The role of civil society organisations in peacebuilding in post-conflict society: Kenya and Nigeria

Muhammad Abdullahi Maigari [a*], Danfodiyo University Sokoto, Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Sociology, PMB 2346, Usmanu, Nigeria.

Abstract

The complex and protracted nature of contemporary violent conflicts in Nigeria and other parts of the world poses increasingly significant challenges to the resolution of armed conflicts. Traditional peace mediation strategies and techniques have proven largely inefficient in responding to emerging security challenges presented by conflicts revolving around religious and ethnopolitical affiliations or other issues related to perceptions of group identity. The objectives of the paper are to review the works of civil society organisations (CSOs) in peacebuilding in post-conflict areas. The paper is limited to Plateau State in Nigeria and the post-election violence of 2008 in Kenya because of the efforts put in place by the CSOs in these countries. Based on the findings, the use of non-military or non-use force to resolve conflict provides lasting solutions because it brings the aggrieved parties to the roundtable to vent their grievances, complaints and perspectives about the issue at hand. The participation of the civil society organisations in volatile situations in Kenya and Nigeria has yielded tremendous success because they utilise the residents affected by the violence to fine-tune measures to address the problems.

Keywords*:* Civil, peace, peacebuilding, organisation;

---

[*] ***ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: Muhammad Abdullahi Maigari, Danfodiyo University Sokoto, Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Sociology, PMB 2346, Usmanu - Nigeria.
E-mail address: kariyoma2@yahoo.com

1. Introduction

The complex and protracted nature of contemporary violent conflicts in Nigeria and other parts of the world poses increasingly significant challenges to the resolution of armed conflicts. Traditional peace mediation strategies and techniques have proven largely inefficient in responding to emerging security challenges presented by conflicts revolving around religious and ethnopolitical affiliations or other issues related to perceptions of group identity. As new strategies for addressing these modern security threats have become necessary, the field of mediation has witnessed a growing emphasis on localised mediation and local ownership of peace processes, often spearheaded by non-official diplomacy. The conventional idea of neutral, outsider third parties is frequently replaced by new types of insider mediators. These include local religious leaders, whose mediation capacity is seen as rooted in the trust and credibility they enjoy in their communities (Lepomäki, 2017).

At least 62 identity-based conflicts have taken place within the last decade, with 22 incidents recorded in 2004 alone in Nigeria (Bagudu, 2005), and the emergence of Islamist insurgency in north-eastern Nigeria and armed bandits in some states in the north-west has brought a new dimension to the conflict in Nigeria. The inclusion of civil society organisations is one of the measures of peacebuilding in a society recuperating from violent conflicts. Civil society organisations that work closely with or inside affected communities bring a thorough awareness of their insecurities, needs and desires to the table. Policymakers, donors and other national and international players would be wise to recognise that including these groups is more than a checkbox exercise; it is a requirement for long-term peace (Peace Direct, 2019).

Since its independence in 1960, Nigeria has struggled with the challenge of managing religious, ethnic, regional and political diversity. The major test of Nigeria's ability to manage these diversities, ensure sustainable peace and promote national integration has been ethno-religious crises and their devastating effects in Plateau State, primarily in Jos, and Borno State, primarily in Maiduguri (Emelonye & Buergenthal, 2011). Although violence occurs throughout Nigeria, incidents of identity-based violence in Plateau State, the second most ethnically diverse state after Adamawa State in Nigeria, outnumbered the occurrences in other states. The state's diverse population is considered to have two identities, 'indigenes' and 'settlers', and reflects two major religions, Christianity and Islam, respectively. Cyclical sectarian conflicts often arise during elections and the Jos crises have resulted in grave human rights violations, polarised local society and significant material losses (Emelonye & Buergenthal). From 1995 to 2005, Nigeria witnessed different forms of conflicts and armed violence. At least 62 identity-based conflicts have taken place within the last decade, with 22 incidents were recorded in 2004 alone (Bagudu, 2005). This does not take into account the Boko Haram insurgency which started in 2009, the 2008 violence over the Local Government Election in Plateau State, 2011 post-election violence, the emergence of the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta, Independent People of Biafra and the emergence of Ombatse cult groups.

1.1. Purpose of the study

Diversity, *per se*, is not the problem. Its management, however, presents Nigeria with a formidable challenge. A divisive interplay of politics, ethnicity and religion in Nigeria has led to rising nationalism and militancy of various ethnic and religious movements. Since the 1980s, religious extremism and riots have increased in Nigeria. Given the links between ethnicity, religion, identity and citizenship, conflicts related to each have become dominant factors weakening and dividing the country. The objectives of the paper are to review the works of civil society organisations (CSOs) in peacebuilding in post-conflict areas.

2. Materials and methods

This study used a literature review method. Data were collected from previous studies and credible resources.

2.1. Population of the study

The paper is limited to Plateau State in Nigeria and the post-election violence of 2008 in Kenya because of the efforts put in place by the CSOs in these countries.

3. Results

A lot of efforts were made in different parts of the world to build peace after the outbreak of violent conflicts, while some interventions proved to be very effective and successful others have not. But the involvement and participation of civil society organisations in peacebuilding has reduced the escalation of new violence and recurrence of old. Different non-governmental organisations or civil societies, as well as international agencies, were involved in peacebuilding in different regions of the world from the 20th century to the 21st century, providing different intervention programmes and initiatives to resolve complex conflicts. In this regard, Parver and Wolf (2008) stated that civil society involvement in peacebuilding is one of the most important factors in determining whether a post-conflict peacebuilding initiative will be successful or not. Efforts put forth by local government officials or the international community likely will be unsuccessful in post-conflict peacebuilding if civil society involvement is absent, and without a societal belief that these measures are beneficial to the victims of violence (Parver & Wolf, 2008). After the above discussion, there is a need to explain the meaning of peacebuilding.

3.1. Meaning of peacebuilding

Peacebuilding is a broad umbrella that encompasses not only long-term transformative efforts of the post-conflict period but also short-term operations of conflict resolution and conflict management which refers to conflict escalation and de-escalation (Sentama, 2009). From that perspective, peacebuilding includes early warning and response efforts, violence prevention, peace-making, military intervention, humanitarian assistance, a ceasefire agreement, normalisation and reconciliation (Sentama, 2009). While recognising the broad conception and meaning of the peacebuilding process, the focus of this paper is restricted to the narrow understanding of the concept to refer to the post-conflict peacebuilding efforts.

As in Rwanda, the post-genocide Rwandan society, the concept of peacebuilding referred to a range of perspectives, where peacebuilding includes early warning and response efforts, violence prevention, peace-making, military intervention, humanitarian assistance, a ceasefire agreement, normalisation and reconciliation (Sentama, 2009). These are the seven key steps for building peace: 1. Conduct a conflict assessment; 2. Peacebuilding programme design; 3. Develop a monitoring and evaluation plan; 4. Conduct a baseline study; 5. Monitoring and adaptive management; 6. Conduct an endline study and final evaluation; and 7. Disseminate and share results and key learning. Therefore, the focus of this paper is to identify the CSOs and the role played by them in the peacebuilding process and the restoration of normalcy in areas beleaguered by violent conflicts in Kenya and Nigeria. To achieve this objective, secondary empirical literature was reviewed.

3.2. Roles of civil society organisation in peacebuilding

In the late 1990s, for example, United Nations Organisations, research institute and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (International Alert in the United Kingdom; the PIOOM Foundation in the Netherlands; the Russian Academy of Sciences and Institute of Ethnology; the American Council on Foreign Relations; Canadian York University; and Swisspeace) founded a Forum on Early Warning and Early Response in conflict-ridden areas in the world (Suifon, 2005). Through its FAST programme, the research institute Swisspeace has been a standard-setter in developing early warning methodology, and monitoring programmes in America, Africa and Asia. The International Crisis Group delivers regular background reports and briefings on conflict zones. CARE International has launched several community-based early warning systems in high-risk areas of El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua (Austin, 2004; Suifon, 2005). In

Africa, the West African Network for Peacebuilding is setting the stage for a civil society-based initiative called the Warning and Response Network that will operate in 12 of the 15 member countries of the Economic Community of West African States. The Institute for Security Studies in South Africa is another key organisation in early warning analysis and crisis reporting in Africa (Austin, 2004; Suifon, 2005).

For instance, International Alert (UK), the Carter Centre (USA), International Negotiation Network and one of the church-based Communities of Sant' Egidi participated in peace-making processes in Northern Ireland, Guatemala and South Africa where they met with societal actors and effectively facilitated broader public participation in peace agreement negotiations. In those places, they worked closely with the affected people which influenced the peace processes that brought the lasting solution to the areas (Fitzduff & Church, 2004). Similarly, synergy between NGOs and governmental agencies has yielded fruitful results in peacebuilding in different parts of the world (Fitzduff & Church, 2004). The notable synergy was between the Institute for Applied Social Science and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs which formed the 'Norwegian Channel', which facilitated the well-known Oslo Accord in 1994 (Fitzduff & Church, 2004). Apart from the facilitation of a peace deal, some of the NGOs were at the forefront of striking a peace deal during the war to contribute to ceasefire and compliance to the deeds of the agreement and improve relationships by integrating the parties divided by the conflict via a different mechanism for peacebuilding such as dialogues and joint peace projects in the communities. In this regard, there were NGOs that worked at the international and regional levels and played a vital role in restoring cordial relationships between parties emerging from wars and newly established boards as a result of separation or self-determination, especially in the former Yugoslavia after the wars (Large, 1998) where a lot of dialogues, security sector reforms and dialogues were initiated and facilitated by the NGOs to heal the wounds of wars and wipe the scars and graffiti of the violence(Fitzduff & Church, 2004).

In addition to NGOs, there are also faith-based organisations that are into the peacebuilding process. They come up with initiatives to settle the violent conflict and maintain fragile peace after a ceased fire. They recognise the place and role of religion in most of the violent conflicts in the world. Echoing the significance of religion and the vital role of the faith-based organisation in initiating faith-based dialogue, the United State Institute of Peace (2004) observed that, whether in its own right or as a proxy for political battles, religion has been identified as one of the factors which contributed to settling or fuelling violent conflicts in some parts of the world. But it was at the beginning of the 21st century (2000s) has interfaith dialogue provided a way to serve peaceful goals within the context of religious faith. Interfaith dialogue can unlock the power of religious traditions and provide the inspiration, guidance and validation necessary for populations to move towards non-violent means of conflict resolution (United State Institute of Peace, 2004).

Some of the faith-based organisations involved in peacebuilding from the side of Christianity are Life and Peace Institute based in Sweden, World Vision International in Germany/US/Kosovo, International Association for Religious Freedom (United Kingdom), Community of Sant'Egidio (Italy), Centre for Religions, Diplomacy (US), World Conference of Religions for Peace (US), David Steele (US), International Fellowship of Reconciliation (Netherlands) and Religion and Peace-Making Initiative (US). On the side of Islam, Salam: Institute for Peace and Justice (US), Salam Sudan Foundation (US), Islamic Community of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Acholic Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative (Uganda) and Coalition for Peace in Africa (Kenya) are some of the organisations (Bouta, Kadayifci-Orellana, & Abu-Nimer, 2005).

It could be seen that identified faith-based CSOs play significant roles in peacebuilding based on their respective faith and belief in war-torn societies or post-conflict areas in the world. In one of the most conflict-ridden areas of Africa, the Great Lake region, faith-based organisations have played a significant role during the Rwandan genocide and post-genocide, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Burundi. Christian-based organisations, particularly Catholics, have provided a lot of assistance during violent

conflicts and support the peacebuilding processes and programmes. Katunga (2008) found out that majority of the population in this region are Catholics (67% in Burundi, 55% in DRC and 48% in Rwanda). The church has invested and developed expertise in many sectors, and more specifically in education and health systems to ameliorate the sufferings of the victims of the violence and displaced persons. International Catholic Relief Agencies such as CRS, CAFOD, TROCAIRE, MISEREOR etc., have been crucial in assisting local churches to get fully involved in addressing not only emergencies but also the root causes of the conflicts in the region. Katunga (2008) further stated that, in crisis times, the church premises and amenities have served as places for immediate safety and emergency relief for victims of atrocities in the Great Lakes Region of Africa. This role has strengthened local and international credibility and trust in the church institutions such as Caritas or the justice and peace commission.

In northern Uganda, religious leaders have been important players in the peace process with the involvement of two international faith-based groups in mediation efforts (Githigaro, 2012). They include *Pax Christi* (Netherlands) and the community of *Sant 'Egidio* (a Catholic lay organisation) that have maintained contacts with the Lord's Resistance Army in working towards a settlement of the conflict and thus engaging in track two diplomacy (Wang, Park, & Giles, 2006). In addition to these efforts, religious leaders in northern Uganda have been active through the Acholi Inter-Religious Peace Initiative (ARLPI), which was established between 1997 and 1998 and involved the Catholics, Church of Uganda, Orthodox and Muslim leaders in the peace process. The goal of this partnership was to work for peace through advocacy, training and community-level reconciliation. The initiative has been instrumental in, among other areas, the passage of the Amnesty Bill in the Ugandan Parliament (Wang et al., 2006).

An Islamic-based organisation in Kenya Wajir Peace and Development Committee is a network of 27 governmental and non-governmental organisations representing a variety of people, including businesswomen, elders and religious leaders, operating primarily in the Wajir District of north-eastern Kenya (Salam: Institute for Peace and Justice, 2005). Wajir is one of the most visible and successful peacebuilding actors in the region. Initially formed by a group of women to encourage dialogue among warring parties in the Wajir district of Kenya, Wajir activities expanded to different areas of Kenya in about 5 years. Wajir utilises traditional conflict resolution tools, which require the involvement of the entire clan for the resolution of a conflict. The traditional law seeks justice not so much through punishment as through material appeasement. They utilise religious values and traditions and the cooperation of local religious leaders and elders, who are well respected in their community and have significant moral and spiritual legitimacy and leverage (Salam: Institute for Peace and Justice, 2005). Their work involves conflict prevention and resolution, education and training of adults and young people, addressing root causes of the conflict, organising public meetings, discussions, conferences, peace festivals, peace days, workshops, instituting early intervention measures and training the youth and leaders. They were able to establish a Rapid Response Team composed of elders that mediate between conflicting parties that have been mediating conflicts quite successfully (Salam: Institute for Peace and Justice, 2005). Wajir also worked towards the incorporation of peace education into the education system (Peace Education Network, or PEN) (Salam: Institute for Peace and Justice, 2005).

The Islamic community of Bosnia-Herzegovina has been involved in peacebuilding activities under the leadership of Reis-ul-Ulema Mustafa Ceric in various capacities. These activities involve advocacy for peace and justice, reconciliation and education for peace. One of the important activities of the community is to participate in the Inter-Religious Council of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Also, Reis-ul-Ulema, along with other religious leaders, has stated shared moral commitment as they were concerned with the slow and inefficient implication of the Dayton Accords and continuing violence in the region. Among others, this statement noted that the task of religious communities was to establish durable peace based on truth and justice, show respect for each religious tradition and cooperate. The statement also called for respecting

the dignity of all human beings, condemning violence, acts of hatred and revenge and abuse of media to spread violence (Salam: Institute for Peace and Justice, 2005).

Similarly, ARLPI is a multi-faith peace group in Northern Uganda that provides a proactive response to conflicts through community-based mediation services, advocacy and lobbying, and peace-building activities (Salam: Institute for Peace and Justice, 2005). Muslim leaders who are members of the Acholi Peace Initiative include District Qadi of Kitgum Sheikh Musa, District Qadi of Gulu Sheikh Suleiman Wadrif and Lanyero Karima Obina from the Acholi Muslim Youth and Women's Association. Activities of Acholi include workshops and education projects, reporting facts about the war and violence, advocating human rights and peace, organising peace rallies and prayers and mediation. ARLPI has established a network of peace committees in the main centres throughout the Acholi sub-region. It has also mediated a violent conflict between the Acholi and their Jie neighbours, between Teso and Karimojong rural communities, and also between rebels and the government (Salam: Institute for Peace and Justice, 2005).

Furthermore, Salam: Institute for Peace and Justice (2005) showed that, in Nigeria, there is a Christian–Muslim dialogue and Interfaith Mediation Centre which aims to mediate and encourage dialogue among youth, women, religious leaders and the government; to inculcate and promote the culture of mutual respect and acceptance of the diversity of each other's cultural, historical and religious inheritance; to propagate the value and virtues of religious harmony and peaceful co-existence; to serve as a resource body in conflict intervention, mediation and mitigation; to cooperate and collaborate with other organisations with similar objectives at local and international levels. The centre used the two major religions, Islam and Christianity, as positive tools for pursuing the cause of social justice, equality, healing and peace for humanity; to establish conflict management and poverty alleviation structures for youth and women victims of ethnic and religious crisis. In 1999, Imam Asafa and Rev. Wuye co-published 'The Pastor and the Imam: Responding to Conflict', a guide for the peaceful management of conflict and reconciliation based on passages from the Bible and the Qur'an (Salam: Institute for Peace and Justice, 2005).

Similarly, Faculty of Islamic Studies at the University of Pristina**,** Kosovo, established in 1992, is an Islamic institute aimed to educate students and the Muslim community in Kosovo about Islamic teachings regarding peace and tolerance. They contributed to peacebuilding in their region particularly by educating students in areas of peacebuilding, coexistence and tolerance, from an Islamic point of view. The institute participates in and organises conferences and seminars and appeals for peace and tolerance through public magazines, TVs and other public sources. The faculty cooperates with international and regional organisations such as World Conference on Religion and Peace, Norwegian Church and Boston University. For example, as part of a peacebuilding project, the Faculty at the Islamic Institute took part in a 10-day seminar organised by the University of Boston and other organisations such as the Centre for Strategic Studies at Coux–Switzerland. This seminar included students from different religious communities in the Balkans, like students from Belgrade, Sarajevo, Zagreb–Croatia and Kosovo, to discuss the topic of 'What kind of role should religious leaders play in the Balkans, in the future?' At the seminar, both students and religious teachers, such as Xhabir Hamiti from the Faculty of Islamic Studies at the University of Pristina, discussed issues like tolerance, freedom and coexistence, among others. At the end of the seminar, the participants agreed that they all belong to one God, and if they believe in and respect God, they have to respect each other and they should work very hard for reconciliation between different ethnic and religious groups in their countries (Salam: Institute for Peace and Justice, 2005).

Another Islamic agency involved in providing relief to conflict-affected areas is the Islamic Relief. The Islamic Relief South Africa (2014) suggests that political instability in the Central African Republic has escalated into civil war with thousands of people fleeing and seeking refuge in the nearest villages and towns in the Chad Republic. Islamic Relief Chad conducted a needs assessment and found that nearly 2,000

children and more than 1,000 women were living in appalling conditions in government-registered community centres in the capital, N'Djamena. Islamic Relief distributed food and non-food items in one of the nine returnees' sites, named Zafay. This project was funded by Islamic Relief South Africa. Approximately 339 households benefitted from the project. Women-headed households with many children, elderly people and returnee households with sick people were given priority (Islamic Relief South Africa, 2014)

Stressing the importance of CSO in peacebuilding, an involved civil society is important to hold governments accountable for their actions, strengthen public policies and develop the community following a conflict (Paffenholz & Spunk, 2006). Despite many successful initiatives, and as civil society actors readily acknowledge, civil society is not a panacea. The mere existence of civil society cannot be equated with the existence of peacebuilding actors. Similarly, strengthening civil society does not automatically contribute to peacebuilding. Although CSOs are frequent actors of peace, they can also be actors of violence. So far, the outcomes and impacts of different civil society peace interventions have not been sufficiently evaluated. Civil society and donors need to strategically identify the objectives and demonstrate the relevance of the approaches to different phases of conflict/peacebuilding. Without greater clarity on objectives and intended impacts, and without addressing institutional constraints and distortions, activities run the risk of being well intentioned but unlikely to achieve. After an exhaustive discourse on CSOs and the role played in peacebuilding, it is pertinent to adopt a theoretical framework to aid the explanation of the phenomenon.

3.3. Theory of Change (TOC)

A TOC is a tool that explains and articulates the process of change and can be used to design, monitor and evaluate social change initiatives, such as peacebuilding. A basic TOC explains how programme activities are connected and how they contribute to achieving results at different levels: output, outcome and impact (CARE Nepal, 2012). An explicit TOC articulates the assumptions (intervention and expected outcome) about the process through which change will occur and specifies how all of the required early and intermediate outcomes are related to achieving the desired long-term change. Articulating the TOC offers a clear picture of the intended result from the direct action of the CSOs in peacebuilding programmes and initiatives (CARE Nepal, 2012).

Figure 1. Conceptual model for TOC. Source: Adopted from CARE Nepal (2012)
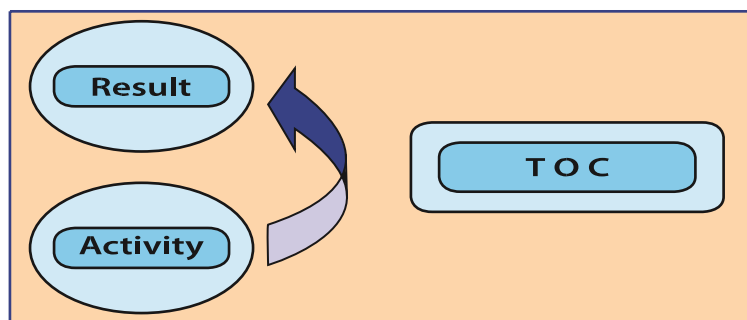
The model states that when violence starts, people tend to hold on to power and traditions; after a conflict people are more willing to change and admit that there was a problem. Thus, it is very important to understand the context. There is therefore the need to go back to the original intent of the action to question and test them to see if they were correct for the particular intervention. In addition, one needs to continuously keep reviewing and testing (and amending) the TOC to find out whether the activities are

contributing to expected results or not. If the expected result of the intervention (peacebuilding) is not achieved, the strategy and theory would be modified.

3.4. The CSOs In peacebuilding: Kenya and Nigeria

Places or societies recuperating from violent conflicts or wars need concerted efforts to rebuild trust, relationships and mutual understanding wrecked by the conflicts. There is a wide range of actors that are involved in conflict transformation and post-war peacebuilding transformation which need the services and intervention of the leaders of states and intergovernmental organisations, local and international NGOs, development and humanitarian organisations, individuals and civil society in the societies destroyed by violent conflicts (Miall, 2007). Stressing further, the destruction of infrastructure during conflicts, the involvement of the international community in peacebuilding and conflict transformation have become necessary (Zartman, 1995). However, there is an overlap of roles and coordination works by actors in peacebuilding efforts at various levels independently to promote peace between various groups (Zartman, 1995).

The broad range of members of civil society involved in peacebuilding work encompasses actors at the local, national and international levels. World Bank (2006) identified key actors subsumed under the notion of civil society including:

1. NGOs, especially those directly supporting peace processes or capacity building;

2. Human rights organisations, social justice advocacy groups and peace networks;

3. Special or collective interest group organisations (faith-based organisations, women, youth and professional associations and trade unions);

4. Community-based organisations, institutions and initiatives (women and youth groups, farmer associations, self-help groups, traditional leaders, informal networks and associations);

5. Informational and educational CSOs (independent media, journalist associations, research and academic institutions and think tanks) (World Bank, 2006).

3.5. The 2007 post-elections violence in Kenya

Violence erupted after the 2007 General elections in Kenya. Different factors were stated as triggers of the violence. These factors were ethnicity, economic inequality and long-standing land dispute in the Rift Valley. Githigaro (2012) also stated that the causes of the post-election violence in Kenya were many which include tribalism, ethnicity and a penchant quest to actualise the political interests of the politicians. However, in the Rift Valley, violence was triggered by contests over disputed land. Furthermore, the political factor that ignited the simmering discontent in the country into full-blown violence was electoral fraud and mishandled of the presidential elections vote tally held at the Kenyatta International Conference Centre (KICC), Nairobi, Kenya, which was the venue for the national vote tallying process for the 2007 elections (Githigaro, 2012).

3.6. The role of the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK) in peacebuilding

The NCCK was founded in 1913 during the United Missionary Conference at the end of which representatives from four missionary organisations signed a constitution to establish the Federation of Missions. The organisations were Church Missionary Society (current day Anglican Church of Kenya), Church of Scotland Mission (current day Presbyterian Church of East Africa), United Methodist Mission (current day Methodist Church in Kenya) and African Inland Mission (current day African Inland Church). A fifth member, the British and Foreign Bible Society (current day Bible Society of Kenya) was admitted in 1918. The core vision has remained unchanged since its inception and is anchored on the unity of the church in Kenya as reflected in the current mission statement. The mission statement of the Council is to

1) Promote fellowship and ecumenism; 2) Nurture a common understanding of the Christian faith and mission; 3) Build the capacities of the membership; and 4) Enhance the creation of a just and sustainable society (The Imam and The Pastor, 2013).

Before the December 2007 General Elections, the council had earlier in March 2007 in partnership with other religious institutions formed the Inter-Religious Forum (IRF) to respond to issues of national concerns such as the promotion of peaceful electoral campaigns 2007. The IRF drew its membership from Christians, Hindus and Muslims, which are the three most dominant religions in Kenya. After the post-election violence, the forum involved humanitarian support, meeting the key protagonists of the Kenyan conflict (The Imam and The Pastor, 2013). The party of National Unity and the Orange Democratic Movement made their inputs to the Africa Union (AU)-led mediation efforts that sought solutions to the crisis (NCCK). Under the IRF, several activities were held such as dialogue forums, pastoral visits, exchange visits and ecumenical visits in different parts of the country that experienced post-election violence. As part of the dialogue forums, religious leaders were trained in conflict resolution and conflict management. Consequently, the participants mapped out areas that were prone to conflict, mapped out the causes of the violence and propose solutions to the conflict.

The council has a national reach with its areas of operations divided into nine regions. They include Central, Lower Eastern, Upper Eastern, Nairobi, Coast, South Rift, North Rift, Western and Nyanza. NCCK has vast experience in the area of peacebuilding and conflict management (NCCK, 2008). Past interventions have included responses to resource-based conflicts, and border conflicts as well as responses to 1992, 1997 and the 2007 ethnic clashes. The council portends that peace in Kenya has been immensely affected by ethnic animosity as a result of underlying causes such as 'inequitable access to land, historical injustices, and proliferation of small arms and light weapons (NCCK)'.

In an attempt to build peace and reconcile people divided by the conflict, NCCK initiated capacity-building workshops for church leaders. The workshops were held to build their capacity in mediation and peacebuilding skills and this enabled them to preach reconciliation in their areas of operation (NCCK, 2008). Similarly, intra- and inter-ethnic dialogue forums were held in areas identified as hotspots for the violence to reconcile bitterly divided communities. To reconcile the divided communities, NCCK held an intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic dialogue to forgive each other by reconciling and bringing about healing and reconciliation to enable communities to live together harmoniously (NCCK).

Additionally, exchange visits were undertaken to various parts of Kenya, such as parts of the Rift Valley (Kuresoi, Molo, and Naivasha), Nairobi informal settlements of Kibera and Mathare, among others, to witness first-hand consequences of the violence (The Imam and The Pastor, 2013). These visits served as solidarity visits to the internally displaced persons. These visits also served as part of advocacy in terms of monitoring the government initiative of returning the displaced to their homes in a Kenyan government resettlement programme referred to as 'Operation *Rudi Nyumbani'* loosely translated as returning home. These exchange visits also served as dialogue forums among communities that had previously engaged in conflict and involved community and opinion leaders, youth leaders, religious leaders as well as government representatives drawn from the provincial administration. Ecumenical joint services were held incorporating the Christians, the Muslims and the Hindus. These served to reinforce the message of peace through various religious teachings. A key underlying theme was that the respective religions advocated for peaceful coexistence and that their followers would be expected to foster a culture of peace (NCCK).

Furthermore, the NCCK ensured that multiple actors were engaged in efforts to build bridges among bitterly divided communities and alleviate human suffering. These actors included the Kenya Red Cross, churches, bodies such as United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Programme and United Nations Development Fund for Women and local and international NGOs, among others (NCCK,

2008). A narrative from a respondent encapsulated the efforts of the NCCK in the restoration and building of peace in a war-torn society. The NCCK coordinated the efforts of member churches such as the Anglican Church, Reformed Church, Presbyterian Church, Friends Church and PEFA Church and partnered with the Red Cross and the government to provide humanitarian assistance and advocate for peaceful coexistence (Githigaro, 2012).

3.7. Ethnic and religious violence in Plateau State

The 2001 and subsequent ethnic, political and religious violence is the focus of this section. After 2001, there were outbreaks of major violence in 2004, 2008 and 2011. However, there were intermittent armed clashes between farmers and pastoralists Fulani in rural areas of the state since 2001. Different CSOs were involved in peacebuilding to resolve the cause of the protected conflicts and forestall future breaches of the peace in the state.

3.8. Islamic Counselling Initiative of Nigeria (ICIN)

Islamic counselling initiatives of Nigeria (ICIN) is a non-governmental and non-profit making organisation founded in February 2006 as a result of several challenges experienced in Jos communities from the September 2001 crisis. The activities of the NGO started in July 2007 with Peace and Trauma Healing seminars, training and assisting the poor and needy, especially women and young girls. These groups were aided with relief materials and support services during the fasting period and the annual love feast programme to cater to the needy irrespective of tribe, race, class or religion (ICIN Bulletin, 2014).

The ICIN in partnership with the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme seek to consolidate peaceful co-existence in Plateau State. ICIN is working in the project implementation areas of Bokkos, Jos-North and Wase LGAs. ICIN established the peace structure known as Community Peace Partnership (CPP) in May 2014 at the community level (The Islamic Counselling Initiatives of Nigeria, 2014) and CPP at the local government level in November 2014 (Omojarabi, 2016). In view of its success, in the beginning, the NGO consolidated on the achievements made through step-down meetings and activities designed to build the capacity of communities to manage conflict non-violently. ICIN continued monitoring and evaluation through the monthly supervisory and monitoring visits of the CPP to track progress made in the actualisation of project goals and activities, improve performance and assess the impact of the project on the peace situation in the target LGAs. It is important to note that Christians are integral parts of ICIN (Omojarabi, 2016).

3.9. Justice development and peace commission/Caritas (JDPC)

The justice, development and peace programme of the Catholic church came into being as a result of the Pan-African Justice and Peace Conference held in Lesotho from 29 May to 3 June 1988 where 30 resolutions were passed. Prominent among the resolutions passed was the urgent need to establish permanent justice and peace structures at the national and regional levels by the different Episcopal Conferences, especially for those where there were none or where the structures were weak (JDPC, 2014). It has worked with relevant stakeholders in Plateau State in the restoration of peace and providing lasting solutions outside the use of military deployment. Omojarabi found out that the JDPC and ICIN have been working in collaboration with community leaders and Special Task Force (STF) in Plateau State since 2010. These collaborations have yielded a positive result which is evident in the return of normalcy in almost all parts of the state.

Furthermore, the involvement of CSO has strengthened social interactions among ethnic groups separated by violence. The interfaith dialogues have provided an avenue for discussions and sharing of ideas on how to solve grievances held by religious groups against each other, this leads to cohesion between Christian and Muslims to resolve any misunderstanding amicably without resorting to the use of

violence to settle their grudges (Omojarabi, 2016). Additionally, the NGOs (JDPC and ICIN) have initiated CPP in communities that report any likely trouble to the NGOs. In response to the report of an attack or breach of peace, the NGOs handled the cases they can treat while issues or cases that required the intervention of security personnel, they forwarded to the appropriate security outfit, usually STF. Omojarabi (2016) revealed that STF has often swung into action on receipt of any report on a security breach on part of the state which has prevented the escalation of minor misunderstandings to metamorphose into full-scale violence (Omojarabi, 2016).

3.10. Mercy corps' interfaith peacebuilding in Northern Nigeria (IPNN) Programme

In the context of persistent, low-intensity conflict, which has characterised Nigeria's Middle Belt for the past decade, Mercy Corps' IPNN programme, supported by the Gerald A. and Henrietta Rauenhorst Foundation, reduces violent incidents and increases economic activity by leveraging the roles of religious leaders to create interfaith cooperation in a region where ethnicity and religion are closely interlinked (Mercy Corps, 2016). The intervention was initiated because the land issues (e.g., land encroachment and blockage of cattle routes) were identified as the key driver of conflict in Plateau State. Similarly, negative attitudes between communities articulated as a lack of trust or patience and spillover of violence from neighbouring communities were other drivers of conflict, both of which are somewhat linked to ethnic and religious identities (Mercy Corps, 2016).

3.11. The Imam and the Pastor interfaith initiative in Kaduna

The two faith leaders made a documentary film that shows how two men came to have legitimate grievances against groups within the other faith. The imam and pastor discussed how they were hostile to members of the opposing faith and that their thoughts centred on revenge for years. But in 1995, the two met unexpectedly at a leadership meeting and they were challenged by a fellow acquaintance to make peace. The imam started by making several overtures to Pastor James and, eventually, the two built a friendship based on trust and respect.

They now travel within and outside Nigeria together as friends to promote peace and inter-religious harmony. They channel their efforts to forge understanding and cooperation between Christian and Muslim clergy and train them in conflict prevention. They focus on previous violent conflicts in Nigeria and what religion says about forgiveness and cooperation (The Imam and the Pastor, 2013).

3.12. Positive impact of the CSO role in peacebuilding

The intervention of the faith-based organisation in the post-election in Kenya has reconciled disputes from elections between political parties. It has also resolved land disputes in the Rift Valley region because there were reported cases of violence in the country over land and post-election violence after the subsequent elections in 2017. This further depicts the influence of religious organisations in mediating, assisting, and changing the attitudes of its faithful, NCCK achieved success in preventing, managing and building peace because Kenya is a predominantly Christian country though there is a sizeable population of Muslims who are mostly regarded as migrants from Somalia and Ethiopia who are mostly found in the port city of Mombasa and Eldoret.

Unlike the post-election violence in Kenya, farmer-pastoralist conflict in Plateau State had always generated religious and ethnic interpretations. This necessitated the involvement of NGOs from both Christianity and Islam in the peacebuilding initiatives to train and educate as well as caution their followers on the need to live harmoniously to end the cycle of violence in their communities through interfaith programmes where issues bothering all parties are discussed and resolved. Additionally, the interfaith peacebuilding has succeeded in mitigating renewed conflict between farmers and pastoralists in Plateau State though there were pockets of clashes in the Northern part of the state. The incorporation of religious

or faith leaders in the peace process and building showed their potential and relevance to influence the attitudes and actions of their followers. An IPNN organised by Mercy Corps (2016) showed that the faith leaders have played a great role in the reducing outbreak of violence in Plateau State. They initiated dialogues and mediations between farmer-pastoralist when there was a misunderstanding or farmland trespass and destruction of crops on the farm between farmers who were mostly Christians and pastoralists predominantly Muslim.

However, despite the intervention and involvement CSOs in peacebuilding in Plateau State, the violence persists between the pastoralist and farmer as in 2018 when a lot of deaths were recorded from both sides, cattle were stolen and crops were destroyed on the farms. But in the case of Kenya, the intervention of CSOs has been successful in forestalling the occurrence of post-election violence after the subsequent general elections in 2013 and 2017. All the elections despite hot contests between rival political parties and ethnic differences, the outcome elections have not resulted in violence. Even in the 2017 Presidential election, the main opposition presidential rejected the results and the court nullified the elections and ordered a fresh election, which the incumbent president Uhuru Kenyatta won because the opposition candidate Raila Odinga refused to participate in the fresh election, there was no violence. This is the result of the awareness, education, orientation, and grassroots programmes carried out by the CSOs in the country which taught the citizens how to ventilate their political, economic, ethnic and religious grievances in an appropriate pattern without resorting to violence.

3.13.   Negative impact of CSOs during peacebuilding

In many Western countries, millions of dollars, pounds and euros are allocated annually directly to advocacy NGOs active in other countries or indirectly for distribution to NGOs via international organisations such as various UN agencies. In many Western countries, millions of dollars, pounds and euros are allocated annually directly to advocacy NGOs active in other countries, or indirectly for distribution to NGOs via international organisations such as various UN agencies. Most of the global NGOs are based in the West while their activities are often focused on other parts of the world (Asia, the Middle East, South America etc.). Many establish country-specific branches and local alliances, creating concerns that they are arms of foreign powers. The funders that provide the source of power and influence are important elements in this process. Funders are enablers, and when NGOs are supported by private and distant foundations to promote particular agendas, or when the primary donors are political officials in Western foreign ministries and development agencies and with no accountability in the target countries, the boundaries are blurred (Steinberg & Wertman, 2018).

In the realm of private funding for NGOs, controversy is reflected in India regarding the Ford Foundation and Christian aid groups for violating the Hindu religious traditions by attempted move to preach religious conversion. For example, in Hungary and the Czech Republic, as well as other parts of Central and Eastern Europe and Russia, the criticism and controversy related to the activities of George Soros and his Open Society Foundations. In these cases, officials and institutions in the target countries often view the NGOs and their funder-enablers as sources of foreign manipulation that undermine national independence and the democratic process (Steinberg & Wertman, 2018).

Similarly, critics like Popplewell (2015) at the International NGO Training and Research Centre Oxford have challenged the legitimacy of civil society actors involved in peacebuilding and highlighted the artificial nature of civil societies in post-conflict countries. For these critics, only a more locally rooted civil society rather than one dominated by externally supported NGOs can build truly sustainable and emancipatory peace. For example, in Sudan, the Government in 2010 expelled NGOs (ACF, CARE, SC-US, MSF-H and -F and SUDO) supporting emergency nutrition programmes for moderately or severely malnourished individuals in the three Darfur states for interference in the domestic affairs of the country.

4. Conclusion

Civil society organisations is an umbrella term that comprises all types of non-governmental organisations involved in all forms of activities in conflict prevention, conflict management and peacebuilding. The use of non-military or non-use force to resolve conflict provides lasting solutions because it brings the aggrieved parties to the roundtable to vent their grievances, complaints and perspectives about the issue at hand. The participation of the civil society organisations in volatile situations in Kenya and Nigeria has yielded tremendous success because they utilise the residents affected by the violence to fine-tune measures to address the problems. The CSOs had, apart from dialogues, initiated educational programmes that educated the victims of the violence on the importance of peace and the necessity to live in harmony with one another.

In this regard, people in these areas realised that their problems, grudges and contestations can be resolved through non-violent ways rather than resorting to violence which is costly and destructive. Therefore, civil society organisations have become veritable tools in conflict prevention, management and peacebuilding in almost all parts of the world beleaguered by armed violence and communal disputes as well as political conflict.

5. Recommendations

Based on the study, the following recommendations are given:

1) The CSO should look for groups that are trusted, respected and listened to by all sides, including decision-makers and officials in the affected societies.

2) Identifying joint strategic avenues of working with the government, the private sector and other relevant civil society sectors to maximise peacebuilding impact. Overcoming certain perceptions and identifying areas of possible compromise and common ground will be an important step in this regard.

3) Developing joint advocacy and proactive engagement strategy with key donors in Kenya committed to peacebuilding. This is not a campaign but a proactive way of working with donors to jointly identify the greatest peacebuilding and conflict prevention needs in Kenya right now and the best approaches to collaborating and making progress on these. Advocating for joint principles around contentious issues such as the countering violent extremism programming and policy agenda is one important example in this regard.

4) Agreeing on a division of labour amongst peacebuilding organisations: Who is best placed to do what (comparative advantage)? What should be stopped and who should stop it? What are we not doing enough of? Who are we currently not engaging?

5) The need for an independent, non-operational, convening and facilitating entity is critical for the Kenyan peacebuilding sector to act more collectively.

References

Austin, A. (2004). Early warning and the field: A Cargo Cult Science? In A. Austin, M. Fischer, & N. Ropers (Eds.), *Transforming ethnopolitical conflict: The Berghof handboo*k (pp. 129–150). Wiesbaden, Germany: VS Verlag. Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-663-05642-3_7

Bagudu, N. (2005). *Recrudescent civil disturbances and human rights: The Jos and state wide crisis.* Jos, Nigeria: League for Human Rights. Retrieved from https://www.africabib.org/rec.php?RID=292989709

Bouta, T., Kadayifci-Orellana, S. A., & Abu-Nimer, M. (2005). *Faith-based peacebuilding: Mapping and analysis of Christian, Muslims and multi-faith actors*. Clingendal, The Netherlands: Netherlands Institute of International Relations, Clingendal. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Mohammed-Abu-Nimer/publication/228716647_Faith-Based_Peace-Building_Mapping_and_Analysis_of_Christian_Muslim_and_Multi-Faith_Actors/links/02e7e52ccda65e0a87000000/Faith-Based-Peace-Building-Mapping-and-Analysis-of-Christian-Muslim-and-Multi-Faith-Actors.pdf

Emelonye, U., & Buergenthal, R. M. (2011). *Nigeria: Peace-building through integration and citizenship.* Rome, Italy: International Development Law Organization (IDLO). Retrieved from https://www.idlo.int/sites/default/files/Nigeria%20-%20Peace%20Building%20Through%20Integration%20and%20Citizenship.pdf

Fitzduff, M., & Church, C. (Eds.) (2004). *NGOs at the table: Strategies for gaining influence*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. Retrieved from https://scholarworks.brandeis.edu/esploro/outputs/book/NGOs-at-the-table-strategies-for/9924086533601921

Githigaro, J. M. (2012). Faith-based peacebuilding: A case study of the National Council of Churches of Kenya. *Peace and Conflict Studies, 19*(1), 4. Retrieved from https://nsuworks.nova.edu/pcs/vol19/iss1/4/

Islamic Counselling Initiative of Nigeria (ICIN) (2014). *Security and Good Governance*, September – November. Retrieved from http://icinngo.org/

Islamic Relief South Africa (2014). Retrieved from https://tinyurl.com/399mvprp

JDPC (2012). *EPRT newsletter* (2nd ed.). September.

Katunga, J. (2008). *Lessons about the Catholic Church's role in peace processes and post-conflict reconciliation drawn from the Church's experiences in Africa, particularly the Great Lakes region.* New York NY: The United Nations. Retrieved from https://cpn.nd.edu/assets/243354/2008_john_katunga_lessons_about_the_catholic_church_s_role_in_peace_processes_and_post_conflict_reconciliation.pdfhttps://cpn.nd.edu/assets/243354/2008_john_katunga_lessons_about_the_catholic_church_s_role_in_peace_processes_and_post_conflict_reconciliation.pdf

Large, J. (1998). *The war next door: A study of second-track intervention during the war in ex-Yugoslavia*. Gloucestershire, UK: Hawthorn Press. Retrieved from https://librarysearch.lse.ac.uk/primo-explore/fulldisplay/44LSE_ALMA_DS21134206950002021/44LSE_VU1

Lepomäki, M. (2017). *Supporting the peace mediation efforts of religious leaders: An empirical study of co-operation between Finnish NGOs and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland* (Master's thesis). Peace, Mediation and Conflict Research, Faculty of Management University of Tampere. Retrieved from https://trepo.tuni.fi/handle/10024/101008

Mercy Corps Nigeria (2016). *Role of religion and religious leaders in farmer-pastoralist conflict in Plateau State: An inter-religious peacebuilding in Northern Nigeria (IPNN)*. Qualitative Research Report. Retrieved from https://www.mercycorps.org/research-resources/role-religion-farmer-pastoralist-conflict

Miall, H. (2007). *Conflict transformation: A multi-dimensional task* (p. 12). Bergh of Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management. Retrieved from http://www.berghof-handbook.net/articles/miall_handbook.pdf.

Omojarabi, W.F. (2016). *An assessment of the military special task force and non-governmental organisations interventions in peacebuilding initiatives in Jos North LGA of Plateau State (2010–2015)* (Unpublished M. Sc. Dissertation). The Department of Political Science and International Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria Nigeria. Retrieved from https://codemint.net/political-science/an-assessment-of-the-military-special-task-force-and-non-governmental-organisations-interventions-in-peacebuilding-initiatives-in-jos-north-lga-of-plateau-state-2010-2015/index.html

Paffenholz, T., & Spurk, C. (2006). Civil society, civic engagement, and peacebuilding: Conflict prevention & reconstruction. *Social. Development Papers*, *36*. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/download/31764499/CIVIL_SOCIETY_AND_PEACE_BUILDING.PDF

Parver, C., & Wolf, R. (2008). Civil society's involvement in post-conflict peacebuilding. *International Journal of Legal Information, 36*(1), 51–79. Retrieved from https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-journal-of-legal-information/article/civil-societys-involvement-in-postconflict-peacebuilding/0F29E5835EEFBA33AF1701F9DEB300DA

Peace Direct (2019). *Civil society & inclusive peace: Key insights and lessons from a global consultation convened on Peace Insight* (pp. 1–33). Retrieved from https://www.peacedirect.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/P833-PD-IPTI-LVP-Report_LR2_FINALWEB.pdf

Popplewell, R. (2015). Three big questions for peacebuilders working with local civil society. *Briefing Paper,* (42), 1–15.

Salam: Institute for Peace and Justice (2005). *Muslim peacebuilding actors in the Balkans, Horn of Africa, and the Great Lakes regions*. The Hague, the Netherlands: Clingendael Institute.

Sentama, E. (2009). *Peacebuilding in post-genocide Rwanda: The role of cooperatives in restoration of interpersonal relationships* (Ph.D. thesis). Peace and Development Research, Göteborg, Sweden. Retrieved from http://154.68.126.42/handle/123456789/1159

Steinberg, G. & Wertman, B. (2018). Value clash: Civil society, foreign funding, and national sovereignty. *Global Governance,* (24), 1–10. Retrieved from https://heinonline.org/hol-cgi-bin/get_pdf.cgi?handle=hein.journals/glogo24&section=5

Suifon, T. Z. (2005). Early warning, early response: Preventing violent conflicts. In P. van Tongeren, M. Brenk, M. Hellema, & J. Verhoeven (Eds.), *People building peace 2, successful stories of civil society* (pp. 421–432). London, UK: Lynne Rienner.

The Imam and The Pastor (2013). *A film guide*. Washington, DC: Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs.

United States Institute of Peace (2004). *What works? Evaluating interfaith dialogue programs*. *Special Report* 123. Retrieved from https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/resources/sr123.pdf

Wang, M., Park, A., & Giles, J. (2006). *Civil society and peacebuilding: Potential, limitations and critical factors*. Retrieved from https://agris.fao.org/agris-search/search.do?recordID=US2012415374.

Zartman, I. W. (1995). *Putting things back together. In collapsed states: The disintegration and restoration of legitimate authority* (pp. 267–273). Boulder, CO: Lynner Rienner. Retrieved from ttps://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=-t-KiA-GNlYC&oi=fnd&pg=PP9&dq=Zartman,+I.+W.+(1995).+Putting+Things+Back+Together.+In+Collapsed+States:+The+Disintegration+and+Restoration+of+Legitimate+Authority.+Co:+Lynner+Rienner,+267-73+&ots=3fs77KgVtn&sig=YYEQLc9XDu20XJa5ZkFQmjmKKm0