KENYA COMMUNITY SUPPORT CENTRE (KECOSCE)

COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN KENYA
BOTTOM-UP LEVERAGING AND BUILDING GRASSROOTS’ CAPACITIES IN COMMUNITIES

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Kenya Community Support Centre (KECOSCE) is a Non-Governmental Organization based in the Coast region. The region covers six counties with an approximated population of 3,325,307 (2009 Pop. Census)

The Mission of the KECOSCE:- To mobilize, organize and empower citizens to be able to effectively participate in social, economic and political processes that impact on their well-being in order to realize sustainable human development.
PROGRAMME AREAS

- Democratic Governance
- Economic development and asset management
- Peace building, Security and Conflict Mitigation
- Urban Development and Governance
BACKGROUND TO OUR RESPONSE ACTIVITIES TO COUNTER TRANSATIONAL THREATS IN KENYA

- The bombing of Nairobi in 1998 whose masterminds had roots in the Coast of Kenya.
- The 2002 bombing of Paradise Hotel in Kikambala - masterminds had lived and had won the support of communities in the region.
- Penetration of community religious and cultural institutions for recruitment to join militia and insurgent radical movements.
- Fertile environment – porous borders, corruption, government failure, deep marginalization of the region and its people.
Our Approach

- Assessment to enhance our understanding of the key drivers of youth radicalization in the region and to generate interventions and policy recommendations aimed at decreasing the appeal of violent extremist groups.
- Mapping of hotspot areas Mombasa – (Kisauni, Mvita, Likoni), Kwale (Matuga), Kilifi (Kikambala), Malindi (Malindi Town), Lamu (Island, Faza, Kiunga).
KEY DRIVERS OF RADICALIZATION AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN THE COAST OF KENYA

- **Political drivers** - reward/punishment system (it’s our time to eat). The Secession agenda

- **Cultural drivers** - Inter-religious tensions and misuse of religion by a small group to justify their use of violence against innocent. Societal view of youth as perpetrators of violence

- **Economic drivers** - Youth Bulge - 60% of population is youthful without gainful employment, insufficient infrastructure and policies to support and provide financial support.

- **Legal/policy drivers** - weak infrastructure, collapse of industries, deep mistrust between policy and communities the high levels of corruption, weak policies. The issuance of identification cards - the vetting process, employment, agriculture, transport etc. Less than 60% of youth with secondary education, huge numbers without identification cards and necessary citizenship documents.
Programs focus

- Strengthening community resilience – education and capacity building initiatives.
- Legal/Policy Advocacy
Intergenerational and Youth Mentoring and media program

Focus on youth out of schools 15-35yrs

- Dialogues with respected religious leaders and scholars
- Moderated debates to challenge violent extremism ideologies, topics discussions forums on Identity, citizenship, religion, culture, relationships with government, elders, parents etc.
- Economic empowerment - training on small scale businesses, creation of youth cooperative society, update of government funds, Information Technology etc
- Use of Multi media – Websites (www.kataakutumiwa.org), Radio (Amua infomercials, talk shows, paid adverts), bill boards, LED video, cell phones (SMS Platforms) and social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube) to promote tolerance, diversity and sense of citizenship amongst the youth.
STRENGTHENING WOMEN VOICES AGAINST VIOLENT EXTREMISM

• Training women on early signs of radicalization, leadership, human rights, constitution, leadership and participation in decision making at family and societal level.

• Monitoring movements of visitors and sharing information with security agencies

• Creation of support groups within the district/county and inter-county to promote women voices able to withstand violent extremist ideologies and challenge those who espouse them to protect their children.

• Documenting women experiences on impact of radicalization to families and societies (WOMEN VOICES)
SCHOOL MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME.

Involves engagement with the students to empower and educate them on dangers of radicalization and counter radicalization/extremist ideologies

- Monthly school outreach programmes to talk about dangers of radicalization; Debates on counterradicalization/extremist ideologies in order to educate youth on dangers of radicalization
- Provide a safe forum to develop their own thought on the issues
- Mentors provide right information regarding information, culture and traditions, leadership and citizenship etc
- Supporting schools guidance and counseling departments and linking with network of imams
COLLABORATION WITH SECURITY ACTORS

Enhancing partnership between the law enforcement and communities and increasing community participation in deterring terrorist from operating in their localities.

- Joint discussion forums to build trust and change perception on security agencies as adversaries but rather as partners in security
- Developing police/community connections, engage with communities
- Joint training on community safety attended by youth, women, police, community leaders to community support while countering crime and handing of terrorist related cases.
• Open regular dialogue ensure that citizens are informed of the threat in a honest and straightforward way to foster a deeper understanding of why particular actions are needed to respond to the threat.

• Monitoring to ensure that counter-terrorism activities adhere to the rule of law and that police act within legal mandates that include mechanisms for accountability, oversight and review to protect the society from the inadvertent erosion of the civil liberties.
Coast Early Warning and Response mechanism (CEWER)

- To cushion sources of information, KECOSCE established a Coast Early Warning and Response mechanism to continuously monitors activities of suspect groups and individual at community level.
- Supported by 50 monitors who collect information, verify and sent to KECOSCE alert number.
Program Strengths

- Increased awareness on the negative impact of VEOs on national security
- Strengthened the relationship between government officials and local communities
- Established channels of communication for addressing grievances and information sharing.
- Establishment of various public funds to support community socio-economic initiatives.
- Supportive legislation (Prevention of Terrorism Act, the Organized Criminal Act, Money Laundering etc)
Program challenges faced

- Lack of a National Strategy to counter violence Extremism and increase community resilience
- Increased presence of Small Arms amongst communities.
- High turn over of security officials sensitized on CVE
- Slow phase towards addressing root causes and drivers of radicalization and violent extremism. (land, employment opportunities, social amenities, drugs and illicit trade of persons etc)
- Communication Technology
LESSONS LEARNT

- Youth population is increasingly defining the region’s security environment, their involvement is crucial.
- Violent extremist organizations (VEOs) remain active in the region and have extended their influence in a number of areas e.g. schools, colleges, etc.
- Radical organizations understand and prey upon a combination of political realities, socioeconomic factors, and individual characteristics that render youth vulnerable to VEO recruitment.
LESSONS LEARNT

- Enhancing cross-sectoral trust is very important when engaging youth at the margins of society.
- Rural-to-urban migration, the disintegration of traditional family and community structures, and a lack of formal employment have pushed large numbers of youth into the informal sector, where they rarely interact with state institutions. These youth are vulnerable to VEO recruiters, who offer them a strong sense of purpose, community, and even financial compensation.
- Funding for CVE should be prioritized and long term
THANK YOU
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