

What is “violent extremism”? How can the ongoing work in this area influence the design of World Bank projects? What value added can the World Bank bring to this topic?

Role of Education in the Prevention of Violent Extremism

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The author is grateful to Luis Benveniste, Director, Education Global Practice for his support and guidance. Context profiles were prepared by Suh Yoon Kang. The team is also grateful for inputs received during informal consultations with World Bank Group colleagues and external partners

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“Ideologies are not defeated by guns, but by new ideas”

President Obama

Executive Summary

Tackling violent extremism (VE) as a part of education interventions is reflective of a broader international shift toward prevention of terrorism, and toward efforts to address the environment conducive for extremists to spread their ideologies and recruit supporters. Education has been leveraged to both radicalize and to de-radicalize young people and increasingly, governments in conflict-affected countries are interested in financing measures that counter violent extremism as part of education programs. Yet the term “violent extremism” lacks a specific definition making it difficult to carry out research, policy dialogue and/or programming. Furthermore, there is little empirical evidence to demonstrate the efficacy of CVE programs that work consistently and across different contexts, primarily because the root causes of violent extremism are poorly understood.

The World Bank Group (WBG) is increasingly being called upon to address the development dimensions of VE both by client governments and the international community. Up to now, the Bank has shied away from designing standalone CVE programs even in contexts where violent extremism is present. And education programs for the most part, whether in stable or conflict-affected countries, have had similar goals. Going forward, we propose two avenues of strategic engagement for the Bank in this area. First, to undertake more in-depth learning on what works and what does not work including through rigorous impact evaluations and research. Second to ensure that Bank financed programs are designed with dynamics of VE clearly in mind, using existing CVE frameworks and tools and addressing some of the key drivers for VE, within the broader objectives of the operation. Ultimately, the Bank’s contribution to this agenda, will focus, together with client governments, on piloting, testing and scaling up CVE programs that do work.

Introduction

Attacks by VE groups have increased significantly in the past decade. According to the Global Terrorism Database¹, VE groups killed roughly 43,412 people in 2014, rising from 22,211 in 2013 and 3,329 in 2000. The vast majority of terrorist attacks have occurred in just five countries: Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan and Syria, with significant negative impacts on development outcomes, including declines in tourism and foreign direct investments as well as a significant drop in growth rates.

The term “violent extremism”, which was previously seen as the exclusive purview of the security sector, has now found its way into the development dialogue. Indeed, the issue has become an important topic in development forums. Several agencies have been created to address the issue and coordinate interventions globally². The UN has held a number of high level meetings on the topic. UN agencies, including the World Bank, have also started prioritizing discussions on prevention of VE as part of their policy dialogue with affected countries.

This paper –focusing particularly on the role of education in prevention of VE– is written as a background document for the joint World Bank-UN flagship report, “Can Development Interventions Help Prevent Conflict and Violence?”. The World Bank-UN study will discuss what the international community can do to improve development aid as a tool for countering violent extremism (CVE) and contribute to peacebuilding.

The education sector is often one of the most critical development interventions supported by governments and donors as a way of strengthening peacebuilding efforts during post conflict recovery, as well as addressing long-term human development needs in fragile states.

Prevention approaches are necessary both in countries that have never had a conflict as well as states that are in the very tenuous post-conflict recovery phase. Conflicts can relapse very often and therefore prevention is essential as a peacebuilding effort. In this paper, we focus primarily

¹ Global Terrorism Database available at <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>

² For example the Global Counterterrorism Forum; Hedayah, the International Center of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism; the Yale Political Violence Field Lab etc.

on education interventions that have been implemented in fragile states and/or those that have targeted high risk groups (e.g., youth), as a way of discouraging violent extremism. The primary audience for this paper is World Bank management and task teams working on education/skills programs. A secondary audience could be policy makers and external development partners interested in supporting interventions in the education sector as a way of countering violent extremism.

The main programs supported by the World Bank in such contexts are primary/secondary education, skills and vocational training, skills training conducted as part of public works/social welfare programs, and training as part of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) interventions. There are fewer programs which are designed and implemented with the explicit objective of countering violent extremism (CVE). Although, increasingly, project teams have been interested in including such components in their education/skills training projects.

Within the World Bank, education and skills training programs are financed primarily by the Education Global Practice, Social Protection, Jobs and Labor Global Practice as well as the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP), and Fragility, Conflict and Violence (FCV) Cross-cutting Solutions Areas. There are other sectors that support education/skills interventions as part of livelihood support, disaster risk reduction, private sector development etc., however the bulk of the financing in this area is limited to the above practices.

The paper will first try to understand what is meant by ‘violent extremism’ in its current form. It will outline the evolution of the thinking behind the root causes of VE over the last decade and describe the types of education interventions that are supported as part of its efforts to prevent VE. We will also examine available evidence from evaluations of CVE programs that have been carried out to better understand the impacts such programs have had (if any). We will identify lessons learned –both challenges and good practice– related to efforts to counter CVE through education. It is hoped that these lessons will be useful for both policymakers and practitioners, and will inform current and future CVE programming at the World Bank.

What is violent extremism?

The terms “violent extremism” and “radicalization”, which have become part of the development lexicon since the attacks of September 11, 2001, lack a specific definition making it difficult to carry out research, policy dialogue and/or programming. As Steven Heydemann (2014 p.1) has observed: “Despite its impressive growth, CVE has struggled to establish a clear and compelling definition as a field; has evolved in to a category that lacks precision, and focus...and has not been able to draw clear boundaries that distinguish CVE programs from those of other well-established fields, such as development, poverty alleviation, governance and democratization, and education”.

Some bilateral donors have developed working definitions of violent extremism to guide their programming. DFID defines violent extremism as the “use of facilitation of violence targeted on civilians as a means of rectifying grievances, real or perceived, which form the basis of increasingly strong exclusive group identities” (DFID, 2013).

The UN Resolution 2178, states only that VE “can be conducive to terrorism” (UN Security Council, 2014, para 15). The 2015 Global Terrorism Index (GTI) report defines terrorism as “the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by non-state actors to attain a political, economic, religious or social goal through fear, coercion or intimidation³”.

There is a distinction to be made between religious driven violence and poverty driven violence. Religious motivation as a driver of violence cuts across class lines and is particularly complex. Religious violence has to do with existential beliefs regarding the nature of religious commandments and the ability to be rewarded in the afterlife. Here, the most important distinction is between violence motivated by worldly outcome: for example, a regime change or different distribution of resources -- and violence motivated by the desire to be rewarded in the afterlife. In the former case one could offer better ways of achieving the same goal, however, it is much harder in the latter case.

More recently, a new driver of mass violence has also emerged: a fascination with killing. Grounded in evidence from social and neuropsychology, emerging analysis of lone wolf

³ <http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2015.pdf>

shooters and perpetrators of terrorist activity and mass violence suggest that there are social and biological stimuli that are strongly capable of luring people into committing acts of violence⁴. Beyond neurobiology, there is a sociocultural contagion that drives violence. For example, media coverage of mass attacks with constant emphasis on the names, faces, motives, and actions of shooters leaves a “blue print” for others to follow⁵. People who are interested in killing have social media and the internet available to find out more.

Another setback is that the terms –violent extremism and radicalization– are often used interchangeably in security and development literature. Indeed, radicalization is often seen as a precursor to engaging in violent extremism. However, as many researchers have pointed out, the relationship is not automatic or direct. An individual could be radical without necessarily carrying out violent acts. There is also debate as to whether terrorism is limited to acts by non-state actors and whether violence must be committed against noncombatant targets. (World Bank 2015).

The line between terrorism and resistance is often blurred and they can be highly politically charged. Labelling a group a violent extremist group has serious repercussions including being barred from contact with international agencies. (World Bank 2015). Governments may also hesitate in using these terms which can have negative effects on tourism, country risk ratings, and even foreign direct investment.

Moreover, the drivers as well as the methods for preventing VE are studied by many different disciplines ranging from psychology, sociology and religious studies, to development and security studies. While the multidisciplinary nature of the topic adds depth and richness and provides many entry points for policy dialogue, it can also create confusion and a lack of rigor in the way the topic is covered.

Regardless of whether the issue is of not being able to define the concept in its specificity or not being able to get the stakeholders to agree on a definition, it is likely to imperil dialogue (and to a lesser extent), programming, but one can still conduct research on it. (There are a

⁴ <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/10/19/thresholds-of-violence>

⁵ http://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/08/science/mass-killers-often-rely-on-past-perpetrators-blueprints.html?_r=0

number of issues over which disagreement persists as to their definition/concept but that does not imperil research.) The WBG can and certainly must engage in this debate both within the Bank and with our external partners. The UN-WB flagship report, mentioned above, will go a long way toward defining our priorities.

Furthermore, there is a large body of literature that suggests that when interventions focus on countering extremism or terrorism, they often limit themselves to violent behavior, and fail to address the attitudes that engender those behaviors. There is a need for an empirical base to understand not only why people pursue violence as a means to express their preferences, but also an understanding what specific attitudes lead to those violent behaviors. This is important because attitudes do not always translate into predictable behaviors, and, conversely, it is hard to deduce attitudes from behaviors. Just because people partake in violence does not mean that they subscribe to specific ideologies. And, just because someone preaches an ideology does not mean she/he will pursue violence. We need to address both.

How has the thinking on violent extremism evolved?

In the past decade, the focus of international and national strategies for countering terrorism has shifted from using hard security measures to combat violent extremism and terrorism to a more multi-sectoral and development approach. Initially, the development discourse attributed the root causes of VE primarily to poverty and lack of education, and many donor countries called for increased aid and educational assistance as a means of ending terrorism. Yet some researchers found the link tenuous. Kruger and Malečková (2003) for example, noted that “any connection between poverty, education and terrorism is indirect, complicated and probably weak”. They also noted that drawing a connection between poverty and terrorism, if it is not justified, could be potentially dangerous. Not only would the international community lose interest in providing support for developing nations when the imminent threat of terrorism recedes, but premising foreign aid on the threat of terrorism could create perverse incentives, inducing groups to engage in terrorism in order to receive more aid.

The original hypothesis, linking poverty to terrorism, stemmed from the view that poverty and lack of opportunity drove individuals to join extremist groups, much like choosing a life of

crime. Yet, researchers found that education and poverty were statistically insignificant predictors of whether individuals became martyrs and/or joined extremist groups. Indeed, during a study analyzing participation in Hezbollah in Lebanon, researchers found that having a standard of living above the poverty line, or a secondary school education or higher was positively associated with participation in Hezbollah. The same conclusion was found with Palestinian suicide bombers (Kruger and Malečková, 2003). The researchers argued that in most cases, terrorism is less like property crime and more like a violent form of political engagement. The emphasis is on the ideological dimensions of violent extremism. This distinction sets extremist groups apart from many other types of violence.

Researchers believe the key factors that fuel VE seem to be rooted in perceptions of injustice and marginalization. A cross-country study of Colombia, Afghanistan and Somalia, carried out by Mercy Corps (2015), found that early experience of abuse and humiliation were an important driver of joining extremist groups, more so than economic factors. Many extremist groups have their roots in identity-based politics and they mobilize support based on perceived grievances.

The GTI report (2013 p.68) has identified two factors closely identified with terrorist activity: political violence committed by the state and the existence of broader armed conflicts. The link between these two factors and terrorism is so strong that less than 0.6 percent of all terrorist attacks have occurred in countries without any ongoing conflict and any form of political terror.

Khalil and Zeuthen (2016) classify key drivers of VE as structural motivators (limited economic opportunities, state repression, etc.), individual incentives (status, material incentives etc.), and enabling factors (radical mentors, online radical forums) and offer various CVE responses tailor made to each incentive (advocacy for institutional reform, education and vocational training, career guidance, intercommunity forums, interfaith dialogue, mentoring, online messaging initiatives, etc.).

Studies have found that while education does not correlate with terrorist activity at a cross country level, at an individual level many terrorists are well educated (Kruegar and Maleckova, 2003, Botha 2013). A study of Middle Eastern and North African youth (Bhatia and Ghanem,

2017) demonstrates that individuals with secondary educations who are unemployed or underemployed have the highest risk of becoming radicalized. Stig Jarle Hansen (2013 p. 45) observes that ‘the rank and file of Al-Shabaab consisted of unemployed Somali youth’.

The 2016 Middle East North Africa Economic Monitor, published by the World Bank, analyzed a dataset of Daesh foreign fighter personnel and concluded that the average fighter from MENA is more educated than what is typical of their counterparts in their countries, and hence frustration over failure to secure jobs commensurate with their education status could have played a role in radicalizing fighters⁶. This is a cause for concern the authors note because unemployment in many Arab countries seems to rise with the level of education, and many new graduates are only able to find low-paying jobs in the informal sector. Furthermore, Steer et al (2014) note that while Arab countries have succeeded in increasing access to education, the quality of education remains a problem. This fact is true beyond MENA countries; the quality and relevance of education systems in many developing countries remain problematic. Not only do many children not learn, but those who do are not equipped with the skills required in a 21st century globalized economy.

While this is an interesting finding, much more research needs to be conducted to better understand the links between education, employment and radicalization, especially in order to establish any causality. At present, there are substantial limitations to accurately understand and address the root causes of VE, and policy makers can only draw tentative conclusions. There are also constraints in the data collection process as well as data quality in fragile and high security environments.

Regardless of whether lack of education in and of itself is a driver of radicalization, there seems to be a general consensus that education is one of the most important tools to reach young people and therefore can be used to address some of the “push and pull factors” that may drive young people towards violent extremism.⁷ As noted previously, education can be leveraged to

⁶ A 2016 report released by the Combating Terrorism Center, West Point provides an analysis of 4,600 Daesh foreign fighters from the Islamic State’s personnel records.

⁷ USAID (2011) identifies push factors as “important in creating the conditions that favor the rise or spread in appeal of violent extremism or insurgency” and pull factors as “associated with the personal rewards which membership in a group or movement, and participation in its activities may confer”. pp. 3-4

both radicalize and to de-radicalize young people. Therefore, it is critical that governments and development partners work together to identify the many ways in which education can be utilized to build resilience and reduce radicalization to violent extremism.

Education as a Tool for Countering Violent Extremism

Tackling violent extremism as part of development interventions is reflective of a broader international shift toward prevention of terrorism, and toward efforts to address the environment conducive for extremists to spread their ideologies and recruit supporters. Countering violent extremism through education –while a relatively new concept in the international discourse– has been piloted through many national and international programs and policies.

Here it is important to distinguish between two types of interventions used by the education sector: 1) providing access and quality education to all in an effort to address issues to do with marginalization, inequality, unemployment, etc., or in other words, some of the “root causes” of VE; and 2) targeted location-specific CVE programming focusing on populations that have a higher probability of being attracted to violence (e.g., recent religious converts, specific ethnic or clan groups, those with existing familial links to VE entities, etc.).

Targeted interventions are successful only if research has demonstrated that such traits are disproportionately associated with VE. (Khalil and Zeuthen, 2016). While more precise targeting may be worthwhile in some contexts, in many high security contexts governments primarily focus on reaching youth through education interventions. Indeed, youth are often mentioned as the group that is most vulnerable to radicalization and therefore ongoing efforts have attempted to engage with youth as part of international counter-terrorism strategies. This has both positive and negative aspects, not the least of which is the securitization of the education sector.

Few World Bank financed education programs specifically mention countering violent extremism as an objective. However, in most fragile contexts where the World Bank is present, education programs are one of the most frequently financed development interventions that

target youth. They do this in a number of ways – through primary and secondary education (when young people are most likely to start being radicalized), technical and vocational education and training (TVET) as part of employment programs, skills training as a component in demobilizing and reintegration programs, and skills training as part of public works and welfare programs.

In the recent past, there has been increasing pressure to include CVE dimensions in the projects supported by the World Bank in fragile/conflict affected contexts.⁸ However, it is important to note that VE can also be seen in countries that aren't typically identified as conflict contexts. Therefore, it is important to address VE dimensions not only in conflict contexts, but also in non-conflict situations, so that patterns in VE can be addressed before they escalate into conflicts.

The comparative advantage the World Bank brings to the development arena is that it works directly with governments, and is able to finance large scale programs, usually covering the entire country. While many NGOs and bi-lateral donors have implemented innovative CVE programs, many of them are limited in scope and size. Furthermore, since they are usually implemented outside of government systems, their ability to build capacity in government in this area is limited. It would be useful for the World Bank to learn from NGOs and donor supported CVE programs, so that in countries where governments are interested in implementing CVE programs and policy goals, the Bank is able to respond quickly and effectively and help them scale up tested and proven policies and programs.

⁸ "Youth: Countering Extremism and Promoting Peace", a high-level panel discussion organized by the World Bank Social Development Unit on October 11, 2016 specifically called for the Bank to act.

Box 1. Examples of World Bank Education Projects in FCV

Review of World Bank's Education project portfolio shows that most of World Bank education projects in FCV context do not explicitly address CVE in their objectives. Rather, many of the Bank's projects in these contexts are aimed at building a strong education system. While these projects do not directly address VE, they contribute to CVE and prevention of potential conflict, as there are large bodies of evidence that suggests the state's failure to provide access to education generates poverty and inequality, which has been found to increase the likelihood of conflict. The review of projects also shows that these projects include a number of conflict sensitivity elements. The following are illustrative examples of World Bank Education projects:

Global Partnership for Education (GPE) – Baluchistan Education Project (P144454)

Baluchistan is Pakistan's largest province in terms of land mass, and has experienced several periods of internal conflict arising from a mixture of issues linked to politics, geography, religion and ethnicity. The World Bank project in this area aimed to 1) expand more equitable distribution of education services through reducing pockets of exclusion and marginalization from access to education; 2) actively involve the community to create a safe learning environment; and 3) promote gender equity by promoting girls' education and greater inclusion of female teachers.

Under this project, community members are organized as Parent Teacher School Management Committees (PTSMC) to provide support to ensure schools remain functional, children and teacher feel protected and district level offices are supported in performing a supervisory role. It also engages local community groups as protection mechanisms that can support enrolment and retention of girls, reduce teacher turnover and absenteeism. In addition, in the construction of school spaces, the criteria for the construction of new schools include boundary walls and separate latrines for girls and boys that will have implications for girls' enrolment and retention.

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) Education Quality Improvement Project (EQUIP) (P157922)

The Education Quality Improvement Project in DRC aims to 1) improve learning achievement in primary education, and 2) strengthen the governance of education sector. The project focused on improving evidentiary understanding of school, household, and individual determinants of dropouts and to inform strategies to improve retention and encourage re-enrollment of students that have dropped out of the system. This project also contributes to stabilizing, and building the education system by the training of teachers to improve the provision of quality education.

In provision of learning and teacher materials, this project also aims to ensure that textbooks will be free of gender stereotyping before printing and distribution. In addition, in alignment with the government's policy for the use of national languages, the project builds capacity of teachers to shift languages of instruction from one language (French) to languages spoken in the specific geographical areas for the early grades. This is important from a conflict sensitivity perspective, as it can facilitate decreasing marginalization of certain parts of the population, while increasing their access to education. This is in line with research which demonstrates that the teaching and learning with textbooks in a child's native language are critical for improved learning outcomes, particularly in the early grades.

[Text prepared by Suh Yoon Kang]

Gaps in the Evidence Base

Increasingly policy makers have come to see CVE as an important goal in education programs being implemented in fragile and conflict affected states. Yet there is hardly any empirical evidence to demonstrate the root causes of violent extremism and/or what particular types of prevention interventions work consistently across different contexts. A recent rapid evidence assessment for conflict prevention commissioned by DFID (Oxford Policy Management and SOAS, 2016. p. 15) notes that in many studies of conflict prevention, “theories of change are assumed rather than clearly specified, and the linkages between knowledge, attitudes, behavioral change and armed violence prevention/reduction is frequently asserted rather than demonstrated”.

There is a need for further research into the relationship between education and VE before governments scale up CVE interventions – both cross country impact evaluations as well as rigorous assessments of context specific interventions. Research focusing on how education affects the push-pull factors related to radicalization and recruitment into violent extremism, and how access to education may increase or decrease radicalization depending on the local context are important areas of study. Researchers also need to better understand what interventions do not work and why.

Identifying what types of curricula and pedagogy affect radicalization and recruitment into violent extremism is another essential area of work. For example, there is mixed evidence on the role of Islamic schools in radicalization and recruitment. As an example, while in some cases, Indonesian students, with a background in Islamic education may be less vulnerable to radicalization, in others, such as Pakistani students may be more susceptible to radical teachings (ICG, 2007). It is not only what is taught in the classroom but how it is taught that could have an impact on VE. Better understanding of teacher-pupil power dynamics in the classroom, teaching methods, and ensuring that student perspectives are included in these types of interventions projects will help design more effective CVE/education programs.

Radicalization and Recruitment of Women and Girls. Much of the literature related to CVE and education focuses on men and youth and ignores some of the marked differences

between males and females in these processes. There is very little information on the recruitment and radicalization of girls and women into violent extremism even though in many countries (Syria, Iraq, Chechnya, Sri Lanka etc.) women and girls were active and willing participants in terrorism. CVE programs must recognize the nuanced and not mutually exclusive role between women and girls as victims of violent extremism and perpetrators of violent extremism (Hedayah, 2015).

In addition, education/CVE programs must take into consideration, the unique role that mothers play as the family's first educator and the effect that mothers can have on radicalization (or not) of their children. Unless these differences are taken into account, education programs that support CVE interventions will not be successful and will not be relevant for a critical segment of the population.

Social Media in Education. VE groups seem to be especially adept at using social media to create a sense of social connection. Initial contact for new recruits is usually done through social media (messaging, Facebook, snapchat etc.). ISIS alone reportedly has hundreds of online platforms including at least 46,000 Twitter accounts (Berger and Morgan, 2015). Yet, there is very little research on the role that social media can play in education programs supporting CVE interventions and or the impact that they have had. Even though education programs target some of the biggest users of social media –the youth– they very rarely use these effective and innovative means of educational communication.

Box 2: DFID Kenya Essential Education Program (KEEP)

Kenya is far advanced in its quest to expand access to and ensure completion of primary education for all Kenyan children. However, two regions remain where expansion continues to be challenging:- the sparsely populated and insecure arid and semi-arid lands and the informal urban settlements, or slum areas. KEEP, a four-year (2012 – 2016) DFID funded program seeks to address the critical issues of access, equity, and accountability in Kenya's education sector. The Supporting Complementary Schools for Equitable Education (SUCSEED) project under KEEP focuses on supporting vulnerable children who attend Low Cost Private Schools in informal settlements in Nairobi and impoverished areas in Mombasa, Kenya. The SDF project under KEEP in arid and semi-arid lands seeks to address supply side constraints such as long distances to school or lack of water and sanitation facilities.

The interventions addressing VE under KEEP are based on the hypotheses examined in the recent paper, "Drivers of Violent Extremism: Hypotheses and Literature Review" (Khalil and Zeuthan, 2016). A review of the evidence shows that there is little "correlation between levels of education and involvement in extremism". This suggests that the focus of interventions with youth have to look beyond just increasing the number of years of schooling. A qualitative overhaul in the system, focusing on fostering citizenship and wider behavior change is required.

There are several areas where a targeted education and behavior-change intervention can contribute towards the larger agenda of managing violent extremism. We group the approaches under the two following (non-discrete) categories – both of which work on the situational, social and cultural factors that contribute to the spread of violent extremism. Government failure to provide basic services allows extremist ideologues to exploit the dissatisfactions within the community. Framing an approach to tackle this would involve county governments playing a key role, apart from working with the Government of Kenya to expand services to these under-served areas. Access to education remains poor, and one can look at the following: expanding infrastructure, such as boarding facilities, and; expanding access through financial assistance to transition to secondary schooling.

Although the correlation between levels of education and involvement in extremism is weak, lack of employment opportunities (and as a result, a lack of 'hope' for a better future) could create fertile conditions for the propagation of extremist ideology. This presents two possibilities: students who do not transition from primary to secondary school and remain idle are amongst the most vulnerable; current statistics show that 30% of students enrolled in primary school do not complete their primary education. In north-east Kenya, this is a significant number and they are often responsible for anti-social activities and crime, and may even be 'paid' to create local disturbances. Strategic and market-linked skills development has an important role to play, especially in and around urban centers such as Mombasa. Since vocational education is a devolved function, an appropriate intervention would involve the close engagement of the relevant county governments.

The experience in the border counties in Kenya bear out the hypothesis that religious and ethnic identities that tend to compete with loyalties to the state are often misused to create and deepen extremist tendencies amongst the youth. Focusing therefore on not just the school curriculum, but on activities that go beyond the classroom could be important. For example, by working on madrassas, not seeing them as a place where students are radicalized, but as centers to drive a positive agenda of peace and citizenship.

As the Bank prepares for scaling up support for fragile and conflict affected countries through an increase in IDA 18, we believe that finding effective solutions for CVE among youth will be crucial. In the following section we provide a summary of lessons which we think are relevant for Bank task teams interested in financing interventions that counter violent extremism, usually within the broader objectives of the education sector program.

Key Lessons for the Education Sector

Primary Secondary Level⁹

High Drop-out Rates among primary and secondary school leavers contributed significantly to recruitment to extremist groups, in some contexts. Therefore addressing high drop-out rates may be the first step in reducing recruitment of young people into violent extremism. In the same way children and youth who have no access to formal education may be susceptible to recruitment and radicalization. Providing incentives (such as cash transfers) to parents to ensure children are enrolled and have access to education may be an important step.

Designing CVE Programs. Advocating for decentralized local initiatives that engage and give voice and agency to young people within the programs financed by the Bank will be an important first step. Programs must –as much as possible- reflect the distinctive features of the specific environment in which a particular group operates. Identifying key drivers of VE through localized research will help to design programs that are relevant and context specific. (Khalil and Zeuthan (2016).

Semantics and Labeling are important in these environments and must be considered carefully to avoid securitizing the education sector. A program that is labeled as “countering violent extremism” may garner negative reactions from communities and may in itself become a target of radical groups. As much as possible these CVE programs should be integrated into the everyday curricula and teaching methods rather than being introduced as a discrete initiative.

⁹ Many of these lessons are taken from workshops and conferences held by GCTF, Hedayah, Mercy Corps and other agencies who are active in this area of work.

Who delivers the intervention? In some contexts governments are mistrusted, in others secular education is seen as being a tool of western donor governments/international NGOs. It is very important, therefore, to ensure that education is delivered through agencies seen as neutral in these circumstances. Ensuring that CVE programs are seen as a means of supporting the wellbeing of communities and children is important in order to get buy in from families. Credible interlocutors who are connected to the education system and the community can often play a facilitating role.

Safe Schools. Schools need to be safe for teachers and students. Safe infrastructure (i.e., boundary walls, separate latrines for females, water points, cleanliness) etc., all contribute to making school a safe space. Not only does it make it difficult for outsiders to wander into the school space but it also creates a sense of community within the school. Most importantly, it is much more likely that female students will enroll if the school is considered safe and clean.

Critical Thinking and Life Skills. From primary and secondary school, children should be introduced to logic, critical thinking, problem solving, and negotiation skills. Examining issues in a value neutral manner, respecting others viewpoints, compromise, listening etc., are all skills learned at a young age. Empowering students to think critically, teaching them to challenge ideas, construct rational thoughts and engage in meaningful debate will be critical for them as they grow up. In an environment which values the “hard sciences” of math, science, engineering etc., ensuring that there is sufficient emphasis placed on other topics such as life skills and civic engagement, is an important contribution that the education sector can make.

Training Teachers for CVE. Teachers can be trained to detect early signs of radicalization (similar to what has been done in many western countries regarding use of narcotics by students). But it is important that teachers not be burdened with a complex topic such as countering violent extremism without being equipped with the necessary tools and proper support. Teachers who take on this role can themselves be targeted, therefore it is critical that they not be viewed as informants which could not only undermine the teachers’ relationship with the students but also their role in the community.

Addressing Trauma. In many fragile and post conflict contexts, families and children have experienced extreme violence and hardship. We also know that children exposed to violence may be more susceptible to recruitment and radicalization to violence. Yet many education systems are ill equipped to handle these situations. As a priority, CVE programs must ensure that schools and education authorities are able to provide children with the care and support they need.

Sports and Extracurricular Activities. There are approximately 20-25 hours per week that children are out of school, during which time children can get introduced to drugs, crime and violence. In these situations, research has shown that after school programs are a powerful antidote and may have more of an impact on the lives of youth than the formal classroom setting. In the same way, incorporating extracurricular activities as part of CVE programming may provide young people with an alternative to radicalization and violence. Participating in sports, arts and culture can also provide students opportunities to develop constructive goals, leadership and social skills. Coaching and mentoring strategies can be incorporated into CVE program and design.

Role of the Family and Community. Without the necessary support and reinforcement from the family and community, schools can only play a limited role in influencing a child. Therefore, CVE programming must go beyond the school to reach and involve families, communities and even local religious institutions. Engaging communities in their children's education and building trust between schools and communities must be a clear objective of CVE programs. Community service opportunities, interfaith activities, team sports, adult literacy classes, holding events where families can participate can all strengthen the link between school and community.

Decentralized Interventions.¹⁰ Strengthening capacity of local governments to target specific localities and social networks with a positive message that counters the voices of violence and encourages youth to support community development. For example, realizing that 60 percent of twitter feeds from Al Qaeda in Yemen were about development issues, a researcher from

¹⁰ Atran, S. (2016). *Youth: Countering Extremism and Promoting Peace*. Presentation at World Bank.

Oxford University tested an alternate message of engagement that led to 17 youth groups cleaning up 500 km of beach front. The Peace Network of Aware Girls, a youth NGO in Pakistan has successfully turned youth away from extremism by training 1,500 peace agents who have reached out to 10,000 young people in their communities. (Atran, 2016).

Key Lessons for Vocational Education/Skills Training

In post-conflict and fragile contexts, the World Bank has financed vocational training and skills programs as part of employment programs and also as part of demobilization and reintegration efforts. These programs are primarily concerned with employment and job creation and have taken a “do no harm” approach, rather than explicitly address CVE as a specific objective.

Policy makers see skills and vocational training programs as an important entry point for targeting youth and young adults for CVE. A recent technical workshop on Vocational Skills Development (VSD) in Geneva¹¹ discussed to what extent vocational and skills development programs could mitigate some of the multiple and complex drivers of violent extremism. Key findings are outlined below:

Holistic approach. Inclusive, comprehensive, context-specific and demand-oriented education and training programs are seen as efficient tools to prevent extremism. VSD encompasses basic education, technical and practical skills training and also soft and life skills. It contributes to empowering youth, enhancing their technical and analytical thinking and giving them a sense of purpose resulting not only in employability but also societal inclusion. VSD is different to the traditional Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs which focus primarily on the technical aspects and rarely include soft skills training.

Design Context-specific Programs. Rather than roll out “one-size-fits-all” programs nationwide, ensure that CVE sensitive skills programs take into account a thorough analysis of the local

¹¹ “Vocational Skills Development (VSD) in the Context of Violent Extremism”, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva (March 2016) supported by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

context including political, economic, cultural and religious beliefs, in a given society/community. Design of VSD programs must not only consider the local labor market context to avoid creating false expectations among trainees, but also the societal dynamics of the community including the risks of favoring one group over another and/or targeting “at risk” groups which may result in stigmatization of individuals.

Demand-oriented Education and Training. Youth are often perceptive of the conditions that lead their peers to radicalization and recruitment. Therefore, rather than see them as victims or perpetrators, taking into account their experiences and input when designing vocational and skills training programs can shape innovative CVE programs that are relevant to their cohort.

Key Lessons for Re-integration of Ex-Combatants

Support to ex-combatant reintegration is one of the most crucial elements of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process. The societal costs of failed ex-combatant transitions risk the danger of being extremely high. A study by the World Bank, Multi-Country Demobilization and Re-integration Program (MDRP, 2006), notes that ex-combatants who are unable to establish sustainable livelihoods and roots in a community may be drawn into criminal activity, violent political opposition and/or be recruited as combatants or mercenaries posing a threat not only to their own communities and countries but also to the wider region.

Types of Training. The majority of World Bank-financed DDR programs provide “hard” technical and vocational skills training – farming, construction, carpentry, mechanics, tailoring etc. Very few focus on life and soft skills which experts believe are critical for ensuring that ex-combatants reintegrate successfully. Ex-combatants may also benefit from different types of assistance depending on their profile: age, gender, marital status, level of experience as well as reasons for involvement in the conflict, duration and nature of combat experience, rank, health status etc. (MDRP, 2006)

Counselling and Psychological Support. In addition to direct inputs, measures to address psycho-social needs of ex-combatants must be established. Screening ex-combatants for post-

traumatic stress disorder and linking them to appropriate services is a critical intervention that can be supported as part of CVE programs. In addition counseling, mentoring, peer networks and learning from more successful colleagues have all contributed to ex-combatants successful reintegration.

Life Skills Training. Distanced from civilian life for months/years, many ex-combatants are unprepared for social interactions and community dynamics to which they return. CVE programs can help introduce awareness regarding healthy life styles, conflict resolution, social network building, civic education (democracy, rule of law, legal systems, human rights, etc.) as a part of the reintegration process.

Box 3. Reintegration and Education in Pakistan: Sabaoon Project

Sabaoon Center is a de-radicalization program run by Hum Pakistani Foundation, a NGO in Swat Valley in Pakistan. This program is unique as it is one of the few de-radicalization program in the world that is specifically aimed for children. The program is also unique as it is not only focused on de-radicalization, but also on rehabilitation and reintegration of children through a multi-disciplinary approach. While the goal of Sabaoon center is to equip children with necessary skillsets to help them integrate back into society, it involves perspectives from psychologists, mental health professionals, social workers, from the military, from the police, from community elders and school teachers. The program recognizes that one type of approach does not fit the needs of all children. The program remains flexible to cater to each individual child's need for successful integration. The next step will be to conduct rigorous evaluation of the program to better understand the effectiveness of Sabaoon Center's approach in CVE. <http://www.dawn.com/news/1208602>

[Text prepared by Sooh Yung Kang]

Conclusion

It is clear that education plays a very significant role in a country's development and stability, and equitable access to quality education is in and of itself a valuable goal for most governments. It is also clear that governments must go beyond focusing only on access to education – they must also focus on quality and relevance of their education systems in order to generate real impact. As described previously there is mounting

evidence that frustrated educated youth who have no access to jobs or who do not have the relevant skills to get suitable jobs are far more inclined to support violent extremism.

The evidence is less clear on how effective and impactful education interventions supporting conflict prevention have been both in terms of what has worked across countries and what has worked in a particular context (i.e., research that demonstrates interventions directly contributed to the prevention or mitigation of armed violence). In this paper we have identified several key lessons and good practices that may improve the effectiveness of education for CVE interventions. However, they must be submitted for rigorous evaluation before more resources are allocated and/or interventions are scaled up.

While the FCV CCSA can research the topic and provide the overarching framework within which the WBG must operate, the Education Global Practices is well placed to play an active role in piloting CVE interventions in FCV contexts and ensuring that rigorous impact evaluations are included as part of their design. In the context of vocational training programs that are undertaken both by Education and Social Protection Global practices, much more coordination is needed to ensure that more interventions in this area are piloted jointly bringing in lessons from both sectors. Working closely with partner organizations such as GPE which focus almost exclusively on delivery of education services in FCS, the Education Global Practice can invest in research in CVE programs and disseminate lessons learned that can help governments shape educational priorities and better allocate resources.

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