

## Inter-Church Committee's Role in Resolving Inter-Clan Conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examines the role of the Inter-Church Committee in addressing inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, South Sudan, where conflicts persist despite significant church-led peace efforts. The specific objectives were to analyze the nature of these conflicts, evaluate the effectiveness of the Church's peacebuilding strategies, and assess the challenges encountered in resolving these conflicts. The research was grounded in Protracted Social Conflict Theory and Galtung's "A Mini Theory of Peace." Employing a descriptive research design, the study focused on church members, clergy, community leaders, elders, and opinion leaders in the crisis-affected areas of Cuel Kok and Malengakok. A sample of 358 respondents was selected through stratified and purposive sampling. Data collection involved questionnaires and interviews. The study adopted a mixed-methods approach, analyzing quantitative data using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis to identify key patterns and insights. Key findings reveal that inter-communal conflicts are driven by historical grievances, socio-economic issues like cattle raiding and resource disputes, and entrenched gender inequalities. The Church's peacebuilding strategies, including peace meetings, forgiveness preaching, and mediation by local leaders, have been effective but face challenges such as financial constraints, community divisions, and inadequate government support. The study concludes that these conflicts are rooted in deep-seated historical and socio-economic factors, disproportionately impacting vulnerable groups. It highlights the potential of religious actors in peacebuilding while acknowledging the challenges they face. Recommendations include enhancing conflict resolution capacities, addressing root causes, securing sustainable funding, fostering inclusive community engagement, and implementing robust monitoring mechanisms. The study underscores the importance of integrating religious teachings with practical interventions to effectively mitigate conflicts and promote enduring peace in Rumbek East County.*

**Keywords:** Conflict Resolution, Inter-Church Committee, Inter-Clan Conflicts, Peacebuilding Strategies

### I. INTRODUCTION

The widespread presence of inter-clan conflicts underscores the importance of religion, with the church playing a pivotal role in fostering peace and harmony (Ijirshar & Andohol, 2022). The church is a source of hope because of its profound impact on contemporary social dynamics; it promotes peaceful cooperation by going beyond conventional diplomatic channels (Leiner & Schliesser, 2017). Former US ambassador Richard Holbrooke emphasized the church's critical role in fostering peace and acknowledged that it has the power to influence attitudes and actions that lead to the settlement of conflicts (Upreti et al., 2016). Acknowledged for fostering social cohesion, the church plays a pivotal role in enabling nonviolent collaboration and provides priceless support to international efforts to resolve disputes (Desmidt, 2019).

The Catholic Church's role in Colombia stands as a poignant example of the church's commitment to peace and reconciliation (Kenduiywa & Nyandiwa, 2023). Anchored on the principles of truth and the prophetic voice of the Gospel, the Church has facilitated dialogue between opposing groups and advocated for peaceful resolutions to internal conflicts (Leiner & Schliesser, 2017). Through initiatives such as pastoral talks and mediation efforts, exemplified by the Conference of Bishops, the Church has bridged divides and facilitated communication between the government and rebels, contributing significantly to Colombia's peacebuilding endeavors (Thomas, 2019). Despite facing challenges and experiencing losses, including the loss of church workers to violence, the Church remains a steadfast advocate for peace and reconciliation, demonstrating its enduring commitment to promoting harmony and healing amidst ongoing conflict (Martin & Schliesser, 2018).

In the context of civil unrest in Nepal, Caritas Nepal, a member of the Roman Catholic Church Relief and Development, played a significant role in supporting displaced individuals by providing relief supplies and

undertaking projects aimed at fostering inter-religious harmony (Cahill, 2017). One of these initiatives involved creating 275 homes for Muslims and Christians, highlighting understanding and collaboration between the two groups via cooperative home-building. Furthermore, Caritas Nepal addressed important societal concerns by bringing attention to the sexual abuse and trafficking of women in Nepal (Yadav, 2016). Simultaneously, the Unification Church actively promotes ecumenical projects and activities in Nepal through its operation under the Universal Peace Federation (Yadav, 2016). Their efforts, which emphasize their dedication to promoting harmony and collaboration amongst Nepal's many religious communities, include organizing interreligious gatherings and discourses, empowering women, and working with organizations like the Religious Youth Service.

In Africa, the Church has played a crucial role in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. The Catholic community Sant'Egidio is noted for its successful mediation in ending the Mozambican civil war (1977-1992), facilitated by the relationships built by Mozambican priest Don Jaime Conclaves (Schliesser et al., 2020). Similarly, the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) was instrumental during the 2007 post-election violence in Kenya, using media, workshops, and relief efforts to foster dialogue, rebuild communities, and promote reconciliation. The NCCCK also partnered with the Inter-Religious Forum (IRF) to establish the Thabiti taskforce, which researched the violence's causes and developed strategies to prevent future conflicts (Mohamud & Ruto, 2020).

In South Sudan, the Church is highly esteemed for its peacebuilding efforts, particularly through the Action Plan for Peace and initiatives like the People-to-People Peace Process led by the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC) (Thomas, 2019). Despite historical challenges such as the failed 1972 peace process and ongoing inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County driven by historical grievances and socioeconomic issues (Ahadu, 2019), the NSCC's grassroots approach, including significant peace conferences like Wunlit and Liliir, remains vital (Pendle, 2018). The Church's ongoing involvement underscores the need for transformative strategies to break cycles of violence and foster stability, as highlighted by Craze (2020). This study explores how the Church's role and initiatives can be leveraged to address and mitigate persistent conflicts in Rumbek East County and beyond.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Conflicts in South Sudan's Rumbek East County highlight the urgent need for a comprehensive evaluation of the Church's peacebuilding strategies. Despite the Church's revered status and its active contributions to various sectors, including mediation, reconciliation, education, and health, the region continues to experience significant inter-communal violence. The Church's extensive network of local and international partners has provided crucial support, including pressure on the Khartoum government to address humanitarian crises. Nevertheless, recurring instances of violence, such as the 2019 cattle raiding and revenge attacks, and the 2023 clashes resulting in 151 deaths, underscore the ongoing challenges in effectively resolving these conflicts (Saferworld, 2023).

These persistent conflicts not only threaten the immediate safety and stability of the community but also impede South Sudan's broader stability and development goals. They undermine social cohesion, disrupt economic growth, and strain essential services, making it clear that existing peacebuilding approaches may be inadequate. The study aimed to address these gaps by examining the Church's role in resolving clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, identifying effective strategies to enhance peacebuilding efforts and contribute to the region's long-term stability and development.

### 1.2 Research Objectives

The specific objectives were to:

- i. Examine the nature of inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, South Sudan
- ii. Evaluate the peacebuilding strategies the Church employs in resolving inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, South Sudan
- iii. Assess the challenges experienced by the Church in addressing the inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, South Sudan

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Theoretical Review

The study was anchored on two theories: the Protracted Social Conflict (PSC) theory and Galtung's "A Mini Theory of Peace." The PSC theory, based on Azar's model (1990), was used to explain the persistence of inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lakes State, South Sudan, by focusing on unmet needs such as security, development, and identity. Azar's framework highlights how these unmet needs perpetuate ongoing grievances and conflict behavior, which are central to understanding the challenges faced by the inter-Church committee in addressing these disputes (Azar, 1990). However, the PSC theory's limitations in capturing the socio-cultural and historical dimensions of the conflicts were addressed by incorporating Galtung's theory (1996). Galtung's framework

emphasizes positive peace and conflict transformation, providing insights into how the inter-Church committee can foster harmonious relations and address systemic violence. This approach offers a comprehensive perspective on the committee's efforts to build sustainable peace in the complex context of Rumbek East County (Galtung, 1996).

## 2.2 Empirical Review

The empirical review discusses the causes of inter-clan conflict in Rumbek East County, its effects, the initiatives taken by the Church to resolve the conflict as well as the challenges faced by the Church as it seeks to resolve inter-clan conflict in Rumbek East County.

### 2.2.1 Nature of Inter-Clan Conflicts

Clan-based conflicts in regions such as Rumbek East County in South Sudan, the Philippines, Kenya, Ghana, and Somalia reveal the complex nature of these disputes. While unresolved individual and family disputes contribute to clan conflicts, these issues are often compounded by historical, socio-cultural, and political factors. In Rumbek East, ongoing violence and inter-communal clashes underscore the inadequacy of current peacebuilding efforts, despite the Church's extensive network and significant contributions (Saferworld, 2023). This aligns with the objective of the current study, which seeks to examine the nature of inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County. The study found that inter-clan conflicts are deeply rooted in historical grievances, political struggles, and resource competition, reinforcing the need for a more effective and inclusive approach to peacebuilding.

Similarly, in the Philippines, clan conflicts such as Rido are driven by family honor, resource competition, and political manipulation, demonstrating the intersection of clan dynamics with broader socio-political conflicts (Craze, 2020). This is reflected in Rumbek East, where clan conflicts are not only driven by historical tensions but are also aggravated by competition over resources and political power, contributing to the persistence of violence. In Somalia, the manipulation of clan affiliations for political power and resource control has led to cycles of violence and instability (Nnabuihe & Onwuzuruigbo, 2021), a pattern similarly observed in Rumbek East, where clan-based divisions are exploited for political gain, perpetuating conflict.

Additionally, political manipulation and competition for chieftaincy titles in Kenya and Ghana have exacerbated inter-clan tensions (Kimani, 2021). This is relevant to the current study, as it highlights the political dimension of clan conflicts in Rumbek East, where struggles over power and resources further fuel tensions. While previous studies have addressed these factors in different regions, gaps remain in understanding the specific dynamics of inter-clan conflicts in South Sudan, particularly in Rumbek East. The current study fills these gaps by providing an in-depth analysis of the local context in Rumbek East County, focusing on how historical, socio-cultural, and political factors intersect to sustain inter-clan conflicts. Furthermore, it emphasizes the role of peacebuilding initiatives and their limitations in addressing the root causes of conflict. By examining the unique socio-political environment of Rumbek East, the study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of inter-clan conflicts and offers insights into the necessary strategies for sustainable peacebuilding in conflict-prone regions.

Clan conflicts, fueled by competition for resources and power, have profound and often devastating effects on communities. In Ghana, the intense rivalry over chieftaincy titles, which grant access to critical resources like land and minerals, has led to severe violence. The March 2002 conflict, triggered by an attack on the envoy of the Ya Na, resulted in the death of the Ya Na Yakubu Andani II and 30 supporters, alongside the destruction of homes (Pendle, 2018). This case highlights the extent to which disputes over chieftaincy can escalate into significant violence due to the high stakes involved. In Kenya's Kuria District, conflicts over scarce resources such as land, water, and pasture have had severe humanitarian impacts. The report by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [UNOCHA] (2009) indicates that the 2009 inter-clan clashes displaced over 6,290 individuals, exposing them to poor living conditions and increased health risks in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps. The report further highlights that the conflict led to the closure of schools and businesses, significantly disrupting educational outcomes and economic stability.

These studies, while insightful may have limitations such as challenges in isolating the specific impacts of clan conflicts from broader socio-economic factors. The present study aimed to provide a more comprehensive analysis of the impacts of clan conflicts by addressing gaps in existing research, such as the need for a nuanced understanding of the interaction between clan conflicts and broader socio-economic issues.

Clan-based conflicts in regions such as Rumbek East County in South Sudan, the Philippines, Kenya, Ghana, and Somalia illustrate the complex and multifaceted nature of these disputes. While unresolved individual and family disputes often contribute to clan conflicts, these issues are frequently compounded by historical, socio-cultural, and political factors. In Rumbek East, the ongoing violence and inter-communal clashes reveal the inadequacy of current peacebuilding efforts, despite the Church's extensive network and significant contributions (Saferworld, 2023). This aligns with the objective of the current study, which seeks to examine the nature of inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County. The study found that these conflicts are deeply entrenched in historical grievances, political struggles,

and resource competition, emphasizing the need for a more effective and inclusive approach to peacebuilding that addresses both immediate and root causes of conflict.

Similarly, clan conflicts in the Philippines, such as Rido, are driven by a combination of family honor, political manipulation, and competition for resources, demonstrating how clan dynamics intersect with broader socio-political issues (Craze, 2020). A similar pattern is observed in Rumbek East, where clan conflicts are not only fueled by historical tensions but also exacerbated by competition for resources and political power. The study reveals that these factors contribute significantly to the persistence of violence in Rumbek East, underscoring the need for comprehensive strategies that address these intertwined socio-political challenges. Additionally, in Somalia, the manipulation of clan affiliations for political power and control over resources has led to cycles of violence and instability (Nnabuihe & Onwuzuruigbo, 2021), a dynamic mirrored in Rumbek East, where political elites exploit clan divisions to further their own agendas, perpetuating conflict and instability.

Furthermore, political manipulation and competition for chieftaincy titles in Kenya and Ghana have exacerbated inter-clan tensions, particularly where struggles over control of resources like land are involved (Kimani, 2021). This aspect is highly relevant to the current study, as it emphasizes the political dimensions of clan conflicts in Rumbek East, where power struggles and resource competition further fuel tensions. While previous studies have examined these dynamics in different regions, gaps remain in understanding the specific drivers of inter-clan conflicts in South Sudan, particularly in Rumbek East. The current study fills this gap by providing an in-depth analysis of the local context in Rumbek East County, focusing on the intersection of historical, socio-cultural, and political factors in sustaining inter-clan conflicts. Moreover, it highlights the role of peacebuilding initiatives and the limitations of existing interventions, offering insights into more effective strategies for sustainable peacebuilding in conflict-prone regions.

Clan conflicts, particularly those centered on resource and power competition, have profound impacts on communities. For example, in Ghana, disputes over chieftaincy titles, which grant access to valuable resources like land and minerals, have led to violent confrontations, as seen in the 2002 conflict that resulted in the death of the Ya Na Yakubu Andani II and several others homes (Pendle, 2018). Similarly, in Kenya's Kuria District, inter-clan clashes over resources like land, water, and pasture have caused significant humanitarian distress. For instance, report by UNOCHA (2009) indicates that the 2009 inter-clan clashes displaced over 6,290 individuals, exposing them to poor living conditions and increased health risks in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps. These studies offer valuable insights into the nature of clan conflicts but often fail to fully separate the specific impacts of these conflicts from broader socio-economic factors. The present study builds on these findings by offering a deeper exploration of the nature of inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East as closely tied to broader socio-economic issues, including competition for resources, political manipulation, and historical grievances. By addressing these gaps in the existing literature, the study provides a clearer understanding of the underlying causes of inter-clan conflicts and contributes to developing more targeted and effective strategies for conflict resolution within the region.

### **2.2.2 Peacebuilding Strategies the Church Employs in Resolving Inter-Clan Conflicts**

The Church has played a pivotal role in peacebuilding and conflict resolution, leveraging its moral and spiritual authority to mediate disputes. Faith-based organizations have historically been instrumental in resolving conflicts by mobilizing communities, facilitating dialogue, and providing humanitarian aid. In South Sudan, for example, the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC) mediated between warring Nuer clans and organized peace conferences that addressed critical issues. These efforts resulted in significant reductions in hostilities and improvements in local governance and infrastructure (Leonardi, 2020). This demonstrates the Church's ability to influence peace processes through its networks and moral guidance, grounded in biblical principles of reconciliation and peacemaking.

While the Church's successes in peacebuilding are notable, there remain gaps in understanding its role in conflict resolution. The involvement of religious organizations in peace efforts is often influenced by their access to grassroots and elite networks, which can vary considerably. Studies by Aleyomi and Abu (2018) and Abu-Nimer and Nasser (2018) highlight that the Church's effectiveness in conflict resolution is shaped by its legitimacy and its access to both social and political spheres. These findings point to the importance of examining how different levels of access impact the Church's ability to facilitate peace. The current research build on the two studies by providing a comprehensive analysis of the Church's role in conflict resolution, specifically in the context of Rumbek East County, South Sudan.

Ajayi and Buhari (2014) explored peacebuilding strategies across African cultures, emphasizing the importance of cross-examining disputants as a primary approach in conflict resolution. They found that effective peacebuilding requires gaining the disputants' awareness and consent, which is essential for successful conflict resolution. Ademowo (2017) reinforced this view, demonstrating that cross-examination, combined with community dialogue, is crucial for addressing communal conflicts. These strategies highlight the significance of understanding

historical contexts and previous grievances to effectively manage conflicts. However, while these studies provide valuable insights into peacebuilding, they focus on broader African contexts and do not specifically address the Church's role in South Sudan. This gap is addressed in the current study, which examines the Church's peacebuilding strategies in the specific socio-cultural and political context of South Sudan.

Research by Ekpenyong and Okoi (2018) further contributes to the understanding of the Church's role in conflict management, emphasizing strategies such as reconciliation, dialogue, and workshops. However, their reliance on secondary data leaves a gap in empirical evidence, particularly regarding the effectiveness of these strategies. Lamidi's (2021) study identifies several peacebuilding strategies used in Southwestern Nigeria, including quick intervention, community sensitization, and gospel teaching. While these strategies are informative, they are based on the Nigerian context, which differs significantly from South Sudan's socio-cultural and political environment. This study addresses this gap by collecting primary data to explore how church-led strategies can be adapted and implemented in the unique context of Rumbek East County, Lakes State, South Sudan.

The current study evaluates the peacebuilding strategies the Church employs in resolving inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, South Sudan. By considering historical grievances, ethnic dynamics, and the influence of external actors, the study provides a nuanced understanding of effective peacebuilding tactics in this specific context. This research contributes valuable insights into the Church's role in fostering sustainable peace in South Sudan and highlights strategies that can be adapted to similar conflict contexts.

### **2.2.3 Challenges faced by the Church in Addressing Inter-Clan Conflicts**

Empirical studies highlight various challenges encountered by churches in their peacebuilding efforts. Mwagiru (2018) identifies several key obstacles, including the difficulty religious leaders face in applying peacebuilding theories, suspicion from different religious groups, and concerns about proselytism. These factors complicate the Church's role in peacebuilding, indicating a need for better integration of peacebuilding principles within religious frameworks. Additionally, Netanyahu and Susanto (2022) explore the effects of rising intolerance in Indonesia, noting how exclusivist attitudes and religious chauvinism have intensified inter-religious tensions. While their findings shed light on the impact of intolerance, they are limited by their focus on the Muslim community and may not fully represent the experiences of other religious groups or contexts.

Further, Oyedele (2019) examines the challenges faced by local governance institutions in southwestern Nigeria, such as lack of a unified vision, financial limitations, and insufficient communication networks. Although these insights are valuable, they may not directly apply to the South Sudanese context due to differences in historical and ethnic factors. Angom (2018) provides a perspective on the use of religion in conflict through their study of Joseph Kony's LRA in Uganda, revealing how religious rhetoric was used to justify violence. Finally, Korir et al. (2022) discuss financial constraints in church-led peacebuilding in Kenya, noting that short-term funding undermines the sustainability of peace initiatives. However, the findings may not fully address the specific challenges faced in South Sudan. The present study addressed these gaps by focusing on the Church's role in resolving inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, South Sudan, and considering the unique socio-cultural and political dynamics of the region.

## **III. METHODOLOGY**

The study was based on the descriptive research design, targeting church members, clergy, leaders, elders, and opinion leaders in the crisis-affected zones of Cueil Kok and Malengakok which are found in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan. These two Payams, out of the seven in the county, represent approximately 13,000 individuals and 3,500 households (Idris et al., 2021). Using Krejcie and Morgan's formula, the study determined a sample size of 346, evenly distributed among church members, with an additional 12 key informants selected purposively, bringing the total to 358 respondents. Of the 346 questionnaires issued, 332 were successfully returned, achieving a 96% response rate. Data collection involved questionnaires and interview guides, with quantitative data analyzed using SPSS and qualitative data examined thematically. The study adhered to strict ethical standards, securing approvals from the SPU Ethical Review Board, the Board of Postgraduate Studies, and NACOSTI to ensure respondent confidentiality and privacy.

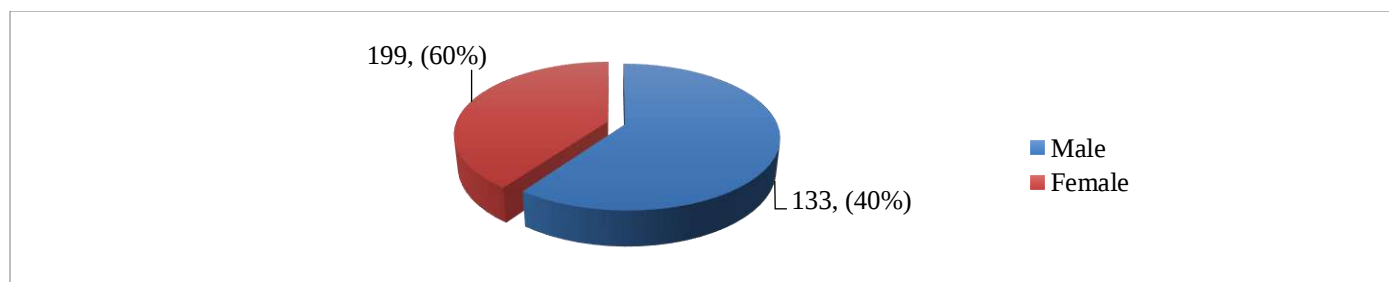
## **IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 Demographic Data**

The primary participants in this study were individuals affiliated with various churches, comprising both men and women, selected based on their membership within these religious congregations. These participants were categorized according to several demographic factors, including gender, age, educational background, duration of residence in the area, and occupation

#### 4.1.1 Respondents' Gender

Figure 1 provides a summary of respondent distribution by gender, reflecting the multifaceted rationale for considering gender in this study.



**Figure 1**  
*Gender of Respondents*

Figure 1 illustrates the gender distribution among the sample population, revealing that 199 respondents (60%) are male, while 133 respondents (40%) are female. This gender imbalance suggests that social and cultural norms may have influenced the participation rates. Traditional roles, as discussed by Eckhardt et al. (2021), position men as household decision-makers, potentially making them more available for external engagements. This could explain the higher male participation, while women's involvement might be limited by caregiving responsibilities and societal expectations. Kariuki (2016) attributes this disparity to entrenched patriarchal structures, reflecting broader systemic inequities in power and organizational dynamics. This gender distribution highlights the significant influence of cultural norms and survey methodology on participation patterns in the study.

#### 4.1.2 Respondents' Age

The study also considered the importance of age in understanding individual conflict experiences and how it affects conflict resolution approaches. The study's age distribution reveals a diverse demographic composition, with the largest proportion of respondents aged 30-40 years (39.8%), likely reflecting individuals in their prime working and family-building years, who bring both energy and experience to conflict resolution efforts. Younger adults aged 20-29 years, comprising 31.6% of the sample, may offer innovative approaches to inter-clan conflicts, while those aged above 40 (29%) provide seasoned insights based on accumulated life experiences and established social networks. The findings are presented in Table 1

**Table 1**  
*Distribution of Respondents according to their Age Groups*

| Age group    | Frequency  | Percentage   |
|--------------|------------|--------------|
| 20-29        | 105        | 31.6         |
| 30-40        | 132        | 39.8         |
| Above 40     | 95         | 28.6         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>332</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

This varied age representation highlights the importance of considering age-related dynamics in formulating effective conflict resolution and peacebuilding strategies in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan.

#### 4.1.3 Level of Education

The study sought to assess the level of education of respondents, recognizing its importance in understanding their perspectives and capabilities in conflict management and peacebuilding. Table 2 summarizes the findings.

**Table 2**  
*Level of Education*

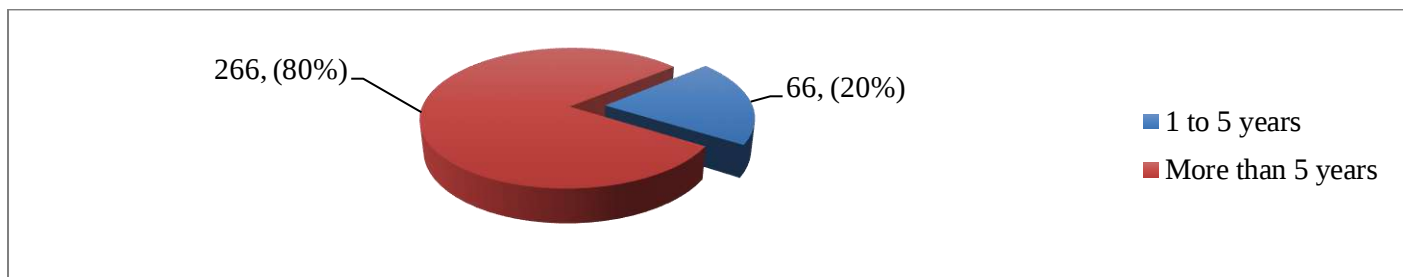
| Education Level | Frequency  | Percentage |
|-----------------|------------|------------|
| Primary         | 66         | 20         |
| Secondary       | 66         | 20         |
| Tertiary        | 199        | 60         |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>332</b> | <b>100</b> |

The study's findings on educational attainment among respondents show that 60% have tertiary education, while 20% each have primary and secondary education. This distribution may be influenced by the presence of international NGOs and aid organizations in South Sudan, which focus on providing educational opportunities, as well

as the support from churches and community-based organizations in promoting higher education. The higher participation of individuals with tertiary education could also reflect a sample bias. This educational profile suggests that the community possesses significant capacity for effective conflict management and peacebuilding, which is crucial for the Inter-Church Committee's efforts in resolving inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan.

#### 4.1.4 Length of Stay in the Area

The study also delved into an examination of the respondents' length of stay in the area. The findings show that 66 individuals, constituting 20% of the total, have lived in the area for 1 to 5 years. In contrast, the majority, 266 individuals, or 80% of the total, have resided in the area for more than 5 years. The findings are as summarized in Figure 2.



**Figure 2**

*Length of stay in the area*

This distribution suggests a significant level of long-term residency among respondents, indicating a deep-rooted connection to the area. Possible interpretations of these findings could include stability within the community, with a large proportion of residents having established roots and enduring ties to the locality. Additionally, the higher percentage of individuals residing for over 5 years may signify a greater familiarity with local dynamics, including inter-clan conflicts, which could influence their perspectives and experiences regarding conflict resolution efforts. Understanding this distribution aided in contextualizing the responses and viewpoints gathered in the study, enriching the depth and validity of the findings regarding the Inter-Church Committee's role in resolving inter-clan conflicts.

#### 4.1.5 Occupation

The study explored the occupational status of individuals in Rumbek East County to understand the socio-economic conditions in the region. The findings on respondents' occupation reveal a varied distribution within the sample population as summarized in Table 3 below.

**Table 3**

*Distribution of Respondents according to their Occupation*

| Occupation    | Frequency  | Percentage   |
|---------------|------------|--------------|
| Employed      | 100        | 30.0         |
| Self-employed | 66         | 20.0         |
| Not-employed  | 166        | 50.0         |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>332</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

The study's findings on occupation in Rumbek East County highlight the socio-economic challenges faced by the local population, which may be further influenced by inter-clan conflicts. Among the 332 respondents, 166 individuals (50.0%) are not employed, reflecting the limited economic opportunities in the region, likely exacerbated by the instability caused by ongoing conflicts. This high unemployment rate underscores the need for economic development and peacebuilding efforts. Meanwhile, 100 individuals (30.0%) are employed, and 66 individuals (20.0%) are self-employed, suggesting that some individuals are attempting to sustain livelihoods despite the challenging circumstances. The relatively low employment rates highlight the critical role of the Inter-Church Committee in not only resolving inter-clan conflicts but also fostering peace and stability, which are essential for economic growth and job creation in Rumbek East County.

## 4.2 Nature of Inter-Clan Conflicts in Rumbek East County, South Sudan

The presentation of findings on the nature of inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, South Sudan, delves into the intricate dynamics of these disputes, shedding light on their types, patterns, duration, and the parties involved.

#### 4.2.1 Types of Conflicts

This study sought to explore and analyze the specific types of inter-clan conflicts prevalent in Rumbek East County, South Sudan. The findings are summarized in Table 4:

**Table 4**

*Nature of Inter-clan Conflicts in Rumbek East County, South Sudan*

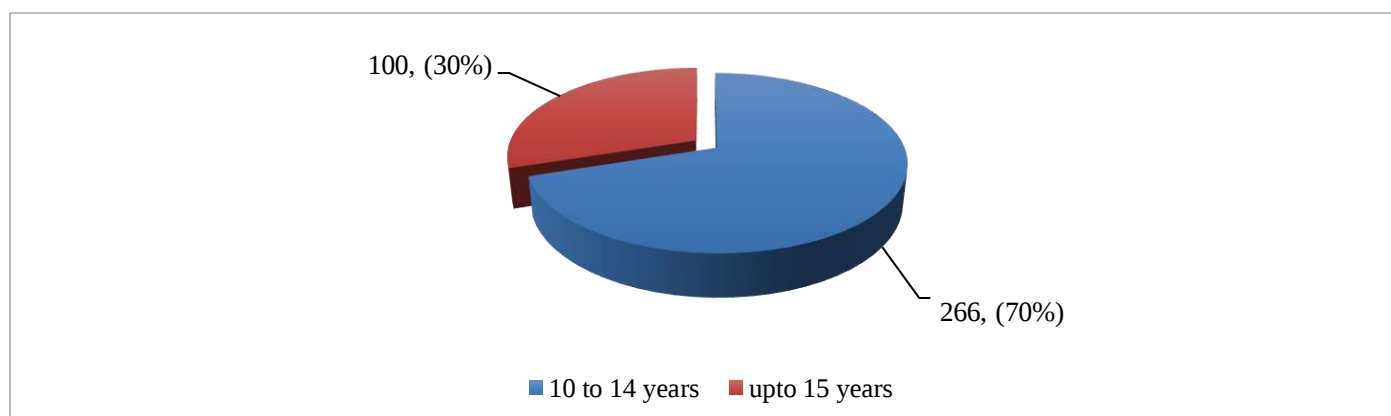
| Types of conflicts     | Frequency  | Percentage   |
|------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Inter-communal/        | 97         | 29.2         |
| Cattle Raiding         | 83         | 25.0         |
| Resource Based         | 42         | 12.5         |
| Gender-Based/Elopement | 83         | 25.0         |
| Others                 | 28         | 8.3          |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>332</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

The study identifies inter-communal conflicts as the most frequent type of conflict in Rumbek East County, South Sudan, accounting for 29.2% of the total conflicts. These conflicts often stem from historical grievances and competition for political power, alongside significant issues like cattle raiding, which constitutes 25% of the conflicts. Resource-based conflicts, making up 12.5%, highlight the critical role of natural resources in fueling disputes, while gender-based conflicts and other localized disputes account for the remainder. The findings align with previous research on inter-clan conflicts among the Dinka community, emphasizing the centrality of historical grievances, competition for resources, and socio-cultural factors in these conflicts.

The findings are consistent with prior research on inter-clan conflicts among the Dinka of South Sudan. Pendle (2018) noted that conflicts among the Dinka often involve political power, natural resources, and cattle theft. This pattern is evident in Rumbek East County, which faces similar issues with inter-communal conflicts and cattle raiding. Wilson (2019) described historical disputes between the Anyual and Dachuek sub-clans of the Dinka in Jonglei State, highlighting how territorial disputes and grievances have persisted despite shared history. Similarly, Rumbek East County's conflicts have deep historical roots, exacerbated by land and resource disputes. Applying Azar's Protracted Social Conflict (PSC) theory, the study underscores the structural and systemic issues that drive inter-communal conflicts in the region. These conflicts are fueled by misalignments between state structures and societal needs, leading to unaddressed grievances and power imbalances. The persistent deprivation of essential needs, such as security and political access, exacerbates these conflicts, making resolution particularly challenging. The study highlights the importance of comprehensive strategies that address these underlying issues to promote sustainable peace and stability in Rumbek East County and similar regions in South Sudan.

#### 4.2.2 Duration of Conflicts

The study also focused on the duration of inter-clan conflicts in the area to assess residents' awareness of the ongoing nature of these disputes, as summarized in Figure 3.



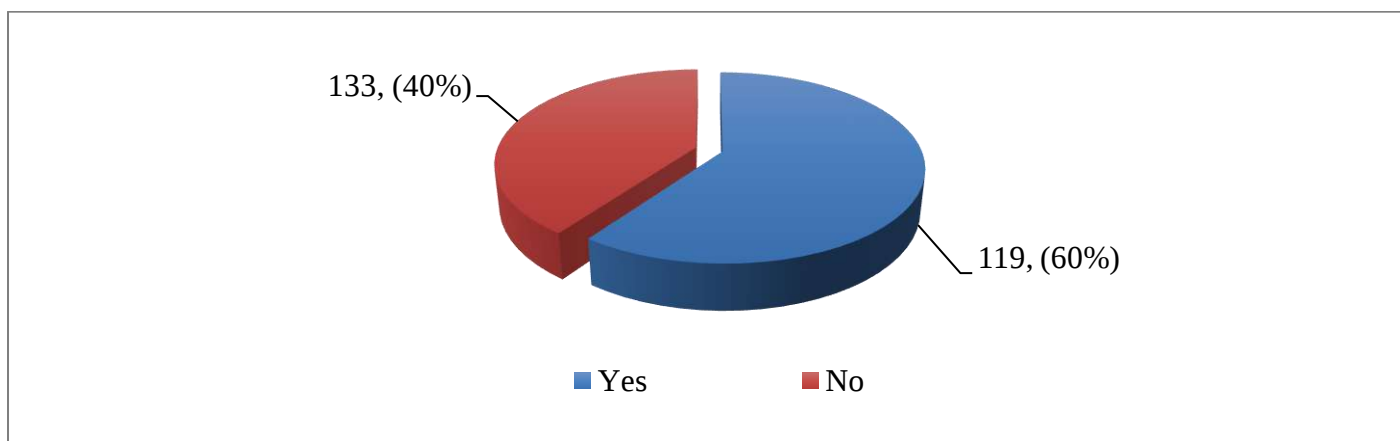
**Figure 3**

*Duration of the Conflicts*

In Rumbek East County, 232 respondents (70%) indicated that conflicts have persisted for 10 to 14 years, while 100 respondents (30%) reported that conflicts have lasted up to 15 years, highlighting a trend of prolonged disputes. This persistence may be rooted in entrenched grievances, historical animosities, competition for resources, and political power struggles, all compounded by ineffective conflict resolution mechanisms and limited opportunities for dialogue. The Protracted Social Conflict theory suggests that structural inequalities, identity issues, unresolved relational dynamics, and external influences contribute to the extended duration of these conflicts. These findings align with broader patterns observed in conflict-affected regions (Craze, 2020), though it is essential to consider the unique socio-political and cultural factors of the region in developing effective peacebuilding strategies.

#### 4.2.3 Whether Involved in the Conflicts

The study investigated whether respondents were directly involved in the conflicts in Rumbek East County, South Sudan, to understand personal participation and lived experiences during these turbulent times. The results are illustrated in Figure 4:



**Figure 4**

*Have you ever been involved in conflicts?*

The study found that 199 respondents, comprising 60% of the sample, reported direct involvement in conflicts, while 133 respondents, constituting 40%, indicated non-involvement. This highlights a complex landscape of participation, influenced by factors such as proximity to conflict zones, familial ties, and cultural norms. The high rate of involvement may reflect both direct and indirect contributions, while non-involvement could be due to fear of reprisals, social stigma, or strategic avoidance. These findings align with patterns observed in other studies, such as Idris et al. (2021), where respondents were hesitant to disclose their conflict involvement due to fear or social considerations. This emphasizes the nuanced nature of individual responses to conflict, shaped by contextual and subjective factors.

#### 4.2.4 Those Mainly Affected by the Conflicts

Here, the focuses on demographics of those primarily affected by the conflicts within Rumbek East County, South Sudan. The findings are presented in Table 5:

**Table 5**

*Those Mainly Affected by the Conflicts*

| Involved     | Frequency  | Percentages  |
|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Women        | 83         | 25.0         |
| Men          | 18         | 5.6          |
| Children     | 55         | 16.7         |
| Elderly      | 74         | 22.2         |
| Youths       | 55         | 16.7         |
| Others       | 46         | 13.9         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>332</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

The findings from Table 5 indicate that in Rumbek East County, South Sudan, conflicts disproportionately affect women, who represent 25% of those impacted, facing significant challenges such as violence, displacement, and livelihood disruption. The elderly and children are also notably affected, making up 22.2% and 16.7% of respondents,

respectively. In contrast, men are less affected, accounting for only 5.6%, which is lower than expected given their traditional role in conflicts. Youths and other demographic groups each constitute 16.7% and 13.9% of those affected. The qualitative data further highlights the emotional distress experienced by women, such as loss of family members, underscoring the need for targeted interventions to address their specific vulnerabilities. Common reasons revolved around emotional Distress from Loss of Children as exemplified by the following quotes.

*"Women as the mothers are very unhappy to see their children dying daily and the same to the elderly."*

*"For youths are the ones fighting themselves while their parents are also affected because they lost their children."*

Additionally, young girls are particularly vulnerable due to the high incidence of pregnancies during times of conflict. This vulnerability is poignantly captured in the following statement:

*"Pregnancies were most happening to girls and this would make them victims at that point."*

The above quote illustrates how the conflict exacerbates the already precarious situation for young girls, thrusting them into motherhood amidst chaos and instability.

The elderly are profoundly affected by inter-clan conflicts primarily due to the emotional distress caused by the loss of younger generations. Witnessing the death of their children and grandchildren leads to deep sorrow and grief, as captured in the quotes:

*"Women as the mothers are very unhappy to see their children dying daily and the same to the elderly,"*  
and,

*"For youths are the ones fighting themselves while their parents are also affected because they lost their children."*

Additionally, the widespread disruption of community life impacts the elderly significantly. The pervasive nature of conflict affects all aspects of social, political, and economic life, exacerbating the suffering of older community members. This is reflected in the quotes:

*"It is crystal clear that when elephants fight, the grass suffers so the whole community members are affected in one way or another"*

Moreover, the feeling of helplessness and hopelessness further affects the elderly. The inability to protect their clans and the preaching of hatred and holding of grudges contribute to a sense of despair. This is illustrated by the quotes

*"If your clan is intimidated they will not watch but fight. Besides, they preached hatred and holding of grudges,"* and *"It is because they were involved in the inter-clan conflict by killing themselves, the fighting, and cattle raiding."*

Findings from qualitative data illustrate that youths are primarily affected by inter-clan conflicts due to their direct involvement in the fighting and cattle raiding. This direct engagement in violent activities makes them both perpetrators and victims of the ongoing conflicts. As one of the respondents puts it:

*"Youths are mainly involved through fighting and cattle raiding."*

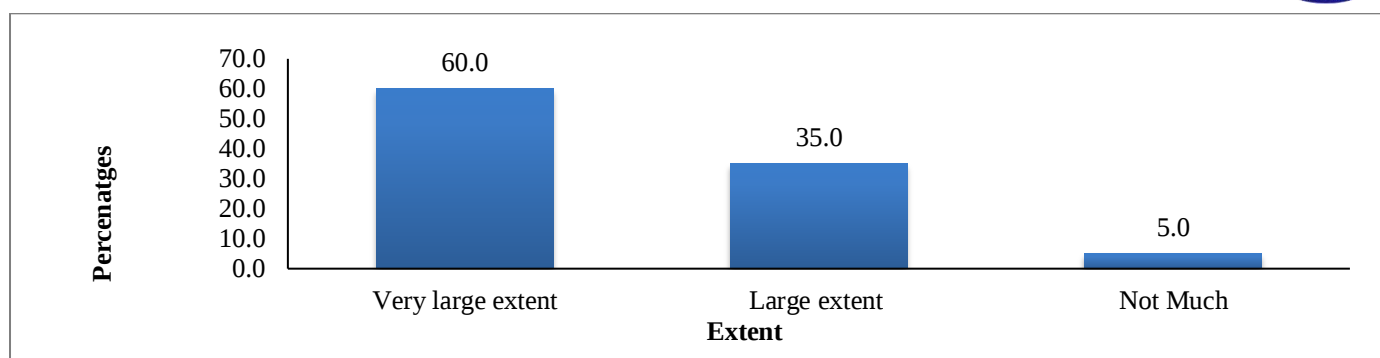
It is also important to acknowledge that the intense nature of inter-clan conflicts, which often involves youths killing each other, leads to significant loss and trauma among young individuals, further exacerbated by the overall impact on their families and communities. This is evident by the following quote:

*"For youths are the ones fighting themselves while their parents are also affected because they lost their children."*

From the above quotes, it is clear that the dual role of youths as both combatants and casualties underscores their substantial impact in these conflicts. The present study mirrors global findings, such as those in Angom's (2018) study of inter-clan conflicts in Ethiopia, where women and children face severe challenges including sexual violence and displacement. Qualitative data further supports these findings, with interviews and focus groups highlighting the emotional distress experienced by women, such as the loss of family members, and the disruptions faced by children in terms of education and healthcare. These insights align with Desmidt's (2019) research on conflict zones like Syria, where women and children are disproportionately affected by gender-based violence and malnutrition. Together, the quantitative and qualitative data underscore the need for targeted interventions that address the specific vulnerabilities of these groups, taking into account their unique socio-cultural and contextual experiences.

How respondents are affected by the conflicts

Enquiring about the extent to which respondents have been affected by the conflicts in Rumbek East County, South Sudan, was aimed at giving insights into the scale and severity of the conflict's impact on the local population. The findings are as displayed in Figure 5.



**Figure 5**  
*Impact of Conflicts as Perceived by Respondents*

The findings indicate that conflicts in Rumbek East County, South Sudan, have had a profound impact on the local population, with 60% of respondents experiencing effects to a very large extent and 35% to a large extent. This highlights the severe and widespread repercussions of the conflicts, including displacement, loss of livelihoods, and trauma. Even among the 5% of respondents who reported minimal effects, there remains some level of hardship. These impacts may be attributed to the extensive violence, destruction of infrastructure, and disruption of essential services, which contribute to the pervasive nature of the conflict's effects. Additionally, the protracted duration of the conflict intensifies these challenges, resulting in long-lasting and cumulative hardships for the community.

### 4.3 Peacebuilding Strategies the Church Employs in Resolving Inter-Clan Conflicts in Rumbek East County, South Sudan

#### 4.3.1 Peacebuilding Strategies

In addressing inter-klan conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan, it was essential to understand the specific interventions implemented by the Church. Respondents were queried about the types of interventions the Church employed to resolve these conflicts, with their responses detailed in Table 6.

**Table 6**  
*Types of Intervention the Church Adopted in Resolving the Inter-Clan Conflict*

| Intervention          | Frequency  | Percentages  |
|-----------------------|------------|--------------|
| Peace meetings        | 95         | 28.6         |
| Public gatherings     | 47         | 14.3         |
| Appeals to leaders    | 57         | 17.1         |
| Preaching forgiveness | 76         | 22.9         |
| Any other             | 57         | 17.1         |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>332</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

The findings indicate that the Church in Rumbek East County uses various interventions to address inter-klan conflicts, with peace meetings being the most common strategy, reported by 28.6% of respondents. These meetings likely provide crucial platforms for dialogue and reconciliation, helping to resolve grievances and foster mutual understanding. Preaching forgiveness, noted in 22.9% of responses, underscores the role of moral and spiritual guidance in healing divisions and promoting a culture of reconciliation. This approach is supported by research showing that moral teachings can significantly impact post-conflict healing. Additionally, appeals to traditional leaders, representing 17.1% of responses, reflect the Church's strategy of involving local authority figures to mediate conflicts and ensure grassroots support for peacebuilding. This multifaceted approach is effective in addressing conflicts by combining direct dialogue, spiritual guidance, and local leadership to foster sustainable peace. The quotes from key respondents highlight several consistent themes regarding the Church's approach to resolving inter-klan conflicts in Rumbek East County, South Sudan.

*"Community talks and paying cow for compensations"*

*"Dialogue is the main peacebuilding activity applied"*

*"The church engages in peace meeting, dialogue and mediations in the conflicts"*

*"Dialogue between the conflicting communities, peace meeting and appeal to the authority for something to be done"*

The insights from key respondents underscore several consistent themes regarding the Church's approach to resolving inter-klan conflicts in Rumbek East County, South Sudan. According to respondents, *"dialogue is the main*

*peacebuilding activity applied*," highlighting its pivotal role in fostering understanding and reconciliation among conflicting communities. This emphasis on dialogue is complemented by the organization of "*peace meetings*" and "*community peace conferences*," where representatives from different clans convene to negotiate grievances and seek collaborative resolutions.

Moreover, the Church's proactive role includes "*engaging in peace meeting, dialogue, and mediations in the conflicts*," indicating a multifaceted approach that spans facilitation of discussions and direct mediation efforts. Respondents also noted instances where the Church initiates "*dialogue between the conflicting communities*" and makes "*appeals to the authority for something to be done*," demonstrating its commitment to leveraging influence and advocating for peaceful resolutions through formal channels. Additionally, the practice of "*paying cow for compensations*" emerged as a significant gesture towards reconciliation, symbolizing efforts to address material grievances and rebuild trust among parties affected by conflict.

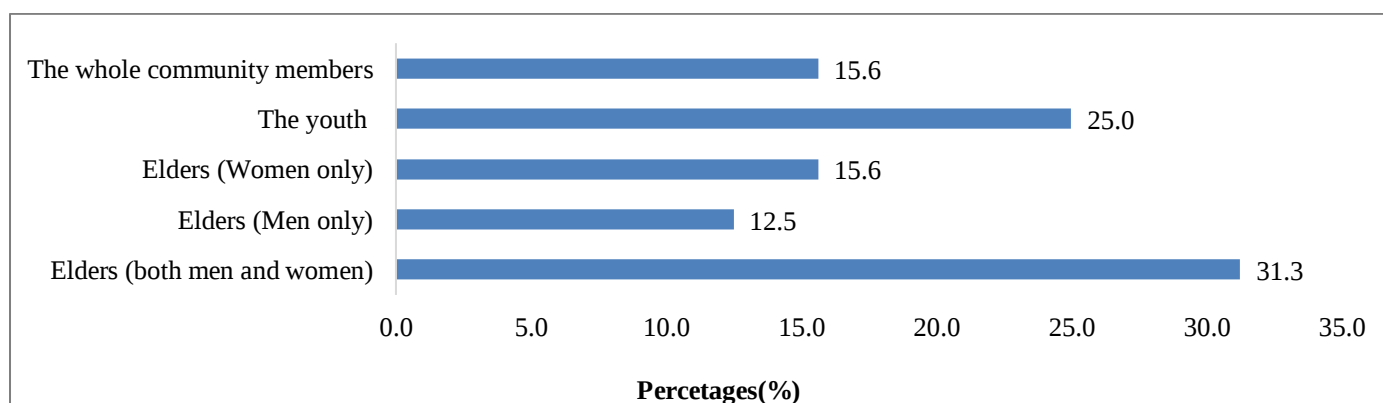
These qualitative insights align with the quantitative data presented earlier, which highlight the frequencies of peace meetings, appeals to leaders, and other interventions. Together, they underscore the comprehensive and community-focused approach taken by the Church in addressing inter-clan conflicts.

The present study aligns with previous research on the role of structured dialogue and moral guidance in peacebuilding. Like Ekpenyong and Okoi (2018), this study highlights the importance of peace meetings and public gatherings for facilitating dialogue and reconciliation. It also mirrors Korir et al. (2022) in emphasizing the use of religious teachings and moral guidance, particularly through preaching forgiveness. However, it diverges from Lamidi's (2021) focus on community sensitization in Southwestern Nigeria by including appeals to leaders and various community-oriented activities, reflecting local adaptations to peacebuilding strategies in South Sudan. Kimani (2021) supports this approach, noting that dialogue helps parties understand each other and find common ground despite differing viewpoints. Additionally, Wilson (2019) acknowledges the church's significant role in organizing grassroots dialogue forums but cautions that such forums alone may not ensure lasting peace. Despite this, the optimism of local informants about the church's efforts underscores its ongoing commitment to fostering reconciliation in Rumbek East County. One of the key informant accentuates that:

*"Several government officials and representatives of different factions we spoke with early on showed support for the church providing impartial platforms for discussion. Seeing the importance of conversation in attempts to promote peace, they expressed a desire to participate."*

Overall, the current findings imply that sustained and multifaceted peacebuilding efforts, led by local institutions such as the Church, can significantly enhance the prospects for long-term conflict resolution and community reconciliation in post-conflict settings. By integrating structured dialogue, moral guidance, and local leadership engagement, such approaches can address the complex root causes of conflicts and foster a more inclusive and resilient peacebuilding process. This underscores the importance of continued support for and adaptation of peacebuilding strategies to local contexts, ensuring they remain effective in addressing both immediate and underlying issues in conflict-affected regions.

The respondents were asked to indicate who were mostly involved in the peacebuilding activities to understand the key actors driving reconciliation efforts, which is crucial for identifying effective strategies and ensuring inclusive community participation in conflict resolution processes. Figure 6 gives the distribution of the findings.



**Figure 6**  
*Those Mainly Involved in these Peacebuilding Activities*

The findings reveal that peacebuilding activities in Rumbek East County, South Sudan, are characterized by diverse and significant involvement across various groups. Elders, both men and women, are the most actively

engaged (31.3%), reflecting their traditional authority and role in mediating conflicts. Youth are also notably involved, representing 25.0%, highlighting their energy and fresh perspectives in peace efforts. The breakdown of elder involvement shows that women elders (15.6%) contribute uniquely to gender-sensitive conflict resolution, while men elders account for 12.5%. Community-wide involvement, at 15.6%, emphasizes the collective nature of peacebuilding and the importance of inclusive participation. These findings highlight the need for a multi-dimensional approach, leveraging the strengths of different groups to address conflicts effectively and promote lasting peace in the region.

#### 4.4 To What Extent did these Activities Address the Inter-Clan Conflicts?

In addressing the effectiveness of peacebuilding activities in Rumbek East County, South Sudan, the respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which the various interventions successfully mitigated inter-klan conflicts. The findings are summarized in Table 7:

**Table 7**

*Extent to which Peacebuilding Activities Address Inter-Clan Conflicts*

| Extent            | Frequency  | Percentage   |
|-------------------|------------|--------------|
| Very large extent | 100        | 30.0         |
| Average extent    | 166        | 50.0         |
| Low extent        | 33         | 10.0         |
| No extent         | 33         | 10.0         |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>332</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

The findings from Table 7 reveal varying perceptions of the effectiveness of peacebuilding activities in Rumbek East County, South Sudan. While 30% of respondents perceive these activities as having a very large extent of impact, indicating notable success in mitigating conflicts, a majority (50%) view them as having an average extent of effectiveness, pointing to progress but also ongoing challenges. Conversely, 10% of respondents see these activities as having low or no impact, highlighting significant gaps in the current strategies. This variation aligns with Galtung's theory of positive and negative peace, emphasizing that true peace involves addressing underlying grievances and societal conditions beyond just the absence of violence. The findings resonate with similar patterns observed in studies by Ekpenyong and Okoi (2018), Lamidi (2021), and Korir et al. (2022), underscoring the need for context-specific and adaptive peacebuilding strategies. These insights suggest that while some interventions are effective, continuous evaluation and tailored approaches are essential for achieving lasting peace in complex conflict settings.

**Challenges Experienced by the Church in Addressing the Inter-Clan Conflicts in Rumbek East County, South Sudan**

The study identifies several primary challenges impacting the effectiveness of peacebuilding in Rumbek East County, South Sudan as summarized in Table 8 below

**Table 8**

*Challenges Faced by the Church in Addressing Inter-Clan Conflicts in Rumbek East County, South Sudan*

| Challenges                               | Frequency  | Percentages  |
|------------------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Financial/resources challenges           | 142        | 42.9         |
| Lack of cooperation within the community | 63         | 19.0         |
| Lack of government support               | 32         | 9.5          |
| Closer of Churches/Security issues       | 95         | 28.6         |
| <b>Total</b>                             | <b>332</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

Financial and resource constraints are the most significant, cited by 42.9% of respondents, which hampers essential activities such as mediation and community engagement. Additionally, 19.0% of respondents highlight internal community divisions and mistrust as critical barriers, undermining collective efforts for reconciliation. The lack of government support (9.5%) also poses a challenge, as effective peacebuilding requires governmental backing for policy, infrastructure, and institutional stability. Furthermore, 28.6% of respondents pointed out that the closure of churches due to security concerns disrupts vital peacebuilding activities, as these institutions are crucial for dialogue and mediation.

These findings align with challenges observed in other conflict contexts. Oyedele (2019) notes similar obstacles in southwestern Nigeria, including financial constraints, lack of cooperation, and institutional deficiencies. Korir et al. (2022) also highlight community mistrust and inadequate institutional support in Kenya. These parallels emphasize that peacebuilding faces universal challenges across different regions, underscoring the need for context-

specific strategies that address local dynamics, integrate available resources, and foster collaborative efforts to achieve sustainable peace.

#### 4.4.1 Strategies Contributed by the Church towards Sustainable Peacebuilding Efforts

**Table 9**

*Ways of addressing the challenges*

| Ways                                                         | Frequency  | Percentages  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Engaging elders in the community                             | 70         | 21.1         |
| Bringing the people at the grassroots together               | 79         | 23.7         |
| Bringing the warring parties together for dialogue           | 79         | 23.7         |
| Inviting the leaders of the warring communities for dialogue | 61         | 18.4         |
| Other                                                        | 44         | 13.2         |
| <b>Total</b>                                                 | <b>332</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

The study reveals that the Church in Rumbek East County, South Sudan, employs a variety of strategies to address inter-clan conflicts. Key approaches include the engagement of community elders (21.1%), grassroots community gatherings (23.7%), direct reconciliation talks between warring factions (23.7%), and inviting leaders from conflicting communities (18.4%). Additionally, 13.2% of respondents cited methods such as compensation for damages, reconciliation rituals, preaching forgiveness, and communal mourning practices. These diverse strategies reflect a comprehensive effort to address both immediate and underlying causes of conflict, leveraging local dynamics and cultural norms to promote sustainable peace.

These findings align with similar strategies documented in previous studies, such as those by Lamidi (2021) in Nigeria and Korir et al. (2022) in Kenya, which also emphasize the role of community elders, grassroots engagement, and direct dialogue. However, the specific cultural and socio-political contexts can influence the implementation and effectiveness of these strategies. The study highlights the importance of adapting successful peacebuilding approaches to fit local cultural values and social structures, underscoring the need for context-specific strategies to effectively address the unique challenges in Rumbek East County.

#### 4.4.2 Strategies for ensuring sustainable Peace in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan

When asked, "What ways can the church do to ensure sustainable peace in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan?," key respondents provided a range of insightful suggestions that reflect both the challenges and potential solutions for peacebuilding in the region. The responses highlight various strategic interventions that could strengthen the Church's role in fostering sustainable peace. One key respondent emphasized the importance of collaboration, stating, "Yes, the church can do more in collaborating with community leaders" (Key Respondent I). This underscores the need for the Church to work closely with traditional and local authorities to enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of peace initiatives. By leveraging the influence of community leaders, the Church can ensure broader acceptance and implementation of peacebuilding measures.

Key respondents also emphasize that the communities in Rumbek are traumatized, and that trauma healing is essential to dialogue and reconciliation. One of the key respondent mentioned:

*"Trauma healing and reconciliation are essential steps for rebuilding trust and fostering long-term peace in our communities."*

Another church leader elaborated;

*"Trauma healing training, peacebuilding, and additional specialized workshops are essential components of peace building programs in our communities."*

The findings highlight the critical role of trauma healing in conflict resolution, emphasizing the need for communities to address psychological wounds to achieve lasting peace. Trauma healing training helps individuals process their experiences and fosters reconciliation. The current findings align with existing literature, such as Steen-Johnsen (2020), which notes that religious actors, due to their empathy and personal experiences of trauma, are well-suited for leading transformative dialogues that address grief and loss. Steen-Johnsen (2020) further emphasize that recognizing the trauma experienced by religious leaders themselves is crucial in their approach to reconciliation and healing. By integrating spiritual teachings of compassion and forgiveness, clergy and Church leaders effectively leverage their trusted roles and cultural practices to support community healing and promote sustainable peace. The importance of education and training was also a recurring theme. Respondents suggested,

*"More training and preaching the importance of peace to the community," and, "More training to engage the youth on peace activities."*

These recommendations suggest that ongoing educational efforts can instill values of peace and reconciliation, particularly among the youth, who are crucial for the future stability of the region.

Forgiveness was another key element highlighted by respondents. One stated,

*"Preaching forgiveness, carrying out peace programs, and trauma healing training to heal the wounded."*

These quotes reflect the importance of combining moral and spiritual guidance with practical peacebuilding strategies. Wilson (2019) emphasizes that religious leaders can inspire societal change by promoting forgiveness and love, translating inner peace into societal action. This perspective is supported by Steen-Johnsen (2020), who argues that while advocating for compassion and forgiveness is crucial, addressing the root causes of conflict is also essential for sustainable peacebuilding. The integration of spiritual teachings with practical interventions helps heal personal and communal divisions while tackling systemic injustices, creating a foundation for enduring peace and reconciliation. This dual approach ensures that both individual and structural issues are addressed, fostering resilient and peaceful societies.

Respondents also called for strategic communication and resource mobilization. One noted,

*"Share the information with the government of the state and national as well as the NGOs for support."*

This insight affirms the importance of engaging with governmental and non-governmental organizations to gain broader support for peace initiatives. Another pointed out the need for financial resources, suggesting:

*"Write many projects to generate funds for the facilitation of long-lasting peace in Rumbek East County."*

Securing funding is essential for effective peacebuilding, as emphasized by various studies. Korir et al. (2022) highlight that sustainable peacebuilding requires adequate resources to support initiatives such as forgiveness, reconciliation, and community healing. Steen-Johnsen (2020) adds that addressing both immediate and root causes of conflict through well-funded, targeted interventions is crucial. Project proposals should clearly outline objectives and demonstrate an understanding of local needs to attract funding and ensure impactful outcomes. Key respondents in Rumbek East County stress the importance of a multi-dimensional approach, including community engagement, trauma healing, and economic development, supported by strategic partnerships. These strategies reflect the necessity of context-specific interventions for achieving lasting peace.

## V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Conclusions

The study concludes that inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County are mainly driven by historical animosities, socio-economic issues, and deeply ingrained cultural norms, leading to ongoing violence and instability. Vulnerable groups, especially women, the elderly, and children, are disproportionately affected, underscoring the need for targeted peacebuilding interventions. The Church plays a key role in promoting peace through strategies like peace meetings, forgiveness preaching, and mediation by local leaders, utilizing the wisdom of community elders and the perspectives of youth. However, challenges such as financial constraints, community divisions, and church closures remain. The study emphasizes that while the Church's efforts contribute significantly to peacebuilding, greater support from governmental and international bodies is crucial for addressing the evolving dynamics of conflict and achieving lasting peace.

### 5.2 Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, it is recommended that the Church and local organizations invest in training community elders and mediators in dialogue facilitation and conflict transformation. Promoting inter-generational dialogue and integrating youth perspectives will strengthen peacebuilding efforts. Interventions should focus on addressing root causes like cattle raiding by improving livelihoods, resource management, and economic development, while ensuring the inclusion of vulnerable groups such as women, the elderly, and children.

The Church should collaborate with governmental and international entities to secure sustainable funding and support for peacebuilding initiatives. Investments should be made in infrastructure that enhances peace meetings, church security, and local leaders' mediation capacity. Community engagement should involve women, youth, and marginalized groups, and robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be established to assess and adapt strategies based on evolving conflict dynamics, ensuring their long-term success.

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