

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism in Africa



Snapshot

Introductory meeting with the Coordinator a.i of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Regional Counter-Terrorism Centre (RCTC)

As part of the on-going intervention to strengthen the SADC regional early warning and early response mechanism with a PVE lens, through the Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) and PVE Toolkit, an introductory meeting with the Coordinator a.i. of SADC RCTC was held on 14th April. Participants also included the Director a.i and the head of the training department of the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT/CAERT). The Coordinator a.i expressed his appreciation on the presentation made to introduce the EWER and PVE Toolkit and committed to strengthen the PVE component of SADC's early warning and early response mechanism in the SADC Regional Warning Centre (REWC).

More snapshot stories are found on page 4 of the newsletter.



Regional PVE Team

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UNDP Supports Civil Society Organizations to Lead Insider Mediation Efforts in the Great Lakes Region

In May 2022, UNDP Africa in partnership with Elman Peace and Human Rights Centre invited eligible Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda to submit proposals for consideration of grants under a newly established funding mechanism.

The grants aim at supporting CSOs specializing in activities that promote insider mediation, reintegration, and reconciliation efforts at the community-grassroots level in the Great Lakes region. This initiative is part of the broader ongoing regional project in support of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) with funding from the European Union to strengthen the capacities of regional mediators specialized in Disarmament, Demobilization, Repatriation, Reintegration, and Resettlement (DDR/RR), and empower national and cross-border CSO engagement strategies in Insider Mediation and DDR/RR. It also supplements Elman Peace Centre's Bilalo Byetu[1] project which aims to improve CSOs participation, broaden, and concretize their role in reintegration, prevention of violent extremism and insider mediation efforts in the Great Lakes region. Over 30 organizations submitted project proposals that will undergo a robust and transparent review by established and diverse Steering Committee to shortlist a portfolio of projects that will receive funding to commence implementation by August 2022.

[1] Bilalo Byetu means 'our bridges' in Swahili



Empowering Youth to Address Insecurity in Southern Tanzania

In May 2022, UNDP Tanzania in partnership with the Global Peace Foundation (GPF)[2] launched an 8-month peace-building project - #VijanaNaAmani255 (meaning #YouthAndPeaceTanzania) - in the regions of Lindi, Mtwara and Ruvuma in the southern borderlands of Tanzania. The project encompasses a broad range of activities, including awareness raising to mobilize young women and men to engage and participate in peacebuilding initiatives, capacitating youth to tackle misinformation; and meaningful inclusion of religious leaders and communities in platforms to discuss faith-based narratives to enhance social cohesion. Mr. Joseph Brighton Malekela, the Coordinator of #VijanaNaAmani255, a passionate youth worker, and UN trained Youth Champion of Sustainable Development Goals in Tanzania unpacks specific objectives and a vision of the project.

In May 2022, the Global Peace Foundation, jointly with UNDP Tanzania, began implementing a peace-building project in the regions of Lindi, Mtwara and Ruvuma. Why were these regions selected and what are the specific goals of this initiative in the southern Tanzania?

Violence, led by Ansar al Sunna, an ISIS affiliate, has accelerated dramatically in the last few years along the southern border of Tanzania. Cross border attacks, refugee inflows from Mozambique traversing porous borders into southern Tanzania to escape violence as well as increased recruitment efforts by militant groups have all added to the instability of border regions. This is why the GPF and UNDP selected these three regions to work with young people to build community resilience.

The project targets to impact the youth population in the focused regions. Could you unpack the key challenges young men and women are facing and how many beneficiaries you intend to reach?

Youth in Lindi, Mtwara and Ruvuma are facing common challenges related to a lack of education, school dropouts, extreme poverty, lack of information of available opportunities for economic growth, influence of recruitment to extremist groups as well as fear of peace and security due to recent incidences of violence and attacks near borders of Tanzania and Mozambique.

#VijanaNaAmani255 Project, for the year 2022 intends to reach 150 youth representatives from influential community groups, 1,500 students in schools and colleges, 60 religious leaders, 30 cultural leaders, 20 parents and 20 caregivers. Meanwhile, through the ongoing online campaign, we intend to reach indirect online beneficiaries of over 10,000,000 to make them aware of this project.

How do you envisage to leverage and build on this project beyond the implementation phase toward a scaled and long-term impact in the targeted communities?

We want the #VijanaNaAmani255 Project to be a sustainable project. We plan to engage trained youth to conduct local community outreach through door-to-door approaches on peace building and sending monthly reports to Global Peace Foundation Tanzania. Also, we monitor thoroughly the peace clubs in schools and colleges to ensure they are operating throughout the year under specific guidelines, by guidance of their teacher, while sending monthly updates.

If we successfully mobilize additional funds, we aim to conduct regular joint dialogues with youth groups, religious leaders and local government authorities as we found that separating them in workshops brings a barrier in information sharing and delivering of suggestions on what should be done in their constituencies. These dialogues will help them to develop common strategies in the communities regarding peacebuilding.

Moreover, in the long run, we want to engage more regions with similar challenges especially Kigoma Region, Kagera Region, Mara Region, Arusha Region, Tanga Region and Pemba – Zanzibar.

What is your vision for Tanzania to aspire to in the next decade?

The vision of GPFT is a society free from violence and gender disparities to bring sustainable peace and harmony in the community. To that end we would like to see a Tanzania that engages youth and women in peace and security as well as decision making process from the grassroots levels. We believe the inclusion of youth and women in peacebuilding and leadership ensures a sustainable peace and development in communities as they will not only feel part of the process but also own the process and create a society free from violence.

[2] The Global Peace Foundation implements their activities in partnership with the Prime Minister's Office, Labor, Youth, Employment and Persons with Disabilities; Tanzania Scouts Association (TSA), Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation, Youth of United Nations Association of Tanzania and Global Religious for Children Foundation.



Sharing experiences of the Regional PVE Project at the Regional Roundtable Discussion, 6th-7th June, 2022, Amman-Jordan

The UNDP Regional Hub for Arab States in Amman organized a regional roundtable discussion on 6th and 7th June in Amman where governments, civil society actors, and other practitioners participated to share lessons learned and emerging good practices from the region in the field of Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE).

The discussion covered eight thematic sessions focusing on lessons learned and emerging practices: 1) Understanding the Violent Extremism Threat in the Region - Evidence-Based Research, 2) Institutional Capacity-Building on PVE, Including PVE Strategies and NAPs Development, 3) Countering and Addressing Hate Speech and the Role of Media, 4) Disengagement, Deradicalization, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration, 5) Engagement with CSOs, Youth, Women, Religious Leaders, and Faith-Based Organizations, 6) Leveraging Psychology for More Impactful PVE, 7) Dialogue and Promotion of Peace, Tolerance, and Social cohesion, and 8) Regional and Cross-border Cooperation, Coordination, and Knowledge Sharing.

The representative from the Africa Regional PVE Project gave a presentation on a case study of how research can create entry points and influence policy and programmatic interventions. This included sharing lessons learned, providing insights from the ground-breaking UNDP Africa study Journey to Extremism study, and highlighting the importance of anchoring PVE frameworks and interventions on sound analysis and evidence-based data.

Key recommendations for the way forward include, but are not limited to, 1) Conducting a sub-regional focused analysis on drivers, root-causes and VE trends for stronger policy and programming in the Mashriq of Arab States Region, 2) Establishment of a regional network/Community of Practice (CoP) and a regional coordination working group to help guide interventions and enhance coherence and collaborations across the region, 3) Further study to clarify and unify the terminology in the field of PVE in order to foster collaboration between different actors and reduce misunderstanding and stigma, 4) Building resilience at both individual and societal level to be integrated into plans and programmatic interventions in the region, 5) Conduct a multi-country case-based analysis on lessons learned and emerging good practices on disengagement, rehabilitation, and reintegration, 6) Ensure the meaningful participation: inclusion of CSOs and especially women and youth, but also families and local communities in PVE efforts as the main drivers in meaningful and substantive ways, 7) Integrate individual behavior in planning and programming with linking programs to science and data that are backed by psychology and related sciences and Use MHPSS to act on the non-cognitive sphere to change cognitive perspectives (feeling of threats, injustice, etc.) and increase cooperation among partners from different spheres and 8) Promoting innovation and art, as well as dialogue, enhanced coordination among institutions, policy-makers, and practitioners.



Violent Extremism in Littoral West Africa Conference, 7th-8th April 2022, The Hague, Netherlands

Organized by the German Federal Foreign Office (German FFO), the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NL MFA), Elva Community Engagement and the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR), the Regional Peacebuilding Advisor and the Governance Team Leader of the Cote d'Ivoire Country Office participated in the Violent Extremism in Littoral West Africa Conference, held on 7th-8th April in The Hague, Netherlands. During the conference, the Regional Peacebuilding Advisor participated in a panel to share the experiences of coordinated responses to violent extremism in the region in reference to the Regional PVE project. The aim of the conference was to (1) understand the emergent dynamics of violent extremism in Littoral West Africa (Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo and Benin); and (2) to discuss the alignment of related development programming, stabilisation engagement, security cooperation and diplomatic engagement by local, regional and international partners. Concurrently, noting the risk of spillover effects of violent extremism from the Sahel region and leveraging from the lessons learned from the West Africa Regional Initiative (for Benin, Ghana, and Togo) under the Regional Project, the "Atlantic Corridor Initiative to Prevent Violent Extremism" Project document is under development and will be finalised in the subsequent quarter.

High-Level International Conference on Human Rights, Civil Society and Counter-Terrorism, 9th May 2022, Málaga, Spain

The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) through its Office of Parliamentary Engagement in Preventing and Countering Terrorism, in partnership with the Shura Council of the State of Qatar organised a side event on "Engaging Parliamentarians with Civil Society Organizations in Enhancing Legislation and Oversight Functions on CT and PVE", in Málaga, Spain, on 9th May 2022. The aim of the event was to create an opportunity for civil society organizations (CSOs) and Parliaments from around the world to enhance the dialogue and show cases on how civil society organizations can contribute and enhance parliamentary functions in preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism, especially with regards to victims of terrorism. Along this line, Father Pascal Djeumegued, represented the UNDP-supported Observatory for Human Rights in Far North of Cameroon, to showcase the operations and key results since its establishment in 2020.

Roundtable Meeting for the Revision of the Regional PVE Project for Africa

On 16th June, a virtual roundtable discussion was organised by the Regional PVE project team, as part of the revision process of the project document to incorporate the increased experience, knowledge built through research, and expanded partnership on interventions to prevent violent extremism in Africa during the first phase of the Regional PVE Project. The event brought together a wide range of stakeholders (UNDP, UN agencies, CSOs, Researchers, Regional Institutions, and International Development Partners) under the project with the aim conducting in-depth thematic discussions that cover all elements of the Theory of Change, intervention logic and intervention design for the revised Regional PVE Project for Africa. The draft revised version of the Regional PVE Project is expected to be completed before the end of the third quarter for approval by Project Board.