

Evaluation of ‘Strengthening Resilience to Violent Extremism (STRIVE II) in Kenya’ *Final Report*



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Executive Summary presents in brief the findings, conclusions and recommendations from evaluative research conducted between July 2019 and April 2020 on the Strengthening Resilience to Violent Extremism II (STRIVE II) in Kenya programme, a set of interventions funded by the European Union (EU) Trust Fund for Kenya¹.

Strengthening Resilience to Violent Extremism (STRIVE) II

STRIVE II aims to contribute to the reduction of radicalisation, recruitment and support for violent extremist groups. The programme is implemented by the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), an independent defence and security think tank based in the UK and Kenya. It follows on from the successfully-delivered, EU-funded STRIVE I programme implemented in the Horn of Africa between January 2014 and January 2017, marking the beginning of the EU's engagement in the field of countering violent extremism in the region.

STRIVE II has an overall budget of €3m and is focused on geographical areas identified as hotspots for radicalisation, namely North Eastern, Western and Central Kenya as well as the coast region and urban areas within Nairobi (Eastleigh and Majengo). STRIVE II began in January 2017 and, after having had its original timeframe and budget extended, it is currently due to end in September 2020.

STRIVE II's interventions operate based on a distinctive conceptual framework: the programme conceptualises its desired impact across four connected arenas (mostly the authors' wording):

1. tackling **structural factors** such as social exclusion, marginalisation and institutional cultures & political narratives which create the conditions for radicalisation and support for violent extremism;
2. addressing **group-based dynamics** which contribute to and encourage pathways towards radicalisation, such as peer pressure, group norms, radical flank actors, etc.;
3. countering **enabling factors** which stem from contact with those actors who seek to radicalise and recruit to violent extremist groups, and the rhetoric which aims to garner support;
4. reducing **individual incentives** to participation and support which can range from an individual's feelings of injustice and desire for revenge to perceived financial gain and rewards in the afterlife.

In pursuing this impact, STRIVE II's interventions take place within four connected result areas.

Mentorship Result Area: aiming to reduce the susceptibility of young people to political and ideological violence. A concurrent dimension of this initiative increases the knowledge base of relevant stakeholders and builds the capacity of mentors to identify and engage with at risk individuals.

Law Enforcement Result Area: focusing on CVE training for senior and mid-level managers and frontline officers from a range of agencies to strengthen prevention capabilities and response to VE with strategies compatible with international law and human rights standards.

Preventive Communication Result Area: focuses on strengthening the voice of marginalised youth by improving their self-expression, sense of participation and representation in key media spaces.

Research Result Area: focusing on improving CVE programming and enhancing the understanding of relationships between conflict dynamics and recruitment patterns.

¹ See www.rusi.org/strive for more information on STRIVE and related publications

Purpose of the Evaluation

The evaluation was commissioned to provide RUSI, its partners and funders with a summative assessment on the nature and extent of impact achieved from STRIVE II and formative recommendations for enhancing future iterations of the programme. The research objectives were:

- to investigate the **logic and theory of change** of the programme (outlined later in this report) and identify in what ways the programme has contributed to achieving its impact statement;
- to assess the **appropriateness** of the design, implementation and contribution of the programme's four main intervention areas; and
- to provide an analysis of the **sustainability** of specific interventions.

Research questions

At the broadest level, the evaluation has sought to assess the impact of the programme against three overarching questions:

- How and in what ways may STRIVE II have contributed to **reduced radicalisation**?
- How and in what ways may STRIVE II have contributed to **reduced recruitment**?
- How and in what ways may STRIVE II have contributed to **reduced support** to VE groups?

Additionally, a set of sub-questions were provided which stem directly from the conceptual framing developed by RUSI and its partners. The evaluation has used these questions to connect the available evidence to the programme's logical framework at four related levels.

- a) How and to what extent did the programme contribute to addressing **structural factors**?
- b) How and to what extent did the programme address **group dynamics**?
- c) How and to what extent did the programme address **enabling factors**?
- d) How and to what extent did the programme address **individual factors**?

Methodology

The evaluation methodology developed was based on the following factors.

1. Recognition of the extensive, internal evaluation and monitoring activity which was been underway since the programme's inception, providing a wealth of predominantly but not exclusively quantitative data;
2. The desire for a mixed-methods approach which ensures an effective balance between qualitative and quantitative data overall, meaning that the evaluation team would focus their efforts on gathering qualitative, primary data; and
3. The need for an iterative approach which is able to work around the needs of STRIVE II's programming and be as inclusive as viable given language barriers and a short fieldwork period.

The following research methods have been used:

- Comprehensive background and extant data review and analysis;
- Primary data collection including:
 - more than 50 semi-structured interviews and 5 focus groups with programme staff, programme participants and funder & partner representatives;
 - Observation of a range of elements delivered in the programme, including training sessions, internal programme meetings and public events.

Data from the above has been analysed thematically, using the programme's change logic and conceptual framework as high-level guides. Research limitations are listed in the full-length report.

Evaluative Findings and Conclusions

This section uses the insights and findings from across the four result areas to assess the extent to which STRIVE II has contributed to its overarching aim through the framework of its theory of change.

STRIVE II's theory of change demonstrates logically how its activities create intermediate change in a variety of ways which link to the contribution to reduced radicalisation, recruitment and support for violent extremist groups. It is important to note firstly that the inclusion of the term 'contributing to' is critical in the use of this to assess success: it highlights the fact that the aim is relative and not absolute. Ultimately, there are a range of external factors beyond the control of the programme that have the potential to both increase and reduce the success of violent extremist groups and the actors which work against their progress in CVE. If, for example, unanticipated events further increase the fragility of communities in deprived neighbourhoods across Kenya, the success of violent extremist groups could easily increase above the level at the start of the programme – clearly this does not mean that the programme has not succeeded. The role of this evaluation is to assess the success of the programme based on the resources, ethos and methods within its control. Overall, the evaluation finds that the programme is highly successful and is making a significant and comprehensive contribution to this overarching aim in a multitude of ways, explored in the concluding comments below.

The evaluation of the **Mentorship Result Area** has demonstrated how the programme excels at identifying and supporting young people who are truly at risk of recruitment and radicalisation to violent extremist groups and a range of related dangers such as violent crime. The programme successfully pairs young people with credible, effective peer mentors who are committed to providing one-to-one and group-based support in order to enable their mentees to make significant, positive changes in their lives. Critically, STRIVE II mentors have had similar life experiences to their mentees and have a deep understanding of their community context. This system is supported by a group of community stakeholders who live and work in close proximity to young people at risk and who are able to identify those in need of support, acting as an interface between the programme and the young person.

The data and stories provided throughout the mentorship evaluation show, in general and through compelling examples, the severity of the situations that mentees are in upon entering the programme and demonstrate well the transformative effects of STRIVE II in knowledge, attitudes, economic and life opportunities, self-worth, social identity and general prosperity. The programme has a clear and powerful focus on group dynamics, illustrating well the role of positive social identity as a bulwark against violence, extremism and negative life choices. Critical to the programme's success is the role of STRIVE II's group settings in providing and bolstering positive social identities, friendships, networks and norms which act as a clear safeguard against the narrative and group dynamics of violent extremist groups.

Further, the data demonstrates positive shifts in the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of mentors and stakeholders, including in ways that directly contribute to and cement their roles as community actors in countering violent extremism (CVE). All groups engaged in the programme have shown substantial shifts in their understanding of violent extremism, recognising the interplay of a more complex set of factors and the multiple pathways which draw individuals to extremist groups. Part of the sustainability of the programme rests on the position of stakeholders and mentors, and also mentees, to become active in their communities in working against those factors and there is good evidence that this is already happening.

There is significant evidence to demonstrate that the programme is successful in supporting those at risk to become more resilient to violent extremism in ways that align well with the theory of change. As the programme has matured, however, the focus should now shift to sustainability and longer-term outcomes including the potential to put more formal structures in place to support mentees into employment and educational opportunities. Collecting data on the longer-term trajectories of mentees and mentors would provide concrete evidence of sustainable change and support the work of the programme in the future in being able to evidence the extent of the difference made.

At this point, STRIVE II's mentorship approach should be considered a tried and tested model for supporting youth people from marginalised communities in Kenya which, owing to the work of a committed team of RUSI staff, mentors, mentees and stakeholders, has produced remarkable, positive effects on the lives of youth at risk of violent extremism.

In the **Law Enforcement Result Area**, the evaluation finds a substantial change in attitudes and application of soft power solutions over hard power actions. There is clear evidence of an understanding of the impact and implications for vulnerable members of society, particularly young people, when hard power options are applied by law enforcement. Indeed, those engaged in the training programme illustrated a pendulum swing in their responses to questionnaires. The training created a shift from support for actions that resulted in the removal of liberty and in some instances injury and loss of life to ones of community engagement, disruption and preventative measures to protect those exposed by violent extremists and to prevent their exploitation. Such recognised indicators of effect demonstrate the effectiveness of the training programme. The acknowledgement that previous activity breached human rights and the rule of law, 'pushing' vulnerable members of society towards those identified threat actors is remarkable and holds huge potential for a significant improvement in police-community relations. From the significant and rigorously collected data available, triangulated through this evaluation, the training has become a significant part of a movement that is enabling a change in the position of law enforcement from a causal factor in violent extremism to a positive influencer in the development of relationships and building of trust between themselves and young people.

This pathway to success has been created through the safe spaces in which to interact with traditional and non-traditional partners and engage in an incremental learning curve of modular training, which catered for their needs and the needs of the communities they serve.

To achieve this success within a challenging environment, where civil society organisations have never before been afforded direct and sustained access and influence is impressive. To do this within a context in which changes in leadership and interests have influenced progress on a previously agreed curriculum, shifted geographical areas of operation and tested the strength of existing trust and confidence, simply underscores the success of this result area. RUSI has developed a solid foundation from which to continue to work with a wide range of security and law enforcement actors and managed to positively influence organisational culture within security and law enforcement agencies.

That being noted, the challenges experienced within the Law Enforcement Result Area also serve to highlight the precarious nature of success in this field and with government partners. At the end of this programme, STRIVE II can legitimately claim hard-fought successes in influencing the structures which drive violent extremism. RUSI is now a tried and tested provider with the trust of NCTC and wider law enforcement structures. However, sustainable progress in this arena is reliant upon the demonstrably fickle nature of political influence and interests – a prominent factor in any politically sensitive area of work but particularly well-evidenced in this case. The successes achieved have come through perseverance and, it would seem, their sustainability hinges on future political dynamics.

An important caveat to this insecurity, however, is that there is significant support from national, regional and local level law-enforcement change-makers for the continuation of this training programme with a broadening out of beneficiaries to include front-facing practitioners and the centralisation and embedding of the STRIVE II curriculum within the Police Training Academy.

It is unusual for a civil society organisation to achieve strategic, tactical and operational support for a product which serves to educate and influence policing. There is an acceptance that law enforcement have been part of the problem in local communities, which is a difficult but important admission, and now with the innovation and creativity of RUSI they can become a more effective part of the solution, delivering a sustainable community policing model that impacts the lives of the communities they serve.

The **Preventive Communications Result Area** has delivered CVE and conflict resolution training to a range of radio professionals from the coastal region of Kenya and a range of youth expression and communication activities to STRIVE II mentors and mentees.

Much like in its work with law enforcement, STRIVE II's training for radio professionals is a standout example of how societal structures can be influenced through an investment in understanding the needs of the agencies that represent the structures and tailoring programmes to fit. One key factor in the success of this element is the inclusion of technical training on general radio production skills which has ensured that the training was attractive and useful to participants from the start. The data shows clear shifts in knowledge and attitudes related to CVE and conflict sensitive journalism and, crucially, that radio stations have changed their practices as a result: engaging with the community more and covering violent extremism and other community issues in a more balanced and sensitive manner.

Looking at the effects across result areas, the evaluation depicts a range of common increases in awareness, knowledge and behaviours, particularly in creating opportunities for critical self-reflection of actors in their roles as representatives of the mainstream structures of Kenyan society. There are clear overlaps between the changes made in STRIVE II's work with law enforcement and beneficiaries of the preventive communications interventions suggesting that there may be scope to bring those agencies together for mutual benefit. Conflict-sensitive journalism appears to align well with the ethos of the law enforcement curriculum and manual: perhaps there is scope and benefit in utilising the commonalities of these approaches to facilitate contact and mutual understanding between law enforcement, communication & media professionals and young people in order to explore and further advance the role of communication in CVE.

STRIVE II's use of self-expression and communication in attempts to enhance the voice of young people has produced a range of tentative findings from a pilot of limited scale. It has found, perhaps expectedly, that the workings of national and government-owned media institutions place significant limits on and barriers to the influence of external actors such as RUSI and, subsequently on the articulation of the authentic experiences of young people. Despite this, however, the investments made in one-to-one relationships with actors within those institutions has demonstrated a successful way of gaining influence. At this point, this approach has not manifested in a great deal of longer-term impact in influencing structures but presents clear potential for the future: an apt form of success for a pilot intervention. The change logic of this element of STRIVE II appears to be contingent on scale, relationships with the right actors and the extant ability within the group of young people to effectively represent their lives, views and experiences within media-worthy outputs.

As stated in the detailed analysis, though, this part of the programme should be judged at this stage more by the effects of the process than the outputs generated. The use of self-expression appears to be wholly and uniquely supportive of the strengthening of group dynamics. It permits the programme to facilitate the development of a shared understanding within groups of young people, many of whom have experienced traumatic events in their lives. This is a micro-level process which is supportive of the tackling of negative group dynamics as depicted in the theory of change. The evaluation and the discussion article recently published (Freear and Glazzard 2020) both indicate a viable logic between this intervention and the aim of the programme. Currently, however, a lack of comprehensive data on the impact on mentors and mentees prevents the drawing of a definite, causal line between self-expression of mentors and mentees and the reduction of radicalisation, recruitment and support for violent extremism. Following the 'useful meandering' of this pilot, more extensive and rigorous evaluation data from future iterations would readily support the testing of this logic.

The self-communication element of this part of the programme may also be supportive of structured contact between young people and law enforcement, should the programme wish to develop this activity in the future. The combination of shifts in law enforcement's attitudes towards young people, shifts in young people's attitudes to law enforcement and an enhanced ability of young people to communicate their experiences and views usefully and effectively would appear in theory to present opportunities for dialogue and prejudice-reducing contact. This has already been trialled to a certain extent within the Canadian-funded police dialogue programme which appears to have been highly successful in shifting perceptions in both groups. It is important to keep in mind, though, that these groups are starting from a position of distrust rather than a neutral point. From the data available across this evaluation and the current understanding of trust between groups, it is likely that the positive effects of the programme have reduced distrust between young people and law enforcement representatives taking part in the programme, potentially bringing them closer to a 'neutral' point. The next stage, then, would be to use contact between the two groups to build active trust. It is this which would form the basis for a strong community policing model in the future.

With regard to the **Research Result Area**, the programme has successfully added to the evidence base on violent extremism in a number of clear and much-needed ways. Crucially, the evaluation finds that the work on women's involvement in violent extremism and on clan conflict in the North East of Kenya has led to the most significant contribution to knowledge and presents the clearest opportunity for impact. This is due to the multiple angles, topics and sites of data collection that have hitherto not been examined scientifically – in social science parlance: 'revelatory cases' (Yin 2014) –, leading to a greater depth of insights within those two themes. Knowledge production should be seen as an end in

itself: the programme has provided, developed and enhanced evidence and insights on the threat posed by violent extremism which is wholly supportive of the overarching aim.

In addition to this, RUSI have been successful in using this research to influence policy, practice and structural change, particularly given that some of the research has only very recently been published. Whilst there are a range of external factors which limit the adoption and effects of research knowledge, there is clear evidence of the direct use of the research within USAID, the International Security Sector Advisory Team (ISSAT) and likely other organisations not included in the evaluation, showing that the research has the potential for significant influence within donor and civil society structures. The influencing of more-overtly political structures, such as the Government of Kenya, is far more difficult than influencing more delivery-focused organisations such as USAID because of the explicit and competing interests which can block progress in the former and the more practical and pragmatic attitudes which prevail (more and more often) in the latter. The evidence presented in this report suggests that the most successful adoption of research has come from time spent with key contacts in those organisations, through events and seminars and between individual members of staff.

For many in the world of CVE and security, RUSI represents a trusted brand in research and analysis and this is highly useful for the aims around research impact for STRIVE II. Successful knowledge exchange, though, is reliant upon more than institutional recognition: the development of trust through interpersonal contact is an important prerequisite to depth of impact. Continuing to invest and investing more in this 'facework' (Giddens 1990, Kroeger 2017) with organisations and government agencies (such as NCTC) would provide a greater chance of research being understood and accepted, and thereafter influencing structures. One way of achieving this would be through reinstating or hosting forums that regularly bring organisational representatives in contact with each other to discuss research. RUSI's reputation as excellent providers of research and evidence, the relevance of the topics, the access obtained and the skill of RUSI in translating research into actionable findings are supportive of influencing structures and demonstrate the validity of the assumptions made in the theory of change.

Overall, the evaluation finds that STRIVE II is a strong and effective programme, the different elements of which are complimentary and mutually reinforcing. The logic contained in the programme's theory of change has been shown to be largely valid although it is often restricted by structural barriers, and the scale of its interventions stacked against the breadth and depth of the issues at large in communities. There are a number of ways that the programme can be strengthened, listed as recommendations below. However, the evidence and analysis presented in this report demonstrate a multitude of innovative ways that STRIVE II is contributing to reduced radicalisation, recruitment and support for violent extremism and crucially that the lives and contribution to society of the vast majority of those who take part in the programme are stronger as a result of the programme.

Recommendations

Included below are the recommendations based on the conclusions and findings across the report. These differ from the lessons learned which follow each section in that the recommendations are actionable suggestions for enhancing the programme and are mostly practically focused; the lessons learned are concerned with ideas and findings from the STRIVE II experience which relate to the wider practice of CVE beyond the programme. For consistency, the recommendations below are split by result area:

Mentorship Result Area Recommendations

- Selection criteria for mentees should be reviewed to consider the impact of subjective terminology and the training and awareness raising process for stakeholders should be looked at with the aim of increasing the success rate of mentee recruitment.
- The programme should consider providing more formalised linking of mentees to employment or training opportunities, either through consortium partners or other means (e.g. partnerships with other civil society organisations). In future iterations of the programme, this could be an expected or likely outcome at the end of the mentorship process rather than a possible outcome.
- The programme should capitalise upon the links between young people and law enforcement that have already been founded within STRIVE II and develop opportunities for contact through,

for example, structured dialogue, collaborative projects and involvement of mentors within law enforcement training. The work of the mentorship project has demonstrably softened the attitudes of mentees, mentors and stakeholders to security forces without direct contact having taken place between them. If a positive contact scenario can be managed between mentees and the security forces, this would allow for more substantial improvements in perception and reductions in prejudice and negative stereotyping.

Law Enforcement Result Area Recommendations

- Now the training content is tested and found to be effective, future models of training delivery should consider the use of more efficient, higher volume modes of dissemination, including potentially through police colleges and greater-resourced train-the-trainer approaches.
- Future models of delivery should also maintain the inclusion of senior and mid-level professionals to ensure that change is created at organisational and policy level. A hybrid approach, bringing together front line officers and mid-level managers, which seeks change in structures and with a large volume of individual professionals should be pursued. Recognising that this is not always possible, having training for front line officers supported by mid-level managers through formal opening of courses provides strategic endorsement of such training.
- The inclusion of participants from a range of different agencies should be maintained and perhaps expanded to include non-law enforcement organisations and stations in neighbouring counties/regions within sessions.
- The training should continue to be led and delivered by NCTC trainers but, where viable, should also include more external trainers to provide variety in facilitation and expertise.
- Future training should consider joint delivery by county trainers enhancing the linkage between national and local priorities. Such fusion of experience and expertise would enhance opportunities to progress towards sustainable solutions and the cascading of 'local' training.
- RUSI should consider involving young people within the delivery of the training content to model contact between law enforcement and young people and to increase effects of empathy and trust building. This could involve the use of case studies which show violent extremism and the socio-economic context from the perspectives of young people and the direct involvement of young people in training delivery, possibly connected to future iterations of the Preventive Communication Result Area.(consideration may be given to a pilot area within one of the participating counties)
- Any future iteration of the programme should begin as soon as viable to ensure that the positive momentum and relationship with NCTC is capitalised upon.
- Any future iteration of the programme should allocate greater time, resource and programmatic flexibility to the negotiation of unforeseen political turmoil and bureaucratic hurdles.

Preventive Communication Result Area Recommendations

- Both parts of the result area have been shown to be successful to different extents and should be considered for further investment and scaling.
- In any future work on Strengthening the Voice of Young People, RUSI should consider partnering with organisations with similar values and aims but greater reach within relevant audiences to ensure the greater distribution of communications outputs.
- In any future iteration of the programme, more resource should be provided for evaluation data collection on the qualitative effects of self-expression and communications training on mentors and mentee and the longer-term impact on media institutions from both the radio training and Strengthening the Voice of Young People interventions.
- RUSI should consider ways of capitalising upon the common links between Law Enforcement and Preventive Communications Result Areas, exploring the use of conflict sensitive journalism with law enforcement and bringing participants from the result areas (mentors, mentees, radio/media professionals and law enforcement) to look together at the role of communication in CVE.

Research Result Area Recommendations

- Any future iterations of the result area should allow greater investment of time in overcoming the challenges related to the commission of research, including delays in delivery and issues of research quality.
- A formal mechanism of sharing and collaboration on CVE research between consortium partners and other relevant stakeholders should be established to ensure de-confliction and the transfer of knowledge and research between partners. The research finds that organic processes do not achieve enough in this respect.
- Investment in research in the future should be heavily weighted towards and grouped in coherent themes of relevant research rather than niche, standalone topics. Whilst the research activity in STRIVE II had a common focus on 'recruitment', the topics chosen appears from the outside as separate and not entirely related. Both a better communication of the commonalities between research themes and a greater depth in one or two areas would likely support greater research impact.
- Additional resource should be allocated to ensuring that all research produced is 'translated' and synthesised into accessible formats for policy and practice, allowing the research to be more readily available for implementation.
- A research partnership with NCTC around violent crime and violent extremism should be more actively pursued to maximise the potential for more research within this theme, greater alignment between NCTC's and RUSI's research and greater policy influence.
- The use of STRIVE II research within STRIVE II programming should be increased to allow a somewhat captive audience of CVE stakeholders to be made aware of the research
- RUSI should consider the wider rollout of their CVE training provided to partners, based on their experiences in STRIVE II and the research produced.
- RUSI should look to make use of existing relationships with local and regional law enforcement and security structures, such as the County Security and Intelligence Committees in their dissemination activity, to both inform planning processes and understand future research interests.

Recommendations for Internal Evaluation

- The programme should have a greater focus on qualitative insights to capture more of the depth of change for individuals and groups, with a particular focus on the development of group dynamics within each area.
- A less structured and approach to qualitative data collection (e.g. focus groups) would allow a wider expression of stories and change. This has been achieved in the focus group which followed the film screening in the Preventive Communication Result Area but the structured nature of some of the other focus group and interview data collection may have limited the degree of expression.
- Fuller recording of qualitative data collection from focus groups and interviews from a dedicated transcriber (this has been put in place since the evaluation period).
- The consideration of inductive, ethnographic and grounded-theory approaches to qualitative data collection, allowing themes and insights to emerge from the data over the course of the programme.
- Data collection on the journeys and experiences of researchers within the Research Result Area to assess the changes made in research capabilities.
- Where possible, data should be recorded on life trajectory of a sample of mentees and mentors beyond the delivery of STRIVE II. Whilst short- and mid-term improvements have been identified, there is an excellent opportunity to evidence the value and sustainability of a mentoring programme.

INTRODUCTION

This final evaluation report presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations from evaluative research conducted between July 2019 and April 2020 on the Strengthening Resilience to Violent Extremism II (STRIVE II) in Kenya programme, a set of interventions funded by the European Union Trust Fund for Kenya². The evaluation was undertaken collaboratively by 3 independent consultants with professional backgrounds and expertise in evaluation, countering violent extremism programmes, law enforcement, mentoring programmes, research impact measurement, European Union programming, and a range of other, related areas.

Purpose of the evaluation

The evaluation was commissioned to provide RUSI, its partners and funders with a summative assessment on the nature and extent of impact achieved from STRIVE II and formative recommendations for enhancing future iterations of the programme in Kenya. During the evaluation period, STRIVE II's timeframe was extended and is currently due to end in September 2020. Given RUSI's foundations as an independent think tank, an additional aim is for the evaluation to contribute to the growing body of evidence on the nature of violent extremism, efficacy and effects of countering violent extremism interventions in general and CVE programmes with similar features to those of STRIVE II. The specific objectives of the research are:

- to investigate the **logic and theory of change** of the programme (outlined later in this report) and identify in what ways the programme has contributed to achieving its impact statement;
- to assess the **appropriateness** of the design, implementation and contribution of the programme's four main intervention areas; and
- to provide an analysis of the **sustainability** of specific interventions.

Research questions

The research has been guided at each stage by a set of questions derived from STRIVE II's theory of change. At the broadest level, the evaluation has sought to assess the impact of the programme against three overarching questions:

- How and in what ways may STRIVE II have contributed to **reduced radicalisation**?
- How and in what ways may STRIVE II have contributed to **reduced recruitment**?
- How and in what ways may STRIVE II have contributed to **reduced support** to VE groups?

Additionally, a set of sub-questions have been provided which stem directly from the conceptual framing developed by RUSI and its partners. The evaluation has used these questions to connect the available evidence to the programme's logical framework at four related levels.

- e) How and to what extent did the programme contribute to addressing **structural factors**?
- f) How and to what extent did the programme address **group dynamics**?
- g) How and to what extent did the programme address **enabling factors**?
- h) How and to what extent did the programme address **individual factors**?

In order to operationalise data collection within the programme's delivery, a more detailed set of questions at the 'outcome' or intermediate change level was proposed. The evaluation has sought to answer those questions (available in Appendix 1) in order to explain in detail the evidence base for the broader questions above. This approach aligns with the use of logic modelling as the basis for an evaluation framework: demonstrating the associative and causal links between 1) interventions, 2) immediate and intermediate outcomes and 3) less tangible, contextual change.

² See www.rusi.org/strive for more information on STRIVE and related publications

METHODOLOGY

The evaluation team worked with the STRIVE II team to develop the evaluation methodology based on the following factors.

4. Recognition of the extensive, internal evaluation and monitoring activity which was been underway since the programme's inception, providing a wealth of predominantly but not exclusively quantitative data pertaining to Mentorship, Law Enforcement and Preventative Communication Result Areas;
5. The desire for a mixed-methods approach which ensures an effective balance between qualitative and quantitative data overall, meaning that the evaluation team would focus their efforts on gathering qualitative, primary data; and
6. The need for an iterative, flexible approach which is able to work around the needs of STRIVE II's programming and busy schedules of participants, and be as inclusive as viable given language barriers and a relatively short fieldwork period.

Given the above, the following methods have been used.

Background and extant data review and analysis

The evaluation team was provided with more than 40 background documents ranging from management reports and policy documents to published RUSI research and programme guidelines. The team was also provided with both raw and analysed monitoring and evaluation data, as well as the evaluation and monitoring guidelines, the overarching theory of change and a detailed logical framework. The data provided for each result area is as follows:

Mentorship Result Area

- Baseline, midline and end-line data from questionnaires completed by STRIVE II mentors, mentees and community stakeholders
- A range of slide packs presenting extant analyses of the above data in various ways (e.g. split by location or cohort)
- Qualitative data from end-line, structured, focus group discussions with mentees in Eastleigh, Majengo (Nairobi), Kwale, Likoni and Kisauni

Law Enforcement Result Area

- Baseline and midline data from questionnaires completed by participants on the law enforcement training
- End-line, qualitative data from 7 key informant interviews with law enforcement professionals

Preventive Communication Result Area

- Baseline and end-line data from questionnaires completed by radio training delegates
- Qualitative notes from a focus group of participants of STRIVE II Radio Training

No formal internal evaluation data was collected on the performance of the Research Result Area – as intended by the programme design, although the monitoring reports provide insights on dissemination and advocacy activities and outputs which have informed the analysis presented here.

Primary Data Collection

During the evaluation period of June 2019 to April 2020, the evaluation team undertook the following data collection.

- 16 semi-structured telephone and face-to-face interviews with RUSI staff (some staff interviewed more than once).
- 26 semi-structured face-to-face interviews with active mentors on the mentorship programme.
- 2 day-long observations of mentor training sessions, one in Kisauni, Mombasa and one in Eastleigh, Nairobi.
- 2 focus group discussions with a total of 18 mentees, one in Kisauni, Mombasa and one in Eastleigh, Nairobi.
- 1 interview with a representative from Kenya's National Counter Terrorism Centre
- 2 focus-group discussions with 16 senior law enforcement training participants, conducted via video conference software.
- 3 semi-structured interviews with non-RUSI stakeholders in the training for radio professionals and a walking tour of a participating radio station.
- 1 observation of a film-screening event as part of the Preventive Communication Result Area.
- 6 semi-structured interviews with researchers and partner representatives primarily related to the Research Result Area but also discussing STRIVE II more generally.
- 1 focus group discussion and 1 semi-structured interview with consortium partner representatives.

Participants were identified through three forms of sampling techniques:

- 1) **Purposive sampling** – working with the RUSI team, researchers identified characteristics of potential participants based on the programme and parameters of the evaluation criteria. These characteristics were primarily based on i) the assumed level and type of knowledge and expertise in particular areas (e.g. selecting partner representatives who work in CVE and have likely read and used STRIVE II research) and ii) proximity to the programme (i.e. prioritising the inclusion of those who have been closest to the programme, including by starting with the RUSI STRIVE II team).
- 2) **Convenience sampling** – given the desire to work flexibly around the schedules of the programme, many of the participants were chosen based on those who had availability to participate, particularly during the researchers' short period 'in-country'. This method also describes the choice of site visits and event observations.
- 3) **Snowball sampling** – some participants were selected based on referrals from other participants. At the end of each interview or focus group, researchers asked if participants '*felt there was anyone else we should speak to*'. This led to a number of more spontaneous referrals, including two focus groups with mentees, and has likely provided a counter-balance in some cases to potential bias generated through the prescribed purposive sampling (Patton 2002).

Data Analysis

Much of the data analysis has been guided by the Terms of Reference for the evaluation, including the overarching and outcome-focused questions set out above. A central purpose of the evaluation listed in the terms of reference was to test, to whatever extent is viable, the programme's logic and conceptual framing. The programme's theory of change and Result Area programming format have therefore both been central in bringing the various different forms of data together, including in the structuring of this report.

As described above, a number of previous analyses from STRIVE II questionnaire data had been provided in slide packs and reports. The evaluation team also requested the raw data from these questionnaires which has been re-analysed and presented in different formats to serve the specific purposes of this report. Most of the presentations of this data (i.e. charts, graphs, tables, etc.) included in the report have therefore been created by the evaluation team, based on the raw data.

The qualitative data, both secondary and primary, have been analysed thematically using areas of interest from the Terms of Reference and the STRIVE II theory of change as highest-level themes, with sub-themes created and developed into points of discussion in the report. Each piece of data has been thematically analysed by at least two of the three researchers and discussed before synthesis and report writing. Additional academic and policy literature is referenced to add detail, clarity or weight to points where the authors felt it was useful.

Research Limitations

The evaluation constitutes a focused piece of research undertaken under a relatively tight timescale. In primary data collection, researchers have prioritised working flexibly around the needs of the programme and, as with a majority of evaluative research, the researchers have needed to respond iteratively to the needs of the programme, participants and timelines. Whilst this more pragmatic approach is standard practice in programmatic evaluation, it is still important to recognise some of the limitations of the research approach, as follows.

- Our approach to purposive sampling began by working with the STRIVE II team to identify relevant stakeholders. This is standard practice in qualitative evaluation but, clearly, by allowing the programme administrators to determine the sources of the primary data, there was an opportunity for the influence of their biases. This has likely been counteracted by the additional use of more random convenience and snowball sampling approaches and the volume and variety of data sources has allowed the data collection to reach an effective saturation (with no new themes arising in interviews).
- Due to the use of convenience sampling, and the timeframe of the research generally, some groups are represented in the research more than others. In Law Enforcement, Preventive Communication and Research Result Areas there is relatively balanced representation across identified participant groups. For the Mentorship Result Area, the researchers were able to gain a good volume of data from mentors, mentees and the RUSI STRIVE II team. The team was not, however, able to reach community stakeholders which have supported the mentorship programme. This group are well-represented in the extant data provided by RUSI but their inclusion in the evaluators' own data collection would have allowed further triangulation of findings and may have strengthened the evidence base on their contribution and role. Caveats are made during the discussion on the mentorship programme to account for this.
- Finally, it is important to recognise the potential role of self-selection bias. Whilst participants represent a variety of groups (from internal stakeholders to programme participants), it is well established (e.g. Heckman and Robb 1986) that those who volunteer to participate in evaluative research are most likely to have had a positive experience of the intervention under study and to provide more positive reviews. Researchers have looked to manage this potential bias by i) attempting to reach large sample sizes for as many groups as viable and, most importantly, ii) triangulating findings in 3 of the 4 result areas with the quasi-experimental data gathered by RUSI in their internal evaluation processes.

STRENGTHENING RESILIENCE TO VIOLENT EXTREMISM (STRIVE) II

STRIVE II aims to contribute to the reduction of radicalisation, recruitment and support for violent extremist groups. The programme is implemented by the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), an independent defence and security think tank based in the UK and Kenya. It follows on from the successfully-delivered, EU-funded STRIVE I programme implemented in the Horn of Africa between January 2014 and January 2017, marking the beginning of the EU's engagement in the field of countering violent extremism in the region. The successes, challenges and lessons learned from the first iteration of STRIVE have been documented both by [RUSI](#) and the programme's independent [evaluators](#). STRIVE II has expanded upon a number of successful pilot initiatives trialled in the first programme, and has introduced some new pilot approaches of its own, but has narrowed its operations by focusing exclusively on implementation in Kenya.

RUSI operates in a consortium with Kenya Red Cross Society (KRC) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), both of which are delivering separate EU-funded programmes focused on peace, stability and inclusive economic opportunity in marginalised areas of Kenya. The programmes operate under the same EU framework but have distinct contracts with the European Union and specific remits to focus on. The partners overlapping areas of operation and have worked with marginalised groups; RUSI's focus, however, is on peace, CVE and violence reduction whereas KRC and GIZ are more explicitly focused on skills and economic opportunity.

STRIVE II has an overall budget of €3m and is focused on geographical areas identified as hotspots for radicalisation, namely North Eastern, Western and Central Kenya as well as the coast region and

urban areas within Nairobi (Eastleigh and Majengo). STRIVE II began in January 2017 and, after having had its original timeframe and budget extended, it is currently due to end in September 2020.

STRIVE II's interventions operate based on a distinctive conceptual framework: the programme conceptualises its desired impact across four connected arenas (mostly the authors' wording):

5. tackling **structural factors** such as social exclusion, marginalisation and institutional cultures & political narratives which create the conditions for radicalisation and support for violent extremism;
6. addressing **group-based dynamics** which contribute to and encourage pathways towards radicalisation, such as peer pressure, group norms, radical flank actors, etc.;
7. countering **enabling factors** which stem from contact with those actors who seek to radicalise and recruit to violent extremist groups, and the rhetoric which aims to garner support;
8. reducing **individual incentives** to participation and support which can range from an individual's feelings of injustice and desire for revenge to perceived financial gain and rewards in the afterlife.

These elements are more than just an articulation of the programme's distinctiveness: they represent the critical recognition of the context in which the programme operates and are indicative of STRIVE II's philosophy. They are demonstrative of the notion that interventions in this field require a recognition of not just the power – or limits thereof – of individual agency (in young people and those who seek to protect and support them) but also the centrality of societal structures (culture, tradition, policy, institutions, etc.) and the groups and institutions that operate in between (e.g. peer groups, local communities and violent extremist groups). In pursuing this impact, STRIVE II's interventions take place within four connected result areas.

Mentorship Result Area: aiming to reduce the susceptibility of young people to political and ideological violence. A concurrent dimension of this initiative increases the knowledge base of relevant stakeholders and builds the capacity of mentors to identify and engage with at risk individuals.

Law Enforcement Result Area: focusing on CVE training for senior and mid-level managers and frontline officers from a range of agencies to strengthen prevention capabilities and response to VE with strategies compatible with international law and human rights standards.

Preventive Communication Result Area focuses on strengthening the voice of marginalised youth by improving their self-expression, sense of participation and representation in key media spaces.

Research Result Area: focusing on improving CVE programming and enhancing the understanding of relationships between conflict dynamics and recruitment patterns.

Finally, the change logic connecting these interventions with the overarching aim of the programme is depicted in the STRIVE II theory of change – a central document in the programme's evaluation framework. This proposes that by working with and, to some extent, connecting four key audiences (young people at risk of radicalisation and recruitment; mentors & community stakeholders; policy makers & practitioners; and law enforcement (both senior and mid-ranking officers) - as well as media groups -, the programme will be able to reduce radicalisation, recruitment and support to violent extremist groups.

As well as outlining the broad interventions made by the programme, there are a range of assumptions proposed which, as a summary for those viewing for the first time:

1. highlight some potential logistical and motivational hurdles in achieving the desired impact (e.g. a question of whether people will want to be part of the programme or not) and,
2. to a lesser extent question the programme's influence and power in the context of structural, political and bureaucratic barriers for example, does greater understanding lead to better decision making in law enforcement or are the institutional barriers to impact immutable?

The evaluation has sought to answer these questions where data allowed and assess the extent to which the desired outcomes have been achieved.

IMPACT: Reduced Radicalization, recruitment and support to VE groups



Figure 1: STRIVE II Theory of Change

EVALUATION FINDINGS BY RESULT AREA

This main section of the report presents the evaluations findings within each of the four result areas. Overall conclusions and recommendations from across the programme's evaluation follow these analyses.

Mentorship Result Area

The third result area covers the development and delivery of a peer-to-peer support and counselling mentorship programme that works with at-risk young men and women with the aims of building resilience to radicalisation and reducing the risk of their engaging in political or ideological violence. This constitutes a core facet of the STRIVE II programme and represents a good deal of the work done at grassroots level in the programme.

Young people who are seen to be at risk of engaging in radicalised, criminal or extreme behaviour from particularly disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Nairobi, Mombasa and Kwale are identified by mentors and community stakeholders, including parents, teachers, community leaders and social workers, against pre-defined criteria for eligibility. Once identified, these at-risk young people are matched to a mentor who provides them with support and guidance for periods usually between 18 months and 2 years. The mentors are drawn from the same geographical areas, and often the same communities, as the at-risk young people and are seen as relatable, usually slightly older, figures with shared backgrounds and some commonalities in life experience.

This one-to-one support coupled with regular group activities aims to address key factors which contribute to the vulnerability of young people to violent extremism and radicalisation, such as low levels of sense of belonging, poor sense of self-worth and a lack of ambition or purpose in life. The various activities for both mentors and mentees are detailed in Figure 2 below:

Activity	Description
One to one meetings	In weekly one-to-one meetings mentees discuss their challenges, issues and successes with their mentor. These discussions are flexible in nature but follow the ethos and key messages of the programme and are designed to be based on the mentorship manual and facilitation plans.
Group bi-weekly meetings	The group bi-weekly meetings are relatively large gatherings of mentors and mentees who come together to discuss key issues and share experiences. These are structured around key themes with set speakers and topics including violence, confidence and self-esteem, anger management, pathways to violent extremism and understanding others. These meetings are aimed at building shared experiences and promoting a group identity amongst the mentor and mentee cohorts whilst also encouraging them to work together and to support each other. The bi-weeklies focus on encouraging the mentees to see that they can have a positive impact on their future.
Mentor Training	The programme invests heavily in structured training which aims to build the skills and capacities of mentors to provide more and better support to mentees and to become effective CVE community actors. Training topics are relevant to the programme's aims and include topics such as pathways to violent extremism, critical thinking skills and building self-confidence. Additional training for mentors has been provided through GIZ's programme on skills for employment, delivered in a 'train the trainer' model, designed to inform their work with mentees.
Stakeholder engagement	Local, monthly meetings between mentors and stakeholders in their area. Stakeholders include, but are not limited to, social workers, religious leaders, teachers and parents. Here potential mentees are referred to the programme by stakeholders and assessed by mentors against the set criteria. Strategy around working to prevent violent extremism and radicalisation is discussed and localised action between the parties is agreed.

Links to skills development and training opportunities	Mentees are linked to external organisations offering vocational skills, life skills, grants and scholarships. This aims to address the socio-economic challenges often faced by the target cohort. Key examples include opportunities with KRC and Kenya Commercial Bank. Not all mentees are linked to skills training as a result of differences in regional provision.
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Figure 2: STRIVE II activities for mentors and mentees

This is an area of the programme that RUSI have put time into researching the outcomes of and they have previously developed an article on the effects of the mentoring element of the STRIVE II programme (Saghal and Kimaiyo, forthcoming). This employs statistical analysis to analyse the effects of the intervention in three key areas: mentees' readiness to engage in political and ideological violence; mentees' awareness of risks and consequences of joining violent extremist groups and, mentees' understanding of violent extremist issues and patterns. The findings of this piece of work, based on quantitative data collected a year into delivery, reported mixed results. It found significant improvements in understanding and knowledge but not significant results across improvements in attitudes. In order to complement this approach, the evaluation of this result area has deliberately placed a greater focus on capturing the more in-depth stories and experiences of those involved as mentors and mentees and testing these against the data collected in the baseline, midline and end-line surveys.

Due to the marginalised nature of the communities of which most mentees are part and the background levels of suspicion of law enforcement and security services – as evidenced in the baseline mentee questionnaire results – the evaluation team felt that particular focus should be given to spending time in person with both mentors and mentees in their own environments. The focus groups were held within the mentees own neighbourhoods (one under tree cover in a garden, the other in an abandoned children's home) and started with informal introductions and conversations about common interests between the researchers, the mentors and the mentees (for example, UK football teams). The mentors gave an introduction to the researchers' roles and interests and aided in the translation of more complex ideas and questions. The mentors played an essential role in establishing the comfort of the mentees in these interactions but in a way that did not appear to compromise the honesty and integrity of the contributions.

Whilst the in-country fieldwork period was relatively short, this approach enabled the building of a limited rapport and trust with participants which would not have been possible through telephone interviews whilst also overcoming issues around access to telecommunications and interpersonal communication barriers (i.e. not feeling comfortable speaking to researchers on the phone) for mentors and mentees. This constituted the bulk of fieldwork conducted in Kenya.

The evaluation team also attended mentor training sessions in both Nairobi and Mombasa to observe sessions and conduct face-to-face interviews with mentors. Where appropriate and possible, some of these mentors were then asked to arrange focus groups in community settings with their mentees and the evaluation team. In total, the evaluation team conducted:

- 26 semi-structured face-to-face interviews with active mentors on the mentorship programme;
- 2 day-long observations of mentor training sessions, one in Kisauni, Mombasa and one in Eastleigh, Nairobi;
- 2 focus group discussions with a total of 18 mentees, one in Kisauni, Mombasa and one in Eastleigh, Nairobi; and
- A range of telephone interviews with relevant RUSI and stakeholder leads.

The findings from this fieldwork are complemented by baseline, midline and end-line data gathered through the mentor and mentee questionnaires and a range of additional qualitative data collected through internal evaluation processes. They are presented under the headings of design, implementation, change and sustainability below, after an introduction to the context and ethos of the mentorship programme.

Context and Ethos

As described at various stages in this report, the prevalence of violent extremism in Kenya has increased over the last decade. These incidents have taken place at a time of significant social,

economic and political issues and grievances that have fuelled the disenfranchisement of many young people in Kenya at the same time as eroding trust and cooperation between communities and the Kenyan government & security services. These factors combined have created fertile grounds for the recruitment and radicalisation of young people in Kenya to extremist and violent groups.

This intervention with young people in areas deemed to be 'hotspots' of recruitment for extremist organisations works towards the overall aims of the STRIVE II programme in reducing radicalisation, recruitment and support for violent extremist groups and is complementary to the other 3 results areas of the programme in ways explored below.

As a mentorship programme, this intervention aims to pair at risk young people with mentors who can act as positive role models and influencers to work with the young people to increase their awareness of violent extremism and radicalisation as well as bringing positive change in their wider attitudes, behaviours and life trajectories. This area of activity is a central part of the STRIVE II theory of change. It aims to achieve impact at the following levels:

Group Dynamics	<p>Through bringing the mentees and mentors together as groups, the programme aims to develop group identities within the programme that promote values, norms and relationships which serve to counter violent extremist narratives and criminality ways of life.</p> <p>By building the capacity of mentors and stakeholders, and their organisations, to work more effectively with both the mentees themselves and other at risk young people in their communities.</p>
Enabling Factors	<p>Through raising awareness in mentees, mentors and stakeholders of the drivers and signs of radicalisation and recruitment as well as an awareness of the risks.</p>
Individual Incentives	<p>By promoting a sense of belonging to a group identity and/or wider, mainstream society to mentees whilst promoting positive life trajectories through economic outcomes and a stake in wider society, thereby reducing the readiness of young people to engage in political violence and extremist activities.</p>

The distinctive nature of the mentorship programme is that it takes account of the interplay between these factors in its design. The programme, and much of the analysis below, demonstrates that to counter effectively the inherently multi-faceted and dynamics recruitment approaches of extremists, most young people at risk need more than one-to-one mentoring. STRIVE II offers knowledge, support, connection and alternative, positive identity in its pursuit of individual and community resilience. Moreover, because of the interaction of the three key groups involved, the impact of the work must be judged not just in terms of its effects on the mentees but also on the mentors, stakeholders and the wider communities in which they live.

Design

The intervention design is clearly and consistently articulated at all levels of the programme, including in a comprehensive mentorship manual and through training on 'how to be a mentor'. Mentors, mentees and stakeholders are all versed in the aims, ethos and methods of the mentorship scheme at the start of their engagement. A shared terminology related to the programme's facets, processes and aims is used across all three groups (mentees, mentors and community stakeholders) which serves to reduce the scope for confusion, inconsistency and mixed messaging. There were many different articulations of the aims of the programme from mentors and mentees during the fieldwork but all link well to the logic of the programme and demonstrate a coherence in understanding.

The approach appears typical of mentoring programmes, with would-be mentees identified and put forward to the programme by local stakeholders and mentors and then, if successful, entering into a supportive, professionalised relationship with a mentor. Importantly, though, the level of support and involvement provided to stakeholders and mentors provides a clear point of distinctiveness against typical approaches.

The use of a mentoring intervention is highly appropriate to the aims and outcomes of the STRIVE II programme in several respects. Firstly, it helps to build capacity within local communities and areas to develop awareness of the signs of youth being at risk of violent extremism. This speaks to both the short-term impact of the intervention and the longer-term sustainability of it, in aiming to expand the number of people in deprived communities who are skilled in identifying and taking action to prevent violent extremist behaviour or vulnerability to radicalisation and recruitment. Similarly, capacity is also built in mentors as community members to identify and work against young people becoming involved in violent extremism and other forms of negative and harmful activity. This activity at grassroots level, with trusted community actors, in a country where community trust in law enforcement and security services is low (Skilling 2016, Ransley 2009), means that concerns about an individual are more likely to be raised and then to be dealt with appropriately.

Secondly, the intervention appropriately identifies that group and one-to-one support and counselling and the forming of a strong group identity between mentees and mentors can form strong bulwarks against social isolation and radicalisation. The manipulation of individual identity through the formation of group identity is a common and significant factor in pathways into extremist networks and subsequent behaviours (Ebner 2020, Harris, Gringart and Drake 2014) preying on the absence or weakness of positive, inclusive group identities for young people. Contemporary thinking on social identity recognises that people’s identity shifts with dynamic associations to multiple group ‘memberships’. The mentorship programme offers a membership opportunity which provides young people with a clear belonging to a group, meeting their needs and desire to belong and providing a positive group identity which is able to compete with and challenge negative affiliations and connections in the mentees day-to-day lives. Being a part of the programme is seen by many mentors and mentees as a positive form of exclusive identity and the strong networks and regular contact which participation brings can demonstrably build resilience against pull factors toward violent extremism. Many of the mentees participating in the evaluation fieldwork were either personally recommended to the programme by friends or had recommended friends to it (or both).

That participation on the programme is, in some cases, sought after by young people means that admission to the programme is over-subscribed and, therefore, there must be a high degree of selectivity in recruitment to ensure that those receiving support are doing so because they are at risk and most in need of the intervention. The programme sets clear guidance for which factors contribute towards a young person being deemed as ‘at risk’. This guidance is drawn from established literature around radicalisation and aims to provide clarity to all stakeholder groups as to who is deemed at risk and why. Not only is this useful to the programme in a direct way but it also makes mentors and stakeholders aware of the risk factors for young people, useful for their practice beyond STRIVE II.

When mentees are being assessed for entry to the programme there are primary and secondary criteria that must be considered. These are outlined in [Figure 3](#) **Error! Reference source not found.** below. At least one of the primary criteria and two or more of the secondary criteria must be fulfilled by the would-be mentee for them to join the programme.

Primary Criteria	Secondary Criteria
Have a close peer or relative who has been recruited into a VE group or is engaged in VE activities	Being a school dropout
Be associated with violent criminals or gang members	Having a dysfunctional family background
Hold radical or extremist views and tendencies	Suddenly becoming socially withdrawn
Be affiliated with holders of extremist views and tendencies	Being a former convict
	Being a new convert to a religion
	Being idle

Figure 3: Strive II Mentee Criteria taken from the STRIVE II mentorship manual

This defined set of criteria for the selection of mentees is of great use and was regarded by mentors and the RUSI team as an asset in their work as it aided decision making around recruitment and enabled the justification of decision making to stakeholders. This is a significant strength of the programme as

it takes some of the subjective decision-making out of recruitment process and ensures that the aims and outcomes of the programme take a priority in the recruitment of mentors and mentees. This removes the potential for cronyism or grift which, from the evaluators' experiences with other mentorship programmes, are common concern for funders and programme managers in programmes of this kind. It is worth recognising that a vulnerability to violent extremism is far from the only support need that exists within the programme's locations of operation and demand for support services and economic development projects far outstrips provision: these criteria protect against the possible mission of a programme with a clear degree of devolved decision-making.

This could be further strengthened by adapting or expanding some of the terminology used as there is still a high degree of subjectivity in some of the terms. Phrases such as 'dysfunctional family background' and 'being idle' are value led and will mean different things to different individuals. The data from interviews with mentors show that a minority feel that some of the terms are too open to interpretation and have led to some inappropriate referrals. Providing a clearer lead by offering alternative terms or clearer definitions would perhaps support further clarity in the comprehension of these and is something to consider in future iterations of the programme.

The demographic data collected through the programme demonstrates that mentees on the programme are between 18 and 24, 74% are male and 86% are Muslim. Most do not have any experience of community or voluntary work (29% have limited experience). Interestingly, 44% at baseline had received CVE training before their engagement with STRIVE II, perhaps demonstrating the appropriateness of their being on the programme. Data drawn from the baseline questionnaires provides good indications that the programme's criteria are being adhered to. For example, only 31% of incoming mentees were in any form of employment (including self-employment) or education. This is one of the most critical criteria in relation to risk as financial incentives have been identified as a driver of recruitment to extremist organisations in Kenya (Botha 2014) and stakeholders highlight economic problems as the main issue facing their communities in both baseline and end-line surveys.

More qualitatively, and reflective of the depth of understanding that has come from the fieldwork in Nairobi and Mombasa, the evaluators have seen first-hand that the programme has been successful at identifying and working with 'youth at risk' whose circumstances fit well with the mentee criteria. Participants in the focus groups in both cities were predominantly young men who had been on the edge of, or previously involved in, low level criminality and who described themselves – paraphrased by the authors - prior to participation as isolated, disenfranchised and afraid for their future. All described a close proximity to violence and crime in their day-to-day lives and many had close friends or family members who had died as a result of violent crime. Some had family members or friends who had been recruited to Al-Shabaab and had travelled to Somalia and not returned. Most had little to no recent involvement in education or legal economic activity prior to the programme and all described challenging personal circumstances linked to family and social relationships, crime, drugs, gangs, and lack of economic opportunity. It is worth noting at this stage that all those who spoke (the majority) in the focus groups listed multiple ways in which their lives were difficult before the programme that relate to the STRIVE II criteria, and beyond (including difficulties with mental health and experiences of bereavement and other trauma) and, as discussed later, also listed ways that these situations had significantly improved as a result of the programme.

Within the focus groups, it was challenging due of time limitations, and the participants' enthusiasm for contributing to the discussion, to extract full and detailed individual stories – these came more readily from mentor interviews included under the heading 'Change'. Often, however, the freeform nature of discussions led to insightful revelations about the content in which the mentees live that demonstrate well their fit for the programme. For example, a common theme emerged during multiple discussions of the benefits of the 'bi-weeklies'. In both focus groups mentees revealed, without being prompted, that they felt better able to leave their own areas and to venture into other neighbourhoods or parts of the city because of the connection they had made on the programme. Prior to STRIVE II, this would have carried a risk of violent assault for some and was something that mentees had said that they had avoided and were afraid to do. However, there were many examples given of mentees effectively 'protecting' one another and facilitating passage between neighbourhoods.

'I couldn't step out in Eastleigh before. People there know that I not from there and I'd be robbed. But, if I'm with him (fellow mentee) then he can take me there. Even if I am not with

him, people know that I know him and so will leave me. It's the same. He can come to Majengo because people here know that he is my friend' (STRIVE II Mentee)

Whilst there can be various costs and benefits to this and it could be described as a positive externality that this greater freedom of movement has come from the programme, the prominence of this as a theme in the data illustrates the point that mentees clearly have regular encounters with danger and a proximity to violent groups, gangs and weapons. The mentees spoken to had the position within that context to be able to vouch for others from outside the area and the respect of local people to know that this would be upheld. This is strongly suggestive that the programme had successfully identified and worked with young people who are living in high-risk environments, and is a context supported by further qualitative and quantitative data from across the programme.

Though the mentorship manual makes very clear the qualities required of a mentor for the programme, these are not a selection criteria as such. They detail the expected characteristics and conduct of mentors when performing their roles. They are more of a job description than a person specification. They include qualities such as experience in managing your life even in very difficult situations and contexts and taking responsibility and leading change. The flexibility permitted through the use of these qualities rather than criteria likely widens the scope of the programme to attract a diverse range of mentors. In this respect, there is less need to be prescriptive in the recruitment of mentors than mentees.

The cohorts of both the mentors and stakeholders are comprised of individuals who tend to have some background in either or both of CVE or community work. The majority of both cohorts identify as having significant previous experience in this field and nearly all had at least some.

Experience before STRIVE II	Mentors	Stakeholders
Previous significant experience of CVE (%)	75	66
Previous significant community experience (%)	68	79

Figure 4: Previous experience of mentors and stakeholders in CVE and community work

This previous experience is a positive indicator of the suitability of mentors to carry out their roles. As well as the knowledge and skillsets this demonstrates, the work of individuals in both of these groups is aided, by the nature of the role, by being known locally as a point of support and guidance and community role model. In interviews, the only examples of those having no previous experience in either CVE or community work were examples of mentors who moved into the position from being a STRIVE II mentee. This offers a different and also-valuable form of experience that aligns well with the aims of the programme.

Data from mentee focus groups shows that mentors are perceived as being people of high professional and personal standards, adept at listening to concerns or issues and focussed on the well-being of the mentee. There are many descriptions of the mentors as people who genuinely and selflessly care about the progress and life trajectory of mentees. This is supported by the descriptions of mentors' motivations for joining the programme:

'I was a mentee, now a mentor - it's a call. It comes from my heart'
(STRIVE II Mentor and Former Mentee)

'There's a gap in society. Many people lack mentors. I have a passion to work in the community.'
(STRIVE II Mentor)

'I grew up being a mentor. I had 10 friends who went to Somalia. If you're not a part of the solution, you're a part of the problem. I wanted to make a difference.' (STRIVE II Mentor)

These descriptions from mentees and mentors point to the existence and perception of benevolence in the mentors. This is highly positive as seminal research on trust shows that perceived benevolence is a key building block of interpersonal (mentee-mentor) and organisational (mentee-RUSI) trust (Mayer, Davis and Schoorman 1995). Generally, mentees described mentors highly positively and as inspirational characters whom they have learnt a great deal from. Whilst it is unlikely that negative accounts would arise within the focus group environment, the type and depth of descriptions between

mentees align well with both the objectives and role of mentors described in the mentorship manual and point to trust-based relationships between them.

It is a clear strength of the programme that mentors are drawn from the communities in which they work and that they are, in many cases, people who have experienced relevant and similar challenges and difficulties of their own. The desirable characteristic noted in the mentorship manual of mentors having managed difficult life experiences certainly comes through in the interview data:

'I had a brother in a gang group. In order for me to change other people, it had to start with me. Lots of people around me are parts of gangs. I wanted to change the perspective of youth in the community. The mentees that I've had. This programme has allowed me to impact the community positively. Some have got jobs and have businesses.' (STRIVE II Mentor)

'I lost my brother. He was shot. I realised that people need someone in their life to help them live a good life.' (STRIVE II Mentor)

These quotes show that not only have some mentors experienced similar traumatic and other life experiences as mentees but that many have a standing in the community as someone who has overcome difficult times in their lives and are now seen as successful, economically or otherwise. Both of these factors make the mentors relatable to the mentees, but the age and status gap between the two creates a good, professional distance and useful hierarchy. In focus groups, mentees were asked if they would find it appealing to be mentored by someone of a very different social economic background or someone from a different city; resoundingly they would not.

The description of stakeholders in the mentorship manual is much vaguer than that for mentors and does not go beyond the following:

'The stakeholders are active and vocal members of the community, already engaged in youth affairs. They are a diverse team including teachers at schools with high dropout rates, social workers, parents, peace committee members and religious leaders in the selected areas.' (7)

This approach does, however, also give space for insightful and well-positioned members of the mentor/mentee communities to bring their first-hand knowledge to bear. An overly prescriptive model would likely reduce the volume of inappropriate referrals but could do this by limiting this valuable input.

The end-line stakeholder survey data shows that most stakeholders had been engaged with the programme for more than 1 or 2 years (66%). Most stakeholders had completed secondary level education or above (76%). 62% of stakeholders were self-employed which is above the average rate in Kenya of 52%³ but not greatly so when adjusted for age. The interviews with RUSI representatives and with mentors concerning their interactions with stakeholders provide good indications that stakeholders are drawn from the groups highlighted above. More data is presented on stakeholders under the heading 'Change for Stakeholders'.

Figure 5 below shows the activities which stakeholders agree are their primary roles and responsibilities. Here it can be seen that the immediate priority of assisting mentors with identifying at risk youth is the most commonly agreed activity by some distance at baseline and end-line. This is positive as it shows that the role is understood from the start by stakeholders. Stakeholders' knowledge of the diversity of the role increases generally between baseline and end-line as they take on wider remits and responsibilities that help to support the work of the programme and improve sustainability. Activities around generating awareness of violent extremism, engaging with other actors to counter violent extremist networks, assisting mentees in seeking employment and promoting community resolution and peace all grow in importance as elements of their role over the course of the programme.

Activity	% agreeing at baseline	% agreeing at end-line
Assist mentors with the identification of at-risk youth	90	93
Provide psychosocial support and assistance to at risk youth	55	55

³ World Bank collection of development indicators, 2019

Generating awareness on the risks of violent extremism	59	72
Engage with other actors to strengthen counter violent extremism networks	38	72
Assist at-risk youth with finding employment opportunities	31	55
Promote community resolution and peace	7	24

Figure 5: Stakeholders' view on their roles and responsibilities in the STRIVE II programme

It is important to note that the promotion of community resolution and peace remains low throughout, demonstrating perhaps that the programme could place more emphasis and skills for stakeholders in taking this role on. There is only limited data on this, though.

Implementation

Mentors have worked with mentees in 3 areas in Kenya: Kwale, Mombasa and Nairobi. At the time of writing, 254 mentees had completed the baseline and midline questionnaires with a further 93 having completed the end-line assessment. As the baseline and midline questionnaires both show the exact same number of respondents and the same figures for each of the 3 areas, we can consider these to be a full, matched sample. As can be seen in Figure 6 below, mentees from Mombasa make up just over half of the total cohort (51%) with the remainder coming from Nairobi (35%) and Kwale (14%).

Mentee Respondents to Baseline Questionnaire
by Area

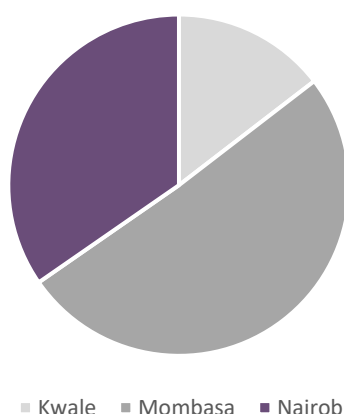


Figure 6: Which areas do mentees come from?

The first stage in the programme for mentees is referral by stakeholders or mentors. Here we see that 53% of potential mentees referred to RUSI at the end-line stage of delivery are accepted onto the programme. This is up from 46% at the baseline stage, showing a moderate improvement in the ability of stakeholders to identify mentees according to agreed selection criteria. The end-line figure of 53% is, though, still quite low and, whilst there are reasons other than not fulfilling criteria as to why a mentee may not be recruited to the mentoring project, this is suggestive that there is further work that could be done in improving stakeholder knowledge of the selection criteria. In part, this may also be linked to the subjective wording of some of the selection criteria.

41 mentors had completed the baseline and midline questionnaires with only 28 having done so at the time of analysis. As would be expected, the mentors are proportionally drawn in similar numbers by region to the mentee group. 51% are from Mombasa with 32% coming from Nairobi and the remaining 17% in Kwale.

The mentoring programme works with male and female mentees with different risk factors taken into account for each group. Overall 187 (74%) mentees were male and 67 (26%) were female. Mentees are not matched to a mentor by gender. It is believed that access to social networks, different perspectives and different skillsets are more important in developing the mentor-mentee relationship than matching by gender. The mentorship manual has a clear focus on expectations around gender, particularly around the challenges posed by structural gender inequality in Kenya and the prominence of 'traditional' gender roles in Kenyan society. Mentors are trained to take this into account in their roles. In the data collected during the evaluation period, there were noticeable trends around gender in the programme which point to it being a standout factor, other than the majority of mentors and mentees being male. There is nothing to suggest that this is problematic.

The ethos of the mentoring scheme runs coherently throughout the mentorship manual and training material and is based on research and findings drawn from other work around young people, radicalisation and violent extremism. This background and base in extant knowledge and experience is articulated to stakeholders across the programme and it appears to resonate well with both mentors and mentees that the programme has strong foundations in established theory and practices. For the mentors interviewed, this gave them confidence that the work they are undertaking is credible and that the knowledge and practices which they are learning and undertaking are transferable.

'It comes in when I speak to people, they will listen. Credibility gives me a status in the community. Now when I want to mobilise people they listen. I'm better able to help my community because of the credibility of working with this programme' (STRIVE II Mentor)

Similarly, that the work undertaken in the programme is a synthesis of established research and practice which has been drawn up and developed by in-house experts at RUSI was important to mentors as it allowed them to access these resources and to discuss issues when they were unsure.

'If you're doing something new, or aren't sure about something then you can speak to the Project Manager any time. She will always answer or tell you where to look' (STRIVE II Mentor)

For mentees too there was a degree of reassurance that there was a clear credibility to the programme. This, though, was not as pronounced as it was for the mentors, with the mentees interviewed viewing their relationship with mentors as more important factor to them. Crucially though, all mentee participants appeared to have a good understanding of the aims and ethos of the programme and were able to articulate these, and were familiar with RUSI's role in coordination.

The premise of a mentorship programme for young people deemed at risk is a relatively uncontroversial choice. However, whilst the principle idea does not break new ground, it does have features in its implementation which are tailored to the context in which it operates and which make a positive difference to both mentors and mentees.

That mentors were drawn from local communities made them relatable to the mentees and figures which they felt that they could realistically aspire to be like and on whom they could model their own behaviour. Nearly all mentee participants in the evaluation fieldwork, and, the evaluators are told, the programme in general, have limited life experience outside of the immediate geographic areas in which they live and have had limited positive engagement with state actors beyond often elementary level schooling. This makes the level that mentors are drawn from and pitched at an appropriate one: they are relatable and their evaluated status within communities is seen as being attainable and realistic in a way that working with a mentor from outside the community who is of a different socio-economic status may not be.

Similarly, both mentors and mentees were able to use their own networks to find out more about one another before and during the mentoring process and both more comfortable and better informed when involving themselves in the relationship.

'I asked around and people knew him. I heard that he was a good guy, so I gave it a chance and met with him' (STRIVE II Mentee)

This touches on principles of extended contact (Wright et al, 1997) whereby positive attitudes develop towards an individual or group through the knowledge that a member of your own group or community

has a relationship with another individual or group. In essence, the availability of this level of scrutiny was available to the mentees created a reliable way of vetting mentors ahead of their joining the programme; if they are known to and trusted by friends or acquaintances then they are more likely to be trustworthy. Given the often-limited social networks of the mentees, this would not be possible if mentors more often came from outside of their geographic areas and communities and is a real plus for the way that this area of work is implemented.

Several of the mentors interviewed begun their work with RUSI as mentees and had transferred to being mentors. This appears to add significantly to the relatable and credible nature of the mentors and is clear demonstration of commonality between the two.

'They (the mentees) all know who I am and my family. They know that I had problems in the past and that it took me time to overcome them. It is no secret. Everyone here knows. But it means that when they come to me with their problems, they know that I understand, because I've been there' (STRIVE II Mentor and Former Mentee)

Additionally, mentors and mentees tend to come from similar areas and backgrounds means that there is often a shared vernacular between the two. Particularly with regards to the use of local slang, common cultural reference points and/or speaking in Sheng: this appeared to help to facilitate the relationship between the two.

The structuring of the intervention with bi-weekly meetings between mentors and mentees that take place in each of the 3 areas was as a clear positive for mentors and mentees with interviewees from both groups consistently talking very positively of them. The *'bi-weeklies'* are a large fortnightly meeting between all mentors and mentees which take place in each city, often in public spaces such as parks. These meetings provide a format for regular contact between members of both cohorts and a structure for delivering appropriate content and learning to mentees.

The bi-weekly meetings are a highlight for both cohorts and are seen by both as a mix between social occasions and educational experiences. The informal setting and that some of the mentors are regarded as being highly charismatic figures and *'very good, funny'* (STRIVE II Mentee) public speakers appears to help to draw a crowd in a way that a more formal lecture, meeting or training session could not:

'You go there first to see and meet people, but you listen to the speakers too. Then you start to look out for who is talking next and what they are talking about. It's good. It's not like school.' (STRIVE II Mentee)

'When [Name of Mentor] speaks, everyone attends. You know that it'll be good' (STRIVE II Mentee)

Seeing mentors speak in public and seeing mentee peers asking questions and speaking publicly appears to have been effective in building the confidence of some mentees. Mentors are mindful to try to draw new mentees into conversation or to encourage them to speak. This creates a virtuous circle whereby new mentees are not pressured or obliged to speak but are encouraged to gradually.

That these meetings follow a regular schedule in terms of timing and format gives mentees a level of structure to follow. For some, particularly those not in any form of employment or education, these meetings are their only formal, timetabled event in each two week period and getting to these meetings, or in the case of mentors, getting your mentees to these meetings, was seen as a tentative, but critical, first step.

'With some, it is a lot of effort just to get them there. Phone calls, messages, sometimes even going around to their place to make sure that they are leaving. But when you get them to the meetings, they keep coming. It is a start. They are doing something and being responsible for being there.' (STRIVE II Mentor)

It is clear from the data that the networking and relationship building elements are of critical importance for mentees' development:

'Networking, we are able to know people from different areas, if you were not connected you are to get connections.' (STRIVE II Mentee)

The evaluation team, based on experience of working with at risk, gang-affiliated, young men elsewhere in the world were concerned that these large group meetings taking place across the city could be potential flashpoints for violence or hostility. When asked about this, mentors and mentees accepted that there had been rare incidents but that the bi-weeklies and attendance at them was held in sufficient regard that behaviour was kept in check. That mentors are able to effectively communicate potential issues with one another ahead of time also enables this risk to be managed. The key point here though is that mentees are willing, and able, to restrain their behaviour because doing so allows them to stay on the programme and to attend meetings. This level of self-policing shown is also indicative of the positive impacts of group norms and peer pressure that participation in the programme develops, reinforcing positive behaviours. This aligns well with the depiction of group dynamics within the theory of change.

Additionally, several mentees who have finished their time with the programme still (informally) attend bi-weeklies when they can. This is entirely of their own volition and something which they push for. This, along with the self-policing of behaviour at events, is strongly suggestive of the programme and the way that it is implemented being highly valued by mentees. This links to a range of findings on the importance of group identity, including most recently in the work of Ebner who references the importance of developing a positive, alternative group identity within CVE work as a guard against being drawn towards fringe or extremist groups. This point is expanded on in later sections.

Mentors are provided with a range of training during their engagement with STRIVE II, mostly provided through the RUSI team. From interview data, the training has been very well received and extremely relevant overall. There are a range of positive effects from the training demonstrated in later sections but mentors interviewed most often mentioned the content on CVE and violent extremism ('I didn't even know about CVE before but it's very important to me now') and the introductory content on mentorship as most relevant.

'The best was the role of the mentor and mentee. That's allowed us to say that we're not giving them money...we can say it from RUSI now.' (STRIVE II Mentor)

Some mentors felt that more topics could be added to the training to make it more impactful to their work in the community:

'We have to capture the real situation of which we live in our own geographical area because each area has its own way. The issues are very different. So the training should feed us more information on matters pertaining to our environment. And the daily issues that are happening in our country at large.' (STRIVE II Mentor)

Mentors are also provided with training on vocational skills for employment by GIZ. This has, from the evaluators' understanding, been provided to all mentors to date. GIZ were not able to provide specific evaluation and monitoring data on this but the representatives spoken to felt that the mentorship programme and the mentors were very well suited to their programme and the work RUSI were doing with mentees aligned excellently with the aims of GIZ's intervention. The mentors spoken to did not have anything of substance to say about this training and those asked were not aware of GIZ's role in the programme. Perhaps this is related to a lack of profile for GIZ in the training as some of it is outsourced to local partners. GIZ's programme is, from the data provided, highly successful in providing vocational skills for young people, having provided training and support to 4056 young people at risk since inception in 2017, of which 3327 have successfully transitioned to a job. GIZ representatives noted collaboration at points in the duration of both programmes (mainly events and conferences) but felt that there was scope to engage more with RUSI on the mentorship programme:

'The approaches should be blended in a way that is not just mentorship but mentorship plus. They should have an element of livelihood training in there. Their mentorship is great but it should not just be standalone. There should be an aspect of livelihood and skills development. It works much better to have it blended. I think a much closer work between the partners would help that.' (GIZ Representative)

Mentees are also provided with opportunities for training, most notably through the KRC programme which runs in the coastal areas. The KRC programme focuses on entrepreneurship, providing not just

training but also start up kits for new, small businesses. A strong focus of the training is business planning and starting and managing a business. It is in this training that the role of the consortium is most prominent in the STRIVE II programme and, from the data available, this has been a critical factor in the sustainable progression of mentees from the Coast.

Mentee participants in the focus group in Mombasa had all taken this training and were in receipt of support from KRC to set up enterprises. Members of the group had decided, as a result of the training, to establish a business collectively in the local area and were trading successfully at the time of data collection. One member of the group was also earning ad hoc income from writing business plans for friends and associates, including fellow mentees, following the training. There is limited data on this point but from the two focus groups, and the views of the mentors, the KRC programme had provided a range of concrete options for sustainable economic opportunities following the programme for those in Mombasa. Those mentees who had not taken the training in Nairobi seemed less explicitly prepared in this way. They noted multiple times the advice and guidance from their mentors in this area and some had started business by themselves but a more formal training and resourcing programme would likely have added to the sustainability of these successes. It would seem beneficial to engage more with this programme and others like it in the future and, ideally, ensure that all mentees have access to a livelihoods-type programme. Overall, the consortium has had a positive effect on the mentorship programme but this could be enhanced through a closer working relationship, and from data from all three partners demonstrates a desire to enact this.

Change

The mentoring aspect of the STRIVE II programme also, deliberately, has a dual aspiration in that it aims to build up the skills and capacities of the mentors and stakeholders involved as well as the mentees. As such, findings on the impact of the programme are split into 3 subsections which focus on changes that the programme has brought about for mentees, mentors and for the communities in which it operates. There is a natural overlap in places between these.

Changes for Mentees

The mentorship programme identifies young people at risk of being drawn into violent extremism and aims to address the factors which place them in this risk category, ranging from unemployment and poverty to social isolation, mistrust of security forces and a lack of belonging. The programme also aims to offer an alternative peer network for mentees to extremist groups and gangs which operate in their locale. It is against these aims that the changes in mentees caused by the intervention are assessed.

Data gathered in the fieldwork and drawn from the baseline, midline and end-line questionnaires has shown clear impacts on the life trajectory of mentees. Improving economic and educational opportunities for young people is viewed as a strong bulwark against radicalisation. The East African Development Agency, for example, find that Kenyan youth are particularly vulnerable to recruitment to extremist groups because of high levels of unemployment, dis-engagement from education, and general disenfranchisement with society (Finn et al. 2016).

The data in [Figure 7](#) below shows the change in employment status of mentees as they move through the programme from baseline to end-line. Here we see positive trends in relation to mentee lift trajectory, such as the increase in the proportion of mentees who are self-employed rising from 19% to 28%, but also a good deal of uncertainty. The proportions of mentees working full time rises nearly threefold from baseline to end-line but at the same time the proportion working part-time drops dramatically. Similarly, the proportion who are students declines but those who are unemployed see a steep rise.

Category	Baseline	Midline	End-line
Employed full time (more than 35 hours a week round the year)	4%	6%	11%
Employed part time (less than 35 hours a week or only at certain time of the year)	0%	0%	0%
Housewife	0%	0%	0%
Self Employed	16%	22%	31%
Student	11%	7%	3%
Unemployed but looking for work in the last month	19%	26%	28%
Unemployed but not actively looking for work in the last month	4%	2%	2%

Figure 7: Mentee employment percentages throughout the programme

There is no clear reason as to why participating in the programme would make mentees more likely to be unemployed and so it is likely that this increase is due to both the lifecycle of mentees in leaving education and seeking employment and, potentially, macro-economic factors. Unemployment amongst people aged 15-24 has risen slightly in Kenya over the duration of the STRIVE II programme⁴.

A positive here is that the proportion of those who are unemployed but not actively seeking work was halved between the baseline and midline surveys. This suggests that involvement in the programme may move mentees out of the participation criteria of being 'idle' and is thus a clear positive step. In the interview data, mentors reported that often with mentees with a greater number of personal challenges to overcome, a key part of their role at the start of the relationship is to ensure that the mentee was awake and active during the day. This was seen as a first step towards establishing structure and routine but before actively seeking employment or education.

Earnings data below shows a 34% increase in the average wage earned by mentees between the baseline survey and the end-line. This increase in average earnings will have directly impacted the life trajectory of mentees. This increase was most pronounced between the baseline and midline surveys where we see an increase of 26%. This is very likely due to mentees entering (or re-entering) the labour market as seen above in Figure 7.

For many mentees who took part in focus groups with the research team, having legitimately earned money of their own was a source of pride and was seen as being a first step towards higher aspirations. From one group of 12, 7 had re-invested their incomes into their own businesses and some had bought new clothes which they saw as separating themselves from their previous lives on the fringes of society and criminality. When asked by researchers why 4 of the focus group participants were wearing beige or cream trousers, the response was that these are colours which '*show that you are clean*'. This was intended both literally and figuratively and was not only a change in their life trajectory but also in their levels of self-esteem and their perception of self.

⁴ International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT database.

Average Mentee Income Per Month

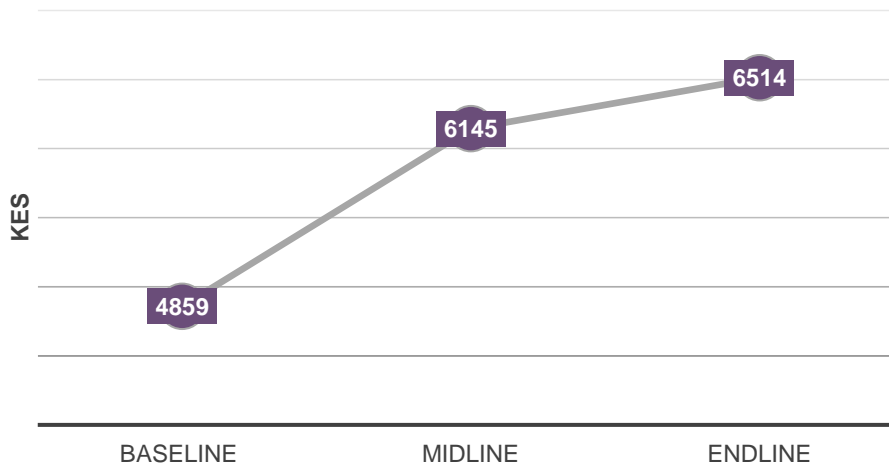


Figure 8: Average mentee income increasing over the course of the programme

First and foremost these increases in earnings likely have an appreciable impact on the living standards and opportunities of mentees that may increase resilience towards radicalisation and other criminal activities. However, they also represent a significant return on investment for the programme. In real terms the 254 mentees in the baseline survey earned 1,234,200 KES (€10,167) between them, rising to 1,560,800 KES (€12,858) by the midline point. That represents total additional income of 326,600 KES (€2,691) (an increase of 20.9%) at the midway point in the programme. Full data is not available for total income at the end-line level due to the incomplete dataset, but further increases are likely based on increased average income from respondents to date.

Expanding upon this, mentors provided a range of examples of change in mentees lives which constitute a significant transformation from an extremely challenging circumstance and to stable and prosperous positions as a result of the programme. Many of these stories demonstrate the role of increased economic opportunity within this. This example was mentioned by many of the RUSI team and is told below in the words of the mentor who supported the individual involved.

'One of my mentees was involved in a gun group and during our sessions he realised he was facing a lot of challenges with the police. He decided to change his lifestyle where he was doing community work, cleaning the community. He came to know that life is so sweet. He started a fruit business with one jerrycan of juice. He now is one of the biggest manufacturers of juice in Majengo. He's now married and has a kid. He does spoken word poetry and was on TV. He decided to start the Islamic poetry and now employed by an Islamic poet. From 2010 to 2015 he was in gang. He had a lot of regret over past wrongs. He realised that having someone to talk to helped him. He joined in 2017. He realised that through the bi-weeklies he met, connected, to someone who did finance and business at school and they helped him set up a business. He got some cash from someone, started with 2 gallons of juice. After that he branded the juice. After then I saw some change in his life.' (STRIVE II Mentor)

Other examples provided show a direct link between advances in financial and educational circumstance and personal stability and an increase in resilience to violent extremism.

'When I met my mentee, he was calling his neighbour Kafir. Calling his mum a bad Muslim. Had very extreme Islamic views. He was planning to travel and would have travelled if he hadn't been part of the programme. Now he is in an engineering course. But I will not let him graduate right now because of how extreme his views were. I want to make sure that he's changed and that he meets more of his goals before I graduate him.' (STRIVE II Mentor)

'There are lots of girls being recruited and deceived. This girl is behaving. She is rushing into some business which the family aren't aware of. Go and talk to her. My friend introduced me. I met her and just let her talk. She told me there's this journey I want to go. She was talking to an agent that was trying to get her to travel to Somalia. But the agent was lying and I exposed

it. I asked her 'what kind of agent isn't in the country that she's trying to get you to travel to'. Are you working? No. Are you in school? She was lamenting that she hadn't finished school and I don't have certificate to look for job. I said this is a programme of development. She's now started a business and married.' (STRIVE II Mentor)

'I have a mentee. One of his family members went to Somalia. Brother tried to recruit him: 'You should come to this side and fight the government'. The Muslims are being oppressed. You and I are like the Mujahidin. Offering money and fighting for the religion. He used to tell me I'm scared. What my brother is saying is partly true. I asked 'Is this what you really want' you want to run from one place or another. You need to look after your safety first. He's lost contact with his brother and wants to travel to find him but he doesn't even know which country he was in. I've been able to convince him to not travel. He's doing electronics now and close to graduating.' (STRIVE II Mentor)

These examples provide important depth in showing the nature of the transformations that take place and the acuteness of the problems faced and mindsets held by mentees upon entry to the programme. The examples show the clear role that the programme has in supporting critical thinking and positive decision-making which has led to avoidance of potentially life-threatening decisions and to the taking up of economic and educational opportunities.

That participation in the programme gave mentors and mentees exposure to new opportunities, contacts and environments also had a markedly positive impact on their lives and aspirations. For those seeking employment in the voluntary sector, to be able to reference having been part of a RUSI programme and having received training from the Kenya Red Cross Society on their CV was of huge benefit and was linked to an increased confidence to put themselves forward for opportunities. This confidence was particularly evident amongst the mentees in Mombasa who had been involved in the Red Cross training scheme:

'We're good enough for the Red Cross. We can say that, and who is bigger than them? Everyone knows who the Red Cross are. We put that on our application for a bank loan.' (Self-employed STRIVE II Mentee, Mombasa)

Here though the programme could look to do more with mentees and have a more systematic approach to linking to skills training and/or employment opportunities. A more formal step of progression towards the end of mentees' engagement with mentorship into a training or work placements would have a huge impact on improving the life trajectory of the significant proportion of participants who do not find work and would negate some risk of them reverting back to old routines or behaviours. It is clear that this happens in some cases but is not currently a formalised or structured part of the programme. The strengths of the consortium partners could support this.

As touched upon, clear perceptual and attitudinal changes took place for mentees over the duration of their involvement in the programme. Significant in this, with regards to the aims and ethos of STRIVE II, is that the mentees began to hold different views on causes of issues within their communities and the role of security forces (such as police, army, paramilitary). At the baseline stage only 8% of mentees selected a 'lack of guidance' as one of the most important problems which face youth in their communities. This rose at both midline and end-line stages up to an eventual 25%. This is a significant rise and suggests both a change in perception and a degree of introspection from mentees. Similarly, though not as dramatic a change, the proportion who felt that a lack of role models was an important issue for youth in their communities rose from 7% at baseline to 12% at end-line.

This data echoes statements from mentees in the mentee focus groups. Mentees discussed how they had come to be involved with STRIVE II and accepted, quite willingly, that they were at risk of either radicalisation or other forms of criminality and violence. Many of the male participants felt that their lack of positive male role models was a factor in this as many described a lack of stable relationships with positive figures. Not all mentees that the research team met with came from single parent or "broken" households, but nearly all lacked a role model figure with whom they could openly discuss their lives. This was a topic that they, not the research team, raised.

'If my dad sees me with money or something new, he will call me a thief and throw me out. If I don't have money, he will call me lazy and hit me. We don't talk.' (STRIVE II Mentee)

'I spent all my time on the streets. You don't talk about anything to people there because you can't be weak. So you get problems and they get worse. In the end, I spent my time alone and walked with my head down. People were scared of me and got out of my way'
(STRIVE II Mentee)

Across the board in the focus groups there was a recognition from the mentees that they needed support and that recognising this was not a weakness. The group in Mombasa was drawn from two mentors and were particularly close as a result of their involvement in the programme:

'Before, we knew one another. But not well. We played football, some of us went to school, I know his brother. But now, we work together. If I have a problem, they will help. If someone else has a problem, I will help. If one of us has food and the other doesn't, then we both eat.'
(STRIVE II Mentee, Mombasa)

The supportive atmosphere in the focus groups was evident to the researchers, as was the degree of openness and honesty with which mentees discussed their feelings and the changes that the programme had brought about for them. In the Mombasa focus group, one mentee told researchers that he has just gone back to college. When asked how he felt about this, he replied that he was 'proud' of himself and was interrupted by other mentees telling him that they were also proud of him.

An additional positive attitudinal change amongst mentees in the 3 areas, from baseline to end-line, is a softening in attitudes towards security forces. At the baseline survey, 42% of mentees felt that security forces were the most damaging group to their communities. This dropped to 27% by the end-line survey. For at risk young people who have been engaged in or around criminality and violence to have undergone positive perceptual change towards security forces is a real achievement for the programme. This change should be harnessed and capitalised upon in the future, allowing the credible voices of the mentees within their community to effectively have a multiplier effect.

In response to the same question around the group that was most damaging to local communities, Figure 9 shows that 63% of mentees in the end-line survey felt that this was 'youth'. This increases substantially from 33% in the baseline survey. Further research is required to fully understand this complex change in perception but data collected in interviews and focus groups before the end-line survey data was available for analysis suggests that increased awareness of issues and personal accountability on the part of mentees may be factors.

One important factor in this appears to be the role of a sister programme which some of the mentees took part in, funded by the Government of Canada. The programme brought together STRIVE II mentees with members of law enforcement for dialogue about community issues and the role of the police. This programme was not included in this evaluation project but it was mentioned multiple times by mentors and mentees, with many of the latter assuming that it was a planned part of STRIVE II. For some in the focus group, this was listed as one of the most important elements of the programme indicating that there is perhaps scope for greater contact between law enforcement and young people in the programme. In the focus groups, some believed that the biggest change for them in the programme was in their understanding that the police were like regular people with families to support, trying to earn enough money. This appeared hugely revelatory to the group. This theme is built on further in the concluding remarks.

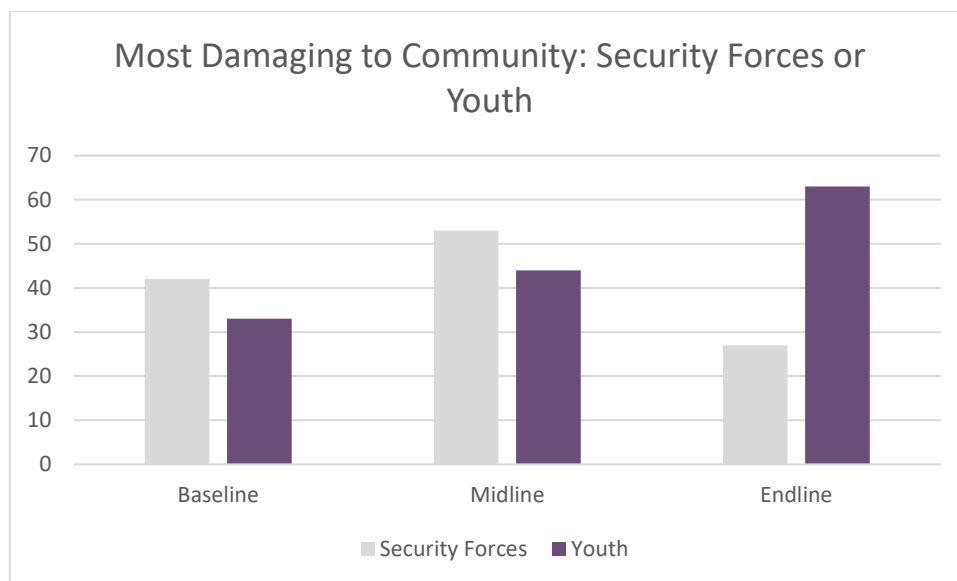


Figure 9: Views on which groups are most damaging to the community: security forces or youth

Finally, the psychosocial support offered by the programme to mentees appears to have had a very clear and beneficial impact. Focus group data and interviews with mentors shows that mentees are exhibiting more positive self-images and a greater awareness of their identity and that this is leading to positive change in their lives.

'I had a mentee who was in the gang group who was very stubborn. He didn't want my help at first. After a while he started opening up. He was struggling with having a place to belong and got that from the gang. After a while he was passionate about [name of career]. Now has a shop selling [name of products] and is very successful. His life is very positively impacted. He was not really inside. He wasn't in the gang but used to hang around them because they were part of his social group.' (STRIVE II Mentor)

In this example provided by a mentor, there is a clear role for factors such as social identity, belonging, and self-expression. Many more stories such as this were provided but have not been included to protect anonymity. That many mentees are able to contextualise their feelings, ambitions and emotions now against a benchmark of where they feel that they were at the beginning of the intervention and that coping strategies such as alcohol and drug abuse and violent behaviour are seen as such, is a hugely positive outcome. For young people to be able to critically assess their own past behaviour in such a way is a highly positive development for them and one which they are aware can help guide their future actions. The addition of the psychotherapist to the capacity of the programme was mentioned multiple times by the mentors as a positive contributory factor to their ability to support mentees in this way.

'One of my mentees told me that his friend wants to commit suicide. We can go to the psychologist and ask what I should say or bring her' (STRIVE II Mentor)

This example demonstrates the importance of having a trained mental health professional attached to the programme. The data has a range of references to mental ill health within the mentee group and references such as this one to mental health as a prevalent community issue. This example also demonstrates the wider community effects of the programme in connecting young people with no access to support services to help at crisis point. There are a range of examples in which mentors and the RUSI team have supported mentees in their interactions with services:

'We bring the stakeholders in sometimes. Maybe one of the mentees doesn't have an ID. The process of getting an ID for a Muslim is long. We bring the community chief/elder into the session to help out with it.' (STRIVE II Mentor)

This example of facilitating contact between community stakeholders and elders to support a Muslim mentee to get new identification is typical of the kind of issues described by mentors and the approach

to helping them. The mentorship programme for some has become a place to resolve a wide range of practical, emotional, financial and relational issues that constitute human vulnerabilities, many of which result – like this one – from real or perceived structural discrimination. Young people that are disconnected from support and services are reconnected through the programme, providing a wide range of positive impacts.

Changes for Mentors

Mentors have a crucial role as the face of the direct intervention with at risk young people. However, unlike many other mentoring programmes, the STRIVE II mentoring project is designed to impact positively on the attitudes, behaviours and life trajectories of mentors as well as mentees. By building the skills and capabilities of mentors to work in communities, CVE and hostile environments this increases the capacity of communities to identify and work to mitigate the risks and behaviours associated with radicalisation and violent extremism. This brings a tangible sustainability to the work.

This section addresses first the personal change that takes place for mentors and second the changes which take place which are more closely linked to programme outcomes around working with at-risk young people.

Mentors, from the data available, have typically been subject to similar life experiences and conditions with regards to poverty and opportunity. In the baseline survey, 25% of mentors are classed as higher earners in that they earn more than 30,000 KSH per year. At the end-line survey this had risen to 36% and average earnings in the brackets below these had risen too. This is a positive outcome that will have the effect of bringing positive change to the personal circumstance and life trajectory of mentors. However, over the same period, the mentor cohort also saw an increase in average educational qualification and indicating that not all of this change can be attributed to their involvement in STRIVE II.

Interview data, however, shows that mentors viewed their future employment prospects much more favourably as a result of their involvement with the programme. This increased confidence appears largely derived from the skills and experience gained from both the training given and the practical aspects of the work but also from the status that they have taken on in their local areas as a result of being seen to be a positive role model and a leader for young people.

Feedback on the training given to mentors was very strong with all mentors at end-line either agreeing or strongly agreeing that the training which they were given was useful for their work. These positive findings indicate that the training has strengthened the capabilities of mentors to deliver work on this programme as well as building the capacity of mentors to deliver similar work in the future. There is very little aside from STRIVE II programme administration that is not transferable to a wide range of roles.

When asked what the biggest professional improvement that they had undergone in the last year, most mentors listed the affable qualities around friendliness and approachability as being an area of improvement for them. The biggest change though between midline and end-line was that the proportion of mentors who were comfortable working in hostile or less secure environments rose from 10% to 32%. This suggests that they were developing in the role over time, though 10% is a low baseline figure.

Further indication that the mentors' ability to do the job coupled with their understanding of the role developed grew during the programme is that the proportion who ranked their qualities as a good listener as important dropped from 59% to 29% between midline and end-line. From time spent with mentors, it is likely that this is a result of mentors placing more emphasis and value on other aspects of their role and less on the more foundational task of being a good listener. Here there is perhaps a recognition that successfully supporting and counselling at risk young people is about more than just listening to them but about, as the mentorship manual notes, taking responsibility and leading change. More data is required to confirm this but, from descriptions of how the mentors have developed during the programme, this reading seems plausible.

Further evidence of perception change taking place amongst mentors over the duration of their work with STRIVE II can be seen in [Figure 10](#) below.

What type of help does the mentorship programme provide?

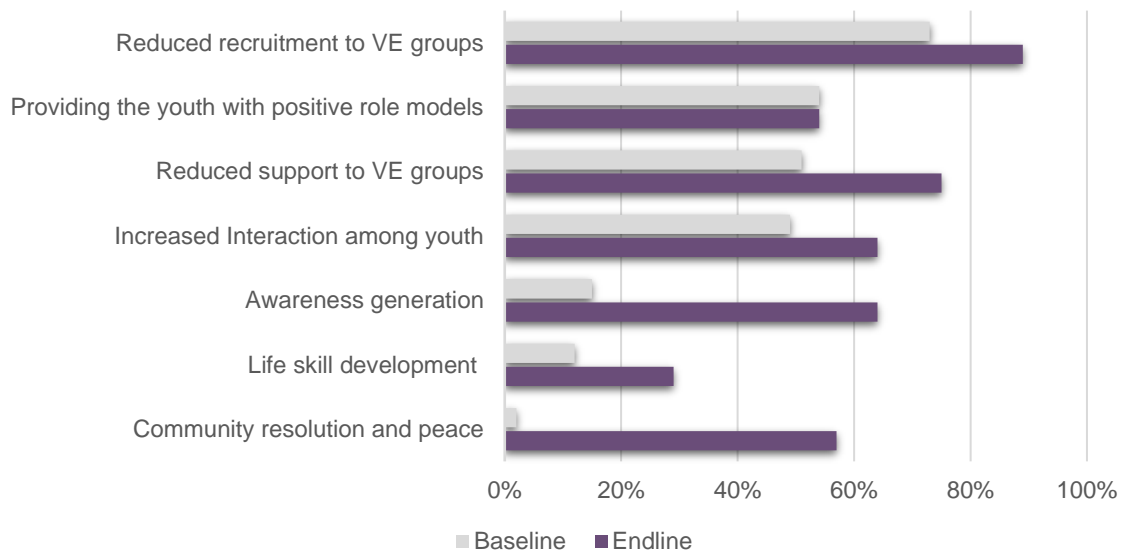


Figure 10: Mentors views on what type of help is provided by the mentorship programme

In the baseline survey results, which is where they begin their journey with STRIVE II, mentors typically see the intervention as being focussed on reducing recruitment and support for violent extremist groups, providing a positive role model to young people and increasing interaction between young people. Roles such as ‘awareness generation around violent extremism issues’, ‘community resolution and peace’ and ‘life-skill development for mentees’ are not recognised to any large degree by mentors. This changes dramatically by the end-line survey with the proportion of mentors seeing the programme as providing awareness raising around violent extremism issues going up from 15% to 64%, community resolution and peace from a very low 2% to 57% and life skill development for mentees from 12% to 29%. These increases demonstrate that the understanding of the programme’s work and the mentors’ roles enhances throughout the programme and crucially in a wider set of themes than those explicitly related to violent extremism.

Coupled with this increased understanding of the role of a mentor and the aims and ethos of the STRIVE II programme is a degree of change in what mentors feel are the reasons why young people may support or engage in violent extremism. Though peer pressure and a lack of viable earning opportunities and prospects are highly ranked as key factors in both baseline and end-line surveys, there is a degree of change beneath these. After training, mentors see face-to-face engagement with holders of radical views and radical interpretations of the teachings of Islam to be significantly less influential as factors and a lack of parental guidance, lack of identity and social belonging and economic opportunity to be much more substantial influences. This aligns with shifts in law enforcement following training in that result area and there were similar results for radio professionals following the conflict-sensitive journalism training in the Preventive Communication Result Area. This gives a good indication of the common shifts created by the programme across multiple groups of important stakeholders in local communities.

It bears emphasis that peer pressure is the most commonly selected reason that young people may support or engage in violent extremism across the baseline (80%), midline (73%) and end-line (64%) surveys. In a programme which aims to create new social networks and which evidently have been able to establish a culture of positive peer pressure (particularly regarding behaviour at bi-weeklies), it is positive that mentors recognise the important role that peer pressure can play and the resilience that it can conversely build.

The training that mentors received also aimed to build up the knowledge base of mentors around the risks to individuals associated with joining extremist groups. Given that 75% of the mentor cohort had previous significant experience of working in CVE, it is no surprise that opinions on the risks did not

change significantly from baseline to end-line: the group was likely already fairly well-informed on this topic. There were some shifts worthy of note, though. Most strikingly, the percentage of mentors who felt that the recruit could disappear either before or after joining them rose from 22% at baseline to 75% at end-line. This suggests both a new awareness of the severity of risk involved and is indicative that the key messages from CVE training content were successfully transferred.

Finally, the data in the Figure 11 below shows that the awareness of organisations which can support at-risk young people and their families has grown between the baseline and the end-line surveys. This alone is a good outcome. However, of greater benefit to the aims of STRIVE II overall is that security forces grew significantly as a recognised provider of this support.

Which organisations can provide support for youth and their families at risk of engaging in violent extremism?

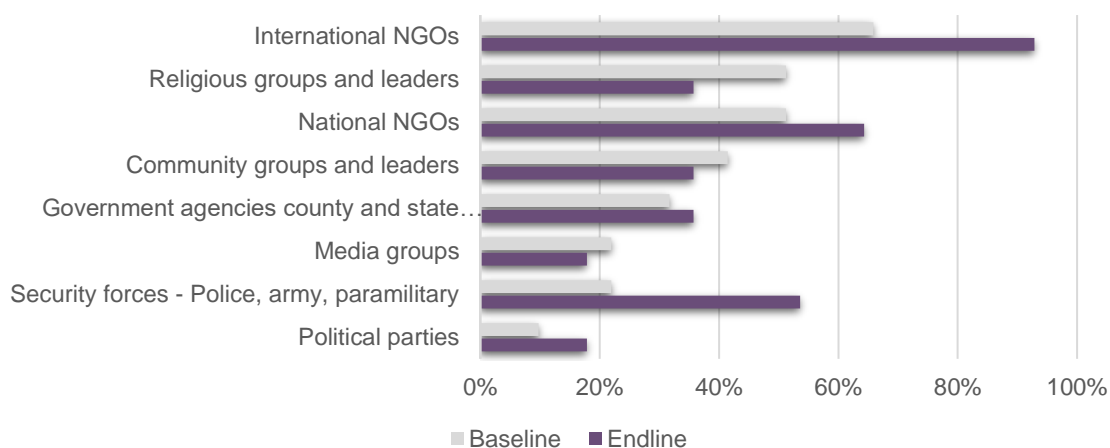


Figure 11: Mentors awareness of which organisations can provide support to those at risk of engaging violent extremism

Overall, the changes which the mentoring project have brought to the mentor cohort have been highly positive in terms of both development of the mentors professionally and outcomes for the STRIVE II programme. Data from interviews shows that mentors unanimously regard the role as being a positive experience for them (though it should be noted that no mentors who dropped out were interviewed) and one which they feel will benefit them personally and professionally going forward. The occurrence of this alongside the building of capacity to identify and tackle radicalisation and violent extremism also takes place is a real win for STRIVE II.

Changes for Stakeholders

Stakeholders are, in many ways, the most detached of the beneficiary groups covered in this report, but still have a critical and unique role in both the delivery of the programme and the sustainability of the programme’s impact after delivery. Stakeholders work within local areas and identify and refer young people at risk of radicalisation or recruitment to RUSI which this has a direct impact on programme outcomes. However, of equal importance to the programme aims is the more indirect work that the stakeholders do away from STRIVE II with other at-risk people.

The role that stakeholders play in the programme too goes beyond just delivery and impact, they also bring a degree of localised credibility and authority to the work. They are typically well-known and trusted individuals in their communities and the programme is able to leverage this to gain access and impact in communities:

‘They (stakeholders) are well known people in their area. If I say to someone’s parents that I am meeting with their child because this person said that I should, then they listen to me’
(STRIVE II Mentor, Nairobi)

Quantitative data in this section is drawn from analysis of the stakeholder baseline and end-line surveys. This comprises a sample of 29 stakeholders at both stages and is drawn from across the delivery areas. This is supplemented by qualitative data from interviews and focus groups.

Though 66% of stakeholders came into the programme with ‘significant CVE experience’, they had limited personal or professional networks in the CVE field with 24% having none and 62% having only 1 or 2 contacts. No stakeholders at baseline level had engaged with 5 or more CVE networks. Figure 12 below shows that, by end-line stage, this had changed substantially with there being growth in the number of networks with which stakeholders were engaging.

Number of CVE networks engaged with by stakeholders

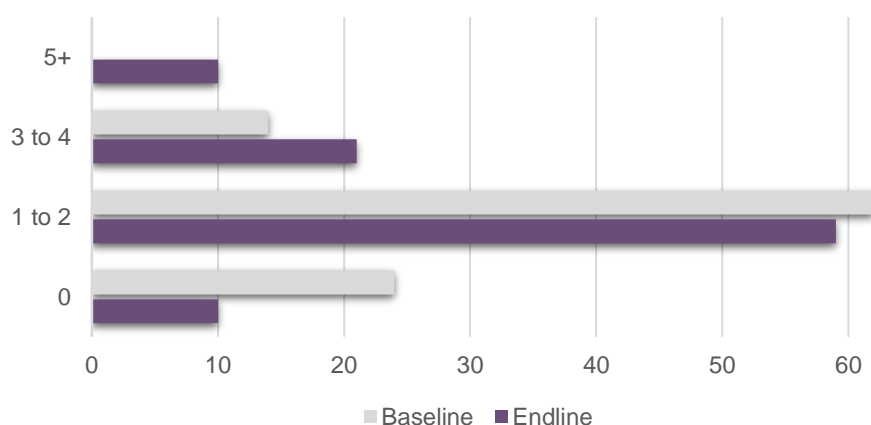


Figure 12: Stakeholder CVE networks increasing over the course of the programme

This increased level of networking is supportive of greater sustainability of work undertaken in STRIVE II and has developed capacity that will likely last beyond the programme.

There are a range of increases and changes in the attitudes, professional behaviours and skills shown with the data which appear to be likely attributed to the stakeholders’ involvement in STRIVE II. For example, 52% of stakeholders agreed that they have received assistance from the programme and overall CVE networks grew substantially between baseline and end-line surveys. These are impressive in the context of two thirds of stakeholders already having been involved in CVE work before STRIVE II and 79% having significant community development experience; the programme made substantial contributions to a group who already had a relatively high level of relevant experience.

When stakeholders were asked to highlight the main problems faced by their communities there was some evidence of shifts in beliefs and opinions between baseline and end-line. Economic problems were the most commonly selected issue at both baseline and end-line but the percentage of respondents selecting this dropped from 86% to 66% between the surveys. In place of this at end-line stage, issues such as drug abuse, lack of government services, crime and criminality, poor housing and family issues were selected more. This perhaps demonstrates the integration of a wider set of factors within the analysis of stakeholders towards problems in their communities, away from the dominance of one single factor and towards an array of interlinked issues. Similar change has also been recorded in members of law enforcement and radio professionals following training in other result areas, but more closely related to CVE, again showing the common effects of STRIVE II’s focus on complexity.

Relevant to the aims of the STRIVE II programme is that perceptions of security forces did change to a substantial degree. Security services were felt by 62% of stakeholders at the baseline survey to be a group which was damaging to their community. This was the second highest rate of selection amongst all options, behind only criminals (72%) and comfortably ahead of youth (24%) and radicals, including violent extremists and terrorists (31%). In the end-line survey, though, the security forces were selected by only 24% of stakeholders and were the 4th most commonly selected group. This is a significant swing in perceptions, with almost the mirror opposite happening with perceptions of youth as being the cause of problems in communities. This can be seen in Figure 13 **Error! Reference source not found.** below:

Most damaging to your community: security forces and youth

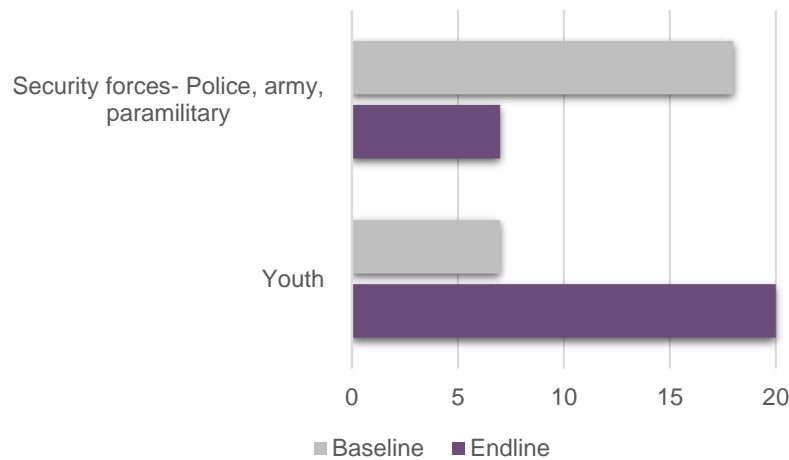


Figure 13: Which groups are most damaging to your community? Security forces and youth

This shift is substantial but difficult to interpret clearly. It is perhaps positive that the programme has potentially contributed to changed views of the role of security services as not as negative as force in the community. However, the shift towards seeing youth as a problem, instead, could mean that the programme has provided a closer proximity to the issues related to young people which has led to an re-evaluation of the role of youth in general. It could also be related the programme’s focus on youth having the power to influence their own futures, perhaps over-representing in the minds of stakeholders the degree of agency and influence that young people have in society. As always, there could also be external factors in society which have caused this change such as shifts in media coverage of current affairs or the release of government policy. More data is required to understand this shift fully.

Attitudinal changes were also found between the baseline and end-line surveys when looking at stakeholder perceptions as to why young people may be persuaded to join radical or extremist groups. Peer pressure (55%) and a lack of viable income and prospects (79%) were the two most commonly selected factors at baseline. However, stakeholders’ selection of ‘lack of viable income or prospects’ was a major factor dropped from 79% to 38% by end-line. This changes equates it to the level of importance associated in the end-line questionnaire with ‘frustration with life’, ‘lack of identity and belonging to society’, ‘lack of information or guidance’ and ‘lack of parental guidance’ as reasons felt by stakeholders for young people joining extremist groups.

Similarly, there were changes in how stakeholders identified signs that a young person supports violent extremism. The most major swings here were around sudden increases in wealth and an unwillingness to coexist with people from different backgrounds. This can be seen in Figure 14 below:

Signs that indicate someone supports violent extremism

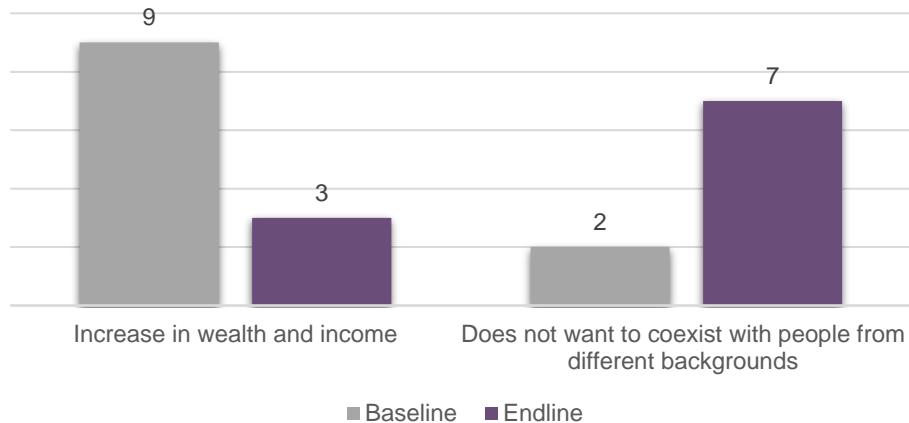


Figure 14: Signs that indicate that supports violent extremism

The stereotypical imagery of young people being recruited online and suddenly endowed with newfound wealth being refuted in the minds of stakeholders is a positive outcome for the programme, as the evidence shows that in reality the picture is often far more complex. As is a greater recognition of social isolation and objection to people from different backgrounds.

The results presented above overall are indicative of shifts seen in other areas of the evaluation, with an increased recognition that no one factor, and particularly in this case, not only economic factors contribute to the motivation to join extremist groups. The results show a relative increase in the importance of social and relational factors. Ultimately, stakeholders, like mentors, law enforcement, radio professionals and others leave their engagement with STRIVE with the belief that young people are not driven to violent extremism by simply-explained or single issues and rewards. Rather, there are strong signs to suggest that the idea has been successfully communication that individualised pathways develop as a result of a range of factors, the composition of which is different for each individual. This shift in understanding, for a programme focused on increasing the understanding and awareness of CVE is a substantial success.

There is one area in particular that shows a lack of substantial increase where one might be expected. Stakeholders become more adept at selecting mentees for the programme over time, with the rate of successful referrals (in which the referred mentee enters the programme) increasing from 46% at baseline to 53% at end-line. It is positive that this has increased but this is a relatively small improvement from a low base considering the length of time and amount of likely engagement with the programme between baseline and end-line. More, qualitative data is required to understand this, including by looking at the variation in levels of contact with the programme across the sample size (i.e. those who engage more likely understand the programme criteria better). One suggestion, proposed at the start, though is to revisit the wording of the selection criteria and/or invest more time in making stakeholders more aware of the programme's requirements.

Overall, the story of change as a result of the mentorship programme with regards to stakeholders is positive. It is a definite strength that networks on CVE have been built and that key local stakeholders have the opportunity to engage in those beyond the programme. This coupled with an increased ability on the part of stakeholders to identify signs of risk and reasons for support of violent extremism, and the rejection of stereotypical images around recruitment and radicalisation are signs of significant success.

Sustainability

The programme aims to increase the knowledge base of relevant stakeholders and mentors and to build their capacity to be able to recognise factors related to violent extremism in work with at-risk youth. There is clear evidence that this is being achieved by the programme. The expanding remit of

stakeholders over their involvement with the programme and the increased abilities and confidence of the mentors themselves point to positive changes that are supportive of a sustainable and longer-term influence of those groups beyond the programme.

For mentees and mentors there has also been an exposure to significant and impactful new relationships, networks, skills and opportunities. For those who have moved into paid employment or undertaken training that leads them towards employment, this comes in the form of tangible increases in earnings. This mitigates against some of the key factors related to violent extremism and crime and sets mentees up on an enhanced life trajectory. This has sustainable impact for them and their communities, particularly if they are enabled to act as mentors or community role models in the future, as many appear to be already.

The exposure to new networks and opportunities also brings about sustainable change by giving mentors and mentees both the confidence to raise their aspirations and solid experience and references to take with them. From the mentees in Mombasa who worked with KRC to the mentors who have all worked with RUSI, these individuals now have associations with large civil society organisations on their CVs and connections within these that can issue them with references if required. Many recognise and have noted within the data the opportunity that this brings.

The benefits in economic and educational opportunities from the programme for many of the mentees are clear. As the programme has matured, there may be scope to formalise the later stages of the mentorship relationship through connecting mentees with placements, additional training, employment opportunities and educational opportunities. This depends largely on the availability of these opportunities and the partnerships required to support them but data collected from consortium partners indicates that this would be feasible. This would secure the sustainability of the programme over the longer term.

The positive group identity which the mentorship programme has developed to negate the harmful draws of local gangs and extremist groups is a powerful lasting legacy of the programme and one which mentee attitudes suggest is sustainable.

Whom do mentees plan to continue to engage with after programme end?

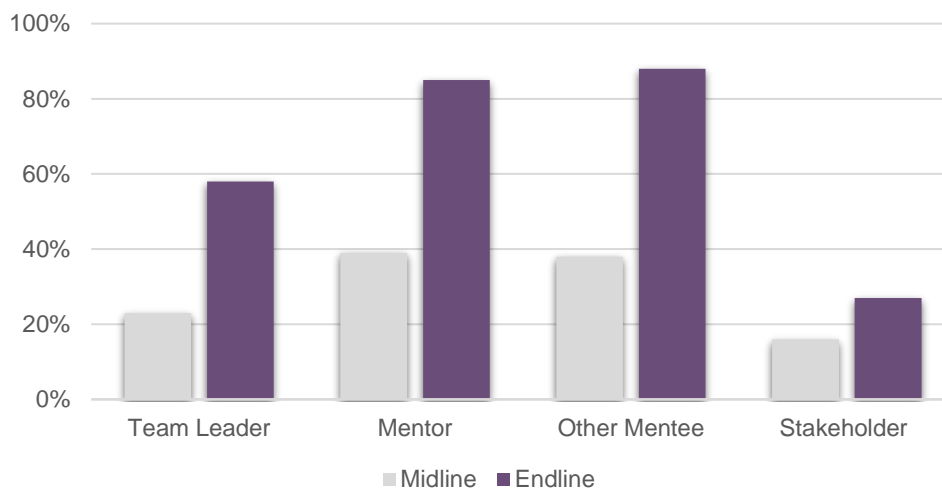


Figure 15: Mentees' plans to engage with people after their graduation from the programme

Figure 15Error! Reference source not found. above shows that mentees show an increased willingness to continue to engage with other mentees, their mentor, stakeholders and team leaders after the programme ends. Over 80% plan to keep in contact with other mentees and/or their mentor. This is further supported by a range of examples of how the groups are interacting with each other including this account from a mentor:

'The mentees have decided to start their own WhatsApp group to share their own information on security risks as they emerge. Stay indoors because I've seen this...it's stopping people from the idea of hanging out at night.' (STRIVE II Mentor)

Activity such as this should continue to be encouraged by RUSI and stakeholders and, where viable, qualitative data should be kept on some of the longer-term trajectories of the groups in order to more accurately understand the sustainability of these effects and relationships.

Mentorship: Lessons Learned

The following is a set of lessons taken from the analysis above and the data available that relate to the wider practice of preventing and countering violent extremism based on the experience and performance of STRIVE II within the Mentorship Result Area.

- The model of creating an alternative social network for at-risk young people in conjunction with one-to-one peer support is highly effective in a multitude of ways that relate to the prevention and countering of violent extremism, including benefits around inclusion, sense of belonging and self-worth for mentees and the sustainable use of these networks to enhance future prospects.
- Using the peer model of mentorship with mentors drawn from local communities is highly beneficial in the Kenyan context as it allows for localised knowledge and status to be employed and overcomes many of the mistrust issues around external interventions and security forces.
- Involvement in the programme brings credibility and opportunity to both mentors and mentees. Working with a large organisation, such as RUSI, and linking to work or opportunities with consortium partners adds to the prospects and future employability of individuals in both cohorts.
- A softening of attitudes from mentees, mentors and stakeholders towards security services and their role in problems in local communities is a real positive outcome that can be linked directly back to the goals of the programme and which has potential to bring long-term benefit. All 3 cohorts are known in their communities and their voices will likely be listened to if they can advocate for security forces to not be seen as major drivers of community issues and if they pass on their humanising experiences of law enforcement.
- Training and learning as part of the programme has deepened the knowledge of stakeholders and mentors as to what factors are most critical in processes of radicalisation, recruitment and extremist behaviour and what the signs of these in young people may be. This understanding has been passed down to mentees, further extending the network of those working both informally and formally in CVE.

Law Enforcement Result Area

The Law Enforcement Result Area constitutes the development and delivery of a training programme for Kenyan security and law enforcement. It has been delivered to senior and mid-level officers through the provision of four training modules, each linked to a curriculum piloted under STRIVE I. The result area operates in line with the training and capacity-building pillar of the National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism (NSCVE) and, although not officially approved by the Director of NCTC, has been endorsed for delivery by senior NCTC leaders. The multi-agency training sessions are designed within a human rights and rule of law framework that strives to strengthen national CVE approaches.

Part of the training aims to communicate the benefits of community-based policing in CVE, linked to a law enforcement ethos often referred to as 'soft' policing (McCarthy 2014) including partnerships with non-law enforcement actors and greater engagement with citizens with the aim of preventing violence. This is often set in contrast to 'hard' policing (Scarman 1981) approaches, led by law enforcement agencies and, traditionally, more reliant upon coercion and reactive force (ibid) than proactive, community engagement. In so doing, the programme intends to improve the level of collaboration and trust between youth and law-enforcement and contribute to changed understanding of issues of violent extremism, involving public, human rights and disengagement.

After outlining the activities that have taken place, this section examines the context and design of this result area and then presents data on implementation, impact and sustainability. At the end of the data collection period, the training sessions had been delivered in 6 of the originally-intended 9 counties (at time of writing, sessions have been delivered in 11 counties, for reasons explored below). The review of this result area examines data involving 219 of the 244 participants together with those involved in the design and delivery of the programme. The data available allows the authors to draw a range of strong conclusions about the training's relevance, efficacy and impact and make useful inferences about the potential of the interventions and general approach for the future.

Activities in this result area fall into four areas of implementation:

- Development of the STRIVE I curriculum and creation of a subsequent training course
- Stakeholder engagement between RUSI & NCTC and the County Security and Intelligence Committee (CSIC) in each county of operation.
- Supporting the delivery of training sessions to participants from counties identified and prioritised by NCTC as the areas most affected by radicalisation and terrorism in terms of both the rate of recruitment into violent extremist groups and the number of terror-related attacks⁵.
- Following approval from EU, delivery of a CVE workshop for regional security and law enforcement agency command teams, intended to ensure collective understanding and mutual exchange of experience and expertise in the area of CVE which would assist in the creation and delivery of a CVE programme⁶.

RUSI had intended to deliver online training for frontline officers. This was removed from the programme due to extensive delays in agreeing the curriculum (STRIVE II 30 Month Report).

⁵ Initial assessments identified Mandera, Wajir, Garissa, Isiolo, Nairobi, Lamu, Kilifi, Mombasa and Kwale, however during the term of the programme NCTC requested the addition of two further counties, namely Tana River and Neyri and the re-prioritisation of the roll out of the training based on escalation of threat and risk. (STRIVE II progress reports - various)

⁶ This activity was not within the initial objectives but added following requests from NCTC and discussion with RUSI (STRIVE II progress reports - various)

Context

The content of the Law Enforcement Result Area is heavily linked to the security and law enforcement context and threat of terrorism in Kenya. In understanding the efficacy of the design, it is thus important to briefly recognise the threat landscape and legislative framework that currently exists across Kenya.

Kenya has been the target of numerous terrorist atrocities and has, in recent times, suffered at the hands al-Shabaab, most notably the 2013 siege of Nairobi's Westgate shopping mall, which left 67 people dead and numerous injured and the 2015 attack on Garissa University in which 148 people lost their lives.

Garissa University is located 90 miles from the relatively porous Kenya-Somalia border, exploited by militants who transit with relative ease. Garissa County also hosts Dadaab, one of the largest refugee camps in the world with over 336,000 Somali which has been allegedly been a focal point for Al-Shabaab activities in a number of ways. The confluence of population density, vulnerability of population and a troubling and deteriorating internal security situation seemingly makes the area especially vulnerable to al-Shabaab influence, recruitment and attack planning. Al-Shabaab have continued to conduct such attacks including in 2019 when five Somali militants stormed the DusitD2 hotel and business complex in Nairobi, claiming the lives of at least 26 and injuring another 28 (CNN 2019).

Al-Shabaab is the most active terrorist organisation in Kenya and amongst the deadliest operating across Africa, (Nickels & Muibu, 2017) whilst not solely responsible for the country's extremist violence, is a primary focus for interventions. In 2016, through the coordination of NCTC, the Kenyan government launched the National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism, aiming to better *'integrate religious, ethnic and tribal minorities, promote interfaith harmony and facilitate deradicalization.'* (Government of Kenya 2016) The plan was launched in four coastal counties; Mombasa, Kwale, Lamu and Kilifi, aiming to build *'strong, cohesive and resilient communities against violent extremism and (Al- Shabaab) recruitment'* (ibid).

NCTC are mandated to pool multi-agency resources and coordinate activities that enable enhanced effectiveness of counter-terrorism efforts. An important aspect of the strategy involves training law enforcement personnel to be more sensitive towards the needs of diverse and marginalised communities and to support CVE programmes undertaken by civil society and international organisations. This collective response serves to contribute to the overall objective of 'stopping terrorism'.

From the outset, RUSI have been receptive and flexible to the needs of Kenya and the diverse needs of each of the counties and agencies tasked with delivering countering violent extremism policy and practice. Indeed, this flexibility has demonstrated agility to respond to the dynamic threat landscape and subsequent requirements of NCTC. In doing so RUSI has displayed high levels of patience, diplomacy and resourcefulness, enabling a focus on the RUSI team' objectives to build the resilience of those vulnerable to violent extremism and the capabilities of those involved in countering violent extremism.

Design

Within that context, RUSI, collaborating at each stage with NCTC, developed a curriculum and training programme which seek to complement existing programmes across Kenya in enhancing the CVE capabilities of law enforcement. Whilst there has been a necessary focus on complementarity with and relevance to the extant culture and way of working within Kenyan law enforcement, RUSI and NCTC's priority is on creating a shift towards prevention, disengagement, the rule of law and human rights. This extract from the foreword of the CVE for Law Enforcement Manual summarises well the aim of the programme's design.

'...the focus is on preventative efforts and how excessive use of force, ethnic profiling and lack of rule of law can contribute to increased radicalisation. The curriculum also aims to increase the capacity of law enforcement agents to understand the drivers of radicalisation among youth in Kenya.'

Implicit throughout the manual is the notion that the current approach to *'fighting'* (3) violent extremism is lacking: without a clear focus on prevention, it will not be comprehensive enough to be effective. As a result, the curriculum content emphasises the benefits of adopting soft rather than hard policing solutions, delivered through a whole of society approach. In relation to the success of the design of the

curriculum, this overall approach has been repeatedly referred to as both quite different to current approaches in policing violent extremism and highly relevant to the experiences of those on the course.

The first iteration of the curriculum had 11 modules, which, following further discussions with NCTC was later distilled to 4 modules:

- Module 1 - The Role of Security and Law Enforcement in National Security and Promoting the National Interest: a module introducing many of the key concepts, national structures and bodies related to national security, terrorism and violent extremism, and a discussion of the role of Security and Law Enforcement Agencies (SLEA) and NCTC.
- Module 2 - Who is a Terrorist or Violent Extremist: a focus on the 'global trends' in terrorism and violent extremism and a discussion of the difference between the two terms, followed by a look at recruitment targets and processes, legal frameworks and the RADAR risk assessment tool.
- Module 3 - Introduction to Disengagement from Violent Extremism: a focus on how disengagement differs from de-radicalisation, frameworks which explain the use of the term, followed by the skills required to disengage individuals and a case study of disengagement from the UK Home Office.
- Module 4 - Role of Senior Law Enforcement Advisors (SLEA) in Strengthening Public Support for Counter Terrorism: covering a range of topics related to public support, including community policing, intelligence-led policing, human rights and partnerships with civil society. This module also includes a case study describing an approach to public engagement used an Israeli counter terrorism policy as well as introducing the socio-economic approach to understanding violent extremism.

The modules move from broad frameworks and concepts in national security through to specific tools, techniques and tactics. The content in the manual is far more comprehensive than that contained in the 4 modules, particularly in its more explicit focus on values in CVE and counter-terrorism, but most of the key themes and content from the manual has been successfully transferred into the 4 modules that are delivered to SLEAs.

One of the two overarching objectives of the training is improving *'the level of collaboration and trust between youth and law-enforcement'* yet the focus on youth in the curriculum and the four modules is very limited. Whilst some of the content refers to issues related to young people, such as processes of disengagement, in Modules 1, 2 and 3, there is almost no mention of youth and young people. In Module 4 there are 23 references to either 'youth' or 'young people' but these are almost all found in two paragraphs within a section on socio-economic approaches, on page 22 of 25. Whilst these paragraphs align excellently with building an understanding of the position of young people vulnerable to radicalisation in Kenya and the inclusive ethos of the training (e.g. *'Youth should be viewed as part of the solution to countering violent extremism, not just a potential violent-extremism problem.'* (Module 4)), they are far from the key focus of the content. There are many more references, particularly in Module 4, to public engagement and partnership with external organisations, many of whom work with or support young people; the content of the training, however, is skewed towards the second objective of contributing *'to changed understanding of issues of violent extremism.'*

A key focus in the discussion of the design of the curriculum is its relevance to the work of SLEAs and to the Kenyan context. This is a prominent theme in the qualitative data: *'The topics they set were extremely relevant for our work.'* (Focus Group Participant). Within the focus groups, there was significant discussion about the relevance of key elements, including the need to take a softer approach, the recognition of the potential to do more harm than good through continuing to rely upon current and previous (harder) approaches, and the need to take different approaches at *'different stages of the radicalisation process'* (Focus Group Participant). RUSI and NCTC's boldness in teaching an approach

which is very different to the current way of working arguably and in theory runs the risk of making the training seem less relevant to the work of delegates and might even have been perceived as negatively critiquing current policy and practice. On the contrary, however, the content on soft approaches which relate to public engagement, vulnerability to radicalisation, human rights and multi-agency working were cited as the most relevant and useful parts of the programme and seem to have sparked useful discussions on the limitations of the current approach between delegates:

“the training helped my officers on how to relate to the public. Initially, their behaviour would push guys to radicalization rather than shy them away. The training helped them to be careful in using hard and soft approaches to CVE” (Key Informant).+

Set within the context of Kenya, the language, definitions and terminology all relate to the country and its law enforcement structure. Whilst reflecting on international terrorism and CVE approaches and utilising evidence from academic literature and international case studies, the curriculum ensures that these experiences are directly related to a Kenyan context. The data shows that beneficiaries found in particular the focus on action planning and tools (e.g. RADAR) blended with practical case studies allowed them to recognise the potential for the use of this approach within County Action Plans⁷. As discussed later in the report, the relevance of the training could have been enhanced by providing more time for discussion between delegates of these complex cases and ideas, allowing delegates to discuss together how they might fit within their daily practice.

The focus in the curriculum on the importance of multiagency working appears to have also found significant relevance, with a number of revelations about the potential for change in law enforcement approaches. There are many references in the data to the relevance to their work of greater openness and inclusivity in the approach to countering violent extremism and the need to recognise and include bodies previously excluded from the work of law enforcement as part of this wider approach.

From lengthy discussions with many of the stakeholders involved, it seems that the timing of the training has also been a contributory factor in enhancing the relevance of the content. It has been delivered during a period when new planning processes and shifts in national strategy are being implemented – and thus a wider context of change – which has seemingly allowed these novel approaches to CVE to have significant relevance. The relevance of the approach is certainly aided by the role of NCTC senior officers as trainers, blending the internal influence of NCTC and the Government with RUSI’s external expertise in offering this new ethos for law enforcement. The discussion of relevance is continued under the heading of ‘Implementation’.

In relation to how comprehensive the programme is, there are a lot of different topics and themes covered in the manual and the four modules. The content delivered face-to-face remains at foundational level in relation to the insights that are available in policy and academic literature: key terms and definitions, introductory concepts of modern policing styles, case studies of limited length, etc. From discussions with delegates and NCTC though, it appears that this style of breadth over depth works well for the delegates: delegates are primarily from action-orientated, policy implementation roles. When delegates were asked to consider what might have been missing from the programme, their replies were focused more on who was in the room (e.g. more trainers, more delegates from different counties, etc.) rather than additional content. From those discussions, the response to the content appears to be highly positive and that more than enough new content was covered in the timeframe, and for some there was too much covered in the timeframe to be able to absorb it effectively.

Implementation

The discussion of the implementation of the programme covers the process of the development of the curriculum, engagement with stakeholders and the training delivery, beginning with the choice of

⁷ The curriculum compliments the County Action Plans (CAP), mandated by the Kenyan Government in 2016 to all 47 counties as part of the response to major terrorist attacks, including at the Westgate Mall and Garissa University, to support national CVE efforts seen as a locally driven problem.

partner. RUSI's decision to engage NCTC as the principal partner was arguably essential to the result area's delivery. It ensured that the curriculum could be developed, coordinated and delivered in accordance with the diverse needs of law enforcement and that RUSI would have easier access to key stakeholders. In addition, through local recruitment of respected academics and utilisation of NCTC senior staff as trainers, RUSI fused together academic thinking and operational experience. The relationship has proven effective overall but has seen significant blocks at key stages, ultimately resulting in delays. This first part of this section is focused on the experience of working with NCTC: one of the most influential factors in the success of the result area.

Interviews with NCTC show that the RUSI approach to relationship building, in general, enabled the development of positive relationships with NCTC.

'[RUSI has been] very professional, very knowledgeable and easy to work with...more flexible than others we've worked with.' (NCTC Senior Officer)

RUSI are essentially the first non-governmental body to collaborate with NCTC on CVE training delivery – many others have liaised and coordinated as part of donor-funded programmes but this is the first full collaboration: a trusted role. The approach to collaboration in the early design of the programme – continuing the work of STRIVE I, with close collaboration and regular communication with NCTC staff – appears to have been highly appropriate, leveraging opportunities to develop an effective and relevant curriculum, successfully engaging with senior NCTC stakeholders whilst managing challenges.

'[RUSI's] role in developing the curriculum with us has been good. A number of challenges in the changes of leadership and government but these have been overcome now. We have a curriculum that is being used'. (NCTC Senior Officer)

There is strong evidence that NCTC stakeholders have found the relationship with RUSI effective. One key finding from the curriculum development process, however, described commonly across interviews related to business continuity, especially in relation to changes in strategic leadership in partner organisations as this has influenced a change in strategic direction and deviation from previously agreed strategies. Challenges have included the following:

1. Values and approaches of one organisation perceived as potentially not aligned to another.

The changes in leadership within NCTC resulted in a review of on-going partnership programmes leading to delays within already-challenging timeframes. Such delays impacted on key delivery milestones which have hindered RUSI's ability to deliver against agreed objectives.

2. Challenges arising from difference of opinions on definitions and language used to describe significant impacting factors.

There is no doubt that a lack of agreement around the international definitions can become inhibitors in the progression of partnership working. A search for common ground is key to fostering relationships and ensuring a 'whole of society' approach to a 'whole of society problem'. Changes in leadership or strategic intent, can sometimes result in the need to re-assess previously agreed 'common ground', resulting in significant detrimental impact to the programme and partnership relations.

The above represent some of the strategic challenges faced by partner agencies, faced with disruption to business continuity. At times such challenges may seem insurmountable however, perhaps there is value in formally endorsing agreements that may protect such partnership and protect against the potential impact of a change in strategic direction. There may also be value in ensuring that business continuity is reflected within the strategic risk register enabling early consideration of such risks manifesting themselves.

With these objections and challenges as the backdrop, RUSI continued to engage with NCTC for more than a year, until progress did not seem forthcoming. In an effort to maintain momentum, RUSI chose to divert funding from this result area towards mentorship, ensuring progression within a difficult timeframe. This course of action demonstrated the strength and determination of RUSI to deliver on their commitment to the funder and indeed those communities identified as vulnerable. Such decision-

making was rewarded when one month after this, NCTC granted permission to continue the training. The curriculum is now in use but does not have the formal approval of the NCTC Director – it is still considered a draft but has been taught to SLEAs in 9 counties. This is recognised as an issue by the programme team and the funding body, who also recognise that the process to gain approval may be more resource intensive than would be worthwhile: *‘the difference in reality wouldn’t be much’* (Funder Representative). The priority has been to focus pragmatically on delivery over formal sign off, which has been effective.

Given the scale of the issues, the RUSI team have shown significant resilience, patience and innovation and have found a way to make the best use of resources through strength of character, leadership and persuasion through dialogue and assertive action, enabling them to overcome individual, organisational and structural challenges.

The programme initially envisaged training approximately 400 individuals operating within the field of CVE (an average of 45 per the initial 9 counties) for 5-7 days with the aim of improving their understanding of CVE and response to VE. However, this expectation changed owing to a number of factors: each county is structured differently with different resource allocation models, each influenced by the demand profile in their county. In addition, law enforcement trainings were initially conceptualised to cover 9 Counties (Mandera, Wajir, Garissa, Isiolo, Nairobi, Lamu, Kilifi, Mombasa and Kwale). These selected counties were, at the time of proposal of STRIVE II, identified in collaboration with NCTC as the areas most impacted by terrorism in terms of both the rate of recruitment into violent extremist groups and the number of terror-related incidence. Given the changing nature of the threat, NCTC proposed a revised list in 2018: 3 counties on the coast were removed while 4 others were added, with a further switch (Kwale for Kilifi) included in the latest EU monitoring report (42 month). This has remained a dynamic process with the programme team responding to national priorities and deploying to each county as directed by NCTC, showing again RUSI’s flexibility and perseverance. The geographical reach of the programme (within the original timeframe) has been reduced due to these influencing factors and the delay in agreeing the curriculum.

The latest monitoring report shows that the training has been delivered in 9 of the 11 identified beneficiary counties, namely Isiolo, Nyeri, Mandera, Lamu, Wajir, Garissa, Tana River, Siaya and Kwale. The latest participant total provided, from training undertaken in the first 6 counties, is 244 participants which included 64 senior officers and 155 mid-level managers (and delegates from other roles) from a variety of law enforcement agencies. This represents 61% of the intended 400; an impressive total when one considers training did not commence until June 2018. This number has increased since then and will likely go beyond the original target of 400 by September 2020, meaning that against this particular target and allowing – reasonably – for the extended timeframe, implementation has been successful overall.

Stakeholder engagement is listed as a distinct function of the result area, demonstrating the importance placed upon this as an essential activity. RUSI and NCTC have engaged with national, regional and local agencies and structures ahead of training.

‘... that the team came to visit us and ask our thoughts on the issues in our community - made us feel they were listening to us and would help us...’ (Focus Group Participant)

This approach has been resource intensive but ultimately critical in successfully communicating the aims of the training and gaining strategic buy-in at each level and with civil society and private organisations, too. As well as a wide range of additional benefits, such as the gathering of intelligence on the security context at county level, this investment has led to successful recruitment of participants from a wide range of agencies, nominated by their respective CSICs, as shown in Figure 16 below.

MULTI-AGENCY PARTNERS

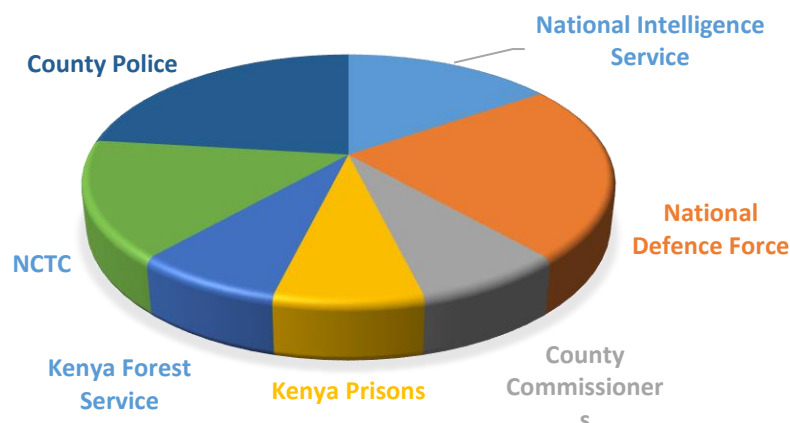


Figure 16: Multi-Agency Partners as Law Enforcement Training Participants: Split by Agency

The inclusion of this wide range of agencies is worthy of note: bringing together traditional actors in counter-terrorism with a wider range of actors such as the Forest Service could be described as unconventional. However what may seem unconventional to some is accepted practice within Kenya and such a multi-agency approach is based on CSIC at county level and dependant on the demographics and threat profile within each county. As such, in the counties of NE and North Coast, requiring of 'border policing' the Forrest Service has a significant role to play in Counter Terrorism. Indeed, all security actors operating across Kenya have a CT role as prescribed in law. Within the focus group discussions, this was noted as an important and rare factor which enabled further challenge and wider discussions as well as opportunities for innovative thinking, particularly in relation to the proposal for greater multi-agency working.

In support of this partnership approach, RUSI, in consultation with NCTC and Ministry of Interior, convened a high-level workshop on CVE for 70 regional policing commanders. The event was officiated by the Director of NCTC, Director of RUSI and Ministerial representatives, supported and facilitated by international, national and regional CVE experts, academics and religious scholars. This was intended to ensure their collective understanding and mutual exchange of experience, specifically in the threat of terrorism and violent extremism, national and county approaches to CVE; and religion and CVE.

'We brought together all of the regional commanders for training for conversations about CVE. NCTC has appreciated that we've been willing to be flexible about who we'll work with.'
(RUSI Representative)

From interview data, the event served to enhance the strategic buy-in and support for the programme and presented an opportunity to demonstrate the openness and transparency of those involved, developing relationships for RUSI and serving as the basis for building and enhancing trust between law enforcement and civil society. There is only limited data on the effects of this but the available data suggests that this was a positive and impactful part of the implementation process, partly because of the visibility afforded to the partnership between RUSI and NCTC.

The final points on implementation come from the feedback of participants on the logistics of the training. These reflections are based on data from focus groups with training delegates, undertaken on the day they finished the training: much of the focus is on their immediate reaction to the training.

Firstly, it was felt by most in the focus groups that whilst the training was very well organised with appropriate venues and facilities, the training would have benefited from having more trainers. Whilst there was broad agreement that the knowledge of the NCTC trainers was excellent and appropriate (*'they were certainly up to the task'* (Training Delegate)), some requested more trainers per module:

'We had very few facilitators covering so many topics. Sometimes is created monotony. We would prefer to have one or two topics per facilitator. The same facilitators everyday doesn't work. We need more people to train us.' (Training Delegate)

The original curriculum manual lists a number of RUSI and external contributors: involving these more in the training delivery could be an effective way of remedying this and would provide greater opportunities to cement the benefits of partnership with civil society.

Following this, the other two areas of practical criticism were in requests for more time, both to cover the training content and for interaction between participants. It was felt that there was too much focus on transfer of information from NCTC trainers and not enough on exchange between delegates.

'We should have more time to share our experience. We all have experience and we've not shared that enough.' (Training Delegate)

Whilst it is common for evaluators to hear requests for additional time allocation following training events, the desire for more exchange and time for exchange in this case seems highly valid because of the rare mix of people in the room and the focus on multiagency collaboration. Furthermore, aligning with the County Action Plan process, part of the ethos of the training is on devolution which would be better served by greater focus on the sharing of local experience within the training.

Finally, continuing along a similar line, there were a number of requests to bring additional stakeholders into the training, most notably those representing neighbouring counties:

'You need to think about including the neighbouring counties and getting them in the room together for training. It should be done in the next county too and with us because the terrorist doesn't see counties.' (Training Delegate)

The training has been successful in reaching a range of middle and senior level officers, working through county structures. Future iterations could include a wider range of delegates, including from new geographical areas and ranks. This is discussed further under the heading of 'Sustainability'.

Change

This section presents the data available on the impact of the training for different audiences. Data presented here comes from:

- the results of questionnaires administered to training delegates before training (baseline) and immediately after training (midline);
- 7 end-line, key informant interviews conducted three months after training; and
- data gathered during the evaluation in focus groups and interviews with trainers, delegates and other STRIVE II stakeholders.

This has provided a wealth of 'change' data, primarily focused on the immediate impact of the training with some focus on longer-term change, both inferred and actual.

Unlike in other areas of STRIVE II, the data collection has been largely influenced by the interests of NCTC, meaning that much of the quantitative data relates to the strategic priorities of the Government of Kenya and is less directly focused on the STRIVE II theory of change, although there is a good degree of useful overlap. It is also worthy of note that it is believed that a high proportion of training delegates move around within law enforcement following the training:

'the problem that we have is the officers being constantly transferred. This might be a challenge since an officer might have gained the knowledge but he's transferred to an area where VE is not an issue hence I can say the knowledge goes to waste.' (NCTC Representative)

This has limited the degree to which RUSI has been able to follow up with end-line assessments because of the challenges in keeping in contact with delegates following the training. For the impact of the training, this has raised questions as to the validity of prioritising geographical areas when the trainee population is so transient. This latter point is discussed further under the 'Sustainability' heading.

According to the STRIVE II theory of change, improved understanding of violent extremism in the four module areas will improve the response of law enforcement to violent extremism in high-risk stations. The analysis below demonstrates that the training has been successful in key ways which compliment this logic. Moreover, the findings demonstrate that the training appears to have created positive change in more areas and ways than depicted in the STRIVE II theory of change.

Theme 1: Changes in knowledge and understanding of violent extremism

The training has been successful to some degree in improving the overall understanding of violent extremism of delegates. As a starting point, Figure 17 below shows the baseline and midline assessments of delegates selections of the main violent extremist groups in Kenya, showing a moderate increase in awareness of groups.

In your opinion which are the main VE groups currently active in Kenya

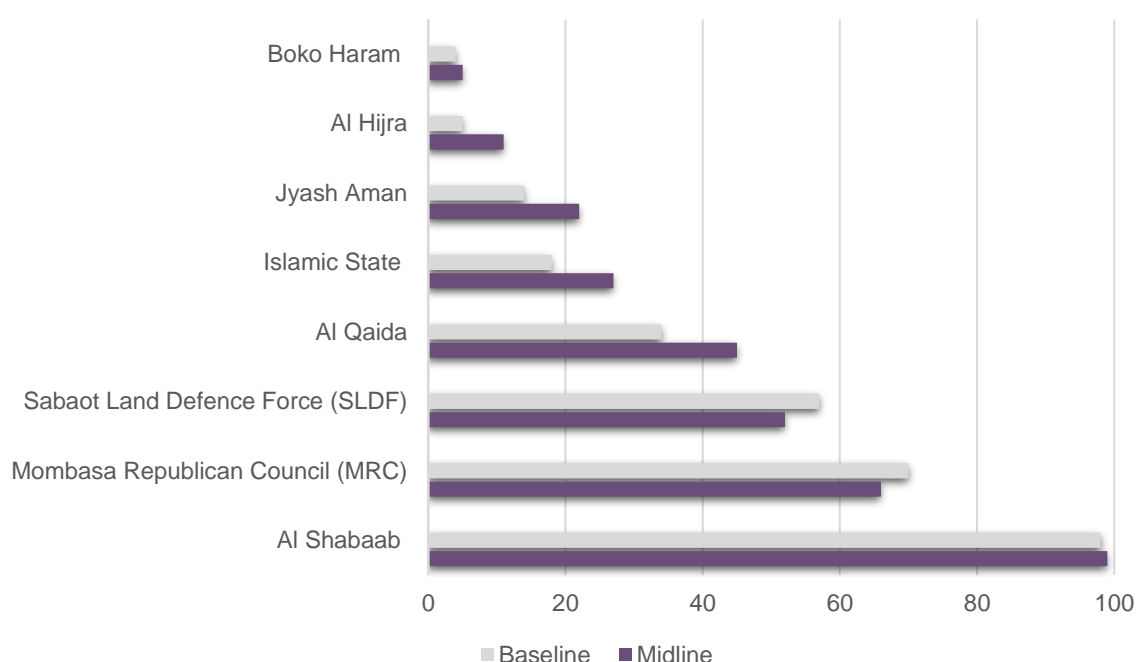


Figure 17: Opinions on main violent extremist groups

Overall, participants left the training with an enhanced awareness of a greater range of groups, particularly the role of international terrorist groups that have a presence in Kenya, such as Islamic State, Boko Haram and Al Qaida. There was also a moderate increase in the recognition of the role of smaller groups that are linked to Al Shabaab such as Al Hijra, perhaps indicating a greater awareness of the complexity of links between groups. This increase is moderate but relates well to the specific content in Module 2 in which lengthy descriptions of these groups are provided.

Following this, Figure 18 presents data from a question in which delegates picked the five most important factors that promote violent extremism from a list of 16. The data shows a substantial reprioritisation in the minds of delegates. One specific point is the decrease in relative importance of 'quick money' as an incentive (moving from 6th most selected down to 12th), alongside the increase in importance of the longer-term 'lack of viable income earning opportunities and prospects' (2nd position to 1st). The training's focus on communicating a more complex picture of factors has had a positive influence in reducing the number of people that believe young people are making decisions around violence and extremism, based on short-term impulses, detached from their overall environment.

What, according to you, are the five most important factors/drivers that promote violent extremism?

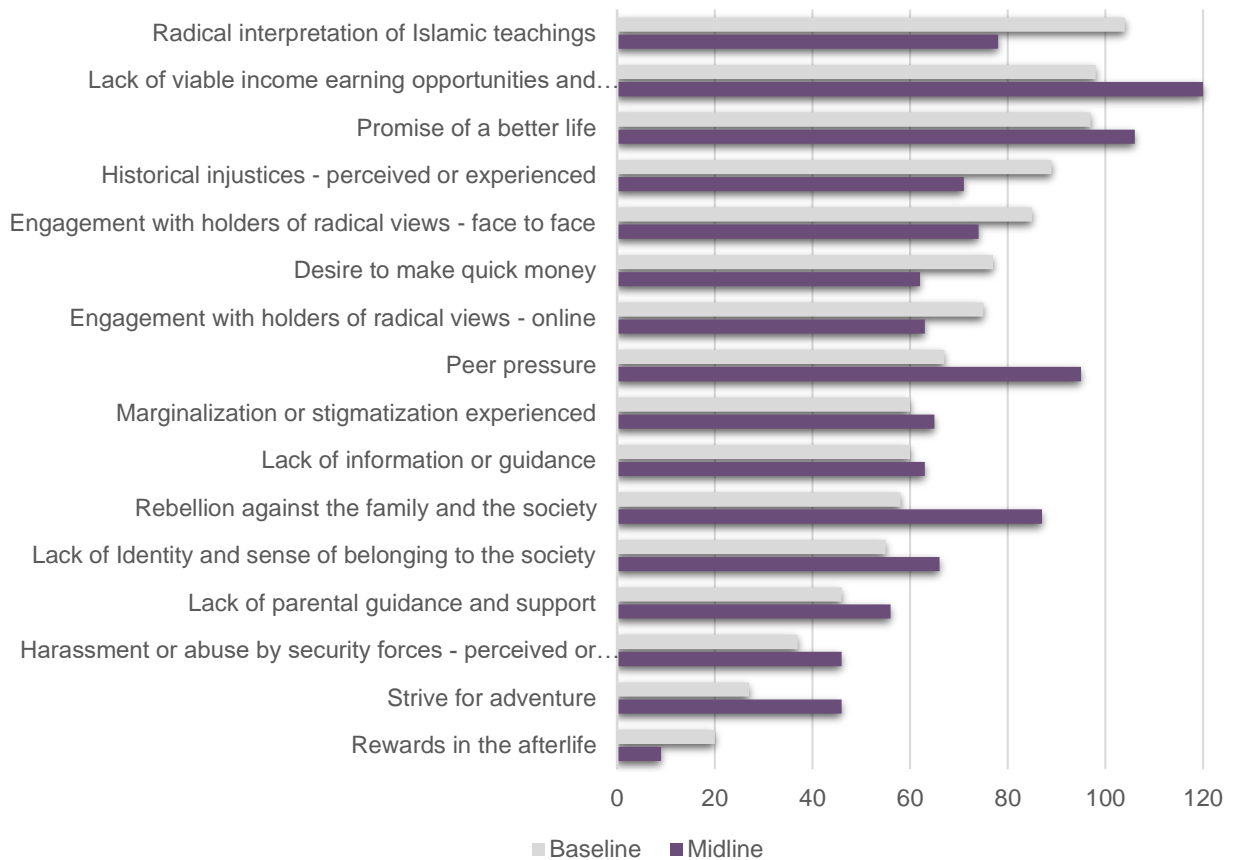


Figure 18: Five most important factors that promote violent extremism

Expanding this further, the data reveals an overall trend towards the recognition of an interplay of factors. For example, there has been a reduction – but not an eradication – in the importance of religious ideology and *'rewards in the afterlife'* in the responses above. This combines with increases in 1) the importance of socio-economic factors such as economic opportunities and desires for a better life; and 2) psychosocial factors such as peer pressure, lack of identity and lack of sense of belonging. This indicates a shift towards a more social ecological understanding of violent extremism – one in which there is an *'interplay between individual, relationship, community and societal factors'* (Gielen in Coleart: 107). This is supported by the qualitative data in which descriptions of multiple factors are prominent:

'I learned that radicalization is not based on religion. It goes beyond social background and anybody can be a VE and can be radicalized' (Key Informant, Nyeri).

Overall, the selections made demonstrate that interpretations of what causes violent extremism vary greatly between delegates and that the training has shifted views towards complexity. These points relate excellently to the Module 2 which explicitly refers to the futility of simple explanations:

'The fact that no consensus exists suggests that what we call radicalisation may actually be much more complex and variable than is often assumed. It is certainly the case that almost all academic experts on terrorism agree that there is no such thing as a typical terrorist'

In this respect, the training has created a positive shift towards a better understanding of violent extremism and one that aligns with the aims of the training and the ethos of STRIVE II.

In contrast to this, Figure 19 shows delegates’ understanding of definitions of violent extremism., indicating that there is no consistent interpretation of what constitutes violent extremism. Moreover, and more worryingly, a good proportion of law enforcement professionals were not able to accurately identify a description of a violent extremist, in accordance with the NSCVE definition (Option 3 in Figure 19), including a large proportion of delegates who confuse violent extremism with descriptions of ‘general’ violence and support for violent acts. This shows well the relevance of the training content and the importance of the training.

In your opinion, who is a violent extremist?

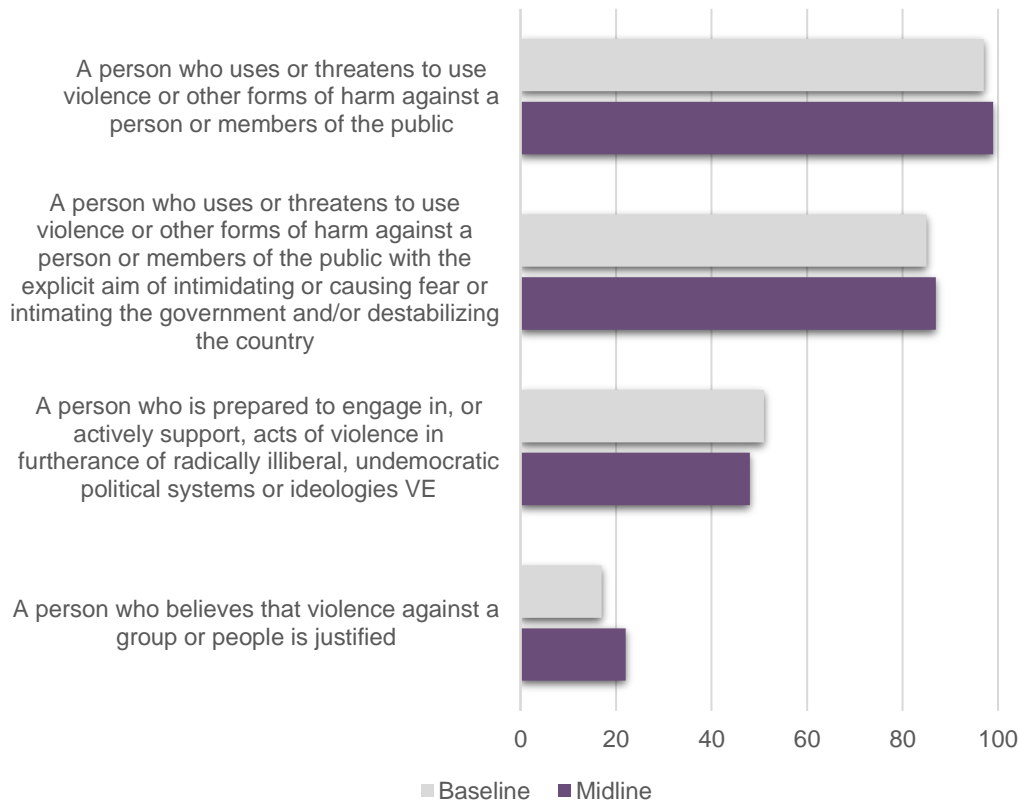


Figure 19: Who is a violent extremist?

Disappointingly, the training does not appear, on this measure, to have made a significant difference to delegates’ perspectives which is surprising because it is one of the only questions asked for which there is a ‘correct’ – according to the Kenyan national policy – answer. This sits at odds with the findings in the rest of this theme that show that delegates’ understanding has been positively influenced. There are likely limitations of this data, however, e.g. the question asks for opinions and not the national definition.

Alongside this, data from the end-line interviews demonstrates highly positive shifts from the perspectives of key informants, also seen in the focus group data. One example is:

‘I know of a person who was arrested and charged in court for only talking to a person in Somalia over the phone. To me, talking to those in Somalia over the phone is not a good enough measure to have someone convicted and sent behind bars, because, putting someone behind bars at this stage might be too early and can harden someone.’ (Key Informant)

This example and a range of others in the data, indicate a shift away from the definitions that rely solely on beliefs and ideas towards those that relate to violent acts, which, in the context of Figure 19, points to a positive shift that has not been highlighted in the quantitative data.

Overall, this theme's findings show positive increases in knowledge of violent extremism, broadly in line with the aims of the training. On the face of it, the changes shown in the quantitative data are relatively moderate but taken together and combined with more substantive insights from the qualitative data the training demonstrates an ability to create a substantial and positive shift in understanding.

Theme 2: Change in understanding and recognition of disengagement

One quarter of the training content focuses exclusively on disengagement as a method in CVE, based on the definition from the Government of Kenya:

'Disengagement refers to individuals deserting, defecting or demobilizing from terrorist groups and activities. This is a behavioural and declarative act and does not necessarily include the psychological and social dimensions of de-radicalization (NSCVE 2016: viii).'

The data on this element of the programme is very clear: the training has led to an overall increase in law enforcement's understanding of this element of CVE. For example, Figure 20 shows a clear increase in awareness of the applicability of disengagement programmes, showing that prior to the training, far fewer delegates were aware of the potential for disengagement to be used for those who have been convicted or used in conjunction with de-radicalisation programmes.

Who should be disengaged?

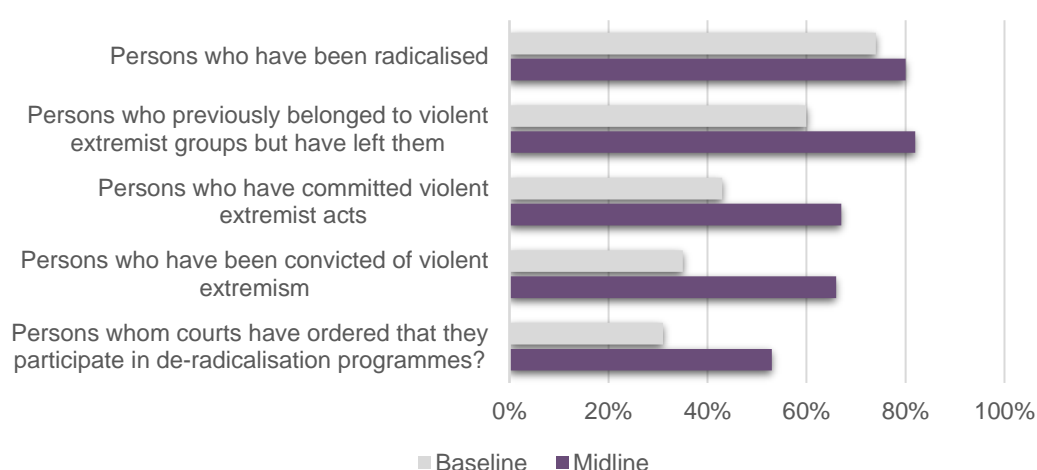


Figure 20: Who should be disengaged?

The qualitative data also shows substantial increases in understanding of what disengagement is and which actors are responsible for it. Further, and more substantially, there are clear and impressive indications within the end-line interviews that the longer-term attitudes and actions towards the use of disengagement have changed positively. Many key informants note this as a specific tool that they had not recognised enough before. These responses are typified by these two extracts:

'I learned imprisonment is not the only solution to VE offenders. Disengagement is also an effective option. Personally, I learned that not all VE offenders are supposed to be in prison. It is actually my responsibility to make sure not all offenders are in prison, we can use the disengagement approach.' (Key Informant)

'To me, what was taught was familiar to me but the issues to do with disengagement was quite interesting. For example, in the case of returnees, we used to do it forcefully but nowadays we engage with the NGO to re-integrate them into the society.' (Key Informant)

Data from a range of sources demonstrates that the training has been successful in enhancing both understanding and professional recognition of disengagement. Attempts were made within the key informant interviews to assess the extent to which delegates used or referred to disengagement

processes since the training but responses to this were limited. Whilst it would be useful to ascertain the extent to which this has happened, all the signs within this theme point to the idea that delegates would be more likely to refer to and support disengagement processes as a result of the training.

Most importantly in relation to the theory of change, the latter quote above demonstrates well the underlying link between the proactive use of disengagement and the reduction in the use of force and police violence. There is a clear link here to the protection of human rights and the rule of law, with disengagement logically having a role in reducing the vicious circle of police violence leading to radicalisation processes amongst young people.

Theme 3: Changes in perceptions of national security, human rights and the rule of law

The training has been successful to some extent, also, in shifting perceptions and opening up conversations that relate to a more holistic approach to CVE and security. The training content and manual cover the links between traditional security and law enforcement approaches with other forms of security. These provide a contextual background to a shift towards the inclusion of a greater diversity of law enforcement approaches, showing how traditional policing challenges are inherently connected to social and economic issues and, thus, the approach to policing them needs to become more holistic.

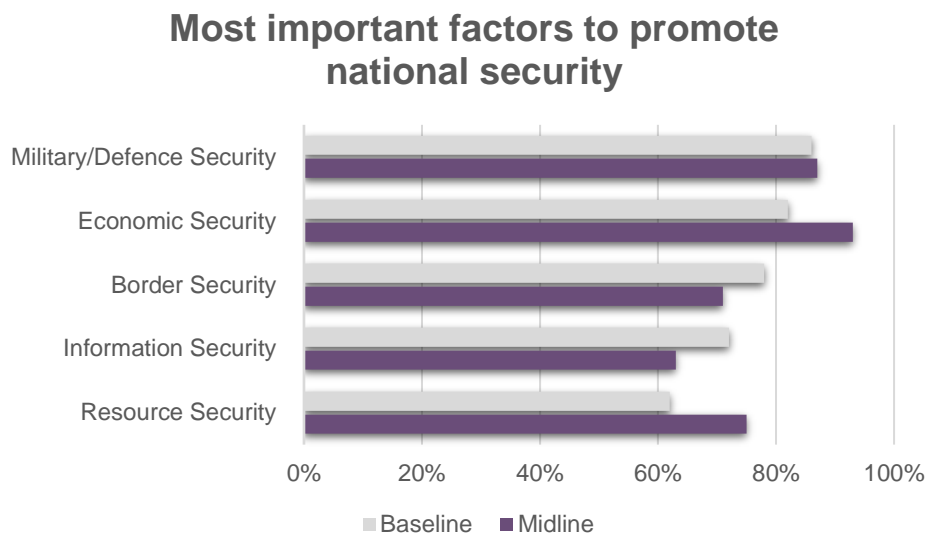


Figure 21: Most important factors to promote national security

At the broadest point, this starts with discussions of the essence of national security. Figure 21 shows that the training, through its content on the broad range of factors that connect to national security, has successfully shifted perceptions towards the importance of economic and resource security in promoting national security. Interestingly, the internationally-prevalent concept of 'human security' is not included in the content. The term's emphasis of the importance of the lived experience of those caught up in crisis, conflict and resource poverty may add further coherence to this definition of national security, particularly in relation to the role of soft power, engagement and human vulnerability.

Further data demonstrates that upon entering the training, only 29% of delegates believed it was *extremely important* to observe human rights when dealing with violent extremists. 14 respondents (8%) rated this as either neutral, low importance or not at all important. This is an excellent illustration of the need for the training. Following the training, 93% of delegates believed that this it was either *very* or *extremely important* to observe human rights in this context, showing a substantial increase.

Further, Figure 22 demonstrates positive change in delegates' understanding of the risk of not upholding human rights. The graph shows a substantial increase in delegates' understanding of the cause and effect relationship between human rights abuses and a range of social challenges that underpin violent extremism. Most notably, there was a 56% increase in delegates' recognising that human rights abuses reduce *'faith in democracy and political system'* and further increases in delegates' recognising that this also leads to *'reduced sense of belonging'* and *'marginalisation of communities'*.

Risks of not upholding human rights when dealing with violent extremism

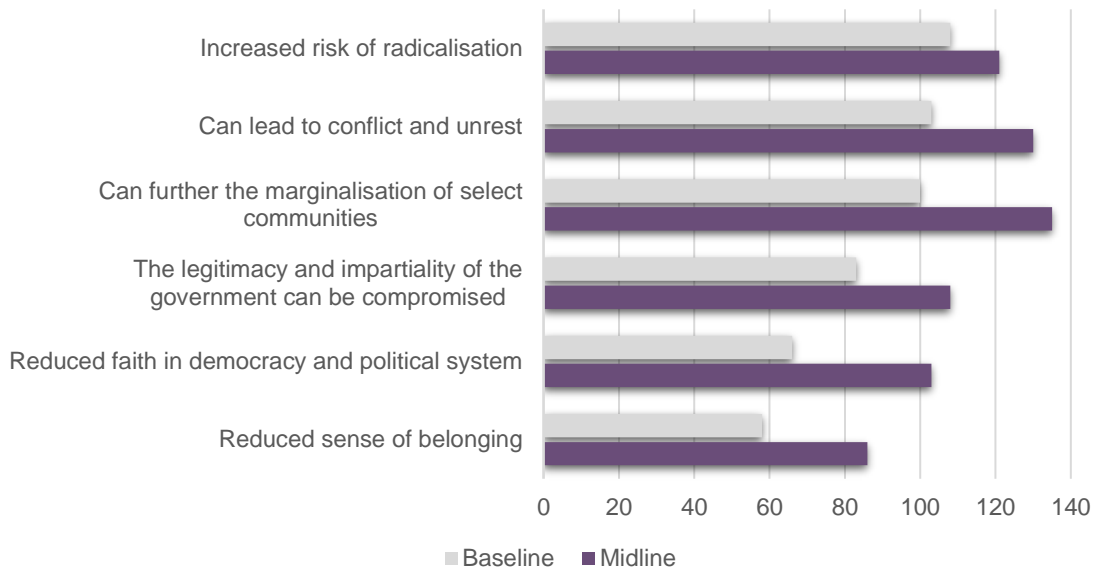


Figure 22: Risks of not upholding human rights when dealing with violent extremism

These results demonstrate a recognition on behalf of law enforcement that an over-secured environment acts as a factor in violent extremism. The increases seen add further evidence to the success of the training in showing that law enforcement's actions have longer-term effects on social issues and underline the view that anyone who does not uphold human rights and the rule of law is ultimately part of the problem. This is a positive indicator for a potential cultural shift in law enforcement which, if spread far enough, would significantly benefit the countering of violent extremism and the relationship between the law enforcement and young people.

Theme 4: Changes in the perceptions of actors' roles and responsibilities in CVE

This theme relates to shifts in the perception of the role of law enforcement and non-law enforcement actors in CVE. It links to the increased understanding of the challenges shown in previous themes, leading to the need to reassess the roles of actors in confronting those challenges. The first result relates to the role of law enforcement, with data showing changes in attitudes to how law enforcement can respond to violent extremism. Figure 23, for example, shows responses to a question about the main responsibilities of security actors in relation to violent extremism. It shows a moderate swing (from 63% of respondents to 79%) towards the recognition of 'disruption' as a responsibility.

Main responsibilities in responding to violent extremism

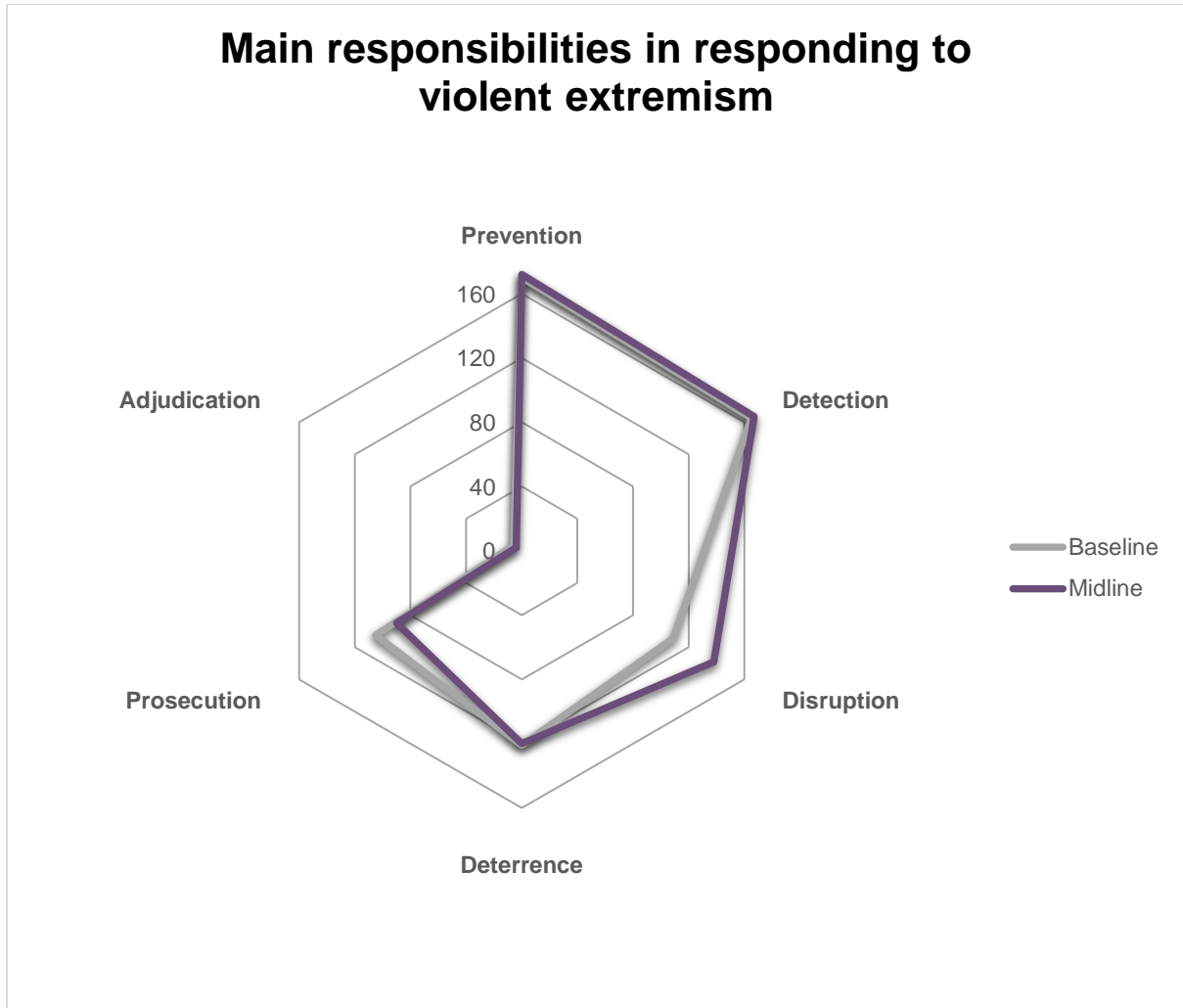


Figure 23: Main responsibilities in responding to violent extremism

The moderate increase in 'disruption' is evidence of increased support for prevention in favour of detection and a diversification of the role of law enforcement in CVE. Much like in the increase of the recognition of disengagement, there is evidence that the training is shifting perceptions towards the virtues of soft policing approaches. This was a significant point of discussion within the focus groups:

'Issues of socio-economics mean that there are people who are vulnerable. Maybe the approach would have been the hard way in the past. I believe that the soft approach is more effective now, from the training. Particularly in preventing terrorism. We need to engage more than we do and we need to work more with others.' (Focus Group Participant)

Data collection has also highlighted a shift in attitudes towards the role for public engagement CVE.

Role of public in CVE

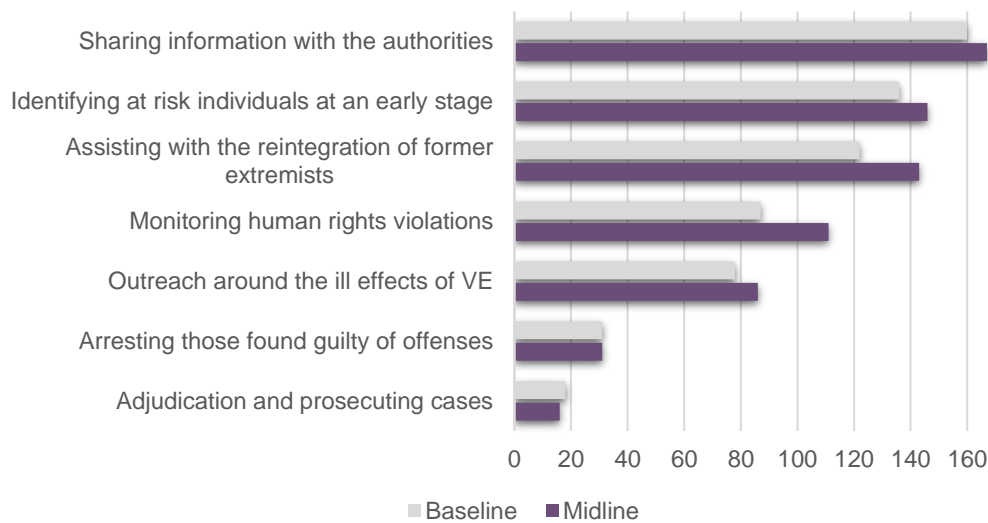


Figure 24: Role of public in CVE

Figure 24 highlights a moderate increase in the recognition of the roles played by the public in CVE, with notable increases in recognising the public's potential role in the monitoring of human rights violations and assisting with reintegration. Building on this evidence, the qualitative data provides a range of examples of changes in attitudes towards young people as well as engagement activities that have been or will be delivered as a result of the training, for example:

'Before the training, our engagement with the youth has been nothing. We do not engage with them. But now we believe that we can bring about sporting activities and other things. Organise community forums to bring them together. We have a county action plan and subcounties and we have youth engagement as a part of that. This training has helped a lot to understand what engagement really is.' (Focus Group Participant)

'We nowadays meet twice a month with the youth. This meeting has been really helpful, in fact the youth has phone numbers of some of the police officers. This engagement has also reduced the problem of drug abuse in this county.' (Key Informant)

There is clear evidence indicating that law enforcement have changed decisions around case handling, advocating soft rather than hard policing solutions, and have the intention to reach out more to young people and the wider community. Importantly, from the sample of delegates included in the focus groups and end-line interviews, there appears to be a greater degree of empathy and understanding towards the position of young people, with repeated mentions of concepts related to vulnerability and trust.

Finally within this theme, in both focus groups there was discussion of the training increasing understanding of the role of NCTC as a coordinating body for CVE and of the need to work through this coordination approach to bring in civil society and other actors.

'From our past approaches, there has been more violence in the community...We need a multiagency approach more than we need the equipment. We need to bring all those experts and multi-agencies to tackle that. That's something new from this training. We have – the government to support us through these programmes – there is a department coordinating multiagency work that we need to use. All those stakeholders can add to what we are doing and we can learn from them.' (Focus Group Participant)

'Multi-sectoral approaches is very important. In the past we used the police alone. Now with this new knowledge we've seen it's important to bring everyone on board. Civil society. Health.

Religious leaders. The community. Everyone together so everyone is aware of what their responsibility is. (Focus Group Participant)

The evidence demonstrates that the training has been highly successful in shifting attitudes towards partnership working and collaboration, both with and beyond government agencies. This collaborative model is supportive of the theory of change as it is likely to contribute to the *'improved response'* to violent extremism and to further cement the soft policing approach, seen as a remedy to the lack of accountability, use of excessive force and human rights violations.

Sustainability

The thematic analysis above shows clear evidence of impact and progression towards longer-term change for delegates and their institutions. The diversity and geographical spread of participants has allowed a wide reach for the training, supportive of sustainability. There has been some concern expressed by NCTC and RUSI that delegates chosen by geography and proximity to extremism issues are later transferred to different, less-relevant posts. There is no statistical data available on the extent to which this is happening. It was suggested during interviews that the training should be delivered in future within the police training colleges. Whilst accepting this would require agreement and partnership working between different ministries, this may serve to solve the issues resulting from the transience within the trainee population, ensuring that all future officers are trained to the same high standard in CVE. Such a move would also deliver considerable change in line with the theory of change, influencing structural change within a significant institution, enabling significant progression towards sustainability.

RUSI should be mindful, however, that much of the longer-term, institutional change which has come so far has likely happened because of the degree of experience and seniority of delegates. There are significant sustainability benefits to training those within senior roles; this element should be retained in future models of delivery. A hybrid approach to recruiting delegates, from both rank and file and senior positions would be beneficial, where viable. However, where it is not possible to have both front line and senior officers within the same training, perhaps a solution would be to ensure senior management and strategic endorsement at the commencement of training for front line officers by their formal opening of the training course.

Whilst recognising that the training focused on only a proportion of content created within the manual, it is perhaps worth reflecting on the comments of participants who stated that there was considerable material to absorb within a short timeframe, requesting for more time to be allocated to the training course with more topics being delivered through continuous professional development, but split over a longer period. This appears to support a move to modular training and incremental learning. In addition, participants repeatedly complimented the depth of knowledge and expertise on CVE by the trainers, setting them apart from other trainings they have engaged previously. This supports evidence that RUSI have focused on quality rather than quantity. Impact and sustainability may be enhanced, however, through a greater use of additional, external trainers where viable.

The availability of the CVE manual and supporting materials is certainly supportive of a train-the-trainer approach but there is a strong degree of reticence from senior officials based on the time and resource implications of delivering the training to colleagues. It seems that without funding and specific orders to implement this, the training will either not be passed on or will be delivered in an ad hoc and limited fashion. For the known cases in which this has happened, however, the training has served to demonstrate operational and institutional change in approaches to CVE. To achieve such impact with a short course which introduces a large volume of new concepts and approaches to longstanding professionals is testament to the content, trainers and delivery partnership.

Participants see the value of community engagement and communication at different levels with various groups, including youth. They value the involvement of multiagency collaboration, evidencing a change in their approach from hard to soft policing solutions. Evidence of residual impact of such engagement in other areas of crime such as drug abuse is provided which in itself is inspiring law enforcement to continue with such approaches. Some of this change is directly attributed to the training and the level of experience and expertise by those delivering the programme.

Such improvement in responses to violent extremism has been described by beneficiaries as truly life-changing, where once hard policing solutions resulted in the loss of liberty for young people engaged in minor offences. This 'pushed' them from law enforcement and 'pulled' them towards those threat

actors operating within the prison system. In a number of instances described by key informants and consortium partners, those confronted by law enforcement lost their lives, further enabling terrorist groups to radicalise aggrieved, vulnerable youth and families.

It is important to recognise, however, that the context introduced at the start of this section likely acts as a barrier to the programme's sustainable impact. Delegates return from training to the systems they represent and whilst many have reported impressive changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviours, engrained institutional and cultural habits that are perhaps counter to this will have an effect on the successful diffusion of what is a novel ethos. Public involvement in CVE and youth engagement, for example, are seen by delegates as more central in CVE than they were prior to the training but both of these are contingent on the actions that reduce distrust and building active trust within communities. This is not to downplay the important effects of the training: it has been highly effective in laying the foundations for a more effective, sustainable relationship between police and young people/the public. It is important to recognise the limitations of an intervention of this size and the much longer-standing structural context. To achieve more sustainable progress in the future, there will likely need to be more resource put into effective, trust-building contact between law enforcement and the community. Perhaps one approach would be to use future training sessions as an opportunity for young people and law enforcement to have contact, in a similar manner to that used in the radio training, where young people came together with professionals within media to develop relationships and build trust. This would be supportive of developing empathy and understanding between the groups within a safe environment.

Whilst the curriculum is not formally signed-off, the resilience of RUSI in maintaining the relationship and (re)gaining the confidence of NCTC has enabled a 'workaround' with the development of a series of modules, anchored in the manual. This provides evidence of a change in response by law enforcement at a strategic level where they acknowledge the value and expertise of an external organisation, recognising the impact RUSI had on enhancing their organisation's understanding of CVE. This is strong evidence of a change in culture, presenting a foundation of trust between NCTC and RUSI which, despite the challenges involved to date, augurs well for future collaborations.

At the strategic level RUSI ensured that their programme was inextricably linked with the NSCVE and locally with the commissioned County Action Plans (CAPs) ensuring a programme that complimented and enhanced the national strategy whilst delivering locally-actioned responses by multi-agency groups. This has led to perhaps the most important sustainable successes of the programme: NCTC are now using the STRIVE II supported curriculum within other areas of work, showing a clear and sustainable influence at the highest level.

At an operational level the approach by RUSI/NCTC of engagement with CSIC ahead of training, developed relationships, built trust and demonstrated a partnership approach in the fight against VE. To leverage current knowledge and experience enabled the implementation of training in a manner conducive to continuous professional development whilst providing an opportunity to determine a baseline of knowledge from which to progress.

From discussions with law enforcement partners there is an absolute desire to maintain this training programme, widening it out to front-line officers, but also, to engage further in training with partner agencies outside of law enforcement, through the delivery of joint CVE training sessions. In addition, the desire is also to engage in bespoke training sessions where scenarios can be considered from a cross-border perspective, involving cross-county partners discussing collaborative responses to CVE. It would be highly desirable to capitalise on the success of this training programme and the strong strategic and operational relationships that have been built on a now-solid foundation of trust.

Law Enforcement: Lessons Learned

The following is a set of lessons taken from the analysis above and the data available that relate to the wider practice of preventing and countering violent extremism based on the experience and performance of STRIVE II within the Law Enforcement Result Area.

- A good degree of flexibility in the allocation of budget across result areas has allowed for both transfer of funds and delays in spending, supporting successful and innovative project delivery in the face of political challenges.
- Law enforcement training delegates are likely to be transient between posts and regions and geographical and threat priorities are likely to shift during delivery – training should either be designed to be reactive to these changes or seek to recruit from a wide, less transient base (such as police colleges).
- There are limitations to the extent to which training is further cascaded within high-risk stations because of time and resource limitations and a lack of strategic pressure to implement – dedicated resources, not just materiel, are likely a prerequisite to the train-the-trainer model in law enforcement.
- The inclusion of a range of law enforcement agencies provides a valuable range of positive externalities in the delivery of training supportive of a collaborative model of CVE.
- Law enforcement delegates value the expertise of NCTC and RUSI as trainers but also place a high value on the experience of other delegates and would benefit from more time to share and learn from other experiences.
- There appears to be agreement and complementarity between RUSI's research findings around the relationship between violent crime and violent extremism and the baseline understanding of those involved in the operational law enforcement arena, particularly around the question of '*what is a violent extremist?*' The data from this result area shows that many law enforcement and security officials confused other violent criminal acts with acts of violent extremism. This seems to relate well to the findings of the STRIVE II research in prison settings in which those convicted of violent extremism often did not distinguish between violent extremist acts and other acts of violence in their pasts (see Research Result Area section). Beyond the remit of this research, there could be an interesting line of enquiry developed concerning the difference between policy definitions and on-the-ground interpretations from those both involved in and countering violent extremism, in a similar vein to the work of Aroussi (2020) on gendered and community interpretations of violent extremism which clash with government policy in Kenya. Aroussi found that government policy definitions of violent extremism did not relate well to the experiences of violent extremism for those in the community, including not accounting for the diverse and divergent experiences of women within affected communities. The basic notion here is that a foundational step in countering violent extremism through policy is for there to be a common – not necessarily identical – understanding and interpretation of what violent extremism is amongst those involved in its countering and a clear understanding of how those involved in violent extremism classify and make sense of their own actions. If there are multiple, very different interpretations of violent extremism extant between policy makers, policy implementers/practitioners and those affected by, at risk of or perpetrating violent extremism, the assumption is that the policy approach is weaker than where consistency exists. This is also explored in the work of Thiessen (2019) on the 'strategic ambiguity' of Preventing Violent Extremism within the UN system. The evidence within the different facets of STRIVE II could provide additional weight and clarity to these findings.
- The baseline assessment of the perceived importance of the upholding of human rights in CVE amongst mid and senior level law enforcement is remarkably low but can be readily and significantly increased through a short training course, with some evidence to suggest the transfer for this increased knowledge into practice.
- CVE as a topic can be used as an excellent vehicle for bringing together the concepts of soft and hard policing and to constructively and powerfully critique the role of security actors in the social ecology of terrorism, demonstrating how the actions of law enforcement can both be part of the solution and the problem. The effects of this opportunity for reflection appear to have been profound;
- CVE as a topic can be used to illustrate the potential positive role of the public in policing, the benefits to engage with young people and civil society and the link between terrorism and other forms of criminality (e.g. drugs and gangs)

- The use of NCTC trainers demonstrates the sheer value of internal credibility in the delivery of law enforcement training on CVE. The presence of NCTC within the face-to-face delivery of training has lent authority to the expert content of RUSI and has effectively modelled the value of collaboration with external partners to senior law enforcement;
- As in many parts of the world, there are significant challenges for non-governmental bodies working in the politically-sensitive arena of CVE and interfacing with political leadership on controversial themes. The nett consequence of this is a significant amount of time spent navigating political and bureaucratic hurdles, taken away from time allocated for delivery. RUSI has impressively demonstrated that, through extensive perseverance, it is viable to maintain a team's principles and quality standards in this arena despite the need to negotiate with government actors, precarious work environments and challenging timeframes.
- Recognising NCTC as the statutory authority for the coordination of CVE activity has enabled effective and sustained interaction with stakeholders.
- Recognising the complexities of the landscape in which law enforcement and NCTC operate enables an understanding of the structural, organisational and individual challenges that may impact on the successful delivery of a programme.

Preventive Communication Result Area

This next result area constitutes a series of small-scale, linked pilot interventions under the banner of 'preventive communication', terminology purposely chosen by the STRIVE II team to illustrate the distinctiveness of the approach chosen. The pilots represent the programme team's desire to approach and advance the roles of media and communications in countering violent extremism: to test an ethos and connected series of new interventions in Kenya, reflections on which have now formed the basis for a research article published in *The RUSI Journal* (Freear and Glazzard 2020).

After outlining the activities that have taken place, this section examines the logic, context and ethos behind the design of this result area and presents data on implementation, impact and sustainability. Given the nature of these interventions as small-scale pilots, data on impact is more limited in volume and breadth than for the more substantial result areas of the programme. The data available, though, allows the authors to draw a range of strong conclusions about the pilots' relevance, efficacy and impact and make useful inferences about the potential of the interventions and approach for the future.

Activities in this result area fall into two areas of implementation:

- Design and delivery of original, bespoke CVE and conflict-sensitive journalism training to 24 media professionals representing radio stations across the coastal region (see Figure 26). This involved initial training design and delivery, mentoring of staff from 9 stations and production of a set of radio 'packages' which have been aired.
- A capacity-building programme for STRIVE II mentors and mentees focused on developing their skills as communicators, spokespeople and storytellers and providing opportunities for groups of mentors to contribute to traditional and social media in various ways. This involved training and mentoring on film-making and writing for newspapers on the subject of CVE and associated topics as well as efforts to publish and promote the resulting films and articles.

As is apparent in the analysis below, both of these elements were designed as supportive of other result areas, especially Mentorship.

Context and Ethos

As discussed earlier in this report, much of STRIVE II's design constitutes a response to the increasingly nuanced and evidence-based understanding of recruitment and radicalisation narratives, messaging and methods used by Al-Shabaab in Kenya⁸, and to a lesser extent those of other violent extremist groups. Central to these narratives have for some time been Al-Shabaab's articulations of injustices experienced by Kenya's young, Muslim population. These lean upon both current and historical perceptions of marginalisation, structural violence and discriminatory policy allegedly enacted by the Kenyan state and furthered through mainstream norms, structures and institutions. Central among these institutions are media agencies which make up a critical element of the socio-cultural structure and discourse in Kenya, influencing communities from which violent extremist groups aim to recruit.

Collectively, these agencies have a substantial role in influencing, shaping and setting, the social, cultural and political milieu of Kenyan society and, thus, in their mediation of relations and portrayal of issues and events, have the ability to further exclude young people and marginalised groups and, conversely, provide voice, inclusion and representation to those who feel or are marginalised. Moreover, particularly in their coverage of terrorism, crime and violent extremism, media agencies in Kenya have the potential to affect, cement and transform relations between Kenyan state institutions and 'at risk' youth (and in wider conflict dynamics which affect all elements of society). For RUSI, they represent critical potential in the countering of violent extremism in Kenya; STRIVE II has sought to capitalise upon novel opportunities to influence their skills, methods and motivations.

STRIVE II's preventive communication activities have developed in direct response to not only this context. The above description constitutes the *structural* side of the justification: the role of media

⁸ See for example a RUSI report on the branding and communication techniques of Al-Shabaab which has influenced some of the thinking behind this element of the programme: <https://rusi.org/publication/rusi-newsbrief/how-east-africa%E2%80%99s-terrorists-build-their-brand-strength>

institutions in shaping the attitudes and experiences of communities, through their transfer of information to communities. Equally vital to the logic behind this result area is the recognition of the importance of the potential agency – one’s power and ability to influence – held by young people through which they themselves can affect change. A key assumption behind this result area is that at-risk and marginalised youth, if given the right tools, confidence and opportunities, have both the power and will to contribute to countering violent extremism, tackling marginalisation and enhancing their own self-perception, representation and inclusion in society. In general, this result area seeks to connect young people and media institutions in a variety of mutually reinforcing ways, aiming to create a shift in the relationship between the institutions, at-risk youth and their respective cultural contexts.

It is important to note that the RUSI team has sought to distinguish the preventive communication strand from the design of counter- and alternative-narrative interventions which have proliferated in recent years around the world (Briggs and Fave 2013, Davies et al.) despite significant criticism and mixed results (Archetti 2012, Glazzard 2017, Hemmingsen and Castro 2017). Interviews with the RUSI team and other stakeholders, articulate the belief that these other approaches have been largely ineffective, are detached from the evidence base and, in some cases, are counterintuitive. To some extent, within the parameters of the logic of the theory of change (structural factors, enabling factors, group dynamics and individual incentives) the preventive communication area has been designed in opposition to the ethos of these programmes: RUSI has sought to trial a different way, based partially on the ethos of conflict-sensitive journalism.

‘We didn’t want to be doing comms to convince people that they were thinking wrong. Many approaches do that and I didn’t. At the heart of those is the idea of changing the attitude of someone who has not done anything wrong.’ (RUSI Representative)

‘We [who work in CVE] need to get out of propagandising young people’ (RUSI Representative)

The design of the Preventive Communication Result Area is indicative of the conceptual framing of the whole programme: a belief that impact and efficacy will be found in simultaneously influencing (media) structures & institutions and strengthening the position of individuals, including by enhancing relationships between the two. The resulting aim from this is the mantra of STRIVE II’s preventive communication work, stated commonly in every interview with the RUSI team: *‘to strengthen the voice of at risk and marginalised youth’*.

The Preventive Communication Result Area 4 has been purposely developed in an iterative manner: interventions have been designed around the strengths and creativity of the RUSI team (in particular the Communications Manager and Programme Leads), external non-key experts involved (e.g. film makers and trainers) as well as the interests and requests of participants. The process of implementation has been fraught with challenges – as often seen in innovative pilots – and serves as an example of both the virtue and challenges of adapting a team’s approach to the context faced by each individual programme rather than a more top down, prescriptive approach. The data shows that at each stage the RUSI team has been able to innovatively and flexibly adapt to overcome barriers and find the best way of achieving impact in the face of challenges. This process has been referred to by participants multiple times as *‘useful meandering’*: the intention to turn an abstract idea and rough plan into a relevant and coherent approach through trial, error and creative problem solving. As discussed below, many of the successes demonstrated by the data can be traced to the flexibility permitted by this process.

Training for Radio Professionals

STRIVE II has delivered training to 24 professionals from radio stations across the coastal region. The training design is based on conflict-sensitive journalism: a movement in media and communication studies which uses principles from peacebuilding and conflict resolution to transform the role of traditional media in conflict-stressed environments, making media professionals more aware of their role in both resolving and exacerbating conflicts (see: Howard 2015). The approach also focuses on strengthening independent, accurate journalism in contexts where there is explicit and implicit pressure to broadcast in a particular way or to a particular line. The use of this within STRIVE II can be seen as a continuation of the team’s view that violent extremism can be seen as a form of conflict and, in turn, CVE can be seen as a form of ‘conflict transformation’ (see: Lederach 1996). This philosophy accommodates both the desire to challenge the immediate, destructive potential of conflict whilst also

seeing the existence of conflict as an opportunity for positive, systemic change – the aims of the radio training fit within this.

Design

From the data available, the training programme appears to have been designed in a highly-inclusive and successful way. The RUSI team met with a selection of would-be participants from radio stations across the coast to understand the level and nature of interest as well as gaps in knowledge. Based on this, the team developed both the details of the syllabus and the types of intervention (classroom training followed by mentoring). The training was designed and delivered by the Communication Manager and a non-key expert with extensive experience in media and journalism in Kenya. From interview data, the addition of this external expertise and the standing and credibility of both experts in their fields appears to have added significant value to both the training content and the credibility of the training, with mention of their expertise and careers across the data.

The 4-day syllabus developed is wide-ranging. It covers the principles of conflict-sensitive journalism and content on the causes of terrorism and violent extremism. It then largely follows the process of developing a longer-form, feature story for air (with a focus on having space to probe issues and to deliberately plan a piece rather than work to immediate deadlines) but with key issues and messages related to terrorism, violent extremism and conflict-sensitive reporting highlighted throughout, including:

- how to research conflict, terrorism and violent extremism ahead of developing a story, beyond desk-based research and with curiosity for discovering the real story within communities;
- discussion of which voices are usually included in coverage of and which should be to make the product more conflict-sensitive;
- how to choose appropriate language and terminology and develop an '*alternative vocabulary*' (Radio Training Syllabus) which aligns with conflict-sensitivity (with attention paid to the three main languages used by the radio stations); and
- skills and techniques for interviewing people from groups not usually included in media content.

A somewhat-surprising feature of the design of the training is the inclusion of content on skills associated with general radio production and journalism. Included are sessions on the use of standard radio production equipment and processes such as microphones and sound editing as well as skills related to journalism such as basic interviewing skills, script development and other aspects of storytelling which are not explicitly related to violent extremism, conflict or the voice of young people. These were included because:

- 1) the trainers were readily able to provide technical training on these;
- 2) their inclusion made the training more attractive to those professionals with less training in journalism/production; and
- 3) the RUSI team wanted to ensure that the stories/packages resulting from the mentoring were of good, professional standard, so were invested in providing additional technical training to support this.

From the focus group data available and from the pre- and post-training questionnaires, participants generally found the content highly relevant to their work and found that it covered topics – both conflict-related and otherwise – that were new and important to them.

'I would like RUSI to consider more training to CVE to develop more relevant ideas, after learn[ing] relevant things on the training of CVE held.' (Radio Training Delegate)

In the pre-training questionnaire, delegates selected options to describe what they would hope to gain from the training. Most respondents (10 out of 11) had attended to learn about conflict-sensitive reporting and issues related to terrorism: the mainstay of the programme. A good number of respondents also stated, though, that they would also like training on general skills related to reporting (8 out of 11 people), editing (4 out of 11 people) and technical issues (5 out of 11 people). Largely, this vindicates the choice to provide the wide array of content: generally, delegates attended in order to benefit from a mixture of conflict and non-conflict related material. This is a positive finding in relation to the design of the four-day training and likely a product of the inclusive nature of the process, listening to the needs of participants.

Implementation

The training was implemented in two parts: 1) delivery of the classroom-based training for 24 people, 2) delivery of mentoring with professionals from 9 stations leading to the production of packages/stories to be aired on radio. For the first part, RUSI was successful in recruiting a diverse range of delegates, as shown in the presentation of demographics below (based on responses from 11 delegates).

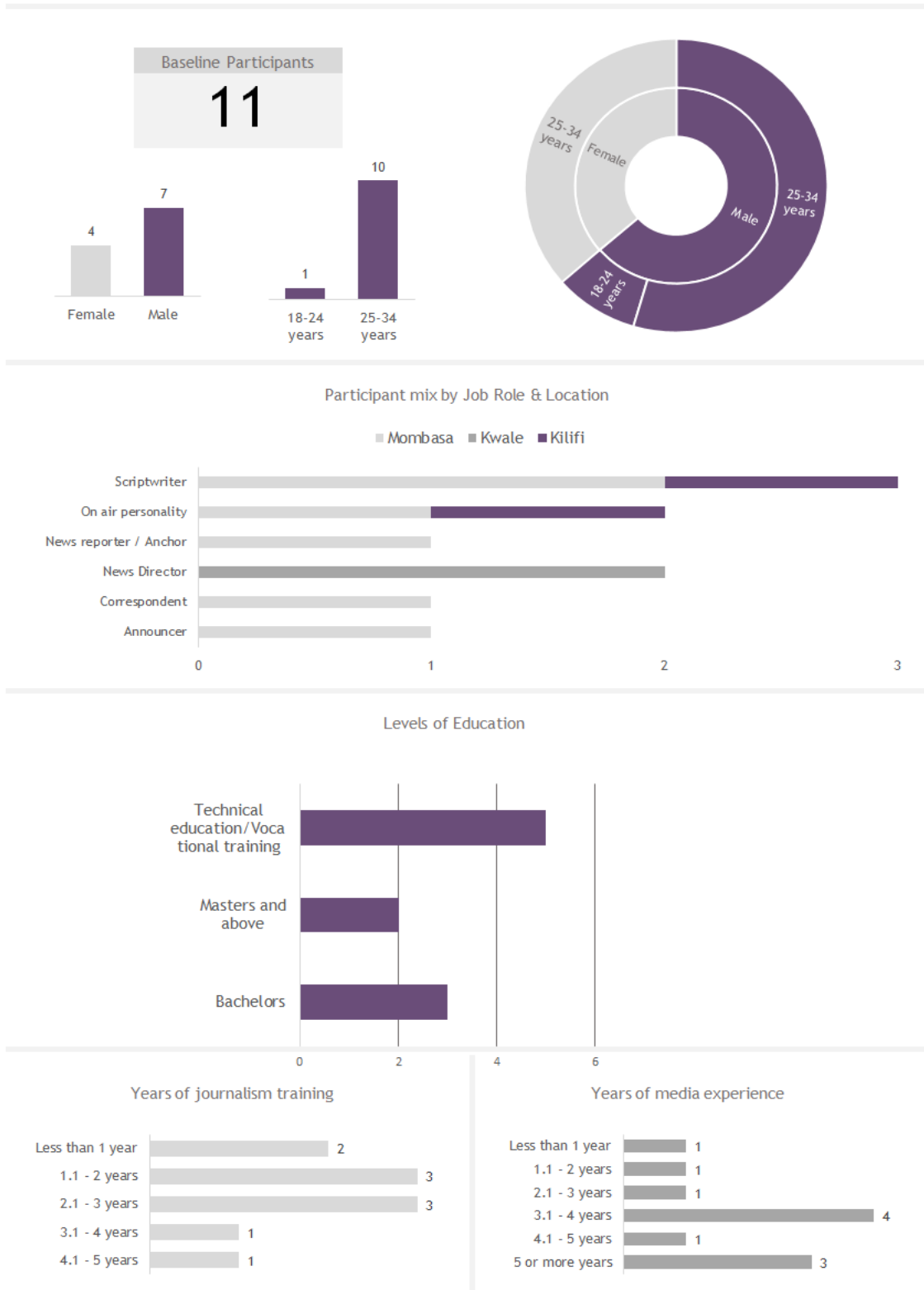


Figure 25: Demographic data of radio training delegates (11 respondents from 24 delegates)

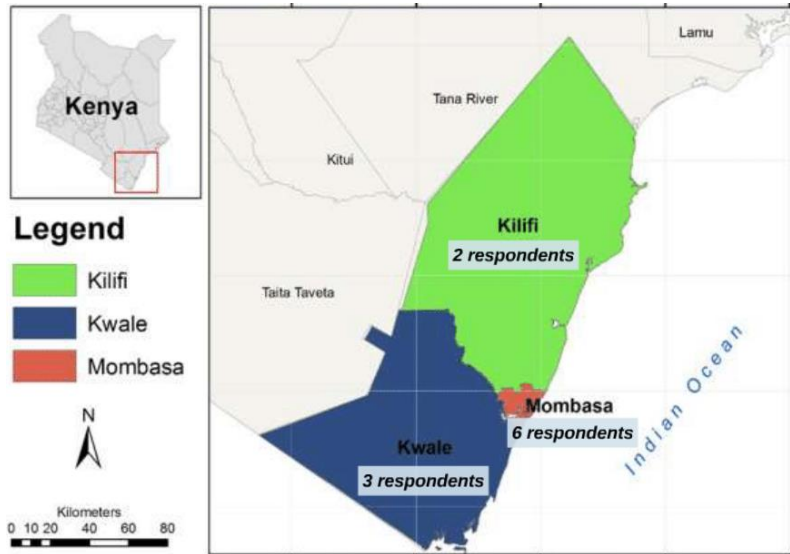


Figure 26: Respondents to Radio Training Evaluation Survey by County - Location of Kwale, Mombasa and Kilifi Counties (Original Map Source: Ogega et al. 2016)

The Communications Manager specifically targeted small, locally produced and broadcasted radio stations which were *'influential amongst communities on the Coast'* – within this group, though, the training attracted a diversity of interest. The figures above show that 10 of the 11 respondents were between 25 and 34, including 4 women and 7 men, representing 10 radio stations in 3 counties. Delegates represented a broad range of educational attainment, with nearly half of delegates (5 out of 11 people) having no university education and others having completed Masters-level qualifications and higher (2 out of 11 people). There was also a wide spread of experience, from those with only 1 or 2 years' experience (2 out of 11 people) to those who had worked in media for more than 5 years (3 out of 11 people). This range demonstrates both the broad-based appeal and relevance of the training but also underlines one of the challenges that RUSI had to overcome in their design: providing content which accommodates those new to media and those who are highly experienced.

A similar diversity is shown in the roles held by delegates, with scriptwriters, on air personalities, announcers and news directors taking the training together. One clear finding from the focus group held afterwards and the interviews conducted by evaluators was that whilst the classroom training was described as relevant to all stations represented, it was most relevant and had the clearest ongoing impact for those professionals in directorial, reporting, management and scriptwriting roles. The RUSI team are already considering a greater focus around this for future iterations of the training.

A clear theme from the focus group and interview data was the relevance of the themes of conflict-sensitive journalism, terrorism and violent extremism to the work of radio professionals. There are multiple references to the desire of stations to cover gang violence, extremism and terrorism in a more sensitive way and the barriers involved in doing so, most notably knowing how to reach and interview people from 'marginalised' groups, especially young people. This was echoed in the interviews at the radio station in Mombasa which had chosen to send two of their team to be trained because terrorism was already a central feature of their coverage but no one at the station had ever received training on the topic. There were concerns within this station that their coverage beforehand was not accurate enough and that there was a general lack of confidence in covering terrorism and violent extremism, leading to them consulting with only or mostly with security services on these stories. Across the data there are multiple mentions of the relevance of the notion of 'sensitive coverage' and of the centrality of gangs, violent extremism, Al-Shabaab and terrorism generally– all themes which reflect well on the relevance of the programme and the choice to set violent extremism within the frame of conflict sensitive journalism.

Following the training, delegates from 9 radio stations received mentorship visits from an experienced Kenyan media professional with over 20 years experience in print and broadcast journalism. Delegates were supported in developing specific stories that they felt linked to both the training and their stations'

coverage ambitions. From the 9 stations that took part in the mentoring, 12 stories were produced and aired. Aside from two pieces which lacked some coherence and leadership, the quality of the packages, as judged by the RUSI team and non-key expert, was very high, including one that was deemed potentially 'award winning'.

The topics chosen by the stations demonstrate the diversity of ways in which the knowledge from the training has been applied. Many packages linked directly to extremism and terrorism, including on *'the role of women in terrorism'* and *'families of youth who have joined terror groups'*. Others focused more on vulnerability, marginalisation and related issues such as *'youth and crime'*, *'drugs and youth'* and *'youth expression'*. Interesting, particularly given RUSI's research focus on the link between crime and violent extremism, several of the packages centred on the link between criminal gangs, youth and terrorism including *'Criminal Gangs and Al-Shabaab'* and *'jobless youth entering gangs and terror groups'*. This diversity of topics indicates that the training has been effective in communicating the links between violent extremism, terrorism and a range of community issues such as crime, marginalisation and the voice of young people. This, again, is largely supportive of the inclusion of conflict-sensitive journalism as a central frame within the training: a frame which, in part, aims to demonstrate the complexity and interlinked nature of conflict issues.

Interviews with those involved demonstrate a range of logistical hurdles in the process of mentoring, including some stations not having enough funding to cover travel expenses for reporters, lots of difficulties in communication and coordination of visits resulting in wasted trips and a lack of clear leadership for some stations. It could be argued that some of these challenges are to be expected in any new mentoring programme: it is unrealistic to expect the same level of success across such a diverse set of busy organisations.

The most challenging barrier, however, appears to have been in working with the government owned stations which, from interviews and management reports, have a much higher degree of bureaucracy and more control and caution over editorial decisions. The stories developed within these stations each needed the approval of many more authorities before they were allowed to air. When related back to the concept of challenging and changing structural factors, however, there is perhaps a strong argument to be made for working with these stations more in the future, despite the barriers, in order to influence government coverage of issues from the ground up. It is clear, though, that change may often be slower and require more effort than with privately run/independent stations.

From the number of professionals reached, mentoring visits provided and radio packages developed, it is clear that the implementation of the mentoring and training has been highly successful, despite the range of logistical and bureaucratic hurdles encountered. Data from a range of sources demonstrates that the content of the training and the nature of the mentoring was new to delegates, highly relevant to the roles of those attending and, particularly through the blending of conflict-sensitive journalism content, practical skills and technical production training, fitting to the context in which delegates operate.

Change

The first thing to note in a discussion of the impact of the training and mentoring for radio professionals is that RUSI have deftly invested in gathering a clear set of quasi-experimental quantitative 'change' data – as opposed to simply 'feedback' data – from training delegates which, for a pilot initiative on this small scale, is rare. Whilst the sample from the questionnaire is quite limited (n=11), the data is highly valuable. It provides not only a range of important evidence on the effects of the pilot training but allows a range of predictive insights to be developed on what the indicative impact would be if further investment were made into scaling-up the training in the future. Supporting this data, a focus group discussion was also held with station representatives, notes of which have informed the analysis below.

Delegates were asked to complete baseline questionnaires at the start of the training workshop and end-line questionnaires around 3 months after the face-to-face training had taken place. Complementing this data, the evaluation team spent time with the team at one participating station and interviewed the two radio trainers and other RUSI team members.

According to the STRIVE II theory of change, the radio training, along with other contact with the mainstream media, aims to enhance the representation of young people in mainstream media, based on the assumption that advocacy (in this case, training and mentoring), would contribute to institutional

change in 1) the representation of young people and 2) the way in which issues of violent extremism are covered. The analysis below demonstrates that the training has been successful in these areas. Moreover, the findings demonstrate that the training appears to have created positive change in more areas and ways than depicted in the STRIVE II theory of change.

Theme 1 – Change in knowledge and understanding of terrorism and violent extremism

One of the clearest findings from both the qualitative and quantitative data is that the training was highly successful in improving the knowledge and understanding of terrorism and violent extremism. The figures below show a positive trend of increase in knowledge (e.g. numbers of active groups) as well as indicating a broadening of delegates’ understanding of the complexity of terrorism and related issues.

Radio professionals' knowledge of terrorist and militant groups

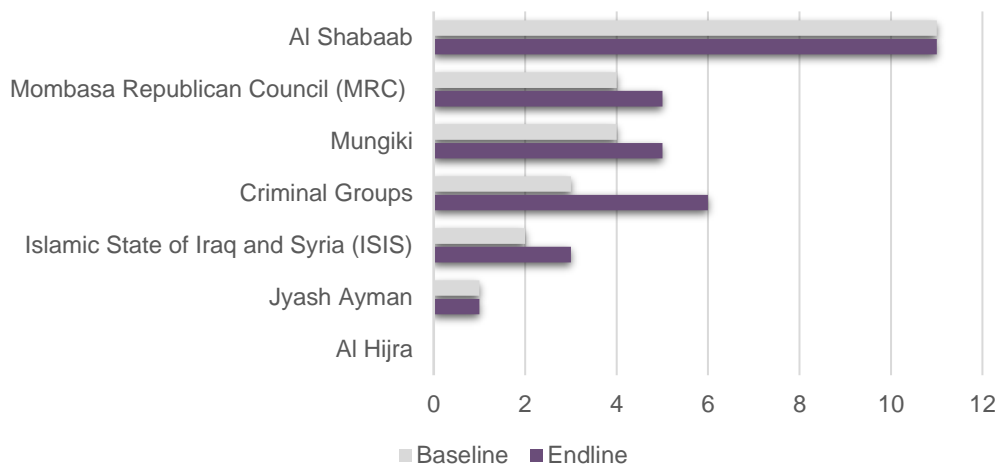


Figure 27: Radio professionals' knowledge of terrorist and militant groups

Reasons people engage in terrorist activity

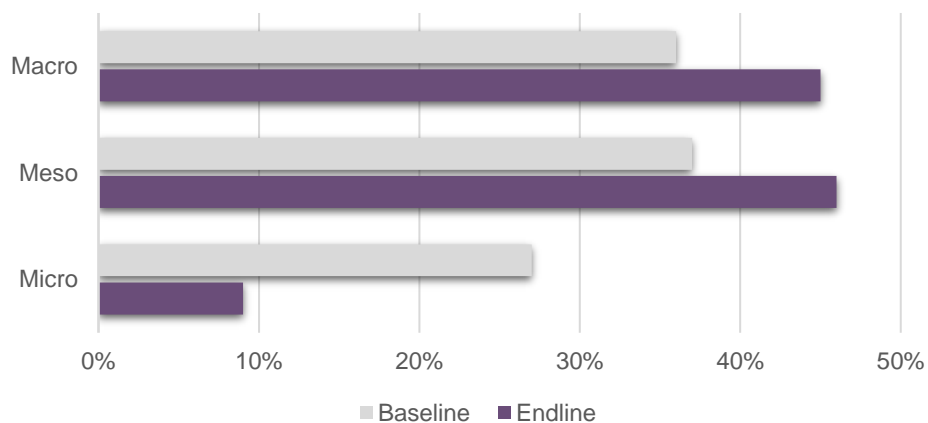


Figure 28: Radio professionals' understanding of why people engage in terrorist activity

Steps to address the problem of terror

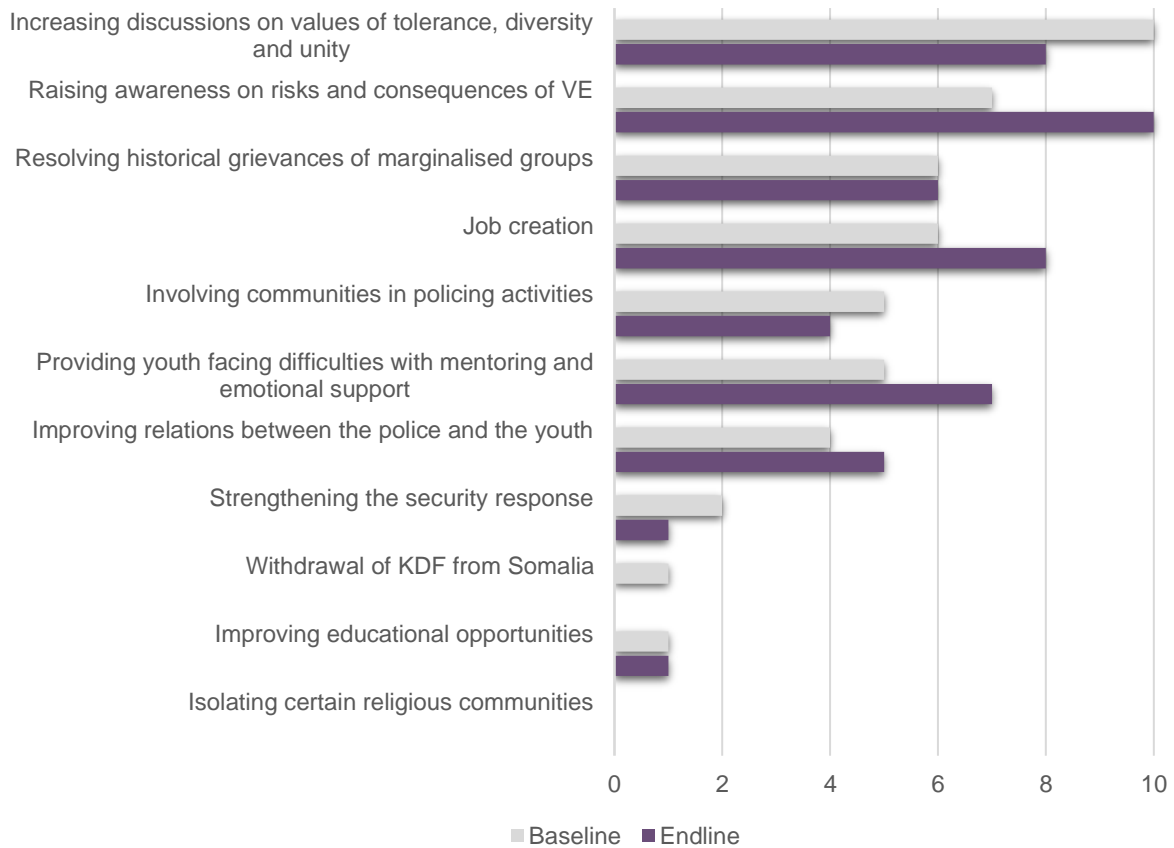


Figure 29: Radio professionals understanding of steps to address the problem of terrorism

The first of these graphs shows that all respondents were aware of Al-Shabaab prior to the training – unsurprising, given the prominence of the group’s activity in the coastal region (Lind, Mutahi and Oosterom 2017) – and that knowledge of other groups was low. This in itself indicates the high relevance of the training. Three months after the training, the data shows moderate increases in knowledge of other groups. Interestingly and positively, given RUSI’s ambition to communicate the complexity of terrorism and its intrinsic link with other societal issues, the biggest increase was in knowledge of the role of criminal groups in terrorist activity.

Linked with this, the second and third graphs demonstrate changes in the understanding of both what leads to and what counters terrorism. Respondents identified individual reasons why people may engage in terrorist activity which have been grouped into micro, meso and macro categories. Figure 28 **Error! Reference source not found.** demonstrates an overall shift from the importance of micro factors such as ‘frustration with life’ towards meso (e.g. lack of identity, sense of belonging and lack of positive role models) and macro reasons (e.g. sense of discrimination, lack of jobs). Figure 29 mirrors some of this change with moderate increases in the importance of job creation and the role of mentoring as steps towards addressing terrorism.

Both figures also demonstrate a change in respondents’ views on the role of police and security, with an increase in understanding of the role of revenge for police abuse as a reason for engaging and a decrease in the importance of the security responses in addressing terrorism. This links well to similar shifts within law enforcement resulting from the training in the Law Enforcement Result Area and shows the relevance of these messages. This also potentially shows that conflict sensitive journalism has the potential to bring those groups together more effectively in understanding how media and

communication can be supportive of peaceful relations generally and relations between law enforcement and the community specifically.

In the focus group and interview data, participants also noted a difference in perspectives of security and law enforcement and a difference in engagement with them:

'...they (training delegates) become more aware so they ask security better questions' (Focus Group Participant)

'We are confident in handling police now. We see their way of relating with the youth. They can be part of the situation – so we speak to them in that way now.' (Station Representative)

There are other increases in the identification of factors that relate to the humanisation of those that are vulnerable to being drawn into extremism (rather than viewing those individuals as a threat) such as *'the role of identity and sense of belonging'* and the need to raise *'awareness of risks of violent extremism'*. This aligns well with the shift towards meso and macro factors, generally fitting with a broader, more complex view of what causes terrorism. The finding is supported also by the focus group and interview data, with participants noting an increased understanding of the links between violent extremism and family issues, abuse, drug problems and lack of economic opportunity. This is likely a particularly desirable shift, supportive of some of the aims of conflict-sensitive journalism and the desire to foster a nuanced understanding of terrorism and the multiple pathways which can lead to radicalisation. It also, again, links closely with changes in views resulting from the Law Enforcement Result Area, with law enforcement delegates recognising that a shift in approach to CVE has also led to better policing in drug-related activity.

Taken together, the change in knowledge and understanding of terrorism shows a general broadening of professionals' perspectives on those topics, from issues of threat, security and policing towards issues of structural violence, vulnerability and the connection of these issues with wider societal factors and vulnerability.

Theme 2: Understanding of conflict-sensitive reporting

A central focus of the training and mentoring is equipping radio professionals with conflict-sensitive reporting skills in order to positively influence coverage of terrorism and violent extremism and, secondarily, to also encourage more sensitive and inclusive reporting in other areas such as crime and drug abuse. The questionnaire data presented in the figures below shows general increases in these skills following the training.

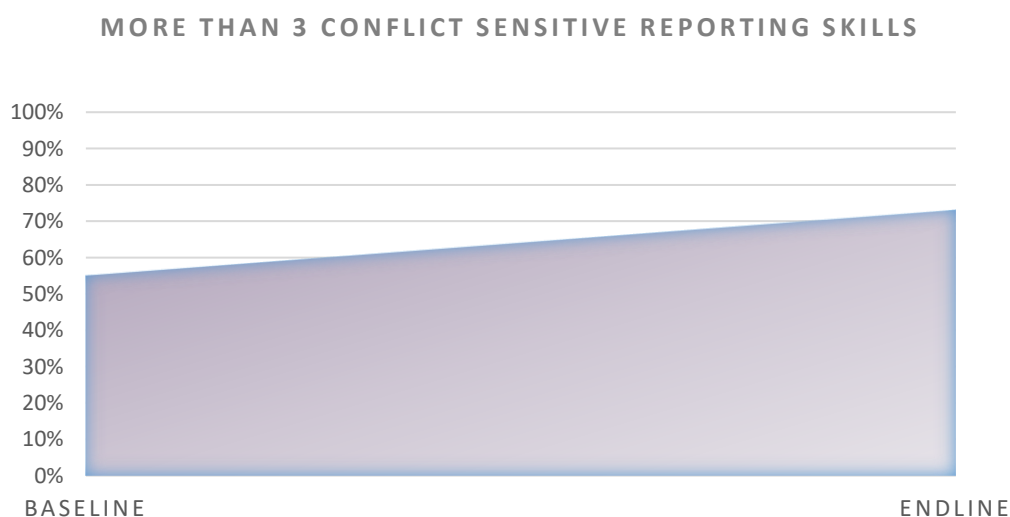


Figure 30: Participants' identification of conflict-sensitive reporting skills

IDENTIFYING GOOD CONFLICT SENSITIVE REPORTING: STORY 2 IS CONFLICT SENSITIVE

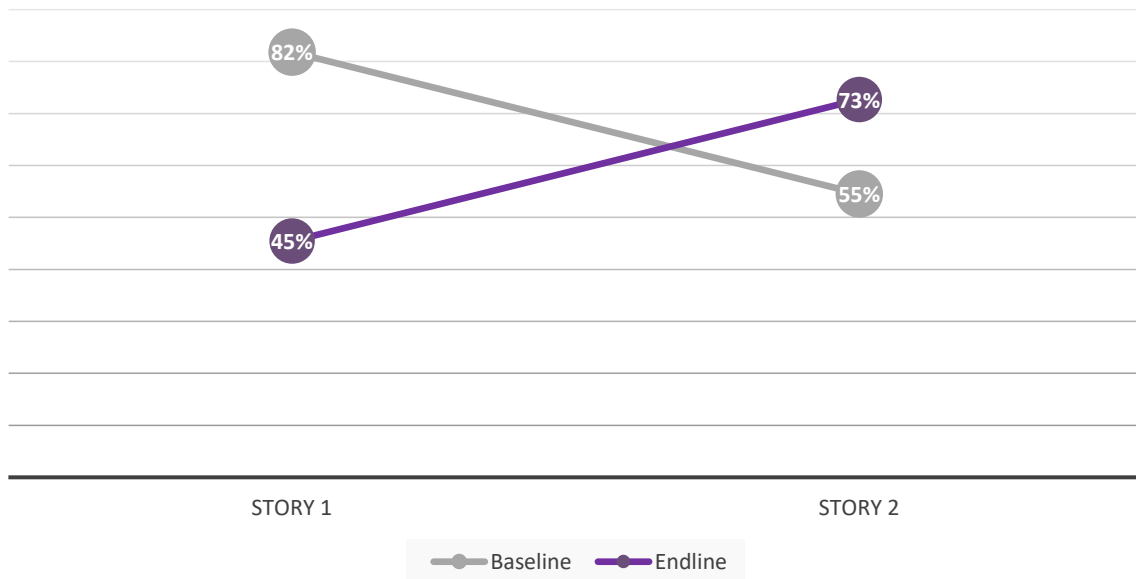


Figure 31: Identification of conflict sensitive reporting in 2 stories: Story 2 is more desirable conflict sensitive journalism.

Similar to the findings in Theme 1, Figure 30 shows a general increase in the ability of participants to identify conflict-sensitive reporting skills when selecting from a wider list of reporting considerations. Before the training, 55% of respondents identified 3 or more skills, rising to 73% afterwards. Looking more closely at the data, the biggest change was in the selection of the need to: ‘describe the events from points of different actors’; ‘avoid taking sides’; and ‘research the history and causes of conflict’.

Building on this positive trend, Figure 31 shows an increase in respondents’ ability to identify conflict-sensitive reporting in two example stories, with a clear swing towards Story 2 (the more conflict sensitive piece) and away from Story 1 following the training. This overall positive shift is echoed in the qualitative data, too:

‘The training has enabled me to gain the importance of talking to different people with different perspectives and doing research on VE and how to relate one story to another for example how do I relate terrorism attack in Islamabad and Nairobi’ (Focus Group Participant)

‘The training has enabled me to garner skills on how well to conduct a non-judgemental interview particularly on young people who have engaged in VE’ (Focus Group Participant)

Participants in the focus groups and interviewees spoke repeatedly about their increased awareness of the importance of covering terrorism and related themes from a greater number of perspectives, understanding the dynamics and about the importance of research within the development of stories. Across the data, there are clear indications that the training has been successful in increasing participants’ understanding of conflict sensitive journalism and in the value of this to their work. The next theme looks at the extent to which this has been applied in practice since the training.

Theme 3: The role of the media and changes in radio practice

The training also appears to have been somewhat successful in demonstrating the importance of the connection between radio journalism and the causes and context of terrorism, leading to a range of positive effects on professional practice. As a starting point, Figure 32 **Error! Reference source not found.** below demonstrates a general increase in awareness of ways that the media can better cover terrorism, particularly in the importance of contextual knowledge and impartiality.

Ways to improve coverage of terrorism

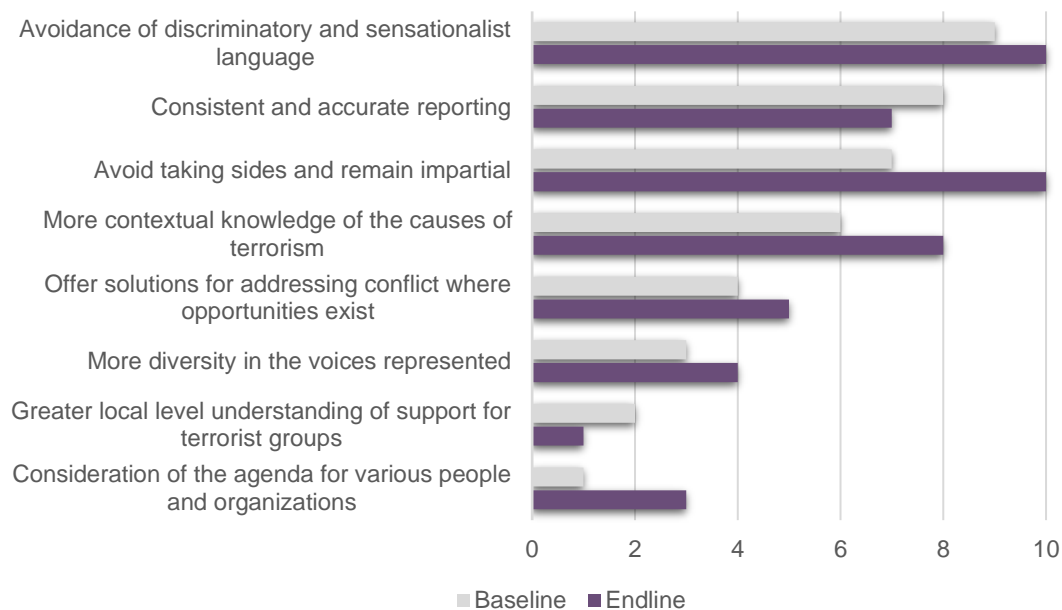


Figure 32: Participants understanding of ways to improve the coverage of terrorism

This increase demonstrates the value not just of learning the links between media and terrorism but also the value of the opportunity for self-reflection for radio professionals on their own practice and role in the context. Building on this, the focus group data gives some indication of the extent to which this enhanced awareness and new knowledge has been put into practice in delegates' work.

'I used to focus on security apparatus, nowadays I use what the community says and check against what the security says (Focus Group Participant)'

'Courtesy of the training, we now use several sources in VE stories and this helps us in producing other stories' (Focus Group Participant)

'Better content – better interviewing – given courage to talk to people involved in terrorism without them turning on you.' (Focus Group Participant)

These examples, and others contained within the focus group data, demonstrate that a combination of the knowledge from both the conflict sensitive aspect and content on terrorism and violent extremism have contributed to a desirable change in practice. The most common messages are that reporters are more confident in covering terrorism, including a wider array of voices in their stories, connecting terrorism with other themes such as crime and making efforts to speak to young people and community representatives in their local area more.

There was also discussion of the barriers in doing this, including interviewees asking for payment and challenges in finding people willing to speak about issues such as terrorism, resulting from a lack of trust in media institutions and mistrust of strangers from outside their local area. The role of the mentor, however, in supporting stories and setting up interviews for reporters with RUSI mentors or personal contacts appears to have been critical in translating the training knowledge into practical experience and professional confidence, allowing these challenges to be navigated effectively.

Radio Station Case Study

The evaluators were able to collect enough data for a limited case study on the effects of the training for radio professionals for one, government-owned radio station. The station had sent two reporters on the training, who had since left the station – one for a more senior job at a different station, the other had started their own station. Following the training, however, the two delegates delivered their own

training to their colleagues which meant that much of the knowledge and ethos of the training had been passed on and was still in use, despite their leaving. The effects of this on the station appear to have been profound in the following ways, illustrated through quotes from station representatives interviewed:

1. The use of **conflict sensitive journalism** approaches was apparent:

'Here we speak about being 'sensitive' to it now...It means looking at the different angles. Terrorism and crime and mothers and youth and drugs.'

2. Changes in the **coverage of violent extremism** and the relationship with the **police**:

'The reporting has definitely changed on violent extremism and crime generally. More voices represented from the community. We spend more time in the slums now. Our relationship with the police has definitely opened up too – we speak to them more'

3. New insights into **violent extremism and crime**:

'I believe there is a link between CVE and gangs – I learned that in the training. People might think that they're in criminal gangs, but they are radicalised. We've seen 12 year old boys in gangs. Doesn't want to see women. Religiously radicalised. 12-15 years old.'

4. **New programmes and content** related to violent extremism since engaging with the community more:

'We see a lot of parents harbouring their children – protecting them and pretending nothing is happening. I can't say specifically I know because they are hidden by their parents but it goes on. We did some programmes on that early this year.'

'We have spoken to a few people since who have experienced VE. Calls from people. One person: 'I knew my son was doing this. He was being trained to go to Somalia. Even the way he was treating me. I knew.' These stories come up much more now that we have more contact with the local people.'

5. New techniques and ways to overcome barriers to **community engagement**:

We speak to religious leaders more too on this since the training. I wouldn't interview a Sheik because I'm a woman. I get my main counterpart to do it and provide follow up questions that push them a bit. We talked about that in the training.

This case represents an important success story for the training: it shows how the mix of elements in the training have come together to change the way the station operates. Despite not attending the RUSI training themselves, interviewees were able to provide detailed insights into the content of the training and how it had affected the station's practice, demonstrating the potential for a train-the-trainer approach for future iterations. All interviewees noted that a refresher training would be greatly appreciated because 'the situation of violent extremism has changed a lot'.

Sustainability

There has clearly been a lasting impact from the training and mentoring for the radio stations. The impact with the greatest demonstrable longevity has occurred where it has been cascaded by trainees to their colleagues, through a 'train the trainer' approach. From interviews with the RUSI team, the case study station described above is the only one that is known to have done this so far (there may be others) and it has clearly led to sustainable impact. In future iterations, it would seem prudent for RUSI to encourage this practice and provide materials for delegates to enable this to happen more, in order to increase the multiplier effect to whole stations rather than just those that took part in the original training.

Logically, the training and mentoring shows significant promise in achieving a highly-positive cultural shift within radio stations. All signs point to an increase in reporters' engagement with a wider set of voices, particularly young people and members of law enforcement, logically leading to greater

representation of community and youth voices. There also appears to have been significant shifts in the understanding of the factors linked to terrorism and violent extremism which has had a knock-on effect on how those issues are covered, positively connecting the theory of change. This can be seen in the initial set of on-air packages developed through mentoring but also in features developed independently once the support ended. Conflict-sensitive journalism also appears to have successfully been adopted into the longer-term practices of some of the stations.

Terrorism and violent extremism are far from the mainstay of local radio journalism yet the results show a strong level of engagement with RUSI's content and support: low attrition rates between training and mentoring, high number of packages that have made it to air, etc. There are repeated mentions of the training being of a higher quality and relevance than other radio training from charities. Part of the sustainability of the programme appears to be related to the skills of the trainers and the comprehensive blend of training content which has provided a highly credible package that has been taken seriously by those involved, and has therefore had more sustainable impact.

Importantly, much of the data points to a relatively low starting base in knowledge of violent extremism, conflict-sensitive journalism, and, in some but certainly not all cases, some fundamental techniques of professional journalism. Insights from the qualitative data show not just a significant distance travelled from the baseline but a clear willingness and openness to these new and novel ideas and techniques. STRIVE II has found an audience which is largely untapped by the countering violent extremism 'world', very well-positioned to make a difference to the structural conditions and group dynamics affecting violent extremism and, importantly, willing to mobilise that position in line with the aims of the programme.

One factor which is prominent in the qualitative data is the value of bringing stations together to learn from each other, some of which would ordinarily be competitors or would have no reason to connect with each other. There was a good amount of discussion in the focus group and interviews of new contacts being made, stations collaborating and coordinating on pieces relating to community issues, jointly managing the use of sources for stories, etc. There is not enough data to make conclusive remarks on this point but it reflects very well on STRIVE II's ambition for sustainable impact. If stations are able to collaborate on stories and cover them in similar ways, there is a greater opportunity to establish new norms for the coverage of community and conflict stories, including those related to violent extremism. If a handful of stations change their practices to, for instance, include more youth voices, it is perhaps likely that more stations would follow that practice, creating a more sustainable impact across media institutions on the coast. This could be described as a positive externality – a wider, social benefit - from the programme which is wholly supportive of STRIVE II's theory of change.

The final reflection on sustainability relates to the question of whether there is scope and virtue in further training delivery with radio stations, were the pilot to be scaled-up. From discussions with RUSI, there are many more stations in Kenya which could productively be engaged, potentially alongside other media institutions (although there is no data on how the training might transfer to other mediums). Moreover, many of the stations that have been supported have requested further/refresher training from RUSI, some of which has already been delivered after the data collection period for this evaluation. It may be desirable to capitalise on the success of this pilot by involving former training delegates in future training sessions – including by using the packages developed as examples in the training. It could also be an option to look at the coverage of future events related to terrorism, counter terrorism and violent extremism from the stations that take part in order to understand how the coverage has changed and provide direct illustrations for the latest training delegates.

Strengthening the Voice of Young People

Alongside the training for radio professionals, STRIVE II has also delivered a range of youth expression interventions, based around the idea of strengthening the voice of young people. This can be viewed as an extension to the work of the Mentorship Result Area, with the Communications Manager and a number of external experts working with the mentors and, to a lesser extent, mentees to undertake a number of creative, exploratory processes focused on the lives of young people in Mombasa and Nairobi. The results of this have seen the development of a set of films and newspapers articles, covering a range of themes and shared on social media as well as a film festival and a film-screening event. Whilst these tangible outputs can be listed as an obvious measure of performance, it is clear from interviews and other data collected that the process benefits to those participating have been equally important – as was intended – and, in relation to a wider understanding of violent extremism,

revelatory about the context that the programme works within. These themes are explored further below.

Design and Implementation

Each element of this area of work was developed iteratively, with the programme responding to the experiences and needs of the participants at each stage. A range of challenges were encountered throughout the process; a need to innovate and adapt the course of the result area has prevailed. Much of the success of this area relates to the flexibility of the programme team to find a way forward and capitalise upon opportunities as they arose.

The implementation began with the delivery of two workshops for mentors on storytelling – called ‘Smart Stories’. The Communications Manager, working with an international journalist and Kenyan filmmakers, supported mentors and mentees to explore ‘*what was most personal and important to them – their life stories*’ (STRIVE II Progress Report). Over the course of these sessions, participants shared and developed stories and turned them into films using smartphones. Following this, RUSI held a film festival in Mombasa, showcasing the work of the participants, and providing an opportunity for mentors to vote for the most important films.

This first section was for a subset of mentors and mentees that were interested in this type of activity. A sample of mentors and mentees from this stage then worked with professional filmmakers in 1) a documentary developed in conjunction with Africa Uncensored – an independent, Kenyan media house and 2) Rich Studios, another production house, to produce 6 short films designed for social media.

The programme team’s reflections on this process demonstrate a number of challenges in supporting mentors to develop stories, particularly in effectively communicating the value and purpose of the exercise at the start:

‘Communicating the point of it was difficult; they struggled with understanding why their doing this.’ (RUSI Representative).

This is perhaps not surprising as the aims of the intervention are fairly abstract and layered: there is a complex change logic sitting between 1) mentors expressing experiences in films and 2) reducing radicalisation and recruitment to violent extremism. This complexity also led to other challenges, discussed below, and links to a wider point about the intervention’s ethos.

The RUSI team is clear that the ambitions of the programme are in *supporting* mentors and mentees to express and record their stories themselves rather than, as professional communicators, doing that on their behalf. This is a clear point of distinctiveness and a markedly different approach to that of the consortium partners. For example, KRC also have an area of work called ‘Preventive Communication’, part of which documents and shares stories of young, marginalised people. At first glance, the activities are similar: both programmes aim to document and share stories of beneficiaries which relate to violence and extremism. The underlying aims and means of achieving this are very different, though, and present an opportunity for limited comparison.

In their preventive communication work, KRC aims to ‘*ensure that KRC’s activities are seen by everyone*’ (KRC Team Member), targeting the ‘*county government and then our partners and the EU*’ (KRC Team Member). The stories are usually captured by KRC communication staff with beneficiaries, developed into short films or written accounts by KRC and shared on their website, social media and, where possible, traditional media. This could be described as a standard approach to external communications in project management (for example, see: Juliano 1995) – using KRC staff as ‘*information gatekeepers*’ (Tushman and Katz 1980) to showcase positive stories and raise awareness of the programme and its context.

RUSI’s approach, in contrast, does not focus on showcasing the programme or developing stories on the behalf of beneficiaries. Instead, it creates opportunities for participants to connect emotionally with themes in their lives, and to each other, in order to create stories that represent their experiences. During the process, participants shared experiences from their lives with a large group of peers which gradually formed the basis for stories, which then were made into films. At each stage, mentors and mentees were heavily involved in developing and sharing stories: a very different, more participatory approach to KRC’s.

'Mentees were challenged to delve into their experiences, hopes and fears, rather than repeating common complaints and narratives.' (RUSI Representative)

This quote demonstrates not just the process but the desire for more authentic narratives to emerge, based on experience and emotion. The outputs from the two programmes' communication activities are similar – both have sets of films and articles to share – but RUSI's design and implementation has emphasised 1) the benefits of individual expression and ownership and 2) the positive consequences of developing storytelling and filmmaking skills within the mentor and mentee populations.

The investment made in this process, reportedly (as the evaluators were not present), led to a range of personal and emotional issues being revealed within the group:

'We started off the day talking and we discussed issues in their community. We had a wall of local and personal issues. We turned it around and said everyone is going to stand up and say who is the most important person in their lives. 3 people cried. Tales of violence, suicide and much more. Lots of stuff was shared in that session. Even just that act of standing up. To talk to strangers in that bigger group. Out of that came lots of stories.' (RUSI Team Member)

Whilst facilitating discussions of this nature opens up the risk of emotional distress, (the programme has since added psychotherapeutic support for mentors and mentees) the opportunity to share these personal experiences and hear those of others is regarded as a significant success by the RUSI team and workshop participants, as explored further in the next section.

In relation to design and implementation, however, this point demonstrates the high degree of relevance of this emotional and communicative process for the participants. There are a number of references in the focus group data to the importance of communication and self-expression for mentors and mentees. For some mentors, the process was highly relevant to their relationship with mentees, enabling them to communicate more effectively with them:

'Some of the mentees do not know how to express themselves, they would keep inside of them many things which they have gone through, and understanding them was quite hard'. (STRIVE II Mentor)

Others spoke of the need for greater self-expression to process trauma and the challenges in safely communicating views and experiences of violent extremism:

'I fear talking about violent extremism for the fear that I could be arrested. In my community youths are being killed every day on the suspicion that they are allured to extremist groups such as the Al Shabaab. When you talk more about violent extremism, the government takes it the wrong way by believing that the exposee knows more about the subject and therefore could pursue you to get more information.' (STRIVE II Mentor)

These extracts demonstrate well the relevance and importance of providing opportunities for communication in a safe environment. The latter quote also shows how the implementation of this result area has allowed some mentors to recognise the link between this communicative element and countering violent extremism. This description and others in the focus group transcripts are essentially depicting a picture of either real or perceived government suppression of ideas – a known factor in increasing support for violent extremism worldwide. Providing the opportunity to tell stories well, accurately and from experience is clearly relevant to the aim of the programme and the lives of mentors and mentees who feel under threat.

The description above demonstrates well the complex and sensitive nature of the process that has been used and of the potential value in facilitating safe expression and developing communication skills. This process began very broad, involving lots of participants and ideas, and gradually a smaller group were selected who were most suited to developing and contributing to professional-standard films and newspaper articles.

In terms of tangible results, 1 documentary has been produced, based on the life stories of mentors and mentees and featuring them directly and over 30 short social media films made on smartphones were

also produced. Themes range from family conflict, drugs and unemployment to violence and radicalisation and videos feature mentors and mentees.

One of the clearest challenges has been in sharing and promoting the films. The documentary was designed to be aired on national Kenyan television, an aim stated in the contract with the documentary makers, Africa Uncensored. There were a series of blocks in getting airtime, though, primarily in the need to pay for both commercial space, an inversion of the more standard approach of media companies paying for content. This meant that the programme was not able to satisfy this goal – a goal which was perhaps unrealistic given the barrier to access and the scale of the project. Instead, the documentary has been primarily shared on social media, both in full and in shorter clips. All films have been promoted by Chemsha Bongo, an existing platform for youth on Facebook with a modest following of 772 fans (Life Mtaani social media film campaign report), and by Africa Uncensored through online platforms.

The social media report on this activity shows that the ‘paid promotion’ Facebook campaign for launching and sharing the films which took place between March 11th and June 23rd 2019 21,700 ‘engaged users’ (users who click on the page to watch a video, comment, share or like the content) and, overall, 35,900 minutes of film was watched. Much of this was achieved through age- and geographically-focused promotion, targeting 14 – 36 year-olds within a 40km radius of Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, Eldoret, Thika and Meru. The social media report concludes that the overall reach and engagement rates were relatively high, in part due to paid promotion and the concentrated release of content (lots of visual content was released in a short time period). It notes, however, that the films did not generate the level of discussion and conversation on Facebook desired by the organisers; it is posited that this is due to the emotional nature of the content and the nature of people’s interaction with Facebook. It is very difficult to judge what success looks like for a campaign of this size as there are no set benchmarks and social media popularity appears highly fickle and somewhat unpredictable. On one hand, this element of the programme is small in staffing and budget (e.g. €720 was allocated for paid sponsorship on social media) and on the other, the campaign was able to use a range of professionally-produced/supported content on topics produced by and for young people. Without explicit expectations (e.g. targets), the most effective means by which to judge success in a campaign of this size is the expectations of those involved in its design, commissioning and delivery. From interviews with those involved at RUSI, overall the view is that there was a good level of focused reach on Facebook but that the videos did not generate the desired level of qualitative impact relative to the magnitude of the aims in the theory of change and have not had enough effect or prominence beyond the initial paid promotion period (i.e. through organic sharing once the paid promotion ended).

Alongside the film-making, 6 mentors were chosen to receive writing coaching. Two of these were chosen to work with editors from mainstream newspapers (*The Nation* and *The Standard*), with the aim of ‘portraying the life and viewpoint of Ghetto youth to middle class Kenya’ (*RUSI Representative*). Key to success in this has been the position and power of the editors in ensuring that the articles could be published, both in relation to access and writing quality. This resulted in the publishing of a series of commentaries on a range of issues, including employment and relationships, and a series of short fictional stories about a young woman drawn into violent extremism. These contributions have had very limited promotion on social media but have been given significant profile on the respective websites and will remain available for the foreseeable future.

There are repeated references in the interview data to this process taking longer than expected and producing less in relation to volume of outputs than expected. As explored further below, the process has been successful in supporting expression but far less successful in utilising this expression to create change in any great volume. This, however, is not only to be expected by a pilot of this size but is also an ineffective mechanism through which to judge impact. The entire ethos of the approach is to ultimately prioritise self-expression over efficiency and output. Ultimately, all results from this element of the programme should be caveated by RUSI’s decision to take a more complex, meandering and participatory approach.

Change

Relative to the Mentorship and Law Enforcement Result Areas, there is limited data available on the impact of this element of the programme partly due to the much lower number of participants. There are transcripts from two focus groups facilitated by the programme team, one with mentors during the film festival and another with policy influencers immediately following the documentary screening in

Nairobi. There are also elements of the RUSI-held focus groups with mentees that cover the communication activities and analysis from social media. Added to that is interview data with mentors who took part in the training, including one individual who took part in the writing coaching. Based on this data, the discussion of impact is split into two parts: impact from the process and impact from outputs, illustrating the quite different levels of impact achieved and expected from this element of STRIVE II.

Impact from the Process

As introduced in previous sections, the process of expression through storytelling proved to be an emotional and seemingly cathartic process for many involved. The early part of the process for mentors allowed the sharing of personal experiences within a group setting. It focused not on the labels and common narratives that applied to mentors and mentees (e.g. marginalised youth) but on individual moments and stories from their past – there was a strong focus on avoiding activist stances within this process to allow other forms of expression to emerge. This approach appears to have resonated well with mentors, introducing self-expression and self-communication as valuable, standalone activities.

‘When you express yourself it makes someone else to understand you, and it also helps one to know, (depending on what they are expressing) that what they are going through is not experienced solely by them.’ (STRIVE II Mentor)

‘Someone gets to expose their inner thoughts to the world, and hence enable individuals to relate to what is being said.’ (STRIVE II Mentor)

These quotes demonstrate the connections made by mentors between the expression opportunities during the training and the psychosocial benefits of having one’s experience, perspective and trauma heard by another person. The use of storytelling in this way is a common approach in psychological therapy. It is widely accepted that around one-third of the benefits of psychological therapy, regardless of the type of intervention, are related to the experience of telling one’s story and having it understood and accepted by someone else. There are indications of a range of limited, emotional and personal benefits for mentors which would be expected from early therapeutic work, such as the normalisation and rationalisation of challenging experiences.

‘It allows one to put yourself out there, and boost your self-realisation, doesn’t have that courage. Boosts your capacity, your strength, your character. people can identify with some of the challenges and struggles that one goes through.’ (STRIVE II Mentor)

Furthermore, this form of external processing in group settings can, if facilitated correctly, support the development of a shared phenomenology (the way in which we come to a common understanding of our environment), allowing people to integrate the emotional experiences of others into their understanding of the world.

Whilst the data is limited, there is some evidence of the development of common values and narratives with the groups from the sharing and recording of stories. The data reveals how mentors have learned much more about their peers’ personal stories through the self-expression, film-making and film-screening processes. Traumatic experience with suicide, violence, substance abuse, grief and mental ill health were prominent in the data from mentors when talking about the film-making and self-expression, some of which were recorded or expressed in the final outputs. Focus group participants also talked commonly about the values they felt were important, including the importance of care, empathy and trust in developing stories because these values are seen to be lacking in wider society.

Facilitator: *‘What is the most important value when you are doing the films?’*

Mentor 1: *‘Care. I think it is an important feeling when one knows that he or she is cared for. In our environment now as it is, most youth feel that no one really cares for them and essentially it is the reason why most of them become violent and even join illegal groups.’*

Mentor 2: *‘Trust: There is a bigger gap between the Christian Youth and Muslim Youth from where I come from in Kwale. This has been catalyzed by the lack of trust between the two sides.’*

The sharing of traumatic and emotional experiences and the building of common values and narratives can lead – and appears here to have led – to the recognition of both issues and opportunities for change. It provides a way of forging group identity and also reveals the vulnerability and challenges experienced in the lives of mentors and mentees. This process of self-expression, feeling understood and development of shared norms and values is critical in the creation of group and social identities. This relates directly to the theory of change's depiction of group dynamics. The assumption is that the creation of stronger networks for at risk youth will act as a deterrent to the attractiveness of the group dynamics of violent extremist organisations. Self-expression is a micro-level process which aids the emotional and identity-based connection to those new networks: although much more data is required to verify those psychological processes within mentor and, crucially, mentee circles.

For some, the role of group dynamics sits awkwardly within the theory of change: *'we don't really do group dynamics – I'm not sure what that is'* (RUSI representative). The change logic becomes clearer, however, when this result area is set in the context of the dynamics of recruitment and radicalisation. One of the most recent studies of extremist group dynamics underlines the specific role of self-expression in recruitment to online groups. Regardless of the extremist focus (e.g. far right or religious fundamentalist), the sharing of personal and traumatic experiences within a group setting is a common and critical factor in the early stages of recruitment to violent and non-violent extremism. Ebner (2020) found that extremist groups, purposefully or otherwise, create a space for people to share experiences, from loss of family members to common relationship problems, and use this to build solidarity and group identity in online networks. Ebner notes that in a range of extremist groups...

'When feelings of loneliness and insecurity are blamed on external circumstances like political, cultural and societal trends, the real trouble starts. Personal struggles turn into collective ones, and collective conflicts become personal (2020: 179)

STRIVE II's use of self-expression likely has similar effects on forging group identity but, crucially, there is an overt focus on avoiding activism. The training keeps the focus away from sweeping generalisations, societal trends and groups in society and firmly on the individual experience, critical thought and other areas in which the most immediate change can take place. The programme seems to deftly avoid attributing blame for these experiences and instead focuses on empathy and shared understanding. In this respect it is training mentors to provide positive and constructive group dynamics by using self-expression to process challenging experience and vulnerability which could otherwise be capitalised upon by recruiters to violent extremism.

There is a substantial caveat in this analysis, though. Without more revelatory and detailed data collected during the process, the effects of this are somewhat speculative. Whilst there are specific questions that relate to the preventive communications elements of the programme within the mentee focus group discussions held by RUSI, the answers are quite limited around aspects that relate to the STRIVE II theory of change, such as group-level dynamics. For example:

Facilitator: *'In your opinion, what were the reasons for developing such films?'*

Mentee: *'They help us in being able to learn on how to depend on ourselves'*

From answers such as this, it is clear that there has been a positive effect but there remains a dearth of detail and depth in the data (which is to be expected given the relative volume of activity and iterative style of design). For future iterations, there are two important gaps in evidence which would add rigour to the analysis:

- to what extent do mentors feel that self-expression has facilitated a stronger group of mentors on which mentees can rely; and
- to what extent have mentors used self-expression techniques with mentees following the training. There is good data on the positive effects of the mentorship programme generally but less is known about the specific contribution of self-expression within those group dynamics. Any future iteration of the programme should put processes in place to understand that variable.

The process of sharing and listening to personal experiences, learning how to structure and record those stories and presenting them to peers during a film festival appears to have also enabled the group of mentors to consider how their self-expression and storytelling can be effective tools in creating positive change for themselves, their mentees and their community. Many of those in the focus group expressed the positive effects of the training:

'It's made me more outspoken and confident. I can talk in front of tons of people. It's made me a better person.'

'I've gained experiences that I would never have had. I've been on TV and I've been part of the TV series.'

'I would like to use the acquired skills to capture news-stories within my own neighbourhood, and try to get the perspectives of the residents regarding a particular story trending in the community.'

Overall, the training appears to have been successful in communicating the link between self-expression and personal and social change and there are good indications from the examples provided that this has led to positive impact for many involved.

Finally, there are a number of examples of mentors discussing the acquisition of technical skills in storytelling, including being able to structure and articulate ideas more effectively, script writing, the use of recording and editing equipment and targeting stories to audiences through the use of language. An increase in these skills effectively underpins the ability of mentors to use self-expression and storytelling as tools in the future: better storytelling likely leads to more positive impact. This increase in skills has also led to a number of positive externalities, including mentors using film-making skills in the marketing of their private businesses.

Impact from Outputs

As presented above, the films and newspaper articles produced in this result area have been impacted by challenges in distribution in traditional and social media. There are some indications of limited impact, though.

As a starting point, editors from the highest-circulation independent newspaper (The Daily Nation) and one of the largest newspapers in Kenya (The Standard; 48% market share) worked with mentors from deprived areas to develop two sets of articles on themes that are underrepresented in mainstream Kenyan media. The newspapers, mentors and topics were carefully selected by RUSI based on the team's knowledge of the audience, mentors' skillsets and potential narratives respectively. The content of these pieces reflects the views of the authors and their peer groups and each present a set of ideas which aim to challenge stereotypes of young people, including this example from a piece published in The Standard.

'It's [money is] a means to the good life that we all want, young and old. But, I feel like it is the most misunderstood fact about the youth – the assumption that all young people want quick cash, flashy chains and public attention. Many of us want independence. We want to fend for ourselves and our family rather than relying on handouts. And as most youth discover once they hit adulthood, dependency and expectation are the root of all conflicts.' (October 6th, 2018)

It is important to note that the completion of this process is a substantial success for the programme and, much like with the radio training, points to the idea that a future relationship between the mentorship programme and traditional media agencies in Kenya has the potential to enhance the representation of young people.

The documentary film was shown to a set of policy influencers whose reaction to the film was wide-ranging and overwhelmingly positive. The focus group transcript shows that there is a recognition that young people are effectively discriminated against in mainstream society and that this is upheld by the lack of positive representation of youth in the media:

'[The youth is]...one of the sectors that is marginalized as far as the media is concerned but it's also a reflection of the poor journalism that is going on, poor reporting that is going on in the name of journalism. Really the critical questions are not being asked' (Focus Group Participant)

'in the northern Kenyan, anytime you see youth, is banditry, radicalization, its Al Shabaab, it all every negative thing, but they are people in those communities who have chosen to look at their culture and embrace it in different way. Choose different rites of passage and it's never portrayed to encourage them that what you are doing is something that is acceptable... Especially when these guys are radicalized... some of them are given amnesty... those are the success stories. I don't know even how you have a face to come back after everything, that takes courage.'

This demonstrates well the relevance of the focus on individual stories and the programme's ambitions around youth representation.

The discussion also shows that whilst many in the group were familiar with the issues covered – unemployment, drug abuse, poverty – and had worked with young people in official roles, they noted a clear difference in how the young people were depicted in the film and that the problems faced are severe and enduring but perhaps not intractable:

'There's hope, with the right intervention. There's hope just give people a chance and that might make a difference between the path they were taking and maybe make about turn and go back in the right direction'

'he said at the end, something like God shining his torch, that really strike a chord with me, because but was gap of the structures that are meant to serve this young people, so there's a gap in even waiting for these structures to work in your favour'

The content and angle of the film appears to have been successful in representing young people as complex individuals with agency who can be supported to improve their lives, moving away from the apparently-standard representation of youth as idle and responsible for social problems. One caveat to this impact is that the focus group participants, by virtue of their voluntary involvement, are likely to possess biases which make them more likely to interpret the film in this way. This is not to take away from the impact but to illustrate that, were this film shown to a wider, more representative group of policy makers, the effects may be different.

There are clear limitations to the impact of both the newspaper articles and the films. There are only a handful of articles and stories published and these have not been given much profile on social media so it is unclear how many times they have been read. The newspaper websites both have a high volume of daily hits but there is no data on reactions to the pieces from the readership. It is possible that the articles may have made readers think differently, temporarily, about young people and their context but this will not have *'moved the needle'* (RUSI Representative) in youth representation overall. Similarly, the documentary and short films show great promise in their ability to affect positively opinions on the role and plight of young Kenyans but the scale of their distribution is simply not large enough to be able to claim structural influence. This was, however, never likely to be the outcome from a small-scale pilot in which the main priority was the expression itself rather than the impact of that expression.

Overall, given the scale of the project and its relative weight in comparison to other areas of the programme, the impact from the Strengthening the Voice of Young People element demonstrates significant promise to effect change if the appropriate scale and distribution was achieved in future iterations. Crucially, the specific approach to youth expression and the nature of content appear to be critical factors in the creation of change.

Sustainability

As introduced above, one of the biggest barriers to sustainable, long-term and societal impact from this element of the programme is 'scale' – a likely finding for a small-sized, pilot project. The main question in the discussion of sustainability, then, is 'if the project's scale increased significantly, would the desired impact depicted in the theory of change be realised?'

It is clear from the focus group data that scale is not the only challenge. There are many competing interests within the traditional media landscape that limit the articulation of young people in this nuanced, individual and balanced manner. As with most modern journalism, sensationalism and the competition for readership and website traffic, driven by an advertising-based business model, are likely to be counter to the type of output produced by STRIVE II mentors and mentees. It is likely that the articles published in The Standard received only a fraction of the attention as headlines about crime, terrorism, violence and gangs which depict young people in a negative, unhelpful light. Similarly, the experience of the programme shows that getting access to national television spots presents another range of structural and ethical barriers and influencing trends on social media in any substantive and positive way requires significant resource and timing.

Despite these obvious limits, this project of very limited scale was successful in having two major media outlets publish collections of mentors' work. It did so through the individual relationships between editors and RUSI staff, allowing the building of trust between the organisations. This approach is known as 'facework' (Kroeger 2017): the process of building trust between institutions through interpersonal connections. RUSI has shown a clear ability in gaining access through effective facework which perhaps shows a potential route for greater impact in the future. If RUSI can establish longer-term relationships with media institutions, this could lead to ready-made routes to impact.

To increase reach and sustainability, there is perhaps an argument to suggest that RUSI could achieve more through better partnerships. Collaboration with the film-making agencies has led to the production of films as intended but has not achieved the widespread distribution and showcasing that would have given more sustainable impact. Perhaps finding organisations within Kenya that have more effective distribution approaches, similar values and existing relationships within mass media could support this. Some active NGOs specialise in the production of 'disruptive' films depicting the lives of young people which have far more substantial and relevant online presences than RUSI, film-makers and social media groups partnered with⁹. The data available demonstrates that STRIVE II's strengths in this field are the mentorship programme, the broad and deep understanding of violent extremism and the niche approach to communications content. Perhaps there is scope for those strengths to be supported by the different capabilities of other organisations.

There is a small set of mentors who are trained in film-making and writing. Part of the sustainability of the programme rests in this group using those skills after the programme. Whilst there are anecdotes of mentors and mentees using their film-making skills in business ventures (including one individual offering wedding videography), mostly the skills learnt are not used by the mentors. This raises the question of whether or not there should be more sustainable routes for the mentors to follow through support in the provision of internships, placements and job opportunities. One idea which came up during interviews was to negotiate voluntary placements at radio stations and newspaper agencies for a select group of mentors. The evaluators are unsure of the viability of this but, in theory, it would support the findings around the sustainability of the mentorship programme.

Finally, as introduced earlier, the sustainability of the self-expression element relates most pertinently to the issue of whether or not (and how) the approaches to self-expression are used by mentors with mentees after the training. There is not currently enough evidence to state if the positive benefits of self-expression are being transferred into the mentor-mentee relationship but all signs point to the idea that this would be highly beneficial to the mentorship programme.

⁹ See, for example, GirlEffect who specialise in female youth empowerment through technology, media and youth brands, including media content on the experience of young people in East Africa. Their estimated reach through mobile platforms is 12.7 million people worldwide (GirlEffect Website). This is by no means an endorsement of their work but one example of the skillsets that might be available through partnership.

Preventive Communication: Lessons Learned

The following is a set of lessons taken from the analysis above and the data available that relate to the wider practice of preventing and countering violent extremism based on the experience and performance of STRIVE II within the Preventive Communication Result Area.

- The approach to designing the radio training in an inclusive manner, consulting with prospective beneficiaries ahead of training design was a critical factor in the training's success.
- The radio training has clearly demonstrated the value bringing together content on CVE and conflict-sensitive journalism as well as providing a range of technical skills training for radio professionals.
- There have been very similar shifts in knowledge, attitudes and behaviours between radio professionals and law enforcement despite undergoing different types of training. This suggests the widespread applicability of the CVE messages of the programme as a whole to those representing the structure of society, particularly in humanising young people and the benefits of deeper community engagement.
- There is a good degree of evidence and logic behind the connection between self-expression and self-communication within this Preventive Communication context and building the resilience to the group dynamics of violent extremist. Most importantly, the focus on individual stories, critical thought and the avoidance of labels and generalisation is critical the project's success.
- The self-expression activity has been effective in revealing the severity of the challenges and trauma experiences by both mentors and mentees in the STRIVE II programme, with common themes around grief, violence, abuse, criminality, social isolation and suicide.
- Scale is a significant barrier to the sustainability of impact from the preventive communication strand, but also not the only barrier. There are a range of structural blocks that stand in the way of shifting the representation of youth in both social and traditional media.
- One method which has been able to work around this has been the development of professionals relationships with media professionals which could later lead to more established institutional relationships and more effective routes in to traditional media.
- Whilst there are distinctive reasons for RUSI's leadership of a project of this kind, there are limits to the role of an organisation which does not specialise in media and communication. Success may be increased through a better choice of partners, particularly around increasing the visibility of outputs.

Research Result Area

The Research Result Area is focused on enhancing the evidence base in key areas through developing and disseminating academic research on conflict and violent extremism in Kenya. The research programme has covered:

- The role of women in violent extremism
- The relationship between clan conflict and recruitment in North Eastern Kenya
- The relationship between land conflict and radicalisation in the South Coast
- The relationship between violent extremism and violent crime

This section discusses the design and implementation of the programme of research and its dissemination and looks at the change and sustainability created through the result area, based on the academic outputs generated. Data comes from a range of interviews with RUSI representatives, external researchers and partner organisation representatives (e.g. donor organisations) intended to be 'users' of the research.

Design and Implementation

Over the course of STRIVE II's delivery to date, the programme has produced research in all four themes and has published papers in the first 3 areas, with a paper on land conflict and radicalisation on the coast set to be published in June 2020. Overall, STRIVE II had been successful in meeting a primary objective of the result area: the production and publication of research in four key themes.

The RUSI team has had three overlapping roles during much of this process: first as commissioners and developers of research, second as users, translators and disseminators of knowledge and third as researchers themselves, particularly when access to fieldwork settings was granted to RUSI and not to partner research institutes. These roles relate to the multiple objectives of the result area in not only conducting new research but developing sustainable violent extremism research capacity in Kenya and enabling the knowledge generated to influence CVE policy and practice. The following activity has been delivered.

Women's involvement in violent extremism

A compendium on women's involvement in violent extremism was officially launched in June 2018 at the Rift Valley Institute in Nairobi at a seminar attended by over 50 representatives from civil society, donors, governments and research organisations. The compendium contains 4 articles based on primary research and one review of literature¹⁰, shown below.

- Impact of Violent Extremism and Recruitment of Spouses on Widows in the Coastal Region of Kenya.
- Understanding the role of Gender Relations in Radicalising and Recruiting Young Muslim Women in Higher Learning Institutions in Kenya.
- Coastal Muslim Women in the Coast of Kenya: Narrating Radicalization, Gender, Violence and Extremism.
- Women and Recruitment in the Al-Shabaab Network: Stories of Women being recruited by Women Recruiters in the Coastal Region of Kenya.
- Analytical Framing of Violent Extremism and Gender in Kenya: A Review of the Literature.

The compendium was commissioned by RUSI in partnership with the French Institute of Research in Africa (IFRA). The review article was written by two STRIVE II team members and the 4 pieces of primary research were led by Kenyan academics from Pwani University (2), United States International University-Africa (1) and Technical University of Mombasa (1). The primary research is largely qualitative, based on interviews, focus groups and ethnographic data collection with those affected by (e.g. widows of male recruits) or in close proximity to (e.g. students at learning institutes identified as recruitment hotspots) violent extremist organisations. As well as being hosted on the RUSI website, the five articles have been published in a special issue of an established, peer-reviewed academic journal:

¹⁰ The full compendium can be found at: <https://rusi.org/rusi-news/new-compendium-research-gender-and-violent-extremism-kenya>

The African Review. The special issue was edited by two STRIVE II team members and the Director of IFRA.

RUSI's partnership with IFRA came as a result of common interests and timeframes between the STRIVE II programme and IFRA's project focused on local trajectories of religious radicalisation. Both institutes were interested in exploring the links between gender and radicalisation in Kenya. Funding and expertise from the programmes were pooled and, as a result, RUSI were able to commission and guide twice as many research projects as was originally intended. As explored below, the collaboration with IFRA on this research has proven to be a critical success factor, supporting a greater volume of research, a more substantial contribution to knowledge and, ultimately more effective reach and impact.

Relationship between Violent Extremism and Violent Crime

RUSI led a piece of research with the support of the Kenyan Prison Service which sought to uncover the links between violent crime and violent extremism in Kenya. The research was conducted by RUSI team members rather than researchers from Kenyan universities because access to prison sites was only extended to RUSI based on an existing relationship and the sensitivities involved. Data collection involved interviews with convicted violent extremist offenders, people undergoing trial for violent extremism offenses as well as a range of prison administrators and staff, lawyers and paralegals. The research ultimately found only tenuous links between violent extremism and other forms of criminality. There were several methodological restrictions, mostly owing to the challenges of access and the lack of insights held by prison and legal officials. Perhaps the most conclusive aspect of the research is that the relationship between violent crime and violent extremism is far from simplistic and that, unlike in most government policy, there often was not a distinction made by those convicted of violent extremism between their criminal and extremist pasts. This finding links well with the findings of Law Enforcement Result Area, with law enforcement not demonstrating a consistent understanding of the definition of a violent extremist. The paper, written by Saghal and Zeuthen, has been shared amongst RUSI's donor contacts, with the prison service and NCTC. It has been submitted for publication in the RUSI journal. It is noted that NCTC were in the process of designing a similar study – recognition of the relevance of the research area – but there has been no contact from NCTC about this to date despite offers from RUSI. A collaboration on this, if viable, would allow the opportunity to fill some of the gaps highlighted by this research and significantly enhance its impact and sustainability.

Clan Conflict and Recruitment in North Eastern Kenya

RUSI collaborated with Garissa University College to undertake a study on the relationship between clan conflict and recruitment to violent extremism focused on Garissa, Wajir and Mandera. This led to the creation of a set of papers focused on the dynamics of each of the three counties in turn presented at a conference in January 2019. Each paper has a slightly different focus but all look at the role of Al-Shabaab in clan conflicts in the region. Collectively, they expose the multitude of roles played and manipulated by Al-Shabaab in the three counties in opportunistic pursuit of recruitment, political influence and undermining the Kenyan state. The findings from the research were shared at a conference in January 2019 held at Rift Valley Institute in Nairobi. It was attended by academics and representatives from the Kenyan government, foreign governments, non-governmental organisations and civil society organisations and think tanks. As well as sharing research findings on the subject, the conference also aimed to expand the debate on drivers of clan conflicts and the role of external actors in conflicts and produce recommendations for policy and practice. The results of the conference are presented in a conference report¹¹ on the RUSI website. The papers have not been published separately.

Land Conflict and Radicalisation on the Coast

A piece was commissioned to Pwani University which, after changes in scope, focuses on the role of Islamic movements in radicalisation and recruitment. The final area of research has taken longer than expected to complete, with the publication of the research article expected in 2020. Delays have resulted, according the latest EU programme monitoring report, partly from the quality of the research article not meeting required standards. RUSI have acted on this by investing heavily in the editing and review process and bringing in an additional conversant to assist in the final drafting. This research is therefore not discussed at length in this report.

¹¹ The conference report is available here: <https://rusi.org/publication/conference-reports/clan-conflict-and-violent-extremism-north-eastern-counties-kenya>

Overall, the implementation has produced more research processes and outputs than anticipated, largely due to the partnership with IFRA/IFRA and, looking at final outputs, this result area represents a significant over-achievement for RUSI against its original aims.

There have been a number of hurdles to overcome during implementation. Firstly, interviewees noted that it was more difficult than expected to commission the research:

'It was extremely challenging to identify Universities that have a minimum of capacities. The main aim was to build the capacity of local universities to research this topic in Kenya. Especially in the North East' (Funder Representative)

The mention of this *'main aim'* from the funder representative perhaps shows a minor difference in articulation to the perceived aims of the RUSI team. Whilst the EU seem heavily focused on the development of research capacity, RUSI – perhaps out of operational necessity – seem more focused on the production of research within the timeframe and, secondarily, on the sustainable benefits for research capacity following the programme. Ultimately, both aims have been advanced, as discussed below, but the need to advance both simultaneously has presented significant challenges for RUSI. The result area implementation was challenging precisely because there is a limited supply of experienced researchers in the fields of focus.

Perhaps the biggest impact of this on the process relates to research quality. It has been widely acknowledged in all the areas of commissioned research (i.e. not undertaken by RUSI), that the RUSI team have needed to be deeply involved in the writing and editing process in some of the outputs (especially the one that is still to be published) and, to a lesser extent, in guiding the wider research process, to ensure an appropriate standard in the outputs.

'I believe that RUSI did a lot of work in making the documents research-worthy because the standard wasn't what we expected. Maybe we should have spent even more time on that learning process – making sure that the knowledge is exchanged. That's a lesson for the future. To build in more support around that.' (Funder Representative)

'RUSI have given me lots of their time to improve my research. Especially in the style of writing.' (External Researcher)

One of the clear lessons from the process, described commonly by those interviewed, is in the higher-than-expected allocation of resource required to ensure that researchers are able to be trained to deliver research to effective standards of rigour and originality.

Collectively, the research has an impressive geographical reach, with data collection in Nairobi, across Coastal region and three counties on the Somali-Kenyan border and was undertaken by universities based in those three areas. The biggest determinant of whether the geographical reach has been effective should simply be whether or not the research has been revelatory in producing knowledge on violent extremism from those locations. Each piece of research has been able to add to the evidence base through the contribution of novel, primary data-driven insights. The literature reviews show that the areas of research published are characterised by a lack of either: primary data in general; primary data collection involving those with clear and triangulated proximity to violent extremism or; primary data collected in Kenya/East Africa. Further, the choice of contexts has allowed critical, revelatory local cases to be studied. For example, the choice to focus on clan conflict and violent extremism in the North East of Kenya enabled the study of the issue where it is arguably at its most prolific and visible: the border of Somalia and Kenya. The findings from this piece are highly relevant to that specific context but also have a range of implications for clan conflicts in other parts of the world¹². The research published to date has enabled important, empirical findings to be added to the literature partly as a result of the nature of locations chosen.

¹²As anecdotal evidence beyond the remit of this piece, the evaluators have shared the research with government colleagues working in Mindanao, Philippines who are now using the analysis within a training programme for community peacebuilders.

Building on this, behind some of the success of the empirical contributions made is the impressive degree of access attained by the research teams. It is worth noting that:

- RUSI negotiated access to prisons to interview violent extremists;
- Badurdeen completed in-depth interviews with returnees from Al-Shabaab on the Coast; and
- detailed accounts were obtained from women who had travelled to Somalia at a time when this was becoming a prominent feature of policy discussions in East Africa; and many more examples of unique points of access.

The access to participants achieved and the large sample sizes across the research are perhaps the most distinctive characteristics, allowing the testing of a range of theoretical lenses and concepts with relevant empirical data for the first time. The conclusions drawn as a result are far more generalisable and substantial than much of the preceding work referenced in the articles. There is good evidence that researchers were able to draw upon existing personal contacts and those of their institutions to achieve this, showing a clear strength of both RUSI and their partners.

From the evaluators' understanding, the first two research themes – clan conflict and role of women – were agreed between the EU and RUSI based on concerns at the start of the programme. The additional themes and the extended focus to the research on women and gender came from ideas that emerged and the partnerships that have formed (e.g. with IFRA and the Kenyan Prison Service) during delivery. From the data available, the research on women's involvement in violent extremism has clearly been relevant. There are significant gaps in coherent evidence in this field¹³ and challenges in recognising it as a legitimate field of enquiry that recognises the nuance of gender roles and the agency of women in violent extremism beyond peacekeepers and victims. Partners spoken to, including KRC, GIZ and USAID, all noted gender, women and violent extremism as priority themes in their work.

The research on the nexus between violent crime and violent extremism is critical because literature in this field tends to maintain the generalisation that the two are very closely linked whilst some government policy treats them quite separately. The finding of a tenuous link between the two challenges, in the evaluators' views, some of prevailing wisdom around crime and violent extremism and possibly urges caution about the assumptions made in some policy. The research also finds that often there is no distinction made between violent extremist and other criminal activities in their pasts. This links well to the interpretation of the programme's aims by STRIVE II mentees who switch fluidly between descriptions of their proximity to criminal gangs and violent extremist recruiters as reasons for their being on the programme and do not feel the need to make the distinction. This is expanded upon in the lessons learned section for this result area.

One of the clearest, and least surprising, findings from this result area, however, is that the most important choices made have been in developing depth in themes rather than breadth across multiple areas. The choice to partner with IFRA has led to the generation of a body of work on women's involvement that can draw confident conclusions, practical recommendations and demonstrate the diversity of women's roles in violent extremism from the 4 distinctive areas. In a similar way, but to a lesser extent, the three pieces of research undertaken in the 3 north-eastern counties on clan conflict has achieved the same, demonstrating an array of issues and differences between counties. As a result, both have led to subsequent research-communication pieces (e.g. conference briefs) which synthesise and translate the findings into more accessible, contextualised and action-focused intelligence. This, as discussed below, has been critical in dissemination and impact. This is in contrast to the single piece of research on crime and violent extremism which has had far more limited reach and significance.

In addition to the above, the Research Result Area has also provided a violent extremism tracking function for the EU, providing reports on incidents and developments in violent extremism in Kenya on a regular basis for use of EU policy. This falls outside the remit of the evaluation but appears to have been used to a large extent in the briefing of senior civil servants and the working of the EU.

¹³ For example, [a report](#) from UN Women, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Wilton Park found that part of the challenging in developing interventions around gender and extremism is 'the knowledge gap in what drives people to join or support these groups, including in understanding the interlinkages between gender, masculinities, insecurity, terrorism and violent extremism' (2018: 2)

Overall, the implementation of the research has presented a range of challenges but been ultimately successful in producing high-quality research and research communication. The most successful elements have come from the areas of depth of inquiry, especially the focus on women's involvement in violent extremism.

Change and Sustainability

STRIVE II aims for impact in both the process of the research and its outputs. The discussion of impact is split into two areas: the development of research capacity and capabilities and the generation of impact from the use of research in practice.

Development of Research Capacity and Capabilities

The evaluators were able to interview two researchers associated with Kenyan universities, commissioned by RUSI in this result area. The key finding overall is that RUSI have put significant time and energy aside to support the researchers in research design, delivery, publication and dissemination. Most of the focus appears to have been placed on the latter two – publication and dissemination – and this is where most of the value for the researchers has come from. Both researchers found the editorial expertise in turning draft research papers into finished, peer-reviewed articles to be a far more advanced and supportive process than they had expected or had experienced in previous work. One also noted that the dissemination activity undertaken in presenting the research at conferences and creation of briefings based on the research was an opportunity that they, an experienced researcher, had never had before. In general, both researchers felt that the process was challenging and positive and had prepared them to work in this field more, which they intended to do. More evidence is required from the process but if these experiences are indicative of the overall approach taken to collaboration, RUSI have been successful in supporting sustainable research capacity in CVE within the institutions with which they have partnered.

Impact from Research Outputs

As introduced in the previous section, there has been a clear focus on dissemination following the completion of research in each theme. This has happened in two ways: the synthesis and summarising of research findings into more accessible and higher-level briefings, conference papers and reviews and the sharing of research findings at events, online and through networks. This has led, it is assumed, to the research being read by representatives from a large range of organisations in the field, ranging from government agencies to international donor organisations.

Research impact can be assessed by looking at the reach of the research (how many people or institutions have been affected, informed or influenced) and the significance (how much change has happened within that audience)¹⁴. From the data collected, there is evidence that the research has been more successful in significance than reach. It is vital to note though that all of the research has been quite recently produced and there is therefore likely to be more impact from the research in the latter part of the programme delivery and beyond. From interviews with representatives in fields relevant to CVE, there were mixed findings on the reach of the research at this stage:

- All partners were aware that RUSI was undertaking research on violent extremism in Kenya and all were aware of the focus on women and gender.
- Focus groups with the two consortium partners, one of which is also undertaking research in the field, showed that participants were aware only of the research on women and gender but none of the participants had read the research or could name the areas in which it was undertaken.
- Two external stakeholder representatives had in-depth awareness of the three published areas of research and found the thematic focus on women's involvement most useful to their work. They both cited the depth of focus and the variety of angles taken as important to their using

¹⁴ Reach and significance are the two main components of the UK Research Excellence Framework, a government-led exercise which periodically assesses the impact of academic research across UK higher education institutions. More information can be found here:

<https://www.ref.ac.uk/2014/panels/assessmentcriteriaandleveldefinitions/>

the research; the range of topics gave the area more perceived importance that they could use to communicate the findings within their respective organisations.

- Those who had read the research noted that the translation of the research and accompanying briefings had made it more accessible and easier to interpret within their practice. As practitioners, they would have been far less likely to read the research if it was not packaged in this way.

As well as these mixed findings on reach, there was one stand-out example of significant impact. The representative of USAID (permission has been granted to include the organisation's name) was the most aware of the research of all participants and had an existing professional interest in gender and violent extremism. The individual also has a close working relationship with the RUSI team. The representative has been successful in using the compendium on women's involvement in violent extremism to lobby for the establishment of an international network within East Africa on gender and violent extremism. The network's successful founding is directly related to the research in the compendium which provided enough evidence to convince those supporting and joining the network to advance plans. It is rare that such immediate, tangible impact comes from academic research – as it is usually challenged with both latency and attribution (Donovan 2011: 175) – but the representative was very clear that the research was an integral part of the development.

Further, it is worth noting that the report on gender and violent extremism was circulated to the International Security Sector Advisory Team (ISSAT) during preparation for a new training programme on security sector reform and violent extremism. This was included in the reference material for course participants and was described by ISSAT representatives as '*an excellent reference for us*' and a '*very valuable source*'. This example demonstrates the international applicability of the research and the practical relevance of the findings to training for the security sector.

The impact of research is often limited by external factors beyond the control of research producers: timing, political challenges and openness to external evidence ultimately determine the extent to which research findings influence policy and practice. From those findings, though, it is clear that the greatest impact has come from the research with the greatest depth of focus. This is not the only factor in achieving change, though. The successful example above has also come from two activities in which RUSI have excelled and have been able to navigate external challenges:

1. Collaboration – the existing links with partner organisations and the fact that RUSI is recognised and trusted for high-quality research has enabled the research more readily transfer between organisations.
2. Translation – the additional effort put into synthesising the research into more accessible and higher-level documents has enabled the research to be better situated within the literature (e.g. the review article on women's involvement) and for relatively niche studies to be translated into the language, problematics and practical requirements of practitioners. This combined with the range of face-to-face events has ensured that the findings are more readily available for those in policy and practice.

Whilst there has been a good amount of dissemination through conferences and online activity, the lack of awareness of the research for some is likely to be down to gaps in dissemination activity. Concerns have been expressed that the research is not reaching enough people and, crucially, is '*just reaching the usual suspects*'. The RUSI team recognises these limitations and more resources have been allocated for this in the programme's extension periods.

One prominent factor related to this was the lack of collaboration and research dissemination between the consortium partners. In particular, KRC who are researching on similar themes had very low knowledge of the STRIVE II research. There are multiple mentions in the data of the CVE Researcher Forum which brought these partners, and researchers from other organisations, together to share insights on research. This was found to be extremely useful by RUSI and KRC but stopped as a result of a lack of funding. Having a practical mechanism which brings together organisations to discuss and share research on CVE is likely to have a highly positive effect on both research production and research impact. Regardless of mechanism, it seems that there would be much to gain from the consortium members sharing research and insights more. It is vital to state here that it is unclear as to the reasons for the lack of collaboration on this and to whether or not consortium members would

actually attend meetings such as this – this finding is simply reporting the expressed desire of consortium members to put more time and resource into collaboration on research and knowledge exchange with RUSI.

One aim was for the research to be used to inform the work of the programme. For the most recently-developed areas of work, this is not as applicable because there has been less opportunity to embed findings within manuals and training content. However, for the pieces on women's involvement and violent crime there was ample opportunity to use research findings to inform the work. There was some influence on programme activity, such as the decision to organise separate focus groups with female mentors as a result of the research and invitations for researchers to speak at training sessions. There are also references to themes covered in the research within the mentorship manual and law enforcement curriculum but no specific reference to the research. Some of the research findings would likely be too detailed for inclusion in the documents which are written either at more abstract or foundational levels.

It is understood that the research on women's involvement in violent extremism has been discussed within mentorship training sessions but there is no data on the response of mentors and stakeholders to this. It is also understood that RUSI have delivered CVE training to consortium partners and their beneficiaries and a researcher provided a specific presentation on the research at those training sessions. This model appears to present an effective opportunity for future dissemination: through the delivery of CVE training to stakeholders. Other research on clan conflict and violent crime and violent extremism has been shared with NCTC and a researcher spoke briefly at some of the training sessions but this does not seem to have influenced the law enforcement training to a great extent. There may be other ways that the research has been used to inform delivery but, from those spoken to, there is certainly room for improvement in this area in the future.

One option to enhance the impact of the research within security services and law enforcement would be to share the findings more often, directly at county level rather than relying upon national level actors to cascade. This approach is taken by KRC in their work with county law enforcement actors and had created a relationship in which the organisation's research – albeit more focused, reactive and instrumental than that of this result area – is responsive to the needs of county commissioners as issues arise locally. The existing relationships between RUSI and the County Security and Intelligence Forums and their link with the County Action Plans would perhaps make a good starting point of access for sharing this research and understanding more about the interests of county actors, informing future research themes.

Overall, the biggest and most sustainable change has come where there has been a depth of research facilitated through well-timed partnerships. The resource put into supporting the external researchers to provide the required standard of research, often beyond that anticipated, has led to a set of researchers with more experience in CVE and greater expertise and track record in research. This is supportive of sustainable change. STRIVE II has invested in dissemination activity but many feel that there should have more investment in this area, something which is currently being remedied.

Most importantly, the research has led to new knowledge in areas where there were previously gaps and a range of insights on what the next focus of research should be at the end of each article, showing that attempts to close gaps in knowledge often reveal another set of gaps. The depth of research on women's involvement has led to the creation of network around that theme, showing that the research has the potential to create positive, tangible change given the right circumstances. The most critical success factors for sustainability have been depth over breadth in research trajectory, additional support for researchers, effective choice of locations, access to participants and the translation of research into accessible findings for partners. Combined, these factors have led to a highly successful research programme which, in many respects, has overachieved against its aims.

Research: Lessons Learned

The following is a set of lessons taken from the analysis above and the data available that relate to the wider practice of preventing and countering violent extremism based on the experience and performance of STRIVE II within the Research Result Area.

1. The programme needed to invest significantly in supporting researchers to produce and publish research at the required standard of quality, indicating and to a certain extent confirming the need for support to enhance not just the capacity but also the capabilities of Kenyan researchers in fields relevant to CVE
2. The evaluation finds that depth of research production in fewer areas is far more supportive of research communication, impact and significant contribution to knowledge than a breadth of pieces across multiple, unconnected areas.
3. The programme demonstrates that tangible and significant impact from CVE research is achievable with some or all of the following prerequisites: depth of research within a theme, collaboration and existing relationships with research 'users', translation of research into practical and actionable findings and an investment in face-to-face dissemination.
4. Related to this, the additional investment of time into research 'translation' into the language, problematics and format preferred by policy makers and practitioners is wholly justified and critical in the success of dissemination activity.
5. Despite this activity, there is still a challenge in bridging the gap between the general levels of expertise of policy makers and practitioners and the specific, niche and limited findings of individual research pieces. RUSI has excelled in achieving this for some of the research and importantly this is often through interpersonal routes (presentations, face-to-face conveyance) rather than through more distanced dissemination activity.
6. RUSI's brand and standing within the research and practitioner communities has been a vital, intangible asset in gaining access, attracting research talent and the development of partnerships with key organisations such as IFTA and Kenyan universities.

Internal Evaluation Approach

Attached to the position of 'external evaluators' is the necessity and luxury of working with the product of evaluation work conducted during delivery by those internal to programmes. It is common in this position for external evaluators to be required to patch together incomplete datasets or to work with the results of incomplete methodology: internal evaluation is often not appropriately prioritised or allocated the professional expertise required to provide a rigorous assessment of a programme. This is not the case with STRIVE II. The internal evaluation function has been given significant priority relative to other areas of delivery and has been led by advanced research experts with high degrees of subject knowledge. The tools associated with the internal evaluation work (e.g. questionnaires and theory of change.) are understood and used throughout the programme team and have had a clear and positive impact on the work of the programme. For instance, participants regularly made reference to the theory of change in their articulation of the programme aims and there are many references to the summaries provided of quantitative data in Law Enforcement and Mentorship Result Areas as an influence to delivery.

As described throughout this report, data has been collected against each result area and links well to the programme's theory of change and logical framework. The evaluation data collected provides a rare wealth of data on the impact of the programme and offers significant, quantitative insights which can be repeated and continued in future iterations of the programme in Kenya and elsewhere. The lesson from this, ultimately, is that this level of investment in evaluation provides an important degree of confidence in the results and effects of the programme and should, logically, provide greater assurances to those funding the programme as to the value generated through their financial and other support of STRIVE II. This is not a new lesson – it is a staple argument of the 'evidence-based policy' movement – but STRIVE II's commitment provides an excellent case in point to demonstrate the virtue of the argument in a highly contentious and, for the EU, novel policy and programming arena. Importantly, this comes as the international development and aid sectors are experiencing some of the most significant changes and challenges in recent times (with Covid-19, the growth of isolationist policy, divestment, etc.) leading to a much more acute need for clear evidence on the efficacy and return of interventions such as STRIVE II in real terms.

Where relevant in the preceding sections, there are points made about data collection against the respective result areas. As an overarching point, the programme is rich in quantitative data. Having this data provides a rigorous and hard-to-question assessment of its impact against a central but restricted set of outcomes. With every methodological choice, however, there are opportunity costs: research approaches invariably lead to skews towards particular groups of participants, research interests or types of data. This section has been included to allow the external evaluators to suggest potential shifts to the internal evaluation approach that may benefit the programme. These are included as recommendations below but should be read with the caveat that these are also subject to the epistemological paradigms and bias of the evaluators (e.g. interpretivists/constructivists with a bias towards the merits of inductive and qualitative approaches)

EVALUATIVE CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion: To what extent is STRIVE II contributing to reduced radicalisation, recruitment and support for violent extremist groups through addressing structural issues, enabling factors, group dynamics and individual incentives?

As a conclusion to this evaluation, this section uses the insights and findings from across the four result areas to assess the extent to which STRIVE II has contributed to its overarching aim through the framework of its theory of change.

STRIVE II's theory of change demonstrates logically how its activities create intermediate change in a variety of ways which link to the contribution to reduced radicalisation, recruitment and support for violent extremist groups. It is important to note firstly that the inclusion of the term 'contributing to' is critical in the use of this to assess success: it highlights the fact that the aim is relative and not absolute. Ultimately, there are a range of external factors beyond the control of the programme that have the potential to both increase and reduce the success of violent extremist groups and the actors which work against their progress in CVE. If, for example, unanticipated events further increase the fragility of communities in deprived neighbourhoods across Kenya, the success of violent extremist groups could easily increase above the level at the start of the programme – clearly this does not mean that the programme has not succeeded. The role of this evaluation is to assess the success of the programme based on the resources, ethos and methods within its control. Overall, the evaluation finds that the programme is highly successful and is making a significant and comprehensive contribution to this overarching aim in a multitude of ways, explored in the concluding comments below.

The evaluation of the **Mentorship Result Area** has demonstrated how the programme excels at identifying and supporting young people who are truly at risk of recruitment and radicalisation to violent extremist groups and a range of related dangers such as violent crime. The programme successfully pairs young people with credible, effective peer mentors who are committed to providing one-to-one and group-based support in order to enable their mentees to make significant, positive changes in their lives. Critically, STRIVE II mentors have had similar life experiences to their mentees and have a deep understanding of their community context. This system is supported by a group of community stakeholders who live and work in close proximity to young people at risk and who are able to identify those in need of support, acting as an interface between the programme and the young person.

The data and stories provided throughout the mentorship evaluation show, in general and through compelling examples, the severity of the situations that mentees are in upon entering the programme and demonstrate well the transformative effects of STRIVE II in knowledge, attitudes, economic and life opportunities, self-worth, social identity and general prosperity. The programme has a clear and powerful focus on group dynamics, illustrating well the role of positive social identity as a bulwark against violence, extremism and negative life choices. Critical to the programme's success is the role of STRIVE II's group settings in providing and bolstering positive social identities, friendships, networks and norms which act as a clear safeguard against the narrative and group dynamics of violent extremist groups.

Further, the data demonstrates positive shifts in the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of mentors and stakeholders, including in ways that directly contribute to and cement their roles as community actors in countering violent extremism (CVE). All groups engaged in the programme have shown substantial shifts in their understanding of violent extremism, recognising the interplay of a more complex set of factors and the multiple pathways which draw individuals to extremist groups. Part of the sustainability of the programme rests on the position of stakeholders and mentors, and also mentees, to become active in their communities in working against those factors and there is good evidence that this is already happening.

There is significant evidence to demonstrate that the programme is successful in supporting those at risk to become more resilient to violent extremism in ways that align well with the theory of change. As the programme has matured, however, the focus should now shift to sustainability and longer-term outcomes including the potential to put more formal structures in place to support mentees into employment and educational opportunities. Collecting data on the longer-term trajectories of mentees

and mentors would provide concrete evidence of sustainable change and support the work of the programme in the future in being able to evidence the extent of the difference made.

At this point, STRIVE II's mentorship approach should be considered a tried and tested model for supporting youth people from marginalised communities in Kenya which, owing to the work of a committed team of RUSI staff, mentors, mentees and stakeholders, has produced remarkable, positive effects on the lives of youth at risk of violent extremism.

In the **Law Enforcement Result Area**, the evaluation finds a substantial change in attitudes and application of soft power solutions over hard power actions. There is clear evidence of an understanding of the impact and implications for vulnerable members of society, particularly young people, when hard power options are applied by law enforcement. Indeed, those engaged in the training programme illustrated a pendulum swing in their responses to questionnaires. The training created a shift from support for actions that resulted in the removal of liberty and in some instances injury and loss of life to ones of community engagement, disruption and preventative measures to protect those exposed by violent extremists and to prevent their exploitation. Such recognised indicators of effect demonstrate the effectiveness of the training programme. The acknowledgement that previous activity breached human rights and the rule of law, 'pushing' vulnerable members of society towards those identified threat actors is remarkable and holds huge potential for a significant improvement in police-community relations. From the significant and rigorously collected data available, triangulated through this evaluation, the training has become a significant part of a movement that is enabling a change in the position of law enforcement from a causal factor in violent extremism to a positive influencer in the development of relationships and building of trust between themselves and young people.

This pathway to success has been created through the safe spaces in which to interact with traditional and non-traditional partners and engage in an incremental learning curve of modular training, which catered for their needs and the needs of the communities they serve.

To achieve this success within a challenging environment, where civil society organisations have never before been afforded direct and sustained access and influence is impressive. To do this within a context in which changes in leadership and interests have influenced progress on a previously agreed curriculum, shifted geographical areas of operation and tested the strength of existing trust and confidence, simply underscores the success of this result area. RUSI has developed a solid foundation from which to continue to work with a wide range of security and law enforcement actors and managed to positively influence organisational culture within security and law enforcement agencies.

That being noted, the challenges experienced within the Law Enforcement Result Area also serve to highlight the precarious nature of success in this field and with government partners. At the end of this programme, STRIVE II can legitimately claim hard-fought successes in influencing the structures which drive violent extremism. RUSI is now a tried and tested provider with the trust of NCTC and wider law enforcement structures. However, sustainable progress in this arena is reliant upon the demonstrably fickle nature of political influence and interests – a prominent factor in any politically sensitive area of work but particularly well-evidenced in this case. The successes achieved have come through perseverance and, it would seem, their sustainability hinges on future political dynamics.

An important caveat to this insecurity, however, is that there is significant support from national, regional and local level law-enforcement change-makers for the continuation of this training programme with a broadening out of beneficiaries to include front-facing practitioners and the centralisation and embedding of the STRIVE II curriculum within the Police Training Academy.

It is unusual for a civil society organisation to achieve strategic, tactical and operational support for a product which serves to educate and influence policing. There is an acceptance that law enforcement have been part of the problem in local communities, which is a difficult but important admission, and now with the innovation and creativity of RUSI they can become a more effective part of the solution, delivering a sustainable community policing model that impacts the lives of the communities they serve.

The **Preventive Communications Result Area** has delivered CVE and conflict resolution training to a range of radio professionals from the coastal region of Kenya and a range of youth expression and communication activities to STRIVE II mentors and mentees.

Much like in its work with law enforcement, STRIVE II's training for radio professionals is a standout example of how societal structures can be influenced through an investment in understanding the needs of the agencies that represent the structures and tailoring programmes to fit. One key factor in the success of this element is the inclusion of technical training on general radio production skills which has ensured that the training was attractive and useful to participants from the start. The data shows clear shifts in knowledge and attitudes related to CVE and conflict sensitive journalism and, crucially, that radio stations have changed their practices as a result: engaging with the community more and covering violent extremism and other community issues in a more balanced and sensitive manner.

Looking at the effects across result areas, the evaluation depicts a range of common increases in awareness, knowledge and behaviours, particularly in creating opportunities for critical self-reflection of actors in their roles as representatives of the mainstream structures of Kenyan society. There are clear overlaps between the changes made in STRIVE II's work with law enforcement and beneficiaries of the preventive communications interventions suggesting that there may be scope to bring those agencies together for mutual benefit. Conflict-sensitive journalism appears to align well with the ethos of the law enforcement curriculum and manual: perhaps there is scope and benefit in utilising the commonalities of these approaches to facilitate contact and mutual understanding between law enforcement, communication & media professionals and young people in order to explore and further advance the role of communication in CVE.

STRIVE II's use of self-expression and communication in attempts to enhance the voice of young people has produced a range of tentative findings from a pilot of limited scale. It has found, perhaps expectedly, that the workings of national and government-owned media institutions place significant limits on and barriers to the influence of external actors such as RUSI and, subsequently on the articulation of the authentic experiences of young people. Despite this, however, the investments made in one-to-one relationships with actors within those institutions has demonstrated a successful way of gaining influence. At this point, this approach has not manifested in a great deal of longer-term impact in influencing structures but presents clear potential for the future: an apt form of success for a pilot intervention. The change logic of this element of STRIVE II appears to be contingent on scale, relationships with the right actors and the extant ability within the group of young people to effectively represent their lives, views and experiences within media-worthy outputs.

As stated in the detailed analysis, though, this part of the programme should be judged at this stage more by the effects of the process than the outputs generated. The use of self-expression appears to be wholly and uniquely supportive of the strengthening of group dynamics. It permits the programme to facilitate the development of a shared understanding within groups of young people, many of whom have experienced traumatic events in their lives. This is a micro-level process which is supportive of the tackling of negative group dynamics as depicted in the theory of change. The evaluation and the discussion article recently published (Freear and Glazzard 2020) both indicate a viable logic between this intervention and the aim of the programme. Currently, however, a lack of comprehensive data on the impact on mentors and mentees prevents the drawing of a definite, causal line between self-expression of mentors and mentees and the reduction of radicalisation, recruitment and support for violent extremism. Following the 'useful meandering' of this pilot, more extensive and rigorous evaluation data from future iterations would readily support the testing of this logic.

The self-communication element of this part of the programme may also be supportive of structured contact between young people and law enforcement, should the programme wish to develop this activity in the future. The combination of shifts in law enforcement's attitudes towards young people, shifts in young people's attitudes to law enforcement and an enhanced ability of young people to communicate their experiences and views usefully and effectively would appear in theory to present opportunities for dialogue and prejudice-reducing contact. This has already been trialled to a certain extent within the Canadian-funded police dialogue programme which appears to have been highly successful in shifting perceptions in both groups. It is important to keep in mind, though, that these groups are starting from a position of distrust rather than a neutral point. From the data available across this evaluation and the current understanding of trust between groups, it is likely that the positive effects of the programme have reduced distrust between young people and law enforcement representatives taking part in the programme, potentially bringing them closer to a 'neutral' point. The next stage, then, would be to use contact between the two groups to build active trust. It is this which would form the basis for a strong community policing model in the future.

With regard to the **Research Result Area**, the programme has successfully added to the evidence base on violent extremism in a number of clear and much-needed ways. Crucially, the evaluation finds that the work on women's involvement in violent extremism and on clan conflict in the North East of Kenya has led to the most significant contribution to knowledge and presents the clearest opportunity for impact. This is due to the multiple angles, topics and sites of data collection that have hitherto not been examined scientifically – in social science parlance: 'revelatory cases' (Yin 2014) –, leading to a greater depth of insights within those two themes. Knowledge production should be seen as an end in itself: the programme has provided, developed and enhanced evidence and insights on the threat posed by violent extremism which is wholly supportive of the overarching aim.

In addition to this, RUSI have been successful in using this research to influence policy, practice and structural change, particularly given that some of the research has only very recently been published. Whilst there are a range of external factors which limit the adoption and effects of research knowledge, there is clear evidence of the direct use of the research within USAID, the International Security Sector Advisory Team (ISSAT) and likely other organisations not included in the evaluation, showing that the research has the potential for significant influence within donor and civil society structures. The influencing of more-overtly political structures, such as the Government of Kenya, is far more difficult than influencing more delivery-focused organisations such as USAID because of the explicit and competing interests which can block progress in the former and the more practical and pragmatic attitudes which prevail (more and more often) in the latter. The evidence presented in this report suggests that the most successful adoption of research has come from time spent with key contacts in those organisations, through events and seminars and between individual members of staff.

For many in the world of CVE and security, RUSI represents a trusted brand in research and analysis and this is highly useful for the aims around research impact for STRIVE II. Successful knowledge exchange, though, is reliant upon more than institutional recognition: the development of trust through interpersonal contact is an important prerequisite to depth of impact. Continuing to invest and investing more in this 'facework' (Giddens 1990, Kroeger 2017) with organisations and government agencies (such as NCTC) would provide a greater chance of research being understood and accepted, and thereafter influencing structures. One way of achieving this would be through reinstating or hosting forums that regularly bring organisational representatives in contact with each other to discuss research. RUSI's reputation as excellent providers of research and evidence, the relevance of the topics, the access obtained and the skill of RUSI in translating research into actionable findings are supportive of influencing structures and demonstrate the validity of the assumptions made in the theory of change.

Overall, the evaluation finds that STRIVE II is a strong and effective programme, the different elements of which are complimentary and mutually reinforcing. The logic contained in the programme's theory of change has been shown to be largely valid although it is often restricted by structural barriers, and the scale of its interventions stacked against the breadth and depth of the issues at large in communities. There are a number of ways that the programme can be strengthened, listed as recommendations below. However, the evidence and analysis presented in this report demonstrate a multitude of innovative ways that STRIVE II is contributing to reduced radicalisation, recruitment and support for violent extremism and crucially that the lives and contribution to society of the vast majority of those who take part in the programme are stronger as a result of the programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Included below are the recommendations based on the conclusions and findings across the report. These differ from the lessons learned which follow each section above in that the recommendations are actionable suggestions for enhancing the programme and are mostly practically focused; the lessons learned are concerned with ideas and findings from the STRIVE II experience which relate to the wider practice of CVE beyond the programme. For consistency, the recommendations are split by result area:

Mentorship Result Area Recommendations

- Selection criteria for mentees should be reviewed to consider the impact of subjective terminology and the training and awareness raising process for stakeholders should be looked at with the aim of increasing the success rate of mentee recruitment.
- The programme should consider providing more formalised linking of mentees to employment or training opportunities, either through consortium partners or other means (e.g. partnerships with other civil society organisations). In future iterations of the programme, this could be an expected or likely outcome at the end of the mentorship process rather than a possible outcome.
- The programme should capitalise upon the links between young people and law enforcement that have already been founded within STRIVE II and develop opportunities for contact through, for example, structured dialogue, collaborative projects and involvement of mentors within law enforcement training. The work of the mentorship project has demonstrably softened the attitudes of mentees, mentors and stakeholders to security forces without direct contact having taken place between them. If a positive contact scenario can be managed between mentees and the security forces, this would allow for more substantial improvements in perception and reductions in prejudice and negative stereotyping.

Law Enforcement Result Area Recommendations

- Now the training content is tested and found to be effective, future models of training delivery should consider the use of more efficient, higher volume modes of dissemination, including potentially through police colleges and greater-resourced train-the-trainer approaches.
- Future models of delivery should also maintain the inclusion of senior and mid-level professionals to ensure that change is created at organisational and policy level. A hybrid approach, bringing together front line officers and mid-level managers, which seeks change in structures and with a large volume of individual professionals should be pursued. Recognising that this is not always possible, having training for front line officers supported by mid-level managers through formal opening of courses provides strategic endorsement of such training.
- The inclusion of participants from a range of different agencies should be maintained and perhaps expanded to include non-law enforcement organisations and stations in neighbouring counties/regions within sessions.
- The training should continue to be led and delivered by NCTC trainers but, where viable, should also include more external trainers to provide variety in facilitation and expertise.
- Future training should consider joint delivery by county trainers enhancing the linkage between national and local priorities. Such fusion of experience and expertise would enhance opportunities to progress towards sustainable solutions and the cascading of 'local' training.
- RUSI should consider involving young people within the delivery of the training content to model contact between law enforcement and young people and to increase effects of empathy and trust building. This could involve the use of case studies which show violent extremism and the socio-economic context from the perspectives of young people and the direct involvement of young people in training delivery, possibly connected to future iterations of the Preventive Communication Result Area.(consideration may be given to a pilot area within one of the participating counties)
- Any future iteration of the programme should begin as soon as viable to ensure that the positive momentum and relationship with NCTC is capitalised upon.

- Any future iteration of the programme should allocate greater time, resource and programmatic flexibility to the negotiation of unforeseen political turmoil and bureaucratic hurdles.

Preventive Communication Result Area Recommendations

- Both parts of the result area have been shown to be successful to different extents and should be considered for further investment and scaling.
- In any future work on Strengthening the Voice of Young People, RUSI should consider partnering with organisations with similar values and aims but greater reach within relevant audiences to ensure the greater distribution of communications outputs.
- In any future iteration of the programme, more resource should be provided for evaluation data collection on the qualitative effects of self-expression and communications training on mentors and mentee and the longer-term impact on media institutions from both the radio training and Strengthening the Voice of Young People interventions.
- RUSI should consider ways of capitalising upon the common links between Law Enforcement and Preventive Communications Result Areas, exploring the use of conflict sensitive journalism with law enforcement and bringing participants from the result areas (mentors, mentees, radio/media professionals and law enforcement) to look together at the role of communication in CVE.

Research Result Area Recommendations

- Any future iterations of the result area should allow greater investment of time in overcoming the challenges related to the commission of research, including delays in delivery and issues of research quality.
- A formal mechanism of sharing and collaboration on CVE research between consortium partners and other relevant stakeholders should be established to ensure de-confliction and the transfer of knowledge and research between partners. The research finds that organic processes do not achieve enough in this respect.
- Investment in research in the future should be heavily weighted towards and grouped in coherent themes of relevant research rather than niche, standalone topics. Whilst the research activity in STRIVE II had a common focus on 'recruitment', the topics chosen appears from the outside as separate and not entirely related. Both a better communication of the commonalities between research themes and a greater depth in one or two areas would likely support greater research impact.
- Additional resource should be allocated to ensuring that all research produced is 'translated' and synthesised into accessible formats for policy and practice, allowing the research to be more readily available for implementation.
- A research partnership with NCTC around violent crime and violent extremism should be more actively pursued to maximise the potential for more research within this theme, greater alignment between NCTC's and RUSI's research and greater policy influence.
- The use of STRIVE II research within STRIVE II programming should be increased to allow a somewhat captive audience of CVE stakeholders to be made aware of the research
- RUSI should consider the wider rollout of their CVE training provided to partners, based on their experiences in STRIVE II and the research produced.
- RUSI should look to make use of existing relationships with local and regional law enforcement and security structures, such as the County Security and Intelligence Committees in their dissemination activity, to both inform planning processes and understand future research interests.

Recommendations for Internal Evaluation

- The programme should have a greater focus on qualitative insights to capture more of the depth of change for individuals and groups, with a particular focus on the development of group dynamics within each area.
- A less structured and approach to qualitative data collection (e.g. focus groups) would allow a wider expression of stories and change. This has been achieved in the focus group which

followed the film screening in the Preventive Communication Result Area but the structured nature of some of the other focus group and interview data collection may have limited the degree of expression.

- Fuller recording of qualitative data collection from focus groups and interviews from a dedicated transcriber (this has been put in place since the evaluation period).
- The consideration of inductive, ethnographic and grounded-theory approaches to qualitative data collection, allowing themes and insights to emerge from the data over the course of the programme.
- Data collection on the journeys and experiences of researchers within the Research Result Area to assess the changes made in research capabilities.
- Where possible, data should be recorded on life trajectory of a sample of mentees and mentors beyond the delivery of STRIVE II. Whilst short- and mid-term improvements have been identified, there is an excellent opportunity to evidence the value and sustainability of a mentoring programme.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Bibliography

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