

**Green-String Network, Kenya**  
**SDGs Progress Report**  
**2017-2019**

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## **1.0 Introduction: Organization**

The Green String Network (GSN) is a multi-disciplinary team of peacebuilders, community development workers, psychologists, police officers and researchers designing trauma-informed interventions and methods for their evaluation. Our work is focused on addressing trauma as one of the root causes of violent behavior. We seek to understand how trauma and exposure to violence shape identity, memory, perceptions, attitudes, and behavior. An important aspect of examining violent behavior is understanding the nature of resilience. That is, we study peaceful behavior, particularly resistance to reactionary forces and ideas. Our programs support participants in a process of deconstructing the narratives associated with beliefs and histories of conflict and grievances. The gendered nature of the conflict is among the issues examined. Much of our work is focused on issues related to violence prevention, including violent extremism, violent crime, gender-based violence, and ethnic violence.

<https://www.green-string.org/>

## **2.0 SDGs We contribute to**

We are actively invested in working on SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) as our main goal. SDG 3 (Good health and Wellbeing), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) are our follow up goals.

## **3.0 The Intervention (Approach)**

GSN's fundamental approach (**A trauma-informed peacebuilding**) creates safe spaces which foster real dialogue within fragmented communities. The approach confronts the past and injustices in safe and empowering settings increasing both self and collective awareness and resilience.

From 2017-2019, GSN has implemented 2 social healing projects in coastal (Kilifi, Lamu and Tana River counties) and Nairobi (Majengo) regions for communities and national police service. The social healing program for communities is called 'Kumekucha'-A New Dawn while for the police is called "Muamko Mpya: Healing the Uniform". GSN also has conducted

various wellbeing and resilience training workshops for leaders; community, youth, religious, etc.

### **3.1 Kumekucha:**

Kumekucha is a 12-week sessions program that is led by community volunteers (Community facilitators) who have undergone a 10-day wellbeing and Resilience framework. The program is done through the use of artwork and storytelling. The community is divided into 12-15 participants per group to create a space for them to go through the sessions comfortably.

### **3.2 Muamko Mpya:**

Muamko Mpya: Healing the Uniform is an adaptation of Kumekucha for the Kenya National Police Service (NPS) and other security actors. It builds on Kumekucha and examines the cycle of violence, trauma, resilience and healing. A group of 15 police officers take part in a 5-day wellbeing and resilience trainings.

WebR incorporates peacebuilding and conflict transformation programming with mental health. It supports actors in violence-prone environments in assessing how different populations, sectors and types of work are affected by compounded stress and/or trauma. The WebR focuses on relationships as a resource for healing and builds on existing community-resilience modalities. The WebR peacebuilding approach involves working with practitioners who are already providing some sort of service to communities such as the police force.

### **Wellbeing & Resilience: A trauma-informed peacebuilding approach programming includes:**

- Understanding the physiological, emotional, cognitive, behavioral and spiritual impact of traumatic events (current or historic) on recipient populations, and how unaddressed trauma contributes to cycles of violence;
- Going beyond traditional mental health diagnosis and symptoms of Post- Traumatic Stress Disorder as the measure of trauma impact, and also recognizing community and societal dynamics and behaviors are indicators of unaddressed trauma;

- Identifying processes from multiple fields—human and economic security, conflict transformation, restorative justice, neurobiology, psychology and spirituality—which can address the effects of trauma and increase resilience; and
- Recognizing that addressing the psychological needs of populations creates the need to monitor staff for secondary trauma and to equip them with self-care skills.

#### **4.0 The Impact:**

A pre and post intervention surveys are conducted for each group before and after the implementation to assess the impact the program has had on the beneficiaries.

One of the assumptions guiding Kumekucha and Muamko Mpya is that lower levels of distress and higher levels of trauma awareness result in individuals and communities resilient to forces and ideologies that promote violence and division.

##### ***What we measure in the studies:***

- Growth in knowledge in relation to trauma and violence.
- Changes in behavior in relation to resilience and healing.
- Changes in attitudes and perceptions in relation to peace and reconciliation.
- Changes in behavior in relation to violence, peace and reconciliation.
- Changes in levels of distress and trauma symptoms.

The research process for the two projects began in 2017 and was concluded 2019. Data from all implementation locations were analyzed and reported on. On 12<sup>th</sup> November 2019, GSN launched its first community impact report “Growing Connection, Resiliency and Agency: *The impact of community-led trauma-informed peacebuilding in response to violent extremism in Kenya*” at the second annual Paris Peace Forum. The full report can be downloaded here <https://www.green-string.org/our-impact/>

## **5.0 The Findings:**

Below are the findings from the program research conducted in the period of 2017-2019.

### **5.1 Kumekucha Impact**

The findings show that participants reported significant changes from preintervention survey (Baseline) to postintervention survey (Endline) in trauma & resilience, social cohesion and community engagement as shown below:

#### **a) Impact on trauma & resilience:**

- Using healthier ways of alleviating stress
- Going to one's place of faith more frequently
- Having a stronger support system
- Having reduced PTSD symptoms

#### **b) Impact on social cohesion:**

- Increased trust in members of one's community
- Increased trust in members of other groups increased
- Increased willingness to forgive someone who has harmed them even if they do not regret what they have done
- Stronger belief that former members of armed groups
- Should be allowed to return to their communities increased.
- Stronger feeling that your community has been treated unfairly compared to others increased.
- Stronger belief in the necessity of fighting to resolve differences increased but not significantly.

### **c) Impact on community engagement.**

Beyond promoting more positive attitudes toward social cohesion, peace and reconciliation, we were interested in seeing the impact on actual behaviors that promoted social cohesion through community engagement.

- greater belonging to any social, civic, sports or cultural groups (any group that meets regularly increased).
- Increased level of engagement in one's community, socially, civically or politically
- Increased interaction with members of "other" groups.

These findings indicate higher levels of actual connecting and bridging behaviors with people beyond themselves or their immediate families.

### **5.2 Muamko Mpya Findings:**

Police officers participated in Trauma Informed Resilience (TIR) workshops conducted in Mombasa, Nairobi, Malindi and Kwale in December 2017 and January 2018. TIR is now referred to as the Wellbeing and Resilience (WebR) framework. The officers were interviewed 10-11 months post intervention. The number of respondents from the baseline to the endline surveys dropped from 45 to 31. Though the officers were willing to take part in the endline survey, coordinating a time was very difficult given the erratic nature of their work and schedules.

There were significant changes post-intervention. Here is a summary of the changes found through our quantitative tool:

- There was significant improvement in the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10 score) with more officers scoring within the "likely to be well" range ( $p < 0.011$ )
- There was improvement in the support system at work ( $p < 0.016$ )
- There were significant improvements in the following symptoms:

Hopelessness ( $p < 0.041$ )

Restlessness ( $p < 0.001$ )

Depression ( $p < 0.030$ )

Feelings of worthlessness ( $p < 0.027$ )

## **6.0 Conclusion:**

A total of three thousand eight hundred and eighty-two (3882) community members have taken part in the 12-week social healing program in Kenya as well as five hundred and fifty-six (556) police officers and leaders were trained on wellbeing and resilience by 2019.

Currently GSN is continuing implementation of Web-R trainings with the National Police Service. The research for the project is ongoing and final Police Impact report will be worked on 20202.