



ICRD Monthly Update

January 16, 2019

Dear friends,

As yesterday's attack in Nairobi made clear, the Republic of Kenya is still vulnerable to attacks by violent extremist organizations such as al-Shabaab. As transnational terrorism remains a threat around the world, preventing future attacks in the Kenyan context calls for locally driven interventions that draw on global best practices in halting the spread of violent extremism.

To this end, ICRD conducted a workshop last month for grantees of the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF) to train its grantee staff members on good practices in preventing violent extremism (PVE). ICRD staff traveled to Nairobi to conduct a two-day PVE workshop to address drivers of violent extremism among vulnerable populations in Kenya. Drawing on years of experience conducting PVE workshops in Yemen, Morocco, and elsewhere, ICRD successfully adapted its training modules and international expertise to the risks and concerns unique to the Kenyan context. This effort was aided, in no small, part by the co-facilitation of Kenyan PVE expert Dr. Mustafa Ali.



The workshop positively strengthened peacebuilders in the region. Trainees are now poised to implement community-level interventions intended to strengthen the resilience of local populations against the lures of violent extremism. ICRD continues to be recognized as a global leader in the field of practice – particularly as we work to build community resilience against extremist recruitment.

“Now I am looking forward to doing this [PVE] project. I wasn't before, because I didn't feel like I had the right knowledge. But now, I am.” - PVE workshop participant



As ICRD's global profile continues to grow, new and interesting groups are inquiring about ICRD's work. We would like to offer our sincere thanks to ICRD Board member, Rev. Dr. Conrad Fischer, who recently hosted a panel on which I sat with two incredibly inspiring individuals working to promote peace. The first, Anthony Grippa, is the Director of the short movie [Aleppo the Film](#). Anthony's work sheds light on the realities of medical workers struggling to support those wounded in the ongoing violence in Syria. The film is intended to raise awareness of the plight of the Syrian people and the selfless work performed by doctors and medical workers in the midst of danger and conflict, including the lasting impact that work has had on them.

The panel also featured Irene Kapustina, the writer and director of the original play, [Lost and Guided](#). The play tells the story of four young Syrians who travel as refugees to the United States. Based on interviews and stories garnered from actual Syrian refugees, the play offers audiences an incredibly authentic experience and brings to light the social and relationship struggles faced in the Syrian diaspora. A truly unique panel of speakers, the audience posed questions about the relationship between art, theater, and peacebuilding. Seeing the panelists as different sides of the same coin, many were deeply impacted by the shared aims and goals of the panelists.

Much of people's sense of identity is woven around stories, stories of pain, of hope, of anger, and of reconciliation. As we work to strengthen and support peacebuilders around the world, it is equally important that we listen to and help them to tell their stories. Through media, art, programming in communities, and any other means by which we might raise the profile of the lived histories of violent conflict in the world, it is our responsibility as global citizens to promote the possibility of peace.

Warm regards,

James Patton

ICRD partner, Alliance for Peacebuilding (AfP), is hosting in-person trainings on Inter-religious Peacebuilding Design & Monitoring in Washington, DC; Brussels, Belgium; and Bangkok, Thailand. More information can be found [here](#). AfP, in collaboration with GHR Foundation, is facilitating these trainings as a part of their "Effective Inter-religious Action in Peacebuilding (EIAP)" project. Consider applying for the trainings today!

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