# THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN PEACE BUILDING: A CASE STUDY OF MOLO DIVISION IN NAKURU DISTRICT

## BY

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# DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been submitted for a degree in any other university.
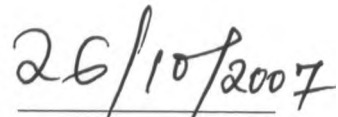
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**Date**

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as university supervisor.

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**Prof. Collete A. Suda**

26/10/2007

**Date**

## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to:

All women in Molo division whose time, sacrifices and efforts have contributed to peace.

My beloved parents, the late Socrates Owuor Osura who is dearly missed and remembered and Mary Magdalene Owuor for her love and prayers.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| ACK | Anglican Church of Kenya |
| AFWIC | African Women In Crisis Programme |
| AIDS | Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome |
| CBOs | Community Development Organizations |
| CEDAW | Convention on Elimination of all sorts of Discrimination Against Women. |
| CJPC | Catholic Justice and Peace Committee |
| CMA | Christian Mission Aid |
| FAWE | Federation of African Women Educationalists |
| GOK | Government of Kenya |
| HBC | Home Based Care |
| HIV | Human Immune Deficiency Virus |
| IGAD | Inter-Governmental Authority on Development |
| IRDP | International Relief and Development Project |
| KCC | Kenya Cooperative Creameries |
| NCCK | National Council of Churches in Kenya |
| NGOs | Non Governmental Organizations |
| PC | Provincial Commissioner |
| PCEA | Presbyterian Church of East Africa |
| SPSS | Statistical Package for the Social Sciences |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Education Fund |
| UNIFEM | United Nations Fund for Women |
| UNSC | United Nations Security Council |

**Abstract**

The resurgence of conflicts in many parts of Africa including Sudan, Somalia, Burundi, Kenya and elsewhere has mired efforts to build sustainable peace in Africa. This has caused untold suffering particularly among civilian populations with women and children bearing the brunt of these conflicts. Although women have made an important contribution in peace building, they are consistently excluded in formal peace negotiations. This is because politicians and peace practitioners have viewed women primarily as 'victims' in conflict situations with little or nothing to contribute to peace efforts. This has obscured the actual contribution of women to peace efforts. The Beijing Platform of Action spells out that there should be equal participation of women and men at all levels of decision making including peace building. In this regard, the study examines the role of women in peace building using qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection.

The study was conducted in two locations in Molo division using different methods of data collection. The sample was drawn by purposive and snowball sampling methods and respondents were interviewed using questionnaires with open and closed ended questions. In depth qualitative data were obtained through key informant interviews, focus group discussions and narratives. The data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Gender perspective and Capacities and Vulnerabilities Analysis were used in the interpretation of research findings.

The study established that several values and institutions that were central to a culture of peace in traditional African societies have been eroded. These include the critical role of women as peace educators in the family and values such as patience, tolerance, humility, respect and sympathy. Their erosion has caused setbacks in modern women's efforts to build peace as they do not sufficiently embody the values that maintained peace and harmony in traditional societies. Contemporary women do not also sufficiently perform their role as peace educators. The study proposes that these values and institutions be reinstated for the promotion of sustainable peace in current societies.

The study established that women are actively involved in informal peace building initiatives. However, attitudinal and structural barriers hinder them from actively participating in formal peace building efforts. The study proposes that targets be established for the number of women

participating in peace negotiations and that education and training opportunities be made accessible to women to enable them to participate actively in formal peace building efforts.

The study revealed that women and men possess unique strengths for peace building which they acquire through the socialization process that prepares them to perform their traditional gender roles. The findings show that women and men approach conflict differently, have different concerns and use different strategies in the building of peace. Women's perception of peace is broad and includes agendas that lead to improvements in the overall quality of life. Women are also more likely than men to embrace a collaborative position that cuts across ethnic, class or religion which contributes to breaking down barriers. Furthermore, women are the main proponents of gender in peace negotiations. On the basis of these findings, the study recommends procedures to tap the experiences, strengths and expertise of women for building sustainable peace. In addition, the study proposes measures to address the physical, social and motivational vulnerabilities of people affected by conflict in a sustainable way.

The study findings revealed that the impact of women's peace efforts is felt more in current settings than in traditional settings. The increased involvement of women in formal peace building initiatives has enabled women to challenge human rights violations against women and to propose laws that safeguard women's rights. Women have achieved a lot by organizing in groups that cut across socio-cultural barriers. The peace contributions of women have changed perceptions about women's leadership role, contributed to a more equitable society and improved the overall quality of life.

The participation of women should not be viewed as beneficial to women alone but as crucial in the search for sustainable peace. The study shows that excluding women from peace processes entrenches their vulnerability which threatens the realization of lasting peace and can contribute to future conflicts. It further draws attention to alternative forms of peace building in the informal sphere. These efforts by women should be recognized and strengthened to complement peace efforts in the formal sphere. The study also reveals that women are disproportionately affected by conflicts but are agents in the making of both war and peace. Finally, the study suggests that

peace building should include equal participation of men and women and collaboration among all the sectors of peace building.

# CHAPTER ONE

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

The tribal clashes that broke out in the period preceding the 1992 multiparty elections and after affected mainly the Rift Valley, Nyanza and Western provinces as well as some parts of the Coastal Province were considered the worst in the history of independent Kenya (Akiwumi Report 2002). However, Nyukuri (1997) reports that ethnic clashes have affected many other parts of Kenya namely the Eastern, Central, North Eastern, Nyanza and Nairobi provinces.

Nakuru is a multi ethnic district. Prior to independence, the Kisii, Kamba, Luhya and Luo ethnic groups among others moved in and settled in the district under different settlement programmes. Some farms in Nakuru district were bought by ethnically based land-buying companies with the result that members of one ethnic group wholly occupied those farms. Since 1961, inter tribal tensions existed in the province and increased over the years culminating in the 1992 ethnic clashes that pitted the Kalenjin against the outsiders living in the region. Although the Kikuyu were the main target in the raids, the Kalenjin also attacked the Luo, the Kisii, the Kamba and other tribes. The Kalenjin looted property, set houses on fire and in some instances, killed or severely injured the non-kalenjin with traditional weapons such as bows and arrows, spears, clubs, pangas and swords. The clashes were calculated to drive the non-Kalenjin out of their farms, to cripple them economically and to traumatize them (Akiwumi Report 2002).

Kathina (2000) notes that the relationship between ethnicity and land is rooted in colonial policies that created the white highlands by evicting Kenyans to create room for settler agriculture. According to Harold (1984), Leys (1974), land grievances were central to all ethnic groups that fought for independence. People fought for independence with the prospect that they would repossess their land which had been forcibly taken away from them. However, with independence the principle of willing buyer willing seller determined who could own these lands. People of different ethnic backgrounds with the ability to purchase these farms either individually or as members of land buying companies bought land and settled in the Rift Valley province. Meanwhile, the pastoral groups who had earlier been evicted but did not have money to purchase land after independence remained squatters. The pastoral groups have always detested the political and economic control of their ancestral land by outsiders living in the

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region and have over the years laid claim to the whole of the Rift Valley province (Nyukuri 1997, Kathina 2000, Akiwumi Report 2002).

The causes of the conflict were given as competition over land, cattle rustling, ecological reasons and political differences. Apart from these reasons, the real motive of the clashes was to drive the non-Kalenjin away so that the Kalenjin could vote as a bloc in the December 1992 elections. This would also deny the opposition critical votes in the province that would make up the 25% requirement (Akiwumi Report 2000). The Kalenjin politicians felt that the Kikuyu, who were at the forefront of the clamour for multiparty democracy, threatened the position of their own tribesman as President. Furthermore, majority of parliamentarians in Nakuru district during the one party era were from the Kikuyu tribe and the Kalenjin felt that they would lose a great deal if multipartism was introduced in Kenya (Nyukuri 1997, Akiwumi Report 2002). The advocates of *Majimboism* (a federal system of government based on ethnicity) often called for the expulsion of other ethnic groups from the Kalenjin's ancestral land hence leading to the inter-tribal clashes that happened in Kenya in the 1990's (Weekly Review June 29 1993, Daily Nation June 30 1993).

According to the Akiwumi Report (2002) the consequences of the conflict were displacement, loss of life and property, poverty and untold suffering on the survivors. Many of them were forced to camp in schools, church compounds and shopping centers. They lived in unsanitary conditions in makeshift structures of polythene sheets and similar materials, with little food and belongings. In Nakuru district, many of them fled their homes and trekked towards Molo town.

Nakuru district was the hardest hit by the ethnic clashes of 1991 – 1998. The district borders Narok, Nyandarua, Baringo, Koibatek, Kericho and Bomet Districts. The Kalenjin presently use majority of the farms previously owned and occupied by the non-Kalenjin for grazing and cultivation. Many of the displaced people fear returning to their farms due to insecurity. Majority of them have either sold or leased their farms to the Kalenjin with the result that farms that were previously occupied by both the Kalenjin and non-Kalenjin are now occupied only by the Kalenjin (Akiwumi Report 2002).

## 1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.

Women and girls constitute the majority or refugees and internally displaced people who flee conflict situations. Conflict intensifies women's burden, as they often take care of injured combatants and elderly relatives while managing the household single handedly (The Beijing Platform of Action 1995). According to Lives Under Threat (1995) and Dirasse (1999), women and girls are the group most exposed to multiple forms of violence in times of peace and normalcy. In times of conflict and social upheaval, women experience increased violence as parties to the conflict who use rape as a tactic of terrorism deliberately target them. For instance, during the 1993 ethnic clashes over land in Kenya, hundreds of internally displaced women in Maela Camp in Kenya were systematically raped.

In conflict situations, women are always portrayed and described as mere casualties of war, weak, defenseless, needing protection and crying for sympathy. Little is known or documented about how they survive the conflict, how they protect and save the lives of thousands of children, elders and the people, how they cope, their contribution toward rebuilding peace and how they can help the peace process (Tamang 2004).

The Beijing Platform of Action (1995) stipulates that peace cannot be separated from the question of equality between women and men. Nonetheless, Dalak (2002) notes that politicians, peace practitioners and policy makers have not considered questions of gender as relevant to this area of policy. A gender perspective in peace building recognizes that women and men are positioned differently in armed conflicts in the sense that men are the perpetrators of war while women suffer disproportionately from the effects of war. On the other hand, a gender perspective goes beyond the victim approach by recognizing women's active role in the search for peace and highlights the relationship between women and men in peace building so as to ascertain the effectiveness of their peace building approaches (Dalak 2002). Any attempt to build peace must therefore include an analysis based on gender so that after the transition from war to peace, the entire country benefits from the development process (Heyzer 2000).

According to Lubbers (2003), women play a greater role in conflict resolution because they tend to approach it in a practical way. Women address conflict differently because they seek practical

ways of resolving it. Dalak (2002) outlines women's grassroots peacemaking activities as trauma therapy, information and advocacy and engaging in income generating activities which create and sustain dialogue between conflicting groups. However, since women's contributions take unconventional forms, are considered extensions of their gender roles and occur outside formal and structured peace negotiations, they tend to be undervalued and not incorporated into formal peace processes. Women themselves do not realize that their activities are part of peace building efforts because they perform them as part of their traditional gender roles such as taking care of their families and providing social services (International Alert 1999). Because women lack formal platforms, they often promote their agenda at the grassroots level where their efforts remain largely unrecognized (Dirasse 1999). Bop (2001) asserts that although women's experience in war has been largely documented, less information is available on their participation in the peace processes.

Dalak (2002) notes that what is always lacking on the official level of peace building is an expertise on the ground those women because of their experience can provide. The victim approach taken by politicians and peace practitioners towards women in conflict situations has not only obscured their actual contribution to peace efforts but has also led to inefficient solutions to the problem of armed conflicts and a lack of consideration for the special needs and concerns of women who are the most vulnerable in conflict situations (Bop 2001, Equal Time 2002). Anderson and Woodrow (1998) posit that the exclusion of women in peace negotiations is likely to threaten the sustainability of the peace that follows or to contribute to future conflicts by widening and deepening inequalities. Women's strengths for peace building such as wives and mothers are essential components of the peace process. Therefore, women should be included in official negotiations for peace and their peace building strengths should be exploited for conflict prevention, conflict management and conflict resolution efforts (Equal Time 2000). The study sought to identify the peace building strengths of women and how they can be used to complement peace building efforts.

Culture is an important component in conflict resolution (Burton and Dukes 1990, Kozan 1997, Byrne and Irvin 2000). The field of conflict resolution has over the years been dominated and influenced by western values, traditions, experiences and expectations. The application of

western models and techniques indiscriminately in all conflict situations and cultural settings is based on the assumption that Western perspectives have universal legitimacy and applicability. Although Western approaches to conflict resolution have been successful in a number of cases in the past, they are increasingly challenged by the complex dynamics of contemporary armed conflicts. This highlights the inherent limitations of the culture blind conventional approaches to conflict resolution (IGAD 2005).

Traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution take a community based approach (Somjee 2000) and are specific to each cultural group because of the different cultural meanings and beliefs attached to the rituals (Suda 2003). Traditionally, women had important roles in promoting peace in their communities. For instance, in Western Cameroon a mother of twins was believed to have mystical powers to end conflict (Ngwane 1996). Thus, Lederach and Coner (1978) advocate for the integration of various traditional theories and practices with contemporary practices of conflict resolution.

According to Ayoub (2002), the best resources for peace building are the community within which conflict arises. This is because it is assumed that most of the active players in any conflict are grassroots populations and therefore it is important to involve them in the process of peace building. This approach also assumes that conflict can be built from below. Pondi (1996) concludes that for peace to be sustainable, cultural elements must inform the peace building process since disputes are not solved in the same way in different societies (IGAD 2005). Equal time (2000) notes that peace building has always been seen as a male preserve thus rendering women's contributions in reducing conflict invisible. Therefore, there is need to highlight women's role in peace building and its impact at the grassroots level to enhance awareness and recognition of their efforts. In addition, women's traditional approaches that worked in the past should be revisited and integrated into current approaches for building sustainable peace.

## 1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are women's traditional roles in peace building?
2. What are women's contemporary roles in peace building?

3. What peace building strengths do women have and how can they be used to complement peace building efforts?
4. What peace building strategies do women use and how do they differ from the peace building strategies used by men?
5. What is the impact of women's role in peace building?
6. How can women's participation in peace building be promoted at the family and community levels in a manner that is culturally acceptable to the communities involved?

## 1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

**Overall objective.**

To examine the role of women in peace building in the context of Molo division, Nakuru district, Rift Valley province in Kenya.

**Specific objectives.**

1. To identify women's traditional roles in peace building.
2. To identify women's contemporary roles in peace building.
3. To identify the unique strengths of women in peace building and how this information can be used to complement peace building efforts.
4. To contrast the peace building strategies used by women and men.
5. To determine the impact of women's role in peace building.
6. To identify recommendations on culturally acceptable ways of promoting women's involvement in peace building at the family and community level.

## 1.4 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

Conflict is a major impediment to sustainable development. The economic consequences of the ethnic clashes included food insecurity, land grabbing, low levels of tourist activity, diversion of resources, environmental degradation, damage on transport and communication facilities, inflation and fluctuation of prices and disruption of labour in farms, industries and the public sector. The social consequences of the conflict included insecurity, loss of life, displacement and psychological trauma, disruption of education, marriages and family life, and mistrust among the ethnic communities (Amani Forum 2002). Kamungi (2001) notes that majority of children who

were orphaned during the clashes are now living in the streets and are offering manual labour in the farms. Those still displaced have multiplied greatly and are part of street families who earn a living through begging, hawking, prostitution, drug peddling and theft.

Although a few of those who were displaced from their land went back to their farms, the majority are still afraid and do not want to return due to ethnic tension and insecurity. Moreover, the return of those displaced was not based on justice or compensation, perpetrators of the violence have not been punished and the root causes of the violence have not been addressed (Kathina 2000). Nyukuri (1997) notes that sustainable peace will only be achieved through successful management of the root causes of the ethnic clashes in a transparent process that utilizes all available resources for peace building.

Several studies and media profiles on war have made known its effects on populations, local and regional economies but less information is available on women as actors in building peace (Bop 2001). In Kenya, numerous studies have made known the causes and effects of ethnic clashes on the affected populations. However, fewer studies have focused on the role of women in peace building. The study aims to address this gap by highlighting the actual and potential contribution of women to peace efforts to enhance awareness and recognition of their efforts.

The information obtained from this study can assist policy makers, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other peace practitioners in designing policies and programmes for peace building that do not marginalize women. Furthermore, the information can be used by the government and relief organizations in designing relief interventions with long term developmental impact for communities affected by conflict. The anthropological input can be used by development planners who are interested in designing non violent peace building initiatives that are effective, culturally sensitive and responsive to the needs of the entire population. This study therefore highlights women as agents and protagonists in the peace building process and promotes recognition for their efforts.

**CHAPTER TWO**

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1.0 Women's traditional role in peace building

The East African region has a long history of conflict resolution and peace building. This is indicated by the presence of traditional peacemakers in various communities in the East African region. These are individual men and women charged with the responsibility of resolving conflicts and upholding the values of peace and reconciliation within their communities (Somjee 2000). Suda (2003:290) states: "the Borana, Samburu, Turkana and Meru communities have internal mechanisms and traditional institutions which they use to restore peace. The Meru use the *Njuri Ncheke*, (respected leaders), who preside over all the negotiations on behalf of the community, the Borana have the *jorsaula* (Manyatta Elders), *Jalaba* (clan leaders) and *Abaolla* (village elders committees) who work hand in hand with the provincial administration to create peace in the community." The elders' responsibilities include interpretation of community laws with regard to different types of offences and their penalties, regulation of the use of pastures and water resources and making decisions on the type and amount of compensation for each offense (Suda 2003).

The reviewed literature shows that women in traditional Kenyan societies played no role in the political and legal affairs of their societies. According to Ayiemba (1983), Were and Wandibba (1986) and Were and Nyamwaya (1986) the political and legal affairs in traditional societies were intertwined and these were also inseparable from the rest of community life. The responsibility of settling disputes and making political decisions was vested on a male dominated council of elders. For instance, traditional Meru society had a council of elders known as the *Njuri Ncheke*, the Digo had the *Ngambi*, the Keiyo Marakwet had the *Kokwet*, the Akamba had the *Nzama* and the Duruma had the *Kambi*. Indeed, Akonga (1986) explicitly mentions that women in traditional Kikuyu society played no major role in the political affairs of their society.

Several other studies of women and peace in Africa show that in traditional societies, women's role in the running of public affairs was indirect and unobtrusive. Although women did not hold public offices they wielded a lot of power from behind the scenes. Notably, in Somalia, male legislators consulted with their wives when dealing with difficult cases and a determined wife

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could have a positive influence on her husband and bring him round to her cause. In Central African Republic, women were the most influential advisors of their husbands who when faced with a difficult decision could postpone their decision in order to consult their wives. In several Owambo communities in Namibia, the king and the chief consulted their mothers before making important decisions and often acted on their advice and in traditional Burundian society, women intervened in an advisory capacity through their husbands in the settlement of armed conflicts (Mohammed 2003, Mathey et al 2003, Tonjes 1911, Hayes 1992 Ntahobari and Ndayizinga 2003). Mathey et al. (2003) add that this influence by women on their husbands was discreet in public as it could be interpreted as a sign of weakness on the part of the husbands.

Although women in most traditional societies had little or no decision making power there were cases where women assumed high offices and exercised political and administrative power in their own right. Such was the case in traditional Burundian and Sierra Leone societies where women held positions as chiefs (Ntahobari and Ndayizinga 2003, Gordon 1996) and in Tanzania where elderly women were associated with the council of elders and were often consulted before the outbreak of hostilities (Lihamba 2003). In addition, women in traditional Burundian society ascended to high offices when their male relatives went to war or when the king was too young to reign (Ntahobari and Ndayizinga 2003). Thus, the reviewed literature shows that in traditional African societies women did not have the same degree of influence across cultures.

Several studies such as Were and Nyamwaya (1986) and Were and Wandibba (1986), Ntahobari and Ndayiziga (2003), Ngongo-mbede (2003), Mathey et al (2003), Lihamba (2003), Mohammed (2003) further indicate that in traditional societies women played a vital role in promoting a culture of peace for future generations by instilling moral values on the young. Mohammed (2003:101) notes that "mother is the first and most valuable school of life." Initiation rites were another area where women in traditional societies performed their role of peace educators particularly on female initiates. Mbiti (1969) notes that initiation rites had a great educative purpose and marked the commencement of acquiring knowledge on matters of sexual life, marriage, procreation and family responsibilities. Initiates also learnt how to endure hardship, the value of corporate existence and respect for elders. Lihamba (2003) notes that after the training sessions, the education process continued with grandmothers, aunts and the whole

community. Along with the training, harsh punishments were meted on those whose bad behaviour disrupted social harmony and peace in the society. According to Ntahobari and Ndayiziga (2003) the range of punishments included payment of fines, expulsion from the community and in exceptional cases the death penalty. Thus, in traditional societies women played a vital role in the transmission of positive cultural values to the young generation.

The point of departure for any successful attempt to resolve conflict and make peace in Africa must be a genuine respect of the identities, traditions and cultures of the people in the continent (Kathina 2000, Pondi 1996). According to IGAD (2005) culture and cultural assumptions are central to the understanding, prevention, management and resolution of conflicts for a number of reasons: the genesis of conflicts is firmly embedded in the cultural context in which the conflicts occur; the divergent manifestations of conflict are founded upon cultural assumptions, values, beliefs and attitudes; and the cultural context where conflicts occur contains the cultural resources for peace and conflict management.

In traditional African societies, there were many values and practices that ensured the protection of children and civilians during conflict. Women, children and elders' lives were spared and battles were fought away from the villages. In present times however, no lives are spared or protected (CMA et al. 2002, Imanyara 1992, FAWE 2000). Mohammed (2003:87-88) notes that Somali customary law identifies a specific group of people whose lives and property cannot be violated even when conflicts reach their ugly summit. This group comprises refugees, guests, peace envoys, women and children, the elderly and the sick, travelers, non combatants/civilians and priests. Another inviolable group referred to as 'the three with crowned heads' comprised leaders, prominent religious figures and women. In fact, Somalis say, "material wealth can be forgotten but *hiiro* (crimes against women and children) cannot be forgotten."

According to Ngwane (1996) women are the backbone of the reconciliation process because of their role in social solidarity, mediating local disputes and taking care of the community. Women are the ones who integrate returning soldiers who may be either their sons or husbands back into the family and the community. Therefore, in traditional African societies, women were

sometimes empowered to end conflicts. For instance, women could be sent as peace messengers for instance by brandishing the leaves of the tree of peace.

Pondi (1996) also highlights the key role played by women as mediators in traditional African societies through their important role as spirit mediums. Since the ancestors only spoke to the living through the spirit medium, women played a key role as mediators since only they could assume the important role of spirit medium.

Sekuda (1997) asserts that in some cases, women present the best resources for resolving conflicts. For instance, Maasai women, particularly the mothers of warriors were so revered that nobody would hurt them. Women could go to the battlefield and walk between warring sides without the fear of getting hurt as no one could throw anything for fear of hurting them. Sometimes, Maasai women removed their lower skirts and belts to show their weakness and to express sympathy for the conflicting groups. They did all these because as mothers, they were promoters of life and could not afford the loss of anyone's life. In addition, children, especially young girls could bring calm in a conflict even by word of mouth

Lederach and Coner (1978) and Ayoub (2002) note that indigenous societies were more inclined to cooperative problem solving than to personal and individual ownership emphasized by the Western approach. Joint ownership of a conflict is integral to conflict resolution because change occurs in the context of support or pressure from the group. Somjee (2000) reports of how peace was created between the Maasai of Kisongo, Soita and Salei sections in Sonjo in the 1980's. The Prime Minister of Tanzania, Ole Sokoine, requested the warring groups to breast-feed each other's babies. This event led to the establishment of peace between the two communities because the experience was meaningful and acceptable to both communities.

In African traditional societies especially in East and Central Africa, meanings were attached to symbols and songs (Apollos and Yakubu 1999). For instance, Ibrahim and Jenner (1996) note that Somali women can either start or end a conflict depending on the nature of songs they sing for warring men. In some East African communities, honey, a heifer, a dove, a white feather, green grass or vegetation, milk, lamb, and a white cloth are symbols of peace and failure to

understand these artifacts may lead to failure to reconcile social tension. Given that conflict management procedures are not universally applicable and appropriate there should be an exploration of cultural dynamics and constraints prior to designing and implementing a process in a specific culture (Apollos and Yakubu 1999). Suda (2003) notes that traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution are most effective within an ethnic community than outside it because of the different cultural meanings assigned to the rituals and the beliefs around them. For instance, Samburus rely on oath taking and cursing as traditional ways of preventing *morans* from raiding other communities. Once the elders administer the oaths and curses, they remain binding for generations and whoever disobeys them by going for cattle raiding or by killing another person has also to be killed.

Despite differences in the cultures, history and geographical location of African communities many similarities exist with regard to how they approached and reacted to conflicts in traditional societies. This may have been due to diffusion of cultural traits, intermarriage, interregional trade or conquest. For instance, the protection of civilians during war is one common feature in nearly all cultural groups in traditional African societies. Consequently, there is need to identify indigenous peoples customs and traditions and informal peace-building initiatives by women and integrate these initiatives into formal peace processes (Apollos and Yakubu 1999).

### 2.1.1 Women's contemporary role in peace building

Africa profiles the highest statistics of violent conflicts in the world. Although the nature of conflicts in Africa varies from one part of the continent to another, their root causes stem mainly from social, economic and political factors (Ofuho 2001). Numerous studies, conferences and media profiles on war have made known its effects on populations, local and regional economies. However, although the media repeatedly provides information on the negative effects of war on women particularly in refugee camps and on the roads to exile, they constantly ignore the actions that women take as actors in building peace. In war situations, women are active agents in peace building yet the image portrayed is that of women as losers and victims. Such an image prevents a true awareness of the differential impact of conflict on women and men and impedes the recognition of endogenous solutions proposed by women.. The result is a continuous

marginalization of women in peace processes and feeble actions by humanitarian aid organizations to militate the consequences of war on women (Bop 2001).

Amani Forum (2002:1) states, "In Kenya, the past decade has witnessed the development, growth and escalation of diverse types of conflicts. These include conflict over land, political conflict, ethnic conflict and religious conflict. All these conflicts threaten the social fabric of Kenya and any meaningful socio-cultural and economic development that has been achieved. The conflicts also divert resources form more pressing tasks of development." FAWE (2000) points out poverty, dictatorship, social tension, denial of human rights, powerlessness and power struggles as the root causes of conflict in Kenya. It also notes that as victims of rape, women suffer from reproductive health problems and psychological trauma yet their needs are largely unrecognized by humanitarian aid organizations.

Calls to involve women in matters of war and peace began seriously in the 1980s but a review of the strategies in 1990s revealed no significant improvements in women's involvement in peace building at decision making levels (Sorensen 1998). Recommendation XX from the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women state that "the government should be encouraged to increase the participation of women in the peace process at the decision making level, including them as part of delegations to negotiate international agreements relating to peace and disarmament and establishing a target for the number of women participating in such delegations" (United Nations 1992:3).

Several initiatives followed these recommendations. They included UNESCO's Culture of peace programme and UNIFEM's African Women in Crisis Programme (AFWIC), both of which stress the importance of gender mainstreaming in programmes relating to peace building and post conflict reconstruction. While both organizations have established projects in war torn countries they are yet to establish comprehensive programmes in Kenya. This means that Kenyan women's peace initiatives take place outside the support of these international frameworks (Kathina 2000). The third initiative was the 1995 United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. This conference provided a platform for deliberations on increasing the role of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels and at the grassroots level (UNESCO

1999). Since then, Kathina (2000) asserts, that women have received special attention because of their invaluable contribution to peace efforts.

During conflicts, women gain access to public spaces previously denied them as patriarchal gender relations become transformed. In the absence of men women are forced to take on roles previously performed by men and may achieve a degree of economic independence or emerge as leaders in the process (Turshen 2001).

The Arta peace conference held in Arta, Djibouti, was the fourteenth attempt since 1991 to find a peaceful solution to the civil war in Somalia. Delegates at the peacemaking conference were representatives of four major clans and a coalition of minor ones. Women broke out of the clan-based allegiances and formed the sixth clan, which was a coalition of women from all the clans. In doing this, women were aware that peace could only be achieved through cross clan reconciliation and not official negotiations between warlords. After intense lobbying, women helped form a National charter that protected the human rights of civilians and guaranteed women twenty-five seats in the two hundred and forty five member Transitional National Assembly (Rehn and Sirleaf 2002). Similarly, many Somali women overlooked clan affiliations at the grassroots level and risked their lives by crossing kinship lines even under fire to seek food and medicine. In the process they were able to share their plight and engage in serious dialogue on the conflict and ways to resolve it (Okumu 2001).

Women in Burundi through their associations had also participated in the search for peace through peace campaigns held at the grassroots level. Yet women, regardless of cultural, ethnic, geographical and educational background were continuously marginalized and excluded from official peace negotiations. Women also constituted majority of the country's population and excluding them was denying the right of the majority to be heard (Houten 2001). Since 1997, Burundi women had lobbied for inclusion and recognition in the peace process. Their efforts were rewarded when women's contributions to the peace effort was officially recognized when the all party Burundi women's peace conference took place in Arusha Tanzania in July 2000. (Heyzer and Butiku 2001). The conference, convened by UNIFEM and Mwalimu Julius Foundation led to the incorporation of 23 women's recommendations in the Arusha peace

accord, which was signed in August 2000 (Houten 2001). These examples of women in Burundi and Somalia illustrate the barriers women encounter in their efforts to participate in peace building and how they have organized to overcome them.

The conflict in Sudan has affected the lives of both women and men yet women who have been the more disadvantaged have been the driving forces behind maintaining a normal way of life. Several women's organizations have also provided displaced women with basic services by rehabilitating schools and health centers and developing local relief programmes through which they provide food and shelter. The peace studies programmes in various universities are a new area where women in Sudan are playing an effective role in the search for peace. Some of the most important include Peace studies center, Peace studies and research center, University of Khartoum and Juba University (Swan 2003). "Women groups have also been involved in an informal way to build peace at both sides of the conflict in Sudan. Nationally, more than fifty women groups have organized themselves into five networks of peace. Networking has also helped them maintain a flexible structure and to be more responsive. They can accomplish more together than what could be done by individuals or a single organization" (Nzorijana 2001:23).

Tana River district in Kenya's coast province has been the scene of conflict between the Orma and Warden who are pastoralists and the Pokomo who are farmers. The farming Pokomo who occupy the banks of the river Tana favour privately owned land where they can practise their agricultural activities. On the other hand, the Orma and Warden pastoralists favour communal land ownership so that their animals can roam about freely in search of water and pasture. In addition, the Pokomo accuse the Orma of using their political connections to grab Pokomo land while the Orma accuse the Pokomo of blocking their access to the only permanent water source, which is the Tana River. Politicians from both communities have also exploited the hostility between the two groups for political mileage. The politicians use banditry as a tactic to intimidate and displace voters from rival groups and to mobilize their own loyal support. In 2001 prolonged fighting between the Orma and Pokomo led to the displacement of thousands of people from Tarasa area. Women, in conjunction with peace organizations like Oxfam have been working to restore peace in the district. Women's associations for instance the Tusameheana -women group and the Tana River Women for peace are both involved in peace campaigns and

AIDS awareness campaigns, through which they help in resolving resource conflicts around river Tana. The women also gather and share information on the various conflicts arising within the district with the District commissioner's office. In addition, they use public celebrations to educate the community on peaceful ways of sorting out disagreements and talk to their children and spouses not to engage in election violence (Suda and Otieno 2003).

During the period between 1992 and 1995, Wajir district in North Eastern province of Kenya was affected by clan based violence with devastating effects on the local population. Incidences of rape, murder, cattle raiding and highway robberies increased to such a level that humanitarian non-governmental organizations withdrew their relief efforts as feelings of fear and distrust pervaded the entire society. Among the root causes of the violence were competition over scarce resources of pasture and water, lack of economic opportunities especially for the youth, influx of arms and refugees from neighbouring countries of Somalia and Ethiopia, drought related famine, misuse of the clan structure and leadership questions (Ibrahim and Jenner 1996). According to Ibrahim (2001:25) "the conflict has recently been worsened by the breakdown of traditional clan structures and conflict resolution systems which assured the survival of pastoralists and provided insurance for the loss of livestock though death or disease."

Ibrahim (2001) reports that women were critical to the search for peace in Wajir district from the initial stages to implementation. Women drawn from different clans formed a committee known as "women for peace" and called on the elders, youth, business community, religious leaders, Members of Parliament and District Security Committees to engage in peace building. Ibrahim and Jenner (1996) note that eventually, all these civilian groups were united as a sub-committee of the District Development Committee. In Wajir district, women's role in peace building included providing information that was used for early warning of potential conflict and therefore early action to try and forestall it. Women also organized training in neighbouring districts around thematic topics such as the problems posed by small arms.

The UN study Women, Peace and Security (2002) distinguishes between formal and informal activities within the peace process. Activities within the formal peace process are peace building, early warning, preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention, peace making, global disarmament,

conflict resolution, peace negotiations, reconciliation, reconstruction of infrastructure and provision of humanitarian aid. Actors in formal peace processes include political leaders, military, international, regional and sub-regional organizations, governmental, non governmental and humanitarian organizations. Among such actors, women constitute the minority especially at the decision making levels. Informal activities of peace processes on the other hand include peace marches and protests, informal group dialogue, promotion of intercultural tolerance and understanding, and the empowerment of ordinary citizens in the economic, social, cultural and political spheres. Actors in the informal peace processes come from various UN entities, or from international, regional, national, local and grassroots organizations including peace groups, women groups, religious organizations and individuals. This last cluster is among the main fields of women's involvement. Women are frequently active at the grassroots level but rarely at the highest level. Thus, the problem faced in gender mainstreaming is how to make the formal peace process profit from the efforts made by women within the sphere of informal activities.

According to Kathina (2000) formal mechanisms of conflict resolution and peace making are incapable of handling the complex and multiplying number of conflicts in Africa. Kagwanja (1998) notes that the ethnic clashes that affected Kenya in the 1990's were seen as politically instigated. Therefore the search for peace was conceived at the level of high politics. However, formal response by the government failed to bring about peace because it neglected the affected communities who became recipients rather than participants in these initiatives. On the other hand, the Catholic Church in Western province of Kenya targeted women as entry points to peace building through its relief efforts, training and by building on women's solidarity. Eventually, the women convinced the youth and the men to engage in peace work thus rendering the peace effort successful. Western Kenya records the highest return of displaced people in comparison to other areas hit by clashes in 1991. Therefore, it is necessary to seek alternative mechanisms for conflict resolution and peace building beyond the formal sector.

Okumu (2001) asserts that women have specific and practical ways of dealing with conflict for instance women employ gentle, persuasive dialogue, they nurse the sick, they feed and adopt orphans even from the opposing side, and they use informal judicial system that are not punitive but corrective and rehabilitative. Women are also aware that the hungry must be fed and

stabilized before they can be reasoned with. Other peace activities by women include holding peaceful demonstrations or establishing mobile health clinics to provide gynecological and psychological care to female survivors of rape and assault as in the case of Bosnia (Rehn and Sirleaf 2002).

In conflicts, women play a critical role in promoting healing in their communities. Women often take full responsibility for the care and survival of their children, the sick, the injured and the elderly (Dirasse 1999, Lives under threat 1995). As socializers of children, women have a role to play in successful peace education, which develops a culture of peace for future generations (Lives under Threat 1995). Women have established solidarity across ethnic lines to protect each other's interests during conflict situations. For example, women in Western province in Kenya exchanged information on the security situation and about pending land and property sales prompting displaced women to return to protest the sale of their property even in the midst of clashes (Kathina 2000).

According to Nzorijana (2001) the perception of women as victims of violent conflicts not only obscures their role as peacemakers but also limits their ability to engage in various peace activities. It also creates a stereotype that women should not be allowed to voice their concerns during peace talks and negotiations. Although they have not been fully allowed to use their ability as peacemakers, women have been working at the grassroots level to create and sustain peace in their families and communities. Therefore, it is necessary to research on their potential role to building sustainable peace.

Of all the social groups and individuals that support peace in Africa, women, have the most to gain from a transformation from war to peaceful conditions in Africa (Campbell 2002). Women should therefore own the transformation process that leads to peace since they are aware of the needs of their society after keeping communities together and caring for enlarged families during conflicts. While women will achieve gender equality by gaining access to the peace table, the peace process will also gain by upholding the principle of democracy and laying the foundation for sustainable peace. Documenting the experiences of women in conflict and post conflict situations is therefore a step towards acknowledging women as agents of peace (Swan 2003).

This study was meant to highlight the contributions of women to peace building efforts in Molo division. Consequently, it provided information on how to strengthen their role in peace building within the family and community levels for the effective promotion of peace.

## 2.1.2 Women's strengths in peace building

Women and men are both endowed with the human gifts of brain, speech and language. However, women and men are neither identical, biological beings nor are they incomplete contradicting separates but are people with different identities that complement each other (Mugo 1978). However, Campbell (2002) rightly argues that the skills, talents and experiences of women as agents of peace and development have not been fully exploited in Africa. Poverty, illiteracy, lack of social, economic, religious and political security, gender inequality, and the limited participation of women in the democratization process are the underlying causes of women's marginalization in Africa.

"Women are great entry points to peace building. Their position as wives and mothers is very critical in peace building" (Kathina 2000: 39–43). In all societies, women ocupy a central position in the family and the society. As bearers of the human race, women are at the centre of the society's existence. As mothers, women are concerned about the future of their children. They are the bridges between the father and the children (Mugo 1978) and the glue that socially binds people across generational, ethnic, racial and other socio-cultural divides. They socialize the children, nurse the old and the sick and are endowed with the attributes of caring, sharing, flexibility, tolerance and above all, aborrence of violence as a means of resolving conflict (Lives under threat 1995)

Women are perceived to be more compassionate, less insistent on status, less willing to employ force or confrontation rather than conciliation, more willing to listen and learn though not always and less egocentric than men. Women's inner strength and cheerful disposition is the result of their endless struggle to care for their families while coping with social injustice on the one hand and a disadvantaged position in society on the other (United Nations Chromide 1997). Kathina (2000) adds that women's ability to establish unspoken solidarity is driven by the desire to protect each others interests. This is because they and their children are the main victims of the

conflicts they often do not start. For instance, in Western province of Kenya women risked their lives by returning to their homes to protest against the sale of their land by their spouses. This information was often provided by friendly women neighbours of their adversaries.

Thus, women are in a better position to contribute to an environment of stability which fosters the peace process (United Nations Chromide 1997). Women remain the most underutilized resources although they make up the bulk of the population and therefore the bulk of the national workforce particularly in the informal sector. (Swan 2003). Women's softness, patience, persitence, creativity, resourcefulness and ability to perfom multiple tasks should be tapped for building sustainable peace (Ibrahim 2001). This study was intended to identify the strengths of women in peace building with a view to suggesting ways of integrating women's underutilized strenghts into peace building efforts.

### 2.1.3 Gender and peace building strategies

The Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (1985) notes that peace is not only the absence of war, violence and hostilities but also includes ideas such as social and economic justice, equality, human rights and fundamental freedoms in society which must be enhanced and protected. This positive and comprehensive definition of peace highlights the implications of peace for women namely, the absence of structural violence including economic and social inequality, protection of basic human rights, enjoyment of fundamental freedoms in society and lack of exploitation of large sectors of the population. More importantly, the Forward Looking Strategies posit that violence at the personal level is inextricably linked to violence at the international level and therefore questions of women and peace cannot be separated from the question of relationships between women and men in the family and in all spheres of life.

According to Cockburn (2001), a gender perspective makes a difference not only to what is seen of war and peace but also to what can be done about it. Gender consciousness highlights how women and men are positioned differently, have different needs, strengths, experiences and skills and how these differences are expressed in different cultures. It also brings into sharp focus how oppression and exploitation work through gender power relations, which intersect with relations

of class and ethnicity. Finally, gender consciousness focuses on how gender power relations shape institutions like the family, the military and the state.

Rehn and Sirleaf (2002) assert that women's concerns come from their experiences of war as well as their rootedness in their communities. Women represent those in need of education, of land, of healthcare and of jobs. The nature of dialogue therefore changes when women are given a chance at the peace table. Nzorijana (2001) confirms this notion by outlining some of Burundi women's recommendations at the Arusha peace conference. The recommendations included mandatory primary education, the right of young pregnant girls who drop out of school to return to school, the right to education of boys and girls whose schooling was interrupted by conflict, a 30% quota representation of women in decision making positions, a chapter guaranteeing women's rights to be included in the constitution among others.

Women's leadership role is most visible at the grassroots level where they organize to end conflicts and build the skills necessary for peace building and reconstruction (Rehn and Sirleaf 2002). Women organize in their communities to build peace through peace campaigns and demonstrations and rebuilding damaged houses and friendships with former neighbours who had turned against them during the conflict. Their organizing at the grassroots level, lays the foundation for organizing across borders, regionally and internationally. For instance, Rehn and Sirleaf (2002) note that the Mano river union women's network for peace is a network of high – level women as well as grassroots women from Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, all searching for ways to end the fighting that has destroyed their countries.

The 1999 women in Watch On-line Working Group on women and armed conflict stressed that the priorities and roles of women in peace building differ from those of men. However, there was no clear agreement on those differences (United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (2000). This study was aimed at contrasting the peace building strategies used by women and men so as to understand the relationship between men and women as they are involved in peace building and to ascertain the effectiveness of their strategies. The data obtained was used to test the assumption that there is a relationship between the gender of individuals and the peace building strategies they use.

## 2.1.4 The impact of women's role in peace building

Women's contributions as peacemakers are concentrated at the grassroots level because women have been marginalized from official initiatives of peace building (Dalak 2002). At the grassroots level where women undertake their activities as part of their traditional gender roles women have ensured the survival of their families and communities through their care taking roles. For instance, women in Western Kenya were at the forefront of building peace with their neighbours while men suffered from the guilt of inability to protect their families. Women exchanged labour, food and information, encouraged one another and eventually changed the attitude of the men and the youth from perpetrating the violence to building peace (Kathina 2000).

Kathina (2000) also notes that the lesson in Wajir district whose history until the 1990's was synonymous with conflict is that even in patrilineal societies, women can champion peace in the public arena. Ibrahim (2001) asserts that the women in Wajir initiated the peace process and expanded it to include male elders, youth leaders religious leaders, merchants and traders, Members of Parliament, the district security committee and neighbouring districts. Eventually the violence in Wajir district stopped paving way for efforts to promote sustainable peace. (Ibrahim and Jenner 1996).

Although women were finally included in the Burundi and Somali peace talks, it took considerate lobbying before they could finally be allowed to participate in the negotiations. Nevertheless the women made history in their countries by convincing the negotiators at the peace conferences to listen to them leading to the laying of gender sensitive frameworks for rebuilding their states (Elmi 2001, Nzorijana 2001).

Anderlini (2000) notes that women's direct participation at the peace table has caused changes in perceptions and entrenched attitudes about women's leadership and decision making abilities. This is a critical step in the struggle for gender equality and the process of building more inclusive societies. He notes that women are now seeking to change the culture of silence and acceptance that has prevailed in the past and some men are beginning to see their point. Nonetheless, others still try to oppose gender equality. The study was intended to document the

outcome of women's role in peace building in Molo division as a way of overcoming the invisibility of their efforts and promoting recognition and support of their efforts by stakeholders involved in peace building in the region.

## 2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.2.1 Gender perspective

Gender perspective is a conceptual framework that articulates the social construction of relationships in society. It views the roles of men and women as socially defined without any bearing to their biological differences. The theory is different from feminism, which views women as victims of patriarchal oppression but shares a lot of ideas with the feminists as far as feminine consciousness is concerned (Hooks 1984).

The gender perspective denies the common feminist approach which views women as living under oppressive conditions, which also undermine their power and position in society. Instead, it is more concerned with women as actors in the development process and not as victims. Thus, it looks at women as agents of change.

A gender perspective also introduces the relational approach, which looks into the relationship between men and women and the roles they play in society (Hooks 1989). Gender relations are at the same time relations of cooperation, connection and mutual support, of conflict, separation and competition, and of difference and inequality. Gender relations are concerned about how power is distributed between the sexes and define the way in which responsibilities and claims are allocated and the way in which each is given a value. Hence, they create and reproduce systemic differences in men's and women's positions in a given society. Gender relations vary according to time and place and between different groups of people. They also vary according to other social relations such as class, race, ethnicity, disability and so on. Hence a gender analysis explores and highlights the relationships of women and men in societies and the inequalities in those relationships (Candida et al. 1999).

A gender analysis is transformational. It is concerned with understanding the practical situation under which men and women perform their roles with the aim of promoting gender equality.

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Therefore, the gender perspective advocates for the recognition and reward of women's reproductive and productive roles without any discrimination (Hooks 1989). Such an analysis assists women in challenging unequal gender power relations and contributes to women's empowerment (Candida et al. 1999).

A gender mainstreaming strategy involves bringing a gender analysis into all initiatives, not just developing an isolated sub-component. While gender mainstreaming does not preclude specific initiatives that are either targeted at women or at narrowing gender inequalities, it goes beyond increasing women's participation to bringing the experience, knowledge and interests of women and men to bear on the development agenda. Hence, a gender analysis is holistic. It may require changes in goals, strategies, and actions to enable women and men to influence, participate in and benefit from development processes (UNDP 2002).

The Harvard Analytical Framework also referred to as the Gender Roles Framework was developed at the Harvard Institute for International Development in the USA in collaboration with the WID office of USAID and is based on the WID 'efficiency approach.' It was designed to demonstrate that there is an economic case for allocating resources to women and men. The framework consists of a matrix for collecting data at the micro (community and household) level. It has four interrelated components:

a) The activity profile which identifies all relevant productive and reproductive tasks and answers the question, "who does what?" including gender, age, time spent and location of the activity.

b) The access and control profile which identifies the resources used to carry out the work identified in the activity profile, and access to and control over their use, by gender.

c) The analysis of influencing factors which charts factors that influence gender differences in the above two profiles.

d) The project cycle analysis which examines a project or intervention in light of gender-disaggregated information.

The framework also contains a series of checklists consisting of key questions to ask at each stage of the project cycle: identification, design, implementation, and evaluation (Overholt et al. 1984).

## 2.2.1.0 Relevance of gender perspective to the study

Gender is an important concept in peace building as it deals with the social construction of relationships which lead to differentiated treatment of males and females in terms of allocation of goods and services, productive resources and benefits accruing from resources thus bringing about differential impacts of development to men and women. To avoid continued tension and achieve a fair and just process of development it is important to address gender differences during reconstruction. Gender mainstreaming should be the overall tool and strategy in peace building because the experiences and perspectives of women, men, boys and girls before, during and after wars are shaped differently by their gendered social roles (International Alert 2002).

Moser (1993) asserts that the gender division of labour assigns women the responsibility of domestic work involving child rearing, provision of food and health services for the family and community managing roles, which include management of housing, basic services and the capacity to earn income through productive work. Therefore, practical gender needs are concerned with inadequacies in living conditions and do not work towards a strategic goal such as emancipation of women. Moser (1993) further notes that strategic gender needs are the needs identified by women as a result of their subordinate position to men in society. They relate to the gender division of labour, power and control and include issues such as legal rights, domestic violence, women's control over their own bodies and alleviation of women's burden of domestic labour and childcare. They also vary according to social, cultural and political contexts. Meeting strategic gender needs challenges women's subordinate position by helping women to achieve greater equality through changing existing roles and the nature of relationships between women and men.

This study revealed that women and men were differently affected by the conflict because of their different gender roles. The conflict intensified women's burden as they expanded their households to take care of elderly relatives, the sick, orphans and their own families without the benefit of resources they owned prior to the conflict. The death of their husbands and family

disintegration that followed the conflict engendered many female headed households. Hence, women assumed the role of breadwinners. By working hard in economic activities and pooling resources in women groups they were able to address needs such as payment of school fees for their children and purchased land to resettle their families. Most of the displaced people who were camping in schools, church compounds in Molo town eventually left the camps and rented their own houses. However, some families remained in the social hall where they continued to receive relief support from the government.

After the conflict, women continued to build peace informally by supporting needy people in the community including the sick, orphans and the poor, providing pastoral counseling, providing food for the family by cultivating hired land, engaging in small scale income generating activities to supplement their husbands' income and participating in community development projects such as construction of water tanks. However, women are largely underrepresented in formal peace building initiatives and development committees. Although some women have access to formal peace building initiatives, they lack control over decisions made as the final decisions are made by men. On the other hand, men do not do reproductive work. They engage in economic activities although not always to support their families, and are the main actors in decision making in the family and in formal peace building initiatives. Thus, women and men are assigned interdependent roles but women are overburdened by reproductive roles in the domestic sphere. Thus, the study revealed that women and men build peace within their socially accepted roles.

The Harvard analytical framework is relevant in understanding the differential roles of women and men in peace building and the resources they need to participate in these processes. The burden of women's work in the family and community limits the time they can dedicate to formal peace building initiatives. Hence, the gender division of labour undermines women's capacities and contributes to their marginalization in formal peace processes. There is need to address obstacles to women's participation in decision making about peace as well as their practical gender needs which are often unmet in conflict situations. Moser (1998) asserts that it is important not only to address women's practical needs in conflict situations such as the need for water, shelter, food, healthcare and resources for child care but also their strategic needs

including participation in leadership and peace building at decision making levels, reducing the burden of women's work, legal rights to land and property ownership, access to credit facilities and skill training in peace building and protection from gender violence.

The question of women and peace cannot be separated from the question of relationships between women and men in all spheres of life (United Nations 1991). Dalak (2002) notes that formal mechanisms of peace building have failed because issues of gender inequality have not been considered as important and the needs, rights and concerns of women in conflict situations have been ignored. In a similar note, Kathina (2000) asserts that conventional methods of peace building do not fully recognize the informal efforts women make in nurturing and sustaining peace.

Gender planning is concerned with the fact that men and women have different roles in society and have different levels of control over resources and therefore often have different needs. The concept of women's interests assumes that women have common interests based on their biological similarities. However, women's interests are determined not only by their biological similarities as women, but also by their class, position, ethnic identity, specific socio- economic contexts and religious structures of individual societies (Moser 1993).

Moser (1998) posits that socialist theorists widened the narrow focus of nineteenth century theorists on productivity to include reproductive concerns, which was conceived not merely in physical terms but also in terms of sustaining household labour and child rearing usually on unpaid terms. Women offer cheap labour in the paid labour force while their unpaid labour in the home sustains the family and enables men to be more productive. Socialist theorists argue that women's work whether paid or unpaid is generally undervalued though deriving benefits to husbands, employers and the government which relegates responsibility for child care and volunteerism to women. Similarly peace activities by women such as caring for enlarged families, income generating activities, nursing the sick are undervalued because they are considered as an extension of their gender roles. The gender perspective has highlighted the actual and potential roles of women in peace building and calls for equal recognition and support of women and men's peace building efforts.

## 2.2.2 Capacities and Vulnerabilities Framework

The analytical framework was developed through a joint undertaking by NGOs (The International Relief and Development Project -IRDP) to analyze field projects and derive lessons from their past project experience that would help them to improve the developmental impact of their emergency aid. The tool can be used to predict and assess the extent to which relief and development supports or subverts development. It is therefore useful in the design and implementation of development projects that support long term development especially in disaster prone areas. (Anderson and Woodrow 1998).

The analytical framework is based on the dual concepts of Capacities and Vulnerabilities. 'Vulnerabilities are the long-term factors which affect the ability of people to respond to and recover from crises and which make it susceptible to disaster. Needs are the immediate requirements for survival or recovery from disasters. Needs arise out of the crisis and are relatively short-term. Most disaster relief efforts concentrate on addressing immediate needs rather than addressing and lessening vulnerabilities. Vulnerabilities analysis draws relief workers' attention to the potential for contributing to future vulnerabilities by their intervention and to the importance of addressing vulnerabilities which if not changed could lead to future disasters (Anderson and Woodrow 1998).

Capacities are the existing strengths in individuals and social groups that are related to people's social and physical resources and their beliefs and attitudes which are built over time. They determine people's ability to respond to a disaster (UNDP 2002). To avoid increasing vulnerabilities, it's necessary to identify existing capacities within a society even among disaster victims on which future development can be built. This is essential for designing and implementing disaster responses that have developmental impacts (Anderson and Woodrow 1998).

Capacities and Vulnerabilities Analysis (CVA) is based on the central idea that peoples existing strengths/capacities and weaknesses/vulnerabilities determine the impact that a crisis has on them and the way they respond to crisis. In the long term, emergency interventions should aim at

increasing people's capacities and reducing their vulnerabilities. As such CVA is a developmental approach to relief in emergencies.

Capacities and Vulnerabilities Analysis (CVA) distinguishes between three levels or capacities and vulnerabilities using an analysis matrix. These are physical, social and motivational capacities and vulnerabilities.

a) Physical or material capacities and vulnerabilities: They include features of the climate, land and environment where people live, their health, skills, work, housing, technologies, water and food supply and their access to capital and other assets. While women and men suffer physical deprivation they always have some material resources left such as skills and recoverable goods. These are capacities upon which agencies can build.

b) Social or organizational capacities and vulnerabilities: This category refers to how the society is organized and includes formal political structures and informal systems through which people get things done and manage their internal conflicts. Vulnerabilities at this level include divisions according to gender, race, religion, ethnicity, class etc which become manifest when there is conflict and prejudice within the society. Such divisions can weaken the social fabric to such an extent that people are more vulnerable to crises especially war. Capacities in this realm include people's coping skills such as family, group, community or area wide organizations, systems for distributing goods and services, and inter and intra family decision making patterns.

c) Motivational or attitudinal capacities and vulnerabilities: This category refers to how the community views itself in terms of its ability to deal effectively with its physical and social political environment. Crisis can be a catalyst for extraordinary efforts by the community. However, when people feel victimized and dependent they may become passive and fatalist and suffer a decrease in their capacities to cope and recover from the crisis. Sometimes religion, ideology or superstitions underlie such vulnerability. The indicators of capacities and vulnerabilities in the motivational/attitudinal realm vary with culture. People's sense of capacity and competence should form the basis for any attempt

to overcome a disaster and build better and stronger economic and social systems (Anderson and Woodrow 1998).

Other dimensions such as disaggregation of communities by social relations such as gender, age, economic status, ethnic and political affiliation rural/urban residence, age can be added to the analysis matrix to make it reflect complex reality. This reveals important information about how different people and groups are affected by crises and interventions. All the categories mentioned overlap and interact. Hence, an increase in capacities in the social realm can simultaneously cause a reduction in physical vulnerabilities as well as a shift from a sense of dependency to a sense of effectiveness in motivational realm. Failure to recognize and attempt to predict these interactions can be a programmatic mistake and opportunities to support existing capacities can be lost thus slowing down development (Anderson and Woodrow 1998).

The CVA matrix provides a snapshot of a given moment but can be used before or after an intervention to examine social change and evaluate impact. In particular, it can be used to assess change in gender relations as a result of an emergency and of agency interventions. Finally, the CVA matrix can be applied at different scale and levels in society such as small villages, larger districts, nations and regions. As the scale of application increase, the factors examined are less precisely defined although it can still assess disaster proneness and development potential at each level (Anderson and Woodrow 1998).

## 2.2.2.0 Relevance of Capacities and Vulnerabilities Analysis to the study

Capacities and vulnerabilities analysis is an important tool for peace building and promoting sustainable development. Conflict and underdevelopment are linked and people are aware of the relationship between them. They know that their vulnerability to conflict is heightened by poverty, political insecurity and marginalization. All these issues are addressed by development. However, the growing awareness of the link between relief and development has not been adequately translated into programme designs that ensure both effective actions to save lives during crises and promote long term development in ways that lessen people's vulnerability to conflicts (CMA et al. 2002).

Capacities and vulnerabilities determine the developmental impact of any relief intervention that seeks to assist the disaster victim (Anderson and Woodrow 1998). In conflict situations, women and men are positioned and affected differently hence they have different vulnerabilities and capacities which affect their abilities to respond to disasters. Within the context of Molo division, men and boys formed the majority of people who were killed during the ethnic conflict. Women's lives were spared although expectant mothers were killed on the presumption that they would give birth to boys. Women also suffered gender specific abuses such as rape and continued violence in the domestic sphere after the conflict. With the death of their husbands and family disintegration that followed the conflict, women assumed new responsibilities as heads of households. As single heads of households, women had to shoulder the burden of caring for and protecting their children as well as elderly parents, orphans and sick relatives in a new environment without the resources they owned prior to the conflict. This is because all their property had been burnt or looted during the clashes. Thus, women and men experienced the conflict differently because of the different gender roles and identities.

Many people fled their homes and sought refuge in Molo town. The government, relief organizations and well wishers provided relief supplies to the displaced people until they were able to leave the camps. Some displaced people sought their relatives in other towns while others remained in the camps and continued to offer casual labour in farms until they were able to rent their own houses in Molo town. However, for some, aid created dependency as they continued to receive aid from the government until recently when they left the social hall. Displacement and loss of property rendered the displaced people homeless and without a source of livelihood as most of them depended on agricultural activities in their farms. Later, the introduction of the *shamba* system by the government provided the displaced with a source of livelihood by availing an opportunity to hire forest land for cultivation. Therefore, its withdrawal has once again left them without a source of livelihood.

Displaced people are vulnerable because relief efforts by the government and relief organizations failed to address their material needs in a sustainable way by building on local capacities. Relief efforts concentrated on meeting immediate needs but failed to address the trauma, suspicion and mistrust engendered by the conflict, wider justice and development issues such as retribution and

compensation for the displaced people, resettlement, reconciliation and poverty reduction. Relief efforts also failed to address the root causes of land conflicts in the region with the result that many displaced people are unable to resettle on their land or in surrounding areas due to recurrent conflicts in the region. During this research, violent land clashes erupted in Likia area which neighbours Molo division. At the time of this research, displaced women were still traumatized and did not want to recount their past because it brought back painful memories. They also noted that they feared to return back to their farms because of the trauma of living side by side with the people who killed their loved ones.

The starting point for any relief intervention should be the recognition of existing capacities among beneficiaries (CMA et al. 2002). Anderson and Woodrow (1998:96-97) state that "programming must not be solely preoccupied with meeting urgent physical needs but must integrate such needs into efforts that address the social/ organizational and motivational/ attitudinal elements of the situation as well."

According to the Centre for Study of Forgiveness and Reconciliation (2003) the elements of compassion, charity and mercy are integral to the process of reconciliation. Forgiveness on the other hand is the capacity to let go of the hatred and hurt of the past and to begin to envision common futures. In Molo division, existing capacities in the social realm include the church institution which can promote peace through its doctrine of forgiveness and reconciliation. Other capacities include the council of elders from both sides of the conflict who have the strengths of authority and can perform culturally meaningful rituals to signify the beginning of peace.

Other capacities include women groups whose membership cut across social and cultural divides. Women groups address the psychosocial needs of its members and promote inter-ethnic tolerance in communities fractured by conflict through cross cultural interaction. Women have accomplished a lot by initiating of development projects in their women groups and championing peace within and beyond their communities through the solidarity networks. Women can also bring two warring communities together through intermarriages which reduce tension, promote healing and cements relationships. In addition, there are educated, confident women who can participate in formal peace building processes and inspire women to promote

peace in the public arena. Efforts to build peace should recognize and build on such existing capacities.

Lederach and Coner (1978) note that peace is a dynamic social construct and not merely a stage in time. McDonald (1997) notes that peace is more than the absence of violence and includes ideas about sustainable development and social justice. It encompasses economic, social, cultural, political and humanitarian issues. Hence, peace is a developmental process that requires an integrated approach which continues long after the conflict has subsided. This analysis is important in forming relief interventions with long term developmental impact since it looks at wider vulnerabilities which contribute to people's vulnerability and affect their ability to recover from disasters. As Kathina (2000) notes, justice is the foundation for sustainable peace and the interconnectedness between small initiatives by women and wider issues of justice should be emphasized. In addition, legal reform on the issue of land ownership must be addressed failure to which access to and utilization of land is likely to threaten the realization of lasting peace.

**Assumptions of the study.**
1. Women are underrepresented in formal peace building initiatives at the grassroots level.
2. Women are actively involved in peace building at the family and community levels through informal peace building initiatives.
3. Women have peace building strengths which enhance their contribution to peace efforts.
4. Women and men use different peace building strategies which are associated with their gender.
5. Women make both positive and negative contributions to peace efforts hence they are agents of both war and peace.
6. The peace building strategies women used in traditional societies are essential cultural resources for effective peace building in contemporary settings.

# CHAPTER THREE

## 3.0 METHODOLOGY

### 3.1.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

Molo is one of the sixteen divisions in Nakuru district. Other divisions in the district are Olenguruone, Kuresoi, Keringet, Mau Narok, Lare, Elburgon, Rongai, Mbogoini, Bahati, Njoro, Gilgil, Mauche, Naivasha, Kamara and Nakuru municipality. Many divisions and locations in Nakuru district were created recently in an effort to bring administration closer to the people. For instance, Kamara, Kuresoi, Keringet, Elburgon and Olenguruone divisions were formerly part of Molo division. During the period of the 1992 ethnic clashes, Keringet, Kuresoi, Elburgon and Kamara divisions were still part of Molo division. Olenguruone was carved out in 1987, Keringet and Elburgon were carved out in 1994, Kuresoi was carved out in 1996 while Kamara was carved out in 1997. Nakuru district has six constituencies namely Nakuru town, Nakuru North, Nakuru East, Rongai, Kuresoi and Molo constituencies. These do not follow the divisional administrative boundaries.

Presently, Molo division has two locations namely Sachangwan and Molo. In each of these locations there are two sub-locations. Molo location covers Molo town and Matumaini sub-locations while Sachangwan location covers Sachangwan and Kabianga sub-locations. The research was carried out in Molo town and Sachangwan sub locations.

### 3.1.1 Social dimensions of development.

In Nakuru town, the poor include slum dwellers in estates like Rhonda, Bondeni, London, a section of Free Area and Lake View. Most of them lack jobs and cannot afford proper housing. Another group includes street children, beggars and some of the disabled. In the rural areas, poor people exist in all divisions. These include the landless, some workers and squatters in big farms or forests. Some of them were displaced during land clashes. There are also female-headed households (single women, widows, separated, divorced etc). Most of these engage in petty low earning businesses (Nakuru District Development Plan 1994 – 1996).

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### 3.1.2 Land and soils.

Much of Nakuru district was part of the former white highlands. With the purchase of land from the settlers by various groups, the land has continued to be subdivided making the average size of landholdings to be about 3 hectares. The amount of land under smallholders is 2,701 Sq.km while 2,128 Sq.km is under large farms. The remaining water masses and urban land occupy 2,361 Sq.km. Molo division covers part of the 291,000 hectares of the high potential land in the district (Nakuru District Development Plan 1994 – 1996).

### 3.1.3 Agricultural activities.

About 85% of the total population in Nakuru district depends on agriculture for their livelihood. Molo division has high agricultural potential and grows high value cash crops like pyrethrum and tea. The main food crops produced in the division are wheat, peas, maize and cabbages.

Molo is one of the divisions with higher levels of income in Nakuru district. This is because of its higher production of both food and cash crops. It is also among the divisions with the highest number of rural households as well as large-scale farms and smallholdings, which contribute to incomes and employment in the district (Kenya government 1994). The average size of large scale farms in Molo is 20 acres while the average size of small scale farms is 5 acres (Nakuru District Development Plan 1994 – 1996).

### 3.1.4 Livestock production activities.

Livestock production creates employment, is a major source of income as well as a good source of protein to the inhabitants of Nakuru district as well as other districts. It is also a major source of raw materials for industries such as milk processing, tanneries, textile and beef canning. In addition, it provides a ready market for industrial products such as cattle feeds medicines etc. The main livestock kept in Molo division are dairy cattle and sheep with milk and wool being their main products. Molo division is also amongst divisions with large-scale livestock farms (Nakuru District Development Plan 1994 – 1996).

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## 3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study was designed at the descriptive level to understand and document the actual and potential role of women in peace building in the context of Molo division. This was meant to highlight women's contributions to peace building efforts and to address knowledge gaps that had emerged in earlier studies on conflict and peace building.

Before the actual fieldwork, the researcher conducted a general excursion of the area to gain familiarity with the research setting and to pre-test the draft questionnaire. This also enabled the researcher to come to terms with anticipated problems and device ways of addressing them. Research assistants were recruited from the study area to assist in data collection. They were also useful in obtaining information from people who could not understand Kiswahili or English languages.

In the actual research, the structured questionnaires were administered first to 65 women of 18 years and above. Thereafter, qualitative data was obtained through key informant interviews with 17 women who were actively involved in peace efforts in the region. A few men were also interviewed in this category. Afterwards, three focus group discussions were held with men and women to compare their reactions. Finally, accounts of displaced women's lived experiences were obtained through narratives and emerging themes were related to the study and used to answer the research questions.

## 3.3 STUDY POPULATION

The study population consisted of all women over 18 years of age who were resident in Molo. Thus, the women formed the unit of analysis. The core of the study was the 65 women who were interviewed through structured questionnaires and the 17 women who were interviewed through key informant interviews. They included women who had been affected by the conflict and/or had participated in peace building in one way or another.

## 3.4 SAMPLING STRATEGY

Because of the nature of the study, random sampling could not be used to select sampling units for the study. Hence, purposive sampling was used to select the respondents for the structured

questionnaires and key informant interviews. Williams et al. (1995) notes that purposive sampling is used when it is necessary to select a particular sample of some kind. Therefore, the researcher subjectively selected women who had been affected by the conflict and were involved in peace efforts in one way or another. This was done through existing social networks in the area such as CBOs, women's groups and churches. In selecting the respondents, the researcher attempted to select women to represent the diverse characteristics in the population such as income level, rural/urban residence, occupation and ethnic background. Purposive sampling was also used to select the sampling units for the key informant interviews. In this case the informants were identified through their respective offices.

Snowball sampling was used to select the respondents for the narratives. The first respondent was identified with the help of the local assistant chief. The researcher was then guided by this respondent to other women with similar characteristics who could provide the needed information. A total of ten narratives were obtained from displased women.

## 3.5 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

### 3.5.1 Structured interviews using questionnaires

Structured interviews are highly standardized and respondents receive the same set of questions phrased in exactly the same way. Therefore, structured interviews are amenable to statistical analysis (Burns 2000).

Structured questionnaires with open ended and closed ended questions were administered to women of 18 years and above. This method was used to obtain quantitative data on the themes of the study. Through this method, quantitative data pertaining to the degree of involvement of women vis a vis men, elders and youth in peace building efforts in traditional and current settings were obtained. Also obtained were quantitative data pertaining to the unique qualities of women and men for peace building, the differences between women and men's peace building strategies at formal and informal levels and the impact of women's role in peace building. A total of sixty five women were interviewed using this method.

### 3.5.2 Key informant interviews

Key informant interviewing is an integral part of ethnographic research. Good informants are people who the researcher can easily talk to; they understand the information needed and are glad to give it or to get it for the researcher (Russel 1995). Interviewing is a useful method when extensive data is required on a small number of complex topics and probing can be used to get more complete responses (Burns 2000).

This method was central to this particular research. It provided supplementary qualitative data to complement the structured interviews. In this study, key informants were people who are knowledgeable about the situation of peace building in the community and/or were actually involved in formal peace building initiatives in the area. They included religious leaders, members of the provincial administration, NGO workers and members of peace committees. A few selected women including elderly women were also interviewed as key informants. A total of 17 women were interviewed through this method. Nine men were also interviewed as key informants to compare the responses.

### 3.5.3 Direct observation

Russel (1995) notes that interviewing people gets information about their attitudes, values and perceptions of what they do but direct observation gets information on what they actually do. Williams et al. (1995) notes that observation makes it possible to capture the context in which the respondents' attitudes and feelings occurred. In addition, observational techniques are also less demanding of active cooperation on the part of the subjects and make it possible to record behaviour as it occurs (Burns 2000).

This method was used to a limited extent to collect supplementary data to help interpret and qualify findings obtained through structured interviews and key informant interviews. Through this method, information pertaining to socio-economic activities carried out in the division was obtained. These included agricultural and livestock production activities, women holding meetings in their groups, or providing services to the sick as volunteers of Red Cross Society and women leaving early for the farms and selling vegetables or roasted maize by the road in the evenings. Through this method information pertaining to common types of conflicts in the

division was also captured. These include brewing and consumption of illicit brews in the slums/drunkenness, burglary/insecurity due to lack of electricity in many parts of the division destruction of crops by animals and poverty. It was also useful in noting the presence of women's development projects e.g. the girls' hostel at PCEA, the Kitchen Hall at ACK and water tanks with names of women's groups clearly inscribed on them.

### 3.5.4 Narrative method

The narrative method was used to obtain life histories from women who were affected by the ethnic conflict. Through this method, displaced women were asked to relate their life experiences before, during and after the 1992 ethnic conflict. Emerging themes were related to the study topic and used to answer the research questions. It was useful in obtaining information on the impact of the conflict on women's lives, their concerns, their coping strategies and achievements and the contributions they had made to peace efforts. The cause of the ethnic conflict and its impact on the general population were also captured.

### 3.5.5 Focus group discussions

Focus group discussions provide ethnographically rich data and are useful when there is need to compare the reactions of at least two groups such as women and men (Russel 1995). The focus group discussions were useful in clarifying issues that had emerged from the questionnaires and key informant interviews.

This method was intended to obtain the collective view of women and men on the broad subject of women's role in peace building in traditional and current settings. The participants were allowed to explore and bring up new ideas on the broad subject of women's role in peace building in traditional and contemporary settings. In all focus group discussions, women were acknowledged as pillars of peace in the family and the need to strengthen women's efforts at all levels of peace building was emphasized. The focus group discussions yielded more insights on the subject of the study which helped in the interpretation of the findings. A theme that emerged in the focus group discussions was the changing behaviour of women and their role in peace building.

Three sets of focus group discussions were held in this study. One for male religious leaders, female church leaders and another for displaced women. The minimum number of participants in each focus group discussion was eight while the maximum number was ten. In setting up the focus group discussions, consideration was given to the homogeneity of the participants and in order to obtain a cross-cultural perspective, the participants were drawn from different ethnic groups.

### 3.5.6 Secondary data.

Secondary data was accessed through secondary sources obtained from libraries, relevant institutions and the internet. They included books, newspapers, newsletters, journals, census reports and district development plans. At the outset, secondary data was used to obtain background information about the research site. Secondary data also enabled the researcher to obtain a comprehensive view of the problem and to define the scope of the research. The literature review provided a historical context for the problem and helped in identification of knowledge gaps which helped in the formulation of specific research questions. The data was also useful in making comparisons to reinforce findings obtained from primary data sources. Thus, secondary data formed an integral part of the study.

The use of all these measuring instruments was based on the fact that they all produce different kinds of information hence the researcher is likely to achieve better insights through a combination of various methods (Russel 1995). Williams et al. (1995) notes that no instrument is entirely valid and reliable. Hence, a similar result from different measuring instruments allows the researcher to be more certain that he/she is obtaining an accurate measure of the right variable.

### 3.6 PRE-TESTING OF QUESTIONNAIRES AND ETHICAL ISSUES

The questionnaires were pre-tested in a neighboring town that was not within the study area and subsequently necessary corrections on the wording and sequence of questions were made before administering it to the study population.

The study adhered to the code of ethics in conducting anthropological research. During the structured interviews using questionnaires the respondents were not asked to give their names to protect their safety and privacy. Where necessary, pseudonyms were used to present the findings.

## 3.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Due to a low completion rate, the researcher did not carry out a full study of the intended 120 respondents using questionnaires. Secondly, the respondents for this study were subjectively selected by the researcher hence the findings of the study cannot be generalized to the entire population and are only true to the population studied.

## 3.8 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN THE FIELD AND HOW THEY WERE OVERCOME

One of the problems was language barrier. To address it, translators were employed to translate the questions into the interviewees' languages and the answers back to Kiswahili language.

The second problem was reluctance by interviewees to provide information. This problem was particularly common among the women who were displaced by the clashes from whom narratives and interviews were required. They complained that the situation of displaced victims had been over-researched and recorded by the government but nothing had come out of it. Moreover, they recounted prior experiences with strangers who took advantage of their vulnerability to swindle them of their meager resources with false promises of helping them to achieve better lives. On this the researcher took time to explain the purpose of the study and the importance of the opinions and experiences of women since they were the focus of the study. This tactic was useful but some people remained adamant by refusing to be interviewed. In such situations the next household, business or professional was the researcher's recourse.

Thirdly, the research was slowed down by a low return rate of questionnaires. Some people even returned blank questionnaires. On this, the researcher and the field assistants administered the questionnaires to the respondents rather than dropping them as was earlier the case. Due to a low completion rate, the researcher obtained 65 questionnaires filled instead of the intended 120

questionnaires. However, the researcher managed to achieve all the objectives of the research through the triangulation method.

## 3.9 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

In this study, quantitative and qualitative data were obtained and analyzed separately. Quantitative data from the questionnaires was first coded, entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and analyzed. The data was then presented in form of frequency tables and graphs. Qualitative responses from key informant interviews, focus group discussions and narratives were coded in separate code sheets created and analyzed using content analysis. The responses were interpreted by looking at trends within them and forming ideas which account for the trends. The methods of presentation of qualitative data included direct quotations to give consideration to actual words used by the respondents.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## 4.0 THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN PEACE BUILDING AND ITS IMPACT AT THE GRASSROOTS LEVEL

### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the findings obtained through narratives, structured interviews using a questionnaire, key informant interviews and focus group discussions are presented. It is divided into eleven sections. The first section gives an overview of displaced women's experiences relating to their peace building efforts and what they underwent before, during and after the ethnic clashes thus providing a context for the rest of the sections. This data was obtained through narratives with women who were displaced by the ethnic conflict. In subsequent sections, a thematic discussion of the findings obtained through structured interviews, key informant interviews and focus group discussions is presented.

### 4.2 The causes of the conflict in Molo

Narratives from women who were displaced by the 1992 ethnic clashes revealed that the conflict was spearheaded by the Kalenjin against the non Kalenjin living in Molo division as it was in 1992. The non-kalenjin living in Molo comprised the Kikuyu, Abagusii, Abaluhya, Luo and other tribes. The non Kalenjin began to move in and settle in the region prior to independence when they worked as labourers in the European settlers' farms. At independence, some Kalenjin took loans to purchase large tracts of land from the settlers but upon failing to service these loans, sold portions of land to outsiders to avoid losing their entire pieces of land. It was also noted that at independence, the settlers reserved a portion of land where their workers would be settled but the Kalenjin reneged on the agreement and instead sold a small portion of land to the labourers.

The 1992 ethnic conflict was attributed to the land issue and was calculated to drive the non-Kalenjin out of the Kalenjin's ancestral land. Over and above these reasons, it was felt that the conflict was fuelled by the leadership of the day because of its failure to ward off the conflict and the seemingly complacent way in which it handled its perpetrators. For example, security officers sent to protect the non-kalenjin during the conflict told them to vacate the area as they were unable to protect them due to insufficient equipment. The Kalenjin leaders viewed the non-

kalenjin ethnic groups who had moved in and settled in their ancestral land as a threat to the position of the presidency which was occupied by their tribesman. Hence, the violence was meted on the non kalenjin living in the area especially the Kikuyu and the Kisii to drive them out of the area so that the Kalenjin could vote as a bloc in the elections.

## 4.3 Women's experiences before, during and after the ethnic conflict

### 4.3.1 Women's experiences before the conflict

Prior to the ethnic clashes of 1992, members of the Kalenjin, Kikuyu, Kisii, Luhya, Luo and other ethnic groups had lived in harmony  for many years. The women recounted that formerly they led comfortable lives in their farms where they earned a livelihood through cultivation of food and cash crops and domestication of animals. They had plenty of food and neighboring towns obtained food supplies from Molo south. As one of them put it:

> *"When we were living there, we led very comfortable lives. We owned farms; we also reared chicken, cows, and goats. We managed our land well so as to reap good harvests. Many people lived off their farm products such as pyrethrum and potatoes and back then, milk and pyrethrum were well paying. When I relocated to Molo, I left behind seven productive cows, a lot of chicken and healthy sheep."* (A 43 year old female businesswoman, married)
> Source: Field research 2004.

Before the conflict erupted there were imminent signs of conflict. The non-Kalenjin were forewarned by the Kalenjin of the inevitable day when they would vacate their ancestral land. The Kalenjin openly talked of plans to drive the non- kalenjin out of the area and circulated leaflets warning members of the Kikuyu tribe to vacate the area or else they would be killed. Some women reported that they found these leaflets inside their milk jars when they were returned by the Kalenjin who collected and delivered their milk to the Kenya Cooperative Creameries (KCC) depot. Moreover, other women noted that a week before the conflict erupted, some Kalenjin evacuated their wives and property away from the conflict zone. At the same time, Kalenjin women and children stopped delivering milk to the non-Kalenjin. There were also talks among school children that the non-Kalenjin would vacate the area and go back to Murang'a and Kiambu. It was also noted that non-Kalenjin elders stumbled on Kalenjin elders training Kalenjin youth on how to shoot arrows in the forest when they went to relieve

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themselves. Furthermore, in some areas the market remained closed for many days as traders were beaten and their property looted by raiders.

In spite of these signs of looming conflict, the non-Kalenjin remained unperturbed and waited to see what would happen. Sometimes non kalenjin women came across compelling information on the looming danger but even these were dismissed by members of their community. For instance, one woman recounted how she came across a Kalenjin man making arrows in his home. Upon asking him what the arrows were intended for, the man replied that they were intended for chasing away monkeys that were destroying crops in their farm. However, the woman noted that she realized that the question had made the man uncomfortable and she did not keep the information to herself. Another woman who became convincingly aware of the impending danger put it this way:

*"Two days before the conflict, I visited a close friend from the Kalenjin tribe who informed me of the impending danger. She told me that she had learnt that the non-Kalenjin were to be attacked on that day but it was postponed because of the presence of many policemen from the anti-stock theft unit who were dispatched to the area following a cattle raid. She also told me that there was looming danger between then and the following Monday. I went and informed my people but no one believed me. So I told my husband but he also disregarded it. Therefore, people did not believe me. However, on Monday, just like the Kalenjin woman had told me, the situation worsened and many people were killed."* (A 50 year old, female farmer, married)
Source: Field research 2004.

It was noted that many non-Kalenjin knew no other home besides Molo as they were born and brought up in the area. Consequently, they did not take the Kalenjin's threats seriously and only vacated the area after witnessing the loss of lives and destruction of houses and property by the Kalenjin raiders.

## 4.3.2 Women's experiences during the conflict

The non-Kalenjin were caught by surprise as Kalenjin raiders attacked their villages by night and killed them using arrows and knives. They also set their grass thatched houses on fire and looted their property. Some non-Kalenjin in neighbouring villages witnessed the raids and fled to nearby schools or police stations where they camped in the hope that calm would return and they

would go back to their homes. However, they later sought refuge in Molo town after witnessing deaths and their own houses and granaries torched by the Kalenjin raiders.

The fights by the Kalenjin raiders were well organized and coordinated. As one woman put it:

*"On that day we saw them lining up and were amazed by their large numbers. I advised other women to stay on the road because the situation was dangerous. At about eleven o'clock, there were very many people lined up on the entire farm and they were wearing some sort of uniform. When the Kalenjin warriors attacked the non-Kalenjin living in Nakuru our people went to help those in Nakuru.. However, they learnt that the Kalenjin raiders were in Naivasha. When the non-Kalenjin followed them to Naivasha, they learnt that the non-Kalenjin in Gilgil needed their assistance. When our people went to assist the non-Kalenjin in Gilgil, the Kalenjin warriors were back in Nakuru, and when the non-Kalenjin went back to Nakuru, the Kalenjin warriors were in Njoro. No one knew their exact location as we found them in large numbers wherever we went."* (A female farmer, 32 years old, married)
Source: Field research 2004.

The Kalenjin warriors' main targets were men and male children. Women and girls' lives were generally spared by the raiders. Therefore, women protected their sons by dressing them in girls' clothes and tying their heads with head scarves. They also gave men their dresses to disguise themselves from the Kalenjin warriors. As men were driven away by the Kalenjin warriors women were left with the difficult task of protecting themselves and their children. As one woman put it:

*"As our husbands were chased away by the warriors, we were left alone with our children. In our predicament, we wondered which child to protect and yet we wanted all of them. On the way, a pregnant woman whose leg was badly hurt carried an infant on her back while another child walked beside her. And when you saw your child dying, you could not go back to mourn your baby because you were also going to die. You just moved on up to the point where you would also be killed."* (A 41 year old housewife, married with seven children)
Source: Field research 2004.

Although women lives were generally spared, they nevertheless experienced death and trauma as a result of gender related abuses. While narrating their experiences, the pain was still evident in the women's faces and they confessed that they did not like to recount their past. Specific gender

related abuses against women included the killing of pregnant women on the presumption that they would give birth to boys. An incident was mentioned in which a woman died while giving birth and the Kalenjin raiders immediately hacked the newborn boy to death. In another incident, a woman with a one week old baby wailed to death after seeing her husband being attacked by *pangas* and crude weapons. Fortunately, her husband and daughter survived and were living in Molo town at the time of this research.

As has already been noted women were not passive although they bore the brunt of the ethnic clashes. For instance, women protected their husbands' and sons lives by disguising them in female clothes. In addition, women fuelled or stopped the conflict at different times through their men. Displaced women were angered by the deeds of the Kalenjin raiders and incited their men to go and counter attack their enemies or to surrender their trousers to women and children so that they could go back and revenge. Consequently, men held meetings, took weapons, boarded vehicles and went back to fight and drove the Kalenjin raiders back into the forest. However, women later held their husbands and sons from perpetuating the conflict upon realizing that they were losing them in the conflict.

Another initiative by women was in organizing a demonstration which made the whole country aware of the conflict in Molo. Women decided to trek from Molo to Nakuru town to protest against the conflict in Molo. They wanted to be addressed by the Provincial Commissioner (PC). On the way they stopped at various shopping centers and asked women to join them while men were told to go and counter attack their enemies. Attempts by the police to disperse them were unsuccessful because the women would not budge after witnessing the deaths of their sons and husbands in the conflict. They reached Soil before turning back after the PC addressed them. The incident made the country aware of the crisis in Molo and later on security was beefed up by the government.

### 4.3.3 Women's experiences after the conflict

Having lost all their property to the conflict, displaced people had to begin life anew. While some displaced people sought their relatives in other towns, others remained in the camps and earned an income by offering casual labour in farms. Ultimately, many were able to leave the

camps and rent their own houses. Some people who left for other towns also returned and settled in Molo since it had better promise of accessing income from farming activities. It was also noted that some displaced people continued to camp at social hall where they received relief supplies from the government until recently while others who had settled in Molo town were doing better than those they found residing in the area. As one woman noted:

*"Life here was very difficult as there was no milk for the children and we had no houses. Because of the high demand for houses, landlords increased the rent for small houses. Since potatoes and vegetables were supplied from there, food became scarce as people had fled their farms and come to town. Life was very difficult. However, because we were blameless, God uplifted us and we got some money to educate our children and to subsist on. Eventually I rented a house and started living here. I worked hard and with God's help, got some money, bought a plot and constructed a house. I have always been a business woman. I had a large shop in Keringet but I did not salvage anything during the conflict. The first capital was provided by friends while the Indian traders from whom we bought our shop supplies assisted us by giving us goods on credit. That is how I was able to uplift myself.... God has helped my family because we are active Christians. I teach my children to know God and to trust Him. This engenders love, erodes any feelings of hatred among them and unites them. Above all I pray for them. I also pray for those who have not yet adopted a Christian way of life. Hence, they are peaceful and love one another. My home is good. My children are respectful. All of them are good children." (A* 43 year old business woman, married)
Source: Field research 2004.

After the conflict, the resultant deaths of men and broken marriages engendered many female headed households. The deaths continued after the conflict especially among elderly people who were traumatized after losing all their property and having nothing to leave for their children. Many displaced women had to rear and educate their children single-handedly. They also expanded their households to accommodate elderly relatives, orphans and the sick whom they cared for without the benefit of resources owned prior to the conflict. As one woman put it:

*"Suffering caused our parents' deaths. This is because if you live with both parents and your children in the same household, it is difficult to share the little food that is available. Many times our parents went hungry so that the children could eat. I could see that they were immersed in deep thought. After displacement, one of my sisters fell sick and passed on. We had no money to pay hospital fees. We did not even have money to buy medicine. The little that we managed to get was shared amongst the children. We barely had enough to feed the children. Where could we get money to take her to hospital? We watched helplessly as she passed away."* (A

37 year old housewife, married) as we found them in large numbers wherever we went." (A, 37 years old housewife, married)
Source: Field research 2004.

Afterwards, when security was beefed up, the displaced people were able to go back to their farms to dig up food for the children or to find out if any property had remained. However, they did not find anything as all their property had been looted. Learning for many children of the displaced was disrupted for many years as their parents could not afford to pay school fees for them. One woman noted that upon realizing that the conflict had destabilized schooling for their children they formed a group and started a school where a teacher volunteered to teach the children of the displaced and orphans. This strategy was of benefit to them as free primary education had not been introduced at that time. Leaning was also disrupted for students in Molo town. This was because schools did not reopen for a whole term as displaced people were camping in the classrooms.

Many displaced people do not wish to return to their farms because of the volatile situation and mistrust between the ethnic groups engendered by the conflict. Some displaced people cultivate their farms in neighbouring divisions like Keringet while living in Molo town. Others have left their land fallow because the Kalenjin graze animals in their farms. Moreover, some do not want to return to their farms because of the trauma of living side by side with people who killed their loved ones. Some displaced women recounted that they had tried to resettle their families in neighbouring areas but had been displaced and lost their property several times due to recurrent conflicts in the region.

Women also experienced continued violence in their homes and abandonment by spouses in the face of adversity wrought by the conflict. In spite of these, displaced women strive to maintain a sense of stability in their children's lives and have managed to educate them. They have also managed to buy plots and construct their own houses through hard work in the farms, prayer and activities in their women groups. Left alone to fend for themselves, women learnt to work hard and to be independent. As one woman put it:

*"For me it was after the conflict that I suffered most. When my husband learnt that I came back to Molo, it took 10 years before he came back. My child learnt from nursery school to standard eight before he came back.... We lived together for 8 months. In 2003, he woke up at night, he wanted to kill me. He stabbed me with a knife four times. That is why I don't like narrating these incidents, can you see these scars... Do you know why he was stabbing me? It was because I had joined a women's group. My child did his class eight examinations and passed and was offered a place in four different secondary schools. Because I did not have a lot of money, and only had the money received from women groups I decided to take him to the cheapest school. I bought my child a school uniform and took him to school. When my husband who had not been providing anything saw that, he started to quarrel with me. He said that I was getting the money through prostitution, that I was being given money by men to take the child to school which made me to look better than him. Yet I was doing casual work on a daily basis. I'm usually among the women who sell vegetables. That is where you will find me on a daily basis. I have been there for 5 years, this is my sixth year. But he claimed that I got the money from men. On that day that he stabbed me, I decided to end my marriage. We went to the police station and to the chief who wrote us a letter. Now we are separated.* " A 42 year old vegetable vendor who is separated with her husband)
Source: Field research 2004.

As has been noted elsewhere in this report, women groups were an important coping strategy that enabled displaced women to deal with the trauma of displacement and loss of property. All the displaced women recounted that after the conflict they formed groups or merry go rounds where they pooled as little as 10 shillings on a weekly basis to purchase household items. The women noted that presently they pool as much as 1000 shillings on a monthly basis. The money is used to pay school fees, purchase household items and for personal use. Evidence of women's creativity is seen not only in the various functions the women groups serve, but in the sense that one woman can be a member of different merry go rounds each serving a different purpose. As one woman noted:

*"The women groups I have joined are not registered. We have some groups where we meet monthly to contribute small amounts of money like a thousand shillings to help in uplifting our businesses. However, you may need to purchase a household item but you cannot withdraw a lot of money from the business because it might weaken it yet it is what we use to pay school fees. Therefore, in order to purchase household goods, we form small groups where we contribute money on market days such as Wednesdays and Saturdays.* " (A 39 year old businesswoman, married)
Source: Field research 2004.

After the conflict, the government introduced the *shamba* system allowing forest land to be hired for farming. This initiative provided a source of livelihood for many displaced and unemployed people residing in Molo by availing them land for farming. The withdrawal of the *shamba* system a few months before the study has taken away the displaced people's source of livelihood. Consequently, it was reported that cases of theft in people's farms had gone up. By the time of this research the provincial administration had banned the sale of green maize due to rising cases of theft in people's farms. Many displaced people were unhappy with the withdrawal of the *shamba* system and wished that the government could rescind its decision.

## 4.4 Demographic characteristics of respondents

The data that was proposed to be collected through structured interviews or questionnaires targeted 120 respondents. However, at the end of the survey, responses were received from 65 women drawn mainly from five villages namely Molo town, Kenyatta, Mutirithia, Moto, and Sachang'wan.

As shown in Table 4.1, majority of the respondents (43%) were from the Kikuyu ethnic group while 28% were from the Kalenjin ethnic group. Fourteen per cent of the sample was from the Abagusii ethnic group, 8% of the sample was from the Luo ethnic group while 3% of the sample was from the Abaluhya ethnic group. Other ethnic groups namely the Meru and Turkana, comprised 4% of the sample.

**Table 4.1** Distribution of respondents by ethnic background

| Ethnic background | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Agikuyu | 28 | 43.1 |
| Abagusii | 9 | 13.8 |
| Luo | 5 | 7.7 |
| Abaluhya | 2 | 3.1 |
| Kalenjin | 18 | 27.7 |
| Others | 3 | 4.6 |
| Total | 65 | 100.0 |

As shown in Table 4.2, majority of the respondents for this study (67%) were married while those who were single formed 25% of the sample. Nearly 5% of the respondents were widowed and only 3% were separated.

**Table 4.2** Distribution of respondents by marital status

| Marital status | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Married | 44 | 67.7 |
| Single | 16 | 24.6 |
| Widowed | 3 | 4.6 |
| Separated | 2 | 3.1 |
| Total | 65 | 100.0 |

As shown in Table 4.3, the majority of the respondents (32%) fell in the age bracket of 20-30. Those aged between 31-40 years formed 25% of the sample, whereas those aged 51 years and above formed 19% of the sample.

**Table 4.3** Distribution of respondents by age

| Age | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 20 to 30 | 21 | 32.3 |
| 31 to 40 | 16 | 24.6 |
| 41 to 50 | 16 | 24.6 |
| 51 and over | 12 | 18.5 |
| Total | 65 | 100.0 |

In terms of level of education, most of the respondents represented by 49% had attained secondary level education as shown in Table 4.4. Twenty six per cent of the respondents had post secondary education; nearly 18% of the sample had primary education while 6% had no education.

**Table 4.4** Distribution of respondents by educational level

| Educational level | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| None | 4 | 6.2 |
| Primary | 12 | 18.5 |
| Secondary | 32 | 49.2 |
| Post secondary | 17 | 26.2 |
| Total | 65 | 100.0 |

An assessment of the respondents' occupation as shown in Table 4.5 revealed that 25% of the respondents were farmers, another 25% were teachers while 12% of the respondents .were business women. Students comprised 10% of the sample, nurses comprised 6% of the sample, and housewives comprised 4% of the sample. Other respondents in the category of casual employment, cook, chemist, extension workers and clerk comprised 15% of the sample.

**Table 4.5** Distribution of respondents by occupation

| Occupation | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Farmer | 16 | 24.6 |
| Teacher | 16 | 24.6 |
| Business | 8 | 12.3 |
| Nurse | 4 | 6.2 |
| Student | 7 | 10.8 |
| H/wife | 4 | 6.2 |
| Others | 10 | 15.4 |
| Total | 65 | 100.0 |

## 4.5 The traditional role of women in peace building

Respondents were asked to mention the role of women in peace building in traditional settings. As is evident from Table 4.6, women's primary role in peace building was child nurturing as reported by 24% of the respondents and educating young girls on peace as reported by 27% of the respondents. Other respondents represented by 16% pointed out that woman in traditional societies built peace through a spirit of collective responsibility and hard work which lessened

the burden of each woman's work and gave them an opportunity to guide and correct one another. Seven percent of the respondents noted that women built peace by promoting association with members of other tribes through intermarriages and trade while 6% mentioned that they built peace by being respectful and submissive to their husbands. This enabled them to acknowledge their husbands as heads of households thereby avoiding situations that could destabilize peace in the domestic sphere. Furthermore, 4% of the respondents mentioned that traditionally, women built peace through role modeling. For example, women set an example for girls and other members of the community to follow by adopting behaviors that would not disrupt peace and harmony.

A further assessment of the information in Table 4.6 reveals that 7% of the respondents noted that traditionally, women played a limited role in peace negotiations by serving men with food and beer. In addition, 4% of the respondents also noted that women built peace by intervening in an advisory capacity during conflict resolution. From these findings it can be deduced that in traditional societies women mainly built peace as an extension of their reproductive and productive roles such as child nurturing, provision of food and engaging in trade. Men were the main actors in peace building at decision making levels whereas women played a secondary role by providing support services. Nonetheless, women could influence the decisions made through their male relatives or upon invitation by the elders. These findings are confirmed by Ntahobari and Ndayizinga (2003) who note that in traditional Burundian society, women influenced decisions indirectly through their husbands in the settlement of armed conflicts.

**Table 4.6** The traditional role of women in peace building

| Role of women in peace building in traditional settings | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Serve food as men discuss peace and war | 5 | 7.7 |
| Nominated by men to advise | 3 | 4.6 |
| Educate young girls on peace | 18 | 27.7 |
| Nurturing of children | 16 | 24.6 |
| Submissive and respectful to husbands | 4 | 6.2 |
| Role modeling for girls/community members | 3 | 4.6 |
| Spirit of collective responsibility/hard work | 11 | 16.9 |
| Intermarriages/ association through trade | 5 | 7.7 |
| Total | 65 | 100.0 |

Respondents were further asked to indicate the degree of involvement of different groups of people at both formal and informal levels of peace building in the traditional setting. The formal level is the official sphere of peace building where authoritative decisions are made. This sphere is characterized by involvement of authority figures such as village elders, household heads and elderly women. Indicators of peace building at this level include a renowned council of elders who engage in conflict resolution. On the other hand, the informal level of peace building is the unofficial sphere of peace building which is dominated by ordinary members of the society but not necessarily limited to them. Indicators of peace building at this level include income generating activities, farming in groups, peace education and nursing the sick.

As is evident in Table 4.7, the majority of respondents noted that elders and men were actively involved at formal and informal levels of peace building in traditional societies. On the other hand, only 12% of the respondents noted that women were actively involved in formal peace building initiatives whereas 26% noted that women were actively involved in informal peace building initiatives. Thus, in traditional societies, the formal sphere of peace building was the domain of men. For the most part, women carried out peace activities informally as an extension of their gender roles.

**Table 4.7** Degree of involvement in peace building in the traditional setting

| | FORMAL PEACE INITIATIVES | | | | INFORMAL PEACE INITIATIVES | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % Men | % Women | % Elders | % Youths | % Men | % Women | % Elders | % Youths |
| **Actively** | 70.8 | 12.3 | 83.1 | 0.0 | 63.1 | 26.2 | 81.5 | 4.6 |
| **Moderately** | 26.2 | 35.4 | 9.2 | 13.8 | 24.6 | 29.2 | 13.8 | 21.5 |
| **Less** | 1.5 | 40.0 | 3.1 | 47.7 | 9.2 | 40.0 | 4.6 | 36.9 |
| **Not involved** | 1.5 | 12.3 | 4.6 | 38.5 | 3.1 | 4.6 | 0.0 | 36.9 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

The following chart gives a concise picture of the findings. It indicates that only elders and men participate actively both in formal and informal peace building initiatives (over 60% in each case). On the contrary, only 12% of the respondents noted that women participated actively at the formal sphere of peace building while 26% noted that women participate actively at the informal sphere of peace building. This implies that relative to men, women did not play an active role in peace building in the traditional setting. It can be inferred that in traditional societies women played a less active role at the formal sphere of peace building and an active role at the informal sphere of peace building.

**Figure 1** Active involvement in peace building in the traditional setting



Active involvement-Traditional chart showing Frequency by Level (Formal and Informal) for Men, Women, Elders, and Youth.
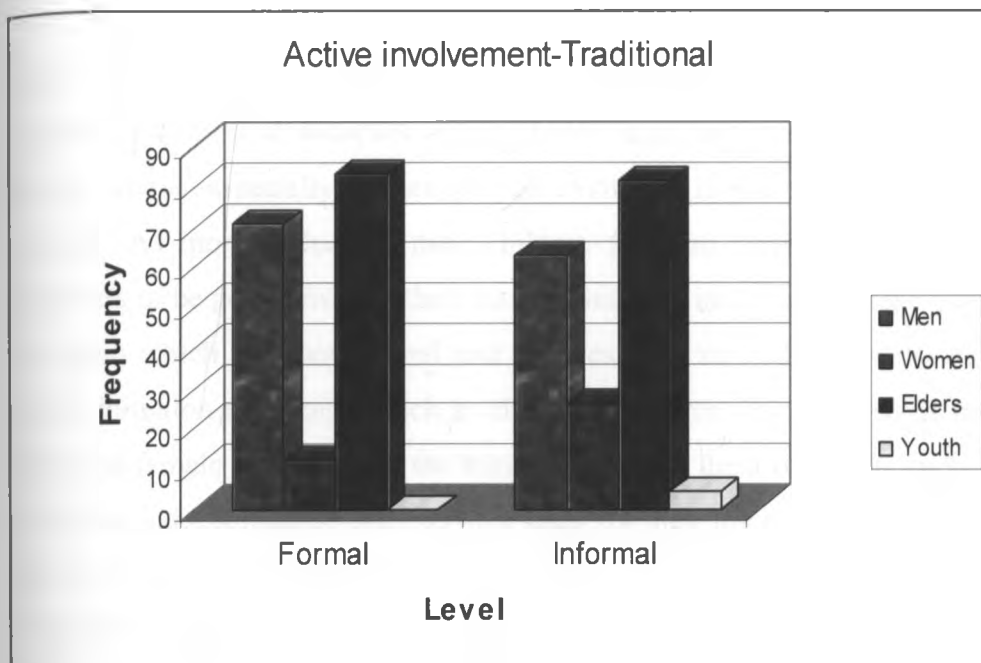
The findings from structured interviews were consistent with qualitative data from key informant interviews and focus group discussions. Qualitative data established that in traditional societies, women played a minimal or no role in formal peace building initiatives. For example, among the Kalenjin, Kikuyu, Luo, and Abagusii ethnic groups, peace building was the domain of men who formed the council of elders. Women played a secondary role in peace negotiations by serving the men with food and beer. In addition, women played a complementary role by implementing the decisions arrived at by men. However, it was pointed out that among the Luo, the elders could invite a wise woman to give her opinion before the council or to advise the feuding parties. Elders could also send women as emissaries to persuade parties who had refused to relent to give way to peace. Besides, during armed conflicts, women contributed to peace efforts by dissuading men from perpetrating conflicts because of the accompanying loss of lives and property. As one informant put it "*Among the Luo, if a woman was reluctant to allow her husband to go to war it meant that he was going to be killed.' If the man ignored the pleas of his wife and went to the battlefield he was likely to die.*" This instinctive ability of women was respected in times of war and was used to deter men from perpetuating conflicts. Conversely, it was noted that women in traditional societies also contributed to conflicts by encouraging men to fight or by making the

fighters to look like heroes through their songs. This is because conflicts in traditional societies were done for survival, to obtain wealth or as part of tradition.

Qualitative data from key informant interviews and focus group discussions also established that women in traditional societies were actively involved in informal peace building initiatives. Firstly, women especially mothers played a vital role in peace education by transmitting essential cultural and moral values to their children from an early age. Women also prepared their daughters to be good wives in their future homes by instilling housekeeping skills on them. The education which was both moral and practical was carried out in the home environment and during initiation ceremonies such as circumcision rites which served as institutions of learning. Male and female caretakers of the initiates educated them on values such as obedience, respect for elders and truthfulness and prepared them for their future roles as husbands and wives. These lessons were enforced through strict sanctions and severe punishments which were meted on those who went contrary to the expected norms. Apart from mothers, grandmothers played a critical role in peace education through the medium of folk narratives and proverbs. For example, among the Luo, young girls spent the night in a grandmother's hut where they received instruction on moral and cultural values. The findings revealed that a common aspect of traditional societies was the involvement of whole communities in child upbringing. Consequently, any mature person disciplined a disobedient child and where necessary reported the child to his or her parents. These findings are confirmed in a study on women and peace in Africa by Lihamba (2003) who notes after circumcision ceremonies, the education process continued with grandmothers, aunts and the whole community.

Secondly, women in traditional societies fostered peace by embodying the traditional values of faithfulness, hard work, perseverance, humility, submission, and great respect for their husbands. As a result of their socialization, women in traditional societies had great respect for the elders. Accordingly, they endured marital problems out of respect for the elders who would be obliged to return bride wealth in case their marriages ended. Consequently, cases of separation were uncommon in traditional societies. By embodying the traditional values, women also contributed to peace efforts by acting as role models thus setting an example for other women to emulate. For example, in a polygamous marriage, the newly married woman followed in the footsteps of

her predecessors thereby avoiding situations that could destabilize peace in the family. Peace also prevailed in many families because the eldest wife in a polygamous marriage played an essential role in promoting good relationships among the younger wives. Consequently, she was greatly respected both by her husband and co-wives. Another reason why peace prevailed in many families was because prospective bridegrooms obtained wives from good families. Among the Turkana, for example a woman could search for a good wife for her son even without his knowledge.

The spirit of collective responsibility is another way through which women in traditional societies built peace. Women formed cooperative work groups to cultivate their farms in turns thereby lessening the burden of each woman's work. This also afforded them an opportunity to share experiences and to guide and correct one another. Furthermore, in many traditional societies, a woman would spend an entire month without doing any work after child birth. During this time, other women performed her household duties such as cooking and fetching firewood.

Finally, qualitative data from key informant interviews and focus group discussions also revealed that intermarriages were another strategy by which rival ethnic groups promoted peace during conflicts. Two warring ethnic groups could enter a peace agreement or seal a peace pact by intermarrying. The two ethnic groups would thereafter safeguard the agreement by seeking non-violent ways of resolving conflicts since they were now bonded by blood. For instance one could no longer fight his father in law. Othieno (2001) confirms that in traditional Africa, a woman was described as a pacifist, tolerant, compassionate domestic and soft spoken. She further notes that a married woman was a symbol of peace as she acted as a bridge, a wound healer and the means by which feuding communities put an end to future conflicts.

## 4.6 Changing behaviour of women and their role in peace building

Qualitative data from key informant interviews and focus group discussions established that the current setting is characterized by an increase in old types of conflicts and the emergence of conflicts that were not present in traditional societies. Old types of conflicts that are increasing include immorality, premarital sex, teenage pregnancies, burglary and divorce. On the other hand

conflicts that are emerging include fights between parents and children, incest, drug abuse and drunkenness among men women and youth of all ages. The current state of affairs was attributed to a breakdown of traditional values and institutions that safeguarded peace in traditional societies but also to a modern culture, bad governance and poverty.

Traditional institutions of learning that promoted peace through education of the youth and children on moral values have been eroded in the current setting. These included grandmothers' stories, parental instruction and initiation rites. Additionally, there were appropriate sanctions and strict punishments in traditional societies that served to bar the youth from engaging in unacceptable behaviour. For instance, failure to obey adult instruction carried the risk of receiving the elders' curse and severe punishments. Moreover, a girl who gave birth outside wedlock could only be married by an old man of her father's age if the father of her child refused to marry her. This is in contrast to the current setting whereby girls give birth outside wedlock, leave their children in their parent's homes and live elsewhere. This is because in the current setting there are no strict sanctions to compel the youth to obey the teachings learnt. Both male and female participants in focus group discussions lamented that in the current setting the youth do not obey adult instruction. As one of them put it:

*"Now*adays, *there are two kinds of people, those who are circumcised and those who are not. The lives of those who were circumcised and came out of the 'chondoni', is disgraceful. This is because the girl leaves the 'chondoni' and gets married; she lives with her husband for one month then leaves him and begins to search for someone else. When she's unable to find another husband, she comes to live in town. Some of them go to Total petrol station or Salgaa. (Stop over for truck drivers). There is no help there (female circumcision rites). The youth who go to church are better off if they obey the lessons taught. "*

Consequently, in the absence of strict sanctions and punishments which can oblige the youth to obey the lessons taught, circumcision rites are no longer effective in instilling moral values to the youth.

Qualitative data established that contemporary women are not as efficient in performing the role of peace educators as their traditional counterparts. Children in the current setting lack parental instruction as both parents spend most of their time outside the home building careers or earning

a living. Therefore, the principal sources of information for children and the youth are formal education, the mass media and other sources of knowledge that are not tailored to instill moral values or life skills. It is no wonder that currently, unemployed youth resort to commercial sex or drug and alcohol abuse and later pick up fights with their parents.

Another reason why contemporary women are not as efficient in performing the role of peace educators as their traditional counterparts is that they do not sufficiently embody the traditional values that were central to a culture of peace in traditional societies. Traditionally, women embodied values such as great respect for elders, submission, humility and patience and these enhanced their role in peace building. For example, in traditional societies beer was taken only by men and was served on occasions such as deliberations for peace. Although women in traditional societies were barred from drinking beer those in the current societies can freely purchase it. As one man put it:

*"Men have many commitments outside the home. In the past, they left the home knowing that it was well taken care of. This was because the mother was present hence children would not misbehave…. But nowadays if women get drunk, there is no good advice that can be obtained from them. The family has been left without a teacher."*

Thus, when women become drunk they turn out to be a negative influence and are no longer capable of transmitting positive values to their children. In addition, women's access to education and wealth has elevated their status to be almost equal to that of men. Women who are empowered do not acknowledge their husbands as heads of households and wish to be treated as equal partners in a marriage. Moreover, in traditional societies, women's manner of dressing was symbolic of their status as married or unmarried women. This is in contrast to the current setting where it is difficult to differentiate married women from unmarried women based on their manner of dressing. The problem is compounded by the availability of cheap imported clothes from the west. In some cases, contemporary women's mode of dressing has contributed to cases of immorality leading to divorce and separation.

The spirit of collective responsibility which was a feature of traditional societies has been eroded. Needy people no longer receive support from members of the extended family except

during occasions like funerals and weddings when family members come together to express support and care for one another. The individualistic lifestyle that has emerged has also made it impossible for any adult to discipline another person's child in the current setting.

On the other hand, men were also blamed for failing in their traditional duties of directing the youth on proper conduct. For instance, it was noted that some men introduce the youth to alcohol consumption by purchasing it for them while others appease the youth to buy them drinks by approving their bad habits.

Consequently, there is need to strengthen the role of women as peace educators in the family and in the community to enable the youth to acquire knowledge and values that are essential for maintaining peace and harmony in the society. Secondly, appropriate sanctions and strict punishments should be established to compel the youth to obey the teachings learnt. Moreover, contemporary women should adopt the values traditionally embodied by women such as humility, faithfulness, submission and respect as these complement their role in peace building. They should also be encouraged to be role models by adopting behaviours which can be copied by young girls and other women. Finally, the spirit of collective responsibility should be promoted through increased association and visits among members of the extended family and involvement of the whole community in child upbringing. This will ensure that children are not left to their own devices but are under the constant watch of adults.

## 4.7 Women's contemporary role in peace building

The second objective of the study was to determine the role of women in peace building within the context of Molo division. To achieve this, respondents were asked to mention formal and informal mechanisms of peace building in Molo division and the degree of involvement of women and other groups of people at formal and informal levels of peace building. Respondents were also asked to mention the peace activities of women in Molo division.

The formal sphere of peace building in contemporary settings is characterized by the involvement of authority figures such as government officials, politicians, NGO officials, acknowledged peace practitioners e.g. religious leaders, village elders and members of the

community. It is the sphere of peace building where authoritative decisions on peace are made. Indicators of peace building at this level include peace committees, courts of law, chief's *barazas*, council of elders etc.

According to Table 4.8, 27% of the respondents mentioned the formal mechanisms of peace building as dispute resolution through village elders, 26% mentioned participation in socio-economic activities organized by NGOs and CBOs dealing in peace, 20% mentioned arbitration by government officials (chiefs, magistrates, police etc), 9% mentioned church based initiatives (Justice and Peace committees, pastoral counseling, family life education) 9% mentioned preventive diplomacy, 4% mentioned dialogue by members of different communities while only 3% mentioned confidence-building measures. This shows that formal mechanisms are in place in Molo and involve the participation of government officials, NGO officials, churches and village elders.

Table 4.8 Formal mechanisms of peace building in Molo division

| Formal mechanisms of peace building | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Solve disputes through village elders | 18 | 27.7 |
| Church based initiatives | 6 | 9.2 |
| Arbitration by Govt. officers (e.g. chiefs, courts of law, police) | 13 | 20.0 |
| Participation in socio-economic activities organized by NGOs | 17 | 26.2 |
| Preventive diplomacy | 6 | 9.2 |
| Confidence building | 2 | 3.1 |
| Dialogue by members of different communities | 3 | 4.6 |
| Total | 65 | 100.0 |

Respondents were asked to indicate the degree of involvement of various groups of people and institutions at the formal level of peace building in contemporary settings. As shown in Table 4.9, 87% of the respondents noted that the government is actively involved in formal peace building efforts, 80% noted that elders are actively involved in formal peace building efforts,

73% of the respondents noted that religious leaders are actively involved in formal peace building efforts,, 40% of the respondents noted that NGOs are actively involved in formal peace building efforts,, 51% of the respondents noted that men are actively involved in formal peace building efforts, while only 29% of the respondents noted that women are actively involved in formal peace building efforts. In addition, 65% of the respondents noted that women are moderately involved in formal peace building efforts, 34% of the respondents noted that men are moderately involved in formal peace building efforts, 30% of the respondents noted that the youth are moderately involved while only 14% of the respondents noted that elders are moderately involved in formal peace building efforts,. From this table it can be inferred that currently, the main actors in formal peace building efforts are government officials, elders, religious leaders, men and NGO officials. Women are moderately involved in formal peace building efforts while the youth are less actively involved. These findings show that women's experiences and skills are not taken into account in the resolution of armed conflicts, reconciliation and reconstruction efforts at the grassroots level. The under representation of women in peace building at decision making levels is an indication of the low position of women in society and is likely to threaten the realization of lasting peace. Conflict conditions often create an opportunity for the transformation of gender roles and relations as women take on non traditional roles and gain access to public spaces (Turshen 2001). In the absence of a gender perspective in peace building, the chance to sustain any gains women have made such as land ownership for female heads of households is lost.

Table 4.9 Degree of involvement at formal level of peace building (currently)

| Level of involvement | % Women | % Men | % Youth | % Elders | % GOK | %Church leaders | % NGOs |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Active | 29.5 | 51.0 | 11.8 | 80.1 | 87.7 | 73.8 | 40.6 |
| Moderate | 65.7 | 34.1 | 30.4 | 14.3 | 9.2 | 21.5 | 28.1 |
| Less active | 5.8 | 14.9 | 23.3 | 6.6 | 3.1 | 4.6 | 18.8 |
| Not involved | 0.0 | 0.0 | 34.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 12.5 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

According to qualitative data obtained from key informant interviews, informants were divided on the extent of women's participation in peace building at the community level. Some informants noted that women were actively involved while others noted that they were involved to a limited extent. However, the majority of the informants noted that women were moderately involved at the formal level of peace building.

## 4.7.1 Barriers to women's participation at the formal sphere of peace building

Qualitative data from key informant interviews and focus group discussions established that several factors bar women from participating actively in formal peace building initiatives. According to Conway et al (1997) barriers to women's participation in politics are dichotomized into attitudinal and structural factors. Factors that are attitudinal are those occasioned by socialization and cultural conditioning while structural factors are those set by environmental conditions.

Similarly, the study revealed a number of attitudinal and structural factors which deter women from participating actively in formal peace building initiatives. One of these is the low status assigned to women by tradition. Women are socialized to be subservient and to perform roles in the private sphere whereas men are socialized to be aggressive in order to take up leadership roles in the public sphere. In this connection, men are viewed as the bona fide leaders and decision making is viewed as the domain of men. Consequently, very few women take up leadership positions because they lack confidence to participate in activities that put them in the public limelight or that will put them in positions where they will oppose men. Even in churches where women take up leadership positions, men still dominate formal peace building initiatives as women constitute only a third of the members of Justice and Peace Committees. Notably, the Catholic Justice and Peace Committee (CJPC) and chief's *barazas* are viewed by locals as political institutions. Therefore, very few women participate in these ventures as most of them avoid political involvement or activities that put them in focus with administrators. Women's participation in formal peace building activities is also restricted by lack time. This is because women have many commitments and have to conform to what is expected of them as wives first. As a result, even in development committees, women's participation is limited right from the

village level to the district level where their contribution is further hampered by the length of time it takes for people to listen or pay attention to their views.

The respondents were asked whether they had received any skills training in peace building. As shown in Table 5.0, the majority of the respondents represented by 78% had not received any skills training in peace building while almost 22% of the sample had received some training in peace building. Lack of skill training in peace building is one of the factors that hinder women from participating in peace building hence it is important to target women with skill training on peace building to enhance their participation. According to Cape Unit (2003), improving access to training and educational opportunities for women is an important step in reducing obstacles to their participation in all forms of decision making including peace building. This is because a woman's ability to take up formal positions in towns and settlements depends on her education, personal abilities and skills such as public speaking. These are in sharp contrast to the abilities defining women's status in traditional societies such as being seers and dreamers.

**Table 5.0** Skills training in peace building

| Those who have skills training in peace building | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 14 | 21.5 |
| No | 51 | 78.5 |
| Total | 65 | 100.0 |

Amongst the few who had received training in peace building and as shown in Table 5.1, the majority (36%) had been trained in dispute settlement while 36% had received training in peace promotion through education of youths. 14% of them had received training on conflict management and the rest of the respondents represented by 14% had received training on identification of conflict zones and pastoral counseling. The church and NGOs provide skills training in peace building to both women and men in the locality through seminars. Women receive training as leaders of women groups and CBOs or as employees of peace organizations working in the area such as the Red Cross Society. Churches also provide regular training to their lay leaders and volunteers through seminars.

The study revealed that women who are trained in pastoral counseling provide counseling and spiritual nourishment to sick people who have been abandoned by their relatives thus giving them relief and reconciling them with their relatives. Furthermore, women who are members of the CJPC are involved in resettlement of people who are displaced by conflicts, pursuing court cases for people who are unable, tackling situations of indiscipline among administrators in to improve management of Catholic institutions among other peace building efforts.

Table 5.1 Type of peace building skills acquired

| Peace building skill acquired | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Conflict management | 2 | 14.3 |
| Settling of dispute | 5 | 35.7 |
| Pastoral counseling | 1 | 7.1 |
| Peace promotion through education of youths | 5 | 35.7 |
| Identification of conflict zones | 1 | 7.1 |
| Total | 14 | 100.0 |

The respondents were asked to mention the informal mechanisms of peace building in Molo division. The informal sphere of peace building is the unofficial sphere of peace building which is dominated by ordinary members of the community but is not necessarily limited to them. Indicators of peace building at this level include income generating activities, trauma therapy, nursing the sick and collecting and sharing information on imminent conflicts with the relevant authorities. As shown in Table 5.2, 29% of the respondents mentioned church based initiatives such as visiting and providing material goods and spiritual nourishment for the sick, 26% mentioned women's group activities, 15% mentioned guidance and counseling and 12% mentioned intermarriages. In addition 7% mentioned peace education while others represented by 9% mentioned reporting insecurity issues to administrators, formation of vigilante groups and performing rituals to signify an end to conflict. This reveals that peace building in Molo division is not limited to activities at the formal level but extends to the informal level. Women are the key actors in these processes as shown by the range of activities which correspond to women's reproductive roles, such as taking care of the sick and guidance and counseling. Since women

perform these activities as an extension of their traditional gender roles, they are undervalued and not incorporated in formal peace processes.

Table 5.2 Informal mechanisms of peace building in Molo division

| Informal mechanisms of peace building | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Church based initiatives | 19 | 29.2 |
| Women groups activities | 17 | 26.2 |
| Guidance and counseling | 10 | 15.4 |
| Intermarriages | 8 | 12.3 |
| Peace education | 5 | 7.7 |
| Others | 6 | 9.2 |
| Total | 65 | 100.0 |

Respondents were asked to indicate the degree of involvement of different groups of people at the informal level of peace building currently. As shown in Table 5.3, 89 % of the respondents noted that elders are actively involved, 59% of the respondents noted that women are actively involved, 19% of the respondents noted that men are actively involved while only 9% of the respondents noted that the youth are actively involved. In addition, 75% of the respondents noted that men are moderately involved while only 10% of the respondents noted that women are less actively involved. Thus, it can be inferred that those actively involved at the informal level of peace building are women and elders while men are moderately involved at this level. This shows that women mainly build peace informally through ways that correspond to their traditional gender roles. This implies that women's fear of the public eye predisposes them to concentrate their peace efforts at the informal level. The challenge therefore is to integrate these efforts by women into formal peace processes for building sustainable peace.

Table 5.3 Degree of involvement at informal level of peace building (currently)

| Degree of involvement at informal level of peace building | Percentage Women | Percentage Men | Percentage Youth | Percentage Elders |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Actively | 59.8 | 19.7 | 9.2 | 89.5 |
| Moderately | 31.1 | 75.7 | 30.6 | 4.3 |
| Less | 10.1 | 5.6 | 23.9 | 6.2 |
| Not involved | 0.0 | 0.0 | 36.3 | 0.0 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Qualitative data from key informant interviews and focus group discussions also established that at the community level, women prefer to build peace informally through their day to day activities and in their women groups. It was also noted that peace building starts in the family where women are actively involved in nurturing peace. Nonetheless, some informants mainly from the Kalenjin tribe noted that even within the family, women have no say in decision making and only build peace informally through child nurturing and instilling moral values on children and the youth.

Figure 2 presents a picture of current involvements in peace building at formal and informal levels.

**Figure 2** Current involvements in peace building at formal and informal levels
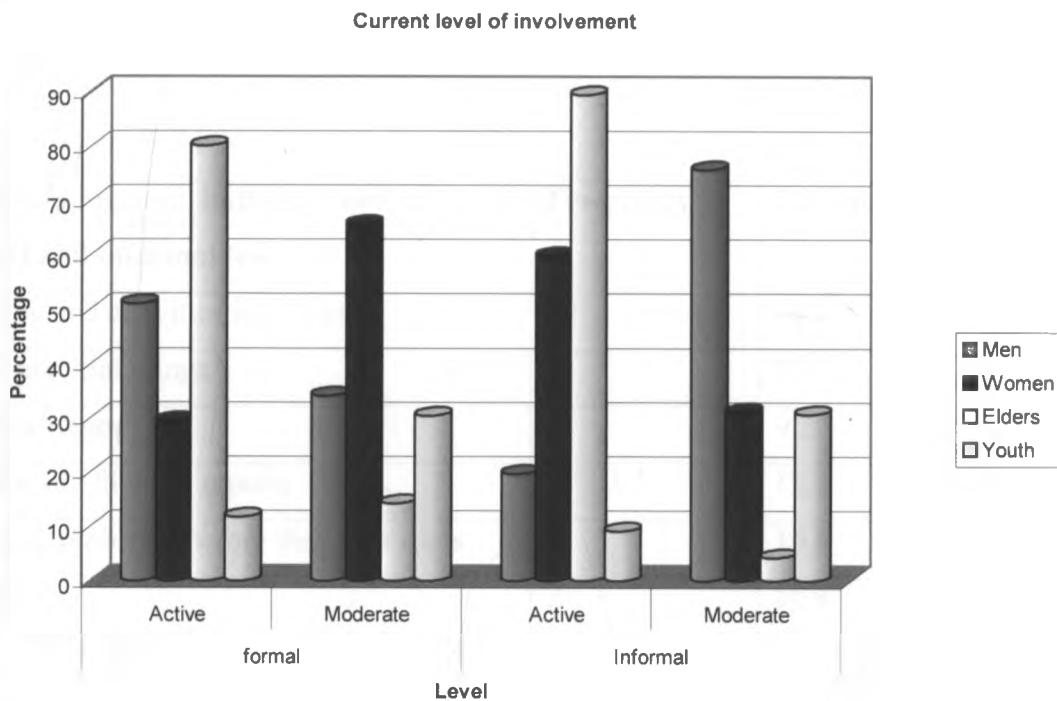


Thus, it can be inferred that currently, women are actively involved at the informal level of peace building (59%) and moderately involved at the formal level of peace building (29%).

Respondents were further asked to mention specific activities women engage in to build peace currently. As is evident from Table 5.4, 44% of the respondents mentioned women's peace building activities as farming and socio-economic activities in groups, 12% mentioned sharing material things with the less fortunate, 12% mentioned providing reports about imminent conflicts or insecurity problems to the administrators and preparing enabling environment for discussions to take place, 10% mentioned tackling problems before they take roots, while 9% mentioned intermarriages. Other respondents represented by 10% mentioned peace education, mediation, participation in peace committees, workshops and activities organized by NGOs and CBOs that promote peace and communal and administrative work. The information in this table also reveals that women engage in peace building at both formal and informal spheres. However, women's peace activities are concentrated at the informal sphere and include initiatives for

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conflict prevention and conflict resolution. The table also reveals that women groups constitute an important part of women's peace building initiatives.

**Table 5.4** Activities women engage in to build peace at formal and informal levels of peace building in Molo division

| Women's peace building activities at formal and informal levels | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Farming and activities in groups | 29 | 44.6 |
| Share material things | 8 | 12.3 |
| Intermarriages | 6 | 9.2 |
| Provide intelligence reports | 8 | 12.3 |
| Tackling problems before they take roots | 7 | 10.8 |
| Others | 7 | 10.8 |

This information is consistent with qualitative data obtained from key informant interviews and focus group discussions which established that women groups are an important strategy that women use to build peace at the family and community levels. Various types of women groups exist in Molo division. The first types are self-help groups which engage in purchase and marketing of agricultural produce such as pyrethrum and milk. The second types are merry go rounds which engage in pooling of resources to uplift businesses, to pay school fees and to purchase plots or household items. The third types are women's development projects which initiate development projects such as purchase of solar systems for lighting, construction of water tanks and setting up zero grazing units. The fourth and final types are women's religious associations such as Association of Catholic Women of the Roman Catholic Church, the Mother's Guild of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) and the Mothers Union of the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK). These provide spiritual nourishment to their members and to the larger community, material support to orphans and the sick and they also undertake development projects. For instance, the Mothers' Union (ACK) initiated the construction of a 'Kitchen hall' that would be hired out to community members for various functions while the Mothers' Guild of (PCEA) initiated the construction of a girls' hostel so that students who are

day scholars and are not residents in Molo do not have to rent houses. Women also educate the girls in the hostel on moral values.

Women groups were a coping strategy during the ethnic conflict. After losing all their property during the conflict, women pooled resources in turns which enabled them to purchase household goods. Moreover, women groups enabled them to pay school fees for their children, purchase plots and construct houses to resettle their families in the new environment. Some displaced women were noted to be doing better economically than those they found living in Molo town. Thus activities of women groups have enabled many women to meet the economic needs of their families which is necessary for peace in the home.

Over and above these economic activities, women groups also create an enabling environment for learning new skills, sharing problems and experiences and providing psychosocial support to its members. The membership of these groups cuts across socio-cultural divides which facilitates the exchange of ideas among women from different ethnic groups and promotes ethnic tolerance. Community development officers visit these groups and advice the women while micro-finance institutions like Faulu grant them small loans to advance their economic activities.

The quantitative data from questionnaires was consistent with qualitative data from key informant interviews and focus group discussions. When asked about the role of women in peace building, informants gave two main types of responses; women's role at the family and the community levels. Within the family setting, women's primary role is that of child nurturing and peace education. In the family, women also mediate disputes between their children on the one hand and between their spouses and their children on the other. For example, women are more open-minded than men and readily make compromises to accommodate their children's concerns. Hence, intergenerational conflicts tend to be more frequent between children and their fathers than between them and their mothers. This gives women the advantage of being able to foster a mutual understanding between their children and their spouses. Women also intervene to persuade their husbands to discipline their children fairly when they do it out of anger.

wives, women build peace by trying to live harmoniously with their husbands in spite of
estic problems which include economic hardship, alcoholic husbands, disobedient children,
sical violence or desertion by their husbands. Women cope with alcoholic and irresponsible
bands through prayer, sharing problems with other women who offer guidance and
nselling and being humble and respectful to their husbands regardless of their irresponsible
viour. An elderly informant recounted her days as a counselor when she encouraged women
were married to alcoholic men, to treat them with respect as this would facilitate their
version to responsible men. Initially, the women refused to open doors for their husbands
n they returned from their drinking sprees but when they eventually heeded her advice, all
men who were lost in drinking dens reformed and returned home. This brought a lot of
piness to their families and put an end to the domestic conflicts that were common before.
informant captured this view quite superbly when she noted the following: "*A good woman
ds her home with her two hands while a foolish woman destroys her home with her two
ds. Among the Agikuyu a good woman is known as 'Ngatha.' Such a woman is humble,
missive, and hospitable and takes good care of her husband. Above all she has the skills of
ding her home with her two hands.*"

men manage economic conflicts in the domestic front by controlling the little available
urces sparingly and engaging in productive work to supplement their husbands' income.
men also form the bulk of those who engage in agricultural activities hence they are the chief
pliers of food for the family. They also sell their surplus produce in local and distant markets
enerate income to cater for needs such as school fees for their children. For example, in the
nings women line the streets of Molo with their produce which include roasted maize and
etables. Consequently, with or without their husbands' assistance, women contribute to food
economic security thereby promoting peace in their families.

rmants gave two types of responses with regards to women's participation in peace building
e community level: the role played by women in the context of the 1992 ethnic clashes and
current role in peace building at the community level. Many people who were displaced by
ethnic clashes sought refuge in Molo town where they camped in schools and church
pounds as well as the social hall where received relief supplies from the government and

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relief agencies. Women who were living in Molo town also provided them with moral and material support in form of prayers, food, shelter and clothing. Secondly women promoted peace through civic education on the negative effects of conflict. For example the leader of the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK) at that time was a woman who played a major role in civic education. Thirdly, displaced women from the Kikuyu ethnic group were prompted by feelings of sympathy for Kalenjin women among them and allowed them to benefit from relief supplies. This was because they had been commonly affected by a war that was perpetuated by men. Women also adopted orphans even from other tribes. Moreover, displaced women saved their sons' lives by clothing them in girls' dresses since the Kalenjin warriors' main targets were men and male children from other tribes.

Displaced women were also prompted to engage in peace work because of intermarriages. The conflict engendered enmity between families on both sides of the conflict and led to indiscriminate killings regardless of kin relations. Upon witnessing the deaths of their husbands and sons, women held them back from perpetuating the war. Finally, after undergoing untold suffering and witnessing the deaths of their husbands and sons, women decided to hold a demonstration from Molo division to Nakuru district Provincial Headquarters to protest against the violence. Attempts by the police to disperse them were unsuccessful as the women remained adamant. Eventually, the Provincial Commissioner addressed them and they turned back after reaching Soil. Thus, it was women's initiative that made the nation aware of the crisis in Molo and later security was beefed up in the area.

With regards to the current role of women in peace building at the community level, informants noted that women constitute the majority of those who offer voluntary services to the sick particularly those who suffer from HIV/AIDS. Notably, majority of volunteers for both Home Based Care (HBC) training (72%) and pastoral care training (75%) at a local faith-based dispensary were women. The services offered include tending to the patients' needs if they are neglected by their relatives, providing spiritual nourishment, reconciling the patients with their families and educating the patient's caretakers on how to prevent infection.

Other peace building activities by women at the community level include participating in peace committees such as (CJPC) and chief's *barazas,* campaigning against negative practices like female genital mutilation, wife battering and abortion, engaging in prayer and preaching individually or in groups and providing reports on impending conflicts and the location of illicit brews to local administrators. Thus women's perception of peace is broad and cuts across various spheres of life which lead to improvements in the overall quality of life. As the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies on the Advancement of Women (1985) reports, peace is not only the absence of war but includes ideas such as social and economic justice, equality and the protection and improvement of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms in society.

Although women in Molo have made positive contributions to peace, they have also contributed to conflicts. For instance, during the 1992 clashes, displaced women incited men into violence by telling them to go and fight their enemies or to surrender their trousers to women and children so that they could go and fight back their opponents. Consequently, men held meetings, took weapons, boarded vehicles and went back to fight the Kalenjin warriors whom they drove back into the forest. Women also supported actual fights during the Mau Mau war by providing food or an enabling environment for conflict to take place. As one elderly informant who participated in the independence war put it: *"I knew where to get bullets when they were running out. I got them from the boys and cooks who were working for the colonialists. I organized people to fight but I did not kill anyone myself. I also took food to the forests for the fighters."* On the other hand. she added that women prayed for their sons and husbands who were engaged in the war so that God would spare their lives.

Other ways through which women undermine peace include engaging in rumours which could breed conflict or selling their deceased husband's property thus leaving the children suffering. Some women also undermine peace by refusing to assist or associate with poor members of their families or preventing their husbands from supporting them. Some women also fail to work hard to support their families when their husbands become irresponsible while others fail to acknowledge their husbands as heads of families because of their access to education and economic resources which elevates their status. Conflicts also arise between women and

microfinance institutions when women fail to pay back loans. When it happens their husbands discourage them from participating in the activities of women groups.

## 4.8 The strengths of women in peace building

In this study, women's strengths were defined as unique qualities in women which complement their peace building efforts. Some of the indicators of women's strengths include their position as wives and mothers.

Respondents were asked their opinions on whether men and women have unique strengths for peace building. The majority of the respondents (96%) of the respondents reported that women have unique strengths for peace building while only 3% reported that women do not have unique strengths for peace building. Furthermore, 83% of the respondents reported that men have unique strengths for peace building while 16% reported that men do not have unique strengths for peace building. This shows that women and men have strengths which complement their peace building efforts. However, women were credited for their peace building strengths by the majority of respondents. This could partly be due to the fact that women occupy a central position in the society and the performance of their multiple roles which enable them to acquire a wide range of attributes for peace building.

Table 5.5 shows responses to an item that sought the respondents' opinions on women's unique strengths for peace building. It is evident from the table that 26% of the respondents mentioned patience, perseverance and humility, nearly 25% of the respondents mentioned solidarity, 12% of the respondents mentioned mothers, 9% mentioned sympathy or compassion, 5% mentioned prayers and 3% mentioned hard work. Other respondents represented by 20% mentioned flexibility, wives, peaceful, selfless, respectful, forgiving, soft, resourceful and understanding.

The information in Table 5.5 reveals that women's strengths for peace building arise from their gendered social roles. Women are the custodians of peace in the family where they build peace by performing their traditional gender roles such as child socialization, caring for the sick and the elderly, providing food for the family, organizing in groups across socio-economic divides to address various social and economic needs and caring for the needy in the society. Therefore, the

ocialization process and the performance of their traditional gender roles enables women to cquire and perfect attributes such as compassion, solidarity, gentleness, selflessness, diligence, esourcefulness, submission, multitasking, tolerance and a caring spirit. As Archer (2002) notes, vomen and men's characteristics stem from the societal roles they occupy and these in turn are based on their role in reproduction. Since women are the ones who bear and suckle the young, hey are seen as more caring and nurturant.

Table 5.5 Women's unique qualities for peace building

| Women's unique qualities | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Patience/ perseverance/humility | 17 | 26.2 |
| Solidarity | 16 | 24.6 |
| Mothers | 8 | 12.3 |
| Compassionate/ sympathetic | 6 | 9.2 |
| Prayers/spiritual | 3 | 4.6 |
| Hard work | 2 | 3.1 |
| Others | 13 | 20.0 |
| Total | 65 | 100.0 |

This table was derived from a multiple response question

This information is consistent with qualitative data obtained from key informant interviews and focus group discussions. Qualitative data revealed that women are gentle and this in turn predisposes them to adopt a diplomatic approach as opposed to violence or force in resolving conflicts. Women are peaceful, non-violent and lack physical strength hence they employ diplomatic strategies such as persuasive dialogue, submission, compromise, silence or prayer to build peace.

Secondly, women's strategy of going out of their way to assist needy people is linked to the quality of sympathy which arises from their caretaking roles in the family. By performing these roles women develop a caring and compassionate spirit. For instance, women are the majority of volunteers providing HBC services to sick people and material support to orphans in the division. Their compassionate spirit is also exemplified by the efforts of displaced women who

expanded their households to accommodate orphans, the sick and the elderly after the ethnic clashes. Women living in Molo town also cooked for the displaced people, provided moral and material support and offered them casual work for pay. Qualitative data also revealed that during fundraisings women donate money in small quantities but they do so in large numbers. On the contrary, only a few men donate money although they can contribute a large amount of money because of the control they have over resources. Similarly, Fitzegerald (2002) notes that the quality of sympathy in women arises from their traditional roles as providers, nurturers and caretakers which predispose them to assist people in need of help without discrimination. For instance traditionally, Southern Sudanese women followed their men on raiding parties so that they could nurse the wounded from both sides. In addition, women hid and saved the lives of enemy casualties.

Qualitative data from key informant interviews and focus group discussions also revealed that the qualities of mothers and wives are women's peace building strengths. Apart from their role in child socialization, women have an influential impact on their husbands and sons' behaviour since they can dissuade them from perpetuating violence to building peace. For instance, during the ethnic clashes, displaced women incited their sons and husbands to go back and fight their enemies. However, upon witnessing the loss of lives that accompanied the violence, women held them back from perpetuating the violence. Moreover, women are concerned about the welfare of their children and husbands they are more proficient in dealing with the problem of illicit brews than men. Finally, as mothers women try to live in harmony with other women for the sake of their children who continue to play or associate with each other regardless of their mother's differences.

Qualitative data from key informant interviews and focus group discussions revealed that spirituality is another peace building strength of women which is linked to prayer, a peace building strategy used by women. Women are the majority of those who attend church services and participate in church activities such as pastoral seminars. Hence, they are more likely to be spiritual and acknowledge the use of prayer as a tool for peace building. Women employ the lessons learnt in church such as prayer, forgiveness, hard work, perseverance and patience which enables them to cope with problems and build stable families. For instance, it was noted that

reformed drunkards had testified in churches that it was their wives who made them to change into responsible men. Women mostly use prayer as a peace building strategy when all other strategies have failed. One informant captured it in this phrase during a focus group discussion; *"When you realize that you are pleading with your husband but he is not listening, and your children disrespect you, you can go inside a maize plantation, a bush or wait for the children to go to school and then lock yourself in your house and pray for them. We often realize that God answers prayers when our children and husbands become respectful."*

Solidarity is another peace building strength of women and this is linked to the strategy of women groups which they employ to build peace. The membership of women groups cut across socio-cultural divides. Women are drawn together to address common problems they face in their families and communities. For example, after the ethnic clashes, displaced women who lost their land and property converged to pool resources in merry go rounds so as to purchase household items and plots, to construct houses and to fence their land. Displaced women also expressed solidarity with women from other tribes by allowing them to benefit from relief supplies since they were not involved in perpetrating the conflict. Moreover, women converged in women groups to pool resources for the construction of water tanks thus averting a water crisis in Molo division. During meetings in their groups, women share problems and give advice and counseling on how to tackle the problems they face. Women's solidarity is also seen in the large numbers of women who converge to demonstrate against issues such as brewing of illicit brews.

The findings also revealed that women are endowed with intuition hence they are able to detect problems at an earlier stage than men. For example, a mother can detect a child who is developing a bad habit long before the father notices. It was noted that unlike men, women do not take issues that could cause conflict or disunity for granted and act swiftly to contain them. Finally, women's strength of multitasking arises from their multiple roles and makes them be resourceful and practical in their approach to peace building. Consequently, women's strategies for peace building include, nurturing children, adopting orphans, nursing the sick, praying for peace, guidance and counseling, construction of water tanks, planting trees, farming, income generating activities, establishing solar systems for lighting among others. On the other hand it was noted that men's chief concern is to acquire and accumulate wealth. Other strengths of

women mentioned by key informants are loving, resilience/inner strength, submissive, hardworking, faithful, good communicators, good listeners and not greedy for wealth.

The respondents were asked for their opinions on men's unique qualities for peace building. As is evident from the Table 5.6 nearly 30% of the respondents mentioned that men are courageous, bold and brave, 28% of the respondents mentioned wealthy and full of ideas, 12% of the respondents mentioned physical strength, 12% of the respondents mentioned power and authority and another 12% mentioned confident and firm. Other respondents represented by 14% mentioned persuasive, logical, calm, domineering and forceful. Eight respondents absconded.

Men have the strengths of power and authority which enable people to pay quick attention to decisions made by men and to implement them. Power, authority and control over resources are traditionally vested on men to enable them to perform their societal roles such as assuming leadership positions and providing for their families. Hence, the physical presence of men often lends credence to decisions arrived at since they cannot be overruled. Secondly, men's quality of physical strength is necessary for provision of security or protection against enemies. Hence, men are more likely to form vigilante groups and engage in fighting during war. Thirdly, men are seen to be logical and full of ideas. This may be the result of access to high levels of education and experience gained in public service which makes them to articulate issues more intelligently than women. Furthermore, men are bold and confident because the socialization process prepares them to execute leadership functions in the community. Apart from these roles, men are seen to be domineering because of their propensity to employ force or authority to assert themselves and to achieve their goals. Finally, it was mentioned that men are calm which enables them to be effective mediators during conflicts. This is opposed to women who are emotional and take side with parties they consider to be offended.

**Table 5.6** Men's unique qualities for peace building

| Men's unique qualities | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Courageous/bold/brave | 17 | 29.8 |
| Physical strength | 7 | 12.3 |
| Power and authority | 7 | 12.3 |
| Wealthy/full of ideas | 16 | 28.1 |
| Confident/firm | 7 | 12.3 |
| Others | 3 | 14.1 |
| Total | 57 | 100.0 |

*This table was derived from a multiple response question

Thus, study findings revealed that women and men's strengths in peace building arise from the traditional roles they occupy in the family and community. Consequently women acquire attributes such as gentleness, compassion, perseverance and humility which correspond to their nurturing and caretaking roles. On the other hand, men acquire attributes such as power, authority, confidence, courage to execute leadership roles in the public sphere and to provide protection for their families and communities. Therefore men are able to deal with problems of a seemingly insurmountable nature. It can therefore be argued that the roles and attributes which men and women acquire through the process of socialization prepare them to contribute differently to peace building initiatives.

### 4.8.1 How women's unique qualities for peace building can be tapped to promote sustainable peace

Respondents were asked for their opinions on how women's unique qualities for peace building can be tapped to promote sustainable peace in Molo division. Table 5.7 shows that majority of the respondents represented by 40% reported that women's strategies for peace building e.g. women groups activities and peace education should be enhanced and promoted, 21% of the respondents said that women should be involved fully in formal and informal spheres of peace building, 19% of the respondents said that women should receive more skill training in peace building while 7% of the respondents said that women's views should be incorporated in peace building initiatives. Other respondents represented by 6% mentioned that women's strengths can

be tapped by encouraging intermarriages to promote trust among warring ethnic groups, promoting recognition of women's peace building efforts by disseminating their achievements through the media and dissuading women from engaging in anti-social behaviour like brewing illicit brews.

**Table 5.7** How women's unique qualities for peace building can be tapped to promote sustainable peace

| How to tap women's strengths for peace building | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Women should be involved fully in PB at both formal and informal levels | 14 | 21.4 |
| Women should receive more education in PB | 12 | 18.5 |
| Enhance women's strategies in PB | 26 | 40.0 |
| Incorporate women's views in PB initiatives | 5 | 7.7 |
| Others | 4 | 6.2 |
| Missing responses | 4 | 6.2 |
| Total | 65 | 100.0 |

Other methods of data collection such as key informant interviews and focus group discussions also established that promoting women's peace building strategies is an effective way of tapping their strengths for peace building. This can be achieved providing financial support and skill training on peace building to members of women groups. Other activities by women such as prayer and preaching are critical for positive behaviour change and should be promoted. Moreover, women's role in peace education should be promoted by encouraging women to engage in civic education to increase awareness on the negative effects of conflict during war and peaceful times. Similarly, women should intensify their role as peace educators in their capacities as mothers, grandmothers and aunts. This will enable them to contribute to a peaceful world for present and future generations by empowering the youth with knowledge on how to maintain peace and harmony. This will also encourage the youth to seek their counsel and therefore to avoid making the wrong choices.

nformants also noted that women should be fully involved in socio-political affairs and in all levels of decision making including peace building. This will put them in authoritative positions to utilize their skills and experiences to promote women's rights. Yet, participation or an increase in degree of involvement alone will not yield positive change if the views of women are suppressed and not implemented. Therefore, women should be given an equal opportunity to voice their concerns through community mobilization, chief' *barazas* and during reconciliatory talks. This will increase their sense of ownership of the peace process and enhance their participation particularly if their views are acknowledged and implemented.

Promoting education for women and girls and equipping women with the necessary knowledge and skills for peace building is another way of tapping their unique qualities for peace building. This can be achieved by involving them in existing peace building workshops organized by churches, the government and NGOs. Women can also be trained in chief's *barazas* and women groups. Furthermore, it is important to exploit the potential role of women in peace building by sensitizing them to be aware of their peace building strengths to enable them to employ them in building peace. This is because although women can be effective peace makers most of them are neither assertive nor aware of their unique strengths for peace building. The peace building strengths of both women and men should be identified, enhanced and promoted.

Respondents also noted that it is important that women and men be proactive and not always rely on institutions and administrators to resolve problems afflicting them. Community members should be creative and innovative in coming up with strategies to handle the conflicts afflicting them. This is because local initiatives can be more effective than initiatives by administrators who may not act swiftly in resolving their problems. Finally, it was noted that there is need to adopt a state in which all community members share common aspirations and define themselves in terms of a unique common identity. This could be achieved by promoting the use of the national language in churches and schools and inter-cultural associations.

The respondents were asked to state their acquaintance with anybody who was participating at the formal sphere of peace building. About 89% of the respondents reported such acquaintance with men whereas 81% reported such acquaintance with women. In addition 10% of the

respondents reported that they did not have such acquaintance with men whereas 19% reported that they did not have such acquaintance with women. Those who reported in the affirmative were subsequently asked to indicate the age bracket and income level in which the men and women who participate in formal peace building initiatives could be classified.

A cross tabulation of age bracket by gender of those who participate in peace building at the formal level as shown in Table 5.8 reveals that most women who participate in formal peace building initiatives fall between ages 31 to 40 as reported by 31% of the respondents, and 41-40 as reported by 58% of the respondents. Additionally, only 9% of the respondents reported that women aged between 21-30 years participate in formal peace building initiatives. On the other hand, majority of men who participate in formal peace building initiatives fall between ages 41-50 as reported by 58% of the respondents.

From Table 5.8 middle aged women (31-50) form the majority of those who participate at the formal sphere of peace building while majority of men who participate at the formal level of peace building fall between the mid and late ages (41-50 and above). Women in the mid ages participate in formal peace building initiatives since they have become mothers and wives and are likely to feel the pain of losing their husbands and children more strongly. Their experiences as wives, mothers, nurturers, providers, caretakers and consolidators are likely to influence their participation in peace building. Similarly, a study by Odongo (2004) revealed that most women who participate in peace building fall between ages 26-40. He explains that this is partly because most women falling in this age bracket have become mothers and they feel the pain strongly when they or other women lose their children and husbands in conflicts.

Table 5.8 Age bracket by gender who participates in peace building at formal level

| Age bracket | %Men | %Women |
|-------------|------|--------|
| 21 to 30 | 1.7 | 9.6 |
| 31 to 40 | 16.7 | 30.8 |
| 41 to 50 | 55.0 | 57.7 |
| 51 + | 26.6 | 1.9 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 |

A cross tabulation of income by gender of those who participate in peace building at the formal level as shown in Table 5.9 reveals that over half of the respondents (54%) noted that most men who participate at the formal level of peace building fall in the high income bracket of 4000 and above. In addition, almost half of the respondents (47%) noted that most women who participate at this level of peace building fall in the high income bracket of 4000 and above. This reveals that participation in formal peace building initiatives is dominated by men as they have greater access to and control over resources than women. Thus, it can be deduced that lack of resources or women's low income status bars them from participating in formal peace building initiatives.

Table 5.9 Income bracket by gender that participates in peace building at formal level

| Income bracket | %Men | %Women |
|---|---|---|
| Less than 2000 | 8.5 | 7.5 |
| 2001 to 3000 | 6.8 | 24.5 |
| 3001 to 4000 | 30.5 | 20.8 |
| 4001 + | 54.2 | 47.2 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 |

The respondents were further asked whether their respective cultures approve women's participation in peace building to which 89% responded in the affirmative while only 10% responded that their cultures did not approve women's participation in peace building.

### 4.9 The differences in the peace building strategies of women and men

In this study, peace building strategies refer to approaches/methods used by women and men to prevent or resolve conflicts and to maintain peace in their communities. Measurable indicators include mechanisms of peace building such as dialogue, mediation, use of violence, building solidarity across ethnic lines, collecting and sharing information about imminent conflicts with relevant authorities and adopting orphans.

Table 6.0 was derived from responses obtained through key informant interviews and focus group discussions. As shown in the table, women and men employ different peace building strategies which match their traditional gender roles. Therefore, women's multiple roles as caretakers, providers and nurturers incline them to adopt a practical approach in peace building and to employ numerous activities to build peace at the family and community levels. On the other hand, men' peace building strategies are inclined to their traditional roles as leaders and protectors. Hence, it can be inferred that women and men's peace building strategies arise from their traditional gender roles.

**Table 6.0** Women and men's peace building strategies

| Women's peace building strategies | Men's peace building strategies |
|---|---|
| • Prayer<br>• Dialogue<br>• Mediation<br>• Looking for arbitrators<br>• Women groups<br>• Silence<br>• Assisting orphans and the sick<br>• Nurturing and instilling moral values on children<br>• Sharing problems<br>• Guidance and counseling<br>• Sharing information about rising conflicts with public administrators<br>• Holding demonstrations<br>• Hard work in economic activities<br>• Incitement<br>• Submission<br>• Compromise<br>• Perseverance<br>• Role modeling for fellow women and girls. | • Dialogue<br>• Chief's *barazas*<br>• Mediation<br>• Economic resources<br>• Power and authority<br>• Force and physical strength. |

The information in Table 6.1 represents responses to an item that sought the respondents' views on differences between women and men's peace building strategies at the formal level. As shown in the table, the majority of the respondents (32%) reported that men capitalize on their traditionally ascribed power and authority to advance images of being in control while women

concentrate on the pertinent issues. About 17% of the respondents reported that the decisions of men do not need anybody's approval but women's decisions are subject to the approval of men who do not always take their suggestions. Twelve percent of the respondents reported that women are diplomatic while men are forceful and another 12% reported that men are more equipped with skills for peace building at this level than women. About 14% of the respondents reported that there are no differences between women and men's peace building strategies as both of them work to achieve a common goal. Other respondents represented by 9% reported that men's strategies are inclined toward conflict resolution whereas those of women are inclined toward conflict prevention, others noted that unlike women who take time to consult other parties men make hasty decisions and that more men than women participate at the formal level of peace building. 3 respondents absconded.

The information in Table 6.1 is consistent with qualitative data obtained from key informant interviews and focus group discussions. Qualitative data established that although some decisions do not require men's approval, for the most part women's strategies do not yield quick results because their decisions are subject to the approval of men. It was noted that sometimes men oppose ideas if they are proposed by women. As one informant put it; '*a man can dismiss a good idea from his wife without a second thought.*' On the other hand, men's strategies yield quick results because their words are final. This implies that the leadership role as well as power and authority ascribed to men by tradition give them an advantage over women in deciding making.

This shows that women and men's relations in decision making and in the formal sphere of peace building are characterized by relations of dominance which reinforce the secondary social status traditionally ascribed to women. It is therefore important to change the social structure that perpetuates male dominance to give way to a structure that looks to women and men for solutions to life's crises. This is because the experiences, knowledge and skills of both women and men are essential components of the peace process.

Table 6.1 also reveals that women and men use the same strategies to build peace. This implies that women are beginning to overcome obstacles to their participation in formal peace building

initiatives and are gaining acceptance as equal partners with men in peace building. However, this view was expressed by a few respondents (14%). Majority of the respondents noted that men disregard the views proposed by women and that men constitute the majority of those who participate at the formal level of peace building.

Table 6.1 Differences between women's and men's peace building strategies at the formal level

| Differences in the peace building strategies of women and men at the formal level | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| No difference | 9 | 14.5 |
| Men rely on power and authority | 20 | 32.3 |
| Men are more equipped with skills than women | 8 | 12.9 |
| Men do not take suggestions from women | 11 | 17.7 |
| Women spiritual and diplomatic men forceful | 8 | 12.9 |
| Others | 6 | 9.6 |
| Total | 62 | 100.0 |

Qualitative data also established that men are confident and can freely engage in any conflict resolution. On the other hand, most women lack confidence to engage in conflict resolution particularly when it involves authorities and institutions like courts. This is linked to how women and men are brought up through socialization process in most societies and explains the information in Table 6.1 that more men than women participate in formal peace building initiatives.

Respondents were also asked to mention differences between women and men's strategies at the informal level of peace building. Table 6.2 shows that women are the custodians of peace in the domestic sphere as reported by 27% of the respondents. Twenty one percent of the respondents reported that men rely on physical strength, 15% of the respondents reported that women have a close relationship with the youth which gives them an upper hand in handling youth related conflicts, 10% of the respondents reported that men are considered experts in peace building while 9% reported that unlike men, women express solidarity by forming groups across socio-cultural divides. Other respondents represented by 15% reported that men are impartial while

women tend to side with parties they consider to be wronged, others said that men employ the use of resources and can easily get away with wrongdoing while others said that unlike men, women stem conflicts by handling them before they become established.

The information in Table 6.2 reveals that men are perceived to be the experts in peace building. However, Table 6.2 also reveals that women are the custodians of peace in the domestic sphere. This corresponds to the traditional gender division of labour which assigns men public responsibilities of decision making and conflict resolution whereas women are assigned roles in the domestic sphere. Qualitative data from key informant interviews and narratives also revealed that women are the custodians of peace in the domestic sphere. Women's peace activities in the domestic sphere include being respectful and patient with irresponsible husbands, persevering economic hardship and emotional problems while working hard to provide basic needs for their families. Women also remain with their children when their husbands desert them and welcome them back when they return. For example, a displaced woman noted that after the ethnic clashes, her husband deserted her and their children for a period of 10 years. However, she welcomed him when he returned for the sake of their children. Women also abandon their economic activities to take care of their husbands and children when they fall ill. Although it was noted that some women undermine peace in the domestic sphere by failing to perform their traditional roles it was noted that the majority have promoted peace by building stable families.

Table 6.2 Differences between women and men's peace building strategies at informal level

| Difference between men and women strategies of peace building at informal level | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Women are custodians of peace in the home | 18 | 27.7 |
| Women express solidarity by forming groups | 6 | 9.2 |
| Women closer to youths than men | 10 | 15.4 |
| Men only rely on physical strength | 14 | 21.5 |
| Men are considered experts in peace building | 7 | 10.8 |
| Others | 10 | 15.4 |
| Total | 65 | 100.0 |

Table 6.2 further shows that men rely on physical strength to build peace. However, it was noted that this strategy has the potential of yielding negative results. This information is consistent with data from key informant interviews which established that men employ excessive force (or *thorax* as put forward by many informants) in peace building. As a female informant put it; "A *man has no patience. He can slap you or insult you when he is angry. They use force, Even if they don't hit you physically, they will hit you with words.*" A male informant put it thus; "*A man will use thorax, a woman will use dialogue or go down in prayer. A man who is angry will fight first. Fighting is one way of resolving conflicts. In the past, if two men were in conflict and despised each other they were allowed to fight and the loser would respect his opponent.*" It was also noted that a man whose self image is threatened by his wife who accomplishes something he's unable to do will assert himself forcefully by assaulting her. This information was confirmed by a displaced woman who recounted that her husband physically assaulted her on the claim that she made him to look unimportant by educating their children with money she obtained through prostitution. She noted that while her husband was not providing anything for the family upkeep, she was able to provide basic needs and pay school fees for their children by selling vegetables and pooling resources in a women's group. As a result her husband employed force to assert his authority and to discourage her from engaging in the activities which made him to look insignificant.

It was noted that while men employ force as a strategy of peace building women employ gentle and peaceful strategies such as compromise, forgiveness, dialogue and submission which do not generate negative results. However, it was noted that not all men are forceful as some of them employ diplomatic ways to settle conflicts. Since men are socialized to be aggressive and are gifted with physical strength they use force to assert themselves or to build peace. On the other hand, women are socialized to be subservient and gentle in order to perform their traditional roles as nurturers and caretakers. This predisposes them to use non-violent means of resolving conflicts.

Qualitative data from key informant interviews and focus group discussions also revealed that men use economic resources at their disposal to resolve conflicts. A case was reported in which a herd of animals strayed into a neighbours farm and caused crop damage. The owner of the farm

confronted the owner of the herd but the latter only enquired about the amount of compensation he wanted for the crop damage. This strategy resolved the dispute in the short term as the relationship between the two parties remained severed. This was because the owner of the herd was unremorseful and indifferent to the anguish the incident had caused to the landowner. On the other hand, it was noted that a woman who lacked resources would have employed a different approach to resolve the conflict. For instance, she could have expressed regret and assured her neighbor that she would be careful with the animals in future. Consequently, even without compensation, the aggrieved party could have opted to forgive her and a harmonious relationship would be maintained. This implies that the lower economic position of women enables them to employ appropriate strategies to resolve conflicts as opposed to men who can buy their way our of problems because of the economic resources at their disposal.

The information in Table 6.2 as well as qualitative data from key informant interviews also established that men are seen to be impartial but women tend to take sides and to reprimand whoever they feel is the offender. Due to their impartiality men are able to get to the root of the problem. As a displaced woman put it: "*When your child and mine are involved in a fight, I will side with my child even if he is the one who has offended your child. If my child beats your child, it will be alright with me because my child is not hurt. Isn't that wrong? You are supposed to reprimand both children......Women are like that and I am one of them. But men are impartial and will reprimand both children as their own.*" Women's traditional roles of caretakers and nurturers predispose them to be sympathetic. This emotional side of women predispose them to side with parties they feel have been wronged and to reprimand those they feel are the offenders. This affects their neutrality in the settlement of disputes.

Another difference between women and men's informal peace building strategies is that unlike men, women express solidarity with one another across socio-cultural divides through their women groups. Women's solidarity is further exemplified by the large number of women who turn up for public demonstrations against issues that commonly affect them such as the production of illicit brews which are consumed by their sons and husbands. Furthermore, several single mothers had also teamed up to solve boundary problems by pooling resources to buy

wood for fencing their land. Thus, women advance their causes by drawing strength from one another.

Qualitative data also established that the difference between women and men's peace building strategies is that when facing problems women postpone judgment to share them or to consult other people on how to solve them but men make hasty decisions and do not share their problems with others. For instance, a woman can look for an arbitrator to help in solving a domestic problem but a man will not disclose his problem for fear of being viewed as incapable of handling his domestic problems. It was also noted that postponing judgment enables women to review their options and increases the likelihood that the problem will be solved well. Women more readily admit that they do not know the solutions to their problems and will seek help from others. In contrast, men keep their problems to themselves so as to preserve the image of being in control of their families.

Qualitative data from key informant interviews also established that both women and men provide reports about imminent conflicts in their villages to the relevant authorities. However, it was noted that women always provide true reports but men sometimes provide false reports. Moreover, when women engage in conflict resolution they contribute ideas which they go further to implement. On the other hand, men engage only in rhetoric. This shows that women resolve conflicts in a practical way.

In addition, it was noted that the chief concern of men is to acquire and accumulate wealth but women are resourceful and perform numerous activities in the home and in the community to build peace. These include nurturing and education of children on moral values, managing the homestead, nursing the sick, assisting orphans, participating in church activities and women's development projects such as tree planting and construction of water tanks. Moreover, it was noted that men can be indifferent to other people's plight but women are sympathetic and dedicate a lot of their time to assist needy people. The numerous peace activities of women correspond to their traditional roles as wives, mothers, nurturers, providers, caretakers, house keeping and community management roles. On the other hand men's fewer peace building initiatives correspond to their few traditional roles as leaders and guardians.

Finally, a few informants revealed that there are no major differences between women and men's peace building strategies as they both work for a common goal which is to build sustainable peace. However, the informants noted that the slight differences in women and men's peace building strategies can be attributed to their gender. For instance, women and men both use demonstrations as a peace building strategy but women's sense of solidarity enables them to turn up for demonstrations in large numbers as opposed to men who turn up in small numbers. Secondly, although prayer is a peace building strategy used by both women and men, the percentage of men who use prayer as a strategy of building peace is significantly lower than that of women. This is because women are the majority of those who attend or participate in church activities where they learn and realize the effectiveness of prayer as a strategy of peace building. Thus, it can be inferred that the peace building strategies women and men use are related to the attributes they acquire through socialization process. These strategies are also perfected through the performance of their traditional roles.

Finally, the peace building strategies employed by women and men in formal and informal levels of peace building are also linked to the formal and informal mechanisms of peace building in Molo division. For instance, women's peace building strategies are linked to informal mechanisms of peace building such as guidance and counseling, women's group activities, church based initiatives such as visiting the sick, reporting insecurity issues to local administrators and peace education. On the other hand, men's peace building strategies are linked to formal mechanisms of peace building such as dialogue by elders, arbitration by government officials such as chiefs and policemen, dialogue between members of different ethnic groups, church based initiatives such as CJPC and preventive diplomacy. Thus, women and men build peace within their socially accepted roles.

Table 6.3 shows responses to an item that sought the respondents' views on the effectiveness of women and men's peace building strategies. As shown in Table 6.3, 47% of the respondents reported that women's peace building strategies were more effective than men's peace building strategies, 20% of the respondents reported that the peace building strategies of men and women were both effective and complementary, 16% of the respondents reported that men's peace building strategies were more effective than women's peace building strategies while 10% of the

respondents reported that they did not know. This shows that the majority of the respondents felt that women's peace building strategies were more effective than men's peace building strategies. This could be partly because women use gentle and peaceful strategies which do not yield negative results. Women's traditional roles also enable them to approach conflict in a practical way and to employ numerous peace building initiatives which cut across various spheres of life and improve the overall quality of life. Women also strengthen conflict prevention activities by addressing problems before they take root as opposed to men whose strategies are more inclined towards conflict resolution.  On the other hand the information in Table 6.3 also shows that the peace building strategies of women and men are both effective and complementary. This is because women and men approach conflicts differently, have different strengths and employ strategies which differ by gender to resolve them.

Table 6.3 Comparison of effectiveness of women and men's strategies for peace building

| Effectiveness of women and men's strategies for peace building | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Women's strategies more effective than men's | 31 | 47.7 |
| Both sexes' strategies effective | 13 | 20.0 |
| Men's strategies more effective than women's | 11 | 16.9 |
| Don't know | 10 | 15.4 |
| Total | 65 | 100.0 |

This information was confirmed by qualitative data from key informant interviews. Since women and men have different concerns and employ peace building strategies which differ by gender they are proficient in handling different types of conflicts. For instance, women are more skilled than men in handling conflicts associated with the youth because they employ gentle and peaceful strategies as opposed to men who employ force. For example, a man who discovers that his child is engaging in a bad habit like alcoholism would react by beating the child or chasing him away from home. This compels the child to go back to the drinking dens where he continues with the bad habit. On the other hand, a woman would try to persuade the child to stop the bad habit in a gentle way. This is because women are often the ones who are blamed when children

turn out to be irresponsible. One informant captured this succinctly as follows; *"a good child is a father's pride but a bad child is a mother's cry."* Moreover, as nurturers and providers women develop close bonds with their children from an early age which make them to have an influential impact on their behaviour.

As mothers, women are caring and concerned with the future of their children. Because of their social position as wives, women are aware that their married daughters would lose economic security in their matrimonial homes in the event that their marriages break. Hence, while men do not prefer to bestow property inheritance rights on their married daughters, women do not discriminate against their children and ensure that they all inherit wealth. Consequently, women handle property inheritance disputes better than men. Women also handle the problem of illicit brews better than men because they are concerned about the welfare of their sons and husbands who consume the illicit brews. Women provide information on the location of illicit brews to administrators and storm the drinking dens to pour the illicit drinks. It was noted that given the mandate to deal with this problem women can terminate it because of their concern for their children's welfare. On the contrary, men are not capable of handling this problem effectively as they are the ones who buy and consume illicit drinks.

Thirdly, women are more proficient than men in handling intrapersonal and domestic conflicts because they tend to share the problems they encounter or to seek advice from other parties on how to tackle them. Sharing problems reduces the burden of suffering on the affected person and increases the chance that the problem would be solved well as he or she is likely to get a good solution from other parties. For instance, if a woman who is affected by HIV/AIDS disease shares the problem with her children it becomes easier to deal with it since they will support her. Similarly, sharing her problem enables her to encounter people in similar or worse circumstances who advise her on how to tackle the problem. On the contrary, a man will not disclose his problem to other parties which makes it more difficult to deal with. In addition, men make hasty decisions and this reduces the chance that the problem will be solved effectively. Consequently, men respond to adversity by resorting to alcoholism or abandoning their families whereas women stick with their children and make tremendous sacrifices to maintain stable families.

Fourthly, women are sympathetic and go out of their way to assist needy people. Hence women are more proficient than men in handling problems afflicting other people such as HIV/AIDS, landlessness and bereavement better. For example, women offer the landless casual jobs to do and take the trouble to assist sick people or to report the sick to the relevant people. Whereas women also abandon their productive activities to take care of their husbands and children when they fall ill, it was noted that men can be indifferent to other people's needs and may abandon their sick wives to go and look for wealth.

Data from key informant interviews revealed that women's peace building strategies are effective. Although women make decisions unhurriedly, they are swifter than men in containing problems that could potentially lead to conflicts. This shows that women are keener than men in conflict prevention. This information is consistent with date obtained from the structured questionnaires that women do not take for granted issues that can cause conflicts and act swiftly to contain them.

Qualitative data also revealed that the effectiveness of women's peace building strategies depends on the prevailing circumstances. For example, the effectiveness of prayer depends on the timing, the level of commitment of the persons using it as a tool for peace building and their ability to accompany it with appropriate actions. Consequently, prayer can be effective for purposes of conflict prevention and building sustainable peace after conflict has subsided but it is not an effective peace building strategy in the context of ethnic clashes. Another peace building strategy employed by women is incitement. Its effectiveness lies in the fact that men do not like to be challenged by women and will take any action when provoked by women. However, its effectiveness also depends on the prevailing situation because when incited by women men can take action which can yield either positive or negative results. Thirdly, the effectiveness of public demonstrations as a peace building strategy depends on the level of publicity accorded them. This is because administrators do not like to be portrayed in bad light and would act swiftly to address the issue if is accorded a high level of publicity.

On the other hand qualitative data revealed that men are more proficient in resolving land conflicts since such conflicts are often the result of animosity between men. Moreover, when

women are married into new families they may be unaware of the nature of existing land problems and this makes them less proficient in solving them. Men are more proficient in handling conflicts that require physical strength such as providing security and fighting enemies. Finally, due to power and authority vested on them by tradition, men are capable of handling conflicts of a seemingly insurmountable nature such as ethnic clashes.

## 4.10 The impact of women's role in peace building

Respondents were asked their views on the impact of women's role in peace building in current and traditional settings. According to Figure 3, 87% of the respondents reported that in the current setting, women's role had produced positive results, 6% of the respondents reported that it had produced negative results, while 6% of the respondents reported that they did not know. In addition 75% of the respondents reported that in traditional societies, women's role in peace building had produced positive results, 10% of the respondents reported that it had produced negative results while 13% of the respondents reported that they did not know. The two ranges were subtracted and the results were compared at traditional and current settings. From the chart above it is evident that the impact of women's role in peace building is felt more at current than traditional settings. This could be due to improved participation of women in formal peace building initiatives in the current setting. This has given them a platform to challenge and abolish unfair practices such as female genital mutilation, wife battering and gender discrimination.

**Figure 3** The impact of women's role in peace building at current and traditional settings
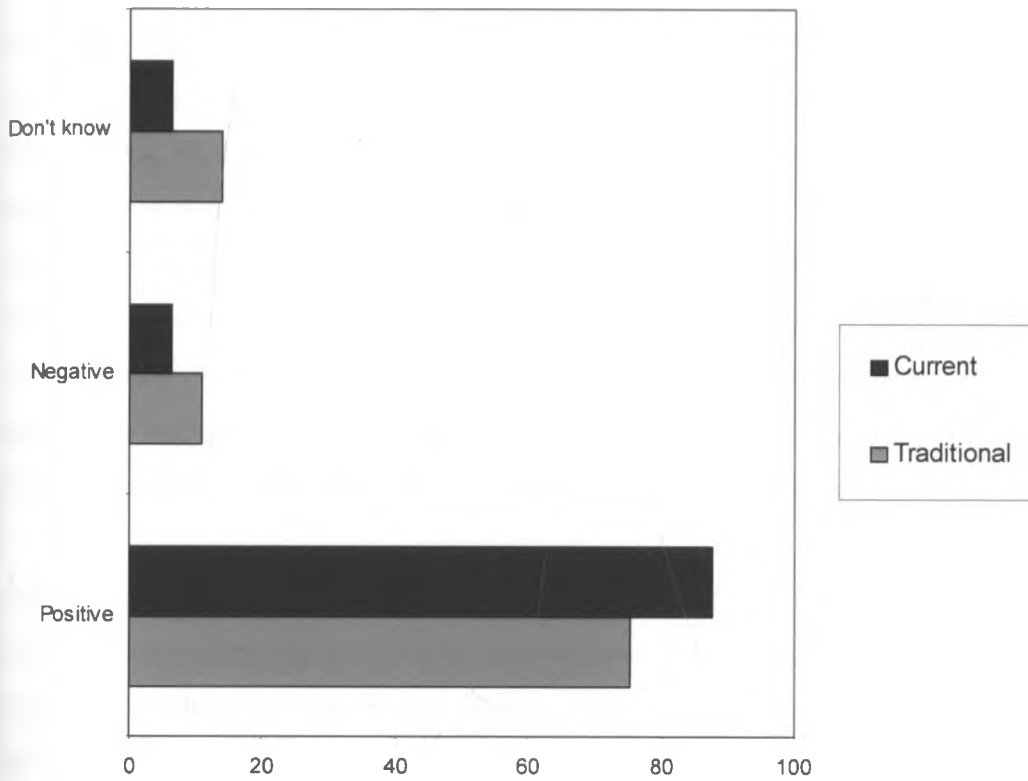


Qualitative data from key informant interviews and focus group discussions established that in both traditional and contemporary societies, women either contribute to peace or undermine it through their actions. In traditional societies, women's role in peace building made a positive impact. Notably, food security, stable families, peaceful relations between rival communities and morally upright and responsible youth were results of women's peace efforts in traditional societies. Furthermore, women in traditional societies were diligent in performing their traditional roles. Moreover, men viewed women's efforts to participate in decision making as a threat and frustrated them. On the other hand, there were also problematic women in traditional societies who contributed negatively to peace efforts.

Qualitative data also revealed that currently women's role in peace building has made a big impact at the family level. It was unanimously reported that women are custodians of peace in the domestic sphere. Hence, stable families were mentioned to be the product of women's peace building efforts in the family. Women make many sacrifices to maintain peaceful families. For

example, they persevere in the face of domestic problems. They also work hard to provide basic needs for their families and to pay school fees for their children when their husbands become irresponsible or desert them. It was noted that happiness abounds in families where alcoholic men who were previously unable to cater for the economic needs of their families have reformed. This was due to their wives' unwavering kindness, patience, hard work, respect and caring attitude. Even the youth who were previously irresponsible because of alcohol abuse have reformed with the result that there are fewer nightclubs as existing ones are not frequented by the youth. This has reduced incidences of alcoholism, promiscuity and family disputes. Moreover, in spite of economic hardships children in many families continue to go to school because of their mother's efforts to educate them. As one informant put it *'many parents' day meetings are attended by single women who strive to ensure that their children learn without fee balances.'*

Secondly, women have achieved economic independence and improved the standard of living in their homes by engaging in income generating activities and economic activities in women groups. Consequently, they do not have to earn an income by engaging in prostitution at the nearest urban centers or stop-overs such as Salgaa and Total. Women's economic independence has forestalled resource related conflicts and reduced tension in the family which arises when women persistently ask their husbands for money. Notably, following the ethnic clashes displaced women who were single had to fend for themselves and their children in the absence of their husbands. In the process of working hard to fend for themselves by offering casual labour in farms, engaging in income generating activities and pooling resources in women groups the women achieved economic independence. Thus, they were able to buy household items and provide shelter for their families by renting houses or buying land to construct their own houses.

The peace building skills women learn in churches or pastoral seminars organized by churches enhance their abilities to build peace in their homes. Women are the majority of people who attend church services where they learn the Christian virtues of tolerance, forgiveness, humility, patience and respect as well as the effectiveness of prayer as a tool for resolving conflicts. These qualities underpin women's efforts to build and maintain peace in their families. It was also established that currently, the impact of women's role in peace building has not been felt in a big way at the community level. This is because women are underrepresented in formal peace

building initiatives and mainly contribute to peace efforts informally through their day to day activities. In addition, even when participating in peace building, women encounter additional obstacles when their views are sidelined by men. This limits the potential impact of women's peace building efforts at the community level.

Nonetheless, women's informal peace building initiatives have made a positive impact. For example, women have contributed to community development by initiating development projects through their women groups. Notably, women in Molo pooled resources in women groups for a long period in order to construct water tanks. This has averted a water crisis in the division and provided water for home use, irrigation and watering livestock. Those who still do not have water tanks in their homesteads also benefit from the water tanks in their neighbours' homes. Other development projects by women groups include installation of solar systems for lighting and construction of zero grazing units for livestock. These development projects have won the approval of men who always take credit for their wives' efforts. Moreover, women's religious associations such as the Mothers' Union of the ACK initiated the construction of a hall that would be hired out to groups for holding functions while the Mothers' Guild in the PCEA, initiated the construction of a girls' hostel so that day scholars in nearby schools would not have to rent houses. Finally, the membership of women groups cuts across socio cultural divides. Hence, women groups enhance inter-cultural interaction, tolerance and promote the exchange of ideas among women of different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

Women also draw strength from one another to address community problems such as brewing and consumption of illicit brews. Women hold demonstrations against the brewing of illicit brews and collect and share information about the location of these brews with local administrators. Sometimes they storm the brewers' dens with local administrators to pour the liquor. Therefore, women's efforts have made the police to be more vigilant in addressing the problem of illicit brews. Secondly, during the ethnic clashes, women organized a demonstration which made the whole country aware of the crisis in Molo and prompted the Provincial Commissioner to take action. Later, security was boosted in the area. Moreover, during the ethnic clashes, displaced women worked together to convince their sons and husbands to stop the violence. This was after realizing that they were losing their husbands and sons in the conflict.

Women are also at the forefront in mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS. Women form the majority of people offering voluntary services for the sick as well as pastoral counseling. These efforts by women have brought relief to people living with HIV/AIDS. Moreover, through pastoral counseling, many people living with HIV/AIDS have gained spiritual nourishment and have reconciled with their relatives who abandoned them. Apart from providing nursing care, women are also involved in peer education and youth counseling on HIV/AIDS. This has increased HIV/AIDS awareness and people's ability to make informed choices to prevent infection. In addition, women provide moral and material support to orphans and spiritual nourishment to members of the community.

Women's activism against gender discrimination has increased women's access to education, leadership and decision making which has changed perceptions about women's leadership abilities. Incidences of wife battering and female genital mutilation and early marriages of girls have reduced as a result of women' campaigns against gender violence. Moreover, women's civic education efforts have increased community awareness on the necessity of peace, the negative effects of violence and how to prevent conflicts.

On the other hand it was noted that women have also contributed negatively to peace efforts. For instance, some women do not support or associate with poor members of their families. Others undermine peace by choosing to pursue careers at the expense of their traditional roles of mothers and wives. Others compete with spouses who fail to support their families by refusing to work hard to provide basic needs for their children while others sell property upon the death of their husbands and leave their children suffering. It was also noted that sometimes women alienate themselves by refusing to associate with other women. Women who do not share their problems with others find it harder to deal with them and this may lead to depression and death. For example, an incident was mentioned whereby a woman committed suicide after she became overwhelmed by frequent beatings from her husband for failing to give birth to sons. It was noted that had she shared her problem with other women they would have told her that the inability to sire boys was due to her husband and not to her.

inally, sometimes women's efforts to build peace generate negative results. For example, men who are unable to provide for their families feel threatened when their wives manage to do so ence they frustrate their efforts. Moreover, conflicts arise between women and micro-finance institutions when women fail to repay their loans. When it happens, men prevent their wives rom participating in women groups activities.

able 6.4 presents responses to a question that sought the respondents' perceptions on the articipation of women and men in peace building. As shown in the table, the majority of the espondents represented by 89% disagreed with the view that men are the perpetrators of conflict nd should be the only participants in peace building, 47% of the respondents strongly agreed vith the view that there should be equal participation of men and women in conflict resolution vhile 50% agreed with this view. Thus, it was almost unanimously accepted that there should be qual participation of men and women in peace building as reported by 97% of the respondents.

**Table 6.4** Respondents perceptions of the participation of women and men in peace building

| | %<br>Strongly<br>Agree | %<br>Agree | %<br>Uncertain | %<br>Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Men are the perpetrators of conflict and should be the only participants in peace building | 4.6 | 4.6 | 1.5 | 89.2 |
| There should be equal participation of men and women in conflict resolution | 47.7 | 50.8 | 1.5 | 0.0 |

.11 **Women's traditional strategies that should be integrated into their current peace uilding strategies for sustainability.**

espondents were asked which peace building strategies used by women in traditional societies hould be integrated into women's current peace building strategies for the promotion of ustainable peace. As shown in Table 6.5, 27% of the respondents mentioned submissiveness to usbands, 24% mentioned role modeling, 20% mentioned the spirit of collective responsibility, 5% mentioned peace education for the youth by age and sex while other respondents

represented by 12% mentioned involvement of elderly women in the settlement of disputes, promotion of association through trade and visits, the spirit of hard work, praying for peace and intermarriages. Thus, it can be deduced from these findings that women's peace building strategies in traditional societies are essential components of the peace process. Hence, they should be integrated into contemporary women's peace building efforts.

**Table 6.5** Women's traditional strategies that should be integrated into their current peace building strategies for sustainable peace

| Women's traditional peace building strategies to be integrated into their current peace building strategies | No. of respondents | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Peace education for youth by age and sex | 10 | 15.4 |
| Spirit of collective responsibility | 13 | 20.0 |
| Submit to husbands | 18 | 27.7 |
| Role modeling for members of the community | 16 | 24.6 |
| Others | 8 | 12.3 |
| Total | 65 | 100.0 |

# CHAPTER FIVE
## 5.0 SUMMARY

As has been noted in previous chapters, the assumption that women are primarily victims in conflict situations obscures the important contributions they make to peace efforts. This has led to women's exclusion from formal peace negotiations which deny peace efforts a chance of utilizing the unique experiences and strengths of women for peace building. This study has highlighted several issues regarding the role of women in peace building in the context of Molo division. It has also shed light on the traditional institutions and values critical to a culture of peace that have been eroded and its implications for peace in contemporary settings. Finally, the study gives recommendations on how to strengthen the participation of women in peace building efforts for the effective promotion of peace.

The first objective of the study was to identify the role of women in peace building in traditional settings. The study has revealed the contributions women made in both formal and informal peace building initiatives. The findings show that in traditional African societies, women did not play a major role in formal peace building initiatives as the responsibility of settling disputes was vested on a male dominated council of elders. However, women's degree of influence over the political and legal aspects of their societies varied across cultures. Hence, in some cultures, women especially elderly women were associated with the council of elders. Nevertheless, in most traditional societies women played a secondary role in the resolution of armed conflicts by providing support services and influencing decisions through their husbands and male relatives. However, this informal influence on men was vital since women could change the attitude of their men folk from perpetrating violence to building peace. Therefore women in traditional societies played an indirect role in formal peace building initiatives.

With regards to the informal sphere of peace building in traditional settings, the findings revealed that women contributed to a culture of peace by transmitting positive cultural values to the young in their capacities as mothers, aunts, grandmothers and female caretakers of initiates during circumcision ceremonies. These lessons were enforced by strict sanctions that impelled the youth to abide by the lessons learnt. The study has also shown that women in traditional societies were symbols of peace as they represented the ideal picture of a woman who built peace through her virtues. For instance, by being submissive and respectful to their husbands, they

avoided situations that could be disruptive of peace in the domestic sphere. Women embodied the traditional values of tolerance, humility, perseverance, gentleness, respect for elders, compassion and hard work thus setting a good example for girls and other women to emulate. Through intermarriages, married women were symbols of peace as they acted as the means by which rival ethnic groups could resolve conflicts and put a permanent seal on peace pacts. Thereafter, the feuding parties could not engage in fights with their blood relatives. Thus, women in traditional societies made an important contribution to peace efforts in the informal sphere. Thus, it can be concluded that women in traditional societies played an indirect, less active role in formal peace building initiatives and an active role in informal peace building initiatives.

The study established that the traditional values and sanctions that underpinned peace efforts in traditional societies have been eroded. Traditional institutions of learning such as parental instruction, circumcision rites and grandmother's stories have been replaced by new ways of obtaining knowledge such as schools and the mass media that are not tailored to instill moral values or life skills. In addition, modern women do not sufficiently perform the role of peace educators as their traditional counterparts. This is because they spend a lot of time outside the home and dedicate a little time to their families and children. The result is a moral breakdown in the society as evidenced by several instances of teenage pregnancies, fights between children and their parents, incest and drug abuse. The situation is worsened by the erosion of traditional sanctions such as elders' curses that could oblige the youth to abide by the lessons learnt. This underscores the need to revitalize traditional values and institutions that were central to a culture of peace and the critical role of women as peace educators so that they can transmit positive cultural values to the young from a tender age.

The second objective sought to determine the contemporary role of women in peace building at the grassroots level. The findings show that women are underrepresented in formal spheres of peace building at the grassroots level. Among the attitudinal factors that hinder women from actively participating in formal peace building initiatives are the assumption that peace building is the domain of men and women's lack of confidence to participate in activities that put them in the public limelight. This is because of the socialization process which prepares them to perform roles in the private sphere. Situational factors that bar women from actively participating in

formal peace building initiatives include lack of peace building skills, resources and time due to the burden of responsibilities in the home. Thus, the study recommends that women's access to training and educational opportunities be improved to enable them to acquire confidence and skills to participate actively in peace building at decision making levels.

On the other hand, the study draws attention to women's peace activities in the informal sphere of peace building. These efforts are largely unnoticed because women perform them as an extension of their traditional gender roles such as nursing the sick, child nurturing, supporting orphans and the poor, providing food for the family and guidance and counselling. The study established that peace building starts in the family and that women are the custodians of peace in the family. Women make several efforts and sacrifices to maintain stable families thus laying the foundation for a just and peaceful society. At the community level, they participate in various socio-economic activities that contribute to an improved quality of life. For instance, they form the majority of people who provide voluntary services to the sick and material support to orphans in the community. Through their women groups, women have initiated development projects such as construction of water tanks and installation of solar systems for lighting. It was also displaced women's initiative to hold a demonstration to protest against the violence in Molo division that made the entire country aware of the 1992 ethnic clashes. This prompted the government to beef up security in the area. On the other hand, findings reveal that displaced women fuelled the violence by inciting men to go and fight back their enemies. Thus, it can be concluded that currently, women are moderately involved in formal peace building initiatives and actively involved in informal peace building initiatives.

The findings of this study expose women as agents of both peace and war making. This challenges the traditional perception of women as passive victims of war. Although women suffered disproportionately from the effects of the ethnic conflict in Molo division, they were active in their roles as caretakers, providers, home makers, consolidators and peace makers. They also participated in fuelling the violence. This lends credence to the fact that women are agents of peace with unique abilities that should be tapped for peace promotion. This introduces the next two objectives of this study which were to determine the unique peace building strengths of women and the differences in the peace building strategies of women and men.

The study revealed that women and men's peace building strengths stem from their traditional gender roles. The socialization process which prepares women and men to perform different roles in the society enables them to acquire different attributes for peace building. Thus, women strengths such as mothers, wives, compassion and gentleness arise from their roles as caretakers, nurturers and providers. Moreover, women's strengths of prayer and solidarity stem from their spirituality and involvement in women groups through which they draw strength from one another to address individual and communal problems. On the other hand, the findings revealed that men's peace building strengths include power, authority, boldness and confidence which arise from their traditional gender roles as leaders and protectors. Thus, men's decisions carry weight and are quickly heard and implemented as opposed to women's decisions which are subject to the approval of men. Thus, it can be concluded that there is an association between gender and women and men's peace building strengths.

The fourth objective of the study sought to identify the differences in the peace building strategies of women and men. The study established that the socialization process enables women and men to acquire different attributes and prepares them to contribute differently to peace building efforts. The findings revealed that women and men employ peace building strategies which differ by gender. Women's perception of peace is broad and they employ a variety of strategies which cut across various spheres of life leading to improvements in the overall quality of life. For instance, women's peace building strategies included inculcating a culture of peace to the young, , praying individually and in groups, taking care of the sick and orphans, guidance and counseling, sharing information about imminent conflicts with local administrators and initiating community development projects through their women groups. On the other hand, men's use strategies such as power, authority, dialogue and resources at their disposal to build peace.

The study also established that women and men's peace building strategies are linked to their respective peace building strengths. Through the socialization process, men acquire attributes such as aggressiveness, physical strength, and a domineering character. Hence, men are inclined to employ strategies such as force or physical violence which can yield negative results. On the

other hand, women are socialized to be gentle, submissive, soft and peaceful which predispose them to employ gentle and peaceful ways of resolving conflicts. Thus, the strategies women use to build peace include compromise, caring for others, silence, submission, prayer and persuasive dialogue. Hence, women are also more likely to opt for dialogue and compromise rather than confrontation and competition during peace negotiations.

The study revealed that women and men are proficient in handling different types of conflicts because they acquire different attributes through the socialization process. For instance, men are skilled in handling conflicts requiring authority or courage such as insurmountable security problems because of the strengths of power, authority and boldness. On the other hand, women are skilled in handling conflicts requiring patience, compassion, solidarity, gentleness or compromise such as conflicts associated with the young and problems affecting needy people. In line with the findings, it can be concluded that there is an association between gender and the peace building strategies used by women and men.

The final objective of this study was to determine the impact of women's role in peace building. The findings show that the impact of women's peace building efforts is felt most at the family level. Notably, stable families were noted to be the products of women's peace efforts. Women contribute to food and economic security in the family even without the support of their husbands. Their hard work in economic activities has enabled them to improve the standard of living in their families and to achieve economic independence. This has in turn reduced resource related conflicts in the family.

At the community level, women have addressed community problems such as lack of water and electricity by initiating development projects like construction of water tanks, installation of solar systems for lighting and construction of a girl's hostel for day scholars in Molo town who come from distant areas through activities in their women groups. Women groups also promote inter-ethnic tolerance since their membership cut across different ethnic groups. Women groups also provide an environment that is suitable for learning, sharing problems with other women and providing psychosocial counselling. In addition, women in leadership have proposed laws outlawing gender violence and which protect women's rights. Consequently, incidences of wife

battering, female genital mutilation and early marriages have reduced. Women's participation in leadership has also changed perceptions about women's leadership and decision making abilities. After the ethnic clashes, displaced women pooled resources in women groups and were able to purchase household goods whereas female heads of households were able to purchase land, construct houses and resettle their families. Thus, women overcame traditional barriers to achieve economic independence and land ownership which was previously the domain of men. Thus, it is important to recognize and build on women's initiatives and the gains they have made.

On the other hand the findings revealed that women contribute negatively to peace efforts when they fail to perform their traditional roles or refuse to assist poor members of their families. Women also contribute negatively to peace efforts when they influence men to perpetrate violence. In addition, when women become drunk as a result of alcohol consumption they become negative influences and can no longer transmit positive values to the young. Thus, the study revealed that women make positive and negative contributions to peace efforts.

Finally, the study revealed that the impact of women's role in peace building is felt more in current than traditional settings. This may be partly because women are now directly involved in leadership and in peace building at decision making levels as opposed to women in traditional societies who were largely excluded from formal peace negotiations. Through direct participation in decision making women have been able to propose laws for the protection of women's rights and have challenged negative and harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and wife battering. In conclusion, it can be noted that the impact of women's role in peace building is felt more in current than in traditional settings.

## 5.1 CONCLUSIONS

It has been argued that traditional thinking about women and peace either ignores women or regards them as victims. This oversight has cost the world dearly. In the wars of the past decade, civilians were not merely caught in the cross fire, they were deliberately targeted by military strategists. Just as warfare has become inclusive, with civilian deaths more common than soldiers' deaths, so too must the approach to ending conflict. Today the goal is not simply the absence of war but the creation of just peace by fostering fundamental social changes including

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gender equality (Hunt 2001). Anderlini (2000) reports that the peace table often presents opportunities for the reconstruction of political, social and economic institutions that follow.

Although the role of women in peace building is critical for building sustainable peace, women's efforts must be complemented by other actors particularly men and administrative structures. Thus, the critical lesson is that no single person or group can claim the entire peace process and women's efforts should therefore complement those of other actors in the entire peace process (Kathina 2000).

It is therefore worth noting that women's contribution is a prerequisite for the success of peace efforts at all levels. Women's holistic approach to peace building is vital for the realization of positive peace which goes beyond the mere absence of violence to promoting fundamental changes in the society including gender equality, social and economic justice and protection of basic human rights. Therefore, it is important to address barriers to women's active participation in formal peace building initiatives so that women and men can work together for peace. It is also important to recognize women's informal peace building initiatives and tap their unique strengths as mothers, wives, caretakers and nurturers for effective peace building in contemporary societies.

## 5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendations on women's traditional strategies that should be integrated into contemporary peace building approaches.**

**At the family level:**

1. Strengthen the role of women as peace educators to enable the young to be educated on moral and positive cultural values. There is need to sensitize women to dedicate more time to instill moral values on their children and the role of aunts, grandmothers in child upbringing should be reinstated. Appropriate sanctions and punishments should be put in place to enforce the lessons learnt.

2. Women's informal influence as mothers and wives is vital for peace building efforts. Women should assume the responsibility of dissuading their sons and husbands from perpetrating conflicts to building peace.

**At the community level:**

3. Revitalize the role of women as symbols of peace. Women should be encouraged to adopt the traditional values that were critical to a culture of peace in traditional settings. This will ensure that young girls have role models to emulate. The role of married women as symbols of peace should also be revitalized by promoting intermarriages between feuding tribes to diffuse tensions.

4. Admit elderly women into the council of elders to incorporate women's perspectives in the resolution of conflicts. Community members should participate in the selection of members of the council. The criteria for selection of members to the council of elders should include renowned, respectable and morally upright persons in the community and targets for the number of women to participate should be set.

5. Revive the cooperative spirit of women in traditional societies since behaviour change often occurs in the context of support or pressure from a group. Encourage them to form cooperative work groups such as those in traditional societies to support one another in their quest for sustainable peace.

**Recommendations on how to tap women's peace building strengths and/or how to strengthen their role in peace building**

**At the family level and community levels**

1. Establish targets for the number of women participating in peace negotiations so that women are not marginalized in formal peace building initiatives. This will give women an equal opportunity with men to utilize their peace building strengths and skills.

2. Empower women with knowledge, skills and resources they need to participate in peace building efforts. Such knowledge includes conflict management, gender mainstreaming, cultural awareness, HIV/AIDS counseling, improved agricultural practices, entrepreneurship and home making skills which can be imparted through seminars. There is need to provide financial support and loans to women groups to enhance their efforts to build peace in the family and community. Knowledge on better agricultural practices will lessen women's burden and enable them to participate actively in development processes.

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3. Involve women in exchange programmes with women from outside the community to enable them to exchange ideas and learn from the peace activities of women in other districts.

4. Recognize women's peace building efforts by showcasing their achievements in the family and community through strategies like documentation, the mass media and establishing national awards for women who have made exemplary efforts in peace building. This will boost their morale to participate actively in peace building.

## Policy recommendations

1. Create awareness among various communities of positive traditional values and promote them through the mass media, seminars, chief's *barazas,* women groups, formal and non formal education curricula songs, IEC materials and other communication channels. Identify and document indigenous mechanisms of conflict resolution including women's indigenous peace building efforts and document them for sustainability.

2. Introduce peace education by age and sex into the formal and non formal education systems. The media should recognize its role as a tool for peace education.

3. Promote preventive development which involves community empowerment and development. Poverty reduction strategies should be made a component of peace building and men and women should be given a chance to voice their concerns on matters affecting their lives before policy decisions are made.

4. Encourage gender awareness in media reporting of conflict situations. The media should showcase the efforts women contribute to peace efforts in conflict situations as opposed to perpetrating the victim approach to women in conflict situations.

5. Inculcate a culture of peace in the nation by establishing a national day of peace. This will also facilitate exchange of information on mechanisms of conflict resolution and create an opportunity to celebrate and reward women and men's achievements in peace building.

6. Promote collaboration among various sectors of peace building. The government and non governmental sectors, community members (women, men and youth) the church, the council of elders should work together in the pursuit of peace.

## Recommendations for further study

The study established that a common aspect of most traditional African societies was the existence of positive traditional values that were critical for a culture of peace. In addition, similarities existed across cultures with regards to women's role in peace building in traditional societies. However, women in traditional societies did not have the same degree of autonomy and influence and conflicts were not solved in the same way across cultures. In view of these findings, there is need to carry out a comprehensive study of individual Kenyan cultures to establish indigenous cultural practices and peace building initiatives by women in their cultures and how they can be used to come up with community based interventions for building sustainable peace in contemporary settings.

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# APPENDICES

<u>**Appendix A.**</u>

**QUESTIONNARE**

My name is Lilian Auma. I am a Master of Arts student at the Institute of African studies, University of Nairobi. I am conducting a research on the role of women in peace building and how their participation has enhanced peace in this area. The study is meant to highlight the important contributions of women in peace building so as to enhance recognition and support of their peace efforts by all stakeholders in the peace process. The information obtained will also be used to enhance the participation of women in peace building in a culturally sensitive way so as to promote sustainable peace in this area. I would be grateful if you would spare some time to answer the questions in this questionnaire to the best of your knowledge.

**(To be filled by women of 18 years and above)**
**(BACKGROUND INFORMATION)**

1. Division............................... Location............................
   Sub location........................... Village.............................

2. Ethnic group ...............................

3. Gender
   (1). Male        (2). Female.

4. Marital status
   (1).Married          (2). Single          (3). Divorced
   (4). Widowed          (5).Separated.

5. Age (years)............................................................

6. Education
   1). None        2).Primary        3). Post Secondary

4). Other, specify ...................................................

7. Occupation ...........................................................

8. Have you undergone any skill training in peace building?
   1). Yes          2). No

9. If yes, what type of skills did you gain?

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## WOMEN'S TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY ROLE IN PEACE BUILDING

10. Briefly describe the role of women in your community in peace building in the traditional setting.

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11. Indicate the degree of involvement of **each of the following** groups of people at the **formal (public positions)** level of peace building in the **traditional setting**.

**1). Actively involved          2). Moderately involved      3).Less actively involved      3). Not involved at all**

Men.................................................

Women..............................................

Elders..............................................

Youth...............................................

12. Indicate the degree of involvement of **each of the following** groups of people at the **informal** level of peace building in the **traditional setting**.

**1). Actively involved**    **2). Moderately involved**    **3).Less actively involved**    **3). Not involved at all**

Men...............................................

Women...........................................

Elders...........................................

Youth...........................................

13. Currently, what are the mechanisms of peace building in this area?

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14. Currently, what informal mechanisms are employed by members of your community to make peace between conflicting groups?

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15. Currently, which activities do women engage in to build peace in this area?

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16. Currently, what is the degree of involvement of **each of the following** groups of people at the **formal (public positions)** level of peace building in this area?

**1). Actively involved**    **2). Moderately involved**    **3).Less actively involved**    **3). Not involved at all**

Men...............................................

Women...........................................

Youth...........................................

Elders...........................................

Government officials.......................................

Church leaders...........................................

NGO officials...........................................

17. Currently, what is the degree of involvement of **each of the following** groups of people at the **informal** level of peace building in this area?

**1). Actively involved        2). Moderately involved      3).Less actively involved      3). Not involved at all**

Men..............................................

Women..........................................

Elders...........................................

Youth............................................

18. Which of the traditional approaches used by women to build peace in the past should be integrated with the peace building approaches used by women today to create sustainable peace in this area?

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**WOMEN'S UNIQUE STRENGTHS IN PEACE BUILDING EFFORTS**

19. In your opinion, do women have unique qualities that assist them in building peace?

1)Yes     2). No

20. If yes, briefly describe these qualities

Women's qualities

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21. Describe how women's qualities for peace building what you have mentioned above can be tapped to promote sustainable peace in this area.

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In your opinion, do men have unique qualities that assist them in building peace?

1) Yes    2). No

If yes, briefly describe these qualities

Men's qualities

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Based on these qualities, compare the **effectiveness** of women and men's **strategies/ methods** of building peace.

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Do women from your community interact with people from other ethnic groups living in this area during periods of ethnic conflicts?

1) Yes    2). No

If yes, with whom do they interact among the following groups of people and why?

1).Fellow women   2). Victims 3). Elderly people 4). Children   5). Men 6). All

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# DIFFERENCES IN THE PEACE BUILDIGN STRAGEBIES USED BY WOMEN AND MEN.

Are there women you know who have participated at the **formal (public positions)** level of peace building in this area?

1) Yes    2). No

28. If yes, which of the following age brackets do they fall?

    1). 20 – 30 2). 31 – 40    3). 41 – 50    4). 51 – 60    5). Over 60

29. Which of the following income brackets do they fall?

    1) Less or equal to 2000  2). 2001 – 3000    3). 3001 – 4000.   4). Over 4000

30. How does that correspond with their educational background?

    ...................................................................................................................

31. Are there men you know who have participated at the **formal (public positions**) level of peace building in this area?

    1) Yes        2). No

32. If yes, which of the following age brackets do they fall?

    1). 20 – 30    2). 31 -40    3). 41 – 50    4). 51 – 60    5). Over 60

33. Which of the following income brackets do they fall?

    1). Less or equal to 2000.    2). 2001 – 3000.

    3). 3001 – 4000             4).Over 4000

34. How does that correspond with their educational background?

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35. What are the differences between women and men's **methods/strategies** of building peace at the **formal (public positions)** level of peace building?

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6. What are the differences between women and men's **methods/strategies** of building peace at the **informal** level of peace building?

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7. Does your culture approve the participation of women in peace building?

1) Yes    2). No

38. Please explain your answer if Yes or No.

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## HE IMPACT OF WOMEN'S ROLE IN PEACE BUILDING

9. What is the impact/ consequence of women's role in peace building in the traditional setting?

1) Positive    2). Negative    3).  Don't know

). Please explain your answer if the impact is negative or positive.

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1. What is the impact/ consequence of women's role in peace building in the traditional setting?

1) Positive    2). Negative    3). Don't know

2. Please explain your answer if the impact is negative or positive.

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**For question 43 and 44, just tick any of the alternatives that best conforms to your evaluation.**

43. Men are the perpetrators of conflict and should therefore be the only participants in making peace.

1) Strongly agree    2). Agree       3). Uncertain           4). Disagree

44. Peace building at all levels should involve equal participation of women and men.

1) Strongly agree    2). Agree       3). Uncertain           4). Disagree

**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR KEY INFORMANTS** (To be administered to men and women who have participated in peace and reconciliation efforts e.g. members of peace committees, humanitarian aid organizations and the local administration)

Name.......................................

Social position.............................

1.  Do you think that women in this community have a role in peace building?

    1. Yes      2.No

    - If yes please specify their role.

    - What is the extent of women's participation in peace building at the community level?

    - What is the extent of women's participation in peace building at the family level?

    - How can traditional mechanisms of peace building used by women in the past be integrated with the peace building strategies women use today?

2.  What types of conflicts are common in this area?

    - Which ones do women resolve better than men and why?

    - What methods do women use to resolve conflict? How effective are they?

    - How do these methods differ from the ones used by men?

3.  What are women's unique strengths for peace building?

    - How can women's strengths in peace building be tapped to promote lasting peace in this area?

4.  What is the impact of women's role in peace building in this community?

5.  How can women's role in peace building be strengthened in a culturally sensitive way?

## FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Discuss the role of women in peace building both in traditional and contemporary settings.

   - How can traditional mechanisms used by women in the past be integrated with the current peace building strategies women use today?

2. What types of conflicts are common in this area? Which ones do women resolve better than men and why?

   - What methods do women use to resolve conflict? How effective are they?
   - How do these methods differ from the ones used by men?

3. What unique qualities do women have that enhance their efforts in peace building and how can they be tapped in a culturally acceptable manner for effective peace building in this area?

4. What is the impact of women's involvement in peace building in the community?

5. How can women's role in peace building be strengthened in a culturally sensitive way?