

**PEACE ANALYSIS-COMMUNITY PEACE PILLARS**  
**An Innovation in Peace Analysis**  
**Synopsis**

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Peace Analysis, Community Peace Pillars, Foundational Attributes

**Author's Biography**

The author, Kisuke Ndiku, is a Practitioner in peacebuilding and works at PRECISE. PRECISE is an agency focusing on organizational development, development research, and peace issues in Eastern Africa. The author has undertaken studies and baselines on conflict sensitivity and Analysis as well as assessment and evaluation of peace and peacebuilding projects at community and cross-border levels, including Peace Analysis in different countries of the East and Greater Horn of Africa. His research interests are in community-led solutions and innovations in peacebuilding. This has focused solutions on organizational development and management change, research in community development, peacebuilding, and capacity strengthening.

## **Background**

In June 2016 PRECISE collaborated with World Renew, Anglican Development Service, Coast Interfaith Council Clerics Trust, and three multi-ethnic localities in Baringo East, Solai, and Elementaita in carrying out a participatory study to learn from different communities, the mechanisms, and types of interactions used in local engagements to enforce peace between different ethnicities. The study sought to establish who in the communities engages, how the engagement is structured, and what, at the local level upholds the engagements.

## **The innovation**

The study was a departure from the conventional use of conflict analysis, conflict management, and security enforcement approaches predominantly used in peacebuilding since 1987 in Kenya. Instead, this study focused on analyzing local social factors used to inform engagements that lead to peace and how to enforce and uphold the peace between communities, in conflict-prone communities. The study was based on the premise that communities have mechanisms that ensure peace. Through analysis, the study sought to identify what underpins these mechanisms and how they operate. This approach had not been used previously by the collaborating organizations, peace practitioners, and community peace workers in Kenya.

During the study, the basic assumptions were that, if the types of local social engagement directly related to how peace was gained and maintained could be better understood, respondents could describe who in the community held functions and roles in peace engagement processes. If the types of functions and roles related to the mechanisms were described then; this would illuminate levels of capacity in local peacebuilding. This would then lead to an improved understanding of how to strengthen the mechanisms used and the skills among those who use them. If this is done it would also contribute to how benefits arising from peaceful coexistence are shared locally within communities and in other wider peace relations.

The study aimed at preparing the ground for the development of innovative responses to peacebuilding, informed by community-bred and community-led approaches in peacebuilding. The findings were intended for use by Anglican Development Service to strengthen local community structures and functions that enforce peace. The findings would also be shared with peace practitioners outside these communities to enhance peacebuilding practices elsewhere.

## **Peace analysis-community peace pillars**

The study process was part of a new approach for assessing how communities manage peace from within and how that would lead to peacebuilding interventions. In that regard, the approach was used as a baseline and was implemented to examine local mechanisms and types of engagements in peacebuilding from,

a) historical perspective, including people and structures of the community engaged in enforcing peace.

b) social context dimensions, including the interactions of community peace workers, community structures, and other operating structures contributing to peace locally, including government structures and other agencies in society responsible to ensure fruitful peace engagements. This sought to identify the types of interactions these had and how this informed community-driven peace efforts.

This was followed by local descriptive profiling of

c) community individuals and local structures involved in peace interactions, and this led to

d) identifying and describing the functions, roles, and responsibilities these individuals and structures held in engaging communities to forestall or enforce peace and how the benefits of peaceful coexistence are safeguarded. This informed how peace was negotiated, how benefits arising from peaceful coexistence were conceived and managed, and how these were shared at the local level.

The study findings drew out four key conditions or community peace pillars, a metaphor describing supporting poles used locally in the building of shelters. These were referred to frequently by respondents, describing how interactions among community members facilitated engagements that enforce local peace.

### *Community Peace Pillars Illustrated*



The First Pillar profiles functions, roles, and responsibilities perceived to facilitate interactions to maintain peace and sharing of benefits arising from peaceful coexistence. Some peace benefits identified by respondents include access to justice, access to a process that provides closure to the breach of peace or wrongs occurring when peace is violated, freedom of movement and association, freedom to transact in trade, freedom to share common resources such as livestock grazing areas and water sources, sharing of public spaces between rival communities, intermarriages, and other activities of social and economic interest. When these are articulated by individuals in different levels and community backgrounds (ethnicities), within themselves, and then reaching out to others outside of their own, this enforces peace.

The Second Pillar highlights that faith and spirituality have inherent contributions within these communities to reinforce interactions that underscore neighborliness, forbearance, forgiveness, co-existence, and harmony. These were also perceived by community members to be part of the benefits and as elements of uniting community members. Respondents reported that communities perceived that, in times of tension and conflict; religious leaders could be relied on, and trusted, were more open and accountable, and could hold community confidentiality.

The Third Pillar identified functions and roles of community leaders and elders in governance, for instance, the council of elders and a few isolated cases of chiefs serving in formal government. Elders in local structures of leadership such as clan heads, and traditional spiritual leaders among others, were perceived to represent the community in engaging sensitive and priority issues. These operate outside formal government to validate, legitimize and give credibility to the cause of peace.

The Fourth Pillar has to do with formal governance structures and how these interact with the community structures for peace engagement. Pillar Four included law enforcement and security organs. Findings seemed to indicate that this pillar was one where elements of the political class and others who could contribute to peace might be allowed to engage. The pillar considered entities that address crime, gross injustice, and formal aspects of land, borders, access to rights, and formal justice.

### **Foundational Attributes**

The community peace pillars are informed by the functions and roles of local individuals and community structures in the process of negotiating peace. The study found that the community's understanding of who (individuals and local structures) in the community was involved in facilitating and negotiating peace, and how they undertook the functions and roles they had to play included also the forms of behaviour and conduct in the process. Foundational attributes that describe prerequisite forms of behaviour and conduct among those engaging in the peace process were defined in the study:

- ❖ Attributes of Fairness, Equity and Justice derived as gains from community affiliations community members engage with
- ❖ Attributes of Dialogue and Interactions between different communities, gaining voice
- ❖ Attributes of Inclusion in Diversity among communities, gaining togetherness, cohesion, unity and acceptance to live together in diversity
- ❖ Attributes of Identity, Legitimacy in the nature of engagement, persons leading, gaining involvement/inclusion, roles in community processes
- ❖ Attributes of Sharing interactive relations in resources, land borders, spirituality/ spiritual nurture, trade and exchange and space for sharing

The study obtained a deeper understanding of the types of engagement and mechanics, including who in the community gets involved, in which community structures peace is negotiated, and how they engage among themselves and with communities outside their own to bring about peace and peaceful coexistence. This was based on exploring interactions of members within and outside their ethnic lines.

Insights were gained on perceptions and descriptions of community identity, contacts, associations, relations, interactions, exchanges, engagements, and transactions essential for working toward peace. The author asserts that peaceful coexistence is incumbent on community composition and how communities perceive and describe themselves in relation to others they relate to.

### **Diversity in the study context**

In the sampled locations, the government had not responded to some peacebuilding aspects in the past. This left unresolved issues of actions committed through the use of excessive force by government security agencies or unresolved land and border-related issues. Human rights agents in Kenya refer to unresolved issues as historical injustices.

The study learned that unresolved court cases on any of the issues stated above led to social unrest and agitation during election-related campaigns. Respondents to the study pointed out that, land and administrative borders define community identities and when the borders are interfered with without inclusive community engagement, this undermines peace within and between communities. This state of affairs depicted community disaffection towards the government. These issues were more articulate across the different sampled communities where different communities interact.

As examples in each sampled locality, in Baringo East sub-county, cultural interactions between the three dominant communities, Pokot, Il Jamus, and Tugen, and a minority group, Endorois, include the practice of traditional cattle raiding. Cattle raiding creates a high sense of insecurity, uncertainty, and stigmatization of communities, as well as a historical trail of vengeful practices, made worse by the use of small arms, as confirmed by the work of Shalom Centre in these localities.

The Solai/Banita communities are comprised of Kalenjin and Kikuyu, and a mix of resettled people from all main communities of Kenya. The minority community, Endorois, also lives here and identifies their cultural heritage and traditional land with unresolved land issues. They have made formal legal claims about the ancestral heritage of their cultural lands. It pointed to a formal legal title as the representation of land certification, while cultural land tenure has to do with ancestry and communal sharing in perpetuity, recognized based on traditional justice.

The third locality, Elementaita, has four dominant communities Maasai, Kisii, Kalenjin, and Kikuyu, and the minority Ogiek community. The Ogiek traditionally occupied the slopes of the Mau mountain range and have internationally advocated for their ancestral lands and have worked for over 20 years pursuing their cultural heritage rights.

The characteristics depicted within each sample locality in the foregoing represent the broader context of other communities in Kenya. This study contributes to learning about peacebuilding among other similar communities. The findings can be applied in other communities by obtaining local descriptions of how categories of individuals and structures working on peace in one community, interact with others from other communities thus defining sets of factors that underpin peace. The pillars identify whom to engage at the local level, to utilize the identified pillars in peacebuilding.

The innovative study approach guided the process of field data collection. The findings from each community affirmed that community mechanisms are not only relevant but have similarities across communities. For instance, in the sampled communities, the role of elders as the face of the community during peace negotiations was reported to be a key platform for interactions within and between communities. Decisions taken at such platforms are foundational to progress on community-based peacebuilding.

### **Lessons to draw out**

The study provided a different and innovative approach to peacebuilding at the community level. Some respondents readily remarked on what one would term “*a wow moment*”. John Nampayei a local religious leader observed this in relation to the approach used in the study...“*actually I have not thought about investigating peace that way before!*” The approach contributed to a visibly energized sense of freshness, usefulness, interest, motivation, and animated dialogue sessions with community members and their leaders.

### **Learning from the challenges and outcomes**

From the process, the terms, terminology, and jargon on the tools and measures for collecting data could inhibit the quality of data collection and analysis of the field data. To enhance on-the-spot analysis and learning, the design aspects, language, and tools used need simplification. The field data collectors need more time to learn and understand the process, and how to use the tools better.

Evidence showed that community peace pillars exist and are not to be assumed. They are underpinned by clear local peace functions, roles, and responsibilities. Using the local languages better facilitated the description of social relations and interactions essential for maintaining peace and sharing of benefits arising from peaceful coexistence. The use of local languages underscored the importance of shared vocabulary in peace work, which is devoid of technical jargon and semantics. The local individuals, especially elders, and the community structures they use are key to local peace, and enhancing their capacities would make a more significant difference in peacebuilding.

### **The Implication of the Study**

The Peace Analysis-Community Peace Pillars study revealed that:

- Approaching peace work from a peace analysis perspective enhances and makes local peace mechanisms better understood and visible to strengthen local capacities in peacebuilding.
- The vocabulary for peace among practitioners and formal decision-makers is limited, thus giving rise to different meanings in reference to and description of peace, and this needs redress.
- Local organs of society, community elders, and spiritual leaders lack support from government organs on peace work.
- Interfaith, intra-faith, intercultural and intra-cultural entities have unique functions and roles in peace work.

## **Conclusion**

The place and importance of local community peace actors in fostering and enforcing local peace and protection of benefits arising from peaceful coexistence in communities were repeatedly affirmed. The local actors comprise organs of society namely faith, inter-faith and intra-faith entities, elders, some local chiefs; women, and youth leaders.

Overall, each pillar defines community aspirations for peace, in a clearer systematic manner for peace work strategies and interventions at the community level. The pillars also link to what the study identified as foundational attributes which describe what underpins the cause for community harmony, neighbourliness, fairness, unity, justice, and coexistence. The foundational attributes are integral in defining desirable values, norms, ethics, principles, practices, behaviour, and conduct that communities expect from duty-bearers, government leaders, and peace workers.

The interplay of the community peace pillars and the foundational attributes are both symbiotic and synergistic, contributing to the maintenance of peace and peaceful coexistence. Each community peace pillar is key but dependent on the other pillars and the foundational attributes for functional effect.

Lessons gained in every aspect of the study process need to be used for refinement as part of action research and developing this approach further in the future.

*This is a Synopsis of a fuller unpublished learning Mimeograph under PRECISE Working Documents. January 2017*

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