

Exploring The Elements and Phases of Peacebuilding in Post-Conflict Communities in Nigeria

¹Heman Johnson

¹Department of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution, Faculty of Social Sciences,
National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja
Email: hjohnson@noun.edu.ng

Abstract

Preventing crises and conflict recurrence has always been a primary concern for post-conflict states. Even when a violent conflict has ended, the task of establishing a lasting peace frequently appears daunting. It is against this background that the study examined processes, elements and phases of peacebuilding in post-conflict communities. Premised on human need theory, the study employed a qualitative methodology that includes a desk study and purposeful sampling of events in Nigeria and Africa. Secondary sources of data collection used include textbooks, the internet, periodicals and so on. Additionally, the narrative method of analysis was used in interpreting the data. Findings showed that good governance, security, reconciliation and others constitute strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding. On the other hand, stakeholders in post-conflict peacebuilding were found to be businesses, media, religions, civil society, and the likes of others. Likewise, conflict management, transformation and resolution account for phases of peacebuilding. Moreover, a sustainable transformative process in a post-conflict environment is therefore needed for long-lasting peace.

Keywords: Elements, Nigeria, Peacebuilding, Phases and Post-conflict communities

Introduction

Conflict has been an inherent aspect of human existence, with numerous communities experiencing various forms of war or conflict. Nigeria, for instance, has faced conflicts such as civil war, ethnoreligious conflicts, farmers-herders crises, and land disputes (Albert, 2019). Unfortunately, conflict has predominantly resulted in harm, causing the destruction of lives and property, as well as the erosion of relationships, which fosters distrust within communities (David, 2000). The ultimate goal is to shift mindsets away from violence and confrontation, promoting a culture of peace that strengthens institutions to uphold justice, respect human rights, ensure equality, foster good governance, encourage political participation, ensure transparency and accountability, and facilitate the equitable distribution of resources. The term "peacebuilding" was introduced by Boutros Boutros-Ghali in 1995 to encompass both military and civilian efforts aimed at preventing future conflicts by enhancing the necessary infrastructure for long-term peace and post-war reconstruction. Examples of peacebuilding include demilitarization, small arms control, institutional reform, improved police and judicial systems, human rights monitoring, electoral reform, and social and economic development (Boutros-Ghali, 1995)

Multiple schools of thought have emerged in response to David (2000) categorization of three main aspects of peacebuilding: societal rehabilitation, restoration, and reconciliation. Peacebuilding entails implementing programs that address the root causes of conflict and historical grievances while promoting long-term stability and justice. One strategy for peacebuilding is the promotion of interaction through activities such as trade, business, trade unions, professional

gatherings, sports, and other forms of engagement. These interactions help diminish ethnic prejudice and intergroup hostility (Hofmann & Schneckener, 2011). Peacebuilding also plays a crucial role in establishing personal, social, institutional, and political connections that transcend ethnic, religious, class, national, cultural, value, and racial divides (Aggestam & Björkdahl, 2012). With a mandate to eliminate injustice, inequality, marginalization, and oppression, peacebuilding aims to transform structures that perpetuate a violent culture, advocating for nonviolent means of conflict management and resolution (Hofmann & Schneckener, 2011).

Conflict prevention, management, resolution, transformation, and reconciliation are all mechanisms employed in peacebuilding (Hudson, 2009). These mechanisms measure the level of impact or destruction in a post-conflict scenario, accommodating the warring parties and encouraging a shift toward cooperation, collaboration, compromise, and peace talks (Benyera, 2019). Cooperation and collaboration are emphasized to foster peace through interaction, enabling others to participate in decision-making and fostering a sense of togetherness within the community (Osisioma, 2004). This togetherness and cordial relationship encompass a range of conflict resolution techniques, including problem-solving, pursuit of superordinate aims, resource expansion, avoidance, smoothing, compromise, authoritative command, and changes to human and structural variables (Robbins, 2001). Furthermore, peacebuilding supports the rebuilding and rehabilitation of all sectors of war-torn societies, encourages interaction to repair damaged relations, and initiates the restoration of dignity and trust. It acknowledges the unique aspects of each post-conflict situation and promotes the participation of marginalized individuals, while also offering humanitarian assistance to provide hope for war victims (Robbins, 2001). These humanitarian efforts are often provided by the international community, philanthropists, non-governmental organizations, and civil society. Against this backdrop, this study examines the elements and phases of peacebuilding in post-conflict communities in Nigeria with a focus on the significant role of culture in reconstructing post-conflict communities and fostering social solidarity through political inclusiveness, equitable resource distribution, job opportunities, transparency, and accountability. The study is organized into four sections. First, it offers background information on peacebuilding processes. Second, it employs qualitative methodology through content analysis. The third section aligns with conceptual clarification, a theoretical framework, and relevant scholarly literature to shed light on the subject matter. Finally, the fourth section concludes with recommendations. In this context, the paper aims to explore the processes and strategies of peacebuilding in post-conflict communities. It seeks to understand how peacebuilding can mend fractured relationships and establish an environment characterized by trust, love, empathy, and nonviolent conflict resolution mechanisms.

Research Methodology

The study utilized a qualitative methodology, specifically employing content analysis to examine secondary data. Various sources such as textbooks, the internet, periodicals, journals, and both published and unpublished research works were consulted. The purpose of gathering data from scholarly sources was to gain insights into the perspectives on the given topic.

Conceptual Clarifications

The term "peace-building," initially coined by Johan Galtung in 1970, gained further attention when the United Nations published "An Agenda for Peace" in 1992, advocating for proactive peace-making and humanitarian intervention (Boutros-Ghali, 1992). This publication outlined

effective strategies for addressing threats to international peace and security in post-conflict situations. It identified four major areas of activity: preventive diplomacy, peace-making, peacekeeping, and post-conflict peacebuilding.

Preventive diplomacy refers to taking action to prevent disputes from arising or escalating into conflict and limiting their spread (Boutros-Ghali, 1992). Peace-making involves using peaceful means outlined in Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter to bring hostile parties to an agreement. Peacekeeping entails deploying a United Nations presence with the consent of involved parties, exercising restraint in the use of force except in cases of self-defence. Furthermore, peacebuilding encompasses medium to long-term efforts aimed at rebuilding war-affected communities.

Peacebuilding involves the reconstruction of the political, security, social, and economic dimensions of a society emerging from conflict (Ramalingam, 2010). It entails addressing the root causes of the conflict, promoting social and economic justice, and establishing political structures of governance and the rule of law to consolidate peace, reconciliation, and development.

Aggestam and Björkdahl (2012) further explain that peacebuilding is a method focused on understanding the direct cause-effect relationship and employing a problem-solving model to analyze conflicts, identify underlying factors, and propose solutions that address the root causes. International entities such as the United Nations, regional organizations like the African Union (AU) or the European Union (EU), and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) engage in programmatic interventions to address conflict-related issues. These interventions may include third-party interventions such as peacekeeping, peace-making, conflict transformation, conflict prevention, and early warning mechanisms to prevent the escalation of conflicts. They are crucial for addressing the root causes of conflict and dealing with the visible outcomes of war, including military culture and weapon proliferation (Fourchard & Albert, 2003).

Undoubtedly, the concept of peacebuilding encompasses a comprehensive integration of procedures, approaches, and stages necessary for transforming conflict into sustainable, peaceful partnerships and creating safe spaces for disarmament, rehabilitation, and reintegration (Albert, 2001). It serves as a means to support political, economic, social, and military policies and structures aimed at strengthening and solidifying political settlements to address the sources of conflict (Bar-Tal & Bennink, 2004). Aggestam *et al* (2012) similarly assert that peacebuilding is a transformative approach that aims to end undesirable conflicts through programs promoting the rule of law, justice, respect for human rights, equal distribution of resources, and an environment conducive to peace. This process seeks to restore broken relationships and improve the socioeconomic conditions of ordinary people.

Elements of Peacebuilding in Post Conflict Community

Security

The processes and strategies of community peacebuilding encompass various elements aimed at establishing security and promoting harmonious coexistence. Security in areas affected by war entails the establishment of freedom and a secure environment, which addresses the concerns of fear, poverty, and inadequate precautions to prevent future conflicts (Haider, 2009). These efforts involve exposing oppressors, addressing injustices, inequalities, and marginalization, rectifying imbalanced resource distribution, and challenging cultural norms that glorify violence. To achieve this, institutions must be strengthened to uphold the rule of law, respect for human dignity, and the promotion of good policing and inclusive political systems that are transparent, accountable, and

value the culture of the community. Thus, Haider (2009) added that community peacebuilding also involves addressing the multifaceted challenges arising from conflicts, such as poverty, post-traumatic disorders, and health issues faced by conflict victims. To restore hope and create an enabling environment, logistics and humanitarian services must be provided to meet the diverse needs of individuals. These services include counselling, medical support, and general welfare assistance, with the primary goal of protecting victims from further harm and facilitating their recovery (Haider, 2009).

The concept of security extends beyond the absence of physical harm or disruption. It encompasses the creation of a stable and predictable environment that allows individuals and organizations to pursue their goals without fear of harm or interruption. Fischer and Green (2004) describe security as the assurance of such an environment. In the context of international relations in the new millennium, many analysts advocate for a broader understanding of security, incorporating the notion of human security. This expanded perspective considers various aspects that impact human well-being.

In post-conflict communities, safeguarding human security becomes a paramount concern. Long-standing conflicts have negatively affected societies, drawing the attention of peacebuilding actors to prioritize human security. This entails establishing systems that fulfil the responsibility to protect and safeguard the lives and property of citizens. The dissatisfaction resulting from conflict outcomes necessitates addressing multilevel insecurities that profoundly impact conflict management and peacebuilding efforts in war-torn regions (Acharya, 2015).

During and after conflicts, harm is inflicted upon individuals and social structures. High levels of insecurity manifest in harmful actions directed at people and property, including rape, looting, and intercommunal strife (Nwanmuoh, Dibua, Tochukwu, Linus & Obi-Okonkwo, 2021). To them the vulnerable groups, such as women, children, and the elderly, suffer the most from these atrocities. Consequently, Oyedele (2019) opine that peacebuilding strategies must adopt a holistic and pragmatic approach that prioritizes problem-solving. Identifying the root causes of conflict is crucial, and addressing human security concerns in post-conflict communities is of utmost importance. In this regard, Oyedele further stress that the following strategies are vital to community peacebuilding:

- i. **Disarmament:** This comprehensive strategy aims to recover arms, ammunition, explosives, and related equipment, preventing their reintegration into society. An illustrative example is the amnesty program initiated by the late President Umaru Musa Yar Aduwa in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The program aimed to address the grievances of militants who took up arms against the Federal Government due to exploitation and neglect. The amnesty program provided an opportunity for peace, and participants were able to benefit from government policies.
- ii. **Demobilization:** Following disarmament, demobilization involves registering and collecting necessary information from members of militant groups who voluntarily surrendered their arms. This phase prepares them for reintegration by admitting them to designated camps, where they receive documentation, counselling, and training on nonviolence. President Mohammed Buhari's safe heaven corridor initiative in the North East of Nigeria serves as a relevant example, aiming to deradicalize and reintegrate repented *Boko Haram* members.

- iii. Reintegration: This phase focuses on reintegrating the group that surrendered their arms back into the social and economic fabric of society. Government institutions partner with stakeholders to coordinate this process, aiming to make the groups economically independent and capable of leveraging their skills for productive ends. Reintegration efforts involve placing individuals in schools and skill acquisition centers within and outside the country. The case of repented Boko Haram members undergoing skills training in Gombe state, North East Nigeria, exemplifies this phase. Additionally, policies such as the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme, the integration of major languages into the school curriculum, and the establishment of unity schools emerged as initiatives to reunite Nigerians following the protracted civil war from 1967 to 1970.

In summary, the processes and strategies of community peacebuilding entail establishing security and addressing the multifaceted challenges that arise in post-conflict settings. By implementing comprehensive strategies like disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration, peacebuilding efforts strive to create a secure and harmonious environment that upholds human security, promotes the well-being of individuals, and restores social cohesion.

Justice and Reconciliation

According to Bar-Tal *et al* (2004) the concept of reconciliation should be reconsidered as a fundamental element for establishing stable peace in post-conflict communities. This notion has been particularly relevant in the resolution of conflicts in West African countries, as it is seen as a crucial factor in shifting the current state of peace towards a sustainable and enduring peace. This transformative process of reconciliation encompasses profound cognitive changes in beliefs, ideologies, and emotions, not only among leaders but also throughout all sectors of society (Bar-Siman-Tov, 2000). Moreover, reconciliation entails the restoration of friendship and harmony between formerly warring factions, transforming their hostile and resentful relationships into friendly and harmonious ones (Ackerman, 1994). It is important to note that reconciliation is not limited to international conflicts; it encompasses conflicts at various levels, ranging from familial and inter-communal disputes to ethnic conflicts and civil wars (Chukwudifu, 2002). Therefore, it primarily takes place within divided societies or within a country following interethnic, interracial, or interreligious conflicts. These conflicts often exhibit characteristics of protracted, zero-sum struggles, involving extensive violence, substantial casualties, and a build-up of animosity and hatred. For instance, in Nigeria, shortly after assuming office as the democratically elected President, President Olusegun Obasanjo established the Human Rights Violations Investigation Panel, known as the Oputa panel, headed by Justice Chukwudifu Oputa, a respected retired Justice of the Supreme Court (Bar-Siman-Tov, 2000). The creation of this commission was greeted with great enthusiasm by the public, and it actively sought and received testimonies and evidence from individuals affected by past human rights abuses. The panel commenced hearings on October 23, 2000, to address the historical grievances and human rights violations in Nigeria (Oyedele, 2019). Similarly, in South Africa, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established in 1995 by the newly formed parliament through the "Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act" (No. 34, 1995). The objective of this commission was to foster national unity and reconciliation by transcending past conflicts and divisions through elements such as forgiveness, justice, mercy, empathy, kindness, and love (Bar-Siman-Tov, 2000). These examples highlight the significance of reconciliation in peacebuilding within post-conflict communities,

illustrating its potential to heal wounds, address grievances, and promote enduring harmony and coexistence.

Humanitarian intervention

In post-conflict communities in Nigeria, community peacebuilding efforts involve various agencies and donors engaging in interventions aimed at providing relief materials to conflict victims, thereby supporting and strengthening their situation through humanitarian assistance (Philpott & Powers, 2010). These services strive to foster a conducive atmosphere where the distribution of social resources brings relief to those affected by conflict (Acharya, 2015). For example, extensive humanitarian interventions have been carried out in Northeast Nigeria due to the detrimental impact of insurgency, resulting in displacement, loss of life, property destruction, and significant trauma. Consequently, a wide range of humanitarian services, including healthcare, counselling, education, food provision, and shelter, have been rendered. It is crucial to note that such interventions occur when the territorial state is either reluctant or unable to effectively protect those in danger (David, 1992). The humanitarian approach towards individuals in need is inherently characterized by care, concern, and an earnest desire to alleviate suffering.

Good Governance

In the context of post-conflict community peacebuilding, the significance of good governance cannot be overstated. It plays a pivotal role in strengthening the peacebuilding process and ensuring justice, human rights, and the rule of law are upheld. One essential aspect of good governance is the provision of fundamental amenities like latrines, shelter, and other social facilities. This contributes to the creation of a secure environment where humanitarian services can effectively operate and thrive (Roeder & Rothchild, 2005).

Moreover, Acharya (2015) argues that governments have the power to significantly impact the daily lives of citizens through improved service delivery. Therefore, a successful government must be closely attuned to understanding the basic needs of its people and implementing policies and interventions that are centered on meeting those needs. This responsibility extends beyond providing essential infrastructure, such as drinking water, waste management, public conveniences, recreational facilities, parks, and local road networks. It also encompasses sectors like education, including primary and secondary schooling, early childhood education, public healthcare, and social assistance (Philpott & Powers, 2010).

In conclusion, peacebuilding is a comprehensive and transformative process that aims to address conflicts, rebuild societies, and create sustainable peace through a range of strategies and interventions. By understanding the causes of conflicts and implementing targeted measures, peacebuilders work towards establishing a just and peaceful society.

Stakeholders in Post Conflict Community Peace Building (Multi-Track Diplomacy)

The concept of multi-track diplomacy has undergone significant development over the years, with its roots traced back to Joseph Montville's 1981 article on foreign affairs. Montville introduced the distinction between track one and track two diplomacy. Building upon this foundation, Ambassador John W. McDonald published the seminal work "Conflict Resolution: Track Two Diplomacy" in 1985, which further expanded the understanding of non-governmental approaches to conflict resolution. McDonald's subsequent contributions led to the inclusion of additional

tracks, resulting in the publication of the book "Multi-Track Diplomacy" in 1991, co-authored with Dr. Louise Diamond, presenting a comprehensive systems approach to peace.

The framework of multi-track diplomacy encompasses nine distinct tracks, each playing a unique role in promoting peace and stability within post-conflict communities. The first track, referred to as Government or peace-making through diplomacy, encompasses official diplomatic processes, policy-making, and peacebuilding initiatives undertaken by governmental entities. An example of this can be seen in the efforts of the Nigerian federal government, which has implemented policies and programs, such as the demobilization, disassociation, reintegration, and reconciliation (DDRR) programs, to provide relief to victims of insurgency in the north-eastern region.

The second track, nongovernment/professional or peace-making through conflict resolution, focuses on the involvement of professional non-state actors in analyzing, preventing, resolving, and managing international conflicts. The influence of this track can be seen through the interventions of entities like the Dangote Group, which has provided support and resources in various conflicts.

Additionally, the third track, business or peace-making through commerce, highlights the role of economic opportunities, international friendship, informal communication channels, and other business-related factors in facilitating peacebuilding efforts. For instance, businesses like Dangote have played a significant role in conflict resolution through their contributions.

The fourth track, private citizen or peace-making through personal involvement, recognizes the contributions of individual citizens in peace and development activities. This involvement can manifest through citizen diplomacy, exchange programs, private voluntary organizations, non-governmental organizations, and special interest groups.

The fifth track, research, training, and education or peace-making through learning, encompasses various spheres related to education and knowledge acquisition. This includes research conducted by universities, think tanks, and specialized research centers, as well as training programs that equip practitioners with essential skills such as negotiation, mediation, conflict resolution, and third-party facilitation.

Activism, the sixth track, involves peace and environmental activism focused on issues such as disarmament, human rights, social and economic justice, and advocacy for specific governmental policies.

The seventh track, religion or peace-making through faith in action, examines the role of spiritual and religious communities in fostering peace-oriented beliefs and actions, encompassing movements based on pacifism, sanctuary, and nonviolence.

The eighth track, funding or peace-making through providing resources, emphasizes the critical role of the funding community, including foundations and individual philanthropists, in supporting activities undertaken by other tracks.

Lastly, the ninth track, communications and the media or peace-making through Information, focuses on the influence of media platforms such as print, film, video, radio, electronic systems, and the arts in shaping and expressing public opinion.

Understanding the multi-track diplomacy framework and its nine distinct tracks enables stakeholders engaged in post-conflict community peace building to recognize the diverse range of actors and avenues available to promote sustainable peace and reconciliation. By strategically

engaging these various tracks, stakeholders can foster comprehensive and collaborative approaches to address the complex challenges that arise in post-conflict contexts.

Phases of Peacebuilding in Post-Conflict Environment

Conflict Transformation

Conflict transformation, according to Lederach (2001) is a prescriptive idea. This means that conflict can have negative implications on its own. However, depending on how it is handled, the repercussions can be regulated or modified to improve self-images, relationships, and social systems. This is usually accomplished by altering people's or groups' views of issues, actions, and other people or groups. When actors' interests, values, and needs are contrasting or irreconcilable, effective conflict transformation can work to improve mutual understanding by changing perceptions and emphasizing differences between people and positions. When actors' interests, values, and needs are contrasting or irreconcilable, a fair understanding of one another through contact and communication can help.

Conflict Management

In the context of post-conflict communities in Nigeria, conflict management plays a crucial role in fostering sustainable peace, reconciliation, and development. Post-conflict areas often grapple with deep-rooted divisions, grievances, and divergent interests among various groups, which can hinder progress and lead to renewed tensions (Clifford & Ejike, 2022). Hence, the practice of identifying and handling conflicts sensibly, fairly, and efficiently becomes paramount in rebuilding these communities. Similarly, Clifford *et al* (2022) state that after the cessation of hostilities, unresolved issues and perceived incompatibilities may continue to surface, necessitating a comprehensive conflict management approach. This entails understanding the complexities of the conflicts and addressing the underlying causes, such as historical grievances, political marginalization, socioeconomic disparities, or resource competition.

Effective conflict management in post-conflict Nigeria involves promoting dialogue and constructive engagement among different stakeholders, including government authorities, community leaders, civil society organizations, and marginalized groups. It requires creating spaces for open discussions, where diverging opinions, objectives, and needs can be expressed and reconciled in a peaceful manner. Given the country's diverse cultural, ethnic, and religious landscape, conflict resolution strategies must be culturally sensitive and inclusive (Mayer, 2020). Thus, empowering local leaders and community members with conflict resolution skills can help bridge divides and foster a sense of ownership in the peacebuilding process. Furthermore, in the aftermath of conflict, rebuilding the economy and fostering socio-economic opportunities are critical to prevent the resurgence of violence. Accordingly, Mayer (2020) opine that effective conflict management can help mitigate conflict in post conflict communities, which can significantly contribute to overall stability and development in post-conflict communities.

In today's rapidly changing market environment, post-conflict communities in Nigeria are seeking to demonstrate their potential and contribute to the nation's progress. By developing a culture of conflict management and resolution, individuals can enhance their abilities to work collaboratively and mitigate potential conflicts that may arise as they strive to showcase their value in the community, they are part of. Additionally, conflict management plays an integral role in the post-conflict reconstruction process in Nigeria. By addressing conflicts sensibly, fairly, and efficiently,

these communities can pave the way for lasting peace, sustainable development, and improved well-being for all their members.

Conflict Prevention

Conflict prevention is a broad term that refers to a variety of activities and strategies within the field of peacebuilding that is deployed to preempt and subsequently neutralise potential triggers to widespread violent conflict. Additionally, the former UN secretary-general Boutros Ghali (1995) asserts that conflict prevention since its inception, the concept has grown in popularity in fields of diplomacy as key actors and institutions have increasingly shifted from a culture of reaction to prevention in their approach to violent conflict. For instance, the current President of Nigeria Mohamadu Buhari prevented the political conflict from escalating in the Gambia by a prompt intervention which led Yahya Jammeh to transfer power to president-elect Adama Barrow in 2017.

Peacemaking

Peacemaking also entails systemic transformation or the process of enhancing justice and equality across the entire social system. This may entail the abolition of oppression, increased resource sharing, and nonviolent dispute resolution between groups of people. Each of these activities builds on the previous one. In other words, human transformation supports social system transformation, while systemic changes facilitate personal transformation. Truth, justice, and mercy, as well as empowerment and interdependence, are essential for both types of development. These ideas are typically perceived as opposed; but, for reconciliation or "peace" to occur, they must come together (Taylor, 2002).

Peace Keeping

Peacekeeping's a little like emergency medicine when dealing with significant conflict. Protecting the injured person from additional harm is the first step. Then and only then can the treatment and healing processes begin (surgery and recovery, for example). The first step in resolving a violent conflict is to get people to stop injuring each other. This is frequently accomplished by placing a neutral intermediary between the duelling factions to physically separate them. "Peacekeeping" is the name for this. After the gunfire has ceased, political officials will meet to try to reach an agreement on a political solution to the crisis, a process known as "peacemaking." For instance, Nigeria contributed immensely to the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), an interventionist mediations force to end the protracted Liberian Civil War, where the Government of Nigeria puts the financial cost of 8 billion dollars (over N800billion) apart from a large number of lost and maimed soldiers in 1987 (Curle, 1995).

Theoretical framework

The paper adopts John Burton's Human Needs Theory, which was propounded in 1991. This theory is a conflict resolution approach that highlights the crucial role of unmet human needs in the emergence and perpetuation of conflicts. According to Tamunodiepiriye, Bedzra and Essuman (2022), addressing these needs can significantly enhance peacebuilding efforts. In the context of post-conflict communities in Nigeria, where tensions and grievances may persist despite formal peace agreements, conflicts often stem from unmet human needs, such as security, recognition, identity, participation, and well-being. Thus, fostering reconciliation and sustainable peace

requires identifying and addressing these specific unmet needs among different groups and individuals, which continue to fuel tensions.

Furthermore, communication and dialogue play a significant role in understanding the perspectives and unmet needs of conflicting parties. Facilitating dialogue sessions can lead to mutual understanding of these needs and act as drivers for reconciliation, building trust for lasting peace in post-conflict communities. Identifying trust-building measures that promote cooperation among various stakeholders, including local communities, governmental organizations, NGOs, and international actors, becomes essential.

Trust building enhances the capability of communities in the peacebuilding process, fostering ownership and participation in nation-building. Including these communities increases the likelihood of successful outcomes and long-term peace. Moreover, meeting the basic human needs of individuals in post-conflict communities is vital for creating a conducive environment for peace (Tamunodiepiriye *et al*, 2022). The use of Burton's theory in post-conflict communities in Nigeria is crucial to achieve stable and lasting peace that addresses the core concerns of the affected community. This approach acknowledges the complexities of the conflict and emphasizes the importance of addressing human needs to achieve sustainable peace and development, paving the way for a brighter and more harmonious future in post-conflict communities.

On the other hand, the theory helps peacebuilders recognize that conflicts often arise from unmet human needs. By conducting a thorough needs assessment in affected communities, they can identify the specific needs that have been neglected or violated during the conflict, with physical and security needs being the most pressing. Providing access to clean water, food, healthcare, and ensuring safety and protection are essential steps in creating an environment where peace can take root.

Additionally, the theory highlights the significance of social needs in peacebuilding. Promoting intergroup dialogue, reconciliation, and fostering a sense of belonging among different communities in Nigeria can help reduce tensions and promote cooperation.

Moreover, communities that have experienced conflict may have suffered severe human rights abuses and loss of self-esteem. Addressing cognitive needs through education initiatives can help disseminate information, promote tolerance, and empower individuals to engage constructively in the rebuilding process. Appreciating aesthetic needs, such as cultural expressions and traditions, can foster mutual respect and understanding among different ethnic and religious groups in Nigeria (Sakai, 2022). Empowering individuals to become active agents of change in post-conflict communities is crucial for sustainable peace.

John Burton's Human Needs Theory provides in post conflict communities a comprehensive framework for understanding the root causes of conflicts and designing effective peacebuilding strategies. By addressing the fundamental human needs of post-conflict communities in Nigeria, peacebuilders can contribute to the establishment of a more stable, inclusive, and sustainable peace. It is crucial to recognize that every conflict is unique, and applying the Human Needs.

Conclusion

In conclusion, peacebuilding is an essential tool for national development that effectively restructures and rebuilds broken relationships, encompassing both social and economic spheres. Through its emphasis on upholding human rights, establishing a just system, promoting equality,

establishing a robust communication infrastructure, and providing necessary training, such as conferences, peacebuilding not only supports peace but also combats violent tendencies, paving the way for lasting and sustainable peace. Moreover, by fostering empathy, compassion, and kindness among parties with violent inclinations, peacebuilding agents enable a shift towards long-term peace through reconciliation discourse. This healing process addresses the root causes of conflict and restores shattered relationships, fostering mutual understanding and collaboration. In the context of post-conflict communities in Nigeria, the implementation of effective processes and strategies of peacebuilding becomes crucial to foster sustainable peace and development.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made;

- i. Firstly, while formal strategies are essential in the peacebuilding process, it is crucial to recognize the significance of community-based efforts. Community peacebuilding plays a vital role in achieving positive peace, and communities should prioritize activities that promote social solidarity and unity among their members. This involves reinstating the recognition of each other as fellow human beings and fostering a shared concern for the common welfare and well-being of all individuals.
- ii. Secondly, culture and tradition have a significant impact on conflict resolution and the strengthening of social bonds. People derive meaning and identity from their cultural heritage, so it is essential to encourage the internalization and sharing of cultural attitudes and values among community members. Furthermore, the transmission of these cultural aspects to future generations aids in reconstructing societies based on a specific cultural framework and
- iii. Finally, implementing peace talks, training sessions, seminars, and integrating peace education into the primary, secondary, and tertiary curriculum can significantly contribute to teaching individuals how to resolve conflicts through dialogue. These initiatives also provide opportunities for recreational activities and improve living conditions by creating job opportunities, thus reducing poverty and unemployment rates. Additionally, mechanisms should be strengthened to expose and address corruption, ensuring the equal distribution of resources within the community.

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