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## VOICES FOR PEACE

### Amplifying local voices of peace and tolerance to counter violent extremism in West Africa

The Voices for Peace project is a regional communication and media strengthening effort that will leverage both traditional and new media to counter violent extremism (CVE) and promote democracy, human rights and governance. The project will support a culturally-resonant communications environment of indigenous CVE narratives by building the capacity of locally influential voices, establishing interactive media platforms, and engaging at-risk youth, women, and communities with quality, credible CVE content. The project's approach is rooted in local partnerships so as to support and sustain native narratives that reinforce communities' historical and cultural traditions of tolerance and moderation. Lasting partnerships with recognized and respected leaders, institutions, and networks are critical to building local and regional resilience to VE narratives and recruitment. Finally, learning what engagement platforms, partnerships, and narratives are most effective in undermining violent extremist propaganda, and adapting new approaches based on that learning, will be fundamental to the effort.

The project will initially target Burkina Faso, Chad and Niger, with a planned expansion to Cameroon in December of 2017. However, Voices for Peace will have built-in flexibility to modify its geographic targets, messaging and scope in order to adapt and respond to changing violent extremist narratives and fluid security situations.

Voices for Peace is an element of USAID's support to the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership. Together with other CVE programming and broader development efforts, the project contributes to the U.S. Government's goal of reducing vulnerability to violent extremism in West Africa.

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## PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The Voices for Peace project will amplify moderate voices of peace and tolerance in West Africa by:

- Strengthening positive local narratives;
- Expanding access to information;
- Increasing dialogue and exchange on themes of CVE, good governance, and peace; and
- Learning and adapting continuously.

## PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- Produce and broadcast CVE radio and video programs in local languages on themes of peace, tolerance, good governance, and human rights, including:
  - Locally produced programs that tackle community-specific CVE themes;
  - Programs highlighting women's roles in promoting democracy, peace, and security; and
  - Programs for youth, by youth.
- Support locally-driven information campaigns in response to events and trends that are relevant to VE or the underlying causes of VE.
- Expand the reach and strengthen the capacity of 80+ local radio station partners through technical and management training, material support, and peer-to-peer sharing.
- Establish or refurbish radio stations in areas critical to countering VE influence.
- Use social media platforms, interactive voice response (IVR), and short message service (SMS) to engage audience members and CVE actors across the four countries.
- Support mechanisms and activities for feedback and interaction on CVE concepts and media content, including listener discussion groups, radio station associations, radio station media centers, tech camps, mentorship exchanges, active community reporters, and national competitions for best radio shows and songs.
- Enhance regional collaboration among radio producers and reporters through cross-border co-productions, production exchange retreats, and regional radio productions.
- Rigorously evaluate project results and promote learning through pilot activities, project review workshops, CVE studies, white papers, and widely share results with the greater CVE community.

### PROGRAM INFORMATION

#### GOAL

Amplify moderate voices of peace and tolerance in West Africa

#### LIFE OF PROGRAM

September 2016 – September 2021

#### TOTAL USAID FUNDING

U.S. \$ 24.9 million

#### GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

Burkina Faso, Chad, Niger. Northern Cameroon to be added in December 2017.

#### IMPLEMENTING PARTNER

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