



GCERF
Global Community Engagement
and Resilience Fund



NEWSLETTER ISSUE 1

TRANSFORMING ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT INTO RESILIENCE,
OPPORTUNITY, AND LASTING PEACE



PREPARED BY
Robert Mwangi



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The AMANI Tekelezi programme, implemented by Action Life under the Kenya Community Engagement, Resilience and Resilience Project (KCERP), demonstrates a transformative and community-centered approach to peacebuilding in Lamu County. Across multiple wards—including Witu, Mkomani, Hindi, Bahari, Hongwe and Mkunumbi—the programme has consistently shown that sustainable peace is best achieved through inclusive engagement, local ownership, and practical, people-driven solutions.

At its core, AMANI Tekelezi redefines peacebuilding by moving beyond conventional dialogue spaces and embedding engagement within everyday community experiences. Through innovative platforms such as sports tournaments, community dialogues, arts, and economic inclusion initiatives, the programme has successfully created safe and accessible spaces where trust can be rebuilt between youth, communities, and security actors.

A key achievement has been the strengthening of relationships between communities and security institutions. By fostering direct, informal interactions—such as joint football matches and open dialogue sessions—longstanding barriers of fear, mistrust, and limited communication have been significantly reduced. These engagements have enhanced information sharing, improved early response to emerging threats, and reinforced the understanding that security is a shared responsibility.

Equally important is the programme's strong focus on youth and women as drivers of peace and resilience. Young people have demonstrated leadership in organizing activities, facilitating dialogue, and promoting non-violence, while women have actively contributed through participation in blue economy coconut value chains and community engagement platforms. By linking peacebuilding with economic empowerment—particularly through initiatives such as the coconut value chain—AMANI Tekelezi has positioned livelihoods as a critical peace dividend, reducing vulnerability and fostering dignity and self-reliance.

The programme has also proactively addressed emerging risks, including youth involvement in violence, resource-based conflicts, and the threat of radicalization and violent extremism. Through community-led dialogue, early warning and early response mechanisms, and the establishment of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) structures, communities are now better equipped to identify, manage, and prevent conflict before it escalates.

A notable strength of AMANI Tekelezi lies in its ability to integrate social cohesion, economic opportunity, and security collaboration into a unified framework. By leveraging familiar and culturally relevant platforms—such as sports and the arts—the programme ensures that engagement is not only inclusive, but also relatable and sustainable.

In conclusion, AMANI Tekelezi offers a compelling model for localized peacebuilding—one that is simple, human-centered, and impact-driven. It affirms that when communities are empowered, youth are engaged, women are included, and institutions are trusted, peace becomes not just an aspiration, but a lived and lasting reality.

Dr. Noor Dahir

Executive Director, Action Life Kenya

Launching AMANI Tekelezi: From Community Engagement to Lasting Peace Dividends



A significant milestone in our shared journey toward sustainable peace and resilience. Action Life is proud to officially launch the Kenya Community Engagement, Resilience and Resilience Programme (KCERRP), locally known as AMANI Tekelezi—a bold initiative designed to transform community engagement into tangible and lasting peace dividends.

The launch, held in Lamu West, brought together a diverse and influential group of stakeholders, including Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs, faith leaders, civil society representatives, National Government Administration Officers (NGAO), county officials, persons with disabilities (PWDs), youth leaders, and community champions. This powerful convergence reflects a shared commitment: to build peace that is practical, inclusive, and deeply rooted in local ownership.

More than just an inception meeting, the event laid the groundwork for a collaborative peace architecture. Through participatory dialogue, stakeholders identified opportunities for synergy, partnership, and collective impact. By aligning AMANI Tekelezi with existing initiatives, we are ensuring stronger coordination, minimizing duplication, and fostering a unified approach to peacebuilding—one that is co-created with communities, not imposed upon them.

A key highlight of the launch was the active involvement of youth supported through Action Life's coconut value chain initiatives. These young entrepreneurs showcased their products, engaged directly with stakeholders, and explored market opportunities and partnerships. Their participation underscored a powerful truth: economic empowerment is a cornerstone of sustainable peace. By creating pathways for livelihoods, we reduce vulnerability, restore dignity, and strengthen social cohesion.

AMANI Tekelezi is anchored on the belief that peace cannot thrive in isolation from opportunity. By integrating trust-building, community engagement, and inclusive economic empowerment, the programme positions youth and women as active drivers of resilience—not passive beneficiaries.

STRENGTHENING LOCAL RESILIENCE THROUGH DIALOGUE AND EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS

Action Life continues to bring peacebuilding closer to the people through the Kenya Community Engagement, Resilience and Resilience Project (KCERP), locally known as AMANI Tekelezi. In a significant step toward strengthening local resilience, a community dialogue was recently convened in Witu Ward, Amkeni Village (Lamu West)—uniting farmers, pastoralists, women and youth leaders, elders, and security agencies in a timely and solutions-driven conversation.

This engagement comes at a critical moment. Prolonged drought conditions across neighboring regions have led to an influx of livestock into Lamu County, intensifying pressure on land, water, and crop protection. These challenges have heightened tensions between farming and pastoralist communities—making proactive dialogue not just important, but essential.



AMANI Tekelezi responded by creating a safe and inclusive platform where all voices could be heard. Participants openly shared their lived experiences, identified early warning signs of conflict, and explored practical pathways toward peaceful coexistence. Women and youth brought forward grounded, day-to-day perspectives, while security actors provided clarity on coordination and response mechanisms. The session reinforced a powerful message: conflict prevention begins with trust, listening, and shared responsibility.

A key milestone from the dialogue was the establishment of a community-based Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Committee. This committee will be strengthened through targeted capacity-building initiatives in mediation, negotiation, and conflict resolution. In parallel, the foundation was laid for Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) systems, empowering communities to identify and address tensions before they escalate into conflict.

This initiative underscores a fundamental principle—resilience is built not through force, but through inclusive engagement, local leadership, and proactive systems. AMANI Tekelezi continues to place communities at the center of peacebuilding, ensuring that farmers, herders, women, youth, and security actors work together with shared tools and a unified vision.





A particularly powerful outcome has been the growing recognition and adoption of value-added products within the coconut value chain. Products such as brooms, virgin coconut oil, coconut-based soaps, and charcoal briquettes are no longer seen as small-scale outputs, but as symbols of resilience, innovation, and self-reliance. By integrating product exhibitions and market linkages into dialogue sessions, Action Life is successfully bridging the gap between social cohesion, economic empowerment, and sustainable livelihoods.

These dialogue platforms have also strengthened community ownership and buy-in, ensuring that local markets are inclusive, trusted, and responsive to community needs. They are helping shift social norms, build confidence in women- and youth-led enterprises, and foster a shared vision of economic transformation.

Looking ahead, Action Life remains committed to using community dialogue as a cornerstone approach—championing women’s empowerment, advancing youth economic inclusion, and unlocking transformative growth within the blue economy.

Women and youth are not just participants in this journey—they are leading it.

Through dialogue, we are building markets. Through markets, we are building resilience.

Empowering Women and Youth through Dialogue: Unlocking Opportunities in the Blue Economy

Action Life continues to innovate in its approach to peacebuilding and economic empowerment by strategically leveraging community dialogue platforms as powerful engines for inclusion, opportunity, and transformation within the blue economy.

These platforms are intentionally designed to go beyond conversation. They serve as safe, inclusive, and action-oriented spaces where women’s voices are amplified, their innovations showcased, and their economic contributions recognized and valued within their communities. Women engaged in blue economy value chains are not only sharing their experiences—but actively reshaping perceptions around women-led enterprise, leadership, and participation in local economies.

At the same time, these dialogue spaces have evolved into practical market-entry points for young people. Youth are able to display, promote, and sell locally manufactured products while building referral networks that expand their customer base and strengthen market access. Through peer-to-peer referrals and community endorsements, trust in locally produced goods continues to grow—driving demand and reinforcing the value of grassroots enterprise.



When Peace is Played on the Pitch



Through the Kenya Community Engagement, Resilience and Resilience Project (KICERP), locally known as AMANI Tekelezi, and supported by the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GICERF), Action Life—together with Act Change Transform—continues to reimagine what peacebuilding looks like in practice.

This time, we chose football.

Not because it solves everything—but because it opens doors that formal conversations sometimes cannot.

In Witu, six teams came together. Youth showed up ready to play. The community gathered with anticipation. And on the pitch, something unexpected—and powerful—unfolded: officers from the Kenya Defence Forces stepped in not as authority figures, but as teammates and competitors. No ranks. No titles. Just people, playing the same game, equally exhausted by halftime. Football broke the ice.

There were cheers, laughter, and the usual debates over refereeing decisions. But beneath the competition, something deeper began to take shape—barriers started to fall. When the final whistle blew, the real work began.

Participants came together in a relaxed, open setting—no podiums, no formal speeches. Just honest conversation. Youth shared their perspectives on safety, trust, and the everyday challenges they face. Security officers listened—and responded—not as uniforms, but as fellow members of the community.

This is the essence of AMANI Tekelezi.

We do not wait for conflict to escalate before taking action.

We meet communities where they are.

We use familiar spaces to rebuild trust before it is broken.

Football gave us a shared language.

Dialogue gave us direction.

Together, they created something powerful: connection.

Because peace is not always negotiated in offices.

Sometimes, it is passed from the left wing to the striker.

Sometimes, it is defended in extra time.

And sometimes, it is built in the simple realization that the person you feared yesterday laughs just like you.

TURNING ENGAGEMENT INTO IMPACT FOR SAFER COMMUNITIES

Through the KCERP project (AMANI Tekelezi), Action Life brought together security actors, community members, and young people into one shared, dynamic space. What followed was not a conventional dialogue—but a vibrant, inclusive experience built on football matches, theatre performances, creative skits, and energetic youth dances.

These activities did more than entertain—they transformed how conversations around security happen.

They made them accessible, relatable, and honest.

By engaging through sports and the arts, barriers that often limit trust and cooperation began to fall. Security actors were no longer seen as distant authorities, but as partners. Young people were not passive participants, but active contributors. And the community found its voice in a safe and open environment.

This approach reinforced a critical truth:

peace and security cannot exist without trust.

When communities and security actors understand one another and build genuine relationships:

- Information flows more freely
- Emerging threats are identified early
- Responses become more timely and effective
- And most importantly—violence is prevented before it escalates

At a time when worrying trends are emerging—including youth engaging in violence such as the use of pangas—this initiative offered a powerful alternative. It demonstrated that when young people are meaningfully engaged through sports, arts, and talent, they are far less likely to be drawn into crime or conflict—and far more likely to become champions of peace.



The dialogue also created space for honest conversations around radicalization and violent extremism. Together, participants unpacked the complex push and pull factors—from social vulnerabilities and economic exclusion to the search for identity and belonging. More importantly, the discussions highlighted how early, community-led interventions can disrupt these pathways before they take root.

Uniting Youth Through Sport & Dialogue for a Safer Community

Sports have always been more than just a game—they are a powerful force for connection, understanding, and transformation. Through football, we are not just building teams—we are building bridges between individuals, ideas, and communities. In Hindi Ward, Action Life Kenya, in partnership with Act Change Transform (Act!) and with the generous support of the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF), successfully convened a Football Dialogue Session that brought together youth, community leaders, and prison officers in a shared, safe, and inclusive space. While the match on the pitch sparked energy and unity, the true impact unfolded after the game—through open, honest, and courageous conversations on some of the most pressing issues affecting young people today, particularly radicalization and violent extremism.



Across many communities, youth face complex and often overlapping challenges. Social exclusion, limited economic opportunities, and the search for identity and belonging can create vulnerabilities that expose young people to harmful ideologies. By creating safe and engaging platforms like this, we are able to:

- Encourage peer-to-peer dialogue, allowing youth to openly share experiences and perspectives
- Build trust between communities and institutions, including meaningful engagement with prison officers
- Promote critical thinking and awareness on the dangers of violent extremism
- Strengthen community resilience through inclusion, participation, and shared responsibility

As the final whistle blew, participants gathered for reflective discussions that went beyond surface-level conversations. Youth engaged deeply—asking questions, sharing realities, and exploring how to resist negative influences while supporting one another.

These moments of dialogue are where transformation begins—where understanding replaces fear, and where solutions are shaped collectively.

WHERE SPORT BUILDS LEADERS AND STRENGTHENS PEACE



In Uziwa Mkunumbi Ward, something powerful is unfolding—where football is no longer just a game, but a catalyst for connection, dialogue, and lasting peace.

Through Action Life's Sports for Peace tournaments under the AMANI Tekelezi programme, the football pitch has become a dynamic space where youth, security actors, and the wider community come together—not just to play, but to engage, understand, and build trust.

These were not ordinary matches.

They were moments of transformation.

As the ball moved across the field, so did conversations. Young people and security officers sat side by side—sharing experiences, voicing concerns, and dismantling long-standing barriers of fear and mistrust. In these informal and inclusive spaces, relationships deepened, and mutual understanding began to take root.

At the center of it all were young people—not as participants, but as leaders.

From organizing teams and mobilizing their peers, to guiding discussions and shaping the tone of engagement, youth demonstrated ownership, agency, and a deep commitment to peace. Team captains emerged as role models, inspiring both players and spectators to embrace unity, respect, and non-violence.

Young people began to see themselves not as bystanders, but as active peacebuilders—individuals with the power to influence, protect, and transform their communities. Through sport and dialogue, they found their voice—and used it with confidence.

The impact extended far beyond the pitch.

The strong community turnout reflected something even greater: a collective willingness to engage, to listen, and to act. Spectators became participants—joining conversations, sharing perspectives, and reinforcing a shared responsibility for peace and security.





Empowering

COMMUNITIES THROUGH KNOWLEDGE: AMANI
TEKELEZI DRIVING ECONOMIC RESILIENCE



Across Mpeketoni, Witu, Mapenya, Hindi, and Mkunumbi, a quiet but powerful transformation is taking place—one rooted in knowledge, dignity, and opportunity. Through the AMANI Tekelezi initiative, Action Life recently facilitated five Economic Empowerment Awareness sessions, bringing together 76 participants—66 youth and 10 women—in spaces designed not just for learning, but for reflection, connection, and growth.

What made these sessions truly impactful was not only the knowledge shared, but the honest and courageous conversations that emerged.

Participants spoke openly about the realities they face—unstable incomes, financial uncertainty, and the frustration of limited opportunities. In these safe and inclusive environments, livelihoods were no longer viewed simply as a means of survival—but as a pathway to dignity, stability, and peacebuilding.



Through practical, hands-on sessions, participants gained essential financial skills, including:

- Budgeting and saving
- Record-keeping
- Small business management

For many, this was their first introduction to structured financial planning—unlocking a new mindset around money, growth, and long-term sustainability.

The sessions also placed strong emphasis on marketing and value addition, particularly for participants engaged in coconut-based and small-scale enterprises. With guidance from peer coaches within the BlueBiz youth groups, participants explored practical ways to improve product quality, branding, and customer engagement—transforming everyday hustle into strategic and competitive enterprise.

A critical and timely component of the sessions was the integration of Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) awareness. Through real-life scenarios and open discussions, participants connected how economic vulnerability and frustration can increase susceptibility to harmful influences. This reframed economic empowerment as more than a financial goal—it became a tool for resilience, protection, and community safety. Equally important, the sessions created space for healing and emotional well-being. Conversations around stress, trauma, and personal struggles allowed participants—especially women—to share openly, support one another, and build stronger bonds within their groups.

By the end of the sessions, the transformation was visible:

- Confidence had grown
- Mindsets had shifted
- Hope had been restored



AMANI TEKELEZI NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 1

Transforming Economic Empowerment into Resilience,
Opportunity, and Lasting Peace



For More Information

Email: actionlifekenya@gmail.com

Physical Address

BAAZAI BUILDING,
OPPOSITE MOKOWE GUEST HOUSE
MOKOWE TOWN
P.O Box 21-80500, Lamu Kenya.
Phone: +254 729 004516

    
Like| Share| Subscribe| Comment
@Action Life Kenya

 <https://actionlife.co.ke/>

