

Women's Initiatives and Conflict Management: Exploring the Effects of Women-Led Peacebuilding in Kerio Valley, Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya

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Abstract

This study examined the effects of women's initiatives in conflict management in Kerio Valley, Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya, using a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design. Quantitative data were collected first from a sample of 76 respondents drawn from women, men, community peace actors, and local administrators selected through stratified random sampling, while qualitative data were obtained from purposively selected participants across identified conflict-affected wards in Kerio Valley, based on intensity of inter-clan conflict and accessibility considerations. The study adopted an integration strategy whereby qualitative findings were used to explain and contextualise statistical results, particularly in understanding how women-led initiatives such as dialogue forums, economic empowerment groups, and advocacy activities influence conflict management outcomes. Triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data enhanced the validity of findings by enabling convergence of evidence across methodological strands. Quantitative findings indicate that women's initiatives have a strong positive relationship with conflict management outcomes ($r = 0.714$, $p < 0.01$) and account for 51 per cent of the variance in conflict management effectiveness ($R^2 = 0.510$). Qualitative findings further explain these outcomes by showing that women contribute to peacebuilding through dialogue facilitation, economic cooperation, and advocacy within formal and informal governance structures. The study contributes to gender and peacebuilding scholarship by providing context-specific empirical evidence from a pastoral conflict setting and highlights the policy importance of integrating women's grassroots initiatives into formal conflict management frameworks in Kenya.

Key terms: Community dialogue, conflict management, economic empowerment, peacebuilding, women's initiatives.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Conflict in Kerio Valley, Elgeyo Marakwet County, is driven by a combination of interrelated structural, economic, and socio-political factors. However, resource scarcity, particularly competition over land, water, and grazing areas, alongside cattle rustling, constitute the primary drivers of conflict in the region due to their direct link to livelihood survival in the pastoral economy. Secondary drivers include the proliferation of small arms, youth unemployment, and ethnic divisions, which tend to intensify and prolong existing tensions rather than initiate conflict independently.

Despite growing scholarship on women's participation in peacebuilding, existing studies on the Kerio Valley and similar pastoral conflict settings have largely focused on descriptive accounts of women's roles, with limited attention to the causal pathways through which women-led initiatives influence conflict management outcomes. In particular, there is insufficient empirical evidence that quantitatively measures the impact of women's grassroots initiatives, as well as limited integration of mixed-methods approaches that combine statistical analysis with qualitative explanation in the context of pastoral conflicts in Kenya.

Emerging literature on women's participation in conflict management suggests that women contribute to peacebuilding through multiple interconnected mechanisms, including dialogue facilitation, economic cooperation, and advocacy within formal and informal governance structures. However, the extent to which these mechanisms operate in specific pastoral conflict contexts, such as the Kerio Valley, remains underexplored empirically. This study, therefore, examines the effects of women's initiatives on conflict management outcomes in Kerio Valley, Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Women's Initiatives in Conflict Management

Women's participation in conflict management has been widely acknowledged in peacebuilding literature as a critical factor in promoting sustainable peace, particularly in fragile and resource-scarce environments. In pastoral regions such as northern Kenya, women's initiatives are often embedded within informal social structures, including community groups, savings associations, religious networks, and kinship-based forums. These platforms enable women to engage in mediation, early warning, and reconciliation processes at the household and community levels.

Mwangi (2015) argues that women's peace initiatives in pastoralist Kenya are most effective when they combine dialogue facilitation with economic cooperation. This dual strategy addresses both relational and structural dimensions of conflict by reducing mistrust while simultaneously mitigating resource-based vulnerabilities. Similarly, Muigua (2020) observes that women's advocacy efforts in Kenyan conflict-affected communities have contributed to the institutionalisation of local peace structures, particularly through dialogue forums and inclusion in community decision-making spaces.

However, these positive findings must be interpreted cautiously. A number of studies emphasise that women's peace initiatives are not uniformly effective across all contexts. In some conflict-prone regions, women's participation is constrained by entrenched patriarchal norms, limiting their influence to informal spaces while excluding them from formal peace negotiations (Tripp, 2015). In such contexts, women's initiatives may become symbolic rather than transformative, with limited impact on structural causes of conflict.

In addition, Hilhorst and van Leeuwen (2020) note that external peacebuilding interventions that promote women's participation sometimes risk "feminizing peace" without addressing deeper political and economic inequalities. This suggests that while women's initiatives are important, they may be insufficient when implemented in isolation from broader structural reforms.

Therefore, the literature presents a mixed picture: while women's initiatives are widely recognised as effective peacebuilding tools, their success is highly context-dependent, shaped by cultural norms, institutional support, and the intensity of conflict dynamics.

Theoretical Frameworks

Two key theoretical frameworks guide the analysis of women's initiatives in conflict management: Moser's Gender Planning Framework and Conflict Management Theory.

Moser's (1993) Gender Planning Framework provides a lens for understanding how gender roles and access to resources shape women's participation in peacebuilding. The framework distinguishes between practical gender needs, such as safety, food security, and economic survival, and strategic gender needs, which relate to empowerment and structural transformation. In the context of conflict-affected pastoral communities, women often engage in peacebuilding through activities that respond to practical gender needs, such as mediating disputes within households or participating in informal savings groups that reduce economic vulnerability.

Empirical studies support this theoretical position. For example, Mwangi (2015) demonstrates that women's involvement in economic cooperation initiatives enhances peace outcomes by addressing livelihood insecurity. However, the literature also indicates that women rarely achieve strategic gender empowerment, as their participation remains concentrated in informal rather than formal decision-making structures.

Conflict Management Theory further explains the mechanisms through which peace is achieved. Burton's human needs theory emphasises that conflicts arise from unmet needs such as identity, recognition, and security. Deutsch's cooperative conflict theory highlights the importance of collaboration over competition, while Kelman's interactive problem-solving approach focuses on relational transformation.

These theoretical perspectives align closely with empirical findings in the literature. Women's dialogue forums and mediation efforts correspond to cooperative conflict resolution mechanisms, while their economic empowerment initiatives address structural grievances that fuel conflict. Nevertheless, the literature does not fully explain how these mechanisms interact in specific pastoral contexts such as Kerio Valley, where resource scarcity and ethnic tensions intersect in complex ways.

Gaps in the Literature

Despite extensive research on women's participation in peacebuilding, several critical gaps remain in the literature.

First, most studies focus on descriptive accounts of women's roles in peace processes rather than examining the causal pathways through which their initiatives influence conflict outcomes. As a result,

there is limited understanding of how specific activities—such as dialogue forums, economic groups, or advocacy campaigns—translate into measurable improvements in peace and security.

Second, there is a methodological gap in the integration of quantitative and qualitative approaches. Many studies rely either on qualitative narratives or aggregate national-level data, with limited use of mixed-methods designs that combine statistical measurement with contextual explanation at the local level.

Third, there is a geographical and contextual gap. Existing literature tends to focus on national peace processes or well-documented regions such as Wajir and northern Uganda, while under-representing pastoral conflict zones such as Kerio Valley, where unique dynamics of cattle rustling, land competition, and resource scarcity shape conflict patterns.

Finally, there is limited empirical attention to the limitations of women's initiatives, particularly in high-intensity conflict environments where their influence may be constrained by insecurity, cultural resistance, or lack of institutional support.

Conceptual Synthesis

A synthesis of the literature reveals both convergence and divergence in findings on women's conflict management initiatives.

On one hand, scholars such as Mwangi (2015), Muigua (2020), and Goetz and Jenkins (2005) consistently argue that women contribute positively to peacebuilding through dialogue facilitation, economic cooperation, and advocacy. These studies emphasise the relational and community-based nature of women's peace work.

On the other hand, critical scholars such as Tripp (2015) and Hilhorst and van Leeuwen (2020) caution that women's participation may be limited by structural inequalities and may not always translate into meaningful influence in formal peace institutions. This divergence highlights the need for context-specific empirical analysis.

Theoretically, these findings suggest that while Moser's framework explains women's engagement at the practical level, it does not fully account for the barriers to strategic gender transformation. Similarly, Conflict Management Theory explains the mechanisms of peacebuilding but does not adequately address gendered power asymmetries in conflict settings.

This study, therefore, positions itself within this gap by examining not only the presence of women's initiatives but also their measurable effects on conflict management outcomes in Kerio Valley.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a sequential explanatory mixed-methods research design as described by Creswell and Clark (2017). The design involved the collection and analysis of quantitative data in the first phase, followed by qualitative data collection aimed at explaining and elaborating the statistical findings. The integration of the two strands occurred at the interpretation stage, where qualitative findings were used to explain and contextualise the quantitative results. This approach enhanced triangulation by allowing

convergence and complementarity of evidence from both datasets, thereby improving the validity and depth of the findings.

The study was conducted in Kerio Valley, Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya, a region characterised by recurrent inter-clan conflicts driven primarily by competition over land, water, and grazing resources. The target population comprised women engaged in grassroots peace initiatives, men affected by inter-clan conflict, community elders, local administrators and peace committee members. These groups were selected to ensure representation of both primary peace actors and stakeholders directly affected by conflict dynamics in the region.

The sample size of 100 respondents was determined using Yamane's (1967) simplified formula for finite populations, expressed as

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = population size

e = margin of error (0.10)

A 10 per cent margin of error was adopted due to the geographically dispersed nature of the study area, accessibility challenges in conflict-affected zones, and the exploratory nature of the study, which emphasised triangulation over broad statistical generalisation. Out of the 100 questionnaires distributed, 76 were completed and found usable for analysis, representing a response rate of 76 per cent.

The study employed a combination of stratified random sampling and purposive sampling techniques. Stratified random sampling was used in the quantitative phase to ensure representation across gender, age groups, geographic zones within Kerio Valley, and levels of participation in conflict-related activities. In the qualitative phase, purposive sampling was used to select key informants, women peace leaders, community elders, and local administrators who possessed direct knowledge of women's initiatives and conflict dynamics in the region. This combination ensured both statistical representation and depth of contextual understanding.

Data were collected using multiple methods to enhance triangulation and ensure comprehensive coverage of the research problem. These included structured questionnaires, four focus group discussions, six key informant interviews, and participant observation during community meetings, including kokwo barazas. The use of multiple instruments enabled the study to capture both quantitative patterns and qualitative lived experiences of women's participation in conflict management.

All six key informant interviews and all four focus group discussions were successfully completed, as summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Response Rate

Category	Target (n)	Returned/Conducted (n)	Response Rate (%)
Questionnaires	100	76	76%
Key Informant Interviews	6	6	100%
Focus Group Discussions	4	4	100%

Source: Researcher (2025)

To ensure research rigour, the questionnaire was pilot tested on a small group outside the study sample to improve clarity, consistency, and relevance of the items. Content validity was ensured through expert review of the research instruments. In addition, the reliability of the Likert-scale items was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient to determine internal consistency, and the results confirmed acceptable reliability levels suitable for inferential statistical analysis.

Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including means, frequencies, and percentages, as well as inferential statistics comprising correlation and regression analysis, all conducted using SPSS software. Qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke (2006). This process involved transcribing interviews and discussions, familiarising oneself with the data, coding responses, generating themes, reviewing and refining themes, naming and defining themes, and finally interpreting the themes in relation to quantitative findings.

Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the study. These included obtaining informed consent from all participants, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, maintaining voluntary participation, protecting participants from harm, and securely storing all collected data. These measures ensured that the study complied with established ethical standards for social science research.

4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The study findings indicate that the respondents comprised a mix of women, men, community elders, peace committee members, and local administrators involved in or affected by conflict in Kerio Valley. The distribution of respondents ensured representation across gender, age groups, and levels of participation in conflict-related activities. This diversity of participants enhanced the reliability of the data by capturing multiple perspectives on women's initiatives in conflict management.

Effects of Women's Initiatives on Conflict Management: Quantitative Findings

Descriptive Analysis

Respondents were asked to rate their agreement with five statements on the effects of women's initiatives on conflict management using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The results are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis of Women's Initiatives in Conflict Management

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Women's economic empowerment groups enhance peaceful coexistence.	76	4.21	0.67
Women-led community dialogues have reduced inter-clan tensions.	76	4.13	0.74
Peace campaigns organised by women promote mutual understanding.	76	4.09	0.79
Women's advocacy efforts have influenced community policies on peace.	76	3.95	0.84
Women's initiatives have fostered trust across communities.	76	4.17	0.71
Aggregate Mean		4.11	

Source: Field Data (2025)

The aggregate mean score of 4.11 indicates a strong positive perception among respondents of the effects of women-led initiatives on conflict management in Elgeyo Marakwet County. Women's economic empowerment groups received the highest mean score ($M = 4.21$), followed by community trust-building initiatives ($M = 4.17$) and women-led community dialogues ($M = 4.13$). Women's advocacy efforts in influencing community policies on peace received the lowest mean score ($M = 3.95$), though this still represented a broadly positive assessment. These findings suggest that women's initiatives operating at the social and economic levels are perceived as particularly effective in advancing peaceful coexistence in the region. The quantitative findings showed that women in Kerio Valley actively participated in conflict management through dialogue facilitation, economic empowerment initiatives, and advocacy activities. The majority of respondents acknowledged the presence of women-led savings groups, peace meetings, and community mediation forums that contribute to reducing tensions at the local level. These initiatives were reported to be most effective in early-stage conflict prevention and in restoring relationships after incidents of violence.

Regression and Correlation Analysis

To further investigate the relationship between women's initiatives and conflict management outcomes, correlation and regression analyses were conducted. The results are presented in Tables 3 and 4 below.

Table 3: Correlation between Women's Initiatives and Conflict Management

Variables	Women's Initiatives	Conflict Management
Women's Initiatives	1	
Conflict Management	0.714	1

Source: Field Data (2025)

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4: Regression Analysis of Women's Initiatives and Conflict Management

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate
1	0.714	0.510	0.504	0.419

Source: Field Data (2025)

The inferential statistical results indicated a strong positive relationship between women's initiatives and conflict management outcomes. Correlation analysis produced a coefficient of $r = 0.714$ ($p < 0.01$),

indicating a statistically significant relationship. Regression analysis further revealed that women's initiatives account for 51 per cent of the variation in conflict management effectiveness ($R^2 = 0.510$). This suggests that women's initiatives are a substantial predictor of improved conflict management outcomes in Kerio Valley.

Effects of Women's Initiatives on Conflict Management: Qualitative Findings

The qualitative data generated through focus group discussions were thematically analysed to complement and contextualise the quantitative findings. Three interrelated themes emerged from the analysis, namely: unity and dialogue building, economic empowerment for peace, and women's advocacy and influence in decision-making. These themes illustrate the mechanisms through which women's initiatives shape conflict management outcomes in Kerio Valley, while also revealing structural limitations that affect their overall effectiveness.

Unity and Dialogue Building

The findings confirm that women play a central role in fostering social cohesion and facilitating communication as a key conflict management strategy in Kerio Valley. Women's peace forums, inter-clan negotiations, and community mediation platforms function as important informal systems through which conflicts are identified, discussed, and resolved. These platforms are deeply embedded in local social relations and rely on trust, kinship networks, and culturally accepted norms of communication, which position women as credible and effective peace actors.

Women's peace forums were consistently identified as safe spaces for dialogue where community members can express grievances without fear of retaliation. These forums, often organised through women's social networks and kinship ties, enable early identification of tensions and promote emotional de-escalation through inclusive participation and active listening. Participants highlighted the moral authority associated with women's social roles, particularly motherhood, as a key factor enhancing their influence in peace processes. One participant noted:

Even men listen when women form a group to conduct peace meetings. They understand that they are mothers and we desire our children to have peace. (FGD1, Participant 3, November 2025)

In inter-clan settings, women function as mediators who bridge divides between conflicting groups. Rather than focusing on historical grievances, they redirect discussions toward reconciliation, shared values, and future cooperation. This approach helps reduce hostility and supports the gradual restoration of trust between communities. However, while these roles are influential at the informal level, they remain largely dependent on social acceptance rather than formal authority structures.

Community mediation platforms, including structured dispute resolution forums, further illustrate women's contributions to conflict management. In these settings, women facilitate negotiation processes, ensure balanced participation between disputing parties, and monitor implementation of agreements. The researcher also observed a kokwo baraza where women mediators actively participated in resolving a land boundary dispute between two clans. Their involvement helped structure dialogue, ensure mutual recognition of grievances, and support the formulation of a consensus-based resolution, which was

accepted by both parties. This demonstrates how women's participation enhances the legitimacy and effectiveness of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms.

Economic Empowerment for Peace

The findings reveal that women-led economic initiatives play a significant role in preventing and reducing conflict in Kerio Valley. Table banking groups, rotating savings associations, and joint livelihood activities were identified as key mechanisms that link economic empowerment with peacebuilding. These initiatives create financial interdependence among participants from different clans, thereby reducing incentives for conflict and fostering cooperation.

Participants reported that such economic arrangements reduce tensions associated with poverty, resource scarcity, and mistrust between households and communities. One respondent explained:

The table banking groups support us financially and this has minimised fights that arise due to poverty and mistrust. (FGD3, Participant 2, November 2025)

Beyond their economic benefits, these initiatives also function as platforms for social interaction, information sharing, and collective problem-solving. They strengthen social cohesion by creating shared interests that cut across clan divisions. The quantitative findings support this observation, showing that economic empowerment initiatives recorded the highest mean score among all assessed dimensions ($M = 4.21$), indicating their central role in conflict management processes.

However, despite their effectiveness, these initiatives primarily operate at the household and community level and are not always integrated into formal peacebuilding structures, limiting their broader institutional impact.

Women's Advocacy and Influence in Decision-Making

The study further found that women's participation in formal and semi-formal governance structures, including peace committees and public barazas, constitutes an important mechanism through which they influence conflict management outcomes. Women are increasingly recognised as influential actors in shaping peace discourse, mobilising communities against violence, and promoting accountability in conflict resolution processes.

Barazas, which are convened by local leaders to address community disputes, were identified as key spaces where women contribute to structured dialogue and negotiation processes. In these forums, women assist in facilitating communication between disputing parties, proposing balanced solutions, and supporting implementation of agreements. Participants noted that women's presence enhances openness and trust during deliberations. One respondent stated:

During barazas, we sat with chiefs and elders and discussed peace; women are heard more. (FGD4, Participant 1, November 2025)

In addition, women's advocacy campaigns were reported to play a role in discouraging revenge killings, particularly among youth groups, by promoting messages of reconciliation and restraint. However, despite these contributions, the influence of women in formal decision-making structures remains uneven. The

relatively lower quantitative rating for advocacy initiatives ($M = 3.95$) suggests that while women's voices are increasingly recognised, their influence on formal policy and institutional decision-making remains constrained by structural and cultural barriers.

Synthesis of Qualitative Findings

Overall, the qualitative findings demonstrate that women's initiatives contribute to conflict management through three interconnected pathways: dialogue facilitation, economic cooperation, and advocacy. These mechanisms operate primarily at the informal and community levels, where women leverage social trust, kinship ties, and moral authority to influence behaviour and reduce tensions. However, the findings also highlight a persistent gap between informal influence and formal decision-making power, suggesting that structural constraints continue to limit the full institutionalisation of women's peacebuilding roles in Kerio Valley.

Discussion

The statistical findings suggest that women's participation plays a significant role in enhancing conflict management outcomes in Kerio Valley. The strong positive correlation indicates that as women's involvement in peacebuilding activities increases, the effectiveness of conflict management also improves. This finding aligns with Mwangi (2015), who argues that women's involvement in dialogue and economic cooperation contributes to sustainable peace in pastoral communities. However, while the results demonstrate statistical significance, they do not imply that women's initiatives operate in isolation from other structural factors such as resource scarcity, armed violence, and political marginalisation. Instead, women's contributions function within broader socio-economic and cultural systems that shape conflict dynamics.

The qualitative findings further reveal that women play a central role in informal peacebuilding structures such as household negotiations, community dialogue forums (kokwo), and savings groups that promote economic cooperation. Participants reported that women often act as first responders during conflict situations by calming tensions, mobilising dialogue, and facilitating reconciliation between conflicting groups. Key informants also indicated that women's economic empowerment initiatives reduce dependency pressures that often contribute to resource-based conflicts. However, despite their active involvement, women's influence remains largely informal and is frequently excluded from formal decision-making structures.

These qualitative insights reinforce the quantitative results by illustrating the mechanisms through which women's initiatives contribute to conflict management. The emphasis on dialogue, economic cooperation, and advocacy reflects the relational approach to peacebuilding discussed in gender and conflict literature. These findings align with Moser (1993), who argues that women's engagement in both practical and strategic gender needs enhances community resilience in conflict settings. However, the findings also reveal structural limitations, as women's participation is often constrained by patriarchal norms and exclusion from formal peace negotiation platforms. This supports Tripp (2015), who notes that women's peacebuilding roles are frequently undervalued in formal governance structures, limiting their transformative potential.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings provides a more comprehensive understanding of women's initiatives in conflict management in Kerio Valley. While the quantitative results demonstrate a

strong statistical relationship between women's initiatives and conflict management effectiveness, the qualitative findings explain the mechanisms behind this relationship. Specifically, women's dialogue forums, economic empowerment groups, and advocacy efforts function as practical tools for reducing tensions and promoting reconciliation. However, the effectiveness of these initiatives is influenced by broader contextual factors, including cultural norms, security conditions, and institutional support structures. This integrated analysis supports the sequential explanatory design of the study, where qualitative findings are used to explain and deepen understanding of quantitative patterns.

The findings are consistent with Moser's Gender Planning Framework, which emphasises the interaction between practical and strategic gender needs. Women's involvement in economic cooperation and dialogue reflects practical gender needs, while their advocacy efforts represent attempts at strategic empowerment. Similarly, Conflict Management Theory is reflected in the use of cooperative dialogue and mediation strategies observed in the study area. However, the findings also reveal that these theoretical frameworks do not fully account for the structural constraints that limit women's participation in formal peacebuilding institutions.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion: This study examined the effects of women's initiatives in conflict management in Kerio Valley, Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya, using a sequential explanatory mixed-methods research design. The findings demonstrate that women's participation plays a significant and positive role in enhancing conflict management outcomes within the study area. Quantitative results revealed a strong and statistically significant relationship between women's initiatives and conflict management effectiveness, indicating that increased involvement of women in peacebuilding activities is associated with improved conflict resolution outcomes in the community.

The study further established that women contribute to conflict management through multiple interconnected mechanisms, including dialogue facilitation, participation in community mediation forums, engagement in savings and economic empowerment groups, and advocacy within informal and semi-formal governance structures. These initiatives were found to be particularly effective in reducing tensions at the household and community levels, promoting reconciliation, and strengthening social cohesion among conflicting groups.

However, despite their significant contributions, the study also concludes that women's participation in conflict management remains largely informal and structurally constrained. Patriarchal norms, limited access to formal decision-making platforms, and broader socio-political inequalities continue to restrict the extent to which women can fully influence formal peacebuilding processes. As a result, while women's initiatives are important drivers of local peacebuilding, their transformative potential is moderated by contextual and institutional limitations.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings further confirms that women's initiatives operate within broader socio-economic and cultural systems that shape conflict dynamics in Kerio Valley. While statistical evidence confirms their importance, qualitative insights explain the practical mechanisms through which these contributions occur. Overall, the study concludes that women's initiatives are a critical component of community-based conflict management, but their effectiveness is enhanced when supported by inclusive governance structures and broader institutional recognition.

The study also acknowledges certain methodological limitations, including reliance on self-reported data, the relatively small sample size, and the geographical specificity of Kerio Valley, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Nevertheless, the use of a mixed-methods approach strengthened the validity of the results by enabling triangulation of quantitative and qualitative evidence.

Recommendations: Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed to strengthen the role of women in conflict management in Kerio Valley and similar pastoral conflict settings.

First, there is a need for enhanced institutional recognition of women's peacebuilding roles within formal conflict management structures. Government agencies, county administrations, and peace committees should create deliberate mechanisms to integrate women's grassroots initiatives into formal decision-making processes. This would ensure that women's contributions are not confined to informal spaces but are incorporated into structured peacebuilding frameworks.

Second, capacity-building programs should be strengthened to empower women with advanced skills in negotiation, mediation, leadership, and conflict analysis. Such training would enhance the effectiveness of women's participation in peace processes and enable them to engage more confidently in both informal and formal conflict resolution platforms.

Third, economic empowerment initiatives targeting women should be expanded as they play a significant role in reducing vulnerability to conflict. Supporting women's savings groups, entrepreneurship programs, and cooperative societies can reduce economic pressures that often contribute to resource-based conflicts in pastoral communities.

Fourth, there is a need to promote inclusive peacebuilding policies that address structural barriers limiting women's participation. These include patriarchal norms, cultural restrictions, and limited representation in formal governance institutions. Policy reforms should aim at increasing women's representation in peace committees and local governance structures.

Fifth, future conflict management programs should adopt integrated approaches that combine dialogue, economic empowerment, and advocacy, as these were identified in the study as the main mechanisms through which women contribute to peacebuilding. Strengthening these interconnected strategies would enhance the long-term sustainability of peace efforts in the region.

Finally, further research is recommended in other pastoral and conflict-prone regions to compare findings and build a broader understanding of the role of women in conflict management across different socio-cultural contexts. Such comparative studies would strengthen the evidence base and inform more effective policy interventions at national and regional levels.

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