



## KENYA NIWAJIBU WETU (NIWETU) PROGRAM

ACCESS INITIATIVE & DEVELOPMENT FOR AFRIKA

(AID-AFRIKA)

END OF GRANT REPORT

NOVEMBER 4, 2019

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

**CVE- COUNTER VIOLENT EXTREMISM**

**VE- VIOLENT EXTREMISM**

**PCVE- PREVENTION AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM**

**VEOs- VIOLENT EXTREMIST ORGANIZATIONS**

## **I. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS (Qualitative)**

### **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Over the period of the project, Aid-Afrika targeted **at risk** youth both male and female from five hotspot sub counties of Township, Dadaab, Fafi, Hulugho and Ijara, the larger Garissa County. The project has learnt a lot about transforming youth. Work with youth influencers has shown that if given the skills and opportunities that they are an active resource that can continue to mobilize and work themselves within their communities.

One of the critical issues in this is perceptions. Youth have been considered as the problem, and have been held down by perceptions of them from their leaders and communities. Breaking down barriers between youth and government, youth and elders; and changing the perceptions of each other is essential, so that they can develop understanding and relationships to be able to address risks together.

Across the project where space has been provided for youth to engage with one another, each has come away with a different view of the other and greater willingness to hear their views. Each youth influencer has developed actionable work plan to carry out initiatives within their communities these initiatives are

A number of issues that emerged from the beneficiary feedbacks conducted by Aid-Afrika and star FM on the effects of the radio messaging in countering violence extremism using youth voices through listeners call ins include;

- The listeners, youth and community members appreciated Aid-Afrika for giving them a platform to understand, learn and address their issues in relation to VE confidently and find ways to counter VE narratives using local voices. *“We would like the program to continue to nurture these youth influencers, to continue to build their skills and confidence and provide them with opportunities to network and engage”* were the remarks of AbdullahiMoge a caller from Masalani.
- The youths learned skills in which they would counter Narratives used by VEOs in recruiting the at risk youths to their ranks. *“I had learnt how to communicate more effectively with government and gained confidence in talking to government officials. I was impressed that in the two youth dialogue events I attended the government officials who were present accepted criticism and suggestions from the youth.”* Youth influencer who called from Dadaab.
- The youth agreed to have a follow up meeting to deliberate on how they are going to create a dedicated working group, tasked with works of countering extremism in their community.

**LISTENERS REQUESTED THE FOLLOWING KEY ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE MESSAGING:**

**AREAS WE WANT TO EXPAND IN OUR RADIO MESSAGING PROJECTS.**

- Producing contents encouraging youth to return, amnesty and on rehabilitating and reintegrating of these returnees. Taking returnees into account when designing counter narratives messages has become more and more pressing in recent years as hundreds of fighters have been relocating to their home communities. Foreign fighters are strongly exposed to violent extremist ideologies, with many having witnessed or actively participated in acts of violence. Some may be highly traumatized and in need of medical assistance.
- The listeners highlighted the importance of the soft power of religion in preventing violent extremism (PVE) through innovative, youth-led approaches. By building on existing initiatives and supporting young people's engagement and ideas such as non-violent approaches to problem solving that strengthen social cohesion and to create a forum for exchange and mutual learning.

**THEORY OF CHANGE:**

IF NIWETU supports Aid–Afrika to raise awareness on VE through community dialogues and radio messaging among at-risk youth in Garissa County, THEN their CVE knowledge and skills will improve and this will expand their spheres of influence among their peers, BECAUSE increased understanding and knowledge on VE will strengthen their resilience towards VEOs.

**PROVIDE A SHORT NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF THE KEY ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE IMPLEMENTING PERIOD**

Aid-Afrika through the support of the NIWETU program worked with local communities in Garissa to address violent extremism. This was done through community CVE dialogues targeting At-risk youths from the five sub-counties of Garissa County i.e. Township, Dadaab, Fafi, Hulugho and Ijara.

**Achievements**

1. Throughout the youth led community CVE dialogues across the five sub-counties in Garissa, Aid-Afrika was able to reach and train/educate 327 beneficiaries on matters of CVE. 72% were young males mainly unemployed and school dropouts, while the females were mostly high school students and home stay girls.
2. The selection criteria of the participants were done through consultations and support of the chiefs, local leaders, and existing youth structures.
3. Of the 327 youths the project was able to reach, Aid-Afrika selected 12 youth influencers for the radio spots, to disseminate CVE messages with the purpose of sensitizing the wider community on the effects of Violent Extremism. The selection of the youth influencers was voluntary.

## OUTCOMES

1. At the end of the youth led CVE dialogues in the selected 5 sub-counties within Garissa, twelve youth influencers were mobilized who were able to interact with the radio program processes, this had a significant impact in disseminating CVE knowledge to places beyond Garissa county as evidenced by feedback calls received from callers as far as mandera and across the border appreciating the learnings they got from the radio project.
2. The setting up of volunteer groups led by youths in the 5 sub-counties who took initiatives to pass knowledge impacted on them by Aid-Afrika through the NIWETU project to the wider community.
3. Establishment of change agents within the different group of youths engaged in the CVE dialogues, whose objectives were to help other at risk individuals within their respective communities change or rehabilitate from bad behaviors and addiction to drugs, violence etc that could potentially make them targets of VEOs. The change agents also helped in the smooth implementation of CVE measures such as fostering networks within their groups and communities.
4. The project established common denominators that drive the youths to join VEOs. They include poverty and unemployment.
5. Garissa county being inhabited by different religious groups, the project highlighted the need for an inter faith dialogue to demystify concepts that have been wrongly interpreted and understood. This can have an effect in fostering peace in the region and reduce cases of violence/stigmatization.



**FIGURE 1: YOUTH INFLUENCERS DELIBERATING ON ACTION PLAN FOR THEIR COMMUNITIES**

## II. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS (Quantitative)

### PROGRESS TRACKING TABLE

Use the table below to present the data required to assess progress toward the achievement of the targets.

<b>NIWETU Objectives</b> <i>Tick as appropriate as per the Concept Note developed</i>			
#	Indicator	Target	Actuals Achieved
1.1	# of civil society organizations that partner with Government of Kenya in CVE activities	1	1
1.3	# of people participating in USG-supported events, or activities designed to build mass support for CVE	285	327
1.4	# of community based organizations supported by USG assistance (disaggregated by focus on women, youth and other)	1	1
1.7	# of women, youth and marginalized individuals who are beneficiaries of USG-funded interventions	200	264
1.8	# of local women participating in a substantive role or position in CVE supported with USG assistance	5	4
1.9	# of local youth participating in a substantive role or position in CVE supported with USG assistance	12	37
2.1	# of initiatives directly supported by or adopted by county/national government, designed in response to community concerns around VE	1	1

### **III. PARTNER LEARNING GOAL**

#### **DID YOU LEARN ANYTHING RELATED TO YOUR LEARNING GOAL? IF YES, PLEASE EXPLAIN WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED.**

VE has become an unprecedented threat to peace, security and development in Garissa County. To tackle this threat CVE/PCVE measures have been to put in place to thwart it. Nevertheless, due to the rapidly changing dynamics of VE and VEO activities, cases of recruitment is still rife and efforts are to be put in places to understand their new these dynamics and approaches they use.

Through involvement with community work, Aid-Afrika learnt new approaches used by violent extremist organizations in infiltrating communities and recruit members into their ranks. The approach used is targeting widowed women who are desperate for marriage, VEO agents take advantage of the vulnerability of such individuals, and use the safe spaces provided by their spouses to recruit and carry out other activities while being shielded by the spouses.

#### **WHAT MORE WOULD YOU HAVE LIKED TO LEARN TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOAL?**

1. A research study on how many people do background checks of their spouses or potential spouses.
2. Monitoring mechanisms of returnees, Mechanisms put in place by the government to monitor returnees, if they work. And how those returnees are re-integrated back to society without jeopardizing their safety.
3. Research and analysis conducted on re-integration and rehabilitation trends, and needs of returnees.

### **IV. PROJECT LEARNING**

Please give up to 3 examples of what worked well in your project.

The following are examples of what went well in the project

1. The mobilization process. Aid-Afrika sought the support of chiefs from the different wards, local authorities and existing youth structures to select participants for the youth led community CVE dialogues.
2. Willing attitude and co-operation from the youths to implement CVE measures in their respective sub-counties and wards. This created a good working relation between Aid-Afrika and the youth and thus resulted in the smooth implementation of the project.
3. Positive feedback from the radio programs. Due to Star FM's coverage, Aid- Africa through the Niwetu project received positive feedback where callers appreciated the project and thanked the program for shedding light into matters they didn't know before.

**PLEASE GIVE UP TO 3 EXAMPLES OF WHAT DID NOT WORK WELL IN YOUR PROJECT.**

1. The presence of security officers in some of the CVE dialogues resulted in the youths feeling their safe spaces violated. This was due to fear off backlash, harassment or retribution from the security forces.
2. Due to lack of universally agreed terms on the definition of some CVE terms, translating the terms to the local language posed a challenge.
3. Project scope creep.

**IF YOU COULD IMPLEMENT THIS PROJECT AGAIN, PLEASE DISCUSS WHAT YOU WOULD DO DIFFERENTLY AND WHY?**

- The narratives used by the VEOs to attract recruits are many as discussed in the various youth led community CVE dialogues. One common narrative is the religious narrative where the VEOs inculcate misinterpreted religious doctrines in innocent youths. Involving various religious factions in the dialogue sessions would promote better understanding among the followers of the different faiths, increase tolerance between the different people and also come up with solutions or counter narratives to those perpetuated by the VEOs.
- It's the feedback from the project beneficiaries that we form inter faith dialogue groups on violent extremism from faiths in Islam and Christianity so that they amplify common voices against extremism and their divisive narratives, Aid-Afrika will enable the formation and capacitation of interfaith dialogue on extremism groups from Garissa county and help them amplify their voices against extremism.
- Aid-Afrika will build on the gaps identified by the project beneficiaries in considering development of contents that advocate for amnesty, rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees while engaging with community sector groups, government authorities and security agents so that the returnees get safe space to change their course.

**V. GENDER CONSIDERATION**

**PLEASE DESCRIBE THE WAYS IN WHICH GENDER DYNAMICS AFFECTED OR WERE CONSIDERED UNDER THIS ACTIVITY.**

When considering the role of women and the dynamics of violent extremism, our project focused on one key critical question which must be addressed. This question is whether women have a comparative advantage when it comes to preventative efforts. . With respect to this question, Aid-Afrika pointed out that women in one of their central roles as mothers—are key players in the household and have significant influence in the social hierarchies of families and communities. As such, they often have a deep awareness of activities within their communities. Then Aid-Afrika when developing its radio program contents deliberately designed specific areas within the different 12 topics to provide women with the necessary skills and information to recognize early signs of radicalization within their households and families.

It is generally recognized that women are disproportionately affected by acts of extremism and terrorist violence in our targeted hotspots. From the feedbacks of project beneficiaries especially women we observed that women have strong motivations for preventing such acts. At the same time, we have observed some women who were indirectly encouraging extremism in their households unintentionally.

**PLEASE DESCRIBE ANY LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT GENDER INCLUSION AND SENSITIVITY THAT YOU WOULD RECOMMEND BEING INCORPORATED INTO FUTURE GRANTS.**

Aid-Afrika project learnt that the role of women in preventing violent extremism has to be designed to provide women with the necessary skills to recognize early signs of radicalization, build supportive communities, and subsequently, to engage in effective and contextually appropriate actions to prevent radicalization from taking place.

**PLEASE DESCRIBE ANY GENDER FOCUSED UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES, POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE, THAT PLAYED OUT UNDER THIS GRANT**

Change of perception and behavior among parents who were encouraging indirect recruitment among their children , one of the listeners called and shared how she was indirectly adding VEOs recruitment in her household by demeaning , killing self-esteem of her son who failed in his school exams without a meaningful job which she feared to make him join bad groups she said “*Women wield a lot of power and can cause massive change since they have a silent but powerful voice to their husbands and sons who get into bad groups such as terror groups* ”...anonymous. She added “*from listening the radio program I realized Mothers are thought to be either the source of radicalization or entry points for de-radicalization and prevention efforts* ”