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Full Length Research Paper

Facing social-politcal challenges: A historical examination on the survival methods of the Nubi ethnic minority in Uganda

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Since the pacification of Uganda by the British Imperial Government in 1894, up to the time Nubians were recognized as an ethnic community in 1995, they continue to retain their indigenous ethnic identity, through professing Islam, speaking their traditional language (Ki-Nubi) and practicing their own traditional values, for example traditional dressings and foods. Nubians quest for survival as an ethnic group has been threatened over the time by the incursion of the negative political and social forces right from 1894 to 1995. This situation impacted their existence as an ethnic minority in Uganda. Using a qualitative approach and a historical research design, drawing on both written and oral information, this particular study established that Nubians faced myriads of both political and social challenges from the time of their systematic arrival in Uganda up to when they gained their ethnic recognition. This situation however, did not deter has not deterred the Nubis to identify themselves as an ethnic minority in a multi-ethnic Ugandan society. The Nubis as they are conventionally known devised strategies or methods that helped them survive as an ethnic minority of their settlement. The study concludes that regardless of the social-political challenges facing the Nubis of Uganda, they continue to survive as an ethnic cluster. through Islam which forms part of their culture and not a mere religion.

Key words: Nubians, ethnicity, survival, Nubis, traditions, Islam, language, conglomeration, discrimination, minority.

INTRODUCTION

Nubis, a minority ethnic group in Uganda, were negatively affected by some social and political forces dating back to colonial era. Some of these negative forces included discrimination and political alienation ostensibly to extinct the group from being recognized as one of Uganda's ethnic community. It was not until 1995 that the Uganda Nubis were recognized as citizens and listed in Uganda's constitution as one of its indigenous communities, in spite of this development, the Nubis were able to survive as an ethnic group visible in the areas of their settlement across the country. This situation captivated their determination and initiative to establish several survival methods which helped them to live as a ethnic community. The questions this study tried to examine were; What political and social challenges did the Nubis experience since their advent in Uganda from the colonial up to the post-colonial era? How were they able to survive as an ethnic minority yet they were not recognized

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as indigenous people by different political regimes including the British, their former colonial masters. Using ethnic constructivism approaches to ethnic survival, this particular study argues that the Uganda Nubis were able to survive as an ethnic minority because they were able to assert themselves as an ethnic group through embracing Islamic religion and making it part of their livelihood. To become a Nubi, the first qualification criterion was that one had to become a Muslim, regardless of one's ethnic background. In fact, there is a common saying among the Nubis "All Nubis are Moslems but not all Moslems are Nubis." Thus, Islam helped the Nubians establish themselves and construct a unique ethnic group with 'African Islamized culture.' The unity exhibited by the Nubi through Islam helped them employ various methods at different stages of their livelihoods into their independent futuristic human race as a Nubi cluster.

Constructivism approaches to ethnic creation and survival

The Nubis like any other ethnic minority experienced social-political challenges to survive and sustain their existence, let alone acceptance among the majority ethnicities, which have lived on for centuries. What should be noted though is the fact, that ethnic minorities have transformed themselves into majority ethnicities using their ethnic minority power, influence and acumen. A case in point is that of the Baganda people from Buganda Kingdom, one of the oldest centralized kingdoms in East Africa. By the fifteenth century they constituted only nine clans with three counties of Busiro, Kyadondo and Mawokota. Using both conventional and non-conventional survival methods, Buganda till date is one of the biggest centralized kingdoms in East Africa with over eighteen counties and fifty-two clans. With their survival, the Nubi ethnic cluster has been able to construct new civilizations and discourses which today shape the social, political and economic welfare of not only themselves, but those where they settle.

The survival of the Nubis was examined by reflecting on the theories of ethnic construction. First, there is need to appreciate that long before the Nubis made entrance in Uganda, they were various social enclaves in Sudan who were brought together by the colonialists to form what we today describe as the Nubi ethnic identity. Within the social constructionist approach of ethnic creation, Adlparvar and Tadros (2016) argue that all ethnicities survive and get created using three approaches, namely the individuals as social agents of social construction. This approach contends that ethnicities survive through creation and recreation using every day actions of individuals. Such individuals perceive themselves as associated with certain ethnic identity. They act to confirm, contest and propagate their identity. The second

approach is the discursive formations. This approach attests that discursive formations and cultural systems result into the sustainability of ethnic identities. Third, is the role of broad social, political and economic forces in the sustainability and construction of ethnicities. This approach focuses on the processes of ethno-genesis, which is the process of formation and development of an ethnic group. Ethno genesis as a process is linked to colonialism, globalization, modernity, nationalism and the formation of nation-states. As we reflect on the Nubis, we need to appreciate the fact that they were partly introduced in Uganda by European explorers and colonialist as early as 1982 (Rowe, 1988)

The Nubi survival and sustainability in Uganda is best understood using the colonial lens. Those who allude to this school of argument state that the coming, establishment and settlement of the Nubis in Uganda was entirely the effort and selfish effort of the early colonial masters. Constructivists consider ethnicity in Africa to have been invented by both colonialists and African intellectuals within the colonial frame work (Ranger, 1989; Vail, 1989). In this respect Isajiw (1993) contends that ethnicity is something created and maintained by a foreign economy or a product of economic exploitation arising out of internal colonialism and cultural division. It is from this point of view that the Nubis emerged as a colonial construct since their systematic advent in Uganda back in 1894 was initiated by Captain Fredrick Lugard of the Imperial British East African Company (I.B.E.A. Co).

To clearly examine the survival methods of Uganda Nubis, one perhaps needs to take note on the social-political challenges they faced since their advent in Uganda as part of the British colonial army throughout the colonial period (1894-1962), and during the post-colonial era under different political regimes (1962-1995).

Social-political challenges that threatened the survival of Nubi ethnic cluster

The process of Nubianization in modern Uganda has its roots in the slave raiding and Zariba system of the nineteenth century Southern Sudan. The Nubians were part of the slave army employed by the Arabs for slave raiding activities. They were a conglomeration of different ethnic tribes that shared their livelihood in a number of Arab settlements known as Zaribas. In these Zariba settlements, they acquired military skills, practiced Islam and adopted Islamic culture. The Egyptians and the British used the Nubis during their pacification struggles in Sudan and in East Africa. In Uganda specifically the Nubians were recruited as the British colonial army by Lugard to fight other ethnicities like the Banyoro of South western Uganda and the Acholis of Northern Uganda.

The Banyoro perceived Nubis as British colonial mercenaries while the Acholi hated them for their

involvement in slave raids. It is their military involvement with the British that many indigenous societies in Uganda regarded them as African fore runners of colonialism.[1] Due to their military role, the Nubis were resisted and were considered allies of the British by some other ethnicities. It is worth noting that some societies that lost their political sovereignty to the British like Buganda, Bunyoro and Toro, often blamed partly the Nubis because of their military role. The Nubis hence were at times isolated and discriminated against by other ethnic groups.[2]

The Nubis were at times discriminated against because first, they had participated in the Madhist revolt which almost led to an end of the European colonialism in Sudan and Uganda;[3] second, because they belonged to the minority religion (Islam) and most importantly their military skills, which was a threat to the imperial and local forces in Uganda (Hinamundi, 2012). Their survival was therefore at cross roads. The British who forcefully used them were not willing to support and promote their survival as an indigenous ethnic group but also regarded them as Sudanese. On the other hand, those they fought against for their colonial masters were not willing to sympathize due to their colonial military involvement. This argument is well elucidated in the words of Hinamundi (2012), "The Nubians were the guns that stood guard as Lugard declared Uganda a British protectorate in 1894, making them officers of the British crown throughout the over 60 years of British rule in Uganda"

The fact that the Nubis belonged to a minority religion, which was not respected by the francophone and Anglophone religions of Catholics and Protestants posed a big threat to their existence and survival. No tribe wished to identify itself with the Nubis in Uganda. Islam, the religion of the Nubis therefore posed a great challenge of being accepted in the Buganda community. Not even the Bagandas who converted to Islam were accepted. This partly explains the religious wars in Buganda, where the Protestants and Catholics allied to fight the Buganda Muslims. This was made worse when the Nubian soldiers came in to protect and defend Islam and its converts. The fact that the Baganda Muslims were persecuted and isolated proves that the survival of the Muslim Nubis was at risk, bordering extinction. Evidence of persecution is provided by Wild (1955), who argues that Mukajanga persecuted the Sudanese Baganda Muslim followers on the orders of Mutesa I. On this note Katumba and Welbourn (1964) argue that Muslims had for 70 years been treated as no more than third rateBaganda. Rowe (1988) added, "Ganda Muslims were

looked down upon by everyone else and their strange manner of Nubian Arab dressing (turbans and tarbushes) and their discounted religion made them seem foreign". If those who followed the Nubian religion were persecuted and disrespected, one wonders what could have happened to the Nubians in Buganda. To crown up this argument, Mugaju and Oloka-Onyango (2000) state that religious sectarianism undermined the progress of the predominantly Muslim Nubis. It is therefore not in question that the existence of the Nubis in Buganda affected their growth and acceptance.

Mugaju et al. (2000), argue that the Nubis is a creation of the colonial establishment of indirect rule in Uganda; their colonial policy before 1945 was to keep African apart and promote disunity, ethnicity and parochialism. They implemented this through indirect rule. Magaju et al. (2000) therefore argue that the 68 years of uninterrupted colonial rule halted and froze the national process of ethnic evolution in Uganda. According to Magaju, et al. (2000), the process of cultural diffusion through trade, intermarriages and migrations was disrupted, because the British then emphasized the differences and prejudices, rather than similarities between the people of Uganda. To extend this argument to the Nubian position in Uganda, had the British colonialism not to have promoted the "divide and rule" policy, the Nubians could have been welcomed much better than they did. It is therefore succinctly clear that the resistance of the local ethnicities in Uganda was a seed planted by the British indirect rule, which hampered the progress and development of the Nubi community in Uganda. This argument is buttressed by Mugaju, et al (2000), who stated "The colonial regime had, in pursuit of the strategy of divide and rule armed the disadvantaged Sudanic speakers and demilitarized more privileged Baganda"

The Nubis were victims of ethnic manipulation. Although the British used them to colonize Uganda ethnic communities, the indigenous ethnic identities, especially the Baganda used them to fight off their adversaries. For example, the Baganda used them to expand the Buganda kingdom at the expense of the Bunyoro kingdom.[4] The Baganda Muslims used them to fight off the Baganda Christians. Amin used the Nubis as a buffer to capture and remain in political power. Obote eliminated the Nubis to create a powerful Langi Acholi ethnic cluster that would sustain him in power (Mugaju, et al 2000). Commenting about the ethnic manipulation, Banton (1994) contends "Ethnic identity is a social capital brought to bear on the political negotiation table by different groups at different times. As such, the selfish goods and goals of the ethnic identities are used as vehicles to achieve a measure in terms of wealth, power and status". These ethnic manipulations without any reward do not only affect the progress of the Nubis, but their existence and survival as a whole.

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[1] Chairman Arua Nubian Forum and A Cultural Preservation Award winner of the East African Nubian Awards 2017. Interviewed at his residence in Arua on 15th/09/2018.

[2] Khemis Juma Kenyi is a retired teacher and a highly respected advisor on Nubian culture, as well as a radio presenter Voice of Africa Radio. Interviewed on 29th/09/2018 at his residence in Mpakawero, Bombo Luwero District.

[3] Chairman Arua Nubian Forum and A Cultural Preservation Award winner of

the East African Nubian Awards 2017. Interviewed at his residence in Arua on 15th/09/2018.

METHODOLOGY

The examination of past experiences on the survival of Uganda Nubis calls for a Historical Research Design. A historical research design enables the researcher to systematically collect, evaluate and describe data to explain and understand actions or events that occurred sometimes in the past (Hassan, 2015) The design also involves establishment of the facts as provided by both secondary and primary sources in order to arrive at conclusions concerning past events (Golder, 2000). Secondary sources involved extensive use of written materials such as textbooks and journals, while primary sources included written reports and oral interviews from encultured informants since it involves exploring past histories on the survival of the Nubis. The design is important towards the collection of data using both oral and written sources as a way of explaining survival methods of the Nubis of Uganda amidst social-political challenges.

The narrative on the survival methods of Uganda Nubis is best explained using a qualitative data collection approach. According to Samuel et al. (2017), Qualitative approach was developed by Wilhelm Wundt in early twentieth century. Wundt advocated strongly that human life is encompassed of different aspects like culture, expressions, beliefs, morality and imaginations, and these aspects can only be researched qualitatively. Since the study involved all most all aspects outlined by Wundt, a qualitative approach was adopted. Shank (2002) also argues that qualitative research as a form of systematic empirical inquiry into meaning, is useful to a researcher to get a holistic picture from historically unique situation. The Nubis for that matter presented resilience towards their survival as an ethnic group, regardless of the social-political challenges they faced.

Survival methods of the Nubi ethnic minority in Uganda

Right from the times of the colonialism, imperialism, capitalism and now globalization, weak ethnicities have disappeared and new ones have evolved. Strong ones still influence the social, economic and political mantle of social organizations. In this era of "You either swallow or get swallowed, you either eat or get eaten", the Nubis ethnic cluster has been able to live on using many strategies, others crafted, adopted, innovated and developed depending on the circumstances that surround them. It is important to explain Nubis strategic survival methods as an ethnic minority in Uganda amidst social-political challenges they encountered.

Pre-colonial ethnic survival

The Sudanese Nubian cluster traded in ivory, which

became a prominent article of trade long before colonialism. They obtained ivory from Bunyoro and sent it to Karagwe in exchange for coastal goods. In this respect, Juma, a Nubian ivory trader gave Muteesa I of Buganda a present. In return king Muteesa gave him 700-1b weight of ivory, some of the ivory tusks weighed 901b. The king also gave him seven women and fifty cows. This followed the influx of the Nubis into Buganda; this resulted into the first intermarriages of the Baganda and the Nubis around the villages of Bombo and Kibuli. This intermarriage led to what Soghayroun (1981) described as "Gandanization" of the Nubis. The dual argue that a number of the Baganda Muslims intermarried with the Nubis and became Nubianized as they got influenced by the Nubis ways of life. This sustained their survival and continued legacy in Buganda and Uganda as a whole. The intermarriages with other indigenous ethnic groups during pre-colonial time helped them to expand as an ethnic entity, since whoever intermarried with a Nubi, became automatically a Nubi and had to abandon his or her former ethnic inclination. This clearly indicates that throughout the pre-colonial period, some Nubis who were able to survive as traders exploited their trading experiences to inter-marry with other groups they traded with.

Colonial ethnic survival

Being Ex-Sudanese slave soldiers, Johnson (1988) argues that the Nubis gave rise to the colonial governments of Sudan, Uganda, Kenya and were the nucleus around which nascent urban centers grew in northern Uganda. Families of professional soldiers descended from these slave soldiers and played an important role in the colonial and postcolonial armies. Daniel Spain, in his study of the origins of the Islamic military slavery identifies three essential characteristics of the military slavery: The systematic acquisition of the slaves by the army, specific military training and a life time of professional soldiering. Military slaves are state property owned by the government, not by individual masters and they are employed as instruments of state craft. A slave soldier has greater access to power and potential than other slaves. Even after the military slavery was replaced by convectional and regional oriented recruitment in colonial states, ex-slave soldiers continued to claim especial relationship to the colonial government, as the Nubis of Uganda did when in 1940 they objected to the colonial government to plan to include them in the tribal poll taxes, putting them at par with the people they had helped the colonial governments to conquer.

The Madhist revolt, which shattered the Khedive Ismail's empire, witnessed the influx of the Wanubi as then called in Northern Uganda in 1890. In 1894, they were enlisted into the Ugandan riffles as mercenaries. In 1891 Lord Lugard took them to Western Uganda where he assigned them with the responsibilities of guarding

forts at Lorne, Ntara, Kirari and fort Grant. Lugard took some of them to Kampala, where he formed the new Sudanese company of armed Nubians. At this moment in time he paid them as Imperial British East African company mercenaries. They therefore survived on as British mercenaries. In the years that followed, the Wanubi were deployed against the resisters in Bunyoro between 1893 and 1897 (Okoth, 1972). This fits in Mutibwa (1992), who argues that by the time of the formation of the king African riffles; the Nubians were a monopoly of the 4th battalion. The Nubians since then saw the army as their natural calling, thus as their pre occupation. This meant that fighting on behalf of the colonial masters became part of their livelihood occupation.[5] Johnson (1902) contends that although the Nubis were originally slave soldiers, they transformed into mercenaries and began being used by both local natives and colonial forces to acquire and obtain valuable goods. They were used to fight off local resisters; for example, De Winton used them to support Kasagama of Bunyoro. The Nubis also used manipulation, trickery and alliances to survive.

Although they were introduced in Uganda by the British and worked for the British East African company, the British never recognized them as an ethnic group, making their survival as an ethnic community difficult. This forced some of them to rebel against the British colonial government. The amalgamation of the grievances raised by the Nubians or the Sudanese troops culminated into the Nubian Mutiny of 1897.[6] In this respect, Johnson (1902) states "Kabarega of Unyoro and Mwanga of Uganda took advantage of the Nubian mutiny to join hands with the Sudanese in a final effort to over throw the British protectorate". Although this never worked out, it points to how the Sudanese Nubis survived in Uganda.

Desperate and hopelessly hoping for hope, the Sudanese Nubis resorted to raiding other fellow natives of animals and other goods. In this regard Johnson writes "… Sudanese mutineers had still remained in existence in a rather remote part of the central province (the Lango country) and as they were making themselves objectionable by raiding the adjoining natives" This implied that raids were part of their preoccupation for survival. This act was not new to the Nubis, it was a common practice that the strong raided and acquired wealth and necessities through raids from the weak natives. This practice was very common with cattle keepers in Uganda, especially the northern cattle

keepers, and so were the western Ugandan tribes.

Mazrui (1977) contends that the Nubis are not strangers, nor intruders in Uganda's body politic; they are part of the process that led to the creation of Uganda. This in itself implies that the Nubis were part of Uganda's political discourse; if anything they were the midwives that delivered Uganda, first, as a geographical entity; second as a colonial territory. It is in this respect that Wairama (2001) describes them as Ugandans of the Sudanese descent who were descendants of the military recruits who entered Uganda in the late 19th century of the colonial army. Their survival and sustainability largely depended on their superior military skills, which were then needed by the Europeans for the colonization of Uganda. Their survival and exceptional military skills became so central for their continued stay and establishment in Uganda.

The Nubis expanded and got accepted through what Mazrui (1977) describes as the Nubianization strategy. Nubianization was the process of converting indigenous Ugandan tribes into the Nubian culture. In this regard, the Acholis, Lugbara, and Banyoro were Nubianized. Nakayi (2007) adds that the Madi and Kakwa communities in Uganda became part of the first Nubian civilization which derives its central originality from the ancient civilization of Egypt and Sudan. The Ugandan adopted tribes constituted the bastion of the Nubian culture that sustained their stay and growth into an indigenous ethnic cluster.

Internal wars among and between indigenous Ugandan tribes were sustained using the military skills of the Nubis. This made them to be accepted as instruments of military might in Buganda. Rowe (1988) argues that the Nubis were formidable fighters whom the Baganda Muslims depended on to establish an Islamic state in Buganda. In fact, the Nubians, given their military might and influence discovered by both the British and the Baganda recognized them as military arbiters. The Baganda Muslims therefore relied on the Nubis to sustain themselves against Muteesa I and Mwanga of Buganda. Using the Nubis soldiers, the Baganda Muslims had won many battles against fellow Baganda Christians. As such the Nubis were able to dictate the balance of power not only in Buganda, but Uganda at large. Thus the Islamic factor became so instrumental in making the Nubis to be part of Uganda.

The Nubians carried out expedition for their colonial masters. This helped them to integrate, socialize and influence other ethnicities in Uganda. Busoga, Buganda and Bunyoro were some of the most common expeditions. The British colonial masters sent Sudanese soldiers to Busoga at Lubas palace in Busoga. A Sudanese garrison was sent to Bunyoro (Report by Her Majesy, 1898). This meant that the Nubis were able to spread, expand and grow in Uganda through several expeditions. Whenever they carried out these expeditions, they stayed there and established their homesteads; they adopted and spread their cultures far and wide. This

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[5] An in-depth one on one interview with Yazeed Hussein Sebi, a Nubian representative in the Rukurato- (Toro Kingdoms' Parliament) on a Historical seat, interviewed on, in his residence in Kitumba-Kinubi Fort Portal on 17/12/2018

[6] An Extract of a Report by F.J Jackson to the Most Honorable Marquess of Salisbury. Robert Gascoyne-Cecil Prime Minister (1895-1902), Received November 15, 1897. Presented to both Houses of Parliament of Her Majesty in February 1898, Papers relating to Recent Events in the Uganda Protectorate. In AFRICA No.2, p.21. Printed by Her Majesty's stationary office by Herrison and Sons, St. Martins Lane.

made it difficult, if not impossible to limit their operations and survival in the indigenous communities.

The Islamic factor was central in explaining the survival of the Nubians in Buganda. Supporting this argument, Soghayroun (1981) states that the Nubians converted Kings into Islam. In this respect Bunyoro and Buganda kings embraced the Nubian Islamic religion. This partly explains why the Islamic religion was associated with the Nubian soldierly affiliation. Commenting about this standpoint, Emin Pasha in his diaries noted that Kabarega spoke the Sudanese Arabic very well. He explicitly stated, "Kabarega himself speaks it well, but in public prefers his own language". Strengthening the influence of the Nubian Arabic, Dr. Cook, a missionary in charge of the Nile province stated, "It is generally spoken and understood over a wide area from the Murchison falls two hundred, fifty miles south of the Mungella up to here… And understood by many among the Acholi, Madi, Bari and Latuka"

Prior to the Nubis, Soghayroun (1981) argues that there was no recognition of the Islamic law in Uganda. The Nubis enforced the introduction of the Islamic courts and made recognition of the Islamic law concerning marriage and divorce legally binding under the protectorate. The Nubis emphasized the Islamic law, which eventually got practiced by all the Muslim Ugandan converts. There was a right popular will of the people over the Islamic law, places with such considerable Muslim communities like Mbale on the eastern boarder of Uganda, Arua on the boarders of Congo, North of lake albert and Gulu, Kitgum and Acholi all willingly accepted the Islamic law.

The Nubis survived on in Uganda as peace builders and promoters. In this regard Johnson (1901) contends that by the year 1897 a little army comprising the Nubians had been formed for the maintenance of peace and resistance to aggression which was composed mainly of these Sudanese soldiers; some of whom had once been in the service of Egypt, while others were the children of slaves. Cementing this argument, Johnson (1901) adds that when Lugard first visited Uganda as the agent of imperial East Africa company, circumstances obliged him to intervene in the affairs of that kingdom and impose peace on the distracted factions-protestants, Catholics and Muhammedans who were bringing the country into utter ruin by their civil wars. It is argued that Lugard succeeded in ushering in peace in Buganda by using the experienced Nubi Sudanese under the respected Nubian commander Salim Bey. And without their support and intervention, the civil internal wars among the three worrying religious factions would have continued to cause instability.

Post-colonial ethnic survival of the Nubis

Following Uganda's independence on the 9th October 1962, the Nubian soldiers continued serving in the newly

renamed Ugandan army. The Nubians were experiencing real xenophobia from their fellow Acholis and Langi soldiers for no apparent reason/ crime except their Sudanese origin. In this respect, several Nubians recount the difficulties they endured in the military barracks after independence from the Acholi who openly discriminated them. The threat of violence against the Nubian soldiers was regularly made even to the innocent Nubi wives and children while fetching water from the barracks water points (Lumumba, 2015). Their only recourse was silence. They exercised the highest form of patience amidst open and injustice confrontations. In this respect, Lumumba (2015) states Obotes' mistake was to go after an ethnic group that was in the army, well-armed and militarily trained. This forced the Nubians who reacted through what came to be called the Lubiri revolt led by Sergeant major Musa Aswa. Commenting on the survival instinct of the Nubian soldiers under the Obote I regime, Khamis, a Nubian soldier argues that they relied heavily on the Ugandan minority tribes when their extinction was under threat. Knowing that Obote was bent towards eliminating all the Nubian soldiers, Khamis, a former Nubian captain narrates that they forced Iddi Amin of the indigenous Kakwa tribe to over throw Obote. He adds that Milton obote had left instructions to have all the Nubis arrested, disarmed and executed because he believed that they were not loyal to him and his regime. In his own words, Khamis states "In fact, that day, 23rd January, prior to us breaking the armory, we saw that some of us were being disarmed and confined based on our ethnic origins. Even those who were supposed to be on duty were suspiciously told to hand over their weapons. They then locked us in the officer's hall… we actually called Amin much later… Amin turned up the next day (24th January). It is then that we asked him to be president… when he refused, our college put him at gun point, and told him that if he does not, he dies, because even us we will all die if Obote returns".[7] This was the highest manifestation of the Nubia survival instinct, which was under threat. They had to risk and employ such a method if they were to survive Obote's political machinations. Knowing their historical roots then, the Nubians realized that they would not fully be accepted to take over the political mantle of Uganda, as such they chose a native Ugandan top run the country rather than a fellow Nubian from among themselves. The Nubian coup therefore brought in Amin as the third president of the republic of Uganda.

Amin brought in thousands of Nubians with whom he had an ethnic affinity. Many Kakwas were in fact Nubians from Southern Sudan (Mann, 1977). Savolainen (2008) states that during the last years of Obote's first regime, Amin, as commander of the Ugandan army recruited

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[7]Khemis Juma Kenyi is a retired teacher and a highly respected advisor on Nubian culture, as well as a radio presenter Voice of Africa Radio. Interviewed on 29th/09/2018 at his residence in Mpakawero, Bombo Luwero District.

most of the soldiers and police officers from the Nubian tribes. And when he captured power, he organized wealth for the Nubians and recruited most of them into the State research bureau. Amin was also able to invite other Africans to become members of the "Nubian tribe" (Lunyigo, 1967). This meant a good number of Baganda, Batoro, Kakwa, Acholi, Langi, Banyoro, Basoga became Nubians. The only qualification of becoming a Nubi was to profess the Nubian/ Islamic culture. Many Acholis and Langi began pretentiously claim to be Nubis in order for them to capture the sympathy of Amin.

Following the Indian expulsion, later to be called the Amin economic war, the Nubis benefited a lot by taking over established shops and other Indian businesses. In this respect, Hinamundi (2012) argues that the Nubian men spent most of their time in their shops at the trading centers, selling different commodities and the women trained their children in the ways of Prophet Muhammad. This gave rise to what later came to be called "Mafutamingi"- a local slung which described rich Nubis. Mutibwa confirms this narrative when he states "When Amin launched the economic war in 1972 and expelled all the Asians, most of the confiscated property was handed over to Nubians".

When Amin lost power in 1979, Nubian in West Nile were a target in Gulu and the rest of the country. Thus, they fled for their lives, they were persecuted. In fact, the second Obote regime carried out an ethnic cleansing of the Nubians in the army which gave birth to what was later called Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA). This further intensified conflicts between the West Nilers against the Obote regime. As a result, the West Nile Nubians came up with several military organizations such as the Uganda national rescue front led by a Nubian Gen. Moses Ali), Former Uganda National Army (FUNA).

Although the Nubians were resistant to western education, with the passage of time they embraced formal education, which turned some of them into relevant professionals. In this regard Abdul Bekil argued, "Things are beginning to change with the rising generation of well-educated prosperous Nubians under way" (Hinamundi, 2012). This meant that the Nubians had realized that western education was paramount for them not only to survive but influence the thinking and perceptions of humanity in totality.

As political regimes continued abusing their rights and entitlements, the Nubis resorted to courts of law. The Obote II regime did not only discriminate them but marginalized them and further denied them their God given birth rights. The Obote regime froze their bank accounts after the over throw of the Amin regime, as such Nubis lost lots of money and investments. This put them in deplorable conditions. In respect of the rule of law, which seemed prevalent in the NRM regime, over 1000 of the Nubian origin in Uganda petitioned the Civil Division of the high court in Kampala seeking orders for their bank accounts to be reactivated and money refunded. This petition was filled by Ismail Dabule in 2015 as a reaction to the national Consultative Council that had enacted a Banking Act which gave the finance Minister powers to make legal notices of 1982/1984 that led to the freezing of the Nubian Muslim's Bank accounts. Using legal procedures, Danube, the petitioner asserted that the Minister then instructed Bank of Uganda to take over their accounts which were held in Uganda Commercial Bank (Now Stanbic Bank), Glandly's Bank, Barclay's Bank, and Libyan Bank (now Tropical Bank) that later froze their accounts and other business accounts. The mentioned Banks held a meeting that saw the burying of the affected people from accessing their accounts and had their money transferred to Bank of Uganda. The said banks illegally and wrongfully through bank of Uganda accessed the petitioner's money and used it. Through their lawyers, Omongole and company advocates, the petitioners wanted court to compel Bank of Uganda and other named commercial banks to pay their money in Uganda shillings at a dollar rate of 1 dollar to Shs.7, a rate that was applicable in 1979 when the accounts were frozen (Kazibwe, 2015). Rather than waiting for the court's final decision on the matter, the affected Nubis have no other option apart from waiting. The fact that they appealed to court meant that they embraced the money economy as a strategy towards their survival and sustainability.

Conclusion

Relying on both written and oral evidence, the study examined different methods the Uganda Nubis used which helped them survive as an ethnic group from the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. Drawing from the three constructivism ethnic approaches to ethnic survival, the Nubis are seen as agents for the construction of their ethnic identity by embracing Islam and Islamic values right from the Zaribas in Sudan. The adaptation of a unique ethnic identity based on 'foreign' Islamic values helped them a lot to survive as members of one family, irrespective of their former ethnic backgrounds. The social, political and economic environment, right from the colonial period up to the post-colonial era, also created both favorable and unfavorable conditions for the Nubi to survive as an ethnic community. This therefore brings to the fold that the survival of the Nubis as an ethnic group was mainly an invention from colonial forces that brought them together as part of their pacification process.

What however, should be taken into account is the fact that right from pre-colonial period, Uganda Nubis on several accounts have been struggling to survive as an ethnic community. They experienced cases of discrimination, marginalization and isolation during past political regimes, as well as their former British colonial masters. The reasons for their discrimination and

marginalization ranged from political as well as social factors. The study established that as Nubis were struggling to extend their livelihood in a country, which is constructed along ethnic lines, they managed to identify themselves as members of one ethnic group through Islam which was the major uniting factor.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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Beneficiaries' perceptions of the contributions of community development projects to peacebuilding process in South Sudan: A case of Terekeka State

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Despite the fact that a lot of research has been done about community development in relations to peacebuilding, there are a few studies available on the contribution of community development projects to peacebuilding process. The intention of this article is to start to fill the gap by investigating beneficiaries' perceptions of the contribution of the community development projects to peacebuilding process in Terekeka State. The study adopted qualitative approach. Two community development projects were selected for the study, that is, South Sudan Livelihood and Development Project (SSLDP) and Food Security and Livelihood Project (FSLP). The total of respondents for the case of SSLDP was 38 individuals for in-depth interviews (30 were project participants while 8 were non-participants). With regards to FSLP, respondents totaled 22 individuals for in-depth interviews (18 were project participants while 4 were non-project participants). In addition, 32 key informants were interviewed. Focus Group Discussions were carried out with 64 respondents in total, for both projects studied. The results of the finding were discussed after the process of data collection, with the help of key informants. The study revealed actors' positive perceptions of the contributions of community of development projects in sustainable peacebuilding which included nurturing friendly attitudes among the project participants, promoting unity and restoring positive communication, building confidence and trust, building sense of tolerance and love, overcoming fear and suspicions, enabling positive collaboration, creating bond between members, and enabling capacity building for peacebuilding engagement.

Key words: Peacebuilding, community development, Terekeka State.

INTRODUCTION

There have been numerous peacebuilding initiatives and agreements, today in the world, since the cold war period.

Some of the agreements and peacebuilding initiatives have successfully transformed conflicts into more

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constructive relations between individuals, communities and groups, while others have failed (Waller, 2007).

In South Sudan, Terekeka State, socially protracted conflicts had provided a serious challenge to peacebuilding efforts, in the early stages of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed in 2005 that end a long civil between the north and south. The conflicts in this state had been associated with cattle aids, land issues and struggle for limited pastures and water. These had combined to cause wide spread socio-economic underdevelopment, resulting in outbreak and escalation of conflict between communities, loss of human lives, destruction of property and wide spread poverty. The government of South Sudan responded by supporting community development programs at all levels to reduce incidence of violence, through economic empowerment and capacity building. For instance, in 2012, the government of South Sudan allocated 5 US dollars million for the support of community development initiatives in all the states, with the ultimate aim of promoting peacebuilding drive through socio-economic transformation at the grassroots[1]. It is generally assumed that communities are better positioned in making decisions that affect their lives (UMMISS, 2014).

The study, therefore, explored whether community development projects contribute to peacebuilding process in South Sudan. There is a general assumption that community development methods emphasize growth and development from below, which consequently promotes peacebuilding drive, especially in developing countries Garb and Nan 2009). The study, therefore, provided an empirically based study on the contribution of community development projects to peacebuilding process at the grassroots in Terekeka State. More precisely, the research questions were: What are the beneficiaries' perceptions of the contribution of community development projects in peacebuilding process? What are the perceptions of non-project beneficiaries of the contribution of community development projects in the peacebuilding process?

This study was exploratory and it adopted qualitative approach. The data collection process was guided by the study's research questions. The methods used in data collection included Focus Group Discussions, key informant interviews, in-depth interviews with individuals and personal observations. In order to collect as much information as possible and deepen the understanding of the peacebuilding basically, the study adopted two community development projects for the study, that is, South Sudan Livelihood and Development Project (SSLDP) and Food Security and Livelihood Project (FSLP). The two community development projects represent the sectors of livelihood, which is cattle rearing, fishing and agriculture, in Terekeka State.

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[1]ZOA, South Sudan, Inc. (2012, April). *Semi-Annual Report, November 2011-May 31, 2012: Food Security and Livelihood Project*. Juba, South Sudan.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Peacebuilding basically is primarily concerned with strengthening the role of local people and their institutions as a means of promoting peace (UNMISS, 2014). Lederach (1997) in his discourse on peacebuilding disagreed with the bottom up approach to peacebuilding arguing that it is always filled with hatred and suspicion from the authority. The argument was however echoed by de Coning (2013). While analyzing conflict in Northern Uganda. He asserted that peace can never be achieved by gun but through an inclusive peace that involves dialogue. Similarly, Chigas and Woodrow (2009) argued that the socio-cultural knowledge of the local initiatives improves peacebuilding process more than actors' holistic approach that requires meeting a variety of needs of ex-combatant. Therefore, this argument was further supported by Olson (1982), who asserted that peacebuilding requires the widest legitimacy and the process must not only be accepted by wider portion of the population, but must be based on the culture of the people at the grassroots. also supported this claim when he argued that in order to effectively deal with intra-state conflict, it requires a creative and complex approach, which can penetrate into the web of the relationships in which the conflicts are entangled, bring genuine reconciliation, and produce a better and wider set of interdependent relationship.

Peacebuilding initiative basically have also been credited on their ability to bring local people together to engage in constant reconciliation processes as participants learn to apologize and accept apologies, ask for forgiveness and to forgive, to heal and to close conflicts (Palmer, 2002). In this regard, people create space to dialogue, embrace micro-culture and inclusiveness in the process of peace building, and this becomes highly relevant for they open up all forms of group interaction in the process (Lederach et al, 2007). Another research carried out by the Centre of Ubuntu in Burundi, community groups in peace building ensure that they incorporate the work of other groups in the bottom up peace building process.

The potential for community development to contribute towards peace and peacebuilding lacks empirical evidences. In this regard, little research has been done with regards to the study on sustainable peacebuilding in relation to community development project. It follows that much of what is advocated on community development potential in peace/peacebuilding remains speculation.

RESEARCH METHODS

The study employed qualitative approach. The data were collected mainly through personal interviewing. The researcher used to regularly interact with respondents (Project beneficiaries) and key informants. Additionally, field notes for a certain relevant behavior or facts were also taken while carrying interviews. The researcher spent a total of six months in the field (three months in each

community development project studied). Qualitative methods of data collection were used and the interviews were conducted in local Arabic language, because it was spoken by the majority. The interviews were done through face to face interactions and extended dialogue on the topics related to Beneficiaries Perceptions of the Contribution of Community Development Projects in Peacebuilding Process. It is in this regard that qualitative in-depth interviews with open ended questions, both in Focus Group Discussions and individually, served as the main source of information. The major themes around which interviews were conducted were:

(1) Identification of respondents (age, sex, marital status, education level).
(2) Ways in which each community development project studied was perceived by its beneficiaries.
(3) Ways in which the community development project studied contributed to peacebuilding.
(4) Non-beneficiaries' perceptions of how the community development project studied contributed to peacebuilding process.

The process of interviewing was inspired by Hoyle et al. (2002). The researcher ensured the questions were asked in a proper way, which were comprehensible by the respondents and which motivated them to make the necessary effort in answering them. These interviews that were conducted in Arabic language were recorded, transcribed and later translated into English.

The methods of data collection that were used in the field included Focus Group Discussions, key informant interviews, in-depth interviews with individuals and personal observation. The main reason for the adoption of the given data collection methods was to explore what respondents feel, say and experience with regards to the contribution of community development projects. Focus Group Discussion in particular was used, in order to get rich information on consensus and minimize lies because it is hard to lie in a group; key informant interviews were adopted, in order to get expert views with regards to subject matter under study; and above all, the researcher was in the field for six months to observe events in relations to the study, as he carried out interviews, to observe traits that are not clearly communicated by the respondents.

Data analysis technique

The data for this study were analyzed qualitatively inform of text, which involved comparing, analyzing, weighing and combining empirical materials (Rubin, 2005), from interviews and field notes to deduce the meaning, so as to understand subject matter under study in a coherent explanation. There are many ways of analyzing qualitative data. The data analysis for this study began early during the data collection, where the results of early data analysis guided subsequent data collection process. The ideas developed at the start and during the data collection helped the researcher in framing the further questions that would be used to obtain data at the next stage. The major part of data analysis was done after the data collection, with the transcription of field notes and interviews during the data presentation and analysis.

In the presentation of the data, themes and concepts used by the respondents were cross examined from different interviews, and that helped shape the material to be wholly coherent, and offer a clear description of the subject under study and easily draw conclusion that relates to research questions. The objective of this qualitative analysis was not to provide numeric summaries but to portray shades of meaning through the words of respondents. In the analysis of the data, field notes, interview materials and researcher comments were classified into units and blocks of information that were analyzed together. Then later, the data units were categorized along the same theme in order to get a coherent

meaning. Therefore, the procedure in this regard, referred to the reading of field note and transcribed interviews, the identification of categories and emerging themes, and identification of these themes and categories linked together to present findings by use verbatim quotes from interview texts.

The study populations

This study involved two categories of respondents. The first category of respondents were community development project beneficiaries. The second category involved the individuals who are not participants of the community development project studied were referred to in this study as non- project beneficiaries. Non-project beneficiaries were added in order to deepen understanding and achieve much more validity of the data for that reason collected from participants. In this regard, both categories of participants were consulted. The total of respondents for the case of SSLDP was 38 individuals for in-depth interviews with individuals (30 were project beneficiaries while 08 were non project beneficiaries). With regard to FSLP, respondents totaled to 22 individuals for in-depth interviews (18 were project beneficiaries while 4 were non-project beneficiaries). In addition, 32 key informants were interviewed and Focus Group Discussion was carried out with 64 respondents. The results of the finding were discussed after the process of data collection, with the help of key informants.

PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

Participants from both FSL and SSLD projects had positive perceptions and experiences of the contribution of their respective projects they participate in. This aspect was responded to by the participants themselves and some key informants, particularly the officials. The results from both study projects have been combined and are presented subsequently.

Nurturing friendly attitudes

Most of the respondents from both projects studied attested that their respective community development project has nurtured the atmosphere of friendships. This is one of the illustrative testimonies of respondent from FSLP:

"This project has instilled in us a friendly attitude towards one another; love for one another and trust that we have built for one another because we work together, we discuss together and market our products together. The project through its teachings and practice has dispelled hatred for one another".

Another respondent from SSLDP echoed the same points:

"SSLDP has made us good friend who believe in common goal and collective efforts. Imagine, when we missed each other for months, we hug and warmly welcome. This is how this project has far taken us. We become more and more united day by day with stronger relationship characterized by love".

The findings established that concept of friendship was commonly used by the beneficiaries of both projects. This term means people living together peacefully, and by rendering social support to one another. Research respondents from FSLP and SSLDP adopted the concept of love and brotherhood, as indicated in the aforementioned quote from a respondent. This means that, according to some participants from FSLP, when suspicion for one another, hatred and fear for one another reduces attitudes for love, friendship and social support increase. Thus, the findings indicate project participants (Beneficiaries) and non-project participants (Non-beneficiaries) in some aspects believe that both case study projects (SSLD and FSL) contributed positively to sustainable in their areas, because those two projects have enabled them to live and work mutually together.

As the findings indicate, respondents from SSLDP also emphasized their positive relational attitudes have been nurtured. Thus, project beneficiaries now support each other through non-discriminatory mutual help.

"This community development project has permanently inculcated the attitude of friendship, mutual support, care and tolerance in us. We are now friends and we always remain friends in every social space. When one of us gets in to trouble, we all intervene and help. This is how far this project has taken us! Female respondent from SSLDP".

This statement is similar to other statements, during the Focus Group Discussions for the participants of FSLP in Jemeza County, in which respondents accounted that they were one and they were friends who would hug each other whenever they met. According to the respondents of SSLD, it is that the culture of peace is nurtured.

"When we are concerned about each other's difficulties and problem, regardless of our differences in terms of ethnicity and religion that is a sign that we are at peace". A respondent from SSLD

An illustrative account in this regard could be the statement of a respondent from FSLP:

"When we go back home, we maintain our friendship and conviviality, and create other projects in which we work together; and even when one of us has a particular hard work, or any problem, which needs support, we intervene. This project! It reunited us".

This appears to reflect project participants' statements, during Focus Group Discussions for the participants of FSLP in Jemeza, we are one, we are friends, we love each other and we always grow together. In this regard, for example, a respondent in a group argued that when one gets involved in FSLP, he immediately realizes that people changed, as shown by participants' songs, jokes,

and mutual support. This also refers to what these three respondents from the same project, stated, respectively:

"In a few words, FSLP is a new family for all of us. All participants help and rescue each other. Whenever there are weddings, for instance, project participants are the first to offer their support".

"We, project participants, we are one. When for example we meet outside the work place, for example in the market, you better watch us hugging each other! Of course we hug other people too, but for project participants we hug each other differently! Because we are very close friends! Me, I actually compare that with students. You know how students hug each other when they meet, when they are in holidays! When they meet for example in the market, they form their own group. We also do the same".

"When you help each other and share food, it is a good thing to me! It means that for example we, who are in this project, you can see that we are completely different from non-participants because the non-project participants are still uncertain of their future, but we have been able to be with them, we talk to each other, we live convivially, and we do not have any worry".

However, the views of non-project participants are now juxtaposed against the aforementioned contentions of the members of SSLDP. They maintained that project enabled people to come into contact to communicate and have dialogue with each other and to visit each other and live convivially.
Another respondent said:

"Yes, the project has changed something because it brings together people of all ethnic background without any discrimination. May be it is because of frequent contact that people changed; because they visit each other and converse".

Another respondent who was a non-project participant said:

"Everybody thought it was impossible, but we watch them; they are happy together in that project (referring to SSLDP). This is true".

This was also echoed by another non-project participant from Jemeza county, who stated:

"I think their community development project help them discuss everything because one of them with whom we are in neighborhood told me that they discuss all the problems related to experiences of conflicts. Actually the fact that it brought together people of different communities is enough. None could talk to the other before. I also watch them, they are friends. For example,

during convivial festivals, they invite us also; we go and drink and eat together, and we all dance together".

Considering the above contentions of participants of both selected community development projects, and nonmembers, it appears that these respondents seem to only show a solely positive picture of the impact of those projects studied on peacebuilding.

Promoting unity and restoring positive communication

As the data already indicate, most respondents said community development projects have impacted positively on them by promoting unity and restoring positive communication. Here is an illustrative account of the participants from SSLDP:

"I thought coming together was not possible as people who did not trust each other because we belong to a different rival community. I can say there is no division in this project. Rather it has reunited us".

Another respondent in a Focus Group Discussions of the participants FSLP from Jemeza County also said:

"To be honest really, as a beneficiary of FSLP, I would like to admit the fact that this project has enabled free interactions and regular contact with each other, regardless of our ethnic differences. We sing, laugh and eat together. This is how far this project has united us".

In connection with the earlier statement, data generally reveal that their respective community development project effectively enabled positive interactions and communication among them in a way that some members often referred to as fruitful conversations. Not only were their divisions broken, but also positive communication among them became nurtured as they strived together to increase agricultural productions and look for common market for their products. Likewise, the aforementioned statement, an account of another respondent from SSLDP emphasizes the common objective, notably among participants from different communities, which constituted an occasion for constructive conversations and equality among them, and consequently unity: He states:

"For example, I often watch. Since this project was established, we all joined together; you can see that they all share the same objective, or job. We, members, have no problem, because when a member gets into contact with one the other. We are no longer divided; this project has reunited us, we are one! Another important thing is that we are no longer starving. No poverty".

These testimonies emphasize the impact of community

development projects in fostering positive communication among conflicting parties. Other illustrative accounts are the statements of from Focus Group Discussions in Terekeka County. They held, respectively:

"This community development project enables good conversations. I mean conversations which soothe one's mind. We always cherish the principle of equality. We called it livelihood project because it is really improving our lives; it helped us to talk to each other again, a thing which was like a dream. Our conversations are always soothing and we always understand each other's problem.

"This community development project makes me happy; I converse with people; I can't have any problem. We, all, sit together and while conversing. Can you imagine, I am young but this community development project considers all of us as equal! Actually, I don't have words in which to express that".

From the aforementioned statement, a picture of how the selected study community development projects enabled, and still enable, grassroots members to get united and consequently overcome discrimination, while fostering positive communication, can be easily seen.

Building confidence and trust

As data indicate, negative relational problems of fear and suspicion, which characterized the relationships between conflicting social groups, have been overcome as a result of their participation in the community development projects studied. As found, non-project participants interviewed were still fearful and suspected their enemy'. Below are some illustrative experiences and perceptions. By beginning with Mundari respondent from FSLP, which reads:

"There are members here from Dinka Aliap whom we suspected to have raided our cattle some time back…we no longer look at them as our enemies but as our brothers. This project has helped overcome fear and suspicion and built trust for each other. This of course is peacebuilding".

Another respondent went on to say:

"…I even invited my friends from the project whom we considered before as our enemies. We now look at each other as brothers and sisters and not enemies".

A respondent interviewed from SSLDP reported that she no longer hates and fear people that she perceived were her enemies. The teachings within her project have transformed her life. She said she was oriented more on money making through agriculture.
Another respondent from Terekeka also viewed things

from a similar perspective. For example, a respondent who once involved in robbery in which a person was killed was detained in prison for 8 years and later released, held:

"For example, I was sentence to 8 years in prison for involving in an act robbery-cattle raid. After my release from prison I joined this community development project which has helped me to overcome suspicion and fear because of the conversation and contact in the project. This according to me is a step toward peacebuilding".

With regard to suspicion, a respondent in Focus Group Discussion in Terekeka County describes, how SSLDP also enabled them to overcome suspicion:

"No suspicion in this project. We are open to one another, and that has helped in strengthening our unity. Yes, because of the good spirit in this project; we love and support each other".

These considerations emphasize that the project enabled grassroots members in Terekeka to overcome fear and suspicion and build confidence and trust in each other. The projects have helped them reduce fear and hatred and increase unity and confidence, hence, sustainable peacebuilding.

Nurturing sense of tolerance and love

As the data indicate, the community development projects studied contributed to peacebuilding by enabling the participants to embrace the spirit of togetherness by working together and communicating positively, hence overcoming feeling of hatred and anger.
This is illustrated in the statement of a respondent from SSLDP:

"Well, I cannot say we are completely free from feelings of fear, hatred and anger, but I can say negative attitude have been reduced. That is a positive sign that we are heading towards a peaceful transformation".

Another respondent from FSLP said:

"Really I am thankful for what this project did, because it managed to bring people together. With the teaching of the project everything is fine".

The statement confirms that anger and hatred between individual members of the community reduced because of positive communication and teachings while working together cooperatively in the project.

Apart from enabling conflicting parties to overcome negative and hostile attitudes, positive relationships were also nurtured by their respective community development project, in addition to the positive communication, as

discussed earlier. The common concept used in this regard, is *conviviality* among project participants. In addition to fear, suspicion, and distrust, respondents' accounts also emphasized anger and hatred as other relational problems between conflicting parties prior to their membership of a community development project. Illustrative testimonies concern the respective accounts, below, of the three respondents in a Focus Group Discussions of the participants of SSLDP:

"Truly, this community development has changed our lives. We hated each other just because we could not trust each other. I thought everyone from Dinka was bad. But now, it is a story. The anger and hatred has disappeared, and it is because of this project".

"After all our cattle were raided by our neighbors Dinkas, I hated everyone from there because I thought they were people who did not have heart for humanity".

"That is true, the Mundari hated us but we also hated them. They were considering all of us, I mean *Dinka*, as aggressors while it was not the case. Not every *Dinka* kill, you know that, no!"

These statements exemplify community development participants accounts were angry towards each other, and hated, other members from other perceived enemy community. Likewise, non-participants, not only emphasized fear, suspicion and mistrust, but they also underscored anger and hatred, as the relational problems between conflicting parties, prior to their respective community development project. An illustrative testimony is the account of a respondent from FSLP who stated:

"Their thoughts were preoccupied by negative thinking; they thought everyone from other side was bad, which was not true; after joining the community development project. They are together now".

All the aforementioned accounts show that the relationships between conflicting parties prior to their membership of their respective community development projects were negative. These relationships were characterized by division and the absence of communication, and by fear, suspicion, and mistrust, as well as anger and hatred. Yet, some of the people (conflicting parties) whose relationships were negative are now members of the community development project. It is therefore paramount to know whether their participation in community development project was motivated by a desire to restore these negative relationships before considering the project's impact in this regard.

Enabling collaborative engagement for peacebuilding

The key concept that participants from both selected

community development projects repeatedly underscored and insisted on is that their respective community development project is a collaborative network between them, where people who were divided by various social conflicts come into contact with each other and that contact between conflicting parties allows things to get to light. Illustrative experiences and perceptions depicting community development projects as an encounter are worth putting forward. In this regard, a statement of a respondent from SSLDP, reads:

"Actually, our community development project is our collaborative network;[2] it is a thing that enabled people who were divided to get into contact. This really provides us the opportunity to get into contact with one another all the time".

The same assertion was echoed by a respondent from FSLP, who attested that his community development project provided him with a platform for contact, interaction and constructive engagement with people that he was previously afraid of. In this regard, it follows that community development projects are perceived by its participants (conflicting parties) as collaborative network. This also follows the assertion of another respondent that:

"Community development project is a collaborative network; this project brought together divided people, without intrigues or discrimination among them".

As the statement of a key informant from FSLP emphasized, the concept to which all respondents repeatedly pointed out was that a community development project was a collaborative network, as it brought together people (that is, conflicting parties) who were divided in various social conflicts, and thus made possible the communication between their contact and communication thus became the key factors behind the positive relationship developed by the beneficiaries themselves.

DISCUSSION

The study aimed to explore whether community development projects contribute to peacebuilding process in South Sudan. The study revealed that communities in Terekeka State now live together in a culture of peace, where the communities experience a sense of security and freedom of movement; culture of collaborative engagement was nurtured; fear and suspicion for one another faded; the communities have experienced economic growth and improved markets, with interethnic cooperation and integration; there is a shared sense of

responsibility for sustaining the peace; and the peace dialogue meetings continue the inclusion and empowerment of women and youth as peacebuilders. In addition, community members have been empowered as peace leaders and travel to adjacent counties to work towards peace in neighboring villages through their community development projects.

Most scholarships confirm those contributions of the community development project in peacebuilding in conjunction with Anderson and Olsen (2003), Anderson et al. (2008), Chigas and Woodrow (2009), and Lederach (2005). The data show that the community development projects studied contributed to peacebuilding by transforming individuals and socio-economic realms at the grassroots. The study further indicates that poverty was the general problem and the joint strive to solve it successfully through community development projects became an opportunity for them to interact, meet and constructively work together. That enabled them to overcome divisions, fear and hatred and nurture spirit of love, tolerance, unity and cooperative.

Despite the fact that the perceptions are solely positive about the contribution of the community development project studied, shortcomings have been discovered. For instance, the case of SSLDP, there were problems of bad leadership reported by the participants, whereby project participants accused their current leaders of mismanaging the project relating to misuse of funds and making decisions unilaterally without the consent of other members. While the external shortcoming was reported to be the interference of local authorities in the affairs of the project. These internal and external obstacles experienced in SSLDP were not, however, experienced in FSLP. The obstacles, in this regard, point to the lack of market for the agricultural products.

Finally, the scholarship has indicated through community development projects, peacebuilding results are facilitated by a process that was elective, participatory, and inclusive (Garb and Nan, 2009; Lederach, 1997). This exactly is what this study has confirmed.

Conclusion

The restoration of relationships between communities at the grassroots in Terekeka State, South Sudan is one of the key tasks of post conflict peacebuilding following long civil war between north and south that ended in 2005, with the historic signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Whether a community development project contributes positively in this regard constituted the study's research problem. At the completion of this study, the general conclusion is that community development projects contributed positively to peacebuilding by mending relationships that were broken by various social conflicts. Each community development project studied provided a space for transforming negative and

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[2]By *collaborative network,* respondents refer to a space/place, where people meet/come into contact.

dehumanizing attitudes into positive ones: from fear to fearlessness, from suspicion to trust, from division to union, from anger and resentment to calm, from hatred to attraction and conviviality. Peacebuilding requires that people who have been traumatized by the past events should have the space to be free from that burden. To improve the relationship, people thus must be in a place where they are able to think positively in a given space and have the opportunity to think not only about their physical survival but also where they can begin to imagine life without hatred, conflict and suspicion. This confirms Waller's insistence on the power of the situation in influencing people's thoughts, feelings and behaviours (2007). However, the study found that the role of a community development project in peacebuilding process is conditional; it has to be geared towards achieving the goal to which it was created for.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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