

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

INSTITUTE OF DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

**RELIGION, GENDER AND PEACEBUILDING IN AFRICA; A CASE
STUDY OF KENYA 2007/8**

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(R52/80690/2012)

**A Research Project submitted in partial fulfillment of The Degree of Master
of Arts in International Conflict Management**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my original work and has not been submitted for any qualification of this or any other university.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to God, without whom I would not have managed to be where I am now. My family has also been supportive throughout my academic years; to Mum, Joyce Gesare, you are forever appreciated for your support and prayers. To Dad, Dr. John Onsati, your insight and advice have helped me to grow intellectually. My brothers; Japheth Onchagwa, Gerald Mandela and Brian Onsati, thank you for your support and for believing in me. I love you all.

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ABSTRACT

The post-election violence of 2007/8 in Kenya unearthed the deep-rooted differences that had led to animosity between different ethnic groups. Eldoret was one of the worst hit towns in Kenya during the violence recording the worst cases of violence. This conflict demanded a peacebuilding initiative that emphasized the addressing of the uncovered differences and the setting up of a reconciliation program that would build new long-lasting and peaceful relationships between the different communities. Research into the peacebuilding in Kenya has mainly focused on the role of the government and of the international community while only glossing over the role of religion and of women. This paper takes an in-depth analysis of the role of religious organizations; especially the Christian and Islamic faiths in undertaking peacebuilding in Eldoret. It further looks at how women were involved in peacebuilding activities, especially through the religious platform availed by the different religious institutions available in the society.

Through unstructured interviews and open ended questionnaires, the study explains the vital role that religious institutions and women in the said religious organizations carried out peacebuilding activities. The findings demonstrate that religious organizations and women through these religious institutions have been instrumental in conducting peacebuilding activities, especially the reconciliation of perpetrators into society and trauma healing for the victims of the post-election violence.

The challenges faced by the women involved in religious peacebuilding highlight the need for greater recognition of the peace activities of these women in order to achieve a greater global support for women engaged in religious peacebuilding.

CHAPTER ONE: RELIGION, GENDER AND PEACEBUILDING IN AFRICA; A CASE STUDY OF KENYA 2007/8

1.1 Background to the Study

Religion is a vital social entity¹, and with this, lays its potential for building peace in conflict ridden societies and encouraging willingness to peaceful coexistence with former warring parties.² ‘Religious peacebuilding is hardly a new phenomenon; as religious communities and actors have long been involved in building peaceful and just societies.’³ The end of the Cold War led to an increased interest in the role of religion in identity conflict and most importantly, religion’s potential in peacebuilding. The importance of understanding religious traditions is now highlighted as it plays a vital role in the conflict resolution and peacebuilding practices in post conflict areas.⁴

The core values of Abrahamic faiths⁵ like forgiveness and the acceptance of the responsibility of past errors⁶ have provided the background for religious institutions to engage in peacebuilding measures in the quest for social justice.⁷ This has led to the emergence of ‘religious peacemakers’ who R. Appleby defines as ‘religious individuals or representatives of faith-based

¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2003) Netherlands, Paragraph 3.1

² Coward H. and Smith Gordon S. S., (eds.), (2004) *Religion and Peacebuilding*, Albany, N.Y: State University of New York Press, 2

³ Marshal K. et al., (2011) “Women in Religious Peacebuilding,” *USIP Peaceworks, No. 7*, Washington DC: USIP pp.1-21:11

⁴ Ibid, Little & Appleby, *A Moment of Opportunity*, 5

⁵ Christianity and Islam are regarded as Abrahamic faiths because they trace their ancestry back to Abraham. According to the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs report of 2003, these two religions are the most widespread in Africa.

⁶ Vendley J. and D. Little, (1994), ‘Implications for religious communities: Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism and Christianity’, in D. Johnston and S. Sampson (eds.), (1994) *Religion: The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 307

⁷ Ibid

organisations that attempt to help resolve inter-group conflicts and build peace.’⁸ Some of the roles that religious peacemakers can carry out in peacebuilding range from ‘advocacy for peace and human rights, to facilitation of dialogue between all actors.’⁹

Evidence of religion in peacebuilding has been witnessed in Nicaragua, during the civil war between the Sandinista government and the Yatama resistance movement. Religion played a vital role in reconciliation efforts and reintegration of the Yatama rebels back to society in the Nicaraguan East Coast.¹⁰ At the height of the conflict, Lederach notes that religious institutions participated in the negotiations between the two warring parties. Reconciliation efforts were equally spearheaded by religious institutions at the end of the conflict. During reconciliation, religious leaders explained to the community members the terms agreed during negotiations, and through scriptures such as Psalms 85, which refers to ‘the return of the people to their land and the opportunity for peace,’¹¹ the community was urged to accept the rebels back into society and to embrace forgiveness and mercy in their dealings with the former rebels. The reconciliation efforts, heavily hinged on truth telling and forgiveness were supported by the constant reading of the above psalm which supported the initiative in a religious standpoint.¹²

In Africa, religious participation in peacebuilding has not been confined to the pulpit. Mozambique suffered a long civil war since its independence in 1975 between the FRELIMO led government and RENAMO rebels. Efforts to bring an end to the war failed until 1990, when a Catholic-run non-profit organization, Sant’ Egidio facilitated a two-year negotiation between the

⁸ Appleby R. S., (2006) *Building Sustainable Peace: The roles of local and transnational religious actors*. Washington, DC:Georgetown University

⁹ Paffenholz T., *Civil Society and Peacebuilding* (The Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding Working Paper), 5

¹⁰ Lederach J. P., (1997), ‘Building peace: sustainable reconciliation in divided societies,’ in Govers C. and Vermuelen H. (eds.), (1997)*The politics of ethnic consciousness*, Houndmills, UK: Macmillan Press, 13

¹¹ Ibid, Lederach, *Building Peace*, 28

¹² Ibid

two parties.¹³ The organization's reputation of neutrality and compassion encouraged the cooperation of FRELIMO government which eventually contacted the rebels for negotiations and resulted into the end of the civil war, nearly 25 years later.

Women have seldom been passive during peacebuilding efforts; they are more actively involved in peacebuilding than in destroying lives through conflicts.¹⁴ Some of the activities that women have been involved in during peacebuilding efforts include peace advocacy; by waging conflict nonviolently in pursuit of democracy and human rights, they also take up the roles of relief workers, mediators, trauma healing counselors and participation in development and decision making processes.¹⁵

In Liberia, the increasing insecurity and subsequent civil war of 1992 witnessed the incessant participation of the Women of Liberian Mass Action for Peace Campaign (WIPNET) where Muslim and Christian Women joined together to protest the deteriorating security situation in the country. WIPNET advocated for peace to the government and the rebel forces of the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD). In collaboration with other women's peace initiatives such as the Liberian Women Initiative (LWI) and the Women United for Peace and Democracy (WOUPAD) women paved way for the cease fire agreement that was signed in 2003. This was through peace advocacy where the women sent friendly letters to individual warlords asking them to 'put aside their differences and work together for peace'¹⁶ Peace advocacy was further coupled with peaceful demonstrations and awareness campaigns where women threatened to carry out demonstrations on city streets without skirts and *lapas*, in a bid to

¹³ Haynes J., (2009), "Conflict, conflict resolution and peacebuilding: the role of religion in mozambique, nigeria and cambodia," in *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, Vol. 47, No. 1, 32-73: 64

¹⁴ Porter E., (2007), *Peacebuilding: women in international perspective*, New York: Routedledge, 15

¹⁵ Schirch L. and Sewark M., (2005), *The role of women in peacebuilding*, an Issue paper for the Global Patnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict, 7

¹⁶ UNHCR, et al., *Best Practices in Peacebuilding and Non-Violent Conflict Resolution; Some Documented African Women's Peace Initiatives*, 12

pressure the government and rebels to agree to a peace agreement.¹⁷ Alongside all the political campaigns towards peace, the women also organized weekly prayer meetings for peace.

As seen in the case of Liberia, ‘women involved in peacebuilding around the world often draw inspiration and support from religious sources and organizations.’¹⁸ The continued rise of women in leadership in the religious institutions gives hope for the increased effectiveness of women in peace activities through the religious platform. The recent case of the first female bishop to be ordained in the Church of England in July 2014 gives more avenues for women in the inclusion and effective participation in decision making, especially in shedding light on gender issues existent in society and the mobilization of more women to be involved in peacebuilding through the religious platform.

1.2 Statement of the Research

Women’s role in peacebuilding has been acknowledged worldwide with the inception of organizations such as the Convention on the Status of Women (CSW) in 1946, which monitors the status of women worldwide. This was followed by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1981, which ‘established universal standards regarding equality between men and women.’¹⁹ In terms of peacebuilding, the passing of Resolution 1325, marked a highlight for women worldwide as this resolution not only recognized the gendered nature of conflict, but it also called for governments and peace practitioners worldwide to involve women in all aspects of peace and conflict management.

With these international platforms in place, women have increasingly been recognized for their role in peacebuilding efforts. Peace efforts in DRC, which has been plagued by civil war since

¹⁷ Ibid, 11

¹⁸ Ibid, Marshal K., et al., *Women in Religious Peacebuilding*, 2

¹⁹ Ibid, Porter E., *Peacebuilding: Women in International Perspective*, 12

1993²⁰, have been accredited to the invaluable role of women who have formed secular institutions and have contributed to the signing of peace pacts which seek to build sustainable peace. Women, through the formation of several peace-inspired organizations such as the Women's National Committee for Peace, and the National Forum on Women resorted to collective action in the pursuit of peace. Through peace marches and the media, women preached peace to the masses and declared the need to find alternative solutions to the conflict.²¹ These, coupled with appeals to regional leaders such as President Robert Mugabe (Zimbabwe), Nelson Mandela (South Africa) and Konan Bedie (Cote d'Ivoire) collectively led to the signing of peace pacts which started a journey towards peace. The women have also been involved in decision making in the country, through the agreement to participate in Prime Minister Bernard Kolela's government.²²

The involvement of women in peacebuilding, especially through secular organizations has been highlighted in conflict and post conflict societies worldwide. There is however a noticeable gap in the knowledge of women using the religious platform in peacebuilding efforts. Katherine Marshall attributes this to the nature of these women, most of whom prefer anonymity with a desire to help others only in the background without any recognition.²³ This noble attitude however translates into a knowledge gap for both practitioners and policy makers. This is because the vital role of these women is often overlooked and a study of religious peacebuilding is therefore incomplete.

²⁰ In 1993, a civil war erupted in the DRC between Movance Presidentielle and the United Democratic Forces. More than 3,000 people died in this war that was sparked off due to discrepancies in the legislative elections in the same year. In 1997,

²¹ Ibid, UNHCR, et al., *Best Practices*, 20-21

²² Ibid

²³ Ibid, Marshal et al., *Women in Religious Peacebuilding*, 11

This paper seeks to unearth the role of religion in peacebuilding, especially in handling gender issues during reconciliation, and how women used the religious platform to undertake peacebuilding activities in Kenya after the post-election violence in 2007/8 using the case study of Eldoret. This research, therefore, raises the question; in the quest for sustainable peace in Eldoret, is there a relationship between religion, gender and peacebuilding?

1.3 Objectives of the Research

The objectives of this research are;

1. To analyze the interrelationship between religion, gender and peacebuilding in Africa, Kenya in particular
2. To investigate how religious institutions embrace gender in peacebuilding
3. To find out how women use religion to engage in reconciliation

1.4 Literature Review

1.4.1 Peacebuilding

Borrowing on his definition of positive peace as the ‘cooperation and integration between human groups, with less emphasis on the absence of violence,’²⁴ Johan Galtung coined the term peacebuilding which he defined as ‘the progression towards positive peace following the end of war.’²⁵ Later, Boutros Boutros Ghali, the UN Secretary General in 1992, in *An Agenda for Peace*, defined peacebuilding as ‘an action to identify and support structures which tend to strengthen and solidify peace to avoid a relapse into conflict.’²⁶ This definition was then adopted

²⁴ Galtung J., (1967) *Theories of Peace; A Synthetic Approach to Peace Thinking*, Oslo: International Peace Research Institute, 12

²⁵ Ramsbotham O., et al., (2007), *Contemporary conflict resolution: the prevention, management and transformation of deadly conflicts* Cambridge: Polity Press, 186

²⁶ United Nations, (1992), *An Agenda for Peace*

worldwide to refer to preventive diplomacy, preventive development, conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction.²⁷ An understanding of the dynamics of conflict following the end of the Cold War have necessitated the qualifier ‘post-conflict’ which emphasizes the minimalistic military and largely civilian international support to societies emerging from conflict.²⁸

Changing trends of peacebuilding: top – bottom vs. bottom-top peacebuilding

New wars; intra-state wars that increased at the end of the Cold War are characterized by civilian rather than state actors going to war over motives other than national interests. This phenomenon has also been referred to as identity conflicts²⁹ based on the causes of conflict which range from security, identity and participation.³⁰

Lederach aptly offers imageries that describe the two opposing trends in peacebuilding. Top – Bottom peacebuilding has been equated to a house of peace that is built from the top down, there needs not be a foundation for a roof to be installed. This refers to the ‘manipulation of peace agreements made by elites’³¹ and the effects of these decisions are expected to trickle down to the masses. In this type of peacebuilding, there exists ‘top-heavy military security mechanisms and political-administrative structures [that] do not reach ordinary people.’³² Existing civilian

²⁷ Call C., (2004) “*The problem of peacebuilding: how UN thinking has evolved in recent years*,” draft paper prepared for DPA

²⁸ Necla T., (2004), *Post-conflict peacebuilding revisited: achievements, limitations, challenges*, A report prepared for the WSP International/ IPA Peacebuilding Forum Conference, i

²⁹ Ibid, Lederach, *Building Peace*, 16

³⁰ Vermeulen H. and Govers C., (eds.), (1997) “From Political Mobilization to the Politics of Consciousness,” in *The Politics of Ethnic Consciousness*, Houndmills, UK: Macmillan Press, 16

³¹ Ibid, Ramsbotham, et al., *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, 215

³² Ibid, 218

NGOs are small, dispersed and under-resourced,³³ debilitating their impact in peacebuilding in the society.

A major contention against top – bottom peacebuilding lies in the argument that positive peace can seldom be achieved through the signing of peace agreements. Peace needs to be cultivated at the individual and grassroots level in order to achieve sustainability.³⁴ This assertion is backed by Ramsbotham et al., who argue that the effectiveness and sustainability of peace cannot be achieved through the manipulation of peace agreements by the elite, communities need to be involved from the grassroots up.³⁵ This opposing school of thought advocates for bottom – top peacebuilding, or in the words of Lederach, “peacebuilding from below.” In the above imagery of erecting a house, this is reflected by the laying of a foundation and putting up walls before setting up the roof.³⁶

Evolution of ‘the thinking about the complex dynamics and processes of post conflict peacebuilding’³⁷ has brought about popularity of the concept of peacebuilding from below,³⁸ and what John Paul Lederach calls ‘indigenous empowerment.’³⁹ This form of peacebuilding ‘empower[s] people of goodwill in conflict-afflicted communities to rebuild democratic institutions.’⁴⁰ The adoption of this indigenous empowerment enhances citizen-based

³³ Ibid

³⁴ Ibid, 215

³⁵ Ibid, 215

³⁶ Lederach, *Building Peace*, 37

³⁷ Ibid, Ramsbotham et al., *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, 217

³⁸ This type of peacebuilding, according to Ramsbotham involves the empowerment of communities in the peace process. This allows for the understanding of local dynamics and will enable the erosion of the cultures of violence at the grassroots thus translating into long lasting peace.

³⁹ Ibid, 219

⁴⁰ Ibid, 218

peacebuilding initiatives, opens up participatory public political spaces and ensures that civil societies flourish.⁴¹

Bottom - top peacebuilding

According to Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall, peacebuilding from below has shed light to the existing limitations of only practising peacebuilding from the top without engaging the grassroots in the peace process, namely, the inability of the process to address the ‘embedded cultures and economies of violence’⁴² which threatens sustainable peace. This is coupled with the need for peacebuilding measures to take into account the community’s structure while instituting long term development frameworks and incorporating local actors which will go a long way at dissuading recurring violence. The practice of peacebuilding from below therefore is seen as a better alternative to ‘manipulation of peace agreements by the elites’ because it allows for citizen ownership of the process alongside the development of a vibrant civil society.⁴³

Scholar-practitioners such as John Paul Lederach and Adam Curle have led a revision in thinking on the process of peacebuilding from below. Adam Curle led a change in thinking from formal diplomacy to mediatory techniques that would change the attitudes of the warring communities. According to him, solutions reached only in the higher echelons of power through negotiations don’t lead to a change of attitude; this therefore does not guarantee sustainable peace.⁴⁴ A change in attitude can only be effected through the participation of locals in the peacebuilding process, as opposed to outsider neutrals. The nature of conflict which informs his assertion is ethnic

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴² Ibid, 215

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ Ibid

conflict in areas like Somalia, Eastern Europe (former USSR) where outsiders are ineffective and not powerful enough to promote peace.⁴⁵

Empowerment of local peacemakers involves the promotion of their advisory and consultative-facilitative roles through workshops and training in fields that the locals deem necessary. This lays ground for sustainable peace because it enables the locals to develop ‘inner sources of wisdom, courage and compassionate non-violence’ which in turn ‘tames the hydra of violence by understanding not only the politics of conflict but the deeper spiritual and philosophical sources of wisdom which would favour peace.’⁴⁶ This empowering approach to mediation is described as context-sensitive, strengthens the civil society and deepens its capacity for non-violent social change.⁴⁷

Lederach envisions three tiers of leadership that are often involved in peacebuilding: top level, mid-level and grass roots leaders. According to him peacebuilding should be both vertical and horizontal, with all levels of leadership taking part in peacebuilding in their own level of influence in tandem with others doing the same in the varied levels of leadership in society.⁴⁸ Grass roots leadership which carry out peacebuilding through local peace commissions are expected to involve local elders, religious leaders, and members of the society. According to Lederach, ‘peacebuilding from below is of decisive importance, for it is the means by which a peace constituency can be built within a setting of the conflict itself.

⁴⁵ Ibid, Ramsbotham et al., *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, 218

⁴⁶ Ibid, 218

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ Ibid, 220-221

The main characteristic of peacebuilding from below involves a heavier inclusion of local actors, which Lederach calls ‘indigenous empowerment.’⁴⁹ In what Ramsbotham et al., refer to as an elicitive and transformative, rather than a prescriptive and directive approach to peacebuilding, local actors are viewed in ‘new lenses’: not just as a ‘problem’ but as the source to a long term solution of peace.⁵⁰ This approach further advocates for the use of ‘cultural modalities and resources within the setting of the conflict in order to evolve a comprehensive framework which embodies both short term and long term perspectives for conflict transformation.’⁵¹

Through the conceptual framework of reconciliation, Lederach asserts that the grassroots have potential for building lasting peace. Through the leadership of local cultural and religious leaders, truth telling, reconciliation and transformative justice is effected in societies previously plagued by conflict bearing deep-rooted causes thus rebuilding relationships and ensuring sustainable peace.

Studies for and against peacebuilding from below

Peacebuilding from below has thus been identified with the pursuit of positive peace; through the liberation of communities from cycles of violence into the cultivation of cultures and structures for peace.⁵² The use of local actors with the support of international peacebuilders promotes the development of short term and long term activities while ensuring the respect of the local cultures and practices. According to Lederach and Wehr, the use of a ‘western’ model of peacebuilding using outsider neutral mediators is seldom trusted nor understood. This often leads to its ineffectiveness. A comprehensive approach combines the short term goals aimed at the

⁴⁹ Ibid, 219

⁵⁰ Ibid, 220

⁵¹ Ibid, Ramsbotham, et al., *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, 220

⁵² Ibid, 219

immediate end to the conflict and the long term goals of sustainability of peace through the incorporation of the local community and its leaders.

In the event of a conflict, there is a heightened number of grassroots organizations and civil society organizations which seek to represent local interests, opinion and culture.⁵³ Ramsbotham et al., note that at the height of the genocide crisis in Rwanda, more than 200 NGOs were active in the country, while in former Yugoslavia the height of the civil war in 1993 saw the doubling of NGOs from 65 to 126. There has therefore been criticism that conflict leads to ‘a plethora of ‘amateur’ organisations that are drawn to conflict areas in competitive pursuit of funding.’⁵⁴ This results in the frustration of peacebuilding efforts in the grassroots as most of these organizations jeopardize the works of existing organizations, whereby most refuse formal coordination in the larger post conflict peacebuilding framework. Some grassroots peacebuilding actors have also been criticized for unwittingly prolonging and worsening conflicts. Some of these well-meaning peace builders ‘serve the ends of those intent on pacification in the interest of the powerful, distort local economies and encumber rather than empower local initiatives.’⁵⁵

In answer to the criticisms of peacebuilding from below, Judith Large maintains that the transformative potential of the practice does not deter its practice in conflict areas,

‘Although it is easy for outside critics to be dismissive of these small-scale and usually unpublicized initiatives, this is not how things look from the inside. Here it was the practical transformative work of all those who opposed the violence that was cumulatively crucial: for activists inside, it mattered too much not to try.’⁵⁶

⁵³ Ibid, 223

⁵⁴ Ibid

⁵⁵ Ibid, 224

⁵⁶ Ibid, 225-6

Theories supporting peacebuilding from below

Some of the theories that inform and support the knowledge on peacebuilding from below include human needs theory by John Burton and Lederach's conceptual framework on reconciliation.⁵⁷

Human needs theory in reconciliation

John Burton, using Human Needs theory explains deep rooted causes of conflict and the importance of peacebuilding which involves the grassroots. Human beings have needs, which include security, participation and recognition that cannot be recognized. These needs can lead to conflict if they are not addressed, especially in the case of a particular group which feels ostracized by other groups, especially those in power. Peacebuilding from below can therefore use this theory to unearth the existing gaps in the meeting of each groups' needs, and in addressing the ensuing needs that occur amongst victims and perpetrators.

Reconciliation conceptual framework

John Paul Lederach points out that new wars are now fought within smaller geographical spaces. Neighbours harbor deep rooted hatred, mostly because of historical injustices that favour one group at the expense of another. In the conceptual framework of reconciliation, there exists a heavy dependence of grassroots in the peacebuilding efforts, especially in the case of truth telling, justice, reparation and eventual reconciliation of communities. To achieve this, Lederach

⁵⁷ Lambourne W., (2004) "Post-conflict peacebuilding: meeting human needs for justice and reconciliation." *Peace, Conflict and Development, No. 4, 2-3*

highlights the importance of local leaders, both religious and elders, and the entire society in active participation of the reconciliation process to build sustainable peace.⁵⁸

1.4.1.1 Peacebuilding Frameworks

The African Union (AU) highlights several frameworks that need to be incorporated in the peacebuilding and reconstruction framework of a post conflict state, especially in the African context. These are (a) security, (b) political governance and transition, (c) human rights, justice and reconciliation, (d) humanitarian assistance, (e) reconstruction and socio-economic development, and (f) women and gender. According to the AU, these frameworks offer a guideline of elements in a post conflict society that need to be addressed. These frameworks offer a foundation for a holistic and effective address of all the vital sectors during peacebuilding.⁵⁹ The six elements outlined above are both self-standing and cross-cutting⁶⁰: they can be carried out on their own while each also has a part to play on the overall effectiveness of the other elements for effective peacebuilding.

A) *Security*

According to the African Union (AU) Post Conflict Framework, the objective of incorporating security in the peacebuilding framework is to ‘create a safe and secure environment for the affected state and its population, through the re-establishment of the architecture of the state, including responsible and accountable state control over the means of coercion.’⁶¹ The reinstatement of security involves the institutionalization of the state in the maintenance of a

⁵⁸ Op Cit. Ramsbotham et al., *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, 24, 220; Lederach, *Building Peace*, 27-8

⁵⁹ African Union, *Draft Policy Framework for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD)*, par 22

⁶⁰ Ibid, AU, *Draft Policy Framework for PCRD*, par 21

⁶¹ Ibid

monopoly of violence, which takes a short and long-term perspective in the accomplishment of this framework.

In the short-term, security can be enhanced through the control of belligerents through enforcement of a ceasefire to stop immediate violence, enforcement of a peace agreement and carrying out a demilitarization, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) program. The territorial security is then reinforced through increased boundary control and monitoring to ensure that proliferation of arms is not encouraged through porous borders. Long-term security measures ensure the protection of the populace so that any demand for illegal firearms is not encouraged through insecurity within the population. This is enforced through the protection of non-combatants, even those in refugee camps, and the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Public order is then established through the provision of international police and the training of indigenous police whilst maintaining human rights and good public relations through the implementation of civic education programs for law enforcement agencies.⁶²

2. Humanitarian / emergency assistance

This framework of peacebuilding includes ‘the provision of emergency relief, restoration of essential services to the population...and the initiation of an inclusive, sustainable development program. This aspect takes on the human security approach by putting measures that protect the victims from starvation, disease and the elements.’⁶³

The groups of people who majorly benefit in this aspect of peacebuilding are the IDPs, refugees, ex-combatants and other war affected populations.⁶⁴ The aim of this framework is to ‘coordinate

⁶² Ibid, 4-7

⁶³ Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and Association of the United States Army (AUSA), (2002) *Post Conflict Reconstruction*, 3

⁶⁴ Ibid, AU, *Draft Policy Framework for PCRD*, par 27

measures that seek to save and sustain lives, maintain basic human dignity, ensure protection of civilians, support the return and reintegration of displaced populations and help resuscitate social-economic activity⁶⁵ of the target group. Activities carried out in this framework include the maintenance of the social well-being of the refugees and IDPs by providing food, water, shelter and medicine, manage the flow of refugees to avoid overcrowding and its ensuing effects. The economic well-being of the target groups is ensured through recruiting donors and developing mechanism for donor and in-country resources allocation and management.

3. Political governance and transition

This covers a vital role in the peacebuilding process. Governance incorporates the establishment of fair political decision making procedures and delivery of public services while, participation takes into account the ‘giving voice to the population through the development of the civil society that includes the generation and exchange of ideas through advocacy groups, civic associations and the media.’⁶⁶ This is accomplished through the promotion of inclusive politics, and the addressing of the root causes of the conflict.

This aspect of the peacebuilding and reconstruction framework includes the ‘distribution and exercise of power from the national to the local levels.’⁶⁷ The inclusion of a political governance and transition framework ‘address(es) the need for legitimate, effective political and administrative institutions and participatory processes.’⁶⁸ This is in a bid to nstill an equitable

⁶⁵ Ibid

⁶⁶ Ibid, CSIS and AUSA, *Post Conflict Reconstruction* , 3

⁶⁷ Ibid, PCRD, 11

⁶⁸ Op Cit., CSIS & AUSA, *Post Conflict Reconstruction* , 3

representative and participatory constitutional structure by strengthening the public sector and ensuring an open and transparent public service delivery system and civil service.⁶⁹

4. Socio-economic reconstruction and development

The end of a conflict is characterized by a dilapidated economy which translates into a need to address the social and economic well-being of the masses. This aspect of the peacebuilding framework involves the improvement of living conditions, increased access to basic needs and a reduction of poverty and inequality.⁷⁰ In the accomplishment of this element of peacebuilding, efforts are aimed at a reduction in the gap between relief and development by addressing any threats of livelihoods and income generation, encourage micro-level development and the re-establishment and support of agricultural production and the re-establishment of markets and trade at all levels.

5. Human rights, Justice and Reconciliation

The AU underlines the importance of this element in peacebuilding in all post conflict societies. An end to a conflict requires the re-establishment of people's rights and their dignity if peace is to be achieved, especially in the form of a transformation of relationship between former adversaries, especially in the grassroots and all echelons of the society.⁷¹ Failure to properly address this element of the peacebuilding framework can trigger fresh conflict or deter the sustainability of peace.

⁶⁹ Ibid

⁷⁰ Ibid, AU, *Draft Policy Framework for PCRD*, par 38

⁷¹ Ibid

Human rights can be enforced through the restoration of constitutional and legal rights of sections of society who may have lost them during a conflict,⁷² a guarantee of the protection of the socio-economic rights of all members of the society, especially of women and children. Justice can take many facets, which range from legal justice (in form of retributive, restitutive, restorative or procedural justice), socioeconomic or distributive justice (economic and social justice) and symbolic justice.⁷³ Lederach emphasizes the importance of socioeconomic justice in conflict transformation as a way of ‘reducing violence while producing social and economic justice.’⁷⁴

The question of justice and reconciliation especially of human rights violators has been seen as ‘one of the most troubling quandaries for peace builders’.⁷⁵ This is especially so in the case of societies which have a history of genocide. While acknowledging the importance of justice and reconciliation in such a society, authors Volkan and Montville⁷⁶ propose the need to overcome enmities that are formed during conflict. This can only be done by ‘acknowledgement of chosen traumas and developing shared histories and empathy with the other.’⁷⁷

6. Women and gender

The inclusion of women and gender into the AU peacebuilding framework points at its efforts at incorporating Resolution 1325 stipulations on women and peacebuilding while addressing women specific issues that arise during the process. This aspect of the peacebuilding framework

⁷² Ibid, AU, *Draft Policy Framework for PCRD*, par 41

⁷³ Ibid, Lambourne W., *Post Conflict Peacebuilding*, 5

⁷⁴ Lederach J. P., (1999) “The Challenge of the 21st Century: Just peace” in *People Building Peace: 35 Inspiring Stories from Around the World*, Utrecht: European Centre for Conflict Prevention, 32

⁷⁵ Hartzell C. A., (1999), “Explaining the stability of Negotiated Settlements to Intrastate Wars”, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 43:1, pp. 3-22: 4

⁷⁶ Vamik D. V., (1994), *The Need to Have Enemies and Allies: From Clinical Practice to International Relationships*, Northvale, N.J: Jason Aronson Publishing

⁷⁷ Vamik D. V., et al., (eds.), (1990) *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships, Volume 1: Concepts and Theories*, Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books

acknowledges the gendered effects of conflict, whereby most women suffer ‘disproportionately from the effects of violent conflict; [they are] victims of sexual violence, abduction into slavery, care for the sick and wounded, and are also armed combatants.’⁷⁸ The framework also highlights the new ‘economic and political opportunities that women gain during conflict which break the traditional gender roles’⁷⁹ and therefore, take steps to enhance gender equality and make provision for their inclusion in conflict resolution mechanisms and decision making processes.⁸⁰ The main aim of the gender element in the AU peacebuilding framework is to ensure gender equality in governance, peace, security, human rights, education and economic empowerment.⁸¹

1.4.2 Religion and Peacebuilding

The ability of religion to promote tolerance and a willingness to live with, explore and honor differences⁸² has encouraged scholarly interest on the role of peacebuilding in post conflict societies. This has also been coupled with international recognition of the religion’s role in peacebuilding through the UN convention of a World Religious Summit for religious leaders in 2000 which brought together 1000 religious representatives.⁸³

Religious peacebuilding has thus been acknowledged for the provision of emotional and spiritual support to war-affected communities, mobilization of societies for peace and the facilitation of mediation, reconciliation and DDR.⁸⁴ The existing values and dogma of the various religious institutions also offer a background for the promotion and dissemination of peace messages to

⁷⁸ Ibid, AU Post Conflict Framework, 20

⁷⁹ Ibid

⁸⁰ Ibid

⁸¹ Ibid, 28-30

⁸² Op Cit., Coward H. & Gordon S. S. (eds.) *Religion and Peacebuilding*, 2

⁸³ Ibid

⁸⁴ Bouta T., Kadayifci-Orellana S. A and Abu-Nimer M., (2009), *Faith-Based Peace-Building: Mapping and Analysis of Christian, Muslim and Multi-Faith Actors*, Hague/ Washington D.C: Clingendael/ Salam Institute for Peace and Justice, ix

the war-torn communities. Some of these values include mercy, forgiveness and love for one another.⁸⁵

There are several religious actors in peacebuilding. According to Luttwak, these range from ‘religious leaders, religious institutions and religiously motivated lay figures.’⁸⁶ Appleby adds that ‘faith-based peacebuilding consists of Christian ethicists, Muslim jurists and theologians....courageous religious officials, trans-religious movements and theologians.’⁸⁷

A major challenge in religious peacebuilding is however seen in the confusion and uncertainty faced by religious leaders when provided an opportunity to ‘play an unfamiliar role in the transformation of deeply rooted ethnic or religious conflicts.’⁸⁸ According to Coward and Smith, religious leaders are seldom psychologically prepared for the conversion of their roles from protection and direction of their congregation to the personal conversion necessary to embrace genuine dialogue, healing and reconciliation.⁸⁹ A conflict requires the personal conversion of a religious actor to a peace builder,⁹⁰ a hard conversion, especially in instances where the religious actor is personally affected by the ongoing conflict.

1.4.2.1 Core values in religious peacebuilding

‘A religious community’s core values determine their potential for peacebuilding.’⁹¹ Christianity and Islam, which form a major proportion of the religions in Africa,⁹² share most core values of their respective faith, namely forgiveness, humility, interpersonal repentance and the acceptance

⁸⁵ Ibid, 11

⁸⁶ Luttwak, E., (1994) ‘The Missing Dimension,’ in D. Johnston and S. Sampson (eds.), *Religion: The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*, New York: Oxford University Press, 9

⁸⁷ Adapted from Appleby, 2003, p.254

⁸⁸ Op Cit., Coward & Smith, *Religion and Peacebuilding*, 4

⁸⁹ Ibid

⁹⁰ Ibid, 5

⁹¹ Op Cit. Boula et al. p 11

⁹² Op cit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2003

of responsibility for past errors.⁹³ This background offers a potential ground for successful peacebuilding as it encourages ‘reconciliation and the drive for social justice.’⁹⁴

Despite these core values, Appleby notes that there is ‘not one Christian or Islamic interpretation of peace and peacebuilding.’⁹⁵ Within the Christian community, there exists ‘different perceptions on peace and peacebuilding....Christians [are yet] to arrive at a universal set of values and priorities in pursuing peace.’⁹⁶ This is manifested in the disagreement on ‘the relationship between peace and justice, and the practical meaning of reconciliation.’⁹⁷ Islam has also failed to cultivate a unified concept of peacebuilding. This, according to Appleby is because ‘many Koranic verses and *hadiths* refer to particular historical events and at times they seem to contradict each other.’⁹⁸

1.4.2.2 Christianity and Peacebuilding

The basis of Christian peacebuilding is informed by the Bible’s teachings on peace and peacemakers; ‘blessed are the peacemakers, they shall be called children of God.’⁹⁹ The Bible also teaches of love: ‘love your neighbor as yourself’¹⁰⁰ and non-violence; Jesus, the founder of the faith asserts that the proof of discipleship lies in the ability to ‘love one’s enemies.’¹⁰¹

The lack of a unified interpretation of peace and peacebuilding within the Christian community poses a challenge in the community’s peacebuilding efforts. According to Appleby, there exists division in the perception of varied core values that inform peacebuilding. These values include

⁹³ Op Cit., Vendley J and D. Little, *Implications for Religious Communities*, 307

⁹⁴ Ibid

⁹⁵ Adapted from Appleby, 2001

⁹⁶ Ibid, Bouta, et al. p.13

⁹⁷ Ibid

⁹⁸ Ibid

⁹⁹ Matt. 5:9 (New International Version)

¹⁰⁰ Matt. 22:37-39 (New International Version)

¹⁰¹ Luke 6: 27 (New International Version)

‘the relationship between peace and justice, and the philosophical and practical meaning of reconciliation.’¹⁰²

1.4.2.3 Islam and Peacebuilding

Muslim societies have developed ‘traditional and cultural dispute resolution mechanisms’¹⁰³ over time. These concepts stem from the Koran principle of ‘Suhl’ which denotes reconciliation and peacebuilding.¹⁰⁴ This principle has been incorporated in different parts of the world by the Islamic community to promote peacebuilding efforts.¹⁰⁵ These Islamic principles have been localized and this has given birth to traditional measures of peacebuilding within these muslim communities. These ‘traditional conflict-resolution have become internal sources for resolving conflict and peacemaking’ in the said communities; the mechanisms have been legitimized and they enjoy the support of community elders and the religious leaders of the respective communities.¹⁰⁶

Despite the presence of core values and traditional measures that promote peacebuilding in Islam, peacebuilding in this community is faced with challenges that affect the nature and impact of its peacebuilding efforts. Easy radicalization through the misinterpretation of religious texts is rampant in Islam. Many Muslims are resentful towards the West due to negative experiences such as colonization, imperialism and underdevelopment.¹⁰⁷ This heightens the chances of embittered clergy to purposely misinterpret Islamic core values to spread hate and resentment.

¹⁰² Adapted from Appleby, 2001

¹⁰³ Abu-Nimer M., (2003) *Non-Violence and Peace-Building in Islam*, Gainesville FL: University Press of Florida, 54

¹⁰⁴ Ibid

¹⁰⁵ Local Muslim communities have adopted this principle and have a variation of names; the Middle East has incorporated it as *sulha*, Bosnia as *sulh* and Kenya as *suluh*.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, Abu-Nimer, *Non-Violence and Peace-Building in Islam*, 59

¹⁰⁷ Ibid

Most Muslim communities have a ‘limited access to different interpretations of the Koran, and such to Islamic values that underpin peace and peacebuilding.’¹⁰⁸ Since most Muslim communities don’t speak Arabic, coupled with the high illiteracy rate of its members, especially women, translates into a high dependency on the clergy,¹⁰⁹ some of whom if embittered against the West, can resort to misinterpretation of the texts to promote resentment towards other communities instead of peace.

Many religious leaders (Imams) ‘lack proper education and training to engage in religious texts.’¹¹⁰ The Islamic educational institutions like the *madradas* are seen to be outdated and are viewed to be providing a low quality of education.¹¹¹ The texts used in these institutions ‘do not emphasize Islam’s peacemaking values of tolerance and dialogue.’¹¹² This equates to poor education being disseminated to the masses which can affect the religion’s effectiveness in promoting peace in war-torn communities.

1.4.3 Religion and reconciliation

Peace activities and reconciliation is central to religious identity¹¹³ and thus is a major component of religious actors in peacebuilding. Among the major values that inform reconciliation activities in the Christian faith include forgiveness and mercy, while in Islam the values include *fitrah* and *suhl*.¹¹⁴ In the Christian faith, these concepts of forgiveness and mercy are informed in scriptures such as Psalms 85 and the teachings of Jesus Christ in the gospels.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, Bouta et al. p14

¹⁰⁹ Ibid

¹¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹¹ Ibid

¹¹² Ibid

¹¹³ Op Cit., Coward & Smith, *Religion and Peacebuilding*, 5

¹¹⁴ Ibid, Bouta et al., *Faith Based Peacebuilding*, x

Christians are taught to forgive each other in order to also be forgiven by God, and to show mercy to one another, just as God shows mercy to them.

In the Islamic faith, the values of *fitrah* and *suhl* are found in Hadiths and texts found in the Quran. *Fitrah* signifies the individual responsibility that all people have to uphold peace by doing good works and by playing a part in the development of harmony.¹¹⁵ *Suhl*, which means reconciliation works hand in hand with *fitrah* whereby the people are encouraged to forgive the wrongdoers and reconcile them back in society in order to play their part in the building of harmonious societies as stipulated by the *fitrah*.¹¹⁶

In carrying out dialogue and reconciliation, Coward and Smith note that the courage and cunning is necessary to acquire hearing with perpetrators of violence and confront them. It is even more difficult to ‘evoke forgiveness or tolerance from people who have been oppressed or otherwise injured by the religious or ethnic enemy.’¹¹⁷ Religious actors, especially leaders bear the daunting task of restoring tolerance and addressing deeply rooted grievances in their transformation and reconciliation in order to ensure the longevity of peace and the newly formed relationships based on forgiveness and reconciliation.¹¹⁸

1.4.4 Gender and Peacebuilding

1.4.4.1 Gender

The term gender gained popularity in the 1980s to women and development. Gender is a social construct that assets the expectations and responsibilities of men and women are not always

¹¹⁵ Abu-Nimer M. and Kadayifci-Orellana S. A., (2008) ‘Muslim Peace-Building Actors in Africa and the Balkan Context: Challenges and Needs,’ *Peace & Change Vol. 33 No. 4*

¹¹⁶ Ibid, Bouta et al., *Faith Based Peacebuilding*, 11-12

¹¹⁷ Ibid, Coward & Smith, *Religious Peacebuilding*, 5

¹¹⁸ Ibid

biologically determined.¹¹⁹ Subbo, however argues for a need to redefine the concept of gender, which is generally associated with women's issues. The term has continually gained support on the basis that it accommodates the female race, class, ethnicity and all other male and female power relationships.¹²⁰ The definitions of gender roles have been structurally and culturally created and reinforced to ensure male dominance and female subordination.¹²¹

Evidence of this in Africa is found in the socialization process whereby the roles of men and women are spelt out, especially during initiation. Tradition has further cemented the secondary position of women in society whereby in societies like the Tswana of Botswana, women are exempted from the decision-making processes; a woman is perceived as the child of a man, and traditionally requires the guardianship and direction of a man. Language has further been used as a degradation tool of women. Among the Yoruba, J. Onguwale notes that concepts such as 'hardness, efficiency, toughness, sharpness, resistance, [and] grandeur' have been commonly associated with men, while the opposite qualities have been attributed to the female gender.¹²²

Evidence of women subordination has brought forth approaches towards their liberation. The Women in Development (WID) approach advocates for the integration of women in development projects as a way of emancipation of the gender. This approach views the neglect of women in development as the main source of subordination; therefore, the increased inclusion of

¹¹⁹ Subbo W., (2004), 'The Conceptualisation of Gender,' in Yash Pal Ghai (ed.), *Perspectives on Gender Studies: Gender and Constitution-making in Kenya*, Nairobi, Heinrich Boll Foundation, 2

¹²⁰ Tadesse M. and M. Snyder, (1995), *African women and development: a history, the story of african training and research centre for the women of the UN Economic Commission for Africa*, Johannesburg: Witwaterstrand University Press, 15

¹²¹ Subbo W., *The Conceptualisation of Gender*, 10

¹²² Onguwale J., as quoted in Subbo W., *The Conceptualization of Gender*, 14

women in mainstream development projects will ensure the independence of women and remedy the existing unequal gender relations in the development process.¹²³

The opposing school of thought, Gender and Development (GAD) approach offers a more aggressive answer to women subordination. Unlike the WID approach, this school of thought emphasizes that economics is not the only avenue of women's subordination; it cuts across the environment, and cultural aspects of development. GAD, therefore, proposes a complete change in the system, which is highly patriarchal, in order to effect a successful end to women subordination.¹²⁴

1.4.4.2 Women in Peacebuilding

'The end of a war is crowded with gendered decisions'¹²⁵ which necessitates the inclusion of both men and women in peacebuilding to highlight and represent the interests of all members of the society. Increased advocacy of the inclusion of women in peacebuilding is based on the correlation between women and sustainable peace. According to Kathleen Keuhnast et al., the engagement and inclusion of women 'brings to the table issues such as human rights, justice, national reconciliation, and economic renewal, which are key ingredients to enduring peace.'¹²⁶

The impacts of conflict, especially on women as outlined above made it necessary for the Security Council to pass Resolution 1325 on October 30, 2000. This resolution has played a

¹²³ Ibid, Subbo, 14

¹²⁴ Ibid

¹²⁵ Enloe C., (1993), *The Morning After: Sexual Politics at the end of the Cold War*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 261

¹²⁶ Keuhnast K, et al., (2012) 'Peacebuilding Efforts of Women from Afghanistan and Iraq: Lessons in Transition,' in *USIP Special Report, No. 319*, 2

major part worldwide in highlighting women's plight in conflict and the importance of including them in the peace process to ensure sustainable peace.¹²⁷

Firstly, the resolution acknowledged the different experiences that different genders went through in a conflict. It further recommended that policy makers should make conscious steps at reconstruction with the different gendered experiences in mind. The recognition that women play a major role in the conflict ranging from being freedom fighters, taking care of the injured to providing the warriors morale would go a long way in formulating effective DDR measures that take care of the needs of all the combatants that are being reintegrated back to society; men and women alike.¹²⁸

This resolution also pointed at the importance of democracy in establishing sustainable peace. It was deemed important to include the marginalized groups, especially women and the disabled, in the peace process in order to reduce the tendencies for spoilers. Lastly, great emphasis was laid on the importance of women involvement in peace and reconstruction.¹²⁹ Women were credited as vital during the conflict in disseminating peace education and maintaining social order. Other than playing these parts, women would highlight the plight of other women and children and help in coming up with effective ways of healing the society while fulfilling the needs of all the members of the society. In spite of all this, girls and women are seldom consulted nor actively involved in the reconstruction process during peacebuilding and their specific interests are seldom a top priority, even in peace accords¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Sweetman C. (ed.), (2005), *Gender, Peacebuilding and Reconstruction*, Oxford: Oxfam GB, 2-3

¹²⁸ McKay S., (2005) "Reconstructing Fragile Lives: Girls' Social Reintegration in Northern Uganda and Sierra Leone," in Sweetman C. (ed.) *Gender, Peacebuilding and Reconstruction*, Oxford: Oxfam GB, 21

¹²⁹ Ibid, 4

¹³⁰ Ibid, Sweetman, 5

Even though women and girls are ignored in the peace process, they still have a vital role to play as peace builders in the aftermath of a conflict. In Northern Uganda, old women and lay women through the church have proven to be invaluable in the reintegration of the girls who come back home from the bush. Other than spiritual guidance and acceptance, they have offered these former victims and combatants skills with which they can support themselves and for some, their ‘war babies.’¹³¹ In Northern Uganda, the older women have taken up the role of ‘talking with the girls, performing cleansing rituals and helping the girls to learn positive modes of female behaviour’¹³² and this has been seen to improve their confidence and self-esteem.

Women are not just instrumental in the grassroots. In Liberia, during and after the civil war, women mobilized and formed organizations such as the Liberian Women’s Initiative (LWI) and the Women United for Peace and Democracy (WOUPAD). Among the activities that these women carried out as part of the peace initiative included lobbying – by sending friendly letters to warlords asking them to abandon the fighting and instead embrace peace, carrying out peaceful demonstrations and awareness campaigns to highlight the needs of the women and the promotion of women in political participation to ensure that gender issues were addressed even in the national level (Ernest, 2000).

The inclusion of women in peacebuilding has further been associated with the longevity of peace in a post conflict society. According to Butler, Mader and Kean, ‘peacebuilding efforts are more likely to be sustainable if they include women generally, and focusing on women deepens and broadens the narrower and more traditional view of peace work.’¹³³ Supporters of this

¹³¹ Save the Children Denmark, (2000), *A Study of the Views, Perspectives and Experiences of ‘Social Integration’ Among Formerly Abducted Girls in Gulu, Northern Uganda*

¹³² Ibid, McKay 24

¹³³ Butler M., Mader K. and Kean R., (2010), *Women, Peace and Security Handbook*, New York: UN Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

perception allude to Rwanda as proof of the linkage between the inclusion and participation of women in peacebuilding following the genocide of 1994 and the sustainable peace still in effect twenty years later. After the genocide of 1994, the new government of national unity that was set up in November of the same year had twelve (12) women members of parliament out of 70. These women embarked on a sensitization mission of the other parliamentarians ‘to perceive gender problems as political problems that must be addressed.’¹³⁴ These female parliamentarians complimented the efforts of the organization of women’s society that was formed to promote social justice and peace in Rwanda in the same period; *Pro-Femme/Twese Hamwe*.¹³⁵ This organization is credited for ‘promoting the power and role of women in the Rwandese society and the culture of peace in the national, regional and international community.’¹³⁶

1.4.4.3 Women in Religious Peacebuilding

‘The work of women building peace from within religious communities has been largely overlooked in analysis, policy and practice.’¹³⁷ This, according to Susan Hayward is because religious peacebuilding has often been targeted towards the clerics and heads of religious institutions, who are mostly older men,¹³⁸ which results in the invisibility of women engaged in religious peacebuilding. This oversight by policy makers and scholars alike, has contributed to an ineffective understanding of the ‘potential avenues for resolving conflicts, promoting post-conflict healing

In spite of this lack of effective acknowledgment, women have proven to be ‘particularly effective implementors of religious peacebuilding, particularly interfaith or intercommunal

¹³⁴ Ibid, UNHCR et al., *Best Practices in Peace Building*, 18

¹³⁵ Ibid

¹³⁶ Ibid

¹³⁷ Ibid, Marshall K. et al. Women in Religious Peacebuilding, *USIP Peaceworks no. 71*, 11.

¹³⁸ Op cit. Susan Hayward, *Religion and Peacebuilding*, 7

activities.¹³⁹ Faith is a major motivator of women who ‘become involved in both secular and religious peacebuilding.’¹⁴⁰ These women are involved in the provision of ‘social services or assistance to the needy, trauma healing or reconciliation...and rebuilding communities by caring for marginalized groups.’¹⁴¹

1.5 Justification of the Study

Most women who are involved in peacebuilding worldwide often draw inspiration from religious sources and organizations.¹⁴² However, in spite of the increasing interest in the role of religion in conflict and peacebuilding, the roles of women and the impact of religion in their peacebuilding activities has largely been ignored.¹⁴³ This is evidenced in the lack of consideration of religion and women in religious peacebuilding even in the definitions of the peacebuilding as outlined above. This oversight translates into an incomplete picture of peacebuilding whose relationship with religion largely alludes to male clergy in the question of religious peacebuilding, thus excluding the activities of women in the same platform.¹⁴⁴

This paper will add insight to the existing inadequate knowledge of religious peacebuilding by highlighting the various peacebuilding activities that are carried out by the different members of the religious institutions. The role of women in peacebuilding will also be analyzed; with emphasis on their motivation to be involved in peacebuilding activities, the various roles they play in peacebuilding, especially during reconciliation efforts and their various challenges.

¹³⁹ Ibid

¹⁴⁰ Ibid

¹⁴¹ ibid

¹⁴² Ibid, Marshall K., et al., ‘*Women in Religious Peacebuilding*’, 2

¹⁴³ Ibid

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 4

The oversight of women in religious peacebuilding has translated into a lack of international and regional support in the form of resources and training for the women involved in peacebuilding.¹⁴⁵ This paper offers a better understanding of the women in religious peacebuilding which should translate in the provision of more resources and training avenues for their increased effectiveness in peacebuilding - and lead to an increased inclusion and consideration of women religious peace builders in the overall peacebuilding framework of post conflict societies.

1.6 Conceptual Framework

According to Lederach, the new wars are characterized by a similarity of close geographical quarters of the warring groups. Enmity between neighbours is ‘tied to a history of grievance and enmity that has accumulated over generations....locked into long-standing cycle of hostile interaction. The conflicts are characterized by deep-rooted, intense animosity, fear; and severe stereotyping.’¹⁴⁶ This new understanding of war, renders the previous ‘rational and mechanical processes and solutions aimed at conflict transformation not only ineffective but also irrelevant or offensive.’¹⁴⁷ This has created a need to come up with peacebuilding mechanisms that not only address the existing historical differences, but also create grounds to foster restoration and rebuilding of relationships.¹⁴⁸ Peacebuilding in the new wars context should be transformative; a framework that addresses structural issues, social dynamics of relationship-building while supporting an infrastructure for peace.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, 3

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, Lederach, *Building Peace*, 23

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 24

¹⁴⁸ Ibid

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, 22

Increased disparities between International Relations and Conflict Resolution schools of thought have emerged over how to carry out peacebuilding activities in the face of the new wars. Proponents of the Realism school of thought, such as Hans Mogenthau, assert that power is vital in the resolution of conflicts and thus views the advances of Conflict Resolution as sentimentalism.¹⁵⁰ On the other hand, Conflict Resolution faults the overuse of power, which in peacebuilding fails to solve the root causes in the conflict.¹⁵¹ Lederach, however, proposes a collaboration of the two in the form of a reconciliation conceptual framework that covers the weaknesses of the two schools of thought and takes advantage of their strengths; a reconciliation conceptual framework.

Assumptions of the conceptual framework

Lederach puts forth three assumptions of the reconciliation conceptual framework;

Firstly, he highlights the importance of ‘relationship as the basis of both the conflict and its long term solution.’¹⁵² This is further supported by Harold Saunders and Randa Slim who point out that ‘relations are the focal point for sustained dialogue within protracted conflict settings.’¹⁵³ This changes the perspective of reconciliation; from the disintegration of conflicting groups’ affiliation to the engagement of both warring parties in building peaceful relationships.¹⁵⁴ This is further supported by the quantum and chaos theory which discourages the concentration of how a system works at the expense of the relationship of its parts in order to understand its dynamic and structure; ‘relationships...are the centerpiece, the beginning and ending point for

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 24

¹⁵¹ Ibid

¹⁵² Ibid, 26

¹⁵³ Saunders H. and Slim R., (1994), “Dialogue to Change Conflictual Relationships,” *Higher Education Exchange* (a Kettering newsletter, 46

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, Lederach, *Building Peace*, 26

understanding the system.¹⁵⁵ By equating protracted conflict as a system, the focus and attention to relationships is highlighted through the reconciliation paradigm.¹⁵⁶

The second assumption is encounter. This refers to ‘the engagement of the conflicting groups...not only of peoples but also of several different and highly interdependent streams of activity.’¹⁵⁷ This gives an opportunity for warring parties to share their experiences, to acknowledge ‘the trauma of loss and their grief of that loss, and the anger that accompanies the pain and the memory of the injustices experienced.’¹⁵⁸ Reconciliation in this case should seek to eradicate the ‘vicious cycle of mutual exclusiveness [through] acknowledgment of others’ stories and the validation of others’ experiences which ‘represents the first step toward restoration of the person and the relationship.’¹⁵⁹

In this case, reconciliation should also aim at envisioning a future that promotes interdependence. As discussed earlier, the conflicts in question are between neighbours who bear resentment and hate towards each other. The focus of reconciliation should therefore seek to mend relationships between these communities while cultivating a culture of interdependence. This promotes a sense of responsibility in the envisioning of a shared future.¹⁶⁰ Reconciliation provides ground/ opportunity for the acknowledgement of the past and the curving of a shared future.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid

¹⁵⁶ Ibid

¹⁵⁷ Ibid

¹⁵⁸ Ibid

¹⁵⁹ Ibid

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 27

The third assumption encompasses innovation. This involves ‘looking outside the mainstream of international political traditions, discourse, and operational modalities.’¹⁶¹ This aspect of reconciliation seeks to tailor reconciliation based on the individual context of the protracted conflict. This lays ground for the utilization of available resources that can strengthen the peacebuilding efforts and thus contribute to its sustainability.

In the explanation of the reconciliation concept, Lederach further introduces four concepts which combined, facilitate reconciliation: Truth, Mercy, Justice and Peace.¹⁶² Truth denotes honesty, revelation, open accountability and vulnerability, without which it is impossible to resolve conflict. Truth, however unveils feelings of nakedness, vulnerability and unworthiness, and so cannot stand alone, but comes hand in hand with Mercy.

Mercy is associated with ‘compassion, forgiveness, acceptance and a new start.’¹⁶³ This helps in the building of new relationships between former adversaries. Forgiveness and healing is facilitated through the collaborative application of both Truth and Mercy.

Justice is associated with the rectification of past wrongs, with an aim of restitution and making things right.¹⁶⁴ Peace, the ultimate goal of the reconciliation process is an inclusive phenomenon that encompasses the whole society. It is envisioned in images of harmony, unity and well-being.¹⁶⁵

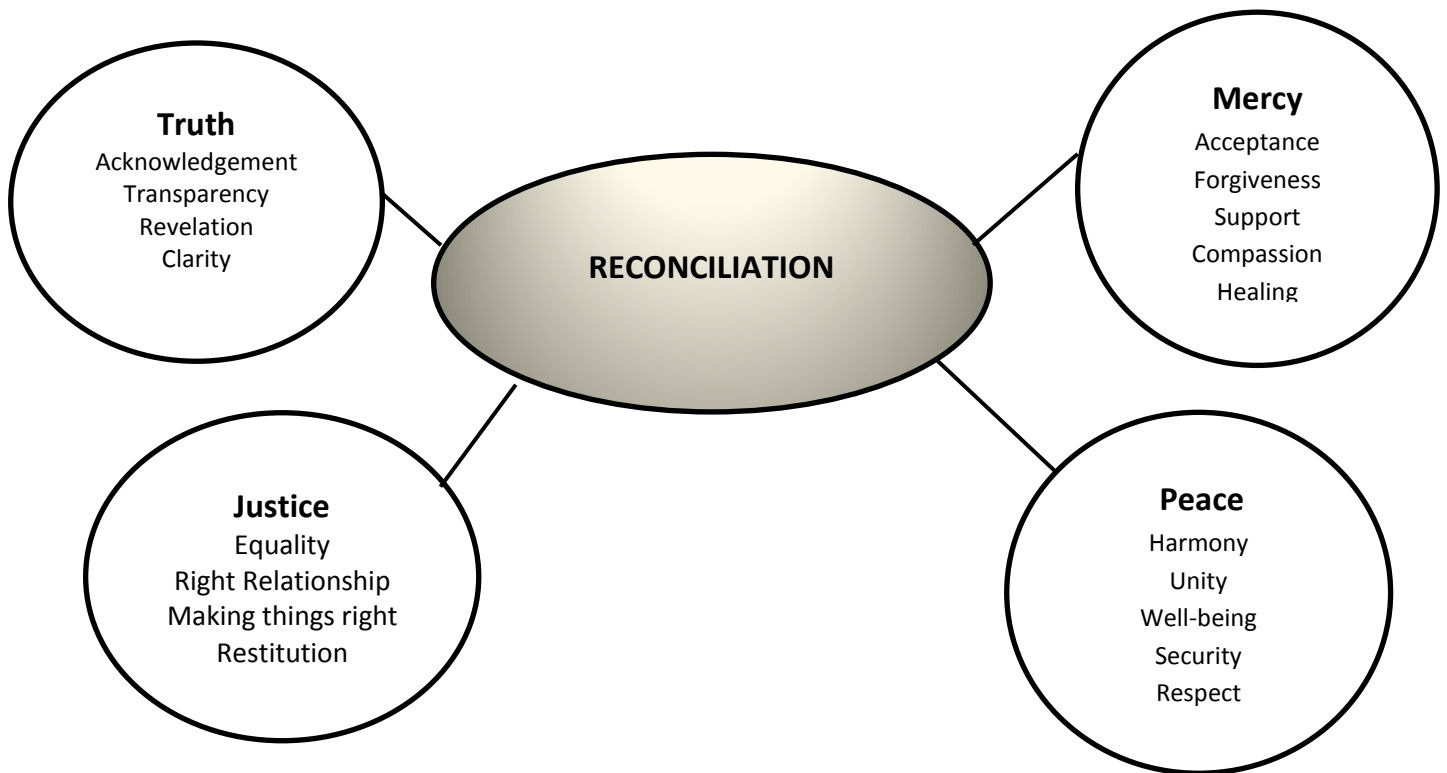
¹⁶¹ Ibid

¹⁶² Ibid, 29

¹⁶³ Ibid, 28

¹⁶⁴ Ibid

¹⁶⁵ Ibid



(Source: John Paul Lederach, 1997)

Fig. 1: ‘The Place Called Reconciliation’- A pictorial illustration of the concepts involved in reconciliation.

The diagram above portrays reconciliation as both a focus and a locus;¹⁶⁶ it is a relationship-based phenomenon that creates encounters for conflict parties to meet. According to Lederach, Truth is embraced as a longing for the acknowledgment of wrong and the validation of painful loss and experience. This is accompanied by Mercy, which encompasses the need for forgiveness and letting go of the wrongs confessed. Justice, sought either by individuals and/or groups seeks restitution and social reconstruction. All these are aimed at resulting to sustainable peace.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, Lederach, *Building Peace*, 30

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 28

John Burton's Human Needs theory, and Volkan and Montville's theory of the need to overcome enmity through acknowledgment of chosen traumas and the development of shared histories both support the reconciliation conceptual framework outlined above.¹⁶⁸

According to Human Needs theory, 'irrespective of how civil wars end, or the type of agreement [that is] reached, unless basic human needs such as participation, recognition and security are explicitly dealt with, it is only a matter of time before civil conflicts emerge.'¹⁶⁹ Nadler further adds that, 'conflict threatens different psychological resources of victims and perpetrators and these threats contribute to the maintenance of conflict.'¹⁷⁰ Both parties possess needs that can be addressed through reconciliation; victims lose status and power during a conflict, while perpetrators experience a loss in their image as moral and social beings. Reconciliation is therefore vital in the restoration of a sense of power and a public moral image for the victims and perpetrators respectively. This addresses the human needs of the different parties while laying ground for sustainable peace.¹⁷¹

The authors Vamik Volkan and Joseph V. Montville come up with a theory that seeks to prove the necessity of reconciliation and transitional justice in a post conflict society, especially one that has been plagued by genocide. Volkan and Montville assert that there is a need to overcome enmities that are formed during conflict. This can only be done by 'acknowledgement of chosen traumas and developing shared histories and empathy with the other'¹⁷² The question of justice

¹⁶⁸ Op Cit., Lambourne, *Post-Conflict Peacebuilding*, 2

¹⁶⁹ Azar E. and Burton J. (eds.), (1986), *International Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*, Sussex: Wheatsheaf

¹⁷⁰ A. Nadler, (2002), Post-resolution Processes: Instrumental and socio-emotional routs to reconciliation, in G.Salmono & B. Nevo (Eds.), (2002) *Peace Education: the concept, principles and practices around the world* (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2002), 54

¹⁷¹ Shnabel N. and Nadler A., (1999) "A needs-based model of reconciliation: satisfying the differential emotional needs of victims and perpetrators as key to promoting reconciliation," in *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, No. 1 Vol. 94, pp. 84-123; 116

¹⁷² Ibid, Volkan, et al., *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships*, 16

and reconciliation especially of human rights violators has been seen as ‘one of the most troubling quandaries for peace builders’.¹⁷³ Victims of these human rights atrocities feel a sense of ‘unjust peace’ when amnesty is granted to aggressors which could bring about further impunity and lays the ground for unstable peace. Peace builders, therefore, in an effort to restore the conflict ridden society have a task of establishing justice and order. This can be done through a peace agreement to stop the violence, DDR to disarm the ex-combatants and a justice system for the victims of human rights violations. The need for reconciliation has also been encouraged in order to ‘overcome or transform enmities developed during a violent conflict and build bridges between ordinary people.’¹⁷⁴ The need for psychological reconciliation between former enemies has also been cited as an important part of post conflict peacebuilding and reconciliation in particular.¹⁷⁵

1.6.1 Application of the Conceptual Framework

Human Needs Theory’s assertion of the need for participation, recognition and security, and Lederach’s assumption of relationship’s role in reconciliation and the important role of encounters unveils the need of inclusion of every member and aspect of the society; including women and religious institutions.

The role of cultural violence in conflicts, especially in Africa necessitate the inclusion of women in the construction of new social structures and of religion in instilling new cultures through its leadership and core values in the process of reconciliation.

¹⁷³ Hartzell C.A, (1999) “Explaining the stability of Negotiated Settlements to Intrastate Wars”, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, No. 43 Vol.1, pp. 3-22; 16

¹⁷⁴ Op cit., Lambourne W., *Post Conflict Peace-Building*, 17

¹⁷⁵ Ibid pg. 5

Religion is instrumental in bringing together and enforcing the four concepts necessary for reconciliation as pointed out in Figure 1 above. Lederach highlights the case of Nicaragua, between the Sandinista government and the Yatama rebels. Religion played a vital role in conciliation efforts, the reintegration of the Yatama rebels back to society and in reconciliation. Through scriptures, especially Psalms 85, which was read at every opening of the village meetings, the community was encouraged to welcome back the rebels with forgiving hearts and to participate in justice efforts that will promote the establishment of peace.¹⁷⁶

Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall assert that the success of conflict resolution and its effectiveness is dependent on the inclusion of both genders equally. Participation and recognition of women will help in addressing their human needs and their inclusion in the reconciliation process leads to the acknowledgment of deep rooted cultural and structural entities that may endanger sustainable peace and the building of new relationships.

1.7 Hypothesis

- ↳ The inclusion of religious actors and women is necessary in order to successfully transform the society after a conflict/ to achieve sustainable peace
- ↳ The presence of women and religion in peacebuilding activities ensures the propagation and implementation of gender issues in peacebuilding and the achievement of sustainable peace
- ↳ Active participation of women in peacebuilding ensures that gender specific issues are addressed

¹⁷⁶ Op Cit., Lederach, *Building Peace*, 27,28

1.8 Research Methodology

1.8.1 Research Design

The research design that will be used in this study will be the case-study research design. The study aims to collect the views of men and women in regards to peacebuilding, religion and gender.

1.8.2 Location of the Study

The study will be carried out in Eldoret town and its environs. Area sampling will be used to choose the faith based organizations that carry out peacebuilding activities in the area and the people who benefit from these activities.

Purposive sampling will be carried out to identify women leaders in these faith organizations that coordinate and mobilization of other women for peacebuilding activities.

1.8.3 Target of the Study

The study targets the Eldoret region. This was the worst hit of the towns in Kenya during the post-election violence.

1.8.4 Sample Selection

Samples of the respondents will be chosen through two methods;

a) Cluster Sampling will chose the respondents who will participate in answering the questionnaires.

b) Deliberate Sampling will aid in the choice women religious leaders and the men who support the peacebuilding activities carried out by women in their organizations. These will make up the respondents of the unstructured interviews.

1.8.5 Research Instruments

The researcher will use two instruments in collection of data;

- a) Open-ended questionnaires. The respondents, selected through area sampling of the communities around Eldoret.

- b) Unstructured Interviews. This will enable the researcher to get better perspectives on the questions asked, their varied opinions and attitudes towards the peacebuilding activities underway and ways that these can be more effective.

1.8.6 Data Collection Techniques

To collect the data, the researcher will use the following instruments;

- a) Open-ended questionnaires

- b) Unstructured interviews

1.9 Chapter Outline

The project will be outlined as follows;

CHAPTER ONE: Religion, Gender and Peacebuilding in Africa: A case study of Kenya (2007/8)

This chapter gives a brief introduction to what is covered throughout the rest of the project. It includes a background to the study, a statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, literature review, a justification of the study, theoretical framework, hypothesis and the methodology that is used in collecting data for the study.

CHAPTER TWO: Religion in Peacebuilding

This chapter covers the first part of the project. It looks in a detailed manner the relationship between religion and peacebuilding. This chapter focuses on the relationship of the two main religions in Africa; Christianity and Muslim and their peacebuilding efforts and challenges. The study will then look at efforts towards interfaith dialogue and peacebuilding between the two faiths and the relationship between these religious peacebuilding institutions and the secular counterparts.

CHAPTER THREE: Women in Peacebuilding

This chapter covers the second half of the project. It focuses on the role of women in peacebuilding, the existence of women in religious peacebuilding whilst focusing on their activities, motivation and challenges. This chapter also looks at the gender issues that must be addressed for any peacebuilding effort to be successful in contributing to sustainable peace.

CHAPTER FOUR: Religion, Gender and Peacebuilding in Eldoret, Kenya

This chapter gives a brief history of Eldoret while explaining the importance of its choice for a case study. The areas covered in chapters two and three are then put into context in the case of Eldoret. The women's role in reconciliation and other forms of peacebuilding activities after the post-election violence through the religious platforms will be reviewed in this chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: Conclusion

Conclusions and recommendations are drawn based on the findings of the above chapters, especially those found in chapter four.

CHAPTER TWO: RELIGION AND PEACEBUILDING

2.1 Religion and peacebuilding

‘Although religion is often blamed for inciting conflict, it can also help to resolve conflict and decrease tension.’¹⁷⁷ This peace promoting facet of religion has encouraged an increased interest from the international actors and policy makers to acknowledge and therefore take advantage of religion’s importance in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.¹⁷⁸ The attack of the United States Embassy in Tehran by Islamic extremists in 1979 and later the September 11th attacks in New York in 2001 alerted the international community and policy makers of the once ignored role of religion in the political arena.¹⁷⁹

Faith based organizations are regarded as a part of the civil society,¹⁸⁰ and so they have ‘the potential to play an important and effective role in peacebuilding....and [have] often contributed positively.’¹⁸¹ F. Hampson adds that civil societies, which include religious institutions, can play a positive role in maintaining sustainable peace as [it] is a critical space where diversity and pluralism can be cherished and fostered.’¹⁸² Among the positive impacts of religious institutions in peacebuilding include the provision of emotional and spiritual support to war affected communities, the mobilization of their communities towards peace, mediation between conflict parties, and reconciliation.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁷ Op Cit., BoutaT., et al., *Faith-Based Peace-Building*, ix

¹⁷⁸ Ibid

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, 1

¹⁸⁰ Wanyande P. & M.A Okebe (Eds.), (2009), *Discourses on Civil Society in Kenya*, Nairobi: African Research and Resource Forum (ARRF), 1

¹⁸¹ Op Cit., Paffenholz T., *Civil Society and Peacebuilding*, 6

¹⁸² Hampson F. O, (1996) *Nurturing Peace: Why Peace Processes succeed or Fail*, Washington DC: USIP, 4

¹⁸³ Ibid, Bouta et al., *Faith Based Peacebuilding*, ix

Religion ‘has developed laws and ideas that provide civilization with cultural commitments to critical peace-related values including empathy...unilateral gestures of forgiveness and humility...and even the acceptance of responsibility as a means of reconciliation, and a drive for social justice.’¹⁸⁴

David Steele notes that ‘peace and reconciliation are basic to all religious traditions.’¹⁸⁵ These terms bear similar meanings in Abrahamic traditions.¹⁸⁶ Peace means ‘wholeness...unity and well-being, [while] reconciliation involves maintaining and restoring right relationships.’¹⁸⁷ The core values are vital to the faith based peace builders. According to Steele, ‘internalization of the peace values in one’s faith tradition...can be effective in helping to reconcile’¹⁸⁸ both non-religious people and those who share the same faith.

2.1.1 Roles of Religious Actors in Peacebuilding

Religious peacemakers that can be involved in peacebuilding are extensive. According to David Steel, they include;

‘clergy and laity, indigenous and external players, individuals and institutions, religious communities and ad-hoc commissions, ecumenical and inter-faith organizations, faith-based NGOs working in relief and development, politically motivated religious leaders at all levels.’¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁴ Goppin M., (2000), *Between Eden and Armageddon: The Future of World Religions, Violence and Peacemaking*, New York: Oxford University Press, 13

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 58

¹⁸⁶ Christianity and Islam are collectively known as Abrahamic faiths. This is because they trace their roots to the same ancestor, Abraham. More information on Coward & Smith’s *Religion and Peacebuilding*

¹⁸⁷ David Steele, *A Manual to Facilitate Conversations on Religious Peacebuilding and Reconciliation*, 59

¹⁸⁸ Ibid

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 57

According to David Steele, there are four types of roles that faith based actors can perform in peacebuilding; ‘(1) Observation and witness, (2) education and formation, (3) advocacy and empowerment, and (4) conciliation and mediation.’¹⁹⁰

a) Observation and witness

This is a vigilant, not passive role that a faith based actor can play in a conflict situation. This role is meant to ‘prevent, or at least report, violence and other forms of injustice.’¹⁹¹ Observer activities that can be carried out include fact-finding/truth-telling missions, monitoring of human rights abuses and election promises.¹⁹²

b) Education and formation

‘The role of educator is to lay the foundation for transforming an unjust and violent conflict into just peace.’¹⁹³ This role is mainly taken up by religious leaders who educate the masses with an aim to ‘raise the conscience of the population regarding inequalities in the system... [and] nourish values that can provide moral direction for the society.’¹⁹⁴ Education can also be done through seminars, conferences, posters and through the media.

c) Advocacy and empowerment

This, according to Bouta, involves ‘the empowering of the weaker party(ies) in a conflict situation...[in order to] strengthen the representativeness and in particular the inclusiveness of governance.’¹⁹⁵ Advocacy involves the ‘restructuring of relationships and transforming unjust

¹⁹⁰ *ibid*

¹⁹¹ *Ibid*, 59

¹⁹² *Ibid*

¹⁹³ *Ibid*

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid*

¹⁹⁵ *Op Cit.*, Bouta et al., *Faith-Based Peacebuilding*, 7

social structures.’ David Steele¹⁹⁶, however, identifies three forms of advocacy: ‘party advocacy, outcome advocacy and process advocacy.’¹⁹⁷ Advocacy can be carried out through confrontational activities such as ‘protests, petitions, marches...and strikes’¹⁹⁸ or through non-confrontational activities such as ‘public statements, speeches,...and engaging in personal conversations.’¹⁹⁹

d) Conciliation and dialogue

According to Steele, ‘conciliation involves providing a channel of communication, some dialogue process which helps parties in conflict to develop a better relationship.’²⁰⁰ Conciliation is often carried out before negotiation or mediation activities, but it is however not limited to this preliminary phase of conflict resolution.²⁰¹

2.1.2 Strengths and weaknesses of religious peacebuilding

Faith based organizations are steadily gaining popularity in peacebuilding activities due to some potential strengths that the organizations contribute;

Primarily, the religious organizations bear a strong motivation for peacebuilding.²⁰² Through their religious principles and values, religious organizations are given a mandate to carry out peacebuilding activities. These values also provide motivation and inspiration to reach out to

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, David Steel, 60

¹⁹⁷ *Party advocacy* involves the taking of sides, particularly of the party that is considered as the weaker counterpart. This is meant to ensure equitable power of the warring parties. *Outcome advocacy* is where the actor chooses the most desirable outcome and advances towards creating an environment that is suitable for the adoption of this outcome. This form of justice is often used in the pursuit of justice or the reduction of violence.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹⁹ Ibid

²⁰⁰ Ibid

²⁰¹ Ibid, 59

²⁰² Ibid, Bouta et al., *Faith Based Peacebuilding*, 39

victims, preach peace and maintain a longer lifespan of commitment to peace where political and other secular actors give up.²⁰³

Religious organizations share a characteristic of a long-term presence in the society whereby they are ‘widely present and deeply rooted in the majority of societies all over the world.’²⁰⁴ A long-term presence provides a logistical advantage and potential to work in peacebuilding.²⁰⁵ This is because the continued presence in the society both during and long after the conflict enables them to be more involved in all aspects of conflict prevention and resolution over a long period of time.

Religious actors in peacebuilding possess moral and spiritual authority which enable them to ‘mitigate tensions and act as a platform for common understanding.’²⁰⁶ The local religious leaders such as imams and pastors possess a moral and spiritual legitimacy to influence the opinions of people. Their long-term presence in the society equips them with the knowledge of the history and needs of the parties to the conflict and they ‘possess the authority and reputation as even-handed people of God that places them in a good position to mediate between [the] conflicting parties.’²⁰⁷

In spite of the strengths that come with the involvement of faith-based organizations in peacebuilding, there are some weaknesses that are attributed to religious actors in peacebuilding activities;

²⁰³ Ibid

²⁰⁴ Ibid

²⁰⁵ Ibid

²⁰⁶ Ibid, 39

²⁰⁷ Ibid, Bouta et al., *Faith Based Peacebuilding*, 39

Faith based peacebuilding organizations have been accused of proselytization. This implies that the religious organizations are sometimes seen to be involved in peacebuilding in order to recruit membership into their respective faiths. This case is especially rampant in cases where the religious organization in question is a minority in the society. In cases where the faith based organizations are involved in trauma healing, differentiating psychological help from proselytization is difficult, which may negatively affect the perception of the religious actors and their activities.²⁰⁸

A lack of professionalism has been observed of some faith based organizations involved in peacebuilding. Some religious actors have been accused of lacking the same level of professionalism as their secular counterparts. In this case, the religious actors have put more ‘focus on the faith-based motivation for peacebuilding, or on maintaining long-term relationships with local counterparts, than on the fact that peacebuilding is a profession for which an organization [...] requires specific skills and experiences.’²⁰⁹

2.1.3 Christianity and Peacebuilding

There exist international Christian Peacebuilding institutions and denominations that have been involved in peacebuilding activities in Africa. These include international NGOs such as Life and Peace Institute, the Community of Sant’Egidio and the Catholic Church among others. This section will look in detail at the Christian actors that are involved in the peacebuilding activities in Africa, the core values that inform their peacebuilding works, the roles that they take up and the challenges that they face in carrying out their activities.

²⁰⁸ Ibid

²⁰⁹ Ibid, 40

2.1.3.1 Christian Core Values in Peacebuilding

The Bible is the main source of peace related concepts that motivates Christians to work on peace. These include, but are not limited to:

- Peacemaking: Christians are taught to be peacemakers through scriptures such as, ‘blessed are the peacemakers, they shall be called children of God,’²¹⁰
- Unconditional love: all human beings are created equal and so Christians are taught to love God and each other unconditionally, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind [...] Love your neighbor as yourself,’²¹¹
- Repentance: ‘this is the willingness to evaluate oneself and assume responsibility for one’s own responsibility in the conflict, and
- Reconciliation and forgiveness: Biblical teachings stress the importance of forgiveness, ‘if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive you.’²¹²

2.1.3.2 Christian Actors in Peacebuilding

Christian actors that have been involved in peacebuilding include international religious institutions, religious leaders and individuals.

Life and Peace Institute ²¹³(LPI) is an international religious institution that carries out peacebuilding activities in Africa. LPI has contributed to knowledge on religion and peacebuilding through conducting of research and the publication of books. Apart from research,

²¹⁰ Matt. 5:9 (New International Version)

²¹¹ Matt. 22:37-39 (New International Version)

²¹² Matt. 6:14,15

²¹³ This is an international NGO, with their headquarters in Uppsala, Sweden. The aims of this institution are ‘to further justice peace and reconciliation through a combination of research, seminars, publication and action on the ground.’

LPI has ‘organized workshops and seminars on peace-building and conflict resolution in Sudan.’²¹⁴ LPI has engaged church and Muslim leaders in workshops in order to equip them for peacebuilding activities in their societies. Among the topics addressed in these workshops include; ‘the concepts of peace and conflict, conflict transformation [...] and strategic peace-building options.’²¹⁵

Denominations like the Catholic Church are very active in the peacebuilding arena in the African continent. In the case of Togo, the political violence that characterizes the election of both the legislature and the presidency has resulted into ‘socio-psychological frictions rooted on xenophobia, the demonizing of adversaries, intolerance [and] ethnic branding of political organization.’²¹⁶ The church’s peacebuilding role in this society includes ‘communicating messages of peace, listening and accompanying the people affected by violence a[re] means to psychological healing.’²¹⁷

A notable religious leader that has carried out peacebuilding activities includes Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa who was instrumental in the in truth seeking missions that were formed to address abuse inflicted on the masses through the apartheid²¹⁸ policy. Tutu was the chairman of the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission.²¹⁹ Using his capacity as a

²¹⁴ Sudan was engaged in more than 20 years of civil war between the North and Southern parts of the country. The conflict ended with the formation of a new republic of South Sudan.

²¹⁵ Ibid, Bouta et al., 64

²¹⁶ Rogers M. M., Bamat T. and Ideh J. (eds.), (2008) *Pursuing Just Peace: An Overview and Case Studies for Faith-Based Peacebuilders*, Baltimore, MD: Catholic Relief Services, 63

²¹⁷ Ibid

²¹⁸ Indigenous Africans in South Africa were subjected to segregation and mistreatment during the colonial period in the country. This was later adopted into a policy in 1948.

²¹⁹ Ibid, Bouta et al., *Faith Based Peacebuilding*, 8

respected religious leader in the country, Tutu is said encouraged people to forgive their perpetrators²²⁰ in order to heal and unite as a country.

2.1.3.2.1 Roles of Christian Actors in Peacebuilding

Christian peacebuilding actors have been able to successfully undertake the broad roles of peacebuilding that as outlined by David Steele. The Life and Peace Institute (LPI), a Christian peacebuilding organization, has been instrumental in the dissemination of knowledge to both the policy makers and the citizens in the grassroots, especially in conflict societies in Africa.²²¹ In the Democratic Republic of Congo²²², LPI has been involved in peacebuilding in the grassroots by conducting workshops and seminars to equip the masses with peacebuilding skills of conflict resolution with which they can effectively participate in building peace in the community. LPI works with both churches and mosques to build their capacity in dealing with conflict and building peace. This has been achieved through seminars and workshops with the respective religious leaders.

As expounded by Steele, the role of observation and witness can encompass fact-finding or truth-telling missions. Desmond Tutu was vital in the healing of the South Africans after the attainment of independence.²²³ He is credited for chairing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission which was set up to effect transitional justice and reconciliation of the masses.²²⁴

²²⁰ Philpot D., (2007), Religion, Reconciliation and Transitional Justice: The State of the Field, New York: SSRIC Working Papers, 1

²²¹ Ibid, Bouta et al., *Faith Based Peacebuilding*, 63-4

²²² DRC has had political insecurities and violent civil wars since 1994

²²³ South Africa gained independence in 1994. Her colonization was marred by the institutionalization of the apartheid policy from 1948 which discriminated against the blacks.

²²⁴ Op Cit, Bouta et al., 82

‘Conciliation has been pursued by a great variety of faith-based individuals and groups who have tried to help reconcile parties.’²²⁵ Sant’Egidio, a Catholic-run International community mainly involved in conflict resolution and unofficial diplomacy, is a success story of religious efforts in conciliation during the Mozambique civil conflict.²²⁶ Sant’Egidio was seen as an impartial actor and so, successfully convinced the two warring parties to agree to mediation in 1990. With the help of the Italian government, advisers from America and the United Nations, Sant’Egidio moderated and facilitated a two year dialogue between RENAMO and FRELIMO which ended in a General Peace Accord, which was signed on 4th October 1992.²²⁷

2.1.4 Islam and Peacebuilding

Islam is the youngest of Abrahamic faiths, which comes with many classic teachings pertinent to peacebuilding.²²⁸ Among said teachings is *umma*, which emphasizes the importance of community and cooperation in overcoming conflict, and the use of religion in resolving the disputes that cause the conflict.²²⁹ Islam’s approach to the relationship between private beliefs and public affairs is in major contrast with the Christian approach to the same²³⁰. In the case of Islam, there is no separation of religion and state as is the case of the Western practice, ‘Islam advocates the intertwining of religion and governance.’²³¹ This interrelationship of private and public life in the Islamic tradition offers lessons into the resolution of conflict and peacebuilding.

²²⁵ Ibid, Steele, 60

²²⁶ Mozambique went into civil war immediately after the attainment of independence in 1975.

²²⁷ Appleby S., (2000), *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence and Reconciliation*, Lanham MD: Rowan & Littlefield, p.161-162

²²⁸ Carter J. and Gordon S. S., (2004), ‘Religious Peacebuilding’, in Harold Coward and Gordon S. Smith (eds.), *Religion and Peacebuilding*, Albany, N.Y: State University of New York Press, 284

²²⁹ Carter and Smith, *Religious Peacebuilding*, 284

²³⁰ Most Western countries which claim a Christian background tend to practice a division of church and state. This means that private beliefs are not to be entrenched, nor to interfere with the workings of the state. The two should always be compartmentalized with no interference of one to another, especially of the Church with the workings of the state.

²³¹ Ibid, Carter and Smith, *Religious Peacebuilding*, 285

By permeating all aspects of Muslim life, interveners are able to take a comprehensive and multifaceted approach to the conflicts they seek to solve.²³² Conflict managers are better able to trace the history of the conflict, understand the context, before making recommendations on the resolution. Islam, therefore, according to Carter and Smith, ‘offers insight into the potential power of religion, if directed towards peaceful ends.’

2.1.4.1 Islamic Core Values in Peacebuilding

Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana mentions that Islam ‘has a direct impact in the way that peace is conceptualized and the way that conflicts are resolved in Islamic societies...it embodies and elaborates upon its highest morals, ethical principles and ideals of social harmony.’²³³

First and most important, the word Islam, shares a common root with the Hebrew word *shalom*, which means peace.²³⁴ Islam equally means “submission” and is closely related to *salam* (also *salm*, or *silm*) ‘which means peace, not merely the absence of conflict but, positively, as presence of health and general well-being.’²³⁵

Among the Muslim values pertinent in peacebuilding include;

- *Salaam*. Translates peace. According to the Koran, this implies peace with God, nature and oneself and fellow human beings,
- *Tawhid* denotes the ‘principle of unity of God and all beings.’ This emphasizes the need to coexist with other human beings in peace and harmony, and

²³² Ibid, 285

²³³ Kadayifci-Orellana S. A., (2011), “Islamic Non-Violence Paradigm,” in A.K Bangura (ed.), *Islamic Peace Paradigms* (Hauppauge NY: Nova Science, 101

²³⁴ Ibid, Coward and Smith, *Religious Peacebuilding*, 134

²³⁵ Ibid

- *Fitrah* signifies the individual responsibility ‘to uphold peace...to be good and to work for the establishment of harmony

There also exist localized principles that have been derived from the Koran and have been incorporated into traditional and cultural conflict resolution in different parts of the world.²³⁶

Sulha/Suhl which means reconciliation or peacebuilding has been incorporated in various ways by different Islamic communities.²³⁷

2.1.4.2 Muslim Actors in Peacebuilding

There is a lack of institutionalization of most Muslim peacebuilding organizations. In spite of this lack of institutionalization, there exist numerous national, local and individual actors. Bouta notes that ‘peacebuilding activities are mostly undertaken by individual actors (such as imams and sheikhs) in their personal capacity, often in an ad hoc informal manner.’²³⁸

The Wajir Peace and Development Committee has been an instrumental peacebuilding organization in North Eastern Kenya. In a region plagued by insecurity that ranges from cattle rustling to terrorism attacks, the Wajir Committee has been able to mobilize the communities to seek and promote peace within their communities.²³⁹

The Centre for Research and Dialogue²⁴⁰ (CRD) has similarly been instrumental in peace works in Somalia. CRD has contributed to peacebuilding through the mobilization of both local and international actors to take part in peacebuilding activities in the country. The institution has

²³⁶ Ibid

²³⁷ The concept of *Sulha* has been incorporated as *sulh* in Bosnia, *suluh* in Kenya and Indonesia and as *sulha* in the Middle East.

²³⁸ Ibid, Bouta et al. *Faith Based Peacebuilding*, ix

²³⁹ Bouta et al., *Faith Based Peacebuilding*, 23

²⁴⁰ CRD is based in Somalia. Its aims include the promotion of socio-economic and political rebuilding in Somalia and the empowerment of Somali communities in transition to peaceful change. (More details on CRD in Bouta’s *Faith-Based Peacebuilding* pg. 117-119)

cooperated with UNICEF to engage the youth in peacebuilding activities by training them in facilitation and conflict resolution skills.²⁴¹ This is with the aim of equipping the youth, both boys and girls ‘with peacebuilding and conflict resolution life-skills and thereby increase their opportunities to participate in community based peace processes.’²⁴²

2.1.4.2.1 Roles of Muslim Actors in Peacebuilding

Abu-Nimer defines observation as ‘the watchful, compelling physical presence of religious actors that is intended to discourage violence, corruption, human rights violations, or other behaviour deemed threatening and undesirable.’²⁴³ The Kisima Peace and Development Organization in Somalia²⁴⁴ has played an important observation role in Somalia. This organization has made strides in discouraging violence and human rights violations,²⁴⁵ fighting for the rights of the weak in society.

The Wajir Peace and Development Committee (WPDC) in Kenya similarly contributed to the peacebuilding efforts in Wajir²⁴⁶ through conciliation. The WPDC organized a mediation meeting between the warring partners. The committee later created a Joint Committee of Clans which continues to play a preventive peacebuilding role where they diffuse tension before it turns into violent conflict and report incidences to the police.²⁴⁷

The Centre for Research and Dialogue (CRD) is an organization based in Somalia that has been lauded for its peacebuilding activities that involve the dissemination of education to the masses.

²⁴¹ Ibid, Bouta, 118

²⁴² Ibid..

²⁴³ Abu-Nimer M. and Kadayifci-Orellana S. A, (2008), ‘Muslim Peace-Building Actors in Africa and the Balkan Context: Challenges and Needs,’ *Peace & Change Vol. 33 No. 4*

²⁴⁴ Somalia has been involved in a political and inter-clan violent conflict since 1990 to date.

²⁴⁵ Ibid, 554

²⁴⁶ Wajir is inhabited by nomadic pastoralists who frequently engage in cattle rustling. This has often resulted into revenge attacks leading to violent conflicts between the communities in the area.

²⁴⁷ Ibid, Bouta, 109

It the fulfillment of its role, CRD has worked with UNICEF on a Youth Peace-building Programme to engage the Youth from various regions in Somalia.²⁴⁸ The program provides training on peacebuilding, conflict resolution and advocacy among the youth in an effort at giving them life-skills which they can employ to promote peace in the community and ‘provide a permanent forum for their continuous engagement in the Somali peace process.’²⁴⁹

2.1.5 Interfaith dialogue and peacebuilding

Mohammed Abu-Nimer defines interfaith dialogue as ‘those dialogues organized by religious actors that aim to bring together religious groups with the goal of contributing to the peace process.’²⁵⁰ Interreligious peacebuilding is a vital facet of peacebuilding in societies with multiple religious affiliations.

The most notable case of interreligious peacebuilding is evident in Nigeria between Christians and Muslims²⁵¹. Following years of religious conflict in the country, an imam and a pastor, Muhammed Ashafa and James Wuye respectively, resorted to working together in a show of solidarity to discourage further conflict in Nigeria.²⁵² Following near death experiences, these former adversaries formed the Muslim-Christian Dialogue Forum to promote discussions and negotiations between the Christians and Muslims and a non-violent end to the conflict. Ashafa and Wuye have been instrumental in Nigeria for promoting ‘non-violence, reconciliation and the

²⁴⁸ Ibid, Bouta, 118

²⁴⁹ Ibid

²⁵⁰ Ibid, Abu-Nimer & Kadayifci-Orellana, *Muslim Peace-Building Actors*, 559

²⁵¹ Nigeria is divided between two major religions with a lesser percentage of the population practicing traditional African religion; Muslims are mostly found in the North and Christians in the South. The country has been plagued with political, ethnic and religious conflict since 1964 -1965. This was followed by a civil war in 1967. Religious conflict hit an all-time high in 1987 which was spiked by the question of whether or not to include *Sharia* courts of appeal into the Nigerian constitution. This year led to increasing deaths in Christian Muslim wars.

²⁵² In 1992, both Ashafa and Wuye tried to get the other killed in a clash in Kaduna State. Christian killers murdered Ashafa’s uncle, believing that it was Ashafa. Meanwhile, Muslim assassins cut off Wuye’s arm and left him for dead.

advocacy of peaceful relations between their communities and [...] encourage others to join them in this goal.²⁵³

2.1.6 Impact of religious peacebuilding

Bouta, et al., outline the following roles that have been adopted by religious peacebuilding actors in conflict and post conflict societies.²⁵⁴ This includes, but is not limited to the following;

- i. Altering of behaviour, attitude and negative stereotype and mind frames of Christian, Muslim and non-faith based counterparts
- ii. Healing of trauma and injuries as well as rehumanizing the ‘other; and
- iii. Contribution to more effective dissemination of ideas such as democracy, human rights, justice, development and peacebuilding.²⁵⁵

2.2 Religion and Reconciliation

New wars are mainly fought between enemies that are geographically close together and are based on issues of identity, and manifested in terms of stereotypes, fear and hatred. Diplomacy and peacekeeping are seldom feasible in peacebuilding in the context of these wars.²⁵⁶ The nature of the new wars demands a transformation of relationships that enable the sustainability of peace.²⁵⁷ Religion relies on a varied array of values that highlight the importance of forgiveness,

²⁵³ Op cit, Hayes, *Conflict, Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding*, 66

²⁵⁴ According to the authors, these roles are undertaken irrespective of the nature of the conflict; a religious or non-religious conflict.

²⁵⁵ Op cit. Bouta et al. p35

²⁵⁶ Botman H. R. , (2004), “Truth and Reconciliation: The South Africa Case,” in Harold Coward and Gordon S. Smith (eds.), *Religion and Peacebuilding*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 243

²⁵⁷ Op Cit., Lederach, *Building Peace*,27-8

mercy, justice and reconciliation, vital concepts of a rebuilding of relationships in the pursuit of positive peace.²⁵⁸

Forgiveness and mercy are intertwined. After religious actors facilitate talks between warring parties, perpetrators and victims are expected to truthfully recount their ordeals. Perpetrators are expected to be remorseful and to seek forgiveness from their victims. Through scriptures on the importance of forgiveness and mercy, the victims are encouraged to forgive the perpetrators and to forge new relationships.²⁵⁹

The demand for justice is a human need,²⁶⁰ but the ‘central question in reconciliation is not whether justice must be done, but how.’²⁶¹ There are different forms of justice which can be exacted, and not necessarily legislative: justice can take the form of revenge, retribution, redistributive or restorative.²⁶² Restorative justice has been lauded as the ‘most critical form of justice in the structuring of the reconciliation process. According to Russel Botman, ‘restorative justice returns the voice of the victim, whether dead or alive, from the periphery to the centre.’²⁶³ Supported by scriptures in the bible warning against revenge, victims are encouraged to embrace forms of justice that will promote a rebuilding of healthy relationships between the former adversaries.²⁶⁴

²⁵⁸ Ibid, 29-31

²⁵⁹ Ibid, 31

²⁶⁰ Op Cit., Lambourne, *Post Conflict Peacebuilding*, 2-3

²⁶¹ Botman H. R., “Truth and Reconciliation: The South Africa Case,” 248

²⁶² Ibid

²⁶³ Ibid, 250

²⁶⁴ Ibid, Lambourne, *Post Conflict Peacebuilding*, 5-7

2.2.1 Case Study of South Africa

At the advent of independence in 1994, South Africa was plagued by scars acquired during colonialism, which was characterized by apartheid since 1948. Religion and its role in apartheid in South Africa is traced back to the 19th Century when the Dutch reformed church approved the conversion of the black KhoiKhoi into the congregation, but also instituted segregation in the partaking of the Holy Communion, ‘the congregation set up among the heathen [...] should enjoy their Christian privileges in a separate building or institution.’²⁶⁵ This practice of segregation based on race later spread into the political circles and was formally adopted in the South Africa in 1948.²⁶⁶ In 1980, religious institutions formed the United Democratic Front. Under the leadership of religious leaders such as Allan Boesak and Desmond Tutu, faith based organizations, both Muslim and Christians, banded together and fought against apartheid policy.²⁶⁷

Religion in South Africa was blamed for ‘shaping the mind of the offenders’ and therefore shared responsibility for the offences carried out during the era of apartheid in the country. Religious actors, therefore, also needed to repent, and ask for forgiveness both to God, and to the victims, for their role in the propagation of apartheid.²⁶⁸ This understanding informed the participation of the religious community in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The “church hearings” were also meant to help the religious communities to see their own complicity in the gross human rights violation of the apartheid era.²⁶⁹ The church has also

²⁶⁵ Loff C., (1983), “The History of a Heresy,” in Gruchy J. D. and Villa-Vicencio C. (eds.), (1983), *Apartheid Is a Heresy*, Cape Town: Philip, pp. 17–19.

²⁶⁶ Ibid, Botman, “*Truth and Reconciliation*,” 244

²⁶⁷ Ibid, Botman, 246

²⁶⁸ Ibid 247

²⁶⁹ Ibid

rejected the biblical justifications that were given as a justification of apartheid and continued to play an active role in the healing efforts of the people during the reconciliation.

The question of justice was addressed during the TRC in South Africa. Although some preferred retributive justice, the church advocated for retributive justice. This was supported by scriptures such as Romans 12:19, 'vengeance belongs to God' and Romans 13:14, that God appoints civil authorities as rightful administrator of punishment to the evil doer.²⁷⁰ The surviving victims were able to question the perpetrators, while the perpetrators were given a chance to confess the truth. This process was aimed at restoration of human dignity back to the survivors.

2.3 Religious Peacebuilding and gender issues

A post-conflict society is faced with many gendered issues at the end of a conflict. The Rome Statute identified some gender crimes such as sexual violence as crimes against humanity.²⁷¹ These gender sexual crimes include gender based violence and rape, whereby women and children are the highest majority of the victims.²⁷²

To address these issues during peacebuilding, religious actors have a wealth of resources which can be used to effect change, both structural and cultural that will lead to sustainable peace. In the case of rape and gender based violence, Bouta et al., highlight the ability of religious organizations to heal trauma and injuries as well as rehumanizing 'the other'.²⁷³ Through religious values like forgiveness and with the help of scriptures, hadiths and *sunna*, both

²⁷⁰ Ibid

²⁷¹ Op Cit., Porter E., *Peacebuilding*, 13

²⁷² Dara Kay Cohen et al., highlight that sexual violence is a major weapon during a conflict, and that women and children make up the highest number of victims, of this type of violence during and also immediately after the end of a conflict. It is however important to note that women are not the exclusive victims of gender based sexual violence, and men are not the exclusive perpetrators of the violence.

²⁷³ Op Cit., Bouta et al., *Faith Based Peacebuilding*, 35

Christian and Muslim religious actors can help the victims of these acts to heal and forgive their perpetrators.

Religious actor's ability to challenge traditional structures through sacred texts can translate into the re-evaluation of the status of women in post conflict societies and thus an examination and revision of the cultural values that undermine women. Gender equality can be achieved with the help of religious actors, which will enable women to continue enjoying the liberation gained during the conflict.²⁷⁴

Conclusion

As seen above, religious organizations possess immense potential in peacebuilding. Through the varied actors that use the religious platform to build peace, ranging from leaders to lay members of both sexes, grassroots have the ability to take part in peacebuilding, through the mandate of sacred texts which encourage the participation in peacebuilding and reconciliation.

The next chapter will look at the role of women in peacebuilding. Gleaning lessons from this chapter, it will then look at the role of women in religious organizations in peacebuilding activities.

²⁷⁴ Ibid, Zuckerman & Greenberg, "*The Gender Dimensions of post-conflict reconstruction*, 70-71

CHAPTER 3: WOMEN AND PEACEBUILDING

*“When men take up arms, women are left behind, better equipped to play a key role in bringing fighting parties to a discussing table. They bear the brunt of the humanitarian crises associated with war and are never direct beneficiaries of any agreements, so they are likely to dedicate more of their energies towards ending war than their male counterparts. [...] there is ‘a window of opportunity’ because women are forgiving and good at “meeting people halfway”.*²⁷⁵

3.1 Gender Issues in Conflict

In July 2002, The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court came into force. It recognized and categorized gender related crimes such as rape and other forms of sexual violence as crimes against humanity.²⁷⁶ According to Elisabeth Porter, the statute further increased awareness of that violence against women and children was a human rights violation which requires prosecution, and that armed conflict impacts women and children differently as compared to men.²⁷⁷

Gender stereotypes ignore that different genders experience war differently in what Sweetman (2005) calls the “gendered experience of conflict.”²⁷⁸ According to her, gender identity is a big determinant of the experience that different members of society have during a conflict. Women and children are always assumed to have stayed behind as the men go to the battle zones during war – distanced from the conflict. Women are only portrayed as helpless beings who are victims of war ranging from rape to kidnapping. Men on the other hand are portrayed as active participants during a conflict and therefore, the most affected by it.²⁷⁹ This is however far from reality.

²⁷⁵ Okeyo V., (3.10.2014), “Little to Celebrate for Africa’s Women...but hope springs eternal,” *Daily Nation*

²⁷⁶ Ibid, Porter E., *Peacebuilding*, 13

²⁷⁷ Ibid

²⁷⁸ Op Cit., Sweetman, *Gender, Peacebuilding and Reconstruction*, 3

²⁷⁹ Ibid, 5

Women are far from distanced during a conflict. Since the 1960s there has been a steady increase of women combatants during conflict. Peru, Liberia, Rwanda and even Columbia have registered a steady increase of between a fifth and a third of the total number of combatants.²⁸⁰ According to the United States Institute of Peace, these women take up varied roles during the conflict; ranging from frontline battles to weapon carriers. In Rwanda, women are reported to have been amongst the perpetrators of genocide, most of them proving to be as cruel as their male counterparts.²⁸¹

War brings with it the proliferation of light weapons and with it a heightened sense of insecurity. This brings with it issues of sexual and gender based violence especially against women. Liberia and Sierra Leone, during their respective civil wars, experienced a loss of respect especially towards the older women who became victims of rape from young boys.²⁸² Rwanda recorded a high case of sexual violence in form of rape of women by both individual men and groups. Similar cases have been recorded in Somalia and Democratic Republic of Congo where UN Peacekeepers are reported to have perpetrated gender crimes against women in the respective countries.²⁸³ Rape is now used as a weapon of warfare by opposing forces in a bid to demoralize opponents.²⁸⁴ This has led to its categorization as a war crime.

Conflict forces the woman, who has ordinarily adopted the role of the homemaker, forced to take on the role of caretaker.²⁸⁵ This is usually with untold difficulty as they struggle to provide security and food in an uncertain environment ridden with insecurity and with little to no

²⁸⁰ Paez E., (2002), *Girls in the Colombian Armed Groups: A Diagnosis: 'Let Us Dream'* UK: Terre des Hommes

²⁸¹ Ibid, Oudraat, 23

²⁸² Turshen M., & Tagiramasiya C. (eds.), (1998), *What Women do in Wartime: Gender and Conflict in Africa*, London: Zed Books, 45

²⁸³ Zuckerman E. & Greenberg G., (2004), 'The Gender Dimensions of Post-Conflict Reconstruction: An analytical framework for Policymakers in Sweetman C., *Gender, Peacebuilding and Reconstruction*, Oxford: Oxfam GB

²⁸⁴ Ibid, Sweetman, 105

²⁸⁵ Ibid, Sweetman, 3

support.²⁸⁶ This same independence and gender equality is sadly not upheld at the end of the conflict. In what has been termed as ‘gendered peace,’²⁸⁷ women in rural Eritrea were forced to revert back to traditional practices of women discrimination, after years of taking care of the homestead while most of the men were in the bush fighting for the emancipation of Eritrea from Ethiopia.

Since the end of the Cold war, there have been a heightened number of women who die due to health reasons during a conflict. In Congo, the high levels of female deaths during the ongoing conflict have been attributed to ‘contagious diseases, lack of infrastructure like clean water and health services’ rather than direct conflict.²⁸⁸ There have been an increased number of HIV/Aids infections due to the increased sexual transactions with prostitutes, especially during and after the conflict; this is later spread to the spouses on the return home.

Effects of conflict are however not just negative. There has been a change from the existing status quo in terms of women’s position whereby they seem to enjoy liberty from the subordination that is usually dictated by existing culture.²⁸⁹ In the 1986 war in Uganda, women took up positions in the warring parties as nurses, administrators and even as combatants. They later used these positions to fight for better representation of women and improved consideration of their rights.

The future still seems bleak in relation to gender issues and conflict. According to Porter, despite the numerous international agreements and international standards on the treatment of women

²⁸⁶ Ibid Turshen & Tagiramasiya, 67

²⁸⁷ Pankhurst J. et al., (1997), “Engendering the Analysis of Conflict: Perspectives from the South,” in Afshah Haleh, *Women & Empowerment*, New York: Routledge Press,

²⁸⁸ McNairn R., (2005), “Building Capacity to Resolve Conflict in Communities: Oxfam Experience in Rwanda,” in Sweetman C., *Gender, Peacebuilding and Reconstruction*, (Oxford: Oxfam GB, 85

²⁸⁹ Op Cit., Zuckerman and Greenberg, *The Gender Dimensions of post-conflict reconstruction*, 70-1

and children and the persecution of violators of these agreements, women's empowerment and security is still not secured. Violence against women, especially in terms of raping enemy women is still a strategic weapon of war, used as a measure to achieve victory in war.²⁹⁰

3.2 Gender Issues in Peacebuilding

'That war is profoundly gendered has long been recognized by feminist international relations scholars. What is less recognized is that the post war period is equally gendered.'²⁹¹ Gender roles shift in the event of a war, 'women frequently take on new roles which may lead to a greater sense of political protagonism and institutional savvy.'²⁹² Rita Manchanda adds that 'the transitional period that follows can open up intended or unintended spaces for empowering women [thus] affecting structural social transformations and producing new social economic and political hierarchies.'²⁹³ This change needs to be considered as governments 'find ways to absorb a large number of demobilized soldiers,'²⁹⁴ to include women and 'script new gender roles.'²⁹⁵

There is dire need to protect women in a post conflict society. Jennifer Klot highlights this need for social protection of women, 'especially those who have been cast away from their families as a result of violence perpetrated upon them.'²⁹⁶ In Northern Uganda²⁹⁷, most girls who come back from these kidnapping ordeals do so in secrecy, 'downplay[ing] what happened to them. They initially go back to their own family...but often it doesn't work out and they go someplace

²⁹⁰ Op Cit., Porter E., *Peacebuilding*, 15

²⁹¹ Borer T. A., (2009) "Gendered War and Gendered Peace: Truth Commissions and Post Conflict Gender Violence: Lessons from South Africa," *Violence Against Women*, 15 No. 10, 1170

²⁹² Theidon K. et al., (2011), "Gender, Conflict and Peacebuilding: State of the Field and Lessons Learned from USIP Grantmaking, *USIP Peaceworks*, No. 76, Washington DC: USIP, 24

²⁹³ Manchanda R., 'Ambivalent Gains in South Asian Conflicts,' in the *Aftermath*, as quoted in Theidon et al., *"Gender, Conflict and Peacebuilding*, 25

²⁹⁴ Ibid, Theidon et al., *"Gender, Conflict and Peacebuilding"*, 24

²⁹⁵ Ibid

²⁹⁶ Ibid, Sweetman, 37

²⁹⁷ Northern Uganda has been plagued with insecurity since 1986. The rebel group, Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) under the leadership of Joseph Kony, have contributed to the insecurity in the region. Women and girls have been frequent victims of kidnapping, sexual violence and forced marriages to the soldiers of the rebel group.

else.²⁹⁸ This is attributed to the negative attitude directed towards the women who have been actively involved in the war, whether willingly or not.

The experiences of women and girls in the post conflict Northern Uganda and Mozambique point to the need of a gender sensitive perspective in the implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programs. In Mozambique and Sierra Leone²⁹⁹, DDR has been mainly aimed at men and boys³⁰⁰. This has resulted from the continued ‘conventional views of gender roles, which understand war as armed conflict between males.’³⁰¹ Consequently, these ‘gender-discriminatory framework saw girls and women only as ‘sex slaves’, ‘wives’, and ‘camp followers’; they were therefore not viewed as appropriate recipients of DDR benefits.’³⁰² This resulted in a low number of female participants in the Sierra Leone DDR program; only eight percent of the total population that participated in the program was female.³⁰³

Gender-Based Violence denotes ‘violence targeting women or men, girls or boys on the basis of their gender or sexual orientation. It includes, but is not limited to sexual violence, which is often used as an instrument of terror and torture in armed conflict situations.’³⁰⁴ In the aftermath of a conflict, Kimberly Theidon and Kelly Phenicie note that shame is associated with the victims; ‘when people talk about rape, they talk a great deal about silences’ because of the stigma attached to the victims. In South Africa, reports of powerful deterrents to reporting incidences of sexual violence whereby the perpetrators are powerful politicians.³⁰⁵ The Truth Commissions in

²⁹⁸ Op Cit., Sweetman (ed.), *Gender, Peacebuilding, and Reconstruction*, 25

²⁹⁹ Sierra Leone experienced an intensification of war from 1992 to 1997 whose immediate cause was the military’s overthrow of President Monoh’s Government.

³⁰⁰ Op Cit., McKay S., (2005), *Reconstructing Fragile Lives*, 25

³⁰¹ Ibid, 23

³⁰² Ibid

³⁰³ Ibid

³⁰⁴ Australian Agency for International Development, *Gender Guidelines: Peace-Building*, 33

³⁰⁵ Ibid, Thiedon, 24

many countries have also failed to provide protection and anonymity to the witnesses, thus, ‘someone might be dissuaded from doing so if they felt exposed and vulnerable.’³⁰⁶

Positive strides

Despite the wide strides that are yet to be made to ensure a gender perspective is enforced during peacebuilding, various positive steps have already been taken. Women participation is increasing steadily, due to efforts of organizations and institutions to this effect. In Sierra Leone, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) was engaged in the dissemination of knowledge among the women leaders and civil society organizations about the role of the PBC and also helped in the ‘establishment of a national peacebuilding agenda for women.’³⁰⁷ These two initiatives effectively encouraged the participation of women in peacebuilding activities in Sierra Leone.

Sierra Leone has successfully carried out gender reforms that reflect gender sensitivity. Some of the reforms include the ‘adoption of a legal framework that outlaws domestic violence, ensures women’s right to inheritance and to own property.’³⁰⁸ Additionally, the Sierra Leone peacebuilding Cooperation Framework ‘specifies the need to increase women’s access to courts, help ensure property rights [...] and commits increased support to Family Support Units of the national police to address sexual and gender based violence and other crimes against women.’³⁰⁹

Judicial Reforms are increasing the ability of women to access justice. Klot reports an increased establishment of specialized police station for women and hospital police in states such as Liberia and Sierra Leone. This, she adds should be accompanied by an ‘increased women legal

³⁰⁶ Ibid, Borer T. A, *Gendered War and Gendered Peace*, 1180- 1181

³⁰⁷ Kolt, *Women in Peacebuilding*, 3

³⁰⁸ Ibid, Kolt, 3

³⁰⁹ Ibid, Kolt, 3

literacy and aid, monitoring and reporting women's human rights violations, ensuring reparations and restitution for women, and training and capacity building for gender justice³¹⁰ must also be included in the reforms in order to ensure the effectiveness of the newly instituted structures.

3.3 Women in Peacebuilding

'Societies where women have higher social and economic status and greater political representation are less likely to become involved in conflict.'³¹¹ This highlights the need for gender equality, and active women involvement in peacebuilding, in order to avoid a relapse of a post conflict society back into conflict, or as a measure of preventive peacebuilding.

In the international arena, women's role in peacebuilding has been accompanied by the formation of various organizations which carry out an oversight role into the plight of women. The first of these organizations is the Convention on the Status of Women (CSW) that not only monitors women situation worldwide, but also fights for their rights.³¹² This was followed by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which was adopted in 1979, and later enforced in 1981. CEDAW seeks to establish universal standards of equality for both men and women. Other organizations incorporated in the UN include UNIFEM which works in close collaboration with UNDP to monitor and promote 'gender mainstreaming, women's empowerment strategies, and engendering governance to increase women's participation in decision-making, promoting women's human rights and making women's perspectives central to peace.'³¹³

³¹⁰ Klot J. F., (2003) *Women and Peacebuilding*, UNIFEM & PBSO, 8

³¹¹ Esposito J. L and Yilmaz I., (2010), 'Transnational Muslim Faith-Based Peacebuilding: Initiatives of the Gulen Movement' in *European Journal of Economic and Political Studies*, no. 3, 96

³¹² Op Cit., Porter, *Peacebuilding*, 12

³¹³ Ibid

David Smock emphasizes the importance of including women in peacebuilding by arguing that ‘to exclude women is to neglect a particular set of opportunities that have often been neglected,’³¹⁴ while Katherine Marshall et al. add that ‘women’s skills and social positions give them different perspectives on issues of peace and conflict, [and] abilities to achieve common ground and work effectively to better their communities in instances where men have failed.’³¹⁵ In the international level the passing of the Security Council Resolution 1325 on October 2000 globally acknowledged the invaluable role of women in peacebuilding. In this resolution, the Security Council not only acknowledged the gendered experiences of conflict³¹⁶, but it also reiterated ‘the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building.’ The Resolution, therefore stresses the need for women’s equal participation and full involvement in conflict resolution and all decision making levels.³¹⁷

The current post conflict situation is marred by women’s inadequate ‘protection and lack of services, justice, [and] economic security.’³¹⁸ United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has highlighted a need to ‘integrate a gender perspective into the United Nations (UN) systems approach to early recovery, transition and reconciliation.’³¹⁹ Women’s needs demand great attention within the Justice and Security Sector Reforms (SSR). This is however not yet feasible, because of existing gaps whereby conflicts against women in the aftermath of a conflict receive less attention compared to ‘high profile street crimes, homicides, political corruption, gangs and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) initiatives.’³²⁰

³¹⁴ Ibid, Marshall et al. *Women in Religious Peacebuilding*, 7

³¹⁵ Ibid

³¹⁶ Op Cit., Sweetman, *Gender, Peacebuilding , and Reconstruction*, 3

³¹⁷ Resolution 1325, paragraph 5

³¹⁸ Ibid, Klot, *Women and Peacebuilding*, 1

³¹⁹ Ibid

³²⁰ Ibid

3.4 Gender peacebuilding frameworks

As highlighted above, the international system has been on the forefront of promoting the involvement of women in peacebuilding. The Security Council of the UN has been instrumental in passing vital resolutions that cement and encourage the active participation of women in the peacebuilding efforts in post conflict society. The most notable of these resolutions is UNSCR 1325, a resolution adopted in October 2000, which offers three important recommendations in the field of women, peace and security;

Firstly, ‘the resolution formally recognized that there are aspects of women’s and girls’ experience of armed conflict which are not shared by men or boys. Gender identity affects the ways in which people are caught up in armed conflict, and what happens to them during and after it.’³²¹ So, ignoring the impact of a conflict on the different genders results in the omission of ‘gender-specific interests and needs of women and girls.’³²² The resolution suggests to policy makers that there is need to ‘design and implement interventions to maintain and build peace, and reconstruct post-war societies with the realities of women’s, girls’, men’s and boys’ experience of conflict in mind.’³²³

The resolution further stresses the relationship between democracy and sustainable peace. There is need to incorporate marginalized groups in order to ensure that they all participate in decision making. A lack of inclusivity in decision making can lead to unequal resource distribution which could lead to renewed conflict. UNSCR 1325 insists on the need to ensure that there is sufficient representation of women to ensure that they play a part in the maintenance of peace and security.

³²¹ Ibid, Sweetman, 2

³²² Ibid, 3

³²³ Ibid

Empowerment, both politically and economically is to be pursued alongside women representation.

The resolution lastly encourages the use of women's skills and knowledge in peace and reconstruction. It is noted that women are vital in ensuring social order during a conflict, and soliciting their services in a bid to develop a culture of peace during reconstruction makes a big difference in post conflict societies.

Apart from resolution 1325, the UN Security Council has passed six other resolutions that pertain to women, peace and security. In 2008, UNSCR 1820 was passed, which recognized the use of Sexual Gender Based Violence as a war tactic, and later in 2009 Resolution 1888 called for strategies to deal with sexual violence during conflict, and the deployment of gender experts in conflict areas and an improved monitoring and reporting system of gender based violence during conflict. Resolution 1890 of 2009 called for the development of global indicators that would track the implementation of Resolution 1325. In 2010, Resolution 1960 provided measures that would end impunity of perpetrators of sexual violence during conflict while Resolution 2106 seeks to address issues of impunity in sexual violence during conflict and resolution. Lastly, Resolution 2122 of 2013 presents methods of combating obstacles to women participation in peace and security.³²⁴

Regionally, institutions have set up frameworks that enforce the recommendations of the UNSCR 1325 thus ensuring active involvement of women in peace and security. The European Union has passed resolutions such as the Comprehensive Approach to the EU implementation of the UNSCRs 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace and Security³²⁵ and the 2000 EU Resolution on

³²⁴ Swiss Peace, KOFF Factsheets on Gender and Peacebuilding, 5/15

³²⁵ EU Doc 15671/1/08

Participation of Women in Peaceful Conflict Resolution. These resolutions borrow heavily from the UNSCR 1325 and put measures for member countries to comply with the resolution's recommendations to ensure the involvement of women in peace and security.

In Africa, the African Union, AU, passed a Solemn Declaration of Gender Equality in Africa. Through this declaration, the AU seeks to empower the women in the continent and promote gender equality in all the member states. This is especially so in the sectors of governance, peace and security, health, education, human rights and economic empowerment.³²⁶

3.5 Roles of Women in Peacebuilding

Women are an asset in peacebuilding. Katherine Marshall highlights that 'women often seem better able and more willing to reach across religious and cultural divides to find common ground.'³²⁷ Marc Gopin further acknowledges affinity for women to be successfully involved in peace efforts, 'women seem to have a capacity to make connections and to use many means to achieve that [connection], they are able to make connections between warring parties [bringing] a different level of seriousness and respect.'³²⁸ The innate desire for inclusiveness and recognition for others' viewpoints³²⁹ makes them an asset in any peacebuilding effort.

Women have successfully carried out peacebuilding activities in post conflict areas³³⁰. This has been carried out in form of activities ranging from 'mediation, grassroots activism [to] CSO organizing'³³¹ to promote gender equality based on the concept of positive rather than negative

³²⁶ AU, Policy on Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD), 8-9

³²⁷ Op Cit., Marshall et al., *Women in Religious Peacebuilding*, 8

³²⁸ Interview with Marc Gopin, as quoted in Marshall et al., *Women in Religious Peacebuilding*, 8

³²⁹ Ibid, Marshall et al., *Women in Religious Peacebuilding*, 8

³³⁰ Australian Agency for International Development, *Gender Guidelines: Peace-Building* (AusAid, 2006), 15

³³¹ Ibid, AusAid, 15

peace. Some of the roles that women have carried out in peacebuilding include mediation, advocacy, education and even provision of social services, as is evident below.

The Wajir Peace and Development Committee (WPDC) ‘is regarded as one of the most visible and successful peace-building actors in the region.’³³² This is a Kenyan peacebuilding organization that ‘was initially formed by women to encourage dialogue among warring parties in the Wajir district of Kenya.’³³³ This institution has been instrumental in the monitoring of conflict and has ‘helped to prevent conflicts before these conflicts turned violent.’³³⁴ This has been enforced through the formation of the Joint Committee of Clans which ‘acted as a vigilante body to diffuse tension and to report incidences to police.’³³⁵ To curb the problem of intercommunity conflict,³³⁶ the WPDC mediated in the local conflicts in Wajir, this was followed by the formation of a Joint Commission that continue mediation efforts in the case of continued conflict, before it resorted to violence.

Sudanese women who sought a peaceful end to the long Sudanese war came together and formed the Sudanese Women’s Voice for Peace (SWVP) in March 1994.³³⁷ This institution has successfully carried out education and peace awareness campaigns in its initiative to promote peace in Sudan. In terms of awareness campaigns, SWVP used workshops, seminars and meetings to reach the masses at the grassroots. Respected leaders were involved in SWVP’s campaigns in order to legitimize and endorse the peace messages of the institution. Education workshops were mainly held in Lokichogio, Kenya in which ‘grass root leaders from Southern

³³² Ibid, 109

³³³ Wajir has been plagued by intercommunity conflict between the ethnic tribes in the area. This has been characterized by cattle rustling and violence.

³³⁴ Ibid Bouta et al., 110

³³⁵ Ibid

³³⁶ Wajir is inhabited by nomadic pastoralists who engage in cattle raiding which often turns violent.

³³⁷ UNHCR, et al., *Best Practices in Peacebuilding*, 13

and marginalized South Sudan explored root causes of the inter-ethnic conflict in North-South Sudan and recommended peace activities which would encourage the participation of the Sudanese people.³³⁸

In Rwanda³³⁹, the Pro-Femme / *Twese Hamwe* is a success story of women in peacebuilding, having even received the ‘UNESCO Madanjeet Singh Prize for the promotion of Tolerance and Non-violence in 1996.’³⁴⁰ Pro-Femme has made great strides in its efforts at promoting peace after the genocide of 1994, while supporting the empowerment of women in positions of leadership and ‘increase[ing] the capacity of Rwandese women in providing sustainable solutions to national problems [which] include refugees, repatriated people and fugitives.’³⁴¹ This effectively promotes the inclusion of women in national decision making processes. Pro-Femme has also improved the economic status of women through ‘creating micro-actions to ensure food and generate income especially for women and children.’³⁴²

3.6 Challenges faced by women in Peacebuilding

Policies incorporated during peacebuilding form a major challenge. ‘Women security is considered a ‘human rights’ or ‘women’s issue rather than a security sector imperative.’³⁴³ Such policies dampen women efforts in ensuring justice especially in the case of gender based violence after the conflict.³⁴⁴ According to Klot, ‘in many post-conflict settings, the formal security institutions charged with women’s protection, namely the military, civilian police and

³³⁸ Ibid, 15

³³⁹ Rwanda experienced the worst case of a genocide war since the holocaust in Germany. The Hutu were pitted against the Tutsi using propaganda which led to the massacre of 800,000 minority Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

³⁴⁰ Ibid, *Best Practices in Peacebuilding*, 19

³⁴¹ Ibid

³⁴² Ibid, 19

³⁴³ Ibid, Klot, *Women in Peacebuilding*, 1

³⁴⁴ Ibid

even peacekeepers, are sometimes among the perpetrators of violence against them and fail to serve as accountability institutions to which women can turn for redress and security.’³⁴⁵

Inadequate support and funding also poses a challenge for women undertaking peacebuilding activities. Klot notes the ‘sharp inconsistencies in the support provided by the international community to women’s machineries and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).’³⁴⁶ This could affect the reach of the peacebuilding institution in question and the impact of its activities.

AusAid points out that the media can form a challenge in women’s peacebuilding initiatives. According to the ‘*Gender and Peacebuilding Report*,’ women have ‘unequal access to media [which] may mean their interests, needs and perspectives are not represented or discussed.’³⁴⁷ The inadequate access to media may affect the peacebuilding activities mainly dealing with dissemination of information by limiting the reach of the masses.

The aspect of motherhood has proven to be a two edged sword in the question of women’s involvement in peacebuilding. According to Nyaradzayi Gumbonzavanda³⁴⁸, ‘conflict situations always become a question of “women and their children” – a fact that women in some situations have taken advantage of to arouse sympathy and respect’³⁴⁹ as was the case with mothers in Latin American Catholic Church and the Association of War Affected Mothers of Sri Lanka.³⁵⁰ This has the potential of contributing to further stereotyping and marginalization as women’s reproductive roles of ‘nurturing, prayer and care for children,’ will be much more pronounced

³⁴⁵ Ibid

³⁴⁶ Ibid

³⁴⁷ Australian Agency for International Development, *Gender and Peacebuilding*

³⁴⁸ Nyaradzayi Gumbonzavanda was the general secretary of the World YWCA as of 2011

³⁴⁹ Interview with Nyaradzayi Gumbonzavanda as quoted in Marshall et al., *Women in Religious Peacebuilding*, 9

³⁵⁰ According to Marshall, this was a group of bereaved Sri Lankan mothers who met with their counterparts on the other side of the conflict. They arranged dialogues which resulted in cease fire in 2009

thus impeding on changing these roles and taking up more strategic ones that deal with tackle gender inequality.³⁵¹

Faith is sometimes construed as a dividing factor, this is especially so in the case of interfaith peacebuilding. In the case of WIPNET in Liberia, Marshall notes the problem of faith differences which made some women in the community ‘refuse to pray with women who were not of the same faith, asserting that it would dilute their faith.

3.7 Women in religious peacebuilding

Women in religious peacebuilding have largely been ignored whereby ‘religion’s role in driving conflict and its potential to open up avenues for peace and reconciliation is often viewed through a male prism, limiting comprehension of both the causes of and the solutions to the conflict.’³⁵²

Katherine Marshall views this oversight as ‘counterintuitive’ pointing out since the role of women and of religion in peacebuilding has increasingly garnered interest among scholars and policy makers. This oversight has consequently affected the field’s ability to bring the next generation of women into the fold, making women’s inspiration and challenges in religious peacebuilding invisible.³⁵³

Faith plays a major role in the inspiration of women who carry out religious peacebuilding activities. As Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana points out, ‘many of these women see their peace work as a service to God, which keeps them motivated to continue, despite the challenges they face.’³⁵⁴

Alongside faith as a motivator, these women share the preference for anonymity, a quality which is applauded by Marshall who argues that ‘working out of the public eye, women are less likely

³⁵¹ Ibid, Marshall et al., *Women in Religious Peacebuilding*, 9

³⁵² Ibid, 10

³⁵³ Ibid, 5

³⁵⁴ Interview with Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana as quoted in Marshall et al., *Women in Religious Peacebuilding*, 11

to face resistance from detractors and can hence be more effective.’³⁵⁵ This selfless quality, though commendable has also resulted in the invisibility of most of the women in religious peacebuilding, which accounts for their oversight by policy makers and international donors.

Despite this apparent invisibility of the women in religious peacebuilding, both as lay members in religious institutions and using their respective platforms in leadership and even as individuals have successfully carried out peacebuilding activities.

Maryann Cusimano Love highlights a strength of women’s religious groups that has an impact if used in peacebuilding;

‘Women’s religious groups tend to have greater networks and be more relationship based. This is very helpful in creating trust in post-conflict societies, and with refugees, IDPs (internally displaced persons), and other victims of conflicts. It is a very effective way to build movements for peace.’³⁵⁶

Societal and religious marginalization of women has been ‘an advantage over men, for action in peacebuilding. Sanam Anderlini contends that because ‘women are regarded as less threatening [...] they tend to have more freedom of action. Women can make public pleas for peace by taking advantage of sexist notions that discourage retaliation against women.’³⁵⁷ Virginia Bouvier adds that this marginalization encourages the women to engage in reforms, especially of the institutions they belong to, ‘the fact that they are not at the top levels of institutions may mean that they are more open to institutional change.’³⁵⁸

³⁵⁵ Ibid, Marshall et al., 11

³⁵⁶ Interview with Maryann Cusimano Love as quoted in, Katherine Marshall et al., *Women in Religious Peacebuilding*, 8

³⁵⁷ Anderlini S. N., (2000), *Women at the Peace Table: Making a Difference* , New York: United Nations Development Fund for women UNIFEM, 18

³⁵⁸ Ibid, Marshall et al., *Women in Religious Peacebuilding*, 8

Despite all the available strengths that are associated with women religious peacebuilding, Katherine Marshall however points out the lack of a strategy within women religious peace builders that affect their impact. She contends that,

‘women groups [...] do not operate often enough at the level of politics and policy, those at the centre of the peace process often pay insufficient attention to healing and building communities, and the “softer” peace work, ranging from dialogue initiatives to community does not translate into robust processes that transform conflict-sustaining institutions.’³⁵⁹

Appleby, therefore insists on the strategic application of peacebuilding at every level, ranging from local to international whilst involving the participation of both men and women.

3.7.1 Women Religious leaders in peacebuilding

Despite the immense role of faith in motivating women to carry out peacebuilding activities, religious traditions are patriarchal, and tend to deny women leadership roles, especially in formal religious leadership positions. The lack of numerous women in high level leadership is even justified by scripture and precedent and this problem has led to the increased invisibility of women in religious activities, especially in peacebuilding.

Ideas are being advanced on how to engage women, give them credibility and authority, and to ensure their recognition in religious peace work.³⁶⁰ The first step to actualizing these changes, according to Agnes Aboum, lies in the need to change how participants of peace discussions are selected. Participation should actively seek out an increased female participation, which changes the narrative in the peace discussions.³⁶¹

³⁵⁹ Ibid, 9

³⁶⁰ Ibid, 13

³⁶¹ Ibid

There also needs to be a shift in how practitioners, scholars and policy makers refer religious peace actors. Marc Gopin suggests a shift from *religious leaders* to *religious representatives*. According to him, this will improve the recognition of the women involved in peace activities, as opposed to the use of “religious leaders” which indirectly gives a connotation of male religious peace actors.³⁶²

The situation is however changing, as women are increasingly being appointed in high level religious positions, which gives hope for an increased visibility of women in religious formal activities. In July 2014, the Church of England appointed the first female bishop; this will set precedence for more women to be given positions of power in faith based organizations.

The Islamic faith is establishing measures of involving women in leadership and peacebuilding activities. In the Philippines, the Muslim religious scholars and leaders, *ulama*, have been addressing the society’s cycle of violence in the Southern Philippines conflict. the ulama has been made up of both men and women leaders of the Islamic faith who both receive training in Islamic law and peace studies.

In the DRC, the continued insecurity in the South and North Kivu has disproportionately affected the lives of women. Tens of thousands of women have been brutally raped and mutilated, yet there is a limited access to health care facilities. The situation has led to the rise of women leaders in faith based organizations who have lead the efforts towards assisting the women in the region. Mathilde Muhindo Mwamini, the director of the Catholic Social Assistance Agency, The Centre Olame has provided healthcare and trauma healing for the victims of the brutal sexual violence in South and North Kivu. Another woman leader, Justine Masika has also joined

³⁶² Ibid

Mathilde in her efforts at peacebuilding in South Kivu. She has founded a coalition of women's organization that helps victims of sexual violence, Synergy of Women for Victims of Sexual Violence. Through the patronage of the Catholic Church, the organization has been carrying out 'advocacy on behalf of women affected by violence and rape as a weapon of war...and criticizing the culture of impunity that surrounds sexual assault and the dearth of accessible judiciary to prosecute offenders.'³⁶³

3.7.2 Lay women in religious peacebuilding

Marginalization of women in religious leadership has not hampered women's religious peacebuilding efforts. Maryanne Cusimano notes that women, even those not in leadership positions in faith based organisations, are often still motivated by faith and tend to carry out peacebuilding activities, especially in the grassroots. Among the activities these women carry out ranges from reconciliation, provision of healthcare and education services.³⁶⁴ These women are also involved in shaping the religious traditions in the local churches and their homes, which is an important, but of less obvious influence, yet these practices provide a background from which religious peacebuilding takes place.³⁶⁵

Women in post-conflict societies have been commonly involved in reconciliation and trauma healing, with faith playing a major role in the process. According to Andrea Blanch, 'religion and faith tap into people's deepest beliefs and can provide one tool to begin addressing the trauma and the conflict at a personal and societal level.'³⁶⁶ In the DRC, women have used religion to carry out peacebuilding and reconciliation in their communities; rape and mutilation of women has been a common strategy of war in the continuing conflict. Religious women's

³⁶³ Ibid, 17-8

³⁶⁴ Ibid

³⁶⁵ Katherine Marshall et al., *Women in Religious Peacebuilding*, 13

³⁶⁶ Interview with Andrea Blanch, quoted in Marshall et al., *Women in Religious Peacebuilding*, 14

groups have helped the victims of these crimes against humanity and providing healing support and addressing the issue of stigmatization when integrating the victims back to society.

Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana observed that women, irrespective of religious marginalization in leadership, have created informal peace mechanisms and processes to make up for their lack of participation in the formal tracks of peacemaking.³⁶⁷ A Kurdish Iraqi woman is reported to have provided conflict resolution services (*shura*) even without formal training to do so. As a traditional community leader, she used her capacity in the society and her religious background to build peace in her society.³⁶⁸

3.8 Interfaith peacebuilding

Religious women have successfully joined together and effected change as was in the case of Liberia.³⁶⁹ Frustration and hope led to the formation of the Liberian Women's Initiative (LWI) in 1994; having had enough of 'hiding in the bushes, eating grass and burying their dead,'³⁷⁰ women from different religious and ethnic groups joined together and formed the LWI to bring peace in their war torn country. LWI is credited for pressuring the 'warring factions to make peace [through] organizing demonstrations and raising money to attend peace talks. These efforts successfully culminated in the Liberian Peace Accord of 2004.³⁷¹

The LWI also led to the formation of an interfaith women's peacebuilding network, the Liberian Women's in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET) which brought together women from both Christian and Muslim faiths. WIPNET reportedly 'helped force Charles Taylor to attend peace talks in Accra with the rebels and a delegation of women from WIPNET, [who] monitored the

³⁶⁷ Interview with Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana, quoted in Marshall et al., *Women in Religious Peacebuilding*, 15

³⁶⁸ Ibid

³⁶⁹ Political insecurity plunged Liberia in two civil wars between 1992 and 2000

³⁷⁰ Ibid, Marshall, *Women in Religious Peacebuilding*, 7

³⁷¹ Ibid

negotiations. WIPNET, under the leadership of Leymar Gbowee, barricaded the building that hosted the negotiations between Charles Taylor and the rebels, when the talks stalled. The women forced the continuation of the peace talks with threats ‘to keep them in the room without water, without food’³⁷² while policemen’s intervention were met with threats by the older women, led by Gbowee to strip naked.³⁷³ These aggressive measures resulted in the completion of the treaty two weeks later.

Conclusions

The above literature and examples highlight the importance of ensuring gender involvement in all aspects of peacebuilding. The literature has also uncovered the importance of women in religious peacebuilding as evidenced by the landmarks that have been achieved by women in several post-conflict societies in Africa. The next chapter combines the lessons learnt in this and the previous chapter, and puts it into context; the role of religion and women in peacebuilding will be highlighted, using the case study of Eldoret, Kenya.

³⁷² Ibid

³⁷³ According to Liberian tradition, if an older woman willfully undresses in front of a man, the man’s family is cursed.

CHAPTER FOUR: RELIGION, GENDER AND PEACEBUILDING IN ELDORET, KENYA

4.1 Brief background of Eldoret, Kenya

Eldoret is a small town in Uasin Gishu County, located in the former Rift Valley province, in Kenya (See Map 1). Eldoret is the administrative headquarters of Uasin Gishu County, and the fifth largest town in Kenya, after Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu and Nakuru - and has an estimated population of 500,000 up from an estimated 300,000 in 1999.³⁷⁴ This heightened population growth has led to the emergence of “peri-urban” areas which have necessitated the continued expansion of Eldoret from the former 59km² in 1908 to 147km² as of 1988. This has led to an influx of settlements which surround the town; Langas, Munyaka, Huruma, Kamkunji, King’ong’o, Kimumu and Mwinyenderi³⁷⁵ (see map 2).

The main inhabitants of the Eldoret region belong to the Nandi community.³⁷⁶ Their settlement in the region can be traced back to the migration and settlement of Kenyan communities in the 19th century. The Masai, who preceded the Nandi in the region, gave the region its name, Uasin Gishu. The history of Eldoret is traced back to Afrikaner settlement in the area in 1908. Fifty-eight Afrikaner families trekked from Nakuru with an aim of establishing farms in the region. This was followed by an establishment of Eldoret as an administrative centre in order to provide necessary services such as security, transport and communication, to the Afrikaner settlers.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁴ Eldoret Municipal Council website: <http://www.eldoretmunicipal.go.ke/>

³⁷⁵ Simiyu R., *Gender Aspects of Urban Agriculture in Eldoret Kenya*, 57

³⁷⁶ Chemelil T., (30.10.2013), *The Rich Colonial History of Eldoret*, Kass magazine,

³⁷⁷ Ibid, Simiyu, *Gender Aspects*, 57

The Uasin Gishu District Commissioner's (DC) office was officially awarded a contract to build administration offices on Farm 64, which led to the growth of Eldoret into the town it is today.³⁷⁸

4.2 Post-election violence 2007/8

On 27th December 2007, Kenya held its general elections, voting in a new cycle of legislative and presidential leaders. The campaign and election process were marred by corruption and hate speech by aspirants along tribal lines, which the then electoral body, the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) failed to immediately address. The election was therefore characterized by tension, as different tribes saw the winning of the elections as a matter of life and death.³⁷⁹

On the evening of 30th December, amid claims of voting irregularity and increased tension, the then Chairman of the ECK, Mr. Samuel Kivuitu, announced the final presidential results of the elections; Mr. Mwai Kibaki was declared the winner of the elections and the president of the country. This announcement sparked cases of violence in several parts of the country. The supporters of the opposition party, the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) and its leader, Raila Odinga, refused to accept the outcome of the announced results, citing the aforementioned irregularities in the voting process. According to Sampson Baibai, a Kalenjin elder in Kapsoya, violence erupted in the region when 'many Kalenjins expected opposition leader Raila Odinga to win and accused the Kikuyu community of cheating when it was announced that he had lost to President Mwai Kibaki.'³⁸⁰

Violence erupted almost instantaneously after the announcement of the presidential election results by the chairman of the ECK. Though the elections were the immediate cause of the conflict, the roots of the violence can be traced back to 'historical injustices: a strong belief held

³⁷⁸ Ibid Simiyu, 55

³⁷⁹ Osinde V., (12.12.2007), *Journey to the General Elections*, The East African Standard,

³⁸⁰ Interview with Sampson Baibai, as quoted in *Refugee Review Tribunal*, Australia, 22nd August, 2008

by many ethnic groups that inequalities in resources and government appointments between regions and ethnicities.³⁸¹ Land distribution equally played a major role in the eruption of the violence. Rising discontent had been ignored by former government over the issue of land grabbing and illegal land distribution. The injustices above, coupled by a lack of trust in the judiciary, rising unemployment and poverty encouraged many youth to be engaged in violence. The role of vernacular stations in the country played a major role in incitement against other ethnic groups which facilitated the spread of violence.³⁸²

4.2.1 Perpetrators

Owing to the immense mobilization and incitement by prominent persons in society, youth were easily involved in the infliction of violence during the post-election violence. Gerald Ping'o³⁸³, narrates the recruitment of his neighbours and friends; 'my neighbor was already a member of the local gang, which was mainly involved in selling and taking drugs in the neighborhood. Soon after the violence started, youth from the neighboring village came and convinced them to join their exploits of inflicting violence against members of other tribes.'³⁸⁴ Nick Mutuma further supports the role of the youth in the post-election violence, 'most male youth proved susceptible to the incitement of the leaders and so most of them were actively involved in the post-election violence as perpetrators.'³⁸⁵

4.2.2 Victims

All the members of the society were affected by the post-election violence in different ways. Women and children were however more adversely affected than any other age-group and

³⁸¹ Donatella Lorch, *Kenya's Post-election Violence and the Plight of its Internally Displaced*

³⁸² Ibid, Lorch, *Kenya's Post-Election Violence, 1*

³⁸³ The name has been changed to protect the identity of the narrator

³⁸⁴ Interview with Gerald Ping'o

³⁸⁵ Interview with Nick Mutuma

gender. The IDPs that sought shelter in Eldoret show ground and other public lands were mainly made up of mothers and their children. According to Esther Mutuku, women, especially mothers were the worst affected during the violence. Unlike other groups of people, mothers don't just have their own lives to consider, they also have to look out for their own children, and any other children nearby. Evidence of this was seen in the IDP camps which were mostly populated by mothers and young children.

4.3 Peacebuilding efforts in Eldoret

The government has been faulted for not carrying out adequate peacebuilding in the region. According to Daniel Were, it was hoped that the post-election violence would offer a window into which the government would finally address the historical grievances that have caused the eruption of violence in the country after every election.³⁸⁶ These hopes were not actualized, 'it would seem that these politicians had finally got[ten] what they wanted: power, or, to be precise, a share of it. Other matters were quickly relegated to the bottom of their priorities agenda.'³⁸⁷

The mediation efforts that brought an end to the violence stipulated the need to address the deep-rooted grievances that existed in the country in order to avoid a relapse into violence in the future. The government then set up a Truth and Justice commission that would unearth these grievances and find ways of addressing them. This move has however been faulted by civil activists who claim that the constant bad press and criticizing amongst its members led to a loss of confidence in the process. The failure of the then coalition government to publicize the

³⁸⁶ Since 1992, the country has always sprouted into violence at the end of every general election. There have been reports of ethnic clashes in 1992, 1997, 2002, and even in 2005 during the referendum vote.

³⁸⁷ "Roots of Unrest still deep in Kenya; Peace, but no reforms after election violence," *Chicago Tribune*, 20 July 2008

findings for the compiled report of the Commission led to a generalized feeling of dissatisfaction and a promotion of a culture of impunity.³⁸⁸

At the end of the violence, the new coalition government was faced with the task of resettling the 350,000 Internally Displaced People who had fled their homes at the height of the conflict. The government has been faulted for ‘failing to lay the groundwork for resettlement by bringing the tribes back together to vent their frustrations and forgive one another’³⁸⁹ before embarking on resettlement. Activist Daniel Were further supports the need for reconciliation of the communities before resettlement. The government, he claims, is only doing part of the job by resettling the IDPs before carrying out reconciliation projects.

Efforts at resettlement have therefore been met with resistance by most of the IDPs. Many of those who fled their homes in Burnt Forest and Kiambaa are reluctant to accept the cash offered by the government and return back to their former homes. Kiambaa, 50km from Eldoret town, was the scene of the most gruesome deaths during the post-election violence. The world watched as families, most of who had been living in the region for centuries, were burnt to death as they sought shelter in a local church. At least 30 people were killed during that attack of 1st January 2008, most of them women and children, as local masses protested the results of the 27th December elections of the previous year.³⁹⁰ Gichuhi, a survivor of the attack, described in an interview with a local paper how his neighbours, people he had lived amongst for 40 years had ganged up and torched the church they were hiding in.³⁹¹ He is afraid of going back to his former home, ‘I am not going back because the people who burnt the church are still there, the people

³⁸⁸ Interview with activist Mwangi Kahinga

³⁸⁹ Refugee Review Tribunal Report on the Post conflict Situation in Eldoret.

³⁹⁰ “Kenya: Kiambaa IDPs still afraid to return home”, *IRIN News*, 30 July 2008
<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=79526>

³⁹¹ Okeyo D., (27.02.2008), The Horrors of Kiambaa, Daily Nation

who killed by child and father are still there.³⁹² Gichuhi's sentiments echo those of thousands of IDPs who are yet to go back home. This emphasizes the importance of reconciliation if Eldoret is to experience positive and long term peace.

4.4 Religious Peacebuilding in Eldoret

The weaknesses of the government's peacebuilding efforts as illustrated above necessitated the active involvement of religious institutions in peacebuilding in Eldoret. The importance of inclusion of religious institutions in peacebuilding activities is emphasized by all the religious leaders who were interviewed for this study. The church, guided by scriptures such as 2 Corinthians 5:18,³⁹³ bears the mandate of restoration of peace among people, which involves reconciliation of former enemies. According to Presbiter Mutiso, 'The church has a responsibility of promoting peace in the society, by word and deed. We are a vital part of the society and so shoulder the burden of promoting peace and reconciliation, not only with our friends but also with our "enemies" ' ³⁹⁴ President Kogo, of the Church of Jesus Christ further adds that, "the teachings of Jesus, which emphasized peace and love among men, guide the mandate of the church. As followers of Jesus, we have the duty to play a role in peacebuilding efforts in our community."

Muslim cleric, Sheikh Mohamed emphasizes that the role of the mosque is to cater for the peoples' interests. The mosque should therefore be involved in peace activities because peace benefits the society as a whole, 'Islam means peace, our teachings stress the importance of

³⁹² Ibid, *Kiambaa IDPs still afraid to return home*

³⁹³ 2 Corinthians 5:18 (KJV) 'All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave use the ministry of reconciliation...'

³⁹⁴ Interview with Presbiter Mutiso

peaceful co-existence and we have the responsibility of sharing this teachings through our actions.³⁹⁵

All the religious institutions carried out peacebuilding activities in three ways; individually, in collaboration with other religious institutions and under the umbrella body of the Inter Religious Council of Kenya. Individually, the religious institutions carry out activities ranging from human assistance, reconciliation and visiting of the victims. The churches and mosques provided shelter for the victims whose homes were raided and burnt. The Church of Jesus Christ, the Christco Church and Jamia Mosque admittedly offered their premises as shelter for those who were running for their lives. ‘The church was seen as neutral ground and a safe haven for the people who were under attack. We therefore offered this security for them by opening up our offices and even put up tents to provide the necessary shelter.’³⁹⁶

Apart from shelter, other peacebuilding activities carried out during and after the post-election violence in Eldoret ranged from visitation of the victims, trauma healing and humanitarian assistance. According to Mr. Kogo, his church donated aid to the tune of 25 Million Kenya shillings to aid the victims of the post-election violence. In addition to this, they also took part in visiting the victims who’d been temporarily sheltered on the Eldoret Show Ground, ‘to comfort them, and let them know that they were not alone.

Religious institutions come out as the main advocates of peace, especially in the grassroots. Religious leaders have been instrumental for preaching peace both on the public and in individual platforms. Abundant scriptures provide the basis for sermons which encourage harmonious coexistence with others. Among the most frequented themes in the sermons on the

³⁹⁵ Interview with Sheikh Mohamed

³⁹⁶ Interview with President Dominic Kogo, leader of the Church of Jesus Christ, of latter day saints, Uasin Gishu Chapter.

aftermath of the violence, reconciliation and forgiveness topped the list in both the Christian and Islamic sermons.

In the Christian faith, the bible through lessons like the parable of the prodigal son³⁹⁷ helped to convey the message on the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation. In the parable of the prodigal son, Christians are encouraged to embrace the characteristic of the father, who forgave the prodigal son who had taken his inheritance and squandered it on pleasures of the world. Reconciliation in this parable is evidenced by the father's warm welcome of the prodigal son back home in the form of a huge celebration. Christians are encouraged to have loving and forgiving hearts towards those who have wronged them, and to reconcile with them, without holding grudges.

In Islam, coexistence and cohesion feature sermons that emphasize reconciliation and harmonious coexistence. Verses such as 49:13 of the Quran; 'O humankind! We created you from a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that you may recognize each other,' emphasizes the positive importance of diversity. Congregants are taught that the differences of all in society are meant to enrich us all, embracing the differences of members in the society will strengthen, not weaken the society.

Interfaith peacebuilding was vital in carrying out the peacebuilding activities in Eldoret. 'The Catholic Church has a good reputation in outreach programs. We, therefore, partnered with them and together, were able to give immediate help to the homeless who sought refuge in the Eldoret Show Ground in form of clothes, food and solace.'³⁹⁸

³⁹⁷ Luke 15 (KIV)

³⁹⁸ Interview with President Kogo

4.4.1 Dealing with Victims and Perpetrators

On the individual level, religious leaders played a vital role in promoting reconciliation of both the victims and the perpetrators of the violence. Of the leaders interviewed, all of them work with victims in a group and individual level, but only 40% of the leaders interacted with the perpetrators on an individual level. ‘When preaching reconciliation and forgiveness to the victims, patience and understanding is key, the atrocities the victims undergo during a conflict demand patience in addressing before reconciliation can be achieved.’³⁹⁹

Religious leaders faced challenges in engaging perpetrators in counseling and active reconciliation. ‘Counseling is voluntary, yet most perpetrators preferred not to come forward and own up to their mistakes. For fear of persecution by the police and animosity by their communities, we found it hard to hold as many counseling sessions with the wrong-doers as we would have liked.’⁴⁰⁰ Efforts at engaging most perpetrators towards the reconciliation process proved futile as most were not willing to come forward.

4.4.2 Religion, reconciliation and traditional culture

The long presence of the religious institutions in the area enabled them to be involved as active participants and witnesses to some of the traditional measures that were carried out to promote reconciliation of the once warring parties. Bishop Mutiso, of the Christco Church, has been based in Eldoret for past 22 years. His understanding of the traditions of the Kalenjin allowed him access to some of the traditional practices that were carried out following the violence in 2007/8 in the area. The Kalenjins and other communities exchanged meaningful gifts with each other as a symbol of forgiveness and good neighborliness:

³⁹⁹ Interview with Mr. Kogo

⁴⁰⁰ Interview with Bishop Mutiso

‘Gifts such as calves were exchanged between former enemies during the post-election violence. As soon as livestock gave birth, the young were gifted to neighbors of different communities. This symbolized the new friendship and relationship that was blossoming. Every time the neighbor took care of the cow, it reminded them of the new existing relationship. These gifts tied the neighbours to each other and would enable them to build new relationships.’⁴⁰¹

Apart from the exchange of gifts, neighbours rebuilt each other’s homesteads which were destroyed at the height of the violence. The worst hit areas of Manyaka, near Eldoret town and Kiambaa, a Kilometre from Eldoret, where a church was burnt at during the post-election violence embraced this tradition as a way of reconciling with the neighbours.

‘In Muniyaka, there was heightened insecurity which forced all the inhabitants to walk around with weapons to ensure their own security. In the end, neighbours were wary of their fellow neighbours, and something needed to be done to ensure that the neighbors forgave each other and could live with each other in peace. We as the clergy served as witnesses to the rebuilding efforts where members of different communities would build houses for each other as a symbol of penance, and an assurance of continued good neighborliness in the future.’⁴⁰²

Mursik, a traditional Kalenjin meal made of fermented milk sealed the burgeoning covenant of reconciliation. According to Kalenjin tradition, the sharing of Mursik is a binding agreement of friendship and peace among those who partake it.

‘Equipped with knowledge of the importance of sharing of a meal amongst the Kalenjin, I preached peace from the pulpit, practiced it with the diverse tribes I came across, and encouraged the Kalenjin, who make up a majority in the Rift Valley area, to cement their vow of peace by sharing Mursik with those they perceived as enemies during the post-election period. This was a significant step for those who took part in it, because it marked the first step towards long-term peace; once a Kalenjin shares Mursik with you, they consider you a part of them, and can never go to war with you again, ever!’⁴⁰³

4.4.2.1 Gender issues in Religious Peacebuilding

In carrying out peacebuilding activities, some of the gender issues that they faced included; rape and gender violence incidences, and new responsibilities. Rape was used as a weapon of conflict

⁴⁰¹ Interview with Presbiter Mutiso

⁴⁰² Interview with President Dominic Kogo

⁴⁰³ Interview with Presbiter Mutiso

by ‘enemy’ communities. Mary* narrates her ordeal when her house was invaded at midnight in Muniyaka;

“I had prepared to run off with my two children at sunset on the following day, but I was not so lucky. Young men broke into my house and demanded to see my I.D (card). When they confirmed that I was from an ‘enemy tribe’ they ransacked my house, beat me and raped me. I am only thankful that they did not hurt my children.”⁴⁰⁴

Many women share the experience of Mary, though some were not so lucky, when they were forced to helplessly witness the abuse of their own children, as was the case of Chelang’at*;

‘I was attacked in my own home. Neighbors I had lived with for years came with pangas and *rungus* (clubs) into my house. I was beaten and then a panga was put to my throat and I was forced to witness as my teenage daughter was brutally raped.”⁴⁰⁵

Women were equally faced with new responsibilities with the advent of conflict. Many men and boys were either killed in the skirmishes, or joined groups which exacted violence against each other. As was the case of Elkoi’kai,

‘my husband and teenage son were forced out of the house and given a *rungu* and *panga* (each) and told to prove their loyalty to their tribe by targeting the ‘enemy.’ I was left alone to take care of my three younger children, yet there was no way I could make a living and feed them yet everyone was fighting out there.”⁴⁰⁶

The church has addressed rape and gender violence by individually counseling the victims who seek help from the church. The Church of Jesus Christ has used the Ministry of Sisterhood, to work with women who suffered from such cases of violence. Acknowledging that it is easier to discuss and seek help from their fellow women, the Ministry of Sisterhood has been equipped with guidance and counseling skills and scriptures in order to effectively help rape and gender violence victims to heal and forgive their abusers.

⁴⁰⁴ Mary’s name has been changed to protect her identity

⁴⁰⁵ Interview with Chelang’at, whose name has been changed to protect her identity

⁴⁰⁶ Interview with Elkoi’kai

4.4.3 Christian Religious Peacebuilding

As stipulated above, Christian organizations played a major role in the peacebuilding efforts in Eldoret. Among the activities carried out included peace advocacy, humanitarian assistance, reconciliation and trauma healing.

In terms of reconciliation, efforts were made to engage both the victims and the perpetrators. 96% of the religious actors involved in peacebuilding interacted with the victims during their peacebuilding activities. This was done both in an individual and group levels of interaction.

Due to the difficulty of engaging perpetrators in reconciliation, most churches conducted outreach programs which sought to address the atrocities performed by the perpetrators. This was mainly done in a group dynamic atmosphere, where messages of repentance and acknowledgement of wrongs were addressed in a generalized fashion. Nicholas Kalunda, a youth member of the Christco Church notes that many youth were mobilized into participating in violence during the height of the violence. Even though most felt guilty and needed to narrate their experiences and their misdeeds, they were scared of coming forward as perpetrators, in fear of backlash from the society and the police. Christco Church holds annual crusades every November that pray for peace and preach forgiveness and repentance.

4.4.3.1 Challenges in Christian Religious Peacebuilding

There exists segregation amongst the various denominations within the Christian fraternity.

President Kogo points out that his church is not considered Christian, a perception which results in negative attitudes in the field when carrying out peacebuilding activities,

‘We are Mormons and are viewed with speculation by other Christians when we are out there carrying out peace activities. Most groups are more concerned with pointing out how different our religious practices are from theirs. Such habits in the field have led to

misconception which makes it hard to collaborate with other denominations in order to reach a wider population and have a greater impact.⁴⁰⁷

4.4.4 Muslim Religious Peacebuilding

The Muslim clergy and congregation have been actively involved in peacebuilding in Eldoret. Through the pulpit, the religious leaders have been vocal about admonishing the wrongs done during the post-election violence. The sheikhs and imams emphasize on teachings that promote peace and harmony in society while victims are taught on the values of the *Quadr*, whereby all things that happen are lessons from God, they are encouraged to embrace them and learn from them.

The Mosques are however not directly involved in addressing gender specific issues that affected women during the post-election violence such as rape, and other forms of gender based violence. Instead, the clerics equip the women leaders, through sacred texts, provision of guidance and counseling skills and moral support, who then address these gender issues to the women individually and communally.

4.4.4.1 Challenges in Muslim Religious Peacebuilding

‘We’re surrounded by animosity. On one side, Christians feel we are their enemies, and the same case applies to the Jews.’⁴⁰⁸ This perception of Muslims has hindered their peacebuilding activities, especially amongst non-Muslims. ‘The media has turned out to be a mechanism that has spread propaganda and led to the generalization and misrepresentation of the Islamic faith and the Muslim community as a whole.’⁴⁰⁹ This has heightened animosity from the public which has hindered the effectiveness of the peacebuilding activities carried out by the mosque and its members.

⁴⁰⁷ Interview with Mr. Kogo of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

⁴⁰⁸ Interview with Haji Issak

⁴⁰⁹ Interview with Sheikh Mohammed

4.5 Women in Religious Peacebuilding in Eldoret

Of the women in religious institutions interviewed for this study, 70% were involved in peacebuilding activities through their various religious institutions. 38% are Christians while 32% are Muslim.

The women who did not participate in peacebuilding are predominantly single and range from the ages of 22 – 30 years. The main reason for not participating in peacebuilding is personal, as previously mentioned, these women are single and preferred to flee the violence prone area at the height of the conflict.

Motivated by spiritual and personal levels, the women who participated in religious peacebuilding show dedication to carry out peace activities regardless of the dangers and challenges they face. Mary Kongora, a widower who was active in carrying out peacebuilding activities was motivated to help in building peace by the scriptures, ‘ I am a staunch Christian, and the bible’s teachings enabled me to get involved in peace activities after the post-election violence. Jesus teaches us to love our neighbours as ourselves and to be peacemakers. The violence in 2007 gave me an opportunity to show love for my neighbours who were affected by the violence.’⁴¹⁰ Her sentiments are echoed by Sophia Lang’at who claims that

‘Jesus embodied forgiveness and helping those less fortunate through his works and even through teachings such as the parable of the good Samaritan. This gave me the courage to help the victims of the post-election violence and to preach peace and forgiveness, based on Jesus’ teachings.’⁴¹¹

Women engaged in peacebuilding in the Muslim faith are also motivated by their faith to engage in peacebuilding activities. According to Amina Mohammed, ‘Islam means peace, as Muslims,

⁴¹⁰ Interview with Mary Kongora

⁴¹¹ Interview with Sophia Lang’at

we all have a duty to promote peaceful coexistence among all people.’⁴¹² Farida Chepkoech further adds that,

‘My faith has instilled in me the value of *fitrah*.⁴¹³ I felt a responsibility towards my society based on these teachings to promote peace and harmony in my community by taking care of those who had been affected by the conflict and later to encourage them to forgive those who had hurt them during the post-conflict violence.’⁴¹⁴

Women in religious peacebuilding carry out their activities both individually and as a group. Individually, the women worked in their own neighborhoods, advocating for peace and forgiveness, and showing their support for the traditional methods that were incorporated in the peacebuilding process. Mary Kongora, a member of the Church of Jesus Christ, talked to her neighbours to forgive each other, and to embrace peace. She also participated in the traditional practices such as the sharing of the Mursik and the exchange of gifts by acting as a witness in several occasions, and also participating in the preparation of meals that were consumed during these ceremonies.

Religious institutions have formed various groups that bring together the congregation of different ages and sexes. Women groups have been formed in all religious institutions and bear different names, ranging from the Catholic Women’s Association, the Sisterhood Ministry of the Church of Jesus Christ, outreach programs that bear the names of saints like Saint Anne and Saint Elizabeth and Hospitality Ministries. In the Muslim set up, women are generally taught together, separate from the men, and this frequent meetings offered ample ground for the women to carry out peace activities together in the patronage of their respective mosques. The activities

⁴¹² Interview with Amina Mohamed

⁴¹³ This denotes the individual responsibility to uphold peace, to be good and to work for the establishment of harmony.

⁴¹⁴ Interview with Farida Chepkoech

these women are involved in range from humanitarian assistance, preaching peace, reconciliation efforts, visiting the victims and trauma healing.

The Mosques have supported women's peacebuilding initiatives in their respective institutions. Mohammed Haji, a senior leader in an Eldoret Mosque points out that the mosque actively supports women in their peacebuilding efforts, 'we (the Mosque Committee) together with the Sheikhs and Imams ensure that the women are well equipped to carry out any peace activities in the society. Men are not involved in tackling gender issues that may be encountered in the field, the women's leaders are therefore given guidance and counseling skills and equipped with knowledge of the Quran. The work that the women do in the society to bring peace is important, and so we make sure that they are well prepared to handle anything that they may face.'⁴¹⁵

Equally in the Christian institutions, the churches provide the women with adequate support in carrying out peacebuilding activities. According to Reverend Mirmet of the ACK church, the congregation mobilized clothes and foodstuff for the women to take to the victims during their visitation to the Eldoret Showground which provided shelter for hundreds of families in the aftermath of the poll chaos. The church leadership supports women's peacebuilding efforts by providing spiritual and fiscal support of the women's groups whenever it is needed.

4.5.1 Women and Reconciliation

Reconciliation is a vital activity that women in religious peacebuilding are involved in in Eldoret. Women have been engaged in reconciliation efforts especially through the available women's religious groups. Guided by sacred teachings on forgiveness and reconciliation, women were successfully able to engage with both perpetrators and victims and promote reconciliation

⁴¹⁵ Interview with Eldoret Mosque Commissioner, Mohammed Haji Issak

in Eldoret. Christians were guided by teachings such as the parable of the prodigal son which emphasizes the need to repent, no matter how big your mistake is, with promises of forgiveness. Victims were encouraged to participate in reconciliation through scriptures that encouraged forgiveness of others in order to also be forgiven by God.⁴¹⁶ Notions of revenge were discouraged through scriptures which discourage victims from retribution, ‘do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay.”’⁴¹⁷

In the Islamic faith, perpetrators were encouraged to own up to their mistakes through teachings of punishments from God. Teachings on *Quadr*, or fate were used in addressing the victims, ‘*Quadr* teaches us that everything that happens to you is a lesson from God; you should learn from it, accept it and pray.’⁴¹⁸ Hadith were equally effective in dispatching the dangers of revenge. The society is equated to a ship with two levels. If those at the bottom desire to punish those on the higher level and decide to do so by denting the ship, it will only lead to the capsizing of the whole ship and both people on the two levels in the ship will drown. This teaching views revenge as punching holes in the fabric of the society, which will lead to the destruction of the whole society.⁴¹⁹

4.5.1.1 Dealing with perpetrators

Only a small percentage of women, 28%, directly dealt with any perpetrators of the election violence. Terry Nderitu, the leader of the Catholic Women’s Association (C.W.A) points out that, ‘seeking forgiveness for the wrongs that you have done is very scary. Some wrong-doers are either afraid of the reactions of their family members, or of being incarcerated by the police.

⁴¹⁶ Mathew 6:14,15 (KIV)

⁴¹⁷ Romans 12:19 (KIV)

⁴¹⁸ Interview with Sheikh Mohamed Hussein Ali, of Jamia Mosque Eldoret

⁴¹⁹ Interview with Sheikh Mohamed

This has contributed to the low incidences of perpetrators confessing to their wrong doings.’⁴²⁰
In spite of the challenge of getting perpetrators to come out publicly and own up to their actions during the post-election violence, several women’s groups have successfully engaged with perpetrators during reconciliation. ‘The continued preaching on the need to seek forgiveness, and witnessing the reconciliation of other perpetrators without police incarceration later or fall outs from family members has encouraged more perpetrators to participate in the reconciliation process.’⁴²¹

Because of the aforementioned challenge of getting perpetrators, who were mostly male,⁴²² the women groups addressed the violence enacted by the perpetrators in two ways: directly and indirectly. In the immediate aftermath of the violence, the existing tension necessitated the use of an indirect approach in addressing the victims,

“Most villages we visited lived in fear and tension. We found it necessary to indirectly address the evils that had happened during the post-election violence indirectly, through general sermons and talks. We used this approach in order to address the perpetrators without singling them out, which we feared would result into revenge attacks. These general sermons and talks were also vital because through them, we sowed seeds of forgiveness and repentance. The general sermons and crusades helped us to gain the confidence of the perpetrators, especially those who were remorseful and wanted to seek forgiveness.’⁴²³

When the perpetrators come forward to seek forgiveness, the women groups often work in tandem with the religious leaders of their respective institutions. The perpetrators were not allowed to narrate their actions,

‘The situation was unstable and filled with tension months after the end of the post-poll election. Perpetrators who came forward seeking forgiveness were therefore not allowed

⁴²⁰ Interview with Terry Nderitu of the C.W.A

⁴²¹ Interview with Faith Kilenga of the SDA women’s group

⁴²² According to the research carried out, 80% of the perpetrators who came forward were male aged between 18-45 years.

⁴²³ Interview with Esther Mutuku of the Christco Women’s Guild

to publicly narrate their actions; the wounds were still too fresh and the consequences of being forced to face a possible perpetrator would have been dire.⁴²⁴

4.5.1.2 Dealing with Victims

98% of women involved in religious peacebuilding engaged with victims both individually and as a group. At the height of the violence and after the violent conflict, women offered humanitarian assistance and later participated in trauma healing and reconciliation. Individually, the women embarked on efforts of disseminating messages of peace, humanitarian assistance and visitation. ‘it was important to me, immediately after the IDPs were settled in the (Eldoret) showground, to visit those who had lost their homes and everything they owned. These visitations passed a message that they were not alone, people still cared.’⁴²⁵

Women church groups equally organized visitation trips to the hospitals, the worst hit villages and the IDP camps. With help from the various religious institutions, the women were able to send messages of hope and peace to the fragile society. Trauma healing was a vital aspect of these visitations. With an easy access to the victims, the women were equipped, both by the churches and the mosques on how to adequately start the healing process through the sacred texts.

⁴²⁴ Interview with Reverend David Ng’ang’a, Pastor, A.I.C Fellowship Church

⁴²⁵ Interview with Martha Chepkony

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

This study highlights the interrelationship between religion gender and peacebuilding in Africa, with emphasis on Eldoret town.

Religion is a respected and revered institution in African societies. The longevity of their presence and the positive work within the society has ensured unwavering support and respect for religious communities in many societies in Africa, Eldoret is no exception. The participation of religious institutions in peacebuilding efforts in Eldoret offered hope for sustainable peace in the area as religious actors enjoy authority in carrying out peace activities. This can be attributed to their longevity in the society and the trust and confidence built during their myriad positive activities within the community.

Based on the shared principle of equality, gender issues are accorded a modicum of importance by religious institutions. Gender issues encountered during peacebuilding are addressed by the religious institutions indirectly; through the use of the female leaders and female groups already engaged in peacebuilding. Both Christian and Muslim religious institutions equip the women through scriptures, moral and financial support in the addressing of gender issues during peacebuilding.

Women equally have proved their importance in being involved in peace activities in Eldoret. Often being viewed as the cornerstone of the society, women have helped the society to heal after a conflict. Women enjoy a wider reach of the society based on their ingenuity and the shared experiences with other mothers of both victims and perpetrators. Women's peacebuilding activities are preceded by the perception of gentility and nurturing which women have

successfully exploited to assert for peaceful co-existence within their own families, neighbours and towards perpetrators and victims during reconciliation. Through individual and group efforts, the women in religious peacebuilding are a positive impact in promoting peaceful coexistence after a protracted conflict. Armed with religious texts on forgiveness and mercy, religious women have become ambassadors of reconciliation and witnesses in the traditional ceremonies that were incorporated to help the people of Eldoret to forgive each other.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations offered in this study are aimed at improving the interrelationship between religion, gender and peacebuilding especially in Africa, and for donors interested in the above field.

There is a need to incorporate women engaged in religious peacebuilding in policy. This study has highlighted the important role that women, both in leadership and lay religious capacities, were successful in carrying out peacebuilding activities effectively with the basic assistance of the various religious institutions. The burgeoning capacity of these women needs to be harnessed and exploited when carrying out reconciliation and peacebuilding activities in general.

Donors and religious institutions need to increase the training of religious peacebuilding actors. The strengths attributed to the engagement of these actors in peacebuilding can be improved through investing in their skills in areas such as reconciliation, diplomacy and conflict resolution.

There is a need to incorporate psychological training and services for the religious actors involved in peacebuilding. It was noted in the study that some religious actors are seldom psychologically prepared for the conversion of roles from preaching to peacebuilding. A psychological perspective to religious peacebuilding will go a long way in preparing the

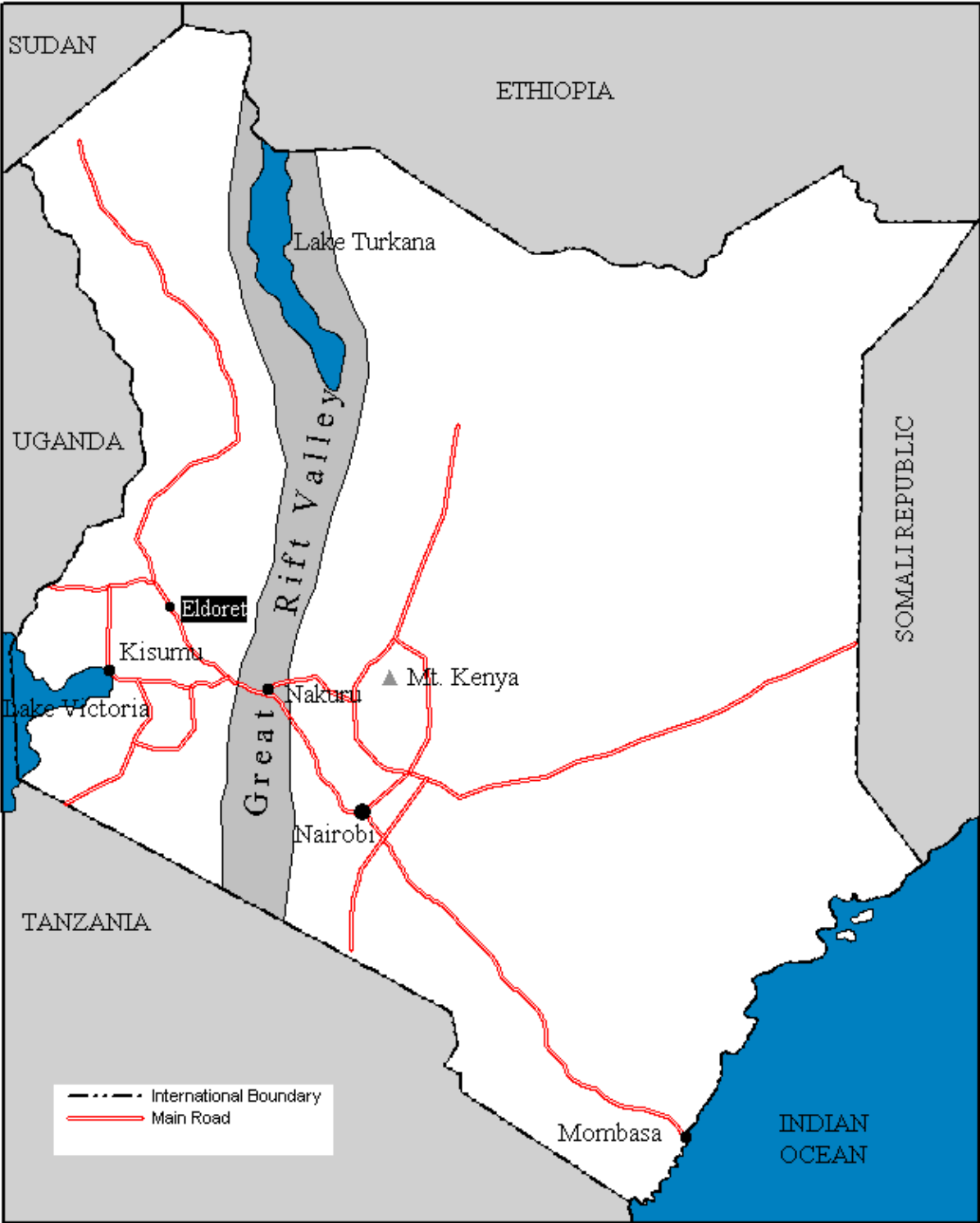
religious actors to take up the necessary new roles during peacebuilding, and will ensure a follow-up for all religious actors in an effort to curb any possible psychological trauma.

More women need to be adequately trained to take up more responsibilities in religious peacebuilding. The training of women leaders is inadequate since women don't only practice peacebuilding in groups. There needs to be an increased level of training of both women leaders and lay women who use the religious platform to carry out peacebuilding activities in order to increase their effectiveness.

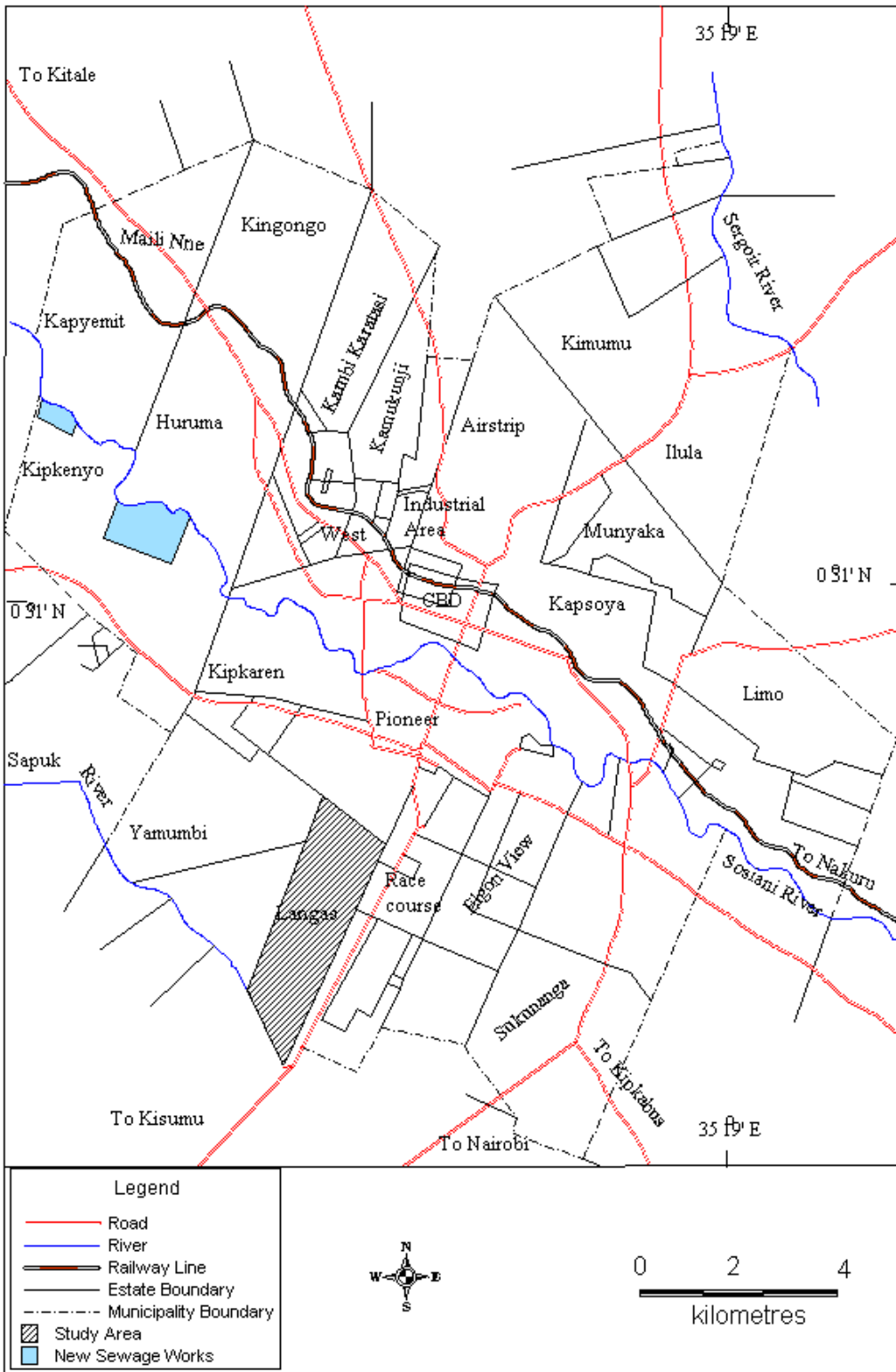
Religious institutions need to harmonize the official peacebuilding activities of the respective institutions with those of the women in the various religious capacities. Both avenues have recorded remarkable impact in post-conflict societies, which can improve immensely and have a wider impact if both groups can work together in building peace.

Maps included in the study

Map 1 – Map of Kenya highlighting the location of Eldoret



Map 2 - Residential areas and settlements of Eldoret Municipality



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