

[RELEASE IN FULL]

Promoting Local Research and Information-Sharing on the Drivers of Violent Extremism

There is growing recognition that, while violent extremism is a transnational threat, the factors contributing to particular communities' vulnerability or resilience to violent extremism are contextual, and efforts to counter and prevent violent extremism will be more effective if tailored to those specific factors. However, much research about the causes of violent extremism, radicalization, or terrorism more broadly is at the individual or national levels, leaving gaps in our ability to fully understand what drives it or how best to address it. Researchers and practitioners also agree that better tools are needed with which to monitor and evaluate the results and impact of CVE programs. There, too, the CVE field is just beginning to develop best practices.

Deeper research is needed about the factors which at the subnational levels enable or prevent its spread. This is not a matter of creating research capacity from scratch, rather about better utilizing, supporting, and connecting the existing knowledge base, particularly among local experts in the field.

Hedayah is taking a first step towards this goal through its research unit, which can serve as a resource hub for practitioners and experts. It recently held a major CVE research conference, and it plans to build in-house capacity to conduct long-term research to complement governmental and academic efforts. Through its non-resident fellowship program, Hedayah is starting to develop a small field-based network of local researchers. Under Canada's leadership, the GCTFCVE Working Group has overseen the development of a practitioner handbook on CVE M&E for eventual use by civil society partners in the field.

To build on and enhance these research efforts, which will help donors support more effective and targeted CVE interventions, the international community should consider:

- Working with and through Hedayah's nascent research network to identify and address research gaps; catalyze local efforts to identify critical CVE needs; mobilize the necessary expertise and resources to address such needs.
- Supporting small networks of in-country researchers – from a range of disciplines in local universities, civil society organizations, survey firms, and government agencies – to identify and address gaps in our

understanding of the drivers of violent extremism within communities at risk. The network could advance the CVE agenda by connecting and coordinating local research efforts;; and sharing findings and lessons learned.

- Supporting GCTF efforts to develop more robust M&E guidelines for measuring impact of CVE programming (including how to quantify prevention), adopting these guidelines in donor programming, and socializing these guidelines with practitioners in the field.
- Sharing M&E frameworks and analysis.
- Sponsoring research on community-level support of or resilience to violent extremism, to enhance our understanding of why some communities resort to violence when faced with pressures to do so; how and why some communities choose to reject violent extremism; and where opportunities exist to prevent radicalization and recruitment to violent extremism.