

## An Examination of Nature of Peace-Building Strategies Employed Among the Border Communities of Kisumu and Nandi Counties, Kenya

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### ABSTRACT

*The study examined peace building strategies employed among the border communities of Kisumu and Nandi Counties, Kenya. The nature of peace building was analyzed through investigating the types of the peace building strategies, the types of actors, approaches used and the level of community participation. The study was supported by conflict transformation theory. Descriptive research design was employed. The target population of the study was the people living along the borders of Muhoroni and Tinderet constituencies. The study adopted simple random and purposive sampling to select the participants. The sample size of the study was 320. Data was collected using questionnaires, interview schedule and focus group discussion guide. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS V. 30.1. Qualitative data was analyzed using content and thematic analysis technique. The results were presented in the percentages, frequencies, tables and figures. The findings revealed that the types of peace building strategies used mostly were inter-communal dialogue (31.8%), sports and theatre (19.2%), psycho-social support (16.9%), peace caravans and crusades (13.6%), use of security personnel (10.6%) and socio-economic development projects (7.94%). The study further revealed reactive and non-reactive approaches were employed. The actors mostly involved are state (47%), non-state (32%) and Indigenous groups (21%). Finally, the findings revealed that the local community participates in the peace building process to a high extent. The study concludes that ethnic dialogue, sports and theatre, psychosocial support and counselling, peace caravans and crusades, use of security personnel and socio-economic initiatives are mostly used peace building strategies to enhance cohesion with state actors, non-state actors and the indigenous groups using non-reactive approaches and reactive approaches. These interventions are organized by the actors who always involve the local communities who are the primary beneficiary of the outcome. The study recommends that the cure to the reoccurrence inter-ethnic conflict in the study are is the collaboration between the state actors, non-state actors and the locals communities during the implementation of the initiatives to make the initiatives more effective.*

**Key Words:** Cohesion, Development, Peace Building, Security

### I. INTRODUCTION

Peace building as a concept was introduced by Norwegian Sociologist Johana Galtung in the 1970s when he was trying to promote a system that would create sustainable peace in the world (Mohamed, 2014). This system created would address the root causes of the disagreement among the local people and bring ethnic-cohesion. Peace building was popularized to the international community through United Nations Secretary- General Boutros Boutros-Ghali 1992 in his *An Agenda for Peace report* (Mohamed, 2014). Hence, Boutros Boutros-Ghali described peace building as process of identifying and supporting the institutions that strengthen cohesion among the neighboring communities (Cravo, 2017).

Pragmatically, there are no universally preferred peace building interventions but actors usually employ different initiatives to build cohesion and reduce reoccurrence of conflicts. For instance, United Nations (UN), civil societies and even individual states have their own approaches to peace building for ethnic cohesion. Therefore, it's now upon the actor to decide which strategy is the best to be employed in a given post conflict society for cohesion. The post-conflict Peace building has become the site of interrelations between peace, development and security (Öjendaal, *et al.*, 2021).

According to Van der Borgh *et al.* (2019), in the post conflict between Serbia and Kosovo, the European Union (EU) applied community dialogue as the peace building strategy to reconcile the two ethnic communities and enhance inter-ethnic cohesion. Community dialogue was used as peace building strategy to improve the interactions

between the stakeholders and policy makers so that the implementation and adoption of those policies could bring cohesion to the entire country that was formerly disintegrated. The United States (US) government offered financial support to many European countries as peace building interventions after conflict to build their economies for ethnic cohesion (Seif, 2015).

In Africa, community leaders have employed different peace building strategies, such as the traditional arbitration system, to solve land disputes and other family wrangles for inter-ethnic cohesion (Ajayi & Oluwafemi, 2014). In Rwanda and Burundi, media and arts have been used as a peace building tool. The dramas and skirts played were geared towards ensuring people who used to be enemies are living in harmony (Idris, 2020). In addition, in Burundi, women have been also been used as peace agents between the warring communities. Finally, religious organization have been involved in a number of conflict management and resolutions especially in Ethiopia at Ahram area where they act as the judges in the disputes between the communities (Langat, 2017).

Many parts of Kenya have experienced increased number of inter-ethnic conflicts since the end of cold war in the early 1990's which coincided with the introduction of multi-party system in the country. Therefore, a number of interventions have been introduced to reduce the tensions in the country and build cohesion. For instance, the formation of Grand-coalition government in Kenya gave birth to the Constitution 2010, devolution and other constitutional offices (Rohweder, 2015). Similarly, the border communities have also experienced several inter-ethnic conflicts that has many destruction and loss of lives. Thus, the state and other actors have initiated various peace building programs such as 'Nyumba Kumi' initiative, sports and cultural activities, establishing Anti-Stock Theft Police Units to deal with cattle rustling and put up police posts along the borderline (Saferworld, 2015).

The media, faith-based organizations, women and youth groups and political leaders have also used dialogue, reconciliation, peace committee meetings, sports and psycho-social support as peace building initiatives among the border communities of Kisumu and Nandi Counties for ethnic cohesion (Saferworld, 2015). Despite, the well-organized peace building activities conducted among the border communities; there is still hatred, prejudice, and mistrust with out-group and recurring ethnic conflicts (Okoth & Magero, 2022). Therefore, this study examined the nature of peace building strategies employed among the border communities of Kisumu and Nandi Counties for inter-ethnic cohesion since 2013 to 2023.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Since 2013-2023, there have been many sporadic inter-ethnic conflicts among the border communities of Kisumu and Nandi Counties. These conflicts have caused both social and economic disruptions in the two counties such as destruction of properties, loss of lives and livelihoods leading poverty, and an increase of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees (Abonyo, 2020). Due to sporadic nature these inter-ethnic conflicts different actors have employed various peace building strategies to enhance inter-ethnic cohesion. For instance, community dialogue and interethnic schooling, equal distribution of resources, community negotiation, and mediation, youth programs, grass root peace organizations and cross-border (Okoth & Magero, 2022). Despite the implementation of various peace building initiatives, the border communities still experience sporadic and persistent inter-ethnic conflicts.

In addition, few studies conducted around the study area have not examined nature of peace building strategies employed across the border. For instance, Ngonela *et al.* (2017), studied implications of peace building strategies in Kwanza Sub-County. Akinyi *et al.* (2017) examined women participating in peace building in the cross-border conflict between the Luo and Kipsigis. Abonyo (2020) studied the persistent inter-ethnic hostility and its impact on social-economic livelihood. Odanga *et al.* (2022) analyzing the social-economic ramifications of trans-border conflict. Juma and Simiyu (2019) explored the nature and causes inter-ethnic conflicts in Western Kenya. Mwamba *et al.* (2019) examined the peace building strategies employed by PCEA in Kenya. Therefore, this study examined the nature of peace building employed among the border communities of Kisumu and Nandi Counties. By investigating types of peace building employed, the approaches used and the extent of community participation in the peace building process.

### 1.2 Research Objective

- i. To examine the types of the peace building strategies employed among the border communities of Kisumu and Nandi Counties, Kenya
- ii. To explore approaches used in peace building among the border communities of Kisumu and Nandi Counties, Kenya
- iii. To examine the extent of community participation in peace building strategies at the Kisumu and Nandi Counties, Kenya

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Theoretical Review

#### 2.1.1 Conflict Transformation Theory

The study was grounded on the Conflict transformation theory that was started by Johan Galtung. It puts more emphasis on tackling the deeply rooted situations that could lead to conflict and hostilities but also makes sure that peace is sustainable (Galtung, 1976). Moreover, it attempts to make clear-cut and change the social structures and dynamics that lead to conflict, often using analytical techniques taken from systems thinking (Galtung, 2013). Thus, it is a process of attracting and reshaping relationships, interests, and conversations with conflicting groups (Milojević, 2024). Despite its significance, this theory has some weaknesses, such as it does not give attention to the autonomous process of change within the political system and does not identify the type of action appropriate during the peace-building process.

Nevertheless, this theory is significant as it helps the border communities of Kisumu and Nandi Counties, which are the primary beneficiaries of the peace-building process, and other actors such as the state, civil society, and religious on how conflicting experiences could be transformed to a peaceful environment using various peace building techniques to lead to inter-ethnic cohesion. It further recognizes that persistent conflicts can be changed gradually via a series of smaller or larger transformations as well as specific steps by various actors. Moreover, the theory identifies the root causes of conflict that should be addressed through concerted efforts by actors during peace-building initiatives.

### 2.2 Empirical Review

#### 2.2.1 The types of Peace building Interventions used in building Inter-ethnic Cohesion

There are several peace building strategies that have been used over the years to transform societies in conflict to peaceful and secured environment. Cravo (2017), argues political framework reformation is a strategy that involves political transformation where antagonistic groups legitimize the government authority, which they did not recognize. The pragmatic approach embraces peacebuilding as a political activity that must never have templates and formulas during implementation but be based on the institutional transformations of a country (Paffenholz, 2021). The Constitutional Amendment in Afghanistan of 2002 was recorded and evaluated to be successful after it led to the inter-state cohesion (Cravo, 2017). In South Africa, political reforms were used build peace after marginalization and apartheid (Langat, 2017). In Kenya, there have many constitutional changes such as, one party system to multi-party system of 1992 was meant to give Kenyans political freedom, Grand-coalition government after mediated 2007/8 post-election violence and handshake of 2013 elections brought substantial cohesion in the country (Muigua, 2021). It also allowed the transfer of tensions among conflicting groups to be solved at the institutional level instead of engaging in armed conflict.

Socio-economic development activities are also peace building strategies linked to cohesion. They lead to the socio-economic revitalization, a vital foundation for longer-term economic empowerment (Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), 2010). It is based on economic growth and development of local people to reduce likelihood of conflict and the promotion of sustainable peace (UN, 2020). In Rwanda, for example socio-economic development and redistribution policies have increased social stability, social cohesion and social transformation. Those two factors have positively contributed to peace and security in that Country (Orango, 2017). This is because they were able to address the root causes of inter-ethnic problems by promoting employment opportunities, poverty eradication and inclusive economic growth among the local communities.

In contrast Burke (2013), argues that many Asian Nation-state advanced economic growth at the lowest level in order to settle subnational conflicts, there were evidences showing that violence continued despite intense economic growth. The high income does not guarantee high levels of peace and stability as was experienced in India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Nepal all have much higher conflict rates than expected for their stage of development. For instance, Sri Lanka, has had its economy expanded by 5% annually from 1983 to 2000 despite the civil war. In another example, Burke (2013) argues socioeconomic improvement in the far South of Thailand has exacerbated tensions between different groups, rather than reducing them.

The strategy was developed by UN 1998 Known as '*Health as a Bridge for peace*' under the World Health Organization (WHO, 1998). It is therefore a multidimensional policy framework that would help health workers in providing health programmes in conflict and post-conflict situations. Similarly, contribute to sustainable peace (Tankink *et al.*, 2017). Gutlove and Thompson (2004) posit that complication of rebuilding a society after armed or violent conflict needs a strategy that includes political and structural rebuilding of institutions and political processes, as well as psychological healing, equipping of survivors and social reconstruction. So without working on psycho-social needs, the main causes of the conflict cannot be addressed; building relationships is the entry point to healing process and peace into a society.

According to Musembi and Iteyo (2018), Trauma healing through psycho-social support is an inter-ethnic cohesion building strategy which focuses on creation of awareness of trauma, social reconciliation and forgiveness among the conflicting communities. For instance, managing conflict in Tana River area lacked trauma healing and psychosocial support.

According to Ombati (2014) Media and Art have been used as a peace building strategy to promote a lasting peace. This is due to technological advancements and diffusions among the communities in the modern times. The digital platform which is majorly dominated by the social media to help in building peace (Stieglitz & Ross, 2022). According to Council of Europe (2011), Sport is a universal language that everyone speaks irrespective of the background, economic status, religious beliefs and culture. For instance, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, schools initiated open football at the grassroots levels to increase interactions and build relationship between young people. The initiatives have become a reconciliation instruments to promote understanding and tolerance in Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Moldova, Georgia and many other countries in the Balkans and Middle East.

### **2.2.2 Actors and Approaches used in the Post Inter-Ethnic Conflict Peace Building Initiatives**

During peace building process a number of actors and approaches are used concurrently or alternatively to enhance inter-ethnic cohesion. The many stakeholders in the peace building process are state actors, non-state actors and indigenous groups. Each of the actor may employ a methods that suites the conflict environment. According to Cravo (2017), the state does security sector reforms to as a peacebuilding strategy in post-conflict societies for inter-ethnic cohesion. It is to institutionalize, safeguard and neutralize the feeling of insecurity that pervades the various actors who fear exclusion, centralization of political and military power favoring the opposing group to their detrimental. But, it is also an aspect of the broader security sector reforms (SSR), which is very important to sustainable cohesion (Akerdal, 2013). They further argued that security reforms help in building trust between the military and the population by promoting transparency, accountability and respect for human rights (Akerdal, 2013).

In Kenya, there have been numerous security sector reforms since independence such as transforming police from a force to service, creation of Independent Police Oversight Authority (IPOA), harmonious working among the defense forces, creation of police commissioner position among other changes (Chebon, 2010). Military and police officers are usually deployed in conflict areas to end or lessen the impact of conflict or violence on the locals (Ojalah & Gona, 2021). The deployment comprise of long-term operations aimed at disarming conflicting parties and monitoring the conflict situation, once calm has been restored. Ombati (2014) observed that Media and Art have been used to promote a lasting peace. This is due to technological advancements and diffusions among the communities in the modern times. The digital platform which is majorly dominated by the social media to help in building peace (Stieglitz & Ross, 2022). According to Council of Europe (2011), Sport is a universal language that everyone speaks irrespective of the background, economic status, religious beliefs and culture. In, Borabu/ Sotik border sports activities for instance, soccer competitions and road peace marathons have been used to build peace and resolve conflict (Ombati, 2014).

### **2.2.3 Community Participation in the Peace building Process**

Community participation is very necessary in peace building as other aspects of people's activities for ownership and effectiveness. According to Muigua (2021), the Kenyan Constitution 2010 emphasizes the significance of peaceful co-existence among the Kenya, irrespective of culture, ethnicity and religion. The peace building policies and frameworks are recognized as crucial processes and tools for the achievement of vision 2030 which aims to change Kenya into a new industrialized middle-income state providing a better quality of life for everyone by 2030 (Vision 2030, 2022). Moreover, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) has been working in collaboration with Kenyan government to enhance women's involvement and safety in the peace building process. To promote women's functions in conflict prevention, and enhance youth empowerment and participation in sustainable peace and development (Muigua, 2021).

In addition, Council of Europe (2011) argues that sporting activities such as football, volleyball, basketball, rope pulling and races has been accepted as an instrument for social integration in a post conflict society. For instance, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, schools initiated open football at the grassroots levels to increase interactions and build relationship between young people. The initiatives have become a reconciliation instruments to promote understanding and tolerance in Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Moldova, Georgia and many other countries in the Balkans and Middle East.

In another situation. Tegla Lorupe started annual 'race for' in her west Pokot area after the 2012 Conflicts between the Tugen and Pokot communities, where 7000 people participated (Schliesser, 2020). The race included celebrities and former warriors and also fostered dialogue among the two fighting communities which enhanced ethnic cohesion among them.

The local groups include council of elders, women and youth used in the peace building process. They participate in the dialogues, storytelling, consultations and reconciliation. With reciprocating respect for variety, the communities organize around their common predicaments which generally leads to a positive change (Ombati, 2014). Okoth and Magero (2022), argues that the role played by council of elders in peacebuilding process is generally acknowledged by many people across the globe. This interventions is usually driven through customary or indigenous mechanisms such as spiritual leaders, chiefs and elders mediating local situations especially in the Horn of Africa (Ojalah & Gona, 2021).

According to Schliesser (2020), the role of religious groups and institutions in peace building and conflict resolution process has increasingly been the subject of scientific scrutiny worldwide. This is because most people always view religion as ambivalent which catalyzes hatred, intolerances and violence among the communities, but it also incorporates a huge potentiality in terms of resources for reconciliation and violence management (Schliesser, 2020). Moreover, Hans (2016), adds that religious groups are the motivators and mobilisers of masses in the conflicting area, thus negatively contributors to violence instead of being positive influencer of conflict transformation process.

According to Nyambura (2016), the non-state actors in Kenya began active Peace building in the early 2000s. For instance, the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) reacted to the 1992 after elections violence which led an upheaval of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Rift Valley region. NCCCK gave out food and other items to IDPs and despite the government disregarding its efforts but some government administrators supported its work with the IDPs at their own personal level. Derlich and Allden (2021) argue that the Non- Governmental Organizations (NGOs) tend to be the subject of a traditional-modern dichotomy in the post-conflict reconstruction. The civil society organizations (CSOs) ended up as service providers and thus led to the growth of the economy hence facilitating the peace building process in Afghanistan. The NGO worked very hard in bottom-up initiative change instead of the top-down approaches on peace building efforts to reduce chances of recurring conflicts in the country. Similarly, International community was involved in the peacebuilding initiative programmes such as security, humanitarian, democratization and economic reconstruction (Seif, 2015). These interventions were meant to spur economic growth and security to address the root causes of the violence.

According to Musila (2013), the approach of peace committees was adopted by actors in other parts of the Northern region and Coastal areas, for example, Pokot, Mandera, Moyale, Garissa, Tana River Marsabit, and Turkana. This approach is viewed as successful in addressing resource-based conflicts among pastoralist communities, and that is the reason why the NSC is promoting it, initially focused on hot spot areas. With a lot of support from UNDP and Oxfam, DPCs were piloted in many districts in Northern Kenya to front preventive action at the district level. Later, the model was used in many parts of the country following the post-election violence of 2007-2008.

## 2.3 The Empirical Gaps

Mutuku and Sabala (2017), examined the inter-ethnic conflict management among the Borana and Rendile of Kenya, Horn of Africa. The study employed conflict transformation theory. The results revealed that inter-ethnic conflicts are as a result of scarce resources and cultural disparity. The findings also revealed that a number of conflict management measures were put place such as both top-down and bottom-up initiatives. The study concludes that conflict management strategies are ineffective which now requires tailor made interventions to sort the problem between Borana and Rendile.

Agwella and Harris (2018) studied localizing Peace building in South Sudan. The study employed social constructionist interpretivist methods as ontological and epistemological dimensions. The study found out that traditional strategies were not used and applied double peace processes and final agreements that settled the 1983-2005 war and the ongoing post-independence conflicts. However, it uncovered the role and contributions of local mechanisms before and during the years of war.

Agaya *et al.* (2021) explored strategies employed by grassroots organizations in anchoring community peace and cohesion in Kibra informal urban settlement in Nairobi, Kenya. The study revealed that the main strategy used to building cohesion were sports and art, cultural exchanges and collective intergroup programs as well as environmental protection. The study further revealed that intergroup funeral and self-help group meetings were transformed to inclusive units. The study also found that grassroots organizations lacked properly collaborative mechanisms anchored in law and policy to support and cohesion.

Mwamba *et al.* (2019) investigated peace strategies employed by the Presbyterian church of East Africa in enhancing inter-ethnic harmony in Kenya. The study adopted descriptive survey design with a scope of Mombasa, Eldoret, Nakuru west and east, Laikipia, Njoro and Elburgon among the presbyteries. The tools used were FGDs, Questionnaires and Interview guides. Findings revealed that competition and manipulation of the locals has led to inter-ethnic violence, radicalization and polarization in many areas and also concluded that PCEA's participation in the peace building process was due to pastoral, Biblical and theological reasons.

Odanga *et al.* (2022), examined strategies employed in managing inter-ethnic conflicts occasioned by National elections in Nakuru County between 19992 and 2017. The study revealed the state was leading agency in the peacebuilding for many years but now has shifted from macro-level to micro-level intervention through the local institutions. The study also revealed that non-state actors have joined hand to work with state in the conflict management. The study has further revealed that state have initiated projects to promote cohesion and unity such as schools and dispensaries, and further prevent inter-ethnic conflicts.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research Design

Cooper and Schindler (2014), argue that research design is a construct, or the blueprint of study that direct the processes of study from the formulation of the questions and hypotheses to reporting the results. The study adopted a descriptive mixed method research design.

#### 3.2 Study Location

The study was carried out among border the communities of Kisumu and Nandi counties. The borderline stretches around 103 Km along Muhoroni and Tinderet sub-counties (Shalom-SCCRR, 2020). The total area of borderline is 506.50Km with Tinderet sub-county 321km<sup>2</sup> and Muhuroni Sub-county 185.50Km<sup>2</sup> (Abonyo, 2020). The actual area of study were the 8 villages of Muhuroni and Tinderet sub-counties; Soba, Chemase, Chemelil and Kapkitony in Tinderet sub-county, Nandi County and in Kisumu County, Muhuroni Sub-County are God Abuor, Kibigori, Soghor East and West. These villages have been chosen because they have been hotspots for inter-ethnic conflicts for a long time despite a number of peace building initiatives to enhance inter-ethnic cohesion (Shalom-SCCRR, 2020).

#### 3.3 Target Population

According to Kenya National Bureau of Statistics [KNBS] (2019), the total population of the community people living in area are about 75,420 people that is 54,423 from the Nandi side and 20,997 from the Kisumu side. The study population were made up of three categories; the household heads, community leaders and peace building actors. The household heads are people who live and work within the four selected wards in the study area. The second category were the community leaders that included chiefs, assistant chiefs, village elders, member of county assembly (MCAs), senators, governors, women representatives. Finally, the peace building actors were; council of elders, religious leaders, civil society groups, youth groups, women groups, state security officers and members of National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) officers.

#### 3.4 Sample Size

The sample size alludes to the representatives of the population that was picked for inquiry on behalf of the other units in the population. Creswell (2014) argues that it contains the attribute of the population and should be a good representation of the population for generalizable results. The total households in the border area were 52,438 households (KNBS, 2019). This study sample size of 320 household heads was determined using Yamane formula

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

#### 3.5 Reliability and Validity of Instruments

A test-retest method was used to test for the reliability of the instruments where a sample of 10% of 320, which was 32, was drawn from Sotik/ Borabu border communities which was not part of the sample size but have experienced recurring inter-ethnic conflict among the border communities of the two counties which indicate lack of inter-ethnic cohesion. The research assistants were trained in data collection techniques. The reliability of the items was assessed by interrogating the internal consistency and loading the items on their corresponding consistency. During the analysis, the answers were compared. A correlation of 0.7 was considered reliable and sufficient for this study type.

The supervisors and other members of the faculty assisted in determining whether the items in the questionnaires, focus group discussion schedules and interview guides adequately represent all the areas that were to be investigated. The researcher also ensured validity of the collected data by training research assistants before commencing field work as well administering the interview guides personally.

#### 3.6 Data Collection

Data collection instruments were three questionnaires, interview schedule and focus group discussion guide. The study utilized drop and pick questionnaires with help of research assistants. The researcher used key informant

interviews guides to collect qualitative data from key informants through in depth interviews. The key informants were drawn from chiefs/ assistant chiefs, elected leaders, NCIC officers, religious leaders and security personnel.

### 3.7 Data Analysis

Quantitative methods of data analysis were used to analyze the collected data. Quantitative information were analyzed through statistical procedures with help SPSS and Microsoft Excel (MS). The study employed thematic and content analysis methods to analyze qualitative data collected. Content analysis involves coding and classifying data, and then categorizing and indexing with the aim of making sense of the data collected and highlight the important messages, features or findings.

### 3.8 Ethical Considerations

The graduate school issued an introduction letter to the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) which is a state corporation which gives research permit for data collection. The permit from NACOSTI was then used to enable acquiring other permits for data collection from other relevant authorities.

## IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Demographic Information of the Respondents

The study examined the nature of peace building strategies employed among the border communities of Kisumu and Nandi Counties, Kenya, revealed various demographic informants. Out of 320 questionnaires distributed to the household heads living along the border of Kisumu and Nandi Counties, 302 questionnaires were responded to and returned and shows an excellent response rate of 94.4%. This was deemed sufficient for analysis and making conclusion. The research instruments was marked reliable as supported by Cronbach's Alpha with value 0.7, indicating a perfect consistency of the tool in relation with data collected.

**Table 1**

*Summarizes the Demographic Information of the Respondents*

| Demographic information | Particulars         | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------|---------|
| Gender                  | Male                | 160       | 53%     |
|                         | Female              | 142       | 47%     |
| Level of education      | No formal education | 19        | 6%      |
|                         | Primary             | 52        | 17%     |
|                         | Secondary           | 99        | 33%     |
|                         | College             | 72        | 24%     |
|                         | University          | 60        | 20%     |
| Age bracket             | 18-25               | 51        | 17%     |
|                         | 26-35               | 103       | 34%     |
|                         | 36-43               | 79        | 26%     |
|                         | 44-50               | 42        | 14%     |
|                         | Over 50             | 27        | 9%      |
| Ethnic Group            | Luhya               | 39        | 13%     |
|                         | Nandi               | 100       | 33%     |
|                         | Abagusii            | 30        | 10%     |
|                         | Luo                 | 106       | 35%     |
|                         | Maasai              | 15        | 5%      |
|                         | Kikuyu              | 12        | 4%      |

Table 1.0 shows the summary on the demographic information, 53% male and 47% female respondents, indicating a slight gender difference but in most Africa communities it is men who usually respond to critical issues affecting the communities (Kipuri & Ridwell, 2010). In addition, the UN (2020) 1325 supports women meaningful participation in peace building initiatives, security and respondents. Regarding age of household heads 34% (26-35), 26% (36-43), 17% (18-25), 14% (44-50), and 9% over 51 years. A majority of the respondents were in the (18-35) years as supported by Goldstone (2008) youthful house heads participated despite the fact they need proper integration in their society to become responsible adults in future. On the level of education 33% had secondary as the highest level of education, 24% college, 20% university, 17% primary and 6% no formal education. On the ethnic groups representation, study revealed that Luo were the majority with 35%, Nandi 33%, Luhya 13%, Abagusii 10%, Maasai, 5% and Kikuyu, 4%.

## 4.2 Nature of Peace Building Strategies Employed among the Border Communities

This study examined the nature of peace building strategies employed among the border communities. In examining the nature of peace building strategies employed by various actors, this study has investigated types of peace building strategies that have employed, approaches used by various actors and community in the peace building process at the border area.

### 4.2.1 Types of Peace Building Strategies Employed among the Border Communities

The respondents were asked to name the type of peace building strategies employed mostly to influence interethnic cohesion among the border communities. Table 1.0 presents the summary of the finding.

**Table 2**

*Types of Peace Building Initiatives Employed among the Border Communities (N=302)*

| Peacebuilding strategy employed      | Frequency  | Percent    | Mean | SD    |
|--------------------------------------|------------|------------|------|-------|
| Socio-economic development           | 24         | 7.94%      | 1.02 | 0.791 |
| Inter-communal dialogue              | 96         | 31.8%      | 4.13 | 2.987 |
| Psychosocial support and Counselling | 51         | 16.9%      | 3.17 | 1.267 |
| Sports and Theatre                   | 58         | 19.2%      | 3.47 | 1.146 |
| Peace Caravans and Crusades          | 41         | 13.6%      | 3.09 | 0.987 |
| Use of security forces               | 32         | 10.6%      | 2.17 | 0.934 |
| <b>Total</b>                         | <b>302</b> | <b>100</b> |      |       |

Based on the results shown in Table 2.0 on the types of peace building strategy employed a majority (96) 31.8% of household heads indicated that inter-communal dialogue through peace committee meetings has been one of the types of building strategies employed most by actors. One of the key informant argued.

*“The inter-ethnic dialogue done through peace committee meetings is one of the most peace building initiative used here...The peace committee is made up of the local administration, village elders, state security personnel, religious leaders and CSO members”.* [Q1.Religious Leader, East Soghor, 11/07/23].

Inter-ethnic dialogue usually done through the peace committee meetings has been used frequently. It is made up of the members from all ethnic groups living at border area, community leaders, religious leaders and local civil organization members. It has always been organized by state officers, civil society members and religious leaders. The discussion is about how to manage conflicts and disputes, cattle or stock theft, politics and cohesion. The finding of the current study corroborates with the previous literature of Akerdal (2013) that the inter-communal dialogue was a type of peace building initiative carried out in Rift valley region Nakuru County. The inter-communal dialogue was done through peace meetings comprising of both the local communities and other stakeholders.

The current study is also in agreement with the previous literature of Nyengenyne *et al.* (2014), in West Pokot area where reconciliation in the peace committee and cross border sports was employed for cohesion. Informal peace committees were also the type of peace building strategies taken by most actors to build peace in Kibera slum area of Nairobi County, Kenya. Langat (2017), argues inter-ethnic dialogues has been used in many parts of Kenya such as Mandera, Garissa, Marsabit, Moyale, Turkana, Pokot, and Tana River to influence cohesion among the communities in disagreement. Mobekk (2014) asserted that reconciliation leads to cessation of hostilities and the restoration of peace, which allow the citizens to live without fear that they would be attacked or harmed and also restores individual's status relating to the conflict.

The respondents were asked to name the type of peace building strategies employed mostly by actors to influence interethnic cohesion among the border communities. The results, shown on Table 1.0 shows sports and theatre were second mostly employed strategies with (58) 19.2% ( $m=3.47$ ,  $SD= 1.146$ ). This finding is further supported by the responses from Focus group discussions.

*“Theatre, drama or sports has been used to bring people together.... In theatre or drama.... we formulate the themes based on the current issue that affects the relations between us the Luo and the Nandi communities”* [Q1. FGD II, Kopere, 10/09/23].

Most of the actors have employed sports and theatre to enhance ethnic cohesion and peace among the border communities of Kisumu and Nandi Counties. The finding is in agreement with the previous findings of Ombati (2014), sports and physical activities promote psychological well-being and assist fighting inherent stress, and therefore can be used as rehabilitative mechanism, giving psycho-social support for people in the post conflict society. MacClancy (1996) reiterated that sports have the unique ability and significant means to mark, create, construct and re-imagine national and ethnic identities. For instance, Tegla Lorupe started annual ‘race for’ in her west Pokot area after the 2012 Conflicts between the Tugen and Pokot communities, where 7000 people participated. The annual race has attended by many people with aim to foster dialogue among the two fighting communities which enhanced ethnic cohesion among them. Therefore, sports and theatre leads to societal cohesion by promoting the integration of

communities, combating discrimination and/or promoting communication between different groups in a post-conflict environment.

The respondents were asked to name the type of peace building strategies employed mostly by actors to influence interethnic cohesion among the border communities. The results, shown on Table 1.0 shows psycho-social support and counselling third mostly employed strategies with (51)16.9% ( $m=3.17$ ,  $SD= 1.267$ ). This finding is further supported by the responses from key informant interviews.

*“After the conflict NGOs and religious organizations usually come and talk to the victims of violence, give them food, clothing and even help them reconstruct or start life again. They do this even many months after conflict had taken place”* (Interview Muhoroni, 11/10/2023).

The support victims get after the conflict always help get over the conflict and start a fresh. They are assisted to be able to forgive and forget about the conflict. This finding is in agreement with the previous literature of Cravo (2017), recurring practices in dealing with the post-conflict trauma can exist independently through truth and reconciliation, such as the one that took place in El Salvador; secondly through the judicial peacebuilding settlement of disputes, either domestically or internationally, for instance, the *Gacaca* courts in Rwanda.

According to Tankink *et al.* (2017) a mapping study of 62 international NGOs working on mental health and psycho-social support and peace building around the world, the results revealed that 92 per cent of mental health and psycho-social support and peace building workers think that interventions aimed at building sustainable peace would benefit from an approach that integrate peacebuilding and mental health.

Musembi and Iteyo (2018), argue that trauma healing through psycho-social support is an inter-ethnic cohesion building strategy which focuses on creation of awareness of trauma, social reconciliation and forgiveness among the conflicting communities. For instance, managing conflict in Tana River area lacked trauma healing and psychosocial support, which explains why conflict keeps recurring in the area despite having a number of peacebuilding programs initiated for ethnic cohesion.

The respondents were asked to name the type of peace building strategies employed mostly by actors to influence interethnic cohesion among the border communities. The results, shown on Table 1.0 shows peace caravans and crusades were fourth mostly employed strategies with (41)13.6% ( $m=3.09$ ,  $SD= 0.987$ ). One key informant said.

*“Prior to the last general of 2022, the national government through the NCIC organized for peace caravan and crusades around the borderline. Other actors have also come in with caravans and crusades. They talked about the importance of peace and unity to the resident of the borderline”* (Interview Soghor, 14/10/2023).

The finding is in tandem with the findings of Okumu (2013) the role of the Laikipia Peace Caravan in facilitating the formation of grazing and peace committees in areas where communities share common pasture is also evident in its tour of the Samburu North district during 14–20 August 2011. The Samburu North Peace Caravan helped in the formation of peace and grazing committees in Suyan, Kawap, Nachola and Marti. One of the major achievements of the Laikipia Peace Caravan was the cessation of hostilities between the Pokot in Baringo East, the Turkana in Turkana South and the Samburu in Laikipia West.

The respondents were asked to name the type of peace building strategies employed mostly by actors to influence interethnic cohesion among the border communities. The results, shown on Table 1.0 shows deployment of security forces were fifth mostly employed strategies with (32) 10.6% ( $m=2.17$ ,  $SD=0.934$ ).

The finding is in line with the previous literature of National Crime Research Centre (2018) that the state deploy security officers in the border area to prevent cross border conflict, keep and deter the conflicts. The state has intensified the security deployment to patrol and control the criminal activities in the area such as stock theft, torching of the houses, and destruction of property that could escalate the conflict.

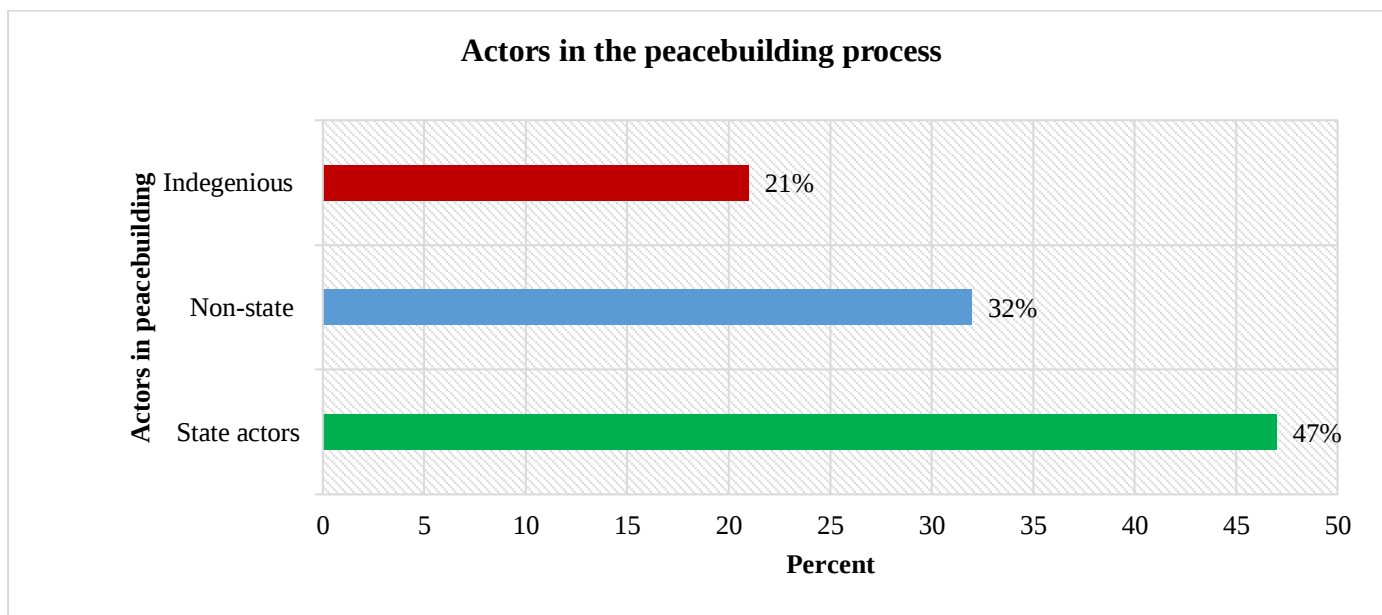
The respondents were asked to name the type of peace building strategies employed mostly by actors to influence interethnic cohesion among the border communities. The results, shown on Table 1.0 shows socio-economic development initiatives were second mostly employed strategies with (24)7.94% ( $m= 1.02$ ,  $SD= 0.791$ ). This study ranked socio-economic activities low as a peacebuilding strategy that could be used to enhance ethnic cohesion. There were few socio-economic activities initiated by the both levels of government to enhance ethnic cohesion. The current finding disagrees with previous literature of Cravo (2017) that initiating socioeconomic programmes would solve the problem of recurring conflict and help increase the inter-ethnic cohesion among the border communities. The current finding found out that other initiatives other than socioeconomic development have been used to build cohesion in the study area.

According to Burke (2013), further argues that many Asian nation-states promoted socioeconomic growth and development at the local level in order to resolve sub-national conflicts which never contributed to ethnic cohesion in the end. Therefore, the question of effectiveness or failure is quite debatable because most actors have not initiated socioeconomic activities to building cohesion. This implies that socioeconomic development can be initiated but still

ethnic communities find themselves in wrangles and fighting over natural resources utilization and control, boundary and politics.

#### 4.2.2 Actors and Approaches used in Peace Building Process among the Border Communities

The study sought to know the actors involved in the peace building process among the border communities of Kisumu and Nandi counties. Figure 1 gives the summary of the finding.



**Figure 1**  
*Peace Building Actors (N=302)*

Based on the results shown in Figure 1, a majority (143) 47% of household heads indicated that the first peace building actor to respond when there is armed violence among the border communities is the government security officers such as police officers, assistant chiefs, chiefs, and county commissioner and NCIC members; 97 (32%) indicated non-state actors and finally 62 (21%) were indigenous groups. The non-state actors are religious groups such as the Catholic, Seventh day Adventist among others and civil society organizations such as NGOs, CBOs and FBOs. Finally, the indigenous groups are elders, women groups and youth groups have also been involved when conflict erupts.

On the actors involved in the peace building initiatives, the current finding revealed that there are three types of actors as shown in the figure 1.0 the state actors, non-state actors and indigenous groups. These actors usually collaborate with each other or work on individual initiatives to build cohesion in the area. The finding also ranked the actors based on their response when there is ethnic violence or stock theft in the area. The government security teams are the first to respond whenever there is armed conflict among the border communities. The criminal issues such as stock theft, torching, maiming of people are normally handled by the state security department. Therefore, they have to be the first ones to respond to any security concerns. But in some situations religious organizations and civil society have responded first to the conflict before the government teams because some of them live within the community while security officers must get orders from the seniors and permission to intervene in any kind of conflict.

The indigenous groups and non-state actors have been ranked in their response because they are sometimes the victims of the violence or the raid, and they do not have weapons to force peace. They rarely use reactive approach to force peace in the area but non-reactive method such as negotiation, mediations and reconciliations to ensure they build cohesion among the border communities.

The finding of the current study is agreement with previous literature of Kanampiu and Onkware (2018) that the Kenya National Police Service have a mandate to maintain law and order in the country hence the focus on conflict management is to build cohesion among the border communities of the two counties. The police service works to bring law and order therefore they will not hesitate to run there and enforce peace. The current study's finding is in agreement with Juma and Simiyu (2019), that police plays a vital role in bringing peace during ethnic skirmishes by protecting destruction of property, creating buffer zones between the areas, protecting the escalation of the conflict by patrolling along the border and helping in tracing stolen livestock which contribute to inter-ethnic cohesion.

The current study is further supported by Odanga *et al.* (2022) the National Cohesion Integration Commission (NCIC) intervened in Nakuru County ahead of 2013 general elections. They mediated between the Kikuyu and Kalenjin and sorted issues such as politics, land and economic disparities which contributed to cohesion in that area. The local administration also organized seminars and workshops, to teach local administrators various conflict resolution skills, risk reduction techniques, resources mobilization and administration and security duties establishment of the police stations and patrols.

The finding above is confirmed by the Juma and Simiyu (2019) that the security, peace building, conflict prevention and management has been an inclusive work among the actors. For instance, in the border of Nyakach and Sigowet areas where NCIC, Catholic Justice Peace Commission (CJPC) and National police service were involved in the conflict management and peace building process. They both played significant roles from the peace enforcement, peace keeping and inter-ethnic cohesion.

The study sought to examine the approaches used to peace building process among the border communities. Majority of respondents (214) 71% indicated that the non-reactive approaches have been used to influence cohesion while (88) 29% indicated the reactive approach being used in the conflict cohesion process. The non-reactive approaches employed were inter-ethnic dialogue and reconciliation, mediations, negotiation, observation of the early warning systems, and sports and theatre. The reactive approaches were police deployments and using force to ensure the people stop fighting. The reactive approach is usually applied by the state actors while the non-reactive approaches are applied by the three actors, state, non-state and indigenous groups. For instance, the civil society organizations, religious groups and NCIC which is a state actor have all been ranked as the most effective actors in the peace building process through conducting dialogues, peace caravans, sports, and psycho-social support to the warring communities and enhancing cohesion in the area.

This implies that non-reactive approaches are the most employed strategies among the border communities. The non-state actors such as civil societies including both local and international NGOs, religious groups, and NCIC were the most effective peace building actors in influencing inter-ethnic cohesion. They have played a significant role in bringing cohesion in the area by organizing sports, dialogues and peace education in the local area. This implies that in this area all the three actors have played significant roles jointly or individually to bring peace in the area. But even the indigenous groups have also played some roles through women groups, council of elders, peace committee members and youth groups. In terms of planning, most of the peace building initiatives are locally planned but in many times all the stakeholders come together and plan how to implement those strategies. The elected leaders have also been involved in the peace building process at the border targeting development projects and collaboration with their neighbors. But they also use both the reactive and non-reactive approaches to enhance ethnic cohesion in the area.

The current finding aligns with previous literature of Mengistu (2014) that the potentiality of development NGOs worked hard to reduce conflict in protracted conflict in Ethiopia. In addition, the current findings are also agreement with previous literature of Uddqvist (2018) NGOs activities throughout the country, commonly with local staffs hired from each location brought together for trainings, workshops and meeting have reduced conflict in the country.

The current study is in line with findings of previous literatures of Idriss (2020), that Presbyterian Church of East Africa which is a non-state actor use sermons, pastoral care and counselling, bible study, peace building workshops, prayer movements as peace building strategies in enhancing inter-ethnic harmony in Kenya. Religious organization groups is mostly employ non-reactive approaches and also ranked among the effective actors in the area.

#### 4.2.3 The extent of Community Participation in the Peace building Process

The study sought to know the extent to which community members are involved in the peace building process among the border communities of Kisumu and Nandi counties. Table 3.0 gives the summary of the finding.

**Table 3**

*The extent of Community Participation in the Peace Building Process (N=302)*

| Extent of Community involvement | Frequency (f) | Percent (%) |
|---------------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Very High Extent                | 67            | 22.2        |
| High Extent                     | 58            | 19.2        |
| Moderate                        | 124           | 40.0        |
| Small Extent                    | 36            | 12.0        |
| Very Small Extent               | 17            | 5.6         |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>302</b>    | <b>100</b>  |

Based on the results shown in Table 3, a majority (124)40.0% of household heads indicated that the community are moderately involved in the peace building process, (67)22.2% affirmed that community members are involved to a very high extent, (58)19.2% are to a high extent involved, 36(12.0%) are to a small extent involved and finally 17(5.6%) are to a small extent involved in the peace building process. The community participation is to a high extent. The interventions are organized by the actors who always involve the local communities who are the primary beneficiary of the outcome. The involvement is general without exclusion of any member as a result the high result shown in the last two years where the communities have been experiencing peace.

The current finding corroborates with the previous literature of Ruto (2013), peace building strategies are local community owned, low cost, socially acceptable peacebuilding model that recognizes and appreciates the role of the citizenry, indigenous knowledge and expertise in conflict management and peacebuilding. The model of peace committee is an informal structure composed of elders, civil society, religious leaders and government officials, the model has since been replicated in the whole country and concerted campaigns for its institutionalization have gained momentum.

The finding is in agreement with the previous literature of Bennett (2004) communities can experience their own beliefs and behaviors, and appreciate them as just one organization of reality among many viable possibilities. These interactions therefore can alter the beliefs, attitudes and behaviors of individuals and communities towards each other. Significant impetus is given to the informal peace building activities in what Abdalla (2012) represents as “peace markets.” Peace markets are established in optimum locations along the Sotik/Borabu border. For years they have represented innovative cross-border commerce, trade, relationships, bonding, and commodity exchange model of how the two neighboring communities preserve their common interests by circumventing the border’s insecurity pressures, even in the intensity of a conflict. These common markets, from Chepilat and Tembwo to Ndanai, are not only arcades and fairs of trade and commerce, but also epicenters of cultural exchange and civilization, bonding, networking, sharing, discussions, and conversation.

## V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Conclusions

This study emphasizes the important contributed of various peace building strategies to inter-ethnic cohesion among the border communities of Kisumu and Nandi Counties 2013 – 2023. The study concludes that ethnic dialogue, sports and theatre, psychosocial support and counselling, peace caravans and crusades, use of security personnel and socio-economic initiatives are mostly used peace building strategies to enhance cohesion. The study further concludes that the first actor to respond whenever there is conflict is the state actors, non-state actors and the indigenous groups. The study also conclude that non-reactive approaches and reactive approaches. The community participation is to a high extent. The interventions are organized by the actors who always involve the local communities who are the primary beneficiary of the outcome.

### 5.2 Recommendations

Based on the foregoing study findings and conclusions drawn thereof of the first study objective, the study recommends that the cure to the reoccurrence inter-ethnic conflict in the study are is the collaboration between the state actors, non-state actors and the locals communities during the implementation of the initiatives to make the initiatives more effective. Both levels of government to initiate socio-economic development projects to reduce over-dependency on the farming and stocks.

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