East Africa Civil Society Organizations Hub
Summary Report of National Meetings

The East Africa Civil Society Organizations Hub (CSO Hub) is a network of nearly 160 civil society organizations engaging in preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) efforts in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. Its objectives are to support and deepen regional civil society relationships and collaboration, strengthen programming capacities, identify and map new and grassroots P/CVE actors, and develop a representative voice for civil society to engage with governments, regional bodies, and international actors on the development of P/CVE policies and programs.

With initial support from the governments of the Netherlands and Norway, the CSO Hub was established and operationalized in 2017-2018 by the Global Center on Cooperative Security (Global Center) in collaboration with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Center of Excellence for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (ICEPCVE). As a regional coordinating body on P/CVE, ICEPCVE's mandate includes facilitating partnerships between governments, non-governmental organizations, and sub-national actors as well as capturing numerous locally-led efforts to build community resilience against violent extremism in the region.

Local civil society organizations (CSOs) were integral partners in every step of the formation and launch of the CSO Hub. Following regional stakeholder workshops, two organizations per country were nominated by their peers to serve as Interim Conveners for the CSO Hub at a May 2017 meeting co-hosted by ICEPCVE and the Global Center in Djibouti.

Interim Conveners for the CSO Hub (2017-2018)	
Djibouti	Djibouti Rural Action
	United Religious Initiative – Horn of Africa
Ethiopia	Ethiopia Muslim Relief and Development Association
	Ethiopia Interfaith Forum for Development, Dialogue and Action
Kenya	BRAVE – CSCR
	Youth Arts Development & Entrepreneurship Network (YADEN)
Somalia	Community Center Network
	Somali Youth Development Network (SOYDEN)
South Sudan	South Sudan Women Empowerment Network
	Organization for Peace, Relief and Development
Sudan	Sudanese Development Initiative (SUDIA)
	Al-Khatim Adlan Center for Enlightenment & Human Development (KACE)
Tanzania	Center for Youth Dialogue
	Tanzania Youth Coalition
Uganda	International Alert, Uganda Office
	Uganda Muslim Youth Development Forum

Formation of the CSO Hub

Over the course of six months, Interim Conveners worked with ICEPCVE and the Global Center to identify and map CSOs working on P/CVE within their respective communities. In total, more than 400 organizations from across East Africa were identified through desk research, consultations, and local networking. Publicly available data suggests these organizations have undertaken P/CVE relevant work within the last five years, though not all responded to inquiries to confirm the current operational capacities and scope of work.

Of the organizations identified, 159 became members of the CSO Hub (39%). This includes CSOs who submitted membership forms, or were willing to share their information with ICEPCVE and the Global Center. Interim Conveners have indicated that trust and pre-existing relationships were key decision-making factors for many CSOs considering membership. In certain contexts, CSOs were willing to speak with the Interim Conveners only in confidence and therefore are not reflected in the table below.

Country	Total Identified	Members	Membership Response Rate
Djibouti	29	16	55%
Ethiopia	28	6	21%
Kenya	91	55	60%
Somalia	37	15	41%
South Sudan	30	9	30%
Sudan	36	16	44%
Tanzania	83	11	13%
Uganda	70	30	43%
Total	**404**	**159**	**39%**

Organizational criteria for membership in the CSO Hub is determined at the national level and includes charities and non-profit organizations, community organizations and leaders, faith-based institutions, religious leaders, researchers, and academics. The majority of current members identified as a non-profit organization (86%), with the rest primarily being religious institutions (12%). It should be noted that 14% of the non-profit members also indicated a religious focus to their work (e.g., Muslim advocacy or inter-faith dialogue). The CSO Hub also counts among its members a small number of private sector entities and academic institutions (2%).

CSO Hub applications requested information on the types of work conducted by prospective members in order to understand their operations and proved tailored support. The Global Center has attributed categories to describe the work of each organization based upon the information provided, as outlined below. Please note, multiple categories were assigned to CSOs conducting a variety of activities. Further, not all members chose to submit this information in full.

- **Advocacy** – 42 members
- **Capacity Building** – 47 members
- **Stakeholder Dialogue** – 60 members
- **Policy** – 7 members
- **Direct Programming** – 24 members
- **Research** – 5 members

Based upon the information provided on current or recent P/CVE programs, the Global Center also categorized thematic areas of work undertaken by CSO Hub members. This is intended to help identify linkages between CSOs, as well and to better understand the scope of P/CVE work in the region. A summary of the areas where CSO Hub members are most active is provided below, noting that these categories are inherently subjective, interrelated, and influenced by the information provided in a relatively constrained membership application format. Further, CSO Hub membership is not necessarily a fully representative sample from which to draw conclusions about the scope of P/CVE activities in an entire country.

- **Djibouti** – Development and Service Provision; Addressing Drivers of Violent Extremism

- **Ethiopia** – Development and Service Provision;

- **Kenya** – Building Community Resilience; Conflict Prevention/Mitigation; Economic Empowerment; Gender; Human Rights; Inter-Faith Dialogue; Religious Education; Youth

- **Somalia** – Building Community Resilience; Gender; Youth; Social Reconciliation; Civic Education

- **South Sudan** – Gender (specifically gender-based violence)

- **Sudan** – Inter-Faith Dialogue; Religious Tolerance, Youth; Economic Empowerment

- **Tanzania** – Conflict Prevention/Mitigation; Education; Youth

- **Uganda** – Addressing Drivers of Violent Extremism; Economic Empowerment; Gender; Inter-Faith Dialogue; Peace Building/Maintenance; Rehabilitation and Reintegration; Youth

Country Priorities and Meeting Outcomes

Interim Conveners also conducted extensive consultations with identified CSOs to learn their perspectives, needs, priorities, and challenges relative to their activities in the P/CVE field. The feedback from these discussions was integral to the formation of the CSO Hub and to aligning its strategic vision with the operational contexts and lived CSO experiences in each country.

To validate country findings and launch the CSO Hub, two-day meetings were held in Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda.[1] Meetings were organized and facilitated by the Interim Conveners and co-hosted by ICEPCVE with support from the Global Center. The first day of the meeting invited CSO Hub members and others consulted during the formation process to review and validate the findings of the national consultations, identify priorities, and determine a process for establishing a representative mechanism to lead engagement with members and government actors (i.e. "National Conveners," Working Group, etc.). In most countries, the CSOs were joined by national government officials on the second day to share their perspectives and expertise on P/CVE, reflect on the findings of the Interim Conveners, and discuss how to strengthen collaboration between government and CSOs on P/CVE policies and programs.[2]

This section provides a summary of the key points emerging from the consultations and national meetings. In line with its mandate, ICEPCVE will lead future engagements with the CSO Hub and its members. This includes facilitating ongoing dialogue and collaboration among members and between government and non-governmental actors on the priorities and needs identified. Further, ICEPCVE will integrate the representative function of the CSO Hub into its formal structure to ensure a sustained mechanism of engagement and to

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[1] National meetings were unable to be held in Ethiopia and Tanzania.
[2] Government officials did not attend meetings in Sudan, Somalia, or Uganda.

advance ICEPCVE's mission to harness the grassroots knowledge of local communities and involve them as active participants in P/CVE strategies and programs.

Djibouti
Interim Conveners: Djibouti Rural Action and United Religious Initiative – Horn of Africa

On 2-3 July 2018, more than 30 representatives of government and civil society convened to discuss the launch of the CSO Hub in Djibouti. The Minister of Justice, H.E. Ali Farah Assoweh, opened the meeting and expressed the government's commitment to combatting extremist violence through the development of a national strategy on P/CVE. Representatives from the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, and the Gendamerie Nationale also attended to demonstrate their support and commitment to P/CVE.

Participants highlighted that Djibouti has a tradition of peace that P/CVE programs must seek to bolster and support. The perception was that society is experiencing some changes and there was a call for prevention tactics that focus on sensitization and reinforcement of Djiboutian cultural values, particularly in families, schools, and community centers. Important elements of such programs were deemed to include education, gender and women's empowerment, cultural and intercommunal tolerance, youth engagement through sports and peace clubs, vocational and entrepreneurship training, and inclusive and sustainable development. Media and the internet were highlighted as important mechanisms for awareness raising and countering violent extremist narratives.

To address structural conditions that can create enabling environments for radicalization to violent extremism, participants noted a need to equip youth with the skills required for employment in the private sector and to facilitate vocational and mentorship programs for unemployed populations. Strong collaboration between government, civil society, academics, and media was underscored as critical, including involving and empowering municipal authorities and actors outside of the capital.

Kenya
Interim Conveners: BRAVE and YADEN

In Nairobi, over 50 CSOs delivering national and grassroots P/CVE programs convened from 9-10 July 2018. The meeting provided an important opportunity for actors from across the country to network and share information, as well as interact with officials from the Kenyan government and ICEPCVE. The meeting featured presentations, songs, poetry, and videos from Kenyan performers with positive and peacebuilding messages.

Kenya is home to an active P/CVE landscape with programming focused on youth engagement, faith-based dialogue, counter-narrative campaigns, women and family engagement, research, networking, and rehabilitation and reintegration support. Relative to the work of CSOs, participants identified a number of strengths, including strong community engagement, partnerships among CSOs, and knowledge and awareness of P/CVE objectives. Challenges raised during the consultations include systemic engagement with government, sustained networking between CSOs across the country, resource mobilization, and development of P/CVE strategies that resonate with grassroots populations.

Efforts to combat violent extremism are supported and guided by Kenya's national CVE strategy and county level action plans on P/CVE. On the second day of the meeting, representatives from Kenya's National Counter Terrorism Centre joined to outline the core pillars of the national approach and discuss how government and CSOs can best work independently and collaboratively to comprehensively respond to the challenge of violent

extremism. This includes utilizing the new [Kenyan citizen support mechanism](#), an online portal where CSOs and organizations can register and present ideas for P/CVE partnerships between government, civil society, and the private sector.

Throughout the discussion, a number of priority areas emerged for the CSO Hub to focus on in Kenya, including connecting CSOs for experience sharing, facilitating resource mobilization, and ensuring equitable representation and participation across all sizes, scales, and locations of members. It was noted that for the CSO Hub to be successful, it would require sustained engagement and incentives for members to ensure momentum is not lost. Balance between the contributions of larger and smaller organizations was also noted, including ensuring the CSO Hub benefits members at all capacity levels. To address this, it was proposed that conferences be held across the country with potential breakout sessions focused on different P/CVE themes.

Participants also expressed interest in structured and sustained platforms for dialogue between government and CSOs to support information sharing and trust building. Facilitating ongoing communication could support increased and broader consultations with CSOs when developing P/CVE programming as well as periodic review and dialogue on the implementation of the national and county P/CVE action plans.

Somalia
Interim Convener: SOYDEN

On 13-14 August, 12 CSOs convened in Mogadishu to discuss the establishment of the CSO Hub and its operations in Somalia. Participants noted a desire to engage universities and student associations, women and youth groups, religious leaders, professional associations, and the private sector to expand CSO Hub membership. Recognizing the sensitive nature of the issues addressed by the CSO Hub, participants discussed how future members could be vetted to ensure safety and security, including by providing documentation of registration in Somalia, meeting with current members, and referral processes.

Facing a territorial threat from al-Shabaab, security was considered the biggest challenge to P/CVE efforts by CSOs in Somalia. In addition to constraining their ability to operate, some CSOs were wary of engaging on P/CVE out of concern that they might attract unwanted attention from al-Shabaab. Many CSOs felt they did not have sufficient capacity or expertise to engage on such sensitive topics as violent extremism, and were wary of the potential repercussions that misguided programming could have on fragile communities and populations. Trust among CSOs and other stakeholders was described as weak, and concern over information security and confidentiality hindered information channels between CSOs and government officials. Here, participants expressed a clear need for sustained platforms of engagement and trust building between government and CSOs on P/CVE.

Despite the development of a National Strategy and Action Plan on P/CVE, CSOs felt that the strategy was not well disseminated and that further awareness raising was necessary to clarify national priorities and policies. Resource mobilization and enhanced coordination of P/CVE efforts between CSOs and national and sub-national government officials was highlighted as critical to effectively implementing the action plans. Participants also highlighted the importance of public awareness and education on P/CVE policies and programs, youth engagement and employment strategies, and capacity building for CSOs. Further priority areas include empowering women and minority groups; analysis and assessment of stabilization, reconciliation, and social healing programs and their relevance to P/CVE efforts; advancing public and private sector partnerships; and engaging madrassas in P/CVE educational curriculum development and implementation. CSOs expressed a strong desire to collaborate with government officials on P/CVE policies and programs, and would welcome government engagement in future meetings and other forums facilitated by ICEPCVE.

South Sudan
Interim Conveners: Organization for Peace, Relief, and Development and South Sudan Women Empowerment Network

As one of the newest countries and one facing significant security and development challenges, Interim Conveners in South Sudan identified a need to engage a broad range of CSOs working on a diverse set of issues that may hold relevance to P/CVE efforts. More than 40 organizations came together on 13-14 August 2018 to consider their contributions to P/CVE and officially launch the CSO Hub in South Sudan.

Participants were welcomed by the Honorable Mou Mou, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Trade, who underscored the vital role of non-state actors in building community resilience and preventing violent extremism and organized crime. He encouraged participants to measure the success of P/CVE measures not by the disruption of terrorist plots, but rather by their contributions to addressing the structural conditions and community tensions that underpin vulnerability to violent extremist narratives.

During the consultations and meeting dialogues, CSOs expressed the need to promote human rights, rule of law, social liberties, good governance, and public sector accountability and transparency. CSOs also highlighted the importance of economic empowerment of marginalized communities and others hit by economic downturns, including women, widows, and internally displaced persons. It was noted that these are worthwhile aims in their own right, and further capacity building is required for CSOs to understand how these efforts can contribute to P/CVE.

During the meeting, participants identified a set of shared priorities between government and CSOs relating to P/CVE approaches. These include the need for a conflict-sensitive analysis to deepen the understanding of conflict drivers and mitigation strategies and development of a P/CVE national strategy to guide programmatic interventions. Conducting a broader actors mapping would support efforts to strengthen networks and deepen the capacity of CSOs to contribute to P/CVE programs. Sustained engagement with government and collaborative efforts to advance South Sudan's peace strategy and monitor its effective implementation were also highlighted, alongside sensitization of the general public on P/CVE efforts and the contributions of CSOs.

Sudan
Interim Convener: Sudanese Development Initiative

In Sudan, the Interim Convener established a Working Group on P/CVE as an informal and voluntary association of independent civil society actors working to address violent extremism through peaceful and legitimate means. Its objectives are to advance the understanding of the drivers of violent extremism, promote and deepen the participation of Sudanese civil society in P/CVE efforts, contribute to P/CVE policy formulation, and raise awareness on violent extremism and P/CVE approaches.

Consultations conducted relative to the CSO Hub have highlighted that CSOs have varying interpretations and understandings of violent extremism, which is considered a new concept in Sudan. There is need for sensitization among CSOs on the objectives and importance of P/CVE efforts to ensure programs are properly grounded and responsive to the Sudanese context. Constraints on the operations of civil society and a lack of trust between CSOs and government officials was cited as a core challenge, and an area where the finalization of the national strategy could be useful. CSOs were described as committed and passionate, but struggling with low institutional capacity, limited opportunities for staff development, and instable and insufficient resource streams. Lack of networking opportunities has hindered information sharing and there is a need for trust building between CSOs to support more effective collaboration.

The Working Group organized a meeting on 17 November 2018, which brought together over 30 representatives of CSOs and activists working directly on P/CVE (relevant) issues in Sudan. During the meeting, the Working Group and CSO Hub were introduced, and the findings from the consultation phase regarding the drivers of violent extremism in the Sudanese context were augmented and validated. Participants also explored possible CSO interventions to address some or all the drivers identified. A second meeting is planned to be held with the Sudan National Commission for Counter Terrorism (SNCCT) and relevant government institutions, to explore synergy with government-led P/CVE efforts and ensure Sudanese civil society is actively involved in the development of the national P/CVE strategy.

Tanzania
Interim Conveners: Tanzania Youth Coalition and Center for Youth Dialogue

The Interim Conveners were not able to hold a meeting of P/CVE stakeholders in Tanzania due to miscommunication with government authorities. CSOs remain committed to the objectives of the CSO Hub, and Interim Conveners have sought to meet with government officials and ICEPCVE to discuss how the CSO Hub and its members can collaborate with the government on P/CVE policies and programs.

Tanzania has a number of CSOs with expertise in peace building, interfaith relation, youth mobilization, gender issues and human rights. Their work has contributed to a strong peace infrastructure that supports and contributes to P/CVE objectives. CSOs expressed a need for capacity building on P/CVE concepts to understand how ongoing initiatives can contribute to P/CVE objectives, as well as ensure P/CVE programs are properly grounded and reflective of the Tanzanian context. The ongoing development of a national strategy on P/CVE was seen as important to aligning national P/CVE efforts, and CSOs expressed an interest in establishing joint guidelines for implementation that would include mechanisms of cooperation between government and civil society.

Uganda
Interim Conveners: International Alert, Uganda and Uganda Muslim Youth Development Forum

In Uganda, 35 CSOs with expertise in peacebuilding, legal and criminal justice reform, human rights advocacy, gender dynamics, and youth mobilization came together to discuss findings of the consultations and launch of the CSO Hub in Uganda. Uganda has a strong peace maintenance infrastructure, but participants noted that a lack of definitional consensus on violent extremism has hindered cohesive and collaborative P/CVE efforts. Further research is needed to understand the nuance between different types of violence and violent extremism in Uganda, and to deepen the understanding of contributing factors, drivers, and impactful responses.

Participants also discussed building alliances between CSOs, including through the sharing of good practices and lessons learned and increased collaboration and information sharing to reduce duplication of efforts. CSOs would also benefit from further organizational capacity development on P/CVE programming and conflict sensitivity, as well as resource mobilization and diversification of donors. Trust building between CSOs and government officials was seen as critical to advancing constructive engagements that address community level tensions and structural issues such as unemployment and marginalization.

Uganda is currently developing a national action plan on P/CVE that can help guide prevention approaches, and the need to meaningfully engage CSOs in the drafting process and to develop subsequent programs in partnership was raised. Participants identified areas of potential collaboration between government and CSOs, including involvement of CSOs in policy development, increased information sharing and stronger

confidentiality mechanisms, audit of legal frameworks with respect to human rights protections, and a coordination and monitoring mechanism to measure positive outcomes of P/CVE programs and strategies. To facilitate collaboration on these areas, participants urged a meeting to be arranged between the Ugandan government, CSOs, and ICEPCVE to identify shared priorities and avenues of cooperation.

Next Steps

When describing obstacles in the P/CVE environment in their countries, CSOs most often mentioned a shrinking space for civil society. Restrictive legislation, arduous registration of non-governmental entities and activities, harassment, and obstruction were noted in nearly every country.

CSOs welcomed the establishment of ICEPCVCE and the CSO Hub and the important contributions it can make to coordinating P/CVE efforts and advancing collaboration between government and civil society. Going forward, ICEPCVE will engage directly with the CSO Hub and its members and continue its work at the national level on the priorities identified. During the formation of the CSO Hub, CSOs also underscored the strategic role ICEPCVE could play at the regional level in leading and contributing to the following areas:

- **Facilitate dialogue between government and CSOs through national and regional meetings**: Trust building and sustained mechanisms for dialogue between government and CSOs was seen as critical to advancing holistic P/CVE approaches. ICEPCVE is well positioned to convene multi-stakeholder meetings at the national and regional level that would create an important space for dialogue on sensitive P/CVE issues on which CSOs are not regularly engaged by governments. Facilitation of such meetings was noted as especially useful in Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, and Tanzania, where engagement between the CSO Hub and government officials was limited.

- **Mobilize political support for inclusive national P/CVE strategies and action plans**: ICEPCVE has produced a regional P/CVE strategy that provides a useful framework against which national and local plans can be developed,[3] and can play an instrumental role in facilitating and promoting inclusive national P/CVE action plan development and monitoring processes.

- **Promote partnerships between CSOs and government on P/CVE programs:** CSOs across the region expressed a desire to work collaboratively with government to implement P/CVE programs. Trust building and sustained dialogue are critical foundations for such partnerships, and would benefit from ongoing political sensitization by ICEPVE to government officials on the important contributions of CSOs to P/CVE efforts.

- **Provide a platform for CSO networking and information sharing**: ICEPCVE has established a digital hub to provide a platform for information sharing, networking, and accessing research and materials on P/CVE. Further awareness raising and capacity building on using the site would support increased membership and platform usage.

- **Mobilize resources and capacity development support for CSOs**: ICEPCVE has a mandate to provide P/CVE capacity development support to CSOs and governmental actors. CSOs expressed an interest in trainings on P/CVE concepts, drivers of radicalization in East Africa, community resilience, and combatting violent extremist narratives.

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[3] As the time of consultations, national P/CVE action plans have been developed in Kenya and Somalia with work ongoing to develop county-level strategies. Djibouti, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda had also begun national action plan drafting processes with the support of the United Nations Development Programme.