2023

REDUCED VULNERABILITY TO EXTREMIST NARRATIVES FOR AT RISK YOUTH AMONG JUVENILE GANGS IN MOMBASA COUNTY

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

DISCLAIMER

The views expressed by the authors in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the Collaboration of Women in Development (CWID).

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACC   Assistant County Commissioner

CAPE   Continuous Assessment Prevention and Empowerment

CSOs   Civil Society Organisations

CUC   Court Users Committee

CVE   Countering Violent Extremism

CWID   Collaboration of Women in Development

ERM   Early Recovery Mechanisms

FBO   Faith Based Organisation

FGDs   Focus Group Discussions

CT/PCVE   Counter Terrorism - Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism

GDPR   General Data Protection Regulations of the European Union

KECOSCE   Kenya Community Support Centre

KIIs   Key Informant Interviews

LICODEP   Likoni Community Develop Program

MAYE   Manyatta Youth Entertainment

MRC   Mombasa Republican Council

NGOs   Non-Governmental Organisations

NSCVE   National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism

OCS   Officer-In-Charge of a Police Station

PCVE   Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism

USAID   U.S. Agency for International Development

USIP   United States Institute of Peace

HSC Betty Sharon
Executive Director Collaboration of Women in Development - CWID

FORWARD

The mushrooming of juvenile gangs among the youth in Mombasa County continues to be a worrying trend. Some of the methods used by terrorist groups to recruit new members into their groups include; extremist ideologies, abduction, forced recruitment, enticement by promises of money and other material advantages. The involvement of young people with gangs can lead to an increased likelihood of insecurity leading to economic instability in Mombasa County, social disconnect, altercation with the law leading to arrests and imprisonment and even death. The reality requires an appropriate and effective response by state and non-state actors that is grounded in international human rights law and the rule of law.

In our line of interventions, we recognize that young people are a vital source of support for many terrorist groups, with roles ranging from cooks, armed fighters and informers. The study unveils different ways young people are recruited widely across various contexts. It further elaborates how young victims of violent extremism have a much higher attachment to extremist ideologies and require exhaustive efforts to counter their indoctrination.

Collaboration of Women in Development - CWID recognizes that it is important for stakeholders across the community to work together to tackle the threats of radicalization and extremism. CWID aims to use this study to ensure that protecting children and the youth from being drawn into radicalisation and extremism is part of their safeguarding policies. This should include information about how to recognise and respond to radicalisation, both online and offline. (https:www.collabowid.org/assets/tiles/Early-Warning-Early–Response-Framework-for-Mombasa-County.pdf).

We anticipate creating platforms for early warning through working with parents of at-risk youths to identify spaces where radicalisation may take place and collaborate with partners to reduce youth recruitment into gang groups. Initiate early response to those at risk through intersectionality engagement and empower local community to be able to provide children and families with appropriate support and welfare. Stakeholders need to strengthen programs that address parental gaps as they play a key role in Early Warning Early Response.

KEY TERMS

- **Resilience** is the ability of a community, people, state, or region to adapt to a violent shock or increase in aggression and brutality. Adaptation can lead to new structures and interactions, as well as new functions in the community. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) published "A Framework for Analyzing Resilience in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States" in 2013, which hypothesized that five types of external shocks (economic, environmental, security, political, and social) interact with one another and with three bases of community resilience (institutions, resources, and adaptive facilitators).

- **Understanding that risk factors for violent extremism** are generally divided into two categories: push (structural or environmental) and pull (individual recruitment). Using drivers identified by USAID, the study will look at the prevalence of push and pull forces in Kenyan urban communities. Corruption, violent government persecution, human rights abuses, young marginalization, and underemployment are likely in most or all of the research locations. A misconception of Islam, propagated by charismatic leaders, is another common pull factor.

- **Extremist ideology** as an ideology that has become inflexible and dogmatic. It is used to distinguish between ideologies that are far from the norm, such as the Islamic State, and ideologies that have become accepted in certain parts of Iraq and Syria. Extremist ideologies can be political, religious, economic, environmental, or social and do not presuppose any one doctrine. However, the existence of a non-compromising ideology is central to extremism, which has political and practical implications. For example, the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) in Kenya is separatist and not extremist because it is focused on a discrete set of political or territorial goals.

USIP (2016). Community resilience to violent extremism in Kenya. Peaceworks No. 122

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Objectives and Scope of the Study

This reports presents findings of a baseline study on reduced vulnerability to extremist narratives for at-risk youth among juvenile gangs in Mombasa County. The study was conducted across six sub-counties in Mombasa namely: Kisauni, Nyali, Mvita, Likoni, Changamwe and Jomvu Sub-counties.

The study aimed to assess the prevalence of vulnerability to extremist narratives among at-risk youth in juvenile gangs and identify the factors that contribute to this vulnerability. It further explored community coping mechanisms that address vulnerability among youth gangs including identifying partnerships, collaborations and the interventions that can be implemented to reduce the vulnerability of these youth to extremist narratives.

The Purpose and Objectives of the assignment were to:
  i.   Establish the level of influence of the various narratives as well as resilience/coping mechanisms that exist among at-risk youth and juveniles.
  ii. Support to bring out the best-case studies on resilience and make recommendations to both policy makers and CSOs.

The study was structured into three phases that sequentially built into each other. These are the inception and planning phase, data collection phase, and data analysis and reporting phase. The baseline study adopted a mixed-methods approach to uncover the factors that contribute to the increased vulnerability of at-risk youth and juveniles to extremist narratives. The methods utilized for data gathering included literature review, household surveys, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). An observational approach was employed to evaluate any visible indicators relevant to this study. Finally, a consultative validation meeting was held with members of the Mombasa County Action Plan-PCVE Secretariat, Technical Review Committee, CWID and the research team, which provided further insights used to enrich and strengthen the study report.

Key Insights from the Study
Vulnerability to Extremist Narratives

The study revealed that at-risk youth in juvenile gangs in Mombasa County are highly vulnerable to extremist narratives due to a combination of factors. 53.6% of at-risk youth in the study's target communities are very vulnerable to extremist narratives, compared to 34.1% who are slightly vulnerable. 93.1% of the 276 respondents were aware of at-risk youth, while 2.5% were not. 28.6% of youth were enrolled in school, compared to 68.5% who were not.

The main causes of vulnerability included; poverty, dysfunctional families and parental neglect, unemployment, and low literacy levels, which must be addressed to lessen their susceptibility. In addition, the study revealed that 73.2 % of respondents were familiar with the challenges faced by youth and their communities in countering violent extremism, while 12% did not have adequate information.

Resilience Building towards Extremist Narratives

The study findings noted that 33.3% of at-risk youth in this community have low resilience, which presents a significant challenge for 44.2% of them to resist extremist narratives. At-risk youth were found to be less vulnerable to extremist narratives when offered economic empowerment, such as entrepreneurship, vocational training, and job creation opportunities.

Proposed Interventions to Counter Extremist Narratives

The study established that 88% of participants deemed it important to help young gang members reconstruct their lives away from extremist groups. Community-based programs are an effective strategy for reducing vulnerability to extremist narratives among at-risk youth. 93.1% of respondents were aware of the factors that lead youth to join these gangs, which are well-known in the community and supported by some citizens. It is critical to integrate the community in an effort to find remedies to counter violent extremism and promote peace. 36.2 % disagreed with partnerships and collaborations among stakeholders to support at-risk youths, while 34.78% called for increased stakeholder engagement and analysis to define a strategic model to deal with structural poverty, limited educational opportunities, and exposure to drugs and criminality.

The need for remediation (rehabilitation and reintegration) has been used as a technique to reduce the vulnerability of at-risk youth to extremist narratives. The study respondents disclosed that the Mombasa County government has put in place a variety of development initiatives intended to lessen the susceptibility of young people who were vulnerable.

Sports and recreation facilities, youth empowerment efforts, professional education programs, and healthcare and rehabilitation programs are initiatives that seek to help people reintegrate into their communities and explore potential root causes of their susceptibility to extreme rhetoric. These initiatives involve counseling and family support to help them reintegrate and combat social inequality and economic marginalization.

Unveiling the CAPE Model

The validation meeting held with the Technical Review Committee birthed the Continuous Assessment Prevention and Empowerment (CAPE) model which is considered a useful framework for reducing vulnerability to extremist narratives among at-risk youth in juvenile gangs in Mombasa County. The CAPE model is a holistic approach that will address the root causes of youth vulnerability to extremist narratives through continuous assessment, prevention, and empowerment strategies. It will create opportunities for inter-sectoral collaboration and allow diverse partners to specialize in the delivery of specific components of the model to improve strategies and avoid duplication of efforts.

The CAPE model can be applied to reduce vulnerability to extremist narratives among at-risk youth in juvenile gangs in Mombasa County as follows:

1. **Continuous Assessment:** The CAPE model involves continuous assessment to identify at-risk youth and the factors that contribute to their vulnerability to extremist narratives. This includes monitoring their behavior, attitudes, and beliefs, as well as their social and economic situations. Appropriate interventions can be created and delivered using this knowledge and information.
2. **Prevention:** The CAPE model emphasizes the importance of prevention by providing at-risk youth with positive alternatives to extremist narratives. This can be achieved through mentorship programs, vocational training, education, community engagement and law enforcement. The goal is to help at-risk youth develop positive identities and self-esteem, which can reduce their vulnerability to extremist narratives.
3. **Empowerment:** The CAPE model recognizes that at-risk youth need to be empowered to resist extremist narratives. This can be achieved through programs that build critical thinking skills, media literacy, and civic engagement. At-risk youth can also be empowered through economic opportunities, such as microfinance and entrepreneurship programs, employment and income generation for youths and their families.

The CAPE model will be anchored on a collaborative approach between all the key duty bearers and right holders. It will emphasize a collaborative approach involving multiple stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, religious leaders, and community members. This approach ensures that interventions are coordinated, effective, and sustainable. In conclusion, the CAPE model will be a useful framework for reducing vulnerability to extremist narratives among at-risk youth in juvenile gangs in Mombasa County. By providing continuous assessment, prevention, and empowerment strategies, at-risk youth can develop positive identities and resist extremist narratives. Additionally, a collaborative approach ensures that interventions are effective and sustainable.

Recommendations
Vulnerability to Extremist Narratives

The immediate center of focus should be the family unit which is either dysfunctional or crumbling. Addressing the underlying issues of poor parenting and dysfunctional families is critical in combating the involvement of at-risk youth in violent extremism in the Coastal region. This can be attained through education and awareness campaigns that promote positive parenting and family values, alongside counselling and support services for low-income families and programs that provide economic opportunities for families and youth. We can help prevent youths from becoming drawn into violent extremism by addressing these issues, as well as promote more resilient and cohesive communities.

To guarantee that their opinions are taken into consideration, guarantee that their opinions, initiatives must emphasize public safety work with National and County government agencies, and collaborate with civil society organizations and human rights advocates. As a result, a more secure and stable society will be created by fostering a sense of trust between the government and its people.

At the regional level, it is important to improve coordination between the (Coastal counties) and the national government through other existing platforms including Court Users Committees (CUCs) and spaces to ensure that security reforms are implemented effectively and efficiently. It is important to involve community members in the security process to increase their trust and promote community policing. The suggested strategy of collaborating with regional influencers is positive on a local level, creating a sense of ownership and local responsibility towards maintaining peace and security. This can lead to the development of a stronger relationship between the security forces and the community, leading to long-term stability.

At this level, awareness campaigns should be founded on the principles of equity, human rights, the rule of law, and collaboration with national and county governments. To guarantee that the community is knowledgeable and equipped to take part in decision-making processes, these pillars should be incorporated into the influencers' messaging and content development. To assess the impact of these awareness campaigns, monitoring and evaluation systems should be implemented.

Public education can also play a crucial role in creating awareness among at-risk youth and communities about the dangers of violent extremism and the consequences of their actions. Educating youth and communities especially parents about the early warning signs of extremist ideologies and how to prevent radicalization can help them make informed decisions and avoid getting involved in violent activities.

Resilience Building towards Extremist Narratives

Building resilience requires a holistic approach that addresses the underlying causes of violent extremism and provides the youth with the necessary support and resources to overcome their challenges. The study believes that facilitating the implementation of programs that promote connections between P/CVE approaches used by the government and the community. CWID and its partners should step up their advocacy for community engagement in P/CVE at the National and County government levels by creating focused communication campaigns and training initiatives that emphasize the importance of community involvement.

Public education can equally help build the resilience of at-risk youth of being radicalized by teaching them skills to resist extremist narratives and ideologies. This can be achieved through programs that promote critical thinking, tolerance, and respect for diversity. Moreover, it can foster community engagement by involving parents, teachers, religious leaders, and other community members in efforts to combat violent extremism. This can be achieved through participatory action research, public dialogue, community workshops and forums that promote dialogue and understanding.

Institutions of higher learning should be used to inform youth about the emerging opportunities supported by the county and national governments in their local communities, while also holding them accountable for executing the CVE plan. Lobbying should include suggestions for modifications to the NSCVE at the national level, and collaborators should use the Mombasa County Leadership Framework. The most important details are that plans and strategies for P/CVE should be formulated by the wider public in collaboration with national and county governments. This will ensure that P/CVE efforts are more effective and sustainable in the long term, promote community ownership and involvement, and ensure resources are used efficiently. It will also strengthen communication and cooperation between the parties involved to achieve the shared objective of preventing violent extremism.

Psychosocial support can be an effective way to reduce vulnerability to extremist narratives among at-risk youth in juvenile gangs in Mombasa County. Psychosocial support can help at-risk youth in Mombasa County become more resilient to extremist narratives by addressing trauma, mental health issues, building resilience, strengthening positive identities, and providing education. Some ways that psychosocial support can help reduce vulnerability to extremist narratives among at-risk youth include:

By addressing trauma and mental health issues, building resilience, strengthening positive identities, providing education and skills training, and fostering positive relationships, at-risk youth can become more resilient to extremist narratives and better equipped to navigate the challenges of their lives. Here are some ways that psychosocial support can help reduce vulnerability to extremist narratives among at-risk youth:

Addressing underlying trauma and mental health issues: Many at-risk youth in juvenile gangs have experienced trauma, including violence, abuse, and neglect, which can contribute to their vulnerability to extremist narratives. Psychosocial support can help these youth address underlying trauma and mental health issues, which can reduce their vulnerability to extremist narratives.

Building resilience: Psychosocial support can help at-risk youth build resilience, which is the ability to cope with adversity and stress. Resilience-building activities, such as group counseling and mentoring, can help youth develop positive coping skills, problem-solving abilities, and social support networks, which can reduce their vulnerability to extremist narratives.

Strengthening positive identities: At-risk youth in juvenile gangs may feel isolated or excluded from mainstream society, making them more vulnerable to extremist narratives. Psychosocial support can help these young people improve their positive identities and sense of belonging, making them less susceptible to extremist narratives. Activities such as art and music therapy, athletics, and cultural events can help with this.

Providing education and skills training: Psychosocial support can also provide at-risk youth with education and skills training, which can increase their opportunities for employment and social mobility. The acquired knowledge and skills not only increase their employability but also provide at-risk youth with purpose, direction, and opportunities that can help them succeed and overcome the challenges they face. This can reduce their sense of frustration and hopelessness, which can make them more vulnerable to extremist narratives.

Fostering positive relationships: Psychosocial support can help at-risk youth build positive relationships with adults and peers who can provide them with guidance and support. This can reduce their sense of isolation and vulnerability to extremist narratives.

Proposed Interventions to Counter Extremist Narratives

To tackle the underlying causes of violence and advance long-lasting peace, CWID and its partners should create projects that supplement current P/CVE activities, such as youth entrepreneurship initiatives in Mombasa and other coastal regions. Programs for mentoring and drug rehabilitation should be strengthened. The collaborating partners should take the lead in empowering communities in their geographical locations to tackle the problems brought on by drug use and unemployment.

The main root causes of at-risk youth vulnerability to extremist narratives include poor parenting and dysfunctional families; negative peer influence coupled with low literacy levels or limited access to education; and drug and substance abuse. Thus, effective strategies and initiatives must be put into place to tackle these issues, mitigate youth gang violence, and foster societal stability. To tackle the underlying causes of violence and advance long-lasting peace, CWID and its partners should create projects that supplement current P/CVE activities, such as youth entrepreneurship initiatives in Mombasa and other coastal regions. Programs for mentoring and drug rehabilitation must be provided. The collaborating stakeholder should take the lead in empowering communities in their geographical locations to tackle the problems brought on by drug use and unemployment.

Partner organizations should make sure their initiatives are in accordance with community expectations and needs by including citizens in the planning and execution of programs. According to the baseline, a sizeable proportion of residents were willing to be engaged in peace and security initiatives. Moreover, most respondents think that at-risk adolescents can help their community maintain peace and security. The probation department and Wazee Wa Mtaa are some champions that could be transformed into P/CVE ambassadors through the utilization of CWID's platform for stakeholder engagement.

The involvement of marginalized youth should be given top priority in this framework, and it should guarantee that their voices are heard throughout decision-making. CWID should successfully engage at-risk youth in P/CVE activities and advance long-lasting peace and security in their communities by incorporating these major stakeholders and prioritizing the involvement of underprivileged adolescents.

Partner organizations should adopt the Human rights-based programs that are community based and enhance PCVE capacities and recognition by the government. This strategy should

ensure programming is inclusive, participatory, and sensitive to community needs while also including respect for human rights and dignity in the development of long-term solutions. The most important details are that community-based dialogues should be used to address concerns with all stakeholders, such as National and County Governments, Civil Society Organizations, Independent Institutions and Faith Based Organizations. This will ensure better collaboration while paying attention to the community, judicial frameworks, and law enforcement agencies.

Low levels of trust in the government's commitment should be addressed by including community members in the design and implementation of initiatives.

1.0   OVERVIEW

Introduction

Collaboration of Women in Development (CWID) is a grassroots; women led non-profit organization based in Mombasa County. It was established in 2005 and registered in 2010 by the NGO Coordination Board of Kenya. Between 2005 and 2019, the organization operated as Coast Women in Development (CWID) until August 2019, when the Board of Directors made a strategic decision to change the name. The change of name was done to allow CWID to operate beyond the borders of coastal counties in Kenya. The organization is committed to creating a society that improves the lives of vulnerable women, children, youths, persons with disabilities, minorities, and other groups in the community at the grassroots level. The organization's expansion is a positive step towards achieving its mission of identifying and reinforcing womens' role in education, leadership development and governance. With their dedication to making a difference in the lives of those in need, they are sure to have a positive impact on communities beyond the coastal region.

Over the years, CWID has been named the 2020 NGO Global Leadership and Excellence Awards Winner, including being nominated and crowned under the African NGO Leadership Awards (2019, 2018, 2017, and 2016), with an additional award for the Women Super Achievers. The organization has directly supported vulnerable women, girls, and youth through gender-responsive economic empowerment promotion of gender equality and access to justice, health, governance and education, and climate change adaptation and resilience. See more at https://collabowid.org/ .

CWID promotes long-term peace and violence prevention among the youth women, and persons with disabilities by offering a platform for meaningful engagement, dialogue, and collaboration with state and non-state organizations. It is gender-focused and a significant partner in promoting and implementing the Mombasa County Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (MCAP-PCVE). It offers platforms for effective and meaningful dialogue and coordination across stakeholders to improve and implement existing frameworks to end the cycle of radicalization and violence in Mombasa County.

CWID's approach is based on community involvement and empowerment that inspire sustainable change and a sense of ownership. The organization has been at the forefront of initiating social change and a transformation agenda to create a positive impact in the lives of the youth and coastal communities., The organization's commitment to sustainability and community-driven solutions has made it a respected leader in the field of social development.

Purpose and Objectives of the Baseline Survey

The specific objectives of the baseline study are:
a.   Establish the level of influence of the various narratives as well as resilience/coping mechanisms that exist among at-risk youth and juveniles.
b.   Support to bring out the best-case studies on resilience and make recommendations to both policy makers and CSOs.

The Organization of the Report

The inception report outlines actions related to the project scope and project guidance notes to conduct a baseline study on at-risk youth in Mombasa County juvenile gangs' decreased susceptibility to extremist narratives. The goal and scope, specific objectives and learning questions, methodology, methods for gathering data sources, and a timeline for significant milestones and deliverables are all included in the inception report. The report includes responsibilities of the research team and resources used.

2.0   BACKGROUND

Beginning in 1998 with the al-Qaeda bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi, and increasingly since its military involvement in Somalia in 2011, Kenya has become a regular target of terrorist attacks, including the 2013 Westgate Shopping Mall attack, the 2014 attacks in Lamu and Tana River Counties, the 2015 Garissa University College attack, and more than 200 additional smaller-scale attacks that have occurred between 2011 and 2015. Most recently Kenya has transitioned contexts from "foreign" to "homegrown" terrorism, demonstrated by increased violent extremist attacks and recruitment in coastal counties in recent years. A combination of historical grievances linked to political and economic marginalization, as well as feelings of religious discrimination, make the area a target for Al- Shabaab recruiters to tap into these deep-rooted feelings of marginalization, historical injustice, and frustration for recruitment[1].

Several economic, social, and political issues, some imagined and some genuine, have historically fueled violent extremist activity in the Coast area, particularly in the targeted communities of Kilifi, Kwale, Lamu, and Mombasa[2]. In terms of economics, the proportion of Kenyans living below the international poverty line has decreased over the previous decade, but it remains significant (36 percent in 2015-2016)[3]. The unemployment rate in Kenya is likewise quite high, with estimates indicating that up to 75 percent of the 2.3 million jobless Kenyans are young[4]. Insecurity in Coastal Kenya significantly affects the economic prospects as it directly influences various sectors. The occurrence of terrorist activities and subsequent counter-operations by Kenyan security forces has had a detrimental effect on economic activities, leading to a decline in tourism—a crucial source of income for local communities. Additionally, the region has experienced an increased unemployment rate, which, as indicated in the Kessels report, is three times higher compared to the rest of Kenya[5].

Mombasa County has witnessed a rapid proliferation of criminal gangs, predominantly comprised of juvenile members, engaged in a surge of unlawful activities. Originally formed as football teams, certain groups within these gangs were involved in robbery incidents occurring at popular beaches like Pirates and Nyali. Unfortunately, such occurrences persistently escalate. The attacks by the two gangs in Old Town where they had beaten, robbed and stabbed their victims led to the US Embassy sending an advisory to their citizens not to visit the area, especially at night (Ahmed & Atieno, 2016). More actions taken by former Mombasa County Commissioner Maalim Mohamed corroborated these findings and emphasized intensified efforts to combat the gangs. He issued a stern warning that individuals who refuse to surrender would face elimination by the police. Although many people know of Wakali Wao and Wakali Kwanza), there are up to twenty juvenile criminal gangs operating in the sub-counties of Mombasa. Other gang groups are (Kapenguria Six, Wajukuu wa Bibi, Young Thugs and Chafu) operating in Likoni, south of Mombasa Island. (Gaza and Spanish Sparta) gangs are terrorizing residents in Changamwe while (Born to Kill, Vietnam, Akili za Usiku, 64 Gang, Memory Gang, Watalia Gang and Crazy Boys) roam across the County, extorting residents and even killing with impunity. According to police sources and members of community policing some of the members of these groups are young girls high on drugs[6].

While motivations for joining gang groups vary, individuals often note they were either pulled or pushed into membership. However, recruiters use different narratives to recruit and radicalize. To illustrate, economic narratives can manifest in various forms, such as the allure of monetary

[1] *Steve Ouma Akoth. 2018. "Returnee and Justice: Alternative Justice System as a Mechanism for Amnesty in the Kwale County of Kenya". Pp. 170-181, in Mutuma and Mutahi (edds). Confronting VE in Kenya: Ideas, debates and challenges. Centre for Human Rights and Policy Studies, Nairobi, Kenya.*
[2] *Botha, Anneli, "Radicalisation in Kenya Recruitment to al-Shabaab and the Mombasa Republican Council", Institute for Security Studies, Paper 265 (2014).*
[3] *Poverty Incidence in Kenya Declined Significantly, but Unlikely to be eradicated by 2030", World Bank, 10 April 2018.*
[4] *"Kenya: Youth unemployment rate from 2007 to 2017", Statista, 2018 (Accessed on 16 October 2018)*
[5] *Kessels. E, et al, "Violent Extremism and Instability in the Greater Horn of Africa: An Examination of Drivers and Responses," Global Center on Cooperative Security, April 2016 (Accessed on 16 October 2018).*
[6] *See https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/entertainment/features/2000213664/exposed-juvenile-gangs-of-kenyas-coastal-area*

rewards, access to resources or consumer goods, and prospects for employment or job opportunities. On the other hand, terror groups predominantly employ the "War against Islam" narrative to rally support for violent "jihad" against Western governments and their allies. It is crucial not to underestimate the narrative of coercion and forced recruitment, which entails compelling individuals into gang groups against their will. Gang leaders frequently employ the tactic of violence not only to intimidate communities but also to coerce individuals into joining their ranks against their will. Additionally, the allure of violence or power narrative becomes prominent in regions where socioeconomic opportunities are scarce. This narrative holds significant sway among gangs and extremist groups operating in the region, as noted by Hedayah (2018), among other factors. In a concerted effort to diminish the susceptibility of at-risk youth and juveniles to extremist narratives, a comprehensive baseline study was recently undertaken. The study sought to gauge the extent of influence wielded by diverse narratives while also examining the resilience and coping mechanisms prevalent among this vulnerable demographic. Moreover, the study aims to display exemplary cases of resilience and provide valuable recommendations to policymakers and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) alike.

3.0   APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The baseline study adopted a mixed-methods approach to uncover the factors that contribute to the increased vulnerability of at-risk youth and juveniles to extremist narratives. It also established the level of influence of the various narratives and resilience/coping mechanisms that exist among at-risk youth and juveniles. Individual household interviews were conducted across Mombasa and its sub counties using quantitative methods, while qualitative methods were conducted through Policymakers Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). An observational approach was employed to evaluate any visible indicators relevant to this study. A consultative validation meeting was held with the Technical Review Committee on PCVE and the research team, which provided further insights used to enrich and strengthen the study report.

Secondary data was gathered by reviewing relevant documents, such as program reports, partner reports, and published articles. Finally, an analytical baseline report was written in response to the study objectives and project indicators, exploring the various facets of at-risk youth and juvenile gangs and laying out the relevant context as needed. The data collection methods and tools involved the project team, the CWID team, local partners, and target actors in identifying and recording significant issues and patterns.

Table 1: Baseline study matrix

VARIABLE	INFORMATION TO COLLECT	RELEVANT DATA/FIGURES	TOOLS
Demographics	Age, gender, education, socio-economic status	Average age of gang members, gender distribution, education level, and average income	Questionnaires, literature review
Risk factors	Poverty, social exclusion, lack of education, lack of employment opportunities, exposure to violence.	Number of juvenile gang members living in poverty, number of juvenile gang members who dropped out of school, number of juvenile gang members who witnessed violence.	Literature review
Gang membership	Age of entry, reasons for joining, level of involvement, duration of membership.	Average age of joining a gang, most common reasons for joining a gang, percentage of gang members involved in gang activities on a daily basis, and average length of gang membership.	Questionnaires, KII, FGDs, Literature review
Exposure to extremist narratives	Sources of extremist narratives such as social media, propaganda, literature, and extremist leaders.	Percentage of juvenile gang members exposed to extremist narratives, most common sources of extremist narratives, and frequency of exposure to extremist narratives.	Questionnaires, KII, FGDs, Literature review
Attitudes and beliefs	Perceptions of violence, attitudes towards different ethnic and religious groups, beliefs about the legitimacy of violence as a means of achieving goals.	Percentage of juvenile gang members who believe violence is a legitimate means of achieving their goals, most common perception of violence among juvenile gang members, and attitudes towards different ethnic and religious groups.	Questionnaires, KII, FGDs, Literature review
Protective factors	Positive social support, access to education and employment opportunities, exposure to positive role models.	Number of juvenile gang members with access to positive social support, percentage of juvenile gang members attending school or employed, and percentage of juvenile gang members with positive role models.	Questionnaires, KII, FGDs,
Existing interventions	Existing interventions and prevention strategies to reduce vulnerability to extremist narratives.	Number of programs targeting at-risk youth, types of interventions used, and their level of effectiveness.	Questionnaires, KII, FGDs,

The study used both primary and secondary data sources. Data analysis included transcription, coding, and thematic analysis. The CWID staff and consultants held an inception/orientation meeting to outline the expectations and rationale behind the baseline study. Primary data was collected from stakeholders and at-risk youth by using a structured questionnaire. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants with information on juvenile gangs and focus group discussions. A desk review of relevant literature and important project documents was part of the preparatory steps for the investigation. Key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted to obtain qualitative data from respondents. Focus group discussions were conducted with respondents from a sampled group. Written or verbal informed consent was obtained before each FGD, and a semi-structured guide was used to drive discussions. Results were used to supplement and triangulate data from other sources, with a focus on facility and organizational governance issues. A checklist of issues was developed to enable discussion of issues pertinent to this study.

Sample Frame and Sample Size

Table 2: Sampling Plan

METHOD	TARGET	SAMPLE	INTERVIEW
Comprehensive documents and reports review	■ CWID and Fungua Pazia Project Reports ■ Other relevant documents	■ All relevant documents and data ■ Legislative Data	N/A
Key Informant Interviews	■ CWID, Fungua Pazia Project staff and relevant Partners	■ One rep. from each organization/ institution	Physical/Virtual
Key Informant Interviews	■ County Level Actors: MCA/ Ward admin, Department of Directorate Youth and Resilience in CVE ■ National Level Actors:(County Commissioner, County Police Commander, Anti-Terror Police Unit, Prison and Correctional centre, Probation Officer, ODDP Office, NCIC, NCTC Chiefs, Village Elders, Community Policing, District Peace Committee (DPC) ■ Civil Society Organizations ■ Independent Institutions: Kenya National Commission on Human Rights ■ Fourth Estate: Media station, , ■ Educational Institutions (MOE/County education, etc.) ■ Community: Youth and women leaders, Reformed Youths, PLWD	■ 7-10 reps at the county ■ 10-12 reps at sub county level from organization/institution	Physical/Virtual
Focus Group Discussions (FGD)	■ Juvenile only groups, ■ Women only groups, ■ Men only groups ■ Youth only groups ■ Community leaders only groups	■ 7-12 per group was targeted ■ 3 FGDs in separate selected sub-counties ■ One joint FGD with community leaders only groups from all sub-counties targeted by the project.	Physical/Virtual

Ethical Consideration

The ethical standards in this study include informed consent and confidentiality. All individuals must provide their agreement for their personal information to be processed in line with the Data Protection Act of (2019) and the General Data Protection Regulations of the European Union (GDPR) (2018). Respondents from the community were questioned in locations chosen by the client. Data processing, analysis, and reporting were conducted to analyze the data collected in the previous phases. A validation meeting was scheduled between the consultant and the CWID team to deliver the draft report and solicit their views, comments, and feedback. Comments and suggestions on the draft report were incorporated, and a final report was drawn up and presented to the project team. The availability of respondents was an important factor in the study, so the research assistants and field enumerators extended the survey period to ensure accurate data collection. However, the consultants made an effort to obtain data from other sources, but it was important for the consultants to ensure that the additional data obtained from other sources is reliable and relevant to the study.

Limitations

A number of methodological limitations exists with the study, foremost among which being the challenge in obtaining recent raw information in the selected (study) locations. This issue was solved by collecting the most recent data from the Kenya Bureau of Statistics (specify the year). It was possible to obtain information on violent extremism from non-state actors and policymakers by integrating their information with those from field interviews.

The survey was conducted in Mombasa County during Ramadan, when the majority of individuals observed fasts and performed prayers. Meetings were limited, thus the rate of attendance had to be changed proportionately. Due to transportation issues, accessing people from outside the region was challenging.

4.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Kenya has been affected by extremist narratives, particularly among youth in juvenile gangs. The government and other stakeholders have implemented measures to reduce the vulnerability of at-risk youth to these narratives. This literature review aims to identify and analyze approaches to reduce the vulnerability of at-risk youth to extremist narratives among juvenile gangs with a bias to Mombasa County in the coastal region of Kenya. Gang culture is characterized by drug trafficking, robbery, and extortion, since Kenya is in proximity to the geographical corridor with countries that have been affected by activities of terrorist groups.

The Mombasa County Action Plan (MCAP-PCVE) recognizes the complexity of the issue of violent extremism and the demand for an all-encompassing strategy that targets the underlying factors contributing to youth vulnerability. It emphasizes community participation, education, and economic growth to help at-risk youth become more independent and less vulnerable to extremist narratives. Due to the internet and social media's accessibility, extremist groups have found it easy to approach and radicalize young people.

The close link between the political landscape in the Coast region of Kenya and the substantial Somali community residing there is noteworthy. This was influenced by the interactions among these communities, external organizations, and the government, as noted by Botha (2014).

Violent extremist activity in the Coast region, notably in the targeted areas of Kilifi, Kwale, Lamu, and Mombasa, has traditionally been driven by a number of economic, social, and political difficulties, some imagined and some real (Botha, 2014)[7] . In terms of economics, the percentage of Kenyans living below the international poverty line has reduced over the past ten years, although it is still high (36 percent in 2015–2016). According to the World Bank (2018)[8], Kenya has a high unemployment rate as well, with estimates stating that up to 75% of the 2.3 million unemployed Kenyans are under the age of 25. Statista (2018)notes that Terrorist attacks and counter-operations by Kenyan security forces have negatively damaged economic activity in coastal Kenya, which has a direct influence on the economic outlook. As a result, tourism, a major industry that provides a living for the region's residents, has also suffered (Kessels. E, et al, 2016).

Vulnerability to Extremist Narratives

Njoroge and Otieno (2020)[9] examined these issues in their study of how social networks, peer pressure, and other factors affect at-risk youth vulnerability to extremist narratives spread by juvenile gangs in Kenya. Their study established that social networks significantly influence how at-risk youth view their surroundings and those interventions should focus on fostering positive relationships between peers and community members. Additionally, the study highlighted the need for interventions to address economic and social inequalities that contribute to the vulnerability of at-risk youth to extremist narratives. The researchers suggested that addressing these underlying factors could help prevent youth from joining gangs and exposed to extremist ideologies.

In the study on youth radicalization and recruitment into violent extremism in Kenya conducted by Mercy Corps (2015), the factors that lead to young Kenyans becoming radicalized and joining violent extremist groups be investigated. According to the survey, the primary causes of young people's susceptibility to extremist narratives are marginalization, unemployment, poverty, and lack of education. It advocates for addressing these issues through community-based strategies, economic empowerment, and education.

---

[7] *Botha, Anneli (2014). Radicalization in Kenya: Recruitment to al-Shabaab and the Mombasa Republican Council, Institute for Security Studies, Paper 265.*
[8] *World Bank (2018). Poverty Incidence in Kenya Declined Significantly, But Is Unlikely to Be Eradicated by 2030.*
[9] *Njoroge, J., & Otieno, R. (2020). Reducing Vulnerability to Extremist Narratives among At-Risk Youth in Kenya Journal of Social Sciences, 5(2), 30-41*

In the study on youth radicalization and recruitment into violent extremism in Kenya conducted by Mercy Corps (2015), the factors that lead to young Kenyans becoming radicalized and joining violent extremist groups be investigated. According to the survey, the primary causes of young people's susceptibility to extremist narratives are marginalization, unemployment, poverty, and lack of education. It advocates for addressing these issues through community-based strategies, economic empowerment, and education.

Resilience Building towards Extremist Narratives

In a paper, Dagne and Pandey (2019)[10] , evaluate how education might prevent at-risk Kenyan youth from becoming violent extremists. They established that while education may be a useful tactic for reducing susceptibility to extremist narratives, it must be used in conjunction with other interventions like mentorship and community involvement to be effective. The study highlights the importance of a comprehensive approach to countering violent extremism that goes beyond education. It emphasizes the need for a multifaceted strategy that addresses the root causes of radicalization and engages communities in preventing violent extremism. The findings of this study have important implications for policymakers and practitioners working to prevent violent extremism in Kenya and other contexts. It suggests that a narrow focus on education as a solution to radicalization may not be sufficient and that efforts must be made to engage communities and provide mentorship opportunities to vulnerable individuals.

The Preventing Violent Extremism among At-Risk Youth in Kenya: The Importance of Education and Livelihoods Study by Mercy Corps (2017) investigates how meeting one's basic needs can lower violent extremism among Kenyan youth at risk. It implies that providing at-risk youth with educational and employment opportunities may help lessen their susceptibility to extremist narratives. The study urges support for initiatives that offer mentoring and employment opportunities to at-risk youth, as well as for educational and vocational training programs.

The study by Nyawira and Othieno (2018)[11] examines the effect of community-based interventions in reducing vulnerability to gang violence among at-risk youth in Kenya. The authors focused on a Kisumu program that provided mentoring, job training, and other services to children at risk of joining gangs while using a case study methodology. They discovered that, even though community-based interventions can be effective in reducing the likelihood of gang membership, they must be sustained over time. The study also found that the involvement of parents and community leaders in the interventions was crucial to their success, as they helped to create a supportive environment for the at-risk youth. Additionally, the authors suggest that future research should explore how to scale up these interventions to reach more vulnerable youth.

Practices and Stories of Change

The Institute for Security Studies (2016) published Countering Violent Extremism in Kenya: A Practitioner's Guide. It describes the challenges of combating violent extremism in Kenya and offers strategies to prevent the spread of extremist narratives among young people. It suggests developing community-led initiatives, strengthening partnerships between government and civil society, and increasing the capacity of security forces to engage with communities.

The National Counter-Terrorism Center (2016) assesses the success of its initiatives in preventing radicalization among Kenyan youth in the study. It emphasizes the importance of community engagement in radicalization prevention, with recommendations for community-led projects and community-based treatments.

---

[10] *Dagne, T., & Pandey, A. (2019). Preventing Violent Extremism through Education: A Case Study of Kenya International Journal of Educational Development, 72, 1–9.*
[11] *Nyawira, S., & Othieno, R. (2018). The Role of Community-Based Interventions in Reducing Vulnerability to Gang Violence among At-Risk Youth in Kenya*

The Institute for Security Studies (2017), in its report on youth, violent extremism, and community policing in Kenya, investigates the role of community policing in reducing youth involvement in violent extremism. It claims that community policing can help reduce the susceptibility of at-risk youth to extremist narratives by encouraging dialogue and trust between young people and law enforcement officials. Law enforcement officers should take community policing courses and participate in community policing initiatives.

In conclusion, the literature on reducing vulnerability to extremist narratives among at-risk youth in Kenya emphasizes the importance of community-based interventions, education, and positive social networks. While these approaches have shown promise in reducing the risk of gang involvement and violent extremism, they require sustained investment and support to be successful. Policymakers and practitioners must continue to develop and implement evidence-based strategies to address this critical issue.

5.0   FINDINGS

This section presents the findings from the baseline study. The findings are organized along the study questions and objectives and all were based on consultations with youth parents, religious leaders, government administrators, and other relevant stakeholders.

Demographic Characteristics

The study had 276 participants, all of whom were chosen from the six targeted wards; Kisauni, Nyali, Likoni, Mvita, Changamwe and Jomvu. The majority of the 276 respondents (Table 1) were between the ages of 25 to 34. In terms of education, 49.6 percent of respondents had completed secondary school, 28.3 percent had completed university education, and 22.1 percent had completed primary school. The constitutional requirement of 2/3 female representation was reached by most of the females (40%) and males (40%) interviewed. Married people accounted for the majority of the responses (52.9 percent). A majority of the participants in the study came from Kisauni (22.1%), followed by Nyali (20.7%), Likoni (18.1%), Mvita (15.2%), and Changamwe (12.3%), with Jomvu garnering the least number of respondents (11.6 percent). Table 3 shows the indicative finding:

Figure 1: Gender and Age of Respondents

Table 3: Demographic data of respondents

Demographic Data				
(n = 276)			Respondents	Percent
Gender		Female	111	40.2%
		Male	165	59.8%
Age		Below 18 years	3	1.1%
		18 - 24 years	47	17.0%
		25 - 34 years	96	34.8%
		35 -44 years	70	25.4%
		45 -54 years	40	14.5%
		Above 55 years	20	7.2%
Level of Education		Primary	61	22.1
		Secondary	137	49.6
		University	78	28.3
Marital Status		Single	110	39.9%
		Married	146	52.9%
		Divorced	20	7.2%
Study Area	Wards	Changamwe	34	12.3
		Jomvu	32	11.6
		Kisauni	61	22.1
		Nyali	57	20.7
		Likoni	50	18.1
		Mvita	42	15.2

Source: Field Data 2023
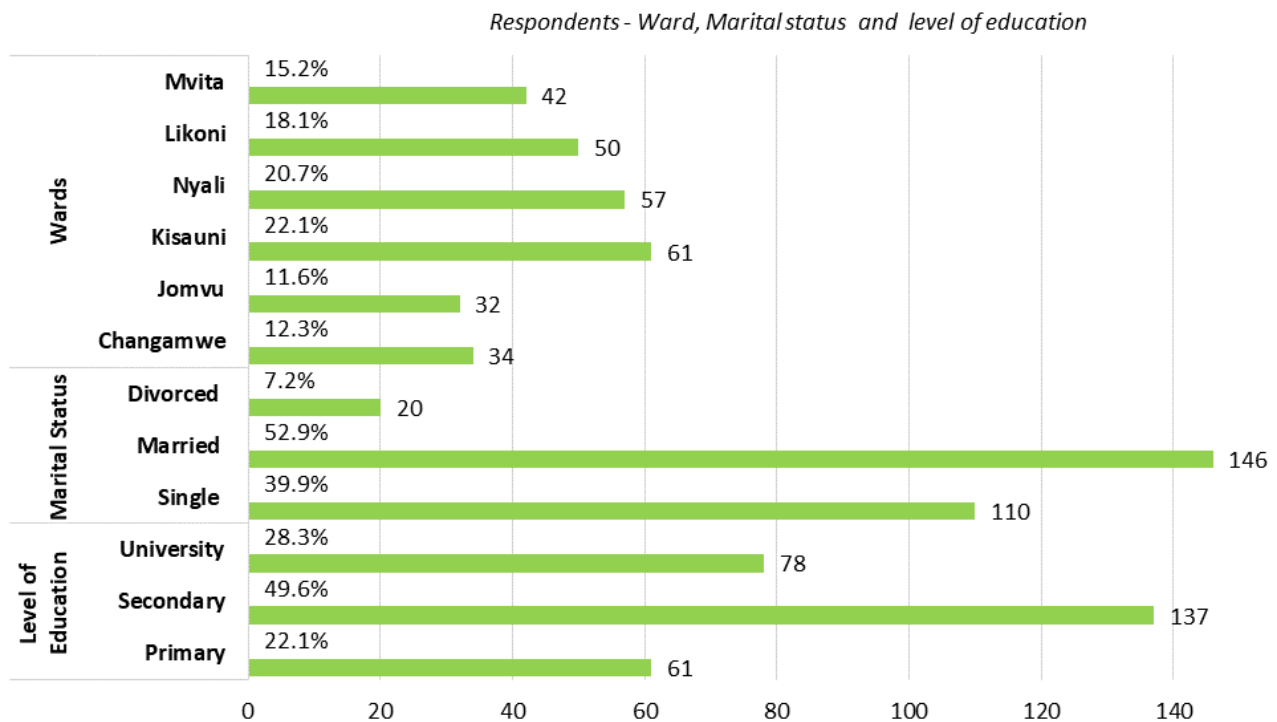
Figure 2: Demographic data of respondents

Baseline Data of Youth Gangs and at-risk Youth in Mombasa

According to Table 4 below, the study sought to examine if respondents who had previously resided in the study area had heard of youth gangs and at-risk youth. Based on the findings, 94.2% of the participants knew about and had heard of the existence of youth gangs and experience with gangs. According to the study, youth gangs are a problem that is widespread in the area, and interventions are required to address the causes of youth crime.

> *Yes, I have heard about them. They are youngsters aged 10-24 years who walk around armed with pangas to rob innocent People in the community. We have more than 50 such gangs here in Likoni. The rise of these juvenile gangs in our community is causing tension in the neighborhood. Most of them do not have national ID card. They are idle school dropouts.*
>
> *KII Women Champion*

At-risk youth were known to 93.1% of the 276 respondents while 2.5% were unaware of their existence at the household level. Respondents reported 68.5% of youth out of school and a substantial proportion of 28.6% of youth in school, indicating that the number in Mombasa is becoming increasingly alarming. The absence of constructive pathways and the urgent need for effective interventions to keep youth in school and provide them with opportunities for positive engagement are highlighted by the potential for them to become involved in crime and violence once they are out of school. This highlights the need to address the root causes of this trend and create a conducive environment for youth development and empowerment.

The study revealed that male youth made up 89.1% of the at-risk groups, while females made up 5.1%. This implies that in the six wards of Mombasa; male youth faced several challenges from the community. The high risk among male youth in Mombasa County is a result of a wide range of circumstances, including poverty, limited educational opportunities, exposure to drugs, and criminality. Addressing these issues could help reduce the risk.
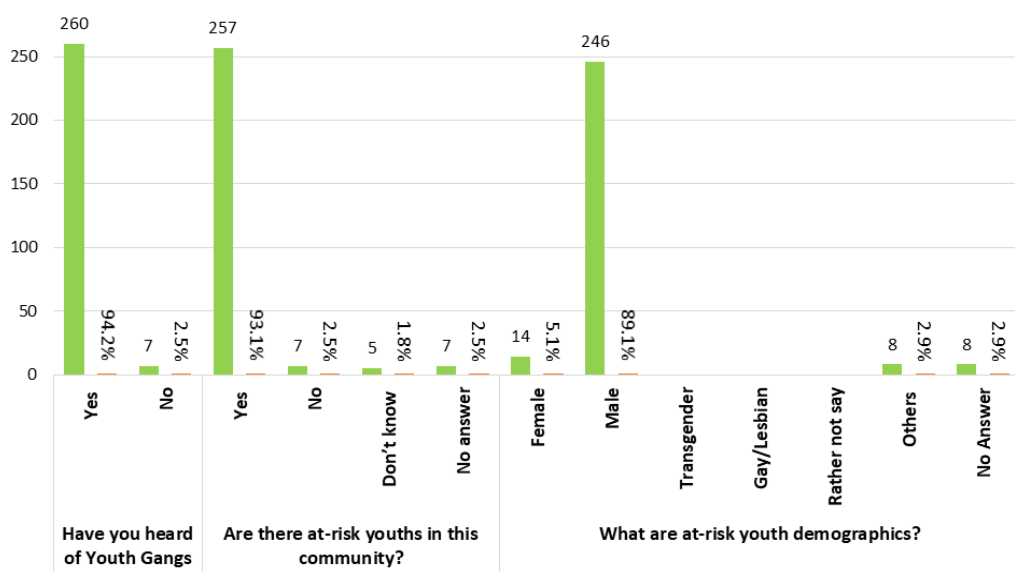
Figure 3: Awareness about youth gangs and at-risk youths in Mombasa

Table 4: Awareness about youth gangs and at-risk youths in Mombasa

(n = 276)	Value	Respondents	Percent
Have you heard of Youth Gangs	Yes	260	94.2%
	No	7	2.5%
If yes, please tell me more about them and what they do.	Yes	260	100.0%
	No	0	0%
Are there at-risk youths in this community?	Yes	257	93.1%
	No	7	2.5%
	Don't know	5	1.8%
	No answer	7	2.5%
If Yes, in which category do they fall?	Youth in School	65	23.6%
	Youth out of School	189	68.5%
	Youth with disabilities	0	0%
	Others	15	5.4%
	No answer	0	2.5%
What are at-risk youth demographics?	Female	14	5.1%
	Male	246	89.1%
	Transgender	0	0%
	Gay/Lesbian	0	0%
	Rather not say	0	0%
	Others	8	2.9%
	No Answer	8	2.9%

Source: Field Data 2023

Vulnerability to Extremist Narratives

In this section, we analyze the dynamics of Mombasa County's susceptibility to extremist discourse. It examines the prevalence and effects of violent extremism, the reasons why young people join juvenile or youth gangs, the attitudes and beliefs that at-risk youngsters frequently have, the repercussions of gang membership, and the advantages and disadvantages of joining a gang. Additionally, we examine the challenges faced by communities in dealing with violent extremism and potential solutions to address this pressing issue.

Key Drivers and Impact of Violent Extremism

The study sought to investigate the incidences and impact of violent extremism on citizens, the push and pull factors that attract at-risk youth to criminal gangs, and the consequences of joining such groups, as shown in Table 5.

Figure 4: Key drivers and impact of violent extremism

Key drivers and impact of violent extremism
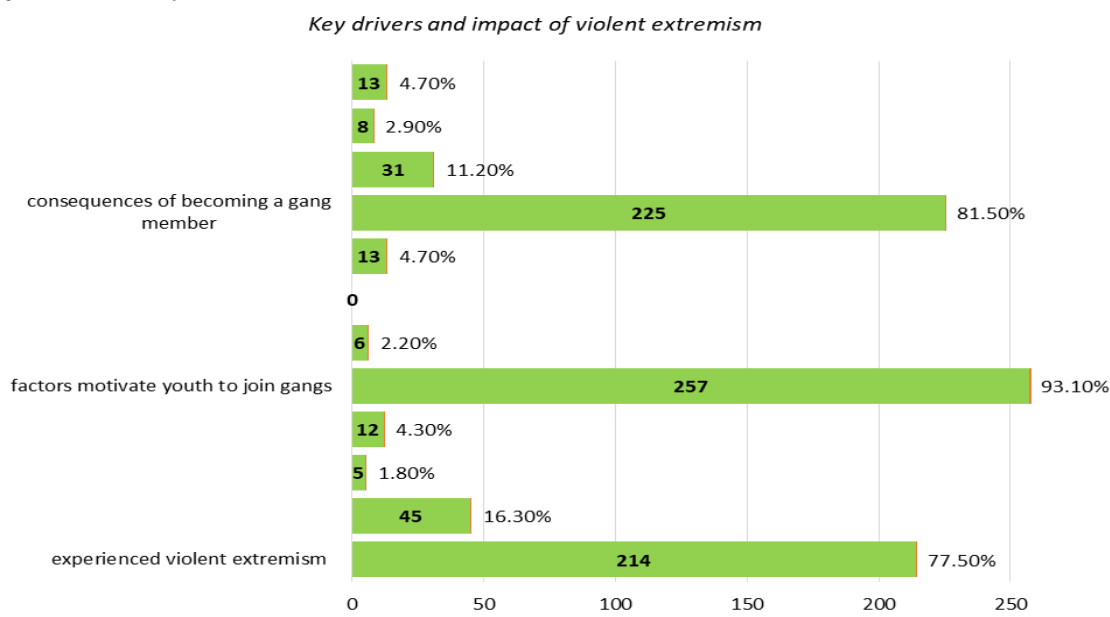
Table 5: Key drivers and impact of violent extremism

(n = 276)	Value	Respondents	Percent
Have you or anyone you know ever experienced or witnessed violent extremism in your community?	Yes	214	77.5%
	No	45	16.3%
	Don't know	5	1.8%
	No Answer	12	4.3%
Do you know of any factors that motivate youth to join these gangs?	Yes	257	93.1%
	No	6	2.2%
	Don't know	0	0%
	No Answer	13	4.7%
Are there any consequences of becoming a gang member? (Probe for positive/ benefits and negative consequences)	Yes	225	81.5%
	No	31	11.2%
	Don't know	8	2.9%
	No Answer	13	4.7%

Source: Field Data 2023

According to the survey, 77.5% of respondents had witnessed or personally experienced violent extremism, which might have affected their ability to sustain themselves. This calls for in-depth analysis to understand the underlying causes and develop evidence-based remedies. It is crucial to address the issue of violent extremism, as it not only affects individuals but also has a broader impact on the society. By identifying the root causes and implementing effective solutions, we can prevent the spread of violent extremism and promote peace and stability.

During the study, most of the perpetrators of these violent criminal gangs were a combination of out of school juveniles and youth.

According to a respondent, *"I have heard about them. They are youngsters aged 10-24 years who walk around armed with pangas to rob innocent people in the community. We have more than 50 such gangs here in Likoni. The rise of these juvenile gangs in our community is causing tension in the neighborhood. Most of them don't even have national ID card; they are idle and are school drop outs." These gangs can be quite brutal in their attacks because they are energized and emboldened by drugs and substance.*

For example, one respondent observed that; "Yes, many people especially those who work in EPZ have been brutally attacked by these juvenile gangsters using Pangas. There was a traumatizing case where these juvenile gangs attacked a pregnant woman. They cut her hand and robbed her of her purse. Unfortunately, even after reporting the case to the local police officers, none of them seemed to be bothered and so the victim did not get the justice required." The frequency and intensity of the youth attacks can be felt across counties in the Coastal Region.

Factors that Motivate Youth to Join Juvenile/Youth Gangs

The study also established that a significant proportion of respondents, 93.1% are aware of the factors that lead youth to join these gangs as many were well known in the community and openly supported by some residents. It is critical to integrate the community in the effort to find remedies to counter violent extremism and promote peace. The community's involvement in the fight against violent extremism is essential to understanding and addressing the root causes of youth joining gangs, creating lasting strategies to promote peace, and preventing future recruitment.

The study identified major factors that motivate youth to join criminal gangs. These included but not limited to the following;

Growing urban poverty and unemployment: High levels of poverty and unemployment in Mombasa was also responsible for pushing the youths to search for alternative livelihoods to meet either basic individual or family needs. At risk youth are caught up in a perpetual deprivation trap since the high levels of poverty and unemployment limit the opportunities available for their families, making it difficult for them to access education, secure stable employment, or pursue meaningful careers. This in turn creates a sense of hopelessness and frustration, which drives some youth towards gang involvement as a means of making money or finding a sense of purpose.

Moreover, youth who live in poverty and unemployment feel marginalized or excluded from mainstream society, which increases their vulnerability to gang involvement as a means of finding a sense of belonging and social acceptance.

> *According to a respondent*, "*There are increased poverty levels in the neighborhood. Lack of basic needs such as food and appropriate shelter has forced some youths to go to the streets and start robbing innocent people in search of food.*"

In general, addressing the issue of poverty and unemployment in Mombasa County is an important step in reducing gang-related violence and crime. This can be done through a range of interventions, including education and job training programs, community-based initiatives, and family support services, which can provide youth with the skills and resources they need to succeed and thrive.

Poor parenting and dysfunctional families: Poor parenting can result in identity issues for youths, leading them to search for a sense of belonging and identity elsewhere, including through extremist ideologies that offer a sense of purpose and identity. At-risk youth who come from broken or dysfunctional families were more susceptible to joining gangs to fill the void left by poor parental guidance and support. This is exuberated by loss of livelihood and increased poverty in the neighborhood making it difficult for many parents to afford to pay their children's school fees.

This research shows that delegating the full responsibility of child care and upbringing to a nanny, 'house girl' or another household worker or member can make the child more susceptible to radicalization. This is supported by the fact that respondents acknowledged that many house helps may not share the same morals and ethics as the child's biological parents. A child's vulnerability to radical ideology increases if they feel alienated and alone. The house helps may also be exposed to extremist literature, including books, websites, and videos. These resources can be used to inculcate radical ideology in young minds. Overall, not all domestic workers pose a danger to children, but it is crucial for parents to teach their kids about the world beyond their own. Parents should build strong relationships with their children, their children's friends and their families.

Most of the at-risk youths are raised in broken families with a higher likelihood of dropping out of school. Without proper education and parental guidance, they have fewer opportunities to succeed in life, which pushes them to join gangs as a way of earning money or gaining a sense of purpose. They also lack positive role models to emulate leading them to seek out negative influences, such as gang members.

> *A respondent observed that; "Some parents encourage their children to get into illegal acts, by forcing them to the streets to earn a living. Mzae achemshe chai amwambie mtoto katafute kitu yakunyia chai. Atatotoa wapi kama bado yuko shule? Siku ya kwanza atavumilia ya pili atashawishika akaibe. A father prepares tea and tells their child to go and search for an accompaniment. Where does the child get it while they are still in school? They will persevere the first time, but the second time they will be compelled to rob.*

Peer pressure was one of the drivers that pull the youth towards criminal gangs. Most of the youth joined gangs because of pressure from their peers or to gain the respect of their peers. It was evident that the criminal gang members used their social networks to recruit new members, particularly vulnerable youth who may be looking for a sense of belonging or a way to escape their problems. Respondents noted that membership in a gang can provide a sense of identity and belonging, which can be especially appealing to youth who may be struggling with issues such as social isolation or low self-esteem. One example cited was the *"Wakware Babes"* which is a female gang group that specifically steals from men.

It was also observed that gang members pressured their peers to engage in criminal activities such as theft or drug dealing, to demonstrate loyalty and commitment to the gang. In some cases, gang culture normalized violence and aggression which made it easier for youth to engage in criminal behavior. Gang members also engaged in criminal behavior as a way to build a reputation for toughness or to gain respect from their peers or to avoid being targeted by gang violence or to protect themselves and their families. A respondent shared a shocking case study of new and bizarre rituals being adopted by some juvenile gangs in Kisauni while initiating new members. During such sessions, initiates are sodomized or engaged in gay sex by gang members in a live recording session. The recorded video is often kept for use to blackmail such members in the event they wish to exit such gangs.

Combating the problem of peer influence in Mombasa juvenile or youth criminal gangs is a critical step toward reducing gang-related violence and crime. This can be achieved through an array of interventions such as education and prevention programs that teach youth about the dangers of gang involvement while also providing positive role models and support networks. Additionally, programs that promote positive youth development and provide opportunities for youth to build skills and pursue their interests can help reduce the appeal of gang involvement.

The study also established that drugs and substance abuse play a significant role in the activities and dynamics of juvenile or youth criminal gangs in Mombasa. Youth criminal gangs use drugs and substance to recruit new members, especially vulnerable youth who may be looking for a sense of belonging or a way to escape their problems. They also sell drugs to finance their criminal activities such as purchasing weapons or paying off police or other officials to avoid arrest. Furthermore, they are also used to control their members, such as withholding drugs as a form of punishment or using them to keep members in line. Gang members who use drugs and alcohol become addicted, which makes them more reliant on the gang for their supply and more willing to engage in criminal activities to support their addiction. Finally, because the gang members are relatively young, they are dependent on drugs and substance to boost their sense of self-confidence, courage and increase their aggression. Thus, addressing the issue of drugs and substance abuse use among juvenile and youth criminal gangs in Mombasa is an important step in reducing gang-related violence and crime. This can be done through a range of interventions including education and prevention programs, substance abuse treatment, and law enforcement efforts to disrupt the drug trade.

Low literacy levels or limited access to education can make it difficult for youth to secure well-paying jobs, leading them to turn to gangs to earn a living. Low literacy levels translated into limited opportunities for youths limiting them from securing stable employment or pursue higher education, thus making them more vulnerable to gang involvement as a means of making money or finding a sense of purpose. It can also make it difficult for them to make informed decisions and understand the consequences of their actions, making them more vulnerable to negative influences and peer pressure.

Other key drivers highlighted included; weak law enforcement mechanisms by relevant agencies and influence of politicians. It is important to note that these factors are not mutually exclusive, and there may be a complex interplay of different factors that contribute to youth gang involvement in Mombasa. Addressing these underlying issues through targeted interventions, such as education and job training programs, community-based initiatives, and family support services, can help to prevent youth from joining gangs and reduce gang-related violence and crime.

Common Behavior (Attitudes and Beliefs) of at-risk Youth

At-risk youth in Mombasa exhibit a range of behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs that put them in vulnerable positions. Based on feedback from the respondents, there are some common behaviors associated with at-risk youth.

> *Some of the identified behaviors that characterize these youth include the fact that most of them have specific hairstyles and tattoos, a significant proportion of them sleep during the day and are mostly active at night. Most of them are involved in drugs and substance abuse, including drugs such as muguka, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin. "They are drug addicts who are usually found in maskani (central base) consuming drugs or substances such as muguka."*

> *In terms of literacy levels, they are mainly school dropouts who influence others to leave school. At risk youth are "overconfident, and they don't fear serikali (government officers) and are drug addicts. Recently, they have adopted tattooing and wearing of specific cloths as a means of identification. And lastly, most of these youth are ever relocating from one sub county to another to avoid been detected," observed a respondent.*

Another characteristic associated with the at-risk youth is a rebellious attitude to firm up their sense of low esteem. "They are violent. They do not listen to their elders. Their worst enemies are the village elder and area chiefs. They are natives who feel marginalized."

> *Another key behaviour is that they are also guided by religious ideologies and usually invoke religious words before engaging in criminal acts in the community. "They feel like by doing so their sins are cleansed. This has been a major challenge because the government feels like Islam is a religion of violence," noted a KII respondent.*

Consequences of Juvenile/Youth Gangs' Membership

The consequences of juvenile/youth gang membership in Mombasa are serious and far-reaching, impacting not only the individual gang members but also the wider community. This calls for greater collaboration between local governments and community leaders to find alternative paths for young people to avoid gang involvement and to support those who want to leave gangs.

The study revealed that there are deadly consequences such as the risk of been killed by mob justice, also being isolated by the community due to your bad behavior. Gang involvement can also interfere with education, leading to high school dropouts and limited skills and qualifications needed for future employment. In addition, the criminal gangs often use violence as a means of control, and this leads to an increased incidences of violent crimes in the host spots. This can make it more dangerous for both gang members and non-members.

> *According to the respondents*, *"There are no benefits of gang membership. Youth in crime are always in the run. They fear, hide, and lead a reckless life. The consequences are very terrible it conflicts with their social life to the extent that there is no trust from society. Because of drug and substance abuse, they become slow learners. Some die of complications due to drugs and substance abuse. A young boy had his intestines removed due to use of muguka and later died."*

Challenges Experienced by Communities while Coping with Violent Extremism and Potential Solutions

During the study, it was established that communities affected by violent extremism face numerous challenges, which vary depending on the specific context. One of the greatest challenge is the 'culture of silence' reinforced by unwillingness to share information related to violent extremist ideologies. It was evident that communities that had experienced violent extremism were in some instances traumatized and fearful. This makes them hesitant to cooperate with security agencies or speak out against extremist activities. In short, the fear of retaliatory attacks by the gang members can be quite gripping.

Growing mistrust is also another key challenge that was identified. There is general suspicion between communities and security agencies, which hinders effective collaboration and intelligence sharing.

> *According to a key informant*, *"Many times we have investigated cases of violent extremism but upon reporting them to police officers, they take a different direction. Some officers are corrupt and they demand for a bribe before they begin investigating a case. "Lakini hio Ni kama kuanza kufanya biashara ingine."*

Weak law enforcement and low responsiveness by security agencies is a key drawback. "The police and the chief of this area are so reluctant and don't respond promptly in times of emergency." In some cases, parents of at-risk youth bribe police to release their children when they are arrested for violent extremism. "Mothers are too empathetic. They keep on bribing the Police for their children to be out of cell." This is a major drawback to the efforts being made to combat violent extremism.

Low public education is equally a challenge. The community has not been sensitized on the issues pertaining the juvenile groups.

> *The public needs to be educated on the importance of going to court, testify and be ready to be witnesses. "Community members are afraid to talk about the criminal gangs. They are always defensive, especially, we the religious leaders for fear of losing the youth) to the authorities."*

> *A respondent noted that, "The biggest challenge is lack of support from the community. No clear mechanism from both the County and National governments on how to counter Violence Extremism. "With the effort I have for Peace building the challenge I have is CSOs thinking I gain a lot from what I do or even think I undermine their work and interventions."*

Vulnerability, Risks, and Resilience towards Violent Extremism and at-risk Youth

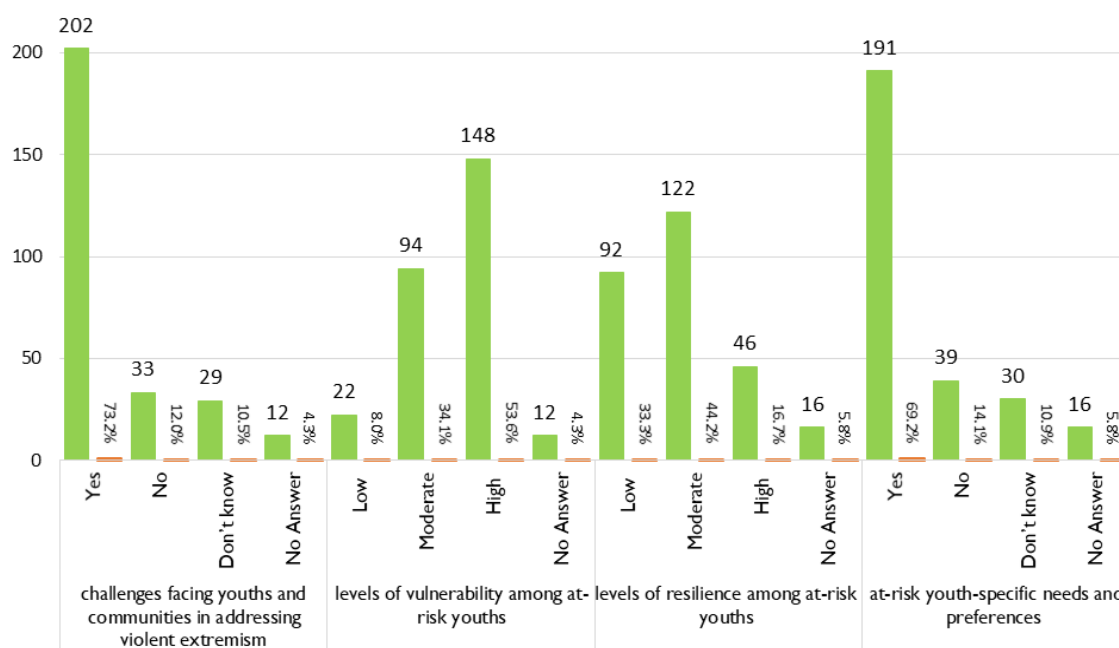The study findings are indicated in Table 6 below.

Figure 5: Violent extremism, motivating factors, and consequences of youth gangs

Table 6: Violent extremism, motivating factors, and consequences of youth gangs

(n = 276)	Value	Respondents	Percent
Are you aware of any challenges experienced by youths and their communities in addressing violent extremism?	Yes	202	73.2%
	No	33	12.0%
	Don't know	29	10.5%
	No Answer	12	4.3%
What are the current levels of vulnerability to extremist narratives among at-risk youths in this community?	Low	22	8.0%
	Moderate	94	34.1%
	High	148	53.6%
	No Answer	12	4.3%
What are the current levels of resilience to extremist narratives among at-risk youths in this community?	Low	92	33.3%
	Moderate	122	44.2%
	High	46	16.7%
	No Answer	16	5.8%
Do at-risk youth have specific needs and preferences in this community?	Yes	191	69.2%
	No	39	14.1%
	Don't know	30	10.9%
	No Answer	16	5.8%

Source: Field Data 2023

The study found that 73.2 % of respondents were familiar with the challenges faced by youth and their communities in countering violent extremism, while 12% did not have adequate information. Addressing these challenges needs increased awareness and education to improved public access to information. Limited partnerships between government agencies, civil society organizations, and local communities could equally affect trust and collaboration in addressing this complex issue.

The study also revealed that 53.6% of at-risk youth in the target communities are highly vulnerable to extremist narratives. On the other hand, 34.1% are moderately vulnerable but may likely become acutely attached to extremist groups and narratives. This may affect the community deeply. To reduce their vulnerability, it is important to address the root causes of vulnerability, such as poverty, unemployment, and limited of education. It is also important to provide them with opportunities and support to improve their socio-economic status and prevent them from being lured into extremist groups.

According to the study, 44.2% of at-risk youth in this community are still working to strengthen their levels of resilience to extremist narratives, which is exacerbated by the fact that 33.3% of at-risk youth have low resilience. This is an important area for organizations to work on training and community dialogues to prevent vulnerable youths from falling prey to extremist narratives and to strengthen resilience against extremist ideologies.

In conclusion, the study highlights the presence and effects of violent extremism and youth gang involvement in Mombasa County, while also highlighting important motivators such as peer pressure, unemployment, poor parenting and dysfunctional families, and poverty. The findings highlight the need for evidence-based treatments that tackle the underlying causes of young people joining gangs and foster community peace and stability. It is possible to prevent stop the spread of violent extremism and lower youth gang involvement in Mombasa by implementing targeted programs that deal with poverty and unemployment, improve parenting and family support, combat harmful peer influences, involve the community, and strengthen law enforcement efforts. In order to build a safer and more welcoming environment

for children and at-risk youth of Mombasa, addressing these concerns requires a multifaceted strategy involving numerous stakeholders, including government institutions, civil society organizations, community leaders, and law enforcement authorities.

Building Resilience towards Violent Extremism and Youth Gangs

According to the findings of this study, extremist narratives can have a tremendous influence on vulnerable young, leading to increased radicalization and participation in violent activities. As a result, resilience building to extremist narratives is critical in combating extremist ideologies. This section covers the findings on strengthening resistance to extremist narratives for at-risk youths in Mombasa County's juvenile gangs.

Level of Resilience of at-risk Youth to Extremist Narratives

According to key informant interviews and focus group discussions, 6/10 juvenile youth in Mombasa County are more vulnerable to extremist discourses.
Some respondents revealed that the community has built resilience by always engaging these youth in peaceful dialogues, but the majority of study participants believe that it is easy to persuade young people into joining these juvenile gangs as long as there is something to entice them.

The study also identified several factors, such as individual beliefs and values, exposure to violence, disadvantageous peer pressure, and weak government policies and interventions, which affect how resilient at-risk youth cope with extremist narratives in Mombasa County.

Peculiar Needs and Preferences of at-risk Youth and Potential Risks

The study findings revealed that at-risk youth specific demands and preferences that may make them more susceptible to extremist narratives. These include a desire for acceptability and belonging; they want to be given preference for all local opportunities, such as job placements in surrounding industries, even though many of them are unqualified for the positions.

> *Youth leader shared,*
> *"Yes, these young people want jobs, but they insist on getting things to go their way. If they do not meet the requirements, how are they meant to receive these opportunities even if the law states that locals should be given first priority?"*

The study findings further revealed that other youngsters are just excited to join these juvenile gangs to seek protection. They lack emotional support and parental love. They want their voices to be listened to.

> *According to the Women Leader and grassroots mobilizer,*
> *"Some of these youth lack parental love. They have no one who is willing to listen to them, particularly those who come from troubled family units. Kama babako ni mhuni, naye mama ni maskini mlevi, then what do you expect? Who will look after your children? The child will end up on the streets looking for a better life, and regrettably, he or she might fall into the clutches of the wrong group."*

According to the respondents,
These juvenile gangs believe that being a gang member is a chance for them to battle poverty and gain economic rewards while living a flossy lifestyle. "These kids believe that because they move in gangs and are fully armed with Machetes and Knives, they are immune and ready to defend themselves from any external attacks."

Participants also noted that discrimination and marginalization, as well as other social and political circumstances, can increase their susceptibility to extremist narratives. The study also sought to establish the respondents' vulnerability to violent extremism as indicated in Table 7 below.

Figure 6: Building resilience towards violent extremism and Youth Gangs
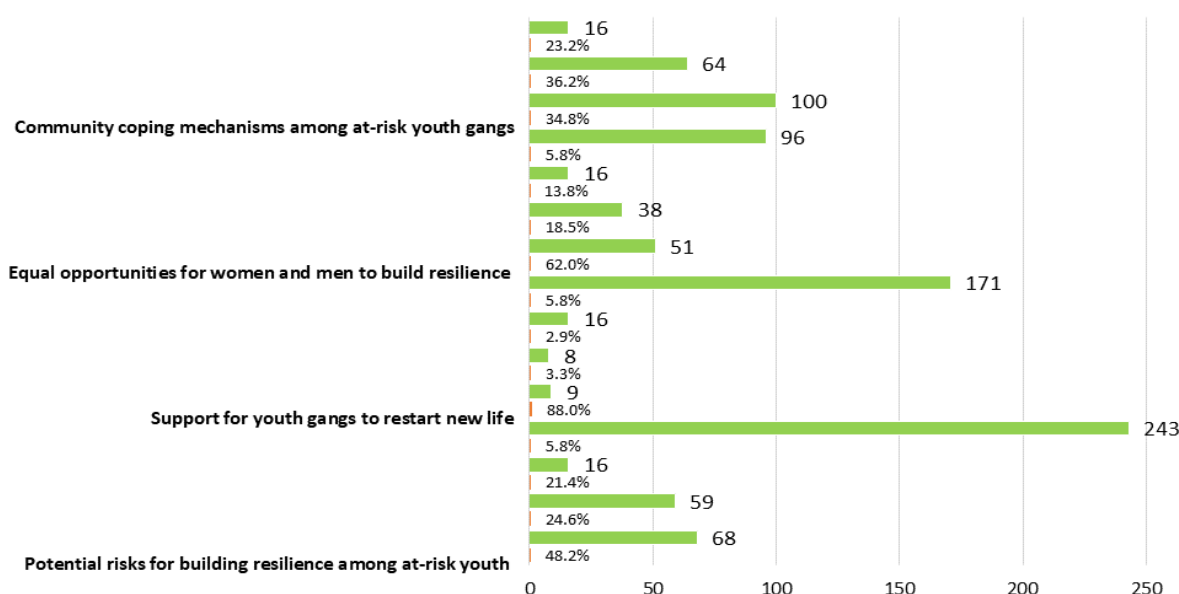
Table 7: Building resilience towards violent extremism and Youth Gangs

(n = 276)	Value	Respondents	Percent
Are there potential risks for building resilience among at-risk youth in this community?	Yes	133	48.19%
	No	68	24.64%
	Don't know	59	21.38%
	No Answer	16	5.80%
Is there something that can be done to support members of youth gangs to restart new life outside these extremist groups?	Yes	243	88.04%
	No	9	3.26%
	Don't know	8	2.90%
	No Answer	16	5.80%
Do you think women and men have equal opportunities to participate building resilience to extremist narratives among at-risk youth in this community?	Yes	171	61.96%
	No	51	18.48%
	Don't know	38	13.77%
	No Answer	16	5.80%
Are you aware of any community coping mechanisms that address vulnerability or at risk among juvenile youth gangs?	Yes	96	34.78%
	No	100	36.23%
	Don't know	64	23.19%
	No Answer	16	5.80%

Source: Field Data 2023

48.2% of respondents, according to the study, were mindful of the potential risks for building resilience among at-risk youths in this community, while 24% had insufficient knowledge. According to the findings, there is a need for more education and awareness efforts to make sure that everyone in the community is aware of the possible risks and the best practices for helping at-risk youth develop resilience. In conclusion, this might produce good outcomes for these young people and the community as a whole.

New Opportunities for Youth Gangs to Restart their Lives

Helping young gang members reconstruct their life away from extremist groups was deemed important by 88% of participants. In order to assist young people in leaving gangs and reintegrating into society, the study highlights the need for more initiatives and resources. To offer a comprehensive model to gang prevention and intervention, it is also essential to form partnerships with law enforcement, schools, non-profits, and other community stakeholders. Together, these organizations can tackle the underlying issues that lead to gang involvement and offer at-risk youth with pragmatic solutions.

Participants confirmed that juvenile gangs have existed in Mombasa County for decades and that exiting these gangs is difficult since gang members are constantly recruiting new members. The research findings have revealed important themes that reflect the type of support needed by juvenile gangs to restart a fresh life away from these extremist groups and ideas.

> *Participants indicated that the community has developed resilience, and that there are various talks and events aimed specifically at youngsters. "We have built their resilience, we talk to them more on issues of violence and the consequences, Sio wengi wanaeza kubali kutumika kulingana na mimi, itabidi maana sisi tunaongea nao wasijiunge na hii mambo ya gangs."*

Study data shows having a strong support structure to provide emotional support, such as family and friends, can assist these youth in resisting extremist narratives. In FGD sessions, community members acknowledged that many juvenile gang members face loneliness, isolation, and anxiety when they begin to transition away from their old aggressive ideals. Some participants whom have reformed expressed a need for assistance in developing beneficial relationships and establishing a sense of belonging in the community.

The majority of juvenile gang members, who range between the ages of 9 to 21, are found to be enrolled in school. However, many of them drop out or are unable to transition to high school owing to lack of academic support, which makes them more vulnerable to extreme ideas. Therefore, most participants felt that there is a great need for education and employment support to these youngsters. Furthermore, respondents emphasized the importance of training youths on ICT skills because the sector is currently brimming with opportunities, particularly for today's young generation who are constantly using smartphones, and this could be an opportunity to introduce them into the digital marketing space.

The study also revealed that at-risk youth need to have a mentor and role model to guide them in making positive life choices.

> *Participants believe that religious leaders* *can serve as excellent role models for them as they navigate through their new lives as reformed youth outside the gang and provide direction in building life skills. "I believe young people can still be changed from these violent extremist ideologies, so I urge religious and youth leaders to come in and ensure they spread the word of hope in mosques and churches."*

Lastly, there is a subset of juvenile teenagers who have turned from violent extremist ideologies but are afraid of being attacked by members of the community and police officers because of their previous involvement in crime.

> *Participants in Focused group* *FGDs expressed a desire for legal assistance for these former juvenile youth gang members. "Former gang members have fear, they lack knowledge, and they need someone to reintroduce them to the community."*

Participants reported a need for legal assistance to help the former gang members in navigating the legal system in order to be entirely cleared of previous criminal conduct.

> *One respondent from Nyali Sub County* *revealed that he is reformed, but the community is yet to accept him back. His close friend, who has been closely watching him, revealed, "I know of a reformed former member of a juvenile gang. He is finding it difficult to re-integrate into our society since everyone still associates him with his previous criminal acts. Amebaki njia panda. He is hopeless, and no one is willing to associate with him."*

Gender Mainstreaming in Building Resilience

The study found that 62% of respondents believe that women and men have equal opportunities to participate in building resilience to extremist narratives among at-risk youth. However, 18.5% believe that there is lack of equal opportunity. This is a sensitive matter that requires collaboration. The study highlights the need for more inclusive and diverse approaches to building resilience against extremist narratives and suggests that addressing the perceived lack of equal opportunity can help improve collaboration and effectiveness. Organizations should engage communities in their roles to prevent vulnerable youth and strengthen resilience against extremist ideologies.

According to the study findings, incorporating a gender equality perspective at all phases and levels of PCVE policies, programs, and projects is a successful method to building resilience against extreme narratives among at-risk youth. The study also revealed that Involving both males and females in community-based initiatives that promote social cohesiveness and peaceful cohabitation can also help minimize the danger of extremism. Furthermore, the study discovered that gender-sensitive approaches to mental health and psychosocial assistance could assist at-risk teenagers in dealing with trauma, anxiety, and other emotional issues that predispose them to extremist narratives.

Community Coping Mechanisms that Address Vulnerability among Youth Gangs

According to the study findings, coastal communities have created a variety of coping techniques to handle the vulnerability of at-risk status of adolescent youth. This study highlighted some of the most important community coping mechanisms, such as community preventative initiatives.

> *According to one respondent from Changamwe Sub County,*
> "*We have chief Barazas to address vulnerability and here in Changamwe we have KIOTA Organisation whose main objective is to counter VE narratives through use of ART.*"

Participants revealed that, these programs mention any specific programs educate young people about the dangers of joining gangs and provide constructive alternatives to gang involvement. The programs also attempt to help at-risk youth develop resilience.

> *In Jomvu, it was reported that the rising presence of violent extremist ideas in the neighborhood has compelled the community to form a community security team.*
> "*We now have a community policing unit that was formed from the community security team.*"

Community policing entails law enforcement agencies working closely with members of the community to prevent crime and alleviate fear, building trust and positive relationships.

36.2% of respondents are not aware of any community coping mechanisms that address vulnerability or at-risk behavior among juvenile and youth gangs. 34.8% are not aware, and 23.1 % do not have information about existing coping mechanisms. This highlights the need for organizations to work closely with communities to raise awareness and provide resources to prevent vulnerable youth from being recruited into extremist groups. By engaging with communities, organizations can identify and address any gaps in existing coping mechanisms, strengthening their resilience against extremist ideologies.

Programmes, Partnerships and Collaboration towards Violent Extremism and Youth Gangs

This section seeks to explore the existing programs and initiatives that build resilience among at-risk youth in the target communities, identify gaps and challenges in the programs being undertaken in the communities, discuss existing interventions by government and other stakeholders to support building resilience among at-risk youth, identify Mombasa County Government Development Plans that might contribute to reducing the vulnerability of youth at risk, and discuss the stories of change of reformed youths. **To counter extremist narratives, various programs and initiatives have been launched in Mombasa County.**

Existing Programs and Initiatives that Build Resilience among at-risk Youths in the Target Communities

Participants from the six sub-counties recognized current programs and activities that help at-risk youth in target communities build resilience. Sports, art & culture, mentorship, vocational training, education, and civic involvement are some of the programs and initiatives supported. Apart from Collaboration Women in Development (CWID), the study also found several grass root organizations that assist youth through these programs, including Kiota Community Based Organization, Shakirina Youth for Development, Manyatta Youth Entertainment (MAYE),

Likoni Community Development Program (LICODEP), Haki Africa, Shofco, Kenya Red Cross Society, and Kenya Community Support Centre (KECOSCE), among others. The Study data revealed these programs have been beneficial in preventing young people from being involved with extremist groups.

> *One respondent shared a success story of a former juvenile gang member who successfully transitioned.*
> *"I know a young man who was rescued from a gang and recently graduated from Maseno University. He's become a role model in the neighborhood, and everyone is happy to see him reformed."*

Participants attributed the success of these programs to their ability to instill in young people a sense of belonging, identity, and purpose, as well as to empower them to be agents of positive change in their communities. Another respondent shared a story about a reformer who supports youths at risk in his or her Maskanis (Base). The former juvenile gang member now helps youngsters through arts and music creation.

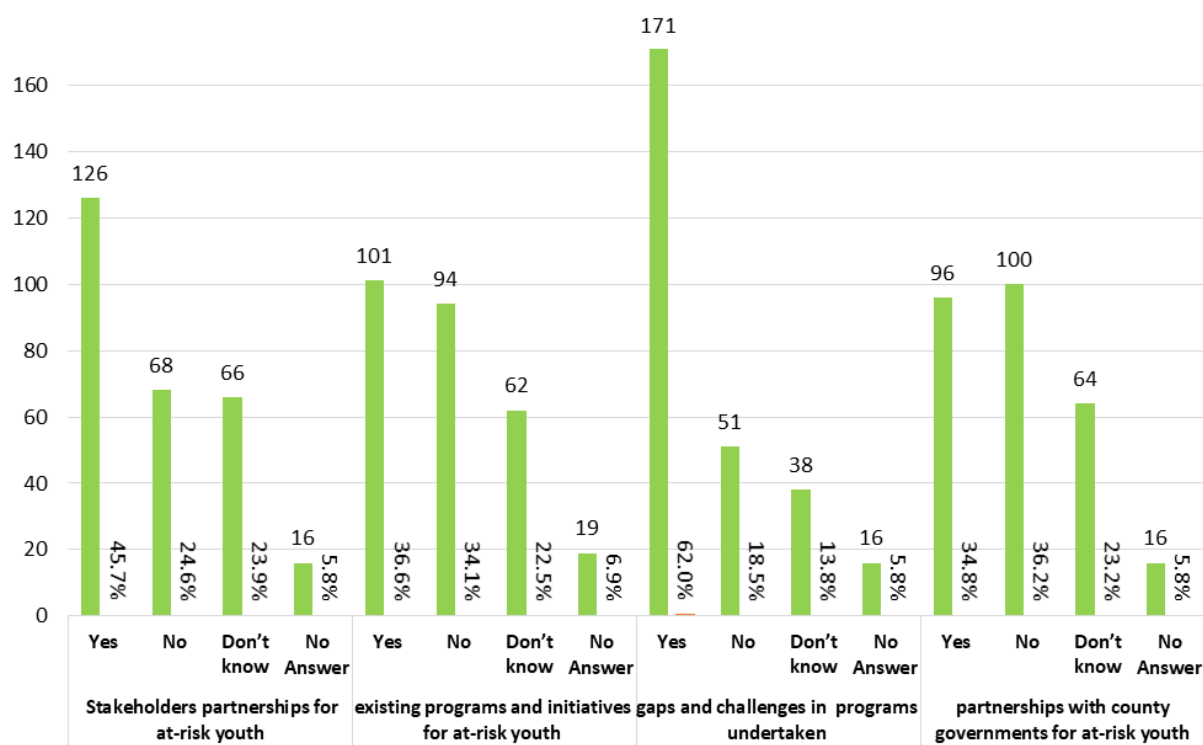## Partnership and Stakeholder Collaboration

Figure 7: Violent extremism, motivating factors, and consequences of youth gangs

Table 8: Violent extremism, motivating factors, and consequences of youth gangs

(n = 276)	Value	Respondents	Percent
In your opinion, are there partnerships and collaborations among stakeholders (government, non-governmental organizations, community leaders, etc.) that may support building resilience among at-risk youth?	Yes	133	48.19%
	No	68	24.64%
	Don't know	59	21.38%
	No Answer	16	5.80%
Are there existing programs and initiatives that aim to build resilience to extremist narratives among at-risk youth in the target community?	Yes	101	36.59%
	No	94	34.06%
	Don't know	62	22.46%
	No Answer	19	6.88%
Are there gaps and challenges in the programs being undertaken in the community?	Yes	171	61.96%
	No	51	18.48%
	Don't know	38	13.77%
	No Answer	16	5.80%
In your opinion, are there partnerships and collaboration among stakeholders (national and county government, non-governmental organizations, community leaders, etc.) that may support building resilience among at-risk youth?	Yes	96	34.78%
	No	100	36.23%
	Don't know	64	23.19%
	No Answer	16	5.80%

Source: Field Data 2023

As shown in Table 8 above, the study indicates that 45.7% of the participants were aware of partnerships and collaborations among stakeholders such as government, non-governmental organizations, community leaders, etc. However, there was a substantial group of 24.6% who said there was no partnership, and 24% did not know. The findings suggest that there is a need for further exploration of the reasons behind the lack of perceived partnership and ways to improve collaboration among stakeholders. This could lead to more interventions that are effective and support for at-risk youth.

36.6 % of the respondents were aware of any programs aimed at the initiative, while 34.06% were aware of any programs designed to encourage resilience against extremist narratives among at-risk youth in the target community. The findings suggest that there is a need for greater awareness and promotion of existing programs and initiatives that aim to build resilience to extremist narratives among at-risk youth in the target community. This could be achieved through targeted outreach efforts and community engagement strategies, as well as effective interventions to engage youth and provide them with opportunities for positive engagement.

Identified Gaps and Challenges in the Programs being Undertaken in the Communities

Several respondents pointed out that one of the key challenges is inconsistent funding for the initiatives, which restricts their effectiveness and sustainability. One respondent from Mvita sub-county reported that there was a 9-month program that ended unexpectedly, leaving 23 youngsters without a sense of hope. These young people have returned to their previous lives of drug and substance abuse, with some joining gangs.

Participants also reported poor coordination and weak collaboration among numerous actors involved in PCVE, resulting in duplication of efforts and a lack of impact. Furthermore, the experts emphasized the importance of greater inclusion and participation of women and girls in PCVE programs, as they are sometimes disregarded in these activities.

The study revealed that there are gaps and challenges in the programs being undertaken in the community, with 62.0 % agreeing and 18.9 % disagreeing. There is a need for action to reach marginalized communities with programs that deal with at-risk youth and violent extremism. 19.6% of respondents were unsure about the issue, suggesting limited awareness or understanding of the programs being implemented. It is important to address this knowledge gap and involve the community in developing effective solutions to these challenges.

36.2 % of respondents disagreed that there are partnerships and collaborations among stakeholders to support at-risk youth, while 34.78% called for stakeholder engagement and analysis to define a strategic model to deal with poverty, limited educational opportunities, and exposure to drugs, and criminality. It is important to address these issues and engage stakeholders in developing a strategic model to reduce the risks associated with poverty, low level of education, drug exposure, and criminality.

Interventions by Government and other Stakeholders to Support Building Resilience among at-risk Youth

A review of documents and interviews with respondents indicate the government and other stakeholders have launched interventions to help at-risk youth build resilience across Mombasa six sub-counties. Participants confirmed that the government has majorly used soft ways to prevent and counter violent extremism (VE) since the launch of the National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism (NSCVE). Soft approaches include the following: psychosocial, educational, political, security, faith-based and ideological, training and capacity building, arts and culture, legal and political pillars, media and online. [12]

The government has established youth empowerment programs, such as the Youth Enterprise Development Fund, which provides low-interest loans to young people to start enterprises, as well as rehabilitation centers to assist at-risk youth in overcoming drug addiction and other issues. NGO initiatives have also been implemented to assist at-risk youth. For example, the Pwani Youth Network teaches young people skills that enable them to be self-sufficient. KECOSCE is an organization that works in Kenya's coastal region to promote non-violence, democratic governance, and sustainable social-economic development, as well as to improve community-security relations and counter violent extremism efforts through community organizing, peace messaging, multimedia and alternative narrative development, community stakeholder and government engagement, and community-oriented policing. The Kenya Red Cross Society has also established health and hygiene programs in schools and communities to promote healthy lifestyles, as well as MAYE, which uses art, sports, and social media as communication tools to champion long-term peace and violence prevention among local youth, women, and children. [13]

Community leaders have also been instrumental in assisting at-risk youngsters. For example, some religious leaders have founded youth clubs to mentor and guide young people.

[12] *https://www.mombasa.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/MCAP-PCVE-1-Document.pdf*
[13] *https://www.mombasa.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/MCAP-PCVE-1-Document.pdf*

Public Participation and Engagement of Communities

The study also sought to establish the public participation and engagement of communities towards violent extremism and at-risk youth as indicated in Table 9 below.

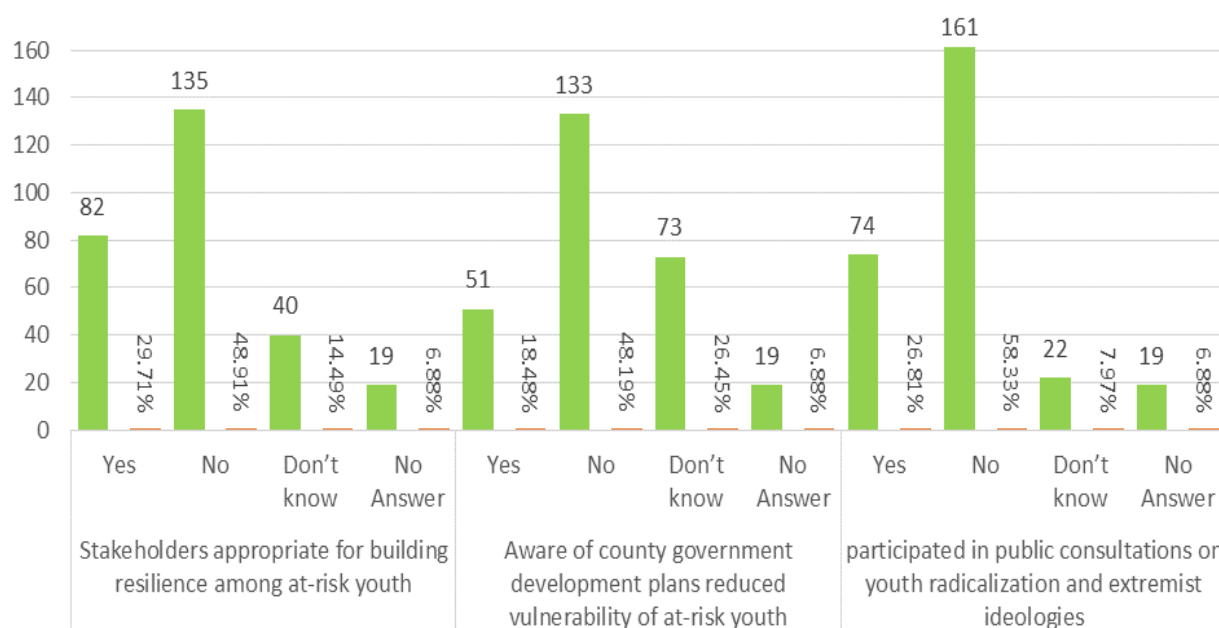**Figure 8: Public participation and engagement of communities**

Table 9: Public participation and engagement of communities

(n = 276)	Value	Respondents	Percent
Do you think that the government and other stakeholders have taken appropriate steps to support building resilience among at-risk youth?	Yes	82	29.71%
	No	135	48.91%
	Don't know	40	14.49%
	No Answer	19	6.88%
Are you aware of any county government development plans that would contribute to reduced vulnerability of at-risk youth?	Yes	51	18.48%
	No	133	48.19%
	Don't know	73	26.45%
	No Answer	19	6.88%
Have you participated in public consultations regarding youth radicalization and extremist ideologies?	Yes	74	26.81%
	No	161	58.33%
	Don't know	22	7.97%
	No Answer	19	6.88%

According to the survey, 48.9% of respondents felt that the government and other stakeholders had not taken appropriate steps to support building resilience among at-risk youth. 29.7 % felt that there was action being taken. It is crucial for the stakeholders to develop collective strategies for addressing the root causes and implementing effective solutions. Without a sense of action being taken, stakeholders may lose motivation and engagement in the process. Developing collective strategies can help ensure that efforts are coordinated and impactful.

County Government Development Plans that might Contribute to Reducing the Vulnerability of at-risk Youth

Participants in the study revealed that the Mombasa County government has implemented a number of development programs aimed at minimizing the vulnerability of susceptible youth. Sports and recreational facilities, youth empowerment programs, vocational training programs

and rehabilitation and healthcare initiatives are among the plans mentioned by respondents. Respondents confirmed that the county government had collaborated with non-governmental organizations to carry out these initiatives.

One KII respondent stated that,
"These plans have been successful in keeping youth occupied and reducing idleness, which leads to drug and substance abuse. The initiatives have instilled confidence in our youth, and we've seen positive behavior in some neighborhoods compared to before, when there were many cases of attacks."

48.2% of those interviewed were unaware of any County Integrated Plans (CIDPs) that could help reduce the vulnerability of at-risk youth. Stakeholder involvement and engagement is essential for identifying and addressing the underlying causes that motivate the youth to join gangs, developing peace-promoting policies, and avoiding further recruitment. Additionally, it is important to create a safe space for dialogue between stakeholders and community members to foster mutual understanding and trust. This can lead to effective strategies that address the root causes of violent extremism.

58.3% of respondents failed to participate in public consultations regarding youth radicalization and extremist ideologies. This is important to address given the limited level of awareness among respondents regarding the factors and consequences of joining gangs. Additionally, it is important to address the root causes of gang involvement, such as poverty, lack of opportunities, and social exclusion, to effectively reduce gang activity in communities. This can be achieved through targeted interventions and policies that promote social and economic inclusion.

Overall, the findings show that factors such as individual beliefs, exposure to violence, disadvantageous peer pressure, weak and inappropriate government policies and interventions affect the resilience of at-risk youth to extremist narratives. The study also highlights the peculiar needs and preferences of at-risk youth, such as the desire for acceptability and belonging, and the lack of emotional support and parental love. The study emphasizes the need for support structures to provide emotional support, education, vocational training opportunities and employment support, providing economic support for families and communities and mentoring to guide the youth in making positive life choices.

It is also important to involve youth in the design and implementation of programs and policies that affect their lives. Lastly, the study data reveals that training the youth in technical and ICT skills offers a good bet for at-risk youth, as this can equip them with practical skills in a short period of time, introducing them to the digital marketing space.

Stories of Change

Building Resilience through Effective Early Warning and Intervention Mechanism

One of the key strategies in reducing vulnerability to extremist narratives in Mombasa County is effective Early Warning and Early Response Mechanisms (ERMs) through various programs and initiatives. This strategy has proven to be effective in identifying individuals at risk of radicalization and providing targeted interventions, such as counseling, mentorship, and rehabilitation programs, to prevent at-risk juveniles and youth from embracing extremist ideologies.

This approach has helped many young people who were previously open to radical narratives to become motivated and successful individuals. For example, several respondents stated that they have witnessed many youths transforming through counselling and mentorship sessions. A young man who had dropped out of school and been misled by extremist views was rehabilitated by mentors and recently graduated from Maseno University. He now leads a fulfilling life, engaged in his community, and serves as a role model for other young people. Everyone in the community is happy to see him reformed.

Strengthening Governance and Rule of Law

The results of the study showed that the Mombasa County Government had started programs to help vulnerable youngsters develop resilience. The National Government, through the National Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism, has embraced the use of soft approaches such as gender, psychosocial, educational, and ideological; training and capacity building; arts and culture; legal and law enforcement; and economic and political pillars to prevent and combat violent extremism.

The administration has made sure that local government institutions, law enforcement agencies, and the court system are responsive in order to prevent incidents of discrimination, corruption, and human rights abuses that can fuel extremism.

The community and the local government institutions have been well coordinated because of this strategy. The creation of a community-policing unit to deter crime and reduce fear is one example of local government administrators' achievement. Many villages in Mombasa County have found success using this technique, which has helped to foster relationships of trust and goodwill between the community and law enforcement. Participants also disclosed that Chiefs Barazas have been crucial in educating young people about the risks associated with joining gangs and in offering positive alternatives to gang involvement.

Strengthening Interfaith Dialogue and Social Cohesion

Study findings revealed that few years ago there were religious conflict between young people from different religious and ethnic backgrounds in Mombasa County. One respondent shared the sad tale of a church in Mvita sub-county being set on fire by juvenile gangs. Today, however, religious leaders from diverse faiths have found common ground and launched several initiatives that encourage respect, tolerance, and mutual understanding. These activities include community service projects, interfaith forums and cultural exchanges. According to a local religious leader, these activities spread lessons of tolerance and moderation that encourage peaceful cooperation and combat radical ideas.

Theoretical Framework on the Reduced Vulnerability to Extremist Narratives for at-risk Youth among the Juvenile and Youth Gangs in Mombasa County

The theoretical framework analyzed and provided a comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to the vulnerability of at-risk youth to extremist narratives and the measures taken to reduce their vulnerability.

Risk and Protective Factors Theory

The Mombasa County Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (MCAP-PCVE) 2017 has emphasis on the risk and protective factors framework in tackling the issue of violent extremism among at-risk youth in the region. The study conducted in the region used the risk and protective factors framework to identify the specific factors that contribute to the vulnerability of at-risk youth to extremist narratives. The study found that interventions aimed at strengthening protective factors while also addressing risk factors can help reduce vulnerability to extremist narratives and promote positive outcomes for young people in Mombasa County.

The study highlights the need to address structural and systemic factors that contribute to youth vulnerability to extremist narratives, such as poverty, inequality, and social exclusion. This requires a comprehensive and collaborative approach that involves multiple stakeholders, including government agencies, community organizations, and civil society groups. The risk and protective factors framework provide insight into the specific risk and protective factors relevant to the context of Mombasa County and can inform the development of effective interventions to (PCVE) among at-risk youth. The findings of the study highlight the importance of a comprehensive and collaborative approach that addresses not only individual risk and protective factors but also structural and systemic factors that contribute to youth vulnerability to extremist narratives.

Push and Pull Theory

Mombasa County, on Kenya's southern coast, is well-known for its gorgeous beaches and rich culture. However, in recent years, the area has developed a reputation for being a breeding ground for violent extremism. This trend has been especially prominent among the region's youth, who are typically vulnerable to radicalization. In response, the (MCAP-PCVE) which was launched in 2017, highlighted the importance of the push and pull theory in addressing the issue of violent extremism among at-risk youth in the region.

The push and pull theory suggest that individuals are pushed towards violent extremism due to a combination of factors such as poverty, marginalization, and oppression. At the same time, they are also pulled towards extremism due to factors such as a sense of belonging, purpose, and identity. In essence, the theory argues that individuals are not radicalized in a vacuum but rather as a result of complex social, economic, and political factors.

The (MCAP-PCVE) has recognized the importance of addressing both the push and pull factors in preventing radicalization among at-risk youth in the region. The plan has identified several key strategies for addressing the push factors, such as poverty, unemployment, and marginalization. These strategies include promoting economic empowerment, increasing access to education and training, and enhancing social inclusion.

At the same time, the plan emphasizes the significance of tackling the pull factors that lead people to violent extremism. To that purpose, it identifies initiatives such as fostering social cohesiveness, strengthening resilience, and increasing community engagement. These programs are intended to provide at-risk youth with good alternatives such as social and cultural activities, sports, and vocational training.

One of the (MCAP-PCVEs) primary strengths is its emphasis on community engagement. The MCAP-PCVE emphasizes that preventing and combating violent extremism is a shared responsibility of all members of society, not only the government or security forces. To that aim, the MCAP-PCVE highlights the importance of community-led programs that foster social cohesion and resilience.

The MCAP-PCVE also recognizes the need for collaboration between various stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, religious leaders, and the private sector. The MCAP-PCVE emphasizes the importance of building partnerships and networks to enhance the effectiveness of prevention and counter-terrorism efforts.

The MCAP-PCVE is a comprehensive and integrated approach to addressing the issue of violent extremism among the region's at-risk youth. The approach provides a framework for addressing the core causes of violent extremism and promoting constructive alternatives for at-risk adolescents by acknowledging the importance of both the push and pull elements. The MCAP-PCVE, with its emphasis on community engagement and collaboration, has the potential to have a substantial influence in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in Mombasa County and beyond.

Social Identity Theory

The MCAP-PCVE 2017 recognizes the need for evidence-based approaches to address the issue of violent extremism among at-risk youth in the region. A recent study, which used social learning theory, explored how interventions can reduce the vulnerability of at-risk youth in Mombasa County juvenile and youth gangs to extremist narratives. The study found that at-risk youth in juvenile gangs are more likely to form peer networks with other gang members who hold extremist views or engage in extremist behavior. These networks can provide a sense of belonging and purpose, which can make extremist narratives more appealing to at-risk youth.

One of the key factors that the MCAP-PCVE identifies is social identity, and a recent study used social identity theory to explore its role in shaping the vulnerability of at-risk youth in Mombasa County. It is important to understand the factors that make young people more susceptible to extremist narratives, according to the MCAP-PCVE. The study findings are consistent with the goals of the plan and can inform the development of effective interventions. The study highlights the important role that social identity plays in shaping the vulnerability of at-risk youth to extremist narratives. Specifically, the study examines how the identity of at-risk youth as members of juvenile gangs in Mombasa County affects their susceptibility to extremist narratives.

The study findings suggest that youth who strongly identify with their gang membership may be more vulnerable to extremist narratives that offer a sense of identity and belonging. By contrast, youth who have stronger social identities based on positive values and beliefs may be more resilient to extremist narratives. These findings have important implications for the development of interventions that address the role of social identity in shaping youth vulnerability to extremist narratives. Interventions that promote positive social identities based on values and beliefs that are incompatible with extremist ideologies may be effective in reducing vulnerability to extremist narratives among at-risk youth. By strengthening positive social identities and promoting critical thinking, interventions can help build resilience to extremist narratives and promote positive outcomes for at-risk youth in Mombasa County. The study findings underscore the importance of evidence-based approaches to reducing vulnerability to extremist narratives and promoting positive outcomes for at-risk youth.

Risk and Protective Factors Framework

The MCAP-PCVE recognizes that addressing the issue of youth vulnerability to extremist narratives requires a multifaceted approach that considers both risk and protective factors. The MCAP-PCVE emphasizes the importance of addressing the root causes of vulnerability, including poverty, lack of education, and exposure to violence, while also promoting protective factors that can build resilience among at-risk youth.

The study used in this framework is consistent with the goals of the MCAP-PCVE and provides valuable insights into the factors that contribute to the vulnerability of at-risk youth to extremist narratives in Mombasa County. The study underscores the importance of protective factors such as positive relationships with caring adults, access to education, and positive peer relationships in reducing vulnerability to extremist narratives. It also highlights the critical role of risk factors such as poverty and exposure to violence in contributing to vulnerability. The study findings can inform the development of interventions that target both risk and protective factors to reduce vulnerability to extremist narratives among at-risk youth in Mombasa County. Such interventions may include programs that provide at-risk youth with positive adult role models, educational opportunities, and access to resources that promote positive social relationships. By addressing the complex array of factors that contribute to vulnerability to extremist narratives, interventions can promote positive outcomes for at-risk youth and contribute to the broader goals of the MCAP-PCVE.

Resilience Theory

The issue of violent extremism is a serious challenge facing many regions around the world, including Mombasa County in Kenya. In recognition of this, the MCAP-PCVE places a strong emphasis on resilience theory as a framework for addressing the issue of violent extremism among at-risk youth in the region. The MCAP-PCVE recognizes that resilience is not only the ability to bounce back from adversity but also the capacity to resist negative influences and adapt to changing circumstances. The MCAP-PCVE emphasizes the need to strengthen protective factors such as positive relationships, access to education, and positive peer relationships to enhance the resilience of at-risk youth to extremist narratives. These factors can buffer the effects of risk factors and help individuals cope with adversity.

The study findings on the importance of protective factors in promoting resilience among at-risk youth are consistent with the MCAP-PCVE goals. They can inform the development of effective interventions to prevent and counter violent extremism in Mombasa County. Interventions such as mentoring and education can promote positive peer relationships and provide at-risk youth with alternative role models, critical thinking skills, and the ability to evaluate information critically. Focusing on protective factors, promoting positive social relationships and educational opportunities for at-risk youth, and related interventions can help reduce vulnerability to extremist narratives and promote positive outcomes for young people in the region. The MCAP-PCVE emphasizes the need to strengthen protective factors such as positive relationships with caring adults, access to education, and positive peer relationships to enhance the resilience of at-risk youth to extremist narratives.

Connecting the Study Findings and Recommendations to the Mombasa County Action Plan on Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism

Mombasa County in Kenya has launched the MCAP-PCVE program to address the root causes of violent extremism through social cohesion, economic empowerment, and youth engagement. The plan includes initiatives to reduce the vulnerability of at-risk youth to extremist narratives, especially those involved in juvenile and youth gangs. The MCAP-PCVE program provides education, vocational training, and job opportunities to vulnerable youth, empowering them to become agents of change in their communities.

The MCAP-PCVE, outlines reducing at-risk youth's vulnerability to extremist narratives as one of its primary objectives on page 9. To address this issue, the plan includes initiatives aimed at providing alternative education and employment opportunities, building resilience in communities, and countering extremist narratives. These initiatives are aimed at reducing the number of young people who are at risk of joining gangs, strengthening communities, and providing accurate information about extremism and its dangers. The plan recognizes the need to provide young people with positive alternatives and education to prevent them from being drawn into gangs and exposed to extremist narratives.

According to the MCAP-PCVE, page 10, it is crucial to collaborate with youth gangs to decrease their vulnerability to extremist narratives by providing social and economic empowerment, education, and skill development. The action plan includes programs aimed at creating alternative education and employment opportunities, strengthening community resilience, and countering extremist narratives. The study revealed that 68.5% of youth were not in school, while 28.6% were, indicating a worrying trend in Mombasa. Effective interventions are essential to keep them in school and provide opportunities for positive engagement.

The MCAP-PCVE, lists encouraging interfaith dialogue and cultural diversity as two of the most important interventions with the goal of enhancing community resilience on page 13 under the section on "Community Resilience". The report found that 53.6% of at-risk youth in target communities are highly vulnerable to extremist narratives due to poverty, dysfunctional families, parental neglect, unemployment, and low literacy levels. Initiatives to promote social cohesion, peaceful cohabitation, and conflict resolution are essential to build community resilience, but 33.3% of communities have low resilience, and 44.2% are still working to strengthen it. Organizations should focus on training and community organizing to prevent vulnerable youths from falling prey to extremist narratives and to strengthen their resilience against extremist ideologies.

The MCAP-PCVE, highlights the need to address poverty, unemployment, and social marginalization as the root causes of violent extremism on page 16. The study found that 77.5% of respondents had experienced or witnessed violent extremism, and 53.6 percent of at-risk youth were highly vulnerable to extremist narratives. 48.9 percent felt the government and other stakeholders had not taken appropriate steps to support building resilience, while only 29.71% felt action was undertaken. This shows commitment to the process.

According to content on page 20, the MCAP-PCVE, highlights the value of cooperating with civil society organizations, such as youth, women, and community-based groups, in implementing the plan into practice. 73.2% of respondents were familiar with the challenges faced by youth and their communities in countering violent extremism, while 12% lacked adequate information. The Mombasa County government has implemented various development programs to reduce the vulnerability of at-risk youth, but 48.2% were unaware of any. Effective early warning and intervention mechanisms, such as counseling, mentorship, and rehabilitation programs, have helped many young people become motivated and successful individuals.

As Kenya continues to grapple with violent extremism, the MCAP-PCVE, offers a comprehensive plan to address the root causes of this issue in Mombasa County. Poverty, unemployment, and social marginalization are key drivers of violent extremism, and the action plan provides measures to tackle these underlying issues. However, as evidenced by the survey findings, there is still a pressing need for more effective and collaborative efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism, particularly by providing at-risk youth with meaningful alternatives. The involvement of civil society organizations is crucial to the success of this plan, as they can provide valuable insight and practical solutions to put the MCAP-PCVE into practice. By prioritizing education, vocational training, and employment opportunities, Mombasa County can build a more inclusive society that offers its youth a brighter future.

Unveiling the *CAPE* Model

The validation meeting held with the Technical Review Committee birthed the Continuous Assessment Prevention and Empowerment (CAPE) model which is considered a useful framework for reducing vulnerability to extremist narratives among at-risk youth in juvenile gangs in Mombasa County. The CAPE model is a holistic approach that addresses the root causes of youth vulnerability to extremist narratives through continuous assessment, prevention, and empowerment strategies. It will create opportunities for inter-sectoral collaboration and allow diverse partners to specialize in the delivery of specific components of the model to improve strategies and avoid duplication of efforts.

The CAPE model can be applied to reduce vulnerability to extremist narratives among at-risk youth and juvenile gangs in Mombasa County as follows:

Continuous Assessment: The CAPE model involves continuous assessment to identify at-risk youth and the factors that contribute to their vulnerability to extremist narratives. This includes monitoring their behavior, attitudes, and beliefs, as well as their social and economic situations. Appropriate interventions can be created and delivered using this knowledge and information.

Prevention: The CAPE model emphasizes the importance of prevention by providing at-risk youth with positive alternatives to extremist narratives. This can be achieved through mentorship programs, vocational training, education, community engagement and law enforcement. The goal is to help at-risk youth develop positive identities and self-esteem, which can reduce their vulnerability to extremist narratives.

Empowerment: The CAPE model recognizes that at-risk youth need to be empowered to resist extremist narratives. This can be achieved through programs that build critical thinking skills, media literacy, and civic engagement. At-risk youth can also be empowered through economic opportunities, such as microfinance and entrepreneurship programs, employment and income generation for youths and their families.

The CAPE model will be anchored on a collaborative approach between all the key duty bearers and right holders. It will emphasize a collaborative approach involving multiple stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, religious leaders, and community members. This approach ensures that interventions are coordinated, effective, and sustainable.

In conclusion, the CAPE model is a useful framework for reducing vulnerability to extremist narratives among at-risk youth and juvenile gangs in Mombasa County. By providing continuous assessment, prevention, and empowerment strategies, at-risk youth can develop positive identities and resist extremist narratives. Additionally, a collaborative approach ensures that interventions are effective and sustainable.

6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY FINDINGS

Community engagement, education, and law enforcement were approaches applied to counter the risk of violent extremism and young gang networks across coastal Kenyan communities. The study made use of the hypothesis that Mombasa County must adopt preventive measures to diminish spaces for potential recruitment of vulnerable youth into related gangs. Extremist groups potential influence has expanded internationally, making it easier to recruit people globally. Thus, an all-encompassing strategy that integrates community engagement, social programs, and education is required to solve this issue.

To avoid or reduce at-risk youths joining extremist organizations, it is also crucial to address the core causes of radicalization, such as discrimination and marginalization. It was envisaged that the study findings would help CWID and target communities as follows:

1. The study findings noted that 33.3% of at-risk youth in this community have low resilience, which presents a significant challenge for 44.2% of them to resist extremist narratives. The study recommends implementing resilience-building programs for at-risk youth in the community to help them resist extremist narratives and prevent radicalization. It also suggests involving community leaders and mentors to provide positive role models and support. Local organizations should focus on training and conducting community dialogues to prevent vulnerable youths from falling prey to extremist narratives. At-risk youth were found to be less vulnerable to extremist narratives when offered economic empowerment, such as entrepreneurship, vocational training, and job creation opportunities.

    These initiatives provide at-risk youth with alternative sources of income through skill training, microfinance, and entrepreneurship. These programs improve young people's general well-being, reduce their likelihood of joining extremist groups and assist them in becoming useful members of society. Governments and organizations should support these types of initiatives to provide employment opportunities and promote a sense of purpose and self-worth to address the root causes of extremism.

2. 53.6% of at-risk youth in the study target communities are very vulnerable to extremist narratives, compared to 34.1% who are slightly vulnerable. The main causes of vulnerability included; poverty, dysfunctional families and parental neglect, unemployment, and low literacy levels, which must be addressed to lessen their susceptibility. Initiatives to promote social cohesiveness, peaceful cohabitation, and conflict resolution are required to build community resilience. Community resilience may be increased by fostering civic engagement, education, and economic opportunity. Interfaith dialogue, cross-cultural dialogue, youth leadership, and civic engagement are all initiatives that can help stop the spread of extremist ideas and extremism. Moreover, psychosocial support networks for marginalized or traumatized community members can enhance community resilience.

3. 3) The study revealed that 73.2 % of respondents were familiar with the challenges faced by youth and their communities in countering violent extremism, while 12% did not have adequate information. To address these challenges, increased public awareness and education could be provided to accelerate shifts in attitudes and behavior among the youth. Additionally, youth at risk need mentors and role models to guide them in making positive life choices.

    Mentors and role models can help at-risk youth strengthen their capacity for critical thinking and resistance to extremist narratives and empower them to make informed decisions and fend off the influence of violent extremism. Religious leaders can serve as

role models and provide direction in building life skills. Moreover, it is evident that mentoring and counseling programs have been successful in reducing at-risk youth susceptibility to extremist narratives.

Counseling services offer a secure setting where young people can express their worries and get assistance overcoming personal obstacles. They can also help youth at risk address underlying problems such as mental health difficulties, which can help prevent radicalization and foster resilience. Research has shown that the vulnerability of at-risk youth to extremist narratives may reduce through mentoring and counseling programs.

4. The study established that 88% of participants deemed it important to help young gang members reconstruct their lives away from extremist groups. Community-based programs are an effective strategy for reducing vulnerability to extremist narratives among at-risk youth. 93.1% of respondents were aware of the factors that lead youth to join these gangs, which are well-known in the community and supported by some citizens. It is critical to integrate the community in an effort to find remedies to prevent and counter violent extremism and promote peace.

    The most important details are that involving the community in anti-gang efforts is essential to addressing the root causes of youth joining gangs and preventing violent extremism from spreading further. This can be achieved through community-based programs and initiatives that promote education, employment opportunities, and positive role models for at-risk youth. Additionally, communities and organizations should provide a safe and supportive environment or safe spaces for young people to engage in positive activities and build relationships with mentors and peers.

    National and County Governments and communities should invest in youth development programs to ensure that all young people have the chance to reach their full potential. Youth centers, sports programs, and cultural activities provide positive outlets for at-risk youth, which can help prevent them from being drawn into extremist ideologies.

5. 93.1% of the 276 respondents were aware of at-risk youth, while 2.5% were not. 28.6% of youth were enrolled in school, compared to 68.5% who were not. 36.2 % disagreed with partnerships and collaboration among stakeholders to support at-risk youth, while 34.78% called for increased stakeholder engagement and analysis to define a strategic model to deal with structural poverty, limited educational opportunities, and exposure to drugs and criminality.

    The need for remediation (rehabilitation and reintegration) has been used as a technique to reduce the vulnerability of at-risk youth to extremist narratives. The study respondents disclosed that the Mombasa County government has put in place a variety of development initiatives (Specific initiatives consider "Mombasa Yetu") intended to lessen the susceptibility of young people who were vulnerable. Sports and recreation facilities, youth empowerment efforts, professional education programs, and healthcare and rehabilitation programs are initiatives that seek to help people reintegrate into their communities and explore potential root causes of their susceptibility to extreme rhetoric. These initiatives involve counseling and family support to help them reintegrate and combat social inequality and economic marginalization.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Vulnerability to Extremist Narratives

Respondents characterized being at risk of youth gangs as having limited economic opportunities, resulting in criminal behavior. Using the term "vulnerability," respondents also emphasized the importance of addressing these vulnerabilities through community-based programs and support systems that provide alternative pathways for youth to realize their full potential.

The immediate center of focus should be the family unit. Addressing the underlying issues of poor parenting and dysfunctional families is critical in combating the involvement of at-risk youth in violent extremism in the Coastal region. This can be attained through education and awareness campaigns that promote positive parenting and family values, alongside counselling and support services for low-income families and programs that provide economic opportunities for families and youth. We can help prevent youths from becoming drawn into violent extremism by addressing these issues, as well as promote more resilient and cohesive communities.

To guarantee that their opinions are taken into consideration, initiatives must emphasize public safety work with National and County government agencies, and collaborate with civil society organizations and human rights advocates. As a result, a more secure and stable society will be created by fostering a sense of trust between the government and its people.

At the regional level, it is important to improve coordination between the (Coastal counties) and the national government through other existing platforms including Court Users Committees (CUCs) and spaces to ensure that security reforms are implemented effectively and efficiently
It is important to involve community members in the security process to increase their trust and promote community policing. The suggested strategy of collaborating with regional influencers is positive on a local level, creating a sense of ownership and local responsibility towards maintaining peace and security. This can lead to the development of a stronger relationship between the security forces and the community, leading to long-term stability.

At this level, awareness campaigns should be founded on the principles of equity, human rights, the rule of law, and collaboration with national and county governments. To guarantee that the community is knowledgeable and equipped to take part in decision-making processes, these pillars should be incorporated into the influencers' messaging and content development. To assess the impact of these awareness campaigns, monitoring and evaluation systems should be implemented.

Public education can also play a crucial role in creating awareness among youth at risks and communities about the dangers of violent extremism and the consequences of their actions. Educating youth and communities especially parents about the early warning signs of extremist ideologies and how to prevent radicalization can help them make informed decisions and avoid getting involved in violent activities.

Resilience Building towards Extremist Narratives

Building resilience requires a holistic approach that addresses the underlying causes of violent extremism and provides the youth with the necessary support and resources to overcome their challenges. The study believes that facilitating the implementation of programs that promote connections between P/CVE approaches used by the government and the community. CWID and its partners should step up their advocacy for community engagement in P/CVE at the

National and County government levels by creating focused communication campaigns and training initiatives that emphasize the importance of community involvement.

Public education can equally help build the resilience of at-risk youth of being radicalized by teaching them skills to resist extremist narratives and ideologies. This can be achieved through programs that promote critical thinking, tolerance, and respect for diversity. Moreover, it can foster community engagement by involving parents, teachers, religious leaders, and other community members in efforts to combat violent extremism. This can be achieved through forums, workshops, and other activities that promote dialogue and understanding.

Partnerships with local government representatives and community leaders can also help raise awareness and involvement in these initiatives.

Institutions of higher learning should be used to inform youth about the emerging opportunities supported by the County and National governments in their local communities, while also holding them accountable for executing the MCAP-PCVE plan. Lobbying should include suggestions for modifications to the NSCVE at the national level, and collaborators should use the Mombasa County Leadership Framework. The most important details are that plans and strategies for P/CVE should be formulated by the wider public in collaboration with county governments. This will ensure that P/CVE efforts are more effective and sustainable in the long term, promote community ownership and involvement, and ensure resources are used efficiently. It will also strengthen communication and cooperation between the parties involved to achieve the shared objective of preventing violent extremism.

Psychosocial support can be an effective way to reduce vulnerability to extremist narratives among at-risk youth in juvenile gangs in Mombasa County. Psychosocial support can help at-risk youth in Mombasa County become more resilient to extremist narratives by addressing trauma, mental health issues, building resilience, strengthening positive identities, and providing education.

Addressing underlying trauma and mental health issues: Many at-risk youth in juvenile gangs have experienced trauma, including violence, abuse, and neglect, which can contribute to their vulnerability to extremist narratives. Psychosocial support can help these youth address underlying trauma and mental health issues, which can reduce their vulnerability to extremist narratives.

Building resilience: Psychosocial support can help at-risk youth build resilience, which is the ability to cope with adversity and stress. Resilience-building activities, such as group counseling and mentoring, can help youth develop positive coping skills, problem-solving abilities, and social support networks, which can reduce their vulnerability to extremist narratives.

Strengthening positive identities: At-risk youth in juvenile gangs may feel isolated or excluded from mainstream society, making them more vulnerable to extremist narratives. Psychosocial support can help these young people improve their positive identities and sense of belonging, making them less susceptible to extremist narratives. Activities such as art and music therapy, athletics, and cultural events can help with this.

Providing education and skills training: Psychosocial support can also provide at-risk youth with education and skills training, which can increase their opportunities for employment and social mobility. The acquired knowledge and skills not only increase their employability but also provide at-risk youth with purpose, direction, and opportunities that can help them succeed and overcome the challenges they face. This can reduce their sense of frustration and

hopelessness, which can make them more vulnerable to extremist narratives.

Fostering positive relationships: Psychosocial support can help at-risk youth build positive relationships with adults and peers who can provide them with guidance and support. This can reduce their sense of isolation and vulnerability to extremist narratives.

Proposed Interventions to Counter Extremist Narratives

The main root causes of at-risk youth vulnerability to extremist narratives include poor parenting and dysfunctional families; negative peer influence coupled with low literacy levels or limited access to education; and drug and substance abuse. Thus, effective strategies and initiatives must be put into place to tackle these issues, mitigate youth gang violence, and foster societal stability. To tackle the underlying causes of violence and advance long-lasting peace, CWID and its partners should create projects that supplement current P/CVE activities, such as youth entrepreneurship initiatives in Mombasa and other coastal regions. Programs for mentoring and drug rehabilitation must be provided. The collaborating stakeholder should take the lead in empowering communities in their geographical locations to tackle the problems brought on by drug use and unemployment.

Partner organizations should make sure their initiatives are in accordance with community expectations and needs by including citizens in the planning and execution of programs. According to the baseline, a sizeable proportion of residents were willing to be engaged in peace and security initiatives. Moreover, most respondents think that at-risk adolescents can help their community maintain peace and security. The probation department and Wazee Wa Mtaa are some champions that could be transformed into P/CVE ambassadors through the utilization of CWID's platform for stakeholder engagement.

The involvement of marginalized youth should be given top priority in this framework, and it should guarantee that their voices are heard throughout decision-making. CWID should successfully engage at-risk youth in P/CVE activities and advance long-lasting peace and security in their communities by incorporating these major stakeholders and prioritizing the involvement of underprivileged adolescents.

Partner organizations should adopt the Human rights-based programs that are community based and enhance PCVE capacities and recognition by the government. This strategy should ensure programming is inclusive, participatory, and sensitive to community needs while also including respect for human rights and dignity in the development of long-term solutions. The most important details are that community-based dialogues should be used to address concerns with all stakeholders, such as National and County Governments, Civil Society Organizations, Independent Institutions and Faith Based Organizations. This will ensure better collaboration while paying attention to the community, judicial frameworks, and law enforcement agencies.

Low levels of trust in the government's commitment should be addressed by including community members in the design and implementation of initiatives.

8.0 GALLERY

One of the enumerators engaging a Key Informants Interviewee during the baseline survery in Mombasa County on reduced vulnerability to extremist narratives for at-risk youth among juvenile gangs.

Mr. Livingstone Odero from CWID introducing the Fungua Pazia project that aimed at reducing vulnerability to extremist narratives for at-risk youth among juvenile gangs in Mombasa County

The Lead Consultant Mr. Boniface Lwanda presenting the baseline survey findings to the Technical Review Committee members at the Mombasa County Commissioners Boardroom.

The Technical Review Committee members holding a group work session to add inputs to the baseline survey.

The key stakeholders from the Technical Review and Validation Committee pose for a group photo after the validation process of the baseline survey.

9.0   LIST OF REFERENCES

1. Njoroge, J., & Otieno, R. (2020). Reducing Vulnerability to Extremist Narratives among At-Risk Youth in Kenya Journal of Social Sciences, 5(2), 30-41

2. Dagne, T., & Pandey, A. (2019). Preventing Violent Extremism through Education: A Case Study of Kenya International Journal of Educational Development, 72, 1–9

3. Nyawira, S., & Othieno, R. (2018). The Role of Community-Based Interventions in Reducing Vulnerability to Gang Violence among At-Risk Youth in Kenya

4. Botha, Anneli (2014). Radicalization in Kenya: Recruitment to al-Shabaab and the Mombasa Republican Council, Institute for Security Studies, Paper 265.

5. World Bank (2018). Poverty Incidence in Kenya Declined Significantly, But Is Unlikely to Be Eradicated by 2030.

6. Statista (2018). Kenya: Youth unemployment rate from 2007 to 2017

7. MDPI https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/12/6/2320 : The Role of Education in the Prevention of Radicalization and Violent Extremism in Developing Countries

8. OSCE; https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/c/b/103352.pdf Youth Engagement to counter violent extremism and radicalisation that leads to terrorism

9. International Sociology; https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0268580920953333 Recognizing youth radicalization in schools: Slovenian 'frontline' school workers in search of a compass

10. JSTOR; https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep20392   Rehabilitating Juvenile Violent Extremist Offenders in Detention Advancing a Juvenile Justice Approach

11. John Willey; https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/cl2.1190   Is radicalization a family issue? A systematic review of family-related risk and protective factors, consequences, and interventions against radicalization

10.0 ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: Terms of Reference

CWID-CEWARN RRF
Consultancy Concept

ANNEX 2: Household Questionnaire

CWID-CEWARN RRF
Consultancy Concept

ANNEX 3: Key Informant Interview Guide

CWID-CEWARN RRF
Consultancy Concept

ANNEX 4: Focus Group Discussion Interview Guide

CWID-CEWARN RRF
Consultancy Concept

ANNEX 5: End of Day Reflection Checklist

CWID-CEWARN RRF
Consultancy Concept

WITH SUPPORT FROM

THIS BASELINE STUDY WAS CONDUCTED AND REPORT COMPILED BY

Lwanergy Infiniti Consulting
Building #40| Wilson Airport - Off Lang'ata Rd
PO Box 48040 - 00100
Nairobi - Kenya.
Tel: +254 735870001/722407543
Skype: lwandakeya
Twitter: @lwanerg

COLLABORATION OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT - CWID

COLLABORATION OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT - CWID

BASELINE REPORT 2023

Cwid4Cwid

www.collabowid.org