

Highlights

Dexis Consulting Group was contracted by the Department of State to evaluate the Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism (CT) Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) program to evaluate two areas:

1. **Program Results and Impact:** *A performance evaluation seeking to identify the results of CVE programming, and to determine which approaches were the most effective and why;*
2. **Programming Process:** *An examination of the processes that support the design and implementation of CT's CVE programming.*

Programming Results and Impact

CT's CVE program has made significant advances in its interventions using specific violent extremism (VE) drivers, local knowledge, and an inter-agency approach including partner nations. The following is recommended:

- Project commitments should be 3 – 5 years minimum.
- CVE efforts should be locally led, built upon a deep understanding of the history, local context, and unique drivers.
- CVE must be part of a broader effort that addresses human rights abuses, poor governance, and the impacts of international events and policies.
- CVE programming should recognize that VE takes many forms, and should not focus on any particular religion as a driver.
- The United States Government (USG) should not engage in counter messaging (particularly involving religion).
- CVE programs must adopt a complexity-aware or systems thinking approach because there is no one-size-fits-all path to VE recruitment, and no linear path to VE. As such, a systems approach will be better able to measure programming impact where cause and effect are unclear.

Programming Process

The processes for creating, funding, and implementing CVE programs has improved substantially since 2013 and there is an ongoing process to standardize processes and improve communications between offices and stakeholders. These recommendations are based upon input from CT, embassies, and implementing partners:

- Effective CVE program design must be informed by a deep bottom-up understanding of the complex and interrelated drivers in each particular case so that it can resonate with local audiences.
- CT should hire, train, and install long-term CVE program design specialists with local expertise into embassies at critical posts. Those specialists must forge deep partnerships with a broad spectrum of host country stakeholders.
- Significantly reduce the number of CVE meetings partner nations and USG staff are asked to attend.
- Streamline required reporting and documentation to encourage local group involvement.
- Evaluate the current systems being used to capture project data for their applicability, ease of use, potential to feed CVE analysis models useful information, and level of acceptance and understanding by DOS and USAID staff.
- Provide a clear document elucidating the process of CVE program design, implementation, and adaptation (including M&E) for those involved.
- Reach out to leading experts on their complexity-aware methodologies for guidance in designing effective CVE programs.

CVE Evaluation

Document Review

175 CVE Projects that began between 2009-2013 worldwide, academic and policy papers, news reports, historical research.

Field Mission

Nairobi, Kenya; Jakarta and Surabaya, Indonesia; Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Individual Interviews

37 with Washington-based and embassy staff from DOS, USAID, and DOD, subject matter experts, community organization and religious leaders, students and university professors.

Focus Group Discussions

Focus Group Discussions with male and female youth, women, and security and terrorism organizations, DOS in Washington and at embassies.

Cross Data Analysis

Triangulation of data collected during evaluation with existing documentation and input from subject matter experts