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## 1. Introduction

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This Theory of Change concludes the project “Towards more effective human security approaches in the context of the emerging threat of violent extremism in Jordan, Lebanon and Tunisia.” Over three years, the project has examined the trilateral relation between human security, state security policies, and efforts to counter violent extremism in the region. The project investigated this relation in 18 communities across the three counties with a total of 238 research activities conducted with over 1700 participants. This included national and local government officials, security actors, local leaders, civil society organisations, and marginalised communities.<sup>1</sup>

The project has sought to answer the **question of how can human security approaches be reconceptualised and implemented to align with, contribute to, and balance policies aimed at countering the transnational threat of violent extremism in the MENA region, with a view to enhancing resilience to conflict?** To answer this question, the project activities gathered input from local communities on the concept of human security, relation between weak human security programming and drivers of conflict and violent extremism, and on the role and impact of state security policies in this regard.

In November 2019, the West Asia-North Africa (WANA) Institute published a White Paper that synthesises the main **findings** and answers the questions of this project.<sup>2</sup> It builds on 20 publications that discuss findings on the community level and background papers on this trilateral relation. In answering the research questions, the White Paper concludes that:

- Successful Human Security (HS) programming can prevent violent extremism and go beyond that to address drivers of broader instability in the region. This includes drivers of social conflict, economic strife, challenges hindering representative and inclusive governance, as well as questions related to the social contract in countries of the region.
- State-centric Security Policies (SSPs) –defined as both procedural and legislative- can reinforce drivers of violent extremism. Excessive use of force, selective application of security measures, and constrains on freedoms of expression reinforce the sense of marginalisation and alienation among citizens. In turn, this enhances the prospects of violent extremism, because their frustration is directed towards the state (both as government and security agencies).
- SSPs also hinder the implementation of successful HS programmes in various ways including procedural and administrative restrictions on civil society, as well as restrictions on individual participation.

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<sup>1</sup> Project details and publications are available via this link: <https://bit.ly/2DuBdyd>

<sup>2</sup> Neven Bondokji and Barik Mhadeen, *White Paper: Towards More Effective Human Security Approaches in the Context of the Emerging Threat of Violent Radicalisation in Jordan, Lebanon, and Tunisia*, (Amman: WANA Institute, November 2019), accessed via: <https://bit.ly/2Duczhh>

Weak HS programming, as a result of government unwillingness and inability and due to the impact of SSPs on HS programmes have increased marginalisation and contributes to instability in the region.<sup>3</sup>

This Theory of Change (ToC) complements the White Paper and should be read in conjunction with it. This ToC clarifies the desired **impact pathways** to translate project findings into action points on the short, medium, and long-terms. It takes into account the needs, considerations, and underlying dynamics that were explored in the 18 communities.

Any ToC translates findings into impact pathways. It can never encompass all the different local nuances, or the individual complex dynamics in one setting. Therefore, the ToC presented here offers a generic framework to translate the reconceptualisation of human security into actionable and desirable policy changes.

This paper has **eight** sections. It first defines key concepts and clarifies assumptions behind the project's initial design. It then explains the underlying reconceptualisation of HS that informs the ToC design. The following section addresses marginalisation as a key concept in understanding the trilateral relation between HS, SSPs, and CVE. It then elaborates on the question of actors, and explains their capacity building needs. After that it explains ToC design and details the impact pathways.

This paper concludes this project that was led by the WANA Institute, and funded through the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO-WOTRO), commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, and developed in close collaboration with the Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law. Mercy Corps and the Arab Institute for Security Studies are WANA's consortium partners. In-country partners in Lebanon and Tunisia were the Lebanese Centre for Policy Studies and The Jasmine Foundation for Research and Communication.

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<sup>3</sup> Several studies have drawn the link between marginalisation and drivers of violent extremism. For example, see "Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism," USAID, February 2009, accessed August 17, 2017, [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/Pnadt978.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pnadt978.pdf); and Dave Allen, et. al., "The Big Spin: Corruption and the Growth of Violent Extremism," Transparency International, February 2017, accessed August 17, 2017, [http://ti-defence.org/wpcontent/uploads/2017/02/The\\_Big\\_Spin\\_Web.pdf](http://ti-defence.org/wpcontent/uploads/2017/02/The_Big_Spin_Web.pdf); Foad Ghirbali, "Youth and Religion in Tunisia: A Study of New Identity Expression of Tunisian Youth," *Idafat* Journal 23 and 24 (2013): 41-42; Neven Bondokji, Kim Wilkinson, and Leen Aghabi, *Understanding Radicalisation: A Literature Review of Models and Drivers* (Amman: The WANA Institute, 2016), p.13.

## 2. Definitions and Assumptions

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Before discussing the ToC, it is important to define the key concepts of this project and clarify its underlying assumptions, in order to allow practitioners and policy makers to gauge the in-built limitations of this ToC and also to attract attention to its wide scope.

Human security is defined by participants of this project as “a state of individual and communal peace achieved through an environment that meets the basic needs of individuals and through legislations that guarantee the rights and duties of all citizens. A state that promotes confidence in state institutions and cements citizenship and belonging.”<sup>4</sup> This definition builds on the 1990 UN Human Development Report that detailed seven pillars of human security: economic, food, health, environmental, personal physical, communal, and personal political.<sup>5</sup> Meeting these seven pillars contributes to efforts to PVE as discussed and elaborated in the literature on structural drivers of radicalisation and violent extremism.

Initially the project had a focus on CVE, but in designing research activities the project expanded the focus to address Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) as it aligns more with the broader goals of HS programming. Although the terms are used sometimes interchangeably, CVE implies the pre-existence of violent extremism and has thus often been associated with state security approaches. PVE is understood to focus on “systematic preventive steps to address the factors that make individuals join violent extremist groups.”<sup>6</sup> PVE, thus, emphasises efforts that are not included in traditional security-based efforts to avert this threat.

State security policies (SSPs) are traditional security efforts that take two forms: legislative and procedural. Whilst the legislative relates to laws and regulations governing the length of sentences and reasons for indictments for instance, as well as laws of Countering Terrorism and governing the cybersecurity space, the procedural policies relate to arrangements made within prison cells after an individual has been sentenced, raids, arrests, etc.

Two underlying **assumptions** shaped the project design and this ToC: First, effective HS programming would enhance the resilience of at-risk communities located within the fragile contexts in Jordan, Lebanon, and Tunisia. Structural drivers of conflict like economic strife, marginalisation, and political exclusion can be addressed through HS programmes and its 7 pillars detailed above. Second, although SSPs are designed to counter violent extremism, these policies reinforce drivers of

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<sup>4</sup> Jordan policy lab report, “Reconceptualising Human Security in Jordan,” July 12th, 2018, available at: [http://wanainstitute.org/sites/default/files/files/NWO\\_PolicyLab\\_ReconceptualisingHumanSecurityInJordan.pdf](http://wanainstitute.org/sites/default/files/files/NWO_PolicyLab_ReconceptualisingHumanSecurityInJordan.pdf), Lebanon policy lab report, “Reconceptualising Human Security in Lebanon,” January 10th and February 26th, 2019, available at:

<http://wanainstitute.org/sites/default/files/files/Reconceptualising%20Human%20Security%20in%20Lebanon.Pdf> and Tunisia policy lab report (in Arabic), “Towards More Effective HS Approaches,” March 7th, 2019, available at: <http://bit.ly/2pja5Pq>

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Development Program. 1994. “Human Development Report 1994,” p. 24-33 [http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/255/hdr\\_1994\\_en\\_complete\\_nostats.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/255/hdr_1994_en_complete_nostats.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force. 2016. *FAQ- GENEVA CONFERENCE ON PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM*, available at <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/en/faq-geneva-conference-preventing-violent-extremism>

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conflict and of extremism through excessive reliance on hard security measures. This latter assumption is based on research findings in Africa on this.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa, *Journey to Extremism in Africa*, UNDP, 2017, accessed via: <http://journey-to-extremism.undp.org/content/downloads/UNDP-JourneyToExtremism-report-2017-english.pdf>

### 3. Human Security as a Preventive Approach

The project findings answer the main question of how to reconceptualise HS by elaborating on two approaches to understanding the concept. First, there is a **material (tangible)** level understood as basic services that meet human needs.<sup>8</sup> Research participants referred to various and diverse services that reflect their immediate concerns. This includes safe transportation, decent healthcare, quality education that enhances employment prospects and nurtures critical thinking and positive values, and improved urban planning to provide open spaces for cultural and communal learning.

Second, human security is understood on an **abstract** level in terms of rights, freedoms, and duties. This includes freedoms (specifically from *fear, state-driven or otherwise*), and the right of assembly in public spaces. Key to conceptualising human security here is also the **protection** of vulnerable and minority groups, such as women in the Northern Jordanian *Badia* or individuals with disability,<sup>9</sup> extending to the protection from both the physical and mental abuse that they might be exposed to by state and other non-state actors.

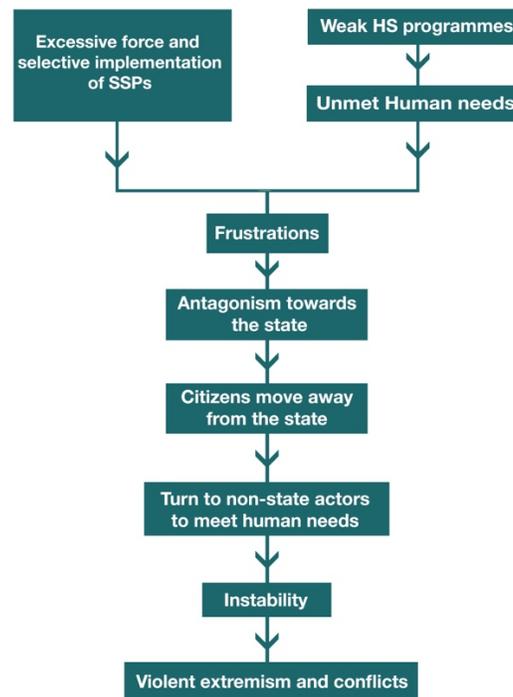


Figure 1: The relation between SSPs, HS, and violent extremism

Research participants explained that offering the tangible services and granting the rights and freedoms reduce their frustration due to unmet human needs. Frustration leads to aggression.<sup>10</sup> In

<sup>8</sup> The concept of human needs was first introduced by Maslow. See Saul McLeod, “Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs,” *Simply Psychology* (2018), accessed via: <https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html>

<sup>9</sup> Focus Group Discussion, Mafraq, 28 July, 2018.

<sup>10</sup> Neal E. Miller, et al. “the Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis,” *Psychological Review*, Vol. 48, No. 4 (1941): 337–342.

this case, frustration with the state due to its failure in granting the services and rights, or in enabling civil society organisations (CSOs) to meet basic needs, leads to antagonism towards the state. When this is combined with repression under state security policies and/or use of excessive force in implementing security policies, it leads to antagonism towards the state. This turns citizens away from the state towards non-state actors. These can be paramilitary actors, political parties, or other social/religious groups. This undermines the social contract and then leads to instability in the form of either violent extremism or other conflicts (Figure 1).

**This sequence of dynamics highlights the preventive capacities of successful human security programming.** The more human security programmes meet people's tangible and abstract needs, the more it enhances resilience to conflict. The following ToC explains how this reconceptualisation of HS can be translated into action points that improve policy design and implementation in HS and SSPs to respond to the threats of violent extremism and other forms of conflict in the region.

## 4. Marginalisation

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Another articulation that most research participants resorted to centres on marginalisation. In fact, across all project activities in the 18 communities with all categories of actors, marginalisation stands out as *the* common overarching theme. The articulation about marginalisation is not very different from the sequence of negative dynamics captured in Figure 1, but it emphasises forms of marginalisation as a key dynamic that feeds antagonism towards the state, and then opens the door for either trust in non-state actors or accentuates drivers of conflict.

Similar to the dynamics explained above, weak HS programming when combined with the interference of security actors to limit reach and scope of HS programming leads to marginalisation on three levels:

- Security agencies against HS providers, which is best captured through SSPs limiting the efficacy of local HS providers;
- HS providers against residents in local communities (duplicate programmes, weak in design and implementation, poor reach to local communities);
- State against citizens, which is felt through state absence in local communities both as service provider and as guarantor of citizen rights and physical security.

The first level pertains to common complaints from CSOs and civil society actors on security clearances required for starting a CSO and for each activity or programme it seeks to implement. Mafraq, in the north of Jordan, is one case in point here; whereby certain human security providers cited their inability to receive the needed approvals to undertake programmes on youth's political empowerment.<sup>11</sup> This subjects all HS programmes to the approval of security actors who for arbitrary and unclear reasons may block implementation of HS programmes or limit their reach and scope. This level of marginalisation captures the upper hand security that actors have on implementing HS programmes.

The second level highlights marginalisation that local residents suffer from HS providers. This includes CSOs, civil society actors, and local government agencies. Respondents complained that HS local programmes either repeatedly targeted towards the same small group of beneficiaries, who end up benefiting from all HS programmes while marginalising other residents. Respondents also discussed the weak design of HS programmes locally and their unprofessional implementation, which undermine the potential of these programmes in improving the level of HS for locals. These are two examples only of marginalisation caused by HS providers.

The third level of marginalisation is broader. Respondents argued that the state (as government and as an all-encompassing national entity) is absent locally. Its presence and authority are not felt. No adequate services are offered by local or national governments, and the state fails in protecting citizens' rights or in ensuring citizens are treated rightfully and equally before the law. For instance, one participant in the FGD in Zgharta, Lebanon, stated that he had to go through local political

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<sup>11</sup> Key Stakeholder Interview with a local CBO, Mafraq, 30 July, 2018.

leadership to get his children registered in a public school.<sup>12</sup> This level of marginalisation creates the sense for citizens to be abandoned by the state. Interestingly, they noted that the state is there to punish but is absent when it comes to rights and services they are entitled to. In short terms, it is selectively, rather than comprehensively, present.

The individual citizen is the victim of all three levels of marginalisation. This not only intensifies the sense of alienation, but also creates a notable trust gap whereby the citizen loses trust in all three actors: the security agencies, CSOs and the government, and the state in general. It is no surprise, then, that local citizens will turn to non-state actors to access services in exchange for limited or total loyalty. These are, for example, Hezbollah and Amal Movement in Baalbek and Hay el Selloum, respectively, who act as brokers between the citizens and the central government.<sup>13</sup> This has led to various forms of local clientalism where the state loses legitimacy, or to a clear sense of both imposed exclusion and self-exclusion, such was the case captured in Douar Hicher in Tunisia.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Males' Focus Group Discussion, Zgharta, 10 July, 2018.

<sup>13</sup> Zeina El-Helou, May Tamim, Sami Zoughaib and Neven Bondokji, *Sectarian Politics, Human Security, and the Quest to Prevent Violent Extremism in Lebanon* (Amman: WANA Institute, June 2019), accessed via: [http://wanainstitute.org/sites/default/files/publications/Lebanon-%20English%20Report\\_%2030-6.pdf](http://wanainstitute.org/sites/default/files/publications/Lebanon-%20English%20Report_%2030-6.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Maher Zoghlemi and research assistant Helmi Toumi, *Embracing Social Exclusion in Douar Hicher: Isolation and Code Words* (Amman, WANA Institute, June 2019), accessed via: <http://wanainstitute.org/sites/default/files/publications/Douar%20Hisher%20English%20final%20report.pdf>

## 5. The Question of Actors

The discussion of actors attained primary significance in the discussions with research respondents. When the state, security actors, the government, and CSOs subject locals to various forms of marginalisation, who is then the most trusted actor to implement HS programmes and who is expected by locals to assume this responsibility. The discussion below elaborates on respondents' views on four actors: the government, security agencies, civil society, and non-state actors. Figure 2 clarifies the divergence in levels of trust and expectation.

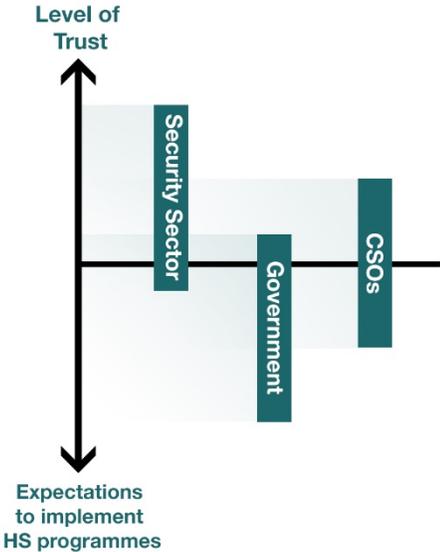


Figure 2: Levels of trust in actors and level of expectations from them in HS programming

### 1.1. Security Agencies

Deliberations around the role of the security sector, and that of traditional security providers, was rather **implied** than explicit. A clear intimidation of discussing security actors was captured; thus, it was difficult to arrive at sharp conclusions. Nonetheless, the overall discussion noted security actors as **highly trusted, but least expected** to carry out human security programmes. The overall high levels of trust in security actors (particularly the military) was notable. At times this high trust is related to their non-partisan involvement in local conflicts and politics as is the case in Lebanon. In few communities in Jordan, this high trust pertains to the military's efficient offering of certain human security needs/services in some locales like hospitals and schooling.

The trust level in security actors varied across different actors. Trust was lower in the police, for example, but was relatively high compared to non-security actors. Regardless of trust levels, all security actors were least expected to offer human security programming. Participants preferred that security actors restrict their operations within the classical sphere of providing physical security and upholding law and order.

## 1.2. Civil Society

Deliberations around the role of civil society were vibrant. Civil society actors are **both mildly trusted and mildly expected** to offer human security programming. In large part, the mild trust is attributed to the perceived association of some civil society actors with the state; that is: the lack of trust in the state had an obvious trickle-down impact on the level of trust in local civil society actors. The other factor pertains to the aforementioned marginalisation level caused by CSOs in duplicate HS programmes, weak implementation and design, etc. The capabilities of civil society in this regard were also contested due to capacity building needs of civil society actors.

With enhanced levels of trust and capability, civil society is seen as a highly expected actor to achieve a balanced approach on human security that allows its local programmes to successfully contribute to countering violent extremism and to enhancing local resilience.

## 1.3. The Government

Deliberations around the role of the government were extensive. The government (national and local) is the **most expected, but least trusted** actor to provide HS programmes. Its **capabilities were questioned**, due to either distrust in public administration or to perceptions of corruption. The high expectations should not be seen in isolation from the discussion around the social contract in the three countries of concern, whereby the state has always played a highly centralised father-figure role in providing social welfare.

Yet, it was rather an unsustainable model built on an ever-expanding public sector, and subscribing to a rentier/semi-rentier model that was highly dependent on foreign revenues and aid, especially from oil and gas producing countries. The inability to sustain this model has arguably led to a gradual **withdrawal** of the state's role in providing HS programmes and other services, leaving citizens feeling exposed and vulnerable. And whilst the state's ability in making a come-back is in doubt, it is still expected to do so. Without such return, it will be difficult to achieve a comprehensive level of human security in these countries.

## 1.4. Non-state Actors

Naturally, the absence of the government gives significant room to non-state actors, and para-military actors in particular, to enhance human security and ensure its provisions. Lebanon is a clear case in point here. People in various locations tended to resort to para-military state actors to ensure the minimum requirement of their human security. Yet, this challenges the local and communal resilience for it sharpens the lines of sectarian and confessional divisions, and further cements the clientelistic structure of society.

Non-state actors are not limited to para-military actors. They also include political parties and social and religious groups, who often offer and run health and educational services in exchange for loyalty. Regardless of the state's ability to contain the impact of these networks of trust and loyalty, absence of the government as service provider and guarantor of rights and protection opens the door to multitude of actors that can harness support in exchange for services *and* protection.

Figure 2 above does not include non-state actors for three reasons. First, research participants did not voice clear views on their trust level and expectations from non-state actors in HS programming. Second, the relevance of these actors differs from one community to another in Tunisia and Jordan, so results cannot be generalised. But absence of the state is deeply felt. Third, and most importantly, it should not be implied that non-state actors should replace civil society or the government in this role; even though in many communities they are assuming this role de-facto on the ground. Instead, this discussion alerts all stakeholders to the high propensity of carving a bigger role of non-state actors if the government continues to be absent from local communities and if civil society continues to be limited in its abilities and reach.

Non-state actors will destabilise the countries in question and will harness support against the state. If some of these non-state actors are ideologically or politically driven towards violent extremism, the state is considerably weak in facing and averting this threat.

## 6. Capacity Building Needs

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On one level, the different levels of trust in and expectations from the different actors as discussed above emphasises the need to empower the government and civil society to design and implement HS programmes. It goes without saying that non-state actors –particularly armed groups– are to be overcome in this role. Similarly, security actors are not expected and should not be assigned the role of HS provision, although it is important that they appreciate and understand how crucial HS is for CVE and resilience needs.

On another level, there are clear capacity building needs to be achieved if HS programmes are to be aligned with and contribute to CVE efforts and conflict resilience in the region. Before detailing how the ToC will meet these needs. It is important to explain these capacity gaps.

- All actors do not understand the term HS. In fact, all respondents (security officials, civil society actors, government officials, and local residents) have defined human insecurity rather than affirmative human security as a concept. More alarming is the fact that national policy makers were equally unaware of what the concept is.
- Actors also have conflicting views on violent extremism. The first step in successful CVE policy design is agreement on defining the term. All actors had different views. The divergence was also evident among one category of actors. For example, civil society actors disagreed among themselves as was the case among government officials. Security actors had a relatively clear view of the violent extremism is, but they limited their definition to physical threats.
- Security actors seemed unaware or are in denial of how security policies can reinforce the drivers of violent extremism; they seem to dismiss the link between security measures, marginalisation, and drivers of violent extremism.
- Security actors are generally unaware of how SSPs actually hinder and limit HS programming and the precarious consequences this has on the sense of marginalisation in local communities.
- Most actors were incapable of recommending concrete policy changes. In all research activities respondents were asked to offer policy recommendations to reconceptualise HS and to enhance its role in CVE and conflict resilience. All actors offered very generic, loose, and inapplicable policy options, and were tied to unclear timeline of implementation. This was particularly alarming in local communities where there was considerable focus on discussing unmet human needs. Nonetheless, local actors were not empowered to articulate their own policy recommendations. Most alarming in this regard is that national government officials were equally weak in proposing policy changes or revisions. Policy-makers are expected to excel in this. Nonetheless there was a noticeable weakness in this regard.

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The ToC detailed in this paper is designed to meet these capacity building needs in addition to forging the lines that enable all actors to work together for a comprehensive HS approach as will be detailed below.

## 7. ToC Design

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The Theory of Change detailed here is designed to meet the long-term objective of utilising the reconceptualisation of human security so that programmes are implemented to align with, contribute to, and balance policies aimed at countering the transnational threat of violent extremism.

To achieve this and to meet the capacity building needs detailed above, the ToC details two parallel tracks: one for human security programming and the other for state security policies. But since security in local communities is a combination of both forms of security, actors cannot operate in these two tracks in isolated silos. Instead, the ToC also prescribes a third track that combines HS providers and security actors.

This design draws attention to the important negative impact of both weak HS programming and repressive SSPs in leading to violent extremism and instability. Civil society actors, and communities in general, usually cite repressive SSPs as hindering successful HS programming. They refer to use of excessive force, repression of political rights, restrictions on freedom of assembly and/or expression. Individuals elaborate on administrative detention and the need for no-criminal-record certificates as examples of SSPs that limit individual's opportunities and changes for inclusion in human security programming. CSOs refer to administrative procedures and clearances requested by security actors as factors that limit their scope and reach.

Likewise, security actors refer to government weaknesses in implementing programmes, widespread corruption in CSOs, and the general civilian inability to design and implement programmes that consider local security needs. Both group of actors blame the other for instability and unrest.

With this in mind, the ToC combines the roles of both HS programmes and SSPs in enhancing resilience. Both tracks and group of actors are to be empowered and better informed for them to respond to the threat of violent extremism and to drivers of wider conflicts in the region. This is echoed in research participants' repeated assertion that SSPs are needed, and in certain locales welcomed, to respond to immediate threats in the short-term. But for effective CVE policies, a long-term human security approach is needed and desired.

In addition to the three tracks, the ToC is designed to explain short-term action, mid-term objectives and long-term achievements. Like all other ToCs, it also details the expected output per track and details target group. The ToC is designed to respond to community needs in the three countries with a generic outlook that can inform HS approaches in the region. The focus on community needs is reflected in emphasising local government actors. The project as a whole was designed to focus on communities given the growing evidence that points to local incubating environments instead of individual extremists.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> For example, Bouhana argues that vulnerability to extremism is not just a matter of being psychologically susceptible to moral influence. It is also a matter of being susceptible to sustained exposure to settings that enable extremist socialisation. Noémie Bouhana, *The Moral Ecology of Extremism, A Systemic Perspective*, University College London (July 2019), accessed via: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/834354/Bouhana-The-moral-ecology-of-extremism.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/834354/Bouhana-The-moral-ecology-of-extremism.pdf)

## 8. Impact Pathways

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The following ToC (Figure 3) clarifies impact pathways across actors. This impact pathway is to be repeated in each of the countries examined: Jordan, Lebanon, and Tunisia. It can also be replicated in other countries of the region. The numbers of beneficiaries of short-term activities here are indicative only and can be adjusted as needed.

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Figure 3: Theory of Change



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