QUALITATIVE STUDY ON COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM (CVE) PROGRAMMING UNDER THE KENYA TRANSITION INITIATIVE (KTI)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. BACKGROUND

While Kenya received global attention in September 2013 due to the attack at the Westgate shopping mall, this event represents just one of many violent incidents in the country over recent years, often considered to be in part a spill-over from instability in Somalia. The tensions in Coastal Kenya also take additional forms and are driven to a considerable degree by the perceived political and economic marginalisation of the region. Drawing upon professed historical injustices, the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) reportedly relies upon violence to promote independence, and has encouraged local residents to boycott elections. Tensions between Christians and Muslims are also pronounced on the Coast, particularly after the killing of prominent Muslim clerics such as Aboud Rogo.

In this context fits the Kenya Transition Initiative (KTI) and its Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) programme. Since 2011 KTI has been operational in Eastleigh and its environs, and in 2012 it expanded to the Coastal regions of Lamu, Kilifi, Kwale, Malindi and Mombasa. The KTI programme was essentially a pilot of the new CVE concept, operating through flexible funding mechanisms that supported individuals, networks and organisations, often with small grants implemented over a short duration. The grants were designed to target the key 'push' and 'pull' factors responsible for driving Violent Extremism (VE). As understood by KTI, the former 'drive youth to join extremist movements,' whereas the latter 'attract youth towards extremism as an emotional struggle for purpose, direction and identity.'[1] Examples of push factors may include, for instance, police harassment, elevated unemployment and racial profiling, whereas KTI's identified pull factors included personal appeal of radical preachers and a radicalised religious environment.

2. THIS STUDY

As part of the learning process during closedown, KTI engaged Integrity Research and Consultancy (Integrity) to undertake a qualitative study into its intervention. Following an introduction looking at the background, objectives and the study methods (Section 1), this report is structured loosely to mirror KTI's lifecycle, sequentially focusing upon the research undertaken to inform the intervention (Section 2), programme design (Section 3), and the selection of grants (Section 4). This is followed by conclusions (Section 5), and a series of actionable recommendations designed to inform future CVE initiatives in Kenya and elsewhere (Section 6). The KTI Terms of Reference (TOR) largely advised our research methods, with a primary focus upon a review of KTI documentation being complemented by key informant interviews with KTI staff, grantees and other stakeholders, focus group discussions with grant beneficiaries, and grantee observations.

---

[1] USAID, *KTI-E PPMP*, 4

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

KTI and Integrity agreed that the research should be focused upon providing responses to the following study questions:

- **Were the key programme concepts such as 'extremism' and 'identity' suitably defined and understood?** KTI relied upon the USAID *Policy Paper* definition of VE, and arguably would have benefited from additional guidance and clarity from this document, for instance, with regard to whether this concept is intended to include 'attitudinal support' for VE,[2] and how to identify boundaries at the margins between 'ideologically' and 'criminally' motivated entities that apply force. A definition of 'identity' was provided by KTI, but this was subject to alternative interpretations – e.g. religious, national or clan-based identities, identity as youth, and so on.

- **To what extent were local drivers of VE understood prior to project onset? Was sufficient research undertaken on drivers of VE prior to project onset?** Considerable research was conducted on the drivers of VE prior to project onset, and this served to identify key push and pull factors. Notably absent from the research was a case study focus upon individuals who have been directly involved in VE, i.e. ideally via interviews with active, incarcerated or former members of VE entities (the challenges associated with such research are of course recognised).

- **Were some identified pull/push factors more influential than others?** Issues such as poverty, state repression, and material enticements (i.e. offered by VE entities to incentivise certain activities) were reoccurring themes identified during the field research. However, definitive answers to this question are precluded by the qualitative nature of this research, and as it was not designed to draw directly from individuals who had personally travelled down the VE path.

- **Was this research consistent with the USAID *Guide to Drivers* report? Should other candidate pull/push factors have been the subject of research? Was the planned focus upon pull factors achieved?** KTI followed the *Guide to Drivers* distinction between push and pull factors (also highlighted in the USAID *Policy Paper*), and its efforts to counter a predisposition towards the former was a key programme success. However, the KTI research overlooked a range of individual-level incentives, such as vengeance, material incentives, fear and status (as discussed in Part Five of Guide to Drivers). Such drivers have direct programmatic relevance, for instance, as if vengeance-seeking is identified as a driver of VE in a selected location, grants should be designed to bridge gaps between communities and/or between individuals.

---

[2] The term 'support' is used in an ambiguous manner in the USAID *Policy Paper* definition, and thus it is unclear as to whether it should refer to 'attitudinal support' (i.e. the encouragement of VE) or only 'behavioural support' (i.e. activities that contribute directly to VE). If the concept is intended to also incorporate the former, CVE programming will be required to target a wider audience.

- **To what extent was the KTI goal statement suitable in light of the above drivers?** The KTI goal statement was: 'stronger identity and self-confidence of youth to allow them to reject extremism.' We argue that simplicity is an asset, and thus that the concepts of 'identity' and 'self-confidence' should be omitted from future goal statements. We also caution against the apparent 'top-down' assumptions implicit in the term 'to allow them to reject' in that it denies agency to the many individuals who actively seek VE.

- **To what extent was the KTI goal statement achieved?** A beneficiary interviewed during the research process reported a case of an individual who had been initiated to Al Shabaab, but who was persuaded to alter his path by the grantee and wider community. While not a formal evaluation (see Section 1.2), our research provided considerable qualitative evidence to support broader conclusions about progress towards the KTI goal statement.

- **To what extent was the results framework suitable in light of the project goal? Were suitable pull and push factors targeted through the Intermediate Results (IRs)?** We argue that the results framework was largely robust, but also provide a limited number of recommendations on how it may have been strengthened. In particular, we suggest that it would have been beneficial to apply the Theories of Change (see Annex D) logic to identify untested assumptions.

- **To what extent were the IRs achieved? To what extent did individual grants achieve their objectives?** During the research process we collected considerable qualitative evidence to support wider conclusions with regard to progress towards the nine IRs. There is considerable overlap between the objectives of the grants and the programme IRs, and thus evidence positive change for the latter is also a signal of progress towards the former.

- **To what extent were grants suitable in light of the project objectives and results framework?** Reflecting the existing capabilities of civil society organisations, a number of grants may arguably be described as being 'CVE relevant' rather than 'CVE specific.' However, in most instances the grants linked logically into the results framework and thus also the programme goal.

- **Was the project as innovative as was expected? Was the programme suitably flexible to changing contexts and ongoing lessons learned?** The KTI approach was both flexible and innovative, and this qualifies as a key programme success. For instance, through the grant mechanism KTI was able to react to changing the context following incidents such as the Westgate attack and the killing of prominent Muslim cleric Aboud Rogo. This system of funding also allowed KTI to upscale its association with the grantees that achieved notable successes.

- **Did the grants target vulnerable/the most vulnerable individuals?** While delivering important benefits to 'youth' (generally taken to be those between 16 and 35 in Kenya), we argue that a key lesson learnt from the KTI pilot was that it insufficiently targeted the most vulnerable subsets of the population. This is of critical importance as only small minorities follow the VE path in locations such as Eastleigh and the Coast. We also recommend that this narrower targeting will require additional research as, while substance-users, ex-convicts, recent religious converts, and other subpopulation may intuitively be 'at-risk', the evidence upon which such perceptions are based within the locations in question is insufficiently robust.

- **How did the programme respond to the 2011 USAID *Policy Paper* and the 2009 USAID *Guide to Programming*?** These are both wide-ranging documents, thus it is challenging to draw simple conclusions regarding KTI's response to them. At the heart of the *Policy Paper* are eleven programme principles, such as 'tailor and coordinate communications,' 'promote inclusive country ownership,' and 'exercise selectivity.' We believe that KTI successfully achieved the majority of these principles to a considerable extent, including particularly that relating to 'flexibility, agility and procurement speed.' This paper outlines suggested improvements in others, such as 'focus on the drivers of violent extremism and insurgency.' The *Guide to Programming* report centres upon twelve rules, including 'anchor the implementation in partnerships,' and 'convey respect for indigenous religious and cultural norms and traditions.' We argue that KTI also generally met these rules to a considerable extent, but comment specifically upon adaptations that would have enhanced their ability to 'develop a strategy after acquiring an adequate understanding of local conditions and dynamics' and to 'direct assistance to at-risk groups and communities.'

4. KEY PROGRAMME SUCCESSES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summarising the above, it is possible to state that the KTI successes were considerable, with perhaps the most pronounced achievements being their willingness to focus upon 'pull' factors, and their programmatic flexibility. The latter is demonstrated most clearly in KTI's ability to rapidly react to changing contexts, and in the manner in which they were able to upscale efforts with grantees that demonstrated success. More important still, our evidence also suggested that substantial progress was made towards the overarching goal of countering VE.

These considerable successes aside, seeking to inform future CVE efforts in Kenya and beyond, our recommendations include:

1. **Increase the focus upon more narrowly defined 'at-risk' groups.** While the KTI grants were designed to focus upon specific vulnerable groups, such as youth and Somalis, we feel that further gains may have been made through greater precision in this targeting. Specifically, additional efforts should have been made to focus upon, for instance, ex-convicts, gang members, substance-users, religious converts, members of specific clans and so on. Such targeting requires a strong evidence-base, and this begins with detailed research prior to programme design into whether each of these subsets of the population are actually more vulnerable.

2. **Focus upon individual-level drivers as pull factors.** While KTI's focus upon pull factors was a key success of the programme, the core programme research neglected to focus upon factors that motivate at the individual-level, such as status seeking, vengeance, material incentives, and so on. Programmatic implications are apparent, for instance, as if research reveals that vengeance is deemed to be a key driver of VE in a specific geography, grants should be designed to bridge the gaps between and within communities (e.g. religions, clans) and between individuals.

3. **Invest additional resources into conducting rigorous research.** While research into political violence is almost uniquely challenging, much of that undertaken for the KTI programme lacked rigour. Specific issues include an insufficient focus upon 'triangulating' data from multiple sources, a failure to adopt a 'case study' emphasis upon individuals who travelled the VE path, a lack of recognition of the fallibility of sources, and so on. While recognising that resources are finite, we suggest that additional finances and time should be invested in research at the outset and throughout CVE initiatives. Indeed, we argue that there is a need for research beyond what is normally considered to be adequate for donor initiatives both because CVE is a new programmatic area, and as the drivers of VE are highly complex.

4. **Build a system to articulate and test assumptions in intervention logic.** It is necessary to test the assumptions of the programme logic, and to achieve this we recommend the Theories of Change framework (see Annex D). This assists with identifying untested assumptions, thereby helping to ensure that programme activities contribute to the IRs, which in turn support progress toward the CVE goal.

5. **Increase focus upon avoiding/mitigating negative effects.** The potential negative effects of CVE programming are substantial, and include, for instance, donors undermining their own efforts to achieve CVE objectives through been considered to 'meddle' in local (particularly religious) affairs, and the targeting of individuals and/or entities due to their association with these donors. Aside from adopting rigorous risk management strategies, we also suggest that donors in this field (and U.S. ones in particular) recognise that the objectives of CVE programming and gaining community support through branding (e.g. of USAID) are in many instances incompatible, and thus in certain contexts it may be necessary to sacrifice the latter in favour of the former.

6. **Recognise the need for time for CVE programmes to become established.** As observed, a key success of KTI was in its flexibility, allowing it to react to changing contexts and upscale its relations with successful grantees. As observed in *Guide to Programming*, however, initiatives 'must seek to reconcile the competing demands of responsiveness and adaptability on the one hand, and steadiness and steadfastness on the other.'[3] We argue that the Coastal component of KTI was given insufficient time to comprehend the context, trial grantees through small-scale grants, and so on.

---

[3] USAID, *Guide to Programming*, 48.

Cover photograph: KTI beneficiaries

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Integrity wishes to thank all of the grantee representatives in Eastleigh and the Coast who kindly took time out of their busy schedules to assist our research. Their assistance enabled us to comprehend the subtleties of their interactions with beneficiaries that tend not to appear in project documentation. These individuals offered frank comments, and were willing to highlight both the strengths and weaknesses of their programmes.

We also wish to thank the beneficiaries who took part in focus group discussions, and who revealed valuable insight into their experience of the programme. These individuals were also keen to elaborate upon both the achievements of grants and lessons learnt. They additionally provided the research team insight into the challenges that youth face, and thoughts on what drives individuals to violence.

Most of all, we wish to extend thanks to the KTI / Chemonics team. These individuals were extremely supportive throughout the research process, rapidly providing requested information and documentation. It is to their credit that they have repeatedly expressed a desire for the wider CVE community to learn from their experiences, including both their successes and aspects of the programme that may have been improved with hindsight.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS

AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
ATPU	Anti-Terrorist Police Unit
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GoK	Government of Kenya
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IR	Intermediate Results
ISS	Institute for Security Studies
KII	Key Informant Interview
KTI	Kenya Transition Initiative
MRC	Mombasa Republican Council
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
OTI	Office of Transition Initiative
PPMP	Partner Performance Management Plan
PTDS	Post-traumatic Stress Disorder
TFG	Transitional Federal Government (Somalia)
TOC	Theories of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
VE	Violent Extremism

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

While Kenya received global attention in September 2013 due to the attack at the Westgate shopping mall, this represents only one of many violent events in the country over recent years. This particular incident was claimed by al Shabaab, who maintained that it was conducted in revenge against Kenyan military operations in Somalia. As observed by the International Crisis Group:

> Somalia's growing Islamist radicalism is spilling over into Kenya. The militant Al-Shabaab movement has built a cross-border presence and a clandestine support network among Muslim populations in the northeast and Nairobi and on the coast and is trying to radicalise and recruit youth from these communities, often capitalising on long-standing grievances against the central state.[4]

Tensions on the Coast are also driven to a considerable degree by the perceived political and economic marginalisation of the region. Citing historical injustices, the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) reportedly applies violence to promote independence, and it has recently encouraged Coastal residents to boycott elections. Tensions between Christians and Muslims are also pronounced in this region, particularly after the killing of prominent Muslim clerics such as Aboud Rogo.

In this context fits the Kenya Transition Initiative (KTI) and its Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) programme. Since 2011 KTI has been operational in Eastleigh and its environs, and in 2012 it expanded to the Coastal regions of Lamu, Kilifi, Kwale, Malindi and Mombasa. The KTI programme was essentially a pilot of the new CVE concept, operating through a flexible funding mechanism that supported individuals, networks and organisations, often with small grants implemented over a short duration. The grants were each designed to target key 'push' and 'pull' factors responsible for Violent Extremism (VE). Examples of push factors identified by KTI include police harassment, elevated unemployment and racial profiling, whereas the pull factors included a highly radicalised religious environment, the personal appeal of radical preachers, and the influence of 'cyber preachers.'

As part of the learning process during closedown, KTI engaged Integrity Research and Consultancy (Integrity) to undertake a qualitative study into its intervention. The objective was to assess KTI achievements and to draw actionable recommendations for future CVE programming in Kenya and elsewhere.

---

[4] International Crisis Group, *Kenyan Somali Islamist Radicalisation*, 1.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

The Terms of Reference (TOR) for this study states that 'this is not a formal evaluation but the report should attempt to answer some key evaluation-type questions.'[5] Drawing from the TOR, KTI and Integrity established the following key research questions:[6]

QUESTION	LOCATION IN REPORT
• To what extent were local drivers of VE understood prior to project onset?	See Sections 2.1 and 2.2.
• Was sufficient research undertaken on drivers of VE prior to project onset?	See Section 2 and Annex C.
• Was this research consistent with the 2009 USAID *Guide to Drivers* document?	See Sections 2.1 and 2.2.
• Were some identified pull/push factors more influential than others?	See Sections 2.1 and 2.2.
• Should other candidate pull/push factors have been the subject of research?	See Section 2.2.
• To what extent was the KTI project objective suitable in light of the above local drivers?	See Section 3.2.
• Were key project concepts (e.g. 'extremism,' 'identity') suitably defined and understood?	See Section 3.2.
• To what extent was the project goal achieved?	See Section 3.1.
• To what extent was the results framework suitable in light of the project objective?	See Section 3.4.
• Were suitable pull and push factors targeted through the Intermediate Results (IRs)?	See Section 3.4.
• To what extent were the IRs achieved?	See Section 3.3.
• To what extent were grants suitable in light of the project objectives and results framework?	See Sections 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3.
• Did the grants target vulnerable/the most vulnerable individuals?	See Section 4.4.
• To what extent did individual grants achieve their objectives?	See Sections 4 and 3.3.
• Was the planned focus upon pull factors achieved?	See Section 2.2.
• Was the project as innovative as was expected?	See Section 4.1.
• Was the programme suitably flexible to changing contexts and ongoing lessons learned?	See Section 4.1.
• How did the programme respond to the 2011 USAID *Policy Paper* and the 2009 USAID *Guide to Programming*?	These documents are cross-cutting and thus comments are provided at various points in the report.

Figure 1: Research Questions

---

[5] KTI, *Terms of Reference*, 15.
[6] Note that these research questions were adapted from those provided in the TOR (see Annex B)

Integrity interpreted the aims of this study broadly to inform CVE programming and related initiatives, rather than just KTI. Thus, certain recommendations offered in this report are beyond the scope of CVE and US interventions,[7] and these should be understood in this light.

1.3 METHODS

KTI and the TOR largely advised the methodological approach applied by the research team. These methods included:

- A review of KTI and related documents, spanning the programme phases (Annex A)
- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with KTI staff, grantees and other stakeholders
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with grant beneficiaries
- Observations of grantees

In selecting informants, Integrity consulted primarily with prominent grantees (i.e. those that received multiple grants or high-value grants), and these efforts were supplemented through research into smaller grants of specific interest. To the extent possible Integrity met with grantees and beneficiaries in their offices or near their homes to ensure the least possible inconvenience. It was necessary to postpone a number of FGDs as they were planned shortly after a violent incident in Majengo, near the established venue. These FGDs were rescheduled and the research guides were adjusted to omit sensitive questions at this time of heightened insecurity. All KIIs were held in English, with occasional translation support from our Kenyan and Somali research assistants. FGDs occurred using the preferred language of the participants, including Somali, Swahili and English. For certain KIIs/FGDs it was necessary to exclude the female and/or non-Muslim members of the research team.

1.4 EASTLEIGH AND COAST

Eastleigh and its environs and the Coast (from Lamu to Kwale) are very different areas in which to implement CVE, with a key distinctions being that while VE in the former is widely linked to events in Somalia, in the latter it relates to a greater extent to the pursuit of independence and tensions between religious communities. Key difference between the two KTI components have been summarised in Figure 2.

---

[7] The Establishment Clause is of particular significance in this regard.

	EASTLEIGH	COAST
INITIATION	July 2011	September 2012
ACTIVITIES	88	43
SPENDING	USD 3.06m	USD 1.95m

Figure 2: Comparisons between the Eastleigh and Coast components

Unlike their counterparts in Eastleigh, KTI Coast had little time to comprehend the local context of VE, identify partners, and trial these entities through small-scale grants prior to scaling-up. Put simply, while the Eastleigh component was allowed to embed, we believe that the Costal initiative was provided with insufficient time, thus undermining its ability to achieve programmatic success. Given these unequal conditions, this study does not intend to compare the results between these two KTI elements.

1.5 REPORT STRUCTURE

In seeking to provide answers to the questions presented in Section 1.2, this report is structured loosely to mirror the lifecycle of KTI, sequentially focusing upon the research undertaken to inform the intervention (Section 2), programme design (Section 3), and grant selection (Section 4). This is followed by a conclusion (Section 5) and a series of actionable recommendations designed to inform future CVE initiatives both in Kenya and elsewhere (Section 6).

2. KTI's UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONTEXT

Observing that 'precise definitions have eluded many experts,' the USAID *Policy Paper* identifies VE as 'advocating, engaging in, preparing, or otherwise supporting ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic and political objectives.'[8] In analysing the KTI programme, we start by focusing upon the research that informed the understanding of the context in Eastleigh and Coast. In particular, the emphasis is upon the relevance of the 'push' and 'pull' factors that drive VE, and issues associated with research into these drivers. This section also comments upon research into 'at-risk' subpopulation, which may include, for instance, ex-convicts, substance users, teenagers, religious converts, and members of specific clans.

	PUSH FACTORS	PULL FACTORS
USAID 2011 POLICY PAPER ON CVE AND INSURGENCY	• Social marginalisation and fragmentation • Poorly governed/ungoverned areas • Government repression/rights violations • Endemic corruption and elite impunity • Cultural threat perceptions	• Access to material resources • Social status and respect from peers • Belonging • Adventure • Self-esteem and personal empowerment • Prospect of glory or fame • Social networks • Presence of radical institutions or venues • Service provision by extremist groups • Involvement in economic activity
KTI EASTLEIGH ASSESSMENT AND DESIGN	• Police harassment and corruption • Very high youth unemployment • Idleness • Marginalisation • Racial and cultural profiling • Lack of social amenities • Youth estrangements and frustrations	• Highly radicalised religious environment • Misinterpretation of religious teachings • Personal appeal of radical preachers • Concept of global Muslim community • Influence of cyber preachers/sheikhs
KTI MOMBASA ASSESSMMENT AND DESIGN	• Poverty and unemployment • Marginalisation • Unattended historical injustices • Police harassment and cultural profiling	• Misinterpretations of teachings on jihad • Radicalised Religious environment • Appeal by charismatic preachers • Hero worship of extremist individuals • Lack of effective mosque structures

Figure 3: Push and Pull Factors (Summarised)

---

[8] USAID, *Policy Paper*, 2.

2.1 'PUSH' FACTORS

In seeking to comprehend the drivers of violent extremism KTI adopts the USAID language of 'push' and 'pull' factors. In the KTI *Partner Performance Management Plan (PPMP)* it is stated that the former 'drive youth to join extremist movements,' whereas the latter 'attract youth towards extremism as an emotional struggle for purpose, direction and identity.'[9] The push and pull factors considered in the USAID *Policy Paper* and the KTI *Assessment and Design* documents are summarised in Figure 3. The *Policy Paper* is not intended to provide a definitive list, and thus KTI adapted the focus to factors deemed to be most relevant in Eastleigh and Coast. Focusing upon a selected number of the push factors identified in Figure 3, this section highlights the need for localised research to test the relevance of candidate drivers in the communities in question, and the need to also test assumptions regarding the 'direction' of causality (summarised in Box 1).

2.1.1 DISCRIMINATION, PROFILING

The role of discrimination and profiling is commonly discussed in the Kenya literature, for instance, with the International Crisis Group reporting that 'the war against Al-Shabaab has led to an increase in ethnic profiling and discrimination against Somalis in particular, and Muslims in general.'[10] Anneli Botha, from the Institute for Security Studies, similarly argues that 'members of the Somali-Kenyan and Somali communities claim to be victims of racial or ethnic profiling and to have been rounded up and arrested for little reason other than their race and ethnicity.'[11] A KTI grantee likewise referred to state activities as a 'silent policy of discrimination.'

2.1.2 SECURITY FORCE HARASSMENT

The Eastleigh *Assessment and Design* report maintains that youth 'express a particular anger and frustration from the way they are mistreated by authorities especially the police for whom they reserve some of the harshest criticism and disaffection.'[13] Police harassment was also reported during the research conducted for this study, with the Anti-Terrorist Police Unit (ATPU) considered to be a key driver of tensions on the Coast in particular.

---

[9] USAID, *KTI-E PPMP*, 4.
[10] International Crisis Group, *Kenyan Somali Islamist Radicalisation*, 10.
[11] Botha, *Assessing the Vulnerability*, 9.
[12] USAID, *Eastleigh Assessment and Design*, 17.

BOX 1: DIRECTIONS OF CAUSALITY[13]

Research may reveal a correlation, for instance, between VE and employment opportunities in a specific location. Rather than simply assume that the latter drives the former, however, it is necessary to consider the various potential causal routes. Specifically, these include:

1. **A lack of employment opportunities may drive individuals to VE (i.e. *X* 'causes' *Y*)**

Variable X: lack of employment opportunities	→	**Variable Y:** VE
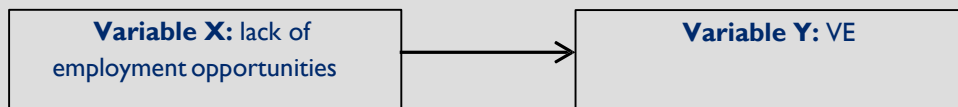
2. **VE may lead to a lack of opportunities (i.e. *Y* 'causes' *X*), perhaps as individuals become tainted by the former.**

Variable X: lack of employment opportunities	←	**Variable Y:** VE
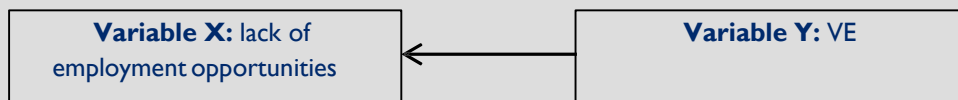
3. **An 'external variable' (e.g. education levels, clan) may drive *both* a lack of employment opportunities and support for this violence (i.e. *Variable Z* 'causes' *X* and *Y*).**

    Variable Z: e.g. education levels, clan affiliations, etc.

    ↙   ↘

Variable X: lack of employment opportunities	**Variable Y:** VE
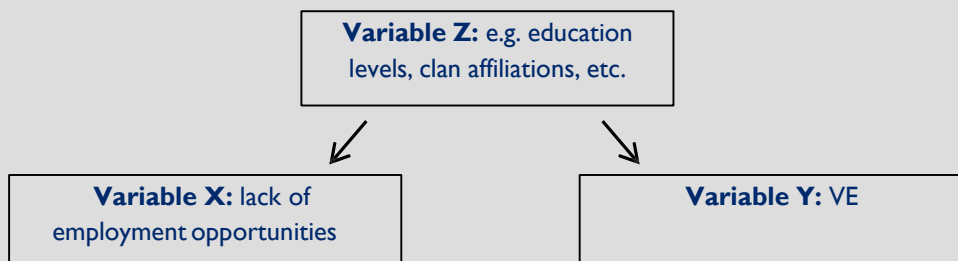
Research must attempt to eliminate plausible hypothesis regarding the direction of causality through focusing upon the sequencing of events (i.e. if *X* tends to precede *Y*, or *vice versa*) and techniques that control for external factors (as discussed in Box 6). Complexity is added, however, as causality may simultaneously run in multiple directions (e.g. *X* 'causes' *Y* and *Y* 'causes' *X*) and further challenges arise as a result of tipping points, disproportionate feedback loops and other complex effects. This is of key relevance for CVE programming in that initiatives to provide employment will have no impact upon VE if the research indicates that option 1 above is inapplicable within the location in question. While the focus in this box is upon employment opportunities, a similar logic should be applied to all candidate drivers of VE, and other plausible causal routes considered in each case.

---

[13] This is adapted from Khalil, *Radical Beliefs.*

2.1.3 POVERTY

While a third commonly-cited driver of VE is poverty, there is considerable scepticism with regard to the role of this factor in the literature. For instance, *Guide to Drivers* claims that 'individual terrorists tend to be better off than the average citizen in the societies to which they belong.' The Mombasa *Assessment and Design* report also highlights that the majority of those arrested or suspected of involvement of VE in Mombasa 'are from middle and upper class families where poverty is not an issue.'[14]

BOX 2: PATHWAY MODELS TO 'RADICALISATION' – A CRITIQUE

A number of prominent studies attempt to explain the radicalisation process through delineating phases through which individuals pass from being 'non-radical' to 'radical.' A prominent example is provided by the Danish Security and Intelligence Services, as presented below.[15]

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
Contact between 'radicalisator' and a person open to radical ideas	Gradual change of behaviour – change in religious behaviour, new communication habits (internet)	Narrowing of social life to include only like-minded individuals – social bonds with family and former friends are cut off or restricted	The radical often goes through a process of (moral) hardening – by watching very violent videos and combat scenes

However, such models present an unwarranted degree of consistency in the trajectory individuals take towards being 'radical.' In the above example, for instance, it should be noted that: [16]

- Phase 1 may not occur for some individuals (e.g. 'lone-wolves')
- Phase 2 may precede Phase 1
- Phase 3 may not occur for certain individuals
- The model overlooks that individuals may become involved in 'radical' activities without 'radical' attitudes (see Box 3)

On this basis, Integrity recommends that research conducted on CVE retains its focus upon drivers (e.g. push and pull factors) without resorting to such models.

---

[14] USAID, *Mombasa Assessment and Design*, 7.
[15] Cited in Veldhuis and Staun, *Islamist Radicalisation* – which also offers a more detailed critique than given here.
[16] A more detailed critique is provided in Veldhuis and Staun, *Islamist Radicalisation*

2.1.4 UNEMPLOYMENT

A fourth commonly-cited driver of VE is unemployment, with this forming a focus in both *Assessment and Design* studies (see Figure 3). However, a Mercy Corps study conducted in Somaliland and Puntland concluded that 'actual employment status did not relate to propensity towards political violence,' but also asserted that 'in similar research in Kenya, Mercy Corps did find a relationship that positively linked employment to lower the likelihood of participation in political violence.'[17] Such inconsistent findings highlight the need for local research, and to not simply assume that the drivers of VE are consistent between regions and over time.

Furthermore, even if research reveals that there is a relationship between unemployment and VE in a given context, is it not possible to take for granted that the former drives the latter as there are other potential causal routes (see Box 1). Unemployment and VE may also be correlated as the latter drives the former, or as they are both driven by an 'external variable' such as education levels or clan affiliation. The need for rigorous research into causality becomes apparent when considering that in such cases an increase in employment will have zero impact upon VE levels.

2.2 'PULL' FACTORS

Two critical observations are commonly offered regarding efforts to counter push factors. Firstly, it is noted that goals such as poverty alleviation, employment creation, and so on, are objectives that are realistically beyond the scope of CVE in the short-term. As observed in the *Guide to Drivers* report:

> From a programmatic perspective, and particularly given funding constraints, explanations based on structural factors are not particularly helpful or practical. Typically, efforts to bring about significant reductions in such alleged "root causes" as high unemployment, pervasive poverty, systematic political exclusion, endemic corruption, and a lack of political and economic opportunities (to name but a few) will require large-scale investments, carried out through hard-to-implement and expensive programs sustained over long periods of time.[18]

Secondly, it is routinely observed that while VE push factors are common to many global regions, political violence remains relatively rare.[19] Thus, at best such drivers provide insufficient explanations for VE, and it is necessary to also consider what 'pulls' individuals towards such violence. Indeed, a key achievement of the KTI initiative is in its shifting of focus to pull factors.

However, the selected pull factors identified by KTI diverge notably from those identified in the 2011 USAID *Policy Paper* (this is revealed in Figure 3), with many potential key drivers excluded. Based upon field research and knowledge of the wider literature and theory (see Box 3), it is recommended that future CVE programmes also include the following as candidate drivers to be researched:

---

[17] MercyCorps, *Examining the Link*, 1 and 6.
[18] USAID, *Guide to Drivers*, 11.
[19] For instance, see USAID, *Guide to Drivers*, ii.

• **Material Incentives:** Selective economic drivers often said to motivate recruitment into Al-Shabaab[20] Muhsin Hassan's (a former KTI associate) research suggests that this armed group offered a monthly salary of 50-150 USD. [21] Material incentives are also of relevance in Afghanistan where it is reported that certain community members plant IEDs in exchange for cash. [22]

• **Fear:** A number of relevant documents suggested that certain individuals have been coerced into assisting al-Shabaab. While there is likely at least some truth to this allegation, caution must be taken in assessing the relevance of this motive as its role can be overstated by those seeking to discredit VE groups.[23] Allegations of coercion are also apparent, for instance, in the cases of Northern Ireland and the Palestinian Territories.[24]

• **Vengeance:** Hassan maintains that former Al-Shabaab members claimed that 'the bombing of Somali towns by the mostly Ugandan and Burundian UN peacekeeping force, AMISOM [African Union Mission in Somalia], built intense hatred towards this group,' and that 'they joined al-Shabab to seek revenge.'[25] Of more immediate relevance, this driver was also suggested in our research on the Coast regarding the killing of Aboud Rogo. Similarly, al Shabaab leaders assert that the Westgate incident was a response to the involvement of Kenyan forces in Somalia.

• **Status:** A former member interviewed by Muhsin Hassan claimed that 'walking in the city with a gun as a member of al-Shabab ensured everybody feared and respected you,' and that 'girls also liked you.'[26] Similarly, focusing upon the case of Northern Ireland, Eamon Collins claims that Provisional IRA cadre had 'considerable status,' and there was 'no shortage of women willing to give more than the time of day to IRA volunteers.'[27]

• **Peer Pressure:** The Coast *Assessment and Design* study reports that youth 'are at risk of being exposed to extremism and violence due to peer pressure, particularly the fear of being called "*mama's boy*" by their contemporaries already showing violent tendencies.'[28]

• **Adventure seeking:** While this driver does not feature prominently within the Kenya literature, its relevance is noted, for instance, in the case of Afghanistan.[29] Similarly, with regard to Colombia Marcella Ribetti asserts that 'fundamentally, combat appears to have been an exciting experience for many.'[30]

---

[20] This is highlighted, for instance, by USAID *Eastleigh Assessment and Design*, 25.
[21] Hassan, *Understanding Drivers*, 18.
[22] See, for instance, Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov,* 41.
[23] As noted, for instance, by Hassan, *Lost Boys*, 39.
[24] See, for instance, Bloom and Horgan, *Missing their Mark*, 33; and Levitt, *Hamas,* 110-111.
[25] Hassan, *Understanding Drivers*, 18.
[26] Hassan, *Understanding Drivers*, 19.
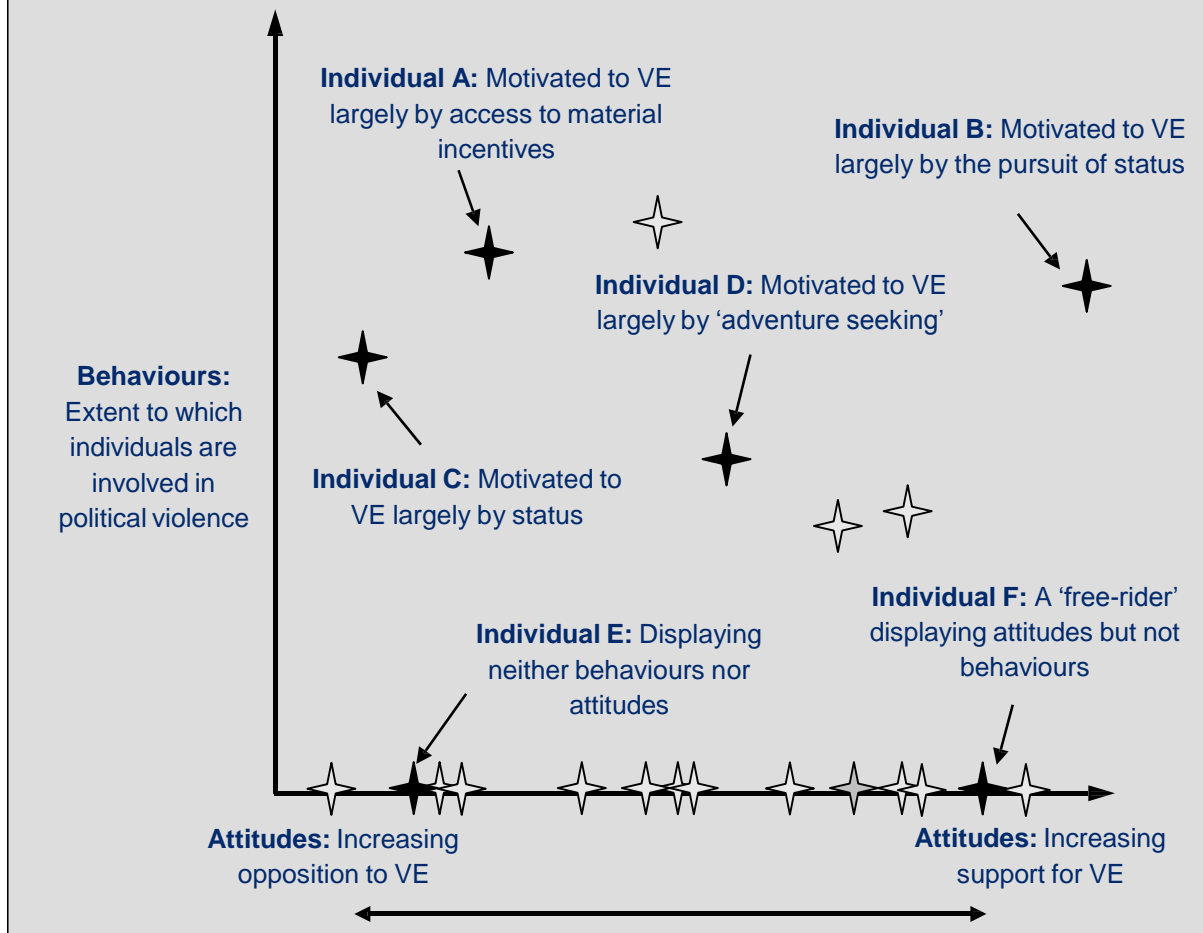[27] Collins, *Killing Rage*, 164.
[28] USAID, *Mombasa Assessment and Design*, 8.
[29] See, for instance, Kilcullen, *Accidental Guerrilla*, 40-41.
[30] Ribetti, *Colombian Guerrillas*, 712.

BOX 3: THE DISJUNCTURE BETWEEN ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS[31]

Most individuals who support the use of political violence typically remain on the sidelines. For instance, this includes those in favour of 'suicide attacks' in the Palestinian Territories, which reportedly reached 66 per cent of the populace in 2005.[32] Conversely, those responsible for violent behaviours are not necessarily supportive of the ostensible political or ideological objectives (e.g. *Individuals A* and *C* in the schematic diagram below). This reinforces the need to focus upon the individual-level incentives set out in the USAID *Policy Paper*, such as status, adventure, belonging, access to material resources, and so on, as such individuals may be driven to only a limited or negligible extent by the push factors identified by the KTI *Assessment and Design* research.

Individual A: Motivated to VE largely by access to material incentives

Individual B: Motivated to VE largely by the pursuit of status

Individual D: Motivated to VE largely by 'adventure seeking'

Behaviours: Extent to which individuals are involved in political violence

Individual C: Motivated to VE largely by status

Individual F: A 'free-rider' displaying attitudes but not behaviours

Individual E: Displaying neither behaviours nor attitudes

Attitudes: Increasing opposition to VE

Attitudes: Increasing support for VE

The recommendations from the Eastleigh and Mombasa *Assessment and Design* studies and the *Mombasa Revalidation Report* inevitably downplayed the role of coercion, fear, material incentives, status, peer pressure, and so on, as these drivers were excluded from the central research. This is of programmatic relevance as grants should be designed to counter such drivers if they are determined to be of relevance. For instance, if research reveals that vengeance is a VE driver in a given geography, specifically-designed grants may serve to bridge the gaps between and within religious, ethnic, and clan communities.

---

[31] Adapted from Khalil, *Radical Beliefs.*
[32] Gunning, *Hamas in Politics*, 127.

BOX 4: RECOMMENDED APPROACH TO RESEARCHING CVE

Research into political violence is notoriously problematic, with informants potentially offering false or misleading information, for instance, (a) as they themselves are misinformed, (b) to discredit others, (c) to be viewed favourably by the interviewer (often referred to as Social Desirability Bias), (d) out of the fear of potential repercussions of divulging information, (e) to aggrandise their own role in events, or (f) as a process of unwitting self-deception.[33] Overcoming such issues requires triangulating data through a mixed method approach, ideally relying upon:

• **Surveys:** The KTI research has involved surveys with a variety of population groups. These are valuable for drawing statistically-based conclusions regarding perceptions, for instance, of the key drivers of VE, or the legitimacy of violence.

• **Key Informant Interviews / Focus Group Discussions:** KIIs and FGDs may be conducted with a wide range of sources, including youth, political elites, religious leaders, and so on. Notably absent from the KTI research was a case study focus upon individuals who have been directly involved in VE, i.e. involving KIIs / FGDs with active, incarcerated or former members of VE entities.[34] Of course, the accessibility of these actors varies substantially between locations, being dependent particularly upon the amenability of the authorities, and the extent to which those perpetrating violence are hostile to outsiders. In locations where it is not possible to draw information directly from those with personal experience of VE the potential may exist to undertake KIIs / FGDs with their colleagues, friends or family members.

• **Metrics:** The KTI research would have benefited from greater efforts to tap open or official sources that reveal numerical patterns regarding those directly involved in VE. The value of such information is revealed in the Mombasa *Assessment and Design* report's claim that the majority of those actually arrested and suspected of involvement in VE 'are from middle and upper class families where poverty is not an issue.'[35]

While recognising that resources are finite, we argue that CVE requires an investment in research beyond standard programme levels as (a) this is a new concept that remains poorly understood, and (b) there is an uncommon degree of complexity in the nature of the research required.

---

[33] Such matters are discussed in greater detail, for instance, in Wood, *Insurgent Collective Action*, 35; and Khalil, *Radical Beliefs.*

[34] A commonly cited example of research undertaken with incarcerated 'terrorists' is Post et al., *Terrorists in Their Own Words.* Of greater relevance to Kenya, and focusing upon former Al-Shabaab members, see Hassan, *Understanding Drivers.*

[35] USAID, *Mombasa Assessment and Design*, 7.

2.3 'VULNERABLE'/'AT RISK' GROUPS

While the above discussion is about the drivers of VE, we argue that is also necessary to research what makes certain individuals more susceptible than others.[36] Indeed, the *Guide to Drivers* report states that:

> Development practitioners and counter-terrorism analysts alike should not reject the concept of "vulnerable" or "at-risk" populations out-of-hand, especially when they focus *on a specific case.* The fact that it is not possible to generalize about the profile of populations susceptible to VE across countries, regions, and time periods does not mean that one cannot detect such a profile for a particular country, location or movement at a given historical juncture.[37]

While the full relevance of this recommendation will not become apparent until later in the report (see Section 4.4 in particular), it is sufficient to currently note that this this will enable more precise targeting of CVE programming. A focus upon particularly vulnerable groups is essentially an extension of the logic currently applied by KTI, in which due emphasis is placed upon Somalis and 'youth' (generally taken to be those between 16 and 35 in Kenya) as at-risk subsets of the population. There is limited evidence (in some cases anecdotal) in support of the below categories being specifically 'at-risk,' and we suggest that additional research is required to determine whether they are genuinely more vulnerable.

- **Teenagers:** The Eastleigh *One Year Evaluation* maintains that 'younger youth between 10-17 years are at more risk to extremism due their naiveté and lack of real life experience in the adult world.'[38] Participants in one FGD conducted by Integrity made a similar claim.

- **Youth lacking adequate education:** The Eastleigh *Assessment and Design* document asserts that 'youth mentioned to be susceptible to violent extremism are those with little or no exposure to formal education.'[39]

- **Members of specific clans:** While focussing upon patterns of attempted recruitment, rather than vulnerability *per se*, the Eastleigh Assessment and Design report claims that 'Al-Shabaab has targeted Somali youth from low-caste and minority clans.'[40]

- **Substance-users:** A KTI grantee final report asserts that 'dependability on the drugs and no source of income force the abusers to join criminal gangs and terrorism organisations as means to support the addictions.'[41]

---

[36] The term 'vulnerable' is used throughout this report to refer to individuals and groups that are more susceptible to becoming involved in VE, rather than those subsets of the populace that may be more exposed to the effects of this violence.

[37] USAID, *Guide to Drivers*, 62.

[38] Ahmed Ali et al, *One-Year Evaluation*, 3.

[39] USAID, *Eastleigh Assessment and Design*, 6.

[40] USAID, *Eastleigh Assessment and Design*, 6.

[41] Source withheld

- **Religious converts:** Participants in a FGD conducted by Integrity argued that recent religious converts are particularly susceptible to VE influence.

- **Convicts:** While noting the limitations of the data upon which the findings are based, the *Guide to Drivers* study broadly asserts that there 'is evidence that the new generation of global jihadists is more prone to having been involved in petty crime and illicit activities (e.g., smuggling, drug dealing, theft, extortion and racketeering).'[42]

To reiterate the point made above, while recognising that difficult decisions must be made regarding the allocation of finite programme resources, we suggest that this theme requires additional research to separate genuine evidence of patterns of vulnerability from that which is anecdotal or unsubstantiated.

---

[42] USAID, *Guide to Drivers*, 57.

3. GOAL AND RESULTS FRAMEWORK

This section firstly discusses the manner in which KTI attempted to measure its progress towards its goal statement (see Figure 4). It then provides qualitative evidence from FGDs with beneficiaries in support of successes to this end. Substantial qualitative evidence was also collected from the field to suggest that progress was made towards the IRs. The section concludes through reviewing the KTI results framework, and recommending a number of modest adaptations.

3.1 ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOAL

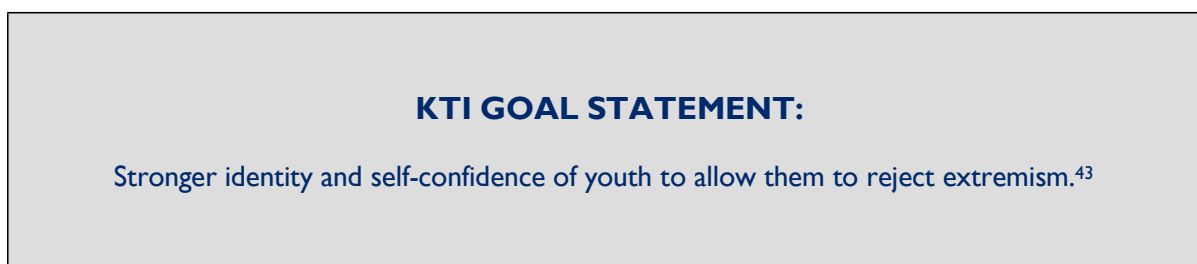<div style="border:1px solid; background:#d9d9d9; padding:1em; text-align:center">

KTI GOAL STATEMENT:

Stronger identity and self-confidence of youth to allow them to reject extremism.[43]

</div>

Figure 4: KTI Goal Statement

In seeking to measure progress towards their goal (as presented in Figure 4) KTI focussed on a proxy indicator of 'opposition to the existence of outlawed entities.' This metric was established through survey research, and suggested success through increasing from an October 2012 baseline of 88 per cent, to a final figure of 97 per cent.[44] However, considerable caution should be taken when interpreting such figures as a series of issues were identified with the indicator and the associated process:

• The term 'outlawed entities' is excessively broad as it undoubtedly also incorporates groups not involved in VE.

• The data will reflect the legal status of various groups in Kenya, and will be distorted if this status changes. For instance, the percentage of respondents claiming to support outlawed entities will likely increase if the state proscribes additional groups, yet this change would not reflect a movement away from the KTI goal *per se*.

• In its focus upon 'outlawed entities' the metric overlooks that VE may be conducted by 'lone-wolves' or groups that are insufficiently formalised to be considered 'entities.'

---

[43] This statement was expanded for KTI-E through specific reference to being applicable 'in and around Eastleigh.'
[44] Infotrak, *1st Quarter Evaluation*, 36, and Ipsos, *Impact Assessment Study*.

- The monitoring of the goal statement should not hinge upon one single indicator. In other words, progress towards the goal (or reversals away from this objective) should be 'triangulated' through the use of additional metrics and qualitative evidence (such as the quotes provided below). This applies in particular as survey data is of variable quality in such environments, and there are considerable issues associated with the reliability of responses offered by participants, the ability to recruit enumerators of sufficiently high capacity, and so on.[45]

- Apparent inconstancies in the research methods between the baseline and final survey substantially undermine the ability to draw comparative conclusions. While it is unclear whether there were discrepancies in the selection of the primary sampling units, the respective methodological sections of the survey reports suggest differences in household selection.[46] More importantly, the Infotrak study reports the use of 'street surveys' (comprising 553 of 1113 respondents) to compensate for individuals often not being at home during research hours, whereas this was apparently not applied by Ipsos.

- The indicator is unrelated to the concepts of 'identity' and 'self-confidence' (although see Section 3.2).

Seeking to provide recommendations based upon the above, it should firstly be noted that many candidate questions that may be used as indicators are often unsuitable in that they are insensitive in insecure environments, e.g. asking individuals if they support violence in pursuit of ideological objectives, or if they believe that such violence is ever justified. An alternative is to depersonalise the research through enquiring if 'anyone you know' or 'the people in your community' support this violence. While sacrificing the ability to report upon the numbers of individuals personally supportive of VE, this approach is likely to generate more reliable data.[47] In seeking to measure progress towards CVE goals, it is also worth recording VE incidents in the locations in question as a parallel indicator through which to monitor progress toward the goal.

---

[45] Such issues are elaborated upon in Khalil, *Reliability of Perception Surveys.*

[46] Infotrak, *1st Quarter Evaluation*, 36; and Ipsos, *Impact Assessment Study*. It should be noted that a 'panel' approach (i.e. interviewing the same people for each survey 'wave') would generally be the preferred method to determine possible changes in perceptions over time, but that this method is essentially inapplicable in Eastleigh given that the community is transitory to a large extent.

[47] A more sophisticated approach is offered by 'list experiments,' which involve providing a sample of respondents with various statements that include only one of specific interest (e.g. 'I sometimes feel that violence in pursuit of an ideological objective is justified'). The respondents are asked how many statements they agree with, but for the sake of confidentiality not which ones. This process is then repeated on a control sample with the key statement omitted, and the difference between the mean numbers of affirmative responses reveals the proportion in agreement with the statement of interest.

BOX 5: A CRITIQUE OF THE *MID-TERM EVALUATION OF THREE COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM PROJECTS (2012), AND THE KTI FINAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT STUDY (2014)*[48]

The *Mid-term Evaluation of Three CVE Projects* and the *Impact Assessment Study* both applied quantitative research methods to collect information on perceptions with regard to youth associations, identity, efficacy, levels of civic engagement, and violence in the name of Islam. Seeking to inform CVE programming, these studies drew comparisons between the views held by (a) full beneficiaries of KTI, (b) partial beneficiaries, and (c) a comparison group of non-beneficiaries. In the former the methods are caveated with the statement that:

> Comparison of full beneficiaries to a comparison group does raise issues of selection bias – a phenomenon that arises when participants in a program are systematically different from non-participants (even before they enter the program). … However, the evaluation team sought to mitigate any selection bias by randomly sampling from a comparison group that matched the beneficiaries closely in terms of location, socio-economic status, age and (only Somali) ethnicity.[49]

Unfortunately this represents a substantial understatement of the methodological issues, and the mitigating measures will not have assured that the selection bias is corrected. The report states that 'the KTI-E program, which has several activities focusing on working with local government, is giving beneficiaries a higher sense of *efficacy* than their non-beneficiary counterparts.' In reality it is not possible to draw such a conclusion given that this enhanced efficacy may be a cause or an effect of being a beneficiary (see Box 1 for a related discussion). Put another way, the *Mid-Term Evaluation* research team did not control for the perceptions of efficacy held by individuals prior to the KTI intervention, and thus the data does not allow for conclusions regarding the extent to which the two below causal pathways reflects reality.

Involvement as a beneficiary of KTI-E may drive enhanced sense of efficacy (*X* 'causes' *Y*)

Variable X: Involvement as beneficiary with KTI-E	→	**Variable Y:** Enhanced sense of efficacy
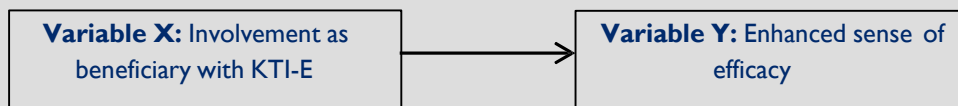
An enhanced sense of efficacy may drive individuals to become KTI beneficiaries (*Y* 'causes' *X*), i.e. as those who believe in the power of their own agency elected to associate with KTI as a means through which to channel this agency.

Variable X: Involvement as beneficiary with KTI-E	←	**Variable Y:** Enhanced sense of efficacy
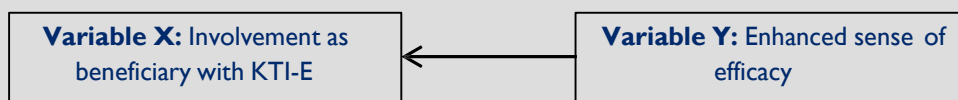
Indeed, this issue undermines many of the findings in both studies as in a general sense it is not possible to determine the extent to which individuals held certain perceptions as a result of being KTI beneficiaries, or conversely if they became beneficiaries precisely because they already held such views. The *Mid-Term Evaluation* correctly states that 'to fully avoid selection bias in the evaluation it would have been necessary for USAID and its implementers to randomly assign some people and not others to a CVE program at its inception,' and this theme is discussed further in Box 6.

---

[48] USAID, *Mid-Term Evaluation*; and Ipsos, *Impact Assessment Study*
[49] USAID, *Mid-Term Evaluation*

While this is not a formal evaluation (see Section 1.2), the KIIs and FGDs with grantees and beneficiaries provided considerable qualitative evidence to support wider conclusions about progress towards the KTI goal. For instance, one beneficiary stated that:

> Actually one of the members of a certain group called '*msingi imara*' was on the ten most wanted list published last year. He had been initiated to Al-Shabaab and then he came back, so he is from Majengo here. They actually called him and told him, that he is being lied to by those false Muslim preachers. So with the help of the sheikhs we were able to get him back.

Another beneficiary similarly claimed that the grant 'changed my mind not to go to Somalia and to join al-Shabab,' with a further stating that:

> We had a lot of awareness from the radical groups about their objective and many of us had bought their objectives because we never had any correct information, I was very sure that MRC was the best way, and Al-Shabab was the answer to some of the questions. But, having been given the information on the dangers and my self-awareness, I realised that MRC's agenda may be the best, but their approach may not be the best, so I buy the agenda and disagree with the approach.

However, such positive sentiments were not drawn from all sources, and the following exchange from an FGD with beneficiaries highlights the subjectivity that is often involved when assessing the outcome of an initiative:

> **FGD Moderator:** [To what extent has [*grantee name redacted*] achieved its objective] to sensitise the Somali youth to avoid all forms of extremist ideology and violence?

> **Respondent 1:** Ninety-five per cent – the only problem is that we are not taking the message out to the community, but if we do so by taking the message to our younger ones we can even achieve more.

> **Respondent 2:** I believe that when we say we had achieved something it is that we brought a long-term solution to the problem that existed. Up to this time I can say nothing has been achieved since the problem exists [*sic*.]. When you are doing an awareness the mandate of the organisation should be known to the community it's trying to help, be it [*grantee name redacted*] or any other organisation.

> **Respondent 3:** I have a different idea of what he said. They are a community that has not seen a government for two decades. Bringing a tangible difference takes a time and not one or two years. In my opinion they have achieved this objective 60 per cent and in the future given the chance they will achieve more.

> **Respondent 4:** We are Somalis. We will just be doing something and later everyone disappears. Doing something on a single day can't bring a change. It should repeated more and more. However, looking into the trend the aspect of extremism is fading away in the Somali community since everyone has understood it as evil. I can say they have achieved it at 80 per cent.

Aside from highlighting that there are degrees of subjectivity in assessing whether such an objectives is achieved, a second critical point to be taken from the above exchange is that CVE is not a short-term process.

<div style="border:1px solid #000; padding:10px;">

BOX 6: EVALUATING CVE PROGRAMMES THROUGH RANDOMISED CONTROLLED TRIALS

A key issue faced by programme evaluators is the 'attribution problem.' A reduction in VE in a specific geography may be driven by a donor-sponsored CVE programme, independent community efforts to counter this phenomenon, reversals faced by VE entities (for instance, key members of the leadership being arrested), an economic boost offering employment to the local youth, a reduction in tensions in a neighbouring state (e.g. Somalia), and so on. In practice, many such factors may contribute to a reduction in VE, thus making it difficult to determine the extent to which successes were attributable to the specific CVE programme in question. Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs) enable such conclusions through controlling for other potential drivers of the observed change. This is achieved through selecting 'treatment' and 'control' communities randomly or through a process of matching, and determining whether greater progress is achieved towards CVE objectives in the former.

Currently there are many ongoing initiatives to trial RCTs in complex environments. However, RCTs should not be considered a panacea as there are substantial methodological obstacles to overcome, including the potential issue of spill-over effects (i.e. the effect of a CVE initiative spilling from a treatment community to a control location). Moreover, RCTs enforce a uniform intervention in all areas to detect attribution. This approach also tends to be costly as substantial numbers of both treatment and control communities must be selected in order to achieve statistical significance. Nevertheless, and we recommend that CVE implementers explore RCTs as a possible means to evaluate impact.

</div>

3.2 ADAPTING THE GOAL STATEMENT

Having commented upon the achievement of the goal, this subsection aims to constructively critique the statement with the aim of advising future CVE endeavours. Focussing upon the individual elements of the statement in turn, the KTI *Close-out* document notes that 'identity refers to traditional cultural identity and a sense of belonging to a community that has a strong history of moderate religious belief and tolerant culture.'[50] However, this definition did not always appear alongside the goal statement, thus exposing it to varied interpretations. Stripped of this accompanying definition, identity may be taken to refer to clan, religious or national identity or perhaps even identity as youth. In any case, the 'traditional cultural identity' element of the definition is problematic as such identities are not universally tolerant, and conversely as individuals may reject VE without holding such an identity. The latter component of the definition (i.e. 'a sense of belonging to a community that has a strong history of moderate religious belief and tolerant culture') is also arguably redundant as this theme is already encapsulated in the final phrase of the goal statement. On these grounds we recommend removing the term 'identity' from the statement.

---

[50] KTI-E, *Close-out*, 14.

The concept of 'self-confidence' is also highly problematic. The KTI *Close-out* document states that 'confidence is linked to feeling some ability to affect the future and to address the challenges in their lives and take advantage of the opportunities.'[51] With this concept not regularly featuring in the terrorism studies/radicalisation literature, however, of relevance in this case is the apparent absence of evidence to suggest a linkage between this factor and VE. Indeed, the emphasis upon self-confidence echoes of psychological profiling, and to quote a prominent authority on the subject, former CIA Operations Officer Marc Sageman, 'at present, the consensus in the field of terrorism is that there is no terrorist personality.'[52] In the absence of research demonstrating a link between self-confidence and VE, we suggested this term should be omitted from goal statements.

A third issue identified with the stated goal is that the phrase 'allow them to reject extremism' is suggestive of 'top-down' assumptions, implicitly removing degrees of agency from those who travel the radicalisation path. Put another way, it infers that radicalisation is something that happens to individuals, rather than being something that people actively pursue. Countering this perception, Marc Sageman claims that:

> The process of joining the jihad, however, is more of a bottom-up than a top-down activity. A lot of Muslim young men want to join the jihad but do not know how. Joining the jihad is more akin to the process of applying to a highly selective college. Many try to get in but only a few succeed, and the college's role is evaluation and selection rather than marketing. Candidates are enthusiastic rather than reluctant.[53]

While this stance is certainly not uncontested, and examples of VE entities actively recruiting can be identified in numerous locations, the broader point is that 'top-down' assumptions should not be made in any given context.

In formulating an alternative goal statement it is worth emphasizing that simplicity is an asset, and that in any case it is possible to bring out nuance in the subordinate IRs. On this basis, we recommend the following as alternatives.

- **To reduce the likelihood that individuals in *Community X* are attracted to VE.**

- **To reduce the appeal of VE to residents of *Community X.***

- **To strengthen individual and community resilience against push and pull factors that drive VE in *Community X.***

---

[51] KTI-E, *Close-out*, 15.
[52] Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 17.
[53] Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 122

Observing that 'precise definitions have eluded many experts,' the USAID Policy Paper identifies VE as 'advocating, engaging in, preparing, or otherwise supporting ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic and political objectives.'[54] While this provides a useful platform, in establishing the goal statement, KTI arguably would have benefitted from additional guidance from the Policy Paper regarding, for instance, whether the focus should:

• Be only upon entities that fall clearly within the VE definition, rather than also those that sit at the margins between being 'ideologically' and 'criminally' motivated, or those whose involvement in violence is contested or limited (e.g. MRC).

• Be upon countering 'attitudinal support' for VE rather than only 'behavioural support,' i.e. as the term 'supporting' is applied in an ambiguous manner in the definition. If the concept is intended to also incorporate the former, CVE programming will be required to target a wider audience.

Through elaborating upon such points USAID will equip CVE initiatives with a more robust conceptual framework through which to operate.

3.3 ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INTERMEDIATE RESULTS

This subsection presents information on the achievement of selected IRs, with examples shown in Figure 5. While this is not a formal evaluation (see Section 1.2), the qualitative research offered evidence to support wider conclusions of progress towards these IRs.

IR-1.1: ENHANCED ADVOCACY CAPACITY AND SUSTAINED POSITIVE DIALOGUE WITH GoK

• One grantee highlighted that some of their online activities had attracted interaction with Kenyan government representatives. This individual expressed that 'we also got to interact with the political leaders in the government. Maybe you come across an incident and you inform the police through the social media or the political leaders.' KIIs with an additional grantee in Nairobi and a state representative both further indicated that KTI grants had improved dialogue with state actors.

IR-1.2: IMPROVED COMMUNICATION CHANNELS FOR YOUTH TO RECEIVE INFORMATION AND/OR DISCUSS SENSITIVE TOPICS

• A KTI grantee report cites evidence in support of the idea that the grant enhanced the capabilities of youth 'to discuss sensitive topics in community without fear of embarrassment.'[55]

---

[54] USAID, *Policy Paper*, 2.
[55] Source withheld.

IR-1.3: IMPROVED MESSAGING AND OUTREACH CAPACITY OF MODERATE VOICES INCLUDING WOMEN AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS

• One beneficiary highlighted a case of success for moderate voices. He maintained that 'one of the [KTI grantee] facilitators has tried his level best to explain and define the word jihad, and at the end of the course I can say that eighty per cent of the youth changed their minds to the positive perception. Before it appeared they are going to practice jihad according to their understanding, their peers' definition, but when the religious teachers came in to explain the real meaning of jihad ... it is when they came to understand and change their minds from the negativity to the positivity (*sic.*).'

IR-2.1: INCREASED ACCESS TO COMMUNITY, RECREATIONAL AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

• A grantee final report claims that research 'revealed that the improvement of the aesthetic look of the [grantee] center and the sports had greater impact on the youths. One respondent is quoted to have said, "We have more balls and kits, they were never enough sometime back considering we always have new members [*sic.*]."'[56] Such findings were confirmed through an observational assessment conducted by the Integrity research team.

IR-2.2: IMPROVED LEADERSHIP CAPACITY AMONG YOUTH

• Few of the grants selected for the Integrity research focused to any great extent upon leadership training. While Integrity was unable to verify this claim, the final report from one notable exception asserts that 'at a macro level, the project has addressed a significant gap which could have a positive impact on both the ethnicity and empowerment of youth in leadership.'[57]

IR-2.3: IMPROVED NETWORKING AMONG YOUTH ORGANISATIONS

• A beneficiary asserted that KTI 'has increased the networking among the youth. If something happens in the south, then someone in the north will know.' Another respondent from the same group claimed that 'through our networks we get access to jobs which we link to our youths, of which some have applied and they got.'

IR-2.4: IMPROVED ACCESS TO COUNSELLING AND MENTORING SERVICES

• A beneficiary claimed that the support provided by a grantee 'helped us through how to control stress[77] first of all, and with teachings on how to control it.' A second beneficiary similarly stated that 'since in the past, they [individuals with 'stress'] didn't open up, they have a problem [*sic.*]. So when you come here they give you like confidence to speak up about what you feel inside you, if there is any trauma going on in your house or around the neighbourhood, or if you have stress. At least when you open up and see people supporting you, it gives you morale.'

---

[56] Source withheld.
[57] Source withheld.
[58] The euphemism 'stress' is often use to avoid stigmatising terms such as 'post-traumatic stress disorder,' and 'mental health issues.'

> **IR-3.1: IMPROVED ATTITUDE FOR MERITOCRATIC WORK**
>
> • A beneficiary stated that 'now the youth are looking for starting new businesses by accessing funds from Kenya Business Trust, so this makes them busy instead of staying idle and engaging in these [VE] groups.'

> **IR-3.2: IMPROVED LINKAGES TO TRAINING, FINANCIAL AND OTHER SUPPORT**
>
> • One beneficiary claimed that the grantee successful trained individuals in 'how to create a business from scratch, how to brainstorm on what kind of idea you want to put forward, what kind of business you want to do, how you are going to do it, when and where.' Another maintained that 'our group got involved in getting skills in electrical engineering, [and] so far we are getting contracts, [and] as I am talking right now there is some electrical installation we are doing.'

Figure 5: Selected findings regarding IRs

3.4 ADAPTING THE INTERMEDIATE RESULTS

Having commented upon the achievement of the IRs, this subsection aims to constructively critique the framework with the objective of advising future CVE endeavours. We believe that the existing result-framework is generally robust, thus the below comments suggest modest adaptations rather than fundamental changes. A result-framework for CVE programming must by necessity link to both the VE drivers, as determined through research, and the goal statement. We suggest the following additional IR:

> • **Enhanced inter-community and intra-community (i.e. between and within clan, religious, ethnic groups) relations.**

KTI appears to have contributed at least partly to this suggested addition through a number of its grants. However, the focus on this theme within the wider KTI programme was undoubtedly reduced as it was not included within the framework.

We also recommend that IR-1.1 should be adapted to (something like):

> • **Enhanced advocacy capacity and sustained positive dialogue with GoK, and enhanced capacity of GoK to interact with relevant actors.**

The termination of KTI leaves an obvious vacuum in CVE that the Kenyan state and other actors cannot yet fill. With this in mind, the above recommended IR could arguably be expanded further (or split into separate IRs) to incorporate capacity building of the state machinery (both security providers and public administrators) in CVE as an element of the wider KTI exit strategy.

Separately, it is necessary to determine whether any of the existing IRs are sub-optimally expressed or inappropriate. This may arise as a result of questionable assumptions linking IRs to the higher goal statement, with perhaps the main candidate being IR-2.4, 'improved access to counselling and mentoring services.' While the Eastleigh *Assessment and Design* report maintains that former Al Shabaab members are likely to reenlist if they are unable 'to get appropriate psychological counselling to deal with their trauma,' this statement seemingly lacks supporting empirical evidence.[59] Indeed, it is perhaps contradicted by Marc Sageman's claim that:

> In terms of psychological explanation for their ['members of the global Salafi jihad'] participation, they did not seem to display any psychiatric pathology. There was no pattern of emotional trauma in their past nor was there any evidence of any pathological hatred or paranoia when the facts are analysed. This "pathological hatred" much talked about in the press cannot be found in the accounts studied.[60]

The point is not that the hypothesised link between post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and VE has been disproven across all contexts, but rather that assumptions around this supposed link should be thoroughly tested during the programme design. While counselling undoubtedly delivers positive effects, it will not undermine VE if this assumption is flawed. We suggest that CVE programmes should routinely adopt the Theories of Change logic to test such assumptions (see Annex D).

---

[59] USAID, *Eastleigh Assessment and Design*, 7.
[60] Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 97.

4. GRANTS AND GRANTEES

This section focuses firstly upon the notable flexibility provided by the grant system, which represents a key KTI success. This is followed by recommendations on adaptations to the manner in which individual grants are linked to the wider results framework and the grant-level M&E system. The final two subsections respectively focus upon the targeting of specifically vulnerable groups, and actual/potential negative effects of CVE programming. Evidence of positive change at the grant level is not provided in this section as there is considerable overlap between the objectives of grants and the programme IRs (i.e. the reader should refer to Section 3.3).

4.1 PROGRAMME FLEXIBILITY

This subsection focuses upon the extent to which the grant mechanism enabled the KTI programme to be flexible. As explained in the KTI *Factsheet*:

> OTI's approach allows for constant re-evaluation and re-programming since activities are designed on a rolling basis. The KTI-E team can respond to the changing environment, including the 2011 Kenyan intervention in Somalia, 2011-2012 growing xenophobia against Somalis and increasing attacks in public places including the September 2013 Westgate Mall attack.[61]

Indeed, shortly after the Westgate incident a grant was established with a specified aim being 'to provide a platform to engage with the community to build tolerance and peace especially after the attack at the Westgate.'[62] Similarly, shortly after the killing of Aboud Rogo a grant was provided to '(a) to facilitate and foster the peace processes in the coastal region, and (b) to mitigate religious and sectarian driven conflict in the region.'[63]

The programme also showed flexibility in its ability to scale-up its association with successful grantees, with the *Program Reflections* document highlighting that:

> The OTI approach of testing the waters with a small grant and then following up with new activities worked well for CVE. The flexibility and low-risk approach helped us identify what activities had an impact and build on them.[64]

While flexibility is certainly an asset, the *Guide to Programming* document also cautions that programming:

---

[61] USAID, *Factsheet*, 2.
[62] Grantee name and source withheld.
[63] Grantee name and source withheld.
[64] KTI-E, *Program Reflections (Part 7)*, 2.

…must seek to reconcile the competing demands of responsiveness and adaptability on the one hand, and steadiness and steadfastness on the other. A measure of continuity is essential to signalling determination and commitment. It helps reassure local partners that one will "stay the course," and conveys to the enemy that one will not be deterred or distracted.[65]

It is possible to broadly conclude that KTI-E achieved a more suitable balance than KTI-C regarding the above. More specifically, the Costal component was given insufficient time to comprehend the context, trial grantees through small-scale grants, and so on.

4.2 LINKING GRANTS TO THE RESULTS FRAMEWORK

This subsection recommends a minor revision in the process of linking grants to the wider KTI framework. Specifically, rather than articulating objectives specific to each individual grant, it is worth considering whether the Intermediate Results can serve this purpose directly. Thus, for instance, an objective for grants intending to enhance networks would be 'improved networking amongst youth organisations' (i.e. IR-2.3), and their success would be measured against this statement. In a similar manner, other grant objectives would be 'improved linkages to training, financial and other support' (i.e. IR-3.2). The selection of grantees was restricted by the limited number of civil society organisations in Eastleigh and Coast, and as a consequence certain grants were only 'CVE relevant' in line with the initial capabilities of these groups. Adopting this approach should help ensure a quicker transition to 'CVE specific' programming.[66]

4.3 GRANT M&E

With the objective of informing future CVE programming, this subsection recommends minor revisions to the grant M&E system. Providing insight into the achievements of grants, the following questions appear in each of the relevant grant documents:

• Are all grant objectives met?

• What are the details on how each was met or not, and, if not, why?

• Were the Grantee responsibilities (deliverables) completed?

• Did the activity contribute to the country objective? How?

• What were the result(s)/outcome(s) of the grant activities?

• Where there unintended (positive or negative) effects? Please describe.

---

[65] USAID, *Guide to Programming*, 48.
[66] The term 'CVE specific' is used here to refer to activities that specifically aim to counter VE, in contrast to 'CVE relevant' where it is deemed that activities may counteract VE drivers but in a less direct fashion.

- What lessons were learnt from the implementation of this grant?

- What recommendations can we derive from this evaluation?

- How did the grantee perform?

We suggest the following adaptations to the M&E system at the grant level:

- While a limited number of 'partial successes' are noted, the grant documents generally report on the achievement of the objectives in a binary fashion – i.e. as a success or otherwise. Valuable extra nuance may be generated through rephrasing the question to enquire as to *the extent* to which these aims were achieved. This will provide additional scope to compare the relative successes/failures of these grants and draw lessons from these comparisons.

- We recommend that it is worth enquiring about the efficiency with which the grant objectives are achieved, i.e. whether sufficient benefit is gained from the outlaid costs.

- We also recommend that it is worth enquiring about sustainability, in particular as many grants are scheduled to last for a limited time.

- As discussed in Section 3.4, we recommend that a Theories of Change framework is adopted to test the assumptions between programme activities and IRs (see Annex D).

With resources for M&E being finite, it is worth reporting that the suggestions within this subsection would require no more than modest adaptations to the existing system, and thus remain 'light-touch.'

4.4 TARGETING VULNERABLE AND 'AT-RISK' GROUPS

This subsection aims to reflect upon what we consider to be a central weakness to the KTI programme. KTI deliberately sought to target individuals 'at-risk' through focusing upon specific population subsets, such as youth (generally taken to be between 16 and 36 in Kenya) and in certain cases Somalis. However, these are relatively broad 'at-risk' categories and certain grants seemingly failed to reach the most vulnerable, as was apparent in the below cases:

- **Grantee X:** This programme aimed to empower youth groups through providing them with livelihood skills and links to financial institutions. Beneficiaries from Grantee X affirmed that Somalis were well represented in the programme and thus that a vulnerable community was reached.[91] However, it was also claimed that individuals associated with VE entities are not typically involved in the youth groups targeted by Grantee X, and thus the project seemingly selected against those who are most vulnerable.[67]

---

[67] FGD with Grantee X beneficiaries.

- **Grantee Y:** Beneficiaries confirmed that this grant targeted the Somali community,[68] and the project documents state that gang members were recruited into Grantee Y debates.[69] However, it seems unlikely that those regularly accessing Grantee Y initiatives were amongst the most vulnerable. Indeed, the grantees reported that they received relatively few communications indicating an 'extreme' stance.[70]

It is worth highlighting ICG's assertion that the support base for al-Shabaab in Kenya is 'a tiny, but highly radicalised, close-knit and secretive Salafi Jihadi fringe.'[71] This suggests a need to narrow CVE targeting to precise at-risk population subsets, perhaps including gang members, ex-convicts, substance-users, members of specific clans, religious converts, and so on, rather than the wider category of 'youth.' This is not to suggest that KTI overlooked such groups entirely, but rather that an insufficient number of the grants were narrowly targeted in this manner. To reiterate a key point made in Section 2.3, however, there should be a strong evidence-base for such targeting, and this starts with detailed research into precisely which of these subsets are actually specifically at-risk.

4.5 5 NEGATIVE EFFECTS

This subsection focuses upon two potential/actual negative effects caused by KTI grant activities, prior to recommending two measures to counter this risk. The first of these negative effects is a perception of external 'meddling,' particularly with regard to religious affairs. KTI was involved in pedagogical training for madrasas, and certain beneficiaries reported positive effects:

> I thank God for what we have learnt. We were combined with other teachers, to know the problems of the teachers. We want to go to the state to make one syllabus that is going to help all Kilifi County. Other things were how KTI works according to Muslims (*sic.*), we are happy as it is going to help us though it comes from another country which other people have some doubt in. But as a group of teachers we have accepted and we want it to work with us (*sic.*).[72]

Yet, other respondents maintained that controversy is inevitably caused by a U.S. entity engaged in religious affairs. The ICG also adopts a cautious stance, in stating that:

> Islamist radicalisation is at the heart of the contest to shape the future of Islam and Muslim societies. The struggle against it will only be won if truly Muslim-driven. Foreign "meddling" would be counterproductive. There is room for donors to encourage moderation, but it must be done discreetly and in partnership with Muslim organisations that have wide support.[73]

---

[68] FGD with Grantee Y beneficiaries.
[69] Source withheld.
[70] KII with grantees.
[71] International Crisis Group, *Kenyan Somali Islamist Radicalisation*, 7.
[72] Source withheld.
[73] International Crisis Group, *Kenyan Somali Islamist Radicalisation*, 11.

Indeed, ICG concludes that 'it would be unwise for the state and donors to intervene,' and that 'modest and discreet attempts by the U.S. in recent years to encourage debate (especially in Coast Province) have galvanised hardliners.'[74] Put simply, there is substantial risk that these 'hardliners' use this external involvement in religious affairs for propaganda victories and thus that these particular initiatives actually undermine progress towards the CVE objectives.

A second risk is that grantees or other stakeholders may be subject to targeting as a result of their association with the U.S. or other external donors. For instance, a grantee maintained that they had created 'artificial enemies' and that the 'people they used to work with and were their friends considered them as traitors and as people who collaborated with USAID, or as people who contributed to the killing of Osama.'[75] Another grantee explained that youth distributed leaflets in Mosques to denounce their KTI-funded activities, and that these same individuals subsequently threatened grantee staff.[76] In this latter instance, KTI sought to resolve this issue immediately through offering to cancel the grant, but this suggestion that was rejected by the grantees themselves as they felt personally committed to the CVE aims.

The first measure recommended to counter such negative effects is a robust system of risk management applied in the process of grant selection and through the life of individual projects. In making this statement, we recognise that CVE programmes must also avoid temptations to become excessively risk-adverse. A second suggestion is for donors (and particularly the U.S.) to be more cautious about grantees using their logos. Even if USAID branding successfully generates support for the U.S. from the majority of the population, it may simultaneously be used as evidence of 'meddling' by the advocates of violence and thus may actually serve to drive VE. Furthermore, it is likely that branding will discourage individuals who are part-way down the VE path from participating in CVE initiatives. Put another way, the objectives of (a) CVE and (b) promoting the U.S. through branding may be to a certain extent incompatible. Given that an association with USAID may also convert grantees into potential targets, as with the case discussed above, it is worth reconsidering the importance of winning sympathy for donors in these contexts.

---

[74] International Crisis Group, *Kenyan Somali Islamist Radicalisation*, 11.
[75] Source withheld.
[76] Source withheld.

5. CONCLUSION

The research team collected substantial qualitative evidence that KTI contributed to its CVE goal, and the subordinate IRs. Other key successes of the programme were the flexibility provided by the grant mechanism, and its intentional emphasis upon countering the pull factors that drive VE. Regarding the latter, however, it should be noted that the core KTI research neglected to focus upon individual-level incentives outlined in the 2011 USAID *Policy Paper*, such as social status, belonging and adventure. This has programmatic implications in that the activities undertaken through grants should be tailored to counter these potential drivers if determined to be relevant in the locations in question. In addition, we argue that the programme would have benefitted from additional research into which specific subsets of the population are particularly 'at-risk' of VE, perhaps including gang members, ex-convicts, substance users, teenagers, and religious converts.

We suggest that benefit would have been gained in simplifying the goal statement: 'stronger identity and self-confidence of youth to allow them to reject extremism,' particularly through removing the terms 'identity' and 'self-confidence.' While the results framework was largely robust, minor additions or adaptations to the IRs may have been beneficial, e.g. through adding an IR of 'enhanced inter-community and intra-community (between and within clan, religious, ethnic groups) relations.' Notable gains may also have been achieved through adopting the Theories of Change logic to identify untested assumptions in the framework, e.g. perhaps that linking PTSD to VE.

We also found that while KTI specifically sought to target vulnerable groups such as youth and Somalis, at least some grants not only failed to access the most vulnerable, but perhaps even inadvertently selected against these individuals. Thus, an increased precision in the targeting (e.g. focusing upon religious converts, ex-convicts, gang members, teenagers and members of specific clans) would have been a key area of improvement for KTI. Our research also revealed potential/actual negative effects of KTI programming, such as a perception of U.S. 'meddling' potentially undermining progress towards the CVE aim, and threats received by a Coastal grantee. A means to counter this risk may be via placing less emphasis upon USAID branding in contexts where CVE and generating support for the U.S. are effectively incompatible objectives.

We hope that the CVE community can learn from both the considerable successes of KTI's CVE pilot, and also their areas of programming with room for improvements.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

While our recommendations respond to the key research questions agreed with KTI, the intention is that they will also inform the broader CVE community. It is worth restating that CVE programming is in an experimental stage. Similarly, our research is experimental and as evaluators we are still attempting to find the best possible ways to evaluate this type of programming (see boxes 4 and 6). Based on our literature review and qualitative research we recommend the CVE community:

1. **Increase the focus upon more narrowly defined 'at-risk' groups.** While the KTI grants were designed to focus upon specific vulnerable groups, such as youth and Somalis, we feel that further gains may have been made through greater precision in this targeting. Specifically, additional efforts could have been made to focus upon, for instance, ex-convicts, substance-users, gang members, religious converts, members of specific clans and so on. Such targeting requires a strong evidence-base, and this begins with detailed research prior to programme design into whether these subsets of the population are actually more vulnerable.

2. **Focus upon individual-level drivers as pull factors.** While KTI's focus upon pull factors was a key success of the programme, the core programme research neglected to focus upon factors that motivate at the individual-level, such as status seeking, vengeance, material incentives, and so on. Programmatic implications are apparent, for instance, if research reveals that vengeance is deemed to be a critical driver of VE in a specific geography, grants should be designed to bridge the gaps between and within communities (e.g. religions, ethnic groups, clans).

3. **Invest additional resources into conducting rigorous research.** While research into political violence is almost uniquely challenging, much of that undertaken for the KTI programme lacked rigour. Specific issues include an insufficient focus upon 'triangulating' data from multiple sources, a failure to adopt a 'case study' emphasis upon individuals who travelled the VE path, a lack of recognition of the fallibility of sources, and so on (Annex C). While recognising that programme resources are finite, we suggest that additional finances and time should be invested in research at the outset and throughout CVE initiatives. Indeed, we argue that there is a need for research beyond what is normally considered to be adequate for donor initiatives both because CVE is a new thematic area, and as the drivers of VE are highly complex.

4. **Build a system to articulate and test assumptions in intervention logic.** It is necessary to test the assumptions of the programme logic, and to achieve this we recommend the

Theories of Change framework (see Annex D). This assists with identifying untested assumptions (e.g. as to whether PTSD counselling drives a reduction in VE), thereby helping to ensure that programme activities contribute to the IRs, which in turn support progress toward the CVE goal.

5. **Increase focus upon avoiding/mitigating negative effects.** The potential negative effects of CVE programming are substantial, and include, for instance, (a) external donors undermining their own efforts to achieve CVE goals through been considered to 'meddle' in local (and particularly religious) affairs, (b) threats or actual physical targeting of individuals and/or entities due to their association with these donors, and (c) reputational risk driven by donors associating with local bodies viewed in an unfavourable light. Aside from adopting rigorous risk management strategies, we also recommend that donors in this field (and U.S. ones in particular) recognise that the objectives of CVE and gaining community support through branding (e.g. of USAID) may in many instances be incompatible, and thus in certain contexts it may be necessary to sacrifice the latter in favour of the former.

6. **Recognise the need for time for CVE programmes to become established.** As repeatedly observed, a key success of KTI was in its flexibility, allowing it to react to changing contexts and upscale its relations with successful grantees. As observed in *Guide to Programming*, however, initiatives 'must seek to reconcile the competing demands of responsiveness and adaptability on the one hand, and steadiness and steadfastness on the other.'[77] The Costal component of KTI was given insufficient time to comprehend the context, trial grantees through small-scale grants, and so on.

---

[77] USAID, *Guide to Programming*, 48.

ANNEX A: BIBLIOGRAPHY

OPEN SOURCES

Bloom, Mia, and John Horgan, "Missing their Mark: The IRA's Proxy Bomb Campaign," in Michael Innes, ed., *Making Sense of Proxy Wars* (Washington D.C.: Potomac Books, 2012), 31-60.

Botha, Anneli, "Assessing the Vulnerability of Kenyan Youths," *Institute for Security Studies Paper*, 2013.

Collins, Eamon, *Killing Rage* (London: Granta Books, 1998, 2nd ed.).

Giustozzi, Antonio, *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

Gunning, Jeroen, *Hamas in Politics: Democracy, Religion, Violence* (London: Hurst Publishers Ltd., 2007).

Hassan, Muhsin, "Understanding Drivers of Violent Extremism: The Case of al-Shabab and Somali Youth," *CTC Sentinel*, 2012, 18-20.

Hassan, Muhsin, "The Lost Boys of Eastleigh: Ideology, Identity, and the Appeal of Al-Shabaab," (PhD diss., University of Princeton, 2012).

International Crisis Group, "Kenyan Somali Islamist Radicalisation," *Africa Briefing 85*, 2012.

Khalil, James, "Radical Beliefs and Violent Actions are not Synonymous," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 2014, 37(2), 198-211.

Khalil, James, "The Reliability of Perception Surveys in Afghanistan,' *Households in Conflict Network,* 2012.

Kilcullen, David, *Accidental Guerrilla* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

Levitt, Matthew, *Hamas: Politics, Charity, and Terrorism in the Service of Jihad* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006).

MercyCorps, "Examining the Links between Youth, Economic Opportunity, Civic Engagement, and Conflict," *Somalia Research Brief*, 2013.

Post, Jerrold M., Ehud Sprinzak, and Laurita M. Denny, "The Terrorists in Their Own Words: Interviews with 35 Incarcerated Middle Eastern Terrorists," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 2003, 15/1.

Ribetti, Marcella, "The Unveiled Motivations of Violence in Intra-State Conflicts: The Colombian Guerrillas," *Small Wars and Insurgencies,* 2007*, 18/4.

Sageman, Marc, *Leaderless Jihad* (University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2008).

Sageman Marc, *Understanding Terror Networks* (University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2004).

USAID, *Mid-Term Evaluation of Three Countering Violent Extremism Projects*, 2013.

USAID, *Policy Paper: The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency*, 2011.

USAID, *Development Assistance and Counter-Extremism: A Guide to Programming*, 2009.

USAID, *Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism*, 2009.

Veldhuis, Tinka and Jørgen Staun, "*Islamist Radicalisation: A Root Cause Model,*" Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael (2009).

Vidino, Lorenzo "Bringing Global Jihad to the Horn of Africa," *African Security*, 2010, 3, 216-238.

Wood, Elisabeth Jean. *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

INTERNAL DOCUMENTS

Infotrak Research and Consulting, "1st Quarter Evaluation Report on KTI's Eastleigh Program," 2012.

Ipsos Public Affairs, "Evaluating the Impact of Countering Violent Extremism Programming in Eastleigh and Kenya Coast," 2014.

USAID, *Final KTI-Eastleigh Internal Program Team Reflection for USAID,* 2014.

USAID, *Kenya Transition Initiative – Eastleigh: Factsheet*, 2013.

USAID, *Kenya Transition Initiative – Eastleigh: Partner Performance Management Plan*, 2013.

USAID, *Kenya Transition Initiative – Eastleigh Youth Engagement (KTI-E) Rolling Engagement for Closeout*, 2013.

USAID, *Revalidation Report of the 2010 Mombasa Assessment and Design*, 2013.

USAID, *Final Report for One Year Evaluation of the Kenya Transition Initiative – Eastleigh Component*, 2012.

USAID, *Action Memorandum for the Mission Director*, 2011.

USAID, *Eastleigh Youth Engagement Project Assessment and Design*, 2010.

USAID, *Mombasa Youth Engagement Project Assessment and Design*, 2010.

ANNEX B: TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

II.1. BACKGROUND

The problem statement can be defined by its various components: the scale of the program, the qualitative and quantitative inputs to the study at the activity level, and KTI's attempts to roll up the analysis at the higher level, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

THE SCALE

KTI-E commenced in August 2011 in KTI-C in mid-2012. The following table summarizes the activities: **COMPONENT**	**KTI-EASTLEIGH**	**KTI-COAST**
Number of sub-grants	53	30
Total sub-grant value	$2,089,160	$1,257,739
Number of STTA	10	1
Total STTA Value	$111,726	$23,628
Number of Direct Procurement	11	3
Total Direct Proc. Value	$221,690	$98,215
Number of Activities	74	34
Total Value	$2,422,576	$1,379,582

- Sub-grants are awarded to State (local government) or Non-State actors (community groups, youth groups, non-governmental organisations, NGOs, private sector, and media).
- STTA is short term technical assistance, including consultants
- Direct procurement activities include studies and surveys

KTI also facilitated two direct grants (approximately $100,000 each) from the Department of State to local organisations. These grants supported the design of KTI's CVE program but were not activities that KTI could support directly.

ACTIVITY LEVEL BUILDING BLOCKS OF A STUDY

Each activity is managed through the program's performance monitoring plan with multiple intermediate results and outcome and output indicators. Each sub-grant has a final report and may have various interim reports. Some of the activities incorporated activity-specific surveys, focus group discussions, and micro-surveys (via SMS).

HIGHER LEVEL BUILDING BLOCKS OF A STUDY

Since the Eastleigh pilot started first (2011), it has therefore been the subject of multiple evaluations, studies, and assessments in order to provide input to the program's activities and lessons learned for future USAID CVE programs. The program has therefore produced significant amounts of qualitative and quantitative information above the activity level. These are summarized below:

- August 2010 Assessment and Design of a KTI-E and KTI-C CVE Program conducted by a team of 3 consultants.
- A validation of the Coast Assessment/Design, completed in March 2013 as KTI-C began its CVE programming.
- July 2012, a study (44 in depth interviews), and qualitative survey (1,666 interviews) in order to assess, document, and inform the project team and key stakeholders on the impact of the project's youth empowerment activities on at-risk youths' identity and self-confidence in Eastleigh

• December 2012, USAID/East Africa funded a quantitative and qualitative evaluation of a number of USAID funded CVE programs in East Africa. This included KTI-E. There were 13 survey questions completed by 102 full beneficiaries, 105 partial beneficiaries, and 95 comparison group in Eastleigh.

• The results of these two studies informed KTI's selection of intermediate results, outcome and output indicators, which forms the basis of the program's Partner Performance Monitoring Plan (PPMP).

• KTI is currently commissioning a follow-on quantitative survey to both the July 2012 and December 2012 surveys in both Eastleigh and the Coast. These will be conducted in October and completed in November 2013.

• Late 2011, KTI-E piloted the use of Sensemaker®, a qualitative analysis tool owned by CognitiveEdge. The first application (i.e., the baseline) was conducted between November 2011 and March 2012. The interviewers, or "scribes", asked 2033 youth, mainly Somali immigrants throughout the Eastleigh neighborhood of Nairobi, Kenya, about a situation where they faced a struggle between right and wrong. The respondent then self-signified the narrative based on a signification framework. This application allowed for the identification of patterns in the stories related to feelings about radical groups, revenge, and preventing conflict; challenges this youth groups faces; and perceptions on self-identity.

• In the second application, conducted in September 2012, scribes asked 600 youth and 434 adults for a story about whether anyone they know was ever approached to join a radical group. The signification framework used for the second application was also more helpful in illuminating youth problems and perceptions.

• Several independent academic papers or opinion pieces on Eastleigh written by third parties, which will be made available as soon as possible to all interested parties

• A qualitative review of KTI-E, conducted in August 2012 by a 3-person team to review KTI-E's accomplishments after one year.

KTI's CVE program is a pilot program for USAID in that both components (KTI-E and KTI-C) were designed as specific CVE interventions and use CVE funds. Both were designed in 2010 by an independent assessment and design team. Both focus on the pull factors to extremism instead of the push factors that traditional development programs address. The hypothesis is that addressing push factors is necessary but not sufficient to reduce the draw towards extremism. Further, KTI found very early on that addressing the key push factors (livelihoods, legal residence, and government attitudes towards youth) are extremely difficult in the Kenyan context.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The winning firm shall use all of this collected information to study KTI's CVE program and to write a report on it. This is not a formal evaluation but the report should attempt to answer some key evaluation-type questions:

• Was KTI's approach to CVE programming effective?

• Was it as innovative as it was expected to be?

• How did the program respond to the September 2011 USAID Policy on Violent Extremism?

• Was the stated focus on pull factors actually achieved?

• What were some of the mistakes or areas of improvement?

• What advice do you have for USAID CVE programs in the future?

• What advice do you have for other CVE programs in Kenya?

II.2. SCOPE OF WORK

KEY ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES

(Note: additional details on deliverables included in section II.3)

- Detailed final work plan for the consultancy which includes a schedule for all deliverables (D).
- Review existing related literature and data
- Collect any other data as required and agreed upon
- Draft report (D)
- Present the findings to KTI in Nairobi (D)
- Incorporate comments on the draft
- Finalize the report (D)
- Other activities should be proposed by the offeror as per its proposal.

METHODOLOGY

Given the vast amount of data collected, we do not expect the winning firm to conduct any quantitative research. We think that the methodology be limited to desk reviews, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions. However, organisations are encouraged to propose methodologies that will get to the questions listed in the problem statement above.

LOCATION

The work can be conducted remotely, since most of the reports are electronic. However, interviews with KTI staff and any grantees or other stakeholders must be conducted in person in Nairobi or on the Coast. The projects are restricted to the two following locations:

A. KTI-E: Eastleigh and its environs (Eastleigh, Majengo, Pumwani, and Malango Kubwa)
B. KTI-C: Coast (Mombasa, Kwale, Kilifi, Lamu).

ANNEX C: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON KTI RESEARCH

Rigorous research must be undertaken to supply the contextual comprehension upon which all CVE programming should be based. However, a series of weaknesses were identified with the Eastleigh and Mombasa *Assessment and Design* studies and with the *Mombasa Revalidation Report*, as outlined in this annex.

LACK OF RECOGNITION OF FALLIBILITY OF SOURCES

The research participants for the abovementioned studies were undoubtedly well-informed as they included religious leaders, political elites, 'at-risk' youth, and so on. As with any informants, however, their responses will have included biases, and are likely to be drawn at least in part from hearsay (see Box 4). In allocating percentages to the identified driving factors (as is discussed below), and through insufficiently highlighting the fallibility of these sources, the findings in these reports are delivered with a misleading sense of certainty. This is perhaps best illustrated in an apparent inconsistency within the Mombasa *Assessment and Design* document where the information provided by the respondents suggested that poverty and unemployment account for 35 per cent of push factors, while (as discussed in Section 2.1) the profiles of those actually arrested and suspected of involvement in VE indicate that 'the majority are from middle and upper class families where poverty is not an issue.' To counteract such issues, it is recommended that research should draw from a broad range of sources to 'triangulate' data (which the KTI research achieved to a limited extent), but also that the fallibility of sources is clearly highlighted in the study reports to ensure that programme decisions are not based upon an undue sense of confidence in contextual knowledge.

QUESTIONABLE USE OF NUMERICAL FINDINGS

The Eastleigh *Assessment and Design* document attributes the below percentages to the identified push and pull factors:

- Police harassment and corruption (9 per cent)
- Very high youth unemployment (7 per cent)
- Idleness (6 per cent)
- Marginalisation (5 per cent)
- Racial and cultural profiling (5 per cent)
- Lack of social amenities (5 per cent)

- Youth estrangement and frustration (3 per cent)

- Highly radicalised religious environment (15 per cent)

- Misinterpretation of religious teaching (15 per cent)

- Personal appeal and charisma of radical preachers (11 per cent)

- Appeal of the concept of global Muslim community (10 per cent)

- Influence of cyber preachers and Shaykhs (9 per cent)

Qualitative research techniques, such as KII and FGDs, are not designed to deliver numerically-based findings, such as the above, but rather are conducted to supply contextual nuance. This is because they typically (a) are comprised of insufficiently large samples of respondents, (b) are not representative of the wider populace and (c) present conditions for distorting opinions through 'group think' (FGDs only). This is certainly not to suggest that qualitative techniques are not an important means though which to source information, but rather that the conclusions drawn from these methods should not be presented with 'scientific' precision. Again, the potential consequence is that this may result in programme decision-making being founded upon an undue confidence in the level of contextual knowledge. As is observed in the KTI *Program Reflections* document, efforts should absolutely be made to prioritise the relevance of specific drivers,[78] but through simply ranking their importance, rather than attributing percentages on the basis of qualitative research.

AMBIGIOUS TERMINOLOGY

As commonly occurs in social science research, many of the concepts used in the studies are ambiguous or open to interpretation (e.g. 'misinterpretation of religious teachings on jihad,' 'unattended historical injustices,' etc.), and this leads to concerns with the resultant data. A particular issue is that the respondents may be more likely to offer affirmative responses to questions about drivers that are better understood (e.g. 'unemployment') than those that are more abstract ('youth estrangement,' 'marginalisation,' 'cultural profiling,' and so on), and thus the findings will unduly emphasise the former over the latter. A partial solution to this regular research issue is to offer descriptions of these problematic concepts to the respondents, or to offer specific examples in the phrasing of questions, for instance, of ways in which individuals may be 'marginalised.' It seems that this approach was not consistently adopted during the two *Assessment and Design* studies and the *Mombasa Revalidation* research.

---

[78] As observed in USAID, *Program Reflections (Part 5)*, 14.

NON-EXCLUSIVE LIST OF CVE DRIVERS

The response options provided to the research participants are 'non-exclusive' in that in certain cases they are overlapping. For instance, in the Eastleigh *Assessment and Design* study the 'idleness' category arguably overlays with both 'unemployment' and 'lack of social amenities'. Shifting the focus to pull factors, a quote drawn from the Mombasa *Assessment and Design* document serves to demonstrate the potential deleterious impact of this non-exclusivity.[79]

> During interviews, shaykh Abudi who gives lectures in Masjid Mussa was singled out as the most vocal and active in this respect. Youth who listen to his lectures have developed the habit of taking rigid ideological positions, being disrespectful of divergent religious opinions, antagonistic towards other members of the community who are not supportive of violence or extremism and defiant to leaders of established Muslim institutions and organisations.[80]

It seems likely that research respondents will adopt inconsistent stances regarding whether to place this phenomenon in one or more of the following categories of *Assessment and Design* drivers:

- Misinterpretations of religious teachings on jihad

- Radicalised religious environment

- Appeal by charismatic preachers

Such inconsistencies may have substantial consequences for the reliability of the resultant data. For instance, the respondents from *Location X* may select (or be encouraged to select by the researchers) only the one category from the above that they deemed to be the 'best fit' for this phenomena, whereas those from *Location Y* may select several categories. In such a case the resultant data will suggest that there are a wider range of VE drivers in the latter location, but in reality this actually will reflect this research inconsistency.[81] Lessons can be learnt on the subject of exclusivity from the manner in which the *Guide to Drivers* document disentangles political drivers as follows:[82]

- Denial of political rights and civil liberties

- Government repression and gross violation of human rights

- Endemic corruption and impunity for well-connected elites

- Poorly governed and ungoverned areas

- Protracted local conflicts

Depending upon how widely each of these categories is interpreted there is the potential for degrees of overlap, i.e. they also may not be entirely exclusive. However, this is less the case than with those adopted within the *Assessment and Design* research.

---

[79] While tangential to the main points being discussed in this section, there are potential issues with causality associated with this quote (see Box 1). Specifically, while it is seemingly implied that the lectures cause listeners to develop 'rigid ideological positions,' is also conceivable that the converse is true, i.e. that these stances drive such individuals to attend such lectures in the first place. It is also possible that causality drives in both directions.
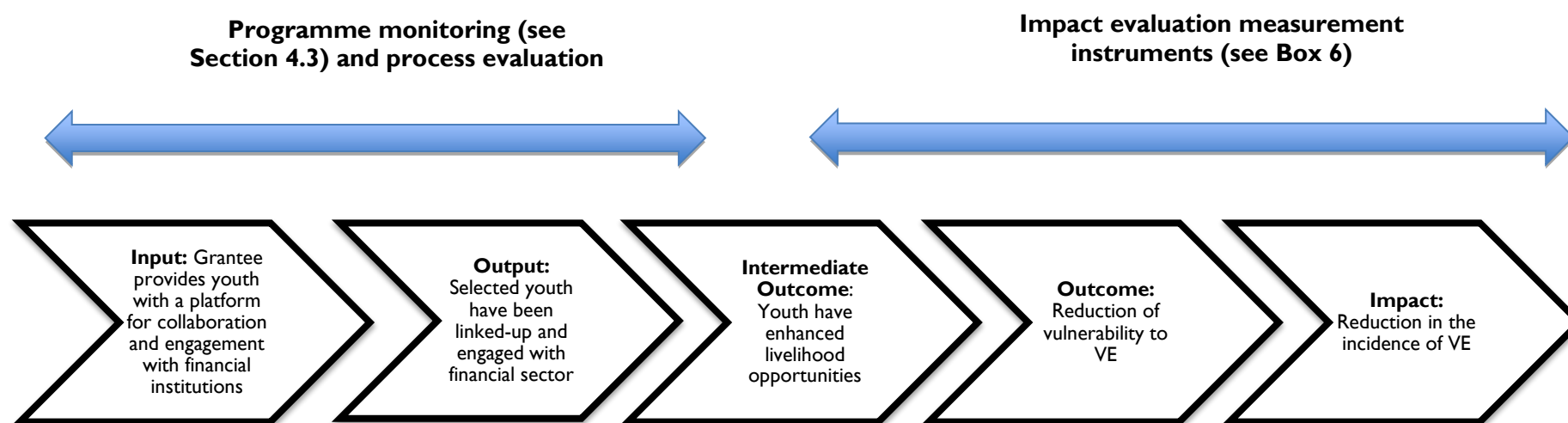[80] USAID, *Mombasa Assessment and Design*, 22.
[81] This is likely to have substantial consequences for the percentages attributed collectively to push and pull factors within these studies in particular, although it is not possible to comment on such effects as the methods through which these figures were determined is not revealed in the reports.
[82] This is not to suggest that the *Guide to Drivers* classification system is adopted as there is a need to adapt such categories to local circumstances.

ANNEX D: THEORIES OF CHANGE (TOC)

The below is a demonstration TOC focussing upon a grant that seeks to reduce VE through enhancing links between youth and financial institutions.

Programme monitoring (see Section 4.3) and process evaluation

Impact evaluation measurement instruments (see Box 6)

Input: Grantee provides youth with a platform for collaboration and engagement with financial institutions

Output: Selected youth have been linked-up and engaged with financial sector

Intermediate Outcome: Youth have enhanced livelihood opportunities

Outcome: Reduction of vulnerability to VE

Impact: Reduction in the incidence of VE

Selected assumptions

• Youth do not already have collaboration and engagement with financial institutions. • Youth have the time and motivation to participate in the training. • Financial institutions are willing to engage with youth. • Financial institutions have resources to provide grants or loans.	• Youth are able to apply benefits from linkages to institutions to daily lives.	• Youth are able to enhance livelihoods as a result of grants or loans. • A lack of livelihoods opportunities serves as a driver of VE. • The grant attracts youth who are specifically 'at-risk.'