



SRIC: PILOT INTERVENTION LEARNING PAPER

PROJECT TITLE:

Digitisation of Police Arms Registers in four counties: An integrated Approach

The Amaya Triangle where Baringo borders Samburu, Laikipia, Isiolo and West Pokot Counties provides a rich pilot site for exploring community safety and security programming in fragile, conflict and violence affected settings (FCVAS). Reconfiguration and renegotiation of access to land and water resources in counties with large scale conservancies and pastoral communities has long been part of the broader proposals in managing latent conflict. Towards this end, the REINVENT Programme worked with CSI-Kenya to implement a pilot intervention using the Targeted Dialogue Approach¹ to understand the underlying drivers of recurrent cross border violence in Laikipia, Baringo, Isiolo, West Pokot and Samburu counties and how the availability and proliferation of small arms and light weapons among these communities exacerbate conflict. Entry points for programme delivery delivering promoting community relations, safety and security among local communities and with ranch owners will be found.

This learning paper highlights lessons emerging from the pilot phase and the implications for how peacebuilders design inter-communal peacebuilding interventions in FCVAS. One

stark lesson emerging in this pilot intervention is that theories of change often assume hard State led approaches will deliver inter-communal peacebuilding and thus devise ways in which the State is pushed to deliver increased security in volatile regions to ensure that community members perusing conflict are apprehended and held 'accountable'. On the contrary, this intervention has found that in FCVAS, we need to understand the nature of authority and question our assumptions of who is to be held to account, the limitations of hard State led approaches and how intra- and inter-community allegiances play out when there are threats to commonly community beliefs on existence, prosperity and power.

Taken together, the lessons emerging pose important challenges to the design of interventions in these settings where State, private organisation like conservancies and local communities interact in search of a sustainable peace. The findings are relevant for the effective implementation of conflict and stability interventions and how to promote collaboration between local communities, conservancies and county security leadership committees.

Design and implementation of the pilot intervention



Management of conflicts in arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) in Kenya pose a big challenge to state and non-state actors. Although the scale, severity and frequency of such conflicts may have reduced over the years¹, low government presence, previous experience of conflicts, spill overs from politically fragile neighboring countries such as Somalia and widespread youth unemployment² continue to drive intra and inter community conflicts in the country and especially within the frontier counties. Additionally, political polarisation, competition over control and access to devolved opportunities and easy availability of small arms and light weapons are increasingly making the likelihood of recurrence or upsurge of armed inter-communal conflicts rife, particularly in poorly developed and resource scarce ASALs such as the Samburu, Laikipia, Baringo and West Pokot counties. The issue of misuse of legally held firearms and excessive use of force while quelling conflicts by law enforcement agencies has also been highlighted as part of the development challenges in these counties.

This pilot intervention sought to address the challenge of illegal use of state-owned arms through digitisation of existing manual records aimed at creating a secure framework of tracking their issuance and movements. SRIC was guided by two objectives. First, obtaining the trust and confidence of local security agencies and other licensed arms holders within the four counties key being National Police Reservists and private rangers working in ranches and conservancies. Second, demonstrating the value of the digitisation considering established police procedures (relevant sections of Firearms Act and NPS Act).

In order to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of the interventions, SRIC adopted an integrated approach which brought together national (NPS, KNFP and Ministry of Interior - MoI), county (County Security and Intelligence Committees and National Government and Administrative Officers) and community level partners (CSI) and also state and non-state actors (AWCFS – from the national level).

Overview of key activities undertaken during the Intervention

1. Obtaining key stakeholders' consent and ownership of the intervention

SRIC and KNFP worked closely with other partners in the implementation of the activities during the pilot phase. KNFP is mandated by the government to coordinate all actions and initiatives on Small arms and Light weapons in the country. Involvement of KNFP, made implementation of the activities easy for SRIC. Working closely with KNFP whose staff is predominantly senior police officers made access to the police stations and the digitisation process easier.

The first activity undertaken during implementation was introduction of the programme to the County Security Intelligence Committee⁴ (CSIC). The programme was well received and assured of full support to work with sub-county security leadership as would be necessary. In particular, the CSIC in Laikipia through the County Commissioner appreciated the different thematic interventions being undertaken by the REINVENT Programme and highlighted the need for a flexible approach in responding to emerging peace and security concerns in the county.

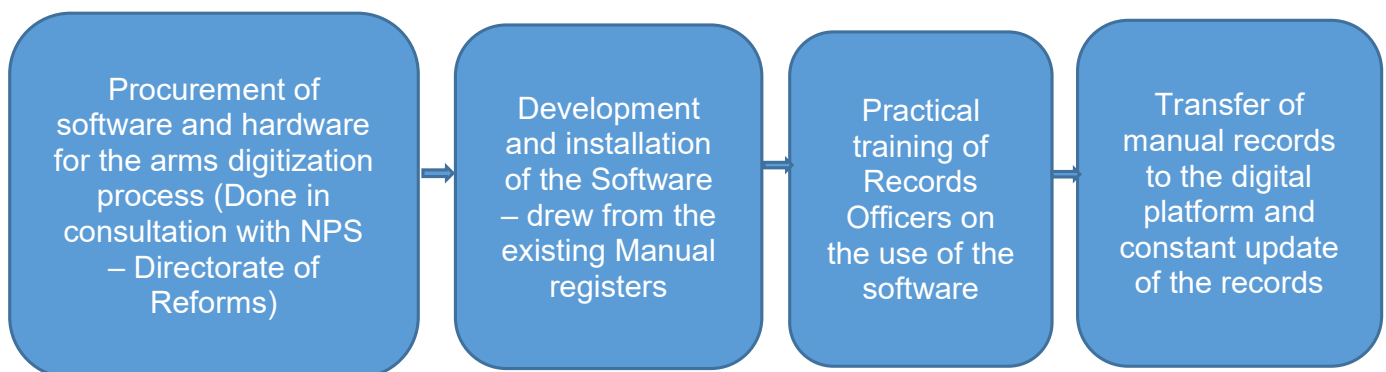
2. Establishment of digital arms registers

Nine police divisions⁵ across the four target counties were

selected to explore the viability of digital arms registers and whether this could enhance accountability and reduce misuse of state-owned arms. This was done in three stages:

- Stage one involved procurement of appropriate software and hardware in consultation with the National Police Service (NPS) at the national level to ensure compliance with asset acquisition and inventory management as well as NPS's information technology standards in terms of system design fitness of software and hardware technical requirements. .
- Stage two involved the development of an intuitive software application drawing from the NPS Arms Register (GP87), followed by installation on computers and actual establishment of the arms registers.
- Stage three involved training of arms record officers across all pilot police stations and working with arms record officers at police stations in digitisation of the manual arms records. A simplified user manual was later produced through the support of the software developer to provide officers with a reference point in case of technical challenges.

The digitisation included the following processes:



Feedback from the training of records officers revealed that the arms movement registers within the police stations filled-up fast and therefore use of the digital registers would help in dealing with huge piles of files, the manual registers were bulky in the long run and took most of the space within the stores and as a result tracing of documents was difficult, manual records were also easily exposed to wear and tear and the risk of loss was high especially through malicious damage.

This intervention is informed by the successes achieved

in Nanyuki and Kabarnet police stations under the Jamii Thabiti project where the digitisation process was lauded by security administrators in those police stations to have reduced workload and made access to information faster and easier⁶. The success demonstrated the need to digitise police operations in other parts of the country as it was shown by the recent launch of a digital Occurrence Book (OB) at the Kasarani Police station by the Inspector General of Police (IG – NPS) , a sign of uptake of this initiative by the law enforcement agencies.

Collaboration with REINVENT Partners

Due to the need for addressing the challenge of latent fragility, conflict and violence in the four counties, an integrated approach during the pilot phase where other partner organizations working in the four counties could synergize their interventions was a key activity. There was also continuous engagement and consultations among the partners to exchange ideas and ensure synergy in the implementation of activities. SRIC was in close contact with REINVENT regional staff, CSI and African Woman and Child Feature Services (AWCFS).

In Baringo, AWCFS were part of the meeting establishing the digital arms registers and had the opportunity to introduce their project activities. In Samburu, CSI were part of the introductory meeting with the CSIC. Due to its local networks in the AMAYA region, similarity in some aspects of work plans and the goodwill generated through Peace Cops, CSI will be critical in the next phase of the programme especially regarding engagement with the NPR, ranch owners/ large and small-scale farmers.

Emerging Lessons

1. **Aligning the programme with REINVENT Strategy:**

having gone through sessions with REINVENT team on the strategies and theories of change underpinning the programme, SRIC benefited a lot in framing its approach within the bigger project approach helping the programme to focus on areas where change is likely to happen and inform any future adaptation. It is very clear for example that moving forward greater monitoring will be necessary including through REINVENT regional team and local partners to gauge how police are implementing the initiative on their own.

2. **Placing accountability at the heart of police reforms:**

Pitching the pilot intervention and explaining to CSICs how the whole project fits within police reforms especially regarding adopting new technology to improve efficiency resonated well with key stakeholders making the work easier to implement in a very sensitive reform area. The planning meetings involved the NPS at national level, CSIC, other pilot partners, Kenya National Focal Point on small arms (KNFP) and REINVENT regional representatives made the establishment of the digital arms registers and the initial training of officers managing police records easy as the county leadership were not only keen to ensure the police officers were available for the meetings but also appreciated the need for the digital registers in furthering arms accountability within the framework of police reforms. County Commissioners and NPS County Commanders across the four counties appreciated the gesture and pledged full support in implementation of the activities. New partners need to be encouraged to share their workplans with the county security teams for ownership and support.

This intervention further demonstrates how community safety and security can be challenged by the lack of an

accountability framework within policing services. It further demonstrates community safety and security is a shared endeavour bringing together law enforcement agencies, ranch/conservancy managers, local communities and the national agency - Kenya National Focal Point on Small Arms. This approach is necessary for successful programme implementation not only in this specific programme but other fragility, conflict, violence programming.

3. **Working with National institutions eases access, ownership and sustainability:**

From the design stage, the close working relationship with KNFP, CSICs, REINVENT partners and regional staff made activity implementation easier. SRIC took a technical facilitative role allowing the Kenya National Focal Point on Small Arms (KNFP) to lead, own and drive the implementation. The close collaboration with KNFP was dynamic in two ways. First, it allowed access to key documentation such as police station arms records, GP-87, Firearms movement book. Second, the ease of allowing CSICs to task police officers in the nine divisions to be available for training and integration of the digital arms registers within their operations. Moving forward, KNFP could prioritise this intervention within their strategic planning and using the lessons learnt in this project, extend to other counties across the country.

4. **Close monitoring will sustain the gains:**

Accountability in arms management is a very sensitive subject for which the police can be resistant to new ideas. Addressing the resistance using the reforms angle and the need for technical capacity building went along way to obtain buy in from the officers. Moving forward, follow-up visits to monitor the successes and challenges experienced from the project at community level will be paramount and understand the experiences from the police officers both



handling the digitisation process and the general duty officers served by the system.

5. Integrating approaches by different partners enriches the delivery:

Working with other REINVENT supported partners offered an opportunity to consult on best local approaches and collaboration. Moving forward, there is a big scope to work jointly with CSI in engaging NPRs and ranchers as well as largescale/ small scale farmers in the region to understand better the shocks of violence and effects of climate change in the face of diminishing resources and develop related solutions.

6. Utilise officer centred approaches during training:

Although the project encountered a good number of police with computer skills, the arms officers were instead taken through step by step process in which they generated the data themselves from the manual records to the electronic platform thereby enabling them to learn by doing, ask questions and practically address them. This gave them the excitement and confidence necessary in handling the records on their own with limited follow-up on use and adoption of the digital registers.

7. Learning through doing approach quickens the uptake of training content:

In order to make the training sessions

more interesting and ensure easy and quick uptake of the digital arms recording content, the team adopted the learning through doing approach. This innovative way came from the fact that majority of the officers were not as active as expected in the initial stages of training in Laikipia County (the first station) but through the involvement, the team was able to encourage active participation and also accelerated the learning process. By placing the officers at the centre of training and how the project contributes to the police reforms conversation at the national level, these officers appreciated the training and demonstrated interest and professionalism.

8. Not re-inventing the wheel:

accountability in arms management is a very sensitive subject for which the police can be resistant to new ideas. By demonstrating that the project was adapting the already existing manual records and translating them into an intuitive digital platform, SRIC achieved two objectives: a) trust and confidence by the officers and b) demonstrating that the project was operating within established police procedures (relevant sections of Firearms Act and NPS Act) thereby further enhancing ownership and guaranteeing continuous application/ use of the new system.

Challenges experienced during the pilot phase and mitigation measures:

1. Capacity gaps: Some police officers manning police records were not computer literate. This was visible in the way they responded to the idea of digital arms registers. This however presented an opportunity for some stations to redeploy staff to accommodate this intervention. This is one area that SRIC will follow up in the next phase to build the capacity of police officers in IT skills to work well with the new system.
2. Vastness of jurisdictions under some of the police stations limit the capacities within the stations: Some of the target police stations such as Nginyang and Loruk in Baringo and Doldol and Umande in Lalikipia cover expansive jurisdictions with limited force strength and resources in terms of vehicles. This delayed activity implementation as most of the targeted police officers would be on duty far from the police station or doubled up on other duties beyond records. SRIC adopted a flexible schedule during implementation to accommodate the officers and ensure timely implementation of the activities.

Conclusion

While the overall police reforms agenda speaks to various change projects, integrating national aspirations with realities at local police stations (which are the central units of police operations) will go a long way in ensuring ownership and support from officers and key security actors in local communities. Moreover, this pilot established the need to rethink police records management as an urgent area that will require an integrated approach to ensure that documentation besides the arms register is properly collected and collated to add value to the quality of policing services at the police station and improve decision making at the command level.

ABOUT US

Reducing Insecurity and Violent Extremism in the Northern and Coastal regions of Kenya (REINVENT) is a £20m 5-year programme that aims to enhance Kenyan capacity and capability to address inter-communal conflict, weak community-police relations, violence against women and girls (VAWG), violent extremism and election related violence. It will support the continued advancement of police reforms to improve the management, oversight and accountability of the police force. The programme is delivered by TetraTech International Development in partnership with the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI) and the Danish Demining Group (DDG) builds on the experience of the Jamii Thabiti Programme (2014-19), also known as the Kenya Improving Community Security Programme (ICS), and expands DFID support across more counties. It supports new areas of work including conflict sensitivity, pastoral livelihoods and combating violent extremism.

Impact of the programme:

Improved community safety and security as measured by effect on inclusive and equitable development, investment and service delivery in Kenya

Envisaged outcome of the programme:

Improved state and non-state actors' collaboration in a mutually accountable and inclusive manner to respond effectively to root causes of violence.

Programme outputs:

- Increased practice of accountability to build police (and other security agencies) effectiveness when addressing community security, violent extremism and election security.
- Strengthened agency of women and girls in peace, safety and security
- Intra and inter institutional commitment to address the root causes and drivers of conflict
- Knowledge and evidence generated and utilised to enhance community and institutional learning and adaptation.

6 . Countering Violent Extremism: Based on RUSI's experience from the Strengthening Resilience to Violent Extremism (STRIVE) programme and other CVE interventions, REINVENT's approach to CVE envisions an effective CVE policy framework

1 . Police Reform: The police reform agenda in Kenya envisions quality policing services for a safe and secure Kenya through strengthened capacity among policing institutions to address institutional and people centered reforms.

5 . Conflict Sensitive Development in the Northern and Coastal Regions: Kenya's rapid but unequal pace of economic growth poses enormous political and social ramifications. REINVENT Programme approach to Conflict Sensitive Development (CSD) is to promote the practice of conflict sensitivity among state, development actors and private sector in their planning and implementation of development and large-scale infrastructure projects in the country

2 . Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls: The Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and Gender Mainstreaming workstream supports national, county and community initiatives, discourses and activities that deliberately interrogate gender inequalities and increase the agency and voice of women and girls.

4 . Enhancing Election Security for a Peaceful General Election in 2022: Kenya's electoral narrative has often been characterized by systemic failings in implementing violence free electoral management processes. REINVENT Election Security work is closely intertwined with police reforms, tackling VAWG and peacebuilding

3 . Peacebuilding to address Inter-communal conflict: Understanding that there are multiple fault lines in Kenya where inter-communal conflict occurs, driven by failure to address structural, institutional, historical, cultural and legal factors, creating opportunities for VE groups and criminal gangs to take advantage of conflict and instability,

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