



Building an architecture for peace, clarifies roles and responsibilities of local peace actors between Sudan and South Sudan

Introduction

The western corridor is the western-most of the three main grazing corridors used by the Fiyareen clan of Arabic-speaking cattle-herding Missiriya of the state of South Kordofan in Sudan. The Missiriya grazes southward into the territory of the Dinka Malual of the state of Northern Bahr al-Ghazal in South Sudan.

The Dinka are frequently portrayed as farmers in the conflict paradigm of farmers versus herders but they actually practice semi-pastoralism and are very much a cattle-loving people. As the home grazing areas become exhausted and the land dries up, the Dinka move north towards more distant winter

grazing land until the rains come in spring. This makes this corridor a key location for interaction for both the Missiriya and Dinka.

In the past, access to natural resources and conflict resolution was regulated by customary laws within the traditional tribal system. This helped to maintain and strengthen peaceful coexistence and conflict resolution between the two communities. However, in recent years the local peace effort has not been honoured, leading to the agreement being dishonoured and frequent outbreaks of violence. With support from AECOM, USAID, and the office of the U.S. Special

Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, United States Institute of Peace (USIP) managed to identify a successful process that will build two elements critical to any stable society, trust and accountability. The process focused on dialogue and building social cohesion at grassroots level, contributing to wider sustainable peace initiatives and livelihood improvement.

Challenges

The second Sudanese civil war ended in early 2005 with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace agreement, but that accord was put to the test within only a few years. In October 2007, serious fighting broke out in the western corridor, continuing on and off until spring 2008.

The violence put great pressure on the Missiriya because the clashes between the pastoralists and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) occurred within the grazing corridor, the Fiyareen are being restricted from grazing their cattle south of the border. In addition, the SPLA blocked the Missiriya traders from accessing critical markets of Warwara depriving the Dinka Malwal of some essential goods for their livelihood.

Sudan and South Sudan have had numerous local peacebuilding efforts in recent years, yet violence continues largely unabated. Local peace actors are buffered by national level political, economic, and security challenges that can destabilise local efforts. This situation underscores the critical need to better understand local peace processes more generally and to improve them.



INTERVENTION AREA
Conflict prevention, resolution and peace building

LOCATION
The western corridor is the western-most of the three main grazing corridors used by both Sudan cattle herder in South Kordofan and Dinka Malwal of Bahr el Ghazal in South Sudan

STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS
USIP, the members of the Meiram-Warawar Joint Peace Committee, Northern Bahr al-Ghazal state, University of Durham, NGO partners IDCS, Badya Centre, ACDF, NICE, and Al Rashash Organisation. The donor was USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, AECOM, and the office of the U.S. Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan

BENEFICIARIES
Community of Dinka Malwal and Missiriya Fiyareen

Methodological approach

Workshops sponsored by the USIP as well as consultations, dialogues, meetings, and interviews were conducted across Sudan and South Sudan from 2005 through 2010.

The 2010 gathering, known as a Dialogue for Peaceful Coexistence, began with angry young men wagging their fingers at their tablemates.

How was it possible that months of work by numerous local actors (and much expense), the convening of almost three hundred people, the warm salutations, and a consensus document came to naught? More importantly, what can international and local actors do to create more successful, sustainable peace processes in the future? USIP's analysis of the ten conflict-affected communities in South Kordofan and its work in the western corridor has enabled the USIP team to make the following recommendations.

Before a peace process

Conduct a robust analysis of the conflict.

The analysis informs a peace process about critical stakeholders and spoilers, root causes, and past efforts at resolving conflicts large and small. It also highlights elements of both successes and failures. These tools include conflict analysis frameworks, stakeholder mapping, and focus groups.

Get the right people in the room.

Clarity about the contributions of various peace actors provides a 360-degree picture of who is needed in the room to create effective and sustainable agreements, who has the ability to undermine or derail a peace process, and whose consent is necessary for peace agreements to be implemented.

Build skills and trust.

Concepts such as ripeness describe the extent to which a community is ready for peace. Understanding ripeness as well as capacities and resources helps determine the extent of the capacity-building needed. In addition, assessing levels of trust helps inform the need for work on trauma, justice, reconciliation, confidence-building measures, accountability, and transparency.

Identify a vision, goals, and objectives.

If a vision for peace is lacking, it may be challenging to gain commitment and generate the hard work needed to build peace. Likewise, goals and objectives help to outline specific sets of activities necessary to achieving a vision of sustainable peace.

Map out the peace process.

Mapping a process creates a visual reminder to all participants of why even the smallest pieces of a process are needed to achieve a larger outcome. It also allows a community and peace actors to visualise where they are in their journey toward peace.

During a peace process

Gain the support of key stakeholders.

Without face-to-face consultations, it may be challenging, if not impossible, to generate the engagement and commitment to peace that is needed for successful processes. Without the information gained through consultations, one would be implementing a process based on assumptions about stakeholder goals, interests, values, and perspectives rather than direct knowledge. In addition, consultations can build trust and relationships that contribute substantially to the process.

Design an event to achieve goals.

Once an organiser or initiator of a process has determined what they hope to achieve, a brainstorming or collaborative process can help answer the question of how best to go about achieving it. Any event, from a small meeting to a large conference, can have value, but specific events with specific actors might be needed to achieve specific goals.

Select a decision-making model, preferably one that builds consensus.

In conflict-affected areas, victims of violence may see no options except to retaliate or wait for the next attack. Engaging representatives of key stakeholder communities in decision-making processes that reflect broad consensus gives peace a foothold in that community.

Build local empowerment.

Throughout a peace process, training local actors and involving them in leadership roles can contribute to a sense of ownership of the process, to developing an increasing recognition of the needs and feelings of others, and to a sense of trust that all effort will be made to honour and implement commitments.

Ensure transparency and accountability.

Activities such as “town hall” meetings and other community-level presentations, as well as media programmes, help inform and engage stakeholder groups in the process. These meetings can also serve as mechanisms to keep decision makers and implementers accountable, further building trust in each other and confidence in the process.

Sustainability

Given the political and local crisis in Sudan and South Sudan the two communities of Missiriya and Dinka Malual will continue to look for local peace solutions to their problems. Especially the solutions which place a strong emphasis on the transition from conflict to a sustainable livelihood and peaceful coexistence. USIP has played a key role in advocating for this approach and for including livelihood strategies, which are good for sustainable peace. Through this approach, sustainability is ensured by:

Developing the capacity of the local peace makers:

Training in active listening skills will enhance the level of discussion in a group and enable improved communications. Training in negotiation skills and the roles that interests, needs, and values play in conflict resolution can broaden the scope of solutions and can also increase bargaining power. Analysing of conflict helps a peace process in identifying critical actors to include and to avoid. It can help clarify the strengths and weaknesses of stakeholder communities and interest. It can identify key linkages or connectors that bind the warring parties together, as well as narratives or dividers used to mobilise actors to violence.

Having good people in the negotiation room that will negotiate in the interest of the community will build trust. This collaboration during the peace process will ensure the sustainability of peace outcomes and enable the negotiators to adequately consult.

Replicability and up scaling

Map implementation mechanisms into the process. Mapping implementation mechanisms into the process highlights the key idea that a peace conference is truly a peacebuilding process.

Include monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. It has become increasingly clear that international and local peace actors need to document what they seek to achieve, how they go about it, their successes and failures, and how they implement processes for reflection and learning lessons. A central repository for this documentation would be helpful.

Build a communication and outreach strategy. Commitments to transparency and accountability must include disseminating the outcome of peace conferences and peace agreements widely. One way to do this is to have witnesses or participants at the conference from all regions, including rural areas. Other strategies include using local radio and displaying posters at local marketplaces.

Conclusion

The process of reconciling peoples who have perpetrated or been victimised by violence requires considerable time, energy, and commitment. Wounds of past violence do not usually heal without some type of culturally acceptable process. Examples of such activities have included traditional ceremonies or rituals, presentations by local dancers, and sharing meals, but these should be examined for appropriateness and then supplemented. These recommendations will not build lasting peace in Sudan and South Sudan overnight. Almost certainly, without some mutually agreed-upon vision and framework of peace between the two, local peace in either of these countries will prove unattainable. However, certain actions and perspectives, if applied consistently, can improve engagement of communities in finding solutions to their problems, which will contribute to better outcomes and more sustainable impact.

Several guiding principles that should apply to all phases of peace processes need to be emphasised: empowerment, transparency, and accountability.

Additional information

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Local Peace Processes in Sudan and South Sudan

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