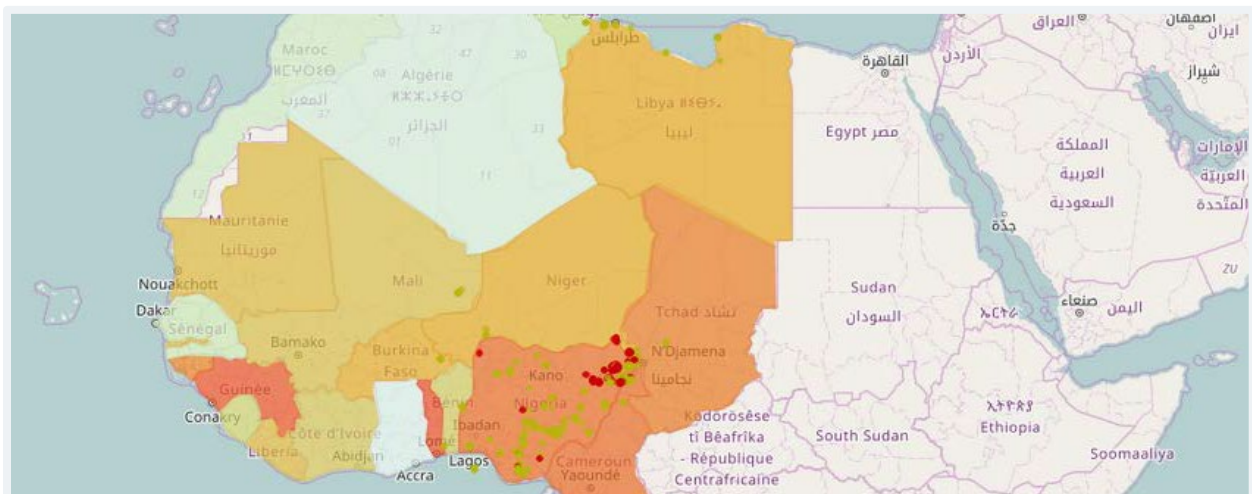## Project Backgrounder | 2017-18
Higher Education in Lake Chad Basin

Exploring the Social Impact of Education on Community Responses to Violent Extremism

Context

The politics of religion, education, and governance in Lake Chad Basin countries impacted by extremism has been largely underexplored. Much has been made of the prevalence of madrassa based Qur'anic education in countries like Chad, Cameroon, and Nigeria, for instance, but there are no hard and fast numbers on who opts in or who opts out of religious and secular education. How students and communities arrive at decisions to embrace one form of pedagogy over the other is too little understood in hotspots such as Kano or Maiduguri or the outer edges of N'Djamena. Even less is known about how educators and educational policymakers view the problematic rise of extremism on university campuses across the region. Yet, it is clear that answers to these questions could have tremendous impact in shaping responses to the rise of violent extremism across the region. To better understand why violent extremist rhetoric has gained traction in some communities and not in others in the region, and to understand when and where P/CVE aligned development interventions in the realm of education might be the most effective, development actors need a stronger evidence base to support more robust program monitoring and evaluation.

Photo Credit: RESOLVE Network Data Portal, 2016.

Project Scope and Purpose

The primary purpose of the RESOLVE Network initiative in the Lake Chad Basin is to assess the role of the state, civil society, and other non-state actors in shaping the political divides over the role of religion in education and community and state responses to extremism in Chad, Nigeria, and Cameroon. The RESOLVE Network offers an innovative means of helping USAID and other USG partners interested testing assumptions embedded their theories of change about the effectiveness of C/PVE interventions in the educational arena. The core research question driving the initiative is: *what are the potential pitfalls, pratfalls, and barriers to successful educational development programming in Lake Chad Basin communities at risk for vulnerability to violent extremism?*

Goals and Activities

In partnership with USAID's Africa Bureau, and through a series of workshops and consultations with subject matter experts in the field, RESOLVE will work to:

- Generate a substantive briefing paper on the state of play in the higher education sector in priority Lake Chad Basin countries (Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon) in shaping responses to the rise of violent extremism in the region. Research will specifically examine the network of key influencers and influences that have shaped doctrinal debates about the role of religion at local universities.
- Facilitate local, regional, and international workshops with RESOLVE Network partners, key regional research institutes and locally-based individual researchers to support the development of a research agenda with prioritized research questions.
- Foster the establishment of a sustainable community of practice driven by and for local researchers, practitioners, and policymakers at the ground level that can serve as a resource for long-term monitoring and evaluation of programs in the future.

These combined efforts will result in a robust, locally informed research agenda, several substantial research papers, a dedicated online community forum with data and analysis, and a dynamic and broad assessment of the major factors that influence how extremism shapes state and community views on higher education institutions--public, private, and parochial. Likewise, the study will attempt to outline the ways in which universities inform the public discourse on the role of religion, justice, and governance in public life.

Contact

For more information about the RESOLVE Network's work in Lake Chad Basin and how to collaborate with or support the network please contact our research coordination team at: research@resolvenet.org. Additional information about the RESOLVE Network and its partners can be found on our website: www.resolvenet.org.