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Drivers of Conflict in Kenya's Frontier Counties

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Abstract

Purpose: The main goal of this study was to collect citizen voices on peace building, identifying challenges and enablers, and suggesting solutions for sustainable peace and development in the Frontier Counties Development Council (FCDC) in Kenya.

Materials and Methods: This study utilized mixed qualitative research design, employing semi-structured radio questions shared through radio promotions, interactive radio programs discussing peace-building issues, and Short Messaging Service (SMS) on mobile phones. In collaboration with seven radio stations, the study engaged a total of 12,783 participants from the FCDC region. Qualitative data was organized into themes and analyzed using content analysis while quantitative data, descriptive statistics and inferential analysis were performed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 and Microsoft Excel.

Findings: The study highlighted the major factors affecting peaceful coexistence among conflicting communities in the Frontier Counties. Disagreement over land use was identified as the most common source of conflict, followed by competition for scarce resources, political divisions, challenging economic conditions, unfair distribution of

resources, livestock rustling, banditry, election-related violence, and cross-border tensions. Poor leadership, marked by political incitement, abuse of power, support for criminal activities, protecting offenders, and corruption, has also exacerbated insecurity in most of the FCDC Counties. Proposed solutions included community dialogue, mediation, intermarriages, collaboration with stakeholders, and ensuring inclusivity to foster peace and reduce conflicts.

Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: Resolving conflicts in the Frontier Counties requires creating and enforcing flexible guidelines for community dialogue and mediation. To reduce the likelihood of future conflicts and retaliation the study recommended activities geared towards reducing bias and prejudice against tribal profiling. Additionally, strengthening cross-communal civic education, co-creating locally owned peace building initiatives and addressing leadership reforms would significantly enhance tolerance and enhance security in the region.

Keyword: *Barriers to Peaceful Coexistence, Sustainable Peace, Sustainable Development, Frontier Counties.*

JEL Codes: D74, O55, Z18

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The ten FCDC Counties in Kenya is an economic bloc of 10 Counties which was established in 2016 and share a history of political and economic marginalization (World Bank Report, 2019). This platform aims to unite the member counties for collective action, promoting resilience and shared prosperity in the region. By forming an economic bloc, the FCDC counties seek to strengthen their voice in negotiations with the national government and stakeholders, promote peaceful coexistence, and create a larger economic zone to attract investments. However, the 2022 elections and uneven devolved funding patterns have altered long-standing conflicts and introduced new tensions related to devolution, land disputes, extractive industries, terrorism, and drug trafficking (FCDC & DLCI Report, 2020).

The Government of Kenya, in collaboration with the FCDC, has implemented various measures to address insecurity in the frontier counties. A key initiative includes establishing permanent military and police camps in high-risk areas, such as along the Elgeyo-Marakwet and West Pokot County border, to combat banditry and recover illegal firearms, with security forces remaining until peace is restored. Additionally, the FCDC promotes peace and security through community-based programs and improved coordination among its member Counties (FCDC & DLCI Report, 2020). The council has also reviewed institutional, legal, and policy frameworks for peacebuilding and conflict management, prioritizing community dialogue and civic education.

Acknowledging the need for collaborative efforts to foster development and sustainable peace, Africa's Voices Foundation (AVF), in partnership with the FCDC, and the Institute of Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) at Garissa University (GaU), launched a diagnostic radio series with funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). This initiative aimed to collect citizen-generated data on peace, including obstacles, drivers, and proposed solutions for lasting peace and development. Through an interactive radio format, the project mapped ongoing peace and mediation efforts, identified knowledge gaps, and offered recommendations to policymakers and peace committees. The diagnostic phase was intended to drive action and significantly impact the peace and mediation landscape, contributing to a more stable and cohesive region.

The radio series' content was developed in collaboration with the aforementioned partners, taking into account the sensitivity of topics related to peacebuilding, mediation, and conflict resolution. The aim was to engage local citizens from the targeted Counties, explore barriers and drivers of sustainable peace, and gather citizen-driven solutions for lasting peace and development in the FCDC region. Between May 2023 and October 2023, AVF carried out seven consecutive weekly broadcasts on seven radio stations attracting inclusive and diverse conversations. The interactive format was carefully designed to encourage listener participation. Each episode featured a guest from the local peacebuilding sector, including County government representatives, civil society organizations, or religious groups. These guests provided updates on peacebuilding efforts in their counties and addressed the concerns and questions of citizens.

1.1 Problem Statement

The Frontier Counties Development Council (FCDC) in Kenya faces persistent challenges, including resource-based conflicts, terrorism, livestock theft, climate change, poverty, and historical marginalization. Devolution has intensified ethnic rivalries and resource inequalities, undermining social cohesion. Studies like Chirchir (2025) on climate-driven conflicts, Lind (2018) on devolution tensions, and Maelo and Harris (2021) on conflict policing often focus on isolated issues, lacking a holistic, citizen-centered analysis. This paper addresses this gap

through a participatory, mixed-methods approach, analyzing data from over 12,000 FCDC participants to understand conflict drivers and propose community-driven strategies for sustainable peace and development in this conflict-prone region.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

The effects of climate change have contributed significantly to causing conflicts in Northern Kenyan regions such as Garissa, Wajir, and Mandera. In the report, Chirchir (2025) outlines that long periods of drought, excess heat, and higher rates of livestock diseases encourage banditry and violence among communities, causing formerly simple survival problems to turn into safety issues. In addition, Opiyo et al. (2012) discovered in Northwestern Kenya that conflicts are sometimes sparked by more than scarcity alone: after rain, greed for animals can result in violent attacks. In these studies, the authors highlight that climate change stretches elemental weaknesses but works with social, economic, and governance triggers, rendering climate adaptation necessary even if reform is not made to manage resources (Chirchir, 2025; Opiyo et al., 2012).

The shortage of water often plays a major role in triggering conflicts. Omosa's study (2003) of Dadajabulla in Wajir indicates that fights over boreholes among Ajuran, Degodia, and Ogaden communities increase with pressure from environmental conditions and reduced ability to pasture animals. According to Berger (2003), indigenous management practices, such as redistributing herds and moving seasonally, helped to manage water tensions in the past. Despite this, land interventions by the colonial government and the breakdown of government after independence deprived communities of the tools needed to solve conflicts. Both works picture how, although environmental pressure is a risk, absence or weakness in leadership encourages those subjects to clash over resources like water when crises arise (Omosaoza, 2003; Berger, 2003).

Gender dynamics are critical in environmental conflicts in Kenya's Frontier Counties. Kaguara, (2023) note that climate shocks in Turkana exacerbate women's burdens, increasing time spent on household care and limiting access to land and credit, which deepens poverty. Concurrently, Kamais (2024) highlight that youth unemployment drives male youth toward radicalization and violence in Wajir and Garissa, as economic marginalization fuels hyper-masculine identities and recruitment into groups like al-Shabaab. These studies emphasize the need for gender-sensitive programs that empower women in conflict response while addressing male youth vulnerabilities through job creation and deradicalization initiatives to foster peace and resilience.

Devolution, enacted through Kenya's 2010 Constitution, aimed to enhance local governance and reduce marginalization in the Frontier Counties. Lind (2018) notes that devolved resource control has increased local competitiveness, heightening conflict risks. Mumbua (2018) observes that in Isiolo, devolution included more minorities in administration, yet dominant groups' control perpetuated marginalization. Wato and Moi (2025) highlight that devolution fueled electoral violence in Isiolo's 2013 gubernatorial race, where Boran clan rivalries sparked clashes over resource control. Similarly, Moler (2022) argue that devolved resource allocation in Marsabit incited ethnic tensions during elections. These studies suggest that without robust oversight, devolution exacerbates political and electoral conflicts, necessitating targeted mitigation strategies.

Maelo and Harris (2021) investigated conflict policing in the spring pastoralist communities of Isiolo County, Kenya, aiming to assess whether policing interventions could reduce violent

conflict in the region over the years. This area has experienced significant violent confrontations since 1990. Their findings revealed that armed conflicts in these communities have not diminished over the past thirty years, attributed to power struggles, a breakdown of social agreements, social exclusion, ostracism, and environmental factors. The study concluded that the effectiveness of conflict policing in reducing crime in the region is low due to issues like political interference, ethnic tensions, corruption, and inadequate service conditions.

Owino (2024) argues that the presence of devolved administrations and ethnically divided communities changed cattle raiding from a way to survive to violent struggles for control over management areas, mineral wealth, and key sites. Juma et al. (2014) explain that weak coordination between national and county governments makes the challenges of devolution even worse in Africa. In Kenya, these studies indicate that weak institutional measures may cause devolution to increase, rather than correct, the long-standing inequalities and problems between communities (Owino, 2024; Juma et al., 2014).

A significant challenge in Northern Kenya is the growth of oil extraction in Turkana, which raises risks for pastoralists by depleting groundwater, blocking migration routes, and causing water pollution (Schilling et al., 2015). Kim & Mkutu (2021) notes that oil activities exacerbate income disparities and community competition but may reduce pastoral conflicts as some shift to urban jobs. Comparatively, in Uganda's Albertine region, oil exploration disrupts fishing livelihoods and increases land disputes, while Nigeria's Niger Delta faces severe environmental degradation and health crises from oil spills (Asinansi, 2023). These transnational parallels highlight how oil extraction fuels socio-economic tensions and environmental harm, necessitating inclusive governance to mitigate conflicts.

At the center of many conflicts in Kenya's Frontier Counties are issues with water governance. Mutschinski and Coles (2021) highlight that inequitable water distribution in rural Kenya, including FCDC counties, stems from fragmented policy enforcement, intensifying community disputes. Similarly, Maingey et al. (2022) note that in Mandera, inadequate water infrastructure and mismanagement exacerbate conflicts, underscoring the need for inclusive governance. These studies emphasize that while water infrastructure is vital, robust, locally driven governance is essential to ensure equitable resource access and prevent water-related conflicts in the FCDC region.

There is an added layer of complication to the link between climate and conflict because of the growing availability of weapons and political complaints. Opiyo et al. (2012) show that in Northwestern Kenya, where droughts are common, both the effects of nature and the spread of small arms are worsened by manipulation from political actors. Chirchir finds that climate pressures overlap with elite decisions and grievances from history, concluding that adapting to climate change should also focus on these wider factors. These studies all agree that effective response to climate-related conflicts involves strategies involving security, government, and protection of the environment (Opiyo et al., 2012; Chirchir, 2025).

Building peace has produced some positive results in the region but also encountered some difficulties. Two studies (Mumbua, 2018 and Lind, 2018) note that local peace forums and community discussions have eased some conflicts under devolution but warn that they need more funding, official support, and legal recognition. According to Juma et al. (2014), effective peacebuilding is built on open civic lessons, close cooperation between various institutions, and ways to observe and restrain local powerholders. Without the crises above, these analysts warn that devolution might continue instead of ending the problems in Kenyan society (Mumbua, 2018; Lind, 2018; Juma et al., 2014).

In addition, Schilling et al. (2015) offer a detailed overview of the links between oil exploration, climate change, and conflict. The researchers found that unmet local hopes for jobs, clean water, and improvements caused many community clashes during fieldwork. In addition, Schilling et al. state that a lack of clear advantages and open information to local people could cause grievances to develop into roadblocks, assaults on extraction sites, and tougher battles amongst communities. They show that governments must unite to address natural threats and the population's expectations.

Although there is a significant amount of literature on conflict policing in Northern Kenya, there is a lack of understanding regarding the long-term effects of resource-based conflicts, terrorism, livestock theft, climate change, poverty, and historical marginalization among other areas where political differences persist. Previous studies, such as those by Maelo and Harris (2021), primarily focus on the short-term impacts of policing efforts, with little attention given to the socio-political context that impedes cooperation. This study aims to address this gap by analyzing systematic factors that hinder conflict resolution in regions inhabited by nomadic herders, particularly emphasizing issues around governance, resource distribution, and the politicization of conflict. By doing so, the research aspires to offer new insights into more comprehensive and effective conflict resolution strategies in these areas.

2.3 Research Gaps

While extensive literature explores the causes and consequences of conflict in Kenya's Northern Frontier Counties, including climate change, resource scarcity, weak governance, and devolution-related political tensions, several critical gaps remain unaddressed, particularly in terms of citizen-centered, systematic analysis of peacebuilding. Most studies reviewed focus on discrete or sectoral aspects such as environmental pressures (Chirchir, 2025; Opiyo et al., 2012), devolution and ethnic tensions (Lind, 2018; Mumbua, 2018), conflict policing (Maelo & Harris, 2021), or the implications of extractive industries (Schilling et al., 2015; Kim, 2023). However, these analyses often overlook the integrated perspectives of local populations, their lived experiences, local innovations, and grassroots solutions to peacebuilding and conflict mediation.

Furthermore, despite growing acknowledgment of the intersections between governance failures, historical marginalization, and resource-based violence, few studies holistically capture how these factors interact at the community level to shape both conflict drivers and peacebuilding opportunities. Moreover, existing empirical data largely rely on observational or institutional perspectives, rather than participatory methods that foreground citizen voices. This limits the potential to design locally grounded, adaptive, and inclusive peacebuilding models.

This study addresses these gaps by employing an innovative, participatory mixed-methods approach, particularly the use of interactive radio programming and SMS, to gather and analyze citizen-generated data from over 12,000 participants across FCDC counties. By thematically organizing this data, the study offers rare insights into how everyday people perceive, experience, and propose solutions to conflict. This bottom-up, real-time diagnostic of peace and conflict dynamics offers a novel empirical contribution that complements and extends existing literature.

In doing so, the research introduces a more nuanced, systems-level understanding of conflict in Northern Kenya, one that integrates social, political, environmental, and institutional dimensions with community-driven solutions. It fills a critical gap in both academic discourse and policy practice by shifting the peacebuilding paradigm toward inclusive, citizen-informed approaches capable of addressing the region's complex and evolving conflict landscape. However, the reliance on radio and SMS may limit participation from communities with low

access to these technologies, and the study's focus on FCDC counties may not fully capture variations in conflict dynamics across other Kenyan regions, potentially affecting the generalizability of findings

3.0 MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study adopted a mix of qualitative and quantitative research design, using semi-structured radio questions disseminated through various channels, such as radio promotions, interactive radio programs focused on peace-building topics, and Short Messaging Service (SMS) on mobile phones. The research was conducted within Kenya's Frontier Counties Development Council (FCDC), which encompasses ten counties: Garissa, Isiolo, Lamu, Mandera, Marsabit, Samburu, Tana River, Turkana, Wajir, and West Pokot. Africa's Voices established a collaborative partnership with organizations including SDC, FCDC, GaU, and local radio stations, jointly co-designing the content of the radio series. Together, they identified thematic priorities, topics, and content for the seven one-hour radio shows. These episodes featured experts, mainly from the FCDC region, who were knowledgeable about peace-building issues. Through this collaboration with seven radio stations, the initiative successfully engaged 12,783 participants, who sent a total of 83,818 messages, representing diverse viewpoints from across the FCDC region. The qualitative data was thematically organized and analyzed through content analysis, while quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential analysis with SPSS version 25 and Excel. Measures of central tendency were calculated, and the results were compared across variables to draw conclusions. The findings were presented in tables and figures for clarity and ease of understanding.

4.0 FINDINGS

4.1. Demographic Information

The primary geographic focus of the project centered on the 10 Frontier Counties (Figure 1). Majority of the participants, comprising 15.8% (n=1466), hailed from Samburu County, followed by Turkana County with 11.1% (n=1031). Mandera and Lamu Counties each accounted for 10.0% (n=933), while the remaining counties had participants ranging from 6% (n=557) in West Pokot County, which had the least, to 9.8% (n=908) in Garissa County. Additionally, 7% (n=648) of the participants resided outside the targeted FCDC Counties. Although the differences are relatively modest, the higher participation in Samburu and Turkana is linked to more engaging radio sessions conducted in those areas. Insights gained from these engagements have been documented to enhance future performance.

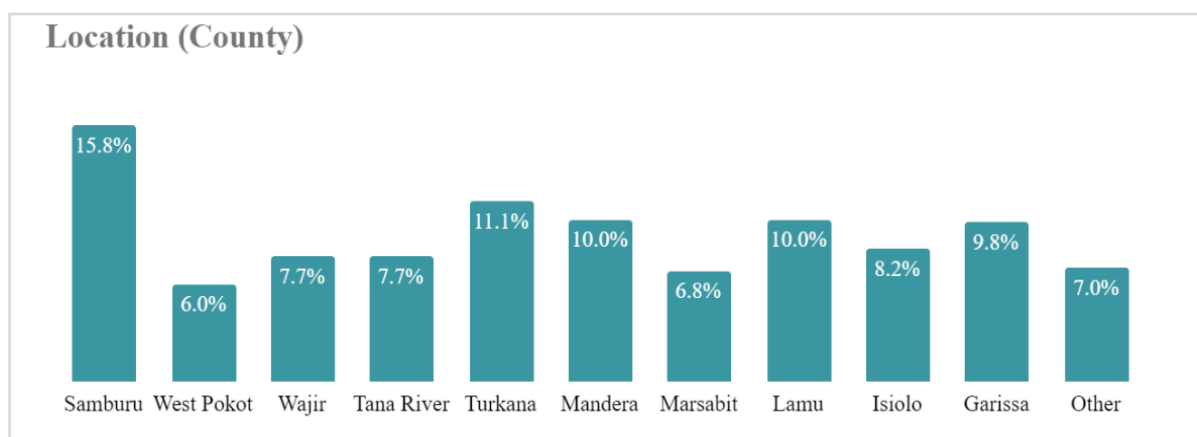


Figure 1: Distribution of participants within the FCDC Counties

Additionally, the interactive radio engagement approach actively engaged youth aged 35 and below, who made up the majority of participants in the dialogue compared to older individuals, accounting for over half (55.2%, n=5,274) of the total participants. This strong representation is attributed not only to their larger demographic presence but also to their ease of participation via SMS during radio discussions. Women also represented a substantial portion, making up 42.6% (n=4,073) of participants (Table 1). Although youth and women are often underrepresented in key decision-making processes, especially in humanitarian emergency contexts, this study successfully incorporated their perspectives.

Table 1: Participants Split by Age and Gender in 10 FCDC Counties

Demography	Split	Frequency	Percent
Age	18-35 Years	5274	55.2%
	36-54 Years	2971	31.1%
	55-99 Years	1309	13.7%
	Total	9554	100%
Gender	Male	5489	57.4%
	Female	4073	42.6%
	Total	9562	100%

4.2. Factors Hindering the Community from Attaining Sustainable Peace

The primary goal for this topic was to identify the challenges preventing sustainable peace in the FCDC region. A total of 3,128 respondents contributed to this topic and the top five challenges out of 20 themes identified during the analysis and categorization of responses were poor leadership, land disputes, tribalism, animosity and hatred, and scarcity of resources (Table 2). The remaining themes were classified as "other themes," but they are further explained to offer clearer insight into the listed themes.

Table 2: Factors Affecting Communities from Attaining Sustainable Peace in the FCDC region

Theme	Frequency	Percent
Poor leadership	590	18.9%
Land disputes	373	11.9%
Tribalism	345	11.0%
Animosity and hatred	227	7.3%
Scarcity of resources	227	7.3%
Poverty	175	5.6%
Violet terrorism	148	4.7%
Illiteracy	137	4.4%
Cattle raiding	115	3.7%
Other themes	791	25.3%
Total	3128	100%

Nearly one-fifth of the participants, constituting 18.9% (n=590), identified poor leadership as the primary factor hindering the attainment of lasting peace in communities within the Frontier Counties. According to the participants, leadership is marked by political provocations, abuse of authority, and support for criminal activities for political gain, shielding wrongdoers from

legal consequences, and corruption, all of which have contributed to elevated levels of insecurity in these communities. The prevalence of diverse cultures and the presence of numerous tribes, which are susceptible to political manipulation, could explain why detrimental political ambitions thrive in this region. Continual community education on peaceful coexistence and awareness of the repercussions of poor politics could be instrumental in mitigating the adverse effects of poor leadership.

“Bad leadership-insight from bad leaders lead to community clashing and separation of community members into different tribes” Woman, 28, Tana River County.

Land disputes emerged as the second prominent factor obstructing the achievement of lasting peace, as confirmed by more than one in ten participants, specifically 11.9% (n=373) and was significantly mentioned by those with access to mobile phones and radio. Additionally, another 7.3% (n=227) attributed the lack of resources as a hindrance to achieving sustainable peace. Perhaps, the adverse effects of climate change, as supported by 1.4% (n=45) of participants, have also contributed to heightened competition for scarce resources like water and grazing land. Advocating for political goodwill that focuses on resolving land disputes and promoting equitable resource-sharing, among other potential solutions, would be a significant step toward establishing lasting peace.

“Land disputes is a major factor that brings lack of peace as one grabs a land which belongs to another person resulting in war between them” Man, 31, Tana River County.

Furthermore, more than one out of every ten participants, specifically 11.0% (n=345) and significantly mentioned by women, expressed the view that tribalism has significantly impeded harmonious coexistence among communities in the frontier counties. This, in conjunction with a lack of unity among these communities, supported by 1.3% (n=40) of the participants, has likely contributed to increased levels of animosity and hostility between different tribal groups, as indicated by 7.3% (n=227) of the participants and was significantly mentioned by women. Initiatives aimed at combating high levels of tribalism and fostering unity among residents would be instrumental in achieving lasting peace in the society.

“Clan clashes created by community members staying outside the town so for revenge they start by killing people” Man, 36, Wajir County.

The aforementioned factors may have facilitated the radicalization of individuals, resulting in increased incidents of violent terrorism, as indicated by 4.7% (n=148) of participants. This, in turn, has contributed to other problems, such as livestock raiding, supported by 3.7% (n=115) of participants, and regional instability, acknowledged by 2.9% (n=92) of participants. These issues, combined with the high prevalence of firearms, as supported by 0.6% (n=18) of participants, have led to the loss of innocent lives and forced displacements. Mobilizing community-led efforts to empower young people and prevent their radicalization would significantly contribute to fostering peace and harmony in the society.

“The Pokot community livestock rustling is the main source of insecurity in Loosuk ward” Woman, 23, Samburu County.

Additional factors that are detrimentally affecting the sustainability of peace encompass poverty, as acknowledged by 5.6% (n=175) of participants and significantly mentioned by those with access to radio, high levels of illiteracy as supported by 4.4% (n=137) of participants, challenging economic conditions as supported by 3.4% (n=107) of participants and significantly mentioned by women, and differences in cultural beliefs as recognized by 2.5% (n=77) of participants but was significantly mentioned by those aged 36 years and above as compared to those aged 18-35 years.

“Illiteracy is high in the neighboring community thus leading to attacks frequently by them” Man, 39, Samburu.

These findings underscore the crucial need for the Kenyan Government to establish a conducive environment for the enduring peace of the community. This involves enhancing security measures, reducing the cost of living, expanding and adequately funding schools to improve literacy rates, and ensuring the amicable resolution of emerging issues through local government mechanisms.

4.3. Impact of Insecurity on Community Participation in Income Generating Activities

The goal of this engagement was to explore how communities in the Frontier Counties can be assisted in identifying and pursuing alternative livelihood opportunities beyond livestock farming. A total of 2,160 respondents contributed to the discussion, with Table 6 highlighting the top 8 themes out of 15 identified through the analysis and categorization of responses. The remaining 7 themes were grouped as "other themes," but are further explained in the text to provide a clearer understanding of the listed themes.

Table 3: Impact of Insecurity on Community Participation in Income Generating Activities

Theme	Frequency	Percent
Business operations hindered	430	19.9%
Fear and anxiety	345	16.0%
Investments prevented	307	14.2%
Restricted movement	162	7.5%
Limits economic development	155	7.2%
Increased theft	135	6.3%
Unemployment	131	6.1%
Displacement	122	5.6%
Other theme	373	17.3%
Total	2160	100%

The majority of the respondents, constituting nearly one-fifth (19.9%, n=430) of the participants, expressed the belief that insecurity has significantly impeded business operations in the Frontier Counties. They argued that insecurity disrupts business activities and supply chains, a view supported by another over one in every ten (14.2%, n=307) of the respondents, due to incidents such as killings, theft, extortion, and property damage. The heightened incidents of theft, supported by 6.3% (n=135), discourage investors from considering the region for investment, affecting entities in the NGO and financial sectors, with many entities relocating from areas characterized by high insecurity levels. Additionally, the closure of borders and stringent government measures, such as curfews, make conducting business challenging. Supporting security efforts in the region would be a significant benefit to the community and to Kenya as a whole.

"Insecurity can disrupt business operations and supply chains. Business owners may be hesitant to invest in or expand their enterprises in an insecure area due to concerns about theft, extortion, or damage to property." Man, 56, Wajir.

Furthermore, insecurity has significantly heightened fear, anxiety, and panic among residents, creating challenges for them to go out for work or engage in business. This perspective is endorsed by 16.0% (n=345) of the respondents. Additionally, 7.5% (n=162) of participants

associate insecurity with restricting people's mobility, causing substantial disruptions to the daily activities of residents. Another 7.2% (n=155) of the participants acknowledge that insecurity has the potential to impede development in the region, diverting resources away from other crucial developments such as infrastructure, including schools and hospitals. This underscores the importance of prioritizing security stabilization to realize development in various sectors within the region. Collaborative efforts between the government and other organizations are crucial to effectively address and eliminate insecurity.

"I can't also freely move into some areas due to fear of attack which affects my income"
Woman, 18, Wajir.

Another significant consequence of insecurity, as highlighted by 5.6% (n=122) of the participants, is displacement. This has resulted in unemployment, as residents flee from their jobs, a perspective supported by 6.1% (n=131) of the participants. Moreover, it has severely disrupted education, an observation backed by 2.1% (n=46) of the respondents. The occurrences of banditry and theft have led to the loss of livelihoods, thereby increasing food insecurity in the region, a viewpoint supported by 4.5% (n=98) of the participants. This, combined with terrorism, has significantly contributed to the loss of lives and property, a sentiment supported by 3.2% (n=69) of the participants. This underscores the importance of stabilising the lives of residents to prevent displacement, thereby protecting their lives, property, and livelihoods.

"Insecurity can disrupt education, limiting the development of skills necessary for individuals to engage in diverse income generating activities" Man, 20, Lamu.

4.4. Current Peace Building Initiatives Working Effectively

The current peace-building initiatives that are proving effective (Table 4). A total of 2,632 respondents contributed to this discussion, with only 9 out of the 23 themes identified during the analysis and categorization of responses presented. The remaining 14 themes, which had fewer respondents per theme, were categorized as "other themes," but are further elaborated to provide a clearer understanding of the listed themes.

Table 4: Current Peace Building Initiatives Working Effectively in FCDC Counties

Theme	Frequency	Percent
Civic education	567	21.5%
Local leaders' initiatives	335	12.7%
Dialogue and mediation	281	10.7%
Peace tournaments	219	8.3%
Creating economic opportunities	173	6.6%
Rule of law	143	5.4%
Peace committees	139	5.3%
NGO programs	127	4.8%
Collaboration between stakeholders	120	4.6%
Other themes	411	15.6%
Total	2632	100%

A significant portion of the participants, accounting for one fifth (21.5%, n=567), confirmed that civic education has been the most successful endeavour in the Frontier communities. This education has proven effective in promoting peace and resolving conflicts among different

communities. They recognized that education programs aimed at fostering peace, unity, and combating issues like drug abuse and banditry, which are conducted through various media platforms, have significantly enhanced coexistence in their regions. The FCDC, in collaboration with other partners, could take the initiative to educate community members about these programs and other cross-border peace initiatives. This would ensure that a majority of residents are informed about the importance of peace and unity, making it easier to manage negative peace initiatives such as radicalization.

"Education and Awareness Campaigns: Promoting peace and conflict resolution through educational programs is essential" Man, 36, Wajir.

Local leaders, including religious leaders, play a vital role in disseminating the message of peace initiatives, as acknowledged by more than one in every ten participants (12.7%, n=335) and significantly mentioned by women. They actively participated in dialogue and mediation, which was also recognized as an effective peacebuilding initiative by 10.7% (n=281) of the participants. Additionally, they collaborate with other partners such as local peace committees (supported by 5.3% of the respondents) and trained mediators. The local leadership are also part of the law enforcement system and are responsible for maintaining law and order, even including the enforcement of penalties for those who violate the law, as backed by 0.7% (n=18) of the participants. This group demonstrates effective interaction with the local community in resolving important peace-related matters. Therefore, empowering this group would greatly benefit society, and the FCDC could contribute to enhancing their effectiveness in addressing emerging issues.

"We have a peace committee from all tribes, they are doing a good job in resolving our conflict and ensuring peace" Woman, 26, Marsabit.

Social and cultural gatherings, including peace tournaments (endorsed by 8.3%, n= 219 participants), cultural festivals, traditional peace forums, and conferences aimed at celebrating diversity and fostering unity (supported by 1.8%, n=47 participants), have significantly contributed to community cohesion, especially among the youth. Backing and ensuring the success of such initiatives would have a lasting impact on the younger generation.

"Arts and Culture Initiatives: Promoting cultural exchanges and artistic expression can be a powerful way to bridge divides and promote understanding" Man, 36, Garissa.

Moreover, both the government and the private sector, especially NGOs, have played a crucial role in establishing effective peacebuilding initiatives. For instance, initiatives like creating job and business opportunities for residents, backed by 6.6% (n=173) of the participants, have not only spurred economic growth but also contributed to the overall peace in the community. Additionally, NGO programs, supported by 4.8% (n=127), including providing humanitarian assistance in times of need, ongoing women empowerment campaigns against FGM, advocating for women's rights, and supporting the government in delivering essential services to the less fortunate, have further strengthened community integration. The improvement of water availability through the construction of additional pans, dams and boreholes, endorsed by 0.8% (n=22), has alleviated hardships among the residents. Recognizing the critical role of these initiatives in sustainable peace, it is essential for FCDC and other organizations to collaborate and ensure the continuous enhancement of service delivery in these areas.

"Camps for NGOs like world Vision here has assisted some youths to get job and be able to be taught meaning of peace coexistence and also be able to teach the community importance of peace" Man, 65, West pokot.

The effective resolution of disputes through a just and fair process has garnered support from 5.4% (n=143) of the respondents, proving to be successful in society. This success is attributed to the collaboration of various stakeholders, including the community, law enforcement personnel, and local leaders, as acknowledged by 4.6% (n=120) of the participants. Additionally, the "nyumba kumi initiative," supported by 3.7% of participants, has significantly contributed to the community policing effort. The collaborative nature of these initiatives has facilitated timely reporting of peace-threatening incidents and enhanced community policing, thereby preventing potential calamities.

"Legal and Justice Reform: Improving access to fair and transparent legal systems is necessary" Woman, 34, Garissa.

4.5. How Communities Resolve Conflicts Caused by Differences over Sharing of Natural Resources

This engagement focused on collecting feedback on how local communities can help address conflicts stemming from changing weather patterns in the Frontier Counties, attracting input from 2,304 participants. Table 7 highlights the top 8 themes out of 16 identified during the analysis and categorization of responses. The remaining 8 themes, which had fewer respondents per theme, were grouped under "other themes," but they are further explained to provide additional insight into the listed themes.

Table 5: How Communities Resolve Conflicts Caused by Differences over Sharing of Natural Resources

Theme	Frequency	Percent
Through dialogue	419	18.2%
Through community leaders	400	17.4%
Community collaboration	250	10.9%
Establishing rules for resource management	173	7.5%
Through mediation	149	6.5%
Building water infrastructure	128	5.6%
Equality in resource sharing	124	5.4%
Educational programs	122	5.3%
Other themes	539	23.4%
Total	2304	100%

The community has found the most effective method of resolving conflicts stemming from the limited sharing of natural resources is through dialogue between the parties concerned, a viewpoint endorsed by almost one-fifth (18.2%, n=419) of the participants. Preemptive negotiations and dialogue have also proven beneficial in bringing communities together to address potential conflicts, enhance resilience, and fortify livelihoods. When conflicts arise, mediation efforts involving skilled, knowledgeable, and neutral third parties are embraced, an idea supported by 6.5% (n=149) of the participants. If conflicts escalate, security agencies are involved to maintain law and order, a perspective backed by 3.0% (n=69) of the participants. This demonstrates the community's willingness to ensure equitable sharing of the available, albeit limited, resources. Therefore, providing support to streamline this process would greatly help in preventing shortfalls.

"Community uses mediation to resolve conflicts," Man, 34, Turkana

Local administrators, church leaders, and other community figures, such as council elders, play an extremely crucial role in resolving these conflicts, a perspective supported by 17.4% (n=400) of the participants. They actively engage in identifying issues, conducting discussions, generating viable solutions, and deciding on the most effective course of action. Essentially, as supported by 7.5% (n=173) of the participants, these leaders establish rules and guidelines for natural resource management, including rotational grazing (specifically supported by 3.4%, n=78 of the participants) to facilitate land regeneration. Their primary focus is to ensure equality in the use of natural resources, an idea backed by 5.4% (n=124) of the participants. Empowering these leaders through training to handle such challenging tasks is a venture that FCDC and its partners aim to undertake.

"Elders provide moral and ethical guidance to conflicting parties/ communities helping them understand the broader implications of their action" Man, 36, Samburu.

In all the aforementioned interactions, trust, supported by more than one in every ten participants (10.9%, n=250), is pivotal for any form of community collaboration. The use of transparency, open information sharing, and collaborative problem-solving is essential to establish trust among various stakeholders. Initiatives such as joint community projects, sharing benefits, and establishing mechanisms for ongoing dialogue and cooperation are also crucial for building a lasting relationship. Conversely, the lack of trust could result in the rejection of any initiative, leading to legal disputes, as acknowledged by 2.3% (n=53) of the participants. It is therefore crucial to avoid legal entanglements through the implementation of a trusted and all-inclusive system for sharing natural resources

"Building trust through actions by demonstrating a commitment to fair and equitable resource management through consistent action" Woman, 59, West pokot.

Moreover, it is essential to decrease overdependence on natural resources, and one way to achieve this is by constructing man-made water infrastructure such as dams and boreholes, an idea supported by 5.6% (n=128) of the participants. Additionally, creating water catchment systems to collect rainwater, endorsed by 2.6% (n=59), can significantly contribute to reducing conflicts over water. This approach not only helps in mitigating water-related disputes but also serves as an enabling factor for implementing alternative sources of income, such as agriculture, a perspective supported by 0.9% (n=20) of the participants. Supporting the drilling of additional boreholes and the collection and storage of rainwater is a worthwhile initiative that FCDC and its partners should actively engage in.

"Construction of waterpoint will help mitigate conflict over water and pasture for the predominantly pastoralist communities" Man, 38, Garissa.

4.6. Ways to Improve Relationships between the Communities and Security Agencies

Public participation forums were utilized in this discussion to encourage citizen engagement in community policing as a way to prevent common conflicts in the Frontier Counties. A total of 2,205 respondents contributed, with Table 5 highlighting the top 8 themes out of 12 identified through analysis and categorization. The remaining themes were grouped as "other themes," but are further elaborated to provide additional insight into the listed themes.

Table 6: Ways to Improve Relationships between the Communities and Security Agencies

Theme	Frequency	Percent
Encourage joint working	809	36.7%
Educational programs	240	10.9%
Transparency and accountability	222	10.1%
Appropriate security conduct	205	9.3%
Train security personnel	126	5.7%
Community programs	124	5.6%
Security fulfills duties	117	5.3%
Community policing initiatives	111	5.0%
Other themes	252	11.4%
Total	2205	100%

To enhance the relationship between the community and police in the Frontier Counties, prioritizing joint collaboration between the two is strongly advocated by 36.7% (n=809) of the respondents. The objective of such collaborative efforts is to identify and address issues, fostering trust between the community and the police over time. Additionally, security agencies should strategically plan and participate in community-led projects, including public meetings and barazas, to discuss security matters and jointly develop solutions for improved service delivery. This approach garnered support from 5.6% (n=124). Careful consideration should be given to the areas of collaboration to avoid creating security lapses in the process.

"Building Trust Over Time: Recognize that trust-building is an ongoing process that requires consistent efforts from both the community and law enforcement agencies" Woman, 31, Garissa.

Secondly, as suggested by more than one in every 10 participants (10.9%, n=240), enhancing the relationship between the community and police officers could be achieved by providing education to the police on the distinctive cultural, ethnic, and religious beliefs, as well as the diversity present in the vast Northern frontier counties. Furthermore, community members should also receive education about their rights and the role of law enforcement agencies. This education aims to foster collaboration and deepen understanding of police procedures and processes. Other areas of training for security personnel to enhance collaboration include conflict resolution, soft skills training to improve interaction with locals, and training focused on improving professionalism for better service delivery, an idea supported by another 5.7% (n=126) of the participants.

"Train security personnel to understand and respect the cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity within the community. Cultural competence is crucial for effective policing" Woman, 33, Wajir.

Thirdly, emphasizing the importance of a transparent and accountable security workforce is crucial for improving the relationship between the community and security personnel, as advocated by one in every ten participants (10.1%, n=222). In this regard, security agencies should diligently address and resolve all security issues while providing feedback to the affected community members. This approach is aimed at building trust and fostering better collaboration. It should be complemented by the proper conduct of security personnel, a sentiment supported by 9.3% (n=205) of participants. Overall, efforts should be made to

eradicate favoritism and corruption entirely, and the police should refrain from using excessive force and harassing the public.

"Police should deal with fairness with people regardless of their financial status. They should avoid corruption at all cost" Woman, 30, Isiolo.

Furthermore, there is a necessity to enhance security service delivery by promptly responding to reported emergency issues and efficiently apprehending those who violate the law, as endorsed by 5.3% (n=117). Empowering security personnel through the provision of necessary equipment, materials, training, and increasing their numbers would significantly contribute to streamlining processes and procedures. This empowerment is envisioned to improve the enforcement of laws and policies, as supported by 2.1% (n=47) of the participants. FCDC and collaborating institutions should play a role in building these capacities for security personnel to enhance service delivery.

"Community reporting law breakers to police hence increase the bond by collaborating" Man, 26, Tana River.

Finally, it is essential to implement community policing initiatives to encourage active participation of community members in ensuring the safety of their neighborhoods, a perspective supported by 5.0% (n=111) of the participants. These initiatives should prioritize collaboration, trust-building, and problem-solving for enhanced service delivery. Strengthening "nyumba kumi" initiatives, as backed by 0.9% (n=19) of the participants, would significantly contribute to the improvement of identifying and reporting security issues in society. In fact, 2.9% (n=65) of respondents advocated for the enhanced reporting of security incidents in society by community members. Therefore, putting in place the necessary facilitators for these activities would greatly enhance community policing initiatives.

"Nyumba Kumi initiatives that helps the security agencies to identify new members in the community" Man, 26, Turkana.

4.7. Ways to Resolve Conflict in the FCDC Region

Aiming to utilize traditional conflict resolution methods to promote peace and unity initiatives among communities in the Northern Frontier Counties, 2,711 respondents participated in the process (Table 3). The table presents the top 8 themes, out of 18 identified through analysis and categorization of responses. The remaining themes were grouped under "other themes," but they are further elaborated on to provide additional clarity regarding the tabulated themes.

Table 7: Ways to Resolve Conflict in the FCDC Region

Theme	Frequency	Percent
Promote community dialogue and mediation	691	25.5%
Create job and business opportunities	373	13.8%
Peace education	349	12.9%
Improve security measures	275	10.1%
Embrace peace, love, and unity	167	6.2%
Involve community leaders	144	5.3%
Identify and address causes of conflict	118	4.4%
Take legal action	107	3.9%
Other themes	487	18.0%
Total	2711	100%

One of the prominent strategies for addressing common conflicts in the frontier counties, as identified earlier, is a concerted effort to promote community dialogue and mediation, a viewpoint endorsed by a quarter of the participants, representing 25.5% (n=691). Discussions aimed at formulating joint peace initiatives among concerned parties, including the identification and resolution of conflict causes, as supported by 4.4% (n=118) of participants, and ensuring cooperation among these parties, backed by 1.0% (n=27) of participants, are also key considerations. Perhaps the most effective approach for managing these issues involves shared responsibility among the communities and their leaders, a notion specifically supported by 5.3% (n=144) of the participants particularly those aged 55 years and above and those with access to mobile phones and radio, the government, political leadership, and collaborating organizations.

"Dialogue and negotiations between communities to iron out contentious issues" Man, 42, Isiolo.

Considering the scarcity of resources causing discord among the Frontier communities, the creation of job opportunities and business prospects is seen as a potential solution for conflict resolution by 13.8% (n=373) of the participants, this was significantly mentioned by those who are literate and with access to mobile phones. Additionally, an alternative livelihood, such as crop farming, could be adopted to complement the current practice of livestock rearing as the primary source of income, a suggestion supported by 2.0% (n=54) of the participants. For these initiatives to be effective, a peaceful environment is crucial (supported by 10.1%, n=275 of the participants) as persistent insecurity leading to forced relocations is detrimental to both businesses and crop farming. This underscores the importance of the government's role in enhancing security, as it serves as a facilitator for all these endeavors.

"Changing of livelihood from livestock keeping to crop farming reduces incidences of animal theft" Woman, 18, West Pokot.

A substantial portion of the participants, specifically 12.9% (n=349), emphasized the importance of educating the community about promoting peaceful coexistence. They recommended that both the local government and the political class in the frontier counties should actively engage in this educational effort. Another 6.2% (n=167) of participants, most significantly mentioned by women, advocated for fostering love and unity among the residents. Furthermore, they advised taking legal actions against offenders to reduce the increasing number of criminal cases that disrupt peace in the society, a notion supported by 3.9% (n=107) of the participants. This highlights the ongoing necessity for goodwill and cooperation among government officials, the political class, and organizations capable of financing activities aimed at supporting peace-building initiatives.

"Education and sensitization of people on peace" Woman, 24, Isiolo.

According to the feedback from participants, there are additional factors that can be promoted to address common conflicts in the Frontier Counties. These include combating tribalism and discrimination, which found support from 2.7% (n=73) of the respondents and significantly mentioned by women. Additionally, there's a call for the equitable distribution of resources, backed by 2.4% (n=64) of the participants. Furthermore, suggestions were made for the implementation of good governance and leadership practices, supported by 1.3% (n=35) and significantly mentioned by those aged between 36-54 years and those who are literate, and the need for disarmament, with 0.8% (n=21) expressing support for this idea. These are all critical issues that require careful attention to reduce levels of hatred and animosity in society. Therefore, it is crucial for the FCDC and its partner organisations to collaborate closely with

national governments to ensure the effective implementation of mechanisms for fair resource distribution and good governance practices.

"To stop corruption, bribery and let everyone live in peace and the Government should fully align this matter" Man, 42, Kilifi.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The findings highlight that major sources of conflict in the FCDC Counties include land disputes, competition for scarce resources, political divisions, economic hardships, injustices, livestock raiding, banditry, election-related violence, and cross-border conflicts. Poor leadership, characterized by political provocations, abuse of authority, support for criminal activities, and corruption, was identified as the primary obstacle to lasting peace. Additional hindrances include resource scarcity, tribalism, lack of unity, and terrorism-related activities. Community dialogue, joint peace initiatives, mediation, and collaboration with stakeholders were seen as crucial in resolving conflicts. Civic education was recognized as the most effective effort in promoting peace. Participants also stressed the importance of enhancing community-police relations through strategic planning, community-led projects, public meetings, and the "Nyumba Kumi" initiative. However, incidents like terrorism, banditry, and property damage disrupt business and deter investment, leading to relocations.

5.2 Recommendations

To address the challenges outlined above, it is crucial to implement comprehensive strategies that target the root causes of conflict. These strategies should include providing essential resources to security forces, such as training, equipment, streamlined processes, and support for community policing initiatives to ensure timely incident reporting and transparency. Transparent resource management plans are needed to resolve land disputes and resource competition, encouraging collaboration between peacebuilding organizations and government entities to address economic disparities. Tackling religious extremism requires direct community engagement through initiatives promoting understanding and tolerance, with a focus on youth education and vocational training. Cultural activities, such as intermarriages, collaborative sports events, festivals, and educational programs, should be utilized to foster cross-cultural understanding and enhance community cohesion, especially among the youth. Additionally, economic development is key to peaceful coexistence, and measures aimed at reducing the cost of living, creating jobs, and promoting alternative livelihoods to ease resource competition which have become increasingly scarce due to climate change must be implemented. These recommendations are intended for all stakeholders in peacebuilding within the FCDC region, including national and local governments, donor agencies, implementing partners, academic institutions, media, and other relevant partners.

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