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CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (CSOS), CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PEACEBUILDING IN NIGERIA: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

This paper reviews the role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in facilitating conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Nigeria, a country characterized by diverse and persistent conflicts. The review synthesizes existing research that highlights the critical contributions of CSOs in mediating disputes, promoting dialogue, and enhancing community resilience amidst socio-political challenges. It identifies the shift from state-centric conflict management to a more inclusive approach that recognizes the importance of CSO involvement, particularly in the aftermath of Nigeria's transition to democratic governance. The paper used systematic review of literature and qualitative method in analysing the data collected from secondary sources. It underscores the diverse strategies employed by CSOs, including the integration of traditional, religious, and contemporary conflict resolution mechanisms, to address the root causes of conflict and advocate for human rights. However, it also highlights significant challenges, such as governmental resistance and limited collaboration, which hinder the effectiveness of CSOs in peace building efforts. Ultimately, this review emphasizes the need for a supportive environment that fosters cooperation between CSOs and the state to achieve sustainable peace and social transformation in Nigeria. The findings call for further research and advocacy to strengthen the role of CSOs in the country's ongoing peace building initiatives.

Key words: Conflict, conflict resolution, civil society organizations, peacebuilding

Introduction

Civil society organizations (CSOs) play a pivotal role in global conflict resolution and peace-building processes, and Nigeria is no exception. These organizations, encompassing non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations, faith-based groups, and other non-state actors, have been instrumental in addressing the multifaceted conflicts that have plagued Nigeria for decades. The complexity of Nigeria's conflicts, which include ethnic, religious, and political dimensions, necessitates robust engagement by CSOs to foster dialogue, mediate disputes, and promote sustainable peace. Today, CSOs in Nigeria have increasingly taken on responsibilities traditionally held by the state, particularly in areas where governmental presence is weak or ineffective by promoting the idea of community-based conflict resolution approach, facilitating capacity building training, and peace-centered empowerment opportunities among many. (Akinwale, 2018). One significant contribution of CSOs in Nigeria is their ability to operate at the grassroots level, providing a bridge between local communities and broader national and international peace initiatives. These organizations often possess a deep understanding of local dynamics and cultural contexts, enabling them to effectively tailor conflict-resolution strategies.

Despite the critical role of civil society organizations (CSOs) in fostering conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Nigeria, their efforts are often hampered by numerous challenges that undermine their effectiveness. Issues, such as funding constraints, political interference, and security risks, have impeded their effectiveness. Moreover, the relationship

between CSOs and government is often fraught with tension, leading to an environment in which collaboration is challenging. Political interference not only restricts the operational space for CSOs, but also undermines their legitimacy and credibility within the communities they serve. In addition, government suspicion and restrictive policies towards CSOs further exacerbate these challenges, creating barriers to effective conflict resolution and peace-building efforts (Akinwale 2018).

Moreover, the relationship between CSOs and government is often fraught with tension, leading to an environment in which collaboration is challenging. Political interference not only restricts the operational space for CSOs, but also undermines their legitimacy and credibility within the communities they serve. Additionally, government suspicion and restrictive policies towards CSOs further exacerbate these challenges, creating barriers to effective conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts. This adversarial dynamic is detrimental to the holistic approach needed to address the root causes of conflict in Nigeria, which requires coordinated efforts between state and non-state actors.

However, the resilience and adaptability of CSOs continue to make them indispensable actors in Nigeria's peace quest. Evidently, the collective efforts of CSOs supported by international partners and local stakeholders are crucial for sustainable peacebuilding in Nigeria (Nwankwo & Agu, 2022).

Essentially, this study aims to review the role of civil society organizations in facilitating conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes in Nigeria. Specifically, it intends to analyze the contributions of civil society organizations to conflict resolution and peace-building processes at the grassroots level in Nigeria. Second, it assesses the impact of CSO advocacy and policy influence in addressing the underlying causes of conflict in Nigeria. Third, it identifies and examines the challenges that impede the effectiveness of CSOs in mediating conflict and promoting peace in Nigeria. Fourth, it evaluates successful strategies employed by CSOs in Nigeria to enhance local capacities for conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Methodology

This paper uses data collected from secondary sources such as journal articles and published reports searched using online search engines such as Google and Bind. It utilizes other available online libraries and Artificial Intelligence sources in the search, such as Scispace, Perplexity AI, and Google Scholar to search on themes (as inclusion criteria) related to peace building, peace, civil society organisations (CSOs), the role of CSOs in peace building, CSOs and conflict resolution, peace initiatives by CSOs in Nigeria etc. The paper excluded any other theme that is not related to peace, peace building and conflict resolution and CSOs in Nigeria. The data were analyzed using a systematic review and qualitatively presented in the discussions. However, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations and potential biases of the collected data and sources.

Conceptual clarification: Conflict, Conflict resolution, Peacebuilding Process and Civil Society Organisations

Conflict is defined as the incompatibility of goals or values between two or more parties in a relationship, combined with attempts to control each other and antagonistic feelings toward each other (Fisher, 1990). According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2023), the term is synonymous with clash, contention, confrontation, a controversy or quarrel, active opposition, strife, incompatibility, meeting in opposition or hostility, contending, being contrary, or being at variance. According to Wallensteen (2002), conflict occurs when two or more parties compete for the same scarce resources simultaneously. Conflict occurs among people in all types of human relationships and social settings (Deutsch, Coleman &Marcus, 2006). Because people have a wide range of potential

differences, the absence of conflict usually indicates the absence of meaningful interactions. Conflict is neither good nor bad in itself. However, whether a conflict is constructive or destructive is determined by how it is handled.

However, conflict resolution is typically associated with efforts to address the root causes of conflict and find mutually acceptable solutions. It comprises the mechanisms of resolving conflicts, disputes, or disagreements between parties in a peaceful and constructive manner (Kriesberg, 2016; Deutsch & Coleman, 2014), involving finding mutually acceptable solutions and restoring relationships (Lederach, 1995; Kriesberg, 2019). It involves finding solutions to conflicts through various methods, such as negotiations, mediation, facilitation, or the use of coercive measures such as military, political, or economic sanctions (Muriuki, 2022). Peaceful measures such as negotiations and mediation are essential for achieving long-term conflict settlement, whereas coercive measures are typically short-term in nature (Muriuki, 2022). However, they are complementary if sustainable peace can be achieved.

Peacebuilding is a complex process involving multiple actors and requires values, goals, and commitment to human rights and needs (Christofis, 2020). Furthermore, it considers structural forms of injustice and violence, as well as the underlying cultures, histories, and root causes of violence. Peacebuilding processes depend on relational skills and have the main goal of healing traumas through relationship building at multiple levels (Christofis, 2020). For peacebuilding to be successful, the process should be founded on trusted relations, partnerships, and interdependence. Finally, peacebuilding is not just about resolving a conflict, but also about establishing durable peace and preventing the recurrence of violence.

Apart from the related concepts defined above, civil society remains a contested concept in the social sciences (Paturyan 2011). According to Edwards (2011), this is in part because it first emerged as a broad concept of a 'sphere of uncoerced human association between the individual and the state […] relatively independent of government and the market' (Edwards, 2011:3). Therefore, civil society organizations (CSOs) are non-state, non-market organizations that represent the interests and will of citizens. They include non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), faith-based organizations (FBOs), and advocacy groups (Schoenefeld 2021). In this paper, CSOs are those entities actively engaged in initiatives aimed at conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Nigeria, working at various levels from local to national.

Civil Society Organizations in Peacebuilding Processes

Globally, civil society organizations (CSOs) play a critical role in peace-building processes, leveraging their grassroots presence and community-based approaches to address the root causes of conflict and foster sustainable peace. According to Nwankwo and Agu (2022), CSOs are at the forefront of reconciliation efforts, facilitating dialogue between conflicting parties and promoting trust-building initiatives. Through community dialogues, peace forums, and mediation efforts, CSOs create platforms for communication and negotiation, enabling conflicting groups to voice their grievances and seek mutually acceptable solutions (Okeke 2020). These initiatives are instrumental in de-escalating tensions and building bridges between communities, thereby laying the foundation for long-term peace and stability.

In Nigeria, CSOs engage in capacity-building activities that empower local communities with the skills and knowledge required to manage conflicts peacefully. Akinwale (2018) noted that CSOs in Nigeria implement training programs and workshops in conflict resolution, peace education, and leadership development, targeting community leaders, youth, and women. By equipping individuals with tools to navigate and resolve disputes, CSOs enhance the resilience of communities against future conflicts. Furthermore, CSOs play a crucial role in advocating policy reforms that address the structural causes of

conflicts. Through public campaigns, research, and lobbying efforts, CSOs influence government policies on issues such as resource allocation, governance, and human rights, thereby creating an enabling environment for sustainable peace (Nwankwo & Agu, 2022).

In summary, civil society organizations are indispensable actors in peace-building processes in Nigeria, working at the grassroots level to foster dialogue, reconciliation, and community empowerment. Their initiatives not only facilitate conflict resolution, but also contribute to the broader goal of building a more just and peaceful society. However, challenges such as funding constraints, political interference, and security risks continue to impede the effectiveness of CSOs in Nigeria's peace-building efforts, highlighting the need for continued support and collaboration among stakeholders to address these obstacles and realize the full potential of CSO contributions to peace and stability in the country.

Relevance of Civil Society Organizations in Conflict and Resolution and Peace-building Processes

Civil society organizations (CSOs) are critically relevant to conflict resolution and peace-building processes because of their unique ability to bridge divides, foster dialogue, and empower communities. As highlighted by Ibrahim (2021), CSOs in Nigeria operate at the grassroots level, where they have intimate knowledge of local dynamics and can directly engage with affected populations. This proximity enables CSOs to facilitate inclusive and participatory peace processes that prioritize the voices of marginalized groups, such as women and youth, who are often disproportionately affected by conflict. CSOs contribute to the legitimacy and sustainability of peace agreements by ensuring that diverse perspectives are represented and considered in peace negotiations (Ibrahim 2021).

Furthermore, CSOs play a vital role in advocating structural reforms and policy changes that address the underlying causes of conflict. According to Amnesty International (2019), CSOs in Nigeria engage in public campaigns, research, and lobbying efforts to promote governmental accountability, human rights protection, and social justice reforms. By advocating equitable resource allocation, good governance practices, and respect for human rights, CSOs create an enabling environment for peace-building initiatives to thrive. Their advocacy efforts not only raise awareness of conflict-related issues, but also exert pressure on policymakers to prioritize peace and reconciliation (Amnesty International, 2019).

Moreover, the adaptability and resilience of CSOs make them indispensable actors in navigating complex and evolving conflicting landscapes. CSOs often employ innovative approaches and creative strategies to address emerging challenges and facilitate peace processes. Technological advancements have enabled CSOs to leverage social media platforms and digital tools for conflict monitoring, early warning systems, and online dialogue facilitation (Nwankwo & Agu, 2022). By embracing these new technologies and methodologies, CSOs enhance their effectiveness in responding to conflicts in real time and adapting to changing contexts, reinforcing their relevance to conflict resolution and peace-building efforts in Nigeria.

Advocacy and Policy Influence of Civil Society Organizations in Conflict and Resolution and Peace-building Processes

Civil society organizations (CSOs) significantly influence conflict resolution and peace-building processes through advocacy efforts and policy influence. CSOs in Nigeria engage in various forms of advocacy, including lobbying, public campaigns, and research to push for policy reforms that address the root causes of conflict and promote peace. According to Osaghae and Suberu (2020), CSOs play a pivotal role in promoting good governance, transparency, and accountability within government institutions, which are essential for fostering an environment conducive to peace. Through their advocacy initiatives, CSOs highlight issues such as human rights violations, corruption, and social injustice, compelling

policymakers to take action and implement reforms that contribute to conflict resolution and sustainable peace (Osaghae and Suberu 2020).

Furthermore, CSOs leverage their networks and partnerships to amplify their voices and influence decision-making processes at local, national, and international levels. As noted by Ikelegbe (2018), CSOs often collaborate with other stakeholders, including governmental agencies, international organizations, and grassroots movements, to advocate for policy changes that advance peace-building agendas. These alliances strengthen the collective impact of CSOs and increase their visibility and credibility in advocating peace-related issues. By mobilizing diverse coalitions and advocating multi-stakeholder approaches to peacebuilding, CSOs contribute to the development and implementation of inclusive and sustainable peace strategies (Ikelegbe, 2018).

Moreover, CSOs utilize innovative strategies and communication platforms to effectively disseminate information, raise awareness, and mobilize public support for peacebuilding initiatives. According to Eboh (2021), CSOs harness the power of social media, digital technologies, and traditional media outlets to amplify their advocacy messages and reach a broader audience. Through targeted advocacy campaigns and public outreach efforts, CSOs generate momentum and public pressure for policy reforms that prioritize peace and conflict resolution. Additionally, CSOs engage in evidence-based research and policy analysis to provide policymakers with empirical data and recommendations to strengthen the credibility and impact of their advocacy efforts (Eboh, 2021).

Role of Civil Society Organizations in Conflict and Resolution and Peacebuilding Processes

Civil society organizations (CSOs) serve as crucial actors in conflict resolution and peace-building processes in Nigeria, utilizing their unique capacities and grassroots connections to address the multifaceted challenges of conflict. As noted by Odinkalu (2020), CSOs play diverse roles ranging from facilitating dialogue and mediation to promoting community-led initiatives for peace and reconciliation. These organizations operate in various conflict-prone regions, working closely with affected communities to identify underlying grievances, build trust, and foster sustainable solutions. By fostering inclusive and participatory approaches to peacebuilding, CSOs can enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of peace processes (Odinkalu, 2020).

Moreover, CSOs contribute to conflict resolution and peacebuilding through their advocacy efforts, pushing for policy reforms and institutional changes that address the root causes of conflicts. According to Ukiwo (2019), CSOs in Nigeria engage in advocacy campaigns aimed at promoting good governance, human rights protection, and social justice, which are essential for sustainable peace. By amplifying the voices of marginalized groups and holding governments accountable, CSOs advocate policies that prioritize peace and reconciliation, contributing to the creation of an enabling environment for peace-building initiatives (Ukiwo, 2019). In addition, CSOs play a critical role in enhancing the resilience and capacity of communities to manage conflicts peacefully. Through capacity-building programs, training workshops, and peace education initiatives, CSOs empower local leaders, youth, and women with the skills and knowledge required to navigate and resolve disputes. This grassroots empowerment strengthens social cohesion, fosters dialogue, and promotes alternative mechanisms of conflict resolution within communities. By investing in human capital and promoting a culture of peace, CSOs lay the foundation for sustainable peace-building efforts rooted in the agency and resilience of the local populations (Ibrahim, 2021).

The position of CSOs in Contemporary Nigeria

In contemporary Nigeria, civil society organizations (CSOs) continue to play a vital role in peacebuilding efforts across the country, addressing a wide range of social, economic,

and political challenges. CSOs have evolved to adapt to changing contexts and emerging conflicts by employing innovative approaches and partnerships to promote peace and reconciliation (Ukiwo 2019).

Moreover, CSOs in Nigeria leverage technology and social media platforms to amplify their peace-building efforts and reach a broader audience. By embracing these new tools and methodologies, CSOs can enhance their effectiveness in responding to conflicts in real time and engaging diverse stakeholders in peacebuilding efforts (Nwankwo & Agu, 2022).

Despite their contributions, CSOs in Nigeria face numerous challenges, including funding constraints, political interference, and security risks, which can hinder their ability to operate effectively (Osaghae &Suberu, 2020). Additionally, there is a need for greater collaboration and coordination among CSOs, government agencies, and other stakeholders to maximize the impact of peace-building initiatives and address the root causes of conflict more comprehensively (Osaghae &Suberu, 2020). However, CSOs remain resilient and committed to their mission of promoting peace, social justice, and sustainable development in Nigeria, reaffirming their indispensable role in the contemporary peacebuilding landscape.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding at the Grassroots Level

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Nigeria play a vital role in conflict resolution and peacebuilding at the grassroots level through various initiatives and interventions. One such organization is the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), which has been actively involved in promoting dialogue and reconciliation among conflicting parties in Nigeria (Abdulrazaq, 2020). This was pursued through its conflict mitigation and community reconciliation in northwest Nigeria project that focus on transitional justice in the region (CDD, 2024). CDD's efforts include community engagement, capacity building, and advocacy for inclusive governance structures, which have been instrumental in mitigating tensions and fostering peaceful coexistence in conflict-prone areas (Centre for Democracy and Development 2020).

Moreover, international organizations, such as the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), have recognized the significance of grassroots-level engagement by CSOs in conflict resolution. USIP's research highlights the effectiveness of locally driven initiatives led by CSOs in addressing underlying grievances and building sustainable peace in Nigeria (United States Institute of Peace, 2019). These initiatives often focus on empowering marginalized communities, promoting interfaith dialogue, and facilitating reconciliation processes tailored to the specific needs of the affected populations (USIP, 2019).

Additionally, the role of CSOs in conflict resolution extends beyond Nigeria's borders, with examples from other African countries providing valuable insight. In Rwanda, organizations such as Never Again Rwanda have successfully utilized community-based approaches for healing and reconciliation following the 1994 genocide (Never Again Rwanda, 2021). By adopting similar grassroots strategies, Nigerian CSOs can enhance social cohesion, strengthen trust between communities, and contribute to sustainable peace-building efforts in the country (Rwanda, 2021). These diverse examples underscore the importance of local ownership and community participation in fostering peace and stability and highlight the critical role of CSOs in driving positive changes at the grassroots level.

Advocacy and Policy Influence Efforts of CSOs in addressing the root causes of Conflict in Nigeria

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Nigeria play a crucial role in advocating policy changes and influencing decision-making processes to address the root causes of conflict in the country. One notable example is the collaborative engagement of many CSOs with

Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) a subsidiary of the Nigeria's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which actively engages in research and policy analysis to inform Nigerian government policies on conflict prevention and resolution (Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, 2020). Through its advocacy efforts, the IPCR seeks to address systemic issues such as resource competition, ethnic tensions, and governance deficits, which are often underlying factors contributing to conflicts in Nigeria (Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, 2020).

Furthermore, international organizations such as the International Crisis Group (ICG) have highlighted the importance of CSOs in advocating inclusive and participatory governance structures to mitigate conflicts in Nigeria (International Crisis Group, 2021). By promoting transparency, accountability, and respect for human rights, CSOs contribute to creating an enabling environment for peaceful coexistence and sustainable development (International Crisis Group, 2021). Additionally, CSOs collaborate with government agencies, community leaders, and other stakeholders to develop evidence-based policies and strategies that address socioeconomic inequalities and political marginalization, fueling conflicts in Nigeria (International Crisis Group, 2021).

Moreover, the role of CSOs in addressing the root causes of conflict extends beyond national borders, with lessons learned from other African countries informing Nigerian advocacy efforts. Organizations such as the Africa Centre for Strategic Studies (ACSS) emphasize the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration and community engagement in promoting peace and stability (Africa Centre for Strategic Studies, 2022). By amplifying the voices of marginalized groups and advocating for inclusive policies, CSOs in Nigeria contribute to building resilience against conflict and fostering a culture of dialogue and reconciliation (Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2022). These collaborative efforts underscore the significance of civil society in driving positive change and in shaping policies that address the underlying drivers of conflict in Nigeria and across the continent.

Challenges faced by CSOs in Nigeria in their efforts to mediate conflicts and promote peace

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Nigeria encounter numerous challenges in their endeavors to mediate conflicts and promote peace within the country. One significant challenge is the lack of adequate funding and resources, which restrict the capacity of CSOs to implement effective peace-building initiatives (Oshomah et al., 2020). Limited financial support hampers CSOs' ability to sustain their operations, engage communities, and provide essential services in conflict-affected areas (Oshomahet al., 2020). Additionally, bureaucratic hurdles and restrictive government regulations often impede the registration and operation of CSOs, constraining their ability to mobilize resources and reach vulnerable populations (Oshomah et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the volatile security situation in Nigeria poses a significant obstacle to the work of CSOs engaged in conflict mediation and peace-building activities (International Crisis Group, 2021). Persistent insecurity, including insurgency, communal violence, and banditry, creates challenges in accessing conflict-affected areas and implementing peace initiatives (International Crisis Group, 2021). CSOs face threats to their safety and security, limiting their ability to operate effectively in conflict zones and engage with conflicting parties (International Crisis Group, 2021).

Moreover, CSOs often encounter resistance and distrust from various stakeholders, including government agencies, traditional leaders, and armed groups, which undermine their mediation efforts because of their stance to fairness and neutrality (Oshomah et al., 2020). Political interference and the manipulation of conflict dynamics by vested interests further complicate CSOs' attempts to facilitate dialogue and reconciliation (Oshomah et al., 2020). Additionally, the lack of coordination and collaboration among CSOs and other stakeholders

in the peace-building sector hinders the effectiveness of interventions and leads to duplication of efforts (International Crisis Group, 2021).

Strategies for CSOs in Nigeria for Enhancing Local Capacity for Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Nigeria can adopt various strategies to enhance local capacity for conflict resolution and peacebuilding, thereby contributing to sustainable peace in the country. One effective approach is to prioritize community-based peace education and training programs that empower local stakeholders with the skills and knowledge necessary to manage conflicts (Beyers, 2020). CSOs can collaborate with local schools, religious institutions, and community centers to facilitate workshops, seminars, and awareness campaigns on conflict resolution techniques and peacebuilding principles (Beyers, 2020). By investing in grassroots educational initiatives, CSOs empower communities to proactively address conflicts and promote peaceful coexistence.

Furthermore, fostering interethnic and interreligious dialogue is essential for building trust and social cohesion among the diverse communities in Nigeria (Akinyemi & Oluwafemi, 2021). CSOs can organize peace forums, cultural exchanges, and reconciliation meetings that bring together representatives from different ethnic and religious groups to foster mutual understanding and promote tolerance (Akinyemi & Oluwafemi, 2021). By facilitating dialogue and promoting cross-cultural exchange, CSOs contribute to bridging divides and mitigating tensions that often fuel conflicts in Nigeria (Akinyemi & Oluwafemi, 2021).

Moreover, leveraging traditional conflict-resolution mechanisms and indigenous knowledge systems can enhance CSOs' effectiveness of CSOs in addressing local conflicts (Okoli &Nwobu, 2020). CSOs can collaborate with traditional leaders, elders, and customary institutions to integrate traditional dispute-resolution practices into formal peace-building processes (Okoli &Nwobu, 2020). By recognizing and respecting indigenous approaches to conflict resolution, CSOs promote cultural sensitivity and strengthen the legitimacy of peace efforts at the grassroots level (Okoli &Nwobu, 2020).

Additionally, harnessing technology and innovation can expand the reach and impact of peace-building initiatives in Nigeria (International Crisis Group 2021). CSOs can utilize digital platforms, mobile applications, and social media networks to disseminate information, facilitate virtual dialogue sessions, and mobilize communities for collective action (International Crisis Group, 2021). By embracing technology, CSOs overcome geographical barriers, reach marginalized populations, and promote inclusive participation in peace processes (International Crisis Group, 2021).

Furthermore, promoting youth empowerment and inclusion is crucial for building a resilient and peaceful society in Nigeria (Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2022). CSOs can create platforms for youth leadership, entrepreneurship, and civic engagement that enable young people to contribute positively to conflict resolution and peace-building efforts (Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2022). By investing in youth development programs, CSOs harness the energy and creativity of young Nigerians to drive social change and promote sustainable peace in their communities (Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2022).

Finally, CSOs in Nigeria can enhance the local capacity for conflict resolution and peacebuilding by prioritizing community-based education, fostering interethnic dialogue, leveraging traditional mechanisms, harnessing technology, and innovation, and promoting youth empowerment. These strategies empower local stakeholders, strengthen social cohesion, and contribute to sustainable peace and development in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Civil society organizations (CSOs) in Nigeria have played a significant role in facilitating conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts. They stepped in to fill the gap left by the government's failure to manage conflicts effectively using various instruments. Thus, CSOs are essential actors in addressing the complex and multidimensional conflicts that plague Nigeria, as they possess the grassroots connections, cultural sensitivity, and community trust necessary for effective peacebuilding interventions. Advocacy and policy influence efforts by CSOs are crucial for creating an enabling environment for sustainable peace by addressing structural issues, such as governance deficits, socio-economic inequalities, and human rights violations.

Collaboration and coordination among CSOs, government agencies, international partners, and local communities yielded a positive impact by strengthening peace-building initiatives and helped comprehensively address the root causes of conflict. Their presence as in the case of CDD's Northwest 2023 project on mitigation and reconciliation for example, has empowered local stakeholders, including community leaders, youth, and women, through capacity-building, and peace education programs are fundamental for fostering a culture of peace and ensuring the long-term sustainability of conflict resolution efforts. These successes were recorded because CSOs today have embraced innovative approaches that leverage technology and recognize the value of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. All of these are essential for enhancing the reach, inclusivity, and cultural relevance of CSOs' peace-building strategies of CSOs.

However, despite the achievements recorded in violent conflict intervention, much work remains to be done to ensure lasting peace and social change in Nigeria. The government's perception of CSOs as a threat to their authority has sometimes hindered their efforts.

In conclusion, CSOs in Nigeria have played a crucial role in facilitating conflict resolution and peace building efforts, using various tools and strategies. CSOs have made significant contributions to conflict resolution and peace building in Nigeria, their effectiveness is contingent upon overcoming governmental resistance and fostering collaborative relationships with state actors. Continued research and advocacy are essential to enhance the role of CSOs in promoting lasting peace in Nigeria.

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