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CENTRAL ASIA SUPPORT FOR STABLE SOCIETIES FACT SHEET

The USAID Central Asia Support for Stable Societies project is identifying and testing new responses to preventing violent extremism (PVE). The project will contribute to the evolution of more effective PVE approaches in Central Asia by using a systematic and rigorous ‘research-into-programming’ process to identify violent extremism risk and prevention factors and apply this information to pilot interventions.

The Central Asia Support for Stable Societies project is implemented in Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and is applying a country-specific mix of digital and/or real-world research and pilot programming in each country. The project utilizes DAI’s ‘Research, Act, Learn Cycle,’ which closely integrates research and learning into the design of project activities and interventions. The project will define problems and identify risk and prevention factors through research. Through pilot activities, the Central Asia Support for Stable Societies project will develop and test strategies for violent extremism prevention and risk reduction.

In the post-research, intervention design phase, the project team will draw on the insights of local networks and organizations in communities vulnerable to extremist influence through a collaborative co-design process. Partner organizations will identify opportunities to build on local PVE initiatives and apply research findings to more effectively address extremism risk. The

project will also facilitate in-person and virtual activities to bring together partners across key project focal areas to share experiences and facilitate further collaboration.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH

The Central Asia Support for Stable Societies project is first and foremost a **learning project** designed to:

- Identify through research viable PVE strategies;
- Test those strategies through pilot activities;
- Use data to determine the replicability and scalability of successful pilot activities within and /or across the four countries.

The project's primary learning objectives are:

- To what extent is the research-based design of this program effective in identifying risk and prevention factors and designing interventions that reduce community risk to violent extremism (VE)?
- To what extent are the digital risk and prevention factors equal to, greater, or less than real-world factors?
- How do digital or real-world VE risk and prevention factors vary by community and country and what insights do the data provide into these differences?

By using a mix of digital and real-world research and pilot activities, the Central Asia Support for Stable Societies project will: 1) develop and test our understanding of VE at the country level and 2) make comparisons between consistent application of digital and/or real-world research methods in each location. Across all four countries, the project team will identify communities vulnerable to extremist influence; describe VE risk and protective factors at the individual, family, community and societal levels; and describe common pathways and processes of radicalization. Based on this research, the project will design and implement three possible types of targeted interventions to address specific risk or protective factors: 1) community-based development responses; 2) interventions testing resilience to VE messages; and 3) online/digital responses. The final number, objectives and scope of pilot interventions will be determined based on the research outcomes. All interventions will use an experimental design to allow for rigorous evaluation of whether the interventions had the intended impacts on VE risk and protective factors.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The project is designed to substantively contribute to the body of research on violent extremism by testing prevention strategies. By being able to predict which communities might be less resilient to future VE threats and understanding which community-level factors are associated with community resilience to VE, USAID will be able to more effectively leverage other development program investments, such as governance, economic growth, health and education, to bolster the preventive factors of these at-risk communities. Finally, the project will also provide USAID with a field-tested set of tools and methods to apply to USAID's PVE program implementation and monitoring and evaluation, both in Central Asia and more broadly.