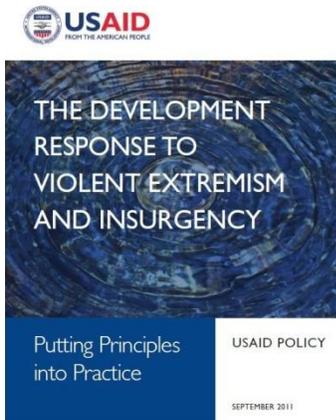


The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency



“Where governments are incapable of meeting their citizens’ basic needs and fulfilling their responsibilities to provide security within their borders, the consequences are often global and may directly threaten the American people. To advance our common security, we must address the underlying political and economic deficits that foster instability, enable radicalization and extremism, and ultimately undermine the ability of governments to manage threats within their borders and to be our partners in addressing common challenges.”

2010 National Security Strategy¹

The 2010 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Report (QDDR) states: “Today, close to 60 percent of State and USAID’s foreign assistance goes to 50 countries that are in the midst of, or trying to prevent conflict or state failure.”² USAID currently manages programs in many of these countries, from Colombia to Afghanistan to Yemen to the Horn of Africa, where conflict is driven by violent extremism and insurgency.

USAID’s Policy on *The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency* provides USAID with common concepts, engagement criteria, and programming principles to support and guide our work in these areas. At its core, the policy aims to enhance the impact of our assistance tools and help ensure that the results we achieve are sustainable.

The Policy’s intended result is that USAID designs and implements effective, evidence-based development programming targeting drivers of violent extremism and insurgency while systemically learning from and adapting its approaches.

POLICY CONTEXT

The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency is guided by the President’s National Security Strategy and the Global Development Policy as well as the QDDR, USAID Forward and USAID’s Policy Framework 2011-2015. This policy builds upon the Agency’s long experience and knowledge base working to prevent, mitigate and manage violent conflict, in concert with our interagency partners. Additionally, the policy directs the Agency to implement internal changes to improve its

¹2010 National Security Strategy, http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf, p. 26

² Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, http://www.usaid.gov/qddr/QDDR_FullReportLo.pdf, p. 122

operational and management responsiveness, including the capability to procure more rapidly, expand its work with local partners, improve staff training, provide the necessary tools for hands-on management and oversight, and promote innovation and adaptation.

POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

The policy affirms the importance of the development discipline to, and USAID’s distinct and critical role in, addressing critical national security and development challenges. This includes USAID’s focus on sustainability and building ownership and capacity at all levels.

Based on our growing knowledge base, the policy identifies those drivers that can favor the rise of violent extremism or insurgency as well as those that can influence the radicalization of individuals. These include:

- *structural “push” factors*, including high levels of social marginalization and fragmentation; poorly governed or ungoverned areas; government repression and human rights violations; endemic corruption and elite impunity; and cultural threat perceptions; and
- *“pull” factors* that are also necessary for push factors to have a direct influence on individual-level radicalization and recruitment and are associated with the personal rewards which membership in a group or movement, and participation in its activities, may confer.

Specifically, the policy directs the Agency to:

- Consider *key engagement criteria* at the earliest stage of program development; and
- *Apply a core body of program principles* at all levels of the programming cycle.

Key engagement criteria:

- *Assessment of drivers, host country commitment*
- *Determination of appropriate role for development assistance*
- *Determination of adequacy of security level*
- *Identification of risks and plans to mitigate*
- *Consideration of program, management and resource plans*

Core body of program principles:

- *Focus on drivers*
- *Promote inclusive country ownership*
- *Exercise selectivity*
- *Take a coordinated and integrated approach*
- *Tailor and coordinate communications*
- *Think locally; an entrepreneurial approach*
- *Consider transnational strategies*
- *Flexibility, agility and procurement speed*
- *Intensive program management*
- *Innovation, evaluation and learning*
- *Informed risk taking and experimentation*

THE WAY FORWARD

Lessons from this work are not static, and USAID is building a growing evidence base to shape our response to violent extremism and insurgency. Even in the face of challenging or unstable operating environments, this policy emphasizes the importance of rigorous, frequent and creative means to monitor and evaluate programs and disseminate lessons learned, findings and analysis.