



Women's role and participation in peace and security processes

A case of 15 Counties in Kenya



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ACRONYMS

ASAL	: Arid and Semi Arid Land
CBO	: Community Based Organization
CIPEV	: Commission of Inquiry into Post Election Violence
DRC	: Democratic Republic of Congo
FGD	: Focused Group Discussion
IDPs	: Internally Displaced Persons
IGAD	: Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
KDF	: Kenya Defense Forces
LRA	: Lord's Resistance Army
MRC	: Mombasa Republican Council
NCEWERS	: National Conflict Early Warning and Early Response System
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organization
NSC	: National Steering Committee on Peace building and Conflict Management
PEV	: Post Elections Violence
SALW	: Small Arms and Light Weapons
UNDP	: United Nations Development Program
UNSCR	: United Nations Security Council Resolution

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Arthur Okwemba

Executive Director

African Woman and Child Feature Service

Executive Summary

Throughout the history of mankind, conflicts have had a disproportionate toll on one section of the society: women and other vulnerable groups such as children, people with disabilities and youth. The atrocities and injustices inflicted on them have been grave and in many cases they have been qualified as crimes against humanity. Women too bear the burden of war, taking care of the sick during and after wars. Others become widows and orphans, forcing them to take the role of fending for the family. Yet, most of the times, women do not have the same access to resources, decision making and power before, during or after conflicts compared to their male counterparts. They are routinely excluded from decisions processes when the very decisions will affect them. This failure to participate in post-conflict reconstruction and peace processes is likely to result in outcomes that are gender blind. Women's role during and after conflict, the impact of the conflict on their wellbeing and their significance in helping shape the destinies of their communities and countries, is rarely recognized. A lot of research work has been done across the world, especially in countries emerging from conflict, to establish the role of women in post-conflict processes. Many of these studies have shown awfully low participation and lack of appreciation of women's role in peace-building and reconstruction. The situation is worse when cultural explanations are used to deny women their right to participate. In Kenya, the situation is not different. The concern of failure to include Kenyan in women processes has been lingering for a long time. It is this concern that prompted the conducting of a research to establish the level and the depth of women participation in peace processes in selected 15-conflict prone Counties.

The survey report is divided into seven sections. Section one looks at overview of conflicts in Kenya and role of women in peace-building in Kenya and Africa; Justification for the Survey; objective of the survey, and literature review. Section Two is a snapshot into the causes and nature of conflicts in the 15 Counties; Section Three is on the Effect of conflicts on women and their wellbeing; Section four is on conflict interventions and mitigation strategies; and Section five explains the methodology and the findings of the survey.

Section five in particular speaks to the different response structures such as the existing peace committees in the select 15 counties, which are clustered into rural, urban and pastoralist. It looks at the composition and membership of these structures with a focus on gender representation in the committee and in the leadership of the committees. In terms of membership, out of the sampled fifteen counties, women make up 31% of the membership of sub-county peace committees. But when data was analyzed within the counties, it indicated that some of the counties were doing awfully bad, with representation of women on the peace committees less than 10 percent.

Overall, in the 30 sub-counties studies in the 15 counties, 86.7% of the chairpersons of the peace committee were men compared to only 13.3% women. In other words, if this is extrapolated across the country, men dominate leadership of sub-county peace committees. Only four sub-counties of the 30 in the table, had women as the chair of the peace committees. These were Teso South, West Pokot, Nakuru Town and Wareng.

It further looks at the challenges that women encounter in their day to day implementation of the peace programs and activities. It discusses the reason for poor participation of women in peace processes juxtaposing it with communities where women play some key roles in the prevention and management of conflicts. In the FDGs, women said that the domestic roles they have to engage in restrict what types of processes they can be involved in; peace and security processes being one of them. "It will be difficult to sit in a peace committee or spend many hours travelling around the County attending meetings and talking about peace when at home children are waiting to be fed and washed. This can even lead to a divorce," said one woman participant. Some-times members of peace committees travel far and wide to mediate conflicts, and this has frustrated the participation of women in such interventions. They said some men find it difficult to entertain the idea of their wives going for peace meetings for days with male counterparts unknown to their husbands.

The suspicions that surround such movements prevent women from joining peace committees. This does not mean that traditional societies barred women from participating in peace processes. Among the Samburu and Rendille communities¹, women perform certain specific rituals during peace processes especially when peace accords are being brokered. This was confirmed in the Focus Group Discussions in West Pokot where women revisited the role of traditional "woman" belt that is strapped around the belly to help prevent conflicts and violence. They also made reference to the symbolic role of a particular type of grass that once women placed it between two feuding groups, the combatants had no option other than to respect the verdict of the women and stop violence.

Section six is the conclusion and Section seven is the recommendation on what needs to be done to increase the presence and participation of women in peace and security processes.

¹ Ruto Pkalya et al, 2003, Indigenous Democracy. Traditional Conflict Resolution Mechanisms: Pokot, Turkana, Marakwet and Samburu Communities, ITDG EA, Nairobi



Evalyn Aruasa, Narok County Deputy Governor, listens keenly to a grassroots Maasai woman leader during the Media Encounter in Narok to discuss the role and participation of women in peace and security processes organized by African Woman and Child Feature Service.

SECTION ONE

1.0 Introduction

Conflicts are generally an expression of tensions arising from incompatibilities between different parties in regard to respective needs, interests and values. Violent conflicts pose a great challenge to societies as they result in destruction of property, loss of lives, psychological injuries as well as substantial damage to infrastructure. These actions compromise development efforts and further entrench poverty. From their experiences, women and girls suffer disproportionately from conflict. Where they endure the same trauma as the rest of the population, they are targets of specific forms of violence and abuse including sexual violence, abuse and exploitation. This is attributed to their station in the society since they do not enjoy equal status with men. While women and girls bear the brunt of conflict, they are invariably pushed to the periphery when it comes to discussions around prevention of conflict and reconstruction after the conflict. They are excluded from formalized processes such as negotiations, formulation of peace accords and reconstruction plans.

In recent times, Kenya has attempted to include women in peace processes in recognition of the enormous role they play in peace-building. The National Steering Committee on Peace-building and Conflict Management established peace structures across the country. These structures are required to be all inclusive. The initiative gives women the opportunity to participate in the process and leadership of the peace matters. This is informed by the fact that peace is a multi-level investment that is targeted at building the capacities and structures that help prevent and transform root causes of conflict. Under this approach, the local peace structure models are community driven initiatives which underscore women's active participation. Despite ensuring that women involvement is highly recommended, the bigger question is at what level are women's voices heard or their visibility felt?

There are numerous provisions in policy and law that affirm women participation. This includes the Kenya Constitution 2010, Kenya National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security that domesticates UNSCR 1325 and UNSCR 1820. The UNSCR 1325 address the issues of disproportionate number of women and girls affected by armed conflict and the necessity to protect them during conflict and post conflict settings, the underrepresentation of women in conflict resolution and peace activities and the importance of promoting women's participation in all processes related to peace and security. It also discusses the importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all aspects of peace-keeping operations and in the peace and security in states. It is instructive to note that while the peace model adopted in Kenya was borne out of women initiatives such as the Wajir peace process, the initiative seems to have been hijacked and led by men.

It is also important to recognize that there are a number of local peace committees that are women led while others have quite a few women as members. But the most important thing is the substantive participation of women in terms of decision-making in the sub-county peace committees. The critical questions to ask are: What difference does women participation bring in the peace committees; what challenges do women peace committee members face that hinder their full contribution; and how can these be addressed to enhance their effectiveness. Concerned about the participation of women in the peace processes, this survey was undertaken to establish their participation from both a qualitative and quantitative perspective. In this regard, we attempted to look at peace committees that women led and those which are not, and then attempted to establish what are the issues in each of the scenarios.

Focus Group Discussion and Key Informant Interviews were done in six Counties comprising Tana River, Uasin Gishu, West Pokot, Nakuru, Nairobi and Narok. The data and information obtained in this study will help give an insight in the women's role and participation in peace processes. It will further help to establish at the local level, what are the triggers of conflict; interrogate the current models of participation of women in security and peace processes at the local and national levels. We hope, the survey will provide useful information that will further enhance the participation of women in peace work. It will also highlight the bottlenecks that have hindered effective and substantive women participation in peace processes. The information will further help reflecting on gender responsive policies and programs in place.

To gather this important information, two tools were used: Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews. The data and information obtained in the study provided an insight into women's role and participation in peace processes in the selected counties. The findings of this survey will go a long way in helping stakeholders design gender responsive policies and programs in peace committees at the local and national level.

1.1. Overview of conflicts in Kenya

Many of the conflicts experienced in Kenya manifest in various forms. According to the National Conflict Mapping and Analysis report of 2011, there are four types of conflict in Kenya that are defined by their triggers: political, economic, socio-cultural and environmental conflicts². The report of the Commission of Inquiry into Post Election Violence in Kenya (PEV), popularly re-ferred to as the Waki Report, also identified various issues that precipitated the PEV such as un-resolved historical grievances, the land question, political competition (winner takes it all political contest that increased the stakes for the presidency), weak state institutions and weak culture of constitutionalism.³

A better understanding of conflicts in the country has been the tendency to classify conflicts into pastoralists, rural and urban conflicts. This is the classification of conflicts that informs the National Conflict Early Warning and Early Response System (NCEWERS) that is hosted by National Steering Committee on Peace-building and Conflict Management. In Kenya, pastoral conflicts involving pastoralists have become increasingly severe and widespread in arid and semi arid lands (ASALs). Communities in these areas largely depend on livestock (cattle, sheep, goats and camels) for their livelihood. They rely on access to pasture, natural vegetation and water for survival of their livestock. In their quest for survival, competition over increasingly diminishing resources amongst these communities causes conflicts. The situation is also exacerbated by high proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in these areas. SALW have fueled low intensity conflicts characterized by a high incidence of banditry, inter-ethnic clashes as well as cattle rustling. SALW has also transformed traditional cattle rustling into deadly, more severe and frequent raids that has led to thousands of deaths and commercialization of cattle rustling. The insecurity caused has serious implications in regard to poverty and competition for resources as people flee and exert increased pressure on natural resources in the areas where they seek refuge. Cattle rustling is an extremely lucrative intra- and inter-communal activity and in some cases had the blessings of well connected people eyeing the multi-million shilling trade⁴.

This is also played out across the Kenya-Somalia border zone where local communities suffer from sporadic, low intensity communal clashes especially the pastoralist zones. The same sorry state of affairs obtain in the other cross-border areas such as Kenya – Uganda, Kenya – South Sudan and on the Kenya – Ethiopia borders, where violent and armed cross-border livestock raids and trans boundary conflicts have been rampant⁵.

Ethnicity is another cause of conflicts in Kenya. Allocation of resources and opportunities has been ethnicised, with those coming from the president's ethnic group benefiting more. This has entrenched hatred and sometimes violent competition between communities. Urbanization has also contributed to emergent of urban conflicts that have a social, economic and political dimension where the rich-poor divide is quite



Hon Carol Muga, Nairobi Member of County Assembly (seated second right) shares her thoughts with the Nairobi team during the FGD to discuss the role, position and participation of women in peace and security processes and structures. The meeting was organized by African Woman and Child Feature Service.

2 NSC, 2011, National Conflict Mapping and Analysis: Peace and Conflict Trends in Kenya, NSC, Nairobi.

3 GoK, 2008, CIPEV Report, Government Printer, Nairobi

4 NSC Strategic Plan 2008-2013, p7

5 Ibid.

prominent. The conflict environment is characterized by urban crime, landlord-tenant, industrial and labor disputes.

Whereas men and particularly the youthful population have been identified as the main perpetrators of conflicts in Kenya and other parts of Africa, studies have also found out that sometimes women contribute to conflicts and equally suffer from its effects. In pastoralists' communities, women sing praise songs to successful warriors while ridiculing the "cowards". Yet, after the conflicts, women and children are displaced, widowed or left with the burden of caring for the family. During PEV, women and children accounted for over 60% of those who were living in IDP camps.

In conclusion therefore, experiences of women and men in conflict situations are significantly different. While entire communities suffer the consequences of conflict, women and girls are disproportionately affected because of their gender and status in society. Yet, while the women are the main victims of conflicts, they are often excluded from the negotiations on conflict resolutions, justice, and reconciliation processes. It can be rightly argued that the general exclusion of women from decision making processes prior to, during, and after the conflicts reinforces their victimization.

1.2. Overview of women's role in peace-building in Kenya and Africa

Women's role in peace-building in many communities has not been a primary concern of many people, including scholars. There is less appreciation of women as mediators in peace-building efforts in conflict prone societies. Some studies insinuate that the practice of conflict resolution and peace-building just incorporates practices common among the female gender such as compassion and empathy and those that stress women's stereotypical female attributes such as their roles as child-bearers and care-givers. But the extent to which this is true has not been demonstrated by empirical studies. This survey attempts to show the position of women in structures that are expected to prevent and manage conflicts and their participation in the peace-building and security processes.

Women have a major role in promoting peace and security. This has been demonstrated at both the regional and national levels. While many countries in the Horn of Africa have experienced conflicts, women still play limited roles in peace and security dialogues. Traditions and cultural barriers have been blamed for this. Efforts by the women organizations to increase their capacity to lobby for participation in peace processes are just starting to make inroads in this area.

In Ethiopia, the translation of United Nation's Security Council Resolution 1325 into Amharic, and the work of Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association on pushing for women rights in such processes, has been applauded as a right step in enhancing women's visibility. In Somali, women illustrated their contribution to peace process through initiatives such as the creation of the 6th clan that allowed for their participation in Djibouti peace meeting. Women groups in collaboration with other civil society organizations played a prominent role in initiating, supporting pre-disarmament encampments in Mogadishu. In Uganda, Betty Bigombe, a former Cabinet Minister, acted as a chief mediator between Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Government that saw her work recognized by both the Government and the international community. It is also during the leadership of Uganda's First Lady, Janet Museveni, who doubles as the Minister for Karamoja Affairs, that cattle rustling and banditry was comprehensively tackled in that region.

While in Burundi during the Arusha peace talks of 2001, women lobbied for participation and were recognized as permanent observers in the negotiations. As a result, 80% of their recommendations were incorporated in the Accord. In Rwanda, women played an important role as combatants as well as victims in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide. This was observed during the interviews conducted on women ex-combatants that showed them as disciplined and peaceful. The government in recognizing women efforts in peace process developed and adopted gender policy and subsequent ratification of protocol on the Rights of women by domesticating the instrument. These examples show the significant role and contribution by women in peace-building and security processes.

Contribution of Kenyan women to peace-building and security processes

In Kenya, there is evidence to show the effective role women play in conflict and post-conflict situations. The Wajir story and Tegla Loroupe Peace races offer the best attempts by local women to steer their communities, and by extension their countries, to unprecedented levels of peace and development. Wajir is one of the 47 Counties of Kenya and is located within the North Eastern part of the country that borders Somalia and Ethiopia. In 1993, the County was engulfed by conflict pitting different clans against each other partly as a result of a severe 1991-92 drought and the outcome of the 1992 General elections that saw some clans loose in the ensuing political competition. As elders, Government officials and NGOs were unable to stop the violence, a group of women civil servants came together and steered a



: Group photo for women peace actors and champions from Nakuru County after attending a workshop on the role and participation of women in peace and security processes. The meeting was organized by African Woman and Child Feature Service.

peace process that later culminated to the formation of Wajir Peace and Development Committee that comprised of elders, Government officials, religious elders and women leaders. This committee finally managed to end the conflicts in Wajir County and became a model for establishing peace committees in the entire region and in the country. The Wajir story has been an inspiration to many women in their quest for peace despite their obvious disadvantaged position.⁶

On the other hand, Tegla Loroupe, a renowned athlete from the pastoralist Pokot community and three times world half-marathon champion, established Tegla Loroupe Peace Foundation in 2003. The foundation has since been organizing annual well publicized peace races as one of the interventions in ensuring peace prevails in the troubled Pokot, Marakwet, Turkana (all in North-ern Kenya) and Karamoja and Sabiny (in Eastern Uganda) corridor.

Amongst the pastoralists Samburu and Rendille communities, women perform some of the most important rituals during peace making. During the brokering of a peace agreement between or within the Maa-communities, women sprinkle special milk on the tools of war that have been buried or broken as a symbol for ending violence. Among the Kalenjin, women wear particular type of traditional belt to protect their sons from harm during conflicts. Women can also stop conflict by placing a special type of grass between combatants. All these demonstrate the role and power of women in peace-building from the traditional to modern times.

In recent times, women have vowed to take lead in starting peace initiatives to champion for peace. A case in point is the movement championing for peace between the women from Pokot and Turkana Counties. This was evident during the celebration to mark the 2014 International Women's Day at Salmach, Pokot County. The reason for that initiative was that women have been sidelined in peace-making processes despite being the most affected group by the clashes. "They are able to foster peace between the two communities. "We have suffered a lot because of insecurity and cattle-rustling. We have resolved to come together to crusade for our rights and inclusion in the peace process," said Jacinta Nanok from Turkana County. The women faulted the Government of ignoring their contribution to bringing peace between the two warring communities and pledged to take a lead in the war against rustling. "We feel isolated when we are not involved in peace talks and failure by the Government to empower us. Our movement will strive to bring desirable changes," said Maria Loyom.

However, many challenges still face women when it comes to participation and effective contribution to peace and security processes in the country. The challenges range from unequal distribution of opportunities to cultural and traditional practices.

⁶ For further information about Wajir Story see among other publications/documentaries: http://www.irenees.net/bdf_fiche-documentation-639_fr.html

1.3. Justification for the Survey

Women and children bear the brunt of conflicts, especially armed or violent ones. Although they are primary victims of these conflicts, they are not recognized as key stakeholders in peace and security processes. Women and children constitute the biggest proportion of every community and suffer more whenever there is a conflict. Women are the central care-takers of families in many cultures, everyone suffers when women are oppressed, victimized, and excluded from peace-building. Their centrality to communal life makes their inclusion in peace building essential. Women have the capacity for both violence and peace and yet they are excluded from public decision-making, leadership, and educational opportunities in many communities around the world. Because women and men experience violence and peace differently, women must be allowed and encouraged to bring their unique insights and gifts to the process of peace-building.

While women are sexually abused, carry the burden of the family during and after conflicts, and play a critical role in deciding the course of conflicts, there have been concerns about their exclusion. They rarely participate in critical decisions around peace and security; when the very decisions are about their lives. This survey was therefore designed to establish the nature, position and participation of Kenyan women in conflict prone counties in peace and security processes. The findings of this survey are to be used for advocacy purposes by organizations' and individuals working around these issues as well as by policy makers to inform policy.

1.4. Objective of the survey

The main objective of the study is to investigate the place, role and relevance of women in peace-building and security processes and architecture in Kenya.

1.3.1 Specific objectives

- Identify women's position and role in peace processes and decision-making at the national and in sub-County peace committees.
- Identify challenges in relation to women's participation in peace and security processes.
- Highlight and profile key conflict issues and triggers in the sampled counties
- Identify and evaluate the conflict intervention and mitigation efforts and institutions in the sampled counties
- Recommend ways of enhancing women's participation in peace and security processes

1.5. Literature review

In a research conducted by Ruto, Mohamud and Isabella (2014), women can prevent inter-ethnic conflicts in a number of ways. Among the Pokot for instance, there is a belief that a woman can protect her son from external harm of any kind by wearing a birth belt called Leketio. The belt is believed to support pregnancy and life. It is a powerful charm that protects children from harm. Before warriors set out for a raid, each one of them informs his mother to wear the belt while he is on that mission. But the question is, can women refuse to wear the belts prompting the warrior to abandon the raiding mission? What cultural attachment does the belt have? Ruto, Mohamud and Isabella (2014) did not address these issues in relation to women power to stop war or mediate or inform peace building instances⁷.

The International Alert Group in their journal on women in violent conflict and peace building observed that women are involved in psychosocial program of healing, reconciliation and therapy for victims and combatants in a conflict society. Such roles are important in reconstructing any war-torn society. However, how do these roles lead to peace-building? Although the work acknowledged that a comprehensive programme of cross-regional experience should be developed, such development needs to include documentation of women's peace-building efforts, cross-regional training and workshops⁸.

On his part, Fitzgerald (2002) argues in her research that traditionally women are non partisan medics on battlefields and mediators behind the lines. The women are valuable mediators in disputes even in patrilineal societies. She further argues that since the beginning of recorded history, women have been working for peace and picking up the pieces from the wars started by men. The author brings out a very interesting view that, one characteristics of the contemporary women's peace movement is its tending connections between domestic violence and war, economic oppression and militarism, women rights and environmental concerns⁹.

7 Ruto Pkalya, Mohamud Adan and Isabela Masinde, *Indigenous, Democracy: Traditional Conflict Mechanism, Pokot, Turkana, Samburu and Marakwet*, Nairobi: ITDG, 2004, p. 40.

8 N. A. Sanam, Manchanda R and Karmali S, *Women Violent Conflict and Peace Building: Global Perspective*, London: International Alert, 1999, p.11.

9 Mary Anne Fitzgerald, *Throwing the Stick Forward: The Impact of War on Southern Sudanese Women*, Nairobi: UNIFEM, 2002, p.19.



Journalists from various media houses in Kenya discussing the role of media in giving visibility to peace and security issues affecting women and their role in advancing the same. Meeting was organized by African Woman and Child Feature Service.

Afghan women, as argued by Masuda Sultan, demonstrated their participation in meaningful promotion of peace through their contribution to post-conflict reconstruction and governance. Women helped counter the tendency towards political extremism and fostering recognition for ethnic minority rights. They provided a moderating force against extremists. Individual women were vocal in challenging the power of the warlords and local commanders. They were at the forefront of calls for disarmament of private militias. They organized protests and signed petitions for peace.¹⁰

According to Anderlin (2006), women in Somalia do emerge as actors in peace-building, but this factor is not developed or addressed in terms of programming. In Sierra Leone, similar references are made to women on numerous occasions. The study indicates that inclusion of women in peace-building can benefit the entire society. There is acknowledgement that women issues are not seen in the context of the impact of peace-building or conflict on men.¹¹ McGrew et al (2004) in study on women's role in post conflicts argues that women in Cambodia joined Buddhist leaders to galvanize a mass peace movement. For months, thousands of women joined peace walks across the country, calling for elections without bloodshed. This peace movement made a significant difference in the atmosphere in Cambodia and probably reduced the amount of violence. Yearly peace walks, called Dhammayietras or walking meditations, were organized since 1993¹². The peace walks in Cambodia are similar in form to what is known as peace caravans in Kenya.

Faiza Jama underscores the role women play in influencing elders and other interventions in conflicts through mobilization of resources to finance peace meetings and mopping out of weapons. Women's vision of peace exceeds the aspect of focusing on achieving political settlement and includes sustainable livelihoods, education, truth and reconciliation; and the struggle for women's rights. Inspired by Beijing conference on women in 1995, women have continued with their push and cooperation to establish grassroots platforms whose work revolves around women's rights and peace-building.¹³ Although women have become active agents with notable success in the struggle for equality, violence remains a component of relations between men and women (Sidens, 2001).

There are multiple causes of violence against women, yet inequality of power (domination and sub-ordination) is a common denominator in all aspects of violence. The link between gendered inequality and violence leads to the conclusion that this is an impediment to sustainable peace. What this means is that achieving peace necessitates "overcoming social relations of domination and sub-ordination (Tickner, 1992:129)"¹⁴

10 Masuda Sultan, "From Rhetoric to Reality: Afghan Women on the Agenda for Peace",

11 Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, "Mainstreaming Gender in Conflict Analysis: Issues and Recommendations", in Social Development Papers Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction, Papers No. 33/ February, 2006

12 Laura McGrew, Kate Frieson and Sambath Chan, "Good Governance from the Ground Up: Women's Roles in Post-Conflict Cambodia", in Women Waging Peace Policy Commission, Cambodia: Hunt Alternatives Fund, 2004

13 Jama, Faiza "Whose Peace is it anyway? Connecting Somali and International Peacemaking" African Centre for the Reconstructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), Journal Issue 21, Pg 62-67.

14 M. Caprioli (2005), "Prime for Violence: The role of Gender Inequality in Predicting Internal Conflicts", International Studies quarterly, Vol 49, p161-178.

SECTION TWO

2.0 A snapshot into the causes and nature of conflicts in the 15 Counties

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews were held to understand the cause, pattern and nature of conflicts that are the heart of the suffering of women and children. The following were the emerging issues in the Counties under study.

2.1. Highlights of the causes of conflicts in Turkana County

Turkana is found in the North Rift part of Kenya. Some of the root causes of conflict in the County include land and cattle rustling. Turkana and Pokot communities fight over disputed boundary along the entire Turkana- Pokot boundary belt that stretches from Lokiriama through Kainuk to Nadome. The land issue has been in existence since late 1980s and continues to date.

Resource based conflicts: This is evident largely in the northern region of Turkana County. More to the north is the Nyangatom-Turkana- Dassenech conflict that ropes in Kibish, Todon-yang zones which have huge water and pasture deposits. To the North-West is Turkana- Toposa conflict pitting Toposa of South Sudan and Turkana in areas of Moru Anayeche, Oropoi and to-wards Kidepo Game Reserve in Uganda/South Sudan. The conflicts happen during drought sea-son when pastoralists are forced to migrate close to rivers Turkwell and Kerio to water their live-stock.

Discovery of Oil and Gas: Oil and gas exploration has generated a lot of heat from the community and stakeholders at large. In Lokichar for instance, there have been a number of community peaceful demonstrations demanding employment, fair share of oil and gas proceeds to the community and in the awarding of tenders. A case in point was in October 2013 when Tullow Oil Plc. suspended its operations for over two weeks following an attack on the camp by members of the Turkana community who were demanding for jobs, tenders for the locals, and compensation (The Standard Newspaper of October, 2013).

Small Arms and light weapons: Proliferation of illicit SALW along the major road that is Lod-war- Lokichoggio- Nadapal poses a threat to the peace and security in the County. Although the road is an important transport corridor for communities in the North, it has also brought with it insecurity and fears of terror attacks. Porous, unmanned borders along the elemi triangle, Tur-kana-Pokot border pose as an entry point of illicit arms.



A participant at the Eldoret Peace and Security meeting for women peace actors and champions making presentation on their group discussions. Meeting was organized by African Woman and Child Feature Service.

2.2. Highlights of the causes of conflicts in Narok County

Land: Cases of double leasing of agricultural land and double allocation of titles deeds is a major cause of conflict in the County. This is further aggravated by alleged corruption and malpractices by land registrars. The situation has led to an increase in cases of widows being disinherited. It has also aggravated ethnic tensions since the host community perceive other communities as outsiders and out to reap big from their prime ancestral land. The affected areas include Mau Narok, Shartuka, Angata Baragoi, Olosakwana, Dikirr and Trans Mara West administrative capital border.

Environmental conflicts: Charcoal burning in parts of Narok County has been a major problem. Unemployed youth, men and women are engaged in charcoal burning in total disregard of environmental laws, leading to clashes between themselves, their communities or with environmental authorities.

2.3. Highlights of causes of conflicts in Trans-Nzoia County

Land: Conflicts emerging from allocation of title deeds on Agricultural Development Corporation (ADC) farms has been a major cause of conflicts. Genuine owners of these farms have never been issued with title deeds since the said land belongs to the Government, which has not de-gazetted it.

Small Arms and Light Weapons: Proliferation of SALW has been aggravated by the porous border with Uganda and other neighbouring counties such as West Pokot making illegal weapons easily accessible in Trans Nzoia. The communities living in West Pokot are pastoralists and en-gage in livestock rustling hence the usage of SALW. When the raids are done, women and children have been subjected to major suffering.

Cattle rustling: The vice has been witnessed in Trans-Nzoia County along the border with West Pokot. The conflicts are sporadic and happen at certain times when the neighbouring community experiences severe drought. The shrinking pastures and water for livestock forces the neighbouring communities to drive their livestock to better grounds, wedging displacements and raids in the process. This is a big challenge as the situation is aggravated by infiltration of SALW from Uganda.

2.4. Highlights of causes of conflicts in Samburu County

The County borders Marsabit County to the North East, Isiolo County to the South East, Baringo to the South West, Turkana to the West and Laikipia to the South. The inhabitants of the county are both pastoralist and agro-pastoralists. As far as conflict issues are concerned, the epicenters are more concentrated to the north, bordering Turkana County. Some of the causes of conflict in the county include:

Livestock rustling / Stock theft: Cases of livestock raids and counter raids between the Samburu and Turkana are rampant especially in Baragoi, Samburu North Sub-County, and along the Samburu-Isiolo, and Samburu-Meru boundaries. These conflicts have resulted in displacement of families, killings of men, women and children. In some of the villages, the women have been left without bread winners. Others have been raped or sexually violated as weapon of war by the warring parties. The problem of SALW has been widely blamed for insecurity in the County. Lack of political support, difficult terrain and poor planning in undertaking disarmament exercises have complicated programs geared towards addressing the problem posing a threat to peace and security. Corridors suspected to be avenues of SALW include; Waso Rongai, Kawap, Suy-ian, Lenderoni, Chalda, Mbukoi, Morijo and Sereolipi.



Nairobi Women MCAs and peace champions during one of the focus group discussion on peace and security issues in Nairobi moderated by African Woman and Child Feature Service.

Negative ethnicity and tensions: Politicization of ethnicity is a major challenge to the attainment of peace in Samburu, and specifically in Samburu North. Political leaders from Turkana and Samburu Counties have been blamed for this negative ethnicity. This has resulted in full-blown conflicts and the displacement of communities in Samburu North mainly Samburu and Turkana community in Marti and Kawap, with biggest victims being women and children.

Resource based conflict: The conflict is largely over water and pasture during the dry spell, especially in areas such as Marti, Nachola and Kawap. The challenge of lack of equitable sharing of devolved resources, for instance Constituency Development Funds projects and job opportunities, was also cited by FGD participants as another major trigger of conflicts in the County.

2.5. Highlights of causes of conflicts in West Pokot County

The County borders Elgeyo Marakwet and Trans-Nzoia Counties to the South, Baringo to the East, Republic of Uganda to the West and Turkana to the North. West Pokot County is inhabited by pastoralists who time and again raid the neighbouring Counties sometimes killing and raping women. In West Pokot County, the North and Central sub-counties are among the worst affected areas. Cattle rustling are one of the major causes of conflict. This is aggravated by proliferation of illicit SALW as well as the fight over shrinking water and pasture for their livestock. The transformation of cattle rustling into a commercialized entrepreneurial activity has increased in-tensity for raids and is leading to major changes in economic, social and political structures in the border areas. It is creating a black market for commercial cattle trading that straddles the localities and the wider region. Culture also contributes to a large extent to cattle rustling, for instance practices for dowry/bride wealth has also been a big challenge as youth steal animals to be paid off in exchange of a bride.

Land: The land resource remains a conflicting issue in the County, especially where communal land is concerned. Communal land ownership always results in conflict between the community members. Cross-border conflict over land in Chepchoina between the Pokots and Luhya communities is as a result of ownership where both communities claim ownership of the land¹⁵.

2.6. Highlights of causes of conflicts in Uasin Gishu County

The County is cosmopolitan in nature and borders five counties namely, Elgeyo Marakwet, Trans-Nzoia, Nandi, Baringo and Kakamega. Post Election Violence (PEV) of 2007/2008 unearthed deep rooted unaddressed land issues among others.

Conflicts over IDP resettlement: The PEV resulted in massive displacements, loss of life and property but the Kenya government rolled out a resettlement framework for the IDPs at Chemusian in Eldoret East and Kipkurere. Disputes arose over the resettlement of IDPs over squatters displaced during the 1992 political clashes and has been a thorny issue that needs to be addressed with utmost care. Compensation by the Government was seen as unfair by the integrated IDPs since they didn't benefit yet they were displaced from their residential areas.

Tribalism and negative ethnicity: This issue is considered to be based on political affiliation and loyalties especially during electioneering periods. With the different political landscape in the County and the fact that communities align themselves to support one of their "own", it has resulted in negative ethnicity amongst the communities living in the County.¹⁶

2.7. Highlights of the causes of conflicts in Nairobi County

Nairobi is the capital city of Kenya, cosmopolitan and multicultural city that hosts people from all walks of life and classes. The conflict issues are enormous and include:

Growth of informal settlements/slums: The interplay between politics and economics in the slum areas since 1991 led to inter-ethnic tensions and conflicts. The high population densities, youth unemployment, pressure on land, poor accessibility as well as illiteracy level in the slums complicated the security and peace issues. Cases of women and girls being violated during conflict time are very high in these settings. Many slum youths, as a way of survival, are hired by the political class to terrorize supporters of their political opponents.

Land: Population explosion in the slum areas exerts pressure on land pushing slum dwellers to encroach on public utility or any unoccupied Government land. This causes tensions and conflicts especially when eviction orders are to be implemented.

Landlord-tenant conflicts: Conflicts between landlords and tenants occur in the informal settlements relates to rent hikes. The situation

¹⁵ Chesek G.J, Omondi P, and Odenyo, V.A.O, (2012) , Emerging trends in Economics and Management Science: Nature and causes of cattle rustling among some pastoral communities in Kenya p137-179

¹⁶ TJRC-Pull Out Vol 1. No4

worsens around electioneering period as some communities in a bid to evict their tenants, especially if they do not support/affiliate to the party of their preferred candidate.

Youth unemployment and poverty: High rate of unemployed among the youth puts them in a very vulnerable situation. During the PEV it is claimed that youths raped women from a certain community to pass a message to their opponents from that community.

2.8. Highlights of conflict issues in Nakuru County

Nakuru County is a home to diverse communities. It borders Kericho and Bomet Counties to the West; Narok to the South West, Baringo to the North, Nyandarua to the East, Kajiado to the South and Laikipia to the North East. The diverse communities coexisted till the 2007/8 PEV. Some of the triggers of conflict in this county include:

Political incitement: This occurs during electioneering period, especially when the interest of a politician is at stake. Case in point is the eviction from Mau Water Catchment area. Some communities felt that they were being targeted by the government, an issue politicians used to whip the emotions of the locals. Another case occurred during the 2007 general elections leading to post election violence that resulted in mass killings, displacements, destruction of property and infrastructure.

Resource based conflicts: Resources such as forests, water, land in Molo, Kuresoi, Rongai, Njoro and Naivasha have caused tensions and conflicts among the communities in the County. The conflicts are about unequal access and sharing of natural resources where some communities feel excluded.

Negative ethnicity: The County is home to many communities. The driving force behind the conflicts witnessed in the recent past has been as a result of historical injustices. From time and again, just a little trigger shatter the peaceful co-existence among these communities as was the case during the 2007/2008 post elections violence.

2.9. Highlights of causes of conflicts in Mombasa County

Mombasa county is a multi-ethnic in nature and borders following counties: Kwale to the South West, Kilifi to the North and Indian Ocean to the East. There has been agitation by the secession-ist groups citing cases of marginalization of indigenous community and taking up of their land by “foreigners” a situation that has led to sporadic demonstrations in this part of the Coastal re-gion. The conflict triggers as identified in the Focus Group Discussions include:

Land conflicts: Access to land and land ownership has been a serious conflict issue in the Coastal region. A case in point is the Waitiki farm where thousands of squatters occupy land without land ownership documents. The squatters claim that they own the land since they have been occupying it for decades. Absentee landlords is also prevalent, struggle over prime land along the beaches are other factors that contribute to conflicts. This has resulted in animosity between the indigenous communities and those from upcountry.

Criminal gangs: Existence of Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) a secessionist gang has posed both security and peace concerns at the coast. Their slogan “Pwani si Kenya” has transformed to “Pwani ni yetu”. Groups like “eleven brothers” operating in Kisauni, Mombolulu and Mshoromoni are just examples. High levels of poverty, unemployment, high illiteracy levels, and idleness are the factors driving the youth to joining these formations. Their activities revolve around instilling fear, and advancing political agendas.

Religious intolerance: This is an emergent conflict issue at the Coast region. The region is home to diverse communities with diverse religion. There are cases reported where violent conflicts have been witnessed and meted by members of certain communities on others.

2.10. Highlights of causes of conflicts in Kisumu County

The county is majorly a home to the Luo community although there are other communities engaged in business ventures such as the Kisii, Kalenjin Luhya. It borders the following counties: Nandi to the North, Kericho to the East, Homa bay to the South, Siaya to the West. The conflict triggers as identified in the Focus Group Discussions include:

Border disputes: This kind of conflict goes along with cattle rustling in some areas. In the County boundary disputes are around Kibos, Miwani, Muhoroni, Nandi and Nyakach. This has resulted in cross border clashes between Kipsigis, Nandi and Luo communities.

Political conflicts: Jostling for power and position in the County is clan-based and as such the aspect of divisive and mergers among the clans are common aspects witnessed during campaigns and electioneering period. The youth become very violent during elections time, setting-off conflict with their opponents.

2.11. Highlights of causes of conflicts in Busia County

Busia County borders the following counties: Bungoma to the North East, Kakamega to the East, Siaya to the South East and Republic of Uganda to the West while Lake Victoria is to the South West. It is inhabited by different communities such as Abasamia, Teso, Luhya, Asians among others engaged in business activities. The county has two official border points at Malaba and Busia leading to Uganda. The conflict triggers as identified in the Focus Group Discussions include:

Land conflicts: This is an emotive issue and in this County it is characterized by multiple sale of same parcel of land to different buyers creating animosity between them. Commercialization of plots at the border county is a case in point. Women and children are constantly dispossessed.

Political conflicts: The County is cosmopolitan and ethnicity is rife and politicians employ divisive methods during elections causing a lot of tension and strain the peaceful co-existence among the communities.

Criminal gangs: The gangs operate from Sofia slums in Uganda. Peddling of drugs by the youth is common at Marachi area while issues of smuggling of small arms have compounded the insecurity situation. It is these youth who are hired to attack other people either for political reasons or for struggle over natural resources. The epicenters of conflicts and insecurity include: Malaba, Changara, Angurai, Kocholia, and Adungosi, an area known for illegal trade on various commodities including SALW.



Youth from Mathare slums in Nairobi in an animated discussion on the role and participation young people in the peace and security processes, and why they need to be involved. Meeting was organized by African Woman and Child Feature Service.

2.12. Highlights of causes of conflicts in Bungoma County

The County is located in the Western part of Kenya and borders Kakamega, Trans-Nzoia and Busia. The inhabitants of the County comprise of the Sabaot and Bukusu communities who practice agricultural farming. The Sabaots live in Mt. Elgon area and borders Karamoja of Uganda. The conflict triggers as identified

in the Focus Group Discussions include:

Land conflicts: Conflicts over land can be traced back to colonial policy of alienating African land to create room for white settler farms. For the Sabaot community, they believe that their ancestral grazing land on the extensive Trans-Nzoia was taken away in the early 1930s without any compensation. This has heralded intra-community differentiation and rivalry that has many times transformed into violent conflicts.

Small arms and light weapons: Proliferation of SALW continues to fuel violent conflicts in these areas. Some communities usually use them to fight other communities who they believe are encroaching on their land. When these groups resist, it transforms into a major conflict.

2.13. Highlights of causes of conflicts in Garissa County

The County is located in the North Eastern part of Kenya and borders the following Counties: Kitui to the South West, Lamu to the South, Tana River to the West, Wajir to the North, the Republic of Somalia to the East. It is inhabited by the Ogaden sub-clans who have had historical contestation over land and political indifferences. The conflict triggers as identified in the Focus Group Discussions include:

Boundary disputes: The conflict has been between sub-clans namely the Aulian with Abdiwak at Hagarbul and Abdisamed areas. The two sub-clans have registered electoral boundary dispute between Balambala and Lagdera constituencies. The communities from both sub-

counties claim land around Ewaso Nyiro basin. The County has had a dispute between Garissa and Tana River. The claim by Pokomo that the boundary extends three miles into Garissa sub-County while the Somali allege Tana River is the only permanent water source for both counties. The two communities depend on the river for both domestic use and water supply for irrigation as well as water for their livestock. These disputes have resulted in killing of women, children and men, raping women, and displacement of communities.

Terrorism: Cases of Al Shaabab terrorist attacks have been on the rise since the fall of Kismayu to Kenya Defense Forces (KDF). The struggle over the important town has ended up in major violent conflicts inside Kenya, with the terrorists engage in revenge missions.

2.14. Highlights of causes of conflicts in Tana River County

Tana River County is inhabited by the Pokomo, Wardei, Watta and Orma communities. They practice both pastoralism as well as livestock keeping. It borders the following Counties: Taita Taveta to the South, Kitui to the West, Kilifi to the South East, Lamu to the Northern East, Isiolo to the North West and Garissa to the North. During drought season, food insecurity is rife, a situation that forces the pastoralist communities to wander into agricultural farms in search of pasture for their livestock. This move results into a major conflict between the pastoralists and the agricultural communities over grazing land and water points.

Land and land tenure system uses: The County borders North Eastern region whose inhabitants are mostly pastoralists who often move during drought season in search of water and pasture for their livestock. Land in the County is communally owned. Scarcity of water and pasture is compounded by influx of farmers and pastoralists from North Eastern crossing over to Tana River County and also farmers from other Counties crossing for commercial farming especially Bura in Tana North sub-county, Kipini and Hurara in Tana Delta sub-county makes the situation volatile.

Illicit arms and banditry: Proliferation of SALW from the neighboring countries such as Ethiopia and Somalia makes these illicit arms easily accessible to bandits and become handy especially when there are clan-based conflicts.

Border and boundary disputes: Boundary disputes around Garissa-Tana River in Masalani area, Waldena of Tana River County and Mudha of Kitui County aggravates the insecurity and conflict situation especially during electioneering period. Other boundary disputes exists between Tana River County and Kilifi County over rights of access to certain natural resources.

Negative ethnicity/politics of exclusion: Negative ethnicity propagated by the political class has contributed to conflicts among the communities in the County. On many occasions, this has resulted in ethnic related conflict and extreme violation of rights and displacement of people especially women and children.

SECTION THREE:

3.0 Effect of conflicts on women and their wellbeing

The foregoing section has elucidated in detail the causes of conflict in the Counties under study in Kenya. Whatever form these conflicts take, they have a major gender dimension. The biggest sufferers are women and girls. Conflict scenarios exposes women and girls to difficult and untold sufferings because of their vulnerability. Women and girls are either killed or sexually abused. Those who experience the latter end up with unwanted pregnancies and infections such as HIV, trauma, and sometimes experience depression. The burden on women to undertake certain roles such as caring and fending for the family increases whenever a husband dies in conflict. The women carry the burden of caring for the sick and the injured during conflict times. As result of all these factors, they cannot function optimally. The effects of conflict are devastating considering the fact that it has both short and long time repercussions. Some of the effects are elaborated below:

Sexual gender based violence

Women and girls undergo untold suffering and different experiences such as sexual, psychological and physical effects during and after conflicts. During conflicts in the counties under study, women and girls are targeted, with perpetrators employing forms of violence such as sexual assault, exploitation, rape, torture, and sexual slavery as tools of war.

Trauma: Prolonged emotional trauma that manifests itself in stress, anguish, isolation weighs down on the economic and social well being of women. There are also health related problems stemming from the biological differences that make women very vulnerable in conflict situations. Cases of risks exposure such as contracting sexually transmitted infections, HIV/Aids were raised by the participants during Focus Group Discussions. Trauma suffered by women and girls was said to be enormous and destabilizes their socio-economic status. They further said that this trauma was exacerbated by cultural practices that prohibit the women from disclosing the sexual violence they have suffered.

Economic effects: Poverty and decline in status of women in the society occasioned by loss of land and property rights for women headed households worsened during conflicts situations. This was raised in both FGDs and key informant interviews. Since women do not own the property with their husbands, they might not be in a position to access credit to start businesses. This was highlighted as one of the issues that deprived women of their social security. Studies have indeed shown that violent conflicts and complex emergencies have profound short-and long-term consequences on economic resources and institutions that women and girls rely on.

SECTION FOUR

4.0 Conflict interventions and mitigation strategies

Conflict interventions may either refer to conflict management measures that are aimed at limiting, mitigating, or containing a conflict without necessarily solving it. During the Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews, several responses to conflict within the selected counties were identified. These included:

Traditional responses: Traditional responses refer to mechanisms that are based upon customary practices such as a Council of Elders exercising authority strictly within their community. The successes of these mechanisms differ from region to region and community to community but are widely respected. The participants in the FGDs did indicate that engagement of elders has been found to be very effective. Elders remain the epitome of wisdom and power and are highly regarded. Engaging in community dialogues have in most cases resulted in declarations/agreements that guide and bind the warring communities. These agreements stipulate stiffer penalties for individuals who contravene the provisions contained in them. In many of the communities, these elders are predominantly men such as the Nchuri Ncheke in the Meru Community in the Central part of Kenya. But what is encouraging is communities are slowly realizing that women too play a key role in peace and security matters. In Luo community, for instance, council of elders has incorporated women to recognize their role in peace processes whether at family or community level.



Ms Siyama Ismail, one of the women peace champions shares a point with Odhiambo Orlale, a media consultant, during a meeting on why women should be at the forefront on issues of peace and security organized by African Woman and Child Feature Service.

Sub-County peace committees: While strengthening Kenya's infrastructure for peace, institutionalization of sub-county peace committees that work very closely with other traditional conflict handling mechanisms such as councils of elders, has been undertaken. The peace committees are grassroots community-driven institutions based at the various administrative levels. They bring together traditional dispute resolution mechanisms involving elders, women, youth and inter-faith leaders on the one hand; and formal mechanisms for conflict resolution including those by Government administrative and security agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) initiatives on the other. In most parts of the country, peace committees have facilitated and supported improved coordination in peace work; reduced tensions among communities and groups; scaled up community dialogue; facilitated rapid response to conflicts; facilitated recovery of illicit small arms and light weapons; and increased awareness on the effects of conflict, among others. It is instructive to note that gender is slowly getting attention in the composition and leadership of these committees. In each Sub-County, there are fifteen members of the peace committees out of which three slots are reserved for women while in other sub-counties there are women chairpersons, deputies, and secretaries in the peace committees management structure.

Community Based Organizations (CBOs): Peace-building process requires a holistic approach that encompasses both state and non-state actors, in this case the faith based and community based organizations. Participants in the Focus Group Discussion did indicate that these organizations are at the grassroots level and have direct touch and link with the community. They are therefore better equipped to build

social capital among the locals, networking and reducing the vulnerability among the poor and marginalized groups. The participants were happy that these CBOs push for gender dimensions in every initiative they undertake.

Media: Although media and conflict prevention is one of the chips in the vast field of conflict resolution, it is nevertheless a very important one. In Kenya, media has been found to be very powerful in reducing tensions and advocating for peace as happened in the 2013 general elections. It can incite as was the case in 2007 general election that led to violence. Radio, for instance, has a large reach in the Counties under study. Media messages can have a profound influence on the attitudes and behavior of people in regard to how they perceive and handle conflicts. A Media message that enables a society to make well-informed choices, a precursor of democratic governance reduces conflict and fosters human security. For example in the period preceding and the one immediately after the 2013 General Elections, the media engaged in peace campaigns preaching peace messages. Every news bulletin had a message pleading for peace. This had an effect on how people behaved and perceived the elections. There were many people who avoided violence acts by listening to media messages and feeling that everyone was for peace.

SECTION FIVE

5.0 Methodology and Findings

The survey on women participation in peace and security processes in Kenya was conducted between 3rd March 2014 and 30th June 2014. It looked at the position of women in peace committees and determined extent to which women representation conforms to provisions of the Kenyan Constitution and other legislation. The survey focused on 15 conflict prone Counties namely: Kisumu, Bungoma, Tana River, Trans Nzoia, Nairobi, Busia, Migori, Narok, Mombasa, Garissa, Turkana, West Pokot, Nakuru, Uasin Gishu and Samburu. Desktop reviews, key informant interviews, and Focused group discussions were used. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted in seven counties. Through them, key issues emerged in regard to the role and participation of women in peace processes, specifically their participation in local peace structures. The Counties represented a fair mix of the Kenyan social fabric for they cut across urban, rural and pastoralists clusters. The pastoral clusters are inhabited by pastoral communities, where conflict is mostly over natural resources, while the rural cluster covers areas that are rural and perceived to experience relative peace. The urban cluster focused on cities that experience - social, economic, and political conflicts that vary from time to time depending on the dynamics of the day.

In choosing the Counties, purposive sampling method was used. Other factors considered while sampling the counties included: conflict dynamics, socio-economic dynamics and the degree to which women's voices and role in peace and security is appreciated. The seven Counties that were selected included: Turkana, Garissa, Narok, Samburu, West Pokot, Tana River, Trans Nzoia, Nakuru, Uasin Gishu, Bungoma..

A total of 15 key informants, who on account of their positions in the peace structures were deemed to possess valuable knowledge and expertise in peace building and conflict management were interviewed. Ten Focus Groups discussions were conducted. The survey also involved desk research of the reports undertaken by other researchers. The findings of the survey will be used in tracking the representation of women in peace and security processes and discourses as well as in advocacy purposes to advance women effective participation in peace and security processes.

5.1. Findings

Table I: Women representation in peace infrastructure in 15 select counties

No	County	Sub-County Peace Committee	No. Of Women on the Peace Committee	No. Of Men On the Peace Committee	Gender of the Chair of the Peace Committee	Gender of the Vice-Chair of the Peace Committee
1	Bungoma	Bungoma East	7	8	M	M
		Mt. Elgon	7	8	M	M
		Bungoma West	8	7	F	M
2	T. River	Tana Delta	5	10	M	F
		Tana River	3	14	M	F
3	Trans Nzoia	Trans Nzoia East	6	9	M	M
		Trans Nzoia West	3	15	M	M
4	Nairobi	Dagoretti	9	7	M	F
		Langata	5	10	M	M
5	Busia	Teso South	8	11	F	M
		Nambale	4	11	F	M
6	Migori	Kuria East	4	11	M	F
		Kuria West	5	10	M	M
7	Narok	Narok North	5	10	M	M
		Narok South	3	12	M	M
8	Mombasa	Likoni	6	9	M	M
		Changamwe	6	9	M	F
9	Garissa	Garissa Township	5	10	M	M
		Balambala	6	10	M	M
10	Turkana	Turkana West	5	11	M	M
		Turkana East	4	11	M	F
11	West Pokot	West Pokot Central	6	9	M	M
		West Pokot	6	9	F	M
12	Nakuru	Nakuru town	6	9	F	M
		Rongai	5	10	M	M
13	Uasin Gishu	Eldoret West	5	10	M	M
		Wareng	5	10	F	M
14	Samburu	Samburu East	1	13	M	M
		Samburu North	3	12	M	M
15	Kisumu	Kisumu East	2	12	M	F
		Kisumu North	3	12	M	M

NSC Database, as at February, 2014



Women MCAs and peace champions from Nairobi during one of the focus group discussion on peace and security issues moderated by African Woman and Child Feature Service.

5.2. Membership and participation of women in peace committees

Since mid-1990s and inspired by the “Wajir” story and constitutional requirements that women should make at least a third of membership of any association or groups, women have taken an increasingly visible role in peace-building processes in the country. In terms of membership, out of the 15 sampled counties, women make up 31% of the membership of sub-county peace committees. But when data was analyzed within the counties, it indicated that some of the Counties were in a sorry state, with representation of women on the peace committees less than 10 per-cent. Although for few Counties they seem to be keeping up with the constitutional requirements on gender representation, there are those who are surpassing this mark. For instance, Bungoma East, Mt. Elgon and Teso South, have close to 50 percent of the members of the peace committees being women. Dagoretti and Bungoma West Sub-Counties have more than 50 percent women on the peace committees.

When a comparative analysis was done on women representation in the peace processes in the rural and urban settings, the findings were startling. In terms of membership, urban areas seem to appreciate the role and participation of women in peace activities than their rural areas. For instance, in Dagoretti Sub-County in Nairobi County, there were 9 women or 56 per cent representation in the peace committee out of the 16 members. Bungoma West sub-county has eight (8) women compared to seven (7) men on its peace committee. The other Sub-Counties within Bungoma County have almost equal membership of both men and women and so are Sub-Counties such as Teso South with eight (8) women and eleven (11) men; Trans Mara East, Likoni and Chagamwe all having six (6) women and nine (9) men in their Sub-County peace committee membership.

The pastoralists’ areas are still lagging behind in terms of appreciating and recognizing the role of women in peace-building and conflict prevention. Samburu County, for instance, is ranked last in terms of women involvement in peace activities with Samburu East having only one (1) woman against thirteen (13) men in the sub-County peace committee. Samburu West has only three (3) women out of the 15 membership peace committee.

The story is the same in other pastoralists’ Counties, which have between four (4) and two (2) women in the total membership of the Sub-County peace committees of more than 10 members. This could be explained by the strong cultural practices that consign a woman from issues considered as a preserve of men. This is also happening in regions where men consider women as part of the ‘children’ and not grown up people. Yet, peace committees are seen as places where adults, and more knowledgeable men, dialogue on important issues.

Overall, the findings indicate, the number of women on the peace committees is just at the 30 percent mark. Anything less than that is a violation of the constitutional requirement which stipulates in article 81(b) that: "Not more than two-thirds of the members of elective public bodies shall be of the same gender". It is also against the National Guidelines and Terms of References for the Sub-County peace committees that were developed by National Steering Committee on Peace-building and Conflict Management to guide operations of the peace committees across the Country. The guidelines require gender representation to be in line with the Constitution and other national laws.

When Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews were done with women and men members of peace committees in Tana River, Nairobi, Nakuru and Narok counties, there emerged reasons why there is poor representation of women on these committees. The respondents blamed the cultural and traditional practices as the main cause of this poor representation. In the four Counties, as is the case in other parts of the country, men still consider peace-building a masculine responsibility and that women and girls should just concern themselves with house-hold chores and singing praise songs to successful warriors while ridiculing the cowards.

In the FDGs, women said that the domestic roles they have to engage in restrict what types of processes they can take active participation; peace and security processes being one of them.



Khadija Omar, a woman peace champion from Isiolo, speaking during a workshop on role of women in peace and security held in Isiolo County, which was organized by African Woman and Child Feature Service

"It will be difficult to sit in a peace committee or spend many hours travelling around the county attending meetings and talking about peace when at home children are waiting to be fed and washed. This can even lead to a divorce," said one woman participant.

Sometimes members of peace committees travel far and wide to mediate conflicts, and this has frustrated the participation of women in such activities. The women said some men find it difficult to entertain the idea of their wives going for peace meetings for days with male strangers. The suspicions that surround such movements prevent women from joining peace committees. This does not mean that traditional societies barred women from participating in peace processes. Among the Samburu and Rendille communities¹⁷, women perform certain specific rituals during peace processes especially when peace accords are being brokered. This was confirmed in the FGD responses in West Pokot where women revisited the role of traditional "women" belt that is strapped around the belly to help prevent conflicts and violence. They also made reference to the symbolic role of a particular type of grass that once women placed it between two feuding groups, the combatants had no option other than to respect the verdict of the women and stop violence.

The women respondents in all the Counties sampled were unanimous that even though they are not visible in peace processes including in the membership of peace committees, they do indeed play critical roles behind the scenes such as persuading their sons, brothers and husbands not to raid other communities or engage in criminality. They further said that they play a very significant role in early warning and early response, since they are normally the first ones to get wind of any planned raid or banditry activity. With such information, they can reliably inform the relevant authorities to be on the lookout and avert any conflict that may arise.

In addition to the pastoralists' counties, there are rural Counties where women are doing much better in participating in the activities of the peace committees. All the sub-counties in Migori County met the constitutional threshold of 30% women in membership of its peace committee with each having 5 women and 10 men as members. The women in these committees indicated that they were also participating in the peace activities organized by the committees.

17 Ruto Pkalya et al, 2003, Indigenous Democracy. Traditional Conflict Resolution Mechanisms: Pokot, Turkana, Marakwet and Samburu Communities, ITDG EA, Nairobi

During the Focus Group Discussions and the Key Informant Interviews, the respondents said the poor representation and participation of women in peace committees in the rural counties may not improve if the traditional and cultural practices are not confronted. The good news is, the study found, there were concerted efforts by stakeholders to increase the number of women on peace committees as well as appreciating their active participation in peace and security processes. By the time of this study was being done, there were on-going initiatives to raise awareness on the need to involve both genders in peace and security processes including documenting the behind the scenes roles played by women in this country in conflict prevention and peace-building. Such documentation will be made public to help change perceptions about and increase appreciation of women's role in peace and security matters.

5.2.1. Positions held by women in the Sub-County peace committees

It is said that those in key leadership positions often determine and take strategic decisions on the nature and direction of business to be transacted by the organizations or formation they head. The same is very alive at the Sub-County peace committees. The head of the peace committee are very influential in deciding what actions should be taken or not taken in regard to issues of peace. What this means is that being the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson of a peace committee is critical in shaping how peace matters are handled in a given County. The data collected shows variations in the number of women and men in the leadership of peace committees at the Counties under study.

Overall, in the 30 sub-counties studied in the 15 Counties, 86.7% of the chairpersons of the peace committee were men compared to only 13.3% women. In other words, if this is extrapolated across the country, men dominate leadership of sub-county peace committees. It also means that at this level, the Constitutional requirement in regard to gender representation has not been met.

Only four sub-counties of the 30 in the table above had women as the chair of the peace committee. These were Teso South, West Pokot, Nakuru Town and Wareng. West Pokot had the first woman chair on the peace committee in the Country, despite being a County performing poorly on overall women representation in the peace committees. Nakuru town and Starehe represent urban areas; Teso South represents the rural cluster, while Wareng represents both urban and rural clusters. This means there is no much variation between urban and rural clusters in terms of gender of the leaders of the peace committees. While this is a great improvement compared to the late 1990s and early 2000s when there was no single woman chairing sub-county peace committees in the country, the situation remains worrying. Studies and other literature have shown that the work of resolving disputes between individuals and communities has traditionally been associated with chiefs and there were no, if not very few, women chiefs in the country. The situation changed in recent years. This may have also contributed to the low level of women in peace structures especially in pastoralists and rural areas as confirmed in the FGDs and key informant interviews.

But interestingly, a new trend is emerging where in Commissions where men are chairs, women are vice chairs. This is the case with Revenue Allocation Commission; and The National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC). The National Gender and Equality Commission that has a woman chair, as the chair with a man deputizing. But this might be because of the subtle stereotype that gender issues are women issues and hence organs dealing with such matters should be headed by a woman. Similarly, when it came to vice chairs of the peace committees in the 30 Sub-County peace committees, 23.3% were women compared to 76.7% men. This might be a situation obtaining in the whole country. The findings further show another worrying trend: while there was no single peace committee where both the chair and vice chair are women; the case was different with men, where they occupied both positions. This was the case in 63% of the sub-county peace committees, which had both men as chair and vice chair.

The pastoralists' cluster was notorious in consigning women to the periphery when it came to the leadership



Women leaders from Narok County discussing role and participation of women in peace and security processes during workshop a community encounter meeting in the county organized by African Woman and Child Feature Service.

of peace committees. For instance, all the sub-county peace committees in Samburu, Garissa and Narok counties have both men as the chair and vice chair of the peace committees. West Pokot and Turkana are doing fairly good by having more than 30 percent of those in leadership of peace committees being women. What this means is that a lot of effort needs to be spent in raising awareness on the need to include women in peace committees, and more importantly in the leadership positions. The communities should adhere to the Constitutional provisions on gender requirement and to the NSC guidelines.

5.2.2. Challenges facing women in peace and security structures and processes in the Country

From the discussions with the participants in the FGDs and Key Informant Interviews, there are numerous challenges that prevent effective participation of women in peace and security discourse as well as in decision making processes. Some of the challenges include the patriarchal nature of the society and the public attitudes towards women leadership. For instance, the society expects women to behave in a certain manner which includes on how they should dress and what time they should report at home in the evening. These restrictions curtail women's participation in public spaces, and make them feel less confident to engage in important processes such as peace building. Almost all the FGD participants agreed that retrogressive cultural and religious beliefs and practices pose a serious challenge to women's participation in processes and structures such as peace committees. These beliefs and practices undermine even the rights and privileges already granted to women by the Constitution of Kenya, laws and other policy guidelines.

In cultures where women are not allowed to venture into public sphere or address men, they find it difficult to come out and openly speak about peace. Many fear being divorced for going against the prescriptions of their culture. Lack of political will and knowledge is another challenge facing women participation in peace-building. Peace-building is a political activity and therefore requires political knowledge and strategy for effective engagement. Majority of the women either lack or are deficient in political issues around peace and security. The other challenge facing women is lack of experience, exposure and skills in negotiation, advocacy and lobbying, which are key in ingredients for effective participation in peace processes.

Other challenges raised during the Focus Group Discussion and key informant interviews include:

High Illiteracy levels: High illiteracy level among women has been associated with women feeling less confident to compete with literate men in either political agenda or in decision-making processes. While access to information would play a critical role in enhancing the women's effectiveness, the illiteracy levels are a great drawback.

Lack of visibility: Women's conflict-resolution activities are confined to the behind scenes, very often playing peripheral, but important roles during official peace negotiations. In addition, even if women contribute to the promotion of peace, neither are they invited to participate in formal negotiations nor are their contribution recognized.

Lack of resources-material and financial: Most of the time the women and their formations lack the means to back up their actions. In some instances, they are unable to get across to the media network to enhance their peace campaign because they do not have a budget for such activities. Even if they had, they in most cases lack communication and media skills to engage effectively. Further, they are not part of the main fund-raising channels and networks. They work on a voluntary basis at the grassroots levels, pooling their own resources together to get an office, desk and even communication materials.

FGDs revealed that women also lack in the political networks and strategies that ensure meaningful and recognition of ideas in peace and security processes. In addition, once a peace process is over, women often return to more traditional activities, losing their gains and public presence. These losses make it very difficult for women to return to the public stage later when the making of agreements after conflicts begins¹⁸.

18 Damilola Taiye Agbalajobi (2009): "The role of African women in peace-building and conflict resolution: The case of Burundi, journal, Issue 15, Vol 8

SECTION SIX

6.0 CONCLUSION

In the recent years, Kenya has made progress in including women in peace processes. Women representation in peace committees as members and decision makers is slowly improving. There are now women even leadership positions of the peace committees, which was not the case before. In meetings around peace in their communities, the female gender is becoming an active participant. Some of them are appearing on various media platforms to express their views and solutions to conflicts situations in their community. These bold steps are the ingredients needed to see more women taking an active and influential role in peace matters at the National and County government levels. What the new trend indicates is that women are showing more interest in areas they had shied away from many years ago, despite their valuable contribution to peace processes. This encouraging trend should continue. But a lot needs to be done. There is need for all stakeholders to address the challenges-cultural, traditional, financial, knowledge, community attitudes, and gender roles- that continue to make it difficult for women to participate effectively in peace processes. Women's role, both on the table of negotiations and dialogues, and behind the scene contributions to peace processes needs to be documented. This documentation is very important in shaping public opinion about women's contribution to peace processes.

The late Dekha Ibrahim, who was awarded for her peace-making efforts in Kenya and the IGAD region as a whole, acknowledged that her gender played a critical role in cooling tempers in some heated peace dialogues. This was particularly so when men shied away from confronting her ideas and proposals of ending such disputes. Sometimes they made her the bridge between the disputants.

At the moment, it is encouraging that renowned women such as Tegla Loroupe are leading peace campaigns and so are the many women chiefs, Assistant County Commissioners, County Commissioners, and Cabinet Secretaries. These are trends that should be emulated and used to bring more women at the critical decision making table on peace and security. Finally, there is need to showcase Counties that are doing well in including women in peace processes. They will serve as case studies for counties that are underperforming. Forums for knowledge sharing and learning should be held to enable women exchange views on how best to participate in security and peace processes.

SECTION SEVEN

7.0 Recommendation

After analyzing women participation in peace processes, several issues have emerged. Moving forward, the following proposals need considerations. More studies on the role and effective-ness of women in peace committees especially where they are at parity with the men in terms of membership, is an area that requires a deeper understanding and analysis. While women have performed tremendously well as chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of the peace committees, their contribution has not been documented. This needs to happen.

Greater attention to awareness, capacity-building and skills development of women in the communities are very necessary if women have to be active participants in these processes.

Establishing mentoring programmes where women will be mentored and their confidence on participation in peace processes enhanced require consideration. This is because strict cultural practices compounded with high level of illiteracy make many women fear taking an active role in peace-building.

Exchange visits should be undertaken to help women share knowledge and experience on how best to participate in peace and security processes both at the National and County levels.

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