Unveiling Women as Pillars of Peace
Peace Building in Communities Fractured by Conflict in Kenya

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AN INTERIM REPORT

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This interim report is being distributed as a work in progress to solicit comments and suggestions. It will hopefully contribute to the on-going discussions on UNDP policy related to community based efforts for rebuilding fractured communities in crisis countries. Comments should be sent to Lina Hamadeh-Banerjee, Management Development and Governance Division, Bureau for Development Policy, (Telephone: 212-906-6593/ Facsimile: 212-906-6471).

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In Memoriam to Rose Barmasai, A Pillar of Peace

This monograph is dedicated to Rose Barmasai, one of the extraordinary Pillars of Peace whose work is chronicled in this study. At a time when her untiring efforts were bearing fruit to rebuild fracture within and between communities, Rose was killed in a road accident on 22 October 1999. Her death occurred just one day before a second follow-up interview on the peace process among the Kalenjin subgroups of the Northern Rift of Kenya. Ironically, she was returning from a peace-building activity when her vehicle crashed and rolled over, killing her. Despite many obstacles, including suspicion from actors on all sides of the conflict, Rose continued to believe that peace was achievable. She knew that peace could also be enduring once the people involved decided to own the peace process. Mrs. Barmasai's experiences illustrate the challenges that confront peace work in the midst of seemingly irresolvable conflict. Nevertheless, she reached beyond the confines of gender, religion, and ethnicity to make a profound impact on peace processes among the Kalenjin communities.

She will be missed, but not forgotten by all who share her work and dreams of reconciliation, healing, and acceptance of all peoples.

Monica Kathina Juma
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Chapter 1

SITUATING WOMEN IN PEACE BUILDING

Introduction

This monograph presents the experiences of peace workers, called hereafter "pillars of peace," in initiating and nurturing peace in post conflict situations in Kenya. It goes beyond the familiar images of women as victims of war and documents the many ways women contribute to rebuilding communities fractured by conflict.

Conventional methods of peace building do not capture the full range of informal efforts and processes that contribute to nurturing and sustaining peace. This monograph is based on a premise that asserts the dual nature of conflict. Conflict destroys the ability of affected communities to carry on normally, but it also presents special opportunities. If these opportunities are seized, they can help communities transform violent situations into peaceful coexistence. Vanguards in the transformations discussed in this study are the stabilising points within their communities. These individuals and institutions serve as interlocutors within and between communities affected by conflict. They act as the building blocs upon which peaceful coexistence is nurtured and sustained. We can bolster and promote peace initiatives by understanding these actors' repertoires, the challenges they face, and their tactics for negotiating challenges. This monograph goes beyond describing the pillars of peace and recording their narratives. It identifies lessons that can be adapted to other situations beset by conflict.

Background

While many studies show that conflict occurs with the involvement or acquiescence of women, several new studies portray women as a principal driving force in peace initiatives (Sorensen 1998, Henderson 1994, Achieng 1998, Villanueva 1995, UNESCO 1999). Women generally show a keen interest in peace processes. However, the *rituals* of peace often preclude their full participation. When peace negotiations and rebuilding destroyed economies become formal exercises, women fade into the background. Other peace activities by women, such as reviving economies and rebuilding social networks, are seen as peripheral to the formal mechanisms, and have received little recognition.

The literature on women's participation in conflict resolution and peace processes takes two approaches. One focuses on their representation and participation at high political levels and in decision-making mechanisms for conflict resolution. The second is a disparate collection on women's grass-roots peace making initiatives.

The first approach includes the ongoing debates in international agencies. These discussions of women's participation in decision-making about war and peace predate recent discussions of their role in post conflict reconstruction (Sorensen 1998:14). Calls to involve women in matters of war and peace began seriously in the 1980s. However, as Brigitte Sorensen (1998) reports, a review of these strategies in 1990 concluded that women were no more prominent in decision making about conflict than they had been in the past. This appraisal recommends that, ". . . the United Nations and the international non governmental organisations [NGOs] . . . continue to monitor and support women's increased involvement in peace processes" (United Nations 1992:3). Recommendation XX from the *Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women* further states that:

> Governments 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 (UN 1992:3).

Several initiatives to involve women in conflict resolution followed these recommendations. All of them emphasised the importance of increased sensitivity to the needs and capacities of women in programmes relating to peace building and post conflict reconstruction (United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women 1996). UNESCO's Culture of Peace Programme and UNIFEM's Africa Women in Crisis Programme (AFWIC) emerged from developments in the 1990s. While both organisations have projects in countries besieged by conflict, they have yet to establish comprehensive programmes in Kenya. This limitation means that women's participation takes place outside comprehensive international frameworks and support mechanisms.

The 1995 United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, was a watershed for thrusting women to the forefront of peace activities. This conference provided a platform for deliberations on the role of women at two levels. First, it followed up on concerns about increasing decision-making roles of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels. The conference specifically called for including ". . . a gender perspective in the resolution of armed and other conflicts . . . to ensure that bodies are able to address gender issues properly" (UN 1995:61).

More significantly, this conference provided a rationale for looking beyond high politics to the grassroots level. Participants turned their attention to women's roles in preventing and resolving conflicts around the world. This conference aimed to involve women in crushing the prevailing logic of war and moving toward a culture of peace. It was a major step in recognising and legitimating the role of women in conflict resolution and peace making at the grassroots level (UNESCO 1999:4). Since Beijing, women and their participation have received special attention because, it is argued, they represent a vital resource for sustaining peace efforts at all levels. The UNESCO programme is expanding to include participation at the lowest levels in areas afflicted by conflicts. UNIFEM has embarked on programmes that support women's concrete efforts in peace building, governance, and consolidating international partnerships. UNIFEM also supports documentation and distribution of information about such activities.

The Scale of Conflict in Africa

The challenge to initiate peace is enormous. Nearly 100 conflict situations, primarily civil wars in developing countries, have erupted since 1990. The African continent is especially hard hit, with 15 out of 43 countries currently at war (Kiplagat 1998). Formal mechanisms of conflict resolution and peace making are largely ill equipped to handle the multiplying number of complex and intractable conflicts. Alternative conflict resolution and peace building frameworks are, therefore, necessary. As such, women are increasingly encouraged and supported as pillars of peace beyond the formal sector. This monograph examines the involvement of women throughout Kenya and the various methods and mechanisms they have used to pursue peace. The study draws on the experiences of three individual players to shed light on the links between traditional indigenous approaches and conventional western approaches to resolving conflict and building peace.

Defining Peace Processes in Fragile Situations

Peace building, peacekeeping, peace brokering, and preventive diplomacy have entered daily parlance. They are often used loosely and interchangeably without a precise understanding of their meanings (Goodhand 1997). Such usage fails to distinguish between the various activities related to peace building, including arbitration, peace implementation, and peace enforcement. *Peace building* generally refers to any activity undertaken with the purpose of preventing, alleviating, or resolving conflict. This study defines it as a collection of strategies used to reverse the destructive processes that accompany violence. These strategies can set in motion processes that can transform a conflict situation from an atmosphere beset with violence, fear, and uncertainty to one where disputes can be settled non-violently. Peace building, therefore, involves helping fractured communities toward reconciliation and peaceful transformation while protecting and respecting human rights.

This conception of peace building involves a shift away from "taming" and stopping the warriors with whom peace keeping is mainly concerned to changing the attitudes and socio-economic circumstances of ordinary people. It concentrates on the context of the conflict, rather than on the issues that divide the parties involved (Bush 1995). The objective is to consolidate peaceful relations and societal institutions, creating an environment to deter tensions that could lead to violent conflict.[1] In this study the following basic assumptions underlie the concept of peace building:

- Peace requires transformation and must be built over time.
- Peace encompasses economic, social, cultural, political and humanitarian issues. It is more than the absence of violence, and it includes ideas about sustainable development and social justice (McDonald 1997).
- Peace building is not a specific event. It is all processes that occur before, during, and after violent conflict.
- Peace building is not a specific activity. It consists of consequences of various activities, and it is defined by outcomes.
- Societies affected by conflict still have valuable resources that can promote peace.

These include individuals, groups, attitudes, and processes (Anderson 1996).
This last assumption identifies the rationale for the study. Peace building rests on human and institutional focal points that act as interlocutors between conflicting parties

While the absence of peace is linked to conflict, not all conflicts lead to the disruption of peace. Moreover, peace is not merely the absence of conflict. As Galtung (1990, 1996) observes, violence is manifest in structural inequity and the unequal distribution of power. Consequently, peace theory is intimately connected to both conflict theory and development theory. Simplified analytical dichotomies of peace and conflict are not helpful.

What Constitutes Conflict?

Conflict is a situation with at least two identifiable groups in conscious opposition to each other as they pursue incompatible goals. These groups may be tribal, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious, socio-economic, or political (Dougherty and Pfltzgraft 1990:187). Every conflict involves a struggle over values and claims to scarce resources, power, and status. The aims of the opponents are to neutralise, injure, or eliminate their rivals.

Conflict may be *interstate* (between states) or *intrastate* (within states). Interstate conflict has been of concern for a long time. Mechanisms to resolve conflict and restore peace and order, defined in security terms by the United Nations Charter, have usually addressed interstate conflict. Diplomatic efforts for mediation and reconciliation are a principal feature of such mechanisms. These efforts call on outside actors who are unaffected by the conflict and therefore considered acceptable as impartial mediators.

The world is experiencing more conflicts within states, and strategies that focus on interstate conflicts are becoming ineffective in conflict resolution and ill suited for peace building. This is largely because the complexity of emerging conflicts challenges the assumptions of conventional strategies. First, most of the intrastate conflicts do involve competition for limited resources, but they are driven by ethnic, religious and inter-communal issues rather than a clear ideological predisposition (Cutts1998). Second, they are marked by intense brutality and disregard for the rules of war. Finally, the distinctions between civilians and combatants are fading (Roberts 1999). A combination of these factors leads to deeply fractured societies and "humanitarian dilemmas" (Weiss and Collins 1996).

Intrastate conflicts carry several implications for peace processes. Broadly, such conflicts undermine the states within which they occur and by extension the state system that is based on the integrity of national sovereignty. In the present context where sovereign states still have a substantial role in the world system, intervention in conflict requires negotiation of the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of nation states. 0utside parties to peace building are constrained by the requirement of consent from at least one party to the conflict.[2] Typically, negotiations for access to victims have stalled, accentuating the damages of war. Sudan, Angola, Congo, and more recently Chechnya, are examples. Thus, while evolving international norms and practices challenge absolute state sovereignty and argue for the supremacy of human rights, claims of national sovereignty pose a dilemma for intervening parties.

Second, effective intervention in internal conflicts requires understanding the different elements of the communities and how they are related to the current situation. This includes familiarity with history, economic and power interests, perceptions and expectations, fears and feelings, and values and cultures. The operation of these factors, from local to national and international levels, must also be understood. Information of this sort is not always readily available to outside actors. Ignorance may lead to well-intentioned involvement that contributes to the escalation of conflict and exacerbates its negative consequences.[3]

Finally, internal conflicts violate human rights. Only well-focussed efforts that address the root causes of the abuses can stop such violations. This requires addressing issues of structural violence and, more important, justice. Justice is the foundation for sustainable peace. Concerned parties, whether political or civil, who do not confront justice issues jeopardise efforts for conflict resolution and reduce the chances for achieving sustainable peace. Thus, while support continues for women's small grassroots projects, the small initiatives must not be allowed to eclipse the

broader perspective. These efforts need to be supplemented by activities that address larger issues, and the interconnectedness of small initiatives to larger ones must be emphasised.

Examining the Connection Between Local Capacity and Outside Intervention

Sustainable peace demands time, patience and protracted engagement in efforts for medium, and long-range change. Affected communities must be involved throughout the cycle of peace building. However, models for peace building have assumed that members of communities afflicted by conflict are parties to the conflict and therefore unable to undertake effective peace building on their own. Consequently, attempts to nurture peace have been formulated within frameworks that depend largely on outside intervention by actors who are considered impartial.

Outside actors have dominated post conflict peace activities. Evidence presented in this study suggests that the success of outside intervention depends on the extent to which it connects with local peace initiatives. As conflict becomes more localised, complex, and protracted, the "outside intervention" model is giving way to the "inside participation" model. This trend increases of local peace builders, especially women.

Sources and Methodology

This monograph addresses five specific questions to examine how the developments as discussed above are reflected in Kenya at the local level:

- What is the nature of the conflicts that fracture communities in Kenya?
- How have local and national initiatives nurtured peace building?
- To what extent have women contributed to peace building and reconciliation?
- What has been the role of the pillars of peace?
- How have these individuals handled the challenges they face as peace builders, as Kenyans, and as women?

These questions are answered by data collected from both primary and secondary sources. This study uses two types of secondary sources. (1) Materials with a gender analysis of conflict and post conflict situations provide the broad overview of peace work. (2) Literature on the conflicts in Kenya places the role of Kenyan women in context. Research documents and commissioned reports include (1) two studies by John Rogge (1993, 1994) for UNDP, (2) the Western Province Coordination Committee (WPCC) evaluation report by the Centre for Refugee Studies–Moi University (Kathina and Oduor 1995), and (3) an evaluation report on the resettlement programmes in Western Kenya and the Rift Valley (Kathina and Masika 1997). We also consulted government documents, media reports, periodicals, and newspapers. A central feature of all these publications is their focus on institutional responses to conflict. They provide the context for women's actions, but they do not look at women's contributions in any detail.

Primary data from interviews with peace workers and members of affected communities enrich the secondary material. This study employs three paths of analysis:

- The author has six-year's of experience with conflict related research throughout Kenya, and particularly the Rift Valley and Western Provinces, two areas that have experienced intense conflicts during the last decade.

- Experiences of three peace workers illustrate local initiatives of women especially in the processes of building peace. In-depth interviews with open-ended questions allow their own voices to be heard in the narratives of their experiences with fracture and peace building. Social network analysis is used to identify the various focal points. The tools used by these individuals in the peace trade, the mechanisms for networking, and their sources of support and collaboration are identified and assessed. The constraints faced by the actors are highlighted with their modes of confrontation and negotiation.

- Capacity–vulnerability analysis involves the exploration of resources within affected communities and identification of deficiencies. It identifies local resources, specifies their use, and evaluates their potential to buffer the effects of conflict on local populations. The purpose of this analysis is to illustrate arguments used to justify outside interventions in peace processes. This analysis establishes the communities' perceptions of outside interventions and examines how their perceptions affect the restoration of peace.

- Finally, the study compares the interaction between outsiders and locals in three regions that have experienced intense conflicts. Peace has been restored in Wajir District by using local resources. In Western Kenya, local efforts supplemented by ideas from outside the area have resulted in relative peace. The Northern Rift Valley analysis looks at peace building in ongoing conflict. We have selected four individual cases from more than 20 interviews to display the pillars of peace in action. The remaining narratives corroborate and embellish the narratives of the selected pillars of peace. Maps in the appendix illustrate the scope of conflicts in Kenya and the areas in this report.

Organisation of the Report

This study presents some general principles and lessons to share with other peace workers operating in areas that experience similar conflicts. Chapter 1 has situated the position of women in peace building at the decision-making and grassroots levels and discussed the challenges posed to conventional conflict resolution and peace building. Chapter 2 looks at types of conflict in Kenya, effects of conflict on communities, and trends in peace building. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 are the core of this monograph. They provide the analysis of women as pillars of peace in Kenya. These chapters outline the peculiarities of the types of conflict, the scale of their effects, and the form that peace building takes in each case. Chapter 3 presents a rare case of success by women building peace in Wajir District. This is an area influenced by patrilineal structures and afflicted with a combination of political and long-term resource-related conflicts. Chapter 4 turns to peace building in Western Kenya, a region deeply fractured by politically instigated conflicts. Chapter

five, entitled “Evasive Peace,” looks at the Northern Rift Valley region, where hostilities and conflicts are ongoing. Chapter 6 highlights the similarities and differences and extracts lessons learnt from each situation. Finally, this chapter summarises the role of the State in facilitating, brokering, or obstructing peace.

Chapter 2

BACKGROUND TO CONFLICTS AND PEACE BUILDING IN KENYA

Introduction

Peace building is shaped by the nature of the conflicts and challenges confronting peace workers. As Anthony Richmond (1994) observes, ethnic conflicts take various forms, sometimes combining different elements. He identifies six types of conflicts:

- Conflicts that engage the state against a community. State-supported systems of domination and exploitation, usually of minorities, may even lead eventually to the extermination of a people or their relegation to the geographic and social margins of the society.

- Conflicts for emancipation by minority groups seeking to reclaim territory and reassert human rights, with or without the support of outside agencies

.

- Conflicts in which questions of language, religion, and irredentism are involved.

- Conflict within states, stemming from inter-ethnic antagonisms, competition for scarce resources, political power struggles, and ideological disputes that fail to be resolved by other means.

- Various manifestations of ethnic nationalism that lead to overt conflict when other constraining factors are removed.[1] Sectarian violence, communal conflict, civil wars, and independence movements may assert themselves under these conditions.

- Conflicts that arise because of past and present migrations.

Some of the factors in Richmond's categories are relevant to Kenya. Policies pursued by the government have marginalised certain communities. Competition for scarce resources, political struggles, ethnic nationalism, and migrations have all shaped conflicts in Kenya

Classification of Conflicts in Kenya

The classification of conflicts for this monograph is based on the socio-economic characteristics of the communities at war. Four broad categories apply:

- Conflicts within pastoral communities

- Conflicts between pastoral and agricultural communities

- Conflicts linked to the presence of refugees

- Ethnic clashes

Although this classification is far from absolute, it is a useful heuristic device for conceptual and analytical clarity.

Conflicts Within Pastoral Communities

These conflicts manifest themselves as inter-clan or inter-community conflicts. Inter-clan conflicts are the oldest types of clashes, and many societies in Kenya have experienced them. However, as agricultural communities settled, and individual ownership became the basis for regulating resources, such conflicts have remained primarily in the domain of nomadic pastoralists. Their communities are still organised within the framework of communal ownership of the means of production.

Pastoralists occupy ecologically fragile areas characterised by unreliable patterns of rainfall and high evaporation rates. Among these communities are the Somali, Boran, Turkana, and Pokot who live in a belt that stretches across the northern region of Kenya, and the Maasai in the southern Rift Valley. Sustaining their nomadic pastoralist way of life requires large tracks of land. Under these circumstances, conflicts over the ownership, control, and use rights of land and other natural resources such as grazing fields and water wells are commonplace.

While conflicts are not new to these communities, a combination of factors has changed the dynamics of conflict. Cattle raiding and rustling have overwhelmed local mechanisms for dealing with long term problems and wreaked havoc in the affected communities. During the 1990s, pastoral life was transformed by environmental pressure from droughts and floods, commercialisation of cattle raiding, the influx of sophisticated arms, and changes in the political landscape. According to the *National Development Plan*, by 1997, the drought alone threatened the survival of more than 25 per cent of the population and more than 50 percent of livestock (GOK 1997:76).

Raiding of animals for social and cultural purposes is one of the characteristics of pastoral life. Herds, as indicators of wealth and status, are important in cultural rituals such as marriage and childbirth. When clans or communities suffer depletion of their livestock because of calamities or raids, counter raids are carried out against other clans or communities to restock. Pastoralists have developed elaborate social mechanisms and norms that govern negotiations for compensation after raids. These mechanisms have recently been rendered ineffective for several reasons.

Increasing environmental pressure has caused an imbalance in these social systems. Between 1972 and 1999, the Turkana experienced 14 years of drought and famine that have literally wiped out their entire stock.[2] This depletion has increased pressure on them to raid other communities to restock. Such raids have resulted in conflicts with loss of life because Turkana are the least armed of the groups in a pastoral axis that includes north-eastern Uganda (Karamanjong), Northwest Kenya, southern Sudan (Toposa) and southern Ethiopia (Randile). Floods from the *El Niño* rains dealt another blow to pastoralists, particularly in north-eastern Kenya. Coming shortly after the 1997 famine and drought, these floods were accompanied by the Rift Valley fever that killed large herds of animals and thousands of people.

Depletion of herds has been exacerbated by the expansion of a market economy and the commercialisation of raiding. Historically, raided animals have remained within the same ecological region. This meant that stolen animals could be recovered. However, as meat export to regions beyond Africa expands, raiding has taken on another dimension. The introduction of cash for animals has created a network of businesses that offer a ready market for raided animals.

Once raided, animals are driven across borders and sold to markets beyond the reach of pastoralists. In this situation, traditional rescue efforts and negotiation mechanisms are useless. Raiding has become an income generating activity rather than a means for augmenting social status or fulfilling cultural roles. Knowing that raided cattle are valuable commercial assets in a money economy and that raided animals may never be recovered, pastoralists are forced to guard their remaining stock closely. Attempts at raiding are met with strong resistance, often ending in massive destruction of property and loss of life.

An increasing influx of arms complicates the pressures from the environment and the expansion of animal export commerce. Following the concert of conflicts in the Horn of Africa, and north-eastern Uganda, all of northern Kenya has become an arms bazaar. Two developments have increased the quantity and quality of arms. First, the influx of asylum seekers from countries afflicted by conflict has overwhelmed the capacity of the Kenyan government to control the guns that come in with these populations. Combatants, including militias, mercenaries, and remnants of armies from countries at war, have come with these groups. These men bring the skills and knowledge of waging war along with their sophisticated weapons. The influx of all these armed groups means that the pastoralists have to contend with more than the traditional raiders. Fighting groups operating from northern Kenya include the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) who are fighting a low-key secessionist war in Ethiopia, the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA), and miscellaneous other groups supporting Somali warlords. This situation has ignited an arms race throughout the region. Increased violence and insecurity have followed.

Conflicts Between Pastoral and Agricultural Communities

Faced with expanding desertification from the north, ecological pressure within their zones, and encroachment on the fringes of their lands by farming communities, pastoralists have responded in ways that have escalated ethnic conflicts.

Many pastoralists have moved out of their regions in search of pastures for their significantly reduced herds or alternative means of subsistence. This development has brought them into direct conflict with non-pastoral communities. Migrating groups come into conflict with agricultural communities living on the borderlands of semiarid and arable lands. For example, conflicts between the Somalis and the Akamba people of northern Mwingi District, or between communities in northern Meru, epitomise the clash of different ways of life and the failure of a harmonious interface between pastoral and agricultural modes of production.

For those without animals, the search for other means is affected by lack of education, skills, or training. The pastoral communities have the lowest levels of education and training. Therefore, those who seek jobs, enter the labour market at the lowest stratum. Some end up as farm hands in agricultural areas, often being paid as little as the food they need for survival. Others have moved to cities. In both cases, they join the inhabitants of sprawling slums in towns and peri-urban areas. Private security companies favour the Turkana and Maasai because of their reputation for fearlessness. They can obtain employment as watchmen, a job that is not only among the lowest paid, but also carries great risks (Kitunyi 1991). Just as their counterparts in the agricultural sector, they are exploited and abused.

Movement out of the northern pastoral zone ultimately destroys pastoral communities and their way of life. It has resulted in family breakdown as the mainly male population gravitates to urban centres and agricultural areas. Left without any other livelihood, the dependency on relief assistance has become the other “mode of subsistence” for those left behind. Most of these people are unprotected women and children who make easy targets for raiders. In Turkana for example, it

is women and children who have suffered most from attacks by the better armed Toposas, Rangiles and Karamojong communities.

Conflicts Linked to the Presence of Refugees

Kenya's northern belt is ecologically fragile, however, since 1990, it has received about 500,000 refugees in locations that support 10,000 people with difficulty. For example, the population of Kakuma division is more than 7,000 people; the Kakuma refugee camp covering an area of 12 square kilometres, hosts more than 80,000 refugees (UNHCR 1999). The Dadaab camp complex currently has about 128,000 people, down from 420,000 in 1993 (UNHCR 1993). The effect of such large populations on such fragile environments is momentous. Yet, humanitarian assistance, administered chiefly by international agencies, is designated for refugees. It ignores the plight of the locals whose material condition is usually worse.

The presence of humanitarian assistance resources for refugees in Kakuma, and other displaced populations in the Southern Sudan,[3] for instance, has created oases in the middle of deprived local populations in Turkana districts. This has caused conflicts between the locals and the refugees. As camps continue to attract substantial resources, they develop and expand into surrounding areas. This kind of encroachment also causes conflicts between the locals and refugees.[4] Security in the camps and nearby is inadequate. Women are particularly vulnerable to physical attacks and rapes by locals who commit these negative acts to avenge perceived injustices. Human rights protests in 1992-1993 at the refugee camps in Dadaab were in response to unprecedented levels of violence, principally rape. Reports from that period disclose that most rapes were perpetrated by bandits, probably local Kenyan Somalis or Somalis from either Somalia or Ethiopia. Increased security measures such as fencing off the camps reduced the number of reported rape cases to about 30 per month, of which more than half were perpetrated outside the camp.[5]

Insecurity for women and other refugees is also becoming a problem in Kakuma refugee camp, once perceived as a safe area. Crisp (1999) reports that by 1998, UNHCR was developing a policy agenda to handle the state of insecurity in and around Kakuma refugee camp. Locals argued that refugees are better cared for, while they destroy the environment and consume natural resources. The locals issued an ultimatum that refugees not use resources outside the camp. The numbers of women attacked outside the camp have been on the increase. While in 1997, only few cases were reported, by August 1999, three out of five women who attempted to harvest wild vegetables or gather firewood outside the camp were attacked or raped by local Turkanas.[6] So high is the insecurity that UNHCR discourages refugees from buying and keeping animals within the camp because local Turkanas invade the camp and seize the animals by force.

Ethnic Clashes

The nature of conflicts in Kenya was transformed by multiparty politics in the 1990s. Across the country, conflicts broke out between or within ethnic groups. While this type of conflict is not new to Kenya, the clashes of the 1990s were noticeably different in scale, complexity, and consequences. These conflicts presented unique challenges for peace activities.

Beginning in 1991, in the euphoria of democratisation and the anticipation of the historic 1992 elections, the ethnic clashes that erupted reflected political developments. The first conflict erupted at Mitei-tei Farm in Nandi district.[7] Violence then swept through the Rift Valley to

Western Province. After the election, clashes intensified and kept recurring on a small scale at different times, in various places through 1995. As the next elections approached, the country witnessed a resurgence of conflicts starting in 1996. In August 1997, Mombasa, unaffected by earlier conflicts, entered the circus of violence.

Some analysts attribute these ethnic clashes in Kenya to increased competition for shrinking resources, particularly land (Rogge 1993). However, this interpretation does not explain why the clashes erupted in 1991, why they followed a pattern of occurring in ethnically heterogeneous zones, and more significantly, why the state was reluctant to deal firmly with the perpetrators of violence. Commissioned by UNDP the Rogge (1993) report takes an institutional view and does not focus on communities or mention the role of women in the restoration of peace.

Other analysts look to the role of the state in democratisation and opening the political arena in the 1990s, particularly with the repeal of Section 2(a) of the constitution which made Kenya *de jure a* one party state in 1982. Repeal allowed other parties and different political articulations that challenged the Kenya African National Union (KANU), whose power was beginning to erode. The KANU ruling clique was uneasy over the prospect of losing the second multiparty election since independence. To ensure victory, they created zones of support that paralleled ethnic configurations. The ethnic zones were designed to isolate populations perceived as supportive of opposition parties. For the state, such communities, defined in ethnic terms, were perceived as enemy populations of doubtful allegiance, whose political actions would be difficult to control.

The nexus between ethnicity and geographical space gave the 1990s clashes their unique character. The campaign against multiparty politics would have had a less violent impact, were it not for this association (Somjee and Kathina). These clashes were attempts to drive away populations seen as "alien" (non-indigenous) in a bid to create ethnic homogeneity, presumed to operate as bloc that could offer political support. As "enemy" communities were expunged, KANU strongmen urged vigilantes to create and protect KANU zones. For example, in early 1991, the controversial *majimbo*[8] rallies promulgated the theory that the Rift Valley was an exclusive Kalenjin KANU zone. Opposition party leaders were warned not to enter the Rift Valley. Meanwhile, their presumed supporters were being driven out of the Rift Valley (Kathina and Masika 1997:9, Kiliku et al 1992). It is this aspect of the clashes that Peter Kagwanja (1998) labels *state-sponsored violence*.

Ironically, the relationship between ethnicity and territory is rooted in colonial policies that created the enviable "white" highlands. During this period, Kenyans were evicted to create space for settler agriculture. With independence, the principle of "willing seller, willing buyer" determined who could own these lands. People of different ethnic backgrounds, with the ability to purchase these farms, either individually or as members of co-operatives, became neighbours. Meanwhile, large numbers of people who had been evicted earlier, but did not have money after independence, remained squatters. The areas that witnessed the most violent of inter-ethnic clashes were within the former "white" highlands.[9] The principal areas of conflict include (1) the Rift Valley districts of Nakuru, Molo, Kericho, Nandi, Uasin Gishu, Trans-Mara, and Marakwet; (2) the districts that flank Mt. Elgon, namely, Trans-Nzoia, Bungoma and Mt. Elgon, and (3) Mombasa located in the Coast Province.

Intra-Ethnic Clashes

Increasingly, inter ethnic clashes are occurring simultaneously with intra ethnic clashes. Marakwet, Elgeyo and Pokot districts are witnessing repeated waves of inter-communal violence

affecting, Kalenjin pastoral groups. Clashes are historically linked to cattle rustling. As among pastoralists in northern Kenya, negotiations for peace, reconciliation, and compensation have been weakened and overwhelmed by violence. The influx of guns from outside Kenya, coupled with the government policy of creating homeguards, has tipped the balance of power in favour of some groups who have become militarily superior to others. For example, while Pokots are allowed to keep guns for their own defence, their proximity to Uganda gives them an access to sophisticated weapons. This has rendered the other Kalenjin groups, particularly the Marakwet, more vulnerable.

Imbalances in power relations are fuelled by political agendas, particularly, the desire of some clique of power barons within the government to keep Kalenjin groups as a single political block. Kalenjin groups are seen as the mainstay of the ruling KANU party because President Moi belongs to the Kalenjin groups. Kalenjin communities that express different opinions are seen as rebels breaching the code of conduct for "family" unity. For example, the Nandi and Kipsigis settled in the central Rift Valley as sedentary farmers. The Tugen, Elgeyo, Pokot, and Marakwet axis of the Kalenjin groups have viewed them with suspicion for a long time. Most of these groups are pastoralists living in the northern Rift Valley. Despite a long history of tensions between these two blocks of Kalenjin, they have remained strongly united during President Moi's administration.

More recently, since the onset of multiparty government, the cohesion of Kalenjins from the northern Rift Valley, taken for granted for a long time, has shown signs of stress The Marakwet are considered dissenters, weakening support for the ruling elite. The Marakwet argue that the government has failed to ensure their protection from rustlers and bandits believed to have stronger patrons in the government. Of all the Kalenjn groups in the northern Rift Valley, the Marakwet have the largest opposition party membership. So far, three opposition party MPs, including a woman, Mrs. Tabitha Seei, represent the Marakwet in Parliament. After losing the1997 election to Mr. Nicholas Biwott, one of President Moi's most powerful lieutenants, Mrs. Seei was nominated to Parliament by the predominantly Kikuyu Democratic Party. Mrs Seei is an important force in destroying the myth of the unyielding connection between ethnicity and politics. She consistently highlighted the plight of the Marakwet at the hands of power barons, and with her spouse, she has facilitated access of peace workers to her constituency and other Kalenjin areas. While the government explains attacks on the Marakwet as cattle rustling, local analysts, church groups and peace workers see them as a punishment unleashed on a community that has shown the characteristics of the prodigal child with a dissenting voice.

Manipulation of Ethnicity

Ethnicity is a primary element in the social and political configurations of Kenya. For most Kenyans, rites of passage–birth, initiation into adulthood, marriage, and death–are acknowledged through ethnic rituals and regulations that reinforce the bonds between community members. However, the politicisation of ethnicity in post independent Kenya is the key to understanding all the conflicts in Kenya. Politicians have used ethnic structures to create their positions as the representatives of their groups.[10] Ethnic community claims also to correspond to political constituencies, and political participation has been primarily organised along communal and ethnic lines. Political parties are usually known by the ethnic and regional basis from which they draw their support rather than by their party manifestos, achievements, or strategies. Thus, a political party's loss is interpreted as the entire ethnic group's loss.

Politicians have perfected the art of manipulating ethnicity to strengthen their positions as ethnic leaders rather than national leaders. They often play on ethnic sentiments, fears and sensitivities to secure their positions. Therefore, politicisation of ethnicity has become the strongest single determinant in the domain of governance in Kenya. While the political elite use their ethnicity to enhance both their political power and their wealth, the masses are induced into distrust and fear of other ethnic groups, particularly those who belong to political parties different from their own. Without democratic institutions with which people can identify, or competent security and legal structures to which people can appeal to for their claims, these feelings further consolidate the position of leaders as ethnic spokespersons.

Consequences of Conflict

The extent of the effects of conflict on Kenya's populations is uncertain and speculative. Registering displaced persons is difficult for both logistical and political reasons (Rogge 1993). Many victims remain undocumented, leaving large numbers outside assistance networks. For instance, by 1993, most victims were reluctant to register with government institutions because they did not trust the state and its functionaries. Typically, victims have disappeared and gravitated towards urban centres. Population growth is noticeably up in towns near conflict areas. The dramatic increase in the numbers of street children and homeless families is an indication of this migration phenomenon.

The most cited estimates of clash victims indicate 1,500 by early 1993. More than 350,000 people, largely but not exclusively from the Rift Valley and Western provinces, were displaced to camp-like situations, usually in church compounds, schools and market places (Rogge 1993, HRW 1997). These numbers exclude an estimated 100 dead and 100,000 persons displaced in the ethnic clashes that occurred in August 1997 in Mombasa. Of those displaced, 210,000 remained so by early 1998. Commenting on the prolonged displacement in the Rift Valley, on 9 November 1999, President Moi called for the displaced to" . . . return to their homes and continue with their normal lives." Only a few have returned to their home areas.

By 1993, about 22,300 people were registered as displaced in the Elgeyo–Marakwet districts (NEMU Report 1993). These two districts have continued to witness sporadic intra-Kalenjin conflicts (NCCK 1997). Between 1997-98 the Pokot–Marakwet conflicts produced more than 4,000 victims. Since the beginning of 1999, this area has become the theatre of violence and displacement of populations. Between January and March 1998, clashes in Laikipia and Molo displaced and disrupted the lives of many. The numbers are less definite in the nomadic North Eastern province where entire populations are on the move throughout the year. In March 1999, an incident of inter-clan rivalry in Wajir left nearly 140 people dead and an unknown number wounded.

Other areas prone to clashes and displacement are away from the prying eye of the media and remain largely unreported. For example, since January 1998, more than 1,000 people have been displaced in the Tharaka-Nithi Nyabene belt. Tana River, parts of Migori and northern Mwingi are areas that have witnessed systematic depopulation as people flee attacks from bandits.

In each instance, the conflict has led to substantial loss of human life and destruction of livestock and other property. Therefore, the clashes have created a large internally displaced population of destitute and highly vulnerable Kenyans. Many thousands of homes have been destroyed, and the majority of the displaced populations have lost most, if not all of their household effects, food stocks, agricultural implements, seed, and livestock. Large reserves of

frustrated people, particularly destitute young men, have the potential to spark off violence at any time.

The effects of clashes are related directly to survival and earning a living, especially to the availability of food supplies in Kenya. All of the inter-ethnic conflicts occurred in areas of high economic potential, the food baskets for the entire country. Worse yet, they occurred in the wake of the failure of the 1991-1992 short and long rains. This meant that no transferable surplus from high potential areas to the fragile areas was forthcoming. Subsequently, the country was gripped by an unprecedented food shortage. The food emergency in the rich farming area and the drought-related famine in the fragile areas of the country occurred simultaneously. While farming has resumed in some areas that were affected by the clashes, food production has not returned to previous levels.[11] Since the clashes, Kenya has continuously imported cereals and other food grain each year. In essence, it is arguable that the persistent food crisis facing Kenya in the 1990s hinges on clashes that have occurred intermittently since 1991. Perhaps the greatest casualty of the clashes was the trust that existed between families, neighbours, communities and regions. Distrust, resentment, suspicion and hatred replaced harmonious existence and long term interaction. While the impact of these conflicts has not been systematically assessed, evidence suggests massive losses and intense trauma. Areas affected have experienced declining standards of living manifested in deteriorating heath status, diminishing income levels, elevated school dropout rates, large-scale trauma, and a general sense of hopelessness (Kathina and Masika 1997).

The fracture experienced by communities led to a breakdown in social support systems and normative structures that regulate interaction and behaviour. This in turn, increased both social and physical insecurity. In the words of the Nigerian novelist, Chinua Achebe, the things that held people together were no more, and communities had fallen apart.

Responding to Conflict and Restoring Peace

Attempts to restore peace in Kenya have taken two distinct paths. One consisted of formal peace negotiations conducted by political leaders and sometimes mediated by external parties. The second path contains an array of grass-roots initiatives. These attempts culminated in three types of peace building. The responses can be classified as the formal (government), semiformal (individuals in government positions) and informal (grass roots).

Formal Response - The Role of the Government

The conflicts that plagued Kenya in the 1990s were seen in political terms. Leaders in government, particularly KANU stalwarts, including the President, blamed the clashes on multiparty politics. At another level, clashes were seen as an attempt to ensure the survival of the state. According to this interpretation, the political agenda of the state took two forms. First, clashes became a vehicle to fulfil President Moi's prediction that Kenya's return to a multiparty system would plunge the country into tribal violence. The second agenda item was to influence the outcomes of the multiparty elections in 1992 and 1997 (Kagwanja 1998:14).

Emanating from these two positions, the search for peace needed to be conceived within the arena of high politics. Affected communities became recipients, rather than participants in these initiatives. This top-down perception of peace became the greatest weakness of the formal response. Activities within this framework remained ad-hoc; they lacked community support, and failed.

Calls for peace by the government were met with suspicion and distrust. Government officials were viewed by most victims and analysts as partisan, unable to keep the conflict in check, and either unwilling or incapable of responding to its consequences. The people saw attempts to preach peace as pursuing state survival. The government argued that irresponsible utterances by opposition Members of Parliament (MPs) and their desire to wreak havoc before the 1992 elections had caused the clashes and perpetuated them. However, this thesis could not stand up after KANU won elections in December of 1992 and 1997, and the clashes increased instead of declining.

By mid-1991, with pressure mounting from lobby groups, within and outside the country, MPs from areas hit by conflicts raised the matter in Parliament under a motion of urgency, insisting that clashes were politically motivated. Eventually, Parliament approved the establishment of the Parliamentary Select Committee to Investigate Ethnic Clashes in western and other parts of Kenya. Under the Chair of Kennedy Kiliku, an opposition MP, the findings showed evidence of government officials' involvement in enabling the clashes. It recommended that ". . . appropriate action be taken against those administration officials who directly or indirectly participated in or encouraged the clashes" (Kiliku et al 1992:82). When this acclaimed report was introduced in Parliament, debate was suddenly suspended. The report was subsequently rejected, and the clashes raged on.

After two years of continued conflicts and displacement of people, the government acted to stop the violence in mid 1993. The President toured areas affected by clashes, ordered that violence stop, and appealed for calm. In the most insecure areas he invoked the Preservation of Public Security Act and declared the hardest hit areas of Elburgon, Molo, Londiani and Burnt Forest security operation zones. This act banned outlawed the possession of firearms, instituted curfews, and prohibited movement into these areas. As one young man explained, "When the President came to Mt. Elgon and told people the fighting should stop, it stopped."

While the President's tour became a reference point for peace building activities, the declaration of security zones isolated these areas. The bans on entering or working in the zones interfered with the work of certain NGOs and prohibited certain individuals from visiting them. Among those obstructed were Aurelia Brazeal, the US Ambassador to Kenya and a team of MPs from the United Kingdom and Denmark.

More government administrators went to affected areas. Their first tasks were to increase security and oversee the return of displaced people. Molo, one of the hardest hit sites, received an additional 15 district and police officers. The presence of government officers, some of whom were eager to begin their assignments, stabilised populations and provided a basis for peace work.

These efforts did not go far enough in punishing the perpetrators of violence, leaving this as an unresolved issue in most of the areas affected by clashes. These government-driven efforts encouraged little participation from affected communities. For the most part, these communities remained suspicious of the government and reluctant to seek meaningful involvement.

Semi-Formal Responses: The KAMATUSA-GEMA Talks

A group of Kalenjin MPs led by Mr. Nicholas Biwott introduced the most conspicuous semiformal effort to initiate peace. Mr. Biwott consulted with a few Kalenjin Members of Parliament in early 1995 following the President's comprehensive tour of Kiambu District and several high profile meetings with Kikuyu power brokers. These consultations lead to an informal coalition known as KAMATUSA, an acronym for the Kalenjin, Maasai, Turkana and Samburu.[12]

Between May and July 1995, Biwott had engaged a core group of Kikuyu power barons lead by Njenga Karume in several behind-the-scenes talks. By mid July, a joint statement from both Biwott and Karume announced an initiative to " . . . promote co-operation between the previously antagonistic groups [Kikuyus and Kalenjins]." (*The Weekly Review* 7 July 1995:4) However, rumours filtering out of the closed-door "reconciliation" meetings suggested that the agenda was broadening ". . . to seek an accord [on how] to end the perceived marginalisation of the members of GEMA[13] communities in appointments to [significant] and high profile posts in the public sector and the armed forces" (*The Weekly Review* 21 July 1995). The GEMA caucus was organised. It met several times in Kiambu, Limuru, and Thika in quick succession. At the last meeting, the caucus discussed a July 1995 conference in Molo with delegates from KAMATUSA and Kikuyu communities.

The conference, attended by 1,200 delegates including 52 Kikuyu and Kalenjin Members of Parliament, was co-chaired by Biwott and Karume. During his speech, Karume called for reconciliation between GEMA and Kalenjin communities, pointing out the need for a lasting solution to the problem of ethnic conflict. He castigated politicians who had come out to oppose efforts to reconcile these communities. Biwott told the conference that the talks preceding it were not meant to hasten an alliance between the GEMA and KAMATUSA communities. They aimed at peaceful coexistence for the two communities and all other tribes living in the Rift Valley. Biwott argued that it was not the intention of the organisers to exclude other tribes from the peace talks. He pointed out that the emphasis was on the Kikuyu and Kalenjins because they formed the main blocs of ethnic communities living in the Rift Valley. He continued that the organisers decided to begin reconciliation with these two groups in anticipation that peace between them would spawn peace between the rest of the tribes in the province. (*The Weekly Review* 4 August1995: 4).

The conference adopted six resolutions. One noted that the conflicts affected both communities. Two called for the return of clash victims. Three urged co-operation between Kalenjin and Kikuyu communities to prevent a recurrence of clashes. Four commended the President for his efforts to restore peace. Five sought to speed up the process of issuing government identity cards to youth. Six called for using traditional institutions and methods, particularly village elders, in resolving differences between communities. The conference appointed a 20-person committee to link the government with leaders of the two communities and to move the reconciliation efforts forward (*The Weekly Review* 4 August 1995).

Many looked on these meetings and the highly publicised conference with suspicion. They were criticised as a camouflage for members of the KAMATUSA elite who were perpetrators of clashes. The agenda for the talks and the programmes remained unclear, as attendance was exclusive and highly selective. Among the strongest critics of the GEMA-KAMATUSA talks was Mrs. Tabitha Seei, a Democratic Party MP. Mrs. Seei noted the absence of victims in the talks and at the conference. She doubted that those implicated in the clashes were serious about reconciliation. She asserted, "The issue of reconciliation must involve those who were affected by tribal clashes and not the inciters"(*The Weekly Review*. 21 July 1995:6).

After the Molo conference, KANU lost in the Kipipiri by-elections. Soon, Mr. Njenga Muingai, the MP for Molo and a most vocal critic of the KANU government, left Ford ASILI[14] for KANU. He cited the need for co-operation with the government to hasten the return of displaced populations and promote development for his constituents. In real terms, the KAMATUSA-Kikuyu talks had reached the end of the road.

Informal Grassroots Peace Building Initiatives

Local peace-building activities emerged out of despair and exasperation with conflict. Initial responses were based on the relief model and dominated largely by international actors. In this model, food relief comes first, followed by returning displaced populations, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. Peace and reconciliation are part of rehabilitation. However, persistent problems with displacement led to outside actors experiencing burnout. Furthermore, resources were diminishing because of donor fatigue, and frustration with the government was increasing. Therefore, most foreign actors left the scene in less than 24 months after the eruption of conflict in 1991-2.

Although the departure of foreign actors created a vacuum, it did leave local actors with the space to reassert their role and engage in a wide range of activities related to returning, rehabilitation and reconstruction. Peace building posed particular challenges for most local actors. It required specific skills and institutional support, both of which were scarce at the local and national levels. The withdrawal of foreign actors translated into reduced funds for local actors working with displaced populations. For example, the abrupt withdrawal of UNDP from Western Province in March 1995 curtailed the start-up of a range of quick impact projects, all of which had a peace and reconciliation component. A third set of challenges were generated at the ground level where most displaced persons began to show signs of weariness with assistance programmes and eagerness to return to their homes. This generated immense pressure for actors to look to issues beyond relief, a challenge that required big budgets and long term commitments.

Constrained by limited expertise, resources, and government support, local actors were forced to turn to local resources. They sought skills, capacities, and available opportunities among members of communities with which they worked. Through intense interaction and working together, peace actions were initiated and the process of transforming conflict began. In short, local peace builders learned while working for peace.

This study examines peace processes through the experiences of three of the many women who have been identified by their communities as playing significant roles in bringing about peace. While interest focuses on women, this study also highlights the contributions of one man in particular who has been instrumental in supporting various initiatives. These individuals are selected from areas that were hit by clashes and other types of conflict:

- Wajir, a district in North Eastern Kenya, towards the Kenya-Somali-Ethiopia borders. Wajir has been the seat of conflicts that manifest as intra community violence. Political development of the 1990s further complicated these conflicts.
- Bungoma and Mt. Elgon are two districts where between 35,000-70,000 people were displaced in inter-ethnic conflicts linked directly to political factors.
- The North Rift Valley is characterised by intra-Kalenjin clashes that have intensified considerably in the last 10 years.

The most distinct male voice in the report belongs to a remarkable District Commissioner who supported the development of the only successful co-ordination committee to deal with issues of displacement. The Western Province Co-ordination Committee (WPCC) was instrumental in ensuring the return of many displaced persons, in Western Province. It developed an operational framework, known as the "Three R's" -- relief, rehabilitation and reconciliation -- which provided a basis for dealing with issues beyond relief. In 1994, this DC was transferred to Wajir District where he provided vital support for the Wajir peace initiatives. Currently, he works in the Rift

Valley where he has promoted various peace processes. Narratives of these four individuals, among others, are presented in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 3

A WOMAN-GROWN SUSTAINABLE PEACE: THE CASE OF WAJIR DISTRICT[1]

Introduction

Wajir is a district in north-eastern Kenya bordering Somalia and Ethiopia. Most of the inhabitants in Wajir are nomadic pastoralists who largely depend on animals for their livelihoods. Owing to insufficient and unreliable rainfall, these pastoralists require expansive land for grazing. As in most such situations, competition over the use of the limited resources of water and pasture is unavoidable between the clans of Wajir. Raiding is common, often resulting in death and heavy loss of the only means of making a living.

The normal activity of nomadic lifestyles was changed by two developments. In 1991, following democratic pressure, the state of emergency declared on the entire North Eastern Province shortly after independence was lifted. This created a *laissez-faire* situation where neither the locals nor the security forces felt responsible for order and peace. As one of the main pillars of peace, Dekha Ibrahim, explains, "Neither the security forces in the district nor the population quite understood what that meant. We all knew how to live *in* an emergency, but not *without* one."

Second, in 1991-92,Wajir was hit by a drought in which more than 80 percent of their animal stock died. Hundreds of people were displaced in search of food and sustenance. This situation was accentuated by a general state of insecurity associated with the influx of refugees, some of whom while fleeing war carried arms with them into Kenya. With the refugees also came combatants and gangs of mercenaries. In response to the pressure caused by the refugee influx, the government declared a state of emergency and as one commentator puts it, by the end of 1991, the situation in Wajir was a disaster waiting to happen. Consequently, the situation exploded.

Following the December 1992 elections, fierce fighting erupted in several places. Incidences of highway robberies, looting of homesteads, destruction of business premises and schools, rape of women and children, injury, murder and raiding of animals increased drastically. By 1993, very few parts of Wajir were safe, and this insecurity brought normal activities to a halt. Humanitarian NGOs withdrew their relief efforts, and feelings of fear and distrust pervaded all levels of the society. Resentment grew between the different clans and ethnic groups, particularly between the Ogaden and Ajuran clans.

General lawlessness became widespread in the district as violence continued to escalate with heavy loss of life and destruction of property. According to a report by Dekha Ibrahim and Janice Jenner, during 1993 alone, approximately 1,213 people died, and another 200 were injured. Stolen livestock included 1,000 camels, 2,500 cattle and 15,000 sheep and goats. Economic losses of this year are estimated at around $900,000 USD (Kiplagat, 1998), a significant amount for the area.

Women: The Vanguards of Peace

This situation required urgent action. However, the government administration at the time was reluctant to get involved. Most times when the police or army went out to deal with a situation of violence, they suffered such extreme casualties that the government became disengaged from the task of providing security. The government leadership held that if the Somalis did not attack the administration, they could continue fighting each other. With the exit of NGOs, Wajir people fell into two categories, victims and combatants. The choices available were also severely limited. They could move out of Wajir and seek a peaceful habitat, live in Wajir under fear and insecurity, or do something. With no prospects of external intervention, any peace strategies had to be home-grown.

Three incidents provided the opportunity which women seized. One day, at a wedding, a woman reminded the others of the need to disperse early because of their safety. This sparked off a discussion during which the idea of trying to stop the violence was born. Women agreed that they could do something. Before anything happened, a daytime raid in a residential area caused some children to run away to safety. While none was injured, it took hours for parents to find them. This incident became the defining moment. It led to panic among parents, particularly mothers, as even children were clearly not excluded from the violence. Five women who worked in government departments met to discuss ways of confronting the conflict. Before they found a strategy to deal with the threat hanging in the air, a fight broke out between women in a market. This added to the panic in Wajir as the market, an arena viewed as immune to violence, was now characterised by frequent fights and quarrels. Nevertheless, it also provided an opportunity for entry. The five women decided to approach the market women to address the violence and find ways of dealing with it. To deal with the now frequent fights and quarrels, market women had reached a point where they refused to sell or buy from members of clans other than their own. After exchanging views with the women, most of them were visibly frustrated with the situation and did not require much persuasion to be convinced of the senselessness of the prevailing situation. For most, the idea of searching for peace provided a ray of hope to the economy.

After initial discussions, a committee of ten women, headed by an elderly woman leader, was chosen to monitor the situation in the market on a daily basis. This committee was to visit the market each day and ensure that all women had entry into the market. They were to be free to share space and conduct business among themselves without discrimination. Anyone who failed to follow these rules would be expelled from the market. Soon, violence in the marketplace abated. Success in stopping violence at the market encouraged the women to pursue peace in the wider community. Given the administration's suspicions of the Somalis, the women decided to inform government officials of their intentions. Four women, including my informant, visited the District Commissioner and explained the women's initiative. Thus, the Wajir Women Association for Peace was born.

Advocacy Beyond Women's Issues

After getting the acknowledgement of the administration, the association of women for peace then engaged in advocacy and a recruitment drive. They visited other women within the municipality of Wajir and sought their support. Soon the group grew to 15 volunteers drawn from a cross-section of the community. Most of them were civil servants, teachers, health workers, community workers, one local Oxfam staff, and elders. To avoid being identified with any particular clan, members of this group called themselves the Children of Wajir. They then sought the support of the youths. In a discussion held at Wajir High School, the students urged the women

to leave them alone and deal with the perpetrators of violence, the politicians, elders and mercenaries roaming the district. To prepare themselves, these fifteen volunteers decided to begin by targeting members of their own families and clans to explain the need to support an initiative towards peace.

Owing to tension in the town and given that most of them were civil servants, it was imperative that the group cultivate and maintain an image of neutrality. Therefore, the first strategy meeting was held under a tree. At this meeting, the core group issued a solidarity statement in which they agreed to stand by each other whatever the circumstances. They also vowed to work for peace in their individual capacity, as children of Wajir. A day later, five children of the family of Orai, one of the five core members, were killed in an attack, suspected to have been a threat to her involvement with the group. Bravely, Orai stood by the solidarity statement. This act reaffirmed the commitment of all the other members of the core group and ignited their zeal for the search of peace.

Securing the Support of Elders: The Council of Elders for Peace

The first daunting task for women was to convince the elders of the importance of putting an end to the violence. Each of the fifteen members of the core group began to talk to their clan members, convincing them of the need to end violence. After these consultations, the women managed to organise the first meeting with the elders. Most of the men were prejudiced against what the women could achieve. They thought this was a waste of time. Nevertheless, one elder from the minority clans (called the Kona tribes) tipped the balance in the favour of women. He spoke about the need for peace, argued that men were responsible for the violence and challenged elders to get involved and stop conflicts. While some of the elders were known warlords, all expressed a desire for peace. The women then used this elder as their entry point in their dealing with men on peace issues. This development was a significant breakthrough in a patrilineal society that privileges the opinion of men and the elderly, over women and the young.

Women and concerned men then started mobilising elders from the various clans. After a series of meetings between clan elders, Members of Parliament organised a meeting of elders. At that gathering, the Council of the Elders for Peace, comprising 40 elders initially (becoming 36 later), was formed. More significantly, the Alfataa Declaration for Peace was accepted. This declaration provided the guidelines for the return of peace in Wajir District.

Alfataa provided for the creation of investigative teams drawn from all clans. Owing to their composition, the public trusted these teams to discover the truth about crimes and to make fair judgement that could ensure that justice was done. Members of the Council for Peace then started going out to communal points like the market, water wells and mosques calling for calm and a stop to the violence. This strategy was highly successful as Dekha Ibrahim observes, "The declaration of peace coming from the mouth of a known warlord had the immediate effect of stopping conflicts." Wanting to be associated with the return of calm, all elders took the peace campaign seriously and sometimes had to expose themselves to great danger.

In one incident, animals were raided from Wajir North and brought to Wajir East. One member of Alfataa Council, who hailed from Wajir East, was asked by the Chairman of the Council to mediate this conflict. He went around to all the clans and from each picked two representatives. In total, 15 elders were mandated to find and return the hundreds of raided camels. After investigation, they discovered the place where the animals were and confronted the raiders. After negotiating with them extensively, the elders recovered the animals and 50 guns. At

Buna in a ceremony attended by Alfataa members and government officials, the animals were returned to the owners, and the guns were handed over to the government by members of Alfataa. The Elders then visited all the divisions and held reconciliation meetings. During these gatherings, they used the egg as a symbol for peace and each division of elders was given one. Breaking the egg would symbolise a breakdown of peace. Since then, no egg has been broken and no raiding had occurred between the north and the east. This intervention of the council foiled a counter raid from the north.

Effectively, women had lit the candle of peace and passed it on to the men. While women continued to deal with conflicts among women, an undisputed domain, they had pushed let the men deal with the public domain and the issue of inter-clan wars. In a sense, an unspoken division of labour was emerging.

The Birth of the Youth for Peace Groups

The women then expanded their operational base to the youths. Male youths were key in perpetrating the violence while girls were victims of abuses. In April 1994, the youth converged and discussed their role in the conflicts and its impact on the lives. Out of this meeting, a decision was made to pursue two objectives: (1) contribute to a sustainable peace by helping in stopping the violence and (2) engage in development projects to rebuild the economic base of the communities.

To address the first objective, youth groups under the banner of Youth for Peace Groups were organised. The task of these groups was to talk to youths still in the bush and convince them to surrender their guns and cease the violence. Visits were made to areas hardest hit by the violence, in anticipation of positive responses from them. Beyond convincing their peers, the youth had a great impact in changing the attitudes of the elder community members. "If our children are urging peace, how can we not follow their examples?" they asked themselves. One woman explained how her involvement in the peace activities came from listening to a young man. After her children were killed in a conflict, she ran away from home and roamed the district for 25 months. Then one day, young boys who visited the area where she lived, invited her to a peace meeting. She declined to attend for the first two days, but on the third day, she decided to listen. At the meeting, one boy talked about suffering. He argued convincingly that people had wronged each other, and that both sides of the conflict had suffered. He expressed sympathy with the victims. He appealed for peace, calm, and patience, calling on people to talk to each other in order to end the conflict. Later the woman confessed that the words of this boy "felt like a cool breeze through her troubled heart." These words coming from a child had turned her around, and she joined the peace movement.

To address the second objective, youth and other peace workers helped with the revitalisation of the Wajir Youth Polytechnic, which was closed during the clashes. Young people began to seek training and engage in income-generating activities such as construction and the manufacture of whitewash. The rehabilitation of the Youth Polytechnic gave the youth hope of a better economic future. Here they could obtain the skills and training necessary for leading productive lives. To enhance harmony between the various groups, the Youth for Peace Groups organised joint social activities such as plays and sports competitions.

Dealing with the Ex-Militia

The militia had to be included with the elders, who may have been warlords, and the young men, who were among the combatants. The objective was to transform their way of life and bring them into the peace-building fold. This militia's role in the conflicts had been enhanced by the influx of guns following the breakdown of public order in Somalia. One strategy involved women contacting the spouses of militia members and urging them to help convert their husbands to peace building. One notorious gangster was among the first converts. Approached by some elders to help fight their enemies, this young mercenary led groups of gangs that unleashed mayhem in most of Wajir. When his wife was invited to join the women peace group, without condemnation, she joined and advised him to leave his gangster activities. He agreed and then surrendered to the military at a time when they were seeking to arrest him. Within a framework of amnesty, he was pardoned and removed 46 guns from the fighting group he led.

The main explanation given for involvement in mercenary activity is simply to earn a livelihood. Therefore, the strategy used by peace workers was to engage such persons in earning activities to sustain decent lives. The programme started advancing credit in small amounts to ex-militias. Starting with the amount of Kshs 2,000 (USD 45) from the District Commissioner, the money was paid on a daily or weekly basis. After repaying the first micro-credit loan, the second loan could be doubled to Kshs 4,000 and then Kshs 6,000. While these amounts seem small, the loans do help people with earning a decent living. For instance, one gangster confessed that he had made Kshs 270,000 (approximately USD 3,700) between 1992-1996 from the clashes. When asked what he had done with the money, he replied, "*Pesa haramu, imeenda* (The blood money blew away)." He went on to explain that he currently had Kshs. 12,000 in profit generated from activities started from the micro credit facilities. These lending schemes were financed largely by women. Women, led by the core of five pillars, collected monies and helped create a credit scheme. The government and humanitarian NGOs such as Oxfam and the Mennonite Central Committee contributed additional funds as part of their peace programmes. Even the mercenaries were engaged when they responded to the administration's declaration of a general amnesty by surrendering their guns and other weapons.

Using Religion as a Tool for Peace Building

To prepare the ground for reconciliation, meetings and workshops were organised for religious leaders, both Christian and Muslim. Starting with a vanguard group of women, the peace wagon accommodated people from varied fields. By 1994, Wajir was experiencing a window of peace. By using traditional and administrative channels, the peace movement broke the cycle of violence and began nurturing peace. The message of peace was carried from village to village, urging the different groups -- including chiefs, elders, police and women -- to work together.

Women had cultivated peace across the various sectors of the community and sparked off peace activities at different levels. The challenge now lay in sustaining peace. This depended on the extent to which it was internalised.

A Harvest of Peace in Wajir

The year 1994 will be remembered as the year of Peace in Wajir. It was a year of workshops and engaging various sectors of the community in peace activities. However, the question of where to hold the emerging initiatives that had so far operated in an ad-hoc basis arose. This concern was based on the realisation that the relative peace achieved needed

consolidation and had to be grounded, if it were to be sustainable. Between March and April 1995, consultations were held to deliberate whether the peace initiatives should sit within or outside government structures. During these consultations the notion of inclusiveness arose that was to become the answer to the question of whether governmental or non-governmental ownership of peace was the answer.

The search to institutionalise peace culminated in a conference attended by all sectors of the community: elders, youth, women, religious leaders, businessmen and politicians. Invited to attend the conference were also administrators of the district, civil servants, the police and the military. At the end of the two-week conference, participants came up with a peace declaration that set out the principles to guide the community in its search of sustainable peace. The most significant development out of this meeting was the creation of the Wajir Peace and Development Committee (WPDC). To legitimise peace efforts and weave them into the administration of Wajir District, the WPDC was housed within the District Development Committee (DDC). Thus, the committee became an integral part of the decision-making processes in Wajir because of its location at the highest level of security and decision making of the district.

Within the framework of the DDC, peace workers sought a balance between the Somali traditional system of conflict resolution and Kenyan constitutional law. To celebrate the achievement of peace, the WPDC organised a one-day peace festival with participants coming from every part of the district. The festival included lectures, poetry readings, music, and dances. All activities were organised around the theme of peace. The Council of Elders was mandated to nominate persons who were critical to peace, for peace awards. In addition, the chief with the most peaceful area got a cash prize while other critical actors in the peace process were issued peace certificates. The festival has become an annual event and now lasts longer than the first one. It lasted a week in 1996, while it lasted nearly two weeks in 1997. The 1998 festival scheduled for August was cancelled following the Bagalla massacres.[2] The 1999 festival was then scheduled for December to coincide with the first Regional Workshop of Women for Peace.

Towards Sustainable Peace

Several advantages came with the location of the Wajir Peace and Development Committee (WPDC) within the DCC. First, it provided for a co-ordinated approach towards sustainable peace. Second, as a structure of the DDC, matters of peace were elevated to a high priority within the district decision-making mechanisms. Moreover, it gave the peace movement a legally defined locus. Finally, this location established an infrastructure through which peace could be maintained. A separate peace structure serving from the district level to the village level would have been an expensive project. It would also have created parallel structures with the potential of generating conflict with the district administrative structures.

Thus, a perfect co-operation between the government and civilians was attained. While members of the WPDC monitored the conditions on the ground, the government provided the necessary backup support. For instance, while community members became important in identifying criminals and gathering evidence, the government provided the infrastructure to deal with those continuing to engage in crime. For the first time, the adversary relationship that had existed between the government machinery and the people of Wajir was being replaced with civic-based actions. This increased the participation of the people of Wajir in their own governance. Dekha captures this change clearly, "Before 1991, when a problem occurred, the military moved to the troubled area and beat people indiscriminately. By 1995, Wajir had moved from that. When

a problem occurs, elders and other groups visit affected areas, investigate the crime, broker peace and hand the criminal(s) over to the government...." Finally, the people of Wajir had become stakeholders in running affairs concerning them.

Creating Peace Infrastructure

The first task within the Wajir Peace and Development Committee was to create an infrastructure to sustain peace. These structures were formed from the district level to the village level. At the District level, the WPDC consisted of 27-30 members drawn from all sectors. Four Members of Parliament, the NGOs operating in Wajir, the five members of the District Security Committee, chaired by the District Commissioner, four religious leaders, one businessman, two women, three to four civil servants, two youth representatives and four elders made up the WPDC. The WPDC meets once a month. It serves as the peace making policy body and the co-ordinating unit for peace in the entire district. Each division has also established a divisional peace and development committee that feeds into the district peace and development committee.

Under the WPDC are its four working subcommittees. These include the Council of Elders for Peace (36 elders), Women for Peace (13 Women) Youth for Peace (13 representatives) and Religious leaders (9). While each subcommittee is autonomous of the others, and organises its own programmes, all are contributing members to the WPDC. The Women for Peace subcommittee has established six branches at the village level. Each of these committees meets once a month and sends information about the situation to the 13-member committee. In each division, the Council of Elders for Peace has two representatives who monitor the local situation and regularly transfer information to the council.

Creation of a Rapid Response Team

Recognising that criminal acts have a potential of escalating into conflicts between clans, the WPDC created a permanent Rapid Response team. Like the WPDC, this team drew its members from women, youths, the district security committee and elders. Their mandate was to "listen continuously and act immediately" in potentially volatile situations. After an incident is reported to them, they visit the place where the crime has occurred, secure evidence, meet with all sides involved, and act appropriately. Actions might include mediation, reporting to security forces, or facilitating the arrest of the perpetrator of a crime. The issue may also be referred to a subcommittee. For instance, the Rapid Response Team calls upon the Women for Peace subcommittee to deal with matters concerning women. In this way, the Rapid Response Team works like a fire-fighting engine. It puts out the fire and provides a space for dialogue and peace building.

In one case, this approach solved a problem that could have been manipulated politically. A seven-year-old girl was raped within Wajir Municipality. Unfortunately, the victim belonged to the clan that lost in the last general election while the culprit came from the winning clan. After these facts were established, the case was referred to the subcommittee of women. All 13 members then visited the elders and chiefs of the clan to which the girl belonged. They spoke to them, explaining that this was not just their problem and appealed to be given time to deal with the matter, with the government. During this visit, the elders confessed that 50 of their young men were preparing to act. This meant engaging in a revenge orgy of killing, looting or raping members of the clan of the culprit. The visit by the women calmed the elders who talked their youths out of revenge. This incident shows how much trust the women have cultivated in the society including the elders who are primary opinion makers.

Women can accelerate conflict by taunting warriors and urging them to war. Knowing that women can cause conflict or nurture peace, the members of Women for Peace responded quickly. They visited their counterparts in the same village the next day. They empathised with the women, urged them to work towards peace and to prevent rapes occurring as acts of revenge. Women for Peace then urged the arrest and prosecution of the culprit. He was arrested and remanded in custody. However, before he was sentenced, the culprit was released from custody under unclear circumstances. This caused tensions within the community but the Women for Peace went a step further. While they pressured the local administration to do something, they lobbied for justice through the Members of Parliament. They called the MP for the area where the crime occurred and insisted that the culprit be arrested again and tried. Fearing the effect, this could have on his position and desirous to show his support for peace, the MP joined in the calls for the arrest and prosecution of the culprit. The man was re-arrested, tried, convicted, and jailed. Thus, the involvement of women at the community level, in collaboration with the local government and their elected officials stopped a potentially volatile situation. Without the women's intervention, violent acts of revenge and counterattacks could have erupted.

The Bagalla massacre referred to earlier, presented a big challenge for the WPDC. Carried out by a community outside Wajir, it tested the ability of WPDC to deal with a crisis with the potential of escalating conflict. Following the attack on the Dagodia clan, by Boran warriors, the various subcommittees of WPDC moved into action. The District Security Committee together with the Council of Elders for Peace met, visited the site of the massacre, spoke to the elders of the Dagodia clan and urged them to restrain their community from taking revenge. Then the Council with the DSC visited the responsible Boran clan to investigate the circumstances of the crime.

As the Elders for Peace and District Security Committee were dealing with this matter at the local leaders' level, Women for Peace held an emergency meeting during which they appealed for clothes, food, and money. They made these collections moving from house to house. Afterwards they visited the victims of the attack where they expressed their sympathy and solidarity, and offered them the supplies collected. Given the gravity of the situation, the President planned to visit Wajir. The women seized this opportunity to go back to Wajir and organise a meeting with the President. They presented their plea for peace in Wajir to the President and asked for his support. For the first time, conflicts in Wajir, defined and operationalised by men, were being presented in the public domain by women. This affected both the leaders and the President who promised his support and challenged the men to join the efforts by women.

Simultaneously, the Youth for Peace wrote letters of appeal to charitable organisations and helped in restraining the youths of the Dagodia clan from seeking revenge. Their efforts were enhanced by one member of the Dagodia clan whose nine children were killed during this attack. As a member of the peace groups, he agreed that peace was needed, and he quickly became a rallying point for calls for peace. The experiences of this man and his urge for peace were pivotal in calming community passions. Arguing that violence could only beget more violence, he called for calm and stressed that revenge was not an option. This position strengthened the work of peace committees. Following several meetings with the Council of Elders, attackers from the Boran clan agreed to make peace. However, since most of the raided animals had already crossed the border, the resolution took the form of compensation for a blood feud rather than the return of animals. Here, a situation that could have led to a major war between clans, with the possibility of spreading had been effectively mediated in peaceful ways.

Continued Education Campaigns

Education campaigns targeting the various groups, particularly government officials were organised within the framework of the DDC. Each workshop identified the next target group depending on whom the participant viewed as requiring exposure to civic education. Chiefs and sub-chiefs with leadership training were among the beneficiaries of these workshops. Their training focussed particularly on the repealed Chief's Act and the exercise of authority within a multiparty framework. These helped them appreciate the changing political landscape and the need to deal with the expanding political arena. Other groups of civil servants exposed to the civic and peace education include the police, military personnel and administrative officers, particularly the District Officers. In all these cases, government officers attained a better understanding of the challenges facing Wajir District. Given the high turnover of civil servants, these workshops are organised regularly.[3]

Exporting Peace

Between 1993 and 1997, peace activities were based in Wajir District only. However, being a neighbour to trouble-ridden districts of Garissa, Isiolo, Mandera and Marsabit, meant that conflicts in these districts had the potential of spilling over into Wajir. The massacre at Bagalla had brought this lesson home. Besides, owing to the social clan structure, communities in Wajir have relations in these districts and beyond the borders of Kenya. For peace to be sustainable in Wajir, therefore, required peaceful coexistence with communities in neighbouring districts. This reality became a basis for nurturing an inter-district understanding and peaceful coexistence.

In November 1998, a regional workshop brought the Districts of North Eastern, Eastern, and Nairobi together. The delegates attending this meeting agreed that peace workers in Wajir should network with representatives from these districts. A Regional Peace Co-ordinator was appointed to act as a liaison between Wajir, neighbouring districts, and national peace workers. Women for Peace organised the next regional workshop scheduled for Wajir in December 1999. This workshop aimed at bringing women from these districts together and seeking ways of extending their influence in peace making.

Instruments of Peace

No single factor can account for the success of women and the entire peace movement in Wajir. A combination of factors has contributed to the creation of sustainable peace that is being exported to the outlying districts.

The Right Moment

The idea of working for peace in Wajir occurred at the right moment. The society had been nearly destroyed after continuously experiencing conflict and wanton destruction. By 1993, insecurity rated very high for both civilian populations and the administrators. Everyone lived in fear with the acute knowledge that they could become victims at any moment. This virtual "state of nature" translated into a desperate desire for peace. At any other time, no one would have listened to the women, but the prevailing state of fear and insecurity caught their attention, and their message for peace brought some glimmer of hope to all. Resistance and prejudices faced by women and youths in the initial stages of the peace campaigns quickly transformed into support. It is this right moment that explains the momentum of Wajir peace processes. Once set off, its membership grew like a bush fire, spreading to all sectors of the community.

People as Movers for Peace

The absence of outside actors and initial reluctance of the government provided the people of Wajir a space within which they defined their problems and sought local solutions. This opportunity made the nurturing of peace an organic process. Starting from issues that affected daily lives such as conflicts in the marketplace, women embraced bigger problems. This way of defining problems created opportunities for participation by all sectors of the community. From women, involvement extended to the elders, youths and the administration, which reinforced and legitimised the peace processes. By being so comprehensive, the peace processes benefited from the participation of the entire community.

Prejudices were broken down as women and youths took up the mantle of peace. In an unprecedented development, one well-respected woman, known as Fatuma, was given honorary membership in the Council of Elders for Peace. While this woman had to deal with prejudices from some men, these diminished as her performance equalled that of her male counterparts. Asked by one man why she sat in the Council of (male) Elders, Fatuma replied by a question, "If your house were on fire, would you wait for the *others* to come and salvage it or would *you* put it out?" "I would put it out," replied the man. To this, Fatuma answered, "My house is on fire and I shall extinguish the fire." Such was the determination of women. Those who were given tasks and responsibilities undertook them with diligence.

Besides, the peace movement was nurtured within the principle of inclusiveness. Realisation that sustainable peace depended on engaging the whole spectrum of the society was crucial for peace. Critical also was the ability to involve rather than condemn criminals such as warlords, combatants and the ex-militia. Having the potential to bring war, these people had an immense capacity to bring about peace and to protect it. In cases where essential actors fell outside this framework, peace was threatened. For instance, in the case of the rape of the seven-year-old girl, most peace workers felt the action by the Magistrate to release to the culprit from remand prison was not informed by the spirit for peace in Wajir. Based in Garissa town more than 200 miles away, the magistrate was outside the fold of the peace movement and did not understand the aspirations and dreams of the people of Wajir. This feeling reinforced the need to export peace beyond Wajir District.

Generating Community Support for Peace

Depending on the people as the major resource meant participation in peace activities was based on voluntary action. Programme activities of the various committees are funded by contributions from local business and the people of Wajir. Realising the importance of peace to their businesses, all business people sponsor and support peace activities. The government also provides supplementary funds. To enhance resources for peace, fundraising has become an integral part of the annual peace festival.

The willingness and degree of community support to the peace movement was shown when they collected enough money to train one member of Women for Peace in South Africa. Beyond local support, these initiatives have also benefited financially from the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), Quaker Peace Service, and Oxfam. Such resources have however been channelled through the Wajir Peace and Development Committee structures.

Working with the Government

Support from government officials was critical to the peace process. Fortunately, District Commissioners sent to Wajir since 1994 have been critical catalysts for the peace process. Mr

Kibiriti Rintari has been widely accredited with reclaiming the legitimacy of state machinery within Wajir. His management style used government intelligence for the benefit of the community. When a crime was reported to him, he distinguished between criminal activities and community conflicts. Through extensive consultation with the community and the peace workers, he has been able to instil confidence in the government. He has also been a source of learning for peace workers. A good listener and mediator, he let the people guide his actions. For instance, during one meeting, a woman participant accused him of tolerating and entertaining warlords. Asked to elaborate, she argued that some leaders claiming to be peace workers, and attending peace workshops, were engaged in war activities. When pressed for a solution, the woman urged the DC to jail such people. After these deliberations an investigation was launched following which a councillor, known to perpetrate violence, was arrested. This act reinforced confidence in the government's commitment to peace. The message filtering out was clear. No one engaging in warlike activities would be tolerated. In the words of Dekha, "Mr Rintari never missed an opportunity. He seized every opportunity that came his way... for the benefit of peace." In the approximately three years of his term in Wajir (1994-1997), he helped peace to become institutionalised.

DC Rintari was replaced by Mr. Mutemi another good mediator who was ready to advance the peace process. While Rintari focussed on peace activities at the district level, Mr. Mutemi extended to the local levels. During his tenure, workshops were organised with District Officers, Chiefs, and Sub-Chiefs. His emphasis on responsible governance and citizenship was instrumental in anchoring the relationship between the administration and local populations. While he lasted only one year, his replacement, Mr. Mmtsami had walked in the shoes of both easily. When he arrived, he put himself in service to local structures. After being briefed on the Peace and Development Committee his answer was a question, "What do you want me to do?" Consultation has remained his management style. Whenever a problem occurs, he calls the elders and together they find a solution.

In all cases, these administrators managed through people. Rintari was particularly hailed for being a good listener and able to let people generate options in dealing with their problems. In one case, members of *Maendeleo ya Wanawake*, a national umbrella organisation for women, disagreed with *Miraa* (*khat*) women over the business of *Khat*.[4] In dealing with this problem, which had the potential of exploding into a larger problem, Rintari invited the women to negotiate a solution that was amenable to both sides. After months of the women talking, the problem was resolved. Agreement was brokered on how to share and control the business. Previous administrations would have responded to such a problem by arresting and locking up the concerned parties, an act that could easily lead to upheavals. Once they were provided with a space, the women were able to transform the confidence bestowed upon them into solutions for their disagreements over the single most productive business in the district.

Political will from these three District Commissioners was complemented by other civil servants within the district. One police officer in charge of Wajir police division, who was a criminologist by training, became a significant resource person during peace workshops. Dekha offers a tribute to the work of this officer, "Mr Peter Kimanzi face-lifted Wajir and helped rid it of lawlessness." Military commanders were also supportive of the administration. An air force major who headed the education subsection of the Youth for Peace Groups visited schools and talked to students about improving education for sustainable peace and security.

A strategic standing committee of 6-8 members was appointed to respond to the high turnover of civil servants and to ensure commitment of incoming officers. These people were

given the mandate of meeting and briefing every new government officer, within a day or two of his or her arrival in Wajir. During such meetings, they explained what the WPDC was, its origin, aims, achievements and challenges. Finally, they informed him/her of their expectations and sought his/her unwavering support for the peace movement. Sensitisation of government officers guaranteed continuity for the peace process.

Training and Experience

Community involvement and government support are given meaning by continuous accumulation of knowledge on peace work through training and experience. Capacity building for peace work has taken place in Kenya and abroad. In total four of the five women who began the peace movement in Wajir have undergone training in peace building. Two attended a one-month course on peace and conflict management at the East Mennonite University, in America. Another who was funded by contributions from local people in Wajir attended a conflict resolution course in South Africa. Last October, the fourth woman attended peace building training in Austria. The first youth is scheduled to attend a summer course at the Mennonite University next year. All group leaders of the peace committees have attended several workshops and conferences within Kenya. This training has enhanced the capacity of peace workers by increasing their confidence and skills. It has also broadened their horizons and provided them with different perspectives and methodologies, all of which have been adapted for their work in Wajir District.

Commitment of the Pillars for Peace

If members of the community and the administration were committed to the peace process, the women's group that formed the core of the peace movement is consumed by the ideal of sustainable peace. Committed to the objective of seeking peace and peace alone, members of this group perceive everything else in terms of its relation to their aim to enhance peace. Perhaps the greatest measure of this commitment is in their move to influence education in Wajir towards a peace curriculum. In 1997, six women of the core group of fifteen and four men from different clans and economic backgrounds decided to establish a peace institute in Wajir. They were guided by the principle that Wajir must develop through its own resources. The progress towards this project started with the establishment of a primary school. Each one of the 10 members contributed Kshs 30,000 (USD 400) and agreed to an annual contribution Kshs 10,000 (USD 135). Together, they made up the board members of the school, which opened its doors to students in 1997. Among its first students were children of the ten board members. By 1999, the school had 107 students and was expanding rapidly. Believing in transforming attitudes, this school is meant to normalise peace and to contribute to a culture of peace.

Conclusion

The efforts of the Wajir Peace and Development Group have borne fruit. Beginning with one critical group of women, and spreading to the elders, youths and the government, Wajir has become a seat of peace. Conflict and banditry have been reduced drastically. People were encouraged and did turn in guns. By 1997 more than one thousand guns had been surrendered and handed over to the police. Not all guns have been turned in yet, but progress has been made towards disarmament of the district. The peace dividend is there for the whole community to enjoy. Schools and businesses have reopened and are flourishing. Development agencies are back. Insecurity has been reduced by the control of arms. Notably, the full participation of the

community has been crucial, as has been its support in bearing most of the cost of this work. The people's efforts at self-help have turned the community around. Also significant are the comprehensive mechanisms and structures in place, from the district down to the local level, for dealing with tensions and managing conflict. Perhaps the most significant development of out Wajir is the ability of women to become catalysts of peace in the most unexpected circumstances. They have arisen, taken a lead and engineered community participation, challenging all presumed assumptions about societies that are patrilineal and gerontocratic in structure. This is a story about successful peace efforts in the most unusual structural and environmental conditions. The story of Wajir resonates well to the ears of peace-loving people and deserves to be told, repeatedly.

Chapter 4

RESTORING PEACE IN WESTERN KENYA[1]

Introduction

Historically, three ethnic groups inhabited Western Kenya, administered as Bungoma district until 1992. Until the eruption of ethnic clashes in 1991, the Sabaot, the Bukusu, and the Iteso had intermarried and lived in mutual harmony and interdependence. The Sabaot, closely related to the Sebeei of Uganda, form part of the Kalenjin ethnic amalgam. They are largely pastoral, occupy most of Mt. Elgon, considered their ancestral home, and areas proximate to it. The Bukusu of the Luyha ethnic conglomeration, comprise the most populous of the three groups demographically. These are groups are principally agricultural, occupying the lowlands near the town of Bungoma. The third of these groups, the Iteso are related to the Teso of Eastern Uganda. They live dispersed among the Sabaot and the Bukusu, although the larger proportion settled around Mt. Elgon before the clashes. Several other smaller ethnic groups, collectively called Dorobos,[2] have also inhabited this region. They were alienated from their lands during the colonial period to make room for the "white" highlands and to ensure a steady supply of labour for agricultural settler production. The Dorobo have remained landless, the largest squatter population in Western Kenya. The two districts contain a sizeable population from other ethnic groups, such as the Kikuyus who purchased land in the settlement schemes of the 1960s and early 1970s.[3]

With different groups and varying systems of production, conflicts were hardly unusual in Western Kenya. However, only two clashes were part of the narratives of these communities, and repeatedly recounted. In 1969, a clash occurred between the Sabaots and Iteso communities on one hand, against the Bukusus, on the other. This conflict was short-lived lasting only two days. Its mediation was organised by the affected communities. This conflict never led to any displacement of populations.[4] Then came the conflict that occurred between 1984 and 1991, a period marked by religious tensions between the Iteso and Sabaots over demands to split the Mt. Elgon Diocese of the Church of the Province of Kenya (CPK). Administratively, this diocese covered the Mt. Elgon and Iteso areas. In 1984, the Iteso began to agitate for a new diocese, to be called the Nambale-Katakwa Diocese. It would be based in Nambale town, corresponding to the geographical area occupied by most of the Iteso population. This agitation was heavily politicised. It culminated in the creation of Nambale-Katakwa CPK Diocese in 1991. Most of the Sabaot interpreted the creation of the new diocese as reducing Sabaot influence and power in the CPK establishment (Kathina & Oduor1995). When Mr Okiring, an Iteso man from Mt Elgon, was made Bishop of the Katakwa diocese, Itesos were asked to either leave Mt. Elgon or remain silent. This dispute was settled with little disruption although it "fractured" a religious fraternity and involved lengthy arguments. No persons were displaced or felt gross insecurity. Even when Bishop Okiring moved to Nambale, his extended family remained in Mt. Elgon and never experienced any direct threat to their lives. However, the tension arising out of this issue injected a measure of distrust between the Sabaot and Iteso communities.

The Advent of Ethnic Clashes

Given this history, the ethnic clashes that erupted on the eve of Christmas in 1991 were not entirely a surprise to communities of Western Kenya. They did not anticipate the dynamics and character of the prolonged violence. Lasting for nearly two years, the intensity of brutality involved, the scale and scope of areas affected, and their negative impacts on peoples' livelihoods were largely unforeseen. Taking place against the backdrop of increasing pressure to democratise, these clashes were unlike any other before them. Groups were propelled principally by the ideology of ethnic cleansing. Gross violations of human rights marked the clashes, with massive destruction of property and deaths of people and valuable livestock. In addition, the clashes led the displacement of nearly 5 percent of the total population of the then Bungoma District.[5]

For the first time in the history of tensions and conflicts in this region, the people saw government security forces as partisan. They accused them of accentuating rather than halting conflicts. In the words of one interviewee:

> Chiefs began to behave like KANU youth wingers. Political leaders began to brand people with names. At that time, Elgon was divided into only two groups, KANU and *Mwakenya*.[6] If you were Sabaot, you were KANU. Everybody else was *Mwakenya* and had to go.

Leaders of Mt. Elgon declared their region a KANU zone, in line with the declaration of the entire Rift Valley. In early December 1991, preparations for clashes were set in motion by the actions of a District Officer who ordered the arrest of a woman accused of feeding violent youths. The arrest, carried out in the early morning, angered Sabaots who interpreted it as special humiliation by government officers seen as "colluding" with their enemies.

By the beginning of 1993, the trust that had governed peaceful coexistence among the communities of Bungoma was completely shattered. On the one hand, Mt. Elgon and its Sabaot population felt their very existence threatened by the hostile Luyha communities who had them closed in on the East and the South. On the other hand, all "foreigners" had their property destroyed or confiscated before being expelled from Mt. Elgon. The creation of ethnic exclusion zones was a *fait accompli*, and the breakdown in peaceful coexistence came with it.

Responses to the Ethnic Clashes and Initial Challenges

The people were unprepared for the eruption of violence because they failed to acknowledge the early warning signs. These included tension generated by the Katakwa issue and the manipulation of ongoing political changes. People fleeing destruction and persecution in their homes sought sanctuary in local churches and markets. The Catholic Church and the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK) were among the first to initiate assistance programmes through their established networks and institutions. Church buildings, schools, and some parishioners gave shelter to those fleeing the hostilities. Hospitals and dispensaries initially provided free medical services. Perceiving displacement as temporary, provisional and short-term assistance focussed primarily on relieving material needs. Relief providers hoped that violence would end so people could return to their homes within a short period. As conflict became more protracted, the capacity of local structures was overwhelmed. In the words of Tecla Wanjala, a pillar of peace in this monograph who was then the Development Co-ordinator with the Catholic Church:

> We all thought that the violence [would be] short-lived and that it would end after the 1992 [December] elections. To the frustration of most of us [relief workers], this assumption turned out wrong. This realisation posed the single most difficult challenge: how to reorient relief programme beyond [the current] relief assistance engaged in by all actors.

In the aftermath of the December 1992 elections, clashes escalated and more people were displaced. Following a Presidential visit to Mt. Elgon in July 1993, access to the mountain was granted. Soon, more than twenty humanitarian agencies were engaged in working with displaced populations in both districts. This generated a set of challenges related to the organisation and disbursement of assistance. Among the most prevalent challenges was the marked competition for operational space and funding which resulted in increased duplication of the relief efforts and uneven distribution of peace building services. Humanitarian actors were struggling with the growing emergency in a crowded, competitive arena. They experienced continuous harassment from government agents as the main obstacle to their relief efforts. Tecla observes:

> At the time [1993], the government was harassing all of us [relief agencies], in some cases we were even denied access to the internally displaced populations (IDPs). At three different times, police officers stopped me from entering a camp where the IDPs were held.

Negative attitudes among government functionaries made daily operations difficult and led to enormous energies being spent in negotiating access and trying to cultivate goodwill from officers on the ground. Further, lack of consistent goodwill by the government made NGOs delay the start-up of any activity that could be associated with peace building. Unsure of how far they could push the government agents, NGOs remained reluctant to engage in any activity that could trigger government suspicion beyond what it was. Subsequently, intervention efforts focussed on relief assistance and emphasised their non-political character to the exclusion of matters that could have political implications. Peace building was an essential victim in this situation. Everyone was trying to avoid addressing directly the return of IDPs and justice. These two controversial issues could have questioned the role of government agencies in the clashes. Until late 1994 and early 1995 when some people began to return to their homes, peace building remained an arena where no one was brave enough to venture. Delayed starts and the failure to address issues of justice and compensation threatened the viability of peace. These concerns are elaborated later.

The Western Province Co-ordination Committee (WPCC)

As the disjointed relief operations continued, operational problems intensified to such a level where actors sought a co-ordinated approach. Local NGOs, with the help of their partners outside Bungoma and Mt. Elgon, started to push for co-ordination, to handle difficulties between local actors, the NGOs, and government officers. The issue of security of workers and access to the displaced was central to for co-ordination.

This effort culminated in the creation of the Western Province Co-ordination Committee (WPCC), and the appointment of a co-ordinator. WPCC then began to negotiate access, systematise data on the numbers and conditions of the displaced, and organise meetings of all actors responding to the conflicts. It also provided a forum within which NGOs operated a consensual division of labour. The strength of this committee was boosted with the expansion of its membership to include the government. Involvement of both government actors and all operational NGOs enhanced the accountability and transparency of all actors. Specifically, WPCC could hold government administrators to answer charges of abuse, including issues of insecurity, coming from NGOs and displaced populations. Including all stakeholders greatly enlarged the operational arena and set up a system of checks and balances among actors. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the WPCC empowered the internally displaced populations by allowing them representation at the weekly co-ordination meetings. Representatives of displaced people in these meetings could air their concerns and contribute to programme strategies. They served as a conduit through which NGOs and the government could establish closer links with these populations. The representatives also urged their constituents to participate in peace building activities when these were initiated. It was within the framework of WPCC that peace building was formulated, concretised and carried out.

WPCC encouraged and facilitated information flow to create an enabling environment for dialogue among different actors in the field. All of its members benefited. The internally displaced persons (IDPs) had a channel through which they could introduce and follow their claims with the administration and the NGOs. From the government's participation, the provincial administration gained the acceptability and legitimacy especially with displaced people. More importantly for this study, the WPCC provided the forum for organising and conducting peace and reconciliation workshops (Kathina & Oduor 1995).

Peace Building Processes

As 1994 approached, prospects for massive return remained bleak, relief provision generated one dilemma for all actors in this sector. Donors, relief workers and displaced persons were increasingly concerned about a displacement situation that was taking longer than expected. Seen initially as a temporary situation, the displacement was now assuming a permanent character. By late 1993, the IDPs began to manifest a degree of dependency syndrome. The majority were relying entirely on relief assistance (Rogge 1993). Additionally, displacement was creating a host of social ills and negative transformations that threatened prospects for peaceful return and rehabilitation.[7] Donors, particularly those funding development activities before the clashes, began to show signs of fatigue and reluctance to continue funding relief activities. They began to press NGOs to revert to development activities. So strong was pressure from donors that they threatened some NGOs with withdrawal of funding. This would require these NGOs to pull out of the operation. Those NGOs that chose to stay had to transcend relief assistance quickly and engage in rehabilitation and development.[8] Pressure from donors disposed NGOs to focus on returning IDPs and infusing peace building into development programmes as a primary component.

The WPCC's response to the pressure was to extend its original mandate. It went from providing relief to organising and conducting peace and reconciliation activities and workshops. Between mid-August and the end of September 1994, WPCC organised seventeen peace workshops. Beyond these workshops, they adopted no single peace building model. Each agency engaged different strategies and frameworks to build peace. As an actor with long-term

development projects in Bungoma and Mt. Elgon, the Catholic Church pursued peace building by developing three interconnected strategies.

Relief for Peace: Integrated Material Assistance

The first strategy latched onto relief provision aimed at restoring broken trust through increased interaction. The Catholic Church reorganised its food distribution centres in two ways. First, it created transit centres closer to farms whose owners had fled. This programme brought people in the camps closer to their farms. It enabled them to tend their farms during the day and return to the safety of the camps at night. The farms also provided food to supplement the insufficient relief assistance from the church. Reduced dependence on relief aid was the immediate outcome of this strategy.

A second element in this strategy was to abandon the practice of distribution centres in ethnic communities for centres shared by all communities. This action increased interaction between members of different ethnic groups. Management of food distribution systems was left to elected or selected committees, whose membership was drawn from all affected groups. Besides beginning to restore trust, this interaction provided a basis for mobilisation of populations through their own representatives.

Thirdly, the programme defined women, rather than men, as the heads of households and therefore as responsible for collecting family food rations.[9] By late 1993, women were the ones collecting family food rations in areas where the Catholic Church ran food distribution centres. This strategy increased the chances for women to meet more frequently during food distribution days.[10] Over time, this interaction provided a basis for peace building workshops. Tecla noted the importance of women's meetings in initiating the peace process:

> After women met severally, they began to get free with each other. Those from areas of adversary groups began to invite their former neighbours to visit. Others invited those faced with food shortage to come and collect some food from their farms in exchange for labour, while most invited their neighbours to return home.

The strategy of reorganising relief distribution provided a basis for peace building activities. By giving women more chances for interaction and using them in food collection, it unveiled an opportunity that was to become key to the peace processes. Women became the entry points to reconciliation and peace processes. Not surprisingly, peace activities came earlier to the multiethnic distribution centres than to the others.

Peace by Groups: Targeting Specific Groups for Peace Work

Against a background of suspicion, establishing trust was a prerequisite for nurturing peace processes. Therefore, the second strategy engaged by the Catholic Church focussed on creating trust within and between communities. The strategy to engage the various groups used a system of multiple activities.

Based on the realisation that clashes had poisoned relationships beginning at the household and extended family levels, the family was the first unit of concern. In over half of the families affected, violence perpetrated by members of the same family caused internal displacement. The picture was more dismal in situations of inter-ethnic marriages. More than 80 percent of such families experienced a breakdown of marriage with spouses or children displaced in opposite directions. Peace building required understanding this dynamic and focussing on the family before extending to the wider society. Peace facilitators made calls for calm, forgiveness, and reconciliation, at the family level. Using public meetings and the Church, peace teams called for forgiveness, reconciliation and encouraged family reunions.

Beyond the family, peace workers sought to re-establish trust among groups such as the women, youth, and political leaders. Their programme focussed on understanding the people's concerns. They sought to identify the concerns, perceptions and strengths of each group, and establish how this information could complement the peace effort. The peace team engaged in extensive consultations with displaced persons, the perpetrators of violence, and the host communities. They attempted to avoid stifling the concerns of any group and allowing any particular section of the communities, to dominate. .

The consultation processes identified the roles and nature of participation of various population groups during the clashes. As Tecla explained, this was done in a slow but systematic process:

> We first spoke to the IDPs in camps. They referred us to those who had chased them away. We then went to the other community and we were referred to the elders. The elders then referred us to the youth saying that although they had been involved, they no longer had control over the violence. The youth were in control.

Communities were then grouped into four categories based on how they would participate. Youth, women, elders, and politicians became target groups for designated peace activities.

Inviting the Youth to Make Peace

The youth were a critical group because they are reservoirs of violence. During the conflicts, they formed gangs of warriors that perpetrated violence. Most felt bitter, rejected, misused and betrayed by the architects of the violence. The words of one young member of a marauding gang capture this mood:

> Everybody now looks at us with the eyes that shout murderers, murderers, but we were not the ones who planned these things [conflicts]. Some people urged us to get involved. In fact, they threatened some of us, so we had to get involved to save ourselves. But now everyone else has got off the hook and everybody blames only the youths...[11]

Increasing unemployment maintained this population as reservoirs of violence and their potential to unleash it in the future. Initiation of sustainable peace therefore depended heavily on eliciting the support of the youth. This realisation encouraged peace builders to reach out to the youth and bring them into the fold of peace building. They used two methods to embrace the youth. First, peace workers sought out the opinion leaders among the youth in all communities. Tecla called them "the critical yeast." They helped peace workers gain access to their peers. One of them was a young teacher whom Tecla describes as committed to help in the resumption of normal

life. Despite suffering three attacks (two by his own people and one by the "enemies") he did not give up his efforts to bring youth together for peace building. He earned the trust and respect of all the communities. Alone, he went into the forests to convince some youths, still in hiding and conducting sporadic attacks on communities, to surrender.

Once they had come out of the forest, Tecla engaged the second strategy. She visited them and consulted with them. As with Wajir, the youths linked their participation to poverty and lack of means to earn a livelihood. For them, the clashes were a fight for survival aimed at ejecting foreigners from their land so they could occupy it. After discussion, they sought Tecla's assistance for their safety from arrest and attacks by other community members. They negotiated an agreement with the government and the elders. Amnesty was granted on condition that the youth would denounce violence and work for peace. The first of these meetings was a test case and a defining moment for the peace process. When no punitive measures were taken against youths that had "surrendered," more emerged from the forests and joined their colleagues in peace activities. After consultations and interaction with youths, peace teams designed specific activities to address their concerns.

Initially, activities attempted to draw young people from various communities together. The peace teams offered support and encouraged them to hold joint sports, debates, and theatre activities. These activities increased interaction between the youth and formed a building block for the young people's peace workshops. Eight workshops on peace building were held just for young people between 11 August and 27 September 1994. They gained information and skills in the workshop training sessions, but more importantly, they transformed their attitudes.

The increased confidence and trust among the youth complemented the women's peace building efforts. They gradually became partners in building peace instead of warriors disrupting the peace process. Providing arenas where the youth could meet and talk had results similar to the markets and food distribution centres. Interaction was the impetus for changing young people's attitudes and the attitudes of other community members toward them.

Women: The Sparks for Peace

Men were looked on with suspicion as planners and combatants during the clashes. However, the prevailing perception of women was that they were not associated with the violence. When asked why women were not involved in the conflict, one man argued that it was a strategy devised by men to keep women from passing information to the "enemy". Consequently women were viewed with less suspicion and enjoyed opportunities to influence peace that were not available to men.

Building on Women's Solidarity. Women's post conflict experiences catapulted them to the forefront of peace activity, despite their insignificant involvement in the clashes. In particular, the effects of the violence and inadequacy of relief assistance created immense pressure on women as managers of households. To deal with food shortage, a particularly acute problem, during and after the clashes, affected women sought assistance from their (former) neighbours, outside the humanitarian assistance programmes. Starting on a small scale, and later involving larger numbers of women and children, women began to offer their labour to their former neighbours in exchange for food. This supplemented the families' relief supplies. It also maintained interaction between women of displaced communities and those that had stayed.

The desire to protect family land from sale or exchange, among other factors, pushed women to seek peace. On market days and food distribution days, women passed on or received information on the security situation and more importantly on the state of family property in home areas. Typically, the return of women to homes was encouraged and based on information received from friendly women neighbours of adversaries. In other cases, women received information about pending land or property sales. Even while clashes were raging, they returned to protest and prevent their spouses from selling family land. Mama Sarah, a pioneering woman for peace, described how she returned amid conflict when her neighbour sent news that her husband was seeking to dispose of the family home.[12] Women established an unspoken solidarity driven by a great desire to protect each other's interests. This emanated from the shared feeling that they and their children were the main victims of the conflicts they did not start.

On another level, the return of women was a barometer to gauge the insecurity. They became bearers of information upon which their spouses based their decisions of return. Customary norms that prohibit attacking women and children govern practices of all the communities in conflict.[13] Any hostility to women was therefore associated with heightened insecurity.

Activating Women's Groups. The Catholic Church recognised this role inversion that had taken place and the opportunity presented by the change in the power in the household. Their programmes focussed particularly on women as entry points to peace building. Catholic Church facilitators went beyond the reorganisation of relief distribution and encouraged interaction outside markets and food distribution centres. They encouraged dormant women's groups to become active again and to bring in new members from other communities. In addition, women consciously created new groups with members from ethnic groups. The strategy of reviving women's groups and creating new ones provided forums where women could resume earlier activities and address new problems. For instance, the most popular activity, the merry-go-round, a system of pooling money and helping each other in turns, availed women of a source of some income. This enabled them to supplement relief assistance coming to the family.

Another popular community-based micro financing project strengthened this ability. It is based on small savings scheme and run by a community-based organisation, the Bungoma Family Development Programme. Membership in women's groups provided collateral for individual access to credit facilities. This was the single most important factor in boosting the involvement of women in all types of income generating activities. Women's involvement in these groups and access to credit enabled them to address needs beyond food, such as paying school fees for their children. The usefulness of the strategy of supporting women initiatives lay in not threatening the role of the men who continued to hold public leadership positions. For example, all representatives of the displaced populations to the WPCC were men.

Women Peace Workshops. Beyond supporting initiatives by women, the Catholic Church developed and organised peace workshops that trained women for peace building. They organised eight workshops to reach each area affected by the clashes. These workshops built and enhanced the capacity of women to nurture and sustain peace. They equipped them to push the peace activities beyond the public arena. For instance, attendance at these workshops boosted the confidence of women and enabled them to influence the attitudes of their husbands towards negotiating for peace. Reaffirming this role, Tecla observes:

> We would work with women in the day, and in the evening, they could continue the peace building work at home.... Their position as wives and mothers was very critical in peace building....

At the personal level, the workshops provided a forum in which women shared experiences and helped each other overcome the trauma of displacement and conflict. After seeing the benefit that women were reaping men started calling for men's workshops, raising the issue at the WPCC meetings. No workshops were organised just for men. Nonetheless, most men did agree that women's participation in the workshops was having a positive effect on restoring peace. In summary, the involvement of women beyond formal structures was crucial in the reestablishment of peaceful coexistence among communities that had been at war. Women were central to repairing fractured communities.

Wooing Members of Parliament

Building peace was a slow and arduous process. At one point, even Members of Parliament were claiming the gains of the peace process as their own. However, their expressions of genuine interest in restoring peace were inconsistent. A politician's reckless utterance could destroy months of work spent building the tenuous trust between combatants. For instance, after attending an NCCK workshop on peace and reconciliation in September 1996, political leaders issued a joint statement. They condemned the clashes and demanded retribution for the victims of the violence. This statement was interpreted as an attack on the government. It had an adverse impact on the NCCK programme in Northern Rift Valley. NCCK was accused of political motivation and prohibited from operating in some areas. In other cases, politicians would, depending on anticipation of political gains, accuse one community of being responsible for the conflict or of inhibiting the search for peace. Statements such as these strained the relationship of trust and sometimes posed a direct threat to peace processes. This called for other strategies to reduce the negative effects of manipulating successes for political gain. The peace team in Bungoma began challenging politicians to participate positively in the search for peace and support local peace initiatives.

Dealing with politicians took various forms. Tecla and her partners took to lobbying through writing letters, meeting and discussing the peace processes with politicians at the local and national levels. They invited politicians to participate in the peace building workshops. Individual politicians who were progressive and sympathetic to the cause of peace were singled out and directly asked to support the peace efforts.

Networking for Peace Beyond Community Actors

With relative inexperience, the Catholic Church peace facilitators sought the assistance of individuals and organisations with expertise in peace building.

Individual Support

Significant to the initiation and nurturing of peace processes in Western Kenya was the support of certain strategic individuals. Tecla led her team in identifying people seen by victims and aggressor communities as impartial and neutral. Such people became organisers of their communities and facilitators of peace activities. Individuals both within governmental and non-governmental institutions used their positions to transform the conflict and influence the direction

of relations towards peaceful coexistence. Officers within the government bureaucracy remained hesitant to release their names in this report as in others. Nevertheless, patterns of conflict transformation indicate that peace initiatives took root in areas where government officers extended goodwill to peace efforts. Several District Officers built upon the space created by the positive attitude of the then District Commissioner of the area.[14] A co-ordinated approach gave meaning to the influence of these pillars of peace. It ensured sharing of information, experiences, techniques, problems encountered, and solutions generated by each situation. Government officials' involvement was particularly significant in legitimating peace activities.

These pillars of peace shared two characteristics. They had worked with communities in Western Kenya before the displacement, and without exception, they were not viewed as having participated in the clashes. Two of these women deserve particular mention. Dina Hayoka, who worked with the national umbrella women's Organisation, *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* (Progressive Women), was primary in mobilising women to participate in the peace workshops. Building on her networks before the clashes, she contacted members of her organisation and their neighbours. As before, she brought them together although they were dispersed throughout the two districts. In Tecla's confession, "Dina Hayoka was [responsible for] every effort I have known. Without her, it would have taken us more than twice the time we took to mobilise women." The Catholic Church's Development co-ordinator was the second woman who became a positive force in the peace activities. The peace processes earned community acceptance by using such focal points from within communities.

Organisational/Institutional Support

Beyond the WPCC, which co-ordinated activities of all actors operating in the affected areas, the Catholic Church sought support and expertise from other institutions, with which its facilitators networked. This was necessary to fill a vacuum created by two successive developments. First, the withdrawal of most international actors by 1994 limited the available expertise for initiating and nurturing peace. Looking beyond the immediate environment became important in augmenting efforts and expertise available locally. People for Peace is an NGO based in Nairobi. It has extensive expertise in working with displaced populations in Southern Sudan. Networking made up for the lack of local expertise in peace building. People for Peace became an important organisation in facilitating workshops run by the Catholic Church team.

Peace and Development Network (Peace-Net)

Peace builders in Western Kenya benefited from networking with peace workers in other parts of the country. The Peace and Development Network (Peace-net) was central in this process. The Ethnic Clashes Network organised as a loose coalition soon after the conflict began. They provided a framework for members to consult on displacement concerns such as access, assistance to victims, and human rights protections for displaced persons. In 1996 they transformed their coalition into a national network of development and peace work NGOs and renamed it. As Peace-net, they sought to address issues beyond overt hostilities and simplify peace building throughout the country. Within the NGO Council, Peace-net became the rallying point for all NGOs dealing with issues of peace and development. Initially they limited their work to lobbying political influence brokers in Nairobi. Peace-net set prevention as a goal in late 1996 because of the possibility of recurrent violence and displacements similar to 1992. They conducted civic education workshops for communities formerly affected by conflicts from election campaigns. The Catholic Church in Western Kenya became Peace-net's partner in the civic education workshops. Peace-net also organised other workshops, such as one for the media on promoting peace through responsible journalism.

Unfortunately, Peace-net focussed largely on areas affected by conflict during and after the 1992 election. While no serious incidents of violence erupted in these regions, all was not well in the entire country. August 1997 brought a spate of ethnic violence to Mombasa, in the Coast Province on the Indian Ocean.

In Western Kenya, peace builders used the framework of Peace-net to create zone capacity building activities for sustaining peace. They brought together people from all sectors and trained them in peace building. At the end of a week's training, they identify the problems faced by their communities, and select committees to deal with them. The purpose of these committees is to enhance networking and support peace work. Other than supporting these initiatives, through material or technical expertise, Peace-net also helps communities address their other development-related problems. For instance, members who deal with development, or human rights offer their services to communities through this network. This pushes peace work to deal with broader development issues, a link that is vital, given the socio-economic conditions of the areas affected by clashes.

Tools of the Trade

In comparison to other areas hit by clashes since 1991, Western Kenya registers the highest rate of return. Estimates of return range between 50-95 percent of the displaced population.[15] By 1996, two years after the initiation of peace building activities, most people had returned and were trying to resume productive lives. Successful peace activities, the absence of the media, and peace workers' ability to confront the various challenges are largely responsible for this rate of return. Tecla offers the following observation on the success of peace building:

> It is difficult to gauge whether and when people have transformed from violence into peaceful coexistence. However, if the 1997 elections are anything to go by, then we succeeded. Electioneering went on peacefully. Opposition politicians visited any places they wished to, campaign as much as they wanted and people cast their votes from their homes. None had fear going to the polling centres. I think that is a mark of great success...

What tools did peace workers, particularly Tecla Wanjala use? What challenges confronted her and how did she deal with these?

Training

A holder of a diploma in social development, Tecla argues that this training was an important asset to her as a team leader of peace workers. Skills in interacting and working with people were particularly useful in a situation where they could have easily identified her with one group of "enemy" populations. She has compelling communication skills that she used to interact freely with all gender and age groups. Persons without such skills have limited chances for success. They would have to exit the humanitarian scene or struggle through insurmountable difficulties. Tecla observes, "There were many situations where desperation was with us, but I managed to hold on and hang on, a skill that I learned in my social development training"

Experience

Experiences in working with refugee emergencies buttressed the social development worker training. When they posted her to set up the Catholic Church relief programme in Bungoma, Tecla came with experience from running emergency programmes. During her two years, 1991-19992, at the Utange Somali refugee camp in Mombasa, she dealt with many challenges to relief programming. She developed and operated an informal Swahili language school for Somali refugees. She also set up income generating projects for the refugees, including promoting arts and crafts and cloth making for single mothers. In dealing with both youth and women, she engaged in mediation and reconciliation whenever conflicts occurred. According to her, this experience convinced her to set up her proposal to use women and the youth as the entry points to peace building later in Western Kenya.

Being a Young Woman

The perception of men as having been architects and perpetrators of the ethnic clashes was a factor that favoured the involvement of women in peace building. Suffering from the guilt of inability to stop clashes or mitigate their adverse effects on their families, men took a back seat. Meanwhile, women were propelled to the front in the search for, and the reestablishment of a state of peaceful coexistence between combatants. For Tecla, this development opened the doors of mediation for her. It gave her a woman's group to work with and justified her involvement as a woman. In explaining that her being woman was a great asset, particularly in dealing with the "enemy" populations, she explains:

> In areas of conflict, women were not viewed as enemies. So, there was no suspicion about me. When people talked about the enemy, they meant men. I remember one young man was almost killed when we went to the Sabaots with him because he was identified as having been involved in the conflict. But nobody touched me...

As a woman, she mobilised other women peace workers. As a young person, she was attractive to the youth. Most elders saw the youth as the problem and condemned them as criminals. The young people saw Tecla as their peer, who understood their problems and their unique perspectives on life. For the youth she became a symbol of the role youths can play when elders fail their communities. Their support for her became the rallying point for youth in leadership and development. To the elders, Tecla presented an opportunity to restore social order. Faced with a breakdown of social norms and a fractured community, elders seized the chance offered by Tecla and other peace workers. They joined in the peace effort to restore legitimacy to their roles in society.

Further, Tecla worked among communities perceived as the "aggressors". This non-discriminatory approach was made easy by her ability to communicate in the three main languages spoken in Bungoma and Mt. Elgon districts. All communities identified with her, enabling her to become an effective interlocutor between them. Tecla presented hope for the future for all groups, thus ensuring consideration and grass roots support for her and for other peace workers.

Challenges and Constraints

Various challenges faced the entire range of peace workers. For Tecla, most factors that served to her advantage presented challenges as well. Each had to be negotiated to turn disadvantages into advantages.

Limited Experience with Relief and Peace Building

The main challenge was related to the problems created by internal displacement. After fleeing into congested areas of refuge, small-scale conflicts began erupting even among those in refuge. Dealing with the relief needs and the emerging conflicts required engaging large teams of qualified persons. Professionally, the small numbers of people on the scene were unprepared for the tasks of relief assistance and peace building. Lamenting the situation, Tecla explains:

> Although I am a trained social worker, I have not had to deal with situations precipitated by large-scale violence... [A]ll of us at the district level were inexperienced in peace building then. We had no choice but to experiment as we went along. [....] This experimentation may have had costs from mistakes made, but the fact that there was no resurgence of violence is an indication that the efforts worked.

A Woman Peace Worker?

While being a woman was an advantage, it presented great risks to personal safety, especially when one had to visit areas of ongoing conflicts. Possibilities of physical abuse were real in some hostile situations. As Tecla explained, "As a woman you risk being raped by going out in the time of conflict...but someone had to do this work so we took courage..." Being a woman

also came with cultural inhibitions. In the three main conflicting groups, women are depicted as managers of homes while issues of war are in the domain of men. Such attitudes require marked sensitivity and patience. As Tecla notes:

> To deal with prejudices of being a woman, I had to spend more time, gradually to win the confidence of those that held conservative views about my involvement in peace building.... In most cases, I turned them around, but in others I failed and had to persist for a long time before they gave in.

Sustainable Peace Without Justice?

Establishing sustainable peace is the greatest challenge in Western Kenya. While the victims of the clashes incurred great losses of lives, destruction of property and trauma, their return was in no way related to issues of justice, compensation or retribution. Peace building called for reconciliation and peace without addressing the causes of the conflicts or dealing with perpetrators. This approach was a trade-off with the government for access of NGOs to displaced populations. Led by churches oriented by charity and fearing to tip the precarious balance with the government, peace building was steered away from activities that could be interpreted as political by the establishment. This, according to Tecla, poses the biggest threat to sustainable peace in Western Kenya. Many still believe that justice has not been accomplished. Most agree that peace is important, but so is justice.

The difficulty in introducing issues of justice and compensation is linked to the political sensitivity that characterises the issue of internal displacement in Kenya. Key perpetrators of the violence have neither been arrested nor charged. In situations where attempts have been made to deal with these issues through traditional systems, they have been proscribed. The issue of compensation has remained profane and therefore untouched. Peace builders are pushing for a forum that approximates South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission to help people come to terms with their experiences and deal with trauma and losses. However, hopes for such a commission were dashed when in 1998, the President constituted a Judicial Commission of Inquiry under Justice Akilano Akiwumi, to look into the causes of the clashes. At this writing, this commission is still hearing evidence and gathering information.

Peace Workers Burn Out

Working under intense pressure, many peace workers soon began to suffer trauma and experience burnout syndrome. Yet, their preoccupation with progress, and the lack of a backup system meant neither space nor personnel to help "the helpers." They had no respite and no means to debrief or to recharge their energies. One woman, peace worker explains their experience:

> We [peace workers] suffered great trauma, but there was no assistance programme for us. This was worsened when you went to a camp and all you could give a family of eight or ten was two kilos of maize meal. Relief became an abuse to the people and we became part of that system of abuse. That was very frustrating to us.... [I]n a sense that displacement violated us as much as the people we tried to help.

Failure to Link Relief to Development

While the need to link peace programmes to development and other structural issues became clear, this was not achieved. Getting donors that can help initiate projects that generate income or training has been difficult. This means unemployment is still rising and idleness especially among the youth is still a main problem. This leaves Western Kenya with a large reservoir of young people that have the potential to engage in violence. Thus, while much rhetoric about peace and development passes between the NGOs and government officers, the structural problems that led to the conflicts have not been addressed. Any sustainable peace would have to address these issues. Otherwise, the recurrence of violence lurks like a dark cloud over Western Kenya.

Chapter 5

EVASIVE PEACE: CHAMPIONING PEACE IN THE NORTH RIFT VALLEY CONFLICT ZONE[1]

In comparison to most of us, Rose tried to build peace in the most precarious environment
Kenyan Peace Worker

Introduction

Commenting on the uncontroversial manner in which Rose Barmasai met her death, one of her colleagues and long time friend said to me:

> The manner in which Rose met her death was a blessing and great relief to me personally. Rose could have been killed by any of the sides to this conflict or even by other actors, and her death blamed on any side. On the one hand, her own people (The Kalenjin--especially the ruling elite) never trusted her. Seeing her as a sell-out, they never understood how and why she worked with the "enemies." On the other hand, some members of the "enemy" communities, including some peace builders, viewed her with great suspicion. Many saw her as a government spy planted to monitor ongoing activities. To complicate her life and work further, Rose worked with the NCCK, viewed as antagonistic by some [of the] top power brokers in the government. Even then, Rose stretched beyond the confines of the NCCK, which is why she managed to [accomplish] her work. Dying in a road accident was the best way . . . without her death jeopardising the entire peace process. (Dekha Ibrahim, 28 November1999)

This tribute summarises the difficulties peace workers confront in situations of ongoing conflict. They do not enjoy the trust that is available in communities that see peace workers as friends and legitimate brokers. Lack of trust and confidence from the affected population denies the peace movement critical support and solidarity necessary for any degree of sustainability. The challenge for peace building efforts in a conflict situation is more daunting when power brokers' hostility is added to community mistrust. Peace making efforts in the Northern Rift Valley of Kenya where Rose Baramasai, on whose experiences this chapter draws, faced among other challenges, the two mentioned above. Rose Barmasai had been a Northern Rift Valley pillar of peace since the outbreak of ethnic clashes in 1991. In early October 1999, she lost her life when the vehicle in which she was travelling from a peace meeting at Kambi ya Samaki in Baringo District was involved in a road accident. The peace movement lost a great advocate.

Background and the Nature of the Problem

For purposes of illustration, this chapter draws from experiences in Marakwet, Elgeyo and Pokot districts, where Mrs Barmasai worked. Most of the populations in these districts are pastoralists, and even the farmers keep animals. This explains the centrality of livestock, especially cattle, in the productive activities of these communities. It highlights the convergence of resource-related conflicts and the state's unwillingness to deal firmly with perpetrators of violence. In this situation, peace work has remained slow, painful, or elusive as conflicts intensify and exacerbate. Yet, experiences of peace workers in these areas generate a major lesson. Only commitment to sustained peace work will abate the conflicts. Therefore, peace workers are increasing in their determination to confront the challenges that ongoing conflicts pose to their work. The driving desire is to reduce the impact of conflict.

Intra-Ethnic Clashes and Challenges to Peace Work

The peace activities that emerged in the early 1990s in Kenya were based on understanding the inter-ethnic clashes that engulfed Kenya starting in 1991. These conflicts pitted the Kalenjin and other pastoral groups on the one hand, against the non-Kalenjins, on the other. As ethnic conflicts intensified, domestic and international pressure provided the background within which peace activities germinated. By 1994-1995, inter-ethnic clashes had receded in importance and intensity. Even in areas like Njoro, which saw intense conflicts after the elections in 1992 and 1997, communities are currently concerned with issues of return and reconciliation. Thus, sporadic acts, partially linked to resource competition, have replaced the systematic patterns of attacks that characterised Kenya between 1991-1995 and part of 1997. These residual attacks are confined to border areas between pastoralists and farmers in search of pastures and other resources. Nonetheless, when they do occur, they can be violent. The Kenyan newspaper, *Daily Nation* reports a macabre murder of at least 40 members of a Kikuyu community in Laikipia District (10 February 2000).

As inter-ethnic clashes decrease, intra-ethnic conflicts, particularly between pastoral groups increase. The most intense of such conflicts are among the Kalenjin groups who live in the North Rift Valley. Here, the emerging pattern pits the Pokot on the one hand and the other Kalenjin sub-tribes, particularly the Marakwet who have suffered most from these conflicts, on the other. For instance, in one publicised incident, which caused a major outcry, in October 1999, between eight hundred and one thousand raiders, believed to be Pokot, attacked Tot Centre in Marakwet. Outbursts of staccato gunfire marked this daylight attack. They killed eleven people, including seven children and three mothers returning from a polio immunisation campaign at the Tot Health Centre. Locals interviewed said the attackers hailed from Kolowa, some 40 kilometres from Tot and Tangulbei areas (both Pokot areas). Some Pokots explained the attack as retaliation for "persistent" attacks by the Marakwet (*Daily Nation* 29 December 1999). Following this attack, the Marakwet-Pokot border has remained pregnant with tension and awash with suspicion. In the words a feature article in the Kenyan *Daily Nation*, "The Marakwet feel vengeful and vulnerable, [while] the Pokot feel stigmatised and defamed"(12 November1999). Popular belief is that the Pokots entered alliances with the Sebeiis of Uganda to carry out attacks on other pastoral communities.

Exacerbation of the Conflicts

These communities are historically conflict-ridden. However, since the 1990s, conflicts in the North Rift have been building in scale and intensity. Several reasons can explain this development.

First is the changing nature of cattle raiding, a major activity of pastoral communities that has assumed unprecedented proportions. As in most other pastoral communities, animals are used for dowry, in rituals, and as status symbols. Now, raiding has become commercialised in a significant way. In north-eastern Kenya, raided animals do not stay within the confines of the community that carried out the raid. Now they are either killed for meat or sold. The allegations are that the Marakwet slaughter raided animals to conceal evidence. The Pokot drive them to depositories from which middlemen take them in lorries to Kenya cities – Nairobi, Nakuru, Eldoret, and Nanyuki – or to Uganda (*Daily Nation* 29 December 1999). This means that stolen livestock is difficult to recover.

Second, the region borders other countries engaged in war. This has created a large reservoir of weapons and mercenaries. As noted in several commentaries, tens of thousands of guns and ammunition flow endlessly through these communities. Community members report that a gun from the Karamajong in Uganda is exchanged for five or six heads of cattle (about Kshs 30,000 or USD 461), and a bullet costs between Kshs 10 and 50 (less than USD 10 cents). The price of guns has decreased more than 500 percent over the last decade. According Mr. Christopher Lomada, the MP for Sigor in West Pokot, a gun cost about 30 heads of cattle (about Kshs 150,000, or USD 2,307) ten years ago (*Daily Nation*.12 November 1999). These communities feel they cannot depend on the government to protect them. On the other hand, easy access and availability of guns simplifies the planning and execution of large-scale raids.

Kerio River is the natural border between the Pokot and the Marakwet. Each community keeps guns pointed at the other across the river. They have also posted hundreds of young boys as spies and scouts in the valley. Political leaders, church leaders, and community members all agree that the militarisation of these communities has transformed traditional cattle rustling.

The free and unabated influx of powerful and sophisticated weapons has encouraged raiding as a way of life. Continued marginalisation of the pastoral subsystems, underdevelopment, and a harsh natural environment, contribute to the hopelessness that makes criminal raids more attractive. This inhibits other forms of productive activities, leaving raiding as the main source of income.

Raiders have also become extremely violent, targeting civilians and non-combatants, including women and children. This leads to mounting anger and the desire for revenge. A cycle of violence emerges as each group tries ever more violently to subdue the other. According to some accounts, raiders are no longer just interested in animals. Now, they attack entire locations, sweeping livestock and people, in daytime operations that can last up to six hours (*Daily Nation* 12 November 1999).

Raids have generated a separate economy. They have become a means of reproducing themselves and enhancing the power of the war barons. For instance, some local seers (*orkoyots)* and spiritual leaders offer instruction, training, and prayers for the raider-warriors *(ngorokos)* before they go on a raid. This enhances both courage and legitimacy for these warriors. Increasingly guidance and "blessings" are made available for a fee. *Orkoyots* are known to make alliances with the *ngorokos* to share a percentage of every successful raid's bounty. War and the legitimacy given it by the *ngorokos* have been commercialised. The traditional beacons of society, known for their role in community welfare, have also become a major factor in exacerbating the conflict.

The power of these *orkoyots* is strengthened by their alliance with the current political machine. In one case, stolen animals were traced to the home of a powerful Minister. In a statement to the media, an unnamed administrator argued, "that the minister had nothing to do with the raid, that the culprits had merely crushed a fence into his homestead without the foggiest idea to whom it belonged" (*Daily Nation* 9 January 2000). According to this explanation, security forces were hot on the heels of the culprits who stormed into the minister's stockade in a desperate attempt to escape arrest. The culprits were never arrested, nor were the animals ever recovered. A critical factor in accentuating raids is the protection raiders receive from their powerful allies close to the administration.

Fifth, conflicts have escalated because of political acts of commission and omission. Politicians have actively encouraged conflict and taken part in it. They have also failed to discourage warlike activities. From the lowest levels of chiefs and sub-chiefs to elected leaders, government officers have been implicated in raids. For instance, Cabinet Minister Francis Lotondo, one of President Moi's high level appointees gave the Marakwet until 31 January to quit West Pokot District or face death (*Daily Nation* 9 January 2000). As the date approached, the minister was silent about his ultimatum, and the Marakwets were saying they would not leave the district (*Daily Nation* 30 December 1999). A cross-section of Kenyans around the country demanded government assurances of security for every Kenyan in any part of the country. No such statement came forth. Instead, the same minister issued a weak denial that he had anything to do with the ultimatum (Ochieng, 2000).

Churches operating in these areas have also criticised this lack of political ethics and willpower. Members of the clergy have blamed the government for failing to use the army, the police or other forces to control flare-ups of insecurity in this area. They accuse the government of not having the "interest of *all* Kenyans at heart" because of its reluctance to ensure the security of populations and property in the North Rift (*Daily Nation* 9 February 2000). In one such statement to the press, Mr. John Munyes, Co-ordinator of the Reformed Church of East Africa (RCEA), urged the OAU to intervene to stop cattle rustling. He said that it had become an international problem pitting communities living along national borders against each other. He also said that internal political dynamics had rendered the peace and reconciliation work ineffective (Munyes 2000).

Scale and Effects of the Problem

The number of victims remains unclear because many affected areas are difficult and risky to reach. Some communities, such as the Pokot, do not reveal the number of battle casualties as a war strategy. Once killed, warriors are hidden away and buried to conceal losses and protect the morale of the other fighters and not boost the morale of the "enemy" warriors.

"The North Rift is a region where death continues to stalk at every daybreak," reports an editorial in the *Daily Nation* (30 December 1999). In another article, the commentator compares the Marakwet-Pokot conflict to a Kosovo in the bowels of the Rift Valley. It is clear from the limited information available that the problem is immense. Some estimates show that between July 1999 and January 2000, marauding rustlers killed at least 150 people, forced thousands into displacement, stole animals and destroyed property. The most recent raid occurred in Kapelibok, Turkana, in mid-January. Several people were killed and 15,000 animals belonging to 42 families were stolen. Some animals belonged to the Kerio Valley Development Authority Managing Director, Mr Emmanuel Immana.

As hopelessness grips the people and anger engulfs them, the urge for revenge becomes the driving motive in conflict. Out of hopelessness, people have turned to conflict for survival after experiencing the destruction of life systems. This has transformed some areas into battlefields. "Kosovo" is a nickname for Tot and the entire Kerio River valley. Residents, top civil servants, administrators, and police bosses use this term to capture the intense fighting that characterises this once fertile and well inhabited farming area.

Fierce battles and atrocities have compelled both communities to retreat from their common border. The Marakwets have climbed up the escarpment and settled mainly around Tirap and Kapcherop areas, while Pokots have run from Kipnai to the interior parts of Kolloa, Lomut, and Sigor in West Pokot. According to some reports, both communities, in fear of attacks, have abandoned a 100-kilometre strip in the Kerio River valley. This is fertile land where they once farmed and grew fodder for their animals. Access to these grazing areas has been one cause of the recent conflicts.

Humanitarian agencies that were useful in forestalling the effects of war and the spread of abject poverty are also being repulsed by the insecurity. World Vision has invested in projects in both West Pokot and Marakwet districts. The organisation threatened to leave unless the government takes control and restores law and order. Daniel Kiptugen, Operations Manager for West Kenya (1999) said, "If the situation does not change, World Vision is likely to pull out and divert its money to other needy communities in the country [with a more] conducive environment." In Tot alone, World Vision sponsors some 9,000 students. However, all schools have been, either closed or rendered non-operational by the tension and insecurity. The organisation is facing the risk of losing some of its base funding. They are operating at 50 percent of their objective, they have experienced a 30 percent drop in boys attending school, and their donors are pressing for results. Thus, to sustain their funding base, they feel compelled to leave these areas.

Action-Aid is planned to construct four classrooms in each primary school in the Kerio Valley division. They abandoned the plan and pulled out after completing classes in only six schools. The Kerio Valley Development Authority (KVDA) was briefly visible at Kolowa, but several of its planned projects stalled (*Daily Nation* 29 December 1999). The Reformed Church of East Africa (RCEA) uses roughly Kshs 6 million (USD 90,000) per year for food health and other income generating projects in Turkana. It has had to end some operations also because of security problems (*Daily Nation* 9 February 2000). So far, the only visible NGOs in these areas are attempting to broker peace. Later in this chapter, we discuss one, the NCCK, which works through local structures. This situation leaves the people of these areas to fend for themselves -- to deal with a life that is slowly slipping into Hobbes' state of nature that is "brutish and nasty".

Affected Areas and Scope of Conflict

The hardest hit areas are border regions. The most violent hot spots include borders between the Pokot and the Trans-Nzoia (Makutano-Kapenguria), West Pokot and Turkana (Kapendo), Pokot and Turkana (Kainuk), Pokot and Karamajong (Uganda), Pokot and Marakwet (Tot), and West Pokot and East Baringo (Nginyang). An interesting observation is that the border between the Pokot and the Tugen has remained trouble free. In April 1997, after a large scale Pokot Raid on Tugens, the President directed an immediate military operation to stamp out the *ngorokos*. When the manoeuvre, code-named "Operation Tame the Tiger, " began, threats of a war came from the Pokot led by the Honourable Francis Lotodo, their spokesman and Minister. After a few weeks, the President called off the operation and ordered the army to withdraw, without explanation. Since then, this border has remained trouble free. Some analysts believe that this incident provided the basis for a political deal including *détente* between the government, the Tugen, and the Pokot. The Pokot seem to have been given license to attack any group other than the Tugen. A conspicuously large military presence reinforces security between the Pokot and East Baringo. Since January 2000, pressure has been mounting on the government to set up an army base on the border of West Pokot and Marakwet districts. The base at Liter is meant to reinforce the livestock-theft unit, the administration, and the regular police in the area. This pressure follows one attack on the Pokot where raiders seized 1,800 animals and fled into Uganda (Barasa, 2000).[2]

Involvement of Rose Barmasai in the Peace Process

In the early 1990s, Mrs. Barmasai worked with the women's programme of the Reformed Church of East Africa. After the clashes broke up in 1991/1992, she became one of the a twenty-eight member Volunteer Peace Task Force (VPTF), formed by volunteers, drawn from all sectors of the communities engaged in, and affected by the conflict. The VPTF helped in the administration of relief materials to affected populations. Besides food distribution, this group was engaged in offering people the opportunity to talk and share in their losses, occasioned by the conflict. Its members listened to the people, assessed loss and empathised with people during these difficult moments. The VPTF gave the communities a space for the much-needed catharsis.

Facilitated by the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK), the task force operated with a small budget. Nonetheless, it slowly began to build up the confidence of the population. This process created the required momentum for peace work. However as conflicts escalated and became protracted, the VPTF was faced with difficulties. The prolongation of conflicts required VPTF to put in more of their time to the peace work, if they were to make any positive impact. Secondly, the members of the VPTF were working without pay. As time passed, their motivation began to wane.

As these difficulties confronted the fragile framework for peace, the NCCK was thinking about a comprehensive peace and reconciliation programme in line with its activities in other parts of the country. In 1994, the NCCK noticed Mrs. Barmasai's potential and asked her to join them in formulating a peace and reconciliation programme for the North Rift Valley. Her arrival in the NCCK coincided with restructuring the organisation. It was moving from carrying out local projects to promoting regional activities. Guided by this new vision, the NCCK established various regional programmes for zones experiencing intense conflict. Burnt Forest, Kaptagat and the KerioValley were selected as pilot areas for the peace and reconciliation work.

Once recruited and appointed as a Peace and Reconciliation Co-ordinator, Mrs Barmasai was given autonomy to create a peace and reconciliation programme for the North Rift. She mapped out a peace structure from the grassroots level. Area Peace Co-ordinators were located in all the hot spots of her region. These focal points were mandated to create a peace building infrastructure, starting with Village Peace Committees. The NCCK was therefore her institutional base for launching peace activities. However, as will be argued later, this did not delimit the operations of Mrs Baramasai.

Peace Activities

The VPTF operated from 1993 to 1994. It was informed by the philosophy that mutual understanding must precede any peace work. The organisation reflected the affected people's desire to participate in the restoration of peaceful coexistence. Given the volatility of the situation, the VPTF's main aim was to create the momentum for building bridges across communities through mutual understanding and peaceful relationships. This meant no pronouncements that would point fingers at any party to the conflict. Activities remained discreet and were confined to people's listening to each other, as they sought ways to motivate the communities toward peaceful co-existence.

At the community level, the church provided a critical entry point to the momentum for peace. Cashing in on her church background, Mrs Barmasai and her peace workers chose Christians as their first constituents. The advantage of the church is that it was the only institution that could make claims to being impartial. It also had the Christian doctrine of forgiveness and peaceful coexistence. However, the church posed a major challenge. Its members were divided along ethnic lines, like the rest of the community. This presented the first challenge for peace work. Peace workers therefore used Pastors to encourage and challenge the members of their churches to move beyond hatred, towards a path of peace and coexistence.

Moving Beyond the Church

From the church, the constituency of peace workers was expanded. The peace facilitators made the next move. They now began to urge church members to support peace activities through reaching out to non-church members, including politicians, administrators, chiefs and youth groups. Thus, starting at the lowest level, peace work moved to higher levels. For instance, in 1996 after months of work, Members of Parliament from the entire North Rift met for the first time in Eldoret. They issued a joint statement that expressed their support and commitment to peace. While this statement was interpreted differently, it gave great hope to peace workers who had managed to bring together political leaders, including those leaders accused of inciting the clashes, for a successful workshop.[3]

Working with Traditional Institutions

As the peace workers engaged the church and politicians, they also made a concerted effort to use traditional institutions and approaches to temper the effects of war. However, the way the conflict has played out neutralised the effectiveness of these. For example, the councils of elders are an important institution, but the elders were the first victims of the social, political, and economic fallout from war. Powerful political and economic interests overshadowed their traditional roles of delimiting war and its effects on populations. Before the 1990s, elders had the capacity to regulate society. This role was shattered with the escalation of conflicts. It has had contradictory effects on the elders. On the one hand, the elders see themselves as having been rendered ineffective by influential political, commercial, and military interests. On the other hand, this threat to their functionality has forced them to revise the conceptualisation of their roles within the society. They feel discouraged, but many want to do something about the current situation. This has pushed them to seek ways of increasing their participation as they ask themselves, sometimes painfully, whether indeed, they "are completely helpless."

Peace workers encourage the elders to invoke institutions of peace making rather than allow themselves to be overwhelmed by warmongers. Peace workers have brought some elders into their fold by challenging them to take on the responsibility of reactivating peace. The support of these elders has been very important since 1995. It has supported the peace work and given it legitimacy. John Katunga's words reflect the primacy of the elders' support: "Without the support of the elders, the effects of the conflict could have been more dramatic...than it is now."

Working with the Local Administration

Noting the significance of the administrative structures, effort has been made to plan and execute peace activities within these structures. The main objective has been to remain transparent and explain the objectives of these activities. At first the biggest challenge was the perception, promoted by KANU stalwarts, that NCCK was an opposition political party. This has created great resentment and suspicion for activities promoted by NCCK. Led by Barmasai, the peace workers took to consciously engaging administrative officers at every level. Before undertaking any activities, teams of peace workers visited and briefed administrative officers, from the provincial to the village levels, on their programmes. Other times, they made courtesy calls to officers such as District Commissioners and Provincial Commissioners in the Rift Valley, Nyanza and Western provinces and explained ongoing peace activities. This increased the interaction between peace workers and the administration immensely and government support for peace work. A degree of symbiosis has been attained in some of these areas. For instance, in Tot, the Area Peace and Reconciliation Officer and the District Officer (DO) share information very closely. Given its grassroots networks, the Peace and Reconciliation office often has more information on the likelihood of attacks. This information is shared between the peace workers and the DO. In other cases, whenever the NCCK calls a meeting and it has no logistics, government contributes vehicles to ferry people from one point to the next, or to ferry food for distribution.

Difficulties have arisen when the NCCK headquarters, particularly the advocacy division, has issued statements with the potential for derailing peace activities. However, local peace structures have developed mechanisms to deal with the effects of such statements. As an example, peace workers have protested to the advocacy and justice divisions at NCCK headquarters when they have issued potentially damaging statements without consultations with the field. The various stakeholders try to respond quickly whenever such a situation arises. Peace workers have had to negotiate such threats to peace at the ground level. While it was difficult at first, understanding and co-operation have increased over time.

What Were Barmasai's Tools of the Trade?

In summing up her tools of trade, George Wachira, Director of the Nairobi Peace Initiative (NPI) stated, "The challenges that faced Rose were also her greatest advantages."

Being a Woman

It was a great challenge for a woman to work among communities that are patrilineal, deeply suspicious, and gerontocratic while being engaged in sporadic and intense conflicts. Mrs. Barmasai had to go an extra mile to legitimise her role as a peace worker. According to Wachira, her humility was useful. She worked through local institutions, no matter how they were perceived. She met and actively engaged all the sectors of the community – elders, the seers, warriors, administrators, women, youth, church leaders – and challenged each group to work for peace. Driven by the philosophy that working for peace is about building bridges, even with the devil, she never pointed an accusing finger or condemned any side. She considered everyone a victim. To push this position she attended meetings and took her place as a woman. If she attended a meeting, among communities where women are not allowed to address the public in a standing position, she spoke from a seated position. This ensured the communities she worked with and those holding power that they need not feel threatened by her person or her ideas.

Ability Adapt to Different Roles

According to her colleagues, Rose could aptly analyse any situation, adapt to it, and turn it to her advantage. Her expansive charisma played well for gaining support and sympathy. For example, whenever men and older women called her *mtoto* (child) or *msichana* (girl), she took advantage of that and played up the need to secure the future for young people. Barmasai used her identity as a mother to appeal to the mothers' sentiments. In urging coexistence among Kalenjin sub-tribes, she would begin by identifying with these communities, "I am a Kalenjin, like you." Then she would move her appeal to parents, " I have growing children and would want to deliver and fetch my dowry from any community that my children get married to." Then she would pose the rhetorical question that confronted all the communities: How could she perform this important ritual if she could not "reach the place where [her] child has married?" Such statements endeared members of the various communities to Rose. She was not condemning them. She was one of them, seeking to resolve the dilemmas facing them.

Training

She had excellent background and training for peace work. Trained as a theologian, an administrator and a social worker, Mrs Barmasai knew when to become a theologian, politician, mother or administrator. She could balance all these roles and to use them for the advantage of the peace work. Her professional training was enhanced by her personal abilities. Besides being humble, she was a good listener, attributes that touched the hearts of the communities with which she worked. These attributes were important in encouraging her fellow peace workers even in the most difficult circumstances. Commenting on it, Wachira observes:

> Personally, Rose always surprised me. After each meeting, we celebrated by hugging each other, thanking God for the work we were doing.... Nevertheless, perhaps the best thing after each meeting was seeing Rose engaged on the side with women as they sought her counsel. Wherever we went, we always factored in some time for Rose with people. (Wachira Interview 18 February 2000).

Being trained and having worked in different capacities, Mrs Barmasai had a wide range of networks of relationships from the highest to the lowest levels. All these she invoked for the purposes of enhancing her peace work.

Being a Keiyo

To the conflicting Pokot and Marakwet, Rose was considered an outsider. This increased her chances of being perceived as a neutral broker of peace. Moreover, sharing their language and understanding their social and cultural organisation was a great asset for the peace workers. In a sense, she was an outsider-insider among the immediate conflicting groups. The non-Kalenjin communities defined Mrs Barmasai as a Kalenjin. This had great symbolic significance. She was a Kalenjin, a member of the supposed aggressor community, interacting with peace workers from other communities and working for peace in a most committed way. This became a major challenge for the other peace workers. Wachira makes the following comments on how this challenge affected him as a peace worker:

> Working with Rose was a route to personal transformation. Here was one, among the enemy who believes in something positive. For me, Rose was great challenge and reaffirmed my faith in peace building (Wachira, Interview 18 February 2000).

This dual identity enabled Rose to become a dual bridge, within the Kalenjin groups and between the Kalenjin and other ethnic groups.

Personal Conviction and Commitment to Peace Work

Mrs Barmasai had a great commitment and conviction about the importance of her work. Thus, she undertook peace work at a great personal expense. In one instance when Marakwet warriors believed she was with the Pokot, they attacked her, tore her clothes and threatened her life. However, she stood her ground and explained that the Pokot like everyone else were victims of a larger process. Undertaking peace activities in situations of conflict presented great risks, even to her life. Since 1999, two of her peace worker colleagues have been slain during attacks by raiders. One attack on 8 March 1999 to raid Marakwet cattle left 22 houses razed. Peace worker Edwin Kibor organised a meeting between the Pokot and Marakwets to discuss the return of the animals. After the meeting failed to take off on 11 March, Kibor decided to spend the night. He was assaulted and killed the same night. A few days later, another peace worker was killed in East Baringo, his head chopped off and carried away. This is the environment in which Rose worked. Yet, these attacks did not deter her. Instead, they increased her pursuit for peace.

In another potentially fatal humorous situation, Rose escaped physical assault. At the height of the clashes in 1993, travelling to a peace meeting in Nyeri, Rose was in a public vehicle stopped by Kikuyu youths at a roadblock in Limuru, on the Eldoret-Nairobi highway. To avenge the suffering of their tribesmen in the Rift valley, these young men were looking out for any Kalenjins to beat or kill. Using linguistic tests and physical looks, they took everyone that appeared Kalenjin out of these vehicles and meted out vengeance. The *matatu* in which Rose was travelling was stopped and the identification parade began. Reverend Pastor Ngumi who sat next to her was asked to identify himself and he did. When her turn came, she breathlessly offered her identity "ndi mutumia wake," (I am his wife in the Kikuyu language). When the *matatu* was allowed to go, Rev. Ngumi turned to her and commented, " I hope you have ceased being my wife" to which Rose responded; "That was the shortest marriage I have ever known." Having lived in Thika in her younger days she had learnt some Kikuyu.

Mrs Barmasai also had to contend with discouragement from other peace workers. On arrival at the Nyeri meeting, then the only Kalenjin peace worker in Kenya, an air of suspicion prevailed. Most of the peace workers questioned her commitment and motives. In their view, how could a well-connected Kalenjin claim to be a peace worker? Instead of frightening her off, these incidents increased her passion for peace work. Reaffirming this unsurpassed conviction, John Katuga observes:

> Rose was a special person - the two years I worked with her she was full of strong conviction of what she was doing. She had a clear vision of how to do it. Since 1993, she had kept on the track of reconciliation, in spite of the difficulties she faced. Her commitment showed in her body language. She spoke from the heart. Often were the times when tears just rolled down her face during emotional speeches. This commitment had tremendous impact on the communities and other peace workers (Katunga Interview 18 February 2000).

Perhaps the greatest test of her commitment lay at the personal level. Rose engaged in peace work at great personal cost. A Keiyo, and married to an influential personality, she was subject to pressure from power brokers through her husband. This pressure was especially intense because of her working for NCCK, and being viewed with suspicion and hate by some important power brokers. Attempts were made to offer her high appointments, as she was also urged to take up different jobs. Her refusal to take up such offers caused tensions within her family. While her children provided support for her, this could not be said of the wider family. This situation was a cause of agony for her, and while she believed that working for peace was her mission, it presented critical dilemmas. In her agonies, she often wondered whether it was fair that she had to pay the price for peace with her family. Asked to describe peace work, Rose always used a metaphor that captures her great commitment and conviction:

> It is a difficult thing, it is uncomfortable, sometimes you get morning sickness, other times, you want to abort, but you do not because you know it's a good thing you are carrying. So you are driven by the results, not the difficulties you have to confront every day (Wachira, Interview 18 February 2000)

Challenges from Community Members

Rose answered community challenges to the peace activities. In the last meeting between Pokot and Marakwet in mid 1999, some participants accused peace workers of capitalising off the misery of the people. Rose explained that she was not personally affected by the clashes, but that she was looking beyond herself to the wider Kalenjin community, the rest of Kenya, and the future. She then challenged the community to compare themselves with other regions of the country without conflicts. She said that the only return on conflict is more conflict. Ending the marginalisation of their region depended entirely on their commitment to get out of the vicious cycle of conflict. This ability to place conflict in the broader context of development has been embraced because it does not dichotomise society into aggressors and victims.

Sustainability of Peace Building Activities

Peace building in the North Rift is still struggling with the question of attaining peace. The issue of sustainability is far beyond current activities, but platforms have been created. From them people can address conflict whenever it breaks out. Reminders for peace come from all levels of society. Area Peace and Rehabilitation structures, councils of elders, and churches are among those who keep the people aware of the need to deal with the conflicts and promote peaceful coexistence. Survival needs can make people seek means of coexistence. When Marakwet and Pokot councillors met recently to negotiate the use of pastures, the Marakwet were apparently willing to let the Pokot use their pastures under certain conditions. Pokot animals have always grazed along the banks of the Kerio River, particularly during the dry season. The Pokot have always got their food supply from the Arror and Tot divisions. Conflicts inevitably lead to lack of these pastures and food supply. Commenting on the need for peace, a member of the Peace and Reconciliation Committee among the Pokot community noted:

> We have a lot to lose if enmity between our neighbours and us persists. All the watering points and pastures are situated on Marakwet soil and we depend on food produced through irrigation in Marakwet (*Daily Nation* 29 December 1999).

This desire among communities to pursue peace is reinforced by the programme expansion and increasing number of local peace workers. Village peace committees have continuous training for peace facilitators. A peace movement took root amid the conflict. John Katunga believes that, if the NCCK withdrew today, the momentum for peace would continue to grow. NCCK is undertaking training of trainers for peace to multiply the number of peace builders and promote the notion of peaceful coexistence. They expect that by the end of the current NCCK three-year programme phase (1999-2001), local structures will be strong enough to continue running without depending on outside actors.

Asked about the possibility of attaining peace, both Wachira and Katunga noted that reports focussed on the difficulties, but success stories were never celebrated. For instance, they cited the highlands where the Pokot and Marakwet live peacefully. In this area, both communities have mechanisms for dealing with raiding. When the Marakwet lose cattle, their Pokot neighbours help recover the animals and return them to the owners. While seeking to recover raided animals, the Pokot lend animals to the victims during the interim. Representatives from these communities are quick to distance themselves from the ongoing pasture-related conflicts of the communities along the Kerio River Valley.

Conclusion

When asked to assess Mrs Barmasai's contribution to peace work, Katunga replied: "Rose's contribution was significant. She gave some direction to the peace movement... [I] t would have been difficult without her. What she did was not something that anybody could have done" (Katunga, Interview 18 February 2000). Capturing this mood, Wachira concluded, "Rose cut the path for peace... in the North Rift Valley... Those left behind are walking on a path well cleared by one of the most amazing peace workers."

The case study of North Rift Valley epitomises difficulties that confront peacemaking attempts in ongoing conflicts. As in the other two cases discussed earlier, this case study highlights the significance of training, personal commitment and attributes such as patience and good listening. The case of Mrs Barmasai shows that even in the most hostile environment, commitment and conviction to peace can bear fruit. However, the positive impact of individual factors needs to be cushioned by a positive political will and support for peace work. Where this is lacking, the impact of individual attributes, though significant, can be neutralised markedly by the lack of larger political and commercial interests. Chapter six pulls together the general lessons drawn from these three cases studies.

Chapter 6
LESSONS FROM WOMEN PILLARS OF PEACE IN KENYA

Introduction

This monograph documents the experiences of women pillars of peace in Kenya. It draws from three contrasting peace-building environments. One is Wajir District whose history until the 1990s was synonymous with conflict. Here, women have remained a critical catalyst in peace activities since 1993. The lesson of Wajir is that, even in patrilineal societies presumed to relegate women to the background, women can champion peace within the public arena. Second, is Western Kenya where institutional frameworks, particularly the Catholic Diocese of Bungoma, gave women the much-needed impetus to promote peace-building. This case shows the ability of women to connect with local, regional, and national peace building structures, in a way that turns to the advantage of communities. Finally, the monograph draws from the North Rift where one woman paved the way for peace in the most precarious of environments. Here, amid ongoing conflict, this woman created an elaborate peace building framework that originated from the grassroots level. This monograph draws peace-building lessons from the experiences of these pillars of peace and other peace workers. The lessons are both general and specific, and other regions or other countries can adapt them for similar experiences with conflict.

Lessons Derived: What Is Peace Building?

While the case studies generate many lessons, the monograph highlights five of the most significant ones. The first centres on definitions of peace building. All three cases show that peace building is a community activity and that peace work is defined and initiated from the grassroots level. Peace workers must enlist community participation to rebuild, from conceptualisation through planning, and finally to undertaking the various peace activities. This approach acknowledges that peace building is an organic process. It ensures community support and legitimacy for peace work. When members of the community take ownership of peace processes, peace is sustainable, and fracture is repairable. In all of the case studies, peace workers did not concentrate on defining victims and culprits in the initial period of the peace processes. Instead, they concerned themselves with building bridges to include as many community members as possible.

This manner of defining peace is linked to the concept of inclusiveness. Although the role of women was primary in defining the right moment the strategies for intervention, their efforts were complemented by other stakeholders, particularly the male elders and administrative structures. In this sense, the communities assailed by conflict included differentiated pillars of peace who range from individuals, to community and local government institutions, to high political offices. The critical lesson is that no one person or group can claim the entire peace process. Thus, while this monograph focuses on women, the interdependence of the various sectors of the society cannot be underestimated. The women, whose stories are told here, built peace *with the community and for the community*. They are the catalysts for peace, providing the spark and the direction for peace building activities.

Situating Peace Building within Wider Socio-economic and Political Environments

In all three case studies, peace work concentrated on promoting reconciliation and peaceful coexistence. However, the message emanating from all three areas points beyond this symptomatic approach, to one that addresses the root causes of conflicts, including the broader development issues. For example, the implications of marginalisation and its impact on vulnerable groups such as women, the aged, and children, is linked directly to the causes and consequences of conflict. In the same vein, the land issue has remained a thorn in the side of Kenya since colonial times. Failure to address land tenure systems, access to and utilisation of land, and access to other natural resources is likely to threaten the attainment of long term peace. Legal reform that addresses these issues is long overdue. In addition, simplifying the myriad land tenure and ownership systems in operation in Kenya is long overdue. In particular, the rights of women to own and acquire land must be addressed to empower them and bolster involvement in resource management.

More recent but dangerous developments are connected to long-term causes. The commercialisation of raids, violence, and the attendant culture of impunity need to be eliminated. Third, justice issues, such as retribution and compensation, must take priority. Peace work, except in Wajir, usually avoids justice issues. In Wajir, women injected the idea of punishment for crimes into the emerging peace structures. The intent was to deter crime and gain the confidence of the community. The "forgive and forget" approach is likely to leave many victims dissatisfied with any form of peace attained. Given the difficulties of building bridges while advocating for justice, peace work must go beyond relief and rehabilitation. It needs ways to promote processes that address a combination of contingent factors. These include: resource management, policy questions that pit the centre against the periphery, governance, inclusiveness in political participation, and the willingness of the state to promote peace. To address these issues requires engaging in an approach that links peace building to basic human security. While the women pillars of peace in this work did not address these issues directly, all were aware of the connection between peace building and broader socio-economic and political issues. All, without exception, agreed that a comprehensive approach that addresses these issues adds value and strength to peace work. Effective peace building takes place at various levels, from local through regional, national, and international. Only with that complementarily can threats to peace be systematically addressed to rebuild fractured relations and attain sustainable peace.

The Repertoire for Peace Work: Necessary and Sufficient Conditions

This monograph demonstrates that peace building is a process of transforming conflicts by making spaces available for dialogue and empowering people at different levels to cultivate peaceful relationships. This requires a thorough and balanced analysis of the conflict, an inventory of its causes, and consequences, and the exploration of alternatives. Likewise, it calls for identifying the different players, their roles, interests, objectives, and limitations. Our three pillars of peace encounter different situations, but each shows that some essential tools and conditions are common to all peace work.

- A peace worker needs to be informed by a clear framework of principles and values based on norms that draw from local, national, and international standards. The most cited principles relate to impartiality, such as (a) understanding the conflict, (b) maintaining

confidentiality and discretion, (c) consistency, and (d) consultation and co-operation with others.

- Principles related to partnership are also important. These include (a) building effective working relationships at all levels, (b) sustaining such relationships, (c) practising cultural sensitivity, (d) promoting local solutions, (e) developing trust and confidence, and (f) learning from experience.

- The final set of principles is related to building credibility include (a) responsible and transparent actions and (b) impartial contact with all parties to the conflict.

All three pillars of peace had great personal commitment to the peace processes. Each was consumed by a desire to see peace in the regions where they worked. They understood the areas and had the added advantage of facility with language. The people perceived them as impartial insiders with a repertoire of personal attributes that endeared them to the communities. Without such commitment, no pillar would have confronted the challenges and risks involved in peace making.

Personal commitment was supplemented by professional expertise and training. These women played multiple roles. They were social workers, development workers, administrators, strategists, and listeners. These attributes enhanced their social status among their communities. All three were mothers, a role that bestowed on them respect from the community. As shown by our cases, training and exposure enhances the ability of peace workers to engage more productively. In the three cases, increased training of both facilitators and peace workers at the community level was significant in creating a culture of peace.

The Politics of Conflict and Peace Building

Another significant lesson drawn from the case studies is related to the role of the government and the politics of war. The willingness of the state to support peace work is critical for the activities of peace workers. Where government structures engage positively and participates fully as in Wajir District, it legitimates the role of the women as they undertake peace work. In such a situation, durable peace is more likely.

In contrast, when the government is unable or unwilling to support and engage in the search for peace, it creates a vacuum that poses a great challenge, particularly for women peace workers. This is illustrated by the case in the North Rift. The effects of strong conviction, clear perspective, good training, and professionalism can be diluted by the lack of political support. The message in this lesson is that political will can enable or inhibit the ability of women peace workers to realise their peace-building potential. Nonetheless, as in the case of Rose Barmasai, to whom this monograph is dedicated, personal commitment and conviction can work around, and slowly reverse political interests for the benefit of peace.

ACRONYMS

AFWIC	Africa Women in Crisis Programme
ASILI	Swahili for Real (original)
CPK	Church of the Province of Kenya
CRS	Centre for Refugee Studies, Moi University-Kenya
DC	District Commissioner
DDC	District Development Committee
DO	District Officer
FORD	Forum for the Restoration of Democracy
GEMA	Gikuyu, Embu, Meru and Akamba
GOK	Government of Kenya
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IFRCCs	International Federation of the Red Cross and Crescent Societies
KAMATUSA	Kalenjin, Maasai, Turkana and Samburu
KANU	Kenya African National Union
MP	Member of Parliament
NCCK	National Council of the Churches of Kenya
NEMU	National Elections Monitoring Unit
NGOs	Non-governmental Organisations
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
SPLA	Sudan Peoples Liberation Army
UNESCO	United National Education, Social and Cultural Organisation
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
USD	United States Dollar
WPCC	Western Province Co-ordination Committee
WPDC	Wajir Peace and Development Committee

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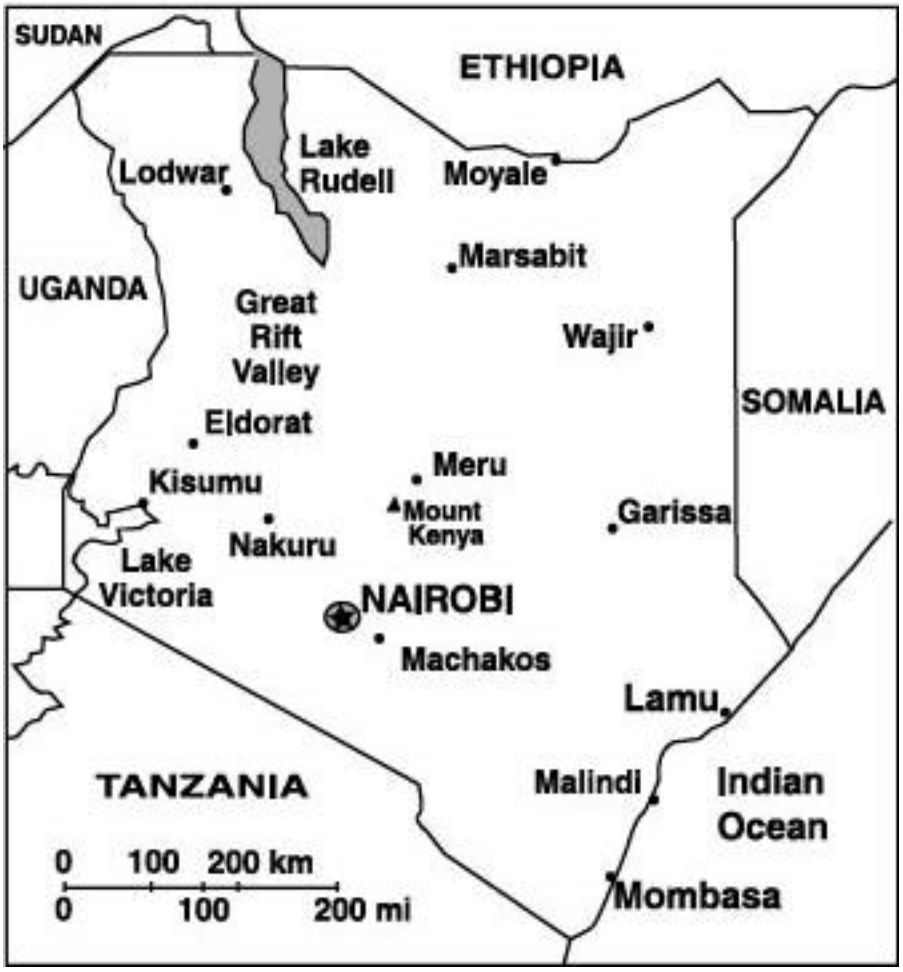
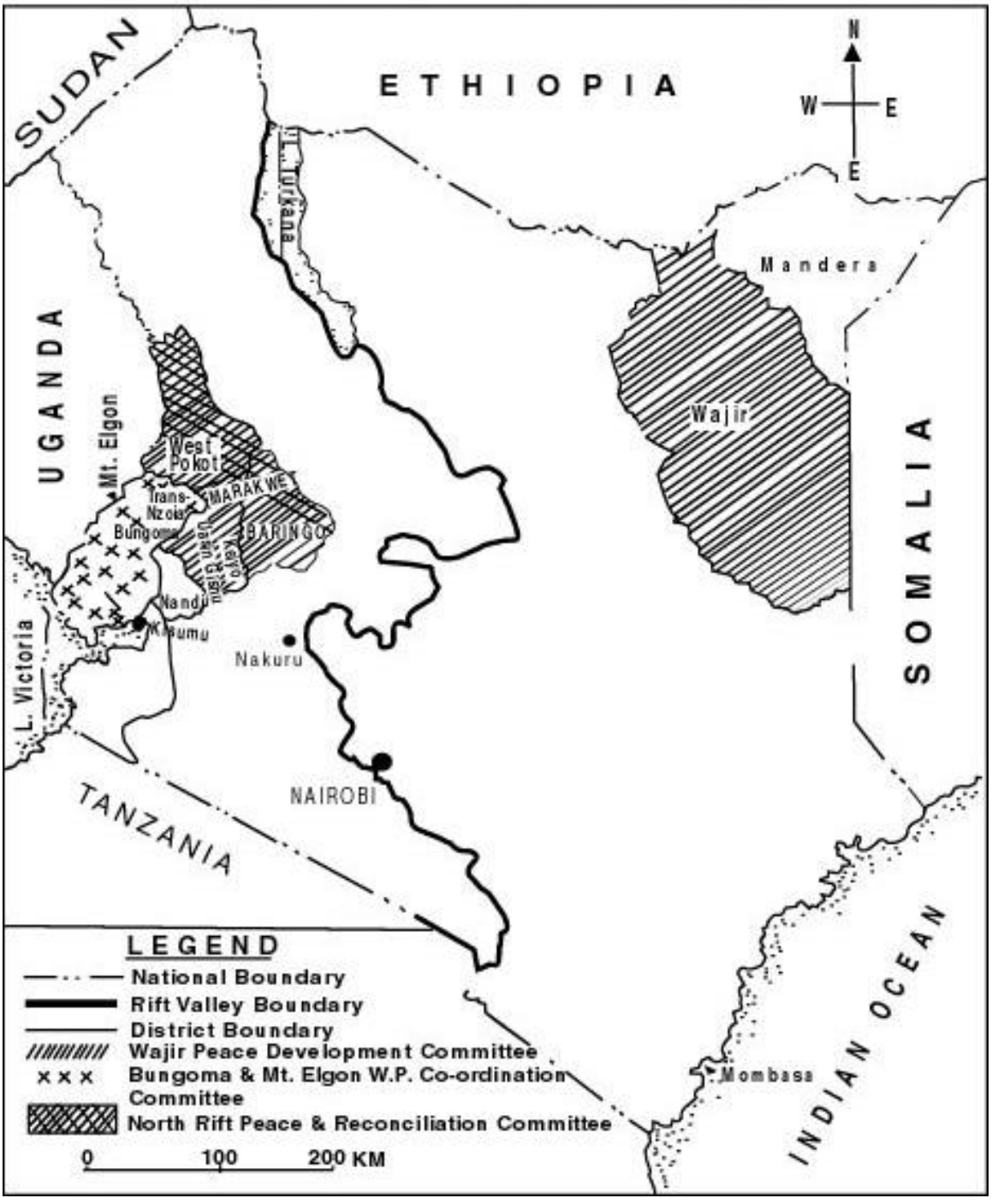
MAPS

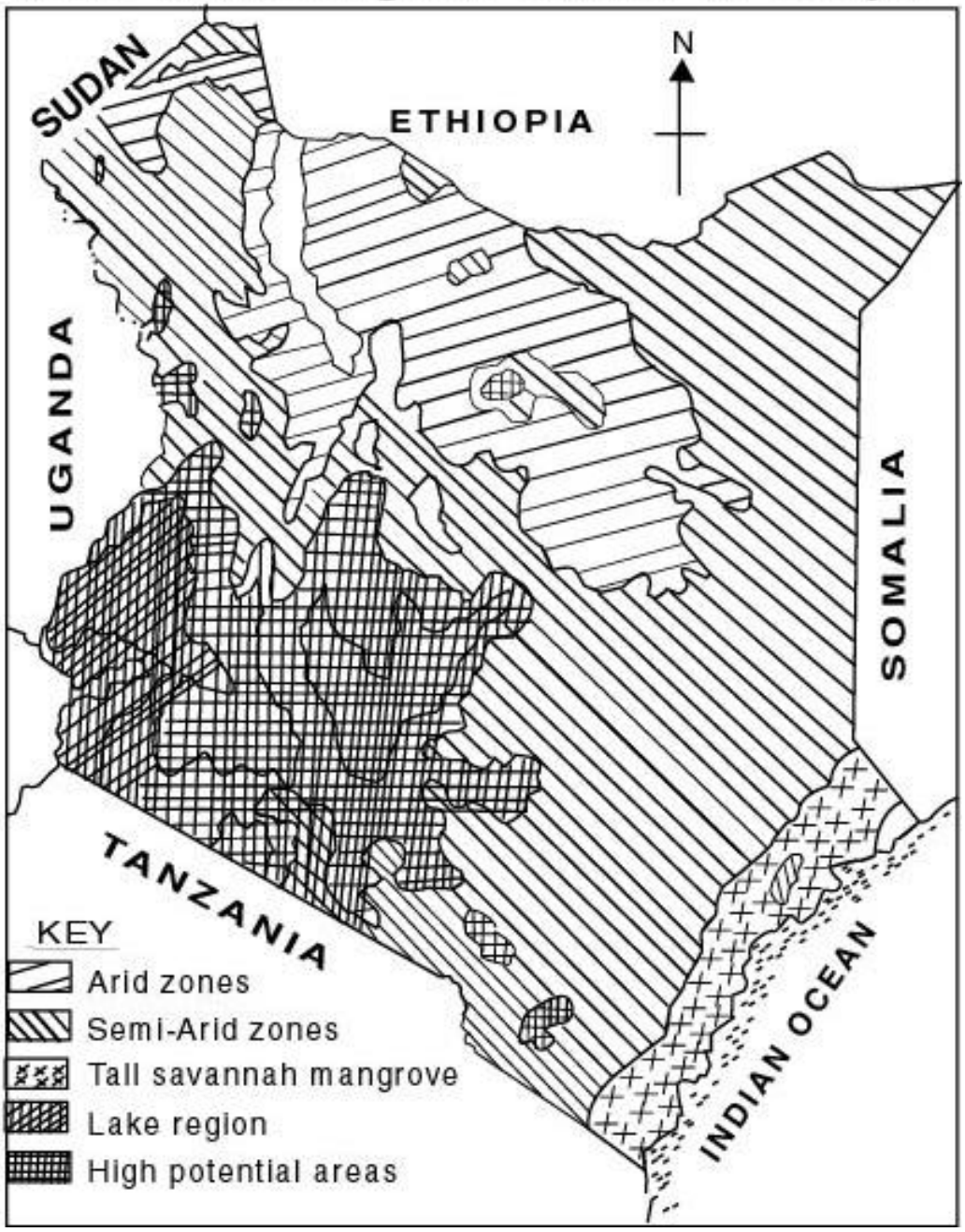
Map 1 Kenya



MAP 2 Zones of Peace - Building in Kenya



MAP 3 Ecological Zones of Kenya



Endnotes: Chapter One

[1] This conception ties in with the objectives of International Alert's *Code of Conduct in Conflict Transformation Work*, p.18 at http://www.international Balert.org/CoCr.html

[2] Whereas there has been movement towards the erosion of national sovereignty in protecting the rights of civilians suffering the effects of war, international agencies have stopped short of intervention without the consent of the state. External pressure has been applied to urge states to change their behaviour rather than to eliminate the principles of sovereignty and non interference. The ongoing Russian-Chechnya conflict is a classic example where the world is trying to influence a change in the behaviour of Russia in its war with Chechen rebels and civilians.

[3] Such situations have led to many studies on the economies of war. These studies show the nexus between outside intervention, the distortion of local economies, and the negative consequences for peace. Assistance generates parallel economies that are appropriated by those groups who wage war, usually the war lords. Finally, intervention becomes a system by which the war economy reproduces itself and flourishes at the expense of peace building. For examples see David Keen (1994, 1998) and Michael Maren (1997).

End Notes Chapter Two

[1] The eruption of conflicts in the Balkans has been explained as the explosion of latent conflicts contained during the reign of Tito in the Former Yugoslavia.

[2] Turkana District is the worst hit by the current drought in Kenya. Hundreds of people have been reported dead. See for example, Adieri Mulaa, "Go to Famine Areas, Ndingi tells NGOs," *Daily Nation* 27 November 1999.

[3] Operation Life Line Sudan, the largest humanitarian assistance programme, is operated from Lokichoggio in Turkana (within Kenya), and costs USD 60 billion. It targets only Southern Sudan to the exclusion of the local Turkana population. See Weiss (1996) and Keen (1992).

[4] In a recent paper on security around the Kenyan refugee camps, Jeff Crisp (1999) shows how resources in refugee camps act as pull factors for the locals. He also points out that local leaders and nearby community members are increasing pressure for agencies to consider the needs of the locals as well.

[5] Interview with Co-ordinator NCCK Reproductive Health Programme in Dadaab Camps, July 1999.

[6] Interview with UNHCR Security Officer Kakuma August 1999. This substantiates earlier findings of an environmental baseline survey of resource-based violence. See Monica Kathina, *Resource-Based Violence and Gender in Environmental Management in and Around Kakuma*, CRS/UNHCR 1998.

[7] The Mitei-tei farm was a microcosm of what happened across Kenya. While there was a range of factors that led to this conflict, a dispute over land ownership was the immediate cause. Members of Mitei-tei Farm, who had paid nearly Kshs one million (USD15,000) disagreed over the issuance of title deeds in the subdivision. Allegations were made about the administration of the farm dislodging non-Kalenjin members and replacing them with Kalenjins. What began as protest grew into a conflict and finally led to one woman's death. This set the stage for an orgy of violence.

[8] The origin of *majimbo* rallies is in pre-independence politics. They relate to competition between small and large ethnic groups. During these rallies, supporters of KANU were called upon to arise and defend their indigenous lands grabbed by "ungrateful aliens".

[9] These areas are located in three zones, Western Kenya (Trans-Nzoia), the Rift Valley (including Nandi, Narok, Molo, Tinderet, Mt. Elgon and Burnt Forest), and Coast Province, which witnessed clashes in August of 1998.

[10] This has its origins in colonial times when the government only permitted ethnic or communal organisations. Their intent was to break up any united national organisations that could pose a threat to colonial authority. These organisations were later transformed into political parties based on tribal support. The first of these was the Kikuyu Central Association founded in 1922

[11] By 1997, Kenya was gripped by a famine that struck 37 of its 53 districts. Some of these districts are high yield areas that had never known famine or food shortages before.

[12] These groups, seen as warrior communities, were accused of being the perpetrators of the conflict. Their communities made up two thirds of the Rift Valley's population of 2.5 million eligible voters for the 1992 election. For example, see the report of the National Election Monitoring Unit (NEMU 1993:94).

[13] GEMA is an acronym for Gikuyu, Embu, Meru and Akamba, the four Bantu tribes that live near Mt. Kenya. During the tenure of Kenyatta, GEMA acted as an association to promote the interests of these communities. It was instrumental in establishing co-operatives and societies through which its members acquired land and other properties throughout Kenya. The concept of KAMATUSA was based on this history.

[14] FORD ASILI is led by Kenneth Matiba, who with Charles Rubia resigned from the cabinet in 1991, after which they were detained. In 1991, the first mass opposition movement, the Forum for the Restoration of Democracy in Kenya (FORD), initially headed by Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, was formed. Soon after, there was disagreement over organisational leadership and the question of co-operation with the government. Following this, FORD split into two factions, FORD Kenya, under Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, and FORD ASILI (Swahili for original) under Kenneth Matiba.

Endnotes: Chapter Three

[1] The case study of Wajir is based on the experiences of Dekha Ibrahim one of the five women who initiated the Wajir Women's Association for Peace in 1993. In line with her request not to document her experiences as unique, this success story is attributed to many peace workers. Dekha and a few others act as interlocutors of the peace processes. Interviews with people involved with the Wajir peace processes were conducted in August 1999. Later, extensive in-depth interviews were conducted with Dekha Ibrahim between 27 and 28 November 1999.

[2] During this attack by an Oromo clan, at least 140 people were reported killed, and they took away more than 1,000 animals.

[3] Wajir is considered a hardship post for the civil service because of security problems. As with other north-eastern districts, civil service postings there are considered punitive measures. Those posted to these areas often decline to serve. Military personnel stay on average six months, while administrative and police officers serve a maximum of two years.

[4] Miraa (Khat) is a leafy plant, believed to be the drug of choice for the Somalis.

Endnotes: Chapter Four

[1] The Pillar of Peace through whose eyes the story of Western Kenya is told, is Tecla Wanjala. Two in-depth interviews were conducted in August and September 1999 to highlight her involvement, participation and experiences with the attempts to initiate and nurture peace processes in Bungoma and Mt. Elgon districts. During the clashes, Tecla worked as the Relief and later Peace and Reconciliation Co-ordinator of the Bungoma Catholic Diocese. Currently she is the National Co-ordinator of the Peace and Development Network (PeaceNet.)

[2] Dorobo is a composite term used to refer to the remnants of hunter-gatherer communities in Kenya.

[3] The post-independence government handled the land question by dividing former settler farmers into resettlement schemes. The main beneficiaries of these were the large land-buying companies who bought the lands and later subdivided them into small holdings.

[4] Interview with Mrs Chepkurui, Kapsokwony, August 1999.

[5] The 1991 population estimate for Bungoma and Mt. Elgon is 836,369. Figures for the displaced population ranged between 29,000 (3.5 percent) and 70,000 (8.4 percent). See Bungoma District Development Plan 1993-97.

[6] *Mwakenya* is a term that came to usage in the early 1980s after the foiled coup attempt Kenya. At first, groups campaigning for increased rights and participation in the political arena called themselves *Mwakenya*, literally "those of Kenya". Then the government appropriated the term to label dissidents. A number of Kenyans were prosecuted or detained for being stigmatised as *Mwakenya.*

[7] By 1994, most school-age children had completed nearly two years without going to school. Urban centres, particularly those that had hosted several of the displaced persons, faced many social problems related to inadequate resources and services: unemployment, crime, child prostitution, alcoholism and public drunkenness, domestic violence, and marital breakdown. Although not entirely new, the magnitude of these problems reached unprecedented levels. See Kathina and Oduor (1995).

[8] In one case, a programme co-ordinator and his field officers were given a directive by headquarters to restructure the relief programme to emphasise development or face shrinking budgets. In his words, this instruction was a veiled dismissal threat if donors failed to fund the programme.

[9] Since the beginning of the relief programmes, all but one NGO, the International Childcare Trust (ICT) based their definition of heads of households on the patriarchal family structure. This caused problems because some assistance did not reach family members. Relief supplies would be sold or exchanged for other goods and services. This problem was particularly acute in polygamous families where men collected the food for all their family members but failed to make it available to everyone. See Kathina & Masika (1997).

[10] The strategy of turning over family food rations to women was introduced in Kenyan refugee camps after studies showed that food distribution through men was having an adverse effect on family health. Most of it was ending up for sale in the markets instead of in the households. Incidents within the IDP camps have corroborated this finding.

[11] Interview with Youth in Kapsokwony, Mt. Elgon, August 1999

[12] After hearing that her neighbour's husband had brought prospective buyers to their farm, a Sabaot woman sent word to Mama Sarah about her insecurity. She explained that the

prices of land had plummeted and that her family would remain homeless if this sale went through. So, Mama Sarah returned and blocked the sale solely by her presence. After remaining alone for three months and sleeping in the bushes for fear of attack at night, one of her sons found her, and finally her husband returned. During that time, a female neighbour supported her with food and water.

[13] Such norms and practices had been ruthlessly violated during the clashes. Women and children were killed. Particularly targeted were male children. These acts were contrary to traditional rules of war and they caused deep trauma to the communities.

[14] This particular District Commissioner's work was pivotal in Western Kenya, Wajir, and Northern Rift Valley, in that order. He is discussed as the fourth Pillar of Peace in this study.

[15] Figures of returnees, varied from one agency to another. The government indicated a 95 percent return; the CPK figures show a 75 percent return. The Catholic Church figures were the lowest with 50 to 55 percent. Significantly, even the lowest figures show over one half of the registered population returning. No other location in Kenya had such high return rates.

Endnotes Chapter Five

[1] This case study draws on the experiences of Rose Baramasai, who died in a road accident two days before an interview scheduled for this monograph. I am greatly indebted to George Wachira and John Katunga, both of Nairobi Peace Initiative (NPI), who worked very closely with Rose until her untimely death. They were kind enough to open up to me at a time when the memories of Rose were still fresh and painful. I thank them for agreeing with me that we must tell this story repeatedly again, to keep the aspirations and dreams of this great peace worker alive. To them I am most grateful.

[2] It will be noted that this attempt comes after a major attack on the Pokot. It reaffirms the notion held by some that the government makes a special effort to protect the interests of the Pokot more than the other afflicted groups.

[3] The statement had a negative effect on the operations of NCCK because of the backlash from higher political barons. It led to the censure for NCCK, but had a great impact for cultivating support from political leaders.