Meeting Notes

Expert Meeting on CVE, Security and Development

Hedayah and Human Security Collective

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Hedayah

Hedayah is the International Center of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism, established in Abu Dhabi through the GCTF. Hedayah was established to serve as the premier international institution for training and capacity building, dialogue, collaboration, and research to counter violent extremism in all of its forms and manifestations, in support of long-term, global efforts to prevent and counter terrorism. (www.hedayah.ae) .

Human Security Collective
Human Security Collective is an international hub for the intersection of development, human rights, conflict mediation and security. Located in The Hague it catalyzes, facilitates and accompanies global and local initiatives, which aim to protect and expand civil society space to engage with security actors world-wide. (http://www.hscollective.org)

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Summary

The Security sector and the Development sector have not traditionally been natural partners, and have not traditionally cooperated to a large degree. However, given the recent developments in Countering Terrorism (CT) that shifted the focus from reactive measures to a more preventive and multi dimensional approach, the Security sector and Development sector have developed more common goals, particularly in the field of countering violent extremism (CVE). The complexity of the current link between Security and Development and the changes occurred in the traditional roles of these sectors, attracted increasing attention from experts and practitioners.

In order to further analyze the evolving connection between security and development, the International Center of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism - Hedayah and Human Security Collective organized an Expert Meeting on CVE, Security and Development from 17-18 November.   The meeting focused on how stronger collaboration between security and development can be effective in terms of CVE objectives. The discussion amongst the experts, held under the Chatham House Rule, investigated the conditions and the practices that encouraged cooperation between security and development in support of CVE but also analysed the challenges that cause obstacles to closer relationships among CVE, Security and Development.   The conclusions informed on future engagement on this issue.

The meeting notes start with attendees' considerations on the definition of 'traditional' and 'human' security and assess what are the roles and limits of these two approaches at present. Participants analyzed how today the security paradigm requires a different approach from the traditional state-centric security. Although the central role of the state for sustainable security was reaffirmed, yet experts agreed on the fact that a new clean slate approach at present requires to bring a diverse set of stakeholders around the table to agree on common security goals. These new actors include for example minorities, multilateral international and regional organizations, non-government organizations (NGOs) and donor countries funding them, as well as citizens, women, religious leaders, and families.

The second section of the meeting notes reports on how participants saw the development work as progressively entering the area of security and how these shifts are seen as relevant for supporting CVE strategies and programs. The first requirements for strengthening the cooperation between the security and development sector in support of CVE is the recognition of their reciprocity and willingness to engage in a constructive dialogue for improving trust and confidence among the different actors. Secondly, meeting attendees noted that it is important to consider context-specific factors when developing CVE programs, given that drivers to violent extremism can vary considerably from a local and regional perspective.

The third section of the document focuses on four main areas for corrective action and recommendations as identified by participants during the discussions:

- *Actors*
  - With regards to the actors involved in CVE, Security and Development, meeting participants recommended two ways in which the relationship between these sectors can be improved: 1) a better multi-sectoral approach to parties involved and 2) the need to include the local perspective in any program design;

- *Approaches*
  - When considering development and security approaches for CVE, considerations were made on the importance of relevant analysis, effective strategies as well as a better-coordinated and more inclusive approach among different stakeholders. International donors' funding and personnel as well as the development of adequate monitoring and evaluation parameters were also deemed as aspects requiring a shift in approach;

- *Communications*
  - The ways of communicating internally with the multiple stakeholders involved and externally with local communities or general audience has been also examined by the attendees as another crucial aspect of the cooperation between security and development sector in support of CVE; and

- *Actions*
  - Finally, the meeting concluded with suggestions on how to bring forward and make more concrete cooperation between security and development in support of CVE. The points raised by the experts listed actions aimed at capitalizing on existing CVE capacities, engaging in capacity building, strengthening inclusiveness and local perspective, and finally, disseminating the results.

Introduction

The Security sector and the Development sector have not traditionally been natural partners, and have not traditionally cooperated to a large degree. While security is traditionally related to government institutions, military and private companies, development is mostly connected to civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGO). Although historically there was a clear distinction between policy and the funding lines for Aid, Development and Security, the lines have become more blurred in the last years. As a consequence of this evolution, 'traditional security', intended as the security of state or national security, is now complemented by 'human security', especially in countries where humanitarian aid and development assistance sees an expanded engagement of civil society and donor countries. The human security perspective looks at the lives of millions of people being threatened today not only by international war and internal conflicts but also by chronic and persistent poverty, climate-related disasters, organized crime, human trafficking, health pandemics, and sudden economic and financial downturns. As these threats affect not only people but also their governments, strengthening legitimate institutions with an aim to provide citizens security, justice, and jobs is crucial to break such cycles of violence, fragility, and weak development.

Yet, in these countries where governments and states have failed to strengthen human security', civil society, with the support of the international community, has often developed programs and built capacities in the broad field of development, governance, conflict transformation, humanitarian action and interreligious dialogue.

Based on this reality, NGOs have gradually entered the domain of security, an area where mutual trust between state and civil society is traditionally low. Different reasons can explain this low trust level:

- Often civil society does not want to be seen as part of a state security agenda, especially in countries where the legitimacy of the government is contested and security might have political connotations. Working on an integrated security approach with police, military and law enforcers, might endanger NGOs' work and staff;
- Governments that see civil society as the opposition, agents of Western states or subversive or terrorist organizations. These governments have often tried to reduce the political and operational space for the NGOs through measures prohibiting foreign funding, increasing legal requirements and criminalizing NGOs by their actions or even employ counter terrorism measures (CTMs) to clamp down on them; and
- Many states employ state-centric security approaches, while NGOs bring forward human security approaches with following clashes of goals and perspectives.

In order to further analyze the evolving connection between Security and Development, Hedayah and Human Security Collective organized an Expert Meeting on CVE, Security and Development from 17-18 November. The meeting focused on how stronger collaboration between security and development can be effective in terms of CVE and de-radicalization objectives. The roundtable, held under Chatham House Rule, saw the

participation of about twenty representatives from international organizations, government officials, civil society representatives, and practitioners.

The multi-sectoral perspective required for CVE permeates many areas of security and development sectors. On the side of security, there is a growing consensus that traditional military and criminal justice approaches alone can be counter-productive at times. Hence, there is a need to take a more proactive multidisciplinary approach, where possible, establishing innovative methods to intervene before individuals and groups become involved in violence.

On the side of development work, as already noted, there is often a symbiotic relationship between deprivation, fragility and violent extremism proved by the fact that the regions most suffering from lack of development are often presenting serious security threats. This necessitates a joint response from those working in development and those working in security. Both sectors face enormous challenges but there is the opportunity for mutual-learning and closer co-operation for strengthening CVE measures and objectives.

The discussion amongst the experts investigated the conditions and the practices that encouraged cooperation between security and development in support of CVE but also the challenges that cause obstacles to closer relationships among these three sectors. The conclusions informed on future engagement on this issue.

CVE and Security

The discussion amongst the experts started on the definition of 'traditional' and 'human' security to assess what are the roles and limits of these two approaches at present. There was general consensus among participants on the notion that security is still seen as a 'state-led' concept and that the perception of security is still defined mainly by national and international interests. Civil society representatives agreed that those who primarily benefit from state security are those who define and invest in state security, including governments, political parties as well as public and private defense sector.

Yet, participants pointed out that not only the actual security context of a state but also its perception of security is fundamental for understanding its security paradigm and its own perception of fragility. Attendees noted that often what is perceived as a 'secure states' externally might reveal pretty fragile internally.

On one hand, experts emphasized how the presence of a strong state that guarantees security to its citizens is still seen as fundamental for long- term security: a state that is non-visible or minimally visible on a local level is very likely to create a sense of insecurity in the local community.

However, participants also pointed out that security of the state does not always mean security for its citizens. A strong state, with a strong security apparatus and good local presence is not sufficient for making people feel secure within their national borders.

The formation of a civil society that can challenge the state and address people's grievances has been considered by participants as fundamental to support people's perception of security within a state.

The experts underlined that if the state does not allow space for addressing local communities' grievances, state security and human security often become inversely proportional: for example, historical and cultural grievances of a minority addressed by the state apparatus only through hard security measures have created distrust towards the central government and increased the minority group's delusion of insecurity within the national borders. As most of the experts wanted to stress, this cycle have repeatedly supported the feeding of 'buffer zones' for violent extremism since terrorism traditionally cashes in on people's perception of insecurity.

Participants presented cases where states recognized as overly securitized had their internal security weakened by discriminations and restrictions, making people feel insecure or unable to express opinions and grievances. Hence, attendees noted that the human right element as supported by civil society and the development sector can be seen as very important for defining security threats and solutions.

As this fragility factors threaten the survival of the state itself, experts pointed out self-interest and power preservation as some of the most persuasive arguments to be used for bringing governments to interact and collaborate with the development sector. The development sector in turn, can persuade governments of the importance of 'human security' with evidence and results of their interventions on the ground.

Meeting attendees therefore assessed how a new clean slate approach requires to bring around the table a diverse set of stakeholders with context-specific insight to agree on common goals and outcomes regarding security. These new actors with a role in supporting the 'human security' paradigm should especially involve civil society and include minorities, multilateral international and regional organizations, NGOs and donor countries, as well as citizens, women, religious leaders and families.

Moreover, some of the participants pointed out how implementing an effective multi-level and multi-sectoral approach for CVE means not only engaging with actors outside the state apparatus but also including new and non-traditional state agencies as part CT and CVE programs. For example, many states realized that while 'hard security' ministries and agencies, i.e. defense and law enforcement still play a fundamental role for violent extremists, other soft ministries and agencies, for example focusing on education, local development, youth and sport are also relevant for strengthening security through countering the complex phenomenon of violent extremism.

To conclude, participants agreed that 'human security' support a more inclusive perception of security within the state as it shifts the focus of the security perception from some parts of the governments to a multitude of stakeholders. For example, the perception of security shall be shared amongst:

- The state for its preservation of power;

- The neighboring states as their security situation often reflects the security context of the surrounding region;
- The private sector since growth and business require a secure environment to thrive; and
- Families concerned about the physical and material security of their loved ones.

CVE and Development

Further establishing that the shift towards the 'human security' paradigm brought new actors and sectors on the security stage, the experts then moved to examining how development work has progressively entered the area of security and how these shifts are relevant for supporting CVE strategies and programs.

One of the requirements listed by the participants for strengthening the cooperation between the security and development sector is the recognition of their reciprocity and willingness to engage in a constructive dialogue that can improve trust and confidence among the different actors. Here, participants noted that reciprocity means that communities need both security and development; they need a secure environment and economic stability. Therefore, as per the attendees' shared opinion, creating jobs and institutional or economic empowerment becomes part of CVE and preventive security measures. In the same way, the experts recognized the security context's influence in shaping and implementing development and foreign aid programs.

Experts then examined how to create a context recognizing the reciprocity between the security and the development sector. From the governments' side, attendees noted that in order to have effective interventions on the local community level, governments should allow civil society to operate in safe spaces where local community grievances can be addressed successfully. In other words, participants remarked that examples of successful cohesive and joint security strategy between civil society and state implied expanding the opportunities for community participation and defeating the fear of some states that greater community participation means encouraging subversion. Former security officials, featuring persuasive power on the security apparatus of the state have been described by some of the participants as a useful support to bridge the gap between security and development sectors and encourage dialogue. On the other hand, experts remarked how states are also demanded for transparency and good governance in order to strengthen community's support and participation.

From the civil society side, participants remarked how polarization on political positions should be avoided to the benefit of the important contribution that civil society and the development sector can give to security. The recognition of this important contribution is already proved by the fact that today CT and security represent important components of aid and development policies and funds.

On the overlapping aspects of development and CVE, participants pointed out that even though violent extremism is recognized as a subset of larger issues such as fragility, conflicts and peace process, this does not mean that violent extremism exists only in fragile and conflict states. In other words, CVE is not only identified with development,

peace building, stabilization, etc. All these sectors are related to CVE but they are also different problems that require different tools. More specifically, development approaches are very much relevant to CVE because the byproduct of development goals are essentially to build a more stable society that is less prone to violent extremism. Development approaches relevant for CVE include, for example, community engagement, economic empowerment, gender mainstreaming, and education.

Participants emphasized the idea that the development sector should not be seen only as a source of funding or implementing mechanism for CVE programs. Instead, there should be specific training for development workers on how to integrate CVE as part of existing development programs.

CVE Security and Development: Challenges and Opportunities

During the discussions at the meeting, participants identified corrective actions and recommendations along four main areas: 1) actors, 2) approaches, 3) communications and 4) actions. The following section will describe the recommendations by the participants on how to improve the coordination and cooperation between the Security and Development sectors to the benefit of countering violent extremism.

1. Actors

With regards to the actors involved in CVE, Security and Development, meeting participants recommended two ways in which the relationship between these sectors can be improved: 1) a better multi-sectoral inclusion of actors; and 2) more emphasis on the local perspective in any program design.

Multi-Sectoral Actors

A more inclusive approach, involving actors from different sectors is beneficial to cooperation CVE, Security and Development sectors because it maximizes the array of skills and contributions. Moreover, since CVE is an area with a continuum of issues for the security and development sectors, it often requires parallel engagement from governments, civil society, business and community.

Experts labeled this more inclusive approach as 'bringing to table the unusual suspects', i.e. actors often unaware of their important role in CVE. Although the long- term sustainability of CVE strategies still implies having the state to take the lead, it is important for the state to engage with vulnerable communities for challenging the isolation that can lead to terrorism and radicalization. According to the participants, challenging this isolation means broader engagement with local communities and non-usual interlocutors that are able to affect change, such as women, families, youth, minorities, religious and other leaders, teachers, social workers. A better interaction between different actors is also needed to create a more homogeneous community of practice in CVE.

Participants also wanted to stress on the human aspect of violent extremism. Some experts remarked that in states where governments have adopted strategies that progressively shifted from 'hard security' and police interventions to a 'softer' approach that took into consideration the human aspect of terrorism has been effective in reducing the acts of violence and general community support for violent extremist organizations. This approach shift included for example addressing more effectively people's grievances and frustrations in some areas of the country, which were exploited by violent extremist organizations to gain support and foster recruitment. The new approach sometimes included also engagement with rebels outside traditional diplomatic channels, i.e. through community, families or through former violent extremists' reintegration into society.

Although there is evident need and benefits deriving for a more inclusive approach, some of the participants remarked that joint efforts might be counterproductive when role of governments and development are not clear in conflict prone or volatile security contexts. For example, it was presented the case of the development sector putting at risk the outcome of the project by taking up projects initiated by the military or government in fragile states or states enjoying low support of the community.

Local Actors

Meeting attendees stressed how important it is to consider context- specific factors when developing CVE programs, given that drivers to violent extremism can vary considerably from a local and regional perspective. For example, some factors leading individuals and groups to join violent extremism can include underdevelopment and financial incentives provided by violent extremists organizations. However, participants discussed how these are only part of broader series of frustrations and motivations (personal, ideological, geographic and demographic), that can represent trigger-factors to violent extremism.

Participants then noted that in order to succeed and be well received by the community, the design of development programs should be as impartial as possible. Yet, the impartiality requirement raises some issues: civil society components in many developing countries are not always impartial but sometimes connected to political parties. Moreover, the opinion of the community is not impartial and neither is the donor perspective when selecting how to spend human and financial resources.

According to some experts international development actors need to acquire better awareness of the local political and cultural environment and of the impartial role expected from them. Attendees considered these as necessary prerequisites to avoid instilling certain foreign values onto local society and putting lives at risk.

Moreover, a local perspective is useful to understand the power chains in a specific area and avoid creating competition between different security actors operating in that area.

For some participants the adoption of a better local perspective is needed also to overcome local diffidence towards foreign development workers, perceived as non-

credible voices and detached from the local community for their different lifestyles and cultural background.

Some of the participants suggested local partners, including grassroots and community-based organizations as the most capable intermediaries to bridge the gaps between foreign aid workers and local communities. Local intermediaries have been pointed out by attendees as ideal implementing partners for their capacity of strengthening support and outreach among the local communities. According to the experts, intermediaries shall be identified, based on some criteria and skills, summarized as follows:

- They needed to be trusted by everyone and be recognized as credible voices;
- They need legitimacy and impartiality in order to be acknowledged by local communities as credible and trusted voices;
- They need a range of capacities such as management skills, being facilitative, politically astute, grounded in local area to be able to identify relevant actors and to assess risk; and
- They must be 'amphibious' and have the capacity of moving among the nuances of the local reality, language and power chains.

2. Approaches

After assessing opportunities and challenges for different actors involved in CVE programs, participants discussed successful development and security approaches for CVE. These approaches include research and analysis, strategies, donors, inter-agency coordination as well as monitoring and evaluation.

Research and Analysis

Participants recognized that at present the analysis and research employed for CVE strategies and programs is mainly based on CT and crisis analysis. However, what CVE would need is a more strategic and forward-looking analysis, which examines 'push and pull factors' towards violent extremism rather than just focusing on terrorism organizations and conflicts or crises areas.

Most of the participants considered analysis as an important starting point for effective CVE program design based on evidence. They remarked how analysis in CVE is especially expected to fill in the gap in the donors' knowledge of local realities, list potential partners and avoid what has been described as a 'policy-based evidence-making', i.e. the creation of evidence based on the need for quick decisions and deliverables from governments. Furthermore, given the multitude of actors involved in CVE activities, analysis should be shared amongst multiple stakeholders within governments, NGOs, civil society and including private sector as much as possible.

Yet, experts underlined how an analysis approach focusing on preventive measures rather than crisis response implies some challenges in providing evidence of actual threats to security.

Moreover, the meeting participants considered as a challenge ensuring that the analysis would reach up the policy level. In these regards, attendees stressed that development actors should learn how to effectively market their results for policy makers, which generally means shorter and concise analysis.

Strategies

With respect to the validity and implementation of CVE strategies based on the support of the security and development sector, two main challenges were considered by the experts: 1) what makes a strategy effective and 2) how we ensure that strategies translate into implementation. Participants noticed that at present, many strategies provide guidance for implementation but this does not mean, they are always implemented.

First, attendees stressed that strategies need some sort of framework in place and proper ownership from government organizations in order to be taken forward. The second requirement for creating valid CVE strategies leading to implementation, according to the experts, is to bring different actors and sectors working together on its design and implementation. This will help different actors for example from the development, humanitarian, security and CVE sectors share a strategic vision and understand where their CVE efforts overlap. For most of the attendees, an effective strategy is usually supported by the inclusion of donors, different stakeholders, and local implementing partners.

Nevertheless, participants noted that possibly the main challenge to the implementation of holistic strategies is the difficulty to rally actors from different sectors and traditionally not used to work with each other. To overcome this difficulty, experts suggested more focused and narrowed strategies, which would allow to better monitor and measure the results.

Moreover, they stressed that given the importance of the 'local context' for CVE, national development strategies should take into account and integrate local development strategies.

Although it has been observed that in practice it is possible to have good programming without strategy and good strategy without implementation, participants remarked that the importance of strategy relies in its long-term results. Tactical approaches might show modest results in the short term but they can encourage donors to keep giving and strengthening the creation of ownership.

Donors

When discussing opportunities and challenges for CVE from a donor perspective, experts recognized that analysis, strategy and policy are important but not sufficient for ensuring donors' support to CVE. Two factors were considered crucial to strengthen support to CVE from donors: trained staff and funding.

Trained staff means that development agencies, NGOs, and governments need to be socialized and capacitated with CVE ideas and perspectives. CVE in turn needs to be further supported by good development practices shaped and informed by the development community. Participants stressed how development cannot be seen as just a source of funding or an implementing mechanism.

On the other hand, according to participants, funding mechanisms requires more flexibility and risk taking from donors. Attendees wished donors to be less afraid of taking risk when engaging in projects and instead try to transform fears of previous failures into "lessons learned". Some of the participants stressed that if there's a lesson learned from a failure, there is still an added value of the project. Mapping and building up a consolidated networks of reliable partners for project implementation can support a more open risk-taking.

Participants also suggested more open risk-taking from donors as an approach shift helping speed-up complicated bureaucratic mechanisms for obtaining grants. On the one hand, it was noted by some of the experts how donor governments' cautious approaches with funds are mainly motivated by adherence to standards of good governance, transparency and taxpayers accountability. On the other hand, it was stressed by other participants that flexibility of funding is particularly important for a multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural area such as CVE to make the intervention more rapid.

A challenge to the shift towards more flexible funding for CVE, as pointed out during the discussion, is that while rapidity of intervention is crucial for quick-response programming during crises it may not be considered as critical for preventive programming. Moreover, results oriented expectations from donors means that preventive programs are harder 'to pitch' than crisis response programs.

Finally, many participants agreed that today further donors' opportunities for CVE come from new and emerging donors, including the private sector through Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) programs, foundations and philanthropic organizations as well as emerging donor countries.

These new donors can often support with considerable financial resources, skills and more rapid informal funding mechanisms that the development sector is encouraged to further explore and utilize. Informal funding mechanisms include for example funds though professional and personal networks or in kind and philanthropic donations.

Inter- Agency Coordination

As stressed by the participants, one of the main challenges to comprehensive and multidisciplinary approaches to CVE concerns how to improve inter-agency coordination between CVE, security and development. Participants assessed that such coordination is needed especially to avoid stove-piping and duplication of efforts. Stove-piping is often due to lack of communication and cooperation amongst different sectors or even

between different agencies from the same sector. Although some of the experts underlined how duplication can have positive consequences and reinforce or fill capacity gaps on the macro level, on the micro level, filling the same needs means waste of resources.

To overcome this challenge, some of the attendees remarked that it is important to show how security and development have something practical to gain from breaking down stove-pipes and improve their cooperation in support of CVE. Some participants saw a possible opportunity coming from a stronger integration of already consolidated approaches to security and development, including methods, instruments, and funding streams into more recent CVE approaches.

Other participants stressed that stove-piping can be contrasted through training and awareness raising. These would be aimed at challenging misperceptions and build a common vision between CVE, security and development.

Greater engagement of recipient countries' governments and local implementing partners was considered during the discussion as an additional opportunity for better coordination. On the one hand, recipient governments can facilitate information sharing with partners and handling the division of labor. On the other hand, as previously described, local implementing partners have the capacities to move and bridge the gap between security, development, and local power chains.

Finally, existing development and peace-building forums were suggested by some of the attendees as another useful tool for better coordination in CVE programs and for expanding the participation of traditionally excluded actors.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Participants generally remarked that the main challenge to Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) in CVE is represented by the fact that standard evaluation practices used for security and development are less effective for CVE. Some of the experts explained that this is due to the multi-sectoral nature of this discipline and to the fact that preventive engagement is harder to measure than interventions.

CVE projects imply M&E on multiple levels and for example, it should measure both security objectives and development objectives. A quantitative approach was seen by some of the participants as a not really feasible approach.

According to one of the participants' examples, when working on a training program, training numbers alone might not be an accurate indicator as it is difficult to assess which participant has learnt and who they have been able to affect. In this case, the middle ground for CVE M&E would be to assess the number of people trained, what participants have learned, how they implement what they have learnt, what they have been able to achieve and whom they have reached. In order to monitor and evaluate this type of CVE program effectively, it was suggested that the process should therefore take place months after the end of the program.

Some participants summarized the M&E challenges by saying that development indicators can be partially used as baseline for CVE, given the overlap between many areas of engagement but there is the need of creating new indicators that are built on the baseline provided by development. For example, overcoming complex issues within community, better perception of youth by community as a whole, and feeling more part of community can be part of CVE indicators.

The meeting attendees agreed on the fact that establishing effective M&E for CVE means employing clear, reasonable and practical M&E parameters both for donors and implementing partners. This according to the experts implies on the one hand, local ownership of evaluation for implementing partners, coupled with mentoring support from donors. On the other hand, participants pointed out the necessity for CVE M&E to be more participatory and actively engage the different stakeholders in the measuring and evaluation process.

3. Communications

The ways of communicating internally with the multiple stakeholders involved and externally with local communities has been discussed as another crucial aspect of the cooperation between security and development sectors in support of CVE.

Firstly, it was examined how to effectively tailor counter-narratives with an impact on local communities. Attendees stressed how public information and language adopted should be culturally and politically aware of the local context and respect the local sensitivities since experience proved that presenting the information in a wrong or hazardous way can undermine the goals of the CVE programs.

Secondly, it was remarked that the publicity sought by donors and states supporting local programs on CVE should take into account the risk for programs and local partners deriving from the security context. For the attendees, publicity should generally avoid being a promotion tool for authorities but rather being used for raising awareness and consequently, communications strategies should preferably employ impartial branding.

Experts then stressed how some violent extremist organizations proved very skilled in the use of media and social media, through which they are able to appeal to frustrations and grievances of local communities, and hence gain sympathy and support.

Some participants remarked that counter-narratives should yet avoid demagoguery and differentiate from the propagandistic communications of violent extremist organizations. Experts viewed two steps as particularly relevant for creating effective counter-narratives:

- The message should be locally and contextually relevant. For some participants, this can be achieved by relying primarily on information derived from local sources such as contacts of local embassies; and

- According to another participant's perspective, the message should "deconstruct" and "delegitimize" the violent extremists' arguments. Counter-narratives must expose the harms of violent extremism on the local community, including for example the effects on economic development. Credible voices such as former member of violent extremist organizations, families of violent extremists, victims of attacks and trusted local community members seem to be particularly effective for building counter-narratives.

As underlined by some of the participants, existing forums for cooperation and dialogue as well as international foundations can support many small NGOs in receiving the right exposure on media and overcome the obstacle related to limited financial resources. Other participants noted that an effective media strategy includes training journalists on development methods and approaches to CVE and invite journalists to meeting in order to raise interest and buy in.

4. Actions: The Way Ahead

Based on the discussion amongst the participants so far, the meeting concluded with suggestions on how to bring forward and make more concrete cooperation between security and development in support of CVE. The points raised by the experts can be summarized as following:

i. *Capitalize on existing CVE capacities*

Since CVE incorporates aspects of many disciplines, practices and required skills, it is important to avoid developing parallel processes for planning the ways ahead. There is already a number of actors and networks working on the intersection between CVE and human rights, CVE and development, or CVE and security and peace building. The expert meeting gathered some of them around the same table but in addition, it would be useful to map other existing actors and forums to be involved in the cooperation between these sectors. To make this suggestion more concrete, the participants to the expert meeting were therefore invited to further connect with their own personal and professional network.

In order to capitalize on the case studies and practices illustrated during the meeting as example of successful cooperation between CVE, security and development, attendees pointed out that it would be helpful to match them to the different local contexts or employ them in the development of a common CVE strategic framework.

To make this suggestion more concrete and shift the focus of produced deliverables from conceptual to practical, it was proposed by some participants as a follow up activity the creation of "platforms" including different groups of donors and NGOs for compiling lists of actual good practices, programs, project case studies and lessons learned.

ii. *Engage in Capacity building*

Capitalizing on existing CVE capacities raised the point of focusing in the future on capacity building for the different actors involved in CVE.

To make this suggestion more concrete and avoid reinventing CVE approaches, participants suggested the organization of trainings focusing on capacity building from countries with a broader CVE experience in terms of trained staff, activities and achievements. Yet, it was stressed how also civil society can participate in capacity building with its diversified skills and experience developed through its work in the field.

iii. Strengthen Inclusiveness and Local Perspective

In order to improve inclusiveness of traditionally excluded actors, and strengthen the local perspective, it was suggested that follow-up meetings should be organized in a way to be more inclusive of new and emerging donors as well as traditionally excluded groups, such as women and grassroots organizations. These kinds of initiatives would be helpful to: 1) bring new partners into dialogue; 2) support a joint plan for the implementation of actions 3) facilitate sharing of analysis and information.

A practical example would be to organize a conference gathering different types of donors to encourage internal discussions among traditional Western countries, emerging donor countries, private sector, CVE Global Fund and foundations.

On the other hand, expanding inclusiveness is important to continue working on the local perspectives and strengthening local ownership of strategies. Therefore, future initiatives need to include local civil societies and governments to find new and valuable intermediaries and implementing partners. For governments the financing of projects that have a certain measure of risk as they are focused on prevention, small-scale and in tune with the cultural and political context through trusted intermediary organizations may be an attractive option.

iv. Disseminate results

The preparation of a comprehensive and inclusive distribution list for all the documents produced under this initiative is relevant to raise the awareness of the topic and progress achieved.

To make this suggestion more concrete, participants recommended to map local actors for encouraging internal dissemination and to invite different participants to follow up meetings and activities. The distribution list would also possibly include GCTF member states and possibly follow a parallel strategy of dissemination between governments and civil society.