

**THE COMMUNITY HEALTH STRATEGY AS A PEACE INITIATIVE IN
AN ETHNICALLY DIVERSE SETTLEMENT: A CASE OF KIBERA
DURING THE 2007/2008 POST-ELECTION VIOLENCE**

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ABSTRACT

This study explored whether the implementation of the Community health Strategy in Kibera, in some way fostered relative peace indirectly during the 2007/2008 Post-election violence. The study also sought to identify Community Health Strategy activities; to establish the ethnic composition of areas with Community Health Strategy activities; and finally to assess the contribution of the health strategy towards peace in the selected areas of Kibera, Nairobi. The study was conducted in four villages in Kibera. Four AMREF-run community units were purposively picked from eleven existing community health units. The respondents mainly included the Community Health Workers and the Community Health Committee members, which comprise of Community Health Extension Workers, women leaders, village heads, peace committee members and other members of the villages. The research project began in the month of January and ended in the month of May. Using a guide, data was collected through focus group discussions. The researcher analyzed the data and generated findings which demonstrated that the Community Health Strategy did indeed contribute towards relative peace in Kibera during the 2007/2008 Post-election violence in the villages with community health units. One of the key findings of the study is that the implementation of the Community Health Strategy provided structures that are not just used for health purposes but as forums and avenues for people to work together, to share social and economic challenges and to engage jointly in value adding activities. It has also enabled flow of information and coordination between the people and the government and other development partners. Since its implementation, there has been development of networks, improved security, trust, behavior change, cohesion and reduced disease burden and general improvement of the community in comparison to those villages without community health units. The study recommends the deliberate uptake and use of the Strategy as a peace building tool. This will provide a different approach to conflict management, by peace builders, health workers and even community members.