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Influence of Youth Inclusivity on Peace Building in Mount Elgon Constituency, Bungoma County, Kenya

Christine Junia Olukhanda
Masters Student, Department of Development Studies,
Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya
Barrack Okello
Lecturer, Department of Business Administration,
Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya
Dr. Hesbon Nangabo Otinga
Lecturer, School of Business and Economics, Moi University, Kenya

Abstract
The considerable emphasis given on youth participation in peacebuilding as a catalyst for peace, security and development in the world, especially in fragile communities seem to be taking the centre stage as far as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are concerned. States are being encouraged to document on youth contribution to peace building rather than focusing on their participation in conflict and violence only. This study analyzed how youth inclusivity relates with peace building in Mt. Elgon Constituency, Bungoma County, Kenya. Transformational Leadership Theory of MacGregor James Burns was adopted. Descripto-explanatory research design was used for this study. The study population comprised of 87 community members including local administration, NGO staffs, opinion leaders, religious leaders, ex-combatants and youth. Purposive, convenience and snowball techniques were used to obtain the participants for the study given the state of fragility in the area. Multiple regression and Thematic Analysis were used to analyze the data generated by semi-structured questionnaires, Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews. The validity and reliability of the instruments were enhanced through pilot study. Validity was done by experts and stakeholders in the field of peace building. The findings show that there is a significant positive relationship between youth inclusivity and peace building. Based on the findings, it was recommended that, a mix of inclusion modalities be established to ensure quantitative and qualitative representations of all youths in development initiatives at all levels.

Keywords: Youth participation, youth inclusivity, peace building, Mount Elgon constituency

1. Introduction

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015) on Youth, Peace and Security recognizes the constructive role young men and women make in ensuring international peace is maintained. It acknowledges the importance of engaging youth in shaping lasting peace and encourages States to increase inclusive representation of youth in institutions and mechanisms for the conflict prevention and resolution and for countering violent extremism (UNSCR, 2015). Young people's meaningful participation in peace building can assist as a potential influential device for implementing UNSCR 2250.

1.1. Background of the Study

Mount Elgon Constituency is a multi-ethnic community with three major tribes: Sabaot, Luhya and Teso. It is however dominated by the Sabaot people who are part of the Kalenjin family. The Sabaot are divided into two sub-tribes: The Soy (Semek) and the Mossop (Ndorobo). Land as a resource has been a major issue for the inhabitants ever since the government established a resettlement plan for the Mosop in the mid-1960s to protect them from frequent attacks from Sebei and Bagisu groups living in Uganda, and facilitate the provision of state services since the moorlands inhabited by them were remote and only accessible by foot through the forest. The government also wanted to preserve and protect the water catchment area which was inhabited by the Mosop.

The phase I,II and III resettlement plans faced lots of challenges with phase III resulting to evictions of some Soy people leading to armed resistance by Soys against forced evictions from what they perceived to be their own land, in favour of Mosop, as demanded by Phase III. The formation and emergence of Sabaot Land Defence Force (SLDF) in 2005 through its defeat in 2008 contributed to states of fragility in Mt. Elgon to date. Some young people have continued engaging in criminal activities as a result of land, poverty and political instigation subsequently yielding high tensions among the ethnic groups.

Youth participation therefore has become a key aspect in peace, security and development especially in communities experiencing fragility and struggling, where in various cases young individuals, particularly young men, are

seen as contributors to instability rather than the solution, resulting to little consideration on youth needs, experiences or capabilities (World Bank, 2017). UNSCR (2015) seeks promoting and supporting meaningful youth involvement at all levels of peace building, conflict transformation, preventing and countering violence and violent radicalism, and distinguishing that it is a demographic and democratic imperative to include youth in matters of peace and security, and that youth participation in shaping peace is an effective way to counter violent extremism and facilitate development (Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development , 2016).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Youth form a significant portion of Kenya's population with those of ages 15-35 years at 35.39% of the total population. The nation recognizes the fact that youth should be involved in shaping present and future development agendas including their participation in enhancing peace and security through peacebuilding initiatives in order to articulate their needs, and ensure the formulation of suitable plans that can address the challenges that young people face (Youth Congress, 2015). In post conflict societies young people are often marginalized from formal political processes even if they helped create the processes. Although they continue to participate in political activities, they may at times use violent and confrontational approaches rather than cooperation and dialogue. Youth often see themselves as minority outsiders and lack a political voice and this is a threat to development.

1.3. Objective of Study

The purpose of this study was to analyze the relationship between youth inclusivity and peacebuilding in Mt. Elgon Constituency, Bungoma County, Kenya.

1.4. Hypothesis

- HO: There is no significant relationship between youth inclusivity and peacebuilding in Mt. Elgon Constituency, in Kenya.

2. Theoretical Review

2.1. Transformational Leadership Theory

The theory was pioneered by MacGregor James Burns back in 1978 and defined transformational leadership as a process where leaders and followers engage in a mutual process of rising each other to higher levels of ethics and enthusiasm. Collaboration rather than individualism is key in development (Burns, 1978). Intellectual stimulation is needed in seeking out divergent standpoints when resolving difficulties and inspiration of the rest to view those problems from a different angle is what youth participation is built on. This theory considers the divergent insights and ideas that emerge when young people are included in peace building.

2.2. Empirical Review

Youth inclusive society guarantees democratic participation in any social essential dimension such as human rights, dignity and a complete citizenship to its citizens and its social organizations (Eurodesk Qualified Multiplier, 2016). The degree of youth inclusion in socio-economic and political life influence a society's tendency for conflict and often a general reflection of exclusion levels in a society and its predisposition to alternatively involve in violence as a way to resolve conflict as divergent to when both genders are included (GIWPS & PRIO, 2017).

3. Methodology

The study adopted a descript to-explanatory research design and used purposive, convenience and snowball sampling techniques to select a sample from community members. The research mainly concentrated on youth age 18- 35 years, opinion leaders, religious leaders, ex-combatants and NGO staff in Mt. Elgon Constituency. A sample size of 134 was selected and 87 respondents were interviewed. The study generated qualitative and quantitative data. Data was collected using semi-structured questionnaires and interview guide then analyzed using SPSS and MAXQDA 2018 software. Analyzed data was presented using tables and triangulation was used for qualitative data.

3.1. Sampling

Selection of sampled study sites were done purposively, and a mix of hotspots and neutral zones were selected to provide the true picture of reality on the ground. Important consideration on categories of respondents was also considered to strengthen credibility and reliability of the study. The total sample size of 134 respondents was selected where purposive sampling was used to get key informants, convenience sampling targeted hard to reach youth and snowball was used to identify respondents in a predefined criterion for selection.

3.2. Research Tools

The study applied a mixed method where qualitative and quantitative research tools were used. The research tools included a semi-structured questionnaire survey and interview guide for Focus Group Discussion and Key Informant Interview which were pre-tested before the actual field study. A guide for KIIs and FDGs were designed to facilitate qualitative data collection. A total of 25 individual interviews with respondents and10 FGDs were conducted.

3.3. Data Analysis and Reporting

Quantitative data was cleaned and coded then fed in SPSS version 25 for statistical analysis. Qualitative data was translated, transcribed and coded using MAXQDA 2018, a mixed method software basically used for qualitative analysis. Data was interpreted statistically, and qualitative information used for triangulation.

4. Findings

4.1. Quantitative Findings

The study results statistically show that there is a strong positive relationship between youth inclusivity and peace building. The model summary shows that (R^2) = 0.62 implying youth inclusivity accounted for 62% variance of peace building. The data also shows that youth inclusivity was a significant predictor of peace building (β = .79, p =.00). This indicated that when youth are included in peace building there is a likelihood of them promoting sustainable peace. See Table 1.

Model	R	R Square	Unstandardized Beta (B)		Df	β	p
1	.79[a]	.62	Constant	3.99	1(85)	.79	.00
			Youth Inclusivity	1.56			

Table 1: Regression Results on Influence of Youth Inclusivity on Peace building

- Dependent Variable: Peace building
- Predictors: (Constant), Youth Inclusivity

The unstandardized beta coefficient (B) is 1.56 implying that a single increase in youth inclusivity will lead to 1.56 increases in peace building. The fittest model is Y= 3.99 + 1.56X_1.

4.2. Qualitative Findings

Youth is not a homogeneous group since they come from diverse backgrounds in terms of ethnicity, education, status and position, occupation, socialization, gender and political ideologies which impact their well-being. Despite youth inclusivity being a significant predictor of peace building, few youths are included in peace building (development) initiatives. Young people who relate to the elite get direct invitation to meetings while the rest, if called upon, information is never timely hindering majority access to decision making avenues. Youth inclusivity in many cases is for decoration purposes and this hinders creative and innovative ideas by young people and limits their voices. The findings clearly revealed that a challenge exists in meaningfully including young people in matters that affect their lives and that of their communities. Quantity as well as quality misses out on youth participation in peace building.

5. Discussions

The purpose of the study was to analyze the relationship between youth inclusivity and peace building in Mt. Elgon Constituency, Bungoma County, Kenya and to test the hypothesis there is no significant relationship between youth inclusivity and peace building in Mt. Elgon Constituency. According to the study results, there is a significant relationship between youth inclusivity and peace building where an increase in youth inclusivity leads to an equivalent change in peace building. This explains why it is important to include youth in peace building initiatives. However, the levels, quantity and quality of inclusion were found to be still low.

6. Conclusions

Based on the study findings it can be concluded that youth inclusivity is a significant predictor of peace building. It is also clear that youth in Mt. Elgon are not meaningfully included in development initiatives. Youth from all diverse are not well represented in terms of numbers and the quality of representation is also compromised.

7. Recommendation

The study recommends that quantity as well as quality should be emphasized in development initiatives geared towards peace building if SDG 16 on inclusive societies and peaceful coexistence is to be realized. Practitioners need to support and lobby for a mix model of inclusion where inclusivity can be done through direct and indirect representations, public participation and workshop dialogues in order to identify the needs of the youth.

8. Areas of Further Research

Further studies can be undertaken on the effectiveness of models of inclusion such workshop dialogues on peace building

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