

**Beyond Athletic Accolades: Sports as an Instrument for Enhancing National Cohesion  
and Security in Kenya**

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## Abstract

The research aimed at evaluating how sports programmes contribute to national security and cohesiveness among Kenya's varied populations and investigate how sports programmes may improve environmental and human security. To accomplish these research goals, the study drew on several interrelated theoretical frameworks such as structural functionalism, social cohesion theory and critical security studies theory which offered a thorough framework for examining how sports contribute to advancement of national security and national cohesion. The specific objectives for this study included analysis of existing sport programmes that are linked to building national cohesion and national security, appraising the effects of sports programmes on fostering national cohesion and national security among different communities in Kenya and to assess the challenges and obstacles that hinder the utilisation of sports more effectively for national security enhancement in Kenya. The research adopted a quantitative survey research design that had both open-ended and closed ended questions which targeted 71 respondents. The answers provided for the open-ended questions were categorised by themes that emerged while graphs and charts were used to show the data collected from the closed ended questions. The study was conducted in three purposely selected counties which were Nairobi, Eldoret and Mombasa. The main criteria for picking the three counties were Nairobi has government ministries and other sport agencies as well as some of the respondents residing in Nairobi, Eldoret county was chosen due to the fact that a big portion of Kenyan athletes lived in or around Eldoret city and Mombasa County was selected due to some cases of violent extremism taking place in the area. The main finding for the first objective was that there are sports programmes that are linked to National Security and Cohesion such as the Michezo Mashinani and the 'Football for Peace' which are organized by the local county governments and Safaricom Dimba Football Cup organized by Safaricom which is a non-government organization in Kenya. The main finding for the second objective was that some of the sport programmes have helped in fostering National Security and cohesion in Kenya, such programmes included the 'Football for Peace' sports programmes that is carried out in the Rift Valley to help reduce ethnic tensions and in Nairobi's Eastleigh area. The main finding for the third objective was that these different sport programmes faced issues of financial mismanagement, political interference and lack of sport resources. The study concluded that by encouraging social participation, building trust and offering alternatives to harmful influences, sports programmes in Kenya have a great potential to improve national cohesion and security. The study suggested creating accessible and inclusive sports programmes that tackle marginalisation and social inequities, guaranteeing equal chances for all societal members. It also underlined how crucial it is to use athletes and sport personalities as role models and peace ambassadors. To maximise the beneficial effects of sports on national development, the study recommended that future research concentrate on assessing the long-term effects of sports-based programmes and investigating methods to remove obstacles to participation.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

AFCON	African Cup of Nations
AFL	Australian Football League
AIU	Athletics Integrity Unit
CPC	Communist Party of China
CTTA	Chinese Table Tennis Association
EAC	East African Community
ECK	Electoral Commission of Kenya
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GSU	General Service Unit
IEBC	Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission
IOC	International Olympic Committee
IPOA	Independent Policing Oversight Authority
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KMT	Kuomintang (Nationalist Party of China)
LEP	Lewa Education Programmes
MYSA	Mathare Youth Sports Association
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation

NFD	Northern Frontier District
NUD	National Unity Day
NSCVE	National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism
NSRA	National Sport Recreation Act
OAR	Olympic Athletes from Russia
PEV	Post Election Violence
PNU	Party of National Unity
PSG	Paris Saint-Germain
PRC	People's Republic of China
PRIC	Police Reform Implementation Committee
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
SPLM-IO	Sudan People's Liberation in Opposition Movement
RPPL	Regional Pastoralist Peace Link
TFG	Transitional Federal Government of Somalia
UAE	United Arab Emirates
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WADA	World Anti-Doping Agency

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the different types of threats that affect Kenya's national security and how the threat to national security affected national cohesion. It also highlights the different ways in which countries all over the globe have used sports to address and improve on the issues that affect the States' national security and cohesion levels.

### **1.2 Threats to National Security**

The building block of a prosperous and durable state is its national security, and security is not restricted merely to border defence. It is part of the currency of the well-being of a nation, that weave of the security of its people, the resilience of its economy, the integrity of its institutions. Before the start of the Twenty first century, national security has traditionally been defined narrowly as military preparedness to deter or repel external attack (Mearsheimer, 2014). However, the Twenty first century is complex and requires an enhanced global view that also addresses foreign and internal coordination challenges.

There are different ways in which scholars have explained the concept of national security. The debate on national security centres around two concepts. The first group consists of those who view it from the traditional state-centric approach with the main aim of protecting the state from external attacks through military strength and political power (Blanchette, 2020). Robert Art and Kelly Greenhill(2015) point out that a state possesses both domestic territorial integrity and sovereignty and hence is not open to external dictation by a foreign entity (Art & Greenhill, 2015). So, the defence of this territorial integrity should be paramount in national security strategy and such military inventory should be brought to bear to nullify or rebut conventional threats. This is in line with the classical understanding of national security that Edward Smith denotes in his work "The traditional routes to security" - the military is the final line of defence the nation can rely on for its physical security (Hough et al., 2020).

The second group's core belief is that the national security of the state is enhanced through cultural and socio-economic prosperity of its citizens rather than relying on state-centric strategies (Buzan, 2007). This brought in the idea of human security which in its nature plays a vital role to a state's

overall national security. The idea of human security changes the emphasis of security studies from the state to the people. Protecting people against a wide range of risks, both conventional (such as military conflict) and non-traditional (such as poverty, sickness, and environmental degradation), is a given priority (Hama & Megan, 2017). The idea places a strong emphasis on people's well-being and attends to their needs while addressing sources of instability.

However, in today's world, a more complex approach is required. Inside the state, internal threats to security such as social turmoil, political uncertainty and economic turmoil pose equal security threats to those originating from battlefields outside. Internally these divisions can be as damaging as external aggression jeopardises public safety and undercuts the state's capacity to rule itself.

African countries after gaining independence have faced a couple of external and internal threats to the states' national Security. After gaining independence from the British in 1963, there were several events within the East African region that posed an external threat to the Kenya's national security. Such events included Somalia's aggressive irredentism under the Greater Somalia Policy of 1960 (Shifta War), 1982 coup d'état, 2007/2008 Post Election Violence and relentless waves of terrorist attacks

The aggressive irredentist moves by Somalia from 1963 until 1968 posed a great internal threat to Kenya's national security under its "Greater Somalia" policy, the Northern Frontier District (NFD) which had the largest ethnic Somali population in Kenya was part of this plan (Whittaker, 2012). The Shifta war posed both an external and internal danger to the security of Kenya in various ways. A desire to absorb predominantly Somali inhabited Northern Frontier District (NFD) into Somalia represented the external threat to Kenya's territorial sovereignty (Rolandsen & Anderson, 2015). The war placed stress on the country's economy since infrastructure was damaged, deterred investment into the NFD region and disrupted trade routes hindering Kenya's national economic development. (Whittaker, 2012). The war also fuelled animosity and mistrust between the Kenyan Somali community and the other Kenyan communities living in or near the NFD region which increased ethnic divisions as well as straining the country's security forces which didn't have enough resources and capabilities thus affecting their capacity to uphold law and order in different regions of the nation (Mbaya, 2019). Bethuel Kiplagat, a former ambassador and Kenyan government official, visited the NFD region in 1975. The former ambassador revealed a deep sense of marginalization among the residents citing the neglect they felt from the central government which

exacerbated the security situation in the area (Cheluget,2018).

Even after President Said Barre was overthrown in 1991 and decent into lawlessness, the insurgency in Somalia persisted leaving a distrustful legacy and an unresolved territorial dispute over the Northern Frontier District (NFD) (Mbaya, 2019). Due to the existence of a failing state like Somalia, which borders Kenya, there has been a surge in refugees and the abundance of small arms and light weapons (SALW), which has made it easier for terrorist organizations like Al- Shabaab to flourish.

Terrorism has posed a danger to Kenya's national security especially from Al-Shabaab group which operates along the border between Kenya and Somalia. Al-Shabaab has remained a danger since the USA embassy in Nairobi was bombed in 1998, Westgate attack in 2013, Garissa University attack in 2015 and DusistD2 attack in 2019 by attacking both security forces and civilians (Sinkó & Besenyó, 2024). The terror these attacks have created in the populace and caused a great deal of casualties have undermined the stability and economic growth of the nation.

According to Ekanem Asukwo (2013), the group's violent extremist ideology has been a major motivator for their actions. To accomplish its goals, Al-Shabaab employs a variety of strategies such as ambushes, kidnappings, and the use of improvised explosive (IEDs) (Asukwo, 2022). Because of the porous border with Somalia, it is difficult for Kenyan authorities to effectively combat the threat posed by illegal weapons and terrorists. Frustrations about marginalization, unemployment, and corruption are among the factors that motivate Al-Shabaab assaults (Abdullahi, Ichani, & Mulu, 2023). The core causes of terrorism are difficult to address because of these variables, which also lead to radicalization and recruitment among vulnerable communities (Abdullahi, Ichani, & Mulu, 2023). The prolonged hostilities in Somalia also give Al-Shabaab a place to hide out and reorganize before launching an assault (Asukwo, 2022). After relentless attacks from the Al-Shabaab terrorist group, Kenya launched Operation Linda Nchi with the main objective of neutralizing and disrupting all Al-Shabaab operations and supporting the fledgling Somali government (Migue & Oluoch, 2014).

The Kenya Air Force's 1982 coup attempt against President Moi was another internal incident that posed a threat to national security. Discontent with perceived political and economic marginalization within the military especially among young officers, was the main cause of the failed coup (Throup, 2020). The coup plotter felt that the government was undervaluing the interests of particular regions

in the country and ethnic groups, and they wanted more diversity in the political system (Howard, 2019). Those who were looking for political alternatives also became more resentful after President Moi's control was further cemented in 1982 with the establishment of a one-party system (Howard, 2019). The failed coup attempt was encouraged by these elements as well as complaints about corruption and nepotism in the government.

The failed coup exposed some government weaknesses when only a select number of persons were able to gain control of Voice of Kenya radio station (now known as Kenya Broadcasting Commission), took control of Eastleigh Air Base located outside Nairobi and paralyzed the nation for days (Torchia, 2017). The failed coup also exposed government's abuse of power after the government's response to the failed coup which involved heavy crackdowns, widespread arbitrary arrests and increased political repression which increased fear and decline in public confidence in the government and the principles of competent democratic governance (Easton & Siverson, 2018).

President Moi disbanded the entire air force and reorganized Kenya's security structure with an increased emphasis on intelligence gathering and counter – insurgency capabilities which was accused of widespread human rights violations and over policing in some areas of the country (N'diaye, 2002). As a way to maintain his political power, President Moi would replace Kikuyu and Luo military officers with individuals from his Kalenjin tribe and would do the same by appointing them to political offices and give them a lot of money thus dividing the nation along ethnic lines and fuelling both tribalization and normalization of corruption in the Moi regime (N'diaye, 2002).

In 2007 Kenya's security landscape would face yet another turning point following the declaration of President Mwai Kibaki as the election's victor on December 30<sup>th</sup> by the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK). The announcement of the disputed 2007 general election results amidst deep ethnic and political tensions triggered widespread violence all across the country (Elekwa, 2011). The government's response to the post-election violence was extremely harsh as the police and General Service Unit (GSU) officials used live ammunition in Kisumu and Nairobi city in an attempt to contain the protests and engage in running battles with different gangs thus exhausting police capabilities in trying to bring the nation's security and tranquilly back (Okia, 2011).

From the start of the Post Election Violence (PEV) on 30<sup>th</sup> December 2007 till its end on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2008, there was an estimated figure of 1200 - 2500 people killed (either by the police or

violent gangs) and internal displacement of roughly 400,000 – 600,000 citizens due to gangs roaming the countryside burning homes of suspected Party of National Unity (PNU) supporters primarily from the communities of Kikuyu, Kamba and Kisii (Okia, 2011). The large displacement of people devastated the country's economic situation as businesses were burnt, reduced agricultural production as there was no one working in the farms and massive damage to infrastructure like roads and bridges thus increasing the price of doing business and deterring foreign investment (Harneit-Sievers & Peters, 2008). The post-election violence highlighted the dire need for an inclusive governance that could address the underlying social and economic inequalities that fuel instability at any given moment.

Successive Kenyan governments have responded to these national security threats in different ways. These responses include initiating reforms in the police sector, constitutional reforms such as the introduction of the new 2010 constitution and creation of the National Counter-Terrorism Centre (NCTC). The aftermath of the post-election violence in 2007-2008, one of the biggest steps to encourage national unity and cohesion and improve the country's security situation was the implementation of the 2010 Constitution which replaced the both the 1963 colonial constitution and 1969 post-colonial constitution. The new 2010 constitution marked a pivotal moment in Kenya's history aiming to address historical injustices, foster national unity and enhance governance in the country.

The 2010 constitution introduced several reforms focusing on improving governance, electoral processes and security sector reforms. To address regional imbalances, the new constitution brought power and resources to Kenyans through the creation of forty-seven (47) county governments with the aim to spur economic growth, improve service delivery and empower marginalized communities (Kanyinga & Long, 2012). Devolution of governance also sought to quell and mitigate conflict arising from competition for national resources. Previously under the centralized system of governance, national resources were channelled to regions that favoured the policy makers and the new move was to have the management of resources be devolved, reduce the pressure placed in the national government and reduce corruption in the management of national resources (Akech, 2011).

National security measures therefore need to encompass a broader range of instruments that are used to deal with these domestic challenges. Some of these measures include improved intelligence and surveillance, counter-insurgency tactics and economic stabilisation and development. For improved

intelligence and surveillance, the intelligence agents apart gathering information on potential threats need to monitor different social media platforms for unrest indicators amongst the population which they can use to advise policy makers on how to quell the civilian unrest (Johnson,2011). Improved counter- insurgency tactics would help to disrupt and dismantle extremist networks, protect critical state infrastructure and bring peace to areas previously affected by violence, this can be done through community policing and counterinsurgency financing (Galula, 2005). Stabilising the economy through investment in education, healthcare, job creation and infrastructure development can help address underlying economic issues and reduce poverty thusmitigating the potential drivers of unrest (Mukand & Rodrik , 2018).

This may involve empowering democratic establishments that support law and stability or pursuing economic growth to alleviate poverty and prevent social strife. National security measures a broader range of (Johnson, 2011). Improved counter- insurgency tactics would help to disrupt and dismantle extremist networks, protect critical state infrastructure(give examples) and bring peace to areas previously affected by violence, this can be done throughcommunity policing and counterinsurgency financing (Galula, 2005). Stabilising the economy through investment in education, healthcare, job creation and infrastructure development can helpaddress underlying economic issues and reduce poverty thus mitigating the potential drivers of unrest (Mukand & Rodrik , 2018).

### **1.3 Sports Programmes and Security Challenges**

A commonplace feature of human culture, sports have developed over the ages to include a wide range of physical activities according to set rules and guidelines. Even though the idea might appear simple, defining sports is a difficult issue that has drawn attention from academic scholars across different fields. Cultural, social and political aspects have shaped the historical evolution of sports as Bin Wang and Jing Liu (2022) contented in their examination of sports (Wang & Liu, 2022). Sports have its roots in ancient cultures, when physical activities were frequently incorporated into social mores and religious rites (Wang & Liu, 2022).

A broader meaning of sports is provided by Vasil Sutula (2018), who highlights their competitive aspect and the physical effort requires. Sutula emphasises how crucial rules and guidelines are to organising sporting events, guaranteeing fair play, and upholding law and order (Sutula, 2018). Sutula's view is consistent with the general consensus that sports are structured competitions involving athletic prowess and physical talent.

Stuart Murray (2018) in his seminal work, "Sports Diplomacy: Origins, theory and practice", offers a compelling argument for exploring alternative approaches to enhance elements of a country's national security. He defines sport diplomacy as the deliberate utilisation of sports, athletes and major sporting events by both official government entities and non-governmental organizations to achieve certain foreign policy objectives (Murray, 2018). From this definition, it purports to sport diplomacy as a strategy used by governments to attain the country's national interests rather than a strategy employed to enhance national security and cohesion. The goals can range from promoting peacebuilding efforts to enhancing a nation's soft power and tackling social and development challenges and encouraging positive and wholesome international relations between countries (Murray, 2018).

Murray, together with Geoffrey Allen Pigman, later expands on the term sport diplomacy in their work "Mapping the relationship between international sport and diplomacy". It can be referred to as the intentional use of sports as platform for diplomatic engagement which promotes and enhances people to people relations and cultural exchange without explicit government intervention or orchestration due to the spontaneous and informal dimensions of the relationship between sports and diplomacy (Murray & Pigman, 2014). This definition showcases how sports can be a tool used by to shape and influence both societal attitudes and some government policies.

The Olympic Truce of 776 BC which was used during the ancient Greek Olympic games is one of the earliest recorded uses of sports diplomacy. During 776 BC three Greek states of Elis, Pisa and Sparta were engaged in constant wars with each other and just before the Olympic games, declared the Olympic Truce (also known as 'Ekecheiria') (Montgomery, 1936). The truce called for a pause to any conflict or war for a period of two to three months as well as safe passage and participation in the ancient games for all athletes and spectators (Steinbach, 2016).

The use of sports to ease external threats can be seen in the example of Ping pong games between USA and China in 1972. During the cold war China and USA had frost diplomatic relations. The newly formed Communist China country under the leadership of Chairman Mao Zedong added another layer of complexity to the already existing Cold War tensions and USA's perceived external threat of communism ideology and practice.

In 1971 nine table tennis players from the USA participating in the 31<sup>st</sup> World Table Tennis Championships in Nagoya, Japan, received an invitation from the Chinese Table Tennis Association (CTTA) to visit China and have a friendly table tennis match (Itoh, 2011). This invitation from the CTTA would make the USA table tennis team the first American delegation to visit China in twenty-two years after the end of the 1949 Chinese revolution. This visit would soon lay the groundwork for the foundation of formal diplomatic engagements between the two nations(Griffin, 2015).

Notwithstanding the difference of opinion that existed between both countries over the issue of Taiwan and other Cold War related issues, the table tennis game (popularly known as ping-pong) proved to be a great success. USA lifted some trade embargoes on China and facilitated China's entry into the United Nations and China reciprocated by detenting with the USA and loosened its close relationship with the USSR (Eckstein & Arbor, 1993). In February 1972, President Richard Nixon made history as he was the first sitting American president to visit Communist China and signed the Shanghai Communiqué (Yi, 2013).The Shanghai Communiqué outlined the wishes of peaceful coexistence and expansion of both economic & cultural contacts through bilateral trade between both countries and contributed to the ease of tensions and eventual normalization of relation in 1979 between USA and China (Elleman, 2018).

The British partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 along religious and territorial lines resulted in a deep sense of distrust and animosity emerged between both new nations and constant violent confrontations over the Kashmir region (Zaidi, 2003). To ease the rising tensions, Pakistani President Mohammed Zia ul-Haq made an unexpected trip to India in 1987 in an attempt to end the dispute peacefully. The two countries share a love for cricket and Mohammed Zia used this to his advantage. After arriving in India and attending the 1987 Cricket world cup, the games provided an unofficial platform for Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi of India and President Mohammed Zia ul-Haq of Pakistan will get together and talk among themselves (Malik, 2011). This unceremonious meeting between the two principals' served as an icebreaker between the two nations and the withdrawal of troops stationed in Kashmir and Rajasthan desert (Marwat et al., 2024).

Sport athletes have the power to significantly impact public opinion and advance social change by using their platforms and their success in international games can help strengthen national pride and solidarity (Seippel, 2017). The power of sport to influence social change has provided governments all over the world with opportunities to create policies and programmes tailor made to unify the nation

with a shared sense of identity and belonging (Sikes, Rider, & Llewellyn, 2019). For instance in post-apartheid South Africa, the government came up with different policies that provided access to sporting opportunities to the poorest and marginalised South African communities as well as amending the National Sport Recreation Act (NSRA) of 2007 to properly define the responsibility of each national, provincial and local level of government in sports development through establishing coordinated and comprehensive sport programmes (Maralack, Keim, & Coning, 2013).

Sports platforms provide policy and decision makers opportunities to achieve desired results and either improve or deteriorate the relationship between divided communities (Pamment, 2019). The different types of sport activities create a unique platform that can be used to promote peaceful interaction between states and non-state actors domestically or internationally, an example of this is the FIFA World Cup and the Olympic Games, which happen every four years.

The 1995 Rugby World Cup and the 2010 FIFA World Cup are two of the world's most prominent athletic events that South Africa has had the honour of hosting. Rugby was once viewed as a divider in the country but soon became a national unifier thanks to the efforts of Nelson Mandela. Nelson Mandela donned the Springbok team's shirt during the world cup rugby final which was once a symbol of white Afrikaner power and embraced them as representatives of a new post-apartheid South Africa (Höglund & Sundberg, 2008). After South Africa defeated New Zealand, Nelson Mandela's actions of wearing the jersey and presenting the trophy to the Springbok team became a reconciliation symbol between black South Africans and the white colonists (Keim, 2003).

The 2010 FIFA World Cup spurred a lot of economic and infrastructural development which ultimately boosted South Africa's national development. The world cup games presented South Africa with the chance to show off a united and developed post-apartheid country with improved transportation networks, telecommunication systems and created numerous job opportunities for the youth (Labuschagne, 2008). The improved infrastructure such road networks broke down geographical barriers and promoted social interactions largely in part to the increased contact between different communities contributing to a more inclusive society and lower xenophobic rhetoric held by anyone (Uwimpuhwe, 2010). The numerous jobs being created were useful in addressing the social ill that was the high unemployment rate that caused a surge in crime rate in the country. These new jobs helped lower crime rates by helping youths escape poverty and give them a sense of purpose and belonging (Oosterbann, 2013)

#### **1.4 Statement of the Problem**

Kenya has faced various series of threats to its external and internal national security. Conflict, mistrust and instability has taken root in the country due to these threats. Threats such as the 1963 Shifta War with Somalia and the terrorist threat of Al-Shabaab have externally challenged Kenya's national security while internal security event threats such as the failed 1982 coup attempt and 2007/2008 post-election violence have further fuelled divisions and eroded trust in government institutions. Due to the nature of the aforementioned threats, Kenya has employed the use traditional hard power approaches such as military force and diplomatic pressure. This complex nature of these challenges needs a more nuanced and multifaceted strategies. This same complex nature creates a pathway for sports to play a significant role, as illustrated by countries like China & USA use of ping pong tournament, South Africa's Rugby World Cup games and India-Pakistan cricket diplomacy, sports can be a useful tool for enhancing cooperation, promote peace and bridge gaps.

The degree to which sports are integrated into national security and cohesiveness in Kenya is yet unknown, despite the country's rich sporting history and potential. The purpose of this project is to find out how Kenya can use sports to strengthen national security and create a more cohesive and resilient community.

#### **1.5 Research Objectives**

The main objectives of the research include:

1. To analyse existing sport programmes that are linked to building national cohesion and national security
2. To appraise the effects of sports programmes on fostering national cohesion and national security among different communities in Kenya.
3. To assess the challenges and obstacles that hinder the utilisation of sports more effectively for national security enhancement in Kenya.

## **1.6 Research Questions**

The questions that shall guide this research are as follows:

1. Which are the existing sport programmes that are linked to building national cohesion and national security?
2. What extent can sport programmes contribute to enhancing and fostering national cohesion and unity among different communities in Kenya?
3. What are the challenges hindering the utilisation of sports in effectively enhancing Kenya's national security?

## **1.7 Justification of the Study**

In Kenya, a very complicated network of national security challenges exists. Stability and development are being threatened by terrorism, inter-communal violence and high youth unemployment. Much as traditional security approaches usually concentrate on reactive measures that answer threats after they have come out, this research suggests a proactive approach which looks at sport potential in addressing the underlying drivers of these security concerns.

Sports are such that they can go beyond social disparities of any kind. A mutual fervour for a particular game may forge togetherness and encourage understanding amid various peoples. Additionally, properly designed sports programmes can present young people who are at risk with constructive outlets for their energy and competition so that they don't become involved in criminal activities like terrorist groups. Such situations will help foster social cohesion while promoting positive norms within society thus empowering young people in the end and enabling them to make meaningful contributions towards national security.

However, it remains insufficiently studied how efficient sport can be in matters of security in the Kenyan context. The usefulness of existing programmes will remain questionable if the initiatives are not carefully examined. This research gap can prevent the country from harnessing its potential to exploit sports as an alternative or complementary measure. Secondly, policymakers could still continue allocating resources for 'as a supplement' and preventive approaches instead of using them as standalone projects. Worse still, they can lead to increased tensions and discrimination or fail to target the most vulnerable.

This investigation is vital in unlocking Kenya's national security through sports. It aims at giving guidance on how to improve the use of sports by critically analysing existing initiatives, understanding underlying mechanisms and proposing well-founded recommendations that policy makers and NGOs should follow up on. Thus, it would contribute to making Kenya a more peaceful and secure place for everyone to live in future.

### **1.8 Scope of the Study**

The research therefore examined important questions for example whether present programmes significantly decline violence and promote social unity and how social norms and opportunities for young people at risk are influenced by program design. Besides, the study delved into cultural, political and sustainability variables that obstruct programme impact. Eventually, by applying international best practices, the research will provide suggestions on how sports can be better embedded in Kenya's national security strategy. This critical analysis seeks to unveil sports as a proactive instrument of peace and order in Kenya.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents literature relating to sports and national security and trying to identify links between sports and national security. The chapter is organised based on the study objectives as outlined in the previous chapter.

### **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

To examine the potential of sports as an instrument used to enhance national cohesion and security, this research study will draw from three interlinked theoretical fields like social cohesion theory, structural functionalism and critical security studies theory.

#### **2.2.1 Critical Security Studies**

A major paradigm change in the area of security studies, Critical Security Studies (CSS) explicitly challenged the long-standing dominance of traditional, state centric viewpoints. This intellectual movement was first sparked by the groundbreaking work of academics like Barry Buzan, Ken Booth and Robert Cox. Booth, as Jundana (2004) rightly points out, criticised the traditional definition of security and argues for its extension beyond the state to include human security in order to provide clarity on the referent object of securitisation. Similar to this, Cox's perceptive examination of power relations, which included material, ideological and social structures, offered a framework for analysing the many factors influencing security discourses (Jundana, 2004). Additionally, Buzan's discussion on security complexes and complex interdependence brought to light the multifaceted and linked character of security issues.

Critical security studies goes further into the social construction of security threats and the power dynamics that underlie them, building on these fundamental concepts. According to scholars in this paradigm, security is a term that is defined and influenced by the prevailing political actors and social norms rather than an absolute reality (Wæver, 1995). In order to uncover possible injustices and inequities ingrained in security procedures, this viewpoint highlights the significance of analysing whose security is being prioritised and at whose price (Tickner, 1993). By dissecting popular security narratives, critical security studies seeks to expose implicit presumptions and prejudice, opening the door for more inclusive alternative security frameworks that tackle a greater

variety of threats, such as those pertaining to economic inequality, environmental degradation and human rights (Sjoberg, 2025).

In accordance with Busan (1998), this theory also highlights the securitisation processes, which frame some problems as existential threats that call for drastic and immediate action. As noted by Booth (2005), this securitisation act has a big impact on how policies are made and how civil rights are restricted (Booth K. , 2005). In order to comprehend how certain risks become more prominent while others are marginalised, critical security academics examine the political processes and language used in securitising topics. By calling for a more thorough examination of the possible effects of securitisation on different actors and society groups, this critical lens promotes a more circumspect and reflective approach to security policy (Huysmans, 2006).

### **2.2.2 Structural Functionalism**

According to structural functionalism, a fundamental sociological viewpoint, society is a complex system whose components cooperate to foster stability and solidarity (Parsons, 1951). Pursuant to this macro-level theory, every social structure, from the family to the state, has distinct roles that support the system's overall equilibrium. Talcott Parsons created a thorough theoretical framework defining the functional requirements required for a society to survive and flourish and Émile Durkheim, who highlighted the significance of social facts and the division of labour in preserving social order, are important scholars who pioneered and developed this perspective (Munch, 2010). The idea was further developed by Robert Merton, who distinguished between the hidden (unintended and sometimes unacknowledged repercussions) and visible (intended and recognised consequences) functions of social structures (Merton, 1968).

Fundamentally, structural functionalism aims to comprehend how societies adjust to change and preserve social order. It highlights how social institutions are interrelated and how they support the efficient operation of the whole. For example, the economy supplies the products and services required for society existence, while the educational system serves to socialise people and impart cultural values (Malik & Malik, 2022). Deviance is perceived as serving to reinforce social norms and limits, despite its apparent disruptive nature (Durkheim, 1982). Structural functionalism offers a paradigm for assessing the stability and cohesiveness of societies by looking at the roles played by various social institutions.

Applying structural functionalism to the study of security provides a distinctive perspective on how societies uphold law and order. According to this viewpoint, security is a condition of relative stability and predictability within the social structure rather than just absence of conflict (Munch, 2010). By discouraging crime, defending against outside threats and settling conflicts, institutions like the military, the legal system and law enforcement are viewed as essential parts that support society security (Spencer, 2019). These institutions carry out certain tasks meant to uphold social order and guarantee the population's welfare.

Structural functionalism also emphasises how security might be jeopardised by disturbances to the social order. For instance, societal norms breaking down, economic disparity or fast social change can all lead to instability and a higher risk of conflict or insecurity (Coakley & Dunning, 2003). On the other hand, it is believed that a safe and stable society depends on strong social integration, common values and efficient social institutions (Turner, 1986). Structural functionalism offers a framework for comprehending the social underpinnings of security and the elements that may either strengthen or weaken it by concentrating on the roles of diverse social structures and their contribution to overall stability.

### **2.2.3 Social Cohesion**

The idea of social cohesion, which has its roots in sociology research, examines the factors that unite people in community and promote trust, togetherness and a common goal (Taylor & Arran, 2018). Often considered a pioneer in this field, Émile Durkheim highlighted the significance of social solidarity, contenting that common norms, values and rituals support both individual and the upkeep of social order (Durkheim, 1982). This line of thinking was further expanded upon by Talcott Parsons who emphasises the importance of common value systems in fostering social harmony and collaboration (Parsons, 1951). In order to create and maintain cohesive communities where people feel a sense of belonging and mutual responsibility, contemporary scholars like Anthony Giddens stress the need of trust and reciprocity (Giddens, 1990). Fundamentally, social cohesion theory holds a strong sense of community and social ties are necessary for societal well-being because they facilitate group activity, lessen social conflict and foster stability in general.

Sports provide a convincing implementation of the social cohesiveness theory's principles. From regional amateur leagues to global contests, sporting events can operate as potent stimulants for interpersonal communication and the formation of collective identities. Political, social and even

geographic barriers can momentarily disappear when people unite to cheer on a team or celebrate sporting accomplishments (Moustakas, 2024). According to Durkheim, the collective effervescence that occurs at these occasions can improve social ties and create a feeling of 'we-ness' among various groups (Putnam, 2000). Additionally, by fostering prosocial behaviour and understanding amongst people, sports involvement may foster qualities like respect, discipline and teamwork, all of which help to create a more united community, deeper social capital and a deeper feeling of community off the pitch can result from the shared experience of competition and the pursuit of shared objectives on the pitch (Moustakas, 2024).

Security and social cohesiveness have a complex and important relationship. High social cohesive societies are often more resistant to both internal and external dangers. Greater cooperation in upholding law and order and avoiding crime can result from a strong sense of community and shared identity, which can also promote trust in institutions like security and law enforcement (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997). On the other hand, societies that are fractured and marked by social exclusion, inequality and a lack of trust are frequently more susceptible to criminal activity, violent extremism and social upheaval (Häuberer, 2011). People may be more receptive to ideas that encourage conflict and division when they feel excluded or cut off from society at large. In order to create safe and stable communities it might be essential to promote social cohesiveness through inclusive policies, fair resource distribution and social contact opportunities.

### **2.3 Sports as a Catalyst for Cohesion and Unity**

It has long been known that sports have the ability to bridge social, cultural and racial gaps and unite people. Using a variety of academic publications and cases, this literature review investigates how sports may promote harmony and cohesiveness. This review seeks to further our understanding of the role that sports play in strengthening and uniting societies by looking at the ways that sports can encourage positive ideals, shared experiences and social engagement.

Sports have a major role in promoting cohesiveness and unity through the creation of shared experience. In his article “Sports as an instrument of development and national cohesion: the Nigerian Experience,” Efebeh makes the case that sporting events can act as a focal point for bringing people from various backgrounds together (Efebeh, 2020). Sports participation and spectatorship can foster a sense of community and shared identity among participants.

Sports have played a significant role in fostering unity in Nigeria by fostering a feeling of shared experiences and pride among participants. Nigerians from all walks of life have come together behind a common cause thanks to the national football team, the Super Eagles, which has served a potent symbol of unification (Efebeh, 2020). The Super Eagles’ competition turns into a national occasion that unites people in celebration and cheering. The divisions that may exist in other spheres of society are transcended by this common experience, which strengthens a sense of national identity and belonging.

Furthermore, athletics have given Nigerians from various backgrounds a chance to socialise and compete fairly. Athletes from diverse geographical locations and cultural backgrounds have united to represent their nation in a variety of sports, exhibiting their abilities and skills (Efebeh, 2020). Stereotypes have been dispelled and respect for one another has grown as a result of this exposure to diversity. In addition, sports have given young people from underprivileged backgrounds a chance to succeed and realise their goals, instilling in them a feeling of purpose and hope.

This is especially clear when it comes to major athletic events like the FIFA World Cup. Even in nations with varied populations as Norbert Kersting points out in his analysis of the World Cup Competition in 2006 in Germany and 2010 in South Africa, these occasions can foster a sense of pride and unanimity among the populace (Kersting, 2007). A feeling of unity and a sense of purpose can be fostered by the shared enthusiasm and anticipation surrounding these occasions.

The team's performance on the world scene is one of the main ways the World Cup can foster a sense of pride in the country. A sense of unity and pride in the country is created when a team performs well and succeeds. Stronger national identity and greater patriotism may result from this. For instance, South African participation in the 2010 World Cup helped foster the national pride and joy among the people, strengthening their sense of identity as a nation and promoting unity. Moreover, the World Cup has the power to unite individuals from all origins and places by acting as a unifying factor (Kersting, 2007). Social and political divides can be overcome by the common experience created by the tournament's enthusiasm and expectation.

Existing scholarly work provides insights into the specific contributions of Kenyan sports programmes, even though complete academic study directly connecting them to concurrent increases in environmental and human security is still evolving. Numerous studies emphasize how sport contributes to social cohesiveness; lower crime rates and promotes peace in terms of human security. For example, a study by Onyango and Wafula (2018) looked at the Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA) and showed how its football program gives young people in Nairobi's informal settlements, structure, education and mentorship, which reduces crime involvement and improves community safety (Onyango & Wafula, 2018). According to Schulenkorf (2016), research on sport for development and peace initiatives in Kenyan conflict-affected areas highlights the use of sports like football to foster discussion, create trust and bridge ethnic barriers in order to reduce violence and improve human security (Schulenkorf, Siefken, & Walch, 2016). These initiatives frequently establish secure environments and cultivate wholesome connections, which enhance communities' feelings of safety and wellbeing.

Sports can foster positive ideals that are necessary for forming cohesive societies in addition to fostering shared experiences. These principles include respect, fair play, cooperation and teamwork. In "Sport, Social Cohesion and Community Building: Managing the Nexus," Ramón Spaaij makes the case that participation in sports can give people the chance to acquire and put these ideals into practice in a secure and safe environment (Spaaij, 2013).

Sports can also aid in dispelling unfavourable preconception and stereotypes. Sports have the power to promote tolerance and understanding across various groups as demonstrated by Stella Wasike's research on "Politics of Grassroot Sports Diplomacy in National Cohesion" (Wasike, 2022). People from different backgrounds can respect one another and learn to value one another's difference through

playing sports together. The South Sudan national football team's contribution to fostering unity and challenge stereotypes is a noteworthy example. The national football team, in spite of great obstacles has become a symbol of pride and optimism for the country. By displaying their brilliance and tenacity on a worldwide scale, their participation in international events has contributed to dispelling unfavourable misconceptions about the nation and its citizens (Wasike, 2022). The football squad has been instrumental in building social cohesion and a feeling of national identity by bringing the country together around a single objective.

Additionally, sports can be a venue for fostering community and social engagement. In "Sport for Social Cohesion: Exploring Aims and Complexities," by Katherine Raw and Emma Sherry, contend that participation in sports can help people connect with other individuals who have similar interests and values (Raw, Sherry, & Rowe, 2022). This has the potential to improve ties to society and foster a feeling of inclusion.

This is especially clear when looking at community-based sports initiatives. Football may be an effective instrument for promoting social cohesiveness in a variety of communities as June Karkee's comparative case study analysis shows. Through offering chances for people to play sports together, these initiatives can support the dismantling of barriers and the strengthening of communities (Karkee, 2020).

Even though the literature discussed here offers insightful information about how sports might promote harmony and cohesiveness, there are still a number of areas that require more study. The long-term effects of sports-based efforts on social cohesiveness is one such area. Sports can benefit people right away according to research, but it's crucial to look at these programmes long-term impacts as well.

Further studies should also look into how sports might help with certain societal issues including discrimination, poverty and inequality. Even while sports can be an effective instrument for fostering social inclusion, it's important to consider how these programmes might be developed and carried out to specifically meet the requirements of marginalised groups.

Lastly, it's crucial to take into account any potential drawbacks and difficulties that come with utilising sports as a social cohesion instrument. Sports, for instance, may be negatively impacted by political and economic issues that could compromise their capacity to foster togetherness.

Furthermore, not every member of the community may be able to participate in sports-based activities, especially those who encounter social or economic obstacles.

## **2. 4 Challenges and Obstacles for Sports as a Tool for National Security Enhancement**

Although it is well acknowledged that sports have the power to promote international harmony and national cohesion, using sports as a weapon to strengthen national security is a difficult and diverse task. This section will examine the constraints and the challenges mentioned in a number of academic publications, using particular instances to emphasise the complexity of this relationship.

One of the main obstacles is the vagueness around the term 'national security'. In "Sports and National Security of the Islamic Republic of Iran," Bahmani, Saboonchi and Feizabadi contend that national security includes social cohesiveness, economic stability and international prestige in addition to military defence (Bahmani, Saboonchi, & Feizabadi, 2015). It is challenging to determine with certainty how sports programmes affect national security because of their wide reach.

Moreover, the political environment can present serious difficulties. Research by Yu (2008) and Feizabadi (2014) highlights the ways in which political goals and national security concerns might collide (Feizabadi, 2014). Yu, for example shows how sports may be politicised to further particular national security goals by highlighting China's use of sports diplomacy to bolster its territorial claims over Taiwan (Yu J. , 2008). Sports have the ability to bring people together yet this politicisation can exacerbate conflicts between nations.

Another major challenge is corruption in sports organizations. The public's confidence in sports is damaged by doping scandals and match-fixing, which also make it harder for sports to uphold moral principles. Studies by Bahmani, Saboonchi and Feizabadi indicate that this is especially alarming when examined through the prism of national security (Bahmani, Saboonchi, & Feizabadi, 2015). International dispute may arise and national prestige may be harmed if teams or athletes are thought to be cheating.

This difficulty is demonstrated by the Russian doping scandal of 2016. In addition to damaging the image of its athletes, Russia's state-sponsored doping program damaged its relation with other nations (Noland, 2016). This episode demonstrates the serious consequences corruption in sports may have on national security. The report by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) exposed the massive state-sponsored doping program and as a result the IOC banned Russian athletes from flying

the Russian flag during games and singing the country's national anthem (Parks, 2023). Since Russian athletes could no longer represent their country, they were now required to compete under the Olympic flag as Olympic Athletes from Russia (OAR). President Vladimir Putin, who had utilised sports to increase his popularity and foster a sense of national unity, suffered a serious setback as a result of his admission to "instances of doping use in Russia" (Hodge, 2018).

Another danger of using sports to improve national security is terrorism and other violent crimes. Numerous studies have shown that terrorist organisation may view major athletic events as desirable targets (Toohey & Taylor, 2023). An example of this can be seen in the 1972 Munich Olympic attack by the terror group known as Black September. The Black September attack during the 1972 Munich Olympics was a well-planned operation intended to shame the Israeli government and bring attention to the Palestinian cause on a global scale (Reeve, 2011). Black September made sure their message reached a large audience by focusing on the games because they knew that their activities would be extensively covered by the media and discussed globally (Silke & Filippidou, 2020). Black September members were able to sneak into the Olympic Village and take eleven hostages, and killing dozen others, in spite of the increased security measures put in place for the Olympics (Kenyon & Rookwood, 2010). This bold move implied that the militants were able to take advantage of serious security flaws. The incident brought to light the difficulties in securing such events and in upholding strict security protocols while yet guaranteeing the satisfaction of attendees.

Black September utilised the Munich Olympics to bring attention to the Palestinian struggle for independence and freedom from apartheid Israel by capturing hostages and demanding the release of Palestinian prisoners (Silke & Filippidou, 2020). The attack was a daring and spectacular declaration that drew international notice and made countries address the subject of Palestinian rights. The terrorists believed that Israel would be under pressure to seek a peace agreement with the Palestinians as a result of the international outcry created by the attack (Kenyon & Rookwood, 2010).

The Munich Massacre significantly altered public perceptions of sports event security as well as the place security of terrorism in the contemporary world. The attack illustrated how terrorist organizations can take use of public events to further their political goals. It also brought attention to the necessity of tighter security measures in order to prevent future assaults on athletic events.

The literature provides examples of how sports can support national security by fostering social cohesion and peace, despite the problems that remain. The study on youth sports programmes by Carbajosa, Steringer and Wehmeyer shows how sports can offer a forum for communication and mutual understanding between various cultures (Carbajosa, Steringer, & Wehmeyer, 2020). Sports can indirectly support national security by promoting social inclusion and easing social tensions within a community.

With regard to national security, Mohamed's "Sport for All Initiative" highlights the significance of encouraging broad sports participation. In addition to being less prone to illness, a healthy and active people may also be more involved in civic life, which supports social stability (Mohamed, 2020). Even though the evaluated literature offers insightful information, there are still a number of areas that require more study. First and foremost, additional empirical research is required to evaluate the long-term effects of sports-related efforts on national security. Second it would be beneficial to conduct study on how sports can be used to counteract particular national security concerns like cyberwarfare and economic espionage. Lastly comparing the methods used by various nations to use sports for national security could provide insightful information and best practise.

Sports and national security have a nuanced and intricate relationship. Sports can surely promote social cohesiveness, international goodwill, and national pride, but these advantaged depend on overcoming formidable obstacles. Maximising the beneficial effects of sports on national security requires addressing problems like political meddling, corruption and security risks. Furthermore, encouraging mass sports participation can make people healthier and more involved in society, which tangentially improves national security. Recognising the difficulties and utilising sports' potential, countries can use this tremendous instrument to advance harmony, peace and stability.

## **2.5 Sport-Based Programmes: A Booster for Environmental Security and Human Security**

Sports have a long history of being associated with constructive societal transformation. The potential of sport-based initiatives to support human and environmental security has drawn more attention in recent years. The present literature delves into the various applications of sports to foster sustainable development, safeguard natural resources and augment the welfare of both individuals and communities.

Promoting sustainable practise and increasing public knowledge of environmental issues are two

important ways that sports can support environmental security. In his paper “Sports Diplomacy in Advancing Environmental Security in Africa,” Benjamin Kinyili makes the case that sports may be utilised to include local populations in environmental preservation initiatives (Kinyili, 2021). Sports events, for instance, might be held in protected areas to increase public awareness of the value of conservation and biodiversity.

Sports can also be utilised to encourage environmentally friendly manufacturing and consumption methods. In recent years, the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup have placed a greater emphasis on sustainability with organisers taking steps to lessen their environmental impact. As Preuss points out in his work “The Contributing of the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup to Green Economy,” these competitions can act as role models for environmentally friendly growth (Preuss, 2013).

Because sports foster social inclusion, health and well-being, sports can help advance human security. In their study “Contribution of taking part in sport to the association between physical activity and quality of life,” Omorou and his fellow scholars make the case that playing sports can have a positive impact on one’s physical and mental well-being (Omorou Y. A., Erpelding, Escalon, & Vuillemin, 2013). Sports can aid in disease prevention and enhance general health outcomes by encouraging physical activity and decreasing sedentary lives.

Sports can also promote inclusion and social harmony. Sports can assist in removing barriers and fostering understanding by giving people from different backgrounds the chance to engage in activities together. This can be especially crucial in situations involving violence or civil instability (Saghezchi & Naini, 2016).

Even while the literature reviewed here offers insightful information about how sports-based initiatives may support both human and environmental security, there are still a number of areas that require more study. The long-term effects of sport-based activities in human well-being and environmental sustainability are one such field. Sports can benefit people right away, according to research, but it’s crucial to look at these programmes’ long-term impacts as well.

Future studies should also look into how sports may help with certain environmental and Human security issues. How, for instance, might sports be utilised to encourage mitigation and adaptation to climate change? What role may sport-based initiatives play in the fight against inequality and

poverty?

Existing research on sport for development and environmental sustainability provides pertinent frameworks, even though scholarly literature directly and thoroughly assessing the contributions of various Kenyan sports programmes to promoting environmental conservation and, combating climate change is still in its infancy. Research indicates that sports can be effective means of fostering pro-environmental behaviours and increasing public knowledge of environmental issues (Chernushenko, 2010). Sports events may incorporate messages about conservation, the effects of climate change, and sustainable behaviours because of their wide audience and fervent fan bases. The larger literature on sport and social impact recognizes the potential of sport to spread environmental knowledge and promote responsible actions, despite the paucity of thorough academic analyses of Kenyan sport programmes addressing climate change (Dingle , Mallen , & Strigas, 2018)

The Lewa Conservancy Marathon is a notable example of an athletic event that is specifically associated with environmental conservation in the Kenyan context. The main goal of the marathon is to collect money for community development and wildlife conservation within the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, even though there may not direct scholarly assessments of its impact on climate change (Gitonga , 2021). This project serves as an example of how well-known athletic events may directly aid in environmental conservation initiatives, which are essential for reducing the negative effects of climate change on ecosystems and biodiversity. Local football leagues or community-based sports programmes that include tree-planting events, spread anti-poaching messages or instruct members on sustainable resource management are examples of similar initiatives, but somewhat less well-documented in scholarly sources. Future scholarly studies may concentrate more on the role of sports in tackling environmental issues in Kenya and elsewhere because of the expanding understanding of the connection between environmental health and human well-being.

Lastly, it's crucial to take into account any potential restriction and difficulties related to employing sports for human and environmental security. Sports events, for instance, can demand a lot of resources and, if improperly handled, may have detrimental effects on the environmental. Furthermore, not every member of the community may be able to participate in sports-based activities, especially those who encounter social or economic obstacles.

## **Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the research methodology that was followed throughout the duration of the study. It presents the research design, the data collection and analysis methods, the validity and reliability tests limitations and conclude with a summary of the chapter.

### **3.2 Research Design**

In his seminal work titled 'Design, Research and Design Research: Synergies and Contradictions', Wayne Nelson defines research design as a meticulously crafted plan/roadmap which guides the methods, strategies and procedures to be used while inquiring into the research question and/or hypodissertation (Nelson, 2013). This research adopted a quantitative survey research design in trying to answer the research questions posed in chapter one.

According to Babbie (2017), a qualitative survey research design is a methodical technique for gathering numerical data from a population sample in order to characterise traits, attitudes, beliefs or behaviours (Babbie, 2017). A comparatively high number of people are given structured questionnaires or surveys as part of this design, which enables statistical analysis of data gathered to find trends and draw conclusions about the general conclusions about the general population (Creswell & Cresweel , 2018). A representative sample chosen using probability or non-probability sampling techniques, standardised data collection tools with closed-ended questions to guarantee consistency, well- defined research questions and hypotheses and pre-established response options that make numerical coding and statistical coding and statistical analysis easier are all important elements of this design (Fowler, 2014). To draw inferences and assess associations between variables, the focus is on measurement, objectivity and the use of statistical techniques such descriptive statistics, correlational analysis or inferential statistics (Babbie, 2017).

### **3.3 Target Population**

Target population is the specific individuals, groups or events identified and grouped by specific characteristics or criteria that distinguish them from the rest of the population at large (Nápoles-Springer & Stewart, 2006).

The total target population for the entire study was 1200 individuals mainly consisting of

Government officials, University Lectures, Athletes and representatives from Sports Kenya and Sport, Arts and Social Development Fund. The table below shows the break down per objective:

Table 1: Breakdown of Target Audience per objective

No.	Target Audience	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3
	Athletes in different sport disciplines (football, basketball, volleyball, marathon runner, hockey and rugby)	1000	1000	1000
	Government officials from the Ministry of Interior and National Administration	50	50	50
	Government officials from the Ministry of Youth Affairs, Creative Economy and Sports	50	50	50
	Representatives from Sports Kenya	30	30	30
	Representatives from Sport, Arts and Social Development Fund	30	30	30
	Lecturers specialising in International Relations and Security	40	40	40

### 3.4 Sampling Size

Sampling size signifies the desired number of individuals or groups gathered from a large population with the critical aim to determine the precision and reliability of the research findings are consistent (Mehrotra, Srivastava, & Tyagi, 1987). For this study, the total sample size was 71 respondents, they were chosen using purposive sampling technique.

The respondents were chosen due to their knowledge in either Kenya's security or sports architecture and they also being residents of the three study locations namely; Nairobi, Mombasa and Eldoret counties.

The table below shows the distribution of the sample population for the three objectives which included:

Table 2: Breakdown of the sample size per objective

No.	Target Audience	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3
	Athletes in different sport disciplines (football, basketball, volleyball, marathon runner, hockey and rugby)	48	48	48
	Government officials from the Ministry of Interior and National Administration	5	5	5
	Government officials from the Ministry of Youth Affairs, Creative Economy and Sports	5	5	5
	Representatives from Sports Kenya	5	5	5
	Representatives from Sport, Arts and Social Development Fund	4	4	4
	Lecturers specialising in International Relations and Security	4	4	4

### 3.5 Data Collection Method

This section outlines the different collection methods that assisted the researcher gather necessary data to answer the research questions.

#### 3.5.1 Instruments of Data Collection

To obtain thorough insights from the 71 participants, the research used a multifaceted strategy to data collecting, utilising both structured and semi-structured questionnaires. A survey questionnaire served as the main tool and was made to gather a variety of data relevant to the goals of the research objectives. Both closed-ended and open-ended questions (such as multiple-choice or rating scales), which made statistical analysis and the discovery of patterns and trends among the 71 participants

possible. These kinds of questions were selected because they offer consistent answers, simplify data collection and comparison and lessen interpretive uncertainty. They were especially helpful in determining attitudes, views and the frequency of certain experiences pertaining to social cohesiveness, national security and sports programs.

Open-ended questions were purposefully included in the survey questionnaire in addition to closed-ended questions. By answering these question in their own words, participants were able to add valuable contextual information that would not have been captured by pre-defined answer choices. In order to better understand participants' experiences, viewpoints and recommendations about the effectiveness, difficulties and room for development of sports programs in promoting peace and security, open-ended questions were used. Understanding the 'why' behind certain observations, offering unique viewpoints and revealing unanticipated problems or insights that may guide policy suggestions were all made possible by this qualitative data.

These survey questions were administered in two different ways; in-person interviews and data gathering via the Kobo Toolbox platform. At least some of the 71 participants were interviewed in person. This approach was particularly selected due to its benefits in building rapport with interviewees, facilitating real time question clarification and allowing the interviewer to watch for non-verbal clue that might offer further context. A face-to-face interview's direct connection allowed for a more thorough examination of replies to delicate or complicated questions and guaranteed that participants understood the purpose of each one. Building trust with respondents and obtaining rich qualitative data from open-ended questions were tow benefits of this method that were very helpful when talking about issues pertaining to community cohesiveness and national security.

The research surveys were administered using the Kobo Toolbox for increased efficiency and reach, particularly with a target of 71 participants. Kobo Toolbox is a set of digital data collecting tools that are ideal for general study but are mainly made for humanitarian crises and difficult to reach place. It made it possible to create digital copies of the survey questionnaire that respondents could fill out on their mobile phones or tablets. The capacity of Kobo Toolbox to expedite data gathering, guarantee data correctness through integrated validation procedures and enable instantaneous data synchronisation to a central server were the main justifications for its use. This decreased the possibility of data input errors and drastically cut down on the time and effort required for manual

data entry. Additionally, the offline data collecting features of Kobo Toolbox were helpful since they enabled researchers to gather data even in places with little to no internet availability which is frequent in some regions of Kenya. For the complete data set of the 71 participants, this digital method also guaranteed data protection and made data administration and analysis easier.

### **3.5.2 Data Sources**

This research study used primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data consisted of data gathered from the survey questionnaires while the secondary data was gathered from academic journals, research and articles as well as reports generated by organisations.

### **3.6 Data Analysis Methods**

Survey questionnaires were the main method used to gather data for this research, which had 71 individuals. These surveys were the main tools used to collect data from the respondents, both quantitative and qualitative. They were created using a two-pronged strategy that included both open-ended and closed-ended questions. In order to have a thorough grasp of the participants' opinions about sports programs and their influence on Kenya's National Cohesion and Security, this dual format was purposefully adopted. The researcher was able to find trends and patterns in replies by using closed-ended questions, such multiple-choice or rating scales, to efficiently collect quantitative data.

Following the collection of survey data, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel were two essential software tools used in a thorough transcribing and analysis procedure. The initial transcription and organisation of the raw survey data were done mostly using Microsoft Excel. This involved putting answers to both open-ended and closed-ended questions into a structured style so that basic data cleaning and first classification could be done. It handled the original dataset efficiently thanks to its spreadsheet skills, setting it up for more complex statistical research. Excel was useful in this stage because it could handle the unprocessed textual and numerical data before it was subjected to more thorough examination.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for the more complex statistical analysis and classification of qualitative data. The Social sciences frequently employ SPSS, a robust statistical software suite, for sophisticated statistical analysis and data management. Processing the qualitative data from the closed-ended questions in this research required the use of SPSS. It made

it possible for the researcher to produce descriptive statistics which were subsequently shown graphically in bar charts and tables. This made it possible to provide the main conclusions and trends about public awareness, efficacy perceptions and sports program kinds in an understandable and succinct manner. Additionally, SPSS made it easier to systematically group replies into discrete themes for the qualitative data gathered from the open-ended questions.

### **3.7 Reliability and Validity of Research**

The validity and reliability of research finding have a major impact on their credibility and dependability. While validity verifies that the research is measuring it is supposed to assess, reliability relates to the consistency and dependability of outcomes. Research quality can only be guaranteed by putting strategies that improve validity and reliability into practice (Varlik, Sorm, & Günbayi, 2021).

Using a variety of data collection techniques is one way to improve reliability. Through the utilisation of several methodologies, including surveys, observations, interviews and investigators can enhance the coherence of their results (Varlik, Sorm, & Günbayi, 2021). Reliability can also be increased by employing standardised tools and precise operational definitions.

### **3.8 Ethical Considerations**

This study involved human beings as the target population and thus there was need for ethical considerations. This study will be guided by the approval from the Strathmore Ethics Research Board and a valid research permit from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI).

Informed consent was administered to all study participants before any information was collected from them. The research guaranteed full discretion of the information disclosed during the interviews and focused group discussions and assure the participants of using the data collected for academic purposes only.

The study also ensured all necessary levels of privacy and confidentiality of all participants besides ensuring safety of storage of data collected both in hard and soft copies.

### **3.9 Research Limitations**

During data gathering the study ran across a few constraints. First, there were limitations on the information that could be obtained from Government representatives in the Ministry of Youth Affairs, Creative Economy and Sports, and Ministry of Interior and National Administration. Due to security clearance procedures and the researcher's academic qualifications rather than security, they were hesitant to disclose the reports themselves. Furthermore, several authorities were hesitant to talk about how sports programmes affect national security with others acknowledging that they didn't know enough about the subject.

Second, different athletes' literacy levels made it difficult to obtain data from them. Because some athletes couldn't fill out written surveys, the researcher had to interview them verbally and transcribe their answers, which might have introduced some interpretation biases.

Lastly, the breadth and depth of data collected were influenced by geographical dispersion and time restrictions. The researcher was obliged to speed up interviews due to the limited availability of some respondents, who were frequently limited to a quick ten maybe fifteen-minute encounter which may have resulted in loss of subtle insights. In addition, the study's three region reach required online sessions to accommodate participants who couldn't meet in person which added logistical challenges and could have impacted the calibre of interactions.

## **Chapter 4: Presentation Of Research Findings**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter reports on the data findings for each of the three objectives mentioned earlier in chapter one. It shows the different sports programmes in existence that are linked to national security and cohesion, the assessment on how well they promote harmony and safety among various communities and describes the challenges that affect the application of sports for improving national security and cohesion.

The respondent included in the data collection included; Athletes who will be represented as 'AT', representatives from the Sports, Arts and Social Development Fund 'SA', representatives from Sport Kenya 'SK', government officials from the Ministry of Youth, Creative Economy and Sports and Ministry of Interior and National Administration 'GO' and lecturers with expertise in International Relations and Security 'L' comprised the five groups of participants. These groups which included 71 participants in total, offered insights that were triangulated and coded to guarantee the accuracy of the data collected.

### **4.2 Participants' Response**

#### **4.2.1 Response Rate**

The questionnaires were completed by all 71 out of the 100 people who were originally targeted for the study; this 71% response rate was judged adequate for data analysis. Participants were given codes according to their occupation to maintain anonymity and their answers were tracked using numerical identifiers.

This study contends that the return rate was favourable due to teamwork and participation in efficiently pursuing the members, proper member introduction to the consider, accessibility and availability of many respondents. The analyst's ability to apply a legitimate investigation strategy within the study and legitimate administrator guidance. As seen in figure 1, the key informant approach was employed to gather useful information from a variety of government officials, Sport Kenya representatives, athletes, lecturers and representatives of the Sports, Arts and Development Fund in order to target the population for this study.

Bar Chart 1: Institutional Affiliation

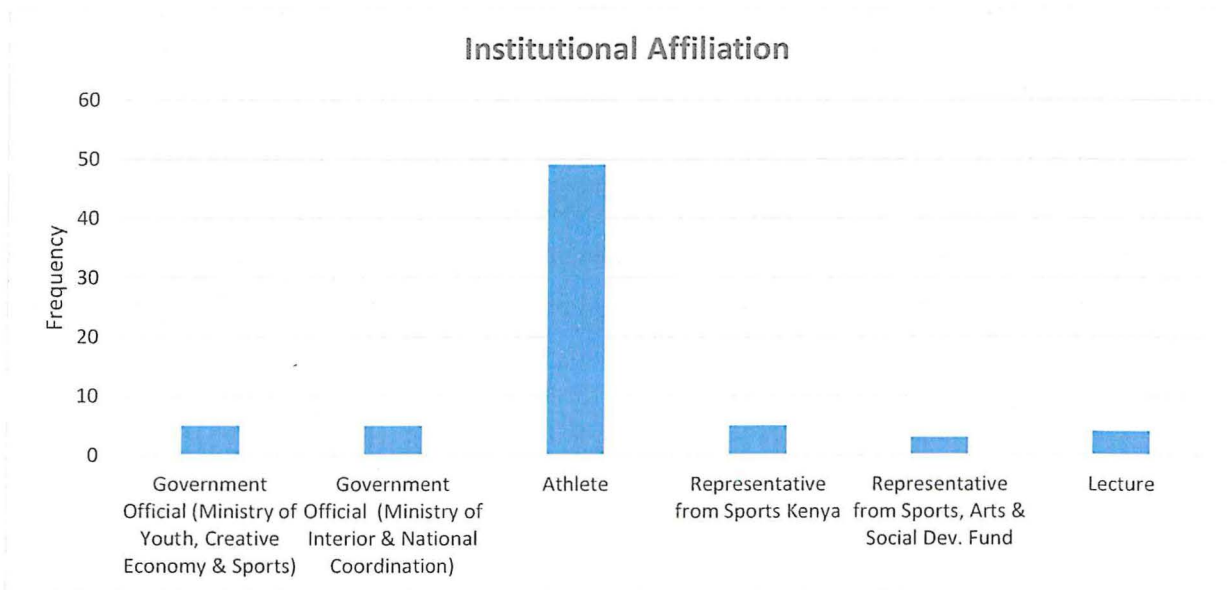


Table 3: Distribution of respondents

Institutional Affiliation	Frequency	Percent
Government Official (Ministry of Youth, Creative Economy & Sports)	5	7.0
Government Official (Ministry of Interior & National Administration)	5	7.0
Athlete	49	69.0
Representative from Sports Kenya	5	7.0
Representative from Sports, Arts & Social Dev. Fund	3	4.2
Lecture	4	5.6
Total	71	100.0

#### 4.2.2 Gender

The gender distribution of the respondents is displayed in the chart below, where respondents were asked to specify their gender.

Bar Chart 2: Gender distribution of respondents



Table 4: Gender distribution of respondents

Gender	No	%
Male	51	71.8%
Female	20	28.2%

### 4.2.3 Age

The age of the informants is displayed in table 5 and the bar chart below.

Bar Chart 3: Age distribution of respondents

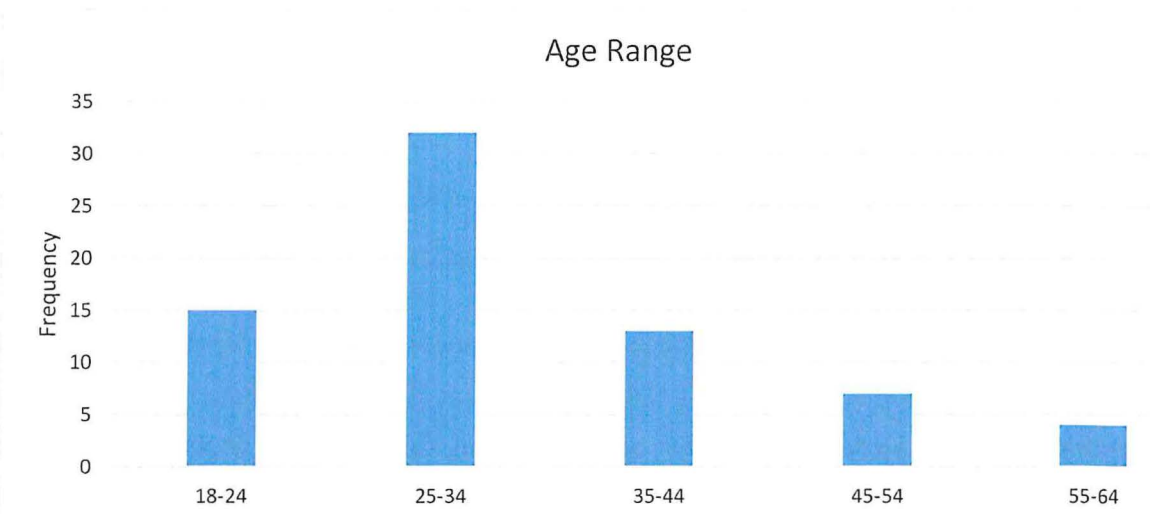


Table 5: Age distribution of the respondents

Age Range	No	%
18-24	15	21.1%
25-34	32	45.1%
35-44	13	18.3%
45-54	7	9.9%
55-64	4	5.6%

The age groups were divided into five classes, each ten years apart. The modal class consisting of individuals aged 25-34 accounted for 45.1% of the totals, followed by those aged 18-24 (21.1%), 35-44 (18.3%), 45-54 (9.9%) and 55-64 (5.6%). According to the data the bulk of the informants were between the ages of 25 and 34.

#### 4.3 Sport Programmes Linked to Building National Cohesion and National Security

Of those surveyed 52.1% (n37) said they were aware of sports programmes that promote national security and cohesion, while 47.9% (n34) said they were not.

Table 6: Existence of Sports Programmes

<b>1. Are you aware of any existing sports programmes in Kenya specifically designed to promote national cohesion &amp; national security concerns?</b>		
	No	%
Yes	37	52.1%
No	34	47.9%

According to the survey results, the participants provided a range of instances of sports initiatives that were connected to National Security and National Cohesion. The themes that emerged from the respondents' answers included Sports for peace, National Cohesiveness, youth empowerment, community sports programmes, football for peace and military/security sports programmes. Sports

for peace, which included initiatives like the NCIC Amani Football Clubs and Michezo Mashinani initiatives that are particularly created to use sports as a tool for societal harmony and conflict resolution, was the most prevalent theme (19.7%). With 15.5% of the responses, National Cohesiveness came in second, followed by youth empowerment, community sports programmes and military/security sport programmes (8.5%), while football for peace received the fewest responses (5.6%). In order to promote regional cooperation and civil-security relations, the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF), Kenya Police Service and other security agencies organize sporting events under the military/security sports program theme. For example, one of the respondents in the field of academia who confirmed the existence of successful sports programmes gave the following as an example

*“Yes, Programmes like the Michezo Mashinani Initiative, KDF’s Civil-Military Sports Engagements, and East African Community Military Games and more like the 4k clubs, NCIC Amani clubs and Baringo peace games promote National Cohesion and National Security by fostering unity and cohesion among communities, discipline and improved collaboration relations between security officers & communities as well as between two different communities.” (Respondent L from Nairobi, 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025)*

This was also confirmed by an athlete who also said they know about existing successful sport Programmes and had the following to say;

*“Madaraka Day Cup fosters unity through inter-county football matches. KPL Peace initiatives promote harmony among rival fan bases and Safaricom Chapa Dimba empowers the youth and reduces crime rates. Police and KDF sport tournaments strengthen relations between security agencies and local communities.” (Respondent AT from Eldoret, 6<sup>th</sup> March 2025)*

Additionally, the study found that although many participants were aware of the sport programmes linked to improving National Security and Cohesion, not all of them thought the programmes had not yielded the expected results. The table below shows that, although there were challenged and obstacles encountered during program implementation, 33.8% of respondents believed the programmes were only moderately successful in achieving their objectives, while 45.1% of the respondents did not believe the programmes were successful.

Table 7: Success of Sports Programmes

<b>2. In your experience, to what extent have these programmes been successful in achieving their goals?</b>		
	N	%
Very Successful	1	1.4%
Successful	6	8.5%
Slightly Successful	24	33.8%
Don't know	8	11.3%
Not Successful	32	45.1%

Eight different themes surfaced from the respondent's responses regarding the success rate of the sport programmes. With 36.6% of the responses, the most common theme was limited impact, followed by positive impact (22.5%), funding issues (15.5%), lack of sustainability (11.3%), regional disparities (8.5%), political interference (7%) community relations (5.6%) and structural inequalities (4.2%).

Although Kenyan sports programmes have demonstrated promise, their influence is frequently constrained by uneven execution and a failure to address root causes. programmes can for example, concentrate on resolving disputes quickly rather than addressing the underlying issues that lead to youth discontent and criminal activity. Furthermore, even effective programmes like 'Football for Peace' in places like the Rift Valley and Eastleigh, Nairobi, find it difficult to keep up with the times because of a lack of money and ongoing mentoring, which eventually causes their impact to wane. Additionally, initiatives like the NCIC Amani Clubs, which were created to foster harmony and unity in schools have had difficulties in execution and monitoring frequently remaining primarily on paper. For example, one of the athlete respondents, shared their thoughts on the perceived benefits or drawback of using sports programmes in relation to national security, as shown below

*"In areas like Nairobi's Eastleigh and parts of the Rift Valley, programmes like "Football for Peace" have helped reduce ethnic tensions during post-election periods. However, I've noticed that they often lose momentum due to limited funding and lack of sustained mentorship*

*for the youth after the events. In contrast, programmes in schools and local clubs have more lasting impacts by keeping kids engaged long-term.” (Respondent AT from Nairobi 24<sup>th</sup> February 2025)*

The ideas expressed by the athlete were also confirmed by the statement provided by a representative from the Sports, Arts and Social Development Fund

“From what I’ve seen, these programmes have had a positive impact, especially in areas with ethnic tensions. For example, during post-election periods, "Football for Peace" helped reduce violence in Rift Valley by bringing different communities together. However, their success can be limited by lack of resources and inconsistent follow-up, so the impact isn’t always long-term.” (Respondent SA from Nairobi 25<sup>th</sup> February 2025)

On the other hand, these sporting initiatives have been beneficial, especially in promoting social cohesiveness and getting kids involved in healthy pursuits. For instance, by uniting disparate groups initiatives like ‘Football for Peace’ have effectively decreased ethnic tensions during post-election periods. In a similar vein, programmes in local organization like the Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA) has aided in sustained youth involvement, fostering harmony, improved environmental conservation awareness and lowering of crime. In many communities, the Kenya Youth Sports Association and related initiatives have promoted social integration and peacebuilding by offering safe spaces and conservation starters.

The respondents gave a range of responses when asked how the sport programmes helped to promote a feeling of cohesion and shared identity, which emerged as eleven themes. The most prevalent themes were cooperation and teamwork (23.9%), dismantling barriers (21.1%), establishing shared experiences and goals (16.9%), mutual respect and understanding (15.5%), fostering cultural exchange and intercultural dialogue (8.5%), promoting youth engagement and employment (8.5%), creating neutral spaces and platforms (7%), enhancing community-based participation (5.6%), offering role models for at risk youth (5.6%) and NCIC Amani Clubs (4.2%). One of the university lecturers had the following to say after she was asked whether she believed if the sports programmes effectively addressed root causes of social divisions or security threats:

*“They're designed to sports contribute to the promotion of a culture. sports are a meaningful way to engage with young people and create a sense of belonging, thus supporting the*

*meaningful inclusive and community-based reintegration of young women and men directly involved in armed conflict. of peace, tolerance, and social cohesion, therefore setting the stage and creating an enabling environment for young people to play a critical role in conflict prevention.” (Respondent L from Nairobi 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025)*

By uniting people from various ethnic, cultural and social backgrounds sports activities in Kenya play a vital role in promoting a sense of solidarity and common identity. These initiatives foster cross-cultural communication and cooperation through events like team sports, neighbourhood tournaments and national contests. Ethnic barriers are broken down and understanding is promoted via events like the Kenya National Sports Festival and local leagues which promote cooperation and respect for one another. National pride and sense of shared Kenyan identity are reinforced by success in national sports like rugby and athletics.

By teaching citizenship, conflict resolution and peace education skills, programmes like the NCIC Amani Clubs in schools help spread these values even more and inspire kids to value diversity and live in harmony with one another. programmes like ‘Sport for Peace’ and the ‘Mombasa Peace Games’ use sport as a neutral forum for communication and reconciliation, focusing on areas that are prone to conflict. These programmes strengthen friendships and mutual respect by emphasizing common objective and experience which promotes unity and cohesion and strengthens a sense of belonging to a broader national identity. A government representative from the Ministry of Interior and National Administration had the following to share;

*‘Programmes like the "Mombasa Peace Games" bring together youth from different ethnic groups, fostering teamwork and mutual respect in a neutral setting, reducing inter-communal tensions. "Sport for Peace" has helped communities in the Rift Valley interact through shared sports activities, breaking ethnic barriers and promoting understanding.’ (Respondent GO from Mombasa, 10<sup>th</sup> February 2025)*

When asked if they were aware of any perceived advantages or disadvantaged of these programmes in relation to National Security and National Cohesion, 69% of the respondents acknowledged that there were some advantaged and disadvantages, while 31% denied any such benefits or drawbacks. The frequency table and bar chart below display the figure.

Bar Chart 4: Perceived benefits or drawbacks

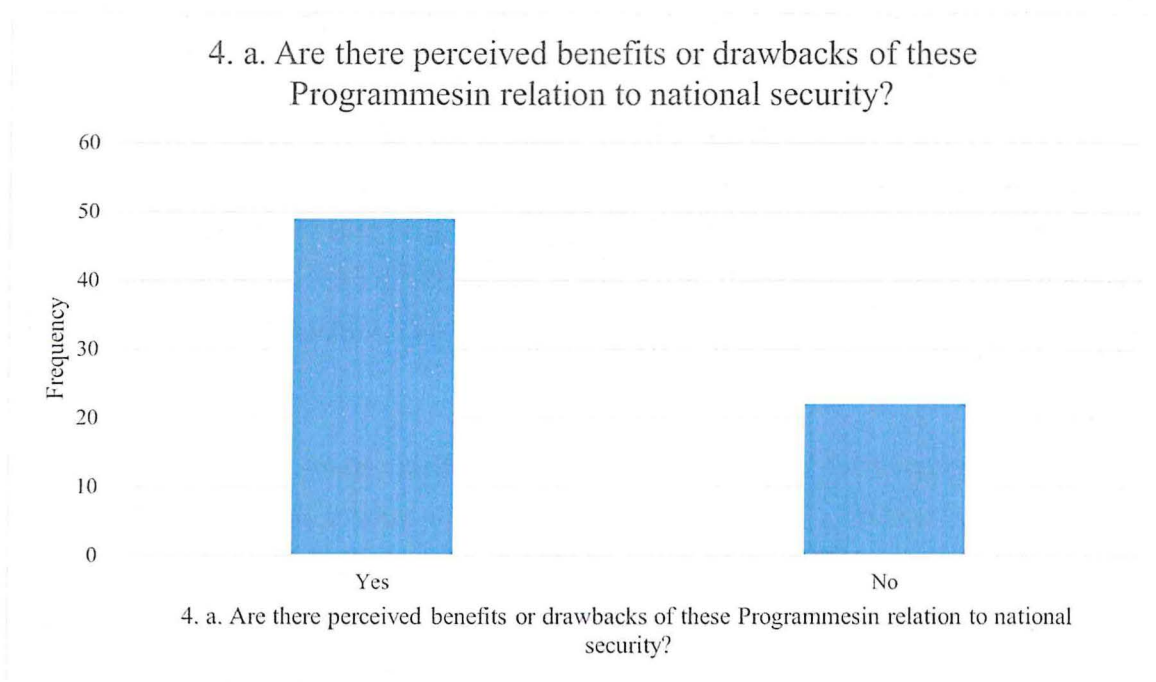


Table 8: Perceived benefits or drawbacks

4. Are there perceived benefits or drawbacks of these programmes in relation to national security?		
	No	%
Yes	49	69.0%
No	22	31.0%

Kenyan sport programmes contribute to National Security and Cohesion in several ways. By involving the youth in productive activities, they lower crime and radicalization risks, diverting energy into constructive outlets. Through cooperative events these programmes also improve police-community relations by fostering communication and trust. Additionally, they lessen political and ethnic tensions by encouraging discipline, collaboration and a sense of National Identity, all of which contribute to social cohesiveness. These programmes develop grassroots networks for conflict prevention and resolution by offering alternative livelihoods organized engagement, which promotes stability and peacebuilding.

While there are certain advantages, there are also some disadvantaged. These sport programmes' shortcomings include a lack of money and sustainability which results in uneven execution and temporary effect. While uneven access across regions may exacerbate social inequality and stoke animosity, political meddling can compromise the efficacy of programmes. Inter-group conflicts may be exacerbated by the passivity of politicization and ethnic favouritism in program execution. Large crowds can also be targets of security risks in they are not appropriately handled, and competitive sporting events present additional difficulties due to the possibility of violence and hooliganism. . A government representative from the Ministry of Interior and National Administration had the following to share;

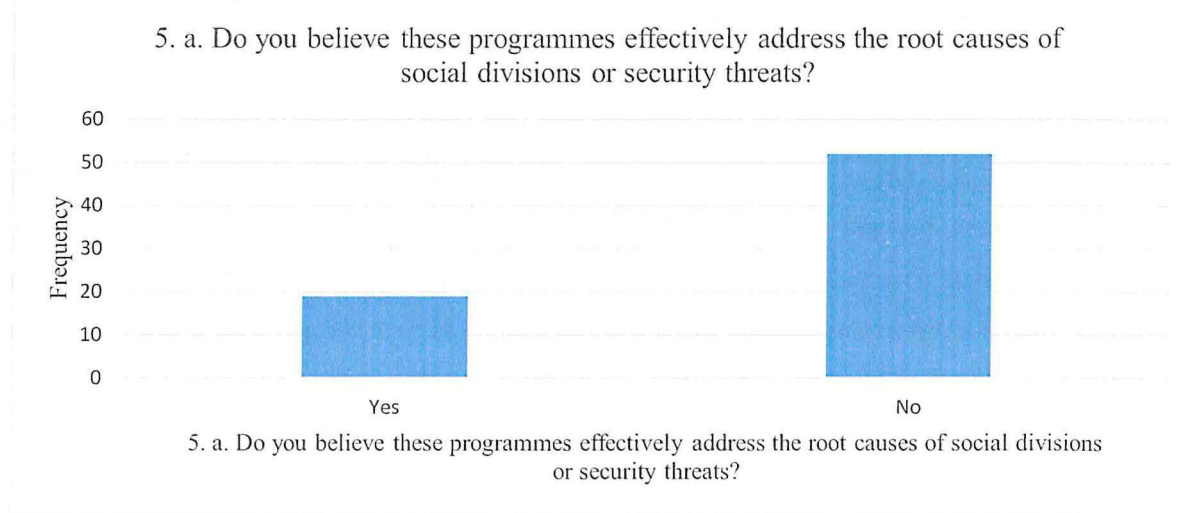
*“Sport programmes run the possibility of being politically exploited or manipulated and they frequently consist of short-term projects that don’t have a permanent effect. Regional inequities can result from unequal access to resources and many programmes become unsustainable due to an excessive reliance on outside funding.” (Respondent GO from Nairobi, 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025)*

When asked whether they thought these sports programmes effectively addressed the underlying reasons of societal divisions or security risks the respondents gave their opinion. While 26.8% of the respondents believed that the programmes addressed some of the underlying reasons of social divisions or security risks, 73.2% of respondents disagreed.

Table 9: Address of root causes of social divisions or security threats by sport programmes

<b>5. a. Do you believe these programmes effectively address the root causes of social divisions or security threats?</b>		
	No	%
Yes	19	26.8%
No	52	73.2%

Bar Chart 5: Address of root causes of social divisions or security threats by programmes



There are differing opinions about how well sport programmes may address the underlying causes of social differences and security threats. Many agree that by encouraging harmony young involvement and constructive contact these initiatives help build a sense of community and ease tensions in the short term. One critics counter that they frequently fall short in addressing more profound, systemic problems such historical injustices, political manipulation, economic inequality and systemic disparities. They argue that sports programmes are only temporary fixes rather than all-encompassing answers to the intricate, underlying causes that feed social divisions and security risks if complementary initiatives are not made in areas like educations, job creation and governance reforms. One academic respondent had the following to share on the effect of the sports programmes in addressing root causes of social division;

*'No, these programmes alone do not effectively address the root causes of social divisions or security threats. While they promote short-term unity and engagement, they do not tackle underlying structural issues such as economic inequality, political marginalization, historical grievances, and systemic corruption. Many of these programmes are event-based or temporary, lacking long-term strategies for sustained impact. Additionally, factors like ethnic favouritism, resource misallocation, and political exploitation can undermine their effectiveness. Without parallel efforts in education, governance reforms, economic empowerment, and justice, sports programmes serve as temporary interventions rather than comprehensive solutions to deep-rooted societal challenges.'* (Respondent L from Nairobi 26<sup>th</sup>

*February 2025)*

Under this objective the study concluded that there are several programmes that are implemented towards national security and cohesion, for example in Nairobi the sport programmes include the Mathare Sports Youth Association , Safaricom Dimba Cup, and Michezo Mashinani, in Eldoret there is the 'Football for Peace' and in Mombasa there is the Mombasa peace games. These sport programmes have brought different communities together to address issues of disunity and fragmentation such as tribal and political tensions in Eldoret, Rift Valley after the 2007 General Election . and address environmental conservations efforts as seen through the works of the Lewa Conservancy Marathon that uses funds from the marathon to protect the Lewa wildlife conservancy and improve the conditions of communities living in the conservancy.

This is not unique to Kenya as other countries have also used different sport programmes to address national security and cohesion issues. For example in Cote d'Ivoire, and through the efforts of international footballers such as Didier Drogba and Yahya Toure, used the AFCON qualifying games hosted in the country , and played in a rebel controlled territory, as an opportunity to bring the country together and try end the civil war that had ravaged the country. This effort led to brokering a ceasefire and a subsequent Ouagadougou political agreement signing in 2007. Similarly in Nigeria, through the participation of the national football team , Super Eagles, in international sports competitions has helped unite the country as they support their national team in the competitions.

The findings of this study are in line with the three theoretical frameworks mentioned in chapter two (structural functionalism, social cohesion and critical security studies). In line with structural functionalism's theory of sports as means of upholding social order, the literature reviewed in chapter two highlighted how sports promote social cohesiveness through shared experiences, the encouragement of positive values and community involvement. In line with Efebeh's (2020) observations on sports as a unifying force and Kersting's (2007) observations on how major sporting events like the World Cup foster a sense of national pride, the survey data for example, highlights initiatives like "Football for Peace" and the NCIC Amani Clubs which serve as prime examples of how sports can unite diverse communities. The efficacy of these sport programmes in creating togetherness through shared experiences and aspirations as described by respondents, clearly validates the literature claims about sports bridging societal differences.

However, the study also reveals significant challenges that temper the effectiveness of these Programmes, aligning with critical security studies' emphasis on power dynamics and structural inequalities. The finding that 45.1% of respondents believed the programmes were not successful, and the identification of issues like limited impact, funding problems and political interference underscore the complexities highlighted by Cox's analysis of power structures. For example, the respondents' observations about "Football for Peace" losing momentum due to funding and mentorship issues, and the NCIC Amani Clubs facing implementation challenges illustrate the impact of material and ideological structures on program outcomes. The critical security viewpoint, which emphasises the necessity of considering larger social and political settings is further supported by the regional disparities and structural inequalities that have been uncovered. These discrepancies underscore the limitation of sports Programmes in tackling ingrained societal issues.

As noted by Raw, Sherry and Rowe (2022), the respondents' examples such as the Madaraka Day Cup and Safaricom Chapa Dimba, show that sports do in fact offer venues for community involvement and youth empowerment. According to Onyango and Wafula (2018), the Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA) is a real-world illustration of how sports may provide structure, mentoring and lowering youth involvement in crime. Additionally, stories of better police-community ties and a decrease in ethnic tensions through sports are consistent with Schulenkorf's (2016) research on how sports promote communication and trust in regions plagued by conflict. In keeping with the critical security studies viewpoint, the study also shows that these initiatives frequently struggle with sustainability and long-term impact, suggesting the need for more all-encompassing strategies that address underlying socioeconomic problems.

#### **4.4 Sport Programmes on Fostering National Cohesion and National Security Among Different Communities in Kenya.**

While collecting data, the following were some of the sports programmes that were mentioned; Mathare Youth Sports Association, Safaricom Dimba Cup, Lewa Conservancy Marathon, Mombasa Peace Games, Michezo Mashinani, NCIC Amani Clubs and the Football for Peace that is takes place in both Eldoret and Nairobi.

One of Nairobi's biggest informal settlements, the Mathare slum, has socioeconomic problems that the Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA) seeks to solve via football and other sports (UNICEF, 2012). Its goals include giving children and young people a secure and orderly environment,

encouraging healthy lives, water resource management and providing educational opportunities and supporting community development (MYSA., 1987). In addition to teaching children life skills like leadership, discipline and collaboration, MYSA aims to prevent drug use, criminality and other harmful effects by getting young people involved in sports (Waithaka, Mutungi, & Onchonga, 2018). Along with identifying and developing athletic talent, the programme offers scholarships and career options for future professionals.

The goal of the Safaricom Dimba Cup, a national youth football competition is to find and nurture young Kenyans between the ages of 16-20 (Safaricom PLC., 2023). Beyond athletics, the programme seeks to improve youths' lives by providing them with a stage on which to demonstrate their skills and maybe make money from their enthusiasm (Safaricom PLC., 2023). A wider goal of social effect outside of the athletic arena is indicated by the tournaments inclusion of community involvement initiatives including free medical camps and digital literacy training (Safaricom PLC., 2023). The Dimba Cup encourages participation and seeks to establish a solid grassroots football foundation in Kenya by offering a competitive platform and awards, which might eventually flow into national teams and leagues.

In Kenya, a number of different sports programmes use sports to achieve other social and environmental goals. For example, the main goal of the Lewa Conservancy Marathon is to collect money for community development and animal conservation initiatives in the Lewa animal conservancy (Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, 2019). Promoting peace, unity and conflict resolution among youth from various racial, ethnic and religious origins is the main goal of the Mombasa Peace Games and NCIC Amani Clubs, which are frequently founded in schools (National Counter Terrorism Centre, 2014).

Michezo Mashinani and the Football for Peace programmes in Eldoret and Nairobi seek to advance sports at grassroots level, with the goal of encouraging social inclusion and healthy living in local communities as well as a means of bridging gaps, advancing understanding and establishing peaceful coexistence, particularly in areas that have seen conflict (Muthuri, 2016).

When asked how sports can be used to foster trust and understanding amongst Kenyan ethnic, religious or social groups the respondents gave a wide range of responses. When the replies were categorized into topics, the most common themes surfaced were holding inter-community/inter-faith/

inter-ethnic sporting events (23.9%), organizing mixed team tournaments (47.9%) and incorporating peace education and debate into sports programmes (28.2%).

By establishing common experiences and encouraging cooperation, sports in Kenya can be potent instrument for promoting trust and understanding among various social, religious and ethnic groups. Setting up inter-ethnic competitions and mixed community teams promotes people from all backgrounds to collaborate towards shared objectives dispelling prejudices and fostering respect for one another. While sports festivals and cultural exchange events recognize the country's variety, initiatives like 'Peace Games' in conflict-prone areas offer impartial forums for communication and interaction. One of the athlete respondents and a representative from Sports Kenya had the following to share after they were asked how sports can be used to build trust and understanding between different ethnic, religious or social groups in Kenya;

*'Sports can foster trust and unity in Kenya by organizing inclusive tournaments, youth Programmes, and community integration games that bring together diverse ethnic, religious, and social groups. By leveraging high-profile athletes as peace ambassadors, promoting cultural exchange through sports, and developing shared facilities, sports can break barriers, encourage dialogue, and build lasting social cohesion.'* (Respondent AT from Nairobi, 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025)

*"Sports create a shared space where people from different backgrounds can interact, collaborate, and compete on equal ground. When we play together, we break stereotypes, build friendships, and develop mutual respect. Whether it's football, rugby, or athletics, teamwork and fair play foster a sense of unity that goes beyond ethnicity, religion, or social status."* (Respondent SK from Nairobi, 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025)

According to a study done by Waithaka (2018), youths who took part in sports programme like Mathare Youth Sports Association events reported feeling more a part of the community, having improved their social skills and being more tolerant of people from different ethnic or religious backgrounds (Waithaka, Mutungi, & Onchonga, 2018). This study by Waithaka supports the above statements with secondary data.

Additionally, incorporating peace education into sports programmes and using athletes as ambassadors for peace and unity can strengthen messages of cooperation and tolerance. Particularly

for young people, school-based activities and community sport leagues offer chances for ongoing social engagement and bonding. Sports foster enduring ties and social cohesiveness by highlighting cooperation, fair play and shared accomplishments which makes society more cohesive and peaceful.

The study looked into whether playing sports could lessen social discontent, juvenile involvement in criminal activity or radicalization. The respondents' responses were not entirely consistent. While 29.6% of the respondents disagreed and 4.2% were unsure if the youth were benefited by the participation, 66.2% of respondents stated they were certain that these programmes would lower youth involvement in crime and radicalization.

Bar Chart 6: Sports participation in the reduction of social unrest, youth involvement in crime and radicalization

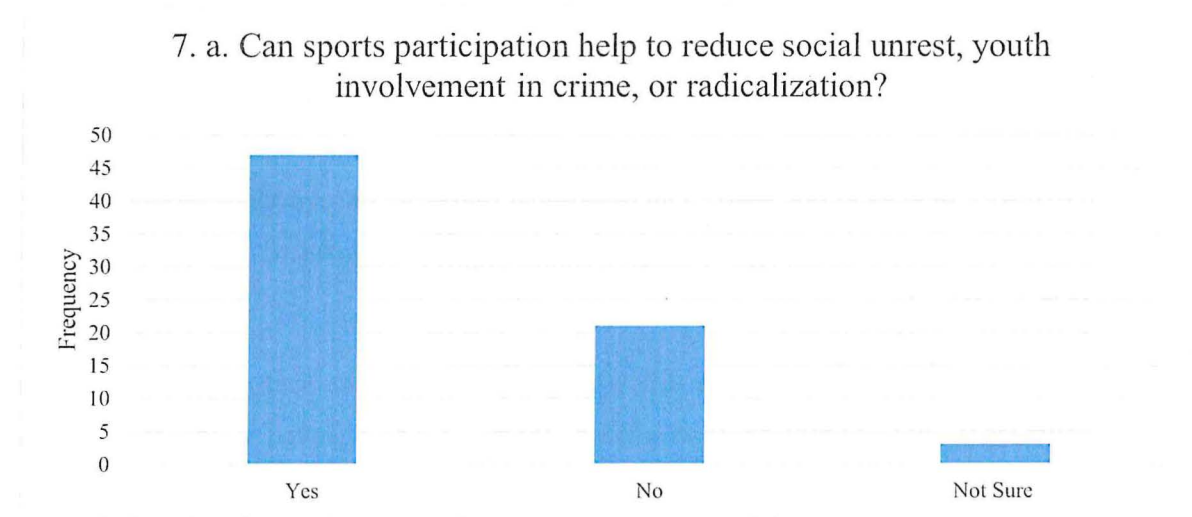


Table 10: Sports participation in the reduction of social unrest, youth involvement in crime and radicalization

<b>7. Can sports participation help to reduce social unrest, youth involvement in crime, or radicalization?</b>		
	N	%
Yes	47	66.2%
No	21	29.6%
Not Sure	3	4.2%

Its ability to offer constructive engagement, mentoring and life skills is one of the main arguments supporting sports participation's ability to lower social discontent, youth involvement in crime and radicalisation. Sports can shield young people from harmful influences by providing organised activities, encouraging discipline and generating income. Supporters point out that sports offer alternatives to violence and extremist beliefs by fostering virtues like cooperation, respect and fortitude. Sports can positively redirect young people's energies, as seen by initiatives like community sports projects and youth football leagues that have shown a drop in crime rates.

Young athletes are frequently used as peace ambassadors by NCIC Amani clubs, which are specifically created to integrate peace education into their events. The National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) established these clubs in Kenyan schools with the goal of encouraging students to have a culture of peace, tolerance and national unity (National Cohesion and Integration Commission, 2013). As peace ambassadors, NCIC uses these athletes in creating and spreading messages of harmony and peace among their classmates and larger school community (UNICEF, 2012). These statements on NCIC Amani clubs' effectiveness can be also seen in the responses below from a representative of Sports Kenya;

*'Yes, sports participation can reduce social unrest, youth crime, and radicalization by instilling discipline, teamwork, and leadership skills that provide alternatives to violence. It also creates structured routines, mentorship opportunities, and a sense of purpose, steering youth away from negative influences.'* (Respondent SK from Eldoret, 6<sup>th</sup> March 2025)

The study also investigated parts that sports organisations and athletes play in fostering unity and national cohesion. Three themes arose from the respondents' responses: promoting cooperation and teamwork 19.7%, acting as ambassadors for peace and unity 40.8% and acting as role models and youth mentors 39.4%.

As strong role models and peace advocates, athletes, coaches and sports organisations are essential in fostering national unity and cohesiveness. By representing the county across social and ethnic divides, athletes promote togetherness and a sense of pride in common identity. Coaches mould attitude that cut across social boundaries by instilling ideals of respect, discipline and teamwork. By planning competitions and projects that unite disparate populations, sports organisations provide inclusive forums for communication and cooperation. They promote social unity, close cultural

divides and strengthen a sense of patriotism through their prominence and influence. Below are responses from an athlete, representative from Sports Kenya and Government official from the ministry of youth affairs, creative economy and sports on their thoughts about the role athletes and sport coaches play in promoting national cohesion and unity;

*'Athletes serve as peace ambassadors, using their influence to advocate for unity. Coaches mentor youth from diverse backgrounds, fostering mutual respect and teamwork. Sports organizations create inclusive policies and programmes that bridge social divides. Professional teams and leagues promote national pride, bringing communities together. Grassroots sports initiatives provide safe spaces for dialogue and cultural exchange'* (Respondent AT from Eldoret, 7<sup>th</sup> March 2025)

*'They serve as ambassadors for peace, advocate for social causes and use their platforms to inspire inclusivity, tolerance and national pride'* (Respondent GO from Mombasa, 10<sup>th</sup> February 2025)

*'Athletes, coaches, and sports organizations serve as unifying figures by inspiring national pride, fostering teamwork, and promoting inclusivity. Star athletes act as role models, bridging ethnic and social divides, while coaches instil discipline and values that transcend sports. Sports organizations organize tournaments and initiatives that bring communities together, creating shared experiences. However, their impact depends on ethical leadership, equal opportunities, and policies that promote diversity and fair play.'* (Respondent SK from Nairobi, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2025)

Four themes emerged from the respondents' responses when asked how sports could be used to address social injustices and marginalisation that could fuel insecurity or social divisions: ensuring equal access and inclusion (28%), offering scholarships and talent development programmes (23.9%), funding grassroots initiatives and community sports infrastructure (23.9%) and using sports for social change and empowerment (18.3%).

By giving marginalised population equal opportunity, encouraging inclusivity and creating avenues for economic development, sports can be used to combat social injustices and marginalisation. Underprivileged youths are given access to school and employment prospects through initiatives like talent identification camps, community sports programmes and scholarships. For instance, gifted

people without financial means can follow their athletic potential and obtain access to higher education by creating sports scholarships for disadvantaged young people. Like this creating customised programmes and grassroots leagues in informal settlements can close economic inequalities by offering organised chances for financial literacy, leadership development and talent development.

*'Sports can address social inequalities by providing equal opportunities for marginalized groups, fostering inclusion, and offering pathways for economic empowerment. Initiatives like community sports programmes, scholarships, and talent identification camps help disadvantaged youth access education and career opportunities. Inclusive policies ensuring gender equity and support for persons with disabilities further reduce marginalization. However, sustained investment, policy reforms, and partnerships with stakeholders are crucial for long-term impact.'* (Respondent L from Nairobi 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025)

*'Provide free or low-cost access to sports programmes for disadvantaged communities. Develop targeted initiatives for marginalized groups, including women and persons with disabilities. Use sports scholarships and mentorship programmes to create opportunities for at-risk youth. Establish community sports facilities in underdeveloped areas. Promote equal representation in leadership and participation within sports organizations'* (Respondent SA from Nairobi 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025)

The above two quotes from the university lecturer and the representative from Sports, Arts and Development Fund on how sports can be used to address social injustices is supported by the secondary data collected on the Mombasa Peace Games. According to a report by International Alert (2015) the Mombasa Peace games have supported the local communities in gaining some recognition and a sense of belonging through their participation in the tournaments, as well as addressing some marginalisation issues that have helped challenge existing prejudices and disunity that is exploited by radical extremist for their own gain (International Alert, 2015). Extremist organisations have used these complaints and feelings of unfairness to entice young people to engage in radical or illegal activities, but this increased sense of strength and inclusion acted as a potent counterbalance (Dudley,, Werner, & McGillivray, 2020). The Mombasa Peace Games show how sports can reduce some social unrest and help create a more safe and cohesive society by directly addressing issues of injustice and

marginalisation by offering constructive alternatives, encouraging social connections across community divides and fostering a sense of shared identity and purpose.

Marginalisation is further decreased by inclusive policies that provide gender parity and assistance for people with impairments. Programmes specifically designed for minority communities, women and people with disabilities help combat discrimination and advance equal representation in decision-making settings. For example, misconceptions can be dispelled and respect for one another can be fostered by establishing inclusive leagues that incorporate many social, ethnic and economic groups. Communities may create safe spaces where people from different backgrounds connect, dispelling preconceptions and promoting respect for one another by investing in sports infrastructure in underprivileged areas. For long term effects, however, consistent funding, legislative changes and stakeholder collaborations are essential.

Additional research was conducted to determine the precise tactics that can be used to guarantee that sports Programmes are open and accessible to everyone in society, regardless of background. Four themes emerged from the collected and analysed data: community engagement and support (14.1%), accessibility and affordability (35.2%), inclusion and diversity (42.3%) and program design and implementation (8.5%).

To guarantee that sports programmes are inclusive and available to all parts of society regardless of background, respondents offered several ideas. These include creating community-based sports facilities in under privileged areas to bring programmes closer to marginalised groups, offering free or reduced participation fees to reduce financial barriers and creating adaptive sports programmes for people with disabilities to guarantee equal opportunities. Targeted outreach initiatives that involve varied populations are also essential as are gender-inclusive policies and safe spaces for women and girls.

Respondents recommended developing mentorship programmes that connect seasoned athletes with novices, providing multilingual coaching and training materials and collaborating with educational institutions and non-governmental organisations to increase outreach to further advance diversity. Important elements also included the creation of talent identification initiatives in rural and underserved areas, flexible scheduling and transportation assistance. Below is a response from an athlete after they were asked their thoughts on what specific strategies can be employed to ensure the

sport programmes are inclusive and accessible to all members of society;

*'Ensuring sports programmes are inclusive requires strategies such as subsidized participation fees, accessible infrastructure, gender-inclusive policies, and targeted outreach to marginalized communities. Additionally, implementing school-based Programmes, mentorship initiatives, adaptive sports for persons with disabilities, and partnerships with local organizations can help break barriers and provide equal opportunities for all.'*  
(Respondent AT from Nairobi 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2025)

In conclusion, the findings for the second objective highlight the tremendous potential of Kenyan sports programmes like Mathare Youth Sports Association, the Mombasa Peace Games, Safaricom Dimba Cup and NCIC Amani clubs to serve as catalysts for security and national unity. Through their varied goals, these programmes seek to promote social contact, dismantle social and ethnic boundaries and help participants develop a feeling of shared identity. These programmes' emphasis on cooperation, fair play and respect for one another, together with particular tactics like intercommunity competitions, mixed team setups and the incorporation of peace education, foster situations that are favourable mutual trust and understanding. Additionally, athletes' active participation as role models and peace ambassadors spreads these uplifting messages, motivating young people and advancing ideals that cut across socioeconomic boundaries.

It is important to recognise that the evidence is not totally consistent, even if the majority of respondents and the body of current research point to a favourable relationship between playing sports and a decline in some social dissatisfaction, youth criminality and radicalisation. In order for these programmes to have a significant influence on national security, consistent and focused efforts are needed to guarantee marginalised populations equitable access and involvement. Maximising the potential of sports to solve social inequities that might contribute to insecurity requires strategies including policies, building community-based infrastructure, offering inexpensive access and actively involving various groups. Furthermore, in order to guarantee these programmes' accessibility and durability throughout Kenya, their long-term success depends on steady funding, encouraging legislation and cooperative collaborations with a range of stakeholders.

The literature study and the research findings from the Kenyan context are highly correlated, especially when it comes to confirming the potential of sports-based programmes to promote social

cohesion and solve human security related challenges. Theoretically, sports can foster social inclusion, health and well-being and intergroup understanding, according to the reviewed research (Omorou et al., 2013; Saghezchi & Naini, 2016). The Kenyan data offers specific instances of initiatives that are actively pursuing these objectives within the Kenyan social scene, such as the Mombasa Peace Games, Safaricom Dimba Cup, Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA) and NCIC Amani Clubs. For example, the literature's claim that sports may improve both individual and community well being is directly supported by MYSA's initiatives to provide safe space, encourage healthy lifestyles and give educational opportunities in the Mathare slum. Similar to this, the literature's claim that sports may promote social harmony in potentially tense situations is shown by the Mombasa Peace Games and NCIC Amani clubs, which specifically aim to develop peace, unity and conflict resolution among different youth.

Beyond the body of the existing literature, the research also reveals fresh subtleties and context specific discoveries. Although most research emphasises the benefits of sports for social inclusion, the Kenyan study explores the particular tactics used and their perceived efficacy in a multicultural and occasionally politically heated setting. A localised perspective on how these theoretical benefits can be practically realised is provided by Kenyan respondents' strong emphasis on intercommunity sporting events, mixed teams tournaments and integrating peace education as crucial mechanisms for fostering understanding and trust (47.9% and 28.2% respectively). Waithaka's (2018) study's statistical support, which shows that involvement in programmes like MYSA is associated with greater tolerance and community belonging, provides empirical data that supports the body of research.

Additionally, the research findings offer a more nuanced perspective on how sports might lessen radicalisation, youth criminality and societal unrest. A considerable percentage of Kenyan respondents (29.6%) disagreed with the majority (66.2%) who believe in this potential, indicating a level of scepticism that was not as strongly represented in the original literature reviewed. As suggested by some respondents who believed that sports alone could not solve problems like poverty and marginalisation, this shows that the influence of sports on these complicated issues may be more context-dependent and necessitate a deeper comprehension of the underlying socio-economic and political factors. One of the main contributions of the Kenyan study is the departure from the exclusively optimistic perspectives offered in parts of the reviewed literature.

Regarding distinctions from previous studies, the Kenyan study results offer a particular case study that both validates and refutes some of the more general assertions in the literature. Although the literature outlines the theoretical advantages of sports for social good, the Kenyan research provides real world instances of how these advantages are being sought and the differing opinions of their efficacy. A practical and contextually rich understanding that may be lacking in more general literature on sports for development is offered by the research respondents strong emphasis on community engagement, accessibility, inclusion and the necessity of focused strategies to address social injustices and marginalisation.

The methods used in Kenyan sports programmes are not exclusive to the country. The “Integration through Sports” programme in Germany, for example, has shown how effective sports are in promoting social inclusion and the assimilation of immigrants and refugees into German culture and improve cohesion levels. Similar to this, the “Luta Pela Paz” programme in Brazil uses martial arts and education to tackle the issue of crime and violence in impoverished favelas (slums) while providing young people with constructive options and teaching them the importance of respect and discipline. These global examples, which reflect the objectives and observed outcomes of the efforts in Kenya, further reinforce the ability of carefully planned sports programmes to address social issues and foster unity among different and occasionally marginalised populations.

#### **4.5 Challenges and Obstacles that Hinder the Utilisation of Sports more Effectively for National Security Enhancement in Kenya.**

Even though the results in the previous section demonstrate that various Kenyan sport programmes have helped to promote national security and cohesion among Kenya’s various communities, these programmes have faced various obstacles that have occasionally made it more difficult to use sports to improve national security and cohesion in Kenya.

Four major themes emerged from the data gathered when it came to examining the primary obstacles to the successful application of sports to improve national security. Financial and resource allocation accounted for 36.6% of the four themes, followed by program and implementation issues (28%), governance and policy challenged (21.1%) and social & cultural challenges (13%).

In Kenya, inconsistent government support and policy implementation, often as a result of insufficient money and resource allocation, are the primary obstacles to the effective use of sports to improve

national security. For instance, a lot of sport programmes depend on temporary funding which can cause instability and discontinuance. Additionally, in many areas, sports facilities are not maintained effectively which deters regular participation. These problems are made worse by corruption and poor administration of sports funding, which causes officials to misallocate money intended for the sport program's growth. Below are some responses from an academic respondent and representative from Sports Kenya on the main challenges that hinder use of sports to enhance national security:

*'Challenges include inadequate grassroots engagement, where sports programmes fail to reach at-risk communities, and the lack of structured policies integrating sports into national security strategies. Additionally, limited career opportunities in sports discourage long-term participation, while social biases, gender inequality, and insufficient coordination between stakeholders hinder inclusivity and impact.'* (Respondent L from Nairobi 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025)

*'Inadequate funding, poor sports infrastructure, and lack of inclusive policies that limit participation from marginalized groups. Additionally, political interference, tribalism, corruption, and insecurity in certain regions hinder the effectiveness of sports in promoting national security.'* (Respondent SK from Nairobi 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2025)

Some secondary data collected can support the responses above. Community-based sport programmes like the Mathare Youth Sport Association (MYSA) which primarily rely on local resources and donor support, often faces financial limitations that restricts its reach and sustainability (Mwangi, 2023). For example, because of financial constraints, MYSA has previously reported difficulties in maintaining sufficient facilities and equipment to serve the high number of interested youths (Omollo, 2021). Its impact on improving national security may be limited as a result of this lack of resources, which may make it difficult for them to grow their operations and successfully involve a larger portion of the vulnerable adolescent population

Furthermore, the impartiality and inclusion of sports programmes are compromised by political meddling and ethnic favouritism in sports administration, which results in bias and exclusion. The potential of sports as a tool for resolving conflicts or preventing crime is further hindered by weak institutional structures and a lack of cooperation between security agencies and sports organisations. Additionally, the efficacy of sport programmes in addressing security issues is hampered by the absence of formal policies that connect sports to national security goals and the incomplete

incorporation of counter-radicalisation frameworks in youth sports initiatives.

For example, football related programmes in Kenya such as the Safaricom Dimba Cup and Football for Peace campaigns have suffered from political interference. AfriCOG (2018) reported that political meddling and bad administration have traditionally hampered Kenyan football's growth as a socially beneficial sport (AfriCOG, 2018). For example, the Football Kenya Federation was suspended by FIFA in 2004, 2006 and 2022 as a result of government meddling which had a direct effect in the smooth operations of programmes such as the Safaricom Dimba Cup and its capacity to accomplish its goals of fostering national unity and talent development (Owino, 2022).

After discussing barriers that prevent sports programmes from having a more significant impact on national security, the respondents were given the same question again, this time attempting to pinpoint the barriers that prevent sport programmes from having a beneficial effect on national cohesiveness. The replies revealed four themes: program and implementation obstacles, resource and infrastructural challenged, social and cultural challenges and socio-political and governance challenges.

An examination of the given data identifies a number of significant barriers that keep Kenyan sports programmes from having a bigger influence on national unity. There are major socio-political and governance issues, with political and ethnic meddling in team management and selection causing splits rather than unification. Pre-existing societal divisions are reinforced, for example, by ethno-regional favouritism in talent development. Additionally, the efficient use of sports as a social integration instrument is hampered by inadequate cross-sector coordination between states and non-state actors and poor institutional frameworks for sports diplomacy. These problems are made worse by the commercialisation of sports, the preference for profit-driven agendas over social inclusion objectives and the lax regulatory monitoring that permits discriminatory acts in prestigious sports organisations. Below is a response from a representative from the Sports , Arts and Development Fund, when asked about the obstacles preventing sports from having a greater impact on national cohesion;

*'Unequal distribution of sports facilities and resources. Political interference in community-based sports programmes. Short-lived initiatives with no long-term sustainability plans. Limited grassroots engagement in program design and execution. Inconsistent government policies on sports and social integration. Socio-cultural biases that limit minority*

*participation. Commercialization of sports, side-lining social impact Programmes. Inadequate funding for rural and informal settlement sports initiatives. Poor coordination between national and local sports bodies. Resistance from traditional leaders in conservative communities.’ (Respondent SA from Nairobi 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025)*

Infrastructure and resource issues are also quite important. Participation is restricted and inequities are created when different regions, especially rural and marginalised areas have unequal access to sports facilities and opportunities. The long-term viability of cohesion initiatives is threatened by short – term donor driven funding models and insufficient money for grassroots and unity focused sports efforts are hampered by the absence of organised cooperation between government agencies and sports organisations as well as by the lack of media coverage of these programmes. The unifying potential of sports is further limited by social and cultural issues, such as gendered access inequities and cultural biases that discourage involvement by specific groups, particularly women.

The study also investigated recommendations made by respondents for projects or policy changes that would enhance the incorporation of sports into national security plans. Three themes surfaced: programme and execution, community and youth participation and policy & governance.

Creating a national sports-security policy framework is a top priority in the fields of governance and policy to integrate sports into national security plans. This includes creating collaborative sports-security task groups to handle violence and criminal infiltration in sports and requiring cross-ethnic team composition in national leagues to reduce identity- based fragmentation. Additionally, respondents recommended including conflict sensitive training for coaches and sports administrators to promote social cohesion and institutionalizing sports diplomacy inside national security frameworks to improve soft power engagement. To guarantee openness in sports finance and administration it was also emphasized that sports organizations should strengthen their governance and accountability while putting anti-corruption measures into place. Below is a response from an academic respondent on which policy changes they would recommend to improve the integration of sports into national security and cohesion:

*“Establish a national sports and security task force to coordinate efforts between sports bodies and security agencies. Introduce tax incentives for private sector investment in community sports programmes focused on social cohesion. Develop a structured*

*rehabilitation-through-sports program for at-risk youth, ex-convicts, and former gang members. Implement mandatory conflict resolution and peace education training for all sports coaches and administrators. Create a national policy requiring every county to integrate sports-based interventions in crime prevention strategies. Strengthen community policing initiatives through sports tournaments that foster trust between law enforcement and youth. Establish a centralized database to track the long-term impact of sports programmes on crime reduction and social integration. Enforce gender equity policies to increase participation in sports as a tool for social transformation. Expand funding for school-based sports programmes in marginalized areas to prevent early exposure to criminal activities. Partner with correctional facilities to implement structured sports programmes for prisoner rehabilitation and reintegration” (Respondent L from Nairobi 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025)*

Recommendations for community and youth participation centred on expanding funding for community sports programmes into national crime prevention measures. Along with rehabilitative sports programmes for at risk adolescents and ex-offenders, there is a push for mandated school sports programmes to promote discipline and teamwork. To foster social cohesion, it was proposed to establish inter-ethnic and religious sporting competitions and to establish inclusive leagues with diverse membership. Additionally, the goal is to use sports as a tool for positive youth development by using them for community policing, trust-building and providing mentorship and career development programmes for young athletes.

In terms of program implementation, participants emphasized the significance of incorporating conflict sensitive training for coaches and sports administrators as well creating sport based early warning systems for identifying and stopping radicalization trends. It was also suggested that mandatory peace education curricula be introduced at sports academies and that rehabilitation programmes utilizing sports be expanded to reintegrate at risk adolescents and former fighters. To assess and broaden the scope of these projects, it was highlighted that establishing frameworks for program impact monitoring and encouraging sports diplomacy for cross border peace initiatives were essential.

When asked if they were aware of any successful instances in other countries where sports have been used to foster national security and cohesiveness, the respondents said that Kenta may take inspiration from them. Of the respondents, 29.6% acknowledged that they were aware of some successful sports

programmes that could be duplicated in Kenya, whereas 62% were unsure of any successful sport programmes that Kenya could utilize and 8.5% knew nothing about them.

Bar Chart 7: Countries where sports have been used to promote security and cohesion

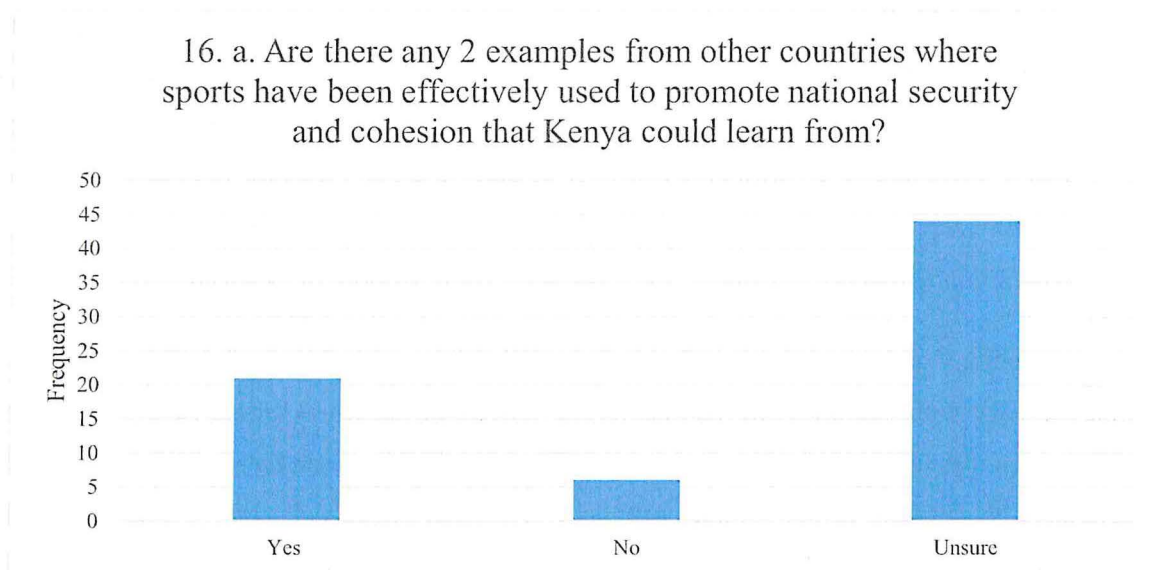


Table 11: Countries where sports have been used to promote security and cohesion

16. a. Are there any 2 examples from other countries where sports have been effectively used to promote national security and cohesion that Kenya could learn from?		
	No	%
Yes	21	29.6%
No	6	8.5%
Unsure	44	62.0%

There are several instances of effective sports initiatives that have made a substantial contribution to national security and cohesion throughout the world. Community sports Programmes, especially football, have helped to heal and bring together the divided communities of Rwanda after the genocide. In a similar vein, South Africa used rugby’s ability to bring people together – most notably at the 1995 Rugby World Cup – to heal racial divisions and promote patriotism in the wake of apartheid. Through initiatives like ‘Integration through Sport,’ Germany has also used athletics to help integrate immigrants and refugees, fostering social integration and averting radicalization.

'Football for Peace' programmes in war-torn Colombia have reintegrated former fighter and decreased violence, while Brazil's 'Luta Pela Paz' programme employs martial arts and boxing to fight crime in underprivileged favelas (slum). Below is a response from a representative from Sports Kenya, stating the different sports programmes that have been successful in other countries in the world'

*'In Rwanda, the government and other NGOs started using football tournaments to bring the citizens together to heal and move on from the dark events of the 1994 Genocide. Also Germany has a programme called integration through sport or welcome through sport which uses basketball and football to make both refugees and immigrants feel like they belong and part of German life and culture.'* (Respondent SK from Eldoret 7<sup>th</sup> March 2025)

*'Colombia have reintegrated former guerrilla fighters and gang members back to normal life using football for peace games. Brazil has done the same but use Luta Pela Paz sports programme to host friendly martial arts and boxing games to improve community relations in the Brazilian favelas and fight increasing crime rates'* (Respondent SK from Nairobi 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025)

In addition, "Peace Players International" in Northern Ireland serves as an example of success of intercommunal sports Programmes, utilizing basketball to bring protestant and catholic youths together and foster long lasting peace. Indigenous children have been involved in 'Sports for Development' initiatives in Australia, which have addressed social issues and promoted inclusivity. Community sports initiatives in the USA have also been successful in lowering gang violence in some neighbourhoods and overcoming cultural gaps. These instances highlight how sports can serve as a potent instrument for social transformation and show how they may be tailored to different situations to meet particular issues related to national security and unity.

Based on some of the responses from the respondents, a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies can be used to measure and evaluate the effects of sports programmes in national security and cohesion. Quantitative measures include monitoring participant employment and educational enrolment rates, assessing changes in participant crime rates and tracking crime and conflict reduction in program areas. Concrete statistics on program efficacy can also be obtained by measuring community involvement and diversity in sporting events, monitoring program retention

and long term engagement and using standardized metrics for sports-driven conflict outcomes.

Qualitative measures, on the other hand, focus on assessing social integration through community feedback, conducting surveys on social cohesion and trust levels and leveraging stakeholder interviews. Ethnographic studies on intergroup perceptions and conflict resolution efficacy analyses also provide valuable insights into the impact of sports programmes on social dynamics. Furthermore, participatory monitoring frameworks involving local communities and longitudinal studies on social cohesion in program areas offer deeper understanding of the long-term effects of these programmes. Evaluation, methods include conducting comparative studies on conflict prone and programme active areas, integrating impact evaluation into national security reporting mechanisms and assessing policy alignment with international sports diplomacy best practices. Multi-agency collaboration with law enforcement, social scientists and international observers ensures evaluation and policy adaptability. Below is a response from a lecturer sharing their idea of how the impact of sport programmes on national security and cohesion be effectively measured and evaluated;

*'The impact of sports programmes on national security and cohesion can be measured through longitudinal social cohesion indices, ethnographic studies on intergroup perceptions, and crime rate differentials in intervention areas. Quantitative metrics should include participation diversity ratios, reintegration success rates for at-risk youth, and reductions in localized conflict incidents. Qualitative assessments should leverage stakeholder interviews, conflict resolution efficacy analyses, and trust-building indicators within historically divided communities. Multi-agency collaboration with law enforcement, social scientists, and international observers ensures rigorous evaluation and policy adaptability.'* (Respondent L from Nairobi 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025)

The question of whether using sports to foster national security and unity could have any unforeseen negative effects was posed to the responders. There were some unforeseen negative outcomes, according to 52.1% of respondents, 46.5% indicated they were not sure and 1.4% said there were none.

Bar Chart 8: Unintended negative consequences from using sports to promote national security and cohesion

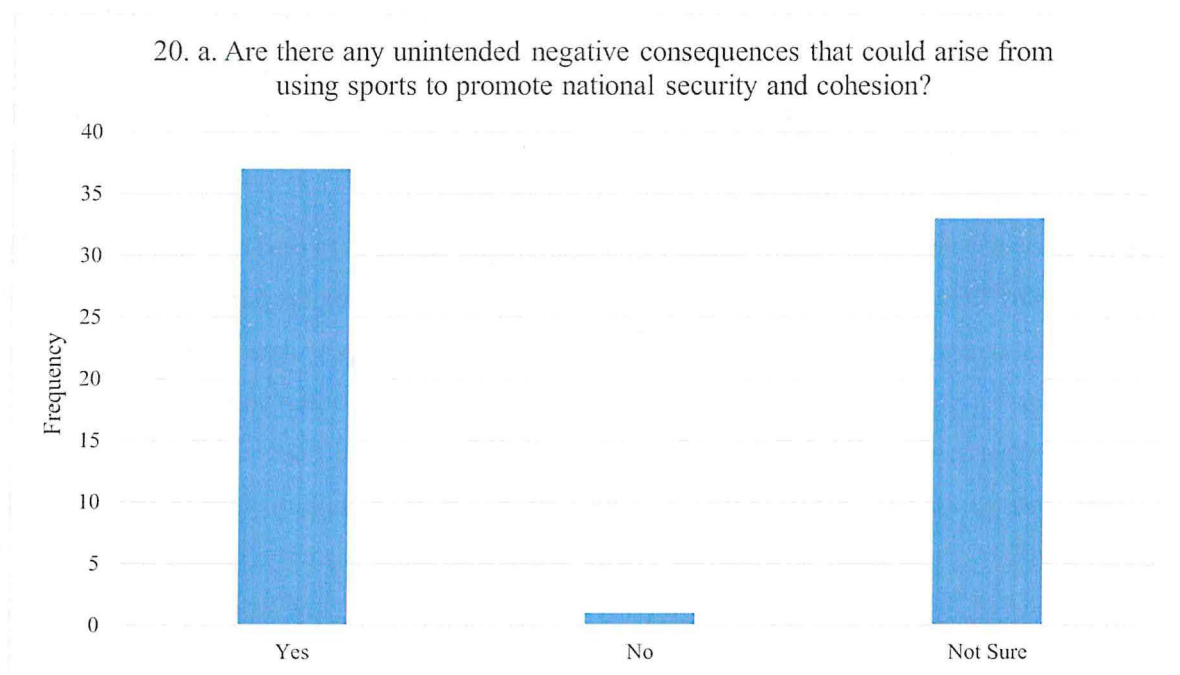


Table 12: Unintended negative consequences from using sports to promote national security and cohesion.

<b>20. Are there any unintended negative consequences that could arise from using sports to promote national security and cohesion?</b>		
	No	%
Yes	37	52.1%
No	1	1.4%
Not Sure	33	46.5%

Promoting national security and unity through sports can have unforeseen negative effects. Among these is the politicization of sports, in which ethnic favouritism and political agendas affect team selection and resource distribution, possibly leaving out under-represented communities. Events with intense competition can also intensify rivalries, which can result in violence and hooliganism. Additionally, money intended for development may be misallocated, taking funds away from vital social initiatives. While the abuse of young athletes for political or commercial gain raises ethical concerns, an over-reliance on athletics without addressing underlying socioeconomic difficulties can

foster a false sense of oneness.

*'Yes, sports can sometimes reinforce existing social divisions if not inclusively managed, with favouritism or ethnic biases in team selection causing resentment. Additionally, commercial interests and political interference may divert programmes from their original unity-building purpose.'* (Respondent AT from Mombasa 11<sup>th</sup> February 2025)

The fierce rivalry and often violent outbursts during football games between AFC Leopards and Gor Mahia, two of Kenya's most well-known and traditionally favoured clubs, have detrimental effects on fostering national security and cohesion, according to secondary data. These derby games frequently go beyond simple athletic competition to serve as forums for the voicing of long-standing social and occasionally ethnic tensions. Fan fights and hooliganism have in the past resulted in property damage, injuries and increased hostility between groups thought to support opposing sides (Okinyo, 2023). In addition to upsetting public order and taxing security forces, these kinds of incidents eroded football's ability to be a unifying sport by fostering an atmosphere where social unrest can fester and possibly escalate into larger community disputes (Kinyanjui, 2023). Thus, the violence connected to these high-stake games can undermine mutual trust and understanding, and also undermining programmes to promote national cohesion and security and even escalating an atmosphere of fear.

Out of the 71 respondents, 33 of them argued against the effectiveness of sports involvement in resolving these problems claim that it ignores the underlying reasons which include lack of education, unemployment, poverty and political marginalisation. They content that although sports offer short-term interaction and constructive role models, they are unable to address structural issues over the long run. After sports Programmes stop, vulnerable kids may still gravitate to crime or extreme ideas in the absence of larger economic and social support networks. Furthermore, poorly run sports Programmes have the potential to further divide society and their influence may be restricted in the absence of consistent funding and guidance. Below is a response from an academic respondent sharing their thoughts on whether sports programmes can reduce social unrest, crime and radicalisation;

*'Sports participation alone cannot effectively reduce social unrest, youth crime, or radicalization because it does not address the underlying causes such as poverty,*

*unemployment, political marginalization, and lack of education. While sports provide temporary engagement and positive values, without long-term economic and social support systems, vulnerable youth may still fall into crime or extremist ideologies once sports programmes end.' (respondent 1 from Nairobi, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2025)*

A few tactics can be used to lessen these challenges. To avoid politicization and guarantee equitable resource allocation, it is essential to enforce just and open policies. The exclusion of marginalized groups can be avoided by promoting inclusivity through focused outreach and equitable access. Violence can be avoided at sporting events by bolstering security and dispute resolution procedures. Corruption and poor management can be decreased by putting in place stringent financial accountability and transparency procedures. Long term, sustained impact can also be ensured by striking a balance between competitive sports and community driven activities and by enhancing sports projects with more extensive social economic development initiatives.

Allocating resources in a diverse manner is necessary for effective sports programmes that promote national security and unity. To guarantee long term viability and sufficient infrastructure, financial resources- including government support, private sector sponsorships and foreign grants- are essential. This covers financing for program operations, equipment and well-maintained sporting facilities. Equally important are human resources, which call for qualified mentors, coaches and program managers with knowledge of social development and conflict resolution. Structure for community engagement are also necessary to promote local ownership and involvement, guaranteeing that initiatives are responsive to community needs and culturally relevant.

Programme implementation heavily relied on logistical resources. This entails offering participants transit, particularly in underserved areas, and making sure that sporting events take place in safe and secure locations. To evaluate guarantee accountability strong data collecting mechanisms as well as monitoring and evaluation tools are required. Strong policy frameworks that incorporate sports into social cohesion and national security plans are also essential because they offer the required administrative and legal backing. Partnerships with international donors, security agencies and community organizations can also expand the scope and efficacy if programmes. Lastly, using technology for virtual training programmes, data collecting and reporting can increase program accessibility and efficiency.

The data findings from the Kenyan context are highly consistent with the difficulties and barriers to using sports to improve national security that were noted in the literature study. The literature study first draws attention to the word “National Security’s” ambiguity meaning (Bahmani, Saboonchi, & Feizabadi, 2015). This uncertainty is reflected in Kenya’s context, which shows that the strategic integration of sports into larger national security frameworks is hampered by uneven government support and policy execution (36.6% attributable to financial and resource allocation, frequently as a result of imprecise policy directives). This conceptual issue is immediately reflected in the absence of formal policy incorporating sports as mentioned by the university lecturers who were part of the research’s sample population.

Second the literature and the Kenyan context of this study both raise serious concerns about the political climate and the possibility of politicising sports (Yu J. , 2008; Feizabadi, 2014). According to the statistics, “governance and policy challenges” make up 21.1% of the barriers that have been identified in Kenya; respondents particularly mentioned political meddling and tribalism as impediments. Similar to Yu’s (2008) observations on China’s use of sports for territorial claims, but in a detrimental context for internal cohesion, FIFA’s suspension of the Football Kenya Federation (FKF) for government meddling (AfriCOG, 2018; Owino, 2022) is a tangible example of how political agendas can sabotage sports programs meant to promote national unity and talent.

Thirdly, there are similarities between the Kenyan environment and the problem of corruption in sports organisations that undermines public trust and national reputation (Bahmani, Saboonchi, & Feizabadi, 2015). Although not specifically measured as a distinct topic, the respondents’ references to “governance and policy challenges” suggests that they include problems with corruption and inadequate management of sports money. The Russian doping crisis as exemplified in the literature (Noland, 2016; Parks, 2023; Hodge, 2018), highlights the grave effects of corruption on a country’s reputation abroad. If governance concerns in its sports industry are not resolved, Kenya is also at danger.

Fourthly, referencing the 1972 Munich Olympics assault (Reeve, 2011; Silke & Filippidou, 2010; Kenyon & Rookwood, 2010), the literature highlights the danger of terrorism and violent crimes targeting large athletic events (Toohey & Taylor, 2023). Although terrorism is not specifically mentioned in the Kenyan context as a direct barrier, this threat is subtly acknowledged by the requirement for collaboration between security authorities and sports organisations (emphasised

under governance problems) and the worry about crowd safety. As Kenya plans and secures its own big athletic events, the lessons learnt from Munich about security flaws and the politicisation of such assaults for larger objectives are still applicable (Silke & Fillippidou, 2010; Kenyon & Rookwood, 2010).

In conclusion, Kenya has a wide range of obstacles to the successful use of sports for enhancing national security and fostering cohesion. The scope and viability of important programmes like the Mathare Youth Sport Association, Football for Peace, Mombasa Peace Games are primarily significantly limited by financial and resource allocation challenges which make it difficult for them to regularly engage disadvantaged kids. Governance and policy difficulties, notably political involvement and corruption within sports administration, as demonstrated in the frequent suspensions of the Football Kenya Federation, impair the impartiality and efficacy of national efforts like the Safaricom Dimba Cup. Additionally, many projects are unable to reach at risk populations and have long term effect due to program and implementation challenges such as a lack of formal integration of sports into national security plans and inadequate grassroots participation. Social and cultural obstacles such as preexisting prejudices and disparities make it more difficult to guarantee inclusion and optimise sports' capacity to bring people from different backgrounds together.

These challenges are not specific to Kenya; they are found in the worldwide panorama of sports for peace and development. An example of the negative effects of political influence on the integrity and global reputation of sports is Russia's expulsion from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for widespread doping and government meddling. This reflects the difficulties Kenyan football programmes confront. Furthermore, the horrific events of the 1972 Munich Olympics in which the Israeli team was assaulted by the terrorist organisation Black September, highlight the serious security risks that big athletic events may encounter as well as the possibility that political violence may penetrate the sports industry.

## **Chapter 5: Summary and Recommendations.**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a discussion of the research findings, draws conclusions and offers recommendations on improving the use of sports in Kenya to enhance national security and cohesion.

### **5.2 Discussion of Research Findings**

The results of this study show that respondents were notably aware of the presence of sports programmes intended to promote national security and cohesion in Kenya. According to the participants, these programs cover a variety of topic areas, with 'Sports for Peace' standing out as the most common including projects like Michezo Mashinani and the NCIC Amani Football Clubs. These initiatives specifically seek to use athletics as a means of fostering social cohesion and settling disputes. Other sport programmes such as 'Football for Peace' and Lewa Conservancy marathon further highlight the various ways that sports are being used to promote national security and cohesion. The respondents gave specific examples of kinds of programmes that are now in place and their intended goals such as the Madaraka Day Cup for inter-county solidarity and KDF/Police games for better civil-security cooperation.

But the study goes beyond simple identification to evaluate these initiatives are though to accomplish their declared goals. A sizable percentage of respondents were sceptical of the effectiveness of the sport programmes and the others thought the programmes were only somewhat beneficial. The problems that have been identified, including limited impact, funding issues and lack of sustainability indicate that although there are a number of sport programmes that are intended to promote national security and cohesion are acknowledged by some members of the public, their long-term sustainability and actual results are concerning. The qualitative comments from respondents, stressing concerns like the ephemeral nature of interventions and difficulty in continuous implementation, emphasises the intricacies involved in effectively leveraging sports to address deeply seated societal divisions and security threats.

The results from the field strongly highlight how different sports programmes in Kenya may promote security and national cohesion among varied populations which is directly related to the objective of evaluating their impact. The Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA), the Safaricom Dimba Cup, Lewa Conservancy Marathon, the Mombasa Peace games, Michezo Mashinani, the NCIC Amani

Clubs and Football for peace are just a few of the projects that are shown by the research findings. According to the responders, each of these programmes has distinct goals that go beyond simple physical participation in order to have social impact. For example, MYSA addresses socioeconomic issues in Nairobi's Mathare slum by offering chances for education and growth, encouraging healthy lives and creating an organised environment all of which subtly aim to reduce social unrest that may otherwise contribute to insecurity. In order to increase its influence on social well being, the Safaricom Dimba Cup now incorporates community projects like medical camps and computer literacy training in addition to its national goal of developing young talent.

Additionally, programmes like the Mombasa Peace Games and NCIC Amani Clubs directly address possible causes of societal separation by promoting peace, unity and conflict resolution among youth from variety of ethnic and religious backgrounds. Similarly, in places like Eldoret and Nairobi, Michezo Mashinani and Football for Peace emphasise grassroots sports to promote social inclusion and close gaps between communities, especially in areas that have experienced conflict in the past. The idea that these programmes by their vary nature of bringing different groups together for shared activities, can break down barriers and promote mutual respect is supported by respondents who suggested inter-community sport events as effective ways to foster trust and understanding. By encouraging positive intercommunal relations and providing constructive alternatives to social unrest, the reported positive outcomes such as increased community belonging and tolerance among youths participating in Mathare Youth Sport Association (MYSA), further support the potential of these sports programmes to contribute to national cohesion and security.

The research findings strongly support the objective of assessing the challenges and obstacles hindering Kenya's ability from using sports more effectively for enhancing national security. According to the research findings, there are a number of sports programmes that are designed to foster national security and cohesion, but their influence is severely limited by a number of interrelated barriers. The most notable of them, according to the respondent is the continuing issue of financial and resource allocation. Programmes like the MYSA and Football for Peace programmes are directly impacted by this lack of steady funding and poor infrastructure, which restricts their capacity to regularly engage at risk youth and maintain essential facilities.

Also, the findings draw attention to significant programme and implementation issues such as lack of structures policies that incorporate sports into national security strategies and a lack of grassroots

engagement. According to respondents and secondary data on organisations such as MYSA, the potential of sports as a tool for national security remains underutilised in the absence of formal frameworks and consistent outreach to at risk communities. Governance and policy challenges, particularly political interference and corruption within sports administration as demonstrated by the Football Kenya Federation's repeated suspensions, compromise the impartiality and efficacy of even well-known programs like the Safaricom Dimba Cup. Such meddling erodes trust and can worsen social divisions rather than promoting unity. Last but not least, social and cultural obstacles, such as ingrained prejudices and disparities, make it more harder to guarantee inclusion and optimise sports' capacity to bring various populations in Kenya together.

Indeed, a number of distinct sports programmes and their stated goals were identified by the research. For example, by creating a safe space, encouraging healthy lifestyles and giving educational opportunities via athletics, the Mathare Youth Sport Association (MYSA) seeks to solve economic issues in Mathare slum. Through programmes like medical camps and computer literacy training, the Safaricom Dimba Cup aims to develop young football potential while simultaneously encouraging community engagement. Football for Peace programmes which are active in Eldoret and Nairobi aim to close gaps, promote understanding and create peaceful coexistence – especially in areas that have experience bloodshed. The goal of the Mombasa Peace Games and NCIC Amani Clubs, which are frequently school based is to encourage harmony, peace, and the settlement of disputes between young people from all backgrounds. These instances highlight current programmes to use sports for social good but the problems they face constantly prevent them from making the most positive impact on national security and cohesion.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The important but frequently underutilised potential of sports programs to strengthen national security and promote social cohesion in Kenya is persuasively highlighted by this study. According to the research, there is a general public knowledge of the 'Sports for Peace' programs that are currently in place with notable instances of using sports to promote peace and heal divisions including Michezo Mashinani and the NCIC Amani Football teams. Events like the Lewa Conservancy Marathon and particular examples mentioned by participants, such as the Madaraka Day Cup and the KDF/Police

games, further demonstrate a multifaceted strategy for utilising sports' ability to bring people together.

The research does, however, present a more critical viewpoint about the true efficacy of these initiatives. Despite the obvious goal of these sports-based programs, many respondents were sceptical of their real effects, frequently pointing to their limited track record of success. The restricted scope and uneven funding of several programs are among the main issues noted, which raise questions about their long-term sustainability and ability to meet their declared objectives. Participants' qualitative input emphasises the inherent challenges of leveraging sports to address deeply ingrained social divisions and security risks, often highlighting the transient character of treatments and the barriers to long term adoption.

Notwithstanding these misgivings, the research shows how various sports programs have the ability to improve national security and unity. Sports may have an influence that goes beyond physical exercise to address underlying socioeconomic concerns as shown by the programs like the Safaricom Dimba Cup. Sports can indirectly reduce the causes of social unrest by providing opportunities for education, skill development and community involvement. This expanding area of impact is best demonstrated by the Safaricom Dimba Cup's growth to include community outreach initiatives like medical camps and computer literacy programs.

Furthermore, by aggressively fostering peace, unity and conflict resolution skills among young people from a variety of ethnic and religious backgrounds, focused programs like the NCIC Amani clubs and the Mombasa Peace Games directly address possible causes of societal fragmentation. Similar to this, grassroots sports programs like Michezo Mashinani and 'Football for Peace' in areas prone to violence place a high value on social inclusion and seek to heal communal divisions via common sporting experiences. Sports' innate capacity to cross barriers and promote respect is highly supported by the respondents' support of intercommunity sports activities as beneficial means of building mutual trust and understanding.

Importantly, the research thoroughly investigates the major obstacles preventing a more effective use of sports to improve national security. Inadequate funding and resources allocation is a recurring problem that threatens the long term viability and operational capability of several programs. Their

capacity to consistently engage at risk kids and sustain steady operations over time is hampered by a lack of steady financing and well maintained facilities.

The research also highlights important program and implementation shortcomings such as lack of explicit policies incorporating sports into more comprehensive national security plans and a lack of grassroots involvement. The natural ability of sports to support national security is still mostly unrealised in the absence of these institutional structures and consistent outreach programs. The impartiality and efficacy of even well-established programs are further threatened by governance and policy flaws, especially the negative consequences of political meddling and corruption in sports administration. This has the potential to worsen already existing societal differences and undermine public confidence.

The research concludes by highlighting the significant potential for well planned and executed sports programs to significantly improve social cohesion and national security in Kenya. A wide range of stakeholders, including government agencies, sports organisations, community leaders and international partners must work together to overcome the complex obstacles of insufficient funding, policy gaps, poor implementation and deeply rooted social and cultural barriers in order to realise this potential. By solving these challenges, Kenya will be better able to use sports' ability to bring people together to create a safer and more cohesive society for all of its residents.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

A multifaceted strategy addressing the identified constraints is essential to improving sports' efficacy as a tool for national security and cohesion in Kenya. First and foremost, funding for sports programmes with a social impact must be significantly and steadily increased. Instead of being donor-dependent or short-term, this funding ought to be incorporated into national budgets with explicit procedures for accountable and transparent distribution. Grassroot programmes like Mathare Youth Sports Association and Football for peace that work directly with marginalised communities should be priorities in order to provide them with the funding they need for equipment, infrastructure development and ongoing operations.

Second, it is crucial to create and execute well defined national policies that specifically incorporate sports into plans for national security and cohesion. Formal structures for cooperation between

governmental organisations (including security forces), sports organisations and community groups are part of this. In order to guarantee relevance and community ownership such policies ought to include grassroots participation in program design and implementation. Furthermore, in order to preserve objectivity and public confidence in these endeavours, steps must be taken to protect sports from political meddling and administrative corruption.

Thirdly, there has to be a concentrated effort to improve programme implementation. This entails funding the education of administrators and coaches in social inclusion, peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity in addition to athletics. Programmes should have strong monitoring and assessment systems in place to examine their long term effects on community trust, social cohesion and any declines in crime or social unrest. The reach and accessibility of these initiatives may also be increased by utilising technology for outreach education and virtual underprivileged regions.

Lastly, intentional and ongoing interventions are needed to overcome the ingrained social and cultural obstacles. Promoting inclusion involves implementing focused initiatives that support the involvement of under-represented groups, such as women and other racial or religious minorities. Campaigns to raise public awareness of the uniting potential of sports and dispel preconceived notions might help create an atmosphere that is more favourable for these endeavours to succeed. Additionally, using well-known sportsmen as peace and unity ambassadors can help spread these ideas and spur constructive social change throughout the country.

### **5.5 Areas for Future Research**

Future studies should focus further on the precise processes by which various sports programmes succeed (or fail) in producing the desired effects on cohesiveness and national security. Important insights into long term efficacy of these programmes would be obtained via longitudinal studies that monitor the effects of involvement on people and communities over time. Finding best practices may be aided by comparing various programme models and evaluating how successful they are in diverse Kenyan situations. Further research is also necessary to examine how media and technology may strengthen the positive themes of these sporting programmes and promote a feeling of national identity. Lastly, a more thorough understanding of these programmes' total contribution maybe possible through study into their economic effects, especially their capacity to generate jobs and lessen economic inequities that may feed social discontent

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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Similarity Report

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## Appendix B: Ethical Clearance



21<sup>st</sup> March 2025

Mr Kinama Bantu,  
bantukinama@gmail.com

Dear Mr Kinama,

**RE: Beyond Athletic Accolades: Sports as an Instrument for Enhancing National Cohesion and Security in Kenya**

This is to inform you that SU-ISERC has reviewed and **approved** your above **SU-masters** proposal. Your application reference number is **SU-ISERC2514/24**. The approval period is from **21<sup>st</sup> March 2025 to 20<sup>th</sup> March 2026**.

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements:

- i Only approved documents including (informed consents, study instruments, MTA) will be used.
- ii All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by SU-ISERC.
- iii Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to SU-ISERC within 72 hours of notification.
- iv Any changes anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affected safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to SU-ISERC within 72 hours.
- v Clearance for the export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions.
- vi Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to the expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.
- vii Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days of completion of the study to SU-ISERC.

Before commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) <https://research-portal.nacosti.go.ke/> and obtain other clearances needed.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ambrose Rachier".

**Mr Ambrose Rachier,  
Chairperson; SU-ISERC**

## Appendix C: NACOSTI Clearance

 REPUBLIC OF KENYA	 NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
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<p>This is to Certify that Mr. Bantu Kinama of Strathmore University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Nairobi on the topic: <b>BEYOND ATHLETIC ACCOLADES: SPORTS AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR ENHANCING NATIONAL COHESION AND SECURITY IN KENYA</b> for the period ending : 01/April/2026.</p>	
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## **Appendix D: Research Questions**

### **Introduction**

This questionnaire aims to gather diverse perspectives on the role of sports in promoting national cohesion and enhancing national security in Kenya. Your honest and thoughtful responses are highly valued. The information you provide will be kept confidential and used for research purposes only.

### **Participant Information**

#### **Age Range (Please tick one)**

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- >64

#### **Gender (Please select one)**

- Male
- Female
- Other

### **Section 1: Existing Sports Programmes Linked to Building National Cohesion and National Security.**

1. Are you aware of any existing sports programmes in Kenya specifically designed to promote national cohesion or address national security concerns?

- Yes
- No

b. In your experience, to what extent have these programmes been successful in achieving their goals?

- Not Successful
- Slightly Successful
- Successful
- Very Successful
- Don't know

c. Please provide specific examples or observations based on your answer above.

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2. How do these programmes contribute to fostering a sense of unity and shared identity among different communities in Kenya?

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b. Are there perceived benefits or drawbacks of these programmes in relation to national security?

- Yes
- No

b. List the Benefits

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c. List the drawbacks

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4. Do you believe these programmes effectively address the root causes of social divisions or security threats?

- Yes
- No

b. Explain Why or why not?

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## **Section 2: Effects of Sports Programmes on Fostering National Cohesion and National Security Among Different Communities in Kenya**

5. How can sports be utilized to build trust and understanding between different ethnic, religious, or social groups in Kenya?

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6. a. Can sports participation help to reduce social unrest, youth involvement in crime, or radicalization?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

b. If Yes, how?

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7. What role do athletes, coaches or sports organizations play in promoting national cohesion and unity?

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8. How can sports be leveraged to address social inequalities and marginalization that may contribute to insecurity or social division?

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9. What specific strategies can be employed to ensure that sports programmes are inclusive and accessible to all members of society, regardless of background? List as many as you can.

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**Section 3: Challenges and Obstacles that Hinder the Utilisation of Sports more Effectively for National Security Enhancement in Kenya.**

10. What are the main challenges hindering the effective use of sports to enhance national security in Kenya?

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11. What obstacles prevent sports programmes from having a greater impact on national cohesion?

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12. What policy changes or initiatives would you recommend to improve the integration of sports into national security strategies? List as many as you can

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13. How can collaboration between government agencies, sports organizations, and communities be strengthened to maximize the positive impact of sports on national security and cohesion?

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14. What role should international organizations or development partners play in supporting Kenya's efforts to utilize sports for national security and cohesion?

15. a. Are there any successful examples from other countries where sports have been effectively used to promote national security and cohesion that Kenya could learn from?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

b. Please provide specific details.

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16. How can the impact of sports programmes on national security and cohesion be effectively measured and evaluated?

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17. What resources (financial, human, logistical) are needed to support the development and implementation of effective sports programmes for national security and cohesion?

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18. How can the sustainability of sports programmes aimed at national security and cohesion be ensured in the long term?

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19. a. Are there any unintended negative consequences that could arise from using sports to promote national security and cohesion?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

b. List them

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c. How can these be mitigated?

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