THE TAVISTOCK INSTITUTE®

Evaluation of Tower Hamlets Prevent Projects

Final report prepared for the London Borough of Tower Hamlets by Giorgia Iacopini, Laura Stock and Dr. Kerstin Junge

Giorgia Iacopini
The Tavistock Institute
30 Tabernacle Street
London EC2A 4UE

T +44 (0)20 7417 0407
F +44 (0)20 7457 0566
E g.iacopini@tavinstitute.org
W tavinstitute.org

Contents

1. Executive Summary

Aim of the report

This is a report on the evaluation of Tower Hamlets' Prevent projects, which was commissioned to gain a deeper understanding of the achievements and outcomes of the projects funded between 2008 and 2011 as part of the Council's Preventing Violent Extremism Strategy. The particular aims of the evaluation were to understand more fully:

- Community organisations' experience in delivering their projects.

- Perceptions of whether Tower Hamlets' approach to Prevent has been experienced as "bottom-up".

- The added value of PVE, getting an insight into the extent to which projects delivered something 'new' that was not being delivered already through other agendas.

- How projects have reached participants; what have been the challenges and successes and what outcomes have been achieved.

Data was collected through:

- A review of the literature and available research on the causes of radicalisation.

- A review of existing documentation (including project monitoring reports and evaluations; PVE strategy / action plan).

- In depth one-to-one interviews with 10 key stakeholders.

- In depth interviews with 27 project leads and delivery partners. Six projects were selected as case-studies for more in-depth fieldwork.

- Observation of two project activities and seven unstructured interviews with project participants.

Context and Rationale (Chapter 3)

The literature on the causes on radicalisation highlights a variety of causes for radicalisation. These were clustered into three broad categories: external level causes: (political, economic and cultural conditions in the wider environment that can shape and constrain an individual); social level causes (group and organisational processes that can influence an individual); individual level causes (psychological characteristics, personal motivations and attitudes).

These three radicalisation models can also be found in Tower Hamlets. There is no consensus among stakeholders and project leads about what might be the most important factors for radicalisation in the Borough. For the purposes of programme design, key stakeholders were able to agree on a cohesion approach to Prevent, emphasising social and external causes of radicalisation. Project leads' different philosophical positions, however, translated into projects with quite different focuses and rationales.

Design of the Prevent programme and funded projects (Chapter 4)

The Prevent programme in Tower Hamlets was designed as a bottom-up community, cohesion-centred programme.

- The majority of project leads interviewed experienced the design and delivery of Prevent as such. They quoted evidence such as: the flexibility of the approach, which enabled them to experiment with and develop new approaches to delivery; minimal interference, which made them feel supported to do what they thought was best for their target groups.

However, the implications of the bottom-up approach were:

- A potential for **mismatch in expectations**: in some cases, expectations around what a PVE project should look like and what success looks like differed between the Council and projects. The second implication is one around **central guidance**: from time to time, projects have experienced less central guidance than they would have liked (for example, a lack of clarity and definitions about which target group the council wanted projects to reach). Thirdly, **sharing of learning** and **monitoring and quality assurance** mechanisms were given less of a focus.

Experiences of delivery (Chapter 5)

Change was a key feature of many of the Prevent projects and this was independent of the model for radicalisation underpinning the projects and the delivery approach chosen. Projects responded flexibly to learning from delivery to respond to local circumstances.

Two types of changes are identified. First, changes in design of project activities: these affected a small number of projects that needed to respond to circumstances not foreseen in their original application. For example, project activities were re-designed to retain project participants or because the original assumptions proved to be wrong.

Second, changes in the approach to delivery, which affected a larger proportion of projects. Changes in this category included: re-naming projects to make them less PVE-related or using different methods than originally envisaged to reach participants. Overall, issues around engagement of project participants were the most commonly cited reasons for change during delivery.

Therefore, before being able to begin work on the project, a large number of activities needed to be implemented, which has implications on delivery.

Distance travelled: successes and outcomes (Chapter 6)

While significant in-roads have been made in terms of delivery, this process has taken longer and been more challenging than originally expected. So, while a large proportion of projects are 'on the path to success' they have not yet been able to fully reach all their objectives in the funding period.

Outcomes reported include: increased organisational awareness and understanding of Prevent and of issues relating to violent extremism; increased knowledge about Islam and discussions about faith; increased discussions about community grievances; better access to mainstream services; gaining life skills; increased capacity.

Successes reported included: being able to reach out to young people that are marginalised and socially excluded; undertaking a youth-work model that focuses on addressing a range of young

people's broader socio-economic needs (such as lack of education, unemployment, young offending) or diversionary activities (sports, leisure and youth clubs). Despite the challenges to reach vulnerable young people, this model worked well.

Added Value (Chapter 7)

In order to assess the added value of the Prevent in Tower Hamlets, we looked at the extent to which projects focused on faith and extremism as part of their activities. For the purposes of the evaluation, we took added value to mean activities that go above and beyond what is being already delivered through community cohesion.

- Despite the controversy and sensitivity around the Prevent agenda, one of the key benefits gained from delivering their project has been the additional area that Prevent created to focus on faith.

- However, the extent to which 'harder' discussions around faith and extremism occurred appears to be related to: whether projects felt that discussions of this kind were part of their remit; whether this focus was seen to hinder engagement of the target group; whether the organisations funded had all the skills to deliver on particular aspects.

If we look at Prevent narrowly (thinking about it as a means to run activities with a specific focus on extremism and faith) we can say that this has been an 'added value' of Tower Hamlets' Prevent projects but it is a limited one. This is because often these discussions happened within a much wider context of delivery or because it inhibited access.

However, if added value has a more open connotation, which includes the establishment of new ways of working, Prevent has brought a number of benefits:

- **New / better relationships**: the programme has allowed agencies, organisations and sectors of the community, whose paths do not cross ordinarily, to come together.

- **Widening collaboration / representation**: Prevent has given access to projects, people and organisations that would have not normally accessed this funding. This includes less-established community organisations and / or those that work with different target groups (in particular the Somali community).

However, there are different experiences are being expressed in particular around relationships with the police, with a small minority indicating that joint work remains a challenge.

Mainstreaming (Chapter 7)

Two different types of mainstreaming were identified: the projects themselves continuing, with mainstream support, or funding from elsewhere; and mainstreaming of learning from project activities.

Mainstreaming activities

- There is an expressed need to continue funding and activities around Prevent. However, there are indications that with limited funding, there is a risk that third sector organisations will return to focusing on activities that are part of their 'core business' and that more difficult and sensitive discussions will not continue to the same extent.

- There were mixed views as to whether PVE work in Tower Hamlets should continue as a separate funding stream or whether it should be integrated into other delivery areas such as cohesion and

youth services. However respondents gave a strong message that the language and marketing of the programme needed to be altered, as this proved to be a significant barrier to delivery.

- **Continuation of third sector involvement***:* community organisations interviewed were generally very positive about building relationships with the Council but there was strong message on the importance of continued third sector involvement. Project leads felt 'grass-roots' organisations were accessing target groups that were not currently being reached by existing mainstream services. However, the evaluation also highlights the need for capacity building support.

- **Building partnerships with mainstream services:** project leads indicated a positive relationship with the local authority. However, further work to engage probation and youth offending teams, schools and education services, and youth services was perceived as a need.

Mainstreaming learning

- **Capturing and sharing learning** around what is working and what needs improvement appears to be a weakness. Even though networking events were initiated by the council, individual networking appears to be more fractured. Building in mechanisms for capturing learning was felt to be important for project leads, especially as PVE is an emerging area.

2. Introduction

2.1. Evaluation Aims and Objectives

The overall purpose of this evaluation was to gain a deeper understanding of the achievements and outcomes of the PVE projects funded between 2008 and 2011 by Tower Hamlets Council as part of its Preventing Violent Extremism Strategy. The particular aims of the evaluation were understand more fully:

- Community organisations' experience in delivering PVE projects.

- Perceptions of whether Tower Hamlets' approach to PVE has been experienced as "bottom-up".

- The added value of PVE –in other words, the extent to which projects delivered something 'unique'.

- How projects have reached participants; what have been the challenges and successes and what has been achieved.

Early conversations between The Tavistock Institute and the Tower Hamlets PVE team clarified that this should be a "learning" evaluation, capturing the journey of the projects in terms of both the successes achieved and the challenges encountered. Using a theory of change approach, the evaluation therefore focused on gaining an understanding, through interviews with project leads, about rationale for their activities, the experience of implementation and reasons for any changes of project activities, as well as views on outcomes.

From the beginning, a particular interest of the PVE team was on understanding outcomes on beneficiaries of PVE funded projects. This aspect of the evaluation proved particularly difficult to execute. The outcomes element of the evaluation therefore had to rely heavily on outcome data reported by project leads (further details in the next section and in Chapter 6).

2.2. Evaluation activities

Reflecting the focus of the evaluation, work concentrated on three sets of activities.

Firstly **the scoping phase** included a literature review on the causes of radicalisation and a review of existing documentation on Tower Hamlets' PVE programme and funded. In addition one-to-one interviews were carried out with ten key stakeholders in the local authority and the police.

Second, we undertook **in-depth interviews** with thirteen project leads (those not involved in case study work). The aim of these interviews was to explore more broadly what projects did, why and what challenges they faced during their delivery; how they see the 'value added' of their activities and what they have learnt.

Thirdly, we selected six of the funded projects for **in-depth case study work** in order to obtain a better understanding of project activities and outcomes for participants achieved. Activities carried out as part of this work included:

- A review of key documents (for example, project monitoring reports and evaluations) in order to construct the approach to, process towards, and achievements to date of Prevent objectives; participants reached; challenges and success factors identified.

- Qualitative interviews with all project leads and, in some cases, with delivery staff and key members of partner organisations (a total of fourteen in-depth interviews).

- Observations of project activities, including one-to-one and group interviews with project participants. Of the six case study sites, this element was possible for two of them.

Our method for collecting data from project participants relied on referrals from project leads. Even though much effort was invested by the evaluation team to build trust (a necessary task in any Prevent evaluation as the sensitivity of the subject area tends to engender a degree of reluctance among project leads to engage with external evaluators), we have only been able to speak to a very limited number of beneficiaries directly. The reasons for this are no doubt manifold and remain largely unarticulated. The evaluation team, however, observes that our difficulties accessing beneficiaries reflects, to a degree, the difficulties experienced by project leads themselves during delivery. We explore this further in Chapter 5 of the report.

2.3. Report structure

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the literature around radicalisation as this provides a useful framework for analysing Tower Hamlets' approach to Prevent. In particular, this chapter explores the assumptions and rationales used to design the programme.

Chapter 4 looks at the design of the PVE strategy at a programme and project level in order to highlight how the different conceptions of violent extremism, highlighted in the previous chapter, result in different ways of designing programme and project activities. Drawing on literature and interview data, this section also explores the success factors and implications that come with adopting a "bottom-up" approach to delivery.

Chapter 5 explores the journey of the projects. Drawing on interview data, this section highlights project leads' experience of delivering their PVE projects: the challenges they faced, how they reached their participants and lessons learned.

Chapter 6 looks at delivery models for PVE and changes made during delivery to an attempt at assessing the successes and outcomes achieved by projects.

Chapter 7 looks at the issue around added value of PVE, for which we mean the extent to which project activities have been able to go above and beyond what is being already done through other agendas, in particular through community cohesion. This section also looks at what the opportunities are for mainstreaming PVE. In particular, in order to assess the 'mainstream readiness' of Prevent work in Tower Hamlets we have looked at two overlapping, levels of mainstreaming: activities and learning.

Chapter 8 draws together key conclusions from the evaluation and offers suggestions for the council to consider in the future.

3. Addressing the challenge of radicalisation in Tower Hamlets: context & rationales

In order to begin capturing the 'journey' of Prevent projects in Tower Hamlets and to assess the achievements and contributions of projects in addressing the challenge of violent extremism, it is important to first uncover the underlying assumptions or 'logic' behind the design of projects. Using a Theory of Change approach to evaluation is helpful to articulate these assumptions. It helps to clarify the pathways of change, or logical sequence of steps, from identification of an issue (context), the 'rationale' or theories as to why a project will make a difference, through the planning of activities to address the issue, to the achievement of immediate outputs from those activities, which open the way to the achievement of longer term outcomes and impacts.[1]

This chapter focuses on the first two components of the theory of change: the context and rationale behind the design of the Tower Hamlets Prevent programme. It focuses on exploring the varied theoretical interpretations of the causes of radicalisation in the wider literature in order to discuss more specifically the differing rationales and underlying assumptions around radicalisation offered by LA stakeholders in Tower Hamlets and Prevent project leads. This chapter therefore lays the foundation for the subsequent chapters on delivery, outcomes and value added.

3.1. Background and context to the Tower Hamlets Prevent programme

The national Prevent strategy was launched in 2007[2] and is firmly placed within wider counter terrorism policy known as CONTEST developed after the 7th July London bombings. As such, it is part of a long-term measure to pursue, prepare for, protect against and prevent similar violent extremist attacks by British Citizens in the UK. It is based on the understanding that a security response alone is not enough to avoid terrorism, but that preventative activities are similarly, if not more, important.

Specifically, Prevent was designed to address five key objectives:

1. To challenge violent extremist ideology and supporting mainstream voices;
2. Disrupting those who promote violent extremism and supporting the institutions where they are active;
3. Supporting individuals who are being targeted and recruited to the cause of violent extremism;
4. Increasing the resilience of communities to violent extremism;
5. Addressing the grievances that ideologues are exploiting.

These strands are supported by two cross cutting work streams which are central to enabling the effective delivery of the strategy:

6. Developing understanding, analysis and information;
7. Strategic communications.

From the beginning, implementing Prevent was seen very much as a local issue. The nature of the challenge was seen to vary from locality to locality. Working with local communities, particularly Muslim communities[3], to deliver local solutions was seen as the most effective way to deliver the Prevent aims. Prevent thus works on the assumption that local authorities can and do work in partnership with

---

[1] For more information on the theory of change approach to evaluation see, for instance: http://www.theoryofchange.org/

[2] The strategy is currently being reviewed. See also: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/counter-terrorism/review-of-prevent-strategy/

[3] In developing this action plan, the CLG drew on the recommendations from the Preventing Extremism Together working groups; debates with local communities; roundtable meetings with theologians, academics, practitioners and community groups; and the views of key partners including the intelligence agencies, the police, local government and other government departments.

communities (of all ages and backgrounds) to challenge and expose the ideology that encourages indiscriminate violence. Indeed, the area based grants given to Local Authorities from 2008 onward aimed to support an area-based multi-stakeholder approach in delivering locally appropriate solutions and to develop 'a whole community approach' to preventing violent extremism.

Tower Hamlets has been involved in the Prevent programme from its first stages, with its initial Pathfinder projects followed by a further three tranches of local projects, supported by a number of cross cutting activities. Since 2008, the Council has funded a total of 28 projects. Three were pulled, leaving a total of 25.

3.2. Causes of radicalisation and violent extremism: views from the literature and the context in Tower Hamlets

Before exploring the context and rationale within which the Prevent programme in Tower Hamlets is situated, it is useful to understand what the scientific literature has to say about causes of radicalisation. This helps contextualise the data gathered from stakeholders and Prevent project leads, about the differing rationales for *why* violent extremism can emerge and interpretations of *how* Prevent projects can seek to do about this.

3.2.1. Excursion: causes of radicalisation as seen in the literature

There is no universal and generally accepted model of radicalisation in the current literature.[4] Rather, current work tends to highlight a variety of causes for radicalisation. For the purposes of this study, these can be clustered into three broad categories, which are drawn from a major research study funded by European Commission from 2006-2009: *Radicalisation, Recruitment and the EU-counter radicalisation strategy'* (2008).[5]

- **External level causes**: **political, economic and cultural conditions in the wider environment that can shape and constrain an individual.** This includes aspects such as exclusion and under-representation in the *political* domain, public institutions and decision-making as well as the role of external political events at national and global levels (for example, foreign policy and conflict in the Middle East). It also includes causes in the wider environment such as *economic* deprivation and poverty and their contributing to radicalisation. Similarly it also includes external *cultural* causes, such as discrimination and stigmatisation of the Muslim community (Islamophobia), and also globalisation, which can give rise to both the expansion of Western consumerism and also the spread of global ideological movements including radical interpretations of Islam.

- **Social level causes: group and organisational processes that can influence an individual**. This includes *social identification* with groups, and how crisis in identity and belonging can be a cause of radicalisation (through rejection from a group or uncertainties around which group we identify with). Similarly, strong social identification can lead to in-group/ out-group behaviour where a threat to the group can be perceived as a personal threat. It also includes *network dynamics* where individuals become radical through being embedded in complex social networks, where the role of charismatic leaders and 'radicalisers' influence a person. Additionally the

---

[4] 2007. *Exploring Root and Trigger Causes of Terrorism*. Project financed by European Commission. Available at: http://www.transnationalterrorism.eu/tekst/publications/Root%20and%20Trigger.pdf
[5] 2008. *Radicalisation, Recruitment and the EU-counter radicalisation strategy.* Project financed by European Commission. Available at http://www.transnationalterrorism.eu/tekst/publications/WP4%20Del%207.pdf

involvement in certain social and group situations (e.g. internet use and prisons) can be seen to contribute to radicalisation.

- **Individual level causes: psychological characteristics, personal motivations and attitudes**. This includes the interaction of psychological variables that can influence the behaviour of individuals that become radical (for example risk-taking behaviours).[6] Similarly *personal experiences* and major life events can be an influence: both on a cognitive dimension (in terms of how people respond to and perceive their environment) and in terms of emotional experiences (such as feelings of humiliation, guilt, shame and revenge).

These different clusters or levels of causes can be visualised in the following diagram:[7]

Figure 1: Causes of radicalisation
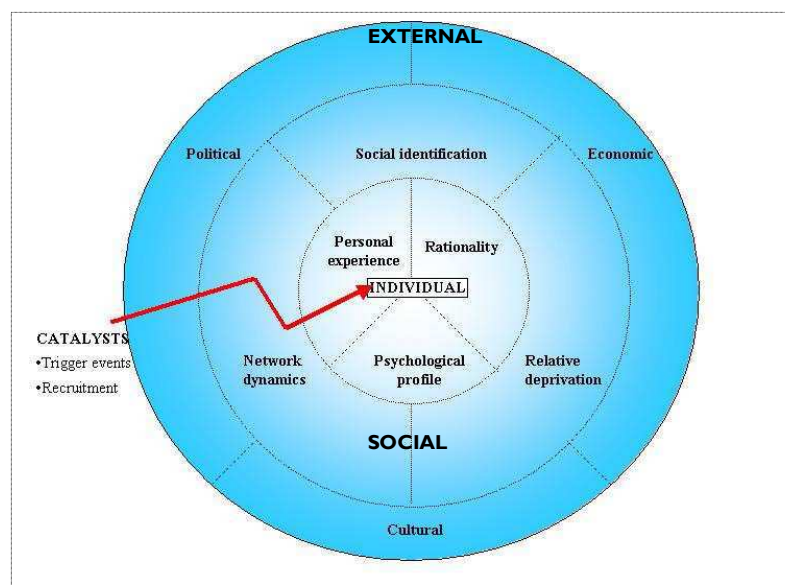
Two important points, raised in the literature on radicalisation, are useful to bear in mind in the analysis below.

First, the precise combination of factors for radicalisation is different in each case and situation: there is no single profile or pathway to violent extremism. Indeed, *"preceding research has demonstrated that radicals, let alone those that engage in terrorism, do not match a specified demographic or psychological profile (…) they stem from different age categories, socio-economic strata, and cultural backgrounds".[8]*

Second, the different causal factors for radicalisation are not hierarchal: *"rather, a complex interaction between factors at the various levels is likely to be crucial for the intensity of the readiness for radicalisation"*, alongside 'trigger' events or catalysts that can accelerate the process (such as recruitment to extremist groups). Hence, the categories should not be perceived as discrete entities but as merging and inter-linking with each other.

---

[6] However authors note that currently there is limited evidence on the psychological profiles in relation to violent extremism, page 31.
[7] 2008: *Radicalisation, Recruitment and the EU-counter radicalisation strategy.* Project financed by European Commission, page 15. Available at: http://www.transnationalterrorism.eu/tekst/publications/WP4%20Del%207.pdf
[8] Ibid, page 5.

The challenge for a preventative programme like Prevent is therefore how those responsible assess and interpret the local situation and translate this assessment into activities that may prevent violent extremist acts. The section below describes the socio-economic context in Tower Hamlets before reporting on how this challenge was addressed in Tower Hamlets.

3.2.2. The context in which Prevent operates in Tower Hamlets

The Borough has a very multi-cultural demographic: one third is Bangladeshi, 7% African/Caribbean. Almost 34% are from ethnic minority communities. Tower Hamlets has the highest share of Muslim population in England: according to ONS data (2001), 36% of people in the Borough are Muslims.[9] This diverse ethnic mix is reflected in the council's 10,000 employees: almost 34% are from ethnic minority communities.[10] In addition, Tower Hamlets has a very high proportion of young people of any local authority area in England, with 36% of the population aged between 20 and 34 (the national average is 25%).[11]

Minority communities in Tower Hamlets also suffer from particular disadvantages. For instance:

- The employment rate of minority ethnic communities as a percentage of those in employment is 40.8% in 2004/05 in comparison with a percentage of 58.9% in England.

- The employment rate of those with the lowest/no qualifications % in employment in Tower Hamlets in 2004/05 was 27.6% compared with 50.1% in England.[12]

While there are barriers around socio-economic deprivation for Muslim communities in Tower Hamlets, residents (especially those of BME background) report strong feelings of belonging. Similarly a greater number of Asian residents (56%) felt they can influence decisions than compared to white (43%) or black residents.[13] A number of stakeholders commented on the high number of Muslim councillors in the Borough, as reported by one respondent *"there are 52 councillors and 30 are Bengali, so they are very active in local communities".* As explained in the Borough's Prevent action plan, *"the Muslim community in Tower Hamlets is not marginal or hard to reach – not least through the nature of our elected members. This is in contrast to the national situation and that in the majority of other local authorities".[14]* It is important to recognise that the context in Tower Hamlets is very different compared to other local areas, and this affected the extent to which communities engaged with the Prevent agenda. It helped foster feelings among grass-roots organisations that locally Prevent was not a 'top-down' programme, but rather something that organisations could actively engage in, working with the council and take ownership of.

3.3. Stakeholder views on the causes of radicalisation in Tower Hamlets

Our interview data suggest that the three explanations for radicalisation identified in the literature can also be found among Prevent stakeholders in Tower Hamlets. Through our interviewees we picked up nuances in individual responses *within* each of the statutory bodies interviewed (for example, as to whether foreign policy or social exclusion were perceived as the primary cause of local grievance that can lead to radicalisation). The most perceptible variation in perspectives, however, can be identified *between* the statutory partners. As summarised by one respondent*: "children's services felt that the underlying issue was youth engagement….for the Police, Prevent was about safety, however for the*

---

[9] http://www.mcb.org.uk/library/statistics.php
[10] http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=7831829
[11] Tower Hamlets Prevent Action Plan April: 2008-April2011 (October 2009 update), page 6
[12] http://www.diversityattowerhamlets.co.uk/html/bme.htm
[13] June 2010. Residents Survey. Reported in Local Borough of Tower Hamlets Prevent Action Plan. Survey conducted by TNS.
[14] June 2010. Local Borough of Tower Hamlets Prevent Action Plan.

equalities team, PVE was more about cohesion" (LA stakeholder).[15] Interestingly, each of the different statutory bodies seems to subscribe to a different model of radicalisation.

The equalities team perspective places greater emphasis on **social causes** (group identity and belonging, the role of community networks and organisations) and **external causes** (including political and cultural grievances in the wider environment). Interview responses from this team suggest that the rationale (or vision) for PVE work in Tower Hamlets tends to have a more explicit focus on community cohesion, and the importance of community engagement and development. For example, tying PVE closely with existing cohesion work, there is a focus on outreach and 'hands on work' with local communities; building community relationships, and *"ensuring that PVE does not divide communities – it is still about different communities working together"* (LA stakeholder). Young people were reported to be a priority for PVE in Tower Hamlets, alongside faith organisations. One respondent later questioned this focus, though: *"however on reflection, in Tower Hamlets faith organisations are not the answer – violent extremism develops outside faith bodies (it is isolation from mosques that is the challenge"* (LA stakeholder). The need to address grievances was also cited by several as a key underlying priority, though there was divergence as to whether foreign policy or socio-economic deprivation were the main cause of such grievances. Thus, greater prominence is given to community issues amongst this group of interviewees.

The police perspective has greater correlation to **individual level causes** of radicalisation, namely the need for targeted work with radicalised individuals. Thus, police respondents interviewed described the aim of Prevent work more in relation to crime prevention and community safety. While it was also explained that 'softer' community work can also contribute to this agenda, the priority from a crime prevention perspective is on individuals 'at risk'.

The **Youth Services** perspective seems to challenge the underlying need for Prevent work in the borough in that Islamic extremism may not necessarily be the issue that requires more attention than other broader range of risks/ vulnerabilities. There is greater focus within this perspective on **external level causes**, in particular the range of wider socio-economic vulnerabilities that can affect young people in Tower Hamlets. Islamic radicalisation is seen as one of many risk factors as to how young people can be vulnerable (and in fact comparatively, it is perceived as a lesser risk in the borough).

These views were evident to Prevent stakeholders during the initial design phase of the programme. For instance, it was reported to us that in an initial workshop in the early stages of the programme, where statutory partners came together to start planning the strategy and approach to Prevent in Tower Hamlets, *"it became apparent that all the partners had very different ideas about the purpose and approach of PVE work"* (LA stakeholder). This was felt to be related to different sector and professional perspectives, ways of working and departmental priorities. For instance, interviewees pointed out that in the initial stages there were points of divergence between the equalities team and the police: *"police officers were under pressure nationally from OSCT to focus on vulnerable individuals: they were more comfortable with a surveillance style approach which did not jar well with council staff"* (LA stakeholder). Similarly, another respondent commented that the priorities for youth services *"focused on other issues e.g. anti-social behaviour, under-achievement in schools, substance misuse"* (LA stakeholder).

Despite these differences, it was possible for these viewpoints to be reconciled when important decisions needed to be made. As described by one stakeholder talking about differences in the partnership, *"we did however reach consensus on key issues: for example, linking with cohesion and the community-lead approach"*.[16] As we will analyse further in Chapter 4, this consensus meant that, despite the different viewpoints on the causes of radicalisation, overall the Prevent programme in

---

[15] It is noteworthy that these differences are recognised by stakeholders themselves. For instance, some interviewees felt that that a key aim of this evaluation was in 'unpicking differing delivery models to PVE as all are approaching this in different ways' (LA stakeholder).
[16] The design of the programme in Tower Hamlets to be explored further in chapter 4

Tower Hamlets was designed to reflect more the social and external causes for radicalisation by means of a bottom-up community cohesion approach. It did, however, not necessarily mean that the other interpretations disappeared.

3.4. Views of Prevent project leads on radicalisation in Tower Hamlets

Just as differing rationales around preventing violent extremism can be found among LA stakeholders, PVE project leads also had different views about 'what a PVE project looks like'.

Many projects incorporated elements of more than one of the radicalisation models, reflecting the blurred boundaries across the three radicalisation models. However, the projects interviewed do tend to have one dominant model or rationale underpinning their activities and objectives which can be linked to the different rationale of 'root causes' introduced above.

Below, the different perceptions of 'root causes' and 'rationales' behind PVE projects in Tower Hamlets will be unpicked, following the three models for radicalisation introduced earlier in the chapter. In the following chapter there will be a more in-depth exploration of how different PVE projects have been designed in relation to the above models.

The table below summarises the different rationales expressed. It builds on a conceptualisation of different 'root causes' of radicalisation[17], and adds to this by clustering the different 'rationales' around project delivery perceptible from interviews with project leads in Tower Hamlets. Connected to this, the table shows how different models correlate with the national Prevent objectives (final column).

Figure 2: Categorisation of causal factors of radicalisation

Level	Types of causes (underlying root causes)	Rationale for project delivery PVE models in Tower Hamlets	PVE/ NI35 objective
External level	**Political:** exclusion from political domain & public institutions; wider political events at local, national & global levels. **Economic:** economic deprivation & poverty	**Communication, Dialogue & Learning:** - understanding of & engagement with, Muslim communities - knowledge and understanding of the causes of violent extremism - challenging the violent extremist ideology - addressing grievances that ideologues are exploiting	(NI35 obj.1) (NI35 obj. 2 & PVE obj. 6) PVE obj. 1 PVE obj. 5
	Cultural: discrimination & stigmatization; Islamophobia; globalisation & modernistation	**Socio-Economic Focus:** - addressing wider contextual issues/ factors in the environment (that can contribute to individual vulnerability) - addressing grievances that ideologues are exploiting	'Softer' / indirect contribution to PVE obj. 3 PVE obj. 5
Social level	**Social identification:** identification of social groups; crisis in identity & belonging; threat to group seen as personal threat **Network dynamics:** social networks; role of leaders & 'radicalisers'; internet & prisons; **Relative deprivation:** group dynamics of frustration & social unrest	**Community Capacity Building and Organisational focus:** - increasing resilience of communities to violent extremism - challenging the violent extremist ideology & supporting mainstream voices - disrupting those who promote violent extremism & supporting institutions where they are active	PVE obj. 4 PVE obj. 1 PVE obj. 2
Individual level	**Psychological profile:** psychological variables &	**Individual Behaviour Change focus:** - enhancing the resilience & changing the	PVE obj. 3.

---
[17] Tinka Veldhuis & Jørgen Staun (2009): *Islamist Radicalisation: A Root Cause Model*

characteristics (no single profile)	behaviour of individuals that have been identified as 'radical' or 'at risk'	
Personal experiences: cognitive & emotional experiences & life events.	- supporting individuals who are being targeted and recruited to the cause of violent extremism	
Rationality: individual motivations; gradual shifts in motivations & behaviour		

3.4.1. External level causes

Projects in this grouping tended to emphasise external issues in the wider political, economic and cultural environment that can lead people to feeling marginalised and turning to extremist ideologies. Issues such as grievances with foreign policy, lack of cultural understanding of Islam and feeling 'under attack' as Muslims were cited. As reported by one respondent *"the foreign policy situation- bombs in Afghanistan, Iraq and Gaza – has a direct impact on young Muslims in the UK like never before"* and another detailed how *"there does need to be better cultural and religious understanding (…) stereotypes do not help this process".* Similarly, project leads in this grouping tended to stress external issues such as socio-economic deprivation, leading to 'disaffected youth' with high levels of unemployment and a lack of education or opportunities that can lead individuals turning to risky behaviour (such as drugs and young offending).

Projects in this grouping use the following delivery methods in order to tackle these issues (however, looking across the projects, while projects may prioritise one method over another, there is a lot of overlap).

- **Communication, dialogue and learning focus:** in their rationales for 'what a PVE project looks like', those in this cluster stressed the importance of communication and dialogue to better understand grievances: "*to try and understand the feelings and frustrations of people locally*". Similarly, projects often have a learning focus on mainstream Islam in order to challenge violent extremist narratives: *"to provide clear evidence from Islam texts (Qur'an and Hadiths) that violent extremism should not happen in any circumstances".* Additionally projects also focus on increasing dialogue and cultural understanding between different groups (with correlations to community cohesion activity): for example, as described by one project lead "*the challenge to get this far was that there was a 'fear of the other'… the idea was to break down these barriers*".

- **Socio-economic focus:** here, projects address issues in the external socio-economic environment that can lead people to becoming marginalised. It is about tackling issues such as lack of skills and opportunities: as described by one respondent, there is *"perception of lack of opportunity. Bearing in mind that Canary Wharf is near, this aspect is quite striking. Only 3-4% can get a job in that that area".* Projects in this area are particularly concerned with how issues around deprivation can affect young people, and about tackling issues such as NEET, drugs, young offending or lack of access to services: *"Some young people can get involved in anti-social behaviour, group fights with others…It is about them using their time for different things so not to spend time on this".*

3.4.2. Social level causes

Respondents in this grouping placed strong emphasis on group processes in the community, including how individuals identify with groups, dynamics of social networks and organisations as key 'root causes' as to why individuals may become radicalised. Identity issues in relation to groups, including crisis in identity and belonging were highlighted, particularly as an inter-generational issue in the community: *"young people need to know how to balance western values and religious values – some*

parents don't understand this tension that young people are experiencing". Similarly, the importance of building the capacity of community groups and organisations was seen as important to better meet the needs of vulnerable people and to create supportive community networks to prevent violent extremist ideologies emerging.

In the rationale for what a 'PVE project looks like', projects in this grouping tended to prioritise the need to build **community and organisational capacity**. This includes the need to build resilience in community networks to be supportive, such as *"improving parenting skills …so mothers can teach how to better deal with young people and how to address identity issues".* Similarly it is about building the capacity of groups so they better reach out to vulnerable people and also to counter radical narratives: *"this is about building the capacity of local organisations to resist some of the more fundamentalist Muslim narratives….and help to bring more people into mosques to engage more formally".* Projects in this grouping also focused on the need to build organisational infrastructure in community organisations: *"There are capacity and infrastructure needs for these groups (…) the needs of youth are not being met – you need grassroots organisations to help".* Projects in this group therefore have a Community Capacity Building and Organisational Focus.

3.4.3. Individual level causes (psychological characteristics, personal motivations and attitudes)

Here, 'root causes' focused around the behaviour, psychology, personal experiences and attitudes of individuals that become radicalised or 'at risk'. There is a need to focus on targeted interventions for individuals, to change personal behaviour and attitudes: in this grouping, a PVE project is focused on a targeted intervention for individuals.

There is a focus on reaching individuals that have been radicalised or are at risk, for example *"working with young people who are vulnerable to violent extremism".* The focus is very much on **individual behaviour change**, as detailed by one respondent *"the overall aim of the project as being to achieve a change of behaviour". In order to achieve this, there needs to be a change in attitudes first".* However as noted above, tensions are emerging from the data as to the extent to which Prevent projects in Tower Hamlets have focused on 'harder' interventions with individuals that are radicalised or 'risk'. Projects in this category therefore have an individual behaviour change focus.

3.5. Summary

This chapter has sought to locate the experience of designing the Prevent programme in Tower Hamlets within the broader knowledge base on factors responsible for causing radicalisation and violent extremism. We have seen that the interviews with programme stakeholders and project leads reveal that the three radicalisation models identified in the literature can also be found in Tower Hamlets. In fact, we have seen that there is no consensus among stakeholders and indeed project leads about what might be the most important factors for radicalisation in the Borough. For the purposes of programme design key stakeholders were able to agree on a cohesion approach to Prevent, emphasising social and external causes of radicalisation. Project leads' different philosophical positions, however, translated into projects with quite different focus and rationales. This will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

4. Design of the Prevent programme and funded projects

In the previous chapter, we discussed the different conceptions among Prevent stakeholders and project leads in Tower Hamlets about what causes radical behaviour and about how to prevent it. The aim of this section is to look at the design of the Prevent strategy at a programme and project level in order to examine how these different conceptions influenced programme and project design.

4.1. Programme design: a community led approach

The design of Tower Hamlets Prevent programme must be seen in the context of the broader policy objectives in the areas of social cohesion and crime, as well as some of the key characteristics of the Prevent programme itself.

A key feature shaping the design of Tower Hamlet's Prevent programme was the aim to fit Prevent into broader efforts under way in the Borough to support community development, support neighbourhood organisations to deliver projects that make a difference at a very local level. In particular, as part of its cohesion strategy 'One Tower Hamlets' the council had a number of initiatives already in place for cutting and targeting crime and improving health, employment, education, parenting support, cultural and fitness levels. The long term vision was to reduce inequality and remove the causes of anti-social behaviour and violent extremism, to identify those people who are most at risk, and support them to fulfill their potential in the community.

As a consequence of the interest in linking Prevent to the community cohesion agenda, there was a focus on a community led approach to the design and delivery of the programme. This had two implications. First, this decision is reflected in the governance structures for Prevent. In Tower Hamlets, Prevent sits in the Scrutiny and Equalities directorate rather than Community Safety (as is the case in some other local authorities). Placing Prevent in the same team as cohesion, diversity and race policy was seen as a strategic decision aimed at easing community sensitivities and reflecting the non-enforcement, community-orientated approach adopted. Second, a decision was reached among key stakeholders, facilitated by good relations and trust between them, that the overall approach to Prevent was to be "bottom-up" and community-led. Those interviewed felt this was both an appropriate and necessary approach given the local context. According to one interviewee, *"communities were suspicious at the start, so it was helpful for the local authority to say: 'you decide how we spend this money"* (LA stakeholder). Interviewees indicated that the Council wanted local communities to feel ownership and to shape the direction of the Prevent agenda themselves, reflecting the local context and perceived community needs. This 'context-based response' and investment in building community trust was considered to be very appropriate given local sensitivities in relation to the agenda.

The decision to adopt a community led approach to delivering Prevent meant a new way of selecting projects. In the pathfinder year, due to tight timescales, projects were selected quickly and primarily on the basis of existing relationships. By contrast, for the first ABG grant year *"it was decided to take a different approach… and spend time consulting with the community and building relationships"* (LA stakeholder). This meant a widening of the community consultation process prior to selecting projects for funding. The majority of interviewees highlighted that time and effort were spent consulting the community and building relationships with key players in the council in order to gain buy-in and work together to find a way to approach the agenda. As part of this process, a series of community consultations or 'roadshows' were undertaken to help shape the commissioning of community-based Prevent projects. Although this process slowed overall progress, all stakeholders saw this as crucial to

the development of the strategy because it enabled transparency and ensured that the sensitivity of the agenda would not divide communities.

While there was agreement across stakeholders that the overall approach was to be community-driven, differences in assumptions around the causes of violent extremism and how project delivery should be orientated appeared to remain present. As explored later in this chapter, this has implications as to perceptions around the value of a Prevent project and 'what success looks like'.

4.2. Projects' experiences of the community-led approach

Stakeholders' perception of a community-based approach is shared by project leads. The majority of interviewees agreed that a community-led approach to Prevent was both necessary and appropriate. Many also highlighted their positive relationship with the Borough's Prevent team who they found to be approachable and helpful.

Project leads saw the following factors as indicators for the bottom up approach of the Prevent strategy:

- **Ownership.** Overall, project leads felt ownership of the agenda. Some referred to the high take up of Prevent from the grass roots level as an indication of this ownership. *"(PVE) was implemented 'hand-in-hand with communities and was not imposed (…) a lot of Muslim communities in other authorities rejected Prevent (…) In Tower Hamlets, the community didn't do that. There was much more take-up of PVE from the grass roots level. The council re-badged Prevent and it wasn't imposed"*. While there were still individual cases reported of organisations not wanting to take funding due to sensitivities in relation to the agenda, the large number of applicants that did apply was seen by interviewees as a reflection of the level of engagement in the community. Even though there were apprehensions around the funding being 'loaded', project leads reported seeing Prevent funding also as an opportunity for their organisations, both in terms of additional resources and in addressing community needs.

- **Engagement of key individuals.** Project leads reported that the interest, buy-in and persistence of key individuals in local organisations was a central factor that led community organisations to apply for Prevent funding. Key individuals were behind driving funding applications forward, including the initial task of persuading those members in their communities or management committees who were suspicious of the agenda of the value of Prevent funding. As explained by one interviewee, *"there was some difficulties at first as people in [the organisation] had different views of Prevent…we really had to persuade them to be involved and that the funding had a real benefit to the community"*. Several interviewees reported that they applied because they felt the issues were important. In one case, an individual who was not successful in gaining funding in the first ABG year strove to find funding from other sources. He *"felt that this was a really important issue … I persuaded the children schools and families team this was important and secured some non-PVE funding to run a pilot"*. However other interviewees reported that Prevent funding was seen as an opportunity and means of improving the resources of their organisations to continue existing work that they felt linked with Prevent: for example, one interviewee was already running a gang mediation project and felt *"there was a strong correlation between the themes of both funds"*.

- **Flexibility**. The majority of project leads mentioned that the council's approach enabled them to experiment with and develop new approaches to delivery. Project leads felt supported to go through a "trial and error" journey and this was seen as very important for a new area like Prevent. Some project leads felt that this flexibility enabled them to modify their original specifications for the project upon realisation that a different way of doing things was required. As one respondent

noted, *"some of the projects chosen were tried and tested and others were supported to develop new things. People have had real vision and have not been afraid to experiment, which is positive".*

- **Minimal interference.** Finally, it was reported that the council's approach gave them freedom and support to do what they felt was best for the community. To cite an interviewee, *"projects themselves have been very brave in going for the funding in the first place and the council were good in accommodating and supporting them".* Another element that was said to be important was that limited interference was experienced during project delivery. As one respondent said, *"the council has given first class support. They never barged in and though they were involved, it was always by invitation. This was a good thing".*

Project leads on the whole therefore agree that a 'community-based' approach to Prevent was taken. Nevertheless, some interviewees also gave examples which suggest that the Council may have envisaged Prevent in a way that differed from views 'on the ground'. The language used to describe the programme is one example. The majority of LA stakeholders reported that transparency in openly using language related to Prevent was a key defining feature of the delivery approach taken in Tower Hamlets. *"Being really clear and open about Prevent – in some areas they have not used the term Prevent, though in Tower Hamlets we wanted to be open".* However, views from community organisations on the ground were that any attempt to openly use Prevent language was not possible in terms of building trust and engaging participants. The Prevent language was seen as 'loaded' with negative connotations. The majority interviewed therefore changed the name of their projects to ensure that they were not in any way connected to the agenda. More open discussions around Prevent were only introduced after trust had already been established with participants involved.[18]

4.3. 'Bottom-up' versus 'top-down' programme design

As we have seen, there was consistency across respondents that in Tower Hamlets the Prevent programme adopted a community-based 'bottom-up' design, which was found to be both appropriate and necessary for the local context in the borough. However it is important to acknowledge that the dynamic of choosing a 'bottom-up' (over a 'top-down' model) can have implications on project delivery.

This is not a unique feature of Prevent programmes, but has been an existing dilemma for social policy in a broad range of fields and sectors. For example, Beattie (1991)[19] and D.Hills (2004)[20], when analysing programme design in the preventative health field, highlight the differences that come with designing an initiative of whether the focus of the intervention was on individual behaviour change, or seeking change at a collective level – in terms of community and organisational capacity building.

A similar difference could be identified in Prevent programmes, between those in which the targets and objectives are set centrally, with projects designed and implemented by local organisations, to meet these targets, and those which adopt a more 'community development' approach to their work. As explained by D. Hills, the key difference between a 'bottom-up' approach to work is not only that the interventions themselves emerge out of direct engagement with local organisations, but that the focus is as much about addressing wider concerns in the social context, such as community infrastructure and wider environmental factors, as they are about delivering targeted interventions to individuals

Green and Kreuter (1991) make a related distinction between large-scale, community-wide programmes 'working *with* the community' and single-focused programmes 'taking place *in* it':

---

[18] The use of language in relation to experiences of delivery will be explored in more depth in chapter 5.
[19] Beattie, A. 1991. Knowledge and Control in health promotion: a test case for social policy and social theory. In Gabe,J. Calnan, M and Bury M (eds) *Sociology of health services.* London: Routeledge.
[20] D. Hills. 2004. Evaluation of community-level interventions for health improvement: a review of experience in the UK. Page 6. The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, conducted for Health Development Agency.

> '*The former [a bottom-up model], generally seek relatively small but pervasive changes for most or all of the population, while the later [a top-down approach] seek intensive and profound changes in the risk behaviour of a small subsection.*'

Another distinctive feature of community-based participatory interventions is that they are constantly evolving and responding to concerns that arise in communities: *'by establishing a programme of activities, adapting these to changing circumstances, and responding to opportunities that arise from the community'.*[21]

If a similar distinction is made in Prevent programmes, it helps to distinguish between different approaches being used in developing local programmes. It could be argued, for example, that while some local authorities have adopted a more 'top down' programme funding approach, others have used a more 'bottom up' community development model. In the former, the key role of the Local authority is one of identifying a strategy and set of criteria for the kind of projects they wish to fund, seeking and assessing applications for funding, and putting in place robust monitoring mechanisms to ensure that these criteria are adhered to. In a community development approach, work would begin with identifying community issues –and possibly community organisations – with which they wish to work, and develop projects with these local communities which address their conception of what are the key concerns and issues of greatest relevance to the funding agenda. In practice, most Local Authorities appear to have adopted a mix of these two approaches, although some appear to have leaned more towards one rather than the other.

A community-based approach can have the following implications for Prevent delivery in Tower Hamlets:

- **Diversity of projects**: by communities taking ownership to themselves shape the design of Prevent delivery, this can lead to the development of a diverse range of Prevent projects. Both as a reflection of the breadth of different perspectives identified in the literature review around the 'root causes' of extremism, and related to projects constantly adapting in response to changing needs that arise within their communities.

- **Changes to project delivery:** a key feature of community-led initiatives is that there is tendency for project delivery to constantly evolve from original plans as a response to changing community-needs that arise throughout the project-lifecycle. Changes to project delivery are a key feature of Prevent projects in Tower Hamlets, as explained in more depth in Chapter 5.

- **Focus on wider factors in external and social environments**: As identified in the literature, for projects that are embedded in the community, 'the target of change is not just the individual, but the social, cultural and organisational environment which influences individual behaviour'[22]. Given this, highly targeted interventions on an individual level to address the risky behaviour of a small sub-section in the community are less likely to take priority in a 'bottom-up' approach, compared to addressing broader community issues. While some community based-projects may certainly still undertake interventions designed to change risky behaviour on an individual level, it is likely that this will not be their only focus.

Building on the clustering in Chapter 3[23], the majority of Prevent projects in Tower Hamlets (12 out of 20 interviewed) focus on addressing **external causes** of violent extremist behaviour such as political disenfranchisement, addressing grievances on national and foreign policy, lack of inter-cultural and inter-faith understanding, lack of understanding of Islam and socio-economic exclusion. A smaller number of projects (6 out of 20) address **social level causes** to radicalisation, around how people indentify with groups and organisations, such as exploring identity and inter-generational issues in

---

[21] Ibid
[22] Ibid
[23] See Annex 1 on page 60: Projects' Theories of Change

communities and organisational capacity building. Only two of the funded projects interviewed, expressed an intention to address **individual level causes** to reach those already radicalised or 'at risk' and to change personal behaviour and attitudes. Also, these projects did not necessarily see changing risky behaviour (in relation to extremist ideologies) as their only focus: they were also concerned with wider socio-economic vulnerabilities such as drugs, violence, criminality and unemployment. This resonates with the literature around the nature of 'bottom-up' programme design.

The other key implications around adopting a 'bottom-up' community-based programme design is perceptible around the levels of central guidance provided and in differing expectations around 'what success looks like' in relation to delivery. These are detailed in the following sections.

4.3.1. Central guidance and support

Whilst Prevent projects appreciated the flexibility, ownership and minimal interference into their work, there was also a feeling that in some areas more central guidance and support by the Council could have been helpful. Projects noted this in particular in three areas.

Two of the project leads interviewed felt that there was a lack of clear understanding on the definitions of Prevent or the risk factors the Council thought they should be addressing. This was a particular tension felt around the projects seeking to reach individuals already '*radicalised or at risk': 'there was not a clear understanding on the definitions of PVE or the risk factors'.* This made it difficult for them to be certain of engaging those groups the Council wanted to see involved in the Prevent programme.

Some respondents also felt that there was a gap in formal communication mechanisms and methods to share learning between projects. As explained by one interviewee: *"This evaluation is the first time we have been asked what we think. They [projects] have conversations informally. But there is no formal attempt to gather this information".* The majority of project leads interviewed reported that it would have been helpful for the Council to facilitate better interaction between delivery organisations: *"projects do not meet regularly. Learning about delivery is not being shared…projects don't really talk between each other about what each of us is doing".* This said, a minority of interviewees reported that the events run by the council to enable projects to interact worked well. However, the most positive comments came from those running media projects that would have been in contact with a range of Prevent projects as part of their filming activities or those delivering projects 'in-house' from within the council. Bearing in mind these exceptions, of the project leads interviewed, very few respondents had awareness of other Prevent projects being delivered locally.

One feature of the bottom up approach to delivering the Prevent programme in Tower Hamlets was to give projects flexibility in implementation and adopting a 'light touch' approach to monitoring. Looking back, several interviewees felt that project delivery could in fact have been supported by better monitoring and quality assurance mechanisms. This view was raised in particular by the programme stakeholders. In the words of one interviewee: *"we could have been a bit harder and stronger with projects that were not delivering and pulled money from those that were not meeting their objectives"* (LA Stakeholder). Similarly, one project lead delivering 'in-house' from within the council felt that *"when engaging community groups there could have been more quality assurance in place for those that were not delivering or have capacity issues"* (project lead).

4.3.2. Differing expectations of success in delivery

While stakeholders reported reaching a consensus on the bottom up and community-led approach to delivering Prevent, different ideas and conceptualisations about what success looks like remained present. This finds its expression in unresolved tensions or differences in assumptions *between* stakeholders in the Council and project leads 'on the ground', where each has differing conceptualisations of 'what works' and what could be achieved at the end of a project life-cycle.

One concrete expression of this is different expectations on what delivery model (or 'rationale') projects are working towards. There seems to be an expectation from some stakeholders that certain projects will be addressing 'individual behaviour change with those radicalised / at risk' yet the key rationale for the projects in question is to rather have a socio-economic focus and also address wider contextual factors in the environment (that indirectly can lead to individual vulnerability). This tension seems to be played out most strongly for projects professionally aligned with youth-work. Here, reaching individuals 'most at risk' of radicalisation (PVE objective 3) was reported to be a priority area for several LA stakeholders. However, in interviews these projects leads expressed doubt as to whether a 'harder radicalisation' programme was needed locally. These different perspectives make it harder to judge the success of the programme.

Partly this dynamic can be connected to the differences between 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' programme design. Although Tower Hamlets has clearly leaned more heavily towards the former approach, no local authority delivering Prevent work can entirely avoid the inherent tension between these two approaches, which arise out of the overall agenda being set by central government, rather than at a local level, and the different 'interpretations', identified above, about the causes, and ways of preventing, violent extremism. In terms of ensuring that activities are firmly 'anchored' within, and addressing the real concerns and issues of, the local community, a community development approach has much to recommend it. However, given the specific nature of the funding stream and central government conditions attached to this, then there is pressure those developing a local Prevent strategy to seek to maintain some control over the kind of activities that are funded.

This tension can be exacerbated if those selecting projects and activities for funding, have slightly different 'models' of how violent extremism should be addressed to those delivering activities 'on the ground'. For example, a project might be funded with a primary aim (for the funders) of reaching and working with those most at risk of being recruited into violent extremism, but itself feel that the most immediate concerns of the community with which it is working, relates to wider 'causes of grievance' and that addressing these is of greater priority, if it is to be seen as having relevance to that community. For the funders, this might be seen as 'losing sight' of the key objective. As explored in chapter 7, this can lead to tensions around the 'added value' of certain Prevent projects.

Another issue is one of time scale – that before work can begin in identifying and working with individuals at risk, considerable work may be needed to establish credibility with the community, and to build the capacity (staffing, networks and contacts) required to do this work. This may require considerable investment in exploring social and economic concerns, external causes, building up communication and dialogue with appropriate sections of the community, or in building community or organisational capacity. Even if activities of this kind are seen as key steps towards the longer term goal of reaching individuals at risk, projects may not have gone as far along this path by the time a set period of funding has come to an end. This resonates with our evaluation findings in that projects have gone through a process of change of this kind (Chapter 5).

4.4. Summary

The Prevent programme in Tower Hamlets was designed as a bottom up community cohesion centred programme. It was experienced as such by project leads who appreciated the ownership, flexibility and link to local communities the approach gave them. At the same time, this bottom up approach meant for some projects less clarity around Prevent, sharing of learning and monitoring than they would have liked. It also meant that expectations around what success looks like tended to differ between the Council and projects.

Part of the difficulty in addressing mismatches of expectation – whether of ultimate goals, or of the means through which these will be achieved, often lies in the lack of common language for discussing these differences of approach and for providing validity to the different models being held by different stakeholders. It is hoped that the description of different models outlined above, will contribute to supporting effective dialogue.

5. Experiences of delivery: change as a feature of projects' journey

In the previous chapter we discussed that a bottom up approach can lead to the development of a diverse range of Prevent projects because projects constantly adapt and evolve from original plans in response to changing needs that arise within their communities. Project leads' interview data support this theory. Looking at projects' journeys can help illustrate how project leads experienced delivery, how they reached participants, what the challenges were and what this might mean in terms of implementation and implications.

The majority of project leads interviewed reported a change of some kind that needed to be undertaken in order to make the agenda work locally. These changes appear to have been a key factor in projects' journeys, and they provide an indication of the extent to which projects have had to adapt and evolve. As noted in Chapter 3, the freedom to be flexible in the approach to delivery was seen as being one of the most positive features of how the council approached Prevent and this enabled project leads to experience the delivery of their projects as 'bottom-up'.

The changes made by projects can be clustered into two main types: changes in the design of project activities and changes in the approach taken and methods adopted in delivery. These are summarised in the table below.

Table 1: Types of changes made by Prevent projects during delivery

Type of change	Reason for change cited	Specific changes made / implications for the project
Change in design of project activities	To retain participants	o The activities designed as part of the original brief needed to change because they did not appeal to the target group. o Original brief was not fully covered.
	The assumptions that were used to design the original brief proved to be wrong.	o Broadening of the project to include additional elements. o Additional work therefore needed to be done.
Changes in approach to delivery and / or methods adopted	To ensure engagement, the style of delivery needed to change.	o Speaking about controversial topics, such as PVE, as a method of outreach wasn't working. Therefore, more time needed to be spent to build relationships first. o The name of the project was changed (to make it non-PVE related). o The more 'controversial' aspects of PVE were "added on" to other activities.
	Unforeseen external events (for example, negative media coverage; political events) causing (actual or potential) engagement issues.	o Extra work and time needed. o Resources re-distributed to focus on engaging participants.

5.1. Changes in the design of project activities

Changes in the design of project activities were not a normal occurrence, taking place in all Prevent projects. Rather, they affected a small number of projects that needed to respond to circumstances unforeseen in their original application. Sometimes these changes meant that the original brief could not be fully covered.

From examples that we were able to identify, we can conclude that Prevent projects made two types of changes to the design of their activities: changes in order to retain participants and revisiting the assumptions underpinning the original proposal. These are discussed in more detail below.

5.1.1. Changes to retain participants

One of the projects aiming to work with young people found that they needed to change the design of their project to be able to work successfully with their target audience. The project originally envisaged locating their activities in local mosques, but learned from feedback during delivery that young people *"were fed up with 'mosque-type interventions".* Therefore, in order to continue to be able to work with their original target group, the project moved away from working with Imams and Mosques. Instead, it engaged young people "with status" who had bought into the Prevent agenda (for instance young community leaders) to speak about violent extremism to young people locally within school settings.

Another example can be drawn from a project working with young offenders. A key strand of this initiative involved providing tailored mentoring to help reintegrate offenders into society. However the mosque experienced barriers in building links with probation services and prisons: *"probation has been the most difficult service to reach. We wanted to go into prisons and have contact with young offenders within prisons and coming out but this was not possible".* As this was a completely new area of work for this organisation, staff did not have the accredited training usually required by probation services to work within prisons. Due to this, it was decided to use a 'snowball approach' to reach participants, where the project worker recruited volunteers who in turn knew young people involved in offending and risky behaviour such as drug taking. Using word-of-mouth and community connections, the volunteers helped recruit a total of 55 vulnerable young people to residential trips. These activities also had a greater faith-based focus that was more aligned to the existing expertise of the organisation, including learning about Islamic texts and also identity issues to help *"young people explore their roots and Somali culture and life in the England".* While the project changed its original objectives from intensive mentoring support with young offenders, the exploratory faith-based residential trips were felt to be very successful as *"no one has done this before in the community".*

5.1.2. Revisiting original assumptions

Two of the three examples that can be found for this category of change are projects working on media activities. One of the projects relied on the assumption of gaining ready access to both Prevent project leads and participants in order to produce a DVD which included an interview with project leads, interviews with delivery staff and interviews with project beneficiaries. However, the project reported struggling to engage both project leads and participants into the endeavour. A number of reasons were given for these challenges:

- Project leads were reluctant to be filmed due to the sensitivities around the Prevent agenda locally;

- The project feels that project leads didn't want to expose their beneficiaries in front of cameras;

- Several media companies were working at the same time doing similar work and this element of interviewing on camera caused some fatigue (and over-consultation).

As a result, the scale of the project shrank to not include project beneficiaries and only around half of the project leads originally envisaged.

Another project within this category started off with the idea of targeting specific extremist clips with the idea of 'rebutting' the extremist views contained in them. However, the project changed track. The main reason for the change was that after a period of research into the types of clips young people are watching and after conversations had with other organisations, it became clear that having simply a 'rebuttal' focus would not have worked because it would have not been possible to respond to all extremist clips. Hence, the project broadened to include an educational element (media education), therefore becoming more 'proactive', rather than keeping a 'reactive' focus, as originally envisaged.

The new element to the project was about giving young people the skills to think critically and enable them to spot elements of propaganda. As a result of the change, additional work needed to be done in order to meet the key objective ('challenge and disrupt') and sub-objectives were developed, which included: forming a steering group; including additional partners in delivering the project (colleges, youth workers, theologists); recruiting a project group (which included a varied number of young Muslims) and working with this group to develop and distribute the films that were the outputs of the project. Overall, it took two months to work out what the project should look like.

A third example in this category is a project working with Muslim women, where it was reported that the original project design was expanded after consultation with grass-roots delivery partners. An interviewee described how the original project design and budget was already partly developed before grass-roots delivery partners became involved. At first this meant it took time for the assumptions or 'rationale' behind the project to be fully understood by partners: *"at first when the project plan was given to us it was unclear how the activities linked to preventing violent extremism. We were unsure how to do that and it felt a bit overwhelming".* However after collaborative discussions across the partnership, it was decided to expand the project by placing greater emphasis on providing parenting support training for mothers involved: *"the parenting course element of the project was introduced later- the delivery partners came up with this idea afterwards as something that would be really tangible for families in improving themselves".*

5.2. Changes in the approach to delivery

The need to change something during delivery not only appears to be a characteristic of Prevent projects in Tower Hamlets but also illustrates the main challenges experienced by projects leads. These are detailed below.

5.2.1. Securing engagement by changing the style of delivery

Issues around engagement of project participants were the most commonly cited reasons for change during the delivery of projects. This challenge was experienced by all project leads interviewed as part of this evaluation. The main reason indicated as having caused engagement difficulties was the stigma attached to Prevent, which made people feel under scrutiny and, consequently, unwilling to engage. The quotes below illustrate the challenges experienced around language in relation to the Prevent programme:

> *"It was a real struggle to try and get young people to come and to open up about these issues (…) They became frightened that we were part of the establishment, and they were worried about where their information and details would end up" (project lead).*
>
> *"It took a fair time to build trust around PVE in the local community (…) especially around trusting information. The language around PVE was not helpful (…) They (participants) were worried that information would be passed back to the police" (project lead).*
>
> *"When you used the words PVE and extremism in the community no ones wants to talk to you. They think you are spying (….) no one wanted to be involved in PVE - they wanted nothing to do with it. It was a real challenge trying to convince the community. We spent a lot of time explaining about the project, saying it was about employment support, capacity building helping young people. Now people understand more about what the project is about" (project lead).*
>
> *"Some participants did not engage or sign the contract because they felt they were being spied on. However, being open about PVE helped lessen the negativity around it" (project lead).*
>
> *"The challenge was engaging mosques and getting them involved in the project. It was difficult gaining consensus between key people in mosques about being involved. The government's terminology was not good. In explaining to mosques, we didn't use these terms and said 'we don't think this terminology is right - the project is about cohesion really'. However despite this there were still concerns" (project lead).*

Being able to engage participants meant undergoing some changes in projects' initial approach to delivery. Even though many of the organisations funded had pre-existing links with the target groups they sought to reach, they still needed to build trust and credibility to gain buy-in from the community. As the quotes above suggest, the language and (perceived) link with the police of the agenda evoked scepticism among the target audience. Some project leads also noted that negative media coverage and unforeseen political events added to the complexity and further hindered the process of engagement. As a result of these experiences, a number of projects changed the way they delivered their Prevent project. A key change that was implemented by the majority of project leads interviewed was to change the name of the project to make it less Prevent-related in order to overcome engagement issues. Other changes included liaising with the council about protocols for sharing confidential information about individuals (which were not built in original contracts); re-designing project activities in order for these to appeal to target groups; considering different ways of approaching the target group, such as adopting snow-balling techniques by getting project participants themselves to reach other people in their community. The quotes below illustrate examples of some changes in design of project activities.

> *"We changed the name of the project as it was hard at the beginning getting people involved. The language around PVE was difficult. People get annoyed about the language used that links Islam with extremism. We changed the project name to 'strengthening families project' to soften the language and to build buy-in" (project lead).*
>
> *"We decided to change the name of the project to Al-Hikmah, meaning wisdom and knowledge. The term 'extremism' made people turn away" (project lead).*

> *"(..) initially we wanted to do more work with the mosques and this was designed in the programme. But it became quite difficult to do. The reason for this was that the target group was fed up with 'mosque-type intervention'. The enthusiasm waned so we decided to change track and change this particular aspect" (project lead).*
>
> *"(the activity) that was envisioned at the beginning of the project was not as easy as hoped. Young people are not keen and open to allowing their parents to be part of certain aspects of their lives. In many ways this is even truer of relations with Imams for some. This needs more thinking in the future and it needs to be lead by those who have very good established relations in the community in the eyes of the elder generation" (project lead).*

The implications of these changes, as summarised in Table 1 above varied. First and foremost, respondents highlighted that this process involved devoting a lot of time to build community buy-in and, therefore, caused delays in delivery. Related to this, the process required an effort which in some cases implied a re-distribution of resources for the project:

> "(The problem of engagement) *was overcome through hard work, going out and convincing people that this was an opportunity (…) It involved a lot of outreach and building trust. 70% of the budget was spent in trying to get attendance" (project lead).*
>
> *"It was only down to the project team giving 110% and being really determined that made it possible to engage them. It sometimes took 6-10 visits to convince people to be involved" (project lead).*
>
> *"These things can take a lot of time and it involves taking time to build trust, which is a crucial aspect. Communities take a long time to change" (project lead).*

In some cases, in order to engage participants, projects had to 'embed' Prevent and more controversial discussions within a variety of other activities. For example, running sports activities as incentives for people to engage in the project or discussion seminars around broader social issues with debates on extremism incorporated more subtly. Embedding Prevent within broader activities appears to have been a particular experience faced by youth projects.

> *"We used the money for the worker to do a football game after the session as an incentive for people to attend it" (project lead).*
>
> *"The workshop approach (which also includes other things attached to it such as introducing music and food etc) "keeps the issue going". In other words, it provides an opportunity to make sure that the messages permeate over a period of time" (project lead)*

However for some, these barriers around engagement meant that original briefs may not have been entirely covered as initially envisaged:

> *"(…) it wasn't possible to deliver on the brief we originally designed because we had to go back to our traditional way of working. The project went through a series of difficulties such as (…) sensitivities, over-consultation and difficulty in gaining access to participants. This was a pity overall because we would have had a more complete picture but there was nothing we could do when the situation occurred" (project lead).*

5.2.2. Managing unexpected external events

Another theme emerging from some interview data is around the occurrence of unforeseen circumstances which proved difficult and time-consuming to manage. Two kinds of unforeseen events were seen to be important by project leads.

Media coverage on Prevent work in Tower Hamlets: a large number of project leads interviewed reflected that unexpected national media coverage around how Prevent was being delivered in the Borough had a negative effect on building community engagement. As we have seen above, these processes were already fragile and time-consuming, often taking considerable effort from the grass-roots organisations involved. Examples given include:

> *"There were many obstacles. It didn't help that the media descriptions of PVE as spying - especially the articles about Tower Hamlets itself…Especially after the Forest gate incident (where doors were broken down by the police… that people were worried that what they said would be taken out of context. This was overcome through hard work – going out and convincing people that this was an opportunity to get their views across".*
>
> *"It was very difficult at the beginning mainly because of the controversy around the Dispatches programme. They had to work through this."*
>
> *"National media scrutiny made three quarters of the organisations suspicious of every video and every media and this became a real problem for the delivery of the project" (project lead.)*

Suspicion from other organisations: a minority of respondents found that gaining PVE funding had created a climate of suspicion which triggered events that proved difficult to manage and navigate. Not only was this time-consuming but also reduced the ability to create partnerships and work together. The box below illustrates an example of this occurrence.

> *"One of our project activities was really positive: we got a lot of media coverage and all of a sudden, three other organisations "popped up" within the space of a month, offering similar things. We wanted to be in touch with them so we could all be on the same page but the attitude was not conducive toward building relationships. One particular organisation felt that they had been around much longer and that therefore we should be working under them. This caused some difficulty (….) trying to deal with other organisations has been much more exhausting than delivering the work itself" (project lead).*

Even though this is a particular example, another participant felt that due to the local complexity, some organisations may find it difficult to accept that some get funding and some don't and this translates into an attitude of suspicion. For some project leads, this was the first time that a situation of this kind happened to them.

Local fragmentation: For one project having to navigate a complex local environment was unexpected even for a local organisation already working in the community. For example, they found there to be a greater degree of local fragmentation and politics between different mosques in the Borough than was

originally anticipated. For example, the training for Imams offered as part of the project was sometimes refused depending on the location. Similarly, some mosques remain ambivalent towards the council. As a result, access was more of a challenge than first anticipated and that this aspect *"was perhaps more difficult than the work itself because gaining access takes a long time"*.

Joint working: In a few cases, PVE projects were delivered between two or more organisations. Overall, the partnerships were said to work well. However, some observations can be made, drawing on some of the learning that came out of projects' experiences of joint delivery. The first observation is one around project objectives: having two or more organisations delivering a project, has, in two cases, resulted in a difficulty in achieving all the objectives that had been set out. In one case, this was because the objectives reflected the remits of the different organisations and these may have been too broad to deliver within the time-frame. Inevitably, some objectives took priority over others. In another case, the objectives that required joint working in order to be achieved were the ones that proved hardest to deliver. Some of the issues highlighted in terms of partnership work were around communication and clarity of agreements, which also provided a lot of learning: interview data suggests that perhaps more could have been done at the beginning of the project cycle to build in and develop clear communication arrangements between partners, ensuring that meetings and conversations could take place. This would have ensured that the objectives which required more joint working could have been achieved more easily.

The second observation is one around capacity: in one case, working together was challenging because the lead organisation, which had just been established, was unable to take up that role as originally envisaged due to having some issues around resources (staff). Additionally, the more grass-root organisations had found it difficult to attend meetings and undertake project planning. While this situation was overcome by spending time going through project plans, this capacity building need could have been tackled in advance.

5.3. Summary

As the examples below have shown, change was a feature of many Prevent projects during the area based grant years of funding. Projects responded flexibly to learning from delivery and modified their original design as well as the mode of delivery to respond to events that were often outside of their control. This was independent of the model for radicalisation underpinning the projects and the delivery approach chosen.

Thus, before being able to identify and work with individuals, a whole set of activities needed to happen or changes needed to be implemented before reaching that stage. Even if Prevent activities are seen as key steps towards the longer term goal of reaching individuals at risk, projects may not have gone as far along this path by the time a set period of funding has come to an end. This has got obvious implications for outcomes which we will discuss in the next chapter.

It is noteworthy that the adjustments made took place even though organisations were funded to deliver Prevent projects which were local and had existing links to the population groups they were looking to engage. This suggests that even 'on the ground' organisations, working with the 'novelty' and sensitivity of the Prevent agenda was a challenge, which in some cases may have been underestimated. This also suggests that anything else other than a bottom up approach to delivering Prevent may be even more of a challenge – if this implies even less granular knowledge of the target groups and how to engage them than community organisations possess.

6. Distance travelled: successes & outcomes

In this chapter we move from looking at delivery models for Prevent and changes made during delivery to an attempt at assessing the successes and outcomes achieved by projects. Assessing outcomes of Prevent activities in particular has proven a rather challenging task, both practically and methodologically. Practically, it has been very challenging for the evaluation to speak with project beneficiaries directly.[24] We have only been able to collect data from very few participants, partly because of the sensitivity of the topic area, the short-timescale for the study, and as a reflection of the barriers in engaging participants also experienced by project leads during delivery. We therefore had to rely on information supplied by project leads for the analysis of outcomes. Methodologically, some of the challenges in assessing outcomes include: lack of 'fidelity' in many projects (ie changes made meant that projects' outcomes cannot necessarily be 'judged' by what they originally envisaged); the lack of knowledge about how to (effectively) prevent violent extremism generally (hence any activity with this aim is to a degree experimental); the high number of intervening variables beyond the control of project leads which are likely to affect outcomes (e.g. local and foreign policy events). Taking all of this into account, therefore, we discuss both successes and outcomes in this chapter, with successes being a 'softer' version of outcomes.

This discussion takes place below. It is structured according to the three models identified in Chapter 3: **external** (wider contextual), **social** (group and organisational) and **individual** factors for radicalisation. The examples of success identified will also be explored in relation to these models.

6.1. Addressing External Level Causes

Projects in this grouping tended to emphasise external issues in the wider political, economic and cultural environment that can lead people to feeling marginalised and turning to extremist ideologies. This includes exclusion from the political domain, grievances with national and global events, feeling of cultural misunderstanding and Islamophobia, alongside the need to address socio-economic inequalities and social exclusion.

Prevent projects that focus on these 'root causes' of radicalisation have tended to adopt two types of delivery models: a focus on communication, dialogue and learning; or projects with a socio-economic focus addressing social exclusion issues in the wider environment.

6.1.1. Communication, Dialogue and Learning

In this category, two types of achievements can be found to have resulted from projects' work: increased knowledge about Islam and discussions about faith; increased discussions about community grievances.

Increased knowledge about Islam and discussions about faith

Despite the controversy and sensitivity around the Prevent agenda, one of the key benefits reported by the majority of project leads who had chosen a communications delivery model has been the space created to focus on Islam and faith. Being able to have this focus would not have been possible without this particular funding stream. The delivery of these projects has served as a platform for new dialogues to occur that would not have otherwise taken place. For one project this was about *"using Islamic scholarship to convey the true meaning of Islam. It is about getting the right messages across at an*

---

[24] Incidentally, this difficulty was shared by the Filim Company.

early stage…there needs to be intellectual arguments in place to challenge these perspectives and address misunderstandings – counter-arguments from the Koran and Hadiths" (project lead).

Being able to speak about faith openly was seen as particularly important for young people: *"it is about engaging people in a dialogue: giving them role models and advice from the Islamic texts about what they should be doing" (project lead).*

As a result of these dialogues, project leads reported to us observing an increase in the level of knowledge and learning about Islam among their target audiences, including increased discussion and dialogue on Islamic texts. The vignette below illustrates this.

> *Recently, we delivered a workshop in a school (…) In the workshop we spoke about Jihad, and asked the group what Jihad meant. 90% of those who were there were Muslim and initially, no one actually knew what Jihad was. At the end of the workshop, they had learned something. The reason for their lack of awareness was that they were basing their thoughts on what they heard from friends. At the end of the meeting, however, they learned that Jihad means "positive struggle" rather than "war". So, this particular group left the youth provision with something positive: they are now more knowledgeable in the use of terminology. This is the best example of how a simple message can get across.*

Increased discussion of community grievances

Overall, interviewees reported that the PVE programme encouraged dialogue around community grievances and challenges. This included discussions of wider community issues such as hate crime, roles and responsibilities, social concerns, alongside airing grievances including around national policy and foreign policy. Again, this was felt to be particularly important for young people. Project leads reported how activities helped young people vent frustrations, ask questions, develop critical thinking and be in a safe space for having discussions. As described by one project lead, *"the project allows for the creation of a space which they can use to share the barriers and experiences they are facing. Attending also becomes a social event and it has encouraged the development of a 'social group'. Also, people have started to question their learning".*

The case study vignette below highlights, for the case of the East London Tabernacle, some of the reported outcomes from these discussions.

> **Case example: East London Tabernacle (ELT) / Mile End Community Project (MCP)**
>
> **Increased confidence and resilience:**
>
> Newsnite: by engaging in discussions about current affairs that affect them, not only do young people have an opportunity to air their grievances but also are also reported to feel more confident about their views, more confident to challenge their peers. This resonates with two of the project participants spoken with, who highlighted that the Newsnite discussions had benefitted them because *"I know now how to put a point across and how to listen".*
>
> **Better relationships and increased trust**
>
> Providing a platform and a safe space for young people to discuss issues they are concerned about also enabled workers to learn about what the young people are like, what they feel insecure about. In addition it allows them to *"scope out who is likely to get into trouble and support them to see things from a different perspective". (Project worker)*
>
> Even though ELT does not have as many discussions around identity and Islam (which is MCP's remit),

during Bible discussion groups some young people are beginning to bring the Qur'an. The level of trust needed to be able to do this is quite high and this was felt to be a positive gesture.

Another reported outcome is a slow softening among young people in their attitudes towards the police, which has been made possible through contact at the youth club and Newsnite discussions.

Increased community dialogue around extremism issues

Project leads reported that community discussion and dialogue around PVE and extremism has increased. At the start of Prevent delivery, discussions around these issues were found to be very difficult within local communities, as the topic area was felt to be controversial and taboo. However, now interviewees described that there was better awareness of the importance of engaging in open dialogue around these issues. For example, *"there is more community understanding in mosques about the need to openly discuss these issues. Mosques are no longer scared to talk about PVE".* Similarly, as described by another respondent: *"It was also really valuable having more controversial debates and discussions. This opened up people – it is about getting people to discuss and make up their own minds about these issues".*

6.1.2. Focus on socio-economic exclusion

Projects in this grouping primarily focus on addressing issues around socio-economic exclusion in the wider environment, which is perceived to be a core 'root cause' that can lead to people becoming vulnerable to extremism. In terms of target groups, projects in this category tended to focus on young people.

Diversionary activity for vulnerable young people

Reaching out to young people that are marginalised and socially excluded was a key success factor reported by project leads. While it had been challenging to reach vulnerable young people, project leads felt that by undertaking a youth-work model that focuses on addressing a range of young people's broader socio-economic needs (such as lack of education, unemployment, young offending etc.) or diversionary activities (sports, leisure and youth clubs etc.), this could reduce the chances of young people engaging in risky behaviour. The case study vignette below illustrates this approach more, and points towards some of the outcomes achieved through these activities.

Case Example: Al Huda

A key element of the project was to focus on the socio-economic barriers affecting young people who were not in education, employment or training, who had a criminal record and were young offenders was cited as a pressing issue within the Somali community locally. It was felt that these issues were not being fully addressed locally and that young Somali offenders were falling through the gaps in terms of support from mainstream services: *"there is so much work to be done here and this will continue to be an issue – you can see it now with 10 or 12 year olds. There is a real gap in looking at young offending with the Somali community".* Due to this context, the Prevent project decided to offer employment support training (including IT classes, CV writing workshops, and customer service training) alongside leisure activities (football classes for young men and self-defence classes for women), residential trips and outreach for young offenders. As detailed by a staff member on the project, this proved to be helpful because:

> *"Young people can just hang around, get into fights, involved in drugs. It is about them using their time for other things, so they do not spend time on this. For example, they have got involved in football tournaments, helping them with CVs, IT courses and interview skills etc courses. This has given them skills. We choose four young people as volunteers - some of these have been speakers at seminars for the first time" (project lead).*

While this project experienced challenges in reaching young offenders in the community, Interviewees felt that the employment support and leisure activities were successful in reaching out to young people that feel socially excluded in the Borough.

Similarly, project leads adopting the youth-work model spoke of the benefits of undertaking outreach and mentoring, alongside providing group activities such as youth clubs as a stable and supportive environment for vulnerable young people: *'people who go there know it is a good place and they trust the youth workers'.* The vignette below illustrates this and points towards some tentative outcomes.

Case Example: ELT

The project worker running the youth club gave an individual story to reflect his sense of the benefits of this activity for young people: 'a particularly disaffected young person is *"smiling a lot more and says that being at the youth club is one of the most positive things in his life. He looks forward to going there each week".* Similarly, in detailing the benefits of outreach, the interviewee spoke of a visit to another young person's home and described *"how significant that was for that particular young person and his family".* While it is difficult to evidence firm outcomes, a picture is developing of the benefits of this model in reaching out to young people that would otherwise feel excluded and on the margins.

Retaining participants through tailored project design

For another group of projects retaining their target group – especially young people – was seen as a success. Retention was supported by three 'mechanisms':

- First, designing project activities so that they meet the interests of young people turned out to be key to promoting retention. For several projects this meant redesigning the activities originally envisaged (see previous chapter).

- For some of the youth projects in particular, a theme emerging is around the importance of designing activities in which Prevent did not feature as the sole aspect of the project. This aspect was shared by other projects which targeted young people. One project lead highlighted that overall, participants of the project benefitted from a holistic approach in addressing wider issues that influence extremist ideology. Similarly, for another project, the reason given as to why the activities were designed using work-shops and open forums involving conversations around both Prevent and other things (for example, gangs and gun crime) was because in order to keep young people interested, they felt that they could not deliver workshops on the same topics. Even though the activities were not "only about Prevent", they managed to sustain this because the activities designed were tailored in such a way to guarantee that young people could feel comfortable. This meant "tagging" Prevent to other topics such as housing or anti social behaviour. The rationale being that in this way, young people "buy into all of it" and it's easier to "sell" as a whole (rather than just to focus on one aspect). As one project lead argued: *"Young people are offered a varied menu of activities: they come back voluntarily, they are here changing and being responsible and they also organise activities for their friends. It's very encouraging"* (Project lead).

- Finally, the adoption of a youth work model that befriends young people as part of the process of engagement was found very effective for retaining young people.

Examples of reported outcomes from youth focused activities in this category

Outcomes reported by projects in this category resulting from their ability to engage and retain young people through their activities include:

- Increased awareness of Prevent;

- Improve relation to faith: this includes learning about Islam, more people attending Mosques and lessons about Islam, and an example young people bringing the Qur'an to a bible discussion group;

- Gaining life skills such as writing CVs, interviewing skills, IT;

- Increased trust in youth worker engaged in one of the projects;

- Learning about guns and crime generally;

- An example of a young person who was at the youth club now has a job working in a law firm. He came back to the club and reflected back on the time spent there and now he can appreciate how much he needed that help and how positive it was.

Overall, reported outcomes are dispersed and quite project specific.   In line with the delivery model chosen by these projects, they are very much at the 'cohesion' end of outcomes, underpinned by a 'theory of change' whereby addressing socio-economic causes for radicalisation prevents violent extremist acts in future.

6.1.3. Addressing Social Level Causes

Within this clustering, Prevent projects tend to prioritise issues around the *social identification* with groups as a 'root cause' of extremism, and how crisis in identity and belonging can be a cause of radicalisation (through rejection from a group or uncertainties around which group we identify with). Similarly projects emphasised the importance of building the capacity of community groups and organisations, to better meet the needs of vulnerable people and to create supportive community networks.

Projects reported the following kinds of outcomes arising from their activities:

- **Empowerment and increased representation of particular groups**. A tangible outcome from project activities in this group has been that young people signed up as community champions, have attended the mosque committee meeting and have their say. The positive aspect in particular is that the mosque has a more balanced committee. There is also a woman on one of the mosque committees and this until now was unheard of.

- **Capacity building**: several mosques have increased capacity in terms of their knowledge and ability to apply for funding. Procedures were put in place as part of a project which allowed mosques to see what it meant to bid for funding and this was deliberate. In these meetings, they had to talk about financial controls, all of which served to increase beneficiaries' capacity and skills.

- **Increased level of community understanding of Prevent:** about the need to openly discuss these issues: *"there was fear at the beginning to start opening up and discussing these issues. At the end of the project mothers really have opened up and shared their feelings. Before these things were not so talked about. Mothers are now able to ask the right questions and start up discussions".*

- **Building relationships and links**: another outcome reported by projects was the development of better relationships with the Council (for example between Somali faith and community organisations). Some respondents commented that this new relationship helped a sense of belonging to the wider society and having some influence on social systems.

6.2. Addressing Individual Level Causes

In this grouping, projects tend to focus on the behaviour, psychology, personal experiences and attitudes of individuals that become radicalised or 'at risk'. Hence project delivery concentrates on targeted interventions for individuals, to change personal behaviour and attitudes. Similar to projects in the socio-economic grouping, a key learning point in this model was the importance of offering a 'varied menu of activities' to young people over a sustained period of time, that focuses on a broad range of issues, including drug issues and gang violence, not only violent extremism. This was felt to be important to retain excluded young people in the programme and to build up trust with them: 'attitude change takes time and if you do not take the necessary time, young people will not believe you'.

Both projects in this category reported improved attitudes towards people's local environment as an outcome from their work. One project felt that its original theory or 'logic' behind their Prevent intervention was proven to be effective after their experiences of delivery. Rather than adopting a 'de-radicalisation' programme for those engaged with or at risk of, involvement with extremist activity, this project focused on improving attitudes towards society and helping individuals feel less excluded from their local community:

"Violent extremism is a manifestation of wrong attitudes towards society. Sometimes it will show itself in the form of robbery, assault, politically motivated violence…. If you get young people to be more respectful of the environment and get them to contribute to society and to feel they belong here, they cannot harm it. Reaching this stage also means that they will steer away from violent extremism (in the PVE sense) but also more generally from all types of extremism, such as fraud, crime, drugs and anti-social-behaviour".

The case study vignette below offers a further example.

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:10px;">

Case example: Aasha project

Several examples were cited of the effectiveness of this approach in changing individual attitudes towards people's local environment. By building up trust with young people through a youth-work model, this was found to be particularly helping in reducing the tensions during a recent English Defence League (EDL) march: *"we operated like a buffer between youth and police offering mediation into an Islamaphobic situation (EDL). We helped by talking and engaging and dispersing the crowds, which prevented 5 or 6 assaults".*

</div>

An outcome that was mentioned across the models was around organisational awareness: some projects highlighted that delivering their Prevent project has enabled the organisation as a whole to have increased awareness and understanding of issues relating to violent extremism. So, for example, issues around Prevent will be flagged up much more easily than previously because staff are much more alert to this particular area. This indicates that Prevent has become part of the organisational culture.

6.3. Summary

A central feature in the experiences of Prevent projects in Tower Hamlets is around the 'distance-travelled' towards meeting project objectives – the extent to which projects are moving 'along an anticipated path' to successfully meeting their project aims. Analysis across project interviews show that while significant in-roads have been made in terms of delivery (for example in terms of openly having discussions about extremism in the community or in engaging hard-to-reach participants), this process has taken longer and been more challenging than originally expected. Hence for a large proportion of projects interviewed, while they feel they are 'on the path to success' they have not yet been able to fully reach all their objectives in the funding period. As summarised by one project lead: *"it is hard measuring real impact. The time that the project was running for was short so any impacts will not be coming through yet - this is a grey area as you can't measure effects immediately".*

Project leads themselves indicated areas where further work was needed:

- While discussions around Prevent and extremism are starting to occur, project leads reported that further work needed to be done to continue embedding awareness of these issues.

- More work could be done around engaging participants. Accessing participants was a central challenge for projects delivering this work and many cited the need for further sustained efforts in this area.

- Respondents detailed that the social issues they were addressing, at times felt too vast to be resolved in the project lifecycle. For example, the issue of young offending in the Somali community was felt to be a considerable unmet need in the Borough. Thus, the extent of needs identified was too much for the scope of the project and timescale.

Further, there are complexities around 'what success looks like' in the socio-economic and individual behaviour change models. In analysing the outcomes across different Prevent delivery models in Tower Hamlets, it is perceptible that there are particular tensions and complexities around 'success' in relation to projects adopting a delivery model looking at socio-economic exclusion and individual behaviour change.

- Socio-economic exclusion: there are complexities around the extent to which projects in this grouping are (or should be) also undertaking more explicit discussions around faith and extremism as part of their work. While some projects primarily focus on alleviating issues of social exclusion and socio-economic deprivation (without faith-based discussions), others use this focus on broader social issues as a 'route into' discussions around faith (e.g. holding a seminar on housing with discussions around extremism embedded). This appears to be a key concern for the council around 'added value': for council stakeholders (especially the equalities team), having improved discussions around faith, can be perceived as an important feature of 'what a Prevent project looks like'.

- Individual behaviour change: very few projects in Tower Hamlets can be identified as being part of this model. Similarly, these projects have themselves reported either changing their delivery model, barriers in openly discussing Prevent, or having experienced engagement challenges in reaching individuals 'at risk' or already radicalised. Given this, though individual behaviour change is still cited as an important aim by these projects, this is also felt to be intimately connected with addressing wider social factors in the environment. Hence, these projects are more closely aligned with the socio-economic model detailed above, rather than undertaking 'de-radicalisation' programmes per se, for individuals involved with, or vulnerable to, extremist groups.

7. Added Value

7.1. Introduction

The evaluation also aimed to explore what has been the 'added value' of the Prevent projects. For the purposes of the work, we have taken added value to mean activities that go above and beyond what is being already done through other agendas, in particular through community cohesion. In other words, a question we can use to think about value added is: would the activities delivered as part of these projects have happened anyway?

Whether or not Prevent can or should be distinguished from cohesion work remains an issue of contention. This section draws on interview data from our case study projects and looks at the key themes emerging around what Prevent funding has enabled project leads to do that they otherwise would not have been able to.

7.2. PVE and community cohesion: the focus on new discussions around faith

Differences between the Prevent and cohesion agendas can be subtle. Community cohesion is about bringing communities together so that different groups of people from different backgrounds can integrate and get on well with each other. Prevent, as the national agenda defines it, is about continuing and enhancing the work that local authorities deliver in building cohesive, safe and strong communities while recognising and addressing a specific threat; building resilience to extremist messages at a community level and works to counter the global terrorist ideology. Even though Tower Hamlets set out to deliver Prevent in the best way for the local area, and felt it necessary to merge it with wider cohesion work, interview data suggests that what makes Prevent distinguishable from cohesion-related work is a focus on enabling open and often more difficult discussions around faith linked to extremism.

Therefore, a way to begin assessing the added value of Prevent in Tower Hamlets is to look at the extent to which this element has occurred. Overall, despite the controversy and sensitivity around the Prevent agenda, the majority of project leads reported that one of the key benefits gained from delivering their project has been the opportunity to focus on faith. This would not have been possible without this particular funding stream. The delivery of the projects has therefore served as a platform for new dialogues to begin to take place.

However, the extent to which projects have focused on this particular theme varies: while some have used faith and identity more prominently, others have found the inclusion of this aspect more difficult. So, while "new discussions" were seen by the majority of project leads to be Prevent's 'added value', what can also be said is that these discussions did not occur in equal measure and with the same intensity. The extent to which they did occur appear to be related to: whether the projects funded felt that discussions of this kind were part of their remit; whether this focus was seen to hinder engagement of the target group; whether the organisations funded had all the skills to deliver on particular aspects. As explored in Chapters 3 & 4, there are differences in perception around the 'root-causes of violent extremism and the 'rationales' for best preventing this. This means that discussions around faith were not necessarily intended to be the underlying focus of all PVE projects funded in Tower Hamlets.

If we think of Prevent as linked to faith, we can cluster projects in four groups: those who used the funding to design completely new activities; those who used the funding to continue activities that were already running but that did something differently (in this case, adding a new and specific focus on faith); those who ran the same activities but were in some way related to Prevent already; those who

ran the same activities that were linked to socio-economic needs, therefore less 'Prevent -specific'. However given, the differences in 'rationales' and delivery models amoung projects in Tower Hamlets, it is also important to explore a broader definition of 'added value' that goes beyond the focus on faith. For example, ascertaining if there are any other benefits which interviewees felt would not have been possible without this particular funding stream.

7.2.1. Projects delivering new activities

Projects within this cluster have used Prevent funds to design and deliver activities that they had never delivered before and that were new in the community. Al Huda is an example of a project that delivered some activities which would not have taken place without this particular funding.

Case example: Al Huda

An aspect of added value of this project is that some community and faith organisations that were not usually as well represented in council-funded initiatives were engaged through the PVE programme. An example of this was in better engagement with the Somali community through the Al Huda project. While interviewees reported that further Council engagement was still needed with this community (only one PVE project lead by the Somali community was funded), the Al Huda project was seen as a very positive step in building better links between the Somali community, the Council and mainstream services.

The project has been quite varied: it is a large project with eight different strands. Partly this was because the council asked three organisations / projects to come together. This did prove to be a challenge for delivery and meant that it was not possible for all elements of the project to be delivered as fully as intended. With hindsight, clearer more contained objectives would have worked more effectively- potentially focusing on intensive work around one strand only such as young offending.

However, the new activities undertaken included the residential trips around faith and identity, which no one had done before in the community. The use of residential trips and training enabled the mosque to reach out to young people in the community who had not been to the mosque before. This was felt to be a key outcome as issues around isolation of young Somalis were seen as a pressing issue for this community. Other activities involved Islamic lectures at Al Huda, including discussions linked to extremism and increasing community dialogue around extremism.

While this project was able to have more difficult conversations around faith and extremism, one target group which the Council hoped the project would reach (young offenders) ended up being very challenging to access. Barriers were experienced in partnership working with probation services, the scale of the problem around young offending was felt to be too large for the project's scope and the mosque was unused to undertaking this type of youth work. This begins to show that whether or not Prevent has created an 'added value' depends on what the programme needs to achieve. In this case, new activities around faith were possible. However, if added value is to mean 'accessing people at risk', the same project did experience barriers with this element. However this said, in the final months of the project, positive in-roads were beginning to be made in accessing this target group.

Another example of a project that fits within this category is the Muslim Women's Collective:

Case Example: Muslim Women's Collective

As part of their PVE project, the Muslim Women's Collective delivered parenting classes which had an Islamic element attached to them: the activities designed focused on balancing Islam and Western

---

values in terms of parenting and to understand the identity conflicts that young people are experiencing which were seen as being a big need in the community. The reason for designing these particular activities was that mainstream services, while providing parenting courses, were seen as not being entirely relevant for families. This is because they do not combine Islamic perspectives and teaching, therefore not addressing some key problems in the community around intergenerational and identity issues that are felt to be important (this is something that was highlighted by several other project leads). In this sense, the project filled a gap.

The parenting classes were highly valuable to the families involved: mothers don't know how to open up discussions around issues relating to violent extremism and the younger generation, who are faced with finding a balance between Islamic faith and also being Western, may not know who to turn to as these issues are not talked about. Being able to find that balance can take time and parents and young people need support in this process. The project was able to provide increased parenting skills to work with these issues. Additionally, it was also really valuable to have more controversial debates and discussions because *"it opened people up".*

The Women's Collective was a project that used its funding to design activities that focused on faith and were able to begin fostering the more difficult discussions around extremism. In addition, a project of this kind may have not been delivered had it not been for this particular funding stream.

What also can be said when looking at these examples is that there are issues around capacity and sustainability. Identifying capacity building and training needs is an important factor that needs to be taken into account in developing new projects.

7.2.2. Same activities but adding a new purpose

Projects falling under this category used Prevent funding to intensify existing activities which had a wider focus, while shifting or adding a new focus which became central to the project. For these projects, exploring issues around faith, ideology and extremism was viewed as a need in the community.

An example of a project of this kind is the Rooted Forum, one of our case study projects.

Case example: The Rooted Forum

The organisation's primary remit is around education and employment. The extra funding meant that the project could design other, more specific activities aimed at getting young people to understand citizenship and Islamic citizenship, covering topics around rights, freedom of speech and what it means to have Islamic belief in the UK. Overall, the aim was to promote mainstream concepts and to challenge some of the fringe thinking through workshops and group discussions which looked at the Islamic viewpoint on the social contract that an individual has with the State and discussing how Islamic law may or may not work in a UK context. This is very much linked with the idea of citizenship, as Islam demands Muslims to honour contracts and therefore abide by the law.

The support that the project provided was through a programme of training, mentoring and personal development. Even though it was important that not all aspects of the programme were linked to faith, the project allowed the organisation to intensify the work they do while also creating a platform to focus on (religion).

New methods were also established: the organisation devised a recruitment process in order to gauge who should participate in the programme. The focus was on tier two young people (those who are at risk of radicalisation –e.g. who have a particular wrong ideology). The recruitment form had a series of risk categories that young people would be assessed by (such as, for example, scoring their understanding and awareness of religious groups, rights and obligations). After the recruitment, young people filled in a goal-setting form (tracking form) where they detailed their learning outcomes and the goal they aspired to reach. This would then be filled out again 6 months later.

Topics covered included:

- o confidence and motivation
- o conflict resolution
- o neuro-linguistic programming
- o motivational interviewing
- o personal life style and self awareness
- o counselling
- o citizenship
- o multifaith- Islamic principles
- o leadership
- o first aid
- o effective communication

Observations:

This particular project used existing activities and methods to include a new focus to the work. Drawing on the literature on the interventions that create positive impact upon young peoples' attitudes to violent extremism in the name of religion, personal development and ongoing supported leadership development, which we find in this project, were strong elements relating to work to challenge extremist ideology. This aspect highlighted the need for sustainability in this area of work and the importance of community groups' involvement. However, while the project reported several outcomes at an individual and organisational level, the faith element of the work is the one that is likely to be the most difficult to carry on. Without the extra funding tied to Prevent, the organisation will not be able to carry on some work on 'grievances' but will return to focus mainly on its remit: education and employment.

Another learning point from this project around sustainability is the need to ensure that the appropriate resources are involved in the running of the activities. While this project appears to have achieved the majority of the outputs it had set out to achieve, one activity in particular (the Community Safety Network Forum), which was envisioned at the beginning of the project, was not as easy as hoped. The challenge identified is that young people are not keen and open in allowing their parents to be part of certain aspects of their lives. In many ways this is even truer of relations with Imams. This needs more thinking in the future and needs to be well planned as an intergenerational project.

For these particular projects, Prevent funding has enabled a more innovative aspect to the work. The difficulty here again is one of sustainability. Without specific funding, the focus added to existing activities may diminish.

7.2.3. Same activities -already related to Prevent

Projects in this category did not necessarily design new activities because, to an extent, they were already addressing some aspects of Prevent. Even though they may have been able to fund these with other funding streams not related to Prevent, the funding enabled project activities to be more successful.

An example of a project of this kind is 'Newsnite' and the youth club activities delivered in partnership by MCP and ELT, illustrated in the box below.

ELT / MCP:

Newsnite was already established when the community project put in a joint bid with a local church for PVE funds. The project is about providing a platform for young people to discuss current affairs that they feel strongly about, therefore providing a safe space for them to vent their frustrations and exchange thoughts. In this sense, the project activities were already in some ways Prevent-related. The event is held once a week, on Wednesday evenings. The sessions are informal, and normally about 15 people attend, most of whom are not in education, employment or training. The group will sometimes invite local figures to the sessions to respond to and participate in the discussions about what is happening in their neighbourhood. Police officers, councillors and representatives from central government have all attended, including a delegation from the Foreign Office's Projecting British Muslims initiative.

Even though the activities in this project were not new, the extra funding allowed MCP to deliver the project differently, which resulted in an increased ability to retain project participants. Prior to receiving Prevent funds, being able to retain project participants proved very challenging. Project workers felt that they needed to be able to incentivise young people in order to get them to attend the sessions. The funds were therefore used to provide football games for young people –only those who attend the discussion night can then go and play.

Being able to use funds to create incentives for young people to attend the sessions was very important for the success of the project because it meant that young people were attending more regularly. In addition, being able to bring in guests to directly address questions young people may have and getting publicity for the project made facilitated success even further, as young people felt part of something important.

Due to the ability to retain more participants, the youth workers are planning to identify what type of personal support the young people could benefit from during the debates.

7.2.4. Same activities but linked to socio-economic needs, therefore less "Prevent-specific".

Projects that fall within the socio-economic (addressing 'external level causes of radicalisation') or individual level model of delivery seem to have either used faith as an 'add-on' to existing activities rather than a focus, or have not used faith at all. If we look back at our models, this is understandable: as we have already noted, projects that focus on these models tend to have objectives around tackling wider socio-economic issues, which are seen as taking priority. The extent to which they can or are able to divert from their core remit will be limited.

As an example, some of the youth projects have reported a need to insert discussions on faith and identity as part of a much wider programme of activities. This was either because using a sensitive topic like Prevent was not seen as conducive to engagement or because the project was delivering a series of other objectives. In this sense, discussions around faith may have needed to be 'diluted' in order to fit in with the organisation's rationale. The question is whether this represents a diversion from the council's expectations and makes these projects less Prevent specific.

Case example: Aasha project

Background and project aims
The Osmani Trust have been working with young people who are vulnerable to violence and extremism for 10 years. The Aasha Project in particular focuses predominantly on young people from the ethnic minority community aged between 16-21, who are at risk of becoming socially excluded or engaging in youth conflict, crime and drugs or anti-social behaviour.

The organisation applied for the funding because the gang mediation project which was already running had a strong correlation with the PVE fund. Due to the fact that the Osmani Trust have been working with young people who are vulnerable to violence and extremism for a long time, it was also felt that the PVE money would allow them to be more effective.

The project activities are designed to achieve a 'change in behaviour', which is what the project aims to achieve in the long term - to help a shift in young peoples' values.

Learning from delivery and changes to the project
The main changes occurred as a result of learning that was emerging during the delivery of the project. The original thinking with which the organisation approached the run up to the PVE funding was that violent extremism, the way the agenda defines it, is not a priority in the local area. However, the funding encouraged the organisation to have an open view about this particular aspect.

During the course of the delivery of the project, there was a realisation that violent extremism (as the PVE programme defines it), was not be as big a concern in the area and for the project's target group, when compared to wider issues. The learning in terms of delivery was that activities bring more meaningful results if they focus on wider aspects such as education, engagement through volunteering and civic engagement.

Secondly, using the PVE agenda to discuss a "hot topic" as part of project activities was too controversial and does not generally work as an approach. Prior to the work starting, the organisation did not know what to expect. During the initial phase of the project, there were many potential groups that could have been engaged on the programme: however, they had to pull out from this idea. There was a need to build relationships with the target group and gain trust. This is because what became apparent was that the work around PVE contains sensitive issues and the organisation had to dilute it in a careful way and that there is a need to be aware of cultural sensitivities and be trained in cultural competences. Even if the Osmani Trust had an advantage due to their extensive experience in working with young people, this remained a challenging area.

Success of implementation
As part of the SLA they agreed to target two groups and 20 individuals and, from interview data collected and monitoring forms reviewed, this target appears to have been met or exceeded. Despite the challenges the funding for this work has enabled the number of young people involved in activities to increase. In this sense, it has made the organisation more efficient because they are working with more young people and this also means that more young people are benefitting from the services, which is perceived as an important milestone. Additionally, the funding has allowed an increase in the number of activities, what approach to use and how to tackle young people.

Key observations:
This project in particular is an example of what the implications are of having different rationales of what a PVE project should look like and what it should be achieving. In Chapter 4.3, we explored how some projects might be funded with a primary aim of reaching and working with those most at risk of being recruited into violent extremism, but itself feels that the

most immediate concerns of the community with which it is working, relates to wider 'causes of grievance' and that addressing these is of greater priority, if it is to be seen as having relevance to that community. In fact, one of the lessons learned from delivery of this project was that Islamic radicalisation is a lesser risk factor for young people in the Borough, in comparison to a range of other, wider vulnerabilities deemed important in the local context.

We have already mentioned how by their nature, community projects respond to local needs and shape according to the local environment. In this case, a focus on faith was not seen as the most suitable approach for the target group but also did not match with the issues seen as most prevalent in the local area. Compared to that of the funder, this may represent a slightly different model of what 'violent extremism' is and how it should be addressed.

If we take Prevent to mean a focus on enabling harder conversations around faith, then the added value has been minimal because those projects using faith and extremism as a focus are not many.

7.3. Risk aversion

Prevent projects in the Borough are being delivered by local organisations. While the bottom up approach has brought several benefits, it appears that the sensitivity of the subject area has also meant that it has been more difficult for some to take risks and be innovative. While all the projects interviewed have tried to use existing or non- Prevent specific activities as an access route into starting more difficult and sensitive discussions around extremism (e.g. parenting classes, capacity building work, citizenship courses, existing Islamic seminars, residentials and sports activities for young people), a key question is the extent to which projects have then attempted or felt able to take the more risky next step and 'go deeper' into directly exploring controversial issues around extremism.

As noted in the Al Huda case study example, there may be an issue around capacity and experience: the more difficult conversations were taking place but the harder target group could not be reached. In the case of Blyda, the situation is reversed: youth workers have the necessary skills and experience to access harder to reach individuals but find it more difficult to use faith as a topic. This highlights that for some, faith is not a remit of the organisation or of their profession. A similar example is East London Tabernacle (ELT). The workers engage with vulnerable young people but, being a Church, do not feel well-placed to have conversations on Islam –which was the remit of the partner organisation (MCP).

A further observation, however, is that some projects have been able to be more innovative than others and that this appears to also have depended on the perceived level of risk. Using Prevent openly as a topic of conversation presented a risk that organisations with a high standing in the community may not have felt comfortable taking.

Despite this, project leads reported other important elements that Prevent funding brought, which they would have been able to achieve without this funding stream. These are detailed below.

7.4. Other elements of value added

If we take value added as something that goes beyond a narrow focus on faith, the picture is a different one. Project leads interviewed reported a number of benefits that came with delivering their project which they felt would not have been possible without this particular funding stream. Some of them are not related to having enabled open discussions around faith and extremism, but delivering Prevent still brought benefits that would not have been possible without this particular funding.

7.4.1. New and / or better relationships

A view that is common across the board is that delivering Prevent has allowed agencies, organisations and sectors of the community, whose paths do not cross ordinarily, to come together. As one project lead noted, *"the blessing of PVE is that it brings people together (..) and the talk has changed too" (project lead).*

An illustration of this can be highlighted by using one of our case study projects again:

Aasha project

Increased dialogue / establishment of new relationships:

PVE funding has created the space for dialogues between groups and organisations that wouldn't have otherwise taken place.

During delivery, a particular example occurred in the recent run up to the elections: groups of Islamic background tried to disrupt people who wanted to vote and engage in a democratic process. As explained by the project lead, the organisation would not generally come across a situation of this kind.

PVE allowed us to pick up on what was being said. We reached out to this group, we met them there was a very positive outcome that came out of this meeting: while accepting the view of this group, our discussion enabled an agreement to take place: a) the group was to not disrupt other people who want to participate in the democratic process and b) if there are events that promote voting, the group would not hold their events on the same day.

The result was that in the entire election period, incidents of violent / verbal confrontation did not occur. This sort of dialogue would have not taken place had it not been for the project and this was reported to be one of the long-lasting learning and effect of the project.

In addition, the majority of project leads reported that relationships with the council have opened up. One project lead explained how, thanks to delivering Prevent, the organisation will now consult with the council when particular events occur (such as disruption during elections) in order to discuss ways of dealing with external situations together. Three other project leads mentioned that their agenda had to change slightly because of where the funding came from. Even though they would have perhaps delivered the same activities under another funding stream, the added value of Prevent was that the organisations running the project designed specific workshops to involve the police, which brought considerable benefits.

Relationships with the police

The majority of project leads interviewed reported that working with the police had brought many benefits and that the relationship worked well. Particular benefits mentioned included: increased police visibility (through organised sessions, events and / or workshops), which served to increase project participants' understanding of their role; and increased police engagement with local organisations, which enabled a different and more positive way of working together. One project lead, when reflecting on what had been learned from delivering the project, said that *"we've learned that police can come and deliver workshops with young people without this being a problem"* and that this had been a very positive outcome. Similarly, another project lead highlighted how, in his view, PVE allowed organisations and agencies to find a different way of working together: *"for example, police were coming into the mosque giving presentations. This was the first positive contact that occurred between*

the two orgnanisations and the benefit was that it enabled the community to realise that police officers are real people doing a job. More generally, these organisations just do not come together. Therefore, overall, the programme helped develop a better understanding of each other" (project lead).

However, a small number of respondents felt that working with the police remained a challenge. In particular, this related to the difficulty and tensions which come with bringing together law enforcement and community work, which have different styles of working. As one project lead said: *"Police sometimes demanded to be in sessions when this was not the most appropriate thing to do".* This resonated with another project lead, who felt that the police should not be involved in community work because it is largely not their remit: *"when they attend events, their presence doesn't go down well".* In some cases, working in partnership with the police caused difficulties in getting participants involved in projects: *"there was still the factor that some participants did not engage with some of the workshops as they felt they were being spied",* the consequence being that engaging some of the most 'at risk' individuals was even harder.

This situation was felt to be compounded by the fact that the officers involved were from the Counter-Terrorism Unit (CTU) rather than safer neighbourhood teams, for example. For a minority of project leads interviewed, therefore, the tension between law enforcement and community work had not been resolved as well as it should have been.

7.4.2. Widening collaboration / representation

Delivering the Prevent agenda has seen the council widen the pool of organisations they are working with. Doing this was necessary in order to reach those target groups that community based organisations were best placed to access. This aspect goes back to the council's bottom-up approach, which was viewed as necessary in order to deliver on this agenda in a way that was appropriate to the local context. The widening of the types of organisations approached coupled with the overarching bottom-up approach to delivery which Prevent required has given access to projects, people and organisations that would have not normally accessed this funding. This includes smaller, less-established community organisations and also those that work with different target communities.

7.5. Mainstreaming

The next step in reflecting upon the 'added value' of Prevent projects is to explore the future potential for mainstreaming this work in the borough.

The concept of 'mainstreaming' can be interpreted in a number of ways. Most concretely, it can be seen as being a process by which **activities** initially funded through 'special' funding are continued through mainstream funding sources or as part of mainstream services. A second and 'softer' interpretation is whether the **learning** emerging from the programme is picked up by, and helps to influence, mainstream services. In order to assess the "mainstream readiness" of Prevent work in Tower Hamlets we have looked at these two different, but sometimes overlapping, levels of mainstreaming.

7.5.1. Mainstreaming of activities

Given that this evaluation was taking place in a period of flux within local authorities, particularly around the need to reduce spending, a main preoccupation for interviewees in relation to mainstreaming was in terms of funding.

Funding of future Prevent activities

Funding cuts are one of the main challenges facing all local authorities nationally and difficult choices need to be made about how to balance areas of work with each other. This context was reflected in

interviews with both council stakeholders and project leads: *"Funding cuts is a huge challenge. All teams will have to do more with less so there is a risk some areas won't go forward"* (council stakeholder). There was concern among project leads interviewed about their ability to continue Prevent activities without funding: as described by one project lead delivering a project 'in-house' from within the council:

"Funding is the main challenge. With huge public sector cuts on the horizon it is hard to tell where these will fall. 15 million in children's services needs to cut in Tower Hamlets. There is a risk that no money will be left for this work"

Interviews with project leads suggest that, with limited funding, there is a risk that third sector organisations will return to focusing on activities that are part of their 'core business'. New work that has been developed in the Prevent area, or new additions to existing activities (detailed above in discussions around added value), is likely to reduce without continued support. For example, one interviewee described that sports activities for young people will continue even if funding was not made available as this was a 'core activity' for their organisation. However, discussions around faith attached to these sessions are less likely to be sustained as this involves additional resources (for example, in terms of staff, time and skills). Similarly, another project described how as a mosque, they would be able to continue having faith-based discussions linked to Prevent, yet new activities around supporting young offenders that were felt to be a high priority for the community, would need continued financial support: *"we could carry on running the discussions on Islam and religion. We could still do that. Though to do something on the other streams like young offending we would need money"*.

Given the initial community sensitivities around discussing extremism, where projects have slowly made positive steps to increasing community dialogue, there is a risk that without the impetus and support of funding, these more difficult and controversial discussions, or activities that are 'something different' for organisations, will not continue to the same extent. As described by one respondent, while *"we will do as much as possible in kind, overall the intensity of the work on this particular angle will diminish"*.

As noted earlier in this chapter, project leads have gained a variety of benefits from delivering their project. While there is scepticism around the language and marketing of the national Prevent programme, which caused issues during delivery, a message emerging from those interviewed was the need to continue funding and activities around Prevent. Despite sensitivities, the majority of project leads felt that Prevent work had helped rather than hindered work in their communities. However, once Prevent funding comes to an end, without alternative sources of funding, their work would come to an end or would not be able to continue with the same intensity.

There are very mixed views across partners and across project leads as to whether Prevent work in Tower Hamlets should continue as a separate funding stream or whether Prevent projects should be integrated into other delivery areas such as cohesion or youth services. For some, the branding and marketing of the national Prevent programme played too much of an inhibiting role. For these respondents it was preferable for Prevent activities to be integrated in other agendas such as cohesion or youth services. As reflected by one interviewee: *"it is easier to discuss issues around cohesion and integration. Prevent could easily be picked up by cohesion. Though discussions around extremism and causes of this need to continue"*. While the language of the Prevent programme was felt to be problematic, there was also a need for a degree of transparency if this work was embedded in other policy agendas: *"PVE has a stigma attached to it. It could work better if it were integrated. Yet there is a balance here - PVE work shouldn't be hidden also"*.

However from the alternative perspective, several respondents felt that Prevent activities should continue as a separate funding strand, but that this strand should be re-named and re-marketed to help ease community sensitivities: *"PVE funding should continue but it has to be given a different name - still doing the same work but with a different name".* As summarised by another respondent:

"It is important that the funding continues - issues around extremism are a priority. We can't afford to ignore them and it would be reckless to cut funding from PVE. PVE is a priority but it needs to be given a lot more thought".

As reported by several stakeholders, in integrating Prevent with more mainstream policy areas, there is a question as to whether the "harder" conversations would get lost or be able to take place: *"While the softer sides of the PVE work can be continued via building PVE into cohesion objectives and funds. The more direct 'harder' work that is explicitly looking at violent extremism is more challenging. It is a risk the more explicit discussions around PVE could be lost – this is different from cohesion work".* This viewpoint was also shared by several project leads: *"Community Cohesion does not go far enough – there are specific issues that only specialist team can deal with".* It was highlighted by council stakeholders that particularly for the police and Youth Offending Teams (YOT) where specialist staff have built up skills around Prevent and community engagement, this expertise would be lost if the programme were mainstreamed:

"The position for the police and YOT is that dedicated PVE teams are still needed… the police PVE team has now built up good community links that are not very strong in other police teams, they feel that mainstreaming this community-based work in the police will be challenging. There are different organisational cultures in the police that make mainstreaming more challenging. This is a similar organisational challenge in the YOTs: they also do not have as strong community links and do not have high awareness about faith and identity issues for young people – what it means to be a Muslim young person".

So while we find mixed views around the future positioning of Prevent activities in Tower Hamlets, in both the above scenarios, whether Prevent was incorporated into other existing policy areas or continued as a separate funding stream, there was a strong message from interviews with project-leads that the language of the programme needed to be altered. This had proven to be a key barrier in terms of delivering 'on the ground' within local communities: *"the name of the funding is not good – it says we are the problem".*

Continuation of Third Sector involvement

While the community organisations interviewed were generally very positive about building relationships with the council and recognised the importance of jointly exploring opportunities to continue this work, a key impression from the interviews was the importance of continued third sector involvement. While community organisations reflected that they all had experienced barriers in engaging participants due to the sensitivities of the Prevent agenda, and difficulties in reaching those most vulnerable and at risk, there was a feeling that if the 'grass-roots' were not able to reach these target groups then no organisation would be able to – that it was only through considerable time and effort from the grass-roots that these target groups could be accessed. According to those interviewed so far, this process appears to have been considerably slower and more difficult than anticipated, even for those groups actively working 'on the ground' within local communities.

Even though it was felt by project leads that some activities could be mainstreamed, several questioned the ability of statutory services to reach the right people: *"other agencies could be able to do this as long as they are able to access the community".* Project leads felt ' grass-roots' organisations were

accessing target groups that were not currently being reached by existing mainstream services: *"Having grass-roots community group is important - you have to have organisations that people are comfortable with and that trust you to talk about these issues".* For example, several interviewees commented that there were gaps in mainstream services reaching Somali young people (especially young offenders). Similarly, other interviewees felt that Bangladeshi women in disadvantaged areas would not access mainstream support services locally, and that their first point of contact would be with local community organisations instead. As detailed by one interviewee, there was concern that *"mainstream organisations would not be able to reach to families involved. You need to have the grass-roots organisations involved who know the families".* Similarly as explained by another interviewee from the same project:

"Though mainstream services can pick up on learning they would not be able to deliver this project themselves. It wouldn't really make sense for that to happen - it is not realistic. They do not have the access to families. Families will not go to mainstream services".

However it was reported that there are capacity building barriers within many community-based organisations. It was described that in some cases 'the infrastructure is not there':

"They have some good plans and ideas but lack infrastructure and organisational capacity to deliver the outcomes they intended. They don't have the infrastructure in place to engage young people or deliver activities as planned…any delivery organisations are very small community groups where capacity is an issue".

In some cases, project leads had to spend considerable time giving partners organisational support: *"we tried to overcome this by having group sessions, putting detailed project plans in place for each organisation and sessions to go through the plans in detail - this model worked well though it was time-consuming".* Hence, if there is to be continued third sector involvement in future Prevent activates, it may be necessary to provide capacity building support for smaller organisations. While these organisations are 'front-line' and have a higher likelihood in accessing communities and building trust, there are often organisational needs that can impact on delivery.

Building partnerships with mainstream services

Project leads indicated a positive relationship with the local authority and felt that the council was 'third-sector orientated' in its approach delivering Prevent. However it seems that building partnership with some statutory services was difficult for several project leads, which has implications in terms of mainstreaming learning from project delivery.

In interviews with council stakeholders, it was reported there being a high level of strategic buy-in to the Prevent agenda, aided by an emphasis on statutory partnership working in the early stages of the programme. As detailed by one interviewee: the Borough had *"taken a partnership approach"* to delivering Prevent, and *"held an initial workshop between partners to explore issues, get buy-in and wide partnership representation on the board".* Considerable effort was dedicated to gaining support of statutory partners in the council, when the Borough's Prevent programme was first being designed. Several interviewees pointed to a particularly strong partnership between the equalities team and the police, helped by good existing relationships between senior members of staff. However despite this context, stakeholders reported there being barriers in engaging with certain statutory partners:

- Further work could be needed to engage the probation and Youth Offending teams. Interviewees reported that the current restructuring of the probation service was having implications in terms of their ability to engage with the agenda.

- It has also proved challenging to build partnerships with education services. As described by one stakeholder: *"schools have been difficult to engage in PVE work. They don't see it part of their job and have other pressures, though they are coming on board now. Higher education has also been tricky".*

- While there were positive comments about key Prevent initiatives being implemented by youth services, such as integrating Prevent into the Common Assessment framework for vulnerable children. It was reported be several stakeholder that at times there have been barriers in engaging youth services: as explained by one interviewee, for youth services *"PVE is not seen as a priority and they are more focused on other issues such as anti-social behaviour, under-achievement in schools, substance misuse".*

These reflections are supported by project leads delivering Prevent activities. Several respondents commented that building links with probation services had proved to be particularly challenging, despite this being a key community concern (especially for the Somali community):

"Probation has been the most difficult service to reach. We wanted to go into prisons and have contact with young offenders within prisons and coming out but this was not possible…Probation wanted all the staff to be trained in youth offending work and to have all the procedures in place before starting work but this was not possible for us. It would have been much better if we had access to the prisons as this would have sped up work with young offenders".

Similarly, other interviewees felt that further work is needed to embed learning around Prevent within mainstream schools:

"There would be a lot of potential and value in engaging mainstream schools in delivering the programme… They will need to lift out some of the Arabic text from the course materials and integrate other religious texts (not just Islamic) for this to run in schools".

As explained later in the interview, *"while citizenship is taught in schools, what is new is the balancing with learning about Islam. This is a unique balance".* Despite Tower Hamlets having a large population of young Muslims, interviewees reported that further work could be done to better embed discussions around Islam, citizenship and identity issues in mainstream education: *"Islamic perspectives are not so embedded - schools are not getting the balance right".* An example was given around children experiencing difficulties in wearing Islamic dress in schools or praying discretely in part of the playground at the appropriate times: the respondent felt *"there is a need to address these conflicts. It would be really good to get these issues discussed in schools".*

Similarly, in relation to youth services, a respondent reported that while initial attempts were made to build partnership with the parenting team in a local authority (with an eye to mainstreaming opportunities), this partnership has not yet come to fruition as meetings were often postponed. There was a feeling that *"there is potential for mainstreaming this work but mainstream services are not picking up learning from the project".* For this project in question, there was a perceived gap in services delivering parenting programmes from an Islamic perspective:

"While mainstream services do run parenting courses- these are not so relevant for families. The courses are not combined with Islamic perspectives and teaching. The courses are more diluted and do not really address the key issues for families - how there can be a conflict for young people around being Western and also being Muslim. Parenting classes needed to also have an understanding of Islam and culture".

7.5.2. Mainstreaming learning

The second aspect of mainstreaming relates to the extent to which learning around Prevent delivery will be taken forward, either within the community itself, or at a Local Authority level. There are two main reasons for looking at how effective the mechanisms are in supporting learning. Prevent remains a new, and to a large extent, experimental area of work, and in order to learn from this work, there need to be opportunities for regular, reflective, dialogue between all those involved in Prevent activities – including the projects themselves, council representatives and other organisations involved in the delivery of the programme. It is also important to consider the mechanisms in place through which learning and good practice from the ground is transferred to other parts of the council and related services.

Community organisations are key conduits for learning about what are the most effective approaches to deliver Prevent projects, as experienced in practice from undertaking this work 'on the ground'. The 'bottom-up' approach designed in Tower Hamlets for the delivery of Prevent is testimony to the council's commitment to the value of 'grass-roots' community of involvement in Prevent work. However the question for the evaluation is around how well learning from project delivery is being systematically captured and shared to inform future initiatives.

Project leads' interview data suggests that **capturing and sharing learning** between projects around what is working and what needs improvement appears to be a weakness in the borough. The majority of project leads interviewed were unfamiliar with the other Prevent projects being delivered locally apart from those projects which are run by larger and more well-known organisations. Even though networking events and workshops were initiated by the council, which were found to be useful to a certain extent, individual networking appears to be more fractured and based on informal relationships and there is a sense that not enough cross-organisational work between projects is taking place. As one interviewee highlighted*: "(...) we have these conversations informally but there is no formal attempt to gather this information and not enough effort in getting lessons".* Similarly, as described by another respondent:

"Learning about delivery is not being shared. Projects don't really talk between each other about what each of us is doing. We tried to contact some projects that could help with the young offending element but they were not so responsive. Out of the projects, people tend to know the larger organisations that are more known anyway".

Though it was acknowledged by interviewees that the council did organise several events to bring Prevent projects together, it was felt that there should be more regular meetings to share experiences between project leads. Partly this feedback was around timing - having more frequent events, and also starting 'learning activities' earlier in the programme lifecycle: *"the council did produce a newsletter, but this could have been done much earlier to allow people to be brought into it earlier".* A minority of interviewees did feel that learning mechanisms were working well, however these were either respondents delivering media initiatives that would have had contact with prevent leads as part of their planned project activities, or those running projects 'in-house' from within the council, who reported having access to internal information.

Some comments raised in the interviews about what may have improved learning were around the difficulty of integrating projects that are inevitably very different from each other. As an interviewee explained, *"the projects are so varied that it was hard to share experiences. On one occasion, I attended a workshop where I was the only youth worker present and this wasn't particularly useful. I don't have much time and attending events that may not be relevant is not the best use of my limited availability. Had there been another youth worker, it would have been much more useful".* Similarly

another interviewee felt that as *"PVE is too different a programme"* with a broad variety of projects, sharing experiences may be more appropriate between those that were similar in terms of remit and style of delivery.

While this may be a result of a more 'hands off', community-based approach chosen by the council in relation to programme design, capturing learning was felt to be important for several projects leads interviewed, as it enables knowledge about different 'tried and tested' delivery models to be shared, especially seeing that Prevent is a new area.

7.6. Summary

Whether or not projects have delivered, or indeed should have delivered, something different and 'unique' remains an issue of contention. Discussions around added value are inevitably tied to assumptions around what the programme as a whole should be delivering; what a Prevent project should look like, who it should be reaching and what it should be achieving. Questions are emerging around whether the approach in Tower Hamlets has overly focussed on the 'softer end', which would not make it different from cohesion-related work; whether this has meant that the 'harder end' work (focusing on those individuals that might commit violent acts) has been overshadowed and indeed whether a 'harder' approach is even necessary. In other words, any value of judgement depends on the philosophy around the programme.

If we look at Prevent narrowly, thinking about it as a means to deliver activities with a specific focus on extremism and faith, we can say that this has been an 'added value' of Tower Hamlets' Prevent projects but it is a limited one. This is because often these discussions happened within a much wider context of delivery or because it inhibited access. Equally, if by added value we mean reaching 'at risk' individuals, the added value is limited for the same reasons. However, if added value has a more open connotation (for example, the establishment of new relationships between organisations; better ways of working together; and widening of the pool of organisations that the Council can work with), Prevent has brought a number of benefits that would not have been achieved without this funding stream.

From our analysis of the case study data, it appears that added value is less about the activities being funded and / or the target groups selected. Rather, it appears to be more about what Prevent and Community Cohesion should deliver and what the remit of these agendas are. This requires a degree of clarity on how the two agendas link with each other.

8. Conclusions & Recommendations

Data collected and analysed as part of this evaluation has enabled us to capture useful learning that the council can consider for future plans around Prevent. This section outlines the key conclusions and some specific recommendations for future work.

Tower Hamlets' approach to PVE

As part of the evaluation, we looked at the design of the Prevent strategy at a programme and project level in order to examine how these different conceptions influenced programme and project design. Tower Hamlets adopted a bottom-up approach to delivering Prevent. Our data shows that this has been an appropriate way of approaching the programme for the local area and that has brought a number of benefits: it allowed community-buy in; fostered a feeling of ownership of the agenda and handing over the design and implementation of the programme to the community implied that it was flexible enough to ensure that the project activities were aligned with local needs. In addition, analysis of project leads' experiences of delivering Prevent, suggests that adopting a different model perhaps would not have yielded as much. This is because all projects, despite being delivered by community organisations, encountered difficulties in engaging participants. Gaining trust and credibility was crucial and the process that project leads had to go through in order to achieve this required careful handling and took considerable time, resources and effort.

While all project leads experienced the delivery of the programme as 'bottom-up' and appreciated the ownership, flexibility and link to local communities the approach gave them, there were implications to this approach. For some projects, the bottom up approach entailed less clarity around Prevent, sharing of learning and monitoring than they would have liked. It also meant that expectations around what a 'PVE project looks like', what 'success' entails tended to differ between the Council and projects.

What should be borne in mind is that these aspects of the bottom up approach should *not* necessarily be viewed as problematic because this approach was the most appropriate for the context and the area. Also, in many ways, these features are part of the nature of community-led initiatives in many other policy areas.

Recommendations:

Part of the difficulty in addressing mismatches of expectation (whether of ultimate goals or of the means through which these will be achieved) often lies in different interpretations of the nature of the 'problem' and hence what solutions might be. Creating opportunities to articulate these differences would therefore provide for a stronger basis on which to judge success. When planning future work, we recommend the establishment of a process for these differences to be articulated before and during project implementation. This could include: ensuring project application forms 'draw-out' the underlying rationale behind project design; discussions (e.g. in workshops) early on to surface differences in approaches both *between and across* stakeholders and project leads.

Experiences of delivery

The evaluation highlighted the changes that projects' leads needed to make in order to make the agenda work locally. Two key observations can be made.

Firstly, projects' journeys are an indication that there has been a continuous process of learning about what works in terms of engaging their target groups and what could be improved. This process was longer and more challenging than expected and impacted on delivery. In some cases, it meant that projects that received funding for three years had to deliver in two, decreasing the time available to implement activities. It could be argued that these processes of 'trial and error' are a necessary feature of experimental programmes such as Prevent, which is a relatively new area of delivery where policy and practice is still constantly evolving. This, however, makes it important that learning is captured and shared so that it can be taken into account during implementation and for future project design and selection.

Secondly, there may have been an assumption that grass-roots organisations would reach large numbers of project participants due to their proximity to the target groups. While the programme in Tower Hamlets has taken a community-based approach linked to community cohesion, there remain expectations from stakeholders that with hindsight, 'more could have been done' around reaching individuals 'at risk' of radicalisation. However, proportionally fewer projects were funded in this category. Similarly, are complexities around 'what success looks like' in the socio-economic model (which are the least Prevent-specific) and the extent to which projects in this grouping are (or should be) also undertaking more explicit discussions around faith and extremism as part of their work. For projects in this grouping, focusing on discussions around faith and extremism were not necessarily seen as part of their underlying remit or 'rationale'- rather their priorities were in reaching and supporting socially excluded groups that are isolated.

The question is whether continued work and dialogue should take place with these projects (that have greater levels of access to hard-to-reach groups) to explore, build knowledge and pilot approaches around working with individuals 'at risk'. Or alternatively, whether projects that address issues of socio-economic exclusion would be better mainstreamed within other policy areas such as youth services.

Overall, a mismatch remains: the council needs to be clearer in terms of its priorities for the Prevent programme. Perhaps because of the need to build better knowledge and understanding around changing behaviour of individuals that are already radicalised or 'at risk', alongside national policy pressures, this still remains a possible area for exploration.[25]

Recommendations:

The difficulties implementing planned activities experienced by projects funded during the ABG period suggests that, going forward, it would be helpful to support those funded to run PVE projects or activities while they are implementing their work. A useful technique could be to run a series of workshops or action learning sets with all those projects involved. These could be structured thematically, to support learning and exchange for improved delivery amongst all those involved around key themes or challenges emerging from implementation.

Building in more systematic communication mechanisms with project leads could also help ensure that changes and barriers to delivery are being regularly shared both amongst project leads and with the

---

[25] The need for further understanding around 'individual causes of radicalisation' was highlighted as the key area in need of further exploration in the Commission study of pan-European CONTEST policies. 2008: Radicalisation, Recruitment and the EU-counter radicalisation strategy. Available at http://www.transnationalterrorism.eu/tekst/publications/WP4%20Del%207.pdf

programme team. Including facilitating regular group and individual meetings with project leads. This is also around building and embedding a 'learning culture' within these meetings, whereby projects feel comfortable to discuss not only successes within their projects but also the challenges they have experienced and how these have been overcome. This is particularly important to build knowledge of work that is sensitive and of an experimental nature - such as reaching and challenging individual behaviour of those already radicalised or 'at risk'.

The limited outcome data, coupled with the uncertainty of definitions of 'at risk', makes it difficult to recommend how the council should focus funding.

In future, self-evaluation could be used to capture not only ongoing learning and good practice but also achievements and successes from projects' work. Projects would need to be supported to carry out this work, and this could be done in a number of ways, such as: making available to projects the PVE self-evaluation guidance[26]; developing a standard template that projects can complete to evaluate their work allowing them to record not only the successes of their projects, but also the key challenges they experienced and how these were overcome. Often, it is also useful to support this process by offering support, either in the form of external experts (for instance to offer additional skills that may be missing) or regular meetings at which self-evaluation work is being discussed (to ensure the self-evaluation work is indeed carried out).

However, we can offer suggestions going forward based on the learning that can be drawn from the evaluation.

A key question is whether projects have attempted or felt able to take the more risky next step and 'go deeper' into directly exploring controversial issues around extremism. The evaluation found that while there was a hope that some projects may have been able to access harder-to-reach groups, those organisations may have not been able to speak about the most difficult aspects of Prevent: either because this was not in their professional remit or because they may not have known how to have those discussions. Equally, those who may have been able to have those conversations may have not had the skills or capacity to access harder-to-reach groups.

Recommendations:

Some will find it harder than others to have more 'PVE specific' conversations and this may be down to skills, organisational cultures, professional perspectives or to a reluctance to innovate due to the reputational risk attached to delivering Prevent: all of these elements should be borne in mind when funding future projects.

Some further specific recommendations on the project selection process:

- A risk assessment section could be included in the application form, which would encourage projects to outline issues of this kind; how they intend to overcome them and what support they may need.
- An engagement strategy could be requested as part of the application process, which could

---

[26] See Evaluating Local PREVENT projects and programmes: Guidance for Local Authorities and their partners. Tavistock Institute for CLG. Aug 2009. http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/localPREVENTprojectsprogrammes

include details of how the organisation plans to set out to reach their target group.

Some recommendations on clarity of objectives:

- With hindsight, the objectives of some projects that have been set out to be achieved were found to be too broad. This can dilute focus, it has implications on the clarity of the objectives and implications on what can be achieved. In terms of suggestions for the future, it may be more effective to focus on one or two objectives, with clearer and more realistic goals.

- It is also important to clearly articulate 'what success' means for different stakeholders and project leads. This includes thinking through and setting clear, realistic objectives: in particular, breaking these down to immediate short-term outputs, medium term outcomes and anticipated longer-term impacts (beyond the project life-cycle).[27] Also, planning *at the start* of project delivery how these different elements will be measured either through self or external evaluation.

There may be scope in thinking about how to support joint working between projects. Several Prevent projects were delivered by two or more local organisations. While the partnerships were said to work well, the learning that came out of the joint working experiences are useful to bear in mind. Some of the issues highlighted in terms of partnership work were around communication, clarity of agreements and different levels of capacity (in terms of staff, for example). Issues of this kind, while not hindering partnerships completely, played a part in delaying delivery due to having to spend time overcoming the challenges.

Recommendations:

Partnerships need to spend time working together on the issues outlined above, and build this into their expected delivery timeframe. Issues around strategy and delivery, role, authorisation and language generally take longer to resolve than expected and space needs to be made to work through them. Equally there are likely to be issues around skills available to run projects and internal capacity building which need to be addressed.

Data shows that in some cases, objectives were very broad because each organisation was working to its own remit. Going forward, we recommend ensuring that objectives are simpler and more realistic and part of the negotiation process. Some partnerships might expect to create an 'identity' for their work; others may concentrate on establishing clear joint working arrangements, delivering particular aspects of the work.

Partnership working also provides opportunities for learning from each other and making time for reflection on practice and disseminating this to the broader system could usefully be supported by the Board.

Value-added and Mainstreaming

From our analysis of the case study data, it appears that added value is less about the activities being funded and / or the target groups selected. Rather, it appears to be more about what Prevent and Community Cohesion should deliver and what the remit of these agendas are. This requires a degree of clarity on how the two agendas link with each other.

---

[27] See Evaluating Local PREVENT projects and programmes: Guidance for Local Authorities and their partners. Tavistock Institute for CLG. Aug 2009. http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/localPREVENTprojectsprogrammes

Having had a designated programme has delivered several advantages. In particular, it has provided an impetus for new discussions around faith to take place – a difficult topic which, project leads agree, is unlikely to have happened without the designated PVE programme. If PVE activities are mainstreamed (ie integrated into children's and young people's services, community cohesion services and others), the question is how activities of this kind (that are difficult yet have shown to be yield positive outcomes) can be maintained. A solution is likely to lie in a combination of creating both the necessary structures and skills. Structurally, it might be advantageous to 'ringfence' PVE activities (and specifically dialogues around faith and extremism) in respective action plans (e.g. creating separate objectives with funding attached). In terms of skills, it will be important to ensure that those delivering Prevent on the ground with extensive community contacts are equipped with the necessary skills to carry out these dialogues. Facilitating these discussions is a sophisticated skill which those normally delivering work to other agendas may not necessarily have; it is noteworthy, for instance, that those involved in the current PVE programme often found it difficult to have these discussions Training may therefore be required, and an awareness of this would need to exist at project selection stage.

Annex 1: Projects' theory of change

Figure 3: **External level causes of radicalisation (1)**

> **EXTERNAL LEVEL CAUSES OF RADICALISATION:**
> **Political:** exclusion from political domain & public institutions; wider political events at local, national and global levels.
> **Cultural:** discrimination and stigmatisation; Islamophobia; globalisation and modernisation.
>
> o **Delivery model: Communication, Dialogue & Learning:** understanding of & engagement with, Muslim communities; knowledge and understanding of the causes of violent extremism; challenging the violent extremist ideology; addressing grievances that ideologues are exploiting.

Project Examples		Root causes identified	Rationale to tackle violent extremism	Prevent Delivery model planned
Project A		Young people are angry and disenfranchised. But they are educated '*and can take the government's policies apart'*. Grievances around foreign policy; better cultural understanding is needed as '*Muslims feel under attack & are frustrated'*.	Need to understand grievances; *'to get a better idea of what people are feeling around issues of extremism'*. Also to *'educate people to express these frustrations through appropriate channels'*.	Research project involving a series of workshops with young people to understand feelings and frustrations.
Project B		Issues in how young people from different ethnicities are getting on with each other. *'There does need to be better cultural & religious understanding in relation to different groups. Stereotypes do not help'*. Are identity issues for young people & high under achievement in education & unemployment;	Is a need for *'educating, improving and raising awareness of how to balance Islamic values and British citizenship values, through workshops and encouraging discussion of Islamic texts'*. - 2nd focus: on organisational capacity building: *'need for much better institutional understanding'*.	Running citizenship & Islam training course for young people in mosques, with each lesson devoted to a different theme in the Koran and Hadiths. - 2nd focus: capacity building work with mosques & improving cultural understanding in mainstream institutions
Project C		Lack of trust in the council: '*there is a need for more trust in the local authority & that this can help in stopping radicalisation before it happens'*. There is a need to raise awareness of what the council is doing, & to understand the delivery of Prevent.	Need to improve understanding of Prevent work and how it is helping local communities through better communication: *'a video would be able to tell a story of all the positive things that are going on'*.	DVD of Prevent projects taking place in the borough as an evaluation & exploration of Prevent projects happening locally.
Project D		Lack of understanding between cultural groups: interviewee '*was shocked that people didn't mix at all'* and that there was a need to 'break these circles'. '*The challenge was that there is a fear of the 'other''*.	Need to improve dialogue and cultural understanding between different ethnic and faith groups. Was important to focus families and children '*so they can grow up understanding their differences'*.	Weekend away with women from different faiths to talk about their culture and to *'open a dialogue explaining each others' differences'*.
Project E		There is a need for better understanding and knowledge about Islam. Integration & deprivation is also key issue. Somalis feel excluded in the borough; there is a lack of services & issues for young people around NEET & offending.	There is a need to improve learning, knowledge and understanding of Islam: it is about *'putting people in the right direction'*. It is important to improve '*learning about the Islamic scriptures & how to interpret the Koran'*.	Teaching & discussion sessions about mainstream Islam in the mosque including about extremism issues; community awareness activities around Islam (newsletters & CDs etc.)

Figure 4: External level causes of radicalisation (2)

EXTERNAL LEVEL CAUSES OF RADICALISATION:				
Economic: economic deprivation & poverty				
o **Delivery Model: Socio-Economic Focus:** addressing wider contextual issues/ factors in the environment (that can contribute to individual vulnerability); addressing grievances that ideologues are exploiting.				

Project Examples		Root causes identified	Rationale to tackle violent extremism	Prevent Delivery model planned
Project F		Socio-economic deprivation: young people are disenfranchised; lack of aspirations & education; get involved in gangs.	Young people 'at the brink' could be manipulated by others; need to introduce issue of ve in organisations/ community; series workshops with yp; airing grievances (socio-economic, addressing wider context & grievances) - also partly comms. & dialogue & also organisational/capacity building	Series of workshops with young people; (socio-economic, addressing wider context)
Project E[28]		Integration as key issue; Somalis feel excluded; socio-economic deprivation; lack of services; young people NEET; young offending	Getting young people who normally just hang around & get in fights' drugs to spend time on other things; build skills	Work with young offenders; employment support; leisure and citizenship courses
Project G		Low educational achievement; drugs and crime; gangs and territoralism	1st focus: Youth club to reach out to vulnerable young people & help them better access mainstream services & build relationships. Providing mentoring to vulnerable young people through employment support (with inter-faith element as delivered by a church). 2nd focus: running discussion nights for young people to improve dialogue & air frustrations.	Youth club & support and mentoring for young people; newsnite style discussions and incentive trips.
		Young people in the borough experience *'low pride and self-esteem'*. This is not helped by there being a '*lack of physical activities, including football and promoting other sports events'*.	To support young people to keep fit, increase discipline and feel part of mainstream society through boxing sessions. Having workshops discuss issues prevalent to young people.	Boxing sessions as the main activity of the project. Workshops run e.g. around stop & search to address misunderstandings with the police.
		Social exclusion of young people is an issue locally., including problems around anti-social behaviour, crime and drug use.	The aim is to use sport to reduce anti-social behaviour, crime and drug use among young people.	Football training for young people, alongside educational workshops & outreach.

---

[28] Please note: project E is a diverse project, where different delivery models are being adopted for different strands; hence this project appears more than once

Figure 5: Social level causes of radicalisation

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5" style="background:yellow">

SOCIAL LEVEL CAUSES OF RADICALISATION:
Social identification: identification of social groups; crisis in identity & belonging; threat to group seen as personal threat.
Network dynamics: social networks; role of leaders & 'radicalisers'; internet & prisons.
Relative deprivation: group dynamics of frustration & social unrest.

- **Delivery Model: Community Capacity Building and Organisational focus:** increasing resilience of communities to violent extremism**;** challenging the violent extremist ideology & supporting mainstream voices**;** disrupting those who promote violent extremism & supporting institutions where they are active.

</td></tr>
</table>

Project Examples		Root causes identified	Rationale to tackle violent extremism	Prevent Delivery model planned
Project H		Socio-economic deprivation & health inequalities; disaffected youth; intergenerational gap & parenting	Need to build infrastructure & capacity in mosques to resist violent extremist narratives; encouraging participation of young people & women in mosques	Grant funding to smaller mosques to run small PVE projects
Project E[29]		Weak capacity and infrastructure of Somali organisations in the Borough; excluded young people; gap in mainstream services	Need of Somali young people are not being met by mainstream services; need to build capacity of grass-roots organisations	Capacity building work with Somali organisations
Project I		Integration issues; women & families are hard to reach; economic deprivation; grievances around foreign policy; identity issues for young people; parenting gap and intergenerational tensions; need to balance Islam and western values.	Need for parenting support to aid intergenerational gap; support parents to balance western & Islam together; building capacity of women around violent extremism	Training core families (women) in parenting support; to act as PVE 'community champions')
		There are capacity building needs in local mosques.	Media training will enable mosques to be better equipped to raise local awareness of their activities and to improve relationships with marginalised members of their congregation	To provide media training for imams and mosque committee members, to build their organisational capacity.

---

[29] As above

Figure 6: Individual causes of radicalisation

INDIVIDUAL LEVEL CAUSES OF RADICALISATION:
Psychological profile: psychological variables & characteristics (no single profile) **Personal experiences:** cognitive & emotional experiences & life events. **Rationality:** individual motivations; gradual shifts in motivations & behaviour   o **Delivery Model: Individual Behaviour Change focus:** enhancing the resilience & changing the behaviour of individuals that have been identified as 'radical' or 'at risk'; supporting individuals who are being targeted and recruited to the cause of violent extremism

Project Examples		Root causes identified	Rationale to tackle violent extremism	Prevent Delivery model planned
		Youth on youth violence; NEET; drug abuse; underachievement; antisocial behaviour; sexual exploitation	Correlation with gang mediation project; need for skills based workshops to challenge behaviour; sports & youth work; creating sense of belonging; discussions	Discussion workshops around broader issues; skills workshops; excursions and sports work
		Identity issues, unemployment and educational under-achievement; drugs and criminality; intergenerational gap, knowledge gap / lack of understanding of Islam	There is therefore a need to fill this knowledge gap and provide young people with community support and role models.	The method is designed to modify behaviour and this includes lifestyle changes and reflective learning. Provide accredited courses and interactive workshops in matters relating to citizenships, mediation and research skills. Providing mentoring session and topic based discussion/learning.