



Agents of Peace



WORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



In our beautiful Continent of Africa some decades of dramatic progress in terms of economic development, political stability, respect for human rights, improved governance and inspired regional

cooperation – currently, Africa is at a turning point. Stability and economic well-being is being threatened by a number of emerging security crises, in particular the recent upsurge of violent extremist groups, together with its religious and political justification, rogue character and cross-border spill-over's in many countries.

The threat is compounded by its impacting a number of the pivotal states on our beloved and beautiful Continent, including Nigeria, Egypt, Kenya, Somalia, Central African Republic and Libya, thus threatening to turn some of the major pillars of our continental stability architecture into liabilities. It is imperative that the nature of the threat be accurately diagnosed in a timely manner, and dealt with in a measured way without a counterproductive overreaction.

The spread of such armed groups with extreme ideology whether religiously or politically justified, reflects multiple failures in African state and society,

including failure of the state in securing the loyalty of all its citizens, compounded (and often caused) by the failure of acknowledging role played by the youths, community and religious leaders of this continent and the failure of political and intellectual elites to provide inclusive political and moral leadership.

No less important is the failure of religious leaders, institutions and movements to provide credible spiritual and moral leadership that could channel communal, political and religious commitment into constructive channels. The sectarian diversion of political and religious sentiment into violence or the search for short term gains for partisan actors is, fundamentally, a crisis of moral leadership.

As the founder and the executive director of AGENTS OF PEACE, I envision a prosperous, stable and progressive Africa. Africa driven forward by its own Youth, community, religious and political leaders, catalyzed by rule of law, reverence for sanctity of human rights, justice and peace.

I am passionate about these mission mainly because I am a strong believer that our continent will grow both socially, economically and politically at a very fast rate if we as Africans learnt the value of peaceful coexistence amongst ourselves and took pride in and embrace our diversity as what defines our cultural heritage instead of fighting each other because of things that we cannot change. We are all one race in our hearts known as human race despite our tribes, ethnicity beliefs and physical impairments.

Mohammed Abdirizak

Executive Director

WORD FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR



In the world over, this year has been a tough and trying one in light of the global pandemic. It is easy to feel as though everything stopped and we had to focus on one thing that threatened to

burn the world if caution was not taken. It may feel like all the odds have been stacked against us and we have no room to make headway due to job losses, pay cuts and glaring health risks.

However, Rahm Emanuel's quote; 'You never let a serious crisis go to waste. And what I mean by that it's an opportunity to do things you think you could not do before,' is one that has been severally quoted this year reminding us that this too shall pass, as long it takes, and as we evolve and adapt to prevent extinction we can learn to see the good in the bad.

At Agents of Peace, we have had the opportunity through an exquisite team led by the Founder Mohammed Abdirizak to set up a Peace Center in Eastleigh. This has allowed leaders to further conversations on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism even during the pandemic. This ensures we can work together with the community to further the vision of Agents of Peace, 'to promote peaceful co-existence among societies regardless of religion, ethnicity, race and color.' Cognizant that community outreach is a key ingredient for peace.

Further, this year the team was able to distribute hand sanitizers to business persons in Eastleigh and we know that as long as we are continually working for good, we build a better tomorrow for the future generations, where we can all exist peacefully knowing, "umoja ni nguvu utengano ni udhaifu"

The communications office is determined to share all essential information and keep you aware of all that we are doing.

Grace Maina

Communications Director

About the author:

Grace Maina is a lawyer currently pursuing her Post Graduate Diploma at the Kenya School of Law. She volunteers at Agents of Peace as the Communications Director as she is passionate about community policy and solving problems from the grassroots.

More to it, she writes on her blog under the name Glynis Maina, where she shares on books, food, explores various places in Kenya and captures stories of young Kenyans making strides in their fields. She recently started her YouTube channel on her Law School Journey and other conversations under the same name Glynis Maina.

WORD FROM THE PROGRAMS DIRECTOR



Hoping this message finds you well during this time as we face the COVID-19 pandemic. It has indeed been a trying time for our country, region and the world as a whole. We however continue to be hopeful that this pandemic will end as we continue to work together for a common goal.

We as Agents of Peace, have tried to play our role in spreading awareness during this pandemic especially in the Eastleigh area as well as providing sanitizers to the residents. Having recently opened a Peace Centre in the same area, it is our hope that we will be more effective and efficient in promoting and educating against radicalisation, which we have seen leads to extreme violence.

This is a good place to give the youth and the community a platform which misunderstandings and differences may be resolved through dialogue and discussions.

We purpose to promote inclusive development, respect for diversity and promote peaceful coexistence in the community as we seek to eradicate the negative perceptions and assumptions in our country.

Let us continue to work together to make our country and the world a better place for our generation and future generations.

Regards,

Sylvia Mathenge

Programs Director

ABOUT US

Agents of Peace, was created in response to the growth of violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism acts against innocent lives in Kenya.

Agents of Peace main work is to Prevent and to Counter Violent Extremism and Radicalization within our community and to promote peaceful coexistence among our society regardless of Religious, Ethnicity and tribal backgrounds.

Vision

To promote peaceful co-existence among our societies regardless of religion, ethnicity, race and colour.

Mission

To provide a platform for peace in which people's differences and misunderstanding can be dealt with non-violently and through dialogue and discussions.

Our work

Agents of peace, organizes various activities and programs throughout the year. Our activities include street campaigns addressing and awareness on violent extremism and terrorism, peace walks against terrorism attacks, peace summit with religious leaders to address radicalization and true meaning of jihad in Islam and university programs on preventing/

countering violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism.

As Agents of Peace we strive to eradicate the myths, negative perceptions and assumptions within Kenyan Communities on religious, ethnicity and tribal grounds, which leads to some young people becoming alienated and disempowered.

Extremists of all persuasions aim to develop destructive relationships between different communities by promoting division, fear and mistrust of others based on ignorance or prejudice and thereby limiting the life chances of young people.

Education, dialogue and forum of discussions is a powerful weapon against this; equipping young people with the knowledge, skills and critical thinking, to challenge and debate in an informed way.

Any prejudice, discrimination or extremist views, including derogatory language, based on religion, ethnicity or tribal displayed by religious leaders, student or youth within our community will always be challenged and, where appropriate, dealt with according to both Christian and Islamic values.



RADICALIZATION AND TERRORIST RECRUITMENT AMONG KENYA'S YOUTH

A development response to addressing radicalization and violent extremism

Introduction

Violent extremism has had a devastating effect on people's lives and livelihoods across the African continent. Peace, stability and development have been compromised by violent extremists and warlords who operate seamlessly across territorial borders. Evidence suggests that the challenges posed by radicalization continue to grow.

Insecurity arising from extremism has led to the highest levels of population displacement - both Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs) and refugees since the Second World War; a large proportion of that displacement is taking place in Africa, with over 1 million in Somalia, Women and children have been disproportionately affected. The alarming growth of gender-based violence is frequently justified by narratives that reference religion, culture, tradition and social norms. Such violence is not incidental but integral to extremist groups' strategies of domination and self-perpetuation.

Children have also faced abduction and kidnapping, not to mention the loss of their education given that hundred of schools have been forced to close as a result of increased insecurity and the rise in direct attacks on schools. No child should have to die for going to school or be forced to associate learning with fear, and no teacher should have to fear entering the classroom.

Radicalization

It is a process marked by a departure from generally accepted social norms and values; the objective of those using radicalization as a tool is to pressure others to subscribe to the same worldview. The methods used to convert others to the same worldview may take a coercive form, including outright violence. Radicalization is a phenomenon characterized by aggressive and exclusive imposition of one's identity on others, consequently constraining or denying space for the expression of other identities.

The uncompromising imposition of one belief system onto another through violent means characterizes processes of radicalization that lead to violent

extremism. This form of absolutism requires compliance (with no exception). Radicalization can manifest itself in the form of physical violence, in systems (including laws, regulations, etc.) and the broader denial of rights. It is largely context-specific and, therefore, subject to local driving factors which contributes to the challenge of establishing a common definition.'

The radicalization of youths and their recruitment for violent and illegal activities is not new to Kenya. Criminal gangs, ethnic sects and local militias have been undertaking such recruitment for years. Politicians have used the youth, particularly during elections, to buy votes; intimidate the opposition; create disturbances, fear, and instability; and even to mount violent attacks on opponents and their supporters. In the disputed 2007 elections, such practices led to widespread violence across the country. However, in recent years, youth radicalization has become even more threatening on account of the increased terrorist activities in the region.

Terrorism in Kenya has resulted in not only the loss of lives, personal suffering and pain, but also in growing instability and a heightened sense of insecurity. The latter has harmed the country's economy, particularly the tourism sector, and there is widespread doubt about the government's will and ability to deal with the situation.

The country's biggest and best-known international hotels are now so heavily guarded and protected that entering them feels more like visiting a prison. Security measures have also increased in public buildings, universities and shopping malls. Newly opened Westgate Mall, which experienced a terror attack in 2013, has entry checks comparable to those at international airports. Earlier, the government downplayed the threat within the country's borders, and claimed Kenya to be an innocent victim of the (Somali) terrorist war against the West.

However, now Al-Shabaab has stated that following Kenyan military involvement in Somalia October 2011, it will target all those who voted for the government

that sent in the troops. Moreover, some recent attacks were planned and executed by young Kenyan nationals. Thus, government can no longer claim that terrorist attacks in Kenya are unrelated to the country's policies, foreign and domestic.

Security, corruption and terrorism

According to observers familiar with the situation, nowadays recruitment is open. Sometimes police and security staff involvement in, or connivance at, such activities is alleged, usually in return for bribes and other 'benefits.' Similarly, Kenyan immigration officials at border posts are said to illegally admit foreigners from Somalia, Ethiopia and elsewhere in return for small fees. The fact that there is a direct link between insecurity and corruption has been publicly acknowledged as the greatest obstacle in the fight against terrorism.

It has been reported that crooked officials have admitted more than 100,000 foreigners into the country, many of them criminals, and some found with highly explosive bomb-making material even after passing through several police roadblocks. The Kenyan military has accused the police and immigration service of corruption, but there have also been allegations that soldiers are involved in the wide-scale illegal sugar and charcoal business, allegedly even collaborating with Somali militants and thus providing Al-Shabaab with revenue. Kenya, seen as a key ally in the War on Terror by the US and UK, has received international help, especially after the Westgate attack. As mentioned, security has been beefed up, often inconveniencing the innocent, but the Kenyan military and police often fail to work together effectively, and there have been lapses in the use of intelligence to prevent attacks.

Youth vulnerability

As long as Kenyan domestic politics remain divisive, corruption prevails and inequality and lack of political voice continue, the youth of all ethnic groups will be vulnerable and susceptible to believing the promises made by recruiters. The youth have learned not to believe the promises made by politicians to their supporters during the elections, and promptly ignored thereafter. Thus, we may only have seen the beginning of terror acts in Kenya, unless the actors find ways to cooperate in order to prevent the threats.

Finances and sustenance

- Al-Shabaab was traditionally financed by imposing taxation on local businesses. However,

sugar importation and charcoal exportation were their biggest sources of income until AMISOM operations effectively disrupted these channels. Despite AMISOM's presence, Al-Shabaab continues to derive income from sugar and livestock trade by working in collaboration with corrupt traders within and outside Somalia.

- Al-Shabaab uses various methods to recruit and maintain members within the group. These methods include forced conscription, promises of great rewards in the afterlife for fighting in Jihad, and severance of family ties and connections. Those who dissent are executed.
- There are reports of sharp policy divisions within the Al-Shabaab movement on whether to remain allied to Al-Qaeda or to pledge allegiance to ISIS. If the pro-ISIS faction prevails, then Al-Shabaab may become an even more potent threat in the future.

Governance of diversity in society

Experiences in development and peace building show that more inclusive and tolerant societies are better able to achieve lasting peace and sustainable development. Over time, societies have become more diverse because of migration and the flow of ideas and people across borders in an increasingly global and interconnected world.

In many societies, an increasing belief in the universality of the human rights of all people have also led to more open attitudes towards gender, sexual orientation, religious practice and other forms of beliefs and lifestyles. There is a range of evidence about the positive impact of the flow of people across borders on human development. Throughout the world, the number of refugees and migrants returning to their home countries continues to decline as they seek to integrate into the economies of their new homes. This generates challenges of adjustment and adaptation for both residents and immigrants. Negative outcomes can arise in the recipient communities when basic rights, like voting, schooling, housing and health care, are denied to refugees and migrants and when mounting hate speech incites a climate of intimidation, discrimination and even violent extremist behavior.

The problem is witnessed in both developed and developing economies. Somali migrants and refugees in Kenya have found themselves the subject of local anger and profiling. Diversity, when coupled with exclusive political and economic systems and rent

seeking, generates horizontal inequalities that may become a driver for violent extremism. Tolerance and understanding for diverse ideas and cultures is at the heart of the new development agenda. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) commits Member States to “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”.

This goal cannot be achieved in an environment characterized by violent extremism; nor can it be achieved when there is widespread inequality and exclusion. The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda envisages a just, equitable, tolerant and socially inclusive world, where there is respect for human rights, for race, ethnicity and cultural values. With its focus on poverty eradication, reduction of inequality, decent work and well-being for all, and peaceful, just and inclusive societies in which no one is left behind, the 2030 Agenda is to be seen as the broader development framework that will help in the prevention of violent extremism around the world.

From radicalization to peaceful contestation or violent extremism.

Scholarly analyses of the manner in which individuals and groups are co-opted into violent extremism have pointed to three broad phases: initial alienation from the processes and institutions that confer identity or authority in a given society and the effort to seek a different identity; subsequent radicalization; and then transition from radicalization to the conduct of (often mass) violence.

Not all alienated groups or individuals adopt radical attitudes and ideologies, and not all radicals travel an inevitable path to violent extremism. Crucial for the prevention of extremist violence is thus an understanding of the factors leading from each phase to the next:

1. Alienation: Alienation can emerge from a persistent pattern of exclusion, humiliation, selective mistreatment, and prejudice towards particular groups or individuals by a community, the state and its institutions, or the wider society. Unequal access - or recourse to - essential services and the rule of law by particular minorities or groups could also be a critical factor. Alienation may emerge from perceptions of gross inadequacy at the individual or group level resulting from the inability to deal with widespread or sudden

social or demographic change. In this first phase, relations between a particular individual or group and the wider structures of family, society and the state become characterized by withdrawal, anomie, grievances and decreasing political or economic participation.

2. Radicalization: As frustration and grievances grow, individuals and groups begin to search for organizations or ideologies that can either help to channel those frustrations or can blame them on external actors. Radicalization may thus emerge from the inadequacy of wider systems for dialogue, communication and mediation among groups, the absence of inclusion and tolerance within the social and political environment of a particular community, an inability to contain provocateurs and radicalizing agents, and the absence of viable alternatives for genuine empowerment in both the personal and the public spheres. The weakening of the institutions of the family and the community as instruments of social control plays a role in this process. Radical recruiters focus their attention on vulnerable alienated groups in society, and manipulate their feelings of frustration and anger. Non-violent radical behavior—especially if undertaken purposively with the objective of reforming systems or generating innovation—can be an asset to society and promote positive change. Violent extremism emerges when radical behavior starts to make use of violence as the means of expression.
3. Adherence to Violence: The final phase is what separates radicals from violent extremists. Radicals choose peaceful contestation or advocacy to accomplish their objectives; violent extremists are those who have chosen violence as a means for imposing their world view on society. Violence gradually moves from being instrumental to becoming symbolic. Ritualized murder, such as practiced by ISIS, al-Shabaab or the KKK, becomes a means for branding and for providing collective inspiration. This third phase in a sense also represents the failure of systems for early warning and response with regard to emerging incidents and signs towards extreme violence. Inability to contain the immediate raw materials for violence—including the movement of illicit weapons and persons—and the inadequacy of essential security services also help to create an environment enabling acts of violent extremism

Analysis

The analysis of this report is focused on the conceptual framework for radicalization, including the role of ideology and strategic/ enabling factors such as technology, which has been a catalytic factor in spreading these ideas.

Session one: Based on the social, ideological and psychological causes of radicalization. These may include but are not limited to:

- Weak social identification/building blocks such as the family unit and community - leading to fragile identity formation and the attendant vulnerabilities.
- Lack of safe spaces for religious expression in the context of public platforms such as mosques. Social media and networks run by extremist groups exploit this vacuum to offer misleading ideas and teachings.
- Ideology driven by misinterpretation of the Qur'an and Islamic traditions. He argued that the concept of Jihad has been wrongly appropriated by terror groups to legitimize their activities and movements. He argued that the misinterpretation of Islamic teaching thrives due to high levels of religious illiteracy.
- Psychological appeal of pride and dignity in 'Ummah'; this is often linked to pre-existing grievances such as poverty and perception of marginalization.

Levels of terrorist acts:

- Level 5: Terrorist acts carried out
- Level 4: Immersion: us vs. them
- Level 3: Moral engagement (terrorism justified)
- Level 2: Displaced aggression/blame
- Level 1: Increasing perceptions of injustice
- Ground floor: Relative deprivation and other factors

To Counter Violent Extremism acts, the following points can be considered:

- Social sciences (psychology/sociology/anthropology /political science) form the backbone of radicalization research;
- Security policy makers sometimes request radicalization researchers to produce 'macro' profiles to train law enforcement officials to identify 'micro'/individual radicalization processes;
- Social identity theory and social movement theory are both helpful for understanding the

individual's radicalization, and the socialization context of that radicalization;

- The Syrian civil war has ignited another wave of home-grown radicalization in the West;
- Just as the field of political science has different schools/frameworks (such as realist/liberalism/Marxism, for example) so does radicalization research;
- Deradicalization vs. disengagement: what's the difference? Disengagement is a behavioural modification to a new path in life whereas deradicalization involves ideological, theological and organizational components.

Recommendations

1. To achieve the CVE mission, which is fundamentally a prevention mission, there needs to be a transformation/ overhaul of the traditional security approach towards a more integrated approach.
2. An Information Sharing Environment (ISE) that advances coordination and localization instead of centralization needs to take root across the African continent if the local and regional waves of extremism currently under way are to be effectively addressed.
3. Localization and coordination alone will not increase the effectiveness of counter-radicalization, nor minimize.
4. Promoting a rule of law and human rights-based approach to PVE. There is a need to respond to the imminent threat that violent extremism poses and to reassure fearful populations. The heightened terrorist alerts many countries currently operate under are a reaction to these security challenges. It is likely that the future in many societies will be one of more robust security systems to prevent possible terrorist attacks. But the manner in which security institutions respond to potential threats could lead to the stigmatization of certain groups and could thus become a driver in the radicalization process. UNDP's global initiative will therefore include as one of its pillars for preventing violent extremism, measures to increase the capacity of the justice and security sectors, not only to detect and prevent violent activities, but also to ensure that the proper judicial process and the legal and human rights of those being prosecuted are followed and respected. This also includes ensuring well-

capacitated staff to run prison facilities and to offer rehabilitation and re-integration support for inmates in general, and in particular the ones convicted of violent extremism. These initiatives will ensure that prisons become centers for deradicalization rather than a source of recruitment for violent extremists. This also means working with national human rights institutions to ensure that the delivery of justice, security and surveillance is done with respect for human rights and the rule of law.

5. Enhancing the fight against corruption-an increased focus on fighting corruption helps to enhance the legitimacy of state institutions and directly contributes to reducing perceptions of injustice and inequality. Local communities that make a solid effort to reduce the petty and grand corruption that fuel people's perceptions of injustice provide a visible sign that the causes of inequality and unequal opportunities are being addressed.
6. Enhancing participatory decision-making and increasing civic space -Economic empowerment through the creation of jobs and livelihoods is not sufficient. It is equally important to ensure that disenfranchised men and women - young people in particular - are provided with the space and platforms for civic engagement and participation in decision-making. UNDP's integrated approach to support inclusive political processes works with women and men of all ages to strengthen civil society capacities and expand and protect spaces for citizen participation in public life, with a special focus on groups experiencing discrimination and marginalization. Regular engagement with political leaders and decision makers in particular at the local level can yield important peace- and social-cohesion dividends. Creating opportunities for men and women to organize, culturally, politically, or for sports, also helps in managing frustrations. Genuine participation in, or access to, decision-making generates a strong sense of inclusion and tolerance, and hence decreases alienation.

Suggestions:

With proper support on peace building initiatives, recommendations in regards to the youth include but not limited to:

- Engaging youth in building social cohesion More than half of the world's population is under the age of 30, and while most youth are peaceful, they nevertheless form the backbone of the world's paramilitary and terrorist groups. Violent extremism is thus disproportionately impacting young people, as they more easily get lured into radical thinking. The vulnerability of youth seems to be increasing as families lose control over the education and lifestyle of their children, in particular because young people increasingly move to urban areas in search of jobs. When societies fail to integrate youth in meaningful ways, young people are more likely to engage in political violence. Young people however do play an important positive role. Youth are already transforming their communities, countering violence and building peace. Yet their efforts remain largely invisible due to lack of adequate mechanisms for participation, and lack of opportunities to partner with decision-making bodies.
- Working with selected partners to develop an online interactive platform for those advocating creative approaches to enhance inclusion, social cohesion and tolerance and reach out to and engage in dialogue with disaffected groups and individuals. The platform will include a communications tool-kit with regard to inclusive development, tolerance and respect for diversity. The toolkit will include references to the use of social media—for use by development partners, governments, media and civic organizations in reaching out to engage with those susceptible to violent extremism.

An action oriented agenda tool that can be adopted within the regional, national and local contexts is expected to greatly reduce extremism to a great extent. This programmatic agenda will include:
 - Policy dialogues: discussing and adapting research findings to context and exchange experiences in terms of coordination, legal frameworks, policies, implementation, monitoring and more.
 - Program Support: support countries in developing specific programmatic responses including legal reforms, advocacy, communications, inter-faith dialogues, building capacity of governments to reintegrate and rehabilitate former extremists etc.

- Lessons Learned: identification and mapping of good practices, promoting south-south exchanges and global and regional collaboration.
- PVE grants mechanism: the approach will include support to selected civil society actors for the important and often dangerous work they do.

Conclusion

The framework for action presented in this paper provides an indicative plan of action to ensure that innovative programs and initiatives that are already being undertaken and/or planned for the near future – at regional or country level - benefit from a global research-informed policy and programming perspective that has been developed with the engagement of a wider group of partners

THE ROLE OF YOUNG WOMEN IN THE PREVENTION AND COUNTERING OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND RADICALIZATION THAT LEAD TO TERRORISM IN KENYA.

Glossary

Gender — Gender is a term used to describe socially constructed roles for men and women. In contrast, the term sex is used to indicate the biological differences between men and women. It is an acquired identity that is changes over time, learned and varies widely within and across cultures (OSCE, 2019).

Radicalization that leads to terrorism — This is a dynamic process whereby an individual comes to acknowledge terrorist violence as a potential, perhaps even legitimate, course of action. This may sometimes, lead the person to act in support of, advocate, or even engage in terrorist activities (OSCE, 2019).

Violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism (VERLT) — According to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (2019), VERLT refers to the process whereby individuals legitimize terrorist violence as possible course of action. In some cases, this leads them to advocate, act in support of, or even to engage in terrorism.

Preventing and countering violent extremism and VERLT — These are both expressions that describe means used at addressing VERLT. These are often used interchangeably. However, prevention implies to, stopping problems from materializing. Hence, requires addressing conditions conducive to VERLT. Whereas Countering violent extremism refers to the application of strategies and measures that serve to deconstruct terrorist narratives and promoting healthy alternatives.

This can also include the reintegration and rehabilitation of former violent extremist offenders (OSCE, 2019).

Gender awareness — This is the ability to view societies from the perspective of different gender roles and understand what effect this has on women's needs in comparison to the needs of men (European Institute for Gender Equality, n.d.).

Mainstreaming gender — According to European Institute for Gender Equality (n.d.), this refers to the

integration of a gender perspective into the preparation, implementation, design, regulatory measures and spending programmes, monitoring and evaluation of policies, with a view at combating discrimination and promoting equality between men and women.

Introduction

It is worth taking into consideration the different politics that take place at the community level in regard to the dynamics around violent extremism and how to counter it. Kenyan women, just like men, may be deeply involved in or impacted by. This has suggestions not just to knowledge how individuals are enlisted to vicious fanaticism yet in addition to responsiveness to proposed policies and programs for preventing VERLT.

For a long time, extremism and radicalization has been considered radicalism to be a male issue in particular. Politics too has long been viewed as a strictly a masculine profession. In recent times however, young women's involvement in these two opposite spheres is evident; that the growing interest of the extremists' focus has an interest in young women as their companions. As radicalization and violent extremism are still often considered as a male issue, the question of young women and extremists is characterised by bias and misconceptions.

The Expressions Gender, Gender Awareness And Gender Mainstreaming In The Context Of Pve/Cve/Verlt

OSCE Permanent Council (2004), explains the principle of gender equality and the conforming prohibition of discrimination are fundamental principles of international human rights law. Most countries including Kenya have committed themselves to making gender equality an integral part of their policies.

Furthermore, according to OSCE (2019), the two main strategies for eliminating all forms of discrimination on the basis of sex and gender and promoting gender equality, are mainstreaming gender and raising

gender awareness. In the regards to VERLT, gender mainstreaming and gender awareness contribute to better informing and targeting those measures taken for countering and preventing violent extremism that lead to terrorism. This makes them more effective.

Through understanding the phenomenon of violent extremism and what urges people to join violent extremist organizations, different classifications have been put forward (UNDP, 2017) In the regional context, structural drivers such as political marginalisation, unemployment, poverty, general life frustration - due to limited perceived influence over one's future and opportunities and; have been recognised as among the principal drivers of radicalization and recruitment (Hansen, 2013).

The Role of Women in Preventing and Countering VERLT

According to the United Nations Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, balanced and well-structured VERLT prevention requires action in the priority areas of conflict prevention, engaging communities, good governance, gender equality, education, empowering youth and strategic communications (United Nations, 2015).

Preventative initiatives within these spaces must be account and be inclusive for the various aspects that drive young women and men to extremism. The P/CVERLT methodologies aimed at understanding and addressing the causes of violent extremism must be gender sensitive. Furthermore, they should prioritize the meaningful inclusion of important stakeholders, especially young women, in their implementation and development (OSCE, 2019).

According to Counter Extremism Project (n.d.), Peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and Security sector reform (SSR) are accurately linked to the prevention of terrorist radicalization. In unpredictable environments, the rate of success of Violent extremist organization recruitment often corresponds to conflict triggers such as injustice or discrimination on religious and ethnicity grounds or legacy of unresolved collective grievances. It has been proven that women are well positioned to detect signs of impending violence.

Limitations on women's rights have contributed to the rise of violent extremist groups - specifically the groups with fundamentalist religious ideologies - worldwide, as it has been documented with regard to the Alshabab, al-Qaeda, the Taliban, Boko Haram and ISIL/Daesh.

(Counter Extremism Project, n.d.)

Thus, the UN has called for the greater integration of CVE and WPS efforts, as well as for women's increased participation, empowerment and leadership in developing strategies to counter violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism (United Nations Security Council, 2015).

Furthermore, evidence has proven that when young women are included in peace negotiations, the agreements reached probable to last and the root causes of the violence are more likely to address (OSCE, 2019).

Preventing Violent Extremism

According to UNDP (2016), development practice has an important role in providing the foundation in preventing violent extremism. UNDP's conceptual framework recommends eleven interlinked building blocks for the theory of change, providing an explanation on how development can help in the prevention of violent extremism. The building blocks, which will inform national, regional and global strategies for PVE include:

1. Promoting the human rights-based approach and a rule of law to PVE;
2. Enhancing on the fight against corruption;
3. Enhancing on participatory decision-making and increasing civic space at local and national level;
4. Provision of effective socio-economic substitutions to violence for groups at risk;
5. Strengthening the capacity of local governments for security and service delivery;
6. Supporting reliable internal intermediaries to promote dialogue with reintegration of former extremists and alienated groups;
7. Promoting women's empowerment and gender equality;
8. Engaging the youth in building social cohesion;
9. Working with religious leaders and faith-based organizations to counter the abuse of religion by violent extremists;
10. Working with the media to promote tolerance and human rights;
11. Promoting respect for diversity, culture of global citizenship and human rights in educational institutions. The manner in which countries, sub-regions and regions are affected by violent extremism differ. Hence, region-specific initiatives and regional research and will consequently be an important aspect of UNDP's approach.

The Role Of Young Women In Preventing & Countering Verlt In Kenya

Kenya has been a prime recruiting territory for al-Shabab since the government sent troops into Somalia to fight militants in 2011. Al-Shabab has been responsible for several major terrorist attacks in Kenya, one the worst being the 2015 terrorist attack at Garissa University College, when al-Shabab fighters stormed into the University and killed nearly 150 people (Counter Extremism Project, n.d.).

According to Yusuf (2019), even though there are not enough organizations or institutions that specialize in Prevention and Counter VERLT focussing on women in our society, there are a few such as; The U.S. Institute of Peace which focuses on training and working with Kenyan women, and helping them build trust within their communities in order to prevent violent extremism. A similar Organization, is Sisters Without Borders, one of the missions of this organization is to bridge the mistrust between families of terrorism suspects and Kenyan security agencies. This organization consists of women's groups from Garissa, Nairobi and Mombasa- all of which have experienced deadly terrorist attacks by the militant group Al-Shabab.

Women who oppose violent extremism are vital, yet there are little-studied group of people in CVE contexts and in terrorism studies more generally. Although there has been some research into the important roles women play (in particular around mothers), very little is known about the roles, contexts and motivations of young women who strive to not only to fight violent extremism, but the prevention of others from becoming vulnerable to its appeal.

According to Grossman et al. (2018), factors that motivate women to fight against violent extremism and radicalization, these are; push factors, pull factors and the contextual settings of family and community environments, issues relating to private versus public activism for women, and the role of social media in regards to women working against violent extremism.

Push factors according to Grossman et al. (2018), characterise both women who support and women who oppose violent extremism. Some of these factors are not exclusive to women in terms of gender, and they include; Religious conviction; The Desire for political

and social change or transformation, the Sense of social alienation- at a community level. There is also Negative portrayal of Islam and Muslims in the media, and finally Humiliation or threat.

There are Push factors for young women seen as more nuanced in terms of gender, these include; Protective impulses for people in their communities, Gendered Islamophobic discrimination or abuse; and finally a Sense of empowerment - within gendered hierarchies of power and access to the public sphere (Grossman et al., 2018).

Grossman et al. (2018) explained that, women who oppose violent extremism constantly identify the desire to strengthen or reassert their own and their family's sense of belonging in the community. Research has also proven that, Religion stimulates young women to oppose violent extremism, both as an obligation for young women to create what they believe their Islamic faith requires the society to manifest, and also as vanguards against the damage they feel is being inflicted on their faith by violent extremism that legitimized in the name of Islam.

Another factor is Gender barriers to women's activism against violent extremism. Young women, specifically Muslim women, face challenges such exclusion by CVE strategies that depend solely or are primarily on established community structures featuring male community leaders to influence friends and relatives from violent extremism. This is obstructive because it limits or closes off opportunities to engage with diverse forms of community leadership and influence exercised by women that could make positive contributions from different angles. (Sahgal, G., & Zeuthen, M., 2018).

Especially younger women search for alternative sense of belonging outside the religious and social traditions of their communities, which they feel relegate women to private domestic spaces and relationships built around marriage and cooking, foreclosing on opportunities for broader civic and community participation by women. Additionally, the role of young women publicising their successful and positive life experiences to their audiences, specifically through social media, is a little considered but potentially a useful CVE strategy.

According to Grossman et al. (2018), contextual factors such as private vs public, family and community influence young women who oppose violent extremism work in a variety of individual, relatives, community

and social contexts, often simultaneous.

According to International Crisis Group (2014), Extremists have opted to involving women and girls in their activities, due to the knowledge of the influence women can potentially exert on the people around them. For instance, mothers are often the first to detect the early warning signs of extremism in their families. Even though the observation change in behaviours of their children/relatives may be intuitive for many, the awareness and the understanding of the process of radicalization is not.

According to Counter Extremism Project (n.d.), cases where women are able to identify extremist behaviours in their relatives, often they lack the skills needed to intervene. Thus, women need to be well equipped and supported in their efforts of preventing their relatives/friends from participating in extremist groups. Women should also be enabled in building their own capacity to reject the influence of violence extremism.

At a community level, women of all ages can be the voices of tolerance and can also provide a strong counter narrative message to extremism in their communities. According to Human Rights Watch (2014), West Africa especially in Nigeria, where women do this through working in interfaith organizations, they host local community events in order to promote tolerance, and finally counter radicalized interpretations of religious teachings. These women work as pro-actively providing counsel, religious leaders in their communities and guidance to young women in their learning institutions as well as vulnerable youth.

At the county and national levels, there are different factors that assist young women in countering and preventing VERT. These include; empowering women in the media is critical to countering the appeal of the teachings of violent extremists. The presence of young women in these most public of spheres, including social media, provides a powerful downsizing effect on extremists' messages (UNDP, 2017).

According to the United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee (2015), education provides problem solving, critical thinking and communication skills that are essential to the understanding how individuals are radicalized and how to counter such extremist thoughts, teachings and narratives. Furthermore, education instils self-confidence that young women need to help build healthy, peaceful and resilient communities. It is clear that there is a high demand by young women for the

knowledge and skills to prevent violent extremism in Kenya. The active participation of young women in our society as teachers, mentors, role models, journalists, religious leaders, healers, and community leaders, builds resilience to the influence and spread of violent extremism.

The UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, peace and security emphasizes on the importance of women's role, equal participation and full involvement in this area and urges countries to increase women representation at all levels of decision making process for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict (United Nations, 2000).

Misconceptions that women are not involved in extremism or terrorist radicalization in Kenya, has often shaped counter-terrorism strategies, hence excluding women from the decision-making process and their importance under-representation among law enforcement officers and security meetings (Counter Extremism Project, n.d.).

According to UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee (2015), Intelligence operations on getting information should be enhanced to be inclusive of young women. Women empowerment and gender equality should not be valued only to the extent that it helps national security. Gender equality should be encouraged in its own right and women should be empowered to participate fully in society. This is because women have been frequent victims of both terrorist attacks and counter-terrorism measures- hence there is a need for forums for advocacy, training, and information.

In Kenya, Muslim women have a unique viewpoint on the challenges faced in their communities – whether it being a threat of violent extremism, anti-social behaviors, or even young people feeling isolated and discouraged. In our society, women are uniquely placed in order to solve these challenges, issues, unacceptable behaviors, or even support those in need. Throughout history, women have been both the drivers and vehicles of positive change and Muslim women have been no exception. All women, whether Muslim or not, have similar ambitions and prospects as their male counterparts. The public perception and unequal needs should be addressed and challenged, both with the Muslims as well as the wider communities in Kenya (Sahgal & Zeuthen, 2018).

According to UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism

Committee (2015), research on women's involvement in supporting and opposing violent extremism is relatively underdeveloped, especially when compared to men, but also rapidly growing. Kenya is at a difficult position as it tries to contain and combat militant violence which has devastated families, communities, and lives across the nation. Muslim women are often targets of terrorism and radical ideologies, giving them a unique perspective on how to counter and prevent violent extremism in their homes and communities. Despite the potential to be powerful participants in constructing and implementing policies aimed at reducing the appeal of radicalization and extremism in Kenya, instead young women are often marginalized in the security decision-making process.

Conclusion

Women have and will continue to make significant contributions towards the culture of peace and security. Women are largely to be responsible for nurturing positive cultural practices and they offer non-violence to violence and strife. Women, although less visible than men, have to be integrally involved in seeking solutions to issues intrinsic to building peace, sustainable economic, environmental and political development.

There is need to discuss their image of a culture of peace as well as the strategies for removal of social, political and other hindrances in mandating gender in peace and security efforts. Young Women's role in P/CVERLT through means such as; resource managers, advocates for Countering violent extremism, leaders in political process, and influential, as advisors need to be valued and acknowledged. Young Women are part of a civil society which is not about representation, but participation of as many diverse voices as possible that need and should be acknowledged and heard.

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EFFECTS OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND RADICALIZATION LEADING TO TERRORISM IN KENYA

Introduction

At the individual level, radicalization process often involves embracing a terrorist belief system or narrative that identifies particular others or groups as “enemies” justifying its engaging in violence against them.

Individuals also begin to identify themselves as terrorists, as well as to engage in activities that highlight their commitments to their new beliefs, identities, and/or others who hold them. It is important to note that while these beliefs and behaviors may facilitate the movement to terrorism, the outcome is not inevitable. Those close to these individuals may become aware of the changes that their friends and family members are undergoing and attempt to address them or seek help from others who can.

An important implication of this is that trusted information and resources need to be available to assist. Another is that prevention and intervention efforts may benefit from addressing beliefs that justify violence and helping individuals to develop identities in which these beliefs are not central.

Case Study; Kenya

Kenya and its people, in recent years have witnessed a surge in terrorist attacks and violent extremism. The impact of these have been most felt on infrastructure, physical and human capital and economic growth. Furthermore, terrorist attacks

and violent extremism have also increased uncertainty in the investment climate, disrupting household spending and livelihood, dissuaded foreign direct investment (FDI) leading to a reallocation of resources from growth-enhancing investment to spending designed to increase national security.

This policy brief shows that terrorism and violent extremism have led to destruction of infrastructure and physical and human capital with dire consequences on productivity and economic growth in the economy. Furthermore, the increase in the number of terrorism incidents have led to businesses facing higher operating costs such as insurance premiums, enhanced security measures and high labour costs to attract workers.

In urban areas, massive investments have gone into expensive installations such as security cameras, metal detectors and advanced security systems to avert terror attacks.

Although the impact of terrorism and violent extremism on economies are relatively new, they are currently gaining popularity, following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack in the United States and the surge in violent extremism and youth radicalization in Africa and other parts of the world.

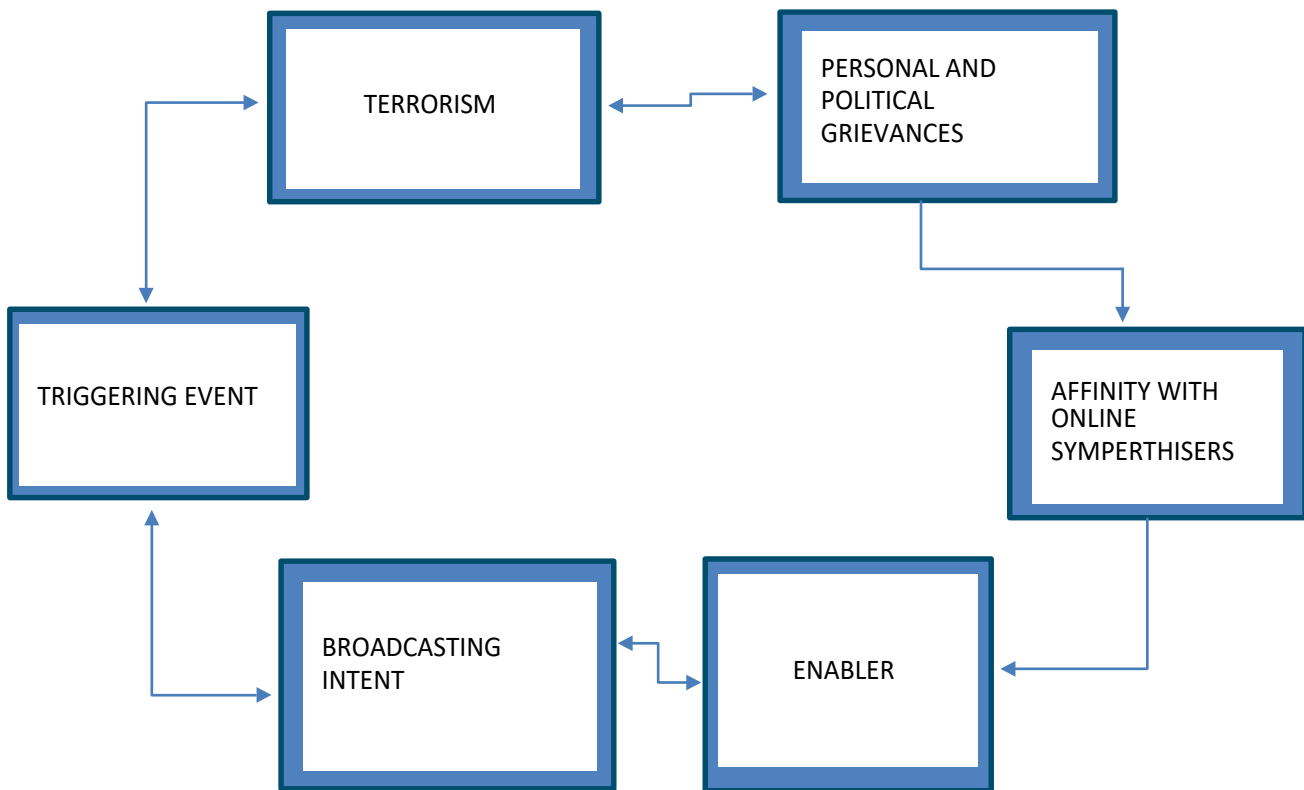
Countering Violent Extremism an Initiative by the UNDP was launched in September 2016. It focused and coordinated pathway

for all stakeholders in the fight against violent extremism and its implementation would be supported by a series of these knowledge products that would also contribute to the process of development of county strategies on CVE.

Some of the seven knowledge and resource products developed to inform policies, strategies and programming in countering violent extremism include:

- Understanding Radicalization and Recruitment Methods in Kenya;
- Rapid Assessment of the Prospects and Challenges of Democracy and Social Liberties Facing the Mosques in the Coastal Counties in Kenya;
- Proceedings of Collaborative Dialogue Forums for National Universities;
- Assessing the Extent of Radicalization in Kenya’s Institutions of Higher Learning and their Capacities to Identify Violent Extremist Networks and Prevent Recruitment of Students;
- National Index on Terrorism, Radicalization and Violent Extremism;
- Comparative Assessment of Disengagement and Rehabilitation Programs for Returnees;
- Assessment of Economic Impact of Terror Activities in Specific Locales in the Coastal Kenya;

*Model of Radicalization to Terrorism
Among Lone Wolves in the U.S.
(Hamm & Spaaij, 2015, 26)*



The social nature of radicalization to terrorism and the roles that connections with terrorists (online and/or offline) and group dynamics may play in this process. As individuals’ relationships with others who support terrorism become stronger, they may begin separating themselves from those who do not, thus becoming increasingly isolated from people who might challenge their views.

This suggests that dramatic changes in the people with whom an individual associates, or increasing insularity among existing groups of friends, may be causes for concern and that it may be those close (or previously close) to these individuals who are best positioned to notice these changes.

It also suggests that efforts to prevent or intervene in the

radicalization process must take into account both the individuals and those with whom they interact, as well as potentially facilitate establishing or re-establishing their relationships with non-extremists.

Challenges Faced

Some of the observable challenges in implementing this intervention include:
 1. Inadequate policy frameworks on dealing with disengagement and rehabilitation from terrorism and violent extremism. Implementation of some of the activities, including the rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees was delayed due to inadequate policy frameworks to guide the process.
 2. Insecurity: heightened insecurity in some of the target areas, which limited access with respect to implementation and provision of assistance

Lessons Learnt

1. Coordination of NGO and the Government. Citizens do not have faith in the governments and subsequent security agencies and thus do not feel safe enough to speak up.
2. Need for Sensitization to the community including those in school. If one does not know what is deemed ‘terrorist’ they would not know how to deal with such a situation should this arise. This also includes sensitization on biasness and profiling that comes with it.

Conclusion

The lessons learned drawn from recent search activities in Kenya provides insight on best practices and strategies matters addressing security challenges. Overall,

approaches which focus on addressing conflicts before they turn into violence and encourage parties in conflict to see common ground, is vital in designing peacebuilding programming.

This has been effective in addressing misunderstandings between communities and the security sector, police in particular. It has built a relationship between sectors and people with different statuses in the community. It should be adapted for other peacebuilding programming aiming to address security challenges, including radicalization, violent extremism and terrorism in communities

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PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND RADICALIZATION LEADING TO TERRORISM IN KENYA

Violent extremism has had a devastating effect on people's lives and livelihoods across the African continent. Peace, stability and development have been compromised by violent extremists and warlords who operate seamlessly across territorial borders. Evidence suggests that the challenges posed by groups continue to grow

Since last year Kenya has witnessed new waves of violent extremism that have taken the lives of Muslims and non-Muslim innocent Kenyans. Whether based on religious, ethnic or political grounds, which jeopardized a more tolerant for diversity, intercultural understanding and inclusive society which embraces peaceful coexistence.

Members of these groups have indiscriminately attacked churches and eating joints, killing many innocent people. To forestall such attacks, security apparatuses often respond to such attacks by hunting down and raiding hubs believed to be training ground for mostly Islamic extremism especially in coast region and Nairobi. The Masjid Musa Mosque raid is a classic example of police reaction and action. During the raid, police found literature, flags, riffles and other items believed to have been used for the radicalization of hundreds of youth who were also arrested.

A string of grenade attacks has occurred in various parts of Kenya although most are confined to Garissa, Mombasa and the capital Nairobi. These attacks have intensified since the military incursion into Somalia in October 2011. Granted, youth radicalization and religious intolerance goes back to the 1998 US embassy attacks in Nairobi and the Tanzanian city of Dar es Salam, that killed 220 people. In 2002, a dual car bomb and suicide attack on a hotel and plane in Mombasa led to the arrest of one suspect.

Following such attacks and subsequent police reaction, there always follow a spate of riots. For example, the killing of two controversial Muslim clergy believed to be behind the jihadist ideology led to serious riots in Mombasa. Such riots have resulted in the burning of churches and the killing of people thought or suspected to be Christians. The coverage of the Eastleigh Usalama watch operations

is illustrative of what sensationalized and sometimes emotive coverage of such issues can do. The scare-mongering as well as profiling of Somali ethnic groups as potential terrorists resulted in some of them being bundled out of public transport and social places.

Religious tensions were high in some areas of the country. For instance, in the Likoni suburb of Mombasa, armed men opened fire on Sunday worshippers at a church, killing six and wounding more than a dozen. Some Muslim groups threatened individuals, especially those of ethnic Somali origin, who converted to Christianity. A monument erected by the Sikh community in Kisumu was vandalized in February by an angry mob after local pastors deemed it satanic. Interreligious nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), such as the Inter-Religious Council of Kenya, stated that with few exceptions Kenyans respect religious diversity and are able to exercise freedom of conscience and religion.

Kenya is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multicultural society. Christian, Muslim and Hindu communities are some of the largest religious groups in Kenya. The Muslim community comprises approximately eleven per cent of the Kenyan population. The composition of Muslim community in Kenya majorly consists of the young, up to 65 per cent of this group being between 18 and 35. About 30 per cent of Kenya's Muslims are of Somali origin but born in Kenya (Kenyan-Somalis). Another 10 per cent are of Borana origin residing in the regions bordering Ethiopia.

The remainder constitute Muslim minorities living in Christian-dominated regions. According to a report by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), the Muslim community, especially Kenyan nationals of Somali origin, are confronted with increasing accusations of being responsible for the growing security risks in the country. Granted, Kenya's Muslims are moderate, with the community involved in every facet of Kenya's activity, social, economic and political.

However, there is increasing perception that the Muslim community is marginalised, this going back to back to negotiations for Kenya's independence in which ethnic Somalis, who are mainly Muslims, were

unrepresented. The fact that they are visibly part of the Muslim community, even if not in any way part of al-Shabaab, contributes to them sometimes being treated differently. Most notably, members of the Somali-Kenyan and Somali communities claim to be victims of racial or ethnic profiling and to have been rounded up and arrested for no other reason than their background and ethnicity.

The ISS report further states that Muslim youths in Kenya are victims of the justice system that considers every Muslim 'guilty of terrorism until proven otherwise'. Joining extremist groups for such youths is, therefore, an accepted or even expected option. They are already viewed as terrorists, whether they are or not, and thus find it easy to join extremist groups and terrorism

EASTLEIGH STREET AWARENESS CAMPAIGN



On April 23rd 2019th, Street campaign titled “Street awareness campaign about the negative effects of violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism” was held to enlighten the community about the value of peaceful coexistence and diversity in Eastleigh, Nairobi, Kenya. The event was hosted by Agents of Peace.

From some of community leaders including Mohamed Ismail (Human rights Defender), Hussein Roba (Kamukunji peace committee), Anthony Njoka (Eastleigh North Senior chief) and Hassan Digale, citizens, and young people were among people who attended the event. Before starting the peace event, a special lecture emphasizing the importance of community participation in the peace activities to achieve peace was carried out.

The lecture was based on the situation of violent extremism, terrorism and the innocent victims in Kenya and how we can face from one side as one community. Also, speeches about the role of the community to prevent and counter violent extremism by the community leaders followed.

EASTLEIGH INTRA-RELIGIOUS PEACE MEETING

“The Role of Muslim Leaders and Youths in Preventing and Countering Violent Exremism”

With open and constructive discussion among Muslim and youth leaders in Eastleigh on actions that could be taken to prevent and counter radicalization of our youths to extremist groups in the Name of Jihad to prevent incitement to violence that could lead to terrorism acts, and counter and respond to such incitement when it occurs. Three languages were used namely: English, Somali and Kiswahili.

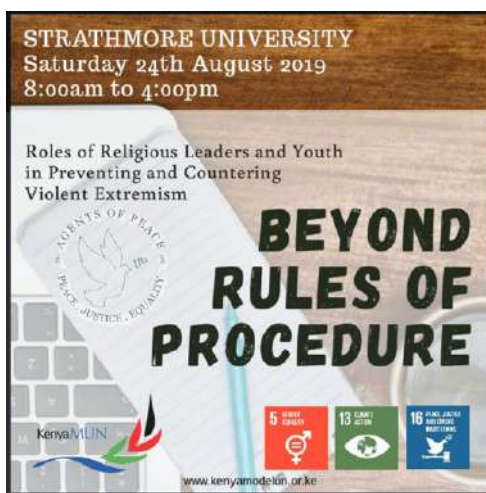
AGENTS OF PEACE UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS

Agents of Peace’s mandate is centered on peaceful coexistence through prevention and countering the spread of violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorist acts against members of the society.

1. Beyond Rules of Procedure -The roles of religious leaders and youths in preventing and countering violent extremism.
2. The Inter-University Debate Competition-Should African Countries Adopt patriotic laws to curb terrorism and extremist ideologies?
3. The Agents of Peace and KenyaMUN Annual Conference
4. KenyaMUN have had a longstanding relationship with Agents of Peace due to the familiarity of the members of both factions. A number of the volunteers were originally members of KenyaMUN before joining Agents of Peace. As alumni’s of KenyaMUN they have offered first hand experience on how to manage debates, recruit members to Agents of Peace and analyze issues on preventing and countering violent extremism in line the organization’s agenda.
5. More importantly the familiarity of the members

gives them a sense of community. This is key in enhancing team work an essential attribute that is key especially when working with volunteers with no monetary motivation. The partnership brings a sense of spirit in doing that which is right to ensure the youth play their role in protecting the future generations from a future of violence due to a lack of respect and understanding of one's basic fundamental rights such as faith. With this the two hope to break the chain reaction of violence by bringing understand to as many people as possible. A closer look at the events will bring this into perspective.

A. Beyond Rules Of Procedure



The event was held at Strathmore University on the 24th of August, 2019.

It was centered around furthering the objectives, principles and ideals of the

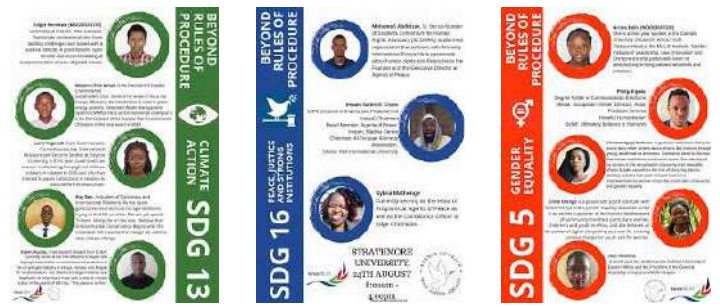
Sustainable Development Goals and empowering the youth to be more involved in their realization.

There were three panel discussions whose focus were;

- SDG 5 – The role of the youth in ending tech violence against women and girls.
- SDG 13 – Addressing climate change as a measure of building sustainable peace.
- SDG 16 – The role of religious leaders and youth in preventing and countering violent extremism.

The essence of the event was to educate and promote greater understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals, promote cohesion and unity amongst the youth so as to empower them to be the drivers of positive change and create an affirmative paradigm shift in their mindsets as the future movers of the nation.

Beyond the Rules of Procedure provided an avenue for youth to foster cooperation and networking amongst themselves and establish a platform for mentorship. Participants were also given time to table their presentations on the possible feasible solutions to the hindrances of achieving the Sustainable Development



Goals. In attendance were a good number of university students from about fourteen universities with diverse panelists.

The event was dubbed Beyond Rules of Procedure as a way of venturing out of the primary role of the General Assembly mandate which is to train on rules of procedure in preparation for the mock debates and eventually conference. These rules are essential for students to know how to conducted themselves during sessions. Going beyond the rules meant focusing on something more than the day to day activities of the organization.

B. Inter-University Debate 2019

The event was held on the 14th of September, 2019 at the Kenyatta University Parklands Law Campus. The Theme of the debate was Preventing and Countering Extreme Violence. There were twenty-six teams that applied to participate and eighty-five observers from thirteen universities. Each team had three participants, where seven motions were distributed among the twenty-six teams.



The following are the motions that were discussed the debate;

- Should African countries adopt the Patriot Act to curb terrorism?
- Should the rule of law be upheld when countering terrorism?
- Does gender mainstreaming matter in

the Preventing and Countering of Violent Extremism?

- Should religious leaders be involved in the process of Countering Violent Extremism?
- Marginalization and discrimination causes Violent Extremism groups.
- There is gender-based motivation in Violent Extremism.
- The use of non-coercive approaches to address the drivers of Violent Extremism is the best route.

The semi-finalists' motions were;

- Real time communication on Social Media is the greatest fuel of violent extremism.
- Poverty eradication is the only avenue to counter recruitment of the youth to extremist groups.

The finalists' motion was;

- Far right politics is the underlying cause of extremist acts such as xenophobia.

The objective of the debate was to cultivate diplomacy, public speaking and research skills as a forum for cultural exchange as students are from diverse backgrounds.

The judges were picked from both organizations alongside additional volunteers. They were tasked with looking into more than debating for or against motions but rather the level of research to back claims made by debaters. In four minutes, each speaker was required to express their position not by being loudest as would be in other debates but by being factual and accurate. This was all to be done objectively without expressing any form of bias towards any of the teams from the preliminary rounds to the finals.

C. Kenyamun Annual Conference

The Annual Conference marks the end of the KenyaMUN session. It was held between February



10th to February 14th at the United Nations Offices in Nairobi, Gigiri. The conference has various activities including the General Assembly debate, the International Law Commission deliberations and the International Court of Justice Moot Competition. During the end of the conference the best in the various committees are awarded with medals sponsored by Agents of Peace.

Additionally, during conference there is an avenue for observers who may not be ready to take part in deliberations to watch and learn before attempting the same during the next session. This gives them a stepping stone to learn and experience the conference. Agents of Peace has previously had observers at the conference to provide a cross over of our members to learn and interact with each other.

Finally during the closing assembly, our Founder, Mr, Mohammed Abdirizak speaks to the delegates on the purpose of Agents of Peace to encourage members to volunteers before awarding the best in respective bureaus.

Creating A Vibrant And More Tolerant Community

To inter-communal trust is important to involve both government officials, youths, religious and leaders of our societies regardless of our backgrounds.

As radicalization is an individual process occurring within our local communities, we have to equip our youths, groups, and institutions with the tools and resilience to prevent and counter violent extremism and negative ideologies which paves the way for radicalization.

Local partners must be able to identify problems as they emerge and customize responses so that they are appropriate and effectively handled as a community with the involvement of government officials. Although we have learned a great deal about radicalization that leads to violence, we can never assume that the dynamics will remain the same. We must be vigilant in identifying, predicting, and preempting new developments. This necessitates exchanges with individuals, communities, and government officials who work on the frontlines to prevent and counter the threats we as community face.

1. Education and capacity building for primary and high school students and teachers.
2. Engaging intra and inter-religious leaders to

prevent all forms of radicalizations.

3. Engaging with community and youth to develop policies to tackle violent extremism.
4. The use of internet and social media to prevent and counter online radicalization.

Education and capacity-building for primary and high school students teachers

- Provide training for religious leaders, both intra and inter religious, on how to use the social media to prevent and counter online radicalization
- Organize training on strategic communication for community leaders with the aim of preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism.
- Develop comprehensive guidance for education stakeholders (students, teachers, parents and religious leaders) on how they can take effective action to prevent and counter radicalization of youth and violent extremism and identify the symptoms and signs of radicalized individuals
- Organize an intra and interfaith, intra and intercultural competition in schools, universities and the rest of communities

Engaging intra and inter-religious leaders to prevent all forms of radicalizations

- Provide a platform to bring together all religious leaders at a local level to deliberate and to discuss about the value diversity, equality, and to embrace peaceful coexistence;
- Foster intra-religious dialogue also as a platform for all voices to be heard;
- Promote inter-religious and inter-communal cooperation on all social issues of relevance to communities, in particular through joint activities;
- Support the role of local religious leaders and communities who are better placed to act as mediators of religious and cultural doctrines;
- Encourage religious leaders to take public stances in support of religious groups other than their own, individually and in cooperation with each other;
- Encourage religious leaders to engage in dialogue with, rather than exclude, individuals with radical and extremist views;

- Provide community level initiatives to promote intra and inter-communal dialogue and respect for one another regardless of religious, ethnicity, political, and tribal background.

Engaging with community and youth to develop policies to tackle violent extremism

- Engage with youth and community leaders to organize at a local level an annual “week of mutual respect for all youth and communities in Kenya”,
- Organise joint meetings of religious leaders with public officials, community, youth and political leaders at local and national level to deliberate on ways to work together as a team to prevent and counter violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism.
- Keep security officials updated concerning risks that community, youth and religious leaders may face if they speak out or take action against violent extremism, radicalisation of youth, or in response to, xenophobia, racism or incitement to violence; if necessary, ask for protection for religious leaders who may be at risk;

The use of internet and social media to prevent and counter online radicalization

- Engage with radicalised and radicalizing individuals online (especially on Twitter, as this is where most of the action is) using arguments based on intra-religious perspective
- Speak out online and offline prevent and counter all forms of radicalisation”.
- Engage with social media regarding the creation of positive and peaceful messages vis-a-vis a problematic content;
- Offer spiritual counselling on-line and off-line, especially to those at risk of being radicalised or who have joined or sympathizes with radical groups;
- Create Facebook pages, twitter and Instagram on/for specific crises or issues to rally people; create a network of support to prevent and to counter online radicalisation







+254772234228
Agents of Peace
Tansim Shopping Mall, 5th Floor
8th Street, First Avenue
Eastleigh Nairobi, Kenya
info@agentsofpeace.net
www.agentsofpeace.net