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Title: Understanding Vulnerable Groups and Their Potential Contribution to Peace Sustainability and Restoration: The Case of Gambella, Ethiopia

Country: Ethiopia

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Area of Interest: Research Paper

Short Description: As one of the most conflict-affected areas in Ethiopia, the Gambella Region experiences persistent insecurity led by land disputes, historical grievances, inter-ethnic tensions, political exclusion, and demographic dynamism associated with refugee flow. However, women and youth had peace-sustaining and restoring potential; they remained invisible in the whole processes, rather than engaging in small-scale level quarrels between individuals or neighbors. This research work examines the overlooked potential of women and youth in peacebuilding in the course of recurring conflict in Gambella Region, showing that cultural, institutional, and integration barriers undermine their contribution.

Abstract

The Gambella Region remains one of the most conflict-affected areas in Ethiopia, where insecurity prevails. The potential of women and youth in the peace process is significant; however, they remain largely invisible in the formal peace process. No matter how much ample research, policy attention, and humanitarian interventions there are, violence persists regularly, grounded in historical grievances, especially land claims, inter-ethnic competition, land disputes, political exclusion, and cross-border dynamics. The continuity of research focuses on causes of conflict rather than changing the knowledge into action, missing the perspectives of the community (views of elites), and poor representation of women and youth in peacebuilding frameworks, which reduces the capacity to ensure sustainable peace or restoration of peace. This study examined conflict in Gambella by foregrounding the lived experiences of the vulnerable groups in the peace process. The results show that women are usually involved in small-scale conflicts, usually at the household and community level, which protects social cohesion, while youth serve as first responders during crises and mobilizers in community protection. The main barriers to wasting the potential of groups in peace protection and restoration are the position of gender in the culture, the male-dominated family system they have, and institutional barriers, which make their position in the peace process symbolic. The coordination among NGOs, government organizations, and traditional authorities is fragmented and further weakens peace efforts and forces structural inequalities not to be addressed. Findings also confirmed the enduring importance of indigenous conflict resolution among

the ethnic groups. The traditional peace process remains constrained when disconnected from formal governance and when it excludes women and youth. Additionally, the study revealed that sustainable peace in Gambella could not be achieved without inclusive, coordinated, and context-sensitive approaches that recognize the women and youth, integrate indigenous mechanisms with formal, and bridge the gaps between research insights and policy implementation. Based on the evidence, this research finally recommended the improvement in institutional integration, strengthening participation, and promoting community-driven peace practices to reduce the persisting conflict in the region.

Keywords: *conflict; community-driven peace; Gambella Region; indigenous conflict resolution; peacebuilding; women and youth.*

1. Background of the Study

1.1. Introduction

The experience of vulnerable groups in the Gambella Region, especially women and youth, cannot be separated from the enduring nature of conflict that shapes their daily lives. The literature identified Gambella as one of the most complex and multi-layered conflict areas in Ethiopia because of ethnic fragmentation, cross-border spillovers, and the long shadow of the Sudanese civil war (Lie and Borchgrevink, 2012). It seems meaningless to conduct much research because all these research has not come up with durable solutions, and the continuity of cyclical violence. The same reports of humanitarian assessments reveal that the peace initiatives often fail to translate into sustainable outcomes because they overlook the lived challenges, and the potential of vulnerable groups in peacekeeping and peace restoration (Sewonet, 2002). This persistent research gap urges us to re-examine the experience of conflict, considering the insufficient representations of women and youth in academic and policy participations. Moreover, the nature of conflict in Gambella, is complex, exposes the limitations of the traditional research approaches. The origination of conflict in the region emanates from historical grievances, inter-ethnic political competition, land pressure, and regional geopolitics (Lie and Borchgrevink, 2012). Most of the time conflict researches miss very pertinent issues such as ethnic federalism, displacement dynamics, and resource competition, which are factors that intensify insecurities (Meckelburg, 2006, as cited in Lie and Borchgrevink, 2012).

Peace remains an indefinable aspiration in many conflict-affected areas, not just because the communities lack the will to restore harmony, but because of the capacities

of potential groups ignored. However, despite steps taken by international organizations to advance the role these groups play, there are identified barriers such as low government commitment, the patriarchal nature of the society, and a shortage of funding to alleviate the problem (Trejos, 2024). This supported evidence that the culturally embedded assumption about the position of men and women undermines the potential of women and youth in peace play. The intervention on conflict has not shown expected progress because of inadequate credit of local perspectives and structural inequalities, limiting the restoration of peace (Sewonet, 2002). Having empirical evidence embedded in cultural treasures of a given communities especially in areas of vulnerable groups such as women and youth can share their potential, and the lived experience in practice in study area is very important.

Because of the gender roles in a culture, the inclusiveness of the politics, and social position for male and female, as well as youth determines the applicability of the proven potentials of women and youth in peace process (Trejo, 2024). The reports of NGOs in Gambella shows women potentially mediate household and community disputes, support displaced families, and mobilize social cohesion, but these roles are rarely credited as a potential for peacekeeping or restoration in the region (Mengistu, 2014). Youth also face similar marginalization despite forming the region's demographic majority and frequently acting as first responders during crises. According to Chigudu (2024), the vulnerable groups acknowledged on paper, the involvement of women and youth is symbolically endorsed but structurally neglected. Understanding these dynamics reveals how deeply embedded social norms shape who and how to participate in peacebuilding and whose knowledge remains invisible. In Gambella, conflict formation evidence shows that fragmentation between formal and informal actors, along with inconsistent state government, weakens collective efforts to prevent and manage conflict (Lie and Borchgrevink, 2012). At the same time, indigenous conflict resolution experiences among Nuer, Anywaa, and other groups sustainably provide culturally legitimate mechanisms for reconciliation, land dispute settlement, and community-to-community dialogue (Sewonet, 2002). These practices historically sustained peace, but their full potential remains limited when women and youth excluded from these customary forums or when such systems operate without linkages to formal governance structures.

Therefore, integrating the indigenous system with inclusive policies considering the double role of women and youth in both sustaining and restoring peace emerges as a necessary step for building durable peace in the Gambella Region.

Before saying a lot, it is very pertinent to discuss the main causes of conflict in the Gambella Region. Evidence shows that the region is sensitive to issues due to the existence of multi-ethnic groups (Sewonet, 2002). Adeto (2016) identified the main causes for conflict in the Gambella Region: the structural causes of violent conflicts since 1991; an unbalanced center-periphery relation, the region being used as an object of extraction and repression; competition over political hegemony between Nuer and Anywaa; ethnic politics; the work of land policy for the interest of government and investors; and the complexity of internal conflict in that the views of officials and the local community differ by far. Thus, ethnic federalism in Ethiopia intensified the conflict by ethnic politics.

This study emphasizes the potential of women and youth in sustaining and restoring peace. They have the potential to alleviate the peace problem, but are denied recognition due to culturally embedded assumptions and ignoring credit to the group (Sewonet, 2002). The existence of ample research without a sustainable solution, the dynamism of conflict and intertwined relationship with other related sources, and the only paper value of women and youth (Chigudu, 2024) justified this study. In this study, peace sustainability refers to the continuity and improvement of the existing peace, whereas peace restoration means maintaining peace after conflict, considering the double role of women in their gender and youth.

1.2. Statement of the problem

Despite two decades of global recognition under the women, peace, and security (WPS) agenda and a decade of emerging policy focus through the youth, peace, and security (YPS) agenda, women and youth in the Gambella Region continue to experience exclusion from formal peacebuilding structures. Although they make up the majority of those affected by recurrent violence, their participation in peace forums, security dialogues, and decision-making bodies remains minimal, inconsistent, and largely symbolic. Women engage in small-scale conflicts and improvement of community

cohesion, but not in a formal process (Sewonet, 2002). Likewise, youth are frequently portrayed through a security-risk lens rather than as potential peace actors, limiting their opportunities for constructive engagement. The mismatch between practice and engagement in formal sessions undermines inclusive peacebuilding efforts in Gambella.

According to Lie and Borchgrevink (2012), the region's conflicts are shaped by political, overlapping ethnic, and resource-based tensions escalated by cross-border migration and regional geopolitics that have persisted for more than five decades (Mengistu, 2014). Research is frequently conducted in the areas of similar issues, but findings often fail to translate into actionable, community-centered solutions, especially incorporating women and youth in restoration and keeping peace. Thus, the weaknesses of research are a lack of ability to influence policy, rather than simply describing drivers of conflict without shifting power relations or influencing policies that meaningfully include vulnerable groups. An equal challenge is the top-down peace intervention, leaving women and youth without sustained platforms to shape decisions that impact their lives.

Vulnerable groups are poorly integrated in the peace processes of government, NGOs, and traditional large-scale conflicts in Gambella, which has weakened institutional impact. Indigenous ways of solving conflicts, though culturally trusted and effective, often operate without formal recognition or gender youth-inclusive frameworks, limiting their potential to support sustainable peace (Mengistu, 2014). Women and youth are frequently excluded from these customary processes due to cultural norms and exclusive formal structures. In contrast, modern peace structures commonly rely on external experts and short-term donor-driven initiatives that fail to draw on community wisdom or build local capacity. This lack of integrated and inclusive approaches prevents the formation of durable peace structures capable of addressing the deep-rooted causes of conflict in the region.






The region is vulnerable because of recycling conflict, political instability, and forced displacement. The situation in the study area is also sensitive; the sustainability of peace is yet a question after huge scholarly and actor engagement to stabilize the region. The concerned bodies for the peace process have not been acknowledged well, and there is a lack of integration between the indigenous and formal structures. The population

dynamics and land claims are worsening the situation. Based on the above gaps in literature, and application of research knowledge in practice; this study focused on issues such as the enduring nature of conflict and the ongoing pursuit of research, the complexity of conflict and the limitations of conflict research, the neglecting of vulnerable groups in peacebuilding processes, and describing the contribution of indigenous conflict resolution to the peacebuilding process, taking the potential of women and youth in sustaining and restoring peace.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

General Objective: This study aimed to understand the experience, challenges, and potential contributions of vulnerable groups in promoting and sustaining peace and social restoration in Gambella Region, Ethiopia

The specific objectives of the study: The followings are the specific objective of this research.

-  To examine the enduring nature of conflict and the ongoing pursuit of research
-  To understand conflict complexity and address limitations in conflict research
-  To explore how women and youth are pushed to the periphery of peacebuilding processes
-  To analyze integration among concerned bodies on inclusive strategies in the peacebuilding process
-  To describe the contribution of the indigenous conflict resolution to the peacebuilding process

2. Methods and Materials

This study was conducted in two woredas, such as Lare and Abobo, representing the Nuer and Anywaa ethnic groups, respectively. A qualitative research approach was employed to operate the overall research process. Qualitative approach helped to have in-depth exploration of participants' perspectives, contextual realities, and experiences. The sample size was not predetermined; rather, it was determined by the principle of data saturation, whereby participant recruitment continued until no new themes or insights emerged.

A purposive sampling technique was applied to intentionally select research participants who were considered knowledgeable and capable of providing diverse, relevant, and rich data on the phenomenon under the study. Data were collected by some qualitative methods. One-to-one interviews were conducted with purposively selected informants, and key informant interviews were held with those who are knowledgeable in areas such as conflict change, community relationships, and local context. Moreover, focus group discussions were arranged with male parents and youth, and female parents and youth in separate sessions to ensure gender sensitive representation and open dialogue within people from homogenous socio-economic background.

In total, 62 individuals participated in this research. These were eight in-depth interviews, six key informant interviews, and eight FGDs, each with an average incorporated seven discussants. This was intentionally to triangulate data and have robust information to understand the issue under study.

3. Discussions

3.1. Introduction

The main causes of conflict in the Gambella Region are mainly rooted in ethnic, demographic pressure, land claims, refugee issues, and political conspiracy. One of the key informants of the study forwarded the following realities:

“Conflict in the Gambella region is basically rooted in ethnic identity and competing claims over land. The recurrent tensions are primarily between the Anywaa and Nuer ethnic groups, each holding divergent historical narratives regarding territorial scope. The Anywa commonly express grievance that their ancestral land had been taken and occupied by the Nuer. In contrast, the Nuer argue that those areas claimed by Anywaa are in reality occupied by their ancestors, rather than their own. These contradicting claims are happening in both urban and rural. This contestation over land ownership continues to be a central driver of ethnic conflict and recurring violence in the Gambella Region.”

3.2. The continuity of research and the persistence of conflict

Vulnerable groups are poorly integrated in the peace processes of government, NGOs, and traditional large-scale conflicts in Gambella, which has weakened their potential to influence the peace process. Indigenous ways of solving conflicts, though

culturally trusted and effective, often operate without formal consideration in the formal peace restoration process. As one of Ethiopia's most conflict-prone regions, the Gambella Region has attracted the interest of scholars, development players, and peace practitioners during the past thirty years. A wealth of information about the historical, political, and socioeconomic factors contributing to conflict has been studied. Some of these studies are breaking the cycle of conflict in Gambella (Sewonet, 2002), conflict complexity in Ethiopia (Adeto, 2014), layer upon layer: understanding the Gambella conflict formation (Lie & Borchgrevink, 2012), and exploring the peacebuilding potential of NGOs (Mengistu, 2014). Yet, the problem is persisting, violent, and tense cycles of conflict, which this study found escalating and regular ethnic and other conflicts changing shape and size. The evidence supports that the continuity of conflict is associated with structural inequalities, ethnic competition, baseless social media dissemination of information in which youth are mainly involved, neglecting potential groups of the community, such as youth and women, or a lack of a participatory peace-building process. One of the Aynwaa informants said, "Conflict perpetuates because the main conflict in Gambella is between Aynwaa and Nuer, which is based on revenge. Accordingly, the main cause for the recurrent conflict is land, which is the main factor for IDPs."

The nature of conflict at Gambella is multi-layered, persistent, and cyclical. The historical tension between Nuer and Anywaa is mainly due to land or boundary shifting migration patterns, political competition, and cross-border influences that continually reshape alliances and rivalries. Moreover, conflict occurs in Gambella as a result of overlapping causes such as ethnicity, federal restructuring, resource scarcity, and refugee inflows (Lie & Borchgrevink, 2012). This is some differ from this finding, however, those factors lay the ground for conflict, this study found that not resource scarcity, but the claiming of specific place later occupied by other ethnic group (example: the Aynwaa land occupied by Nuer and their claim to it and the revenge of killing as result) makes the conflict at Gambella Persist (FGDs). Evidence indicates that the literature simply focuses on symptoms of conflict, but not on the structural nature of conflict that limits the effectiveness of long-term peacebuilding; the existing research is not in a position to influence policy and direct action (Trejos, 2024)

3.3. Conflict Complexity and Conflict Research Limitations

Conflict in Gambella is multifaceted, with roots in ethnicity, federal politics, cross-border migration, and resource competition. According to studies by Lie & Borchgrevink (2012) and Adeto (2014), conflicts in this area are complex due to internal and external factors reinforcing one another. The Ethnic groups have historically fought for political representation and land, frequently under the influence of central-state policies that have alternated between co-optation and repression. Large-scale agricultural investments and the influx of South Sudanese refugees exacerbated resource competitiveness and identity-based claims, which are refugee issues not openly investigated. This was escalated by demographic figures projected by the Central Statistical Agency (CSA) that created grievance among the ethnic groups. Another point of this study is that State-building, security, and land policy reforms have received a lot of attention at the federal level as a solution. These strategies, however, have frequently been top-down, externally motivated, miss context, and unrelated to the actual experiences of oppressed groups. Moreover, there are still a few long-term remedies since peacebuilding frameworks rarely take into account the social and human aspects of daily living in Gambella.

Thus, the complexity of conflict at Gambella is shaped by the convergence of local, national, and regional dynamics, which are tightly interlinked. It starts with land and other resources, leading to mass killing, then followed by revenge, ensuring the persistence of conflict in the region. Lie & Borchgrevink (2012) named the conflict in Gambella “multi-layered.” The conflict happened due to tension around citizenship, identity, and political marginalization. The Region’s border with South Sudan more intensifies the complexity of the conflict since the influx of refugees, transnational ethnic groups, and arms flows expanding the conflict situation. Research traditions in Gambella lack focusing on residents in local having birds-eye view on elite interviews, secondary data, and longitudinal data that fail to capture the evolving nature of conflict. As Sewonet (2002) conflict study often lacks the voices of grassroots actors, especially women and young people, resulting in partial analyses that overlook the human impact of insecurity. As one of the main points in this study, research focuses on political and economic dimensions, but not on trauma, displacement impacts, and tensions through generations. Aligning with the findings, Trejos (2024) found that the gender perspectives are usually superficial,

lacking depth in capturing the everyday experiences of women in conflict zones, while youth are rarely treated as active stakeholders.

Based on the discussion above, research direction for Gambella must incorporate conflict ethnographies, participatory research methods, and a mixed approach focusing on the voice of the marginalized. Thus, integrating WPS and YPS into research enables it to speak to the locally driven peace solutions and practical needs. Almost all participants agree on the following ideas:

“Conflict in the Gambella Region is complex and has a different form, extending beyond ethnic division and competition over land resources. It also emanates when politicians make a conspiracy. For instance, when a politician, after his suspension from the position, attempts to regain it or express grievances, they work to escalate conflict by setting polarizing political agendas, initiating youth movements, and misusing social media to disseminate information or narratives that fuel ethnic and other form of conflict. This is another basis for conflict in the study area that contributes to persisting conflict.”

Therefore, conflict in the study area necessitates viewing in the wider context of the mobilization of local communities, political competition, and elite interests.

3.4. Women and Youth at the Margins

Scholarly works on the potential of women and youth in conflict resolution are recognized; however, in tradition, they were sidelined and treated as less capable. Some studies, such as Sewonet (2002), focused on women’s economic vulnerability, but not on their potential in reconciliation. Research studies on conflict in Gambella have historically sidelined women and youth, treating them as secondary victims rather than potential agents of transformation. The study briefly mentioned women’s economic vulnerability in riverine communities but did not explore their social roles in reconciliation. Adeto and Abate (2014) emphasized displacement and resource competition, but they hardly ever addressed the effects of gender or the marginalization of young people in the peace process.

However, in Gambella, women are frequently affected by displacement and instability. They maintain the social fabric through interethnic marriages that can heal divisions, community support systems, and informal mediation. On the other hand, youth have been depicted as warriors, jobless dependents, neglecting their potential as educators, community mobilizers, and innovators in peacebuilding. They are susceptible to political manipulation; their absence from formal decision-making fuels recurrent acts of violence. Such exclusion is a lost opportunity within the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS), as well as youth, peace, and security (YPS) paradigm framed in UN Security Council Resolution 1325. NGOs operating in Gambella have effectively employed indigenous empowerment strategies that revived customary laws and peace committees, many of which involved women and youth (Mengistu, 2014); however, this process did not get more attention from officials or governmental institutions. Almost all interviews and discussions with participants confirmed that the women in Anywaa participate in traditional conflict resolution, especially issues that are minor or interpersonal in nature. They are involved in mediation between neighbors, or facilitating reconciliation when quarrel between two relatives arise. Therefore, women have the potential restoring social harmony among the community, encouraging dialogue, and calming tension. However, both women and youth position in peacekeeping and restoration is insignificant. They further informed and acknowledged the potential of women and youth in peace and security. But their involvement minimal, and their participation in broader peacekeeping and restoration process remains unrecognized and limited

The finding also supports the above points that a significant demographic portion of women and youth are not considered in peacebuilding or are unrecognized and undervalued. However, women play roles in caregiving, mediation, and mobilization when crises happen, they rarely exert their potential in formal policymaking and peace processes due to their position, culture, and formal institutions. Mengistu (2014) noted the significant contributions of women to community-level peace initiatives, but these potentials are under-documented and remain informal. From this, we understand that peacebuilding strategies do not account for those who are involved in the peace process. Youth are equally marginalized; however, they have potential roles in initiating conflict and protecting the community, which is an untapped contribution by policymakers. Thus,

currently, formal peacebuilding in Gambella is dominated by the state and based on elite perception. The situation in Gambella is not significantly different from the rest of the world; the difference lies in the rhetorical celebration and structural exclusion. Institutionalizing women's and youth participation in the peace process will become the next assignment.

3.5. Challenges of Integrating Peace Actors

State-led security intervention (reproduces mistrust), NGOs-led peace-building research at the national and international level, which prioritize community empowerment rather than policy recommendations. Generally, the approaches were fragmented. None of these studies systematically incorporates the generational and gendered aspects of conflict. Thus, peace cannot be achieved without considering these community parts (depending on gender and age structure participation), as confirmed by this study. When these weaknesses are disregarded, potential peacebuilders become disillusioned players who could fuel new violent cycles.

Peacekeeping and peace restoration are not a project of single bodies. Thus, the lack of this understanding and the separate movement of indigenous institutions, NGOs, government offices, and community stakeholders is a challenge to sustainable peacebuilding in the Region. Lack of integration leads to duplicated interventions, inconsistent messaging, and inefficiencies that weaken peace outcomes. There are problems in both formal and informal approaches; the formal institutions lack enough resources, exposure to bureaucracies, and political priorities, whereas traditional systems lack recognition of formal institutions (Lie and Borchgrevink, 2012). However, if the above problems prevail, the indigenous conflict resolution system has the capacity to restore harmony, but is disconnected from the state, and other initiatives limit its broader potential. According to one of the key informants, "either scientific approach, meaning research, or other funding agents, based on their respective objectives and guidelines. There is no integration, merging of objectives, or fixing the last goal. "

3.6. Sustaining Peace and Enabling Indigenous Conflict Resolutions

In the Gambella Region, various conflict resolution mechanisms were applied to restore peace, such as inter-clan conflict negotiation, riverbank dialogue, cattle

compensation arguments, and ceremonies of ritual cleansing, which historically solved conflicts alone. This mechanism is fast, more trusted, and more accessible to communities than formal courts or administrative structures. Sewonet (2002) noted the effective mediation power of indigenous system issues such as cattle raids, border disputes, and interpersonal conflict. However, cultural and state factors globally influence the potential of traditional methods of conflict resolution (Trejos, 2024). In the current case of Gambella, conflict is linked with militarization, refugee flows, and resource competition, which are reasons for integration beyond traditional authorities.

Incorporating youth and women, as well as other traditional methods of conflict resolution, such as Anywaa's kwaro and Nuer's cieng, which have been employed by the community for a long time. According to Mengistu (2014), long-lasting peace is ensured by empowering local actors through communication, social bridging initiatives, and livelihood assistance in a participatory way rather than top-down approaches like state-imposed solutions. Therefore, peacekeeping and restoration require the incorporation of potential groups, especially women, and a transformative strategy that incorporates gender awareness, values indigenous knowledge, and considers youth to build peace. This also directs the policy focus from investigation only to practice-oriented, or moving from analysis to action.

“Indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms today lack attention; however, they have the potential to build long-lasting peace and restore sustainable peace. There are customary leaders who have social capital and acceptance in the community and can decide soundly to overcome proliferating conflict. Today they are merged and assimilated by formal structure, and their position is ignored (45-year-old informant.)”

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1. Conclusion

The conflict dynamics or complexity of the study area reveal a deeply entrenched, multi-layered, and evolving conflict system where political, ethnic, economic, and regional factors intersect. Overall, historical claiming of land by Nuer or Anywaa is a basis for all types of conflicts in the region, and that is why some informants said the conflicts in Gambella are just between Nuer and Anywaa, with little or very low involvement of others.

These two ethnic groups have their own ways of conflict resolution and a vacant space for the involvement of women and youth. These are all well-studied and recorded, but act individually. Evidence revealed that the existence of ample research in the area cannot guarantee a solution for the problem, but rather the potential of research influencing policy. Indigenous ways of peace restoration must be integrated with modern formal system by government to address contemporary challenges. To restore sustainable peace in the study setting, it needs the involvement of potential actors such as women and youth, and the promotion of coordination among stakeholders. Without ensuring this approach, the conflict recycle till inclusive and integrated strategies harnessed, unless the situation undermines development and social cohesion.

4.2. Recommendations

Based on the above evidence, the following recommendations are forwarded to sustain and restore peace.

1. Strengthening inclusion mechanisms for women and youth (by the Ministry of Peace and Security, and Regional bureau of peace and security)
 - ✓ Establish formal quotas for women and youth participation in federal and regional peace forums, advisory councils, and security committees
 - ✓ Support mentorship, leadership training, and capacity-building programs aligned with WPS/YPS principles.
 - ✓ Document and institutionalize women's and youth's informal peace contributions.
2. Strengthening Coordination among Peace Agents
 - ✓ Forming a platform that connects stakeholders such as government, NGOs, traditional leaders, and international partners.
 - ✓ Integrating approaches to minimize duplicated interventions
 - ✓ Proposing clear planning, allocation of resources, and conflict-monitoring mechanisms,
3. Integration of formal and indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms
 - ✓ Supporting and recognizing indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms by finance and research.

- ✓ Develop hybrid models that employ both customary processes and formal mediation techniques
 - ✓ Revision of indigenous ways of conflict resolution to be inclusive, taking women and youth as permanent stakeholders.
4. Focus on action-oriented and community-led research
 - Encourage participatory research that includes women and youth as co-researchers and research participants.
 - Fund long-term. Interdisciplinary studies that examine the evolving conflict landscape.
 5. Working on problems associated with causes of conflict associated with structures
 - Diversifying livelihoods, particularly for youth, to target unemployment and economic marginalization, and divert their attention to the development agenda
 - Improving local government capacity and representation of potential groups.
 - Working to protect border areas and improve peace diplomacy with South Sudan to manage refugee flows and arms conflict.

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