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# USAID/West Africa Peace through Development (PDEV):

## Program Assessment Report

**March 2011**

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# USAID/West Africa Peace through Development (PDEV):

## Program Assessment Report



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## ACRONYMS

AED	Academy for Educational Development
AEN	Association des Éleveurs et des Nomades
AI	Appreciative Inquiry
AIN	Association Islamique du Niger
AQIM	Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
CAG	Content Advisory Group
CP	Conflict Prevention
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
CYM	Community Youth Mapping
DoD	Department of Defense
FOG	Fixed-Obligation Grants
GSPC	Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat
HA	Humanitarian Assistance
ONEE	Organisation Nigérienne pour l'Éducation Environnementale
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
PDEV	Peace through Development
PSI	Pan Sahel Initiative
RC	Community Radio Reporter
RJD	Rassemblement des Jeunes pour le Développement
State	Department of State
TSCTP	Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership
UECN	Union des Ecoles Coraniques du Niger
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
YRTEP	Youth Reintegration Training and Education for Peace Program



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) contracted EnCompass LLC to assist them in assessing the Peace through Development (PDEV) program within the broader context of the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP). The assessment was conducted to better design the next phase of the program. Specifically, the goals of the assessment were to:

- Summarize the PDEV's program operational strategy and performance to date;
- Identify factors of success, lessons learned, and innovations pioneered through PDEV, TSCTP, and other counter-extremism program implementation; and
- Provide recommendations to be used in planning follow-on activities for PDEV.

## BACKGROUND

Established as the Pan Sahel Initiative (PSI) in November 2002, the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP) has evolved into a multicounty interagency effort that aims to combat violent extremism in the Sahel region of Africa. In this partnership with the Department of State (State) and the Department of Defense (DOD), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) implements the development-based portions of the TSCTP. USAID's current TSCTP activities include community-development activities in Mali, a research agenda examining the drivers of extremism in the Sahel, and the Peace through Development (PDEV) program in Niger and Chad.

PDEV aims to mitigate the potential for terrorism and extremism in the Sahel, and to deter marginalized populations from contemplating destructive and hostile ideologies that advocate conflict resolution by violence means. The current phase of the program began in 2008 program, and runs through 2011. It is managed out of USAID/West Africa and is implemented by the Academy for Educational Development (AED). Originally operating in Niger, Chad and Mauritania, PDEV programs in each country focused on three strategic areas: good governance; youth empowerment and integration; and media and outreach support. While PDEV in Chad has continued to develop its programs in all three areas, political changes in Mauritania and Niger necessitated subsequent changes in operations; the programs in Niger were reduced to focusing on media and religious outreach, and the Mauritania program was shut down completely. Plans are now underway to restart the program in Mauritania before the completion of this phase of the PDEV program.

## ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

A tailored assessment, grounded in the use of whole-systems thinking, appreciative methodologies, and qualitative data collection methods allowed for an understanding of the multidimensional nature of PDEV and its role in communities. Data collection activities included a desk review and interviews of key project staff in Washington, D.C.; a preliminary briefing with USAID/WA; fieldwork in Chad and Niger that included stakeholder interviews and site visits; and a final briefing of USAID in Accra.



The data collected and the analysis directly connected to the ten questions provided by USAID/West Africa and focused on program design, program evolution and learning, impact, and implications and recommendations. The assessment team used ATLAS.ti, a qualitative data analysis software package, to code and analyze both relevant documents provided by USAID, as well as the notes of the field team.

Many of the conditions that affect the PDEV program itself were also experienced in carrying out the assessment. Unpredictable security, travel, and health issues, as well as very tight timeframes posed constraints to data collection, analysis, and use.

## FINDINGS

In order to be useful at different levels of future program planning, this report presents findings from three different perspectives: Findings by program or result area, findings regarding operational strategy and success factors, and findings around larger strategic issues.

### FINDINGS BY EXPECTED RESULTS

PDEV's Results Framework has evolved to better reflect the intended results produced by PDEV at the activity level. By examining PDEV from the perspective of the program's Results Framework, the assessment team described program accomplishments and country differences by result area, noting the following activities:

- **Result 1: Improving Local Governance in Target Communities:** The development of civil society, radio programs about governance issues, and training of community leaders.
- **Result 2: Empowering Youth to Become Participants in Communities and the Economy:** **Community** youth mapping activities, vocational and life -skills training, in-kind grants for youth cultural activities
- **Result 3: Discrediting Extremist Ideologies:** Capacity-building of radio stations and promotion of moderate messaging. Finding by each activity are noted below.

Though not intended results of the program, other results were noted by the assessment team:

**Sustainable And Locally Owned Impact:** The participative approach, in combination with capacity building, has encouraged individuals and communities to design and implement activities without assistance from the program.

**Improved community cohesion in target communities:** While the emphasis has been mainly on addressing community needs and developing and/or strengthening community-based organizations, improved community cohesion has also resulted from PDEV's grant making process

**Positive behavioral changes through Civic Education Messaging:** The radio programs have stimulated some changes of behavior, particularly among the young listeners.

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FINDINGS RELATED TO THE OPERATIONAL STRATEGY AND PDEV SUCCESS FACTORS

In addition to examining PDEV programming by intended result areas, the assessment team analyzed available documents and field interviews about PDEV's experience and accomplishments, in order to identify the effective elements of PDEV's operational strategy. Through this analysis, the assessment team identified four essential steps in programming aimed at countering violent extremism, along with factors of success in programming for each step:

Essential Steps	PDEV Success Factors
<b>1. Assess and Understand the Context</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Using Assessments for Programming</li> <li>– Adaptation of and Flexibility in Programming</li> </ul>
<b>2. Establish Relationships and Build Trust</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Identifying stakeholders</li> <li>– Selecting and developing local partnerships</li> <li>– Building trust</li> <li>– Using a participatory approach</li> <li>– Visible and effective packaging of benefits</li> <li>– Understanding Relationships in the context of violent extremism</li> </ul>
<b>3. Strengthen Resiliency through Capacity and Infrastructure Building</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Capacity building               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Individuals</li> <li>○ Communities</li> <li>○ Youth associations</li> <li>○ National/local civil society organizations</li> <li>○ Partner radio stations</li> </ul> </li> <li>– Infrastructure building</li> </ul>
<b>4. Sustain Impact through Local Ownership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Empowering primary beneficiaries as local actors to become part of the solution</li> <li>– Collaborating locally to strengthen local ownership</li> <li>– Facilitating sustainability through building awareness, capacity, and resources</li> </ul>

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FINDINGS BY STRATEGIC ISSUES FOR USAID

The assessment team also identified findings related to the broader strategic issues for USAID that will be important factors to consider in the design of the follow-on TSCTP programming in the region.

**The sensitive nature of the violent extremism label:** The evaluation team found that the **sensitive** nature of the notion of extremism in Chad and Niger made U.S. implementing partners hesitant to share the ultimate goals of PDEV with their local partners. The reworking of the Results Frameworks helped reframe PDEV's objectives in ways that were less sensitive; however, the higher level strategic context often remained unarticulated.



- **The relationship of countering violent extremism programs and conflict prevention programs:** Where conflict prevention focuses on structural causes of violent conflict, countering violent extremism (CVE) activities look at the conditions that stress existing structures. It is important to understand the key differences, when each type of activity is most appropriate (vis-à-vis conflict); what is addressed; and the population targeted.

**The PDEV program in the context of other USAID programs:** The team identified design and implementation issues related to four areas:

- Program mix—governance, media, and youth
- Similarities Between PDEV and the Office of Transition Initiatives
- Prevention strategy
- Non-presence countries and the impact on technical and management success

**The theory of change of the PDEV program model:** The great need for a clearly articulated, testable theory of change was evidenced in the confusion and varying perceptions of program goals expressed by different stakeholders involved.

## CONCLUSION

Recommendations within each perspective are presented throughout the report for the overall program; Appendix 5 breaks down many of these recommendations to offer specific suggestions for Chad and for Niger. Throughout these findings and recommendations, five themes have stood out.

1. The **clear need for a well-defined and articulated theory of change** that recognizes the fluidity of the context and incorporates the means to test and adapt hypotheses, linkages to program objectives, and programming.
2. Reframing the focus of follow-on activities from the prevention of violent extremism to the **strengthening of community resilience** aligns with a development focus by better describing what PDEV activities have sought to develop.
3. **Building relationships and partnerships play a central role both** as a goal in itself, and as a successful strategy, for countering violent extremism.
4. The need to incorporate into follow-on programming **flexible planning systems that acknowledge and plan for the "constant" of change**.
5. The **use of monitoring and evaluation with a focus on learning** can inform both the theory of change as well as systems for planning around contextual changes. Further development of appropriate M&E systems as well as increased attention to and budget for these systems will be needed.



## I. INTRODUCTION

### PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENT

The Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP) is a multicounty interagency effort that aims to combat violent extremism in the Sahel region of Africa. In this partnership with the Department of State (State) and the Department of Defense (DOD), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) implements the development-based portions of the TSCTP. USAID's current TSCTP activities include community-development activities in Mali, a research agenda examining the drivers of extremism in the Sahel, and the Peace through Development (PDEV) program in Niger and Chad.

PDEV aims to mitigate the potential for terrorism and extremism in the Sahel, and to deter marginalized populations from contemplating destructive and hostile ideologies that advocate conflict resolution by violence means. The current phase of the program began in 2008 program, and runs through 2011. It is managed out of USAID/West Africa and is implemented by the Academy for Educational Development (AED).

In December 2010, USAID/West Africa contracted with EnCompass LLC to assess the PDEV program in order to gain a deeper understanding of what has been effective in the program and in other counter-extremism initiatives, and to incorporate that learning into PDEV for the next phase of work. The specific goals of this assessment were to do the following:

1. Assess the PDEV program
  - Clarify operational strategy and performance of the PDEV program model
  - Describe implementation of the PDEV program
  - Measure impact (intended and unintended) to date
2. Review the field of CVE development programming, exploring similar or related programs and their relevance to PDEV
3. Provide recommendations for future programming for PDEV

EnCompass conducted the assessment of the PDEV program shortly after the completion of a separate impact evaluation of TSCTP, commissioned by the USAID Africa Bureau's Office of Sustainable Development in Washington, D.C., that focused on the measurement of the impact of the partnership in Mali, Niger, and Chad. EnCompass' assessment was designed to complement the findings of the impact evaluation by clarifying the PDEV program's operational strategy and performance; reviewing similar or related programs in the field of counter-extremism; and exploring implications for future programming.

### ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT



The report is organized as follows:

- **Section I: Introduction** provides short introduction to the report.
- **Section II: Background** provides background on the TSCTP initiative and the PDEV program as well as the methodology used to assess the PDEV program.

In order to be useful at different levels of future program planning, this report presents findings from three different perspectives: Findings by program or result area, findings regarding operational strategy and success factors, and findings around larger strategic issues. Specifically, these sections include the following:

- **Section III: Findings by Expected Results** presents findings according to the program's Results Framework and program activities, to assist in planning in specific program areas. Additional results of the program are also featured.
- **Section IV: Findings Related to the Operational Strategy and PDEV Success Factors** identifies the core elements of a successful program process for countering violent extremism, and presents findings related to the program's operations and factors that enabled successes in the program.
- **Section V: Strategic Issues for USAID** highlights findings around the larger strategic issues, and presents overall recommendations for USAID to strengthen its countering violent extremism programming in the future.

Finally:

- **Section VI: Conclusion** reiterates the most important recommendations and presents concluding remarks

## II. BACKGROUND

### BACKGROUND ON TSCTP

One year after 9/11, the United States identified the Sahel as a new front in the war on terror and responded by establishing the Pan Sahel Initiative (PSI) in November 2002. Targeted countries included Chad, Mauritania, Mali, and Niger, which have vast ungoverned regions and large Muslim populations who suffer from extreme poverty and corruption. These countries were signaled out as likely targets for terrorist activities by violent extremist organizations, which include the Algerian-based *Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat* (GSPC). The GSPC declared its allegiance to Al Qaeda and rebranded itself the Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in 2003. The AQIM has used the Sahel as a safe haven, engaging in both extensive smuggling as well as occasional skirmishes with government forces in Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, and recruiting a small number of nationals from Sahelian countries.

Until 2005, the bulk of U.S. Government spending dedicated to countering terrorism in the Sahel focused on military assistance to develop the capacity of the targeted Sahelian governments to detect and prevent terrorist groups from establishing safe havens or launching pads for extremist movements. In 2005, Senegal, Nigeria, Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia were added to the initiative. In 2007, PSI changed its name to Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP), shifting greater strategic emphasis to development assistance as a key to preventing the spread of extremism in the Sahel.

The strategic objective of the TSCTP is to forge partnerships between the U.S. and African governments to combat extremism and empower beneficiaries to resist the drivers of extremism at the individual and community levels. At the highest strategic level, TSCTP's multiyear strategy is focused on defeating terrorist organizations and their ability to gain recruits by:

- a) Developing public diplomacy strategies to discredit terrorist ideology,
- b) Strengthening regional counterterrorism capabilities,
- c) Enhancing and institutionalizing cooperation among the region's security forces,
- d) Denying public support and sanctuary for terrorists through strategically targeted development assistance,
- e) Promoting good governance, and
- f) Normalizing bilateral military ties in the Sahel.

At the country level, one of the principles of the TSCTP is the recognition of the importance of creating partnerships between the United States and moderate governments in the Sahel, and facilitating increased cooperation among moderate governments to defeat extremist threats in the region.



The role of USAID within TSCTP is to work with communities and individuals to prevent the conditions that create an enabling environment for violent extremism and to build their resilience to combat the rise of violent extremism in Sahelian countries. The role of USAID in TSCTP is in line with its role under the *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism (2006)*: to diminish the underlying conditions that terrorists seek to exploit, such as a lack of democracy and governance, poor economic performance, widespread unemployment, and failing educational systems. In much the same way that the Department of State and the Department of Defense build partnerships at the national level, USAID's role is to build partnerships and relationships at the community level with at-risk groups and in at-risk geographic areas to address chronic problems leading to instability.

#### BACKGROUND ON PDEV PROGRAM

The current phase of the Peace through Development (PDEV) program began in 2008 and runs through 2011. Lacking an official USAID Mission in each country, the PDEV program is managed out of USAID/West Africa; the Academy for Educational Development (AED) is the primary in-country contractor for the program, with Equal Access, Mercy Corps, and AfriCare as its international subcontractors. In addition, in each country, the program has selected primary local implementers.<sup>1</sup>

Originally operating in Niger, Chad and Mauritania, PDEV programs in each country focused on three strategic areas: good governance; youth empowerment and integration; and media and outreach support. Specifically, within the governance sector, PDEV focuses primarily on strengthening civil society organizations that can then build and strengthen their constituencies, many of whom live in remote areas. Youth integration provides vocational and life skills training so that unemployed youth are equipped with livelihoods, thus reducing their dependence on external forces for income and making them valued members of their society. Media outreach works with radio and journalists to shape peace and tolerance messaging, and to provide civic education-type information as well as community based listening groups to discuss the messages.

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<sup>1</sup>In this report the term "PDEV implementers" refers to Academy for Educational Development (AED) (the lead implementer) and Equal Access. The evaluation team was informed by the management team that major program decisions (choice of local partners, program strategies) in Niger and Chad were taken in a collegial way; that is as "one team". The evaluation team did not find instances or evidence that show separate decision making processes between AED and Equal Access. However, local beneficiaries in both countries, particularly those of the media component, referred more often to Equal Access than AED or PDEV. Youth referred more often to PDEV or the local partners directly running the activity. In the rest of the report, the name of the PDEV local partners is mentioned when necessary and appropriate. Overall both the beneficiaries and local partners in both countries knew that the activities were funded by USAID or "Americans".



While PDEV in Chad has continued to develop its programs in all three areas, political changes in Mauritania and Niger necessitated subsequent changes in operations; the programs in Niger were reduced to focusing on media and religious outreach, and the Mauritania program was shut down completely. Plans are now underway to restart the program in Mauritania before the completion of this phase of the PDEV program.

The Results Framework also changed over the first two years of the program, to better reflect the results produced by PDEV at the activity level. (See Table 1.) These changes were a result of greater learning and better articulation of the expected results within each country.

Table 1. Changes in the PDEV Results Framework

Original Intended Results	Intended Results and Activities as of July 2010
Result 1. Terrorists denied support and sanctuary by improving governance and reducing ungoverned and poorly governed spaces.	→ <b>Result 1: Improving local governance in target communities.</b> A key underlying assumption of PDEV is that poorly and ungoverned spaces create opportunities for violent extremism to take root. Improving local governance in targeted communities not only denies extremists opportunities they can exploit, but creates stronger community resiliency in remote areas. Activities related to this result focus on strengthening civil society’s capacity to impart civic knowledge and democratic values and include the development of community development plans, grants for development activities, radio programs about governance issues, and training of community leaders.
Result 2. Terrorists denied support and sanctuary by reducing the pool of potential recruits (i.e. unemployed and/or uneducated youth).	→ <b>Result 2: Empowering at-risk youth to become active participants in their communities and the economy.</b> Youth integration provides vocational and life skills training so that unemployed youth are equipped with livelihoods, thus reducing their dependence on external forces for income and making them valued members of their society. Activities for this result include community youth mapping activities, vocational and life -skills training, in-kind grants for youth cultural activities, and youth-driven radio chat shows.
Results 3. Extremist ideologies supporting terrorist tactics are discredited.	→ <b>Result 3: Rendering superfluous ideologies promoting violence.</b> Ideologies are targeted through media outreach to shape peace and tolerance messaging, and to provide civic education-type information as well as community-based listening groups to discuss the messages. The activities under Result 3 include strengthening the capacity of local radio station by providing equipment and supporting moderate messaging through promotion of dialog among religious leaders.



## ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

### APPROACH

The assessment team used an approach grounded in the use of **whole-systems thinking** and **appreciative methodologies**.

A **whole-systems approach** helped to incorporate into the assessment design the complexity of client systems and helped to clarify roles and responsibilities, the nature and dynamics of partnerships, and the reality of country differences, organizational needs, and USAID standards and priorities. This approach allowed for better understanding of the context of each situation and the way in which stakeholders, processes, and systems interconnect. The interview and focus group questions were structured using a systems-thinking perspective, to ensure that multiple perspectives of stakeholders are respected and their roles in the whole system acknowledged.

Given the fragile and unstable environments involved in PDEV, EnCompass used an **Appreciative Inquiry (AI) approach** in assessment design and methodologies, and particularly in designing interview and focus group protocols. Briefly defined, Appreciative Inquiry is a process that inquires into, identifies, and further develops the best of “what is” in organizations and programs in order to build toward results that are more effective in the future. Instead of beginning by gap analysis and reviewing possible causes of problems and solutions, the assessment inquired into times when PDEV programs and other related initiatives have led to positive results; it then used the study of those times to explore strengths, challenges, lessons, and hypotheses.

This approach shifted the lens of analysis from a focus on fragile and unstable environments to an understanding of what works best in such environments. This focus on assets and strengths is especially useful in prevention programs such as PDEV that seek to assess the absence of a factor (e.g., destructive influences on communities and youth). The Appreciative Inquiry approach also engenders greater responsiveness from stakeholders in communities where economic and social challenges are abundant and sensitive. Stakeholders are more inclined to openly participate if the assessment allows them to frame their environment in positive ways. (A further benefit of an AI approach is its contribution to actively moving stakeholders forward in overall program processes, while reflecting the tone of positive alternatives to violent extremism inherent in the PDEV.)

### DATA COLLECTION

In assessing PDEV, EnCompass tailored an approach that used qualitative data collected through a variety of methods, each of which added value to understanding the multidimensional nature of PDEV and its role in communities in Chad and Niger. The data collected directly connected to the 10 questions provided in the SOW for this assessment of PDEV. Table 2 lists these assessment questions, reordered



into four parts: program design, program evolution and learning, impact, and implications and recommendation.

The following table summarizes key assessment areas and questions:

**Table 2. Key assessment areas and questions from the SOW<sup>2</sup>**

Program Design	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How, if at all, do the analytic resources on violent extremism (Drivers and Programming Guides) and country risk assessments inform programming decisions? (f)</li> <li>2. What is the model being used; what are the assumptions made (added)?</li> <li>3. How do the programs resemble more traditional or standard youth, media, and governance programs? How do they differ? (h)</li> <li>4. How do development programs in USAID non-presence countries differ from presence countries? (What are advantages and disadvantages?) (i)</li> </ol>
Program Learning and Evolution	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How were the lessons learned both in terms of the what (types of activities) and the how (ways in which the activities are implemented) applied within country program? (b)</li> <li>2. How did program activities evolve or change over time? (c)</li> <li>3. What are the documented programmatic impacts to-date? (a)</li> <li>4. How did the program develop local individual and institutional partnerships? (e)</li> </ol>
Lessons Learned and Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What impact/role did the visible benefits aspect of the program, i.e., community grants, youth job training, micro-credit have on the implementation (success) of the program? (d)</li> <li>2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the multisector approach of the program? (g)</li> <li>3. What recommendations do key stakeholders have for the next phase of the program? (j)</li> </ol>

Several types of data collection activities were used.

**Desk review:** EnCompass conducted a desk review and analysis of existing project documents to examine the operational strategies for achieving program objectives. USAID provided approximately 237 documents for the desk review. The assessment team catalogued all documents, eliminating duplicates and identifying key sources in the process. (Those documents found to be most useful are listed in **Appendix 2.**) Findings from the desk review were used to develop the protocols for field interviews, which are included in **Appendix 3.**

**Preliminary briefing:** Immediately following the desk review, as part of the presentation of preliminary findings of that review, EnCompass sought input from USAID/West Africa on the accuracy of desk review

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<sup>2</sup> Note: The letter following each assessment question is the order in which the question was originally listed in the SOW.



findings; the context and evolution of the program; and other TSCTP activities in these countries and in the region as a whole.

**Fieldwork in Chad and Niger:** The EnCompass field team of two consultants travelled to Chad and Niger to conduct key informant interviews, focus groups, and other fieldwork in order to provide a more in-depth examination of the assessment questions. The stakeholders interviewed included those directly involved with implementing the program; beneficiary groups and local representatives; and other donors, organizations and expert individuals. A list of all stakeholders interviewed is included in **Appendix 4.**

The assessment field team spent about 1 week each in Niger and Chad and used protocols developed from the desk review to conduct interviews and site visits. In Niger, the team conducted approximately 20 one-on-one interviews with resource people, facilitated 13 focus groups discussions and group meetings, and conducted 10 field visits in Niamey, Zinder and surrounding villages (Mirryah and Maigaria). In Chad, the team conducted 14 one-on-one interviews, facilitated 27 focus groups and group meetings, and conducted 12 field visits in Ndjamen, Mao, Moussoro, and Chaddra. In Niger the team met with the main implementing partners in Niamey and Zinder. In Chad, they met with partners /beneficiaries in N'djamena, Mao and Moussoro. In both countries, the evaluation team used a local translator when needed.

**Field team briefing in Accra:** At the completion of the fieldwork in Niger and Chad, the field team briefed USAID/WA and received feedback on their preliminary findings in Niger and Chad.

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#### DATA ANALYSIS

Desk review documents and field notes were compiled and coded for data analysis using ATLAS.ti, a qualitative data analysis software package. In the desk review, the assessment team used ATLAS.ti to code relevant documents based on the assessment goals and USAID's key questions included in the original SOW. The coded text from documents allowed the assessment team to organize data by theme. Analysis of coded text helped to identify key issues and questions that then informed the development of the field protocols. This analysis process was also used to examine implications and recommendations around various aspects of the PDEV program and approach.

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#### CONSTRAINTS TO THE ASSESSMENT SCOPE AND FINDINGS

As noted earlier, this assessment was not intended to serve as an impact assessment (particularly in light of the simultaneous separate impact evaluation of the ongoing programs in Mali, Niger and Chad commissioned by the USAID office of Sustainable Development); nor was there an expectation that the field team would be in a position to audit on-the-ground projects to verify accuracy of reported outputs.



Many of the conditions that affect the PDEV program itself were also experienced in carrying out the data collection and analysis activities (as discussed in the report), further constraining the assessment process as well as the use of the final report. Unpredictable security issues in country restricted access to PDEV sites in both countries. A very tight timeframe limited options for addressing inevitable disruptions caused by travel and health issues experienced by the field team. This timeframe also limited the extent of data analysis in preparation of the final report. Both the travel and health issues, as well as the immediate scheduling of follow-on planning and design, limited the use of the report in that planning.

In addition, this report suggests further areas of research that are beyond the scope, budget, and timeframe for this assessment. These areas include the articulation of a theory of change model and corresponding new results framework, where program goals and objectives are reframed from a resiliency perspective. Further research could also develop a clearer picture of CVE and where it falls on the continuum of the conflict prevention spectrum.



### III. FINDINGS BY EXPECTED RESULTS

The following section presents findings according to the program’s three expected results and activities. The assessment team found some additional results of the program, which are shared in **Other Results** at the end of this section.

#### RESULT 1: IMPROVING LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN TARGET COMMUNITIES

As noted, activities for Result 1 include the development of civil society, radio programs about governance issues, and training of community leaders. Finding related to each are featured below.

##### CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT

In Chad, the governance program focuses on civil society development. The emphasis is mainly on assessing and addressing community needs and developing and/or strengthening community-based organizations. The underlying assumption is that community resiliency can be built through income-generating activities, encouraging participative governance by citizens, including women and youth; and developing conflict and disputes management skills of community leaders.

The governance component in Chad has been fully implemented. The PDEV program has selected eight local NGOs, based on its unique expertise on a topic or connection to a particular segment of the population. Examples include:

- The Association of Herders and Nomads, which works with extension agents in animal husbandry in Moussoro;
- The Chadian Human Rights League, which works with communities to resolve intercommunal conflicts;
- LEAD Tchad, which trains and educates communities in Bar el Ghazal to develop income-generating activities in agriculture.

The local partners has been selected to implement community development projects related to training, civic education, and income-generating activities. A prerequisite to project implementation is the establishment of a representative governance structure from the community.

##### RADIO PROGRAMS ABOUT GOVERNANCE ISSUES

One of the major differences affecting media programming in Niger and Chad is the extent of radio listening culture in the two countries. In Niger, there are many community radios stations with youth-led chat groups or “Fadas” that PDEV has utilized as a platform for expanding the listening group concept. The same cannot be said in Chad, where there are a limited number of community radio stations. This difference shows on the result of the program. In Niger, the field team saw more engaged and organized



listener clubs, not far from becoming an organized network of more than 120 listeners. The evolution of these groups from listeners clubs to community development groups was only seen in Niger.

In Chad, community radio reporters were paid to organize listeners club (not the case in Niger) and listeners clubs were not cohesive groups. They met at the direction of the community radio reporters and disbanded after listening to the radio program.

In Niger, the PDEV program began the development of civic education messages with a participative assessment so that messages resonated with the target audience. The PDEV team organized a series of workshops with a variety of stakeholders including youth, religious leaders, and local authorities, to identify key themes for the radio programming. Triangulated with the results of the community youth mapping (see Result 2 below), the media team identified a series of main themes. This participatory approach helped guarantee that these themes reflected the needs of the people, as well as respected their norms and culture. The assessment also informed the choice of the format and languages for the radio programming.

In Niger, the PDEV program developed three radio programs:

1. Gwadaben Matasa—Covers youth-related issues and broadcast in French.
2. Hantsi Leka Gidan Kowa—Addresses governance using the format of radio drama or soap opera. This program is the most popular because of the important, relevant issues discussed.
3. Samu Zamunci—This program provides religious leaders, both Muslim and Christian, the opportunity to discuss societal issues from their religious perspective, thus sharing competing ideas in a constructive way.

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#### TRAINING OF COMMUNITY LEADERS

When the scope of work for PDEV was developed in 2007, Niger was fully implementing its decentralization framework. Though limited progress had been made, each commune was developing its own development plan and there was potential for PDEV to capitalize on this mechanism for bringing decision making closer to citizens. PDEV was able to conduct training in 20 communes on budgeting and priority setting before the project was obliged to suspend its activities due to political turmoil in Niger, and by December 17, 2009, the governance component was officially cancelled.

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#### RESULT 2: EMPOWERING YOUTH TO BECOME PARTICIPANTS IN COMMUNITIES AND THE ECONOMY

Overall, the assessment team found that through the PDEV program, youth are empowered participants in their community. Most youth involved in the program went through vocational training, life skills training, and entrepreneurship training. While many of them did not enter the world of work, they agree that their exposure to PDEV has transformed them in a positive way. For example, the youth community mappers in Ndjamena have designed and run multiple activities in their communities. Some youth have



been recruited by PDEV as young producers. In Niger, even though the youth component was cancelled, some youth who went through the vocational training have succeeded in getting a job or an apprenticeship, as is the case of the young community health agents.

As noted, activities for this result include community youth mapping activities, vocational and life -skills training, in-kind grants for youth cultural activities. Finding by each activity are noted below.

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## COMMUNITY YOUTH MAPPING

Because of the community youth mapping exercise, activities and issues concerning youth and relevant to PDEV were identified in both Chad and Niger. Community youth mappers have developed valuable insights into the PDEV target community. In addition to understanding these communities, the youth mappers have developed data collection and analysis skills that have increased an understanding of community concerns among local and U.S.-based implementers of the PDEV program.

The PDEV program capitalizes on the importance of youth and includes them through the community youth mapping (CYM) exercise, which is a youth-led data collection strategy to link youth mappers involved with a variety of community building processes, including identifying at-risk youth populations, and viable institutions. The tools learned by the youth via CYM have broad applications.

In preparation for CYM strategy, young people were recruited through a local organization, and trained in skills including data collection, data analysis, data management, data dissemination and presentation, public speaking, interviewing, small group problem solving, effective survey techniques, situational professionalism, communication, facilitation, and data integrity.

In both Chad and Niger, a local association working with youth was selected to implement the CYM.

In Niger, the NGO Karkara was recruited to implement the activity. Karkara staff and youth mappers were trained simultaneously. The first round of mapping was done in Niamey, under the supervision of AED. The second round was implemented in Maradi, Zinder, Agadez, and Tahoua. Karkara trained about 360 youth during this second round of CYM.

In Niger, community youth mapping was a new approach to both Karkara and the youth involved. Karkara has been able to use this capacity and expertise it gained in work they have done with other partners, i.e. OXFAM. However, according to some, the CYM did not work as expected– the delays in the delivery of the final CYM report limited the application of the results of the mapping exercise to PDEV activities in Niger.

In Chad, the local NGO *Rassemblement des jeunes pour le Développement* (RJD) supervised the CYM activity. RJD is a youth-led network of youth organizations. RJD recruited youth from each neighborhood (*quartier*) of Ndjamena and in the regions targeted by PDEV. Unlike in Niger where the data analysis was done by AED in the United States, RJD took responsibility for the data analysis during



the second round. RJD was appreciative of their increased capacity and knowledge gained through this partnership with AED.

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## VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Vocational skill development provided training on different trade skills including mechanics, sewing, computer science (Word and Excel), carpentry, gardening, electricity, and others.

The use by PDEV team of a multi-dimension approach that combines vocational and life skills training provided greater opportunities for youth development. In fact, despite the difficulties of economic integration, most youth recognize the value and the impact of this combination of trainings, particularly the life skills training. From a CVE perspective, it provided them with self-confidence, the “esprit de critique” or critical thinking skills to be engaged citizens. They still hope to become productive citizens by using their newly acquired skills.

Political instability in Niger led to suspension of the youth component in December 15, 2009. However, by that time, the program had already generated a lot of momentum and raised hopes among youth. About 1,000 youth were in their first trimester of vocational training when the decision of suspension was announced, resulting in disappointment and some frustration amongst these disenfranchised youth.

In Chad, about 320 youth were trained in Moussoro (55), Ati (168) and Mao (100). In addition to vocational training, youth received life skills training (self-confidence, health, and HIV/AIDS, professional behaviors in the work place).

In-kind grants also figured into the vocational training strategy however after the inconclusive experience of individual micro-credit loans during the pilot phase, PDEV shifted from individual to group loans. Youth organized into groups through a voluntary group formation process in which youth decide among themselves who they want to include in their loan group. These groups are targeted to receive start-up kits to launch income-generating activities.

Though the skills training has yielded some success, the assessment team found that the training of youth is marred by many challenges, including:

- Insufficient market analysis of the local economy. The program did not take the weak local economy into account in helping youth select viable trades for vocational training.
- Substantial gaps between training completion and application of those new skills due to delays in providing tool kit package or insertion into apprenticeship or world of work.
- Delays in approving funding for tool kits and equipment to complete the vocation training cycle.
- Changes in implementing partner relations, which have slowed the effectiveness of the vocational training program.

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## IN-KIND GRANTS FOR YOUTH CULTURAL ACTIVITIES



The level of realization of cultural activities was different in Chad and Niger. In Niger, there was a well-functioning, government-supported network of youth centers, with highly motivated managers directly paid by the government and accessible youth centers to a diversified cohort of youth. Each commune in Niamey had one of such youth centers. In Chad, the youth centers were mainly buildings, and the field team did not observe the same level of organization and dynamism. Particularly the youth centers in Moussoro and Mao were mostly attended by students. The presence of the more supportive youth centers in Niamey offered PDEV with a better chance to reach out to a diversified group of both in- and out-of-school youth. In Chad, extra efforts were required to reach out to a more diversified group of youth.

### RESULT 3: DISCREDITING EXTREMIST IDEOLOGIES

As noted, activities for this result include capacity-building of radio stations and promotion of moderate messaging. Findings by each activity are noted below.

#### BUILDING CAPACITY OF COMMUNITY RADIO STATIONS

In both Niger and Chad, PDEV has provided the following capacity-building assistance:

- Provision of equipment—computers, software, microphones, transmitters, etc.;
- Training of producers and technicians of community radio stations on topics such as technical maintenance, interactive radio programming, and the use of Adobe software; and
- Financial support—each community radio receives financial support for broadcasting PDEV radio programs.

In Niger, PDEV works with 58 community radios and the national radio station *La Voix du Sahel*. In Chad, PDEV works with 12 community radios and the national radio station.

Capacity development has been a critical piece to the viability and sustainability of the PDEV messaging goals. The skills and equipment assets will have long lasting impact on these local radio stations, and their use will continue long after the PDEV program is completed.

#### SUPPORTING MODERATE MESSAGING

The assessment team found that through PDEV's efforts, individuals and communities have been empowered to start the conversation on underlying issues driving violent extremism. The PDEV program has created a space conducive to exchange, through which moderates can engage in a religious dialogue with those sympathetic to religious extremism.

One of the impressive achievements of PDEV is its production of **intra-religious radio programming**. In Niger, the radio program *Samu Zamunci* provides religious leaders from different Islamic sects and Christianity the opportunity to discuss societal issues from religious perspectives, thus informing the



population in a constructive way. In Chad, the PDEV program sponsored co-production of a radio program by Radio Al Bayan and Radio Al Quoran, two religious (Islamic) radio stations that have generally found themselves on opposite sides of important societal issues. This initiative is a breakthrough for intrareligious dialogue, given each radio station differing perspectives of Islam that are often in disagreement on the Islamic interpretation of societal issues in Chad.

The PDEV program has also invested in **Koranic schools**, and worked with the *Association Islamique du Niger* (AIN) to develop a peace and tolerance guide, which has reached more than 6,000 students in more than 600 Koranic schools. A partnership between PDEV and the Salam Institute in the United States is also supporting the *Union des Ecoles Coraniques du Niger* to develop a curriculum centered on civic education, peace, and tolerance for the Koranic schools. The Director of the Koranic School in Zinder noted, *The community was surprised and happy to see that Americans were helping a Koranic school. We never thought it will ever be possible.* AIN/ONEE also produced a Bulletin in Ajami and distributed 6,000 bulletins to 100 targeted Koranic schools in Zinder.

In Niger, AIN and ONEE were recipients of a grant to organize a **conference on peace and tolerance** bringing together the four dominant Islamic sects (Tidjania, Malaki, Izallah, Kadria). The participants were Marabous (religious leaders) of five departments of Zinder. The proceedings of the conference were televised and aired on different radio stations. The conference was followed by departmental workshops targeting teachers of Koranic schools. Each workshop brought together 40 teachers of Koranic schools and involved magistrates to share the legal perspectives on issues related to peace and tolerance.

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#### MEDIA ACCESS FOR MODERATE VOICES AND DIALOGUE

In addition to strengthening the capacity of moderates within the Muslim community in Niger, the program has also carried its messages of peace and tolerance on the airwaves, expanding their outreach and sharing moderate perspectives with more of the population. For example, after the kidnapping of the 07 French, Togolese and Madagascar employees from AREVA at Arlit, the community radio station of Arlit launched a series of debates over the impact of kidnapping and its consequences on their community. They brought together community and religious leaders, as well as local authorities to discuss the impact and what could be done to prevent these kinds of acts in the future. The Arlit community radio station received support from PDEV in 2009.

#### OTHER RESULTS

Though not intended results of the program, other results were noted by the assessment team and featured below.

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#### SUSTAINABLE AND LOCALLY OWNED IMPACT



The participative approach, in combination with capacity building, has encouraged individuals and communities to design and implement activities without assistance from the program. In both Chad and Niger, community radio stations are now willing to produce local radio programs around issues of governance, peace, and tolerance. In Niger, community radios targeted by PDEV have recognized the added capacity and the impact of the partnership on their development and particularly for their sustainability. Many of them expressed their willingness and capacity to carry on some of the radio programming, particularly Hantsi (on good governance) even after PDEV is finished. In Chad, some community radio stations have even expressed the need to work in partnership with PDEV to develop local radio programming on issues of good governance. Radios El Bayan and El Quran are working together to launch a co-production of radio programming on religious outreach. This will be the first local partnerships between these two religious radios and more interestingly a major local co-production, which will be about youth and religion: *Shebab Ouaddin*.

Community groups or *groupements* have been created to manage relatively important income-generating activities and other community development projects, and some of these community projects have been scaled up to new levels by community members themselves. In Moussoro, for example, with the support from LEAD Chad, Moussoro 1, Moussoro 2, and Moussoro 3, (these are community based groups facilitated by LEAD Chad with funding from PDEV) have developed sustainable income-generating activities around cereals and gardening (*culture maraicheres*). These income-generating activities are managed by governance structures led by community members themselves. Business decisions, including new investments are now made by these community-based organizations. In addition to initial funding, PDEV through LEAD Chad has provided microenterprise management training and training on conflict resolution.

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#### IMPROVED COMMUNITY COHESION IN TARGET COMMUNITIES

While the emphasis has been mainly on addressing community needs and developing and/or strengthening community-based organizations, improved community cohesion has also resulted from PDEV's grant making process. Working with local partners in Chad, PDEV has supported community livelihoods and development projects. These projects were carefully chosen through a participative needs assessment. Most of the community development projects were income-generating activities. In addition to being income-generating activities, these projects provided community members the opportunity to develop new skills (i.e., micro project management, conflict resolution, and governance). They also provided opportunity for intergenerational and gender collaboration.

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#### POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL CHANGES THROUGH CIVIC EDUCATION MESSAGING

The radio programs have stimulated some changes of behavior, particularly among the young listeners. Some of them who were engaged in negative risk taking (drugs, risky sexual behaviors) told the



assessment team how much they have changed since listening to these messages. Some listeners have started community initiatives and awareness campaigns on issues discussed through the radio program.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings noted above, the assessment team has drafted the following recommendations to improve the PDEV program, which are grouped by expected result.

### RESULT 1: IMPROVING LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN TARGET COMMUNITIES

- Ensure that all programming, including specific local projects, have long-term goals and objectives that clearly fit into PDEV's overall program strategy, and that these goals and objectives are clearly understood by those selecting and implementing projects.
- To date, the governance program in Chad has focused on civil society development. The focus has been on citizen participation in increasing access to services and resources through community-development projects but not through, or in partnership with, the local government. This is seen as a missed opportunity, as linking communities to their government officials could be a stabilizing factor for remote villages. Good governance programming should seek to build relationships with local officials. In most cases, government-citizen relations contribute to stability.

### RESULT 2: EMPOWERING AT-RISK YOUTH TO BECOME ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES AND THE ECONOMY

- Consider incorporating community youth mappers to enhance monitoring and evaluation data collection of PDEV activities.
- Better inform youth on the options available to them for vocational training and the potential for gainful employment for each of the trades. In PDEV, some young people were trained in traditional vocations, with limited or no prospects. Certain communities can only support a limited number of carpenters. It is therefore important to look for new value-chains that can be supported by local economies.
- When beneficiaries, particularly youth, are given the choice of grants or training, their choice should be analyzed in the context of the community situation. Greater integration of existing supportive structures (youth centers, vocational centers), and leaders in the community (religious leaders, parents, workshop owners, etc), could contribute to a greater success rate in the selection of viable vocational careers. An excellent example can be drawn from the initiative of training young people in photography in Moussoro, thanks to a partnership with the National Geographic channel, which carried the promise of innovative income-generating activities. The



training, however, focused on teaching the craft of photography, not the trade. A clear understanding of the market and all the players of the photography value-chain in the region of Bar el Ghazal and Ndjamena would have been very helpful in transforming the training into a sustainable livelihood for the youth involved.

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### RESULT 3: RENDERING SUPERFLUOUS IDEOLOGIES PROMOTING VIOLENCE

- The confluence of partners around different messages within the same community adds to the strength of the overall PDEV goal. Link various initiatives (AIN/ONEE and UECN) working to educate, shift, and modify curricula in Koranic schools.
- Continue to develop relationships with moderate voices within the Muslim community.



#### IV. FINDINGS RELATED TO THE OPERATIONAL STRATEGY AND PDEV SUCCESS FACTORS

In addition to examining PDEV programming by intended result areas, the assessment team analyzed available documents and field interviews about PDEV's experience and accomplishments, in order to identify the effective elements of PDEV's operational strategy. Through this analysis, the assessment team identified four essential steps in programming aimed at countering violent extremism:

1. Assess and understand the context
2. Establish relationships and build trust
3. Build capacity and infrastructure
4. Sustain impact through local ownership

This section reviews each of these four steps; why each step is important in countering violent extremism; what factors in PDEV were found to have contributed to success for each step; and what else is needed. Table 3 lists these four steps, as well as corresponding factors of success in PDEV's programming.

Table 3. Essential steps and success factors in programming aimed at countering violent extremism

Essential Steps	PDEV Success Factors
<b>1. Assess and Understand the Context</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Using Assessments for Programming</li> <li>– Adaptation of and Flexibility in Programming</li> </ul>
<b>2. Establish Relationships and Build Trust</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Identifying stakeholders</li> <li>– Selecting and developing local partnerships</li> <li>– Building trust</li> <li>– Using a participatory approach</li> <li>– Visible and effective packaging of benefits</li> <li>– Understanding Relationships in the context of violent extremism</li> </ul>
<b>3. Strengthen Resiliency through Capacity and Infrastructure Building</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Capacity building               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Individuals</li> <li>○ Communities</li> <li>○ Youth associations</li> <li>○ National/local civil society organizations</li> <li>○ Partner radio stations</li> </ul> </li> <li>– Infrastructure building</li> </ul>
<b>4. Sustain Impact through Local Ownership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Empowering primary beneficiaries as local actors to become part of the solution</li> <li>– Collaborating locally to strengthen local ownership</li> <li>– Facilitating sustainability through building awareness, capacity, and resources</li> </ul>

#### STEP 1. ASSESS AND UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Understanding the context in which the PDEV program takes place is essential, both to be able to identify and assess the particular drivers of violent extremism that the program seeks to address, as well as to design a program that fit the needs and conditions of the area within which it is implemented.

The different contexts involved in preventing violent extremism are complex and are discussed in terms of contextual *differences* and contextual *change*. Contextual differences refer to how the context differs where PDEV is implemented; these include geographical, political, physical, socio-economic, cultural, and religious differences—all of which can have an impact on drivers of violent extremism and the differences in levels of violent extremism. Contextual change refers to the speed, frequency, and unpredictability of changes in the conditions and circumstances in which PDEV operates; contextual change can be expected given the instability of the areas where PDEV is working, as well as the many interacting systems and stakeholders affecting PDEV’s ability to implement activities.

PDEV implementers have recognized that each country has unique conditions requiring specific adaptation. The previous section of this report has described these opportunities and challenges and the way they have affected the implementation of PDEV, highlighting differences between Chad and



Niger. The conclusion of the report also highlights in a table, key programmatic suggestions based on the contextual differences, opportunities and challenges unique to each country (Chad and Niger).

The assessment team did not notice major differences in the program design between Niger and Chad due to contextual differences. The absence of substantial differences in the program design and implementation could be explained by the fact that contextual and societal differences between Chad and Niger that could have affected PDEV in a meaningful way were related to components that were suspended in Niger. These differences are more pronounced in political governance arrangement (national and local) including the role of civil society and youth participation, as noted in the baseline reports and country assessments (AED 2009a and 2009b).

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#### USING ASSESSMENTS TO UNDERSTAND CONTEXT

Contextual differences were identified using assessments that informed the overall planning of PDEV, particularly in targeting and different types of PDEV programming such as in-kind grants, and media programming. Several assessments were conducted in Chad and Niger to gather information related to the following factors that may affect countering violent extremism (CVE) programming:

- Violent extremism environment
- Community issues, needs and interests (local communal conflicts, land issues, economic and social vulnerabilities or risks factors)
- Media landscape
- Baseline indicators to be addressed through programming
- Political and administrative institutions
- Society's perception of youth and their political and economic participation

In interviews, PDEV implementers stated that they used the country risk assessments, but found them somewhat confusing, and often went with the reality on the ground. They did not mention using the analytic resources on violent extremism (Drivers and Programming Guides) for planning programs.

An important strength of the assessment processes used is that implementers of PDEV have taken a participatory approach that relies heavily on local stakeholders to understand context and needs. At the same time, in addition to providing information for programming, operations, and evaluation, these types of participatory assessments also have contributed to building trust and gaining buy-in of local stakeholders.

Less evident was planning for the impact of contextual differences on operations and the ability to manage or monitor program activities. PDEV did do safety and security assessments to assess security issues and operational needs for safety. Other conditions affecting programming did not receive as much attention. Such conditions included the slow bureaucracy. In Chad, for example, it took more than 6 months for AED to obtain the legal status of PDEV, therefore delaying the start of operation. Insufficient analysis of current socio-economic conditions in targeted areas in both countries resulted in



deficiencies in the effectiveness of the youth livelihoods component. The lack of a solid understanding of the economic vulnerabilities and opportunities affected the deployment and the success of the youth livelihoods component in Chad, (less effect in Niger since the component was suspended).

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#### ADAPTATION OF AND FLEXIBILITY IN PROGRAMMING

The impact of contextual changes also appeared to be less considered in planning, but was addressed in some instances by implementers as needed, through the adaptation of programming. Through these adaptations, there is a better understanding now of further flexibility needed to meet contextual changes.

As noted in the impact evaluation and other program documents, major contextual changes had a serious impact on PDEV programming. These included two coups (Mauritania and Niger); suspension of the Mauritania program; USG sanctions eliminating the youth and governance components of the Niger program; increased occurrences of violent extremism related activity in both Niger and Chad; and security-related travel restrictions and evacuations in Chad; and the order to move the PDEV Chad field office with 1 week's notice.

Given some flexibility in its design, PDEV has made some significant adaptations to its programming and operations based on such contextual changes, though much of the adaptation has been administrative. Examples of these adaptations include the following:

- With the *suspension of the Mauritania program*, AED suggested options for expanding activities in the other two countries, and at USAID's request, expanded upon selected concepts for Chad.
- Given new *security issues* in Niger. PDEV Niger finalized its Safety and Security Contingency Plan, reviewed its contents with staff, and adjusted travel plans.
- After *suspension of the youth and governance components in Niger* due to USG sanctions against the Government of Niger, to maintain relationships and minimize the disappointment of the youth and of the training institutes, PDEV sent teams to each school to meet with the students and explain the situation to them, answer their questions, and pay the students' last month of transportation fees that were due. AED worked with USAID to reprogram Niger activities, and to expand PDEV's Chad activities.
- PDEV also prepared a new 17-month PDEV program in Mauritania, and an extension of the task order through September 2011.
- With the *potential rise in extremism in Faya*, AED responded to a request from the Prefect in Faya for assistance in carrying out events that would counter a rise in extremism there. PDEV shifted programming to carry out the Faya Cultural festival, identified as "one of the most visible and positive tangible activities throughout the life of the project [AED Lessons Learned]".

Minor adaptations appeared to be a matter of course, and included adjustments to CYM activities in Chad due to security issues, changes in travel schedules due to transport issues, changes in assessment



schedules due to management turnover, and delays in programming due to registration problems. An ironic example of the need for such adaptations was given in the second quarterly report, which explained that “The security assessment, originally planned for mid-June but cancelled due to insecurity, was finally completed during the period September 14-28.”

The varied and unstable contexts, combined with the innovative nature of the program, require more flexible programming that is able to adapt and respond to those contexts and to new learning about CVE.

## STEP2. ESTABLISH RELATIONSHIPS AND BUILD TRUST

One of the central findings of this assessment relates to the role of relationship building. This section on relationship building, participation, and the role of local partnerships offers findings related to identifying stakeholders, selecting partners and beneficiaries, and building trust through initial activities.

In the context of the results framework formulated for the PDEV program, the development of partnerships and relationships, as well as the building of networks, is of utmost importance. Influencing people to become agents of change is at the heart of the program and important at every level of activity. Therefore, choosing the right partner on the ground, developing and strengthening networks and building trust among the partners and towards the USAID program is an integral part of the overall goal of the program.

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### IDENTIFYING STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholders for PDEV were identified through the assessments as described earlier, both more broadly at a strategic level, and on the ground through local assessment processes. There are many stakeholder groups relevant to PDEV programming, who hold different and sometimes multiple roles.

In addition to the primary international implementers (AED, Equal Access, Mercy Corp, Africare), in each country the program selected primary local implementers through a proposal process, based on their understanding of the program area and regions targeted. While PDEV did some capacity strengthening with these national civil society organizations, their role was focused more in the implementation of PDEV activities. These national implementing CSOs helped to identify and select the local CSOs, groups and associations to receive grants and other services. While the selection of local beneficiary CSOs followed a proposal process, PDEV did offer assistance to them in this process, further strengthening their capacity in participating in this kind of funding. For some grants and events, PDEV also funded consortia of organizations and associations.

Some of the individual beneficiaries of PDEV activities include youth receiving vocational and life skills training; those involved in community youth mapping; individuals receiving media training (e.g., community reporters or producers); and study tour participants.



Other important groups participating in PDEV activities include the listening clubs, which in some cases, through involvement with PDEV, evolved from listening clubs to community development groups, and sometimes to PDEV's content advisory groups, which provided feedback on media programming. In addition, different levels of governmental stakeholders have an effect on PDEV programs and operations in different ways. For example, U.S. Government agencies and policies can affect the success of the program. Host country national government policies, and the various ministries involved, can also play a role in the operations of PDEV. Likewise, host country regional and local authorities can be both actors in, and beneficiaries of, PDEV activities. **Appendix 1** summarizes these groups, their level of organization, their role in the project, and how they were selected.

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#### SELECTING AND DEVELOPING LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

The assessment team observed that local implementing partners were selected based on varying criteria, creating a group of partners diverse in capacity and experience but grounded in the community. From the outset it was made clear that the local implementing partners would have the freedom of choosing their activities. Where managerial skills were weak, PDEV provided a training and accompaniment to strengthen the local partner. The same strategy was applied to more direct grant giving and in-kind grant giving. Through this process, a trust partnership was developed between AED/Equal Access, the local partners, and the beneficiaries.

One of the core strengths of PDEV has been its approach to local partnership development. Partners were chosen based on the relevance of the ideas proposed, and their experience with the target group or community. While capacity was important, it was not the most important criteria. This approach allows organizations whose core work fits the purpose of PDEV to join the project, therefore increasing the chances of sustainability and local ownership. In other words, with or without PDEV, the local partners selected would have developed the type of activities supported, albeit not on the same scale or level of performance. PDEV brought additional resources and capacity, while local partners brought in the knowledge of the target group or community, local outreach, and local legitimacy.

In Niger for example, partnerships with *Union des Ecoles Coraniques du Niger* (UECN) or with Radio Bonferey helped reach out to both moderate Muslims and those segments of the Muslim population exposed to extremist messages. In Chad, the partnership with *Rassemblement des Jeunes pour le Développement* (RJD) facilitated outreach to all segments of the youth population (RJD is a youth serving network led by youth). In both Niger and Chad, each local partner brought to PDEV a unique value.

The text box on the next page describes the process used to select local partners in Niger; the same template was followed in Chad. While it appears that the criteria led to better results, it is difficult to create a strict causal link or correlation between one criterion and particular results. Also, the overall strategy of PDEV grant making mechanism is risk-averse, requiring NGOs to have years of experience, an ability to “pre-finance”, experience in collaboration with multiple NGOs, the ability to support surprise



visits, and documented results. While these criteria included a certain level of managerial capacity and experience, in cases where the NGO was only slightly short of the level of capacity required, PDEV did provide some training. However, this overall approach still may exclude the possibility of working with certain community organizations that may have the local connections, organizational will, and community legitimacy to best meet PDEV counter-extremism objectives.

### **The PDEV Grant Making Process in Niger and Chad**

*A call for proposals*—The call is publicized in media, networks of USAID implementers and beneficiaries. The documents providing detailed information on the terms of references are collected by applicants at PDEV headquarters in Niamey or Ndjamena; or sent via email to the potential applicants upon request.

*Selection committee*—The selection committee is internal, composed of AED and Equal Access staff members.

*Selection criteria*—The selection criteria depend on the project, but the main criteria are management capacity of the applicants, official status (registered with the authorities--no informal organization is qualified), implementing strategy, number of years of existence, and familiarity with the stakeholders affected or involved with the proposed activity.

*Publication of results*—The winners and the losers received a letter explaining the reasons. In most cases they are given a choice between three projects.

*Due diligence and management form*—The process is to understand the level or the capacity needs of the recipient and identify any potential conflict of interest. The recipient then receives help from PDEV to develop a formal and acceptable proposal. This process is an important capacity-building process, as the recipient is exposed to USAID criteria and proposal development. It is important to mention that the capacity developed is to help the recipient develop a standard proposal. PDEV will also check the references of the recipient (due diligence).

*Launch meeting* —PDEV organizes a launch meeting with all the recipients and previous beneficiaries, to explain methodologies and procedures; as well as letting previous beneficiaries share their experiences. During the meeting, the letter of commitment is signed, as well as the PMP plan, which comprises a series of deliverables and results to be met by the recipient. Disbursement of funds follows the principle of “pre-financing”, where reimbursement are made after each deliverable.

The principle of “pre-financing” has been denounced by beneficiaries as an obstacle to local organizations that do not necessarily have the cash flow to engage some of the expenses necessary to



meet a deliverable. The flexibility and transparency of the grant making process were well appreciated by the grant team.

Less evident to the field team were partnerships with local authorities. Much was included in the RFTOP on the involvement of local authorities, the importance of fostering collaboration between local government authorities and civil society organizations, and working with the level of government that is closest to citizens. This lack of collaboration with local authorities was more pronounced in Niger; a situation aggravated by the suspension of the governance component of the program.

There is some indication that the pilot program in Chad had as its goal the promotion of “conflict mitigation and stability in Chad by fostering the development of effective partnerships between the local governments and NGOs”—and providing training for local leaders focused “on practical issues relating to better management of limited local resources and community level advocacy.” The RFTOP also included as a key activity for PDEV the integration of “educated out-of-work youth into supportive roles for local government and/or communal councils.”

PDEV involved local authorities in community dialogues and needs assessments, yet there appeared to be less involvement with them during project activities. The recent impact assessment emphasized how critical it is to continue to work to build the capacity of local organizations and local governments.

The elections scheduled in both countries over the next few months could provide PDEV the opportunity to work with newly elected national and local authorities for the first time in a while. This could be the opportunity to provide capacity strengthening for newly elected authorities and regions.

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#### BUILDING TRUST

From the selection of partners and beneficiaries and onward, PDEV began to build trust between its implementers and its partners. The assessment team identified three key elements to this trust building process: an appropriate timeframe, participatory approach, and visible and effective packaging of benefits.

**An appropriate timeframe** includes both attention to short-term impact, as well as a long-term perspective on relationship building.

**Attention to short-term impact.** The need for quick impact activities was well recognized in the overall programming strategy from the beginning. Through interviews in the field, the assessment team found that in-kind grants given in a timely fashion and elicited by the beneficiaries go a long way. (See below for further discussion of visible benefits.) This ability to provide quick results, when it worked, has been a strength of the program. By building in activities that brought about immediate benefits to beneficiaries, PDEV established a foundation for further involvement and benefits.



**A long-term perspective on relationship building:** The activities and steps in providing short-term impacts can both move the relationships forward while providing results that contribute to PDEV goals; however, the achievement of these relationships is of high priority and needs to be allowed the time to develop. The process of building relationships takes time.

PDEV was designed to provide results in an abbreviated timeframe (three years), as it needed to reinforce interventions by DOD and DOS components of the TSCTP. Contrary to those expectations, while some short term “visible benefits” could be realized, the realities in Chad and Niger require a longer timeframe in which to build solid relationships and yield sustainable results (briefing). The impact assessment noted as well the long-term nature of PDEV’s goals.

PDEV has clearly built these relationships in different ways, with evident impact particularly with its religious outreach efforts in both countries.

When the PDEV program was starting in Niger, Imams in Maradi had been reluctant to speak with representatives of U.S. organizations. Yet, when interviewed for the impact evaluation in 2010, the Imams expressed an eagerness to work with PDEV trainers to improve their communication abilities, spoke favorably about PDEV sponsored religious conferences, and expressed interest in visiting the U.S. This is indicative of the relationships built by the program and increased trust of formally estranged entities. This important shift in perception lays the foundation for future activities.

Radio Bonferey was a radio station catering to an audience prone to extremism. At the beginning, they did not like the idea of inter-faith messaging and were skeptical that their audience, who listened for religious messages and readings of the Koran, were not receptive to the peace and civic education messages proposed by PDEV. However, through discussions and negotiations and by involving Radio Bonferey in the stakeholder meeting, PDEV was able to build this relationship to the point where the station managers saw the benefit of broadcasting PDEV programs. Now, Radio Bonferey regularly receives an outpouring of listener call-in feedback after each episode of Hantsi and Gwadaben Matasa requesting a replay of the episode. This feedback convinced the radio managers of the suitability of the material for their listening audience.

A point of sensitivity particularly related to the length of time needed for building trust was noted in the second Quarterly Report:

“The topics of terrorism and extremism remain very sensitive and are not discussed openly in the Chadian context. The PDEV team and CSO partners agreed that when framing and implementing program activities that touch upon extremism and issues related to Islam, the (interlocutor) with the community must be a trusted source and slowly ease into discussions; rushing and/or being too insistent will not help PDEV reach its objectives.”

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## CHALLENGES FACED IN BUILDING AND MAINTAINING TRUST



Once trust is established, it must be maintained, both through a long-term commitment to the relationships established, and through setting and maintaining appropriate expectations—particularly given that one of the drivers of violent extremism has been identified as “frustrated expectations and relative deprivation (not so much from the system’s failure to deliver, but from its inability to keep up with expectations).” As learned with the suspension of youth and governance activities in Niger, when that commitment is perceived as broken, serious damage can be done to the relationships built and to the overall goals of preventing violent extremism. Some felt strongly that the beneficiaries of the program have been extremely frustrated by the cut-off of the youth and governance components and that this negatively affected PDEV. Future programming needs to consider how it will manage expectations in volatile operating environments.

The recent impact evaluation also emphasized this commitment (TSCTP Impact Evaluation, December 2010):

“USG programming needs to be accompanied by political commitments to sustain funding of key interventions if they are to have the desired impact. TSCTP partners, especially community leaders and traditional authorities, must have faith in USG program commitments if they are to assume the risk of working with sensitive counter-extremism programming. It requires only one failed commitment to seriously, and sometimes permanently, set back relations in a community, a region, or even a country.”

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#### USING A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH

Participation at all levels appears to be important in trust building. By meeting together with ministry officials, academicians, and other stakeholders, PDEV sought and received input and ideas on themes, needs and activities, and thus engendered trust.

In Niger, in addition to the international implementers (Equal Access, AED) operating as “one team”, this principle of participation has been applied in programming as well, through initiating the media component with a series of focus groups throughout all regions of the project. These focus groups included all segments of the populations and across all ages and religions, and received input on themes and issues, preferred media of communication, format of media programming, and languages. After the focus groups, workshops were organized in Niamey to further inform decisions around these issues.

In Chad, community youth mapping (CYM) provides another example of a participatory approach to assessment and program development. In interviews with AED and some of the community youth mappers, the assessment team found that most of the relative success achieved with the quick start and in-kind grants activities appears to have derived from the information gathered by youth, through the CYM process, especially in those instances where local groups were engaged in analyzing results.

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#### VISIBLE AND EFFECTIVE PACKAGING OF BENEFITS



The visible and effective packaging of benefits was another key element of building trust. As noted by a representative of USAID in Niger, the success of a youth program is achieved if it provides tangible tools to the youth to do something with their lives. The director of a Koranic school in Zinder that received benefits commented, “It was the first time, whites provided support to a Koranic school...It was impressive and the community was surprised and really pleased.”

PDEV provided in-kind grants (TVs, chairs, books, refrigerators, kitchen appliances, sewing machines, etc.) to seven youth centers in Niamey, based on the centers’ own statements of its needs and on their explanation of how the donation would strengthen its activities and contribute financially. Even after the suspension of activities in Niger, AED management reported that the youth centers have been a big success. One factor in this success was seen to be the use of these in-kind donations to create income-generating activities

Packaging of benefits is important. For example with vocational training, packaging training with the tools and access to employment makes the difference as to whether youth actually benefit from the training. The eighth quarterly explained that “A number of community members in Ati were reticent to participate in the CYM data collection as they were not convinced that positive outcomes would be seen in their community as a result of the CYM process. They informed PDEV that previous surveys carried out in the community did not produce tangible results, so they felt like their time was being wasted.” The inclusion of youth development activities to follow up CYM surveys are integral to both responding to community needs and avoiding frustrated expectations (and loss of trust) on the part of those that responded to the surveys.

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#### UNDERSTANDING RELATIONSHIPS IN THE CONTEXT OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Relationships are not a by-product of activities, but rather a core component of activities’ effectiveness. It is important to understand how each relationship figures into addressing the drivers of violent extremism. Despite the challenges of determining the right program mix, target population, and most at-risk geographic regions, PDEV has made significant in-roads where none existed before. Without USAID Mission presence, PDEV has developed relationships with individuals, community, and youth groups who are at the heart of the violent extremism issue. Through these relationships, PDEV and USAID have a window into the most isolated and remote areas and relationships with people who are faced, on a daily basis, with choices for survival. Often without any government services, education or employment opportunities, PDEV works on the frontline with those who are most vulnerable and targeted for recruitment into terrorist networks.

Indeed, each relationship fostered with a youth, a school, a government official, journalist, radio station manager, or community group provides insights into how that society copes with the underlying conditions that contribute to violent extremism. Many of those that benefit from the youth integration program, or listen to civic education messages aired on PDEV sponsored radios, or who benefited from a



new community project, may not be on the threshold of signing up as a terrorist recruit. However, the infusion of positive inputs, including new ideas, builds trust. With trust, there is room to grow the relationship, and thus to grapple with more challenging issues.

Building relationships is one area of strength for USAID within the TSCTP. Beneficiaries trust and hope that USAID-funded programs will provide opportunities to surmount the challenges of their environment. By the same token, when USAID withdraws from these relationships for political reasons (such as in Niger), there are consequences to the relationship, dashed expectations and frustrations, all of which, if not managed correctly, can contribute to the push factors already present in violent extremism environments.

### STEP3. BUILD RESILIENCY THROUGH CAPACITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

After gaining an understanding of contextual factors, and building relationships, PDEV provides the opportunity to address the prevention of violent extremism through a development focus on **resiliency**—building resilient communities, strengthening existing groups, institutions and philosophies that are stabilizing influences. PDEV does this in two ways: through **capacity building** at different stakeholder levels (individual, group, community, etc.), and through **infrastructure development**, particularly in media programming.

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#### CAPACITY BUILDING

Many of PDEV's activities are focused on capacity building at different levels.

**Individuals**—Benefits provided to individuals were primarily aimed at increasing their capacity to support themselves, and building skills while connecting them to their communities or organizations. Youth trained as *Community Youth Mappers* gained skills in surveying and needs assessment, and then through the mapping process became further connected to identifying and meeting the needs of their communities. Youth receiving vocational training in a particular livelihood often received concomitant life skills training, including civic education. Those working in the media (e.g. youth producers, radio management council members, community reporters) received training to increase their skills in that area.

**Communities**—Both the benefits to communities, and the processes modeled through which those benefits were provided, were aimed at building community capacity to meet local needs and address local issues.

**Youth associations**—Through PDEV support, youth associations built their capacity to better meet the needs of youth while generating income for its programs. In Niger, PDEV brought the youth organizations up to another level that provided alternative structures that can be used for community development. In the goal of reaching out to as many youth as possible, the program has also worked



with youth-serving and youth-led organizations. Youth centers in Niamey were particularly targeted. There is one youth center per commune, and PDEV has strengthened the capacity of these youth centers with in-kind donations and training. In Chad, RJD played a critical role in the community youth mapping process by training and empowering young people to get engaged in their community.

**National/local CSOs**—While it differed somewhat in each country, PDEV’s work with local CSOs increased their capacity to do more projects on their own, while also increasing their ability to work outside the capital. PDEV provided intensive technical assistance to the CSOs to ensure that their budgets, budget narratives, timelines, and technical proposals were realistic, accurate, and well organized. While this could be frustrating at first, slow and process oriented, it paid off in the long run by increasing their capacity to seek and manage projects.

**Partner radio stations**—In addition to supporting the management of partner radio stations, PDEV also provides training to staff at these stations, as well as programming inputs.

**Use of the grants process to address community needs and build capacity**—PDEV has provided grants to community organizations to address some of their needs. The two main criteria for awarding grants required that they be for income-generating activities and that they be given to associations or community organizations. Fixed-obligation grants (FOG) were disbursed based on several deliverables and milestones agreed upon by PDEV and the recipients. For these types of grants, associations were encouraged to be in partnership with another association. PDEV then analyzed the capacity of the recipients; for those who did not have all the capacity needed, there was a capacity development process, through milestones and deliverables.

Capacity strengthening should be an important component of partnership with local organizations—PDEV is implemented in poor areas and local organizations may have the will, the experience, the local knowledge, and legitimacy, but may lack the capacity to carry out activities. Capacity strengthening of local organizations takes enormous time and resources, but when invested in organizations whose mission and core work speak to the results and overall goal of the program, the chances of sustainability of results increase. Even more than in traditional development programs, countering violent extremism require capable local partners who can sustain the results long after U.S. implementers are gone.

As with the packaging of visible benefits to add value to PDEV activities, instead of adopting stand alone capacity-building activities, PDEV integrates capacity building into the partnership package. This strategy enables PDEV to focus more on organizations that share, or could significantly contribute to, the goals of the project, and then to work with them to develop their capacities. This strategy is exhibited in the partnerships with community radio in Niger and Chad, as well as with the LEAD in Chad or *Association des Éleveurs et des Nomades* (AEN). Both organizations are local partners, and at the same time, beneficiaries of capacity building activities organized by PDEV.



In addition to building the capacity of individuals and groups, PDEV also develops infrastructure that contributes to community resiliency and to promoting messages of peace, tolerance, and civil debate. In-kind grants have provided materials that have allowed local organizations to increase their ability to serve their community. Youth associations have reported increased youth involvement after receiving these grants. The focus on organizations using materials to generate their income contributes to the sustainability of these community organizations. For example, some organizations have received photocopiers (e.g., *Collectif Des Associations Et Groupement Du Bar El Ghazal*); youth associations have received TV sets; some community and grassroots organizations have received funding to purchase grains and cereals that they are now selling.

The value of the new infrastructure was seen by the field team in a visit to a flour mill supported by CAP and PDEV. The women's group had received a flour mill which helped them with their income redistribution. The money they could save was reinvested in adult literacy. The women had created a small fund for other activities (alphabetization and training of midwives). The women were asking to receive more in-kind support, for a machine to remove the shell of the kernels as a way avoid the traditional hand crushing of the grain, an unhealthy women's task.

Perhaps even more significantly, PDEV has strengthened the community radio infrastructure in a way that has the potential for reaching far more with messages of peace, tolerance and civil debate. Key contributions of PDEV in this regard include the following:

- FM transition mapping
- Building radio stations
- Supplying equipment & training in its use
- Establishing content advisory boards
- Establishing audience response systems
- Supporting listening clubs that boost the signal at a human level

#### STEP 4. SUSTAIN IMPACT THROUGH LOCAL OWNERSHIP

The impact of strengthening the capacity, infrastructure, and overall resiliency of its beneficiaries is that PDEV is then able to move towards sustaining this work through local ownership. Important elements of this local ownership include empowering beneficiaries to become part of the solution; collaboration among stakeholder groups; and further efforts to facilitate local ownership and sustainability.

#### EMPOWERING PRIMARY BENEFICIARIES TO BECOME PART OF THE SOLUTION

Through PDEV, primary beneficiaries are empowered to be part of the solution. All primary stakeholders are not only targeted as beneficiaries of the project, but are also empowered to play an important part in the process, and become change agents themselves. In Chad, the youth community mappers started to collect data about their communities and have ended up running community



projects. In Mirryah, Niger, the women listeners from the “Tundu Sale” listeners club have become engaged in their community. In training community reporters, PDEV has insisted in pointing out their difference from journalists, they are, primarily, community development agents working on raising awareness, facilitating the expression of the community, and informing on issues affecting the community.

Local stakeholders become critical in implementing activities, as can be seen in the example of the increasing role played by listeners clubs in influencing behavior changes in communities. Some of the clubs are morphing into solidarity groups and community action groups. Some youth associations have involved youth who are lost in the slums by having those who are trained through PDEV go out and find other youth who are jobless and delinquent, and try to pull them in.

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#### LOCAL COLLABORATION

While PDEV has engaged local stakeholders separately, there is limited collaboration between different local stakeholders (local authorities, civil society, and private sector). Lack of collaboration between local stakeholders may lead to duplication of efforts and missed opportunities.

In addition to collaboration across components (governance, media, youth), collaboration between stakeholders within the same component is required. For instance, absence of dialogue between vocational training centers, youth serving organizations, workshop owners (carpentry, tailoring, etc.), and private sector businesses slowed and in some cases jeopardized the economic integration of the youth trained. In the sense that youth were provided skills, but were not adequately informed or introduced to the world of work; businesses in the other hand were not fully aware of the existence of this newly trained workforce. Some of the youth met in Moussoro and Mao admitted that most of the skills they have acquired through PDEV were forgotten, as they could not find opportunities to put them in practice/use.

When PDEV does bring together a variety of local organizations and institutions working on the same issues or the same communities, it provides the program with the opportunity to build alliances and linkages across sectors, to facilitate experience and information sharing, and to leverage additional resources from other donors. In other programs, linkages between actors of the same sectors have been effective in improving practices and increasing opportunities. Community radio stations, for instance, will gain from being in network with technicians, spare parts dealers, and national and international broadcasters operating in their region. In Niger, about 100 listeners club have been created; these are new resource people and institutions that have been created that could benefit from networking together. Many community reporters have expressed the needs to be connected to other community reporters to exchange experience and information.

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#### FACILITATING SUSTAINABILITY



The combination of relationship building, a participatory approach, and capacity building has been instrumental in creating the basis for sustained impact. Some of the following quotes illustrate how PDEV has facilitated sustainability:

“Even after the suspension of the youth component, the youth organized themselves to protest and put pressure on the government to support the vocational training that started under PDEV.”—AED Niger

“In this case, we are not journalists but also community development agents.” - Producers with Equal Access/ PDEV Niamey

*Support provided to partner community radio stations* can help them continue their programming, though it may not be on the same scale. In Chad and Niger, PDEV has trained and employed about 100 community radio reporters; the skills acquired by these reporters and journalists remain in the community.

*A community feedback process* has been established through listeners’ clubs and content advisory groups. Even though they are formed around PDEV programming, the relationship between listeners and their community radio has been established. In Niger, listeners have become more active and proactive, suggesting themes and making comments. This listening habit can be maintained by community radio without extra cost.

To ensure that the content is appropriate, culturally sensitive, and resonates with the audience, PDEV has put in place, or facilitated the emergence of, the following mechanisms: The content advisory group (CAG); Community radio reporter (RC); Listeners clubs.

Each program (Youth, Governance and Religion affairs) has a CAG, and the composition of the CAG depends on the theme around which the radio program will be developed. More than an editorial board, the CAG allows Nigeriens and Chadians to influence the content of radio programming, and the way in which the message is aired. For instance, the CAG of the religious program includes different Muslim sects, some sympathetic to violent extremism. The CAG also helps frame the message in a way that allows constructive debates between different segments of the society.

Through listening clubs, young people have become community development agents—and part of the solution. In addition to being a relay and feedback mechanism for media messages, listeners clubs are morphing into community development groups, as is the case of “Tundu Lele” in Zinder, Niger, which is a predominantly female listeners club. Created in November of 2009, this group of 23 women and 03 men enjoyed listening to PDEV radio programming, but mostly Hantsi Leka Gidan Kowa (governance). The group is now running a solidarity fund for its members; it also works with the Red Cross to contribute to a blood bank.

The same can be said of the youth listeners club the “Jaz” in Mirryah. The Jaz is a listeners club of 16 young people, both out-of-school and in-schools, between 14 and 25 years old. The Jaz members, after



listening to the programming, organize community discussions and interviews with key people (e.g., medical doctors for HIV and AIDS related issues) to further their understanding of issues and provide the community with accurate information. The program has affected the lives of the members by exposing them to new ideas and encouraging new behaviors.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings noted above, the assessment team has drafted the following recommendations to improve the PDEV program, which are grouped by core step of the operational strategy.

### STEP 1 ASSESS AND UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

- Ensure adequate opportunities to bring stakeholders together to garner input and increase understanding across countries. Engage local stakeholders in the assessment process, as it develops capacity, and builds engagement and trust.
- Incorporate into follow-on programming systems for adapting to context changes and to new understandings of CVE. In planning for these systems, it is essential to involve those with experience in the realities of on-the-ground implementation. Such systems could include flexible tools such as waivers, which would ease restrictions (e.g. working with religious organizations, USAID branding, environmental issues, construction, etc. ) as well as provide possibilities to fund innovative activities relevant to new conditions created by changes in the country or targeted communities (e.g., conflict resolution of communal disputes, multi-stakeholder dialogue to address grievances after riots, etc.)

### STEP 2: ESTABLISH RELATIONSHIPS AND BUILD TRUST

- Continue to select local partner organizations based on the relevance of the ideas proposed and their experience with the target group or community—their capacity can be strengthened after selection.
- Strengthen engagement of civil society with local authorities. Take advantage of the opportunities provided by the local elections in Niger and Chad scheduled between January and April 2011 to both involve and build the capacity of newly elected local authorities.
- In follow-on programming, budget for the time needed for developing relationships and trust, while continuing to implement quick impact activities that link to the overall goals and community needs and to foster trust.
- Continue to use a participatory approach to identifying themes to ensure that these themes reflect the needs of the people, as well as respect their norms and culture.

- Make the selection of partners strategic, with a clear rationale as to why they were selected for participation in the program and how they might figure in the broader countering violent extremism objectives.
- Carefully map out next steps for the relationships USAID has built through the TSCTP work in Niger and Chad. It is important to reframe these relationships in to the context of violent extremism.
- Conceptualize the timeframe for building long-term relationships and incorporate this into program design.

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### STEP 3: BUILD RESILIENCY THROUGH CAPACITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

- Continue to focus on building the capacity of organizations that share or could significantly contribute to the goals of the project, as part of an integrated partnership package, and budget time for capacity building.
- Monitor the use of income-generation materials.

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### STEP 4: SUSTAIN IMPACT THROUGH LOCAL OWNERSHIP

- Recognize and design programming to support the important role of beneficiaries empowered as local actors in building community resilience.
- Encourage and use every opportunity to bring local stakeholders together to facilitate communication and experience sharing, and reduce reliance on U.S. implementers, thus facilitating local ownership and sustainability. Encourage and facilitate the development of a network of listener clubs and provide more training on their potential role in the community. Foster
- Further dialogue among the youth, local authorities, training centers, and private sector actors on youth livelihood and job opportunities.
- Build sustainability into program designs that build awareness through media work; strengthen individual, community, and organizational capacity; and incorporate locally-owned resources.



## V. STRATEGIC ISSUES FOR USAID

The experiences of the PDEV program to date have shown some promising results on the ground, despite difficult circumstances, and related findings will be important factors to consider in the design of the follow-on TSCTP programming in the region. This section discusses issues affecting USAID programming in TSCTP in the future and how these may be addressed. Specifically, this section briefly discusses:

1. The sensitive nature of the violent extremism label
2. The relationship of countering violent extremism programs and conflict prevention programs
3. The drivers of extremism
4. The PDEV program in the context of other USAID programs
5. The theory of change of the PDEV program model

### SENSITIVE NATURE OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM LABEL

One of the overarching issues heard repeatedly during the field work with regard to the program was the sensitivity around discussing extremism. Specifically, the evaluation team found that the **sensitive** nature of the notion of extremism in Chad and Niger made U.S. implementing partners hesitant to share the ultimate goals of PDEV with their local partners. The reworking of the Results Frameworks helped reframe PDEV's objectives in ways that were less sensitive; however, the higher level strategic context often remained unarticulated.

In Chad and Niger, and repeated during data collection in Mali for a similar assessment, there is concern among the local population that the United States has exaggerated the security risk of violent extremism and the violent extremism label is an unfair negative portrayal of the country. The recent controversy around the anti-corruption statement made by the U.S. Ambassador in Senegal followed by a sharp and angry rebuke by President Wade is illustrative of the difficulties of expressing directly the goals of programs aimed at fighting or combating issues such as extremism or corruption. The underlying assumption of these programs is the presence of these issues, therefore increasing the risk profile of the host country. This is true for violent extremism in Chad and Niger, where this notion is perceived as casting a negative image of these countries, whose history is marred by instability. The Government of Chad, in particular, is fighting to break the cycle of its violent past and more importantly to emphasize the image of a capable and stable state.

### RELATIONSHIP OF COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM PROGRAMS AND CONFLICT PREVENTION PROGRAMS



This section explores the similarities and differences of programs for countering violent extremism (CVE) and conflict prevention (CP). While both are aimed at prevention, there exist important distinctions in the focus and objectives of CVE and CP programming that are discussed below.

Conflict prevention (CP) programs most often address the structural causes of violent conflict through programs that promote participation and dispute resolution by focusing on strengthening host government institution's capacity to resolve conflict and by promoting activities that generate dialogue and consensus. Much of USAID's conflict prevention work has been conducted by the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) situated within USAID's Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance Office. The office assists countries emerging from conflict or civil strife to transition to longer term development models. Programs of OTI often address conflict prevention in conjunction with local and national institutions to address systemic issues around which conflict has flared in the past. Youth, media and good governance are key elements of OTI's programming strategy.

Where conflict prevention focuses on structural causes of violent conflict, countering violent extremism (CVE) activities look at the conditions that stress existing structures. Countering violent extremism activities operate in environments where the conditions for conflict are present but the country is not engulfed in widespread civil strife, though like Chad and Niger, may have long, complicated histories of rebellion, insurgency, and coup d'états. Countering violent extremism programming, as seen through the PDEV program, attempt to work with at-risk populations in at-risk communities through activities that address underlying social, political, or economic drivers that contribute to an enabling environment for extremism.

Key differences between CVE and CP programming include the following:

- When employed (vis-à-vis conflict): CVE programming, though closely related to CP, is employed at an earlier phase on the conflict continuum than CP. CVE programs recognize the existence of conditions to render violent extremism prior to an emerging confluence of conditions, or, otherwise said, before they give birth to a movement in a specific country.
- What is addressed: CVE programming addresses "drivers"—social, economic, political or cultural trends—that foster an atmosphere conducive to recruitment for violent extremism. These trends are difficult to narrow down to a discrete set of factors and instead are broadly defined and come together in ways that are unique to each country and to each community within that country
- Population targeted: CVE programming is broad in its scope but relatively narrow in its target population. CVE seeks to dissuade a much smaller fraction of the population vulnerable to recruitment in violent extremist networks. CP programming, in comparison, seeks to achieve broader consensus through participatory dialogue and the strengthening of public institutions. Targeting at-risk populations is one of the more complex features of CVE programming



particularly in the Sahel where little scholarly work has been conducted in this domain. While some research in the Driver’s Guide suggests that adoption of CVE ideology is a personal choice or done with a close group of friends CVE programming would benefit from additional research in the psychological attraction of jihad or violent extremism and the accompanying resiliency factors that impact these decisions.

## THE PDEV PROGRAM IN THE CONTEXT OF OTHER USAID TRADITIONAL MODELS

The assessment team sought to explore the current PDEV program in the context of other USAID programming. PDEV’s unique set of circumstances—notably a prevention-based approach in non-presence countries with a profile that most closely mirrors stabilization programming in a post-conflict environments—places it in a category of its own. Given this unique design of the program, the desk review focused on design and implementation issues from four perspectives:

1. Program mix—governance, media, and youth
2. Similarities Between PDEV and the Office of Transition Initiatives
3. Prevention strategy
4. Non-presence countries and the impact on technical and management success

### PROGRAM MIX--GOVERNANCE, MEDIA, AND YOUTH

The PDEV program’s activities are key components of traditional USAID programming options in Governance and Civil Society Strengthening, Media and Youth Programming. Each of the program’s components is identified as a strategic contributor to “establishing and ensuring” enhanced governance, freedom of information, and youth support.

**Governance.** The focus of PDEV on governance lies primarily in strengthening civil society’s capacity to impart civic knowledge and democratic values by working with civil society associations who represent constituencies in remote or at-risk regions. PDEV also works with youth groups and various media outlets. Specifically:

**Media.** The program’s media efforts focus on strengthening the mediums through which citizens can freely organize and communicate with their government and with each other via:

- Support for independent media,
- Creating an enabling environment for civil society organizations, and
- Strengthening a democratic political culture through support for civic engagement and civic education.

**Youth.** The PDEV program engages youth in the development of a plan for themselves, and provides support necessary for youth to implement their plan. Support may include basic education, life skills,



skills development, and community service. The goal of positive youth development is to prepare youth to earn a livelihood, provide for their family, and contribute to their community.

The program does not strive to modify the policy environment but instead focuses at the community level; as such, its programming targets improvements and modifications at the individual and association levels. While PDEV is linked to broader policy objectives within the TSCTP program, PDEV's activities in all sectors aim to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations to self-govern, engage in civic-minded discussions, and open peaceful dialogue on issues that affect the lives of citizens at the community level.

The strength of the PDEV model is that governance, media, and youth activities work together and regularly cross-fertilize. Each sector has cross-cutting impact. While a traditional USAID program may be more robust in each individual sector, sector activities are rarely as integrated across the portfolio as PDEV's activities. Unlike many traditional USAID activities, PDEV's governance, media, and youth efforts operate in the same geographic area with similar, sometimes overlapping beneficiaries.

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#### SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE OFFICE OF TRANSITION INITIATIVES AND PDEV

Since 1994, Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), part of USAID's Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance, has worked in 31 conflict-prone countries undergoing a transition from authoritarianism to democracy, violent conflict to peace, or pivotal political events. The officer's programs often are initiated in fragile states that have not reached the stability needed to initiate longer-term development programs. Programs promote reconciliation, jumpstart local economies, support nascent independent media, and foster peace and democracy through innovative programming. While closely coordinating with Missions, Regional Offices and Bureaus, OTI's activities are often set apart from traditional USAID Mission activities.

The assessment team noted four areas of similarities between the efforts of PDEV and OTI:

- Operating environments
- Program composition
- Hand-off of activities and sustainability

The following observations on these similarities include some lessons learned from OTI programs that can be applied to future PDEV design.

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#### OPERATING ENVIRONMENTS

Both OTI and PDEV work in complex, fragile, or conflict-prone environments. Both efforts address similar destabilizing factors such as weak or debilitated government structures, conflict or civil strife, fragile political and social environments, and limited information flow. Program management is a



significant challenge for OTI and PDEV. Both programs face similar implementation challenges that stem from operating in environments that are highly fluid, necessitating change, political acumen, and flexible implementation mechanisms. Issues of security, travel restrictions and an undercurrent of uncertainty all pose significant challenges in program implementation.

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## PROGRAM COMPOSITION

The focus of PDEV on three sectors—good governance, youth empowerment and integration, and media and outreach support—is consistent with other USAID conflict mitigation and peace building programs provided by OTI. As discussed above, PDEV and OTI share programming strategies to stabilize populations, ideologies and radical elements. These programming elements seek to build new relationships to solidify stability, reduce marginalization, and promote messages of tolerance. Both efforts share similarities in programming in each of these sectors.

## YOUTH

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OTI's youth programs focus on livelihood skill development and vocational training for youth to open up alternatives to violence. OTI youth programs also focus on behavior change, promoting peace, community development, empowerment of women, and community ownership. In Sierra Leone, the concept of OTI's Youth Reintegration Training and Education for Peace Program (YRTEP) had the goal of bringing closure to a debilitating civil war and supporting the process of reconciliation and reintegration. Youth were the most important potential source of destabilization in the post-conflict period. If nothing was done, there was a definite risk that the youth would become more susceptible to negative and violent influences (Final Evaluation of the OTI Program in Sierra Leone, CARE, Inc, August 2002). There were three key components targeting youth: 1) reintegration into their communities of origin, 2) training in functional literacy, life skills and vocational training, and 3) civic education.

The PDEV program follows a similar approach by applying these three components to a pre-conflict setting where youth are vulnerable due to dwindling traditional livelihoods, high unemployment, low literacy, and external drivers that seek to lure them into illicit networks with promises of compensation and meaningful activity.

## GOVERNANCE

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OTI's governance programming focuses on providing the basic democratic requirements of minimum state capacity, order, and disincentives to violence. OTI often works at the national and local levels reconnecting and implicating isolated communities in national political processes, such as voter registration and constitutional referenda. (USAID/OTI Community-



## Focused Reintegration Programs in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi, Final Evaluation, 2006 )

PDEV's focus tends to be narrower than OTI's in the governance arena, focusing exclusively on civil society strengthening. Specifically, PDEV works with those civil society organizations that can provide linkages to strengthen social networks and bonds. In this way, activities are structured to build associations that can serve as lasting connectors between community and at-risk populations. PDEV's governance focus rests primarily with civil society and reinforcing their capacity to organize around community issues. In Niger, a country that, at the time of the program design, was moving forward with a decentralization agenda, resources were targeted to work with local government officials. In Chad, an entirely civil society based governance approach was adopted, also a reflection of the decentralization agenda in that country.

### MEDIA

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Peace and tolerance messaging is used pervasively in OTI programs. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, OTI stabilized and invigorated war-torn communities through a combination of vocational education training and radio listening groups. Radio provides wide rural community involvement.<sup>3</sup>

The most robust component of the PDEV programming is media. In Niger and Chad, radio is a salvo for populations in the most remote part of the Sahel. Technological development has provided even youth in the remotest Sahelian village with cell phones. These youth may not be able to read or write, but they are busy communicating with each other from their urban and rural environments. They are the ones creating the information flow; they are the agents of change. Since the young form the majority in these societies, they are hungry for information and to change attitudes in these authoritarian societies. Radio broadcasts can fill this void of information. If this space is filled responsibly, these youth become the positive agents for change.

Lessons from the OTI program that are relevant to PDEV include the following:

- Spread of learning is most likely to occur when leaders and persons of influence are involved in the dialogue. Listening groups should seek to integrate leaders and persons of influence into their discussions whenever possible.
- Nearly all OTI evaluations stressed the need for greater synergy of programs—youth, media and governance—to be most effective.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p.6



- Institutional strengthening must figure in as part of a successful governance program. Building civil society in the absence of local government leads to inequitable information shared among strategic partners.
- Whenever possible, leverage other USAID programming and/or other donors.
- Capacity Building and Community Grants
- Provide greater clarity on project selection and the long-term impact of local activities.
  - Strive for greater integration of training and grant-making.
  - Build on existing capacity building and grant models such as the OTI program in Burundi that struck a productive balance between training, project management, and civic messaging.

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#### HAND-OFF OF ACTIVITIES AND SUSTAINABILITY

The independent, stand-alone OTI model enjoys significant independence and freedom during implementation. Hand-off of activities, however, is often problematic. Often a clear linkage into the country or regional Strategic Framework has not been established. With a strategy that focuses on resolving problems in a quick and immediate fashion, OTI programs do not fit neatly inside traditional USAID programming approaches. Nearly every OTI evaluation cites unmet expectations as a characteristic of the hand-off to USAID Missions.

PDEV's programs in Chad and Niger, both countries without USAID presence, face similar challenges. With no foreseeable implementation of a USAID Mission in either location, there is concern as to how these programs will be sustained in the absence of USAID presence. PDEV's experience in Niger in 2009 illustrates this point. A sudden shift in the government of Niger's position on term limitations for the president led to a shutdown of all USG assistance, including PDEV's youth vocational training program. Nearly 1,000 young people had been trained and were anticipating the arrival of their toolkits that, due to the program's closure, never arrived. There are many who are sensitive about the expectations that are being raised and the program's capacity to not only fulfill but also sustain this momentum in the absence of the program.

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#### PREVENTION STRATEGY

The PDEV program is conceived as a program to prevent the factors that generate and sustain violent extremism in countries with predominantly Muslim populations. In this way, PDEV is different from both OTI programming and traditional USAID programs. PDEV focuses on approaches to prevent or mitigate known drivers associated with violent extremism. PDEV's success is measured in its ability to reduce the impact of destabilizing social trends and prevent drivers of extremism present, in varying degrees, in the Sahel.



The desk review was not able to identify USAID prevention programs comparable to PDEV in objective, content, or theory of change.

USAID prevention programming is typically found in two areas: conflict prevention in response to existing or potential conflict; and prevention in the form of early warning systems to monitor food shortages and prevent famine. In both cases, the programming is designed to respond to a situation or a defined set of circumstances. Conflict or violent outbreaks usually related to political, ethnic, or tribal tensions or in the case of famine, early warning, food production, prices, and market availability serve as the baseline for measuring the impact and success of the activity. With a concrete goal of preventing the return to a previous state, the success of the program is measured against something quantifiable.

PDEV is organized around violent extremism drivers—socioeconomic, political, and cultural—that are identified as factors that generate and sustain violent extremism. For example, one of the socioeconomic drivers addressed in Niger and Chad is “social networks and group dynamics.” Field research suggests that high levels of social fragmentation and marginality are push factors for violent extremism. PDEV is designed to prevent and contain destabilizing trends such as social marginalization of young people. The inherent challenge in monitoring social, political, and cultural trends is that they are highly mutable and require constant reassessment. Similarly, the absence of baseline indicators renders progress in reducing the effect of these factors anecdotal.

As discussed in the previous section of this report, reframing PDEV objectives to focus on strengthening resilience will allow for easier measurement of results.

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#### NON-PRESENCE COUNTRIES AND THE IMPACT ON TECHNICAL AND MANAGEMENT SUCCESS

A third factor distinguishing PDEV from traditional programming is that the program operates in non-presence countries. USAID’s traditional management model is an in-country mission, with resident U.S. and foreign national employees filling a variety of program and administrative positions. However, USAID funds activities in places where it does not maintain resident U.S. direct hire employees, thus defined as non-presence countries (Memorandum: Audit of USAID-Funded Activities in Nonpresence Countries, 2009). Activities in these countries are managed by resident contractor staff, USAID personnel in nearby missions and/or one or more of USAID’s Washington bureaus. PDEV, like many other activities in non-presence countries, supports a variety of developmental, humanitarian and/or foreign policy objectives and responds to many different managers both in Washington and in the Regional Mission, as well as to the Ambassador in the host country.

Difficulties in implementation arise with the mix of multiple managers and a new, evolving program design as part of an interagency program. Unlike other USAID programs operating in non-presence countries, PDEV, as part of the interagency initiative TSCTP, is scrutinized by the Ambassador. In short, PDEV has many advisers and managers, from the Ambassador, to the USPSC in country, to the Regional Mission’s COTR to USAID/WA special advisors. The multi-tiered TSCTP Strategic Framework is open to



multiple interpretations about the types of activities that best achieve objectives, as well as which geographic areas are most at risk. As a new and evolving program, the program is typified by negotiations on which initiatives are most pertinent to the program.

Monitoring and reporting on activities in non-presence countries is complicated due to the kind of information that is useful to each of the managing entities. Goals and measures of success differ between the Regional Mission and the Washington Bureaus and undergo further scrutiny by the Department of State, also a key partner in the TSCTP. Conversations in Washington, Accra, Chad, and Niger with various USAID representatives indicated differences, sometime significant, in the purpose, utility, and effectiveness of this violent extremism program. Each USAID manager conveyed the need for greater understanding of the goals and strategies of violent extremism programming to maximize program effectiveness. Some USAID managers expressed a lack of conviction concerning the development hypothesis of the program and believe that other, more pressing issues would be worthier targets of USAID programming. Others use the program as a vehicle to respond to issues raised by the Ambassador despite a tenuous relation to violent extremism goals. Absent a clearer set of defining principles (development hypothesis, theory of change, linkages of DA activities to violent extremism goals), violent extremism programming will continue to be beset with management and directional challenges.

In addition, as noted earlier, because violent extremism drivers change quickly, and require programmatic responses to be able to change accordingly, violent extremism prevention programs are subject to constant revision. Complicating matters further is the difficult operating environment. Security concerns, remote locations and difficult travel conditions slow implementation. PDEV operates in regions that go through periods of instability. Those operating in these environments need to develop plans to adjust management strategies accordingly (i.e. remote management; curtailing certain projects; and budgeting for security escorts). The combination of multiple managers, challenging operating environment, security concerns, and evolving theory of change necessitate programming and operations to develop more realistic timeframes to shift to new directives.<sup>4</sup>

## THEORY OF CHANGE

Fundamental to the program's success is a common understanding on how selected activities, organizations, and geographic locations contribute to the violent extremism goals set out in the project design. Governance, youth integration, and media outreach were identified as the key sectors by which

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<sup>4</sup> Those operating in these environments need to develop plans to adjust management strategies accordingly (i.e. remote management; curtailing certain projects; and budgeting for security escorts). RFTOP – Lessons learned from TSCTP programs



these results would be obtained. As the program evolved, and understanding of violent extremism drivers developed, PDEV’s goals also shifted. These shifts were anticipated given the nature of the program, and the original scope of work was explicit about the experiential nature of the PDEV program. However, as discovered in interviews both in Washington and in the field, what began as common understanding in PDEV seemed to morph into the confusion over goals (described earlier in this report), as the program tried to incorporate the new lessons generated by assessments and other available documentation.

This lead, as noted throughout the above two sections, to a lack of clarity on the program’s fundamental hypotheses, assumptions, and overall theory of change. After reviewing how this need for a clearly articulated, testable theory of change was evidenced in the confusion and varying perceptions of program goals expressed by different stakeholders involved, several aspects to clarifying a theory of change are discussed below, including the following:

- Reframing the drivers and goals to resiliency
- Understanding CVE in a low-threat environment
- Testing the theory of change and developing hypotheses
- Budget and personnel implications of measuring and documenting impact

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#### REFRAMING THE DRIVERS AND GOALS FOR RESILIENCY

While the two published guides on violent extremism contribute toward the understanding of violent extremism, the acknowledgement of a dominant cluster of drivers only partly informs the development hypothesis (what positive conditions, if developed, will prevent those drivers) to be addressed by development programs to prevent violent extremism. Each driver requires additional detail and specificity, to serve as the backdrop or hypothesis for violent extremism prevention activities. Specifically, it would be beneficial to re-state the driver within the country context. For example, in the case of Chad, if social exclusion is a key socioeconomic driver, it could be restated as: “youth in Moussoro have access to employment or leadership opportunities” depending upon the specifics of “social exclusion” in Chad. A corresponding positive corollary would then specify the objective of the program. In this way a deliberate linkage between “driver”, program objective and result could be drawn.

A focus on resiliency offers a new prism for looking at PDEV. A recent assessment done in Burkina Faso (Burkina Faso Risks and resiliency assessment, 2010) provides a new prism for looking at and improving PDEV. Most CVE assessments done so far recognize the threat of extremism in Chad, Niger, and Burkina Faso to be either remote, low, or moderate (depending of the region); therefore, as argued by the Burkina assessment team “...in the context of Burkina Faso, resiliency to instability is a more relevant prism than risk of violent extremism.”



A focus on resiliency to deter and prevent violent extremism more accurately reflects what PDEV has accomplished so far in Chad and Niger. By strengthening community assets and individuals skills, PDEV is building the ability of communities to better address the underlying drivers of extremism, while at the same time building people’s abilities to earn a livelihood, exercise informed judgment about issues, and refrain from using violence as a means to resolve conflict. Monitoring and evaluating progress in community and individual resiliency promises to yield more insights than assessing the prevention of a phenomenon which is yet to happen.

In order to build communities resilient to violent extremism where the violent extremism threat is low and development challenges high, consider reframing the development hypothesis from one of prevention to one of resiliency. Shift the prevention paradigm to strengthening existing groups, institutions, and philosophies that are stabilizing influences.

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#### UNDERSTANDING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN A LOW-THREAT ENVIRONMENT

The PDEV program’s original project goals were framed in risk-mitigating terms: “Deter marginalized populations (youth in particular) from contemplating destructive ideologies that advocate violence, by: improving local governance, empowering at risk-youth and, rendering superfluous ideologies promoting violence.”

Building on that framework, USAID has commissioned assessments in Chad and Niger that have looked at risk factors for violent extremism and violent Islamic extremism (Chad: Counter Extremism and Development, 2009; Niger Counter Extremism Assessment, 2009). However, one of the issues with the “risk-factors/ drivers approach” in the context of low or moderate levels of violent extremism is that these drivers are similar to those targeted in development assistance in conflict-affected countries/fragile states.. In other words, interventions in such contexts are close to traditional development approaches in unstable or fragile states.

In a context of low violent extremism, the line between traditional development and counter-extremism is blurred. There are competing expectations. On one hand, there are those who expect PDEV to address development needs of communities and individuals; and on the other, there are those who see community development needs as one part but not the most important element of PDEV. The evaluation team found these competing expectations at all levels of the program.

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#### TESTING THE THEORY OF CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT HYPOTHESIS

The articulation of a theory of change is essential as USAID strengthens this relatively new area of countering violent extremism through development. A particularly important part of that process is to test the hypotheses and assumptions of this theory through ongoing monitoring and evaluation. As USAID moves forward in CVE programming, M&E systems built into the program that test elements of



the theory of change can contribute the further evidence needed on what most successfully achieves the goals of USAID's efforts in this area.

Unlike other geographic areas that have abundant scholarly work on the qualities of those individual most likely to be attracted to extremist ideology, little research has been done on the characteristics of Sahelian populations. As a result, continued adjustment to country- specific drivers is necessary for program effectiveness. From 2007-2010, USAID's AFR/SD conducted at least one country level assessment in each of the PDEV target countries. These assessments provide greater specificity on program mix, at-risk geographic areas, and at-risk populations. The frequency of these assessment missions demonstrates the importance given to regularly monitoring and updating the current country conditions.

Similarly, at the activity level, monitoring progress is an essential part of learning. Monitoring and evaluation within the PDEV and TSCTP program could be used to test development hypotheses and identify which elements within a governance, youth integration, and media programs most impact the violent extremism environment. In order to do so, the development hypothesis must be clear, testable, and specific. Absent a violent extremism framework that articulates development linkages, the program monitors simple development results rather than aggregating results to broader violent extremism goals.

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#### BUDGET AND PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS OF MEASURING AND DOCUMENTING IMPACT

Prevention programming faces the difficult challenge of measurement. As stated during an interview with a USAID/WA Manager: *"It is difficult to measure the absence of trend. I want to know the absence of something through the presence of something else, something measurable."* PDEV is challenged to measure how its activities contributed to preventing underlying conditions.

PDEV has encountered difficulties in measurement by the lack of resources, both budget and personnel, to cover the large territory targeted by the program in both Chad and Niger. Complicating matters further is the poor capacity of local partners to collect, analyze and report results, and given their role in implementation of activities, they are critical actors in any monitoring and documenting strategy.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Understand where violent extremism programs sits on the conflict prevention spectrum. Articulate clearly how violent extremism programs differ from CP activities.
- As the drivers of and context around violent extremism are ever changing, programming must be flexible both in terms of activities and funding mechanisms. The implementer must have the capability to be responsive in this highly fluid environment both in terms of contractual mechanism and in terms of internal processes.

- As violent extremism prevention programs are replicated, reframing the program objectives to a focus on strengthening resilience will allow for easier measurement of results. If the prevention framework is maintained, additional research on proxies of performance are necessary.
- The program’s fundamental hypotheses, assumptions, and overall theory of change need to be clarified and explicitly stated in the PDEV follow-on design document — and understood by all stakeholders during program implementation. Particularly important is a clear understanding of the program’s objectives, target beneficiaries, interventions, and expected changes—and how they link to the wider goals and strategy.
- Reframe the goals to focus on strengthening resiliency to decrease vulnerability to violent extremism rather than preventing violent extremism.
- In order to build communities resilient to violent extremism where the violent extremism threat is low and development challenges high, consider reframing the development hypothesis from one of prevention to one of resiliency. Shift the prevention paradigm to strengthening existing groups, institutions, and philosophies that are stabilizing influences.
- Re-state the driver within the country context. For example, if social exclusion is a key socioeconomic driver in Chad, it could be restated as: “youth in Moussoro have access to employment or leadership opportunities” depending upon the specifics of “social exclusion” in that community. A corresponding positive corollary would then specify the objective of the program. In this way a deliberate linkage between “driver”, program objective and result could be drawn.
- Further study is necessary to understand the relationship of development objectives to violent extremism goals and their linkages. Clarity on the hierarchy of goals would greatly streamline management decisions at the country and regional levels and in Washington, D.C.
- To effectively measure the linkages between development inputs and violent extremism, make the hypothesis of change explicit and measurable. At the program level, monitoring and evaluation should focus on establishing and testing the linkages between development objectives and violent extremism to better articulate how community-level achievements respond to violent extremism goals.
- Develop the capacity of the local partners to collect and report data related to results by focusing on the use of various tools and methodologies for assessing impact, monitoring, and reporting performance.
- Both the programming context and operating environment are constantly changing; both programming and operations need to incorporate the expectation of change into all planning, in



part by including contingency plans and have more realistic timeframes. Again, involve in this planning those with experience in the realities of on-the-ground implementation.

## VI. CONCLUSION

This report has presented findings from different perspectives: by results, by overall operational strategy, and in terms of the larger strategic issues. Recommendations within each perspective have been presented for the overall program; Appendix 5 breaks down many of these recommendations to offer specific suggestions for Chad and for Niger.

Throughout these findings and recommendations, five themes have stood out.

1. In the design of follow on programming, there is a **clear need for a well-defined and articulated theory of change** that recognizes the fluidity of the context and incorporates the means to test and adapt hypotheses, linkages to program objectives, and programming. A starting point for this theory of change is an explicit understanding of countering violent extremism programming in context of related types of conflict prevention and development programming. Overall strategy, as well as program and project objectives should directly relate to this theory of change.

2. Reframing the focus of follow-on activities from the prevention of violent extremism to the **strengthening of community resilience** aligns with a development focus by better describing what PDEV activities have sought to develop. Not only is resiliency easier to measure, it is easier and less sensitive to articulate to our partners and beneficiaries. USAID values transparency and honest relationships with its partners. Framing program goals in terms of strengthening existing institutions, partnerships, cultural factors, etc. that are part of the context in which the program operates demonstrates respect and will generate many appreciative results.

3. **Building relationships and partnerships play a central role both** as a goal in itself, and as a successful strategy, for countering violent extremism. By effectively incorporating building relationships and partnerships into its theory of change, follow-on programming can strengthen local capacity and lead to local ownership and sustainability of efforts to build community resilience. As part of this, partnerships with local authorities and with moderate religious voices are important. Partnerships need to be built deliberately and selectively within the overall strategy and theory of change; existing partnerships are a resource to be incorporated as well. In addition, by fostering local participation as well as local collaboration between beneficiaries and partners, local ownership is strengthened.

4. Incorporate into follow-on programming **flexible planning systems that acknowledge and plan for the "constant" of change**. As the drivers of and context around violent extremism are ever changing, programming must be flexible both in terms of activities and funding mechanisms. The implementer must have the capability to be responsive in this highly fluid environment both in terms of contractual mechanism and in terms of internal processes. In addition these systems should include regular contingency planning as well as more realistic time frames given the in country challenges of security, travel, bureaucracy, and other issues that consistently impact program operations and staff.



5. Finally, **the use of monitoring and evaluation with a focus on learning** can inform both the theory of change as well as systems for planning around contextual changes. Further development of appropriate M&E systems as well as increased attention to and budget for these systems will be needed. The strengthening and use of local M&E capacity of beneficiaries (both individual youth and partner organizations) can contribute to improving overall M&E of follow-on activities.

**APPENDIX 1: PDEV PARTNERS AND BENEFICIARIES**

Type of Stakeholder	Includes	Role		Selected by
		As actor	As beneficiary	
<b>Implementers</b>				
Primary int'l implementers	AED; Equal Access, Mercy Corp, Africare Salam Institute, Visions Workshop			USAID & AED
Primary Nat'l/local implementing CSOs	Distinct CSOs for different programming areas	Primary role	Limited cap. strengthening	Proposal process, interviews
<b>Other partner organizations and groups</b>				
Other local CSOs & groups (some overlap)	Local CSOs Training institutions (incl. vocational training centers) Schools School associations Partner radio stations Community Radio Service Organizations Various types of associations (incl. Youth, Religious, Women's, Community) Community action groups		Grantees	RFAs, proposal process, local implementers help select
	Listening clubs			?
	PDEV Content Advisory Groups			?Equal Access
Consortia & networks	CSO consortia Radio For Development network of broadcasters (if created)			RFAs, proposals, local implementers select
<b>Individual beneficiaries</b>				
Youth	Community Youth Mappers Youth receiving vocation/Lifeskills training Youth producers Study trip participants			
Other media-related	Radio management council members Community Reporters			Local implementers
<b>Governmental partners and potential partners</b>				
USG	USAID, DoD, State Dept, US Embassy			
National	Host government, represented through various ministries	Nat'l laws/regs		



Local	Regional government, represented through reg'l authorities & laws Community authorities			
Other int'l	Other int;l multilaterals, bilaterals and NGOs operating in country			

## APPENDIX 2: DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

### 1. Primary & General Documents

- USAID/West Africa: Trans-Sahel Counter Terrorism Partnership Program Design and Scope of Work, Social Impact, June 2007
- Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism (Drivers Guide), USAID, 2009
- Development Assistance and Counter-Extremism: A Programming Guide (Programming Guide), USAID 2009
- Timeline of Counter Extremism Analysis, USAID AFR, July 2010
- Violent Extremism Factors Tree (PPT graphics), USAID AFR
- TSCTP Fact Sheet, USAID AFR
- PDEV Chad Program, Fact Sheet
- PDEV Niger Program, Fact Sheet
- PDEV Lessons Learned as of August 2010, AED

### 2. TSCTP Pilot Program Report:

- Final Report for Mercy Corps SKYE (Skill and Knowledge for Youth Empowerment) Program
- Final Report for CARE Maradi Youth Development Project in Niger
- Y2 Q3 report for Mercy Corps BRIDGE (Decentralization) Program
- Chad Capacity Development & Peace Support Project: Final Report: July 11, 2006 – September 11, 2008, AED

### 3. Assessments

- Strengthening Stability through Development in Burkina Faso, USAID, Sep 2010
- Counter Extremism and Development in Chad (Assessment), USAID and MSI, October 2009
- Mauritania Pilot – CT and Development (Assessment), USAID and MSI, 2008
- Mauritania assessment – trip report February 2010
- Niger Counter Extremism Assessment, USAID and MSI, April 2009
- USAID/West Africa Regional Mission: Phase I: Program Assessment Report
- Mid-Term Evaluation of USAID'S Counter-Extremism Programming in Africa, Impact Assessment Draft version, December 13, 2010, (QED/AMEX)

### 4. Work Plans

- PDEV Annual Work Plan 2008-2009
- PDEV Annual Work Plan 2009-2010
- PDEV Annual Work Plan 2010-2011

### 5. Baseline Report

- PDEV Chad Baseline Survey - Key Findings Report
- PDEV Niger Baseline Survey - Key Findings Report



## 6. PMP & PIR

- PDEV Performance Management Plan, 2008, AED
- PDEV Revised Performance Management Plan, July 2010, AED
- 2008 Portfolio Review Narrative and Indicator Data, October 2009
- Performance Indicator Review (PIR) Sheet, FY08
- PIR Sheet, FY09
- PIR Sheet, FY10

## 7. PDEV Reporting

- PDEV Quarterly Program Report Nos. 1-10 (March 2008 – June 2010), AED
- 1207 Quarterly Reports:
  - FY2010 Quarter 1, 2 & 3
  - FY 2009 Quarter 3
  - FY 2008 Quarter 4

## 8. OTI Final Report Documents

- a. Final Evaluation of the Office of Transition Initiative's Program in Sierra Leone, August 2002
- b. Final Report of the USAID/Office of Transition Initiative's Community-Focused Reintegration Programs in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi, February 2006
- c. Mercy Corps Tajikistan Final Report for the Tajikistan Conflict Prevention Program, April 2007

## 9. Success Stories:

- Community Reporter Success Story (April 2010)
- Song Festival Success Story (April 2010)
- Equal Access Success Stories (May 2010)
- PDEV Radio Success Story (Nov. 2009)
- PDEV Niger Success Story - ANASI (July 2010)
- PDEV Success Story - Youth Training in Niamey (Nov. 2009)
- PDEV Programs in Chad
- Faya Festival III

## Interviews Planned

Interview with	Explanation
<b>Primary implementers:</b>	
AED program mgmt	<i>Overall program implementation</i>
Equal Access program mgmt	<i>Overall/media program implementation</i>
AED staff	<i>Factors of success</i>
Equal Access staff	<i>Factors of success</i>
<b>Implementing CSOs:</b>	
KARKARA, Niamey	<i>CSO selected to support the management of the CYM process in Niger /CYM implementation</i>
AIN/ONEE, Zinder	<i>Consortium of the Organisation Nigérienne pour le Education Environnementale (ONEE) and the Zinder branch of AIN (Association Islamique du Niger, the oldest, largest and most influential Islamic association in the country) /Religious outreach</i>
UECN, Zinder	<i>Union des Ecoles Coraniques du Niger: The biggest network of Koranic schools in Niger /Support to religious schools</i>
NIGETECH, Zinder	<i>Vocational training center featured in an episode of a youth radio show that highlighted the work of PDEV and its youth training program /Vocational training</i>
RIESCA, Niamey	<i>Réseau International d'Etudes Stratégiques sur les conflits en Afrique: to implement peace messaging and conflict-prevention activities /Peace messaging &amp; conflict prevention</i>
<b>Other beneficiary CSOs &amp; groups</b>	
Vocational Training Center, Niamey	<i>Centre de formation professionnelle des jeunes de Tallajé /Vocational training</i>
Radio station, Magaria	<i>Media capacity &amp; programming</i>
Listening club, Magaria	<i>Participation in media</i>
Listening club, Mirriah	<i>Participation in media</i>
Religious association, Zinder	<i>Recipient of in-kind grant /Religious outreach</i>
Listening club TUDUN SALE, Zinder	<i>Participation in media</i>
Radio Anfani	<i>Radio privée /Media capacity &amp; programming</i>
?School, Niamey	<i>Comité de gestion de l'école Plateau 1 /?Governance work?</i>
<b>Individual beneficiaries</b>	
CYM Youth, Niamey	<i>CYM experience</i>
Community reporters, Zinder	<i>Journalist training</i>
Community reporters, Niamey	<i>Journalist training</i>
<b>USG</b>	
USAID Country Program Manager	<i>USAID work in Niger</i>
RSO - US Embassy	<i>Security</i>
First Secretary, US Embassy (DCM?)	<i>Country/CE strategy &amp; vision</i>
?Ambassador	<i>Country/CE strategy &amp; vision</i>
<b>Possible others</b>	
Women's NGO	
International NGO	



CSO	
Donor organizaiton	



## Protocols to use

### Primary implementers: Program Management

*Print out the reporting format document for taking notes.*

*In introducing the interview:*

- *Thank those present for their cooperation and hospitality in welcoming us.*
- *Acknowledge that they have probably spent a lot of time with assessments, most recently with the impact assessment team.*
- *Explain that the purposes of this assessment – as different from the impact assessment – are to:*
  - 1. Clarify PDEV’s operational strategy, as well as how the program has evolved and what has worked well in implementation.**
  - 2. Explore similar or related CE and development programs, and their relevance to PDEV.**
  - 3. Use input from the field and the lessons learned to provide recommendations for future programming for PDEV.**
- *Emphasize that we are particularly interested in looking at strengths, and how those strengths are used to overcome expected and unexpected challenges.*

#### 1) Roles & involvement of partners

- a) **Please introduce yourself and your organization. In doing so, tell us briefly about your organization and particularly your name, title, and your role in PDEV activities.**
- b) **Why is your organization involved in PDEV? How does the PDEV program fit with your organization's work and goals in this country/field?**
- c) **From your perspective, what is the most important goal of PDEV?**
- d) **What role does your organization have in PDEV activities? What specifically is it involved in?**
- e) **How has the involvement of your organization evolved over time?**
- f) **How do you learn from what happens in the project? Are there structures and processes in place in your work that help you learn from what is going on, and share what is being learned by those involved?**



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

## 2) How program planning is done

Before talking about the strengths and successes of your work, we'd like to have a better understanding of the programs and activities planned, and how the implementation of the program has evolved. First, we'd like to better understand how program planning and decision-making is done.

When the program is working at its best, for programming decisions...

### 1) Regarding what types of projects are done:

i. Who makes those decisions, and how?

ii. What informs those decisions? (e.g. People's opinions/experience, assessments, guides, other?)

*(Probe: To what extent has the "Drivers of Extremism" and "Programming Guide" been used, if at all?)*

iii. Any examples of effective decision-making regarding *types of projects planned*?

iv. What do you think are the greatest challenges in decision-making about the *types of projects planned*?

### 2) Regarding decisions on *where/ whom* to target:

i. Who makes those decisions, and how?

ii. What informs those decisions? (e.g. People's opinions/experience, assessments, guides, other?)

*(Probe: To what extent has the "Drivers of Extremism" and "Programming Guide" been used, if at all?)*

iii. Any examples of effective decision-making regarding *where/whom to target*?

iv. What do you think are the greatest challenges in decision-making about the *where/whom to target*?



**3) Regarding whom to work with as implementing partners:**

- i. Who makes those decisions, and how?**
- ii. What informs those decisions?** (e.g. People's opinions/experience, assessments, guides, other?)  
  
*(Probe: To what extent has the "Drivers of Extremism" and "Programming Guide" been used, if at all?)*
- iii. Any examples of effective decision-making regarding *implementing partners*?**
- iv. What do you think are the greatest challenges in decision-making about the *implementing partners*?**

**4) Regarding choosing the specific individuals/ groups to receive inputs/ benefits (beneficiaries):**

- i. Who makes those decisions, and how?**
- ii. What informs those decisions?** (e.g. People's opinions/experience, assessments, guides, other?)  
  
*(Probe: To what extent has the "Drivers of Extremism" and "Programming Guide" been used, if at all?)*
- iii. Any examples of effective decision-making regarding *specific beneficiaries*?**
- iv. What do you think are the greatest challenges in decision-making about the *specific beneficiaries*?**

**5) Regarding adding activities to meet newly identified needs, making needed program changes**

- i. Who makes those decisions, and how?**
- ii. What informs those decisions?** (e.g. People's opinions/experience, assessments, guides, other?)  
  
*(Probe: To what extent has the "Drivers of Extremism" and "Programming Guide" been used, if at all?)*
- iii. Any examples of effective decision-making regarding *specific beneficiaries*?**
- iv. What do you think are the greatest challenges in decision-making about the *specific beneficiaries*?**



### 3) Activities Planned

We would like to get a better understanding of the overall program model, and how all of the activities work together to accomplish what expected results.

- a) What have been the **core or primary activities** planned for this program/project? (Get them to list primary activities, not just “Youth, Governance, and Media”, but rather “CYM, Radio programming, etc.”)
- 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  - 4....

For each core activities, **briefly**, what activities are important to this? (Just list the most important ones)

(NOTE: If time is particularly short and questions must be cut, skip b-f here)

First, let's talk about **what was planned** for each of these core activities. For each:

(Note responses as b-1, b-2, etc.)

- b) Why this core activity? What is the history or rationale behind it?
- c) What were the expected outcomes? What impact did you hope to have?
- d) What is the timeframe that was planned, both overall and for each project?
- e) What is expected to happen when the program is over?
- f) What regions did this activity intend to cover? What partners were expected to be involved?

(Repeat for each core activity)

- g) How do these core activities work together? To what end specifically?



#### 4) Activity implementation

Now let's talk about what has actually happened and how these activities have evolved.

For each core activity: *(Note responses as a-1, a-2, etc.)*

- a) What regions have actually involved in this activity?
- b) Who have been the implementing partners? Were there other roles taken on by other stakeholders?
- c) Who have been the actual participants/beneficiaries?
- d) How have the project activities evolved or changed over time? What adaptations have you made to the original plans?
- e) What (other) challenges have you had to overcome? How did you do that/How are you doing that?
- f) For you personally, what has been the most exciting/ encouraging aspect of this activity? What has made that possible?
- g) What significant (other) results have been seen/documentated so far?

#### 5) Lessons Learned

In our next session with all of the staff, we will be asking more about program successes and factors of success. To conclude this session, we want to ask just a couple of questions about lessons learned:

- a) What do you think is the most important thing you or your organization has learned through your involvement in PDEV so far?
- b) What do you think has been learned about preventing violent extremism?
- c) Any final thoughts? Is there anything we should have asked about, but didn't?



## Organizational Staff Focus Groups

*This protocol is to be used for all organizational participants interviewed:*

- 1) Primary Implementers staff
- 2) Local Implementers/CSO staff
- 3) Other associations/groups

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO RECORD FOR EACH:

1. Participants' names, ages, roles
2. About the participants' organizations/associations

### INTERVIEW FORMAT

#### A. Welcome & Introductions:

##### -- Purpose of focus group

We have asked you here because we are looking to better understand how PDEV works with you to build on the strengths that your organizations and communities already have. To address this, we seek to answer several questions:

- 1) What makes communities strong and resilient?
- 2) How do your organizations play an effective role in strengthening their communities and groups?
- 3) How can/does PDEV support this?

We believe that each of you has a unique perspective and experience in this, and today we hope to gather those perspectives to begin to answer these questions.

##### -- How information will be used

The information we gather here will be compiled and presented to the program designers and used to make future programming decisions both here and in other countries.

##### -- Brief introductions (10 minutes)

Please introduce yourself; tell us a little bit about yourself, your community or association, and one or two sentences about how you see your role/place in that community.

##### -- Review agenda

We are going to do things a little differently from a typical focus group interview. After this introduction, I will ask you to break up into pairs to interview each other – I'll give you more instructions on that in a moment.



After each one has had a turn to be interviewed, we will come back together and discuss what we've heard. To lead that discussion I'll be asking you to comment on several different things, and your comments will be listed up here on this newsprint.

**-- Review ground rules (2 minutes)**

I would like to offer a few basic rules that will guide us throughout this discussion:

- 1) Everyone's ideas count – everyone deserves to be listened to.
- 2) At the same time, all should have the opportunity to speak. If we find that some are dominating the conversation and others are quiet, we may stop those who have spoken a lot in order to hear those who are quiet.
- 3) Regarding confidentiality – we request that you respect each other's willingness to speak freely, by keeping what is said here confidential. Individual quotes may be used in our final report as representative examples, but no identifying information will be associated with quotes without your permission.

**B. Pair interviews (13 minutes -- 3 minute intro, 5 minutes each for 1 hour mtgs, longer if meeting is longer)**

1) *Introduction of pair interviews*

The first thing we are going to do is to take advantage of the fact that you all are expert interviewers, and ask you to interview each other, using 4 specific questions, which we are providing in this HANDOUT.

*[READ QUESTIONS ON HANDOUT]*

You will break up into pairs, preferably with someone you don't know or don't know well. Each person will have a 10 minute turn to be an interviewer, and a 10 minute turn as the one interviewed. You will see some basic instructions on the handout; these include:

- Ask the questions below in order.
- Take brief notes – enough to remind you when you are reporting
- Show interest, but refrain from “putting words in the person's mouth.”
- 

In these interviews, we are looking for real stories of best moments, best experiences.

We will keep the time, and suggest when you might want to move on to the next question; we'll also tell you when it is time to switch roles from interviewer to the one being interviewed.

After the 10 minutes, we'll come back together to share these stories.

2) *Break into pairs.*

*Suggest moving on to the following question at these points:*

2 minutes – “You might want to move to question 2 if you haven't already”

3 minutes – “Consider moving on to question 3 if you're not there yet”

4 minutes – “Two minutes left – try to make sure you get to question 4”



- 5 minutes – “It’s time to switch roles, whether you’ve had a chance to get to all of the questions or not.”
- 7 minutes – “You might want to move to question 2 if you haven’t already”
- 8 minutes – “Consider moving on to question 3 if you’re not there yet”
- 9 minutes – “Two minutes left – try to make sure you get to question 4”
- 10 minutes – “Time’s up, let come back together.”

**C. Share stories (10 minutes for 1 hour interviews, longer if more time)**

*[Ask each person to briefly tell the group the stories they heard from the person they interview. For each, after the initial “report,” ask the person whose story it was if they want to add anything. Note taker should try to get the general idea of the stories – particularly any quotable statements.]*

**D. Opportunities**

-- **Identify themes related to #1 (5 minutes)**

“Think about each of the stories you heard. What were the strengths that individuals brought to these experiences? What were the strengths of the organizations and communities themselves that made this possible?”

*[Get people to comment on this. At this point, the note taker should try to capture answers to this in short phrases on newsprint. If appropriate, ask, “Are there any reoccurring themes going on here?”]*

-- **And identify themes related to #3 (5 minutes)**

“What was unique to the PDEV program and its approach that contributed to this success?”

*[Get people to comment on what happens in the organization when people are connected. Again, the note taker should try to capture answers to this in short phrases on newsprint. If appropriate, ask, “Are there any reoccurring themes going on here?”]*

**E. Overcoming obstacles (10 minutes, longer if needed)**

“The last question in the interview was ‘If you had 3 wishes to help make more such situations possible, what would they be?’ What are the wishes for the future that you heard expressed – or that you want to express now? We’re going to list those wishes here [on newsprint] right now.”

*[Keep the focus on “overcoming” & wishes for the future, rather than on bad experiences of the past. If such experiences are described in illustration, that’s o.k., just try to keep those illustrations short.]*



F. If there's time:

**Discussion of a vision for their organizations/groups & resources needed to realize that vision. (This depends on time available)**

“Given all of what we've heard here today, what do you think should be the vision for strengthening your communities and groups? And what resources are needed to make that vision a reality?”

**H. Closure**

- 1) Go around the group and have participants tell “One thing that you heard here today that was really important.”
- 2) Express thanks to participants, restate how info will be used, and provide information for those interested in follow-up.

**IMMEDIATELY AFTER PARTICIPANTS LEAVE:**

Team should discuss and record the following:

- 1) Description of purpose, site and participants in interview
- 2) Question by question summaries/characterizations of answers that the group gave to each question; transcription of newsprint
- 3) Any comments that might have been expressed by just one person but that seem relevant to the topics at hand
- 4) An overall summary of what was learned from the group



## HANDOUT: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS ON COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS AND STRENGTHS

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Instructions to the interviewer:

- Ask the questions below in order.
  - Take brief notes – enough to remind you when you are reporting
  - Show interest, but refrain from “putting words in the person’s mouth.”
- 

- 1) Think for a moment about your organization and your involvement with PDEV, and about a time when you really felt that this involvement was really effective, successful, at a high point; this could be either with an activity being implemented, or the results of an activity being seen – or even when you just experienced really good management of the program, in a way that contributed something important through this work. Describe that time.
  - 2) What strengths did you bring to that experience that helped make it possible? What did other individuals bring?
  - 3) What were the strengths and values of the existing communities and/or local organizations involved that contributed to this?
  - 4) If you had 3 wishes to help make more such moments possible (where you are connected to your community), what would they be?
-



## Individual Beneficiaries Focus Group Protocol

*This protocol is to be used for all individual beneficiaries:*

- 1) Community youth mappers
- 2) Community reporters

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO RECORD FOR EACH:

3. Participants' names, ages, roles
4. About the participants' associations

### INTERVIEW FORMAT

#### A. Welcome & Introductions:

##### -- Purpose of focus group

We have asked you here because we are looking to better understand how PDEV works with you (CYMers, community reporters) to build on the strengths that you and your communities already have. To address this, we seek to answer several questions:

- 4) What makes communities strong and resilient?
- 5) How do individuals play an effective role in strengthening their communities and groups?
- 6) How can/does PDEV support this?

We believe that each of you has a unique perspective and experience in this, and today we hope to gather those perspectives to begin to answer these questions.

##### -- How information will be used

The information we gather here will be compiled and presented to the program designers and used to make future programming decisions both here and in other countries.

##### -- Brief introductions (10 minutes)

Please introduce yourself; tell us a little bit about yourself, your community or association, and one or two sentences about how you see your role/place in that community.

##### -- Review agenda

We are going to do things a little differently from a typical focus group interview. After this introduction, I will ask you to break up into pairs to interview each other – I'll give you more instructions on that in a moment.



After each one has had a turn to be interviewed, we will come back together and discuss what we've heard. To lead that discussion I'll be asking you to comment on several different things, and your comments will be listed up here on this newsprint.

**-- Review ground rules (2 minutes)**

I would like to offer a few basic rules that will guide us throughout this discussion:

- 1) Everyone's ideas count – everyone deserves to be listened to.
- 2) At the same time, all should have the opportunity to speak. If we find that some are dominating the conversation and others are quiet, we may stop those who have spoken a lot in order to hear those who are quiet.
- 3) Regarding confidentiality – we request that you respect each other's willingness to speak freely, by keeping what is said here confidential. Individual quotes may be used in our final report as representative examples, but no identifying information will be associated with quotes without your permission.

**B. Pair interviews (13 minutes -- 3 minute intro, 5 minutes each)**

1) *Introduction of pair interviews*

The first thing we are going to do is to take advantage of the fact that you all are expert interviewers, and ask you to interview each other, using 4 specific questions, which we are providing in this HANDOUT.

*[READ QUESTIONS ON HANDOUT]*

You will break up into pairs, preferably with someone you don't know or don't know well. Each person will have a 10 minute turn to be an interviewer, and a 10 minute turn as the one interviewed. You will see some basic instructions on the handout; these include:

- Ask the questions below in order.
- Take brief notes – enough to remind you when you are reporting
- Show interest, but refrain from “putting words in the person's mouth.”
- 

In these interviews, we are looking for real stories of best moments, best experiences.

We will keep the time, and suggest when you might want to move on to the next question; we'll also tell you when it is time to switch roles from interviewer to the one being interviewed.

After the 10 minutes, we'll come back together to share these stories.

2) *Break into pairs.*

*Suggest moving on to the following question at these points:*

2 minutes – “You might want to move to question 2 if you haven't already”

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- 7 minutes – “You might want to move to question 2 if you haven’t already”
- 8 minutes – “Consider moving on to question 3 if you’re not there yet”
- 9 minutes – “Two minutes left – try to make sure you get to question 4”
- 10 minutes – “Time’s up, let come back together.”

**C. Share stories (10 minutes)**

*[Ask each person to briefly tell the group the stories they heard from the person they interview. For each, after the initial “report,” ask the person whose story it was if they want to add anything. Note taker should try to get the general idea of the stories – particularly any quotable statements.]*

**D. Opportunities**

-- **Identify themes related to #1 (5 minutes)**

“Think about each of the stories you heard. What were the strengths of the communities that were mentioned? What were people proud of?”

*[Get people to comment on this. At this point, the note taker should try to capture answers to this in short phrases on newsprint. If appropriate, ask, “Are there any reoccurring themes going on here?”]*

-- **And identify themes related to #3 (5 minutes)**

“What strengths do different individuals bring to the community? (Could probe regarding strengths of youth, what is the role of women in contributing to strong communities?) What made it possible for people to play a role in that community? What happened when they did?”

*[Get people to comment on what happens in the organization when people are connected. Again, the note taker should try to capture answers to this in short phrases on newsprint. If appropriate, ask, “Are there any reoccurring themes going on here?”]*

**E. Overcoming obstacles (10 minutes, longer if needed)**

“The last question in the interview was ‘If you had 3 wishes to help make more such situations possible, what would they be?’ What are the wishes for the future that you heard expressed – or that you want to express now? We’re going to list those wishes here [on newsprint] right now.”

*[Keep the focus on “overcoming” & wishes for the future, rather than on bad experiences of the past. If such experiences are described in illustration, that’s o.k., just try to keep those illustrations short.]*



F. If there's time:

**Discussion of a vision for their communities/groups & resources needed to realize that vision. (This depends on time available)**

“Given all of what we’ve heard here today, what do you think should be the vision for strengthening your communities and groups? And what resources are needed to make that vision a reality?”

**H. Closure**

- 1) Go around the group and have participants tell “One thing that you heard here today that was really important.”
- 2) Express thanks to participants, restate how info will be used, and provide information for those interested in follow-up.

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- 4) An overall summary of what was learned from the group



## HANDOUT: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS ON COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS AND STRENGTHS

---

Instructions to the interviewer:

- Ask the questions below in order.
  - Take brief notes – enough to remind you when you are reporting
  - Show interest, but refrain from “putting words in the person’s mouth.”
- 

- 1) Think for a moment about your community, its strengths, and what makes you proud to be part of it. Is there a story you can tell about a time when you felt most connected to and proud of your community?
- 2) What strengths did you bring to that experience that helped make it possible? What did others bring?
- 3) How did your involvement with PDEV contribute to this experience? Has your involvement affected the way you look at your role in the community?
- 4) If you had 3 wishes to help make more such moments possible (where you are connected to your community), what would they be?



**APPENDIX 4: LIST OF KEY INFORMANTS MEETINGS, INTERVIEWS, FOCUS GROUPS AND SITE VISITS**

**December 14-17, 2010 (USA) and Jan 4-13, 2011 (Niger)**

Institutions/organizations	Key informants	Type	Date	Format	Place
USAID Washington, D.C	Angela Martin, Senior Counterterrorism Advisor Kellie Burk, Research Analyst Amanda Day, Senegal Desk Officer	Donor	12/15/10	Meeting	USA, Washington, D.C
Academy for Educational Development (AED)	Anne O'Toole Salinas, Program Director Kaitlyn Crook, Program officer Allison Poyac, Senior Program off.	Implementer	12/15/10	Meeting	USA, Washington. DC
PDEV, NIGER	Rougui, CoP and Country Rep.	Implementer	01/05/11	Interview	Niamey, Niger
USAID, Niamey/Niger	William Nobles, Country Program manager Abdourahamane Hassane, Cy. Program asst.	Donor	01/05/11	Interviews	Niger, Niamey
PDEV, Niamey/Niger	Senior staff: Rougui, CoP and Country representative Abdoul Kader, Resp. Media – Equal Access (2008) Rene Djamene (March 2010) Denise Ferron – Finance Manager	Implementer	01/6/2011	Group interviews	Niamey, Niger
Centre des Jeunes de Tallaje	Mariame Oumar, Director	Local beneficiary	01/05/11	Interview/ field visit	
Karkara	Ibrahim Sofo, Suivi et évaluation	Local partner	01/06/11	Interview/ Field visit	Niamey, Niger
Centre de jeunes de Larcourrousse	Zakaria Insa	Local beneficiary	01/06/11	Interview/ Field visit	Niamey, Niger
Producers of PDEV, Niamey/Niger	Katiella, Responsible of content Idi, governance Bintou Hassan, youth Ramoud Gyo, religion outreach Moussa Nekanja, governance,	Implementer	01/06/11	Focus group	Niamey, Niger



Institutions/organizations	Key informants	Type	Date	Format	Place
	Attaou, religious outreach				
Radio Kitari	Lamine Harouna, Directeur Abdoul Martina, Responsable Technique and Community Reporter Mamane Goto, Animateur et producteur d'emission interactive	Beneficiary/Commu nity radio	01/07/11	Focus group / field visit	Maigaria, Niger
Listeners Club CHAHO	Idrissa, Vice president Fati Idrissa, Treasurer Hassan Oumoussa, Vice-treasure Moussa Tchiroma, Secretary Rabia Souleymane, Vice Secretary Ramatou Ousmane, President	Beneficiaries	01/07/11	Focus group	Maigaria, Niger
PDEV, Niamey/ Niger	Aminou, Charge programme Aff. religieuses	Implementer	01/08/11	Interview	Zinder, Niger
Listeners club – Jaz (jeunes amateurs du Zouk)	11 members of the group (age : 12- 25) : Seidou, student (4ème) Bisadi, animateur radio Ousmane, mecanicien Ibrahim, out-of-school Ibrahim Manasa, mecanicien Ibrahim, restaurateur Maarou Mutare, apprenti chauffeur Ibrahim Mallam, vendeur d'essence Yacoubou Salissou, eleve 3 <sup>ème</sup> Souleymane Ousmane, Chaï man Moutaria, élève 4ème	Beneficiaries	01/09/11	Group discussions	Mirryah, Niger
Union des Ecoles coraniques du Niger (UECN)	Mamoud Ibrahim, President and the Senior staff	Local partners	01/09/11	Group discussions	Zinder, Niger
Radio Anfani	Aissah, Reporter governance Mariama, Reporter Governance Jean Gerard Loti, reporter Jeunesse Mariam Ousmane, Reporter	Beneficiary/ community radio	01/09/11	Focus group/ field visit	Zinder, Niger



Institutions/organizations	Key informants	Type	Date	Format	Place
	Jeunesse Boukary, Focal Point				
Ecole Coranique	Director	Beneficiary (In-kind donation)	01/09/11	Interview/field visit	Zinder, Niger
Young beneficiaries trained by AFRICARE	Koumba, apprenti couture Aminou,, broderie Mamanou, cpouture	Beneficiaries – youth training	01/09/11	Focus group / field visit	Zinder, Niger
Listeners club- Tundu Sale	20 women and 03 men	Beneficiaries	01/09/11	Group discussions	Zinder, Niger
Association Islamique du Niger (AIN) and Organisation Nigérienne pour l'Education Environnementale (ONEE)	The President of ONEE and the senior staff of both organizations	Local partner	01/10/11	Group discussions	Niamey
PDEV, Niamey	Boucar Nanatao, Grant manager Mamane Rabiou, Asst. Grant Manager	Implementer	01/12/11	Interview	Niamey, Niger
03 Vocational training Centers	Mahamane Bachir Souley Lep, Lycée professionnel, Frère Jean-Baptiste Coulibaly, Lycée professionnel Mme Hassane Wangari, Complexe technique Wangari Harouna Alouissa, Ecole de santé publique	Local partners	01/12/11	Group interview	Niamey, Niger
OXFAM Quebec	Ibrahima Fatima, Country Rep. Anifa Soumana, Technical Adviser	International NGO	01/12/11	Interview	Niamey, Niger
Former Mayor – Tahoua 1 <sup>er</sup>	El Hadj Abala (Tel: 96 88 52 43)	Beneficiary	01/12/11	Interview	Niamey, Niger
Former PDEV Governance, Program	Aissah Riba ( 96 96 52 26)	Former Staff	01/12/11	Interview	Niamey, Niger
USAID/ Niger	William Nobles, Country Program manager Abdourahamane Hassane, Cy. Program asst.	Donor	01/13/11	Meeting/Debrief	Niamey, Niger
U.S Embassy, Niger	H.E. Amb. Bisa Williams	US Government	01/13/11	Meeting/Debrief	Niamey, Niger

**APPENDIX 5: COUNTRY-SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS**

Key finding area	Chad	Niger
Nimble processes	<p><i>Tailor programming and funding mechanisms to specific needs and concerns of each regions.</i>(see country assessment for region specific concerns).</p> <p>Revisit the \$250,000 fixed obligation grant funding limit for local partners implementing projects in regions outside N’Djamena. Flexible funding would enable PDEV to provide more timely interventions when opportunities present themselves. (e.g., activities around religious festivals)</p> <p>Where specific institutions and activities merit support, there should be an option for “special case” grants. (e.g., support for pastoral wells; for Islamic councils (with non-evangelizing stipulations); University Student Association.)</p>	<p>Resume governance work in Niger when possible, but provide for appropriate contracting mechanisms to engage consulting firms to support PD.C.s or ensure adequate resources for implementers to provide their own TA directly to commune leaders.</p>
Role of Trust Building	<p>Continue to strengthen the relationships and work with traditional and religious leaders, as well as formal authorities, in Chad to decrease skepticism amongst the Chadian population, and to allow messages of peace and tolerance to pass to a larger audience.</p>	<p>Work to regain trust among youth and communities whose involvement was terminated.</p>
Link Stakeholders	<p>Program to increase recognition of the role and value of youth in society, including focusing on fostering greater linkages between youth and the Islamic establishment, and between youth and local authorities</p>	<p><u>After</u> gaining a better understanding of the dynamics of associational life within the university system and the ties of student and faculty with different political and religious movements, explore the possibility of working with university students and faculty in the University of Niamey.</p> <p>Look for opportunities to link youth with local authorities.</p> <p>Explore the possibilities of integrating components and resources from other</p>

Key finding area	Chad	Niger
		USG activities in Niger, where appropriate
Packaging of Benefits	<p>Increase focus on the PDEV youth component (suspended in Niger), to build and reinforce social, cultural, and economic capital. This would include income generation activities, including timely provision of “start-up kits” trained youth, and peer mentoring. Link vocational training with the GOC’s new trade skills programs well as local business opportunities. Consider further replication of the AED/USAID-sponsored tailoring mentorship. Couple economic opportunities with support of social and cultural opportunities of youth groups.</p> <p>Most importantly, increase cross-sectoral linkages: The interweaving of the Governance, Youth, and Media activity areas would provide benefits beyond that obtained from single-tracked interventions.</p>	<p>Continue support for training in vocational and life skills to youth in Maradi and Zinder to enhance their employment potential. Extend training programs to work with poor youth in slum neighborhoods of Niamey and in Diffa region and to look at the possibility of working with groups of younger adolescents like the palais. Ensure benefits are packaged to provide full support and opportunities after completion.</p> <p>address the needs of specific youth subsets in Maradi, Zinder, Niamey, Agades, and Tahoua regions</p>
Resiliency-focused	<p>Given that associational life is still relatively weak, further support the community development project groups as important community infrastructures that will enrich the associational life of the target communities.</p>	
Local Ownership for Sustainability	<p>Given that associational life is still relatively weak, further support the community development project groups as important community infrastructures that will enrich the associational life of the target communities.</p> <p>Encourage and provide training to youth groups (such as in Mao) interested in taking on conflict mediation as among their major activities.</p> <p>Continue to support schools that seek to better integrate the religious and public systems</p> <p>Strengthen the resiliency and ability of youth to take local ownership through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. enabling economic activity within their ranks;</li> </ol>	<p>Consider a broader engagement with the target audience via listening clubs as a cost-effective and impactful means of engaging Nigeriens, particularly youth, and building on an existing tradition.</p>

Key finding area	Chad	Niger
	<p>2. formally extending recognition to them in local institutions and developmental activities;</p> <p>3. providing them a greater voice in media outlets;</p> <p>4. integrating them within decentralization reform.</p>	
<p>Importance of Information &amp; Messaging</p>	<p>The PDEV media component has been a successful way to spread PDEV messages and reduce extremist influences. This component could be expanded in Chad.</p> <p>Reassure and reaffirm religious Leaders (especially the Conseil Islamique) of their integral role in maintaining peace for development through</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Convening seminars (in which they have a prominent position) on peace-building and development;</li> <li>2. Supporting their outreach opportunities, logistically as well as programmatically;</li> <li>3. Initiating mentoring programs for youth, for the purposes of leadership building (not religious education).</li> </ol> <p>Continue to work in supporting curriculum development for Koranic schools.</p>	<p><i>The PDEV follow-on can build on the success of its gradual outreach approach in Niger by more directly tackling the issues of violence, causes and consequences of religious extremism, and methods for mitigation and control of extremism.</i></p> <p><i>Clarify USG legal boundaries of support, and find ways to work more directly with religious leaders, in so far as the US constitution permits</i></p> <p><i>Continue to support programs to equip and r modernize the curriculum of Koranic school and post-Koranic school education, through new content on literacy and numeracy; as well as programs to promote religious tolerance in Niamey, Maradi, and Agadez regions.</i></p>
<p>Expansion to Remote Regions</p>	<p>Expand upon religious activities conducted in northern Chad. Consider establishment, in Faya, of a small office for proper oversight.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Targeting &amp; Role of Women</p>	<p>Provide support for girls-only classes in the public school sector.</p>	<p>N/A</p>