# Effectiveness of Multiagency Structures for Conflict Management in Laikipia County, Kenya

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## Abstract

This study assesses the effectiveness of the multiagency structures for conflict management, in Laikipia County, Kenya. It seeks to provide an understanding of the context and importance of multiagency approaches to conflict management. The objectives of the study are to evaluate the multiagency structures employed for conflict management in Laikipia County and assess the effectiveness of multiagency structures for conflict management in Laikipia County. The study utilises a descriptive survey research design. Primary data was collected in Laikipia West Sub County from 223 respondents, 17 FGD participants and 13 key informants using questionnaires, FGD guides, and interview guides respectively. First, the study established that conflict in Laikipia West Sub-County is an outcome of complex and intersecting factors that require a multiagency intervention approach. Second, implementing a multiagency approach has positively affected conflict management in Laikipia West Sub-County since it on-boards collaboration, acceptability and resource mobilisation. Lastly, strong leadership inclusivity and accountability enhance multi-agency interventions and the successes thereof. The study concludes 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 study recommends continued focus on participatory approaches, establishing formal dialogue platforms, and prioritising strong leadership and inclusivity, and stakeholders involved in conflict management in Laikipia County.

**Key Terms**:
Multiagency Structures, Conflict Management, Collaborative Approach, Stakeholders

## Introduction

The multiagency approach has become widely preferred for conflict management in most regions. Kibusia (2020) surmises that the approach is affected through collaboration across various

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stakeholders in order to synergize resources, expertise, as well as enhancing legitimacy and acceptance of the solutions. This study argues that strong, comprehensive and fit-for-purpose multi-agency structures are critical in ensuring lasting solutions to conflicts. A study by Resetar *et al* (2020) averred that comprehensive and collaborative approach is necessary for conflict management in any region. The objective of this approach is to have various groups, including government agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community leaders, and others, work together to achieve lasting stability and progress.

As submitted hitherto, the multiagency approach to conflict management has been applied in various contexts, from the international to the regional to the local level. For instance, Padin (2023) notes that during the Zapatista struggle in Mexico's Chiapas state, the value of incorporating multiple parties in resolving violent conflict was evident. In this case, Zapatista insurgents, the Mexican government, international non-governmental organisations ventilated on underlying issues such as poverty and indigenous rights. According to Padin (2023), a negotiated settlement was reached through the efforts of different agencies and partners, resulting in less violence and the start of development initiatives in underserved areas. The need of establishing cooperation between different institutions to overcome systemic issues and encourage diversity was highlighted by this case.

In Africa, the conflict in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria demonstrates the value of coordinated efforts amongst many actors in the management of resource-based conflicts. According to Aleyomi and Nwagwu (2023), initiatives for sustainable development, environmental protection, and equitable distribution of resources were launched in the Niger Delta region, thanks to the participation of governmental agencies, oil companies, community groups, and international organisations. The multiagency strategy was pivotal in reducing resource-related disputes and fostering long-term peace and security in the region because it factored in a variety of stakeholders' priorities and viewpoints.

De Sa (2019), draws parallels between the Niger Delta conflict and South Africa's history. By doing so, the importance of a collaborative approach in addressing resource-based conflicts was highlighted through juxtaposing South Africa's efforts in 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.

In Kenya, multiagency efforts were instituted through a presidential directive in 2015 after it was evident that there was an uncoordinated response to crises (Njiru & Muna, 2023; Kithii & Odhiambo, 2023). The efforts have developed since and are increasingly employed to sort a myriad of national security challenges. The Multiagency efforts are coordinated by the National Multi-Agency Command Centre (NMACC), which serves as a pivotal entity overseeing diverse aspects of security and emergency response in Kenya (REINVENT, 2022). According to Boit and Mutungi (2023), Multiagency Cooperation (MAC) in Kenya is structured at the cabinet level but also often takes the peer-to-peer collaboration format and the in-group structure of collaboration. The NMACC organises the efforts of multiple agencies involved in security, disaster management, and responses to national emergencies. These include entities such as the Kenyan police, military, intelligence services, and emergency response units like fire and ambulance services.

In Laikipia County, Nadio (2018) submitted that multi-agency actions have played a pivotal role in transforming conflict management strategies. By bringing together various governmental and non-governmental actors, such as law enforcement agencies, community-based organisations, and conservation groups, these collaborative efforts have significantly enhanced the county's ability to address and mitigate conflicts stemming from issues like land disputes, resource scarcity, and wildlife conservation. Bond and Mkutu (2018) affirmed that the multi-agency approach has fostered information-sharing, joint planning, and coordinated responses, leading to more effective conflict resolution mechanisms, improved community engagement, and greater stability in the region. This collaborative model not only highlights the importance of diverse stakeholders working together, but also serves as a valuable template for conflict management in other complex and multifaceted environments around the world.

This study argues that multifaceted conflicts in the region require multiagency conflict management. Historical grievances, land use patterns, and climate change-induced resource demands sometimes cause these disputes (Blattman, 2023; Hendrix, *et al*., 20223; Gleditsch, *et al*., 2006). Laikipia County experiences land disputes, resource competitiveness, livestock grazing conflicts, and wildlife conservation issues (Bond &Mkutu, 2018). The conflict has been pronounced in Laikipia West, with Laikipia East experiencing sporadic clashes. The local populations, pastoralists, farmers, conservationists, and government agencies all have different interests and viewpoints in these disputes (Wanjiku, Tarus & Nyakwaka, 2023). Thus, the key issue is how to effectively coordinate and harmonise these diverse agencies and actors to address the root causes of conflicts, promote sustainable peace, and ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities for all Laikipia County parties. The complexity and importance of multiagency conflict management activities is highlighted in literature. Conflicts in Laikipia County exhibit considerable level of complexity and intractability where land ownership, resource shortages, and conservation activities meet. Violence and displacement have escalated owing to land and water disputes, pastoralist conflicts, and wildlife conservation measures.

According to Mutunga (2021), the fragmented and uncoordinated responses from agencies and stakeholders often exacerbate these disputes. These limitations must be addressed to build more focused and successful multi-agency conflict management techniques in Laikipia County and other complex conflict zones. Resolving the problems would be crucial for regional stakeholders. Local communities could benefit from peace, security, less displacement, and better resource access, improving their quality of life. In the view of Berdal and Sherman (2023), political economy considerations are crucial. Enhancing conflict management practices, optimising resource distribution, and improving governance in Laikipia County could simultaneously safeguard biodiversity, foster social and political stability, and contribute to sustainable development by aligning the diverse goals of stakeholders, providing a model for global applications. The foregoing aspects were a subject of investigation by this study to examine the effectiveness of multi-agency approach in the context of conflicts in Laikipia County, Kenya.

**Empirical Literature Review**

**Significance of Multiagency Approach to Conflict Management**

The significance of a multiagency approach to conflict management has been global, continental and regional contexts. In the realm of counterterrorism in the USA, Edna's (2020) insights underscore the critical importance of cooperation between intelligence services, law enforcement, and the military. Despite advancements in information sharing and collaborative operations, substantial questions linger in the USA regarding civil liberties, accountability, and the potential role of private sector firms in aiding terrorist activities. The identified gaps emphasise the urgency for targeted research to better comprehend the delicate balance between security imperatives and civil liberties.

In addition, an examination of the case of India by Fitzgerald, O'Sullivan, and O'Brien (2023), in their study on multiagency systems during the Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, recognises the importance of global health governance. In the Indian context, experiences of disparities in vaccine delivery, communication difficulties, and the need for enhanced global pandemic preparedness reveal notable gaps in the effectiveness of multiagency systems. The diverse and densely populated country faced challenges in coordinating responses across various states and healthcare entities. To address these gaps, further study is essential, particularly focusing on improving information sharing mechanisms and enhancing global health governance systems. Examining the case of South Africa, a study by Arriola, Dow, Matanock, and Mattes (2021) on post-conflict reconstruction highlights the imperative of coordination among international agencies, national governments, and community members in the aftermath of historical conflicts. In South Africa, multiagency efforts are deemed crucial for effective reconstruction. However, persistent disparities in resource distribution, challenges in implementing transitional justice systems, and uncertainties regarding the long-term viability of development initiatives underscore

critical gaps. To address these, there was a pressing need for further study focused on fair resource distribution mechanisms, the application of restorative justice tailored to the country's unique historical context, and strategies to ensure the sustainability of post-conflict efforts. The case of South Africa served as a poignant example, urging researchers and practitioners to delve into context-specific multi-agency solutions for post-conflict reconstruction.

**Effectiveness of Multiagency Structures in Kenya**

In the context of Kenya, multiagency cooperation structures present both successes and notable gaps, as highlighted in Solomon's (2019) examination of multi-agency systems for conflict management. The study emphasises the essential need for flexibility and adaptability among stakeholders involved in Kenya's multiagency structures, crucial for effective conflict resolution. Besides, Boit and Mutungi (2023) surmised that MAC in Kenya is structured at the cabinet level, but also often takes the peer-to-peer collaboration format, and the in-group structure of collaboration. The scholars recommended adoption of the Blending Outsider Insights and Techniques (BOIT) model to enhance the operational effectiveness and outcomes of MAC frameworks within Kenya's vast and dynamic security landscape. Whereas the studies offer valuable insights, they do not adequately appreciate the contextual nuances and socio-cultural peculiarities, thus the need for further studies. Gaps persist in comprehending the intricacies of multi-agency interaction within Kenya, indicating a need for more research tailored to the country's specific challenges.

A study by Maratani and Omboto (2024) examines the role of multiagency cooperation structures in security management, through an empirical analysis that delves into the empirical aspects of multiagency cooperation structures. While the study contributes to the understanding of the role of such structures in conflict management, gaps in the literature become apparent. The empirical analysis might encounter limitations in capturing the dynamic and context-specific nature of multiagency interactions in diverse conflict scenarios. Additionally, the article's focus on roles may not fully address the intricacies of communication, leadership, and shared goals within these structures. The need for a more comprehensive exploration of the challenges and successes in multiagency cooperation, along with an emphasis on practical implications for conflict resolution, highlighted areas where further research was warranted to enrich the existing understanding of these structures in real-world conflict scenarios.

Nadio (2018) investigated the application of a multiagency operational approach to managing communal conflicts in this region, particularly focusing on the North Rift region of Kenya. While the study sheds light on the operational aspects of multiagency collaboration in conflict management, there may be gaps in the comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced during the implementation of such approaches. The study may benefit from a more nuanced

exploration of the specific contextual factors that impact the effectiveness of multiagency operations in communal conflict resolution.

Muigua's (2021) study delves into the broader scope of peacebuilding and conflict management in Kenya. While the study likely provides valuable insights into the country's overall landscape of conflict management, there might be gaps in the specific examination of multiagency strategies. Precisely, the study nests conflict management in the sustainable development goals, which are thus a dictate of the state rather than a result of emergent micro-level processes. Such an approach does not appreciate the immense contribution of grassroots stakeholders to sustainable peace. To better inform effective peacebuilding, a more detailed analysis of the existing multiagency frameworks, challenges encountered, and potential enhancements could contribute to a more comprehensive understanding.

A study by Mwaura and Mwaura (2020) focused on the structural and legal frameworks guiding multiagency operations specifically in the context of counterterrorism in Kenya. While this work likely offers valuable insights into the legal and structural dimensions of multiagency efforts, there might be gaps in exploring the operational challenges faced in actual counterterrorism operations. A more in-depth analysis of the practical aspects, coordination issues, and potential improvements in multiagency counterterrorism strategies could provide a more holistic view of the subject. The literature emphasises matching multiagency tactics and structures with institutional norms, legal frameworks, and constitutional principles. However, the effectiveness of multiagency approach has remained unclear at worst and anecdotal at best, thus the need for this study.

**Theoretical Framework**

**Institutionalism Theory**

The study is anchored on Institutionalism Theory postulated by Meyer and Rowan (1977). The theory argues that institutions, understood as formal and informal rules and structures, shape individuals' actions and societal outcomes. The theory highlights the role of institutions in providing stability, order, and predictability in social systems. The critical tenets of the theory include Legitimacy and authority, Stability and predictability, Resource mobilisation, Inclusivity and representation, and Adaptive capacity (Jupille, 2022). These tenets are relevant to the study's cynosure since they encapsulate the requirements for a multi-agency structure to ensure successful outcomes for conflict management in Laikipia County, Kenya.

Critics argue that institutionalism can be overly deterministic, neglecting agency and individual choices in favour of a structural focus. For instance, Peters (2000) observed that institutional theory is the generally static nature of institutional explanations. Besides, it is difficult to measure institutional variables in other than simplistic, nominal categories. While the theory offers valuable

insights into the persistence and change of institutions, it may oversimplify the complexities of human behaviour and overlook the dynamic interactions between individuals and institutions. Nevertheless, institutional theory is useful in understanding the significance of robust structures to synergise multiagency efforts for conflict resolution, thereby emphasising the impact of institutional arrangements on decision-making processes and outcomes.

## Methodology

The study utilised a descriptive survey research design. The study incorporated both quantitative and qualitative primary data from a questionnaire, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informants interviews (KIIs). The study area was Laikipia County, Kenya, focusing on Laikipia West Sub County. Data was collected from 223 respondents, 17 FGD participants and 13 key informants using questionnaires, FGD guides and interview guides respectively. 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 synthesised. Statistical modelling 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. Ethical considerations included source attribution, respect for intellectual property rights, and privacy protection, alongside obtaining necessary permits and approvals for the study.

## Analysis of Findings

The study evaluated the multiagency structures employed for conflict management in Laikipia County, recognising the region's inherent complexities and the diverse array of stakeholders involved. Laikipia County grappled with persistent conflicts stemming from interactions among divergent groups, necessitating a nuanced and collaborative approach to resolution (Muigua, 2021). The study retrospectively examined the effectiveness of past multiagency structures in managing conflicts, offering insights into their impact on the county's socio-political landscape. The study delved into the performance of these structures, seeking to provide a comprehensive understanding of their strengths, weaknesses, and overall contributions to conflict management in Laikipia County. Figure 1, shows the probe into varied structural aspects important for multiagency actions in Laikipia County.

**Figure 1**

*Varied Structural Aspects Important for Multiagency Actions in Laikipia County*



**Opinion on the importance of structural aspects for multiagency actions in Laikipia County**
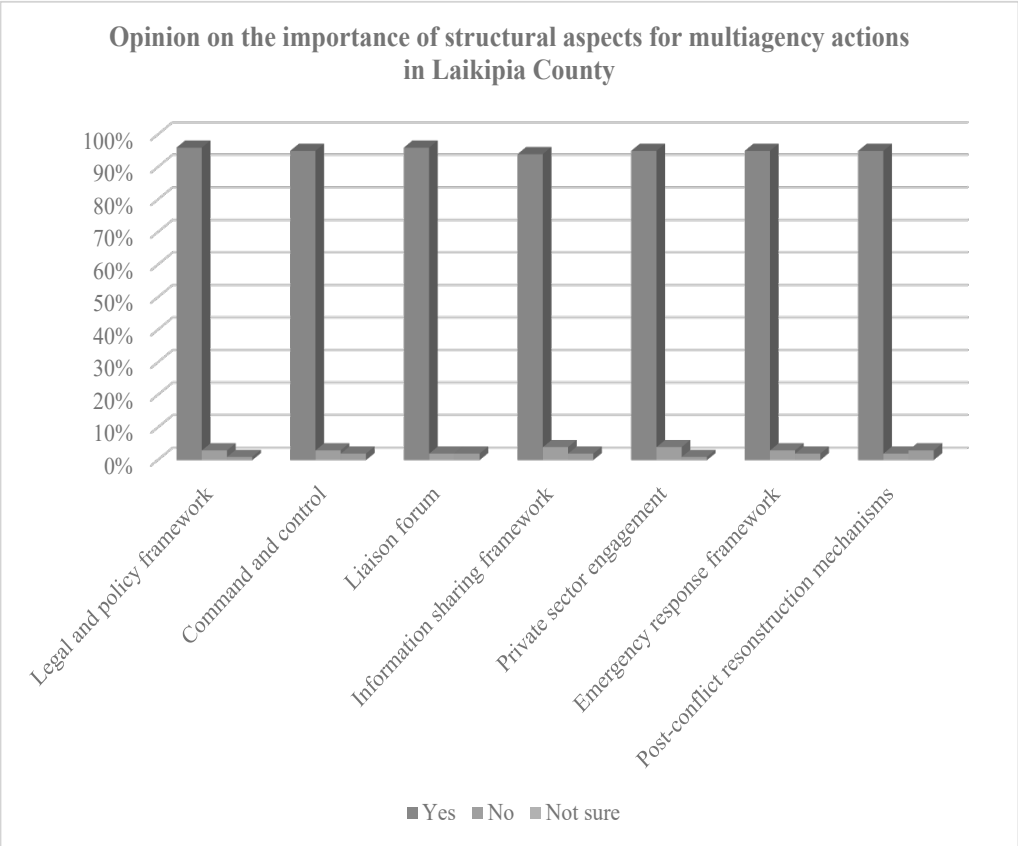
Source: Field data, 2024

The survey outcomes indicated a strong consensus among respondents regarding the perceived importance of various structural aspects for multiagency actions in Laikipia County. The majority affirmed the significance of each aspect, with 96% supporting the need for a robust legal and policy framework, liaison forums, private sector engagement, emergency response structures, and post-conflict reconstruction mechanisms. Command and control structures also garnered considerable support, with 95% expressing their importance. While small percentages indicated uncertainty or disagreement for some aspects, such as information sharing frameworks (2% not sure, 5% no), the overall trend highlighted the recognised importance of these structural elements in facilitating effective multiagency actions for conflict management in the county. The findings support observations by Mwaura and Mwaura (2020) on the need for unity of effort and harmonious interagency collaboration towards conflict resolution. This consensus underscores the acknowledgement of these structural components as essential pillars for successful collaborative

efforts in addressing conflicts. Figure 2, shows the probe into varied opinion on multiagency command and coordination preferences.

**Figure 2**

*Varied Opinion on Multiagency Command and Coordination Preferences*
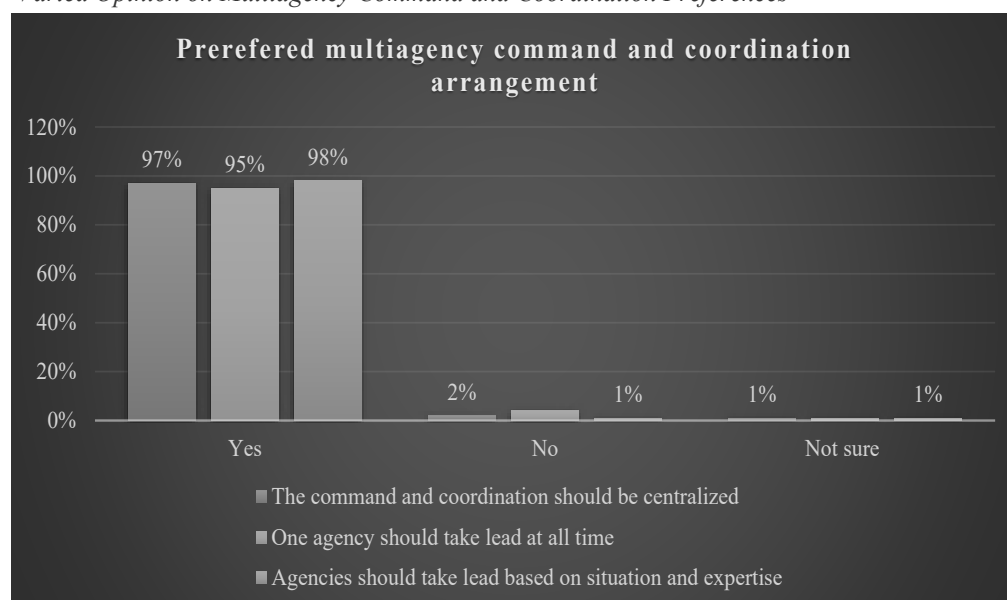


Source: Field data, 2024

The survey results reflected a clear consensus among respondents regarding multiagency command and coordination preferences in conflict management. A significant majority, 97%, expressed a preference for centralised command and coordination, suggesting a belief in the efficacy of a unified approach to directing and overseeing collaborative efforts. Additionally, 95% favoured the idea that one agency should always take the lead, indicating a preference for clear hierarchical structures. Another notable preference emerged, with 98% supporting the notion that agencies should take the lead based on the situation and their expertise, suggesting a recognition of the importance of flexibility and adaptability in command and coordination strategies as espoused by Arriola, *et al*. (2021). Although significant, the findings lean more on a situational command arrangement based on the crisis/issue being addressed (Boit & Mutungi, 2023). This negates the supposition by REINVENT (2022) that there is a need for centralised command in security response. The limited percentages of those who were uncertain or disagreed underscored the overall alignment in opinions, emphasising the importance of establishing effective and contextually appropriate multiagency command and coordination mechanisms in conflict management within Laikipia County. Figure 3 shows the probe into consensus on the adequacy of existing multiagency structures in addressing diverse conflicts in Laikipia County among respondents in the study.

**Figure 3**

*Consensus on the Adequacy of Existing Multiagency Structures in Addressing Diverse Conflicts in Laikipia County*
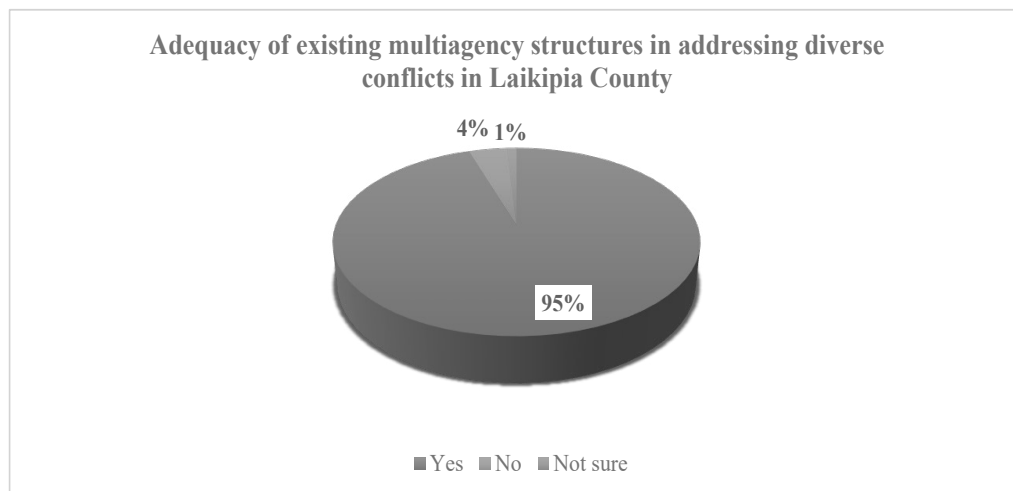


Source: Field data, 2024.

The survey findings revealed a strong consensus among respondents regarding their beliefs about the adequacy of existing multi-agency structures in addressing diverse conflicts in Laikipia County. A significant majority, comprising 95%, expressed confidence in the effectiveness of the current structures, suggesting a prevailing positive perception of their ability to handle the varied challenges presented by conflicts in the region in concurrence with findings by Kut (2022). A minority, constituting 4%, indicated a lack of faith in the adequacy of these structures, underscoring potential concerns or shortcomings in the existing multiagency approach. The minimal percentage of respondents who were unsure (1%) suggests a generally well-informed participant base, but also highlights a need for continuous evaluation and communication to address any uncertainties regarding the efficacy of the multiagency structures for conflict resolution in Laikipia County.

The identification of actors and structures involved in conflict management within the county was essential. This mapping exercise sought to encompass all relevant entities, ranging from government agencies and NGOs to community groups and traditional leaders. Such an inclusive approach was integral to comprehending the complex collaboration networks that existed and identifying potential gaps in the current conflict management infrastructure. Recognising and understanding the roles played by diverse actors allowed for a holistic examination of the

multiagency dynamics, contributing to the overall effectiveness and coherence of conflict management efforts. A participant discoursed that:

> *I believe that successful conflict management in Laikipia County requires accepting that all the different groups involved, from government agencies to community organisations. The involving everyone will help identify weaknesses in current measures and provide a better understanding of how these various groups can work together. In the end, this will lead to more effective and unified efforts to manage conflict.*
> (FGD - Participant 2, 10th January 2024, Laikipia Town Hall)

The sentiments by the FGD participant highlight the need for a collaborative and all-encompassing approach. Moreover, Macharia (2021) made a similar conclusion on the need for tailored security approaches that address community needs. The study evaluated the effectiveness and efficiency of multiagency structures in Laikipia County and was a complex task, demanding a nuanced understanding of their strengths, weaknesses, and impacts on collaborative efforts. The study delved into the effectiveness, efficiency and enhancement of collaborative efforts.

The effectiveness of multiagency structures in conflict management was evident through various indicators, including a reduction in violence and an improvement in trust within communities. In consonance with Edna's (2020) insights, FGD participants pointed on a notable decrease in violent incidents in areas where these structures functioned effectively. Additionally, there was an observed increase in trust between communities and authorities, indicating that collaborative approaches could effectively address the root causes of conflicts and contribute to building bridges of understanding. This reduction in violence and improvement in trust signified the potential of multiagency strategies to foster long-term stability and peaceful coexistence.

Another key aspect of the effectiveness of multiagency structures lay in their ability to facilitate more comprehensive interventions in conflict management; a view held by Mutunga (2021). These structures brought together diverse expertise and resources from different sectors, leading to a more holistic approach. Beyond addressing immediate conflicts, multiagency efforts extended to tackling underlying socio-economic issues, promoting dialogue and peacebuilding initiatives, and implementing resource-sharing agreements. The comprehensive nature of these interventions underscored the potential for multiagency structures to address the multifaceted challenges that contributed to conflicts, thereby promoting sustainable solutions.

Furthermore, Garcia, Jones, and Lee (2023) opine that the involvement of a wider range of stakeholders in multiagency structures enhanced legitimacy and accountability in conflict management processes. This inclusivity was crucial for building trust among communities and ensuring that interventions were responsive to the diverse needs of affected populations. By engaging various actors, including government agencies, NGOs, community leaders, and others, multiagency structures created a platform for collective decision-making and shared responsibility. This shared ownership enhanced the legitimacy of conflict management efforts and ensured that

actions taken were more accountable to the communities they aimed to serve, contributing to the overall effectiveness of these structures. In an interview, an informant indicated that:

*In discussing multiagency structures in Laikipia County, I would highlight the unanimous agreement regarding their significance, although acknowledging areas where enhancements are needed. There's a clear recognition of the potential for these structures to facilitate comprehensive interventions, bolster legitimacy, and enhance accountability. Nonetheless, it's imperative to tackle uncertainties related to information-sharing frameworks and ensure ongoing effectiveness in managing diverse conflict scenarios.*
(KII2, 8th January 2024, Laikipia County)

The sentiments suggest a promising foundation for multiagency conflict management in Laikipia County, while highlighting the need for ongoing refinement and adaptation to realise their potential fully. This is in conformity with the submission by Resetar *et al*. (2020) and Nadia (2018) on the need for improving collaborative approaches to conflict management. Efficiency in conflict management was a notable outcome of well-functioning multi-agency structures. One key aspect was the improved allocation and utilisation of resources as espoused in institutionalism theory. Through pooling resources and coordinating efforts, these structures reduced redundancies and optimised resource utilization. This collaborative approach leads to more efficient conflict management, ensuring that available resources were maximised to address the diverse needs arising from conflicts. The optimisation of resource utilization contributed to the overall effectiveness of interventions, fostering a more impactful and sustainable conflict management strategy.

Another dimension of efficiency lay in the early warning and rapid response capabilities facilitated by effective communication and information-sharing networks within multi-agency structures as established by Macharia (2021). These networks enabled the early detection of potential conflict triggers, allowing swift and coordinated responses to prevent the escalation of conflicts. In the views of Kibusia (2020), the ability to respond rapidly was crucial in saving lives and resources in the end. By minimizing the time between the identification of potential issues and the implementation of preventive measures, multiagency structures enhanced their efficiency in addressing conflicts and mitigating their impacts on communities.

Collaboration within multiagency structures also promoted shared learning and expertise among participating agencies (Macharia, 2021). The exchange of knowledge and experience led to continuous learning and improvement of conflict management practices. This collaborative learning environment allowed agencies to draw on the expertise of others, identify best practices, and adapt strategies based on collective insights; a fact established by REINVENT (2022). This shared learning contributed to the efficiency of multiagency structures, ensuring that they remained adaptive and responsive to the evolving nature of conflicts, ultimately leading to more effective interventions in the future. In an interview, an informant highlighted that:

*There are impressive efficiency gains enabled by effective multiagency structures in Laikipia County. Resource optimization through collaboration, proactive early warning systems, and continuous learning across agencies all converged to create a swift and adaptable conflict management approach.*
(KII3, 8th January 2024, Laikipia County)

Alluded from the sentiments, efficient utilization of resources, rapid response capabilities, and ongoing knowledge sharing not only minimized disruptions but also laid the groundwork for even more effective interventions in the future. This view is support by the submission by Aleyomi and Nwagwu, (2023) while examining strategic model for Nigeria's security and socioeconomic development. In essence, these structures leveraged collaboration to not only resolve conflicts, but also continuously improve their own effectiveness, creating a virtuous cycle of peace and progress.

**Discussion**

The study on multiagency structures for conflict management in Laikipia County reveals a strong consensus among surveyed individuals regarding the importance of these structures. It encompasses various components such as legal frameworks, liaison forums, and emergency response mechanisms. There is a clear preference for centralized command and coordination, albeit with flexibility based on the specific context. Despite some preferences for centralized leadership, the study demonstrates an overall belief in the adequacy of existing multiagency structures for addressing conflicts, with a significant majority expressing confidence in their effectiveness. According to Edna (2020), this confidence is attributed to several observed benefits of these structures.

One significant finding is the role of multiagency structures in reducing violence and fostering trust between communities and authorities. Areas where these structures function effectively experienced fewer violent incidents, indicating their tangible impact on conflict mitigation. Moreover, by bringing together diverse expertise and resources, these structures enable comprehensive interventions that address underlying causes of conflict, leading to more sustainable solutions. Additionally, the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders, including government entities, NGOs, and community leaders, enhances the legitimacy and accountability of conflict management processes, contributing to improved outcomes.

Efficiency in conflict management is another key outcome associated with well-functioning multiagency structures. Through resource pooling and coordinated efforts, these structures optimize resource allocation, reducing redundancies and maximizing impact. According to Macharia (2021), effective communication and information sharing networks established within these structures enable early detection of potential conflicts, facilitating swift responses to prevent escalation. Furthermore, collaboration within these structures promotes shared learning and

expertise among participating agencies, fostering continuous improvement in conflict management practices. Despite the effectiveness of multiagency structures, areas for improvement such as enhancing information sharing were also identified, highlighting the ongoing efforts needed to refine and strengthen these mechanisms for conflict management in Laikipia County.

The theoretical framework for this study offered insightful perspectives on the findings regarding multiagency structures for conflict management in Laikipia County. In particular, institutionalism theory emphasises on the interconnectedness of social systems and resonates with the study's observation of various components within multiagency structures, such as legal frameworks and liaison forums, operating together to address conflicts. The theory underscores the importance of understanding how these components interact and influence one another within the broader social system, shedding light on the complexities of multiagency coordination (Luhmann, Baecker and Gilgen, 2013). Moreover, the theory highlights the role of institutions in shaping individuals' actions and societal outcomes, emphasizing the significance of formal and informal rules within multiagency structures (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). This theory elucidates how institutional arrangements within these structures provide stability and order, guiding decision-making processes and fostering trust among stakeholders. Together, these theoretical frameworks enrich our understanding of the dynamics at play within multiagency structures for conflict management, offering valuable insights into their effectiveness and areas for improvement in Laikipia County.

**Conclusion**

The study focuses on multiagency structures for conflict management in Laikipia County. It illuminates on the intricate nature of conflicts within the region, underscoring the critical role of collaborative endeavours in mitigating their impacts. Through a thorough retrospective analysis of multiagency structures and initiatives, the research offers valuable insights into both their successes and shortcomings. Notably, the effectiveness of multiagency approaches was evident in the tangible outcomes observed, including a reduction in violence levels, the restoration of trust among conflicting parties, and the facilitation of comprehensive interventions that addressed underlying root causes. These positive outcomes underscore the potential of multiagency structures to bring about meaningful change and foster sustainable peace within conflict-affected communities.

Therefore, the study concludes that the inclusivity embedded within multiagency structures plays a pivotal role in enhancing the legitimacy and accountability of conflict management processes. By involving a diverse range of stakeholders, including governmental agencies, community groups, and non-governmental organisations, these structures ensure that decisions and actions are informed by a broad spectrum of perspectives and interests. The inclusivity not only bolstered the credibility of conflict management efforts but also fostered greater transparency and trust among stakeholders, ultimately contributing to the overall effectiveness of multiagency approaches. Thus,

the study underscores the importance of continued collaboration and partnership building among diverse actors to address the complex challenges posed by conflicts in Laikipia County and to pave the way for more sustainable peacebuilding initiatives.

**Recommendations**

Having examined the structural aspects for multiagency actions, command and coordination preferences, and adequacy of existing structures to address conflict situations in Laikipia County, the study recommends the following:

1.   The Ministry of Interior and National Administration, Ministry of Defence and other relevant stakeholders need to ensure adaptive structures that can effectively address the main problems as well as respond to emergencies. Adaptive command structures are critical with different agencies taking lead based on the issues at hand.

2.   The National Government of Kenya and County Government of Laikipia, to establish formal platforms for dialogue, building relationships and trust through regular interactions, and conducting capacity building and shared training programs. These strategies foster a sense of shared responsibility, unity, and enhanced skills among stakeholders within the multiagency structure.

3.   Further, the Ministry of Interior and National Administration and Ministry of Defence in collaboration with the County Government of Laikipia should institute mechanisms for continuous learning, adaptation, and building strong relationships for sustainable conflict management in Laikipia County, targeting stakeholders within the multiagency structure in Laikipia County and community members in Laikipia County.

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