

RESULTS SUMMARY

Humanitarian Disarmament and Peacebuilding (HDP) – Kenya

Author: Danish Refugee Council (2025)

[Find project on OpenAid](#) 

PROJECT	<i>Title:</i>	Humanitarian Disarmament and Peacebuilding (HDP) – Kenya
	<i>Partner:</i>	County Peace Secretariats, local peace committees, community elders' councils (Turkana, Garissa, Mandera)
	<i>Country:</i>	Kenya
	<i>Period:</i>	Jan. 2022 – Dec. 2025

CHANGE



Local conflict resolution mechanisms in Kenya's Turkana, Garissa, and Mandera counties have become measurably more effective and more trusted. An independent evaluation conducted in late 2025 found that 93% of surveyed community members reported positive perceptions of local peace structures' effectiveness, and 86% described them as better than five years ago. Community safety perceptions improved in parallel: 83% reported their communities are now safer than before, rising to 87% in Mandera and Turkana. Yet the five-year trajectory is one of net deterioration: 53% of respondents judge conflict to be more frequent and 52% more violent than before – a fragile equilibrium in which localised peacebuilding gains are repeatedly offset by drought, displacement, and resource competition.

CONTEXT

Kenya's arid and semi-arid land (ASAL) counties – Turkana, Garissa, and Mandera – face compounding conflict drivers: resource-based disputes over land, water, and pasture; cattle raiding; cross-border insecurity; and large refugee populations (Dadaab: 441,776 registered refugees; Kakuma and Kalobeyei: 309,944). Conflict is rarely singular: respondents report experiencing an average of 2 to 3 distinct conflict types simultaneously. Climate variability functions as a structural threat multiplier: 88% of surveyed households experienced severe drought in the past five years, with a statistically significant positive correlation between climate shock exposure and conflict incidence ($r=0.497$, $p<0.001$). Formal state presence is limited; customary elder-led institutions carry the primary burden of conflict prevention but have historically lacked capacity, coordination, and meaningful inclusion of women and youth.

CONTRIBUTION

DRC played a dual role across the three counties. At the community level, DRC trained mediators and peace committees – the changes most cited by respondents as drivers of improvement (increased mediator skills: 68%; expanded training and capacity-building: 57%). At the system level, DRC facilitated inter-clan and cross-border dialogues, strengthened coordination among peace actors (cited by 54%), and co-convened community-police dialogue forums. County peace secretariats and local peace committees co-led implementation throughout; DRC's contribution was facilitation and capacity support, not service substitution. DRC's visibility within this hybrid landscape was pronounced: among respondents who named an NGO as a primary peace actor, 85% identified DRC specifically, and DRC was the single most frequently cited actor supporting peace dividends (36%).

IMAGES		
	<p>Women leader participating in a community dialogue meeting in Turkana County. Photo credit: Afred Loyok, HDP Team Leader, Turkana.</p>	<p>Under a Tree Joint Community Dialogue Meeting in Dagahaley, Garissa County. Photo Credit: Boniface Musyoka, HDP Peacebuilding officer, Dadaab</p>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ACTIVITIES

DRC's HDP Kenya strategy (2021-2025) was structured around three interconnected pillars. Under peacebuilding and governance, DRC trained mediators and peace committee members across all three counties, facilitated inter-clan dialogues, and delivered Conflict Management Education (CME) – reaching 43% of surveyed households, with highest penetration in Turkana (51%) and Mandera (47%). DRC also supported cross-border dialogue platforms, including engagement along the Mandera-Somalia corridor, Karamoja cluster Kenya-Uganda and the Lokiriyama Peace Accord process in Turkana. Under peace dividends, DRC linked peace agreements to tangible community benefits, including water infrastructure (the most frequently reported peace dividend at 30%), skills and vocational training (21%), and agricultural support (12%). Under community safety, DRC co-convened community-police dialogue forums, delivered danger of small arms awareness campaigns, and supported women's and youth engagement in safety structures, including the Women for Peace programme.

LESSONS

Three transferable lessons emerge. First, participation is not the same as influence. While 89% of respondents reported that women, youth, and marginalised groups are included in peace processes, only 19% perceived decision-making authority as equally shared – with senior clan elders dominating final decisions (89%). In customary governance contexts, programming that measures attendance rather than decision-making authority will systematically overstate inclusion gains. Second, peace dividend symbolism matters – but delivery gaps carry real risks. The gap between perceived impact (89% confidence that dividends sustain peace) and actual implementation reach (51% reporting delivery in their area) shows that early signals of tangible benefit reinforce peace agreements, but unfulfilled commitments erode the credibility of the entire peacebuilding process. Third, detection is not the same as response capacity: although 70% of respondents observe early warning signs and 96% know where to report, communities repeatedly name the absence of transport, communication tools, and rapid-response funds – compounded by short funding cycles – as the gap that allows manageable disputes to escalate.

EVIDENCE

A 2025 independent evaluation of DRC's HDP Kenya strategy (2021-2025) – based on 1,609 household surveys, 30 key informant interviews, and 23 focus group discussions across Turkana, Garissa, and Mandera – found that after DRC trained mediators and strengthened peace committees, communities reported faster dispute resolution, reduced retaliation cycles, and greater trust in local peace systems. Respondents consistently attributed these improvements to DRC-supported capacity-building (68% cited increased mediator skills; 57% cited expanded training). DRC was also the most frequently cited actor supporting peace dividends (36%), reflecting its role linking peace processes to material benefits. Qualitative triangulation across KIIs and FGDs strongly reinforces these patterns. Important limitations apply: the evaluation is cross-sectional with no baseline data or control group. Findings reflect community perceptions and recalled change over five years, not objective before-after measurement. DRC's contribution cannot be fully isolated from the work of county governments, other NGOs, and broader contextual factors.

	<i>Development strategy priorities</i>	Fragile contexts and displacement
	DOMAINS	<i>Changes in the lives of people facing poverty, marginalisation or vulnerability</i>
<i>Changes in laws, policies and practices that affect people's rights</i>		-
<i>Changes in the capacity of organisations and communities to support rights</i>		X
<i>Changes in partnerships and collaborations that support people's rights</i>		X
<i>Changes in participation of groups facing poverty, marginalisation or vulnerability</i>		X
<i>Changes in local leadership of development and humanitarian work</i>		-