NOVEMBER 2019

VOICES OF POWER

A MAPPING of POWER DYNAMICS, KEY ACTORS, NETWORKS, and COMMUNICATION CHANNELS in GARISSA and TANA RIVER COUNTIES, KENYA

Contacts:

Judy Kimamo
Country Director, Kenya
Search for Common Ground
jkimamo@sfcg.org

Susan Juma
Design, Monitoring, and
Evaluation Officer
Search for Common Ground
sjuma@sfcg.org

Search for
Common Ground

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments

Abbreviations

CSO	Civil Society Organization
FBO	Faith-based Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
ICNG	Ministry of the Interior and Coordination of National Government
KII	Key Informant Interview
MRI	Main Respondent Interview
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NIS	National Intelligence Service
NPS	National Police Service
ROAD	Rights Organization for the Advancement of Development
Search	Search for Common Ground
SNA	Social Network Analysis
SUPKEM	Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims
TBS	Tana River Broadcasting Station
TVE	Transforming Violent Extremism
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VE	Violent Extremist/Extremism

Executive Summary

Radicalization in Kenya has increased in recent years. Kenya has focused on national and local efforts to prevent and counter[1] violent extremism. Extensive research has been conducted in the country, especially on push and pull factors of violent extremism (VE). While knowledge of overarching push and pull factors, such as unemployment, corruption, drug trafficking, etc. is critical to understand drivers of violent extremism, an in-depth understanding of stakeholders and community members who have the power to influence others' decisions to participate in violent extremist groups is needed to inform more effective programming addressing this issue.

In response to this need, Search for Common Ground (Search), in partnership with Ijara Women for Peace (IJW) and Tana River Peace, Reconciliation, and Development (TRPRD) conducted research to map the power dynamics, communication channels, and relevant actors that drive and prevent violent extremism in Garissa and Tana River Counties, two major at-risk areas for violent extremism in Kenya. The research

In order to gain insight into these issues, Search developed a participatory mapping methodology based on social network analysis (SNA). The research targeted at-risk populations in Garissa and Tana River Counties in Kenya. The research took place and was validated with key stakeholders in November 2019.

Methodology

This study employed a cross-sectional study design composed of social network analysis (SNA) techniques and power analysis. The data collection process used main respondents' interviews, key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs). Overall, Search met with 542 (351 male; 191 female) participants; 158 (M-101; F-57) in Tana River County and 186 (M-119, F-67) in Garissa County. These interviews included: 150 (96 male; 54 female) main respondents interviews with at-risk youth and family/friends; 48 (35 male; 13 females) key informant interviews with a range of key stakeholders; and 344 (220 male; 124 female) community members were interviewed in focus group discussions.

Key Findings

Power Dynamics and Key Stakeholders Mapping

Youth feel that unhealthy pressures and expectations placed by society on youth combined with inadequate and sometimes conflicting responses by formal transforming violent extremism (TVE) actors make youth more vulnerable to VE recruitment. This has been exploited by VE recruiters who pose as mentors and promote VE ideas. While more men are recruited into extremist organizations, women are preferred due to their ability to gain access to potential targets without raising suspicion.

While youth are most likely to turn to their parents, peers, or religious leaders for advice on personal issues. However, on TVE issues, youth consult religious leaders, political leaders,

---

[1] While "preventing violent extremism" and "countering violent extremism" are mentioned here, Search for Common Ground prefers to use "Transforming Violent Extremism (TVE)" for our work in this area. This is explained in detail in "Transforming Violent Extremism: A Peacebuilder's Guide": "Transforming violent extremism recognizes that while violent extremism exists, the reasons and motivators leading up to an individual being drawn to violent extremist movements can be transformed into a different type of agency or engagement. This is distinct from countering violent extremism, which is reactive to extremist violence rather than aimed at altering the dynamics that motivate it. For more information see: https://www.sfcg.org/trnasforming-violent-extremism-peacebuilders-guilde/

traditional chiefs, elders, police, village heads, and members of peace committees. There is a clear difference between consultation with formal authority structures and consulting within effective relationships. While it this is not unusual, it communicates two critical insights. First, there is a real or perceived distance between the people and their government institutions. Second, that there is distrust of formal (authority) structures. Both of these issues have implications for transforming violent extremism.

The major connectors for the target communities were social events that helped to bring people together where individuals can form friendships. These spaces are gendered key differences between where men and women congregate.

- **For male youth**, the most important TVE engagement spaces are *maskani* ("bases") where they frequently get together to share their thoughts and news stories. Additionally, male youth gather in cinema halls to watch football. *Maskani* and other public spaces are gendered with women rarely congregating in these areas.
- **For female youth**, key connecting spaces include women-only events such as Bun (women's prayer sessions) and celebrating the birth of a child among the Pokomo in the Tana River.

Land disputes, political violence, cattle rustling, and other conflicts over resources (including the distribution of humanitarian aid) were identified by participants as key dividers in society. Even if these conflicts are not ethnic in nature, they have the potential to be seen through ethnic and religious lenses and provide fertile ground for violent extremist recruitment.

Key Influencers and Family-based Network Mapping

In the previous section, parents (especially mothers), elders, and religious leaders were identified by youth as the individuals they first turn to when they have a problem. However, public opinion that informs advice from both friends and peers is framed and competes with other sources of influence in the community. Youth, therefore, have to constantly shift through varied perspectives and information. The study found that young people often face competing and at times contrary advice from influential actors. This can create confusion among the youth and make them more vulnerable to VE. A program to address VE influence networks, therefore, must be multidimensional. To identify who were the most influential people in society regarding TVE in the target populations, youth whether certain actors were influential in TVE efforts. Respondents identified religious leaders, political leaders, elders, and media personalities as influential actors.

State and Non-State Actors Mapping

The study found that the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government (ICNG) is the major TVE state actor in both of the target areas. This entity is represented by the Anti-Terrorism Police, the Office of the County and Sub-County Commissioner, chiefs and their assistants. While the Ministry of ICNG is the major actor in both areas, the study found that there is a perceived distrust between the public and government institutions, along with a general mistrust of formal authority structures. Non-state actors present in the communities include civil society organizations and faith-based organizations, notably the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM).

Communication Channels Mapping

Local radio stations and social media were found to be the most popular communication channels. The populations in Garissa and Tana River Counties are largely pastoralists and study participants said it was easier for herders to travel with a radio and women can access it through

their mobile phones at home. The most popular radio stations are Amani FM, Tana River Broadcasting Station (TBS), and Tana FM. In the refugee camps, the most popular radio station was Gargar FM. Social media channels, especially Facebook and WhatsApp were the most popular form of communication among the youth. Respondents said social media was the most popular because it allowed information to be shared quickly, was usually shared in an engaging format, and it would be saved on their mobiles allowing them to repeatedly refer to it.

Recommendations

1. **Strengthen accountability frameworks in governance systems.** The study found that one of the drivers of VE in the target population is the distrust with the security forces due to abuses perpetrated against the community. Youth accused security agencies of abductions, arbitrary arrests, and forced disappearances. VE recruiters leverage these grievances and are seen to provide opportunities to oppose the government. Strengthening internal accountability frameworks within security agencies can address this VE driver.

2. **Rely on family and parent-based networks, particularly those led by mothers, in TVE activities**. Recognizing the unique access that mothers have as most influential resource for youth, mothers should be trained on early warning signs and response mechanisms to TVE. These should be supported by opportunities for women to be involved in peace and community decision-making processes. While the government and international agencies have historically invested in the formal authority structures in TVE, this approach would utilize strong familial connections to TVE.

3. **Engage religious leaders and support positive religious messaging.** Violent extremists are using extremist religious narratives to mobilize and recruit fighters. Both Muslim and Christian leaders are speaking out against them and there is an opportunity to support and amplify their messages of peace and tolerance.

4. **Support sustainable interfaith dialogue forums.** Interfaith dialogue forums have helped to foster religious unity and cohesion across Muslims and Christians in the area but have historically been donor-dependent and therefore ad-hoc. The project should seek to create sustainable interfaith dialogue forums that communities will be able to carry on after the project ends.

5. **Host multi-stakeholder coordination and dialogue platforms.** While key stakeholders are interested in cooperating on TVE, they lack common platforms and have a deep distrust with each other. Multi-stakeholder platforms can foster information sharing, joint-action planning, and gradually build trust among the stakeholders. Key stakeholders include government actors, elders, FBOs, CSOs, and the media.

6. **Strengthen the TVE capacity of local leaders.** Local leaders are uniquely placed to address VE due to their knowledge, connections, and influence in their community. While local leaders are knowledgeable on VE trends, they need additional capacity to support and lead TVE efforts. Capacity strengthening efforts should include strategies for local leaders to ensure their own security. Key leaders to engage are religious leaders, elders, local chiefs and assistants.

7. **Utilize radio and social media to amplify narratives of pluralism, diversity, and nonviolence.** Key radio stations include Star FM and Garagar FM, Key social media channels are Facebook and WhatsApp. Radio programs and social media content should

use voices of community and religious leaders as well as former extremists. Social media channels (particularly WhatsApp and Facebook) should be used to reach youth who are not reached by traditional radio channels like radio. These programs should be conducted in local dialects to amplify their reach to those with lower literacy levels. Social media interventions may include posting information that promotes pluralist narratives, partner with popular and respected individuals in the society with a large following to promote pluralist messages and counter false teachings by VE agents. At an advanced stage, the project should train communities to conduct social media monitoring to discern trends and messages that could point to VE messaging and report the same for action.

8. **Address factors that increase the youth vulnerability to VE recruitment.** Key factors that increase vulnerability include low levels of education or skill development, a lack of livelihood opportunities, and substance abuse. Girls were found to be particularly vulnerable due to limited educational opportunities along with a lack of business training. Where possible, projects should seek to address these underlying issues.

1. Background Information

Introduction

Radicalization across East Africa has increased over the last few years, especially driven by Al Shabaab, a Somalia-based militant group active across the region. Kenya has experienced many attacks by radical groups. This increase has resulted in additional focus being placed on national and local efforts to prevent and counter[2] violent extremism (VE) in these countries. To inform these efforts, extensive research has been conducted in the region, especially seeking to understand push and pull factors driving involvement in these groups.

However, recent research has also shown that the categorization of violent extremism drivers in to push and pull factors can be simplistic and not comprehensive, and thus, there is a need to be more nuanced and creative in analysis and approaches. In addition, while knowledge of overall push and pull factors, such as unemployment, corruption, drug trafficking, etc., is critical to understand causes of violent extremism, an in-depth understanding of stakeholders and community members who have the power to influence others' decision to join violent extremist groups or activities is needed. This would enable organizations like Search for Common Ground (Search) and local civil society organizations (CSOs) to design more effective violent extremism transformation programming.

In response to this need, Search for Common Ground, in partnership with Ijara Women for Peace (IJW) and Tana River Peace, Reconciliation, and Development (TRPRD) conducted research with the following objectives:

1. **Map current power dynamics among key stakeholders** that are considered relevant by at-risk communities, particularly regarding Violent Extremism (VE), in Garissa and Tana River Counties;

---

[2] While "preventing violent extremism" and "countering violent extremism" are mentioned here, Search for Common Ground prefers to use "Transforming Violent Extremism (TVE)" for our work in this area. This is explained in detail in "Transforming Violent Extremism: A Peacebuilder's Guide": "Transforming violent extremism recognizes that while violent extremism exists, the reasons and motivators leading up to an individual being drawn to violent extremist movements can be transformed into a different type of agency or engagement. This is distinct from countering violent extremism, which is reactive to extremist violence rather than aimed at altering the dynamics that motivate it. For more information see: https://www.sfcg.org/trnasforming-violent-extremism-peacebuilders-guilde/.

2. **Map key influencers and parent and family-based networks and actors to engage with**, including mapping their relationships, capacities, and limitations in addressing violent extremism dynamics in target communities;
3. **Map existing state and non-state actors and structures** that could and should be leveraged according to the project's objectives and goal to ensure effectiveness and sustainability; and
4. **Map appropriate media spaces, messages, tools and formats** among at-risk communities in the two counties, including existing narratives of pluralism, strength in diversity and nonviolence.

The findings of the study will be used to address gaps in existing research as well as inform *Jamii Bila Balaa-Strengthening Family and Community Networks to Prevent Violent Extremism*, a TVE project implemented by Search in partnership with Ijara Women for Peace and Tana River Peace, Reconciliation, and Development in Garissa and Tana River Counties.

Context Analysis

Garissa and Tana River Counties are part of the Boni enclave and have been directly affected by violent extremism over the last two decades due to geopolitical, economic, and socio-cultural vulnerabilities. Existing research has shown that VE groups thrive among communities that have real or perceived political, ideological/religious, economic and socio-cultural grievances against the larger society.[3] The experience of Garissa and Tana River Counties exemplifies these findings. In both counties, VE groups have used narratives of collective prosecution based on ideological and socio-cultural identity, capitalizing on historical injustices and economic marginalization. Successive Kenyan administrations have been perceived as continuing policies of deliberate marginalization of Kenyan Somalis.

Figure 1 Map of Garissa and Tana River Counties, Kenya

In regard to geo-political dynamics, Garissa County is part of the northeastern Kenya region, which is predominantly occupied by the Somali ethnic group. At the point of independence from British colonialism, the Somali of northeastern Kenya had expressed a desire to be part of a united Somali republic. However, the government of Kenya did not grant this request, resulting in a resistance movement in the region that was characterized by organized banditry targeting government installations and resources. The armed violence against the government sparked a heavy-handed response by Kenyan security agencies, which at times

[3] Hansen, S.J., S. Lid, and C.C.O. Okwany, "Countering Violent Extremism in Somalia and Kenya: Actors and Approaches," Oslo: Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research, Oslo Metropolitan University, 2016; Botha, Anneli. *Terrorism in Kenya and Uganda: Radicalization from a Political Socialization Perspective,* London: Lexington Books, 2016; Botha, Anneli, "Political Socialization and Terrorist Radicalization among Individuals who Joined al-Shabaab in Kenya," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism,* 37(11), (2014): 895-919; Goldsmith, Paul, "The Future of Pastoralist Conflict in the Horn of Africa," in *Pastoralism and Development in Africa: Dynamic Change at the Margins,* edited by Andy Catley, Jeremy Lind, and Ian Scoones, 131-142. New York: Routledge, 2011; Ndung'u, I., U. Salifu, and R. Sigsworth, "Violent Extremism in Kenya: Why Women are a Priority," Institute for Security Studies Monographs, (2017): 1-124.

targeted civilians as well as violent opposition. Over time, the Kenyan government has continued to be accused of ethnic profiling of Somali Kenyans to systematically target Somali residents in Garissa and Tana River Counties.

Economically, both counties suffer from historic underdevelopment further increasing the perceptions of collective and economic marginalization. The Kenyan government has historically focused infrastructure development projects in regions that have a high potential for agricultural and industrial production. Garissa and Tana River Counties are both predominantly semi-arid and were therefore not targeted for these development projects. This has increased the feeling of marginalization in both counties.

The geopolitical and economic grievances in the two counties have made them attractive recruitment grounds for VE groups. The VE narratives of the state and central government as being oppressive, exclusive, and marginalizing resonates with people in the two countries. VE groups use a narrative of "us" vs. "them." In this context, "them" refers to those associated with, or supportive of the Kenyan government. The Kenyan government is seen as having excluded many from the "national cake," meaning national resources. When this "us" vs. "them" argument is projected to an entire ethnic group, it creates pressure for members of that ethnic group to join the VE group. Not joining is seen by some as a betrayal of the group.[4]

In terms of religious diversity, Garissa County is predominantly Muslim while Tana River County is approximately half Muslim and half Christian. VE groups have leveraged this difference to create a narrative of religious persecution, arguing that the residents of the region are oppressed because they are Muslims.[5] There have been reports of clerics who have been involved in propagating this narrative in order to recruit and radicalize individuals.[6]

Current Transformative Violent Extremism (TVE) Efforts

Garissa and Tana River Counties each have action plans for countering violent extremism (CVE). In both counties, the implementation of the CVE plans is being spearheaded by the National Police Service (NPS), in collaboration with the National Intelligence Service (NIS), Kenya Prisons Service, Kenya Wildlife Services, the County government, the judiciary, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), the business community, and religious and cultural leaders among others.

Garissa County's 2018-2023 CVE plan was developed through the collaborative actions of various actors, including the Rights Organization for Advancement of Development (ROAD), USAID, the office of the County Commissioner of Garissa, and the County government among others.[7]

Tana River County's 2019-2023 CVE plan has eleven pillars: psychosocial, education, political, security, faith based-ideological, legal and policy, media and online, gender and access to justice.[8] Its main areas of intervention include:

1) provision of **vocational and life skills** training to at-risk individuals;
2) provision of **mentorship and religious guidance** to at-risk individuals;

---

[4] Hansen, Lid and Okwany, "Countering Violent Extremism," 2016.
[5] Goldsmith, "The Future of Pastoralism," 2011.
[6] Galgalo, B., "Kenya: 33 Suspected Shabaab Terrorists Arrested in Tana River," *Daily Nation*, May 18, 2017.
[7] See the full Garissa County CVE 2018 – 2023 plan here: https://kecosce.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/GARISSA_COUNTY_CVE_ACTION_PLAN.pdf
[8] See the full Tana River County CVE 2019 – 2023 plan here: https://kecosce.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/tana_river_county_CVE_action_plan.pdf

3) **mainstreaming of TVE** into county government projects;
4) development of **youth political socialization** framework; and
5) enhancement of **collaboration among CVE stakeholders**.

More information about these state actors is included in Section 3 on page 29.

2. Methodology

This study employed a cross-sectional study design composed of social network analysis (SNA) techniques and power analysis. The data collection process used main respondents' interviews (MRIs), key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs). Overall, Search met with 542 (351 male; 191 female) participants; 158 (M-101; F-57) in Tana River County and 186 (M-119, F-67) in Garissa County. These interviews included: 150 (96 male; 54 female) main respondents interviews with at-risk youth and family/friends; 48 (35 male; 13 females) key informant interviews with a range of key stakeholders; and 344 (220 male; 124 female) community members were interviewed in focus group discussions. At-risk youth were defined as individuals who are between 18-35 years old who were affected by violent extremism in any way.

Population and Sampling

The study target population comprised of at-risk youth and their family members as the primary respondents; and other TVE actors in the Garissa and Tana River counties as key informants. The study employed purposive sampling technique to select its respondents. At-risk youth and their family members were identified through snowballing, while key informants were purposively selected from among the key governmental and non-governmental actors in the two counties. Below is the list of respondents:

Table 1: Study Participants

Participants	T. River County	Garissa County	Total
1. Main Respondents' Interviews			
At-risk youth	*48* (M-31, F-17)	*60* (M-38, F22)	108 (M-69, F-39)
Family/friends	*18* (M-12, F-6)	*2 4*(M-15, F9)	42 (M-27, F-15)
MRI Total	**66 (M-43, F-23)**	**84 (M-53, F-31)**	**150 (M-96, F-54)**
2. Key Informant Interviews			
KPS sub-county commanders	03 (M-3, F-0)	04 (M-4, F-0)	07 (M-7, F-0)
Officers in charge of VE	01 (M-1, F-0)	01 (M-1, F-0)	02 (M-2, F-0)
Chiefs	06 (M-6, F-0)	09 (M-9, F-0)	15 (M-15, F-0)
County cohesion officers	01 (M-1, F-0)	01 (M-0, F-1)	02 (M-1, F-1)
Peace committee members	6 (M-3, F-3)	8 (M-5, F-3)	14 (M-8, F-6)
Refugee affairs secretariat	0 (M-0, F-0)	1(M-0, F-1)	1 (M-0, F-1)
CSOs and media	03 (M-1, F-2)	04 (M-1, F-3)	07 (M-2, F-5)
KII Participant Total	**20 (M-15, F-5)**	**28 (M-, F-7)**	**48 (M-35, F-13)**
3. Focus Group Discussions			
Community elders	24 (M-19, F-5)	24 (M-21, F-3)	48 (M-40, F-8)
Religious leaders	24 (M-24, F-0)	24 (M-24, F-0)	48 (M-48, F-0)

Women	24 (M-0, F-24)	26 (M-0, F-26)	50 (M-0, F-50)
FGD Participant Total	**72 (M-43, F-29)**	**74 (M-45, F-29)**	**146 (M-88, F-58)**
Overall Participant Total	**158 (M-101, F-57)**	**186 (M-119, F-67)**	**344 (M-220, F-124)**

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected primarily through interviews (MRIs and KIIs) and augmented with focus group discussions (FGDs). Data were analyzed thematically. To begin with, transcripts were organized in accordance with the data sources and data types and then coded using themes derived from the study objectives and research questions. The frequency of occurrence of concepts, words, and phrases was then interpreted to suggest importance or significance attached to the phrases used by the respondents. The research team also analyzed the transcripts to identify patterns, trends, associations and/or relationships among the themes. Common comments/phrases were organized into similar categories, such as concerns, suggestions, strengths, weaknesses, and recommendations, among others. Some of the responses from the structured questions were entered into SPSS Statistics to produce descriptive statistics presented in the report. For purposes of visualization data on family-based social networks were entered into UCINET[9] to come up with network maps used in the report.

Limitations and Challenges

The findings of this survey are limited to the selected wards in the two counties where the primary data was collected. While the research team believes the findings are likely generalizable to other wards across the two counties due to the homogeneity of the counties, the findings may have limited external validity to other parts of the two counties where data was not collected.

One of the key challenges the research team faced was the geographic distance between households studied given the rural setting. The weather further complicated this challenge due to the logistical challenges of traveling to targeted households. Despite this challenge, the research team adapted the data collection schedule in order to ensure that the target number of respondents was met. Given the rural setting of the data collection, language barriers were also a challenge. The team anticipated this and used interpreters from those regions.

Despite the challenges in the data collection process, Search believes that the information collected was sufficient to arrive at the conclusions made in the latter sections of the report.

3. Findings

This section discusses the study findings, it is organized as per the study objectives and questions: **1) Power Dynamics and Key Stakeholders Mapping; 2) Key Influencers and Parent and Family-Based Networks and Actors Mapping; 3) State and Non-State Actors and Structure Mapping;** and **4) Communication Channel Mapping.**

Power Dynamics and Key Stakeholders Mapping

Unhealthy Family and Social Expectations

In order to understand what dynamics, influence unhealthy family and social expectations that drive youth in VE, the young respondents were asked what the societal expectations that their

---

[9] Borgatti, S.P., M.G. Everett, and L.C. Freeman, "UCINET for Windows: Software for Social Network Analysis, Harvard, MA: Analytic Technologies, 2002.

family had of them. Youth respondents shared that society and their families held man expectations stemming from them being a responsible community member and that their inability to live up to these expectations creates a sense of frustration among them that makes some more vulnerable to VE recruitment.

Respondents shared that a major societal expectation for young people is that they serve their community and be a responsible community member. This included being employed, providing support to the community, protecting the community, to be law-abiding and responsible citizens, to hold leadership positions, to support communal interests, and to give moral and material input into the community.

The study also observed that beyond the general expectations listed above, young men and women in the target population have expected gender roles. For example, are expected to get married to a responsible man. During one of the FGDs with youth, the term responsible was defined as "being able to meet one's financial obligations and to be a spiritual guide for the family". In Tana River, due to rampant conflicts, boys are expected to defend their community resources, especially cattle through military strategies. One of the cultural leaders in Tana River County said that "on such occasions, we expect our male youth to rise to the occasion and protect our resources."

> "Our neighboring community always invade our fields during drought, releasing their livestock to destroy our crops. The invaders are usually heavily armed and whenever we report, government authorities take very long to respond. The government appears not to want to antagonize them, preferring to hold "peace talks". Meanwhile, as they hold these "peace talks" our crops are being destroyed, exposing us to hunger. On such occasions, we expect our male youth to rise to the occasion and protect our resources"
> - Tana River County Cultural Leader

The youth were further asked to state whether some of the societal and family expectations can push them to VE. Respondents said that while youth aspire to meet the previously described societal and familial expectations, there are numerous systemic factors that undermine their ability to live up to them. These include a high level of unemployment, frequency of environmental hazards including drought and floods resulting from climate change and youth exclusion from local and national policy dialogue platforms. For example, many youths in the Dadaab were registered as refugees by their parents to enable them to access education and other social services available only to refugees. Given their registration status as refugees they cannot get identity cards. As a result, they cannot enjoy the privileges of a Kenyan citizen. The youth's inability to live up to these expectations creates a sense of frustration among them.

The study also that VE recruiters take advantage of these frustrations to entice them into VE activities. For example, due to the high level of unemployment, VE recruiters promise employment opportunities as well as financing for businesses. Going to Somalia is particularly attractive to youth without identification cards who therefore cannot be employed in Kenya. VE recruiters also pose as mentors and sometimes as missionaries to capture the youth's interest to know more about religion. They also take advantage of social pressure on girls to get married by posing as potential husbands.

Moreover, the respondents note that given the historic marginalization of the community by successive governments, the youth are vulnerable to VE recruiters' propaganda that targets the population being discriminated against on religious and ethnic grounds. VE recruiters use propaganda that joining their VE group will help to protect their communities and rebel against

the government. At times this is also portrayed as a religious fight and that Muslims must fight in order to protect their beliefs.

Existing Power Dynamics Related to Youth Engagement in VE

Who do youth turn to for advice?

This study also sought to find out the power dynamics related to youth engagement with VE in the two counties by analyzing patterns of influence. The main respondents were asked whether they turned to the individuals listed below for advice on personal issues. Their responses are captured in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Who Youth Turn to for Advice
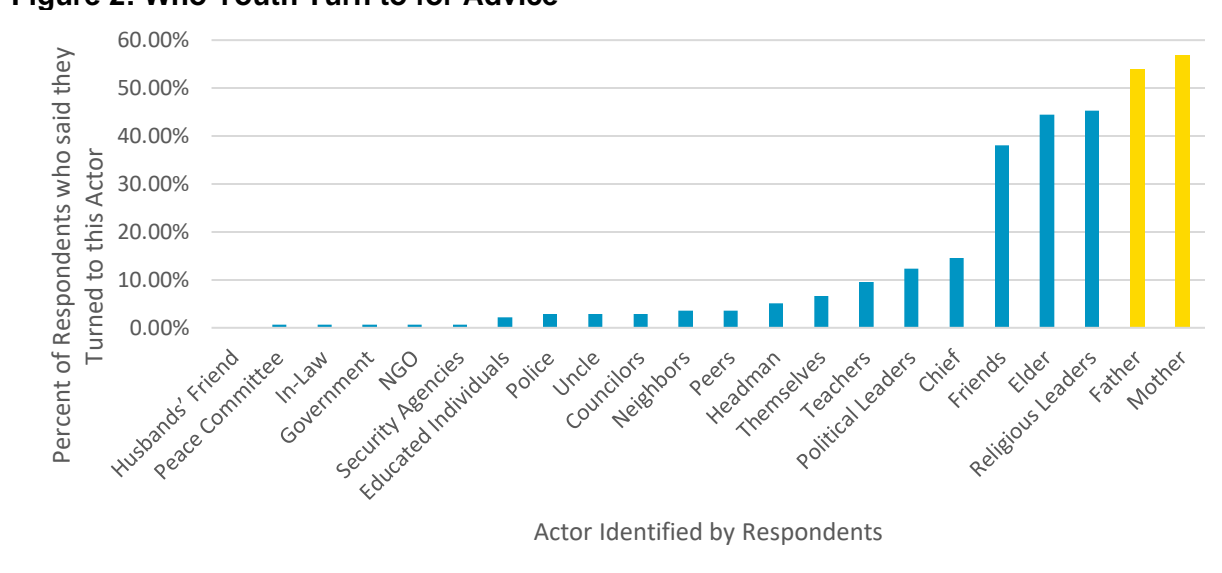
**Note that respondents were asked whether each of the above actors were influential or not. Percentages are not cumulative across all the actors but based on the responses for each individual actor.

Over fifty percent of respondents said they turn to their father (57%) or mother (54%). The high influence of parents could be attributed to culture and religion, both of which are highly valued in the study area, and both of which emphasize the need for respect for parents. The slightly higher influence of mothers could be as a result of the fact that the communities in the two counties are predominantly polygamous, which means children are likely to spend more time with their mothers than their fathers. The higher rating for mothers could also be related to the apparent absenteeism of fathers. FGDs with women revealed that the problem of absentee fathers is quite rampant in both counties. During KIIs however, it emerged that the problem of absentee fathers could be deeper than merely a desire to escape responsibility. Most key informants observed that the problem of absentee fathers could be attributed to the scarcity of employment and business opportunities in the two counties. Regardless, the patriarchal nature of the communities in the study area could explain why fathers still play an important role in the lives of youths, as shown in Figure 1. Data from all data sources confirmed that youths consult their parents on a large array of issues ranging from family and marriage relations to career choices.

The study also found that 45 percent of youth consulted religious leaders and elders. This can be attributed to the prominence of culture and religion in the study area. However, the relatively lower influence of friends, compared to parents and religious/cultural leaders, was somewhat unusual.

Previous studies in other communities have found that among youths, friends tend to be highly influential, even more than parents. The relatively lower influence of friends among youths in the

"[A] maskan is a great place to catch up with friends and get information on current trends as well as to air one's frustrations." **- Study Participant**

study area could similarly be attributed to the importance of religion and culture. Nevertheless, the lower influence of friends does not diminish their importance as influencers. Youths typically congregate at meeting places known as *maskani*, in which they freely share experiences and challenges, and catch up with new developments. One respondent described maskani as places not only to get news but to also share their own frustrations.

The study also found that youths consulted other actors such as chiefs, politicians, and teachers. However, unlike consultations with parents and religious/cultural leaders which tended to be on more private matters, youths consulted chiefs and politicians on matters related to security, employment and development projects. Teachers, on the other hand, are consulted on matters related to education and career choices. This implies that TVE interventions based on in-person interactions should be anchored around parents and cultural/religious leaders.

Who do community members turn to about TVE?

The study asked participants to identify the actors and institutions the community consulted on matters related to TVE and to rank them from the most to least consulted. This ranking revealed that the most consulted actors were religious leaders, followed by political leaders followed by the traditional chief, community elders, the police, village head, and members of peace committees, in that order. This data was triangulated with information on the actors frequently consulted by youth and entered into a social network analysis program to determine the most influential TVE actors in the study area. The results of this analysis are displayed in a two-mode matrix model in Figure 3.[10] The rectangles symbolize those who are sought out for advice and the circles are the individuals who seek advice from that individual/person. The size of each shape denotes the number of individuals who seek advice from the individual/institution.

---

[10] Scott, John and Peter J. Carrington, *The SAGE Handbook of Social Network Analysis,* London: SAGE Publications Ltd., 2011.

Figure 3: Network Analysis of Information Flows between Key Actors

Figure 3 highlights that while parents are consulted on personal issues most by youths as illustrated in Figure 1, their influence as TVE actors diminishes in Figure 3. As can be seen in Figure 3, the size of the node representing mothers is much smaller than that representing other players, such as religious and political leaders, and chiefs. Figure 3 similarly shows that fathers have a greater influence than mothers. KIIs further revealed that the importance of the elders stems from their place in the informal/alternative justice resolution mechanisms. The two counties have a long tradition of using traditional methods of peacemaking. Among the Somali speakers, there exists a state of legal pluralism where customary law (Xeer), religious law (Sharia) and secular law operate side by side depending on the issue at hand. For instance, in case of murder, the clan of the murderer is expected to pay Diya (blood money, usually in terms of cattle) to the clan which loses a member.

From the discussion above, it is noticeable that **there is a clear difference between consultation with formal authority structures and consulting within effective relationships.** While this is not unusual, it communicates two critical insights: **there is a real or perceived distance between the people and their government [institutions]**; second, **there could be existing mistrust of formal (authority) structures**. Either or both combined have implications for tackling VE. Whereas the government and international agencies have invested in the formal authority structures in TVE, the answer could lie in transforming VE from the family and religious angles further demonstrating the importance and potential innovation of the *Jamii Bila Balaa program*.

Connectors and Dividers in the Target Population

1) Connectors

Football: One social event that helps to bring people together in the study area is sports. The study found that European soccer is very popular in the two counties, both as a sport to play and also as something as a form of entertainment. congregate in makeshift cinema halls to watch English, Spanish, Italian and French league games.

Bun (Meetings after Friday Prayers): Somali and Orma women in both counties hold meetings after prayers every Friday. In these meetings, known as Bun, women discuss a wide range of matters including marriage and family issues along with economic empowerment and security. There is also a less frequent gathering of Pokomo women from Tana River County. These women gather together to celebrate childbirth four months after the delivery of a new child. In both cases, respondents stated that **these gatherings cut across socio-economic classes** and form a common space for discussion.

Other Special Events: Other events that bring people together include funerals and weddings, and religious events such as breaking of fast during Ramadan, Eid celebrations. Key informants from both counties also noted that interfaith forums aimed at promoting religious unity also existed. However, FGDs revealed that these meetings are irregular and largely dependent on donor funding. One Assistant County Commissioner in Tana River County had this to say about the interfaith meetings:

> **"Even though we usually have interfaith meetings, they are very rare because organizing such a meeting needs money. One needs to pay for a venue, provide meals to attendees and even reimburse transport to participants. This requires adequate funding, which is the biggest challenge" - Participant**

Government Programs Fostering Inter-Ethnic Cohesion: The government occasionally organizes cultural events in which different clans showcase their culture. Respondents said that these events help to foster harmonious relations across the groups. Respondents also shared that trade and education have helped to increase cohesion among ethnic groups in the area. Due to the delocalization program, teachers and students are sent to schools outside their home locale. Through this program, they interact with individuals from different religious and ethnic groups. In addition, since no clan has been able to single-handedly win gubernatorial elections, different groups are forced to make inter-clan and multiethnic political coalitions.

2) Dividers

The study identified a number of events and issues that act as dividers by breeding conflict in the study area. While some of these dividers are County-specific, there were some that cut across the two counties.

Tana River County—Resource Conflicts: In Tana River County, the main dividers are related to resource-driven conflicts between the two main ethnic groups, the Orma and Pokomo. The Orma are predominantly nomadic pastoralists while the Pokomo are mainly farmers. There are

> **"Our neighbors usually graze their livestock in our cultivated fields, destroying all our crops. This is usually a cause of conflict year in, year out. The government must protect us from such aggressive actions by our neighbors" – Pokomo Cultural Leader**

disagreements over farmland encroachment and destruction of crops along with land adjudication and access to the Tana River. Respondents identified the controversial land adjudication program as sparking some of these conflicts. The Orma believe the program will give the Pokomo exclusive rights to land which is claimed by both communities. The Orma fear that this would cut off the access for their livestock to the river as many farms are close to the river.

Both the Orma and the Pokomo are calling for government intervention and believe that the resource-driven conflict is solvable. **Despite the repeated conflicts between the groups, elders in both groups continue to see each other as neighbors**, something extremely valued, at times even more than a brother, in both cultures.

Garissa County—Resource Conflict: Respondents in Garissa County also identified conflict over resources as the main divider, but the nature of the conflict differed from Tana River County. The recurring issue in Garissa County was a perceived unequal distribution of development resources, including job opportunities, among clans. Some believe that certain clans have unrestricted access to resources. These disputes also include disagreements over the distribution of humanitarian aid materials.

> **"Our neighbors have illegally taken control of most of the land along the river, cutting us off, yet this land belongs to all of us. What therefore are we expected to do? Should we watch as our animals die? Why is this issue not being sorted by the government?"**
>
> -   **– Orma Cultural Leader**

Cross-Cutting—Political Violence: Political violence was identified as a divider in both counties. Political violence was identified as most likely during elections as a tool to intimidate voters and political opponents. Respondents said that youth who were used to being engaged in political violence are more vulnerable to VE recruitment as they had become normalized to a culture of violence.

Key Influencers and Family-Based Network Mapping

The Most Influential TVE Actors

In the previous section, parents (especially mothers), religious leaders, and elders were identified by youth as the individuals they first turn to when they have a problem. However, public opinion that informs advice from both friends and peers is framed and competes with other sources of influence in the community. Youth, therefore, have to constantly shift through varied perspectives and information. The study found that young people often face competing and at times contrary advice from influential actors. This can create confusion among the youth and make them more vulnerable to VE. A program to address VE influence networks, therefore, must be multidimensional. In order to identify who were the most influential people in society in regard to TVE in the target populations, youth were asked whether they thought specific actors were influential in TVE efforts.   Their responses are presented in Figure 4. Religious leaders, political leaders, elders, and media personalities were most often identified by participants as influential.

Specifically, over half of respondents said that they saw religious leaders (57%) and political leaders (53%) as influential in TVE efforts.

Figure 4: Influential Individuals in Transforming Violent Extremism
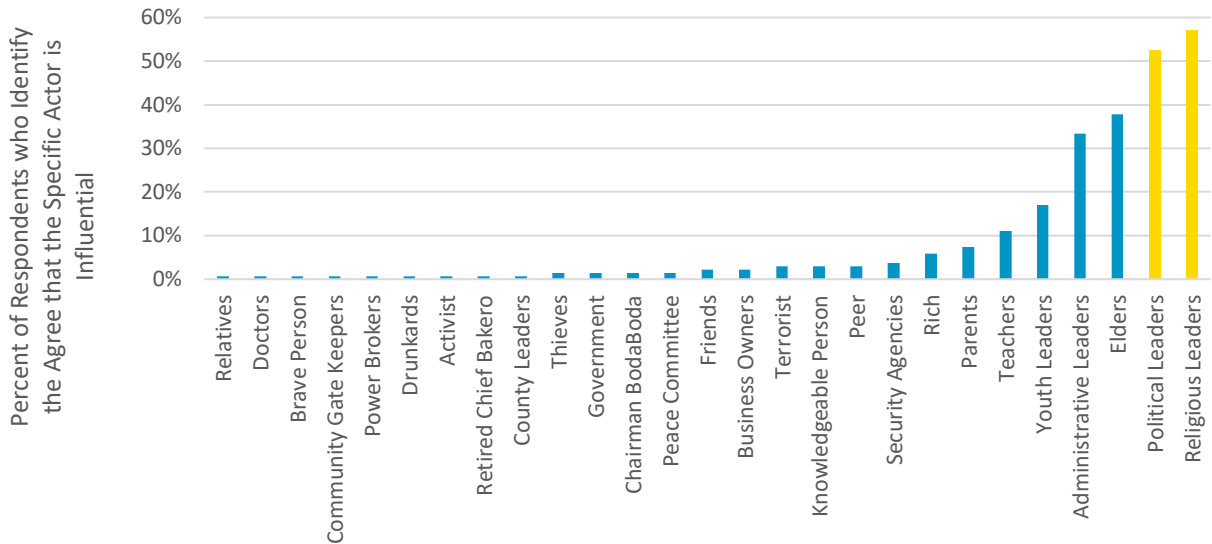
**Note that respondents were asked whether each of the above actors were influential or not. Percentages are not cumulative across all the actors but based on the responses for each individual actor.

Figure 5 below shows the who viewed who as influential in the community. Rectangular nodes represent the influencers themselves and the circular nodes represent the respondents. The larger the shape, the more influential the identified actor is. For example, media personalities are seen as the most influential by many different community members including, religious leaders, mothers, political leaders, civil society organizations, as well as by peer media personalities.

Figure 5: Power Network Mapping
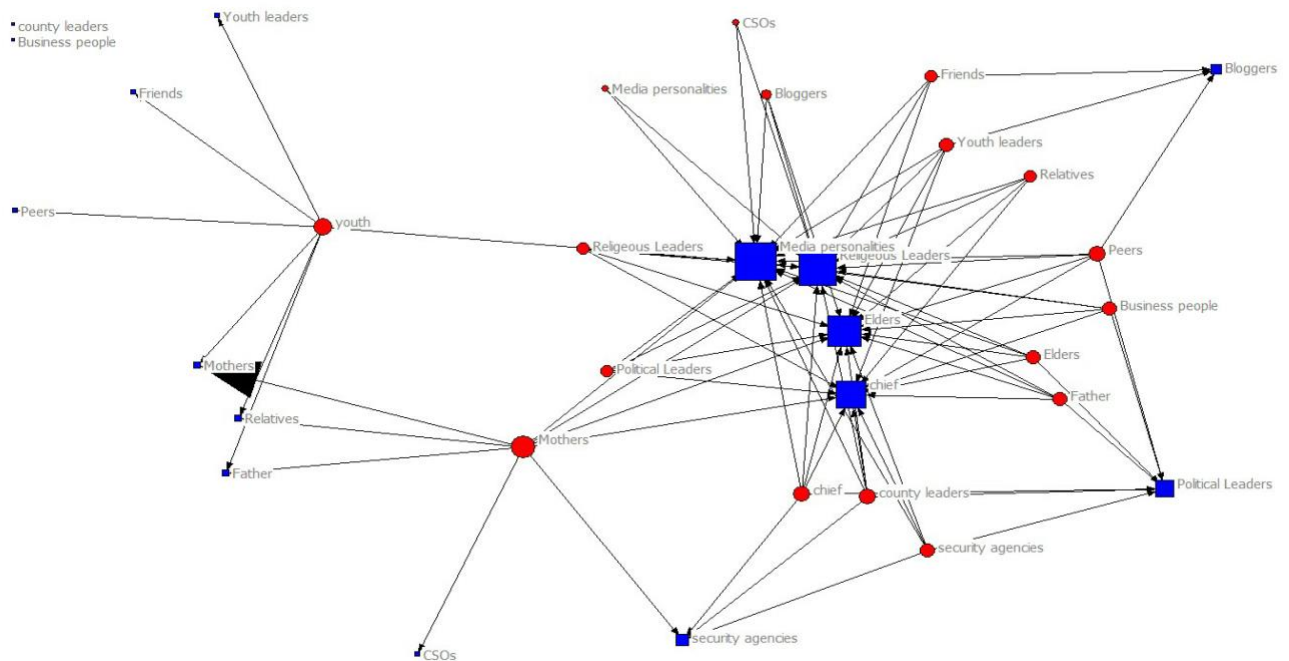
The study found that young people in the target population face a plethora of influence dilemmas emanating from various power wielders. On the one hand, Islam, which is the predominant religion in the two counties places a lot of emphasis on respect for parents. The youth consult their parents especially mothers regularly whenever they have issues. However, the same youth get a lot of influence from their peers in the *maskani.* Secondary data further revealed that clans are the most important tools of political mobilization. To this end, clan elders wield a lot of power in the targeted counties. It was also observed that chiefs and their assistants in most parts of the study area are the faces of government. They thus solve most of the conflicts on various issues including land, clan animosities, and theft. They are also the first responders when it comes to national and county governments' CVE strategies. Because of their knowledge of context, they tend to be more responsive to peoples' needs in comparison to most of the other TVE actors. This is further detailed in the section "State and Non-State Actor Mapping" on page 22.

Resources, Values, and Authority for TVE

Further to the social network analysis shown in Figures 5 and 6, using the Resources, Authority, and Values (RAV) analysis, the study identified key influencers, connectors, and dividers that can be targeted in TVE programming. The Venn diagram depicted in Figure 6 identifies eight zones occupied by various influencers, connectors, and dividers and how they can interact with various TVE interventions. These classifications are dynamic, and an actor can belong to more than one zone. The diagram gives depicts the relationships as they were reported by respondents.

Figure 6: Functional Classification of TVE Actors in the Target Populations
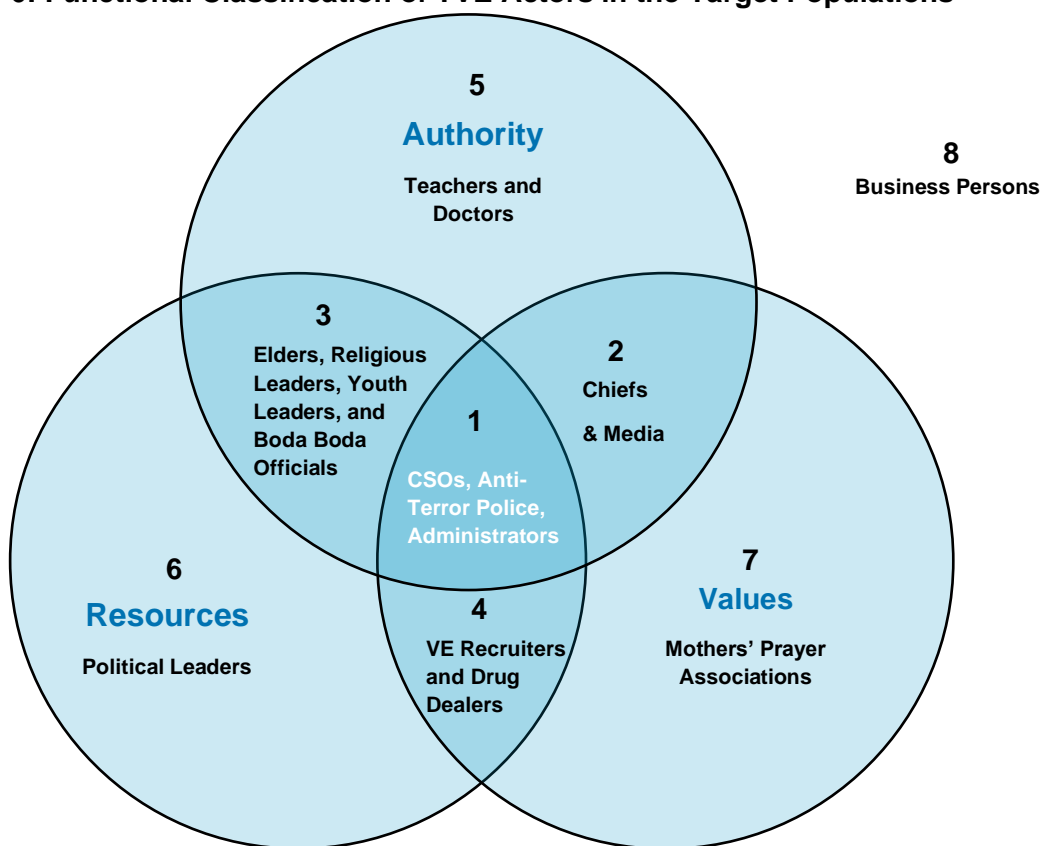
There are eight zones represented in the diagram. Below is a description of the zones and the various ways in which the connectors, dividers, and influencers can be engaged in the project.

Table 2: Functional Classification of TVE Actors in the Target Populations

Zone	Description of Actor
1	Actors who have **authority**, resources, and values that can support TVE (i.e. anti-terror police, administrators and media).
2	Actors who have the **authority** and **values** to support TVE but lack the resources to do it (chiefs, peers, friends, media personalities).
3	Actors who have **resources** and **values** to support TVE but lack the formal authority (i.e. elders, religious leaders, youth leaders, Boda Boda officials).
4	Actors who have **authority** and **resources**, but whose values are at odds with the desired change (i.e. VE recruiters and drug peddlers).
5	Actors who have **authority** but lack the resources and values to support TVE (i.e. police and preachers).
6	Actors who have **resources** to support TVE, but lack authority and similar values in relation to TVE (Political leaders & business people).
7	Actors who **value** TVE, but lack authority or resources to TVE (i.e. mothers prayer associations – Bun, families – mothers and fathers, CSOs and FBOs and community members).
8	Any other actors who do not fit in zones 1 to 7 but may in the future (i.e. Businesspeople).

Gendered Dynamics of Youth Recruitment and Radicalization

This study takes a departure from traditional literature which equates gender to women, to look at the various changes in social-cultural assigned roles for males and females in the target population which have increased their vulnerability to VE recruitment.

1) The Vulnerability of Men to VE Recruitment

Historically, men have been expected to be the providers for their families while women are expected to stay at home and care for children. To an extent, these expectations continue, but the livelihoods that men have historically relied upon—cattle herding, hunting, gathering, and fishing—are no longer mainstream sources of income. These livelihoods not only provided income for families, but they also created a mentorship space for older men to mentor younger men. As the economy has evolved, these spaces have decreased making both income and mentorship harder to find.

While women are increasingly targeted by VE recruiters (described below), men are viewed as strong and more accessible potential recruits. Although parents are normally concerned about the movement of female youth, the same level of concern is not shown to male youth, creating an opening for VE recruiters. Men who are unemployed still do not stay home but congregate in public areas in the hopes of finding employment. For example, respondents said that young men frequently meet a place called "mushroom" along Tana River.

These continued pressures to provide with fewer opportunities available to do so have left many feeling helpless and failing to meet their familial obligations. There is some evidence to suggest that this has increased conflicts within the home and further alienated men from their mentoring

roles at home. This has destabilized families and further weakened historical social support mechanisms that once helped support youth resilience to VE recruitment.

> **"Since there is a very thin line between religion and culture, the male youth is expected to be morally upright and dedicated to good stewardship. If this is achieved, the male youth becomes responsible and hard to be recruited to VE. Those who didn't have strong religious teachings in their foundations are more vulnerable." – Study Respondent**

The community and family expect the male youth to take a leading role in spiritual activities when they start families. With absentee fathers and lack of alternative mentorship forums, youth lacks the opportunity for continuous acquisition of life-skills and informed opportunities for education on culture and religion. VE recruiters have exploited this situation and sought to fill these gaps with their own extremist ideology. This echoes previous research that has found that ignorance of religious ideology increases vulnerability to recruitment to extremist groups.[11]

2) Changing Dynamics of Women and VE Recruitment

Women are increasingly targeted for recruitment. While young men have traditionally been the main target for VE recruitment, there has been increased recruitment of women. Young women are seen as having a greater likelihood of passing through security checkpoints with weapons undetected. Women recruits also collect intelligence, recruit others, and in some cases are wives of fellow VE members.

> **"Girls are preferred by al-Shabaab because they can easily hide weapons past security checks. They also have the capacity to confuse our officers to collect intelligence information" – Study Respondent**

Existing research has shown that women recruiters were often better placed to recruit other men and women to the extremist group due to their linkages in the community, ability to build relationships of trust, and opportunity to exploit gender stereotypes that portray women merely as victims and not perpetrators of VE.[12] These sentiments were shared by a number of KIIs in the study locations. One of them in Dadaab observed as follows "*most VE activities are currently being conducted by women and 'nywele ngumu*[13]*' because they are less likely to be suspected*".

Social media has made recruiting women easier. Social media is increasingly being used by young people as a tool to meet other people and date without their parents' knowledge. Historically, parents would act as a check on who their children interacted with, especially in regard to dating and marriage. Social media is a tool that circumvents this check, and, in some cases, parents now only find out who their child is dating when they announce that they are getting married. This carries significant risk, especially given that social media accounts can mask true identities and have been a tool used by extremists to recruit new members.

Recruiters exploit women's search for jobs and business support. Women are increasingly taking up the role of provider and are looking for opportunities outside the home. A female

---

[11] Cohen, N., and T. Arieli, "Field Research in Conflict Environments: Methodological Challenges and Snowball Sampling," *Journal of Peace Research, 48* (4), (2011): 423–435.

[12] Badurdeen, F.A., "Women and Recruitment in the Al-Shabaab Network: Stories of Women being Recruited by Women Recruiters in the Coastal Region of Kenya," *The African Review 45(1),* (2018): 19-48.

[13] Derogatory terms used to refer to Kenyan of non-Cushite origins.

participant from Garissa County said that "Our men no longer provide for us." VE recruiters use offers money and employment, support for starting their own businesses, etc. as opportunities to build relationships with these women and slowly work to recruit them. For many women who are uneducated and lack business training, this is not only an attractive offer but one of the few that is available to them.

There is an increasing number of female-headed households. Data from KIIs indicated that due to economic hardship in the target areas, more men are marrying late and are monogamous. In consequence, the number of female-headed households has increased in the last decade. Religious and cultural leaders further observed that due to the great importance attached to marriage, VE recruiters promise marriage in order to entice women to join their groups. Since divorce carries a negative stigma in the region, women who are married to VE members do not try to leave due to the fear of being stigmatized as a divorcee. In addition, due to the close association between children and their mothers, mothers find it difficult to believe their sons are involved in VE activities but are devastated if their son is killed in an attack. In consequence, they tend to be easy recruits for revenge missions.

3) Women-Led Peace-Building Initiatives in The Target Population

Traditionally, women in Garissa and Tana River Counties have been marginalized from decision-making processes. However, the study finds that women's connections in their communities, understanding of culturally specific issues, and the ability to mobilize community support uniquely positions them as strong potential peacemakers. The study identified several women-led peace initiatives in the target areas. Notable initiatives in Garissa County include Ijara Women for Peace and Womankind, Mothers for Counter Violent Extremism, and Pastoralist Girls Initiative. In Tana River, these include the Kenya Community Support Center and Malaika Foundation. Additionally, women in Somali communities hold women-only communal home prayers called *bun*. After prayers, they discuss issues affecting them. In recent years, study respondents noted that TVE issues have been some of the main issues discussed. These women-led peace initiatives are strong, existing community-based networks that can be utilized to offer psychosocial support and rehabilitation from violent extremism.

State and Non-State Actors Mapping

This section describes the existing state and non-state actors and structures that can and should be leveraged according to the project's objectives and goals to ensure project effectiveness and sustainability. These findings are informed by the following research questions: 1) What are the existing state and non-state structures in the target areas that deal with VE-related issues? 2) What are their existing capacities and limitations in addressing VE dynamics in target communities? and 3) How can these structures be leveraged throughout the project to ensure effectiveness and sustainability?

The study found that there are five main agencies involved in TVE in the target population: 1) The Ministry of Interior or former provincial administration; 2) the Kenya Police Service; 3) Civil Society Organizations and Faith-Based organizations; and 4) individual families and VE recruiters. The following sections discuss their strengths and areas of opportunity along with how these can be utilized during project implementation.

The Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government

a. Strengths

Knowledge of Context: The study found that the Chiefs are highly knowledgeable about the TVE issues in their areas. Chiefs often have primary information about the activities of newcomers to the community along with information about youth who may be vulnerable to VE recruitment. In some instances, chiefs have been able to identify when youth may have been recruited to VE groups. One of the respondents shared that while the chiefs are knowledgeable, some in the Dadaab area fear they are at risk of being targeted by VE actors due to their TVE efforts and therefore no longer sleep in their own homes.

Availability of Communication Forums: The study found that Chief *Barazas* (public meetings convened by the Chief or Assistant Chief of the area usually weekly) are useful platforms for passing information to the target population. However, KII's revealed that *barazas* are mostly attended by elderly people and not the youth, who are the most vulnerable for VE recruitment. Youth traditionally respect elders and information shared among elders may also be passed to youth.

Strategic Direction: Both Garissa and Tana River Counties have CVE action plans/strategies. The policy documents are meant to provide strategic direction for all the stakeholders in the sector and create synergy to avoid duplication of efforts. However, these documents are yet to be implemented due to a lack of resources. Additionally, the documents were developed in a technical language and are less user-friendly among local bureaucrats and leaders.

b. Areas of Opportunity

Technical expertise: Officials—particularly Chiefs and their assistants—have a high capacity, are experienced, and motivated. However, they are not trained in TVE and are unable to identify early warning signs of VE recruiters or vulnerability to VE recruitment. Efforts should be made to strengthen their capacity in TVE, particularly in identifying and responding to early warning signs of youth vulnerability.

Civil Society Organizations

a. Strengths

Staff quality: Eighty percent of the CSOs have sufficient staff capacity, experience, and expertise that facilitate the organizations' effectiveness. In addition, the staff are motivated and committed to addressing peace and conflict issues. Several staff have been trained on peace and conflict issues but may require additional training on TVE.

Knowledge of Context: A majority of the CSOs' staff also live in the project and have a strong local knowledge of the context including on issues of religion, poverty, divisive governance and social justice. Some of the CSO staff interviewed were also members of the county and sub-county security committees and are able to leverage security updates they receive through those positions. Despite their participation in security committees, there is a low level of trust between CSOs and security agencies due to the government's heavy-handed use of force to TVE.

b. Areas of Opportunity

Collaboration with Key Stakeholders: There are county peace committees composed of police officers, the provincial administration, community representatives, CSOs, and religious leaders in both Tana River and Garissa Counties. These are expected to be a platform to coordinate peace activities in each respective county, including TVE issues. The study found however that these activities have been disjointed due to a seeming lack of trust among the stakeholders, particularly due to the government's approach. Some committee members have accused the police of exacerbating the problem by using excessive force with VE suspects.

Capacity Strengthening: Youth in the target areas rarely seek the advice of CSO leaders on TVE issues. This is likely due to the fact that the CSOs focus on livelihoods, and general peace issues such as interclan conflicts, gender-based violence, and child protection issues, not TVE. Additional capacity strengthening on TVE programming may be needed for local partner organizations before project implementation begins. This is a finding also echoed by previous studies.

Faith-based organizations

a. Strengths

Community Connections: Islam faith-based organizations (FBOs), especially the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM), were found to be highly influential and could be a key player in TVE. SUPKEM has a large and organized framework conducting outreach to its followers. In Garissa, it is the main partner of the Uraia for civic education in the county. The SUPKEM community network and experience running governance programs could be an opportunity for collaboration in the projects. Additionally, both Garissa and Tana River Counties have an association of pastors that could be utilized to conduct outreach to Christians. Lastly, strengthening interfaith dialogues across both counties could be useful in reducing suspicions of the religious groups have of each other.

b. Areas of Opportunity

Gender Gaps: While SUPKEM was identified as influential, female leaders said that SUPKEM was patriarchal and rarely took views from women into consideration in decision-making processes. Currently, the majority of SUPKEM shares information through its religious gatherings which exclude women. If SUPKEM is engaged as a community partner, special consideration needs to be given to the limited inclusion of women in decision-making processes and in community events.

Working Relationship with Security Agencies: There is a need to build trust between FBOs, especially SUPKEM, and security agencies. Both sets of actors distrust each other. Respondents shared that some security personnel were not comfortable sharing information in the presence of some SUPKEM members fearing that they could be VE sympathizers.

Sustainable Interfaith Forums: The interfaith forums in the target populations their dialogue forums are occasional in nature and reliant on donor funding. They are not therefore able to conduct sustained TVE activities. Any use of interfaith forums should include the development of a sustainability plan.

Security agencies

a. Strengths

Deterrence Mechanisms: The police approach to TVE has primarily been through military means. While tools like checkpoints have been effective deterrents for attacks, this approach has been both expensive and failed to transform extremists. In addition, security forces have been accused of violating human rights while dealing with alleged extremist suspects. This has only deepened distrust between security forces and communities.

b. Areas of Opportunity

Addressing Corruption: According to the East African bribery index run by Transparency International, the police agency is the most corrupt institution in the county.[14] Police officers have been accused of taking bribes from VE recruiters to conduct their activities unabated. Efforts should be made by TVE actors toward increasing accountability within the police force and other security agencies working on TVE activities.

Motivation: The study observed that most of the frontline security personnel in the region are posted there as a punishment instead of as their own choice. As a consequence, many security personnel are reluctant to carry out their duties or put themselves in dangerous situations regarding TVE. Efforts need to be made to increase motivation.

Communication Channels Mapping

This section presents the finding of the appropriate media spaces, messages, tools, and formats among at-risk communities in the two counties, including existing narratives of pluralism, strength in diversity and nonviolence. The findings are divided into 1) the most popular media channels; 2) culturally appropriate narratives and messages of pluralism, nonviolence, and diversity; and 3) preferred media tools and formats.

Most Popular Media Channels

Twenty-three percent of respondents identified radio as their main source of information. Radio was followed by baraza[15] (15%), social media (15%) and mobile phones (13% in importance. Group meetings, public events, newspapers, public campaigns, hospital meetings, and rehabilitation sessions were the least popular sources of information. For women, due to the fact that women rarely go to public places, their main source of information was radio, social media, and one-on-one meetings in homes. Male respondents were found to be more likely to listen to news broadcasts (BBC Somalia) whereas female respondents were more likely to listen to music and talk shows. The popularity of the radio could be attributed to the fact that vernacular radio stations are largely available, and the target population identifies with them. Star FM was the first radio station to broadcast in Somali and attracted a wide range of listeners. At the same time, one radio can serve many community members at the same time thus the high percentage of reach.

Figure 7: Most Popular Sources of Information

---
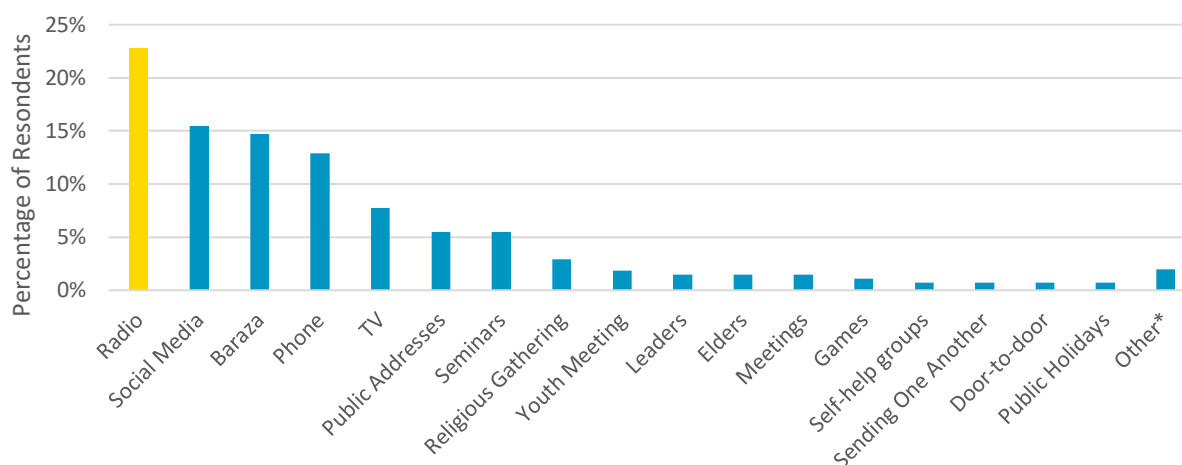
[14] Transparency International-Kenya, "The East African Bribery Index, 2017," 2017.

[15] Barazas are public places where public meetings are held.

*Other (2%) includes newspaper, public campaigns, hospital meetings, rehabilitation sessions, job creation meetings, and guidance and counseling.

Social media channels, specifically WhatsApp and Facebook, were the main source of information for the youth. Widespread access to mobile phones has increased access and usage of social media apps such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram along with other forms of social media. Social media facilitates rapid sharing and both positive and negative messages can go viral.

Culturally Appropriate Narratives of Pluralism, Nonviolence, and Diversity

Narratives and messages have been known to play a fundamental role in the promotion of and recruitment for violent extremist groups. In regard to this, the study sought to understand what narratives were being used and culturally appropriate counternarratives.

The study found that respondents identify more with religiously based narratives vs. any other type of narrative. One Masalani elder described this saying:

> *"In this community, it's very hard to draw a line between culture and religion. The community embraces Islam faith which brings them together especially in the religious festivals and activities that takes place in the mosques and social gatherings."*
> *- Masalani Elder*

KII transcripts showed that VE actors have used religious terms such as *heavenly brides*, *kafir*, *infidels*, *militant martyrdom* and *jihad* (holy war) for purposes of creating divisions and mobilizing recruits. The term *"nywele ngumu"*, meaning hard hair, was used by Garissa inhabitants to refer to those from outside Garissa. These terms are used to create a narrative that violent actions taken against *infidels* are part of *jihad* and beneficial to the community.

To create narratives of pluralism, tolerance, and diversity, peace workers used religious terms such as *salaam* (peace) and *haram* (forbidden in Islam). They also drew from the Koran and referenced passages such as Sulh Hudaibiya (Surat-al-Baqarah (2), aya 190), which requires Muslims to limit their use of violence and not to corrupt the land after it has been set in order (Verse 7:85). Other Koranic verses that promote peace include Sura 4:135 and Sura 3:159,134.

Preferred Media Tools, Format, Spaces and Radio Stations

a. Media Tools and Formats

Overall, respondents recommended that any media content be interactive, contextually relevant, relatable, include infographics, and be done in local languages. Where possible, respondents recommended involving prominent leaders and reformed extremists as two types of individuals that would have influence in the community.

Respondents said that they found interactive media programming to be more engaging and created more of a conversation instead of a one-way transmission. Examples of this type of programming include talk shows, radio dramas, and live interviews of leaders during which the public can call in to ask questions or offer comments. Live call-ins allow instantaneous feedback loops and make the program more inclusive to those who may not ordinarily have an opportunity to participate in the discussions.

Due to the low literacy rates in both target areas, respondents recommended that print media use infographics and pictures as much as possible. This can also facilitate understanding

across different languages.

Respondents identified two channels that were particularly effective to reach and engage youth: Facebook Live and cinemas. For Facebook Live, respondents recommended conducting interviews with prominent leaders and broadcasting via Facebook Live. Respondents said that public films can be an effective channel to reach youth. Current programs such as "How do you feel?" have successfully engaged and resonated with youth.

b. Popular Radio Stations

In the refugee camps, the most popular station was **Gargar FM**. Those with access to TV preferred the BBC, CNN and Al Jazeera TV. In Tana River, **Amani FM and, TBS and Tana FM** were the most popular radio stations. The respondents further noted that programs touching on youth and VE should be aired at the appropriate timings such **8:00-9:00 am, 1:30-2:00 pm** and at night from **8:30 pm-9:30 pm** when the target groups can listen to or watch them. Additionally, the respondents recommend that radio and television stations should air programs where the youth are allowed to share their experiences/problem-solving programs; inform the youth on skills that can help them be self-reliant/self-employed; and improve on the personalities of the youth and make them feel part of the TVE programs.

c. Spaces & Power for TVE

The study observed that there were key differences between men and women in the spaces in which they engage in TVE. Each of the villages in the study area had a young men's meeting area popularly known as the "base" or maskan where young men would hang out and talk about what was going on in the community. Some of the bases are also used for playing indoor games, drinking coffee, and/or chewing *miraa* among other recreational activities. They also function as meeting or resting points for boda-boda drivers or matatu operators.

In contrast, women rarely gather in public spaces. The most important spaces for women were their homes or the homes of other women. The other engagement spaces for women are market and women self-help group meetings. In the Somali culture, there are also Friday prayer meetings called *bun*. In the *bun* sessions, women mostly discuss their issues.

Beyond the "base", there are a number of NGOs and FBOs that have opened youth centers. For example, in Garissa, youth frequently meet at the SUPKEM center; the Canadian Center in Dadaab; and the Red Cross Centre in Hola Town. Similar youth centers have also been established by churches in the target areas. However, these programs are not popular with the most at-risk youth due to the behavior codes set by such organizations which discourage some youth from attending.

In general, youths use these meeting places to share their frustrations and seek advice from peers. Due to the amount of time spent by the youth in these bases (maskani), the spaces have the potential to have the greatest impact on the youth social, political and economic behavior. The study recommends therefore that TVE actors should find ways of taking part in the discussions in maskani.

d. Functional classification of TVE engagement spaces

The study identifies various spaces occupied by key influencers, spoilers and enablers for peace in the VE transformation matrix. In power cube analysis model,[16] these spaces are categorized as **closed**, **invited**, **claimed** and/or **underutilized**:

[16] This is adapted from Power Cube: www.powercube.net.

- **Closed spaces** refer to places where TVE is exercised behind closed doors. These can be closed for various reasons including confidentiality and protection, but regardless, these spaces usually lack transparency and have historically excluded civil society.
- **Invited spaces** for TVE refers to spaces where communities can participate in TVE mechanisms initiated and controlled by the government. Civil society engages in these spaces at the behest of state actors and according to rules set by them. Yet there is often still scope for citizens to influence outcomes in these spaces as is done in the county and sub-county peace committees.
- **Underutilized spaces** are TVE spaces that communities are entitled to participate in, but rarely make use of for a variety of reasons. There may be gatekeepers who discourage entry or citizens may simply be unaware that these spaces are available to them. For example, bun can be considered an underutilized space. The design of Jamii Bila Balaa seems to target such spaces which open new ground for TVE work in the region.
- **Claimed spaces** are TVE spaces created and demanded by civil society. These include forums initiated by citizen groups where government officials are called to account. Claimed spaces may range from public meetings to visiting government facilities to deepening participation across a range of other public domains.

Table 3: TVE Engagement Spaces

Closed spaces	Invited spaces
- Counter-terrorism units - Security operations	- Peace committees - Interfaith peace forums - Mosques - Churches
Underutilized spaces	**Claimed spaces**
- Family settings/ households - Bun (women religious meetings) - Maskani	- Public meetings - Chief's barazas - Media

4. Conclusion

This study set out to map power dynamics, key influencers and parent and family-based networks and actors, state and non-state actors that can support TVE initiatives as well as media spaces and tools that can be employed for promoting a nonviolent narrative. The study found that persons between ages 18 to 35 are most at risk of VE recruitment. Their level of vulnerability stems from societal expectations of them, which include defense, family formation and provisions of livelihood security. These expectations sit in a context of historical state neglect, unemployment, and frequent harassment by the security forces. These frustrations are often aired to parents, especially the mother, and peers and religious leaders. However, family-based networks and actors are rarely able to respond to youth concerns due to state coercion, distrust of state institutions involved in TVE and historical marginalization of the communities under study. TVE recruiters have used these underlying grievances to build a false narrative that extremist groups offer opportunities to access jobs, women, a good life in heaven, and as a means to oppose the government.

Family-based networks were found to be critical in TVE. Mothers, in particular, were found to be the first point of reference for the most at-risk youth. Women have a unique opportunity to use their influence in families and communities to implement innovative solutions to support prevention, de-radicalization, and psychosocial support and rehabilitation from extremism among others. Despite women having limited ability to get information from the outside world (minimum involvement in public life), the mother is the first person who youth contact whenever they have

problems. In this regard, initiatives geared towards increasing the capacity of women-led TVE ventures are likely to be highly effective.

Maskani played an important role as a social space in which young men gather to share information. In the past, these have been used as spaces to promote extremist ideologies, but these can also be used as a positive space to promote pluralism, nonviolence, and strength in diversity.

Moreover, the study mapped out a number of TVE actors who can help parents and other family-based networks and actors to TVE. Some of these actors include religious leaders, politicians, the media, elders, and local administrators. Due to the patriarchal and highly religious nature of the target communities, particular attention needs to be paid to information channels such as religious meetings that exclude women. While religious leaders have the broadest influence, women are often marginalized in decision-making discussions in religious spaces. While SUPKEM offers a strong existing network that can be utilized to spread positive messages, the program needs to address the gendered dimensions of the organization.

The community elders hold an important position and are respected in the communities that were studied. The importance of the elders stems from their place in the informal/alternative justice resolution mechanism. The two study areas have a long tradition of using traditional methods of peacemaking. Among the Somali speakers, there exists a state of legal pluralism where customary law (Xeer), religious law (Sharia) and secular law operate side by side depending on the issue at hand. For instance, in case of murder, the clan of the murderer is expected to pay Diya (blood money usually in terms of cattle) to the clan which loses a member. Given the fact that the formal justice system is both expensive and alien to most communities in the target area, the use of the traditional justice system should be embraced in solving conflicts in society.

Concerning the media, it was noted that local vernacular radio stations are the most popular avenues for passing information. This stems from the fact that they are accessible to all segments of the population. The men can easily carry their radios to grazing places and women can also listen to them at home using mobile phones. Social media channels are the most popular information channels for youth and allow information to be shared quickly and repeatedly referred to in a way that a radio broadcast does not allow. As a result, it is a form of media that VE recruiters often use but which can be used strategically to target and counter VE, especially among the youth.

Recommendations

1. **Strengthen accountability frameworks in governance systems.** The study found that one of the drivers of VE in the target population is the distrust with the security forces due to abuses perpetrated against the community. Youth accused security agencies of abductions, arbitrary arrests, and forced disappearances. VE recruiters leverage these grievances and are seen to provide opportunities to oppose the government. Strengthening internal accountability frameworks within security agencies can address this VE driver.

2. **Rely on family and parent-based networks, particularly those led by mothers, in TVE activities**. Recognizing the unique access that mothers have as most influential resource for youth, mothers should be trained on early warning signs and response mechanisms to TVE. These should be supported by opportunities for women to be involved in peace and community decision-making processes. While the government and international agencies

have historically invested in the formal authority structures in TVE, this approach would utilize strong familial connections to TVE.

3. **Engage religious leaders and support positive religious messaging.** Violent extremists are using extremist religious narratives to mobilize and recruit fighters. Both Muslim and Christian leaders are speaking out against them and there is an opportunity to support and amplify their messages of peace and tolerance.

4. **Support sustainable interfaith dialogue forums.** Interfaith dialogue forums have helped to foster religious unity and cohesion across Muslims and Christians in the area but have historically been donor-dependent and therefore ad-hoc. The project should seek to create sustainable interfaith dialogue forums that communities will be able to carry on after the project ends.

5. **Host multi-stakeholder coordination and dialogue platforms.** While key stakeholders are interested in cooperating on TVE, they lack common platforms and have a deep distrust with each other. Multi-stakeholder platforms can foster information sharing, joint-action planning, and gradually build trust among the stakeholders. Key stakeholders include government actors, elders, FBOs, CSOs, and the media.

6. **Strengthen the TVE capacity of local leaders.** Local leaders are uniquely placed to address VE due to their knowledge, connections, and influence in their community. While local leaders are knowledgeable on VE trends, they need additional capacity in order to support and lead TVE efforts. Capacity strengthening efforts should include strategies for local leaders to ensure their own security. Key leaders to engage are religious leaders, elders, local chiefs and assistants.

7. **Utilize radio and social media to amplify narratives of pluralism, diversity, and nonviolence.** Key radio stations include Star FM and Garagar FM, Key social media channels are Facebook and WhatsApp. Radio programs and social media content should use voices of community and religious leaders as well as former extremists. Social media channels (particularly WhatsApp and Facebook) should be used to reach youth who are not reached by traditional radio channels like radio. These programs should be conducted in local dialects in order to amplify their reach to those with lower literacy levels. Social media interventions may include posting information that promotes pluralist narratives, partner with popular and respected individuals in the society with a large following to promote pluralist messages and counter false teachings by VE agents. At an advanced stage, the project should train communities to conduct social media monitoring in order to discern trends and messages that could point to VE messaging and report the same for action.

8. **Address factors that increase the youth vulnerability to VE recruitment.** Key factors that increase vulnerability include low levels of education or skill development, a lack of livelihood opportunities, and substance abuse. Girls were found to be particularly vulnerable due to limited educational opportunities along with a lack of business training. Where possible, projects should seek to address these underlying issues.

Bibliography

Abdilatif, M., "Engaging Women in Preventing and Countering Extremist Violence in Kenya." United Nations, 2017.

Badurdeen, F.A., "Women and Recruitment in the Al-Shabaab Network: Stories of Women being Recruited by Women Recruiters in the Coastal Region of Kenya," *The African Review 45(1),* (2018): 19-48.

Borgatti, S.P., M.G. Everett, and L.C. Freeman, "UCINET for Windows: Software for Social Network Analysis, Harvard, MA: Analytic Technologies, 2002.

Botha, Anneli. *Terrorism in Kenya and Uganda: Radicalization from a Political Socialization Perspective,* London: Lexington Books, 2016.

Botha, Anneli, "Political Socialization and Terrorist Radicalization among Individuals who Joined al-Shabaab in Kenya," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism,* 37(11), (2014): 895-919.

Branch, D., *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair, 1963–2011.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011.

Breiger, R.L., "The Analysis of Social Networks," in *Handbook of Data Analysis* edited by M. Hardy and A. Bryman, 505-526. London: Sage Publications, 2004.

Broch-Due, V., *Violence and Belonging: The Quest for Identity in Post-Colonial Africa.* New York: Routledge, 2005.

Carrington, P. J., and J.S. Wasserman, *Models and Methods in Social Network Analysis.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Cohen, N., and T. Arieli, "Field Research in Conflict Environments: Methodological Challenges and Snowball Sampling," *Journal of Peace Research, 48* (4), (2011): 423–435.

Galgalo, B., "Kenya: 33 Suspected Shabaab Terrorists Arrested in Tana River," *Daily Nation*, May 18, 2017.

Glazzard, A., and M. Zeuthen, "Violent Extremism" *Reading,* 2014.

Goldsmith, Paul, "The Future of Pastoralist Conflict in the Horn of Africa," in *Pastoralism and Development in Africa: Dynamic Change at the Margins,* edited by Andy Catley, Jeremy Lind, and Ian Scoones, 131-142. New York: Routledge, 2011.

Hansen, S.J., S. Lid, and C.C.O. Okwany, "Countering Violent Extremism in Somalia and Kenya: Actors and Approaches," Oslo: Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research, Oslo Metropolitan University, 2016.

Heckathorn, D.D., "Respondent-driven Sampling II: Deriving Valid Estimates from Chain-referral Samples of Hidden Populations," *Social Problems*, 49 (1), (2002): 11-34.

Horgan, J.G., *Walking Away from Terrorism: Accounts of Disengagement from Radical and Extremist Movements,* New York: Routledge, 2009.

Horgan, J. and M. Taylor, "Disengagement, De-radicalization, and the Arc of Terrorism: Future Directions for Research," in *Jihadi Terrorism and the Radicalization Challenge: European and American Experiences*, edited by Rik Coolsaet, 173-186. New York: Routledge, 2011.

Khalil, J. and M. Zeuthen, "A Case Study of Counter Violent Extremism Programming: Lessons from OTI's Kenya Transition Initiative," *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development,* 3(1), 2014.

Khalil, J., and M. Zeuthen, "Countering Violent Extremism and Risk Reduction: A Guide to Programme Design and Evaluation," *Whitehall Reports.* 2016.

Koehler, D., *Understanding De-radicalization: Methods, Tools, and Programs for Countering Violent Extremism,* New York: Routledge, 2016.

Kothari, C.R., *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques,* Second Edition, New Delhi: New Age International (P) Ltd., 2004.

Mburu, N., "Contemporary Banditry in the Horn of Africa: Causes, History and Political Implications," *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 8(2), (1999): 89-107.

Nash, C., Y. Nesterova, K. Primrose, W.Y.A Chan, R.A. Rios, F.M.J. Velasquez, and A. Zowmi, "Youth-led Guid on Prevention of Violent Extremism through Education," Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development, 2017.

Ndung'u, I., U. Salifu, and R. Sigsworth, "Violent Extremism in Kenya: Why Women are a Priority," Institute for Security Studies Monographs, (2017): 1-124.

Ndung'u, I. and U. Salifu, "The Role of Women in Violent Extremism in Kenya." Institute for Security Studies.

Ruteere, M. and P. Mutahi, "Confronting Violent Extremism in Kenya: Debates, Ideas and Challenges," Centre for Human Rights and Policy Studies, 2018.

Scott, John and Peter J. Carrington, *The SAGE Handbook of Social Network Analysis,* London: SAGE Publications Ltd., 2011.

Transparency International-Kenya, "The East African Bribery Index, 2017," 2017.

Wasserman, S. and K. Faust, *Social Network Analysis: Methods and Applications,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.