# MULTI-STAKEHOLDER MODELS FOR LOCAL PREVENTION

## TECHNICAL EVALUATION AND LEARNINGS FROM KUMANOVO, NORTH MACEDONIA

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# ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| **BRAVE-14** | Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism scale |
| **CAT** | Community Action Team |
| **CCG** | Centre for Common Ground |
| **CSO** | Civil society organisation |
| **CT** | Counter-terrorism |
| **CVE** | Countering violent extremism |
| **DAC** | Development Assistance Criteria |
| **DoS** | Department of State |
| **FGD** | Focus group discussion |
| **FTF** | Foreign terrorist fighter |
| **GoM** | Government of North Macedonia |
| **IOM** | International Organization for Migration |
| **IO** | International organisation |
| **KII** | Key informant interview |
| **LAP** | Local Action Plan |
| **LPC** | Local Prevention Council |
| **LPN** | Local Prevention Network |
| **M&E** | Monitoring and evaluation |
| **MoI** | Ministry of Interior |
| **NCCVECT** | National Committee for Countering Violent Extremism and Counter-Terrorism |
| **NAP** | National Action Plan |
| **NGO** | Non-governmental organisation |
| **OECD** | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| **OSCE** | Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe |
| **P/CVE** | Preventing and countering violent extremism |
| **PS** | Professional services |
| **PVE** | Preventing violent extremism |
| **SCN** | Strong Cities Network |
| **SIA** | Sector for Internal Affairs |
| **TA** | Technical assistance |
| **ToC** | Theory of Change |
| **VE** | Violent extremism |

# INTRODUCTION

The Community Action Team (CAT), a local multidisciplinary and multi-stakeholder entity, was launched in September 2019 as part of the Strong Cities Network (SCN) programme funded by the US Department of State (DoS). The CAT aims to strengthen community resilience to violent extremism (VE) in Kumanovo, North Macedonia, through enhanced multi-agency collaboration and programming at the municipal level. In September 2021, the SCN contracted an external consultant to conduct an evaluation of its support to the Kumanovo CAT.

This evaluation captures achievements, challenges and lessons learned to date, and provides recommendations to relevant government and non-government stakeholders regarding possible future project strategies and approaches. Primary data was collected through a representative community-wide survey, focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs). The community survey mirrors an earlier baseline survey conducted in February 2020, the results of which can be found in the SCN *Community Resilience Study*, and was designed to be statistically representative of Kumanovo's population.[1] Both the baseline and the endline survey gathered information on community resilience to VE, drawing on the Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism (BRAVE-14) scale and a set of bespoke survey questions developed by the SCN Management Unit.[2] Secondary data collection involved a review of project documentation and other external publications.

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# KEY FINDINGS

**1** **People in Kumanovo consider VE to be a significant threat to their community.** 52.9% of respondents reported being worried about violent extremist incidents happening in the municipality. Ethnonationalist extremism was perceived to be a greater threat in Kumanovo than religious-inspired extremism with 57.3% of respondents reporting that ethnonationalist groups represented a moderate or significant threat, compared with 47.2% for religious-inspired extremist groups. Similarly, 12.5% of people reported being exposed to incidences of discrimination or hate on a monthly basis while a further 12% witnessed or experienced these phenomena several times a year.

**2** **The successful institutionalisation of the CAT, which is aligned with the government's framework for preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE), and enjoys significant local ownership and buy-in from central government authorities, has markedly improved national-local coordination in Kumanovo and strengthened North Macedonia's response to VE.** The CAT is explicitly and clearly embedded in the Government of North Macedonia's (GoM) National Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Strategy. The GoM intends to place even greater emphasis on the role of the Local Prevention Councils (LPCs), local multi-stakeholder entities leading a wide variety of preventative efforts, and CATs in the next iteration of the National CVE Strategy, which is due to be drafted and adopted in 2022. Stakeholders from the government and the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE) also commented positively on the decision to establish the CAT under the umbrella of the Kumanovo LPC. This integration is seen as a major contribution to enhanced sustainability and harmonisation. Working with and through the CAT, instead of SCN direct delivery, has allowed for a high level of local ownership. The support provided by the SCN was generally described as relevant and responsive to the demands made.

**3** **The CAT has developed an ambitious, but not always coherent, Local Action Plan (LAP) covering a time span of three years.** Qualitative interview findings suggest that CAT members are dedicated and committed to their work, although this varies among members. The decision-making process within the CAT was generally described as participatory and fair, although there is an indication that the formal representative from the LPC, who works for the Kumanovo Sector of Internal Affairs (SIA), has played a dominant role in driving forward the activities.[3] This has resulted in some concerns that the work of the CAT could be associated too closely with law enforcement and a heavy-handed security approach.

**4** **Despite the pandemic leading to some disturbances, more than 80% of year one (Y1) and year two (Y2) activities have been implemented according to plan.** Findings from the quantitative survey illustrate that community satisfaction with the municipal response to VE has already begun to improve, increasing from a mean score of 2.93 to 3.11 (on a 5-point scale), an improvement of +0.18 points or 6%. It is hoped that satisfaction with the municipal response will continue to grow as more of the LAP is implemented. One area in particular that has seen a positive trend is community satisfaction with how issues of discrimination, intolerance and hate are addressed in schools. This is an area that has been deliberately and intensively targeted by the CAT through its training for psychologists, sociologists, pedagogues and defectologists, jointly referred to as professional services (PS), in all primary and secondary schools in Kumanovo.

**5** With respect to the overarching goal of "more people in Kumanovo are resilient to VE", it is important to acknowledge that it is still early for the project to achieve broader societal changes. So far, Y1 and Y2 activities in the LAP have only partially been implemented, with activities linked to year three (Y3) work plans still outstanding. At the population level, community perceptions as to whether Kumanovo has a lack of tolerance for diversity (e.g. ethnic, religious, beliefs, etc.) have remained unaffected, although subgroup analysis illustrates an 8% improvement among the age group 15-19, which has benefited most extensively from CAT-led interventions. Findings from BRAVE-14 illustrate a mixed picture with statistically significant changes recorded for four of the five resilience factors comprising the scale, two of them positive and two of them negative.

**6** Gaining buy-in and support from the religious authorities is an area that has proven particularly challenging for the project. Although the Islamic Religious Community and the Macedonian Orthodox Church are formally represented in the structure of the CAT, the role of religious stakeholders has been minimal. This has resulted in projects being primarily focused on ethnonationalist ideology with far less attention being paid to religious dimensions.

**7** The CAT would benefit from being more targeted in its choice of activities and beneficiary groups in the future. There is no indication that beneficiary selection by CAT members included subtler and more complex criteria. The CAT's primary focus has been on inclusiveness ("everyone is able to participate") and ensuring there is representation from all ethnic and religious groups. Arguably this was practical in that it allowed for a high degree of flexibility and implementation. However, it also contributed to some CAT-led interventions being disjointed and lacking a consistent and coherent strategy. CAT members would benefit from further capacity building to ensure that their activities are relevant to the target audience.

**8** The quantitative survey illustrates that community awareness of the CAT increased by 10% and the LPC by 14% between baseline and endline. This is a positive outcome because the CAT has invested substantial efforts in raising community awareness about the existence and work of the CAT. However, what is less clear is how community awareness is expected to contribute to the prevention of VE, hate and polarisation. Previous SCN research in Kumanovo has demonstrated that improving public satisfaction with the local government's response to extremism has a beneficial effect on community resilience. Therefore, raising awareness of these bodies and their activities is an important first step in this process. Nonetheless, the relevance of CAT-led interventions could have been improved.

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# RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents the high-level recommendations from the evaluation. More detailed recommendations can be found in the main body of the report.

**1**    To avoid highly fragmented and proliferated interventions, the National Committee for Countering Violent Extremism and Counter-Terrorism (NCCVECT) and the CAT should carefully consider future strategic directions. Develop a clear and high-level vision for the CAT, considering, for instance, whether the CAT should be involved in reintegration work.

**2**    Based on the outcomes of these discussions, consider changing the composition of the CAT to ensure its membership is inclusive, transparent and relevant. For example, consider the inclusion of additional representatives from the Inter-Municipal Centre for Social Affairs to map and coordinate reintegration and rehabilitation service provision.

**3**    Expand representation of civil society actors and consider appointing the religious authorities as non-permanent members only.

**4**    Continue to invest in capacity development of CAT members both from a subject matter and project management standpoint. This will enable them to think more strategically about different forms of extremism and hate, dimensions of vulnerability and how these processes are shaped by demographic variables such as age, ethnicity, religion, social and/or economic status.

**5**    For all CAT members that are employees of municipal or other decentralised government bodies, CAT membership responsibilities should be added to their existing job descriptions. This move would mitigate issues arising from the voluntary nature of the CAT by making associated activities an important part of members' jobs for which they are compensated.

**6**    Carefully consider what counter-extremism outcomes activities can and should contribute towards and encourage a more rigorous prioritisation of beneficiaries, tailoring activities and messaging to target audiences based on groups with comparatively low resilience.[4]

# 1

# BACKGROUND

The Strong Cities Network (SCN) is the first global network of cities focused on preventing hate, polarisation and extremism. It was launched at the United Nations (UN) in 2015 in recognition of the important role that cities play in building community resilience. The network is designed to facilitate the exchange of good practices and learnings among local mayors, officials and community-based practitioners and to provide support to identify and overcome some of the key challenges to more integrated, effective and coordinated prevention efforts. The network also serves to strengthen the vertical cooperation between cities and their national governments on prevention and resilience, and to promote multilateral and global policy that benefits from the local knowledge and experience of city leaders around the world.

More than six years later, the SCN has grown into an independent global network of over 150 cities and other units of local self-governments in which local knowledge and practice inform national, regional, and international approaches to preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE). A few examples of the network's achievements to date include: three SCN global mayoral summits; the multi-actor local prevention networks that have emerged in cities in Bangladesh, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, and North Macedonia; the north-south city-level partnerships it has facilitated; and the P/CVE toolkits it has developed for cities, including how to map hate and extremism or respond to a terrorist incident.

In order to determine the impact of its activities, the SCN has prioritised monitoring and evaluating its programming. This evaluation will look particularly at SCN's programmatic activities in Kumanovo, North Macedonia, where it supported the local government in establishing and operationalising a Local Prevention Network (LPN), a municipality-based multi-actor mechanism for coordinating and delivering local prevention. This was initially developed from European models for multi-agency case management and subsequently adapted and applied to the secondary prevention priorities of local governments dealing with community-wide resilience challenges.

Through the process of developing and adopting its first National Countering Violent Extremism Strategy (2018 – 2022) in accordance with the UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (PVE), North Macedonia made clear its intention to comprehensively address the risks of violent extremism (VE) through multi-agency cooperation.[5] The National Action Plan (NAP) associated with the CVE Strategy specifically calls for the establishment of multi-stakeholder Community Action Teams (CATs) to lead VE prevention efforts at the community level. Since the launch of the NAP in March 2018, CATs have been established in four municipalities: Kičevo, Gostivar, Čair (Skopje) and Kumanovo, while two additional CATs are due to be established in the municipalities of Struga and Prilep in 2022.

The Kumanovo CAT — the prime subject of this evaluation – was officially launched on 11 September 2019, with a decree from the Local Prevention Council (LPC) as a permanent thematic working group to prevent extremism. Its launch was part of a two-year project funded by the US Department of State (DoS) and implemented by the SCN's Management Unit. The project's Theory of Change (ToC), included in **Annex A** of this report, is based on current international understanding of the challenges associated with VE, the importance of municipal and multi-agency responses, and the benefits of programmatic partnerships between governments, national and international civil society organisations (CSOs) and donors. Drawing on the SCN's own programmatic experience in establishing multi-stakeholder prevention networks, the project provided early start-up support to the CAT — including identification of its key institutions represented in the coordinative body – and provided a series of capacity development interventions aimed at strengthening the design, management, implementation and governance of the CAT-related activities. Specifically, support was provided in the following areas:

1. **Identifying local risk factors in Kumanovo municipality through community-wide surveying;**

2. **Mobilising, motivating and inspiring CAT members to lead prevention efforts and to share their experiences and learn from city level professionals in other SCN municipalities;**

3. **Capacity development of CAT members in areas such as identifying early warning signs of radicalisation, push and pull factors and project management;**

4. **Technical advice on the development of a local action plan (LAP) to strengthen community resilience against VE;**

5. **Technical advice and oversight to CAT-led activities, including implementation of the LAP.**

In line with the project's ToC which envisions a locally-owned, multi-stakeholder response to the risk of VE, ownership over the LAP and related activities lies with the CAT, while the SCN Management Unit provides limited strategic direction and fiduciary oversight over a US$30,000 grant provided by the DoS, in support of CAT-led activities.

Since its inception in 2019, the CAT has been composed of 12 members, including two representatives from the municipality, a representative from the LPC working within the SIA, a representative from the office of the Ombudsman, a representative from the Inter-Municipal Centre for Social Affairs, a representative from the Municipal Union of Sports; two teachers – one from a Macedonian-language school and another from an Albanian-language school; two representatives from CSOs and two representatives from the religious communities – one from the Macedonian Orthodox Church and another from the Islamic Religious Community. As of January 2022, the membership has not changed formally, however, two additional representatives from the municipality have started taking an active role in the work of the CAT.

# 2

# EVALUATION PURPOSE AND SCOPE

In September 2021, the SCN contracted an external consultant to conduct an evaluation of its support to the CAT and to assess its performance against the project's intended results. The evaluation covers the period from project inception in July 2019 to October 2021. Specifically, the evaluation report:

—— Captures achievements, challenges and lessons learned to date;

—— Highlights the evaluator's conclusions regarding whether the project has achieved its desired impact and how it has performed on other metrics of success identified in the evaluation framework (i.e. relevance, effectiveness and sustainability); and

—— Provides recommendations regarding possible future project strategies and approaches.

# 2.1 Evaluation Questions

The evaluation is based on a framework developed jointly by the external consultant and the SCN Management Unit in September 2021. The framework integrates the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Criteria (DAC) of Evaluation, covering issues of relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.[6] The full list of evaluation questions are presented in Table 1.

| Table 1: Evaluation questions | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Factor** | **Risk or limitation** | **Mitigation** |
| **Relevance** | To what extent are activities in line with local needs and priorities? | 1 How well is the project aligned with the National CVE Strategy? <br> 2 How relevant was the support provided by the SCN in terms of strengthening the CAT's capacities? <br> 3 Were the activities delivered by the CAT relevant to the risk of VE in Kumanovo? <br> 4 How were project end-users selected? <br> 5 Did CAT-led activities reach the most vulnerable segments of society? <br> 6 Was the project equally relevant to women and men? |
| **Effectiveness** | Is the intervention achieving its objectives? | 1 Are CAT members sufficiently motivated and engaged in the network? <br> 2 Has the LAP been implemented according to plan? <br> 3 Has the CAT improved local coordination on P/CVE? <br> 4 Has the CAT improved national-local coordination on P/CVE? |
| **Impact** | What was the overall impact of the project, both intended and unintended, positive and negative? | 1 What impact did the CAT have on resilience to VE in Kumanovo? <br> 2 What impact did the CAT have on public perceptions about P/CVE? |
| **Sustainability** | How sustainable are the positive effects of the programme? | 1 What evidence is there that the CAT will be able to function independently after the performance period ends? |

The evaluation also looks at cross-cutting themes and principles, in particular gender and "do no harm".[7] These were selected in line with international emerging good practices in the field.

## 2.2 Primary Audiences

The primary audiences for this evaluation are SCN and US DoS staff, members of the CAT, as well as the Government of North Macedonia (GoM) partners, in particular the National Committee for Countering Violent Extremism and Counter-Terrorism (NCCVECT). Other primary intended users include organisations with existing or planned P/CVE programming in North Macedonia, such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Centre for Common Ground (CCG).

Beyond these groups, the report will also be made available to other interested international and local stakeholders who would like to learn about multi-agency approaches to prevention from the experience of the Kumanovo CAT. The achievements, challenges and lessons learned in the study can help inform policies and programmes of SCN member and non-member local governments in their quest for multi-agency prevention efforts to build more resilient communities. The same findings and recommendations can be used by national governments to better support municipal-led efforts on this front. Finally, the evaluation can be used by international and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working on similar issues to reflect on their programmatic activities.

# 3

# EVALUATION METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

This section provides an overview of the evaluation methods used, including data collection methods and tools, sampling, data analysis and ethical considerations.

## 3.1 Data Collection Methods and Tools

Primary data was collected through representative community surveys, focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs). All primary data collection included an informed consent process that appropriately shared the purpose of the evaluation with all participants. Secondary data collection involved a review of project documentation and other external publications.

### Community surveys

In order to assess progress against the overarching goal of "enhanced community resilience against violent extremism", quantitative, telephone-based surveys were conducted in February 2020 and September 2021. The data from the first one is used as a baseline, while the data from the later one as an endline. Both surveys were designed to mirror each other and gather information on community resilience to VE, drawing on the Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism (BRAVE-14) scale, combined with bespoke questions developed for the survey.[8] **Annex B** includes an expanded description of the survey tool. The quantitative survey also incorporates the municipal response scale developed by the SCN at the baseline stage. Further information on the scale can be found in **Annex C.**

| Baseline survey |
|---|
| A baseline survey was carried out in February 2020 to provide a starting point for measuring programme performance. The surveying was carried out by the Institute for Political Research – Skopje (IPRS), a Skopje-based research company. The baseline survey collected quantitative data from a representative sample of 1,052 individuals in the Municipality of Kumanovo, the margin of error for which was 3.88% at the 95% confidence interval. The findings from the survey were presented in the Community Resilience Study which served as an evidence base for tailoring and targeting CAT activities listed in the Kumanovo LAP for PVE and as a baseline for this evaluation.[9] Details of the endline survey are presented in section 3.2. |

### Key informant interviews

The KIIs were designed as semi-structured interviews, which were included as co-pilot cities for this project. The results from the quantitative surveys informed the design of the questions used for the KIIs. Distinct interview topic guides were developed for: the mayor of Kumanovo municipality, the NCCVECT, the Ministry of Interior (MoI), the members of the CAT, representatives from the municipalities of Elbasan in Albania and Čair (Skopje) in North Macedonia, which were included as co-pilots to this project, NGOs and international organisations (IOs).

When the evaluator was not able to meet respondents in person, efforts were made to interview the informants remotely via Microsoft Teams or Zoom. Despite repeated attempts, the representative from the MoI could not be reached and the interview eventually had to be omitted. All interviews conducted either in person or remotely were carried out in the language most preferred by the interviewee – Macedonian, Albanian or English, with consecutive translation provided.

### Focus group discussions

Two FGDs were held with members of the professional services (PS) who took part in activities delivered by the CAT. Due to the COVID-19 situation, the number of participants in each group had to be limited to three individuals to ensure social distancing.

### Document review

The primary data collection was complemented by a review of available project documents, including planning and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) documentation, the Kumanovo LAP and some external literature such as the national CT and CVE strategies.

# 3.2 Sampling Approach

### Quantitative endline survey

The endline community perception survey was population-based, with the sample drawn randomly from all households in the Municipality of Kumanovo. The sample replicated the three-stage stratified sampling methodology of the baseline survey which was designed to be statistically representative. The overall margin of error for the endline survey is 3.14% at the 95% confidence interval. In total 967 people from Kumanovo were interviewed for the endline survey. Survey responses were weighted in order to correct for systemic under- and over-representation and ensure consistency between the sample and population distributions using the latest sociodemographic data from the Bureau of Statistics and the 2002 household census for North Macedonia. The sociodemographic characteristics of the survey respondents are shown in Table 2.

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| Table 2: Demographic profile of survey sample[10] | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Valid N** | **Total unweighted** | **Total weighted** | **Population parameter** |
| **Gender** | | | | |
| **Female** | 477 | 49% | 50% | 50% |
| **Male** | 490 | 51% | 50% | 50% |
| **Age** | | | | |
| **15 - 19** | 58 | 6% | 6% | 6% |
| **20 - 29** | 165 | 17% | 17% | 16% |
| **30 - 39** | 194 | 20% | 18% | 18% |
| **40 - 49** | 173 | 18% | 18% | 18% |
| **50 - 59** | 155 | 16% | 17% | 17% |
| **60 - 69** | 126 | 13% | 13% | 13% |
| **70+** | 97 | 10% | 11% | 11% |
| **Ethnicity** | | | | |
| **Albanian** | 237 | 25% | 25% | 25% |
| **Macedonian** | 639 | 66% | 64% | 61% |
| **Other** | 91 | 10% | 10% | 14% |
| **Highest level of education** | | | | |
| **Unfinished Elementary** | 77 | 8% | 6% | 6% |
| **Elementary** | 194 | 20% | 27% | 28% |
| **Secondary** | 516 | 53% | 51% | 50% |
| **Higher** | 180 | 19% | 16% | 16% |
| **Settlement type** | | | | |
| **Urban** | 763 | 79% | 79% | 79% |
| **Rural** | 204 | 22% | 21% | 21% |

## Qualitative interviews

The qualitative research methods used a purposive sampling approach. Individuals with first-hand knowledge of the project were interviewed. In total, 8 members of the CAT, 5 representatives from the authorities (local and national) and 8 NGO and IO representatives were interviewed. In addition, a representative of Kumanovo's partner city Elbasan, Albania, was interviewed, and two FGDs were held with 6 members of the PSs. Two CAT members declined the evaluators' request for interviews, i.e. the two representatives from the religious authorities.

# 3.3 Data Analysis

## Qualitative data

The information provided from the interviews was compiled and synthesised according to the evaluation framework. The results of the analysis are presented as they relate to the evaluation questions in the evaluation framework.

## Quantitative data

Responses from the endline community perception survey were provided by IPRS and were then cleaned and reviewed by the evaluation team for completeness, consistency and credibility. The data analysis was performed using the statistical software, IBM SPSS. For variables that measure the same feature at two time points, differences were calculated to measure movement between the baseline and endline data. To compare results between key subgroups of the population including gender, age and neighbourhood, descriptive statistics were taken using cross-tabulations, while regression analysis, using logistic ordinal regressions, were employed to detect statistically significant associations and interactions between key variables over time.

# 3.4 Methodological Limitations and Risks

There are a number of limitations of the evaluation approach that should be taken into consideration. **Table 3** presents an overview of the various limitations and describes the evaluation team's mitigation approach.

| Table 3: Key methodological risk and mitigations | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Factor** | **Limitation** | **Mitigation** |
| **Attribution** | Without a control group, it is not possible to attribute changes in community resilience to the project. | The evaluation looks at plausible contributions rather than attribution. Efforts were made to rule out alternative explanations, i.e. by mapping complementary interventions in the project area, and by assessing broader changes in the context. The evaluation considers the potential influence of these factors upon the results (see Section 3.5). |
| **Temporal challenges** | Many of the changes the project is seeking to affect are long-term processes. For instance, the LAP has a time span of three years which falls outside of the cycle of this evaluation. | N/A – could not be mitigated. |
| **Evidence gaps due to weak M&E capacity of the CAT** | There is little robust M&E data available to assess how CAT-led initiatives were perceived by project end-users. | The evaluation gathered some information from project end-users as part of FGDs. |
| **Self-reporting biases** | To assess the performance of the CAT (e.g. in terms of members' motivation, capacities etc.) the evaluators relied on the self-reporting of CAT members. Results may have been over- or under-estimated. | The evaluators thought to mitigate the risk, for example, by assessing general conceptual understanding of related themes and asking respondents to describe how they integrate these concepts into their daily work. Where possible, data has been triangulated. |
| **Other interview biases** | Interview responses may have been affected by other response biases such as social desirability biases, recall biases sponsorship/funding outcome biases, etc. | As above. |

# 3.5 Confounding Factors

This section describes the key external factors that may have affected survey outcomes.

## Other donor-funded interventions

The P/CVE space in North Macedonia is crowded and the project is located within a wider set of international (development) actions on CT and P/CVE. Interview findings, however, suggest that in the project target area of Kumanovo, there are no similar initiatives.

## The COVID-19 pandemic

The economic crisis precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, political polarisation and other related social challenges, may have had an effect on community resilience to VE. To explore and disentangle the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic, people were asked how the pandemic had affected community relationships in Kumanovo.

| Table 4: Effect of the pandemic and government restrictions on relationships between different communities in Kumanovo | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **N =** | **Sampling error**\*\* |
| **Very negatively** | 123 | 15.3% |
| **Somewhat negatively** | 137 | 17.0% |
| **Relationships are unchanged** | 247 | 30.7% |
| **Somewhat positively** | 180 | 22.4% |
| **Very positively** | 117 | 14.6% |

Survey findings show that overall relationships have fractionally improved, with 37% reporting positive changes, 32.3% negative changes and 31% no changes. Subgroup analysis, however, shows considerable differences by gender, age and ethnicity. Among the age group 15-19, 45% of respondents reported a deterioration in relationships, suggesting that young adults are more likely to perceive community cohesion as getting worse during the pandemic than older age groups. Older age groups, in turn, may have benefited from a sense of "coming together" amid the pandemic. Additionally, survey findings illustrate that:

1. Ethnic Macedonians are significantly more pessimistic about the effects of the pandemic on community relationships, with 43% of them reporting a negative trend, as opposed to just 10% of the Albanian respondents.

2. Women are more likely to report negative changes, with close to 40% of female respondents reporting a deterioration in relationships, as opposed to 25% of male respondents.

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One possible reason for this outcome could be the exposure to mis-/disinformation during the pandemic and its effect on the beliefs of ethnic Macedonians and women. Early in the pandemic, there were various stories that alleged that Albanian communities across the country were not being held accountable for the COVID-19 restrictions. Nonetheless, there is no relevant data to explain why more women reported deteriorations compared to men.

Furthermore, findings from the regression analysis shows that neighbourhood is a significant explanatory factor, with participants' responses shaped by the neighbourhood in which they reside.

## The return of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs)

The ongoing return of FTFs from Syria and Iraq and associated press coverage may have affected the survey outcomes, in particular perceptions on existing threats to the community.

## Municipal elections

North Macedonia is currently undergoing political reshuffling, following the municipal elections in October 2021. Qualitative evidence suggests that the elections have contributed to a politicised environment and potential alienation between ethnic groups.

> **"** **Some political parties are playing the ethnic card and negatively contributing to social cohesion between the bigger communities in the country. Albanian mono-ethnic parties are also contributing to this with their mono-ethnic politics. "**
>
> – Key informant, Kumanovo municipality

# 4

# KEY FINDINGS AND LESSONS LEARNED

This section identifies key findings and highlights lessons learned from the project implementation. Key successes and challenges are derived from qualitative and quantitative analysis, with corroborating data from secondary sources such as the LAP and the national CT and P/CVE strategies.

## 4.1 Relevance

The assessment of relevance has three levels of analysis:

— strategic alignment with the National CVE Strategy;

— the relevance of SCN support to the CAT; and

— the relevance of CAT-led initiatives to preventing VE in the Municipality of Kumanovo.

### Strategic alignment with the National CVE Strategy

The Kumanovo CAT is explicitly and clearly embedded in the GoM's overall strategy on P/CVE. Feedback from GoM stakeholders, both at municipal and national level, confirms that the project is meeting government priority needs in the area of P/CVE. The NCCVECT intends to place even greater emphasis on the role of the CATs in the next iteration of the National CVE Strategy, which is planned to be updated in 2022. The SCN has successfully positioned itself as an important technical assistance partner in this field and has been taking proactive and systematic steps in coordinating its work with the authorities and other relevant donors. The relationships, and close coordination, has strengthened the project. Representatives from the OSCE, for instance, commented positively on the SCN's decision to focus on Kumanovo, as opposed to cities such as Gostivar and Čair, which are overcrowded in terms of donor support.

Government and OSCE stakeholders also welcomed the decision to establish the CAT under the umbrella of the LPC.[11] NCCVECT envisions that in the future all CATs should be formally integrated into the LPCs to enhance strategic alignment and to avoid duplication of structures. However, this will likely be a long-term and tedious process. There are, currently, only five fully-functional LPCs in the country – Kumanovo being one them – with another 13 described as partly active. Despite being mandated by government decree, the LPCs continue to lack clear legal frameworks and budgets. This makes harmonisation at the national level a difficult endeavour.

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## The relevance of SCN support to the CAT

The activities funded under this project were generally relevant to the establishment of the CAT. CAT members on the whole value the role the SCN plays in advising them, providing strategic oversight and capacity development support. Overall, the approach by the SCN has been described as responsive and relevant to the demands made. However, capacity development and learning activities have tended to reflect priorities identified by SCN rather than the expressed needs of CAT members. During interviews, few members of the CAT were able to clearly articulate their capacity development needs. This is in itself a finding which shows that CAT members may still lack a deeper understanding of the P/CVE field and its various dimensions. In a few cases, the topics of "online radicalisation" and the "reintegration of returning foreign fighters" were identified as areas requiring additional training and support. In one instance, a member of the CAT also noted that SCN's fiduciary oversight contributed to a "top-down" dynamic, demanding greater flexibility in terms of budget oversight. Further capacity development in this area should be considered, to ensure a smooth transition of the CAT into an independent institution and to mitigate against future accountability risks.

## The relevance of extremism prevention to the Municipality of Kumanovo

Findings from the quantitative survey show that people in Kumanovo consider VE to be a significant threat to their community: 52.9% of respondents reported being worried about violent extremist incidents happening in their communities, with women more likely to report such fears (59.8%) than men (46.1%), and Macedonians (58%) more likely than Albanians (32.2%) and respondents from other ethnic minority backgrounds (49.7%).

| Table 5: Concerns about the risk of violent extremism in Kumanovo | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Overall** | **Macedonian** | **Albanian** | **Other** |
| **Not afraid at all** | 24.4% | 21.5% | 34.4% | 29.0% |
| **Somewhat unafraid** | 22.7% | 20.5% | 33.4% | 21.3% |
| **Somewhat afraid** | 37.5% | 39.8% | 24.6% | 41.5% |
| **Very afraid** | 15.4% | 18.2% | 7.6% | 8.2% |

Participants also reported experiencing or witnessing discrimination or hate against people because of their race, ethnicity, religion or other characteristics on a frequent basis. More than 12.5% of survey respondents indicated that this was the case at least once a month. Subgroup analysis shows significant differences, however. Only 1.4% of Albanians reported experiencing or witnessing incidences at least once a month, as opposed to 14.3% of Macedonians and 13.2% of individuals from other ethnic minority backgrounds.

| Table 6: Exposure to incidences of discrimination or hate | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Overall** | **Macedonian** | **Albanian** | **Other** |
| **Never** | 48.6% | 47.4% | 56.4% | 47.3% |
| **Once a year or less** | 26.9% | 24.3% | 39.8% | 29.6% |
| **Several times a year** | 12.0% | 14.0% | 2.4% | 9.9% |
| **About once a month** | 7.9% | 8.9% | 0.6% | 9.9% |
| **Several times a month** | 4.6% | 5.4% | 0.8% | 3.3% |

Regression analysis illustrates that neighbourhood is another significant explanatory variable, with experiences seemingly tied to the neighbourhoods in which respondents reside. The neighbourhoods in which respondents were most likely to report incidences are Igo Trickovic, Zelen Rid followed by Jane Sandanski.

## The challenge of project conceptualisation

Capacity development for CAT members has initially focused more on P/CVE-related aspects, with less attention being given to generic project design skills, including conceptualisation of projects and evidence-based decision making. This has contributed to some CAT-led interventions being disjointed, lacking a consistent and coherent strategy. For instance, through sports events, CAT members have sought to bring together youth from Albanian and the Macedonian backgrounds. These events have been described as easy "entry points" for programming, due to shared interests in sports among youth from various religious and ethnic groups. Findings from the Community Resilience Study show that the approach of "bringing actors together" is relevant: around 20% of the population socialise with members from different ethnic and religious groups no more than once a year.[12] There is little evidence, however, that CAT members have a vision that moves beyond these ad-hoc encounters. In recognition of this fact, the SCN Management Unit organised a project design and ToC training during the second implementation year. Overall, this learning opportunity was valued by CAT members, although one member noted that these types of training should have been provided much earlier on.

The process of how the CAT allocates its resources could be further strengthened. For instance, through additional diagnostic work, investments in capacity development in areas such as problem analysis, building logical frameworks and evaluating project impact, as well advisory services during the early project design stage. It is acknowledged, however, that advise on project design requires a careful balancing of local ownership needs and the need for more evidence-based approaches.

## Tensions between ownership and quality of delivery

Although the SCN Management Unit provides strategic and fiduciary oversight, it does not guide or direct the CAT as to the activities that should be carried out. Indeed, the project's ToC is based on the fundamental premise that a locally-owned approach, that draws on the contextual knowledge and expertise of local stakeholders, is essential for the prevention of VE. This partnership approach has contributed to a high degree of ownership and a relatively flexible but accountable grant contract. The downside is that project and beneficiary selection were not always highly relevant, due to remaining capacity gaps.

The criteria for selecting activities and beneficiaries were often determined by existing contacts and working relationships. Programming also depends to a large extent on CAT members' individual interests and expertise. In other words, CAT members tend to implement projects that are familiar and fall within the direct mandates of their own organisations, while other dimensions and potentially more useful and relevant approaches are overlooked. There is no clear mechanism in the CAT model to prevent this. The development of a song for Kumanovo municipality is a clear example of a CAT-led initiative that lacks grounding in a consistent ToC. One key informant also raised concerns that there is currently an overemphasis on awareness raising, as opposed to programming designed to address psychosocial resilience factors such as self-esteem, isolation, perspective taking, etc.

> " Forums and workshops with generic speeches will not prevent extremists. More attention needs to be paid to programming as opposed to organising conferences. "
>
> – Key informant, Kumanovo municipality

Findings from the evaluation show that the CAT has invested substantial efforts in raising community awareness on the existence and the work of the CAT. During interview discussions, CAT member frequently pointed to the need for public relations work and the involvement of the press. Indeed, findings from the quantitative survey illustrate that community awareness of the existence of the CAT and its work has increased by 9.8%, suggesting that the CAT has played a visible role in the community. What is less clear, however, is how community awareness is expected to contribute to the prevention of VE. As the CAT does not function as an extremism hotline or referral mechanism, the value of community awareness of the CAT remains debatable.

## Community awareness of prevention bodies

Community awareness of Kumanovo prevention bodies – both the LPC and the CAT – increased by the endline assessment, with positive changes recorded in all neighbourhoods. Community awareness of the CAT and the LPC both increased from a median average of 1 (Strongly disagree) to 2 (Somewhat disagree) by the end of the performance period (on a 5-point scale).

| Table 7: Community awareness of prevention bodies | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Local prevention council | | | Community action team | | |
| | Baseline | Endline | +/- | Baseline | Endline | +/- |
| **Strongly disagree** | 54.2% | 43.5% | -10.70% | 60.7% | 50.6% | -10.10% |
| **Somewhat disagree** | 15.2% | 17.0% | +1.80% | 15.2% | 18.0% | +2.80% |
| **Neither agree nor disagree** | 10.1% | 5.0% | -5.10% | 8.1% | 5.7% | -2.40% |
| **Somewhat agree** | 11.9% | 20.2% | +8.30% | 9.9% | 15.4% | +5.50% |
| **Strongly agree** | 8.5% | 14.3% | +5.80% | 6.0% | 10.3% | +4.30% |

Overall, Albanians who started from a slightly higher baseline recorded the smallest improvements. During the endline assessment, Albanians were the group least familiar with the work of the CAT.

| Table 8: Community awareness of prevention bodies – by ethnicity | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Baseline** | **Endline** | **+/-** |
| **Macedonian** | 1.92 | 2.39 | +0.47 |
| **Albanian** | 2.08 | 2.09 | +0.01 |
| **Other** | 1.86 | 2.49 | +0.63 |

## The challenge of beneficiary selection

Findings from the evaluation show that targeting remains a challenge. There is little evidence that beneficiary selection included subtler and more complex criteria. The logical framework accompanying the LAP requires the collection of data on the "number of people trained".[13] However, there is no requirement to further disaggregate data by variables such as ethnicity, religion, age, socio-economic status or gender. When asked about how participants were selected, the most common response from CAT members was that "everyone is able to participate". In a few cases, CAT members also referred to findings from the Community Resilience Study carried out by SCN in February 2020. Nonetheless, in one instance the age group of 15–19 years was incorrectly quoted as the age group least resilient to VE, when according to the data it was 20-24 year olds.

| Table 9: Resilience to violent extremism (BRAVE-14) – by age group.[14] | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Baseline** | **Endline** | **+/-** |
| **15 — 19** | 54.34 | 54.53 | +0.19 |
| **20 — 29** | 52.99 | 54.61 | +1.62 |
| **30 — 39** | 54.29 | 54.62 | +0.33 |
| **40 — 49** | 52.86 | 52.83 | -0.03 |
| **50 — 59** | 52.89 | 54.02 | +1.13 |
| **60 — 69** | 53.27 | 54.74 | +1.47 |
| **70+** | 55.20 | 55.14 | -0.06 |

However, one member of the CAT also referred to differences in neighbourhoods and the need to focus on marginalised parts of town. This is an encouraging sign that CAT members recognise the importance of focusing on at-risk groups and dimensions of vulnerability. In practice, these considerations, do not seem to have guided programming in a significant way. In part, this may be due to the fact that the Community Resilience Study was conducted only after the LAP was developed. The challenge of targeting is also compounded by the fact that identification at-risk individuals or population groups is not straightforward. For instance, while some CAT members believe that it is primarily young people who are vulnerable to VE, opinions on that matter vary among project stakeholders.

> " **Old stereotypes are hard to debunk and hence we have a situation where the older generations are more vulnerable. More needs to be done to debunk interethnic stereotypes which prevent people from genuinely [building] divides.** "
>
> – Key informant, Kumanovo municipality

It is also important to acknowledge that there are different forms of extremism and hate that can affect individuals and population groups in different ways. Findings from the quantitative survey indicate that ethnonationalist ideology is perceived to be a slightly bigger threat to the community than religious extremism.

| Table 10: How big of a security threat to your municipality are each of the following? (crime, religious extremism, ethnonationalist extremism) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Crime groups** | **Religious extremist** | **Ethnonationalist extremist groups** |
| **Not a threat at all** | 10.4% | 25.7% | 18.4% |
| **A slight threat** | 12.3% | 27.2% | 24.4% |
| **A moderate threat** | 33.6% | 19.9% | 30.1% |
| **A significant threat** | 43.6% | 27.3% | 27.2% |

However, subgroup analysis shows significant differences between ethnic communities, with Macedonians considerably more concerned about religious extremism than Albanians.

| Table 11: Perceptions by ethnic background of the respondent | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Religious extremist groups | | | Ethnonationalist groups | | |
| | Macedonian | Albanian | Other | Macedonian | Albanian | Other |
| Not a threat at all | 20.0% | 46.3% | 29.0% | 18.9% | 16.9% | 17.4% |
| A slight threat | 23.2% | 41.9% | 29.2% | 21.7% | 28.0% | 36.4% |
| A moderate threat | 22.2% | 8.2% | 24.0% | 26.3% | 46.7% | 27.9% |
| A significant threat | 34.6% | 3.6% | 17.7% | 33.1% | 8.5% | 18.3% |

Differences in understanding of the local situation can reflect both Islamophobic views – with the risk of Islamic extremism being largely exaggerated, but also a lack of honest recognition that extremism exists within the Muslim community. Both points merit attention and provide potential entry points for P/CVE programming in the community. In any case it should be noted that in December 2020, there was a police intervention in Kumanovo where three local residents were arrested for forming a terrorist cell under the influence of ISIS' ideology.

The CAT, with assistance provided by the SCN, should think more strategically about different forms of extremism and hate, dimensions of vulnerability and how these processes are shaped by demographic variables such as age, ethnicity, religion and socio-economic status. A more rigorous prioritisation approach, with messages and approaches specifically tailored to the target group, could help to improve the relevance of interventions. In this context, it is, however, important to note that several CAT members raised concerns that a targeted approach – focused on a particular neighbourhood or at-risk group – could potentially ignite jealousies and tensions. This argument requires scrutiny, as a more rigorous prioritisation strategy is not necessarily at odds with the idea of conflict-sensitive project implementation; rather, it requires a careful communication strategy that explains the rationale behind the decision to all of the relevant stakeholder groups.

The training for PSs teams is another example of where beneficiary selection could have been improved. While there are clear benefits to introduce preventive efforts in primary schools to address antisocial behaviour and bullying at a young age, it is questionable whether PS in these schools will deal with issues of extremism and radicalisation.

## Training for professional services

In June 2021, the Kumanovo CAT organised a training for PS staff from all schools based in Kumanovo. The aim of the training was to familiarise members from PS with preventing antisocial behaviour, bullying, hatred and extremism, including early warning signs of radicalisation and to provide guidance on how to respond to identified cases. FGDs with members from PS groups show that the training was perceived to be highly relevant by professionals from high schools, with one participant recounting the story a 17-year-old girl in her school who engaged with extremist propaganda and was perceived to be at high risk of radicalisation. She said that the training had equipped her with new skills and tools to handle such cases. However, primary school teachers commented less positively on the training, noting concerns that the parts of the training dedicated to extremism were not relevant to their needs, due to the young age of the children, while the aspects on antisocial behaviour and bullying were very useful.

## The challenge of engaging religious actors

One area that has proven particularly challenging for the project is gaining buy-in and support from the religious authorities. Although some religious authorities (Muslim and Christian Orthodox) are formally represented in the structure of the CAT, in practice, participation has been minimal and many CAT members noted concerns that there was no real interest among them to engage in the project. Similar concerns were also raised by representatives from the IOM which runs a number of P/CVE projects in the country. Progress has been limited despite repeated attempts to mobilise religious actors, although experiences seem to have been more positive in the other communities where CATs have been established.

In Kumanovo, the lack of participation and engagement has resulted in programming being focused primarily on ethnonationalist ideology, with far less attention being paid to religious dimensions. Indeed, one CAT member questioned the overall composition of the CAT, arguing that if Muslim and Orthodox voices were reflected, there was a need to also integrate "atheist voices". This reasoning suggests a strong focus on diversity as a fundamental value underpinning the work of the CAT. However, in part the argument also dismisses the importance of religion to extremist ideology and narrative. Ethnonationalist and some religious ideologies are themselves closely interlinked and cannot be separated out entirely.

> **" Sadly, they [religious authorities] are not involved because they are serving a political purpose. They are very careful the few times when they take part in events. They are not that open to talk about problems that are present in their communities. Also, when we talk to them about these problems in private they are open and show cooperation; however, when they talk publicly they sing a different tune. "**
>
> – Key informant, Kumanovo municipality

While the evaluation team acknowledges that the CAT and the SCN have engaged in substantial efforts to try to mobilise religious stakeholders, it will be important to further scale these initiatives in the future. In particular, in light of the return of FTFs from Syria and Iraq, SCN, with the support from NCCVECT and the DoS, should explore ways to engage the religious authorities more closely in dialogue. During interview discussions, OSCE representatives indicated that they would like to see the CATs play a role in FTF reintegration, noting concerns that NGOs alone will not be able to handle the process.

Some interviewees, however, also noted concerns that an overemphasis on Islamic extremism could be counterproductive. In this context, some respondents questioned the decision to set up CATs primarily in those communities with a Muslim majority. NCCVECT and international donors should pay close attention to these concerns and consider the implicit message of such prioritisation.

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## Gender considerations

Gender considerations are integrated in project design in that CAT members attempt to mobilise both women and men (in particular youth) to participate in their projects. The LAP specifically calls for women to be involved in training and public events, with a dedicated gender-sensitive indicator looking at the role women play in preventive activities. However, the logical framework accompanying the LAP does not systematically call for data to be collected on a gender-disaggregated basis. The LAP also refers to gender – as opposed to women's participation – only once, by noting that "discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, gender, religion and political affiliation" can be a potential push factor for VE.[15]

In particular, in light of the recent return of FTFs and their families from Syria and Iraq, the SCN and the CAT should consider paying greater attention to the gendered dynamics of VE. Experience elsewhere has shown, that governments and their national and international partners are often inherently ill-prepared to deal with (potential) female extremists. There is a need to develop capacity in this area to ensure that these cases are appropriately handled. Research into gender and VE also shows that gendered norms and ideas related to masculinities and femininities are fundamental aspects of extremist ideology, and are often used deliberately as part of recruitment strategies. The SCN should consider developing training modules on gender and VE and develop capacity in this field.

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### Key lessons and recommendations

**1**    Findings from Kumanovo show that there is value in supporting local and national partners through diagnostic work (e.g. the Community Resilience Study). These studies should be conducted early on during the initial project design phase to provide an evidence base for programming.

**2**    The development of a consistent and comprehensive strategy to prevent VE requires attention to broader, but no less crucial, aspects related to evidence-informed thinking, project conceptualisation and design. Consideration should be given to building further capacities in this field.

**3**    Greater discussion around beneficiary selection criteria and different mechanisms for prioritisation and sequencing should be encouraged. In line with the prioritisation strategy, indicators should be expanded to track not only the number of beneficiaries but also their sociodemographic backgrounds. Greater efforts are also needed in ensuring that monitoring and evaluation data is collected by the CAT on a regular basis.

**4**    Consideration should be given to earmarking specific funds for different priority areas based on local research (e.g. religious vs. ethnonationalist ideologies; primary vs. secondary prevention, gender, etc.).

**5**    To ensure gender considerations are systematically integrated throughout, there is a need to develop training modules and capacity in the field.

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# 4.2 Effectiveness

This section contributes to answering the evaluation questions related to:

— CAT members' motivation to engage in the network;

— the extent to which the LAP has been implemented according to plan; and

— the effect of the project on improving municipal and national-local coordination on P/CVE-related matters.

## Motivation of CAT members

The SCN has achieved some notable successes in mobilising and motivating CAT members to engage in the network, while also playing an important formative role in providing advice and analysis. Two years into the project, the CAT has established itself as a functioning institution. CAT members meet regularly and there is evidence that members are dedicated and committed to their work, although not all of them equally.[16] Nonetheless "lack of time" and "challenges in juggling multiple commitments simultaneously" were frequently cited by respondents as key constraints. In this context, it is important to acknowledge that the CAT is staffed with government and public institution employees, and civil society representatives with already existing jobs and daily activities, rather than being full-time CAT members. During interview discussions, some CAT members highlighted the need for the payment of a stipend, although there was broad acknowledgement that the CAT would continue its work, even if no financial incentive was provided. Similar discussions also seem to have taken place in the other communities where CATs have been established. However, during interview discussions, the national CVE/CT coordinator strongly advised against the use of financial rewards, highlighting the risks of additional aid dependencies and false incentives, a view that is shared by the evaluation team.

A possible solution that enjoys broad backing from NCCVECT, the SCN and CCG staff, is the integration of CAT members' responsibilities into their formal job descriptions. This would allow CAT members to perform their roles as part of their official duties, although this would only be possible for government and not for civil society members. This aspiration should be set out by the NCCVECT in the next iteration of the National CVE Strategy to obtain political backing and support for these reforms. The re-activation of the LPCs could provide a vehicle to drive forward these changes. It is acknowledged, however, that this will likely be a long-term, tedious process. In the meantime, the SCN, OSCE and CCG should closely coordinate their approaches, as divergent strategies on financial rewards could potentially cause frictions.

## Decision-making processes within the CAT

There is widespread acknowledgement among CAT members that the LAP was developed in a transparent and inclusive way. The decision-making process was described as participatory and fair, with all CAT members able to bring forward proposals and suggestions. Although CAT members valued the participatory approach to decision-making, several members suggested that the CAT should be led by a dedicated individual, with overall responsibility and decision-making authority. KIIs indicate that this role is currently held by a member formally working for the MoI, although on an informal basis. Many CAT members described this individual as being "the most experienced" and "the driving force" behind the CAT. While there is no indication that informal leadership has caused frictions among the CAT, one key informant noted concerns that the prominent role played by the MoI could result in P/CVE initiatives being too closely associated with law enforcement.

> " The Ministry of Interior needs to be mostly engaged as a consultative body and reduce its role when it comes to organising and being at the forefront of programming. There is a tendency of the police to take over these activities and lead them. This contributes to people thinking that the MoI is leading PVE activities. Other ministries and their decentralised offices are not involved as much, because they do not understand their role and don't have adequate resources allowing the MoI to have greater influence. "

– Key informant, Kumanovo municipality

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Greater representation of CSOs should be encouraged to avoid the CAT being conflated with a heavy-handed security approach. The SCN and the CAT should also explore opportunities to appoint a dedicated chair to steer the network. Dual leadership or a rotating system could potentially mitigate against the risk of an overly prominent role by one individual. Such reform efforts must be carefully managed, as there is a clear risk that changes to the current (informal) structure could inhibit the effective functioning of the CAT. The downside of this time frame is that there are now few opportunities to integrate learnings from Y1 and Y2 into future project design.

## Proposed changes to the composition of the CAT

During interviews, many participants highlighted the need to change the composition of the CAT. The most prominent concern relates to the membership of the Macedonian Orthodox Church and the Islamic Religious Community. While CAT members on the whole have worked well together – each member bringing distinct experiences, expertise and skills – the role and contributions by religious actors have been described as negligible and almost invisible. The two representatives from the Macedonian Orthodox Church and the Islamic Religious Community also declined the evaluators' requests for an interview. In light of this lack of engagement, the other CAT members have requested these stakeholder groups be removed from the structure. The evaluation team is largely sympathetic to the calls, as clearly there is a risk that decision-making gets delayed due to the inertia of these members.

A potential solution currently debated by SCN staff is the inclusion of some stakeholder groups as non-permanent members. This could help to ensure that there is continued dialogue with the religious authorities, without inhibiting the day-to-day functioning of the CAT. Some interviewees also highlighted the need to include additional stakeholder groups, in particular additional members from the Inter-Municipal Centre for Social Affairs – an important actor when it comes to rehabilitation and reintegration, as well as greater civil society representation. The CAT should consider introducing these changes during the next performance period. Some discussions have also focused on the benefits of appointing deputy representatives to alleviate some of the time pressures CAT members face.

## Implementation of the LAP

The CAT has developed an ambitious but not always coherent LAP, covering a time span of three years. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic leading to disturbances, more than 80 per cent of the Y1 and Y2 projects have been implemented according to plan. In quantitative terms, this is a significant achievement, as many activities had to be postponed or adjusted due to COVID-19 restrictions. While some quality challenges remain (see Section 4.1), the successful implementation of these projects is indicative of the CAT's high level of motivation.

The three-year plan has arguably helped to improve long-term planning and commitment. The downside of this time frame is that there are now few opportunities to integrate learnings from Y1 and Y2 into future project design. For similar interventions elsewhere, the SCN should encourage introducing a mid-term break (e.g. after 1.5 or 2 years) to allow for evaluative evidence to be incorporated into the design of LAP projects, for which support would need to be provided by the SCN.

## Coordination and cooperation on P/CVE-related matters

The CAT has enjoyed strong backing and support from the municipality, in particular the mayor of Kumanovo who was involved from the early stages of the project. Coordination between the CAT and the NCCVECT was also described as good, and the project did well in terms of involving its key government counterparts in the steering of the project.

At the municipal level, enhanced coordination between CSOs and the government was highlighted as a major project achievement. The idea of multi-stakeholder networks connecting government officials and CSOs was described as highly innovative, as there are currently no similar initiatives in the community. However, at the national level, there were few opportunities for CAT members to engage in high-level policy dialogue and reform discussions. An area where cross-exchanges of ideas could prove valuable is the development of the new P/CVE strategy. Findings from this evaluation report can provide a basis to engage in discussions.

## Satisfaction with municipal response to VE

Baseline-endline comparison shows that community satisfaction with the municipal response to VE has improved from a mean score of 2.93 (on a 5-point scale) during the baseline assessment to 3.11 during the endline assessment, an improvement of +0.18 points or 6%.

| Table 12: Satisfaction with municipal response to violence extremism (municipal response scale) | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **N =** | **Mean** |
| **Baseline** | 1,082 | 2.93 |
| **Endline** | 964 | 3.11 |

While no statistically significant difference was detected for two of the four sub-questions in the scale – i.e. (1) local authorities take social problems in the community seriously and (2) local authorities work in the interests of all communities in Kumanovo – survey findings illustrate that satisfaction with how discrimination, intolerance and hate are addressed in schools has improved. This is an area that the CAT has extensively and deliberately targeted through its training for the PS staff.

| Table 13: Satisfaction with response in schools | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Baseline** | **Endline** | **+/-** |
| **Strongly disagree** | 17.9% | 18.6% | +0.70% |
| **Somewhat disagree** | 18.9% | 11.1% | -7.80% |
| **Neither agree nor disagree** | 23.8% | 19.7% | -4.10% |
| **Somewhat agree** | 20.7% | 21.0% | +0.30% |
| **Strongly agree** | 18.7% | 29.6% | +10.90% |

Community satisfaction with how discrimination, intolerance and hate are tackled within religious institutions has also improved, an area that has not been deliberately targeted by the CAT. However, both the Macedonian Orthodox Church and the Islamic Religious Community are represented in the structure of the CAT and have participated in training activities provided by the SCN. As both members declined the evaluators' requests for an interview, it is not possible to assess whether participation in the project has led them to take a more deliberate stance and change approaches within their own institutions.

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| Table 14: Satisfaction with response in religious institutions | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Baseline** | **Endline** | **+/-** |
| **Strongly disagree** | 17.9% | 9.4% | -8.50% |
| **Somewhat disagree** | 11.8% | 12.9% | +1.10% |
| **Neither agree nor disagree** | 24.0% | 12.5% | -11.50% |
| **Somewhat agree** | 20.7% | 27.3% | +6.60% |
| **Strongly agree** | 25.6% | 37.8% | +12.20% |

## Key lessons and recommendations

1. The CAT should engage in a process of restructuring by changing the core composition of its membership base. Greater civil society representation should be encouraged, while religious and potentially some CSO stakeholder groups should be appointed as non-permanent members only.

2. Prior to the process of restructuring the CAT, relevant stakeholder groups should discuss future strategic directions, such as whether the CATs should be involved in reintegration work. The CAT's membership base should be expanded based on the outcomes of these discussions.

3. The NCCVECT should encourage the integration of CAT members' roles and responsibilities into their formal job descriptions.

4. For similar initiatives elsewhere, a flexible approach to the development of LAPs should be encouraged, to enable feedback loops and integration of lessons learned from programming.

# 4.3 Impact

With respect to the overarching goal of "enhancing community resilience to violent extremism", it is important to acknowledge that it is still early for the project to achieve broader societal changes. So far, Y1 and Y2 projects have only partially been implemented (approximately 80 per cent) with activities linked to the Y3 work plan still outstanding. Findings in this section should therefore be seen as early signs of project impact.

Findings from the quantitative survey illustrate that community perceptions on whether Kumanovo has a lack of tolerance for diversity (e.g. ethnic, religious, beliefs, etc.) have remained unaffected, with no statistically significant change recorded between baseline and endline. During both surveys, approximately 30% of respondents agreed with the statement that Kumanovo has a lack of tolerance for diversity, while approximately 40% disagreed.

| Table 15: Kumanovo has a lack of tolerance for diversity | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Baseline** | **Endline** | **+/-** |
| **Strongly disagree** | 26.0% | 19.4% | -6.6% |
| **Somewhat disagree** | 15.8% | 23.4% | +7.6% |
| **Neither agree nor disagree** | 26.4% | 27.2% | +0.8% |
| **Somewhat agree** | 16.1% | 13.0% | -3.1% |
| **Strongly agree** | 15.7% | 17.0% | +1.3% |

Subgroup analysis, however, illustrates a positive trend among the age group 15 —19, who reported an 8% improvement in their perception of tolerance despite being the group most pessimistic about the impact of the pandemic on social cohesion (see Section 3.5). The age group 15 —19 is also the age group that has benefited most extensively from CAT-led interventions in the community.

## Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism scale (BRAVE-14)

Overall, no statistically significant change was recorded for BRAVE-14. The mean score increased slightly from 53.54 to 54.27. A statistically significant change was, however, recorded for 4 of the 5 risk and protective factors that comprise the scale (1) cultural identity and connectedness, (2) bridging capital, (3) linking capital and (4) violence-related beliefs, with two factors recording a positive and two factors a negative change.

| Table 16: Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism scale | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **P-value** | **Mean** | | |
| | | **Baseline** | **Endline** | **+/-** |
| **BRAVE-14 (14 — 70)** | 0.55 | 53.54 | 54.27 | +0.73 |
| **Cultural identity and connectedness subscale (3 — 15)** | ≤.001 | 13.18 | 12.94 | -0.24 |
| **Bridging capital subscale (3 — 15)** | ≤.001 | 10.66 | 11.17 | +0.51 |
| **Linking capital subscale (3 — 15)** | .008 | 8.21 | 8.67 | +0.46 |
| **Violence-related behaviours subscale (2 — 10)** | .245 | 7.97 | 7.96 | -0.01 |
| **Violence-related beliefs subscale (3 — 15)** | .007 | 13.55 | 13.54 | -0.01 |

Subgroup analysis of the risk and protective factors for resilience to VE showed that change did not occur equally across all sociodemographic groups in Kumanovo. While feelings of cultural identity and connectedness declined for both ethnic Albanians and ethnic Macedonians, a greater drop was observed among the Albanian population of Kumanovo.

| Table 17: Cultural identity and connectedness – by ethnicity | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Baseline** | **Endline** | **+/-** |
| **Macedonian** | 13.23 | 13.06 | -0.17 |
| **Albanian** | 13.09 | 12.53 | -0.56 |
| **Other** | 13.13 | 13.20 | +0.07 |

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER MODELS FOR LOCAL PREVENTION

Individuals living in the urban centre of Kumanovo also experienced a decline in their sense of cultural identity and connectedness compared with those residing in rural areas of the municipality who showed a slight improvement in this resilience domain. This could be explained by greater feelings of isolation among individuals living in urban areas during the pandemic where COVID-19 restrictions were more strictly enforced.

| Table 18: Cultural identity and connectedness – by settlement type | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Baseline** | **Endline** | **+/-** |
| **Rural** | 12.91 | 13.07 | +0.16 |
| **Urban** | 13.25 | 12.91 | -0.34 |

Ethnicity also factored into observed changes in bridging capital among the population of Kumanovo. While ethnic Albanians experienced a fractional reduction in their bridging capital with out-groups since the baseline, both Macedonians and other ethnic minorities reported an improvement in their connection with other communities.

| Table 19: Bridging capital – by ethnicity | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Baseline** | **Endline** | **+/-** |
| **Macedonian** | 10.91 | 11.62 | +0.71 |
| **Albanian** | 10.00 | 9.91 | -0.09 |
| **Other** | 10.96 | 11.27 | +0.31 |

## Key lessons and recommendations

1. Findings from the endline survey illustrate that young adults (15–19) feel more positive about the level of tolerance in their community, compared to the baseline. However, at the population level no statistically significant change was recorded.

2. Findings from BRAVE-14 paint a varied picture of community resilience, with both positive and negative changes recorded in the risk and protective factors that comprise the scale.

3. As it is still early to achieve broader impact, the SCN and the DoS should invest in long-term, follow-up assessments.

# 4.4 Sustainability

This section aims to answer the main research question: What evidence is there that the CAT will continue to function after the performance period ends?

The Kumanovo CAT is among the most active and engaged CATs in North Macedonia. The evaluation team has seen evidence of considerable ownership, further reinforcing the view that CAT members are working hard to play a valuable role in the community. Buy-in and engagement from the authorities, both at the municipal and national level is high, as evidenced, in the allocation of a dedicated budget line under the municipal budget and an equivalent payment of US$6,000 to support locally led initiatives to prevent extremism, hate and polarisation. While CAT members so far have not used these funds, due to remaining funding under the DoS grant, this allocation is a clear indication that the municipality values the work of the CAT and would like to see its work continue. Nonetheless, some concerns over future funding were raised. In the long run, sustainability can only be guaranteed if adequate funding is made available through regular budgeting processes, rather than ad-hoc donor funds. This means that the strategic documents and action plans of the CAT need to be submitted in advance to central level institutions in order for them to approve appropriate resources. In a context characterised by general resource scarcity, this could prove challenging.

> **In order to guarantee sustainability of these institutions there needs to be a law that mandates the creation in each municipality including resources that are devoted to their work with a concrete programme of activities. The municipality cannot devote a lot of resources for this because it barely has resources for its own activities.**
>
> – Key informant, Kumanovo municipality

It also bears emphasis that changes in political leadership could impede future commitment. In this context, one stakeholder noted concerns over the lack of incentives to invest in and sustain the CAT.

> **There will rarely be any bottom-up approaches to make the CATs sustainable because they are not something politicians can gloat about. Resources are prioritised for infrastructure and other pressing issues. No mayor will get re-elected based on whether he or she has supported the establishment of a CAT.**
>
> – Key informant, Kumanovo municipality

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER MODELS FOR LOCAL PREVENTION

While the integration of the CAT into the structure of the LPC can be seen as a positive indication of future sustainability, it is noteworthy that the LPCs themselves are beset by numerous challenges, including unclear legal frameworks and a lack of budgets. The challenges in reviving the LPCs are indicative of some of the challenges at hand in sustaining the CAT model. Furthermore, there is a clear risk that the SCN's departure could result in the CAT becoming dysfunctional. During interviews, many CAT members highlighted the SCN's support as being vital to the success of the CAT.

> " **Because the SCN works as a project and supports the institutions as a part of its programming – the moment it stops there is a high chance that the work on the ground will stop.** "
>
> – Key informant, Kumanovo municipality

## Key lesson and recommendation

1. The CAT's integration into the structure of the LPC, as well as strong buy-in and support from the authorities provide positive indications of project sustainability. However, future political support cannot be guaranteed and there is a need to think about how the SCN's support can be gradually phased out during the next performance period. A staggered approach in which assistance is gradually withdrawn should be part of that exit strategy.

# 5

# CONCLUSIONS

This evaluation underlines that the SCN support to the Kumanovo CAT was both relevant and successful. The CAT-led projects are managed successfully and some positive results have been achieved, in particular greater community satisfaction with how issues of extremism, hate and intolerance are addressed by the municipality and in schools. Building further on these achievements, the SCN should continue to invest in the capacity development of CAT members, to enable the CAT to streamline its projects and to further improve responses to VE in the community. Going forward, greater emphasis should be placed on reaching at-risk individuals and population groups, and on the tailoring of interventions to different target groups. Furthermore, the next performance period should be used to develop a clear exit strategy with the SCN's support to the CAT gradually scaled back over the coming year(s).

In terms of scaling the CAT model to other cities and geographic regions, some pertinent lessons can be drawn from the Kumanovo experience:

## Selection of individuals and institutions is vital to project success

Where buy-in and engagement from individuals and institutions are lacking, permanent membership should be withdrawn. Core membership should be composed of dedicated individuals, who are motivated to partake in the activities and are able to work well together as a team. Otherwise, there is a real risk that initiatives will remain donor-driven, lacking ownership and long-term sustainability. To ensure interventions are relevant to extremism prevention and to achieve progress in terms of strengthening multi-stakeholder approaches, there is a need to engage other institutions through more flexible implementation modalities. Engaging additional stakeholder groups as non-permanent members and in the delivery of ad-hoc project activities could be an effective way to gradually build buy-in.

## Avoid idealised notions of "local knowledge"

Findings from Kumanovo show that there are multiple, rather than uniform, local perspectives when it comes to drivers and risk factors of VE. Over-reliance on the views and opinions of a few individuals should be avoided. Rather, there is a need to bring together different bodies of evidence to inform programming. The SCN should encourage informed dialogue by supporting national and local actors in carrying out research and in understanding their own assumptions and biases.[17] VE is a complex and multi-faceted phenomenon and no individual or institution holds the key to solving the problem. The SCN's ToC should emphasise a partnership approach to VE – that is, providing solid support structures in the initial start-up phase through diagnostic work and capacity development – as it should stress local ownership and reliance on "local knowledge". The strength of the model lies in effectively bringing these elements together in a consistent and coherent whole.

## Training and capacity building must go beyond technical aspects related to P/CVE

High-quality project delivery hinges on the capacity of CAT members to conceptualise, deliver and evaluate their own interventions. In addition to assessing risk factors and vulnerabilities, there is a need for CAT members to be able to conceptualise interventions and change processes. A restructuring of the membership base that entails both permanent and non-permanent members would allow for more tailored capacity development support, with advanced training provided to those individuals with overall oversight responsibility. In addition to personal motivation and drive, analytical and conceptual skills should be key selection criteria for permanent members.

## There is no one-size-fits-all approach

Although a standardised project model is desirable from the perspective of having a validated ToC and achieving cost-efficiency through shared processes and tools (e.g. training modules, monitoring, evaluation and research tools, etc.), there is a need to consider the idiosyncratic nature of contexts. For instance, a general recommendation that applies to all interventions irrespective of context is avoidance of duplication of structures. However, this looks fundamentally different in each setting. In the case of Kumanovo, the project was able to leverage the existence of a functioning LPC in which the CAT could be effectively integrated. However, even within the domestic context of North Macedonia, there is significant diversity in practice, which makes extrapolation from one setting to another a difficult, if not impossible, endeavour. Clearly, there are benefits in looking at uniform solutions when it comes to questions such as whether CAT members' roles and responsibilities should be formally integrated into their terms of reference. Whether or not this is feasible in another country, hinges on broader political dynamics which are often beyond the scope of a project to affect, at least in the short-term. Likewise, experiences from Kumanovo point to the importance of individuals' characters, motivation and drive. These factors are more important than ensuring the representation of certain types of organisations. So, the SCN should be critically aware of the limitations of standardisation. There is a need to assess shared traits and characteristics, but also those factors that are idiosyncratic to a particular setting.

# ANNEXES

## Annex A: Theory of Change (ToC)

The CAT will sit within the Kumanovo LPC and serve as a permanent thematic working group on P/CVE in the municipality. The establishment of a local platform for collaboration and coordination among local government, CSOs and other community actors engaged in P/CVE is anticipated to facilitate the development of integrated local strategies and approaches, and support the delivery of prevention programmes across a range of P/CVE themes. This is illustrated in the diagram below and is further explained in the narrative which follows the diagram. Due to the short timeline, this project and its ToC focus specifically on the development of a functioning multi-stakeholder mechanism for P/CVE in Kumanovo, rather than the effect of this body on extremism, hate and polarisation in the community.

**FIGURE 01**   Theory of Change diagram – Kumanovo CAT
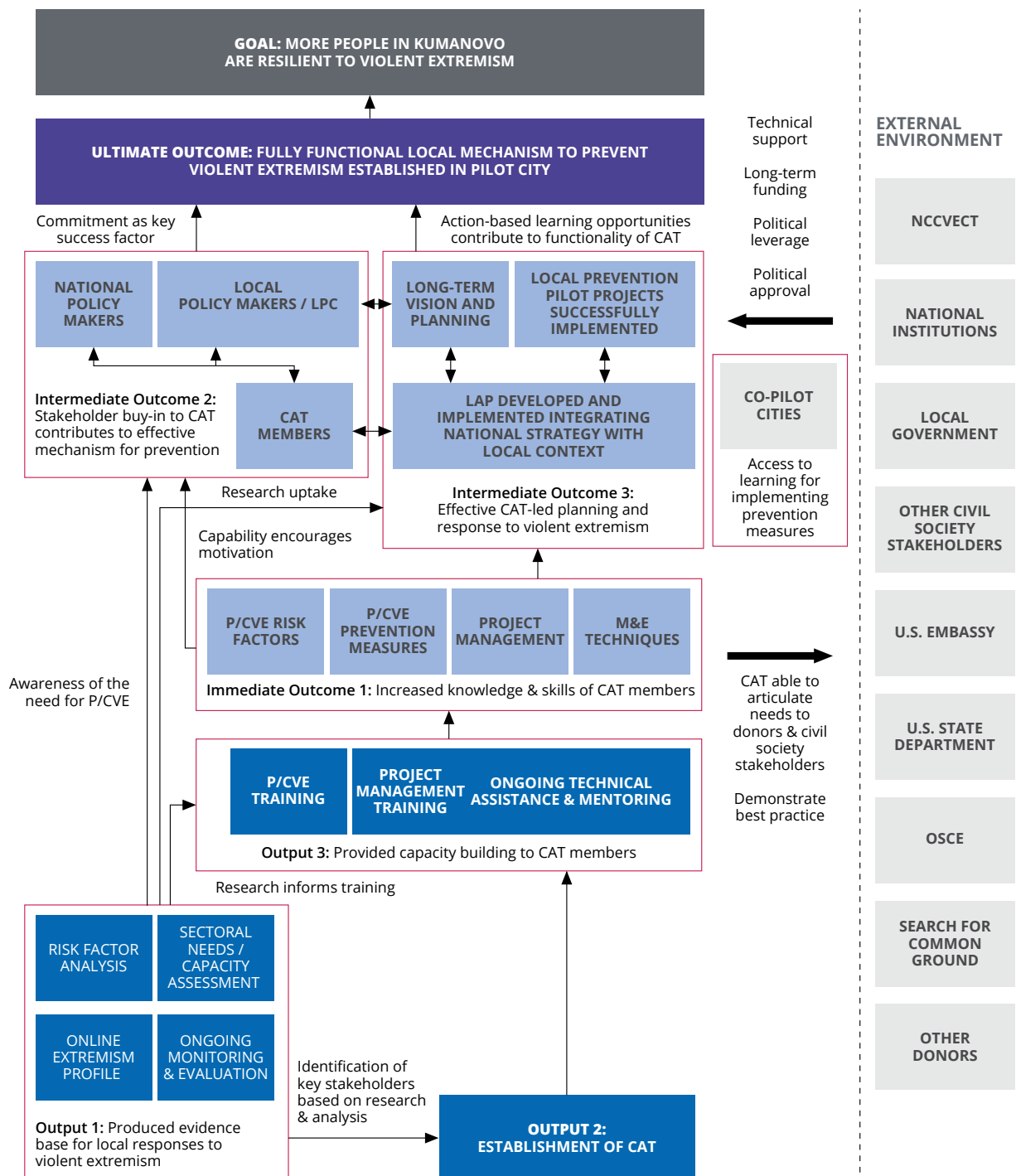
## Inputs to output level

The SCN will assist in producing research to improve understanding of the local context for hate, polarisation and extremism. Based on initial analysis, the SCN will support the LPC and local authorities to recruit CAT members and strengthen their skills relevant to managing P/CVE interventions. This includes: the provision of formal training exercises, exchange visits, facilitation and lesson sharing to improve P/CVE capabilities in areas related to understanding the drivers of VE in the community, identification of early warning signs of radicalisation, learning how to partner effectively on P/CVE relevant issues, and how to design, develop, deliver and evaluate P/CVE projects. The SCN will also work alongside the CAT to improve community awareness and deliver outreach activities (events, campaigns etc.) to provide individuals and groups in Kumanovo with P/CVE relevant information. The outputs of the intervention are:

— **Output 1:** An improved evidence base for local responses to VE is produced

— **Output 2:** The CAT in Kumanovo is established

— **Output 3:** Capacity building to CAT members is provided

## Key assumptions at this level

1. The CAT must be inclusive and represent key segments of society, including different ethnic and religious communities, gender, governmental and non-governmental stakeholders ("whole-of-society approach") in order to address VE effectively.

2. The project is able to mobilise among the different segments of society.

3. CAT members are motivated and able to participate in SCN-led training activities.

4. SCN-led training adequately reflects local contextual conditions.

## Output to outcome level

It is anticipated that the training, facilitation and resources provided by the SCN will improve the skills and knowledge of CAT members and assist them in implementing effective responses to VE in the local community through the development of a LAP and accompanying prevention activities. Commitment will be a key success factor for the operations of the CAT and the process of developing new skills and knowledge among its members. Equally, successful implementation of prevention initiatives will also encourage greater commitment among members. It is expected that this process will be mutually constitutive, with effective implementation leading to greater commitment and vice versa. Similarly, buy-in and support from national and subnational stakeholders and the Kumanovo LPC will also have a role in facilitating the development of an effective mechanism for prevention in the community. The SCN expects that support and buy-in will be further encouraged by the successful implementation of the LAP by the CAT. The intermediate outcomes of the intervention are:

— **Intermediate outcome 1:** Increased knowledge and skills of CAT members

— **Intermediate outcome 2:** Stakeholder buy-in to CAT contributes to an effective mechanism for prevention

— **Intermediate outcome 3:** Effective CAT-led planning and response to VE

## Key assumptions at this level

1. CAT members are willing and able to engage with SCN research and training.

2. Increasing the capacity of the CAT to develop P/CVE measures encourages motivation to do so.

3. Skills gained during training allows CAT members to design prevention measures appropriate to local contextual conditions.

4. Skills gained allows CAT members to effectively engage with national and subnational authorities and the LPC to negotiate local priority needs.

5. CAT members are able to mobilise community stakeholders to engage with prevention measures.

6. CAT members are able and willing to work collectively as part of a team.

7. CAT members have sufficient time to perform their duties as members of the CAT.

## Outcome to goal level

It is anticipated that the CAT will continue to function beyond the lifetime of this DoS grant and will make a long-term contribution to systematically addressing VE in the Municipality of Kumanovo. Given the short implementation period for the project, the primary focus at this stage will be the establishment of a functioning mechanism for P/CVE within the LPC, rather than the effect that the CAT will have on VE in the community. As a result, increased resilience to VE and the wider impact of prevention projects in the community should be understood as a method for gauging the ability of the CAT to operate as a mechanism for coordinating prevention in the municipality. The ultimate outcome and goal of the intervention are:

— **Ultimate outcome:** Fully functional local mechanism to prevent VE established in the pilot city

— **Goal:** More people in Kumanovo are resilient to VE

It should be noted that this stage of the ToC is prone to factors beyond the influence of the project such as changes in priorities of international donors, electoral changes in government figures and the political will of institutions in North Macedonia. The key assumptions and risks underlying the ToC at this level are outlined below.

## Key assumptions at this level

1. CAT members learn from the process of implementing pilot projects in the community and are able to lead similar interventions without further support provided by the SCN.

2. The LAP reflects a long-term vision beyond the current project phase.

3. The GoM remains committed to P/CVE with continuous political will.

4. The CAT is able to secure future funding for the implementation of LAP.

5. The prevention projects successfully increase community resilience.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER MODELS FOR LOCAL PREVENTION

# Annex B: BRAVE-14

The Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism scale (BRAVE-14) measures risk and protective factors present in the population for resilience to VE. BRAVE-14 was developed and validated by the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University and The Resilience Research Centre, Dalhousie University.[18] The Likert scale consists of 14 brief item statements for which respondents are required to select an answer on a 5-point scale of agreement, with the aggregate of these responses denoting scores on the sub- and overall scales. The scale investigates five facets of resilience:

**1** **Cultural identity and connectedness:** This covers familiarity with one's cultural heritage, practices, beliefs, traditions, values and norms; knowledge of "mainstream" cultural practices, beliefs, traditions, values and norms if different from one's cultural heritage; the degree to which one has a sense of cultural pride; the feeling of being anchored in one's cultural beliefs and practices; the perception that one's culture is accepted by the wider community; and feeling able to share one's culture with others.

**2** **Bridging capital:** This relates to trust and confidence in people from other groups; support for and from people from other groups; strength of ties to people outside one's group; the perception that one has the skills, knowledge and confidence to connect with other groups; the degree to which one values intergroup harmony; and active engagement with people from other groups.

**3** **Linking capital:** This encapsulates trust and confidence in government and authority figures; trust in community organisations; the perception that one has the skills, knowledge and resources to make use of institutions and organisations outside one's local community; and the ability to contribute to or influence policy and decision- making relating to one's community.

**4** **Violence-related behaviours:** This covers the willingness to speak out publicly against violence, challenge the use of violence by others, and reject violence as a legitimate means of resolving conflict.

**5** **Violence-related beliefs:** This investigates the degree to which violence is seen to confer status and respect; and the degree to which violence is normalised or tolerated in the community.

| Table 20: BRAVE-14 scale question items | |
|---|---|
| **Dimension of resilience** | **Item statement** |
| **Cultural identity and connectedness** | 11. It's important to me to maintain cultural traditions. |
| | 13. I am familiar with my cultural traditions, beliefs, practices and values. |
| | 1. My cultural identity guides the way I live my life. |
| **Bridging capital** | 3. In general, I trust people from other communities. |
| | 6. I feel supported by people from other communities. |
| | 7. I regularly engage in conversations with people of multiple religions/cultures and beliefs. |
| **Linking capital** | 2. I trust authorities/law enforcement agencies. |
| | 9. I feel confident when interacting with government and authorities. |
| | 10. I feel that my voice is taken into account when dealing with government and authorities. |
| **Violence-related behaviours** | 5. I am willing to speak out publicly against violence in my community. |
| | 8. I am willing to challenge the violent behaviour of others in my community. |
| **Violence-related beliefs (reverse scored)** | 12. Being violent helps me earn the respect of others. |
| | 14. Being violent helps show how strong I am. |
| | 4. My community accepts that young people may use violence to solve problems. |

# Annex C: Municipal Response Scale

The municipal response scale is a bespoke Likert measure developed by the SCN for the baseline, Community Resilience Study in February 2020. The Likert scale consists of 4 brief item statements for which respondents are required to select an answer on a 5-point scale of agreement. The measure assesses how successfully local institutions have responded to the threats of discrimination, intolerance and hate in the community. The first two items in the scale focus on local authorities, the third on schools and the fourth on religious institutions. Taken together these items indicate how effective institutions in the municipality have been in responding to these threats.

| Table 21: Municipal response scale question items |
|---|
| **Item statement** |
| 1. Local authorities take social problems in the community seriously. |
| 2. Local authorities work in the interests of all communities in Kumanovo equally. |
| 3. Within schools, the occurrence of social problems such as discrimination, intolerance and hate are addressed effectively. |
| 4. Within religious institutions (e.g. churches, mosques, etc.), the occurrence of social problems such as discrimination, intolerance and hate are addressed effectively. |

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER MODELS FOR LOCAL PREVENTION

# ENDNOTES

[1] Dukić, S., Hulse, T. and Hooton, D., Community Resilience Study: Kumanovo, North Macedonia, 2021.

[2] An attitudinal scale measuring risk and protective factors for resilience to VE developed and validated by the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University and the Resilience Research Centre, Dalhousie University. The BRAVE-14 scale is a 14-item measure designed to assess risk and protective factors for resilience to VE. The scale provides both an overall measure of an individual's resilience and scores across five domains associated with resilience, these are: cultural identity and connectedness; bridging capital with out-groups; linking capital with government and authorities; violence-related behaviours; and violence-related beliefs.

[3] The Sector of Internal Affairs is a decentralised policing unit under the umbrella of the North Macedonian Ministry of Interior.

[4] For analysis of resilience levels across different demographic groups, see Dukić, S., Hulse, T. and Hooton, D., Community Resilience Study: Kumanovo, North Macedonia, 2021.

[5] Government of the Republic of Macedonia, National Countering Violent Extremism Strategy of the Republic of Macedonia (2018-2022), 2018.

[6] The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Co-operation Directorate (DAC), Evaluation criteria.

[7] The "do no harm" principle states that an intervention should avoid exposing participating individuals to additional risks, negatively impacting a community or exacerbating an issue.

[8] The BRAVE-14 scale is a 14-item measure designed by the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University and the Resilience Research Centre, Dalhousie University to assess risk and protective factors for resilience to VE. The scale provides both an overall measure of an individual's resilience and scores across five domains associated with resilience, these are: cultural identity and connectedness; bridging capital with out-groups; linking capital with government and authorities; violence-related behaviours; and violence-related beliefs. To read the study see Grossman et al., Understanding Youth Resilience to Violent Extremism: A Standardised Research Measure, 2017.

[9] Dukić, S., Hulse, T. and Hooton, D., Community Resilience Study: Kumanovo, North Macedonia, 2021.

[10] Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

[11] Local Prevention Councils were established in 2008 to enhance relations between citizens and the police, and to improve coordination among local-level institutions.

[12] 8.9% of respondents never socialise with people from other ethnic or religious groups, 12.7% once a year or less, 22.7% several times a year, 22.6% about once a month, and 33.1% several times a month.

[13] Kumanovo Local P/CVE Action Plan.

[14] BRAVE-14 measures resilience on a Likert scale from 14-70 with higher scores indicating greater resilience to violent extremism.

[15] Kumanovo Local P/CVE Action Plan.

[16] Over the course of the project, the CAT organised 31 meetings (around 1.5 meetings per month) with an average attendance of 70%.

[17] An attitudinal scale measuring risk and protective factors for resilience to VE developed and validated by the Alfred Deakin

[18] An attitudinal scale measuring risk and protective factors for resilience to VE developed and validated by the Alfred Deakin

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