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## **Activities of International Non-Governmental Organizations' in the Promotion of Human Security in Kakamega County, Kenya: Assessing the Opportunities and Challenges**

By Bruno Muchilwa and Prof Pontian Godfrey Okoth

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### **Abstract**

Throughout the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, up until this day, there has been a gradual, yet enormous, qualitative and quantitative growth in International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in Kenya. Amidst this upsurge, has been their increased recognition as important actors in the social, political and economic welfare agendas of the country. INGOs have become widely perceived to be either complementing or supplementing the state as players in their new-found human security and development roles. As such, INGOs have self-advertised as providers of human security, which includes various elements viz., economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security. However, in spite of this increased and enlarged presence and visibility of INGOs in Kenya, the much sort-after development and accompanying human security goals of the country still remain a distant mirage. In this regard, the study sought to evaluate the challenges that INGOs face in the pursuit of Human Security goals in Kakamega County, Kenya. With the relatively new status of the human security concept, the study promised to contribute to the ever increasing body of knowledge in this area, as well as enrich the developmental approaches and policies applied in Africa which are in need of urgent reform. The study population comprised of the following categories of respondents: officials of INGOs from national to grassroots levels; state officers in relevant departments, from the national level (officials from the NGO Coordination Board), to County development officers, and Members of County Assembly (MCAs); and household heads of beneficiary communities. The study relied on both probability and nonprobability sampling methods to come up with a desirable sample population. The sample sizes for household heads, government officials and members of INGO bodies was 384, 3 and 15 respectively. The study relied on both primary and secondary sources of data, employing Focus Group Discussions, interviews, observation, and questionnaires as methods of data collection. Both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were used, with the researcher selecting respondents who served as key informants, envisioned to provide primary data, alongside other sources. Secondary data was attained via a thorough review of existing academic literature, which included books, journals, and periodicals. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS version 23 software to obtain descriptive statistics, particularly frequencies and percentages, and presented in tables, graphs, and charts. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic techniques to support quantitative data and presented in form of narrative reports. From this evidence, INGOs face the study found that lack of autonomy (20%) government interference 6.67%, and absence of strategic planning (26.67%). The study found out that state of human security in Kakamega still remains below the desired levels, with the aforementioned challenges limiting the performance of the present INGOs. Therefore, there is need for more stakeholder involvement, better cooperation with the local and national governments, as well as better development strategies in order to achieve the desired developmental and human security goals.

**Key words:** Kenya, Kakamega County, INGOs, Human Security, Development

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### **Introduction and Background to the Study**

The term Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) comes into common usage courtesy of the United Nations (UN) Charter when the Second World War ended in nineteen forty-five. However, the long history of International NGOs can be marked out back to the anti-slavery movements of the 1800s, the women's suffrage movements, and later during the World Disarmament Conferences that took place after the world wars. NGOs became a central component of civil society, coinciding with the process of restructuring the welfare state, as well as the recognition that the "many social, economic and political challenges" could not be solved by the state alone (List and Salamon, 1999). NGOs developed to be recognized as alternative development actors, focusing on humanitarian roles, advocacy, and developmental aid.

International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) have progressively become renowned as significant actors in social, political and economic development agendas (Paul and Israel 1991; Edwards & Hulme, 1992). In the international space, according to Boli (2006), at the moment "6,000 to 7,000 fully transnational international NGOs exist in addition to tens of thousands of transnationally oriented NGOs which are based in one single country but active internationally."

In particular, the vast majority of the third sector exists and source funding separate from the state and, thus, their projects originate more from the voiced needs of people as opposed to the state. More recently, INGOs have been viewed as forceful sources for social change amongst developing nations. Their rationale, scope and emergence have been principally directed towards "social service delivery, advocacy, protection of the natural environment, and in establishing new institutions to reflect the dynamic, elusive needs of an increasingly impoverished people" (Boli, 2006).

On the other hand, the history of the human security concept can be drawn back to the contents of the Human Development Report of nineteen ninety four, dealt out by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1994). Traditional approaches to security since the cold war period focused on absence of physical or direct violence or threats, and establishment of sovereignty and integrity of countries, blocking out external military threats. The Human security concept therefore represents a potent, yet contentious effort by sectors of the academic and policy community to restate and expand this conception of security. From the conventional meaning of security, mostly denoted as "national security", the human security concept takes a radical shift from state-led military security notions to broaden it to involve "economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security", according to the UNDP report, (1994). Human security therefore departs from the traditional state centric conception of security, and points out the individual as the core referent for security. Human security is "essentially a concern with Human dignity" (UNDP 1994). As such, the UNDP (1994) set the stage for the

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concept to be defined as “a step forward in highlighting the dangers to human safety and survival posed by poverty, disease, environmental stress, human rights abuses, as well as armed conflict.”

As INGOs increase and expand around the globe and gain more obligation and influence, a public and academic discussion has arisen concerning whether these enterprises are well ready to “play an effective and trustworthy role” in advancement of Human Security (Anderson & Rieff, 2004; Anheier & Hawkes, 2009; Charnovitz, 2006; among others). Africa has been the recipient of much attention and aid from INGOs. NGOs at the moment ensure “more aid to developing countries than ever before”, and the resources of for the most part big INGOs have “exceeded those of some Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) donor countries” (Anheier & Hawkes, 2009).

Kenya's HDI has improved, albeit slightly in recent years, highlighting the citizenry's improving standards of living from increasing economic standing. Nonetheless, a significant number of people in the country are still stuck in abject poverty, lack of affordable and quality healthcare, food insecurity, among others. An assessment of Kenya's Human security in regards to economic security, food security, health, personal security, political security and environmental security indicates that the country still has a long way to go (Nthia and Orodho, 2003; Brown, 2003; UNDP, 2006; KNCHR, 2014; UNDP 2016; Kabaara 2017).

The aforementioned studies, reports and analyses cite the following human security problems in Kenya: The provision of essential services in the education and health sectors is not up to per; an increase in the number of displaced persons in Kenya; persistent terror attacks, inter-community conflicts and violence; HIV and AIDS, malaria and Tuberculosis as threats to Human Security; chronic poverty; increased disregard of political freedoms; among others. The fifth devolution delegates meeting held in Kakamega for the first time on April 23<sup>rd</sup> twenty eighteen saw the county's delegation highlight the chronic need of health care, lower housing costs, food insecurity and an ailing manufacturing sector, unable to meet the demands of the populous county (Imende, 2018). What is more, Kakamega County has a soaring HIV/AIDS burden, with a prevalence rate of 5.9 percent, with most new infections among young people (National Aids Control Council, 2017). Indeed, Kakamega County's state of human security was succinctly summarized by Ontomwa and Okoth (2013) who observed that satisfying demands from volatile sugarcane farmers, pressure of high population growth and housing shortages, an ailing tourist and agricultural sector, are some of the human security challenges that face the county.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The emergence of NGOs coincided with the increased dissatisfaction of the state as the main development actor in the 1980s (Edwards & Hulme, 1992). The INGOs movement that has a long history in the more developed countries has increasingly, in the last decades, established strong links and presence in the Global South. Equally of note has been the steady and gradual diversification of the roles of these INGOs from being purely relief and welfare-based to development-oriented organizations. INGOs have become widely accepted as development actors, complementing or sometimes acting on behalf of the state (Edwards & Hulme, 1992).

In Africa, INGOs have become key actors regarding issues of human security, registering a continuous growth in number and presence (Sally, 2017). However, in spite of this increased and enlarged presence of INGOs in the economies of developing countries, the

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much sort-after development and accompanying human security agendas of the citizens of these states remain a distant mirage.

Particularly, Kenya has witnessed an upsurge in the number of INGOs in the country, advertising to convey a wide assortment of social welfare roles in partnership and on behalf of the citizens of Kenya. Radley (2008) observed that both civil society and the NGO sector in the country were “poised to play a significant role in determining the direction and future of the country’s socio-economic agendas”, including health and HIV/AIDs, the agricultural sector, environmental protection, Kenyans’ livelihoods, among other areas.

Nevertheless, the country’s development and Human security’s agenda still remain elusive (Nthia and Orodho, 2003; Brown, 2003; UNDP, 2006; KNCHR, 2014; UNDP, 2016; Kabaara, 2017). Indeed, since 1990, Kenya has gone through a noticeable deterioration in human security levels, from distending criminality, increased HIV/AIDs prevalence, unemployment, ethnic cleansing, just to name a few. In Kenya, many pointers – every so often already below par, even by sub-Saharan African standards – have in the past illustrated a decline during the 1990s (Brown, 2003). The mid- 2000s, came with a new-found optimism among Kenyans after the end of the Moi regime, ensured that Kenyans were introduced to several human security challenges. UNDP (2006) reiterates that much remains to be done to achieve human security goals.

On 12th December twenty seventeen, President Uhuru Kenyatta, the Kenyan head of state, publicized his pioneering strategy, the “Big Four”, which was meant to lead the development blueprint of Kenya in the period before the 2022 elections. It draws attention on essential needs that are essential in improving the quality of living of the citizenry as part of the efforts in transforming into an upper middle-income state by the year twenty thirty. Top of this campaign were “affordable and decent housing, affordable healthcare, food and nutritional security, and employment creation, all aspects of human security” (KIPPR, 2018). Kenya’s human security goals are still yet to be met, despite various efforts by both state and non-state actors. Kakamega County lags behind in various indicators of human security, including “HIV and AIDs prevalence, health, education, poverty alleviation, environment, sexual and reproductive health services”, among others (KCIDP, 2013; DEPI, 2018; NCPD, 2017; KNCHR, 2014). It is in this context that the research problem arises: What accounts for the seeming incapacity of INGOs to play their widely expected and perceived role in Human Security?

### **Research Objective and Question**

The general objective of the investigation was to examine the challenges and opportunities that INGOs face in the pursuit of Human Security goals, and therefore, the opportunities in Kakamega County, Kenya. The researcher posed the following research question: What are the challenges and opportunities for INGOs face in the pursuit of Human Security goals in Kakamega County, Kenya?

### **Review of Related Literature**

INGOs belong to a diverse and lively market. The figures indicate that there are more than 10 million registered CSOs in the country, with annual increases in non-profits, NGOs and charities. Estimates show that over 40,000 INGOs in France migrate across borders to provide growth and humanity assistance, or actively participate in lobbying programs for aid, foreign Rights employment (Hailey, 2016). The study by Hailey (2016) of recent

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international trends indicates that a variety of significant problems or topics that most likely impact on human security work of INGOs. Global warming and the resulting lack of capital, population shifts, spatial change in the "pockets of poverty," the impact of increasing inequalities, shifting patterns of influence between north and south and implications of expanded access to new technology and inventions. Projections of these "game changers" or mega-trends have prompted INGOs to question the tactics and capability they need to spend in if they are "future-fit" and are prepared to meet the challenges. It is not shocking that Kang'ethe and Manomano (2014) clarify that even though South Africa is home to countless NGOs in the African region, a variety of development problems exist, such as extreme poverty, HIV and AIDS preponderance, etc.

The impacts and interventions of these NGOs are not sufficiently clear. It is an issue that severely harms the competitiveness of these organisations. Other nongovernmental organizations are corrupt, with problems such as mixing up corporate finances, paying phantom employees, misusing organisational resources such as cars for the sake of personal benefit etc (Agere, 2014; Coetzer, 2013). In the leadership circles of African countries, the NGO fraternity can echo and imitate the state of corruption. Reports in several NGOs have shown that those responsible for institutional financing exploit them for personal use and in many situations, corrupt access to financial help.

The suggestion by Kang'ethe and Manomano (2014) is that the work performed in South Africa by NGOs in child welfare programs, the growth of the culture, therapy etc is not sufficiently conspicuous. The position and the mission of NGO brotherhood as a government partner in growth is therefore not sufficiently fulfilled. It is because of South Africa's climate of the brotherhood of NGOs. The NGO problem is exacerbated by insufficient finance and the shortage of permanent social workers, incompetence and lack of public good will. If the quality and efficacy of NGOs are to be introduced, the government will be involved in solving these problems.

Leadership in INGOs is also a matter of concern considering the highly personalized nature of leadership in the sector. The industry is rife with empirical histories of how paternalistic governments, 'charismatic autocrats,' or 'guru syndrome' have a negative effect (Hailey and James, 2004). On the one hand, those leaders show a deep dedication to people and services and an exceptional capacity to mobilize them. In the other hand, they are criticized, unaccountable and reluctant to respond to alter situations by the powerful institutions.

In the NGO climate in Africa, different strategic shifts and challenges continue to be faced, impacting the condition and the well-being of the NGO industry. Some of the main challenges faced by the sector include the closing and failure of key INGOs as a result of intensified funding competitiveness and shifting donor preferences, the lack of a functioned national coordination system and high turnover of senior staff (Matanga, 2000).

Nasong'o (2017) states that East African non-governmental organizations face similar difficulties. They have a small and precarious financial base; they experience the absence of sufficient cooperation and networking between the NGOs, and are over-dependent on donor support. In this respect, Nasong'o (2017) warns that this absence of co-operation contributes to "thin expansion activities with minimal impacts". There is also a persistent lack of awareness on the climate in which NGOs work in East Africa. Nasongo (2017) argues that many of the poverty eradication projects can be due to this fact.

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The literature also reports conflict between the NGO sector and the State (Kanyiga, 1995; Matanga, 2000). To this effect, the NGO-Coordination Board was established to supervise the registration, coordination, supervision and assessment of the country's NGOs and their role in the growth of national countries. This conflict is also encouraged by the huge wealth of nongovernmental organizations and their direct critique of government practice. It is also normal for non-governmental organisations to be overwhelmingly dependent on donations and thus unable to negotiate their freedom from the power of donors, raising concerns about the viability and the importance and connection to their work. Finally, the authors identified that in their pursuit of their goals, some NGOs are considered culturally insensitive or unacceptable (Droz, 2006; Amutabi, 2006). The politicized existence of Kenya's NGOs is further demonstrated by Aubrey (1997) and Okuku (2003).

In a lucid report, PEN (2016) reiterates these problems. Some of the challenges listed in the report are as follows. Firstly, a shortage of funds: NGOs are finding their job hard to find effective, sufficient and continuing support. They find it impossible for donors to access their financing criteria. They see some individual cartels and NGOs restricting access to donor support. They have limited expertise in resource mobilization and therefore do not hunt for the local funds to support foreign donors. Donor reliance is high and initiatives aim to fit donor interests.

The analysis also resonates with Amutabi's (2006) feelings. He pointed out that the NGOs have weak governance structures. Good governance was an issue, with many organizations showing very little comprehension of why NGOs must have boards or their position and functions. Participants with a stronger understanding of good governance acknowledged that openness and transparency are important for NGOs. Many NGOs handle this poorly, often by including and allowing their boards to mismanage the money of their NGOs. Members that are reluctant to pay to have allowances will be hard to locate members of the Board (PEN, 2016).

The PEN (2016) report notes that the lack of strategic preparation causes another concern. Few NGOs have strategic plans that allow their mission, principles and activities to be taken over. This makes them vulnerable to the desires of donors and makes calculating their effect over time impossible. Bad connectivity has been described as a major problem. This issue causes overlapping community policies, lack of experience and the failure of non-governmental organizations to solve local systemic factors of vulnerability, poverty and economic decline. Negative resource rivalry also threatens the sector's credibility and the efficacy of Community-level NGO programs. This leads to strong mistrust, confidentiality and accountability among NGOs. Most NGOs, whether large and small, intervene without mapping the environment and carry out programs without due attention of existing community projects. NGO politics: one battle, one without resources, but without the involvement of a party, one with community, but without resources (Eaton, 2008).

Given the above obstacles, INGOs could try alternative ways of achieving their goals. For example, the Maximum Opportunities (2017) report indicate that first, while INGOs already have several fundraising partners, that is not an excuse in the hunt for new opportunities for their ventures. Another opportunity for INGOs is local resource mobilization, where NGOs can raise funds from local enterprises. In order to achieve this, it is important that the organizations create better credibility with local businesses. NGOs may also network with local communities as these opportunities allow for learning, coming up with new development strategies, and allowing for local advocacy opportunities (Maximum

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Opportunities, 2017). In addition, INGOs are working together to accomplish their goals more effectively with respect to the problem of the lack of networking. But it is also seen by some NGOs as a means of rivalry.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research Design and Study population**

This research employed both an explanatory and exploratory research designs, utilizing mainly qualitative approaches. The choice of this design was motivated by the fact that this study will serve to explore and provide more details in an area of study that, till today, has not been studied in-depth. The “study population is the entire group of people or objects to which the researcher wishes to generalize the study findings.” Kakamega County consists of a total of 1,660,651 people (KNBS, 2009).

The study population included of the following groups of respondents: officials of INGOs from national to grassroots levels; state officers in relevant departments, from the national level (officials from the NGO Coordination Board), to County development officers, and Members of County Assembly (MCAs); and household heads of beneficiary communities.

### **Sampling Procedure**

The researcher employed both probability and non-probability procedures to obtain a representative sample. Specifically, the researcher made use of purposive and random sampling procedures in order to arrive at a sample size that is able achieve the research objective.

### **Sampling Strategy and Sample Size Determination**

The researcher made use of both probability and non-probability techniques in selecting a representative sample for the study. Probability sampling is a sampling methodology that offers fair chances for individuals to be chosen as a representative sample (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003).

Probability sampling was employed in order to provide an equal opportunity for each element of the population to be selected (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). Household heads of beneficiaries will be selected using simple random sampling. In order to get officials of INGOs from national to grassroots levels; state officers in relevant departments, from the national level (officials from the NGO Coordination Board), non-probability sampling will be employed. Purposive sampling was employed, selectively and subjectively selecting a group of people that will be deemed relevant to the study (Creswell and Creswell, 2017).

The study population comprised officials of INGOs from national to grassroots levels; state officers in relevant departments, from the national level (officials from the NGO Coordination Board), to County development officers, and chiefs; and household heads of beneficiary communities.

### **Sampling procedure for Government Officials**

County Development officers were purposively selected, one each from the relevant ministries, i.e. the Ministry of Environment, Water, and Natural Resources, the Ministry of



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Health Services, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Cooperatives and Fisheries. This will bring the total number to three.

The sub counties of the sub counties of Malava, Lugari, Matungu, Ikolomani Lurambi and Shinyalu consist of 6, 6, 5, 4, 5, and 5 wards respectively, bringing a total of 26 wards. Using Mugenda and Mugenda's (2003) 30% sample size determination, 8 MCAs will be selected using simple random sampling. One officer from the Kisumu regional coordination board was selected. This is because the Kisumu regional office of the NGO coordination board is the one that registers, facilitates and regulates the activities of NGOs in western Kenya.

### **Sampling procedure for Household Heads**

Kakamega County has eight sub counties namely: Lugari, Likuyani, Malava, Lurambi, Navakholo, Mumias West, Mumias East, Matungu, Butere, Kwisero, Shinyalu and Ikolomani. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) assert that 50% of the total population is a big enough sample size, a number that was able to allow the researcher to make inferences about the whole population. Based on 50% sampling units as supported by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), six out of the twelve sub counties were selected. The sub counties were selected using simple random sampling. Writing the names of all the constituencies on pieces of paper, and randomly picking them up from a basket ensured that each constituency is selected entirely by chance, and each constituency has an equal chance of being chosen. Thus the sub counties of Malava, Lugari, Matungu, Ikolomani Lurambi and Shinyalu were used in the study. The number of household heads in the sub counties is 52636, 47,475, 30,871, 23,144, 65,121, and 34,177 respectively. This brings the total number to 253,424 household heads (KNBS, 2009). Therefore, to get a representative and desired sample size, the desired sample population was determined using Fisher's formula for sample size determination for a target population that is above 10,000 (Fisher *et al.*, 1983 cited in Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999:43) as stated

$$n = (z^2 pq) / d^2$$

Where n=desired sample size (the target population is greater than 10,000).

z=the standard normal deviate at the confidence level of 95% is 1.96.

p=the proportion of the target population estimated to have characteristics being measured is set at 50%

q=1-p (probability of non-success)

d=level of statistical significance set at 0.05

$$n = ( [(1.96)]^2 * 0.5 * (1 - 0.5) ) / ( [(0.05)]^2 )$$

$$n = 384$$

Therefore, a total sample size considered will be 384.

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**Table 3. 1: Sampling of Household Heads**

S/N	Sub Counties	Total Households (N)	Sampled Household units (s)	
1	Malava	52,636	80	
2	Lugari	47,475	72	
3	Matungu	30,871	47	
4	Ikolomani	23,144	35	
5	Lurambi	65,121	99	
6	Shinyalu	34,177	51	
TOTAL		253,424	384	

Source: Author, 2018; KNBS, 2009

### **Methods of Data Collection**

In collecting data for this study, the researcher employed field research techniques, accompanied by content analysis of secondary sources. The primary data collection techniques included Focus Group Discussions, Key Informant Interviews, Non-participant observation, and both structured and unstructured questionnaires. Field visits to relevant respondents and audio-visual instruments both helped in collection of the primary data.

Relevant secondary sources of data were also sought to complement the primary sources of data. The secondary data were sourced from relevant institutions which include the Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology's Library, Maseno University's Library, National Libraries, the Internet, Television and Radio stations, research journals, books, newspaper articles and magazines. The questionnaires that were issued mainly consisted of both close ended and open ended questions. Interviews consisted of face to face verbal communication between the researcher and key informants. Focus Group discussions were strategically conducted among the local administration to help in the collection of information regarding their opinions, beliefs, attitudes, perceptions regarding the topic under study..

### **Data Analysis**

According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), "quantitative data is information about quantities, that is, information that can be measured and written down with numbers. Qualitative data, on the other hand, is information about qualities, that is, information that can't actually be measured by numbers." More often than not, qualitative data is descriptive (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS software to obtain descriptive statistics particularly frequencies and percentages and presented in presented in tables, graphs, and charts. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic techniques to support quantitative data and presented in form of narrative reports.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The researcher foresaw the following limitations during the forthcoming study: language barrier and security during data collection. Nonetheless, the researcher remains confident that the goals of the study were met successfully. As such, the researcher envisioned to overcome these challenges by engagement of two research assistants and one interpreters who are well

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versed with the local language; and also mobilization of local community leaders and government administrators. Kakamega County is houses the Luhya community who hail from the Bantu ethnic group. It has over ten sub-ethnic groupings, each speaking a different dialect of the Luhya language (Elimu, 2015). Therefore, an interpreter, who understands the vast of these languages was vital in helping the researcher access and understand all the interactions with the informants. Furthermore, the researcher supplemented and complemented the primary data with adequate secondary data.

## Discussion of Findings

### Challenges and opportunities for INGOs in the pursuit of Human Security in Kakamega County

The challenges and opportunities recorded further down were extracted from the FGDs, questionnaires and interviews that the researcher held with various respondents including some members of the local administration, INGO board members, and the household heads that were part of the study sample. The actions of INGOs in Kenya and Kakamega County are hindered by numerous reasons. These reasons, in turn, pause an effect on INGO self-sufficiency. For example, the organizational climate of NGOs defines the productivity of NGO programs and projects. In this regard, success and production of NGOs are influenced by external and internal conditions. The following figure represents, from the findings, an overview of the challenges that INGOs face in the pursuit of their Human Security goals in Kakamega County:

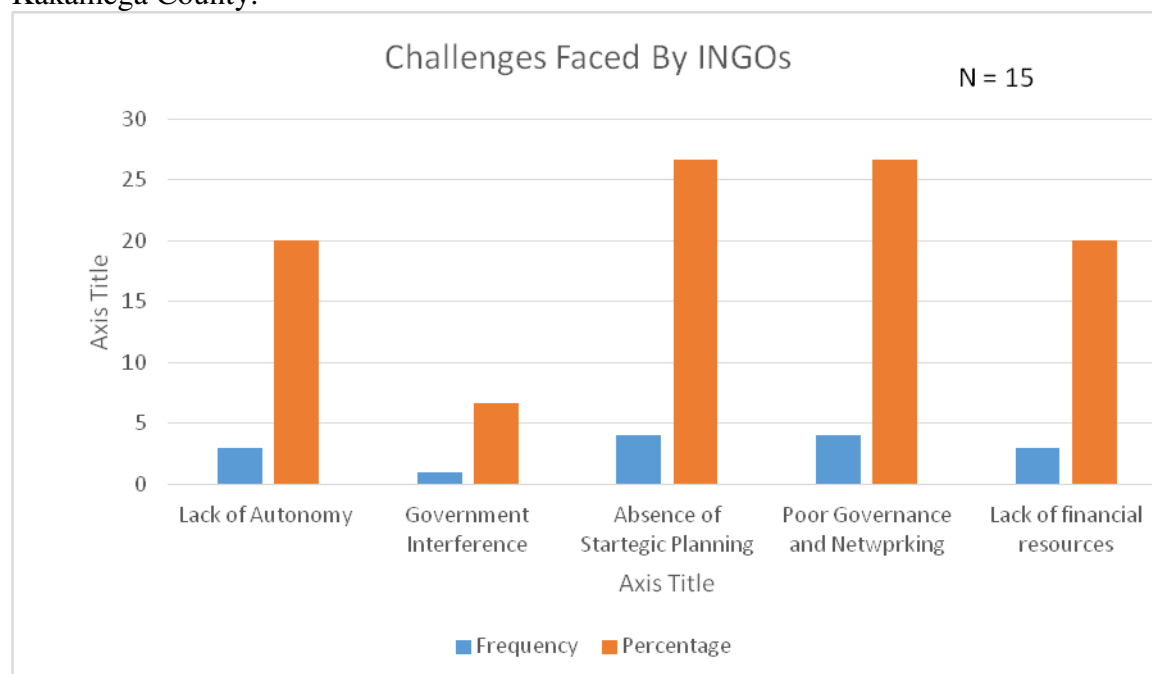


Figure 6. 1: Challenges that INGOs face in the pursuit of their Human Security goals in Kakamega County

**Source: Field Data (2019)**

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From their own admission, 20% of respondents agreed that a lack of autonomy was a problem. 6.67% agreed that government interference was the leading factor for the inability of INGOs to pursue the desired outcomes. Curiously enough, 26.67% of the respondents rated an absence of strategic planning as the main issue that INGOs face in Kakamega County, Kenya. The same number of respondents ranked poor Governance and networking as a key challenge for INGOs in the county, while the rest opined that a lack of financial resources was the main issue at hand. In this regard, the research suggested that the main challenges for INGOs in Kakamega County remain poor governance and networking, as well as an absence of strategic planning.

### **6.1.1 Poor Governance and Networking**

26.7% of the respondents in the research suggested that poor governance and networking was a challenge for INGOs in their pursuit of Human Security in Kakamega County of Kenya. In fact, one of the respondents (Respondent 1) lamented;

In this administrative zone, the leadership of our civil society network which has been enjoying cordial relations with the government in the past, has started to rub shoulders with the government in regard to policy. The local and central government have not been tolerant of criticism. Our leadership in turn expressed its worries, albeit in confidence with our stakeholders, that their relationship may be jeopardized once they start to engage in public expenditure tracking. From our own independent research of NGO networks, many did not engage even once with the local or central government in the last three years and have not demanded participation in policy dialogue (Respondent 8/4/2019).

The second Respondent (Respondent 2) confirmed poor governance and networking as an issue when he expressed the resolutions of a previous sectorial meeting that;

Poor Governance was recognized within the sector as a whole, within the NGO Council and within individual NGOs. Knowledge of good governance varied widely, with some regions indicating very little understanding of why NGOs are required to have Boards or what their roles and functions should be. It is difficult to achieve good governance with founders who wished to own their NGOs for their own purposes. This issue is fundamental to NGO accountability and transparency. Many NGOs mismanage their resources, quite often with the involvement and encouragement of their Boards that eat their NGOs resources. Finding Board members can be difficult if you are not willing to pay them or provide allowances (Respondent 9/4/2019).

Poor governance and networking was also a challenge that Walton and others (2016) observed. They lamented that the apparent binary view that dominates NGOs (it is either bottom up or top-down, never a mixture) causes governance problems. Top-down approaches focus on global norms and institutions while bottom-up approaches focus on the local dynamics surrounding states and populations in the Global South. What is more, when NGOs

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agree on a suitable strategy, there is rarely a good enough team to execute the mostly ambitious objectives.

Another study by Moore and Stewart (2010), in assessing governance in NGOs, opined that official aid funding for the development NGO sector grew fast in the late 1980s and early 1990s. These halcyon days are, however, over. Thinkers within the NGO community are now concerned with how to adapt to the end of the funding boom, and to correct its adverse effects. However, in spite of many calls to reorganize, re-think, and professionalize, one major issue has been largely ignored: the scope for introducing collective self-regulation of the organizational structure and procedures of NGOs in developing countries. The authors argue that solving governance issues could make a major contribution to solving several problems currently faced by NGOs.

### 6.1.2 Absence of Strategic Planning

From the research, it was established that few INGOs have strategic plans which would enable them to have ownership over their mission, values and activities. This leaves them vulnerable to the whims of donors and makes it difficult to measure their impact over time. With the use of mean score and standard deviation, responses with mean score of more than 3.0 were grouped as major problems. INGOs that responded the questionnaire identified following problems which falls under the category of major problems and frequently occurred to INGOs. Based on the mean scores in Table 6.1, the INGO members identified coordination as the main strategic and implementation problem, followed by issues to do with finance.

**Table 6. 1: Major Strategic and Implementation Challenges for INGOs**

Strategy Implementation problems	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Co-ordination was not sufficiently effective	15	3.87	1.125
People are not measured or rewarded for executing the plan	15	3.60	1.242
Insufficient financial resources to execute the strategy	15	3.53	1.187
Major problems surfaced which had not been identified earlier	15	3.47	1.060
Changes in security levels impact implementation	15	3.40	0.986
Took more time than originally allocated	15	3.40	1.352
Lack of stakeholder commitment	15	3.27	1.100
Key formulators of the strategic decision did not play an active role in implementation	15	3.13	1.356

**Source: Field Data (2019)**

The research findings of this study resonate with the discussions of Balcik and others (2010) who pointed out that humanitarian relief environment engage a large number and variety of actors, each with different missions, interests, capacity, and logistics expertise. Therefore, there is much concern about the coordination across the value chain and amongst the stakeholders available. Coordination challenges may be found in cultural, political and institutional capacities. Poor NGO coordination between the national and provincial levels is also common.

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They have resulted in firstly, the absence of a collective voice, secondly, slow progress on NGO self-regulation, third, the fragmentation and duplication of NGO projects, fourth, little understanding of aid effectiveness, fifth, poor engagement in the aid coordination mechanisms, and lastly, Balciik and others (2010) observed that a lack of coordination results in a poor working relationship with the government. Thus, NGO coordination efforts are relatively loose although progress has been made in the Global South since the 1990s.

### **6.1.3 Lack of Autonomy and Government Interference**

The research suggested that while this was not a major problem for INGOs, it nevertheless exists in the county. For the most part, the respondents acknowledged a cooperative partnership between the government and the INGOs in the county. One of the respondents (Respondent 3) observed that;

In Kenya NGOs are encouraged to collaborate with the government although the government is often critical of the high profile of NGOs' advocacy campaigns especially against government policy. The Government, especially the national government, immortalizes its commitment to enhancing social integration within the context of diversified political groups, local and international NGOs and pressure groups. In spite of these assurances, NGOs and the government are yet to perceive each other as partners/collaborators in a practical sense (Respondent 3, 9/4/2019).

To back these sentiments, Mwanzia and Strathdee (2016) assessed the problems of NGOs, and implied that the governments and INGOs, in their common goal of development, were sometimes "strange bedfellows." With regard to a lack of autonomy, Kameri-Mbote, (2000) reiterated that Kenyan NGOs, like many other Southern non-governmental organizations (SNGOs), have over the years maintained links with their Northern counterparts. In 1988 approximately 10% of the external aid used by Kenyan NGOs was through direct funding. The rest (about 90%) was through Northern non-governmental organizations (NNGOs). It is important to note that this type of NGO "dependency" is perceived as a threat to NGO autonomy and accountability to the public. While some NGOs claim autonomy in their operations, basing them on their mission and objectives rather than any dictates from other stakeholders, the reality of the situation is that the donors' influence is normally a factor to contend with. It is trite knowledge that "whoever pays the piper calls the tune."

## **6.2 Opportunities present for INGOs in the pursuit of Human Security in Kakamega County, Kenya**

When asked about the opportunities for INGOs in the pursuit of Human Security in Kakamega County, Kenya, the respondents observed that local participation and networking, as well as better strategic planning were some of the ways INGOs could aid in the pursuit of the human security agenda in the county. Figure 6.2 indicates these responses:

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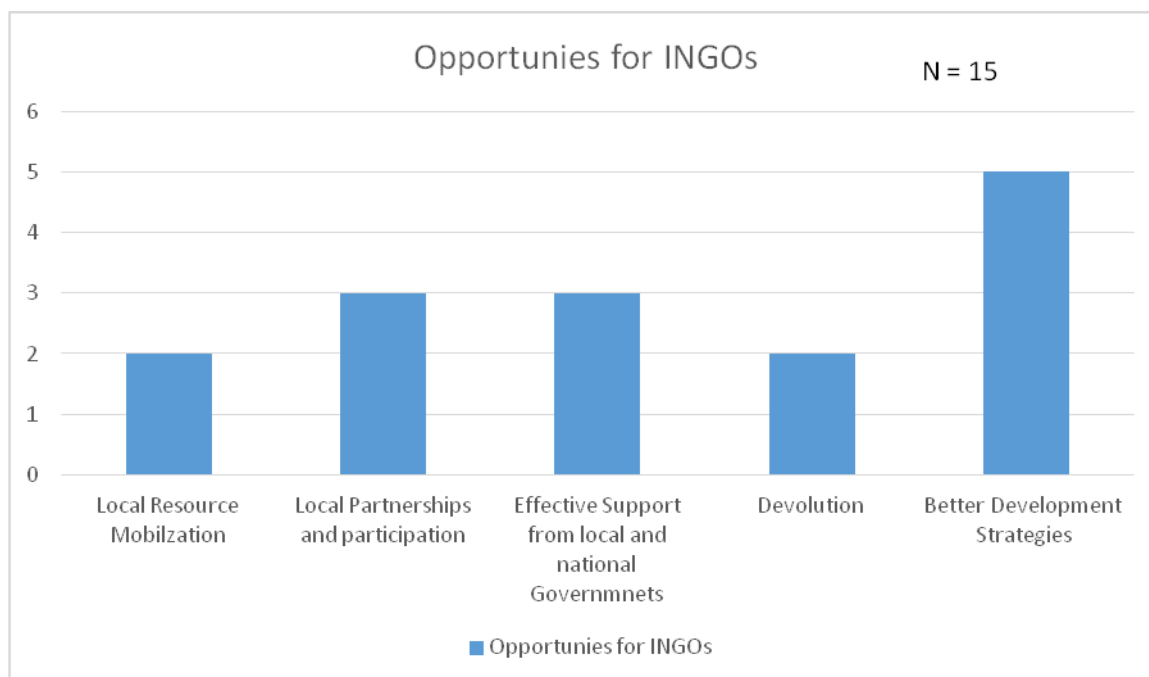


Figure 6. 2: Opportunities for INGOs in the Pursuit of Human Security in Kakamega County, Kenya

**Source: Field Data (2019)**

As the findings revealed, some of the opportunities for INGOs were local resource mobilization (13%), local partnerships and participation (20%), effective support from local and national governments (20%), devolution, and better development strategies (13%).

With regard to local resource mobilization, one of the respondents (Respondent 4) said that:

It provides potential for NGOs to raise funds from local businesses, individuals, government and locally generated income. To do this NGOs must have strong governance and accountability mechanisms, clear strategies and local credibility. Local Networking provides opportunities for mutual learning, identifying appropriate development initiatives, generating learning resources, improving coordination and cooperation with local government, harmonizing approaches to development, and pursuing effective local advocacy. Form consortia to source funding from the donor community (larger projects to access larger donors) (Respondent 4, 12/4/2019).

Resource mobilization is a valuable component for strengthening an NGO. Unfortunately there is a lot of competition for donor resources and in many cases for an organization to secure resources it depends on how well it can compete with other organizations to raise funds; and on how good it is at exploring other ways to source for resources. Other ways may include sourcing these resources from local fundraising techniques. With many outside and foreign donors changing tact and priorities, it remains critical for INGOs to find other sources for funding and expertise. As one of the respondents lamented, the resources (including funds) of One Acre Fund, a leading organization focused on food security in Kakamega, has been facing shortfalls when the major bilateral donors were shifting priorities towards other projects outside the traditional scope of the organization.

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By mobilizing local resources to support their organizations, according to Channell (2000), INGOs can benefit through firstly, Sense of ownership. They will take more control of activities which contribute directly to the positive development of local communities by donating their time and energy to residents, institutions, businesses and other institutions. The sense of ownership" stems from the joy and satisfaction of recognizing that you have made your share of life better for your friends. Local mobilization of money also facilitates social capital building of NGOs. Social capital refers to the importance of social networks and the greater desire of people and entities, regardless of these partnerships, to support each other. The NGOs are more likely to develop long lasting ties with other entities and organizations by finding local help. These partnerships add to the community's social capital.

In addition, another respondent (Respondent 5) from the local administration reiterated that devolution has become a key avenue to spark local development and growth. He said:

The CDF, Constituency Aids Funds, Youth, Women, Water, and other locally available development funding were previously so hard to attain and incorporate into development thinking. However, with the new devolved system, INGOs can take advantage of the easier to access government, that now has less bureaucratic issues. Funding from central government, through the NGO Board, is also a still a possibility (Respondent 5, 12/4/2019).

This evidence resonates with what Latha and Prabhakar (2011) found out in their study in India, a country that is also located in the Global South. The following have been the proposed solutions to NGO issues in India. Firstly, the Government of India must vastly expand grant assistance laws and regulations and incentivize further the process for NGOs. Simultaneously, Latha and Prabhakar (2011) shared their opinion that the state should name enquiry commissions or panels to audit for abuse by NGOs. The Committee members shall routinely track and oversee the operations of NGOs. They also recommended that alumni of universities, colleges, schools hold public lectures, seminars, conference events and other programs and make use of the local media to emphasize the value of volunteerism, the success stories of non-governmental organizations, and inspire the public to engage in voluntarism.

In terms of improving strategies, it is critical for INGOs to start by analyzing the quality and effectiveness of their boards of governors. Pradeep (2005), backing up the findings of this study, addressed how INGOs should be governed well, and how their governance affects their overall strategic development plans. Pradeep reminded the reader that the concern identified here is that boards can become weighed down by trying to represent all stakeholders—so-called constituencies boards—and in the process sacrifice effectiveness. INGOs should therefore properly define the role of directors and ensure regular assessments take place looking at the board's role, tasks and practices. Internal discussions should be used to identify gaps in a board's skills or knowledge.

INGOs should also consider other ways stakeholders can be heard at board level. This could include direct engagement, either face-to-face or virtually. NGOs should also investigate the increasing use of tech, such as board portals, as a means of improving effectiveness. There are no easy answers to NGO governance, according to Pradeep (2005). Recent scandals have raised the stakes and undermined trust. Addressing those issues is



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therefore, important. A charity that loses the faith of its donors could soon find itself out of the picture. Those who suffer most are beneficiaries whose lives would otherwise be worse off without the intervention of effective NGOs. At the root of trust, however, is good governance. Put that in place and the good work can continue without distractions. INGOs try to provide for the marginalized areas of society and the people that are vulnerable. Kenya is a developing country needing this kind of active, focused and committed development organizations. Those organizations should then be funded by the State, the leaders, and sponsors such as politicians together with the public in order to assist them in solving their problems locally.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Concerning the challenges that INGOs face in their pursuit of Human Security goals in Kakamega County, the study made the following findings. 20% of respondents agreed that a lack of autonomy was a problem. 6.67% agreed that government interference was the leading factor for the inability of INGOs to pursue the desired outcomes. 26.67% of the respondents rated an absence of strategic planning as the main issue that INGOs face in Kakamega County, Kenya. The same number of respondents ranked poor Governance and networking as a key challenge for INGOs in the county, while the rest opined that a lack of financial resources was the main issue at hand. Moreover, as the results revealed, some of the opportunities for INGOs were local resource mobilization (13%), local partnerships and participation (20%), effective support from local and national governments (20%), devolution, and better development strategies (13%).

The study concluded that INGOs in Kakamega County face the following problems in their pursuit of human security: poor governance and networking, absence of effective strategic planning, lack of autonomy and government interference. Nonetheless, the future for INGOs as carriers of the human security agenda still remains hopeful, as opportunities exist with regard to local resource mobilization, local partnerships and participation, effective support from local and national governments, devolution, and better development strategies.

The overall conclusion of this study is that INGOs have had an expanded presence in Kakamega County through the years, bringing with them many benefits with regard to health, poverty and livelihoods, environment, conflict and peace building, and advocacy and human rights. Nonetheless, they face challenges in the areas of governance, autonomy, and government interface. In this regard, the County's state of human security still remains below the desired levels, with the aforementioned challenges limiting the performance of the present INGOs. Therefore, there is need for more stakeholder involvement, better cooperation with the local and national governments, as well as better development strategies in order to achieve the desired developmental and human security goals.

Centered on the research findings, analysis, discussion and conclusions of this study, the subsequent recommendations were made:

Firstly, the researcher recommends that INGOs should reassess their short and long term strategic plans. They should continuously align their strategies with the organizational resources and capabilities. Regular reviews and strategic surveillance is highly recommended in order to proactively tackle any potential strategy impeders that might distort the strategic intent. Strategies should be flexible in a way that the organization can adjust to opportunities and threats coming from the uncertain external environment. From the study, many NGOs appeared to be incapable of predicting what they will do even in one or two months. Most of

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their activities look like one time shots. However, a single event is not enough to change the attitude towards some problem. In part, it happens because the activists are trying to diversify their activities, organize events of different kinds and in different areas so that they do not let themselves drown in monotony. Yet, this only blurs the public role of an NGO. Obviously, civic activists should start learning how to do a long-term planning and develop their strategy.

Meanwhile, it is recommended that the gap between the government and INGOs be bridged. The research established that the government's interaction with the NGOs is not necessarily adequate due to bureaucracy, long procedures, and lack of transparency. Bridging this relationship by taking advantage of mechanisms such as devolution will improve the efficacy of INGOs in the pursuit of human security. Other avenues for bridging this gap include opening avenues for INGOs to be part of dialogues on governance (encouraging public debates and consultation, encouraging the right to organize interest groups) and reforming taxation policies (on income, local fund-raising, duties or imports, and VAT, as well as involving them in policy making. In the same vein, better relationship with the government means that the INGO coordination board can have better access to the records of NGOs. Maintaining NGO records with the NGO Coordination Board will enable NGOs to receive regular information and gain access to any possible government-CSO partnership opportunities. The relationship (or lack of it) between INGOs and both the national government will be crucial for the missions and objectives of INGOs.

Third, that INGOs should institutionalize and integrate local participation by employing participatory methodologies to guide them when working with their beneficiaries for their development projects to be successful. For INGOs to bring about development to the communities they work with, it is imperative that they effectively employ participatory methodologies for their beneficiaries to take initiative and action in planning for the development of their communities. For instance, use Volunteers: Kenya has a huge supply of idealistic, young, energetic and well educated graduates who are unemployed or underemployed. Many of them are searching for opportunities to serve their country and get work experience. There are also many older experienced professionals willing to give their time to INGOs. Many companies will loan experienced personnel to INGOs. Finally, there are opportunities to appoint international volunteers to fill vacancies that would otherwise require unavailable funds to fill. Student exchange programs also offer INGOs low cost human resources that can support research, documentation and staff capacity building initiatives. Such a participatory method ensures that more stakeholders remain in the loop, for the overall good of the country.

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