

The Action

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Issue 8

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Building Resilient Communities

Disclaimer

The Action Newsletter is published periodically to inform, educate, challenge and provoke debate around Environment and Natural Resources Management, Democracy and Human Rights and Peace Building and Conflict Transformation.

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Editorial Note

“We celebrate the hard work that our partner organizations have put in transforming the lives of communities across Kenya”



Festus Mutua
Editor

Dear Reader,

I am pleased to present to you our latest edition of the Act! Newsletter, The Action.

This eighth edition of the newsletter, reflects upon the theme, “**Building Resilient Communities**” and the milestones marked during the period. Many of the articles presented herein capture the tremendous achievements and strides made by our partner organizations working in the core areas of Peace Building and Conflict Transformation, Democracy and Human Rights and Environment and Natural Resource Management. We celebrate the hard work of our partner organizations in transforming the lives of communities across Kenya.

As you read through this edition, I hope that you not only appreciate the impact of our work, but also the powerful promise of tomorrow.

Lastly, our special gratitude to our development partners for their tremendous support and continued collaboration.

On behalf of the Act! team, I wish you a nice read!



County colloquium calls for joint efforts to address violent extremism and radicalization

The 1st ever County Colloquium on countering violent extremism (CVE) held in Kwale County has called on governments, civil society organizations (including faith based organizations), private sector and communities to develop joint strategies to help respond effectively to violent extremism in Kenya.

Under the theme – *Promoting Bold conversations, Building Resilient Communities*, the two-day forum held at the School of Government, Matuga sought to ensure that communities are well equipped with the right knowledge to respond to the threats of radicalization and violent extremism.

Speaking during the opening of the forum, Amb. Mariam Yassin,

Special Envoy for Children and Migrant Rights of the Federal Republic of Somalia in the Office of the Prime Minister, called for coordinated efforts between government agencies and civil society organizations in liberating communities from the bondage of extremism. “In Somalia, thousands of young people and women suffer in the hands of terrorist attacks. We are happy that through the various efforts of international development agencies, the problem is being confronted at the community level. To address this complex challenge, let us use our cultural diversity to guard ourselves against violent extremism”, explained Yassin.

Act! Executive Director Anne Nyabera vouched for partnership as a critical tool in countering violent extremism not only in



Fazul Yusuf Mahamed, Executive Director NGO Coordination Board while addressing participants during the opening of the forum

Kenya but also across the globe. **“Extremist groups are a threat to national security and tackling this challenge requires a comprehensive counter violence strategy”**, she noted.

Applauding the efforts of the SCORE Program that is funded by USAID, Fazul Mahamed the NGO Coordination Board Executive Director said that governments and experts must be alive to the fact that, there is no single solution or narrative that can counter violent extremism. “We must adopt a multifaceted community led approach in this war and everything that we do and say must become part of the narrative of winning the hearts and minds of resilient communities” said Fazul.

Kwale Governor Salim Mvurya said the County is ready to work with civil society groups and the National Government to develop short and long-term strategies to address extremism. “This county has

Extremist groups are a threat to national security and tackling this challenge requires a comprehensive counter violence strategy”

Anne Nyabera, Executive Director, Act!

borne the brunt of violent extremism. This has not only hurt Kwale’s economy, but that of the entire country. It is true Kwale is facing a big problem and this colloquium is timely,”. Mvurya said the war on terror can be won by influencing people through dialogue. “Involving the community is important because they are the first to respond when anything

happens. We need to enhance the confidence, capacity, and strength of communities," he said.

The forum called on the private sector to play a complimentary role in creating and pushing for economic opportunities for the youth who are at risk of been radicalized. Representing the US Embassy, Kashayar Ghashghai, Presence Officer, Coastal Region, reiterated US government's support to Kenya in the fight against extremism. SCORE is working with local organizations such as the Human Rights Agenda (HURIA) to build resilient communities, he added.

An eleven-member Committee was formed during the Colloquium to spearhead the process of developing Kwale County CVE Strategy. Human Rights Agenda (HURIA), with technical and financial support from SCORE, will



H.E Hon. Salim Mvurya, Governor Kwale County Government gives his keynote speech during the official opening of the Colloquium held at School of Government, Matuga

support the committee. The County government of Kwale gave its blessings to the CVE strategy development process.

The forum organized by HURIA attracted more than 100 participants from governments, national security agencies and academia to discuss strategies for countering violent extremism which has become a global security challenge.



Participants follow the proceedings of the CVE colloquium



Board Members with Act! Mombasa staff

Act! Welcomes New Board Members

Act! is excited to announce the appointment of Teresa Maina, Samuel Ndonga and Prof. Karuti Kanyinga to its Board of Directors.

“I am delighted about the energy and vast experience these individuals bring to Act!, said the Board Chairman Francis Aywa during a meeting with Act! staff to introduce the new Board Members. “Their participation will enhance our footprint not only as a capacity development organization but also among the communities we serve”, added Aywa.

“I am delighted about the energy and vast experience these individuals bring to Act!, said the Board Chairman Francis Aywa during a meeting with Act! staff to introduce the new Board Members.

Anne Nyabera, Executive Director, noted that their global experience and expertise in sustainable public-private sector development, renewable energy, democracy and governance, research, strategic leadership and organizational development will strengthen Act!’s ability to scale innovation and increase her impact across Kenya and beyond.

She also acknowledged the support of the outgoing members for their commitment to the organization’s growth.



Teresa C. Maina

Teresa C. Maina: is a Human Resources practitioner and a consultant with over 20 years of experience in human resource management, strategic leadership, organizational development and change management. She is also a Member of the Institute of Human Resources Management, Kenya and Institute of Directors, Kenya.



Prof. Karuti Kanyinga

Prof. Karuti Kanyinga: is an accomplished development researcher and scholar with extensive national and international experience. He has vast experience in the design and implementation of several large-scale program interventions in the human rights, democracy and governance sectors.



Samuel Ndonga Mwangi

Samuel Ndonga Mwangi: is an experienced professional with over 10 years in the private sector and international development space. He has vast experience in sustainable private sector development, renewable energy and agribusiness. He is also a Certified Executive in the Practice of Social Entrepreneurship and an Affiliate of the Kenya Institute of Management.





A couple finds fortune in **STRAWBERRY** farming

Kenneth and Beatrice Kiarie, from Ol jororok, in Nyandarua County point proudly at their strawberry farm. The passion for growing their money maker crop strawberries- started when the couple attended a farmer-to-farmer exchange visit in Kiambu County, organized by Ziwani Mungiko, a local women self-help organization based in Nyahururu town.

Three years down the line, Kenneth and Beatrice have been growing strawberries in their six-acre farm for commercial purposes, leaving only a small piece of land for other household food crops. The farm now christened KENBET is the envy of the community and has influenced other farmers to try their hand in growing this nutritious fruit. KENBET farm, is a unique farm, in terms of planning and the sustainable practices on the farm. The farm has Zero produce wastage; all the products are recycled on the farm. The vast grass mulch cover ensures

that the soil remains intact while ensuring moisture is available for crop use all round the year. The livestock on the farm feed on the strawberry fruits and leaves pruned from the fields.

“Instead of planting horticultural crops like cabbage, French beans, potatoes and maize which is the norm here, we decided to plant strawberries in the quest to earn more income and keep our family healthy”, said Kiarie.



The couple notes that despite the achievements the farm has recorded, it has not been easy as taking care of the crop is time consuming especially during the harvest period. “You have to wake up early in the morning to pick the strawberries when the temperatures are ideal so as to avoid post-harvest losses”, explains Kiarie.



The price of a 250 gram punnet of strawberry costs between Ksh 100 and Ksh 150 unlike a 250-gram tin of jam which costs between Ksh 200 and Ksh 250.

group on value addition was their greatest breakthrough. She notes that the price of a 250 gram punnet of strawberry costs between Ksh 100 and Ksh 150 unlike a 250-gram tin of jam which costs between Ksh 200 and Ksh 250. “We use the normal blender when making jam and it is a tedious process and time consuming as we can only manage to produce about 100 tins of jam a day”, says Beatrice. Her husband says that they hope to have a jam and juice processor in the future as their business grows. They have also added value to their milk products by making strawberry flavored yoghurt.

The passion and determination of the couple has not only influenced many farmers in Nyandarua County to get into strawberry farming, but has also seen the formation of a Strawberry Farmers Association.

Ziwani Mungiko is one of the many local organizations supported by Act! through the Changieni Rasili Mali Facility to build the capacity of smallholder farmers for increased income and livelihoods.

Reliable Income

“Strawberry farming is a good business if only you get it right. We have made great economic strides since we started farming the crop”, says Beatrice. In order to earn more income, the couple have turned to making jam, upgraded packaging of strawberry fruit into 250 gram punnets and seed production. , as part of adhering to good agricultural and food safety practices. According to Beatrice, the training they received from Ziwani Mungiko Women



A moment for change:

Youth group rises to fight radicalization through theatre



A Malindi based youth group popularly known as Exodus is taking the fight against violent extremism to new heights through community- based plays and skits. The group, currently being supported by Kwacha Afrika, a SCORE partner, was established five years ago. The 30 members of the group are reaching out to their peers, majority of whom face challenges such as unemployment, drugs, early marriages, teenage pregnancies, HIV infection and most recently, radicalization. In reaching out to their peers, Exodus employs carefully crafted and packaged information to help them cope with these challenges.

According to Bob Wario, the group Chairman, the use of theatre has led to great transformation among the young people. He applauds the support from Kwacha Afrika particularly in the design of major play scripts that has seen them get opportunities to perform at both county and national level events.

With the increasing threat of young people being lured into radicalization, the group carries out community outreach activities by staging theme based plays that highlight the need

for unity in the community and the dangers of terrorism to the society.

“To help our fellow youth not to be lured into terror groups such as Al Shabaab, we organize free shows in the community with targeted messages that advocate for peaceful co-existence and the need to appreciate our diversity”



Members of the Exodus Youth Group during a rehearsal session in Malindi

says Wario. “We know that the youth are most vulnerable to radicalization and recruitment into extremist groups such as Al Shabaab as the terror cells promise lucrative deals in return”, explains Emmanuel Omondi, the group treasurer.

Omondi notes that there is need for the youth to look out for alternative livelihood opportunities that will keep them engaged and prevent them from being lured into violent extremist groups. Theatre is one such activity that can reinforce peer-to-peer mentorship and foster a sense of purpose among the youth according to Omondi.

Evans Kasena of Kwacha Afrika says that theatre is an essential thread that can help bring the youth together, particularly those who have completed school. According to him, theatre can help them deal with the pressures of modern life which is critical in providing a foundation for a more secure society. He notes that their project on *Strengthening Inter-Cultural Cohesion among*

Communities through Participatory Educational Theatre is working with young people in the coastal region to ensure that they actively engage in meaningful income generating activities. “We are training them on entrepreneurship so that they can earn an extra income on top of their group performance”, adds Kasena.

Kwacha Afrika is one of 18 local organizations in the six Coastal Kenya Counties that USAID supports to provide community-led initiatives against violent extremism and radicalization.

Kwacha Afrika aims to address violent extremism, radicalization and land-related grievances, particularly for groups of vulnerable and marginalized people including women, youth and people with disabilities in Kilifi County.

Theatre is an essential thread that can help bring the youth together to shun radicalization and violent extremism.

Through the lens

Promoting Bold Conversations to end Violent Extremism



Amb. Mariam Yassin, Special Envoy for Children and Migrant Rights of the Federal Republic of Somalia during the forum.



Commissioner Murshid Mohammed of the National Police Service Commission during the colloquium



A delighted Kwale County Governor Hon. Salim Mvurya after officially opening the conference on CVE



Dominic Pkalya Program Manager Peace Building and Conflict Transformation, Act! delivering keynote address on behalf of Act! Executive Director Anne Nyabera



The Executive Director of Human Rights Agenda, Yusuf Lule gives his insights on countering violent extremism

The Big Q

Rachel Muthoga,
Executive Director MTG



Preventing and Countering youth radicalization and violent extremism in Kilifi County through girl child sporting events

1. Youth Radicalization and Violent Extremism is increasingly becoming the single greatest global security challenge, and Kenya has been hit hard. What is your take on this security nightmare and views on how to tackle it?

Radicalization is a major security concern that has many facets, compounding factors and has proved to be a hydra-headed challenge that does not have one simple solution. As a country and

the world as a whole seek to counter violent extremism, we must be ready to take multiple approaches as there is not a silver bullet solution so to speak. For us at Moving the Goalposts, we see ourselves as addressing this problem from a prevention perspective; resolving some of the push factors before they impact on young people. Some of these push factors include poverty, illiteracy, lack of opportunities and the disillusionment that comes with these. In response to this, we have designed programs that revolve around conflict resolution and economic empowerment. Economic empowerment here includes financial literacy, preparation for the job market and business startups.

2. Tell us more about your organization and its role in addressing youth radicalization and violent extremism in Kilifi County?

MTG is an organization that has been working in the grassroots in Kilifi County





Rachel Muthoga on receiving the Laureus Award for “Sport for Good” from former football star Luis Figo

for over 15 years now. This gives us credence within the local community as they have come to hold our work in high regard, and clearly understand our programming on leadership development, womens’ rights, sexual and reproductive health, economic empowerment and child protection. It is on the basis of this good will that we are able to focus on the issues that underlie the problem of youth radicalization. Our chosen approach is based on our experiences working with over 30,000 girls and young women over the years, and understanding the push factors for youth radicalization and other ills plaguing young people today.

3. Why is MTG focusing on girls and young mothers and not necessarily other groups in the County?

MTG is and has been an organization that works with girls and young women since inception. As such, this is our area of expertise and experience and we believe we bring a different perspective to the campaign against youth radicalization and violent extremism. Many times

in this arena, girls and women are forgotten as the focus is on young men as combatants. However, women too are at risk of recruitment into extremist groups as well as being part of the front line as combatants. They have also been exploited as wives for the combatants. This double risk means that they cannot be left out of the equation as we seek to intervene in this issue.

4. Recently, MTG won the Laureus Award for “Sport for Good”. What significance does the award have to your organization in addressing challenges facing young girls in Kilifi County and Coastal region as a whole?

The Laureus Award was given to us by the Laureus Academy, who issue such awards each year to outstanding sports persons. For us, being recognized this year, amongst other sporting greats such as Serena Williams who won the Sports Woman of the Year Award is a great achievement. It has enabled us be profiled both in Kenya and abroad. It has helped us to draw more support to the issues that



we are passionate about and has enabled the approach of sports for development to come to the attention of many people.

5. Your organization has registered considerable success in empowering young and vulnerable girls in Kilifi County through sports. In what ways does the sporting approach help to address the challenges associated with violent extremism and radicalization?

As you are aware, working with youth requires innovative approaches that make the learning process interesting enough for the young person to choose to continually engage with the training. For us, the football approach enables us to have a week to week interaction with the girls and young women we work with. Further, we are able to integrate

important sessions such as conflict resolution, decision making and avoiding peer pressure, which build the capacity of the youth to have the tools to be agents of positive development in their local community.

6. Do you think civil society have a role in dealing with the effects of radicalization in Kenya?

Yes, civil society is by nature a grouping of people concerned with finding solutions to the challenges society faces. As such, we cannot sit back and allow this vice to take over our society. We have the tools and resources to create change in society and we should utilize these to engage with youth radicalization and violent extremism until it is eradicated from our society.



Adaptive crop farming, a great hope to Tharaka farmers



Purity Gatiria attends to crops in her farm

“Misery loves company” the old adage goes, and the residents of Tharaka Sub County in Tharaka Nithi County can attest to this. The Sub County and her surrounding environment present a whole range of miseries; from the extreme high temperatures and dry weather to the dusty rocky conditions and the unpredictable rainfall that make farming and survival almost impossible. This has forced some of the residents to migrate in search of greener pastures, while those who choose to stay and live and adapt their life to the hardy conditions are now engaging in serious agribusiness to earn a living.

The story of Tunyai Mithigini Network that took up more resilient farming from different adaptive crops remains a great hope for the many farmers in Tharaka Nithi County. Meet Purity Gatiria a member of Tunyai Mithigini network who has embraced adaptive farming amidst the dry and deserted ecosystem. In her farm, different

Pawpaw farming does not require a lot of capital to start and to maintain. Farmers can easily embrace its' farming since it is profitable as crops grow throughout the year providing a stable income.



A Tunyai Mithigini Network member in his pawpaw farm

technologies like ZAI PIT, drip irrigation, water harvesting, as well as agribusiness, record keeping, agro-forestry and fruit farming among other skills. “When everyone else is talking about drought and hardships, I am busy in my farm reaping

varieties of crops that are well adapted to the environment flourish ranging from pawpaw, bananas, green grams, cowpeas, mangoes, watermelons, to oranges among other varieties. “Pawpaw farming does not require a lot of capital to start and to maintain. Farmers can easily embrace its’ farming since it is profitable as crops grow throughout the year providing a stable income. “Pawpaws actually thrive in arid and semi arid areas” she attests.

Gatiria, explains that before embarking on farming food crops that are adapted to the environment, her crops used to dry immaturely due to the harsh unfriendly weather. With support from Act! partner GRADI-Kenya, farmers in Gatiria’s network were trained on integrated farming, crop husbandry and climate smart

volumes of yields, thanks to the training,” said Gatiria. In a good season she takes home over Ksh. 300,000 which she puts into good use by paying school fees for her children, re-investing some back to the farm and comfortably providing for her family.



Network members who have embraced adaptive farming



Mariam Chuku (not her real name) reflects on her past while celebrating new opportunities presented by SCORE Program

Project Boosts Livelihood for Kilifi Urban Youth

Mariam Chuku (not her real name) is one of hundreds of young adults who seek a meaningful, productive way to earn income and sustain a livelihood within their community. Chuku found was she was looking for in Kwacha Afrika, a USAID supported program to mitigate violent extremism and radicalization among youth in Kilifi County.

The 30-year-old mother of three got married at 14 and has never had any formal education. As the firstborn in a family of 13 children, Chuku's face is full of resentment due to what she views as wasted years.

"When my husband abandoned me, I resorted to prostitution to earn income and feed my children. With no education, I could not get a formal job in the available tourist resorts as I cannot speak English.",

"For more than six years as a commercial sex worker, I got exposed to drugs and illicit brew and this affected my children psychologically as they could not attend school regularly," she added.

says Chuku as tears roll down her cheeks.

"For more than six years as a commercial sex worker, I got exposed to drugs and illicit brew and this affected my children psychologically as they could not attend school regularly," she added.

A study on Youth Radicalization by Muslims for Human Rights (MUHURI) cites lack of education and unemployment among the youth



as a key contributor to young people being radicalized.

As a member of the front office staff, hired to clean up the Exodus Youth Group Secretary's office each day before others arrive, Chuku earns a monthly income to help feed and educate her children. She also gets paid whenever the group performs during public events.

A study on Youth Radicalization by Muslims for Human Rights cites lack of education and unemployment among the youth as a key contributor to young people being radicalized.

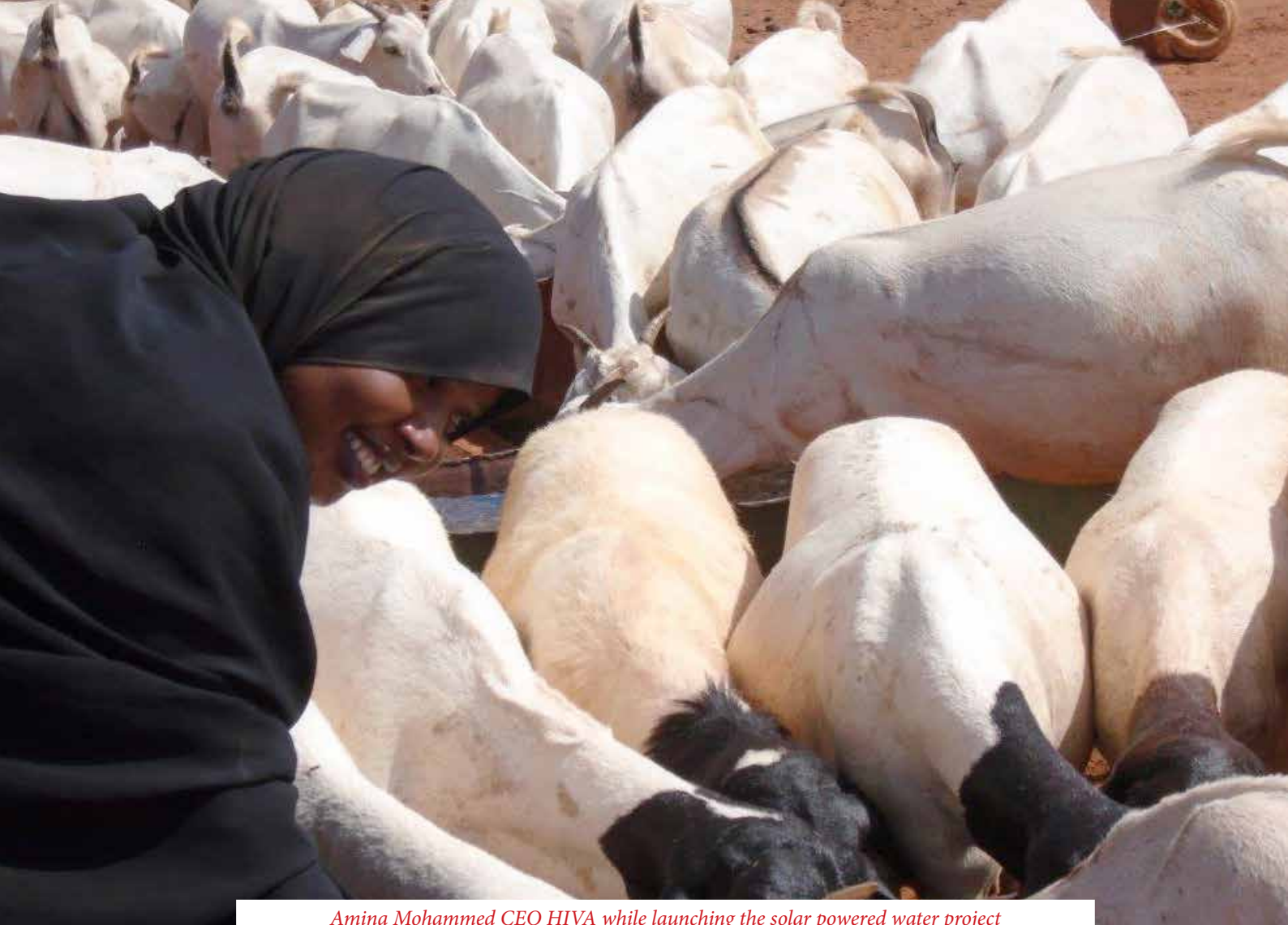
Since her transformation, Chuku has reconciled with her family. "I can attest that theater is one of the ways that the youth can engage in to relieve stress and get rid of peer pressure that lead many of the youth to social evils," she said.

Kwacha Afrika aims to address violent extremism, radicalization and land-related grievances, particularly for groups of vulnerable and marginalized people including women, youth and people with disabilities in Kilifi County.

Strengthening Community Resilience against Violent Extremism (SCORE) is a 5-year program that seeks to offer a flexible and inclusive civil society with the view of addressing the root causes of violent extremism whilst reducing the allure of potentially radicalizing messages.

Act! is implementing the program on behalf of USAID.

The names of the subjects in this story have been changed to protect their identities.



Amina Mohammed CEO HIVA while launching the solar powered water project

Women now part of Water Management Committees

Climate change has significant impacts on fresh water sources, affecting the availability of water used for domestic and agricultural activities. The effects of the increased frequency of floods and droughts are far reaching, particularly for vulnerable groups, including women who are responsible for water management at household level.

All over the developing world, women and girls bear the burden of fetching water for their families and spend significant amounts of time daily hauling water from distant sources. The water from distant sources is rarely enough to meet the needs of the household and is often contaminated, meaning that women and girls also pay the heaviest price for poor sanitation.

Water resource scarcity implies long hours spent by women and children (mostly girls) who

to travel great distances to find water. This is time that could otherwise be spent in school or in income generating activities. Walking long distances to fetch water also exposes women and girls to harassment or sexual assault, especially in areas of conflict.

It is recognized that the actions that women are able to take depend on their involvement in decision-making processes at all levels, their understanding and capacity to effectively

WRUAs are legal entities with a broad mandate of managing water resources in a specified geographical area.

intervene in climate change matters, their integration into climate change institutions, and their engagement in policy and decision making processes at all levels.

Humanitarian International Voluntary Association (HIVA) intervention in strengthening the capacity of water users association has enabled women of Sala, Kamor Liban, Kabo, Damasa and Jarbaley to be part of the Water Management Committees

for the first time. Kamor Liban Water Users Association was initially composed of only 10 men. Things have changed for the better now with the formation and registration of Water Resource Users Association (WRUAs) in these areas. Out of the 40 members, 27 are male while 13 are female. Women are also represented in the various sub-committees such as procurement, finance, monitoring and management.

According to Ambia Muhumud of Kulmis WRUA, women are good leaders and can manage water resources efficiently. "A leader should have experience, must be a good listener, non partisan and honest. You will find most women have these qualities as compared to men", she said.

WRUAs are legal entities with a broad mandate of managing water resources in a specified geographical area. With technical support from Water Resource Management Authority (WARMA), HIVA has so far established two WRUAs in Lafey Sub-County known as Kulmis and Sala.



Kamor Liban community members draw water from a water point, an initiative of HIVA with support from Act!

Picture Speak



Francis Aywa, Board Chairman while presenting Act's Strategy 2016-2019 to development partners



Betty Sidi of HURIA contributing during a SCORE and Peace, Security and Stability partners coordination meeting



Rachel Muthoga, Executive Director Moving the Goalposts on receiving the Laureus Award for "Sport for Good"



Monica Mutisya showcases part of her farm following training on mixed species farming. The farming model ensures farmers are food secure throughout the year



Taking bold conversations on Defying Violent Extremism to Kenya's public transport sector. The initiative dubbed Women Against Violent Extremism engages with members of the public to get insights on preventing radicalization in Coastal Kenya



Act partner UMMAH Initiative engage youth in tree planting exercise to mark World Environment Day 2016

Picture Speak



Act staff during a meeting with new Board Members



Bonventure Chengeck Program Coordinator during an induction workshop of PSS partners



Halima Keah a Grants Officer, Act! during a capacity development session with staff of UMMAH Initiative in Kwale County



Haki Africa's Hussein Khalid receives the James Lawson Award for his organization's role in preventing violent extremism in Coastal Kenya. The award was presented by Shaazka Beyerle, the Director of the International Centre for Non Violent Conflict



Kashayar Ghashghai a representative from the US Embassy addressing participants during the 1st County Colloquium on Countering Violent Extremism in Kwale County



Farmers from Tharaka Nithi showcase their farm following training from GRADIF-Kenya on climate sensitive agriculture



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