KEY LESSONS: these are reflections of what worked well and what did not work well during the lifetime of the project. The key critical lessons drawn from the project include:

- It was realised there is a need to engage with key stakeholders, especially the security actors right from the start of the project. This was important because some of the target beneficiaries were in conflict with the law and were thus viewed as a security threat, and the actors who had not been sensitised about the project. It is thus a pointer towards better stakeholder engagements and the need to consider having politico-economy analyses conducted before project commencement. Sustainable trust building between the criminal justice actors and the vulnerable youth is the cornerstone of the national and county CVE strategy in Kenya.

- The training of youth was first piloted in Lamu, and this proved to be quite useful because the feedback was used to structure the project better through improvements made to the content and methodology. There was dynamism in addressing emerging shifts such as COVID-19 Pandemic.

- The “common ground approach” is still unclear to communities and stakeholders, and thus it meant it took more time to be explained to concerned stakeholders. The lesson is that there is a need for more emphasis on this approach and for it to be mainstreamed in all project activities.

- Radio is the most commonly used media and has potential for CVE dissemination. The adults in the communities have seen the value of engaging with youth, especially the at-risk youth, thus the lesson is that better engagement is needed with adults.

- There is value in involving youth-based community groups, but they were involved at the later stages of the project, so their impact was limited. It means future engagements should be done earlier, especially with those groups that have already been capacitated. The culture of co-creation should be embedded in all the aspects of the project.

- The mixed engagement between the elite and vulnerable youth did not work out so well, especially at the beginning, when trying to bring understanding between the two groups, because they have different perspectives. The lesson here is that working with vulnerable and at-risk youth requires patience and time because they also have self-esteem issues which are also partly brought about by community perceptions which makes them feel stigmatised and discriminated against. Differentiating the youth as either ‘elite’ or ‘vulnerable’ should be re-looked at since it perpetuates the class question among the youths.

- The criminal justice system has learned the importance of engaging with the communities so as to ease and solve judicial-related issues. They have also learnt the importance of bottom-up approach i.e. starting from the community level and engaging with community resource persons who are instrumental in sensitizing the rest.