

PEACEBUILDING APPROACHES TO PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Assessing the evidence for key theories of change

Subsector Review
April 2018



Alliance for
Peacebuilding

Harnessing collective action for peace

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About Alliance for Peacebuilding

The Alliance for Peacebuilding (AfP) is a membership network of over 100 organizations. Our members include some of the world’s largest development organizations, most innovative academic institutions, and the most powerful peacebuilding groups. We bring together coalitions in key areas of strategy and policy to elevate the entire peacebuilding field, tackling issues too large for any one organization to address alone.

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This report was written by Emily Myers, Scoville Fellow, and Elizabeth Hume, Senior Director for Programs and Strategy. It draws upon existing research on the drivers of and effective responses to violent extremism. The conclusions in this review were reached through an analysis of publicly available program evaluations, agency produced lessons summaries, evidence summaries, research papers, and white papers dealing with countering violent extremism.

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Introduction

Violent extremism (VE) is one of the most significant security challenges facing the global community. In 2016, 77 countries saw at least one terrorism related death, more than at any other time in the last 17 years.¹ VE not only directly claims the lives of thousands, it also drives humanitarian and political crises that sow even greater devastation; the emergency in Syria, which has forced over 5.4 million people out of their homes since 2011, is inextricably linked to the proliferation of VE.²

The threat and impact of violent extremism are palpably real, but consensus around how to define, discuss, and respond to violent extremism remains nebulous. Over the last decade, the peacebuilding field has deepened its understanding of the drivers of VE. Research³ has shown that grievances linked to state and security force abuses, perceptions of marginalization and injustice, relative economic and social deprivation, and desire for justice and purpose most consistently underpin mobilization to extremist violence. However, aggregated evidence of what has worked to address these drivers has yet to emerge, hindering our ability to articulate cohesive programmatic and policy responses to VE.

Another challenge to designing effective P/CVE responses is knowing that VE is intricately linked to other types of violence, without clearly understanding how VE might be unique. Between 1989 and 2014, 93 percent of terrorist attacks occurred in countries with high levels of state-sponsored terror and over 90 percent of terrorist deaths occurred in countries afflicted by some form of conflict.⁴ The interconnectivity of the two phenomena has sparked debate over what constitutes P/CVE specific programming versus violence reduction and conflict prevention programming with P/CVE relevance. For example, efforts to build accountable government structures, foster social cohesion, and increase access to education may have implications for P/CVE without having an explicit P/CVE goal, whereas a program to increase religious literacy and education to undermine VE groups' perversion of religious doctrine is specific to P/CVE. Some argue that P/CVE specific programming is superfluous because of the close links between VE and other forms of violence. There is also concern that because of the plethora of funding available for P/CVE programs, organizations may place non-P/CVE programming under the P/CVE umbrella.

The Alliance for Peacebuilding (AfP) theorizes that if we conduct research on existing P/CVE approaches, we can build the evidence base for both CVE and broader violence reduction work and help parse out the differences between P/CVE and other violence reduction programming. Thus, this P/CVE subsector review aims to answer three essential questions:

1. What do peacebuilding approaches to P/CVE reveal about the relationship between violence and violent extremism? Are there significant differences between the two phenomena that should shape programming and evaluation?
2. What are the primary theories of change in peacebuilding approaches to P/CVE?
3. Which theories of change are supported by research and evidence of impact? Which are not? Where are the gaps?

In answering these questions, we hope to build upon the peacebuilding field's knowledge of what works to reduce levels of violent extremism and draw out lessons that will help improve the efficacy of future P/CVE programming.

¹ Institute for Economics and Peace, "Global Terrorism Index", 2017.

² UNHCR, "Syria emergency", 2017.

³ USAID, "Guide to the Drivers of Extremism", 2009; Mercy Corps, "Youth & Consequences: Unemployment, Injustice and Violence", 2015; Atran, Scott, "Talking to the Enemy: Religion, Brotherhood, and the (Un)Making of Terrorists", 2011.

⁴ Institute for Economics and Peace, "Global Terrorism Index", 2017.

Methodology and Included Cases

This subsector review considered evaluations, agency produced lessons summaries, evidence summaries, research papers, and white papers available within the public domain. It is important to note that publicly available evaluations of P/CVE programming are limited due to their sensitive nature.

To identify public domain P/CVE documents, the following approaches were employed:

- Google and Google Scholar searches were conducted for the following key terms: “P/CVE evaluation”, “P/CVE program impact”, “P/CVE intervention evaluation”, “violent extremism prevention evaluation”, “violent extremism reduction evaluation”, “violent extremism intervention evaluation”, “violent extremism intervention impact evaluation”;
- The USAID Development Experience Clearinghouse (USAID DEC) was searched for “violent extremism”;
- Relevant and publicly available results were read and considered;
- Further reports and papers were identified and read based on citations from the Google and Google Scholar report group.

A document was eliminated if it did not measure or discuss programming that attempted to measure one or more of the following:

- Levels of violent extremism
- Levels of support for violent extremism
- Relative significance of factors that drive violent extremism
- Vulnerability to violent extremism
- Resilience to violent extremism

In total, fourteen cases were included in this subsector review. The cases spanned four regions and ten countries. There was a significant regional concentration, with ten out of fourteen cases focusing on African countries, specifically countries located in East Africa, the Lake Chad Basin, and the Sahel. Throughout the review, cases are presented in amalgamation, and source names are not explicitly stated. However, an annex of included cases with links to sources, publication dates, case locations, and case approaches is provided.

What Should We Call It? The Terminology Debate

There is tension over the terminology related to policy responses to violent extremism. While the United States uses countering violent extremism (CVE), the United Nations and European Union use preventing violent extremism (PVE), partly due to their concern that the CVE framework is too close to a militarized counter-terrorism (CT) schema. Within the United Nations and the European Union, PVE is considered to encompass preventative actions aimed at addressing the factors underpinning vulnerability to VE, while CVE is viewed as the efforts to counter the activities of existing VE actors. In the United States, CVE encompasses the preventative aspects of counter-terrorism as well as interventions to address the root causes of VE. The distinction between PVE and CVE is not made in this review. P/CVE will be used throughout this paper to reflect the range of preventive activities employed to ameliorate underlying drivers of VE.

Definitional Implications of Peacebuilding Approaches to P/CVE

A comprehensive understanding of violent extremism is vital to assessing where the peacebuilding approach to P/CVE has succeeded. Violent extremism is seldom defined: neither the United Nations

nor the European Union has offered a formal definition. The definitions that have been offered have struggled to encompass the complexities and diversity of the phenomenon, usually demarcating VE by the motivations behind it. For example, USAID defines VE as “advocating, engaging in, preparing, or otherwise supporting ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic or political objectives”. A framework rooted in ideological motivation and objectives presents several problems. What is the definition of ideology? How is motivation assessed and measured? How are objectives judged? Even if there were consensus surrounding these questions, VE defined as violence committed in the name of ideology does not account for the reality of today’s violent extremist movements. The Catalan separatist movement in Spain has at times turned violent, and is clearly intended to achieve political objectives, yet it is not considered VE. Furthermore, while formalized VE groups may state political goals and profess ideological motivations, research has demonstrated that the individuals within these groups are often not motivated by ideology,⁵ or ideology is much less significant in the journey to extremism than other drivers, like experiences and perceptions of injustice.⁶

Given the abstract concepts the attempt to define violent extremism elicits, including ideology, motivation, and objective, and the clear connections between VE and other forms of violence, this review proposes that what is necessary and practical is not a definition of VE, but a delineation of if and how it is different from other forms of violence.

The Peacebuilding Evaluation Consortium (PEC), of which AfP is a leading partner, is in the process of conducting a subsector review of all violence reduction programming. In an effort to expand the definition of violence and recognize that all forms of violence have implications for stability, the subsector review will recommend that the World Health Organization’s definition of violence be adapted for the peace and security realm as such: *The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation to the societal, political, or communal fabric of a society.* Extremist violence certainly fits into this proposed definition and the cases analyzed in this subsector review suggest significant overlap between underlying drivers of VE and the drivers of other forms of violence. Yet, the cases also indicate that there are several distinct factors of VE and P/CVE programming that necessitate special consideration:

I. Terminology

The term VE is sensitive and the language used to categorize P/CVE programming carries significant weight. There is concern among key partners, target communities, and other stakeholders that self-identifying or being identified as vulnerable to violent extremism will lead to stigmatization. The conflation of P/CVE with counter-terrorism (CT) and U.S. military and political goals has caused additional wariness among stakeholders. Furthermore, the singling out of Muslim communities and “Islamic” extremism has weakened essential partnerships with community groups and international organizations who refuse to implement programs that frame VE as an Islamic problem.⁷

II. Global Drivers

The emergence and strength of VE is in part determined by global factors. While other forms of violence can be influenced by broader regional and global dynamics, VE is affected by the geopolitical landscape more directly. Many extremist organizations characterize local grievances as a microcosm of broader injustice in the international system. People who commit or support

⁵ UNDP, “Journey to Extremism in Africa”, 2017.

⁶ USAID, “Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism”, 2009.

⁷ Tami Abdollah, Associated Press, “Fourth Muslim group rejects federal grant to fight extremism”, 2017.

violence in the name of VE groups often cite feeling persecuted and antagonized by an unfair global order and see their governments as incapable or unwilling to represent their interests within this system.⁸ Militant action by local governments and foreign actors like the United States in areas with budding VE movements often bolster this narrative and fuel violence. Furthermore, VE groups are increasingly borderless; many VE groups recruit members from across the globe and perpetrate acts of violence in other countries.

III. VE Groups as Avenues for Justice/Revenge

The channels and mechanisms through which grievances are leveraged and mobilized for violent extremism are notable. Where traditional governance and community structures have failed, some VE groups purport to provide an alternative source of justice and security. The personal grievances that might mobilize an individual to violence become tied to a formalized movement through which that individual can seek revenge against powers that have marginalized, ignored, or abused them. This pattern plays out to some extent in other forms of violence— gang violence is one clear example— however, it is most notable for VE. VE groups can provide a local and international banner under which marginalized individuals can find camaraderie, under which those who feel slighted can seek justice, and under which those who feel listless can find meaning.

Evaluative Implications of Peacebuilding Approaches to P/CVE

There is not a clear paradigm for measuring violent extremism that reflects the goals of P/CVE programming. The Global Terrorism Index measures levels of terrorism using data from the Global Terrorism Database at the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), which aggregates the number of terrorist incidents and deaths from terrorism from a range of open-source materials including electronic news archives, existing data sets, secondary source materials such as books and journals, and legal documents. This is an impressive undertaking and gives us a strong picture of how the VE phenomenon is playing out at a macro-level. However, it does not necessarily serve the effort to measure the effectiveness of P/CVE programming. At its core, P/CVE is about creating resilience to violent extremism, not building capacity to deter, disrupt, and isolate terrorist activities. Therefore, determining the impact of P/CVE programs necessitates a framework that can measure not only the current levels of VE in a community, but also the susceptibility of that community to violent extremism. The cases reviewed revealed several indicators that help measure risk of violent extremism:

- Level of violence experienced by the community
- Perception that one's community/group has been treated unfairly relative to others
- Perception that the government is responsive to one's needs
- Self-reported use of violence for a political cause
- Self-reported involvement in a violent dispute
- Belief that using violence in the name of Islam is not justified
- Belief that violent activities are not permitted under Islamic law
- Level of support for armed groups
- Belief that violence is an effective way to achieve goals
- Belief that violence is sometimes necessary
- Opinion of the United States government
- Belief that respective country's government should work with Western countries to combat terrorism
- Perception that the U.S. is fighting terrorism vs. fighting Islam

⁸ USAID, "Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism", 2009.

These indicators acknowledge that the primary drivers of VE— perceptions and experiences of injustice, exposure to violence, marginalization, and poor governance— mirror the primary drivers of other forms of violence, but that there are factors which distinguish VE from other forms of violence.

Theories of Change

Understanding the complex web of risk factors driving VE and identifying methods to measure level of risk is fundamental to the goals of the peacebuilding approach to P/CVE, but to make the case for this approach, it is necessary to prove that peacebuilding programs can mitigate these factors. To prove causation, the field must examine how peacebuilding programs imagine resiliency to VE taking hold, identify cases where increased resiliency has and has not been realized, and understand the drivers behind the outcome. What programmatic ToC has the peacebuilding field put forth and where are those ToC supported by evidence? This section presents the macro-ToC found in the analysis of cases and the strength of evidence for each.

Macro Theories of Change in P/CVE Programming

| Approach #1: Altering the Behavior of Individuals Deemed at-risk of Engaging in Violence | | |
|---|--|--|
| Theories of Change | Associated Indicators | Common Activities |
| <p>Theory 1.1: If at-risk youth feel empowered and capable of making a difference in their communities through peaceful mechanisms, then they will be less inclined to support and/or engage in violent extremism.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of times a respondent attended community meetings; raised issues with authorities; participated in decision-making - Level of satisfaction with local government decision making - Respondent’s belief in their ability to solve community problems - Level of responsibility respondent felt to help community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Civic engagement training for youth - Youth community projects - Capacity building of youth associations |
| <p><i>There is robust evidence that the activities associated with this ToC increase youth’s engagement in their community, but to foster feelings of efficacy and empowerment, programs must ensure youth can see the impact of their engagement and communities are receptive to youth’s perspectives. There is some quantitative evidence that achieving this reduces youth’s affinity for VE.</i></p> | | |
| <p>Theory 1.2: If at-risk youth are provided with tangible skills for social and economic advancement, then they will be less inclined to support and/or engage in violent extremism.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Level of satisfaction with quality of education - Level of optimism about future job prospects - Level of satisfaction with access to services and resources - Perception that job opportunities increased after programming - Level of belief that skills were more important than | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical skills and employment training - Literacy programming - Educational support - Individual and group income generation activities |

family connections in finding a job - Technical assistance for community economic projects

Proof that providing at-risk populations with economic and social skills reduces VE is negligible. However, when these programs are coupled with whole-of-community programs that change the conditions hindering economic and social advancement and offer concrete opportunities for program recipients to apply their skills, there is some evidence that support for and participation in VE declines.

Approach #2: Increasing Community Capacity to Resist and Mitigate Violence

| Theories of Change | Associated Indicators | Common Activities |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Theory 2.1: If communities feel that governments and security institutions are trustworthy, accountable, and responsive to their needs, levels of VE will go down.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of people who believe that local government is responsive to community needs - # of times community identified potential threats to security institutions - increased communication b/w communities and law enforcement - # or people who believe that government will improve core services (electricity, jobs, security) - # of people with a favorable view of police - level of perceived community exclusion perpetrated by the government | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CSO capacity building - Improvements to service provision - Infrastructure building - Community policing programs - Police reform - Technical support/training for local government structures |
| <p><i>The evidence for this ToC is promising, but not definitive. There is a large body of research indicating that abusive security and governance practices increase VE. Qualitative metrics observed in these cases confirm causality between adverse community relationships with government and security apparatuses and high levels of VE. Additionally, one case demonstrated that improvements in governments coincided with lower support for armed groups. However, more evidence is needed to prove that programming designed to improve the accountability and responsiveness of government and security bodies drives down levels of VE.</i></p> | | |
| <p>Theory 2.2: If trusted leaders in the community are empowered to understand and mitigate the risks of VE, they will exert their influence to resist VE movements and levels of VE will go down.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - percent increase of moderate imams/community leaders confident and well trained to disseminate message of nonviolence, moderation & tolerance - percent increase of radical imams/community leaders more predisposed to disseminate message of nonviolence and tolerance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dialogue/mediation training for community leaders - Facilitation of partnerships between community leaders and local government structures - Counter-messaging training for community leaders |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of community leaders who report they would intervene in their community to serve the goals of P/CVE - # of community leaders trained in counter-messaging content | |
| <p><i>Qualitative evidence for this ToC is robust. Key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus groups identified community leaders as powerful changemakers in the realm of P/CVE and comparative studies revealed that strong community leadership is a significant protective factor against VE. However, there was no quantitative data confirming the ability of community leaders to reduce VE, nor was there quantitative evidence tying reduction in VE to peacebuilding programming.</i></p> | | |
| <p>Theory 2.3: If members of distinct groups have opportunities to discuss their perspectives and strategies for forging relationships with one another, they will be more tolerant of one another and be less likely to support violent extremism based on gaining power over other identity groups.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of community-led programs - Level of participation in community forums involving diverse groups - Level of participation in cross-cultural trainings, inter-religious associations - # of forums for open discussion of issues dealing with VE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CSO capacity building - Inter-group community projects - Dialogue facilitation - Support for inter-religious or inter-group associations |
| <p><i>Several cases provided clear signals that social cohesion fosters resilience to VE, however, the cases examined demonstrated this by comparing pre-existing levels of social cohesion with levels of VE, rather than showing how peacebuilding programming has increased or created social cohesion to reduce VE.</i></p> | | |

Approach #1: Altering the Behavior of Individuals Deemed at-risk of Engaging in Violence

1.1 If at-risk youth feel empowered and capable of making a difference in their communities through peaceful mechanisms, then they will be less inclined to support and/or engage in violent extremism.

The programming founded in this theory of change proved capable of increasing the level of engagement of at-risk youth in their communities, however in some cases, perceptions of greater involvement and inclusion did not translate to perceptions of ability to effect change. In one case, youth indicated in focus group interviews that they were exerting greater effort to shape their communities for the better because of the programming, but that these efforts were fruitless; authority figures were aloof and unresponsive to youth priorities. This was endlessly frustrating to youth, and the case authors hypothesized this frustration could make youth more susceptible to extremist beliefs. Another case rooted in this theory of change produced more promising results; participants who had access to improved secondary education and carried out student-led community action projects were less likely to report participating in political violence and less likely to believe political violence was necessary. Importantly, the civic engagement projects centered on concrete community issues and had clearly defined outputs like a community garden or a community forum on illegal immigration. Analysis of cases centered around this ToC suggest that it is not sufficient to provide youth with the tools and opportunities to make change; programs must also ensure community receptiveness and clear pathways for action so that change can be realized.

1.2 If at-risk youth are provided with tangible skills for social and economic advancement, then they will be less inclined to support and/or engage in violent extremism.

The evidence for this ToC is weak. Programs that were focused on increasing economic and educational opportunity decreased support and participation in violent extremism among the targeted population only when coupled with openings for youth to apply newly found knowledge and skills in a way that meaningfully engages with and effects the broader community. A program centered around youth employment and outreach programs failed to demonstrate significant difference between treatment and control areas on indicators designed to measure respondent's views toward VE. Similarly, one program found that increased access to quality secondary education increased participants' likelihood of supporting the use of violence for a political cause by 11 percent. Yet, participants in the same program who were also involved in student-led community action projects were 14 percent less likely to report participating in political violence and 20 percent less likely to think political violence is "sometimes necessary". Targeted training of individuals deemed "at-risk" does not cause a decline in support for VE. In fact, it may heighten support by raising youth's expectations without altering conditions so that those expectations can be met. To reduce youth's susceptibility to VE, increased capacity to advance socially and economically must be matched with increased opportunity for advancement. To impact attitudes toward and participation in VE, programs rooted in this ToC may also need to change the perceptions of the economic and social status relative to others. Research has demonstrated that while poverty does not inherently result in VE, relative economic deprivation may aggravate the feelings of injustice and marginalization that can mobilize individuals to violence.⁹ Programs aiming to improve individual economic and social status face two major hurdles. First, relative, rather than absolute, economic position drives VE. Second, focusing on building individual skills does not innately create avenues for individuals to utilize and benefit from those skills.

Approach #2: Increasing Community Capacity to Resist and Mitigate Violence

2.1 If communities feel that governments and security institutions are trustworthy, accountable, and responsive to their needs, levels of VE will go down.

Evidence for this ToC is mixed. Improvements to community-government relationships, especially improvements to how security apparatuses exercise their power over communities, resulted in marked improvements on P/CVE-relevant indicators like level of perceived community exclusion perpetrated by the government. Additionally, the programming resulted in behavioral changes that serve the goals of P/CVE, like the number of times community leaders and law enforcements collaborated on P/CVE projects. However, programs which articulated this theory of change did not provide enough empirical evidence to definitively prove efficacy; they seldom had baseline surveys or comparison control groups. Despite this shortcoming, the evidence that failure to improve government-community relationships increases risk of VE is overwhelming. Focus group and key informant interviews (KIIs) repeatedly confirmed that perceptions of mistreatment and injustice at the hands of government was a primary driver of VE activities. Furthermore, one case saw support for armed groups drop from 46 percent to 26 percent after a change in governance widely perceived as positive by the population polled. There are strong indications this ToC is tenable, but further work is needed to tie reductions in VE associated with governance improvements to peacebuilding programming.

2.2 If trusted leaders in the community are empowered to understand and mitigate the risks of VE, they will exert their influence to resist VE movements and levels of VE will go down.

Qualitative evidence for this ToC is strong, though evidence of impact would be strengthened by more rigorous quantitative measures. One case, which compared similar communities with differing levels of VE, found that local counter narratives created and disseminated by trusted community leaders were among the most prominent protective factors against VE. Community leaders were also successful in facilitating inter-group connections; when leaders from different religions cooperated

⁹ USAID, "Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism", 2009.

with one another on projects and in dialogue, others followed suit and reported improved attitudes toward members of the other religion. Another case found that individuals were most likely to seek help from, trust, and follow the advice of established community leaders, rather than civil society organizations (CSOs), suggesting that these individuals are best placed to influence community attitudes toward VE. KIIs and focus groups consistently affirmed the power of trusted community leaders to engage with and succeed in carrying out P/CVE initiatives. However, quantitative data confirming this relationship is needed.

2.3 If members of distinct groups have opportunities to discuss their perspectives and are provided strategies for forging relationships with one another, they will be more tolerant of one another and be less likely to support violent extremism.

The logic behind this ToC is supported by evidence from the cases, but the cases did not tie changes in levels of social cohesion to peacebuilding programming. Several cases provided convincing evidence that social cohesion increases resiliency to violent extremism. For example, a comparison of socially, economically, and demographically similar areas where levels of VE were disparate demonstrated through quantitative analysis and focus group interviews that significant Christian-Muslim association was instrumental in protecting communities from VE. Similarly, another case demonstrated that creating forums where diverse community groups could openly discuss VE led to a more accurate diagnosis, and thus a more appropriate response, to the threat. However, the cases focused on examining the social dynamics that already existed within communities, rather than analyzing how peacebuilding programming has shifted or created new dynamics. Thus, it cannot be concluded that the peacebuilding field has decreased VE by designing programming around this ToC.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The cases examined in this subsector review lead to two central conclusions about the measurement of P/CVE programming and about which P/CVE related theories of change are most supported by evidence. These conclusions, while not prescriptive, can inform and improve future P/CVE program design, monitoring, and evaluation.

I. The PEC is in the process of conducting a subsector review of all violence reduction programming to understand how peacebuilding programs have contributed to our understanding of violence, new avenues for measurement of violence reduction, and the strength of evidence for peacebuilding theories of change relating to violence reduction. Comparing the results of this subsector review with the conclusions of the forthcoming violence reduction subsector review, it is clear there is less empirical evidence for peacebuilding programming's capacity to succeed in P/CVE initiatives than there is in its ability to reduce violence. This is perhaps because of the nature of the goal of P/CVE compared to the nature of the goal of violence reduction. Violence reduction programs aim to *lower* levels of violence, while P/CVE programs aim to *create* resiliency to a type of violence that is not consistently defined. Therefore, the evaluative hurdles are greater for P/CVE initiatives than for violence reduction initiatives. However, several of the cases provide a promising starting point for how the field can adapt to this challenge. The cases revealed several indicators that measure widely accepted drivers of VE, including exposure to violence, perceptions of injustice, and treatment by the government relative to other communities. On a case by case basis, comparative studies of similar areas with differing levels of extremism successfully identified the major risk and protective factors within a community. The next step is to measure the field's capability to mitigate risk factors and enhance protective factors.

Recommendations:

- The peacebuilding field should more consistently employ indicators designed to measure grievances that are consistently thought to drive VE. These indicators include but are not limited to: level of violence experienced by the community, belief that violence is sometimes

necessary, perception of treatment by the government and international community relative to others.

- After conducting research to identify the conditions fomenting risk of VE and the characteristics building resiliency to VE within a community, the peacebuilding field should employ baseline and endline studies or surveys of control and treatment groups to measure how its programming affected those factors.
- The field should dedicate resources to explore alternative measures of risk and resilience to VE and methods for assessing these measures.

II. While none of the ToC showed definitive ability to influence levels of VE, overall, the community approach seems to be more successful than the targeted approach. One possible explanation is because being identified as “at-risk” for violent extremism is stigmatizing and serves to further isolate the population that programming is aiming to serve. Another possibility is that community and global grievances are more powerful drivers of VE than individual grievances. The cases revealed that people are more likely to condone and support VE when they believe their community or country has been marginalized and treated unfairly relative to others, rather than when they feel personally slighted. Lastly, there is no guarantee that programs can successfully identify who is “at-risk”. Several of the cases examined reflected that programs left out individuals who may not obviously be at-risk and ignored the effects of VE on large groups of the population, especially women. Program evaluations consistently articulated that lack of gendered analysis impeded the overall effectiveness of the initiative. Regardless of the reasons behind the discrepancy between the relative success of individual and community approaches, the targeted individual approach only showed impact when it was linked to efforts to make change at the community level, while the programs aiming to build resiliency to VE by increasing the strength and capacity of community networks were promising on their own.

Recommendations:

- Peacebuilding P/CVE programming should focus on addressing the needs of the entire community, rather than those deemed to be “at-risk” of VE.
- When programming does focus on increasing the social, economic, or educational capital of targeted individuals, it must also explore avenues for those individuals to utilize the capital within the community and for authority figures within the community to effectively respond to their needs.
- The delineation of who constitutes an “at-risk” individual should be expanded to account for the complex reasons and mechanisms for supporting VE groups and causes. Furthermore, programs should recognize that level of individual risk is closely linked to broader community, country, and global level factors.

The peacebuilding field has articulated that P/CVE initiatives are primarily about creating resiliency and that doing so requires a whole-of-society approach. This systematic subsector review reveals how this framework of understanding and implementing P/CVE affects how to think about the definition of VE and how to measure peacebuilding P/CVE initiatives. While the ideas presented in this subsector review are not entirely novel, this review makes a unique contribution in both the scope of programs analyzed and in its effort to draw out lessons to inform the design and measurement of peacebuilding approaches to P/CVE.

Annex 1: Included Cases (sorted alphabetically by location)

| Case Name | Date Published | Organization | Location | Program/Research Focus |
|---|----------------|---|--------------------------------|--|
| <u>The Role of Young People in Preventing Extremism in the Lake Chad Basin</u> | 2015 | Youth, Peace & Security; Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding | Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Nigeria | Empowering youth leaders to implement peace education and conflict management programs for their peers and facilitating individual income generating activities for youth to reduce VE |
| <u>Mid-Term Evaluation of USAID's Counter-Extremism Programming in Africa</u> | 2011 | United States Agency for International Development (USAID) | Chad, Mali, Niger | Implementing youth employment, vocational training, community development, and outreach programs along with facilitating dialogue between ethnic groups on religion and tolerance to reduce VE |
| <u>Investing In Peace: How Good Governance Can Diminish Support for Violent Extremism</u> | 2015 | Mercy Corps | Iraq | Assessing the impact of Maliki's resignation on support for armed violent extremist groups |
| <u>Community Resilience to Violent Extremism in Kenya</u> | 2016 | United States Institute of Peace (USIP) | Kenya | Comparing and contrasting communities with similar risk factors but varying levels of violent extremism to identify the factors that empower communities to resist VE |
| <u>We Don't Trust Anyone: Strengthening Relationships as the Key to Reducing Violent Extremism in Kenya</u> | 2016 | International Alert | Kenya | Analyzing how various relationships (inter-community, intra-community, community-government) affect levels of VE |
| <u>Mid-Term Evaluation of Three Countering Violent Extremism Projects</u> | 2013 | USAID | Kenya, Somalia | Building the capacity of local institutions and government structures; facilitating community dialogue; providing livelihood training, counseling, and job placement for at-risk youth |
| <u>Meet Me at the Maskani: A Mapping of Influencers, Networks, and Communication Channels in Kenya and Tanzania</u> | 2017 | Search for Common Ground | Kenya, Tanzania | Examining people, groups, and places who have influence over at-risk youth in communities |

| | | | | |
|--|------|---|---------------|---|
| <u>Social Media for Deradicalization in Kyrgyzstan: A model for Central Asia Final project evaluation</u> | 2017 | Search for Common Ground | Kyrgyzstan | Creating social media platforms for youth to express their grievances and engage in dialogue; disseminating peace messaging over social media |
| <u>We Hope and We Fight: Youth, Communities, and Violence in Mali</u> | 2017 | Mercy Corps | Mali | Analyzing risk and resilience factors for VE among youth in various communities |
| <u>Motivations and Empty Promises: Voices of Former Boko Haram Combatants and Nigerian Youth</u> | 2016 | Mercy Corps | Nigeria | Analyzing risk and resilience factors for VE among youth in various communities |
| <u>Countering Violence and Extremism through Skills Training and Livelihoods Support for At-Risk Youth in Kismayo</u> | 2016 | United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) | Somalia | Enhancing opportunities for sustainable income generation and facilitating skills training |
| <u>Critical Choices: Assessing the Effects of Education and Civic Engagement on Somali Youths' Propensity Towards Violence</u> | 2016 | Mercy Corps | Somalia | Opening and providing support to secondary schools and identifying youth leaders to carry out student-led civic engagement projects to increase youth's capacity and opportunity to affect positive change to reduce political violence and violent extremism |
| <u>Evaluation of a Multi-Faceted, U.S. Community-Based, Muslim-Led P/CVE Program</u> | 2016 | Department of Justice | United States | Fomenting partnerships between law enforcement and local communities, training local leaders to counsel youth at risk of radicalization |
| <u>Community Policing to Counter Violent Extremism: A Process Evaluation in Los Angeles</u> | 2017 | Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) | United States | Fostering partnerships between law enforcement and local communities to increase cooperation and trust and reduce VE |