Early Warning and Early Response Mechanisms in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism: A Twofold Paradox

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Foreword

This study was motivated by the need to pay more attention in strengthening preventive approaches in countering violent extremism. Various works on preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) paint a picture of a populace generally apprehensive of sharing information on violent extremism. These concerns have further been emphasized by different P/CVE non state actors who in practice, continually demand for more responsive approaches in P/CVE.

The International Peace Support Training Centre presents this policy brief to evaluate Early Warning and Early Response Mechanisms in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in Kwale County. It provides a framework for understanding the primacy of a harmonized Early Warning System in countering violent extremism, the complexities of violent extremism indicators and how existing EWER frameworks can be adapted to mitigate VE. The centre thus hopes to inform to key actors for effective early warning and early response in P/CVE.

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Executive Summary

Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) programmes in Kenya have in most cases taken a reactionary approach aimed at tackling the consequences of radicalization and extremism once extreme violence occur. As this approach takes precedence, different literature has however shown that the primacy of Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) preventive mechanisms may be critical in intervention, planning and action.

Accordingly, a study was conceived to assess the EWER mechanisms in P/CVE focusing on Kwale County. The overall guiding objective of the study was to evaluate the EWER mechanisms in P/CVE. The study found out that there are challenges facing the mitigation of P/CVE including a problem of definition and contextualization of Violent Extremism (VE), diversity and fluidity of drivers of VE, disconnect and lack of trust between the stakeholders, especially between the community and government security structures, which have a direct impact on the development adoption and application of EWER initiatives.

The study concludes by highlighting the over-reliance of the current EWER frameworks in P/CVE, yet findings reveal that they have continued to register low success in P/CVE. The study therefore, recommends a clear interpretation and agreement on terms used in VE discourse and, bridging trust and confidentiality gaps between and among stakeholders. It further proposes that the security of personal data and observation of personal rights, de-securitization of relationships between the community and existing security structures. Additionally, the study recommends for the recognition of specific gender roles in EWER and capacity developing on EWER.

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Introduction

Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) to counter violent extremism is a mechanism that has not been fully exploited in informing P/CVE initiatives in Kenya, including Kwale County. Often, P/CVE response mechanisms and the subsequent interventions have been reactive. Indeed, it was only after the 2013 Westgate attack for example, that the government initiated the Nyumba Kumi Initiative – an approach hinged on the importance of community-based policing that allows the police and local citizens to work together to solve societal challenges (Ngigi, 2018).

Accordingly, what EWER mechanisms on P/CVE exist and how effective they have been in informing programming has remained unclear. Awareness on EWER to actors and stakeholders involved in P/CVE has been limited challenging effective implementation of strategies and programmes to counter violent extremism. It is therefore unclear on what the impact of existing EWER mechanisms in P/CVE has had over the years. With the drivers of VE always changing due its evolving nature, some key drivers have been missed in programming of P/CVE, especially at an early stage which would otherwise inform changes in the trends and nature of the evolving field.

This policy brief thus evaluates the level of efficacy of EWER mechanisms in P/CVE in Kwale County. Importantly, it strives to understand how existing P/CVE initiatives namely Nyumba Kumi, Community Policing and Kwale CVE Engagement Forum have incorporated EWER. Specifically, this policy brief establishes how these frameworks coordinate efforts in EWER in the fight against VE and offers recommendations that can improve EWER in P/CVE efforts.

Method

This policy brief is based on a study carried out from 16-27 August 2021 in the following areas in Kwale County; Bongwe, Mbuani, Shamu, Mabokoni, Mlungunipa, Kibundani, Ukunda, Matuga, Diani, Tiwi, Kombani, Denyenye, Waa, Ng'ombeni, Muhaka, Mwabungo, Kinondo, Shimoni, Kibuyuni and Wasini. It investigates a total of 200 respondents which sampled from security agencies, County Government, P/CVE practitioners, mothers of VE victims, returnees and a section of the general public. This sample size was determined based on the principle of information power based on the level and quality of information a person

possess for respondents in qualitative research and the principle of saturation where data collection and analysis end at the point where further analysis does not yield new patterns in quantitative research. Moreover, the study's data collection tools are based on internationally validated and standardised questionnaires on constructs under investigation.

In data collection phase, research assistants drawn from various entities with programs on P/CVE in the chosen study sites, were engaged. This is because they have contextual knowledge of the study area and have built trust among the community.

Findings and Discussion

A. Evaluating the Level of Awareness of Existing Early Warning and Early Response Mechanisms in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in Kwale County

The study found out that there was a general understanding of what Early Warning and Early Response meant with many alluding to EWER as *'ishara'* (early tell-tale signs) and *"hatua za mapema"* early action as literary meaning early response.

Although there was a general understanding of what EWER meant, respondents found it hard to conclusively agree on the indicators of VE. For example, on one hand, participants in FGDs debated on why growing a beard is associated with involvement in VE (FGD 2, 24 August 2021).

They saw this as profiling and targeting because Sunna teachings of Islam provides for growing beards among the male faithful to emulate the life of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H). In this case, participants noted that at the height of intensified crackdown on VE suspects by security agencies, those who wished to grow their beards had to sign a book as a sign of authorization. This was seen as a direct infringement on their freedom of worship. Indeed, such acts testify to the securitization of EWER policies in P/CVE and inform on why and how they are counterproductive. Further, such occurrences in effect, are exploited by terrorist actors for their own gains. To recollect, a Saferworld (2018) report contends that by crafting attacks designed to provoke a draconian state response, terrorists hope to exploit the resultant societal polarization to attract new recruits.

On the other hand, indicators like isolation, increased online activities and reverence to martyrdom were unanimously agreed as indicators of VE. Violent extremists are increasingly capitalizing on advances in technology to find new ways of engaging with disaffected youth,

taking advantage of social networking sites, online video channels and radical chat rooms is prevalent. These channels tend to spread propaganda more widely, more rapidly and more effectively, and usually with more ease, than any other channels.

The study findings further revealed that there was no harmonized framework in identifying EW indicators. Part of the problem lies in the dilemma about what acts constitute VE as clearly described in analyzing forms and indicators of VE. VE continues to evolve and has taken on new forms and capabilities. Extremist groups have the ability to occupy large amounts of territory, seize and generate substantial resources (for example, kidnappings and illicit trade), and make sophisticated use of social media and communication tools to propagate their messages, disseminate their ideology and incite violence. The trends, means and patterns of radicalization to violence equally continue to broaden. Violent extremism finds its inspiration in a larger variety of ideologies, and its activities are no longer the exclusive domain of centralized and hierarchical organizations (UNODC, 2016).

The threat of VE has progressively evolved to include smaller groups, cells and lone actors operating in a more unconstrained and unpredictable way.

Findings from the study show that the connection between juvenile gangs and acts of VE is growing, especially in Bongwe, Denyenye, and Gombato are new emerging trends. The study was informed that these gangs plan attacks with limited or no direction from any organization, making prevention even more difficult. In the study, the link between juvenile gangs and participation in VE was widely shared by majority of the respondents. This was clearly reiterated during a KII session where it was remarked that '*the gangs are made up of very small [young] boys and not even more than 5 in a group. Just recently around Denyenye, in fact the one commanding them had hardly finished standard 8. Yet he was commanding the rest with bows and arrows ready to attack'* (KII 11, 18 August 2021).

The lack of a harmonized system was further illustrated by a KII respondent who uses EWER in addressing conflict. He indicated the lack of harmonized EW indicators as being problematic because there exists a thin line between profiling and early indicators (KII 12, 25 August 2021). The respondent added that acts of VE can also generally take the form of general crime thus becoming hard to distinguish the motivation of the acts of crimes. Besides, the similarity in the manifestation between acts of general crime and acts of violent extremism makes it hard for prosecutors in courts of law. There is no law that specifically tries acts of

violent extremism, he explained. This continues to cement the foregoing debate among scholars of VE on the challenges faced when situating and prosecuting crimes of VE.

Violent Extremism actors have incorporated new forms of recruitment that are subtle and as such, individuals may find it difficult to know when they are being recruited. The study found out that there are promises of job opportunities and courtships for marriage among the youth made by recruiters. It was observed during the study that many victims of VE found themselves trapped in their quest of seeking for jobs or employment or being in romantic relationships with VE actors.

However, it is important to mention that EWER relies on the quality of information shared. The EWER signals should be fashioned to mirror the push and pull factors of VE as well as the VE trends portrayed by EW. It was informative during the study that respondents understood what early response entailed. For example, some of the responses given included providing counselling services to at-risk individuals, providing livelihood skills to youth to ensure that they are engaged in gainful employment, empowering the community with PVE knowledge, and reporting extremist individuals to authorities.

The study also found out that the County Government of Kwale, through the Department of Social Work, Youth and Gender had established different initiatives to enhance resilience among citizenry, especially the youth and women. The Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLAs) for example, provided an opportunity to increase economic empowerment among women. Despite the existence of several initiatives, there was still concern in the uptake of such opportunities which is dogged by issues of allocation and distribution to those who deserve them.

According to the Kwale County Integrated Development Plan 2018-2022, the County still grapples with the challenge of transition of students from primary to secondary school even though the ministry of education strives to achieve the 100% total transition. In a KII session, a subject matter expert expounded on the blanket requirements for bursary and other scholarship opportunities. According to him students from the more remote sub-counties in Kwale were left behind because they had lesser comparative advantage than those in the advanced and more cosmopolitan areas; '…*the conditions faced by a student in Lunga Lunga would not be the same faced by another in Diani or even Kombani*' (KII 6, 20 August 2021).

Amid the existing limited resources is the issue of exploiting existing opportunities. The contention lies in the ability of the community to recognize existing opportunities and tap into them. Marginalization and the issue of land grabbing cultivated an '*Us Vs Them'* mentality (Saferworld, 2018), where the indigenous Digo community viewed immigrants as outsiders. This translated into the notion that opportunities in Kwale were a reserve of the immigrants. However, critical analysis of the question of access to resources and opportunities reveals instances where some members of the indigenous community failed to take up job opportunities thus rendering them open for consideration by other interested citizens. This fact was stated by a respondent in a FGD:

> *'I am a beneficiary of a scholarship programme from a local organization at the Kenya Fisheries. There were seven positions that were announced but the indigenous youth in my area failed to take up the opportunity. Only two of us were enrolled from my area. The other positions had to be filled by people from up country'* (FDG 2, 24 August 2021).

The role of education cannot be overlooked when analyzing the culture of a particular society. Religious education plays a fundamental role in the predominantly Muslim set up community in Kwale. Indeed, it is estimated that there are over 800 madrassas within Kwale County alone (KII 11, 25 August 2021).

The study revealed that in Kwale County, organisations such as the Kenya Muslim Youth Alliance (KMYA) and Coast Interfaith Council of Clerics (CICC) have used religious teachings to counter VE propaganda. Despite positive contributions made by stakeholders to mitigate VE, there were challenges that were reported during field work. In 2017, for example, the Kwale Action Plan provided for formulation of a Madrassa curriculum as one of the outcomes. However, the study revealed that this remains work-in-progress. This is fundamental in early response as it directly talks about sensitization of the community against VE propaganda. The lack of a harmonized madrassa curriculum heightens the possibilities of mushrooming radical ideologies because there is no sanctioning body that governs how religious education in madrassas is taught.
A respondent in a KII session pointed out that '*Even though the need to have a Madrassa curriculum is known and shared across the divide, there is seemingly competition amongst*

Muslim scholars. This has made it difficult to come up with a harmonized curriculum' (KII 1, 25 August 2021).

Based on interactions with different stakeholders during the study, it was evident that the need exists for the Muslim clerical fraternity through umbrella organisations such as the Council of Muslim Scholars of Kenya, Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM) and KYMA to charter the way forward on the ultimate curriculum that can be adopted by the various Muslim denominations. The study established that KMYA has made attempts to address the gap by establishing Peace Clubs in schools. Through its peace club manual, KYMA has been able to come up with a guide on the generally accepted Muslim teachings that can be taught to students. In addition, the organization has also established a Union for madrassas in a bid to lay the foundation towards the realization of a harmonized curriculum.

B.   Assessing the Level of Efficacy of EWER Mechanisms in Prevention Countering Violent Extremism

The study employed the use of rubrics to measure the level of efficacy of EWER mechanisms. Specifically, the study analyzed the following factors: technical monitoring and warning service;

communication and dissemination of warnings; and community response capability (UNISDR, 2015).

To situate the four elements provided for by UNISDR (2015), analysis of the findings centered on the degree of fit (Kelly, 2020). To begin with, the research study sought to find out whether respondents had ever been engaged in EWER activities. What aspects of EWER the programmes addressed, whether the programmes helped beneficiaries identify individuals at risk and their knowledge of existing laws, policies and regulations that guide EWER. Their knowledge on existing laws, policies, and regulations gives credence to Durkheim (1993) standpoint that analysis of the forementioned helps to understand the functioning of the society. This is because, laws, policies and regulations directly shape the behavior of individuals. The study assessed the level of confidence individuals had in using existing EWER structures to report and share information.

The study interrogated how individuals channeled their voices and concerns regarding EWER in P/CVE and whether such concerns were addressed. The role of individual responsibility was also investigated. The study tried to find out what individuals perceived to be their role in

EWER. It also sought to find out how different stakeholders coordinate their P/CVE efforts and the mechanisms in place that provide for such engagements. An understanding of the nature of relationship of the stakeholders was fundamentally important as it helps to answer to the gaps in literature and further elucidate the proponents of the structural functionalism theory. Importantly, the study probed the existence of a harmonized EWER framework that guided stakeholders' engagement in P/CVE efforts. In the absence of which, the study probed the respondents on which actor they thought suited best to rally the establishment of one.

Despite being aware of what EWER meant,there was the low engagement levels of the community in EWER. 76% of the respondents reported that they had never been engaged in EWER in P/CVE initiatives. Training carried out by a local nongovernmental organization, Human Development Agenda (HUDA), CVE training, participation in sports and peace barazas and participation in radio programs were some of the examples of participation mentioned by 24% of the respondents. 81% of the respondents indicated that the programmes they participated in did not address EWER in VE and they could, therefore, not indicate whether they built their capacities on EWER engagement.

Kwale is among counties leading with the highest number of returnees (KII 9, 23 August 2021), it was an assumption of the study that initiatives carried out by P/CVE actors were both intensive and extensive. However, results depict a low engagement of community members in EWER on P/CVE initiatives. One KI noted that "this was due to little appreciation of the VE problem in Kwale by the county government (KII 6, 02 August 2021). This in turn has affected the level of the county's lead role in spearheading the fight against VE. The KI further alluded to the fact that "branding Kwale as facing VE challenges by the county government may affect the economy which is heavily reliant on tourism". This further confirms Aroussi et al., (2020) position that there is a seemingly 'denial' of the extent of VE problem. Not only does this denial impact on the level of active engagement by the county, but it also speaks to other aspects such as provision of adequate resources to address EWER in VE. In this case, both the human and financial resource that are in jeopardy. A lack of appreciation of the extent of the problem could also impact on the formulation of policies. The devolved system of governance places heavy responsibility on the county as the principal entity to steer development and policies in their areas.

96% of the respondents indicated that an EWER framework for P/CVE programming did not exist. A well-functioning and effective EWER mechanism is founded on the ideals of human capital. Fundamentally, such a mechanism must be characterized by strong interwoven trust channels between those who use it and those who respond to information. Social capital therefore, becomes critical in ensuring that relevant actors within the EWER system share information freely. Thus, it is worth mentioning that for EWER to be fully effective, trust must be linked to the strength of three kinds of relationships; within communities; between generations; and between citizens and the state as portrayed in the figure below.

Shauri, (2018) echoes that there is a poor relationship based on weak trust between the community and the police, leading to a poor community-police relation, especially on P/CVE issues. This can be attributed to the community's perception of the government as repressive. From observations made during this study, reality on the ground further points to deteriorating trust levels between the police and the local community. Further, it was found out that there was over-reliance on the Nyumba Kumi Initiative and Community Policing approach as EWER frameworks for P/CVE. This was despite the fact that there was poor level of interaction between the community and the security frameworks.

Research carried out by Search for Common Ground in 2018, further revealed that the existence of many policies confused the community because they failed to understand which takes precedence over the other. The study noted that at one point, both the Nyumba Kumi Initiative and Community Policing organized parallel awareness campaigns in the same locality leaving the community at crossroads on which one to attend.

During a FGD, a village elder remarked to the area chief that he could share all information with the chief except on matters related to security and more specific to VE and terrorism. He continued to point that 'the chief will pass it over [the information] to his seniors and before he knows it, a helicopter will come hovering in search of him' (FDG 3, 26 August 2021). Similarly, a KI, further corroborated the claim stating that 'violent extremist youth have instilled fear therefore the community is afraid. Even chiefs are scared' (KII 10, August 24, 2021).

Even though community engagement is at the heart of a well-functioning early warning system, the role of the security apparatus cannot be overlooked. The responsibility to ensure

security principally rests with the state. What is clear from the above observations by respondents is the lack of confidence between the community and security agencies and worse even among the different units of the latter. The fear expressed by the village elder signals lack of confidentiality in the way that information is handled and the response thereafter. Moreover, there seemed to be a consensus among the participants on the role of the government in instilling fear through repression. One participant observed that *'Kwa maoni yangu, ningesema kwamba mimi naona ni kama serikali pia inachangia katika maswala haya ya ugaidi wa itikadi potofu ili kutufinyilia sisi wenyeji wa Kwale';* 'In my opinion, I would say that I feel that the government is also contributing to these issues of terrorist ideology to stifle us, the people of Kwale' (FGD 3, 26 August 2021).

The allegation that the government castigates violent extremism to victimize its own population is no small feat. One would beg to ask the question, why a particular sect of the citizens harbor such views. An analysis of such claims highlights the critical aspect of identity and power struggles. The perception by the local citizens is that the government intentionally marginalizes them in order disempower them. Identity shapes the perceptions and behavior of the society and directly informs their participation in social change as provided for by the early warning system checklist by UNISDR (2015).

As such, the importance of early warning, specifically on preventive measures that foster the cultivation of restorative narratives between the community and the security agencies is important in ensuring that government initiatives are accepted and owned by the community.

On the question of trust, P/CVE practitioners from Civil Society groups also expressed their frustration with the security agencies and county government. According to them, they saw their interrelationship as being skewed. A KI stated that 'Information sharing at the Kwale CVE Engagement Forum is one way and low. The government representatives in the forum do not give feedback on their activities. When asked, they normally say "hio ni yetu ama tuwachie sisi"; ('that is ours or leave that to us' (KII 7, 23 August 2021)). This contention by the security agencies confirms the one-sided relationship between state and non-state P/CVE actors. It further highlights the discrepancies in the approaches used by security agencies in handling the problem of violent extremism.

As pointed out in the literature review, in Kenya, security remains a national government function and hence the opposition by security agencies to allow for optimum stakeholder

management (Githinji, 2021). Besides, Githinji (2021) argues that some of the issues raised to oppose involvement in managing security includes the sentiments that it amounts to interference in police work. It is worth mentioning that there is genuine fear that this skewed relationship in information sharing can lead to the civil society actors at the risk of being instrumentalized for collection of intelligence by the security agencies. For this reason, one of the KI noted that 'Information is shared to other actors on need-to-know basis' (KII 2, 17 August 2021).

The report by UNISDR (2015) on communication and dissemination of warnings denotes the importance of analyzed data reaching the intended audience. Clear messages containing simple, useful information are critical to enable proper responses that will help safeguard lives and livelihoods. Dissemination of warnings must mirror the regional, national as well as the grassroot levels of communication systems. Whereas the need-to-know policy aims at protecting data and making sure it only reaches the intended audience, it fails to explain the classification criteria of information used. This leaves an opportunity that cultivates notions of secrecy amongst actors and thus exacerbating mistrust.

Findings of the survey reveal that 52% of the respondents indicated that existing P/CVE engagement opportunities used by citizens were not useful in encouraging reporting and sharing of information on individuals at risk to VE.

From the findings of the survey, only 28% of the respondents indicated that their concerns regarding P/CVE issues were heard, while 72% of them stated that they were not heard. This revelation helps to further explain the seemingly lack of concern to address underlying causes that are key drivers of VE. The higher (72%) percentage of the community perceiving that their voices are not being heard may lead to frustration and could increase vulnerability to VE. Moreover, this also forms a conducive environment for terrorist propaganda to exploit dissatisfied members within the community. More critical was the finding that 91% of the respondents also indicated that there was no EWER interaction organized in networks or other models that coordinated youth voices in VE. While this trend was observed in all P/CVE initiatives, it is critical among the youth because they form a segment of the population that is highly vulnerable to VE.

In regard to social media, 34% of the respondents stated that they preferred such platforms to voice their concerns regarding EWER in P/CVE, while 31% preferred to channel their issues through the local Community Based Organizations (CBOs). Other platforms like State-led structures for example, the local administration was 14%, police 12% and Nyumba Kumi elders 8%. Media presents a challenge in striking a balance between the right to be informed, media freedom and media ethics. The role of the media in P/CVE can be viewed as a double-edged sword. It provides both the avenues for exploitation by both terror and counter terror actors to advance their individual courses. Above all, the critical role media plays in terms of reach cannot be underestimated. The growth of safe media spaces in addressing VE perhaps can explain why 34% of the respondents preferred social media to air out their grievances. Figure 13 illustrates the respondents' view regarding the mediums they use to channel out their issues.

As a public good, security remains the primary role of the state. The central institution in P/CVE and terror related issues lies with the NCTC (NSCVE, 2016). However, 38% of the respondents felt that their issues on P/CVE are addressed by non-state actors. This, therefore, shows a disparity in the fulfillment of duties by the state.

Additionally, this shows the low levels of confidence that the community has on state security agencies. Crucially, only 7% of the respondents felt that the county government addressed their issues. This low level in response sheds more light on the lackluster attitude by the county government in appreciating the problem of VE.

The study also interrogated on who, among the various P/CVE stakeholders, addresses their concerns. It is clear that the civil society tops the list by 38%, followed by the area chief at 26%, then police and national government both at 15% respectively, with the county government scoring the lowest at 7%. The low score for the county government is a surprise for the study because they are closer to the residents. This could be probably attributed to the fact that security is not a devolved function and hence the county government excludes itself despite the understanding of the expanded meaning of security among stakeholders in peace and security programming.

The study findings further revealed that most of the respondents felt that there are certain types of information known to the community but are never reported to the relevant authorities. These types of information were related to: VE recruitment and active

participation, terrorism or Al-Shabaab, information related to perpetrators of killings, identity of drug barons and criminal gangs. Participants pointed out that such types of information were not reported to the relevant authorities due to the following reasons: fear of retaliation or being attacked by the perpetrators, little trust in the authorities, no action being taken on previously reported cases, fear of being branded as government informers by the community, perpetrators are protected by their families especially because some are their relatives.

The level of trust was not only based on the lack of free flow of information but also financial transparency within the Kwale CVE Engagement Forum. A respondent in a KII observed that 'Being a member of the Kwale CVE Engagement Forum, one of the things affecting trust issues is transparency. There have been instances where the county government borrows money from donors in the name of [the]secretariat, but that money is not used within the forum' (KII 11, 25 August 2021).

The security agencies also expressed their dissatisfaction with the CSOs working on P/CVE issues. This pertained to the allegations of the government's participation in extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances. Despite these claims, the government held that it did not participate in any extra-judicial killings on in any disappearances of suspects.

Despite these claims, the government held that it did not participate in any extra-judicial killings on in any disappearances of suspects. Despite this assertion, unconfirmed claims on extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances are not new when analyzing state approaches to P/CVE. Extrajudicial killings violate the due legal process as they do not accord the right to a fair hearing of the accused. Another finding by the study was the relationship between non-state actors that was seen to be based on competition. A KII indicated stated that 'for us CSOs, authority in civil work is based on our reach through the programmes we carry. It is only through that way they can influence decisions on issues of mutual concern.' 96% of the respondents indicated the lack of existence of a harmonized EWER framework helps to explain the low level of monitoring and verification of information. On technical monitoring and assessment of warning, UNISDR (2015) points out to the need to have, whenever possible, warning services well harmonized to gain the benefit of shared institutional, procedural and communication networks. In Kwale County, however, P/CVE actors used different independent approaches to monitor and verify information. This was

evident from a question by a KI, 'EWER, where are they? Who is monitoring and verifying information?' (KII 10, 24 August 2021).

As pointed out in the literature review, lack of a harmonized approach leaves room for confusion and duplication of efforts in the fight against VE. It may also result to loss of memory since there is no focal point for reference. In the Kwale County CVE Engagement Forum for example, it was noted that the county government sends different representatives to the meetings. This not only speaks to the level of commitment by the county government but also the degree of priority given to tackle the problem of VE.

The UNISDR (2015) asserts that apart from the four elements provided, there are other overarching issues that may affect the success of an early warning system. Allocation of resources for instance affects the functioning and realization of intended goals. Majority of the respondents in the study alluded to the fact that there was no budget allocation to carry out EWER in P/CVE. Additionally, a participant in one of the FGD observed that, 'We have policies, but they are not being followed. The Kwale CVE Engagement Forum is just for show. It does not have resources' (FDG1, 19 August 2021). Similarly, a KI noted that 'At CEF, there is no one to facilitate. It is CSO led when it comes to resource allocation' (KII 7, 23 August 2021).

Resource planning is vital to the success of a well-functioning system. As Saunders (1997) notes, projects continue to fail due to poor planning efforts or when there has been insufficient planning during project initiation. The realization of the goals of the Kwale County Action Plan cannot be fully achieved without a proper and concise resource allocation plan. Financial, human, infrastructural as well as technological resources must be well integrated to inform the implementation of the action plan.

The classical Sociologist, Emile Durkheim (1993) stresses on the importance of a society's laws, values and norms in informing how a society function. On response capability, UNISDR (2015) avows that there is need for the community to understand the policies in place to inform their responses. Apparently, the study found out that 97% of the respondents did not have knowledge on any existing laws or policies on EWER in P/CVE. In addition, a KI stated that, 'CAP is an up-down approach. Colleagues at the bottom level are not aware of the CAP' (KI1 10, 24 August 2021).

Community ownership is at the heart of a successful early warning system (UNISDR, 2015). It speaks directly to a community's participation in finding solutions to their challenges. Additionally, a bottom-up approach ensures adherence to inclusivity and diversity. Lack of awareness breeds ground for conflict. It is important to ensure that the community identifies with existing policies and their implementing agencies for proposing intervention strategies. Of the respondents, 96% stated that the community was not involved in the development of laws, policies or measures on early warning and early response mechanisms. In fact, most of the respondents had no idea who was responsible for implementing existing laws and policies. This is problematic because, for example, the community become victims of abuse such as harassment, exploitation and or unlawful detention by actors purporting to work on behalf of security agencies.

C.   Evidence-Based Ewer Mechanisms Adaptable for Mitigating Violent Extremism in Kwale County

Despite the non- existence of a harmonized EWER framework, the study found out that the Safe Coast Early Warning and Early Response Mechanism (SCEWER) and the Kenya Muslim Youth Alliance EW model, can be improved on and adapted as harmonized EWER frameworks to prevent and counter violent extremism.

The SCEWER is managed by a civil society organization; Kenya Community Support Centre (KECOSCE) and is operational in six counties along the coast (KECOSCE, 2021). Established in 2012, the primary focus of the system was to monitor events leading to the 2013 elections to avoid a repeat of the 2007 post election violence. Since then, the system has evolved to address other challenges such as inter ethnic conflict, disasters, crime and violent extremism. Some of the successes of the system include; for example, in Tana River, SCEWER alerts pointed out inter-ethnic clashes that erupted in 2012-2013 leaving over 100 people dead. Similarly, the system picked up the relocation of alleged Mombasa Republican Council youth from Kwale to Kilifi County (KECOSCE, 2021). The SCEWER comprises of five models which comprise of field monitors, incident reporting platform, heat map, response and prevent committees and research and analysis. Through these five components, the EW system collects early warning information and identifies and mobilises appropriate actors and resources for preventive interventions. The outcomes of the interventions are further assessed through joint planning, shared knowledge and best practices amongst stakeholders

A critical analysis of the effectiveness points to the fact that although the system has been able to identify and warn on eminent crime and disasters, its success on preventing and countering violent extremism can be improved. Indication of the risk/emerging threats commonly referred to as warning signs is fashioned in a way that does not fully address the concerns as expounded in the analysis of objective two.

This view was better expressed by a KI who stated that:'There is a catch why the categories do not have indicators. There is a thin line between profiling and early indicators of VE. Some indicators when put, the Muslim community claims that they are being targeted. Then you end up having problems with them, the county...' (KII 12, 25 August 2021).

The main issue of concern is that the EWER system encompasses six counties and is based on crimes that are prevalent in a specific region, thus a generalized categorization of activities to report on. The categorization of EW indicators on VE on SCEWER still remains challenging. Although the system follows the Do No Harm Approach, the issues of vulnerability and profiling come into play thus limiting what should or should not constitute an indicator for VE. The lack of indicators further highlights the level up to which the community has understood the problem of VE and its delineation to issues such as religion.

As per (UNISDR, 2015) a better understanding of the risk knowledge in an EW system is fundamental as it helps with identification of signs. As such, the lack thereof translates to fear of missing out on the early tell-tale signs by the system.

The understanding of EWER system on VE needs to take a different approach. One that first hinges on strong social capital and second on strong spheres of influence. The issue of trust and security of information on this system was also highlighted (KII 12, 25 August 2021). The main concern expressed was that EW signals are channeled to a non-governmental source. Security as earlier mentioned is the primary role of the state. In such a system, issues on how and what information is shared to the security agencies becomes a subject matter of discretion bestowed on the organization. This is because KECOSCE has right of ownership of the system. As such, security agencies as well as other P/CVE actors may not have full leverage over the information amassed by the SCEWER. On social capital, trust in channels of information is still problematic. The SCEWER uses a 10 digit hotline number which the community can use to report incidences. In addition, the

system uses EWER contact cards bearing the numbers of local CSIC committees members to encourage a connection between citizens and security service providers (KECOSCE, 2021). Reporting of VE issues through the hotline number is ineffectual. This is because of the prompting question ' Where does one first turn to when faced with an issue on VE?' The hotline number fails to answer to this. Moreover, the findings in objective two confirmed that 34% of the respondents prefer social media to air their concerns. Likewise, with security agents being subject to changing job posts within the country, this makes it hard for the EWER contact cards to be dully updated at all times. Rendering the cards invalid every time a security member/members are posted to serve in other parts of the country.

Secondly, a good EW system is that which taps into strong spheres of influence to address VE. SCEWER has been able to adapt this in the fight against VE through the use of field monitors and prevention committees. The field monitors are community-based volunteers that are trained as peace monitors of the EWER system. They are trained by KECOSCE to be able to identify EW sings and report through the incident reporting platform, coded SMS or phone calls. Nonetheless, the theme about security of those who interact with such systems come into play.

A good EW system should ensure that the safety of those who use it and safety of vulnerable persons to VE is guaranteed. Whereas the safety of those interacting with SCEWER lies on the sole responsibility of KECOSCE as the primary custodian of the system, safety of vulnerable persons to VE is informed by the responses as a result of the information shared. The SCEWER uses a multi-stakeholder approach when it comes to early response.

The Ministry of Interior is a key stakeholder at the national level, coordination with the County Commissioner (CC) as well as the county government are important stakeholders as first responders to conflict and violence at the county level. The systems also works with other non state actors such as religious groups, civil society organizations and community based organisations. With a lack of a harmonized ER mechanism as discussed under objective two, every actor therefore becomes privy to their individual responses which are shroud with issues of legality such as the allegations on extrajudicial killings, abductions and or enforced disappearances. This therefore, becomes the starting point towards harmonization of SCEWER system if adapted by all stakeholders. Finally, being a non governmental organization, KECOSCE relies on donor funding to carry out its activities. As earlier discussed under objective two, resource planning is crucial to the

effectiveness on any EWS (UNISDR, 2015). Besides, resources speak directly to how an organization shapes and pursues its interest. It also has a direct correlation with perception of ownership, inclusivity and diversity of the system. As it is, the system is primarily sponsored by KECOSCE through external partnerships thus allowing little room for the involvement of the security agencies who are primarily tasked with ensuring security.

Unlike the SCEWER, the Kenya Muslim Youth Alliance (KYMA) EW model is not a system generated EWER mechanism and is mainly used by the organisation to conduct its work in P/CVE. The model is comprised of youth, women and religious leaders influencers from various villages within Kwale, who are considered as change agents within the community. The framework is founded on the values and social norms of the Digo community in a bid to maximise on the positives that brings the Digo community together (KII 11, 25 August 2021). The approach to tap into shared identities is promising towards transforming violent extremism (Lederach, 2003). Additionally, this approach echoes the tenets of structural functionalism theory on the importance of understanding social norms to inform social interaction thus social order.

The model however, fails to provide systematized channels of communication and reporting.

According to (KII 11, 25 August 2021) information is collected and shared through internal consultation with other networks. An individualistic approach by the model therefore fails to answer how harmonized information is collected, verified, analysed, disseminated to the intended audience. From the foregoing discussion, it is evident that the challenges on the lack of a harmonized EWER framework as discussed on objective two resurface in the actual use of the few existing frameworks. Of major concern is the starting point, UNISDR (2015) indicates that the lack of a shared understanding of the concept of VE has led to the cascading of different meanings of VE taken up by actors and the consequent approaches to prevent and counter violent extremism. However, the remaining constant factor is the reigning role of community participation in creating an efficient EW system. If well integrated, the community offer greater hope towards stopping the VE problem before it manifests. Overall, esteem, self-efficacy, and impulsivity cumulatively explain 72 % of the variance in criminal status and thus, are the main risk factors. Specifically, esteem, self-efficacy, and impulsivity account for 43 %, 17 % and 12 % respectively of the variance in adoption of criminal behaviour. The establishment of these individual level risk factors (esteem, efficacy,

and impulsivity) as significant is hardly surprising. This is because, these traits have a great influence on self-regulation and agency in life. In this regard, low self-worth, persistent doubts on one's innate competences to navigate issues within the social context and reach acceptable behavioural outcome coupled with affinity for risky decisions and/or actions without due consideration, leads to a crime.

Further evaluation was carried out to ascertain how esteem, self-efficacy and impulsivity explained/predicted other risk factors not identified as main pathways to crime. In this regard, esteem loads very well with depression and impulsivity. This means that self-esteem is a significant determinant of one's depression and impulsivity level. Therefore, in terms of programming, initiatives that target the enhancement of self-esteem will also help in alleviation of impulsivity and severe depression.

It is also deduced that self-efficacy loads well with family character, attachment, and childhood maltreatment. This implies, self-efficacy development is a significant influence in helping one cope with challenges of character disordered family, weak family bonds and early childhood maltreatment in influencing disruptive behaviours. This is because, individuals with high self-efficacy exude a lot of control on their life risk dynamics such as manifested by negative family functioning (Bandura, 1997).

Therefore, individuals whose self-efficacy is well developed will be resilient to negative influence of disordered family character, weak bonded families, and early childhood victimisation and thus, crime. Thus, for efficacious programs and policies in the management of crime amongst women and girls in Mombasa County, the aim should also be the development of self-efficacy.

Lastly, impulsivity loads very well with anxiety and stress. Therefore, crime management programs that target alleviation of impulsivity, will have a huge influence in addressing mental health issues of offenders particularly with respect to anxiety disorders and acute stress. Generally, programs and policies should focus on esteem, self-efficacy, and impulsivity for effectiveness in addressing crime amongst women and girls. This, however, is specific to Mombasa County and therefore caution should be exercised before replication in other Counties.

Conclusions

The paradox in addressing P/CVE is twofold. On one part lies the emphasis on winning the hearts and minds of target populations, while the other rests on the dominance of hard military and security approaches. To mitigate against VE and harnessing the capacities and actions of front-line communities, a common understanding of the existing threat (UNISDR, 2015) and avenues for exploitation is crucial. Findings above reveal the existence of a weak EWER system in P/CVE in Kwale County. Yet, if well established, EWER promises benefits in addressing VE as it denotes nipping the problem in the bud before it manifests itself. An appreciation of the problem and the opportunities for EWER should be informed by a good understanding of VE concepts as espoused by state and non- state actors.

Even though a majority of the community were not aware of the existing laws and policies, 82% indicated that they could positively contribute to EWER in P/CVE. The willingness by the community to contribute to EWER symbolizes the good will in finding home-grown solutions to common problems.

Policy Recommendations

i. There is need for revision of the NSCVE 2016, to address the issue of harmonization and coordination of EWER activities to P/CVE through an inter-agency approach.

ii. The Kwale County government should initiate the establishment of a P/CVE department within county government structure that will oversee all issues on violent extremism.

iii. Further, the Kwale County government should to allocate the necessary resources towards the implementation of the County Action Plan.

iv. The Ministry of Interior should review the Nyumba Kumi Strategy to promote a non-securitized approach for existing PCVE policies to increase community ownership and trust. This could be achieved through robust re-branding of the Nyumba Kumi Initiative.

Implications for Practitioners

i. The Council of Muslim Scholars and other stakeholders should spearhead the development of Islamic curriculum that include issues of VE/EWER that can be taught in Madrassas.

ii. Kwale CVE Engagement Forum secretariat should take lead in coordinating structured harmonization of monitoring EWER activities by P/CVE actors.

iii. Kwale CVE Engagement Forum secretariat should take lead in intensive sensitization campaigns on the County Action Plan to promote local ownership of homegrown policies.

iv. Kwale county government through the Department of Social Work, Gender and Youth Affairs should increase spaces for continuous capacity building of female & youth led grassroots organizations particularly those that offer psychosocial support.

v. Non-state actors in P/CVE should embrace Transformative approaches to VE in their programmes.

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