Understanding Political Violence among Youth:

Evidence from Kenya on the links between youth economic independence, social integration, and stability

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This research built on and benefited greatly from the foundational work done by the Local Empowerment for Peace Project, Mercy Corps' Evaluation and Assessment of Peace and Conflict research, and the Youth and Conflict Toolkit. This research is a reflection of Mercy Corps' collaborative approach to working across sectors and teams, and of its commitment to evidenced-based learning.

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Executive Summary

Widespread violence erupted in Kenya following the disputed presidential election in December 2007. Incited and abetted by politicians and local leaders, gangs of armed Kalenjin and Kikuyu youth engaged in looting, rioting, and killing in parts of the Rift Valley. Samuel M. was among the youth who joined in the fighting. He recalls:

> [W]hen they announced Kibaki had won, we heard cries from everywhere. I thought they [Kibaki supporters] had been attacked because that day there was tension everywhere…We gathered outside and said we will defend ourselves, we heard that the Kalenjins are coming to fight us! So we went back to our homes but we had already bought *pangas* (machetes) (Insight Share, 2010, p. 39).

Another youth, Peter G. faced similar threats during the violence. His family's business was destroyed and he watched as his uncle was murdered by a group of youth. But he did not resort to violence, despite pressure by his peers to retaliate. He explained:

> I felt that this violence was not supposed to occur. I felt bitter seeing people hurting each other. It showed me that some people are not humane… What I saw there made me speechless and numb; I didn't know what to do (Insight Share, 2010, p. 38).

Like Peter G., the vast majority of youth in Kenya did not get involved in the violence. However, the small number of youth that did had a disproportionately high impact on the stability of their communities and country. The post election violence resulted in the death of 1,500 people, the displacement of 660,000 others, widespread destruction of property and land, and a shattered national fabric (Government of Kenya and PeaceNet, 2011).

Over 70% of the perpetrators of the 2007/8 post-election violence in Kenya were youth (EDC, 2009). Yet only 5% of Kenyan youth engaged in the violence. This highlights the reality that while youth often play major roles in violent conflict, it is typically only a small fraction of the youth population who become involved.

Purpose and Methodology

Mercy Corps recently undertook research to better understand the following questions: What accounts for the differences between the actions of youth like Samuel M. who engage in violence and those such as Peter G. who stay out of it? And how can programs like LEAP best contribute to reducing the risk of violence among youth?

The research aimed to fill gaps in the quantitative evidence on research on youth and conflict. To do this, the study relied primarily on household survey data and used statistical tests identify factors that significantly influence youth's attitudes and behaviors towards political violence and

other measures of stability[1]. The study also used qualitative interview and observation methods to gain first hand perspectives from youth and youth development experts in Kenya on the key drivers of violence.

This research includes data from Mercy Corps' Rift Valley Local Empowerment for Peace (LEAP) project. This project, initiated in January 2009 with funding from USAID, aimed to bridge interethnic divisions and prevent violence from recurring. The intended impact of the LEAP program is increased stability in Kenya, which includes greater interaction and trust, and reduced incidence of violence amongst traditionally conflicting groups. To achieve this, LEAP works with youth to enhance their economic opportunities, strengthen local mechanisms and skills for conflict management, and promote social connections among youth across ethnic and other lines of division. This study sought to test the assumptions underlying the LEAP program logic and the broader theories of change on which they are based.

Key Findings

What makes youth less likely to become involved in violence?

1) **<u>Employment and Income Generation:</u> The research supports the theory that if young people are employed, then they will be less likely to join violent movements for economic gain.**

The following factors related to economic conditions were found to be closely linked to changes to youth's propensity toward violence:

- ***Ability to satisfy basic needs:*** The less often young people have to go without food, water, and other basic needs, the less likely they are to engage in or be disposed towards political violence.

- ***Employment status:*** Having a full or part time job that provides a cash income increases young people's likelihood to disapprove of the use of political violence.

Contrary to the findings from other studies[2] and what was heard from the young people interviewed, the analysis of the quantitative data found no link between perceived disparities in economic conditions between ethnic groups and violence among youth.

2) **<u>Conflict Management and Peacebuilidng Skills:</u> It was unclear whether youth who have the skills and forums to discuss difficult issues are less likely to use violence to solve problems.**

Evidence from the study supporting this theory is sparse, however so was the data available to test it. The results showed that people's freedom of movement increases in locations where more peace dialogues occurred. This finding points to the contributions of the peace dialogues towards mitigating the types of insecurity that affect people's ability to move freely to meet their basic needs and pursue their livelihoods. However, young people's participation in peace dialogues did not influence their levels of trust of or interaction with other Kenyans. One

[1] The main quantitative data sources used were: Household surveys conducted in 2009 and 2011 as part of the Mercy Corps' Local Empowerment for Peace (LEAP) project in Kenya funded by USAID; and Afrobarometer Kenya (Round 4) national household survey conducted in Oct-Nov 2008.
[2] For example, Government of Kenya, Peace & Development Network Trust (2011).

possible explanation for this is that youth were most often included in larger community dialogues rather than stand alone, youth-led dialogues, which may have limited the impact of their participation on their trust levels. The contradictory findings raise questions about if and how efforts to build young people's conflict management skills and support peace dialogues contribute to greater stability. Further testing of these links is needed given the widespread use of such strategies in Mercy Corps' and other agencies' peacebuilding programs.

3) <u>Youth-to-Youth Connections Across Lines of Division:</u> It appears that when youth are socially integrated, then they are less susceptible to involvement in violent groups.

The research showed that several forms of social integration among youth consistently reduce their risk of engagement in violence:

- ***Associational membership:*** Youth who are members of self-help groups exhibit higher levels of trust of other Kenyans than non members[3]. Similarly, youth who are actively involved in religious groups are less likely to engage in political violence.

- ***Collective action****:* People perceive youth as more productive and responsible in locations where youth have engaged in collective action, such as joint income generation or community development projects. More positive attitudes towards youth, in turn, were found to be closely linked to lower levels of reports of youth involvement in violence.

- ***Social identity:*** Youth who give greater priority to their national identity than their group identity – i.e. feel they are a Kenyan first, before their tribal allegiance – are less likely to engage in or approve of political violence.

Two surprising results were found related to social integration. First, the study found no major

> *"Conflict [in the Rift Valley] will only cease when people feel there is more that ties us than separates us".*
>
> - District Peace Committee member, Kericho District, Kenya
>
> Kenyan youth who self-identify as being a Kenyan first were over two times less likely to have engaged in the political violence in 2007/8 than youth who give priority to their ethnic over their national identity.

differences between urban and rural Kenyan youth on measures of trust, social identity, or attitudes towards or involvement in political violence. Second, neither levels of trust or interaction were found to be related to young people's risks of involvement in violence. These findings bring into question the central role that building trust among traditionally conflicting groups is presumed to play in promoting greater stability. Evidence from Kenya reinforces this doubt: History has shown that even high levels of trust are not enough to buttress against the power of outside triggers to stoke hatred and aggression, as was seen during the 2007/8 post election violence.

[3] Youth Self Help Groups are registered community-based organizations with income and /or social development missions. The LEAP project supported self help groups comprised of youth from multiple ethnic groups wherever possible.

What program interventions are most influential?

This study provides evidence of the efficacy of a number of existing peacebuilding program interventions to contribute to higher levels of trust and freedom of movement, and to less accepting attitudes towards political violence among youth. The most influential interventions were the LEAP program efforts that promoted:

- ***Part-time employment for youth***, through support to income generation and cash-for-work activities.

- ***The existence of peace dialogues***, through training community leaders in peacebuilding skills and funding of the dialogues, which were found to be associated with greater freedom of movement.

- ***Youth participation in self-help groups***, via training in leadership and group management skills.

- ***Collective action among youth***, such as community reconstruction projects.

What additional factors do future programs need to consider?

Several influential factors emerged from the study that warrant greater consideration within Mercy Corps' and other agencies' youth and conflict programs:

- ***Political inequality:*** Youth who believe that their group has less influence in politics than others are more likely to approve of and engage in political violence.

- ***Civic engagement:*** Youth who take action to try to address governance problems are less likely to engage in or be disposed towards political violence. The forms of civic engagement measured include joining with others to raise issues, calling in to radio shows, and making complaints to government officials.

- ***Governance:*** Kenyan youth's perceptions of national and local government performance are consistently low, but were not found to directly influence their likelihood to condone or participate in political violence. Rather, the main factor related to risk of engagement in violence appears to be their access to and use of established channels to voice their grievances regarding governance issues.

These findings reinforce the points consistently raised by Kenyan youth that their exclusion from political processes and marginalization from having a say in decisions affecting their lives are major sources of their alienation and anger, and potential push factors toward violence.

"The people representing us [in government] are not youth. We are used by politicians during campaigns, then sidelined after elections."

- Young man, Eldoret District, Kenya

Nearly three out of four Kenyan youth believe that ordinary people can do little or nothing to improve the situation with how government is run. Ensuring youth have constructive avenues for political participation is critical for reducing their risk of resorting to violence to promote political objectives.

Conclusions and Implications

Expanding Program Impact

This study's findings lend support to the further use of economic incentives and building social connections among youth across lines of division as pillars of peacebuilding programs in Kenya and similar contexts. Agencies engaged in peacebuilding efforts should seek to replicate or scale up several of the existing interventions that stood out as the most likely to improve stability. These include creation of both short and longer-term employment opportunities for youth, and support to collective action among interethnic groups of youth.

The research also points to the need to expand young people's political and civic engagement in order to significantly reduce their risk of participation in violent movements, lending support for a cross-sectoral approach in youth and conflict programming. Several Mercy Corps programs in Kenya have already internalized this lesson and are working to create opportunities for youth to influence local governance issues, and to increase young people's voice and representation in political arenas.

Short-term employment generation programs for youth can serve as quick wins for stabilizing violent situations (World Bank 2011). But sustaining such stability requires investing in longer-term job creation that addresses young people's underlying grievances about the lack of meaningful and viable economic opportunities.

Areas for Further Research and Evaluation

Because this study relied largely on the analysis of existing data, it was not able to examine several factors believed to have a major influence on violence among youth. Further research is needed on the types of employment that most influence youth propensity towards violence, the role of manipulation of youth by elites, and the factors that make youth more resilient to outside triggers such as political events or sudden economic crises. Mercy Corps should consider incorporating measures of these factors into its set of indicators and data collection tools for evaluating the impacts of its programs aimed at reducing poverty and conflict.

To expand the understanding of key predictors of violence among youth beyond those apparent in Kenya, it would be valuable to conduct a similar study to this one using data from multiple countries. This would enable Mercy Corps to more rigorously test its youth and conflict program theories, and to better understand the contexts in which they could most appropriately be used to inform program design.

1. Introduction

Rationale

The risks that burgeoning youth populations in developing countries pose to peace and prosperity, if they continue to be economically and socially marginalized, are widely recognized. Yet despite the high levels of investment in youth peacebuilding programs in recent years, there is little evidence on what actually drives young people to participate in violent movements in different contexts, and what strategies are effective in reducing this risk. This represents a critical knowledge gap for Mercy Corps and other agencies that work extensively with youth in countries that are experiencing conflict or struggling to recover from it[4].

Mercy Corps' peacebuilding programs are designed to address the underlying factors that lead young people to become involved in conflict. Towards this end, Mercy Corps has articulated a number of overarching hypotheses, or theories of change which guide its youth and conflict programming[5]. While these theories of change are based on Mercy Corps' and others' research in the peacebuilding field, there remains considerable debate on which factors, including social and economic, contribute towards violence among youth in different contexts. More empirical research in this area is needed to assist Mercy Corps and others in determining if its theories of change regarding youth and conflict hold true, and if so under what conditions.

A better understanding of the key predictors of youth propensity towards violence is important, but not sufficient to guide Mercy Corps' programming[6]. Stronger evidence is also needed on the interventions that show the greatest potential to address the underlying factors identified. This is critical given Mercy Corps' integrated approach to youth and conflict programming, which often incorporates strategies to promote young peoples' economic independence, protection, psychosocial wellbeing, and political voice. To date, few of Mercy Corps' evaluation or research efforts have employed sufficiently rigorous methods needed to establish causal claims regarding the effect of these strategies on measures of stability.[7]

Purpose and Scope

Mercy Corps undertook this research to strengthen its ability to design and scale up effective, evidence-based youth and conflict programs, and to contribute towards filling the above gaps in the knowledge base in the peacebuilding field. The research set out to:

1. Generate evidence on the factors that influence violence among youth. Specifically:
    - What social and economic characteristics make youth more vulnerable to engage in political violence, or be mobilized to do so?
    - What program interventions show the greatest potential to contribute towards greater stability, in the forms of more trust, freedom of movement, and reduced propensity towards violence among youth?

[4] Mercy Corps is currently operating over 50 youth development projects in 20 countries worth approximately $70 million. Nearly all of these are in conflict or post conflict contexts, and 75% have an explicit focus on reducing the risk of young people's participation in violent movements.
[5] A description of Mercy Corps' main youth and conflict theories of change, and how it uses them in its programming, can be found its Youth and Conflict Toolkit (2011).
[6] Predictors refer to the characteristics of the population being researched that are consistently found to influence the outcomes of interests.
[7] A notable exception is Mercy Corps' Evaluation and Assessment of Poverty and Conflict/Fragility Interventions research project.

2. Test the validity of several Mercy Corps youth and conflict program theories of change. Namely:
    - If young people are employed, then they will be less likely to join violent movements for economic gain.
    - If youth have the skills and forums to discuss difficult issues, then they will be less likely to use violence to solve problems.
    - If youth are socially integrated, then they will be less susceptible to manipulation by political elites and violent groups, thus increasing stability.

This study is based primarily on data from Mercy Corps' Local Empowerment for Peace (LEAP) project in Kenya funded by USAID (Jan 2009 – present)[8]. While not solely focused on youth, the LEAP project included a clear strategy for using economic incentives with youth as part of a conflict mitigation program. LEAP is heralded as a successful program with the potential for wider replication (Burbank, 2010). As such, many of the research findings are expected to be applicable to other Mercy Corps youth and conflict programs in Kenya and similar contexts, for example where there are underlying tensions that periodically erupt into violence and/or financial incentives are used to mobilize youth. The study also draws on data from a household survey conducted by Afrobarometer in Kenya in 2008 to further explore the predictors of propensity towards political violence among Kenyan youth[9].

Utility of the Study

The findings from this research are intended to be useful for technical advisors and program staff of Mercy Corps and other organizations working on peacebuilding and economic engagement, and other development initiatives with youth. The research is also aimed at informing donor policies on the most effective interventions, both within Kenya and beyond. The research findings will assist these groups to understand:

- The factors that influence stability: Which of these are current programs adequately addressing? What additional factors do future programs need to consider to achieve the intended impacts on stability?

- The applicability of the theories of change: Under what conditions do they hold true? In what contexts could they most appropriately be used to inform program design?

How this Paper is Organized

Section two of this paper provides an overview of the research context and the theories of change tested, including a review of other relevant assessments and literature on the links between the concepts contained within the theories of change. Section three presents the theories and factors examined, the methodologies used for data collection and analysis, and their main limitations. Section four lays out the major findings from the analysis on the factors most closely related to stability and youth propensity towards violence, along with possible explanations for the relationships (or lack thereof) identified. Section five makes conclusions regarding the validity of the theories of change tested, and suggests possible implications of this study's findings for Mercy Corps' youth and conflict management programming.

[8] See under Section 2.1 for a description of LEAP, and Section 3.1 for details on the data sources.
[9] Afrobarometer is an independent, non-partisan research instrument that measures the social, political and economic atmosphere in Africa. The Round 4 Afrobarometer survey in Kenya was conducted by the Institute for Development Studies (IDS), University of Nairobi. The dataset was retrieved from: http://afrobarometer.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=113&Itemid=62

2. Background to the Study

2.1. Country and Program Context

Post Election Violence in Kenya

In December 2007, Kenya descended into a political, economic, and humanitarian crisis following the disputed presidential elections and resulting violence. The incumbent President Mwai Kibaki claimed victory amid widespread allegations of electoral fraud, setting off a series of protests and violent attacks and reprisals between opposition and Kibaki supporters. This violence reflected the ethnic divisions that have long characterized Kenyan politics. Kibaki's Party of National Unity (PNU) drew its base of support largely from the Kikuyu ethnic group, while the challenger Raila Odinga's Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) was supported by the Luo and Kalenjin.

While Kenya has experienced cycles of election-related violence in recent decades, the scale and consequences of the 2007/8 post election violence were unprecedented. Some 1,500 people were killed and 660,000 were displaced (OCHA Kenya, 2009). The violence affected six out of the eight provinces in Kenya, including both urban and rural areas. The epicenter of the violence was Kenya's Rift Valley Province, which had been the site of longstanding conflicts between the Kikuyu and Kalenjin tribes over political power, economic opportunity, and access to land. The post election violence involved widespread destruction of property and land, with serious consequences on economic activity and food security. Socially, the violence shattered the national fabric of Kenya, exacerbating tension and mistrust along ethnic cleavages (Government of Kenya and PeaceNet, 2011).

Youth played a central role in the post-election violence. Over 70% of the direct perpetrators of the violence were young people (Educational Development Center, 2009). Youth also constituted the majority of victims (Youth Agenda, 2008). It is important to note that the vast majority of youth in Kenya did not get involved in the violence. Only 5% of youth across Kenya reported having used force or violence for a political cause during the time period surrounding the 2007 presidential elections (Afrobarometer, 2008). However, the small number of youth that did had a disproportionately high impact on the stability of their communities and country.

However, youth were not the instigators or the organizers of the violence. It is widely documented that they were largely exploited by politicians to execute violent acts against and evict communities perceived to be foreign, or outsiders (Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, 2008). Most notably, politicians and local leaders incited and paid armed gangs of armed Kalenjin and Kikuyu youth to engage in looting, rioting, and killing in Uasin Gishu District and other parts of the Rift Valley.

In February 2008, former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan brokered a power-sharing agreement between Kibaki and Odingo, which ended the violence. Since then the coalition government has held, and there have been signs of progress towards stability. Most notably, Kenyans voted peacefully for a referendum held on a new constitution in August 2010, which people hoped will ensure more equitable political representation and resource allocation, thereby improving national unity. However, many of the underlying causes that created grounds for the post-election violence remain, particularly in Rift Valley Province.

Underlying Causes of Conflict in Kenya

The violence in 2007/8 was sparked by political manipulation following the election, but was widely understood to be fueled by deeper causes. A number of public polls and studies have generated evidence on Kenyans' perceptions of the underlying causes of conflict that resulted in the post election violence (e.g. Media Focus on Africa, 2009; South Consulting, 2009). The factors most commonly identified within these sources are:

- ***Tribalism / negative ethnicity:*** For most Kenyans, it is the tribe that is perceived to gain when a leader from their ranks ascends to power. This makes some communities willing to resort to violence to support them. However, tribalism is more of a manifestation than a root cause of conflict. It is used by political elites, who appeal to ethnic groups' insecurities over deep seated grievances, such as access to land, political power, development funds and other national resources. As such, ethnicity is an issue that cuts across nearly every other factor believed to fuel tension and conflict in Kenya.

- ***Inequality and unequal distribution of resources:*** More than absolute poverty, disparities in economic conditions between groups are believed to drive conflict in Kenya. Inequality is viewed in ethnic terms. Such inequality is felt to be due to unequal access to land, jobs, infrastructure projects, and other entitlements which are distributed according to ethnically-based patronage systems disproportionately favoring certain groups and geographical locations (Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, undated). These perceptions of skewed development and being discriminated against act as triggers for ethnic rivalry and conflict (Government of Kenya and PeaceNet, 2011).

- ***Competition over land:*** Displacement from and illegal giveaways of land in Kenya during the colonial and post-independence periods have led to sharp inequalities in and disputes over land ownership (Media Focus on Africa, 2009). The fact that Kikuyus and other 'outside' groups are widely believed to have obtained land unfairly in the fertile Rift Valley has been pointed to as a trigger for the intense post-election violence in that Province. Others have argued the conflicting groups had lived side by side for many years, and that the quest for political power, and not land, was the real factor (Commission of Inquiry on Post Election Violence, 2008).

- ***Lack of economic opportunities, especially among youth:*** Frustration is pervasive among the vast majority of Kenya's youth population who are unable to secure meaningful employment, despite their relatively high levels of education. For such youth, the benefits of engaging in violence as a means to gain an income often outweigh the risks (Otieno, 2009). As a result, they are particularly vulnerable to recruitment by ethnically-based gangs, which were effectively mobilized by political leaders in 2007/8.

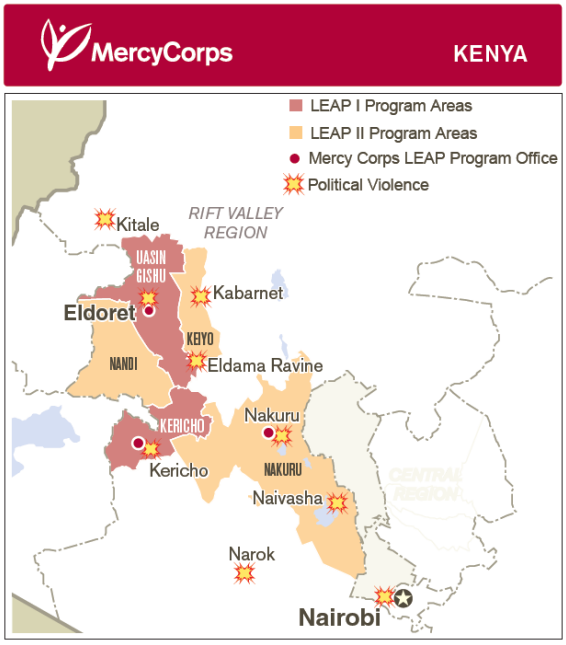
- ***Culture of impunity and corruption:*** The weak rule of law and judicial system in Kenya contribute to violence. Perpetrators and organizers of violence do not fear being convicted, due to the ease of bribing witnesses and judges (Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, undated). A highly visible example of such impunity is the inaction by the Kenyan courts to keep their promise to bring justice to those responsible for the crimes surrounding the 2007/8 violence. As a result, the International Criminal Court issued summonses for six senior Kenyan politicians and government officials for their roles. Ordinary Kenyans' resentment at such impunity and lack of faith in the police and courts drives them to take justice into their own hands, at times through violent means.

- ***Youth exclusion:*** A recent DfID report highlighted that "[w]here youth feel existing power structures marginalise them, violence can provide an opportunity to have a voice" (McLean and Fraser, 2009, p. 4). Youth's lack of voice is manifest at multiple levels in Kenya: within families (e.g. youth do not have a say in how the land is used), at school (e.g. no youth representation on school councils), in public (e.g. youth not given a chance to speak at *barazas* / community meetings), and in the political arena (e.g. lack of representation on local, regional, and national councils). Of these, youth's exclusion from political process represents perhaps the greatest potential push factor toward violence. This is particularly a risk in Kenya, where 75% of youth believe that it is difficult for ordinary people to have their voices heard between elections (Afrobarometer, 2008).

While these are all certainly major, contributing factors to violent conflict in Kenya, they represent the dominant narratives, or received wisdom. It remains unclear which of the factors are actually pivotal in determining incidences of youth participation in violent conflict. Few studies have examined in depth how individual Kenyans' perceptions of these issues, and other conditions, actually influence their attitudes regarding the acceptability of political violence, and their propensity to engage, or be exploited to engage in it.

Mercy Corps' and Partners' Response: Local Empowerment for Peace Project

In order to bridge interethnic divisions and prevent violence from recurring, Mercy Corps and its local partners began implementing the Rift Valley Local Empowerment for Peace (LEAP) project in January 2009[10]. Funded by USAID, the first LEAP phase worked in Uasin Gishu and Kericho, two districts in the Rift Valley that were deeply affected by post-election violence; the second phase (LEAP II) began in July 2010, and has expanded to Keiyo, Nandi, and Nakuru Districts. (See map at right.)

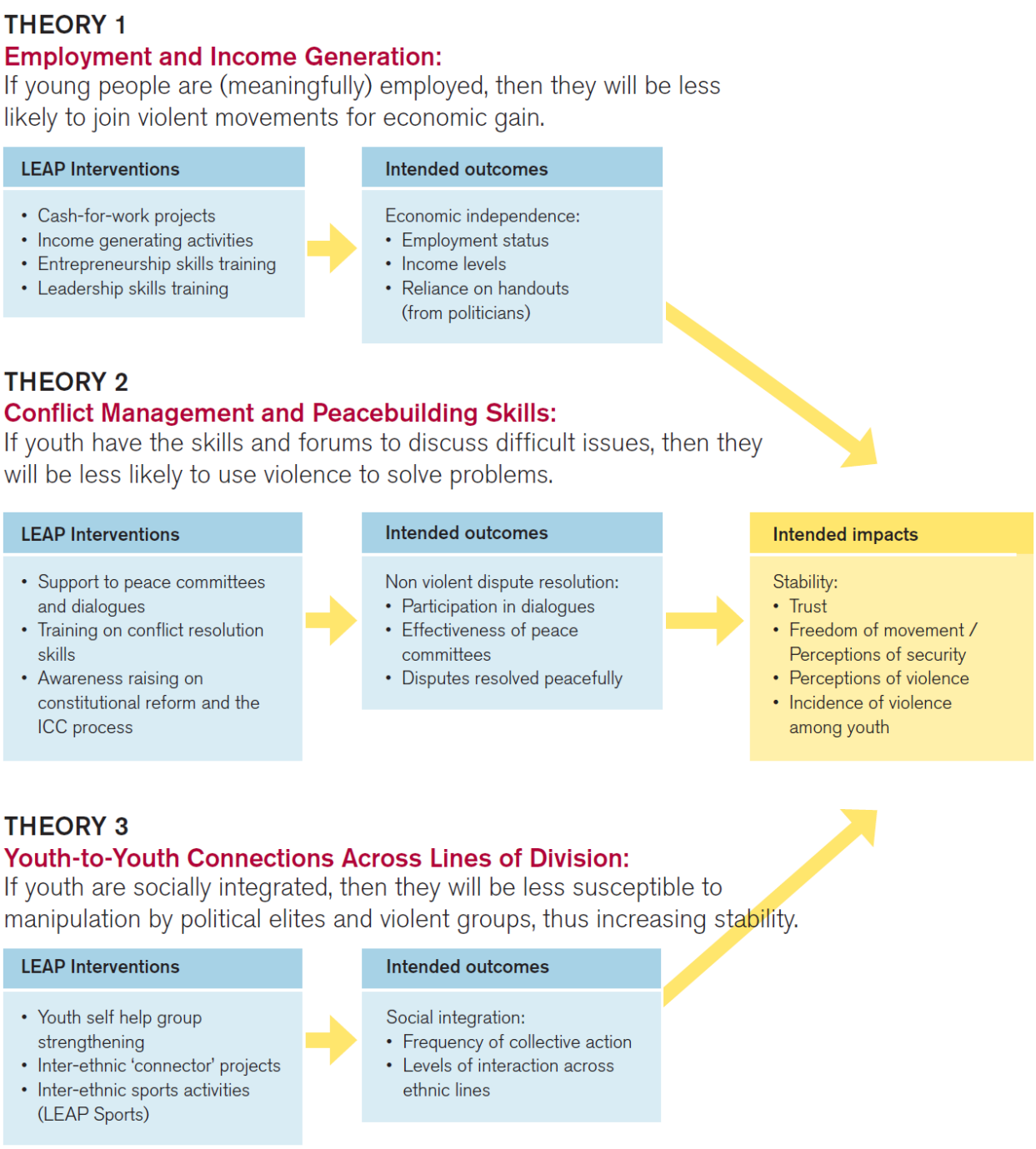


The intended impact of the LEAP program is increased stability in Kenya, which includes greater interaction and trust, and reduced incidence of violence amongst traditionally conflicting groups. To achieve this, LEAP works with youth to enhance their economic opportunities, strengthen local mechanisms and skills for conflict management, and promote social connections among youth across ethnic and other lines of division[11].

These strategies are rooted in three of Mercy Corps' theories of change for its youth and conflict programming[12]. The relationship between the LEAP strategies and the theories of change are illustrated in Figure 1 below.

[10] LEAP I partners: Africa Sports and Talents Empowerment Program (A-STEP) and Youth Consortium Kenya. LEAP II partners: Kericho Youth Center, Wareng Youth Initiative, and A-STEP.
[11] In Kenya, youth are officially defined as persons aged 18–35 years. This is the definition used by LEAP and this study.
[12] The theories of change tested were set out by Mercy Corps' Conflict Management Group in its Youth and Conflict Toolkit (2011). However, they are continually being updated and adapted to different contexts.

Figure 1: Mercy Corps' Youth and Conflict Theories of Change, and Corresponding LEAP Project Strategies



2.2. Theories of Change Tested

Employment and Income Generation

Theory 1: If young people are employed, then they will be less likely to join violent movements for economic gain.

LEAP's efforts to improve economic opportunities for Kenyan youth are based on the belief that this will reduce the likelihood of young people's mobilization and exploitation by political elites for future violence. Some existing evidence supports this proposition. Youth make up over 60% (11 million) of the Kenyan population. Yet youth unemployment is over 20% -- twice the adult average, and 75% of the out-of-school youth do not have regular, full time employment (Kenya Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, 2008). Investigations into the post election violence found extensive evidence of political party leaders paying youth to engage in arson, destruction, looting, and killing (Commission of Inquiry on Post Election Violence, 2008). Based on such findings, it is widely concluded that the lack of economic opportunity, widespread idleness and joblessness of youth were the major drivers behind the extensive involvement of youth in the post election violence.

Research outside of Kenya has identified connections between large youth populations, weak economic opportunities, and increased risks of instability. In Sierra Leone, young people's economic situation was found to increase their vulnerability to economic incentives to engage in violent conflict (Humphreys and Weinstein, 2008). Furthermore, research has shown higher incidences of violent conflict among youth who have to rely on their families longer (i.e. have a higher dependency ratio) (Barakat and Urdal, 2008).

However, a number of studies have begun to question the prominence of youth joblessness in explaining their role in violent movements (e.g. Sommers, 2005; Berman, et al., 2009; Beber and Blattman, 2010). The report from the Commission of Inquiry on Post Election Violence in Kenya (commonly known as the Waki Commission) concludes: "[T]he issue is not one of poverty alone. Instead this situation intersects with other phenomena, including that of weak institutions, ethnic polarization, and the willingness of the political class to hire gangs to engage in violence to obtain political power" (Commission of Inquiry on Post Election Violence, 2008, p 25). This illustrates the complexity of the situation, and the need to look at the interactions between economic and other factors influencing young people's attitudes and behaviors towards political violence.

Mercy Corps' widespread use of youth economic development approaches as part of its peacebuilding programs, and the considerable level of debate regarding their impact on stability, it is critical to investigate the types of conflict contexts where economic conditions may be a major factor.

Conflict Management and Peacebuilding Skills

Theory 2: If youth have the skills and forums to discuss difficult issues, then they will be less likely to use violence to solve problems.

Almost all of Mercy Corps' peacebuilding programs include conflict management training for community leaders to help them strengthen their ability to understand, talk about, and address the difficult issues that are leading to violence. LEAP provides youth with a range of tools and skills, including conflict analysis, negotiation, and reconciliation. Importantly, LEAP also supports inter- and intra-community dialogues to provide opportunities for peace actors to use

the skills gained to resolve disputes and address shared problems across ethnic and political fault lines.

There is little existing research that supports' Mercy Corps' theory of change on conflict management skills. In the case of the LEAP project, it is based on assumptions of direct use of the skills and forums developed. That is, if people are equipped with skills (e.g. through trainings), and have an opportunity to apply them (e.g. during community dialogues), they will use them to assist people to reach agreements through non-violent means. Evaluations of other peacebuilding projects carried out by Mercy Corps provide some evidence of this happening. For example, youth trained on conflict management by Mercy Corps in Nepal used their skills to reduce tensions and prevent inter-community violence over land disputes and other triggers of conflict (Mercy Corps, 2008). While not focused on youth, in Iraq, leaders who were trained in negotiation skills solved 130 disputes, are able to point to clear examples of where their interventions have led to a measurable reduction in violent incidents (Mercy Corps, 2011).

Youth-to-Youth Connections Across Lines of Division

Theory 3: If youth are socially integrated, then they will be less susceptible to manipulation by political elites and violent groups, thus increasing stability.

Building connections between youth across lines of division is a common feature of many Mercy Corps peacebuilding programs. The LEAP project does this through support to multi-ethnic sports activities, community reconstruction, and income generation activities, such as small scale agricultural and service enterprises, that aim to demonstrate tangible benefits to coexistence. This 'people-to-people' approach is based on the theory that purposeful, safe interactions build trust, cooperation, and recognition of mutual interests between groups that have been in conflict with each other (USAID/DCHA/CMM, 2011). These strong relationships across ethnic lines in turn are believed to reduce young people's susceptibility to manipulation by elites, who often use negative ethnic stereotypes, misinformation, and demonization of other groups to garner young people's support for violence against others (Mercy Corps, 2011).

Mercy Corps' social integration theory of change is supported by social psychology studies on the "contact hypothesis", which asserts that increased contact between different ethnic groups gives each group more accurate information about the other and thus reduces friction, under certain conditions. Yet the contact theory has been criticized as not sufficiently distinguishing between group and individual relations. Illustrating this is Forbes' (2007) synthesis of research which suggests that increased contact between culturally distinct *groups* in some cases gives rise to more intense conflict, such as competition over resources. Yet *individuals* who get to know each other better generally have higher options of the other.[13]

A youth-to-youth strategy appears to be relevant for the Kenyan context. The youth most involved in the post-election violence in the Rift Valley were from the more isolated, ethnically homogenous areas. Youth in these areas have limited contact with other ethnic groups, and lower levels of access to information. These factors made them particularly vulnerable to recruitment into violence by political and local leaders who used inflammatory statements and hate speeches to dehumanize and breed deep distrust of members of other tribes (Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, undated).

[13] In psychology, this is also considered sub-typing, where through contact, people's opinions change about an individual, but not the group. They are able to keep the group stereotype by putting the individual into a sub category.

3. Data and Methods

3.1. Data Sources

Significant amounts of data have been collected on the LEAP project, the situation of youth in Kenya, and the post-election violence. This research sought to maximize the use of the existing sources to yield a deeper understanding of the LEAP project's impacts on stability, what strategies contributed the most to these, and what additional factors future programs need to address. The main secondary data sources used in this research were:

- Household surveys conducted as part of the LEAP and LEAP II projects:
  - LEAP I baseline household survey, conducted between March and May 2009 among a random sample of 472 respondents in Uasin Gishu and Kericho districts.
  - LEAP I endline household survey, conducted in June and July 2010 among a random sample of 491 respondents in Uasin Gishu and Kericho districts[14].
  - LEAP II baseline household survey conducted in September 2010 reaching a random sample of 1,041 individuals in eight Districts

  Only data from youth respondents was used in the analysis, with the exception of variables such as "adults' perceptions of youth"[15].

- The Afrobarometer Round 4 household survey conducted in Oct-Nov 2008 among a nationally representative, random sample of 1,104 Kenyans. Only data from the youth respondents was used in the analysis.

The use of secondary data was complemented with targeted primary data collection with youth and youth development experts in Kenya[16]. The fieldwork involved key informant interviews and focus group discussions in Kericho and Eldoret Districts with the following groups:

- Youth self help groups (three that were supported by LEAP, and two that were not)
- District Peace Committee members (three groups)
- District Youth Officers (two)
- LEAP local partner staff (Kericho Youth Center, Wareng Youth Initiative, and A-STEP)
- LEAP program staff (Program Manager, Program Coordinator, and M&E Officer)

These methods provided the research with the opportunity to gain first hand perspectives on the factors felt to be drivers of violence among youth in Kenya, and on explanations on possible reasons for the associations found (or not) between the variables tested[17]. Importantly, the primary sources were all people who have an in-depth understanding of, or even personal experience with political violence in Kenya. The information from these sources was essential for enabling the research to accurately interpret the meaning and significance of the findings within their context.

[14] Wherever possible, data from the LEAP II Baseline Survey was used in place of that from the LEAP I End of Project survey, for two reasons: 1) To ensure a more accurate comparison point I. (Especially because the LEAP I End of Project survey was conducted before the constitutional referendum in August 2010, which brought with it heightened tensions between groups, especially in the Rift Valley. 2) To enabled analysis of paired data within the same dataset.
[15] Variables refer to observable characteristics that vary among individuals or locations. In this research, variables are also referred to as factors.
[16] The primary data collection protocols used are included as Appendix 2.
[17] Associations are when a change in one variable is likely to be accompanied by a change in the other.

3.2. Key concepts and variables examined

The selection of variables was guided by the outcomes and impacts contained in the LEAP program theory (see Figure 1 above) and the concepts in the Mercy Corps theories of change.

Dependent Variables[18]

The overall intended impact of the LEAP program is increased stability in Kenya. This research operationalized the definition of stability based on the impact indicators used by LEAP and similar Mercy Corps peacebuilding projects[19]. Table 1 below outlines the dependent variables used to measure stability.

Table 1: Dependent Variables Used in the Research

Dependent Variables	Operational definitions[20]
Propensity towards violence:	
- Attitudes towards political violence	Belief that political violence is acceptable under certain circumstances, or is never justified
- Behaviors / Behavioral dispositions towards political violence	Self-reporting on if respondents personally used force or violence for a political cause during the previous year, or would do so if given the chance
- Perceptions of youth involvement in violence	The extent to which people perceive that youth participate in crime or violence in their communities
Perceptions of security:	
- Freedom of movement	Respondents' score on a scale measuring the extent to which they avoided going to common areas (e.g. to the market, school) due to insecurity
Trust:	
- Level of trust of Kenyans	Respondents' score on a scale measuring the extent to which they would feel comfortable with a proposed series of interactions with a member of a different ethnic group, such as inter-marriage or employment
Perceptions of youth:	
- Positive perceptions of youth	Respondents' score on a scale measuring the extent to which they believe youth to be productive and responsible members of their community

[18] Dependent variables are those not under the experimenter's control, which are believed to be predicted by or caused by one or more other variables (independent variables). In this research the dependent variables are measures of stability, and are the equivalent of the intended program impacts.
[19] One exception is the variable on interaction. This was treated only as an independent variable, as it was not felt to be an adequate proxy for stability. Trust was treated as both a dependent and independent variable to understand its relationship with propensity towards violence (as the dependent variable), based on the assumption that it may be part of the causal chain leading to this ultimate impact.
[20] See Appendix 1 for the questions asked and response options for each variable.

Independent Variables[21]

The intended outcomes of LEAP served as the initial independent variables for this research. Through the literature review and fieldwork, the research identified additional factors reported to be associated with stability-related impacts sought. Where possible, the study incorporated measures of these factors using data from the Afrobarometer survey as independent variables in the analysis. This enabled the research to examine factors beyond those the LEAP project measured and tried to influence, thereby generating insights into what additional leverage points programs like LEAP should attempt to address. Table 2 below lists the independent variables used in the research, and the hypotheses tested for each, which clarifies their presumed relationships with the dependent variable(s)[22]. As shown in the table, many of the specific hypotheses are nested within the three broad theories of change. Testing these hypotheses was the main way in which this research generated evidence on the validity of the overall theories of change.

Table 2: Independent variables used in the research

Independent Variables	Hypotheses
Theory 1: Employment and Income Generation	**If young people are employed, then they will be less likely to join violent movements for economic gain.**
- Ability to satisfy basic needs	Youth within families that have gone without basic needs several times or more within the past year are more likely to engage in/be disposed towards/approve of political violence[23].
- Employment status	Youth who report not having a full or part-time job that pays a cash income are more likely to engage in/be disposed towards/approve of political violence.
- Average income	Youth whose income is lower are more likely to rely on handouts from politicians (thus making them more vulnerable to exploitation).
Theory 2 : Conflict Management and Peacebuilding Skills	**If youth have the skills and forums to discuss difficult issues, then they will be less likely to use violence to solve problems.**
- Existence of peace dialogues	People in locations where peace dialogues have been held will be more likely to report: a) Higher levels of freedom of movement b) Lower perceptions of youth involvement in violence
- Participation in peace dialogues	People who have participated in peace dialogues are likely to have higher levels of trust of other Kenyans.

[21] In a hypothesized cause-and-effect relationship, the independent variable is the cause and the dependent variable is the outcome or effect. In this research, the majority of the independent variables are the equivalent of the intended program outcomes.

[22] A hypothesis is specific statement regarding the relationship between two variables. In the context of this research, they are based on theories of change, which predict causal relationship between broader concepts or phenomenon. Hypothesis tests are done to determine whether the relationships between variables found are likely to be real, or the result of chance.

[23] Together, these three aspects (engagement in, disposition towards, and approval of) reflect the broader concept of 'propensity' towards political violence.

Independent Variables	Hypotheses
- Perceptions of effectiveness of peace committees	People who feel the local peace committees are effective will be more likely to report: a) Higher levels of freedom of movement b) Lower perceptions of youth involvement in violence
Theory 3: Youth-to-Youth Connections Across Lines of Division	**If youth are socially integrated, then they will be less susceptible to manipulation by political elites and violent groups, thus increasing stability.**
Social Integration:	
- Existence of collective action among youth within a community	People in locations where youth have engaged in collective action will be more likely to have: a) Higher levels of trust of other Kenyans b) More positive perceptions of youth c) Lower perceptions of youth involvement in violence
- Social identity (Kenyan versus own ethnic group)	Youth who give greater priority to their group versus national identity will be more likely to engage in/be disposed towards/approve of political violence.
Associational membership:	
- Member of a religious group	Youth who are members of religious or community development groups will be less likely to engage in/be disposed towards/approve of political violence.
- Member of a community or self-help group[24]	Youth who participate in self help groups will be more likely to have higher levels of trust of other Kenyans.
Interaction:	
- Frequency of interaction with other ethnic groups	Respondents' score on a scale measuring the extent to which they had engaged in a range of social and economic activities with members of other ethnic groups in the past three months
Trust:	
- Level of trust of other Kenyans	The higher an individual's level of trust of other Kenyans, the less likely he/she will be to engage/be disposed towards/approve of in political violence.
- Level of trust in local institutions	The greater an individual's level of trust of local institutions (local representative council and police) the less likely he/she will be to engage/be disposed towards/approve of in political violence
Others variables tested	
Civic Engagement:	
- Level of engagement in efforts to address governance problems	Youth who have taken actions in the past year to address problems they see with how local government is run are less likely to engage in/be disposed towards/approve of political violence.
- Youth voice in governance matters	The more youth perceive that their elected local counselor will listen to their concerns about a matter of importance, the less likely they will be to engage in/be disposed towards/approve of political violence.

[24] LEAP supported multi-ethnic youth self help groups, wherever possible.

Independent Variables	Hypotheses
Equality:	
- Perceived economic inequality	The stronger an individual's belief that his/her group's economic conditions are worse than those of other groups, the more likely he/she is to engage in/be disposed towards/approve of political violence.
- Perceived political inequality	The stronger an individual's belief that his/her group has less influence in politics, the more likely he/she is to engage in/be disposed towards/approve of political violence.
Governance:	
- Perceptions of national government's handling of key responsibilities	People who feel the central government is handling key responsibilities well will be less likely to engage in/be disposed towards/approve of political violence.
- Perceptions of local government's handling of key responsibilities	People who feel the local government is handling key responsibilities well will be less likely to engage in/be disposed towards/approve of political violence.
- Perceived levels of corruption among government officials	The greater the extent of corruption an individual's perceives in government, the more likely he/she is to engage/be disposed towards/approve of in political violence.
Non-political violence:	
- Perceptions of levels of violent conflict within own community	The greater the extent of violent conflict an individual perceives within their community, the more likely he/she is to engage in/be disposed towards/approve of political violence.
- Perceptions of personal security	Youth who have feared crime or have been physically attacked over the past year will be more likely to engage in/be disposed towards/approve of political violence.[25]
Socio-Demographics:	
- Gender	Young men are more likely than young women to engage in/be disposed towards/approve of political violence.
- Education (highest level completed)	The higher the individual's level of education, the less likely he/she is to engage in/be disposed towards/approve of political violence[26].
- Rural / urban status	Youth from rural areas are more likely than those from urban areas to engage in/be disposed towards/approve of political violence.

3.3. Types of Analyses

Ample information from qualitative studies is available on the drivers of violence among youth. Therefore this research aimed to fill a gap in the quantitative evidence base. To do this,

[25] This hypothesis is based on the LEAP program assumption that high levels on non-political violence in communities are likely to lead to an environment where political violence is more accepted or used.
[26] This hypothesis is based on evidence from studies such as Barakat and Urdal (2008) that the risk of conflict is higher in societies where educational attainment levels are low and male youth populations are high, as in many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

regression analyses were used to identify the factors that most consistently predict changes in the stability-related impacts sought by LEAP[27]. Given the data available was largely categorical, the research used loglinear analysis and logistical regression. The regression models included both factors that LEAP attempted to address, and other factors believed to influence youth propensity towards violence.

To identify the program outcomes that could be reasonably attributed to LEAP, the research used two different forms of single difference analysis[28]:

- To determine the change over time among the target population the research did a before versus after analysis of outcome indicators measured in the LEAP baseline and endline surveys.
- To isolate the project effects of LEAP, the research did ex post comparisons of outcomes among LEAP participants (treatment) and non-LEAP participants (comparison), using LEAP II baseline survey data[29].

For both these analyses, the research relied mainly on cross-tabulations, chi-square tests, and independent samples t-tests to determine the statistical and practical significance of the observed differences between before versus after, and treatment versus comparison groups[30].

The researchers rescaled and recoded parts of the LEAP and Afrobarometer data to make the responses more meaningful, and to give them more statistical power for analysis. Where the outcomes or impacts are constructs (as opposed to direct observations), such as trust and freedom of movement, scales were developed from sets of like questions in the LEAP and Afrobarometer data to serve as measures for the constructs[31]. For example, the researchers took 25 responses from different questions on trust measured by the LEAP II baseline study and calculated a score for each respondent on a scale ranging from 0 (least trustful) to 100 (most trustful). These scales generated more robust and reliable measurements of the variables of interest that could be used for inferential statistical tests, which were not possible with the original data.

3.4. Limitations

This research relied predominately on quantitative methodologies to identify statistically significant relationships between variables related to youth and violence. The measurements, including scales, used for the variables were not all based on standardized instruments with proven levels of construct validity and reliability[32]. As such, the measurements may not

[27] Regression analysis is a statistical method which determines the association between the dependent variable and one or more independent variables. It is done to identify which (combination of) independent variables best predicts the dependent variable, or outcome.
[28] Single difference analysis refers to the comparison in the outcome for the treatment group after the intervention to its baseline value (also called before versus after), or an ex post comparison in the outcome between the treatment and control groups.
[29] Ideally, the study would have also had a fourth set of data on before conditions for the comparison group.
[30] Statistical significance is when a finding or a result is caused by something other than just chance. Practical significance looks at whether the difference is large enough to be of value in a practical sense.
[31] See Appendix 3 for the procedures used to develop the scales.
[32] Few standardized tools exist for the constructs examined the study (e.g. trust, freedom of movement); and a secondary objective of the research was to contribute towards the development of such tools.

accurately reflect the factors being studied, thus limiting the confidence that can be placed in the findings on associations between them.

The analysis methods used did not allow for determining the direction of causality between the factors found to be related[33]. For instance, levels of trust and interaction proved to be closely correlated, but it is not clear which one affects the other. This limits the understanding of which factors serve as the most promising leverage points around which to design future interventions. The qualitative data collection aimed to fill some of these gaps in understanding and enable the research to triangulate the quantitative findings. However, the time available for the fieldwork did not allow for the type of systematic information collection necessary to confidently use the qualitative findings in these ways.

This research used evidence from one program in one country to identify predictors of youth propensity towards violence, and to test the validity of a set of Mercy Corps theories of change. As such, the direct inferences made from the data are limited to youth development and peacebuilding programs within Kenya, and in particular Rift Valley Province. While the findings are not technically generalizable beyond this population, many of the conclusions are believed to be transferable to programs working in similar contexts, owing to the confirmatory research approach used to test the broader program theories.

Because the study largely relied on post hoc analysis of secondary data, it was limited to examining the variables on which reliable data was available. Not all of the data was of sufficient quality to analyze or generalize from. For instance, much of the LEAP survey data on economic independence, and perceptions and incidences violence – key outcomes of interest – was found to be unusable for the types of analysis undertaken in this research[34]. In addition, changes to the wording of some questions in the LEAP endline survey from those in the original baseline instrument presented challenges to making before and after comparisons. To compensate, the researchers obtained and analyzed data from a recent Afrobarometer survey which contains reliable measures on Kenyan's attitudes and behaviors towards political violence.

The approach used to establish a comparison group of non-LEAP participants may be subject to selection bias[35]. Due to time constraints, the study was not able to employ statistical matching techniques needed to eliminate this risk. The comparison group was comprised of survey respondents in three non-LEAP I Districts, which shared similar demographic (mainly ethnic) characteristics as the target Districts. However, there may be other differences between the treatment and comparison groups that would influence the status of the indicators measured. For example, the levels of post-election violence in the original LEAP target Districts was higher than in the comparison Districts, given that the program was targeting the conflict 'hot spots'. As a result, the differences in observed measures between the two groups may not be due to the LEAP program / treatment, thus compromising the study's ability to identify attributable program outcomes.

[33] Using regression analysis, the research identified predictor variables – i.e. factors that predict the values of the dependent variables (stability, and propensity towards political violence). However, prediction does not imply causation, as it cannot explain the underlying cause of the relationships.
[34] Mainly due to the subjectivity and poor construct validity, and the large proportion of missing data of some the measures.
[35] This refers to potential biases introduced into a study by the selection of different types of people into treatment and comparison groups. As a result, the outcome differences may potentially be explained as a result of pre-existing differences between the groups, as opposed to the treatment itself.

4. Findings and Interpretations

This section presents the key research findings for the two main research questions:

1. What social, economic, and political factors make youth more vulnerable to engage in political violence, or be mobilized to do so? ***(predictors)***

2. What program interventions show the greatest potential to contribute towards greater stability, in the forms of more trust, freedom of movement, and reduced propensity towards violence among youth? ***(influential interventions)***

For each of these questions, summaries of the results of the quantitative analyses are presented first. This is followed by a discussion of the main associations between variables found (or not) and possible explanations for them within the Kenyan context, which draws on the primary, qualitative data.

4.1. Research Question # 1: Predictors

The study used two different variables to measure propensity towards political violence among Kenyan youth:

- ***Attitudes:*** Respondents were asked if they believed political violence is acceptable under certain circumstances, or is never justified.

- ***Behaviors / Behavioral dispositions:*** Respondents were asked if they had personally used force or violence for a political cause during the previous year, or if they would do so if given the chance[36].

However, it should be noted that there is not necessarily a direct relationship between an individual's *attitudes* and their *actions* regarding political violence. Attitudes are more often representative of the collective norms in society which discourage certain types of behavior, and may not accurately reflect an individual's proclivities. As such, the variable on behavior is likely a more direct and indicative measure of propensity towards political violence.

Looking across the findings for these two variables, the analysis identified several social, economic, political and demographic factors that appear to make youth in Kenya more or less likely to engage in, be disposed towards, or approve of political violence. Other factors that were expected to be key predictors of political violence among youth, based on the qualitative data and the results of other studies, turned out not to be closely linked based on the analysis of the quantitative data. These findings are summarized in Table 3 below.

[36] The data for these analyses came from the Afrobarometer Round 4 survey, which was conducted in Kenya in Oct – Nov 2008. Thus the questions involving 12 month recall captured the time period of the 2007/8 post election violence.

Table 3: Summary of Findings for Research Question # 1: Predictors of Propensity towards Political Violence among Kenyan Youth[37]

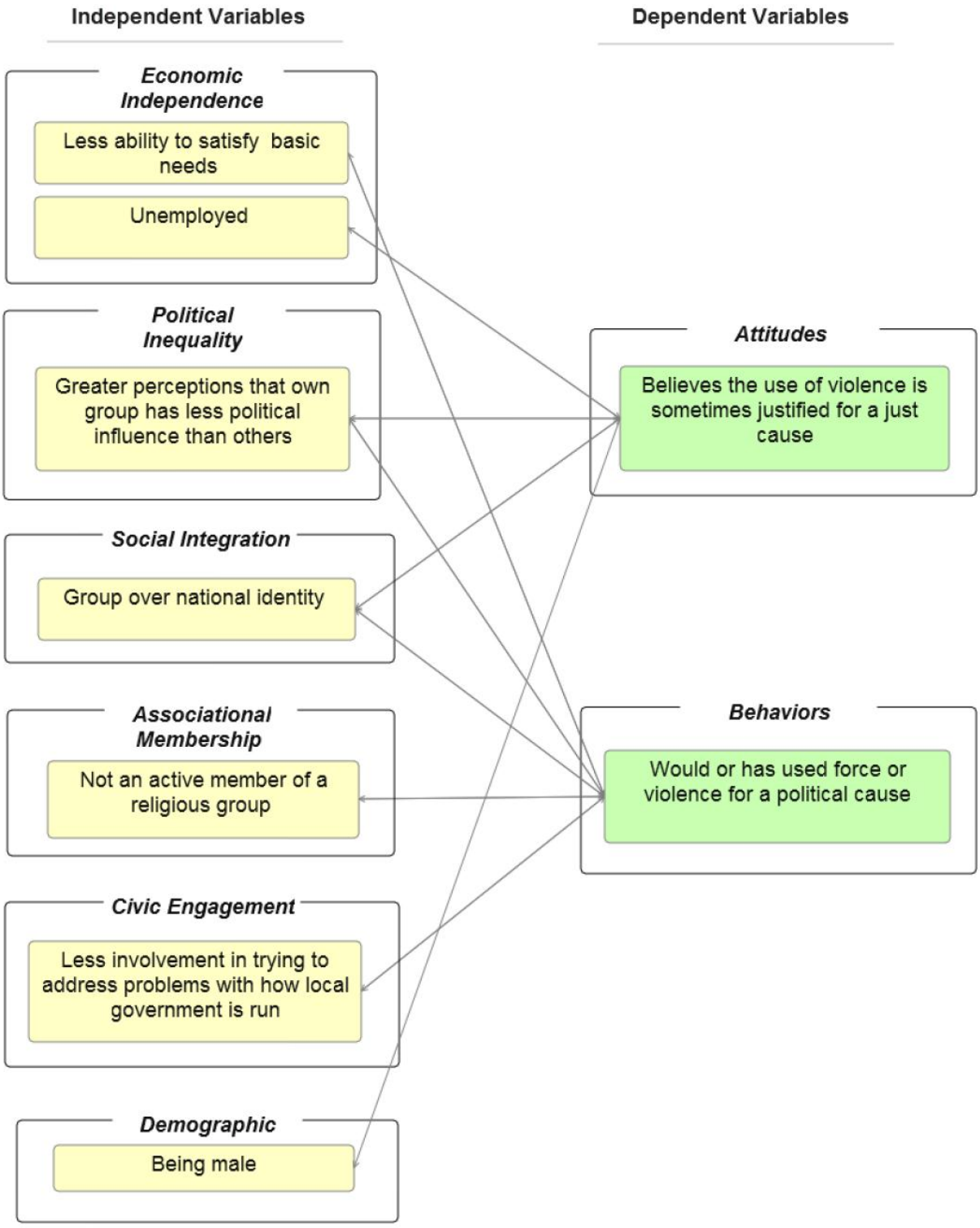
	Significant predictors	Not significant predictors
Economic	- Employment status (Wald (1)=4.34, p<0.05) - Ability to satisfy basic needs (Wald (1)=4.24, p<0.05)	- Perceived economic inequality
Social	- Social identity (Kenyan versus own ethnic group) (For attitudes: Wald (1)=8.24, p<0.05; for behaviors: Wald (1)=6.51, p<0.05) - Member of a religious group (Wald (1)=4.26, p<0.05)	- Trust of other Kenyans - Member of a community or self-help group - Perceptions of levels of violent conflict with own community - Perceptions of personal security
Political	- Perceived political inequality (For attitudes: Wald (1)=9.14, p<0.05; for behaviors: Wald (1)=3.96, p<0.05) - Level of civic engagement (Wald (1)=5.03, p<0.05)	- Trust in local institutions - Perceptions of local and national government performance - Youth voice in governance matters - Perceived levels of corruption among government officials
Socio-Demographic	- Gender (Wald (1)=9.67, p<0.05)	- Education (highest level completed) - Rural / urban status

In total, the combination of factors found to be related to attitudes and behaviors towards political violence explained between 7-12% of the variance[38]. While this is not a high level of predictive power, the findings are still significant given the paucity of data on predictors of political violence among youth.

Figure 2 below summarizes the findings from the regression analyses for the two different dependent variables -- attitudes and behaviors towards political violence. The diagram can be interpreted as follows: Changes in the levels of the independent variables (on the left hand side) will consistently lead to changes in the same direction of the dependent variables (on the right hand side)[39]. For example, higher levels of unemployment will be accompanied by higher levels of accepting attitudes towards political violence.

[37] The outputs of the regression models and these two dependent variables are provided in Annex 4.1.
[38] That is, the variables in the "significant predictors" column in Table 3).
[39] The variables are worded such that all the relationships are positive correlations – i.e. an increase in one variable is associated with an increase in the other.

Figure 2: Predictors of Attitudes and Behaviors towards Political Violence



4.2. Research Question # 2: Influential Interventions

Under this research question the study aimed to identify the program interventions that show the greatest potential to contribute towards increased stability. Specifically, among what was done (or measured) by LEAP, what appears to make the biggest difference to youth's levels of trust, freedom of movement, and adults' perceptions of youth, including of their involvement in violence? This involved two lines of inquiry:

1) Determining the intended outcomes on which LEAP had a significant effect (or not)[40].
2) Determining which intended outcomes are associated with changes in the stability-related measures.

Based on the data from the LEAP surveys detailed in Table 4, this study found evidence of the efficacy of a number of existing peacebuilding program interventions to contribute to the expected impacts on stability. The most influential interventions were the LEAP program efforts that promoted:

- Part time employment for youth, through support to income generation and cash-for-work activities
- The existence of peace dialogues, through training community leaders in peacebuilding skills and funding of the dialogues
- Youth participation in self help groups, via training in leadership and group management skills
- Collective action among youth, such as community reconstruction projects
- Youth interaction across ethnic lines, through sports and other 'connector' projects

Table 4: Summary of Findings for Research Question #2: LEAP Program Outcomes and their Associations with Intended Impacts

Independent Variables (LEAP outcome indicators)	Did LEAP have a significant effect on this indicator?[41]	Associations with Dependent Variables (LEAP impact indicators)
Theory 1: Employment and Income Generation		
Average income	Unclear (No baseline measure; Median income was 4% above comparison Districts at end of project)	No significant relationships found between average income and the expected LEAP impacts on stability
Employment status	No (No significant differences in baseline vs. endline or treatment vs. comparison group measures)	Employment status is a significant predictor of attitudes towards political violence (Wald (1)=4.34, $p<0.05$)

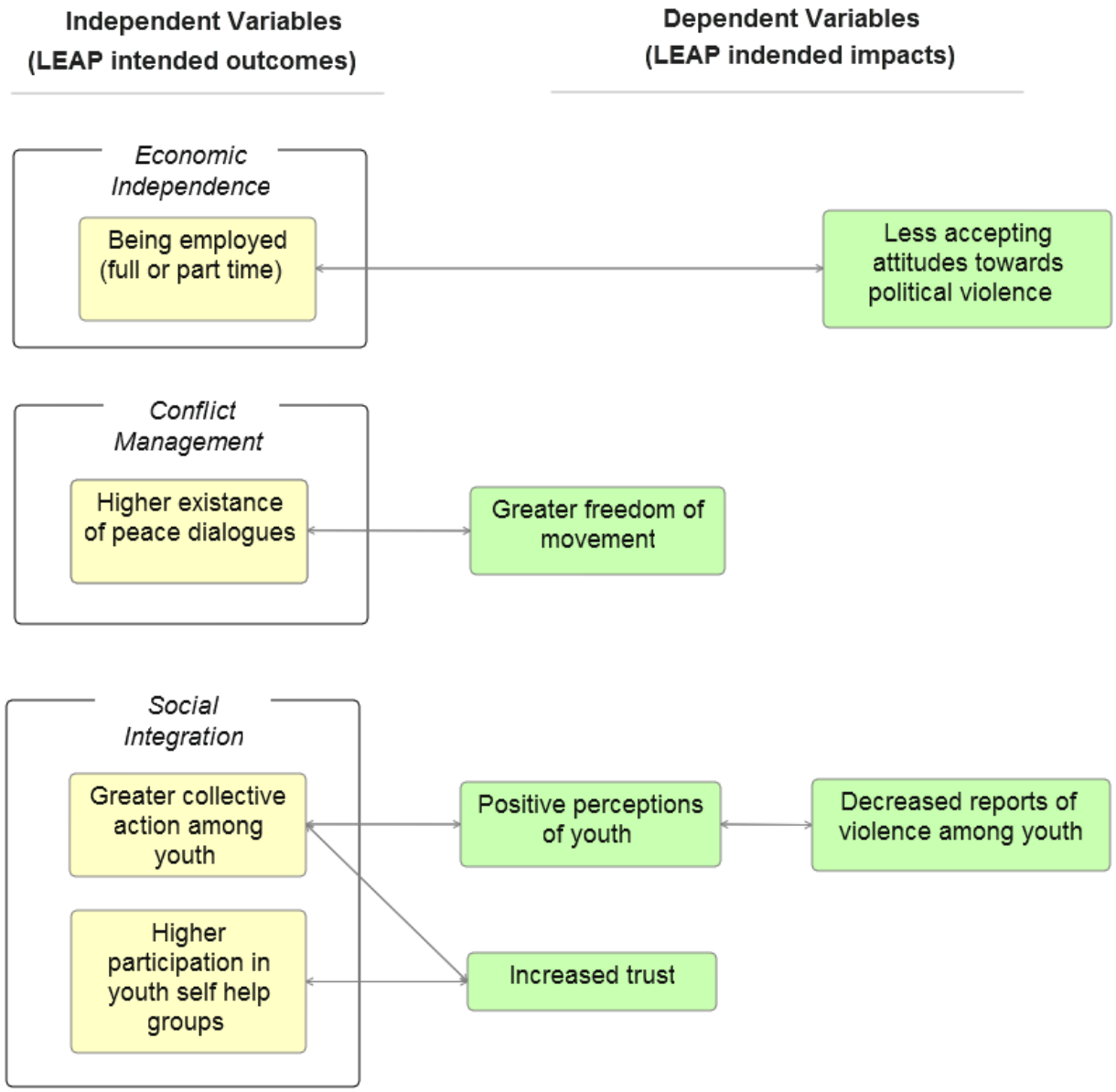
[40] The research was only able to determine the outcomes that could reasonably be attributable to LEAP's interventions where three sources of comparable data were available: A before measurement (from LEAP I baseline survey), an after measurement (from LEAP I endline survey), and a comparison measurement (from LEAP II baseline survey).

[41] See Appendix 4.1 for the data on the baseline, endline and comparison District status for each of these variables.

Independent Variables (LEAP outcome indicators)	Did LEAP have a significant effect on this indicator?[41]	Associations with Dependent Variables (LEAP impact indicators)
Theory 2: Conflict Management and Peacebuilding Skills		
Existence of peace dialogues	Yes (31% increase from baseline; 47% above comparison Districts at end of project)	Existence of peace dialogues is: - A significant predictor of greater freedom of movement (R^2=.016 *p<.05) - Associated with lower perceptions of youth involvement in violence (x^2 (1)=28.17, p=0.000)
Participation in peace dialogues	Yes (44% increase from baseline; 10% above comparison Districts at end of project)	No significant relationships found between youth's participation in community dialogues and the expected LEAP impacts on stability
Perceptions of effectiveness of peace committees	Unclear (no baseline measure; 24% above comparison Districts at end of project)	No significant relationships found between the perceived effectiveness of the District Peace Committees and the expected LEAP impacts on stability
Theory 3: Youth-to-Youth Connections Across Lines of Division		
Participation in Youth Self Help Group	Unclear (39% increase from baseline; 16% below comparison Districts at end of project)	Youth's participation in self help groups is a significant predictor of higher scores in the trust scale (R^2=.046 p<.001)
Existence of collective action among youth within a community	Yes (26% increase from baseline; 52% above comparison Districts at end of project)	Existence of collective action among youth within a community is associated with: - Higher levels of trust (t (317)=2.94, p<0.05) - Higher levels of positive perceptions of youth (t (425)=2.961, p<0.05)
Interaction with members of other ethnic groups	Yes (7% increase from baseline; 5% above comparison Districts at end of project)	Interaction with members of other ethnic groups is associated with higher levels of trust of other Kenyans (t (817)=3.43, p=0.001)
Positive perceptions of youth	Unclear (No baseline measure; no significant difference between comparison and target Districts)	Positive perceptions of youth are associated with (lower) perceptions of youth involvement in violence
Stability-related measures		
Trust of other Kenyans	Unclear (No baseline measure; 7% above comparison Districts at end of project)	Trust of other Kenyans is a significant predictor of interaction with members of other ethnic communities (Wald (1)=17.286, p<0.05)

Figure 3 below illustrates the main relationships identified between the outcomes and impacts sought by LEAP. This clarifies the cases where the assumed causal relationships in the LEAP program theory (as shown in Figure 1) were found to exist, based on the results of the quantitative analysis. The diagram can be interpreted as follows: Changes in the levels of the independent variables / LEAP intended outcomes (on the left hand side) is consistently accompanied by changes in the same direction of the dependent variables / LEAP intended impacts (on the right hand side). For example, people who report the existence of peace dialogues in their community are more likely to report greater levels of freedom of movement.

Figure 3: Associations among Intended LEAP Outcomes and Impacts



4.3. Discussion of Key Findings by the Program Theories Tested

Theory 1: Employment and Income Generation

Summary Finding: It appears that if young people in Kenya are employed, and able to satisfy their basic needs, then they will be less likely to join violent movements for economic gain.

Supporting evidence:

The following factors related to economic conditions were found to be significant predictors of youth's propensity toward violence:

- ***Ability to satisfy basic needs:*** The less often young people have to go without food, water, and other basic needs, the less likely they are to engage in or be disposed towards political violence[42].

- ***Employment status:*** Having a full or part time job that provides a cash income increases young people's likelihood to disapprove of the use of political violence. This confirmed the presumption that moving more youth from a jobless to employed status is a potential mitigating factor against their involvement in violent groups.

Both these findings are consistent with findings from qualitative data gathered. Youth recounted cases of peers who had participated in violence during the 2002 elections, who afterward became more economically active, and then did not participate in violence during 2007/8. Having their own source of income was said to make youth less easily manipulated by politicians offering to pay them to engage in violent acts. Also, employed youth feel they have more to lose from an outbreak of violent conflict in their area, notably their earnings from disrupted markets, and their premises, equipment, and products from destruction and looting.

Contradictory evidence:

Contrary to the hypotheses of this research, the following factors *were not* found to be significantly associated with greater risks of being involved in political violence or with other measures of stability, based on analysis of the quantitative data:

- ***Average incomes:*** The fact that income levels did not appear to be a significant predictor brings to light the importance of the non-economic aspects of employment for youth. According to youth interviewed, the visibility of the cash-for-work community reconstruction projects was often more valuable than their economic benefits. They served as a powerful example of mixed ethnic groups working together in the name of peace, and contributed to greater senses of responsibility among and respect for the youth involved.

- ***Perceived economic inequality:*** The study did not find a significant relationship between an individual's belief that his/her group's economic conditions are worse than those of other groups and their likelihood to engage in or approve of political violence. This goes against the predominant thinking and what the study heard from young people

[42] The study calculated respondents' scores for ability to satisfy basic needs based on a set of questions on: "During the past year, how often have you gone without: food, water, medical care, cooking fuel, cash income?" This is a more reliable measure of economic conditions than income because it is based on multiple questions that yield more accurate and readily interpretable results.

interviewed, who pointed to disparity in incomes and development conditions between ethnic groups as breeding jealousy, feelings of unequal opportunities, and a culture of blaming the ones who are better off[43].

Theory 2: Conflict Management and Peacebuilidng Skills

Summary Finding: It was unclear whether Kenyan youth who have the skills and forums to discuss difficult issues are less likely to use violence to solve problems.

Supporting evidence:

The results showed that people's freedom of movement increases in locations where more peace dialogues occurred. Furthermore, LEAP expanded the frequency and coverage of peace dialogues where it operated. These finding points to the contributions of the LEAP-supported peace dialogues towards mitigating the types of insecurity that restrict people's ability to move freely to meet their basic needs (e.g. to get water, to schools) and pursue their livelihoods (e.g. go to the market, their farms).

Contradictory evidence:

- ***Effectiveness of peace councils:*** Levels of freedom of movement were not found to differ significantly between locations where people perceive the District Peace Committees as effective and those that do not[44]. The apparent contradiction with the finding above can likely be traced to errors during data collection and entry. A significant number of respondents answered the question on the effectiveness of the peace committees in their District even when reporting they had no knowledge that such a committee existed.

- ***Participation in peace dialogues:*** LEAP contributed to an increase in this outcome among youth. However, youth who reported being involved in peace dialogues did not exhibit higher levels of trust of people from other ethnic groups than those who did not participate. While people closely involved in the LEAP-supported peace dialogues pointed to one of their main successes as creating understanding and shared identities between conflicting groups, the quantitative data did not support this. Explanations for this include:

  - *Targeting:* The peace dialogues have been undertaken in areas that have experienced the highest levels of conflict, and (appropriately) targeted community members who were most actively engaged in various forms of violence. The levels of trust among these groups would understandably be lower (or at least not higher) than the wider population who did not participate in the dialogues.

  - *Depth*: The peace dialogues have been effective in tackling some types of inter-communal violence, such as cattle rustling. However they have not been able to address the underlying issues that breed mistrust between groups in the Rift Valley,

[43] More details on this issue are provided in the Background section of this report, under the sub-heading 'Inequality and unequal distribution of resources'.
[44] District Peace Committees are the entities supported by LEAP to convene and facilitate the peace dialogues.

including conflicts over land and the plight of displaced families[45]. As such, participants of the peace dialogues are likely to come away with an attitude of 'I hear you but still don't trust you'.

- ***Non-political violence:*** Other studies using Afrobarometer data from across Africa have shown that the greater the extent of (non-political) violent conflict an individual perceives within their community, the more likely they are to engage in or approve of political violence (Bhavnani and Backer, 2007). However, the Kenya data did not indicate such an association. Nor did it show any significant links between propensity towards violence and measures of personal security, including fear of crime, fear of political intimidation or violence, or experiences of physical attack. These findings bring into question the assumption of LEAP and other peacebuilding programs that providing support to peace dialogues and committees to resolve intra-communal disputes serves an effective mitigation strategy against political violence. This link between intra and inter-communal violence may only exist where there are strong norms in a society for using violence to solve problems, which may not necessarily be the case in Kenya (Paluck, 2009).

Theory 3: Youth-to-Youth Connections Across Lines of Division

Summary Finding: It appears that when Kenyan youth are socially integrated, then they are less susceptible to involvement in violent groups.

Supporting evidence:

The research showed that several forms of social integration among youth are closely linked to lower propensity towards political violence and greater stability:

- ***Associational membership:*** Youth who are members of self-help groups exhibit higher levels of trust of other Kenyans than non-members. Similarly, youth who are active members or leaders in religious groups are less likely to engage in political violence. This finding is consistent with existing research on youth exclusion and conflict, such as a recent assessment commissioned by DfID that found, "[Y]oung people's involvement in associations can build their social capital and sense of belonging and empowerment and act as an important deterrent to engagement in violence (McLean and Fraser, 2009, p. 5).

- ***Social identity:*** As expected, results indicated that youth who give greater priority to their national identity than their group identity – i.e. feel they are a Kenyan first, before being a member of their own tribe – are less likely to engage in or approve of political violence. Social identity was found to be a significant predictor of both Kenyan youth's attitudes and behaviors towards political violence. This finding supports the centrality of ethnic cleavages and identity politics in explaining the cycles of violence in Kenya. As one interview respondent put it, conflict in the Rift Valley will only cease when people feel that 'there is more that ties us than separates us'.

- ***Existence of collective action****:* The findings show that people perceive youth as more productive and responsible in locations where youth have engaged in collective action, such as community reconstruction projects, and that LEAP contributed to a significant

[45] This is being addressed in LEAP II, through having peace committees work more with District level actors (who have greater influence over systemic issues) and by incorporating land conflict resolution into their activities.

increase in such collective action. More positive attitudes towards youth, in turn, were found to be a significant predictor of lower levels of reports of youth involvement in violence.

Findings from interviews with youth help explain the practical significance of these findings. Youth in Kenya are commonly perceived by adults as untrustworthy, short-sighted, and a major source of problems within communities. As a result, youth are not given the opportunities or resources, such as access to family land, to become productive. This in turn leads to isolation from their families and communities, idleness, and a greater likelihood to become involved in crime, gangs or other violent groups. Supporting youth to engage in collective action was found to increase respect for them by adults, thus contributing to breaking the cycle of distrust and marginalization of youth.

- ***Trust:*** Youth's levels of trust of other Kenyans are higher when they:
  - Have participated in youth self-help groups
  - Report greater interaction with members of other ethnic communities
  - Have engaged in collective action

  Lending validity to these findings, young people interviewed highlighted the roles that multi-ethnic sports and cash-for-work projects had played in breaking down barriers and building trust among youth from different tribes and regions.

Contradictory evidence:

Neither levels of trust or interaction were found to be related to young people's risks of involvement in violence. These findings bring into question the central role that building trust among traditionally conflicting groups is presumed to play in promoting greater stability. One apparent explanation is that, within Kenya, levels of trust and interaction have historically been high among different ethnic groups. This is evidenced by indicators like intermarriages between members of different ethnic groups. Yet trust is very malleable, and easily influenced by the political climate and the ideologies of leaders. As such, even high levels of trust are not enough to buttress against the power of outside triggers to stoke hatred and aggression, as was seen during the 2007/8 post election violence.

4.4. Discussion of Findings on Additional Factors Examined

This research examined factors not captured under any of the program theories tested, but which were expected to be closely linked to political violence among youth, based on the literature review and findings from the qualitative data.

Political and Civic Engagement[46]

Summary Finding: It appears that when Kenyan youth have higher levels of civic engagement and perceived political influence, then they are less likely to turn to violence to promote political objectives.

Supporting evidence:

[46] Mercy Corps has developed an overall theory of change related to political participation for youth. It was not part of the design of the LEAP I program, but added attention is being given to civic engagement issues under LEAP II and the Yes Youth Can programs in Kenya.

Several of the study's hypotheses were confirmed by the results of the quantitative data analysis. The following factors were identified as important predictors of propensity towards political violence:

- ***Civic engagement:*** Youth who take action to try to address governance problems are less likely to engage in or be disposed towards political violence[47]. The significance of civic action as a predictor lies in its relationship with other factors believed to influence attitudes and behaviors towards violence. Specifically, civic engagement is presumed to be positively associated with people's levels of self-efficacy, higher levels of trust in government, and likelihood to use established channels to voice grievances, which should all be negatively associated with violence (Bhavnani and Backer, 2007)[48].

- ***Perceived political inequality:*** Youth who believe that their group has less influence in politics than others are more likely to approve of and engage in political violence. This was the only one of two variables found to be a predictor of both youth's attitudes and behaviors toward political violence, thus lending more weight to its significance. This finding directly reinforces the conclusions of other studies of violence in Kenya that have identified the struggle for political power as the dominant factor, such as the Akiwumi Commission's Report (1999). The unequal pattern of distribution of national resources based on ethnic affiliations has perpetuated the belief that having your tribe represented in government is the only way to get more development resources for your area[49].

Contradictory evidence:

Other factors turned out not to be closely linked to higher risks of political violence among youth, as hypothesized:

- ***Youth voice in governance matters:*** Using the available data, the study was able to test the influence of individuals' perceptions that their elected local councilor will listen to their concerns about an issue of importance. While this measure was extremely low among youth (nearly 50% responded that it was very unlikely), it was not found to be a predictor of either youth's attitudes or behaviors towards political violence. This is a situation where a single survey item is unlikely to serve as a strong enough measure for correlation analysis.

- ***Trust in local institutions****:* Young people's levels of trust in their local representative council and police did not prove to be predictors. However, these results do not reflect what was understood from the qualitative data collected from youth and in findings from secondary sources (e.g. Educational Development Center, 2009). Youth interviewed

[47] The actions included in the scale for measuring civic engagement among youth were: discussed problems with others, joined others to respond, discussed with community leaders, wrote newspaper letters or called radio shows, and made complaints to government officials.

[48] However, the data did not support these presumed links in all cases. For example, self-efficacy regarding governance matters among Kenyan youth remains low, with nearly three out of four citing that they believe ordinary people can do nothing or only a small amount to improve the situation with how local government is run (Afrobarometer, 2008).

[49] However, Kenyans do not readily admit to this conviction. Two-thirds believe that leaders should not favor their own family or group over others, and over 60% say that they prefer to vote for candidates who can make policies that benefit everyone in the country, over those who can deliver goods and services to people in their own community. This is likely a case of differences between what people say, which is influenced by a set of social expectations, and what they do.

cited their lack of trust in and access to local institutions, specifically the police and judiciary which they feel treat youth unfairly, as keys factor that push young people to resort to violence to solve their problems. This may have been another case where the survey question used was not sufficiently nuanced to get at the specific types of distrust felt by youth towards local institutions.

- ***Perceptions of government performance:*** The study developed scales to measure youth's perceptions of how both their central and local government are handling key responsibilities, such as managing the economy, creating jobs, reducing crime, and providing essential services. While Kenyan youth's perceptions of national and local government performance are consistently low, they were not found to directly influence their likelihood to condone or participate in political violence.

- ***Perceptions of corruption in government:*** Contrary to this study's hypothesis, youth's perceptions of levels of corruption among government officials were not found to be a predictor of attitudes or behaviors towards political violence.

Socio-demographics

Summary Finding: It appears that in Kenya, young women are more likely than young men to disapprove of political violence.

Out of gender, age, education levels, and urban / rural status, only gender was found to be correlated with propensity towards political violence. As hypothesized, being a female is a significant predictor of less accepting attitudes towards the use of political violence.

Other research has found relationships between low education levels and risk of conflict (e.g. Barakat and Urdal, 2008). However, the role education plays in violence in Kenya is complex and not well documented. Among other issues, unequal access to education causes tensions, and the poor quality and inappropriate curricula of formal education leaves youth who graduate without the skills they require to succeed economically. These aspects were not captured by the simple measure of 'highest level of education completed'.

Similarly, the study expected rurality to be a contributing factor, based on the qualitative data that pointed to youth living in remote areas of Rift Valley Province as posing the greatest risk for renewed political violence due to their limited access to information and low levels of interaction with youth from other ethnic groups. However, the quantitative data from the national survey showed no major differences between urban and rural Kenyan youth on measures of trust, social identity, or attitudes or involvement in political violence. A possible explanation why rural youth were not found to exhibit greater propensity towards political violence that in gangs are more predominant in urban, areas and politicians accessed gangs to instigate violence in 2007/08, especially in Central, Western and Coast Provinces.

5. Conclusions and Implications

This section draws conclusions from the research findings regarding:

- ***The validity of the original theories of change tested:*** What does the evidence say about the causal relationships implied by the theories? Did they hold true in the context of Kenya? Would they likely hold true elsewhere?

- ***The implications for programs and further research:*** What do the findings mean for the LEAP project, for other Mercy Corps peacebuilding programs in Kenya and similar contexts? What should the agency be doing more or less of? What additional questions regarding the links between youth and conflict does this research bring to light?

5.1. Validity of the Theories of Change Tested

Theory of Change 1: Employment and Income Generation

If young people are employed, then they will be less likely to join violent movements for economic gain.

The findings confirm the existence of links between youth economic conditions and their propensity towards political violence in Kenya. Specifically, being employed and having the ability to satisfy basic needs are significant predictors of less accepting attitudes towards, and less involvement in political violence, respectively.

In what other contexts is this likely to be the case? Based on previous research, Mercy Corps' Conflict Management Group has speculated that economic interventions, if successful, are most likely to prevent youth from becoming involved in violence in contexts like Kenya where there are short, intense bursts of violence, and youth are mobilized through economic incentives, as compared to regions experiencing more intractable conflicts. The findings from this study lend support to the first half of this premise; however, similar studies in comparable contexts with long-standing conflicts of a political nature would be needed to test the second half.

Theory of Change 2: Conflict Management and Peacebuilding Skills

If youth have the skills and forums to discuss difficult issues, then they will be less likely to use violence to solve problems.

Evidence from the study supporting this theory is sparse, however so was the data available to test it[50]. Findings from the LEAP data showed an association between the existence of peace dialogues and greater freedom of movement. However, no other stability-related measures were found to be influenced by changes in conflict management skills, forums, or the effectiveness of the peace building committees. Based on these findings, LEAP's investments in strengthening conflict management skills and fora do not appear to be major contributors to greater stability.
One possible explanation for this is that youth were included in larger community dialogues rather than stand alone, youth-led dialogues, which may have limited the impact of their participation on their trust of other Kenyans.

[50] There were no data from the Afrobarometer survey related to the conflict management theory, which limited the ability to further test the underlying relationships.

A explanation may be found in a closely related theory of organizational capacity building which purports that individuals and groups require three conditions to be in place to effectively apply new skills: means, motivation, and opportunity (Britton, 2005). LEAP has worked deliberately on creating the means (mainly through individual skills building) and opportunities (by supporting forums for interaction). However, the program has only just begun to make real headway in building individual's motivations to use conflict management skills to resolve or mitigate disputes. This is happening mainly through support to inter-ethnic 'connector projects', which aim to demonstrate the economic benefits of cooperation. Once these projects have had a chance to bear fruit, it would be worth analyzing the relationships within the conflict management theory of change again, using data from the LEAP II end of project survey.

Theory of Change 3: Youth-to-Youth Connections Across Lines of Division

If youth are socially integrated, then they will be less susceptible to manipulation by political elites and violent groups, thus increasing stability.

The research found evidence that several forms of social integration among youth consistently reduce their risk of involvement in political violence and promote key forms of stability. Though the relationships identified do not necessarily reflect the logic of change implied by this program theory, which is essentially: ***More interaction -> greater trust -> less vulnerability to manipulation -> decisions to resolve disputes peacefully.***

Interaction was found to be linked with higher levels of trust of other Kenyans. But trust itself was not found to predict levels of or propensity towards violence among young people. Rather a shared social identity – the feeling of being a Kenyan national first, before one's tribal allegiance – was found to be strongly correlated with lower risks of violence among youth. It was surprising that there were not major differences between urban and rural Kenyans on the measure of shared identity, as was assumed based on the qualitative data which suggested tribal allegiances are especially strong in rural, mono-ethnic areas. Similarly, levels of trust of other Kenyans did not differ significantly between urban and rural groups.

These findings bring into question:

- The central role that building trust among traditionally conflicting groups is presumed to play in promoting greater stability.
- The extent to which the types of social and economic interaction that take place in more cosmopolitan towns are likely to lead to increased trust or shared social identity.
- The appropriateness of using trust as a proxy indicator for measuring stability.

5.2. Programming Implications

What current program interventions should be replicated?

This study's findings lend support to the further use of economic incentives and building social connections among youth across lines of division as pillars of Mercy Corps' peacebuilding programs in Kenya and similar contexts. Mercy Corps should seek to scale up and assess the impacts of several of the existing interventions that stood out as most likely to improve stability:

- ***Provide timely, short-term employment opportunities for youth:*** A number of findings from this study point to the effectiveness of the type of short-term economic incentives provided by LEAP in contributing to peacebuilding outcomes. This is in line with findings in the 2011 World Development Report, and lessons from USAID's Office

of Transition Initiatives (2011) regarding short-term employment generation that highlight the potential of labor intensive programs, such as the LEAP cash for work activities, to serve as quick wins for stabilizing violent situations. To maximize the benefits of support to short-term youth employment, Mercy Corps programs should consider concentrating such efforts during times of high youth joblessness and historic triggers of violence. In Kenya, this could include the periods preceding presidential elections, and in between agricultural seasons. For example, youth interviewed said that the 'down times' in the sugar cane cycle (which takes two years to harvest) were when they most need additional 'bridging' work or other forms of constructive engagement.

- ***Support longer-term employment creation, based on market demands:*** Short-term employment provision may be an efficient way to restore immediate stability. However, investment in longer-term job creation for youth is required to address their underlying grievances regarding lack of meaningful and viable economic opportunities that contribute to youth engagement in violence. Creating sustainable employment for youth is often a challenge in the fragile contexts where Mercy Corps operates[51]. Doing so effectively necessitates a move away from strategies that focus only on the supply side of employment (e.g. vocational training and entrepreneurship development) to more private-sector, market-driven approaches. In practice, this means working closely with enterprises that have the potential to employ youth to identify market trends and their labor demands, and tailoring youth skills training and other efforts to respond to them.

- ***Expand collective action among youth:*** This research yielded evidence of the value of LEAP's efforts to increase youth's involvement in self-help groups and structured interactions with youth from other ethnic groups (e.g. through sports, and joint income generation and community reconstruction projects). These appear to be relatively low-cost interventions that can have a high impact on stability, in the forms of greater trust of other Kenyans and more positive perceptions of youth among adults.

What should future programs be doing more of?

- ***Expand the non-economic benefits of employment activities for youth:*** The finding that having a job appears to be more important than income levels in determining youth's propensity towards violence points to young people's need to be constructively and meaningfully engaged. To expand more of the non-economic benefits of employment activities for youth, Mercy Corps could facilitate the creation of additional opportunities for youth to play vital roles in their communities. Within Kenya, youth pointed out that such roles could include tutoring by secondary school graduates, or combating environmental degradation and the effects of climate change.

- ***Promote young people's political and civic engagement:*** Ensuring youth have constructive avenues for political participation stood out as a critical factor for reducing their risk of resorting to violence to promote political objectives. These findings point to the need for more programs that addresses poor governance and patrimonialism which underpin the social, economic, and political exclusion of young people. Several Mercy Corps Kenya programs are already engaged on this front, and are working to create opportunities for youth to influence local governance issues, and increase young people's voice and representation in political processes.

[51] This study bore out the fact that LEAP I struggled to significantly improve the incomes of even a small number of youth through its assistance to small scale enterprise development.

- ***Address proximate factors:*** All together, the predictive factors identified by this research only explained a small amount of the differences between youth who are likely to become involved in political violence and those who are not. In addition, levels of trust and social and economic interaction between different ethnic groups were found to be high overall, indicating that further efforts to build these forms of social capital is not likely to be an effective pathway to promoting greater stability. These findings bring to the fore the major role played by outside triggers, such as identity politics, in mobilizing youth into violence in Kenya. Mercy Corps and other actors should consider how to expand efforts to counter the influence of political elites and other opinion leaders, for example through information campaigns, including via vernacular radio stations.

5.3. Areas for Further Research and Evaluation

Because this study relied largely on the analysis of existing data, it was not able to examine several factors believed to have a major influence on violence among youth. Further exploration of the following questions is needed[52]:

- ***What types of employment most influence propensity towards violence?*** For instance, does the type or duration of work make a difference?

- ***What role does elite manipulation play in violence among youth?*** This is presumed to be an important mediating variable in several of Mercy Corps' youth and conflict program theories of change, thus warrants further study.

- ***What makes youth more resilient to outside triggers?*** Triggers include political events and sudden economic crises, which have been shown to spark violence in Kenya and other contexts.

- ***What contributes to a shared social identity?*** Where does a shared social identity come from, if not from increased interaction?

- ***To what extent are the factors that influence political violence also related to other forms of organized violence among youth?*** Researching these links would help expand the generalizability of the findings of this study to contexts where violence among youth is not overtly political.

- ***In what other contexts do the findings from this research apply?*** To expand the understanding of key predictors of violence among youth beyond those apparent in Kenya, it would be valuable to conduct a similar study to this one using data from multiple countries. This would enable Mercy Corps to more rigorously test its youth and conflict program theories, and to better understand the contexts in which they could most appropriately be used to inform program design.

[52] Mercy Corps could incorporate measures of some of these factors into its set of indicators and data collection tools for its poverty and conflict programs -- i.e. those developed / refined as part of its Evaluation and Assessment of Poverty and Conflict Interventions (EAPC) research project.

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Appendixes

1. Survey Questions for the Variables Measured

The table below provides the source and item number(s) for each of the variables measured as part of this research[53].

Variable	Source	Item #
Dependent Variables (Measures of Stability)		
Propensity towards violence:		
- Attitudes towards political violence	Afrobarometer Round 4 in Kenya	Q75B_KEN
- Behaviors / Behavioral dispositions towards political violence	Afrobarometer Round 4 in Kenya	Q23C1-KEN
- Perceptions of youth involvement in violence	LEAP II baseline survey	Q38
Perceptions of security:		
- Freedom of movement	LEAP II baseline survey	Qs 27 - 28
Trust:		
- Level of trust of Kenyans	LEAP II baseline survey	Q's 35 - 37
Perceptions of youth:		
- Positive perceptions of youth	LEAP II baseline survey	Q's 39a and 39b
Independent Variables for Theory 1: Employment and Income Generation		
- Ability to satisfy basic needs	Afrobarometer Round 4 in Kenya	Qs 8A-8E
- Employment status	Afrobarometer Round 4 in Kenya	Q94
- Average income	LEAP II baseline survey	Q48
Independent Variables for Theory 2 : Conflict Management and Peacebuilding Skills		
- Existence of peace dialogues	LEAP II baseline survey	Q19
- Participation in peace dialogues	LEAP II baseline survey	Q20
- Perceptions of effectiveness of peace committees	LEAP II baseline survey	Q18
Independent Variables for Theory 3: Youth-to-Youth Connections Across Lines of Division		
Social Integration:		
- Existence of collective action among youth within a community	LEAP II baseline survey	Q53
- Social identity (Kenyan versus own ethnic group)	Afrobarometer Round 4 in Kenya	Q83
Interaction:		
- Interaction with other ethnic groups	LEAP II baseline survey	Q 33
Associational membership:		
- Member of a religious group	Afrobarometer Round 4 in Kenya	Q22A

[53] The questionnaire for the Afrobarometer Round 4 Survey in Kenya can be accessed at: http://afrobarometer.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&Itemid=176&gid=687
For a copy of the LEAP II baseline survey questionnaire, contact Jon Kurtz (jkurtz@dc.mercycorps.org)

- Member of a community or self-help group	Afrobarometer Round 4 in Kenya	Q22B
Others variables tested		
Civic Engagement:		
- Level of engagement in efforts to address governance problems	Afrobarometer Round 4 in Kenya	Q's 62A – 62F
- Youth voice in governance matters	Afrobarometer Round 4 in Kenya	Q24A
Equality:		
- Perceived economic inequality	Afrobarometer Round 4 in Kenya	Q80
- Perceived political inequality	Afrobarometer Round 4 in Kenya	Q81
Governance:		
- Perceptions of national government's handling of key responsibilities	Afrobarometer Round 4 in Kenya	Qs 57A – 57P
- Perceptions of local government's handling of key responsibilities	Afrobarometer Round 4 in Kenya	Qs 59A – 60F
- Perceived levels of corruption among government officials	Afrobarometer Round 4 in Kenya	50D
- Level of trust in local institutions	Afrobarometer Round 4 in Kenya	Qs 49D and 49G
Non-political violence:		
- Perceptions of levels of violent conflict within own community	Afrobarometer Round 4 in Kenya	Q 71B[54]
- Perceptions of personal security	Afrobarometer Round 4 in Kenya	Qs 9A, Q9C, and Q47
Socio-Demographics:		
- Gender	Afrobarometer Round 4 in Kenya	Q 'THISINT'
- Education (highest level completed)	Afrobarometer Round 4 in Kenya	Q89
- Rural / urban status	Afrobarometer Round 4 in Kenya	Q 'URBRUR'

[54] From Afrobarometer Round 2: http://afrobarometer.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&Itemid=176&gid=227

2. Primary, Qualitative Data Collection Protocols

Research question	Interview questions	Use with			
		Youth group members	DPC members	District Youth Officers	MC / Partner staff
How does youth's participation in a self help groups contribute to economic and peacebuilding outcomes?	• Why do you participate in this group? • What benefit(s) do you get from interacting with this group? Prompt: economic? Social? • Among these benefits, which is most important to you? Why?	X			
Which factors or types of support to youth groups contribute the most to their success?	• What types of support (training, seed money, etc) has Mercy Corps / partner provided your group? • Which of these have been the most important / valuable for your group? Why? What did they help you achieve? • How many individuals belong to your Self Help Group? How does the size of your group help or hinder your success? • What is the composition (ethnic and gender) of your group? How does the composition help or hinder your success?	X		X	X
What are people's perceptions of youth, and what contributes to changes in these?	• What do people think about youth in your community? What words do they use to describe them? • Do people see youth differently (than this stereotype) because they are in a youth group? Or for other reasons? If so, why?	X	X	X	X
To what extent are youth groups engaging in mobilization and political voice?	• Youth groups have received a number of trainings, e.g. on leadership, etc. Have they used these leadership (or other) skills outside their immediate group? How? Prompt: e.g. to mobilize other youth around something they interested in or concerned about? • What more is required to spur this type of activity among them?	X		X	X
What are the relationships between youth economic independence and conflict? And other	• Do you think differences in income are responsible for any of the following? Crime, hatred between groups, corruption, violence? If yes, why? • Are youth with more income / secure livelihoods less likely to be exploited for violent purposes? If yes, why?	X	X	X	X

factors?	• Are increase incomes on their enough? If not, what else is required for them to be less likely to engage in/be disposed towards political violence?				
What are youth group members' views on the likelihood of future violence?	• If a general election were held today, do you think violence (between ethnic groups) is likely to occur? Why or why not? What's different now? • The lead up to and vote for the constitutional referendum last August was controversial, especially here in Rift. Was it more or less violent than you expected? Why? • What would be likely to trigger political violence in this area? • What more needs to be done to prevent violence from reoccurring?	X	X	X	X

3. Procedures Used for Developing Scales for Analysis

One of the fundamental problems facing workers in the field of survey research is to determine if the questions asked on a given issue have a single meaning for the respondents. Obviously, if the question means different things to different respondents, then there is no way that the respondents can be ranked in order of favorableness. Another problem is how to interpret rating scales, such as Likert scales. For example, it is difficult to interpret what mean of 3.6 or 3.8 means in 5-point rating scales, such as those used in questions 39a and 39b of the LEAP survey.

To avoid this problem, unidimensional scales were developed to measure abstract concepts, such as trust, social interaction or perceptions of youth. The process of developing scales involves ensuring that the items in each scale belong together, that each variable in the scale is scored in the same direction, ensuring that the scoring or number of categories of one variable do not bias the overall scale. Each scale has to be transformed so they have the same upper and lower limits so that scores on each variable can be compared easily.

To illustrate this process, an example is provided on how items 39a and 39b were transformed into the "perception of youth" unidemensional scale. (Note: Typically, it is recommended to have at least five items when constructing a scale.[55] A scale with only two items was chosen here to serve as a simpler example.)

The first step was to ensure that each item was scored in the same direction both so that the scores on the scales could be compared and so that the items within each of the scales could be combined to form the scale in the first place. First the researchers had to make a decision about what a high score was to mean. For the perception of youth scale, the Items 39a and 39b were reversed and coded so that a high score indicated a positive perception of youth, while a low score represented a negative perception of youth. The items were scored as a five-point rating scale: 5: strongly agree, 4: agree, 3: neither agree or disagree, 2: disagree, 1: strongly disagree.

39a. Youth are responsible members of the community?

- ☐ Strongly agree,
- ☐ Agree,
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

39b. Youth are productive members of my community?

- ☐ Strongly agree,
- ☐ Agree,
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

The second step was to decide how to treat missing data. Because missing data can lead to an unacceptable loss of cases, especially when constructing scales, it was decided to substitute

[55] For example, see: De Vaus, D. (1996). *Surveys in social research* (4th ed.). St. Leonards NSW Australia: UCL Press ; Streiner, D. (2008). *Health measurement scales: a practical guide to their development and use* (4th ed.). Oxford : Oxford University Press.

the mean of the variable for missing data. To do this the researchers first had to obtain the mean of each variable and then recode the variable so that the missing data code was recoded to the mean.

Table 1: Original scores for items 39a and 39b on LEAP survey

Respondent #	Q.39a	Q.39b	Total
1	4	4	8
2	5	5	10
3	4	4	8
4	5	4	9
5	5	5	10
6	5	5	10
7	5	5	10
8	5	4	9
9	5	5	10
10	5	4	9
…	…	…	…
…	…	…	…
…	…	…	…
1103	5	5	…
1104	5	4	…
Mean	4.18	4.22	
SD	0.88	0.84	

The third step was to ensure that each of the items in the scale contributed equally to the final scale score. To this end, scale scores were adjusted by dividing each person's score on each scale item by the standard deviation of that item. In this way each item has an equal weight in the final scale. This would be accomplished using the following transformations for each item on the scale

$$newitem = \frac{(olditem - \bar{x})}{sd}$$

Where,

$\bar{x}$ = the mean of the untransformed item; and

sd = the standard deviation of the untransformed item. A sample of transformed items are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Weighted scores on scale items

ID	39a Weighted	39b weighted	Total row weighted
1	-0.20805	-0.25797	-0.46602
2	0.927119	0.929871	1.85699
3	-0.20805	-0.25797	-0.46602
4	0.927119	-0.25797	0.669152
5	0.927119	0.929871	1.85699

6	0.927119	0.929871	1.85699
7	0.927119	0.929871	1.85699
8	0.927119	-0.25797	0.669152
9	0.927119	0.929871	1.85699
10	0.927119	-0.25797	0.669152
….	…	…	…
…	…	…	…
1103	0.927119	0.929871	1.85699
1104	0.927119	-0.25797	0.669152

The final step involves forcing scales to have meaningful upper and lower limits. Depending on the number of items in a scale, their distribution, the number of categories in each item, and the minimum and maximum scores of each item, the lower and upper values of a scale can vary between any two numbers. Thus a score of say, -0.46 or 1.85 (see Table 2, third column) has no immediate meaning without first looking at the minimum and maximum values of that scale and its distribution.

In order to overcome this problem and make the meaning of the scale scores meaningful, the scales should be converted so that they have a specified minimum and maximum value. To achieve this the following formula was used:

$$new\ scale = \frac{(old\ scale - minimum\ scale\ value)}{range \times n}$$

Where,

$new\ scale$ = score on weighted scale with upper and lower limit;

$old\ scale =$ score on old scale (using the standardized scores);

$minimum\ scale\ value =$ lowest score observed on old scale;

$range =$ range of observed scores on old scale;

$n =$ upper limit for new scale

Using this formula the scales scores will be forced between 0 and the number indicated by n. The following example shows how this was done for the perception of youth scale (Table 3).

Minimum observed score on old scale = -7.43
Maximum observed score on old scale 1.85
Range = 9.3

Example 1

Individual score on old scale = 1.85 (i.e., highest observed score)
Desired upper limit on scale = 100

$$new\ score = \frac{\left(1.85 - (-7.43)\right)}{9.3 \times 100} = 100$$

Example 2

The individuals' old score is -7.43 (lowest observed score)

$$new\ score = \frac{\left(-7.43 - (-7.43)\right)}{9.3 \times 10\mathbf{0}} = \mathbf{0}$$

Example 3

Old score for respondent # 3's is -0.46, thus

$$new\ score = \frac{\left(-0.46 - (-7.43)\right)}{9.3 \times 10\mathbf{0}} = \mathbf{75}$$

The effect of dividing by the range is to ensure that respondents who obtained the highest and lowest observed (as opposed to theoretically possible) score on the old scale get the highest and lowest possible scores respectively on the new, transformed scale.

Table 3: Final unidimensional scale

ID	newscale
1	75
2	100
3	75
4	87
5	100
6	100
7	100
8	87
9	100
10	87
…	76
…	75
1103	100
1104	88

This same process was followed to construct scales from the LEAP data for "trust" (using items 35 through 37) and "freedom of movement" (using items 27 and 28), and from the Afrobarometer data for "personal economic conditions" (from items 8a-8e), "civic action" (from items 62a-62f), Central Government Performance (from items 57a-57p), and local government performance (from items 59-60).

4. Supporting Data

4.1. Regression Models for Behaviors and Attitudes Towards Political Violence

Below are tables from the logistical regression models for the two dependent variables analyzed from the Aftobarometer survey data.

1. First DV: Behavior / behavioral disposition towards political violence

During the past year, have you used force or violence for a political cause? If not, would you if you had the chance?

Model Summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	1127.647[a]	.071	.106

Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
	membervoluntarygroup(1)	-.443	1.268	.122	1	.726	.642
	Q13interpublicaffairs(1)	-.250	.188	1.764	1	.184	.779
	Q14discusspolitics(1)	-.672	1.342	.251	1	.616	.511
	Q25acontactcouncillor(1)	-.125	.174	.521	1	.470	.882
	Q24acounsilorlisten(1)	19.888	28322.712	.000	1	.999	4.339E8
	Q61canpersonsolveproblems(1)	20.378	40192.970	.000	1	1.000	7.083E8
	Q49trustlocalgov(1)	-.460	.885	.271	1	.603	.631
	Q49gtrustpolice(1)	-.563	1.223	.212	1	.645	.569
	Q45apartycompetition(1)	-.474	1.448	.107	1	.743	.622
	Q50dgovofficialscorrupt(1)	19.310	28304.798	.000	1	.999	2.433E8
	Q84Ctrustotherkenyans(1)	1.248	1.068	1.364	1	.243	3.483
	Q45CApeopletreatedequally(1)	19.588	40192.970	.000	1	1.000	3.214E8
	PERCEPTIONLOCALGOVT	.006	.006	1.011	1	.315	1.006
	personeconscale	.009	.004	4.551	1	.033	1.009
	civicaction	-.009	.004	5.028	1	.025	.991

	perceptionscentralgovt	.001	.006	.022	1	.882	1.001
	gender(1)	.163	.155	1.106	1	.293	1.177
	Q80economicyourgroup(1)	-.060	.202	.088	1	.767	.942
	Q82.treatedfairly(1)	.210	.166	1.587	1	.208	1.233
	Q81.politicainfluence(1)	.353	.178	3.955	1	.047	1.424
	urbanrural(1)	.109	.188	.335	1	.563	1.115
	Q4B.presentconditions(1)	.222	.173	1.656	1	.198	1.249
	Q5.conditiosvsother(1)	-.089	.170	.276	1	.599	.914
	Q94.employement(1)	.025	.161	.024	1	.876	1.025
	Q23B.raiseanissue(1)	.060	.177	.115	1	.735	1.062
	Q9C.beenattacked(1)	-.020	.226	.008	1	.930	.980
	Q9A.fearedcrime(1)	.128	.163	.618	1	.432	1.137
	Q47.fearedintimidation(1)	.252	.211	1.433	1	.231	1.287
	Q22amemberreligiousgroup(1)	.366	.177	4.256	1	.039	1.441
	equallyethnicandkenyan(1)	-.618	.231	7.154	1	.007	.539
	onlykenyan(1)	-.587	.230	6.510	1	.011	.556
	Constant	.624	.704	.785	1	.376	1.867

2. Second DV: Attitude towards political violence

Which of the following statements is closest to your view?
Statement 1: The use of violence is never justified in Kenyan politics today.
Statement 2: In this country, it is sometimes necessary to use violence in support of a just cause.

Model Summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	852.095[a]	.067	.117

Variables in the Equation

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
membervoluntarygroup(1)	19.402	28408.368	.000	1	.999	2.668E8

Q13interpublicaffairs(1)	-.113	.228	.246	1	.620	.893
Q14discusspolitics(1)	-1.472	1.328	1.230	1	.267	.229
Q25acontactcouncillor(1)	.197	.204	.935	1	.334	1.218
Q24acounsilorlisten(1)	19.274	28256.567	.000	1	.999	2.348E8
Q61canpersonsolveproblems(1)	20.525	28386.229	.000	1	.999	8.199E8
Q49trustlocalgov(1)	-.725	.896	.654	1	.419	.484
Q49gtrustpolice(1)	19.886	15854.941	.000	1	.999	4.330E8
Q45apartycompetition(1)	-.960	1.512	.403	1	.526	.383
Q50dgovofficialscorrupt(1)	18.864	24523.341	.000	1	.999	1.557E8
Q84Ctrustotherkenyans(1)	.965	1.087	.789	1	.374	2.626
Q45CApeopletreatedequally(1)	17.832	40192.970	.000	1	1.000	5.552E7
PERCEPTIONLOCALGOVT	.006	.007	.625	1	.429	1.006
personeconscale	.000	.005	.000	1	.993	1.000
civicaction	.002	.005	.145	1	.704	1.002
perceptionscentralgovt	-.009	.007	1.789	1	.181	.991
gender(1)	.590	.190	9.666	1	.002	1.804
Q80economicyourgroup(1)	-.364	.242	2.270	1	.132	.695
Q82.treatedfairly(1)	.103	.199	.267	1	.605	1.108
Q81.politicainfluence(1)	.627	.208	9.138	1	.003	1.873
urbanrural(1)	.275	.218	1.581	1	.209	1.316
Q4B.presentconditions(1)	.141	.205	.473	1	.492	1.152
Q5.conditiosvsother(1)	.023	.202	.012	1	.911	1.023
Q94.employement(1)	.391	.189	4.291	1	.038	1.479
Q23B.raiseanissue(1)	.398	.219	3.310	1	.069	1.489
Q9C.beenattacked(1)	.294	.246	1.428	1	.232	1.342
Q9A.fearedcrime(1)	.310	.197	2.480	1	.115	1.363
Q47.fearedintimidation(1)	.002	.239	.000	1	.995	1.002
Q22amemberreligiousgroup(1)	-.257	.205	1.578	1	.209	.773
equallyethnicandkenyan(1)	-.788	.274	8.238	1	.004	.455
onlykenyan(1)	-.430	.266	2.605	1	.107	.651
Constant	.708	.821	.744	1	.388	2.030

4.2. LEAP Outcome and Impact Indicator Data at Baseline and End of Project

LEAP program indicators	Baseline (May 2009)[56]	End of Project (Sept 2010)	
		Comparison Districts	Target Districts
Theory 1: Employment and Income Generation			
Average monthly income among youth	Not measured	36% (within median income range of 0-3,000 Kshs)	39% (within median income range of 0-3,000 Kshs)
Employment status among youth	11 % "do nothing"	8% "do nothing"	12% "do nothing"
Theory 2: Conflict Management and Peacebuilding Skills			
Existence of peace dialogues	49%	43%	80%
Participation in community dialogues	38%	72%	82%
Perceptions of effectiveness of District Peace Committees	Not measured	55%	79%
Theory 3: Youth to Youth Connections Across Lines of Division			
Participation in Youth Self Help Group	20%	75%	59%
Existence of collective action among youth within a community	50%	24%	76%
Interaction with members of other ethnic groups	87%	89%	94%
Perceptions of youth	Not measured	80 (mean score on perceptions of youth scale)	81 (mean score on perceptions of youth scale)
Stability-related measures (intended impacts)			
Trust of other Kenyans	Not measured	61 (mean score on trust scale)	68 (mean score on trust scale)

[56] No comparison group data was gathered at baseline.