

# Northwest Community of Practice (COP) session

“Emerging Issues and Dynamics in PCVE in Northwest Nigeria.”

28<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> April 2025

# “Repositioning Young Persons as PCVE Champions”

Empowering youth to combat violent extremism effectively

# Introduction

In recent years, the alarming rise of violent extremism has emerged as a pressing threat to global peace, security, and social cohesion. This issue is particularly pronounced in Nigeria, where various social, economic, and political factors contribute to the susceptibility of individuals and communities to extremist ideologies. The Nigerian National Action Plan on PCVE recognizes the invaluable role that youth play in countering these narratives and fostering resilience within their communities.

Youth represent a significant portion of Nigeria's population and possess the energy, creativity, and passion necessary to influence change. Their involvement in the PCVE is essential not only for empowering them but also for ensuring sustainable peace efforts. Repositioning young people as champions of peace can reverse the trend of violence, providing them with platforms to express their voices and concerns while actively participating in the development of solutions tailored to their specific contexts.

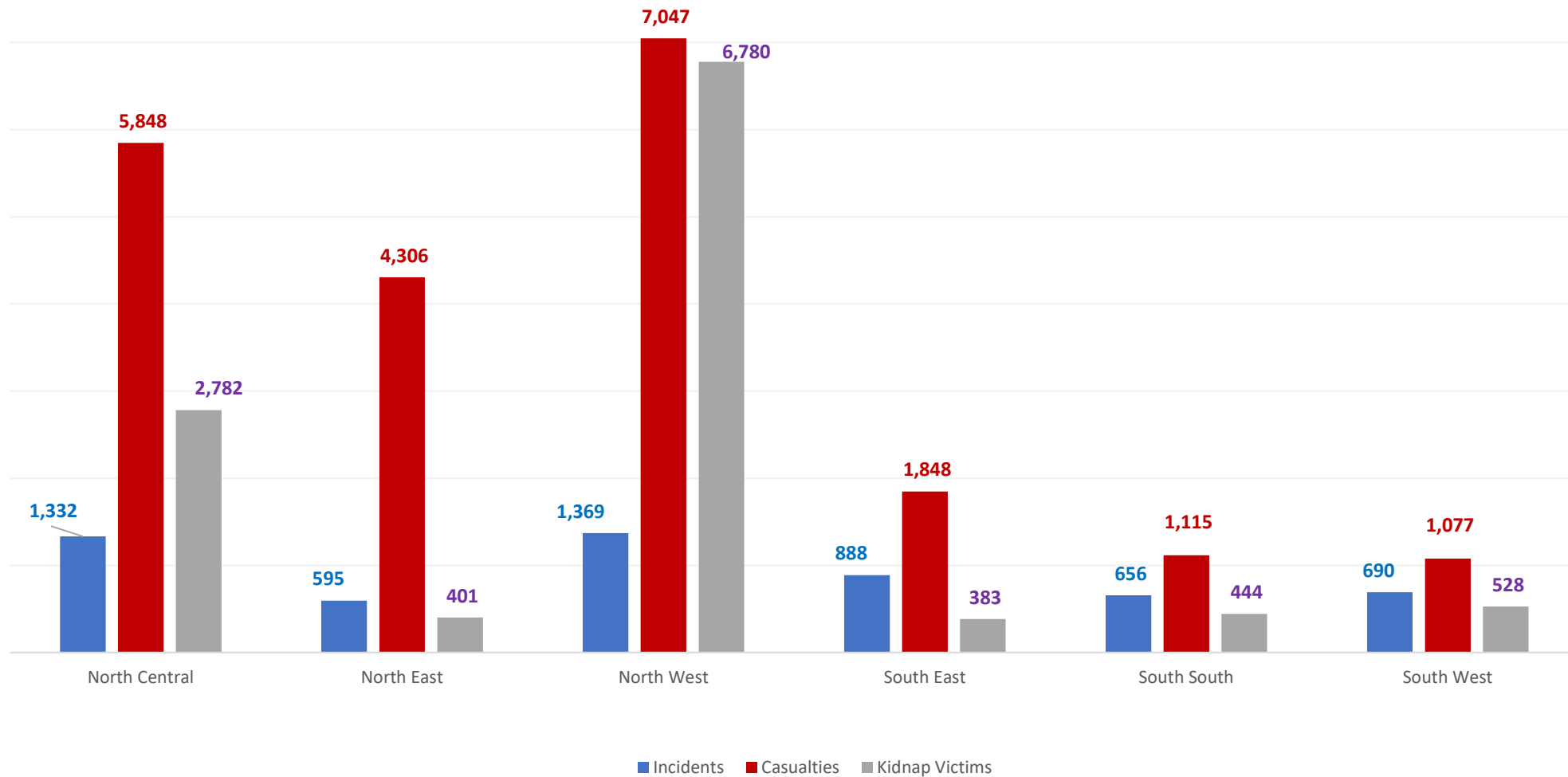
The NAP on PCVE recognizes the significant role of youth creating peace, security and progress, and encourage youth engagement by creating space for sharing of ideas to counter VE both online and offline. This presentation focuses on the significant role of youth in PCVE. While exploring ways to reposition them champions who can effectively and collaboratively engage in PCVE initiatives.

# Why Youth Matter

## **The dual role:**

- Vulnerable to radicalization due to various social, economic, and political factors.
- Their critical role in building community resilience against extremist ideologies.
- Their energy, creativity, and passion make them essential in fostering peace and security within their communities.

## Violent Conflict Data: Regional Overview(source: Nextier violent Data base)



# Challenges Impacting Youth Engagement in PCVE

- Marginalization, unemployment, and limited access to quality education.
- Misinformation and susceptibility to extremist narratives.
- Lack of youth-driven platforms and spaces for healthy community engagement.
- The need to overcome societal stigmatization and misperceptions.

# Role of Youth in PCVE Efforts

## Community Shaping

Youth are essential in shaping their communities through active participation and leadership in various initiatives.

## Peer Influence

Young individuals can effectively influence their peers, promoting positive behaviors and community values through their actions.

## Innovative Solutions

Engaging youth in PCVE efforts encourages fresh ideas and innovative solutions that can tackle complex social issues.



# Opportunities – Empowering Youth as PCVE Champions

- Leveraging technology and social media to promote counter-narratives.
- Establishing youth networks and grassroots movements.
- Utilizing peer education and mentorship programs.
- Creating safe spaces for dialogue, creativity, and civic engagement.



# Strategies for Repositioning Youth

- Capacity Building: Training programs in leadership, digital literacy, critical thinking, and conflict resolution.
- Community Engagement: Partnerships and collaboration with civil society, local leaders, and religious organizations.
- Inclusive Education: Curriculum enhancements that include peace education and socio-emotional learning.
- Mentorship Programs: Linking experienced PCVE practitioners with emerging youth leaders.
- Youth-Friendly Communication: Crafting messages and campaigns that resonate with young audiences.

# Best Practices and Innovative Approaches

- Peer-Led Initiatives: Example: Youth-led community outreach in conflict-prone areas.
- Social Media Campaigns: Utilizing platforms to share positive stories and debunk extremist propaganda.
- Creative Interventions: Incorporation of arts, music, and sports to foster social cohesion.
- Collaborative Projects: Success stories of joint initiatives between government agencies and civil society/community organizations.

# Case Studies of Successful PCVE Youth Champions

## Youth-Led Initiatives

Youth-led initiative that demonstrate power of young leaders driving positive change in their communities. YEEP, the Strengthening Advocacy against Violent Extremism (SAVE) project in Kano State implemented by DAG, AFRYDEV youth peace camp, NEYIF - Amplifying Youth Voices for Peace and Development: A phone-in Radio dialogue

## Lessons Learned

The YEEP project led by the ONSA and UNOCT exemplifies effective youth involvement in policy and decision-making. The YEEP empowers young people to actively participate in discussions around PCVE and peacebuilding. This initiative ensures that youth perspectives and insights are integrated into strategic decisions and policies, demonstrating the significance of their contributions in shaping the environments they inhabit.

## Inspiration for New Champions

These successful examples can inspire new youth champions to initiate their own PCVE efforts and mobilize their peers.





# **Adapting to Evolving Challenges in PCVE**

## **Changing Landscape**

The landscape of violent extremism is continuously evolving, requiring constant vigilance and adaptation from youth networks.

## **Flexibility and Adaptation**

Youth networks must maintain flexibility to adapt to new challenges and opportunities presented by the changing environment.

## **Responding to Challenges**

Proactive responses to emerging threats are essential for youth networks to effectively counter violent extremism.

# Education, Skill Development, and Mentorship

- Integrating peace and conflict resolution modules into formal education.
- Creating platforms for skills training that are aligned with modern-day challenges.
- Mentorship programs that pair youth with experienced PCVE professionals.
- Fostering entrepreneurial spirit to channel youth innovation into constructive community projects.

# Measuring Impact and Ensuring Sustainability

- Metrics for Success: Participation rates, community feedback, qualitative changes in community relations.
- Sustainability: Long-term funding, local ownership of programs, and periodic reviews.
- Data Collection: Using surveys, interviews, and digital analytics to track progress.
- Adapting Strategies: Flexibility in approach based on real-time feedback and emerging trends.

# Recommendations

- Immediate steps: launching pilot programs, community forums, and youth leadership workshops.
- Engage local stakeholders in dialogue to explore tailored interventions.
- Formation of task forces that develop action plans for engaging youth.
- Highlight the potential long-term benefits of repositioning young persons in achieving community resilience.

# Conclusion

- This presentation has highlighted the critical role of youth in combating violent extremism. By repositioning young persons as PCVE champions, we can leverage their energy, creativity, and passion to foster resilience and sustainable peace within their communities.
- Empowering youth through capacity building, community engagement, and inclusive education is essential for reversing the trend of violence and ensuring long-term stability.
- As we move forward, it is imperative to continue supporting and nurturing youth-led initiatives, creating safe spaces for dialogue, and adapting to evolving challenges and opportunities presented by the changing environment.



# GROUP DISCUSSION

How can we effectively empower youth to become champions of peace and counter violent extremism in their communities, considering the unique challenges they face?