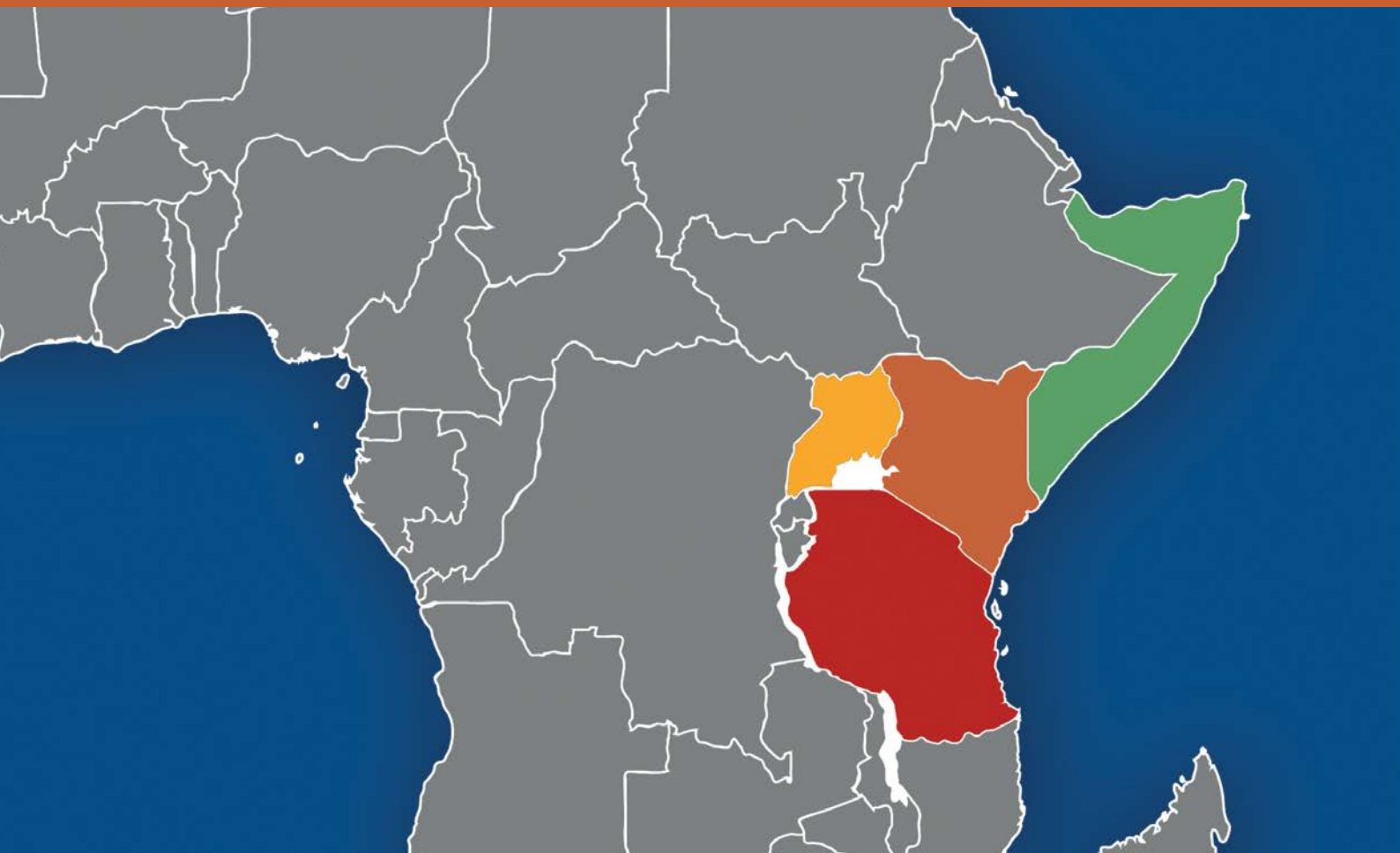


Preventing violent extremism in East Africa

Lessons from Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda

Isel van Zyl and Maram Mahdi



Initiatives to prevent and counter violent extremism in East Africa are being implemented by numerous organisations and are receiving significant funding to address the drivers behind violent extremism in the region. This report examined such projects to establish their objectives, target groups, activities, theories of change, evaluation approaches, donor organisations and funding amounts. The study also focused on the organisations implementing these projects and how they design them to address the violence in the region.

Key findings

- ▶ Violent extremism in East Africa is interpreted by respondents as intercommunal violence fuelled by diminishing natural resources; interethnic and interreligious violence; formal or informal criminal groups; as well as Islamic violent extremism groups like al-Shabaab and the Islamic State in East Africa.
- ▶ Youth was the primary group in most of the P/CVE projects discussed in the study and perceived to be the group most likely to affect change if given the right opportunities.
- ▶ The majority of projects aimed at awareness raising, followed by training and capacity building of target groups.
- ▶ P/CVE actors are applying informal evaluation methods based on local realities.
- ▶ The majority of projects that CSOs are implementing might not directly fall under the ambit of P/CVE initiatives. There is a large emphasis on developmental work.

Recommendations

- ▶ Given the existing distrust between civil society and governments and the effect it has on collaborating on P/CVE initiatives, governments should be more approachable and open to a collaborative approach to prevention efforts in the country, priorities being to decrease human rights violations and increase socio-economic empowerment initiatives.
- ▶ There is a need for a P/CVE evidence base to inform project design and implementation. More research is needed to understand how practitioners in these countries interpret P/CVE and implement related activities. This will help establish P/CVE as a unique field of study or research, separate from peacebuilding and conflict prevention.
- ▶ P/CVE practitioners should find more effective ways to measure long-term progress and should do so regardless of funding. Capacity-building measures should include M&E sessions, taking into consideration that some organisations may not know how to evaluate their projects.
- ▶ Standard guidelines on the measurement and evaluation of P/CVE projects and activities are required to improve the M&E of these initiatives.
- ▶ Local CSOs and communities should design project activities in consultation with their donor organisation where necessary.
- ▶ There needs to be greater knowledge and awareness when it comes to the labelling and design of P/CVE projects, taking into account local cultures and avoiding labelling target groups as 'vulnerable', which leads to further stigmatisation and marginalisation of these groups.

Introduction

In the last few years, global priorities have shifted and placed efforts aimed at preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) on local actors with support from international donors. The idea that states and local civil society can use P/CVE as a tool to end terrorist violence has brought great hope and inspiration. This focus to eliminate devastating violence has inspired donors to contribute vast amounts of resources to P/CVE.

While efforts to contain terrorist violence are being addressed on a number of fronts – military, security and criminal justice – P/CVE efforts aim to address the root causes and the structural dynamics relating to the violence associated with terrorism. In East Africa, substantial financial investments are being made to directly address the push and pull factors that contribute to the grievances associated with violent extremism.

With the help of international donors, local actors are implementing wide-ranging initiatives to address the problems that affect them. However, while significant financial investment has been poured into P/CVE initiatives, very little is known about how these projects are designed, labelled and implemented. This practical question was the focus of this study, which reviewed selected P/CVE projects in four countries in East Africa.

Very little is known about how P/CVE projects are designed, labelled and implemented

The study aimed to understand how theories and ideas associated with P/CVE are translated into practical efforts to achieve their intended results. The United Nation's 2017 report, *Journey to Extremism in Africa*, states that the largest share of existing literature on P/CVE is conceptual as opposed to empirical.¹ Given that theory is often the driving force behind how P/CVE initiatives are designed and implemented, discord may exist between how these initiatives are conceptualised and practically carried out. Furthermore, misalignment between locally designed projects and national action plans and strategies to counter violent extremism hinder progress.

These are some of the factors that make it extremely difficult to realise what works effectively in P/CVE.

The African continent has gained new policy and research interest as part of the global emergence of P/CVE efforts. However, further granularity is needed to achieve effective responses to violent extremism in the African context. This study aims to inform policymakers, researchers and practitioners about the design and implementation of P/CVE projects in an effort to contribute to the growing body of literature. It promotes an evidence-based approach to how P/CVE projects are conceptualised and carried out in four countries in East Africa.

The extent of the threat in East Africa

Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda, the four countries in East Africa which experienced the highest number of incidents of terrorism between 2016 and 27 July 2019, were selected for the study (Figure 1). A broad definition of terrorism was used, including acts of violence perpetrated by various non-state actors such as terrorist groups, clan militias, community militias and unidentified armed groups. Violence perpetrated by state actors on civilian populations was excluded. The study used Armed Conflict Location and Event Data to display the incidents.

Figure 1: Violent incidences in the four study countries

	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
Kenya	54	225	145	42	466
Somalia	854	1 007	1 224	1 052	4 137
Tanzania	13	25	9	10	57
Uganda	36	40	59	36	171

Source: <https://www.acleddata.com/curated-data-files/>

Over a three-and-a-half-year period, the four countries experienced a total of 4 831 incidents of terrorism, with Somalia making up the majority at 4 137 incidents.² Uganda and Tanzania experienced significantly fewer cases, with 171 and 57 incidents respectively. Kenya

experienced significantly fewer cases when compared to Somalia, however the number of cases reported in the study period was approximately double that of Uganda and Tanzania combined. Although there is a vast disparity in the number of incidents per country, overall the number of incidents per year in each country over the study period did not differ drastically. Kenya was the only exception with extreme differences in the number of incidents reported in 2016 and 2017. This likely means that the prevalence of terror-related activity will persist at a similar scale.

These statistics highlight the occurrence of violent extremist activity in East Africa and suggest that further research in the region is warranted. The prevalence of the threat in the four countries in question has been clearly established. Unless innovative, timely and relevant interventions are made, violent extremist activity in the region is unlikely to end. These interventions will only be successful if implementing actors take stock of previous experiences and lessons in the region. Furthermore, there is a need to go beyond relaying the extent of the threat and probing further into P/CVE project design and implementation. As a response to the growing threat of violent extremism in the East African region, this study aims to contribute to the sparse body of knowledge on P/CVE programming in the four countries studied.

Terminology

Many of the terms used in this report remain contested:

Violent extremism is a 'willingness to use or support the use of violence to further particular beliefs, including those of a political, social or ideological nature and may include acts of terrorism'.³

Terrorism is the 'unlawful use of violence or threat of violence, often motivated by religious, political, or other ideological beliefs, to instil fear and coerce governments or societies in pursuit of goals that are usually political'.⁴

Radicalisation is the 'process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups'.⁵

Counter-terrorism refers to military or police activities that are undertaken 'to neutralize terrorists [and extremists], their organizations, and networks in order to

render them incapable of using violence to instil fear and coerce governments or societies to achieve their goals'.⁶

Preventing violent extremism (PVE) consists of 'systematic preventive measures which directly address the drivers of violent extremism. This includes confronting conditions conducive to terrorism while protecting human rights and the rule of law while countering terrorism'. Conditions conducive to terrorism include marginalisation, socio-economic deprivation, human rights abuses and corruption.⁷

Countering violent extremism (CVE) is 'an approach to mitigating or preventing potential terrorist activity that emphasizes the strength of local communities via engagement with a broad range of partners to gain a better understanding of the behaviours, tactics, and other indicators associated with terrorist activity'.⁸

A theory of change is a 'set of assumptions about the relationship between project activities and goals'.⁹

P/CVE and how it differs from peacebuilding initiatives

The term 'preventing or countering violent extremism' gained prominence during the White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism held in Washington D.C. in February 2015. Government officials in attendance admitted that 'intelligence gathering, military force, and law enforcement alone will not solve...the problem of violent extremism'.¹⁰ Government officials and other international representatives further agreed that P/CVE initiatives need to include a comprehensive approach that addresses developmental, humanitarian and economic needs.¹¹ This opens the floor to the debate around whether or not P/CVE is any different from violence prevention or peacebuilding initiatives. The majority of the organisations interviewed stated that they do not list P/CVE as their main area of work. In fact, taking into account how long these organisations have been in existence, they have been doing what could be considered P/CVE work from as far back as 10 years ago. However, there is a valid reason for stating that P/CVE is no different from peacebuilding when considering how the threat of violent extremism is interpreted. Very few respondents in this study referred to al-Shabaab as the main threat. Rather, they considered local organised and informal criminal groups to be the main cause of violence.

Methodology and limitations of the study

This report follows the same methodology as the 'Preventing Extremism in West and Central Africa' report published in September 2018.¹² The study provides a description of the P/CVE initiatives that are being or have been implemented recently in East Africa. It aims to contribute to an understanding of how project designers and implementers are defining the meaning of P/CVE and its accompanying practices. Ultimately, this study seeks to understand how project activities have been designed to achieve their intended results. Data were gathered between January and May 2019, and included interviews and manually completed questionnaires as well as additional information provided by respondents.

Questions addressed by the study included project objectives, design, target groups, activities correlating to the specific target groups, theories of change, how the evaluation is conducted, challenges, lessons learned, funding sources and donor organisations.

The projects selected for this study are not a representative sample of P/CVE projects in the respective countries. The study relied on organisations self-selecting through processes explained in the methodology section below. This report does not name any organisations due to the sensitive nature of P/CVE actors and activities in East Africa.

Methodology

In order to seek out relevant organisations and projects, a literature review and Internet search were conducted. A range of keywords were used to search as broadly as possible, given that many organisations undertaking P/CVE activities do not use this term to describe their work. The search terms included the following: PVE + country, CVE + country, development projects + country, peacebuilding + country, education projects + country.

Organisations with only telephone/cell phone numbers or an active Facebook/Twitter account were contacted via SMS/WhatsApp messaging or were sent a private message via their Facebook/Twitter accounts. The organisations with email addresses were sent emails and official invitation letters requesting their participation. The invitation letter included a generally used definition

for violent extremism (see terminology section). The term 'violent extremism' is not used among local actors and, if not defined properly, could cause respondents to decline the invitation to participate due to a misunderstanding.

Following the invitation email and based on the responses received, organisations were sent follow-up emails to schedule an interview via Skype. The interviews were conducted over a period of four months. Questions addressed by the study included project objectives, design, target groups, activities correlating to the specific target groups, theories of change, how the evaluation is conducted, challenges, lessons learned, funding sources and donor organisations.

Many organisations were implementing or had implemented more than one project which was relevant to this study. It was decided that data would be collected from as many of these projects as possible within the time available, depending on the willingness of respondents. This study thus features both ongoing and concluded projects.

Unless innovative interventions are made, violent extremist activity is unlikely to end

Some respondents were actively implementing activities in the field and preferred completing soft copies of the questionnaire, due to scheduling difficulties and Internet connection issues. Respondents were given the options of remaining anonymous and declining to answer any questions deemed to be sensitive. No incentives were offered for participation in the study. As noted, this report does not name any of the participating organisations due to the sensitive nature of P/CVE actors and activities in East Africa.

The researchers used chain-referral sampling to obtain referrals to other organisations undertaking P/CVE work. A total of 626 organisations were contacted. However, given that some organisations are no longer active (email addresses, social media pages and telephone numbers out of order) and due to time limitations, not all of those identified and contacted could be interviewed.

Limitations of the study

Data were gathered via Skype or telephone interviews and via written answers. Additional documentation and clarification was provided by organisations via email or WhatsApp messaging. For respondents who opted to provide a written response, there were sometimes limited opportunities to request follow-up information.

Given the methods used to select organisations, it is likely that many without an Internet/social media presence were not identified. Language was a possible barrier, as the search was done in English and the respondents spoke English as their second or third language.

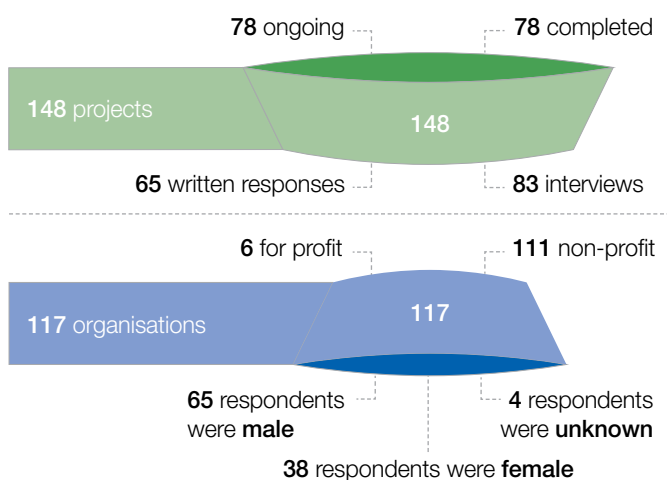
Many respondents indicated that their organisations avoided describing their projects as P/CVE and preferred terms like ‘peacebuilding’, ‘conflict prevention’ or ‘developmental and humanitarian aid’. This limited the search, as the study failed to identify numerous other organisations and projects working on P/CVE.

As the data collection was carried out for only a limited time (four months), it was not possible to interview all the organisations contacted.

Profile of respondents and their organisations

Data were gathered from 148 projects implemented by 117 organisations (Figure 2). During some interviews, more than two people represented their organisation, resulting in a total of 132 respondents. The gender distribution of the respondents was 90 males, 38 females and four respondents of unknown gender. Sixty-two project respondents chose to remain anonymous and 55 said they did not mind being referenced in the study.

Figure 2: Profile of respondents



The majority of participating organisations (112) were registered as non-governmental institutions. Only five were governmental institutions. Of the 117 organisations, 111 said they were non-profits and six were for-profits.

Findings

Implementing organisations

Respondents were asked about the general work their organisation does. They gave more than one description (Figure 3).

Forty respondents said that their organisations implement general peacebuilding and violence prevention work. Thirty-seven respondents said that their organisations do work around capacity building, education and training, and 34 do work around advocacy, legal aid and promoting human rights. Only seven respondents identified their organisation’s work to be in P/CVE or counter-terrorism. This contributes to the recent arguments around whether P/CVE is any different from peacebuilding and conflict prevention work, as well as whether some organisations are adequately equipped and trained to design and implement P/CVE activities.

Respondents were asked about how their organisations are registered and how long their organisations have been active in the four countries (Figure 4).

Seventeen organisations have been active for five to 10 years, 15 have been active for two to five years and only five have been operating for less than two years. The majority of organisations (80) have been active for 10 or more years. This fact contributes to the above-discussed argument about whether or not P/CVE is any different to peacebuilding or conflict prevention or whether it is just an extension of the work these organisations are already doing. The data in Figure 4 support the argument that activities within P/CVE are similar to peacebuilding efforts which have existed for decades and are now being labelled as ‘P/CVE’, with the exception of ‘counter-narratives’, which is considered unique to P/CVE.

Respondents were asked whether their organisations collaborate with government agencies in their countries when implementing their projects (Figure 5).

Figure 3: General work the organisation does

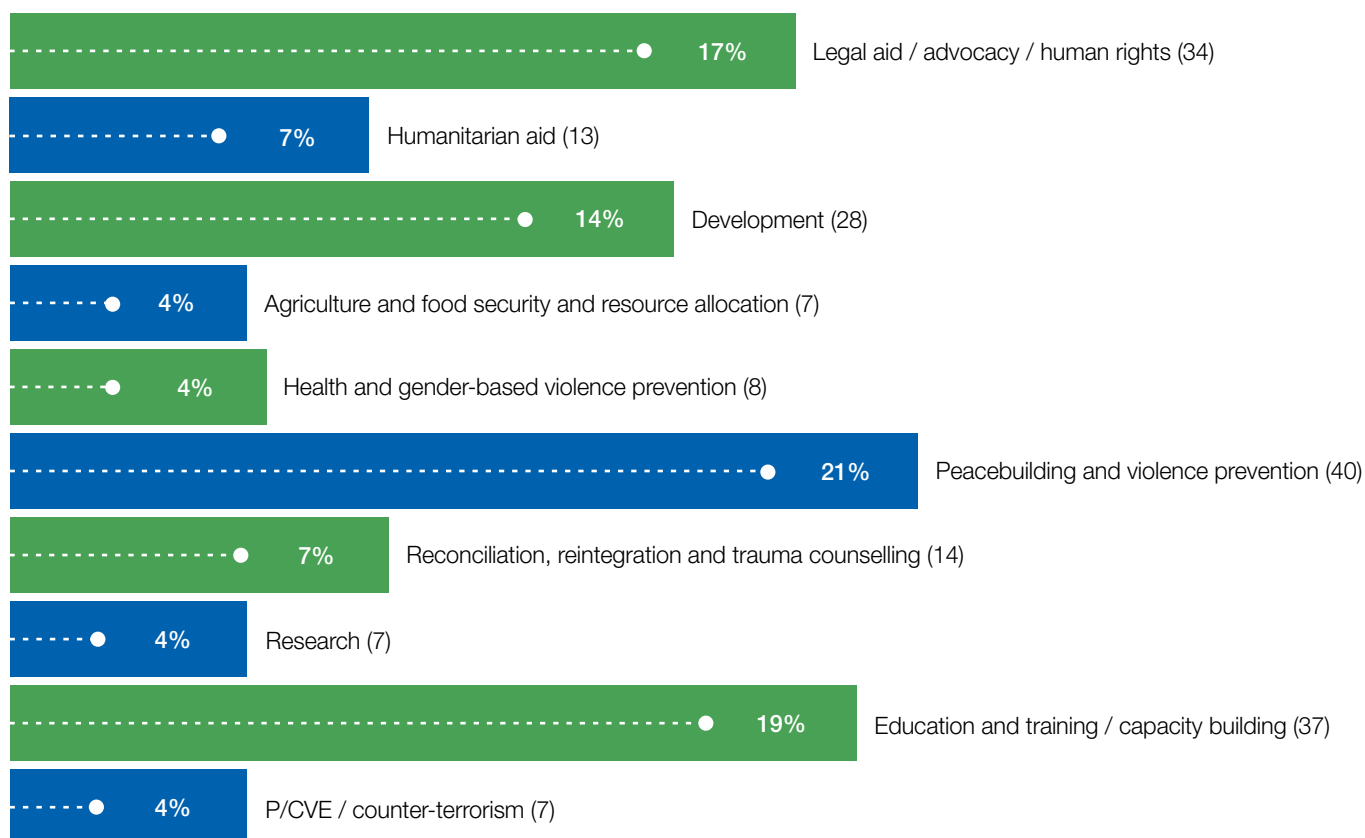
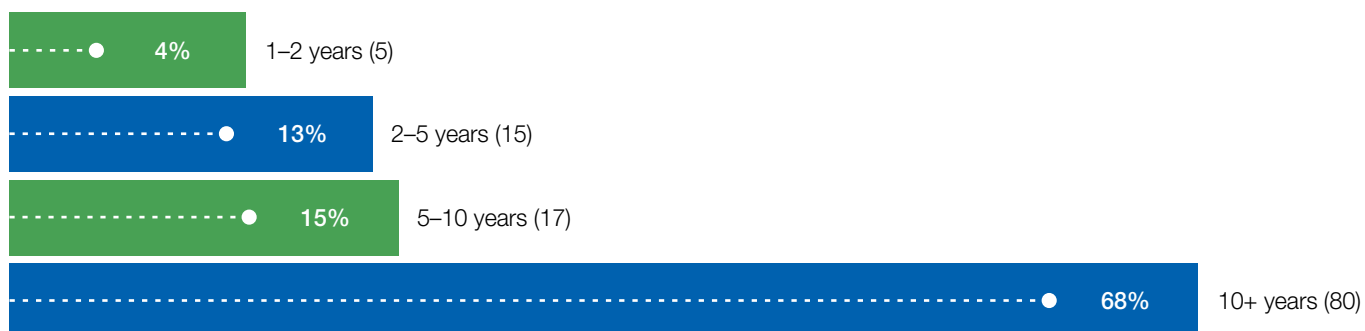


Figure 4: Number of years active

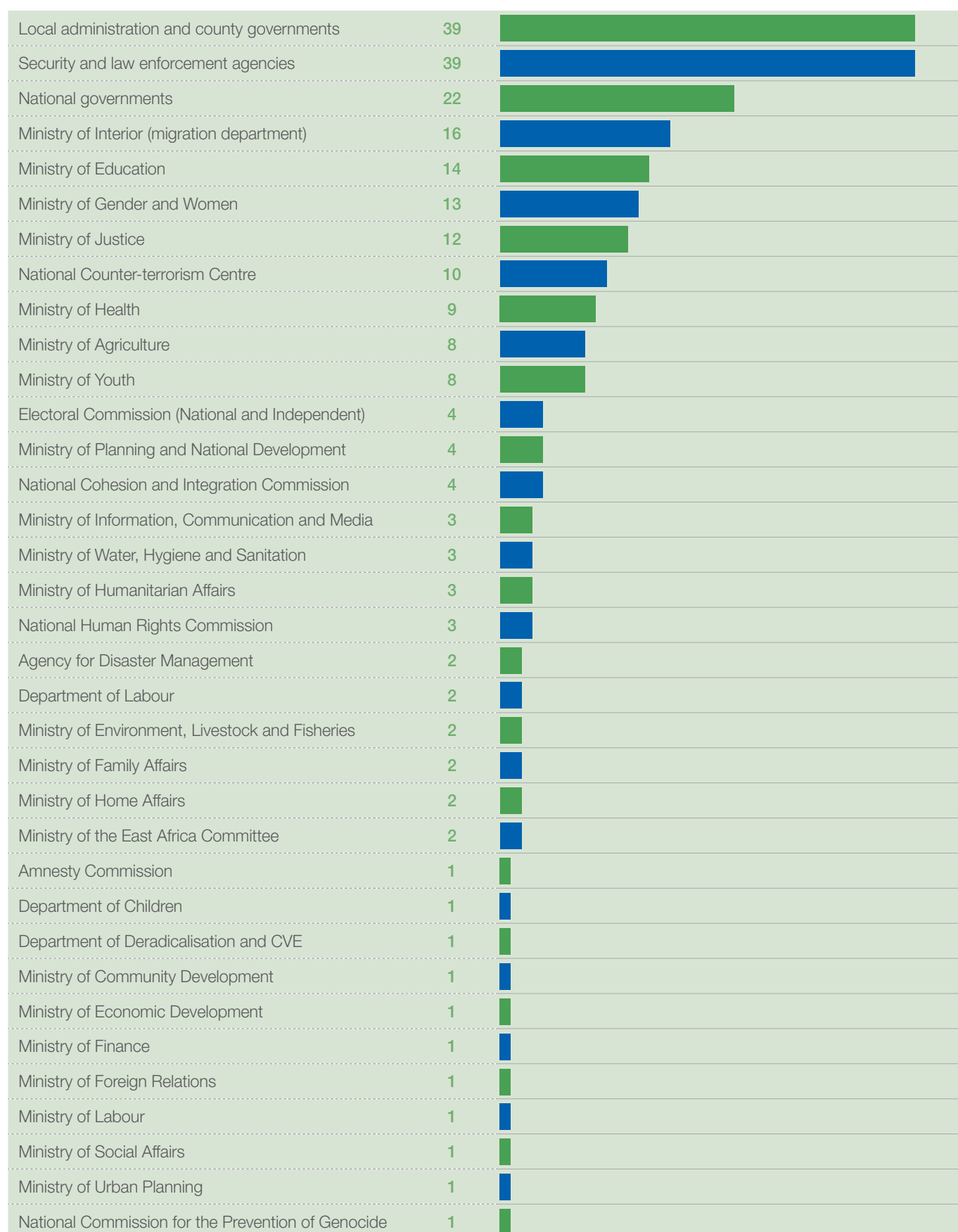


One hundred and forty of the 148 organisations' projects include collaboration with government agencies in the four countries. The most frequently mentioned government agencies were security and law enforcement (39 projects) and local administration and county governments (39 projects). The respondents who listed 'local administration and county governments' were mostly from Kenya. They were the biggest group indicating collaboration with their county governments in implementing or even designing the county P/CVE action plans. Kenyan

organisations are required to obtain authorisation from their county governments to implement P/CVE activities in the communities.

Eight respondents said their projects do not include working with any government agencies. Only two of the eight gave reasons for not collaborating with their governments: one said that they preferred involving other local organisations, which allowed for increased access to vulnerable communities; the other said that their government's P/CVE approach is top-down, but they prefer working bottom-up.

Figure 5: Government agencies that organisations collaborate with during the implementation of their projects



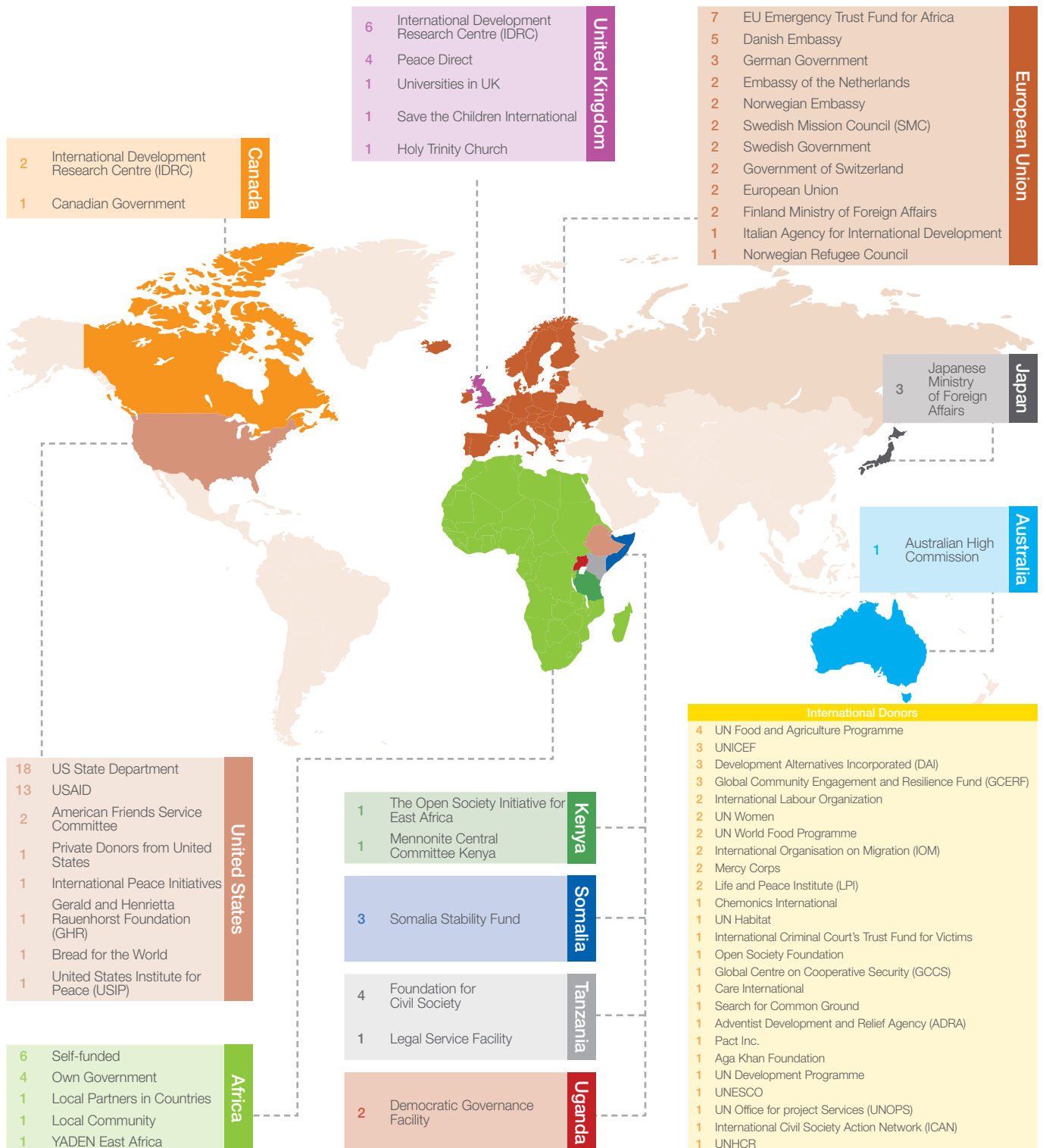
Project support in East Africa

Donor organisations

Respondents were asked who the donor organisations for their projects were. Some respondents requested the

study not to list their donor organisations due to the negative attention this might attract.¹³

Figure 6: Sources of donor support



Eighteen of the projects were funded by the US Department of State, which includes the Counter Terrorism Bureau and the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour. Thirteen projects were funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID). Twenty-five donor organisations noted by the respondents are based in Africa. Of those funded on the continent, most received support from their respective national governments, from private donors or were self-funded. Thirty-eight projects were funded by US organisations; 43 by European organisations (including UK organisations); and 40 by international or intergovernmental organisations such as the UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) or Development Alternatives Incorporated (DAI).

Respondents were asked what amount of funding they received for the project (Figure 7).

Some respondents from the four countries indicated the funding amounts in their local currency. Organisations funded by European organisations provided their amounts in euros. The exchange rate of 15 May 2019 was used to convert those amounts into US dollars.

The highest amount of funding documented in this study was US\$20 million. The majority of projects (48) were funded with less than US\$10 000. Twenty-nine projects were funded for over a million US dollars.

Respondents were asked about the duration of funding they received (Figure 8).

Figure 7: Funding amounts per project (US\$)

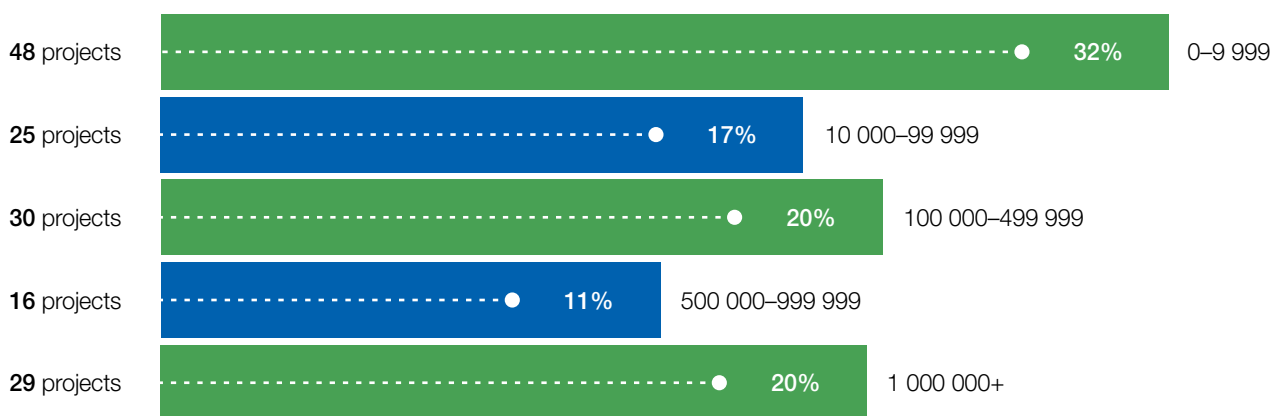
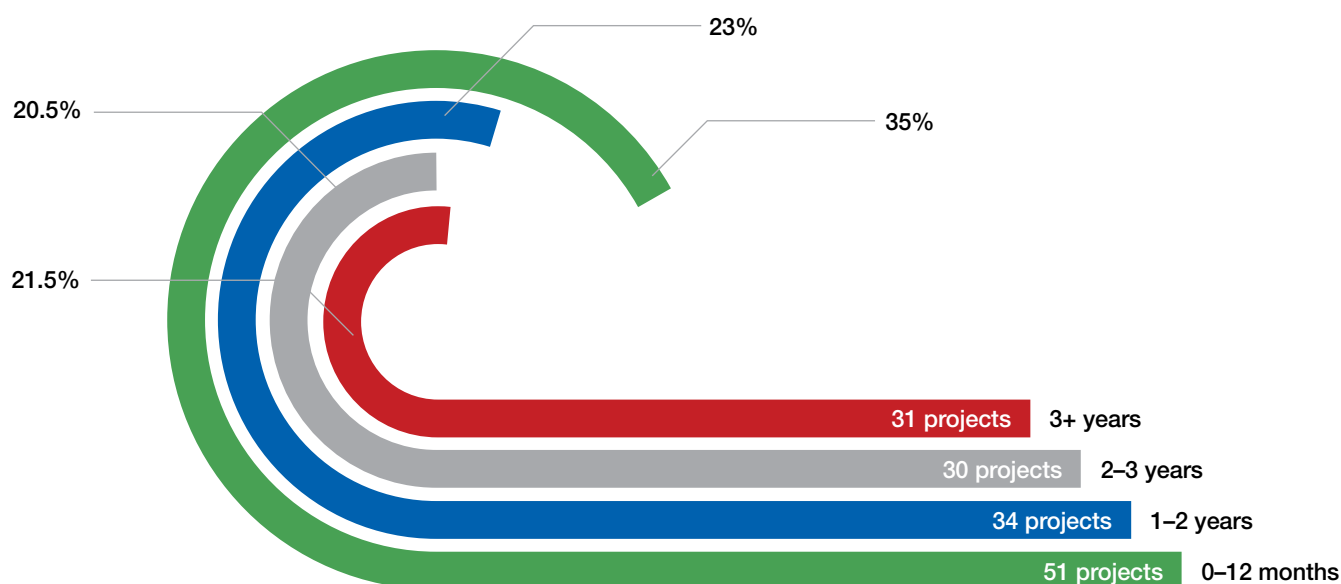


Figure 8: Duration of project funding



Most of the projects (51) were funded for only 12 months or less, followed by 34 projects being funded for one to two years. Considering that there is an overlap between developmental and P/CVE initiatives, this raises the question of whether P/CVE initiatives should not be given enough time before they can be expected to have an impact. This raises questions around the impact of P/CVE initiatives over a 12 month period.

Project design in East Africa

Projects as described by respondents

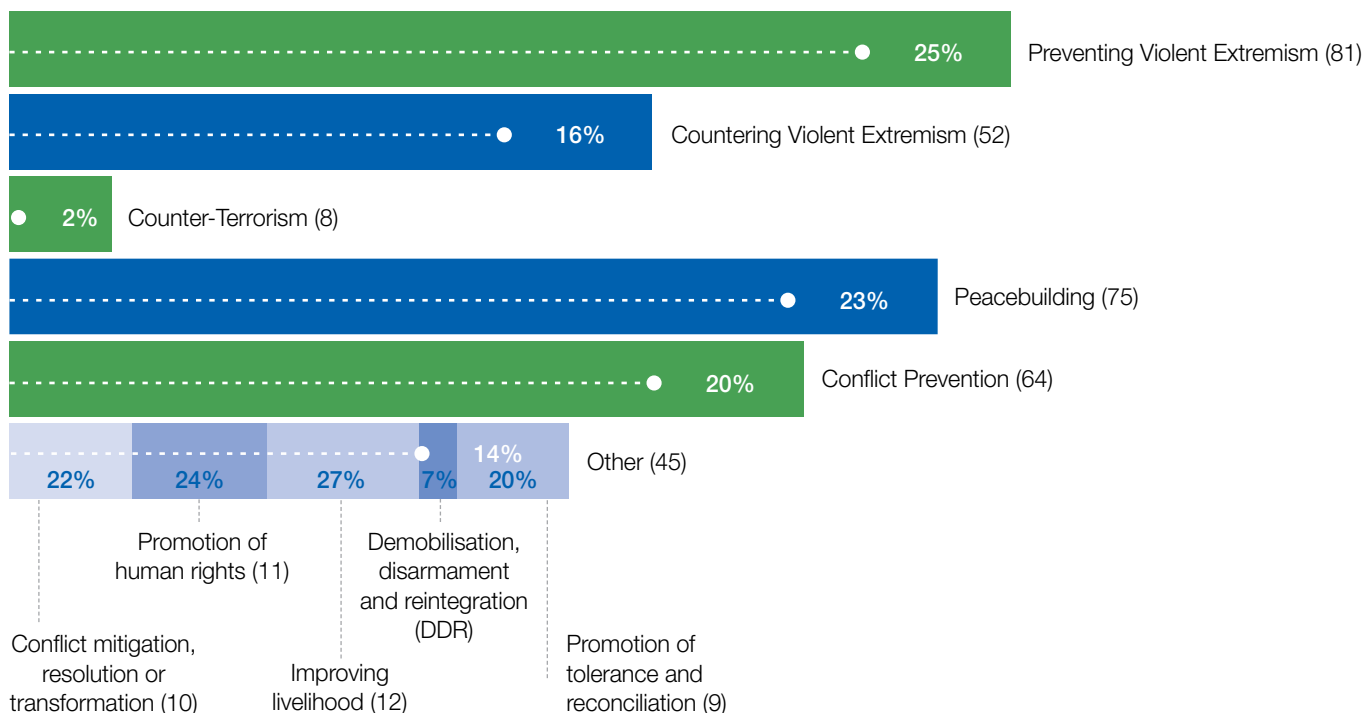
Respondents were asked to describe their projects based on the options shown in Figure 9. Most respondents chose more than one description.

The majority of respondents (81) described their projects as ‘preventing violent extremism’. After PVE, the two most frequently mentioned descriptions were peacebuilding (75 projects) and conflict prevention (64 projects). Under the option ‘other’, the respondents used descriptions like ‘improving the livelihood of specific target groups’, ‘promoting human rights’ and ‘conflict transformation, resolution and mitigation’, among others. Fifty-one projects did not use the terms PVE or CVE, instead choosing the labels ‘peacebuilding’ and ‘conflict prevention’.

Providing the respondents with an ‘other’ option opened the opportunity to discuss what P/CVE entails, according to local actors. Objectives such as the promotion of human rights, improvement of people’s socio-economic circumstances and conflict resolution can all be considered to fall under P/CVE and do not have to be stand-alone objectives. This also emphasises that the term ‘P/CVE’ will differ as much as the drivers of violent extremism do in different regions, countries and communities.

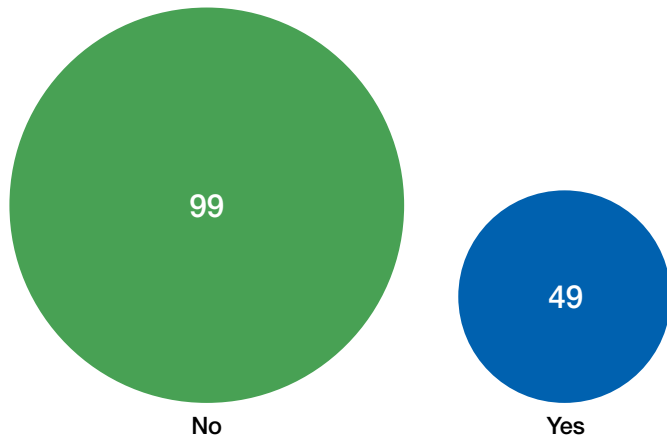
The Tanzanian respondents explained that although they consider their projects to be P/CVE, they do not label them as such to avoid retaliation from the government, for example being arrested by security forces. Due to the lack of support and even hostility from the Tanzanian government, they prefer to label their projects as conflict prevention or peacebuilding. Donor organisations need to be mindful of this when approaching local organisations to conduct P/CVE projects in the country. One Tanzanian respondent admitted that ‘the governments of Zanzibar and mainland Tanzania does not want anything to do with P/CVE being publicised. So, we have to use terms like “peacebuilding” and “peaceful conflict resolution” and during the workshops bring in P/CVE’.¹⁴

Figure 9: Projects as described by respondents



Respondents were asked whether this was the first P/CVE-related project that their organisation had implemented.

Figure 10: First P/CVE-related project implemented by the organisation or not



Forty-nine projects were the first P/CVE-related projects implemented by the organisation and 99 were not. Some respondents raised concerns over P/CVE projects being launched by organisations that do not have any P/CVE experience. This ‘inexperience’ also refers to working with traumatised and vulnerable individuals.

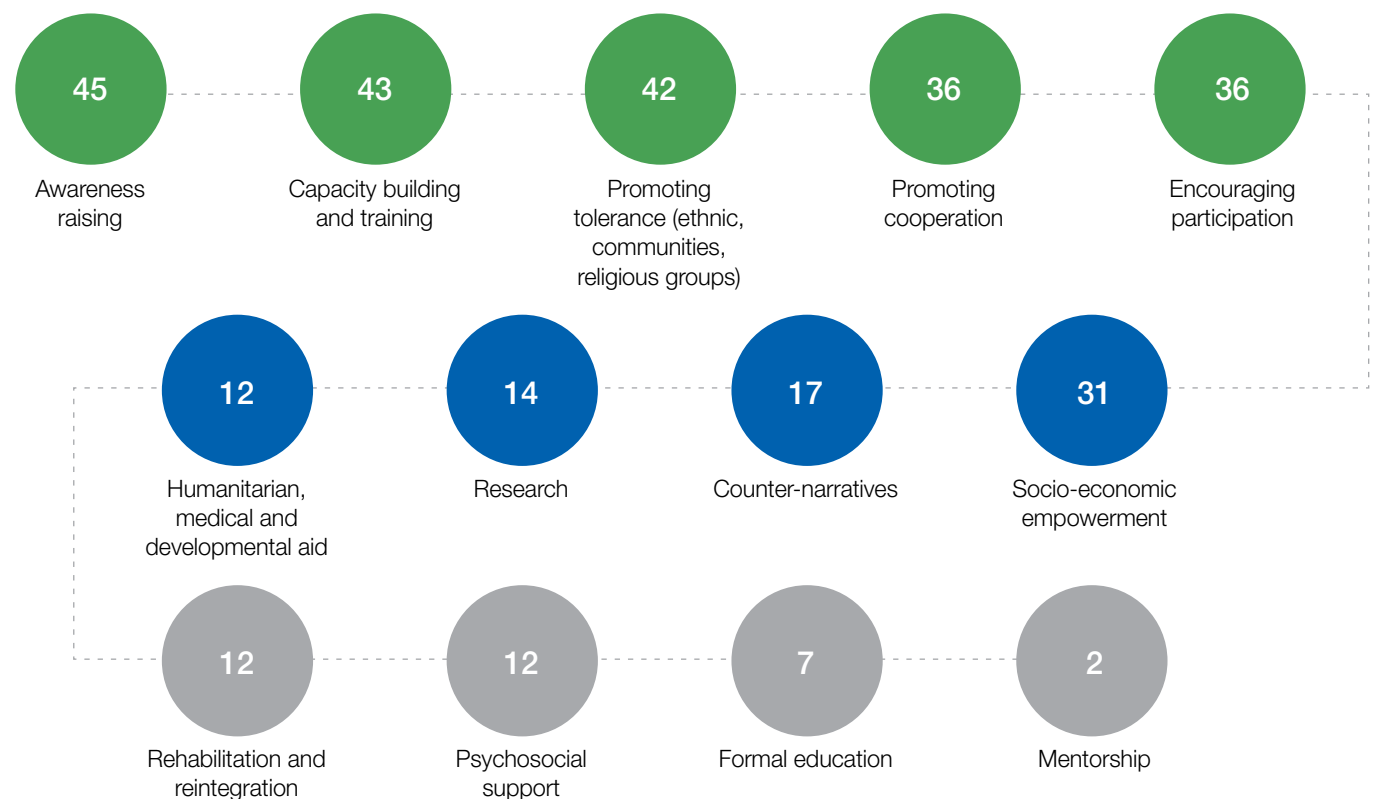
Project objectives

Respondents were asked to explain the objectives of their projects, with most indicating multiple objectives. Respondents considered all the objectives discussed below to be P/CVE activities (Figure 11).

The most frequently mentioned objective, noted for 45 projects, was awareness raising, followed closely by capacity building and training (43 projects) and promoting tolerance between different communities, ethnic and religious groups (42 projects). Awareness raising refers to sensitisation campaigns aimed at informing communities and governments about the drivers behind violent extremism and how to increase resilience within communities. According to respondents, individuals will be less vulnerable to being recruited or exploited by violent extremist groups if they are equipped with the knowledge on how they operate.

According to respondents, intercommunal, interethnic and interreligious tensions and hostility should be considered the main issues to address in promoting tolerance. These tensions not only fuel violent extremist

Figure 11: Project objectives



narratives, but also cause unnecessary violence. Promoting tolerance also refers to ex-combatants who are being reintegrated into their communities.

Capacity building comprises training employees of certain government agencies, which also includes providing technical support where the government agencies need it.

Promoting cooperation, another frequently mentioned objective (36 projects), refers to creating avenues for cooperation and networks within different government agencies, as well as between government agencies and local actors. Respondents believe that if there is any hope for P/CVE, then these efforts need to be holistic and implemented on multiple tiers. This, however, is a double-edged sword, because many respondents also believe that the governments are the drivers behind violent extremism due to their hard-handed military measures and inexperience in the subject (discussed in more detail later).

Promoting cooperation also refers to resource sharing between communities. According to respondents, intercommunal conflict is mainly caused by a lack of natural resources and climate change. Many efforts are aimed at creating systems in which different communities can share watering holes and grazing lands for their cattle and other animals.

Encouraging participation was not mentioned as an objective by respondents in the West and Central Africa P/CVE report. This refers to leadership roles within communities, and participation in dialogues with the government and law enforcement agencies. Different target groups, especially youth and women, are encouraged to start participating in the creation of solutions for the problems faced in their communities. Youth and women are seen as target groups with immense potential when given the right tools (discussed later).

Another interesting objective noted was research (14 projects). This is usually a secondary objective aimed at gaining information from the target groups about what makes them vulnerable. The research aims to inform other practitioners of how they could approach the design of their projects, and to inform governments about what the drivers are behind violent extremism in their countries.

Theory of change

Respondents were asked how they expected their project objectives and activities to reduce violent extremism and what their project's theory of change was. The majority of respondents provided more than one theory of change for their projects.

Figure 12: Theory of change



The most frequently mentioned theory of change (52 projects) is that by raising awareness on violent extremism, the modus operandi of violent extremist groups, and what drives individuals to join these groups, government agencies and community members will be better equipped to assist in implementing P/CVE projects in the country. Fifty projects' theory of change is that by providing selected target groups with education, skills development and socio-economic support, they will be less vulnerable to exploitation by violent extremist groups. Forty-two projects' theory of change is that vulnerability

to violent extremism can be reduced by improving cohesion, trust and tolerance between different communities. This includes preparing communities to reintegrate rehabilitated, disengaged combatants. Respondents believe that if disengaged combatants are rejected or hurt by their communities, other combatants will be discouraged from leaving violent extremist groups.

Target groups

Respondents were asked about their project's target groups (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Key icons used for target groups

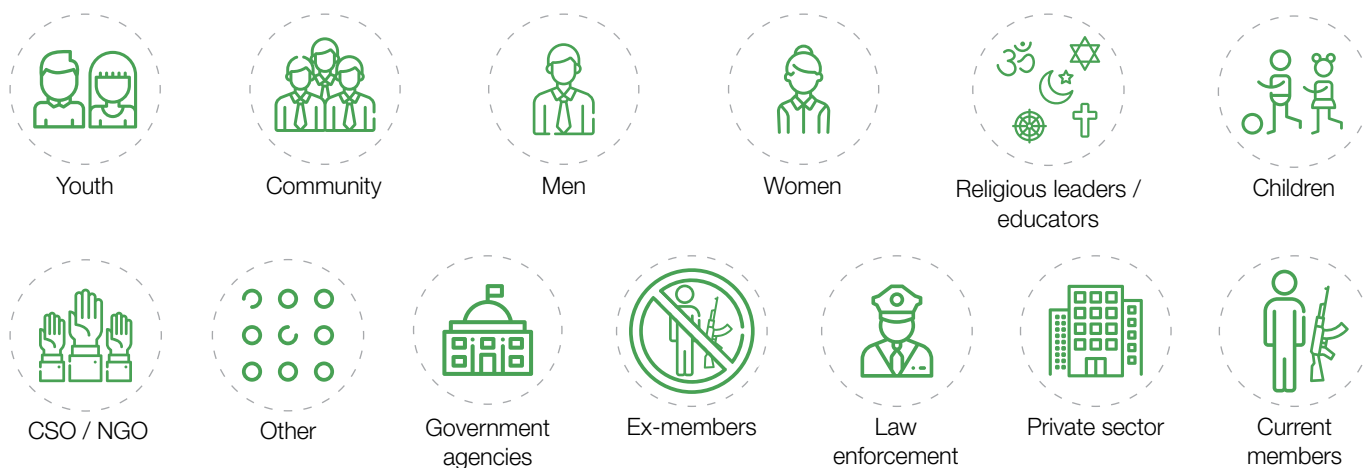
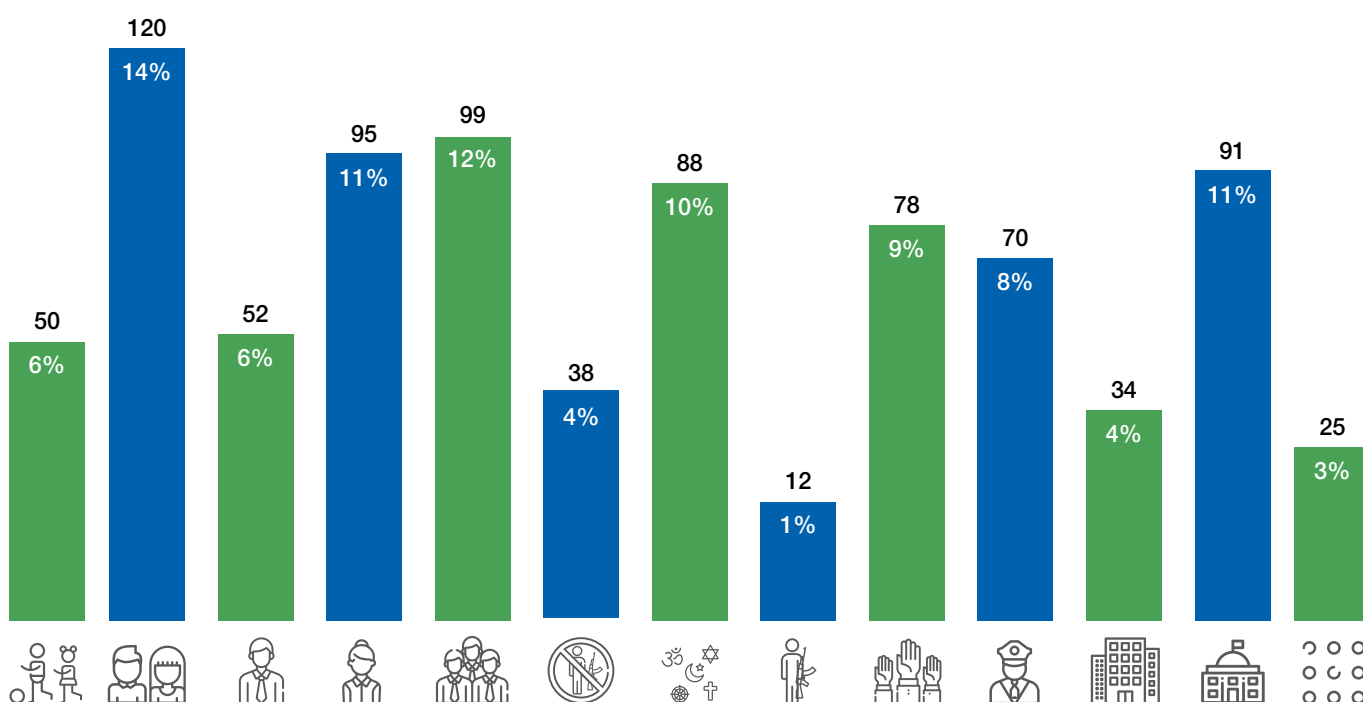


Figure 14: Project target groups



The most frequently mentioned target group was youth, named by 120 projects, followed by communities (99 projects). The third most frequently mentioned target group was women (95 projects). Only 12 projects focus on current members of violent extremist groups.

Target groups: Activities

Respondents were asked which activities directly correlate to which target groups and why they chose this specific target group. Some respondents declined to elaborate on this.

Youth



Most activities that correlate directly to youth are education, skills development and training, which is being implemented by 63 projects. The second most implemented activity (34 projects) relating to youth is dialogue, group discussions and encouragement of participation. Many respondents said that some of the youth's frustrations stem from not being taken seriously within their communities and feeling that their voices are not heard. This is why so many projects are aimed at bringing the community and young people together to discuss the important role youth can play within their communities and also to discuss the reasons behind some of their grievances. A term which was often used during interviews and questionnaires was 'agents of change'. Respondents believe that if young people are empowered, they can become agents of change within their communities, rather than perpetrators of violence. The three main reasons for choosing youth are, firstly, because of their vulnerability (72 projects); secondly, because they are

most likely to be the perpetrators of violence (23 projects); and thirdly, because of their influential position in their communities (19 projects). Youth are influential as they can easily mobilise their peer group to achieve their objectives.


Communities



Forty-seven projects' activities include hosting dialogues and reconciliation discussions within communities and between neighbouring communities. Twenty-seven projects aim at skills development and vocational training of community members, followed closely by 23 projects aiming at raising awareness and sensitising the community to violent extremism. Twenty-one projects focus on communities to help inform their project design and, considering their wealth of information, community members contribute to P/CVE-related research.

Twenty-five project respondents said that communities are chosen as a target group because they can assist with the implementation of project activities and act as 'watch dogs' to ensure the continuation of project implementation when the organisation's grant ends. Eighteen respondents said they focus on communities because they are most affected by violence and in need of assistance. Fourteen projects chose communities as their target groups to empower them to be protagonists in P/CVE efforts. Respondents believe that ignorance and lack of awareness can cause communities to be antagonistic towards P/CVE efforts in their communities.

Women

Women		
Activities		Reasons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocational training and socio-economic empowerment • Community dialogues • Awareness raising and sensitisation • Physical and psychological aid • Recreational and cultural activities • Research • Rehabilitation and reintegration 	 <p>95 projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influential position • Most affected by violence • Vulnerability to exploitation

Most of the activities that correlate to women are vocational training and socio-economic empowerment (44 projects). Many women affected by violence are forced to become the breadwinners for their families. However, due to gender inequality, many of them do not have any formal education and therefore have limited employment opportunities and skills. The second most implemented activity (39 projects) is community dialogues and debates. Respondents who noted this activity said that due to women's powerful and strategic position within their communities, they should be given a seat at the table when discussing problems and solutions within the communities.

The three main reasons for choosing women are, firstly, because of their influential position in their communities (52 projects) as the mothers, wives and sisters of the men who voluntarily join or are radicalised into violent extremist groups. According to the respondents, this means they are strategically placed to recognise the warning signs of radicalisation and they could be empowered to positively influence their families to not join such groups. The second reason behind choosing women is because they are most affected by violence (25 projects). Thirdly, 21 projects said they chose women because they are most likely to be exploited by both violent extremist groups and the security forces in these four countries.

Government agencies

Thirty-eight projects that listed government agencies as the target group for their project aim at establishing networks and avenues for collaboration. This refers to dialogues between different stakeholders (government–

government, government–civil society organisation [CSO], CSO–CSO) as well as creating platforms to discuss avenues for collaboration between governments, communities and CSOs from neighbouring countries. Twenty-seven project respondents said their activities include building the capacity of government agencies and assisting with any activities relating to P/CVE. Thirteen project respondents said that they aim at raising awareness around P/CVE, which includes how actions could either positively or negatively contribute to violent extremism in their countries.

Government agencies		
Activities		Reasons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing networks and avenues for collaboration • Capacity building and technical assistance • Awareness raising on P/CVE • Provision of other types of support 	 <p>91 projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have authority and financial resources to assist with P/CVE • Misconceptions around what P/CVE is • In need of capacity building and technical assistance • To ensure successful implementation of P/CVE projects
<h4>Types of government agencies</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National and local government • Ministry of Education • Ministry of Labour and Employment • Ministry of Interior • Law enforcement and security agencies • National Counterterrorism Centre • Department of Community Development Services • Human Rights Commission • Ministry of Agriculture • Ministry of Health • Department of Home Affairs • Ministry of Cultural and Religious Affairs • Ministry of Social and Family Affairs 		

The main reason why projects focus on government agencies as their target group is because they are considered the highest authority in the country and it is hoped that in return they will fund the CSOs working on P/CVE projects in the country (35 projects). Fourteen project respondents said that government agencies need to better understand P/CVE and how they can positively contribute to the implementation of P/CVE-related projects. Eight project respondents believe that government agencies need capacity building and

technical support, and six said that by coordinating efforts between CSOs and government agencies and 'other groups', P/CVE activities can be more successful.

Religious leaders



Forty-six projects that focus on religious leaders as the target group said that their activity is to empower them to lead community discussions around interfaith tolerance and help raise awareness within the community. Thirty-seven projects said that they train and build the capacity of religious leaders on conflict prevention, peacebuilding and preventing violent extremism. Fifteen projects aim at creating networks for religious leaders to share their experiences as well as platforms on which they can inform government and other agencies 'about the necessity of developing a standardised curriculum and an examination board for peaceful Islamic education'.¹⁵ Only 13 projects aim at helping religious leaders develop counter-narratives and 11 train religious leaders to provide psychosocial counselling to vulnerable groups in the community.

The main reasons why religious leaders are chosen as a target group are, firstly, because of their high level of authority in and access to the communities (43 projects). Secondly, twenty-seven projects chose religious leaders because of their familiarity with the Koran, which is believed to make them better equipped at creating counter-narratives as well as facilitating the deradicalisation process. Thirdly, nine projects chose religious leaders because of their role as facilitators of radicalisation in some cases. Respondents who listed this reason explained that sometimes religious leaders do not radicalise on purpose but this happens due to presumed interfaith conflict between Christian and Muslim religious leaders.

Civil society organisations



Twenty-four projects that listed CSOs as their target group said their activities include capacity building. Another 24 projects include hosting planning, coordination and partnership meetings in order to avoid duplication of projects and activities. Twenty-two projects include other CSOs as partners in their activities. Twenty-one projects organise information-sharing meetings with other CSOs. This is also aimed at avoiding any duplication and sharing lessons learned. Only 11 projects aim at funding and providing other CSOs with logistical support.

The two main reasons for choosing other CSOs as target groups of their projects are, firstly, because they have either superior capacity on certain topics and/or better access to communities and target groups (19 projects). Secondly, they are chosen to increase collaboration on projects and the reach of P/CVE activities (18 projects). An interesting reason mentioned by seven projects for choosing CSOs as a target group is to train them on what P/CVE is in order for them to better design their projects. This was mentioned by local CSOs and correlates with the 11 projects that provide funding and logistical support to other CSOs.

Law enforcement

Law enforcement	
Activities	Reasons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information-sharing and trust-building meetings Capacity building and technical assistance Awareness raising on P/CVE and target groups Awareness raising on human rights and rule of law Provision of other types of support 	 <p>70 projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have superior capacity to counter violent extremism Misconceptions around what P/CVE is Perpetrators of violence and human rights abuses


Thirty-four projects aim at improving cooperation and information sharing between CSOs and law enforcement, as well as creating platforms for trust-building dialogues between communities and law enforcement. Twenty-seven projects aim at building the capacity of law enforcement and assisting with P/CVE-related activities. Twenty projects aim at improving law enforcement agencies' awareness around P/CVE, former combatants and other target groups.

The main reason for including law enforcement as a target group is so that they can assist with P/CVE initiatives once they have been trained and empowered. Respondents believe that as government officials, they have more capacity and authority to counter violent extremism (41 projects). Six project respondents said that security actors do not understand what P/CVE means and why certain target groups must be involved. Three project respondents, one was from Kenya and two from Somalia, said that they believe security forces are the perpetrators of violence and contribute to the drivers of violent extremism in the country.

Men

The most frequently listed activity aimed at men is to involve them in community dialogues and debate (22 projects), followed by vocational training and socio-economic empowerment (14 projects). This vocational training referred mostly to agricultural training and provision of support to be self-sustainable. Eight projects aim at raising awareness and sensitising men. This referred to raising awareness on both P/CVE-related matters and gender-based violence, as

well as giving women a greater role in peacebuilding activities and including them in dialogues and discussions around issues and challenges within their communities.

Men	
Activities	Reasons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community dialogues Vocational training and socio-economic empowerment Awareness raising and sensitisation Physical and psychological aid Research Recreational and cultural activities 	 <p>52 projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perpetrators of violence Vulnerability Influential position

Twenty-four project respondents said that they chose men as a target group because of the likelihood of their role as perpetrators of violence, whether criminal violence, violent extremism or gender-based violence. Ten project respondents said that men are considered a vulnerable group because they are the main target group to be recruited by violent extremist groups. Seven project respondents said that activities should include men because of their influential position in their communities.

Children

Children	
Activities	Reasons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education and skills development Recreational and cultural activities Physical and psychological aid Awareness raising and sensitisation Dialogue and group discussions Rehabilitation and reintegration Research 	 <p>50 projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vulnerability Perpetrators of violence Change agents

Twenty-two projects aim at educating and developing the skills of children. Sixteen of the projects use recreational and cultural activities to involve children, relay positive messages and increase intergroup tolerance. Eleven projects provide children with physical and psychological aid.

The majority of project respondents (19 projects) said that they focus on children as a target group because they are considered the most vulnerable group. Thirteen project respondents said that children are likely to be the perpetrators of violence. Twelve projects focus on children because they are at an influenceable age and it is believed that they have the potential to become change agents when empowered.

Ex-members of violent extremist groups



The majority of projects focusing on ex-members provide them with psychosocial support, trauma counselling and rehabilitation (16 projects). Fifteen projects aim at providing ex-members with vocational training, skills development and economic support. Twelve projects work on reintegrating them into society, hosting forgiveness ceremonies and reconciliation dialogues between ex-members and communities. Most respondents who listed ex-members as the target group of their project believe that rehabilitation and reintegration are possible with the right measures – this is illustrated by the high number of activities focused on enabling this group to return to their communities. Nine projects aim at training ex-members to become mentors to other defectors. These projects also empower and encourage them to use their experience as ex-members to become positive influencers in the community. Four projects target ex-members in order to research why they joined the violent extremist group in the first place or how they were forced or recruited to join the group.

The main reason why projects target ex-members is because it is believed that if these individuals are empowered, they can help and support P/CVE and

peacebuilding initiatives and reduce the risk of further radicalisation in the communities (13 projects). Ten projects chose ex-members because of their status as an extremely vulnerable group. Six projects chose this group to prove to communities that there is still hope for ex-members of violent extremist groups and that they need to be reintegrated to stop the cycle of violence. Another six chose ex-members in the hope that their activities would prevent them from returning to violent extremist groups or turning to other illicit activities.

Private sector

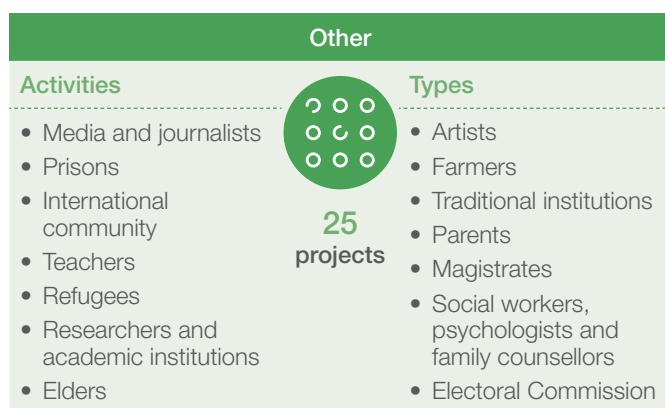


Eleven projects focusing on the private sector listed providing financial and other types of support as their main activity. This includes counselling and psychosocial support to private sector agencies, given their increased capacity. Some private-sector agencies do job placements for target groups that have completed vocational and skills training. Nine projects build the capacity and raise awareness within the private sector on the necessity for their involvement in P/CVE. Another nine projects involve the private sector in planning and cooperation meetings. Only five projects invite the private sector to participate in their activities and to attend their meetings. Respondents said that this was to make them aware of how they could contribute or collaborate with the organisation in terms of their P/CVE activities.

The majority of project respondents chose the private sector as their target group because they have more

resources and superior capacity (16 projects). These resources include financial resources, as well as the provision of services that the organisations do not provide. Nine project respondents said that the reason for choosing this target group was because the private sector is equally affected by violence and also has a key role to play in preventing violence. Five projects chose the private sector because of its ability to influence the government, the economy and the job market. Collaborating with the private sector gives insight into what skills and training are marketable and allows for a more informed design of vocational training activities. Only one respondent said that awareness raising should be broadened to include the private sector as it may sometimes be supporting illicit activities by conducting business as usual.

Other



Respondents were given the opportunity to list any other target groups that were not listed in the questionnaire. Many of these 'other' target groups can be included under previously mentioned target groups. For example, prisons and magistrates can be placed under 'law enforcement' or 'government agencies'.

Current members of violent extremist groups*



Four projects aim at educating and raising awareness among current members of violent extremist groups. Three projects provide them with vocational training, skills development and economic support. Three projects provide this group with rehabilitation and psychosocial support. Another three projects use current members, as with ex-members, to gather data on violent extremist groups' methods of radicalisation and why they joined the group or were recruited. Most respondents who listed current members of violent extremist groups as the target group of their project believe that including them in their activities will increase the chances of them leaving the violent group.

The most frequently mentioned reason for choosing this group (4 projects) is because the respondents believe that they can be turned into agents of change and help deradicalise and encourage their colleagues to leave violent extremist groups. Three projects chose current members because of the valuable insight they can provide into the reasons why they joined the group. Two projects include them in their activities because the respondents believe they are in vulnerable positions and need external help to leave the violent extremist group. Another two projects chose current members because of their status as perpetrators of violence, believing that if they are not helped, they will continue with their violent and illicit activities.

* This is a contested target group. During our data gathering, some respondents explained that there are members of violent extremist groups living and working in some communities where they implement their activities. Thus, this group automatically became a target group of the activities conducted by the project.

Target groups: Gender profile

Respondents were asked about the gender profile of specific target groups: children, youth, community members, ex-members, religious leaders, current members, and other (Figure 15).

The majority of respondents were unsure about the gender profile of target groups of their projects (168 target groups). One of the main reasons for this is because the target groups are so big that it is difficult to gauge the gender profiles. One hundred and twenty-five target groups consist of an equal number of men and women; 93 include more men and only 45 include more women.

Figure 15: Gender profiles of target groups

	Unsure	Mostly female	Mostly male	Equal
 Children	18	9	8	17
 Youth	46	16	23	35
 Community members	33	16	9	41
 Ex-members	14	2	19	3
 Religious leaders	42	1	24	21
 Current members	6	0	6	0
 Others	11	1	4	8
Total	168	45	93	125

Contribution of community members and other organisations

Respondents were asked how communities and other organisations contribute to the implementation of project activities.

The majority of projects (105) use community members in the design and implementation of their projects. The main reason for this is to increase buy-in on a community level (discussed later). Many communities do not understand what P/CVE is and feel that existing P/CVE projects are not tailored to their specific needs. By including communities in the design and implementation of activities, the organisations also increase the chances of project sustainability. An interesting reason why projects include community members is to help monitor the results of the projects – this was noted in relation to 10 projects. Community

members are believed to be the best equipped to monitor the community after a project has been concluded to see whether there have been any significant changes.

Figure 16: How community members contribute to project implementation

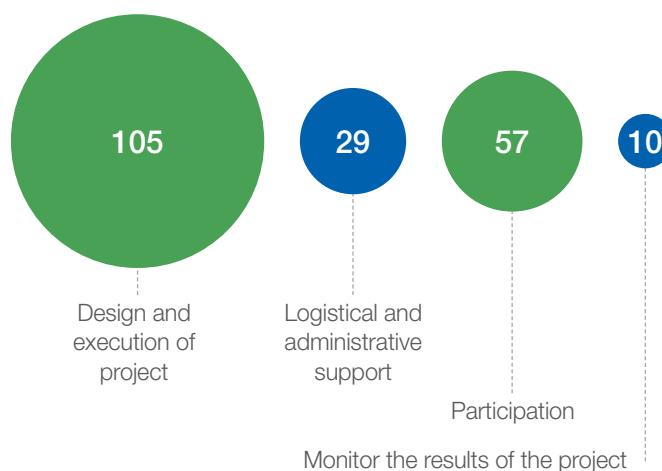
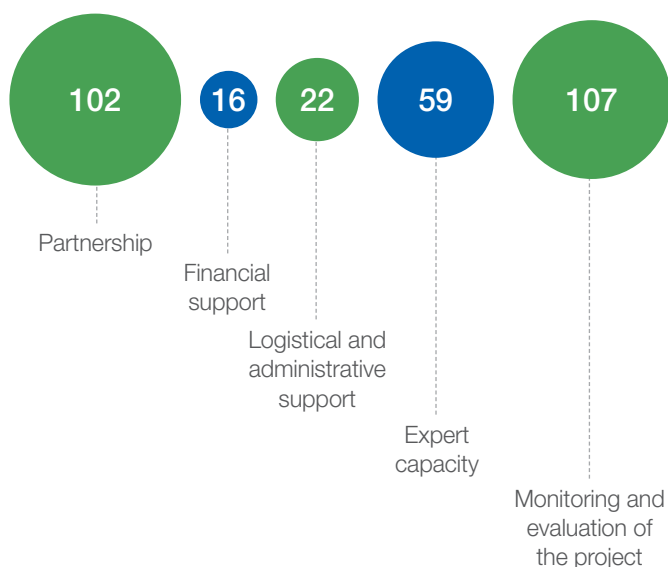


Figure 17: How other organisations contribute to project implementation



The majority of projects use the expertise of other organisations in order to conduct their monitoring and evaluation (M&E), meaning that they outsource these functions (107 projects) – this represents a high percentage using independent evaluation strategies, whether formal or informal. One hundred and two projects partner with other organisations to evaluate collaboratively. Respondents also ask other organisations to contribute to their projects because of their expert capacity (57 projects).

Project monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation

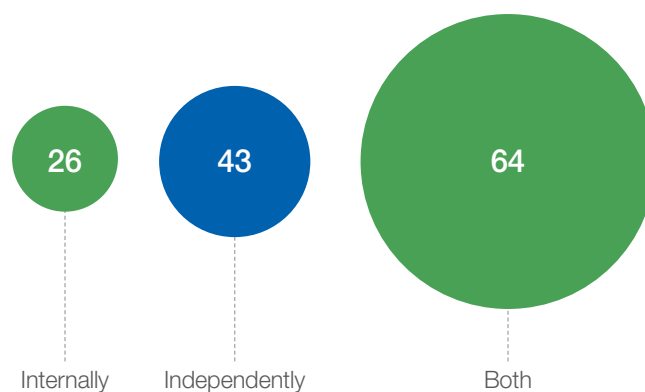
Respondents were asked whether they have conducted an evaluation of their project or whether they are planning to do so once the project has been concluded and, if yes, how the evaluation will be conducted (Figure 19).

One hundred and three projects have been evaluated and of the 45 which have not yet been evaluated, 30 will be once they have been concluded. Some of the 103 projects that have been evaluated are still ongoing, which means that M&E is done every few months. Fifteen projects will not be evaluated, with only three respondents giving reasons for this. One respondent said that their project will not be evaluated because it is still in the initial phases. Another said that there is not enough funding to conduct an evaluation of their project. The third respondent stated that the project will not be evaluated because it was only a consultancy project.

Figure 19: Number of projects evaluated



Figure 20: How projects are evaluated



Evaluations of the 133 projects that have been or will be evaluated were/will be conducted in the following ways: 26 internally, 43 independently and 64 a combination of both internally and independently.

Measuring results of project activities

Respondents were asked how they measure the results of their project.

Figure 18: Monitoring and evaluation methods

61	M&E plan in place
44	Outcome indicators
43	Surveys and questionnaires (pre- and post-implementation)
29	Follow-up meetings with target groups
57	Observations

This question aimed at establishing how respondents would measure the results of activities or how they would know whether their activities are successful or not. This question is especially important considering some organisations' lack of logistical and financial capacity to conduct a formal evaluation. The question was added following the publication of the West and Central Africa report, which established that very few organisations have formal M&E plans in place.

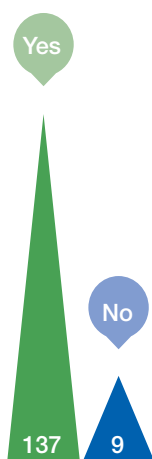
Sixty-one projects have an M&E component, followed by 57 that use observations made by organisation employees as a method of evaluating the project. These observations do not include contact with the target group but rather involve observing the community, for example how violence has decreased among community members. The types of observations mentioned by the respondents included watching communities to see whether the project activities have contributed to members living together in harmony. The observations also noted a reduction in cases of domestic conflicts; changed attitudes; an increase in the number of children enrolled in school, as well as the number of children reintegrated into the community and reunited with their families; a reduction in recruitment; a reduction in illegal migration and a reduction in levels of recidivism.

Challenges regarding M&E persist and respondents are sometimes unsure of the indicators to use, especially with regards to the complex nature of violent extremism and the factors that contribute to vulnerability. 'Do we succeed in engaging youth and training them? It would be difficult to measure to what extent we would have an impact or have helped prevent violent extremism.'¹⁶

Keep in touch

Respondents were asked whether they keep in touch or plan to keep in touch with the target groups of their activities and, if yes, why.

The majority of project respondents said that they do intend to keep in touch or already have mechanisms in place to keep in touch with their project's target group (137 projects). The main reasons for keeping in touch are, firstly, to ensure sustainability



(89 projects). This entails following up to see whether participants are using the skills and training they were provided with during the project and finding out whether they need any additional support. Secondly, respondents keep in touch for evaluation purposes (mentioned by 40 project respondents). Most of the activities cannot be measured in the short term and many respondents ensure mechanisms are in place to stay in touch and to follow up on the progress made on a yearly basis. Lastly, 37 project respondents said they keep in touch with project participants as part of maintaining networks. This is mainly to have active networks for future research or future projects.

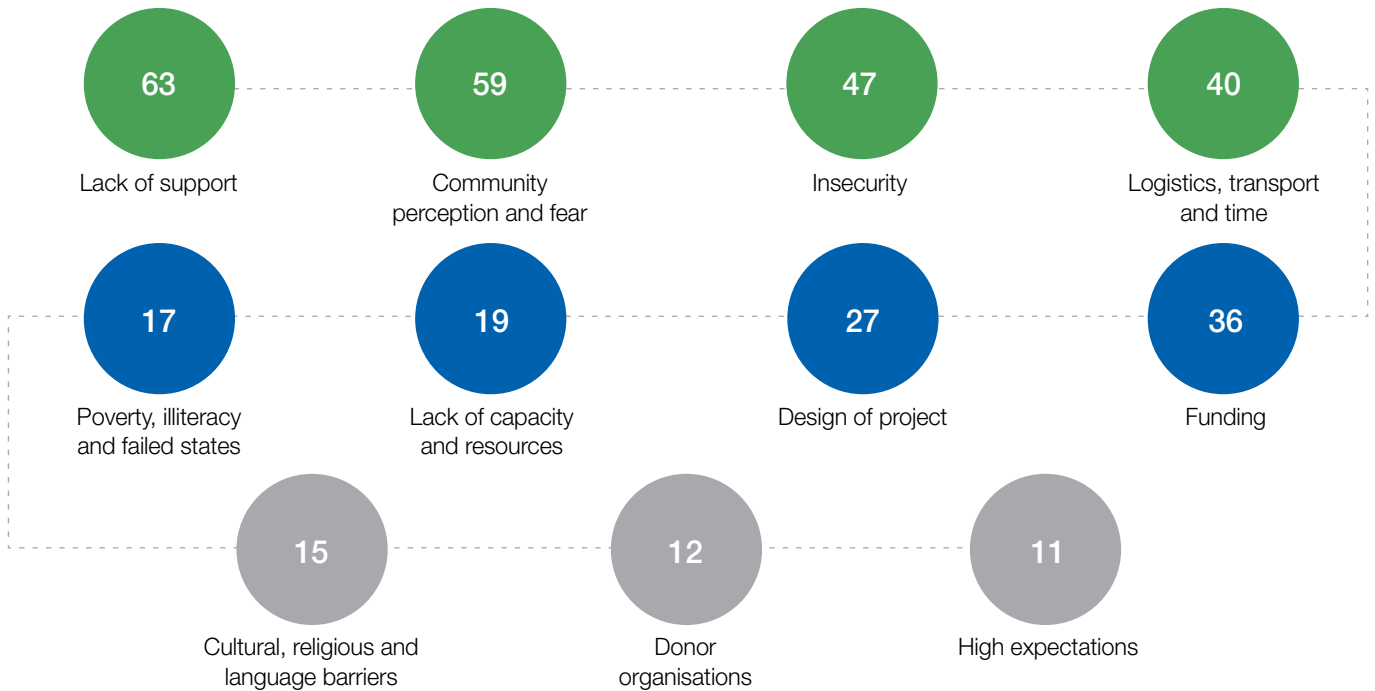
Challenges faced by organisations

Respondents were asked about the main challenges that they experienced during the implementation of their projects (Figure 21).

The most frequently mentioned challenge was lack of support, noted by 63 projects. This includes lack of support from government entities as well as from other organisations in terms of guidelines regarding how P/CVE initiatives should be designed on the country and county levels. One respondent gave the example of a lack of witness protection for women who have defected from al-Shabaab, stating their organisation has no guidelines on how to deal with this group. One respondent said that in their country, CSOs are not allowed to work directly with returnees defecting from terror groups due to the government's lack of transparency regarding how these ex-combatants are treated. This respondent believes that the government will cause 'more harm than good' and that local CSOs are the best conduit to help these individuals reintegrate because they have direct access to the communities in which these individuals need to be reintegrated. Another respondent said that the government does not want to collaborate with them because they still perceive violent extremism as an ideological and religious problem, ignoring historical injustices and ethnic marginalisation.

Community perception and fear was the second most mentioned challenge faced by organisations in the region (59 projects). This refers to community members who do not understand what the term 'P/CVE' means and fear retribution from the government or violent extremist groups. There is a concern around whether using P/CVE

Figure 21: Challenges



can further marginalise or even informally label them as ‘vulnerable’ groups. Communities are often reluctant to participate in activities because they do not trust what P/CVE projects entail.

Government’s reluctance to acknowledge violent extremism is a persistent challenge for respondents. As noted earlier, one respondent said that ‘we have to use terms like “peacebuilding” and “peaceful conflict resolution” to avoid action from the government’.

Child protection efforts are affected and hindered by the government’s punitive approach to former child combatants, despite existing national instruments on how to appropriately deal with youth.

‘As soon as the police knew about some of the former combatants we were working with, the combatants disappeared and we fear they were killed by security forces.’¹⁷ Another respondent said that the distrust between communities and the government is harming both, because the government can assist communities and communities have intelligence that could help the government’s fight against violent extremists in the country. The respondent said, ‘By working with communities, a lot of intelligence comes up – can we trust the government and share this with them or will it put the community at risk?’¹⁸ A lack of support can also

exist between different organisations. As one respondent explained, ‘because PVE is not regulated, some organisations are doing PVE who are not trained on what PVE is or who are not familiar with the National CT Strategy’¹⁹ and they are doing more harm than good.

Government interference was another issue discussed during the interviews. Respondents shared that in an effort to collaborate with their respective governments, they approach relevant agencies to ask for their inputs. However, the organisations are then told which communities and target groups to involve in their activities. The organisations soon realised that these target groups are often family members of the government officials and do not need any help. Nepotism and corruption thus hamper collaboration with governments. A common challenge is political interference: ‘Our primary target group, which is at-risk youth, are used by politicians to carry out their political activities against their opponents.’²⁰

A unique challenge mentioned by some project respondents was high expectations – communities being disappointed if the project activities do not make a significant difference in their lives. Many target groups who are provided with vocational training and education are left feeling even more frustrated afterwards when they are still unable to get access to the job market in the country. One respondent

admitted that, ‘although people receive training and have the skills to do various jobs as part of their business, local poverty within their communities prevents them from establishing their businesses and succeeding’.²¹ This challenge is intricately related to poverty, illiteracy and failed states. The second most used theory of change (Figure 12) refers to the decrease in vulnerability resulting from vocational training and education. However, economies remain weak and despite all the training they might receive, individuals struggle to find employment opportunities.

Lessons learned

The respondents were asked what they would change if they were given the opportunity to implement the project again.

Respondents of 75 projects noted that they would change the design and implementation of their project. One respondent said that they would like to include more follow-up activities: ‘We found that the success rate is around 70% when follow-ups are conducted, because even a small misunderstanding or confusion on the part of the beneficiaries can cause failure. The follow-ups help people progress.’²² A few respondents said that they would include a livelihood component into their project design. One respondent who believes that P/CVE should be a comprehensive approach said the following: ‘There is still major gaps that need to be bridged if PVE is to be realised and this means introducing psychosocial support. For some of the intervention to work these people [specifically referring to returnees and gangs] need to receive counselling [because of what they have been through]. The current project focuses on economic empowerment and ignores this very issue. As a result,

we have seen cases where reformed [criminal, youth, combatant] gangs would find it too challenging to fit within the larger community. Some of them end up going back to the same gang groups where they feel that they are well accepted.’²³

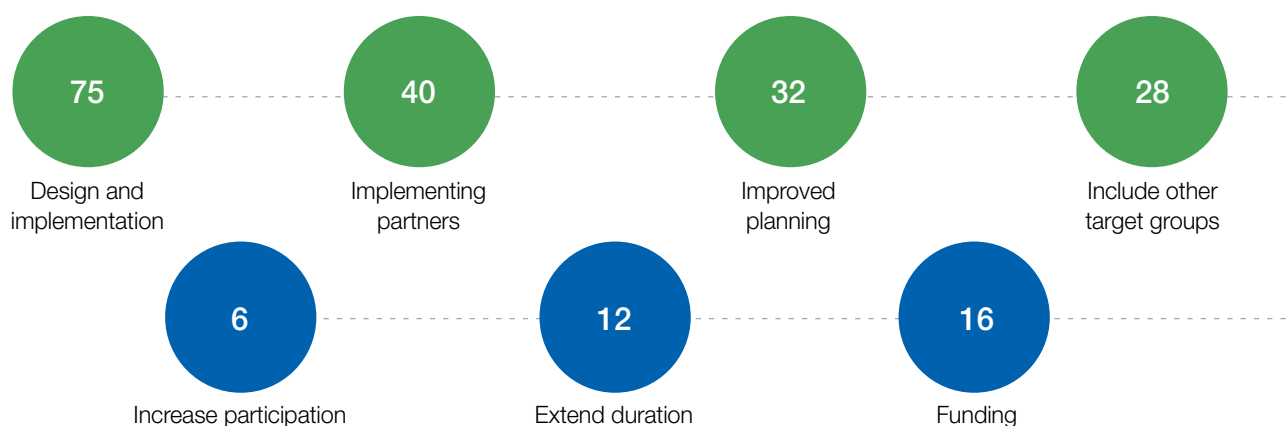
Implementing partners – collaborations between organisations and governments – were noted by the respondents of 40 projects. ‘PVE needs to be looked at holistically. Most PVE programmes/projects focus on a certain theme to implement. The assumption is always that there are other partners and players who are addressing the remaining gap. This is in most cases not the case. While coordination between different players would play an important role in addressing this, project designers need to focus on designing projects that are holistic in nature and which will translate into tangible results.’²⁴

Regarding the inclusion of other target groups, one respondent admitted the following: ‘We would reduce our activities in Christian centres, we would focus more on Muslim centres. Christians have life skills through Sunday school. It is easier to recruit people from mosques than churches, therefore we should focus more on Muslim centres.’²⁵ Mostly this inclusion of other target groups referred to including the whole community rather than separate target groups. Respondents also agreed that more focus should be placed on involving women.

Summary of key findings per country

Findings are summarised below for projects in each country and for regional projects. Each section discusses where the P/CVE projects are being implemented, the target groups and funding amounts.

Figure 22: Lessons learned



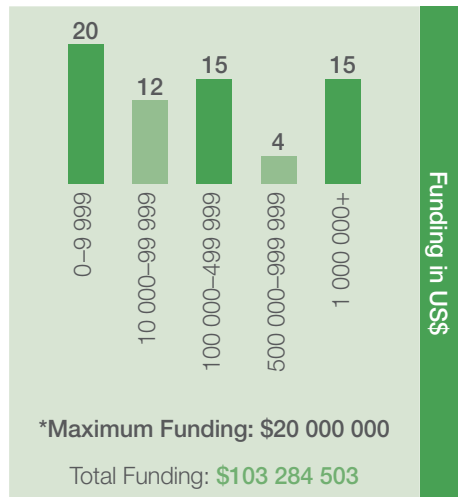
Kenya

The study investigated 66 projects in Kenya, implemented by 51 organisations.

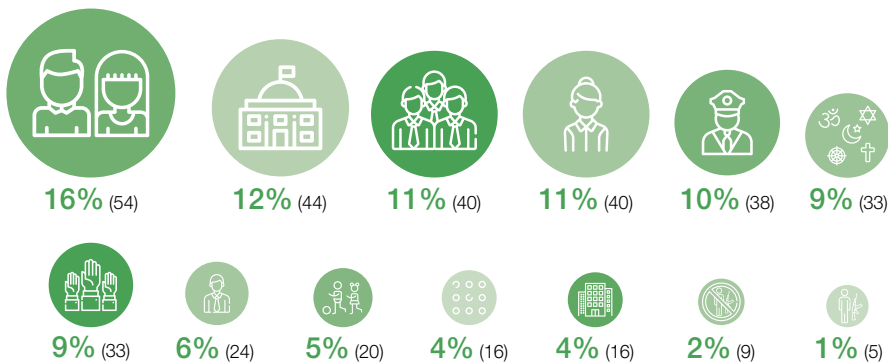
Figure 23: Projects in Kenya



Key Findings	
66	Total Projects
51	Total Organisations
240	Total Contacted
61	Government Collaboration



Target groups in Kenya



* Other target groups include: Self-help groups, media and journalists, CVE community (researchers and academia), elders, victims of terrorist attacks, artists, poultry farmers, international partners, prisons (prisoners and prison staff), traditional institutions, parents, teachers, probation officers, magistrates, prosecutors, electoral commission

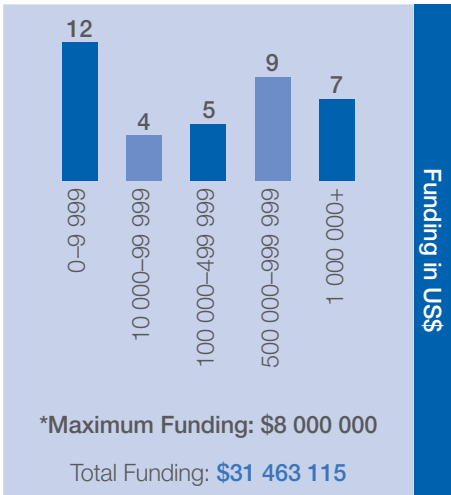
Somalia

The study investigated 37 projects in Somalia, implemented by 27 organisations.

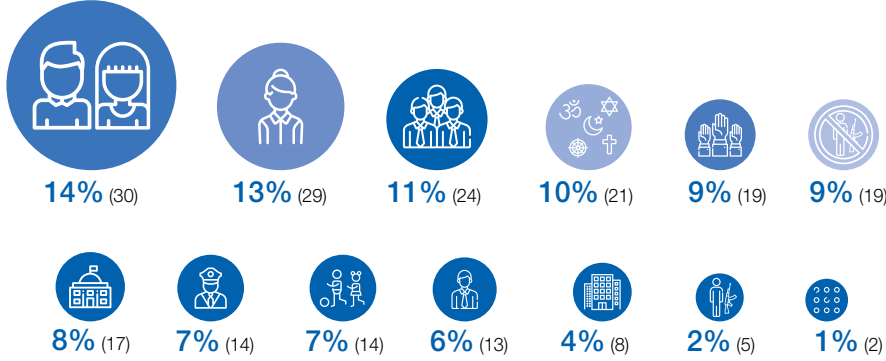
Figure 24: Projects in Somalia



37	Total Projects	Key Findings
27	Total Organisations	
167	Total Contacted	
35	Government Collaboration	



Target groups in Somalia



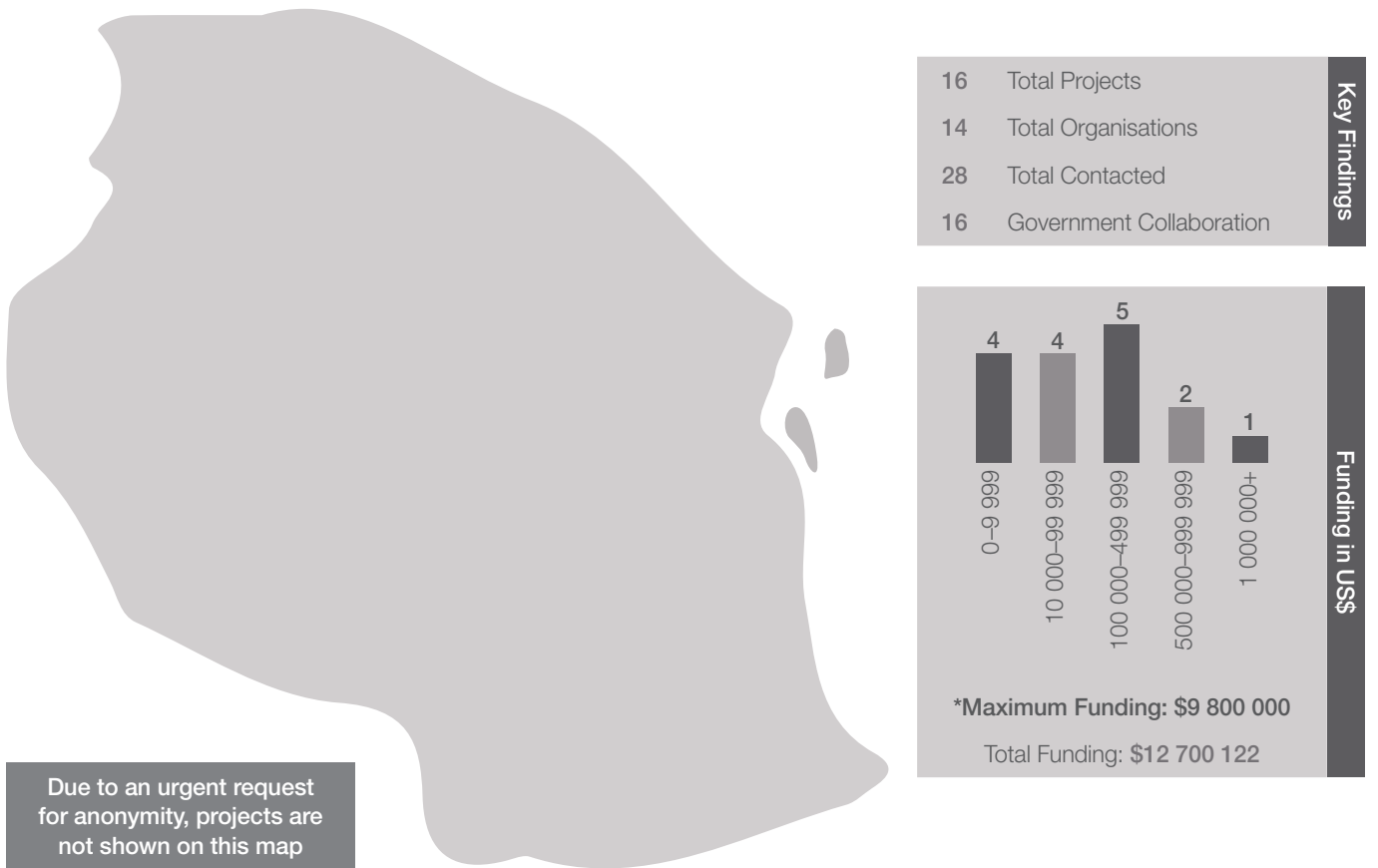
* Other target groups include:
Media



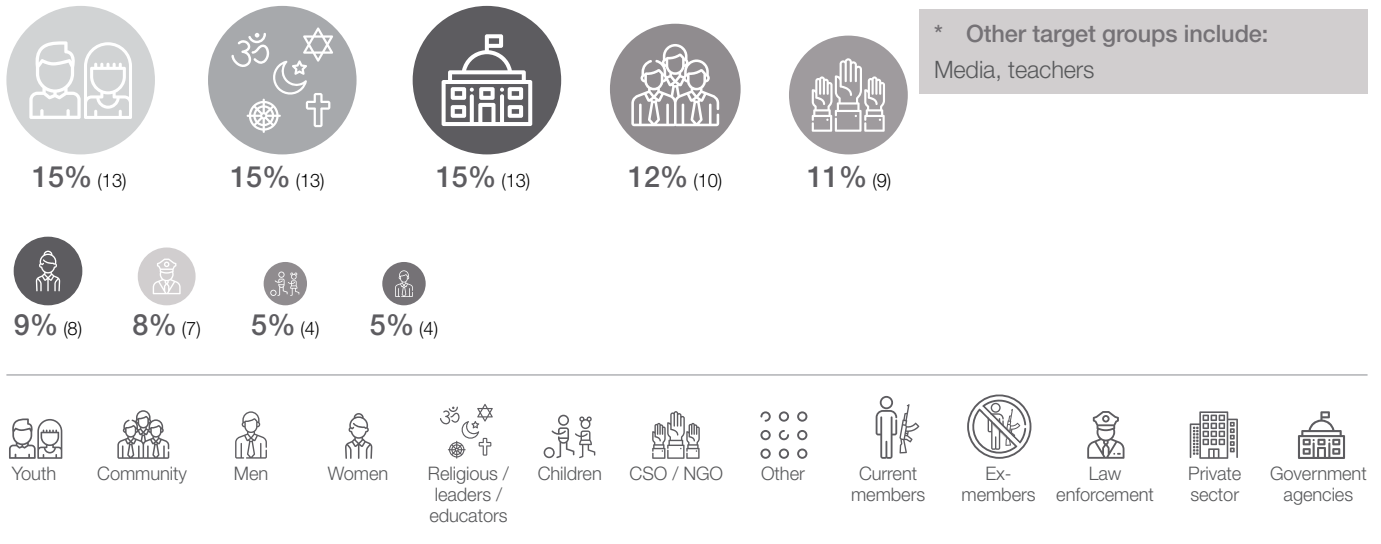
Tanzania

The study investigated 16 projects in Tanzania, implemented by 14 organisations.

Figure 25: Projects in Tanzania



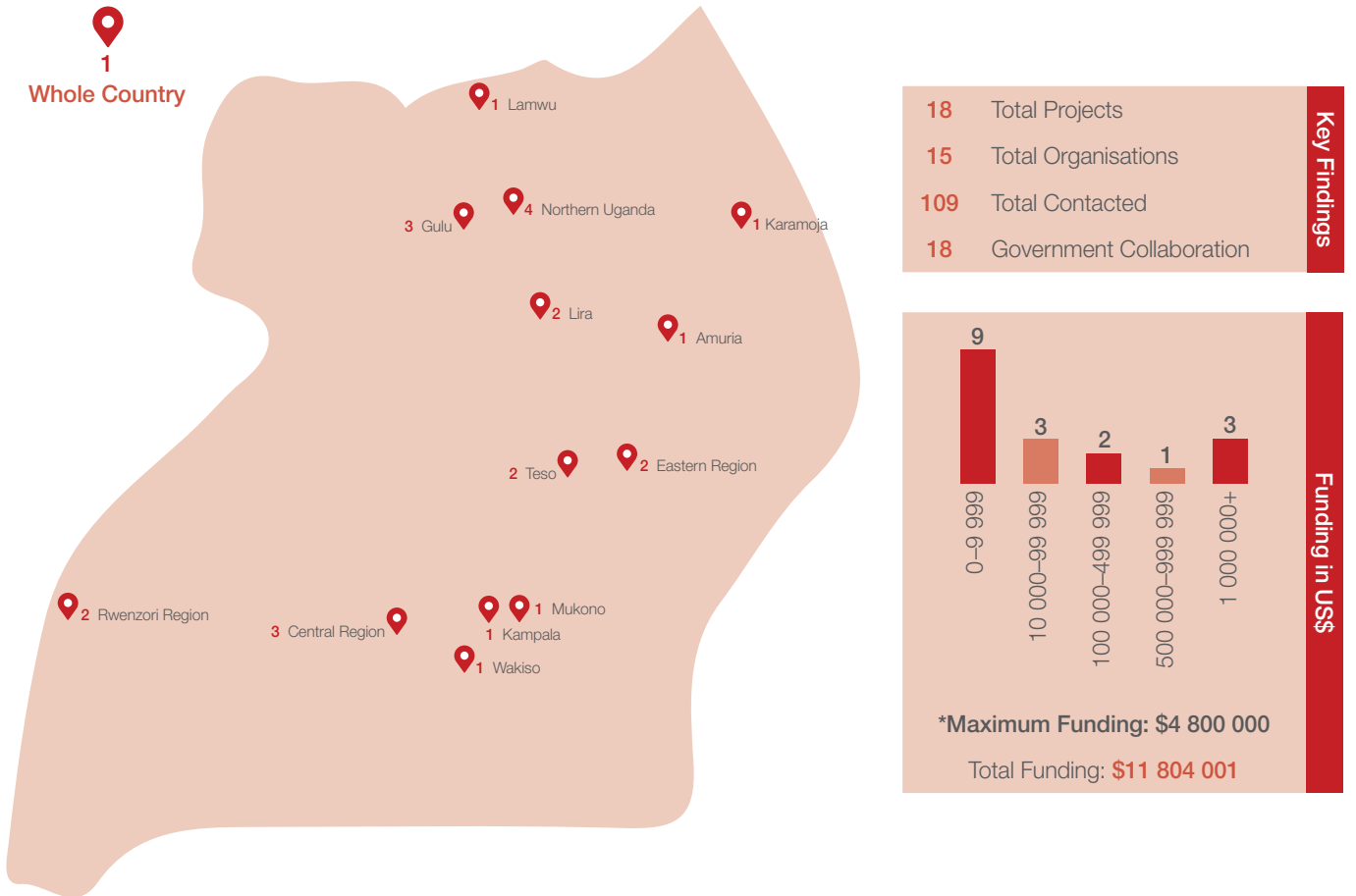
Target groups in Tanzania



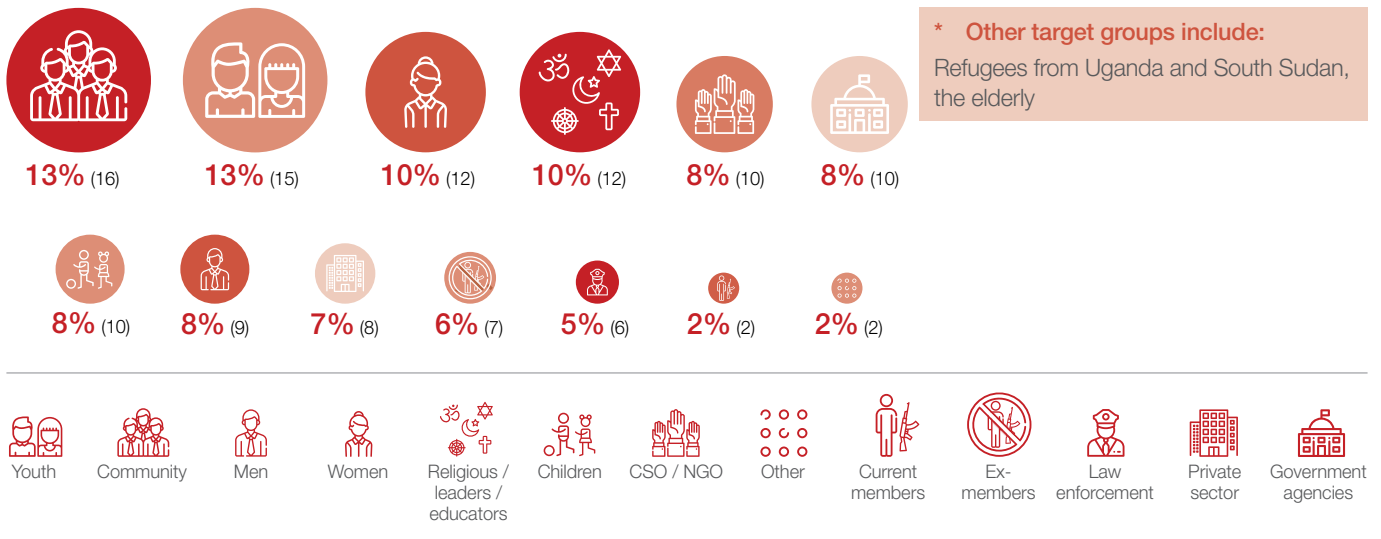
Uganda

The study investigated 18 projects in Uganda, implemented by 15 organisations.

Figure 26: Projects in Uganda



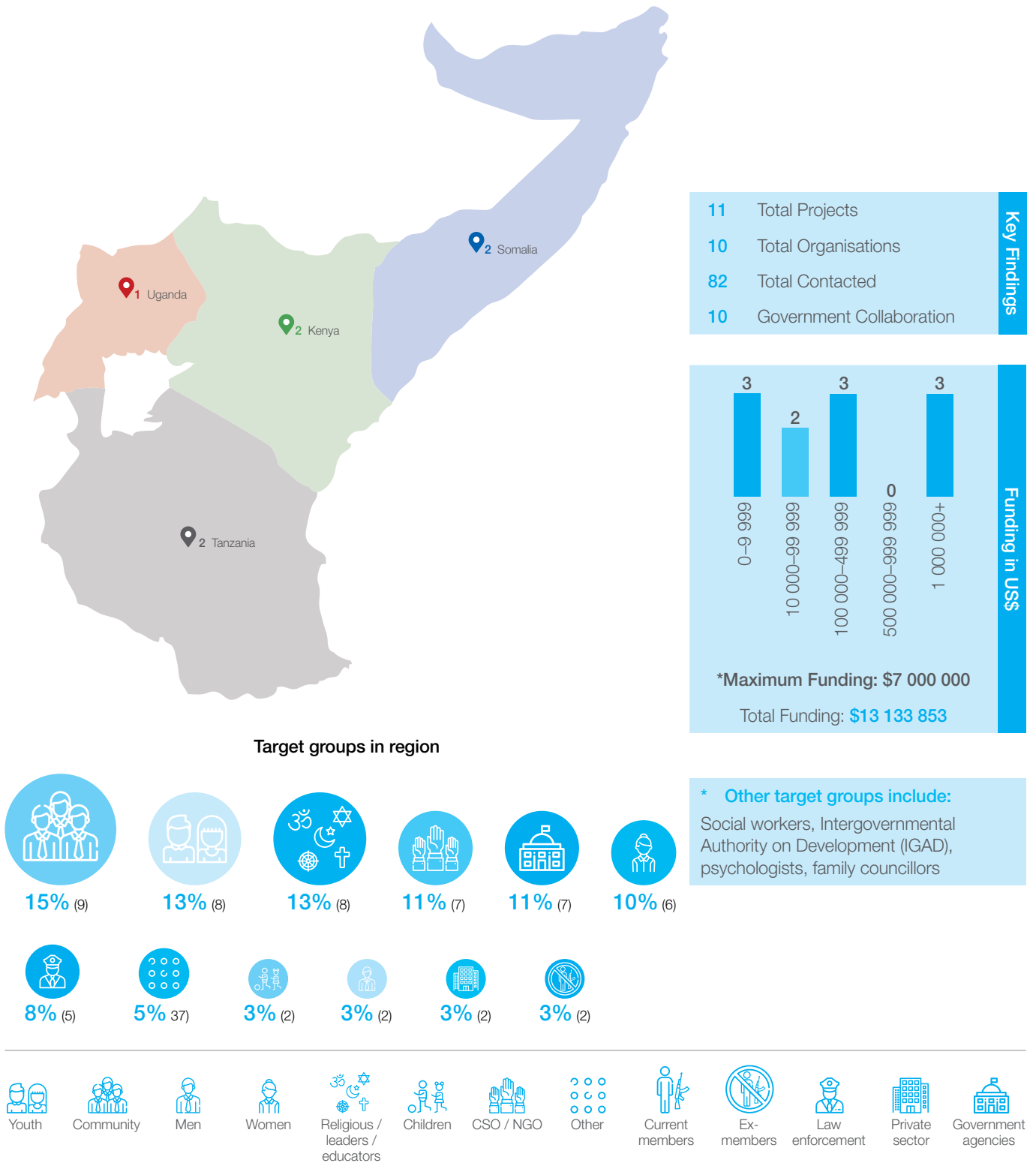
Target groups in Uganda



Regional

The study investigated 11 regional projects, implemented by 10 organisations.

Figure 27: Regional projects



Observations

Defining threats and appropriate responses

One notable issue highlighted during the study was that climate change and diminishing natural resources are causing extreme tension and hostility between communities. Many activities are aimed at bringing communities together and coming up with grazing schedules and the allocation of watering holes to reduce violence between communities. One of the respondents said that since the education system is non-existent in their country, the only form of livelihood for men is farming. However, many outbreaks of intercommunal violence are caused by the worsening weather conditions in the country and diminishing natural resources. These farming and nomadic communities are no longer able to farm and therefore have no means to livelihood. This is why so many projects focus on vocational training, economic empowerment and skills development. One factor as to why individuals join extremist groups is that in some cases these groups provide a salary, which serves as a form of livelihood.²⁶

Support from governments

An interesting trend that surfaced in the study is that most respondents said that they do collaborate with government agencies in their countries. However, many still list a lack of cooperation and support as one of the main challenges experienced during the implementation of their projects. The fact that these organisations are making an effort to both target governments as beneficiaries of their projects as well as approach them to be partners in the implementation of these projects is a positive sign. Firstly, it shows that the governments in these four countries are open to a collaborative approach to P/CVE. Secondly, it shows that the governments are willing (to some extent) to be trained or to have their capacity built in the field of P/CVE.

However, it seems that governments remain impervious to the manner in which their actions or lack thereof fuel the drivers behind violent extremism in their countries. One of the main reasons why respondents target government agencies as beneficiaries of their activities is to build their capacity to join the P/CVE movement in the country. Of the 91 projects which include government

agencies as their target group, 35 respondents said that this is because of the government's authority. If properly trained, government entities have the authority and resources to make a significant impact on P/CVE in their respective countries.

Monitoring and evaluation

The debate continues over whether P/CVE projects can be evaluated, especially when the project duration is less than 12 months. A point raised recently by the *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* is whether P/CVE projects can be measured if they are not multitiered or holistic. This means that unless the project is holistic and includes approaches like education, socio-economic empowerment and psychosocial support, for example, it would not be able to say that it is preventing an individual from joining a violent extremist group.²⁷

Most respondents said that they collaborate with government agencies in their countries

The majority of projects are being evaluated, which is a positive trend. However, it seems that many organisations are still dependent on donor funding and whether or not the donor organisation requests a formal evaluation to be conducted as part of the grant contract. Regardless of whether or not they are receiving funding for their M&E activities, organisations are evaluating their projects informally. In terms of informal evaluation methods, it seems that in some cases there is still confusion between outcome and output indicators. When asked whether they have examples of outcome indicators, respondents provided output indicators, such as the number of young people that attended their dialogue session. This raises the question as to whether projects are evaluated for impact or to assess whether project goals were successfully met.

Regarding how the evaluation is done (Figure 20), the majority of projects (64) are/will be evaluated both internally and independently, which could allow for a broad and objective overview of what the projects have achieved.

The role of counter-narratives

One component of P/CVE that was scarcely mentioned was counter-narratives. Many P/CVE good practices encourage the creation of counter-narratives that are country- and ideology-specific. However, one respondent stated that this should not be misinterpreted as CSOs in East Africa not working on developing counter-narratives, but that anyone identified as disseminating counter-narratives is at risk of being killed by the military, al-Shabaab or other violent extremist religious groups. The respondent said that people live in fear and are unlikely to admit if they work with counter-narratives.

Key findings

- Violent extremism in East Africa is interpreted by respondents as intercommunal violence fuelled by diminishing natural resources; interethnic and interreligious violence; formal or informal criminal groups; as well as Islamist violent extremism groups like al-Shabaab and the Islamic State in East Africa.
- Youth was the primary group in most of the P/CVE projects discussed in the study and perceived to be the group most likely to affect change if given the right opportunities.
- The majority of projects aimed at awareness raising, followed by training and capacity building of target groups.
- P/CVE actors apply informal evaluation methods based on local realities.
- The majority of projects that CSOs are implementing might not directly fall under the ambit of P/CVE initiatives. There is a large emphasis on developmental work.

Recommendations

- Given the existing distrust between civil society and governments and the effect this has on collaborating on P/CVE initiatives, governments should be more approachable and open to a collaborative approach to prevention efforts in the country, with priorities being to decrease human rights violations and increase socio-economic empowerment initiatives.
- There is a need for a P/CVE evidence base to inform project design and implementation. More research

is needed to understand how practitioners in these countries interpret P/CVE and implement related activities. This will help establish P/CVE as a unique field of study or research, separate from peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

- P/CVE practitioners should find more effective ways to measure long-term progress and should do so regardless of funding. Capacity-building measures should include M&E sessions, taking into consideration that some organisations may not know how to evaluate their projects.
- Standard guidelines on the M&E of P/CVE projects and activities are required to improve the M&E of these initiatives.
- Local CSOs and communities should design project activities in consultation with their donor organisation where necessary.
- There needs to be greater knowledge and awareness when it comes to the labelling and design of P/CVE projects, taking into account local cultures and avoiding labelling target groups as 'vulnerable', which leads to the further stigmatisation and marginalisation of these groups.

Conclusion

This study reviewed selected P/CVE initiatives in four countries in East Africa. The data and information obtained on P/CVE programming in Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda has vastly contributed to knowledge regarding the design and implementation of projects in East Africa. Although a relatively limited sample, this study has contributed to an informed understanding of the key priorities of implementers and their difficulties, challenges and lessons learned.

Although not the sole objective of this study, the data shed light on the many opportunities being lost due to informal methods of evaluation and the lack of a standard list of outcome indicators. Given that significant funding is poured into East Africa, there is a need to better understand what works in P/CVE programming.

This study also highlighted the nuances and complexities surrounding how projects related to violent extremism are described and labelled. The fact that the term 'P/CVE' officially made it onto the scene in 2015, and that the

majority of the organisations and their projects were in existence prior to that, raises questions regarding whether they aim to address broader underdevelopment and marginalisation issues in areas where violent extremist activities have become prominent. There is a need to determine if P/CVE projects are entirely different from developmental projects. Further research is needed to answer some of these pressing questions.

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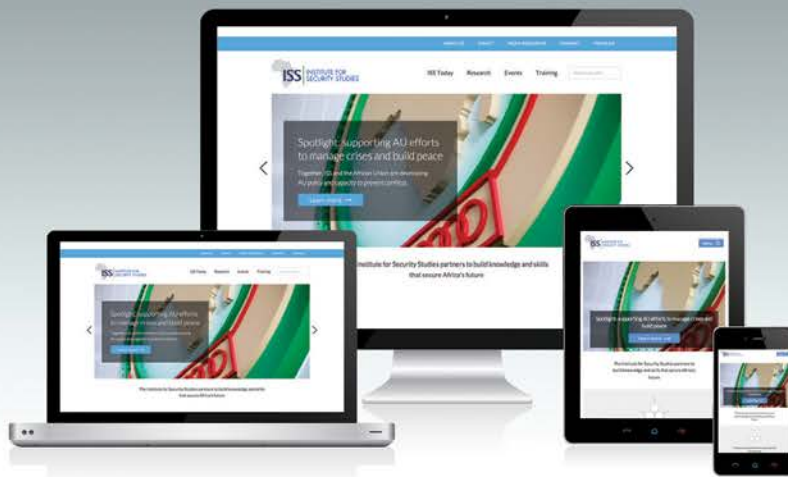
The **questionnaire** used in this study can be accessed here: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1eevOViJ1OjzXWv7tlhgZ951eXneMzyReAyOUpQqs81c/prefill>

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- 14 Response on ISS questionnaire, January 2019
- 15 Response on ISS questionnaire, April 2019
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