

A group of young people, likely in Kenya, are smiling and raising their hands in a meeting or workshop. They are wearing lanyards with ID badges. The image has a teal and purple color overlay.

# young cities

**Kenya**

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**Empowering Youth.  
Strengthening Communities.**





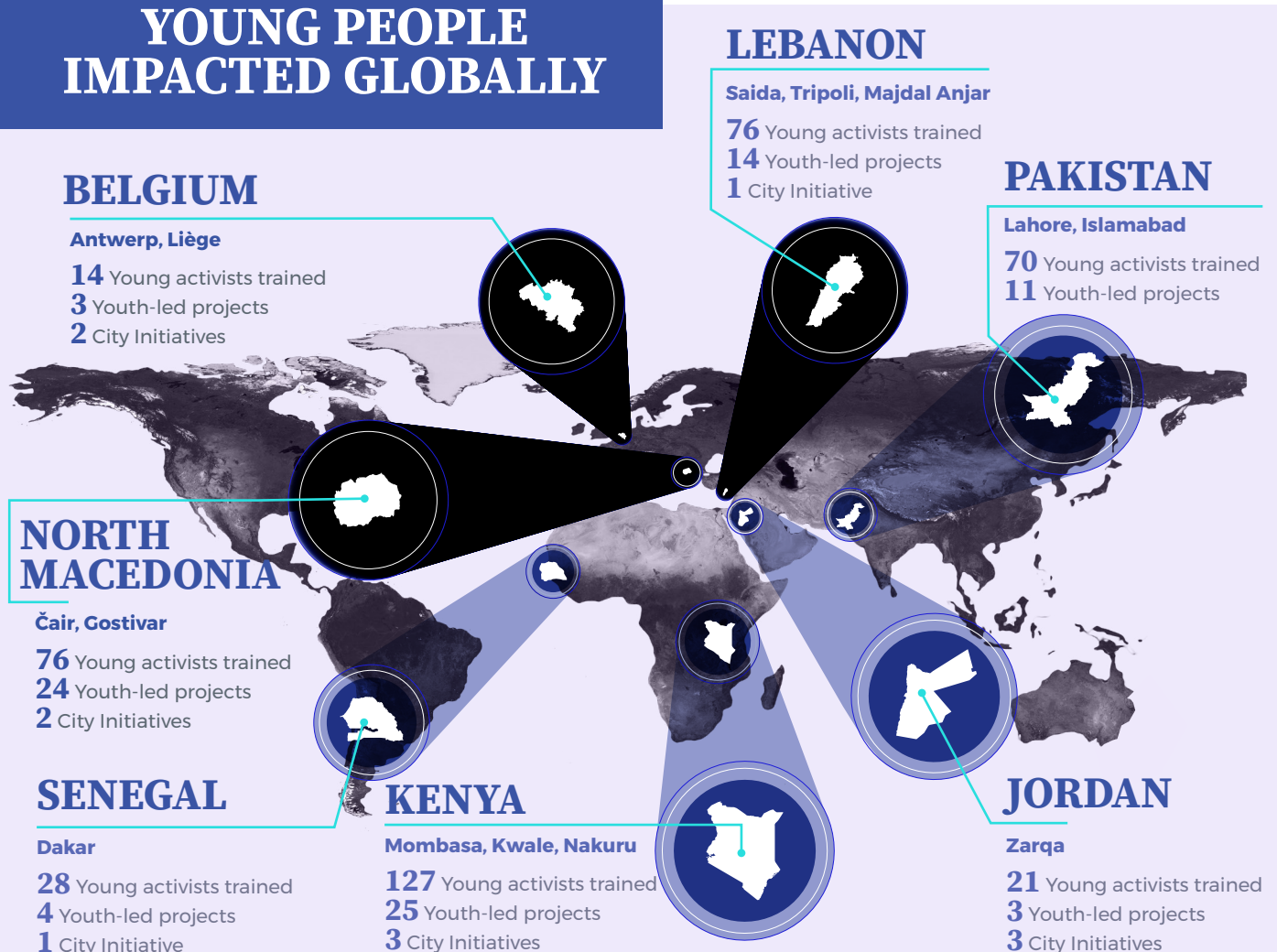
**young  
cities**

Young Cities is a global, pioneering capacity-building programme that connects young people to local governments, enabling the development of shared solutions to the challenges of hate, polarisation, and extremism around the world. Our work builds mutual trust and creates opportunities to address the most pressing issues facing the communities in which we work.

As the youth pillar of the **The Strong Cities Network (SCN)**, Young Cities is furthering the role that young people play in building city and community resilience to hate and polarisation at local level. It is leveraging the insights and experience of SCN's collaboration with municipalities around the world to drive impactful, locally-led policy that includes and represents the needs of all young people.

With the generous support of our donors and our partners, including local organisations and municipal officials, we have empowered young people in ten cities across Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, North Macedonia and Senegal to thrive as peacebuilders in their communities. In 2022, Young Cities launched in the cities of Antwerp and Liège with the support of the United States Embassy in Belgium.

**14.5 MILLION+  
YOUNG PEOPLE  
IMPACTED GLOBALLY**





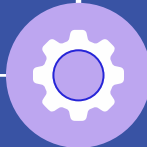
## Scoping & Research

Our work is evidence-led. Before launching in a new city, we spend six months scoping to understand the local context and challenges facing different communities. We conduct original research, identify key stakeholders and map existing programmes and policy so we can tailor our delivery to meet real needs.



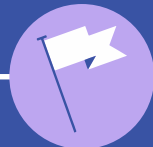
## Collaboration & Partnerships

Social challenges require a multi-faceted response. We therefore connect key actors in civil society, municipal governance, and youth activism - creating opportunities to exchange ideas and build trust. We partner with civil society organisations for our own delivery and connect young people with relevant organisations. We also facilitate ongoing collaboration between youth and cities.



## Workshops

**Youth Innovation Labs** combine learning and doing to guide young activists through a process of planning social impact projects and provide an opportunity to transform ideas into actionable plans. Simultaneously, our city workshops help build best practice at the municipal level.



## Youth-Led Projects

Youth groups can apply for up to £5,000 in funding - with ongoing training and support - to deliver their projects to their community. By enabling young people to lead their own projects, we are offering them the chance to gain experience and deepen their understanding of project management. It also harnesses youth insight, contributing original projects that have real impact and fostering meaningful cooperation between youth and other stakeholders.



## City Initiatives

**City Grants** support new municipal initiatives to engage with young people in their city. Young Cities offers funding and ongoing support to help our city partners conduct research and deliver activities that enhance their youth engagement strategies and policy. The programme gives them the opportunity to engage with youth directly to enhance youth inclusion and build trust.



## Sustainability

We provide our young activists ongoing support year-on-year with additional funding (**Ambassador Grants**), peer mentoring, networking, and opportunities for local and international representation.

**Showcase Events** help to demonstrate the impact young people and municipalities have had, while **City Exchanges** enable the sharing of best practice.

# Young Cities in Kenya

Young Cities has been active in Kenya since 2018, working in Mombasa, Kwale and Nakuru – counties which face high levels of extremist recruitment among youth, a lack of political engagement, and gang- and election-related violence. To date, the programme has provided direct support to 127 young peacebuilders and 57 city officials to develop solutions to these challenges. Young Cities programming has conducted research on timely issues such as youth resilience to hate, and supported city officials to develop youth-centred policies and initiatives. Above all, we facilitate strong partnerships between Kenyan youth and leaders from County governments, the National government, and civil society organisations. Through these partnerships, young Kenyans have been empowered, developing their own initiatives and getting involved in policymaking processes.



## In Numbers

Youth Innovation  
Labs Held:

8

Young Peacebuilders  
Trained:

127

City Officials  
Trained:

57

Youth-Led Projects Launched:

25

City Initiatives Supported:

3

Young People Directly Impacted:

3,497

Young People Reached Digitally:

1,156,272

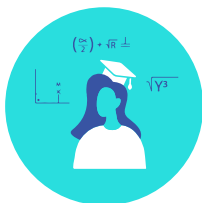


# Understanding and Building Resilience

Kenya is no stranger to violence. Mombasa and its coastal counties have been hubs for gang and extremist recruitment for years, while its inner territories have experienced surges in ethnic and tribal conflict, most notably in the aftermath of the 2007-08 election. Implicit to the presence of violence is a group or individual's willingness to engage in it, and their **resilience** to resist, tolerate, absorb, cope with, and adjust to challenges, without resorting to violence.

It is especially vital that young people are at the centre of efforts to build the resilience of communities across Kenya. Young Cities is strengthening the capability of a generation of young leaders to build the resilience of their peers, resist the allures of violent narratives, and foster constructive dialogue in their communities.

As an **evidence-driven** programme, we use research to tailor our approach, meeting the real needs and challenges of the communities in which we work. In 2020, we conducted a pioneering Youth Resilience Study which measured the dynamics of resilience among young people across Kenya using surveys, demographical data and three different scales. The three most salient findings, which shaped Young Cities' 2020-21 activities, are:



There is a complex relationship between education and resilience in Kenya. Those with technical or vocational qualifications were the most resilient to violent narratives, while those with the highest and lowest levels of education were less resilient.



Men report experiencing more violence than women among those surveyed. More research is needed to understand the relationship between gender, violence, and resilience.



While many young people in Kenya feel unconvinced of the potential for meaningful change and youth involvement in decision-making, the study shows that young people remain passionate and committed to making a positive difference in their community.





## Shared Challenges, Shared Solutions

Young Cities takes a whole-of-community approach to its programming in Kenya. We involve young people from different backgrounds – activists, entrepreneurs, artists and creatives – and connect them to County government and civil society, to jointly develop solutions to challenges which they all face. Moreover, we facilitate cross-County collaboration, strengthening their communities' ability to tackle issues together by sharing best practices.

### Youth-County Cooperation

We connect young peacebuilders with County Officials so that both groups can advance their mutual interests. While young peacebuilders launch initiatives to drive local change, County governments amplify those initiatives and provide direct guidance and support. Several government officials have also participated directly in the initiatives themselves. At the same time, Young Cities creates a space for youth to inform government policies and practices, through webinars, public forums, and closed-door policy evaluation events. Our Youth Innovation Labs and Showcases provide touch points for this cooperation. They enhance youth-facing policy in the region by elevating the role of young people as meaningful agents of change.



### Cross-County Cooperation

Issues do not stop at the County border. Often the same challenges being faced by one County are the same for another County across the country. We establish communication channels between Counties and enables opportunities for cooperation. City Exchanges and participation in bi-lateral meetings give County governments the chance to share experiences, best policies and best practices.



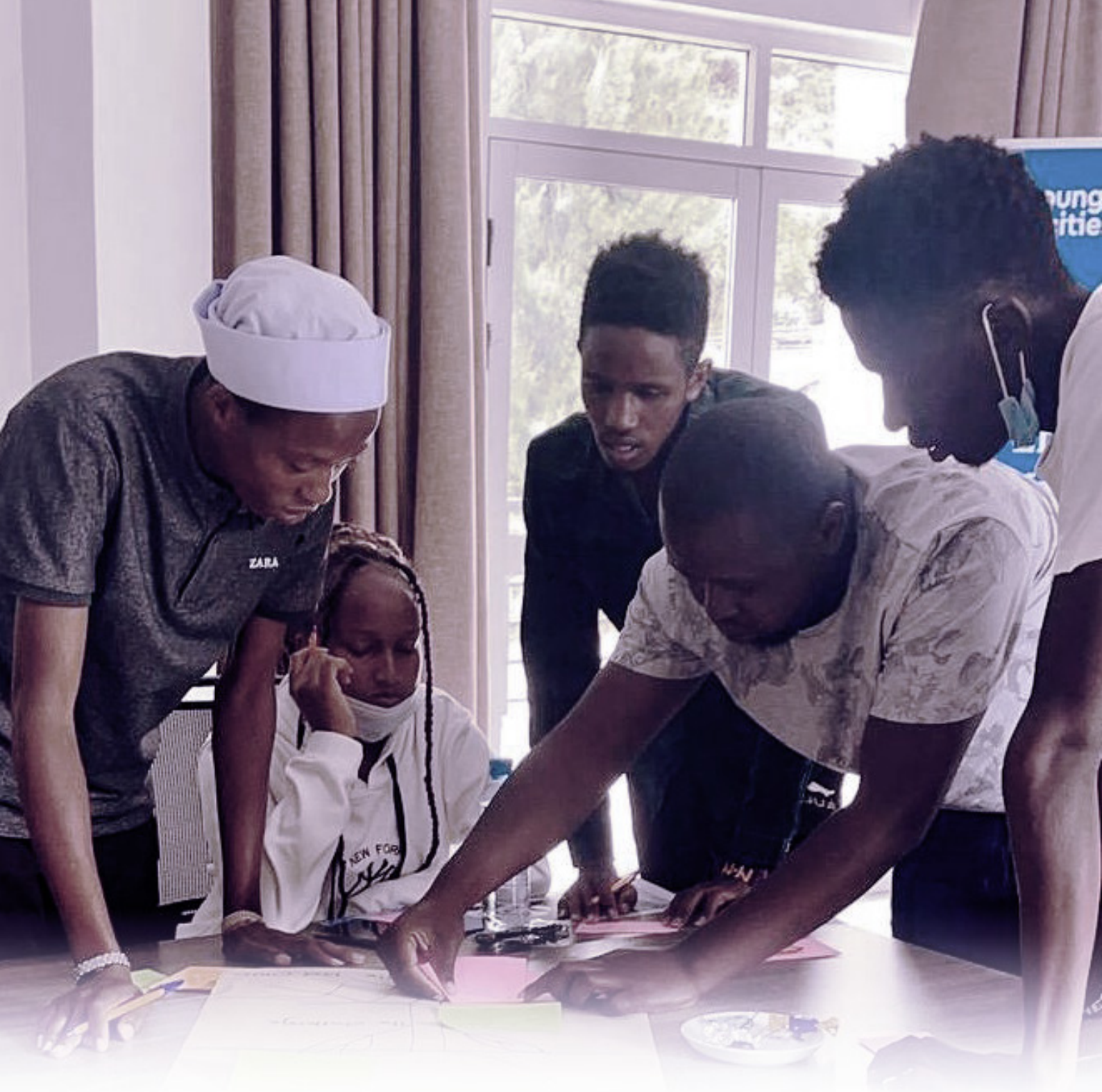




## Whole-of-Community

Effective solutions to violence require collaboration. Our approach engages a variety of sectors at all levels of decision-making to meet the needs of the communities in which we work. Young Cities compliments the existing peacebuilding ecosystem, while forging new connections between city, youth, and civil society actors. Starting at our Youth Innovation Labs, we introduce young people to government officials, creative communities, local CSOs and other youth, to expand their networks and knowledge of Kenya's thriving civil society landscape. We ensure that the research and youth-led initiatives Young Cities supports are also informed by, and engage, all levels of society. This allows us to foster an operational model where diverse perspectives feed directly into locally-led solutions to challenges that matter to Kenyans.





## Youth Initiatives

With ongoing training, mentorship and funding, Young Cities has supported 127 young peacebuilders to create 25 unique initiatives which have together impacted 3,497 young people offline and 1,156,272 digitally. The youth-led initiatives address issues important to the young people who run them and their communities. The teams define their focus, plot their strategies, create their own outputs, and manage every element of their project's delivery. This youth-driven model creates a space for young people to implement their ideas and expertise, and be credible messengers for peace within their communities. It also recognizes that effective capacity-building requires dismantling barriers to funding for young people and supporting sustainable initiatives.



# Preventing Gang Violence and Recruitment in Coastal Kenya

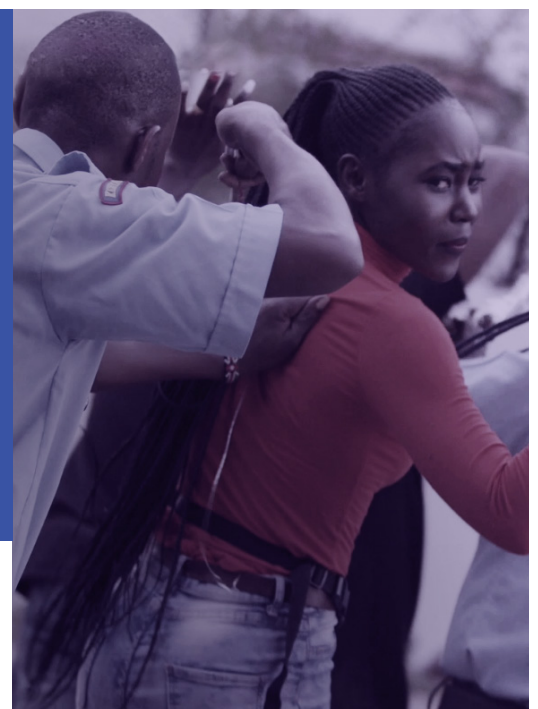
Gang violence is endemic to coastal Kenya. Our Young Cities Ambassadors understand this challenge well, and since Young Cities launched in Kenya it has been a key focus. Five teams addressed the topic of gang violence with creativity, overcoming taboos by distilling messages of peace through popular mediums and accessible messaging.

Three of the groups created though-provoking short videos that depicted fictional characters facing real-life choices that could have prevented familiar tragedies. The other groups went offline; one took to the field to engage young boys through football, while another used rap, a popular genre among young Kenyans, to promote the role of artists in countering violence.

## I Won't be Deceived

📍 Mombasa | 📅 2018

'Team Mombasa' looked beyond traditional targeting to focus on the role that women play in violent gangs. They produced four videos, each depicting a different narrative involving young women - their experiences and motivations for joining or supporting gangs, as well as the eventual consequences. Their campaign, "I Won't be Deceived", involved the entire community: city officials helped secure permissions for filming in public spaces, while members of the public volunteered as extras and assistants on set.



## Be the Bigger Person

📍 Mombasa | 📅 2018

'Team Kisauni' focused on mothers, emphasising the role that parents play in identifying suspicious behaviour and intervening before it is too late. Two videos depict the moments that led up to a young man's death at the hands of a rival gang and his mother's grief as she says her final goodbye at his graveside. The video's tragic outcome is meant to feel familiar, and the group hoped it would galvanise parents to speak with their children and seek resources if they suspect their child might be at risk. The project connected with existing foundations and resources, directing viewers to places where they could find additional support.





## #What If

📍 Mombasa | 📅 2018 - 2020

#WhatIf broadened their focus to emphasise collective community responsibility, highlighting the role of friends, parents and role models as influential figures in a young man's life. The three-video series depicted the events leading up to a young man's murder from three perspectives: those of his mother, teacher, and best friend. Each of these main characters ask themselves, "what if" they had done more to intervene before it was too late.



Securing an Ambassador Grant, the team expanded their campaign by developing a suite of resources to educate mothers, guardians, and young people on their individual roles in preventing gang recruitment and criminality. They organised two workshops for young people and two workshops for mothers of gang members.



## Samba Sports

📍 Kwale | 📅 2019

Unemployment, disaffection and cyclical trauma are some of the reasons why young men and boys are allured to petty crime, gangs and drug abuse in coastal Kenya. Samba Sports Youth Agenda – a youth-led CSO that uses sports to engage with young people – integrated trauma-healing sessions and awareness-raising activities with football to provide an informal, safe environment to discuss these difficult issues. More than 300 boys attended the events, along with parents, teachers and officials from across the County.





## Acha Gun Shika Mic

📍 Mombasa | 📅 2021

Acha Gun Shika Mic (*Drop the Gun Grab the Mic*) is a rap initiative led by a well-known young rapper, Ohms Law Montana, who uses his music to address difficult issues like gang violence. Ohms has worked with Young Cities since 2018, and for this Ambassador Grant, he wanted to inspire other young rappers and producers to use their abilities to help spread peace. Ohms and his team worked with 6 up-and-coming rappers and 2 young producers to create an album that speaks to the danger of joining gangs. They organised workshops to write lyrics together and explore the power of music to influence young listeners.

Acha Gun Shika Mic launched their album at an event with hundreds of attendees, including the Assistant County Commissioner for Mombasa Island. Reformed gang members performed, sharing their stories through music, and inspiring their peers to contribute constructively to their communities, and a renowned retired musician offered mentorships for the local artists. A documentary about the project is currently being produced.



# Building Trust Between Young People and the Police

Mistrust between police and youth is undermining Kenya's security. There is a perception among some young Kenyans that they are victims of police violence, while police view youth as hostile. This mutual mistrust hinders communication, obstructing the reporting and investigation of crimes, and feeds tension, which can boil over into confrontation and even violence. For decades, authorities have worked to improve this relationship for the safety of the wider community. It is crucial that change comes from both sides, and that young people are an active part of the solution.

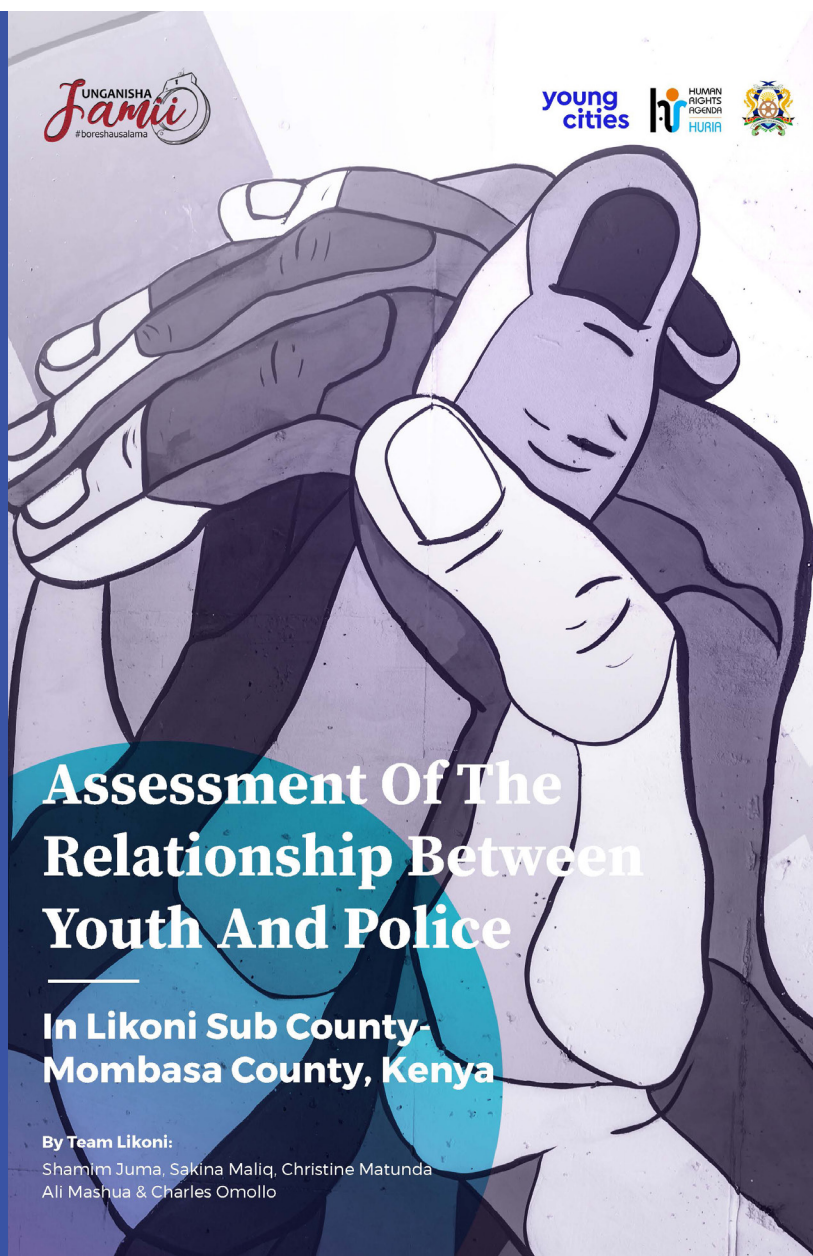
Two of our Young Cities teams in Mombasa took on this challenge. The Likoni Research Initiative wanted to ensure young people's perspectives were represented and to help understand the nature of the distrust. The Love Movement went straight to youth in Mombasa, combining art and education of the law to raise awareness about citizens' rights in the criminal justice system and offer advice on how to interact with the police.

## Likoni Research Initiative

📍 Mombasa | 📅 2018

The Likoni Research Initiative worked with Mombasa County officials to understand why youth-police relations were more strained in Likoni sub-County than in neighbouring sub-Counties. They conducted a series of focus groups with young people and locally based police that explored their perceptions of the other groups and their role in the conflict, key barriers to cooperation and strategies to help reconciliation.

They found that while young people and police both shared concerns about the state of their relationship, the two groups were both willing to work toward a solution. Their report recommended that any trust-building efforts should empower both parties, educate them about their collective responsibility and inspire them to take ownership of the role they can play in fostering a more productive relationship.





# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

IF YOU ARE ARRESTED,  
YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

1



**KNOW WHY YOU  
ARE BEING  
ARRESTED**

(CAP 4, ARTICLE 1 ;49.A.I)

2



**REMAIN SILENT**

(CAP 4, ARTICLE 1 ;49.B)

3



**COMMUNICATE  
WITH SOMEONE  
WHO CAN HELP  
YOU**

(CAP 4, ARTICLE 1 ;49.C)

4



**GET TO COURT  
AS SOON AS  
POSSIBLE.  
WITHIN 24  
HOURS OR THE  
NEXT WORKING  
DAY.**

(CAP 4, ARTICLE 1 ;49.F)

5



**IF THE CRIME IS PUNISHABLE BY  
FINE, YOU SHOULD NOT BE JAILED.**

(CAP 4, ARTICLE 2 ;49)

## The Love Movement

📍 Mombasa | 📅 2018

Concerned about the antagonistic relationship between police and young people in Kwale, The Love Movement launched a campaign to educate young men and encourage more constructive encounters between the two parties. The team, comprised of lawyers and musicians, collaborated with local rappers and police officers to record a song and an accompanying music video that highlighted the issue and offered advice for de-escalation. They also employed visual art to create posters and infographics that offered simplified explanations of their constitutional rights, offered advice and pushed young people to challenge their perceptions of the police and reflect on their own behaviours.

TELE

# Empowering Young People as Violence Prevention Actors

Young people are one of Kenya's greatest resources. Over 60% of its population are under the age of 30, and these young people have incredible potential to shape the country's present, as well as its future. Young people have the understanding and passion to be powerful agents of change in their communities and are critical partners in addressing the challenges that affect youth. They are also creative and credible messengers. However, young changemakers need more support to build critical skills and apply those qualities in ways that can help reduce violence. Two teams have been empowering young people by equipping them with the necessary skills to prevent violence and hateful narratives which their peers experience in their communities and online.



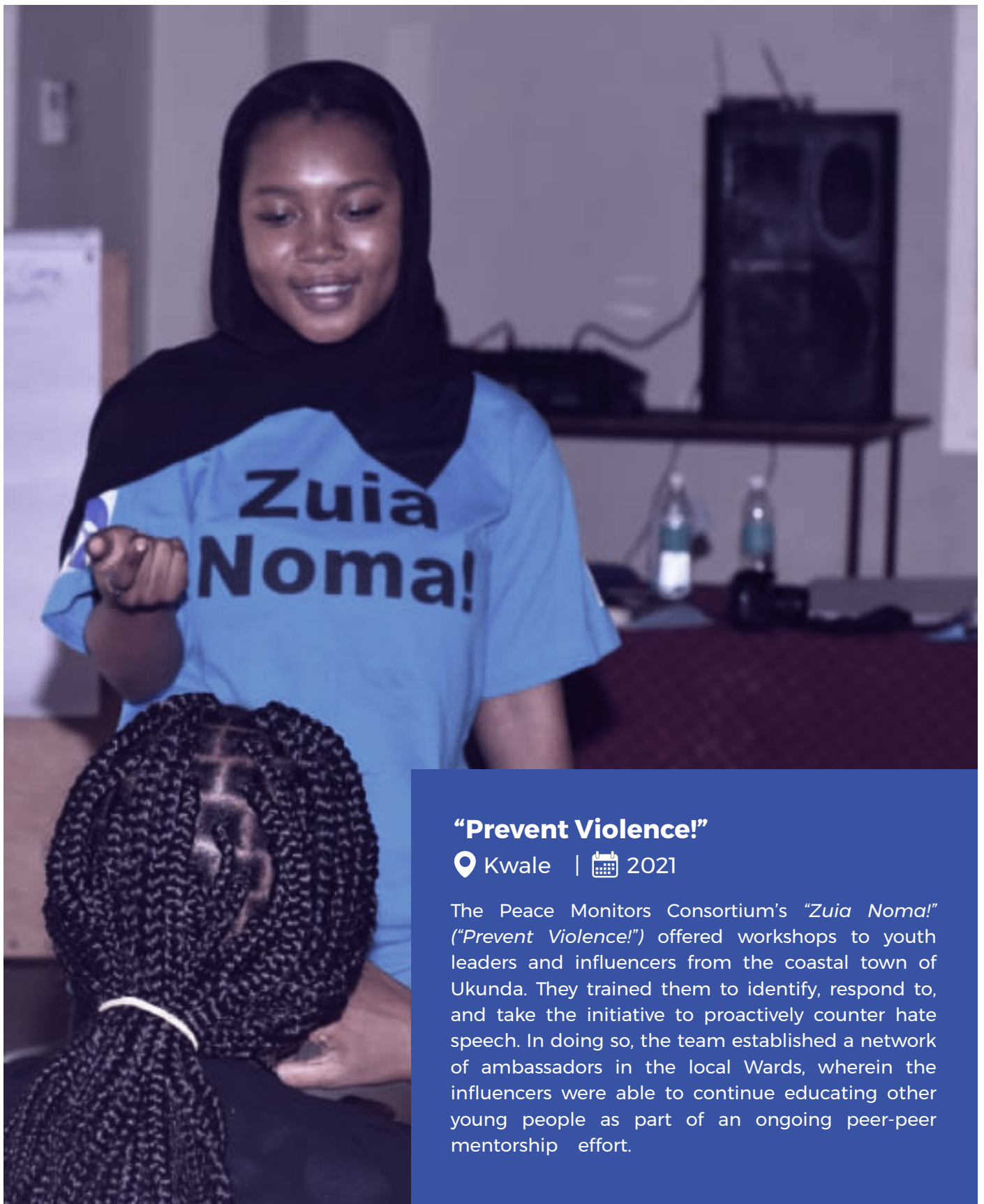
## Local Justice

📍 Kwale | 📅 2021

The justice system is often difficult for young people in Kwale to navigate. It is also bureaucratic, time consuming and costly. Compounded by limited critical conflict resolution skills, tensions between individuals and groups tend to escalate, and some even turn to violence to address perceived injustices.

Haki Mashinani ("*Local Justice*"), a team of qualified community mediators, wanted to empower other young people as peer-peer mediators in their communities. They offered five train-the-trainer workshops trainings for local youth leaders, equipping them with knowledge of dispute resolution techniques. The team also developed a mediation manual to support this effort.





### **“Prevent Violence!”**

📍 Kwale | 📅 2021

The Peace Monitors Consortium’s “*Zuia Noma!*” (“*Prevent Violence!*”) offered workshops to youth leaders and influencers from the coastal town of Ukunda. They trained them to identify, respond to, and take the initiative to proactively counter hate speech. In doing so, the team established a network of ambassadors in the local Wards, wherein the influencers were able to continue educating other young people as part of an ongoing peer-peer mentorship effort.

To support the project, the team launched an online campaign with an animated video which depicted the consequences of hate speech, amplifying the project’s reach. The team further developed poems and skits, which they performed in local communities to foster dialogue on the topic of inter-ethnic and inter-religious divides.



# WACHA POROJO!

## Angaza ukweli

### Angaza

📍 Mombasa | 📅 2021

In recent years, Kenya has become a centre of new sophisticated disinformation operations. There is a particular risk that fake news may catalyse violence leading up to, during, or after the election period. Young people are often not aware of the influence or wider damage that sharing, sometimes seemingly harmless content, can do.

Mombasa-based youth group, Angaza, wanted to understand the level of knowledge young people in Nyali already had about disinformation and identify specific gaps. They conducted an online survey, which outlined several approaches the government could adopt to help prevent violence spurred by fake news in the upcoming general election. The team then used this information to create posters, infographics, and spoken word videos on how to spot and stop the spread of disinformation.

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**STOP**  
FAKE NEWS

Fact check before you share



Angaza

#DontSpreadRumours  
#kaaChonjo #ShareFactsOnly

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Angaza engaged with community members on the issue through their online campaign. It provided key insights on the challenge and practical tips that people can use in the lead up to the Kenyan general election. To conclude and celebrate their project, they held an open mic night, where they shared poems on misinformation and disinformation.



# Accessing Opportunities, Building Resilience

Improving the opportunities available to young people is essential to building their resilience to societal challenges such as violence, hate, extremism, and polarisation. Opportunities provide security and give young people a sense of purpose. By including them as active members of society, they are given the space to become proactive members as their security and self-confidence grows.

There are many opportunities for young people in Kwale and Mombasa, including training and further education, work placements, prospects for civic engagement and more. However, many young people remain unaware of them, and state services lack the infrastructure to reach these young people to inform them. Two teams addressed this issue, crafting campaigns to raise awareness among their peers of the services that are available and empowering them to become proactive citizens capable of shaping their own futures.

## Blueprint Initiative

📍 Kwale | 📅 2018

Blueprint Initiative wanted to offer a 'blueprint' for success that could guide young people away from criminal activity and inspire them to create their own success through entrepreneurship. They developed a multi-media online campaign that combined inspiration with instruction. Their content included three video interviews with local young entrepreneurs, an original song and accompanying music video acknowledging the struggles of young people, as well as posters and infographics with practical advice for young jobseekers. Their online campaign reached hundreds of thousands of young people while they delivered useful resources directly to the most affected communities.



## Kigoda Pwani

📍 Mombasa | 📅 2020 - 2021

Kigoda Pwani wanted to improve the accessibility of opportunities available for young people in Mvita sub-County. Through their research, they found that many young people in Mombasa were unaware of the opportunities available to them and didn't know where to look. They surveyed over a hundred young people from Mvita sub-county and organised meetings with County government to understand where young people were seeking information, why they weren't finding it and what was keeping them from applying when they did. They concluded that, in addition to better communication from local government, young people wanted more skills-based training, entrepreneurship grants and loans, and mentorship programmes. They used these findings to develop educational posters and webinars targeted at young people from across the sub-County.

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cities



### Exploring Available Youth Opportunities In Mvita Constituency



The following year, the team received an Ambassador Grant to apply their methodologies and findings to improve young women's access to these opportunities. Young women face high rates of unemployment and underemployment in Mvita sub-County. They conducted further research to better understand the impact of gender gaps in the workforce and the issues women in face in technical and vocational training. Based on the findings, they trained 20 young women to identify training and mentorship opportunities for other women, and built upon their online campaign with more posters, videos and webinars dedicated particularly to young women.



# Improving Youth Civic Participation

The process of political devolution in Kenya, where political power has been gradually decentralised since 2010, has opened the political space and given grassroots civil society the opportunity to participate meaningfully in political processes. However, there is still a large gap in youth political involvement. Voter turnout is consistently low amongst young people and many young Kenyans feel disenfranchised or marginalised from decision-making, rendering them disaffected and disinterested in being active members of civil society.

While the space for youth involvement can be improved, there are avenues for participation that many are simply unaware of, and there is certainly an appetite among local and national government to improve youth involvement in decision-making. Turning the tide on youth participations must begin with a clear understanding of local political and civic processes, and the will to get involved. Teams Nyali, Alpha & Omega and the DERIN Peace Network have been working to understand barriers to youth civic participation, train young people on how to better exploit opportunities for participation, and work with local government on improving accessibility to participation.



## Alpha and Omega

📍 Mombasa | 📅 2020

Alpha and Omega identified that one reason young people were not engaging in the civic space was that they felt their interests were under-represented. The team conducted a survey of 124 young people from across the sub-County, gauging the accessibility of information related to public participation, and challenges to youth engagement. More than half of respondents felt that their opinions did not matter in county-level policymaking. Moreover, most respondents could not accurately identify the basic political functions of the Mombasa County government. Based on these findings, the team led three workshops with 60 young people from across the sub-county, doubling the overall awareness among participants of the opportunities open to them to participate in local governance.

## Nyali

📍 Mombasa | 📅 2018-2021

Team Nyali wanted to understand the barriers that prevent youth civic participation in their community. Over a period of two months, they conducted surveys, interviews and focus groups involving nearly 200 young people from Nyali sub-County. Many cited the lack of transparency and corruption as a major barrier to their willingness to engage, and more than two thirds felt uninformed about governance processes. The report's recommendations included the creation of a voter education programme and intensified civic education throughout the sub-county to reach as many young citizens as possible. They emphasised the need for both national and local governments, CSOs and young people to collaborate to improve civic education effectively.



### Youth Participation in Leadership and Governance

in Nyali Sub-County,  
Mombasa

Authors:  
Emrick Hanjeh, Mariam Salah, Elias Mwangi,  
Ali Said and Joseph Nazareth

Based on the results of the research, the team conducted three workshops to enhance the knowledge of youth leaders of their civic rights and responsibilities in the Sub-County. While these leaders became 'ambassadors' in Nyali, raising awareness of the importance of civic participation, an online campaign with related informational material helped deliver the message to more communities in the coastal region. Under the slogan "*Viongozi wabaya, huchaguliwa na wale wasiopiga kura*" ("bad leaders are elected by those who do not vote"), they urged young people to take responsibility for their political futures.





## DERIN Peace Network

📍 Kwale | 📅 2019-2020

### Understanding The Level Of Devolution Awareness Among Youths

Survey In Lunga Lunga Sub County- Kwale County

The DERIN Peace Network felt that many of their peers in Kwale were neither aware of the roles and responsibilities of County government, nor of the Kenyan devolution process. That lack of knowledge meant opportunities for their civic engagement were limited. They wanted to work closely with other young people and key government actors to raise awareness of local governance systems, especially around the budgetary characteristics of the devolution process. The project team delivered a series of workshops in Kubo South Ward of Kwale County, tailoring their trainings and messaging to the young people of the district.



Building upon the success of their initiative, they received an Ambassador Grant to conduct research into why young people might be failing to engage. They surveyed more than 200 young people, and conducted focus groups, to get an extensive, evidence-led grasp on youth perceptions in Kwale County. The research informed six workshops with 110 young people in Lunga Lunga sub-county. DERIN transformed their research into 10 infographics which they posted on their Facebook page, reaching tens of thousands of young people online.



# Countering the Threat of Electoral Violence in Nakuru

Nakuru County, north of Nairobi, was one of the epicentres of political unrest in the immediate aftermath of the 2007 elections in Kenya, where waves of violence shocked the nation, claiming the lives of thousands and displacing hundreds of thousands. Many young people were affected during that period – as victims and as perpetrators. Evidence of ongoing tribalism and a heightened anxiety surrounding the upcoming 2022 elections prompted Young Cities to work with teams of local peacebuilders to develop projects that cut to the heart of the issue. The teams creatively combined art, traditional awareness-raising campaigns, and a strategic selection of their target audiences to produce some truly outstanding projects. All three teams are currently building upon this successful initiative with Ambassador Grants.

## Elections without Violence!

📍 Nakuru | 📅 2021

Mtaani Konnect wanted to understand the role of mothers in preventing electoral violence. The team carried out focus group discussions with mothers from Naivasha county, who were victims of violence during the 2007-2008 election period, where they shared their stories, highlighting the long-term effects of the unrest that took place in their community. Based on the discussions, the team conducted five 'magnet' street theatre performances, which they held in different locations in the community. They also produced a spoken word video to raise awareness about the role women, particularly mothers, play in peacebuilding and the importance of youth doing their part to maintain peace during the election period. More than a thousand people were engaged in this campaign to amplify voices that are often side-lined when discussing the issue of election violence.





## Don't be Used, Stand for Peace!

📍 Nakuru | 📅 2021

Nakuru-based Skynet Theatre Productions launched the campaign, *Kataa Kutumika!* ("Don't be used!") *Stand for Peace!* to highlight the dangers of electoral violence. They created a short film spotlighting the violence caused by tribalism, depicting fictional scenes set in the aftermath of the 2007-08 elections. The film's main score was turned into a music video entitled "*Kenya Moja*" ("One Kenya"), which implores young people to choose the way of peace as the election approaches. They premiered their emotionally evocative film in two locations in the city of Nakuru, bringing together key representatives from the national and County governments, the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission who are responsible for overseeing electoral affairs in the country, and more than a hundred young people.



## Peace for all Kenyans

📍 Mombasa | 📅 2018

Naivasha Young Turks identified 'boda boda' (motorcycle taxis) riders as key community messengers. The boda boda industry is diverse, and groups of boda boda drivers are active and influential in the transport sector. Owing to their intimacy with local communities and clientele, they are vulnerable to manipulation and have been used to spread misinformation and hateful narratives. The team conducted five workshops in four wards in Naivasha Ward, targeting a younger generation of boda boda drivers who are vulnerable to influence by hate and polarisation, but who are also passionate about change and politics. The team equipped them with key skills to identify and counter hate speech and raised awareness of the importance of peace in the upcoming elections. After the trainings, the participating boda boda riders pledged to be Peace Ambassadors in the upcoming general elections.

They also composed and recorded their own song, "Amani kwa wakenya" to sensitize the broader community on the importance of peace and not allowing divisions to take place along tribal lines. They complemented this wider campaign with a road show in Naivasha North and South Lake areas, spreading the message of maintaining peace as people head to the ballots in the coming months. Finally, they filmed testimonials from those who suffered from attacks during the 2007-08 post-election period, whose stories brought to life the long-term effects of election violence.



# City Initiatives in Kenya

Since launching in Kenya in 2018, Young Cities has supported County Governments from Kwale, Mombasa and Nakuru to design initiatives to improve youth policy and practice. Each initiative focuses on how to improve cooperation with County government, involving elements of better understanding through research and action-oriented outputs.



## Improving Youth Civic Participation

📍 Kwale | 📅 2019

When Young Cities expanded its programming to include Kwale County in 2019, the County Government were very interested to collaborate more closely with young people to help shape policy and the future of their community. They committed first to understanding the barriers to cooperation, and second to building out mechanisms for better collaboration. Using surveys and focus groups, they conducted research to gauge how well young people in Kwale understood the functions of County Government, ways they can participate and reasons why they were resistant to doing so. The findings were used to inform a series of community dialogue and sensitisation forums to ensure youth felt they could engage with the County government meaningfully.



## Building Youth Resilience

📍 Mombasa | 📅 2020

The County government of Mombasa wanted to ensure their new County Resilience and Preventing Violent Extremism Policy Bill was evidence-driven, relevant, and considered the perspectives of youth. They recognised youth as an integral part of the community and important to include in decision-making processes. As they were designing the policy, they held several online dialogue sessions, followed by offline public forums with youth to ensure their voices were included. In the first of these sessions, entitled the Mombasa Youth Policy Lab, the Mombasa County presented the new Bill to the participants and explained the rationale behind it. Following this, youth were invited to read and review the draft Resilience Policy bill themselves, and the County government organised youth-city feedback sessions to work with the County Attorney in the drafting of the policy, where local youth gave recommendations of what could be included in the new policy documents.





## Integrating Youth Voices in Policy-Making

📍 Nakuru | 📅 2021

The Nakuru County government's Youth Policy, which is still being designed, will enshrine into law the provision of opportunities to improve the quality of life of young people in the County. It aims to improve youth participation in democratic processes and establish enough avenues for their economic self-determination. This will include a raft of social and cultural measures that create an environment that fosters greater youth empowerment. Young Cities is supporting Nakuru County government to lead research and build inclusive processes to ensure that the voices of young people are sufficiently integrated in the policy's design, so that their challenges can be addressed meaningfully.





## Partners

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Local partner organizations are integral to the implementation of the Young Cities programme in the countries in which it works. They ensure that youth participants receive the continuous support and guidance they need to build their projects from the ground up, tackling real issues in relevant and impactful ways. Local partners help further tailor the programme to their context, connect it to key community actors, and play a vital role in fostering creative talent among young people.



HURIA | MOMBASA AND KWALE

HURIA is a Human Rights not-for-profit which strengthens state and non-state actors' capacity to understand and fully enjoy the rights and protections afforded to them under the Constitution of Kenya, Kenyan law, and international human rights instruments.

They have been Young Cities' trusted partner in Coastal Kenya since 2018. They are crucial to building relationships between the teams and Mombasa County government and have taken the lead in driving media exposure of the youth-led projects. Being so well connected to civil society and to government has helped maximise the relevance, reach and impact of the projects.





YOUTH BILA NOMA (YBN) | NAKURU

Youth Bila Noma is a youth-led and youth-focused organization whose mission is to strengthen the resilience of young people and their communities to violence through dialogue, skills development, and civic engagement.

Among their countless strengths, YBN excels at fostering creativity. This is reflected in the extremely high quality of creative youth-led projects launched in the County. Taking the initiative in driving capacity-building, they held a series of masterclasses which each enhanced youth understanding of effective project design and management. In the run-up to the 2022 elections, YBN continue to be vital for the furtherance of peace in the region, and an important partner for Young Cities' programming.



MOMBASA COUNTY



KWALE COUNTY



NAKURU COUNTY  
COUNTY OF UNLIMITED OPPORTUNITIES

NAKURU COUNTY





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You find that when we come together as different stakeholders, it brings a synergy and achieves new solutions. In that way, Young Cities is helping us deliver our mandate.

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It's important for the youth to be actors for change because the biggest group of voters is the youth. We're preparing the path for the little ones coming behind us and we're taking over from the older generation before us.

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It is important to link the youth with the leaders in the government and in the county because at the end of the day, these are the people influencing us. It's important to hear their voice and to get that support from them. It's all about group work between the youth and the government.

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