Youth-inclusive Mechanisms for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in the IGAD Region: Research Design and Methodology

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Background to the Study

- There are about 1.8 billion people in the world today between the ages of 10 and 24, making up just under one quarter of the world's population.

- Over two-thirds of Africa's population is under the age of 35, making Africa the most youthful continent.

- Globally, the last two decades have seen an increased focus on the role of youth in situations of social and armed conflict and violence linked to other developmental issues, such as poverty, unemployment, and biological, social and political reasons.

- African Youth Charter outlines young citizens' rights and responsibilities, affirming that "(the) youth are partners, assets and a prerequisite for sustainable development and for the peace and prosperity of Africa" (African Union, 2006, p. 2). Article 11 of the Charter gives every young citizen "the right to participate in all spheres of society.

- However, very little is known about the youth today. They are often either essentialised as a source of violence and insecurity with little predictors of the violence.

Background…

- The UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy of 2006 calls for a holistic and inclusive approach to counterterrorism.

- The Strategy has tasked member states to reflect on the human perspective in their policies, to place emphasis on targeting disaffected and marginalized groups and areas which are potential breeding grounds for terrorism.

- It identifies the major motivation for terrorist violence to be the struggle for power and justice.

- Special attention is put on youth as members of the community who feel excluded from all decision making processes concerning them.

- The lack of or limited form of inclusive participation and effective collaboration of youth and other stakeholders in their communities implies social injustice against the youth.

Statement of the Problem

- IGAD is making significant strides toward the development of a coherent approach to preventing and countering violent extremism capacity building in the region in response to recommendations of the UN Strategy for Counter-terrorism. However, there remain significant challenges to effective cooperative action.

- Violent extremism and radicalization are complex multifaceted phenomenon that need an integrated approach in its programming. Most counterterrorism efforts have focused on short-term security and law enforcement measures (the hard approaches).

- While young men make up the majority of combatants and perpetrators of violence in most contexts, the majority do not perpetrate violence.

- There is a dearth of information – ideally gender-disaggregated – about the daily lives of young people, in relation to their decisions on involvement or non-involvement in violence and terrorism.

- There is no data on youth experiences, including the positive contributions to victims of violence and terrorism, dealing with trauma and loss, or building resilience against violence and terrorism.

- A more holistic approach to preventing and countering violent extremism that combines methodological plurality with conceptual flexibility, and incorporates micro-level analysis with national and international level assessment of the problem is still at a nascent stage.

- Micro-level studies to uncover the incentives and disincentives for violence at individual and household level for male and female youth are scarce.

- Comparative studies on youth and violence in Africa are limited, particularly those examining similar types of violence (e.g. violent extremism or communal violence) in multiple contexts

- Data on processes of recruitment or leaving the violent groups are not well documented.

- It is not clear how the youths' voices are engaged in P/CVE programming or how inclusive efforts made are.

Statement of the Problem cont…

- The majority of studies tend to over-generalise issues to do with youth, often failing to disaggregate youth by gender and other social sifters. In fact, much evidence speaks to male youth in relation to violence and radicalization in Africa while very few studies capture the gender dimensions of youth and violence, as well as the experiences of female youth in Africa. The drivers of radicalization and violent extremism have also been over-generalized.

- There is a tendency for a 'problem-solving' approach that solely looks at what is wrong and where things went wrong, rather than exploring what works in preventing and addressing youth and violence. Good practices among the youth in prevention of violent extremism and de-radicalization are under-researched.

- Job and employment creation schemes have dominated policy and programmatic responses to youth and violence extremism in Africa. However, the theoretical and empirical case for using youth employment programmes as the exclusive tool for reducing violent have been under researched. In other words, the extent to which these programmes have succeeded in preventing and countering violent extremism has not been well documented.

- Understanding the extent to which policy initiatives and interventions address issues of youth marginalisation and exclusion (with particular focus on structural barriers), and the extent to which progress has been made, or not, in Kenya and Uganda is at a nascent stage.

Purpose of the Study

- This study collates gender-disaggregated data on the contextual analysis of the theories and structural factors underpinning youth exclusion, the injustices they face, and their likely consequent engagement in violence, extremism and radicalization.

- We investigate to what extend mechanisms for preventing and countering violent extremism in the IGAD region are youth inclusive.

- The researchers strive to increase the shared understanding of the context, and to inform evidence-based policy making on P/CVE programming in the IGAD region for violence free nations.

Specific Objectives

i. To identify and analyze the factors that predispose the youth – male and female – to engage in VE in Kenya and Uganda;

ii. To identify avenues and establish strategies by state and non-state actors for creating as well as deepening interventions to engage youth in P/CVE interventions in Kenya and Uganda;

iii. To identify policies and practices related to P/CVE that create space for male and female youth to participate;

iv. To find out and document what has worked, what has not worked and why on preventing and countering violent extremism in the IGAD region.

Roles and Responsibilities of Partner Institutions

- **OSSREA-**Organization for Social Science Research for Eastern and Southern Africa. project manager and lead organization, facilitate the merger of analyses from academia, policy makers and civil society. It takes the lead in documenting the whole process and in supporting the development of various training curricula, training manual, synthesis reports, and policy documents and briefs on holistic for CVE programming in the IGAD region; ensuring that gender is mainstreamed in the project; and disseminating knowledge collated. OSSREA is providing project related financial and technical support to partners for the operationalization of the initiative.

- **CEWARN-IGAD's-**the interlocutor between the UN system and bilateral donors, all state authorities with a CVE interest, including the law enforcement and justice sectors, social services, education, and the sub-regional focal points on implementation of the UN Strategy on CVE. They identify policy makers who are respondents in this study,ensure research uptake at the policy level by ensuring that the policy inputs that will come out of the project get ownership of the policy recommendations and facilitate the adoption, internalization and implementation.

- **PeaceNet-**CSO implementing partner and linking with partner CBOs and FBOs working on P/CVE. Tasked with spearheading data collection, identifying participants in the e-dialogue.

Risks and Ethical Considerations/Measures to Mitigate Risks

i. *Stigmatization of respondents: youth and community members* -All respondents participated on voluntary basis and were assured of anonymity and security without victimization and stigmatization. We sought their consent to be respondents in the study after explaining to them the objectives of the project.

ii. *Adverse effects of the research*: This is a highly emotionally charged research. Signed consent was sought from all respondents. The data collection tool was presented to the Research Ethics committee at the National Council of Science, Technology and Innovation in Kenya and the Uganda National Council of Science and Technology for approval. Each researcher and research assistants went through the intelligence and the research ethics training.

iii. *Keeping the research team together*: Academia, civil society organizations and policy makers each have their own style of conducting and generating research. Putting this diverse team together for co-production of knowledge is a challenge. This risk was mitigated by IDRC conducting a research methodology training to firm up proposals. OSSREA the lead organization also included senior members of these organizations in the field research so as to harness on their strengths.

Theoretical Foundations

- Based on two theories: The Social Control Theory by Hirsch (1969) who asserts that strong bonds to family, community and society are fundamental to violence prevention because they both provide a conduit for conveying social norms and expectations in addition to abiding by the norms.

- And the Conflict Transformation Theory by Lederach (1995:1997) who asserts that conflict transformation is a process of engaging with and transforming the relationships, interests, discourses and constitution of the society that supports the continuation of violent conflicts. Constructive conflict is seen as a vital agent or catalyst for change. People in conflicting parties in the society or region affected and outsiders with relevant human and material resources all have complementary roles to play in the long-term process of peacebuilding.
  - Approaches to solving communial conflicts should embrace support within the society in conflict rather than for the mediation of outsiders.
  - Conflicts are transformed gradually through a series of smaller or larger changes as well as specific steps which involve a variety of actors.

- Participatory Appraisal Research Approach -focuses on a process of sequential reflection and action, carried out with and by local people rather than on them.

- Its purpose is more to gain an understanding of the complexities of a topic rather than to gather highly accurate statistics on a list of variables.

- The PARA method enquires about the population's attitude, beliefs and behaviours and is applied most effectively in communities which share common knowledge, values and beliefs.

- PARA also raises people's self-awareness, suggests viable solutions, and helps people analyse complex issues and problems.

Research Methodology

The Mixed Methods Approach: An Epistemological Understanding

• The study adopted a mixed methods paradigm that is QUAL-quant thus an integrated research approach that is interdisciplinary because preventing and countering violent extremism calls for multi-stakeholder co-production of knowledge.

• The three research organizations thus OSSREA (academia), PeaceNet (CSOs) and CEWARN-IGAD (policy makers) form a transformative network for co-production of knowledge among different sections of the society for understanding and dialoguing P/ CVE using the youth experiences for multi- stakeholder engagement.

• The qualitative researcher, searches for patterns of inter-relationships between a previously unspecified set of thoughts while looking through a wide lens, while on the contrary, the quantitative researcher seems to look through a narrow lens at a specified set of variables.

• Qualitative techniques are usually applied where the research issue is less clear cut and the questions to the respondents are likely to result in complex and inconclusive answers.

• A multi method research allows for both in-depth inquiries into particular cases and examination of trends and characteristics over large populations.It is a linking of the qualitative and quantitative approaches in order to capitalize on the complementary strength of different methods of enquiry through triangulation of methods,theories and findings.

Study Area

- The IGAD region has multiple conflicts; and all its countries have been victims of terrorist acts due to their geographical location, persistence of conflicts, absence of effective state structures, and despair from the loss of hope and the growth of extremism.

- It is considered to be the most vulnerable region to terrorism of all regions in sub-Saharan Africa.

- It has fragile states and vulnerable youths, and is a host to the largest populations of refugees in Africa.

- Eritrea is providing support to religious extremist groups with links to al-Qaida, to further Asmara's military agenda.

- The IGAD region also has unsecured border territories (http://ctc.usma.edu/aq/aqll.asp).

- The high presence of the international community in the region offers international terrorists more "high value", Western-related targets.

- IGAD region is linked to other regional blocks in Africa so lessons learnt will have a regional impact.

- Kenya has been categorized in the UN strategy of counterterrorism as a moderate target for radicalization and violent extremism while Uganda is categorized as latent. The researchers are interested in ascertaining this and drawing comparisons between and within the two countries.
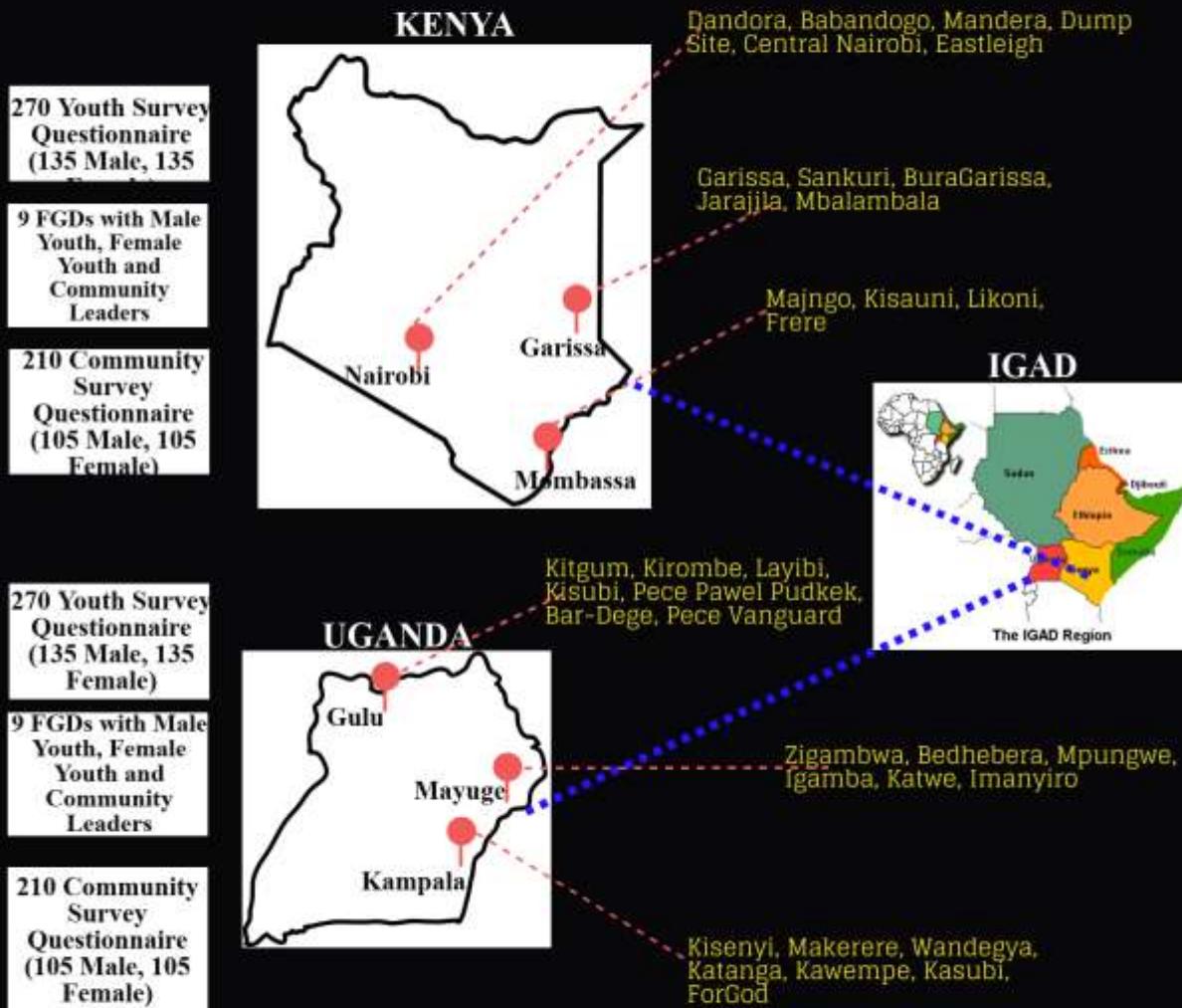
Target Population and Research Sample

- Target-Youth in and out of school, between ages 15 to 35

- This study employed multi-stage sampling technique. First the research team purposively sampled Kenya and Uganda as case studies.

- Research areas were selected guided by reviewed literature on terrorist attacks in Kenya and Uganda and with advice from ministries of internal security in Kenya and Uganda.

- We purposively sampled the categories of respondents thus youth, policy makers at local and national level, community members, security personnel.

Research Design

- The research design guides the linkages between these phases of research and the research objectives.

- This research is a cross-disciplinary study that compares youth inclusive mechanisms in preventing and countering violent extremism in the IGAD region but more specifically in Kenya and Uganda.

- Kenya has been rated by the UN Strategy of Countering Violent Extremism in the moderate category while Uganda has been rated as latent(low). A comparative view of the two countries is necessary.

- Three research sites marked as at risk populations/hotspots were identified.

- The cross-country and inter-country comparative studies will give us better insights in this research that is emphasizing on contexts using a mix of quantitative and qualitative methodologies, and combining micro and macro-level analysis.

- The research approach is to bring together a diverse set of stakeholders with context-specific insight to agree on common goals and outcomes regarding security. These new actors with a role in supporting the 'human security' paradigm should especially involve civil society and include minorities, multilateral international and regional organizations, NGOs and donor.

- The research aligns with the new Sustainable Development Goals 'Leave no one behind' mission and resonates with donor interests.

- The research also seeks to implement an effective multi-level and multi-sectoral approach for P/CVE in kenya at the individual, local,county,regional and international level.

- The planning of this research took close to 6-8 months. First, there was the writing of the concept note in response to the Call for proposals. OSSREA was among the 11 successful grantees by IDRC who have formed a cohort of researchers on youth issues.

- The Department of Governance and Social Justice-IDRC invited grantees to a training workshop whose aim was to strengthen their capacity in research methodology with focus on youth and social justice.

- The research team revised the proposal accordingly.

Inception and Planning Meetings

Meeting in Kenya

Signing of MoU with PeaceNet

INCEPTION CONT...

- First, all partner institutions had a planning meeting with OSSREA leading them to understand their roles and responsibilities, refine the research objectives, methodology, development of research instruments for the baseline and end-line survey and harmonize the research activities with the budget.

- This inception meeting attracted academia, policy makers, CSOs, media and youth.

- The research team made their presentations but also organized break-away sessions that were guided by questions developed by the research team.

- The research team presented the theory of change, the project cycle, the proposal, the research uptake plan, the work plan, the budget, logical framework, and monitoring and evaluation procedures.

- Since this project has adopted PAR and CBRA, the participants who are key stakeholders engaged in lively guided discussions which helped the research team to firm up the proposal.

Fieldwork Preparation

- Research methodology training for research team

- Refining of research tools, securitizing them and ensuring mainstreaming ethics and human rights

- Training of field researchers-simulation and piloting of tools

- Field work-The research team had all the 3 organizations present.

- Fieldwork took 21 days in Kenya and Uganda

Discussions with various Stakeholders in Mayuge-Uganda

Debrief at the end of the Day

Visit to Community Leaders at the Local Level

Key-Informant Interview with Youth Leaders at Kitgum

FGD With Makerere University Students

FGD with Female Retunees in N.Uganda

FGD Muslim Women in Gulu

Key Informant Interview with Mombasa County Commissioner

Football Event at Mayuge

Enumerators Training in Kampala

Key Informant Interview with Garissa University Vice Chancellor