PROJECT CLOSING REPORT
Partnerships for a Tolerant, Inclusive Bangladesh (PTIB)

UNDP

Project Summary

Project Title	Partnerships for a Tolerant, Inclusive Bangladesh
Award ID & Project no.	Award ID: 00086326 Output ID: 00109723
Project Duration	2018-2021
Executive Agency	UNDP
Implementing Partner(s)	Centre for Genocide Studies, Dhaka University; Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime Unit (CTTC), Dhaka Metropolitan Police
Donor(s)	Denmark, Netherlands, Norway, USAID, UK, Facebook
Total Budget (US$)	6,237,006.46
Total Expenditure (US$)	6,074,604.91
Related UNSDCF outcome(s)	2: Develop and implement improved social policies and programmes that focus on good governance, reduction of structural inequalities and advancement of vulnerable individuals and groups.
Related SP outcome(s)	Citizen expectations for voice, development, rule of law, and accountability are met by stronger systems of democratic governance.
Related CPD outcome(s)	Output 2.1: Civil society, interest groups, relevant government agencies and political parties have tools and knowledge to set agendas and to develop platforms for building consensus on national issues.
Country Office focal point(s)	Head of Democratic Governance Cluster
Report prepared by	Robert Stoelman, Project Manager

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS/LIST OF ACRONYMS

BPO	Bangladesh Peace Observatory
CARU	Cox's Bazaar Analysis and Research Unit
CTTC	Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime Unit
DKC	Digital khichuri Challenge
DPM	Digital Peace Movement
D4P	Diversity for Peace
PTC	Peace Talk Café

1. INTRODUCTION

"Partnerships for a Tolerant, Inclusive Bangladesh", is a multi-year initiative to understand and prevent violence and extremism in Bangladesh. The project responds to the Secretary General's call for every country to develop a coherent and contextual strategy to prevent violent extremism (PVE), while reaffirming the need for inclusive institutions, transparent politics, and a commitment to fundamental human rights.

Bangladesh has made remarkable economic and social progress over recent decades. Extremist violence could undermine hard-won advances, particularly in terms of job growth and overall economic prosperity. UNDP Bangladesh's PVE approach assesses possible drivers of extremism through innovative research, engage key stakeholders, and develop a range of targeted citizen and government engagement activities.

Besides responding to the UN Secretary-General's 2015 call, PTIB also helps implement the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech. In May 2019, the Secretary-General identified hate speech as a menace to democratic values, social stability, and peace. PTIB's focus on inclusivity and tolerance also resonates with the December 2019 UN General Assembly's resolution on a culture of peace.

PTIB uses cutting-edge evidence to help promote authentic and resonant Bangladeshi narratives of diversity and tolerance. It structures its learning and research to be far more integrated and responsive to emerging trends than more traditional UN projects, using three distinct data collection and analysis teams to produce the data, which allows for evidence-based programming and messaging.

1.1   Project Outline

The project has three outcome components:

Outcome 1: RESEARCH FACILTY: Improve knowledge, understanding and provide insight into the drivers of violence in Bangladesh;

Outcome 2: CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT: Enhance inclusivity and tolerance though social engagement activities, both on and offline, with a focus on youth, women, migrants and multi-faith communities;

Outcome 3: GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT: Combine results from the first two outcomes to sensitize government agencies to emerging global best practices when developing policies that promote social inclusion and tolerance.

1.2   Context

While violence in Bangladesh may not reach global extremes, its diverse forms have collectively harmed both society and the economy. A 2016 UNDP-commissioned

report delved into public perceptions, identifying political violence as a notable concern (21.8%), though overshadowed by corruption (49.2%) and other criminal behavior (42.7%). Despite Bangladesh's economic success, citizens believe violence hampers faster growth, contributing to a USD $136.8 billion foregone GDP between 1980 and 2013.

Extremist attacks, primarily targeted assassinations since 2005, intensified in 2015, with 25 killings, a significant leap from two in 2014. The July 1, 2016, suicide attack on a Dhaka café marked the first major strike on foreign targets, claiming 24 lives. Subsequently, a gathering of over 100,000 Eid day worshipers was attacked in Sholakia, north of Dhaka, killing 4. Unlike past attacks, these aimed for international attention, prompting a reassessment of extremist potential in Bangladesh. Organizations like UNDP seek to map and understand the issue, proposing sustainable pathways for peaceful change.

Against the abive backdrop, PTIB aims to induce change by empowering existing grassroots networks that promote peace and tolerance across Bangladesh. Acknowledging the nation's diversity, the project strategically focuses on vulnerable demographic groups susceptible to extremist narratives. It aims to support those naturally poised to obstruct the spread of extremist attitudes, treating extremism as contagious and assisting the most vulnerable while empowering the resistant. This approach ensures that calls for peace and inclusion are deeply rooted in Bangladesh's history and local context.

2. PROJECT RESULTS & ACHIEVEMENTS

Research Facility:

Bangladesh Peace Observatory: In partnership with Dhaka University, UNDP established the Bangladesh Peace Observatory (BPO), the country's first comprehensive public database on violence. The BPO catalogs, aggregates, maps, and visualizes nationwide statistics on violent incidents using a combination of open data and media reports. On average, it had 5,500 visitors to the website per year, and there were often citations of BPO data in media and social media, especially during the COVID crisis.

Violent Extremist Social Media Monitoring: SecDev and its national partner Rupantar supported PTIB in monitoring and analyzing Bangla online extremist channels on social media platforms. This analysis offered invaluable insights and identified trends in online extremist narratives that seek to erode liberal, pluralistic and democratic values, undermine equality by attacking women's rights, marginalize ethnic and religious minorities, and invoke the persecution of vulnerable groups. Monthly, quarterly, and annual briefs had opening and response rates of 55% among government, UN, and development partners. The monitoring findings were presented and discussed in different external forums.

Cox's Bazar Analysis & Research Unit (CARU): CARU monitored international, national, and local media reports to prevent rumors, disinformation, and tensions by tracking security incidents. It has established a database per the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS), containing over 20,000 incidents added by classification from 2017 to the present. Based on reported incidents, CARU analyzed violent situations, insecurity, and conflictual events. Additionally, CARU verified sensitive data throughout Cox's Bazar District and inside the camps. Reporting includes daily updates on Signal and weekly, monthly, and sporadic reports (on specific topics or date ranges). Opening and response rates of CARU briefs among government, UN, and development partners was 55%. CARU data was presented directly to UN cross-agency meetings in Cox's Bazar and the UN Senior Executive Group (SEG) in Dhaka, bilateral discussions with country partners, and other formal consultations

During the first phase, PTIB commissioned several studies to understand better the trends identified in the abovementioned research initiatives. These studies included "Vulnerability of Bangladeshi Migrant workers for online radicalization", "Women and Violent Extremism", and "Youth and Social Tolerance".

Citizen Engagement:

Digital Khichuri Challenges (DKC): DKCs see young people collaborate to produce digital solutions that promote a tolerant or inclusive vision of Bangladeshi society. Winning ideas are selected through a public vote and expert jury and launched with

sustained assistance from UNDP and partners. Over the years, the DKCs have become an established brand in Bangladesh with a reach of over 30 M people. Each hackathon was themed to a prominent subject on Bangladeshi social media, using UNDP's online research.

Peace Talk Cafes: By allowing youth to interact directly with experts, government officials, and noteworthy figures on important subjects, the Peace Talk Cafes have taken a radically different approach to social engagement when compared to what is traditionally done in Bangladesh. Peace Talk Cafes created an informal, approachable, and even cosy atmosphere in local environments to conjure meaningful dialogues on pressing and contemporary topics.

Social listening: In 2022, PTIB initiated the social listening exercise to improve the effectiveness of the social media engagement of UNDP/PTIB and partners in partnership with Loosely Couple Technology (LCT), a Bangladeshi-originated firm. LCT has supported PTIB and its partners to identify significant trends and public perceptions regarding tolerance and inclusivity on social media to decide on more informed social media campaign strategies. For example, in 2022, in response to the recurring incidents of communal violence during Durga Puja 2021, a pilot social listening campaign called #AmraiBangladesh was launched. The objective was to prevent social media instigated violence and promote communal peace and harmony during the festival. The campaign was timed two months before the 2022 Durga Puja and involved PTIB and its youth champions, including the DKC teams and D4P partners. The approach was to utilize social listening strategies and leverage the partners' presence on social media platforms.

Diversity for Peace (D4P): D4P promoted the value of diversity and created more connections and mutual understanding among people of diverse identities. D4P covered the PTIB project's offline, grassroots-level activities in collaboration with local NGOs/CSOs/CBOs, which respond to issues identified through the project's analysis of online incitement on social media. Since 2019, 30+ NGOs/CSOs/CBOs have partnered with the D4P initiative to undertake activities that showcase the diversity of Bangladesh at the grassroots level, with geographic coverage in 16 districts of Bangladesh. In 2022 and 2023, D4P organized the "Festival of Tolerance" in collaboration with different CSOs, with a total reach of 941,682 (online) and 3000+ (in person).

Government engagement:

Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) Unit: PTIB supported the CTTC in organizing Youth Dialogues, which provided valuable platforms for young people to express their ideas and concerns directly to law enforcement agencies. In the first phase, CTTC covered 13 dialogues, covering 2000+ youths at different educational institutions (madrassas, colleges, and universities). Moreover, PTIB facilitated joint research between Dhaka University and CTTC and various topics related to PVE. CTTC officials participated in different events such as Peace Talk Cafés and Diversity Talks to speak about online harm and how to address it. In 2022, the CTTC in

partnership with the Islamic Foundation, published and distributed a book on VE religious narratives.

ICT Division: PTIB collaborated closely with the ICT Division in youth start-ups and digital literacy related activities. ICT Division officials, including the State Minister frequently participated in PTIB citizen engagement activities

3. PROGRESS REVIEW

PTIB's Research Facility has produced a substantial body of work, engaging in discussions, gaining media recognition, and maintaining an extensive data repository on the "Bangladesh Peace Observatory" platform. Citizen Engagement efforts empowered civil society organizations, reached a wide online audience, engaged winning teams, and impacted individuals through Diversity4peace activities. Government Engagement highlights include dialogues with youth on PVE and inclusivity, as well as active participation in conferences presenting research findings alongside government and law enforcement agencies. These collective outcomes underscore a holistic approach driving positive change across research, citizen involvement, and government collaboration.

3.1 Output 1-Research Facility:

1.1. Total Number of Research Publications Produced: 116

1.2 Number of dialogues and conferences research products are discussed: 49

1.3 Number of instances media organizations reference research products in reporting: 263

1.4 Number of months' data on various forms of violence available in the website of "Bangladesh peace observatory": 120 months

1.5 Number of people who have viewed the BPO website/ platform: 15K

3.2 Output 2: Citizen Engagement

2.1: Total number of civil society organizations adding a PVE element (including diversity, peace and tolerance) to existing programming, with support of UNDP grants, training or information materials: 68

2.2 Number of viewers reached online through Digital Khichuri Challenge campaign: 19 million

2.3 Number of winner teams engaged in PVE content/narrative development: 15

2.4 Number of people reached through Diversity4peace activities: 1 million

3.3 Output 3: Govt. Engagement

3.1. Number of Government led dialogues with youth on PVE and promoting tolerance and inclusivity: 11

3.2 Number of dialogues and conferences, where research finding were presented, with participation from Government and law enforcement agencies: 12

3.4   Gender and Youth

The project has made significant strides in advancing gender equality and engaging youth in the prevention of violent extremism in Bangladesh. In the realm of gender, PTIB's focus on promoting gender equality aligns with SDG 4.7, creating a safe digital space for all. The Bangladesh Peace Observatory (BPO) provides gender-disaggregated data, informing comprehensive analyses on gender-based violence trends. Notably, a commissioned research on women and violent extremism in 2022 shaped gender-responsive PVE programs. PTIB's Digital Khichuri Challenges (DKCs) have emphasized gender inclusion, with an all-female cohort in one challenge and at least 35% female participation in others. Events like the Festival of Tolerance showcased UNDP's commitment to breaking gender stereotypes, featuring a transgender woman as an MC and an indigenous woman leading an interfaith dialogue.

In parallel, PTIB has enhanced engagement with youth, recognizing them as vulnerable to violent extremism. Initiatives like Peace Talk Cafes, Online Peace Quizzes, and campaigns against cyberbullying have reached millions of young people, fostering awareness and promoting a safer digital space. Recognizing youth as a key demographic susceptible to extremist propaganda, the Digital Peace Movements (DPM) component tailors its activities to be youth-centric, focusing on awareness building.

3.5   Leave No One Behind

The project has made noteworthy achievements in the areas of "Leaving no one behind" by promoting greater inclusion and tolerance. It has actively engaged ethnic and linguistic minorities, people with disabilities, transgenders, and religious preachers. Notably, PTIB has reached a substantial audience, with 10 million social media users receiving messages of tolerance and diversity. Furthermore, specific outreach efforts have targeted ethnic and linguistic minorities, people with disabilities, and transgenders, reaching an additional 3.4 million audiences. The project's commitment to inclusivity is evident in community activities under the Diversity for Peace (D4P) component, which focuses on responding to communal hatred and fostering peaceful coexistence among diverse religious and ethnic groups. These initiatives collectively underscore PTIB's dedication to leaving no one behind and fostering a more inclusive and harmonized society.

3.6   Social and Environmental Considerations

Briefly describe who the project has addressed the social and environmental safeguard issues.

The project has taken steps to address both social and environmental safeguard issues. On the social front, PTIB has actively engaged ethnic and linguistic minorities, people with disabilities, transgenders, and religious preachers, delivering messages of tolerance and diversity to a wide audience of 10 million. A targeted outreach effort focused on specific groups, reaching an additional 3.4 million individuals. Notably, community activities under the Diversity for Peace (D4P) component aim to counter communal hatred and promote peaceful coexistence among diverse religious and ethnic groups.

In terms of environmental safeguards, the project has implemented eco-conscious practices. Efforts to reduce plastic use, waste, and promote sustainable practices contribute to the project's commitment to environmental stewardship. While specific details about environmental initiatives are not provided, the acknowledgment of reducing plastic use suggests a broader commitment to environmentally sustainable actions within the project's scope.

4. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

4.1 Accountability

Accountability to diverse stakeholders has been a central tenet of the project, emphasizing active collaboration and contribution from partners. The University of Dhaka's Centre for Genocide Studies (CGS), as the home of the Bangladesh Peace Observatory, assumes a leadership role, with UNDP offering oversight and support. These entities not only provide valuable data on criminal and political violence but also actively participate in promoting and popularizing the violence-tracking platform. The engagement of local tech industry actors is notable, contributing to the platform's development, updates, and maintenance.

Offline citizen engagement strategies involve partnerships with local youth and women's rights organizations, fostering a more comprehensive approach. The project also explored collaborations within the UN system to amplify its thematic outreach, particularly with UNWOMEN, UN Office of Drugs and Crime, and the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism. Through these multifaceted collaborations, the project ensures a robust and accountable engagement with its partners, leveraging their expertise and resources for collective success.

4.2 Quality of Partnerships with Stakeholders

The project's success is attributed to strategic partnerships forged with diverse stakeholders, including the Government, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), think tanks, academics, and UN organizations. This collaborative network has significantly enhanced the project's model, fostering advancements in promoting peace and social cohesion. The inclusive approach has ensured a well-rounded perspective, incorporating insights from various sectors.

Crucially, the project's activities have been made possible through the generous support of multiple donors, including Denmark, Netherlands, Norway, USAID, UK, and Facebook.

Within PTIB, the engagement of youth groups, such as Digital Khichuri winners, has been pivotal. Additionally, local organizations representing ethnic and cultural minorities have been crucial in promoting peace narratives, diversity, and pluralism. Their involvement underscores the project's commitment to grassroots engagement, ensuring peace promotion resonates authentically within diverse communities.

In summary, the project's success story is intricately woven into its collaborative partnerships, encompassing governmental, non-governmental, and youth-led entities. The support from a range of donors and the active involvement of local organizations further highlight the project's effectiveness in promoting peace and social cohesion.

4.3 Technical Capacity

PTIB's adaptive management approach, centred on skill transfer and in-house capacity building, has yielded significant benefits across various dimensions. This practice ensures the continuity of project activities during transition periods, addresses emerging needs, and introduces diversification to ongoing initiatives.

A notable outcome of this approach is establishing the CARU database on social tension, a testament to the project's in-house capacities. This database serves as a valuable knowledge base for UNDP, a collective socio-political memory, and a digital archive for stakeholders involved in Rohingya issues. The adaptability of CARU was evident in its swift response to monitor social tension around COVID-19 in 2020.

Moreover, the project team's proactive takeover of monitoring COVID-19 misinformation on social media in March 2021, following the end of the contract with a data analysis company, exemplifies the project's resilience and ability to address evolving challenges.

Partnerships within PTIB, such as with BPO, showcase the positive outcomes of capacity building. BPO, leveraging skills gained from an international data scientist of UNDP, has diversified its data products. This learning experience has prompted PTIB to prioritize expanding its national online monitoring and analysis capacity.

In summary, PTIB's adaptive management strategy, emphasizing skill transfer and capacity development, has ensured the project's flexibility and resulted in tangible outcomes, such as the CARU database and enhanced capabilities within partner organizations. This forward-looking approach positions PTIB to navigate dynamic challenges effectively and contribute meaningfully to its objectives.

4.4   Communication and Advocacy

The project employed a multifaceted communication and advocacy strategy to showcase its results to a wider audience effectively. Key components of this strategy include the regular publication of newsletters and annual reports providing comprehensive updates on project activities, achievements, and impact.

The project systematically disseminates monthly and quarterly analyses of violent extremist narratives to maintain real-time engagement. These analyses inform stakeholders and contribute to a dynamic understanding of the project's evolving impact on countering violent extremism.

In the digital realm, the project leverages social media pages strategically to amplify its reach. The project engages with a broader audience through platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram, sharing success stories, insights, and updates regularly. Social media serves as a dynamic channel for direct interaction, fostering community and awareness among diverse stakeholders.

By utilizing these communication channels, including traditional print materials and digital platforms, the project ensures that its achievements, lessons learned, and ongoing efforts are effectively communicated to a diverse and expansive audience. This approach aligns with the project's commitment to transparency, engagement, and promoting peace and tolerance.

5. MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS

5.1   Project Design

The project's intentional design, particularly in its approach to the Digital Khichuri Challenges (DKC), has proven highly effective in achieving its objectives. By fostering sustained engagement with DKC teams and avoiding disconnection after challenges, PTIB maximizes the potential of youth cohorts. This approach aligns with the broader goal of organizational development and skill-building, ensuring that the youth teams remain active contributors to PTIB or other UNDP programs.

The project's innovative solutions, such as the networking event showcasing DKC impacts, underscore its commitment to creating opportunities for youth. This creative use of networks has resulted in new and valuable partnerships between youth organizations, international development entities, and private sectors. This expands opportunities for the youth involved and contributes to the project's overall impact.

A notable example of how the project's design supports its objectives is evident in the Online Social Media Engagement Training. The training has effectively enhanced social media outreach by strategically bringing together DKC teams and Diversity for Peace partners. This aligns seamlessly with the overarching goal of promoting peace, tolerance, and diversity, showcasing the project's thoughtful design.

Furthermore, the project's efficient networking practices demonstrate a deliberate strategy to connect partners based on their competencies. This approach has yielded collaborative initiatives, such as Peacemaker Studio supporting Diversity for Peace partners in youth peace ambassador training. The interconnectedness of partners reflects a design that maximizes synergies and collective impact.

In terms of cost-effective event organization, the project's strategic involvement of Facebook and reputable international and local firms as co-sponsors for the social media engagement training illustrates the successful implementation of the project's design. This attracted top names and ensured excellent facilitation without incurring additional costs.

In summary, the project's intentional design has played a pivotal role in achieving its intended purpose. Through sustained engagement, innovative networking, and creative partnerships, PTIB has effectively maximized opportunities for youth, enhanced organizational capacities, and showcased a model that can be transferable to similar initiatives in diverse contexts.

5.2   Oversight

The oversight mechanism of the PTIB project operates under a well-defined and robust structure, ensuring effective leadership and strategic guidance. Operating under the Direct Implementation Modality (DIM) as per UNDP's rules and procedures, the initiative is administered by UNDP Bangladesh with direct leadership from the Country Director/RR and Deputy Country Director/DRR.

The technical implementation of the project is led by a Project Manager, supported by a diverse project team consisting of both national and international experts and staff. This structure ensures a comprehensive and multidimensional approach to project implementation, drawing on a range of expertise.

A crucial aspect of the oversight mechanism is the formation of a Project Board at the onset of the project initiation. Chaired by the UNDP RR, the Project Board includes representatives from Ministries, development partners, and relevant UN agencies. This board serves as a strategic advisory mechanism, providing high-level policy direction and oversight to the project.

5.3   Monitoring and Evaluation

The project's monitoring system is comprehensive and includes:

- Weekly Team Meetings: Covering progress updates and challenges.
- Social Media Analytics, Google Analytics, and Media Tracking: Monitoring online reach and media coverage.
- Partner's Reporting: Monthly reports from grantees with regular quality assurance meetings.
- Mentorship Sessions and Reporting: Online sessions for DKC-winning teams, with submitted campaign reports.
- Social Listening: Consulting firm evaluates social media engagement, focusing on DKC teams.

Additionally, the system addresses key aspects:
- Track Results Progress: Systematic tracking of progress toward objectives.
- Learn and Integrate New Knowledge: Promoting continuous learning and knowledge integration.
- Monitor and Manage Risks: Robust risk management to identify and address potential issues.
- Review and Make Course Corrections: Regular reviews allow for adjustments to align with objectives.

The evaluation of UNDP's Partnerships for a Tolerant, Inclusive Bangladesh (PTIB) was conducted in August 2020 to assess whether the project has been relevant, effective, efficient, and sustainable. As per the evaluation findings, PTIB's relevance was grounded in domestic and international concern about growing extremist violence in Bangladesh, especially after a high-profile 2016 attack, and the relationship of this violence to a culture of intolerance and exclusivity. As an experimental project, PTIB filled knowledge gaps with research and applied its data and analysis to guide various activities to engage the marginalized and vulnerable populations, including minorities, women, and youth. It demonstrated its efficiency by being relatively small, nimble, and adapting well to the Rohingya crisis of 2017 and the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020. As PTIB now turns to the second phase, it will need strategic planning to sustain the partnerships it has created and support the durability of its ideas, attitude shifts, and behavioral changes. The project needs to go over the lessons learned and think of how

to utilize this knowledge and experience to develop a robust strategy to consolidate a cadre of messengers of inclusivity and tolerance in Bangladesh.

5.5   Cost-Effectiveness and Timely Delivery

PTIB demonstrated a high level of efficiency in utilizing resources and time, ensuring effective delivery of inputs and outputs. Key highlights include:

1. **Budget Utilization and Value for Money:** The project maintained a budget utilization rate consistently above 94%, with no program expenditures exceeding the allocated budget. Despite questions about project effectiveness, stakeholders unanimously agreed that PTIB provided value for money, considering its budget and the diverse array of activities it supported.
2. **Financial Sufficiency and Results Achievement:** Despite funds nearing depletion towards the project's end, stakeholders, including implementers, partners, and sub-grantees, deemed the available money as sufficient to achieve results. The project's effectiveness is evident in the ratio of activity to operational costs, with PTIB allocating 92% of its budget to project activities.
3. **Efficiency in Design and Implementation:** PTIB is recognized as an efficient project with budgets aligned to a valid design. The implementation of activities has been effective, maintaining success in fundraising without significant impacts on programming. The project's adaptability, flexibility, and innovation within the given budget reflect a well-conceived "learning project."
4. **Consistent Adaptability and Innovation:** PTIB's management showcased consistent adaptability, flexibility, and innovation. Despite challenges such as the Rohingya crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic, the project remained on track and even introduced new components. This efficiency is attributed to the project's initial design for evolution, an experienced UNDP program manager, and an energetic project team.

In summary, PTIB utilized resources effectively, maintaining financial efficiency, achieving results, and demonstrating adaptability throughout its implementation. The project's success is attributed to strategic design, experienced management, and an agile project team.

6. IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES & LESSONS LEARNED

6.1   Challenges

Briefly narrate introductory section on challenges that the project has faced during its implementation.

6.1.1   Exclusion of Rural Youth

The urban-rural divide posed a challenge by limiting the participation of youth outside Dhaka in the project's youth-centric activities. This geographical constraint could potentially hinder the project's inclusivity and outreach.
To address this challenge, the project strategically planned the Digital Khichuri Challenge to be organized in divisional and district cities. This initiative aimed to actively engage and include rural youth, ensuring a more comprehensive reach beyond the urban center.

6.1.2   Limited Participation of Women and Girls

The potential limited participation of women and girls, especially in activities like the Digital Khichuri Challenge, was identified as a concern. Gender-related restrictions and barriers had the potential to impact the inclusivity of the project.

The project took proactive measures by setting and adhering to specific gender criteria for teams participating in the Digital Khichuri Challenge. This step aimed to ensure equal opportunities for women and girls, promoting a more diverse and inclusive participation.

6.1.3   Lingering Covid-19 Situation

The ongoing Covid-19 situation posed a potential risk to the timely completion of project activities, introducing uncertainties and disruptions.

In response to the Covid-19 challenge, the project explored and implemented different approaches to overcome the hurdles. Additionally, recognizing that some partners might need contract extensions to complete their activities, the project adopted a flexible approach. Contracts/agreements could be extended with no additional cost if necessary, ensuring that external factors like the pandemic did not unduly impede project progress.

6.2   Lessons Learned

The project identified several key lessons learned. These include:

6.2.1   Lessons Learned 1

Keeping messaging positive: When addressing divisive rhetoric, the project made a deliberate decision to keep UNDP messaging positive – to focus not on "countering" extremist or hateful narratives directly, but to promote alternative peaceful, positive narratives. Throughout the cycle, the project recognized that while deliberate incitement and hate speech did exist in Bangladesh, the best counter was not censorship but better arguments and better evidence.

6.2.2 Lessons Learned 2

Understanding PVE and prevention of hate speech as peacebuilding efforts: While UNDP internally applies the Prevention of Violent Extremism label to this work, in 2019 the project realized how adaptable this model is to address issues of hate speech being raised by the UN Secretary General. Though the means and manner of hate speech may be different, the dynamics and the implications are similar to extremist rhetoric.

6.2.3 Lessons Learned 3

Welcoming supportive government partners: The project has identified government counterparts who care about promoting tolerance and inclusivity and want to get it right. Building a collaborative and positive relationship with government partners has supported mutual trust to grow and influence positive changes.

7. SUSTAINABILITY AND EXIT STRATEGY

Each part of the project's research component had a different approach to sustainability. As an experimental project, there was not much focus on sustainability in its design. In component #1, stakeholders see the BPO as technically weak and politically vulnerable from sustainability. At the same time, social media monitoring and CARU's social tension mapping are components that are informative yet not designed to be sustainable. In component #2 on citizen engagement, the activities of the Digital Peace Movement (DPM) were implemented by partners through contracts or sub-granting basis within a relatively short period. Sustainability of ideas and skills is provided through capacity development support to grant recipients. DPM is the means to develop and test messages of inclusivity and tolerance and explore new mediums to communicate these messages and test their effectiveness. The knowledge and experience of what messages and medium worked stays behind with the messengers after the PTIB project ends.

PTIB's evaluation identified improvements for the next phase. The evaluation found that a more unified theory of change could help the individual components better work together as a team and that better knowledge management could demonstrate how PTIB was adapting and facilitate the sharing of this learning with others inside and outside the programme. The report recommended that the next phase improve capacity building for local partners to support their sustainability. The evaluation also called for a more explicit understanding of gender bias and a strategy to address this and ensure that all future activities were inclusive and no one was left behind.

8. FINANCIAL REPORTING

	Budget	Utilization	Difference	Reason of variance
Year 1	998,055.82	968,986.23	29,069.59	
Year 2	1,646,131.87	1,598,186.28	47,945.59	
Year 3	2,023,332.63	1,983,659.44	39,673.19	
Year 4	1,569,486.15	1,523,772.96	45,713.19	
Total	6,237,006.46	6,074,604.91		

9. CONCLUDING SUMMARY AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

In conclusion, PTIB emerged as a learning project in response to evolving challenges in Bangladesh. Its adaptative management and action-oriented research enabled effective responses to unforeseen events, such as the Rohingya influx and the COVID-19 pandemic. PTIB's relevance persisted, evidenced by its alignment with global strategies and pre-emptive actions on issues like hate speech.

The project demonstrated adaptability and innovation across its components, breaking new ground in research, citizen engagement, and government collaboration. While successes were notable, areas for improvement include better communication of research findings, enhanced tracking of attitudinal and behavioral change in citizen engagement, and a strategic approach to address biases and challenges in inclusion and tolerance efforts.

Moving forward, recommendations encompass improved management practices, enhanced capacity building, refined communication strategies, and a strategic approach to address challenges faced in working with marginalized groups. Strengthening monitoring, evaluation, and learning processes will contribute to the project's continued success, ensuring that PTIB leaves no one behind in its future endeavours.

ANNEX 1
Results Framework

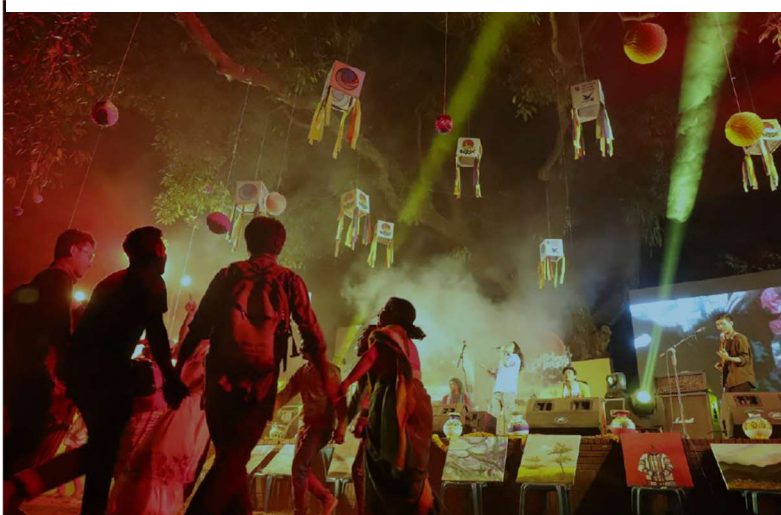| Indicator	Baseline	EOP Target	Achievement	Remarks
Output 1: Research Facility				
1.1 Total Number of Research products produced.	3	55	116	
1.2 Number of dialogues and conferences research products are discussed.	2	38	49	
1.3 Number of instances media organizations reference research products in reporting.	0	40	263	
1.4 Number of months' data on various forms of violence available in the website of "Bangladesh peace observatory".	43	79	120	
1.5 Number of people who have viewed the BPO website/ platform.	250	6k	15K	
Output 2: Citizen Engagement				
2.1: Total number of civil society organizations adding a PVE element (including diversity, peace and tolerance) to existing programming, with support of UNDP grants, training or information materials.	0	25	68	
2.2 Number of viewers reached online through Digital Khichuri Challenge campaign.	0	10	19 million	
2.3 Number of winner teams engaged in PVE content/narrative development.	0	15	15	
2.4 Number of people reached through Diversity4peace activities.	0	1 million	1 million	
Output 3: Government Engagement				
3.1. Number of Government led dialogues with youth on PVE and promoting tolerance and inclusivity.	0	15	11	
3.2 Number of dialogues and conferences, where research finding were presented, with participation from Government and law enforcement agencies.	0	15	12	

ANNEX 2
List of Publications

Sl #	Title of Publication	Year
1	Bangladesh Violent Extremism Monitor: Monthly assessment of drivers, events and online activity	2018-2021
2	Bangladesh Violent Extremism Monitor: Quarterly assessment of drivers, events and online activity	2018-2021
3	Bangladesh Violent Extremism Monitor: Yearly Report	2018-2021
4	Cox's Bazar Analysis and Research Unit: Monthly Report	2019-2021
5	Cox's Bazar Analysis and Research Unit: Quarterly Report	2019-2021
6	Cox's Bazar Analysis and Research Unit: Weekly Report	2020-2021
7	BPO Peace Report	2018-2021
8	COVID-19 Disinformation Monitoring	2020-2021
9	Monetized Open Web COVID-19 Disinformation in Bangladesh	2021

ANNEX 3
Pictorial Illustration of Project Activities

A bus painting with message on diversity

Concert for Tolerance

Ditital literacy training for Imams

ANNEX 4

Case Story

A BOOK PROJECT ON COUNTER-NARRATIVES TO THE EXTREMIST INTERPRETATION

The 2016 terrorist attack at the Holey Artisan Bakery in Dhaka is marked for its extreme brutality carried out by a group of youth without any criminal background. It was the first time Bangladesh experienced such an acute level of crime driven by religious ideology or hatred. Dealing with ideological crime is always a unique challenge for law enforcement agencies as it differed from conventional crimes motivated by factors such as financial gain, power, or personal gratification. Amidst this challenge, the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) Unit of Dhaka Metropolitan Police was formed not only to investigate terrorist acts and arrest the perpetrators but also to prevent and retarding individuals from becoming or supporting violent extremists.

In 2018 UNDP Bangladesh partnered with CTTC to strengthen its preventive approaches. The partnership facilitates two components. a) Research to deepen the understanding of drivers of violent extremism and b) Youth dialogues to raise awareness and exchange perspectives. UNDP coordinated five joint research between CTTC and Dhaka University that bridged the academics and practitioners' gap in analysing extremism sources and expressions. Subsequently, researching violent extremism and its prevention gained more priority in CTTC. In June 2020, it formed a separate R&D Division.

The youth dialogues were full of energy and enthusiasm with youth and Police officials engaging in two-way interactions. The CTTC Chief and Officers deserve credit for encouraging the youth to speak up and express their curiosity and concerns about this sensitive issue. On several occasions, some participants stood up and challenged the anti-extremist position of the state and police. Key of their argument is- violent extremist values are rational, and it is legitimized by their Islamic religious ideologies.

Encountering such religious and ideological questions is a regular experience for CTTC officers, especially during interviews or counseling with terrorist suspects. Globally, Islamists and other religious extremist groups motivate their recruits and followers by interpreting religious scriptures to validate their violent acts. The internet makes these extremist interpretation of religion accessible to everyone, as evidenced by the UNDP's social media monitoring, which revealed that there were 12.7 million subscribers to VE channels in Bangladesh's cyberspace in January 2023. And a police report from 2020 indicated that 85% of arrested youth were radicalized online.

While it is widely recognized that violent extremist groups manipulate the teachings of Islam to rationalize their politically motivated actions, counter-narratives dispelling all these distortions are not that much available or spoken. Not likely that our religious scholars lack sincerity, still most of the anti-extremist religious teaching people accustomed to only reaches a basic level. But we should not forget that with gaining strengths, extremist groups are also relentless in strengthening their arguments. By

relying solely on traditional religious teachings as a counter-narrative to violent extremism, we may be overlooking the fact that these extremist groups are already equipped with more advanced arguments to counter such counter-narratives" once said by Mr. Anisur Rashid, Deputy Police Commissioner and in-charge of CTTC's R&D Division.

Dealing with a well-crafted ideological narrative requires formidable scholarly efforts. CTTC realized the necessity of a profound religious interpretation to refute contemporary extremist arguments, which unfortunately were not readily available for Bangladeshi readers. Some resources exist in books, blogs, and media articles, they are not comprehensive or up-to-date.

CTTC planned for advanced analysis of VE narratives on the religion of Islam and scripting it in a single compilation. UNDP came forward to support this book project.

The project began with a series of brainstorming sessions and homework. The R&D team scanned the VE narratives on religion from VE groups' publications and motivational material CTTC seized from the VE suspects, and contents from VE websites and social media channels, both open and encrypted. R&D team also relooked at the statements of accused extremists they dealt with to have a deeper understanding of what this VE ideology meant to them and drive them to join VE groups. The homework extended to collect and review available counter-narratives both in Bangla and international sources. With all this background research CTTC engaged prominent Islamic scholars in Bangladesh to take over the analysis and manuscripting of the book.

The first edition was published in March 2022. CTTC distributed the book to college, university, and madrasa libraries and the participants of youth dialogue sessions. UNDP took it further to Bangladesh Islamic Foundation under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, resulting in online dissemination of the book through the National Imam Portal. Through online, the book became open-sourced as well as reaching the 125K Imams registered in the Portal. An English version of the book released in December 2023.

The book serves as a valuable resource for religious leaders, teachers, and campaigners seeking to prevent violent extremism by debunking extremist ideologies. At the same time, it precisely benefits the CTTC officers involved in counselling the suspected extremists. They now feel more confident and better equipped to respond to

the challenges and questions posed by VE suspects, or raised in youth dialogue and other community awareness meetings, said Nazmul Islam, Asst. Commissioner of CTTC.