

Running head: The Perceived Role of NGOs in Kenyan Reconciliation

The Perceived Role of NGOs in Kenyan Reconciliation

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**Abstract:**

The purpose of this project is to study the perceived effect and limitations of Kenyan and international NGOs' reconciliation programs on Kenyan youth and NGO staff since the Post-Election Violence (PEV) of 2007-2008. For this, 12 individuals were interviewed, including 6 Kenyan and international NGO staff members and 6 Kenyan youth. The majority of those interviewed said they viewed NGO operations more positively in terms of the use of funds and involvement in the community following the PEV than before. Some interviewees perceive that NGOs contributed to reconciliation on their own staffs, by providing Kenyans of different ethnic affiliations an opportunity to work together. However several Kenyan interview subjects felt that NGOs, no matter their level of effectiveness, cannot achieve reconciliation on their own since NGOs cannot play the essential role of the government, whose efforts since the PEV have been lacking, in the view of the subjects.

**Introduction:**

Millions of expectant Kenyans converged upon the polls for the presidential election on December 27, 2007, to vote for the future leadership of Kenya. In Kenya, there is a perception that with every president comes the president's ethnicity's<sup>1</sup> "turn to eat," or their turn to gain economically and politically (Wrong, 2009). This election for many Kenyans was anticipated as the opportunity for Luo candidate Raila Odinga to finally achieve power, while many others viewed it as an opportunity for the Kikuyu Mwai Kibaki to retain power. Accusations of electoral manipulation following the results led to several types of violence: planned violence by Party of National Unity (PNU) supporters, violence born out of anger and frustration from Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) supporters, and reactionary violence from both sides and

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<sup>1</sup> For this paper I will be using the term "ethnicity" instead of "tribe" unless used in a direct quote

third parties who were affected by the violence (Poster, 2009). The violence lasted for weeks. Despite the swearing in of President Mwai Kibaki at midnight on the 30th of December, months of debate between Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga ensued before mediation by Former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan eventually mediated resulting in a power sharing agreement (The Economist, 2008).

Despite this agreement, tensions are still present between PNU and ODM supporters, and due to the nature of the political parties, the tension is structured primarily along ethnic lines. In addition, the Kenyan government is rife with competition between President Kibaki and Prime Minister Odinga and escalates as the elections approach in March 2013. In response to this, the number of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Kenya over the past five years has increased sharply in an attempt to address and resolve the issues exposed in the 2007-2008 PEV (Nastios, 1995).<sup>2</sup> The Kenya NGO Coordination Board reports a total of 6,000 NGOs in Kenya today with over 1,200 of those organizations dedicated towards peace, human rights, good governance, and civic education (The International Programme of the Charity Commission, n.d. & NGO Bureau, 2012).

Four and a half years after the PEV Kenya is no longer subject to widespread violence between different ethnicities, but many Kenyans believe that the underlying issues that led to the violence still remain. At the time of writing, the next general elections are scheduled for March 2013 and there has been a concentrated effort to ensure that the PEV violence does not repeat itself. To ensure that the violence does not repeat itself various actors have pursued reconciliation. Reconciliation implies that the individuals have worked through their differences and are willing to work toward a common future. Through this research, the question for this

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<sup>2</sup> Brown, Rachel Personal Interview, 7 Feb. 2012.  
Farrell, Lynsey, Personal Interview, 24 Jan. 2012.

paper is what is the perceived effect and limitations of Kenyan NGOs' reconciliation programs on Kenyan youth and NGO staff following the PEV of 2007-2008.

Through my research, I discovered that, in the view of my interviewees, NGOs 1) are perceived as more following the PEV than before 2) that reconciliation is generally intertwined with ideas of dignity and self respect 3) reconciliation cannot be achieved without first addressing many of the structural issues 4) that there is not one set way for a NGO to achieve reconciliation and 5) reconciliation cannot occur without investment from the government.

### **Literature Review:**

This section will include an overview of the literature regarding peacebuilding and reconciliation in a post conflict/ reconstruction society and the various arguments for the causes of ethnic violence.

#### *Theory on Peacebuilding and Reconciliation*

In order to look at the role of NGOs and how effective it is in the reconciliation process, it first is important to understand what peacebuilding and reconciliation are, what reconciliation looks like in a practical sense in society, and what components make up reconciliation specifically. Practically, it is important to understand that one cannot address every aspect of peacebuilding and reconciliation, but it is important to understand the steps and the criteria that are present in order to better judge the efficacy of the NGOs.

Post conflict reconstruction, as defined by Martina Fischer (2004) is the period where hostilities have decreased to the point for possible reintegration and rebuilding. She notes that in reconstruction, there is an effort to return to the condition prior to the violence rather than focus on the issues that inspired the violence initially (Fischer, 2004). John-Paul Lederach (1997) believes that it is essential for peacebuilding to be more responsive to what the people believe

they need. For peacebuilding approaches to be effective, peace workers need to shift away from the traditional framework that focuses on the state as the central actor (Hoffman, 2003).

According to these authors, instead of this traditional approach, they need to move toward the restoration and rebuilding of relationships (Lederach, 1997). Following the PEV, Kenyans have been attempting to rebuild the country, and a part of this rebuilding process needs to be the empowerment of those impoverished by the violence and the resolution for the root causes of the violence.

In order to construct a successful peace process, it is necessary that there be an operative frame of reference that considers the legitimacy, uniqueness, and interdependency of the needs and resources that incorporate the grassroots, middle, and elite levels (Lederach, 1997).

Specifically in Kenya, those in the slums must work with those in the middle class who must also work with the political elites who must then listen to those in the slum. The violence had a large array of negative side effects, and each person must feel as though they are a part of the healing process. When looking at what must happen, it is useful to have a realistic time frame in place to ensure that the work is accomplished. Lederach argues that the best time to start this transformation is when the conflict moves from the latent stage of the conflict to negotiation because it creates dynamic, peaceful relationships that are sustainable (Lederach, 1997). By doing this properly, it should accomplish the psychosocial dimensions of transformation by overcoming trauma of the conflict and achieving reconciliation at the individual and intergroup levels (Fischer, 2004).

In addition, the focus should be on the local people and their culture- the greatest resource that can be used in peacebuilding is that of the local people because it empowers and helps the people to see themselves as resources as opposed to recipients or victims (Lederach,

1997). One of the greatest dangers of the peace process, in general, is that the humanitarian sector can replace the public sector and ignore the need for local ownership. This creates dependency and discourages building a lasting and sustainable peace because NGOs are more transient (Fischer, 2004). Of the three organizations focused on in this paper, one is completely run by Kenyans, another is run by an American but has an all Kenyan staff, and the other is a mixture of Kenyan and international workers, and all three of these organizations have had some level of success because they take into consideration the needs of the people. In order for the peacebuilding process to be sustainable, it must originate within Kenya and must cater to the needs of the people and not the agenda of the donors.

Within the scholarship of peacebuilding there is a subcategory of literature that covers the theory of reconciliation. Bloomfield (2006) discusses the various definitions of reconciliation as well as notes the lack of consensus for what it entails and what part it plays in peace building. He points out that while there remains a lack of one concrete definition, it has gained importance and is now a staple of the international community in the sense that reconciliation is viewed as a necessity in the peacebuilding process. Bloomfield (2003) attempts to define it as a process through “which a society moves from a divided past to a shared future” (12). Galtung (2001) epitomizes the difficulty of defining it: “reconciliation is a theme with deep psychological, sociological, theological, philosophical, and profoundly human roots – and nobody really knows how to successfully achieve it” (4). According to Lederach (1997), reconciliation is the mixture between international relations and conflict resolution. It satisfies the need for critical innovation with the ideas of conflict resolution but at the same time it is tempered by the realism seen in international relations. There is a perception that conflicts are full of hatred and manipulation and can only be solved by political savvy but Lederach argues

political savvy cannot create a constructive peace. The three underlying frameworks for constructive peace is the understanding that the relationship is the basis for both the conflict and the solution, there is an assumption that the parties address the past without becoming stuck in the vicious cycle of mutual exclusiveness- they acknowledge the past without fixating on it, and they look outside the mainstream of international political traditions (Lederach, 1997).

Reconciliation, in this sense, is a process and not an end result (Bloomfield, 2006). This, in many senses, is what I will be grappling with in my paper- the perceived efficacy of NGOs in this process.

The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and the Association of the United States Army (AUSA) (2002) and Bloomfield (2006) in the Berghof handbook outline offer concrete outlines for how to achieve transitional justice and reconciliation. In terms of transitional justice, CSIS & AUSA believe that in most situations, the initial response should be to deploy a transitional package that includes police, police monitors, judges, prosecutors, and defense attorneys. From there the transformation will be dispensing justice in central or sensitive jurisdictions and foster sustainability by transferring responsibilities to permanent justice institutions (CSIS & AUSA, 2002). The CSIS looks at several different frameworks under reconciliation. There are too many subsections to address individually but to give a sense of the depth, they look at truth commissions, citizen education, community rebuilding, confidence building, religion and traditional practices, and the role of women (CSIS & AUSA, 2002). The frameworks used by the CSIS & AUSA are useful because they provides a more detailed listing of how to transition from the beginning of reconstruction to an environment of sustainable peace. Bloomfield (2006) outlines four main instruments for reconciliation: a justice process, a way in which to acknowledge experiences, a process for healing, and a process of reparation and

compensation. In addition, he says that there are three stages to reach reconciliation: coexistence, building trust, and moving toward empathy (Bloomfield, 2006). While there is not one set approach and definition to reconciliation, it is beneficial to understand several different perspectives to be able to effectively speak about reconciliation.

### *Ethnic Violence*

Another important aspect in this discussion is the various theories on what causes ethnic tension. Academics, scholars, and practitioners all propose various theories for why ethnic violence arises or for how ethnicity is manipulated to incite violence. In the past, one of the most prominent explanations has been ancient ethnic hatreds- the idea that groups of people have always had a conflict and will continue to have a conflict (Naimark, 2002). Academics have begun to propose additional theories, however, for why ethnic violence arises. While the focus of this paper is on the process of reconciliation and not the incitement to the conflict, it is important to understand the possible aspects that need to be focused on in order to achieve reconciliation. Many of the interviewees believed that reconciliation was more than just the different ethnicities working together. There were issues of land, corruption, and political power that needed to be contended with in order to reconcile. V.P. Gagnon, James Fearon, Amy Chua and John Hagan and Joshua Kaiser address four such theories that range from commitment issues to market minorities.

V. P. Gagnon Jr. (1994-1995) argues that it is not the ethnicity itself or the inflammation of politicians but the dynamics of within-group conflicts that leads to ethnic conflict. In his article he establishes that the main challenge is to establish a causal link between ethnic nationalist sentiment and interstate violence. His framework is based on the four premises of a politician's goals: the domestic arena is a more prominent concern than the international arena,



that persuasion is the most efficient and least costly way for politicians to gain influence, support must take the form of both material and non material, and conflict over ideas are characteristic of domestic policies. These four premises lead Gagnon to create nine hypotheses regarding the role of political elites in a country and how this affects ethnicity. Throughout his paper, Gagnon negates the value of ethnicity as more of an exaggerated power of the elites. This theory, while focused on Serbia, has important implications for my paper. While reconciliation focuses on the community as a whole, if it is perceived as the elites manipulated ethnicity to gain power, than attempts at reconciliation will not be successful without a government that can be trusted. Or on an even more basic level, if the government is able to manipulate ethnicity in order to serve their own purposes, then that must be addressed to ensure that violence does not break out once more.

Amy Chua (2003) discusses ethnic tension in reference to minorities that are dominant in the market in countries with a democratic system. Grounded in her memories of her Chinese Filipino aunt being murdered by her chauffer, she argues that there is a connection between markets, democracy and ethnic hatred as seen by the increased episodes of protest following American attempts to open up the global market. The basis for her book is that in many countries certain educated minority groups amass disproportionate wealth and therefore, power, while elections lead the impoverished majority to believe they have power when they don't. This analysis is applicable to Kenya as many believe that the Kikuyu minority holds the most power politically and economically, even though all Kenyans are supposed to have access to power through the democratic process. A common narrative is that other ethnicities never have the chance to obtain power and many view the 2007-2008 elections as a time where their voices were not heard despite the democratic process and the economically powerful held all the power.

To look at reconciliation, it is important to understand how to balance this issue and distribute power more equally.

James Fearon (1998) provides a different perspective that commitment problems cause ethnic violence. He uses ethnic tension in Eastern Europe as the context for his research; however, there are some aspects that can be viewed as relevant for Kenya. Ultimately he argues that since the fall of the Communist countries, there is no guarantee that leaders will keep their promises so some groups view it wiser to fight for secession rather than adhere to fragile agreements. Within this, he also argues that nestled minorities, areas in a country where the minority resides in pockets surrounded by the majority, cause conflict. Fearon's argument is based on the lack of accountability that follows major power withdrawal and the vacuum that ensues (Fearon, 1998). Kenya has a very similar circumstance in regards to British withdrawal in the 1960s with the disagreements over how Kenyatta came to power and the constant tension between the Luos and the Kikuyus. When groups of people do not feel that agreements will be maintained, it can be tempting then to resort to other means to achieve their interests. Again, tension over the elections was in part due to the fact that some people felt that agreements could not be upheld. For reconciliation to occur with this issue in mind, more effective decision making mechanisms need to be in place.

John Hagan and Joshua Kaiser (2011) focus on the importance of the intent of the perpetrator in ethnic conflict. Centered on the events in Darfur, the authors are attempting to redefine the way in which people discuss the conflict in the framework of genocide. The authors try to focus on the importance of displacement and elimination in a conflict rather than solely focusing on death and extermination (Hagan & Kaiser, 2011). While it is significant to note that the situation in Kenya was not genocide, the violence did incorporate racial epithets. Hagan and

Kaiser's research methodology is a combination of qualitative and quantitative research that demonstrates the Janjaweed's actions were based along ethnic lines because they went into the villages committing acts of atrocity based on the Black Darfur ethnicity. This demonstrated that at some level it was their identity that they were attempting to attack. Understanding that the violence was motivated by ethnic hatred as evident by racial epithets that transformed into a frenzy of violence is important because it accents that ethnicity did have a role (Bwire, 2012).

Looking at the nature of NGOs and how it affects the peacebuilding process of people of different ethnic affiliations is a crucial component to my project. Having a more solid foundation on these terms and topics will create a stronger platform on which to operate from for the rest of the paper. Additionally, understanding various avenues of thought for how ethnic violence can occur or how political elites can manipulate ethnic identity is important. While this paper is not dedicated to an analysis of the causes of the conflict, the reconciliation process must address the grievances of the people. Through the interviews, it became apparent that the structural violence, land ownership grievances, income inequality, and corruption all factor in as a cause of the violence. Structural violence, the conditions of society, the structures of social order and the institutional arrangements of power that perpetuate inequality on individuals, is very much present in Kenyan society and needs to be addressed especially since it is spoken of in the context of ethnic grievances (Barak 2003).

**Methodology:**

This paper relies on a combination of primary and secondary sources in order to create a comprehensive perspective of the role of NGOs on the Kenyan reconciliation process. This paper is qualitative in nature resulting primarily from blog posts from various Kenyan nationals and interviews that span from January to April of 2011 and January to March of 2012. The

background of the interviewees ranged from local United States International University students, civil servants, Kenyans working for NGOs, and international NGO workers. The secondary sources derive from local newspaper accounts and academic sources from varying perspectives ranging from psychological to economic to political to conflict resolution practices.

One of the main limitations throughout the research and writing of this paper was the geographical distance. It is challenging to gain first hand perspectives when one is in a different country. While Skype made it possible to hold conversations, the quality of the conversation was compromised and it limited the diversity of perspectives. The interviews were limited to individuals I had met, interacted with, or worked with in Kenya and their friends and acquaintances. Most of the Kenyans I knew from my trip there were somehow involved in NGO work or were university students finishing up their degrees. This meant that most of them had some concept of peace and reconciliation- they had been trained either by the organization they worked for, had attended such a training in their village or neighborhood, or it had been discussed in class. In addition, with some interviews there was an inherent bias because they worked for NGOs and were rating the work they themselves did. While their perspectives are still useful, it would have been more effective to gain perspective from a wider array of people from all ages and walks of life. This would have been possible if I had physically been there to travel throughout different parts of Kenya.

Another limitation I experienced was the narrow demographic of the sources. Most of them were youths because that was the majority of the people that I came in contact with during my time in Kenya. In addition, I had more male Kenyan interview sources than women and more women non-Kenyan sources than men. While this can be attributed to social norms (more men in university/working in NGOs and more international women being involved in peace

projects), it regardless skewed the perspective of the sources. Finally, most of the sources came from urban Nairobi rather than rural areas throughout Kenya. In Nairobi, there is more exposure to NGOs and training on ethnic cohesiveness, but less so in rural areas. It would have been better if I had been able to gain those rural perspectives that took into consideration perspectives of people living on the coast, in the east, and in the west.

One last important observation to make within this paper is the fact that I am making the assumption that Kenyans have a desire for reconciliation and that reconciliation is best for Kenyans rather than just coexistence. In the literature review, an overview was provided of reconciliation and what it entails including the process of coexistence. While coexistence is more easily achieved, I will continue to look at the effectiveness for reconciliation for several different reasons. The first reason is that coexistence is the first step toward reconciliation, so any progress taken toward reconciliation is a step toward coexistence (Sluzki, 2010). Also, Kenyans have proven that they can coexist with each other for past forty years and have demonstrated that they can live with one another the four years following the violence; however, reconciliation will work more toward dealing with the underlying issues that remain. Finally, reconciliation is what many NGOs aim toward, so it will be useful to evaluate their role using the language that they use.

**History:**

The tension in Kenyan politics regarding ethnic division did not arise in the past few years. The problem that Kenya has, and that many countries in Africa share, is that the ethnic composition of their states was decided long before their independence in the late nineteenth century. During this period of rapid colonization, arbitrary borders were drawn without concern for families, historical alliances, or grudges, placing some members of a family in one country

and other members in another. Often the only contact that these people had with each other was through trade, so being forced to cooperate with each other in the capacity of countrymen created tension and instability. Today this is a factor because some countries in Africa, not just Kenya, comprise of several ethnic affiliations without a common history to unite them. When the British arrived in Kenya, they overly emphasized the differences between the various ethnicities and made that identity more important than it initially was (Apthorpe, 1968). Additionally, they used it to divide the Kenyans and keep them malleable and under British control. For example, the Kenyans were only allowed to be politically active within the confines of their ethnic land which perpetuated the idea of ethnicity and the need to band together in politics with those who you lived with (Orvis, 2001 & Ajulu, 2002).

From the inception of Kenya as a nation-state in 1963, the state of affairs was rife with ethnic division and political games. The political party Kenya African National Union (KANU) was formed by and consisted mainly of Luo and Kikuyu forces creating a network from which to gain power. To counter what many saw as a power grabbing attempt by the two most prominent ethnicities in Kenya, the minority groups formed the political group Kenyan African Democratic Union (KADU) in 1960 (Bennett, 1961). This group was formed on the basis of regionalism with the premise that devolution of power from the major ethnic groups to the various regions would redirect power away from the Luo and Kikuyu so other groups would have a chance to gain influence. The leaders of KADU were purposefully stoking the fears of ethnicity in order to gain power. Due to the perceived division along ethnicities, it became an issue at independence where "... sixty years of struggle for freedom and independence [and] victory now should see the long battle for equality of black and white ended only to be replaced by a new and more bloody conflict between black and black" (Manners, p. 10). Interestingly, initially, many Kikuyu

were marginalized because they were displaced from their homes in Nairobi by the Mau Mau Rebellion. The Mau Mau Rebellion occurred between 1952 and 1960 and was a reaction by anti-colonial, Kikuyu individuals seeking independence (Berman, 1991). In the beginning, the majority of the land confiscated from the British was granted to the Kikuyu for resettlement; however, President Jomo Kenyatta seized the opportunity to strengthen his network of allies and reward them rather than benefit Kikuyu and Kenyans as a whole. This, as well as Kenyatta's affiliation as a Kikuyu, meant that the distribution of resources focused mainly on traditionally Kikuyu regions. This asymmetric distribution of resources built resentment and created infrastructure inequalities within the country and the initial victims became the perpetrators of the structural violence (Miguel, 2004). Additionally, the way in which Kenyatta formed the nation was ill equipped for national pride. He chose English and Swahili as their national languages rather than just one and maintained the British school system (with a primary and a General Certification of Secondary Education (GCSE) test (British Council, n.d.) and created a cabinet system with a prime minister (US Department of State, 2012) which did not create a sense of national pride and only served to emphasize the lack of cohesion and lack of common identity among the various identities within the country (Miguel, 2004). In the very beginning, when Kenya had a chance to come together under the banner of independence, the policies of Kenyatta only furthered to alienate the members of the various ethnic affiliations.

When Kenyatta died in 1978, his Vice President Daniel arap Moi took control of the state. Rather than steering away from ethnic divisions that had weakened Kenya, Moi "retained Kenyatta's self-preservation in politics, insatiable greed for land and wealth, tribalism, and nepotism" (Munene, 2003). Although many claimed that Moi continued Kenyatta's trend in making ethnicity the primary cleavage from which he worked, it was in reality, a network of

corruption with the guise of ethnicity to manipulate the citizens (Miguel, 2004). The influential politicians at this time were able to come together regardless of identity to ensure their wellbeing. In fact, the Kalenjin group was actually a conglomeration of Elgeyo, Endorois, Kipsigis, Marakwet, Nandi, Pokot, Sabaot, Terik, and Tugen formed mainly so that Moi could gain power and influence. He was able to manipulate the emotional aspect of ethnic identity in order to ensure the support of various groups. For example by Moi placing Odinga, a member of the Luo, in office, the Luo were placed in a position where they had to support Moi or become a traitor. Moi's continuation of Kenyatta's tendency towards ethnic division and exploitation of Kenyan resources for the benefit of himself and his allies placed Kenya in a situation where ethnic loyalties and ties were a way of ensuring at least a sense of cohesion and accountability if only on a local level. Miguel (2004) epitomized this by saying "as Moi leaves office, the nation is dead, only the tribe remains" (p. 338). By being unable to turn to the national government for direction in terms of politics, culture, or economic well being, the notion of these different ethnicities continued into an era where increasing urban forces were bringing Kenyans of different identities together and forcing levels of interaction they had not expected.

Division over ethnicity has not disappeared as Kenya has entered into the twenty first century. Indeed with the PEV of 2007-2008 the issues surrounding ethnicity and its effects on the stability of the nation have become increasingly more pressing. Under President Moi, power was static and there was little attempt to try and gain a greater share of power; however, under President Kibaki, society is more open and thus there is much more jockeying for political power and gain. With a more open society, there is more of a public arena in which to fight for power. While that may encourage dialogue on a local level, on a larger level there is a significant amount of manipulation as leaders manipulate their message to sway the hearts and minds of the



citizens (Orvis, 2011). In the short term, countries that transition to a democracy can experience human rights abuses and large scale violence because there is a power vacuum that the person in power is unable to control. This is evidenced in the two thousand people have been killed and five thousand people displaced due to the political and social unrest in the last decade in Kenya prior to the PEV (Klopp & Zuren, 2007). In 2007-2008 there was turmoil due to President Kibaki retaining his position when the country expected that it would turn over to Raila Odinga. The violence that broke out was divided along ethnic lines and resulted in a vast amount of internally displaced persons, injuries, property loss, and death. The violence that took place has left an indelible scar on Kenyan society (Kagwanja, 2009). The consequences of the violence are serious and long lasting:

...the social fabric of Kenya has been irreparably torn. The clock cannot be turned back.

Ethnic cleansing has occurred. A grievous price will have been paid, most perniciously in terms of people's faith in each other, but also in terms of the economic system and in politics. The venom of tribalism will poison the society for years to come (Orvis 2011).

The violence shifted cyclically between gangs hired by political powers, creating havoc and disorder in order to further and advance their causes and the people who fought back out of anger and frustration (Klopp & Zuren, 2007). When people struck back, they retaliated against those who were of a different group – not those who actually deserved the blame. This served as a major problem as even Kikuyu who had voted for Raila were attacked. When they were attacked, it became necessary for the Kikuyu to pull back under the clock of ethnic identity for safety. Several years later, there are still large numbers of people displaced from the violence and the question of ethnic identity and loyalties persist.

In the past four years, the violence of 2007-2008 has placed the issue of ethnic division under a microscope, and many of the events and activities that go on in Kenya are looked at with regards to these implications. In 2010, the Kenyan government wanted to include ethnic affiliations on the census. This created an uproar because it happened so soon after the PEV that citizens and international observers worried about its implications on the stability of the country. Some, such as Rachel Brown, CEO of Sisi ni Amani- Kenya, feared that it would serve as another way to divide the country and in this instance it would be an official demarcation of the country in terms of ethnic loyalties, and the government could manipulate it to serve their purposes.<sup>3</sup> Others maintained that gaining an accurate sense of the exact numbers of people who belonged to each ethnic group would decrease the fear and uncertainty that surrounds ethnic rhetoric because people would know specific information rather than dealing with vague approximations and exaggerations (Siringi, 2010). The results of the census were as follows for the five biggest groups Kikuyu represented 22 percent, Luhya had 14 percent, 13 percent were Luo, 12 percent were Kalenjin, and Kamba had 11 percent of the population” (Nyambura, 20011).

As the 2013 election approaches, people are looking apprehensively to see if ethnic loyalties and division will once again come into play. It is expected that Raila Odinga will attempt to run once again for Presidency and at this moment in time some people, as Jacob Ochola explains, are projecting that it is going to be Kikuyu and Kalenjin versus Luo with the Luhya, Swahili, Kamba, and Northern Kenyan votes still undecided.<sup>4</sup> The last violence ended with Kibaki and Odinga agreed to a power sharing agreement called the National Accord and Reconciliation Act (Bekoe, 2008). Kibaki remained as President and Odinga was given a

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<sup>3</sup> Rachel Brown.

<sup>4</sup> Ochola, Jacob. Personal Interview, 15 Feb. 2011.

powerful position as Prime Minister. In addition, the minister positions were divided amongst the two contesting parties. While this power sharing agreement ended the violence, it is far from a solution (Gettleman, 2008). An individual involved in the talks, who was not authorized to speak publicly, said that the Kenyan government felt as if “it had its back against the wall” and Gettleman quotes Ngovi Kitau, a car dealer in Nairobi saying “It’s a marriage of convenience, and it’s the best way out because it’s going to get the country moving again, but it’s not a solution” (Gettleman, 2008). With the new constitution adopted in 2010, there is a hope for the devolution of power- a common, unified Kenyan ethos that will form which will decrease the dependency on ethnic identity and create a platform in which political issues are the point of contention rather than ethnic division (The Sentinel Project, 2011).

### **Nongovernmental Organizations**

Following independence, many states in Africa, Kenya included, moved toward a centralized basis of power in an attempt to unite the disparate group of people and form a cohesive state identity. Statism, according to Ndiaye (1999) has constrained development in two different ways. The first way statism fails to encourage responsible citizenship through participation is because so many of the goods and services are based around the government and citizens have a limited to access to them. The second way is that it limits economic entrepreneurship because there are few opportunities and resources for the private sector. NGOs were born out of the political and economic failures of the state and the limited institutional capacity to meet the needs of their people.

#### *NGO Structure*

NGOs have evolved over time in terms of both sheer numbers and the scope of the skills they provide. These skills generally lie outside the area of military intervention and include skills

such as humanitarian relief, preventative action and conflict resolution, development assistance, and institution building (Vakil, 1997 & Aall, 2009). Various scholars divide NGOs in different ways, but Bratton (1989) focuses specifically on the division between community based organization (CBOs) and national NGOs, which he also calls indigenous, and international NGOs. Within national NGOs he further divides it between organizations that help members and organizations that serve a wider range of community members (Bratton, 1989). Within this paper, one NGO discussed is a national NGO and the other two are international NGOs.

Broadly, NGOs fall into two categories: operational NGOs (humanitarian and conflict resolution NGOs) and advocacy NGOs. The new environment of NGOs suggests that there are four fundamental roles that they can play, in general: early warning functions, relief and rehabilitation, human rights monitoring, and conflict resolution services (Aall, 2009).

### *Harambe*

The term harambe is used frequently when speaking about NGOs and their work in Kenya, so it is essential to understand what the term means and how it has shifted over the course of Kenya's history. Harambe is a Swahili term that roughly translates to "let's all work together" (Mehta, n.d.). Initially it was an indigenous tradition used to encourage people to gather their resources and use them for the betterment of the community whether through money, physical resources, or time. It was one of the central ways the local people managed to sustain themselves. Harambe was one of the only local traditions to be maintained after the comprehensive national planning following independence. Under the planning, however, the term has become distorted. Traditionally it was used for small projects but the use of it has been shifted to the provision of large projects such as state hospitals. It once was used to provide mutual assistance and foster cultural values but today it is used more for material aspects (Ngau,

1987). The notion of harambe is important in the lens that we look at NGOs in Kenya, and while the use and characteristics of harambe has changed, the name harambe still evokes the idea of people pulling together to improve their community, not just materially but also culturally.<sup>5</sup>

### *Funding*

A theme that arose throughout my research and interviews was the role of funding in the effectiveness of the NGO. George Odhiambo, a Kenyan who works for the environmentally friendly organization Ecosandals, stated that his initial perception of NGOs was “that they were avenues created by private owners to draw money from donors and philanthropists.”<sup>6</sup> Howell and Peace (2000) argue that the power of the market permeates civil society and shapes its agenda. Stephen Kennedy Omolloh, an intern for the Initiative for Community Action (ICA) agrees with the permeation of funding influencing NGOs. He said that although the role of NGOs have shifted since the PEV, they still are heavily influenced by what the donor wants and NGOs create their agenda based on the trends in the market.<sup>7</sup> There has been a lasting impact as many of the leaders of NGOs have been trained thoroughly on civic engagement and ethnic cohesiveness.<sup>8</sup> Many of the Kenyans (Lydia, Kamakei, Stephen) I interviewed attributed peace workshops to the shift in their perception of ethnic identity.

### **Case Profiles:**

In a country where hundreds of NGOs and thousands of CBOs operate in different capacities within various contexts, it is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of each and every organization involved in reconciliation work and make a blanket statement for the entire country. Instead of making one generic statement, I decided to look into examples of organizations that

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<sup>5</sup> Farrell, Lynsey.

<sup>6</sup> Odhiambo, George, Personal Interview, 2 Feb. 2012.

<sup>7</sup> Omolloh, Stephen, Personal Interview, 7 Feb. 2012

<sup>8</sup> Farrell, Lynsey.

have committed themselves to working for the betterment of Kenya following the PEV and contain some sort of reconciliation component. Following the section on NGOs, there are different testimonies from Kenyans who are involved with NGO reconciliation work or have been positively impacted by NGOs.

**NGOs:**

*Ni sisi!*

Ni sisi! is an organization under Inuka Kenya Trust which works toward the consolidation of the Kenyan identity that affirms the individual as an African and as a global citizen while also empowering them to utilize information and express their views. Ni Sisi! creates initiatives that are aimed toward improving the lives of Kenyan by providing them access to information and facilitate start up businesses in addition to holding governments accountable (Inuka Kenya Trust, 2010). The values of Inuka Trust are Heshima (Dignity), Diversity, and Self-Belief. Within this category of self-belief is Ni Sisi which means “it is us” in Swahili. Inuka Trust holds to the belief that the problems within Kenya should be solved by Kenyan solutions and it is up to them to transform the country into a better place (Ni Sisi!, n.d.a).

Ni Sisi! defines themselves as “a nationwide social movement uniting Kenyans to forge a collective identity to drive transformation in leadership and maisha (life) (Ni Sisi!, n.d.b). The motivation for this project comes from a year and a half of Ni Sisi! Employees listening to Kenyans about how they viewed the state of the nation. Ni Sisi! found that there remained a frayed national fabric left by the PEV that was hidden under a false normalcy. This false normalcy, they believe, means that one could underestimate the seriousness of the situation as people continue to carry around a burden of injustice whether through collective or individual wrongs. The grievances stem from the Kenyans lack of trust of the government, a sense of

alienation and hopelessness by the youth, and a general foreboding of the future that require Kenyans to take charge and create new space for leadership that embraces respect and inclusiveness.

In order to do this, Ni Sisi! works throughout the entire country focusing on areas that suffered the most from the PEV and those that are at the most danger of future hostility. They provide Kenyans better access to information which then empowers them and allows them to express their beliefs and ideas through radio, live performances, the Ni Sisi! Website, and a SMS platform. They continue to gauge the needs of the community by constantly working with others who are interested in this idea of Ni Sisi! and connect others with initiatives that promote inclusivity. One project that they have is Kenya Yetu (Our Kenya) (Ni Sisi!, n.d.b). This project serves as recognition of the diverse ethnic, religious, racial, regional, gender, professional, and generational backgrounds in Kenya and is a call to create a movement of Kenyans who are willing to end impunity and usher a spirit of the new constitution into Kenya.

Within this project is a pledge to promote reconciliation among the diverse people work together to create change. John Githongo, the founder of the movement, a symbol for anti corruption in Kenya, and Chief Executive says in a blog posted by Virginia Simmons (2010)

But at the end of the day the critical element is people...dignity comes before development-and that's about relationships. Therefore you may find situation where people seem to be poor, who are living under challenging circumstances, but they are comfortable in their own skin.

Githongo's statement demonstrates a commitment to the people of Kenya and an emphasis on the Kenyans themselves as the most valuable resource to unite and improve the people. In order to pursue change and make a difference, Githongo maintains that the people need to reconcile

and work together. Their focus as an organization is on local planning and organizing and the sharing of skills and information (Ni Sisi!, n.d.a). In the end, they are an organization that recognizes the memories of yesterday as well as the commitment to peace that will lead to the prosperity of the people that can only occur through by people working together through the spirit of Harambe (Iregi, 2009).

### *Sisi ni Amani-Kenya*

Sisi ni Amani Kenya (We are Peace) is a NGO in Kenya that has two areas of focus in Kasarani, Nairobi and Narok, South Rift Valley. Sisi ni Amani Kenya (SNAK), like Ni Sisi!, operates on the fundamental belief that it is the local actors who have the knowledge, social capital, and motivation to promote sustainable peace. During Kenya's 2007-2008 post-election violence, individuals used mobile phones and radios to trigger and facilitate the violence. In light of the upcoming 2013 elections, SNAK tries to tap into the same communication channels with the hope of preventing and de-escalating the tension and violence. They hold that local leaders best understand the conflict dynamics of their own region and believe that social capital is necessary to gain community trust and participation in activities meant to prevent violence (Sisi ni Amani, n.d.).

While SNAK believes that the answer lies in the people, they also believe that local people sometimes lack the necessary tools and capacity to create change. (Sisi ni Amani, n.d.). To aid the Kenyans, they take an unorthodox approach to peace through technology that equips the local chapters with mobile phone-based technology. These phones facilitate rapid text message (SMS) communication within group and communities and allow an opportunity for local chapters to plan events geared toward peace promotion and conflict monitoring. Overall, SNAK events work to create active peace through collaborative and alternative means to



violence with the hope of empowering communities to be resilient to conflict. Their activities include strengthening positive grassroots civic engagement and voice and conflict early warning and response.

In strengthening positive grassroots civic engagement and voice programming, SNAK is reacting to the fact that many grassroots actors seek to promote peace and positive change in their community and yet lack the capability to speak together as a community as a whole. Some groups are unable to leverage their numbers to ensure that they have representation and their voice is heard. Political presence can result in heated rallies without policy orientated politics. So, SNAK seeks to empower the communities to come together across ethnic and religious lines to advocate for themselves by identifying needs and increase community involvement in peace activists.

One specific example of work led by the local chapters that works toward reconciliation is the community forums on ethnic division and land led by the Narok Chapter. Men and women from Narok and the surrounding area were invited to discuss various issues and how the issues affected themselves, their communities, and the larger region on April 12, 2012. Land is viewed as a serious issue that contributes to the tension especially by the pastoralist Maasai who feel threatened by other groups of people buying the land traditionally used for herding cattle.<sup>9</sup> The representatives from Mulot and Olululuna (which border Narok Town) focused on the issue of double leasing and how that has been causing dissension between the different groups of people. Double leasing is when a landowner leases the same land to two different people. Often, the local team believes, the tension regarding land ownership leads to violence. To prevent this, the Narok Chapter brought two lawyers representing two ethnic communities to educate the

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<sup>9</sup> Twycross, Peter, Personal Interview, 19 March 2012.

community on the legal aspects of land leasing and what to look for in the contracts to ensure that the land has not already been leased. It was the hope of the organization that they could empower those in Narok to understand their rights and ensure that land is leased to only one person (Njeru, 2011). The first forum was held on April 12, 2012 for the residents of Ololulunga Center, Junction, Olgilai, Masaantare, Olepolos, Nkobon and other outskirts for Ololulunga division. Reports from Kamakei hold that it was successful in that there was productive dialogue between the different ethnic groups.<sup>10</sup>

One unique aspect of this organization is that there is a pointed effort to have a wide representation on the staffs of each local chapter. Due to the fact that SNAK focuses on building up existing leaders, many of those who work for SNAK also work directly with community development and peace organizations such as Miss Koch Initiative, NADINEF Democracy and Government Project, Neighbors Peace Initiative. More importantly, before the chapters begin their work, they have to have close to an equal amount of male and female as well as an equal number of people from different ethnic groups.<sup>11</sup> This idea of balanced representation helps the organization to be viewed as one for the entire community rather than a selective organization that benefits only one ethnic group. During times of violence and instability, all potentially conflicting parties will view the work of this organization as their own ensure, so it becomes a common space rather than belonging to one just one group.<sup>12</sup>

#### *Dynamic Business Start-Up Project*

The Dynamic Business Start-up Project (DBSP) is a program designed to train poor and unemployed individuals to start and maintain their own small businesses that will then create job

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<sup>10</sup> Kaigil, Freddy, Personal Interview, 7 Feb. 2012.

<sup>11</sup> Brown, Rachel.

<sup>12</sup> Obiero, Ramadhan, Personal Interview, 3 March 2011.

opportunities for others. DBSP's hope is to provide outcomes that are based on business training, information, and aftercare. Their focus is primarily on the poor and marginalized groups such as those affected by HIV/AIDS and the physically challenged. The objectives of this organization are to identify the areas that need training, to secure funding in order to train the individuals, to build relationships with the community based organizations, to train DBSP facilitators and follow up agents. DBSP hopes to train each leader to identify and research business opportunities, to learn business theory in an easy, applicable context, and to give each learner hands on experience while they learn business principles (DBSP Concept Paper, n.d.).

The original DBSP was created in South African in 1997, and Peter and Wendy Twycross, the leaders of this organization, were interested in bringing the project to Kenya in part because of the high success rate.<sup>13</sup> They had been involved in trying to assist Kenyans start businesses by helping them raise loans but they were unsuccessful. DBSP had an 80% success rate so they brought in the South African team in 2006 to evaluate whether or not it would be successful in Kenya.<sup>14</sup> The participants of these classes go through a selection process in which those who have entrepreneurial skill are selected, and in addition they must have some sort of start up capital to contribute. To Peter and Wendy, what made the expansion worth undertaking, besides the success rate, was the methodology. It went past the simple micro businesses courses and instead had the adult learners learn through discovery participation and learning. As an example, one day they would spend in the classroom and the next day they would spend it in the marketplace- they were learning as they were doing. In addition, there are five follow up visits to ensure that the business is being managed well and is sustainable. Recent data demonstrates

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<sup>13</sup> Twycross, Peter.

<sup>14</sup> Twycross, Wendy, Personal Interview. 19 March 2012.

that there is currently an 87% success rate defined by participants' ability to run a business profitably in their communities.<sup>15</sup>

Reconciliation was not something that DBSP was trying to accomplish. Instead they focused on tackling the underlying issues of the conflict.<sup>16</sup> While some may claim that the core issues are simply ethnic, much of the tension in Kenya is linked to the inequality of land and distribution of wealth. In their perspective, for reconciliation to occur people who once felt disadvantaged need to feel more equal and empowered. In addition this course allows people from different background who were at odds with each other work together and begin to remove prejudices.<sup>17</sup> Eric Knei, a student of the program said in the 2008 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Report:

As Kalenjin, I believe I couldn't succeed in business. Business is not in my blood. In fact, during the first exercise, I did nothing! But then Pastor Titus Mbatiah encouraged me. Charles Kaba and Juma also helped me to see that I can be successful in business. He had grown up believing that Kalenjins were not good at business but proved this stereotype wrong by his own business. He identified a need for milk in his region of Munyaka which was an area of heavy violence during the election. Kalenjins were no longer welcome, but he entered into business there anyways because he had something to offer his community. Over the five weeks, he made the most out of anyone in his class totaling around 12,000 Kenyan Shillings (approximately \$144.00) (DBSP Quarterly Report, 2008).

The participants are a mixture of individuals that depends upon the region and the funders of the course. For example, USAID requested that there was an even background among the participants. Organizations such as USAID and the Rural Women Peace Link recognized that

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<sup>15</sup> Twycross, Peter.

<sup>16</sup> Twycross, Wendy.

<sup>17</sup> Twycross, Peter.

poverty and lack of skills are a main cause of the violence. Due to this, they contacted DBSP in order to do classes for women and young adults. (USAID, 2008). In addition, there was equal representation in the groups that they broke into. “It was a bit tense during the first week”, said John Mwangi, a DBSP trainer, but through team building games and activities they began to work together more peacefully (DBSP Quarterly Report, 2009). Through these small groups, they began to realize that they needed to work with each other in order to be successful, and it helped their community.<sup>18</sup> Juma Mauka, a student from the course, said that it wasn’t until the last day of class that ethnic identity were mentioned because until then they only thought “about our businesses and how to help one another succeed” (DBSP Quarterly Report, 2008). In one example, there was a Kikuyu and a Luhya in a group- during the election these two groups were in opposition to each other, but now these individuals work together and encourage one another (DBSP Quarterly Report, 2008).

Even amongst the trainers there is a diverse background as they work together to model teamwork across identities to the participants. In the end though, their main goal is economic empowerment- for them reconciliation is an additional outcome, albeit one, they believe, that lasts long after they return to their communities (the trainings are conducted locally).<sup>19</sup> Charles Kaba, a participant, said “When positive opportunities like these come our way...we forget about tribe...” (DPSP Quarterly Report, 2009). While this organization does not focus on reconciliation, it provides Kenyans with positive opportunities to treat each other and themselves with respect. By doing this, the DBSP can have a far-reaching effects in Kenya and beyond by socially impacting the community by equipping different ethnic communities with the skills to

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<sup>18</sup> Twycross, Wendy.

<sup>19</sup> Twycross, Peter.

work together peacefully and see each other as colleagues and business partner rather than enemies (DPSB Quarterly Report, 2009 & DBSP Quarterly Report, 2008).

These three organizations all hold reconciliation as a by product of their work whether explicitly or inexplicitly. In this way, the organizations that encouraged people of different identities to work together found that reconciliation, or processes toward reconciliation, occurred because the Kenyans had to work together for a common goal. Additionally, reconciliation attempts hinged on the involvement and needs of the local people, and these three were heavily focused on the Kenyans and their needs.

### **Individual Empowerment**

Whether it be through the sheer advertisement and promotion of the work that NGOs are doing or through direct, intentional involvement in the lives of Kenyans, NGOS have made a difference. George Odhiambo, a Kenyan born in Kisumu but currently a resident of Nairobi believes that it was the “NGOs that took the first step to peace in the tension that contributed to the violence and remained after the violence ended.”<sup>20</sup> Rachel Brown believes that the NGOs have been more proactive with the people in the community following the PEV by placing more eyes on the ground and investing in the youth as they work to build confidence that the violence will not occur again.<sup>21</sup> Stephen Kennedy Omolloh, a current job seeker living in Kibera, believes that it is the goal of the NGOs to “preach peace” and help the victims recover from the violence through rebuilding community ties and economic empowerment.<sup>22</sup> Jacob Ochola, a recent graduate of United States International University originally from Kisumu, holds that NGOs are essential in his country. NGOs provide a sector of service that is not biased from political and

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<sup>20</sup> Odhiambo, George.

<sup>21</sup> Brown, Rachel.

<sup>22</sup> Omolloh, Stephen.

ethnic affiliations (unlike the government). Ochola believes that NGOs have less of an agenda and are “nimble” which is very useful for Kenya.<sup>23</sup> What follows are three perspectives from Kenyans from different walks of life and background of how the NGOs have affected them and their community.

*Lydia Sabina Ayot (Sabina)*

I first met Sabina a year ago when she volunteered with my study abroad trip- she coordinated the welcome week in Naivasha and gave us our first tour of Kibera. Mutual friends pointed Sabina out as someone who was different- someone whose perspective and goals in life did not mirror her background. In many conversations with Sabina, she demonstrated an understanding of Kenya that was based on more than ethnic identity as well and a sense of dignity and self-respect that is unusual.

Lydia Sabina Ayot has lived in Kibera (one of the largest slums on Africa in Nairobi, Kenya for twenty nine years and is involved with two NGOs: St. Martins School and Day Care and Kibera UK. St. Martins is a school and day care run by mostly single parents and Kibera UK is a charity organization that works in Kibera helping students from Europe access volunteer placements. Sabina views the roles of NGOs as very positive since the PEV. In her opinion, most of the initiatives in Kenya are a result of the NGOs in the area. Here, she sees NGOS not just for reconciliation but for other purposes as well. Projects such as water projects, saving and loans, microfinance projects, flying toilets, and others are all a result of their efforts. In specific reference to the work of the NGOs following the PEV, she spoke to how impressed she was by the work of the NGOs especially in contrast to the work of the government.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Ochola, Jacob.

<sup>24</sup> Ayot, Lydia, Personal Interview, 28 Jan. 2012

Sabina has been involved in the campaign for peace in Kenya before the violence and after the violence become more involved in peace work. She participated in a community theatre hosted by Peacenet Kenya that focused on ways to educate the community of issues regarding peace. Another project that she cites as impactful is the TV series called “the Team” which has been running since the PEV co-produced by Media Focus on Africa and Search for Common Ground.<sup>25</sup> The Team is a drama that tells the story of seven young Kenyan footballers from different ethnic groups who work to overcome their differences so that they can win a tournament. The episodes dramatize cooperative ways of handling ethnic conflict and promote positive social change. While each team member has challenges that make it difficult for them to empathize with their teammates, the overall goal of working toward the championship gives them motivation to overcome their differences (Media Focus on Africa, n.d).

When asked specifically how NGOs have impacted her life Sabina speaks to the role of NGOs in building a sense of dignity and self-respect. She said that she has been left with few role models as her friends became mothers as young as fourteen years and others became involved with drugs and prostitution. She said that the trainings the NGOs facilitated empowered her to see beyond her surrounding. Sabina has been given the opportunity to “learn and accept and embrace other people’s opinions.”<sup>26</sup> She notes that through training and other opportunities she has become less judgmental and now understands why people do the things that they do or behave the way they do.

*Ramadhan Obiero*

I met Rama working with SNAK a year ago when he was one of the leaders of the Kasrani Chapter. At the time we spoke, he was working with the African Cultural Research and

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<sup>25</sup> Ayot, Lydia.

<sup>26</sup> Ayot, Lydia.



Education Foundation (ACREF) and managing a band with the hope of using music to bring accountability to the government. He was living in the Korogocho section of the Kasarani slums and working hard to bring NGOs dedicated to peace to his neighborhood because he saw a deep need for them. In many of our conversations, he discussed how shocked he was that Odinga did not win and how much of the violence was contained within the slum. NGOs have given him the opportunity to reach members of his community that were drawn into the violence.

In addition to working with ACREF, he is the founder of the We are Watching You campaign which is a campaign for government accountability. In his perspective, much of the violence occurred because the wealthy were coming to the informal settlements and manipulating the impoverished youth along ethnic lines. In order to prevent this misuse of information, he began to speak with the youth trying to explain to them that violence was not the answer for stolen votes. He did this in his own village for two weeks until his neighbors began to view him as a traitor and threatened violence. When this occurred, he moved to other villages and tried to bring the people together rather than allow them to fight. In addition, he took charge of organizing security for international and local media houses to gain coverage of the violence. Also, he used ACREF as an Office of the United Nations High Commissions for Refugees (UNHCR) distribution center for food and medical supplies so that all of the Kenyans, regardless of political affiliation could be cared for. He believes that it is important for organizations to work for youth empowerment and alternatives ways for people to discuss issues than violence and sees NGOs as an answer to this. He believes that growing local leadership is a way that NGOs can accomplish this, and even more so that it is local NGOs that accomplish the most good in terms of reconciliation work.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Obiero, Ramadhan.

*Freddy Kamakei Kaigil (Kamakei)*

I met Kamakei while working in Narok with SNAK. Narok was an area with violence between the Maasai and Kikuyu and Kamakei was one individual who tried to stop the violence by speaking with both parties, just like Rama. In reflecting upon peacbuilding, Kamaeki believes that NGOs is the way in which he can be most effective.

Kamakei has lived in Narok for thirty year and is a self-ascribed “community developer” who works with NGOs in Narok County. During the violence, Kamakei tried to protect his Kikuyu friend from an angry Maasai group and was beaten up. In response, he and some friends created a group called Kenyan Initiative during the violence. This group consisted mainly of Massai, but along with Kikuyu, Kisii, and Luo men, they went out into the community every night to find angry mobs and convince them to stop the violence. Within a week there was a noticeable difference, and others began to follow their example. Kamakei claims that the violence ended much more smoothly because of their efforts and the community was closer to healing. For his actions, Kamakei won an award from Media Focus on Africa for his heroic actions during the 2007-2008 violence (Ushahidi, n.d.). He currently works with NADINEF, a Christian health services organization, and is the Director of Neighbors Peace Initiative<sup>28</sup>.

Neighbors Peace Initiative is a civil society organization that formed in 2007 with the intent of mitigating the adverse effects of the PEV on “foreign” communities in Narok. Initially, the members of this organization were involved in inter-community dialogue, rescuing, housing, and feeding the IDPs created by the violence. It was the efforts of this organization that are in part attributed to the end of the violence in that community. Five years after the violence, Neighbors Peace Initiative is a major actor in the efforts for peace and reconciliation in the South

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<sup>28</sup> Kaigil, Freddy, Personal Interview, 7. Feb. 2012.

Rift using dialogue as a tool to reach out to the larger community while establishing peace clubs in school, creating sports tournaments and training the youth on life skills as a practical approach to bring the youth into the peace agenda (Building Bridges, 2010).

In his understanding of the effects of the PEV and the current tension, Kamakei is most concerned by the issues that are under the surface.<sup>29</sup> Kamakei believes that the tension is deeply rooted in ethnic affiliated politics and impunity remains an issue that cannot be ignored especially as many of the middle level perpetrators have not been persecuted even today. An example of ethnic affiliated political and impunity is the case of the Ocampo Six. The Ocampo Six is the term Kenyans use for the International Criminal Court (ICC) summons of six high profile Kenyans accused of masterminding the PEV. The six men accused are Education Minister William Ruto, Finance Minister Uhuru Kenyatta, Industrialization Minister Henry Kosgey, Secretary to the Cabinet Francis Kirimi Muthaura, former police chief Mohammed Hussein Ali and radio executive Joshua Arap Sang (Bryant, 2010). The six individuals were divided in the courts as those who supported Mwai Kibaki and those who worked in support of Raila Odinga. ICC Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo accused them as being most responsible for instigating the PEV, and as such they face charges of crimes against humanity (Aljazeera, 2011). On January 24, 2012, charges were named only against four of the men: William Ruto, Joshua Sang, Francis Muthaura, and Uhuru Kenyatta, and the trial is still ongoing (Campbell, 2011). Kamakei concludes that this issue has created this invisible, but very present, tension.<sup>30</sup>

In his experience, Kamakei has found that NGOs have become more proactive in their search for peace, reconciliation, and the betterment of society as a whole. Prior to the violence, they were more reactive to events and while they did their best to respond to the PEV, he felt that

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<sup>29</sup> Kaigil, Freddy.

<sup>30</sup> Kaigil, Freddy.

internal division and lack of resources overwhelmed them. He termed this time as “fire fighting”- they tried to put out fires once they appeared, but were not able to prevent the flame from growing. Organizations, in his perspective, have provided conflict resolution services, mediated conflicts, and created platforms for dialogue whenever tensions do increase. While not every organization focuses on the reconciliation process, Kamakei holds that “the few that are working toward reconciling the different tribes are doing a good job.”<sup>31</sup>

### **Reoccurrence of Violence:**

In March of 2013, given that the government remains true to their current expected election date, the Kenyans will once again have the opportunity to vote for a president. Despite the work of a vast array of organizations on all levels, 44% of Kenyans believe that there will be a repeat of PEV in 2012, and some Kenyans are making plans to not be in the hotspot areas (Delmeiren, 2010; Apollo, 2012).

The three main issues that those I interviewed saw as possible points of contention are the role of the leaders, social issues, and economic inequality. In regard to politics, Lynsey Farrell notes that at the time of writing, two of the Ocampo Six (William Ruto and Jomo Kenyatta) are still planning on running for President (Stein, 2012) which is likely to have an important role in the outcome of the election.<sup>32</sup> While attention to the corruption of high political leaders may prevent the main leaders from building a militia, others will not hesitate to build similar support. Additionally, there remain grave concerns regarding the 40% unemployment rate of youth (15-30 years old) (Mwalulu, 2011) as well as animosity toward the government.<sup>33</sup> In terms of economic and social inequality there is a general frustration regarding money from new

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<sup>31</sup> Kaigil, Freddy.

<sup>32</sup> Omolloh, Stephen.

<sup>33</sup> Twyccross, Peter.

infrastructure not reaching the people,<sup>34</sup> the prevalence of internally displaced persons,<sup>35</sup> and the unfair distribution of land<sup>36</sup> (including land grabbing).<sup>37</sup>

There is a mixed feeling among those I spoke to because many felt concern and uncertainty regarding the outcome, but still hoped for a positive outcome. For Stephen, one of the Kiberan youths I interviewed, a main factor for the level of violence will be who President Kibabki endorses to “take the throne.”<sup>38</sup> Peter Twycross was hesitant to give a decision on how the election would turn out: he thinks that there “has been a change and the country doesn’t want to return to that sort of experience because of how awful it was.” Yet at the same time, he does not believe that politicians have grasped that they have less power and influence over the people than they once had. If the many issues are not addressed, it is just a matter of time until the violence reoccurs.<sup>39</sup> Bianca Palmisano, a past intern with the NGO Umande Trust, thought violence is likely, but it will not be on as large of a scale as in 2007-2008 because of the work of the past four years.<sup>40</sup> Of all those I spoke to, Kamakei was the most optimistic for the future of Kenya. I believe this was in part because of his heavy involvement with NGOs and the change that he has seen in his community because of it. When interviewing him, he said that everything hinged on the work of the NGOs and government to promote tolerance amongst the Kenyans.<sup>41</sup>

### **Role of the Government:**

Throughout this paper, there is a contradiction that must be addressed. Through the specific profiles I provided there were several examples of NGOs who were affecting positive

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<sup>34</sup> Farrell, Lynsey.

<sup>35</sup> Ayot, Lydia.

<sup>36</sup> Twycross, Peter.

<sup>37</sup> Ayot, Lydia.

<sup>38</sup> Omolloh, Stephen.

<sup>39</sup> Twycross, Peter.

<sup>40</sup> Palmisano, Bianca, Personal Interview, 4 March 2012.

<sup>41</sup> Kaigil, Freddy.

change in their communities, and the three individuals that I interviewed, to some extent, all believed that NGOs were forces for reconciliation in their community. Yet despite this, not one person I interviewed could say with certainty that the election results would be met with peace. First of all reconciliation is a process, it does not occur spontaneously or automatically (Bar-Tal, 2002). Even more importantly though, in terms of reconciliation, many of the issues addressed cannot be resolved in a couple of years and cannot be resolved by NGO effort alone.

### *Limitations*

Two main limitations of NGOs is that they are dependent upon the good will of the government to continue operating and only the government can institutionalize policy or reform.<sup>42</sup> There are three areas where this was apparent through my interviews: living conditions, judicial system, and the monitoring of hate speech.

Sabina, recalling her experiences in Kibera, believes that many in the slums were incited to violence because they saw it as an opportunity to improve their situation. Only the government should provide proper housing, hospitals, schools, and effective drainage systems and sanitation. If these structural issues are not addressed, she holds, that the grudges remain which only fuels the tension and leaves the Kiberans vulnerable for manipulation. On a more specific note to the violence, the government are the only ones who can resettle the internally displaced persons of which there are as many as 16,800 displaced (McGregor, 2012).<sup>43</sup> Sabina says “personally I feel like the government has done very little on this, reason being we still have people who are displaced and living in camps without hope for tomorrow.”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Kaigil, Freddy.

<sup>43</sup> Brown, Rachel.

<sup>44</sup> Ayot, Lydia.

In regards to the legal system, first and foremost the government needs to have an inclusive and fair legal system so that Kenyans can turn to country mechanisms for justice rather than to local mechanisms. Kenyans need to feel that, regardless of their ethnic group, they are able to participate on all levels of government.<sup>45</sup> To remedy this constitutionalism should be encouraged especially with the new reformed their constitution (The Constitution of Kenya, 2010), as a guide to prevent the manipulation of allocated resources and economic investment and to prevent these decisions from being in the hands of a potentially corrupt individual (Omolo, 2011). In addition, only the Kenyan government can prosecute the perpetrators<sup>46</sup> (or it can be taken to the ICC for higher level cases), but it first be the responsibility of the government.<sup>47</sup> Finally, in terms of a commission to investigate these crimes and injustices, the Kenyan government should establish a fair and respected commission to expose the atrocities.<sup>48</sup>

Lastly, the Kenyan government is viewed as one that emanates an “us vs. them” mentality which does not help the current tension. One example that Rachel Brown provides is that rather than look after the survivors, the Kenyan government uses government funds to pay for lawyers for the Ocampo Six,<sup>49</sup> so money that should be going to the victims are going to the perpetrators (Hansen, 2011). They have little credibility in the government in part due to the lack of justice mechanisms<sup>50</sup> discussed above but also for the antagonistic ethnic rhetoric in government discussions. There is no implementation of the idea that different ethnic groups can work together to improve their country, and if this is not mirrored in the government than how

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<sup>45</sup> Odhiambo, George.

<sup>46</sup> Palmisano, Bianca.

<sup>47</sup> Omolloh, Stephen.

<sup>48</sup> Hylton, Leslie, Personal Interview, 23 March 2012.

<sup>49</sup> Brown, Rachel.

<sup>50</sup> Brown, Rachel.

can the country mirror it? <sup>51</sup> The government should be modeling appropriate interactions between different ethnic groups but they are the ones most often guilty of hate speech which can stir up animosity. <sup>52</sup> For example Deputy Prime Minister Uhuru Kenyatta derogatorily referred to Prime Minister Raila Odinga in March of last year as “kamundi kahi” (uncircumcised and subhuman) (Alila, 2011).

**Conclusion:**

In the face of the PEV, Kenyan NGOs scrambled to do what they were able to do in order to quell violence. Four years later, they continue to work trying to rebuild the country- not just from the immediate effects of the violence, but from the structural injustices that have been present for decades. The role of NGOs has changed drastically since the PEV. The underlying conflicts and tensions presented themselves in a drastic and bloody way during the PEV which served as an scale to measure the weaknesses of the NGOs. Since then, however, the NGOs have moved in a powerful way working to heal the aftermath of the conflict and address the issues that led to it. Through it all though it is the Kenyan people’s willingness to continue to invest their time and energy in these NGOs. Kenyans believe that NGOs have accomplished the most thus far and are the greatest chance for peace and reconciliation especially in light of the coming 2013 elections.

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<sup>51</sup> Odhiambo, George.

<sup>52</sup> Kaigil, Freddy.



**Annex- Summaries of the Interviews**

*Ayot, Lydia (Sabina)*

Sabina's interview focused on life living in Kibera and how her life has been impacted by the work of NGOs in the community. She provided a wide area of examples of how NGOs have impacted her life and the organizations that she currently works for and their work.

*Brown, Rachel*

Rachel provided a couple of interviews that provided a better understanding of the inner workings of NGOs and how the NGOs interact with the government. She focused on the role of justice and need for accountability in the government and the work of her organization Sisi ni Amani-Kenya.

*Farrell, Lynsey*

Lynsey's interview provided a greater overview of the historical considerations of the Post Election Violence as well as a more concise picture of how the government's attempts for reconciliation. When she spoke of NGOs, she focused especially on the changing role of fiancés with NGOs.

*Hylton, Leslie*

Leslie's interview focused on her time working with the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission of Kenya. She spoke about the need for justice as well as the challenges the commission faced due to the structural limitations from the government.

*Kaigil, Freddy (Kamakei)*

Freddy's interview was based on the various organizations that he had worked with and how they benefitted Narok and Narok County. He also spoke about how he has worked with NGOs to empower his community and his hopes for the future election.

*Obiero, Ramadhan (Rama)*

Rama's interview focused on his own experiences with the Post Election Violence and the challenges he faced in empowering his community for peace following the violence. Rama spoke considerably about the shift that he has noticed in NGOs and how that affects his predictions for the next election.

*Ocholo, Jacob*

Jacob is a student from a Kenyan University who is not currently involved with NGOs who spoke predominately about how NGOs have affected the country as a whole and how their role differs from the government.

*Odhiambo, George*

George spoke about the influence of NGOs on his life and community from the perspective of one who is not involved in NGO work. He focused mainly on the role of funding and how he has noticed NGOs shift in a positive direction.

*Omolloh, Stephen*

Stephen spoke from his experience working with an NGO in Kibera. He focused on the role of funding but also the role that he believes the government needs to play in the community. His interview helped to understand the growing role that NGOs are taking in the community in regards to peacebuilding and reconciliation.

*Palmisano, Bianca*

Bianca spoke from her experience as an international student interning in Kibera. Her interview focused on the role that she observed NGOs taking in the community and how NGOs would influence the level of violence with the upcoming elections.

*Twycross, Peter*

Peter focused on the need of the Kenyan people and how that would affect the projections for the upcoming elections. In addition, he spoke about his organization, the DBSP, and what the role that had in improving Kenyans' lives and the reconciliation process.

Twycross, Wendy

Wendy's interview focused predominately on the DBSP and how it started and what her hopes were for the organization. She provided several examples of how Kenyans had benefited from the work of the organization and what their hopes were for the future.

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