



Empowering Youth Leaders to Counter Violent Extremism in Kenya and Nigeria

BACKGROUND

History has shown that, although they comprise the vast proportion of victims of violence, young people have also made up the bulk of recruits to militaries and militant groups around the world. This is particularly true for violent extremist groups, where recruitment focuses predominantly on individuals between 15 and 30 years of age. Kenya and Nigeria in particular have experienced high levels of violent extremist violence over the past years, perpetrated chiefly by Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram, respectively. Within these groups, youth are specifically targeted for recruitment, often capitalizing on grievances related to actual and perceived relative deprivation, disenfranchisement, and a lack of opportunities, to which groups like Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab seemingly provide quick solutions. Yet young people also play pivotal roles as leaders in articulating and working toward the achievement of economic, political, and social change. Kenya and Nigeria both benefit from a vibrant youth-led civil society landscape, whose expertise is central to building and promoting resilient communities and countering violent extremism (CVE) in both countries.

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

The project aims to mitigate threats of violent extremism in Kenya and Nigeria by empowering youth leaders to recognize and address the grievances that can lead to violence. It seeks to strengthen the capacity of youth leaders and youth-focused civil society organizations (CSOs) by deepening existing networks

of young civil society leaders, and forging new partnerships within and between Kenya and Nigeria to support peer-to-peer information sharing and intra- and inter-country thematic engagements.

The project will also support youth leaders and CSOs through targeted workshops on CVE thematic issues, as well as through trainings to strengthen organizational capacities on topics such as monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Further, the project will facilitate small grant assistance and in-kind support to local CSOs to implement new or ongoing innovative CVE programming at the grassroots level.

Supported by the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, the project is implemented in partnership between the Global Center on Cooperative Security, Carefronting Nigeria, and the Kenya Community Support Centre (KECOSCE).

Activities will focus on Kenya's former Coast province, Garissa County, and Nairobi County, as well as Nigeria's northeast states. The program will be implemented in consultation with key government, civil society, and other stakeholders to ensure it is responsive to local priorities and CVE contexts.

For more information on this project, please contact Ms. Tracey Durner, Senior Analyst at the Global Center on Cooperative Security. (tdurner@globalcenter.org).

About the Global Center on Cooperative Security

The Global Center works with governments, international organizations, and civil society to develop and implement comprehensive and sustainable responses to complex international security challenges through collaborative policy research, context-sensitive programming, and capacity development. In collaboration with a global network of expert practitioners and partner organizations, the Global Center fosters stronger multilateral partnerships and convenes key stakeholders to support integrated and inclusive security policies across national, regional, and global levels.

About Carefronting Nigeria

Carefronting Nigeria is a non-governmental, non-religious, not-political, and not-for-profit organization which was formed in 2000. Carefronting is based in Kaduna, Nigeria and is an assemblage of individuals with varied experiences in humanitarian and social work focusing on peacebuilding, conflict transformation, trauma consciousness, and preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE). Carefronting has worked in every state in Nigeria and in other countries across Africa, Asia, Europe, and America. They are currently involved with healing, reconciliation, and P/CVE activities in the north east and north central regions of Nigeria.

About the Kenya Community Support Centre (KECOSCE)

The Kenya Community Support Centre (KECOSCE) is a national nongovernmental organization dedicated to promoting a just, peaceful, and democratically governed society by mobilizing, organizing, and empowering citizens to be able to effectively participate in social, economic, and political processes that impact their wellbeing in order to realize sustainable human development for the people of Kenya. Founded in 2006, KECOSCE was established to address the challenge of democratic governance, socio-economic, and youth concerns with a focus on the Coast region of Kenya. KECOSCE currently operates in six counties in the Coast and counties of the Northeastern regions implementing research, advocacy, capacity building, and education programs focusing on human rights and democracy, peace and security, social enterprises, and natural resources management.



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