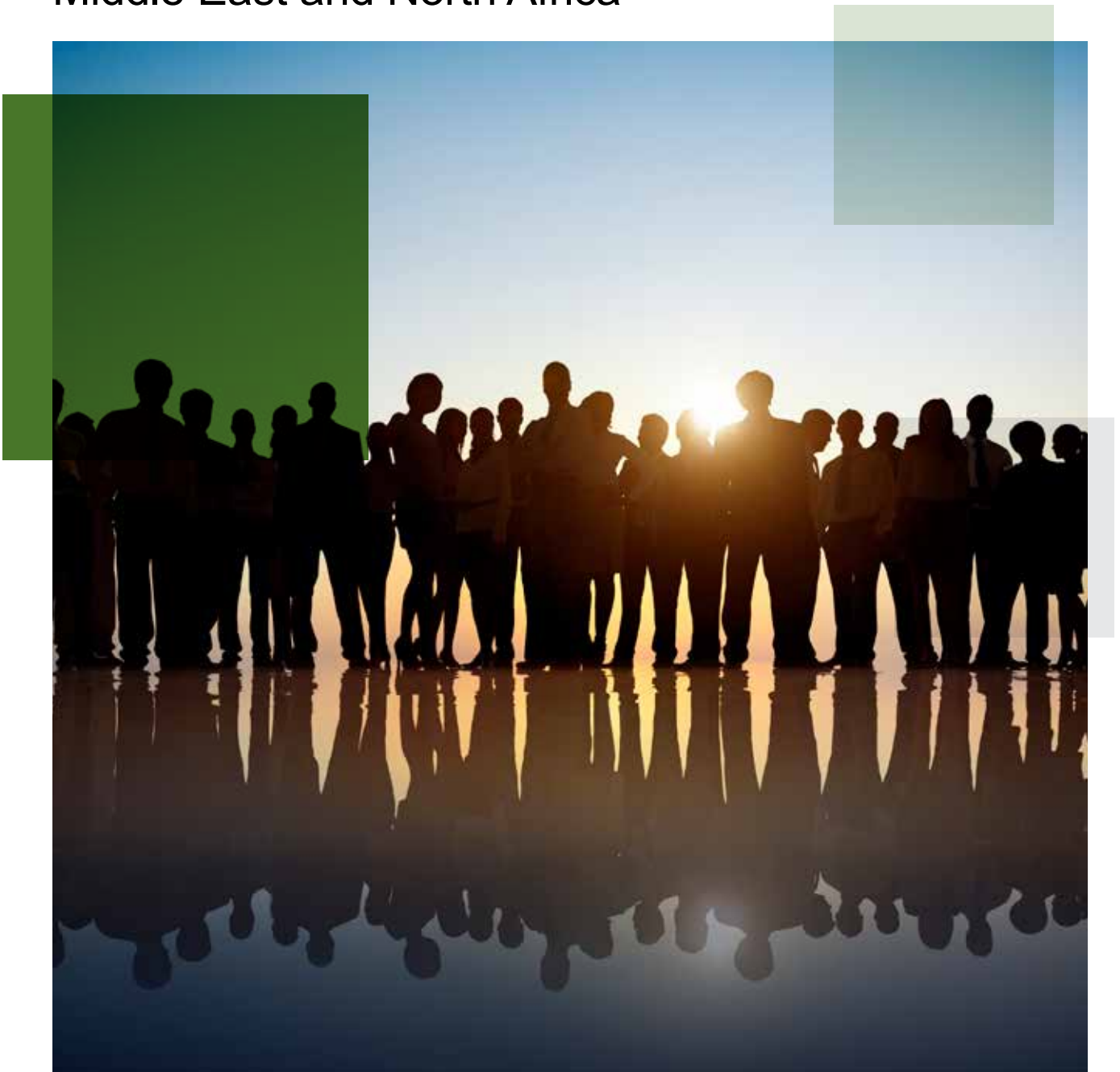**All-Party Parliamentary Group for the British Council**

Building Young People's Resilience to Violent Extremism in the Middle East and North Africa

About the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for the British Council

The British Council All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) is a cross-party group of Members of the House of Commons and Members of the House of Lords who have an interest in the work of the British Council. Its purpose is for parliamentarians to learn more about and better understand the British Council, and to support the British Council, offering advice and encouragement in both its everyday and long term work.

The British Council APPG hosts a number of meetings in Parliament throughout the year. It also has a sub-committee which runs a series of inquiries into areas of importance to the British Council's work.

The British Council supports the work of the APPG through providing its secretariat. In this role it takes direction from the APPG's chairs and organises meetings and events according to the group's agenda.

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Foreword by the Chair, David Warburton MP

The British Council All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) sub-committee launched this inquiry last year in response to a growing sense of international concern about young people becoming attracted to violent forms of extremist activity. Since we began the inquiry, violent extremism has continued on its grim, pitiless march, with attacks rippling through the UK, Europe and, of course, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region itself. Many experts are left wondering what tangible action can be deployed to tackle the forces which drive this behaviour at its fundamental roots.

At the beginning of 2016, the UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism set out an approach to prevent violent extremism. This inquiry has aimed to respond and align to that framework, with a particular focus on 'soft power' interventions in strategically important countries for the UK's security, prosperity and influence. In particular we have looked at the means for building resilience in young people who are at risk of radicalisation and violent extremism.

In our exploration of the UK's diplomatic, cultural and educational interventions and how these can be best used to harden the resilience of young people to violent extremism, the inquiry concentrated primarily on those underlying drivers of violent extremism against which cultural relations programmes in areas such as education, skills, civil society and culture can have a meaningful role to play.

However, as we started our examination, it quickly became evident that many issues were considerably deeper. Experts consistently reminded us that only a very small minority of young people are attracted to any forms of violent extremism, and it would therefore be profitable to look also at the majority who face the same risks and vulnerability – the same societal, political and economic grievances – but do not see violence as any kind of route to redemption.

Evidence submitted to the inquiry suggested that there is a real opportunity for the UK and the international community to act quickly in providing the skills, education and socio-economic opportunities for young people to build resilience against extremist narratives. In light of this, the

sub-committee is calling for a move away from the usual 'downstream' and countering focus on immediate contributing factors and towards an 'upstream', preventative approach, addressing the fundamental factors that build an environment in which violent extremism is able to be nurtured.

I believe that it is only by addressing these underlying 'push' factors that permanent solutions can be found to the generational challenge of violent extremism, and the sub-committee believes that it is specifically in this arena that cultural relations and soft power interventions can have a meaningful and positive impact for young people.

It has been both fascinating and rewarding to have chaired and launched this important inquiry. I would like to thank my committee members unreservedly for their time, dedication and passion in supporting this important subject, which will continue to be discussed and debated for many years to come. I would also like to offer my personal thanks to all the experts who submitted written evidence, alongside those who gave oral evidence and invaluable insights to the inquiry, many of whom travelled considerable distances to the UK in order to take part. I am also very pleased to thank those at the British Council who worked long and hard in so ably facilitating the whole enterprise.

The young people are the future generations who will inherit our work. It is essential that we work with them and invest in their future. The journey is long, uncertain and unpredictable, and we must continue to support dialogue, education and skills. And, in doing so, we must work hand in hand with our global partners if we are to construct a safe, prosperous and secure future for the generations to come.

David Warburton FRSA MP
London, November 2017

Executive Summary

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is by no means the only region facing a threat from violent extremism. But the large scale and devastating impact of attacks by Daesh and other terrorist groups on the region's security and prosperity mean that governments and communities require support from the international community.

Young people are the primary target of violent extremist recruiters. The reasons why young people turn towards violent extremism are complex, but recruiters often attract them with narratives that speak to their grievances, experiences and identities. Until relatively recently, the focus of tackling this issue has been at the point at which somebody becomes violent, rather than before they reach that point.

Prevention is essential if we want to move beyond containment of violent extremism towards a long-term solution. The UK Government, international community and governments in the MENA region can achieve far more durable results by focusing more on tackling the underlying grievances before the point at which people become violent or radicalised. The main goal should be to create safe, inclusive and prosperous societies, which do not foster violence.

A key part of the UK's role in supporting MENA to build the resilience of its population lies in supporting populations through cultural and educational contributions. There are three areas of risk factors that we identified as areas where cultural relations can make an impact:

- **Economic factors** including lack of opportunities as a result of poverty, low growth, unemployment (particularly youth unemployment, exacerbated by demographic 'youth bulges'), lack of skills, poor education and the failure of core public services, and general socio-economic marginalisation and inequality.

- **Civic factors** including corruption, poor governance, weak rule of law, violations of human rights, a lack of voice and influence for particular sections of society, and a sense of social, economic or political injustice.

- **Social factors** including individual psychology and binary thinking, discrimination, inter-community, inter-generational, and gender inequalities, and a marginalisation of certain sections of the population – particularly the young.

However, in working upstream we need to manage a particularly difficult conundrum. The sort of change required to manage the economic, civic and social deficits that facilitate violent extremism takes a long time (the World Bank estimates 15–30 years or a generation)[1]. Mobilising violence extremism on the other hand, especially where there are economic, civic and social deficits, can happen fast. Managing this conundrum requires co-ordination across all policies that are relevant to violent extremism, and

[1] Conflict, Security and Development" World Development Report (2011):
http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/brief/operationalizing-the-wdr-2011-conflict-security-and-development

the simultaneous implementation of shorter term policies that provide alternatives in areas and communities vulnerable to violent extremism, whilst building the trust required to facilitate the success of longer term approaches.

We found a number of interesting and effective projects run by UK and international organisations working to address each of these factors:

- **Programmes addressing economic factors** built soft skills and resilience; science and innovation capacity building; entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship; language training and increased access to education.

- **Programmes addressing civic factors** researched and understood the needs of communities; promoted debate and new ideas; and connected marginalised groups to policymakers.

- **Programmes addressing social factors** addressed gender inequality; promoted critical thinking and fostered debate and common purpose.

While much is being done on a small scale, much more could be done with further investment into building resilience to violent extremism and better co-ordination between different actors and across different policy areas. We recognise the need for accountability of this investment,

and in our recommendations, we also encourage all organisations working in the sectors highlighted to increase their evidence base and invest more time and resource into evaluation against this objective.

We were impressed with the range of work and number of organisations carrying out work in this area and so another key recommendation is that all those that have contributed to this inquiry form a new UK Community of Practice on Preventing Violent Extremism.

More specific recommendations, based on the wealth of evidence we received during the course of this inquiry are detailed throughout the report.

1

Introduction

Background

1. In June 2016, the British Council All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) launched its first inquiry to examine routes towards building resilience amongst young people at risk of being attracted to violent extremism in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

2. A sub-committee was formed to conduct the inquiry. It consisted of David Warburton MP (Chair), Rehman Chishti MP, Baroness Hodgson of Abinger, CBE, Stephen Gethins MP, Stephen Kinnock MP, Lord McConnell of Tweed, (until August 2016) Baroness Mobarik, CBE, (until August 2016), Lord Purvis, CBE, and Baroness Suttie.

3. The sub-committee issued a public call for expert submissions and invited the British Council, other organisations and experts in the field to offer evidence into the ways in which soft power approaches can help build young people's resilience to violent extremism.

4. The inquiry was launched to respond to the growing phenomenon of young people in MENA at risk of being attracted to violent extremist groups. It aimed to inform international organisations of how to help build the capacity of individuals to be less vulnerable to the recruitment tactics of terrorist groups, and to reject using violent means to achieve political or ideological ends.

Lord Purvis of Tweed and Baroness Suttie visiting Lycee Moulay Abdellah, English Baccalaureate school in Rabat, Morocco.

Purpose of the Report

5. This report seeks to understand the main relevant upstream drivers of violent extremism in MENA. These were identified in the evidence presented to the inquiry as:
1) Economic, educational and skills factors;
2) Civic factors; and
3) Social factors.

6. The report also explores programmes currently in place in MENA that help reduce the risk of violent extremism. It then considers how experience from these can be applied more broadly to identify further interventions that can be considered by the UK Government, the British Council, and other UK and international organisations working in the region.

7. The sub-committee chose to focus primarily on those underlying drivers of violent extremism against which cultural relations programmes in areas such as education, skills, civil society, and culture can have a meaningful role to play in building resilience. It did not choose as its remit a comprehensive exploration of other, wider drivers of violent extremism (e.g. climate change, radicalisation in prisons, or religious fundamentalism).

8. The approach of the sub-committee has been to move away from the usual 'downstream' focus on the immediate factors that contribute to violent extremism, and instead to take an 'upstream' approach highlighting those more fundamental factors that build an environment in which violent extremism can flourish. These factors can create a substrate of distrust between citizens and the state, providing a fertile soil in which extremism can take root. The sub-committee believes that it is only by addressing these underlying 'push' factors that permanent solutions can be found to the generational challenge of violent extremism.

Geographical Scope of the Report

9. While the report acknowledges that the issue is a global one, the primary focus of this inquiry has been on MENA, given that it is a key priority region of the world for the UK, with acute challenges of violent extremism and resulting security concerns. According to the Institute for Economics and Peace, six of the ten countries most impacted by terrorism are located in the region.[2]

10. Evidence submitted to the inquiry suggests that many of the issues outlined in this report are particularly prevalent in North Africa. The inquiry therefore focused on this part of the region. A large number of the foreign fighters joining violent extremist groups have originated from North Africa. Recent estimates suggest that (as of October 2015) approx. 6,000 Tunisians had travelled to Syria as foreign fighters[3] – more per capita than from any other country.[4] It is important to note that since this inquiry started, the defeat of Daesh (so-called Islamic State) in Mosul and Raqqa has led experts to suggest that foreign fighters are likely to return home, potentially increasing the risks of terror attacks in their home countries and elsewhere.

11. North Africa has already seen numerous terrorist attacks in recent years – notably the Sousse and Bardo Museum attacks in Tunisia and the Sinai Province plane attack in Egypt. During the course of this inquiry the problem has also been brought closer to home, with the UK experiencing three serious terrorist attacks in Manchester and London, in which three of the attackers were of North African origin. Similarly, attacks in Paris, Nice, Marseille and Brussels have been committed by members of the North African diaspora in Europe. What happens in North Africa and the wider Middle East directly affects the UK.

12. The sub-committee chose to focus primarily on Tunisia and Morocco as key countries in North Africa. These countries have the highest global youth unemployment rates as well as the highest number of foreign fighters travelling to join Daesh. In addition, the report highlights the Syrian refugee crisis as an area of grave concern. As the civil war continues and Syrian refugees are displaced for longer periods, they are more vulnerable to a number of negative pathways, including recruitment for violent extremism. The sub-committee therefore also focused on Lebanon, as it struggles to deal the largest refugee crisis in modern history, resulting from the Syrian conflict.

[2] Global Terrorism Index: http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2017/02/Global-Terrorism-Index-2016.pdf
[3] United Nations Security Council, Implementation of Security Council Resolution 2178 (2014) by States Affected by Foreign Terrorist Fighters: Second Report. S/2015/683, September 2, 2015.
[4] United Nations Security Council, Implementation of Security Council Resolution 2178 (2014) by States Affected by Foreign Terrorist Fighters: Second Report. S/2015/683, September 2, 2015.

Evidence

13. The inquiry took place between July 2016 and July 2017, taking formal oral evidence from 19 expert witnesses (see Appendix 1), and 15 written submissions, (see Appendix 2).

14. The sub-committee undertook two visits to MENA: Tunisia in November 2016 and Morocco in March 2017 (see Appendix 3).

15. The Call for Evidence, issued in July 2016, and the evidence itself is also all published online.[5]

16. The sub-committee hopes that the report findings will offer the UK Government, the British Council, experts and practitioners, advice on effective mechanisms for preventing violent extremism at its roots. It hopes to stimulate a debate on the role that cultural, educational and civil society interventions can play in the UK's policy towards violent extremism, and support a fresh, practical and effective approach towards supporting the MENA region.

Structure of the report

17. The report is divided into three main sections;

a. An analysis of violent extremism, the main drivers towards it and the key challenges currently facing the region.

b. An analysis of resilience, and an examination of how its causes are being and can be addressed by the UK government, the British Council other international organisations working in this area.

c. The sub-committee's conclusions and recommendations.

2

Violent Extremism and the Factors Contributing to it

2.1 Understanding Violent Extremism

"The terms 'radicalisation' and 'extremism' are useful for denoting the phenomenon with which we are concerned, but not for defining or delimiting it… But definition and delimitation are essential, as most significant political groups in the MENA region might be understood as radical extremists in Western terms". [6]

Professor Mark Sedgwick, University of Aarhus, Denmark

[6] Written Evidence taken from Professor Mark Sedgwick, University of Aarhus:
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/professor_mark_sedgwick_-_written_evidence.pdf

18. Before looking at the causes of violent extremism and the possible solutions, we must understand the concept[7]. Only then do we have a chance to understand what effective resilience to violent extremism might mean and look like.

19. Many difficulties arise from the fact that, as the UN itself has explained, *"there is no internationally agreed definition"*[8] of violent extremism. In his evidence to the sub-committee, Professor Tahir Abbas argued that the *"terminology discussion has been taking place… since 9/11. We have been on panels talking to each other about definitions. So there is no point in going over the same ground again and again. We have problems out there; we have to go and find solutions."*[9]

20. However, International Alert suggested convincingly that, while it is possible to *"spend a long time talking about it (a definition),… it is important that we talk about it because what we understand by violent extremism could be very different to what a Syrian person or a Tunisian person understands by violent extremism."*[10]

21. The sub-committee agrees with International Alert's warning that *"using the labels CVE (countering violent extremism)… in programming can be counter-productive as they risk stigmatising the wider target group (most of whom are at no risk at all of becoming either extremist or violent).*" A recent EU funded research report by the British Council, Georgia State University and the Institute for Strategic Dialogue; 'Civic Approaches to Confronting Violent Extremism'[11] similarly found that *"there is a consensus among civil society organisations that the Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) label is toxic, and that it stifles and in some cases prevents coordination between civil society and law enforcement… Stakeholders in this study confirm… that resilience building through healthy community engagement and collaboration needs greater attention and resource allocation."*[12]

[7] Oral Evidence taken on 06 September 2016, Defining and Decoding Radicalisation and Resilience:
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/05_sept_2016_building_resilience_inquiry_british_council_appg.pdf
[8] The UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism: http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/674
[9] Oral Evidence taken on 06 September 2016, Defining and Decoding Radicalisation and Resilience:
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/05_sept_2016_building_resilience_inquiry_british_council_appg.pdf
[10] Oral Evidence taken on 12 September 2016, 'How Organisations are Responding to Radicalisation in MENA':
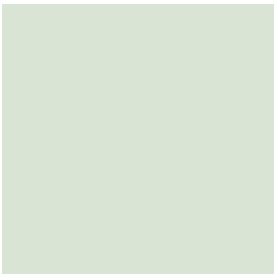https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/12_sept_2016_building_resilience_inquiry_british_council_appg.pdf
[11] 'Civic Approaches to Confronting Violent Extremism; Sector Recommendations and Best Practices':
https://www.britishcouncil.us/sites/default/files/civic_approaches_to_confronting_violent_extremism_-_digital_release.pdf
[12] 'Civic Approaches to Confronting Violent Extremism; Sector Recommendations and Best Practices':
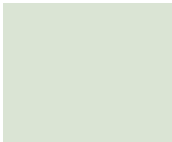https://www.britishcouncil.us/sites/default/files/civic_approaches_to_confronting_violent_extremism_-_digital_release.pdf

22. Reaching from these insights towards a better, more positive definition, Professor Tahir Abbas (RUSI) and Professor George Joffé (Cambridge University) agreed with Professor Mark Sedgwick (University of Aarhus) that extremism is generally understood as *"constituting views that are far from those of the majority of the population. Extremist views are not necessarily illegal and do not automatically lead to violence or harm."* Professor Sedgwick argued that extremism only becomes a concern when those ideologies *"threaten democratic and tolerant societal ideas, or promote the use of violence to coerce their followers or to achieve their objectives."*[13]

23. Similarly, the British Council defines extremism as *"a radical ideology that opposes core British and universal values as set out in the Charter of the United Nations"*, and violent extremism as *"the use of violence to further the aims of an extreme ideology"*.

24. This report is attracted by these definitions. But it recognises the difficulties in reaching final definitions on which all can agree, and that the more important focus must be on finding agreed solutions to this widely-recognised problem. With that in mind, the sub-committee agrees about the desirability of talking about Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) by focusing on building resilience to the underlying factors provide fertile soil for the sewing of violent extremist recruiters.. It recommends that the UK government and others with an interest in tackling these challenges ensure that their policy thinking is directed more on upstream issues of preventing through helping to build more resilient, stable and prosperous societies in the region.

[13] Written Evidence taken from Professor Mark Sedgwick, University of Aarhus: https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/professor_mark_sedgwick_-_written_evidence.pdf

2.2 Factors Contributing to Violent Extremism

2.2.1 The Risk factors Contributing to Violent Extremism

"There is no single or common driver of violent extremism across contexts. What drives someone to join an extremist group differs from context to context and from person to person."

Rebecca Crozier, International Alert

The Need for more Focus on 'Push' Factors

25. There are a wide variety of general risk factors for violent extremism. These can be divided into 'push' and 'pull' factors, and often overlap and interact in complex ways. They include economic, civic, and social factors, as well as unresolved conflicts[14] and broader forces such as climate change, mental health issues, perceptions of foreign policy, and fundamentalist religious and ideological beliefs.

26. According the UN's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism[15], the many risk factors that have been identified and categorised can be deemed to be too broad for the purpose of this inquiry, in which the sub-committee is looking to address the risk factors towards violent extremism where cultural relations interventions can be effective. The sub-committee therefore categorised the several risk factors into three areas.

27. Economic factors include lack of opportunities as a result of poverty, low growth, unemployment (particularly youth unemployment exacerbated by demographic 'youth bulges'), lack of skills, poor education and the failure of core public services, and general socio-economic marginalisation and inequality.

28. Civic factors include corruption, poor governance, weak rule of law, violations of human rights, a lack of voice and influence for particular sections of society, and a sense of social, economic or political injustice.

29. Social factors include individual psychology and binary thinking, discrimination, inter-community, inter-generational, and gender inequalities, and a marginalisation of certain sections of the population, particularly the young.

30. The UN's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, based on a comprehensive review of the global evidence, states, *"There is no authoritative statistical data on the pathways towards individual radicalisation. While there are some recognisable trends and patterns, there are only a few areas of consensus that exist among researchers. Qualitative research, based mainly on interviews, suggests that two main categories of drivers can be distinguished:*
a. "Push factors", or the "conditions conducive to violent extremism and the structural context" from which it emerges; and
b. "Pull factors", or the individual motivations and "processes", which play a key role in transforming ideas and grievances into violent extremist action.

More research, both qualitative and quantitative, is required on this evolving phenomenon".[16]

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[14] See the UN's Framework to Prevent Violent Extremism
[15] See the UN's Framework to Prevent Violent Extremism
[16] https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/en/plan-action-prevent-violent-extremism
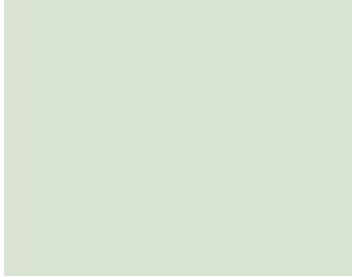
31. **'Preventative' strategies** are intended to be effective responses to 'push' factors identified by the UN Framework. This is also known as an 'upstream' approach, to tackle risks before the process of radicalisation has begun. The sub-committee will focus on these as areas where cultural, educational and civil society interventions can have most impact in terms of building resilience.

32. **'Countering' strategies** and interventions are deemed as effective responses to the 'pull factors'. This is also known as a 'downstream' approach, to tackle the circumstances which have already set in and begun the process of radicalisation. The sub-committee believes that cultural, educational and civil society interventions are likely to have less impact at this level and therefore does not address them in detail.

33. It is important to reiterate that individual drivers do not work in isolation. In 'Drivers of Violent Extremism: Hypotheses and Literature Review',[17] conducted by RUSI for the Department for International Development (DFID); violent extremism is identified as being *"multi-factorial and extremely diverse: it cannot be predicted by one variable alone. For violent extremist movements to develop, and for individuals to join them, it requires an alignment of:*
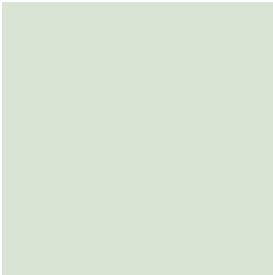
1. Situational factors (working at the macro level i.e. country or community-wide)

2. Social/Cultural factors (working at the meso-level i.e. smaller communities or identity groups)

3. Individual factors (working at the micro level)".

34. The sub-committee agrees with the approach towards tackling violent extremism elaborated by Dr Claire Spencer[18] and both International Alert and Mercy Corps[19] in their evidence to the inquiry, which highlighted that; *"the building of resilience must target and encompass the pre-existing conditions of socioeconomic… and political drivers, as much as it does the elaboration of security and prevention strategies."*

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[17] 'Drivers of Violent Extremism: Hypotheses and Literature Review', Royal United Services Institute (RUSI):
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a0899d40f0b64974000192/Drivers_of_Radicalisation_Literature_Review.pdf
[18] Written Evidence taken from Dr Claire Spencer, Chatham House:
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/dr_claire_spencer_-_written_evidence.pdf
[19] Oral Evidence taken on 12 September 2016, 'How Organisations are Responding to Radicalisation in MENA':
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/12_sept_2016_building_resilience_inquiry_british_council_appg.pdf

35. In other words the sub-committee argues the importance of a much greater focus on using 'preventative strategies' to tackle 'push' factors, which it believes is essential to ensure a significant long-term impact. It therefore believes that the current focus on 'countering strategies' responding to 'pull' factors should be balanced with more focus on prevention of those same pull factors.

36. International Alert's evidence to the committee argued that *"there is no single or common driver of violent extremism across contexts. What drives someone to join an extremist group differs from context to context and from person to person."*[20] It recommended that *"responses… need to be tailored to context, understanding and responding to multiple drivers of violent extremism, recognising that there is no blueprint that will apply across MENA, or even across one country. Implementers and policy makers therefore need to get comfortable with this complexity"*.[21]

37. The sub-committee refers to the 'push factors' as **'risk factors'**, because it is deemed too simplistic to assume that a set of 'push and pull drivers' will inevitably lead individuals or communities to becoming radicalised or violently extremist. There are too many complexities and cross-overs between the drivers. Therefore we believe it is more accurate to say that individuals are at 'risk' of radicalisation and violent extremism due to a number of often overlapping factors.

Broader Factors

38. There are a number of broader forces which can contribute to violent extremism. In many parts of the world, **unresolved violent conflict** creates physical, psychological, and social damage, exacerbates economic, civic, and social problems, fuels resentments, and creates the space for armed extremist groups to flourish.

39. Recent studies have highlighted **'climate change'** as a driver of violent extremism (and migration). Evidence suggests climate changes are a major driver of unrest and conflict over scarce resources, and that what are sometimes characterised as "extremist" groups or terrorist wars actually have their roots in desperate people trying to survive the impact of such changes, which they have had no role in creating.[22]

[20] Written Evidence taken from Rebecca Crozier, International Alert: https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/international_alert_-_written_evidence.pd
[21] Written Evidence taken from International Alert https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/international_alert_-_written_evidence.pdf
[22] Naomi Klein, "Let Them Drown, The Violence of Othering in a Warming World", London Review of Books, 2016: https://www.lrb.co.uk/v38/n11/naomi-klein/let-them-drown
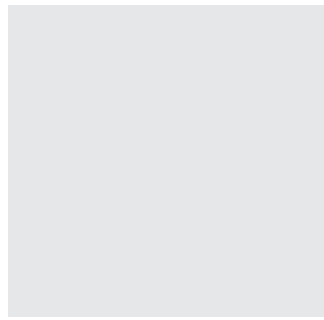
40. It is also important to note that in some cases – especially in some of those highlighted by the UK media as a result of recent terrorist attacks – **mental health** issues can facilitate violent extremism. However, the exact role they play, is a matter of debate. Professor Tahir Abbas[23] and Dr Claire Spencer[24] reiterated this in their evidence, noting that in many cases, mental ill-health may flow from wider societal problems or circumstances such as trauma. Experts are just starting to understand the connection between mental health disorders and violent extremism. *"Mental disorders appear more prevalent among those inspired by Islamic State than those directed by it. Beyond that, however, it is difficult to make clear conclusions. Just because a factor (such as mental disorder) was present, does not make it causal. Nor does it necessarily make it facilitative. It may be completely irrelevant altogether."*[25]

41. However, Aly Jetha, CEO of Big Bad Boo Studios, (a Canadian children's media company which has been working on promoting civic education with children through animation) told the committee about the impact of trauma on young people is where the focus and work should be targeted, suggesting that *"children who have undergone sustained political or ethnic violence have a very special type of trauma that develops in them, which needs to be unwound in a very specific way"*[26]. Aly Jetha continues to explain that to unwind this, *"you have to reset their normative values in terms of violent/non-violent dispute resolution and how they engage with people, i.e. their normative patterns…you have to unwind negative stereotypes, because violence has been propagated against them in the name of a specific religion, culture or ethnicity."*[27]Although the topic of wellbeing and mental health, particularly when addressing the trauma that young people and refugees have experienced (as a result of conflict) was raised by a number of witnesses, the sub-committee did not see strong enough evidence that organisations are working to tangibly give emotional and psychological support through their work. The sub-committee believes there is an opportunity for culture,
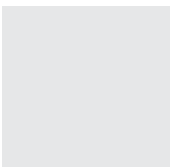
[23] Oral Evidence taken on 06 September 2016, 'Defining and Decoding Radicalisation and Resilience': https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/05_sept_2016_building_resilience_inquiry_british_council_appg.pdf
[24] Written Evidence taken from Dr Claire Spencer, Chatham House: https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/dr_claire_spencer_-_written_evidence.pdf
[25] Emily Corner, Paul Gill (2017), Combatting Terrorism Center (CTC), 'Is there a Nexus between Terrorist Involvement and Mental Health in the Age of the Islamic State?': https://ctc.usma.edu/posts/is-there-a-nexus-between-terrorist-involvement-and-mental-health-in-the-age-of-the-islamic-state
[26] Oral Evidence taken on 25 October 2016; 'Educating and Skilling a New Generation in MENA': https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/educating_and_skilling_a_new_generation_in_mena.pdf
[27] Oral Evidence taken on 25 October 2016; 'Educating and Skilling a New Generation in MENA': https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/educating_and_skilling_a_new_generation_in_mena.pdf

education and civil society organisations to do more to address psychological factors; where organisations are already working with young people who may be susceptible to trauma and mental health issues. **It is critical in considering further responses in this area, to take care to understand the complexity of any connection. Labelling violent extremists as mentally disordered risks missing other key push and pull factors, and could deepen the stigma which already impacts a vulnerable group.**

42. According to RAN (Radicalisation Awareness Network) research[28], **foreign policy** can also play a role in the radicalisation process of many violent extremist recruits. Recruiters take advantage of a sense of injustice over particularly Western foreign policy interventions to mobilise followers. The legacy of colonial history, recent Western interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the post-9/11 'war on terror' have all contributed to the extremist narrative of a 'clash of civilisations' between the West and Islam. These have stoked mistrust and hostility towards the West across Middle Eastern societies and enabled extremist recruiters to repackage violent extremism against Western targets as a legitimate form of self-defence against an aggressive West. This legacy is clearly evident in, for example, the much lower levels of trust in the UK amongst those surveyed in Saudi Arabia when compared to a basket of other countries from outside the MENA region[29] and the fact that, even a century later, Egyptians continue to report net negative views of the UK as a result of the country's role in the Middle East during the First World War and subsequent peace negotiations[30]. In this context, although there is nothing that can be done to alter history, the sub-committee believes that there is a need for a clear strategy that seeks to engage positively with mainstream Middle Eastern youth to reduce the long term pool of mistrust of the UK. By building reserves of trust and good-will towards the UK through enhanced cultural relations activity, the UK can help to reduce the mistrust that makes some in the region susceptible to the binary narratives of violent extremist recruiters.

43. Violent extremism is often associated with **fundamentalist religion.** Yet Professor Abbas told the inquiry that: *"we can explain a lot of this without religion entering into the picture… We need to think of the structural, the political, and the cultural dynamics here"*.[31] Professor Sedgwick also highlighted that *"certainly in MENA, religion on its own does not cause anything. In combination with other*

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[28] Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) Issue Paper, Jan 2016; 'The Root Causes of Violent Extremism': https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-papers/docs/issue_paper_root-causes_jan2016_en.pdf

[29] 'Trust Pays' (2012) British Council: https://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/policy-insight-research/research/trust-pays

[30] 'Remember the World as Well as the War' (2013) British Council: https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/remember-the-world-report-v5.pdf

[31] Oral Evidence taken on 06 September 2016, 'Defining and Decoding Radicalisation and Resilience':https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/05_sept_2016_building_resilience_inquiry_british_council_appg.pdf

things that are going on, religion can be used by various people to legitimise all sorts of things"[32]. In this regard it is worth mentioning comments by Dr Claire Spencer, Senior Research Fellow, Chatham House in her evidence: *"In assessing how to build resilience to radicalisation, the first thing to acknowledge is that upwards of 99% of the target groups for recruitment to these groups and ideologies, namely, youth between late teenage to their late 20s, are not joining or buying into violent ideologies."*

44. Religion is frequently flagged as a contributing factor, not as an explanation in itself, but because (along with other variables like political ideologies) it can be a very powerful expression of individual and group identity and therefore can provide both narrative and justification for violent action by its perpetrators. The role of charismatic individuals (peers as well as leaders) who can instrumentalise identity is also often widely acknowledged in this context.[33] RUSI expands on this to point out that *"the growth of religious and ethnic identities (particularly if they compete with loyalties to the state) can be exploited by extremist ideologue movements."*[34] This broader force is clearly a particular challenge at present in MENA.

However, **instrumentalisation of identity to justify violence**, rather than the identity itself, is the problem. Confusion of the two can lead to (at least) ineffective and sometimes harmful responses which are perceived – for example – as Islamophobic. This is one of many other factors at play in the region which also contribute to the challenge of addressing violent extremism.

45. Dr. Ahmad Al-Dubayan, Director General of the Islamic Cultural Centre, London explains that *"it is essential to clarify at the outset that violence has never been an ideological element of any of major or mainstream Islamic Schools of thought. Violence has commonly been used as a means to bring about change in society. Alternatively, violence was a reaction of some groups when their lives or their faith was under attack."*[35] Dr Ahmed continues to explain that *"much confusion is generated by the media on the use of terms such as "Islamic Terror", "Islamic Violence" or "Fundamentalism". This use of language generates social and negative reactions in Islamic and Middle Eastern societies and individuals (in addition to Non-MENA Islamic societies), and creates misunderstandings."*[36]

[32] Oral Evidence taken on 06 September 2016, 'Defining and Decoding Radicalisation and Resilience':
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/05_sept_2016_building_resilience_inquiry_british_council_appg.pdf
[33] 'Drivers of Violent Extremism: Hypotheses and Literature Review', Royal United Services Institute (RUSI):
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a0899d40f0b64974000192/Drivers_of_Radicalisation_Literature_Review.pdf 'Drivers of Violent
[34] 'Drivers of Violent Extremism: Hypotheses and Literature Review', Royal United Services Institute (RUSI):
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a0899d40f0b64974000192/Drivers_of_Radicalisation_Literature_Review.pdf
[35] Written Evidence taken from Dr Ahmad Al-Dubayan, Director General of the Islamic Cultural Centre, London:
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/radicalisation_in_mena_-_dr_ahmad_al-dubayan.pdf
[36] Written Evidence taken from Dr Ahmad Al-Dubayan, Director General of the Islamic Cultural Centre, London:
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/radicalisation_in_mena_-_dr_ahmad_al-dubayan.pdf

Case Study 1 Mercy Corps: Advancing Adolescents: Evidence on the Impact of Psychosocial Support for Syrian Refugee and Jordanian Adolescents

Supporting vulnerable young people who could be exposed to, and are at risk of, psychological and mental health problems.

Jordan is hosting one of the largest populations of Syrians in the region – more than 650,000 people, of which 28% are between the ages of 11 and 25. This refugee population faces severe challenges. A staggering 93% of refugees living outside the camps are under the Jordanian poverty line. Most are living in host communities absent strong family and social networks. Syrians also face tensions with Jordanians in host communities that are competing for scarce resources ranging from access to water, jobs and education. As is the case in the majority of crises, young people are disproportionately affected by the fallouts.

Against this backdrop, resources for psychosocial support programs are particularly scarce, with the percentage of programming addressing this issue in Jordan just over 1% of the total joint UN appeal for the country in 2016. Yet, Mercy Corps' evidence suggests that without addressing mental health issues, other programming investments in young people's education, social and economic development cannot reach their full potential.

Humanitarian and development actors are recognizing the need to provide targeted psychosocial support to young people in protracted, complex emergency settings to tap into their ambition and potential, and mitigate negative individual and societal impacts. However, little credible evidence exists on which to base the design of such interventions aimed at ensuring adolescents' safety, social ties, and emotional well-being. To fill this evidence gap, Mercy Corps undertook a rigorous impact evaluation of its **Advancing Adolescents program in Jordan** and found measurable impacts on young people's ability to form friendships, perceptions of safety and security, and confidence in the future. Taken together, the findings from this impact evaluation point to the efficacy of holistic, science-based psychosocial support interventions in complex emergency settings.

Recommendations:

1. **Prioritize and increase funding for programming that addresses psychosocial and mental health needs of adolescents in complex emergencies –** these interventions are and should be considered lifesaving in nature.

2. **Cultivate support and buy-in from local institutions and key stakeholders on approaches that facilitate meaningful engagement of young people in their communities.** These should build young people's sense of voice and belonging, and reduce their isolation and other grievances that have linked to risk of engagement in violent acts, including violent extremism.

3. **Tailor adolescent programming to meet the needs of boys and girls** and increase commitments and resources required to ensure hard-to-reach boys and girls have equal access to programs and services.

4. **Improve accountability of investments and coordination of initiatives to promote youth development in complex crises** by tracking funding by sex, age and sector as part of joint appeals in complex emergency settings to establish a baseline and track changes in financial support for adolescent and sectoral programming over the life of the response.

The Middle East and North Africa at night

2.2.2 The Current Challenges in MENA

"Youth are narrated within two principal frames: 'Youth as Problem' or 'Youth as the Future of the Nation', both of which are instruments for political control rather than reflections of the life experiences and interests of youth themselves."

Professor Emma Murphy, Durham University

46. The MENA region suffers from some particular economic, civic, and social challenges which provide fertile soil for the sewing of violent extremist narratives.

Economic Factors

Growing Youth Population and High Youth Unemployment

47. A large population of young, unemployed people is a clear risk factor for violent extremism, because when almost any offer – even one where there is a strong possibility of dying young – can look attractive in a world where increasing unemployment and reducing services pose a double whammy for many young people. This is a particular problem in the MENA region, which is undergoing a huge demographic increase at the same time as it experiences economic stagnation. The population of MENA is very young, with median ages ranging from 21.8 in Jordan to 31.4 in Tunisia[37]. According to UNDP[38], 15–29 year olds make up nearly a third of the region's population, another third are below the age of fifteen, meaning this "demographic momentum" will last for at least the next two decades. More positively, in her evidence, Professor Emma Murphy alluded to the fact that growth of the working age population can be hugely positive, if governments can use this to drive economic development.[39]

[37] Written Evidence taken from Professor Emma Murphy, University of Durham:
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/professor_emma_murphy_-_wriiten_evidence.pdf
[38] Arab Human Development Report 2016, Youth and the Prospects for Human Development in a Changing Reality, UNDP:
http://www.arabstates.undp.org/content/dam/rbas/report/AHDR%20Reports/AHDR%202016/AHDR%20Final%202016/AHDR2016En.pdf
[39] Written Evidence taken from Professor Emma Murphy, University of Durham:
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/professor_emma_murphy_-_wriiten_evidence.pdf

48. As well as this demographic bulge, the International Labor Organisation has warned that MENA continues to have the highest youth unemployment rate in the world by far – 28.2 per cent in the Middle East and 30.5 per cent in North Africa, in 2014 – and rates have worsened significantly since the Arab Spring, particularly for young women.[40] MENA topped youth unemployment rates globally from 1995 – 2014[41].

49. The SAHWA Project, based in Barcelona, Spain, aims to support policymakers in being able to understand and address youth issues in Arab Mediterranean countries. Moussa Bourekba, Researcher at SAHWA, highlighted in his evidence how the issue of high unemployment rates is manifesting as a risk factor for radicalisation. Its research shows that *"a huge amount of young people from MENA are trapped between childhood and waiting to become adults (the concept of 'wait-hood'). They need to be employed, mostly because one of the compulsory steps to become an adult (in MENA) is to get married. To get married you need to have a job in order to be economically independent, so you can see how education, employment and the fact of becoming an adult are crucial in this regard."*[43] This can feed into the frustration of feeling hopeless, and therefore contribute to further grievances through a lack of socio-economic opportunities.
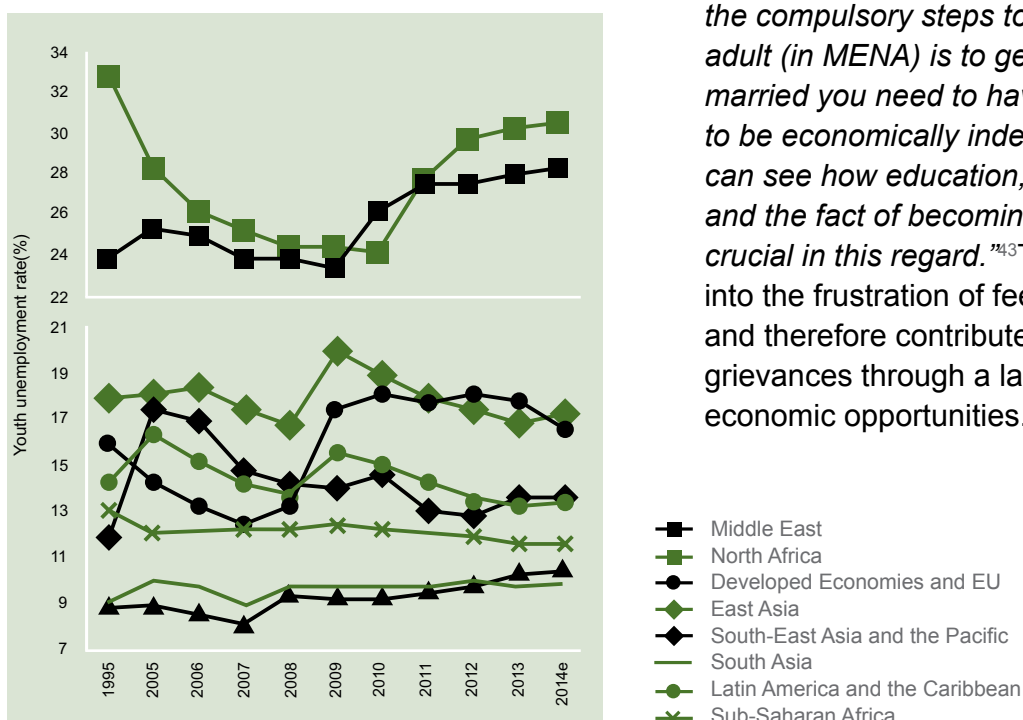

Fig. 1 'Global Employment Trends for Youth 2015; Youth unemployment rates by region, 1995 and 2005−14', International Labor Organisation[42]

Legend:
- ■ Middle East
- ■ North Africa
- ● Developed Economies and EU
- ◆ East Asia
- ◆ South-East Asia and the Pacific
- — South Asia
- ● Latin America and the Caribbean
- ✕ Sub-Saharan Africa

[40] International Labour Organisation: http://www.ilo.org/beirut/media-centre/news/WCMS_412797/lang--en/index.htm
[41] International Labour Organisation: http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/multimedia/maps-and-charts/WCMS_411962/lang--en/index.htm
[42] International Labour Organisation http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/multimedia/maps-and-charts/WCMS_411962/lang--en/index.htm
[43] Oral Evidence taken on 25 October 2016; 'Educating and Skilling a New Generation in MENA':
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/educating_and_skilling_a_new_generation_in_mena.pdf
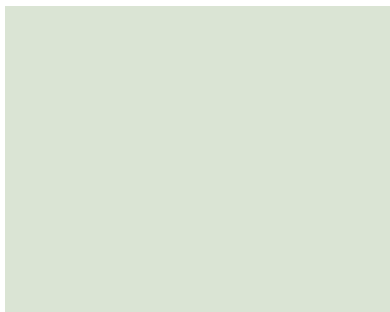
**50.** Professor Emma Murphy[44] and SAHWA[45] both argued that the concepts of 'youth in MENA' have always been misrepresented. There is an absence of concerted efforts to ensure youth needs are addressed and supported at every level, and that they are being reflected through government policies, funding and priorities. Existing policies are not addressing the challenges faced by swathes of marginalised individuals and communities.
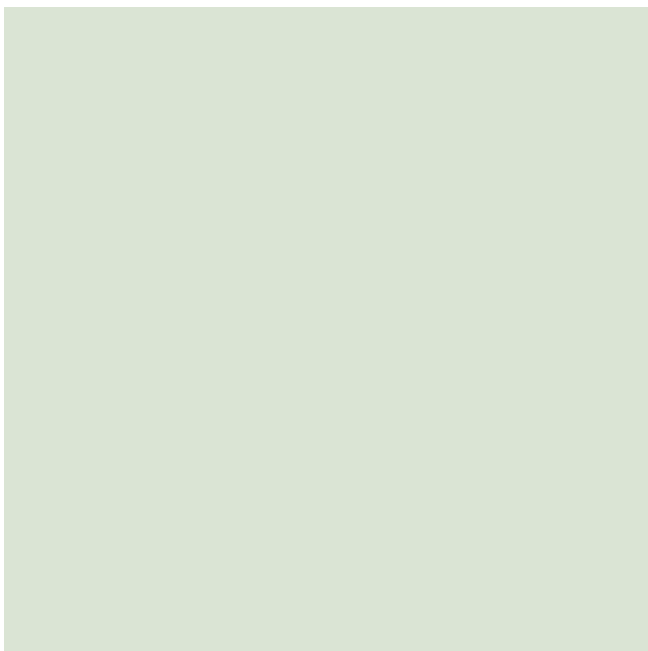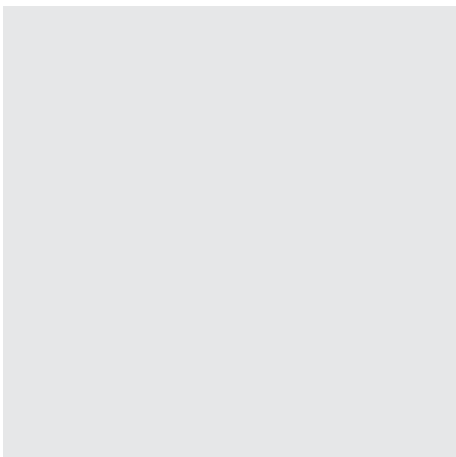
[44] Written Evidence taken from Professor Emma Murphy:
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/professor_emma_murphy_-_wriiten_evidence.pdf
[45] Oral Evidence taken from Moussa Bourekba, SAHWA, on 25 October 2016, 'Educating and Skilling a New Generation in MENA':
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/educating_and_skilling_a_new_generation_in_mena.pdf
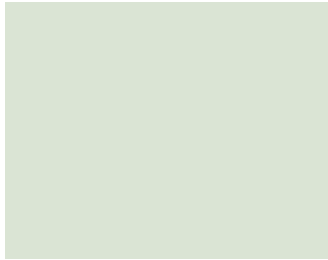
Sir CiaránDevane, Chief Executive, British Council, and Adrian Chadwick, OBE, Regional Director MENA (2013–17), British Council, give oral evidence to the APPG sub-committee on the role of soft power, in response to the inquiry.
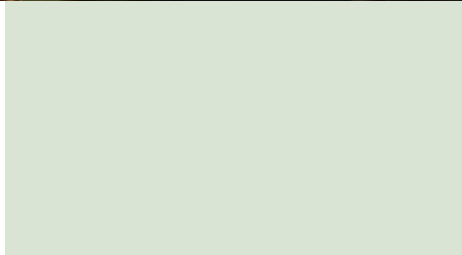
Education and Skills Deficits

52. The MENA region suffers from the related problems of inadequate provision of education and skills, leaving young people ill-prepared for employment or life in general, further increasing their risk of being attracted into violent extremism. The 2017 Arab Youth Survey (carried out by ASDA'A Burson-Marsteller) [46] found that *"education systems fall short of preparing students for jobs of the future"*. Poor education systems in MENA (amongst other poor public services) undermine government legitimacy and lead to poor economic performance, partly because students are unprepared for the job market. It is also necessary to explore how to prepare young people for the prospects of unemployment and manage their expectations, and to ask what opportunities are available for them should they not find employment after education: a situation facing many of them.

53. Further evidence highlights this issue of education systems not preparing young people for the job market in MENA. Data from World Bank shows that *"MENA governments have shown strong commitment to funding public education. The average public investment in education across the region as a percentage of GDP is above 5.3% of GDP"*[47], in comparison to OECD[48] (The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) where in 2014, *"countries spent an average of 5.2% of their gross domestic product (GDP) on educational institutions (from primary to tertiary levels), ranging from 3.3% in the Russian Federation to 6.6% in the United Kingdom across OECD and partner countries.."*[49] Whilst the MENA region is one of the highest investors in education, it achieves the lowest ranking qualifications globally.[50]

[46] Arab Youth Survey 2017, carried out by ASDA'A Burson-Marsteller http://www.arabyouthsurvey.com/pdf/2017-AYS-White-Paper-EN.pdf
[47] World Bank Brief, 'Education in the Middle East and North Africa' (2014):
http://www.worldbank.org/en/region/mena/brief/education-in-mena
[48] For a list of OECD Countries and Members: http://www.oecd.org/about/membersandpartners/list-oecd-member-countries.htm
[49] OECD, 'Education at a Glance' (2017), OECD INDICATORS:http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/download/9617041e.
pdf?expires=1510071708&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=BAB0FFBF57C2264F2398D1E4A7956181
[50] World Bank Brief, 'Education in the Middle East and North Africa' (2014):
http://www.worldbank.org/en/region/mena/brief/education-in-mena
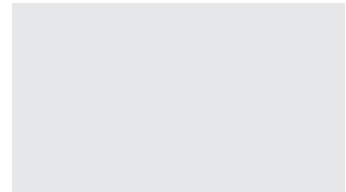
54. To explore this issue further, the evidence we gathered suggested that types of teaching methods could be one of many reasons that education systems are not preparing young people for the job market and are in fact making them more vulnerable to binary narratives and polarisation. In a recent report by the World Bank, on 'Economic and Social Inclusion to Prevent Violent Extremism', 69% of recruits to extremist organisations have at least a secondary level of education, so they are even better placed than the average young person in countries from the South of the Mediterranean.[51] Giulia Marchesini (Senior Partnership Officer, Centre for Mediterranean Integration (CMI)) advised that the issue was not access to education, but quality of teaching and teaching methods.[52] In particular, there is little evidence that education in MENA builds the soft skills that are associated with employability or entrepreneurship and the ability to engage positively in civic and political opportunities.

55. Three sub-committee members attended the annual Hammamet Conference (which brings together established and emerging leaders from the UK and North Africa). At the conference, there was a consensus amongst attendees that entrepreneurship and enterprise skills training are highly demanded from young people in North Africa, and providing these skills would help tackle some of the economic challenges faced in North Africa.

56. A study carried out by the Brookings Institute found that education does not necessarily lead to employment; about 40 per cent of MENA graduates are unemployed[53]. The Combatting Terrorism Centre's analysis of Daesh personnel records showed that recruits to Daesh were relatively highly educated, *"especially when compared to United Nations data on the average years of schooling in the countries in the dataset"*, and yet the *"occupational background of Islamic State recruits seems to be centred on lower skilled positions"*[54]. The analysis continues to say that *"only a small percentage were in the occupation categories in which one might expect to find those with college-level education, such as High-Skilled or White Collar, Government, Teacher, IT, and Media/Communications. This raises intriguing questions about the possibility that some in this dataset may have been motivated by frustration over failure to achieve expected success in the job market following their education"*. It is clear that there is a great disconnect between the education system and skills required in the job market, leading to further youth unemployment and 'wait-hood'.

[51] World Bank; MENA Economic Monitor, 'Economic and social inclusion to prevent violent extremism' (2016): http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/409591474983005625/Economic-and-social-inclusion-to-prevent-violent-extremism
[52] Oral Evidence taken on 25 October 2016; 'Educating and Skilling a New Generation in MENA': https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/educating_and_skilling_a_new_generation_in_mena.pdf
[53] Shanta Devarajan, The Brookings Institution; 'The paradox of higher education in MENA' (2016): https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2016/06/27/the-paradox-of-higher-education-in-mena/
[54] Combatting Terrorism Centre at West Point; The Caliphate's Global Workforce: An Inside Look at the Islamic State's Foreign Fighter Paper Trail: https://ctc.usma.edu/v2/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/CTC_Caliphates-Global-Workforce-Report.pdf

57. Giulia Marchesini from The Centre for Mediterranean Integration (CMI) highlighted some additional problems with education systems in MENA: *"They have a very weak student-assessment system in the entire region. We do not really have data that explains what can be improved, because there is not assessment that provides data. There is widespread teacher absenteeism (in the region), which is very important. The students go to the school, but the professors are often not there. This is a very delicate and sensitive topic but one that needs to be addressed. There is a lot of private tutoring, as well. The same professors who should be at school actually do not go to school; they give private lessons to the same children sometimes. That creates a lot of disparities between the different children."*[55]

58. Evidence presented to the inquiry showed that education systems are also not offering the correct balance of skills needed by employers. Soft skills are particularly lacking, as identified by the Goodall Foundation when they informed the sub-committee that *"there was a poll conducted in 2015 where the factors most looked for in candidates for MENA employers were communication, collaboration and leadership."*[56]

59. International Alert, Mercy Corps, Search for Common Ground[57], and the British Council[58] agreed with much of this analysis, highlighting that education systems in which curricula do not match the skills gaps in the job market need reforming; and that, in particular, young people need to be equipped with the entrepreneurial skills needed to create new employment opportunities.

60. The evidence gathered also highlighted that the 'youth bulge' in MENA cannot be ignored in this context, as it only adds to the economic and skills strain in the region[59]. Population increase over recent decades in MENA has led to a sharp increase in the number of young people entering the job market each year. However, job creation has not kept up with this growth; this is a serious long term problem.

[55] Oral Evidence taken on 25 October 2016; 'Educating and Skilling a New Generation in MENA'
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/educating_and_skilling_a_new_generation_in_mena.pdf
[56] Oral Evidence taken on 25 October 2016; 'Educating and Skilling a New Generation in MENA':
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/educating_and_skilling_a_new_generation_in_mena.pdf
[57] Oral Evidence taken on 12 September 2016, 'How Organisations are Responding to Radicalisation in MENA':
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/12_sept_2016_building_resilience_inquiry_british_council_appg.pdf
[58] Oral Evidence taken from the British Council on 10 July 2017, 'The Role of Soft Power in Building Resilience to Radicalisation in MENA': https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/british_council_evidence_session_10.07.17.pdf
[59] Oral Evidence taken on 25 October 2016; 'Educating and Skilling a New Generation in MENA':
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/educating_and_skilling_a_new_generation_in_mena.pdf

Civic factors

Injustice, corruption, and insufficient Rule of Law

61. Mercy Corps found that the principal drivers of political violence (generally speaking) are rooted in experiences of injustice, perceptions of discrimination, inequality, corruption, and abuse by governments and their security forces.[60] In many MENA countries these factors are a particular problem. Mercy Corps' 'Youth and Consequences' report found, *"injustice is among the most consistent precursors to violent behaviour. No matter whether it is experienced directly, through intergenerational histories, or through perceived "collective shaming", injustice brews hopelessness, disenfranchisement and marginalisation."* It is in this light that *"violent extremist groups package their offer and violence to appeal to disillusioned people seeking recognition, a sense of meaning, or the opportunity to right an injustice or the lack of governance."*[61]

62. SAHWA found that young people are particularly pessimistic about government and politics in MENA: *"We asked people on a scale from 0–10 how much they trusted their parliament, political parties and politicians, with 0 meaning no confidence at all. At the regional level, the rate of interviewees saying they have no confidence at all is either close to or over 50% in the five countries we studied in the project: Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Lebanon. When we asked young people about their ability to play an active role in a politically engaged group, one out of three interviewees believed they have only a moderate role to play, while one out of four thought they cannot have any influence or role to play at the political level. At the qualitative level, when talking about politics to young people, most people were saying, 'Stop. I do not want to talk about politics. I do not care.'"*[62]

Failure to listen to the needs of young people

63. The 2017 Arab Youth Survey (carried out by ASDA'A Burson-Marsteller)[63] found that many young people in MENA perceive themselves to be marginalised and *"want their countries to do more for them, with many feeling overlooked by policymakers"*. This increases the likelihood that some of them, despairing of having their voices heard through mainstream political engagement, may be attracted to extremist narratives.

[60] 'Youth and Consequences', Mercy Corps https://www.mercycorps.org/research-resources/youth-consequences-unemployment-injustice-and-violence
[61] Written Evidence taken from Mercy Corps: https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/mercy_corps_-_written_evidence.pdf
[62] Oral Evidence taken from Moussa Bourekba, SAHWA, on 25 October 2016, 'Educating and Skilling a New Generation in MENA': https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/educating_and_skilling_a_new_generation_in_mena.pdf
[63] Arab Youth Survey 2017, carried out by ASDA'A Burson-Marsteller http://www.arabyouthsurvey.com/pdf/2017-AYS-White-Paper-EN.pdf

64. In 2014 International Alert conducted research of over 740 young people in some of the most marginalised towns in Tunisia: Ettadhamen and Douar Hicher. The research found that marginalisation and exclusion of young people takes many forms: political, economic, social and cultural. This particular study also found that: *"young people encounter difficulties as a result of the stigmas attached to their neighbourhoods. These stigmas serve to widen inequalities, particularly in terms of young people's access to jobs."*[64]

65. Professor Tahir Abbas highlights that work needs to begin at the local level because this is where the majority of the young people are being marginalised and discriminated against, particularly those who come from rural areas.[65]

66. Frustrations are growing, particularly in rural communities because their concerns and needs are not being addressed, which result in political disengagement. This reinforces a perception of restricted access to both public services and job opportunities for these groups.[66]

Social Factors

Binary thinking

67. In many societies in MENA there is a problem, exacerbated by traditionalist education systems and self-interested non-democratic governments, of insufficient nuance in public debate and a lack of diverse voices when political or social issues are discussed. This can make it harder for young people to see things from alternative perspectives, or to see through simplistic extremist narratives.[67] In addition, education in these contexts does not equip young people with the soft skills they need (for example, listening and negotiating) to engage positively in civic discourse.

Marginalisation and discrimination

68. A recent consultation carried out by Search for Common Ground[68] with 122 individuals across 14 countries *"saw that the two most cited drivers of violent extremism in youth were injustice and corruption, and socioeconomic marginalisation / inequality"*. RUSI corroborates this, noting that, in the context of countries in MENA, discrimination, marginalisation and conflict helps violent extremist groups to recruit in large numbers[69].

[64] Written Evidence taken from Rebecca Crozier, International Alert:
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/international_alert_-_written_evidence.pdf
[65] Written Evidence taken from Professor Tahir Abbas, RUSI:
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/written_evidence_submission_by_professor_tahir_abbas_frsa.pdf
[66] Written Evidence taken from Professor Tahir Abbas, RUSI:
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/written_evidence_submission_by_professor_tahir_abbas_frsa.pdf
[67] Martin Rose, "Immunising the Mind: Education and Extremism":
https://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/policy-insight-research/insight/immunising-mind-%E2%80%93-education-and-extremism.
See also: https://press.princeton.edu/titles/10656.html
[68] Written Evidence taken from Search for Common Ground:
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/search_for_common_ground_-_written_evidence.pdf
[69] 'Drivers of Violent Extremism: Hypotheses and Literature Review', Royal United Services Institute (RUSI):
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a0899d40f0b64974000192/Drivers_of_Radicalisation_Literature_Review.pdf
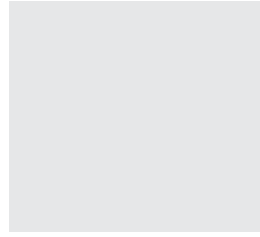
69. From the evidence gathered, the sub-committee believes that 'a sense of injustice'[70], results from this marginalisation and discrimination. All these risk factors lead to a breakdown of broader societal trust and incite further alienation from governments and within communities.

70. The Arab Spring was sparked by 'marginalisation and discrimination', of Mohamed Bouazizi. Bouazizi was a Tunisian who self-immolated because the police had, yet again, destroyed his fruit stand, and therefore his livelihood. The protests that resulted and spread throughout MENA demonstrated the level of collective grievance felt and experienced by many in the region. In addition, a sense of global injustice as a result of historic foreign policy interventions by western powers in the region can further exacerbate the situation and can help to provide the fertile soil in which extremist narratives can take root and grow.

Conflict and the Refugee Crisis in MENA

71. Prolonged and unresolved conflicts in MENA are creating a security vacuum, instability, and deep-rooted grievances, all of which are contributing to violent extremism.[71] It is important to set the context here that in MENA terrorism and violent extremism has grown as a result of conflict and state fragility in countries which previously had little violent extremist activity (e.g. in Iraq, Syria and Libya).[72]

72. A recent International Crisis Group report explained that *"the descent of most of the 2011 Arab revolutions into chaos has opened an enormous opportunity for extremists. Movements have gathered force as crises have festered and evolved, as money, weapons and fighters flow in, as violence escalates. Mounting enmity between states means regional powers worry less about extremists than about traditional rivals; leverage the fight against ISIS against other enemies, or quietly indulge violent extremists as proxies. Especially in the Middle East, the expansion of violent extremists is more a product of instability than its primary driver is due more to radicalisation during crises than beforehand; and owes more to fighting between their enemies than to their own strengths. Rarely can such a movement gather force or seize territory outside a war zone or collapsed state."*[73]

73. We risk a lost generation of young people in these conflict areas, especially among refugees, who will not have had proper access to quality formal

[70] 'Drivers of Violent Extremism: Hypotheses and Literature Review', Royal United Services Institute (RUSI): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a0899d40f0b64974000192/Drivers_of_Radicalisation_Literature_Review.pdf
[71] 'Drivers of Violent Extremism: Hypotheses and Literature Review', Royal United Services Institute (RUSI): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a0899d40f0b64974000192/Drivers_of_Radicalisation_Literature_Review.pdf
[72] 'Drivers of Violent Extremism: Hypotheses and Literature Review', Royal United Services Institute (RUSI): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a0899d40f0b64974000192/Drivers_of_Radicalisation_Literature_Review.pdf
[73] International Crisis Group, 'Exploiting Disorder: al-Qaeda and the Islamic State' (2016): https://www.crisisgroup.org/global/exploiting-disorder-al-qaeda-and-islamic-state

education and are often excluded from labour markets. This may hinder refugees in being able to settle into their host community as an adult: a pressing issue given that refugees spend on average 20 years in exile[74]. Equally, in the long-term, refugees will need the education and skills required to be able to rebuild their societies as stable and not conducive to violent extremism, Regions with very low average rates of education have a 50 per cent chance of experiencing conflict[75], so improving education and employment opportunities are vital in ensuring the cycle is broken.

74. The refugee crisis, resulting from these unresolved conflicts, continues to be a growing and long-term challenge in MENA. The Syrian crisis needs no introduction, being the worst humanitarian disaster of our time, seeing more than 11 million killed or forced to flee their home[76] and leaving the country devastated. Iraq has faced years of economic stagnation and reduced access to essential services as a result of wars and the previous sanctions regime[77]. Yemen is enmeshed in conflict, adding to the humanitarian and refugee crisis in the region, whilst Libya has seen five years of conflict,

is facing a deteriorating humanitarian situation[78] and has also become a transport route for migrants leaving Africa to Europe. The health crisis in Yemen continues to add to the refugee challenges in the region.

75. There are clearly challenges for those young people who have been forced to flee their homes in relation to the other risk factors listed above. However, neighbouring host countries such as Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey have also faced increasing pressure on resources as a result of accepting vast numbers of refugees. Lebanon, for example, has the highest per-capita concentration of refugees worldwide, with one in four people a refugee[79]. This causes additional pressure on resources and basic services in these host countries, negatively affecting both refugees and host communities. Despite significant support from the international community, especially the UK, greater support is required to help these countries cope with the sheer numbers of refugees, but even more importantly solutions need to be found upstream to end the conflict in Syria and help tackle the underlying causes of migration[80], easing the flow of refugees and building the resilience of their host countries[81].

[74] UNHCR, 'Missing Out: Refugee education in crisis' (2016):
http://www.unhcr.org/uk/missing-out-state-of-education-for-the-worlds-refugees.html
[75] UNHCR, 'Missing Out: Refugee education in crisis' (2016):
http://www.unhcr.org/uk/missing-out-state-of-education-for-the-worlds-refugees.html
[76] Mercy Corps; Quick Facts: What You Need to Know About the Syria Crisis (2017):
https://www.mercycorps.org/articles/iraq-jordan-lebanon-syria-turkey/quick-facts-what-you-need-know-about-syria-crisis
[77] UNDP, Country Information, Iraq: http://www.iq.undp.org/content/iraq/en/home/countryinfo.html
[78] UNDP, Country Information, Libya: http://www.ly.undp.org/content/libya/en/home/countryinfo.html
[79] European Commission, Humanitarian Aid and Civil protection; 'Lebanon: Syria Crisis, Echo Factsheet' (2017):
https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/lebanon_syrian_crisis_en.pdf
[80] https://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/policy-insight-research/insight/a-new-approach-migration
[81] European Commission, Humanitarian Aid and Civil protection; 'Lebanon: Syria Crisis, Echo Factsheet' (2017):
https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/lebanon_syrian_crisis_en.pdf

Syrian refugee crisis
Families Fleeing Violence

About **11 million Syrians are on the run,** including some 4.8 million who have been forced to seek safety in neighboring countries. Inside Syria, more than 6.3 million people are displaced and **13.5 million are still in need of humanitarian assistance.**

1 in 4 people is a
Syrian refugee

Lebanon
1,017,433

1 in 10 people is a
Syrian refugee

Jordan
655,404

Fig. 2. Reproduced with permission from Mercy Corps.
Mercy Corps, Quick Facts Syria Crisis[82]

[82]Mercy Corps; Quick Facts: What You Need to Know About the Syria Crisis (2017):
https://www.mercycorps.org/articles/iraq-jordan-lebanon-syria-turkey/quick-facts-what-you-need-know-about-syria-crisis

Turkey

2,764,500

Syria

6,325,978
million people
internationally
displaced

Iraq

228,894

As of December 16, 2016.
Sources: http://data.uchcr.org/
syrianrefugees/regional.php
UNCCHA.org/syria

MERCY CORPS

76. Many Syrian refugees are already highly skilled and educated, which only intensifies their frustrations and grievances. For example, in Lebanon in 2016, the ILO estimated that only around half of Syrian refugees were economically active[83][84]. This lack of socio-economic opportunity manifests as a very clear challenge for young people, who in turn could be susceptible to, and at risk of joining, extremist groups for financial gains. International Alert pointed out: *"for young Syrians inside Syria, livelihood is a major issue. They are desperate. They have no other income and armed groups offer a weekly or monthly stipend. That in some ways can be enough to attract a young person to an armed group inside Syria"*[85].

77. The impact of the Syria crisis on the education of Syria's youth has been immense. Inside Syria, 2.1 million children are out of school. One in four schools is damaged or taken over. The loss of human capital due to increased dropout rates could reach $10.7 billion or 17.7% of Syria's 2010 GDP figures. In host countries the number of students enrolled in formal education has tripled since August 2013, but 50% of children remain out of school. Refugee children are particularly affected: half a million are out of school in Turkey, 40% of all refugee children in Lebanon and 15% in Jordan.[86]

78. Furthermore, poor governance in host communities results in these communities competing with the newly arrived Syrian refugees for resources, housing, and sometimes work. The UN has highlighted how *"host communities continue to see a rise in the cost of living, soaring rent prices and housing shortages, especially in poor neighbourhoods where Syrian refugees are often found"*[87].The issue is compounded in Lebanon, for example, by a deeply precarious legal position for Syrian refugees, particularly in respect of residency permits[88].

[83] International Labour Organisation: http://www.ilo.org/beirut/areasofwork/syrian-refugee-crisis/lebanon/lang--en/index.htm
[84] The Brookings Institution: https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2016/06/20/syrian-refugees-and-the-promise-of-work-permits/
[85] Oral Evidence taken on 12 September 2016, 'How Organisations are Responding to Radicalisation in MENA': https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/12_sept_2016_building_resilience_inquiry_british_council_appg.pdf
[86] UNICEF, Middle East and North Africa Out-Of-School Children Initiative; 'Syria Crisis: Five Years of Crisis and Conflict', Education Factsheet (2015): http://wos-education.org/uploads/reports/Syria_Crisis_5_Year_Education_Fact_Sheet_English_FINAL.pdf
[87] Lei Phyu, UNDP; 'Seven Reasons Why Rule of Law Matters for Peace', 2016: https://medium.com/we-the-peoples/seven-reasons-why-rule-of-law-matters-for-peace-860d5d4fc313
[88] Maja Janmyr, 'Precarity in Exile: The Legal Status of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon', Oxford Academic, Refugee Survey Quarterly, Volume 35, Issue 4, 1 December 2016, Pages 58–78: https://academic.oup.com/rsq/article-lookup/doi/10.1093/rsq/hdw016

Conclusion

79. In conclusion, when considering upstream drivers of violent extremism alongside the specific challenges facing MENA, as well as on-going conflict the sub-committee have identified three broad areas of challenge or priority factors:
a. Economic, Educational and Skills Factors
b. Civic Factors
c. Social Factors

2.2.3 How the Risk Factors Interact with the Challenges in MENA

Fig.3 Summary of where Cultural Relations interventions can impact on the risk factors and challenges in MENA

Risk (Push) Factors for Violent Extremism	Challenges in MENA
Economic Factors • A failure to generate sufficient well-paid jobs for young people • A mismatch of skills and unreformed job markets • Unemployment and economic insecurity • High levels of poverty, low levels of economic growth • Lack of core public service provisions to provide a safety net for people	• Highest youth unemployment rates globally, specifically North Africa • Education systems fall short of preparing young people for the job market; curricula does not match the skills gap in the market • The job market not able to absorb sufficient unemployed young people. • Teaching methods are not providing the sufficient skills. • Young people are not receiving the correct balance of skills needed by employers.
Social Factors • Social, ethnic or religious groups monopolising economic resources and / or political power • Rise in inter-community tensions • Alienation and discrimination • Restricted access to public services and job opportunities for some groups	• Frustrations and grievances in rural communities are growing because their needs are not being listened to. • Sense of injustice – foreign policies, identifying with fellow groups suffering from conflict. • Young people want their countries to do more for them, with many feeling overlooked by policymakers.
Civic Factors • Weak rule of law & corruption • Violations of human rights • Culture of impunity	• Young people have strong sentiments of injustice and corruption, and socio-economic discrimination • Weak rule of law, injustice and corruption, leading to blocked civil society and political engagement.Issues facing young people are misrepresented and not matched with policy.

Trust Deficit

Sub-committee's view on how cultural relations interventions can have an impact

Economic, education & skills barriers:
- Systemic reform of education and skills sectors
- English Language Training to open economic opportunities
- Vocational education and teaching quality
- Soft skills development and integration into programmes
- Building Entrepreneurship skills

Social barriers:
- Experiences and values learnt engaging with cultural relations activities.
- Empowering young people and women
- Fostering debate and dialogue.
- Promoting positive values that help prevent corruption
- Building 2-way trust and understanding of the UK, MENA, and other countries

Civic barriers:
- Active citizenship
- Fostering debate and dialogue
- Training and understanding how to manage and create policy
- Systems of rule of law and justice reform prevent corruption.

Building Trust and Understanding of the UK

3

Resilience and its Contributing Factors

3.1 Understanding Resilience

"We have to deal with the fact that extremism is going to be with us for a very long time and in our opinion, the most effective long-term solution is looking upstream and changing the ethos of people to make sure they are more tolerant, more inclusive and more diverse as a preventive measure."

Aly Jetha, CEO and Founder, Big Bad Boo Studios

Introduction: Understanding Resilience

80. In seeking to address these three broad areas, this report is concerned with societal and individual resilience as one important preventative or mitigating factor. Before exploring the interventions and evidence that address these challenges, we should therefore attempt to properly understand resilience.

81. Resilience has been persuasively defined in the context of violent extremism (by RUSI) as: *"the factors, ideas, institutions, issues, trends, or values that enable individuals and communities to resist or prevent violence. This can also be described as the capability of people, groups and communities to rebut and reject proponents of violent extremism and the ideology they promote, and to recover from violent extremism when it manifests itself."*[89]

82. Eugenie Teasley, CEO at the Goodall Foundation, explained individual resilience in her evidence to the inquiry in terms of the importance of character strengths and soft skills as: *"the non-technical or the non-academic skills; they are qualities, behaviours and attitudes. They are things like being a team player and being communicative. For psychologists it is about things like motivation, self-regulation and coping skills. For employers they are things like communication and interpersonal skills: decision-making and problem-solving."*[90]

[89] Strive for Development, Strengthening Resilience to Violence and Extremism:
https://rusi.org/sites/default/files/20160906_strive_2016_en_proof_combined.pdf
[90] Oral Evidence taken on 25 October 2016; 'Educating and Skilling a New Generation in MENA':
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/educating_and_skilling_a_new_generation_in_mena.pdf
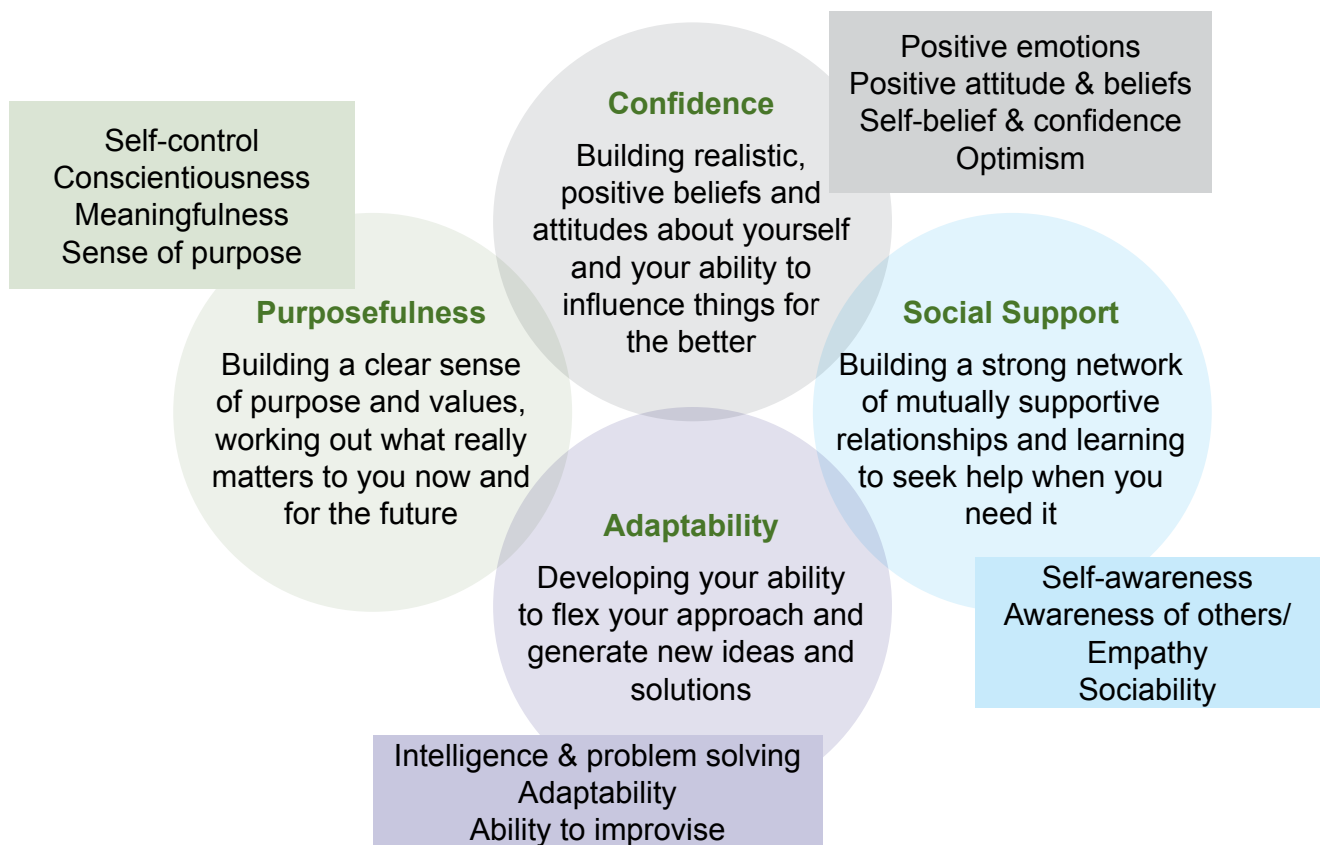
Self-control
Conscientiousness
Meaningfulness
Sense of purpose

Confidence
Building realistic, positive beliefs and attitudes about yourself and your ability to influence things for the better

Positive emotions
Positive attitude & beliefs
Self-belief & confidence
Optimism

Purposefulness
Building a clear sense of purpose and values, working out what really matters to you now and for the future

Social Support
Building a strong network of mutually supportive relationships and learning to seek help when you need it

Adaptability
Developing your ability to flex your approach and generate new ideas and solutions

Self-awareness
Awareness of others/ Empathy
Sociability

Intelligence & problem solving
Adaptability
Ability to improvise

Fig. 4 Building resilience: the four personal resilience resources
© Cooper, Flint-Taylor & Pearn 2013 (reproduced with permission)[91]

83. Building young people's resilience – the set of capabilities and resources that equip people to survive and thrive in the face of pressures and hazards, including – but not limited to – violent extremism is a good start.[92] Cooper, Flint-Taylor & Pearn[93] explain that more resilient individuals typically have strengths across four dimensions (see diagram above). Critical thinking is core – being mentally fit and flexible, means that these individuals can challenge morally bankrupt narratives. But they are also more confident, purposeful, and better able at building and drawing on strong supportive social networks[94]. In contexts that are vulnerable to conflict and violent extremism, such individuals are the self-starters who use their networks to build positive collective action or new

businesses, rather than resorting to violence. These are the young people that can reach across boundary lines, creating networks and communities that empower other young people. They have the skills that foster more fair, inclusive and peaceful societies: debate and dialogue, critical thinking, empathy and building a sense of common purpose. Individuals with these skills are the bedrock of resilient communities. They utilise the opportunities that exist – and create new ones. They and therefore their communities are i) less likely to conclude that violence is the only option; and ii) when confronted with problems, can draw on a wider skill set to manage them positively.

[91] Cooper, C.L., Flint-Taylor, J. & Pearn, M. (2013) *Building resilience for success: a resource for managers and organizations,* Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan
[92] For a discussion of the a cultural relations approach which builds resistance to violent extremism see Stewart, S. Building Resistance to Violent Extremism: A Cultural Relations Approach. British Council Discussion Paper, forthcoming.
[93] Cooper, Flint-Taylor & Pearn (2013)
[94] Cooper, Flint-Taylor & Pearn (2013) This approach is drawn from an in-depth literature review, which has grouped attributes and characteristics related to resilience into four main, overlapping clusters of personal resilience resources.

Individual *Personal resilience resources*	Situation *Context/community resources*
Individual resilience *Processes e.g. re-framing negative thoughts of hopelessness*	Community resilience *Processes e.g. setting up a community task force*
Individual resilience *Outcomes e.g. re-engaging with efforts to repair flood damage*	Community resilience *Outcomes e.g. a co-ordinated response to flood relief*

Fig. 5 Individual and community resilience – interaction and outcomes[95]
(Adapted from Davda & Flint-Taylor 2013)

The ability to engage in, or build, collective action responses illustrates the link between resilient individuals and resilient communities (see diagram above). Resilient individuals utilise the opportunities that exist – and create new ones – to develop social networks and benefit the community at large. This is because resilience is developed through constant feedback between individuals and their community. For example, increasing someone's confidence often helps them to be less defensive in difficult situations. This in turn improves their ability to build strong relationships, leading to more positive interactions with their friends, family and wider community, with the overall outcome being increased community resilience to a variety of threats and pressures.

84. In explaining its approach, the British Council stated in its evidence to the inquiry that when young people gain increased resilience it will *"help enable them to survive and thrive in spite of a bleak future, and encourage them to become "self-starters" who can create something themselves"*[96].

Stephen Gethins MP, Lord Purvis of Tweed and Baroness Suttie visiting 'Marginalised Youth' project in Rabat, Morocco.

[95] Davda, A. and Flint-Taylor, J. (2013), 'Individual and Team Resilience'; Poster Presentation at the European Association of Work and Organisational Psychology Annual Congress, Munster, Germany
[96] Written Evidence taken from the British Council: https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/british_council_-_written_evidence.pdf
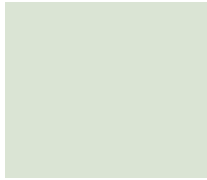
85. At the wider level, societies with high levels of education, employment, skills, and economic, civic and social equality, as well as strong civil society and rule of law, are more likely to be resilient to violent extremism, conflict or other negative influences and indeed are less likely to suffer from them in the first place. Building the resilience of societies as a whole will therefore be as important as building the resilience of the individuals within them. But it is also linked to the resilience of the individuals within them. Young people who lack the soft skills for civic engagement – eg listening and negotiation – are more likely to become frustrated and resort to blunter change tactics – for example popular revolt and violent extremism.

86. There is a growing academic consensus that interventions designed to build individual resilience need to emphasise an "open and critical pedagogy"[97] that builds the skills and confidence young people need to critique extremist narratives and ideologies.[98] This is core to the work of the British Council and other organisations which provided evidence to this inquiry. In essence this is focused on building young peoples' ability to interrogate their environment. In addition, both the evidence that resilience is developed under pressure – and our understanding that, no matter how resilient, young people in areas vulnerable to violent extremism face real external constraints (see section 2) – suggests that there also needs to be work engaging young people in positive activities focused on removing the barriers to economic and political participation. British Council programming in MENA demonstrates that educational approaches in conjunction with opportunities to engage with the state in positive action to improve their prospects has built young peoples' resilience across all the resource areas illustrated above[99].

[97] "Measuring open-mindedness: An evaluation of the impact of our school dialogue programme on student's open-mindedness and attitudes to others" Doney, J and Wegerif, R, Tony Blair Institute for Change, p. 16

[98] Extremist narratives are not generic – rather they draw on young people's negative experiences – often of local authorities and law enforcement strategies, and retell them in the form of narratives designed to persuade young people that the only route to change is violent opposition. Our evidence suggests that any assumptions that young people themselves are at fault because, for example, they are mentally unstable, are inaccurate. Extremist narratives work because they use sophisticated, state of the art communications strategies, based on detailed understanding of local push and pull factors.

[99] For a detailed discussion of this evidence see Strengthening Resilience in MENA "Measuring the resilience of programme participants". Report prepared by Dr Jill Flint-Taylor Rusando Ltd September 2017

Case Study 2 British Council Strengthening Resilience in Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Phase 1 2015–2017

The programme had two components focused on building individual resilience:

i A programme of activity based on the British Council's Active Citizens model and using sports, culture and social enterprise.

ii. A second phase was focused on enabling and supporting young people to engage positively with their context, for example by working with local authorities to renovate a public park. This phase also responded to the evidence that young people today are grappling with significant external barriers.

How did we evaluate improvement?

In evaluating improvement, two things matter. The first is whether young people's internal resources (their confidence, purposefulness, adaptability and ability to reach out for help) have strengthened. The second is whether this personal growth has resulted in the ability to engage more positively with and influence the world around them.

Baseline measurement: summary of trends as participants started the programme

Average levels of confidence and purpose were higher than levels of adaptability and social support. Participants tended to be quite confident in their skills and abilities, and to believe that life has meaning. They felt less well equipped to deal constructively with frustration, or to reach out to others for support.

Wider problems related to support from friends, family and community. Overall, the findings showed that trust in friends, family and community was relatively low for many participants. In particular many participants reported feeling unfairly treated by their communities. This is a significant concern in the light of evidence of that has shown connections between such feelings and recruitment to violent extremism. For example, discussion groups with young people from the same areas highlighted harassment by authorities as a factor driving engagement in violent extremism, which they also explained more generally as a reaction to corrupt, unfair and biased systems.

It is worth noting that the baseline resilience results for male participants were more negative than those for female participants, in two main ways. Firstly, they tended to have a weaker sense of purpose. Secondly, they were more negative about external resources including support from family and friends, being treated with justice, and having good role models.

As the majority of violent extremist recruits are young men, the lack of purpose, higher levels of alienation and distrust among male participants are of particular concern because these conditions create fertile soil for extremist narratives.

Summary of trends at the end of the programme
Following the programme, participants' resilience had improved in a number of important respects. At a broad level, their confidence had increased overall. They also felt better about the impact of external factors on their resilience, including the extent to which their community treats them with justice.

At a more detailed level, several of the weakest areas were among the most improved by the end of the programme. These include being unafraid to speak out and take action, standing up against others who try to impose their beliefs and values, seeking and getting support, and being able to solve problems in a non-violent way. Taken together, these improvements form a pattern that has clear relevance in the context of countering violent extremism.

3.2 Factors that Can Contribute to Resilience

3.2.1 Economic Factors

87. As already discussed, access to education is fairly high in much of MENA, but there are serious issues with educational outcomes, possibly caused by outdated teaching methods.[100] The Goodall Foundation highlighted that teachers in MENA were also aware of this and were grateful for advice in changing teaching styles. Goodall *"had not anticipated the number of teachers coming up from every single country, saying, 'We do not just want to learn the content, although this is good. We want to learn how you are teaching this. How do you do this in this facilitatory and participatory style? It is something that we are just not privy to and we do not have the opportunity to learn ourselves.'"*[101]

88. Overall education reform would enable a wider set of skills to be acquired for the job market. The British Council said: *"System reform, especially rebalancing in favour of vocational education and revising higher education curricula and teaching methodologies, will help alleviate graduate unemployment."*[102] Furthermore, Martin Rose of the British Council argues that *"the step of embracing violence may be connected to education in certain subjects failing to encourage the questioning of received ideas or alternative arguments and points of view"*.[103] The sub-committee suggests as part of the education reform, support and help for attaining jobs should be instilled through help with preparing CVs, interview techniques, careers guidance and how to gain development and skills in careers students want to pursue.

[100] Oral Evidence taken on 25 October 2016, 'Educating and Skilling a New Generation in MENA':
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/educating_and_skilling_a_new_generation_in_mena.pdf
[101] Oral Evidence taken on 25 October 2016, 'Educating and Skilling a New Generation in MENA':
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/educating_and_skilling_a_new_generation_in_mena.pdf
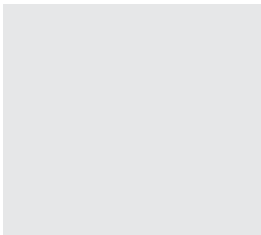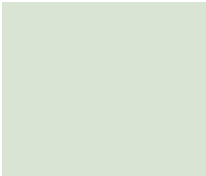[102] Written Evidence taken from the British Council: https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/british_council_-_written_evidence.pdf
[103] Martin Rose, "Immunising the Mind: Education and Extremism"
https://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/policy-insight-research/insight/immunising-mind-%E2%80%93-education-and-extremism.
See also Search for Common Ground "Summary: addressing violent extremism – How can we do better?, p.1
https://www.sfcg.org/tag/publications/

89. Evidence suggests that individuals can develop the skills and attributes associated with resilience.[104] This both about *what the way* in which students are engaged[105]. British Council education programmes and education system capacity building and reform programmes have student engagement at their core.[106] Such engagement characterises, for example, the Core Skills theme that runs through the joint Department for International Development and British Council Connecting Classrooms programme.[107] The skills and attributes encouraged in this programme include, for example, the ability to listen, empathise and manage ambiguity. Skills like these can collectively provide the basis for enhanced resilience. They can provide a basis for resisting extremist narratives, in part because they facilitate critical evaluation, a clear and positive sense of purpose, and the development of mutually supportive connections.[108] In turn this *"in-group belonging and the chance to effect social change can meet the same needs that drive extremist groups' appeal"*.[109]

90. It is important to note that, while failing education systems do appear to exacerbate youth unemployment, Mercy Corps did highlight mixed findings from their youth engagement programmes in Somaliland on the link between poor education and violent extremism. Their research showed that *"improving access to secondary education reduced youth participation in political violence by 16%, but increased support for political violence by 11%"*. So this is clearly a complex area with potentially counterproductive feedback loops and some unexpected or undesirable results or side effects. However, when Mercy Corps combined secondary education with civic engagement opportunities that allow young people to carry out community action campaigns, both participation in and support for violence drop significantly, by 14% and 20% respectively. Again, this highlights the importance of not looking at risk factors in isolation.

[104] British Council, forthcoming
[105] For a discussion of the relationship between education and resistance to violent extremism see Flint-Taylor, J. and Stewart, S, "Can education protect communities against violent extremism by building resilience", British Council, forthcoming 2017.
[106] British Council, forthcoming
[107] British Council "Unlocking a World of Potential" https://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/core_skills_brochure_british-council_2016-17_1.pdf
[108] British Council, forthcoming
[109] Search for Common Ground DATE "Summary: addressing violent extremism – How can we do better?, p.1 https://www.sfcg.org/tag/publications/
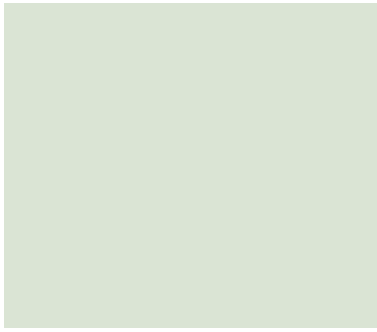
91. In their evidence, International Alert, Mercy Corps, SAHWA, Prof Emma Murphy, and the British Council suggested that the way to tackle high youth unemployment and address the economic and skills deficits is to connect education with enterprise, entrepreneurial training and job creation. This is particularly important in societies like many in MENA, where a traditional means of soaking up youth unemployment – the creation of more public sector jobs – is proving unsustainable. This alternative approach based on enterprise skills instead can build the resilience of individuals, communities and countries, through up-skilling individuals as well as enabling economies to thrive with a larger private sector.

Interventions to target economic factors

Soft Skills

92. The **Goodall Foundation** (in partnership with the British Council and funded by HSBC) works in developing character resilience and soft skills for marginalised young people in the Gulf States. The programme is about equipping young people with a wide set of enduring personal and professional strengthens and skills that will enable them to lead successful and fulfilling lives. The programme promotes pro-social behaviour, socially orientated action and purposeful employment and appears to be delivering effective results.[110] The sub-committee believe that programmes such as this could be scaled-up and used more widely in countries in the region where young people are facing higher levels of marginalisation than in the Gulf States.

93. The British Council and DFID address systemic education reform through their **Connecting Classrooms** programme.[111] More than 1,000 schools in MENA have taken part and the programme has robust evidence of effective impact. The sub-committee believes this is a good example of an effective programme working across individual students and teachers (micro level), schools and communities (meso level) and the education system as a whole (macro level). The areas of focus are closely linked to the attributes necessary for resilience. For example, the core skills focus on "citizenship", "purposefulness", "building a clear sense values" and "working out what matters for you now and for the future".

[110] Oral Evidence taken on 25 October 2016, 'Educating and Skilling a New Generation in MENA': https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/educating_and_skilling_a_new_generation_in_mena.pdf
[111] Oral Evidence taken from the British Council on 10 July 2017, 'The Role of Soft Power in Building Resilience to Radicalisation in MENA': https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/british_council_evidence_session_10.07.17.pdf
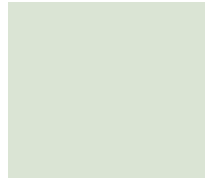
Science, Research and Innovation

94. The seven year **Newton-Mosharafa programme**, is funded by the UK and Egyptian governments and managed by the British Council in Egypt, along with the British Academy and Royal Academy of Engineers (in the UK) and (in Egypt) the Science and Technology Development Fund and Cultural Affairs and Missions Department. It is designed to improve the science, research and innovation relationship between the two countries, supporting the development of the Egyptian science base as a means to fuelling long term and sustainable economic growth and employment opportunities. It includes researcher links, professional development and knowledge transfer schemes, plus a £1 million scholarship programme. This programme has created 36 joint research partnerships linking UK and Egyptian universities, and 128 PhD scholarships awarded for Egyptians to complete part or all of their PhDs in the UK. Almost 900 researchers have participated in bilateral and trilateral workshops or conferences and over 700 scholars have been trained in science communication. It has enabled the UK and Egypt to address common challenges. For example, one project has developed a prototype device for solar powered desalination technology (this technology is seen as key to addressing Egypt's water shortage issues and has the potential to create employment in the country).

The project team developed a new partnership with Sohag University (in a deprived area of Egypt) and will deliver the technology to them.[112]

Entrepreneurship and Social Entrepreneurship

95. **'Social EntrepreNorth'** is a social enterprise programme designed and delivered by the British Council in Morocco and funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office under its North Africa Good Governance Fund (NAGGF). The programme aims to develop locally-owned, innovative solutions in response to the social and economic challenges facing Moroccans. It covers three aspects:

a. Capacity building and training to support the creation of new social enterprises;
b. Embedding social enterprise skills within a university to support employment and social innovation;
c. Research and policy dialogue with local authorities.

As part of the capacity building programme, 30 social entrepreneurs were chosen (from 300 applications) to take part in a four-day boot camp; 20 have been selected to receive a further month of mentoring. At the end of this period, ten entrepreneurs will be awarded up to £5,000 as well as six months of mentoring and support. (See Appendix 4)
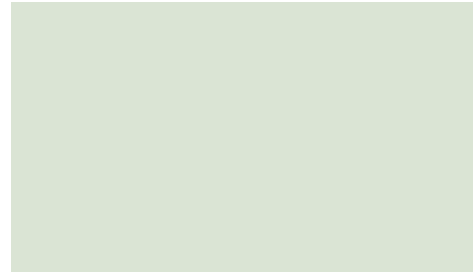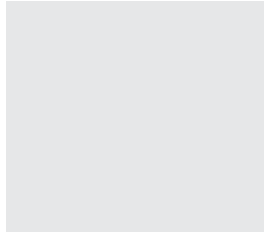
96. Whilst in Morocco, the sub-committee attended a workshop as part of the programme **'Marginalised Youth: Entrepreneurship Training'** under the British Council's 'Skills for Social Inclusion and Employability' project. The British Council has brought together experienced organisations from the UK and Morocco (through the International Skills Partnership initiative and partnering with Ministry of Youth and Sports, UK colleges and the private sector) to address barriers to entrepreneurship faced by people from vulnerable backgrounds. The programme includes institutional capacity-building on content, curricula, and training methods, as well as strengthening the administrative functions of local organisations, to provide a combination of skills needed to start and grow a small income-generating activity, such as life and basic business skills. The programme so far has:

1. Equipped 1000 young people with soft skills needed for the workplace
2. Equipped 40 trainers at the Ministry of Youth and Sports with the skills and tools to deliver training
3. Helped 200 young men and women acquire knowledge of entrepreneurial skills to help them start their business
4. Delivered more than 30 training sessions in collaboration with more 20 civil society organizations.

Teaching Languages

97. According to the EF English language proficiency index *"English is a key driver of economic competitiveness at both the individual and national levels. Higher English proficiency correlates with higher incomes, better quality of life, more dynamic business environments, greater connectivity, and more innovation"*[113] Further evidence of the many economic and social benefits of learning English for individuals and societies is set out in the British Council's The English Effect[114] report. The British Council told the sub-committee that *"if you look at the need across the region, English, for example, is universally stated as one of the top needs. It is stated by young people, by employers, across the board."*[115] **Teaching language** skills is also seen as a key way in which education for refugees can support the transition to the job market.

[113] Written Evidence taken from the British Council: https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/british_council_-_written_evidence.pdf
[114] 'The English Effect', British Council: https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/english-effect-report-v2.pdf
[115] Oral Evidence taken from the British Council on 10 July 2017, 'The Role of Soft Power in Building Resilience to Radicalisation in MENA': https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/british_council_evidence_session_10.07.17.pdf
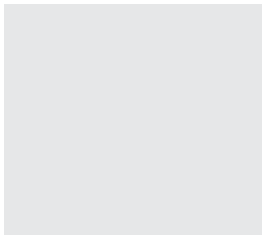
98. The British Council's **LASER programme** (Language, Academic Skills and E-learning Resources) is an academic skills training programme. It seeks to reintegrate Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon into the education system by providing them with English language and academic skills training; access to and support for high-quality accredited online higher education courses from providers such as the Open University; and access to "Massive Online Open Courses" (MOOCs) in Arabic and English.

Access to Education

99. UNHCR[116] and the Education Above All Foundation work with a vast array of other partners on the global **'Educate a Child'** programme. This aims to increase the quality of, and access to, primary education for out-of-school refugee children and improve retention by supporting innovative approaches to education, infrastructure, teacher training and development, as well as better provision of teaching and learning materials. Since 2012, thanks to this partnership, over 400,000 additional out-of-school children in 12 countries have been enrolled in school.
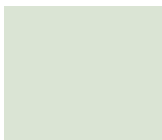
100. Universities are increasingly looking to the internet to facilitate courses. *"In partnership with universities, donors and other organizations, UNHCR, the University of Geneva and others formed the Connected Learning Consortium for Higher Education for Refugees. Connected courses combine digital access with face-to-face learning. Since 2004, these initiatives have provided accredited programmes for more than 5,000 refugee students in nine countries. In 2016 alone, an expected 350 new students will benefit from connected learning degree and diploma programmes, with accreditation from institutions in Australia, Canada, Germany, Kenya, Switzerland and the United States of America"*.

101. DFID works with IBRD HSBC to support the Government of Lebanon's **'Reaching All Children with Education in Lebanon II'** through financing the delivery of formal education for Lebanese and refugee children aged 3–18 in Lebanon. It is supporting the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education to strengthen their national education system, including strategic technical assistance for governance, planning, financing and data performance monitoring. It is taking a balanced approach to three interdependent pillars of activity: access to school; improving the quality of teaching and learning; and institution and systems building in the education sector.

[116] UNHCR, 'Missing Out: Refugee education in crisis' (2016): http://www.unhcr.org/uk/missing-out-state-of-education-for-the-worlds-refugees.html

DFID believes this *"will strengthen the availability and quality of free education, with associated skill and well-being benefits, for the most vulnerable children in Lebanon, including those from the poorest Lebanese families, as well as Syrian refugees."* [117]

102. UNHCR runs the **DAFI scholarship** (DAFI is a German acronym for the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative). This higher education scholarship programme gives young refugees financial assistance to access higher education in their host countries alongside national students. *"Awards cover a wide range of costs, from tuition fees and study materials, to food, transport, accommodation and other allowances… In 2015, 2,324 refugee students were on DAFI scholarships globally and a further 2,560 young refugees will be able to attend universities in their first country of asylum thanks to an expansion of the programme between 2016 and 2020, with support from the German government and other donors"*. These awards are given to Syrian refugees in their host communities.[118]
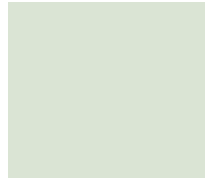
Specific Recommendations Targeting Economic Factors

103. The sub-committee agrees with the International Labor Organisation in concluding that there is a great and urgent need to *"scale up action through investing in skills and in quality job creation. Providing youth the best opportunity to transition to a decent job calls for investing in education and training of the highest possible quality, providing youth with skills that match labour market demands, giving them access to social protection and basic services regardless of their contract type, as well as levelling the playing field so that all aspiring youth can attain productive employment regardless of their gender, income level or socio-economic background."*[119] The UK has a significant role to play in this area through offering its expertise and support to governments in the region to help support their aspirations for economic development.

[117] Department for International Development (DFID), 'Support to Lebanon's Reaching All Children with Education plan': https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-GOV-1-300239
[118] UNHCR, DAFI Scholarships: http://www.unhcr.org/uk/dafi-scholarships.html
[119] International Labour Organisation: http://www.ilo.org/beirut/media-centre/news/WCMS_412797/lang--en/index.htm

104. The sub-committee welcomes the British Council's role in working with governments on **education system reform**. The inquiry heard about projects the British Council continues to sustain in collaboration with ministries and governments in Iraq, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia to reform the quality of education systems through various levels of training. This is an important part of the solution and the sub-committee recommends that the UK Government continues to support the British Council in this enterprise. It is particularly important to ensure that HMG's approach to educational support includes not only subject matter excellence, but also the pedagogical approach which develops the (soft) skills and attributes related to resilience. The sub-committee believes that the British Council should be supported by HMG to be able to play a stronger role in education reform in the region via additional funding for specific work of this type, liaising closely to support Ministries of Education in the region.

105. The sub-committee believes there needs to be **much greater coordination among the region's education ministries on data, statistics, skills gaps, and curriculum**. The sub-committee proposes and calls for an **annual MENA Education Forum**, in which the British Council could consider supporting for an initial period. The aim of such a forum would be to start the consideration of a **MENA Qualifications Framework** as available now in Europe.

106. The sub-committee believes an increased intake of Chevening Scholars[120] to the UK from targeted countries in the MENA region, and targeted subject areas could enable more young people with specific skills and expertise to help improve the future reformation of the job market and education systems. The sub-committee reiterates the importance of investing in future generations, as a critical issue in building resilience and long-term prosperity and development.

107. The sub-committee believes that **informal education** can significantly support formal education in terms of up-skilling young people in MENA. However at present many successful programmes are not operating at sufficient scale. The British Council told us of its work *"with Premier Skills, and those people who like sport tend to gravitate towards that, or to public speaking, science or debating"*[121]. This range of skills acquisition and interventions are important, and it is recommended that the range and scale of such programmes should be significantly increased to reach many more hundreds of thousands and millions of young people.

[120] http://www.chevening.org/
[121] Oral Evidence taken from the British Council on 10 July 2017, 'The Role of Soft Power in Building Resilience to Radicalisation in MENA': https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/british_council_evidence_session_10.07.17.pdf

108. The inquiry heard examples of using **MOOCs** (Massive Open Online Courses) in two different contexts; to address social barriers through critical thinking Center for Mediterranean Integration (CMI), and language skills development for disadvantaged Syrian refugees (British Council). The sub-committee recommends a joint approach between Center for Mediterranean Integration CMI, the British Council and other organisations to develop MOOC materials for young people to develop their journey through education, skills and entrepreneurship for the job market, language acquisition and critical thinking. It also recommends that the British Council works with UK universities to enable further exploration of digital learning solutions in a region that is experiencing rapidly expanding access to the internet.

109. The scale of the **skills** deficit is massive. The inquiry heard of some very effective examples of isolated programmes addressing the skills shortage. Yet they will be unable to make any significant impact without working at a much greater scale and with more co-ordination across different initiatives. Without this it is possible that many "islands of excellence" will be enabled with neglible impact on violent extremism. In essence, we know what needs to be done and it is being done very effectively but at a limited scale.

The sub-committee recommends that the UK Government invests in the British Council working with the Department for International Development, and other donor and partner countries, to expand their programmes to address the skills shortage in a more systematic, evidence-based and co-ordinated fashion.

110. As noted elsewhere in the report, it is important that skills-based responses do not focus only on intellectual or subject matter excellence, but also include the **"soft" skills** – included in the resilience model – which enable young people not just to find existing work, but also to negotiate and create alternative positive futures for themselves when it is lacking.

111. The sub-committee acknowledges that educating and up-skilling people up to the point of transitioning to jobs is critical in MENA. However, if the job markets are not primed to accommodate them, more systemic efforts are needed for **labour market reforms**, increasing the access to funding and good governance. The economic environment needs to be ready for people to move into. Dr Claire Spencer highlighted that frustrations can increase when there is not a joined up effort by agencies, ministries and governments in-country to seize upon the skill transfer and informal education programmes (such as debating or mentoring). The sub-committee recommends that the international community, including the UK government and the British Council, needs to use its influence, support and expertise to continue to encourage MENA governments to transition to economic models that support labour market reforms, increase access to funding and opportunities for young people.[122]

112. The sub-committee recognises the challenges of capacity for Ministries at the official level throughout MENA. Therefore the sub-committee recommends that the focus of support should be given to this. This support should include, but not limited to, a significant increase in fellowships, mentoring, English language skills and wider training among officials.

113. There are very few **entrepreneurship** schemes and programmes in MENA, particularly in North Africa, where unemployment is the highest. The UK has a lot of experience in successful entrepreneurship. It is therefore recommended that the UK Government and British organisations working in MENA, do more to support the region in developing effective and successful entrepreneurship skills programmes. Through doing this they will support individuals in becoming more economically self-sufficient and help boost stagnant economies. The sub-committee believes the British Council has a significant role to play leading this work, given their experience in social entrepreneurship elsewhere and the extensive networks they have already built.

[122] Written Evidence taken from Dr Claire Spencer, Chatham House: https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/dr_claire_spencer_-_written_evidence.pdf

114. The sub-committee recommends that more research is needed to **target specific locations** where sympathy for and recruitment to violent extremist groups is already high, and to highlight the skills needed in the job markets in those locations. Furthermore, there needs to be a better understanding of the local dynamics and contexts as explained by Mercy Corps and International Alert. Some of the organisations that gave evidence to this sub-committee are well placed to undertake this research in targeted areas and should proactive develop a collaborative approach to achieve this more effectively, whilst also pooling together best practice and evidence of impact from across their programmes.

115. The sub-committee notes that whilst the gender gaps have closed in the education and health sectors[123], women are still hugely underrepresented in the economic and political spheres in the MENA region. The sub-committee believes programmes should be increased that train and upskill women for the job market, which, as highlighted by the World Bank[124] and ILO[125], would improve the economic performance in MENA as well as supporting gender equality.

[123] 'Jobs for Shared Prosperity; Time for Action in the Middle East and North Africa'; World Bank: https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/13284
[124] 'Jobs for Shared Prosperity; Time for Action in the Middle East and North Africa'; World Bank: https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/13284
[125] ILO-KILM (International Labour Organization–Key Indicators of the Labour Market) database (data for 1980–2010). 7th ed. International Labour Organization, Geneva, Switzerland: http://kilm.ilo.org/kilmnet/.

3.2.2 Civic Factors

116. Many young people in MENA do not feel that their needs are being addressed through policy[126]. The sub-committee's evidence saw a number of ways in which this issue could be alleviated.

117. Some witnesses spoke about the importance of helping young people in communities to understand their policy needs. This disconnect cannot be addressed if specific needs are not identified correctly.

118. Debate and dialogue is also seen as a key way in which to build understanding around policy needs. This activity is helpful in empowering young people to find their voice and have the confidence to be able to express their needs. The British Council told us that: *"by focussing on empowering youth rather than pacifying them programmes, can help address their socio-economic exclusion and inability to influence decision-making processes"*[127].

119. It is important to connect these policy needs and young people in particular, to policymakers. Evidence presented to the sub-committee demonstrated that youth empowerment programmes that enable them to drive social change work best when they are in collaboration with governments to adopt policies that respond to youth aspirations for change[128].

120. Active citizenship also gives young people a sense of purpose and an active role in bringing about the change they want[129].

121. Changing policy frameworks for refugees is a major challenge with regards to the transition of refugees from education to employment. UNHCR said that *"we need to first underline the fact that refugees are living under a different legal and policy framework. They need work permits, and a work permit is not always granted. They need the ability to have their educational qualifications recognised. This may not necessarily happen. We need to look at all those elements and remove the barriers legal- and policy-wise in order to allow them to move forward."*[130]

[126] Arab Youth Survey 2017, carried out by ASDA'A Burson-Marsteller http://www.arabyouthsurvey.com/pdf/2017-AYS-White-Paper-EN.pdf
[127] Written Evidence taken from the British Council: https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/british_council_-_written_evidence.pdf
[128] Oral Evidence taken on 12 September 2016, 'How Organisations are Responding to Radicalisation in MENA':
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/12_sept_2016_building_resilience_inquiry_british_council_appg.pdf
[129] Oral Evidence taken on 12 September 2016, 'How Organisations are Responding to Radicalisation in MENA':
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/12_sept_2016_building_resilience_inquiry_british_council_appg.pdf
[130] Oral Evidence taken on 25 October 2016, 'Educating and Skilling a New Generation in MENA':
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/educating_and_skilling_a_new_generation_in_mena.pdf
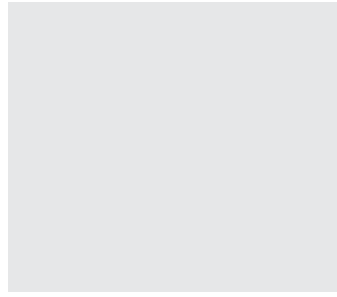
Interventions to alleviate civic factors

Research and Understanding needs

122. In Tunisia, **Search for Common Ground** engage with community leaders, women, youth, religious leaders, and local authorities through dialogue, to collaboratively identify localised risk factors for violent extremism, as well as to advance collaborative local responses in each community. So far, engagement and research in 6 communities with 667 participants has shown that drivers are localised and differ from one community to another. That is, one community may suffer from a strong sentiment of historical injustice and isolation from the central decision-making powers. In another community, the grievances might be primarily about the deficient education system. And in a third, it might be the deep distrust with the local police. Therefore, each community's cause of, and reactions to, violence will be different from one another, thereby necessitating community-led responses.[131]

Promoting Debate and New Ideas

123. The British Council's skills training programme and debating network, **Young Arab Voices (YAV)**, in partnership with the Anna Lindh Foundation, seeks to foster a culture of open and inclusive dialogue, and gives young people the skills to influence decision-makers. Since 2012, the programme has reached over 100,000 young people in North Africa. A report by the think tank Chatham House viewed YAV as one of the region's most successful skills transfer and training initiatives, fostering critical thinking skills not supplied by the formal education system, and creating a culture of more inclusive debate and dialogue.[132]

124. Stephen Stenning of the British Council highlighted the impact of performing arts in enabling debate and expression in MENA. He cited successful work being undertaken by a Tunisian partner, **Art Solutions**, using hip hop music and street dance as a way of giving purpose and direction to young people.[133]

[131] Written Evidence taken from Search for Common Ground:
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/search_for_common_ground_-_written_evidence.pdf
[132] Research Paper, Dr Claire Spencer and Saad Aldouri, Middle East and North Africa Programme, Chatham House, May 2016, 'Young Arab Voices, Moving Youth Policy from Debate into Action':
https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/publications/research/2016-05-13-young-arab-voices-spencer-aldouri.pdf
[133] Oral Evidence taken on 24 January 2017, 'Culture to Build Resilience to Radicalisation in MENA':
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/culture_to_build_resilience_to_radicalisation.pdf

125. The **Hammamet Conference Series**, which was attended by three sub-committee members, brings together established and emerging leaders from the UK and North Africa annually, who represent every level of society and sector, to build relationships and promote understanding and trust through dialogue, in the context of the challenges facing both regions. It has engaged with over 350 senior and emerging influential leaders, and produced several collaborative initiatives responding to the challenges discussed. (See Appendix 4)

Connecting marginalised groups to policymakers

126. The British Council's **Women Participating in Public Life** programme has provided community leadership training to over 4,500 people, and strengthened civil society groups' capacity to advocate for policy change on women's issues. An independent evaluation of the programme reported that participants had gained a sense of agency, self-confidence and new skills in dispute mediation, research and public speaking. One Moroccan participant said the skills she gained on the programme helped her win election to her political party's local leadership, and stand in local elections. An Egyptian participant

was able to advocate more effectively for enshrining gender equality in the new Egyptian constitution.[134] An independent evaluation of the programme reported that participants had gained a sense of agency, self-confidence and new skills in dispute mediation, research and public speaking[135].

127. On a macro level, **Search for Common Ground** enables effective state responses through assisting governments to work collaboratively with non-state actors, to expand the portfolio of policy options available to them, and beyond the use of adversarial approaches or kinetic force.[136] [137]

128. International Alert's work in Tunisia, **'Strengthening the relationship between young Tunisians and the state'** is working in some of the most marginalised towns in Tunisia: Ettadhamen and Douar Hicher[138] Research conducted in these areas in 2014 showed that constructing confidence in the state is the key requirement needed to promote inclusion of young people. Since August 2015, International Alert has been implementing activities to address this. The 18 month project combines dialogue and mediation experience, political participation

[134] Written Evidence taken from the British Council: https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/british_council_-_written_evidence.pdf
[135] Evaluation: Women Participating in Public Life. IOD PARC, 31st March 2015
[136] Written Evidence taken from Search for Common Ground:
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/search_for_common_ground_-_written_evidence.pdf
[137] Written Evidence taken from Search for Common Ground:
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/search_for_common_ground_-_written_evidence.pdf
[138] Written Evidence taken from International Alert:
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/international_alert_-_written_evidence.pdf

methodologies and digital community mapping tools. The local authority has also agreed to allocate 50% of the municipality's 2017 development budget based on a participatory budgeting process, with a focus on young people's needs.

129. Moussa Bourekba of **SAHWA**, explained that one the key objectives they set out to achieve is *"mapping the social and political change in the region and having a youth sensitive approach."*[139] SAHWA *"informs policy-makers about the views, conditions and perspectives of young people in the region with a range of tools and with a unique data set; (they) do it through public events, closed door seminars and some policy briefings."* SAHWA has "developed an extensive survey in five countries of study, through face-to-face interviews of 10,000 people, which has created a huge, unique comparative data set. Approximately 400 qualitative interviews through focus groups, narrative interviews and other ethnographic techniques[140] have further added towards identifying key policy needs. The sub-committee believes this is an important exercise that must be continued and constantly revisited, with the insights use to inform interventions of other agencies working in the region.

Specific Recommendations Targeting Civic Factors

130. The sub-committee believes that **dialogue and debate** are increasingly important in terms of ensuring young people are able to articulate their policy needs effectively, and are able to manage discord in a non-violent way. It saw some excellent examples of this, including the British Council and Anna Lindh Foundation's Young Arab Voices and BBC Media Action's programme. However these were being delivered at a relatively small scale. It therefore recommends that the UK Government allocates more funding to these programmes and others, directing attention on fostering debate and dialogue.

[139] Oral Evidence taken from Moussa Bourekba, SAHWA, on 25 October 2016, 'Educating and Skilling a New Generation in MENA': https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/educating_and_skilling_a_new_generation_in_mena.pdf
[140] Oral Evidence taken from Moussa Bourekba, SAHWA, on 25 October 2016, 'Educating and Skilling a New Generation in MENA': https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/educating_and_skilling_a_new_generation_in_mena.pdf

131. In addition, if young people articulate their policy needs in a vacuum and no real change results, this could breed further cynicism and distrust. Young people need to be able to exercise these skills in asking and arguing for change with the relevant authorities. Search for Common Ground therefore, recommends *"leveraging UNSCR 2250[141] (Youth, Peace and Security), which provides a framework through which Governments can provide greater resources and space for youth to mobilise for positively peace-building within and across their communities. Skills building, information sharing, and community programmes can offer young people meaningful ways to connect and engage with their communities in a way that engender a sense of ownership and belonging (whilst addressing the policy needs of that community)"*.[142] This sub-committee agrees with this recommendation.

132. Other positive evidence presented to the inquiry, notes that there are a number of different organisations undertaking research, fostering debate and enabling young people to **connect with policymakers**. The sub-committee recommends that organisations working in these areas link up and work together to ensure that there is a more coherent approach. This would enable these projects to have a significantly greater impact.

133. Many organisations appear to be leading **debating and dialogue** programmes. The evidence shows that these are effective and the sub-committee recommends that donors support these programmes. It also suggests that organisations running such programmes gain a greater understanding of the actors already working in this space and, where possible or effective to do so, collaborate in order to increase their impact.

134. The sub-committee recommends collaborative programmes between the UK and the MENA region, similar to the UK's National Citizen Service (NCS)[143] to help support young people in the UK and MENA build skills for work and life, and share experiences and challenges.

[141] https://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc12149.doc.htm
[142] Written Evidence taken from Search for Common Ground:
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/search_for_common_ground_-_written_evidence.pdf
[143] https://www.gov.uk/government/get-involved/take-part/national-citizen-service

Case Study 3 International Alert: Strengthening the relationship between young Tunisians and the state in the suburbs of Tunis

International Alert is working with young people in the towns of Ettadhamen and Douar Hicher, Tunisia, for the empowerment of excluded communities and the strengthening of their voices. The high hopes of young people, one of the most active groups in the revolution, have turned to bitterness, in the face of chronic underemployment, underdevelopment and political exclusion. Ettadhamen and Douar Hicher, two working class towns situated in Greater Tunis, embody this shift. Today, both communities suffer from stigmas associated with poverty, crime and Salafism (fundamentalist Islam). Both towns are seen as recruiting grounds for groups promoting violent extremism, including those sending Tunisians to Syria for jihad.

The results revealed that the marginalisation and exclusion of young people takes many forms: social, economic, urban, cultural and political. Youth unemployment is particularly high among graduates, and as a result young people do not believe that going to school will promote their social prospects. Young people are very suspicious of institutions because of corruption, a lack of accountability and feelings of marginalisation.

The study also confirms that young people encounter difficulties as a result of the stigmas attached to their neighbourhoods. These stigmas serve to widen inequalities, particularly in terms of young people's access to jobs. Both towns have very few cultural and sports facilities, and they are marked by high rates of drug consumption. Young people nonetheless have a strong sense of identity associated with their residential area, creating a sense of solidarity.

Further, when young people sympathise with Salafism, it is for two main reasons: either political, because they share its anti-system ideology, or residential, because they feel a sense of solidarity with young Salafist activists who live in the same neighbourhood as them and with whom they share the same daily suffering and deprivation. Many young people from Douar Hicher and Ettadhamen have left for Syria since 2011.

Following up on the findings
The research has shown that the key requirement needed to promote the inclusion of young people is the construction of their confidence in the state. This should be built through the reinforcement of young people's ability to have a voice in local governance, and by involving them in processes of participatory democracy where they are able to articulate their needs and expectations towards the public policies of the state.

From August 2015, International Alert has been implementing a series of activities that aim to address the social and political marginalisation felt by young people. This 18 month project combines International Alert's dialogue and mediation experience, and tried and tested dialogue and political participation methodologies, with innovative digital community mapping tools. It is targeted towards previously overlooked young people, and tackles marginalisation where it is most needed, by using the following approaches:

• Building trust and establishing lasting partnerships between local authorities and young people by creating sustainable consultation mechanisms.
• Encouraging young people, and the general population of Ettadhamen and Douar Hicher, to exchange views with local and national authorities through a participatory dialogue process. This process aims to connect local people's voices to the national level and central government.
• Stimulating local development in Ettadhamen and Douar Hicher and promoting youth employment by establishing two or three pilot initiatives to set up solidarity-based social economy enterprises.

Through an inclusive approach, the project has succeeded in setting up a platform of CSOs in Ettadhamen, which helped to reach out to a number of young people to participate in the project's activities. International Alert also adopted various methods to reach out to and recruit participants; these included an open call for applications through a poster campaign, and contacts with high schools to facilitate access to young people deemed as harder to reach.

More than 30 young people, gender balanced and from various backgrounds, were selected and trained in various topics such as leadership, local democratic governance, local elections and accountability and street art. The crucial tool that was designed to strengthen the coherence of the group, increase its visibility and run the process in a fun and progressive way was the OpenStreetMap.
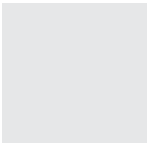
This innovative tool, never used before in Tunisia, is a digital mapping project that allows young people to work together to create an interactive map of their neighbourhood. Its use can be seen as a pioneering exercise in social re-appropriation, geared towards both identifying problems and suggesting ways to improve neighbourhood life. For example, young people can map locations not marked on official maps, unsafe areas, such as those prone to accidents or violence, social requirements and facilities in need of development. In addition, the objective of OpenStreetMap is to give young people the opportunity to inform and influence local government constructively. This tool has already achieved this: the local authority has now begun to invite young people to consultation meetings, and has agreed to allocate 50% of the municipality's 2017 development budget based on a participatory budgeting process, integrating a focus on young people's needs.

3.2.3 Social Factors

135. In looking at ways to reduce social barriers, our evidence suggested it was important to support inclusive growth, defined by the OECD as growth that creates opportunity for all segments of the population and distributes the dividends of increased prosperity, in non-monetary as well as monetary terms, fairly across society.

136. Evidence taken from Dr Bernadette Buckley, Prof David Cotterrell, Lois Stonock, International Alert, Aly Jetha, SAHWA, the British Council, and Search for Common Ground all suggested that one way cultural relations can build resilience to the social inequalities and barriers in MENA is to foster understanding, both intra-regionally and within countries (particularly within those countries facing high levels of migration). Promoting it as early as possible, upstream, is the best way to ensure that understanding becomes embedded.

137. BBC Media Action also suggested that *"creating trusted platforms for public debate so those who are politically or economically marginalised feel their issues are being aired and addressed…is particularly important for young people, who are often not well represented by national media"*[144] Whilst BBC Media Action's evidence primarily related in this context to Bangladesh and Kenya, we believe these lessons are equally applicable in MENA.

138. Big Bad Boo Studios told the inquiry that it is important to foster critical thinking from an early age in order to reduce the sense of "otherness". (This is strongly correlated with the "adaptability" dimension of the resilience framework. It *"uses animation and cartoons to promote universal values, civic education and engagement within young children through school curricula"*. They are addressing how policymakers, Ministries of Education and Governments need to adapt this approach. Their evidence-based programmes show successful impact. Tests they carried out found that *"8% of 8 year olds, 18% of 9 year olds, and 25% of 10 year olds were deemed to be hostile to outside groups. So it was concluded that children between the ages of 8 and 10 children are learning the concept of "otherness" and whether "otherness" is positive*

or negative. After using Big Bad Boo materials, the 8% amongst 8 years olds went down to 6%, the 18% amongst 9 year olds went down to 7% and the 25% amongst 10 year olds went down to 5%. The same data trends were found for gender equality and tolerance for different ideas and beliefs. Other ideas, like empathy and violent versus non-violent dispute resolution are learned even younger than 6–11 year olds. Our data and experiences show that, the further upstream you go in terms of teaching core values that undermine extremism, the more successful you are going to be at preventing extremist narratives from taking root."[145]

139. The British Council saw education system reform as enabling the development of critical thinking. It said: *"It can also tackle the issue of binary approaches to complex problems, which studies indicate can increase vulnerability to radicalisation."*[146]

140. Additionally, they highlighted that *"artistic exchange helps open individuals' minds to diverse cultures (including the UK's) and forms of expression, and helps challenge stereotypes, thereby providing a strong counterweight to the exclusivist monoculture of extremists"*[147].

141. Cultural relations has a role to play in addressing social barriers through helping to *"develop a new positive vision that resonates emotionally with local youth; this has the potential to strengthen national identity, build wider societal resilience, and counter the emotional pull of narratives created by extremist groups"*[148]. The British Council explains how its work creates *"trust and reduce[s] antipathy towards the UK. The impact of this work is demonstrated by the results of our annual impact survey which show increases in young people's knowledge, understanding and relationships with the UK after participation in our programmes. Research by Yougov and Ipsos MORI for the British Council has also established a clear link between those individuals who participate in cultural relations programmes and increased trust in the UK, including in countries with historic distrust in the UK"*[149].

[145] Oral Evidence taken from Aly Jetha, Big Bad Boo, on 25 October 2016, 'Educating and Skilling a New Generation in MENA': https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/educating_and_skilling_a_new_generation_in_mena.pdf
[146] Written Evidence taken from the British Council: https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/british_council_-_written_evidence.pdf
[147] Written Evidence taken from the British Council: https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/british_council_-_written_evidence.pdf
[148] Written Evidence taken from the British Council: https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/british_council_-_written_evidence.pdf
[149] Written Evidence taken from the British Council: https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/british_council_-_written_evidence.pdf
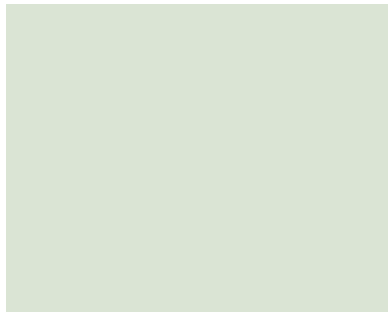
Interventions to alleviate social factors

Social and gender factors

**142.** The FCO Minister for MENA, Tobias Ellwood MP, gave an example in his evidence to the inquiry of how the FCO supports work to achieve a gender balance in education to address social barriers in MENA. He said *"on education in Syria, we have undertaken a gender study to determine the barriers facing girls and boys from accessing school, and facing female teachers and education professionals from accessing education jobs in Northern, opposition-held areas of Syria. This will provide valuable insights through a report in June/July 2017 which will inform the design of our education programme for the 2017/2018 school year."* [150]

143. Mr Ellwood gave another example of an FCO intervention addressing social barriers in MENA. He said *"in addition to political lobbying for greater inclusion of women in the Yemeni peace process by the parties to conflict, we have supported UN Women in developing the Yemeni Women Pac for Peace and Security (YWPACT). This Yemeni-led group advocates for greater participation and inclusion in the official peace process and for a more gender-equal approach in peace building and reconstruction. It also aims to provide this group of Yemeni women with skills and knowledge to enable them to play a leading role in the peace process. In the year since the UK provided funding the project has helped YWPACT to grow in size and status as a consultative body for UN secretary General's Special Envoy for Yemen, and a delegation of Yemeni women travelled to UN-led peace talks in Kuwait. Although the conflict parties remain somewhat resistant to a gender-equal approach to peace talks, and more work needs to be done, this has had the success of getting greater female participation on the agenda."* [151]

[150] Written (Supplementary) Evidence taken from the from Foreign and Commonwealth Office: https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/foreign_and_commonwealth_office_-_written_evidence.pdf
[151] Written (Supplementary) Evidence taken from the from Foreign and Commonwealth Office: https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/foreign_and_commonwealth_office_-_written_evidence.pdf
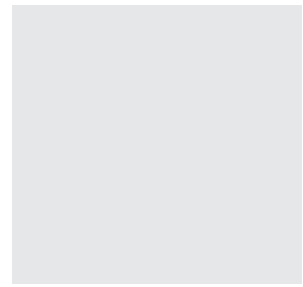
Critical Thinking

144. Giulia Marchesini, CMI (Centre for Mediterranean Integration) described one type of intervention that the World Bank and the Islamic Development Bank have initiated, a programme that is called '**Education for Competitiveness:** a Framework for action'. *"In this new vision for education, one that promotes critical thinking, creativity and innovation, they are suggesting a comprehensive approach to education is required, that spans from early childhood to university, in order to have an effect on the young people of the Mediterranean region… You need to work through all the ages"*.[152]

145. Giulia Marchesini also gave an example of working with policymakers in Tunisia, to build critical thinking amongst graduates. Tunisian intellectuals and academics have developed a **MOOC** (Massive Open Online Course). *"It is a seven-week module, developed by researchers and university academics on radicalisation and terrorism. It has been well-received and is currently being prepared as a proposal to be integrated within the Tunisian education system. There is an agreement with the Ministry of Education, for students to be more sensitised to these issues. The origins and causes are analysed, and the MOOC aims to better understand the phenomena and to promote the critical thinking required to prevent victims of this recruitment. The objective is to have it included as a mandatory module in all Bachelor Degrees in humanities, and as an optional module in engineering degrees, all over Tunisia. It is something that we are very proud of because it is an initiative that is coming from the south (of the Mediterranean), and by the Tunisians themselves."*[153]

[152] Oral Evidence taken from Giulia Marchesini, CMI, on 25 October 2016, 'Educating and Skilling a New Generation in MENA' https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/educating_and_skilling_a_new_generation_in_mena.pdf

[153] Oral Evidence taken from Giulia Marchesini, CMI, on 25 October 2016, 'Educating and Skilling a New Generation in MENA' https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/educating_and_skilling_a_new_generation_in_mena.pdf

Fostering Debate and common purposes

146. **BBC Media Action** supports the development of inclusive states and societies, helping populations that feel disengaged and excluded from society to raise their voice and access opportunities, supporting inclusive identities and reducing the acceptance of violence as a legitimate way to resolve disputes. The organisation is addressing marginalisation at scale to reduce fragility and exclusion, increasing discussion and dialogue, enabling politically and economically marginalised voices to be heard in public debate. They support societies to overcome fear of "others" and navigate their differences. Last year, over 100 million people watched or listened to programmes BBC Media Action supported in this area. [154]

147. BBC Media Action also run **'Ija Inbox'**, an interactive TV and social media project providing a platform for young Tunisians (15–25) to express their opinions on a variety of economic, social and political issues. Ija Inbox is presented and produced by young people for young people. They are invited to share their concerns – and find solutions to them – in a weekly TV show and its social media platforms. Discussion topics range

from relationships, migration and drug use to violence, policing and employment – subjects rarely tackled in mainstream Tunisian media. [155]

148. Lois Stonock, gave an example case study of **Human Drama in Myanmar**, but which may have lessons for the MENA region, *"where the space created is not physical but rather a space for discussion and conversation. It is the form of the theatre workshop that creates the space for people to share and learn. The forum theatre project was created by Human Drama, a participatory theatre company created by Pan Arts to 'tackle burning social issues'. The process involves local intermediaries in the community who gathers people wherever they can. Four facilitators work with anything from 20 to 100 people. The group then (do) exercises that test social attitudes and norms. This helps the facilitators to identify 'justice issues' in the group, which in this project turned out to be trafficking and domestic violence. These stories become the basis for a play which is developed by the facilitators and actors. When the play is performed, the spectators are given a chance to suggest alternative ways for resolving the dispute or injustice."* [156]

[154] Written Evidence taken from BBC Media Action:
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/written_evidence_submission_by_bbc_media_action.pdf
[155] BBC Media Action: http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/where-we-work/middle-east-and-north-africa/tunisia/ija-inbox
[156] Written Evidence taken from Lois Stonock
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/written_evidence_submission_by_lois_stonock.pdf

149. The British Council, through an art exhibition in Tripoli and Benghazi, 'Street Arts', bought together works by young Libyan graffiti artists with that of established international street artists. It was the first large-scale international arts event in Libya following the 2011 revolution; the exhibition explored visual techniques, as well as the political and social dimensions of street art, which have particular significance in North Africa as a way to articulate opinions outside the conventional channels of political debate.[157] Through promoting non-violent forms of discord, programmes such as this enable young people to be more resilient to inequality and social barriers.

Specific Recommendations Targeting Social Factors

150. The sub-committee has heard a range of interventions which could address the challenges of social barriers in MENA. It believes there is a particular role for arts and sport, especially when engaging with younger people. Evidence has shown that **arts and sport** create a unique safe space, forum and platform for the engagement of differences and grievances which otherwise can be capitalised upon by violent extremist groups. Using different platforms means that it is possible to engage young people whatever their interests, abilities and educational achievements.

151. The sub-committee recommends that international organisations including the British Council, working with governments in the region, to carry out more detailed and localised research to **identify 'at risk' communities** where inequality combines with other risk factors that could increase recruitment to violent extremist groups, and target subsequent interventions in these areas.

152. The sub-committee recommends mobilising connections among elites to **help connect** them **to youth and other marginalised groups** to facilitate understanding and address grievances in order to forge new and inclusive national visions.

153. All actors working in MENA should **be aware of the social barriers that exist**, and use all the interventions discussed in this report to help alleviate these inequalities. It is recommended that measures around this are built into evaluations for all projects working in MENA.

154. The sub-committee recommends that more work and research is conducted into the role of women on preventing and countering violent extremism, and whether interventions to support women could be woven into, or increased, through existing programmes supporting women's empowerment, training and development.

[157] Written Evidence taken from the British Council: https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/british_council_-_written_evidence.pdf

Case Study 4 Morocco Countering Violent Extremism Media Training Program

Search for Common Ground – Morocco

From 2016 to 2017, Search for Common Ground in Morocco (Search-Morocco) implemented the multi-platform *Morocco Countering Violent Extremism Media Training Program,* an initiative that highlighted the central role of youth in preventing the emergence of violent extremism and the efficacy of multi-platform campaigns. An international conference launched the initiative, gathering 34 emerging leaders, including government officials, religious scholars, civil society activists, educators, and social and traditional media experts, from all over Morocco. The event provided a platform for participants to learn from international experts about the drivers of violent extremism in the Moroccan context and how to use online messaging to transform them. Harnessing their new knowledge, participants worked collaboratively over the next several months to design online campaigns to prevent and limit the impact of violent extremist messaging. The resulting online campaigns reflected participants' diverse understanding and experiences and highlighted their increased knowledge of transforming violent extremism[158] and amplifying credible alternative narratives. The final campaigns were launched on Facebook and Youtube in July 2017, and included:[159]

- **#Except_me,** which aimed to prevent and limit the impact of violent extremist narratives through 2D animation videos and a short documentary featuring a former Moroccan violent extremist.

- **#I_want_to_live,** which sought to make Moroccan families aware of their significant role in building resilience to violent extremism and taught parents how to recognize radicalization in their children.

- **#Our picture_our_unity,** which featured a photography and painting competition, engaging Moroccan artists to highlight the importance of tolerance in Moroccan society. Winners were selected in a two-stage selection process that included a committee evaluation and a public vote on the Search-Morocco Facebook page.

[158] Slachmuijlder, L. (2017). Transforming Violent Extremism: A peacebuilder's guide, 1st ed. Washington DC: Search for Common Ground.
[159] "How Moroccan Activists Are Countering Online Recruitment Into Violent Extremism," Search for Common Ground Blog, September 19, 2017.

Together, the three Facebook campaigns reached over 1.5 million Moroccans, mostly youth, and garnered nearly 450,000 total video views, achieving an average engagement rate of 9.14%, with 4% generally considered to be "good" or "very good."Audience reactions further validated the success of the initiative and that the developed narratives resonated with Moroccan youth. The online engagement included lively Facebook discussions on the drivers of violent extremism in Morocco and how best to tackle the phenomenon. The highly inclusive process of developing the campaigns further underscored the project's success in bringing together diverse Moroccans around the common goal of transforming violent extremism. One participant remarked that the opening conference helped her to put words to the issues in her community, and motivated her to take on transforming violent extremism in her city of Tetouan. She said, "I have become more aware of the problem and willing to make others aware of it as well. It has become a personal cause for me. Tetouan should not keep sending youth to conflict zones. This situation has to change through amplifying positive stories."

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[1]Slachmuijlder, L. (2017). Transforming Violent Extremism: A peacebuilder's guide, 1st ed. Washington DC: Search for Common Ground.
[2]"How Moroccan Activists Are Countering Online Recruitment Into Violent Extremism," *Search for Common Ground Blog,* September 19, 2017.

Case Study 5 Search for Common Ground
Afef's Story, Youth and Skills' Project

Bizerte, Youth and Skills' project
Name: Afef Heni
Age: 24 years old
Gender: Female
Occupation: Student
Location: Tunis
Marital status: Single

I was born with a serious health condition and I was expected to die in the next few days. My parents left me with an old woman they know in Kairaoun. She was like a grandmother to me. She considered me as her own daughter and took care of me well until her last breath. After her death, I was shocked and I couldn't speak for a few days. My father came to the funeral and took me to live with him in Tunis. It was difficult for me to start a new life especially in a big city. Students in my new high school didn't accept me. I felt like a stranger. It led me to focusing on my studies and participating in art clubs in my school. I wrote short stories and poems since I was a little girl. My professors kept telling me that I will be an important woman one day. I developed a passion for photography and video making.My father was againstthe idea of studying Cinematographyat the university. So I studied Graphic Design instead and continued my master degree in Cinematography.

I know someone who went fighting in Syria with the extremist groups. He is my best friend's brother. He left his sick father and his mother crying over him. After few months, I tried to reach him through Social Media to collect information about his journey and produce a short movie about it. The idea was to raise awareness among youth about the consequences of their choices. **He told me that he is desperate and wants to wake up and find that this is all just a dream. I tried to transfer his sense of remorse to youth so they think twice about committing the same mistake.** The short film was elaborated with the help of Youth and Skills organization from Bizerte. When I found this amount of support from them, I decided to join their organization and participate in their project's activities. In addition to that, I like how they gather participants from different generations in the same room. **When a child interacts with an older person it makes him/her more confident.**

My first short film was screened at the Majestic cinema in Bizerte. It made me believe in myself and aspire to become a filmmaker. I'm willing to travel from Tunis to Bizerte whenever the organization calls me because I appreciate their efforts.I wasn't concerned with NGOs before, but now I'm totally with the idea and **I invite youth to join organizations because only the Civil Society can gather us and benefit the community.**

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3.2.4 Addressing Barriers Faced by Syrian Refugees

155. In her evidence to the inquiry, Lois Stonock (Independent Researcher, Curator and Cultural Strategist, Founder, LR Stonock Consultancy and Create Associates) discussed the role of theatre in supporting Syrian refugees to explore issues related to radicalisation in Turkey: *"One of the examples of this is the use of forum theatre. It is a form of theatre where the audience can take part, though there might be an overall structure to it. I interviewed one girl in Kilis in Turkey, who was using it with a group of young boys…between eight and about 13, and were at risk of being radicalised."*[160]

156. International Alert's programme, '**Teaching Peace, Building Resilience;** Assessing The Impact Of Peace Education For Young Syrians' uses *"peace education to reduce young Syrian's vulnerability to recruitment by extremist groups… In 2015–2016, International Alert, alongside four local implementing partners engaged with 7,111 children aged 6–18 and youth aged 18+ in a range of peace education interventions in Syria, Lebanon and Turkey over a six month period… Project activities aimed to increase young people's capacity for nonviolence, social* and life skills, individual and group resources, (and) resilience… After only six months, the pilot project has demonstrated solid evidence that peace education can successfully support psychosocial resilience and reduce the risk of children and young people engaging in violence…"*[161]

157. Lois Stonock recommended that **the arts** should be supported more as a key tool to build bridges between people, create space for understanding, and thus support the development of more resilient societies.[162] Stonock recommends that *"in order to influence policy, one suggestion could be to support artist activity which creates space for discussion and brings together communities in different ways outside formal structures avenues such as schools and family. This would build into working with artists to develop and share their own practice and create spaces which can become places for people to explore issues such as identity."*[163] Dr Bernadette Buckley (Convenor, MA Art and Politics, Goldsmiths, University of London) gave examples ranging from architecture creating spaces for refugees to explore identity, to digital arts centres providing a place for alienated young people who

[160] Oral Evidence taken on 24 January 2017, 'Culture to Build Resilience to Radicalisation in MENA': https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/culture_to_build_resilience_to_radicalisation.pdf
[161] Written Evidence taken from Rebecca Crozier, International Alert: https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/international_alert_-_written_evidence.pdf
[162] Written Evidence taken from Lois Stonock: https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/written_evidence_submission_by_lois_stonock.pdf
[163] Written Evidence taken from Lois Stonock: https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/written_evidence_submission_by_lois_stonock.pdf
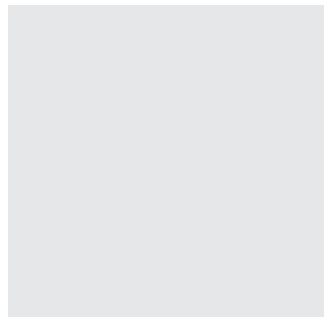
have little else to do to except 'hang out'[164]

158. The British Council emphasised a particular role that **sports** as well as arts can play in fragile and conflict-affected societies. *"They help bolster a positive vision of national identity at a time of crisis, and provide space for different communities to meet and discuss difficult issues, by establishing "a system of values and references that can foster communication among different groups""*.[165] The sub-committee sees this as important to consider amongst the Syrian refugee community, and it is likely to become increasingly important as that community moves towards supporting a peaceful solution for their country.

159. The British Council also gave the example of using active citizenship approaches to challenge inequalities and community conflict. Chief Executive, Sir Ciarán Devane said: *"We have worked with a group of young people called Mobaderoon for 10 years in Syria, and they are still operating in Syria. Mobaderoon have personally developed 'Active Citizens'[166] training that we had given them. They run peace committees in Tartous, which is a regime held area, but the refugees are from non-regime areas, so there is a lot*

of tension. If you remember when there were bombs in the bus station in Tartous, these young people (from Mobaderoon) went out on the streets and convinced people not to riot, not to attack the refugee camps (through the trust and rapport they had built). The same group are carrying street theatre around Syria as best they can, really as a forum for having intercommunity dialogue".[167] The Mobaderoon programme was evaluated by INTRAC consultancy, and they found that those participants had gained a sense of agency and hope, and thought about people from other religious and ethnic communities in a different way[168].
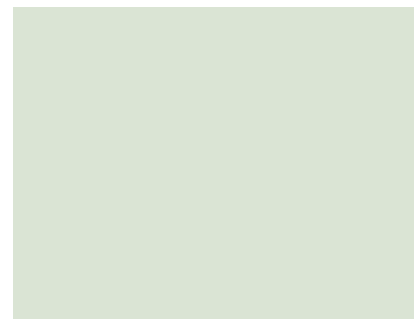
[164] Oral Evidence taken on 24 January 2017, 'Culture to Build Resilience to Radicalisation in MENA':
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/culture_to_build_resilience_to_radicalisation.pdf
[165] Written Evidence taken from the British Council: https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/british_council_-_written_evidence.pdf
[166] British Council, Active Citizens, 'Syria: A Glimmer of Hope':
https://www.britishcouncil.org/active-citizens/global-locations/middle-east-north-africa/syria-glimmer-of-hope
[167] Oral Evidence taken from the British Council on 10 July 2017, 'The Role of Soft Power in Building Resilience to Radicalisation in MENA'
https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/british_council_evidence_session_10.07.17.pdf
[168] A Mixed Methods Evaluation of the Mobaderoon Network (Active Citizens Programme), Didi Alayli, INTRAC, March 2016.
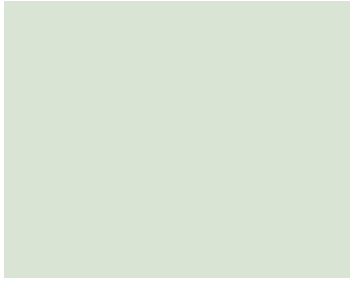
160. Tobias Ellwood MP gave another example of building resilience to radicalisation in response to the Syria conflict: *"one of the most effective programmes in the region is the project which supports the work of the 'Syria Civil Defence' (also known as the White Helmets). It is a truly outstanding programme and the UK is proud to be a long term supporter… Our support to Syria Civil Defence is part of a coordinated international programme of assistance. It had helped to provide the Syrian-led organisation of over 2800 volunteers with much-needed training and equipment. The volunteers include 62 women, who are trained in medical care and search and rescue work. To date the white Helmets have saved over 80,000 lives. They were nominated for the Noble peace prize last year and have been rightly recognised for their efforts to alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people. The Foreign Secretary met members of Syrian Civil Defence (and Free Syrian Police) on a visit to Turkey last year and said that "I am proud that UK supports these organisations, which work in the toughest of circumstances to help the most vulnerable of people""*[169].

Specific Recommendations Targeting Refugees

161. UNHCR have said that *"although some protracted refugee situations have lasted more than two decades, refugee education is largely financed from emergency funds, leaving little room for long-term planning"*. We recommend that the UK government and other international donor organisation incorporate funding for refugee communities into long-term development funds for the host countries, as well as providing the desperately needed emergency funds to help alleviate issues associated with this unprecedented crisis.

Sub-committee during an oral evidence session. From left to right: Baroness Suttie, David Warburton MP (Chair), and Baroness Hodgson of Abinger, CBE

[169] Written (Supplementary) Evidence taken from the from Foreign and Commonwealth Office: https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/foreign_and_commonwealth_office_-_written_evidence.pdf

162. UNHCR has also highlighted that it has only one third of the budget it spends on primary education available for secondary education. Given the emphasis of our evidence on the importance of education which leads to quality employment, the sub-committee believes this is far too low. The sub-committee recommends that UNHCR, and others **creating secondary education opportunities for Syrian refugees**, give substantially more money to ensure that this potentially 'lost generation' is able to access this crucial, basic need. It agrees with UNHCR that *"broad partnerships between governments, development partners and humanitarian agencies, as well as the private sector and civil society, in consultation with refugees"* may be the best way to do this.

163. The low numbers of Syrian refugees accessing higher education is very problematic, and the international community must work to increase these numbers. In part this will involve adopting the recommendations above, to ensure that the route to higher education is available. The sub-committee also recommends that the UK Government and other donors put substantially **more investment into higher education for Syrian refugees**, including the provision of a specific programme of scholarships for Syrian refugees to study in UK

universities or working with the EU commission and other EU countries on a joint programme of European scholarships. A UK programme could be administered as part of the existing Chevening Scholarships programme or possibly by the British Council.

164. Interventions and programming should also be **targeted to support countries who are hosting refugees** whilst also managing the challenges facing their own national youth populations. Lebanon and Jordan are key example of needing more support in this regard.

165. The sub-committee recommends more strategic frameworks and policies need to be developed that can **ensure refugees can access employment opportunities**. The sub-committee acknowledges that access to education for refuges is essential; however there is a constant challenge with violent extremist groups who attract young vulnerable people through salary and pay. This needs to be prevented through **the provision of meaningful employment opportunities to refugees**.

4

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

166. This inquiry was launched to examine how to build resilience amongst those at risk of being attracted to violent extremism in MENA.

167. The sub-committee conducting the inquiry took evidence from a wide range of experts in the field.

168. This resulting report aims to inform the UK government, the British Council, and other organisations working in the cultural, educational and civil society sectors as to how they can help to build the resilience of young people vulnerable to recruitment by violent extremists.

169. After examining the nature and causes of violent extremism, the sub-committee concludes that one of the most important approaches is to concentrate on Preventing Violent Extremism ('PVE') by concentrating on its underlying, 'upstream' causes.

170. Whilst there will remain an important role for direct Countering of Violent Extremism ('CVE'), which fixes on responding to more immediate, 'downstream' or 'pull' factors. This approach alone is likely to be ineffective; however, as long term upstream factors will create a continuous risk of future violent extremism unless they are tackled.

171. As well as on-going conflicts in the region, and a range of broader factors (climate change, historical resentments, religious fundamentalism) beyond the scope of this report, the sub-committee identified three main areas of upstream causes, or 'risk factors', that underlie and create risks of violent extremism, and which are particularly acute issues in the MENA region. These areas are:

1. Economic Factors
2. Civic Factors
3. Social Factors
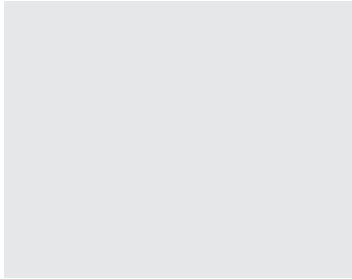
172. The sub-committee then examined the nature and causes of resilience against the drivers of violent extremism. It looked at examples of a wide range of existing programmes that can help to combat the economic, civic and social factors underlying the growth of violent extremism in MENA.

173. The sub-committee believes that programmes and interventions like these that tackle the underlying causes of radicalisation should be scaled up significantly to help build individuals, communities and societies in MENA which are more resilient to the drivers of violent extremism. The report concludes that violent extremism can best be thwarted before it develops by changing the underlying environment in which it is currently able to flourish.

174. For example, MENA is suffering from a variety of **economic factors** which are driving violent extremism. These include a demographic youth bulge, associated high youth unemployment, serious education and skills deficits, and a general lack of entrepreneurship.

175. The sub-committee believes that the best ways the international community can help is through interventions to help promote flourishing economies in the region, attracting inward investment and improving the jobs market. Cultural, educational and civil society interventions that could support this aim include supporting urgent reform of education systems and improving skills for young people, including soft skills and language training, encouraging entrepreneurialism and social entrepreneurialism. They also include supporting increased collaboration with the UK in cultural and creative industries, including in areas such as cultural protection that can help to safeguard historic sites that in the long run can be significant drivers of tourism, jobs and prosperity in the region.

176. Many MENA countries also suffer from serious **civic factors** undermining their societies, including injustice, corruption, insufficient rule of law and an endemic failure to listen to young people.

177. The sub-committee believes that these can be addressed via programmes to strengthen the rule of law and civil society, to strengthen democratic accountability and good governance, and to promote debate and dialogue, connecting policymakers with young people and other marginalised groups.

178. Finally, **Social factors** in MENA which are contributing to the problem of violent extremism include binary thinking, marginalisation and discrimination.

179. The sub-committee supports efforts to counter these problems by challenging young minds through education and debating, encouraging critical thinking, and overcoming gender, ethnic, and religious discrimination.

180. The report also examined programmes that look to address the particular barriers faced by Syrian refugees, including through specific education and civil society measures as well as arts and sports programmes.

General Recommendations

181. The sub-committee supports recommendations put forward by Search for Common Ground and SAHWA that a policy shift is needed away from the Policy Framework on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE). Policy should instead be redefined towards Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE), **with a greater focus on addressing the more fundamental 'upstream' factors contributing to violent extremism.**

182. In particular, the sub-committee recommends that interventions in the areas of education, culture and civil society could be effective in helping to address the economic, civic, and social factors driving violent extremism in many parts of MENA. In doing so, **such interventions should seek to build the resilience of individuals, communities, and societies**, and to build trust and responsive relationships between them. These interventions have a very powerful role to play in helping individuals and their communities to survive and thrive. However, the exact mix of programme responses, where they are targeted and how they are sequenced and prioritised needs to respond to the specific way in which violent extremists are operating in any given context.

183. The sub-committee heard about an impressive variety and range of programmes the British Council in particular is currently deploying in MENA through sports, arts, civil society and education. The range of platforms which the British Council employs, from sports to arts and debating and informal and formal education, means that they can reach all young people, whatever their preferences and educational standards[170]. Furthermore, as the British Council's Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa, Adrian Chadwick highlighted: *"there is something in this about operating at sufficient scale; there is something about operating for a sufficient length of time – this is not something you can just come and do for six months and then go and everything is wonderful"*[171]. The sub-committee therefore recommends that funding should be allocated across a range of interventions, with sufficient scale and duration to ensure a substantial impact. **It is critical that the UK's international development funding is able to be used to make a contribution to these issues in the region.** Whilst not necessarily amongst the poorest countries, states in the region have clear and pressing

development needs, are often fragile and contain large numbers of people living in deprivation or poverty, and addressing these issues will have clear benefits for their populations as well as benefitted UK security. **The sub-committee believes the British Council is well placed to be able to deliver this variety of programmes, and that UK government should work with it to help scale up its cultural, educational and civil society programmes in the MENA region, as approaches to help tackle the upstream risk factors associated with violent extremism.**

184. The sub-committee recommends that the UK Government sets out a clearer UK strategy and approach towards PVE (preventing violent extremism) through cultural, educational and civil society programmes, and also more clarity on what programmes it funds and why.

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[170] Oral Evidence taken from the British Council on 10 July 2017, 'The Role of Soft Power in Building Resilience to Radicalisation in MENA': https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/british_council_evidence_session_10.07.17.pdf Oral Evidence taken from the British Council on 10

[171] July 2017, 'The Role of Soft Power in Building Resilience to Radicalisation in MENA': https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/british_council_evidence_session_10.07.17.pdf
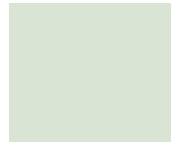
185. Conversely, organisations in receipt of such funds should recognise the importance of evidenced-based programming, and proof of impact. Whether the programmes are specifically targeted at building resilience to radicalisation, or at tackling the risk factors which also affect the majority of young people in MENA, **this report recommends that organisations, including the British Council, invest more time and resource into i) ensuring that programmes are evidence based and respond to the problem in context; ii) carefully evaluating and providing evidence of impact[172]; and iii) learning further lessons to be applied to future programming.**

186. The sub-committee also recommends that **all interventions undertaken by organisations that aim to tackle these issues should have a clear theory of change and rigorous evaluation strategy that explains and evidences their connection to the key risk factors set out in the literature**. Mercy Corps explains that the danger of not doing this is that it can *"easily exacerbate frustrations and grievances about social and economic inequality, especially where [there] is weak understanding of local dynamics. A common example is in delivering lengthy vocational training programmes with poor and*

economically marginalised youth when there is no market demand for the skills acquired." Better strategic focus and coordination of interventions could help to avoid this.

187. The sub-committee gathered evidence on excellent work already being done in these areas by a number of British and international organisations. However, there is a real risk of lack of cooperation and duplication of efforts due to the fact that no database exists of organisations working in this area. Attempts by the sector to gather this information would be welcome. This would ensure that programmes do not run in parallel, and also enable organisations to learn from each other and partner to increase impact. We recommend that the witnesses, experts and organisations that informed this inquiry **form a community of practice**, convened and directed by an organisation like the British Council perhaps working jointly with the Department for International Development and relevant NGOs, to develop a stronger joint evidence base, share knowledge about the plethora of small scale programmes in operation from a wide range of organisations, and support each other in their programmes and collaborate on their strategies in the region.

[172] Oral Evidence taken from the British Council on 10 July 2017, 'The Role of Soft Power in Building Resilience to Radicalisation in MENA' https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/british_council_evidence_session_10.07.17.pdf

188. As highlighted by the UN Action Plan, the inquiry concludes that **more quantitative and qualitative research** is required around drivers of violent extremism. Primary data is particularly lacking and is often coloured by the funder's perception of the problem – it therefore has limited explanatory power. We recommend that this continues to be a key focus of the international research community over the next few years, and that this research is conducted with a view to creating specific and substantial recommendations on how to tackle these drivers. The UK with its strong international development reputation and capability, and the strength of its academic institutions and connections with the region would be well placed to take a lead in this endeavour.

189. The sub-committee would like to encourage governments in the MENA region to have a 'whole-government' approach to PVE (Preventing Violent Extremism) rather than a 'departmental' approach with their security and/ or interior ministries. This approach will enable international funding bodies (such as DFID, the EU etc.) and others to ensure better coordination across their partner funding also, as funding is given multilaterally.

190. The sub-committee would like to propose the formation of a PVE (Preventing Violent Extremism) Charter which would aim to have consistency in the language and interventions. It would be based on and coordinated with the UN's work that has been referred to in this report, and the Charter would be used as a proactive tool.

191. The sub-committee recommends that there should be more structured links and coordination between PVE and the UN's Global Goals for Sustainable Development.
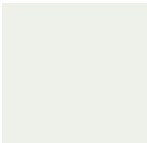
192. The sub-committee has found through this report that investing (time and funding) in upstream and soft power interventions that focusses on preventing violent extremism at it roots (as opposed to countering violent extremism) is in its opinion far more cost-effective and a judicious way of achieving the desired outcomes. The sub-committee recommends that the UK Government and other donors review the effectiveness of their funding and strategy in this area and consider a greater proportion of funding and work be directed at upstream issues.

Specific Recommendations Targeting Economic Factors

1. The sub-committee agrees with the International Labor Organisation in concluding that there is a great and urgent need to *"scale up action through investing in skills and in quality job creation. Providing youth the best opportunity to transition to a decent job calls for investing in* **education and training** *of the highest possible quality, providing youth with skills that match labour market demands, giving them access to social protection and basic services regardless of their contract type, as well as levelling the playing field so that all aspiring youth can attain productive employment regardless of their gender, income level or socio-economic background."*[173] The UK has a significant role to play in this area through offering its expertise and support to governments in the region to help support their aspirations for economic development.

2. The sub-committee welcomes the British Council's role in working with governments on **education system reform.** The inquiry heard about projects the British Council continues to sustain in collaboration with ministries and governments in Iraq, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia to reform the quality of education systems through various levels of training. This is an important part of the solution and the sub-committee recommends that the UK Government continues to support the British Council in this enterprise. It is particularly important to ensure that HMG's approach to educational support includes not only subject matter excellence, but also the pedagogical approach which develops the (soft) skills and attributes related to resilience. The sub-committee believes that the British Council should be supported by HMG to be able to play a stronger role in education reform in the region via additional funding for specific work of this type, liaising closely to support Ministries of Education in the region.

3. The sub-committee believes there needs to be **much greater coordination among the region's education ministries on data, statistics, skills gaps, and curriculum.** The sub-committee proposes and calls for an annual MENA Education Forum, in which the British Council could consider supporting for an initial period. The aim of such a forum would be to start the consideration of a MENA Qualifications Framework as available now in Europe.

4. The sub-committee believes an increased intake of Chevening Scholars[174] to the UK from targeted countries in the MENA region, and targeted subject areas could enable more young people with specific skills and expertise to help improve the future reformation of the job market and education systems. The sub-committee reiterates the importance of investing in the future generations, both specifically and generically.

[173] International Labour Organisation: http://www.ilo.org/beirut/media-centre/news/WCMS_412797/lang--en/index.htm
[174] http://www.chevening.org/

5. The sub-committee believes that **informal education** can significantly support formal education in terms of up-skilling young people in MENA. The British Council told us of its work *"with Premier Skills, and those people who like sport tend to gravitate towards that, or to public speaking, science or debating"*[175]. This range of skills acquisition and interventions are important, and it is recommended that the range and scale of such programmes should be significantly increased to reach many more hundreds of thousands and millions of young people.

6. The inquiry heard examples of using **MOOCs** (Massive Open Online Courses) in two different contexts; to address social barriers through critical thinking (CMI), and language skills development for disadvantaged Syrian refugees (British Council). The sub-committee recommends a joint approach between CMI, the British Council and other organisations to develop MOOC materials for young people to develop their journey through education, skills and entrepreneurship for the job market, language acquisition and critical thinking. It also recommends that the British Council works with UK universities to enable further exploration of digital learning solutions in a region that is experiencing rapidly expanding access to the internet.

7. The scale of the **skills** deficit is massive. The inquiry heard of some very effective examples of isolated programmes addressing the skills shortage. Yet they will be unable to make any significant impact without working at a much greater scale and with more co-ordination across different initiatives. Without this it is possible that many "islands of excellence" will be enabled with neglible impact on violent extremism. In essence, we know what needs to be done and it is being done very effectively but at a limited scale. The sub-committee recommends that the UK Government invests in the British Council working with the Department for International Development, and other donor and partner countries, to expand their programmes to address the skills shortage in a more systematic, evidence-based and co-ordinated fashion.

8. As noted elsewhere in the report, it is important that skills-based responses do not focus only on intellectual or subject matter excellence, but also include the **"soft" skills** – included in the resilience model – which enable young people not just to find existing work, but also to negotiate and create alternative positive futures for themselves when it is lacking.

9. The sub-committee acknowledges that educating and up-skilling people up to the point of transitioning to jobs is critical in MENA. However, if the job markets are not primed to accommodate them, more systemic efforts are needed for **labour market reforms,** increasing the access to funding and good governance. The economic environment needs to be ready for

[175] Oral Evidence taken from the British Council on 10 July 2017, 'The Role of Soft Power in Building Resilience to Radicalisation in MENA': https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/british_council_evidence_session_10.07.17.pdf

people to move into. Dr Claire Spencer highlighted that frustrations can increase when there is not a joined up effort by agencies, ministries and governments in-country to seize upon the skill transfer and informal education programmes (such as debating or mentoring). The sub-committee recommends that the international community, including the UK government and the British Council, needs to use its influence, support and expertise to continue to encourage MENA governments to transition to economic models that support labour market reforms, increase access to funding and opportunities for young people.[176]

10. The sub-committee recognises the challenges of capacity for Ministries at the official level throughout MENA. Therefore the sub-committee recommends that the focus of support should be given to this. This support should include, but not limited to, a significant increase in fellowships, mentoring, English language skills and wider training among officials.

11. In particular, there are very few **entrepreneurship** schemes and programmes in MENA, particularly in North Africa, where unemployment is the highest. The UK has a lot of experience in successful entrepreneurship. It is therefore recommended that the UK Government and British organisations working in MENA, do more to support the region in developing effective and successful entrepreneurship skills

programmes. Through doing this they will support individuals in becoming more economically self-sufficient and help boost stagnant economies. The sub-committee believes the British Council has a significant role to play leading this work, given their experience in social entrepreneurship elsewhere and the extensive networks they have already built.

12. The sub-committee recommends that more research is needed to **target specific locations** where sympathy for and recruitment to violent extremist groups is already high, and to highlight the skills needed in the job markets in those locations. Furthermore, there needs to be a better understanding of the local dynamics and contexts as explained by Mercy Corps and International Alert. Some of the organisations that gave evidence to this sub-committee are well placed to undertake this research in targeted areas and should proactive develop a collaborative approach to achieve this more effectively, whilst also pooling together best practice and evidence of impact from across their programmes.

13. The sub-committee notes that whilst the gender gaps have closed in the education and health sectors[177], women are still hugely underrepresented in the economic and political spheres in the MENA region. The sub-committee believes programmes should be increased that train and upskill

[176] Written Evidence taken from Dr Claire Spencer, Chatham House: https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/dr_claire_spencer_-_written_evidence.pdf

[177] 'Jobs for Shared Prosperity; Time for Action in the Middle East and North Africa'; World Bank: https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/13284

women for the jobs market, which, as highlighted by the World Bank[178] and ILO[179], would improve the economic performances in MENA as well as supporting gender equality.

Specific Recommendations Targeting Civic Factors

14. The sub-committee believes that **dialogue and debate** are increasingly important in terms of ensuring young people are able to articulate their policy needs effectively, and are able to manage discord in a non-violent way. It saw some excellent examples of this, including the British Council and Anna Lindh Foundation's Young Arab Voices and BBC Media Action's programme. However these were being delivered at a relatively small scale. It therefore recommends that the UK Government allocates more funding to these programmes and others, directing attention on fostering debate and dialogue.

15. In addition, if young people articulate their policy needs in a vacuum and no real change results, this could breed further cynicism and distrust. Young people need to be able to exercise these skills in asking and arguing for change with the relevant authorities. Search for Common Ground therefore, recommends *"leveraging UNSCR*

2250[180] (Youth, Peace and Security), which provides a framework through which Governments can provide greater resources and space for youth to mobilise for positively peace-building within and across their communities. Skills building, information sharing, and community programmes can offer young people meaningful ways to connect and engage with their communities in a way that engender a sense of ownership and belonging (whilst addressing the policy needs of that community)".[181] This sub-committee agrees with this recommendation.

16. Other positive evidence presented to the inquiry, notes that there are a number of different organisations undertaking research, fostering debate and enabling young people to **connect with policymakers.** The sub-committee recommends that organisations working in these areas link up and work together to ensure that there is a more coherent approach. This would enable these projects to have a significantly greater impact.

17. Many organisations appear to be leading **debating and dialogue** programmes. The evidence shows that these are effective and the sub-committee recommends that donors support these programmes. It also suggests that organisations running such programmes gain a

[178] 'Jobs for Shared Prosperity; Time for Action in the Middle East and North Africa'; World Bank: https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/13284
[179] ILO-KILM (International Labour Organization–Key Indicators of the Labour Market) database (data for 1980–2010). 7th ed. International Labour Organization, Geneva, Switzerland: http://kilm.ilo.org/kilmnet/.
[180] https://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc12149.doc.htm
[181] Written Evidence taken from Search for Common Ground: https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/search_for_common_ground_-_written_evidence.pdf

greater understanding of the actors already working in this space and, where possible or effective to do so, collaborate in order to increase their impact.

18. The sub-committee recommends collaborative programmes between the UK and the MENA region, similar to the UK's National Citizen Service (NCS)[182] to help support young people in the UK and MENA build skills for work and life, and share experiences and challenges.

Specific Recommendations Targeting Social Factors

19. The sub-committee has heard a range of interventions which could address the challenges of social barriers in MENA. It believes there is a particular role for arts and sport, especially when engaging with younger people. Evidence has shown that **arts and sport** create a unique safe space, forum and platform for the engagement of differences and grievances which otherwise can be capitalised upon by violent extremist groups. Using different platforms means that it is possible to engage young people whatever their interests, abilities and educational achievements.

20. The sub-committee recommends that international organisations including the British Council, working with governments in the region, to carry out more detailed and localised research to **identify 'at risk' communities** where

inequality combines with other risk factors that could increase recruitment to violent extremist groups, and target subsequent interventions in these areas.
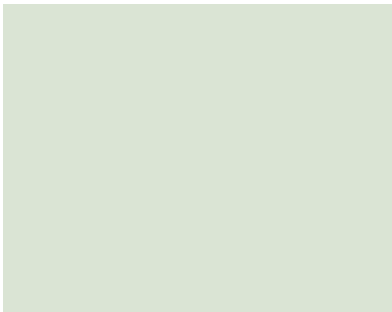
21. The sub-committee recommends mobilising connections among elites to **help connect** them **to youth and other marginalised groups** to facilitate understanding and address grievances in order to forge new and inclusive national visions.

22. All actors working in MENA should **be aware of the social barriers that exist,** and use all the interventions discussed in this report to help alleviate these inequalities. It is recommended that measures around this are built into evaluations for all projects working in MENA.

23. The sub-committee recommends that more work and research is conducted into the role of women in preventing and countering violent extremism, and whether interventions to support women could be woven into, or increased, through existing programmes supporting women's empowerment, training and development.

Specific Recommendations Targeting Refugees

24. UNHCR have said that *"although some protracted refugee situations have lasted more than two decades, refugee education is largely financed*

from emergency funds, leaving little room for long-term planning". We recommend that the UK government and other international donor organisation incorporate funding for refugee communities into long-term development funds for the host countries, as well as providing the desperately needed emergency funds to help alleviate issues associated with this unprecedented crisis.

25. UNHCR has also highlighted that it has only one third of the budget it spends on primary education available for secondary education. Given the emphasis of our evidence on the importance of education which leads to quality employment, the sub-committee believes this is far too low. The sub-committee recommends that UNHCR, and others **creating secondary education opportunities for Syrian refugees,** give substantially more money to ensure that this potentially 'lost generation' is able to access this crucial, basic need. It agrees with UNHCR that *"broad partnerships between governments, development partners and humanitarian agencies, as well as the private sector and civil society, in consultation with refugees"* may be the best way to do this.

26. The low numbers of Syrian refugees accessing higher education is very problematic, and the international community must work to increase these numbers. In part this will involve adopting the recommendations above, to ensure that the route to higher

education is available. The sub-committee also recommends that the UK Government and other donors put substantially **more investment into higher education for Syrian refugees,** including the provision of a specific programme of scholarships for Syrian refugees to study in UK universities or working with the EU commission and other EU countries on a joint programme of European scholarships. A UK programme could be administered as part of the existing Chevening Scholarships programme or possibly by the British Council.

27. Interventions and programming should also be **targeted to support countries who are hosting refugees** whilst also managing the challenges facing their own national youth populations. Lebanon and Jordan are key example of needing more support in this regard.

28. The sub-committee recommends more strategic frameworks and policies need to be developed that can **ensure refugees can access employment opportunities.** The sub-committee acknowledges that access to education for refuges is essential; however there is a constant challenge with violent extremist groups who attract young vulnerable people through salary and pay. This needs to be prevented through the provision of **meaningful employment opportunities to refugees.**

Appendix 1
Witnesses and Formal Minutes

The following witnesses gave oral evidence to the inquiry:

'Defining and Decoding Radicalisation and Resilience'

https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/
files/05_sept_2016_building_resilience_
inquiry_british_council_appg.pdf

Professor Tahir Abbas,
Senior Research Fellow, RUSI
(Royal United Services Institute)
Professor George Joffé, Research Fellow,
Department of Politics and International
Studies, University of Cambridge
Professor Mark Sedgwick, Arab and
Islamic Studies, Aarhus University, Denmark

Monday 12 September 2016

**'How Organisations are Responding
to Radicalisation in MENA'**

https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/
files/12_sept_2016_building_resilience_
inquiry_british_council_appg.pdf

Rebecca Crozier, Head of Programmes,
Middle East and North Africa, International
Alert
Abou Fassi-Fihri, Regional Director,
Middle East & North Africa, Search for
Common Ground

Andras Beszterczey, Peace and Conflict
Advisor, Mercy Corps
Miranda Hurst, Policy and Advocacy
Advisor, Mercy Corps

Tuesday 25 October 2016

**'Educating and Skilling a New
Generation in MENA'**

https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/
files/educating_and_skilling_a_new_
generation_in_mena.pdf

Moussa Bourekba, Researcher, Project
Manager for SAHWA, CIDOB (Barcelona
Centre for International Affairs)
Tayyar Sukru Cansizoglu, Senior Regional
Protection Coordinator, UNHCR
Aly Jetha, CEO and Founder,
Big Bad Boo Studios
Giulia Marchesini, Senior Partnership
Officer, Centre for Mediterranean Integration
(CMI), The World Bank
Eugenie Teasley, CEO,
Goodall Foundation
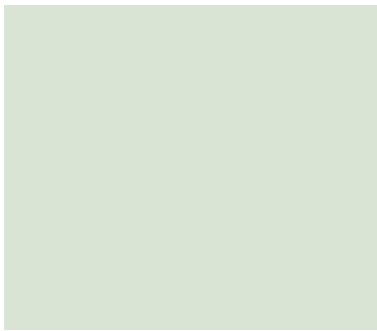
Tuesday 24 January 2017

'Culture to Build Resilience to Radicalisation in MENA'

https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/culture_to_build_resilience_to_radicalisation.pdf

Dr Bernadette Buckley, Convenor, MA Art and Politics, Goldsmiths, University of London
Prof David Cotterrell, Professor of Fine Art, Director of Research and Development, College of Arts and Humanities, University of Brighton
Stephen Stenning, Director Culture and Development, British Council
Lois Stonock, Independent Researcher, Curator and Cultural Strategist, Founder, LR Stonock Consultancy and Create Associates

Monday 20 March 2017

'The UK Supporting MENA to Build Resilience to Radicalisation'

https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/the_uk_supporting_mena_to_build_resilience_to_radicalisation.pdf

Tobias Ellwood MP, Minister for the Middle East and Africa, FCO

Monday 10 July 2017

'The Role of Soft Power in Building Resilience to Radicalisation in MENA'

https://appg.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/british_council_evidence_session_10.07.17.pdf

Sir Ciarán Devane, Chief Executive, British Council

Adrian Chadwick OBE, Regional Director Middle East and North Africa (2013–2017), British Council

Transcripts and formal minutes of all of the hearings can be viewed on the British Council's APPG inquiry page at: https://appg.britishcouncil.org/building-resilience-inquiry/publications/oral-evidence-publications

Appendix 2
Published Written Evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the British Council's APPG inquiry page at: https://appg.britishcouncil.org/building-resilience-inquiry/publications/oral-evidence-publications

1. **Dr Claire Spencer,** Senior Research Fellow, Chatham House

2. **Professor Emma Murphy,** AcSS, FRSA, School of Government and International Affairs (Acknowledgement: "POWER2YOUTH funded by EU's 7th Framework Programme under grant n.612782)

3. **Professor Mark Sedgwick,** Arab and Islamic Studies, Aarhus University, Denmark

4. **International Alert, Rebecca Crozier,** Head of Programmes, Middle East and North Africa, International Alert

5. **British Council**

6. **Mercy Corps**

7. **Eugenie Teasley,** CEO, Goodall Foundation

8. **Search for Common Ground**

9. **Giulia Marchesini,** Senior Partnership Officer, Centre for Mediterranean Integration (CMI), The World Bank

10. **Professor Tahir Abbas,** Senior Research Fellow, RUSI (Royal United Services Institute)

11. **Dr Ahmad Al-Dubayan,** Director General of the Islamic Cultural Centre, London

12. **Lois Stonock,** Independent Researcher, Curator and Cultural Strategist, Founder, LR Stonock Consultancy and Create Associates

13. **Dr Courtney Freer,** Research Officer, London School of Economics (LSE), Kuwait Programme

14. **Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)**

15. **BBC Media Action**

Appendix 3

Summary of visits to Tunisia and Morocco

Sub-committee Visit to Tunisia

Over the course of four days (23rd–27th November 2016), Baroness Suttie, Lord Purvis and Baroness Hodgson attended the annual Hammamet Conference Series in Tunisia.

Sub-committee Visit to Morocco

Over the course of two days (30th March – 02nd April 2017), Baroness Suttie, Lord Purvis and Stephen Gethins MP, visited projects and programmes in Morocco.

First day in Casablanca included:

• Lycée Moulay Abdellah – English Baccalaureate school

• Young Moroccan Voices Debate – National School of Business and Management, University Hassan II

• Marginalised Youth: Entrepreneurship Training under the Skills for Social Inclusion and Employability project – Centre for Safeguarding Girls and Women

• Evening networking event in Rabat with young Moroccan leaders.

Key themes that emerged from the first day included:

• Young, disadvantaged people in Morocco need more support: particularly girls and women, whose opportunities become narrower with age and demography.

• As with any MENA country, youth unemployment is extremely high.

• Equal opportunities and access to education, jobs and career paths are very polarised – elites versus non-elites.

• Almost every young person we engaged with wanted to leave Morocco to seek better opportunities (and had little interest in returning to Morocco to reinvest skills learnt abroad).

- Morocco re-joining the African Union and the King's strategy was a common talking point amongst young Moroccans, and has been met with a mixed reaction. There has been criticism for not investing in young, marginalised Moroccans. However, he has been praised for increasing opportunities to bolster the country's economy, and enable Morocco to become one of the key hubs for trade and commerce in Africa.

- All young Moroccans highlighted the importance of language learning in order to access better opportunities.

- Morocco is a strong state with strong structures in place. In the long-term, it is one of the stronger MENA countries.

- The scale of programmes continues to be an issue. While all the programmes and interventions the sub-committee visited were very effective, these programmes are currently only reaching small numbers.

Second day in Tangiers included:

- Discussion and lunch with Active Citizens project participants.

- Strengthening Resilience project participants / partners from the Council of CSOs, Beni Makada, Tangier.

- Social Entrepreneurs mentoring programme, workshop and pitching of social action projects.

Tobias Ellwood MP, FCO Minister for the Middle East and Africa (2014–17) gives oral evidence to the APPG sub-committee on the UK's role in response to the inquiry

- Discussion with Social Entrepreneurs participants at the mentoring programme.

Key themes that emerged from the second day included:

- Issues of migration in Morocco (namely from the Sub Saharan Africa region) – the King has recently begun the process to acknowledge the status of migrants with temporary stay (to be reviewed every 2 years).

- Majority of migrants do not want to stay in Morocco – they are passing through to Europe, but end up staying for quite a few years (trying to earn enough money to cross to Europe).

- There is a high level of intolerance towards immigrants in Morocco – a major challenge to counter the attitudes of Moroccans.

- There is also a challenge in helping to support migrants to integrate properly into Moroccan society (learn the language, cultures and norms), and also provide skills for them to work and support the Moroccan economy.

- The Arabic Cultural Programme (a social action project) was set up to challenge racism, bring together diversity through cultural visits, and bring Moroccans and non-Moroccans together to have better understanding of one another.

- International visits for young Moroccans is essential in learning best practice from other countries, and in turn, addressing issues in Morocco, which might not be as commonly known.

- The Civil Society Organisations (CSO) Council coordinates and works with over 150 CSOs (in Tangier, which has a very high population). The Council is represented by different political parties, and has over 10 years of experience working with CSOs in Tangier. They have been a key bridge between citizens and local authorities/ governments

- The Civil Society Organisations Council's aim and focus is to challenge public policies and address the needs of the youth population. This needs to be done through supporting development and opportunities for young, poor and marginalised communities, improving education standards (support for drop-outs, victims of domestic violence, and challenging barriers to education), support for parents and guardians, women and girls, supporting people with disabilities and mental health issue, community journalism and media to sensitise deep rooted issues.

- 10% of Local Authorities' budget has been allocated to support the CSO Council and wider CSOs in Tangier; this was a huge achievement through challenging public policies and voicing the needs of the general populace.

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The views expressed in this report are of the sub-committee members for the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the British Council specific to this inquiry, as listed below, and in accordance to sessions they attended. For further details and information regarding the inquiry, or the wider work of the APPG for the British Council, please contact: Siobhan.Foster-Perkins@britishcouncil.org

These members are as follows:

David Warburton MP (Chair)

Rehman Chishti MP (sessions attended: 06th September 2016)

Baroness Hodgson of Abinger, CBE (joined from October 2016)

Stephen Gethins MP

Stephen Kinnock MP (sessions attended: 06th September 2016 and 25th October 2016)

Lord Purvis of Tweed

Baroness Suttie