

**Preventing Violence: Youth expectations of the 2012 Kenyan elections**

Grant Ennis, 2011

Sarah Meek Award Winning Paper

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**Abstract:**

In anticipation of the 2012 election year, Kenyans fear a repeat of the post election violence of 2008 that left countless dead, injured, and homeless. Through 329 youth survey responses in Nairobi slums, this research examines the causes of a culture accepting of violence, what youth believe will happen in the next elections, and how it should be addressed. Most importantly, this study reviews what kinds of solutions and pre-emptive measures Kenyan youth have suggested in order to avoid clashes in the coming election year.



**Dedication:**

This paper is the winner of the 2011 Sarah Meek African Security and Development Research Prize and is dedicated to the memory of its namesake. Sarah tragically left us on 26 October 2006 in a car accident, after spending most of her life working for the reduction of violence and increase in human security throughout the developing world. Sarah's professional focus was on small arms and light weapons issues and was one of the founding members of the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA)<sup>1</sup>. Sarah was formerly the Director of Development at the Institute for Security Studies and was a graduate of the Monterey Institute of International Studies<sup>2</sup>.

**Background of Field Partner:**

Youth Initiatives Kenya (YIKE) is a local Kenyan NGO that works with thousands of youth from nearly 100 youth groups in slums throughout Nairobi. YIKE works in the program areas of Youth Entrepreneurship and Microfinance, Youth Community Capacity Building and Mentorship, Grassroots Community Mobilization, Technology and Library Services, Lobbying, and Research.”<sup>3</sup>

**Background of Author:**

Grant Ennis has worked in management and monitoring, and evaluation in youth entrepreneurship and international development for over 7 years in East Africa, Central America, South America, and in the California central valley. He graduates December 2011 with a Master of Public Administration in Applied Research and Monitoring & Evaluation in Conflict, Security, and Development from the Monterey Institute of International Studies.

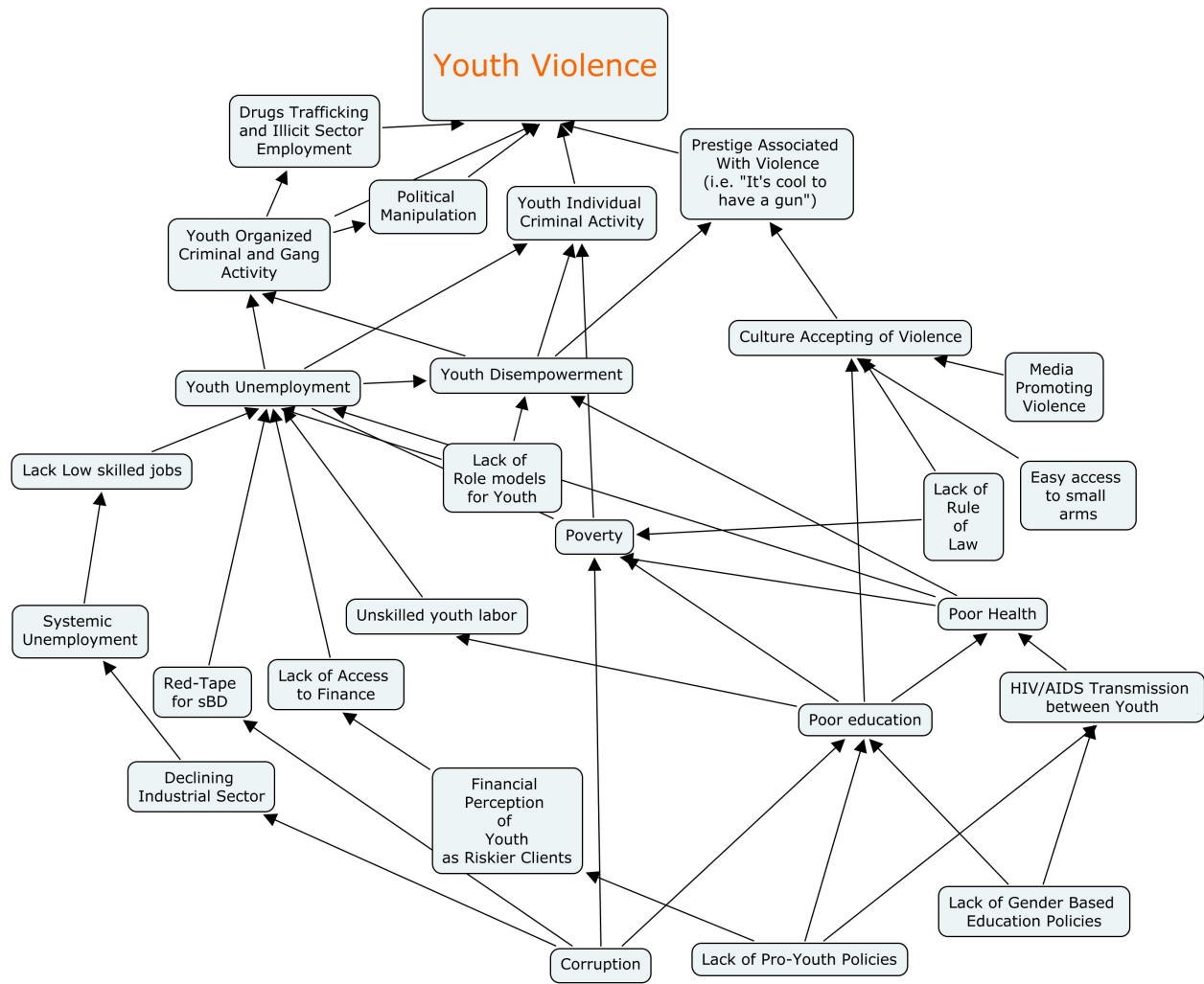
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<sup>1</sup> See: <http://www.iansa.org/>

<sup>2</sup> See: <http://users3.smartgb.com/g/g.php?a=s&i=g32-01879-9c&m=20&p=3>

<sup>3</sup> YIKE Website Homepage, written by Grant Ennis in August 2011. See [www.youthinitiativeskenya.org](http://www.youthinitiativeskenya.org)

**Youth Violence Problem Tree - YIKE**



Figure/Image 1: Hypothesis tree of Youth Violence designed by YIKE staff with author facilitation, June 2011

**Introduction**

Over 1,200 people died and at least 350,000 persons were internally displaced in the 2008 Kenyan post-election violence (PEV). Hundreds of thousands were forced to flee to internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, with many others seeking refuge with friends and family in stable regions of the country<sup>4</sup>. In a continent fraught with a myriad of development challenges, Kenya, a country previously championed as one of the most stable African nations, witnessed a dramatic turn of events with youth committing violent atrocities creating an unstable environment.

In 2012, Kenya will hold its first elections since the elections of 2008. Many inside and outside of Kenya feel that a repeat of 2008 is inevitable. A recent BBC report entitled *Kenyan's rearming for 2012 poll*<sup>5</sup>, reports that in areas of intense violence during the 2008 post election violence (PEV), citizens of

<sup>4</sup> IRIN Global, Humanitarian News, and Analysis, In-depth: Kenya's post election crisis. January 7 2008

See: <http://www.irinnews.org/indepthmain.aspx?indepthid=68&reportid=76116>

<sup>5</sup> BBC-Online, Kenyan's 'rearming for 2012 poll', October 7 2009

See: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8293745.stm>

multiple ethnic groups have been found purchasing AK-47s and G3 assault rifles in anticipation of upcoming elections.

This research argues that the events of 2008 did not occur in a vacuum; but rather considering the scale of violence that occurred on the heels of the last election period precursory tensions *had to have been* present. In addition, violence had to be seen as an acceptable, albeit drastic, method of conflict resolution for citizens and politicians, in order for people to feel that it was an acceptable form of resolving disputed elections.

All of this begs the question; what causes a culture to accept violence as a means of conflict resolution? What role did youth unemployment, low income, lack of mentorship, or lack of education play? Seeking to understand why Kenyan youth accept violence as a means to conflict resolution, this research examines both general attitudes towards violence and questions youth on their perceptions of the post-election violence in 2008. This study specifically aims to identify key causes of election-related violence in Kenya and takes careful note of potential solutions and preventative measures as suggested by survey participants.

In addition, this study explores the perceptions Kenyan youth have of the upcoming elections. Do they believe that it will be a repeat of 2008? And if so, why do youth believe this and how do they believe it can be solved.

### **Background on Youth in Kenya**

Thousands of youth group organizations, or youth groups, are registered throughout Nairobi and around Kenya. These groups run businesses, social enterprises, host events, and mobilize communities throughout the slums of Nairobi. These groups are a truly distinct phenomena if not a unique one where the government has legitimized self-formed youth groups as well as provided incentives for them to organize and operate through these grassroots structures.

To explain the evolution of these groups, local staff at YIKE was asked to advise the author in writing a historical narrative on their development. While the following is the resulting narrative as related by Yike's staff and is indeed a "local perspective," they insisted that it be noted that this is not a universally accepted history of youth in Kenya. That being said, as there is very little written on the origins of Nairobi youth groups, the author and the assisting YIKE staff posit that the following is a valuable attempt at shedding light and understanding this noteworthy phenomena.

#### *History of Youth Groups in Kenya*

After the end of the cold war, financial support from the West started to fade and pressure for increased democracy began to build for Kenya to hold multi-party elections. For the first time, President Daniel Arap Moi faced credible opposition in 1992 with the growth of political parties outside of MOI's KANU party, which had monopolized the political arena for nearly 30 years. In order to diminish the power of this new opposition, Moi's agents organized youth in slums throughout the country into small groups that he supported with state funds. Due to lack of resources, other parties were not able to create similar groups, giving Moi a monopoly on this form of support. Moi used the groups to manipulate and intimidate other political parties and potential candidates, disrupting oppositional political rallies and persecuting non-Moi supporters. In addition to quashing the opposition, Moi's youth groups also supported his campaign by mobilizing, registering, and recruiting voters and members to support the KANU party and by providing entertainment at all political events.

These groups were paid until the end of Moi's presidency. In the years following his ouster, the culture that he had cultivated within these political youth parties in the slums has had a profound effect on the political fabric of Kenyan society. To this day, these groups are still contracted by political parties during the campaigning process to administer tasks similar to those undertaken during Moi's rule.

The donor community has, in its own way, supported this group framework by electing to work with organized community groups rather than individuals. In engaging "civil society groups," which these

youth groups fall into the category of, donors assume that they are creating a greater impact in communities, working to affect a system rather than a few individuals. Since 2008, incentives for the continuation of this group framework comes from the government with youth loans first distributed to groups, and then to individual youth, once their groups have paid back their loans.

Some of these groups have turned in to small racketeering organizations extorting Matatu (bus) drivers and small business owners for “protection” or permission to do business with threats of violence without even the guise of “protection.” Other groups have joined in order to form small businesses that sometimes engage in what could be seen as social entrepreneurship; setting up day care centers, schools, garbage collection centers, and hospice care centers for the terminally ill with HIV/AIDS.

Youth generally benefit from membership in such groups. Most group members’ share an intertwined background that creates a strong sense of kinship between members based on a collective past. Most group members are married young men, with non-member wives maintaining the household and holding jobs in the formal and informal sectors. As the men are generally economically inactive, or sub-employed, they come together to pool their resources and start small businesses, often referred to as income generating activities (IGAs). This group structure gives them easier access to loans from the government, and in addition, groups are seen as highly credible and thus members are more quickly able to hold bank accounts, than individual businesses not associated with youth groups.

In 2008, despite the positive benefits of these groups, they were, by many accounts<sup>6</sup>, coerced by politicians either by monetary means or through ethno-political rallying, to participate in the violence, hatred, and mayhem witnessed during the past elections.

## **Methodology**

### *General Methodology*

The author spent 5 months in the slums of Nairobi Kenya with YIKE as a consultant: 3 months during 2011 and 2 months during 2010. This experience allowed the author and local staff to work collaboratively on survey design, and build trust within the team to work effectively on this project. The questionnaires analyzed in this research were designed for internal organizational use; however, with the permission of YIKE, key questions addressing youth development and violence are explored in this research.

Field research includes 95 questionnaires administered to collect quantitative perception and demographic data (dataset #2), and 205 questionnaires collecting qualitative data on perceptions on expected violence in the 2012 election year (dataset #1).

Interestingly, while the dataset 2 questionnaire was not designed using dataset 1 results, it was collaboratively designed with local staff, and tests many of the policy recommendations proposed by youth, albeit not all.

The election data tells the story of the problem, specifically of why violence may occur again in 2008. It also describes what locals believe are solutions to preventing this tragedy from occurring again. The following data on perceptions of violence and allows for analysis of causal factors of violence, in many ways exploring the hypothesis created by the youth in the election dataset.

## **Qualitative Data Dataset #1 – 2012 Elections**

### Methodology for dataset #1

This qualitative dataset explores how youth view the future elections, whether or not they believe there will be a repeat in 2008, and also what they believe the solution should be to prevent this violence. The qualitative survey, followed the quantitative one and was designed, and administered entirely by local staff at YIKE.

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<sup>6</sup> See Youth sources on causes of PEV in the methods and findings section

The questionnaire consisted of one page and asked for demographic data: Name, Gender Residence. It then asked: “1) Do you think there may be ethnic violence where you live as we move towards 2012? (Yes/No).” The final two remaining questions asked, “If YES above, what might be the cause,” and “Which ways can we prevent this?”

This inductive data will be the core of the findings presented below as they amounted to over 300 statements about why violence would occur, and what the policy recommendations should be to solve this problem. Here is an example of one response:

#	Name	Gender	Residence	Do you think there may be ethnic violence where you live as we move towards 2012?	If YES above, what might be the cause?	Which ways can we prevent this?
B158	Censored Censored	F	Kariobangi	YES	All politicians are based on tribal politics which is very dangerous	Let’s value our brothers and sisters no matter the outcome

These statements were then pile sorted in to groups of overlapping themes such as “blame of politicians,” “hate speech,” “enabling factors (i.e. unemployment, poverty, illiteracy),” and others. These piles were then summarized in to shorter statements and put in to an order that flowed as a narrative.

This decision to present the findings as a narrative enables the reader to see both the raw data and also opinion archetypes about the shared beliefs held by youth throughout Nairobi’s slums. Another advantage of presenting these findings as a narrative is that assembles these beliefs into a strong collective voice of Kenyan youth.

*Findings for Election Questionnaire, Questionnaire #1:*

38% of 206 youth surveyed answered yes when asked if they felt that there would be violence in the 2012 election season. The rate of positive answers was the same for both genders. The following is a narrative summary of the statements provided by the youth as to why this might happen:

*The conditions on the street are just as poor as they were right before the 2008 post election violence. Anger, bitterness and desire for revenge among the tribes that were most affected by the 2008 post election violence (PEV) is still rampant. There has been insufficient reconciliation between the ethnic groups involved in the PEV and the government has done far too little to ensure that reconciliation can happen.*

*The International Criminal Court at the Hague, through its broadcast to Kenyan viewers and listeners, is 1) inciting violence, 2) opening new wounds, and 3) that the outcomes of these trials, regardless of what they may be, will probably incite violence on one side or the other.*

*Leaders, rather than resolving differences and working to prevent the same thing from happening in 2012, blame each other and each other’s tribe for the post election violence. What is worse, they do this on the radio and on TV.*

*The new constitution is being ignored, and even the good reforms that were made are not being implemented. Politics and red tape have gotten in the way of implementation of solutions. Tribalism, ethnic tensions, nepotism, political rivalry, corruption, embezzlement, and lack of transparency are hindering development and reconciliation and are kindling for a resurgence of violence in 2012.*

*Rigging, or the perceived rigging, of poles could also lead to resurgence violence in 2012. Voters will only be satisfied if their candidate wins, and that even if he does win, the losing ethnic group may become violent.*

*Politicians manipulated and incited youth to commit violence in 2008, and they are likely to do it again. Youth claim that many of their peers are paid to be violent. Insecurity, lack of education, employment, life goals, and poverty only exacerbate violence.*

*Findings for Election Questionnaire regarding youth proposed solutions:*

The following is a narrative summary of solutions provided by the youth as to what they believe could prevent violence next year. They have been pile sorted and converted in to narrative form; however, many of their verbatim statements were kept in order to convey the local youth voice:

*We Kenyans must learn our lessons and complete the reconciliation process still unresolved from the 2008 post election violence aftermath. We must rebuild broken friendships and reconcile differences. We must create rehabilitation centers for those affected. We need capacity building forums and to hold politicians accountable. We should hold seminars in the slums and other areas that were affected in the past chaos. We can join organizations that bring people together and educate them about other ethnicity. We can more completely embrace mediation processes and work with each other to learn lessons from past failures. We must provide proper settlement for the internally displaced persons (IDPs) caused by the violence.*

*In some ways, we should change our culture. We should improve our social structures, national values, and morals. We should use our national language (Kiswahili), and not tribal languages, in order to reinforce a feeling of unity and Kenyanness.*

*By creating and strengthening feelings of unity and nationalism among Kenyans, we should see ourselves as one people, not many tribes. We should accept that regardless of tribe, we are one people, one nation, one brother, and have one blood. We should establish unity, peace, and harmony as Kenyans. We must require that our leaders preach love, not hate. We must bring youth together through sports and community development programs, as they are the ones most likely to cause violence. We must support intermarriage between different ethnic groups in the community, inter-ethnic activities e.g. sports and annual peace conferences to educate the community on the importance of maintaining a peaceful country. Dialogues should be embraced and we should unify all Kenyans through educative meetings, and staged drama performances.*

*We need to stop tribalism. To not mix ethnicity with politics, to take tribes and ethnicities out of our national discourse and concentrate on who we are as a people together, not how we are different. We must say no to ethnic violence because we, the youth, are the ones who will suffer most from that violence.*

*We must use non-violent advocacy. We must remember that what we do today will always come back to us in the future.*

*We must implement the constitutions, and implement laws that will protect people from harm. We must pass and implement Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation Agenda Item 4.*

*We must reform the media and make sure that they disseminate fair and just viewpoints. We must use media to our advantage, and teach about the perils of violence.*

*We must work with the International Criminal Courts, and not allow them to work against us. We must stop regular broadcast of the International Criminal Courts trials as they are inciting violence. We must work with them to ensure a neutral judgment of the people at the International Criminal Courts.*



*We must vote for sound politicians who are non-tribal oriented, uncorrupt, and take responsibility for their actions. Our politicians must not act based on ethnicity, must be educated, speak peace and not hatred, and accept political defeat without vengeful statements or organizing violence. They must avoid nepotism and make policy that provides balanced opportunities to different ethnic communities.*

*We must seek and work towards good governance, rule of law and security sector reform. We must improve on our justice system and empower the police service. We need rule of law rather than mob rule for those accused of crimes. Government should provide security to people without favoritism and monitor political campaigns for hatred. Government should provide more security during the election season, to look out and defend citizens from violence.*

*We, as youth, must avoid manipulation. We must avoid peer pressure of our campaigners. We must encourage youth that they can make it, and thrive, without depending on misleading political leaders. We must not listen to these stupid politicians.*

*We must empower youth to set a good example for each other, and for Kenya. We must provide youth with life skills so that they can be independent and stop corruption at the grassroots level. We must support initiatives of inter-tribal sports such as the hope raisers roller skating club. We must teach youth civic education and about their rights. We must empower individuals to take responsibility for peace, make their own choices, and stop tribalism.*

*We need to create civic awareness. We can create billboards to show what happened in the 2008 elections, which will discourage fighting. We need to support grassroots, local design of programs and projects for peace. We must prepare the youth for peace and community development programs.*

*We must create jobs and reduce idleness. Youth should be engaged in productive work and as we know an idle mind is the devil's workshop. We need to make sure that almost all youth have found a place to work or are educated so that poverty decreases.*

*The gospel of peace should be preached. We must preach love among people and live as good neighbors. We must preach peace among youth and show them the effect of ethnic violence. We must preach the word of peace to the community and in every part of the country.*

*We must educate, teach, and explain to the youth, the public, citizen and the community, civic education about problems of: violence, tribalism, the importance of peace and of living in harmony, love, and in unity with one another. We must elect officials to represent our interests, not their tribal affiliation. We must respect the decisions and choices of others. Teaching youth the negative consequences of fighting your neighbor will help them brush off the nagging politicians telling them to rise up in ethnic violence. We must live together as one family. We must promote nationalism and solidification of all tribes to form one Kenyan society so that we get rid of tribalism. We must vote based on what politicians can do for everyone and not for their own ethnic tribe.*

*We youth must understand and teach the legal system, elections, and our rights so as not to be used by our leaders for political gain. We must teach better lifestyle choices, emotional self-control, and about the problems of drugs. Most of all we must continue to teach about the horrors of the 2008 Post Election Violence. We must provide and seek training in morality, problem solving, leadership skills, and conflict management.*

*We must hold town hall sessions, use edutainment, and show pictures of the 2008 post-election violence. We must bring together youth in forums where the youth can be taught on how the government works, and the negative implications of violence*

*We need free, fair, and peaceful elections. The votes need to be wisely counted, and the results must be announced expeditiously. The government needs to take responsibility to reduce corruption during vote counting, and ensure both safety in the ballot box and freedom to vote how we see fit.*

*Individuals should stop accepting bribery as it contributes to greater corruption. We need to reduce, prevent, and stop corruption, vote stealing, and election rigging. We need better, more peaceful campaigns, with political platforms of co-existence and cohesion. We need to vote wisely, for who we believe is the right person. Most of all, we must not fight if our candidate does not win.*

*We must monitor and act to prevent violence during and before the next election. We need to form peace teams within villages and ensure activities are monitored to avert violence. We must ensure peace committees do their work. We must ensure that hate speech is not practiced. Security officers should be deployed to volatile areas before and after the elections. Youth should use technology i.e. Facebook and the Internet to exchange peaceful information and chat with others to discuss and resolve manipulation by politicians.*

## **Dataset #2: Analyzing the Acceptance of Violence**

*Methodology for dataset #2*

*Limitations of the quantitative analysis of questionnaire #2:*

The data in the empirical section of this paper were drawn from a larger dataset, collected using the questionnaire for YIKE as an organization to monitor its impact. While that questionnaire presented an opportunity to study the different questions discussed in this paper, it was indeed designed and administered for a different purpose. This poses some challenges for the analyses and also for how far arguments can be elaborated on, and how generalizable the results may be.

In methodological terms, not having a data collection instrument directly addressing the research questions translates into at least two serious challenges.

1. Statistical models are underspecified when not all relevant explanatory variables are included in them. Experience in international development projects tells us about the many factors that we would expect to affect youth's likelihood to engage in violence. Without the inclusion of all these factors in multivariate models, models end up underspecified, which affects the estimates and the conclusions we are able to draw.
2. Insufficient availability of data on relevant factors affecting youth attitudes toward violence, to estimate regression models with desired precision. For instance, development experience suggests that male youth are more likely to engage in violence than their female counterparts. With the limited amount of data available, it is not possible to study the effects of gender in sufficient detail to adequately test this question.

Nonetheless, some questions of interest can be studied using the data at hand. Key relationship areas of investigation include the following variables:

- Income
- Hours spent working

- Engagement with groups
- Access to mentors
- Likelihood to believe that violence is an acceptable means to resolve conflict or protect people

This section focuses on the statistically significant among the substantively interesting relationships that can be demonstrated. While acknowledging the limitations of the quantitative analyses that are possible to conduct, and of the extractable conclusions, there are some statistically significant findings discussed below. These findings suggest some relationships, and also some gaps in our knowledge that future work should address.

*Data Sources, Questionnaire #2:*

The analysis here is based on primary data collection, from 95 individual questionnaires administered to female and male youth. The questionnaire collected basic demographic data on the youth, and exploring attitudes, knowledge, or experience, in four broad areas:

1. Financial and business skills
2. HIV/AIDS-related health
3. Attitudes toward violence
4. Membership in "youth groups."

Nairobi youth groups are registered community organizations. They hold a lower status on the NGO level beneath Community based organizations (CBOs), which themselves are beneath NGOs in Kenyan policy. As previously mentioned, youth groups do community development projects ranging from hospice care for HIV/AIDS patients in their final days, to garbage collection, to day-care centers, and much more. Youth groups are also able to access loans from the Kenyan government under this organizational classification, which is then passed on to their members.

This questionnaire was designed as a team by local staff of YIKE and was piloted over 20 times with local youth in and around the office of Kariobangi North. As an annual data collection tool on impact for the organization, it looks at perception data of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries in order to try to resolve the counterfactual problem of understanding what would have happened without the program intervention. The questionnaire has at least one proxy question for each impact goal of the organization, and in the final draft, it also contains proxies to determine beliefs about ethnicity and violence. Unfortunately, when it came time to administer the questionnaire, a photocopy from the first pilot was used, rather than the final draft.

This questionnaire was administered in the Korogocho slum on International Youth Day August 12<sup>th</sup> 2011. All youth who completed the questionnaire were offered pens to keep. Local staff administered questionnaires in order to build data collection capacity, with assistance and some questionnaires administered by the author of this paper.

From the questionnaire on these four broad areas, data on attitudes toward violence were extracted (for the dependent variables); employment and hours spent working; access to a business mentor or advisor; and membership in a youth group (for the independent variables). Relevant control variables are included as well.

*Dependent Variables:*

This data is analyzed looking at two dependent, or outcome, variables that together encapsulate a concept of "acceptance of violence." Both are measured on a standard Likert scale 1-5. Summary statistics for all variables are presented in Table 1; Table 2 contains a correlation matrix for all variables. The variables are:

1. Youth's agreement with a statement that "violence is an acceptable way to resolve conflict,"

2. Youth's agreement with a statement that "if more of my friends have guns, we will be safer."

*Independent Variables:*

The explanatory variables of interest reflect the three main factors:

1. Youth's employment and, more specifically, hours spent working in a given period of time  
Measured by two variables; one is a continuous variable for hours spent working in a week; the other, an ordinal variable with values for unemployed, student, self-employed, and employed. The latter variable seeks to tap youth's productive engagement, whether studying or working, as compared to simply being unemployed.
2. Youth income, as an aspect of income poverty and poverty more generally.  
Income is self-reported, and measured for both daily and monthly income.
3. Social Support -Youth connectivity social networks, both in youth groups functioning well as ways to keep youth positively engaged, and to individuals serving as mentors, advisors, etc.  
To explore the effects of social relationships and networks, both group membership and access to individual mentors, advisors, etc. are tapped in to. More specifically, variables on youth's perception of how well youth groups work together and on how well such groups are able to manage conflict are used. Both of these are measured on standard Likert scales. Another Likert-scale then measures how much youth feel they are able to turn to a mentor when they need business advice. Finally, a variable on awareness of NGO services available to youth (also measured on a Likert scale) helps explore how much youth's sense that they can get services, that "there is a place to turn to," keeps them from believing that they should turn to violence to resolve problems instead.

Table 1: Summary statistics for variables

Variable	Mean (Likert-5) or Percentage	SD	Min	Max
<i>Dependent Variables:</i>				
(1) Violence to resolve conflict	1.78	1.33	1	5
(2) Guns to stay safe	1.73	1.20	1	5
<i>Independent Variables:</i>				
(3) Hours worked per week	16.09	18.73	0	84
(4) Employment	2.41	0.96	1	4
(5) Business mentor	2.38	1.43	1	5
(6) Youth group working well together	1.80	1.09	1	5
(7) Youth group managing conflict well	1.61	0.99	1	5
(9) Income per day	702.86	2,144.47	0	17,000
(10) Income per month	17,965.13	64,253.75	0	510,000
<i>Control Variables:</i>				
(8) Knowledge of NGO services	2.15	1.26	1	5
(11) Information (using a library)	2.72	1.45	1	5
(12) Gender (female 1, male 0)	0.27 (27% female)	-	0	1

*Control Variables:*

*Control Variable 1: Gender*

In the analyses, gender is controlled based on theory and experience that male youth may be more likely to view violence as an acceptable means to resolve conflicts or make themselves "safe," than their female counterparts. This relationship between gender and attitudes toward violence is quite complex, determined by cultural, social, and political factors that deserve special attention and analyses of their

own. However, with unavailable data to explore it in more depth here, gender is used only as a control variable and more detailed studies of gender's relationship to youth violence will be left for future work.

*Control Variable 2: Access to information*

Youth's access to information is controlled for in these data, tapped by their self-reported use of a library, on a Likert scale. Varying perceptions on youth and violence hold opposing views on the relationship between access to information and youth's likelihood to turn to violence.

One view holds that increased access to information may expose youth to propaganda of hate and violence, making them an audience for and allowing them to connect with those interested in exciting or promoting violence.

The other view holds that the more informed and exposed to different sources of information a person is, the more difficult the person is to manipulate with agendas, related to violence or otherwise. For instance, often voter education and awareness raising aims to expose people to enough information to keep them from being easily manipulated into not exercising the right to vote or believing that violence is an acceptable means to resolve political disagreement.

Analysis here does not focus on access to information as a key explanatory variable. It is included in the analysis as a relevant control variable.

Table 2: Correlations for all variables  
(\* Indicates significance on the .05 level)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
(1) Violence to resolve conflict	1.00											
(2) Guns to stay safe	.406*	1.00										
(3) Hours worked per week	.506*	.190	1.00									
(4) Employment	.122	-.049	.335*	1.00								
(5) Business mentor	-.006	.063	-.271*	-.423*	1.00							
(6) Youth group working well together	.142	.077	-.159	-.174	.310*	1.00						
(7) Youth group managing conflict well	.200	.171	-.186	-.064	.244*	.586*	1.00					
(8) Knowledge of NGO services	.007	.043	-.044	-.052	.154	.184	.128	1.00				
(9) Income per day	-.059	.003	-.043	.250*	-.163	-.164	-.080	-.091	1.00			
(10) Income per month	.017	.121	.105	.223	-.188	.106	-.030	-.027	.845*	1.00		
(11)	.235*	.302*	.103	.109	-.063	-.036	.161	.342*	.060	.086	1.00	

Information (using a library)												
(12) Gender (female 1, male 0)	-.175	-.066	-.103	-.047	-.035	-.112	-.202	-.032	.130	.103	-.019	1.00

*Hypotheses:*

The analysis distinguishes between employment (hours worked per week) and income (daily or monthly) in order to begin addressing the problem of conflating these concepts and variables in our thinking on youth violence. In substantive terms, it is perhaps obvious that in many of the contexts where youth development projects are implemented, we cannot necessarily expect a strong negative relationship between employment and income poverty. Simply put, there are numerous contexts in which employment or even more hours spent working in a given week, does not always neatly translate into lower income poverty. In many of these contexts, local economies do not generate enough employment opportunities and most people - youth especially - rely on self-employment in the informal sector.

The self-employed experience many types of uncertainty that make the relationship between being technically "employed" (or self-employed) and reduced income poverty tenuous at best. When self-employed youth start a business, they face the uncertainty of whether they will have access to financing for their business, whether they will be able to plug into meaningful value chains, or whether customers' purchasing power will hold in poverty-stricken places to sustain a business. When self-employed youth search for work for hire, they face the uncertainty of being unable to find work for pay in the first place; further, even when they do find work for pay, they are "continuously" self-employed, but may be working and getting paid only sporadically during the period of self-employment. Even during times when the self-employed are spending hours working, the pay for those hours may not materialize immediately; there may well be lags between the period of time spent performing work and the point where working begins to impact youth's income poverty levels.

Yet, in the design and implementation of many development projects, the concepts of employment and income or income poverty are often conflated. To highlight this point, the author had an exchange with the U.S. Ambassador to Kuwait 2004-2007, Richard LeBaron<sup>7</sup>, who when asked about his thoughts on employment as a causal effect to violence and terrorism, he pronounced that there was no such link between poverty and violence, and that there were plenty of terrorists from rich families. In development, program designers often make the same argument.

It is likely that this is a pushback to common belief in early development projects that saw poverty as causational to violence. In such projects, we seem to have believed that it was poverty that causes violence. Such projects were designed on the belief that if people have money to survive, they will not turn to violence. The reality is that (un)employment and income poverty are not the same construct and the relationship between them is much more complex. We should also be designing projects that do not assume that reduced income poverty simply, cleanly, and directly leads to reduced youth violence.

We should not, however, conflate poverty and unemployment. We should be looking at the relationship of employment - or, more generally, of being positively, productively engaged, whether working or studying - to violence propensities as well. Therefore, in the analysis here, it employment is used to parse out the effects of being productively engaged or working, from those of having higher income.

Further, the common theory on youth violence also suggests that meaningful social networks contributes to human development, and in the case of youth, "keeps them out of trouble." In other words, youth need the social ties that bind, the social ties that give them alternatives to violence (such groups that

<sup>7</sup> Conversation at the embassy reception for the 2011 Foreign Area Officer Conference at the Naval Postgraduate School April 7th in La Novia Room

build conflict management skills), and the social ties that allow them to feel supported when needed, to stay away from violence as a meaningful way to address their problems. This thinking is summarized into the following hypotheses for the quantitative analysis:

All else equal youth who are productively engaged will be less willing to accept violence as a means of resolving conflict or having safety. Productively engaged here means both employed or studying, and spending more hours working, keeping them from entertaining violence as a course of action. One would expect to see hours worked and being employed positively associated with less willingness to believe in violence and/or guns to resolve conflict and stay safe.

It is expected that, all else equal, engagement with functional social mentorship or peer networks - whether by being a member of a well-functioning youth group or by feeling like there is a mentor to turn to when needed - will be negatively associated with youth's acceptance of violence.

Conversely, all else constant, income alone is not expected to keep youth from holding positive attitudes toward violence. As argued above, it is not simply (income) poverty that turns youth violent; it is the lack of productive engagement, lack of seeing alternatives, lack of social ties that bind, that explain why youth may consider violence as a solution. In other words employment/productive engagement and work, and social relationships in groups and individually, are expected to will help explain attitudes toward violence, whereas, these held constant, income will not.

Table 3: Effects on youth attitudes toward violence as an acceptable way to resolve conflict (Coefficients with standard errors in parentheses, unless otherwise noted; \*\*\*, \*\*, \* indicate significance at the .01, .05 and .10 levels respectively)

"Violence is an acceptable way to resolve conflict"	Model 1 N = 54	Model 2 N = 50	Model 3 N = 46	Model 4 N = 48
Hours worked per week	.035*** (.008)	.034*** (.008)	.035*** (.009)	.038*** (.010)
Business mentor	.106 (.125)	.238(*) (P=. 106)	.116 (.153)	.105 (.151)
Part of group working well together	.320* (.168)		.323(*) (P=. 108)	.362* (.195)
Information - library	.138 (.119)	.030 (.135)	.106 (.135)	.100 (.129)
Knowledge - NGO services	-.159 (.248)	-.147 (.149)	-.189 (.167)	-.189 (.150)
Gender	-.160 (.325)	-.263 (.382)	-.171 (.427)	-.171 (.362)
Employed		.124 (.207)		
Part of a group able to manage conflict well		.120 (.171)		
Income per day			.000 (.000)	
Income per month				-.000 (.000)
Constant	.359 (.553)	.477 (.836)	.515 (.720)	.503 (.598)
Adjusted R-squared	.29	.25	.23	.24

### *Findings for Questionnaire #2*

Multivariate ordinary least squares (OLS) regressions are estimated with the dependent, explanatory, and control variables described above. The findings are presented in Tables 3 and 4, for each dependent variable, attitudes toward violence as an acceptable means to resolving conflict and the belief that "more guns will make us safer," respectively.

The models estimating the effects of multiple factors on youth's beliefs that "violence is an acceptable way to resolve conflict" (Models 1 to 4 in Table 3), and the models estimating the effects on youth's belief that if more of their friends have guns, that would make them safer (Models 1 to 3 in Table 4), largely confirm the hypotheses about the social relationships and networks in which youth participate. All else constant, participating in a youth group that "works well together" is positively associated with youth's being less willing to accept violence as a means of conflict resolution. The more youth believe that their youth group is not working well together, the more they tend to agree that violence is a means of conflict resolution, all else equal. This relationship holds, with statistical significance, in all three models that explore it. The same relationship is found between having access to a business mentor and belief in violence as a means to resolve conflict. All else constant, the more youth believe they "have no one to consult when [they] need business advice," the more they also think of violence for conflict resolution (Model 2 in Table 3).

In summary, if we hold the effects of employment, work, and income constant, we see that the more youth believe their youth groups do not function well and the more they believe they have no one to turn to for advice, the more they agree that violence is a means to resolve conflict. To put it another way, all else equal, youth groups, and mentors provide a meaningful alternative to thinking of violence in situations of conflict.

Table 4: Effects on youth attitudes toward guns as a means of staying safer  
(Coefficients with standard errors in parentheses, unless otherwise noted; \*\*\*, \*\*, \* indicate significance at the .01, .05 and .10 levels respectively)

If more of my friends have guns, we will be safer	Model 1 N = 57	Model 2 N = 46	Model 3 N = 48
Hours worked per week	.015** (.007)	.023*** (.008)	.018* (.009)
Business mentor	.224** (.110)	.127 (.133)	.150 (.141)
Part of group working well together		.269* (p=.122)	.189 (.182)
Information - library	.260** (.112)	.213* (.117)	.257** (.120)
Knowledge - NGO services	-.079 (.125)	-.198 (.145)	-.094 (.140)
Gender	.107 .312)	-.061 (.371)	.259 (.338)
Income per day		-.000 (.000)	
Income per month			0.000 (0.000)
Constant	.317 (.496)	.453 (.626)	.029 (.558)
Adjusted R-squared	.12	.17	.14

The relationship between weekly hours working and violence is more complicated, but also perhaps more interesting than one would hypothesize. In all four models, there is a statistically significant positive relationship between hours worked per week and acceptance of violence as a means to resolve conflict. The findings suggest that the more hours' youth spend working in a given week, the more they report being open to violence in conflict situations. This is counter to the hypothesized relationship and may, at first glance, appear counter to common sense as well. We tend to believe - and reflect this belief in much of youth programming - that youth unemployment causes youth to turn to violence as alternative outlet. While more research will have to explore this curious finding, it does tend to follow a commonsensical line of thought that if someone works himself or herself too hard, they may believe that



others should also be treated harshly when they step out of line; i.e. violent repercussions for criminals or those deserving of “punishment.”

## Conclusions

### *Unemployment = Violence?*

Youth employment programming must be careful not to assume that since unemployment means violence, more work means less violence. The relationship appears to be much more complicated. It may well be that the amount of work is what makes a difference, or the type of work youth are engaged in.

Working excessively long hours seems to be demoralizing, causing individuals to have positive attitudes towards violence. In considering enabling environments for healthy youth development and fulfilling violence-free childhoods, we must create programs around sustainable livelihoods based on healthy amounts of work, not simply working as many hours as possible.

If youth's sole constant preoccupation is how to get more hours of work to survive, and if they need to work excessive hours in order to support themselves and their families, they may well cross the line of healthy youth development - into frustration, disillusionment, and belief that violence is the shorter, easier solution. In terms of youth development and violence, excessive hours of work may well be a negative factor for youth development and a positive factor for the willingness of frustrated youth to turn to violence. In terms of development programming for youth, this may well suggest that we need to be much more sophisticated in how we promote youth employment and work.

### *Poverty = acceptance of violence?*

The findings generally support the idea that it is not income poverty alone that has to do with youth's willingness to turn to violence or guns, whether for conflict resolution or to feel safe and secure. Instead, we should be focusing on employment, on keeping youth productively engaged (in school, in jobs).

In none of the estimations does income, whether measured per day or per month, appear statistically significant and associated with youth's tendency to accept violence as a means of conflict resolution, when other factors are held constant. This is as expected: income poverty alone does not explain youth's attitudes toward violence, and we need to better understand the relationship between employment or productive engagement, income poverty, and violence. In the dataset utilized, there is not sufficient data to explore the relationship or say anything further about it other than it does not appear to hold sway over youth's violence attitudes when other factors are considered. However, the limited findings here suggest that there is some support for the hypothesis, and need for us to better study, understand, and design youth programming around engaging youth in many productive ways, not simply pursuing reduced income poverty alone.

### *Strong social networks = decreased acceptance of violence?*

Finally, we would also have to consider the positive benefits of social networks - collective groups and individual mentors and relationships - on youth. Creating the ties that bind, and ensuring that these ties are having both a productive and positive influence on youth, appears to be an effective means toward ensuring youth do not turn to violence.

### *2012 Elections*

In regards to the qualitative data collected, Kenyans, including and perhaps especially youth themselves, are very scared about the coming 2012 election cycle. While only 38% report that they believe violence will occur again, nearly all youth responded with recommendations as to what should be done to prevent a repeat of these atrocious events. Their response, in and of itself, is an indication that while the other 62% do not believe there will be violence, they still have it on their minds, and perhaps fear it, enough to have a response ready when surveyed.

Results of the quantitative data and responses for causes and solutions of possible future violence are enlightening and lead the author to make the following recommendations:

- Expand programs to create youth groups and expand programs that work on conflict resolution within youth groups. The effects of these programs, both from the qualitative and from the quantitative data suggest that they are not just viable solutions, but also that buy-in is high as they are requested by the youth themselves.
- While the ICC's live broadcasting may well be causing tension, little evidence suggests that youth and others would not find alternative ways to listen to them if they were on the Internet. Perhaps, however, by countering the ICC's effects with positive advocacy by key leaders of different ethnic backgrounds and transmitting messages of peace, ethnic tension may be diminished.
- Based on the previous recommendation, the author supports the recommendations of youth regarding billboards and displaying of pictures from the post election violence. To quote: "We can create billboards to show what happened in the 2008 elections, which will discourage fighting." While this may sound gruesome, the government of Canada has used similar means for different ends via public service announcements about workplace safety with their program "Prevent-It." The success of that case can be analyzed for further comparison<sup>8</sup>.

#### *Further Research*

Although the findings in this analysis are affected by limitations mentioned previously, they do suggest ideas for further research and for consideration when designing youth development programming.

- Further exploration in to the relationship between violence and employment. Both the qualitative and quantitative data here suggests that there is one, however, significantly more understanding is required to clarify exactly how the relationship functions.
- Beyond violence and employment, explore the relationships of armed violence and employment, and also employment and likelihood of joining groups engaged in violence. Both of these questions can help policymakers and programmers in preventing and reducing violence in the future.
- Could it be that there is a "sweet spot" between youth unemployment and youth over-employment where acceptance of violence is at its lowest? It is hoped that further research will explore this hypothesis as is displayed by the following diagram.

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<sup>8</sup> See: <http://www.prevent-it.ca/>

