

Lamu: Involving Youth and Women in PCVE

Workshop Note

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About this Workshop Note

This Workshop Note is informed by deliberations of a “Youth, Women and Security Actors Sensitization Meeting”, held jointly by Kiunga Youth Bunge Initiative (KYBI) and Centre for Human Rights and Policy Studies (CHRIIPS) in December 2022. It focuses on the involvement of youth and women and security actors in preventing and countering violent extremism (PCVE) and, in particular, in the implementation of the Lamu County Action Plan (LCAP) on PCVE in Lamu County, Kenya. It incorporates insights and perspectives of state and non-state actors, security officials, youth, women and other community members who attended the meeting.

Introduction

As per the LCAP, youth and women are among the stakeholders that must be engaged in addressing radicalisation and violent extremism (VE). The Plan further requires youth and women to work with relevant stakeholders in designing interventions to protect vulnerable members of the community. Additionally, as part of civil society, the Plan provides that women are essential in raising awareness on VE, radicalisation, and social interventions. They also have a role to play in the rehabilitation and re-integration of returnees in collaboration with relevant government agencies.

Although the County Action Plan (CAP) has outlined the vital need to include youth and women in PCVE, this realisation to date has been wanting. Women and youth are still not much included in the decision-making organs. To have a grassroots perspective on this disconnect, KYBI in partnership with CHRIIPS, conducted a town hall meeting with representation from youth, women, security actors, other civil society and community organisations, and community elders. The town hall session aimed at unpacking key challenges facing youth and women in their participation in preventing violent extremism in Lamu County.

Key challenges highlighted

Missing Voices of Women and Youth

Despite the CAP being in existence for the past five years, little progress has been made towards enhancing the effective participation of women and youth in the County Engagement Forum (CEF) and its Secretariat. According to the workshop attendants, women and youth feel that their voices have not yet been well articulated in the CAP, given their diversity in the 3 sub-counties. Representatives of youth groups stated that the youth and women are mostly brought in as beneficiaries once interventions have been rolled out. This trend has been common over the years and does not fully benefit them. Due to them not being involved from the design stage, the PCVE interventions do not fully speak to their needs and have minimal impact.

Harassment and Profiling of Youth

Many youths still feel that the approach of security actors is wanting, especially harassment and forceful disappearance of young men. This can be a tipping

point for youth to join violent extremist organisations. Religious and ethnic profiling was also noted to have subconsciously contributed to sympathy toward violent extremist groups. Some of the Lamu youth have become radicalized as they try to look for their own identity where they feel more respected and honoured.

Accessing National Identification Documents

Many youths feel that the government is punishing them with a very tedious vetting process, which has often cost them opportunities due to a lack of national identity cards. This has meant that their movement has also been curtailed, as they cannot move around without an identification document.

Some participants also stated that increased unnecessary bureaucracy in the issuance of ID cards has caused delayed access to tertiary education and employment opportunities. This has led to a high rate of unemployment and low levels of education in the County. In other instances, the lack of IDs has hindered access to essential government services and initiatives.

Young People and Access to Livelihood Opportunities

Lamu County has numerous opportunities for youth to access income opportunities, for example, getting employed in the County Government, Private Sector or accessing business funds from Youth Fund and Women Enterprise Funds, among others. However, most young people are unable to get opportunities due to a lack of information. Others noted the low education levels in the County locked most from the job market. Further, the youth and women noted that it is hard to access and own land in Lamu, which they can use to generate income.

Recommendations

Revision of Lamu County Action Plan

The current first-generation LCAP was formulated as a 5-year Plan. It is now dated and must be revised to address current local dynamics, the VE landscape, and associated issues. The Plan should include robust strategies for the promotion of effective participation

and inclusion of youth and women in PCVE. This should be done in ways that facilitate and promote their adequate participation, representation and inclusion in security initiatives as well as enhance their contribution to policy conversations.

Strengthen the relationship between youth and security actors

Through the law enforcement pillar, security actors should be trained in human-rights-based policing to promote accountability. Members of the law enforcement pillar should advocate for adherence to police operating procedures by security officials. Security actors need to adhere to internal and external accountability measures in instances of professional misconduct. Building trust between security officials and youth at the community level is instrumental in cultivating a culture of trust and collaboration.

Access to Identity Cards

There is a need to eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy hindering Lamu citizens from obtaining national identification cards. This will ensure a majority of them, especially the youth, have access to education and livelihood opportunities.

Inclusion of women in peace and security structures and initiatives

There is a need for enhanced representation and strategic and effective participation of women in PVE structures at the local level. Beyond the gender pillar and general CEF membership, the CEF should have women in the secretariat. Women should also be in leadership and decisions making positions.

A renewed approach to addressing cases of gender-based violence should be adopted through the CAP. The gender desk within the police stations should provide the much need safe spaces for reporting gender-based violence. The gender desk officers should also work closely with GBV champions at the County Level who will amplify the voices of women and youth regarding GBV.

Communication between CEF and the community

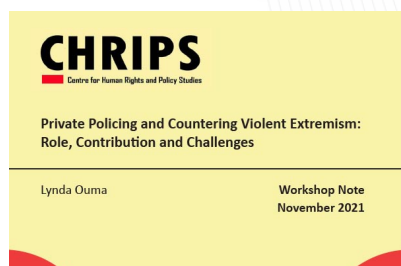
The CEF should adopt a strategic communication approach including innovative ways of unpacking the information and interventions up to the grassroots level and to all relevant stakeholders. The Village

Elders, Nyumba Kumi, Assistant Chiefs and Chiefs can facilitate information sharing, knowledge, opportunities and initiatives especially in remote and hard-to-reach areas. CEF can also collaborate with the County Government in information sharing on PVCE at the ward level through the office of ward administrators.

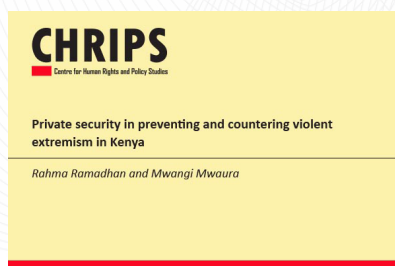
Acknowledgement

Mathenge Ndungu is the Team Leader at Kiunga Youth Bunge Initiative (KYBI) and Rahma Ramadhan is a Junior Research Fellow at the Centre for Human Rights and Policy Studies (CHRIPS). Research and publication of this workshop note was supported by the Open Society Foundations (OSF).

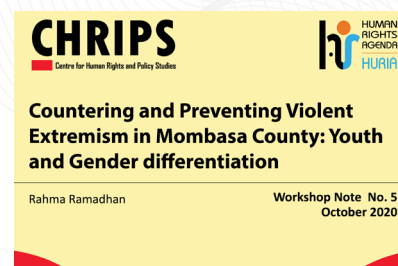
Other Publications on Violent Extremism



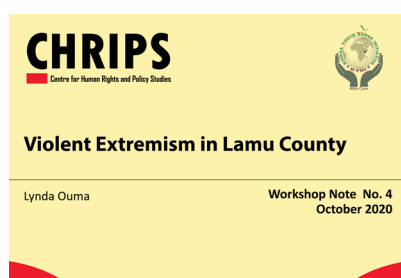
This workshop note draws from discussions held by experts at workshops addressing accountability of private security actors in countering violent extremism (CVE) convened by Centre for Human Rights and Policy Studies (CHRIPS) in Kilifi, Kwale, Mombasa, Nairobi and Nakuru counties between August and September 2021.



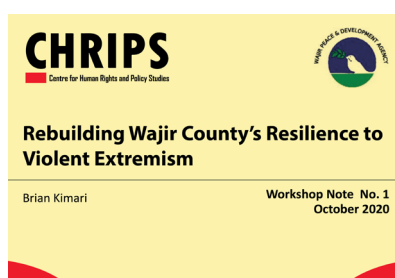
This policy brief addresses gaps and challenges in the role of private security actors in preventing and countering violent extremism. As a result of emerging security concerns private security actors have taken an active role in this regard. The brief offers a set of recommendations that could inform research and policy review.



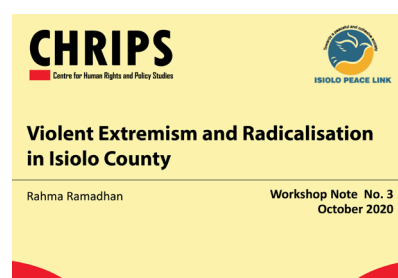
This note partly draws from discussions of the prevention and countering violent extremism (PCVE) policy workshop convened jointly by Human Rights Agenda (HURIA) and Centre for Human Rights and Policy Studies (CHRIPS) in Mombasa County on 22 October 2020. This note presents discussions on preventive initiative focusing on youth in Mombasa and issues of gender differentiation in programming on Preventing and Countering violent Extremism (P/CVE).



This workshop note is a summary of discussions from the Lamu County prevention and countering violent extremism (PCVE) policy workshop convened by the Centre for Human Rights and Policy Studies (CHRIPS) and Kiunga Youth Bunge Initiative (KYBI) on 27th August 2020.



This Workshop Note discusses recent developments, challenges, and opportunities in countering violent extremism (CVE) work & counterterrorism (CT) in Wajir County.



This note partly draws from discussions of the Isiolo County prevention and countering violent extremism (PCVE) policy workshop convened jointly by Isiolo Peace Link (IPL) and Centre for Human Rights and Policy Studies (CHRIPS) in the three sub-counties of Isiolo: Merti, Garba-tulla and Isiolo in September 2020.

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