



FARSIGHT

Designing Countering Violent Extremism Programs: A Strategic Overview

Considering the impact of a country's political and security context on countering violent extremism programming.

August 2016

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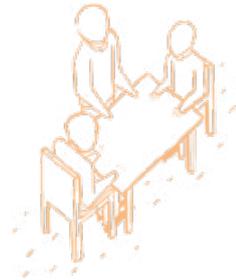
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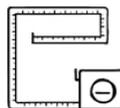
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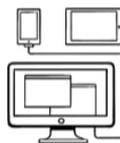
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INTRODUCTION

The international community is grappling with an increasingly complex and evolving terrorism threat which directly impacts our security. An important priority in addressing this is activities aimed at countering violent extremism and significant resources, financial and human, and political capital are being committed to addressing the threat posed by violent extremists. Violent extremism is a global security phenomenon, but developing nations are disproportionately affected and the impact of violent extremism is largely shaped by the context of the operating environment. As such, effective countering violent extremism programs must also be tailored to suit the local context and address the specific needs of the beneficiaries. Programs should adapt and be responsive to the local security and political context. Caution needs to be applied in importing countering violent extremism initiatives that have shown promise in one region without considering context, in particular, in exporting Western initiatives to developing nations.

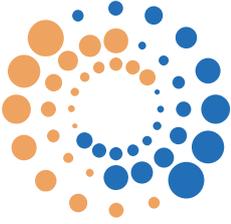
Programs to counter violent extremism must be designed to reflect the needs of each country, as shaped by the political and security context. For example, it is natural that the needs of beneficiaries of countering violent extremism activities in Pakistan will be different from those in Denmark. We explore whether there are contexts in which the aim of programming should be to strengthen human rights and the rule of law first, before there can be any expectation of effective and efficient activities to counter violent extremism. We examined examples of the security and political context in Pakistan and Kenya, and the experiences of countering violent extremism programming in these countries.

We then used these findings to ascertain whether there are basic requirements that should be present in a country to increase the likelihood that countering violent extremism programming will succeed. For the purposes of this report, countering violent extremism refers to the programs and policies which aim to prevent recruitment into and attraction towards violent extremist groups and ideologies. It encompasses non-coercive programming, includes initiatives such as broad-based community engagement, vocational training and counter-narrative campaigns, and remains separate to traditional militarized counter-terrorism efforts. It is our view that success in countering violent extremism requires a collaborative response involving public and private entities, academics and researchers, civil society and non-government organizations.

OUR PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to reflect on the high level strategic considerations behind countering violent extremism interventions. It is intended that this research assists practitioners involved in countering violent extremism programming to design and implement activities that are reflective of a country's specific context. It also highlights the necessity for countering violent extremism programs to remain flexible and adaptable, owing to the dynamic nature of a country's political and security environment.

Our research confirmed that the safety of beneficiaries and implementers is a major practical consideration that must be reviewed at the design stage. As such, practitioners can use this report to identify situations in which beneficiaries might be adversely affected by implementation. We also observed that resource inefficiencies arose where programs were not designed to reflect, or adapt to, the operating environment. The research therefore offers pointers to donors who need to consider resource efficiency. In particular, it suggests cases in which donors should prioritize traditional development activities over those focused on building community resilience through countering violent extremism.



METHOD

In researching this paper, we drew on examples of countering violent extremism programming in Kenya and Pakistan. Previous research papers have documented the limited availability of results and evaluations of countering violent extremism programming at the outcome level. We echo these findings and highlight in our own recommendations the importance of transparency in documenting and reporting on evaluation outcomes. Nonetheless, we conducted a comprehensive literature review and drew on discussions with individuals involved in designing and implementing CVE programs in these countries.

The ability to obtain insights from practitioners was an important criterion in pursuing this research, to ensure the findings and recommendations would have practical value. Thanks to all these people, who were interviewed on background. The resulting report and analysis is indebted to them but its strengths and weaknesses are our own. A final note of appreciation is extended to the two anonymous reviewers whose comments and suggestions helped improve and clarify this report.



FOUNDATION BLOCKS

The impacts of violent extremism vary by country and community; so do capacities to respond. Capacity is largely shaped by the political and security context. By analyzing the operating environment in Kenya and Pakistan, and the impact the environment had on the likelihood of success of countering violent extremism activities, we identified what we term “foundation blocks”, the presence of which increase the potential for successful implementation. These refer to security and governance frameworks that enable countering violent extremism programs to take root. Our research found that when these foundation blocks were stronger, implementation was more likely to be successful, whereas weaknesses correlated with a decreased capacity for success. The foundation blocks are:



Our research process differentiated two perspectives on these factors:

1. As variables that exist in the operating environment; and
2. As the objects or targets of programming.

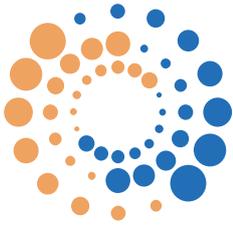
In many instances, countering violent extremism programming will aim to enhance these institutions. However, if such institutions are absent or weak, donor funds and efforts would be better spent on other approaches to strengthening these foundation blocks. This would include creating or reinforcing these structures and increasing government accountability. In these situations, building community resilience to violent extremism is not the priority for these countries – beneficiaries have other needs. Counter-terrorism or other development activities such as institution building programs are more appropriate. As the following diagram shows, the relationship between countering violent extremism programming and these foundation blocks flows two ways. The key point is that the absence of the foundation blocks will render programming ineffective. Countering violent extremism programming may improve the foundation blocks, but if that is the primary ambition, there are better ways to achieve it than running a countering violent extremism program.



In analyzing the differences between countering violent extremism programming in Kenya and Pakistan, it was clear that weakness in these foundation blocks led to resource inefficiencies - financial and human - and alienate potential beneficiaries. This could arise because poorly-developed programs do not address beneficiaries’ most urgent needs, which reduces their ability to attract support. More worryingly, it could contribute to an unstable security environment, through the use of divisive language or counter-



productive donor branding, which increases risks to the beneficiary. In some instances, countering violent extremism activities will not address the most urgent needs and we argue that funding should be directed towards pursuing other development priorities until the situation is conducive to countering violent extremism programming.



SETTING THE SCENE

This section will outline the security and political situation in Kenya and Pakistan, in order to consider the impact this has on countering violent extremism programming.

THE SECURITY AND POLITICAL SITUATION IN KENYA

There are multiple drivers of insecurity in Kenya including historical injustices and marginalization, the country's military presence in Somalia, the security environment in the region and the nature of the Kenyan state.¹ In general, larger scale violence is more likely to be perpetrated by violent extremist groups conducting attacks inside the country than by active insurgencies. Since the bombing of the US Embassy in Nairobi in 1998 by al-Qaeda, which resulted in the deaths of 224 individuals, Kenya has experienced a number of deadly terrorist attacks including:

- 2002** the bombing of the Paradise Hotel in Mombasa by al-Qaeda which killed 15 individuals;
- 2012** a series of terrorist attacks occurred primarily in the capital Nairobi, including in Eastleigh, where a bomb exploded on a bus killing at least 10 and injuring another 30;
- 2013** an al-Shabaab attack on the Westgate Mall in Nairobi killed 67 and injured 175
- 2014** al-Shabaab forces killed 36 non-Muslim quarry workers near the northern town of Mandera;²
- 2014** al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for an attack which killed at least 28 individuals after assailants boarded a bus in Mandera County and opened fire on passengers who did not identify as Muslim;³
- 2014** two explosive devices detonated in the Gikomba Market in Nairobi killing 10 and wounding 70. The attack has been attributed to al-Shabaab by some sources;⁴
- 2015** an attack reportedly conducted by al-Shabaab on the Garissa University killed 147.⁵
- 2016** suspected al-Shabaab militants attacked police officers using a rocket propelled grenade which resulted in the deaths of 5 officers.⁶

Al-Shabaab has its roots in Somalia, but the group has successfully expanded its activities to other African countries. 16% of the attacks conducted by the group in 2014 occurred in Kenya.⁷ Including these attacks, Kenya experienced over 250 terrorism-related deaths in 2014 and was ranked 18 in the 2015 Global Terrorism Index.⁸ In recent years, attacks have occurred principally in the northeast of the country near the border with Somalia, in the surrounds of Eastleigh outside Nairobi, and smaller-scale attacks have occurred along the coastal region near Mombasa.⁹

¹ Atta-Asamoah, Andrews, 'The nature and drivers of insecurity in Kenya', Institute for Security Studies, Issue 2, 2015, Available at: <https://www.issafrica.org/uploads/East-Africa-Report-2-Kenya.pdf>

² BBC News, 'Al-Shabaab massacres non-Muslims at Kenya quarry', *BBC News*, 2 December 2014, Available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-30288137>

³ Global Terrorism Database

⁴ Global Terrorism Database

⁵ Institute for Economics & Peace, 'Global Terrorism Index 2015', Available at: <http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2015.pdf>

⁶ News24 Kenya, 'Mandera attack: Police car exploded into flames after being hit by rocket-propelled grenade', *Associated Foreign Press*, 20 June 2016, Available at: <http://www.news24.co.ke/National/News/mandera-attack-police-car-exploded-into-flames-after-being-hit-by-rocket-propelled-grenade-20160620>

⁷ Institute for Economics & Peace, 'Global Terrorism Index 2015', Available at: <http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2015.pdf>

⁸ The Global Terrorism Index measures the impact of terrorism on individual countries.

⁹ Independent Policing Oversight Authority, 'Monitoring Report on Operation Sanitization Eastleigh Publically Known as "Usalama Watch"', July 2014, Available at: [http://www.ipoa.go.ke/images/press/MONITORING%20REPORT%20ON%20OPERATION%20\(USALAMA%20WATCH\)%2017%207%202014.pdf](http://www.ipoa.go.ke/images/press/MONITORING%20REPORT%20ON%20OPERATION%20(USALAMA%20WATCH)%2017%207%202014.pdf)



Figure 1: Map of Kenya showing locations of major incidents



Kenya is one of the few countries in East Africa which has never been led by the military. However, Kenya's military operations in the region have been cited as justification for subsequent terrorist attacks in Kenya, including the 2013 Westgate mall attack.¹⁰ Another source of instability and violence in Kenya in recent years has been ethnic tension. 1,133 people died as a result of ethnic conflict following the December 2007 disputed presidential elections.¹¹ Local conflicts present opportunities to violent extremists and there are instances internationally in which transnational terrorist groups have attempted to co-opt local conflicts. Such attempts to co-opt these conflicts have a high failure rate because clan or ethnic hostilities can lead to in-fighting and thereby impede violent extremist groups.¹² While there is a relationship between ethnic violence and violent extremism, this does not appear to have manifested as a significant security threat in Kenya. In addition, while the underlying issues which contributed to ethnic-fueled violence in Kenya remain, the violence itself has been more subdued since the 2007/2008 period.

COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM ACTIVITIES IN KENYA

Kenya is actively engaged in activities and programs aimed at countering violent extremism. This includes a number of programs funded by foreign governments, international organizations and civil society organizations, as well as by the Kenyan government. Kenya has also taken an active role in regional countering violent extremism activities, including hosting regional conferences, and a countering terrorism military role as part of the African Union military force fighting al-Shabaab in Somalia, (AMISOM).¹³

Two examples of donor-funded countering violence extremism programs are the USAID Office of Transition Initiative's (OTI) Kenya Transition Initiative and the European Union-funded Strengthening Resilience to Violence Extremism Horn of Africa pilot program for countering violent extremism (STRIVE Horn of Africa). For the purposes of this report, and to provide a framework against which to analyze a country's response to programming, we will focus on these two initiatives. This is due to the relevance of their

¹⁰ BBC News, 'Kenya marks anniversary of deadly Westgate mall attack', *BBC News*, 21 September 2014, Available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-29299596>

¹¹ Abdullahi Boru Halakhe, "R2P in Practice": Ethnic Violence, Elections and Atrocity Prevention in Kenya, *Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect*, Occasional Paper Series, No 4, December 2013, Available at: http://www.globalr2p.org/media/files/kenya_occasionalpaper_web.pdf

¹² USAID, 'Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism', 2009, Available at: http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pnadt978.pdf

¹³ This includes the July 2015 Regional Conference on Countering Violent Extremism and the February 2016 International Youth Conference on Counter Terrorism.



activities to this research, the length of time the programs span, and the transparency in their programming and monitoring and evaluation activities.

Kenya Transition Initiative

- The Kenya Transition Initiative- Eastleigh project ran from 2011 to 2013 in Eastleigh, Nairobi and along the Kenyan coast from 2012. Described as a pilot program of the 'Countering Violent Extremism' concept, it formed one component of the wider Kenya Transition Initiative.¹⁴
- The objective of the Eastleigh program was to build moderation, foster identity and self-confidence in at risk youth to help them reject extremism. Small grants were made available for programs aimed at countering the drivers of violent extremism and included capacity building among youth and community for moderation and non-violence; empowerment of local youth; and livelihood support for youth.¹⁵

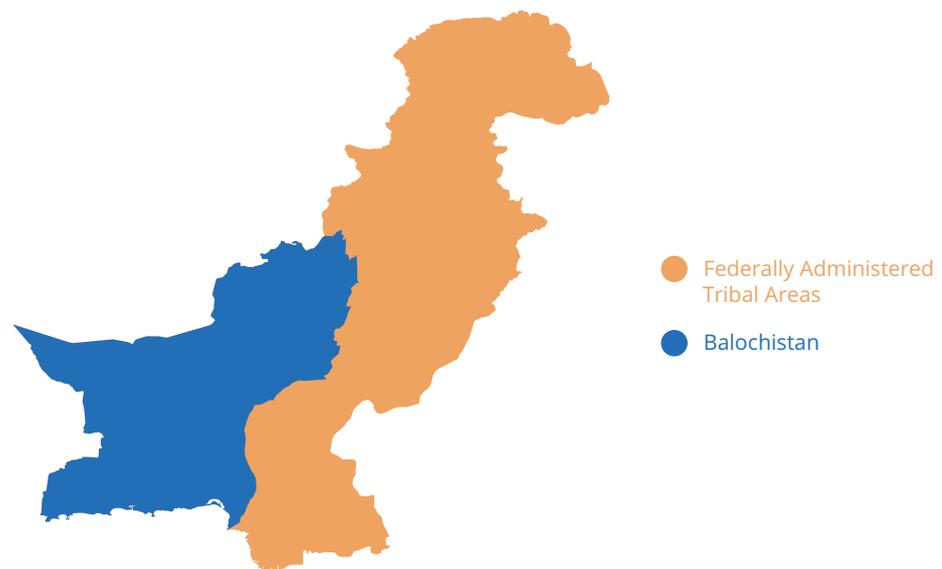
Strengthening Resilience to Violence and Extremism (STRIVE) Horn of Africa

- The aims of STRIVE Horn of Africa include: to understand the drivers of violent extremism in the region through evidence-based analysis; and, to reduce violent extremism through targeted pilot interventions aimed at strengthening resilience against extremism and violence.
- The program focuses on women and youth and is structured around four key result areas: law enforcement and civil-society relations; the role of women; the role of diaspora; and youth marginalization.¹⁶

THE SECURITY AND POLITICAL SITUATION IN PAKISTAN

The security situation in Pakistan is volatile. The country plays host to a wide variety of conflicts ranging from religious and communal violence to separatist conflicts, particularly in Balochistan.

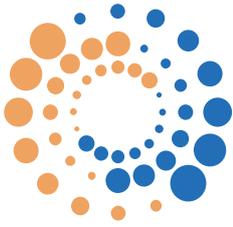
Figure 2: Map of Pakistan



¹⁴ James Khalil & Martine Zeuthen, 'A Case Study of Counter Violent Extremism (CVE) Programming: Lessons from OTI's Kenya Transition Initiative', *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*. 3(1), p.Art. 31, Available at: <http://doi.org/10.5334/sta.ee>

¹⁵ Office of Transition Initiatives, 'Kenya/Eastleigh', *USAID*, Quarterly Report April 1- June 30 2013, Available at: http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00K6HK.pdf

¹⁶ European Commission, 'Strengthening Resilience to Violence and Extremism (STRIVE) in Pakistan, Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/projects/strengthening-resilience-violence-and-extremism-strive-pakistan_en



There is evidence of a nexus between terrorist groups, the political classes and criminality in certain regions of the country. According to the Global Terrorism Index 2015, Pakistan is one of the five countries globally in which terrorism remains highly concentrated, accounting for 5.4% of deaths by terrorism in 2014.¹⁷ In 2014 Pakistan had the fourth highest number of deaths from terrorism in the world.¹⁸ Though attacks decreased in 2015 following concerted military operations and the further fracturing of the Pakistani Taliban, attacks have increased dramatically over the last 15 years.¹⁹ In the period 1998-2006 Pakistan averaged 153 deaths per year, with this figure reaching 1,592 per year on average for the period 2007 to 2014.

Extremism in Pakistan is highly complex, not least because of the quantity and diversity of actors. In 2014, according to the Global Terrorism Index, there were 35 different non-state armed groups recorded.²⁰ Nearly half of all attacks in Pakistan in 2014 were unclaimed by any group. Most groups are Islamist, although there are some separatist movements. The majority of attacks were perpetrated by the Pakistan Taliban, an umbrella organization that split in 2014 following infighting over the group's successor following the death of the former leader Hakimullah Mehsud in November 2013. A lot of attacks have targeted religious minorities, including Shia and Christians.

Furthermore, regional dynamics contribute to internal instability. At the political level, tensions with India affect Pakistan's approach to security. Proximity to Afghanistan has enmeshed Pakistan in cross-border insurgent activity and given Pakistan 10% of the world's refugee population. During 2014, ongoing conflict displaced an estimated one million people into displacement camps and according to Human Rights Watch, the government has not adequately responded to their needs.²¹ This movement impacted the country's security and political situation in a number of ways, including because camps for displaced people have been used as recruiting grounds for violent extremist groups.

COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM ACTIVITIES IN PAKISTAN

Countering violent extremism activities in Pakistan have been driven both by internal and external forces. At the government level there have been a number of policies intended to address the threat of extremism targeted towards the education sector, media, security sector and economic developments.²² The government has been largely unsuccessful in mobilizing public support for its countering violent extremism efforts, while the country's military operations in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas attracts public support. According to the US-Islamic World Forum's paper on "Empowering Pakistan's Civil Society to Counter Global Violent Extremism", the Government of Pakistan has a mixed record of success on countering violent extremism, due to factors including weak governance capacity, domestic political constraints and civilian-military divides.²³

There is considerable international interest and investment in conducting countering violent extremism activities in Pakistan, including because it is:

- Close to Afghanistan and has a reputation as a source of violent extremist rhetoric;

¹⁷ The other countries were Iraq, Nigeria, Afghanistan and Syria.

¹⁸ Institute for Economics & Peace, 'Global Terrorism Index 2015', Available at: <http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2015.pdf>

¹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ Human Rights Watch, 'World Report 2015: Pakistan, Events of 2014', 2015, Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/pakistan>

²² Hedieh Mirahmadi, Waleed Ziad, Mehreen Farooq and Robert D. Lamb, 'Empowering Pakistan's Civil Society to Counter Global Violent Extremism', *The Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World*, U.S.-Islamic World Forum Papers 2014, January 2015, Available at: <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2015/01/us-islamic-world-forum-publications/empowering-pakistans-civil-society-to-counter-violent-extremism-english.pdf>

²³ *ibid.*



- In a hostile relationship with India; and
- A nuclear-armed power.

Efforts undertaken to date include the STRIVE Pakistan program, implemented by GIZ International Services and financed by the European Commission. The overall objective of the project is to support the promotion of a stable, peaceful, plural and tolerant society in Pakistan. Similar to STRIVE Horn of Africa, one aim was to strengthen the resilience of youth to extremism and violence, and strengthen the capacity of government, media and civil society to implement and monitor these programs.²⁴ Our analysis in this report on the context for countering violent extremism programming in Pakistan will focus on the intended activities of the STRIVE program.

²⁴ European Commission, 'Strengthening Resilience to Violence and Extremism (STRIVE) in Pakistan, Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/projects/strengthening-resilience-violence-and-extremism-strive-pakistan_en



THE SECURITY CONTEXT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

For countering violent extremism programming to be effective, a basic level of security needs to exist within the target region. We differentiate between security in the context of the operating environment and security as the object of countering violent extremism programming.

- Object of programming: This is focused on the creation of long-term processes and institutions which will contribute to building community resilience to violent extremist recruitment.
- Context of the operating environment: This requires that the operating environment is not the scene of active conflict and hostilities. Ongoing insecurity can prevent locals from engaging with the program if their safety is at risk. Absent their involvement, countering violent extremism programming is unlikely to be effective. It also contributes to an inefficient use of resources by practitioners if it impacts their capacity to deliver services.

Local practitioners and beneficiaries of countering violent extremism programs have been targeted by violent extremists because of their involvement in the program. One-off incidents of violence can be hard to detect and prevent. However, there are risk mitigation strategies which can be implemented to limit the likelihood of attacks occurring. Most importantly, however, the security situation in the operating environment should be stable enough so that attacks of this nature are rare and can be managed.

Insecurity and conflict can also impact the safety and security of practitioners. Countering violent extremist programs do not fall within the realm of emergency aid programming and are not essential to the daily livelihoods of local communities. To protect the lives of practitioners and beneficiaries, countering violent extremism activities should only be pursued after active and regular hostilities cease.

KENYA

Given the trends, terrorist attacks have occurred in Kenya and will likely occur in the future, but they have not undermined the situation to the extent where security on the whole has deteriorated significantly. The security situation is relatively stable insofar as it concerns the implementation of development programming. To date, countering violent extremism programs have largely proceeded without significant security incidents targeting the program or beneficiaries. Both the Kenya Transition Initiative and the STRIVE Horn of Africa program identified the importance of security on local practitioners and beneficiaries, either during the implementation phase or identified during a program review:

- A review of programming suggests that STRIVE Horn of Africa takes proactive measures to mitigate the risks posed to local partners. By discussing the issue of branding upfront and being able to operate with flexibility, STRIVE Horn of Africa has generally avoided branding any activities when they are associated with sensitive issues. This includes engaging with each local partner prior to conducting activities to determine whether the local partner wants to make the affiliation with STRIVE public.
- A review of the Kenyan Transition Initiative conducted by James Khalil and Martine Zeuthen expressed concern about the program's involvement in religious affairs. There was concern that the religious hardliners could use the involvement of a US-funded program in religious matters for propaganda purposes. Further, there was concern that the grantees, or other local stakeholders, may be targeted because of their association with the US or other external donors. According to the report, one grantee indicated they were considered traitors by former friends because of their collaboration with a US



agency.²⁵ The review recommended that donor branding and community support may at times be incompatible. In some situations, this may require a sacrifice of the branding to promote community engagement. We will discuss this further throughout the paper.

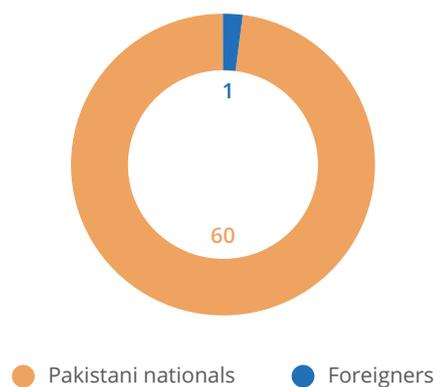
In addition to risks associated with donor branding, the programs identified potential risks associated with the use of the term “extremism”. The review, conducted by Khalil and Zeuthen, of the Kenya Transition Initiative found that the term should be replaced with more neutral language. Replacing the term extremism appears to have been assumed more widely throughout the sector and is partly based on concern that the “counter violent extremism” label may attract attention from violent extremists. Such unwanted attention increases the risk not only to practitioners, but also potential beneficiaries. For this reason, the use of the label “extremism”, and donor branding, could discourage individuals from participating, which would significantly impact on the effectiveness of countering violent extremism programming. Some grantees of the Kenya Transition Initiative program instead opted to represent their activities as “peace-messaging”.

There can be real risks for local actors and beneficiaries involved in countering violent extremism activities. In particular, these risks escalate when local actors involved in programming are already outspoken in their opposition to extremist groups, and therefore attract untoward attention. Operating in a conflict zone would significantly increase the risks to local practitioners and undermine the effectiveness of any programming.

PAKISTAN

In 2014, Pakistan was in the top five most violent settings for aid workers, with 12 major attacks recorded.²⁶ According to the Aid Worker Security Database, from 2013-2015 there were 61 attacks on aid workers in the country which involved methods such as body-borne, vehicle borne and roadside improved explosive devices, and shootings. While the perpetrators in many cases are unknown, some attacks have been linked to the victims’ affiliation as aid workers. As the following graph shows, there is a disproportionate threat facing locals engaged in aid work in Pakistan.

Figure 3: Targets of attacks on aid workers in Pakistan 2013-2015*

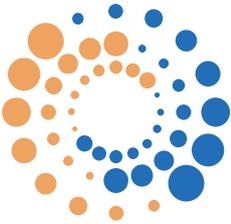


*Of the 60 Pakistani nationals targeted, 32 were killed.²⁷

²⁵ James Khalil and Martine Zeuthen, ‘Qualitative Study On Countering Violent Extremism (Cve) Programming Under The Kenya Transition Initiative (KTI), USAID, 2014, Available at: <https://www.integrityglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/KTI-End-of-Programme-Qualitative-Study-R.pdf>

²⁶ Humanitarian Outcomes, ‘Aid Worker Security Report 2015’, 2015, Available at: https://aidworkersecurity.org/sites/default/files/HO_AidWorkerSecPreview_1015_G.PDF

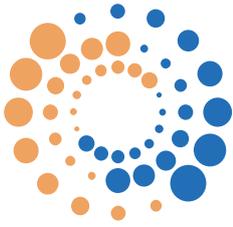
²⁷ Humanitarian Outcomes, ‘Aid Worker Security Database’, Available at: <https://aidworkersecurity.org/incidents/search?start=2013&end=2016&detail=1&country=PK>



To contextualize this, in addition to factors such as the spread of Wahabism and military action in Iraq, the operating environment in Pakistan is influenced by a long legacy of Western intervention and subsequent responses to this involvement. At the local level, this manifests as a distrust of Western solutions and activities. Incidents such as attacks on humanitarian workers in 2012 were reportedly justified as retaliation for claims that the CIA staged an immunization campaign in the country to collect information for counter-terrorism purposes. While there is much hearsay around this incident, the attacks highlight the precarious crossroads of development activity and Western involvement.

In addition, Pakistanis across the political spectrum feel that they have borne the brunt of terror and feel justified in openly wondering about offers of external expertise and assistance from states who have suffered very little in comparison. The unstable security situation in Pakistan also impacts on the practicalities of programming. For example, donors' own restrictions limit site visits due to the security situation, meaning few staff are able to travel and work with local partners or implement programming.²⁸ Many areas of operation are off-limits to international staff. This impacts any potential design and implementation of programs, and monitoring and evaluation capacities.

²⁸ Hedieh Mirahmadi, Waleed Ziad, Mehreen Farooq and Robert D. Lamb, 'Empowering Pakistan's Civil Society to Counter Global Violent Extremism', *The Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World*, U.S.-Islamic World Forum Papers 2014, January 2015, Available at: <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2015/01/us-islamic-world-forum-publications/empowering-pakistans-civil-society-to-counter-violent-extremism-english.pdf>



HUMAN RIGHTS AND GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Widespread violations of human rights and a lack of government accountability are important contributors to grievance and extremism in many contexts. Communities who previously shunned violence and conflict might begin to feel marginalized as a result of oppressive government action and could heed the call of the more radical voices among them. Some terrorist groups view communities experiencing instability, disorder and oppression as ripe for recruitment. In the absence of respect for human rights, and support by an operable rule of law to enforce this respect, countering violent extremism programs will struggle to create long-lasting success. In situations when strengthening human rights is a goal of countering violent extremism activities, there will likely be an initial deficiency before programming is undertaken. However, without a basic level of respect for human rights and mechanisms to enforce it, countering violent extremism programming will be less effective.

In considering human rights in the context of countering violent extremism programming, we are principally concerned with government accountability, including official corruption, security force behavior and impunity. Systematic violations of human rights perpetrated with impunity creates a sense of injustice and helplessness that is all too readily exploited by violent extremists. This creates distrust between the community and government, which can undermine countering violent extremism programming, making them less likely to succeed.

Terrorism and violent extremism prevail when human rights are violated.

UN Secretary-General Ban-Ki Moon

KENYA

The marginalization of Somali Kenyans and Muslims in Kenya has reportedly contributed to terrorist attacks conducted in the country, and the radicalization of Muslim youth.²⁹ A statement released by al-Shabaab following the attack at a university in Garissa near the Somali border, in which 147 people were killed, justified the attack in part as revenge for historic injustices against Muslims in Kenya. The subsequent government response is said to have inflamed this sentiment.³⁰ In what Cedric Barnes from International Crisis Group said “deliberately conflated immigration issues with counter-terrorism”, the mass detention of Somalis in Nairobi exacerbated divisions within the community.³¹

In May 2016 the government again aligned immigration and counter terrorism issues in announcing their intention to shut the Kenya-based Dadaab refugee camp.³² Principal Secretary for the Interior, Dr Karanja Kibicho, announced that national security concerns arising from al-Shabaab's infiltration of the camp necessitated its closure. This was based on claims that al-Shabaab had capitalized on the overcrowding, under-resourced conditions at the camps and used Dadaab as a base to plan and execute the 2013 Westgate attacks.³³ This is not the first time the government has threatened to close the camps. In this instance rhetoric has been accompanied by action such as disbanding the Department of Refugee Affairs,

²⁹ Institute for Economics & Peace, 'Global Terrorism Index 2015', Available at: <http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2015.pdf>

³⁰ Jonathon Horowitz, 'A Proper Response to the Massacre at Kenya's Garissa University College', *Just Security*, 2015, Available at: <https://www.justsecurity.org/21805/proper-response-massacre-kenyas-garissa-university-college/proper-response-massacre-kenyas-garissa-university-college/>

³¹ Cedric Barnes, 'Losing Hearts and Minds in Kenya', International Crisis Group: In Pursuit of Peace, 16 April 2014, Available at: <http://blog.crisisgroup.org/worldwide/2014/04/16/losing-hearts-and-minds-in-kenya/>

³² The camps are two of the largest in the world and have housed Somali refugees for 25 years.

³³ Karanja Kibicho, 'Kenya: PS Karanja Kibicho explains why the government is shutting down refugee camps', *Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government*, 10 May 2016, Available at: <http://www.interior.go.ke/?p=3107>



however the logistics and practicality of such action are challenging, to say the least.³⁴

A heavy handed response

According to a 2014 Human Rights Watch report, almost 4,000 individuals were arrested and detained in Nairobi and Mombasa over a 9-day period as part of a security operation conducted by government forces. Reportedly in response to a series of al-Shabaab attacks, the aim of the operation was to detect, disrupt and deter terrorism and other organized criminal activities principally perpetrated by al-Shabaab and its supporters.

Subsequent media reports alleged ethnic profiling, unlawful detention and deportations carried out by the police, assault and harassment. Claims of corruption also surfaced, detailing instances of individuals being forced to pay bribes to avoid arrest. The police activity had a clear connection with immigration matters. Then Interior Cabinet Secretary Joseph Ole Lenku indicated that the operation sought to remove illegal aliens from Kenya and transfer individuals with refugee documents to refugee camps. The activity eroded normative human rights standards:

- The deportation of Somali nationals to Mogadishu was in contravention of UNHCR guidelines on returns to Somalia;
- Kenya risked violating international law obligations; and
- The reported absence of due process around the deportations contributed to a perceived erosion of the rule of law within Kenya.

As the text box shows, there are concerns that counter terrorism actions undertaken by government security forces amount to human rights violations.³⁵ Accompanying this are concerns that a culture of impunity exists in Kenya. Some reports suggests police were responsible for 40% of the civilian deaths in the post-2007 election violence and there has been no high-level accountability domestically for these crimes.³⁶ In addition, the government of Kenya is also facing a corruption crisis. The nexus between corruption and human rights was demonstrated in the above case study, in which claims were made that police officers were accepting bribes from individuals to avoid arrest. Whether it be a bribe paid to a police officer to escape arrest, or the offer of financial or other incentives to a judicial officer to avoid conviction, a corrupt system can undermine all efforts to counter violent extremism. This association was referenced by Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta in November 2015, when he declared corruption a national security threat, suggesting that bribes accepted by corrupt officials could “lead to successful terrorist attacks that kill Kenyans”.³⁷ Kenya has not yet demonstrated sufficient progress in tackling corruption, but the government appears to have recognized the significance of the problem.

This case study demonstrates the challenges to be faced when implementing countering

³⁴ Obi Anyadike, 'Will Kenya really close Dadaab?', *Irin News*, 19 May 2016, Available at: <https://www.irinnews.org/analysis/2016/05/19/will-kenya-really-close-dadaab>

³⁵ Human Rights Watch, 'Kenya: Halt Crackdown on Somalis', 11 April 2014, Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/04/11/kenya-halt-crackdown-somalis>; Independent Policing Oversight Authority, 'Monitoring Report on Operation Sanitization Eastleigh Publically Known as "Usalama Watch"', July 2014, Available at: [http://www.ipoa.go.ke/images/press/MONITORING%20REPORT%20ON%20OPERATION%20\(USALAMA%20WATCH\)%2017%207%202014.pdf](http://www.ipoa.go.ke/images/press/MONITORING%20REPORT%20ON%20OPERATION%20(USALAMA%20WATCH)%2017%207%202014.pdf)

³⁶ International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect, 'The Crisis in Kenya', Available at: <http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/crises/crisis-in-kenya>

³⁷ News24 Kenya, 'Uhuru declares corruption national security threat', *Associated Press*, 23 November 2015, Available at: <http://www.news24.co.ke/National/News/uhuru-declares-corruption-national-security-threat-20151123>



violent extremism programs in a country in which the human rights of some minority groups are not respected, or a culture of impunity exists. However, in Kenya there appears to be a recognition that the situation needs to be addressed and remedied. Much of the countering violent extremism activity underway in Kenya is aimed at developing best practice in law enforcement and intelligence agencies. The STRIVE Horn of Africa program actively instructs law enforcement on how ethnic profiling and the disproportionate use of force impact on the broader countering violent extremism agenda. In addition, STRIVE Horn of Africa programming aims to work with both law enforcement agencies and community groups to improve relations and understanding. Their activities include a mentorship program in slums with at-risk youth which aims to create space for dialogue between both groups. Police are invited to the sessions to allow both groups to outline their position, and have a conversation around the issues. This is an example of a countering violent extremism program being tailored to the security and political environment of the country of implementation to increase effectiveness, an environment which appears conducive to developing these capacities.

PAKISTAN

The parlous state of the rule of law, often extreme levels of criminality and terror, and the links to politicians pose significant challenges to countering violent extremism programming in Pakistan. The state is unable to provide security, or establish and uphold respect for human rights and there is political resistance to external assistance in addressing these problems. No one is exempt: even senior politicians are targeted in Pakistan. For example, television stations regularly host violent extremists or their supporters on prime time television where they are allowed to incite violence and hate. The owners and editors are aware that this serves the interests of the extremist group, but they are equally aware that the security of their families may be at stake if the leader is not given air time.

As a result of rising crime and terror in Pakistan, hard line law and order policies attract public support. The use of “encounter killings”, a euphemism for summary and extra-judicial execution, the increasing frequency of the use of capital punishment, incommunicado detention and other violations of human rights of suspected terrorists and criminals enjoy political support amongst Pakistan’s middle classes. This includes significant sections of the media and civil society who see these actions as unavoidable as the formal justice system fails to prevent crime and terror. Pakistan’s elite benefit because they can buy their way out of punishment. There is evidence of widespread criminal activity and high levels of human rights abuse. Police abuse is compounded by the absence of effective accountability. According to media reporting, government failure to prosecute and imprison suspects in attacks on Shia Hazaras suggests either incompetence, indifference or sympathy for the group within security forces.³⁸ The International Commission on Missing Persons has also reported that enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings take place in Pakistan with impunity.³⁹ Amnesty International has said that the lack of government response to these violations has contributed to a prevailing culture of impunity.⁴⁰ Police failure to tackle crime and terror has reportedly resulted in the continued role of the military in countering terror.

With a weak rule of law in Pakistan, and absent any system of government transparency and accountability, CVE programming faces significant obstacles. It can be difficult to identify the benefits to law enforcement and security officials of not engaging in corruption in an environment lacking transparency and accountability. In such a climate, short-term benefits outweigh any longer-term cultural change.

³⁸ Phelim Kine, ‘Pakistan’s Shia Under Attack’, *The Diplomat*, 5 July 2014, Available at: <http://thediplomat.com/2014/07/pakistans-shia-under-attack/>

³⁹ International Commission on Missing Persons, ‘Enforced Disappearances in Pakistan’, 2 September 2015, Available at: <http://www.icmp.int/news/enforced-disappearances-in-pakistan/>

⁴⁰ Amnesty International, ‘Pakistan Investigation Crucial after Karachi Political Activist Tortured and Killed in Custody’, 5 May 2016, Available at: <http://www.amnesty.org.au/news/comments/41723/>



Human rights work is deeply unpopular within Pakistan. On one hand it is seen as siding with the terrorists - human rights defenders insist on international standards that obligate states to provide legal protections like accountability, due process and freedom from torture. These are often seen as impeding security efforts, as well as challenging the status quo more widely. On the other hand, human rights defenders are seen by violent extremists as agents of a Western agenda. It is unsurprising that there is very limited national work on human rights. Widespread insecurity and the dominance of the security narrative have tended to sideline considered reactions to defeating terrorist groups in Pakistan. It can be argued that this has also occurred in the West. The situation of human rights in Pakistan – both regarding violations and the absence of an environment conducive or at least accepting of human rights work - requires improvement for countering violent extremism activity to be implemented. At present the current environment poses a significant challenge to the successful implementation of countering violent extremism activities. In these situations, efforts should focus on strengthening structural mechanisms for government transparency and accountability, and in reducing human rights violations perpetrated by the state.



STRONG CIVIL SOCIETY SECTOR

Civil society does and should play an integral role in countering violent extremism. Governments are ill-equipped to tackle the threat of violent extremism alone and civil society can complement or supplement government activities. Countering violent extremism programming requires a comprehensive, collaborative response. The Global Centre explained that *“The key lesson is that CVE measures at the community level rise or fall on the basis of the vitality of prevailing state–civil society relationships onto which CVE measures are imposed”* in their 2015 paper *“Does CVE work?”*.⁴¹ Community actors have greater insights into needs at the local level and are best-placed to identify beneficiaries most in-need, thereby ensuring programs are tailored towards beneficiaries.

KENYA

Kenya has a strong tradition of civil society mobilization. In 2014 there were approximately 7,500 non-government organizations and approximately 300,000 community-based organizations in 2013. The strength of this sector has contributed significantly to the successful implementation of CVE programming. Civil society played an integral role in the implementation of countering violent extremism programming under both the Kenya Transition Initiative and STRIVE Horn of Africa. At the time of the mid-term evaluation, the Kenya Transition Initiative’s Eastleigh program had established a network of community-based youth organizations to target a variety of stakeholders and other actors at varying levels of the community. By engaging local community organizations, the program was able to target beneficiaries most in need. Similarly, the STRIVE Horn of Africa program engaged researchers with local profiles which enabled them to access the right people within the communities to articulate local issues and collect the necessary data.

The current programming trend in Kenya appears to be proceeding along a community-driven path. Donors are getting local organizations to approach them directly with their concepts and requests for funding. This transition, from a position in which donors traditionally approached local civil society organizations, could suggest a slow maturation of the countering violent extremism space in Kenya. This has advantages for beneficiaries. It will likely result in programs driven by local issues and needs, in contrast to adapting programs to suit the community. It also speaks to the strength of the civil society community. The ability of these programs to engage with civil society has significantly contributed to the success of the programs in reaching the local community.

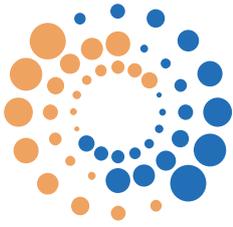
Nevertheless, the relationship between government and civil society in Kenya has experienced challenges. During 2014 civil society groups in Kenya were subject to worsening state interference, a deteriorating legal environment and a decrease in public perception.⁴² This was evidenced in the government’s actions towards two civil society organizations in 2015. In April 2015, Kenyan authorities placed Muslims for Human Rights (MUHURI) and Haki Africa, two strong organizations working to counter violent extremism, on an official list of alleged supporters of terrorism.⁴³ This occurred after the groups raised concerns about Kenyan security agencies involvement in extrajudicial killings of Muslim clerics and alleged terrorism suspects in the wake of the attacks on Garissa University. While Kenya’s High Court deemed the action unconstitutional and a violation of their rights, the government indicated it would appeal the ruling.

This example highlights the challenges to civil society organizations in Kenya that seek to engage and reach those individuals who seem most vulnerable to violent extremist rhetoric

⁴¹ Peter Romaniuk, ‘Does DVE Work? Lessons Learned from the Global Effort to Counter Violent Extremism’, *Global Center on Cooperative Security*, September 2015, Available at: http://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Does-CVE-Work_2015.pdf

⁴² USAID, Centre of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance, and Office of Sustainable Development, ‘The 2014 CSO Sustainability Index For Sub-Saharan Africa, 2014’, Available at: <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/2014%20Africa%20CSOSI%20FINAL.pdf>

⁴³ Maria Burnett, ‘How Best to “Counter Violent Extremism”’, *Human Rights Watch*, 25 June 2015, Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/06/25/how-best-counter-violent-extremism>



and recruitment. It also highlights a potential irony within counter violent extremism planning: the most important potential beneficiaries - individuals directly engaged with extremist groups and thereby of concern to the government - are blocked from receiving assistance and support from civil society groups. In a security-centric approach, government rhetoric frames the only appropriate response to membership of a violent extremist group as a punitive one. Civil society groups that engage directly with at-risk youth may present an alternative: assisting individuals to dissociate themselves from these groups and move away from supporting violent extremism. There may be instances in which government closure of civil society groups does stem from concern over affiliation with individuals involved in violent extremism activities. However, the recent examples of MUHURI and Haki Africa indicates these actions can also be politically motivated. Increasing intervention by the government has seen some leaders dictate terms on which civil society groups could work in their regions.⁴⁴ This possible shrinking space for civil society activity in Kenya would have a negative impact on counter violent extremism programming, and restrict the capacity for programs to reach beneficiaries.

PAKISTAN

Pakistan's civil society has played an important role in undertaking counter violent extremism programming and civil society groups have undertaken innovative peacebuilding initiatives at the grassroots level. This includes campaigns to counter radical narratives by painting messages of peace on rickshaws, and coordinated programs aimed at promoting tolerance and religious and cultural diversity to youth.⁴⁵ Pakistan has a robust civil society and in 2009 there were over 100,000 groups operating.⁴⁶ However, civil society activity in relation to countering violent extremism is hamstrung by the country's political climate. To work with government on counter violent extremism in Pakistan is dependent on political will, which appears uncertain at best. This is despite the following policy frameworks established by the government in 2014:

- The National Internal Security Policy was issued in February 2014 which acknowledged the role of the civilian government, military, civil society stakeholders, the international Pakistani diaspora and the international community,⁴⁷ and
- The National Action Plan in December 2014.⁴⁸

While these frameworks suggest a positive step forward, the reality on the ground presents greater challenges for implementation. This is particularly the case for the international community.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Relations with western donors are sensitive, strained and subject to regular disputes, which can fuel restrictive practices towards development support and international staff. The increase of anti-Americanism in the country has fuelled a perception that all non-government bodies are agents of a Western agenda, or that they are instruments of terror, acting as a front for local violent extremist groups. This narrative is a powerful driver of policy and creates two key challenges for civil society:

⁴⁴ USAID, Centre of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance, and Office of Sustainable Development, 'The 2014 CSO Sustainability Index For Sub-Saharan Africa, 2014, Available at: <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/2014%20Africa%20CSOSI%20FINAL.pdf>

⁴⁵ Hedieh Mirahmadi, Waleed Ziad, Mehreen Farooq and Robert D. Lamb, 'Empowering Pakistan's Civil Society to Counter Global Violent Extremism', *The Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World*, U.S.-Islamic World Forum Papers 2014, January 2015, Available at: <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2015/01/us-islamic-world-forum-publications/empowering-pakistans-civil-society-to-counter-violent-extremism-english.pdf>

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁷ *ibid.*

⁴⁸ The National Action Plan was announced following the terrorist attack on a Peshawar school that resulted in the killing of 141 people, amongst whom 131 were school children.



- obtaining, and maintaining government support for programming; and
- avoiding the perception of criticism.

Obtaining and maintaining government support

Government restrictions and involvement has significantly impacted the capacity of STRIVE Pakistan to act, inhibiting their ability to operate to the extent that in early 2016 STRIVE Pakistan operations were suspended. This was a direct result of the political environment in Pakistan and the government's lack of support for international civil society engaging in what it perceived to be federal government matters.

The concern of countries about external engagement in the countering violent extremism arena within their country is understandable. Involvement by civil society groups and international organizations in what could be perceived as traditional affairs of the state needs to be managed sensitively and discussed with the government. In the case of STRIVE Pakistan, during the development phase in 2012 there was extensive dialogue with government at the regional level, the level at which STRIVE's intended activities would be implemented. Once activities started in early 2015, the program faced resistance from officials at the federal level. Principal among these was the government position that the result areas the program wanted to address – working with the youth, universities and the media - were federal issues and STRIVE's involvement in these matters was not accepted. Negotiations with the federal government are progressing to identify a mutually acceptable approach to countering violent extremism in Pakistan.

STRIVE's experience in Pakistan exemplifies the impact that the government/civil society relationship can have on programming in particular on resource efficiencies and effectiveness. In this instance, the government's opposition to the program's approach significantly affected the implementation of the program and resulted in its suspension. STRIVE Pakistan's experience may also reflect the problem of a lack, or absence, of consensus internally within the Pakistani government on how to approach countering violent extremism. In these instances, the bureaucratic barriers are a consequence, not a cause, of this. When operating in an environment in which government restrictions will limit the effectiveness, or even likelihood of programming being implemented, practitioners need to ensure that their consultation process has engaged all appropriate levels of government - including key individuals - and has documented all agreements. This will not necessarily remove the potential for problems in the future, but may remove some hurdles.

Avoiding the perception of criticism

The consequences for non-government groups that criticize the state includes retaliation towards staff and organizations by both state and non-state actors, the former on the grounds of national security. This serves to polarize Pakistan still further: the removal of legitimate dissent is likely to be replaced by more extreme voices and actors. With the space for civil society operations so constrained there are questions over the impact of key counter violent extremism tools. Absent a strong role for civil society in implementing CVE campaigns, the opportunity for community engagement decreases considerably. Programs in which donors and implementers are unable to visit local communities significantly constrains the capacity to tailor and deliver outputs for intended beneficiaries.

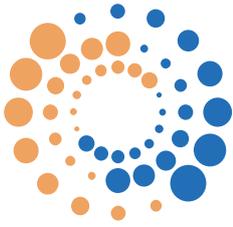
ROLE OF THE MILITARY

The longstanding dominance of the military on countering violent extremism programming presents an additional challenge. Separate to the military's security role in counter-terrorism operations, it has engaged in efforts to counter violent extremism, for example establishing a deradicalization center and operating a radio station to counter terrorist propaganda in



the Swat valley.⁴⁹ While the government has set up a range of institutions and strategies to address terror, civilian government responses to terrorism are highly constrained by military influence. This sits uneasily with the lesson that a whole-of-government approach is required. For most donors, it remains extraordinarily challenging to have a relationship with the key security actor in Pakistan, which for the most part stands outside the dialogue with the international community. For many beneficiaries, human rights violations perpetrated by the military and security agencies fuels distrust and creates an atmosphere of fear. This could result in beneficiaries being less likely to engage in programs.

⁴⁹ Hedieh Mirahmadi, Waleed Ziad, Mehreen Farooq and Robert D. Lamb, 'Empowering Pakistan's Civil Society to Counter Global Violent Extremism', *The Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World*, U.S.-Islamic World Forum Papers 2014, January 2015, Available at: <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2015/01/us-islamic-world-forum-publications/empowering-pakistans-civil-society-to-counter-violent-extremism-english.pdf>



RECOMMENDATIONS

Because of the political and development priority afforded to countering violent extremism, there is pressure on donors, governments and implementing actors to be “seen to be doing something”. The positive side of this is the urgency to deliver results with concrete initiatives. The risk is that it drives donors to spin their wheels unproductively or counter-productively in muddy contexts that cannot support their ambitions. Countering violent extremism programming needs to be tailored to the local context, planned and conducted with realism regarding the political and security context, and focused on intended beneficiaries. When urgency over-rides these considerations, ill-designed programming could result in anything from inefficient use of resources to diplomatic backlash for the donor and death for practitioners and intended beneficiaries.

From our research into the impact of the political and security context on the implementation of CVE activities, we identified the following key recommendations:

- Consider the use of CVE terminology.
- Promote donor branding only when necessary and only after consultation with local partners.
- Practice a flexible, tailored approach to design and implementation. There should be space within the project for significant changes in direction based on the results of monitoring and evaluation activities and changes in the political and security context.
- Consider the appropriateness of countering violent extremism programming.

CONSIDER TERMINOLOGY

In a similar vein to other reviews of countering violent extremism programming, we add our voice to the call that practitioners should actively consider their use of terminology and, where necessary, consider as a risk mitigation strategy limiting the use of the term ‘extremism’. This term, which has acquired a normative value, can have significant consequences on activities. The potential impact of the choice of terminology was discussed in a review of the Kenya Transition Initiative. The term may serve to divide target communities into those considered “extremists” and those considered to be moderate.⁵⁰ The term could also attract the attention of those who expressed extreme opposition to the program, which could increase the risk to beneficiaries and practitioners associated with the activity. This could also serve to discourage potential beneficiaries who are concerned at the potential retaliation from opponents to the concept. We suggest employing more neutral language in situations where the risk of labelling activities as counter violent extremism is unnecessary. This solution was pursued by the Kenya Transition Initiative practitioners. Alternatives could include *building community resilience*, *community cohesion* or *peace building*.

CONSIDER DONOR BRANDING

Practitioners and donors should consider the safety of beneficiaries and practitioners in any decisions to display or promote donor branding of counter violent extremism activities. Instances in which beneficiaries have been targeted with violence for involvement in Western-supported initiatives can be reduced by limiting this publicity, in particular where there is active distrust of Western involvement. Implementing bodies should engage local partners in conversations concerning the risks surrounding donor branding. In reviewing the risks, donors should consider that visibility can still be maintained within the donor community and remain separate to the local implementing space. Visibility which produces

⁵⁰ James Khalil & Martine Zeuthen, ‘A Case Study of Counter Violent Extremism (CVE) Programming: Lessons from OTI’s Kenya Transition Initiative’, *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*, 3(1), p.Art. 31, Available at: <http://doi.org/10.5334/sta.ee>



the opposite of the intended outcome of the activities may be worse than not funding the program at all. For example, at the local level donor funded activities might be promoted only with reference to the implementing partner, but the affiliation would be referenced in official donor documentation. This would ensure the donor's activities remained transparent and accountable for internal and external monitoring and evaluation purposes.

PRACTICE A FLEXIBLE, TAILORED APPROACH

There is very little understanding about what works in countering violent extremism. The unfortunate policy conclusion of our limited knowledge is that, as funds available for programming increase, there will be a temptation to design large scale sectoral interventions. These will be built on theories of change that assume causalities lacking a sufficient evidence base. The logical conclusions to draw from this are:

- projects must be based on more empirically robust theories of change; and
- more empirical evidence is needed, requiring increased investment in monitoring and evaluation.

Programs need to be designed with context-specific conditions in mind, principally recognizing the political and security context, and with the capacity to respond flexibly to changes in the dynamic environment. Practitioners must monitor changes in the context, but then donors need to allow practitioners the flexibility to adapt. Many of these changes may be suggested and informed by local partners and based on demand and the needs of beneficiaries. Practitioners should ensure channels of communication are suitable for monitoring and responding to these changes.

The political nature of violent extremism, uncertain operating environments and the lack of clear evidence on theories of change suggest that traditional monitoring and evaluation mechanisms may be less appropriate to countering violent extremism interventions. Large exhaustive baselines, for example, are of little value to interventions where the questions posed may be of limited relevance in complex, uncertain and rapidly changing political environments. Instead, monitoring and evaluation activities need to be designed with sufficient flexibility to detect changes in the external environment and to adapt interventions in response to these changes. Baselines and logframes can provide framework in designing the program, but it is more important that practitioners conduct frequent reflection and analysis of their theory in the context of the real world operating environment. A need to deviate from the logframe and make adjustments to reflect changing assumptions should not be considered a failure.

Programming of this nature also requires increased transparency of evaluation outcomes. This will allow practitioners and donors to share information and findings on the impact of programming on beneficiaries. It may assist in producing outcomes on what works in counter violent extremism programming. Donors should support practitioners in making these findings public. When sensitivity requires the dissemination be limited, this should occur only when necessary, not as a default.

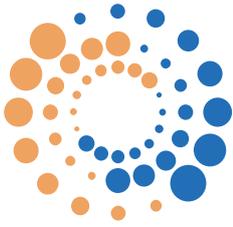
CONSIDER THE APPROPRIATENESS OF COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM PROGRAMMING

This report recommends that counter violent extremist programming not be undertaken in an active conflict zone and where the country's political and security environment is not conducive to its success. This recommendation does not apply to all development or humanitarian activity. There are situations in which the risks associated with implementing programs in conflict zones are outweighed by the urgency of the need for assistance, such as life-saving humanitarian programs. However, we argue that these risks are not justified in countering violent extremism programming. This is because the level of risk to practitioners and beneficiaries arising from these situations produces two results:



1. It leads practitioners to limit their own effectiveness and efficiency due to a limited capacity to engage. This reduces the practical rationale for conducting the program in the first place. We acknowledge that the political rationale for trying to act is not necessarily reduced.
2. It causes beneficiaries not to participate, or increases the likelihood they will be threatened, injured or killed. This not only reduces the practical rationale for conducting countering violent extremism programme, it also raises ethical questions for designers and implementers.

There will be some situations in which the security and political operating environment heighten these risks. In these situations, counter violent extremism programming will be less effective and we urge practitioners to consider the appropriateness of pursuing it. In these situations, development activity should address the immediate security risks facing the local community.



CONCLUSION

By definition, an effort to counter violent extremism will be impacted by a country's political and security context. This context can either support or severely restrict activities. This report has outlined that there are some situations in which the operating environment is less conducive to supporting countering violent extremism programming. This applies to those countries in which the basic foundation blocks do not exist, particularly:

- active conflict zones or where hostilities are frequent and security cannot be provided;
- a lack of respect for and attempts to uphold basic human rights; and
- a weak or ineffective relationship between the government and civil society.

By presenting case studies and examples from counter violent extremism programming in Kenya and Pakistan, we can see that the existence of these foundation blocks increases the likelihood of program success. In contrast, the case study discussions highlight that programs are more likely to falter or fail when these foundation blocks are weaker. In these instances, donors should prioritize strengthening government institutions and other mechanisms to increase their capacity to support countering violent extremism programming.

We also presented recommendations to manage some of the risks in challenging operating environments. This includes replacing the potentially divisive language of extremism with more neutral terminology; limiting donor branding in implementing environments where promotion may be met with hostility; encouraging a flexible approach to program design and implementation to incorporate changes in the operating environment and informed by transparent monitoring and evaluation activities; and assessing the appropriateness of undertaking countering violent extremism programming. By virtue of its relative infancy as a global priority, there is much not known about what works in counter violent extremism programming. These gaps need to be addressed by further research, and information sharing in which the results and findings of program evaluations are circulated widely. Only then will we be in a position to design and develop initiatives that are more likely to produce actionable outcomes and deliver positive results.



FARSIGHT

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