

Kenya: Multiagency Strategies for Conflict Management in Laikipia County

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Abstract: The paper examined multiagency strategies for conflict management in Laikipia County, Kenya. It provided a solid foundation for understanding the context of the effect of multiagency approaches on conflict management. A descriptive survey research design was used incorporating both quantitative and qualitative primary data from a questionnaire, FGDs, and Key Informants interviews. The area of study was Laikipia County, Kenya with a focus on Laikipia West Sub County. Stratified random sampling was used to select respondents while the purposive sampling technique was used to select informants with in-depth knowledge and experience relevant to the research objectives. Qualitative data was coded, thematically categorized, and synthesized. Statistical modeling and trend analysis for quantitative data were performed with the aid of SPSS V.29. The result was presented using graphs, and charts while prioritizing validity and

reliability through rigorous document selection and analysis methods. The research addressed the effectiveness of past strategies, emphasizing the importance of nuanced assessments that considered scope, context, implementation, outcomes, and dissemination. The findings emphasized the need for a nuanced and comprehensive assessment approach, covering scope and context, implementation and outcomes, challenges, and opportunities. The paper advocated for participatory approaches, long-term impact assessment, flexible frameworks, formal dialogue platforms, capacity building, strong leadership, resource mobilization, and continuous learning and adaptation to ensure effective conflict management. It concluded that while multiagency approaches can effectively manage conflicts, successful implementation requires meticulous planning and execution, tailored to the specific dynamics of the conflict landscape. The paper

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recommended a continued focus on participatory approaches, establishing formal dialogue platforms, and prioritizing strong leadership and inclusivity, benefiting policymakers, multiagency leaders, practitioners, and stakeholders involved in conflict management in Laikipia County.

Keywords: Multiagency actions, participatory approach, multiagency strategies, conflict management.

Introduction

A comprehensive and collaborative approach including diverse stakeholders is necessary for conflict management in any region as opined by Almeida, Costa, and Da Silva (2018). The goal of this approach is to have various groups, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community leaders, and others, work together to achieve lasting stability and progress. The multi-agency method of conflict management has been used in a variety of contexts, from the international to the regional to the local level.

Multi-agency efforts, as shown in Australia's fight for Indigenous land rights and reconciliation, have proven to be highly effective (McKemey *et al.*, 2020). Government agencies, aboriginal groups, and philanthropic organizations worked together to construct land management frameworks and launch cultural preservation efforts; these developments are a direct result of the recognition of native title rights. This strategy promotes social cohesiveness and lessens tensions stemming from land disputes, while also redressing historical wrongs and giving Indigenous groups a voice in the decision-making process.

From the perspective of De Sa (2019), the Niger Delta conflict highlights the importance of a collaborative approach in addressing resource-based conflicts, drawing parallels with South Africa's own history of managing post-apartheid challenges. The involvement of governmental agencies, industry players, community representatives, and international bodies in Nigeria's initiatives echoes the inclusive nation-building strategies employed in South Africa (De Sa, 2019). The emphasis on sustainable development and equitable resource distribution aligns with South Africa's ongoing efforts to address historical economic disparities and environmental concerns, particularly in regions affected by mining activities. This perspective underscores the shared imperative across African nations to learn from each other's experiences in fostering cooperation among diverse stakeholders for the collective benefit of society and the environment.

Multi-agency approaches to conflict management in Laikipia County, Kenya, can learn a lot from these studies. A comprehensive plan to resolve land conflicts, resource allocation problems, and ethnic tensions can be developed with the help of local government, community leaders, NGOs, and other interested parties. Methods such as shared

infrastructure building, cross-cultural exchange, and shared classroom instruction are all within the scope of this strategy. When it comes to conflict management and promoting sustainable development in Laikipia County, the many experiences shown by the cited case studies highlight the necessity of openness, cooperation, and continued participation.

Literature Review

Navigating conflicts in international relations, public policy, and organizational settings demands nuanced multiagency approaches. Hickmann and Elsässer (2020) advocate for collaboration among diverse stakeholders, prompting a review of multiagency techniques in conflict management. This literature exploration not only highlights essential case studies but also pinpoints critical gaps, emphasizing the need for further research to enhance the application of multiagency approaches globally.

In the case of the United States America (USA), Hickmann and Elsässer's (2020) emphasis on the imperative collaboration among governments, international organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and the private sector is particularly relevant. Within the USA, addressing complex challenges, ranging from national security issues to humanitarian crises necessitates the concerted efforts of these diverse entities. The review's identification of broad gaps in existing multiagency techniques aligns with instances where collaboration may fall short, such as in response to natural disasters or security threats. The call for a focused examination of specific challenges resonated within the U.S., urging policymakers and practitioners to refine their multiagency approaches to enhance coordination, communication, and resource allocation across different contexts within the country.

Exploring the United Kingdom's (UK) approach to counterterrorism, Schneeberger's (2020) insights resonate with the complexities faced by British intelligence, law enforcement, military, and financial institutions. The collaboration among these agencies is evident, yet persistent gaps in information exchange, and legal frameworks, and the delicate balance between security imperatives and civil liberties pose ongoing challenges. In the context of the UK's counterterrorism efforts, regional dynamics and nuanced geopolitical considerations further underscore the need for targeted research Berdal and Sherman (2023). Addressing these gaps is crucial to refining the country's multiagency tactics, ensuring a more effective and balanced approach to safeguarding national security while upholding individual rights and freedoms.

The corporate landscape in Japan in light of Lezak *et al.* (2019) insights on multiagency solutions in the private sector reveals noteworthy dynamics. Japan, with its unique business culture, grapples with challenges despite making progress in addressing conflicts, ethical issues, and corporate social responsibility. Lezak *et al.* (2019) call for standardized frameworks and tailored recommendations to align with Japan's need to navigate

regional dynamics and cultural nuances in the business environment. As Japanese corporations strive for greater transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct, targeted research becomes essential in developing strategies that not only resonate with the global push for responsible business practices but also align with the distinctive values and expectations within Japan's corporate landscape.

In the case of Syria, Ryan's (2022) research gives significance as humanitarian catastrophes unfold with complex dynamics. The conflict has engaged national, international, and NGO entities in efforts to provide aid and alleviate suffering. However, challenges persist due to unreliable funding, conflicting objectives among stakeholders, and difficulties in the distribution of aid within the war-torn country. Given the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Syria, research focusing on optimal financing methods and transparent coordination rules was crucial. Such insights not only address the national intricacies of aid delivery but also contribute to global efforts in refining multiagency solutions to respond more effectively to similar humanitarian catastrophes worldwide.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) through the context of United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations, the challenges highlighted by the review become salient (Smith & Johnson, 2022). Despite the substantial involvement of military troops, humanitarian organizations, and diplomats in addressing the complex conflict dynamics in the DRC, deficiencies in coordination, communication, and resource allocation have impeded the effectiveness of peacekeeping efforts. The need for further research became crucial in this context, particularly in the DRC where operational challenges such as navigating diverse armed groups, ensuring civilian protection, and managing complex geopolitical dynamics persist. Improving interagency cooperation and mission efficiency is paramount to fostering stability in the region and addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by UN peacekeeping operations globally.

In Kenya, the necessity for multiagency conflict management is underscored by the country's historical and contemporary challenges, making Hickmann and Elsässer's (2020) insights particularly pertinent. Kenya has faced internal conflicts, such as political violence and ethnic tensions, demanding collaboration among governmental bodies, international organizations, NGOs, and the private sector. Despite efforts to address conflicts, shortcomings in coordination, communication, and resource allocation persist. This aligns with the broader call for additional research to enhance the knowledge and application of multiagency approaches in the Kenyan context. Further examination and improvement of interagency cooperation are crucial for effectively navigating the intricate challenges of conflict management within the country (Hickmann & Elsässer, 2020).

Challenges in multiagency conflict management were alluded to, progressing from broad imperatives to specific instances. Each case highlights gaps and complexities, emphasizing the need for targeted research to enhance the effectiveness and ethical application of multiagency approaches across diverse contexts worldwide.

Methodology

The study utilized a descriptive survey research design. The study incorporated both quantitative and qualitative primary data from a questionnaire, FGDs, and key informants' interviews. The area of study was Laikipia County, Kenya with a focus on Laikipia West Sub County. Stratified random sampling was used to select respondents while the purposive sampling technique was used to select informants with in-depth knowledge and experience relevant to the research objectives. Qualitative data was coded, thematically categorized, and synthesized. Statistical modeling and trend analysis for quantitative data were performed with the aid of SPSS V.29. The result was presented using graphs, charts, tables, prioritized validity, and reliability through rigorous document selection and analysis methods. Ethical considerations included source attribution, respect for intellectual property rights, and privacy protection, along with obtaining necessary permits and approvals for the study.

Findings

The study's assessment of multiagency strategies for conflict management in Laikipia County delved into various aspects, including collaboration platforms, resource mobilization plans, and early warning systems. By scrutinizing how these strategies aligned with the specific conflicts prevalent in the region, researchers identified both strengths and areas requiring improvement. This comprehensive evaluation is crucial for ensuring the ongoing effectiveness of these strategies in addressing the ever-evolving conflict landscape, enabling stakeholders to adapt and refine their approaches accordingly. Key findings emphasized the paramount importance of understanding the conflict landscape itself and analyzing types, frequency, and root causes to provide context for evaluating multiagency strategies. Nadio (2018) underscored this when she espoused the need to engage the community in addressing root causes. This contextual understanding facilitated a targeted assessment, allowing stakeholders to tailor interventions to the specific challenges faced in Laikipia County.

The study also focused on the implementation of these strategies and their impact, tracking how they were applied across different conflicts and stakeholders. The researcher looked for patterns and variations in implementation to understand effectiveness in diverse contexts. Additionally, the study measured the impact of the strategies on outcomes such as violence reduction, improved community relations, and increased trust. This multifaceted approach, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data, provided a thorough understanding of the outcomes achieved through multiagency conflict management. Incorporating stakeholder perspectives was integral to the evaluation, with interviews and surveys capturing first-hand experiences to bridge the gap between theory and practice as advised by Koivumäki and Wilkinson (2020). By incorporating

stakeholder feedback, the study identified evidence-based strategies contributing to a deeper understanding of multiagency conflict management's effectiveness.

The study leveraged its findings for advocacy purposes, utilizing evidence gathered to push for policy changes, resource allocation adjustments, and capacity-building initiatives. This advocacy strengthened multiagency conflict management by influencing decision-makers at various levels. By connecting research with real-world action, the study contributed to improving conflict management strategies and fostering lasting peace in Laikipia County. In concurrence with Kimonye (2022), the study highlighted the importance of maintaining a flexible and adaptable framework to address the dynamic nature of conflicts and the evolving needs of stakeholders. This adaptive approach ensured that the research remained responsive to emerging needs and the evolving conflict landscape, facilitating more effective and context-specific recommendations for enhancing multi-agency strategies in the ongoing effort to manage conflicts in Laikipia County.

The study revealed that there were capacity-building and training programs in place, which agreed with the findings by Nadio (2018) in her study on the multiagency approach to communal conflicts in north-rift Kenya. Through the implementation of capacity-building and training programs, stakeholders were equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge, and resources to manage conflicts effectively. These programs focus on conflict analysis, negotiation and mediation skills, peacebuilding techniques, and trauma healing, among other topics, and involve collaboration between government agencies, NGOs, and international partners to enhance the capacity of local actors in conflict management. In a qualitative inquiry, a key informant opined that:

As someone deeply involved in Laikipia County's conflict management efforts, I rely on a various measure. As an administrator, I use regular interagency meetings to bring everyone to the table. We also conduct joint patrols with the Kenya Police Service and Kenya Wildlife Service in high-risk areas like Dol Dol. In addition, multiagency task forces tackle specific issues, drawing expertise from government, communities, and civil society. At the grassroots level, we empower communities through peace committees and forums, utilizing traditional conflict resolution methods alongside government support. Capacity-building programs are also important as they equip the community and our multiagency officers with the skills and knowledge needed for effective conflict management. I can tell you that we have a well-trained team working towards a peaceful Laikipia County.

(KII2, 8th January 2024, Laikipia County)

The sentiment expressed the determination and collaboration in addressing conflict management in Laikipia County, emphasizing a multifaceted approach using various strategies as espoused by Bond and Mkutu (2018) as well as Kimonye (2022). The

sentiments highlight the importance of communication and information sharing through interagency meetings, alongside proactive measures like joint patrols to deter conflict. The use of multiagency task forces demonstrates a commitment to involving diverse expertise, while community-based mechanisms empower local ownership of solutions. This notion supports the findings of Kibusia (2020) in his study on multiagency approaches in Boni enclave. The focus on capacity building ensures a well-equipped team working towards a lasting peace.

Furthermore, the study assessed the efficacy of multiagency strategies employed for conflict management in Laikipia County, a region characterized by diverse stakeholder groups and persistent disputes. Laikipia County faced challenges stemming from interactions between pastoralists, farmers, community leaders, government officials, and various agencies, necessitating a nuanced approach to conflict resolution. The study shed light on the impact of past multiagency actions on conflict management from the perspectives of affected communities, government entities, and non-governmental organizations. By employing a comprehensive methodology that included surveys, focus group discussions, interviews, and document analysis, the study unraveled the dynamics at play and offered insights into the effectiveness of collaborative efforts in mitigating conflicts within the County. Figure 1 indicates the level of familiarity with multi-agency strategies for conflict management in Laikipia County, among the respondents in the study.

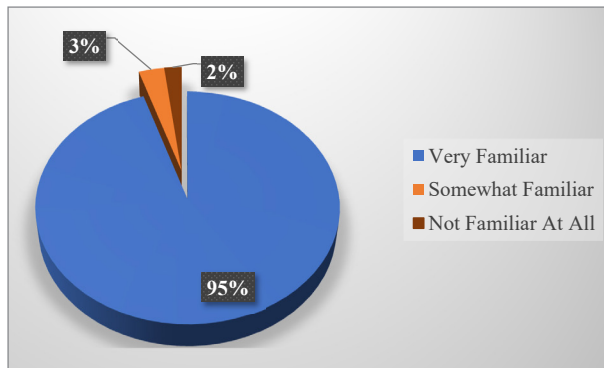


Figure 1. The Level of Familiarity with Multiagency Strategies for Conflict Management in Laikipia County

Source: Field data, 2024.

The survey results indicated a high level of familiarity with multiagency strategies for conflict management in Laikipia County among the respondents. Specifically, 95% of the participants reported being very familiar with these strategies, suggesting a strong awareness and understanding within the surveyed population. The minority,

constituting 3%, claimed to be somewhat familiar, while a mere 2% expressed not being familiar at all. This distribution suggests a generally well-informed respondent base, which may indicate a positive reception or effective dissemination of information regarding the multiagency strategies for conflict management in the specified region. This affirms the findings by Macharia (2021) that community awareness initiatives create positive community protection responses. However, the small percentages of those indicating less familiarity should be considered when interpreting the overall findings, acknowledging potential gaps in awareness that might affect the effectiveness of these strategies across the community. Figure 2, shows the extent of multiagency strategies application for conflict management in Laikipia County.

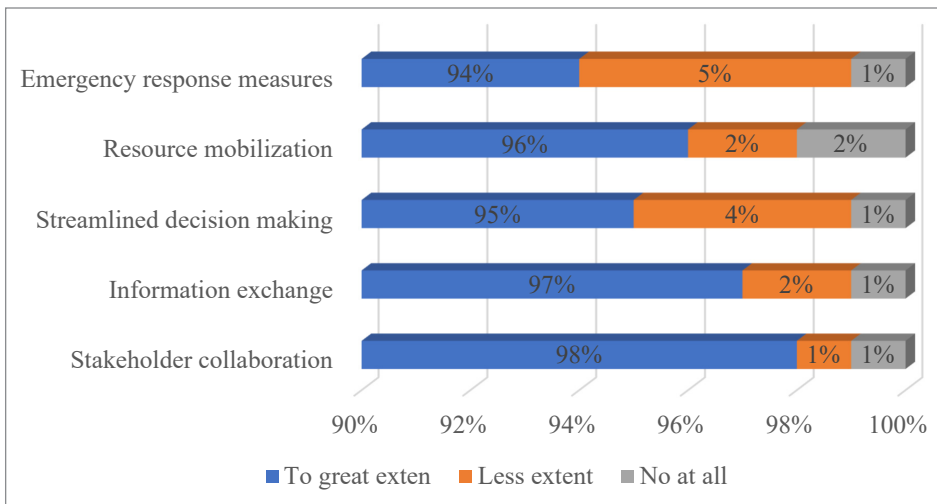


Figure 2. Extent of Multiagency Strategies Application for Conflict Management in Laikipia County

Source: Field data, 2024.

The survey outcomes revealed a widespread application of multiagency strategies for conflict management in Laikipia County. Stakeholder collaboration was reported to a great extent by 98% of respondents, indicating a high level of cooperation among various entities involved in conflict management. Likewise, information exchange was prevalent, with 97% of participants reporting its application to a great extent. Streamlined decision-making processes were employed to a great extent by 95% of respondents, highlighting efficient coordination among agencies. Resource mobilization was also a commonly adopted strategy, with 96% expressing its application to a great extent. Emergency response measures were implemented to a great extent by 94% of participants. These high percentages across strategies suggest a strong commitment to and effective utilization of multiagency approaches for conflict management in the county

as highlighted by Mutunga (2021). The minimal proportions reporting less extent or no application at all indicate a generally robust implementation of these strategies, underscoring the efficacy of collaborative efforts in conflict management. Figure 3, shows the effectiveness of the existing multiagency strategies for conflict management in the study.

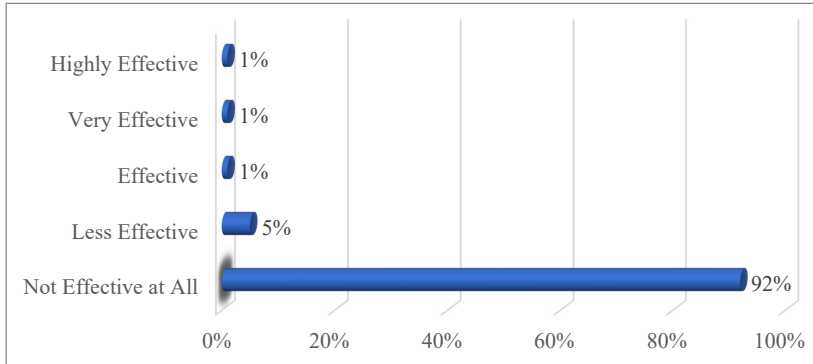


Figure 3. The Effectiveness of the Existing Multiagency Strategies for Conflict Management

Source: Field data, 2024.

The evaluation of the effectiveness of existing multi-agency strategies for conflict management indicated a predominant perception of ineffectiveness among respondents, with 92% expressing that these strategies were not effective at all. Only small proportions reported varying levels of effectiveness, with 5% indicating less effectiveness, and 1% each expressing effectiveness, very effective, and highly effective. This overwhelmingly negative response suggests a significant dissatisfaction or skepticism regarding the impact of the multiagency strategies employed for conflict management. The finding supports the assertion by Kut (2022) that multiagency actions were not attaining the requisite objectives in resolving land conflicts. Besides, the findings conflict with the conclusion by Meteti (2022) that multiagency approaches were effective in Laikipia County. The notable lack of positive assessments implies potential shortcomings or challenges in the implementation of these strategies, highlighting the need for a critical re-evaluation and potential adjustments to enhance their efficacy based on the feedback received from the surveyed population. Figure 4, shows the probe into specific agencies or organizations that play a more significant role in conflict management in the study.

The survey findings indicated a clear consensus among respondents, with 98% acknowledging the presence of specific agencies or organizations that played a more significant role in conflict management. This agrees with the report by Mwangi and Muniu (2023) that there is a representation of the Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Justice, and Ministry of Defence as agencies in Laikipia County.

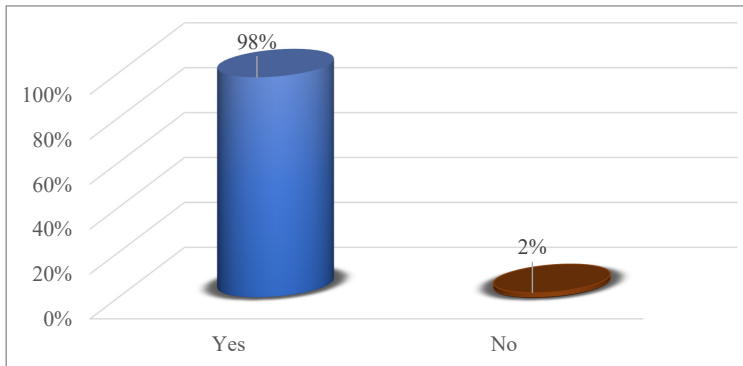


Figure 4. Specific Agencies or Organizations that Play a More Significant Role in Conflict Management

Source: Field data, 2024.

This high percentage underscores a strong perception within the surveyed population that certain entities were actively involved in addressing and managing conflicts. The limited 2% who responded negatively to the existence of such organizations might suggest a minor discrepancy in awareness or recognition among a small segment of participants. Overall, the overwhelming affirmation of the presence of key agencies or organizations highlights the prominence of specific entities in the landscape of conflict management and underscores their perceived significance in addressing conflicts within the community.

Findings from the study revealed that evaluating the effectiveness of multiagency strategies in Laikipia County's complex conflict landscape requires a comprehensive approach that captures the nuanced impacts across various levels. Lusiola (2021), when examining structural and legal frameworks of multiagency operations, advanced the same opinion. Some of the key considerations for effective assessment include the scope and context, implementation and outcomes, challenges and opportunities, data analysis and sharing, and additional considerations.

Understanding the multifaceted nature of conflicts was crucial in providing a contextual backdrop within which multiagency strategies operated in conflict management. By discerning the intricacies of conflicts, the study tailored its examination to the specific challenges faced in Laikipia County, fostering a more informed and targeted approach to the assessment of multiagency strategies. In a FGD, a participant opined that:

According to be I have found that understanding the complex nature of conflicts in Laikipia County is very important. The truth is the government of the county needs to look at the different types of conflicts, how often they occur, and what is causing them in the first place. If we understand this, we can tell how well

multi-agency conflict management strategies are working, or else it will be the same story. A targeted way of looking at things ensures our evaluation is informed by the specific challenges Laikipia County faces.

(FGD Participant 1, 10th January 2024, Laikipia Town Hall)

Maintaining a flexible and adaptable framework was another key consideration. The study acknowledged the position held by Edna (2020) on the dynamic nature of conflicts and the evolving needs of stakeholders in Laikipia County. Therefore, the study advocated for the continuous refinement and adaptation of the assessment framework based on emerging needs, feedback from stakeholders, and the evolving conflict landscape. This adaptive approach was designed to ensure that the research remained responsive to the ever-changing context, facilitating more effective and context-specific recommendations for enhancing multi-agency strategies in the ongoing effort to manage conflicts in Laikipia County. In an interview, a key informant opined:

On Multiagency Strategies for Conflict Management in Laikipia County, I would emphasize the irony of high awareness and application of these strategies alongside their perceived ineffectiveness. While collaboration, information sharing, and resource mobilization seem well established, there is a lack of tangible outcomes in reducing violence or fostering trust suggests critical gaps in implementation or alignment with the complex conflict dynamics.

(KII1, 8th January 2024, Laikipia County)

The voice suggests that addressing these gaps through targeted interventions, improved resource utilization, and adaptation to specific contexts is crucial. Additionally, prioritizing long-term impacts, community participation, and data-driven advocacy can strengthen the effectiveness of multiagency strategies and contribute to sustainable peace as noted by Hickmann and Elsässer (2020).

A study by Allen et al. (2021) emphasizes the importance of participatory approaches in conflict research. Their work highlights that involving affected communities throughout data collection, analysis, and decision-making processes leads to richer data, fosters trust between researchers and communities, and empowers participants to have a say in solutions. This participatory approach ultimately strengthens the research's credibility and relevance to those most impacted by the conflict.

Discussion

The study undertook a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of various multi-agency strategies employed in Laikipia County's conflict management efforts. This evaluation encompassed a review of collaboration platforms, resource mobilization plans, and early warning systems to gauge their alignment with the specific conflicts prevailing in the region. By delving into how well these strategies addressed

the nuanced challenges faced by Laikipia County, researchers identified both strengths and areas requiring improvement. According to Hickmann and Elsässer (2020), critical evaluation is indispensable for ensuring the continued efficacy of these strategies amidst the ever-evolving conflict landscape, enabling stakeholders to adapt and refine their approaches accordingly.

A pivotal revelation from the study was the paramount importance of comprehending the intricacies of the conflict landscape itself. Through the analysis of conflict types, frequency, and root causes, researchers gained contextual insights essential for evaluating the suitability of multiagency strategies. This contextual understanding facilitated a targeted assessment, enabling stakeholders to tailor their interventions to the specific needs and challenges prevalent in Laikipia County. Moreover, the study scrutinized the implementation of these strategies and their impacts, tracking patterns and variations across diverse contexts to ascertain their effectiveness in mitigating conflicts and fostering peace.

Incorporating stakeholder perspectives was integral to the evaluation process, with interviews and surveys capturing the first-hand experiences of those directly engaged in conflict management. This bridged the gap between theory and practice, enriching the evaluation with real-world insights and ensuring that the voices of key actors were heard and considered resonating with a study by Schneeberger (2020). Furthermore, the study utilized its findings for advocacy purposes, leveraging the evidence gathered to advocate for policy changes, resource allocation adjustments, and capacity-building initiatives. By translating research into actionable recommendations, the study catalyzed positive change in conflict management strategies, ultimately contributing to the promotion of lasting peace and stability in Laikipia County.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study concluded that strategies to enhance multiagency action were necessary. This could be done through improved resource allocation and utilization, reducing redundancies, and optimizing responses to conflicts. The early warning and rapid response capabilities of well-functioning multiagency structures demonstrated their efficiency in preventing the escalation of conflicts. Collaboration within these structures promoted shared learning and expertise among participating agencies, contributing to adaptive and responsive conflict management practices.

Therefore, the study recommends the need for continued emphasis on participatory approaches, long-term impact assessment, and flexible frameworks. Actively involving affected communities in decision-making processes ensures that interventions are responsive to their needs and fosters a sense of ownership. Prioritizing long-term impacts beyond immediate changes in conflict dynamics contributes to sustainable peacebuilding and development. Additionally, maintaining a flexible and adaptable framework

allows strategies to evolve in response to emerging needs, enhancing their effectiveness in addressing the evolving conflict landscape, by policymakers and practitioners involved in Multiagency Conflict Management Initiatives.

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