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**The Role of Youth Groups in Community Peace Building: Case of Amani
Kibra and Kibera Hamlets in Kibra Informal Settlements, Kenya**



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The Role of Youth Groups in Community Peace Building: Case of Amani Kibra and Kibera Hamlets in Kibra Informal Settlements, Kenya

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to explore the role of youth groups in community peacebuilding, focusing on the Amani Kibera and Kibera Hamlets groups within Kibra's informal settlements in Kenya.

Methodology: Anchored on Paul Lederach's Conflict Transformation Framework, the study employed a mixed-methods approach, involving 40 respondents from Kibera Hamlets and 35 from Amani Kibera, selected through purposive and cluster sampling. Data collection included in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and structured questionnaires. Qualitative data were thematically analyzed, while quantitative data were processed using SPSS Version 28.

Findings: Findings indicate that youth groups primarily focus on "Mentoring and Empowerment" (27.8%) and "Arts and Creative Expression" (26.9%), but encounter challenges such as resource limitations and socio-political instability, leading to ineffective support from religious institutions, government agencies, and NGOs. The study concludes that youth groups are essential for addressing community challenges and recommends expanding arts initiatives, improving resources, and using online platforms to enhance peacebuilding in Kibera.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Policy and Practice: This study uniquely contributes to theory, policy, and practice in informal settlements by offering actionable, context-specific recommendations grounded in empirical evidence. It provides valuable insights into how innovative collaboration fosters trust and social capital, serving as an important resource for policymakers.

Keywords: *Youth Groups, Community Peacebuilding, Kibera Informal Settlements, Mentoring and Empowerment, Conflict Transformation*

1. Introduction

Amidst ongoing global conflicts that have left lasting scars on societies, particularly in informal settlements, there is an urgent need to explore pathways toward sustainable peace. Historical events, such as the significant wars in medieval Europe, have led to peacebuilding initiatives like the European Union, aimed at fostering harmony after centuries of warfare (Stoicheva, 2019). The current landscape presents significant challenges, exacerbated by social and economic inequalities, with nearly 600 million youth living in conflict-affected regions (UNSC, 2020). The United Nations estimates that one in eight people globally reside in informal settlements, projected to exceed 25% by 2030, with youth comprising a significant majority (Zerbo et al., 2020). Additionally, statistics indicate that youth aged 18 to 24 are disproportionately affected by violent crimes in the U.S. (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2021), while marginalized neighborhoods in Europe experience heightened violence levels (Manso, 2019). This context underscores the importance of understanding youth perspectives and developing effective, sustainable peacebuilding strategies.

Success stories in community peacebuilding, such as those in Medellín, Colombia, and Neza, Mexico, illustrate the transformative power of youth-led initiatives (Torres, 2021). In Asia, the slum of Dharavi in Mumbai, which housed a significant young population, has not reported alarming youth crime rates despite some exceptions in conflict-ridden areas like Kashmir (Lokhande, 2019). However, there is a notable lack of research on youth-led peacebuilding initiatives in Indian slums. Similarly, Pakistan faces challenges as its youth become increasingly susceptible to extremism, necessitating strategies that shift from insurgency to proactive peacebuilding (Farooq et al., 2014).

In Africa, youth are recognized as vital partners in fostering solidarity and cohesion, as outlined in the African Union Constitutive Act. With a significant youth population residing in slums—61.7% in Sub-Saharan Africa and 34% aged 15 to 34—elevated youth crime rates pose challenges (World Bank, 2023). Despite this, young people actively contribute to fostering peaceful communities, as seen in South Africa's #RhodesMustFall movement (Ntloedibe, 2019).

In Kenya, where this study is focused, grassroots organizations have emerged in response to socio-political challenges, particularly after the 2007 post-election violence (Nyarioko, 2017). However, a critical gap persists in integrating youth perspectives into peacebuilding frameworks, particularly in informal settlements like Kibera, Nairobi. Despite the documented efforts of youth organizations such as Amani Kibera and Kibera Hamlets, their contributions remain largely undocumented, emphasizing the need for comprehensive research that assesses the unique roles and challenges faced by youth groups in community peacebuilding initiatives. This study aims to address this research gap and provide insights into the specific contributions of youth in Kibera's informal settlements.

2. Problem Statement

Despite representing a significant portion of the global demographic, young people's contributions to communal harmony are frequently overlooked, particularly in Kenya, where approximately 35% of the population is aged 18 to 35 (Nyarieko, 2017). These demographic faces marginalization and negative stereotypes, especially in informal settlements like Kibera, where conflicts persist despite various peacebuilding frameworks, such as the Kenyan Constitution and the National Policy on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management (Kihato, 2015). The ineffectiveness of these measures is underscored by instances of election-related violence that resulted in up to 60 deaths in Kibera, posing a significant threat to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (Kihato, 2015).

The limited success of peace initiatives can largely be attributed to the exclusion of youth from decision-making processes that shape their communities. Existing peace structures often neglect the active involvement of young people, who play a crucial role in conflict resolution and fostering harmony. This exclusion perpetuates cycles of violence and highlights a critical research gap regarding the unique roles and potentials of youth groups in promoting lasting peace. This study aims to address this gap by exploring the dynamics of youth-led community peacebuilding in Kibera.

3. Research Objective

This study was limited to:

- i) Evaluating the community peacebuilding activities the Amani Kibra and Kibera Hamlets youth groups in Kibera informal settlement, Kenya are engaged in.
- ii) Assessing the challenges encountered by the Amani Kibra and Kibera Hamlets youth groups in facilitating peacebuilding efforts within the Kibera informal settlement of Kenya.
- iii) Elaborating the supports systems available to the Amani Kibra and Kibera Hamlets youth groups in Kibera informal settlement, Kenya.
- iv) Identifying additional avenues for community peacebuilding initiatives that can complement the efforts of the Amani Kibra and Kibera Hamlets youth groups within the Kibera informal settlement of Kenya.

4. Literature Review

4.1 Theoretical Framework

4.1.1 Peacebuilding Concept

Peacebuilding is an interdisciplinary concept shaped by diverse frameworks related to peace and conflict (Chandler, 2017). According to Sandole (2010) Peacebuilding is a dynamic approach that strengthens positive peace through third-party interactions with various actors. Johan Galtung introduced the term to emphasize that peace extends beyond the absence of violence to include justice, equality, and harmony (Ndeche & Iroye, 2022). The peacebuilding concept has evolved

into various approaches, including conflict management, conflict resolution, and conflict transformation. Conflict management aims to mitigate ongoing conflicts, whereas conflict resolution seeks constructive solutions to establish harmony (Rahim, 2023). This study emphasizes the need for a holistic peacebuilding framework that transcends traditional post-conflict rebuilding efforts to include the daily actions of youth groups in Kibera, focusing on community involvement and sustainable conflict management.

4.1.2 Theories of Peacebuilding

Over the years, several theorists have developed frameworks to interpret peacebuilding, with Galtung's (1976) mini theory significantly influencing contemporary ideologies such as liberalism, human needs theory, and conflict transformation theory. Galtung's theory distinguishes between negative peace, the absence of violence, and positive peace, characterized by justice and harmony (Galtung, 2008). Liberal peacebuilding argues that states with democratic institutions are less likely to engage in conflict (Bangura, 2022), but critics highlight its focus on external factors and inadequate attention to local grievances (Richmond, 2018). Meanwhile, human needs theory posits that unmet basic needs can lead to conflict (Burton, 1990), though it overlooks power dynamics. Conflict transformation theories, including those proposed by Fen Osler, focus on engaging all stakeholders in the peacebuilding process and emphasize the importance of local representation, which aligns with the study's objective to explore youth participation in achieving sustainable peace in Kibera.

4.1.3 Paul Lederach's Conflict Transformation Framework

Paul Lederach's Conflict Transformation Framework is particularly relevant to the study, as it emphasizes the importance of grassroots actors in peacebuilding. The framework categorizes leadership into top-level, middle-level, and grassroots tracks, positioning youth as critical agents in conflict transformation (Botes, 2003). While Lederach highlights the role of middle-level peacebuilders, the study critiques this by emphasizing the significant contributions of youth at the grassroots level. This approach not only seeks to address the root causes of violence but also promotes positive community engagement (Paffenholz, 2013). In Kibera, youth organizations provide safe spaces for young people to engage in conflict analysis, social justice advocacy, and community development. By fostering a sense of ownership and belonging, Lederach's framework aids in identifying underlying issues and crafting context-specific solutions, making it a valuable model for understanding the dynamics of youth-led peacebuilding initiatives in Kibera.

4.2 Empirical Review

4.2.1 Community Peacebuilding Programs Run by Youth Groups

The study emphasizes the importance of recognizing the diverse forms of community peacebuilding and the need for a nuanced understanding of the heterogeneity in approaches employed by youth groups. Charbonneau (2018) suggests that various factors, such as religion, politics, ethnicity, and gender, contribute to the formation of communities, and individuals can

belong to multiple communities based on their needs. While many studies generalize ‘communities’ as entire local populations, this research conceptualizes a ‘local community’ as an umbrella encompassing interrelated sub-communities that cater to specific needs. This perspective challenges the notion of homogeneity in community peacebuilding strategies and sets the stage for exploring the distinct methods adopted by youth groups in Kibera, Kenya.

The significance of youth voice in peacebuilding is highlighted through De Graaf’s (2018) study, which underscores how empowering young people to express their ideas can lead to increased agency and influence in peace processes. This is particularly relevant for the Amani Kibra and Kibera Hamlets youth groups, which engage actively in peacebuilding activities. However, the study acknowledges limitations such as resource constraints and external socio-economic factors that may impede these youth groups’ abilities to fully utilize their voices. Additionally, the research by Lederach (2015) and De Coning (2016) supports a participatory, bottom-up approach to peacebuilding, emphasizing the necessity of local engagement. Despite their insights, these frameworks may not capture the diverse strategies employed by different youth groups, warranting further exploration into the specific challenges they face in Kibera.

In examining the role of art as a peacebuilding tool, Flechas (2023) reveals how creative initiatives can facilitate personal and collective healing among individuals affected by conflict. This finding resonates with the experiences of youth groups in Kibera, who also utilize artistic expressions in their community peacebuilding efforts. However, the study recognizes the limitations of not examining the broader impact of these initiatives on the community as a whole. By focusing on how local youth groups adapt their peacebuilding strategies to their specific environment, the current study seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of effective youth engagement in peacebuilding initiatives within informal settlements, thus contributing to the broader discourse on sustainable peace.

4.2.2 Challenges facing Youth Groups in their Community Peacebuilding Effort

Youth worldwide face a myriad of challenges, particularly concerning high unemployment rates. According to the United Nations World Youth Report (2023), the highest unemployment rates globally occur among individuals aged 15 to 24, with regions like Northern Africa, Southern Europe, the United States, and sub-Saharan Africa being the most affected. Eastern Europe, Asia, and Northern America also experience significant youth unemployment, ranging from 15% to 20%. This pervasive unemployment hinders development in affected regions and increases youth vulnerability, often leading them to engage in negative activities such as crime and prostitution to secure quick livelihoods. Moreover, poverty affects a considerable portion of the youth population, further exacerbating their challenges.

The challenges faced by youth organizations, particularly in informal settlements like Kibera in Nairobi County, are less explored in existing research. While Itoyo and Mumbi (2020) examine the difficulties women face in peacebuilding initiatives, including inadequate funding and gender stereotypes, there remains a significant gap regarding the specific obstacles encountered by youth

groups in promoting community peacebuilding in Kibera. The socio-economic dynamics and historical contexts unique to informal settlements necessitate a focused study to understand better the issues youth groups face and how these challenges differ from those in other regions.

Agbiboa's (2017) study on youth in the Sahel region highlights the marginalization young people experience in decision-making processes, which often leads to a sense of defiance against authorities and institutions. Despite this, the study also emphasizes the resourcefulness of Sahel youth in navigating their challenges and contributing to community development and peacebuilding. While offering valuable insights, caution is necessary when applying these findings to different contexts, given the variations in socio-cultural dynamics. Unlike the youth experiences documented in other regions, Kibera's youth groups face distinct challenges stemming from severe resource constraints and limited community support, necessitating a nuanced understanding of their specific circumstances.

4.2.3 Support Systems for the Youths in Peacebuilding and other Community Initiatives

The research conducted by Hallward and Tarkhani (2019) emphasizes the importance of capacity building as a support system for peacebuilding projects, highlighting a shift from traditional training methodologies toward more holistic approaches. Their study identifies three main goals of capacity building: acquiring new skills, exploring attitudes and values, and evaluating the practical application of knowledge. This multimodal approach underscores that effective training goes beyond simply imparting knowledge; it also involves fostering behavioral and attitudinal changes. However, the applicability of these findings to the Kenyan context, particularly regarding youth groups, requires careful consideration. The current study aims to provide insights that address the unique sociocultural dynamics and needs of Kenyan adolescents involved in peacebuilding.

Funding is another critical support system for peacebuilding initiatives, as underscored by Buchanan and Kratzer (2020). Their research explores the evolving relationship between state donors and NGOs, revealing concerns over shifts in funding mechanisms that may hinder peace support activities. The authors argue for the importance of flexible funding, particularly in the formative stages of peace processes. However, a significant gap exists regarding how these funding dynamics specifically impact youth-led peace initiatives, as the study primarily focuses on the interplay between donors and larger organizations without addressing the needs of youth groups. The present study seeks to fill this gap by examining the implications of funding dynamics for youth engaged in peacebuilding efforts.

In addition to capacity building and funding, the role of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) in peacebuilding is explored by Mung'ou (2018), particularly in the context of the Mt. Elgon region following intra-ethnic conflict. While ICTs such as social media and mobile phones have been shown to facilitate peacebuilding efforts by enabling communication and information sharing, the study's regional focus may not fully translate to Kibera's context. Youth groups in Kibera face distinct challenges, including financial constraints, limited access to

technology, and a lack of tailored training programs. The literature reveals a notable gap in understanding the dynamics and challenges specific to youth-led peacebuilding initiatives in Kibera. Addressing this gap is crucial for developing localized strategies that support these initiatives effectively, taking into account the socio-cultural, political, and historical factors influencing peacebuilding in informal settlements.

5. Research Methodology

This study utilized a mixed-methods research approach to investigate the role of young people in community peacebuilding efforts in Kibera, an informal settlement in Nairobi County. A descriptive survey design was implemented to collect quantitative data on the frequency, nature, and perceived impact of youth involvement in peacebuilding activities. In tandem, qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were employed to gain rich insights into the experiences and perspectives of youth. This combination allowed for a holistic understanding of the research problem, effectively capturing both statistical trends and individual narratives regarding youth engagement in peacebuilding initiatives.

Focusing on youth groups in Kibera, specifically Kibera Hamlet and Amani Kibera, the study targeted individuals aged 18 to 30. With a population of 185,768, Kibera faces numerous challenges, including high unemployment and inadequate basic services, creating a paradox where youth are pivotal in fostering peace despite residing in a violent context. The sampling strategy involved selecting 10% of the members from each youth group, yielding sample sizes of 40 from Amani Kibera and 35 from Kibera Hamlet. The research employed purposive and cluster sampling methods to access a representative sample of youth actively engaged in peacebuilding activities, highlighting their vulnerability to conflict and the need for supportive strategies.

Data collection involved semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, informed by a pilot study with the "Kibera Walls for Peace" group to refine research instruments. Ethical considerations were paramount, with rigorous ethical clearance obtained and informed consent emphasized throughout the study. The mixed-methods design facilitated a comprehensive analysis, employing statistical methods for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative insights. This iterative process ensured credible findings that illuminate the dynamics of youth-led peacebuilding in Kibera, ultimately contributing to effective strategies for enhancing peace and social cohesion in the community and beyond.

6. Findings and Discussion

6.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The analysis aimed to examine the demographic profile of the youth participants in the study. It focused on several key aspects: age distribution, highest educational attainment and their roles within the community. Additionally, the analysis considered the length of time each participant had been engaged in peacebuilding efforts and the approximate number of youths targeted by these activities.

6.1.1 Age Bracket

The age distribution of the respondents was assessed to evaluate if the sample adequately represented the various age groups among the youth. The results of this assessment are illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Distribution of Respondents according to Age Brackets

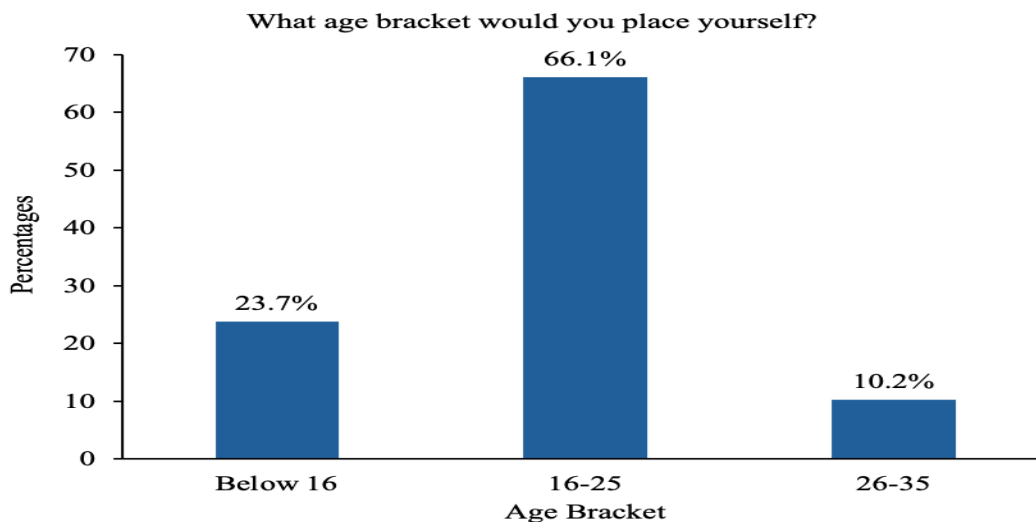


Figure 1 illustrates the age distribution of respondents in the study, showing that 23.7% were under 16 years, 66.1% were between 16 and 25 years, and 10.2% were aged 26 to 35 years. The significant representation of respondents aged 16 to 25 is supported by qualitative interview data highlighting their active participation in community and peacebuilding activities. Interviewees emphasized that individuals in this transitional age are more engaged in social, educational, and community initiatives, demonstrating higher enthusiasm and commitment. Members from youth groups like Amani Kibra and Kibera Hamlets noted that younger individuals often take leadership roles, motivated by their desire to positively impact their communities.

In contrast, the lower representation of respondents under 16 and those aged 26 to 35 was also reflected in qualitative feedback. Group leaders indicated that younger individuals are more accessible for outreach efforts, while those under 16 are typically engaged in school and less involved in organized activities. Similarly, individuals aged 26 to 35 tend to have established personal and professional commitments that limit their availability for community engagement. These insights suggest that although the 16 to 25 age group is effectively mobilized, there is an opportunity for youth groups to expand their outreach to include younger adolescents and older young adults, potentially enhancing the impact and inclusivity of community initiatives.

6.1.2 Education Level

The analysis of the respondents' educational backgrounds aimed to identify their highest level of educational attainment. The results are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Distribution of Respondents according to their Educational Level

Education Level	Frequency	Percent (%)
Primary	6	10.2
Secondary	23	39.0
Diploma	18	30.5
Degree	10	16.9
Post-graduate	2	3.4
Total	59	100

Table 2 reveals the educational background of respondents, indicating that 10.2% completed primary education, 39.0% attained secondary education, 30.5% held a diploma, 16.9% possessed a degree, and 3.4% achieved postgraduate qualifications. The data shows that the majority of youth in the study have reached secondary and diploma levels of education, which are important for further academic or employment opportunities. The presence of diploma and degree holders suggests that those involved in community peacebuilding are relatively well-educated; however, the low percentage of respondents with postgraduate qualifications highlights the challenges in accessing advanced education within informal settlements like Kibera. Interviews and focus group discussions with residents further emphasize these educational barriers. One participant noted, "*The cost of postgraduate education is prohibitive for many of us. Even when there are opportunities, they are often out of reach due to financial constraints.*" Another resident emphasized, "*There are very few institutions offering advanced degrees in Kibera. Most people would have to travel far, which adds to the cost and difficulty.*"

Qualitative feedback from community leaders further illustrates these barriers. One of the community leaders remarked, "*Many students have to start working right after their undergraduate studies to support their families. The financial burden makes continuing education nearly impossible for most.*" Similarly, another community leader pointed out, "*The infrastructure for higher education in Kibera is lacking. Even if someone wants to pursue postgraduate studies, there are not enough resources or institutions available locally.*"

These insights collectively highlight how systemic issues such as financial constraints and inadequate educational infrastructure contribute to the lower percentage of postgraduate qualifications among Kibera's youth. Overall, the educational diversity within the respondents likely contributes to the richness of perspectives and expertise in their community initiatives, potentially enhancing the effectiveness of their peacebuilding efforts.

6.1.3 Position in the Community

An analysis was conducted to determine the respondents' positions within the community, which is important in order to understand the dynamics of youth group involvement in peacebuilding efforts in Kibera's informal settlements. The findings are summarized in Table 2

Table 2

Positions Held by Respondents in the Community

Position in the Community	Frequency	Percent
Youth leader	11	18.6
Activist	26	44.1
Religious leader	4	6.8
None	18	30.5
Total	59	100

Table 2 presents the distribution of positions held by respondents within their community: 18.6% identified as youth leaders, 44.1% as activists, 6.8% as religious leaders, and 30.5% reported holding no formal position within the community. This distribution reveals that a substantial proportion of youth in Kibera's informal settlements are actively engaged in roles requiring leadership and advocacy. The significant proportion of activists (44.1%) indicates a strong emphasis on promoting social change and addressing community challenges. In this study, advocacy encompasses more than just social change; it includes mobilizing resources, raising awareness about pressing issues, and implementing initiatives that directly impact community welfare. Qualitative findings from interviews and focus group discussions support this conclusion. One activist stated, "*Our role goes beyond just organizing events; we work to address systemic issues such as unemployment and access to education, which are critical for our community's development.*" Another youth leader explained, "*Being an activist in Kibera means engaging with different stakeholders to bring about tangible improvements. We are involved in various projects aimed at enhancing living conditions and supporting fellow youth.*"

The 18.6% who are youth leaders further underscore the presence of formal leadership within these initiatives, guiding and organizing efforts to build peace. The smaller percentage of religious leaders (6.8%) highlights the role of faith in some peacebuilding efforts, reflecting the intersection of religious values with community initiatives. The 30.5% of respondents without a formal position likely includes younger or less-experienced individuals who contribute in informal or supportive roles.

This suggests that these youth groups are not only spaces for social interaction but also platforms for civic engagement and leadership development. The fact that a significant portion of respondents reported holding no formal position may also highlight the inclusive nature of these groups, where participation is not limited to those in leadership roles. These current findings underscore the inclusive nature of these youth groups, where participation extends beyond formal leadership, ensuring broad involvement that is essential for the sustainability of peacebuilding efforts in Kibera.

6.1.4 Length of Time engaged in Peace Building

The study enquired about the length of time respondents have been engaged in peacebuilding activities to gain insights into their level of experience and commitment. This information is important as it helps assess the depth of involvement, the continuity of peacebuilding efforts, and the influence of experience on the effectiveness of these initiatives. Figure 4.2 below summarizes the findings.

Figure 2

Duration of Engagement in Peacebuilding Activities

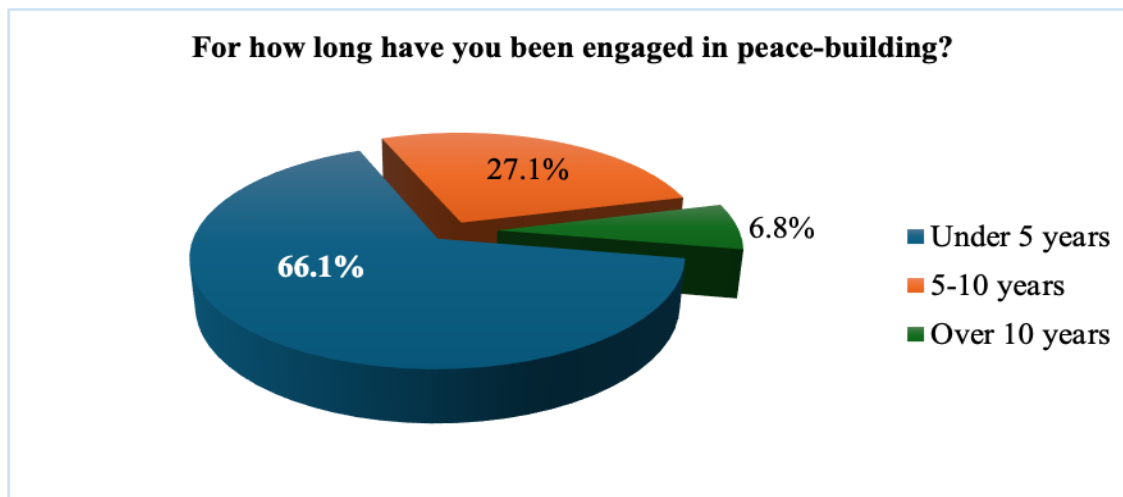


Figure 2 shows that 66.1% of respondents have been involved in peacebuilding for under 5 years, 27.1% for 5-10 years, and 6.8% for over 10 years. This data highlights that a significant majority of the participants are relatively new to peacebuilding activities. The high proportion of respondents with less than 5 years of involvement suggests that recent peacebuilding initiatives in

Kibera are drawing in new participants. This trend is likely influenced by emerging challenges or recent developments in the community that have motivated individuals to engage in peacebuilding efforts. For instance, focus group discussions revealed that many new participants were driven by recent incidents of violence or social unrest, which heightened their awareness and commitment to addressing these issues. One respondent noted, *"I joined a peacebuilding group last year after witnessing a lot of conflict in my neighborhood. It felt urgent to get involved and make a difference."*

The data indicates that only 27.1% of respondents have been involved in peacebuilding for 5-10 years, and just 6.8% have been engaged for over 10 years. This suggests a relatively small number of long-term peacebuilders compared to a larger group of newer participants. Qualitative data from interviews and focus groups further supports this observation. Long-term participants noted the evolving nature of peacebuilding efforts in Kibera. For example, one experienced peacebuilder remarked, *"When I started, there were fewer people involved, and we had to do everything ourselves. Now, many new faces are joining, bringing new ideas and energy to our projects."* This indicates that while there is a stable core of individuals with significant experience, there is also a growing influx of new participants. Additionally, interviews with newer participants revealed that recent events have driven their engagement. As one newcomer explained, *"Recent conflicts in my neighborhood pushed me to join a peacebuilding group. I wanted to contribute to solving these problems and saw that there were new opportunities to get involved."* This influx of new participants, driven by recent challenges and emerging needs, suggests that the peacebuilding landscape in Kibera is adapting and expanding. The fresh perspectives and innovative approaches introduced by these new participants are likely enhancing the effectiveness of community-driven peacebuilding efforts.

Overall, the data points to a dynamic and growing involvement in peacebuilding, driven by recent local issues and the ongoing need for community-driven solutions.

6.1.5 Approximate Number of Youths Targeted

The study sought to understand the scale of youth engagement in peacebuilding initiatives by examining how many youths each group targets. Understanding this aspect is crucial for assessing the reach and impact of these efforts within Kibera's informal settlements. Table 3 presents the findings.

Table 3

Distribution of Target Youth Numbers

Number of Youths Targeted	Frequency	Percent
Below 1,000	19	32.2
1000-5000	36	61
5000-10,000	4	6.8
Total	59	100

The data in Table 3 shows that 32.2% of respondents target fewer than 1,000 youths, 61% target between 1,000 and 5,000 youths, and 6.8% target between 5,000 and 10,000 youths. These findings imply that most of the peacebuilding initiatives are aimed at a substantial number of youths, with the majority targeting between 1,000 and 5,000 individuals. This distribution suggests that these programs have a significant reach within the community, potentially impacting a large portion of the youth population in Kibera.

The relatively high percentage of respondents targeting 1,000 to 5,000 youths indicates that many of the peacebuilding efforts are designed to engage a broad audience, likely reflecting the scale of challenges and the ambition of the initiatives. The smaller proportion targeting more than 5,000 youths may suggest that while some groups aim to reach a very large audience, logistical and resource constraints might limit their capacity to do so. Those targeting fewer than 1,000 youths might represent smaller, localized initiatives or those in early stages of development. This variation in target numbers highlights the diverse strategies employed by youth groups in Kibera, from focused, community-specific efforts to broader, more expansive outreach. The overall pattern underscores the importance of both large-scale and targeted interventions in addressing community needs and suggests opportunities for collaboration and resource sharing among different youth groups.

6.2 Community Peacebuilding Activities Youth Groups in Kibera engages in

6.2.1 Types of Community Peacebuilding Activities

Table 4 provides a detailed overview of the various peacebuilding activities undertaken by these groups, illustrating their diverse approaches and contributions.

Table 4

Distribution of Community Peacebuilding Activities Engaged in by Youth Groups in Kibera

Activities	Frequency	Percentages
Education and Learning	8	13.2
Mentoring and Empowerment	16	27.8
Arts and Creative Expression	16	26.9
Sports and Physical Activities	9	15.4
Community Engagement and Outreach	7	12.0
Religious and Spiritual Activities	1	1.7
Others	2	3.0
Total	59	100.0

The analysis of activity frequency reveals that "Mentoring and Empowerment" and "Arts and Creative Expression" are the most frequently occurring categories, each representing 27.8% and 26.9% of the total activities, respectively. Specific activities under "Mentoring and Empowerment," such as attending girls' talks, participating in girls' empowerment programs, mentoring, and involvement in safe space programs, underscore a strong emphasis on empowering girls and women through mentorship and the creation of supportive environments. In the "Arts and Creative Expression" category, activities like bead making, crocheting clubs, drama festivals, music activities, and dancing highlight the importance of creative outlets for personal expression, cultural engagement, and community bonding.

The "Sports and Physical Activities" category, which includes activities like boxing, playing basketball, volleyball, and community sports, constitutes 15.4% of the total, suggesting that while physical health and sports are valued, they are not as central as empowerment and creative activities. "Community Engagement and Outreach" activities, including environmental programs, peacebuilding activities, and volunteering in schools, account for 12.0%, indicating a significant but secondary focus on community involvement and social responsibility. "Education and Learning" activities, such as attending school, participating in reading clubs, and studying, represent 13.2%, reflecting a commitment to academic growth and intellectual development.

The minimal presence of "Religious and Spiritual Activities," represented solely by attending church at 1.7%, suggests that religious involvement is less prioritized or may be

integrated into other community-oriented activities. The "Others" category, comprising 3.0%, includes activities like doing normal chores and mental health activities, which do not fit neatly into the other categories but still play a role in daily life.

When asked to share some of the main activities of the group during the focus group discussion (FGD), participants highlighted several key areas of focus, including sensitization, advocacy, empowerment, and development. Specific activities mentioned included education, girls and women empowerment, skills building, and peacebuilding.

One participant noted,

"Main activities involve empowering girls; the youths get to have knowledge on how to deal with life, creating awareness among them. There is also distribution of sanitary pads, soaps, and other necessities needed for hygiene on girls." (Participant 6, FGD 2024)

Another participant added;

"The main activities of the group are empowerment programs, beading classes, shoe making, and computer classes." (Participant 1, FGD 2024)

Additionally, another participant had this to say:

"Empowerment, training of soft skills, outdoor activities, advocacy, and peacebuilding." (Participant 2, FGD 2024)

while another highlighted,

"Leadership programs, safe space programs, advocacy of human rights, and mentorship." (Participant 4, FGD 2024)

The combined analysis of data from both questionnaires and the focus group discussion (FGD) reveals a consistent and aligned focus on empowerment, education, and community engagement as the core activities of the youth groups in Kibera. Both the questionnaire data and FGD responses highlight "Mentoring and Empowerment" as the most prominent category, with 27.8% of the activities falling under this theme. The activities mentioned in the FGD, such as girls' empowerment programs, mentoring, and safe space initiatives, align closely with the questionnaire findings, emphasizing the group's strong commitment to empowering young women and girls. This alignment suggests that the youth groups prioritize creating supportive environments where girls can gain the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to navigate life's challenges.

The category of "Arts and Creative Expression," which accounts for 26.9% of the activities, is also strongly represented in the FGD responses. Participants mentioned activities such as beading classes, shoe making, drama festivals, and music activities. These creative outlets not only serve as a means of personal expression and cultural engagement but also as a way to build community bonds and offer therapeutic benefits. The consistency between the questionnaire and

FGD data in this area underscores the role of arts in fostering a sense of identity, belonging, and resilience within the community.

The "Sports and Physical Activities" category, representing 15.4% of the activities, appears less central than mentoring, empowerment, and creative expression but is still significant. The FGD did not emphasize sports as strongly, but activities like boxing and community sports were mentioned in the questionnaire, indicating that while physical health is valued, it is not the primary focus of these groups. This may reflect the groups' strategic prioritization of empowerment and creative activities as more critical to achieving their broader goals.

"Community Engagement and Outreach" activities, which include environmental programs, peacebuilding, and volunteering, are noted in both the questionnaires and FGDs. These activities account for 12.0% of the total, indicating a strong, though secondary, focus on social responsibility and community development. The FGD particularly emphasized peacebuilding, reflecting the youth groups' role in promoting social cohesion and stability within Kibera, a community that has historically faced challenges related to violence and social unrest.

"Education and Learning" activities, comprising 13.2% of the total, are also highlighted in the FGDs, with participants mentioning programs like computer classes, reading clubs, and educational advocacy. This reflects a strong commitment to academic growth and intellectual development, which is essential for breaking the cycle of poverty and creating sustainable opportunities for the youth. The minimal presence of "Religious and Spiritual Activities," as seen in the questionnaires, was not emphasized in the FGDs. This suggests that while religious involvement may be part of individual lives, it is not a central focus of the groups' organized activities. Instead, spiritual aspects may be integrated into broader empowerment and community engagement efforts.

The overall alignment between the data from questionnaires and FGDs suggests that the youth groups have a clear, cohesive strategy that prioritizes empowerment, education, and creative expression as key tools for peacebuilding and community development. The emphasis on peacebuilding activities in both the data sets is particularly significant, as it indicates that these groups are not only addressing immediate socio-economic challenges but are also actively working to foster long-term peace and stability in Kibera.

The current study's findings align with global trends in youth engagement, particularly regarding the role of arts, creative expression, mentoring, and empowerment within youth groups in Kibera. Activities such as beading, drama festivals, and music foster community bonds and provide therapeutic benefits, similar to impacts seen in other regions (Flechas, 2023; Bernebring, 2013). The emphasis on empowerment and community support, especially in girls' programs and safe spaces, enhances personal development and community stability. This comprehensive approach positions these youth groups as vital contributors to peacebuilding, social cohesion, and sustainable development, resonating with broader goals outlined in the United Nations' 2030 Agenda and highlighting their role as catalysts for positive change in Kibera.

A follow up question was posed: Have you observed any positive changes in the community since you started the peacebuilding activities, the findings reveal that peacebuilding activities in Kibera have led to several observable positive changes in the community. One significant outcome is the increased sense of unity and reduction in violence, as noted by a participant who observed,

“Peacebuilding has enhanced unity in the community and reduced the number of violence happenings in the community.”

Additionally, there has been a notable rise in community participation, with more individuals engaging in outreach efforts to promote peace. A participant highlighted this by stating,

“Some people are participating in community outreaches to ensure there is peace.”

Furthermore, the peacebuilding activities have contributed to increased respect and security within the community. One participant noted, *“Security has increased among people, and trust has been built.”* The community has also adopted more civilized methods of conflict resolution, as evidenced by the observation, *“I have observed positive changes; people in the community now use civilized and peaceful methods of solving conflicts without violence.”*

These findings imply that the peacebuilding efforts have improved community cohesion, economic opportunities, and safety, demonstrating their transformative impact. The broad implication is that continued support and expansion of these initiatives are crucial for sustaining and further enhancing these positive outcomes, fostering greater resilience and stability in the community. To quantitatively evaluate the role of community peacebuilding programs in driving peace in the community a regression analysis was conducted as described in subsequent section.

6.2.2 Regression Analysis of Community Peacebuilding Programs

Regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the impact of various community peacebuilding programs on trust and social cohesion within the Kibera informal settlements in Kenya.

Table 5

Regression Analysis of Community Peacebuilding Program Effects on Community Cohesion Outcomes

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficient		
	B	Std.Error	Beta	T	P-value
(Constant)	0.357	0.209			1.708
Education and Learning	11.37	15.32	0.21	0.742	0.523
Mentoring and Empowerment	-56.79	78.61	-0.37	-0.722	0.469
Arts and Creative Expression	-19.43	23.95	-0.29	-0.811	0.417
Sports and Physical Activities	-11.58	24.52	-0.13	-0.472	0.638
Community Engagement and Outreach	0.46	8.51	0.02	0.054	0.949
Religious and Spiritual Activities	38.27	52.84	0.18	0.724	0.476
Others	29.12	38.78	0.22	0.751	0.459

Table 5 above presents the results of a regression analysis of community peacebuilding programs, which offers an informed perspective on the ways in which various initiatives influence community outcomes. The analysis shows a positive correlation of 11.37 for initiatives related to education and learning, indicating a possible advantage for social cohesion and community trust. The high p-value of 0.523, however, suggests that this beneficial effect is not statistically significant, hence not possible to conclusively connect these programs to advancements in peacebuilding results.

The regression analysis also revealed that Mentoring and Empowerment programs had a negative coefficient of -56.79, suggesting a detrimental impact on community peacebuilding, although the p-value of 0.469 indicates that this effect is not statistically significant. Similarly, Arts and Creative Expression programs showed a negative coefficient of -19.43 with a p-value of 0.417, suggesting no substantial influence on community cohesion. Sports and Physical Activities also had a negative relationship with a coefficient of -11.58 and a high p-value of 0.638, further

weakening claims of a meaningful impact. Community Engagement and Outreach programs exhibited a minimal positive coefficient of 0.46, with a p-value of 0.949, indicating negligible significance. Religious and Spiritual Activities had a positive coefficient of 38.27, but a p-value of 0.476 confirmed the lack of statistical significance. The “Others” category showed a positive coefficient of 29.12, yet with a p-value of 0.459, this relationship was also not statistically significant. Overall, the model accounted for approximately 58.4% of the variability in community peacebuilding outcomes, but the negative adjusted R-squared of -0.874 and the F-statistic of 0.4005 with a p-value of 0.848 suggested poor model fit, indicating that other unexamined factors might be influencing the lack of expected impacts. Qualitative data, such as comments from a community leader regarding insufficient resources and lack of local engagement, further emphasized the challenges undermining program effectiveness as illustrated below:

"The programs are well-intentioned, but without enough resources or local buy-in, their impact is limited" (Interview, Community Leader, FGD 2024)

Additionally, one of the participant observed,

"The Community Engagement and Outreach programs often struggle with low participation because they don't address the real issues people are facing" (Participant, FGD 2024)

Similarly, one of the youth participants during the FGD noted,

"There's a disconnect between the goals of the Mentoring and Empowerment programs and the actual support provided, leading to minimal impact" (Focus Group, Youth Participant).

These insights point to challenges such as inadequate resources, misalignment with community needs, and poor local engagement, which likely contribute to the lack of significant findings in the model. Addressing these issues is crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of community peacebuilding initiatives. Broadly, these findings imply that for community peacebuilding programs to achieve their intended impact, a comprehensive approach that considers not only program design but also local context, resource allocation, and community involvement is essential. Enhancing these programs' effectiveness requires addressing these contextual factors and ensuring that initiatives are closely aligned with the specific needs and realities of the communities they aim to serve.

6.3 Main Challenges Faced by Amani Kibra / Kibera Hamlets Youth Groups In their Efforts to Facilitate Peacebuilding

Understanding the challenges faced by youth groups in their peacebuilding efforts is crucial for identifying areas needing support and intervention. The effectiveness of peacebuilding initiatives can be significantly influenced by various obstacles, ranging from resource constraints to social and cultural factors. Table 6 summarizes the findings.

Table 6

Distribution of Challenges Faced by Amani Kibra / Kibera Hamlets Youth Groups in Peacebuilding Efforts

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Resource Constraints	24	40.2
Language and Communication Barriers	8	13.7
Social and Cultural Factors/Challenges	9	15.2
Lack of Community and Organizational Support	10	17.2
Health, political instability/insecurity/Safety, and Operational Challenges	5	7.8
Others	3	5.9
Total	59	100.0

The findings highlight that resource constraints are the most significant challenge facing youth groups in their peacebuilding efforts, accounting for 40.2% of reported issues. Specific challenges within this category include inadequate financial resources, insufficient materials, and limited human resources, emphasizing the need for enhanced support to improve initiative effectiveness. Language and communication barriers were identified by 13.7% of respondents, hindering effective dialogue and progress. Social and cultural factors, including discrimination and entrenched beliefs, accounted for 15.2% of challenges, highlighting the importance of addressing these dynamics. Additionally, 17.2% of respondents reported a lack of community and organizational support, indicating insufficient volunteer assistance and trust issues. Health, political instability, insecurity, and operational challenges constituted 7.8% of difficulties faced, while "Others" represented 5.9%, including issues such as illiteracy and empowerment of girls and women. The results underscore the necessity of tackling both tangible and intangible barriers, particularly resource constraints, to enhance the effectiveness of peacebuilding initiatives. During focus group discussions, participants echoed these challenges, mentioning political issues, financial difficulties, leadership conflicts, and a lack of support from the community and government as key obstacles in their peacebuilding programs as illustrated below:

“Protest which hinder as from empowerment attendants, lack of enough money to support them (enough resources), corrupt leaders end up not partaking in duties of keeping peace,

lack of support which may lead to moral building and lack of government support which discourage many groups” (Participant 2, FGD 2024).

“Protest which is not safe because some die from it and others get injuries. Lack of financial support leads to no enough resources. Lack of government support which discourage which discourage many groups to provide assistance to the community” (Participant 6, FGD 2024).

“Protest which hinder us from going to empowerment. Inadequate resources to purchase to resources; leaders don not provide enough finances due to corruption and others are not willing to listen to us at all. Government does not engage much with these groups /organizations.” (Participant 3, FGD 2024).

“Political interference because this may death or this prevent the youths from coming to the meetings or programs. Financial challenges sometimes make it difficult to for some programs to run smoothly. Leadership wrangles which bring up protests which interferes with youth coming to the programs; lack of community support where some parents do not allow the youths to come the programs ; lack of government support which make the programs not to be recognized.” (Participant 7, FGD 2024)

The findings from the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) reveal significant challenges faced by youth peacebuilding programs, particularly related to political instability, financial constraints, leadership issues, lack of community support, and insufficient government backing. Participants highlighted how protests disrupt empowerment activities and how financial limitations and corruption hinder resource availability and program effectiveness. These challenges align closely with the questionnaire data, which similarly identified resource constraints, political instability, and lack of community and organizational support as major issues. Both data sources underscore the critical need for addressing these multifaceted barriers to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of peacebuilding efforts.

The current findings, including those from both FGDs and questionnaires, resonate with previous research by Iteyo and Mumbi (2020), who explored the challenges faced by women in peacebuilding in Nairobi County, Kenya, reveals some similarities and contrasts. Iteyo and Mumbi identified inadequate funding, lack of human resources, tribalism, gender stereotypes, and inadequate infrastructure as significant challenges. These issues align with the resource constraints and lack of support found in the current study, highlighting a commonality in the difficulties faced by peacebuilders across different contexts. However, the present study also identified specific challenges such as language barriers and social/cultural factors that were not explicitly detailed in Iteyo and Mumbi’s findings. This suggests that while some challenges are universally experienced, others may vary depending on the specific context of the peacebuilding efforts which identified challenges such as inadequate funding, corruption, and lack of support in peacebuilding initiatives.

The integration of FGDs and questionnaire data reveals a clear pattern of common challenges, particularly resource constraints, leadership issues, and lack of support, that significantly impact youth peacebuilding programs. These challenges are interconnected, with political instability and corruption exacerbating financial and operational difficulties. The findings suggest that addressing these issues requires a comprehensive strategy that includes increasing financial support, improving leadership practices, enhancing community engagement, and securing greater government involvement. Broadly, the study underscores the importance of multi-dimensional support to strengthen peacebuilding initiatives, promote community cohesion, and ensure the sustainability of such programs.

Despite ongoing challenges, these initiatives demonstrate a clear path toward fostering community resilience and stability. The peacebuilding initiatives in Kibera have yielded several success stories that underscore their significant impact on individuals and the broader community. A prominent theme is the empowerment and advocacy for women and girls. Respondents shared, *“It has empowered women and helped fight against their rights,”* reflecting how these activities have enabled participants to stand up for their rights and improve their employment prospects.

Another respondent noted,

“Many women and girls have been taught about employability skills, and since then, many of them have jobs.” (Participant 3, FGD 2024)

This highlights the effectiveness of the programs in enhancing job opportunities and fostering economic independence. The transformative power of skill-sharing also emerged as a crucial theme. One participant remarked, *“Sharing skills with others can make a very big change in our community, which helps in stopping violence and maintaining harmony.”* This illustrates how the exchange of skills has contributed to reducing violence and fostering community cohesion.

Additionally, the initiatives have bolstered conflict resolution and community dialogue, with one respondent observing, *“People have been able to stand up and talk about problems in their community, which is encouraging.”* The focus on emotional awareness and teamwork has also been impactful, as indicated by a participant who said, *“The project has impacted me in many ways such as emotional awareness, self-management, and teamwork.”*

Moreover, the emphasis on economic empowerment has proven beneficial. As one participant highlighted, *“The economic activities we learned from the program have allowed girls and women to start their own businesses and support themselves and their families.”*

Despite the challenges, these findings imply that grassroots peacebuilding initiatives that focus on empowerment, education, and economic development can lead to substantial and sustainable positive changes in marginalized communities like Kibera. Despite ongoing challenges, these initiatives demonstrate a clear path toward fostering community resilience and stability.

6.4 Support Systems for the Amani Kibra/ Kibera Hamlets Youth Groups in Kibera informal settlement

The support systems for the Amani Kibra/Kibera Hamlets youth groups in Kibera informal settlement are multifaceted, involving significant contributions from religious institutions, national security agencies, NGOs, and government bodies. The thematic analysis of support systems for the Amani Kibra/Kibera Hamlets youth groups, based on Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), highlights the significant role of religious institutions in fostering peacebuilding efforts. These institutions are crucial in promoting a culture of peace and unity within Kibera. They actively encourage youth involvement in peace initiatives and integrate peace values through their teachings. This support is evident in the following FGDs quotes:

“Religious institutions also teach and encourage the youths towards joining peacebuilding.” (Participant 6, FGD 2024)

“Religious leaders have been preaching the message of peace in churches and also learning institutions to foster peace among people.” (Participant 8, FGD 2024)

These quotes highlight how religious institutions, through their sermons and educational outreach, play a crucial role in promoting peacebuilding efforts. They not only advocate for peace but also actively engage the youth, thereby helping to cultivate a supportive environment for peace and conflict resolution in the community.

The thematic analysis of support systems for the Amani Kibra/Kibera Hamlets youth groups reveals the significant role of religious institutions in promoting peacebuilding. These institutions are instrumental in fostering a culture of peace and unity within Kibera. They actively encourage youth participation in peace initiatives and embed peace values through their teachings. This contribution is reflected in the following quotes:

“Religious institutions also teach and encourage the youths towards joining peacebuilding.” (Participant 1, FGD 2024).

“Religious leaders have been preaching the message of peace in churches and also learning institutions to foster peace among people.” (Participant 5, FGD 2024).

The analysis of support systems for the Amani Kibra/Kibera Hamlets youth groups also highlights the critical role of national security agencies in maintaining community safety and peace, as discussed in the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). While these agencies are fundamental in ensuring security, there are significant challenges that affect their effectiveness. The following quotes from the FGDs illustrate these dynamics:

“National security agencies ensure peace by providing the security needed in the communities.” (Participant 1, FGD 2024).

“But most of the time in our community we lack good security which leads to no peace, violence, and lack of development within the community.” (Participant 2, FGD 2024)

These quotes reflect the essential role of national security agencies in safeguarding communities and supporting peace efforts. However, the FGDs reveal that gaps in security provision contribute to ongoing violence and instability. This highlights the urgent need for improved security measures to enhance the overall effectiveness of peacebuilding initiatives in Kibera.

Government support and policy frameworks are also critical for the success of peacebuilding initiatives. The FGDs reveal that official recognition and resource allocation by the government are vital for sustaining youth groups and ensuring their effective operation. Policy frameworks are essential for protecting and empowering these groups, as evidenced by the following quotes:

“Government giving of certificates which allow the group to run.” (Participant 2, FGD 2024).

“Government organizations make and amend policies and regulations to protect individuals in the youth groups.” (Participant 2, FGD 2024).

The study also highlights the crucial contributions of NGOs to peacebuilding efforts within the community. According to the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), NGOs play a vital role in enhancing community cohesion and improving living conditions. Their efforts include organizing community outreach events and distributing essential resources. The following quotes from the FGDs illustrate these contributions;

“NGOs have enhanced peace making by organizing outreaches which have brought people together in the community.” (Participant 7, FGD 2024).

“NGOs distribute resources such as food, clothes, and sanitary essentials to the individuals in the community.” (Participant 4, FGD 2024).

The above findings indicate that NGOs significantly contribute to peacebuilding by facilitating community gatherings that foster unity and providing practical support through the distribution of essential resources. These activities not only enhance social cohesion but also address immediate needs, thereby improving overall community well-being. The support provided by NGOs strengthens community ties and promotes peace through both their outreach efforts and material assistance.

Overall, the findings reveal a multifaceted network of support systems contributing to peacebuilding and community development within Kibera. Religious institutions play a pivotal role in fostering peace and unity by actively promoting peace values through sermons and educational programs, and by engaging youth in peace initiatives. This is reflected in the FGDs, which highlight how these institutions integrate peace teachings into their activities, shaping community attitudes and behaviors towards conflict resolution. National security agencies, essential for maintaining community safety, face challenges such as inadequate security provision,

which the FGDs indicate leads to ongoing violence and instability. This underscores the need for improved security measures to enhance peacebuilding efforts effectively. Government support is critical, with policy frameworks and official recognition providing essential backing for youth groups. The FGDs reveal that government actions, such as issuing certificates and amending policies, are crucial for sustaining and empowering these groups, enabling them to operate effectively and contribute to peacebuilding. NGOs further bolster these efforts by organizing community events and distributing resources, which enhance social cohesion and address immediate needs. The FGDs emphasize that NGO contributions are vital in strengthening community ties and supporting peacebuilding through practical assistance and outreach activities.

The current study aligns with Garba's (2016) research on empowering women for peacebuilding in Nigeria, emphasizing the importance of addressing systemic barriers to enhance peacebuilding efforts. While Garba's study focuses on gender-related obstacles, the present research adopts a broader perspective, examining the collective impact of various support systems, such as religious institutions, national security agencies, NGOs, and government bodies, in promoting peace within the Kibera informal settlement. This alignment underscores the necessity for comprehensive support systems and systemic reforms to achieve effective and sustainable peacebuilding outcomes. The study highlights the interconnected roles of these support systems, while acknowledging challenges like inadequate security and engagement barriers. It advocates for a holistic approach that integrates efforts across sectors to address security gaps and improve policies, thereby fostering a resilient community. This strategy not only enhances immediate living conditions but also contributes to long-term stability and development, reinforcing the importance of an inclusive approach for sustainable peace and growth.

6.5 Other Community Peacebuilding Initiatives

In exploring additional community peacebuilding initiatives, the data from the questionnaires reveal several crucial areas for development. One significant recommendation is to "*attend empowerment programs so as to expand on their thinking,*" emphasizing the need for continuous personal and collective growth. Such programs can broaden perspectives, enhance skills, and better equip youth for effective peacebuilding.

Additionally, the importance of "*bringing the youths together to promote peace*" underscores the value of unity and collective action, which can create a stronger, more cohesive effort in fostering community peace. Encouragement and education are also critical, as highlighted by the need for "*changing and encouraging*" and providing educational opportunities, which can drive positive change and instill peace-promoting values.

During the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) on additional interventions for youth groups in Kibera, participants highlighted the importance of online and local media platforms in improving communication, engagement, and peacebuilding efforts. A key theme that emerged was the use of WhatsApp for Communication. One participant highlighted the importance of

WhatsApp, describing it as a vital tool for connecting youth, enabling real-time communication, and organizing community activities, as illustrated in the following quote:

“WhatsApp can be used since it enables good conversation on the other days. Through group video calls and group chatting, we can also be updated on the days for meetings and other programs planned. This helps in engaging in conversation without feeling judged by the society.” (Participant 2, FGD 2024).

Facebook for Showcasing Activities was another prominent theme. Participants mentioned that,

“Communicating in WhatsApp groups. The youth group has a Facebook page where we can showcase our activities there. We have our Facebook page where we can showcase the activities we do such as bead making, sewing, and shoe making. This in turn is able to encourage others in joining, contributing towards, and even encouraging others to do the same.” (Participant 6, FGD 2024).

These insights emphasize how Facebook can be leveraged to promote group activities and attract new members, fostering greater community engagement.

Instagram and Local Media for Peace Messaging emerged as another key theme. One participant observed,

“Instagram is another social media handle we can use to spread messages of peace. Use local media like Pamoja FM, Ghetto Radio to create awareness and spread the word about the dangers of violence in the community.” (Participant 7, FGD 2024).

This underscores the potential of Instagram and local radio stations in disseminating peace messages and raising awareness about community issues

Online Platforms for Meetings and Engagement was also highlighted. As noted,

“Online platforms like WhatsApp are used to conduct online meetings that are accessible during delicate moments like protests, COVID-19, sending of peacebuilding messages in platforms which reach more people and encourage engagement (Facebook and Twitter). Microsoft groups, local social media, radios like Pamoja FM, Kibera News Network (KNN).” (Participant 3, FGD 2024).

This quote illustrates the versatility of online platforms in facilitating meetings and spreading peacebuilding messages, particularly during critical times.

Previous studies on community peacebuilding emphasize the importance of empowerment and collective action, aligning closely with the current research. Mung’ou (2018) examined the role of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) in peacebuilding in the Mt. Elgon region following the 2006-2008 intra-ethnic conflict. The study demonstrated that ICTs—such as radio, television, social media, mobile phones, and websites, were instrumental in fostering peace by aiding relationship restoration, psychosocial healing, economic recovery, and inter-community

dialogue. This aligns with the current study's findings on the significance of digital platforms in enhancing engagement and spreading peace messages. Both studies highlight how ICTs can empower communities, support negotiation processes, and facilitate broader participation in peacebuilding efforts. Thus, the current study can draw from Mung'ou's insights to advocate for similar ICT-driven approaches and initiatives to strengthen peacebuilding efforts in the Kibera informal settlement.

The integration of findings from both the questionnaires and FGDs provides a comprehensive understanding of how various interventions can support peacebuilding efforts among youth groups in Kibera. Empowerment programs and educational initiatives are critical for developing the skills and perspectives necessary for effective peacebuilding. The use of digital and local media platforms offers valuable opportunities for communication, showcasing activities, and spreading peace messages, which can enhance community engagement and foster a culture of peace.

These findings suggest that a multifaceted approach, incorporating both personal development and media utilization, is essential for effective peacebuilding. The broad implication is that community peacebuilding initiatives should not only focus on traditional methods but also leverage modern communication tools to reach wider audiences and address contemporary challenges. This approach can contribute to more sustainable and inclusive peacebuilding efforts, ensuring that youth groups are well-equipped to promote peace and address conflicts within their communities.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusion

The study highlights that youth groups in Kibera, such as Amani Kibra and Kibera Hamlets, actively participate in various peacebuilding activities, primarily focusing on "Mentoring and Empowerment" and "Arts and Creative Expression." This engagement demonstrates their commitment to supporting young women and enhancing community cohesion, effectively addressing both immediate and long-term challenges in the informal settlement.

Resource constraints are the most significant challenges hindering the effectiveness of peacebuilding efforts among these youth groups. Issues such as inadequate financial support, limited materials, and human resources, along with language barriers and social dynamics, complicate their initiatives. Addressing these obstacles is crucial for enhancing the impact and sustainability of youth-led peacebuilding initiatives in Kibera.

The support systems available to the youth groups are diverse and interconnected. Religious institutions play a key role in promoting peace, while national security agencies provide essential safety, albeit facing challenges. Government policies and NGO contributions are vital for organizing events and distributing resources, forming a comprehensive network that advances peacebuilding and community development in Kibera.

To strengthen community peacebuilding efforts, initiatives should focus on expanding empowerment programs and leveraging online platforms and local media for communication. Utilizing tools like WhatsApp, Facebook, and local radio stations can enhance outreach, foster unity, and drive positive change, creating a more cohesive and engaged community in Kibera.

7.2 Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i) Youth groups in Kibera should expand their "Mentoring and Empowerment" and "Arts and Creative Expression" initiatives to further support young women and promote personal and cultural development. Additionally, increasing resources for sports, educational programs, and community engagement will complement these primary focus areas and enhance overall community cohesion.
- ii) Targeted interventions are essential to address resource constraints faced by the Amani Kibra/Kibera Hamlets Youth Groups. Securing increased financial support, providing necessary materials, and expanding human resources will enhance their initiatives. Strategies to overcome language barriers, foster cultural sensitivity, and strengthen community engagement are also critical. Moreover, addressing political instability and promoting programs that empower girls and address life skills illiteracy will bolster the sustainability of peacebuilding efforts.
- iii) A coordinated approach is necessary to improve peacebuilding and community development. Strengthening collaboration among religious institutions, national security agencies, government bodies, and NGOs will help address existing challenges. Enhancing security measures and reinforcing policy frameworks will better support youth groups, while increased NGO engagement in community events can enhance social cohesion.
- iv) Targeted empowerment programs should focus on building the skills and perspectives of youth in peacebuilding. Promoting unity and collective action is vital for community collaboration. Utilizing online platforms and local media will improve communication and amplify peace messages, encouraging community involvement and driving positive change toward a more cohesive and engaged community.

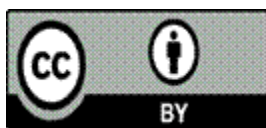
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