

As presented at the US Department of State



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## Countering Violent Extremism

# A Note on Scope

- Two key levels:
  - The initial turn to militancy (directly participating or indirectly supporting)
  - Return to militancy after a period of previous violence
- CSO may be more interested in the first level, but most rigorous evidence is on the second level

# Key Themes

- Socioeconomic status:
  - Poverty → VE
- Education:
  - Less educated / madrassas → VE
- Religion
  - Islam → VE
- Repression
  - Physical integrity violation → VE
- Trust in government
  - Lack of trust in gov't → VE

# Some Reasons to Be Concerned

- Subjects in studies are unique in key ways
  - Those who are VE vs. those who could be
- Factors allegedly producing VE do not allow identification of independent effect
- The micro-macro challenge in existing research

# Evidence: Experimental

- Information: VE costs reduces support for militancy
- Cash programs may reduce participation in crime and violence
- Social skills training plus cash grants reduce recidivism
- Community driven development / reconstruction may increase social cohesion & thus reduce VE

# Integrating Experiments into the Policy Process



Credit: EPoD

# Example of Integrating Experiments into the Policy Process

- 2011: DFID & Government of Punjab initiative
  - Bring vocational skills to poor and marginalized
- Researchers integrated through every stage
- Stages:
  - Standard rollout – lessons learned
  - Mobilized through NGOs vs. micro-training centers
  - Varied distance to training center
  - Scaled up vocational education
- Punchline:
  - Process allowed optimization of implementation

# For Discussion

- How can we generate more researcher-policy implementer collaborations that allow for dynamic experimentation?
- Could such collaborations allow for creative testing of conventional explanations vs. interventions such as those currently being tested?