

# Peace Initiatives and Opportunities for Sustainable Peace in Nyakach and Sigowet Sub-Counties of Western Kenya

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## ABSTRACT

The recurrence of interethnic conflicts in Kenya has been a common phenomenon which has led to loss many lives and left a lot of destructions in the wake. Even with these recurrent conflicts there are opportunities within the communities where these conflicts occur to make things right and ensure durable peace at all times. In Kenya, there have been several cases of recurrent conflicts as well as efforts to bring these conflicts to a stop. One of the most affected places by inter-ethnic conflicts is Nyakach and Sigowet Sub-counties. There are opportunities that exist in the area to help in curbing cases of ethnic conflicts; however, these opportunities have not been properly utilized to help in curbing the repeated episodes of violent inter-ethnic conflicts between communities living in the border of the two Sub-counties. The study was conducted in four wards in the two sub-counties and gained information from 384 respondents including 296 household heads, 36 government officials, 12 non state actors and 4 FGDs of 10 participants each. The study utilized questionnaires, interviews and FGDs. The study indicated that there were different agencies involved in promotion of peace in the area which included National Cohesion and Integration commission (NCIC), National Council of Churches of Kenya, Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC), National Land Commission (NLC), National Police Service (Police). The study also indicated that the effective ways of promoting sustainable peace in the area included Public *barazas*/Dialogue forums; use of police and courts; religious leaders; community elders; use of Government commission; and use of Local administrators. The results also indicated that devolution provided an opportunity for sustainable peace as well. The study recommended more coordination and pro-activity of government agencies and county governments in efforts of peace building in the study area.

**Keywords:** Peace Initiatives, Sustainable peace, Recurrent conflicts; State and Non-State actors.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Conflicts have remained a major concern in the post-cold war world, there have also been several attempts by various players including the United Nations to bring lasting peace in various parts of the world more so in Africa. The UN for instance, has commissioned up to 24 peace-keeping missions of varying robustness in Africa, which have contributed decisively to the stabilization of some conflict affected areas such as Namibia, Mozambique, and Liberia (Tull, 2008); The UN has however failed in ending fighting in certain areas such as Eastern Congo, Sierra Leone, Somalia (Mair, 2009; Tull, 2008). This follows the UN's approach of preventing recurrence of conflicts through advocating for durable peace in conflict prone areas.

Many African countries that have undergone some serious episodes of violent conflicts in the history of Africa have always found ways to deal with conflicts through both state and indigenous initiatives at the grass roots level to ensure that communities are able to live together in harmony. In Rwanda, the *Gacaca* courts helped in reconciling communities that had fought and killed each other mercilessly (Mensah, 2008). The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission led by Bishop Desmond Tutu brought the black and white communities in South Africa together (Moe, 2010). Through this, South Africa became one united nation just like Rwanda.

Kenya has had its own fair share of internal conflicts. Before independence, the Mau Mau engaged the colonial government in serious fighting in effort to gain independence. Between 1963 and 1967 the Kenyan Somalis engaged the government in fighting with the aim of reuniting with the Greater Somalia. This conflict became known as the Shifta and was the ethnic conflict pitting ethnic Somalis against the Kenyan government (Oyugi, 2000).

The advent of political pluralism in the 1990s saw a new rise in ethnic conflicts in Kenya (Musau, 2008; Oucho, 2008). The Multiparty politics revamped the idea of ethnicity in various communities. This coupled with other factors including competition for resources mainly land, political manipulations on the basis of ethnicity, colonial legacy, electoral fraud, weak institutions and heavy handedness of security personnel, greatly contributed to the many conflicts that have been recurring in Kenya since the 1990s. Most of these conflicts have been common during election periods, although some conflicts have been going on even when there are no major political events (Klopp, 2002; Musau, 2008). Since the outbreak of violent conflicts in the 1990s, there were several initiatives by the government to respond to the conflicts, however these did not yield much fruits as the conflicts kept recurring (Nyongesa *et al*, 2016).

There are several initiatives that have been conducted by the government in efforts to curb the recurrence of ethnic conflicts across the country. Some of the initiatives taken have included; disarmament activities, formation of the National Steering Committee (NSC). They act to bring together different actors at all levels to prevent conflicts, establishment and rolling out of the District Peace Committee (DPCs) country wide. This has brought together different actors including government officers, NGOs, religious leaders, and security personnel (Pkalya & Mohamud, 2006). All these initiatives have been aimed at bringing peace in various parts of the country since 1993. However, the conflicts have kept on re-emerging in various parts of the country despite all these initiatives which have in different ways affected the people's livelihoods. This has thereby negatively impacted on the social welfare and the economic capabilities of the affected communities.

Nyakach and Sigowet sub-counties have been major hotspots for conflicts since 1992 (Nyongesa, 2016). The conflicts have since then recurred over the years with similar conflicts experienced in 1992-1993, 1996-1997 and 2002. These conflicts were believed to be politically instigated by the KANU regime, which the Kipsigis community supported. During this time, the violence was targeting the Luo, the Kisii and Luhya communities who were believed to be anti KANU. The most recent case of conflict in the area happened in March 2014 in which several houses were burned and six people killed (Kenya Red Cross, 2014). The conflict occurred just days after the National Cohesion and Integration Commission left the area to facilitate Inter-County Peace and Reconciliation Forum (NCIC, 12 March 2014). It is therefore a concern that even with a national body trying to reconcile communities; it was possible to have conflicts in the area. The recurrent conflicts have led to the loss of many lives including family breadwinners, hence affecting economic abilities and livelihood of communities affected by these conflicts.

## 2.0 Theoretical Framework

### Functionalism Theory

The functionalist perspective is based largely on the works of Herbert Spencer, Emile Durkheim, Talcott Parsons, and Robert Merton. According to functionalism, society is a system of interconnected parts that work together in harmony to maintain a state of balance and social equilibrium for the whole (Mooney, Knox & Schacht, 2007). The functionalist perspective emphasizes the interconnectedness of society by focusing on how each part influences and is influenced by other parts. Functionalism is interested in cohesion and stability of a society based on the role played by each component that makes up the society. This means that in every society, every person, institution and any other components of the society have a role to play as far as the stability of the society is concerned. All the components of the society must thus work together to ensure that the society runs smoothly. That is to say, cooperation of everyone is needed for the society to function properly.

## 3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study employed descriptive and Evaluation research designs. The research was conducted in Sigowet Sub-county of Kericho County and Nyakach Sub-county of Kisumu County. In this Study, Nyakach and Sigowet Sub counties were purposively sampled because of the frequency and magnitude of the recurrence of inter-ethnic conflicts within the two sub-counties (Red Cross, 2014; Safer World Briefing, 2015). The research was done in eight sub-locations where simple random sampling was used to select the 8 sub-locations out of the 27 sub-locations in the two sub-counties.

The study targeted target population for the study was 11, 037, in this regard therefore, since the target population is greater than 10000, the desired sample population was determined using Fisher's formula for sample size determination (Fisher *et al.*, 1983 cited in Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). The formula is stated below.

$$n = \frac{z^2 pq}{d^2}$$

Where n=desired sample size (the target population is greater than 10,000).

z=the standard normal deviate at the confidence level of 95% is 1.96.

p=the proportion of the target population estimated to have characteristics being measured is set at 50%

q=1-p (probability of non-success)

d=level of statistical significance set at 0.05

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \cdot 0.5 \cdot (1-0.5)}{(0.05)^2}$$

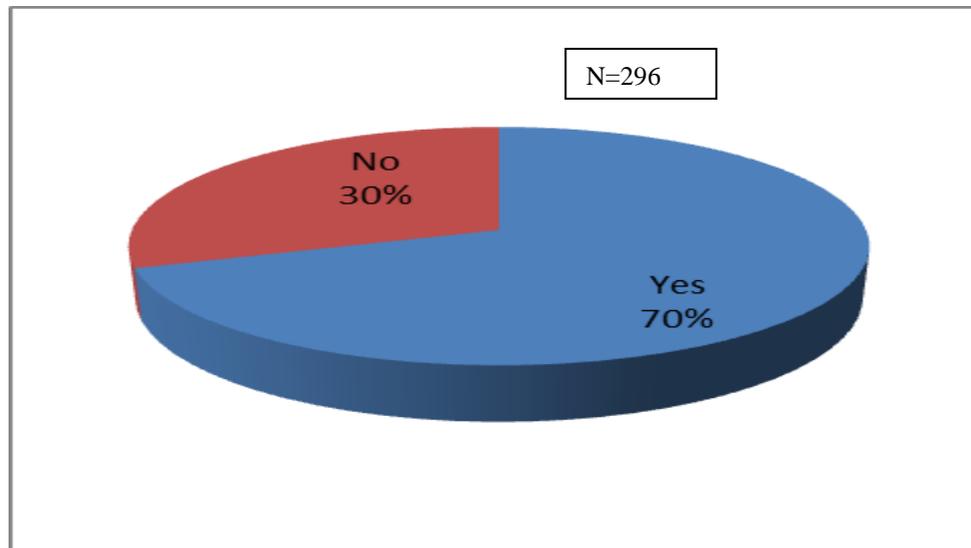
$$n = 384$$

The sample population of 384 respondents was distributed as follows; 38 government officials were purposively sampled, 10 Non-state actors were purposively sampled and convenience sampling was used for 40 respondents in four Focus Group Discussions (10 respondents per FGD). Stratified proportionate and random sampling was used for 296 household heads. The study employed both probability and non-probability sampling methods. Quantitative data was collected using questionnaires while qualitative data was collected through interview guides and FGD guides. Both primary and secondary data were utilised during the study. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS version 17 and Microsoft Excel to obtain descriptive statistics particularly frequencies and percentages and qualitative data was analysed using thematic techniques to support quantitative data. Quantitative data was presented using tables, graphs, and charts while qualitative data was presented inform of narrative reports and verbatim quotations.

## 4.0 STUDY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 4.1 AVAILABILITY OF PEACE INITIATIVES IN THE NYAKACH AND SIGOWET SUB-COUNTIES

The study sought to establish the availability of peace initiatives in Nyakach and Sigowet Sub-counties. Respondents were asked to indicate if they knew about any peace initiatives in the study area. The results are given in Figure 4.1.



**Figure 1: Presence of peace Initiatives in Nyakach and Sigowet Sub-counties**

**Source: Field Data (2017)**

The results indicated that out of the 296 respondents, 207 (70%) specified that they know there were peace initiatives in the study area while 89 (30%) indicated that there were no peace initiatives in the area. The respondents further indicated that the peace initiatives that were available in the area included sporting activities that were organised by various Civil Society Organizations to unite the communities; they also indicated inter-community dialogue meetings that were organised by the faith based organizations and through public *barazas* that were held at the chief's camps. The respondents also mentioned peace caravans that were often common in the area especially during election periods and which were targeting the youths to maintain peace in the area. Other respondents also mentioned the use of social media platforms such as Facebook to reach out to youths in the area to maintain peace. The Kericho Youth *Bunge* which is one of the major platforms for peace was mentioned as having a Facebook page that has been used to preach peace and unity in the study area. The respondents also mentioned that the Local Peace Committee (LPCs) were also mentioned by respondents as a way that has been used to reach out to members of different communities and ensure that there is peace in the study area.

The findings were supported by findings from key informant interviews where the respondents mentioned several peace initiatives that they knew were present in the area of study. Chiefs stated that they held *barazas* every week in their offices to talk to the local communities about the importance of living peacefully with their neighbours.

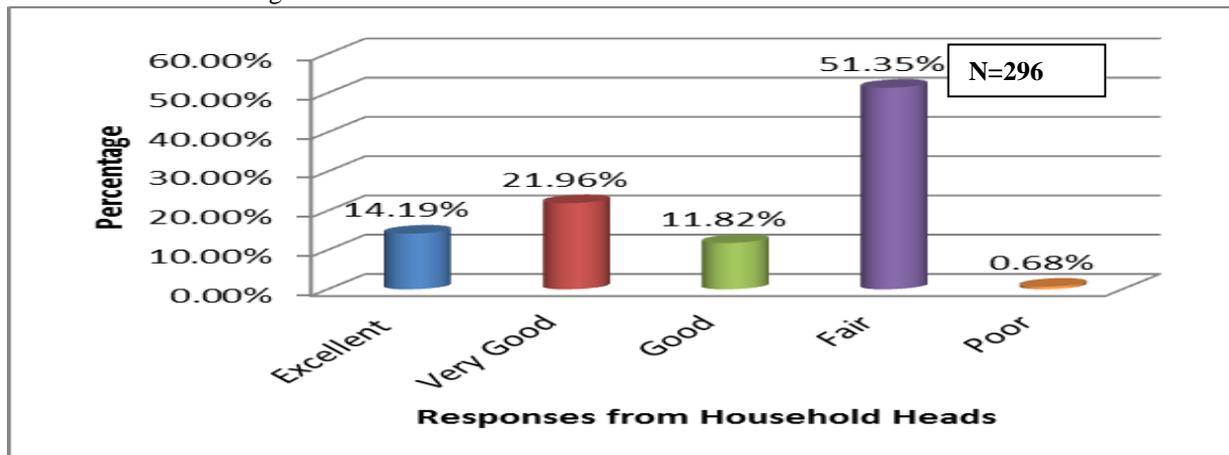
The NGOs including Red Cross and World Vision all stated that they supported various peace initiatives in the area. These two NGOs provided humanitarian support to people displaced by the conflict and also supported activities that were aimed at restoration of peace in the study area through workshops, dialogues and conferences. CBOs including Kericho Youth Bunge, Nyakach Elders Development Group and Uhai Lake Forum as well as Faith Based Organizations including Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) as well as Churches including the Anglican Church, the Catholic Church and the Seventh day Adventist Church all indicated that they were involved in activities that were aimed at fostering peace in the study area. The findings from FGDs also indicated that there were several peace initiatives in the study area. Participants in all the four FGDs all agreed that activities including sports, peace caravans and meetings, public *barazas* had been used to encourage peaceful coexistence among members of various communities in the study area.

### 4.2 PEACE INITIATIVES BY GOVERNMENT AND THE CIVIL SOCIETY IN NYAKACH AND SIGOWET SUB-COUNTIES

The peace initiatives in Nyakach and Sigowet Sub-counties were categorized in terms of peace initiatives by Government and initiatives by non-state actors. Peace initiatives by Government actors included activities by various government officials and agencies in the study area to foster peace. These state actors included the police service, local administration, political leaders (MCAs) and Sub-county administrators. Non state actors included NGOs such as Red Cross, USAID and World Vision, CBOs including Kericho Youth Bunge, Nyakach Elders Development Group and Uhai Lake Forum and FBOs including Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC), National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK), Anglican Church and the Seventh day Adventist Church.

#### 4.2.1 GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE CONFLICTS

The study sought to establish the opinion of the respondents on the way the government responds to the conflicts in the study area. The respondents were asked to gauge the performance of the government as, excellent, very good, good, fair or poor. The results are as indicated in Figure 4.2.



**Figure 2: Government’s response of the conflicts in Nyakach and Sigowet Sub-counties**  
 Source: Field Data (2017)

The results showed that out of the 296 respondents, 42 (14.19%) of them indicated the government did an excellent job, 65 (21.96%) stated that the government’s work was very good, 35 (11.82%) of the respondents indicated good in their response and majority of the respondents 152 (51.35%) stated that the government’s handling of the conflict in the study area had been fair. 2 (0.68%) of the respondents felt that the government performed poorly.

In support of the results from the household heads, the Nyakach Sub-county administrator opined that;

*The national government had been actively involved in responding to the conflicts by the use of police and the Anti-Stock theft police Unit. The county government was also involved in helping to calm down tension in the area through dialogue involving leaders. For example the Kisumu and Kericho governors have on several occasions visited conflict affected areas and addressed residents jointly which helped in easing tension in the border area (Nyakach Sub-county administrator 20<sup>th</sup> March 2017).*

It also emerged from the FGDs that the government had worked towards managing the conflict by taking various actions including sending a parliamentary commission in the area to investigate the conflict. 3 out of 10 respondents in an FGD held in Sondu market indicated that they once in 2014 attended a parliamentary commission meeting that was looking for ways to solve the conflicts in the area. The participants praised this as a good move by the government however, they also indicated that since the members of parliament left, nothing has been done and the information that was given to them has never been acted upon and hence, it has not helped in making any difference in helping towards getting lasting solutions for the conflict that has affected the area for decades. FGD participants indicated that the locals have also shared information with government agencies that have always come to the area looking for information but unfortunately the information they have always given has not often been used appropriately by these government agencies to help in getting lasting solutions to the conflicts in the area.

#### 4.2.2 APPROACHES USED BY GOVERNMENT/STATE ACTORS TO PREVENT RECURRENCE OF INTER-ETHNIC CONFLICTS IN NYAKACH AND SIGOWET SUB-COUNTIES

During the study, respondents were asked to indicate initiatives used by the government in dealing with the conflict in the study area that fostered peace. The results were as indicated in Table 1.

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**Table 1 : Peace Initiatives by Government/State Actors in Nyakach and Sigowet Sub-counties**

Initiative	Frequency	Percentage
Community Policing	45	15.2
Use of local administrators	83	28.1
Police	143	48.3
Use of Judiciary/Courts	25	8.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Field Data (2017)**

The results from 296 respondents indicated that the approaches used included community policing 45 (15.2%), use of local administration 83 (28.1%), use of security personnel/police 143 (48.3%) and use of judiciary/ courts 25 (8.4%).

#### 4.2.1.1 COMMUNITY POLICING

Community policing which was supported by 45 (15.2%) of the respondents shown in Table 1. Community policing entailed efforts by the police to work with local communities from both Nyakach and Sigowet Sub-counties to ensure durable peace in the study area. Interviews by chiefs revealed that the police had been involved in working with members of the community through village elders and chairmen of community policing. The police however stated that, they did not get direct support and cooperation from locals. This explains why majority of the respondents did not favour community policing as a peace initiative by the government.

During an FGD, a youth participant in the Sondu revealed that;

*Reporting to the police may at times land you in trouble. You may in the process become the lead suspect (Luo Men FGD in Sondu, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017).*

#### 4.2.1.2 LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

The local administration 83 (28.1%) as supported by the household heads (Table 1) through the offices of Chiefs, assistant chiefs and village elders frequently intervene in disputes as mediators. They have played a pivotal role in addressing community conflicts such as local and disputes, fights among community members as well as other interpersonal conflicts.

Interviews with the government officials established their roles to include coordination with various peace building initiatives, for instance, the chiefs stated that they chaired Location Peace and Security committees. The chiefs also attended peace meetings organized by various players in the area to show the government support for the peace process.

Interview by the Chiefs further revealed that the administrators are trained on various skills. These included conflict resolution skills, risk reduction strategies, resource mobilization and utilization, administration and security roles through seminars and workshops majorly organized by the government. The chiefs disseminate such skills to their community members through public *barazas*. They also play a major role in training the security personnel on the basics dispute resolution through meetings held at least once a month in their various works stations.

#### 4.2.1.3 SECURITY PERSONNEL/ POLICE

Security personnel were supported by 143 (48.3%) of household heads as shown in Table 1. The Police targeted by this study included officers from the Administration police and the Anti-Stock Theft Police Unit. During Interview by the Chief from South East Nyakach, it emerged that a number of police posts have been set up in areas perceived to be vulnerable to conflicts especially along the borders of Nyakach and Sigowet sub-counties. The police officers were mandated to respond to local crime and disputes, for instance cattle rustling and land disputes within the area. An interview by the Anti-Stock theft police officers revealed that they are specifically mandated to prevent incidence of cattle rustling in the area by patrolling borders. They are also mandated with ensuring that people do not move with cattle across the border and in the event that this happens the officers should help with tracing and recovery of stolen livestock and safe return to the owners as well as apprehending those behind these crimes.

The study further revealed that, the Anti-Stock theft police officers were mostly deployed in places where there were rampant cases of livestock theft and especially along the borders of the two sub-counties. The Chief of Kapsorok location also indicated that the Administration police officers often provided reinforcement to the Anti-stock theft police officers during incidences of cattle rustling and also helped in sealing off the border areas in the event that there was tension between the communities to prevent either community from attacking the other.

#### 4.2.1.4 JUDICIARY /COURTS

The courts are also used in conflict management in the area as supported by 25 (8.4%) of the household heads in Table 1. The Judiciary is the official state body to deal with disputes as indicated by the laws of Kenya and the Constitution of Kenya (2010). Conflict perpetrators arrested are sometimes taken to the court as noted from the interviews by the police. One respondent pointed out during the interview that;

*On several the police do not take conflict perpetrators especially cattle rustlers to court; they are always arrested and then set free after a few days thereby making them have the courage to continue propagating vio-*

lence. The police appear to be collaborating with these cattle rustlers (Interview with an Official of Nyakach Elders Development Group, 25<sup>th</sup> March 2017).

Responses from FGDs also indicated less preference to the court which was viewed as costly and time consuming blaming corruption and ineffectiveness in the official law; Participants in the FGDs noted that conflict incidences reported to the police hardly ever reached the courts. Additionally the costs of travelling and the costs of filing a case at court was viewed by the respondents as high in comparison to the income levels of the people, making it almost impossible for many to seek redress before a court for their grievances.

Contrary to the findings in table 1, Nyukuri (1997) argues that that government has not been actively involved in meaningful peace initiatives but instead has been engaged in acts of police brutality, harassment of activist, harassment of the media and harassment of religious leaders as a way of ensuring it remain in control. These acts only make it possible for people to experience negative peace which comes through force from the government rather than the good will of members of the community.

#### 4.3. PEACE INITIATIVES BY CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS (NGOS, CBOS AND FBOS) IN NYAKACH AND SIGOWET SUB-COUNTIES OF WESTERN KENYA

The study sought to establish the peace initiatives by NGOs, CBOs and FBOs in the study area. The respondents were asked to indicate activities by the civil Society organizations in the study area that fostered peace. The results are as indicated in Figure 3.

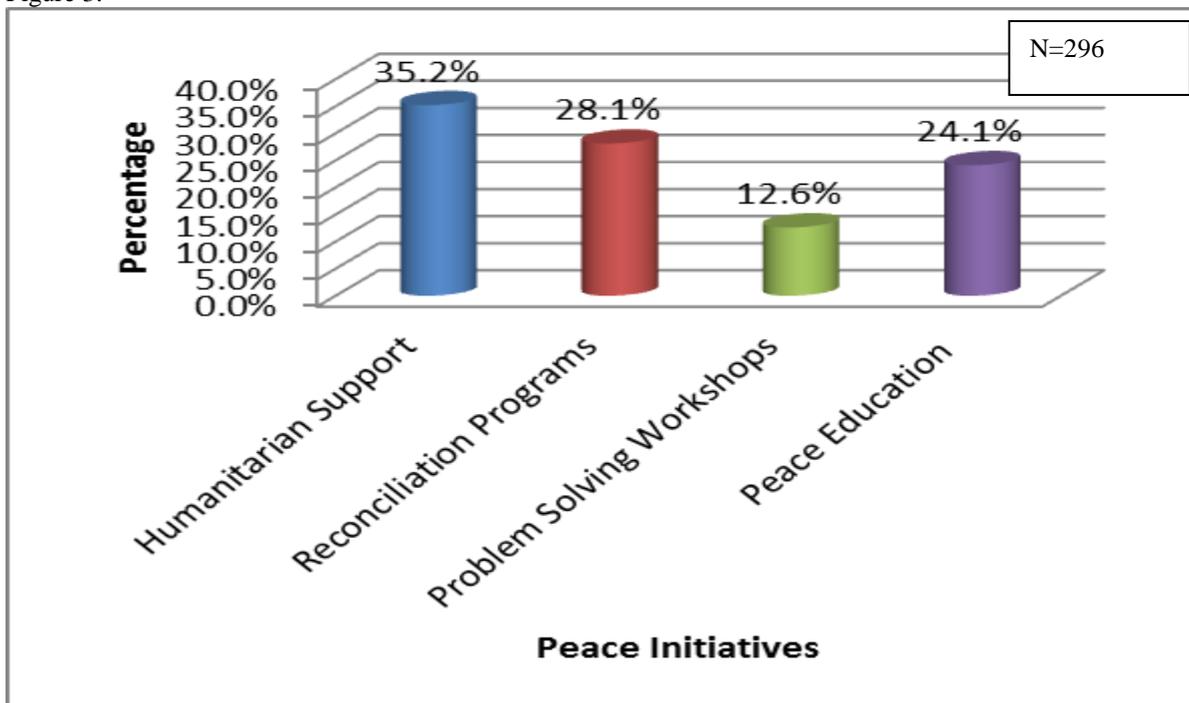


Figure 3: Peace Initiatives by Civil Society Organizations in Nyakach and Sigowet Sub-counties of Western Kenya  
Source: Field Data (2017)

The findings signposted that the initiatives by the civil society included humanitarian support 104 (35.2%), reconciliation programs 83 (28.1%), problem solving workshops 37 (12.6%) and peace education 72 (24.1%). The findings from households were in harmony with the results from interviews by various Civil Society Organizations. The CSOs indicated that they were involved in activities that were meant to ensure peace in the study area. An official from Kenya Red Cross indicated during the interview that the major role the organization plays during conflicts is that of providing humanitarian support to the victims of the conflicts and their families. Red Cross official indicated that they always provide basic needs such as food, clothing and other basic necessities during conflicts; the official also indicated that the organization provided first aid services and ambulance services to the injured so as to reduce fatalities from the conflict. Red Cross worked with other partners including the county governments of Kericho and Kisumu to provide shelter to people whose houses are burnt during the conflicts. World Vision also works closely with the Kenya Red Cross and the county governments to provide shelter and economic empowerment to people affected by the conflicts as revealed during the interview. The two major NGOs in the area revealed that the purpose for the support they provide is to make help the communities move on after the conflicts and have people embrace peace so as to avoid incidences of revenge attacks. One of the respondents opined that;

*In world vision which is a Christian based organization, we encourage beneficiaries of our programs to embrace peace and preach peace so that we do not have cases of conflicts recurring in the affected areas (An interview with an Official of World Vision- Nyakach, 17<sup>th</sup> March 2017).*

The reconciliation programs in the study area were another important activity that was led by the civil society organizations. Reconciliation activities were done by FBOs and CBOs in collaboration with the NGOs in the study area. These organizations worked

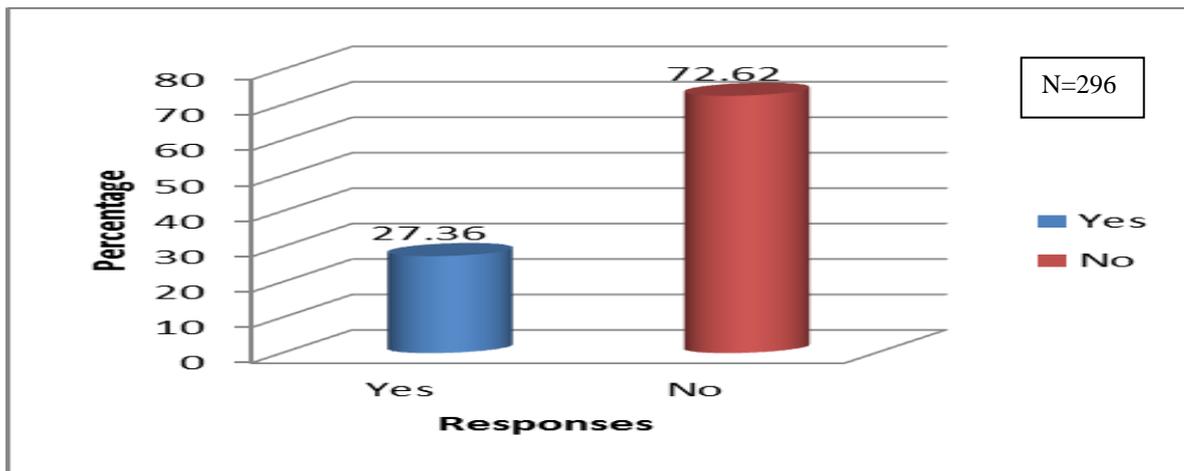
on specific post conflict intervention programs to help in uniting the two communities that were involved in conflicts. The main reconciliation activities sporting activities between youths from Nyakach and Sigowet Sub-counties, dialogue between community members through District Peace Committee meetings, the use of social media to reach out to the youths who are the main participants in conflicts.

During an interview with officials from the CJPC it was revealed that the FBO worked closely with LPCs in the area to make sure that there were dialogue meeting between members of the community in the area which involved village elders, women, youth and local administration to help in the process of reconciliation between community members. CJPC stated that these meetings had been going on since 2008 and had helped in reconciliation efforts in the area. CJPC also indicated that they had been working with various stakeholders through problem solving workshops to make sure that community members lived peacefully. The officials from CJPC also indicated that they reached out to the youths through sporting tournaments as a way of ensuring that the youths are united in working towards lasting peace in the area.

The Kericho County Youth *Bunge* (Parliament) is another organization with Kericho County that has used various methods to ensure peace prevails in the area of study. During the interview it emerged that the CBO is a youth-driven initiative with systemized structures from the county level to the village level comprising of 1000 Village youth *Bunges* (Parliament) mandated to rally youth together to achieve greater voice for the youth in the national reform agenda, to create new livelihood opportunities, to increase public awareness of youth priorities and to promote their effective participation in governance as well as spearhead peace building initiatives. The *Bunge* members work closely with members of the political class in the area to make sure that the politicians do not exploit the youths for violence. The major pillars of the Youth *Bunge* are tolerance, peace dialogue and ethnic harmony among the youths. It is made up of members of both Luo, Kisii and Kipsigis youths from the two Sub-counties especially those living in Sondu area that is the greatest conflict hotspot in the area. Kericho Youth *Bunge* also uses the social media to reach out to young people in the area as a way of ensuring that they youths remain peaceful.

#### 4.4 CONFLICT MANAGEMENT APPROACHES ADDRESSING ROOT CAUSES OF INTER-ETHNIC CONFLICTS IN NYAKACH AND SIGOWET SUB-COUNTIES

The study sought to establish whether the conflict management approaches by state and non-state actors helped in addressing the root causes of conflicts in Nyakach and Sigowet Sub-counties. The results are given in Figure 4.



**Figure 4: Conflict Management Approaches address root causes of ethnic conflicts in Nyakach and Sigowet Sub-counties**  
Source: Field Data (2017)

The results in Figure 4 indicate out of the 296 respondents, 81 (27.36%) indicated that the conflict management approaches addressed root causes of inter-ethnic conflicts while 215 (72.64%) of the respondents indicated that the approaches did not address the root causes of inter-ethnic conflicts in the study area. Majority of the respondents therefore believed that the conflict management approaches and the peace initiatives that were used in the area did not address the root causes of the conflict therefore making it possible for the conflict to keep recurring in the area.

These results were consistent with the results from FGDs as the respondents indicated that most of the actions that were taken were meant to stop a conflict that had started. The respondents indicated that these actors were more reactive than proactive to the conflicts and therefore did not do much during the times when there was peace in the area to make sure the peace was maintained.

The results from key informant interviews however disagreed with those from FGDs and households since the key informants indicated that the measures that they had put in place measures that they believed were addressing the root causes of the conflicts. The key informants both from the government and the civil society indicated that they were working with the community at the grass roots to make sure that the issues that were leading the recurrence of conflicts such as poverty, unemployment and insecurity were handled so as to ensure that the communities live in peace. The key informants also indicated that they were ac-

tively involved in peace initiatives at the grass roots with the aim of reaching out to the people affected by the conflict on the ground.

The argument by key informants is supported by Pkalya & Mohamud (2006b) who state that the civil society actors started rallying and involving government official's activities, this intense rallying and lobbying by the civil society gave rise to the official peace building bodies now referred to as DPCs. There are however glaring gaps in terms of coordination between government initiatives, civil society organization and the people at the grassroots.

#### 4.5 INDIGENOUS MECHANISMS OF PROMOTING PEACE IN NYAKACH AND SIGOWET SUB-COUNTIES OF WESTERN KENYA

The study sought to establish the knowledge of the respondents on indigenous mechanisms of promoting peace in the study area. The 296 respondents indicated their responses as shown in Figure 5. The results indicated that 106 (35.74%) of the respondents indicated that they knew that there were indigenous mechanisms of conflict management in the study area, 172 (58.18%) of the respondents indicated that there were no indigenous mechanisms of promoting peace in the area while 18 (6.08%) of the respondent indicated that they did not know whether or not there were indigenous methods of promoting peace in the area. From the results it is evident that the majority of the respondents indicated that there were no indigenous methods of dispute resolution in the study area. However, the respondents who indicated that there were indigenous mechanisms of promoting peace, stated that they knew about efforts that had been made by elders from both communities to promote peace in the area. These respondents also indicated that intermarriage had been an important factor in promoting peace

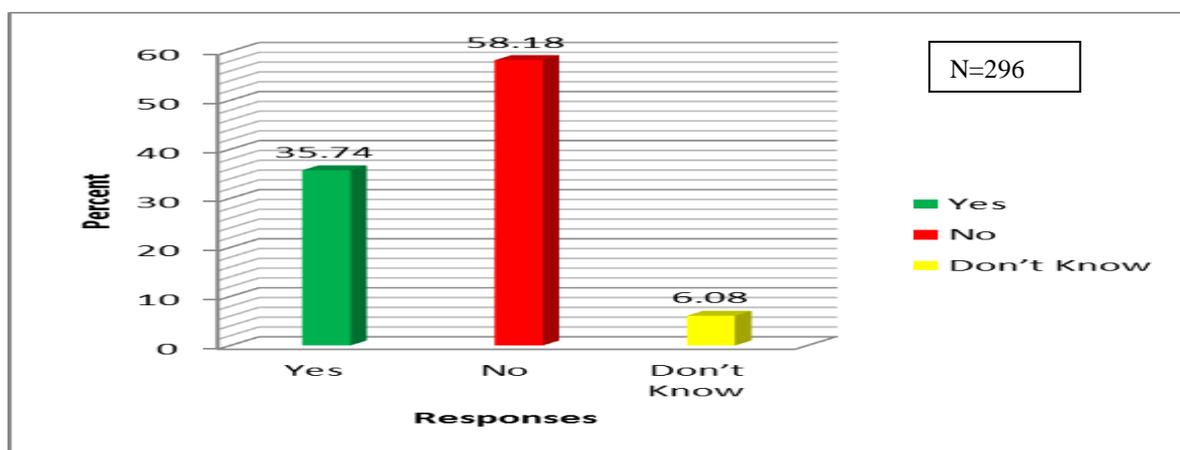


Figure 5: Knowledge on Indigenous methods of promoting Peace in Nyakach and Sigowet Sub-counties  
Source: Field Data (2017)

The results from the households were not consistent with those that came from key informants who indicated that there were a number of indigenous efforts to promote peace in the study area. The key informants indicated that they had been part of peace meetings in which elders from the communities living in the study area had met on several occasions to promote peaceful coexistence among community members. The various CBOS, FBOs and NGOs in the area indicated that they had been part of several meetings in the area in recognition of the role of elders as part indigenous institution for promoting peace and always managed to get commitment from the elders to be part of the efforts in promoting peace.

An official of the Uhai Lake Forum opined that;

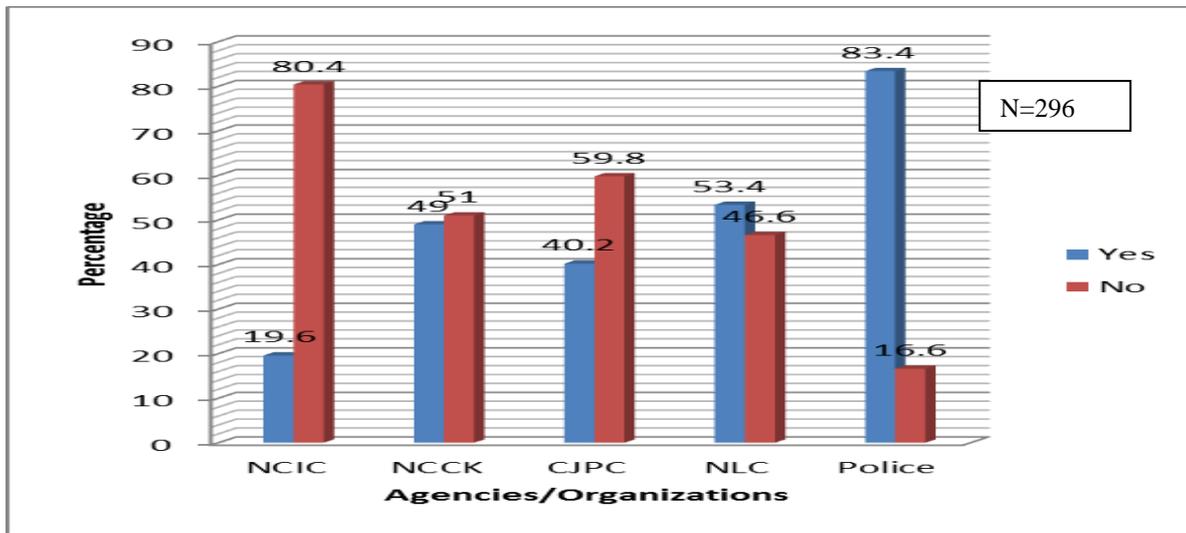
*Our organization has been organizing inter-ethnic dialogue between elders from Luo and Kipsigis communities to bring these two communities together and ensure that they live in peace as neighbours. We will keep on working together with elders since they hold a place of respect among community members and they are likely to influence the way these two communities relate (Interview with Uhai Lake Forum Organization Official, 10<sup>th</sup> April 2017).*

The results from the key informants were supported Akinyi-Dar *et al.* (2011) who indicated that elders were used in tracing of stolen animals, and they had helped to come up with the branding of animals from both Luo communities and Kipsigis communities to help in identifying stolen livestock from either side of the border. Akinyi-Dar *et al.* (2011) further indicated that, elder dialogue had helped in restoration of peace between the Kisii and Kipsigis communities in the area and this could also work between the elders from Kipsigis and Luo communities that were always in conflict. This is further in agreement with a report to the Security Council from former UN Secretary- General, Kofi Annan (2004) emphasizing use of indigenous and informal traditions for administering justice or settling disputes and to do so in conformity with both international standards and local tradition' (UNDP, 2016).

The government officials also indicated that they strongly supported various indigenous initiatives that promoted peace in their areas. Chiefs use their public *barazas* as forums that elders could use to promote peace and solve various inter-community disputes especially those related to land and this had promoted peace in the area.

#### 4.6 AGENCIES FOSTERING PEACE IN NYAKACH AND SIGOWET SUB-COUNTIES

The study sought to establish the knowledge of the respondents on the work done by agencies that fostered peace in the study area. The respondents were asked to state their knowledge of the work done by National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC), National Council of Churches of Kenya, Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC), National Land Commission (NLC), National Police Service (Police). The results are as shown in Figure 6



**Figure 6.: Knowledge of work done by agencies to foster Peace in Nyakach and Sigowet Sub-counties**  
Source: Field Data 2017

The Results in Figure 6 show that 58 (19.6%) of the respondents knew about the work of the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) while 238 (80.4%) of the respondents indicated that they did not know about the work of the commission; The results also indicated that 145 (49%) knew about work that had been done by National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) while 151 (51%) were of the contrary opinion; 119 (40.2%) indicated that they knew about the work that had been done by Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC) while 177 (59.8%) were of the contrary opinion; 158 (53.4%) indicated that they knew about the work that had been done by the National Land Commission while 138 (46.6%) were of the contrary opinion; 247 (83.4%) indicated that they knew about the work that had been done by the National Police Service while 49 (16.6%) gave a contrary opinion.

##### 4.6.1 NATIONAL COHESION AND INTEGRATION COMMISSION

The results indicated that 58 (19.6%) of the respondents knew about the work of the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) while 238 (80.4%) of the respondents indicated that they did not know about the work of the commission. Based on the results, it was evident that NCIC is not in contact with the local people at the grass roots level since majority of the respondents stated that they did not know about the work that the commission had done with regard to ensuring sustainable peace in the study area. NCIC was established in 2008 under the National Cohesion and Integration Act Number 12 of 2008 with the key mandate of to address and reduce incidences of inter-ethnic conflicts in Kenya. Therefore, according to these results, the NCIC as a government agency mandated with dealing with issues relating to the cases of inter-ethnic conflicts in Kenya, has not performed its mandate appropriately due to the failure to work with communities at the grassroots, this assessment was made on the basis that the people at the grassroots are ones who often get involved in conflicts and also get affected by these conflicts and as such they are the ones who can help a body like NCIC to find solution that can help in addressing these conflicts.

In support of the results from household participates in FGDs also reiterated that they only knew about NCIC through the Media as mainly on television and that they had not seen any work done by people from NCIC in the area despite the re being a hotspot for conflicts in the study area. One of the respondents made an assertion that he only knew about NCIC as “a hate speech” commission that was only meant to deal with issues of hate speech by politicians. In this regard therefore, despite the commission being one of the few government agencies that had been entrusted with the responsibility to dealing with addressing and reducing cases of inter-ethnic conflicts in the area, it had not helped in any way to reduce the cases of conflict in the area.

##### 4.6.2 NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF KENYA (NCCCK) AND CATHOLIC JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMISSION (CJPC)

The household respondents also gave their feedback about the knowledge on the role of the key religious organizations that were associated with the issues of conflict management is the study area which were the CJPC and the NCCCK. Based on the results 49% of the respondents knew about the work done by NCCCK while 51% were of the contrary opinion where as 40.2% indicated that they knew the work done by CJPC while 59.8% were of the contrary opinion. These results therefore indicate that the two faith based organization had done some work related to peace building in the area. It is however evident that the activities by these FBOs had not reached a substantial number of respondents in the area. The results from the households were however not in agreement with those from FGDs. The FGD participants indicated that that the two FBOs had been at the centre of preaching

peace in the area through youth, women and men as well as elders workshops. It emerged from the FGDs that CJPC had always organised several meetings in the area to bring communities together through its inter-elder dialogues and intra-elder dialogue programs which were meant to bring together elders between and within communities together and talk about issues of inter-ethnic conflict in the area as well as the need for peaceful coexistence among communities living in the area. Additionally, it emerged that some of the people who were involved in attending meeting that were organised by these FBOs were more interested in the allowances that they drew from these meetings in form of transport disbursements than the actual objective of conflict management which was the sole purpose of them having such meetings in the first place, one of FGD participants in Tabaita pointed out that;

*...Hawa watu huwa wanaenda huko kulipwa baada ya mikutano ya amani lakini hakuna kitu wanafanya kuleta anami kati ya jamii, kazi yao ni kubeba tu pesa lakini hakuna faida wanaleta...* (This people only go to the peace meetings to collect allowances but there is no significant contribution they make to the community in so far as peace is concerned).

Key informants supported the work that was done by the CJPC and NCKK in the area by indicating that the organizations worked through local churches to make sure the message of peace in the area reached as many people as possible. The Priest from the Anglican Church who was interviewed during the study indicated that NCKK had been working with various partner organizations to implement peace programs in the study area. Similarly, the CJPC program officer in Kisumu indicated that the organization had worked closely with communities in the area through Peace committees, sporting events for the youths, economic empowerment programs and inter-community dialogue meetings in the efforts to foster peace in the area. The CJPC official also indicated that they had been working closely with various Communities-Based Organizations such as Uhai Lake Forum to ensure that they reach various parts of the area that were common hotspots for conflicts.

#### **4.6.3 NATIONAL LAND COMMISSION (NLC)**

National Land Commission (NLC) is one of the constitutional commissions that was formed to deal with land related conflicts under the constitution of Kenya 2010. According to the results from the study, 53.4% of the respondents indicated that they knew about the work that had been done by the National Land Commission while 46.6% were vaguely knowledgeable about NLC. These findings were supported by the key informants who indicated that officials from the National Land Commission had been in the area on several occasion to listen to various disputes relating to land in the area. The government officials indicated that some of the residents in the area had received title deeds for their land through the intervention of the NLC. Similarly, chiefs indicated that working closely with officials from NLC had enabled them to constitute traditional dispute resolution committees to help in solving some community land issues within the area such as boundary problems.

Considering that one of the causes of the conflicts in the study area is land related, the role of NLC was therefore key in ensuring sustainable peace in the study area. Article 67 (2) of the Constitution of Kenya 2010 highlights specific functions of the NLC, with regard to its mandate in dealing with land related conflicts in a sustained manner as highlighted in part e of the article where NLC is to;

*Initiate investigations on its own initiative or on complaint, into present or historical land injustices and recommend appropriate redress* (Article 67 (2) (e), Constitution of Kenya 2010).

Similarly, the article also indicates that the NLC is to;

*Encourage the application of traditional dispute resolution mechanisms in land conflicts* (Article 67 (2) (f), Constitution of Kenya 2010).

From the foregoing, it is therefore important to note that the constitution has provided ways in which land conflicts can be resolved and sustained peace realized through the National Land Commission (NLC), which is a constitutional commission.

#### **4.6.4 NATIONAL POLICE SERVICE**

The National Police Service is another agency that majority of the respondents indicated they knew about in terms of its work in maintaining peace, with 83.4% of the respondents giving a positive feedback on the police work. The results from the household were supported by key informants who reiterated that the police were the most active responders to the incidences of ethnic violence in the area and also had been involved in measures to prevent ethnic conflicts in the area. The Chiefs indicated that there were two police units in the area namely, Anti-stock theft Police Unit and Administration Police who worked closely with the locals to deal with cases of conflicts in the study area. The role of the police included protecting property from damage, creating a buffer zone between the two communities when conflict erupted so as to prevent escalation of the conflict, patrolling borders to prevent criminal elements from crossing borders and causing mayhem and helping in tracing stolen livestock in the area.

Contrary to the findings of the study, KNCHR (2014) report indicated that, the police were not trusted by members of the public due to their heavy handed approach in quelling conflicts and the rampant corruption in the police service. The report further revealed that the police had a poor track record of human rights violations which made them a hindrance in gaining sustainable peace.

#### 4.7 EFFECTIVE METHODS OF GETTING SUSTAINABLE PEACE IN NYAKACH AND SIGOWET SUB-COUNTIES

The study sought to establish the opinion of the respondents on the effective ways of attaining sustainable peace in the study area. The methods identified by the respondents included; use of dialogue forums, police and courts, religious leaders, community elders, government commissions and local administrators. The results are as indicated in Table 2.

**Table 2: Effective methods to attain sustainable peace in Nyakach and Sigowet Sub-counties**

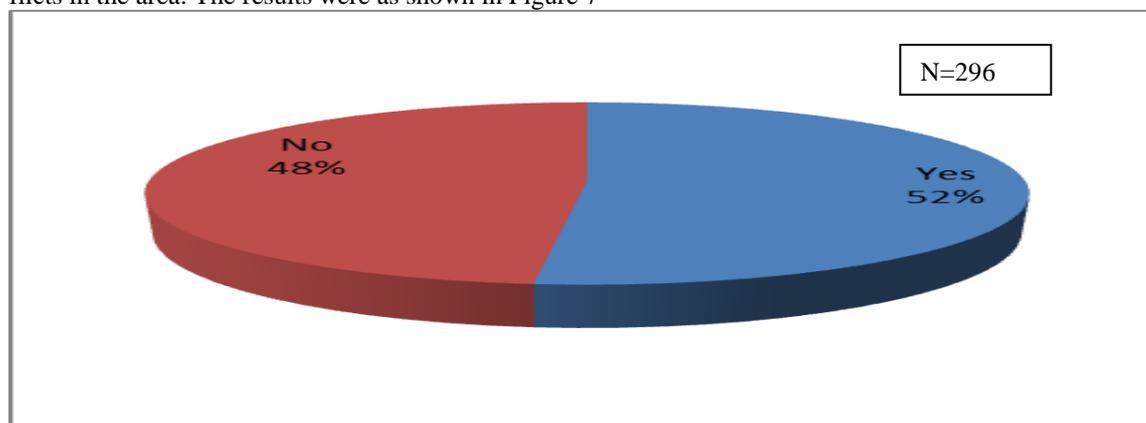
Effective ways to get Sustainable Peace	Frequency	Percentage
Dialogue Forums	133	45
Police and courts	17	5.6
Religious leaders	30	10.1
Community Elders	18	6.2
Government Commissions	1	0.4
Local Administrators	97	32.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Data 2017

The results in Table 2 indicated that out of the 296 respondents, 133 (45%) supported the use of dialogue forums; 17 (5.6%) supported the use of police and courts; 30 (10.1%) supported the use of religious leaders; 18 (6.2%) supported the use of community elders; 1 (0.4%) supported the use of government commission; and 97 (32.7%) supported the use of local administrators as the common methods used to attain sustainable peace in the area of study. From this study, it is therefore evident that majority of the respondents preferred dialogue as the most efficient way to sustain peace in the study area. In support of the results from the household heads, the FGDs revealed that dialogue was the most effective way of attaining lasting peace since it involved would involve people from the grassroots working towards solving problems affecting them. The findings agreed with a study by UNDP (2013) in which it was reported that through dialogue, communities are bale to shed their distrust and work towards lasting peace.

#### 4.8 ROLE OF DEVOLUTION IN REDUCING INCIDENCES OF INTER-ETHNIC CONFLICTS IN NYAKACH AND SIGOWET SUB-COUNTIES

The study sought to establish whether devolution had contributed to reduction in the incidences of inter-ethnic conflicts in the study area. The respondents were asked to indicate whether or not devolution had contributed to reducing inter-ethnic conflicts in the area. The results were as shown in Figure 7



**Figure 7: Devolution helped in reducing ethnic conflicts in Nyakach and Sigowet Sub-counties**

Source: Field Data 2017

The results in Figure 7 indicate that out of the 296 household heads, 154 (52%) indicted that they devolution had contributed to reducing the incidences of inter-ethnic conflicts in Nyakach and Sigowet Sub-counties while 142(48%) of the respondents were of the contrary opinion. The respondents indicated that the county government had opened up the local areas through economic activities and businesses, hence people especially the youths, had been able to get jobs through the county government initiatives which helped in reducing poverty in the area. The respondents also indicated that the county government had availed bursaries for more people to go to school hence reduce the number of youths who dropped out of schools and who would consequently get involved in criminal activities.

The findings from the household heads were supported by those from the key informants who indicated that devolution had provided a number of opportunities for the youths in terms of education and employment and hence contributed to poverty alleviation in the area. The Sub-county Administrators and MCAs who were interviewed during the study indicated that the projects that were undertaken by the county government benefited the locals especially the youths who got jobs from the projects that

were done in the sub-counties. They reiterated that these youths got income from these projects thus ensuring that they were not involved in criminal related activities that would easily lead to cases of inter-ethnic conflicts in the area.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

The study concludes that there were several of peace initiative and opportunities for sustainable peace in Nyakach and Sigowet sub-counties. The peace initiatives in the area were reactive to the conflicts and failed to address the root causes of the conflicts. Additionally, State and Non-state agencies in the area can create an environment for sustainable peace through their mandate and work. Devolution also presents an opportunity of addressing main social and economic issues linked to conflicts in the area. However, the poor coordination between meant to deal with conflicts and local communities has led to the recurrence of conflicts in the study area.

## 6. 0 RECOMMENDATION

The study recommends improved coordination and integration through enhanced inter-ethnic forums in dealing with the conflict perpetrators as well as strengthening of local peace initiatives. There should be improved working relationship between the government agencies, civil society and the community members so as to make the peace initiatives more effective. Additionally, there is need for strengthening of the indigenous mechanisms of conflict resolution and the integration of this indigenous mechanism with formal mechanism including the judiciary.

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