MULTIFACETED APPROACH TO ENSURE CONTINUOUS SUPPORT AND SERVICES FOR REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION OF OFFENDERS

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I. INTRODUCTION

Hedayah, the International Center of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) based in Abu Dhabi, developed an innovative technological tool for Monitoring, Measurement & Evaluation (MM&E) of rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for violent offenders. MASAR is a desktop and smartphone application that assists users in developing a step-by-step framework to evaluate and assess the results and project the long-term impact of CVE programmes,[1] including rehabilitation and reintegration programmes. MASAR specifically focuses on impact-evaluation and not on other types of evaluation (e.g. performance evaluation/process evaluation), it includes an indicators' generator, a library of existing case studies gathered worldwide and a section on lexicon and terminology related to MM&E. This app can support better design and impact-evaluation of rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for offenders and is available for free in iOS and Android.

II. PRESENTATION

Hedayah is an international, apolitical and independent hub created in 2012 and based in Abu Dhabi (UAE), reporting to a steering board of 12 Governments. The organization was launched by the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF)[2] which is a governmental platform focused on developing solutions and identifying good practices to counter terrorism and counter violent extremism.[3] As part of its mission, Hedayah is mandated to develop tools for governments and practitioners, implement capacity-building programmes and gathers global good practices in the field of countering violent extremism, including on rehabilitation and reintegration of violent extremist offenders. Most of these practices are also relevant for rehabilitation and reintegration of mainstream criminal offenders.

As mentioned, one of the key tools developed by Hedayah is MASAR. Indeed, MM&E is a pressing challenge in rehabilitation and reintegration, for a number of reasons:

- There is a challenge in defining "success" and the vision of programmes, across practitioners and governments;

- Outcomes and impact require a long time, and immediate change is not always visible;

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[1] <https://www.hedayahcenter.org/resources/interactive_cve_apps/masar/>.
[2] <https://www.thegctf.org/>.
[3] <https://www.hedayahcenter.org/about/our-story/>.

- In general there is a lack of specific resources dedicated to MM&E across governments and organizations.[4]

At the same time, effective MM&E practices are crucial to link overarching goals and objectives to the visible results of recipients (i.e. criminal offenders). MM&E is also the best mechanism to inform future practices and therefore should be prioritized, despite the challenges.

MASAR proposes a simple, yet comprehensive, framework inclusive of steps to guide governments and practitioners in developing effective impact-evaluation plans for a variety of programmes, including rehabilitation and reintegration. The steps include:

1) Evaluation of the context
2) Development of a Theory of Change
3) Identification of goals and activities
4) Key indicators and indicators' generator
5) Collection methods
6) Resources and limitations
7) Capturing results
8) Displaying results

These steps are included in a user-friendly interface that proposes examples, case studies and definitions to help the development of tailored evaluation plans. One of the key principles in MASAR is that MM&E needs to be embedded at the outset of programming and not as the final step of rehabilitation and reintegration. A proactive approach in designing the MM&E log-frame would ensure that evaluation could be run throughout all the phases of rehabilitation and reintegration, and not as a last step. Indeed, limiting evaluation at the end of a programme seriously affects the quality and feasibility of capturing results.

To showcase the applicability of MASAR, Hedayah proposed a case study on the Dutch Probation Service, based on information contained in a publicly available evaluation study (Der Heide & Schuurmann, 2018).[5]

The Dutch Probation Service is an independent organization focused on criminal justice in the Netherlands. Among its activities, it plays an advisory and supervisory role during court sessions and detention of convicted terrorists as well as individuals suspected of terrorism. Team TER (Terrorism, Extremism and Radicalization) is a unit embedded in the Dutch Probation Service and is mandated with supporting the rehabilitation and reintegration process of terrorist offenders; providing plans for after-care, upon offenders' release and; gather evidence-based practices to inform future programmes. Its stated overarching goal, according to the study, is *reducing likelihood of recidivism to Terrorism*.

Team TER was established based on a number of assumptions:

- It was deemed as the best entity to focus on effective rehabilitation and reintegration.

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[4] Mattei & Zeiger, Evaluate your CVE Results: Projecting your impact (2018). Available at <https://www.hedayahcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/File-16720189339.pdf>.
[5] Der Heide & Schuurman: Reintegrating Terrorists in the Netherlands, Evaluating the Dutch Approach (2018)

- De-radicalization (narrative approach) was considered the best approach to reach a behavioural change (disengagement), in recipients.

- The programmes were based on an approach of incentives and prohibitions and focused on a variety of topics to include theological counselling and vocational training.

The study highlights that out of 189 clients between 2012 and 2018, only 8 returned back to terrorism. This corresponds to 4.2 per cent terrorism recidivism compared to the general Dutch rate of 45.3 per cent for mainstream inmates (2013). [6] However, no information is available on whether the individuals graduating from the programme were fully reinserted and reintegrated into society or were still at the fringes of society. The lack of this information raises a question on whether the programme could be still considered fully successful. In addition, the study highlights that competition with other entities and municipalities was also a serious challenge, especially at the beginning of Team TER's activities. Lack of information-sharing protocols and coordination was in fact one of the issues highlighted in the evaluation study.[7] This leads to questioning the initial assumption set by Team TER of being the natural entity to be in charge of rehabilitation and reintegration in the first place.

By applying MASAR's framework, the presentation aimed to demonstrate that it is possible to proactively develop an effective system that anticipates challenges and needs in designing and evaluating the programme. Notably, MASAR offers assistance to policymakers and programme designers in developing an effective structure that is conducive to better evaluations and capturing of results.

For instance, MASAR's STEP 1 (Evaluating the Context) provides a number of guiding questions that help the app users to reflect about the nature of the programme and the existing stakeholders involved in the same field. Through this step, it is possible to determine whether there are other competing organizations working on the subject and to better define the nature of the programme. This is key to also define what "success" means in the programme. As a matter of fact, several practitioners working in Team TER highlighted that one shortcoming was the lack of consensus on what can be defined as success. Was success defined as graduating the programme and being disengaged from violence or was success defined as full reinsertion and reintegration into society? [8] Furthermore this step also allows to better define and describe the recipients of the programme. Profiling recipients would have the advantage to see whether a narrative approach (deradicalization) could actually be the relevant rehabilitative approach, as in several cases ideology was not the preeminent reason for individuals to join terrorist groups.

STEP 2 guides the users to develop a theory of change which links the underlying assumptions gathered in STEP 1 and articulate them in a concise statement that maps the logical flow of inputs, activities, outcomes and projected impact. In its simplest form, a ToC Statement can be expressed through an "IF"…. "THEN"…. "BECAUSE" statement.[9]

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[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Mattei & Zeiger, Evaluate your CVE Results: Projecting your impact (2018). Available at <https://www.hedayahcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/File-16720189339.pdf>.

This step is important as it helps the user to define the overarching vision of the programme and better determine what success means. It also includes the specific conditions that need to happen to ensure the programme is effective. The definitions of these conditions are crucial as these are often the externalities that impede the success of programmes. For instance, one necessary condition to ensure effectiveness of a programme is that clients need to be willing to participate and/or that staff is appropriately and adequately trained. Without these requirements/conditions satisfied, the programme would not be successful. It is therefore important that the ToC is rooted in a robust understanding of the context, resources and potential externalities. In the case of Team TER, a basic ToC could be defined as follows:

> *IF   Coordination mechanisms are put in place to share information with Team TER*
> *AND   Practitioners are provided with adequate and continuous training and support to ensure full capacity*
> *AND   Approaches implemented are suited to the individual's needs*
> *AND Clients are willing to accept the intervention*
> *AND Resources are allocated to ensure full monitoring upon release*
> *THEN Clients will increase their capacity and opportunity to live a functional, fulfilling pro-social life and resist joining terrorist groups*
> *BECAUSE Clients will be equipped with, skills, tools and tailored alternatives to live a pro-social life and resist recidivism;*

In other words, MASAR guides the user to write the ToC statement and help users reflect on the different conditions and externalities that are required to happen to see change in the recipients (i.e. violent extremist offenders). Some of these conditions can be managed by programme designers and implementers, while others are externalities that may not be predicted. Nonetheless, the latter are still important to be identified to ensure that mitigation strategies and alternatives can be developed.

After defining the ToC statement, STEP 3 guides the user in unpacking the vision of the programme into overarching goals, sub-goals and activities. MASAR also helps the user to frame the goal in a positive manner. For example, Team TER's initial objective "Reducing the likelihood of terrorism" could be redefined as "Increasing Clients' capacity and opportunity to live a functional life and resist joining terrorist groups". Reframing the goal has the advantage to ensure a facilitated evaluation of the progress, as it is much easier to measure progress towards an increase, rather than measuring reductions. It also strengthens the definition of success, defining it as full reintegration into society. This STEP also guides in breaking down ambitious and broad goals into sub-goals that are more measurable and manageable.

In MASAR, the broad goal can be in fact broken down into:

1) Clients' increased openness towards the programme;

2) Clients' progress towards pro-social ambitions and activities;

3) Clients' increased skills competencies to access alternatives in society.

Defining sub-goals has the potential to ensure a better monitoring of the violent extremist offenders' progress in the rehabilitation and reintegration programme. In turn,

these sub-objectives need to be mapped to specific activities (i.e. input) that can ensure concrete rehabilitation and reintegration.

STEP 4 and STEP 5 help the user identify the relevant indicators mapped to each sub-goal. Indicators are distinguished between qualitative indicators and quantitative indicators. Qualitative indicators are meant to capture the qualitative change in attitudes and behaviours, and quantitative indicators are meant to capture the output, meaning any change that can be measured numerically. Both types of indicators need to be mapped to the sub-goals. In other words, they need to be an expression of the progress towards the sub-goals and in turn, the overarching goal of the programme. MASAR also includes an indicators' generator function that allows the user to browse different types of indicators depending on the sub-goal. While this function does not automatically select the best indicators, it still helps the user reflect and identify the best indicator to capture positive changes and progress. This function can be very useful in those cases where evaluation specialists are not available in organizations.

In the case of Team TER, some of the indicators suggested by MASAR included:

Sub-goal 1: Clients' increased openness towards the programme
- *Indicator: Number of times the client proactively communicates, shows interest in participating in the activities*

Sub-goal 2: Clients' progress towards pro-social ambitions and activities
- *Indicator: Existing/number of activities he/she participates in (personal commitment)*
- *Indicator: Existing/number of pro-social interests, ambitions identified and mobilized.*

Sub-goal 3: Clients' increased skills competencies to access alternatives in society.
- *Indicator: Quality and Number of activities performed in the community*
- *Indicator: Quality employment opportunities after release*
- *Indicator: Quality and Number of pro-social activities after release.*

As mentioned, STEP 5 helps the app user to select the appropriate collection methods to capture the above-mentioned indicators. Direct observation, structured professional judgment, needs assessment, information sharing protocols across agencies, interviews and questionnaires are all valid collection methods that can help capture the relevant indicators of progress.

STEP 6 introduces a topic that is quite crucial for MM&E. This STEP is actually an underlying principle encompassing the whole evaluation and guides the user to reflect about the existing resources and limitations to carry out and complete the vision of the programme. In particular, the app helps the user reflect on:

1. *Available funding*
2. *Existing staff*
3. *Available facilities*
4. *Technical capabilities and materials*
5. *Timelines*

This STEP helps to bridge the gap between the reality of the programme implementation and the overarching vision behind it. Notably, if programme implementers recognize any challenges or gaps in any of the above-mentioned categories, the best course of action would be to reframe the overarching goal or the sub-goals, as they may be too ambitious, or select different indicators and collection methods.

STEP 7 AND STEP 8 helps the user to reflect on the collected indicators and distinguish them into results. Notably:

- *Outputs* are measurable products (usually quantitative) of a programme's activities or services. (e.g. number of clients "graduating" from the programme).

- *Outcomes* are intended qualitative results of programme activities or services (e.g. number of clients who enhanced their openness to different worldviews, showed interest and commitment towards pro-social activities.)

- *Impact* refers to the overall vision of the programme which in this case is clients' increased capacity and opportunity to live a functional life and resist joining terrorist groups. As actual impact is a long-term change in recipients, and oftentimes difficult to capture in the scope of the programme implementation, MASAR suggests that by successfully measuring intended outputs and outcomes, it can be presumed that violent extremist offenders will be successfully reintegrated and rehabilitated, in the long-term. This is also linked with the ToC statement previously defined in STEP 2. Measuring "impact" of rehabilitation and reintegration programmes can require time and additional resources that are not always available and often outside the legal scope of the programme itself. MASAR can help project the long-term impact by referring back to the ToC and to the requirements and conditions needed to occur, to ensure the vision is satisfied. By utilizing outcomes and outputs as proxy indicators of impact, MASAR offers a contribution to the pressing challenging of measuring the long-term impact of rehabilitation and reintegration programmes.

In conclusion, MASAR is a technological resource that can facilitate the development of an MM&E framework and build the vision of the programme. By doing so, evaluation is proactively embedded in programme design. MASAR has been developed by Hedayah, the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) and 21Unicorns through the allocations of funds provided by the Governments of Canada, Spain, the United Kingdom and Australia. In Summer 2020, MASAR was updated with the inclusion of additional case studies, basic features in the Arabic language and inclusion of an indicator's generator. For more information, please visit hedayahcenter.org.

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