

2 The critical role of Civil Society Organizations (CSO) in combating terrorism

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Introduction

Globalization in the new millennium has changed the whole world's social, political and economic landscape. Humans live in countries without geographical borders through access to the world wide web. The world becomes a village, referred to as the so-called 'global village', whereby everything that happens in one area in the world will easily be spread to other areas instantaneously (Aslam 2005). In this era of globalization, positive and negative information will also spread rapidly, including matters concerning terrorism and extremism.

It is difficult to predict the effects and consequences of an issue which happens today. Extremist and terrorist movements are hard to foresee, especially when they optimize the use of science and technology in this globalized era. Methods of making bombs, tactics using guerilla and indoctrination processes are carried out very cunningly and effectively through the internet. The easier one can access the internet, the easier the extremism influence and ideology can be spread (Gordon 2007). Thus, it is unsurprising that '*lone-wolf*' or solo terrorists can be found anywhere in the world. With no need for physical recruitment, one can be indoctrinated through social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Telegram and others (Putra & Sukabdi 2013).

There are many different objectives of terrorism today. The motive behind every movement and activity related to terrorism is driven by political and

personal ideologies (Aslam and Gunaratna 2019). Various political parties use tactical terrorism to meet their targeted objectives (Hamid 2007). Observing the modus operandi used by terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda, ISIS, Lehava, Sicarli, the IRA, Laskar Kristus, Khalsa Barbar, Boko Haram, Ashin Wirathu, Aum Shinrikyo and others, all of them have hidden political agendas (Gunaratna 2018). All of them move under the political ideology with the final aim of forming their own governments or governments based on specific religions or ethnics (Hamidi 2016). In fact, forming a dictatorial or liberal government may also be achieved through terrorism-based activities.

Terrorism activities are also protected by personal agendas, particularly those linked to planned crimes which have long existed in multiple areas in the present-day world (Idris 2016). Cross-border crime industries related to drug trafficking, firearms smuggling, human trafficking, prostitution, blackmailing, kidnapping and other violent activities have used terrorism as a tool to achieve their objectives.

For instance, the Al-Maunah movement led by Mohd Amin Razali surprised Malaysia, and indeed the world in general, with the incident of firearms robbery owned by the Malaysian Armed Forces in the year 2000 (Aslam 2017). Amin, who had a personal agenda to overthrow the government and ultimately to become the prime minister of Malaysia, had initiated the movement of a terrorist group known as Al-Maunah, based in Kampung Sauk, Gerik Perak (Aslam 2009). With a total of just 29 followers, Mohd Amin succeeded in indoctrinating them to support his fight to make him the leader of Malaysia with the status of Imam Mahdi.

The same pattern can also be seen in Sultan Jamalul Kiram's struggle in Sabah (Harun 2017). His struggle was to conquer Sabah. In the end, a violent attack targeting the local community and the security forces was executed by Kiram in 2013. This ended with 56 deaths in his team, 6 civilians and 10 members of the army and police. A similar pattern can also be seen in the attack masterminded by Anders Breivick in 2013 in Oslo and Utoya Island, Norway, which ended with 69 deaths and a large explosion at the government headquarters in Oslo (Aslam 2008). In March, 2019, a terrorist named Brenton Tarrant attacked the Al-Noor and Linwood mosques, in Christchurch, New Zealand, resulting in the death of 51 Muslims. In another example, Mohamed Abouyaacoub drove a truck and killed 86 people who were attending the Bastille Day festival in Nice, France

(Al-Jazeera 2017). All of these acts were individual terrorist attacks, perpetrated for a variety of personal agendas.

From the above explanation, it can be concluded that violence is sourced from all sorts of motives and that it evolves over time. Terrorism will continue as long as ideologies become the basis of such movements (Baylis et al. 2008). Physically imprisoning humans will not solve ideological issues. In fact, they will continue and will become more serious with globalization and the rapid development of information technology in these modern times (Gunaratna 2015).

The next challenge is to overcome terrorist threats through strategic approaches in order to defeat their ideologies. Various approaches may be used, whether rigid or more lenient, but the outcomes will differ. Therefore, we need to handle it together wisely and accurately. It is also on this basis that the approach to work together by involving the surrounding community is deemed necessary. This approach is known as 'Civil Society Organization' (or CSO), which is a movement that enables the community, as the main agent, to handle violent and extremist threats (PCVE) (Rohan 2011).

Efforts to handle the problem of terrorism are no longer an issue which becomes exclusive to certain government entities such as the police, army or Anti-Terrorism Elite Units. In future, it has also become the individual responsibility of every member of the community. Each and every member of the community has a role to play in helping the government and the nation to handle terrorism threats and PCVE. An increase of awareness amongst the community has made this issue of greater interest. In fact, the world administration towards PCVE today has changed; no longer using the 'top-down' policy in nature, it will be driven by the 'bottom-millions' policy generated by most countries in approaches concerning the issue of deradicalization and the adoption of anti-terrorism measures (Sabatier 1986).

Success in the efforts to manage terrorism threats in the future depends to a large extent on the establishment of unity and cooperation amongst the authorities and general public. Every small unit within the community or CSO includes women, teenagers, academics, religious practitioners, community leaders, school students, retailers and just about anyone who can play a role in overcoming terrorism threats and making PCVE a success. Children can also assist if they have been nurtured accordingly, and understand every action taken and activities surrounding them. Thus, the role

of the citizen or subordinate is important in assisting all parties in the move to overcome terrorist threats (Rufaedah et al. 2017).

Changes in the social and political landscapes in most countries across the world will also influence the development of deradicalization programmes. The changes in the mainstream community and the IR4.0 approach have made the community closer to problems pertaining to terrorism (Aslam and Gunaratna 2019). The easier the community can be indoctrinated, the more necessary it is for the community to be educated so that they understand, avoid and solve these problems. The changes in the political system which subsequently lead to the abolition or amendment of the existing law enforcement in a country will also affect this situation. If the law is no longer able to prohibit crime, then the only alternative available is through the activities of mass society, which is moved holistically and accurately (Sageman 2004).

No one single entity within a country can negate or deny the roles that it may be able to play. Only those who do not understand or have hidden agendas will see that they cannot afford to contribute to the community and stable nation. Only good individuals will produce a good community, followed by a good nation (Gunaratna 2018). If the individuals are far from good, then this will result in negative communities and nation as an outcome. Therefore, it is necessary for individuals to make an effort to be better so that the benefits can be reaped together.

United Nations Resolution 2242 (2015)

The United Nations (UN) has officially outlined the role of CSOs as something both highly necessary and urgent. UN's Resolution 2242, passed on 13 October 2015 at the 7533rd Security Council Meeting at the UN headquarters in New York, stated that every country has to solve issues relating to terrorism by developing their own clear and prudent National Action Plan (NAP). Every sovereign nation recognized by UN should be given a mandate by the UN to develop NAP in order to deal with the violent threats and extremism, which are also clearly referred to as NAP on Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE).

This plan was suggested by UN so that it is developed by taking into account views and inputs from various stakeholders, including the civilians, teenagers, families, women, religious practitioners, sociologists,

academicians, leaders, media and groups from the government and private sectors. As stated in article 14-17 in United Nation Resolution 2242:

These plans should be developed with input from multiple stakeholders and a wide range of civil society actors, including youth, families, women, religious, cultural and educational leaders, media, and the private sector.

(Sumber: Security Council Report s/res/2242/2015)

Corresponding to the recommendations set by the UN, it has also become a necessity to defend the sensitivity of various groups from any form of violence or crime, especially women. Empowering women and families are also stressed in matter 14-17 of the resolution, which places women and families at the centre of blocking activities concerning terrorism worldwide. Clearly, this resolution attempts to arouse the needs and roles of the civil society, including women and the family institution, and various PCVE programmes and initiatives. By empowering every individual unit within the community, this problem can be overcome more effectively and in a more sustainable manner. Otherwise, it will only be temporary and requires the involvement of too many authorities for the observation and prevention process. In the end, this may lead to other issues related to effectiveness and integrity.

Efforts to constrain terrorism threats and extreme violence depend heavily on the actions of small, interrelated units. Among the main units that need to function is the Civil Society Organizations (CSO). This unit can be made of various levels of the society from all sorts of entity, including the professionals, government, private sectors, donors and others (Gunaratna 2015). Each of these units may play their own roles without creating a competitive situation or unhealthy rivalry. Every unit should complement and support each other. If the empowerment of each unit can be sanctioned, then the outcome will be worthy in assisting the PCVE programme, without any geographical or time limitations.

Five basic CSO implementations

In order to obtain an effective CSO, a few phases have to be overcome and developed with great care (Aslam 2019a). I have shared in Asia-Europe

Counter Terrorism Dialogue organised by Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung and RSIS, Nanyang Technological University of Singapore in September last year on how these five stages can function effectively. Each phase will involve a clear and precise process so that the results can benefit every related entity. The ability to produce precise CSO will ensure that it is achievable and maintained for a long period, as well as being able to face numerous constraints, including monetary and manpower. The aspects pertaining constraints will be discussed in the last section of this chapter ([Figure 2.1](#)).

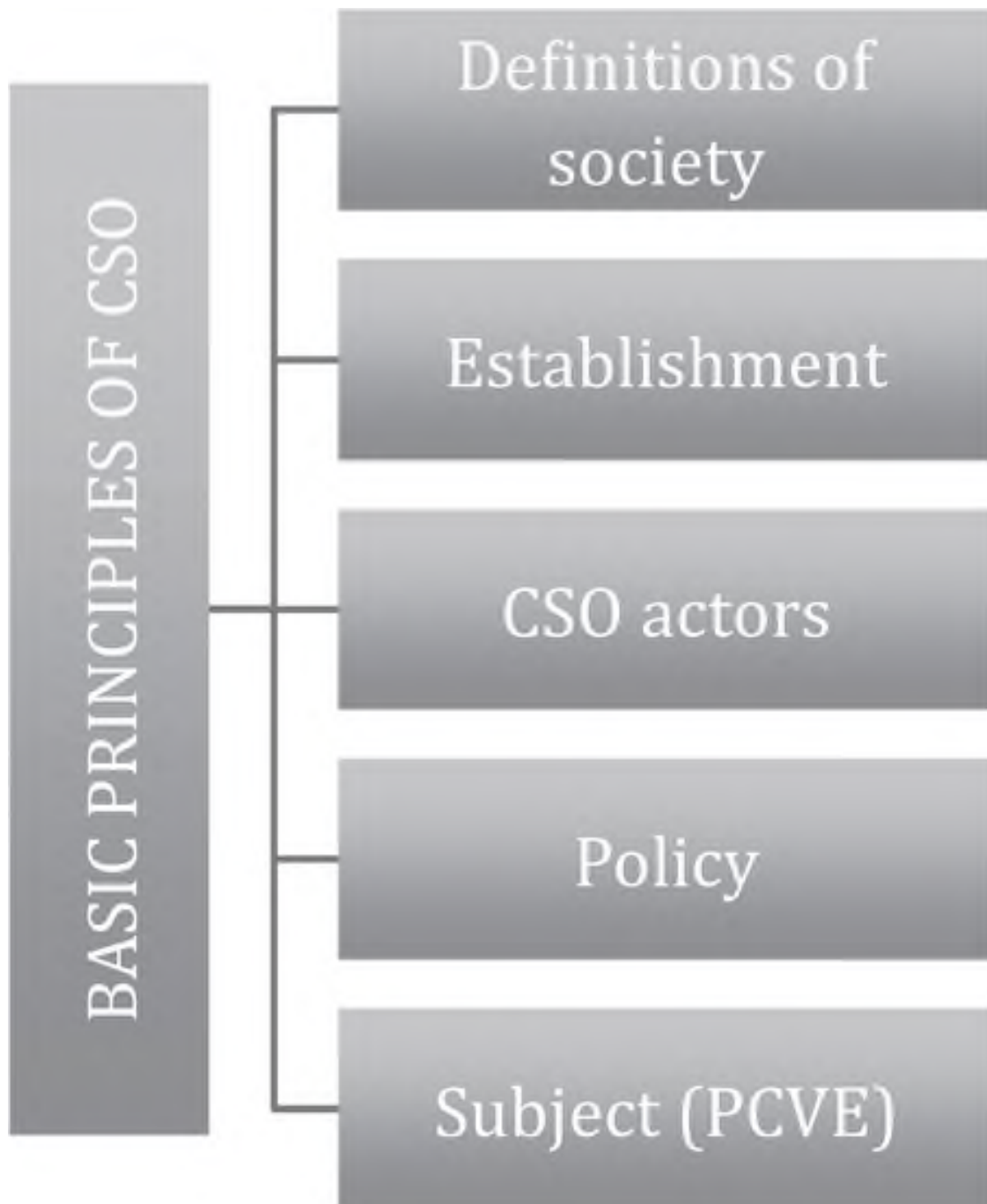


Figure 2.1 The five basic principles in establishing effective and sustainable Civil Society Organisations (CSO).

Sources: Author.

The first basis that should be explained in detail and understood concerns the individuals. Who are the individuals referred to here? In fact, every individual in this world is a small unit of the community or society. This includes men, women, children, teenagers, adults and even the elderly. They live in the same location and share the same hopes or aspirations. For instance, an individual who lives in the village or city and shares the same residential and surrounding area. This group is often marked by their same ethnicity and religious beliefs. They gather based on similar identities and religious beliefs and often meet in houses of worship or meeting points such as restaurants, community halls, workplaces, supermarkets and others (Molone 2008). Individuals will gather and discuss current events as they have the same agenda in producing a harmonious society. Therefore, this individual group will find the same ideology to be fought including PCVE and others.

The establishment and formation of the CSO occurs in the second phase. This is an important phase because it involves a group which is formed on the basis of the same struggle and has the same objectives. They will discuss and work hard to reach their aimed objectives by moving on one platform which is much clearer and structured (Aslam 2019a). This organization is formed either formally or informally. Both move well and have a significant number of individual members (Choo 2008). This group will also basically register itself formally with the authoritative bodies in their own countries. Therefore, at this stage a CSO is formed and it becomes the best solution in spreading targeted peace and safety messages. Consequently, this CSO will be more widely recognized because their struggle can be seen and known by the public. Kim Raymen Choo, in his book *Organised Crime Group in Cyber Space: A Typology*, has discussed how the movements and activities will begin to gain public attention, especially through printed media and social media.

The third phase concerning CSO is the strength possessed by the main figure of this movement or group. Every CSO has a trusted leader who is made the leader of the organization. The main actor of this CSO must have charisma and obtain good and structured leadership skills (Aslam 2019a). Gender is not an issue as long as the idealism carried out can be accepted and raised to a higher level. Having one with youthful energy is a bonus in CSO activities because the quality of the workforce is another vital factor, which is necessary in running CVE activities at local and global levels.

Another significant factor is experience, whereby having a leader with extensive experience, especially at the international level, and one with connections with big international institutions is an advantage to the CSO (Pasha 2005). The ability to master and speak in English as a medium of communication is also important and necessary if the CSO aims to advance to a higher level.

Policy, as the next phase, is the basis of the success behind the PCVE programmes conducted by CSO. The philosophy held by CSO should be supported by a clear government policy (Gunaratna 2018). If the government and CSO do not collaborate, then the organization will have only a low level of effectiveness. Therefore, initiatives made by CSO should be supported by the nation's existing system. If this policy does not exist, the government should be responsible in ensuring that a suitable policy is formed. It is also important for the people behind CSO to adhere to this policy. Even with the best system and policy, inability to observe them will bring about negative consequences and the level of efficiency questionable. The government and CSO players need to cooperate with one other and build a solid relationship. If only the government or CSO play this role, it will only result in conflict. If everyone defends their status quo (Aslam 2019a), there will be rivalry, resulting in each wanting to downfall the other. Therefore, it is vital that the process of developing the policy is clear so that both parties will benefit.

The final phase of the CSO development process concerns the issue or subject at hand. This is a clear priority because without an issue or main problem, it is difficult to shift the CSO to a relevant and effective level within the developed system (Idris 2018). Therefore, the main issue here is prevention and ways to overcome violence and extremism. The role of CSO in PCVE is the main topic discussed here. The issue of PCVE has to be empowered within a clear and precise capacity. Various layers of the society have to be explained about the need to be involved in the process of overcoming and eliminating violence and extremism. The function of each small unit in the so-called CSO society should be explained systematically, covering every available social stratum in a country. The ability of the CSO has to be used to its best in order to secure ongoing and permanent benefits. Other issues can also be enabled because PCVE cannot be solved without an understanding of the surrounding problems. There are many other issues, such as gender, economy, politics, education, employability and others, which also need to be solved in an intellectual manner. A specific support

system has to be developed so that the roles and abilities of CSO will not be questioned, as CSO even has a space to be looked up upon and be respected as an important entity in helping make the government policy regarding PCVE a success.

The role of CSO as an agent in PCVE activities is both important and necessary. The government's role is slowly transferred to the CSO (Gunaratna 2018). If previously PCVE was exclusive to the government through the police or military, now the role of the CSO is increasingly important. Society-centric PCVE programmes are needed, especially in overcoming challenges in the main stream and globalization. With the spirit of complementing not competing, PCVE will therefore be more effective and relevant, especially through the methods of detecting and controlling violent elements at the early stages, subsequently empowering the support system more effectively (Idris 2018).

In a nutshell, CSO is being driven by most social bodies which support human activities and research. Various institutions in the world promote PCVE indirectly. The initial objectives of CSO formation is to assist different societal groups in the social problems that arise. Examples of social problems include poverty, a lack of education opportunities, unemployment, insanitary conditions and others. Problems pertaining to natural disasters, such as floods, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and landslides, are also among the reasons for the formation of a CSO. In addition, CSOs may also be formed to handle issues concerning crimes like prostitution, syndicates, the illegal sales of internal organs, human exploitation, drugs, money laundering and terrorism. Finally, all these problems are combined and changed into subjects requiring sustainable solutions, resulting in the formation of PCVE to complete it.

Challenges implementing CSO

Many agencies or individuals are inspired to form a CSO; each racing to start the CSO because there are many incentives and financial assistance made available in their own countries or by international agencies. However, the government and other related bodies have to pay close attention to a few challenges pertaining to the implementation of CSO. These challenges, if not handled well, will cause failure due to inefficiency of its implementation. There are also three main challenges in the CSO implementation: shortages

of funding; lack of coordination between actors; and redundancies (Aslam 2019a) ([Figure 2.2](#)).



Figure 2.2 Challenges pertaining to the implementation of Civil Society Organisations (CSO).

Sources: Author.

The main problem in executing any CSO is the lack of funding. Money is comparable to an engine that controls all related processes and CSO depends on financial aid being supplied by various agencies. Most CSO will apply for funding from international agencies which are seen as more generous in channeling related aid, such as the Asia Foundation, the Japan Foundation, USAID and others (Aslam 2020). As in my video conversations with a number of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) who are actively involved in PCVE programs in the region, they are all agreed that the funds provided by external governments, such as the Australian, New Zealand, Dutch, Norway, America and German governments, is also seen to be very helpful. How is this possible? Among the reasons are a higher awareness among Western countries and research agencies in these countries, compared to other countries. Developed countries have higher levels of awareness to help CSO further succeed compared to developing and underdeveloped countries (Aslam 2020). As a result, CSO will be fighting for the limited

space and opportunity available here, whereby they will aim to get the funding and normally be in control of the opportunity so that it does not fall into the hands of others.

The second challenge often faced by CSOs is the lack of coordination among actors (Aslam 2019b). Most CSOs frequently race and compete amongst themselves in order to become champions in their fields of expertise. This competition will hinder them from producing great outcomes. The competition created will also cause jealousy and feelings of unhappiness with their competitors' achievements. As a result, they will no longer complement, but become more competitive with one another (Aslam 2019c). The strength obtained by each of them should be maximized in order to create a bigger impact. Otherwise, it will be considered a loss because of failure to manage the limited resources available.

The third challenge is the overlap in workload undertaken by the CSOs (Aslam 2019d). This happens when they react on the same issue but do not manage it well. Thus, amongst the CSOs, some will work on what other CSOs are working on. In fact, some CSOs attempt to highlight their specialties and strengths in a negative way. The parties providing funds often question CSOs seen to make applications on similar issues. In fact, other parties, including the Prison Department, Religious Council, Internal Affairs, Police and others, also view this situation as infuriating. This clearly shows the failure of CSOs in agreeing with the differences between each other and also failure in identifying the differences between them. CSOs are supposed to discuss and coordinate amongst themselves so that every party benefits and looks for a niche that can be fought for (Aslam 2019a).

If all of these challenges can be successfully overcome, then the role of CSOs will become clear and impactful. These three issues should be solved cautiously and positively by every CSO (Aslam 2020). Developed nations are seen to be more open in the implementation of CSOs and are willing to share with any related party. However, in most countries CSOs are seen as something troublesome and interferes with affairs of the government or authority. By solving the issues discussed above, the role of CSOs will be seen as vital. CSOs must become an entity that supports the idealism of the government and be in the forefront in moving current issues, especially those related to PCVE (Aslam 2020).

Producing effective CSO

At this stage, the discussion will focus on how to produce an effective and successful CSO. There are indeed many parties that support the formation of CSO, whether individuals or entities with special interests. However, the question here is the level of its efficiency. Numerous CSOs may be formed, but many seem to fail. Hence, a few effective measures have to be taken to ensure that the CSO is able to achieve its target. Focusing on PCVE, the CSO requires at least eight steps in order to be more effective (Aslam 2019a) ([Figure 2.3](#)).



Figure 2.3 Eight main components in producing effective Civil Society Organisation (CSO).

Sources: Author.

Firstly, CSO actors must understand the local context or environment to be controlled (Aslam 2020). CSO will only be effective if the involvement of the local players can be optimized. Using the local language is important in order for the message to be put across, objectives reached and visions achieved. PCVE very much requires the synergy of the local players and the related CSO players. Using the local language is vital, for example using the Malay language in South East Asia, Tamil and Urdu in South Asia, Mandarin in Indo-China, and others. Most individuals involved in violence are those with lower education background and with no exposure to English. So if English is used as a medium of communication, it is feared that the targeted intentions cannot be achieved. Impaired communication will give a bad impression of the PCVE programme brought by the CSO. The success, which is delivered through reports and presented at international platforms is merely rhetorical and theoretical, not applications and actions deemed necessary in PCVE programmes.

In order to ensure the success of CSO, empowering women and families is also essential. While strengthening the women and family institution is a requirement, understanding the function and actual concept of both is actually more important. This must be taken seriously because these groups are easily exploited by extremists and terrorists. Women whose spouses are influenced with violent ideologies are the main subjects of the group. The feelings of love and affection, as well as the desire for guidance from a husband or spouse considered holy and able to lead to the right path, is the main attraction for women (Yeomans & Mariutti 2016). CSO must thus ensure women understand that their functions and roles are not limited to being merely wives or mothers, but they can actually play a bigger role such as building awareness, preventing extremism and blocking radicalism. Furthermore, women must also be encouraged to have careers and earn an income. The same must be implemented within the family institutions (Yeomans & Mariutti 2016). Women and families must be involved in all CSO activities because both are important agents, either in the recruitment or recovery process. Those who engage in violent and extremist activities usually lose once women and families are involved in recovery and deradicalization programmes.

Next, CSO must ensure there is no gender separation (Yeomans & Mariutti 2016). Every policy and programme developed by a CSO must ensure that both men and women are involved. The strength associated to a certain gender cannot be denied. Even though CSO activities may target a certain gender, in a wider context both genders must be taken seriously in any policy or related activity. Suitable narratives in PCVE must be played by every gender, depending mainly on their target group. Gender inclusivity must be made a priority in every CSO planning by considering those who are behind economically and socially (Wouterse 2016). Priority can also be given by understanding their basic needs such as food, accommodation and sanitary conditions. Women are often left out in groups of extremists and also considered subjects of burden who only need to obey every order given (Aslam et al. 2016). Thus, the CSO functions as an opening space and an opportunity for women to become more prominent, hence playing a more significant role. On the other hand, the men also need to be exposed so that they understand their functions and responsibilities, not merely limited to giving orders but to also consider women as a complement to a perfect life. When the strength of a gender can be synergized, the impact of the CSO in PCVE programmes is huge, and generations growing beside them will be able to see examples and values to be developed and achieved in the future (Gunaratna 2015).

Research done by various world agencies clearly show that the young generation or youths are the most vulnerable to be recruited by the radical and extremist groups. This group is often made a target by the radicals due to their confused minds, as they are often at crossroads in their lives and involved in activities categorized as sinful and frequently feeling guilty. Their minds are messed up and worried. Moreover, this group is also in a position whereby they are searching for their real identities, wanting to be the best and the most perfect. They will follow the right path and often be confused. If they meet extreme teachers or idols, they will often end up being radicalized and willing to be involved in terrorism as an easy way to go to heaven. Psychologically, the youth is also considered to be in the first phase of cognitive thinking, which is the easiest phase to be indoctrinated (Aslam 2017). During this phase, the youth's way of thinking is easily influenced as they are not critical and subjective; their level of interpretations and acceptance are often more inclined towards the directive and convergent, thus they see everything objectively. Things are either right

or wrong, and nothing in between. As many as 75% of identified worldwide terrorists are youth from the ages of 20–35 years old (MyCorps 2019). Therefore, the related CSO must ensure that the policy and programmes developed fulfills the image and interests of this group. If this group can be influenced, then all of the problems related to PCVE are considered to have been resolved successfully.

The fifth notion that has to be given specific attention by CSO players is the involvement of local religious experts (Aslam 2019a). Terrorism, hatred and extremism are caused by intolerance. This is the keyword; most believers become intolerant with other religions, as they only think of what is best for them and their own religion, without thinking of others. They often think that the religion they believe in is the best and right, whereas other religions are wrong and have gone astray. As a result, they will condemn other religions and their believers until often causing conflict within the society. Thus, during this stage, the role of the religious leader becomes important; religious leadership needs to be rational, moderate and acquire a high level of tolerance (Khoo 2018). If religious leaders are intolerant and extreme, then the results will be unfavourable. They should be the authority that balances between the tough and moderate groups. Religious experts must play their roles wisely and prudently. They are capable of attracting the society either to become extreme or moderate in thinking. If everyone promotes moderation in religion, then the believers will also become more moderate and more accommodating with believers of other religions (Hoo 2018). Religious leadership will not only be respected by friends and foes, but they will also be able to encourage harmony and peace. Various dialogues and awareness programmes should be created in order for the society to understand the real functions of religion. Agreeing on the differences is vital so that each of us are more vigilant to matters pertaining to the sensitivity of a community or religion. Therefore, CSO cannot escape from involving the religious bodies in all sorts of PCVE programmes and activities organized by them.

The next most important point that requires particular attention by CSO concerns the cooperation between the government and private sectors. These two main entities within a nation need to be well synergized (Aslam 2019a). Cooperation is not limited to taking action and conducting related programmes, but it has to be broadened to the extent of sharing ideas. Exchanging ideas and having focused discussions should be carried out so

that one solution which is the best and most complete can be achieved. At this stage, the government not only has to include private agencies, but CSOs must also be given the space and opportunity to make a move in making PCVE a success. The government must also view the efforts made by the private parties and CSO players as important and necessary. The status quo of only the government can solve and handle matters pertaining to extremism and radicalism should be put aside (Gunaratna 2018). The role of PCVE is a shared responsibility and needs to be well coordinated. Every entity, whether private or as small as CSO, has specific roles and each of them can help one another for their own good. The government can also help private agencies by simplifying aspects concerning the related law and policy. For private parties, they should see the government's willingness to take part in making PCVE a success with their agencies as a combined opportunity that can potentially benefit all parties. The government has a wide range of resources, while the private agencies have the funds and the CSO has the labor; thus when these three agencies are combined and empowered, it will surely result in a significant impact (Perry & Latiff 2019).

The seventh initiative is to tighten cooperation with other regions. No country can live independently. In this modern world era of globalization, we are in need of one another. Matters related to PCVE also require close cooperation amongst various agencies and countries in order for it to succeed. Easier movement, especially with the development of flight industries, make the flow of human movement faster. Humans can move from one area to another area easily including movements related to crime and terrorism (Korstanje & Clayton 2012). However, the explosion of Information Technology is another big challenge in making PCVE a success. Today, by just being in front of the computer, every individual unit can easily absorb radical elements. Humans are indoctrinated effortlessly without face-to-face contact, but sufficiently with internet access. This situation can also be seen to develop aggressively with activities related to crimes crossing borders, including smuggling, drugs, firearms, corruption and human trafficking (Aslam 2018). The CSO being developed must see these issues on a larger scale and direct the agencies at the borders to cooperate in handling the situation. CSO will only succeed if other countries cooperate and collaborate to take action on all aspects pertaining to PCVE and crime across borders (Korstanje & Clayton 2012). Without the

cooperation from other countries, the success rates of CSO will be low and the effectiveness questionable.

The last thing that requires attention in order to ensure the success of the CSO concerns understanding the sensitivity of the different ethnicities and religions (Aslam 2019d). The rights of every entity must be protected. Occasionally, the developed CSO only pays attention on specific ethnics and religions, forgetting the existence of other communities. This should therefore be avoided. One initiative taken in the West may be suitable with their culture and way of life, and may not be suitable or acceptable by the community in the east. CSO actors are also reminded to not place their emotions ahead of every initiative taken; feelings of hatred and vengeance towards other ethnicities and religions cannot be created. An action and programme conducted should not include personal agendas with underlying importance (Aslam 2019c). The CSO which wishes to make PCVE a success should be professional and sincere. No ethnicity or religion should be left behind as involvement of all parties, at both the local and the international level, must be fully confirmed and enabled.

Conclusion

Lastly, this discussion clearly shows that the CSO that struggles to meet the PCVE agenda has better opportunities and also face big challenges. PCVE has a good chance to become an important world agenda in the future, especially when there is a drastic change in policy and law, as well as changes in the main leaders of a country. In other aspects, PCVE also faces huge complications, especially when CSO fails to detect problems and develop clear policies in the implementation of related programmes and activities. This situation can be overcome if the CSO players or government and private agencies who are involved in PCVE can create a clear understanding amongst the society.

A more prudent and thoughtful approach should be taken by CSO. The involvement of every entity in the society, such as the women, children, teenagers, religious experts, entrepreneurs and every individual within the community, is essential. It is the responsibility of the CSO to ensure that every unit of the community is involved and provided with a solid understanding. This understanding has to be built and developed from the beginning, which is from school to university, followed by working life. This

is even more important for children living in conflict areas with high risks. In fact, their living environments are surrounded by extreme and radical communities that makes them highly in need of the awareness regarding this CSO.

As I have mentioned in many occasions including the Asia–Europe Counter Terrorism Dialogue in 2019, CSO can be made a complementary subject introduced in primary or secondary schools (Aslam 2019a). This is where the understanding and importance of CSO will be exposed to students. Consequently, their projects or field studies will be exposure and a hands-on experience with CSO. In the long run, this will be the basis to awareness regarding the importance and roles of CSO in making whatever activity towards the well-being of the society a success, including PCVE. Kids or youngsters are prone to radicalization and also prone to be deradicalization. It is the task of government, especially NGOs, to ensure this group are safeguarded and indoctrinated appropriately. Capitalize their ability for the sake of society and to create better understanding about PCVE.

Various communication mediums, including creating conventional classes and online classes, have become essential at this stage. Students need to build their ability to think critically. Mastering their knowledge of IT, having good social skills and developing high emotional intelligence is the key to produce a generation that is fully aware and understands the importance of CSO in the society. Greek philosophers as early as Socrates were already talking about harnessing the abilities of youth; so do we. Feed them with the right remedy, it will give a significant effect and outstanding outcomes. Finally, the “winning hearts and minds approach” will create more opportunities for high-risk groups to disengage from extremist ideologies and start a new life.

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