

Socializing the Prevention and Countering Extremism Process in Kenya

The Development and Implementation of the County Action Plans



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Acronyms:

CAPs — County Action Plans
CEF — County Engagement Forum
CGW — County Governance Watch
CIDP — County Integrated Development Plans
CREATE — Creating Resilience Against Terrorism and Extremism Program, an FCO-funded project that is implemented by Mercy Corps
CBO — Community-Based Organization
CSO — Civil Society Organization
CVE — Countering Violent Extremism
GoK — Government of Kenya
GTI — Global Terrorism Index
HURIA — Human Rights Agenda
KCAP — Kwale County Action Plan
KEPSA — Kenya Private Sector Alliance
KDF — Kenya Defense Forces
KII — Key Informant Interview
M&E — Monitoring and Evaluation
MOA — Matatu Owners' Association
MRC — Mombasa Republican Council
NCAP — Nairobi County Action Plan
NCIC — National Cohesion and Integration Commission
NCTC — National Counter Terrorism Center
NGO — Non-Governmental Organization
NIWETU — Kenya Niwajibu Wetu program, funded by USAID
NSCVE — National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism
ODM — Orange Democratic Movement Party
OKRs — Objectives and Key Results
P/CVE — Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism
POTA — Prevention of Terrorism Activities Law
PVE — Preventing Violent Extremism
R-CAPs — Rapid County Action Plans
SWOT — Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
TNA — The National Alliance Party
UNDP — United Nations Development Programme
USAID — United States Agency for International Development
VE/VEOs — Violent Extremism/Violet Extremism Organizations

Wonderful beach in Kwale.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The responses to violent extremism and terrorism interventions by development partners and governments are increasingly focusing on local actors through the engagement of civil society and the promotion of bottom-up responses from within local communities. These responses assume that expanding the engagement pool assists in de-securitization of the process and encourages the framing of violent extremism as a social problem.

This study explores how inclusive and pluralistic the dialogue processes have been in the counties in Kenya and whether these processes reflected the diversity of community groups, with a focus on two counties, Nairobi and Kwale, as case studies. It also analyses how members were recruited and whether the dialogue process managed to ensure meaningful participation by all groups.

It further assesses whether the County Action Plan (CAP) development achieved government engagement at the national and county levels. Finally, it investigates whether the engagement enhanced state legitimacy and moderated state interaction with communities on the topic of violent extremism (VE). The study took place in the period between January and February 2021.

The two counties for the study, Kwale and Nairobi, were selected because the Kwale plan seemed to have more of a community-led process, unlike in Nairobi, which, by contrast, was a response to a presidential directive. Secondly, the Kwale CAP also provided an opportunity to gain experience since its launch in 2017, and the various iterations that included the Refreshed CAP, and new generation CAPs or the Rapid-CAPs (R-CAPs).

It was also interesting to note that although national government conversations on preventing and countering violent extremism were led by Nairobi County, which is the government's central hub on matters related to security, it was among the last counties to develop a plan.

The research utilized grounded theory that allowed for a theoretical sample size selection to fill and check the properties of a tentative category. In the selected sample we tried to include some representation through gender allocations and cluster categorization. The sampled categories included representation from the local government, civil society organizations, traditional leaders, women, youth, donors, and political party representatives. A total of eighteen respondents from Nairobi and seventeen from Kwale were interviewed using a key informant interview protocol.

The analysis adopted a constructivist grounded theory approach that emphasized multiple realities, including the roles of researcher, and researched and subjectivities of situated knowledge. Additionally, some level of comparison was used to evaluate the level of engagement using three groups of interrelated themes. These themes included meaningful participation and inclusion, political space and pluralism, and intersectionality and resilience.

The themes also provided a lens for analyzing the ownership of the development process, and the progress during implementation. The grouping of the themes was based on their interrelationships, to make the case that having one theme depended on the others in the category to be sufficient. The study showed both positive outcomes from the development process and glaring gaps which would affect the implementation process.

A top-level systems analysis shows that the development of the CAPs resulted in coordination success, which may aid in preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) responses in Kenya. All sides of the stakeholder category (national government, county government, and communities) built mutual understanding of each other's positions on what needs to be done to respond to VE, the multidimensional nature of VE, and the level of the VE threat to Kenyan society.

Secondly, civil society achieved enhanced recognition as a player in responding to violent extremism. This resulted in regular outreach by national government and county government to civil society organizations for engagement and support on activities.

However, this outreach can also be argued to have taken place only because the national and county governments have limited financial resources invested in the CAPs. Additionally, the County Engagement Forum (CEF) has tried to bring together the two levels of government with civil society whenever possible; previously, they were seen as working on parallel tracks when responding to violent extremism.

Thirdly, there was an increased understanding by the government that VE is neither highly legalistic nor a security issue only. The CAPs expanded government understanding of the P/CVE response in the community to allow for a conversation on structural imbalances as drivers of VE. Finally, the CAPs helped the donors to focus their funding when responding to VE, resulting in the streamlining of the VE funding pool in the country.

While the CAPs provided successes in the community, there are pressing gaps that remain. The county governments have not successfully conveyed their security issues to the national government. For its part, the national government has not been able to align the community and county voices into national legislation and P/CVE policies.

The analysis shows missing links between the county government, national government, and civil society. These remaining gaps demonstrate the need for pluralistic and inclusive engagement of other stakeholders to achieve a whole-of-society process. This was evidence of limited inclusion to a complete lack of meaningful participation during the development processes in both counties.

Second, the presentation of the problem in the CAPs encourages dependency even within government, leaving the financing to come from the development partners. The CAPs remain a mandate from the national government, which is to say that national government remains the dictating authority rather than a partner in the process.

Additionally, while politicians may provide avenues for reaching vulnerable com-

munities, they are perceived as threats by the same communities. While this is the case, more research is required to provide a better understanding on the role of the politicians, political space, and the prevention and countering of violent extremism.

Third and under the political space, the conversations on anchoring the documents in law remain challenging. Most of the counties have concentrated on looking for legislation for financial support for the CAP activities. However, pressing issues relating to amnesty, returnees, and reintegration remain unaddressed.

Forth, the CAPs assume community resilience and the interaction of factors leading to violent extremism and terrorism, rather than expressly trying to promote and analyze these factors. In their current form, they push communities to fit their challenges into an existing conceptual framework, with no genuine option for local solutions to the local problem.

The local capacities were ignored either intentionally or unintentionally as the relevant thresholds of both rural and urban communities were included during the development process. Opportunities to build resilience are available during the implementation of the CAPs and can be better exploited.

10 Point Recommendations

Overall, the action plans have generated ideas that lack empowerment tools for responding to VE in Kenya. This study therefore recommends the following:

1. The study expressed the wish that the CAPs development process had been locally led. Such a process would encourage awareness to increase county and countrywide communication from community members to government representatives.
2. The findings suggest that a genuine, open channel of communication and accommodation from the national government are crucial if the participation is to be meaningful for the expansion political space for engagement during the implementation process.
3. While the CAPs are already developed, continuous review is encouraged to include analysis of local conflict systems and their interactions with violent extremism and terrorism. An understanding of the underlying stakeholder dynamics that allow for proximate factors such as recruitment, disengagement, and counter-narratives to occur can provide an avenue for a richer, more pluralistic engagement during the implementation of P/CVE plans.
4. The national government should understand when to seize ground on certain pressing issues, and when to accommodate conversations on others. These include open and candid conversations on issues around returnees, reintegration, and other structural conflicts bundled up under various pillars of engagement in the CAPs.
5. The CAPs should take local politics into account during implementation. These local politics also affect the levels of inclusion, the evolution of local conflict systems, and the transition into violent extremism.
6. Returnee engagement and reintegration remains a problem. Stakeholders led by the National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) should encourage the trust-building process through the development of laws to align and guide the CAPs. Such laws should oversee critical issues, including amnesty and the integration of returnees (i.e., ex-fighters).
7. There are opportunities for engagement with the political institutions in P/CVE. Apart from the development of legislation to support the action plans, political will is required to guide the process. More research is required on how national politics merges with local politics to support P/CVE.
8. While monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is critical, rigid timelines that range from one-year to five-year plans should be replaced with flexible periodization that accommodates the needs of the community and is based on implementation realities in the community. This process should also be inclusive of discussions on cross-cutting indicators for measurement.
9. Language serves as the best translator and transistor of culture. While translating the documents into multiple local languages takes resources, having the documents in at least the Swahili language as well as English allows for robust engagement by the community members.
10. Finally, the manifestations of violent extremism and terrorism remain dynamic in communities and therefore the revision period should be timed at six months, depending on the changes at the community level.

OVERVIEW OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM:

Terrorism remains one of the greatest global threats of the 21st century. Ninety-three percent of terrorist attacks between 1989 and 2014 occurred in countries with elevated levels of state-sponsored terror, including extra-judicial killing, torture, and imprisonment without trial (GTI, 2016).

Similarly, over ninety percent of all terrorist deaths occurred in countries already engaged in conflict, whether domestic or international. It underlines the close links between existing conflicts, grievances, and terrorist activity. Although there are multiple paths to radicalization, there are common characteristics shared between the vulnerable groups, regions, and cultures.

A 2017 study by UNDP on former extremist fighters found that more than half of respondents joined an extremist organization due to the perception that their religion was under attack. It shows government action as the tipping point for seventy-one of respondents joining an extremist organization (UNDP, 2017).

In the same study, sixty-five percent of respondents said they had joined Al-Shabaab as a response to the Kenyan government's counter-terror strategy, with forty-nine identifying the government as the enemy (UNDP, 2017).

Since 9/11, governments have exercised leadership to develop strategies for their military responses to terrorism, while also disrupting terrorist financing. Nations now increasingly look beyond traditional counter-terrorism tools to include the winning of hearts and minds, public diplomacy campaigns, and localized soft power approaches. These new strategies aim to help protect communities against extremist ideologies (Pandith, 2019). While these strategies offer success indicators, nations still struggle with the separation and application of soft and hard power approaches to affect or influence such campaigns.

A vital component of preventing violent extremism (PVE) investments in recent years has been to share good practices internationally and develop regional and global guidelines. Spurred on by the high-level political attention generated by the 2015 White House Summit on CVE and the release of the 2016 UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (UNGA, 2015), the "whole of society" approach to preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) continues to gain traction (Rosand, 2016).

International P/CVE interventions are increasingly focused on local actors, engaging civil society, and promoting bottom-up responses from within local communities (Koser et al., 2020). The Kenyan government, for example, understands that winning the war of ideas means collaborating with grassroots organizations, NGOs, civil society, and private-sector actors, who are uniquely familiar with local landscapes and capable of responding with real-time interventions. However, the government is still struggling to make this process acceptable and owned by the community.

Currently, Kenya can claim to be one of the countries in the Horn of Africa with a devolved system of socializing P/CVE through the development of County Action Plans (CAPs) across its forty-seven counties. However, if the development processes for these plans do not include meaningful participation, pluralistic engagement, and political party representation, these initiatives will remain small "pilot" projects.

Only program scaling can impact the modest beginnings (Pandith, 2019). This report covers research comparing the development of the CAPs for P/CVE and provides lessons from their implementation. It also covers scalability in the context of expanding the involvement of the stakeholders and reach to the new counties where new plans, also referred to as "Rapid CAPs" (R-CAPs), are developed. In the report, violent extremism and terrorism are used interchangeably.

GOOD PRACTICE SHARING ENSURES BETTER P/CVE

Terrorism remains one of the greatest global threats of the 21st century.

An image of the capital city: Nairobi.



OVERVIEW OF THE COUNTY ACTION PLANS:

The Kenya's National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism (NSCVE) included ground-breaking insights that would advance the role of youth, faith leaders and their congregations, and civil society engagement. The document, launched in September 2016, provided the template for the CAPs to borrow the pillars, or critical concepts, the theory of change and the implementation process (Scofield Associates, 2018). The pillars in the document represented thematic groupings that the National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) categorized as response areas for countering violent extremism (CVE).

The 2016 NSCVE included the following nine pillars: psycho-social, education, social, political, security, faith-based & ideological, arts & culture, legal & policy, and media & online (NCTC, 2016). Led by the NCTC, the strategy claimed to use a development process that drew on collaboration and input from all the stakeholders. However, the non-state CVE implementing partners claim that, in fact, they were not involved.

There were strides made and lessons learned from the process of the development of the NSCVE to the development of the County Action Plans (CAPs). In the period between 1998 and 2002, Kenya had relied on the penal code to deal with terrorism, equating it with a capital offense (CK Library, 2014), (Mwazighe, 2012). After the 2002 attacks in Mombasa, the Government of Kenya (GoK) started enacting anti-terrorist and financial control legislation (Hared, 2005).

A comparison of these earlier responses from the GoK to VE and terrorism, and the recent process that gave birth to the national and county documents, shows an overall increase in stakeholder engagement. Such consultation, however, did not necessarily reflect a meaningful or sustained engagement.

At the center of developing legislation to respond to terrorism was the national parliament, which had limited information on the new conflict system. Legislation passed included the 2003 and 2006 Suppression of Terrorism Bill, the 2006 Witness Protection

Act, and the 2009 Proceeds of Crime and Money Laundering Act. The rise in laws continued into 2012, with the Prevention of Terrorism Act in October 2012, Security Laws Amendment Act in December 2014, and the Kenya Defense Forces Amendment Bill 2015.

Even with the existence of laws, the narrative from the political class in Kenya after an attack was characterized by a reliance on inadequate knowledge, as well as on possibility rather than probability. Political rhetoric about terrorism linked all terrorist activities to efforts to overthrow the state and formal power institutions, undermine democratic processes, and subvert the existing social order. This framing of terrorism justified government suppression of political opponents in selected coastal counties and the weakening of due process.

In this context, the overall impetus from the international community and development partners for promoting the development of the CAPs was twofold. The first was the push to desecuritize VE and frame it as a social issue. The second was the importance of a social model for defining and responding to VE. Such a process would only succeed if it was community-led. The CAP became the framework for bringing people together in a space where the non-state actors would have a role in CVE.

The CAPs for the coastal counties developed out of a struggle to convince the Kenyan state that VE is not merely a security issue. The concept of the first-generation CAPs organically evolved from the community practitioners in the counties of Kwale and Mombasa.

In Kwale, the dynamics driving violent extremism were diagnosed by local university-based academics and Muslim clerics. The academics brought along the anchor institution HURIA¹ to support the process. In Mombasa, the anchor institution was HAKI Africa², a Kenyan human rights organization.

1. Human Rights Agenda (HURIA) is a not-for-profit, non-partisan, local NGO based on the coast of Kenya and founded immediately after the 2010 referendum.
2. A national human right organization based in Mombasa working to improve livelihoods and enhance the progressive realization of human rights.

According to Dr. Akoth of the Malaika Foundation, the lead consultant for the CAPs development, public participation was not a priority; rather, at the time of development, stakeholder competence and interest were the main qualifications for involvement in the process, and as a result community engagement was not emphasized.

The intellectuals held meetings to develop the diagnostic tools and frameworks for understanding the threat of VE in their areas. Internationally, the 2015 White House conference on P/CVE in Washington, D.C. supported this local effort by validating the ongoing local discussions in Kenya's coastal communities about moving beyond the "hard power" government interventions to "soft power" ones based on participatory and community-engaged initiatives.

The first meeting to develop a CAP included Mr. Khalid Hussein, the Executive Director of HAKI Africa, who also attended the 2015 White House conference. A meeting between Mr. Khalid and the NCTC became critical, since there was no way to develop a county document without understanding what was happening at the national level, where the national strategy was ready but had not yet been launched. After a meeting with NCTC, the consultant, Dr. Akoth, included the nine national pillars in the first CAP in Mombasa.

For the CAP development process to continue, the national government, represented by NCTC, the county commissioner, and the county government, led by the governor, had to agree on where the document would be housed and managed. The hosting institution would also guide the process of implementation and manage any funds that came to it. However, due to the political tensions between Governor Joho and County Commissioner Marwa, the Mombasa CAP could not proceed.

As a result, the concentration then shifted to Kwale. The draft was branded as a county strategy, but it changed to a county action plan with directives from the NCTC. The NCTC argued that the nation can only have one national strategy and therefore the counties should develop plans borrowing from the national strategy.

The first chapter of the Kwale CAP drew on the USAID framework of CVE (USAID, 2011),

but then incorporated the pillars from the national strategy before its launch in 2017. After the first drafts, a limited number of public consultations were included.

The Kwale County Action Plan (K-CAP) was the first county action plan launched in 2017. The plan conceptualized guidance on concrete activities at six interlinked stages of intervention to prevent radicalization and violent extremism. It proposed enabling practitioners and mediators of CVE to successfully integrate relevant programs tailored to current and historical local circumstances (Kwale CAP, 2017).

KCAP identified stakeholder roles at a macro level but lacked specific conceptions for how these roles would be actualized. The plan proposes a three-phase implementation sequence, consisting of prevention, identification, and exit. It features a five-year planning cycle with M&E pegged to micro-level activities dependent on funding from civil society. After the launch of the CAPs in Kwale and Mombasa, the counties of Kilifi and Lamu followed. The counties in the northern part of Kenya were the next in line, following the path of targeted and hotspot counties in Kenya.

This report categorizes the CAPs of the coastal and northern Kenyan counties as the first generation of CAPs. After the 2019 DusitD2 attack in Nairobi, the President of Kenya directed the other counties to develop their CAPs by June 2019. Within this timeframe, the consultant teams led by Malaika Foundation and the NCTC conceptualized a process that resulted in a two-day session for an action plan document. These documents were branded as Rapid-CAPs (R-CAPs). This report categorizes these R-CAPs as second generation. Nairobi's CAP (NCAP), for example, is part of the R-CAPs.

The NCAP, which was launched in November 2020, borrowed heavily from the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP)³. It included analysis of security trends and dynamics from authoritative sectors of government. The plan suggested citizen and institutional involvement at the county level on issues of security. The NCAP proposed to provide platforms for action through solution-seeking, collaboration, coordination, and accountability (Nairobi CAP, 2020).

3. The CIDP is the core five-year development plan that integrates the long-term spatial, sector, and urban plans with inputs from each county governor, national government plans and programs, past county development performance, and the views and expectations of other development actors and the public at large. The CIDP sets the priorities and guides all county government spending until the next elections.

Although the stakeholder meeting took an average of two days per sitting, the plan mentioned an intensive and stakeholder-owned process of identifying practical interventions against violent extremism. A comprehensive stakeholder engagement would not only provide detailed information on the challenges facing the capital, but it would also include means of resolving the issues rather than providing a document that assumed financial funding from the national government.

It aligned its activities to five national strategy pillars: the economy, education, law enforcement, ideology, and politics. The NCAP justified its selection of five out of the original nine based on the alleged issues affecting the city, with the five selected being the most pressing. Additionally, it made the argument that having more areas would be difficult for monitoring over the one-year period suggested. The NCAP included a one-year plan for activities with an M&E plan that incorporated the Objectives and Key Results (OKR) framework.

The development of the CAPs then took place in a process that was slow and led by development partners. This was because not all the counties had CAPs, and a presidential directive of 2019 required that the other counties besides Kwale work together with development partners, and with limited governmental financial support, on the development of the R-CAPs. Our selection of the two counties, Kwale and Nairobi, as case studies was because the Kwale plan seemed a more community-led process than Nairobi's CAP, which was a response to the presidential directive after the 2019 DusitD2 attack.

Secondly, the Kwale CAP, which launched in 2017, provided more lessons for comparison to the second-generation CAPs, termed R-CAPs. It was also interesting to note that, although national government conversations on preventing and countering violent extremism were initiated in Nairobi County, it was among the last counties to develop a plan of action. Its selection would therefore provide insights on how the diverse stakeholders would be included in the action plan conversation, and the outcome of the processes.

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Table 1: Summary of the Nairobi and Kwale CAPs

	Nairobi	Kwale: 1st CAP	Kwale: second ("Refreshed") CAP⁴
Motivation	Generally, viewed as a presidential directive in response to the DusitD2 attack in January 2019.	Community need identified by academia and civil society. Pushed by the need to find a solution to extrajudicial killing and enforced disappearances.	The need to have a focused and time-bound measurable document.
Priority Areas and Thematic Focus	5 priority areas: education, economics, law enforcement, ideology, and politics. ⁵	Adopted the 9 pillars in the national strategy as a required template. ⁶	5 priority areas. Critical pillar that includes security remains missing. ⁷
Financing	No budgetary allocation included in the document and activity reporting is dependent on civil society. Plans are also underway to include the CAP in the CIDP.	Includes 5-year budget activities, dependent on development partner support.	No budgetary allocation indicated, and discussions are focused on having the revised document included in the CIDP.
Planning	1-Year Plan of Activities.	5-Year Plan of Activities.	1-Year Plan of Activities.
Monitoring and Evaluation	Inclusion of Objectives & Key Results (OKR) with 5 key result areas per pillar. 5 pillars in total. These also include at least one activity to be implemented for measurement.	Increased duplication of roles and indicators for M&E with minimal accountability on measurement. Log-frames used were based on low-level activities for 9 pillars.	Inclusion of the OKRs ⁸ as the M&E process, focused on the 5 priority pillars identified.
Alignment to Legal Sector	No mention how the documents align to various national and county laws. In other instances, civil society has had challenges conducting their activities due to the contradictions between the CAPs and the security amendment bills.		
Anchor Civil Society Organization(s)	Multiple: NIWETU ⁹ program led the process but CGW ¹⁰ took over under the CREATE ¹¹ Program.	HURIA	HURIA
National Government Involvement	CAP sits at the County Commissioners' Office as the central coordinator ¹² Semi-active CEF ¹³ with limited funding from civil society.	Non-active CEF. Limited meetings conducted. Members do not have clear roles.	
Implementation Committee	Civil society organizations provided recommendations for the CEF engagement to strengthen CAP implementation. These recommendations not yet adopted. The national government, through the County Commissioners' Office, provides a meeting venue.	Recent study documents limited role allocation to the CEF. ¹⁴ Most of the meetings are supported by civil society.	New forum not completely established.

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- ⁴ “Refreshed”, i.e., revised CAPs are a review of the first-generation county action plans to include the five priority pillars and reduce the implementation period to one year.
- ⁵ As shown in the findings, the media pillar was considered a priority area by civil society during the development of the RCAP Nairobi, but it was not included in the final report. This is because most of the representatives in the room during the voting period were from the government and did not see the importance of the Media Pillar.
- ⁶ The Kwale CAP aligned to the National Strategy was missing the critical issues relating to local drivers in the community, which caused it to stagnate. As indicated by one of the KII, “one of the reasons why the Kwale CAP remained inactive was because it was not able to anticipate the new challenges that emerged right after the launch. The issue of women widows resulting from the VE issues created a lot of pressure on the implementation.”
- ⁷ The security pillar is still missing as a priority area in the Refreshed CAP, yet this was identified as a major issue, as documented in the Kwale CAP review report.
- ⁸ Adopted from Google’s employee monitoring process. The Objectives and Key Results (OKR) is a critical thinking framework and goal-setting methodology that helps companies to align goals and ensure everyone is working collaboratively on goals that really matter. This framework is adopted in the second-generation CAPs and is currently being implemented in the revised CAPs.
- ⁹ The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) launched the Kenya Niwajibu Wetu (NIWETU) activity to improve the capabilities of Kenyan communities and government to identify and respond to violent extremism. “Niwajibu Wetu” is a Kiswahili phrase meaning “it’s our responsibility,” and is inspired by the Kenya National Anthem and the 2010 Constitution of Kenya. DAI implemented the program. The first phase of the project ended in 2020.
- ¹⁰ County Governance Watch (CGW) is a civil society organization in Nairobi.
- ¹¹ Creating Resilience Against Terrorism and Extremism Program (CREATE) was a Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) that closed. It has been replaced by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO).
- ¹² The County Commissioner’s office is an extension of the national government and a direct link to the NCTC. One of the major challenges in the implementation of the document is that the national government did not want to cede some responsibility to the community and the county and yet expected the counties to fund the CAP. To ensure quick monitoring of the CAP implementation, the CAP was placed within the County Commissioner’s office for national government coordination.
- ¹³ When the county action plans were developed, it was not clear who would support the implementation process. As a result, a forum made up of representatives of the national government, county governments, and civil society was created to support the CAP implementation at the county level. This forum was called the County Engagement Forum.
- ¹⁴ A HURIA assessment study on the KCAP shows that the CEF seem to be largely ceremonial, with many tasks either being managed by the national government or led by non-governmental organisations with financial resources. [WHAT IS THE ISSUE WITH FINANCIAL RESOURCES? DID YOU MEAN WITHOUT FINANCIAL RESOURCES, OR WITH LIMITED FINANCIAL RESOURCES?]

METHODOLOGY:

This study explored how inclusive and pluralistic the dialogue processes were in two counties in Kenya, and whether they reflected the diversity of community groups. It also analyses how members were recruited and whether the dialogue process managed to ensure meaningful participation by all groups. It assesses community resilience capacities by analyzing how the CAP development achieved the engagement of the national and county governments. Finally, it investigated whether the engagement enhanced state legitimacy and arbitrated the state's interaction with the community on VE. These areas are explored through the two research problems:

- a) Community networks that are highly pluralistic (inclusive of traditional leaders, religious, and ethnic groups) may exclude women and youth from meaningful participation in the dialogues on the community action plans.
- b) Political parties are rarely mentioned or included in community processes regarding P/CVE and yet have tremendous grassroots representation and engagement potential, or risk for VE, if political leaders are seen as corrupt or predatory.

The research utilized grounded theory that allowed for the theoretical sample size selection (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The theoretical sampling was conducted to fill and check the properties of a tentative category. However, the selection tried to include representation through gender allocations and cluster categorization (Charmaz, 2006a; Hood, 2007).

To fulfill the clustering, a purposive sampling approach (Mugenda, 1999) was incorporated, and the saturation point (Patton, 1990) achieved. This selection resulted in thirty-five respondents interviewed during data collection. The sampled categories included representation from local government, civil society organizations, traditional leaders, women, youth, and a political party representative. A total of eighteen respondents from Nairobi and seventeen from Kwale were interviewed using a key informant interview (KII) protocol.

The analysis adopted a constructivist grounded theory approach that emphasizes multiple realities, including the researcher's and research participants' respective positions and subjectivities. The process incorporates a relativist epistemology and seeks interpretive understanding rather than a variable analysis that reflects the context of the community (Charmaz, 2006a; Hood, 2007).

For example, the findings show no inclusion of the political parties during CAP development. In addition, all politicians in Kwale whose involvement was documented did so for personal political gain, with no linkage to their political parties. The political parties and individuals were discussed as risk factors for terrorism rather than resilience components. At the period of data collection, it was the assessment of those interviewed that involving national political actors in assessment of the CAPS would only lead to complaints about their non-involvement, rather than any insights into how the CAP could be improved.

As a result, only one local politician was included in the data collection process, with the researcher opting to gather information from the other community members instead of contacting political parties. The coding of the findings is based on key definition terms under investigation. Additionally, the data locations (Nairobi and Kwale) were compared to determine the reasoning behind the outcomes in the CAPs at development and during implementation. It should be noted that the study was not a ranking process for the best of the two counties in the development of the CAPs.

It serves to provide learning that recommends how development and engagement processes should take place in communities in order to be successful in P/CVE. The following themes were used as a lens to analyze the development and implementation process. The themes included:

Community leaders in a program development process in Nairobi.



I. INCLUSION AND MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

Meaningful participation occurs when there is value, control, and connectedness (Wierenga, 2003). Engaging in meaningful activities, experiencing control and autonomy, and feeling connected to one's community are important contributors to the development of resilience (Catalano et al., 2002a). In the conceptualization of meaningful participation for the study, it was not associated with manipulation and tokenization by the state, but rather the expectation of full participation, where non-state stakeholders initiate ideas and share decisions (Hart, 1992; Krauskopf, 2000).

However, if the approach were limited in understanding of the relationships and their influence on the vulnerabilities that lead to violent extremism in communities, it would not be contextualized. As a result, the selection of representatives during the development provided a short-term resolve for representation, but deepened marginalization in the long-term (Gigone & Hastie, 1993).

For the study, meaningful participation and inclusion investigated whether participants had voice, agency, and efficacy within an enabling environment that provided opportunities for people to voice their interests, act, and believe that their recommendations would have an impact. The analysis also assessed stakeholders' capacities and skills-building as a part of the CAP processes (Janssens & Brett, 1997).

HYPOTHESIS TESTED:

1. If the development process for the county action plan was inclusive, in terms of meaningful participation by a representative group of community members, including youth and women, then it would be accepted across the community as a viable strategy for preventing or countering VE, including consensus on the VE threats and community resilience capacities.

2. If the action plan is implemented by local government and monitored by the community, then it will enhance state legitimacy with respect to P/CVE policies and programs, and, in the communities' eyes, moderate state VE prevention and countering activities.

II. PLURALISM AND THE POLITICAL SPACE:

Conceptual contests are central to the politics of policy. A policy development process forms interactions in which agents adjust, resolve, accommodate, and transcend initial differences within a specific context of partly shared assumptions, common concepts (and ideology for example), and commitments (Finlayson, 2010).

In any expanding political space in which social policy is developed, pluralism provides an opportunity for contending views to interact and form constitutive conceptions. Embrace of pluralism allows for the reversibility of norms and abolishes the distinction between the true and the distorted (Finlayson, 2010), thereby freeing individuals and communities from the impediments that may restrain a revision of conceptions.

Overall, such an engagement enhances state legitimacy by allowing for an expanded political space that respects the policies developed by government and programs developed by non-state actors. The expanded political space also allows for political parties to represent constituent interests by ensuring that local state operations are more moderate, less predatory, or less abusive (Finlayson, 2010). It also allows for the participation of all and of marginalized groups as both members and leaders, and provides agency, status, and power, reducing the risk of VE recruitment.

Pluralism and an expanded political space would therefore be critical to the development of the CAPs, as it would allow for the participation of people from diverse backgrounds, including ethnic, and religious leaders (Meyerson et al., 1996). The pluralist community dialogue in a politically expanded space allows for perspective-sharing and incorporation in the county action plan, to reduce the perception of political marginalization and, with it, vulnerability to VE. Under these conditions, two hypotheses were tested.

HYPOTHESIS TESTED:

3. In communities at risk for VE, if political parties engage women, youth, and other marginalized groups as members and leaders, then they provide agency, status, and political power, reducing the risk of VE recruitment.

4. If youth are meaningfully engaged in pluralist community dialogue on the action plan and their perspectives are incorporated in the county action plan, then youth's perception of political marginalization will decline, and the action plans will be better situated to address youth vulnerability to VE.

III. INTERSECTIONALITY AND RESILIENCE:

Resilience is the ability of a community, people, state, or region to adopt new processes, norms, and strategies for conducting their lives and societal relationships in response to a violent shock or long-term stress (van Metre, 2015). This adoption prevents, mitigates, and offers recovery from violence and maintains peace.

Categorization of the risk of violent extremism has resulted in a grouping that is anchored on a major dimension, the youth. Recently this dimension has expanded to sub-categories that include women and children. The CAPs therefore see the target population as at-risk and assumes the vulnerabilities that make specific categories of individuals susceptible to violent extremism.

The categorization has also included politics in the grouping process, thereby giving power to specific individuals to operate on behalf of the vulnerable communities. Borrowing from Angie-Marie Hancock (2011), engagement politics in countering violent extremism conceptualizes risk factors as parallel from the at-risk population, which can lead to an “oppression Olympics” (or in this case a competition for the “most at-risk population”), where groups will compete for the title to gain higher political and funding justifications for program activities. The result can be a drawback for the community’s resilience capacities. As an example, major axes of social divisions in each society operate not only as discrete and mutually exclusive entities but build on each other and work together (Crenshaw, 1991).

The concept of intersectionality can be drawn into the process by allowing for the categorization of an at-risk population as a target population to which the CAPs respond. Intersectionality provides an avenue of understanding and analyzing the complexity in the world, in people, and in human experiences (Yuval-Davis, 2006). The argument built on an analysis that uses intersectionality as a lens also provides the linkages to the capacities for response within the community, showing that vulnerabilities that push individuals into violent extremism can be due to a combination of factors.

It can provide insights into the involvement of actors during the development of the CAPs and actor involvement in pillar implementation (Burman, 2003). Communities can use their local capacities to respond to these vulnerabilities by understanding how they build on each other. To understand the application of intersectionality during development and realization of resilience during implementation, two hypotheses were used.

HYPOTHESIS TESTED:

5. If the at-risk population identified in the CAPs acknowledges the intersection of factors (intersectionality) that drive violent extremism in the local context, then the community can understand, own, and fully implement the CAPs.

6. If the community adaptive capacities (community resilience) are understood and incorporated during the development of the CAPs then the responses to violent extremism will be locally led and sustainable as guided by the CAPs.

“

“If I was given an opportunity to do it differently, I would scrap it completely and go to the community and ask them - what do you want? People don't even know what the national strategy document is all about because they don't own it. How do you expect it to be any different with the CAPs?” -NBO0014, Male Muslim, NGO/CBO from Nairobi

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FINDINGS

To understand the constellation of factors leading to the development and implementation of the CAPs, the fieldwork utilized the six hypotheses presented above. The desktop review shows that the development of the county action plans resulted in some success on P/CVE understanding and response in Kenya. All sides of the stakeholder category ([national government](#), [county government](#), and [the community](#)) have increased their understanding of the multi-dimensional nature of VE, the level of the VE threat to Kenyan society, and what they should do to respond to VE.

Secondly, the data also shows that civil society is recognized by the national and county governments as a player in responding to violent extremism. Both the county and national governments occasionally reached out to civil society organizations for support on activities. Additionally, the county engagement forum (CEF) has tried to bring together the two levels of government and civil society representatives whenever possible. Before the development of the CAPs, the two arms of government and the civil society were seen as working on parallel tracks when responding to violent extremism.

Thirdly, there is an increased understanding by the government that VE is neither highly legalistic nor limited to being a security issue. The idea proposed by the CAPs represents an effort to expand the governments' understanding of the CVE response in the community to allow for a conversation on structural imbalances and their role in P/CVE. Finally, the CAPs helped the donors focus their funding when responding to VE. The process has brought about a rationalization of the funding streams in the country.

While the CAPs can be considered successes in the community to some degree, there are pressing gaps that remain unaddressed. The county governments have not successfully conveyed their security issues to the national government. The national government has not been able to incorporate community and county into national legislation and CVE policies. The analysis shows a missing space between the county governments, national government, and civil society. Non-incorporation shows a gap that may be filled through a pluralistic and inclusive engagement during implementation.

The presentation of the VE problem in the CAPs encourages dependency even within government, leaving the VE challenge to be financed by external partners. As a result, members of the community feel that the national government is not serious about the CAPs. The document remains an imposition from the national government, as it has positioned itself as the dictating authority rather than a partner.

The county governments do not want to fully take on the process. This is shown by the agreement to house the CAP at the County Commissioners' Office instead of the Governors' Office.

While counties were expected to adopt the national strategy and localize it, the CAPs results are a copy and paste rather than contextual-

ization of local issues. The process gave birth to a template filling that incorporated the NSCVE pillars, theory of change, and national government implementation plan. It assumed community resilience factors and capacities, and the interaction of factors leading to violent extremism and terrorism. Instead, it pushed communities to fit their challenges into an existing frame, with no genuine option for local solutions to the problem. The table below shows a summary of the findings.

Table 2: Summary of the findings

	Nairobi	Kwale
Meaningful Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selected individuals from the community during the NCAP development were figureheads who did not understand the risks and vulnerabilities of the target population. Use of the RCAP template converted the session into a validation process rather than a bottom-up creation process. Conversations were not built from a needs assessment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selected representatives with knowledge of community needs were present during the development of the KCAP process. The challenge, however, was that most of the ideas from the community were left out of the final document as the final product was supposed to align to the national strategy. Additionally, although there was specific representation from the community, the feedback was to a draft document that later borrowed a lot from the national strategy; deviation from this document was not permitted.
Inclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County Commissioner of Nairobi remains instrumental in pushing for engagement but is constrained due to financial resources. R-CAP participation in Nairobi is highly dependent on civil society's financial resources, with no commitment from the two levels of government. Public interest is still low since the document was recently launched. Engagement remained non-inclusive, based on the selection of participants by the funding CSOs and NCTC. Shorter timeframe for development (3 days on average) is not enough for a comprehensive community engagement. Selection to participate was based on organizations' linkage to the funding partner (NIWETU) and NCTC. Representation continues to be securitized. Implementation continues to utilize the same individuals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited meaningful participation during implementation mostly blamed on the rapid turnover of the county commissioners. However, since the document is housed at the County Commissioners' Office, the new officers, as their coordinators, are required to quickly acclimatize to the CAPs. The process is dependent on civil society funding and programs. No resource allocation from the county and national government. A positive outcome is an increased interest in CVE in Kwale. Engagement was not inclusive. Convenient sampling used for inclusion. Poor relationship between the national government and the community served as another contributor to limited inclusion from the community during the development process. Most of the populations at risk for recruitment are not organized, making it difficult to have a whole of society approach. During implementation, the same approach is applied with limited grassroot activities. The document remains an elite tool, viewed by the community as a means of monitoring and hard-power targeting for response by the national government.

Pluralism

- Pluralistic categories not fully included in the development, as the focus is on “standard” categories, including youth, women, men, religious leaders, business community, and security actors, including government.
- There were assumptions and justifications blamed on time constraints for not reaching all the categories of participants. The document provides for a plan to reach other participant categories during implementation.
- Limited institutional support from the county government leading to limited institutional memory for the document.
- Limited pluralistic engagement, partly because of the non-trusting relationship between the community and the national government.

Political Space

- Poor leadership in Nairobi County during development made it difficult to inspire interest within the county government.
- The political figures engaged were not linked to the national political parties. Additionally, their engagements were at a personal level and not as politicians.
- Lack of interest from the political class in Nairobi. Priority areas do not include CVE because the CAP development activities did not guarantee additional funds from the national government, managed by the politicians.
- Civil society stakeholders have been pushing county government to be involved in the implementation through bill development.
- Implementation tried to reach diverse categories through the local chiefs, but the process was not successful. Most of the chiefs do not understand the document, yet they are expected to ensure its implementation.
- Individual-level political engagement with no links to the political party.
- Opposition party politics in Kwale pushed any political rhetoric from the national government to the periphery. This meant that any conversation from the national government, including the CAP, was not given the priority expected.
- There were no political interests aligned to the CAP. This made the local political wings difficult to engage during the development process.
- Security is not a devolved role, and the development of the CAP was presented from a security perspective, resulting in non-involvement from the county government.
- The “Hand-Shake”¹⁵ between the President and the Leader of Opposition resolved some political tensions to encourage implementation through local framing of VE.
- Engagement framework remained unclear. A political leader, for example, resolved to create a local civil society organization instead of seeking donor funding for activities in Kwale.
- Document made assumptions about a lot of complexities in Kwale. Some of the complexities included the role of women in violent extremism and the rising threat from returnees.
- Targeting during implementation was not clear, as the at-risk populations were not clustered well.
- Assumes local realities as an outcome of poor participation.
- No clarity on activities categorized as CVE.
- Needs Assessment was based

Intersectionality

on a business case rather than social dynamics that reflect the different conflict systems. The mapping focused on the economic loss to the county rather than the VE

the grassroots.

- Local resilience capacities not included, as the participation reflected macro level county factors with limited local level response options.
- CAP remains a securitized document.

- Activity implementation assumes Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis to determine how vulnerabilities converge to

local association of problems and solution development.

- Document remains in English with no translation into Swahili, a language well understood by the community.
- Communities not empowered to respond to VE at the local level.

¹⁵ On the morning of 9 March 2018, Kenyans woke to "life-changing" news through an unexpected event: key leaders Raila Odinga and Uhuru Kenyatta, rival contenders for the Kenyan presidency, were putting their differences aside and uniting through a "Handshake." This was a public declaration to cease all hostilities and instead find a common ground in the interest of moving the country forward economically and politically. Their engagement allowed for an open interaction in opposition counties, including Kwale, where the county government and the national government were not engaging on most of the issues, including the CAP, which is housed at the County Commissioner's Office. See more at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2018_Kenya_handshake.

HYPOTHESIS 1

If the development process for the county action plan was inclusive, in terms of meaningful participation by a representative group of community members, including youth and women, then it would be accepted across the community as a viable strategy for preventing or countering VE, including consensus on the VE threats and community resilience capacities.

Initially, the development of the first-generation CAPs was to include localized processes that were pluralistic, inclusive, and representative; it was intended to reflect meaningful participation. Because the development teams for the first-generation CAPs (Kwale) had more time to think through the development process, they were able to include more people, resulting in a more inclusive process. For the second-generation CAPs (Nairobi), the timeline was shorter, and the development team was also responding to a presidential directive to have a document within a certain time-frame. Therefore, the development process was less inclusive.

NAIROBI

Most respondents believed that the victims of VE were missing from the process. As much as there were youth present, their selection assumed that the “youth category” was a homogeneous group, meaning that “any” youth was at-risk and therefore including “any” youth would mean complete representation and participation. This selection did not include the nuances of characteristics of youth at risk, limiting the selection of the youth representatives based on age clustering. There was also with minimal attention to the inclusion of youth from the sub-regions of Nairobi.

There was limited representation from the active P/CVE CSOs in Nairobi, as the selection was organized by two entities: NIWETU and the NCTC. The CSO representatives included in the development meeting were associated with NIWETU sub-grantee groups. As a result, the other implementing partners who were not part of the NIWETU sub-grantee database were not able to participate in the selection. On the other side, the selection was also organized by NCTC. While NCTC represents the national coordinating body for CVE in Kenya, its institutional knowledge of the local actors at the grassroots is minimal.

The RCAP development in Nairobi therefore remained a “boardroom conversation” represented by a document drafted by a consultant and supported by county elites. This document only required low-level response from a community sample, with limited inclusion of local challenges.

“...feel that the idea generation was a top-down approach. For example, the discussions about the pillars would have left the information pillar as a stand-alone rather than being teamed up with ideology. We also felt that this was more of a boardroom approach. The CAP was more of something that technocrats sat somewhere and formulated. The representatives were more high-tech, and there was no connection between theory and practice, there was no link between academic and outside academia. There were consultations with the Ministry of Education and big international NGOs, without thinking of the locals.”

- NBO002, Female Muslim Community Leader from Nairobi

The presidential directive to have a document ready by June 2019 created pressure on the timeline for development. The engagement took an average of two days. The idea generation used a system developed by the Malaika Foundation consultant, termed the Accelerated CAP Development Process¹⁶. The process commenced with a survey of around fifty county-level representatives on the first day of the two-day process, followed by an analysis of the survey for use as a representation of the needs at the county level.

The results from the survey remained non-representative, as the realities at the grassroots could not be included during the session. For example, the Matatu [small private minibuses used throughout Kenya] Owners Association (MOA), as a Nairobi association, was represented by the national-level representatives, but the matatu drivers and conductors, considered to be vulnerable population groups, were not included. A national-level representation from the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) was included, but representatives of vulnerable groups, including the local businesspeople such as hawkers, who were intended to be among the local target populations, were not.

"The timeframe for Nairobi was limited, and Nairobi has eleven sub-counties. So not all were reached by the process." - NBO008, Male Christian NGO/CBO from Nairobi and CEF member

The NCAP development emerged as a standalone process that did not reflect the previous work and engagement on CVE since early 2011. Another respondent mentioned that

"...it seemed like it was a new dawn, like we are starting now rather than a continuation. The sustainable development goals were taken from the MDGs, for example, but the NCAP seemed like a new thing [that was] not borrowing from some things that have been done before in the communities. There was no room for dispute. The document was already completed, and it was up to the organizations to implement. Even worse, there was no mention of a kitty, for example, where community CSOs would be borrowing from. It was more of, we have given you a road map, but use your means to reach the destination." - NBO006, Male Muslim Youth from Nairobi

No ongoing or past P/CVE activities from the specific counties were included in the document as examples or lessons learned. A respondent pointed out that

"There were no ongoing activities incorporated in the CAP. There was no attempt to link the ongoing work and yet P/CVE work has been done since 2012 to now. I felt that there would be a lot of success stories that would have been included, or even backfire stories." - NBO004, Female Muslim Woman from Nairobi

Dispute resolution mechanisms had the spirit of consensus, but it was clear that there were biases from the majority, who represented the national government. For example, the minority felt that, although education, security, politics, economics, and ideology were present as priority pillars, a media pillar would also be important. But since most of the respondents were from the security sector and did not tend to focus on this pillar, they did not see value in including it.

The engagement from the county government was minimal to none. The challenge was that the governor ignored the process and did not embrace it, due to lack of leadership. The individuals from the county government were present, but their presence was not anchored in a systemic alignment to the CIDP (as an example), which would result in planning and the setting up of structures. Also, there was no authority from the county government in Nairobi to follow up with activities. Officials from Nairobi County lacked the institutional memory to integrate the NCAP into county systems.

16. This is terminology developed by Malaika Foundation on the development process for the CAP, which averaged two days and included sample interviews with stakeholders represented.

While the development KCAP included more engagements than the second-generation CAPs, there was still an expectation among the respondents that many more individuals would be enabled to meaningfully participate in the process. Those who participated were the easy-to-reach individuals, however, rather than those truly at risk of extremist recruitment.

The justification for non-involvement of certain groups during the development process in Kwale assumed that the document is a response to the challenges brought about by the presence of populations in Kwale at risk for recruitment into violent extremist groups. However, the national process managers decided that including these populations would derail the processes, as such groups were seen as a danger to the process. Additionally, development funding regulations also barred the main civil society partner, HURIA, from involving some at-risk categories in the conversations. It was also noted that most of the vulnerable individuals are not organized, and therefore difficult both to locate and include in such conversations.

"We tried as much as possible to involve everyone from the national and county government, women, and youth, except the youth at risk or the vulnerable individuals. We involved all the organized groups, but it was difficult to tap into the at-risk communities. The sympathizers like the MRC were not involved in the process. This is because the development partner funds would not allow engagement with such groups and secondly that the understanding of the CAPs was to fight such groups, and therefore they would not be involved."
- KWA001, Male Christian NGO/CBO from Kwale.

Even though NCTC hijacked the process with the National Strategy template to include nine pillars and an Aarhus model¹⁷, the idea generation at first was top-down, from the CSOs, who assumed they knew all about the local communities, expressing their ideas as though they represented the community. A respondent mentioned that

"... the development focused more on the stakeholders and assumed the community and not most of the community members were involved. There was a lot of assumptions that the civil society knew the community and therefore was a representation of the community. It was assumed that the CSOs have all the answers." - KWA003, Female Muslim Key CBO/NGO from Kwale.

Although not involved at an institutional level, politics played a role in the CAP development in Kwale. At the start, there was limited involvement by the Kwale county government because it represented a political opposition area. Kwale was an Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) zone, and the National Alliance Party (TNA) was in power. Politically, the county government opposed any plans or activities coming from the national government. The government-opposition ceasefire based on the "Hand-Shake" resulted in the reduction of political tensions and opened avenues for engagement of general governance issues, including P/CVE. One respondent noted that

"... during the previous H.E Uhuru's government there was a political pull between the governors and the county commissioners that affected the placement of the CAP. The Handshake cured this challenge. There is a consensus that the handshake resulted in an agreement between the county and the national [governments], but the national government still owns the process." - NBO001, Male Christian CBO/NGO from Nairobi.

The limited understanding of the subject of P/CVE by the county representatives also resulted in minimal engagement. Additionally, the conversations around security were within the purview of the national government and not appropriate to include in county engagements. Stakeholders had to develop new framings to include CVE as a peacebuilding and cohesion process, to allow them an engagement with the national government on security. This framing also allowed for the facilitation of engagement with the county officers.

¹⁷ The model was adopted from the Danish police as a way of categorizing violent extremism stages in the community. The problem, however, was that the progression at the distinct stages was not necessarily reflective of the context in Kwale or Kenya in general. See more here: <https://www.ft.dk/samling/20151/almdel/reu/bilag/248/1617692.pdf>.



HYPOTHESIS 2

If the action plan is implemented by local government and monitored by the community, then they will enhance state legitimacy with respect to P/CVE policies and programs, and, in the communities' eyes, moderate state VE prevention and countering activities.

The creators of the first-generation CAPs assumed that the document would be implemented by the county government with support from the national government. The CAPs would be included in the CIDPs for funding. The design at that time included a five-year planning cycle in line with the CIDPs.

The RCAPs, including Nairobi's, have changed the planning to an annual cycle in the hopes of acquiring annual funding from the counties. This process anticipates inclusion in the annual development plans that are debated in the county assemblies. While the analysis remains inconclusive due to the recent launch of the NCAP, there is no framework to ensure inclusion of the NCAP in the annual development plan.

NAIROBI

Many factors affect the framing of the problem, engagement, and discussions on the NCAP. The level of risk also affects how coordination and implementation will be handled. Radicalization and recruitment leading to VE are changing and often happen covertly, although the old hotspot areas still exist. Other hotspot areas are also emerging, for example, in Dandora and Umoja. One respondent specifically mentioned that

"..there are places that are active in Dandora and Umoja. The risk [of recruitment] is visible through the actions of individuals who make use of the evening Maghrib prayers to plan engagements. In Kamukunji, the factions are still present in the Pumwani Riadha Mosque. Now the Wahhabi sect seems to be promoting VE. Now when you hear them pray, they would use Arabic to pray: "Allah protect the Jihad and the Mujaheddin wherever they are in their fight against non-believers." - NBO005, Male Muslim Religious Leader from Nairobi

The coordination process led by the county commissioner on the NCAP may contribute to the reduction of VE in Nairobi. However, direct implementation is still missing from the county government, and the lack of funding from both levels of government limits the process. The big challenge for the CAPs has always been in transitioning from discussion to action (**implementation**). There are difficulties linking program activities in the community to the NCAP. Although the NCAP includes the OKRs, there are limited M&E processes. There are mixed opinions on the presence or absence of an M&E process, including roles and tools, to evaluate the realities of P/CVE activities in the communities in Nairobi. The tool developed by the NCAP Engagement Forum (CEF) is insufficient, as it treats the NCAP as a project that requires funding and a sole stakeholder to manage all activities.

"The document still needs a lot of streamlining and awareness creation. There are gaps in M&E. No assignment of roles on M&E due to overall understanding of the term evaluation and who is responsible in the process." - NBO008, Male Christian NGO/CBO from Nairobi and CEF member.

The use of the NCAP is not clear. Some partners view it as a project to use for funding requests, while others prefer it as a guide for P/CVE. Lessons from the first-generation CAPs show that the documents should be used as guides rather than project plans. The inclusion of low-level activities makes the document more appropriate to be used as a proposal for funding by local organizations. However, the consensus is that the action plan should remain a policy document linked to the national P/CVE strategy. A review to streamline the guidance process is required.

"If you ask me, the best option would have been a unique way of expanding the national strategy and adopt it in the county. This is because each area has its own dynamics. To me, I think there should have been community involvement that included a presentation of the national strategy as the beginning point and not have an expert coming to explain what is to be done. The national strategy is a good document that should have been expounded and localized in the counties. Then the county action plans should have been a guide at the national level and have work-plans developed in the county focusing on implementation." - NBO0014, Male Muslim, NGO/CBO from Nairobi.

There is limited embrace of the NCAP from the Nairobi County government. Although it was early to provide conclusive responses on the NCAP inclusion in the CIDP, there is optimism from the CEF leading organization that it will be included. Its inclusion may ease the planning of activities at the county level and ensure funding through the county government. However, the optimism is dependent on political interest and engagement at the county level.

Such interest and engagement could also result in the development of legislation and the creation of local government structures to offer greater official support for the process. There are challenges, however, inherent in trying to pass legislation to support the CAPs processes. The experiences of Mombasa and Mandera counties show non-sustainable outcomes. In Mombasa, for example, the county government established a CVE directorate as a way of responding to VE and working through its own CAP process, the MCAP. A bill drafted and passed by the county assembly could have provided legitimacy to the office and justify funding from the county government. In the end, however, the National Government did not support the bill, resulting in the disbandment of the CVE directorate in Mombasa. The officer in charge was reassigned to the youth affairs docket within the county government. In Mandera, there is a bill that was being drafted to support the engagements from the county, but it is yet to be finalized.

In both Mombasa and Mandera counties, the initiative to engage legislatively came from the county government and not from civil society alone. The political class in Nairobi should prioritize the discussion about the NCAP. Additionally, for a bill to be supported by the national government, it cannot touch on any matter of security, as security is not a devolved function. Therefore, the challenge will be to draft a bill that addresses security as identified in the NCAP but does not appear to infringe on the security role of the national government. A representative from the Nairobi CEF mentioned that there were plans to engage the county assembly to draft bills to support the NCAP:

"The county has tried to accept to make budgetary inclusion to address some issues highlighted in the NCAP through the youth department. Part of the process also includes the development of a draft bill and a youth policy that will have the NCAP progress into the CIDP." - NBO008, Male Christian NGO/CBO from Nairobi and CEF member.

KWALE

Radicalization and recruitment are still taking place in Kwale. However, there is fatigue from the stakeholders around discussing a response that lacks complete and genuine commitment from the national and county governments. Accordingly, while the COVID-19 pandemic has made the situation worse through online engagement, the abusive actions from law enforcement have set the community back and the gains made have been lost. The hotspots still exist, and new ones have appeared:

"I think that it's because of the police approach there is fear, and this is not reducing radicalization. Radicalization is happening covertly in the original hotspot areas of Bongwe, Ukunda, and Diani. This is also happening in the neighboring area of Shika Adabu, which is the border of Mombasa and Kwale counties. The recent police brutality even during the COVID-19 period has not made the discussion better. Young people still perceive the old as informers and this has led to the growth of juvenile gangs." - KWA001 Male Christian CBO/NGO from Kwale.

Although the KCAP has supported some level of coordination and awareness by stakeholders and within the community in Kwale, the original assumptions of ill intentions from the government still abound. During the KCAP development process, some members did not participate in the process, as it was seen as a tool to be used by the government to target specific individuals in the community. The actions from law enforcement have only deepened the feelings of mistrust. Accordingly, representatives of the antiterrorism police unit never attended the development meetings, and their continued actions cannot be explained by the county commissioner.

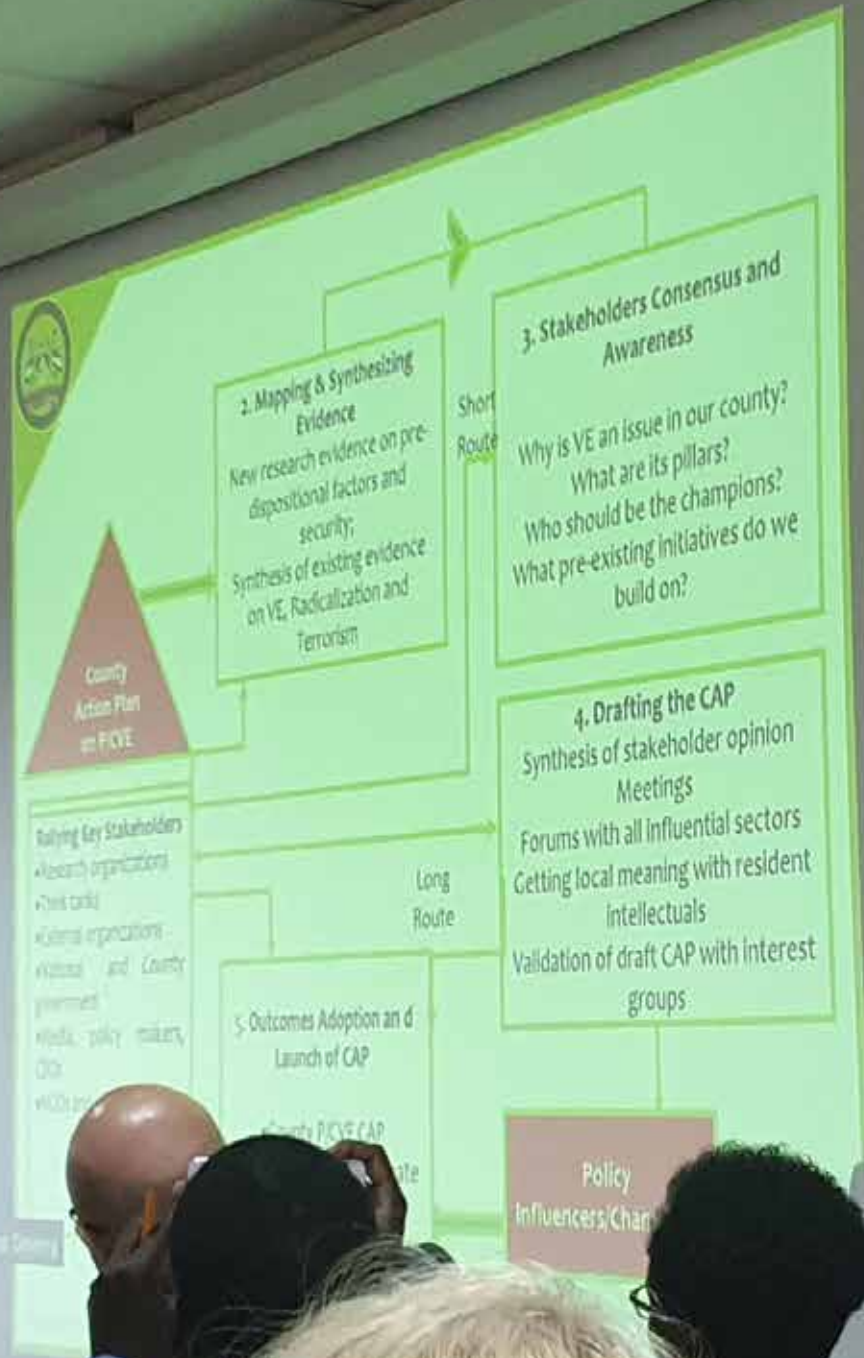
"The young people still perceive the old as informers and this has led to the growth of juvenile gangs. So, the KCAP did not help. The government entities are perceiving it as a tool to map the hotspot areas for returnees and this has endangered the lives of the young people. This has also ensured that young people take backstage and not engage on the document." - KWA002, Male Muslim CBO/NGO from Kwale.

In Kwale, the challenges in monitoring and evaluation have persisted and have moved to the revised document cycle, now termed the refreshed CAPs. Currently, Kwale's is among the first-generation county CAPs that have undergone a refresh to include a new prioritization of the pillars, with the addition of indicators that can be tracked annually. The process is intended to make learning and course correction easier through annual monitoring and evaluation. However, the process seemed to be shaped solely by M&E needs, rather than by a mix of the changing dynamics of violent extremism in Kwale and M&E needs. One respondent complained:

"Why are we remodeling, and yet we have not implemented the CAPs to learn? Some pillar activities have not been done in the community and yet we have reduced them in the name of prioritization? Additionally, even the conversation on prioritization is not adhering to the challenges in the community, as shown in a study we did as an organization focusing on the pressing needs of the community in Kwale. We are still not addressing the security issues of extrajudicial killing and amnesty that plague the community." - KWA004, Male Christian Youth from Kwale.

Now the county government has started the engagement process. However, this engagement has not been pursued to the level expected. Most of the individuals who represent the county government do not take leadership roles on the KCAP, depend on CSOs for stipends, and remain non-committal on the resources. Although Kwale was a pioneer county in the development and even launching of the KCAP, it has not included the KCAP in the CIDP. There is no hope of inclusion unless there is legislation at the county level, with goodwill from the sitting governor.

Stakeholders listening to a presentation from NCTC



HYPOTHESIS 3

In communities at risk for VE, if political parties engage women, youth, and other marginalized groups as members and leaders, then they provide agency, status, and political power, reducing the risk of VE recruitment.

NAIROBI

Based on the stakeholder representation during the development process, violent extremism was categorized as a game of political persuasion, where narratives are formulated to determine a response dependent on the level of influence and engagement. Although politicians have influence in communities, their engagements in the RCAPs development were minimal. The politicians have avoided conversations on VE and only offered proclamations after an attack. In Nairobi, the Member of Parliament from Kamukunji chairs the CVE Committee in parliament. However, from the community's perspective, it is not clear on what the committee does. In Kamukunji sub-county the youth feel like orphans in the community and the NCAP does not make it better:

"The political parties don't talk about violent extremism unless there is an attack. I don't think that the politicians use their platform to respond to violent extremism. For example, the youth in Majengo, Nairobi are sidelined by the current member of parliament. They say that the member of parliament sidelined them because the youth from Majengo are responsible for attacking him and therefore, most of the development plans have happened in Eastleigh and not in Majengo. The youth in Majengo consider themselves as orphans in the community and the NCAP has not provided a home." - NBO006, Male Muslim Youth from Nairobi.

The NCAP is presented as a bottom-up approach, but community inputs are limited. Apart from the surveyed respondents in the two-day development process, no county-wide baseline survey was conducted. Participation was by invitation, rather than resulting from organic conversations at the grassroots level. There was no preparation of the civil society by the national or county government on how to engage on the NCAP. The organizations with convening funds remained in control of who was to be included.

NCTC controlled the development, with a consultant staging the proposal from the Centre to the community. However, the development opened the political space for P/CVE conversations, which is a positive process. The influence from the national government, through the NCTC, is still evident at implementation. While the influence from the national government remains, lack of funding from the GoK has allowed the civil society organizations to adapt and source other means of engagement.

An interviewee said,

"I don't think that the civil society was prepared. However, one good thing with the civil society in Nairobi, it does not wait for the government to prepare them. The civil society in Kenya has taken initiative to respond to the issues of violent extremism and terrorism. Though they were not prepared, they heard of what was going through and found a way of fitting in. On the level of engagement, I think that only the CSO that are aware are those that are trying to make sense of their activities linking to the pillars or priority areas as mentioned in the CAPs." - NBO0014, Male Muslim, NGO/CBO from Nairobi.

There are differences in perspectives on violent extremism from the community, county, and national levels. It should not be a problem if the understanding is based on a common county context combined with a holistic national goal. Such an understanding would support P/CVE and provide agency to respond in diverse ways to VE. One respondent mentioned that

"This is different due to the lenses the different individuals used to address the issues. For example, the national government looks at the issues from a security perspective that may be different from the thinking from the community. The national government's interest is security but for the county government its interest is politics. The community is more [accepting] of soft engagement. This leads to a contradiction of activities resulting in hard power approaches where soft power would have worked better." - NBO0016, Male Muslim, Youth from Nairobi.

There were diverse responses on the planning process:

"The one-year CAP planning is better. From the incident perspective and looking at attacks, it is easy to monitor. From the M&E element, the quarterly engagement makes it better. The one year allows for the annual development plan inclusion for resourcing." - NBO0013, Male Muslim, NGO/CBO from Nairobi)

"A five-year plan would be the best practice, with a midterm review, because the one-year makes it difficult to implement even the activities done and a challenge in measuring the results." - NBO0014, Male Muslim, NGO/CBO from Nairobi)

Political engagement has a direct link to the process of CVE in the community in Kwale. However, the politicians are portrayed by the community as the source of the problem. The political institutional engagement in the CAPs development process was limited because politicians associated the process with risk of political party recruitment and party polarization. While the community acknowledged politicians have some risk related to VE, the discussions did not link political activities in the county to VE.

Although the political institutions did not engage with youth and women on the issues of VE, individual politicians participated. Honorable Omar Bogga, a Member of the County Assembly (MCA) from one of the hotspot areas in Kwale, participated as an individual in the process of development. His engagement, however, did not translate to involvement as a politician, nor his political affiliation during the implementation. In addition, non-involvement by the politicians may have weakened engagement between the community and government because of non-responsive laws passed in legislative assemblies. According to one interviewee,

"The political parties are another problem. They were not involved during the development. If they were, then their discussions in parliament would influence better laws. They would not allow the passage of the Prevention of Terrorism Activities Law [POTA] law without the consideration of the issues in the community. This process has also put the local leaders in the community, including the chiefs and the elders, in danger. Most of them have been killed in Kwale." - KWA0011 Female Muslim Community Leader from Kwale.

At the time of development, the relationship between CSOs and the government was adversarial. CSOs had limited capacity to allow for activities on advocacy against government policy and actions. As a result, the CSOs were not prepared to engage the government. Some activities in the KCAP conflict with the security laws related to violent extremism and terrorism:

"The KCAP does not sit well with the available laws when looking at amnesty, returnees, and disengagement." - KWA0013 Female Muslim CBO/NGO from Kwale.

There were diverse perspectives on the planning cycle. From the point of a coordinating office, the Kwale plan should be reduced to a shortened frame of around two years. The continuous transfers of the county commissioners stall the implementation of the KCAP and as a result, the five-year plan is not sustainable.

"The thinking behind the five-year planning also meant that a county commissioner would stay in a county for that same period. However, most of the county commissioners stay in a county for a year or two, and as a driver it becomes a challenge. In Kwale, the county commissioner involved during the development process was transferred to three different counties even before the implementation started. This therefore meant that Kwale had three county commissioners in a period of around two years. Now, a new county commissioner has just been posted to the county. The one year would work because before they are transferred, they would have one year to implement some activities." - KWA001, Male Christian NGO/CBO from Kwale.

Network for OKR

Meso and Micro Outputs

- **Objective 1:** To rally all sectors of Kenyan social, religious, and economic life to emphatically and continually reject violent extremist ideology, prioritising Jihadism and its underlying extremism
- **Objective 2:** To eliminate opportunities for terrorist groups to operate, radicalise and recruit in Kenya.

HYPOTHESIS 4

If youth are meaningfully engaged in pluralist community dialogue on the action plan and their perspectives are incorporated in the county action plan, then youth's perception of political marginalization will decline, and the action plans will be better situated to address youth vulnerability to VE.

NAIROBI

Engagement for P/CVE in Kenya is limited by the categorization of target populations by stakeholders, in a way that includes or excludes individuals based on their level of vulnerability, context, and relationship to VE challenges. While categorization is required due to the challenge of resourcing and targeting, a wholistic approach should be encouraged. The engagement in the NCAP development was not pluralistic enough to reach all the categories that would contextualize and express group dynamics in the sub-communities of Nairobi.

In its bid to engage the youth in implementation, the national government has sponsored activities that benefitted the NCAP. These activities supported the economic pillar in the NCAP by creating the Kazi Mtaani¹⁸ program for employment of youth. According to one respondent,

"...activities from the national government responding to the NCAP are minimal. However, activities such as Kazi Mtaani show that when the youth are actively engaged, they participate differently on issues of conflict. Even from the county commissioner's perspective, the youth now have a different opinion on conflict issues in their areas because of such engagement." - NBO008, Male Christian NGO/CBO from Nairobi and CEF member.

In Kenya, the police are a highly hierarchical institution. While police engagement can contribute to the community dialogue and by extension, P/CVE, this process was not achieved. During the NCAP development, this hierarchy affected the feedback process, with the presence of police bosses in the room making it difficult for junior officers to offer contributions. As a result, the views and opinions offered did not align with the needs and challenges of the community at the local level.

18. The National Hygiene Program (NHP), dubbed Kazi Mtaani, is a national initiative that is designed to cushion the most vulnerable but able-bodied citizens living in informal settlements from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was conceived of as an extended public works project (EPWP) aimed at utilizing labor-intensive approaches to create sustainable livelihoods in the urban development sector. Through this initiative, residents from informal settlements are recruited to undertake projects concentrated in and around informal settlements, with the twin aims of improving the environment and service delivery infrastructure and creating income generation opportunities.

As part of the stakeholder engagement, the military was invited to attend the process. The military engagement during the NCAP development did not add value, as their inclusion added to the national government representatives who did not allow for local perspectives on community-led security to be shared freely. The result was a conversation that was government-led, with limited inclusion of the genuine issues affecting the community.

"I think that, though there were discussions on security, the discussions about the amnesty, returnees, and extra judicial killings were not included in the Nairobi CAP." - NBO0010, Male Christian Youth from Nairobi.

There were ongoing discussions on P/CVE initiatives even before the NCAP. These activities continue without any influence from the NCAP. This may be because they either did not fit in the five priority areas or have no support from the NCAP. Some of the activities involve women and youth who were not fully represented at the development.

"Though the representation was not a reflection of the women and the youth in the community who are at-risk, the women and youth have expanded their engagement through self-organizing that includes an invitation to the government." - NBO009, Female Christian Woman from Nairobi.

KWALE

Pluralistic engagement was minimal in Kwale and remained negligible during implementation. From the development of the first generation KCAP to the revised KCAP, the engagement of diverse groups like the Kaya Elders¹⁹, the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC)²⁰, and other vulnerable individuals remained non-existent. Women's participation was not on the level of contribution, but the organizers may have intended their presence to raise the number of participants.

"I agree with the hypothesis, but the youth are still being seen not as part of the discussion-making process but [rather as] consumers of the discussions. Women's participation was in numbers but not in contribution to the discussions. For example, in security discussions, most of the women were lower in rank and could not contribute to the conversation." - KWA004, Male Muslim CBO/NGO from Kwale.

"The discussions on diversity are broad at the county level. This is not easy, but they are trying. Even now the vulnerable individuals have not been met yet. For example, the Kayas have not been reached. Most at-risk groups are not organized, and this is the other contributing factor to the problem. I don't think the youth and women have been fully involved in the process." - KWA003 Female Muslim Woman from Kwale.

Although the conversation on security took place during the development process, most of the issues were not included in the final KCAP document.

19. Kayas are fortified settlements whose cultural spaces are indispensable for the enactment of living traditions that underscore the identity, continuity, and cohesion of the Mijikenda communities. The use of natural resources within the Kayas is regulated by traditional knowledge and practices that have contributed to the conservation of their biodiversity. The Kambi (Councils of Elders) acts as the custodians of these Kayas and the related cultural expressions. Find out more information at: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/USL/traditions-and-practices-associated-with-the-kayas-in-the-sacred-forests-of-the-mijikenda-00313>

20. The Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) is a separatist organization based in the coastal city of Mombasa. The group claims areas around Mombasa and the coast. It has both Muslim and Christian supporters.



HYPOTHESIS 5

If the at-risk population identified in the CAPs acknowledges the intersection of factors that drive violent extremism in the local context, then the community can understand, own, and fully implement the CAPs.

NAIROBI

While the respondents agreed that the pillars were a mirror of the national strategy, some believed they did not completely reflect the needs in Nairobi County. Ownership was lacking even at the development stage, as shown by the following response:

"I think that the pillars came from Kirinyaga County. Even the merging process [bringing together different copies/edited versions of the document] was not organized, as it did not account for the issues in the community. There were issues that were mentioned as indicators of risk in the community, but when the final document was released, they did not make the cut to be included in the document." - NBO006.

Kenya has various commissions that came into being with the dispensation of the Constitution of 2010. One such commission is the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC). This commission is tasked with the mandate of providing checks and balances through the review of political rhetoric, including hate speech. The NCAP includes a political pillar to resolve the politically created wedges but pushes this responsibility to the NCIC. This process remains flawed only insofar as the NCAP does not include a linkage between community activities and the activities by the commission, yet an intersection of the political tensions has influence on violent extremism rhetoric. The community is not empowered to act on political risk even as it interacts with VE in Nairobi. Empowerment to respond on other pillars is also questionable, as the Kazi Mtaani engagement systematized marginalization and conditional engagement with government. One respondent mentioned that,

"...during the BBI signature campaign, most of the youth were compelled to sign the document or be kicked out of the Kazi Mtaani government initiative. Instructions were given to the chiefs to ensure this is done." - NBO007.

Additionally, the empowerment of the local communities is not happening in Nairobi due to limited awareness of the NCAP. The document is not shared widely to encourage engagement. Therefore, it cannot be said to empower the community at whichever level to respond. Using an example from Lamu, one respondent confirmed the realities on the Lamu CAP versus the expectations in Lamu. This is also witnessed in Nairobi:

"...for example, in Lamu some community members talked about their experiences when meeting government officials, including KDF, '...- they beat me up even before we have a conversation but when we meet Al-Shabaab, I feel like [I] am part of them -...'. Therefore, there is no ownership and no empowerment to respond to the challenges of VE." - NBO0017.

KWALE

The first drafts did not include the national strategy pillars. These were later introduced as a requirement that the Kwale document resemble the national strategy in the content. The result was the inclusion of the nine pillars, but the biggest challenge remained to be categorized under the security pillar. The security pillar was included but not fully discussed for activity inclusion and genuine government responsibility.

While there were certain local resilience capacities within the community in Kwale to be tapped as a solution to the problem, the KCAP assumed the issues around returnees and amnesty. The returnees/ex-combatants are seeking amnesty and the national government was not willing to offer it and the laws currently don't permit it. Other than the public proclamation by a former minister of internal security, the Kenyan public has not seen any public document or laws that govern the provision of amnesty. These two issues lacked guidance from the national government and, as a result, there was limited ownership by the community for the document. Additionally, there was no empowerment for the community to respond to VE. One respondent mentioned that

"The pillars were from the consultative discussion at the county level and a lot of the borrowing from the national government. The research that supported the pillars, on the other hand, is highly questionable because we don't ask questions of the right people and rely on third- to fourth-party feedback. Also, there were constraints from the Prevention of Terrorism Activity in Kenya (POTA) Law. Now, we rely a lot on perceptions. For example, how is it we know a lot about returnees, and yet we are not allowed to discuss with them? The specific at-risk population should be at the center of the KCAP, but they are not." - KWA0013, Female Muslim CBO/NGO from Kwale.

Even though the marginalized in Kwale have not been empowered, the KCAP was a starting point for better engagement in P/CVE, as it brought the unity between the stakeholders to work in the community.

HYPOTHESIS 6

If the community adaptive capacities are understood and incorporated during the development of the CAPs then the responses to violent extremism will be locally led and sustainable as guided by the CAPs.

NAIROBI

The local definition of those who are at risk received diverse responses. There was no clarity on who belongs to this group. The respondents focused on providing examples as an outcome of the context, environment, and certain vulnerabilities in place of a common definition. The result is that the NCAP did not fully align to the needs and challenges faced by the community. One respondent mentioned that

"..the definition from the CAP is a professional definition because the person leading the process is a university lecturer, and for him, it may not relate to the community." - NBO002, Female Muslim Community Leader from Nairobi.

There were expectations from the NCAP. The development reflected an order from the national government and specifically from the president. They included funding from the national government for activities in specific regions in Nairobi County. The expectations influenced the selection of the hot spots in a race for mapping and therefore eligibility for funding. As a result, the mapping process did not reflect the vulnerabilities to VE in Nairobi. However, there was a positive expectation by the civil society for opportunities for engagement with the national government on P/CVE. This expectation has encouraged coordination and county-level conversations on CVE.

KWALE

There has been no definition of an at-risk person. Indicators of at risk were provided in place of a definition. These indicators include the locality, behavioral dynamics, and contextual association. In Kwale, at-risk is a categorization of indicators as applied to the specific community. Vulnerabilities play a significant role and are better articulated when defining the context of radicalization and recruitment than the at-risk categorization. The focus should be on the changing trends and perspectives that are well-identified as vulnerabilities in local communities in Kwale.

An analysis of the implementation of the KCAP shows that it is not designed to deal with the local issues in Kwale. Although it started locally, it was forced to adopt and align to the national strategy rather than the local capacities for response. The organic commencement of the CAP, as shown in the first drafts of the KCAP, was the correct way to go, and should have been adopted across the forty-seven counties.

"The KCAP is a straitjacket from the government with no pockets allowing for the changing perspectives and trends, requiring the community to fit in. From this perspective, the KCAP is good, but on its own, it cannot fully deal with VE in the county." - KWA004, Male Muslim CBO/NGO from Kwale.

CONCLUSIONS:

I. Overall, there was no meaningful participation, inclusion, or engagement during the development of the first-generation and second-generation CAPs. While the findings show considerations of convenience and time, as well as restrictions on donors, as factors that contributed to the outcome, the consultant leading the development process was of a different opinion. He argued:

“First, I don’t agree with Hypothesis One, because inclusivity is a function of power mapping rather than a function of developmental categories. The categories mentioned have emerged recently and may not apply in other instances, like in the case of building a school. They cannot apply to things that have security character. It is based on a developmentalist notion that does not apply to the social dynamics in the communities. The right question then is, was the correct power mapping and stakeholders mapping undertaken and included, based on their level of influence, interest, and impact to guide the development process?” - NBO0018, Male, CAP Development Consultant.

The findings contradict the “developmentalist” framework proposed by the consultant, as no baseline survey was conducted to incorporate the power mapping in the counties where the CAPs were developed. The development process was therefore based on a sample of convenience and influence and not a representation of issues influencing VE in the community.

II. Inclusion continued to be aligned to the oft-repeated global discourse of target population categorization, which left out a nuancing of local stakeholders in the counties. This process also affected pluralism and encouraged the mismatch, resulting in representation without participation.

III. Political engagement remains a risk, although not fully incorporated in the discourse of P/CVE in Kenya. Resilience opportunities are available in the implementation of the CAPs. As shown in the findings, the political will at the county level also influences the seriousness with which the county government takes the process, especially the governor’s office. However, care should be taken as political participation at the onset does not necessarily translate to successful engagement during implementation.

IV. The conventional definition of at-risk is insufficient for the complex dynamics of VE. However, VE recruitment involves the manipulation of vulnerability: this is the basis of the radicalization definition. For example, education at all the levels removes some risk factors, including ignorance, isolation, and deprivation. But VEOs may still take advantage of such individuals. In the experience of one respondent:

“... for me, I engage with VE targeting as a vulnerability. Vulnerability is therefore defined not by the vulnerable but by the person taking the advantage. It is a creation of utility based on available situations. So, some realities may not be issues but when taken advantage of and viewed to suit the context of the user, they are turned into vulnerabilities. In such instances, these realities may not be a risk or may not expose the individual categorized as at risk! We are therefore failing because we are defining the challenges based on conventional terms. We need to look at vulnerability to understand how risk plays out. Therefore, it is only a risk if it someone takes advantage of it and turns it into a vulnerability.
- NBO001, Male Christian CBO/NGO from Nairobi

Both the first-generation and the second-generation CAPs focus on definitions of at-risk for extremist recruitment, which make it difficult for community activities to be holistic. As a result, stakeholders are implementing activities with limited linkage to the CAPs. Understanding vulnerabilities will provide a better road map for the communities.

V. Language barriers continue to plague the action plans in the communities. The definitions have not been localized at least to Swahili, to allow for interpretation and organic activity development. Additionally, the documents remain secretive, with limited community access. The effect is limited understanding and therefore ownership of the documents.

VI. The action plans have generated ideas with no empowerment tools for responding to VE. They raised expectations for personal benefits, and for close and self-interested working relationships with security structures.



RECOMMENDATIONS:

These recommendations are divided into the thematic areas. Additionally, each thematic area has recommendations to respond to the policymakers, civil society actors, and the communities. In other instances, an additional recommendation is provided for more research, to deepen understanding for future P/CVE engagement.

Meaningful Participation:

I. Given the role of negative agency in violent extremism, the potential and limitations of participation must be considered. A frequent criticism is that the “right people” are not always at the table. Lack of participation limits the effectiveness of interventions. Evidence from the study suggests that varying degrees of participation can either aid or hinder adoption of policy. It is better to have a locally led process than a locally assumed process based on categorization. Locally led processes can encourage a higher degree of input from the “right” participants, resulting in more meaningful participation.

II. Civil society actors can play a critical role as mediators. As representatives of local communities, they can collect experiences from communities and shape them into policy recommendations to be addressed by the government. When the government bypasses the role of civil society actors as mediators and sees them only as financial resource managers, they are relegated to a back seat in a process that they were originally advocating for. Evidence from Kwale shows that, although the KCAP originally was locally led, the civil society groups have stepped back to concentrate on other issues. They only honor government calls when needed and to remain relevant, rather than helping to actively shape KCAP activities.

III. This study confirms that representation does not always equal meaningful participation. As documented in a community resilience study in Kenya, communities resist and mitigate violent extremism effectively when they feel the presence of an open channel of communication with government (van Metre, 2015) through an established framework of engagement. The CAPs can serve as the starting point for this engagement. Increased familiarity with the CAP documents and policies on P/CVE is required to increase both the county and country-wide community engagement. Additionally, genuine open channels and accommodation from the government are crucial if the public participation is to be considered meaningful.

Inclusivity:

I. Even in well-intentioned processes for inclusive dialogues, challenges occur. In P/CVE, the first challenge is the format of inclusion. Too often, the format lends itself only to acquiescent parties. Selection bias favors known “do-gooders” or regular and usual suspects that form the non-state implementing teams, rather than neutral voices representing genuine VE issues, or those capable of shuttling between various actors. The findings show that the development of the CAPs also faced this challenge. As a proposal, the development process at the national level should have included guidelines to be scaled down to the lower levels and a robust and inclusive approach, developed from the grassroots, that should be used to navigate such complexities, while giving meaning to the “whole-of-society-approach.”

II. For implementing partners, the donor funding challenge, linked to the definition of a beneficiary for support, can be navigated through a negotiated representation of vulnerable communities. In such a case, if an individual is tagged as a terrorist, the community or implementing stakeholders can work within their circle of relationships or influence to ensure reach while adhering to the donor and national government parameters for engagement. Such negotiations are required between the donor and the government, to allow for individuals to interact at the local level, as determined by the level of VEO activity in the area. While this remains a sensitive area, a negotiated representation would allow for an understanding of the other party in P/CVE.

III. Definitions of terms such as terrorism and VE present the second challenge to an inclusive process. The phenomenon of violent extremism lacks a common definition. Not knowing exactly what is to be prevented can produce problems in the implementation process. So, too, can the very label “violent extremist,” which risks delegitimizing political grievances and agendas. There is also a risk that during development, the dialogue could incorrectly identify and address the drivers of conflict. The plans should analyze local conflict systems and their relationship to violent extremism and terrorism, in order to allow for a holistic inclusion of stakeholders and their perspectives.

Pluralism:

I. The global programmatic categorization of target populations either as at-risk youth or at-risk communities has robbed P/CVE of the openness that incorporates pluralistic engagement. Pluralism should be thought of in terms of its opportunities and limitations in dealing with the drivers and the manifestations of extremism. Consideration can then be given to what the pluralistic category can achieve, as conceived beyond globally agreed-on categories. Understanding the underlying stakeholder dynamics that allow for the emergence of proximate factors, such as recruitment, disengagement, and counter-narratives, can provide an avenue for a richer pluralistic engagement during the development and implementation of P/CVE plans.

Political Space:

I. The CAPs process remains a representation of Kenyan national politics, closely tied to national security despite being portrayed as a “softer” hard power approach. While national security remains critical in the development of local plans for responding to VE, a political balance is required to navigate the process and allow for buy-in and political investment from the communities. For the national government, understanding when to stand its ground on certain critical security issues and when to accommodate dissenting views and policy recommendations, is essential for an expanded and engaged political space. If this awareness is not included in the development of local plans to P/CVE, they remain national government documents that will not be absorbed into the local political cycle.

II. The development of the action plans shows the myriad factors that drive individuals into violent extremism and sustain long-standing feeling of marginalization in communities. Local politics, in the sense of power struggles, lie at the heart of all these issues. These political dynamics shape whom to include, who negotiates ideas, which stakeholders to engage, and what is considered a risk for extremist recruitment or a vulnerability. Development of plans should reflect an awareness of the local politics to understand how these politics shape the local conflict systems and the manifestation of violent extremism and terrorism. Effort on the part of government actors is required to understand the political dynamics in local communities through a continuous policy testing approach to implementation.

III. Building political trust is a mutual process. The covenant between the community and gov-

ernment can grow stronger if all stakeholders perceive the commitment to engage to be of mutual benefit. In Kwale, the KCAP process turned out to be a vehicle for the national government to target and eliminate wrongdoers, despite government denials.

The same trust-building process is expected from the community. The government sees the community as a sympathizer, encouraging and hiding members it suspects of being linked to VE. The CAPs sought to provide common ground for engagement. However, without legislation to guide the document on critical issues, including amnesty and the returnees, the common space for political discourse and trust building is shrinking. A sober conversation on these issues supported by policy is required. The trust that comes out of an understanding of the gaps in law can provide common ground even before the development of an action plan for P/CVE.

There are opportunities for engagement on P/CVE with policymakers. Apart from the development of legislation to support the action plans, political will is required to guide the process. However, due to the association of the CAPs process with risk, most implementing partners and donors have avoided engaging on the topic. P/CVE practice requires research to provide data to guide the engagement with the political institutions, including politicians and political parties.

Resilience:

I. Recent research in the field on community-level resilience to violence shows that resilience grows when community networks bring members together across conflict divides to develop strategies to resist extremist groups. This process allows for local and organic empowerment processes that help communities to navigate the challenges associated with violent extremism and terrorism. Resilience is mentioned in all the CAPs, but its operationalization is lacking. A process that includes the incorporation of local resilience factors would be critical to push the documents into action.

Such a process would require the revision of the CAPs to focus on reducing the timelines, not from a five-year plan to one-year, but rather to periods that vary by community according to their needs and reflect the realities for implementation. Such revisions would benefit from understanding local resilience capacities, how they use them to resolve their challenges, the communities' expectations, and the effects of violent extremism and terrorism on their daily lives.

II. The internalization of concepts and their operationalization is dependent on how the concepts are interpreted in specific cultures. Language serves as the best translator of culture. The CAPs have been developed in English, yet most of the communities who are to use these documents as references for response have difficulty comprehending English.

While translating the documents into multiple local languages takes resources, having the document in at least Swahili language (a common local language in Kenya) allows for a robust engagement by the community members. Translation would facilitate more advocacy and awareness. New development processes should be translated into local languages, if possible, to allow for better engagement.

III. While the findings did not suggest that the CAPs should allow for direct engagement with individuals who have interacted with VEOs, having an open and welcoming language in the policy, with anticipatory steps for engagement, provides a positive response. If a policy developed for the community paints the community as vulnerable to VE, it risks pushing the members into a non-engagement mode with passive resistance. Action plans for P/CVE should include language that provides specific steps for engagement and outreach to those at immediate risk of participation in VE, rather than relying on overly broad categories of response.

Intersectionality:

The manifestation of violent extremism and terrorism remains dynamic in communities. Plans should develop guidelines that allow for an evaluation of risk, categorization of vulnerability, and the concrete steps that specific stakeholders should take. At-risk groups are not just youth, women, or any other gendered category for ease of planning. Understanding vulnerabilities serves as a better categorization of the threat of violent extremism at the community level, as it provides the convergence of interrelated factors pushing individuals into violent extremism. A continuous assessment of risk and vulnerabilities would improve the implementation process, as it will respond to the everchanging dynamics of violent extremism in the community.

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