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# Amplifying the Youth Voices in PCVE

## A guidance Note for Youth Peace Ambassadors



### About this guidance note

This guidance note is derived from a three-year research conducted in Kenya and Uganda with IGAD regional perspectives on youth inclusivity in preventing and countering violent extremism (PCVE). It promises to be a part of the many efforts spearheaded by young people to take charge of their destiny and be change agents that will transform their communities and ensure sustainable peace. It aims at empowering and enabling youth that actively prevent and counter violent extremism on all levels.

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## Executive Summary

This guide note promises to be a part of the many efforts spearheaded by young people to take charge of their destiny and be change agents that will transform their communities and ensure sustainable peace. It aims at empowering and enabling youth that actively prevent and counter violent extremism on all levels. This guide note was developed as a result of a project funded by IDRC Governance and Justice Department, entitled Youth Inclusive Mechanisms in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in the IGAD Region. OSSREA was among the 11 successful grantees by IDRC-The Department of Governance and Social Justice. OSSREA formed a consortium of three institutions; OSSREA, PeaceNet Kenya and IGAD-CEWARN and funded by IDRC. The main research question was: to what extent were mechanisms for preventing and countering violent extremism in the IGAD region youth inclusive? To answer this question, four objectives were developed focusing on the drivers of violent extremism, policy interventions in place to mitigate violent extremism, state and non-state actors' interventions, what has worked, what has not worked and why. This study took a multi-stakeholder engagement approach centering on the Community –Based Participatory Research Approach (CBPRA). The action research project took a participatory approach to youth engagement and has two phases. Throughout the first phase participants focused on developing a data-driven, evidence-based, human rights compliant and youth-informed programme. It established formal mechanisms and an engagement platform for meaningful participation. The second phase emphasized implementation of the project to prevent violent extremism in partnership with youth, including youth-led civil society organizations, policy makers, civil society organizations, media and private sector stakeholders.

The IGAD Region has faced several attacks from violent extremist groups (VEGs). These attacks cut across religions, race, politics and other social or economic demographics. Young people have been, and continue to be both the perpetrators and the victims of violent extremism. There are a lot of stereotypes about youth by the communities in which they live and this makes them to face social exclusion in the development agenda of their communities and governments. There is lack of trust between youth and their community members. There are also false assumptions that all youth are erratic and violent and that women and female youth are victims of violent extremism. All these fallacies make the governments exclude youth in matters that concern the youth including policy making and implementation. They cause social injustices to be meted against youth through injustice, intolerance, and inequity. This guidance note aims at a paradigm shift in which preventing and countering violent extremism will be youth-led. It encompasses meaningful youth engagement in which youth are beneficiaries, partners and leaders of PCVE programming.

The fourth pillar of the 2006 UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy emphasizes the preventive aspect. It focuses in particular on the contextual conditions leading to “violent extremism” that could be addressed through development programmes, promotion of human rights and the rule of law, and conflict prevention and resolution. Premised on this, this guidance note embraces a

human rights approach that will bequeath the peaceful future into the hands of the youth. Youth need to be empowered through meaningful engagement in PCVE policy making and programming. P/CVE aims to do this by means of “deradicalization”, by identifying and neutralizing actual or potential “violent extremists”, and by countering and preventing the spread of these ideologies, including by promoting alternative doctrines and concepts. All PCVE state and non-state actors who are stakeholders from governments, seasoned experts and policymakers, educators, parents, media and young people alike, should strive for social inclusion and sustainable peace. Compassion, critical thinking, and empathy are difficult competencies to develop. When youth embrace critical thinking, they challenge social injustice. When youth embrace empathy and compassion, they question intolerance. Communities should invoke “the Ubuntu spirit”-I am because we are.

The bottom –up, top-down approach that is rooted in community-based participatory Appraisal Research Approach that we employed in our action research is yet to take root. Also localizing P/CVE is at a nascent stage. This project by OSSREA on Youth-Inclusive Mechanisms in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in the IGAD Region is a good practice that should be scaled up by the national governments. It is a comparative research study that is context-specific, gender-responsive, multi layered and multi-stakeholder. Our grassroots approach while considering individual household community and national dimensions to PCVE and remaining cognisant of the global and regional perspectives of PCVE is admirable and should be scale up. Local communities, individuals, leaders, households have understood VE at their level in different contexts and the relationship it has with the globe and region. They can relate their experiences compared with others in their own counties and across countries or regions. The participatory multi-stakeholder engagement from the beginning to the end of the project has changed mind-sets of different categories of people towards working together, research and co-production of knowledge for policy makers decision-making. The project stakeholders understood their roles from the beginning of the project.

This project has created solidified partnerships that are sustainable because the community and government have embraced it. Each community and local government has champions who are dedicated to ensure that youth in communities move from vulnerability to building resilience for PCVE. This is a brighter future for our youth and the communities in which they live. In this LEA therefore, we hope to give the knowledge and skills for advocating for that positive change that you truly desire. You as the youth of this continent and country who are peace ambassadors and want to have impact with your work, this LEA is what you need. We hope to equip you with knowledge and skills on how to inspire, fellow youth to PCVE. You will not only be change agents but the change itself.

*“We are the Voice-Give us a chance. Allow us to collaborate and lead that which affects us”*  
*Youth in Kenya and Uganda*

## Introduction

In Africa today, youth form 75% of the population and this will be the case for the next few decades to come.<sup>1</sup> The youth and children's population is 580 million which is 47% of the continent's population. By 2055, this population will reach 1 billion.<sup>2</sup> Providing youth with a voice and space to express their views through participatory engagement is critical. Inequalities that marginalize youth and exclude them in matters that concern them is a denial of human rights. Youth therefore need to be recognised and empowered. They need to feel that they belong, are trusted, they can, their views are valid and important, they are understood, they are not lesser mortals, their time is now etc. They need reassurance and correction with love. They desire to be guided as they chart their paths.

Investment in young people today is not a choice but a must. Child-Youth policies need to be put in place by national governments to achieve the SDGs and leave no-one behind.<sup>3</sup> This can only happen if, we use an integrated approach to face the challenges that bedevil Africa and the globe today. Our project is hinged on SDGs 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), 1 (Eradication of Poverty), 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). It is also focused on the UN strategy 2016 for Peace and Security – Human rights approach to peace and security that has seen a number of declarations by the UN security council such as;

- **United Nations Security Council Resolution 1624 (2005)** which was concerned with preventing the incitement of terrorist acts through both its prevention and criminalization under national law (para. 1), as well as through effective international cooperation on all aspects of counter-terrorism, especially the denial of safe havens to terrorists engaged in such incitement (paras. 1 and 2). In addition, the Security Council was concerned with strengthening international efforts to address rising levels of intolerance - which, together with extremism, are underlying motivators of the incitement of terrorist acts - through such efforts as increased dialogue and understanding among civilizations (Para. 3).
- **Resolution 1624 (2005):VE Action Plan** in 2016, the resolution stressed the importance of developing counter-narratives to violent extremism, especially in relation to non-violent means of conflict prevention and resolution. (Para. 19). As such, this resolution builds on and further develops key themes and issues identified in Resolution 1624 (2005).

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<sup>1</sup> UN (2018). World Youth Report. New York. ISBN: 978-92-1-130349-0.

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2018/12/WorldYouthReport-2030Agenda.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2017). Generation 2030 Africa 2.0. Prioritizing investments in children to reap the demographic dividend. October 2017 ISBN: 978-92-806-4918-5

[www.unicef.org/publications/index\\_101219.html](http://www.unicef.org/publications/index_101219.html)

<sup>3</sup> UN (2018). World Youth Report. New York. ISBN: 978-92-1-130349-0.

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2018/12/WorldYouthReport-2030Agenda.pdf>

- The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism ([A/RES/70/291](#))
- In its [resolution 2178 \(2014\)](#), on stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), the Council underscores that CVE is an “essential element” in addressing the threat to international peace and security posed by FTFs. The Council encourages Member States to engage with relevant local communities and non-governmental actors in developing strategies to counter the violent extremist narrative that can incite terrorist acts. States are also called upon to address the conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism, including by empowering youth, families, women, religious, cultural and education leaders, and all other concerned groups of civil society, and promoting social inclusion and cohesion.
- [UN Security Council Resolution 2242 \(2015\)](#), which calls for the greater integration by States of their agendas on women, peace and security, including on counter-terrorism. ensure adequate representation of women in the security sector, around the table when policy and programming is being defined, as well as in operational law enforcement roles. It is also necessary, however, to ensure that both men and women in law enforcement are aware of the different experiences and challenges VERLT presents to women and men, as well as girls and boys. This includes how different people are targeted for recruitment, how they work to prevent VERLT, and how they may differently experience victimization by violent extremist groups. It also includes a deeper knowledge of the gender stereotypes exploited by violent extremists, and why it is important that communities and law enforcement work together to debunk such stereotypes. This can promote positive role models and narratives that serve to strengthen tolerance and prevent VE.
- [United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security \(2015\)](#) identifies clear links between youth, education, peace and security and underscores the role of education in violence prevention and peace building.
- [United Nations Security Council resolution 72/246](#). The importance of increased interfaith and intercultural tolerance and understanding, are also reflected within the content of other resolutions such as the General Assembly's annual resolutions on measures to eliminate international terrorism (most recently, resolution 72/123), as well as resolutions on themes such as the effects of terrorism on the enjoyment of human rights (e.g., resolution 72/246).
  - *Women, peace and security resolutions*
- [Resolution 1325 \(2000\)](#) [[S/RES/1325 \(2000\)](#)] – Affirms the importance of the participation of women and the inclusion of gender perspectives in peace negotiations, humanitarian planning, peacekeeping operations, and post-conflict peace building and governance.
- [Resolution 1820 \(2008\)](#) [[S/RES/1820\(2008\)](#)] – Recognizes sexual violence as a tactic of war and a matter of international peace and security that necessitates a security response.
- [Resolution 1888 \(2009\)](#) [[S/RES/1888\(2009\)](#)] – Strengthens efforts to end sexual violence in conflict by establishing a Special Representative of the Secretary-General and team of experts on rule of law and sexual violence in conflict.



- [Resolution 1889 \(2009\) \[S/RES/1889\(2009\)\]](#) – Establishes indicators for the monitoring of resolution 1325 and requests the Secretary-General to submit a report on women’s participation and inclusion in peacebuilding.
- [Resolution 1960 \(2010\) \[S/RES/1960\(2010\)\]](#) – Establishes a monitoring and reporting mechanism on sexual violence in conflict.
- [Resolution 2106 \(2013\) \[S/RES/2106\(2013\)\]](#) – Stresses accountability for perpetrators of sexual violence in conflict, as well as women’s political and economic empowerment.
- [Resolution 2122 \(2013\) \[S/RES/2122\(2013\)\]](#) – Positions gender equality and women’s empowerment as critical to international peace and security, recognizes the differential impact of all violations in conflict on women and girls, and calls for consistent application of WPS across the Security Council’s work.
- [Resolution 2242 \(2015\) \[S/RES/2242\(2015\)\]](#) – Establishes the Informal Experts Group (IEG); addresses persistent obstacles in implementing the WPS agenda, including financing and institutional reforms; focuses on greater integration of the agendas on WPS and counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism; and calls for improved Security Council working methods on women, peace, and security.
- [Resolution 2467 \(2019\) \[S/RES/2467\(2019\)\]](#) – Positions conflict-related sexual violence as firmly rooted in the broader women, peace and security agenda; stresses justice and accountability efforts; calls for support and protection to women’s civil society organizations; and calls for attention to the issues of children born of rape.

Building upon commitment to the women, peace and security agenda, the Security Council has further considered women, peace and security as a cross-cutting issue in its work and adopted thematic and country-specific resolutions relevant to the agenda.

African Agenda 2030 underscores the importance of peace and security and women and youth being empowered in a participatory manner. National governments have followed suit, and developed National Action Plans for youth. These include youth strategies, policies and programmes. They have also developed national counter terrorism centres, strategies for county governments, youth assemblies, inter-denominational, dialogue platforms, peace, education current.

## The Rationale

“Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism” (P/CVE) is a global State-led approach that is part of a broader counter-terrorism agenda. This “whole-of-society” approach aims, through a wide range of mostly non-coercive activities, to address the root causes that may ultimately result in “violent extremism” and acts of “terrorism.” This LEA is youth-led with the aim of youth being given the space and voice to express themselves and cause the change or be change agents. We expect youth to speak out and share their views, opinions and experiences about preventing and countering violent extremism. Respect for one another’s opinions must be observed. Everyone has

a right not to share or share their views. The facilitators will stimulate conversations with youth and engage them to participate in matters that concern them. It is” Nothing about the youth without the youth”. It is all about their voices being heard”

Facilitators will employ different methods to hold these conversations. This LEA should be highly interactive and participatory. This will be done through,

- On-line and offline mechanisms
- Off-line – story telling,
- Radio call- in shows
- TV programmes
- Road side shows
- Skits/drama
- Communicating messages through bill boards
- Comics and Cartoons
- Writing articles in Newspapers
- Online – Blogging

#### **Box 1:Exercise**

- Talk about lived experiences with a passion for change eg. Peace ambassadors Boresha-base, sports IGAs like Shikirina Self-Help Group, Old Town -Mombasa
- Plan your activities on how to engage youth and members on the communities in which they live with the aim of building resilience to radicalization and VE.
- Promote trust, social cohesion, equality, human dignity, tolerance cultural, diversity, mutual respect, interconnectedness, belonging and loyalty, respect, interconnectedness, belonging and loyalty, respect, interconnectedness, belonging and loyalty.

## **Definitions of Key Terms**

- i. **Youth participation** – Refers to how young people can be involved in processes, institutions and decisions that affect their lives. They should participate in all social, political and economic lives.
- ii. **Active youth participation** – refers to engagement or readiness to engage eg. creation of awareness participation in research with a goal of changing the behaviour of others.
- iii. **Passive youth participation** - Allowing whether happens to happen without controlling the situation. eg. Listening to someone at an event with an intension of getting on evolved in the issue to change the lives of others. See [www.voicesofyouth.org/youthadv.org](http://www.voicesofyouth.org/youthadv.org)
- iv. **Advocacy** – Doing something to support, recommend or implement actions linked to an idea or cause that you care about. It is about making voices to be heard to defend the



vulnerable in the society. It is the use of the collective voice to defend and protect rights or to support different initiatives or causes. Advocacy often brings changes, in policies, programmes, actions behaviours institutions and investments. When advocating for an issue you hold those in charge accountable to ensure that your rights are protected and upheld. It is not asking for favours but your rights.

Advocacy can be both on large scale and small-scale. It can be a movement and also collective bargaining for change. It can be doing research and sharing findings with the large audience to promote change. eg. OSSREA and partners research is advocating for an all-government and all-community approach to PCVE on one hand and use of soft power approach to build resilience to the crisis that communities are faced with. OSSREA is doing its advocacy in various ways eg. Sharing the information on various social media platforms, our website, newsletters, brochures, journal articles, blogs, research reports and face to face dialogue with different stakeholders. We have developed an evidence based training manual on youth-led interventions in PCVE sharing experiences we got in the field etc.

Advocacy can also be about mass action – charging laws and organizing demonstrations or values to support a cause. Civil society organizations use academic research or do own research to provide data and evidence for advocacy against ills in the society.

- v. **Policy** - set of principles, ideas or plans that guide decisions to achieve a certain outcome. They shape the way we do things. They determine how we behave and how we experience our everyday lives. They provide guidelines on how to make decisions, (See Kenyan research report – global, regional and national policies)<sup>4</sup>. In PCVE all national governments have domesticated international protocols and declarations into national action plans, strategies, programmes and policies. These are guiding the direction of PCVE. Youth peace ambassadors need to understand these policies so as to identify gaps in them that breed tolerance, lack do trust, lack of belongingness, lack of connectedness, marginalized exclusion, discriminations, inequality and breed communities that are not cohesive.

Youth peace ambassadors should strive to use this knowledge and data to bring change – change mind –sets, make others aware of their findings and seek audience with local leaders and policy makers to dialogue. Influence fellow youth to form a collective voice for advocating for upholding of the rule of law and human rights. As they do this, they need to use youth-led civic engagement, soft skills of leadership, negotiation, mediation, self-initiative, empathy, respect and communication.

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<sup>4</sup> Mukuna, T.E (2019). Youth-Inclusive Mechanisms in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in the IGAD Region: A Case Study of Kenya.

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334559931\\_Youth-Inclusive\\_Mechanisms\\_in\\_Preventing\\_and\\_Countering\\_Violent\\_Extremism\\_in\\_the\\_IGAD\\_RegionT](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334559931_Youth-Inclusive_Mechanisms_in_Preventing_and_Countering_Violent_Extremism_in_the_IGAD_RegionT)

## Drivers of Violent Extremism and how to reverse them

### Group work

- i. What conflicts exist in your households, communities and the country, region and globally that affect youth?
- ii. How do you solve them?
- iii. How do you feel after solving them?
- iv. How do you protect yourself from these conflicts?
- v. What drives youth into radicalization and violent extremism?
- vi. What opportunities and challenges exist in the community to prevent and counter violent extremism?
- vii. How can youth be game changers and solve this problem? –explain situations where we can have a win-win solution to resolving conflict.
- viii. What are the tale-tale signs of radicalization?
- ix. How can you help a friend who is radicalized to change his/her ways?

### **Box 2: Early signs of radicalization into violent extremism**

#### **Early signs of radicalization into violent extremism**

1. Sudden break with the family and long-standing friendships.
2. Sudden drop-out of school and conflicts with the school.
3. Change in behaviour relating to food, clothing, language, finances.
4. Changes in attitudes and behaviour towards others
5. Antisocial comments,
6. Rejection of authority,
7. Refusal to interact socially,
8. Signs of withdrawal and isolation.
9. Regular viewing of internet sites and participation in social media networks that condone radical or extremist views.
10. Reference to apocalyptic and conspiracy theories.

Source: <http://www.stop-djihadisme.gouv.fr/>

### **Box 3: Exercise**

Start with yourself – who are you? why are you interested in bringing the change? What methods will you use? How will you make a difference? What are your short term and long term goals? How much do you know about the particular issue? What areas need improvement? (Refer back to soft skills) consider leadership, teamwork, negotiation, collaboration, problem-solving, critical thinking, communication stress management etc.

## Youth Roles in Advocacy

In advocacy process four main roles are key – research, speaking, writing and implementing. Identify your niche.

- Researcher – Investigates, finds out why things are a certain way; how they came to be that way, and how they can change.
- Speaker – shares information inspires others to take action in different ways.
- Writer Good writing connects ideas, concepts, realities and helps to tell a story that people can connect to.
- Implementer: - Likes to get things done. Gets involved in action, actualizing ideas.

Youth ambassadors need to know that teamwork, action and interpersonal relationships are critical in advocacy. Everyone has their place. The questions we have asked above on self-identity with help them to know which roles they can carry out best. Some can have  $\frac{3}{4}$ ,  $\frac{2}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{4}$  and  $\frac{4}{4}$ . Valuing everyone as an equal partner of the team but with a special set of skills and abilities that play a role in the process matters a lot. Here soft skills of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century go hand in hand with the norms values and traditions of our communities. As the combination of the two bring about social harmony and social cohesion- a key pillar in advocacy and in building resilience to youth violent extremism and radicalization in communities.

Inculcating the social norms and the following soft skills will reduce youth radicalization and violent extremism:

- Effective communication
- Self esteem
- Self-awareness and identity
- Negotiation skills
- Decision making
- Interpersonal relationship
- Peaceful conflict resolution
- Critical/Creative thinking
- Problem solving and stress management
- Leadership
- Assertiveness
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Empathy
- Peer-pressure resistance

### Q 1.

*On the post cards given to you, choose any two of the soft skills and state how they can help you stay away from radicalization and violent extremism.*

- **Self-understanding and acceptance:** If a person understands and accept themselves, they are less likely to give in to peer pressure or to people who seem to offer them acceptance, a feeling of belonging and importance. This can reduce their vulnerability to Extreme violence and other forms of risk taking behaviour.
- **Assertiveness:** Ability to say ‘NO’, When someone is forcing you to do things you know are wrong, such as joining gangs or illegal groups. When saying ‘No’ we must respect our rights and those of other people. Listen and express confidently and assertively.
- **Decision Making, critical thinking and creative thinking** help us assess our exposure to risks. When a young person is able to weigh different options and evaluate related consequences creatively, get out of danger and seek help. This gives us the ability to identify different options to the challenge we face and make a healthy choice. Every choice has a consequence. It is important for us to evaluate consequences as well. We need to ask ourselves whether the choice is legal socially, acceptable, against one’s values, etc.

## The Advocacy Process

An advocacy process is iterative (back and forth). It includes fact-finding, planning, engaging with policy, building momentum and making individual lifestyle choices. You must gather knowledge before making a plan. The more you engage with policy, the more you may identify activities to include in your plan or issues to gather more connection on. As Youth Peace Ambassadors, in PCVE, be passionate about your communities, nation, region, Africa and the globe. Always remember that you are not only a change agent but the change itself.

### Research – Gathering data for evidence.

Radicalization and violent extremism have destabilized peace in our communities, households and at individual level. This destroys all gains of development. Insecure people cannot concentrate on development issues. In our study,<sup>5</sup> we found out that drivers of violent extremism are varied and keep changing. They are also inter-connected like a spider web and shift like an amoeba. We gathered evidence on this subject, the interventions that the government of Kenya and Uganda have put in place, policy environment in which the youth live, what has worked, what has not worked and why? We also found out that there are other emerging issues in PCVE like home-grown terrorism in Kenya, up-surge of women in radicalization and violent extremism, children involvement in VE, parental neglect as a major factor in radicalization and VE, women as active and equal perpetrators of VE, non- implementation or partial implementation of government

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<sup>5</sup> Mukuna, T.E (2019). Youth-Inclusive Mechanisms in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in the IGAD Region: A Case Study of Kenya.

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policies as a driver to VE, lack of understanding of the Islamic religion and ideology as a critical factor in VE. We also found out that youth unemployment and poverty are not the main drivers of VE without understanding the underlying factors. Basically radicalization and VE has no race, tribe, religion, gender, social status nor educational level. The only option is to use a multi-stakeholder, gender-responsive, multi-layered and context-specific all-government and all-community approaches to build resilience to VE.

As a youth peace advocate, you need to understand what the youth vulnerabilities to VE are and how you can change this in a multi-stakeholder participatory inclusive manner, to build youth resilience to radicalization in VE. To understand this, you need to gather evidences through research. Evidence/ data provides facts upon which you base your arguments. These facts defend you and make you credible and honoured. Only then will your voice be heard and you get followers who support what you are standing for. Be pragmatic in your approach, so that the problems you identify to solve are not only immediate but should consider the future for providing lasting solutions. Always seek to answer the question: am I passionate about de-radicalizing youth, rehabilitating and re-integrating ex-combatants? What opportunities and constraints exist for me? What decisions should I make today to satisfy the youth and their community's needs, 10, 15 and 30 years to come?

eg. The youth unemployment and poverty have for a long time been referred to as the main drivers of VE. Most communities still think so but some few youths involved in VE and radicalization are employed, well-educated and from well to do families. The governments of Kenya and Uganda have many policies, strategies and plans for youth empowerment to reduce radicalization. But this problem persists. They have even integrated peace education and life skills in the national school curriculum.<sup>6</sup> Since inequalities and joblessness persist making youth vulnerable to VE due to poverty, lasting solutions need to be thought of in a holistic manner.

Think of best ways out of this problem, eg. Curriculum change that will integrate 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills, be competency-based with technical and soft skills for digital jobs of today and tomorrow. Think about strengthening traditional value systems of different African cultures that promoted social harmony and social cohesion, mutual trust, tolerance, belongingness connectedness and inclusion. ***The “Ubuntu” – I am because we are” Being your brothers’ keeper, promoting equality, dignity and human rights for all through sharing.*** Renewing, the agents of socialization in our African communities thus the family, school, peers, religious institutions and media will work on both individual and the community resilience to PCVE. Individuals need to be socially competent to fit in the society. Understand the vulnerabilities of youth at the family, community

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<sup>6</sup> Mukuna, T.E (2019). Youth-Inclusive Mechanisms in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in the IGAD Region: A Case Study of Kenya.

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334559931\\_Youth-Inclusive\\_Mechanisms\\_in\\_Preventing\\_and\\_Countering\\_Violent\\_Extremism\\_in\\_the\\_IGAD\\_RegionT](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334559931_Youth-Inclusive_Mechanisms_in_Preventing_and_Countering_Violent_Extremism_in_the_IGAD_RegionT)

and regional level. Using community-based participatory appraisal research approach, get suggestions from the community on how to solve them.

So with radicalization and VE of youth, think about the game changer. So how do you gather information/research?

The aim is to gain a deeper understanding of PCVE at the local level so that you become part of the solution – the change and change agent. A few considerations must be made by answering these questions:

- i. What is the background information about this issue-context matters
- ii. How did we find ourselves where we are today as a community/nation? Use any of the methods mentioned above to demonstrate this.

**a) *The historic context***

The historic context provides the root cause of the problem e.g. the land question and marginalization. This emanates from colonialism in Kenya and in Uganda it is as a result of government policy- the Uganda government's development agenda. Interrogate the social impact of this issue. (Squatters, insurgent groups, poverty, IDPs, refugees etc). The historical perspectives help us understand how people feel at the individual, household, community level. This will help you to understand the feelings that people have developed over the years.

**b) *Social Context***

PCVE is context specific, gender-specific, multi-layered and multi-sectoral. The social networks are very key here. The support of the community at different levels is very important for peace advocacy to succeed. Building relationships is the foundation of your advocacy work. This will help you understand a culture of a community and emotions about the topic of study. The special and cultural dynamics and understanding of the issue guide your next steps. That is, why you need to do some literature review and talk to community members (elders) about your intention. The local and national authorities' must be consulted because PCVE is an emotive issue. Here local and national government officials, cultural leaders, teachers, school board members are key to be consulted. They possess information about what is going on and what has been done so far.

The social context will help you understand the inter-generational dynamics at the household and community level. This is key to a youth peace ambassador (YPA) to understand how decisions are made in the community.

**Box 4: Understanding Social Context**

- What is the level of inclusivity or exclusion of community, members especially the youth?
- Considering the gender dynamics, how are girls and women versus boys and men affected or involved? And in which way, positively or negatively?
- Is there good working relationships in the community or there is tension?
- How is culture a factor in this issue eg. religion, gender in terms of masculinities and feminism, traditional values and norms like alternative conflict resolution mechanisms?
- How has PCVE or related issues like gang violence, drug abuse, poverty, youth unemployment, parental neglect (any of the drivers) been dealt with in the past?

Youth said that they don't trust anyone other than themselves. Elders said the future is bleak because they can't see any youth capable of taking after them. Personal-safety and security must be considered. This is of utmost importance. However passionate you are to an issue it should not put your life on the line.

All YPA must understand the power dynamics as well as the cultural and political context of their countries. If taking a human rights approach according to the UN strategy of 2016, then find out whom to turn to for safety and protection.

In our research study, we identified the following strategies as effective in community engagement<sup>7</sup>:

- *Building trust between members of the community:* Community engagement requires building trust between officials and community members in order to establish a relationship of collaboration. Experience proves that such relationships cannot be built overnight and should be cultivated and maintained over time in order to have effect. It is critical to have at least the beginnings of such relationships in place before engaging the community on the issue of radicalization to violence and empowering them to become part of the solution. Furthermore, officials should approach communities with basic knowledge of their local dynamics and the issues they face in order to demonstrate to the community that they are not engaging the community solely because of potential security threats arising within the community.

<sup>7</sup> Mukuna, T.E (2019). Youth-Inclusive Mechanisms in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in the IGAD Region: A Case Study of Kenya.

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334559931\\_Youth-Inclusive\\_Mechanisms\\_in\\_Preventing\\_and\\_Countering\\_Violent\\_Extremism\\_in\\_the\\_IGAD\\_RegionT](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334559931_Youth-Inclusive_Mechanisms_in_Preventing_and_Countering_Violent_Extremism_in_the_IGAD_RegionT)



- *Sharing information:* In community-oriented policing, initiatives should focus on proactively engaging the local community to share information and better serve their needs – not just employing traditional law enforcement methods or gathering security-related information.
- *Honesty and transparency:* We found out that to build trust, practitioners and officials should be honest and transparent in their efforts to engage the community, respect the community's traditions and culture, listen to their grievances and make demonstrable efforts to address them, and ensure that they maintain integrity and professionalism in their conduct and interactions with the community. If possible, it is helpful to use officials who come from a similar culture and background to the community with which they are engaging; this can help facilitate trust.
- *Social inclusion:* Engagement efforts with the community should be broad-based and fully inclusive, not solely focused on one community or one specific ideology.
- *Holistic approach:* We found out that community engagement and community-oriented policing should involve all sectors of the society in order to find the right partners and sustain the engagement. It should be an all-government and all-society approach that incorporates community influencers who are not formal leaders.
- *Engagement of women in peace and security:* This study found out that women play a critical role in PCVE and gender should be mainstreamed in PCVE programming. They are positive change agents in their communities. We found out that women, especially mothers, carry authority within their families and communities which can translate into positive influence against violent extremism. These practitioners repeatedly observe that women are the gate-keepers to their communities and, as such, should be involved in creating and maintaining PCVE initiatives. They also incite men by ridiculing and teasing them, testing their masculinity. This pushes men and young boys into violent extremism.
- *Youth-led initiatives:* We found out that for interventions to be effectiveness, they should be youth-led. The youth should be meaningfully engaged by involving youth input and inventiveness. Youth hands-on engagement will help develop projects and messages that will resonate with their peers on the dangers of violent extremism.
- *Youth focal persons in the communities:* Dedicated community liaison officers can focus solely on developing programs that build trust with the community and ensuring that law enforcement officials are aware of any violent extremism reported in a community. This can also keep traditional intelligence-gathering and community relationship-building separate.
- *Use of media:* Community engagement and community-oriented policing initiatives can take many forms, including engagement through TV, radio, and the Internet (social media). Maximizing the ways in which one engages, targeting the message, and diversifying the content ensures that the message gets out to a broader audience. Furthermore, given that violent extremists use all these tools and more to recruit individuals, PCVE initiatives should also use the same tools in order to send positive messaging.

- *Engage both former violent extremists and victims of terrorism to communicate counter narratives at both the local and national level.* We found out that using formerly radicalized violent extremists can add legitimacy to the narrative that violence is not the answer.
- *Tailor-made capacity building for stakeholders:* Based on the findings of our baseline research, we developed a tailor-made curriculum and manual ([www.ossrea.net](http://www.ossrea.net)) to address the issues and dynamics that we had found out from local communities in which the youth live. These courses created awareness of potential indicators and behaviors of radicalized youth, drivers of violent extremism, the interventions in place for PCVE, the global, regional and national policy environment for PCVE, what has worked, what has not worked and why. To maintain the trust and respect integral to community engagement and community-oriented policing, practitioners were trained properly on the parameters of engagement and how it relates to the local contexts where they are engaging.
- Evaluate effectiveness of your interventions—develop qualitative and quantitative indicators to measure how effective the interventions introduced by you and others are performing.
- *Building partnerships for PCVE:* To bring change as a youth peace ambassador, building relationships forming partnerships, and working with other like-minded people is extremely important. This partnership should be all-government and all-community including the police, community, policy makers, media private practitioners. YPA should link themselves with youth-friendly platforms, who share a similar ideology of championing the youth cause and empowerment youth as beneficiaries, partners and leaders in PCVE.
- *Knowledge sharing dialogue workshops:* Learn to hold inter-generational dialogue with elders in the community and local leaders who will endorse you to higher level officials. Being part of inter-generational dialogues exposes you to experiences and ideas about how to grow the community and have social cohesion. Respect and kindness is a virtue that all YPAs must possess. But above all the soft skills to help them “dine with the kings.-If the youth want to dine with Kings, they must learn the art of washing their hands well. ”

*c). Political Context*

In doing research on Youth-inclusive Mechanisms in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in the IGAD region in Kenya and Uganda, the political context in which the youth live was very critical. It guided the process and structure of this project. The multi-stakeholder engagement saw CEWARN-IGAD playing a pivotal role in linking academia and civil societies to policy makers – in co-creation and co-production of knowledge.

YPAs need to identify and understand the policies that are in place to leverage radicalization and violent extremism. They must understand the government political structure.

In this project, we explained how we engaged policy makers from the project design, planning, implementation and evaluation. We did this by first engaging IGAD-CEWARN which linked us to the Ministers of Interior and Security in Kenya and Uganda and particularly to the senior CEWERUs who are key in early warning in peace. They work closely with other policy makers

in the NCTC IPOA, ATPU, KDF NCTC, Nyumba Kumi Initiative although country commissioners, chiefs and sub-chiefs, peace committees (Kenya). In Uganda CEWARN is linked to Regional Police Commander (RPC), District Police Commissioner (DPC), LCC and Cultural Leaders. Our bottom-up, top-down approach continued to reward us because we localized and demystified PCVE and made it easy to understand. We worked both at the grassroots, county/district and national government level as well as regional level (IGAD and African Union). We engaged these government officials in the project inception meetings where we explained the project objectives, methodology, theory of change framework and budget. We also engaged them in data collection and validation, dissemination dialogue workshop. This was done in the local research areas in both Kenya and Uganda thus Nairobi, Mombasa and Garissa (Kenya) and Mayuge, Kampala and Gulu. These knowledge sharing workshops provided a platform that brought together policy makers, CSO, Youth Organizations, Community Leaders, Cultural Leaders Community members, Academia Security actors and Media. We got letters of introduction from the Ministry of Interior/internal Security the county commissioners who later introduced us to the local chiefs and LCs.

YPAs should know how youth voices are represented and spaces available for them to be heard. It is important for YPAs to understand the policies, strategies and programmes on PCVE including the regional and international perspectives. In as much as we found out that both Kenya and Uganda have good policies strategies and programmes for PCVE, the major drawback is weak implementation mostly marked with corruption.

### Methodology

Data gathering can either be by desktop review or field work. In desktop review, you gather data from published work, research online, go to the library and read newspapers and books reports etc. This helps you to broaden your perspective on an issue. As you do this, save the documents for future reference. Take notes. If doing online research, take note of the websites, reputable news agencies and good academic journals. Note that the strength of your research outcome is based on the strength of your background information. Use reliable, unbiased evidence. Use up to date information.

Field work is a personal engagement. It involves talking to various stakeholders. It should be well structured to gather various opinions and perspectives on PCVE. Since radicalization Violent Extremism and terrorism are a global challenge and right in our own midst, field work research helps you understand how people are affected by it and what they feel about VE. Before engaging into fieldwork, conduct a stakeholder analysis to identify relevant stakeholders and their level of influence in the community and in relation to this project, persons or institutions of interest in PCVE.

**Box 5: Exercise**

Draw a mind map on how to engage them and their connection to PCVE. These stakeholders include various government officials' academics, NGOs, CBOs and NGOs working on PCVE, religious groups, private sector, peers and colleagues, partners, guardians and family members.

Ref: Engaging with different community groups [www.voiceofyouth.org](http://www.voiceofyouth.org)

**d) Fact-Finding**

Before going to the field at the research planning stage, develop a research tool to guide you in collecting relevant data according to your objectives. Several tools can be used at this stage depending on the research, methodology. A mixed methods research is best suited because it allows qualitative and quantitative data to be collected and triangulated.

Decide which tool for which stakeholder. In our research, we had a questionnaire for youth, a key informant-interview guide for policy makers, security actors, community leaders, religious leaders and academia. We also had a focus group discussion guide for conducting FDGs. All these aimed at finding out the drivers of VE/radicalization among male and female youth, the policy environment in which they live, the global, regional and national policies and interventions in place to give youth a voice and space in their communities, what has made what has not worked and why. Basically, we sought to know how the different PCVE stakeholders are affected by youth radicalization and violent extremism; how they are involved; their experiences; and their suggestions on what should be done.

As we did this, we were keen to check if what we found out during our desktop review resonated with what the various stakeholders were telling us. Thus helped us find out emerging trends in PCVE do comparisons across countries and within the same country but different contexts, comparison about male and female youth in different perspectives of PCVE misconceptions what is happening why is what people think about PCVE in Kenya and Uganda.

**Collecting the information**

To put all the research data that you have collected together, go back to your objectives, categorize your findings according to your research problem, context/background, possible solutions, possible partners to work with and how you will make this possible.

(It should not be an academic exercise).

**Develop an advocacy plan**

- Develop a plan for your advocacy using a clearly defined pathway.
- Identify influencers in the community who make decisions. These will help you be successful. They will tell you whom to engage with and best ways of doing it.

- Think through on ways of influencing the decision-making process.
- Find out who influences the decision makers eg. Media and CSOs.
- Identify peers who are like-minded and are committed to PCVE so that you have unity of purpose and a collective voice on PCVE.
- Ensure you embrace leadership, teamwork, negotiation, communication skills, problem-solving and critical thinking skills to give you a holistic approach that is inclusive for maximum results. In this manner, even those who are opposed to your views will contribute their reasons why they have a contrary opinion. This will also ensure that all sensitivities are taken care of. Note that things become clearer as you progress. Take note of group dynamics too. Do not have a fixed plan of action. It is advisable to be flexible to accommodate diversity of views.

#### Develop an activity plan

Objective	Inputs Activity	Expected Outcome	Indicators (Man of progress)	Impact

Include how to evaluate if activities in PCVE are youth-led (The evaluation-makers of progress). These markers of progress are set targets for what you are trying to achieve and they determine whether you are on track. It is what monitoring and evaluation does. It checks immediately what you want to achieve by your advocacy campaign. In our case, we are looking for ways and means of making PCVE to be youth-led using a two-pronged approach thus all-government and all-community approach. The aim is to make PCVE youth inclusive. If PCVE can be integrated into the school curriculum, have more youth being granted amnesty and getting re-integrated, into the community, have improved police-community relations, have less extra-judicial cases reported, less conflicts, reduced numbers of gangs, revised youth population involved in drugs, reduced number of girls in VE increased dialogue by policy makers on PCVE.

#### Monitoring and Evaluating Progress made

As a YPA, you must include an M & E plan in your advocacy plan. This must be done at the design stage to ensure that you achieve your advocacy goals. It is a tool that makes you constantly monitor and track progress towards achieving your desired outcomes.

This inspires confidence in the working or not working of your advocacy. To do this you regularly gather information to determine the impact that your advocacy is having and to see if you need to do things differently. Acknowledging faults and being honest to change ways of doing things help a lot. The YPA needs to experience reflect and think about lessons learnt, how people are responding to your message initiative what feelings and emotions are arising from your mark, what you are learning from the community.

Monitoring aim is to create effectiveness of advocacy. It leads to learning, grow and improvement and eventually successful advocacy.

### Policy Engagement

From the beginning of this training, we put research uptake as a priority because it is action research where all stakeholders are valued and are not mere respondents but beneficiaries' partners and leaders. In analysis of the political context in which the youth live, policy makers were a critical factor. Research for its own sake without engaging policy makers is not helpful. Research informs policy and practice. In this project the multi-stake holder approach in which policy makers were, engaged aimed at analysing the policy environment in which youth live, then identifying opportunities and constraints that stifle/choke or amplify their voice in PCVE.

Youth-focused policies are imperative to realizing a sustainable future. Youth peace ambassadors need to get equipped with skills that will help them interrogate policies and engage policy makers.

We found out that youth in both Kenya and Uganda are not consulted on matters than concern them. They are therefore not engaged in the policy decision making process. Most policies are top-down. As YPAs, you must be well versed with PCVE related policies before embarking on advocacy for implementation of the same policies. In Kenya, the constitution of 2010 allows for every citizen public participation in matters that concern them. Vision 2030 and the Jubilee manifesto support youth engagement in all matters affecting them. While this is the case, youth engagement with policy makers is still at and nascent stage. In most cases, the inter-generational gap is a main hindrance to effective youth and policy engagement. This is due to the negative attitude that both the youth and older generation have towards each other. Strive to advocate for mind-set change between the two for social harmony and cohesion.

- Effective policy engagement means in depth research into what specific policy your advocacy campaign is addressing.
- You need to know your target audience – ministry responsible.
- Share the policy section with team members, schools, communities' local government district and country officers.
- Identify gaps in the policy documents for example those that do not mention youth as a special group in the community marginalised, male and female etc.

The second stage of policy engagement is attending conferences and meetings with decision makers. For YPA its not enough to attend but to actively participate so as to amplify the voice of youth who are not present and articulate their issues at the decision-making table. This is a great platform for a YPA to prove him/herself. You should create a position paper to present. (see youth advocacy guidebook)

- Use the policy documents that you researched to argue, your point. If no policy exists in that area, advocate for one to fill that gap.



- Speak about strengths and weaknesses of a particular policy (choose any of the policies and outline strengths and weakness)
- Inspire fellow youth into action dialogue to champion their cause.
- Offer recommendations on what should be done.
- YPA should attend conferences for developing networks with other young people organizations and sectors. It also opens one's mind to new ideas.

### Communicating the Knowledge

YPA need to continuously endeavour to build momentum continuously to draw people together to support your cause. Communication is very critical at this point. You need to communicate and create awareness about PCVE issues so as to build resilience communities. Here, the YPA needs to retrieve the information you gathered during the fact-finding and turn it into knowledge that people can easily understand. Thus translate research into knowledge and knowledge products as evidence for policy making. This can be off-line in knowledge sharing workshops or online face books twitter, journal articles research reports e-books policy briefs fact sheets, instagram active videos and commentaries, animated video etc.

- Know your target audience in PCVE, all community members are key.
  - Plan with you want them to get the information and engaged!
- Use appropriate language eg. Policy makers need policy briefs, short videos, songs and infographics.
- Spend time developing your story so that it appeals to the masses and is meaningful. Ensure you raise emotive issues that speak to their concerns.
- Ensure that you package, your message to be informative, kind, respectful, sensitive to cultural generation diversity. Don't be abrasive, aggressive and proactive.
- Tell other stories in your experience related to this eg. The story of the humming bird and the burning forest; the analogy of a mouth and the community. Uganda Acholi women protest .
- Organize events to share information, networking and developing ideas to support the advocacy process. To do this, consider the following.
  - Purpose/objective of the event what you hope to achieve.
  - Audience, size and activities
  - Organization consider time virtue information, materials and activities.
  - Media and social media engagement for public awareness as part of the advocacy process. These range from print media, radio TV, Social gatherings, notice board, internet social media, newsletters publications blogs, cartoons.
  - Host the event.

### Use of social Media

- It is a powerful advocacy tool for awareness creation and communication of ideas (Refer to communication module in the manual)



- Create a social media campaign to encourage the broad support for youth inclusiveness in PCVE. Get a hash tag and launch a social media campaign platform through the following steps.
  - Create an account on a social media platform on Face book Twitter, YouTube, Instagram etc.
  - Create a face book page or whatsapp group and invite people to join.
  - Identify and create useful hash tags to help identify your issue and track discussions. Make the hash tags catching to gain attention faster. eg. Bring back our Girls Campaign Youth-led PCVE.
  - IV) Produce and share content in terms of journals, memory photos, video, music. What you share should strictly speak do your issue be unique and creative.
  - V) Host live chats – This is an easy way to bring people together eg. Webinar, FB chats.
  - Vi) Organize social media thunderclap
  - VII) Collaborate with social media influencers i.e individuals who have a large following and powerful impact on social media eg. Boniface Mwangi, or Churchill, Erick Omondi, Prof. Hamo,Bobi Wine
  - VIII). Identify the best times to post on social media eg. To engage school children post before and after school, for adults at night. While for policy makers during the night.
  - IX) Respond and communicate to create space for dialogue
  - X) Use strong passwords to protect yourself on social media to evoke hacking of accounts.

### Making Follow-up

Throughout your advocacy you will meet a wide-range of people. Establish a relation with them for future engagements.

This guidance note developed by as part of the “Youth-Inclusive Mechanisms for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in the IGAD Region Project Implemented in Kenya and Uganda.

More info available at

[http://ossrea.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=438&Itemid=765](http://ossrea.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=438&Itemid=765)

