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# PVE COMMUNITY *Bulletin*

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STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY-BASED PREVENTION AND RESPONSE AND YOUTH ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT FOR PEACE BUILDING (PVE)
To improve community peace and cohesion
To strengthen Early Warning and Early Response mechanisms, conflict resolution and mediation and cohesion
SDGs

# PROJECT BACKGROUND

Kisumu County continues to experience rapid political and social shifts that have contributed to tensions and persistent challenges in achieving sustainable peace and social cohesion. Historical injustices, political rivalry, and deep economic disparities have fueled mistrust between communities and government structures, slowing progress toward reconciliation.

Youth who form the largest population segment in Kisumu face high unemployment, limited economic opportunities, and exclusion from decision-making spaces. These conditions create frustration and vulnerability, especially during election periods when young people are often manipulated into violence, gang activity, or political confrontation.

This project recognizes that communities themselves are the first line of defence against radicalization and violence. It therefore adopts community-led approaches that emphasize dialogue, trust-building, and collaboration. The project also strengthens traditional mediation structures, promotes inclusive participation, and empowers youth and women to enhance community resilience against violent extremism.

# INCEPTION MEETING

The project began with a high-level inception meeting bringing together County Government officials, faith-based organizations (FBOs), youth representatives, women leaders, and community actors from informal settlements across Kisumu.

Key achievements:

- Shared understanding of project goals, expected outcomes, and stakeholder roles.
- Buy in and support of the project by the different stakeholders
- Establishment of a Steering Committee to support project oversight.
- Strong County Government commitment to youth empowerment and PVE collaboration

## MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

During the inception phase, we held a press briefing bringing together both local and national mainstream media to introduce the project and discuss the state of violent extremism in Kisumu as the county prepares for the 2027 General Election. The engagement highlighted emerging concerns, shared the project's objectives, and outlined the specific areas where implementation will take place.

# LEARNING EXCHANGE VISIT

## Exchange Visit to Nakuru - Hosted by Midrift Hurinet

A learning exchange visit was conducted in partnership with Midrift Human Rights Network(MIDRIFT HURINET) in Nakuru — an organization with established experience in PVE programming.

**Key lessons:**

- Effective collaboration with the County Commissioner's office, FBOs, CSOs, women, and youth is key in the PVE initiatives.
- Engaging the 'Boda boda' sector is crucial. There is a highly regulated bodaboda sector, complete with colour coding, leadership structures, and accountability systems in Nakuru
- There is need for economic empowerment initiatives that reduce youth vulnerability to violent extremism.
- Integrating psychosocial support and establishing efficient referral pathways is important for mental health of the vulnerable.
- There is need for clear, practical application of the PVE pillars within community systems.

## Re-integration of Reformed Youth in PVE.

Reformed youth now work through estate-based leaders to identify at-risk individuals and promote peace, refusing political misuse. Trust with government structures has improved, though community acceptance remains a challenge. MIDRIFT HURINET's engagement through the Reintegrate Programme has strengthened reintegration efforts, with ex-prisoners also referred for psychosocial and economic support, guided by community leaders.

## Role of the Transport Sector

The Boda Boda and Matatu sectors play a key role in community safety through their structures, which run from the base to the county level. Their leadership is represented in the County Policing Committee, enabling better coordination and tracking of members. During engagements, they are urged to sensitize riders to comply with tax payments as stipulated by the County government of Nakuru and to strengthen positive relationships between their members and government agencies.

## Faith Leaders Engagement

The Religious Pillar, as contained in Nakuru County Action Plan, emphasizes youth religious education led by Imams, addressing issues like concealed weapons and identity. It also includes strong interfaith collaboration between Muslims and Christians to strengthen the fight against radicalization.

## Women Participation in PVE

Integration of young women in PVE and ensuring their access to justice and safe spaces is important. Lack of support for women experiencing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) was also highlighted. Suggestions were made to facilitate learning exchanges where Nakuru women can also learn from Kisumu women.

# CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVES

The project brought together peace committees, community policing committee members, chiefs, youth, women and faith-based leaders from the target communities on early warning, early response (EWER) as well as strengthening dialogue and mediation training. It emerged that:

- All the target communities are mostly in the medium risk situation with some bordering on the high-risk situation due to the activities which were highlighted during the communities' conversations.
- The peace committees need revitalization and sustainability plan
- The sms reporting tool that was used for reporting is now redundant and there is need for a new tool.
- The pillars identified for strengthening and engagement are;

1. *Political pillar*
2. *Economic pillar*
3. *Ideological / religious pillar*
4. *Social media pillar and*
5. *Psychosocial pillar*

# COMMUNITY DIALOGUES

For community outreach, dialogues meetings were conducted in **Obunga, Nyalenda, and Manyatta**, to provide space for residents to openly engage on issues of safety, extremism, and community violence.

**Emerging Issues and Concerns include:**

- The growth of **Mbogi/gangs** in the communities, often mobilized for political purposes.
- Wrong perception that PVE only affects Muslim communities despite diverse drivers.
- **Trust deficit** between communities and police, community policing units, and NGAO.
- Bodaboda infiltration by cartels and use in criminal activities.
- Fear of reporting crime due to intimidation and bribery; informants being labelled *'Musudi'*.
- Stigma around reintegration of individuals linked to PVE.
- Attack incidents on ambulances and firetrucks during unrest.
- Disengagement of Christian FBOs from PVE conversations.
- Youth ditching church attendance and the need for alternative engagement platforms.
- Lack of awareness on justice processes and release of suspects perceived to be corrupt.
- Youth unemployment and their preference for formal jobs.
- Threats and intimidation faced by women actively share early warnings
- Lack of distinction between PVE-linked crime and general crime.
- The use of Nyalenda free Wi-Fi for online recruitment and planning.
- Violent contestation of leadership positions in informal settlements.
- Instances of visits to **Kodiaga Prison** to engage convicts.

# MUSLIM WOMEN ENGAGEMENT

Muslim women are often overlooked in PVE initiatives, yet they play a crucial role in teaching women and children in madrasas. Through their participation in our project activities and trainings, they have gained knowledge and confidence that they are now extending to their communities. This inclusion strengthens interfaith resilience efforts and helps bridge gaps in community engagement.

# YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

Economic empowerment for the youth is crucial for PVE as it emerged during the inception meeting. The project in collaboration with the County government of Kisumu has identified the **Rotary Training Centre** as the venue for upcoming youth empowerment sessions. More youths are being incorporated into the program through partnership with the County Government. The forum will offer an opportunity for the youth in Kisumu to understand and uptake some of the many opportunities and programs that the county government has for the youth.

The youth empowerment activities are scheduled for **18th-19th December 2025.**

# CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED

Key challenges emerging from community engagements include:

- The escalating conflict around **Kibuye Market** which is becoming a security concern.
- Public fear of reporting due to political protection and intimidation.
- Influence of powerful political and economic cartels.
- Difficulty uniting ACCs, chiefs, and communities in shared forums.
- Lack of clear reintegration pathways for ex-convicts.
- Rising youth exposure to radicalization, gang signs and violent groups.
- Mobilizing young women and men involved in gangs remains difficult.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

To strengthen PVE efforts, communities, leaders, and project stakeholders recommended:

- Engagement with political party leaders to curb youth manipulation.
- Regular town hall engagements to build trust between communities and state actors.
- Mhadharas - bringing Christian and Muslim faith leaders together to debunk extremist narratives.
- Need for Development of a scripture/verse catalogue countering radicalization.
- Need for A community-friendly PVE monitoring tool.
- Establishment of a Community Early Warning / Early Response (EWER) Hub.
- Joint training for community policing committees and police officers.
- Increased community sensitization and awareness.
- Clear definition and support for women's roles within PVE structures.
- Stronger coordination platforms for FBOs.
- Trust-building meetings among police, NGAO, community leaders, and FBOs.
- Signing and adoption of Peace Charters.
- Better resourcing for community structures and provision of hotline numbers for safe reporting.

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