# EVALUATION REPORT

## *Inuka!* Community-Led Security Approaches to Violent Extremism in Coastal Kenya

**A Project by Search for Common Ground**

**30 October 2018**

# Table of Contents

# Acknowledgements

# Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| CSO | Civil society organization |
| CVE | Countering Violent Extremism |
| DRL | US State Department's Democracy, Human Rights and Labour Bureau |
| KMYA | Kenya Muslim Youth Alliance |
| KYBI | Kiunga Youth Bunge Initiative |
| LIGGA | Leadership Initiative for Good Governance in Africa |
| MUHURI | Muslims for Human Rights |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| NCTC | National Counter-Terrorism Center |
| NSCVE | National Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism |
| USAID | US Agency for Development |

# Executive Summary

In September 2018, Search for Common Ground (Search) concluded a two-year project called *"Inuka! Community-Led Security Approaches to Violent Extremism in Coastal Kenya"* (henceforth referred to as *Inuka!*). Funded by the US State Department's Democracy, Human Rights and Labour Bureau (DRL), this initiative aimed at building increased trust and collaboration between community stakeholders to prevent radicalization and violent extremism in Kenya's Coast region. This report presents the findings from the evaluation that Search commissioned to assess the successes and challenges of the project.

## *Background*

Kenya has seen a steady rise in terrorist incidents and violent extremism over the last 10 years, which has affected the Coast region in particular. These activities are the result of local, regional and global trends, including the rise of the terrorist group Al-Shabaab in Somalia. At the same time, economic, social and political grievances have acted as drivers of violence in Kenya. Economically, poverty and unequal wealth distribution are issues affecting young people and the Coast in particular. Livelihoods in the region have indeed suffered directly from insecurity and the rate of unemployment there is much higher than the national average. Socially, communities have lamented the lack of opportunities in terms of education, healthcare, and other social services. Politically, some communities—like Muslims and ethnic Somalis—have been historically discriminated by the government.

The lack economic and social opportunities, along with a sense of political marginalization, have therefore left young people in the region more vulnerable to radicalism and recruitment by extremist groups, chiefly Al-Shabaab. At the same time, the heavy-handed responses of the Kenyan government—allegedly including human rights abuses and criminalization of entire minorities—have further sowed mistrust between communities and authorities. It is in this context that Search started the *Inuka!* project, working in four counties (Kilifi, Kwale, Lamu and Mombasa) and with three local partners: the Kenya Muslim Youth Alliance (KMYA), the Kiunga Youth Bunge Initiative (KYBI), and Muslims for Human Rights (MUHURI). Partners worked to develop platforms for effective and meaningful collaboration and engagement between various stakeholders, including security forces, in an effort to build a community security framework to halt the cycle of radicalization and violence.

In terms of **methodology**, the evaluation used a mixed-methods action-research approach. Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected and analyzed during the evaluation with the aim of responding to specific lines of inquiry. Overall, evaluation activities—which included a document review, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and a survey—generated solid evidence for answering all lines of inquiry, with the main challenge being data collection in Lamu, which was limited on account of the security situation.

## *Findings*

### *Relevance*

The project was found to be very relevant on account of the needs and challenges faced by young people and communities in targeted areas, and also given the conflict dynamics affecting the region as a whole (as discussed above). Project activities—such as community dialogues where different stakeholders met and discussed how to work together, or grants that were provided to groups to host dialogues or tournaments between police and youth— were seen as very relevant for the type of approach that they utilized, which was a counterweight to the security-oriented approach of government stakeholders. Activities aimed at empowering local civil society organizations (CSOs) through partnerships and sub-

grants were also appropriate and very much needed. A majority of CSO representatives reported to have little to no capacity in monitoring their activities against results, and to face financial personnel constraints. On the other side, these CSOs were already well established at the grassroots level, and were able to engage with the community effectively.

### Effectiveness

The evaluation found that the project was able to achieve most of its expected outcomes, albeit to different extents. Under its first objective (*Strengthening Capacity and Leadership Skills*), the evidence indicates that the capacities of all three main target groups under the project—partner CSOs, community CSOs and community stakeholders—were strengthened effectively. These activities benefited the partners the most, and also helped to build the capacity of smaller organizations. The project was able to provide community leaders (youth and adults) with new skills, empowering them in their efforts to counter violent extremism.

Under the second objective (*Cultivating Working Partnerships*), the project was effective, but with some challenges. The project's strategy of holding both single- and multi-stakeholder dialogues—the first as preparation for the latter—was very effective and seen as central in restoring community-police relations. Most young participants reported that social activities (e.g. tournaments) also helped them to start trusting police. Survey data confirms an improvement in the perceptions of community-police relations: at baseline, only 18% of respondents saw them as positive; at endline the figure was 37% for non-participants and 57% for project participants. However, the informality of these events was a limitation, and negative perceptions, from the community toward the police and vice-versa, still persisted in all areas.

Lastly, under the third objective (*Developing Collaborative Responses*), the evaluation found a couple of very positive cases (discussed under impact), but also the most significant challenges. The latter are particularly evident in the Whatsapp message application, which allowed people to share security information with authorities. However, this platform had fewer users than expected and was not seen as effective, as authorities did not engage in it.

### Validity of Approach and Theory of Change

Positively, *Inuka!* was built around a theory of change, defined as follows:

> "*If key community actors, including civil society leaders, youth, women (wives and mothers), community leaders, religious leaders, government and security forces, have increased capacity and access to platforms to promote mutual engagement around critical security issues, then communities will be able to provide more effective responses to prevent and counter violent extremism because this engagement will cultivate meaningful collaboration and working partnerships based on mutual trust.*"

In line with this theory, Search and its partners pursued three main strategies, each one tied to an objective: the first focused on capacity building; the second on building dialogue between stakeholders; and the last one on creating platforms for information sharing and collaboration. The evidence collected during the evaluation confirms that each strategy was, in its own right, appreciated by participants and stakeholders, and generally effective in achieving intermediate results. Whereas the outcome chain between strategies and short-term and intermediate outcomes can be validated, the same is not true for the chain between strategies and long-term outcomes. Evidence of limited effectiveness (as discussed above) and a significant gap (engagement of national stakeholders) suggest that the theory did not effectively address how the project would build social trust.

### Impact

Participants in focus groups suggested that communities feel safer now compared to two years ago. The endline survey confirms this, as project participants were much more positive than non-participants (88% indicating security as 'somewhat better' or 'a lot better' versus 54%). The fact that both respondent groups answered positively, however, means that it is

likely that factors external to the project also contributed to this change. Quantitative and qualitative data also indicated that women still feel unsafe because of criminal and gender-based violence—or, in other words, that the project had less impact on them compared to men. Still, evidence suggests that project activities had positive impact on relations between communities, local authorities and security forces, as seen in the Mvuvi Card initiative.

*Impact Case Study: The Mvuvi Cards[1]*

In Lamu, a specific grievance pitting security forces against fishermen and women was a night fishing ban, declared in 2011, which caused severe consequences on community livelihoods. In April 2017, dialogues held by Search, MUHURI and KYBI led to the launch of the Mvuvi Card initiative: fishermen and women agreed to be registered and be given a smartcard (the Mvuvi Card) containing personal information and a tracking chip, the latter allowing security forces to track their movements at sea. Right after, in May 2017, the night fishing ban was lifted. The first Mvuvi Cards were distributed in April 2018.

Search's contribution story can be presented as the completion of several steps, all aligned with the theory of change for the project: the organization worked with local partners to sponsor multi-stakeholder dialogues involving groups in conflict with each other; during these sessions, security forces realized that fishermen could be partners in their efforts, and the latter acknowledged the needs of security forces; the identification of a solution led to mutual compromises that re-set the relationship between the two groups, generating trust.

Supporting Search's story, the evaluation found evidence for each of these steps. Project reports confirm that Search and partners were involved in multi-stakeholder dialogues with security forces and fishermen. It was at the end of such a session, in April 2017, that participants converged on the issue of the night fishing ban, and the launch of the Mvuvi Card initiative came directly from this effort. It was quickly embraced by local authorities and security forces, and served to improve relations between them and fishermen. Against the contribution story, however, the evidence is much less clear about the specific role played by Search, compared to that of other organizations. Notably, Search started working in Lamu only in 2017. Most importantly, there are indications that trust between security forces and fishermen still remains low, as several articles noted that in reality police were still preventing boats to go to sea at night, even after the ban was lifted.

In conclusion, there is a good amount of evidence to confirm Search's contribution story, but not enough to ascertain the organization's specific claim to impact. Was Search a key facilitating force? Or was it more of a behind-the-scenes catalyst for change? The answer to these questions could provide valuable lessons learned for future programming.

### *Sustainability*

Some outcomes, such as the skills learned by participants and collaboration among stakeholders, will continue after the completion of the project in all targeted communities. For example, it is clear that dialogues, the learning cycle, sport tournaments, grants, capacity building for leadership and multi-stakeholder collaboration platforms were all designed and implemented in a way that participants will continue with these activities even after the end of the project. Representatives from the government have also shown great interest in continuing the positive outcomes achieved by the project.

In spite of the positive evidence, however, the limitations to sustaining the project's outcomes, without additional funding being made available, remain significant. First, the capacity of government officials to continue with the project's activities is very low. Secondly, without funding, CSOs will not be able to engage in the same activities. Finally, the project did not lead to any significant policy change at the national level. This is likely due to the fact

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[1] The following case study has been developed using Contribution Analysis, a theory-based evaluation "approach for assessing causal questions and inferring causality in real-life programme evaluations."

that there was no intensive engagement with national stakeholders like the National Counter-Terrorism (NCTC) or lawmakers.  This is a significant limitation, as such engagement could have engendered much greater sustainability, for example by making initiatives like the Mvuvi Cards the model to follow, rather than an *ad hoc* initiative.

### Conflict Sensitivity

Lastly, the evaluation looked at whether Search mainstreamed conflict sensitivity in the project. This appears to have taken place, both at the design and implementation phases. For example, Search quickly realized that conflicts associated to resources (such as land) were automatically interpreted as religious, and that this created negative impacts. Responding to this, Search worked with religious scholars and preachers to talk about peace and conflict resolution more widely. Search also relied on local partners with experience and who were well respected at the grassroots level, allowing them to navigate issues of culture and gender sensitivity, which vary by community. Overall, this was a clear area of strength.

Overall, the evaluation has identified the following *lessons learned:*

- Building the capacity of community-level stakeholders is a necessary component of any intervention aimed at improving trust and collaboration between different groups.
- Designing collaborative efforts among CSOs that take into account the differences between them and also the comparative advantages (i.e. small vs. large, etc.) is a necessary strategy to build sustainable platforms to build trust.
- Fostering dialogue requires engaging stakeholder groups both separately and together.
- The willingness of different groups to engage is related not only to the levels of trust between them, but also to the need to work together. 'Catalyst' issues, like the night fishing ban in Lamu, can help to jump start dialogue and quickly re-set relationships.
- New technology can provide an added value, but only where it addresses a specific need, within a well defined collaborative effort.
- Capacity building, while necessary, is not sufficient for achieving longer-term outcomes.
- The involvement of national stakeholders remains an essential component to the success of any peacebuilding endeavor, in terms of both impact and sustainability.
- The perceptions of men and women differ significantly, and therefore it is likely that so does their experience.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The evaluation has found the *Inuka!* project to be relevant, effective and impactful. Project activities clearly responded to well identified needs. The evaluation also found challenges— some related to the logic of the intervention, some to the chosen approach. With these in mind, the following recommendations are made:

- Continue supporting multi-stakeholder community dialogues.
- Design more tailored capacity-building workshops, including follow-up trainings for youth, bespoke trainings for government and security officers, and higher-level trainings (e.g. at national level).
- Engage with police training centers as a way to formalize engagement between CSOs and security forces.
- Increase engagement with national stakeholders and ensure that these efforts are linked with work at county and grassroots level.
- Map and engage on 'catalyst' issues, which can serve as windows of opportunities for jump starting collaboration and re-setting relationships.
- Develop a gender strategy to ensure that the specific needs of women are analyzed, prioritized and acted upon during implementation.
- Organize learning events, such as workshops, which can allow partners to become more familiar with the project's theory of change.

# 1. Introduction

The present report covers the findings from the evaluation of *"Inuka! Community-Led Security Approaches to Violent Extremism in Coastal Kenya"* (henceforth referred to as *Inuka!*), a 24-month-project that started in September 2016 and was implemented by Search for Common Ground (Search) and 3 local partners (Muslims for Human Rights, Kiunga Youth Bunge Initiative and Kenya Muslims Youth Alliance) in Kenya's Coast region. The project targeted communities in four counties and was funded by the US State Department's Democracy, Human Rights and Labour Bureau (DRL).
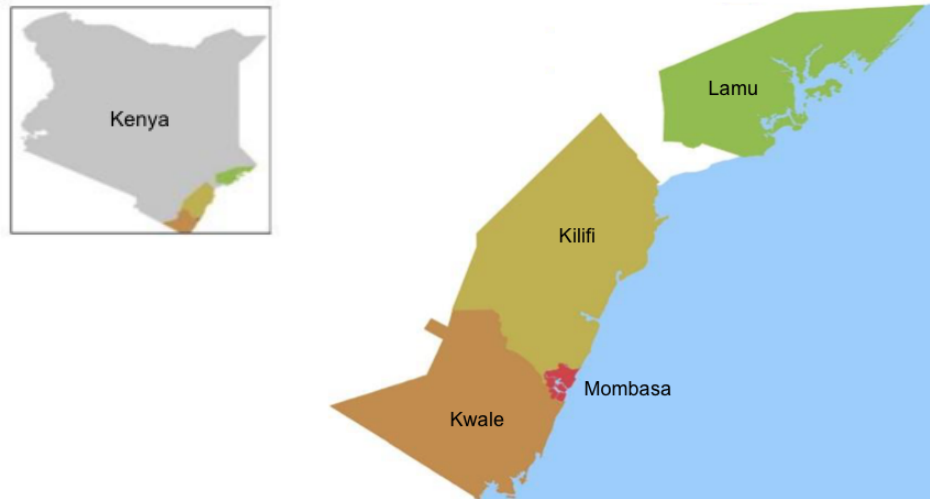


Search commissioned this final evaluation with the overall objective of assessing the achievements and lessons learned of the project in accordance with four criteria: relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. With a focus on learning, the evaluation also sought to identify successes and challenges of *Inuka!* and, as a result of this process, to provide Search with recommendations on how to improve its work in the future.

Evaluation activities took place in August and September 2018, and progressed largely as planned. The only challenges encountered were due to time constraints and security limitations. Concerning the time frame, the evaluation team had approximately two months to revise documents, to conduct data collection in the four counties and to complete the report. Regarding security, this was problematic in particular in Lamu county, where it limited the amount of data that could be collected.

The report is structured in six sections. Following the introduction, brief overviews are provided about the evaluation background both in terms of the context and the project (Section 2). The methodology is then presented (Section 3), and findings are discussed in line with the four main criteria and two crosscutting ones, on the validity of the chosen approach and conflict sensitivity (Section 4). The report concludes by presenting lessons learned (section 5) and recommendations for future programming (section 6).

# 2. Background

## 2.1. Context Analysis

There has been an increase in terrorist incidents and radicalism in Kenya over the last 10 years, which has affected the Coast region in particular. For instance, an explosion occurred in Mombasa in 2013[2]; this was followed by the Garissa University attacks in 2015, which were perpetrated by Al-Shabaab.[3] Terrorist attacks were also recently seen in target areas for the project, including a violent clash between Al-Shabaab and Kenyan law enforcement officers in Kwale in 2015[4] and the decapitation of four civilians in Lamu in late 2017.[5] Another recent incident, the killing of five soldiers in Lamu in late August 2018[6], shows the level or risk that still exists in the region from radicalization and terrorism.

In general, there is a consensus among analysts that extremist activities in Kenya have been motivated by local, regional and global trends. These include, on one hand, the emergence of community groups and individuals with radical ideologies embracing and promoting violence as the means of achieving their political or social goals. On the other hand, the rise of specific terrorist groups, such Al-Shabaab in Somalia, have effectively tapped into local grievances and inspired citizens of many African countries to conduct both coordinated and lone wolf attacks.[7] Kenya is not an exception to this: there has been an increase of attacks in the country[8], including in the areas targeted under the *Inuka!* project. The drivers of violent extremist and terrorist incidents are, however, also a result of highly unequal economic growth and grievances by members of marginalized ethnic and religious groups.[9] In the Coast region, these are closely linked to the political situation in Somalia, including the large presence of ethnic Somalis in the area, and these communities' relations with other groups and also government authorities.[10]

In the Coast region, several economic, social and political grievances, some of which are perceived and some real, have historically acted as drivers of violent extremist activities, including in the targeted communities of Kilifi, Kwale, Lamu and Mombasa.[11] Economically, the proportion of Kenyans living on less than the international poverty line has declined in the last decade, but remains significant (36% in 2015-2016).[12] The unemployment rate is also very high, with some estimates suggesting that as many as 75% of the 2.3 million unemployed Kenyans are young people.[13] The economic outlook in Coastal Kenya also suffers directly from insecurity, as terrorist activities and counter-operations by Kenyan security forces have severely impacted economic activities, resulting in a decline of tourism—a key source of livelihoods for local communities[14]—and also a higher rate of unemployment among youth, with one report suggesting that this might be about three times higher than in the rest of the country.[15]

[2] "16 Injured in Likoni Church Terror Attack", Daily Nation, 10 June 2013 (Accessed on 12 October 2018).
[3] "Attack: 147 dead in Garissa University assault", BBC, 3 April 2015, (Accessed on 12 October 2018).
[4] "Police Gun Down 2 Terror Suspects in The Coastal Town of Kwale", News Ghana, 11 April 2015 (Accessed on 12 October 2018).
[5] "Suspected Al-Shabaab Militants beheaded four in Kenya Lamu County", Daily News, 6 September 2017, (Accessed on 12 October 2018).
[6] "Five soldiers killed, 10 others injured in Lamu", Standard Digital, 29 August 2018 (Accessed on 12 October 2018),
[7] "Setbacks and Realignments: The Continuing Evolution of Militant Islamist Groups in Africa", Africa Center for Strategic Studies, June 2017 (Accessed on 12 October 2018).
[8] "Al Shabaab in Kenya: Emerging Dynamics and Shifts", ACLED, August 2015 (Accessed on 12 October 2018).
[9] "Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism: Report of the Secretary-General", UN General Assembly, 24 December 2015 (Accessed on 16 October 2018).
[10] Botha, Anneli, "Radicalisation in Kenya Recruitment to al-Shabaab and the Mombasa Republican Council", Institute for Security Studies, Paper 265 (2014).
[11] Ibid.
[12] "Poverty Incidence in Kenya Declined Significantly, but Unlikely to be Eradicated by 2030", World Bank, 10 April 2018.
[13] "Kenya: Youth unemployment rate from 2007 to 2017", Statista, 2018 (Accessed on 16 October 2018).
[14] Kessels. E, et al, "Violent Extremism and Instability in the Greater Horn of Africa: An Examination of Drivers and Responses," Global Center on Cooperative Security, April 2016 (Accessed on 16 October 2018).
[15] Ibid.

Economic and social grievances in the Coast have historically gone hand in hand, as local communities lament the lack of opportunities in terms of access to education, healthcare, and other social services. And politically, tensions in the region have also been caused by the policies of the Kenyan government, which has marginalized certain groups specifically.[16] In particular, there have been long-held grievances by Muslims and Somali communities who complain that they have been discriminated against by authorities. Historically, this has also led to the formation of separatist movements, such as the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC), which has been fighting for the rights of marginalized communities in the region, particularly on land and property.[17] The struggle between the Kenyan government and Somali communities goes back to even before the country's independence, and has regularly led to violence. For example, the Northern region, another predominantly Muslim area, was put under martial law from 1968 to 1992, during which time intensive military force control led to human rights violations, abuses, and massacres of community members.[18]

The lack of economic and social opportunities, and the sense of political marginalization, have therefore left young people in the region more vulnerable to radicalism and recruitment by extremist groups. For example, a recent study suggested that a majority of youth from the Coast region have joined MRC as a result of economic and political grievances.[19] Another study has claimed that violent extremist activities by radicalized youth in Kilifi, Kwale and Mombasa have been directly responsible for the deaths of civilians and police officers, and the destruction of government property.[20] Overall, the evidence of extremist groups using narratives around long-held grievances to capitalize in recruiting, radicalizing, and mobilizing community members to act against the government is strong.

The recent increase in terrorist violence has however also been triggered by more recent dynamics, all linked to Kenya's role in neighboring Somalia. Specifically, the invasion of Somalia by Kenyan military forces in 2011 not only resulted in a growing number of lethal attacks by Al-Shabaab, but also growing radicalization and extremism in Kenya. Since then, terrorist attacks associated with Al-Shabaab have in fact rapidly increased: 23 attacks were reported in 2011; 84 in 2014.[21] The lethality of these attacks also increased, peaking in April 2015 with the assault on Garissa University College, which killed 148 people.[22] These have led to responses by the Kenyan government, which have for the most part stemmed from a traditional approach focusing on force and securitization, and thus arguably worsened the situation and contributed to a further radicalization of community members.[23] The authorities' securitized approach has, in fact, reportedly involved human rights abuses, extra-judicial killings, and criminalization of certain religions by "guilt by association."[24] Community representatives have indeed lamented that they have been targeted only based on suspicions, often related to their religion.

The actions of security forces have in other words continued to sow mistrust between local communities and authorities, confirming the same narratives used by radicalized groups. And while the Kenya's government approach has started to shift, in particular with the adoption, in September 2016, of the National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism (NSCVE), the effects of these are still to be seen.

[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] "Conflict Assessment: Northern Kenya and Somaliland," Ken Menkhaus, Danish Demining Group, March 2015, page 18 (Accessed on 16 October 2018).
[19] Ibid.
[20] "Conflict Assessment Report 2016-2020", Danida Peace, Security and Stability Programme–Kenya, Centre for Human Rights and Policy Studies (CHRIPS).
[21] "Community Perceptions of Violent Extremism in Kenya", Villa-Vicencio. C. Buchanan-Clarke. S, Humphrey. A, Institute for Justice and Reconciliation in consultation with the Life & Peace Institute, 2016.
[22] "Al-Shabaab Five Years after Westgate: Still a Menace in East Africa", International Crisis Group, 21 September 2018 (Accessed on 26 October 2018).
[23] "African governments, not religion, are pushing their young people into extremism", Quartz Africa, 8 September 2017 (Accessed on 12 October 2018).
[24] Kessels. E, et al, "Violent Extremism and Instability in the Greater Horn of Africa: An Examination of Drivers and Responses," Global Center on Cooperative Security, April 2016 (Accessed on 16 October 2018).

## 2.2. Project Description

The overall goal of *Inuka!* was to build increased trust and collaboration between key community stakeholders to prevent radicalization and violent extremism in target locations. These included four counties (Kilifi, Kwale, Lamu and Mombasa) all located in Kenya's Coast region. The project had three specific objectives:

1. To strengthen the capacity and leadership skills of civil society and community leaders to meaningfully engage government and security actors to address security challenges in their communities.
2. To cultivate working partnerships between communities and security forces across ethnic and social divides.
3. To develop collaborative responses to shared community security challenges at the local, county, and national levels.

In implementing project activities, Search collaborated with three local civil society organizations (CSOs): the Kenya Muslim Youth Alliance (KMYA), the Kiunga Youth Bunge Initiative (KYBI), and Muslims for Human Rights (MUHURI). Each partner worked to develop platforms for effective and meaningful collaboration and engagement between communities, including mothers and wives, male and female youth, local, regional and national leaders, and security forces in an effort to build a unified and localized community security framework to halt the cycle of radicalization and violence in the target locations.

# 3. Methodology

The overall purpose of the evaluation was to assess the achievements of the *Inuka!* project in accordance with four criteria: relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. With a focus on learning, the evaluation also sought to identify successes and challenges in relation to the validity of its theory of change and how it integrated conflict sensitivity. The final goal has been to provide Search and its partners with recommendations on how to improve their programming around countering violent extremism in the future.

The specific objectives guiding the evaluation were: (i) to generate evidence of change in relation to the chosen OECD-DAC criteria; (ii) to identify key lessons learned in terms of the approach used by Search and the validity of the project's theory of change; (iii) to assess the extent to which the project ensured conflict sensitivity; and (iv) to analyze how Search and its partners could capitalize on the lessons learned to improve their work going forward.

The evaluation used a mixed-methods action-research approach. Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected and analyzed during the evaluation with the aim of responding to specific lines of inquiry. For more information about the evaluation's terms of references, please see Annex 1.

| Criterion | Main line of inquiry |
|---|---|
| Relevance | 1. Did the project address recognized needs and dynamics contributing to radicalization and violent extremism in the target locations? |
| Effectiveness | 2. To what extent have the intended project's results been achieved? |
| Impact | 3. To what extent did the project contribute to collaborative relationships between communities and security forces, increasing trust and hence enduring peace in Coastal Kenya? |
| Sustainability | 4. To what extent are the achieved results likely to be sustained after the project close out? |
| Validity of | 5. What are the lessons learned that can be drawn from the experience |

| approach and Theory of Change | of implementing the project? What has worked and what didn't? Why? |
|---|---|
| Conflict Sensitivity | 6. Did the project interact with the context to minimize negative impacts and maximize positive ones? |
| Recommendations | 7. How can SFCG and partners leverage their P/CVE programming to achieve enduring peace in Kenya? |

## 3.1. Evaluation Activities

All evaluation activities were completed between August and September 2018. They included a document review, key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs), and a survey. All evaluation tools used are included as Annex 2.

*Document Review*

The evaluation team reviewed and analyzed documents related to the *Inuka!* project and also to the Kenyan context. The former was provided by Search, while the latter were gathered through an open-source search mainly targeting the outputs of other NGOs active in the country (or in East Africa more broadly), think tanks and agencies (national and international) working on security and violent extremism in Kenya.

*Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions*

The evaluation team conducted interviews with project staff, participants and stakeholders in all target counties. KIIs and FGDs were done using a semi-structured questionnaire with questions directly linked to the agreed lines of inquiry. A total of 23 interviews were held (with 6 women and 17 men), and 7 FGDs (for a total of 50 participants, 18 women and 32 men), as per the table below. The list of KIIs and FGDs held is included as Annex C.

| Informant type | Kilifi | Kwale | Lamu | Mombasa |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Key informants** | | | | |
| Search staff | - | - | - | 3 |
| Partners staff | - | - | - | 3 |
| Young men and women | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Religious leaders | 1 | 1 | 1 | - |
| Government officials | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Local CSOs | - | - | 1 | 3 |
| *Total* | *4* | *4* | *4* | *11* |
| **Focus Group participants** | | | | |
| Young men and women | 8 | 15 | - | 8 |
| Community members | 8 | 6 | - | - |
| Religious leaders | 5 | - | - | - |
| *Total* | *21* | *21* | *-* | *8* |

*Survey*

Finally, a survey was conducted to gather quantitative data.[25] This was designed to allow comparisons between measurements at baseline and endline, and differences in responses between project participants and non-participants. A total of 309 respondents completed the

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[25] A total of six enumerators contacted respondents to complete the survey during face-to-face interviews in Kilifi, Kwale and Mombasa. All enumerators were trained by the evaluation team, who supervised the quality of their work during data collection. Staff members from Search contacted respondents by phone in Lamu.

survey (160 women, 148 men, 1 not available), as per the table below. An overview of the survey sample population is included as Annex D.

| Informant | Kilifi | Kwale | Lamu | Mombasa |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Project participants | 47 | 48 | 21 | 48 |
| Non-participants | 49 | 48 | - | 48 |
| *Total* | *96* | *96* | *21* | *96* |

## 3.2. Challenges

The evaluation faced several challenges, which affected the implementation of activities. These included:

- The security situation in Lamu did not allow travel to that location. Only a smaller number of interviews could therefore be completed, by phone, and FGDs could not be conducted at all. The survey was also conducted by phone and only 21 respondents completed it.
- A very short time table for completing the evaluation resulted in the team not being able to complete some activities as planned. In particular, this affected FGDs, as only 7 were conducted (compared to the planned 9) and some of them in different conditions than expected (e.g. with fewer participants or mixed-gender groups).
- Unfortunately, the baseline report did not include a lot of data that could be used to compare findings from the endline survey. This seems to be a limitation due to the nature of report, which was more of an assessment than a proper baseline.
- The sample of interviews and focus group participants includes significantly more men than women. This was unintended, but it also appears to reflect the over-representation of men in some groups, i.e. government officials.

Overall, the challenges did not impact significantly on the evaluation's findings, with the exception of Lamu, where analysis could have benefitted from more data, and possibly also in relation to a stronger gender perspective.

# 4. Evaluation Findings

## 4.1. Relevance

In the targeted communities, interviews and focus group discussions confirmed that there is a fragile relationship among stakeholders, particularly security forces and communities. Based on the absence of platforms for groups at risk of radicalization, such as young people, to air their frustrations, as well as the lack of capacity on the part of local stakeholders to address violent extremism and other security challenges, the project's activities and strategies were relevant and necessary.

Project strategies—such as community dialogues where different stakeholders met and discussed their differences to come up with a solution, or grants that were provided to groups to host dialogues or tournaments between police and youth—were also relevant for the type of approach that they utilized, which was a counterweight to the security-oriented approach of government stakeholders, and was seen as affecting positively the level of collaboration and trust between community members and police.

*"Before the project, the disconnected relationship between police and the community was a main reason for tension and violent extremism. While the community had no place to air their complaints such as roadblocks, on the other hand police had no place to explain the reason*

In explaining how project activities were designed to be relevant to young men and women, staff members from both Search and project partners, interviewed during the evaluation, referred back to a report entitled "Meet Me at *Maskani*", which they cited as the basis for the project. One of the key findings in this document was that youth in the region have few or no platforms to air their frustrations and, with the absence of CSOs, a majority of them would generally meet at places like *maskani* (informal hangouts), homes or mosques to discuss relevant issues.[27] These places, however, were not always conducive to discussions and could not offer young people opportunities for gaining new skills to address their frustrations.

Indeed, it seems that Search identified two specific needs to be addressed, in a first instance, by the *Inuka!* project, the first being the lack of adequate platforms or safe spaces for open dialogue around violent extremism and radicalization, the second the lack of capacity for young people to act as facilitators and leaders. Nearly all informants, including partners and project participants, confirmed both needs. The lack of capacity was also confirmed through the baseline survey, with only 5% of respondents suggesting that young men and women had enough training to deal with violent extremism issues.[28] Through the *Inuka!* project, instead, young participants confirmed that they were able to engage with their peers, and that they gained new skills on countering violent extremism and radicalization, as well as a platform to address their concerns and frustrations.

This relevance was also echoed by quantitative data from the endline survey, when respondents were asked whether they thought that young men and women in their community were in need of training opportunities to deal with issues of violent extremism and radicalization.

**Table 1: Answers to the question, "Do you think that young men and women in your community have enough training opportunities to deal with issues of violent extremism and radicalization?"**
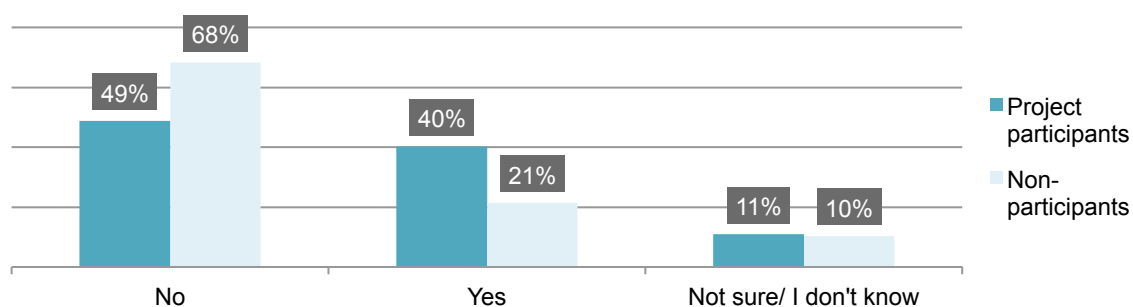


As Table 1 shows, 49% project participants who took part in the endline survey thought that young men and women still did not have enough training opportunities, and the number is even higher (68%) for non-participants. This information suggests that the situation for the young men and women who participated to the project has improved, at least as compared to those who did not take part to it. It also implies that the project was seen as relevant for the community, and that it is still relevant, because even after its completion, a majority of

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[26] Personal Communication with Author (KII), Malindi, 7 September 2018.
[27] "Meet Me at Maskani: Mapping of Influencers, Networks, and Communication Channels in Kenya and Tanzania", Search For Common Ground, 2017.
[28] "Baseline Evaluation Report for *Inuka!*", Scofield's Associates, April 2017.

youth in targeted communities feel that they still have limited skills and opportunities to address violent extremism and radicalization.

The evaluation found that project activities aimed at empowering local CSOs through partnerships and sub-grants were also appropriate. A majority of CSO representatives reported to have little to no capacity in monitoring their activities against results, and to face both financial and personnel constraints. On the other side, these CSOs were already well established at the grassroots level, and were able to provide Search with a platform to engage with the community.

The lack of trust was also a need identified by Search and its partners, and something that the project sought to address. In part, Search did this through its collaboration with local partners: without them, it would have in fact been difficult to reach or convince the community members, as the "Meet Me at *Maskani*" report had already identified that the community had a little trust also toward some CSOs.[29] Furthermore, trust building was both seen as an outcome of the project and a principle underpinning its activities. In large part, this aspect of the project appears to have been appreciated by project stakeholders, and deemed relevant to the context and what they felt was needed to address radicalization.

> *"Collaboration is very important in peacebuilding activities. For instance, we as HUDA are very connected at the grassroots and every member, including returnees and youth community members, trust us, but we had no money to do a number of activities. Through KMYA, Search was able to reach us. In turn we connected them to these groups which would not trust Search or KMYA without us."[30]*

The Inuka project was also able to adopt a number of changes to stay relevant. According to Search and partners' staff, the project was able to adopt the cultural perceptions of each targeted community. For instance, In Lamu, the dialogue sessions could not be done with men and women together, as was initially designed, and so the project was adapted to allow dialogues being held by gender, and activities were completed. One of the critical adaptations made by the project was how Search, MUHURI and the Lamu-based partner, KYBI, were able to address the night fish ban, which had for years been creating tensions between security forces and fishermen and women. Working on this specific issue was not part of the original plan, but as Search, MUHURI and KYBI saw it as one way to start to build the trust between police and the community, activities were shifted to support dialogue on this. The change also required shifting the format of activities, with a stronger emphasis on single-stakeholder engagement as a preparatory step for multi-stakeholder dialogues. These changes allowed the project to stay relevant and eventually resulted in the launch of the successful Mvuvi Card initiative (see section on Impact for more information)

Overall, the activities and strategies implemented by the project have therefore been found to be relevant and aligned with the main goal of *Inuka!*, which was to build increased trust and collaboration between key stakeholders to prevent radicalization and violent extremism in coastal Kenya.

## 4.2. Effectiveness

The overall project goal was to build increased trust and collaboration between key stakeholders to prevent radicalization and violent extremism in Coastal Kenya. To reach that goal, three objectives and seven outcomes were identified in the original project proposal. Activities and strategies employed during the implementation phases proved to be effective

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[29] The report finds that at-risk individuals in these locations were not turning to CSOs to voice their frustrations or more importantly, to find solutions. There seems to be a "crisis of confidence" when it comes to CSOs; both community respondents and key informants noted that CSOs are not often trusted by these communities.
[30] Personal Communication with Author (KII), Kwale, 6 September 2018.

for the project to achieve its intended outcomes. The findings related to effectiveness are presented under each of the three objectives.

### Objective 1: Strengthening Capacity and Leadership Skills

All the evidence collected during the evaluation indicates that the capacities of all three main target groups under the *Inuka!* project—partner CSOs, community CSOs and community stakeholders—were strengthened effectively.

A number of stakeholders interviewed during the evaluation suggested that *Inuka!* was able to empower some of these CSOs in terms of capacity building and financial support to enable them to implement their activities. Likewise, the project was also able to provide community leaders (youth and adults) with new skills as an effort to empower them in their efforts to counter violent extremism, radicalization and other security challenges prevailing in their communities. The achievement of this outcome was also supported by other similar and ongoing initiatives, through which international donors, such as USAID, have been building the capacity for local CSOs. These included efforts to promote partnerships between local and international organizations through the Leadership Initiative for Good Governance in Africa (LIGGA) project.

During the project, Search engaged with MUHURI and helped to build the capacity of the organization's to effectively implement project activities focusing on. KMYA, a well-known CSO dealing with violent extremism in coastal Kenya, was engaged by Search and worked on issues around youth (young males and females). KYBI, a grassroots CSO from Lamu, was engaged by Search to implement activities in that county. During the project, through these partners, Search was also engaged with other local and smaller CSOs, such as HUDA and KIMWACO, and supported them in terms of capacity building. In this respect, the project was effective at supporting CSOs' capacity building in financial management, networking, and also use of technology and application of more rigorous monitoring and evaluation (M&E) tools. This effort by Search not only enabled CSOs to reach a wide area and people who they would not have been able to reach by themselves, but also empowered them in terms of expertise and skills to effectively address violent extremism.

*"As you will see, one of our objectives was to build the capacity of the grassroots CSOs. These CSOs were unable to do a number of things in order to address these security issues. Even during the monitoring and evaluation, we noticed their shortcomings, so a number of times we conducted training to empower their personnel on M&E aspects."[31]*

The findings from the qualitative data are confirmed by the quantitative data. Significantly, all endline survey respondents—project participants and non-participants—indicated having positive views on the capacity of CSOs in addressing violent extremism in their communities. As Table 2 below shows, the rate is significantly higher for project participants, with more than 83% of respondents who either agreed or completely agreed with the statement, compared to 64% of non-participants. The number is still generally positive and, together with the information recorded from interviewing key stakeholders, points to this outcome having been achieved. For example, representatives from grantee CSOs suggested that despite being very connected at the grassroots level, they had limited capacity financially and technically to be able to reach all communities and implement most of their activities effectively, but that through *Inuka!* they are now better able to perform in that capacity.

From a gender perspective, it is also interesting to note a difference between how men and women responded, with considerably more negative views among women compared to men. Specifically, 22% of female project participants said that they either disagreed or completely disagreed with the statement about CSOs' capacities, compared to 6% for male

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[31] Personal Communication with Author (FGD), Mombasa, 7 September 2018.

respondents. Similarly, among non-participants, those who gave negative responses were 31% (for women) and 6% (for men). This information points to a gendered perception of the work done by CSOs, which could be further explored in future efforts.

**Table 2: Answers to the question, "Do you agree with the statement that CSOs in your community have the necessary skills to address radicalization and violent extremism?"**
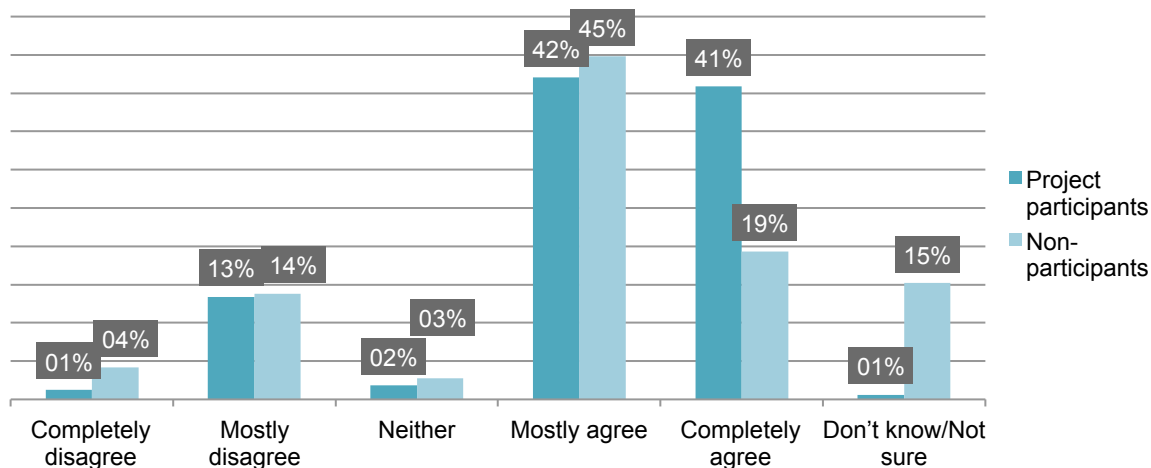


In terms of leadership, Search engaged with local religious, community and government leaders to ensure that these important actors were engaged and working together in addressing violent extremism, radicalization and other security challenges. Through single-stakeholder capacity building dialogues, the project was able to engage and build the capacity of religious leaders one by one as well as through Community Interfaith Councils, community leaders, youth, and women influencers, and local county government authorities such County Chiefs, police officers, and County Commissioners. This approach was effective to address and improve the level of understanding of the issues around violent extremism, human rights, religious teachings that insist on love and not hatred, and on how to use their influence to positively lead the community. In line with Search's approach, these activities worked as the entry point for the multi-stakeholder dialogues.

*"The capacity building for police was the most effective activity to bring the police side on board. Before, police had a very negative notion about the public. We trained them on treating people with dignity, [respecting] human rights, etc., which had become very helpful during the dialogues and forums."[32]*

### Objective 2: Cultivating Working Partnerships

Relations between communities and the state are heavily influenced by the behavior of the Kenyan police, and this continues to be seen problematic, featuring many of the practices identified already in the 2009 Ransley Task Force Report, which showed that police officers were heavily involved with bribes and corruption, the use of extrajudicial force and lack of accountability.[33] This finding is a reflection of the situation in many African countries, where the police has been the product of colonial history. The traditional colonial system of policing involved "oppression and repression of civilian resistance. The police served the colonial

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[32] Personal Communication with Author (KII), Mombasa, 10 September 2018.
[33] "Report of National Task Force on Police Reform", Government of Kenya, 2009.

government's ends with the rights of the colonial subjects secondary to this objective."[34] Police in Coastal Kenya have been accused of shooting criminal suspects. There have also been claims of abducting and making people disappear, and other abuses toward civilians affecting the relationship between police and communities.[35]

This perception was confirmed by the findings from the baseline, where 83% of respondents suggested that police-community relations were not good, mainly on account of police brutality, lack of confidentiality and secrecy, bribes and corruption, and holding criminal suspects without justification (see Table 3 below).[36] It is therefore clear how, for the project to achieve its main goal, activities that aimed at building a working partnership between the community and security forces were necessary. To do this, the project included dialogues where parties came together to discuss their grievances or concerns and to find a common solution. The evaluation has found this strategy to be among *Inuka!'s* most effective. However, because of the existing tension, Search and its partners had to split the dialogue process into phases, by holding a single stakeholder dialogue first, and only after listening to both parties' concerns and grievances, multi-stakeholder meetings were called for different parties to come together and discuss. This approach was seen as effective in helping to restore the community-police relationship in all intervention communities.

*"A good example for the dialogues is while addressing the issue in Lamu. When we sat with fishermen they told us that their concern is that the government is mistreating them by banning them from fishing at night, a time when fishing is effective. When sitting with the government, they told the fishermen that they had [ordered] the ban because terrorists were using night fishing as a way to conduct their activities. After hearing the concern from both sides, we held multi stakeholder meetings where both sides listened to one another and came up with an Mvuvi Card as a solution."[37]*

Social activities through sports and tournaments have also proven effective in promoting the relationship between the community and police. In fact, Search made available two types of sub-grants for local CSOs: the first for groups to hold dialogues, the second to host social events. In all intervention communities, the community therefore had an opportunity to gather with police and compete in different sports. These gatherings have been reported by most young participants in targeted communities as an important activity, which helped them to start trusting police officers and collaborating with them in countering violent extremism and other security challenges.

*"Before the project, there was a huge gap between police and the community. But now we are collaborating with them. We report incidents when we see them. We are playing soccer games with them. And sometimes they even send us security at our social events, a thing which they would not have done before."[38]*

The quantitative data support this positive finding and confirm that the outcomes under this objective have largely been achieved. In particular, data from the endline survey shows a significant improvement in the perceptions of respondents related to the relationship between communities and security forces: at baseline, only 18% saw these as positive, whereas at endline the percentage was 37% for non-participants and 57% for project participants. This finding suggests that the project, in pursuing this objective, benefited from general changes in the context. Yet, the large difference between the positive views of

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[34] "Local Policing Accountability in Kenya: Challenges and Opportunities for Action", Centre for Human Rights and Policy Studies and African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum, 2014.
[35] Ibid.
[36] "Baseline Evaluation Report for *Inuka!*", Scofield's Associates, April 2017.
[37] Personal Communication with Author (KII), Mombasa, 11 September 2018.
[38] Personal Communication with Author (FGD), Kwale, 6 September 2018.

project participants and non-participants (20 percentage points) is indicative of just how much the project contributed to influence perceptions among those who took part to it.



**Table 3: Answers to the question, "How would you describe the level of partnership or collaboration that exists now between communities and security agencies?"**
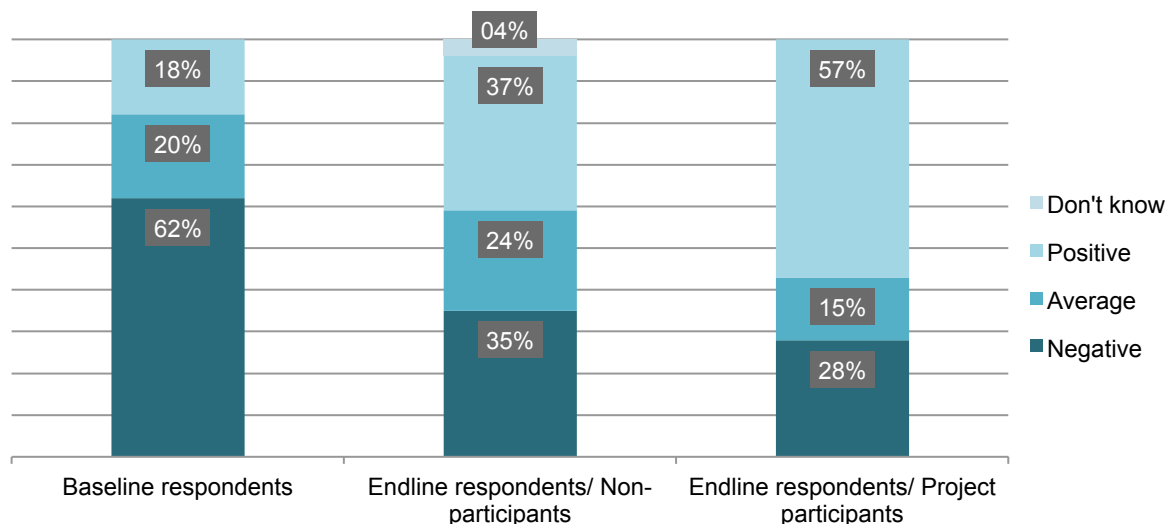
These achievements notwithstanding, the survey results also indicate that negative views continue to exist, from the community toward the police and vice-versa, and the qualitative data also confirm it. Some of the responses gathered for the evaluation, in relation to this challenge, suggest that this might be due to the fact security officers were mostly engaged informally and through focal points, whereas a more formal engagement would have triggered a different response. The project could also be more effective in the future if it engages with police training centers, for instance, where police officers have to undergo training before joining the force, and ongoing courses while in the force. This could open up opportunities for more formal training, which could then cover issues such as human rights, the causes of violent extremism and how to engage with communities. A more formal approach would also align with the National Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism, chiefly under the pillar of ensuring government institutions and all other actors responsible for CVE are equipped with necessary skills, tools and awareness. Interestingly, interviewed stakeholders from the security sector also recommended this in Malindi (Kilifi county).

*"The project tended to invite police, but very few in my opinion. Search should find a way to engage with the police force as an institution instead of individuals. For instance, I have been attending these dialogues and see their importance, so if Search should come and invite the police force through our training center we would have a good number of police participants."[39]*

### *Objective 3: Developing Collaborative Responses*

The activities implemented under this objective focused on the creation of ICT platforms aimed at sharing information and promoting collaboration about critical security challenges at local and community levels, increasing the availability of effective, community-rooted information to inform national level policy development, and fostering understanding and acceptance of localized security provisions by relevant stakeholders within the project

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[39] Personal Communication with Author (KII), Kilifi-Malindi, 7 September 2018.

communities. Each partner in the *Inuka!* project was given the task of implementing a specific ICT platform, which focused on a specific group in the community. As such, KMYA focused on youth (male and female); MUHURI on women (adult and young mothers); and KYBI, in Lamu, on fishermen and women. The activities around the platforms were designed, first, for the community to be able to share information among themselves and with the government, and secondly, for the stakeholders and CSOs responsible for activities countering violent extremism to be able to share information and provide feedback.

By the end of the project, the evaluation found that two main ICT activities had been supported. The first involved a text message application, through which community members could share and provide information to the authorities quickly and with the expectation that the government would respond accordingly. When the respondents sent messages through a specific phone number (40094), the messages would go to senior officials of the government, including the County Commissioners, Deputy County Commissioners and County Senior Chiefs. All government officials with access to the ICT platforms were then responsible for distributing those messages to the relevant government entities, based on content. For instance, if the message were about security, the Senior Chief would have to forward it to the Police Chief, who was then supposed to take appropriate action in a swift way. Several project participants said that this platform was effective, as people using it not only became comfortable reporting suspicious activities without worrying about being known. The online platform has also become a main source of important government information for community members, by allowing them to access information from the Huduma Centre website, which is the hub of all government information including how to obtain a national identity card.

> *"We have a Whatsapp group with police where we are communicating about different issues, and [sharing] criminal information when it arises. Through the platform we can also view different services provided by the government through the Huduma Center. There is also this number, 40094, where we can send information on any suspicious activities or to look into information."[40]*

The second main initiative was the creation and distribution of Mvuvi Cards in Lamu. This, as already discussed, came as a result of a change to the project, which was aimed at addressing the existing gap between security officers and fishermen and women in that county specifically. The Mvuvi card represents indeed a highlight of how very effective the *Inuka!* project was in addressing the objective of developing collaborative responses to shared community security challenges at the county level, and it is discussed in greater detail under the section on impact.

Another positive finding under this objective was in relation to increased understanding. As Table 4 below shows, the difference between the responses from project participants (PP) and those from non-participants (NP) shows that the former group feels that they have a greater understanding of how security forces work in their respective community. Specifically, the table shows that whereas 57% of project participants answered positively ('mostly yes' and 'definitely yes') to the question, only 27% of non-participants said the same.

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[40] Personal Communication with Author (FGD), Mombasa, 11 September 2018.

**Table 4: Answers to the question, "Do you feel that you understand how security forces work in your community, including how they collaborate with CSOs?"**



| | Definitely not | Mostly not | Mostly yes | Definitely yes | Don't know/Not sure |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PP-Women | 08% | 27% | 48% | 16% | 01% |
| PP-Men | 11% | 37% | 45% | 05% | 01% |
| NP-Women | 07% | 25% | 36% | 03% | 28% |
| NP-Men | 33% | 37% | 14% | 01% | 15% |
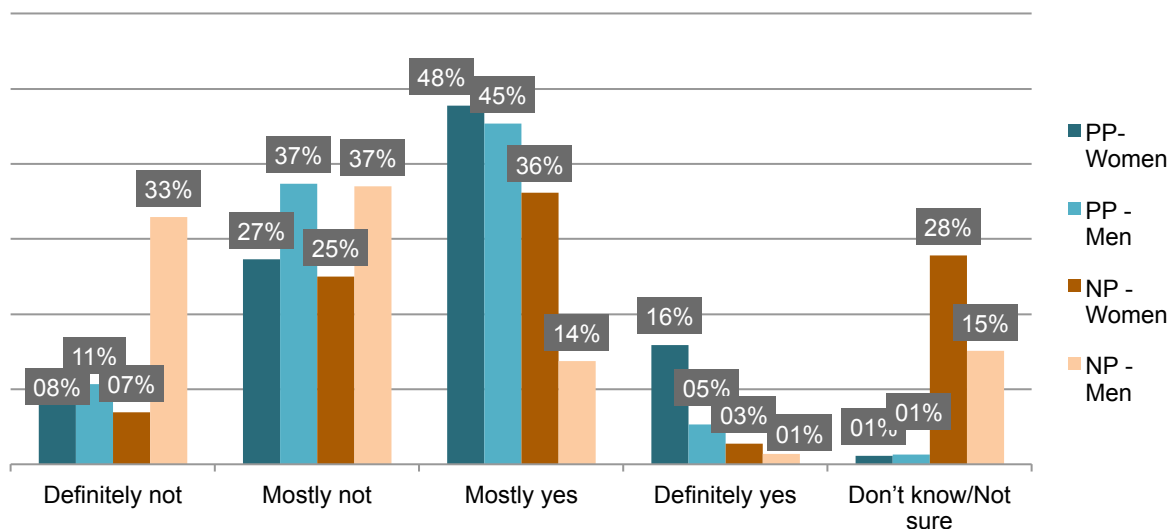
On the challenges' side, the evaluation found that the ICT platform did not work as effectively as expected and was to some extent unable to fulfill its intended purpose. In all intervention communities, informants interviewed during the evaluation suggested that the Whatsapp number was not well known by community members. And in those communities where the platform was somewhat known, the responses received indicated that it was expected to work better than it did. A general feedback was that there were delays or no responses if the community reported incidents to the authorities. Respondents from both government (i.e. those who were the focal points of the Whatsapp number) and communities echoed this. The platform also did not reach as many people as expected, with indications from Search being that only 500 people used it, much fewer than the target of 6.000.

*"As the receiver of the text to 40094, I can tell you, people's responses are not higher, and also when we deliver that text to the responsible office, the response also tends to be delayed."[41]*

*"The platform was not as successful as we expected. I think the platform should be focused more on the youth and we should train some youth who then will go and train their peers on how to use the platform."[42]*

The challenge with the WhatsApp platform suggests some flaws in how the *Inuka!* project was designed, which is highlighted also when comparing this finding with the positive success story of the Mvuvi Cards. While new technologies and the use of social media have been on the rise in Kenya, how citizens relate to them is still an open question. For example, many people still rely on face-to-face meetings and traditional media both to share and get their information, as was identified during the baseline: asked "What channel is [security-related] information shared between the members of the community?" 35% of respondents indicated community meetings, compared to less than 15% choosing phone and only 5% social media.[43] Similarly, the success in Lamu was clearly conditional to how Search had

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[41] Personal Communication with Author (KII), Kwale, 6 September 2018.
[42] Personal Communication with Author (KII), Mombasa, 11 September 2018.
[43] "Baseline Evaluation Report for *Inuka!*", Scofield's Associates (April 2017), page 28.

first found a very specific issue, which resonated with security and community stakeholders, and only then developed a specific response. All of this suggests that ICT activities were introduced with a focus on equipment and technology, but without sufficient thinking going into strategies for how they could be adopted by community members.

Finally, Search and partners also used a policy briefing strategy as a way to influence policies at the national level. Specifically, briefings produced as part of the project were used to engage Members of Parliament (MP), key officers in the Kenya Police Service, members of the National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management, the Kenya Defense Forces, and donor representatives. Briefings were also shared with county-level officials, including County Assembly members and civil society leaders. This strategy was meant to give visibility to the local approach and foster its adoption, or integration into national policies. However, the evaluation was unable to identify the way *Inuka!* briefings could achieve this. The documents themselves appear not to have been a focus of the project, and it is unclear if Search engaged the right stakeholders, including MPs working on terrorism policies and officers within the National Counter Terrorism Center.

### *Effectiveness of Monitoring Tools*

Throughout the project, Search clearly made use of a diverse array of monitoring tools, including pre- and post-training questionnaires, regular field visits and collection of data related to the online platforms. A baseline was also done at the project's start, which produced quantitative data on the views of community members around issues of conflict, cohesion and trust. Overall, these tools were appropriate for the context, but their effectiveness was limited.

On the positive, side, the monitoring tools were able to support and improve the capacity of partners CSOs, and their ability to work more professionally. They also supported Search's reporting activities, mainly in relation to the quarterly reports that the organization submitted to the donor agency. However, the tools were mostly focused on monitoring outputs (e.g. number of activities and participants) or short-term outcomes (e.g. knowledge changes immediately following training events). The usefulness of the tools in monitoring progress towards longer-term (or higher-level) outcomes was much more limited. For example, while there is evidence that Search gathered information about the messages being sent to the Whatsapp number, there are questions about the value of those records. Rather than having the total numbers of messages sent, in fact, understanding where they went and how they were treated would have been far more useful to understand whether the project was being effective. This, however, does not appear to have been done, nor was the evaluation able to find other learning events—such as workshops to discuss monitoring data or a mid-term evaluation—which focused on learning rather than progress monitoring. This is certainly an area of improvement for Search and its partners in the future.

## 4.3 Validity of Approach and Theory of Change

The *Inuka!* project's approach in countering violent extremism relied on Search's model for addressing violent conflict. This focuses on transformative and peacebuilding principles, which emphasize healthy relationships and connections. The theory of change was built to integrate this approach and further describe the causal linkages between actions and results. In the original project proposal, it was defined as follows:

> *If key community actors, including civil society leaders, youth, women (wives and mothers), community leaders, religious leaders, government and security forces, have increased capacity and access to platforms to promote mutual engagement around critical security issues, then communities will be able to provide more effective*

*responses to prevent and counter VE because this engagement will cultivate meaningful collaboration and working partnerships based on mutual trust.*[44]

In order to understand whether the theory is valid—whether, in other words, change happened through the mechanisms described in it—the theory has to be described in more detail. Using the information collected from the evaluation, and a more nuanced framework for defining the individual elements within a theory of change (and the relations between them), a new and expanded theory was developed, which is presented below.

**Impact**

Increased trust and collaboration between key community stakeholders to prevent radicalization and violent extremism in coastal Kenya

**Long-term outcomes**

…THEN communities are able to provide more effective responses to prevent and counter violent extremism

Outcome 3.3: Increased understanding and acceptance of collaborative, localized security provisions by relevant stakeholders within communities.

Outcome 3.2: Increased availability of effective, community-rooted information to inform national-level policy development.

Outcome 3.1: Key community groups have platforms to share information and collaborate on critical security challenges at the local and county levels.

**Intermediate outcomes**

Outcome 1.2: Improved capacity of key community stakeholders to engage one another around security challenges and CVE.

Outcome 2.2: Increased engagement and dialogue between diverse community and security actors at the community, county, and regional levels.

Outcome 1.1: Partner CSOs and the wider CSO community have increased capacity to engage key community stakeholders around security challenges and provisions.

Outcome 2.1: Improved engagement based on mutual trust between community members affected by or vulnerable to radicalization and gov't and security actors.

IF key community actors, including civil society leaders, youth, women (wives and mothers), community leaders, religious leaders, government and security forces, have increased capacity and access to platforms to promote mutual engagement around critical security issues…

**Actions**

Strategy 1 (Obj. 1): Increase capacity of key stakeholders (civil society and government)

Strategy B: Building single and Multi-stakeholder partnerships (between communities and security forces, across ethnic and social divides), incl. sub-grants

Strategy C: Building or strengthening platforms for engagement and information sharing, (at local, county and national levels)

The theory of change as described above makes it clear that, while the outcomes pursued were varied, there were three main strategies, each tied to a specific objective: the first strategy related to capacity building (of partner CSOs, community CSOs and community stakeholders); the second focused on building dialogue between different stakeholders, working first with different groups separately, then bringing them together (once their capacity for mutual engagement was stronger); the third and final strategy was creating platforms for information sharing and collaboration (as a way to concretely engage on violent extremism and radicalization issues).

The evidence collected during the evaluation confirms that each strategy was, in its own right, appreciated by participants and stakeholders, and effective in achieving intermediate results. For example, the project has successfully strengthened the capacity of participants; similarly, all stakeholders saw the dialogues (and related social events) as very useful and effective at repairing the otherwise broken relations between communities and police officers, fostering trust. This in turn led to the search and identification of concrete solutions,

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[44] See Evaluation Terms of References (Annex 1).

mostly seen in the cases of the Mvuvi Cards in Lamu and, albeit to a lesser extent, the Boni Enclave Campaign (see impact section for more information on these).

All this evidence validates certain elements of the theory of change, which Search and its partners should thus make sure to apply to all similar initiatives in the future. Nevertheless, the evidence from the evaluation also highlights some weaknesses in the design of the theory of change, mostly seen in the achievement of long-term outcomes. Here it is worth mentioning again how the evidence of impact is limited to only a few cases, and also difficult to separate from what appear to be context-wide improvements that are not directly linked to the *Inuka!* project.

In conclusion, the outcome chain described in the theory of change can be validated only in part. Strategies are indeed effective to achieve short-term outcomes—with the first and second strategies particularly positive in this regard. However, the links between the strategies and the long-term outcomes are weaker: here there are a clear missing link (the engagement of national stakeholders) and over-reliance on untested questions about how trust can be fostered beyond the individual level. What is still missing, in fact, is the evidence of the role that a project has had in building *social* trust, or community cohesion.

## 4.4. Impact

The overall goal of the *Inuka!* project was to build increased trust and collaboration between key stakeholders to prevent radicalization and violent extremism in intervention communities. Therefore, impact was assessed based on how the respondents viewed the level of security and safety after the end of the project. Likewise, the level of collaboration between community and police in combating extremism represented another dimension of impact, as did the communities' perception on how conflict dynamics have changed over the course of the project implementation.

Overall, respondents from interviews and focus groups in targeted communities suggested that their communities felt safer now if compared with two years ago, i.e. the start of the project. This finding was backed up by the responses from the endline survey.

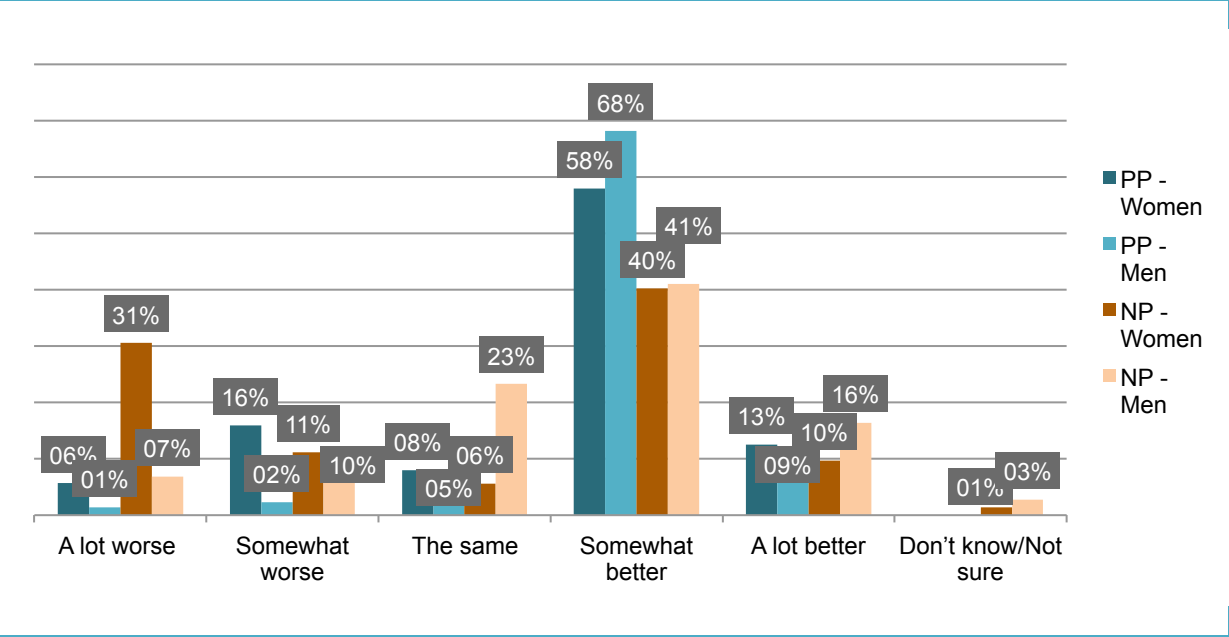**Table 5: Answers to the question, "How would you describe security in your community compared to two years ago?"**

Table 5 above indicates that, generally, all endline respondents felt that the security situation had improved in their communities over the last two years. However, project participants (PP) were more positive than non-participants (NP), with 88% of them answering 'somewhat better' or 'a lot better', compared to 54% for non-participants. The fact that both respondent groups answered positively, however, means that it is likely that other forces were at play, outside of the project, which have contributed to the change in perceptions about security.

Data from Table 5 also shows a significant discrepancy in the perceptions of security between women and men. Among project participants, for example, women appear to see the situation as more negative then their male peers: 22% of them responded 'somewhat worse' or 'a lot worse' when describing the security situation, compared to 3% of men. The same difference is visible between the negative responses of non-participants (42% among female respondents vs. 17% among men). This finding implies that young women still have serious concerns about the security situation, and that the improvements experienced in the last two years have affected them less than they had the men. In focus groups, women indeed confirmed that while they agreed that security has improved, they also said that crimes beyond terrorism and violent extremism continued to pose security threats in their communities, mentioning rape and sexual-based violence in particular.

"Although these Al-Shabaab things are going down, we still have major insecurity challenges facing our community. Sexual crimes such as rape and abuse continue to exist. Juvenile gangs still pose threats to the community."[45]

Similarly, there is evidence that suggests that project activities—dialogues and capacity building workshops in particular—had positive impact on the relationships between communities and local authorities, albeit mostly at an informal level. In interviews and focus groups, community members and leaders suggested that dialogues were crucial in establishing the broken relationship between police and the community. Responses from partners also highlight how capacity building and financial, management and technological support, including around monitoring and evaluation, have positively increased their ability to counter violent extremism and radicalization with their respective target groups.

In Kwale and Kilifi, for example, the dialogues contributed in particular to closing the gap between the community and the police, which was mainly caused by the tendency of police to arrest community members and youth based on what were perceived as unsubstantiated claims, or using extrajudicial power to handle criminals and criminal incidents. In Lamu, dialogues have clearly resulted in improving cohesion between groups and the activities are seen as having increased collaboration between communities and authorities.

*"Dialogues have been able to build the relationship between police and youth. Before the program, youth were the enemy of police and vice versa. Nevertheless, now we are their friends and sources of information…They don't arrest us unreasonably as they used to."[46]*

The evaluation also found an unintended positive outcome: the engagement on the Boni Enclave Campaign to address insecurity through collaboration between multiple stakeholders from Garissa, Kilifi, Lamu and Tana. Originally, the idea for the campaign came from the government, who wanted to launch a military operation in Boni Forest in order to flush out suspected Al-Shabaab militants active in the area. Impressed by the collaboration between CSO stakeholders, however, the government contacted Search and its partners, seeking to build a multi-stakeholder campaign so that civilians could also be involved. Speaking during an interview, the Director of the Boni Enclave Campaign, who also

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[45] Personal Communication with Author (KII), Malindi-Kilifi, 8 September 2018.
[46] Personal Communication with Author (FDG), Kilifi, 8 September 2018.

happened to be County Commissioner of Lamu, mentioned the intention of the government to involve CSOs and other stakeholders to help in its efforts to fight Al-Shabaab terrorists.[47]

Overall, the evaluation provides some good evidence for impact, especially around the contribution of the project to improving perceptions of security and trust between different stakeholders. However, beyond the case of Lamu and the Mvuvi Cards, the evidence is still limited. Part of the challenge in identifying impact is linked to a lack of data, including around baseline measurements of project indicators relating to trust, which makes comparisons with endline data impossible. Part of it is also related to the chosen methodology for the evaluation, which focused on the four criteria and could not, as such, identify the 'right' evidence to validate the contribution of Search and its partners. From this perspective, the case study on the Mvuvi Cards, presented below, shows how using an approach more tailored to social change initiative can lead to more specific and useful evidence.

### *Impact Case Study: The Mvuvi Cards*

The following case study has been developed using Contribution Analysis, a theory-based evaluation "approach for assessing causal questions and inferring causality in real-life programme evaluations."[48] The starting points for applying Contribution Analysis are a theory of change and an observable outcome: the former has already been presented in the previous section, and for the latter the choice has been to focus on the Mvuvi Cards, which several key informants have identified as a key outcome of the project. A contribution story is then developed, based on the project's theory of change, to describe Search's contribution to the outcome; and all available evidence is presented and discussed to prove (or disprove) the validity of the story.

### *The outcome*

The Mvuvi Cards were a solution that, according to several informants interviewed for the evaluation, responded to a particular grievance in Lamu county, which had been pitting security forces and local authorities against fishermen and women: a night fishing ban that the former had declared in 2011 and that was still in place at the start of project activities. Fishing being the main economic activity for people from the island, the ban had severe negative consequences on their livelihood. To create a better environment for the dialogues and other project activities to take place, Search, MUHURI and the local partner, KYBI, engaged with the government to pursue the lifting of the ban and find common ground to address the tensions between the two groups.

Search had clearly been working on easing tensions around the night fish ban since at least the third quarter of the project (January-March 2017), involving local stakeholders from communities, government and security forces. Then, on April 24, 2018, the Mvuvi Card initiative was officially launched, which aimed to formally register fishermen and women in Lamu, so that security forces could better vet and track them when they went to sea at night. Those who chose to register would thus get the Mvuvi Card, which contained personal information about the fisherman or woman, and also a tracking device that security officials would be able to use to monitor their journey at sea.

The registration and handing out of Mvuvi Cards were designed as a way to help protect fishermen from carrying strangers on their boats, and reduce the risk of mistreatment by security forces. It was also a way to build trust between the two stakeholder groups, and eventually get the night fishing ban to be lifted. This actually happened immediately after the launch of the Mvuvi Card, in May 2017. By the end of June 2018, the initiative was well on its way, with 500 fishermen having received their Card and thousands more expected to do the same by the end of the year.

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[47] "Boni Forest operation extended in Lamu, Tana River and Garissa", KBC Channel, 15 October 2017 (Accessed on 16 October 2018).
[48] See BetterEvaluation for more information (http://betterevaluation.org/plan/approach/contribution_analysis).

*Search's Contribution Story*

The agreement around the Mvuvi Card initiative, and the benefits that it brought in terms of trust-building, fits well with Search's narrative about how change should have taken place under *Inuka!*. Given the conflict dynamics seen in Lamu, Search had in fact identified a need for facilitating an incremental dialogue process, involving the different stakeholder groups separately at first, and then bringing them together to discuss areas for collaboration and, eventually, to identify practical solutions.

Search has been working in Lamu since 2017 and during that time it has been supporting the implementation of the Lamu County's Action Plan for Countering Violent Extremism, a localized adaptation of the National Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism—the latter was officially adopted by the Kenyan Government at the end of 2016, the former at the end of March 2017.[49] As part of this process, Search regularly participated to multi-stakeholder sessions, and organized several of its own, involving and working through its local partners. It was a result of these efforts that the opportunity to work on the lifting of the night fishing ban came about, as a way to improve relations between the two groups and increase trust and security within Lamu.

Search's contribution story can therefore be presented as the completion of several steps, all aligned with the theory of change for the project, as described in the previous section:

The organization worked with local partners to sponsor multi-stakeholder dialogues involving groups in conflict with each other;

During these dialogue sessions, security forces realized that fishermen could become partners in their efforts to counter violent extremism;

During the same events, fishermen and women acknowledged the needs of security forces and agreed to allow them to be registered and monitored while at sea;

The facilitated process then led to the identification of a joint solution (the Mvuvi Card initiative), in April 2017, which served both groups' needs and interests, and thus represented a win-win compromise;

Security forces responded to this by lifting night fishing ban the following month, and committing to treating fishermen and women differently; and

The improvement of relations between security forces and fishermen and women led to greater trust and higher levels of perceived community.

*Evidence Supporting Search's Contribution Story*

Positively, the evaluation found evidence for each of the steps. To begin with, several accounts confirm Search's analysis of the main problems affecting the county. Since at least 2014, Lamu has been a hotbed of terrorist activities, which has triggered a strong reaction on the part of the government. Its response, as covered already in the background section, was very much aligned with a security-first approach and relied on the deployment of security forces across the county. This had negative consequences: although Lamu has in fact been less touched by inter-communal violence compared to other areas in Kenya, it is affected by dynamics of conflict, in particular between settlers and local populations around land rights and natural resources. These dynamics have been known to lead to animosity between authorities and communities, and between Muslim and non-Muslim groups. The deployment of additional security forces and the hard approach used by them thus fed into the conflictual narrative and negatively impacted the level of trust between different groups.[50]

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[49] "Lamu County Action Plan for Countering Violent Extremism", Halimu Shauri, *ResearchGate* (Accessed on 12 October 2018).

[50] "Inside Kenya's war on terror: the case of Lamu", Thomas Nyagah, James Mwangi and Larry Attree, Saferworld (Accessed on 12 October 2018).

This was clearly seen also in tensions between security forces and fishermen, which originated from the night fishing ban that had been put in place in 2011 and, according to Search, affected as many as 6,000 fishermen from counties where fishing represents the main source of livelihoods: "fishermen believed that this ban was an injustice", Search's analysis had found, "which further eroded trust between security agencies and citizens, resulting in resentment toward security agencies efforts."[51] This dynamic was also identified by other NGOs working in the area: a report by Saferworld indicates, for example, that some local residents "saw the security response as an inconvenience. A ban on night fishing was harmful for fishermen, as too was the need for complex fishing permission sign-offs from the Kenyan navy. A curfew also meant that weddings, traditionally held at night, could not be carried out. Protests went on for days before this was scrapped."[52]

Project reports confirm that Search and a host of local and international partners were involved in single- and multi-stakeholder dialogues with several groups in Lamu, including security forces and community representatives. They also show that some of these dialogues were specifically organized by Search, and that it was at the end of such a session, in April 2017, that "participants discovered a mutual interest in lifting the fishing ban as a key entry point to immediately improve and create sustainable collaboration between state security agencies and Lamu's coastal communities."[53]

The distribution of Mvuvi Cards officially began on April 24, 2018[54], with a first round of registration; a second round was then started in July of the same year, at which point "at least 300 fishermen in Lamu have been given Mvuvi cards for easy identification by security personnel in the Indian Ocean" and "some 4,500 fishermen are expected to be issued with the cards".[55] Furthermore, the initiative was from the start identified as the result of collaboration between different stakeholders: "other partners behind the cards", stated a news article, "are county commissioner Joseph Kanyiri, KYBI, and SFCG."[56]

The Mvuvi Card initiative appears to have improved relations between security forces and fishermen, and helped to increase trust between communities and local authorities. An article on Baraka FM Mombasa said, for example, that "[the Cards] come as a relief for fishermen in the region who have endured a seven year night fishing ban that has seen many of them literally drop the venture."[57] Importantly, the lifting of the night fishing ban, which occurred already in May 2017, was seen as a direct result of the agreement around the Mvuvi Cards."[58] And finally, a key stakeholder in the process, Lamu County Commissioner Joseph Kanyiri, went on the record to say that "the Mvuvi Card idea [was] a 'great milestone in this generation'."[59] And in an interview for this evaluation, he added that, in his view, "this partnership [under the *Inuka!* project] was behind the force for the government to lift the night fish ban in my county."

*Evidence Against Search's Contribution Story*

Several pieces of evidence have been collected during the evaluation, which pose challenges to Search's narrative about the contribution to the project to the outcome. The

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[51] "Joining efforts to create a safe environment for night fishing in Kenya", Search for Common Ground, 21 August 2018 (Accessed on 12 October 2018).
[52] "Inside Kenya's war on terror: the case of Lamu", Thomas Nyagah, James Mwangi and Larry Attree, Saferworld (Accessed on 12 October 2018.
[53] "*Inuka!*: Community-Led Security Approaches to Violent Extremism in Coastal Kenya", Third Quarterly Report to the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, Search for Common Ground, 30 April 2017.
[54] "Joining efforts to create a safe environment for night fishing in Kenya", Search for Common Ground, 21 August 2018 (Accessed on 12 October 2018).
[55] "Fishermen get Mvuvi cards to end police harassment in Ocean", The Star, 21 July 2018 (Accessed on 12 October 2018).
[56] "Lamu fishers bank on tracking device to end Shabaab kidnappings, police harassment", The Star, 28 April 2018 (Accessed on 12 October 2018).
[57] "Microchip installed Mvuvi card launched in Lamu to curb terrorism", Baraka FM Mombasa, 21 July 2018 (Accessed on 12 October 2018).
[58] "Good news for Lamu fishermen as night ban is lifted", Daily Nation, 2 May 2017 (Accessed on 12 October 2017).
[59] "Lamu fishers bank on tracking device to end Shabaab kidnappings, police harassment", The Star, 28 April 2018 (Accessed on 12 October 2018).

first is about the actual role played by the organization, compared to the role played by other actors. It is, for example, still unclear how much Search influenced the multi-stakeholder platforms within which the lifting of the night fishing ban, which appears to have taken place in the context of the Lamu County's Action Plan for Countering Violent Extremism. This was approved around the same time of the discussion around the lifting of the night fishing ban (March 2017), but it appears to have been developed by other stakeholders and the evaluation could not assess the role or contribution of Search to it.

Linked to this, there appears to have been several NGOs converging on this debate, and the evaluation could not adequately distinguish the contribution of each. For example, the April 2017 meeting where the night fishing ban was first discussed between security forces and community representatives appears to have been organized jointly by Search and Pact Kenya. Similarly, although Search provided direct support to KYBI on this dialogue, MUHURI also appears to have played a role. The outcome might very well be the result of joint efforts by these and other organizations, but to assess Search's specific contribution (and thus identify lessons learned for the future) it would have been helpful to have more evidence of how the relationships between the different partners had been structured.

Another challenge is in relation to Search's specific strategy of working with single stakeholder groups as a preparatory step for multi-stakeholder dialogues. The evaluation could not find any specific evidence of this engagement, a finding that is corroborated by the timeline. Specifically, Search started to work in Lamu in early 2017 and the first substantial activities appear to have been done in the second quarter of that year. This puts into question the depth of relations that Search could have had with authorities, and suggest a greater role played by partners. Related to this is also the role that other stakeholders might have played. There have been efforts by other CSOs that had been working in the county for much longer than Search; and also changes to how authorities have responded to extremism. For example, a report by Saferworld noted, "the county commissioner's office has supported engagement with youth through football tournaments, engaged them in committees and worked with groups such as the Kenyan Muslim Alliance and the Muslim Youth Alliance on events and projects."[60] These efforts could have contributed to building positive relations within Lamu as thus paved the way to the lifting of the night fishing ban.

Finally, there are questions about whether indeed the lifting of the night fishing ban improved trust between security forces and fishermen, and subsequently between authorities and communities. As one article noted in fact that in reality security forces were still preventing boats to go to sea at night, with one fisherman being quoted as saying: ""We were told with the cards we could fish anytime we liked. It was a lie."[61]

*Conclusion*

Overall, there is a good amount of evidence to confirm Search's contribution story. In particular, it is clear that the organization was able to facilitate a multi-stakeholder dialogue in a way that led to improved relationships. It is also evident that the improved relationship between security forces and fishermen and women led to both making compromises and resolving an issue that had the potential to lower tensions in the county and increase trust. On the other hand, the evidence is less strong about Search's specific contribution, especially given its limited engagement prior to April 2017. Was Search a key facilitating force? Or was it more of a catalyst for change, providing sources and ideas that were not there before? The answer to this question could provide a valuable lesson learned for future programming. Finally, the evidence suggests that it might be too soon to see the impact of the Mvuvi Cards on trust and security. Additional learning efforts, perhaps using the same approach applied to this case study, could thus be done in the future.

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[60] "Inside Kenya's war on terror: the case of Lamu", Thomas Nyagah, James Mwangi and Larry Attree, Saferworld (Accessed on 12 October 2018.
[61] "Why Lamu fisherfolk are still crying out despite lifting of night ban", Business Daily, 7 August 2018 (Accessed on 12 October 2018).

## 4.5. Sustainability

Under this criterion, the evaluation looked at the extent to which project participants and sub-grantees will continue to make use of skills and knowledge acquired during the project, and also whether achieved outcomes, for example under capacity building, are likely to continue benefiting stakeholders beyond the end of the initiative. Likewise, the evaluation looked at factors that either impeded or enabled the sustainability of results.

There is substantial evidence, which shows that some outcomes, including the skills learned by participants and collaboration among stakeholders, will continue after the completion of the *Inuka!* project in all targeted communities. Superficially, in interviews with both project staff and key stakeholders, it became clear that dialogues, the learning cycle, sport tournaments, grants, capacity building for leadership and multi-stakeholder collaboration platforms had all been designed and implemented in a way that participants will continue with these activities even after the end of the project. In all targeted areas, communities have shown signs of taking over and continuing to host dialogues as a way of addressing challenges around their areas.

For example, the sub-grants that were given to local CSOs or community groups included a requirement to save some amount from the profits of the events organized to continue to hold additional community dialogues and sport tournaments between police and community from time to time. During the interviews and focus group discussions, community members (youth and adults alike) and leaders gave many examples of how they have started and are continuing to use the skills gained to preach for peace and train their peers. Some of these are included in the following key quotes, and highlight also the continued benefits that many participants thought that they would continue to have from the project's outcomes.

*"Through the project we learned what we call an early warning system. So as a mother I now know when my family members are about to become radicalized, hence I can report [this] to the authorities."[62]*

*"The grant is a continuous thing. We have been given money to invest and some to use for dialogues. But the initiative required us to continue hosting the dialogues by using part of our profit from our business. So, through this approach the outcome will be continuous."*

*"Youth are continuing to use the skills gained from the project. For instance, we are utilizing the ICT platform to inform the government not only about suspicious activities, but also to learn new information about government policies through the Huduma Center page."[63]*

Representatives from the government have also shown great interest in continuing the positive outcomes achieved by the project. According to several informants interviewed for the evaluation, authorities in Lamu intend, for example, to continue with the Mvuvi Card initiative, as well as the engagement of CSOs in the Boni Enclave Campaign.

*"The Boni Forest Campaign is a good example to show that we intend to continue with the positive results of project. As a County Commissioner I am also the director of this campaign, which aims to address violent extremism in our area."[64]*

In spite of the positive remarks given and the examples provided, the limitations to sustaining the project's outcomes, without additional funding being made available, are still significant. For one, the capacity of government officials to continue with the project's activities has to be deemed very low. Similarly, while project partners and other CSOs

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[62] Personal Communication with Author (FDG), Kwale, 6 September 2018.
[63] Personal Communication with Author (KII), Kilifi, 8 September 2018.
[64] Personal Communication with Author (KII), Mombasa, 10 September 2018.

working on the project have made much progress, their capacity to undertake similar initiatives in the future remains linked to the availability of funding. In this respect, more established organizations, such as MUHURI, KMYA, KYBI will likely have an easier time to continue with activities to counter violent extremism; smaller CSOs, such as HUDA and KIMWACO, however, are likely to go back to facing challenges related to finances and professional human resources.

Linked to this last aspect, since the project mostly worked at the county level, the evaluation found that the project did not integrate successfully its activities at different decision-making levels. In other words, while effectively focused on county-level stakeholders, Search and partners did not engage as effectively stakeholders at the grassroots and national levels. In terms of the former, Search engage some community CSOs, but did not, for example, succeed in reaching out to at-risk youth. Nationally, It also was unable to consistently engage stakeholders active on terrorism and extremism issues: the evaluation did not find, for example, any evidence of structured engagement with MPs or officials from the NCTC, even though they have greater authority on CVE policies than their county-level counterparts. Working at the national level, to influence the implementation of policies like the NSCVE, and bringing together grassroots, county and national stakeholders, could have engendered much greater sustainability, for example by making initiatives like the Mvuvi Cards the model to follow, rather than an *ad hoc* initiative. This finding was echoed by focus group participants and interviewees in almost every targeted community, and should be an aspect that Search and partners should review carefully moving forward.

## 4.6. Conflict Sensitivity

Conflict sensitivity refers to the practice making sure that any initiative is based on a detailed analysis of the context in which it is implemented, and that it interacts with conflict dynamics in that particular context to mitigate unintended negative effects and maximize positive ones[65]. As a leading conflict transformation and peacebuilding organization, Search prioritized conflict sensitivity and principles of *Do No Harm* on this project.

If wrongly interpreted, violent extremism and radicalization can easily be associated with one's culture or religion, even though there are other push-and-pull factors behind these phenomena. In this regard, the first conflict scan completed under the project, in September 2017, was able to inform Search and partners on the role of beliefs in conflict. The scan found that in target communities conflicts associated to resources (such as land) were automatically interpreted as religious—for example with farmers, who are mostly Christians, accusing herders (mostly Muslim) of engaging in terrorist activities.[66] Once aware of this, Search was thus able to make sure to address violent extremism and radicalization in the targeted communities as issues separate from religion. This in turn made it easier for Search and partners to work with religious scholars and preachers, who could use the holy scripts and their positives to talk about peace and conflict resolution more widely.

*"As a religious leader and Imam, I have been preaching and informing my followers on the true interpretation of the Holy Quran…and warning them about teachings which might mislead them to violent extremism and radicalization."[67]*

Search also relied on local CSO partners with experience and who were well respected at the grassroots level. This did not only open the door for Search to be accepted locally, but the organizations also helped to lead Search on sensitive issues, according to the narratives specific to each community. Despite all target communities being in coastal Kenya, in fact,

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[65] "How to guide to conflict sensitivity", Conflict Sensitivity Consortium (February 2012), page 2.
[66] "Conflict Scan to inform *Inuka!* programming by Search for Common Ground Kenya", Search for Common Ground, September 2017
[67] Personal Communication with Author (KII), Kwale, 6 September 2018.

they differ in terms of issues of culture and gender sensitivity. For example, while in Mombasa, Kilifi, and Kwale, it was relatively easy to organize forums with both men and women together, in Lamu, because of the culture, Search and partners had to work with each group separately in an effort to abide with conflict sensitivity principles. Another example of how Search ensured conflict sensitivity relates to the involvement of returnees. Initially, the *Inuka!* project also involved returnees in forums, even though this was not part of the initial design. However, these engagements were dropped after Search and partners noticed that instead of helping the returnees, they were exposing them and allowing them to become a target of the authorities.

> *"At the beginning, we tended to host forums which included returnees, nevertheless we had to stop them because we considered this principle. Their attendance in the forum become more and more dangerous because they became a target of the security system."[68]*

The *Inuka!* project was further designed to reflect the approach behind Kenya's NSCVE. This helped the project to be well received at both the national and local levels. The government's buy-in was crucial for implementation of violent extremism programming. To a large extent *Inuka!* has achieved its outcome over the course of implementation because they had the government onboard.

Finally, Search was using monitoring tools, including conflict scans, to make sure that the project continued to be balanced and to adapt programming in cases where the local context did not support the approach originally chosen. It is clear that these tools, along with the communication that Search maintained with project partners and stakeholders, led to adaptations that were aimed at increasing the positive impact of the *Inuka!* project, as has already been discussed (see, for example, the section on relevance).

# 5. Lessons Learned

Overall, the evaluation has identified the following lessons learned, which should be integrated in future efforts to design and implement initiatives to counter violent extremism and, more broadly, promote peace in Kenya:

- Building the capacity of community-level stakeholders is a necessary component of any intervention aimed at improving trust and collaboration in pursuit of peacebuilding. In other words, capacity building by Search toward local CSOs clearly had a positive impact in countering violent extremism in Coastal Kenya.
- Designing collaborative efforts among CSOs that takes into account the differences between them and also their comparative advantages (i.e. small vs. large, grassroots vs. county vs. regional, etc.) is a necessary strategy to build sustainable platforms to build trust. This was one of the pillars of the *Inuka!* project, seen in its partnerships and sub-granting scheme, all of which should be maintained in the future.
- Fostering dialogue requires engaging stakeholder groups both separately and together. Additionally, mutual engagement where levels of trust are particularly low can be better promoted through informal initiatives, like sport festivals, which rely on the positive bias of specific individuals within each group.
- The willingness of different groups to engage is related not only to the levels of trust between them, but also to the need to work together. The Mvuvi Card case shows, in fact, that even though trust levels remained low, police officers and fishermen in Lamu were still willing to collaborate given the importance of the issue once a channel of mutual engagement was created.

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[68] Personal Communication with Author (KII), Mombasa, 5 September 2018.

- New technology can provide an added value, but only where it addresses a specific need, within a defined collaborative effort. The strategy of building platforms was, from a design perspective, the weakest of the three identified in the theory of change. With the exception of the Mvuvi Card case, other practical collaborative efforts did not lead to significant change in the dynamics between different stakeholder groups.
- Capacity building, while necessary, is not sufficient for achieving longer-term outcomes, and it remains unclear how stronger skills or competencies lead to greater trust. A better strategy could be to identify, for each outcome, the capacities needed by the targeted groups, and then assess whether those are in place or not.
- The involvement of national stakeholders remains an essential component to the success of any peacebuilding endeavor, in terms of both impact and sustainability. In the future, a specific strategy for linking local to national stakeholders should be a mandatory component of any initiative like the *Inuka!* project.
- The evaluation has clearly identified that the perceptions of men and women differ significantly, and thus point to their experience also differing. In the future, this should lead Search and its partners to develop and incorporate specific gender strategies, to ensure that women are effectively engaged at all levels of project activities, and monitoring and evaluation data is also gathered in a way that can adequately show the gendered impacts of any initiative like this one.

# 6. Conclusions and Recommendations

The evaluation has found the *Inuka!* project to be relevant, effective and impactful. Project activities responded to well identified needs, which interviews and focus group discussions with participants and stakeholders confirmed to be felt in all project areas. Capacity-building efforts and multi-stakeholder dialogues were seen as particularly effective in building trust between community members, local authorities and security forces. And where solutions were identified to address specific needs, as with the Mvuvi Cards in Lamu, the project had positive impact. Indeed, the evidence for the project's successes leave little doubt about the fact that similar initiatives should continue to be supported across Kenya's Coast region.

The evaluation also found challenges—some related to the logic of the intervention, some to the chosen approach. Among these, informal gatherings were shown to have limited effectiveness in repairing relations between communities and security forces. And not all solutions were seen as effective, including the Whatsapp number and the online platform. With these limitations, as well as the lessons learned, in mind, the following recommendations are offered to inform the work of Search and its partners in the future:

- ***Continue supporting multi-stakeholder community dialogues*** where different stakeholders can meet and discuss their differences to come up with solutions. Complementing the dialogues with grants aimed at community groups to host more informal events should also be continued.
- ***Design more tailored capacity-building workshops***. While the trainings implemented during the project were effective, they can be improved. Search should in particular consider:
  - o Organizing follow-up trainings, as evaluation shows that trained youth in targeted communities still need to improve their skills to address violent extremism and radicalization;
  - o Developing training events for security officers and local authorities, as their low capacities can also be an impediment to achieving outcomes; and
  - o Developing higher-level training workshops, including events designed to support the achievement of longer-term outcomes (e.g. training on influencing national stakeholders.

- ***Engage with police training centers.*** This engagement would allow Search and partners to engage with police officers during training and before they join the force, or during courses while in the force. This could also open up opportunities for more formal training, which could then cover issues such as human rights, the causes of violent extremism and how to engage with communities.
- **Increased *engagement* with national stakeholders** and ensure that these efforts are linked with work at county and grassroots level. A flaw of the project, both in its theory of change and implementation, was its engagement with national stakeholders. In the theory of change, this is reflected in the fact that no specific role is given to the changes that need to take place nationally in order to promote local cohesion. At the same time, Search and its partners should make sure that there are links between what it does at county and grassroots level with national-level efforts.
- **Empowering *grassroots* CSOs**. While Search should engage with well-established organizations with capacity to enhance sustainability, it should also focus on empowering grassroots organizations that are working on similar initiatives. The evaluation found that local CSOs at the grassroots have a better chance of effecting changes in their respective areas, and the community tends to trust them more than outsiders. Search and other donors should initiate ongoing capacity building trainings for these CSOs, particularly on how to mobilize capital through grants and other sources in order to make these CSOs independent and able to sustain themselves.
- ***Map and engage on 'catalyst' issues.*** The Mvuvi Card initiative shows the impact that can be had by engaging on issues, which different stakeholders have a strong incentive to try and resolve. These issues can indeed serve as a catalyst for positively reframing and eventually changing relations, and build trust. Search and partners should thus conduct a mapping exercise, which would need to be participatory, in order to identify similar issues for future engagement.
- **Create linkages between peacebuilding and economic empowerment programming.** The success *of Inuka!*'s sub-grants and the Mvuvi Card initiatives show the importance of understanding the linkages between conflict resolution and livelihoods. Obviously, economic activities fall outside of the purview of what peacebuilding NGOs should do. Still, evidence suggests that impact can be maximized if organizations like Search can integrate strategies to support economic empowerment: this could mean, for example, making sub-grants available also for economic activities; alternatively, Search and partners should consider establishing a referral system so that participants to its activities can be linked with livelihoods initiatives run by other NGOs or government agencies.
- ***Develop a gender strategy.*** It is clear that Search has mainstreamed gender into the design and implementation of the project, but this has so far not been enough to create equal impact for men and women. Search should therefore develop a more structured strategy to ensure that the specific needs of women are analyzed and prioritized. The strategy should also focus on the type of information that should be gathered from women to track progress.
- **Organize learning events.** Search should include, within projects like *Inuka!*, the necessary learning events to make sure that information gathered is shared, analyzed and synthetized into learning. Learning workshops could be one way to do this, and could also serve a purpose within the project, for example by allowing partners to become more familiar with the project's theory of change.