



The Global
SDG Synthesis
Coalition



UNODC



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STRIVE
Juvenile

Preventing violence, saving lives: What works for reducing homicides and conflict-related deaths?

Crime Congress
29th September 2026



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Independent Evaluation Section – at a glance

- Functionally and operationally independent section within UNODC
- Reports evaluation results directly to the Executive Director and Member States
- Guided by CND/CCPCJ resolutions, UNODC policy and UN evaluation norms and standards
- Manages evaluations across UNODC mandates, including crime, terrorism and violent extremism

IES pillars of work

improved UNODC and partner countries' accountability and evaluation-based decision making in the response to drugs, crime and terrorism



Evaluation results



Evaluation capacity development



Evaluation knowledge management and innovation



Knowledge management, innovation and learning

Toolkits



Meta-Synthesis & Toolkit for evaluating in Fragile and Conflict-affected Settings initiated

Evaluation Toolkit on development evaluation and AI in crime prevention evaluations

Meta-Syntheses



Most recent: 2022-2025 (incl case studies) to inform strategic decision-making

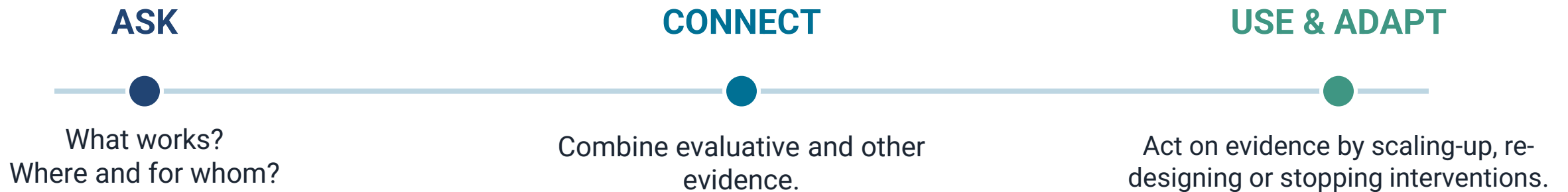


USED BY ALL PERSONNEL FOR ALL EVALUATIONS AT UNODC & UNEP



Role of evaluation and syntheses in crime prevention

- Strengthening of accountability in prevention efforts
- Offering evidence at different levels to inform decision-making
- Strengthen institutional learning and applying good practices





The Global
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Our Mission

Harnessing the power of
evaluation and synthesis to
accelerate the achievement
of the 2030 agenda.



The Global SDG Synthesis Coalition



Leadership
Group

Secretariat



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Evaluation
Office

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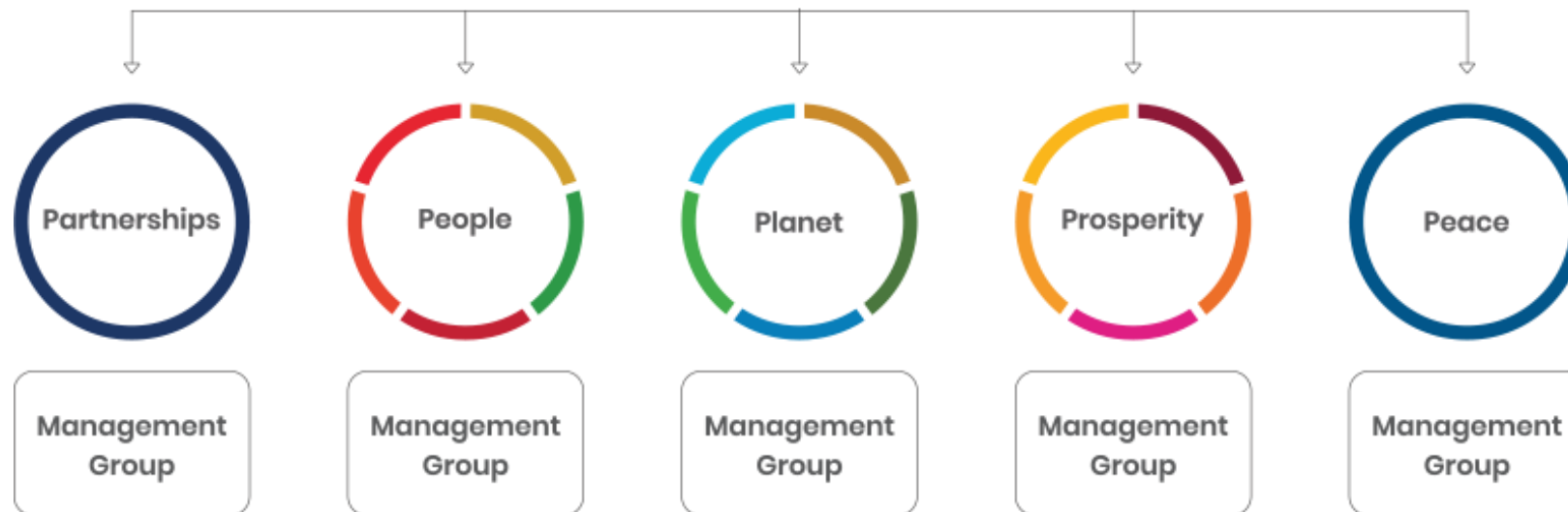
ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK



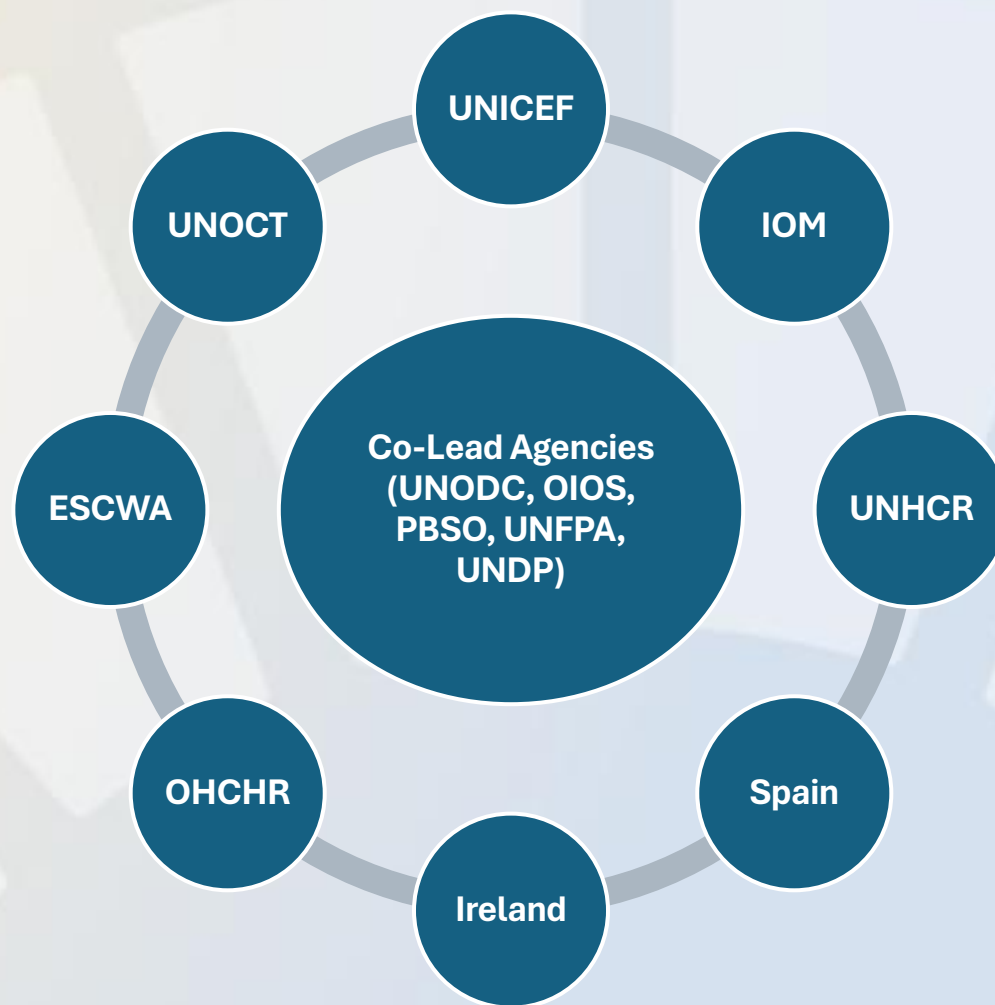
Campbell
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UN SDG System Wide Evaluation
Office



Peace Pillar Management Group



Donors (UNDP
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A suite of products



**Preventing violence, saving lives:
What works for reducing homicides
and conflict-related deaths?**

A synthesis of evaluative evidence
related to the peace pillar of the SDGs.

FINAL REPORT

16 PEACE, JUSTICE
AND STRONG
INSTITUTIONS

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**Preventing violence, saving lives:
What works for reducing homicides
and conflict-related deaths?**

A plain language brief based on the Peace Pillar synthesis of evaluations and
research by the Global SDG Synthesis Coalition. The full synthesis report was
authored by the American Institutes for Research.

10 key takeaways
and their programming and policy implications

Evidence	Implication
Strengthening social inclusion Media and communication initiatives can promote peace and reduce violence, especially in crisis settings. - In Uganda, radio messages encouraged defections from the Lord's Resistance Army, leading to fewer fatalities, especially after increases in cotton prices created job opportunities. - In Nigeria, broadcasts by religious leaders shifted attitudes toward reconciliation with ex-Boko Haram fighters.	Media and communication initiatives appear to be more effective when implemented alongside economic efforts - such as social protection and job creation initiatives. Embedding them into wider strategies, with economic investments, may increase sustainability, as seen in Uganda, where labour market opportunities reinforced peace messaging.
Community engagement, policy advocacy and local partnerships strengthened the sustainability of media and communication initiatives. Where programmes lacked strong local systems, attitude shifts were temporary. - In Albania, a United Nations Children's Fund anti-trafficking programme built digital literacy courses and Facebook channels for resources to remain available beyond the project lifespan. - In Nigeria, involving religious leaders in peace broadcasts increased trust and resonance.	The effectiveness and sustainability of communication initiatives are often enhanced when they involve structured engagement with communities and local organizations from the outset. Formal partnerships with community organizations, support for local leadership, and investment in digital materials can help initiatives remain relevant in the longer term.
Combined interventions - such as those addressing infrastructure, governance and social cohesion - were linked to stronger peace outcomes than standalone programmes. - In Jordan, investments in schools, health centres and roads, alongside trust-building between host and refugee communities, improved social cohesion. - In East Darfur, the combination of land dispute resolution committees and basic services reduced conflict.	Evaluations to test how different components interact and contribute to peace could enable stronger lessons on the most effective combinations.

			SDG-16 Outcomes						
			Homicides	Violent crime	Trust in police	Conflict-related deaths	Conflict-related violence	Conflict resolution	Others (specify)
SDG-16 intervention Topic	Social Inclusion	Peace education		●	● ●			● ●	●
		Peace messaging and media		●		●	●	●	● ●
		Dispute resolution	●	●	●			● ●	● ●
		Social inclusion, social cohesion, and reintegration ¹			●			● ●	● ●
		Intergroup dialogue and interaction		●				●	● ●
		Others (specify)							

Synthesis scope



Focus on 16.1 (reduce violence) and 16.4 (crime)

Activity Category	Specific Initiatives
Social inclusion (strengthening social cohesion and conflict resolution as well as inter-group perceptions and relations)	• Communications • Economic inclusion • Gender/youth inclusion for conflict prevention • Reintegration of ex-combatants or other ex-offenders • Social cohesion for conflict prevention
Safe environments (ending violence and building a safe and secure environment)	• Border management • Democracy and peaceful elections • Early warning systems • Governance strengthening to prevent conflict, violence, or crime • Law enforcement capacity • Youth crime prevention
Peace processes and conflict prevention (supporting peace processes, oversight, and post-conflict justice)	• Gender for peace • Governance strengthening to respond to conflict • Natural resource management • Peace agreement implementation • Security and stabilization strengthening • Social cohesion for conflict resolution • Transitional justice • Youth for peace

Synthesis questions



- 1. What works? Where?** What interventions are effective in **reducing homicides and conflict-related deaths**? What is the impact of these interventions on homicides and conflict-related deaths? How do these impacts differ across different contexts (e.g., low-income vs middle-income countries, acute crisis, vs. protracted crisis, vs. non-crisis LMIC contexts)?
- 2. How or why does it work?** Why are interventions to reduce conflict-related deaths and homicides effective (or not)? How do these interventions achieve their objectives (or not)? How do contextual, implementation, and design factors influence the effectiveness of these interventions?
- 3. Leave no one behind.** How do gender and marginalization affect the impact of interventions to reduce conflict-related deaths and homicides? How did interventions consider non-discrimination, equity, and equality considerations in their design and implementation?

Synthesis methods



Impact evaluations

10,096 studies identified from scholarly and institutional databases

6,785 studies excluded after screening title and abstract

3,066 studies excluded after machine learning

171 studies excluded after full-text screening and 35 studies excluded during coding

Coding and risk of bias assessment completed for 39 studies

Performance and process evaluations

3,000+ records reviewed through institutional databases and management group

Manual eligibility screening of title and abstract using inclusion criteria

448 evaluations excluded after full-text screening

438 studies included in evidence gap map

77 studies sampled for full-text analysis

75 studies included in analysis

Police presence reduced violence, militarised policing increased risks

Expanding access to policing often reduced violent crime, while militarised policing showed limited effectiveness and risked human rights abuses



UN Photo

Police presence and capacity:

- Reduced homicides and violent crime in Brazil
- Reduced reliance on vigilante justice through police alarm systems in South Africa

Militarised policing:

- Limited evidence of crime reduction
- Increased human rights abuses in Colombia

Community policing showed mixed results, firearm regulations reduced violence



Community policing improved legitimacy and perceptions of safety in some contexts but showed inconsistent impacts on violence; firearm restrictions reduced firearm mortality in Latin America.



UN Photo

Community policing

- **Had no measurable effects on crime in Uganda**
- **Improved access to police and security in the DRC**

Firearms regulation

- **Permanent gun-carry restrictions reduced firearm mortality in Colombia**

Media and communication can reduce violence

Communication initiatives shifted attitudes toward peace and, in some contexts, reduced violence, particularly when messages were trusted and aligned with economic realities, and embedded in local systems that supported sustainability.



UN Photo

- Large-scale radio campaigns reduced fatalities in active conflict
- Trusted messengers (e.g., religious leaders) strengthened credibility
- **Uganda: Radio messages encouraging LRA defections reduced fatalities — strongest when labour market opportunities increased**
- **Nigeria: Religious leader broadcasts improved attitudes toward reconciliation**
- **Albania; Digital literacy resources and online communication stayed available after project completion**

Cross-cutting facilitators

Programmes were more sustainable when institutionalised through laws, policies or systemic capacity, and supported by strong partnerships.



UN Photo

- Legal anchoring strengthened continuity beyond project cycles
- Institutional capacity-building, coupled with involving law enforcement and community actors in initiatives, improved implementation durability
- **Malawi: Institutionalised paralegal services improved access to justice and reduced case backlogs**
- **Nigeria & Sudan: Government engagement strengthened legitimacy and durability of social cohesion initiatives**

Barriers to effective implementation

Programmes often fell short, due to weak coordination, unrealistic goals and failure to account for cultural or political dynamics. External shocks, like conflict and displacement, further disrupted implementation.



UN Photo

- Wide geographic scope limited depth, specificity, and effectiveness of interventions
- Cross-border disruptions hindered effectiveness of law enforcement initiatives, pointing to a need for cross-border collaboration
- A UNODC urban safety project in Kenya, Mexico and Uzbekistan found that a focus on one country instead of three may have led to better outcomes related to organized crime and extremism.

Inclusion often prioritized – but evidence gaps remain

Many performance and process evaluations — and a notable subset of impact evaluations — emphasised gender and youth inclusion. However, few evaluations examined participation of other vulnerable populations.



UN Photo

- Gender and youth inclusion frequently featured in programme design
- Evaluations showed limited rigorous evidence linking inclusion directly to reductions in violence
- Minimal focus on other marginalised groups (e.g., persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities)
- Inclusion was stronger in intent than in demonstrated impact

Implication: Stronger theories of change and more rigorous mixed-method and experimental evaluations are needed to understand how inclusion reduces conflict and violence.

Future research, evaluation and synthesis



Where does evidence need to go next?



- **Measure outcomes, not just activities and capacity**
- **Build evidence across a wider range of contexts**
- **Strengthen evidence on inclusion and differential effects**
- **Future synthesis on crime prevention, criminal justice, organized crime and institutional effectiveness can help connect fragmented evidence**



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STRIVE JUVENILE: PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN BY TERRORIST AND VIOLENT EXTREMIST GROUPS

Using evidence in crime prevention: what five years and three
countries tell us

Global evidence synthesis: preventing violence, saving lives
Fifteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice | Abu Dhabi | 29 September 2026



A SERIOUS FORM OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN



Who we work for: Children associated or formerly associated with armed and criminal groups, including terrorist groups: targets of recruitment, and primarily victims.

UNODC since 2015: The Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups, the UNODC Roadmap on the treatment of children associated with these groups, and training manuals adapted to national contexts.

The approach: Child rights and security are complementary: child protection is a precondition for sustainable security and development. The response runs across three areas, prevention, justice, and rehabilitation and reintegration, and is localized through bottom-up work led by youth and communities.

#SeeTheChild awareness campaign at a school, north-east Nigeria



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STRIVE JUVENILE: ONE PROJECT, FOUR INTERRELATED PILLARS

2021-2026

Funded by the European Union,
implemented by UNODC.

Three partner countries



Indonesia

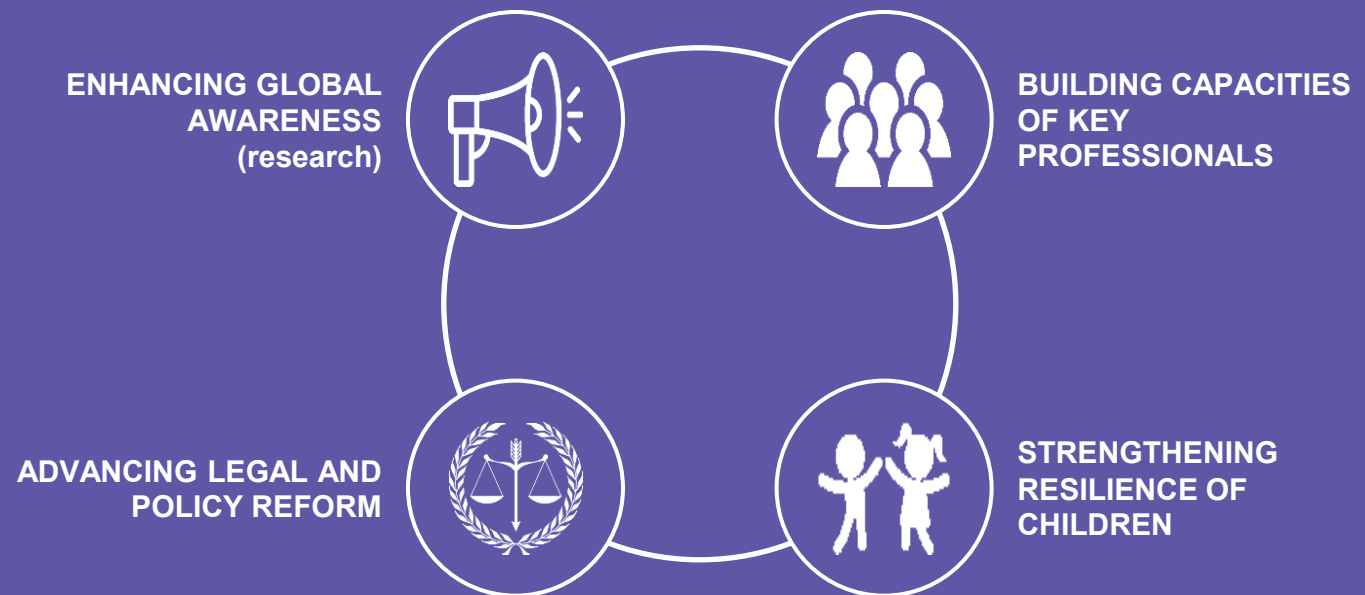


Iraq



Nigeria

Two independent evaluations: mid-term (2023)
and final (2026), managed by the Independent
Evaluation Section.

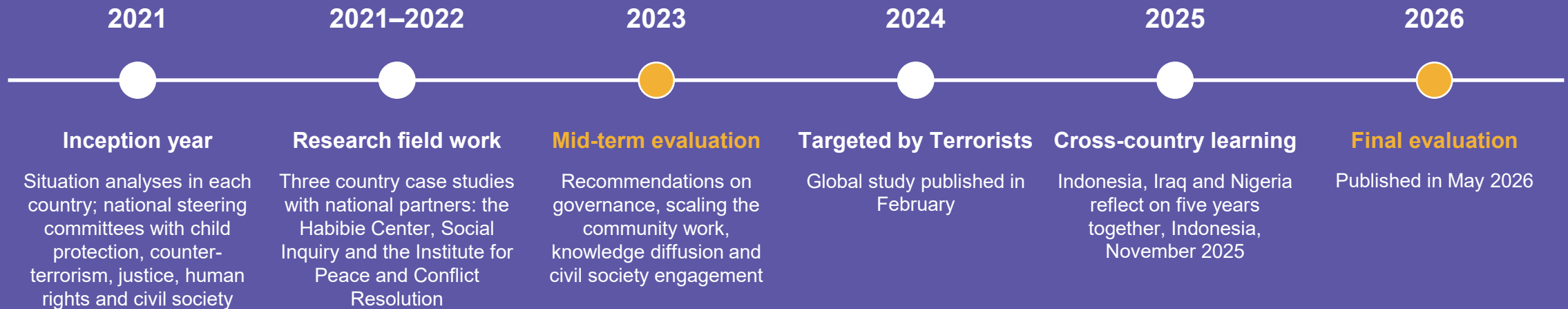


How they interlock (final evaluation, good practice): evidence informs policy and tools, knowledge products reinforce training, and continuous engagement with children, youth and communities keeps the work relevant on the ground.

Synthesis takeaway: combined interventions were linked to stronger peace outcomes than standalone programmes



EVIDENCE BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER



Mid-term evaluation: situation analyses and inclusive steering committees recorded as good practice; the one-year inception phase as a lesson learned; the situation analyses continue to serve government counterparts as an evidence base



PILLAR 1: ENHANCING GLOBAL AWARENESS



Targeted by Terrorists: Child Recruitment, Exploitation and Reintegration in Indonesia, Iraq and Nigeria (UNODC, February 2024)



- Documents how groups target children for recruitment, drawing on the accounts of people associated with these groups as children, through national research partners in all three countries
- Final evaluation: a robust evidence base that informed policy dialogue and system reform; stakeholders described the study as timely and critical in reframing children as victims of coercion and exploitation
- Contributing to ECOSOC resolution 2024/12 (23 July 2024), General Assembly resolution 79/188 (17 December 2024) and the revised EU Guidelines on Children and Armed Conflict

Use of evidence: research defined the problem before the response was designed, and that definition travelled into policy



PILLAR 2: ADVANCING LEGAL AND POLICY REFORM

22

normative documents: 14
Nigeria, 5 Indonesia, 3
Iraq

Final evaluation: the project contributed to reframing national approaches toward rehabilitation and reintegration over punitive responses, including in contexts permitting prosecution of children.



Iraq



Endorsement of a National roadmap to support the rehabilitation and reintegration of child detainees formerly associated with terrorist groups; 2 guidance notes developed



Nigeria



Launch of Nigeria Call to Action (2022); 8 guidance notes developed



Indonesia



Ministerial letter establishing a national framework for the rehabilitation and reintegration of children associated with terrorist groups; 3 guidance notes developed

Synthesis takeaway: peacebuilding was more sustainable when institutionalized through laws, policies or systemic capacity and supported by strong partnerships: legal anchoring



PILLAR 3: BUILDING CAPACITIES OF KEY PROFESSIONALS

44

capacity-building workshops,
2021-2025

1,053

people trained: 267
Indonesia, 453 Iraq, 333
Nigeria; 424 women

85 per cent

rated the training highly
useful (87 Indonesia, 83 Iraq,
83 Nigeria)

Content followed the evidence: child-centred justice; treatment of children deprived of liberty in terrorism-related contexts; rehabilitation and reintegration; psychosocial assessment. Delivered mostly through national workshops.

Impact finding: STRIVE Juvenile supported the alignment of justice and security responses with child-rights standards in Iraq, Indonesia and Nigeria, including increased use of diversion, improved coordination and shifts in professional and community attitudes. Scale and durability depend on sustained political commitment, institutionalization and resourcing.



Inside the reformatories, Iraq



Renovations and equipment in seven reformatory facilities in Baghdad and Mosul produced durable benefits.

Synthesis takeaway: rights-based approaches and accountability appear central to sustaining gains; militarized approaches carry clear risks



PILLAR 4: RESILIENCE OF CHILDREN AND COMMUNITIES

22,655

children reached directly
across the three countries,
against a target of 9,000
(monitoring data)

Final evaluation: evidence of behavioural change, strengthened community resilience and improved reintegration outcomes, especially in Indonesia and Nigeria; youth-led initiatives fostered leadership, peer support and community engagement.



Indonesia



National Youth-led CSO Peace Generation with the national scout movement, Pramuka: peace education rooted in primary schools, with counsellors trained and materials from manuals to a board game. Partner surveys reported increased resilience among students.



Nigeria



32 Youth Peace Champions across Borno, Adamawa and Yobe; #SeeTheChild youth-led products reached over 100 million people; peace clubs, intergenerational dialogues, STARLIGHT storytelling theatre; three civil society partners on family- and community-based reintegration.



Iraq



Psychosocial assistance, reintegration support and livelihoods work with juveniles inside the reformatories and after release.

Synthesis takeaways: communication shifts attitudes where local systems carry the message; reintegration and prevention are stronger where families have livelihoods



WHAT THE TWO EVALUATIONS TELL US

Findings

- Highly relevant to national needs; activities largely delivered as planned and to a generally high standard, with wide geographic coverage relative to resources
- A robust evidence base that informed policy dialogue and system reform
- Alignment of justice and security responses with child-rights standards in all three countries; mindset shifts: children framed as victims and rights-holders
- Mid-term recommendations acted on: governance replicated, research diffused, cross-country learning initiated

Lessons learned and good practices

- Attitudes and reintegration outcomes take multi-year engagement, beyond three-year cycles
- Visible community-led preventative and rehabilitative interventions crucial for meeting immediate needs and reinforcing advocacy and policy gains
- Youth engagement is most effective when young people are genuine partners; training cascades when trainers are mentored
- Early and continuous stakeholder engagement was found to strengthen ownership and facilitate smoother implementation



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WHAT COMES NEXT: PROTECTING FUTURES



Brazil and the Philippines, with the European Union.

Two outcomes, four outputs. Strengthened government strategies, policies and mechanisms; strengthened resilience of children in vulnerable situations and their communities. The outputs carry the four pillars: global awareness, legal and policy frameworks, professional capacity, and the capacity of children and communities to resist recruitment and reintegrate.

Starts as STRIVE did. An inception phase built on a strong evidence base: co-design and governance, needs assessment, governance structure, detailed workplan.



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THANK YOU



**Final independent in-depth evaluation
of STRIVE Juvenile**
UNODC Independent Evaluation Section,
May 2026



Rewriting narratives
STRIVE Juvenile in north-east
Nigeria (video)

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What comes next? Building a stronger evidence system for crime, justice and peace

The Coalition is part of global efforts to build an evidence infrastructure and pipeline to make high-quality evidence synthesis more connected, responsive and useful for policy and practice.

- **Sectoral Hubs on 'Crime and Justice' and 'Peace and Effective Institutions'**
- Identify priority questions where living synthesis could inform decisions
- Connect existing evaluations, research and evidence repositories
- Strengthen the link between evidence and policy processes.

Thank you!

- Champion and apply the evidence
- Contact us if you have specific comments or suggestions for further Peace Pillar policy priorities
- The future for SDG synthesis: static to interactive access to evidence
- The Coalition as an evidence connector

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