



WARRIORS TO PEACE GUARDIANS FRAMEWORK KENYA

Overview

A unique partnership of Kenyan and US volunteer organizations, pastoralist communities, and Kenyan county government have come together to design a project to address deadly and intractable pastoralist violence. This project builds on the success of the Laikipia Peace Caravan, and takes its most effective strategies to next level. Mediators Beyond Borders (MBB) participates as catalysts, mentors, trainers, and coordinators in supporting the development of a strong pastoralist network that can effectively manage conflict at the grassroots.

The Kenyan Project team consists of the following contributing organizations:

- Mediators Beyond Borders (MBB)
- Kenya Pastoralist Network (KPN)
- Peace Guardians (Local Kenyan volunteers)
- Rotary clubs (Kenya & U.S.) – primary donors
- Local government and police
- Regional government and police
- National government

Context

For pastoralists (nomadic herders) in the arid and semi-arid lands of Kenya, harsh conditions threaten their lives and their herds, often the sole source of livelihood. Warriors who kept the group safe and who rustled cattle when needed were celebrated, as this could mean survival. But modern conditions – easy access to weapons, arbitrary boundaries, disappearing water and grazing due to climate change – have escalated the violence within those traditions into widespread death and destruction. Shrinking resources to keep the herds alive disrupts cooperative grazing patterns and pits these herding groups against each other, and revenge cycles keep the violence going. The changes bring the pastoralists into closer contact and similar conflict with farmers in villages. And warriors' desperation, high mobility, and skill with weapons make them easy targets for recruiting into the violent commercial rustling markets and as agents of corrupt politicians accomplishing political goals through violence.

And while Kenyan society is generating economic success, it isn't reaching the pastoralists. Development in their areas rarely provides access to water, much less sanitation, schools or health care. Inadequate road building keeps them isolated from towns with services and other possibilities for livelihood. Written off as violent, backward people, pastoralists cannot count on police response to replace violent self-protection, nor has there been consistent political action to address the severe development deficits in pastoral lands. Pastoralists remain locked in a cycle of scarcity and violence with little ability to imagine any other option.

Rationale: Building on success

Kenya Pastoralist Network (KPN) saw a way out and has been effectively building peace among pastoralists since 2007. The network is registered as a Trust in Kenya and, when there is a crisis, it mobilizes a network of men and women from the involved pastoralist ethnic groups – some are former warriors – who have also gained status by working in urban centers (“the professionals”). They speak with the power of those who have “been there” and are “sons and daughters,” and they model co-existence; with unique access, they convene and guide warring groups to deescalate the conflict and replace revenge cycles with joint decision-making bodies, early warning systems, and new norms that celebrate peaceful conduct and punish rustling.

KPN first invited MBB to support their efforts in early 2009, and the Kenya Initiative was formally established in 2012. Members of MBB made multiple trips to assess how MBB could contribute to KPN, and both KPN and MBB-KI members were involved in a participatory action research project in 2014 to determine what makes KPN’s approach most effective. The discovery phase of the project revealed that MBB could bring multiple requisite skills and expertise to support KPN in scaling up their peacebuilding activities.

Research on the most successful of these efforts, the Laikipia Peace Caravan, found outcomes sustained in Laikipia for five years, including:

- The number of conflict-related deaths has been almost zero
- Communities now help return lost or stolen livestock to other communities
- Weekly inter-ethnic peace committee meetings with women, elders and youth – call them **peace guardians** – discuss issues, share information, and largely use restorative justice processes to resolve disputes, keep the peace and manage criminal activities
- Children were able to return to school and new schools have been built
- The communities are growing wealthier and economic activity has increased
- Peace guardians respond to early signs of conflict and have become peacebuilders for surrounding communities

These outcomes reflect peacebuilders’ greatest goal, not just the absence of fighting, but **positive peace** – where relationships are restored, social systems serve the entire inter-ethnic community, and there is constructive resolution of conflict.

While more development is still needed to solidify the positive peace in Laikipia North, this is a firm foundation. This project is designed to take the next step: **spread the peace**. Laikipia is bordered by Baringo, Isiolo and Samburu counties, which share pastoralist ethnic groups and conflict drivers. Insecurity in one quickly becomes a threat to all. Laikipia peace guardians and the KPN network are uniquely positioned to transform pastoralist violence cycles in Baringo, Isiolo and Samburu counties. Supported by the public-private partnership proposed in this project, the Laikipia peace guardians will employ Laikipia Peace Caravan methods and link grassroots peace work to District Peace Committees and other new decentralized government structures for effective, integrated conflict prevention and response, and for the development needed for healthy communities.

Objectives

- Increase the skills and number of pastoralist peace guardians who prevent and manage violence in their communities and teach this to other pastoralist groups
- Generate development and improve livelihoods for pastoralists to remove key conflict drivers and promote positive peace
- Create civil society focus on ensuring that the government's peace infrastructure functions effectively and is coordinated with grassroots peace activity
- Improve police and security response to violence and crime in pastoralist communities
- Disseminate peace-sustaining practices from Laikipia North to areas of pastoralist violence in Baringo, Samburu and Isiolo counties
- Increase the coordination of peace-sustaining practices across the four counties of Laikipia, Baringo, Samburu and Isiolo at the County government and grassroots levels

Activities

The project team will accomplish its objectives through the following activities.

Strengthen and expand the cadre of community peace guardians: The Laikipia peace guardians have asked to build a larger cadre with deeper skills and knowledge. This will be created through a cascaded conflict resolution training and mentoring system. Based on KPN's and the peace guardians' requests, Mediators Beyond Borders and Rotary will train KPN and peace guardian professionals in advanced techniques such as managing public dialogue, trauma-sensitive facilitation, neurophysiology, eliminating bias, achieving positive peace, and training methodology. Then KPN and the trainers will jointly design the curriculum for KPN to carry forward to community peace guardians. Benefits of all trainings will be extended by all trainers mentoring their trainees throughout the project's life.

Development to reduce conflict drivers: The project will address these conflict drivers through three means:

- Civic education to identify government sources of funds for development, women and youth, along with advocacy skills training for communities to effectively access those funds
- Convening Laikipia Peace Caravan professionals and engaging them to influence the government to provide development, such as bore holes, boarding schools, markets, roads, and dispensaries
- Building improved practices for pastoralists to get more out of grazing areas, diversify feed sources, improve livestock health and hardiness, and retain more profit from the livestock value chain, all of which will improve livelihoods with the existing herds (an expertise of the Rotary Club of Ngong Hills).

Responsive peace infrastructure and security: The project, led in this activity by Local Capacities for Peace, will map civil society in the four counties. This will identify the key civil society actors and their roles and relationship to the government-sponsored District Peace

Committee and any other government entities responsible for peace. Based on the mapping, the team will recommend, and work to put in place, means to strengthen those relationships and coordination. There is also much distrust of police and security, which leads to pastoralists not communicating early warning signs and the police failing to respond to pastoralist violence. The project will facilitate a series of meetings to build trust between these ethnic groups and police and security forces. This would be dovetailed with peacebuilding efforts and support more positive engagement of police and national security services in such activities.

Coordinate county governments: Kenya is at an extraordinary political moment, barely more than two years into implementing a fully restructured, decentralized government. With power in many new hands, there is risk of power competition between counties, but handled well, this can be turned to coordination and responsiveness to constituent needs. **Perhaps no need transcends political borders more than security.** The project will convene targeted officials from the four counties and facilitate planning to increase community and pastoralist security and development.

Building peace: MBB will support KPN in developing new networks of peace guardians in conflict areas training new peace guardians in the Peace Caravan model, convening, and training methods, and the guardians will join the rest of the project team in mapping conflicts, identifying the existing peace network, and designing meetings and peace messages for conflict areas. Locations and implementation will be determined based on funding and conflict assessment. The peace guardians and KPN will convene intra- and inter-ethnic meetings to:

- Address grievances and seek reconciliation between professionals, and between ethnic communities
- Shift attitudes, behaviors and ways of resolving conflict within key conflict areas
- Support warring communities to agree to a set of processes and norms to sustain peace
- Create inter-ethnic conflict prevention and management structures, as described above

KPN and MBB will simultaneously coordinate county governments and convene county elites to reduce political incitement and enhance development to reduce conflict drivers.

As peace is restored and agreements are reached, MBB and KPN will work with partners to help:

- Strengthen relationships with District Peace Committees and police
- Improve productivity of livelihood-critical herds
- Educate ethnic groups to access government development funds

KPN and local peace guardians will be mentored by MBB to repeat these activities in conflict areas of Baringo, Isiolo and Samburu counties for sustainable, self-managed peace. MBB's direct interaction towards these objectives is in its roles as catalyst, connector, trainer of trainers, mentors, and overall facilitator of the process until the local capacity reaches the tipping point towards self-generation.

How each Organization participates in partnership

Kenya Pastoralist Network is a multi-ethnic network of pastoralists working in Kenya's urban centers and volunteering to create and maintain peace in their tribes of origin. Its goals are to promote human security and conflict resolution, eradicate cattle rustling, and develop harmony

and peaceful coexistence in all pastoralist regions. Since its founders began responding to inter-ethnic conflict in 2007, it has mobilized peace caravans in Laikipia, Samburu, Baringo, Turkana, Narok, Nakuru, Tana River, and Isiolo counties, working to create early warning networks, quick response to crises and establishing inter-ethnic committees to maintain peace and cooperation.

Mediators Beyond Borders International is a global organization whose multidisciplinary volunteers build local skills for peace. Its Kenya Initiative has been engaged, by invitation, since 2009 and its US, Kenyan, and UK members integrate innovative techniques with traditional and local methods, adapt their approach to the host country context, design and initiate projects, and mentor local partners until they feel confident to take full responsibility for sustaining activities.

Rotary Clubs of Ngong Hills – Kenya, and North Sacramento – California, United States, and potentially other clubs and districts within Rotary International. The Rotary Clubs have a unique interest in advancing international understanding, goodwill, and peace through a world fellowship of business and professional persons united in the ideal of service.

The Government of Laikipia County (Kenya), particularly through its Ministry of Security, Cohesion and Intergovernmental Relations.

Local Capacities for Peace International is a Kenyan nonprofit organization that promotes and strengthens participatory, conflict-sensitive programming in the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding realms.

Support of the full project, or of discrete activities, is welcome. Thank you for this opportunity to share our ideas and we welcome your feedback and support.

We invite you to contact MBB Kenya Initiative team leaders for further information:

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