



TRANS-SAHARA COUNTERTERRORISM PARTNERSHIP (TSCTP) EVALUATIVE STUDY

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Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP)

Evaluative Study



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List of Acronyms

AF/PD	Bureau of African Affairs/Public Diplomacy
AF/RSA	Bureau of African Affairs/Office of Regional Security Affairs
AFRICOM	Africa Command
AQIM	Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
BRIGHT	Burkina Response to Improve Girls cHances to Succeed
CDC	Centers for Disease Control
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CT	Counterterrorism
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
DAO	Defense Attaché Office
DCM	Deputy Chief of Mission
DOD	Department of Defense
DOS	Department of State
DS	Department of State
ELA	English Leadership Academy
ESF	Economic Support Fund
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FSI	Foreign Service Institute
FSI/SPAS	Foreign Service Institute/School of Professional and Area Studies
FSO	Foreign Service Officer
FY	Fiscal Year
GCTF	Global Counterterrorism Forum
GOR	Grants Officer Representative
HAP	Humanitarian Assistance Program
INR	Intelligence and Research

LES	Locally Employed Staff
MAT	Mission Activity Tracker
MIST	Military Information Support Teams
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NADR/RSI	Non-proliferation, Anti-terrorism, and Related programs/Regional Strategic initiative
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OSC	Office of Security Cooperation
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
PAO	Public Affairs Officer
PAS	Public Affairs Sections
PD	Public Diplomacy
PDev	Peace through Development
PMP	Performance Management Plan
RAO	Regional Affairs Officer
RLA	Resident Legal Advisor
RSO	Regional Security Officer
SMS	Short Message Service
SOW	Statement of Work
TSCTP	Trans Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
VE	Violent Extremism
YALI	Young African Leaders Initiative

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This evaluative study looks at Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) projects in seven countries of the Sahel - Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal. Its focus is on projects overseen and/or implemented by the US Embassy Public Diplomacy (PD) Offices and how efforts are coordinated with the other agencies implementing the TSCTP, including other offices of the Department of State (DOS), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and Department of Defense (DOD). In keeping with the Scope of Work, the report contains recommendations on possible follow-on projects and how they can better align with countering violent extremism (CVE) messaging objectives; options for better integration with complementary longer term projects; global indicators or metrics across programs; and the use of a tracking system for monitoring future projects that is compatible with current web based portals. Annex 1 contains an inventory of TSCTP PD projects completed or ongoing, focusing on outcomes and effectiveness or reach of messaging.

TSCTP is the primary vehicle to coordinate U.S. counterterrorism policy in West Africa and the Maghreb regions of Africa. Initiated in 2005, the TSCTP grew to a multi-year, multi-agency effort to support diplomacy, development, and military activities to combat the spread of violent extremism in eleven countries: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Tunisia and Senegal. State, USAID, and DOD are primarily responsible for diplomacy, development assistance, and military activities, respectively, with State as the program lead.

The authors of this evaluative study visited Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal from November 2013 to February 2014 and met with US Embassy officials and beneficiaries. They conducted key informant interviews and focus groups to generate findings, conclusions and recommendations in keeping with their Scope of Work. They are summarized in the table below:

	Findings	Conclusions	Recommendation
1	Most PD grant files were available only in hard copy and seldom addressed project impact.	Filing protocols for TSCTP grants are not adequate for finding documentation of programs predating current staff.	Grant reporting should be standardized and supported by training.
2	Aside from basic grants monitoring, there is no M&E system in place at PD offices.	There are currently no objective criteria of success against which performance can be measured.	Once a results framework has been agreed upon, each PD Office should be trained to track a few standard indicators, coordinate assessments and track polling data.
3	Interagency working groups on counterterrorism were the norm in most Embassies, although the process was very recent in some.	Coordination works best when there is a regular schedule, regular participants and some degree of high-level buy-in.	Each Embassy should designate a counterterrorism coordination working group, led by the DCM, if they do not already have one. A key focus should be better integration with

	Findings	Conclusions	Recommendation
			complementary longer term projects.
4	Many PAOs feel that extra money from TSCTP does not come with the necessary staffing support and capacity to make it effective.	Investment in personnel and training is insufficient.	PD Offices should work with Washington to explore using a small amount of TSCTP ESF funding to hire additional local staff that can support TSCTP programming/oversight.
5	Most Embassy officers expressed at least some support for the idea of a tracking system for TSCTP. SharePoint is only used by State.	While the field agrees that a tracking system is needed, there is little enthusiasm in the field for a SharePoint tracking system reliant on field-based uploads.	TSCTP should develop and administer a Washington-based tracking system with PD offices, providing reports and other material for that system.
6	No regional major multi-country projects have been implemented under TSCTP for PD.	There is a need to look beyond the bilateral aspect of TSCTP and address regional problems, recognizing internal capacity shortages.	PD Offices should partner with their counterparts in neighboring countries, with the support of Washington, to consider regional proposals.
7	Embassy officers, implementers and beneficiaries reported a strong demand for English instruction.	Programs based around English language instruction can be a flexible mechanism for subtle CVE messaging.	Use English language programming, where possible, to leverage youth engagement while addressing legal challenges.
8	In some countries with inter-communal and inter-religious conflict, Embassies have designed TSCTP projects with conflict mitigation goals.	Embassies in Chad and Nigeria have had some success at building conflict mitigation into their programs.	In countries where communal conflict is a potential driver of extremism, TSCTP grants should encourage conflict mitigation.
9	Where messaging was the primary purpose of the grant, it is difficult to tell how widely the message was disseminated or how it was perceived.	Better information is needed on the size of the audience for TSCTP messaging efforts and on how these messages were received.	Use marketing tools and methodologies, such as listener surveys and more rigorous metric tools like those developed by USAID and MIST.

The evaluation team's primary task was to generate recommendations based on its findings and conclusions. Many of the recommendations overlap and reinforce each other. The evaluators recommend that the TSCTP program standardize its files and grants reporting system. In some Embassy Public Affairs Offices, additional reporting requirements could be addressed by using TSCTP program funds to hire an additional Locally Employed Staff (LES) member or other staffer. TSCTP-focused staff, whether an existing LES with additional responsibilities, or new hires, should receive training in grants management, with an added component of monitoring and evaluation. These staff would be responsible for helping the PAO submit information to the

Washington TSCTP coordinator every six months, and when a grant is completed. In Washington, AF/RSA should take the lead in receiving the grant updates from the Embassies, editing them as appropriate to highlight success stories, and posting them on a shared intranet site. The State intranet site would be centrally managed, but accessible to all USG personnel working on TSCTP. SharePoint would not be used because it is not accessible by non-State personnel. The shared intranet site would also include key documents, such as the new TSCTP strategy, results frameworks and common indicators that can be tracked. For PAO, a results framework, with indicators, should be developed with an emphasis on the guiding strategy's CVE objective, which is supported by eight sub-objectives (see results framework in Annex 3). In order to handle this increased work load, AF/RSA should be given a new full-time officer. Training should be offered to all personnel who are working on TSCTP grants, including modules on monitoring and evaluation.

Most Embassies have a TSCTP or CT coordination committee, led by the DCM or his/her designee, which meets at least once a month. This has proven to be a very effective model and should be replicated by all Embassies. The committee should include representatives from State/PD, RSO, Pol/Econ, USAID and DOD, depending on the nature of an Embassy's TSCTP program. With access to a TSCTP intranet site, Embassy coordination groups will become more familiar with programs in other Embassies and should be encouraged to work across borders to design regional proposals.

On the programmatic side, English language programming shows great potential as a CVE tool, given its broad popularity and flexibility. The TSCTP coordinator's office should work with the Office of English Language programs and the Office of the Legal Advisor to determine if and how additional English activities could be supported through TSCTP grants. Despite the need to centralize TSCTP administration and emphasize regional programming, Embassies should continue to fund grants addressing the unique situations in their countries. Countries with ongoing or high risk of inter-communal conflicts (e.g. Nigeria, Niger, Chad) should incorporate conflict mitigation goals into their programs. These programs could include training of moderate imams and religious scholars on religious tolerance, or joint workshops for Muslim and Christian youth. In countries where CVE messaging is employed, better information should be gathered on the size of the audience for TSCTP messaging efforts and on how these messages were received. Greater consideration should be given to alternative modalities for delivering these messages.

These recommendations are supported by a detailed report narrative and a number of annexes, including reports on visits to implementers and an inventory of all PD grants to TSCTP.

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Evaluative Study and Questions

This report is an evaluative study of Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) projects implemented in seven countries of the Sahel - Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal – the sub-Saharan African TSCTP-presence countries. Its focus is on projects implemented by the Department of State Public Diplomacy (PD) Office and how its efforts are contributing to the full complement of interagency countering violent extremism (CVE) programming. While the agencies implementing the TSCTP – Department of State (DOS), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and Department of Defense (DOD) - share a common mission of CVE and work in the same geographical zones, their programs have different audiences, as well as differences in tone, pacing and duration.

In keeping with the tasks contained in the Scope of Work, this report contains an analysis of the coordination/complementarity between USAID, DOS, DOD, and other agency activities in the realm of CVE activities funded by Economic Support Fund (ESF) resources allocated for TSCTP. In keeping with USAID evaluation policy, the format for analysis is based on findings from data collection followed by the attendant conclusions. Findings and conclusions are tied to recommendations. The recommendations cover the tasks stated the Scope of Work, including; possible follow-on projects and how they can have better alignment with CVE messaging objectives; options for better integration with complementary longer term projects; global indicators or metrics across programs; and the use of a tracking system for monitoring future projects that is compatible with current web based portals. Annex 1 contains an inventory of TSCTP PD projects completed or ongoing. To the extent possible, each project is examined in terms of objectives, activities, impact coordination and reach of messaging.

The seven specific tasks detailed in the SOW were the following:

- A complete inventory of projects completed or ongoing with outcomes and effectiveness or reach of messaging, (did program reach beyond the direct beneficiaries, did messages get rebroadcast, etc.) This will be covered in detail in Annex 1
- Analysis of the coordination/complementarity (or lack thereof) between USAID, DOS, and DOD activities in the realm of CVE. This will be addressed primarily in Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations #3.
- Recommendations for possible follow-on projects. This will be addressed primarily in Programmatic Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations - #7, #8 and #9, and in the study conclusion.
- Recommendations on how ongoing and future projects could have better alignment with CVE messaging (outreach) objectives. This will be addressed primarily in Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations #9.
- Development of a simple tracking system for monitoring future projects that is compatible with current web based portals (Share Point, Google). This will be addressed in Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations #5.
- Provide options for better integration with complementary longer term projects, either USG or other donor supported. This will be addressed in Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations #3.
- Recommendations for global indicators or metrics across programs. This will be addressed in Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations #2.

Background

The Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) is the primary vehicle to coordinate U.S. counterterrorism policy in West Africa and the Maghreb regions of Africa. Initiated in 2005, the TSCTP grew to a multi-year, multi-agency effort to support diplomacy, development, and military activities to combat the spread of Islamic extremism in eleven countries: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Tunisia and Senegal. The Department of State's Africa Bureau, Office of Regional and Security Affairs (AF/RSA) coordinates it. State, USAID, and DOD are primarily responsible for diplomacy, development assistance, and military activities, respectively, with State as the program lead. In each country participating in the program, a country team led by, and under the authority of, the Ambassador, coordinates the implementation of U.S. foreign assistance, including TSCTP activities.

Balance between a coordinated and decentralized approach. There are different levels to the interagency coordination process. Action Officers representing the various agencies meet periodically in Washington to coordinate activities and share information. Representatives from Washington and AFRICOM also meet regularly with Embassies in TSCTP countries, including at the annual TSCTP Conference. However, the first and most important line of coordination and oversight takes place at the Embassy level. Chiefs of Mission must concur with all proposed activities, as they are best placed to understand the immediate and long-term implications of various activities and are ultimately the primary interlocutors with host country governments. John Bray, Regional Security Officer (RSO) in Nigeria, who has written on the TSCTP at National Defense University, states that it is “one of the few initiatives that truly are whole-of-government.” He also notes that its whole-of-government approach grew from “the bottom up from the region rather than the top down” and is part of the reason TSCTP has remained flexible yet durable for the past nine years¹. Since TSCTP is designed to be a holistic program, however, the flexible and decentralized structure must be balanced with efforts to improve interagency coordination and coordination between Embassies and program managers in Washington.

A New Strategy and a Proposed Results Framework. In January 2014, DOS approved a “Guiding Strategy” highlighting the desired end states and strategic objectives and sub-objectives that knit together the broad U.S. counterterrorism effort of military cooperation, security assistance, capacity building, and targeted development to counter violent extremist organizations (VEOs) in the Sahel and Maghreb regions of Africa. The overarching strategic objectives are:

- A. Law Enforcement: Building the capacity of justice and security sector actors.
- B. Military: Reinforcing the political will, confidence, and capacity of national military forces.
- C. Border security: Enhancing the capacity of regional governments to survey, patrol, and secure borders.
- D. Countering the financing of terrorism: Assisting governments to establish and implement appropriate laws, institutions, and regulatory mechanisms.
- E. Countering violent extremism: Reduce sympathy and support for al-Qaida, AQIM, and other VEOs by strengthening resilience in communities at risk of recruitment and

¹ Recommendation 3 states that the process is more efficient if linked to a routine coordination process led by the DCM.

radicalization through improving livelihoods and social services for vulnerable, impoverished, and marginalized communities, in coordination with USG humanitarian and development efforts; encouraging and assisting governments and communities to develop positive alternatives to violent extremism; and improving relationships between those communities and government entities, especially security and justice sector institutions.

This final strategic objective (countering violent extremism (CVE)) is the focus of this evaluative study. The new strategy should also serve as the basis of any results framework for the TSCTP – both for the program as a whole and its five objectives, and a more detailed framework for the CVE objective.² The CVE objective is supported by eight sub-objectives (see results framework in Annex 3) that can be divided into three foci – all supported by State PD and USAID. The results framework divides the CVE objective into three categories of sub objectives - *development*: (strengthening resilience in communities at risk of recruitment and radicalization through improving livelihoods and social services for vulnerable, impoverished, and marginalized communities, in coordination with USG humanitarian and development efforts;) *alternative voices* (encouraging and assisting governments and communities to develop positive alternatives to violent extremism) and *governance*: improving relationships between those communities and government entities, especially security and justice sector institutions.

The Role of the State Department and Public Diplomacy under TSCTP. The primary focus of the evaluative study is the role played by Embassy Public Affairs Sections (PASs). Part of their mission is to inform and influence foreign publics by expanding and strengthening the relationship between the United States government, US citizens, and citizens of the rest of the world. Public Diplomacy, along with development activities, seeks to reinforce the civilian “soft-side” of USG counterterrorism efforts and demonstrate US commitment to reaching out and positively engaging vulnerable populations who are at risk of violent extremist messaging and recruitment.

TSCTP is only one among many programs PASs administer. Their public diplomacy outreach programs include communications with international audiences, cultural programming, academic grants, educational exchanges, and visitor programs. Traditionally, PASs are responsible for ensuring adherence to the five pillars of American Spaces: 1) promoting the English language; 2) promoting study in the U.S.; 3) cultural programming; 4) alumni engagement; and 5) information dissemination. These five pillars illustrate the primary activities PD grants, including those for CVE, will support.

TSCTP is not the only source of funding for CVE in the Sahel. Funding also comes from global accounts managed by the Bureau of Counterterrorism’s CVE office and the Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications (CSCC), which were established to coordinate, government-wide foreign communications activities targeted against terrorism and violent extremism, particularly al-Qaida, worldwide.

The USAID Role. While focused primarily on State PD activities, this evaluative study looks at USAID programs as well. USAID has particular technical expertise in CVE programming and monitoring and evaluation and has played a major role in thought leadership and coordination.

² USAID defines a Results Framework as “a graphic representation of a strategy to achieve a specific objective that is grounded in cause-and-effect logic.”

Importantly, USAID has implemented and managed several of the grants funded by TSCTP Economic Support Fund (ESF) resources.

Current USAID assistance efforts, such as the Peace through Development II (PDev II) program, include targeted interventions focusing on marginalized youth, and/or populations bordering ungoverned spaces or urban hot spots, partnering with community leaders and organizations, as well as youth, to spread messages of tolerance, improve public accountability and foster positive political engagement.

Funding Source: Most of the budget for TSCTP CVE projects reviewed by this evaluative study comes from dedicated State and USAID funding from several sources: most prominently, the Economic Support Fund (ESF) and Development Assistance (DA). From Fiscal Year 2008 through FY 2012, around \$18.0 million in ESF funding has been allocated for TSCTP related projects. These funds have been programmed through projects ranging in size from under \$100,000 to more than \$1.0 million.

METHODOLOGY³

This evaluative study is based entirely on qualitative methods – primarily document review, key informant interviews, beneficiary group interviews and beneficiary focus groups. Several individual grants were examined through field visits to examine specific approaches and, where possible, investigate project impact.

Limitations. One of the limitations of this evaluative study is that the grants provided by the Embassy PD offices may not be entirely representative. However, a broad number of grants were covered in each of the seven TSCTP countries in Africa, allowing an in-depth evaluation and assessment of the interventions. Additionally, other than budget numbers, there were limited quantitative data available for this study. Most conclusions were based upon qualitative findings gathered in interviews and focus groups. They do not meet the standards of statistical significance found in some quantitative evaluations.

Document Review and Inventory. The primary use of document review was for the PD project inventory. At the PAS of every Embassy visited, the evaluation team asked to review the files for all grants administered by the PAS under TSCTP since the beginning of the interagency program in 2005 – both those underway and those since completed. The evaluation team entered relevant information into the inventory matrix, which is organized by country and included in Annex 1. The evaluation team also reviewed other evaluations, assessments and sector studies. They have reviewed relevant contractor reports, unclassified cables, press stories, polling data, and analytical works on violent extremism, including those released by USAID.

Key Informant Interviews. The evaluation team conducted multiple interviews with key informants - a select (nonrandom) group of experts who are most knowledgeable of the organization and issue being evaluated. In the field, key informants primarily consisted of Embassy staffers responsible for aspects of TSCTP. They included Public Affairs Officers (PAOs), Political/Economic officers, Regional Security Officers (RSOs), Defense Attaches, DOD Officers of Security and Cooperation (OSCs), Military Information Support Teams (MIST); USAID Representatives, Deputy Chiefs of Mission, and, occasionally, the Ambassador. The

³ The full methodology section can be found in Annex 11

team also interviewed grant recipients, project implementers, and beneficiaries. The evaluation team endeavored to establish an atmosphere conducive to candor and honest assessment with all of its interview subjects. In some cases, such as statements from an Ambassador, the interview subject is identified by name. In most other cases, the person is identified by their position or seniority level, offering a degree of anonymity while giving the reader a sense of who was making a particular statement. These statements are the primary data sources for the operational findings and conclusions.

Focus Group Discussions. The evaluation team endeavored to conduct focus groups of beneficiaries in all seven countries it visited, and succeeded in doing so in Burkina Faso, Senegal, Nigeria, Niger and Mauritania. Most focus group sessions were recorded and transcribed (See Annex 2).

Highlighted Field Visits. In each of the seven countries in this multi-site evaluative study, the team visited TSCTP-funded projects. The purpose was to provide information about the overall experience of the TSCTP as well as a deeper understanding of the variations that occurred in different grant interventions. Highlighted grants were selected in collaboration with State PAOs and/or grant officers based on specific criteria, most notably the best cases within each country accessible to the evaluators. Since a major purpose of the assessment is to identify transferable best practices, the evaluation team focused on visits to projects the PAOs believed were the most successful, but do include some examples in which lessons can be learned. Because of space limitations, and to preserve the flow of the narrative, the full highlighted field visits are documented in Annex 2.

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section will address findings, conclusions and recommendations, divided into two parts. The first part deals with operational issues identified in the evaluative study Scope of Work. For each, findings based on data collection will be followed by conclusions and recommendations reached by the evaluation team. Operational issues include: 1) Maintenance of PD grant files; 2) Measurement systems of PD grants; 3) Coordination of TSCTP, both at the Embassy working level and among USG programs; 4) Issues of time and staffing; 5) Issues related to development of a TSCTP tracking system; 6) Issues related to regional programming. Programmatic issues include: 7) Use of English language programming; 8) Conflict and livelihoods programming; and 10) Use of private sector mechanisms to tailor messaging.

Operational Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

Finding 1. Most files were available only in hard copy and seldom addressed project CVE impact

Files for PD Grants were relatively easy to access in some Embassies, but harder in others. Most files were made available to the evaluation team only in hard copy format and were usually in folders containing the project proposal, signed grant contracts and amendments, budgets, receipts, and (sometimes) narrative reports. The evaluation team scanned the more important

of these documents, which will be provided separately.⁴ Additionally, the evaluation team was uncertain about the completeness of these files, as we relied upon Embassy staff to provide them. Often, Foreign Service officers also rely on institutional memory of LES' to locate older projects, which may contribute to the somewhat limited knowledge of and availability of data from prior projects.⁵ Lastly, it was uncertain whether the budget systems available would permit staff to find older grants and track them.

The 'cover sheet' for most of the recent grants was the DS-1909 Form – the US State Department Federal Assistance Award. When its fields are filled out, it outlines the amount and dates of the grant, the name and contact information for the grant recipient, and briefly summarizes the expected objective and activities.

The DS 1909 forms stipulate the record keeping expected and have the following written reporting requirement: *"A final summary report and financial status report is due 30 days after the grant expires. The Department of State encourages grantees to include an in-depth assessment and or/project evaluation in the final project summary report. The project summary should include quantitative and qualitative data relating to the project goals and objectives, project outputs and overall project impact."* Earlier forms were less stringent in their requirements.

In fact, the evaluation team found few final reports from grantees that included all the information listed in the DS 1909 cover page, especially regarding impact. More standard were reports, often written in French, which described activities implemented, sometimes in the form of budget line items, backed up by receipts. Some grantees (e.g., the English Learning Academy in Burkina Faso, the Hip Hop Akademy in Senegal, or the Maison de Cinastre film and photo project in Mauritania) produced more detailed reports and included summaries of meetings and/or photos from their activities. However, the evaluation team seldom found reports that addressed the project's overall CVE impact. In some cases, e.g., an older grant to an Islamic school in Niger, the grant file contained only expenditure reports and receipts.

Conclusion 1. Filing protocols for TSCTP grants are not adequate for finding documentation of programs predating current staff

PAOs were usually quite well-versed on the ongoing grants, especially those in which they played a role in initiating. Not surprisingly, PAOs were less familiar with grants that predated their time in country. As one PAO put it, "There is no institutional way for a PAO to know what went on before."

Knowledge about grants awarded more than three or four years ago was even scarcer. Turnover of PAS personnel takes a large toll on the institutional knowledge of the TSCTP grants. The primary source of knowledge of older grants usually rests with locally employed staff (LES) in the PAS. In Mali, the LES with responsibility for the TSCTP files had been with the office since 2006. In the eight years since then, he said he had worked for seven different PAOs. In some cases, (e.g., Nigeria), the files uncovered had remarkably rich documentation. However, the evaluation team was not clear whether it succeeded in documenting all TSCTP

⁴ All Embassies made good-faith efforts to provide the required files. However, the evaluation team cannot know how complete files are given its reliance on Embassy staff to provide them. Additionally, most U.S. Foreign Service Officers relied on the institutional memory of LESs to locate older projects.

⁵ This is less of an issue in Chad due to the long-term service of a USAID Personal Services Contractor who served as the institutional memory for the Embassy.

grants from that country. Filing protocols for TSCTP grants are not adequate for finding documentation of programs predating current staff.

Some of the confusion may stem from the multiple funding streams from ESF. In addition to funds designated to TSCTP only, there are funds through the CT Bureau and the Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications (CSCC) that support CVE projects. Often these funds have very similar objectives and are administered in the same way as TSCTP, with only the funding stream to differentiate them. Such budgetary and programmatic details often made it difficult to know which projects were TSCTP funded and which were not.

The quality of the grant files mirrored the capacity of the grantee. Local NGOs, especially those less accustomed to Western donors, often documented their projects insufficiently. When narrative reports were provided, usually in French, they often lacked material that adequately tied their activities to CVE objectives. This lack of reporting and management capacity from local partners has made some PAOs reluctant to initiate new TSCTP-funded grants, despite the availability of funding – a point that will be explored further.

Recommendation 1. Grant reporting should be standardized and supported by training

Reporting on grants should be standardized and appropriate to the capacity of the PD office and mission. This can be accomplished without making the requirements onerous.

The TSCTP Coordinator is now using a standard template for the TSCTP FY 2013 ESF Proposal Submission Form. The items on this proposal form should be tracked at the PD office where the grant was awarded and filled out on a final report for each grant. The final report would essentially compare results against what was listed on the proposal. An example of such a reporting form for ongoing or completed grants is in Annex 4.

With more prescriptive grant filing procedures, there will need to be a commensurate increase in training. Standardized instructions for files will need to be written so that locally employed staff (LES) can follow them. LES capacity across the Sahel varies significantly. There are some LES who perform quite consistently. However, in some files reviewed by the evaluators, even the form DS 1909, the standard template for reporting on grants, is filled out differently at different times in the same Embassy. This problem could be addressed with additional training for the responsible Grants Officer and, perhaps more importantly, the Grants Officer Representative (GOR). In most Embassies, the GOR is an experienced LES, who ensures the grant report is in the right format. An LES with GOR responsibilities would be a valuable addition regarding long-term memory on TSCTP. Training should be offered on specific issues such as the importance of using both dollar values and local currency when filling out financial information, since exchange rates vary over time. Training should also include institutional content on navigating the DOS bureaucracy.

This recommendation links with Recommendation 4, which calls for a percentage of TSCTP funds to go toward LES training and a salary for an additional employee to track and monitor the grants. It also overlaps with Recommendation 5, which calls for a centrally-managed intranet site/ tracking system on which grant documentation can be found electronically and can be accessed by both the field and Washington.

Finding 2. There is no M&E system in place in Embassy Public Affairs Sections

Aside from basic grants-monitoring, the evaluation team found no monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system in place at PASs. As mentioned in the findings on TSCTP files, there are few requirements for the monitoring and evaluation of PD grants, and there is no evidence that TSCTP grants receive more M&E than those grants funded differently. Most PD Officers freely admitted that there was no M&E system in place for tracking their grants other than quarterly reports from implementers and occasional site visits from grants officers. There was a difference of opinion as to whether there should be a more prescriptive M&E system, with some seeing greater M&E leading to greater accountability, while others see such a requirement as mandating additional paperwork at an office already burdened by reporting requirements. Some PD offices do report on some indicators as part of their Mission Strategic Plans, but there are no common indicators shared across posts.

To some extent, there is guidance for PD officers on M&E in these excerpts from Grants Officer Representative (GOR) Designation Letter:

“GORs have the authority to evaluate project performance to ensure compliance with assistance award terms and conditions. With prior notification of the Grants Officer – they can visit recipients at their place of performance and evaluate progress or problems. They receive and review required recipient reports on behalf of Government to determine if they are timely and complete...”

At closeout, they can review and evaluate recipient progress...

Reports should contain a) actual performance vs. scheduled performance; b) action needed (if any) to restore assistance award schedule; c) costs incurred... “

However, this guidance is in the context of grants management rather than M&E. Even so, it is rare to find detailed grant monitoring reports in the files of most TSCTP grants.

USAID. Projects administered by USAID, in keeping with that agency’s policy and their usually larger scale, have formal and far more rigorous M&E requirements. USAID projects, such as PDev, have elaborate performance management plans with large numbers of indicators. Indeed, there is criticism from some within USAID that tracking all the indicators on the new Performance Management Plan (PMP) may be too onerous (See PDev PMP in Annex 5).

The MIST System. MIST have their own indicators, with “number of calls to tip line” being the one most cited. Other metrics tracked by MIST, such as voter turnout, come from open source reporting and media monitoring. One indicator suggested by the MIST in Mauritania was ‘reach.’ “If a program is operating in Bir Megrein (a remote town) - that is operational reach.”

Higher Level Indicators. There is currently no log frame or results framework in place for TSCTP. Outside of USAID, there are no common indicators, either at the output, outcome or impact level. However, there are some information sources that are followed, or at least can be followed, across countries. The DOS Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) conducts regular surveys in most Sahel countries that provide information at a national level on attitudes toward extremism, terrorism and perceptions of the United States. However, INR is doing

random sampling on a national basis, not among targeted populations.⁶ Currently, the sampling is heavily focused on urban areas and not on the areas being targeted by TSCTP. These surveys can provide useful contextual indicators, but they cannot be attributed to USG programs. Still, as one senior Embassy officer put it “you get what you measure.” Despite the caveats, those familiar with the INR survey were supportive of the idea of using it as part of a TSCTP measurement system.

Conclusion 2. There are currently no objective criteria of success against which performance can be measured

Within PD, the grants management process, with its emphasis on contract compliance and reconciliation of expenditures, serves as the de facto monitoring and evaluation process. Accordingly, there are no objective criteria of success against which performance can be measured. Until the recent release of the TSCTP strategy, there was no organizational framework on which to measure success.

CVE programs implemented by USAID have incorporated the tenets of two USAID analytical guides written in 2009, as well as country-specific information from CVE risk assessments. However, there is little evidence of a common analytical framework across the interagency. The evaluation team found no common usage of the USAID CVE framework, or any other causal model, by non-USAID agencies. As one USAID officer said “This language is just for us...I don’t use this language when talking to others outside of USAID.”

PD and USAID do not share common indicators. The public diplomacy function does not lend itself as well to rigorous M&E as is the case in development. Traditional PD, with its focus on small grants supporting communications and cultural outreach, has no standardized system of metrics. However, under the new CVE objective in the TSCTP Strategy, many of the PD grants share common objectives with USAID’s development programming that are often, and appropriately, coordinated with USAID. The dividing line between public diplomacy and development is less clear in the CVE space.

The primary monitoring tool for USAID’s activity under TSCTP is the PDev performance management plan (PMP), which is detailed and complicated. For some USAID representatives, this is a sign of a sophisticated document tracking a complicated and multi-faceted program. For others, it is too complicated and has too many indicators.

OTI. In Mali, the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), a USAID office, uses numerous output indicators under the objectives: *Increase citizen confidence in and information about the democratic process and governance*; and *Promote reconciliation and social cohesion aimed at addressing drivers of conflict*. OTI tracks one F indicator: *Peace Dividends*. While OTI has a sophisticated and flexible M&E system, only one TSCTP country (Mali) has an OTI program, making OTI indicators less useful across borders.

MIST. The MIST System uses its own set of indicators. In Nigeria, MIST distinguishes between measures of performance and measures of effectiveness. For instance, a performance indicator would be the number of people calling into a radio show. An effectiveness indicator would be a survey testing reaction to a particular product, for instance

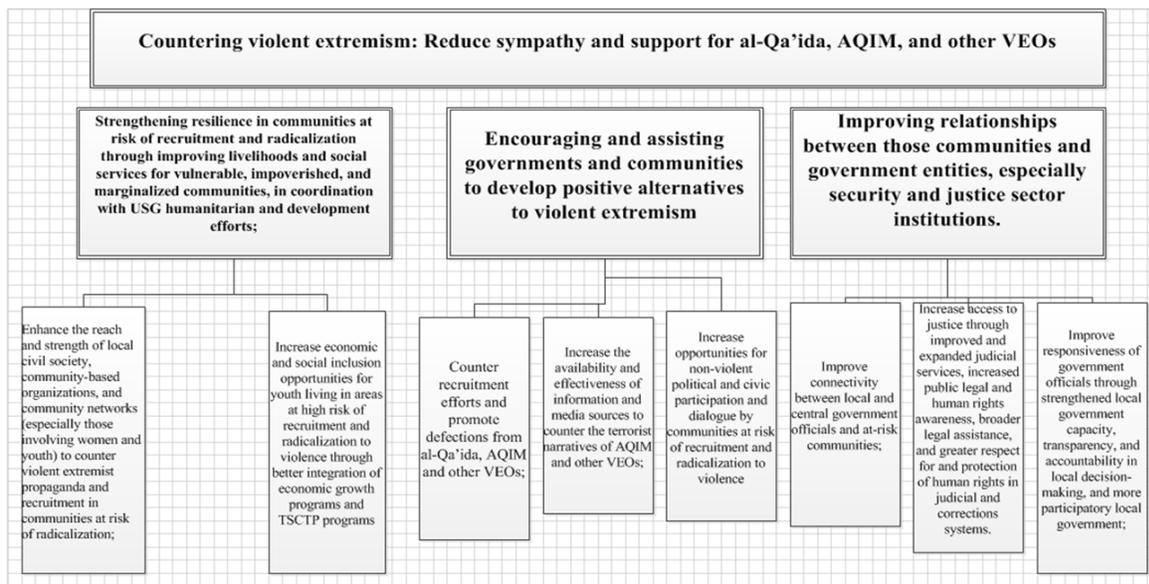
⁶ The data gathered through these surveys is considered ‘sensitive but unclassified’ and thus not available to many implementers.

CVE books. Respondents are asked, “Did you like them? Do you want more?” Data for higher level indicators would be collected through a second set of surveys, in which respondents will rate their agreement with certain ideas on a Likert scale with ratings between 1 and 5. However, only two of the TSCTP countries visited had a MIST presence, making these indicators difficult to use across borders.

Use of assessments. Outside of USAID and PD, where most activities take place in the security sector, M&E usually takes the form of assessment reports. Although the military is known for its rigorous system of metrics, no single system of indicators is used for TSCTP. As one Defense Attaché put it, “There are all sorts of metrics [available], but there is too much USG changeover to institutionalize anything”. Instead, “our team goes into the field to check if [the host country] forces are using our equipment, using it properly, and that the same trained troops are present.” While assessments are useful and appropriate in many situations, they cannot offer a common set of metrics for TSCTP.

Recommendation 2. Once a results framework has been agreed upon, each PD Office should be trained to track a few standard indicators, coordinate assessments and track polling data

Now that a new TSCTP strategy has been released, the next step should be to put it into a results framework and identify some indicators. (See additional detail in Annex 3). The diagram below shows an example of a proposed Results Framework for CVE, taken from the objectives in the TSCTP Guiding Strategy.



To be useful, results frameworks need indicators to track whether objectives are being reached. To the maximum extent possible, the indicators chosen should be based on measures already tracked in TSCTP countries so as to offer a baseline for future comparisons.

At the outcome and impact level, it is recommended that AF/RSA track annually the surveys funded through the State INR. These surveys provide a rare instance of existing baseline of opinion data on attitudes on VE issues. They are available to each country under TSCTP, are updated regularly, and provide information at a national level on attitudes toward extremism, terrorism and perceptions of the United States. While most sampling is currently on a national basis, USAID has bought into the survey in the past to ensure greater sampling in areas of interest. The survey asks questions in each country, such as “Do you believe Al Qaeda/AQIM is exerting a positive or negative influence in your country?” or; “Is it ever justified to use violence in the name of Islam?” INR cautions that these surveys should not be used to establish attribution to a particular program.⁷ However, it should be possible to oversample in certain areas with a strong TSCTP presence to gather valuable contextual data. TSCTP coordinators should work with INR to determine whether additional questions or sampling strategies could be developed to establish some level of attribution.

At the output level, TSCTP should track a few standard indicators, including some from the F system Peace and Security area, which would allow greater awareness of the potential impact of CVE messaging.⁸ F indicators relevant to TSCTP activities include: “Number of new groups or initiatives created through USG funding, dedicated to resolving the conflict or the drivers of the conflict;” or “Number of USG supported events, trainings, or activities designed to build support for peace or reconciliation among key actors to the conflict.” As for all F indicators, only indicators relevant to ongoing activities would require tracking.⁹

Also at the output level, the PDev PMP offers a number of opportunities for common indicators with PD – at least in Chad, Niger and Burkina Faso, where PDev and PD grants exist side by side and have complementary activities. Possible indicators that could be shared are highlighted in Annex 5. PD could transfer some funds to USAID to ensure their parallel projects could be monitored as well by PDev M&E staff.

Finally, any new training provided on TSCTP issues should also include a basic introduction to monitoring and evaluation, including the differences between outcomes, outputs and inputs and the best way to measure them. Embassies should also provide training in monitoring and evaluation to grantees. This could take the form of a half-day seminar for grantees on any grant reporting requirements and on how to access, track and report on data. Funding for extra training would be required to fully implement this recommendation, ideally by allocating a percentage of TSCTP funds currently allocated for grants.

This recommendation links to Recommendation 1 on a standardized filing system, since M&E should play an enhanced role in grants management. It also links to Recommendation 4 on training, since an enhanced M&E capacity will require training; and Recommendation 5 on a tracking system, since a TSCTP results framework and associated common indicators would be a major feature of such a system.

⁷ For instance, the favorability of the U.S declined in Niger after 2011, partly because of perceived US involvement in the Libyan civil war, not because of any programmatic issue.

⁸ F indicators generally only capture outputs and not outcomes or impact.

⁹ This would be conditional on having a TSCTP-funded LES to track the indicators, as mentioned in Recommendation 1. The system should minimize any increase in paperwork.

Finding 3. Interagency working groups on counterterrorism were the norm in most Embassies, although the process was very recent in some

Most Embassies visited by the evaluation team had some form of counterterrorism coordination body in place, although some were recently instituted and not well rooted. In some Embassies, the evaluation team found an uneven understanding of how TSCTP fits into the broader universe of CT and CVE programming. Some PASs did not have filing systems that could correctly identify which grants were TSCTP funded. While there was some awareness of the new Guiding Strategy of TSCTP, the components of the strategy were not well-known and the document, albeit very recent, was infrequently cited in interviews. Even knowledgeable officers characterized it differently. One officer referred to it as a “funding stream,” while another said “TSCTP is a guide to a set of funding streams as a means for coordinating counterterrorism.” While not a commonly expressed sentiment, there was some frustration with the lack of a clear hierarchical staffing structure in Washington for TSCTP. As one mid-level Embassy officer stated, “There is no organization [for TSCTP] and no one in the drivers’ seat.”

In some Embassies, the evaluators found robust coordination mechanisms that have been functioning well for years. In other posts, at least until very recently, there has been only a modicum of coordination among TSCTP programs, which was primarily informal and conversational. The table here shows what the evaluation team found to be the state of coordination during the period of the fieldwork. A USG interagency working group on counterterrorism was the norm in most countries. Some, such as Chad, Senegal and Nigeria, had only recently implemented regular coordination. Only Burkina Faso, a late entrant into TSCTP, did not indicate the presence of a committee. In most countries, the lead coordinator was the DCM, although the role was often delegated.¹⁰

Country	Coordination Mechanism	Participation	Frequency of Meeting
Burkina Faso	Mostly informal	DCM, Military Attaché, USAID, PAO	As needed
Chad	TSCTP Coordination meeting	DCM – Chaired Coordination Meeting, PD, USAID, RSO, Office of Security Cooperation; Economic and Commercial Officer:	Episodic
Mali	Peace and Security Working Group	Pol/Econ, Military, RSO, USAID and OTI. The agenda goes out a couple of days before the meeting.	Every two weeks
Mauritania	TSCTP coordination meeting	Pol/Econ (Chair); PD, MIST, CMSC, Pol Econ, RLA, OSC, and HAP (Humanitarian Assistance Team) and USAID	Every two weeks
Niger	Counterterrorism Coordination Group	Chaired by Resident Legal Advisor (funded by Bureau resources)	Monthly
Nigeria	CT Working Group	Political and Economic Sections, INL, Public Diplomacy, DAO, MIST, Counselor Affairs, RSO, RAO, CDC and USAID.	Monthly
Senegal	TSCTP Working Group, chaired by the DCM. Operational since late 2013	Political, Public Affairs, RSO, Consular, Regional Affairs, Legal Affairs and USAID	Monthly

Best Practices – Procedural. In some countries, primarily those that had been in TSCTP for some time and for which counterterrorism was a major issue, (e.g., Mali, Mauritania and Niger)

¹⁰ The coordination leadership role was generally not given to the Public Affairs Section

regular coordination meetings had been going on for years. The DCM, while formally in the lead, often delegates the chairmanship. In Niger, for instance, the CT Group meets on a monthly basis and is chaired by a Resident Legal Advisor, whose position is funded by NADR/RSI resources of the Counterterrorism Bureau. Sessions are short – 30 minutes or so-- but not all activity happens at the meeting itself. Votes can be taken over Outlook and ideas are discussed over email. Each meeting has an unclassified agenda and LESs are allowed to attend and sometimes provide briefings in their areas of expertise. For instance, one senior LES recently gave a briefing to the CT Group on the emergence of Azala movement in Niger – a fundamentalist Islamic sect that has been growing in recent years.

In Mauritania, TSCTP Coordination Committee meetings are chaired by the Pol/Econ officer and are held every other week. The process usually begins the day before the meeting as the chairman talks with participants and puts together an agenda. Most participants volunteered that the more productive sessions are those in which money available to distribute and the committee can brainstorm about proposals. Proposal drafts are prepared, circulated and discussed at the next meeting.

The RSO for Niger attends monthly CT coordination meetings at the Embassy to ensure that his programs do not “cross streams,” with other programs. While this will not happen often with PD, “streams will cross occasionally with FBI”. An example of poorly crossed streams might be provision of communications equipment. Multiple Embassy offices (or other donors) might be told simultaneously of the need for such equipment by their host country counterpart, resulting in communications equipment, some of it duplicative, “falling out of the Christmas tree at once.”

Examples of Embassy Coordination Participants in coordination meetings were mostly positive about the process. No one called the meetings a waste of time, although some indicated they attended selectively after reviewing the agenda. The evaluation team solicited examples of how coordination resulted in a positive development or avoided a negative one. The concrete examples often involved security sector coordination. For instance, the military liaison officer in Niger recounted how he learned at the CT Coordinating Committee about USAID’s problem with security in an area of operation for food delivery. Accordingly, he was able to get the Niger military to cordon off an area with extra security for food delivery.

Donor coordination. Another important aspect of coordination is the ability to process information regarding other donors. This is particularly important in the security sector, where the French and other donors are active in Sahel. Donor coordination can play a significant role in advancing CVE by forging common objectives among donors, promoting aid effectiveness, and mobilizing resources.¹¹ Since host countries usually have differing methods for donor coordination, it is incumbent on the US Embassy to understand what other international actors are doing in this area.

Participants in the Embassy coordination committees are able to orally pass on information they learn to their counterparts in the international donor community. The Resident Legal Advisor (RLA), (a Justice Department Position) in Mauritania, for example, is able to bring to the table her experience as the US representative on the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF). The TSCTP strategy states that the GCTF Sahel Working Group “provides an important mechanism to enhance donor coordination, identify regional priorities, and mobilize the necessary expertise and resources to address specific needs in the region.”

¹¹ Most foreign donors do not call their programs CVE

Conclusion 3. Coordination works best when there is a regular schedule, regular participants and some degree of high-level buy-in

Coordination, in some form, is taking place at all posts, to varying degrees of formality. The evaluation team concluded that coordination tends to work best when there is a regular schedule, regular participants and some degree of high-level buy-in. According to the chairman of one coordinating committee, “effective coordination comes down to communication and personal relations...and the involvement of the Ambassador.” The involvement of the TSCTP coordinator in Washington was also cited as helpful.

Whether there is enough coordination is a matter of some dispute. As one USAID representative put it, “there is lots of talk about coordination but information sharing is not coordination. The sum of all the parts is not coming together.” This, however, was not a commonly expressed view.

Close interagency coordination may be more important for USAID, an agency with less freedom to work with a number of involved counterparts, including religious groups and the military.

The evaluators also found that coordination was easiest at small posts and hardest at large ones. Officers at small Embassies spent more time together and had more opportunities for both formal and informal communication.

DCM-led coordination seems to work best. The model the evaluators found most frequently was a committee chaired by the Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM). With regard to TSCTP, PAOs and other Embassy officers generally report to the DCM or their designee. Equivalent to a Chief Operating Officer, the DCM is usually tasked with Embassy coordination, both within the State Department and at the inter-agency level. In Nigeria, for instance, the DCM has recently begun chairing the Task Force on CT, and is “looking at bringing coherence” to the process. With a number of important new projects coming on line and MIST now operational, there is a proliferation of related projects that need to pull together and avoid “tunnel vision.” Additionally, PAOs often have more limited expertise and training to manage programs as complex as TSCTP.

Civil-Military issues. Coordination between the military and civilian projects with development programs is the most difficult to manage, given that the audiences for the programs are very different. Views differed on the appropriate level of coordination between the military and civilian sides of TSCTP. For some, issues of host country sovereignty prevent the USG from asking a host country military that has received TSCTP-funded training to protect certain TSCTP-funded civilian programs. In other cases, OSC officers were proud of cases when they



were able to use their connections with the host-country military to encourage a presence in an area where a food distribution project needed security.

MIST. The Media Information Support Team (MIST) is the office that seems to focus most intently on coordination, especially with regard to CVE messaging. They are a presence in Nigeria and Mauritania, although they have been in Mali and may be in Niger in the future. According to the MIST director in Nigeria, “We have two sets of masters – we are where State and DOD come together.” MIST activities are sometimes funded by TSCTP and sometimes through their own funding. In Nigeria they are not funded by TSCTP, but have the authority to request TSCTP funding.

In Niger, the evaluation team had an opportunity to observe a visiting MIST team briefing of the Public Diplomacy Office on plans for radio spots, SMS messages and posters explaining Operation Flintlock, which was scheduled in Niger for later in 2014. The MIST officers sought input from the PD staff, including the LES, on their thoughts regarding the cultural implications of various messages. They asked if the pictures would play differently in Diffa or Agadez. They asked about the best visual to use in the tip line and solicited input on the message: ‘if you see something, say something’.

Operation Flintlock 2014, which was held in Niger in 2014, is an annual CT exercise between Western and African CT forces that has been conducted since 2006. It includes ground and air forces from around 18 countries and strengthens interoperability, information sharing and regional cooperation. It involves military training and involves visits from foreign military forces. MIST’s mission was to explain Flintlock’s presence to the population and counteract any misinformation rumors that could result from the presence of foreign military forces in Niger.

TSCTP Conference. The annual TSCTP conference, most recently held in Washington in October 2013, is a major coordination mechanism. Each participating Embassy is invited to send three people. Appropriately, the DCM is usually one of the three. However, there are seldom enough slots to send all the people who might benefit or would want to attend. PD officers, who recently participated in their own regional conference, are not always included in the larger TSCTP event, occasionally creating some resentment. The conference is currently the only major opportunity for regional coordination and information sharing among those working in TSCTP.

TSCTP Conference Call. The TSCTP coordination office holds monthly conference calls with all of the Embassies to discuss issues affecting TSCTP across programs. However, there is no separate conference call for the PAOs from across the TSCTP region to discuss their programming and challenges. While a conference call is a potentially good tool for coordination, participation from too many people can make calls unwieldy.

PDev plays a major role for coordination with other TSCTP elements. In countries where PDev operates – Chad, Niger and Burkina Faso - there are examples of coordination, especially with PD. In Burkina Faso for instance, several of the English Learning Academy (ELA) volunteers have gone on to work for PDev. ELA volunteers were also asked to comment on the PDev logo from a Burkinabe perspective. These efforts create synergies that enhance both sides of the coordination effort.

Some PD grants have roots in USAID programs. For example; BRIGHT was a CRS-implemented \$42 million program aiding 132 schools in Burkina Faso (see Annex 1). This was the inspiration for the school backpacks grant in Burkina, where CRS implemented a grant

distributing US Embassy branded backpacks to students in the north of the country. The evaluation team believes these synergistic efforts are a good starting point for better coordination.

Recommendation 3. Each Embassy should institute a counterterrorism coordination working group, led by the DCM, if they do not already have one. A key focus should be better integration with complementary longer term projects

Coordination should be increased, both in Washington and within the Embassies. The evaluation team agrees with the new TSCTP Strategy, issued in January 2014 that calls for stronger coordination and oversight of TSCTP as well as ensuring sufficient staffing and resources for managing activities. In addition, the TSCTP Review of June 2013 emphasized the role of the Washington TSCTP in drafting annual program objectives, providing directive guidance to Embassies, and reviewing program progress (with emphasis on M&E). It also suggested an MOU for stronger coordination of USAID/DOS/DOD roles and efforts.

At the Embassy level, the evaluation team believes that a coordination/working group focused on TSCTP and other counterterrorism issues, should meet on a regular basis.¹² Depending on the workload, a meeting once a month would suffice. The group should be chaired by the Deputy Chief of Mission or his or her designee. Given the busy schedule of an Embassy, participation ought to be voluntary, but people in key positions – PD, Pol/Econ, USAID, RSO, Military Liaison, RLA, and MIST – should be encouraged to go when possible. Should an LES position be established at the PAS level to focus on TSCTP as mentioned in Recommendation 4, this person should also attend the coordination meetings.

The nature and schedule of the coordination, however, should not be too prescriptive. A good example of a flexible and effective group can be seen in Niger. The DCM in Niger valued the “flexibility” of TSCTP and cautioned against too much direction in how coordination is handled by the Mission. The CT Coordination group in Niger is chaired by the Regional Legal Advisor. While the DCM has formal authority over the group, “I stay out of the way,” he said. The need for flexibility in the committee structure was echoed by the DCM in Chad, who stated that when it comes to coordination, “one size doesn’t fit all.”

While officers interviewed in most Embassies stated the importance of regular coordination meetings, DCMs, in particular, were unanimous in the view that the composition and scheduling of the group not be made too prescriptive. A military liaison, active in coordination, concurs: “Lots of flexibility is inherently necessary, and I don’t want guidance that is too inflexible.” Even if not mandated or prescribed, however, regular, DCM-chaired, coordination meetings are a best-practice that should be actively encouraged. Additionally, PAOs should consider a quarterly conference call with TSCTP’s Washington coordination office at which they can share regional best practices and information relevant to improved coordination.

While the agenda for the working groups should not be prescribed, coordination groups should strive to integrate CVE activities with complementary longer term projects. In countries with a PDev presence – Burkina Faso, Chad and Niger – the PAS and USAID should look for ways to reinforce activities.¹³ The same should hold true for non-PDev USAID projects with CVE components, including those in Nigeria and Mali. Embassy working groups should also have

¹² What is recommended here is not intended as an addition to what an Embassy may already have in place.

¹³ In Chad, for instance, PD grants are provided for radio stations in areas where PDev resources did not allow.

liaison with the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF) so as to identify other donor activities that could mesh with TSCTP.

Finding 4. Many PAOs feel that extra money from TSCTP does not come with the necessary staffing support and capacity to make it effective

Especially in the smaller posts, there is sense that the extra money from TSCTP and other similar funding streams does not come with the necessary manpower to make it effective. As the DCM in Chad put it: “There is a whole cafeteria out there of CT funding. But we need to choose wisely or we will get indigestion.” This perception also exists in large Embassies. According to the PAO in Nigeria: “We have a large staff and are hugely funded, but we lack systems and the properly trained or oriented staff that would allow us to process methodically everything that comes at us.”

Low Capacity of Partners. According to one PD officer, in a point echoed frequently by others, “I don’t have time to do most of what I want to do” including dealing with the press and management of multiple grants outside of TSCTP. In at least two instances, PAOs felt too uncomfortable with the capacity level of grantees chosen by their predecessor to initiate any new TSCTP grants. In both instances, the number of other non-TSCTP public diplomacy activities fills all available time. The evaluators encountered no complaints of inadequate TSCTP funding, but several about inadequate time to oversee grants from local implementers who are sometimes seen as untrustworthy partners. One PAO states, “I have trouble finding a partner with the capacity to implement a \$10,000 grant, let alone a \$100,000 grant. Most partners can’t report in English, and often not even in French. They have no budget management skills.”

Insufficient grants capacity at post. Many of the embassies implementing TSCTP programs are small posts, with few Grants Officers, or certified Grants Officer Representatives (GORs). In Mauritania the PAO served as the only grants officer at the entire Embassy. This puts a damper on the number of grants that can be signed. The necessary staff is not available to effectively design, administer, and monitor additional TSCTP grants.

Conclusion 4. Investment in personnel and training is insufficient

Several PAOs responsible for TSCTP grants felt they could have been better prepared during their Foreign Service Officer orientation about TSCTP. This was true for both first tour officers and veteran PAOs alike. Some FSOs found Foreign Service Institute (FSI) regional training on Africa to provide inadequate background on the Sahel and its security environment. There were complaints as well regarding an absence of training on the interagency level that defines TSCTP and other whole-of-government programs.

Greater knowledge and coordination will be difficult if it involves substantial new time commitments. There was support, especially in Mauritania, for the idea of providing more training on TSCTP and the Sahel region at the FSI. The DCM there agrees that the current one-day provided in the FSI on Africa was too general and that a focus on regions such as the Sahel might be effective, “although that would require a lot of teachers.” Training on M&E and Grants Management also was mentioned as important.

The evaluation team understands this is not a new issue for the State Department in Washington, and not everyone within the Department is convinced new FSI courses are

necessary. However, most people interviewed on this subject, in Washington or the field, believe more could be done to educate new Foreign Service Officers who will be involved in TSCTP. The team believes that FSI could be doing more to prepare FSOs working on TSCTP.

Recommendation 4. PD Offices should work with Washington to explore using a small amount of TSCTP ESF funding to hire additional local staff that can support TSCTP programming/oversight

As stated in Recommendation 1, which focused on the need for a more consistent grants management filing system and the need for someone to run it, a percentage of TSCTP funds should go toward LES training and, where appropriate and possible, fund the salary for an additional employee to track and monitor the grants. Around \$3 to \$4 million per year has been allocated to ESF activities under TSCTP in the seven African countries. \$500,000 to \$1 million of this funding should be allocated to salaries and training of LESs who will be dedicated to TSCTP grants management and oversight. They would also be tasked with assisting the PAO to send and update the necessary grants files to the Washington TSCTP office, as called for in Recommendation 5.

Additionally, a portion of this money should go for a new Washington-based position, which will provide greater capacity for a more centralized coordination and tracking system and process. Among the tasks of this new position would be the drafting and distribution of a new TSCTP manual that will describe funding opportunities and timelines, grants management procedures, highlight best practices and showcase particularly successful grants. This manual would be a major part of any new TSCTP training.

PAOs and other FSOs being posted to TSCTP countries should have access to training modules and materials on the Sahel, with background on CVE and CT issues, including terrorist groups operating in the region, threat information, and the broader theory of CVE interventions - topics on which there is currently little institutionalized knowledge. Additionally, training should cover how the State Department works with MIST. Interagency-focused training could also bring in new recruits to other TSCTP-related agencies to participate in complementary program lectures. Several PAOs expressed the desire for grants management training. Grants training should include material on monitoring and evaluation and how it overlaps with, but still differs from, grants management. M&E is a new skill for many State FSO's, but it is critical to providing effective oversight on projects. Given the turnover in PAS staff, emphasis should be placed on training new LES personnel during transitions. LES staff is critical for program continuity and material on TSCTP should be embedded in their grants management training.

As the USG's primary training institution for employees of the U.S. foreign affairs community, the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) provides a possible option to offer such new material, although this would require revisions to its current course schedule. FSI provides more than 600 courses to more than 100,000 enrollees a year from the Department of State and more than 40 other government agencies and the military service branches, from the National Foreign Affairs Training Center in Arlington, Virginia. The courses would probably come under the School of Professional and Area Studies (FSI/SPAS), which offers training in foreign affairs specialties. FSI courses range in length from one day to two years, but there is a limit to the course load for a new FSO.

Another important aspect of an FSO's training is the 'consultation' process, in which new officers consult with people and offices that have special knowledge regarding an issue that will

be important to the FSO's posting. Whether or not a revised FSI curriculum proves feasible, efforts should be made to ensure that new officers who will be involved in TSCTP have the time and support to hold consultations with the relevant interagency players on the Sahel, CVE, interagency coordination, and other areas of importance to their future work.

Outside of FSI, extra training would be useful. In the US, it may be difficult, since travel there is linked to home leave, or other official travel. However, workshops or conferences could be held in Frankfurt or some other intermediate location. Another resource for training of Embassy staff is the USAID CVE training that is available to DOS through regional workshops (2-3 per year). DOS participation in the past has been valuable.

Finding 5. Most Embassy officers expressed support for a TSCTP tracking system. SharePoint is only used by State

Almost all persons interviewed expressed at least some support for the idea of a tracking system for TSCTP. For those interested in TSCTP coordination, meetings were helpful, but not enough. One RSO said "I only get bits and pieces of what others are doing at meetings." One DCM stated: "Currently, if I want to find out what another Embassy is doing, I have to shoot an email to the DCM."¹⁴

The potential platform most discussed as a tracking tool was SharePoint, a Microsoft program currently used by many State Department employees. Of those DOS officers interviewed, most – although not all – were familiar with and used SharePoint in some capacity. In Nigeria for instance, the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), and the Political and Economic Section each have their own SharePoint sites.

Other tracking systems were in use as well. For instance, PD offices use a Mission Activity Tracker (MAT) – a web-based database in which all grants, including those under the TSCTP, are supposed to be tracked. MIST teams use a system called Prospector, on which they can track what their MIST counterparts around the world are doing. A MIST Team in Mauritania or Niger can track MIST activities in Afghanistan or the Philippines and compare their activities. However, the Prospector system is classified, not used by State, and has a mixed reputation among MIST personnel interviewed, some of whom find it complicated to use.

USAID does not use SharePoint. Most USAID officers the team spoke with were either unfamiliar with SharePoint or stated they did not have access to it. One USAID officer believed he could use SharePoint, but would have to leave the Google Docs environment in which he usually worked. When he does use SharePoint, it "tends to open slowly".

Connectivity Issues. Internet connections, necessary for SharePoint, are bad across the Sahel. In Chad, the PAO stated that connections are so unreliable, "we can't even take on-line exams and we have trouble using the MAT system." The Ambassador to Chad, James Knight, shares the view that SharePoint would be unworkable, at least in that country. "Whoever designs the system," Knight says, "should be able to fix it [when it isn't working]."

¹⁴ The NDU/CNA review recommends an "unclassified password-protected web portal to which all U.S. government TSCTP stakeholders had access, and into which all stakeholders would be required to enter data on TSCTP engagement."

Conclusion 5. While the field agrees that a tracking system is needed, there is little enthusiasm in the field for a SharePoint tracking system reliant on field-based uploads

A system, accessible across agencies that can track all activities, could create greater understanding of the disparate components of TSCTP. A PAO officer in Chad could get new ideas from going onto the system to see what grants had been implemented in Niger or Burkina Faso. If an activity in another country appeared to be replicable, the officer could borrow elements that were appropriate and even copy and paste certain information to save time and effort. A new PD officer, who had not encountered TSCTP before reporting to post, would be able to view source documents, such as the TSCTP Strategy, to determine what areas of CVE were most important. A military liaison, interested in what PD or development grants were ongoing in a particular military district, would have that information at his or her fingertips.

All PAOs who addressed the subject supported the idea of TSCTP being added as a tag to the MAT system, possibly with a click option. This would allow PD offices to have an electronic system in which they could see which of their grants, and which grants at other posts, were funded under TSCTP. However, MAT is very PAO-specific and would not be a realistic vehicle for tracking activities TSCTP-wide.

There is no support for any tracking system considered complicated. A theme the evaluation team heard consistently was that existing systems should be used instead of complicated new ones. “Don’t reinvent the wheel” was a phrase used frequently when discussing a tracking system. For some, SharePoint is a familiar system, but for many – especially outside of the State Department – it is not.

One DCM admitted to being “very cynical” about tracking systems, saying “I’ve seen a lot of custom-made proprietary systems burn out because of disuse.” For this DCM’s Embassy “the number one resource challenge is time.” Providing funding alone for such a system would not be enough, given the opportunity costs for any complicated new system.

SharePoint has many positive features, but its primary value as a TSCTP tracking tool would be to allow people to post material from multiple locations in the field in a decentralized manner. The field is where most current information on TSCTP resides, but turnover is constant. The DCM in Mali acknowledges that “turnover in Embassies is a problem for institutional memory,” but that “institutional knowledge should stay in Washington.”

Most field officers are not enthusiastic about a SharePoint tracking system. A common view held at senior levels is that field officers do not have the time nor inclination to update a SharePoint site. One DCM interviewed suggested a tracking system “should not be a burden to respond to, or update. It should invite reactions, keeping open a dialogue to keep moving in the right direction.”

Recommendation 5. TSCTP should develop and administer adopt a Washington-based tracking system, with PD offices providing reports and other material for that system

The Washington TSCTP coordinator’s office acknowledges that there is no shared filing system and agrees that there should be, a point made in Recommendation 1. A tracking system would provide a virtual filing system that can be accessible to all USG officers involved in TSCTP

activities and coordination. The State Department should establish an intranet site on TSCTP.¹⁵ It is recommended that it be regularly updated in Washington by a desk officer in the TSCTP coordinator's office. TSCTP-engaged field staff, from all relevant agencies, would be required to submit all relevant activity material and would be invited to write up best practices. Officers in the field would submit material to the central office, where the desk officer, possibly involving a new position, would edit and/or write up developments in a succinct manner that would increase the likelihood of it being read in other posts and across different agencies (see Recommendation 4). Tasking the intranet website to someone in Washington would allow a more holistic view of TSCTP to be presented. The site would resemble a centrally-managed bulletin board. An initial task would be populating the site with files from the last three years of TSCTP activity.

Posts should be encouraged to submit new information when it becomes available, or at least every six months. Submission of final reports should be required when a grant has been completed, in the manner suggested in Recommendation 1. Providing this information would be useful for incoming personnel and others in posts with similar conditions.

All project documentation from posts should be emailed to Washington in PDF format and would be kept in a central file. If a new staff person could be added to the AF/PD office, they could be tasked with maintaining an intranet site and uploading new materials. In the meantime, the PDFed files should be kept in Washington and organized to be posted when it becomes feasible. In order to publicize and encourage use of the site, or of the status of the Washington-maintained data base until the site goes online, AF RSA could issue a TSCTP Round-Up Quarterly Report in the form of a cable containing new updates. The approach would be "pushing rather than pulling." Synthesizing of new information should be done in Washington. In order to send out the reports, AF RSA would ask posts to update points of contact and would distribute the report through a list-serve email.

The intranet site should be designed within the State Department with the intent of making it accessible to other agencies, such as USAID, DOD and DOJ. It should have differing levels of access depending on the level of security clearance required to access different documents. The site should have links to each Embassy – subdivided into PAS, RSO, Pol/Econ, DOD and USAID – each with its own office-specific link. Files for all TSCTP grants, going back to at least 2010, should be accessible. The site would also have links to key documents, such as the Guiding TSCTP Strategy, other relevant USG strategies, and key USAID analytical documents, such as the Drivers and Programming Guides to CVE.

MAT System Changes. The Mission Activity Tracker (MAT) system is a PD system in which PAOs track their grants. MAT should have a way of indicating if TSCTP funding was used. Currently, it requires having the person who awarded the grant know about it. This may be as simple as adding a tab for TSCTP related activities. While not taking the place of the intranet site, MAT would be another place where grant tracking could be addressed in a manner consistent with the larger tracking system.

Finding 6. No regional major multi-country projects have been implemented under TSCTP for PD

¹⁵ PAS TSCTP files are usually Sensitive but Unclassified (SBU), but seldom Classified. Non-PAO material, especially from DOD, might have higher levels of classification. The intranet site should have different levels of access to reflect this.

The evaluation team saw little in the way of cross-border or regional programming in the public diplomacy area. For the US military TSCTP program, which was designed for regional action through AFRICOM, regional TSCTP programming takes place frequently, as seen in the exercises under Operation Flintlock. USAID oversees PDev, with its activities in Chad, Niger and Burkina Faso. However, no regional major multi-country projects have been implemented under TSCTP by PD. There are a few examples of regional cooperation among PASs. For instance, several Embassies, including Chad and Mali, sent journalists to Niger Flintlock preparations at the suggestion of the Niger PAO. Some initiatives in Mali are shared for comment with colleagues in Algeria, given the pivotal role that North African country plays in Malian affairs. Also in Mali, a 2008 grant brought several African journalists together for a conference, including three from Niger and one from Burkina Faso.

Conclusion 6. There is a need to look beyond the bilateral aspect of TSCTP and address regional problems, recognizing internal capacity shortages

There is support at many levels for development of combined proposals involving several posts. US Ambassador to Burkina Faso, Tuli Muslingi, emphasizes the need to look beyond the bilateral aspect of TSCTP and address regional problems. For instance, he is concerned that some extremist elements among Malian refugees may seek to recruit Burkinabe and others in the Sahel – a transnational challenge that TSCTP may be equipped to address.

The attitude of the host-country government plays a major role in whether regional programs are feasible. For instance, different Embassies had different views on how open their host country governments were to regional action. However, since most PD projects work with non-governmental entities, the primary challenge for a regional program would be to find organizations that operate across borders. The evaluation team encountered few of these. One, however, was the Niger Scouts. The Scouts do have a presence in most of the countries of the Sahel and offer a sense of positive identity to youth. Research on VE by USAID has found that youth longing for a sense of group identity is a powerful driver that can be exploited by extremist recruiters. As the quote above shows, scouting can offer a positive sense of identity – at least for some.

“I had a friend in school who was a Scout and I noticed her clothes – the shirt and the scarf. I made the connection with scouting after seeing the uniform. My friend told me about the group nearby. With the Scouts you have a good time, you have friends, you have relationships. And you contribute to your community. There are many advantages.”

Focus Group Participant - Female Scout (Niamey, Niger)

Given the limited capacity of many Embassy PASs, and a lack of clarity about who would serve as Grants Officer or Grants Officer Representative for a multi-country grant, logistics will pose a problem. However, if several PD offices were to jointly identify a potential project, it should be possible to submit a joint proposal and then seek Washington support for implementation and administration of it.

Recommendation 6. PD Offices should partner with their counterparts in neighboring countries, with the support of Washington, to consider opportunities for regional, cross-border proposals

Regional programs such as TSCTP need not have extensive multi-country programming, but they should have a regional effect resulting from multiple lines of coordinated bilateral programming. As coordination between posts on TSCTP becomes more common, PD offices should look for opportunities to submit joint proposals for multi-country activities. Opportunities should become more evident with the initiation of a TSCTP intranet site to which posts have access to information on the activities of other Embassies. Additionally, the State Bureau for African Affairs should solicit ideas for regional proposals.

Initially, this may involve going through larger, more-established implementers with a presence in several Sahel countries. One example is the Scouts, which operates across the Sahel – at least in capital cities. The current grant to the Scouts of Niger is in its early stages, making it premature to label it a success. Should this prove to be a successful grant, other Embassies may want to look at a regional program that would bring together Scouts from across the Sahel to share best practices and to establish a cross border community. Other possible examples could include work with religious organizations, such as the High Islamic Councils. (see highlighted site visits in Annex 2). Another area for regional programming might involve working with Malian refugees, a population of concern from a VE perspective. Refugees fleeing the conflict in Mali are currently residing in Burkina Faso, Niger and Mauritania. The first such joint grants should be limited to two or three countries, rather than all of the Sahel, in order to avoid coordination problems at the outset of a potentially complex process.

Programmatic Findings and Conclusions and Recommendations

The following findings, conclusions and recommendations are focused on programming, with an eye toward possible follow-on projects.

Finding 7. Embassy officers, implementers and beneficiaries reported a strong demand for English instruction

PAOs expressed support in principle for using TSCTP funding for more English language programming. Embassy officers reported a strong demand for English instruction, which was clear from conversations with beneficiaries as well. Beneficiary interest in English programs came up, unsolicited, in a focus group in Mauritania of members of an exchange program to the United States. When asked if any members of the group had maintained contact with people they met in the US, one woman admitted that her lack of English skills had made that impossible. The woman, an NGO leader, went on to say, “The US Embassy should have a program to learn English. That is the international language.”

Teaching English was a major activity for Peace Corps volunteers in the past. As the USAID Representative in Niger put it, “The best CVE program we ever had was the Peace Corps.” However, the use of Peace Corps language classes and other activities as a tool of US goodwill in the Sahel is vanishing, a prominent casualty of the deteriorating security environment. Of the seven countries visited during this evaluative study, only Burkina Faso has a Peace Corps program, and only in the southern part of the country.

Conclusion 7. Programs based around English language instruction can be a flexible mechanism for subtle CVE messaging

Most Embassies have English programs, a core PD activity, but the focus is seldom on CVE. Only one English-related project reviewed received TSCTP funding. Programs based around English language instruction can, however, be a flexible mechanism for subtle CVE messaging. One possible model is in Burkina Faso, where the PD Office is currently implementing a creative approach in which Burkinabe returned-Fulbright scholars teach English in isolated communities in the north. The English Leadership Academy (ELA) was instituted after the Peace Corps withdrew its volunteers from the north in 2010 because of security risks. Using the returned Fulbrighters, the program serves as a “proxy program” to address the vacuum in US presence in the north. US Ambassador to Burkina Faso Tuli Muslingi, a proponent of the ELA projects, said “the security situation will be as it is for the foreseeable future”, meaning that the Peace Corps is unlikely to be returning to northern Burkina Faso anytime soon. The USAID representative in Burkina Faso sees another value: “ELA may provide a foothold for future engagement. USAID would like to put a resilience program there, but can’t because of security. We would like to see how it is working with PDev.” (See highlighted field visit in Annex 2). English is increasingly popular for aspiring professionals, who see it as a necessary tool for advancement (see text box).

“At our company, most documents are written in English. [For this reason] my colleagues and I are interested [in this class].”

(Mining company employee and focus Group Participant on ELA – Goram Goram, Burkina Faso)

As a PD officer in Burkina Faso put it, “English is an important diplomatic tool, because people want it. It is not gimmicky, it is not propaganda, and it doesn’t come off as a bribe.” Because of the almost unlimited number of topics that can be used in English instruction, it also allows engagement on many topics. Overt CVE messages are not a primary focus in the relatively low-risk environment of Burkina Faso, but some activities have dealt with this issue. For instance, ELA sponsored a debate on religious tolerance in the northern town on Kaya in April 2013. With a thorough review of the cultural appropriateness of the curriculum, it may be possible for ELA instructors to inject themes of tolerance and peace into the English dialogues used to teach more advanced students. CVE can be made a goal of the ELA approach, but need not be the only goal. ELA’s primary goal is English teaching, a PD staple. “It is giving the people what they want, although its broader goal is education and engagement. “If you have a key to open a door, you are a friend, not an enemy.”¹⁶

“The US Embassy should have a program to learn English. That is the international language.”

Female focus group participant – NGO leader in Mauritania

¹⁶ While support for English as a CVE tool was shared by most PAOs, not all believed that it should be part of TSCTP.

Recommendation 7. Use English language programming to leverage youth engagement, while addressing legal challenges

Embassies should look to the Office of English Language Programs for assistance in future grants. PAOs in most of the offices visited by the evaluation team believed that CVE programs promoting the learning and teaching of American English around the world should be an integral part of the TSCTP. CVE messaging can be developed during instruction, especially in the construction of English dialogues for more advanced students. The message should be subtle, focusing on 'feel-good' concepts such as tolerance and community harmony, or life within the United States. Dialogues between the students with their returned-fellow instructors, , would be an opportunity to address these issues in greater detail if the students chose to do so. However, instructors would keep in mind the primary reason most students want to learn English – to advance themselves professionally. In the long-term, English language programs can advance CVE goals by expanding access to the local and global job markets, particularly among youth.¹⁷

The evaluation team also found that English language programming was particularly popular among members of the military and police forces. In Burkina Faso, knowledge of English was described by focus group participants as important for job promotion or opportunities with international peace keeping operations. Providing a CVE message – focused primarily on peace and tolerance rather than identification of extremists – could offer a way to complement and add balance to some of the military and police work skills members of the police and military may be receiving through other TSCTP components.

The State Department Office of English Language Programs has the lead in the design and management of programs to promote language learning and support the teaching of English. These programs are administered through local American Embassies and Consulates and are overseen by the PAOs, who are occasionally supported by Regional English Language Officers. The Office of English Language Programs also provides academic expertise and develops English teaching and learning resources for use worldwide. The American English website provides links to multimedia resources and information on exchange opportunities for teachers and students of English as a foreign language.

Currently, the English Access Micro-scholarship Program (Access) provides a foundation in English language skills to selected 13-20 year-olds from economically disadvantaged sectors through after-school classes and intensive sessions. Access gives participants English skills that may lead to better jobs and educational prospects. Participants in the two-year program also gain the ability to compete for and participate in future exchanges and study in the United States. It should be possible to tap this program for TSCTP grant proposals for selective youth from VE high-risk groups. The State Bureau for African Affairs should consult with the Office of English Language Programs to determine the extent to which the Access program can be a vehicle for TSCTP programming.¹⁸

¹⁷ English is also the lingua franca of the internet, where youth can find information about the alternatives to terrorism and violence.

¹⁸ To avoid traditional PD vehicles being overtly associated with TSCTP/CVE, it will be important to do this in a way that does not make it seem that all traditional tools are being used for counter-extremism. This could send the wrong signal to youth the USG trying to cultivate.

Embassies should also examine whether the English Leadership Academy approach highlighted here can be used in any country with a cadre of returned-Fulbright volunteers needing work. The program could also be expanded in important ways. For instance, PAOs could distribute basic text books in a more formal structure. Text books also offer the opportunity to include a culturally-specific CVE message of peace and tolerance. In Burkina Faso, ELA volunteers are largely on their own, operating in a non-structured environment. The ELA should be highlighted on the new TSCTP intranet page (see Recommendation 5). PAOs should survey returned Fulbrighters and other fellowship participants to determine their employment status. Another potential source of volunteers include youth returning from Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) programs now being initiated in some Embassies. YALI has an exchange component for young African leaders. Embassies could establish a required commitment to short-term volunteer service upon return for Fulbrighters and other programs such as YALI. If there is sufficient demand for an ELA-style program among the prospective teachers, PAOs should be encouraged to submit a proposal for such a program on a pilot basis, to be based in areas where the presence of US personnel is currently difficult. Regional programming, as mentioned in Recommendation 6, could be a possible outcome of such activities.

Finding 8. In some countries with inter-communal and inter-religious conflict, Embassies have designed TSCTP projects with conflict mitigation goals

In some countries with either high or moderate levels of conflict, the evaluation team examined programs based on the premise that local conflicts can be entry points for violent extremists. Accordingly, the Embassy in Chad, has designed a project focused on the training of imams about conflict mitigation. In Chad, where the problem is manifested through periodic conflicts over grazing by herders (often Muslim) and farmers (often Christian), this approach is being applied through the High Council for Islamic Affairs, which serves as a moderate voice of Islam.¹⁹ At least in Chad, the High Islamic Council is seen as an ally opposing militant views on Islam. According to Mahamat Khouroua, a member of the High Islamic Council, the council will remove imams considered “too radical.”

In Nigeria, the US Embassy funded the Bridge Builders Association of Nigeria to implement a project - Vocational Skills Training for Youths in Northern Nigeria, using Kaduna State for the pilot. The activity involved a three week training session in Kaduna, focused on teaching job skills, while also teaching inter-communal tolerance. After the training, the participants were given a grant of 20,000 Naira (\$123) to begin a business. A focus group held with participants showed support for this approach, although the reach of the program is more limited.

¹⁹ The High Council in Chad is an independent organization responsible for overseeing the religious activities of all Muslims in that country, including Koranic instruction, coordination of Hajj activities, representation of Chad at international religious events, and monitoring of mosque sermons and proselytization by Muslim groups. The Council appoints Chad's Grand Imam, who then oversees the organizations activities.

Conclusion 8. Embassies in Chad and Nigeria have had some success at working conflict mitigation into their programs

Given that extremist groups in Nigeria, Niger and Mali have used longstanding religious and ethnic conflicts in those countries to gain influence, peaceful resolution of conflict can have a high CVE value. When the local religious authorities have moderate inclinations, they can be powerful allies.

Chad Mabrouka Center. Chad's approach to conflict mitigation focuses on a relationship with a hierarchical organization – the High Islamic Council. Ambassador to Chad James Knight points out that “Muslims have a high respect for people of high position and reputation.” Working with the Islamic Council's Mabrouka Center in Sarh, the Embassy provided a grant to the US-based Salam Institute to conduct training and interfaith workshops for Christian and Muslim leaders on dialogue, community cohesion and conflict resolution. To improve the reach of the trainings, a cadre of 25 trainees were sent to local villages to convey the messages of the original workshops. Addressing communities in the Sarh region of southern Chad, the trainee cadre worked with local imams and Christian teachers to provide conflict resolution messages in village community centers, based on koranic and Christian teachings. (See Annex 2) Reporting on this project from the Salam Institute was clear and comprehensive, an advantage not always shared by African-based organizations.

“The interaction I had with people of diverse backgrounds, was an experience we need to continue within the community. Many people [in Kaduna] have negative views of the United States. But someone that comes from far away to assist you is a real friend. People that had negative views of the US, now have positive views.”

Muslim man Focus Group Participant, regarding Kaduna Bridgebuilders Project

Nigeria - Bridge Builders. At \$65,000, the Kaduna Bridge Builders program is too small to have a significant impact in a large country like Nigeria, with its long history of communal violence. However, this modest project is one of the most directly-targeted at the drivers of extremism encountered by the evaluation team. A hybrid project, it tackled issues of unemployment by providing livelihood training, while focusing on tolerance issues and inter-religious strife. As one Muslim participant in a focus group put it: “Kaduna is divided into two separate Muslim and Christian communities and it is very hard for someone to visit the other side. “But due to the training of the bridge-builders, we [now] interact.” (See Annex 2)

Recommendation 8. In countries where communal conflict is a driver of extremism, TSCTP grants should encourage conflict mitigation

If local conflicts are drivers of VE in a particular country, TSCTP programs should address conflict by encouraging intercultural and inter-faith dialogue. The Chad example offers a replicable model to do so.

The Chad model of working through the High Islamic Council offers the benefit of a well-respected local partner with an interest in promoting moderation and minimizing inter-religious conflict. Similar councils exist in other countries in the Sahel and have similar viewpoints. Embassies should make efforts to cultivate the relationship and determine whether a programming partnership is viable. Whether or not a partnership with the High Islamic Council

is possible, Embassies in countries in need of inter-religious conflict mitigation should develop programs to train moderate imams and religious teachers. The training agenda should fit the context of the country, whether it is herder-famer conflict or religious intolerance in different communities. Training programs should use a train-the-trainers approach that will allow project follow-up and more opportunities for the message to reach a wider audience through mosques, churches, and the media. The message should emphasize the importance of tolerance and respect between people of different faiths. If the primary conflict is between herders and farmers, the message should be developed in cooperation with local officials in charge of land use issues. It will be important that messages are disseminated throughout communities where inter-communal conflict is a threat. Therefore, a train-the-trainers approach offers the best opportunity for expanding the message, as in the case of the cadre of 25 trainees from Salam Institute training in Sahr Chad who were sent to local villages to convey the messages they had learned there. Without the cadre of trainees spreading the message after the training, the message may have limited reach.

Finding 9. Where messaging was the primary purpose of the grant, it was difficult to tell how widely the message was disseminated or how it was perceived

Messages for PD grants often took the form of media coverage for a training session or an infrastructure grant that sought to show U.S. policies in a positive light. In its field work, the evaluation team often encountered grateful beneficiaries who were effusive in their praise of the US Embassy. However, the evaluators were seldom able to tell how widely a message from a particular grant was being disseminated or how it was being perceived. While grantees sometimes collected information on how many people attended their seminars or trainings, information on indirect beneficiaries was usually speculative. Where messaging was the primary intention of grant, the evaluators found little information on how many people watched news shows with coverage of PD activities – for instance a news story on a community meeting on peace and tolerance - or whether these messages were understood in the way intended by the funders.

Conclusion 9. Better information is needed on the size of the audience for TSCTP messaging efforts and on how these messages were received

The evaluation team had difficulty determining the size of the audience for TSCTP messaging efforts and found even less information indicating how well these messages were received. One way to improve this information deficit would be through greater use of marketing tools and methodologies, including listener surveys, and more rigorous metric tools such as those developed by USAID and MIST. Information gathered through such tools would help assure the messaging methodologies adapted will be appropriate.

Managers of TSCTP grants were usually reliant on local media and word-of-mouth to convey points of view, so the intended message is often diluted. The US Embassy in Mali has faced the problem of message control head-on with a grant to the local affiliate of the advertising agency Spirit McCann. Arranging for a waiver to allow a grant to a private sector entity, the Embassy in Mali provided a \$508,313 grant to Spirit McCann (2013 – 2015) to conduct a Peace & Unity Media Messaging Campaign. Messages are collected from Malian opinion leaders and influential figures, to be distributed to media outlets throughout the country for thorough coverage in Bamako and the regional capitals, as well as for transmission on local community

radio stations in smaller towns throughout the country. Messages promote CVE themes of tolerance, reconciliation and religious acceptance.²⁰

Recommendation 9. Use marketing tools and methodologies, such as listener surveys and more rigorous metric tools, like those developed by USAID and MIST.

When the primary purpose of the grant is message dissemination, PAOs need to be as precise as possible in documenting the size of the audience reached. If, for example, a message is going out on a particular radio or television channel, PAOs should try and obtain information on the number of people reached by the signal and the ratings for a broadcast at a particular time slot. If time and budget permit, the Embassy should also attempt to get feedback from the audience, through surveys or focus groups, a modality often used by USAID and MIST as part of their monitoring and evaluation efforts

Embassies should also look for new ways to incorporate tracking of perception through other modalities, as appropriate. Options could involve working with MIST, such as the case in Nigeria where the team regularly surveys beneficiaries to determine how its products were perceived. In some cases, such as in Mali, a private sector, research organization (e.g., a university) or public relations firm could be considered as the situation warrants.

However, the degree to which the messaging is controlled by the US Embassy should depend on the context of the host country. In lower-VE risk countries, such as Burkina Faso and Senegal, projects focused on livelihoods, distribution of educational supplies, or cultural activities may be more appropriate than overt CVE messages. However, TSCTP managers should ensure that beneficiaries, both direct and indirect, are counted and recorded (see Recommendations 1 and 2). In cases where the CVE needs are more immediate, such as Mali or Nigeria, the US Embassy should become directly involved in shaping and disseminating that message.

Recommendation Summary

The nine recommendations above are necessarily linked to other recommendations. On the operational side, for instance, standardizing grant reporting (Recommendation 1, or R1) will require better understanding of M&E (R2), trained personnel to carry out the necessary tasks (R4), and will be closely linked to the creation of a TSCTP tracking system (R5). The operational recommendations (R1 – R6) have significant overlaps and should be considered as an interrelated package.

Recommendations for possible follow-on projects The following summary highlights projects mentioned in programmatic recommendations - 7, 8 and 9 - that have the potential to be replicated in other countries.

TSCTP Program	Description	Country of Current Operation	Countries of Potential Expansion
English Learning Academy	Using returned Fulbright volunteers to teach English in regions with no Peace Corps presence	Burkina Faso	Chad, Mali, Niger, Mauritania, (Francophone countries with no

²⁰ At this time, no ads have yet been aired.

TSCTP Program	Description	Country of Current Operation	Countries of Potential Expansion
			Peace Corps.)
High Islamic Council training	Training of imams and religious teachers; Cadre of trainees conducts community meetings in neighboring villages	Chad	Mali (another country with an influential and moderate High Islamic Council.)
Bridge-Builders Kaduna	Workshops on inter-religious tolerance and livelihood training	Nigeria	Chad, Mali, Niger (Countries with sizable Christian or Tuareg populations and a history of conflict)
Spirit McCann messaging campaign	Use of a private sector public relations firm to formulate CVE messages	Mali	Nigeria (Country with large budget and active VE message in need of countering.)