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# Countering Violent Extremism and Development Assistance

## Identifying Synergies, Obstacles, and Opportunities

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A consensus is building that violent extremism and terrorism are both international security and development issues. It is well documented that economic and social development are better attained in the absence of violent conflict.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, although poverty does not have a direct causal relationship with violent extremism and terrorism, poorer countries are the most affected by terrorism.<sup>2</sup> Beyond socioeconomic challenges, a lack of hope and future prospects, real or perceived marginalization and sociopolitical exclusion, and weak governance and rule of law are considered conducive to the spread of terrorism and challenging to sustainable development. **Indeed, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16, one of the United Nations–supported set of targets related to international development, focuses on the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, the provision of access to justice for all, and the building of effective, accountable, and representative institutions at all levels.**<sup>3</sup> Moreover, violent extremism and terrorism are direct threats to development as they impact economic stability, tourism, and the human security and freedom of citizens, including their freedom from physical threat, freedom of religion, and freedom of expression. Lastly, violent extremism is increasingly part of the context in which development organizations operate, with violent extremist groups impeding, endangering, and diverting the delivery of development assistance and aid services. In certain cases, terrorism and violent extremism are the primary factors contributing to the need for continued assistance.

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<sup>1</sup> Frances Stewart, “Development and Security,” *Conflict, Security and Development* 4, no. 3 (2004): 261–288.

<sup>2</sup> Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), “Global Terrorism Index 2015: Measuring and Understanding the Impact of Terrorism,” *IEP Report*, no. 36 (November 2015), <http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2015.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, A/RES/70/1, 21 October 2015, pp. 25–26.

A gap remains, however, between the policies, practices, and tools used by those concerned with international security (e.g., ministries of interior, justice, foreign affairs, and defense; law enforcement actors; and regional and multilateral organizations) and those responsible for stabilization and development cooperation (e.g., bilateral and multilateral donor agencies, responsible national ministries and departments, international nongovernmental organizations [NGOs], and civil society organizations). The gap exists at an organizational level within governments and other bureaucracies and in implementation of programming on the ground. An integrated approach has the potential to play a stronger role in strengthening community resilience against violent extremism and reducing many of its enabling factors, including relative deprivation and marginalization. **This does not mean that all development assistance needs to include specific objectives aimed at countering violent extremism (CVE)<sup>4</sup> but instead emphasizes the importance of recognizing CVE relevance as part of ongoing development work and the potential benefits of integrating some targeted CVE interventions into development programming where appropriate.**

This brief will examine the nexus between CVE and development assistance, looking specifically at opportunities and risks, different approaches taken by donor organizations, and the impact on programs and implementers. It aims to highlight lessons learned and emerging practices, as well as provide recommendations that could increase their efficiency and impact.

### **The Security-Development Nexus**

In the last decade, there has been growing consensus regarding an intrinsic connection between security and development. The security-development nexus is especially evident when looking beyond the traditional interpretation of national security to human security, which includes environmental, economic, health, and crime-related threats. The World Bank, in *World Development Report 2011*, focused specifically on conflict, security, and development, arguing that the developmental consequences and human costs of violence are severe, violence has been the main constraint to meeting the Millennium Development Goals, and restoration of confidence and transformation of the institutions that provide citizen security, justice, and employment are key to breaking cycles of insecurity and realizing economic development and stability.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, in January 2015, the UN Security Council described the relationship between security and development as “closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing and key to attaining sus-

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<sup>4</sup> CVE aims to reduce the support for or participation in violent extremism through noncoercive means by identifying and addressing factors conducive to the spread of terrorism. This may involve a broad range of efforts, including empowering local communities and civil society groups and improving constructive engagement with authorities, enhancing social resilience, stimulating educational and economic opportunities, encouraging credible counternarratives or alternative narratives, and providing disengagement and reintegration opportunities. For a more extensive discussion of the CVE concept, see Will McCants and Clinton Watts, “U.S. Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism: An Assessment,” *Foreign Policy Research Institute E-Notes*, December 2012, [http://www.fpri.org/docs/media/McCants\\_Watts\\_-\\_Countering\\_Violent\\_Extremism.pdf](http://www.fpri.org/docs/media/McCants_Watts_-_Countering_Violent_Extremism.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> World Bank, *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2011), [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDRS/Resources/WDR2011\\_Full\\_Text.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDRS/Resources/WDR2011_Full_Text.pdf).

tainable peace.”<sup>6</sup> The newly adopted SDGs reflect this approach, especially through goal 16 and its promotion of just, peaceful, and inclusive societies. **In his Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, the UN Secretary-General states that “[v]iolent extremism aggravates perceptions of insecurity and can lead to repeated outbreaks of unrest which compromise sustained economic growth,” with UN member states warning that “violent extremism threatens to reverse much of the development progress made in recent decades.”**<sup>7</sup> Yet, there are concerns that a conceptual blurring between security and development has not necessarily led to better policies but in fact to confusion and exposure to abuse.<sup>8</sup>

In part due to the unprecedented rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant and the continued flow of foreign terrorist fighters to Syria and Iraq, as well as ongoing terrorism campaigns in places such as Libya, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia, and Yemen, 32,685 people lost their lives to terrorist attacks in 2014, an 80 percent increase from 2013.<sup>9</sup> Given the prolonged instabilities in these countries prior to the rise of violent extremism, their experiences help illustrate the findings that incidents of terrorism are most common within the context of an already existing conflict.<sup>10</sup> In fact, out of 23 countries identified as experiencing ongoing conflict, 17 of them also suffer from the highest levels of terrorism.<sup>11</sup> Not all conflict breeds terrorism, but where it does, incidents of terrorism build on and exacerbate already heavy development costs, such as declining health and education, disruption of social services, disintegrated communities, broken infrastructure, and forced migration.<sup>12</sup> The sustained high level of insecurity has adverse implications for human security and the socioeconomic prospects for individuals and communities, thereby impeding the advancement of development goals, but there are other terrorism implications as well.<sup>13</sup> Refugees, forced migrants, and internally displaced persons (IDPs) have been identified as at-risk groups, vulnerable to recruitment and radicalization to violence in contexts where they are not integrated and lack human security.

### **Points of Intersection Between Security, Development, and Drivers of Recruitment and Radicalization to Violent Extremism**

Security and development are separate but related concepts that diverge and converge in ways important to acknowledge. Donors need to be cognizant of the potential points of convergence and make available appropriate funding mechanisms while ensuring these do no harm to important ongoing work. To that end, it will be critical to understand the potential impacts of their work beyond their core focus, i.e., development assistance and

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<sup>6</sup> UN Security Council, “Statement by the President of the Security Council,” S/PRST/2015/3, 19 January 2015.

<sup>7</sup> UN General Assembly, “Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism: Report of the Secretary-General,” A/70/674, 24 December 2015, p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> See International Relations and Security Network, “The Security-Development Nexus: An Illusion?” 10 February 2012, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Articles/Special-Feature/Detail/?lng=en&id=136958&contextid774=136958&contextid775=136942&tabid=136942>.

<sup>9</sup> IEP, “Global Terrorism Index 2015.”

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Stewart, “Development and Security.”

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.



stabilization, and incorporate additional expertise. The drivers of recruitment and radicalization to violence and the factors conducive to the spread of terrorism are closely linked to the circumstances that create stabilization and development challenges. Conversely, violent extremism impacts development in a variety of ways. This section will examine several points of intersection between violent extremism and development challenges.

### *Poverty*

Since 2000, only 7 percent of all incidents of terrorism have occurred in countries belonging to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), accounting for just 5 percent of all terrorism-related fatalities.<sup>14</sup> In 2014, Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Syria were home to 78 percent of the lives lost to terrorist attacks.<sup>15</sup> Although poverty cannot be said to have a direct causal relationship to terrorism, the impact of extremist violence has been borne most heavily by the citizens of poorer countries, where the presence of considerable youth bulges often acts as a challenge multiplier.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, these nations often face resource and capacity constraints that can hinder their ability to address radicalization and violent extremism appropriately and effectively at national and regional levels.

Many of these countries already receive large amounts of development aid. Terrorist attacks or increases in violence can further compound existing development challenges, particularly as unstable security situations threaten the ability of humanitarian and development actors to operate within the country. Additionally, in the face of rising or continued extremist violence, many states may opt to prioritize security aims that can result in the diversion of domestic resources away from investments in the rule of law and socioeconomic development.

### *Sociopolitical Exclusion*

Poverty alone is not an underlying cause of violent extremism. Yet, it is often accompanied by real or perceived marginalization, disenfranchisement, and relative deprivation that can be potential drivers of recruitment and radicalization to violence at the individual and community levels, particularly where these factors are perceived to align with ethnic, sectarian, religious, or other divisions. These issues are often compounded by long-standing historical grievances against the state, ruling party, or another group (e.g., between or within religious groups, such as between Sunnis and Shi'ites) and contribute to a lack of trust among different populations and between citizens and their government.

Unmet expectations coupled with a perceived absence of hope stemming from limited economic mobility, lack of political representation, and discrimination can leave many feeling as though they lack recourse. These individuals may become vulnerable to vio-

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<sup>14</sup> IEP, "Global Terrorism Index 2015."

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Recruitment and radicalization to violent extremism occur in more affluent countries as well, as most of the foreign terrorist fighters currently engaged in Syria and Iraq do not come from the poorest countries.

lent extremist ideologies that promise a sense of belonging, purpose, and method of retribution against the state and other powers that be—ideologies that actively tap into stated grievances. Development assistance that increasingly promotes inclusive governance and supports equitable service delivery can directly address some of these systemic conditions that can contribute to conflict, instability, and violent extremism.

### *Poor Governance*

Effective governance is key to advancing development and security aims. Poorly governed or ungoverned regions may allow for the creation of safe havens for transnational criminal networks or violent extremist groups. In addition to contributing to regional instability, a deficiency of strong and accountable governance in these regions allows violent extremist groups to fill the void related to human security, paid employment, and effective service provision, providing a key recruitment narrative for violence against the state.

Conversely, heavy-handed security responses, arbitrary implementation of laws or regulations, and a lack of access to justice can contribute to grievances that raise tensions between communities and governments. In addition, corruption, nepotism, and the consolidation of political power among elites can foster disenfranchisement that may leave communities feeling disconnected and excluded from public institutions. Extremist groups can capitalize on these grievances for recruitment and fundraising purposes. Stabilization and development assistance that promotes institutional reform and respect for human rights and the rule of law can help further the implementation of calibrated security responses, addressing existing trust deficits within the law enforcement and judiciary and bolstering community resilience against violent extremist ideologies.

### *Economic Dimensions*

Terrorism has a number of economic implications beyond the immediate costs associated with security responses and management of IDPs or refugees. Research has shown that a doubling of incidents of terrorism is estimated to reduce bilateral trade with each trading partner by 4 percent.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, incidents of violent extremism and terrorism negatively impact tourism revenue and can contribute to unfavorable environments for foreign direct investment. Prolonged violence can also damage infrastructure, threaten key natural resources, and reduce available land for agriculture and livestock cultivation. This presents challenges to economic growth and development and can potentially increase long-term reliance on international aid flows.

### *Operational Integrity and Security*

The most unstable areas are often those facing the greatest need for development assistance. As such, violent extremism is increasingly part of the operating context for many stabilization and development organizations. The prevalence of violence and terrorism provides a direct threat to the security of aid workers and endangers the continued pro-

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<sup>17</sup> Volker Nitsch and Dieter Schumacher, "Terrorism and International Trade: An Empirical Investigation," *European Journal of Political Economy* 20, no. 2 (June 2014): 423–433.

vision of services. In these contexts, misappropriation of aid and diversion of resources are very real concerns for development actors. In particularly fragile areas, this diversion may be viewed as a necessary cost of providing services within the region. In contexts where it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish violent extremist actors from civilians seeking assistance, providing material and resource support to the very groups that are the driving force behind the need for development assistance undercuts security and development aims.

## **Obstacles**

Although development and security aims can be overlapping and mutually reinforcing, there are challenges in integrating CVE objectives in stabilization and development programs. A lack of trust between government and civil society organizations and other nongovernmental actors delivering development assistance, as well as a wariness of integrating two ostensibly different approaches, contributes to reluctance on both sides to engage in collaborative partnerships without further clarity on concepts, parameters, and implications. Furthermore, the long-term nature of development initiatives runs contrary to the focus on immediate gains seen as necessary to address dynamic and rapidly changing security environments. This is further compounded by the nascent nature of the CVE field, which is characterized by an unclear scope and underdeveloped monitoring and evaluation frameworks.<sup>18</sup> This section will examine in detail the challenges that hinder effective integration of security and development aims.

### *Identifying Objectives*

Practitioners in the development field raise concerns about subsuming CVE initiatives into development projects and potentially shifting the end goal from key development markers to the primary aim of reduced violent extremism. Many of the current aims of development initiatives are sufficient and necessary ends in and of themselves; given the shared drivers of conflict in both fields, CVE effects can be secondary or tertiary benefits of development undertakings and should be identified as such. From the CVE perspective, common terminology to illustrate this distinction would be “CVE-relevant” versus “CVE-specific” programming—interventions that are not explicitly targeted at preventing or countering violent extremism but may still contribute to that goal indirectly versus those that are designed to mitigate a particular violent extremist threat or community vulnerability.

While identifying synergies between security and development programs, it is important to recognize that many development initiatives already have CVE-relevant outcomes that advance the two fields and need not be altered to show CVE-specific aims. Broadly reframing development goals as CVE-specific goals risks diminishing the impact of development programs and may neglect the importance of broader human security in favor of narrower state security, a shift that hurts security and development. Furthermore, an overemphasis on incorporating CVE objectives into development initi-

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<sup>18</sup> Peter Romaniuk, “Does CVE Work? Lessons Learned From the Global Effort to Counter Violent Extremism,” Global Center on Cooperative Security, September 2015, [http://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Does-CVE-Work\\_2015.pdf](http://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Does-CVE-Work_2015.pdf).



atives may actually dilute the overall effectiveness of these initiatives and lead to diminished returns on development and CVE targets. Also, development projects can hurt CVE objectives just as CVE projects can harm development aims. For example, aid in particularly unstable areas might land inadvertently in the hands of terrorist groups, or unevenly distributed aid might expose a gap in social services that terrorist groups can exploit. Finally, labeling programming as CVE can hinder efforts of international NGOs and civil society organizations doing mediation, conflict resolution, and humanitarian work.

### *Coordination Challenges*

When integrating CVE objectives in stabilization and development programs, coordination challenges may arise due to the involvement of a number of governmental departments beyond the traditional development actors. Communication and cooperation between different line ministries responsible for education, health, social welfare, youth, sports, interior, justice, diplomacy, and defense are often not fully optimized to address CVE goals in a coordinated fashion. This not only encompasses separate intra-governmental coordination in the donor and recipient countries, but also government-to-government coordination between the two, as well as other stakeholders.

### *Trust Deficits*

A lack of trust in government institutions has been cited as a potential driver of violent extremism and is a key challenge in associating CVE with development initiatives and actors. Many development actors are reluctant to engage with certain governments or certain government agencies as they fear it will raise questions regarding their impartiality or ability to serve as advocates for their communities. The potential for the over-politicization and securitization of development aid is also a concern, with some actors perceiving CVE efforts as an attempt on behalf of the government to extend power, including through coercive means; misappropriate development tools; and increase surveillance and oversight over benign and humane activities.

From the perspective of governments and those agencies responsible for security and CVE, many view security purely as a matter of the state and have yet to recognize the important role of civil society and communities in reaching target audiences for countering and preventing violent extremism. Even in those countries that recognize this role, the identification of appropriate actors with which the government can engage remains challenging, particularly when considering nonviolent extremists or former combatants. Furthermore, many civil society organizations advocate oppositional or critical beliefs regarding the government and its policies, which may strain relationships and hinder collaboration.

### *Unintended Stigmatization*

Beyond challenges to establishing partnerships with government, there is also concern regarding the potential stigma associated with CVE. Organizations may be hesitant to label or to be perceived as labeling their constituencies as vulnerable to violent extremism, fearing increased scrutiny, discrimination, or attacks in the future. Additionally,

many fear reputational damage resulting from association with government-led CVE initiatives. Such an affiliation may harm their credibility and reduce their ability to recruit members, raise funds, and implement effective community-level programming. Members would understandably be reticent to affiliate with an organization that presumes their vulnerability to recruitment and radicalization to violence.

### *Realigning Expectations*

Kinetic counterterrorism initiatives are intended to respond to rapid and dynamic security situations and are often expected to include quick and demonstrable gains. Although CVE initiatives are more effective when designed for the long term, they too tend to be deployed in a reactive and rapid fashion with a demand, often spurred by political motivations, for immediate results. Conversely, development assistance traditionally is designed to achieve more long-term objectives and does not generally result in rapid, visible successes. The discrepancy in tolerance for long-term CVE initiatives versus long-term development goals hinders successful integration of the two fields and presents challenges to garnering political support for large CVE expenditures that may span electoral cycles. Additionally, research suggests that CVE programs are most effective when specifically tailored to local contexts and community concerns.<sup>19</sup> This requires a comprehensive understanding of underlying dynamics and local drivers of violent extremism, as well as the establishment of relationships and trust-building with key actors, which can delay the development and implementation of programming. Also, the contextualized nature of CVE presents challenges to the scalability of initiatives because a “one size fits all” approach is unlikely to result in deep and sustained resilience to violent extremist ideologies and may serve to alienate targeted communities.

### *Assessing Impact*

Despite growing international attention, CVE remains a nascent and broadly defined field that is arguably reliant on largely untested assumptions and assessed through oft-repeated anecdotes. Numerous methodologies exist for evaluating development initiatives, but assessments of the impact of these initiatives on security aims remain underdeveloped. Inherent complications in the effective monitoring and evaluation of CVE outcomes include challenges in measuring a negative, developing and elaborating metrics, articulating a theory of change, and resourcing evaluation efforts. Yet, the lack of empirical evidence and a lessons-learned capacity in many policymaking and programming sectors presents a significant challenge to the refinement of CVE scope, objectives, and policy development. Additionally, it presents a catch-22–like sequencing dilemma: In order to be able to gather empirical evidence and assess the impact and generalizability of certain approaches, there is a demand for larger, multiyear, and multicountry programs with thorough assessment frameworks. Given the current nascent status of the CVE field, however, donors are often reluctant to commit funding to such broad initiatives.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.



## Emerging Approaches by Donor Agencies

Despite the obstacles discussed earlier and urged in part by the increasing complexity of conflict environments and development needs, as well as decreasing resources, several donor organizations have started to focus their programming on the nexus between conflict, violent extremism, and development. Although counterterrorism activities are excluded under the Official Development Assistance (ODA) guidelines because they are deemed to primarily benefit the donor rather than the recipient country, the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) agreed in 2003 that activities aimed at preventing terrorism and reducing public support for terrorism are eligible.<sup>20</sup>

Below are some illustrations of different donors addressing the nexus between CVE and development assistance.

### *Australia*

Australia is determining the role of its aid program in CVE, as it recognizes that violent extremism is a development issue directly threatening poverty reduction, stability, and economic growth objectives. The government has assessed that CVE aid interventions are most appropriately approached as a subset of Australia's broader work on conflict and fragility because several drivers of violent extremism, such as political instability, intergroup hostility, and lack of government legitimacy, are common to fragile and conflict-affected states, where 78 percent of Australian 2014–2015 bilateral aid spending was directed. Subject to the finalization of OECD DAC review and specifically the anticipated inclusion of CVE activities in the ODA directives, Australia will more actively pursue CVE objectives through its aid program.<sup>21</sup> This could include "CVE-supportive" development investments and CVE-targeted programs, which will need to be based on a robust analysis of local contexts and drivers.<sup>22</sup>

### *Denmark*

In 2004, Denmark released a plan titled "Principles Governing Danish Development Assistance for the Fight Against the New Terrorism," making it one of the first countries to acknowledge the link between security and development. The Danish principles establish that security is necessary for development and that ensuring stability and security can be investments in poverty reduction and economic growth. Denmark's early adoption of this stance indicated its commitment to traditional development goals and all the factors that can affect them, as well as its acknowledgment that Denmark's own

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<sup>20</sup> OECD, "A Development Co-operation Lens on Terrorism Prevention: Key Entry Points for Action," DCD/DAC(2003)11/REV1, 11 April 2003. An OECD DAC task team is currently exploring how to modernize the ODA directives, including on the eligibility of peace and security assistance.

<sup>21</sup> See Anthony Bergin and Sarah Hatley, "Security Through Aid: Countering Violent Extremism and Terrorism With Australia's Aid Program," *Strategic Insights*, no. 95 (August 2015), [https://www.aspi.org.au/publications/security-through-aid-countering-violent-extremism-and-terrorism-with-australias-aid-program/SI95\\_aid\\_terrorism.pdf](https://www.aspi.org.au/publications/security-through-aid-countering-violent-extremism-and-terrorism-with-australias-aid-program/SI95_aid_terrorism.pdf).

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

security could be improved by integrating the two fields.<sup>23</sup> More recently, an evaluation study commissioned by DANIDA, the Danish development agency, further analyzed the nascent field and provided several recommendations to the Danish government to further improve its programming.<sup>24</sup>

### *European Union*

The European Security Strategy of 2003 acknowledged that security is a requirement of development, while the “European Consensus on Development” statement in 2006 recognized the need for conflict prevention, resolution, and peace building and for “addressing the root-causes of violent conflict, including poverty, degradation, exploitation and unequal distribution and access to land and natural resources, weak governance, human rights abuses and gender inequality.”<sup>25</sup> In a 2011 development policy document, the European Commission argued that the European Union’s “development, foreign and security policy initiatives should be linked so as to create a more coherent approach to peace, state-building, poverty reduction and the underlying causes of conflict.”<sup>26</sup>

This has spurred a harmonization of EU development and external policies, including development approaches that aim to strengthen the resilience to violence and extremism of communities around the world.<sup>27</sup> For example, the EU has taken an integrated approach to the Sahel region by identifying that security and development are interwoven in this region and therefore must be treated as one entity. In order to achieve sustainable security in the Sahel, the EU strategy dictates that development processes, promotion of good governance, and improvement of the security situation need to be conducted in a coordinated manner.<sup>28</sup> The EU ultimately recognizes the role it can play in encouraging economic development and helping the Sahel achieve the stability necessary to sustain it.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Jo Beall, Thomas Goodfellow, and James Putzel, “Introductory Article: On the Discourse of Terrorism, Security, and Development,” *Journal of International Development* 18, no. 1 (January 2006): 51–67 (citing Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, “Security, Growth - Development: Priorities of the Danish Government for Danish Development Assistance, 2005–2009,” 2004).

<sup>24</sup> Julian Brett et al., “Lessons Learned From Danish and Other International Efforts on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) in Development Contexts,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, October 2015, <http://um.dk/da/~~/media/UM/Danish-site/Documents/Udenrigspolitik/Fred-sikkerhed-og-retsorden/201503StudyCVE.pdf>.

<sup>25</sup> European Parliament, European Council, and the Commission on European Union Development Policy, “The European Consensus on Development,” 2006/C 46/01, 2006, p. 14, [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/intra\\_acp\\_mobility/funding/2012/documents/agenda\\_for\\_change\\_en.pdf](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/intra_acp_mobility/funding/2012/documents/agenda_for_change_en.pdf).

<sup>26</sup> European Commission, “Increasing the Impact of EU Development Policy: An Agenda for Change,” COM(2011) 637 final, 13 October 2011, p. 11, [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/intra\\_acp\\_mobility/funding/2012/documents/agenda\\_for\\_change\\_en.pdf](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/intra_acp_mobility/funding/2012/documents/agenda_for_change_en.pdf).

<sup>27</sup> For more information on key EU policies and programs in this domain, see European Commission, “STRIVE for Development,” 2015, [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/strive-brochure-20150617\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/strive-brochure-20150617_en.pdf).

<sup>28</sup> European Union External Action Service, “Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel,” n.d., [http://eeas.europa.eu/africa/docs/sahel\\_strategy\\_en.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/africa/docs/sahel_strategy_en.pdf).

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

## Norway

In 2014, Norway released an action plan detailing its efforts to improve preventive measures to counter violent extremism. The action plan acknowledges that broader prevention encompasses reducing poverty, improving conditions for youth, and fighting marginalization.<sup>30</sup> In recognition of the multisectoral contributions the action plan requires, the government set up a working group of officials across its various ministries and is engaging with outside groups such as research organizations and civil society. Norway is also documenting lessons learned from other countries.<sup>31</sup> Norway acknowledges that the issue of violent extremism is fluid and rapidly changing and has consequently designated the action plan as dynamic and subject to updates as situations evolve.

## United Kingdom

The United Kingdom has chosen not to set up a separate CVE workstream within the Department for International Development (DFID), but DFID is scanning all current and new development projects for potential CVE relevance. Through this assessment, DFID aims to understand where it solely needs to apply the principle of “do no harm” to ensure projects do not have any unintended consequences that may harm aid delivery or the target population or benefit terrorist organizations and where there may be dual (development and CVE) objectives that can be mutually supportive. In the latter case, DFID will need to ensure that it does not just avoid harm but facilitates a positive effect on security and development through its programming.

As a result, DFID differentiates among three levels of CVE in its programming.

1. **Extremism, Violent Extremism, and Terrorism (EVET) sensitive.** DFID classifies programs as EVET sensitive when it has conducted an assessment of the drivers of violent extremism in the broader context of conflict and fragility and has determined that development programs are not having unintended consequences.<sup>32</sup>
2. **EVET and Development mutually supportive.** DFID classifies programs as EVET and Development supportive in cases when they have a positive effect on extremism, violent extremism, and terrorism. For example, in situations where extremism, violent extremism, and terrorism are contributing to sustained poverty, programs that address them are beneficial to development and security.<sup>33</sup>
3. **EVET Targeted.** These programs explicitly aim to counter extremism, violent extremism, and terrorism in situations where they have been identified as a seri-

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<sup>30</sup> Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security, “Action Plan Against Radicalisation and Violent Extremism,” G-0433 E, 2014,

[https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/6d84d5d6c6df47b38f5e2b989347fc49/action-plan-against-radicalisation-and-violent-extremism\\_2014.pdf](https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/6d84d5d6c6df47b38f5e2b989347fc49/action-plan-against-radicalisation-and-violent-extremism_2014.pdf).

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> UK DFID, “Extremism, Violent Extremism, and Terrorism (EVET): Core Brief,” n.d. (copy on file with author).

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.



ous threat to development and are relevant to the national security and interests of the United Kingdom internationally. All such programs will be coordinated with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Home Office.<sup>34</sup>

### *United States*

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) began working on CVE in 2006 as a key partner in the interagency Trans Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership. In 2009, USAID released two documents that provided the framework for understanding the driving factors behind violent extremism and the broad approaches for designing a development response.<sup>35</sup> In 2011 a USAID policy on violent extremism and insurgency was approved, recognizing the role development can play in addressing the social, economic, and governance grievances that drive violent extremism.<sup>36</sup>

The USAID policy incorporated a framework that identifies the locally informed structural (push) drivers and individual (pull) drivers of recruitment and radicalization to violence and provides guidelines for using development programming to address those conditions. The organization has further institutionalized CVE across all areas of its work by establishing an internal coordinating secretariat. USAID has coordinated closely with the U.S. Department of State and other U.S. agencies to design and implement programming focused on youth empowerment, social and economic inclusion, media and messaging, improved local governance, reconciliation, and conflict mitigation.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, the action agenda agreed by international leaders following the White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism in February 2015, as well as subsequent global summits, highlights the importance of development assistance and stabilization efforts in preventing and countering violent extremism. Among other things, this has led to the creation of a global CVE youth network and a CVE research network, which will each reflect on the nexus between development and CVE.

### **Conclusion**

Development assistance can play an important role in strengthening community resilience against violent extremism and reducing many of its enabling factors, including relative deprivation and marginalization. Hence, several countries and donor organizations have started to focus their programming on the nexus between conflict, violent extremism, and development, often starting with a review of existing programs to identify potential CVE benefits. These benefits should not be expected in every development program, but it is important to ensure that, at a minimum, development programs do not hurt CVE efforts or vice versa. To that end, the various practical and ethical concerns raised by CVE and development actors need to be factored into the design and imple-

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Guilain Denoeux and Lynn Carter, "Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism," USAID, February 2009, [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/Pnadt978.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pnadt978.pdf); Guilain Denoeux and Lynn Carter, "Development Assistance and Counter-Extremism: A Guide to Programming," USAID, October 2009, [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/Pnadt977.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pnadt977.pdf).

<sup>36</sup> USAID, "The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency," September 2011, [https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/VEI\\_Policy\\_Final.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/VEI_Policy_Final.pdf).

<sup>37</sup> For more information on USAID CVE efforts, see USAID, "Countering Violent Extremism," 11 December 2015, <https://www.usaid.gov/countering-violent-extremism>.

mentation of such programs. In cases where there may be dual objectives or where development programs could specifically target CVE goals, this must be explicitly recognized. As with broader CVE programming but particularly in such cases, programs need to specifically target a well-defined audience, and impact needs to be closely monitored and assessed for CVE and development outcomes.

## Recommendations

In order to optimize the efficiency and impact of development programs with integrated CVE objectives, this brief provides nine recommendations.

1. *Establish a baseline of knowledge on the interaction between security and development in relation to CVE.* To better elucidate opportunities for synergies between security and development programs, both fields should enhance their knowledge base on push and pull factors for violence, including but not limited to violent extremism, versus development-related structural drivers and establish the frequency and importance of both. At the same time, because of the complexity of the issues, the permanence of contradictory research findings and project results must be acknowledged. A collaboration of efforts led by field offices, civil society organizations, independent researchers, and organizations such as **Hedayah**, the **International Center of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism**,<sup>38</sup> and research networks such as **Researching Solutions to Violent Extremism (RESOLVE)**<sup>39</sup> would provide important data and opportunities for deconfliction, as well as demonstrate why integrating CVE and development can be harmful in certain contexts.
2. *Refine and support monitoring and evaluation tools for use in insecure environments.* Standard development monitoring and evaluation efforts are challenging to implement in insecure environments, and measuring the impact of CVE efforts is notoriously difficult. For security agencies, it is difficult to demonstrate that more training or deeper community engagement measurably reduces violent extremist threats. It is similarly difficult for development agencies to measure the CVE impact of certain types of development assistance. Despite these challenges, there are ways to measure impacts using more qualitative assessments and creating more psychosocial indicators that build on traditional development assessments. Donors and implementing partners should invest in the refinement of monitoring and evaluation tools for use in insecure environments to adequately test the assumptions on which programming is based and assess the impact of interventions. This should not lead to favoring programs with a measurable, short-term impact over more sustained but flexible investments over a longer time period.
3. *Develop a robust learning capacity to apply the principle of do no harm.* At a minimum, existing and future CVE and development programming must not

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<sup>38</sup> Hedayah was established in 2012 to serve as the premier international institution for CVE training, dialogue, collaboration, and research.

<sup>39</sup> Established in 2015, the RESOLVE network is a consortium of research organizations and individuals from across the academic and practitioner spectrum that will coordinate and allow sharing of ideas regarding violent extremism in local contexts and successful strategies for opposing it.

harm either field. Consequently, in a CVE context, donors and implementers should analyze development programs in regions of interest to ensure that, for example, aid is not inadvertently supporting terrorist groups and hurting CVE objectives. Furthermore, in a development context, stakeholders should analyze CVE objectives to ensure that, for example, program implementation does not harm aid delivery or ostracize the target population.

4. *Clearly define objectives and target audiences.* Traditionally, security programming and development programming target different objectives and different groups. Security interventions tend to focus on populations and regions where violence is already rife, but development interventions usually target the poorest, least developed, or most marginalized. This difference in focus often leads to those communities most at risk of radicalization to violence being overlooked. Development programming with CVE objectives should therefore consider the breadth of potential stakeholders and ensure strategic clarity when identifying objectives and end goals (e.g., concentrating on symptoms versus addressing underlying structural drivers) and make explicit the audience it is targeting (e.g., communities that have suffered the most at the hand of violent extremists, segments of society that are most at risk of recruitment or radicalization to violence, or the wider population) and whose security it is improving. At the same time, possible negative effects of defining particular target audiences must be considered in the program design phase and closely monitored during implementation. Using peacebuilding and conflict prevention lenses and language rather than a security framework may be beneficial because it will likely enjoy more familiarity and credibility on the community level as it centers not on the state's grievances, development, and security but that of the individual.
5. *Develop context-specific, locally owned initiatives through engagement and support of local communities and civil society organizations.* CVE and development programs are most effective when tailored to local context, culturally sensitive, and built on existing networks and traditional peace and dispute settlement structures. Successful implementation and sustained impact will require the involvement of local actors, such as community organizations, religious leaders, youth, and women's groups. These groups are usually most intimately aware of the local grievances driving conflict and are often already part of ongoing stabilization and peacebuilding activities. Therefore, they are better placed to engage at-risk groups and implement sustained initiatives. To achieve a high level of local co-ownership of CVE programs, it is vital that the capacity of civil society organizations and communities is built through, for example, the transfer of knowledge and sharing of good practices; technical support in project development, administration, and implementation; and partnerships with more experienced implementers.
6. *Increase coordination between donors, implementers, and local governmental and civil society partners.* A multitude of players—governments, multilateral organizations, civil society, and the private sector—are working to accomplish security and development aims. CVE policies should be developed in an integrated and coherent fashion, in which a variety of actors work toward different



but mutually reinforcing, coordinated, and commonly agreed end goals, such as strengthening community resilience against violent extremism and reducing some of its enabling factors, including relative deprivation and marginalization. This requires policy coordination and harmonization between different sectors, including diplomacy, security, criminal justice, and development. Better coordination of all actors involved also would allow for improved information sharing, larger data sets from which to draw conclusions, increased efficiency in expenditures, and deconfliction of programming. To achieve such coordination, it may be useful to designate an independent body to oversee these efforts and create a mechanism that tracks all existing and planned efforts in a transparent and accessible manner.

7. *Identify realistic targets and timelines.* Security programming and development programming have traditionally been deployed in different fashions. Security programs are usually reactive and focused on short-term gains while development programs aim to ameliorate long-term challenges and are implemented over a more extensive period. CVE programming is similarly expected to ameliorate long-term challenges but is too often deployed as a quick fix. The underlying grievances driving recruitment and radicalization to violence, just as the underlying challenges to development, will not be fixed in the short term. All parties undertaking CVE and development initiatives should be honest about expected timelines and should stress to constituents the necessity of sustained engagement.
8. *Increase tolerance for and acceptance of risk and promote innovation.* Implementing CVE-relevant development programming can mean operating in regions where terrorist groups have taken hold or have access. Despite countries' best efforts to do no harm, some aid or other resources may find their way to terrorist groups. Furthermore, implementation of programs in such complex and dynamic environments is more likely to be prone to sudden unexpected changes in local realities, with success being far less straightforward than in more stable contexts. Such risks, although unfortunate and detrimental, should not prevent implementation of necessary programs in insecure regions where they are often needed most. All donors must acknowledge and increase their tolerance for the multitude of factors that can potentially go wrong. In certain cases, it may be prudent to develop small-scale pilot programs in unstable and insecure environments that allow funders to test key assumptions and gather data with the aim of expanding such programs should they prove feasible. In addition, smaller programs allow funders to test more innovative initiatives free of the level of scrutiny of larger-scale projects.
9. *Engage a broad range of stakeholders for long-term CVE and development programs.* As consumers become more conscious of supply chains and the effect of their purchases on global sustainability and international development, companies have invested more time and resources on corporate social responsibility initiatives. Additionally, mass popular-culture campaigns to get citizens to support development aims such as the SDGs have attracted celebrities and huge crowds. Although few parallels exist in the CVE context, the experience of private sector involvement in raising awareness about development presents

opportunities for CVE as well. Companies may be apprehensive to engage on the type of security matters CVE sometimes involves but may be more open if the concept of development elucidates the link between development and security. The public sector can play a role in illuminating that link and engaging industries who stand to lose the most from prolonged violent conflict, such as the extractives, tourism, and insurance industries.<sup>40</sup> Partnering with the private sector and private institutions such as foundations also alleviates some of the burden on governments for reactive and quick fixes and allows for the implementation of longer-term solutions.

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<sup>40</sup> Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund, meeting notes from roundtable titled “Investing in Fragile Environments: The Role of the Private Sector in Countering Violent Extremism,” September 2015, [http://www.gcerf.org/wp-content/uploads/29Sept\\_GCERF\\_UNGA-\\_Final.pdf](http://www.gcerf.org/wp-content/uploads/29Sept_GCERF_UNGA-_Final.pdf).



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The Global Center (UK) is a registered charity in the United Kingdom that works closely with its U.S. counterpart on criminal justice, countering violent extremism, corrections, and rule of law programming that promotes responsive, fair, and accessible justice and security systems to help address a range of complex security challenges, safeguard human rights, and promote sustainable development. Together, the Global Center offices work with governments, international organizations, and civil society actors worldwide to develop and implement comprehensive and viable responses to these multifaceted issues through collaborative policy research, context-sensitive programming, and capacity development. By these efforts, the Global Center fosters stronger multilateral partnerships and convenes key stakeholders to support integrated and inclusive security policies at the national, regional, and global levels.

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