

PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM



Lessons from the following evaluations:

(all evaluations available at <https://gate.unwomen.org/>)

2018

Evaluation of Women's Participation in Preventing and Response to Violent Extremism in Kenya.



2016

Evaluation of the Peace Building and Protection Systems in Uganda.



1. WHY IS THE ENGAGEMENT OF WOMEN IN PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IMPORTANT?



In the last few years, the East and Southern Africa region has experienced a sudden surge of violent extremist activities and a substantial shifts in its security landscape.

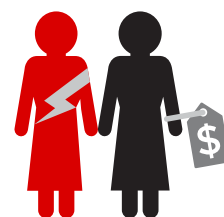
There is evidence suggesting that gender norms have strategically been used and manipulated for violent extremism purposes such as the use of gender stereotypes for recruitment, perpetration by women and using their roles to facilitate evasion from counter-terrorism measures. UN Women is engaged

in programmes that aim at involving women and women groups in efforts to prevent and combat terrorism and violent extremism in the region. They include initiatives that build women's capacities in mentoring, negotiating, and mediating to participate meaningfully in political and peace processes. They also include work on evidence based advocacy to comprehensively understand the drivers and impacts of women's active participation in responding to terrorism and violent extremism in the region.

Key strategies for engaging women in preventing and countering violent extremism.



BUILD WOMEN'S CAPACITIES IN
MENTORING, NEGOTIATING AND
MEDIATING



EVIDENCE-BASED ADVOCACY
ON WOMEN'S ROLES IN RESPONDING TO
TERRORISM AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

2. WHICH APPROACHES HAVE PROVEN EFFECTIVE IN PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM?



In terms of capacity building on the topic of violent extremism, UN Women programmes adopted adult-based and skill-oriented training approaches, which proved effective for increasing women's confidence, knowledge and skills about their rights. They also helped in reducing women's fear of speaking out.

The programmes proved to be useful when offering integrated capacity building workshops for both men and women, with the majority of beneficiaries being women who were trained on entrepreneurship, human rights and countering violent extremism. However, UN Women evaluations demonstrated that the short duration of the training presented

a limitation overly impacting the entire training effectiveness. At the same time, the evaluations confirm that training of traditional and other transitional justice structures does not only require a one-off training workshop, but needs follow up, on-site support and monitoring to address gaps in knowledge transfer at specific circumstances, e.g., during a mediation process.

UN Women programmes helped to enroll local women communities to take active roles in community peace building initiatives, in the formation of support groups and to increase women's engagement in security structures. While this resulted in enhanced collaboration and coordination amongst project stakeholders, evaluations found that women's participation in key decision-making positions in communities remained limited. This was mainly due to factors related to community and cultural beliefs, which might take a longer time to change. Support groups have also been formed alongside increased engagement of women in security structures, all of which have led to increased awareness of violent extremism among community members.

The evaluations also highlighted that support for women and girls formerly associated with extremist groups requires holistic approaches that address issues around livelihoods, psychosocial and protection support. Beneficiaries may require long term psychosocial support to treat post-traumatic stress disorders. The support needs to be provided in a flexible way that is driven by individual women's needs. Circumstances may change; hence the programmes require continuous monitoring and adaptation of the implementation strategy.

Key approaches for preventing and countering violent extremism:



INTEGRATED
CAPACITY BUILDING
WORKSHOPS
FOR MEN AND WOMEN
ON TOPICS AROUND
VIOLENT EXTREMISM



FORMATION OF
SUPPORT GROUPS
AT COMMUNITY
LEVEL



ENGAGEMENT OF
WOMEN IN SECURITY
STRUCTURES, E.G.,
POLICE



HOLISTIC SUPPORT
THAT INCLUDES
LIVELIHOODS,
PSYCHOSOCIAL
AND PROTECTION
ASSISTANCE

3. HOW CAN UN WOMEN IMPROVE ITS WORK ON ENGAGING WOMEN IN PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM?

UN Women should continue building the capacity of duty bearers so that they can effectively fulfill their obligations in responding to women's rights.

It is also important to integrate elements into future initiatives that look at improving the relationships between security agents and members of the community, in particular women. Given the past experiences with harsh security measures, a careful cultivation of trust and dialogue between law enforcement staff and community members is essential.

Psychosocial support for women is only effective if provided on a long-term basis. Similar projects should be structured to provide such kind of support, including counseling to the families of women formerly associated with extremist groups to ensure full integration for them and their children.

UN Women should capitalize on the experience from its women, peace and security programmes and derive lessons for developing intervention models that have the potential for scale-up in other fragile situations.

Related to this, UN Women should make use of existing contacts and networks in its programmes to facilitate knowledge sharing amongst implementing partners and help position UN Women as a recognized authority in the area of women, peace and security.

UN Women evaluations have recommended that UN agencies in joint programmes and those with complementary activities should consider targeting the same geographical areas to ensure a holistic support approach and increase the chances of achieving impact. This could include working in similar sub-counties and villages and organizing joint coordination meetings in communities.

Lastly, evaluations have demonstrated that training of chiefs and local leaders alone does not lead to improving mediation practices in traditional courts. Chieftdom and community level committees should also be targeted as they conduct the actual hearing and recording of cases.

IMPROVE
RELATIONSHIPS
BETWEEN SECURITY
AGENTS AND WOMEN
COMMUNITY MEMBERS



BUILD THE CAPACITY OF
DUTY BEARERS
SO THEY CAN
EFFECTIVELY PROTECT
WOMEN'S RIGHTS

PLAN FOR LONG-TERM
PSYCHOSOCIAL AND
COUNSELING
SUPPORT



INCLUDE
CHIEFDOM
AND COMMUNITY
LEVEL COMMITTEES
IN TARGET GROUPS

Independent Evaluation and Audit Services (IEAS) Independent Evaluation Service (IES)