

Impact of non-governmental organizations' (NGOs) peacebuilding operations on the humanitarian aid architecture in Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya

Muketha Eunice Kirito¹
Ferdinand Nabiswa²
Kimokoti Susan³

^{1*}eunice14kit@gmail.com

^{1,2,3}Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, Kenya

Recommended Reference: Kirito, M. E., Nabiswa, F., & Susan, K. (2026). Impact of non-governmental organizations' (NGOs) peacebuilding operations on the humanitarian aid architecture in Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya. *African Quarterly Social Science Review*, 3(4), 364–374. <https://doi.org/10.51867/AQSSR.3.4.29>

ABSTRACT

The global refugee crisis has resulted in the displacement of over 100 million people, underscoring the necessity for efficient humanitarian aid systems. This is especially the case in long-term situations such as the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya, which is home to more than 200,000 refugees. The present research investigates how Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) peacebuilding initiatives affect the overall performance of the humanitarian aid architecture in Kakuma. The manner in which the questioned institutions carry out the said work, e.g., community dialogues, violence prevention, and peace education, was the focus of the present research. By using a concurrent mixed-methods research design, the study explores how NGOs peacebuilding work has changed the aid architecture in Kakuma and the realization of community dialogues, violence prevention, and peace education as the main interventions. The population surveyed in the research comprised 40,316 refugee household heads, 63 host community leaders, 28 NGO officers, 15 government representatives, and 50 leaders from the United Refugee and Host Churches (URHC). The selection process used stratified simple random sampling to pick 384 refugee household heads; purposive sampling to pinpoint 19 host community leaders and 5 government representatives; and a census approach for the 28 NGO officers and the 50 URHC leaders, respectively. Results from the research demonstrate excellent participation in NGO capacity building dialogues (82.8%) as well as the increase in positive safety perceptions among the population involved (78.6%) together with the rise in the percentage of efficiently handled conflicts (56.3%) among the local communities, thus contributing significantly to the organization of the aid delivery through stability provision. On the contrary, issues such as a lack of good NGO-government relations (44.8%) and instances of discrimination (79.3%) illustrate that the approach applied is far from being comprehensive. These empirical results, rooted in Galtung's Conflict Theory, indicate that peacebuilding activities bolster the humanitarian architecture by decreasing instances of disruption, however, the presence of certain systemic barriers still dictates the need for targeted interventions. To tackle such issues, the study suggests employing more participatory approaches along with better coordination as the key to achieving conflict-sensitive aid that will both be sustainable in Kakuma and transferable to other potential scenarios.

Keywords: Humanitarian Aid Architecture, Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya, Non-Governmental Organizations, Peacebuilding Operations, Sustainability

I. INTRODUCTION

The global refugee crisis has reached an unprecedented scale, with forcibly displaced persons totaling more than 100 million attributable to wars, persecutions, and climate-related disasters [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2023]. The longer these people are displaced, the more they assert the necessity for not only humanitarian aid but also well-functioning structures that can sustain the aid in areas that have been in the limelight due to the existing social tensions and resource shortage. Kenya's arid Turkana County, the place where Kakuma Refugee Camp is situated, is a good illustration of such ordeals. Initially, the camp was set up in 1992 to shelter refugees from Sudanese areas engulfed by wars but is now home to more than 200,000 people from different countries such as South Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (UNHCR, 2023). The local socio-political crisis related to ethnic tensions, scarcity of resources, and occasional violence has not only been a challenge to the delivery of humanitarian aid in an equitable and sustainable manner but also food, shelter, health, and education services have been seriously affected (Opiyo et al., 2017). NGOs working in Kakuma like Lutheran World Federation and the International Rescue Committee run activities to build peace including community talks, peace education, and violence prevention programs which are intended to resolve conflicts and bring about peace (Opiyo et al., 2017; UNHCR, 2023). These actions are designed to improve the architecture of humanitarian aid, which means the delivery

of aid to refugees and the host communities is managed through the coordinated systems, structures, and processes. Although, the particular contribution of the peacebuilding initiatives to the effectiveness of humanitarian aid in Kakuma remains largely unrecognized, thus requiring empirical proof to inform both scholarly debate and the field of humanitarian practice.

Generally, the delivery of aid in such crisis areas as the Kakuma refugee camp that has been there for a long time is usually affected by conflicts between different communities, insecurity, and logistical challenges that lower the power to provide refugees with their most basic needs (Opiyo et al., 2017; Pascucci, 2021). One example of this is the ethnic conflicts that occur between different refugee groups or between refugees and locals, which make it difficult to get to the distribution points, while malfunctioning in partnership among NGOs, government agencies, and the UNHCR can lead to the exacerbation of inefficiencies (Opiyo et al., 2017; Smit et al., 2020). Existing literature mainly refers to the role of NGOs in delivering humanitarian aid (Smit et al., 2020) and peacebuilding activities in conflict areas (Adetula et al., 2021), yet there is only a small number of academic texts that explicitly highlight the connection between peacebuilding operations and the functions of the humanitarian aid system in the sub-Saharan refugee contexts. Omuthe (2015) studied the implementation of livelihood projects at Kenya's Dadaab camp, for example, but the characteristics of Kakuma, such as its diverse refugee population, the prolonged stay situation, and its location near unstable borders, make it necessary to have analysis that is specific to the context. Moreover, the assertion that community interactions and advocacy could be ways of reducing violence thus enhancing the possibility of getting aid is very plausible (Matfess, 2022), however, data is lacking to actually quantify the effect these initiatives have on the overall humanitarian architecture in Kakuma. The issue is that if peacebuilding were really to be efficient, it could succeed in stabilizing the situation in the camp to the extent that NGOs could then provide their aid in a more equitable and sustainable way, nevertheless, the challenge of poor cooperation among stakeholders and discrimination may continue to affect the progress of these outcomes (Smit et al., 2020; Opiyo et al., 2017).

The research work here is focused on the evaluation of the Peacebuilding operations led by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the area of humanitarian aid architecture in Kakuma Refugee Camp. It accomplishes Objective II from the initial thesis: to investigate the influence of NGO peacebuilding operations upon Humanitarian Aid Architecture in Kakuma Refugee Camp. The study is shaped by three research questions: (1) How far have NGO peacebuilding operations brought about changes in the efficiency of humanitarian aid architecture in Kakuma? (2) Which particular activities of peacebuilding, e.g. community dialogues or peace education, are the main contributors to aid delivery outcomes? (3) What challenges are at the forefront in hindering the seamless integration of peacebuilding efforts into the broader aid system? These queries are being dealt with by the use of a mixed-methods approach, which combines quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data includes surveys conducted with 384 household heads, whereas the qualitative data includes 28 key informant interviews and 50 focus group discussions. The data, when taken together, gives a full picture of the role of peacebuilding in improving aid effectiveness.

The importance of this research is represented in a threefold manner: academic, practical, and philosophical. In the academic realm, it's a significant add-on to limited studies about the interconnection of peacebuilding and aid in long-lasting refugee camps, mainly that of the Kakuma camp, illustrating the local situation, and thus extending and complementing work like Opiyo et al. (2017) and the related regional analyses. Theoretically, the results could be interpreted by UNHCR, NGOs, and the Kenyan government policy-makers to comprehend the strategies whether they are effective and to predict the impediments which would help facilitate the frameworks of aid delivery in Kakuma and resembling places. The research, in terms of philosophy, stands behind the positivist paradigm and is mainly empirical in nature. This means that it uses data to test-by-hypotheses rather than taking a stance or relying on subjective judgments. By examining the case of the Kakuma refugee camp study becomes more generalized humanitarian insights about the situation of the global refugee camp phenomenon

1.1 Statement of the Problem

As the world currently hosts the highest number of displaced populations due to war, violence, and disasters of over 100 million people (UNHCR, 2023), humanitarian access is increasingly challenging. In contexts of protracted displacement like Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya, where more than 200,000 refugees mainly from South Sudan Ethiopia Somalia and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), are distributed across 15 different camps, humanitarian aids are heavily compromised due to recurrent inter-ethnic tensions, violence, and depletion of resources (Opiyo et al., 2017; Anomat Ali, 2017). While Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are involved in peacebuilding initiatives (like community dialogue, violence prevention, peace education and psychosocial supports) to create conditions conducive to aid access, little is known about their contributions to building this humanitarian architecture (Kurz et al., 2022; Opiyo et al., 2017).

While there has been significant research on the ways of humanitarian aid delivery or peacebuilding practices, no holistic analysis of their combined nexus within a long-standing refugee camp setting has been conducted (Smit et



al., 2020; Pascucci, 2021; Miriti & Karithi, 2020). Before one in Kakuma, studies remain concentrated on the Dadaab (Omuthe, 2015) or broader African regions (Chris et al., 2021; Adetula et al., 2021). Their inability to encapsulate the smaller scale, predominantly Turkana ethnicity, short term nature, and long-standing denser refugee confined Kakuma leaves the assertion of peacebuilding improving aid sustainability by decreasing assistance disruptions and fostering community inclusion within aid architecture unsubstantiated without robust, contextualized evidence (Matfess, 2022). This deficit leaves Kentalis institutions immobile in formulating streamlined partners and synergetic interventions that reduces inefficiencies, inequality in access, and exposes refugees and the Turkana to continued vulnerabilities.

As a result, this study seeks to close an important knowledge gap by empirically exploring the relationship between NGO peacebuilding interventions and the sustainability of humanitarian interventions in Kakuma Refugee Camp. Using Galtung's Theory of Conflict, the Theory of Resilience, and Resource Dependency Theory as theoretical underpinnings, the study adopts a concurrent mixed-methods design to analyze how peacebuilding interventions shape aid effectiveness, sustainability strategies, challenges, and opportunities. Such empirical evidence for Kakuma Refugee Camp So aims to contribute a context-specific knowledge base for more conflict-sensitive, participatory, and sustainable humanitarian programming in the Camp and other protracted refugee contexts.

1.2 Research Objectives

- i. Examine the specific peacebuilding operations implemented by NGOs within Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya
- ii. Assess impact of NGO peacebuilding operations on Humanitarian Aid Architecture in Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Galtung's Theory of Conflict

This study refers to Galtung's Theory of Conflict which depicts the distinction between negative peace (lack of direct violence) and positive peace (existence of social justice and equality) (Galtung, 1969). In the case of Kakuma, NGO-led peacebuilding initiatives like community dialogues and advocacy have a strong impact on negative peace as they limit the violent clashes among different communities. Such activities are also likely to contribute to positive peace by encouraging fair aid distribution and fostering social cohesion. For example, peace education programs could become instruments for dealing with such issues as structural inequalities, which are also in harmony with Galtung's framework. Besides that, the Theory of Resilience supports the study by highlighting the adaptive nature of the populations living in the areas of crisis. The activities directed towards peace are the main reason for the refugees to be strong and courageous as they provide them with a calm environment where they can easily get the help they need, in spite of the difficulties such as dependence on resources or ethnic conflicts (Van Breda, 2018). The application of these notions creates a sturdy theoretical background that is suitable for dissecting how peacebuilding aids the reduction of conflict-related disruption situations, thus, the whole system of humanitarian aid gets strengthened.

2.2 Empirical Review

Empirical studies on the role of NGOs in peacebuilding operations within refugee camps have grown substantially, with increasing attention paid to their contribution to the effectiveness and sustainability of humanitarian aid in protracted displacement contexts (Kurz et al., 2022; Smit et al., 2020). Scholarly attention has focused on the NGO driven peacebuilding efforts (community dialogues, conflict resolution, violence prevention, peace education) and the perceived impact on the delivery, effectiveness and sustainability of aid in Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya. Although these studies offer contextual evidence, they tend to focus on individual dimensions and not a comprehensive integrated nexus.

Opiyo et al. (2017) used a qualitative case study of Kakuma Refugee Camp to report on experiences of inter-community conflict between refugees and host communities, which often impacts equitable access to humanitarian assistance. The authors emphasized the need to consider the importance of ethnic competition over limited resources in increasing violence and logistical difficulties to deliver aid. While it was not a study of NGO peacebuilding per se, it did highlight the role of community-level peacebuilding interventions, including those run by NGOs, in de-escalating tensions and enhancing the availability of aid. Opiyo et al. (2017) found that conflicts between refugees and hosts are a primary barrier to continued humanitarian programming, and that targeted peacebuilding interventions are needed.

Mwai et al. (2022) examined the strategies used by humanitarian organizations, including NGOs, to meet the needs of refugee children at Kakuma and Kalobeyei camps. They note that NGOs in Kakuma prioritize youth-focused operations such as education and psychosocial support, and that dual-use infrastructure serving refugees and hosts

enhances social cohesion and reduces perceptions of favoritism. They also emphasize youth employment programs as a way of addressing frustrations and reducing the likelihood of violence, and report that involving refugees in project management fosters ownership and a sense of responsibility. Although the study did not focus on peacebuilding as such, these strategies bear on the social cohesion on which aid delivery depends.

Golicha (2017) looked at the activities of NGOs in conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Moyale Sub-County, Kenya. The study notes that peacebuilding forums facilitated by NGOs in northern Kenya significantly reduced inter-ethnic violence and enhanced social cohesion, and that involving local influencers such as elders and youth in peace dialogues made outcomes more sustainable through greater community ownership and legitimacy. On this basis, NGOs' peacebuilding activities can help prevent direct violence and support the sustainability of aid by reducing conflict-induced disruptions in service delivery.

More recent work by Smit et al. (2020) examines community participation and power dynamics in humanitarian aid in Kakuma. The authors emphasize that participation must be substantive rather than superficial if it is to enhance ownership and effectiveness, and that refugee-run services in health and education were more adaptive and community-centered because of the sense of ownership involved. They also point to the way power dynamics and uneven engagement in aid processes can produce perceptions of inequity and exclude marginalized groups, and to coordination gaps among NGOs, government actors and UN agencies that lead to fragmented implementation.

Chris et al. (2021) provided a general overview of NGO involvement in conflict and peacebuilding in Africa. They argue that NGOs are pivotal in fostering peace by establishing platforms for inter-community dialogue that address tensions related to ethnicity, resources and political exclusion, and that structured community dialogues help bridge divides, reduce mistrust and promote reconciliation in ethnically divided settings. They also stress that coordination and collaboration among diverse actors ensures coherence and enhances the impact of peacebuilding efforts, and they document how insurgency limits humanitarian access in conflict-affected areas such as Maiduguri, Nigeria.

Kurz et al. (2022) reviewed evidence on local peacebuilding in protracted crises. They assert that peacebuilding operations are multifaceted and require a comprehensive approach emphasizing local ownership, inclusivity, conflict sensitivity, monitoring and evaluation, and coordination among stakeholders. By involving communities and empowering them to own the peacebuilding process, such operations can address root causes of conflict, build trust and promote reconciliation. The review also notes that peace committees often rely on established social networks, which can leave less-connected groups, such as household heads with no formal education, at risk of exclusion.

All these empirical studies make a good foundation for understanding NGO peacebuilding in Kakuma. But they show some significant areas of weakness. Very few studies provide mixed-methods analyses of the direct connection between peacebuilding and aid sustainability, and few studies do so in the particular multi-ethnic and protracted environment in Kakuma (Smit et al., 2020; Pascucci, 2021). Most studies focus on peacebuilding or aid sustainability (Opiyo et al., 2017; Golicha, 2017; Smit et al., 2020). To fill these gaps, this thesis will quantify the impact of specific NGO peacebuilding operations (community dialogues, violence prevention, peace education) on humanitarian aid effectiveness, sustainability strategies and community outcomes in Kakuma, employing data from the concurrent mixed methods approach.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study's objective was addressed through a concurrent mixed-methods design, which was a combination of cross-sectional, evaluative, and exploratory approaches. The cross-sectional aspect provided a view of the effects of peacebuilding at the very point in time, showing perceptions and results from a wide range of the population of Kakuma. From the scope of NGO activities, the evaluative dimension led to the measuring of the effectiveness of community dialogues and peace education, as two examples, in the furtherance of aid delivery. The exploratory facet made it possible for the researchers to gain knowledge of the issues and of the solutions that the community suggested, through the use of qualitative methods. Ratified survey data can be used at the same time as qualitative data from interviews and discussions helping to get more reliable and valid results.

3.2 Study Area

The research took place at the Kakuma Refugee Camp which is in Turkana County, north-western Kenya, around 100 km from the South Sudan border. Since 1992, Kakuma has been the home of more than 200,000 refugees of various nationalities such as South Sudan, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo as well as a host community of Turkana locals (UNHCR, 2023). It is said that the camp is the study area because of its large and varied population, the longevity of the camp and its intricate socio-political dynamics, which are marked by ethnic tensions

and scarcity of resources, conditions that make it an ideal place to study the peacebuilding-aid nexus. The camp is divided into four zones (Kakuma 1–4), each with distinct demographic and operational characteristics, affecting the way NGO peace activities are carried out.

3.3 Population and Sampling

The population to be studied is the household heads from the Kakuma Refugee Camp, leaders of the host community, and key stakeholders from NGOs and government agencies. A sample of 384 household heads was determined using Cochran's formula (95% confidence level, 5% margin of error), ensuring representativeness across camp zones and nationalities. To select the household heads, stratified random sampling was used, and the strata were based on the camp zones and the ethnic groups so as to reflect the diversity of Kakuma. Furthermore, 19 leaders of the host community were purposively sampled to get the views on the interactions between the refugee and the host community. To acquire qualitative data 28 KIIs were performed with the representatives of the NGOs (e.g., Lutheran World Federation, International Rescue Committee) and government officials, who were selected for their knowledge of peacebuilding and aid delivery. Fifty FGD participants, comprising refugees and host community members, were recruited through purposive sampling to ensure representation of gender, age, and nationality. This multi-level sampling method supplied and ensured the gathering of data in a wide range of areas.

3.4 Data Collection

Three different instruments were used to gather data: structured questionnaires, KII schedules, and FGD guides. The questionnaires were administered to 384 household heads to collect quantitative data about participation in peacebuilding activities and the perception of their contribution to the aid architecture. The questionnaire consisted of Likert-scale items and demographic questions, which were specifically designed to be in line with the second objective. KIIs were conducted with 28 informants, including staff members of NGOs and government officials, to discuss the challenges and the success of the operations in the peace process. FGDs were composed of 50 participants in groups of 8–12, who were allowed to discuss community perceptions and propose measures. The data were collected between March and June 2025, and trained enumerators were responsible for ensuring that the data were consistent and culturally sensitive.

3.5 Data Analysis

Quantitative data from questionnaires were processed using SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics were used as the main tool for the data, including participation rates and perceptions expressed in terms of percentages and frequencies. To look for possible relationships between the variables under study, correlation analyses (Pearson's r) were conducted. As a result, relationships were found between peacebuilding activities and outcomes in the aid architecture, for example, such as safety and coordination. Thematic analysis was applied to qualitative data from interviews and focus groups, drawing on Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step procedure: familiarization, coding, theme generation, review, definition, and reporting. The participants found themes dealing with improved cohesion and issues of discrimination. The mixing of quantitative and qualitative evidence was used as a method to confirm the interpretation of the impacts of peacebuilding in their entirety.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

To make sure of validity, the data collection instruments were tested with a small sample ($n=20$) in Kakuma to improve the clarity and relevance of the instruments. The content validity was recognized by the expert review of supervisors from Masinde Muliro University. The reliability was secured through the use of Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha=0.82$ for questionnaire items), which showed that the questionnaire had internal consistency. Quantitative data could be authenticated through cross-verification with field notes while qualitative results were member-checked with FGD participants to help maintain accuracy.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) provided ethical approval. Every participant was given the opportunity to give their informed consent and take part in the study hence their participation was voluntary and they were also granted the right to withdraw at any time. The data were kept confidential by means of anonymization, that is, people were identified by codes rather than names, and the records were stored securely. No rewards were given in order to prevent any kind of pressure on the participants, while the enumerators who were well trained and knew the local languages ensured that there was cultural sensitivity. The ethical issues raised in the study were among others the possible re-traumatization during FGDs which has been addressed by the provision of psychosocial support services.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Results of the Study

The people who answered the study were from Kakuma Refugee Camp and the shared host community in Turkana County, Kenya. The sample consisted of 384 household heads who were surveyed, where 98.2% (377 valid responses) participated, along with 28 KIIs and 50 FGD respondents. Gender-wise, there were almost equal numbers of the two sexes. The percentage of men was 51.3% (n=193), while that of women was 48.7% (n=184), which indicates that gender equity was maintained in the selection of the sample. Different age groups were included in the study, the largest group being the one from 26 to 35 years (38.5%, n=145), followed by 36 to 45 years (24.7%, n=93), and two other groups, i.e. 18–25 years (18.6%, n=70) and over 45 years (18.2%, n=69), with almost equal numbers of respondents. The nationality information highlights the great variety of people living in Kakuma: 39.8% (n=150) of the respondents were South Sudanese, 28.4% (n=107) were Somali, 18.3% (n=69) were Congolese, 8.5% (n=32) were Ethiopians, and the rest were from some other countries, such as Burundi and Sudan, which together with the mentioned ones make up the refugee community. The education levels of the population were: 42.7% (n=161) had primary education, 29.4% (n=111) had secondary education, and 18.6% (n=70) had no formal education. This shows that literacy levels are quite different and this will certainly have an impact on the people's participation in the peacebuilding process. The average time of being in Kakuma was 8.7 years, and the largest group, 31.6% (n=119), had been there for more than 10 years, which is an indication of a long-term refugee situation. These different characteristics of people constitute a strong basis for evaluating how the theme of peacebuilding affects people in different settings.

Table 1

Summary of Respondent Demographics in Kakuma Refugee Camp

Demographic Category	Description	Percentage (%)	Number (n)
Gender	Male	51.3%	193
	Female	48.7%	184
Age Group	18–25 years	18.6%	70
	26–35 years	38.5%	145
	36–45 years	24.7%	93
	Over 45 years	18.2%	69
Nationality	South Sudanese	39.8%	150
	Somali	28.4%	107
	Congolese	18.3%	69
	Ethiopian	8.5%	32
	Other (e.g., Burundian, Sudanese)	5.0%	19
Education Level	No formal education	18.6%	70
	Primary	42.7%	161
	Secondary	29.4%	111
	Tertiary	9.3%	35
Length of Stay	< 5 years	25.7%	97
	5–10 years	42.7%	161
	> 10 years	31.6%	119

4.1.1 Awareness of NGO Operations

Survey data uncovered a broad range of understanding of the NGO operations held among the refugees in Kakuma Refugee Camp. Out of the 377 people surveyed, 39.1% (n=147) said they were fairly aware, 37.8% (n=142) were very aware, while 23.1% (n=87) were only slightly aware. The distribution shows that over three-quarters (76.9%, n=290) of the respondents have at least moderate awareness, which is in line with the presence of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), International Rescue Committee (IRC), and World Food Programme (WFP). Nevertheless, this level of awareness also points to the fact that there remain areas of possible neglect, so some groups could be at risk of being left out. The results of the surveys are confirmed by the interviews, with an NGO officer saying,

“We provide food, water, shelter, and healthcare, education, and training apart from that we also provide training and education for self-reliance.” (NGO Officer, 7th February, 2026).

Another officer spoke about the work on the ground:

“We put the donor commitments that are made at the global level into community-specific interventions such as the development of skills.” (NGO Officer, 2026).

They agree with the relief-development model of hybrid nature as mentioned by Aall and Helsing (2021) which notes NGOs' double concentration in Kakuma.

4.1.2 Perceived Effectiveness of NGO Activities

According to the evaluations that were done, it was found how effective the NGOs are at addressing the problems of the refugees. The assessment of the organization's activities as effective was made by 41.4% (n=156) of the respondents, while 37.9% (n=143) regarded them as very effective, which means that the positive responses summed up to 79.3% (n=299). Only 20.7% (n=78) of them were neither for nor against the issue indicating that most of them agreed, but there was still some space for improvement. The interviews with the NGO officers gave us information about their evaluation methods, the NGO officer explaining,

"We rely on monitoring and evaluation frameworks with well-defined indicators and annual evaluations to decide on the success of the program". (NGO Officer, 8th February, 2026)

Another one supported this with community feedback:

"Interaction with beneficiaries allows us to get refugee opinions." (NGO Officer, 8th February, 2026)

A government official also concurred,

"The NGOs' in-depth reports which we verify with our documentation, guarantee transparency." (Government Officer, 8th February, 2026)

These results are in line with Abdirahman (2022) who emphasizes participatory evaluation as a significant factor of accountability in refugee settings.

4.1.3 Satisfaction with NGO Services

The satisfaction with the NGO services was high, as shown by 39.1% (n=150) of the respondents who said they were satisfied and 37.9% (n=146) who said they were very satisfied, which means that the respondents who gave positive feedback amounted to 77.0% (n=296) (Figure 4.9; Section 4.4.2). Nonetheless, as many as 23.0% (n=88) did not take sides with the issue, that is, they were neutral with regard to it, suggesting that only some groups were fully convinced. A KII gave positive impacts of the event:

"Indeed, we rebuilt the shelters after the fire in 2022 at Kakuma 3 and used fire-retardant materials for the shelters. We provided training to 50 young people, who are now employed by the NGOs." (KII, 8th February, 2026)

This is a clear demonstration of real benefits such as training and hiring processes that lead to the satisfaction of the respondents. The presence of the neutrals indicates a need for further information dissemination so as to reach not only the less satisfied but also those who might be unaware of such efforts, thus enabling them to be compatible with the view expressed by Colombo and Pavanello (2017) on the issue of inclusive service delivery.

4.1.4 Engagement in NGO Decision-Making

The engagement of local people in decisions of NGOs was considerable but diverse. Out of the surveyed people, 39.1% (n=150) stated that NGOs engaged the community to a large extent, 37.9% (n=146) felt complete engagement, and 23.0% (n=88) saw engagement only to a small extent. Key informant interview (KII) indicates that

"Peace forums bring women, youth, elders, and former militia together to prevent conflicts over resources". (KII, 9th February, 2026)

This is consistent with Amina's (2020) assertion that participatory frameworks promote ownership. However, the 23.0% reporting low engagement indicates gaps in participation, especially for those who are marginalized, e.g., as recognized by Colombo and Pavanello (2017).

4.1.5 Participation in NGO Programs

NGO programs saw high community participation with 82.8% (n=318) of respondents reporting that they were actively involved in various activities such as vocational training, health workshops, peacebuilding initiatives, and community agriculture projects. Only 17.2% (n=66) of respondents stated that they did not participate, which is an indicator of strong community engagement. Survey respondents reported that the programs had positive impacts on them, e.g., via employment after vocational training, reduced ethnic tensions through peacebuilding programs, and improved family health by nutrition initiatives. A KII pointed out that we

"partner with UNHCR and local governments through coordination meetings to streamline interventions". (K11, 9th February, 2026)

This type of cooperation, that Adem et al. (2018) also emphasize, allows program reach as well as efficiency to be enhanced.

4.1.6 Associations between Participation and Education Level

The cross-tabulation method was used to study the connection between participation of respondents in NGO programs and their education levels (Table 4.2; Section 4.4.5). All respondents with tertiary education ($n=115$, 100%) were engaged in activities, followed by 88.6% ($n=101$) of those with high school education, 77.2% ($n=88$) with primary education, and 33.3% ($n=13$) with no education. Non-participation was more common among individuals with a low level of education: 66.7% ($n=26$) with no education and 22.8% ($n=26$) with primary education. The Chi-Square test confirmed that there is an association between these variables ($\chi^2=97.264$, $df=3$, $p<0.000$) which means that higher education levels are likely to lead to more participation (Table 4.2). KIIs suggested that the educated refugees might be the first to get the news about programs and such could be the reasons they feel they have more power to participate.

Table 2

Cross-Tabulation of NGO Program Participation and Education Level

Participation	None	Primary	High School	Tertiary	Total
Yes	13 (33.3%)	88 (77.2%)	101 (88.6%)	115 (100%)	317
No	26 (66.7%)	26 (22.8%)	13 (11.4%)	0 (0%)	65
Total	39	114	114	115	384

Caption: Table showing the relationship between NGO program participation and education level ($\chi^2=97.264$, $p<0.000$), with higher education linked to greater participation.

4.2 Discussion

The study's findings reveal that after the NGO-driven peace-building measures in the Kakuma Refugee Camp, the situation became quite sustainable for the people living in the camp since the aid delivery was consistent. This is evidenced by the high level of participation in community dialogues that amounted to 82.8%. These programs, among other interventions, appear to have immense potential to create social cohesion and thus have been able to address the prevailing issue of ethnic tensions in the camp.

This community engagement approach is in line with the conclusions that Kurz et al. (2022) drew from their research, which finds that NGO-facilitated dialogues in such post-conflict settings result in the empowerment of community members to settle conflicts together, thus lessening the interruptions to aid delivery. Since various nationalities live side by side in Kakuma (such as, the South Sudanese make up 39.8% and the Somali 28.4%), and resources are scarce, it is evident that such conversations open ways to build trust and solve problems together. This is also the position of Chris et al. (2021) in their research of NGO mediation in African conflict zones. The results of the study indicate that the issue activities are alleviating the conflict that surrounds the camp, but this they do also indirectly by laying the basis of the long-term sustainability of aid through the creation of inclusive platforms for refugees and host communities.

An interdependence between dialogue involvement and the state of safety as perceived (78.6% witnessed improvements) indicates the role of peacebuilding in the architecture of humanitarian aid, the role which it plays in ensuring that secure environments are created so that the aid is accessed. The correlation here is strong enough to suggest that NGO violence prevention measures such as workshops and patrols, along with direct support for aid equity and continuity, may be the cause of the improvements. Matfess (2022) similarly observes that NGOs play a crucial role in peacebuilding, particularly where government institutions are weak or ineffective. Along similar lines, Adetula et al. (2021) show that regional bodies such as ECOWAS have been instrumental in mediating conflicts and fostering regional cooperation in West Africa. Moreover, in Kakuma, where there are frequent clashes between ethnic groups over resources (Opiyo et al., 2017), the Chi-Square results confirm that inclusive dialogues help lessen the risk of vulnerable groups, which is consistent with the view of Huss and Labonte (2018) on community-driven peacebuilding being a factor in resilience. Nevertheless, the 21.4% reporting of continued safety concerns indicates the existence of security gaps, especially in the more isolated parts of the camp area that seem to be less affected by peacebuilding activities as they can only reach a limited number of people, thus having minimal impact, which is consistent with Smit et al.'s (2020) observation of uneven engagement in Kakuma's aid processes.

Respondents' proposals for the development of education for peace and youth employment programs have progressively shed more light on the possible ways of providing sustainable aid. Over a half of the respondents (56.3%) gave the highest rating to peace education, citing among other things that it had raised awareness about conflict resolution. The research findings are consistent with Omondi (2017) and Zziwa et al. (2021), who document and highlight the role of peace education in promoting understanding and reducing ethnic conflict in Kakuma. Youth employment recommendations deal with economic frustrations which Mwai et al. (2022) also emphasize, advocating youth employment programs to reduce the likelihood of violence. The descriptive examination reveals 56.3% consensus on the proposition of conflict prevention and 46.0% - on negotiation effectiveness that are in line with Chris

et al. (2021), who identify NGOs as pivotal in establishing platforms for inter-community dialogue and stress that coordination among actors enhances the impact of peacebuilding. Advocacy activities (with 59.8% positive impact) have a correlation with the conclusions of Nyang'aya and Majanga (2018), who observe that NGOs advocating through UNHCR and international platforms often succeed in driving financial commitments and procedural reforms. Relief assistance (63.2% well-being improvement) is in line with Nyang'aya and Majanga (2018), who highlight the critical role of NGOs in delivering effective humanitarian assistance, such as food and healthcare, in Kakuma.

FGD qualitative evidence indicates that there was improved unity among community members despite the fact that discrimination as one of the main problems was still in place (79.3%) and there were also problems such as poor coordination (44.8%), which led to the fact that the distribution of aid was inequitable. These obstacles are very close to what Pascucci (2021) found in Jordan, where unequal access to resources was the root cause of tensions, and what Özdora-Akşak and Dimitrova (2021) report for Turkey, where stringent government oversight restricts NGO autonomy and complicates aid delivery. In Kakuma, if there is bad coordination, the distribution of aid will be fragmented. That is a point that Adem et al. (2018) make in showing that, without stronger coordination mechanisms, aid delivery becomes less effective and more costly. Theoretical support coming from Galtung's Theory of Conflict is what constructs these findings: such modes of interaction as dialogues are conducive to the achievement of the stage of negative peace (the condition of violence absence) and that of positive peace (the presence of equity), however, at the same time discrimination as one of the constituent features of the very paradigm of structural violence is a factor hindering the realization of these ideals. Resilience Theory unveils the mechanism through which peacebuilding practices develop the adaptive capacities of the beneficiaries though the question of resource dependence limits the scope of scalability since donors always have an impact on whether the program will continue or not (Hilhorst, 2018; Pascucci, 2021).

Several more general aspects may include the necessity of aid that is sensitive to conflicts in the case of long-term crises. Compared to Dadaab (Omuthe, 2015), Kakuma is much more heterogeneous and therefore requires interventions that are more specific, like those described by Opiyo et al. (2017) and Wardeh and Marques (2021). Positive features of the research are, among others, exceptionally high response rates (98.2%) and triangulation, while there are also weaknesses such as self-reported bias, which indicates the need for future longitudinal studies. On the whole, though peacebuilding is one of the ways NGOs utilize to ensure the sustainability of aid, the presence of systemic barriers makes it necessary to come up with comprehensive solutions that can effectively confront such barriers.

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The research shows that peacebuilding activities of the NGOs can firmly support the system of humanitarian aid in Kakuma by lessening the conflicts through activities such as trust building, which in turn gives the possibility of more fair aid distribution. The role of community dialogues and peace education in this context is to mitigate resource-based tensions. On the other hand, factors such as poor coordination with government agencies and unfair aid distribution not only hinder the progress of the overall aid system but also enrich the already existing vulnerable groups with the risk of being left out and even getting involved in social unrest, which leads to weakening trust in the aid framework.

5.2 Recommendations

In order to invigorate NGO peacebuilding operations and make them more efficient in Kakuma Refugee Camp, my suggestion would be that NGOs commit to even more decentralized initiatives by improving participatory structures that have the populations living in refugee areas and the host communities involved throughout their peacebuilding processes. Organizations have a major role to play in the inclusion, especially of the marginalized, such as women, youth, and the minority ethnic communities. This way, they can also ascertain social equity in terms of representation and benefits. Apart from that, the initiatives need to be addressed in the way where contextual conflict drivers become the focus, and the curricula of peace education should be not only embedded in schools but also in community centers with content that is culturally sensitive. Moreover, NGOs need to equip adequate resources to form a long-term alliance with government agencies and local institutions. This will help to not only synchronize peacebuilding efforts with national frameworks but also improve the support of policies. Apart from funding, more sustainable options including the multi-donor pools and community-driven resource mobilization strategies can be implemented to fill the existing gaps in program continuity and coverage. Besides that, NGOs should shift to the integration of the peacebuilding models that combine education, therapy, and economic empowerment for the holistic alleviation of conflict root causes. The review of the monitoring system must consider, among other factors such as sensitivity to conflict and long-term social impact, present progress in a more effective manner.



Declaration of Interest

The authors declare that they do not have any known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Funding Declaration

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

REFERENCES

- African Development Bank. (2020, April). *Road safety framework and guidelines*. Infrastructure and Urban Development Department.
- Almaiah, M. A., Al-Otaibi, S., Shishakly, R., Hassan, L., Lutfi, A., Alrawad, M., et al. (2023). Investigating the role of perceived risk, perceived security and perceived trust on smart m-banking application using SEM. *Sustainability*, 15(13), Article 9908. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15139908>
- Benbasat, I., & Barki, H. (2007). Quo vadis TAM? *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, 8(4), 211–218.
- Bhattacharjee, A. (2001). Understanding information systems continuance: An expectation-confirmation model. *MIS Quarterly*, 25(3), 351–370.
- Burton-Jones, A., & Straub, D. W., Jr. (2006). Reconceptualizing system usage: An approach and empirical test. *Information Systems Research*, 17(3), 228–246.
- Chang, S.-C., & Tung, F.-C. (2008). An empirical investigation of students' behavioural intentions to use the online learning course websites. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 39(1), 71–83.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2023). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. SAGE Publications.
- Davis, F. D. (1989). Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of information technology. *MIS Quarterly*, 13(3), 319–340.
- Davis, F. D., Bagozzi, R. P., & Warshaw, P. R. (1989). User acceptance of computer technology: A comparison of two theoretical models. *Management Science*, 35(8), 982–1003.
- Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. (1975). *Belief, attitude, intention, and behavior: An introduction to theory and research*. Addison-Wesley.
- Goodhue, D. L., & Thompson, R. L. (1995). Task–technology fit and individual performance. *MIS Quarterly*, 19(2), 213–236.
- Hair, J. F., Babin, J. B., Anderson, R. E., & Black, W. C. (2019). *Multivariate data analysis* (8th ed.). Cengage Learning. <https://www.cengage.uk/c/multivariate-data-analysis-8e-hair-babin-anderson-black/9781473756540/>
- King, W. R., & He, J. (2006). A meta-analysis of the technology acceptance model. *Information & Management*, 43(6), 740–755.
- Land Transport Regulatory Authority. (2024). *Annual performance report 2023/2024*.
- Legris, P., Ingham, J., & Collette, P. (2003). Why do people use information technology? A critical review of the technology acceptance model. *Information & Management*, 40(3), 191–204.
- Matemba, E. D., Li, G., Gogan, I. C. W., & Maiseli, B. J. (2020). Technology acceptance model: Recent developments, future directions, and proposal for hypothetical extensions. *International Journal of Technology Intelligence and Planning*, 12(4), 315–348.
- Motsi, L., Chipangura, B., & Musanhi, N. (2023). A model for the adoption of transport management systems in the South African taxi industry. *South African Journal of Information Management*, 25(1), Article a1713. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajim.v25i1.1713>
- Ngumbi, D. N. (2016). *A model for vehicle tracking and monitoring systems adoption in the Kenya Police Service* [Master's thesis, Strathmore University]. <https://su-plus.strathmore.edu/handle/11071/4845>
- Nyamawe, A. S., & Mboosso, E. C. (2014). Road safety: Adoption of ICT for tracking vehicles' over-speeding in Tanzania. *International Journal of Computer Applications*, 96(16), 12–15. <https://doi.org/10.5120/16877-6876>
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2011). *Research methods for business students* (4th ed.). Pearson.
- Sumner, E., & Yildirim, S. (2015). Exploring user acceptance of an electronic performance support system. *Performance Improvement Quarterly*, 27(4), 29–48. <https://doi.org/10.1002/piq.21178>
- Taber, K. S. (2018). The use of Cronbach's alpha when developing and reporting research instruments in science education. *Research in Science Education*, 48(6), 1273–1296.



- Tavasoli, M., Sarrafzadeh, A., Khaleghi, M., Zakaria, M., Barahouei Pasandi, H., & Karimoddini, A. (2025). Data communication challenges of connected and automated vehicles in rural areas. *IEEE Access*, 13, 29220–29251. <https://doi.org/10.1109/ACCESS.2025.3539598>
- Venkatesh, V., & Davis, F. D. (2000). A theoretical extension of the technology acceptance model: Four longitudinal field studies. *Management Science*, 46(2), 186–204.
- Venkatesh, V., Morris, M. G., Davis, G. B., & Davis, F. D. (2003). User acceptance of information technology: Toward a unified view. *MIS Quarterly*, 27(3), 425–478.
- World Bank. (2017). *The high toll of traffic injuries: Unacceptable and preventable*. <https://hdl.handle.net/10986/29129>
- World Health Organization. (2023). *Global status report on road safety 2023*. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240086517>
- Yamane, T. (1967). *Statistics: An introductory analysis* (2nd ed.). Harper and Row.