



Collaborative Food Security: An Antidote for Sustainable Peace in Nigeria

Kachollom Bot L.

Department of Political Science,
Federal College of Education, Zaria.

Abstract

As a multi-linear and a dynamic process, sustainable-peace can be approached from different trajectories one of which is food security where mutual collaboration of stakeholders is key. The high incidence of conflict relapse in post-conflict communities in Nigeria is often attributed to the absence of food while the presence of food serves to minimize violence to a great extent which clearly indicates the centrality and dynamic role of food in the conflict cycle. Thus, integrating the food security approach in peace-building or post-conflict reconstruction is a critical precondition for the realization of sustainable peace in which multi-sectoral collaboration remains a key prerequisite for fast-tracking the recovery of food systems earlier devastated by conflict. Logically, the availability and accessibility will go a long way in minimize conflict while paving way for sustainable peace and development. This research is largely theoretical and finds its utility in the conflict transformation theory. It also uses secondary data as well as quantitative method of analysis.

Keywords: Collaboration, Food Security, Anti-dote, Sustainable Peace

Introduction

Food Security is the perpetually physical and economical availability and accessibility of safe and nutritious food for human consumption at all times. Food plays a critical and dynamic role in the conflict cycle. This is because research has shown that in as much as the absence of food serves as a major conflict trigger, in the same vein, the presence of food also, can serve as a major catalyst and building block for sustainable peace and conflict resolution, (Gordon & Okoth :2016, Breisinger & Ecker, et al:2014). However, the problem of deprivation of basic needs of man is one of the root causes of conflict of any type ranging from domestic, communal or inter-state. This makes the food security paradigm in peace-building very central to the realization of sustainable peace.

Thus, one of the key challenges for post-conflict communities especially in Nigeria remains the ability to fast-track the food production so as to provide for the immediate food needs of post conflict victims which can only be achieve through mutual collaboration. The shortage of food in post conflict communities in Nigeria seems to constitute a structural deficiency and major conflict trigger as implicit in Galtung's notion of negative peace. Thus, there is a very critical need for



peace-builders to adopt a multi-sectoral approach towards fast-tracking food security of so as to check conflict or its relapse. Absence of mutual cooperation or synergy is one of the preponderant factors militating against the realization of this cardinal goal as well as the broad objectives, goals, targets and priorities of peace-building in post conflict societies, (Bogomolova & Mitusova:2016, Santander:2016, Richmond:2011, Lederach:2008, Botes:2003). More so, peace-builders in Nigeria seem to focus on meeting only the short-term rather than long term food needs of post-conflict victims which remains a major conflict trigger. The destruction of farmlands and interruption of economic activities as well as the attendant lack of synergy among peace-builders and food experts largely account for the frequent food shortage faced by post conflict communities and thus, the high incidence of conflict relapse. The inability of peace-builders to meet up with the immediate food security needs of conflict victims serves as a potential conflict trigger where communities remain engulfed in the conflict trap. It was against this background that this research seeks to critically analyze role of collaboration amongst food experts as a catalyst in fast-tracking food security and the attainment of sustainable peace.

Nevertheless, this research seeks to provide answers to such questions as: what is the role of food within the conflict cycle? How does multi-sectoral collaboration in food security help in fast-tracking food production so as to check conflict relapse? How does food security constitute a building block for sustainable peace? Thus, this research work finds its utility in the Conflict Transformation Theory which is concerned about strategic planning for sustainable peace. This research aims at bridging the interdependence gap amongst peace-builders and food experts by encouraging cooperation and synergetic efforts so as to facilitate sustainable peace-building.

Conflict Transformation Theory and Strategic/Collaborative Peace-Building

Lederach (1967) is the founding father of the conflict transformation theory which finds its utility in the concept of strategic or systematic planning using his notion of 'conflict pyramid'. Thus, strategic peace-building has its root in the general Systems Theory as popularized by Bertalanfy (1968) who defines a system as elements in a standing relationship. The systems theory presents a multi- sectoral, multi-dimensional and a trans-disciplinary approach to the understanding of peace-building. Conflict transformation is a holistic and multifaceted process that embraces conflict as a potentially constructive force. Collaborative otherwise called strategic peace-building is an emerging area in the peace discourse which aims at positively transforming conflict by addressing the root and potential causes of conflict through mutual cooperation amongst stakeholders. In this case, food security through mutual collaboration becomes a transformative factor in Conflict Management.

Key contributors to the Conflict Transformation scholarship also include Johan Galtung, John Burton, Adam Curle, Karl Deutsch, Elise and Kenneth Boulding, Chadwick Alger, Louis Kriesberg, Chris Mitchell, Edward Azar, Herbert Kelman, (Wikipedia:2017) Thus, the Conflict



Transformation School sees peace-building as a collaborative, systematic and multi-linear process of rebuilding post conflict societies through a strategic network of peace actors which includes local and international actors working at regional and sub-regional levels, governments and NGOs, multi-sectoral and multidisciplinary approach, inclusion of women, people with special needs etc so as to ensure the sustainability of post conflict peace.

However, this theory is context appropriate as it provides an apt explanation to multi-sectoral collaboration, food security and sustainable peace.

Conceptual Clarification Collaboration

Collaboration simply means a process in which entities share information, resources, and responsibilities to jointly plan, implement, and evaluate a program of activities to achieve a common goal, (Camarinha-Matos & Afsarmanesh, 2008). Collaboration refers to exchanging information, altering activities, sharing resources, and enhancing one another's capacity for mutual benefit and to achieve a common purpose (Garrett & Natalicchio: 2011)

This concept of collaboration can be best understood within the context of strategic planning or strategic peace-building. According to Adams (2002; 20), strategic peace-building is a synergetic process of social and economic development through multiple organizations which aims to transform conflicts in a constructive way to create an environment conducive for sustainable peace, (in USIP: 2017). Similarly, Lederach and Appleby (2010), Philpot (2010), Guterres (2018), USIP (2021) have conceptualized strategic-peace-building with greater emphasis on collaboration, broad and inclusive approaches such as strategic coherence, partnership amongst peace actors, regional and sub-regional organizations, international financial institutions, civil society and local actors.

However, peace-building progresses to become strategic when it becomes systematic, participatory inclusive, multi-sectoral or multi-dimensional, domestic, international, and trans-disciplinary which is aimed at establishing and sustaining relationships among people at all levels of society. This makes the process more organized, logical and efficient so as to allow for the easy attainment of goals and objectives. Strategic peace-building connects people and groups with policymakers and governments, and the international community. It aims not only to resolve conflicts, but to build irrepressible societies, institutions, policies, and relationships that are capable of standing the test of time and conflicts. Strategic peace-building identifies peacemaking as an enduring and endless endeavor that requires the construction of multifaceted systems towards sustainable peace and development.

Thus, the role of strategic or systematic planning in sustainable peace-building cannot be over emphasized. Blum and Grangaard (2018) and the Smith (2004, 2003) both highlight the role



of strategic planning, inclusivity, participation, interdependence, collaboration and shared measurement in promoting sustainable peace.

Food Security

There are so many literatures on the concept of Food Security which accounts for the different definitions of the concept. CWW (2021) sees Food Security as the measure of an individual's ability to access food that is nutritious and sufficient in quantity. However, the World Food Summit in 1996 and subsequent reconfirmation that food security exists "when all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for a healthy and active life., (WFS: 1996) Recent debates on food security center on the point that food security is a fundamental human right as articulated in the UNDHR (1948).

Nevertheless, the importance of food as a basic human need cannot be overemphasized. It is very critical for human survival that is why it constitutes one of the cardinal goals of the Sustainable Development Goals. This means that all human beings should have equal right to food without discrimination or deprivation. Thus, food security is a function of four pillars namely availability, accessibility, stabilization and utilization. Food Insecurity constitutes a major global problem which raises questions on such issues as production, consumption, poverty, inequalities, healthcare and climate change. Gundersen & Ziliak (2015), define Food Insecurity, as a condition in which households lack access to adequate food because of limited money or other resources, leading to poor health and nutrition most importantly, food plays a very pivotal role in the conflict cycle. While the absence of food constitutes a major conflict trigger, its availability and accessibility constitute a building block for post-conflict peace.

Sustainable Peace

According to KIIPS, (2000), Peace-building is the development of constructive personal, group, and political relationships across ethnic, religious, class, national, and racial boundaries. It aims to resolve injustice in nonviolent ways and to transform the structural conditions that generate deadly conflict. Peace-building can include conflict prevention; conflict management; conflict resolution and transformation, and post-conflict reconciliation. Boutros-Ghali (1992) defines sustainable peace-building as "action to identify and support structures, which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict. Similarly knight and Keating (2004), define sustainable peace-building as the process of disarming warring parties, restoring order, decommissioning and destroying weapons, repatriating refugees, providing advisory and training support for security personnel, monitoring elections, de-mining and other forms of demilitarization, providing technical assistance, advancing efforts to protect human rights, reforming and strengthening institutions of governance-including assistance in monitoring and



supervising electoral processes-and promoting formal and informal participation in the political process.

However, peace becomes sustainable it persists for a long period even beyond the post-conflict period. Sustainable peace is perpetual process that has a beginning but without an end even after all parties to the conflict has sheathed their swords. This entails the erection of structures that strengthen the peace one of which the constant availability and accessibility of food especially in post-conflict societies. Thus, sustainable peace is an expectant or future target which involves the continuous process of post conflict reconstruction of political as well as socio-economic institutions and physical infrastructure leading to lasting peace. Irrespective of the path adopted towards sustaining peace or peace-building the major preoccupation is to check the risk or minimize the tendency of conflict relapse. It is thus very imperative to note that the conceptualization and theorizing on peace/sustainable peace, there is no consensual union amongst peace scholars on the meaning and scope of peace-building and the implementation strategy. This has been a major source of division amongst peace-builders. Deliberations on peace-building amongst stakeholders are neither multi-sectoral nor trans-disciplinary and thus characterized by vast exclusivity of important groups by practitioners.

Major Food Security Actors in Nigeria

With the high and rapid rate of population growth, achieving the commensurate level of Food Security in Nigeria becomes a herculean task. In this case, the continuous commitment of key and diverse actors or stakeholders in food security at all levels of society is very critical to the attainment of common goals and objectives

However, Renwick (2020) identified the following key experts involved in food security.

1. Government/Policy Makers
2. Farmers
3. Peace-builders,
4. NGOs
4. Researchers/academics
5. Local business/trade
6. Financial sector
7. External entities

Others include agricultural experts, environmental and climate change experts, etc

No doubt, Food is a basic human need and a core agenda both in times of war and peace for all communities. Many food security experts have advocated for collaborative efforts towards food security as a key to meeting up with the global food demand where collaboration efforts provides such great opportunities especially in the midst of incessant wars and conflicts that have continued to catastrophically destroy food systems. Thus, collaboration is a shared problem for both peace-actors and food security experts where they both see absence of food as a major cause and effect of conflict or its relapse.

Multi-sectoral synergy involves both vertical and horizontal interaction, inter-disciplinary, and cross regional involving such key actors a domestic and international, governments and NGOs, youth groups, women, community leaders, civil society organizations, religious groups etc. Thus,



since strategic planning is at the centre of the problem, it logically entails that a collective approach to tackle hunger is very sacrosanct to the attainment of the broad targets and goals of peace-building. Practically, most peace-building agenda scarcely lay emphasis on collaborative efforts especially towards reconstructing the devastated food security systems of post-conflict communities so as to meet up with the food security need of such communities. Thus, minimal cooperation or absence of multi-sectoral synergy amongst the diverse peace-builders particularly in the area of food security serves as a major pitfall of the peace process and a major conflict trigger. A collaborative food security/agenda does not only constitute a major building block for forestalling conflict or its relapse, but also fast-tracks the entire post-conflict reconstruction process which eventually paves way towards sustainable peace. This assertion has been supported by D'Souza & Jolliffe:2012, Bora & Ceccassi et. al 2011.

However, the question of lack of collaboration among these diverse actors in this context remains a great challenge not only to peace-builders but also to the food security experts in Nigeria. Since food is a key catalyst in post conflict reconstruction, the absence of it constitutes a major problem towards checking conflict relapse.

Factors Militating Against Collaboration Food Security in Nigeria

In as much as collaboration facilitates sharing knowledge, division of labour, effective communication and provides avenue for mentorship and building effective relationships among stakeholders in food security, there are several factors that militate against collaboration in food security.

1. Lack of Synergy amongst peace-builders and food security experts
2. Poor information and Communication network
3. Dearth of information
4. Social Exclusion
5. Corruption
6. Lack of ownership of the peace process
7. Imported models of peace
8. Tendency for a few members to dominate the leadership in a team
9. Unequal division of labour
10. Unhealthy competition amongst team members
11. Lack of expertise knowledge
12. Unwillingness to share information by some team members

Promoting Collaborative Food Security for Sustainable Peace in Nigeria

Karanasungar et al (2016), Cornish (2015), have both emphasized the need for collaboration through interdisciplinary approach to food security involving experts from different fields. Thus, a



collective approach to peace-building facilitates the attainment of food security, consistency of goals and the exchange of ideas as well as the ability for collective action, assessment and response. It also provides the socio-political and economic framework for lasting peace as well as reviewing policies and understanding debates on peace-building and food security. It then becomes very imperative for actors within the food security chain both domestic and international actors from diverse sectors to take proactive measures towards fast-tracking food production so as to build a vibrant food security system as a measure towards checking conflict relapse in fragile communities. South Sudan, Congo DRC, Central African Republic etc are also seen to be ache-type of failed peace process due to absence of synergy amongst peace actors.

Smith (2003 &2004) have also pointed to the absence of strategic planning and co-operation as a major strategic deficit in peace building which accounts for about 50% failure of peace agreements within at least 5 years while it asserts that 55% of peace-building activities have no direct link to a broader strategy which affects planning and analysis. Ledearch (2008) also asserts that the major reason for the failure of peace processes is as a result of what he called a huge ‘interdependence gap’ amongst peace actors and this creates a lacuna in the peace-building which tends to narrow the scope of peace negotiations. According to Lederach (2008), peace-building process is rather an organic system and not a disjointed one which requires relationships and coordination of multiple activities, multiple roles and at multiple levels by multiple actors. He further argues that peace-building operations cannot fulfill their potentials and achieve just peace without “strategic” planning and implementation.

Other reasons that also contribute to the failure of peace-building include corruption, lack of sufficient funds, lack of accountability etc while the high level of social exclusion, imported models of peace, absence of local ownership in peace-building make collaboration even more difficult. Collaborative peace-building involves multiple peace actors and increasing interaction between the local and global which informs the need for a collective response to food security. The absence of synergy amongst peace-builders on how to attain the minimum level of food security so as to check conflict or its conflict relapse while consolidating peace seems to create a huge gap in peace-building process. The inability of stakeholders to meet the basic food needs of vulnerable victims in such post conflict situation serves as potential trigger for conflict/ conflict relapse and consequently, the failure of the entire peace-process as it seems counter-productive

Levels of Collaboration in Food Security for Sustainable Peace

There are different areas through which collaboration could be enhanced in order to boost food security in Nigeria. They include

1. **Inter-disciplinary Research;** This is one of most critical areas in collaboration as it helps in the generation of new knowledge and technologies on how to improve food production. This draws stake holders from the sciences, social sciences, public health, plant and animal production etc



2. **Regional Collaboration:** This involves collaboration between stakeholders in food security within a specific region such as Africa. This could be either inter-regional or inter regional cooperation.
3. **Global Network:** This involves collaboration between domestic and international actors in food security
4. **Multi-sectoral Collaboration:** This involves collaboration across different sectors, such as public and private sector partnership, governments and NGOs, as well as formal and informal sectors.
5. **Collaboration between farmers and Financial Institutions:** Farming is a capital intensive project which requires a lot of labour and resource. Financial institutions collaborate with local farmers by providing financial support to the latter to facilitate food production.
6. **Rural - Urban Collaboration:** collaboration between rural and urban stakeholders is important especially in terms of producer-consumer relations

Thus, collaboration in food security enhances commitment and coordination where a common blue-print for implementation and evaluation of food security policy outcomes plays a key role.

Conclusion

Food constitutes one of the major building blocks for post conflict reconstruction. One of the greatest challenges for peace builders remains the ability to promote collaborative efforts among food experts within the domain of peace-building so as to achieve food security for sustainable peace-building and to meet the food security needs of post conflict communities. Co-operation/mutual collaboration amongst food experts accounts for the inability of peace actors to meet the basic food needs of post-conflict victims and thus responsible for the high incidence of conflict relapse. Sustainable peace entails the use of collaborative approaches such as partnership, multi-sectoral and trans-disciplinary collaboration, greater strategic coherence, and support for inclusivity, particularly the frequently marginalized and excluded. It also requires a common blue-print for the implementation and evaluation of peace-building outcomes.

Suggestions

1. Neither peace-builders nor food security actors can achieve their individual goals in isolation. It is suggested that all key actors in peace-building on the one hand and food security on the other hand should work hand in hand by placing great emphasis on synergy or cooperation as an approach towards the attainment of their collective goals.
2. For instance, institutionalization of collaborative research or policies, trans-disciplinary co-operation in research, multi-sectoral collaboration and partnership, public and private sector partnership, cooperation between domestic and international actors in both peace-



building and food security will go a long way in attaining the required level of food security in Nigeria so as to facilitate sustainable peace etc

3. The government, Non-governmental Organizations, Civil societies and other stakeholders in Nigeria should show sincere commitment towards investing in security to tackle the immediate and remote causes of conflict.
4. Climate change experts should lay great emphasis on tackling the negative effects of climate change for sustainable food production
5. The Nigerian government should improve agricultural policies to encourage greater participation of youth and foreign investors, so as to tackle hunger and boost food production and supply.
6. Governments and stakeholders should make concrete efforts in erecting a community food bank by investing in food production for future use as a mean for tackling food security for sustainable peace
7. Stakeholders should invest more resources in agriculture so as to boost food production for storage in food banks in order to cater for emergencies.
8. In the event of any conflict, stakeholders in food security should look inwards towards the restoration of farmlands devastated by conflicts in order to boost agricultural yield rather than focus on the provision of short-term food needs from external sources which is certainly not sufficient for conflict victims.
9. All Stakeholders in food security should cooperate towards erecting a mechanism of implementation and evaluation to monitor the progress in collaboration and food supply.
10. All Stakeholders especially governments and NGO should form a synergy by investing in the Agricultural sector geared towards mechanization so as to boost food production

References

Bertalanffy L (1968) General Systems Theory.

<https://www.panarchy.org/vonbertalanffy/systems.1968.html>

Blum. A and Grangaard. R (2018) Collaborative Design in Peace building; Lessons from the Central African Republic. *United States Institute for Peace*. Retrieved from: <https://www.usip.org/04/2018>.

Bogomolova. P and Mitusova. Y (2016) Collaboration is Key to Food Security in Central Asia. *Euroasian Perspectives. Voices from Europe and Central Asia*. The World Bank; IBRD.IDA February,02, 2016 . Retrieved from: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/>

Bote, J. (2003) Conflict Transformation: A Debate over Semantics or a Crucial Shift in the Theory and Practice of Peace and Conflict Studies? *International Journal of Peace Studies*.01/2003. 08(2):1-27. Retrieved from: <https://www.researchgate.net/>



- Bora, S & Ceccasin, I, et al (2010) Food Security and Conflict - *World Bank Document*. Retrieved from: <http://documents1.worldbank.org>.
- Breisinger C and Ecker O (2014) How to Build Resilience to Conflict: The Role of Food Security. *International Food Policy Research Institute*. Washington, Dc. 10/ 2014. Retrieved from: <https://www.ifpri.org/>
- Boutros-Ghali, Boutros (1992). An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peace-keeping. Report of the Secretary General. *Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council*. UN. New York: UN. pp822-828. 06/1992. Retrieved from: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/145749?>
- Camarinha-Matos, L& Afsarmanesh, H (2008) the Concept of Collaboration. *In book: Encyclopedia of Networked and Virtual Organizations*. Universidade NOVA de Lisboa University of Amsterdam. (pp.311-315). January, 2008. Retrieved from
- Cornish L (2015) Calls for Greater Collaboration to Tackle Food Security. *Inside Development: Food Security*. 09/ 2015. Retrieved from: <https://www.devex.com/news/search?query%5B%5D=Food+security>
- CWW (2015) *Concern World Wide: What is Food Security?* 26/2021.<https://www.concern.net/>
- D'Souser, A., & Jolife, D. (2012). Conflict, Food Price Shocks and Food Insecurity. *Econpapers USA: Germany*. Retrieved from: <https://econpapers.repec.org/RePEc:ags:aaea12:123323>
- Gordon N and Okoth J et al(2016) Role Of Food And Nutrition Security On Peace, Conflict Resolution And National Cohesion In Kenya. ResearchGate. *Journal of Education and Social Sciences*(2016). 3/1.pp145-159.Retrieved from: <https://www.researchgate.net/>
- Galtung Johan (1967) *Theories of Peace: A Synthetic Approach to Peace Thinking* International Peace Research Institute, Oslo. September 1967
- Garret, J& M Natalicchio (2011) *Working Multi-sectorally in Nutrition: Principles, Practices and Case Studies*. Semantic Scholar. Retrieved from <https://www.semanticscholar.org/>.
- Guterres. A (2018) Briefing to the Security Council on Peace-Building and Sustaining Peace. Food Insecurity and Health Outcomes, 04/2018. Retrieved from: <https://reliefweb.int/>
- Gunderson, C and ZiliaK, JP (2015) Food and Health. *Health Affairs*. 34/11. 011/ 2015. <https://www.healthaffairs.org/topic/researcharticle>
- Karunasagar. I and Karunasagar. I (2016) Challenges of Food Security – Need for Interdisciplinary Collaboration. *Procedia Food Science*. Vol 6, 2016, pp31-33.Retrieved



From; <https://cyberleninka.org/article/n/618899>

Keating, T and W. Andy Knight (2004) Building Sustainable Peace. *UN University of Peace* ISBN-13: 978-92-808-1101-United Nations University Press. 04/2004
<http://archive.unu.edu/unupress/sample-chapters/buildingspeace.pdf>

KIIPS (2000) University of Notre Dame. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies'. *Keough School of Global Affairs*. <https://kroc.nd.edu/>.

Richmond O (2011) the End of the Liberal Peace? Post-Liberal Peace vs. Post-Liberal States. *London. Routledge*. 14/03.

Kristi, S, (2005) Sustainability and Peace Building: A Key Challenge Development in Practice *Taylor & Francis, Ltd*. 15(6). (11/2005), pp. 728-736. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4030095>

Renwick.S (2020) Analytics and Decision-Making to Inform Public Policy in response to Diverse threats. *Environment Systems and Decisions*. 40/4.
<https://ideas.repec.org/s/spr/envsyd.html>

Santander L.M (2016), Reconciliation: A Critical Approach to Peace-Building in Bosnia-Herzegovina. *Peace, Conflict & Development. An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Issue 22, (06 2016) University of Birmingham. ISSN 1742-0601.

Smith, D (2004) Towards a Strategic Framework for Peace building: Getting Their Act Together. *Overview Report of the Joint Utstein Study of Peacebuilding* PRIO – International Peace Research Institute, Oslo

USIP (2021) Making Peace Possible Preparing for Peace. United Nations Peace-Building Academy <https://www.usip.org/2301> Constitution Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20037

USIP (2017) Sustainable Peace. What does Sustaining Peace Building Mean? United Nations Peace-building Support Office/Policy Planning and Application Branch with inputs from UN entities through the Peace-building Contact Group, 17 January 2017) UN Peace-Building.

Wikipedia (2017) Conflict Transformation. Wikipedia the Free Encyclopedia. Wikipedia Inc. USA 2017