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# THE USAID CENTRAL ASIA SUPPORT FOR STABLE SOCIETIES FACT SHEET

The USAID Central Asia Support for Stable Societies activity is identifying and testing new methods for the prevention of violent extremism (PVE) in Central Asia. The activity has conducted field and digital research to identify risk and prevention factors for violent extremism. Based on the research results, the activity is working closely with civil society organizations (CSOs) in Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan to design violent extremism risk reduction pilot programming. In its final year, the activity is assessing and monitoring the impacts of the Afghanistan crisis on Central Asia.

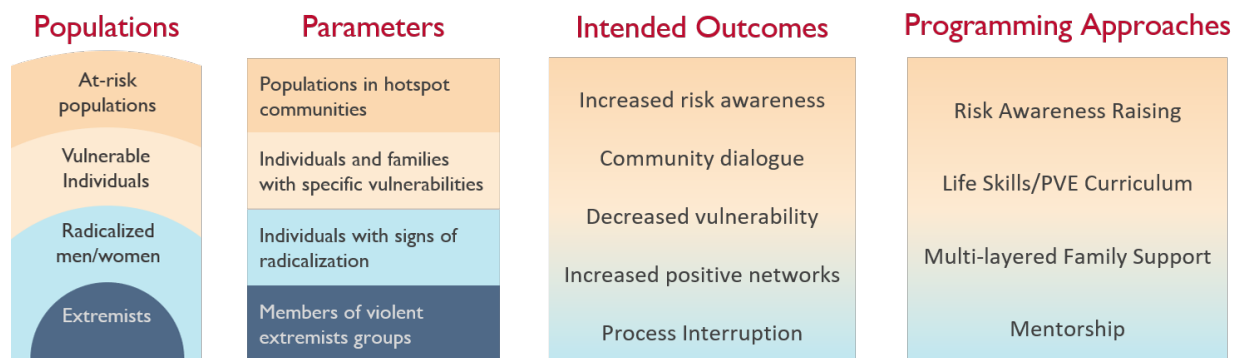
## **ACTIVITY ACHIEVEMENTS**

### **RESEARCH IMPLEMENTATION**

The USAID Central Asia Support for Stable Societies activity conducted a mixed-methods research design with field research and online research components. The activity completed data collection in

December 2019 and reported all research results by May 2020. Based on these results, the activity developed a Programming Framework to guide pilot programming.

The Programming Framework recognizes that risks and vulnerabilities vary across the populations of Central Asia. Different levels of risk require very different interventions tied to distinct outcomes to achieve overall violent extremism risk reduction. The Programming Framework recognizes four populations: first, at-risk communities, otherwise known as hotspot community, that have witnessed extensive radicalization in the past; second, families and individuals with specific vulnerabilities; third, radicalized men and women who have shown initial signs of radicalization; and fourth, members of violent extremist groups. Activity programming focuses on each of these populations with intended outcomes and programming approaches matched to the primary risks in each group.



Research results and program learning from pilot projects have been shared with a variety of U.S. government audiences, regional governments, and CSOs during the process of program design.

### PILOT PROGRAMMING

The activity team is working closely with CSOs and government partners in at-risk communities to implement risk reduction activities based on the activity’s research. The USAID Central Asia Support for Stable Societies activity has initiated 36 grant-based research and pilot programs, 24 of which have been completed.

- In Kazakhstan, USAID partnered with the non-governmental organization *Aqniyet* to pilot a six-month mentorship program for former offenders who were sentenced for non-violent extremism offenses. Thirty former offenders in Atyrau, Kazakhstan voluntarily enrolled and then were matched with trained mentors to assist them in navigating issues of reintegration in their communities. The project aims to strengthen the critical family, community, and psycho-social support networks for VE ex-offenders, while reducing the discrimination they face related to being ex-offenders in their communities. The approach is being extended in Atyrau for an additional five months and will be launched in a new location in 2022.
- In the Kyrgyz Republic, the activity has partnered with the Center for Support of International Protection (CSIP), a southern Kyrgyz CSO known for its legal support for migrants, to develop an online and offline information campaign about the risks of extremism. CSIP shared the focus-group-tested campaign products with 23 migrant-focused organizations, as well as Kyrgyz government agencies. Videos such as “There is no greater honor than a peaceful life” and “There is always a choice,” delve into the pitfalls of recruitment and reinforce the support that troubled migrants can find in positive community and family networks. Together, the videos have been viewed more than three-million times. This information campaign has helped migrants better identify the warning signs of potential recruitment and mitigate violent extremism risks.

- In Tajikistan, the activity partnered with CSO *Mohi Munir* to develop and test a multi-layered family support service to address the vulnerabilities of families in at-risk communities. The service is centered on Community-Based Resource Groups (CRBGs) that are made up of influential individuals from civil society and government. CRBGs are trained in VE risks and vulnerabilities, conducting vulnerability assessments, and psychosocial first aid. Door-to-door outreach is conducted, focusing on families most likely to be exposed to radicalization risks, such as: families with members in migration; women-led households; families with weak social support networks in local communities; and families with connections to extremists. Results from the project demonstrate the CRBGs' ability to raise community awareness about the variety of services and resources available to at-risk families, as well as the bespoke support for solving crises and problems that could otherwise become risk factors for radicalization and/or mobilization to violent extremism.
- In Uzbekistan, the activity partnered with independent media entity *Tajumon.uz* to produce a PVE-themed cartoon, *Ali's Adventures*. Through 90 screening and discussion sessions held in schools across Uzbekistan, the cartoon reached 1,130 youth and 370 parents. Results from the activity evaluation showed that the cartoon achieved its objective of positively influencing the attitudes and perceptions of children and parents about family relationships and family support. These results demonstrate that even cartoons that do not directly address extremism can positively impact attitudes and perceptions of violent extremism vulnerabilities.

## PROGRAM LEARNING

Program learning is a central component of the USAID Central Asia Support for Stable Societies activity. The activity's research has done much to advance understandings and challenge assumptions about causal factors for violent extremism in Central Asia. Pilot programming is developing and testing a variety of approaches that can be used by communities to address extremism risks. The USAID Central Asia Support for Stable Societies activity has released three programming reports summarizing the lessons learned.