



FACTSHEET VERA-2R

The VERA-2R is a scientific, evidence-based protocol that is specifically developed for risk analysis and risk management of violent extremism. Accurate risk analysis of violent extremism is essential for the prevention of terrorist attacks and other forms of violent extremism. Regular risk assessment tools for individual violence have been found to be insufficiently relevant to the specific characteristics of terrorists and violent extremists. Moreover, there are very low numbers of terrorists available to be studied and significant differences even within this population. As a result, the absolute prediction of an individual's future violent extremist action is not possible at the presently available data. Risk assessment of violent extremism requires an individual, structured and methodical weighing of the type, severity, nature and threat to public safety.

DESCRIPTION VERA-2R

The VERA-2R is a systematic and comprehensive protocol with 34 relevant risk-supporting and risk-mitigating indicators that are empirically related to violent extremism. Using specific guidelines and clearly defined indicators and definitions, all risk indicators are assessed in order to provide a professional risk judgment and a relevant risk management plan for a specific individual within a specific context. The VERA-2R guides and supports the assessor to make the best risk judgment possible. The VERA-2R does not provide, nor is it intended to provide, a numerical outcome pertaining to future violent extremist action. Use of the VERA-2R supports the professional judgment in the risk assessment of each individual case.



Repeated measurements with the VERA-2R are essential for assessing an increasing or decreasing risk of violent extremism. The methodology of the VERA-2R, with transparent and criteria-based definitions, ensures consistency, reliability and user-friendliness for assessors. Repeated measures on the VERA-2R allows for a determination of specific changes in indicators from the baseline measurements. Such repeat measures can be used to monitor the effectiveness of intervention programs over time as well as monitoring changes in risk status of an individual.

Ongoing academic research is important to ensure that the VERA-2R is based on continuous developments in the field of both risk assessment and violent extremism. Several important European studies have recently been conducted and published which have demonstrated high inter-rater and intra-rater reliability of the VERA-2R as well as documenting the validity of the VERA-2R and its perceived usefulness (2023)¹. The VERA-2R can be used for all forms of violent extremism, and is appropriate for different sex and age groups.

APPLICATION VERA-2R

The VERA-2R is used worldwide. In Europe, the VERA-2R is used in the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria Sweden, Denmark, Spain, and Germany as well as in other countries in the European Union. Outside Europe, the VERA-2R is used in Canada, the USA, Australia, New Zealand, countries in Asia and beyond.



The information obtained from the VERA-2R can be applied in a variety of settings. This includes the following applications: (i) professional judgements of risk for the courts; (ii) placement decisions within prisons and other

¹ For a review of relevant literature, see the website www.vera-2r.nl



detention settings; (iii) required risk reports at the end of a detention period or at other times; (iv) reports relating to parole or probation decisions; (v) monitoring decisions following conditional release; (vi) risk and threat monitoring and supervision after a detention period; (vii) investigations by national security police and other security services.

The VERA-2R can be used when only file information is available and applies when file information can be supplemented with interviews with the individual.

Sufficient, credible, and reliable information related to the individual and violent extremism concerns is required. The VERA-2R is not a screening instrument that superficially addresses signals that may be present. It is a comprehensive analysis of a broad spectrum of relevant information. A second requirement for correct use is that the user has followed an official VERA-2R training. The section below outlines various training options. Detailed directions for the use of the VERA-2R are included in the official VERA-2R manual.

VERA-2R TRAINING

To use the VERA-2R tool as part of a formal risk analysis, official training is required. It is also possible to be trained to understand and interpret the findings resulting from a VERA-2R analysis prepared by other trained professionals, and not be a certified trained user of the tool. The Netherlands Institute for Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology (NIFP) offers several training programs. One training is mandatory for future users of the VERA-2R. Other training programs are designed to support a good understanding of the VERA-2R without certified user status. All programs listed below are available in English, German, French and Dutch and are offered both digitally and physically.

USE OF THE VERA-2R

In order to use the VERA-2R as a foundation for risk analysis and associated risk management, a formal VERA-2R training course must be successfully completed. This is a two-day training that can be organized digitally as well as on-site. The group size varies between ten and, at most, twenty participants. The training is generally provided by two internationally experienced trainers. Participants are required to complete preparatory assignments. This preparation takes approximately one day. During the training, relevant theoretical concepts are discussed in depth, including different forms of extremism, specific target groups, developments in risk analysis and the challenges involved in the risk analysis and assessment of violent extremism. Relevant disclaimers and user criteria surrounding the VERA-2R are discussed. A main component of the training is actual case-exercises. In addition to identifying and assessing relevant risks in various cases, essential follow-up steps such as establishing a risk assessment report and developing risk management programs are included.



The group setting is used to support learning from colleagues as well as from the trainers who have theoretical and operational experience with the VERA-2R.



After successfully completing the training, participants receive the official VERA-2R manual (available in several languages) and are recognized as certified users. The NIFP monitors the certified users within the EU and will invite all trained users to recertification modules in the future. Recertification focuses on new developments in violent extremism, terrorism and risk assessment research.

READING AND DECIDING UPON THE VERA-2R

The VERA-2R is used worldwide in a variety of settings. Risk assessment reports based on the VERA-2R are shared with decisionmakers, such as judges, public prosecutors and prison directors. For such recipients of VERA-2R risk assessment reports, a one (or half a) day session is offered in which the background of the VERA-2R, the challenges related to risk analysis of violent extremism and the specific methodology and terminology of the VERA-2R are discussed. Key aspects of these sessions are questions such as 'What is the VERA-2R?' 'Why is working with the VERA-2R important for the violent extremism target group?' 'How should I read and interpret the results of a VERA-2R analysis?' The session also addresses the question of what the VERA-2R does not and is not intended to provide. This last issue is important to avoid misconceptions and false expectations among recipients of VERA-2R risk reports, for example when a recipient is under the assumption that a numerical outcome of the risk for future violence is provided, something that is simply not possible for this population.



For such expert sessions a general training format has been developed. Adjustment to the training to address any special needs or specific focus of the professionals is possible. For example, a knowledge session for prosecutors can differ from a knowledge session for prison professionals.

The recipients of these training sessions will learn how to optimally integrate the findings from a VERA-2R report into their own operational decision-making. Although this one-day session does not result in certified user status, the enhanced knowledge about the VERA-2R will support inter-organizational cooperation and an increased understanding of both the strengths and constraints of the VERA-2R approach.

OTHER OPTIONS

If there are specific needs regarding a training or knowledge session, this can be shared with the NIFP at the contact information below. Options will be discussed in detail after which a training or session can be developed and provided.

CONTACT DETAILS

For questions and registration regarding training and knowledge sessions, please contact NIFP at the following email address: VERA-2R@dji.minjus.nl