

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

CASE STUDY OF KIBERA CONSTITUENCY

PAULINE AGUNDA OYUGI

BACR/2013/42461

**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF DEGREE IN BACHELOR OF ARTS IN
PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION OF MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY**

DECEMBER 2015

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the role of women in conflict resolution, using FIDA as a case study. It argues that despite the traditional challenges women faced they were able to contribute significantly to the country, and have since earned a position of respect in society that has given them a larger role to play in government, politics and the private sector. Major barriers remain, but a brighter future has been created.

During the 2007-2008 clashes the perception of women as the victims obscured their role as peacemakers and conflict resolution in the reconstruction and peace-building processes. However, grassroots women and women's organizations initiated dialogue and reconciliation within their villages and communities. The objective of the study was to examine the extent to which women have contributed to the peace building and reconciliation process in Kenya, focusing on the 2007-2008 post-election violence. Primary data obtained from peace FIDA and volunteers affiliated to various NGOs in Kibera Nairobi County. These site visits were carried out as follows: meetings with key informant NGO leaders, peace volunteers and government representatives and analysis and validation of findings with research assistant. Instrumentation included use of interviews including key informant interviews, in-depth interviews and focused group discussions (FGD) with the intention of eliciting information and opinions. The data collected was analyzed mainly qualitatively. Discourse analysis was used to analyze written, spoken or sign language. The objects of discourse analysis are variously defined in terms of coherent sequences of sentences, speeches, intonations and repetitions. The findings demonstrate that women have played a central role in the conflict resolution despite being marginalized from the structural design of peace building. Women responded to this marginalization by initiating unique peace building mechanisms and making space for themselves during the process of reconstruction. In doing so, they contributed to the overall process of peace building in Kenya. In addition, women worked to make known their needs and concerns regarding security, governance, relief and development and reconciliation in Kenya. Also, women were active in each of the four peace building areas explored in this study, focusing their efforts on identifying, responding to, and fostering awareness of women's unique needs and concerns during the post-election violence. Governance and judicial reforms recommend increased gender-awareness, support for women's participation, and the inclusion of women in all levels of policy and decision-making. Reforms also call for changes that will affect women in particular, that will maximize women's individual and collective ability to contribute to relief delivery as well as social and economic development post-conflict. Individuals must feel that they can safely step forward to make known human rights infractions, and be protected from reprisal.

Furthermore, this paper recommends constructive actions that should be taken to assure that the productive involvement of women continues.