

Youth's Role in Peace Building: A Case Study of Gadarif State

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This study in Gadarif State, Sudan, analyzes the crucial role of youth in conflict resolution and peace building efforts amidst the ongoing crisis. Findings reveal that youth, facing economic, environmental, and security challenges, actively engage in peacemaking through initiatives, emergency rooms, and cultural programs, contributing to social cohesion and combatting hate speech. Despite their willingness to build peace, they encounter obstacles like the lack of training programs, limited support, and marginalization in policy-making processes. Recommendations emphasize the necessity of empowering youth through training programs, enhancing government support, and addressing negative perceptions from older generations towards youth contributions. Conclusively, prioritizing youth issues and fostering their participation in peace building initiatives are essential for sustainable peace and social harmony in Gadarif State.

Keywords: peace building, peace issues, youth contributions, youth initiatives, social cohesion, young people, community, emergency rooms

Introduction

There are several international studies mentioning that more than 600 million young people live in fragile and conflict-affected context; young people's voices are not heard, nor included in the processes of conflict resolution and peace building; young people are typically portrayed as, perpetrators of violence or potential 'spoilers' who should be protected from radicalization and extremism. The importance of Sudanese youth female and male's roles and contributions in policy formation has been recommended from several studies such as Carter Center study that provides to Sudan government an essential recommendation on youth involvement in government decision-making by identifying and developing regular channels for them to express their views at the local, state, and national levels. Actions could include holding in-person or online public forums on the transition and peacemaking processes; creating a hotline where youth could provide perspectives via text or e-mail; and strengthening networks for sharing youth views on transition-related issues with government officials and disseminating accurate, reliable information to youth and communities at the local level (Ozcelik, Nesterova, Young, & Maxwell, 2021, p. 4).

Peace is fundamental rights of human being based on justice and law rules, and diversity management and good governance. This study will investigate the key role of youth men and women who play in design and

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implementation of peace building activities and mediators. This study is unique because the researchers are from different disciplines and different universities, which means its combination efforts. There is a study conducted by the University of Glasgow as an output of the project “Youth Led Peace: The Role of Youth in Peace Processes”. They work towards conflict prevention, build peace during conflict, deliver humanitarian support, and participate in post-conflict peace, truth and reconciliation processes (Ozcelik et al., 2021, pp. 11-33).

The study provide many examples of youth roles in peace building in different countries. In Afghanistan, peace process and the role of young men and women, who can often feel disenfranchised from the country's legislature, gathered to discuss how to bring about peace in the country as well as ways to improve education and address unemployment; in Kenya, youth work with secondary school peace clubs to create awareness and impart skills amongst students and teachers in identifying and responding to early signs of radicalization; in Turkey, the Youth, Peace and Security School, first-of-its-kind project brought 35 youth participants aged between 18-29 with experts from academia and NGOs to address the issues of peace building, conflict resolution, the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda, digital peace building, and the role of youth in peace processes; in Rwanda, focuses are put on youth engagement within the community dealing with the past, paving the way for the future, to create spaces for peace, working specifically with youth from survival, ex-perpetrator and returnee backgrounds.

In Somaliland, bringing youth representatives from conflicting parties together, Youth Development and Voluntary Organization (SOYDAVO) described their experience of bringing together a group of young men and women from warring parties and providing psychosocial support and safe spaces to help youth overcome the traumas. In South Sudan, civil society raises the consciousness of an active citizenry through workshops and information sessions. The study findings are insufficient capacity-building opportunities, local resistance to youth leadership and international involvement, socio-economic barriers and financial challenges and the need for protection and psychosocial support (The Carter Center, 2021, pp. 5-32).

In August 2020, the Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports invited The Carter Center to support the training of youth who would serve as independent, impartial observers of the transitional period and peace advisors in their local communities in Sudan. To identify youth who could be engaged and establish a baseline of perspectives, in March and April 2021 the Center conducted field research, including mapping, surveying, and focus groups among a diverse range of youth groups in 500 locations across Sudan. Survey results highlight important trends among youth that are encouraging but also provide early warning to transition officials that there are gaps in how youth engage in and feel about the transition that, if not managed properly, could create significant obstacles to the transition. Although surveyed youth remain highly optimistic about Sudan's trajectory, a majority are not currently engaged in national policymaking. The participation of young Sudanese in political life remains limited.

The Carter Center conducted survey results highlight prioritization of peacemaking. A high percentage of youth surveyed (80%) viewed the government's peacemaking efforts as successful, and focus group participants repeatedly encouraged an acceleration of peacemaking to include groups that did not sign the Juba Peace Agreement. While youth surveyed remain optimistic overall, those from areas without a history of armed conflict are six percentage points less optimistic about the future than those from conflict-impacted areas (73% feel “somewhat” or “very” optimistic in the former compared to 79% in the latter). Greater Darfur is the most optimistic (87%) about the future, compared with the least positive areas of South and West Kordofan (57%),

White Nile and North Kordofan (64%), and Khartoum states (70%). Youth from non-conflict areas said peace-related issues are at times prioritized over general issues of common concern. A possible conclusion is that dividends from peacemaking and peace building are not yet as evident in non-conflict areas. The Carter report survey recommended to create and implement a youth-focused outreach strategy with the aim of sharing information about the transitional and peacemaking processes and engaging their participation. It should include bolstering communication in non-conflict areas about the benefits and dividends of peacemaking. And also it recommended to the international community to keep youth front-and-center, including by seeking their input on initiatives and encouraging Sudanese stakeholders to do the same. This step is vital if Sudan's transition is to be sustainable. After a long period of youth disenfranchisement and victimization, the survey results underscore the continuing, keen interest of young women and men to be included in decision-making related to the transition and to contribute actively to laying the peaceful, democratic foundations of the Sudan (The Carter Center, 2021, p. 5).

There are many studies conducted on peace and conflict at the national and international levels, and the gaps are mainly in methods, disciplines and social contexts. The studies have been conducted in many countries of which the gaps are dealing peace in post violent conflict context, and this study is dealing peace in post conflict context and in different communities, cultures and time zone. And also there is generalization in findings of the study, and methodologically is just focus on consultation process comprising a questionnaire and focus group meeting.

There is theoretical gaps as many theories cannot elaborate journalistically and anthropologically how locality is involved in peace process and bound as social norms. This research is a field study on the role of youth in peace building whereas the study will carry out the issue of peace that is interacting with many factors like development, community culture, political situation and so on, and each factor affects the other. The current study aims to know the role of youth in peace building, in addition to organizations' support for the peace building process, the role of society in that, and how youth participate in policy making so that it becomes a reference for researchers and workers in the field of peace building.

Research Questions

1. How youth influence peace process in study areas?
2. What are the youth contributions in peace building study area?
3. What initiatives and mechanisms youth women and men have to sustain peace both at national and local levels?
4. Examine how youth engage with policy formation?
5. What challenges facing youth contributions in peace building?
6. How to overcome these challenges?

Objectives

1. Understand the role of youth in peace building in Gadarif context.
2. Explain main barriers facing youth contribution in peace building in the context.
3. Investigate the reasons of exclusion and marginalization of young women and men in peace building processes.
4. Identify through scientific methods and initiatives youth and peace building in research areas.

Methodology

A qualitative approach has been applied because it is most suitable for study specially it is based on extensive description of the problem, in addition it helps a researcher gather wide latitude information to fully explain the problem particularly with relating to issues that have been studied, and also it provides an opportunity to informants a detailed account of events in the study. Another advantage is that the qualitative approach gives the informants opportunity to express their own understanding of the problem in their own terms (Poni, 2017, pp. 29-30). The researchers selected a qualitative sample of the four discussion groups, where in-depth discussion sessions were held regarding the topic of the study to describe the problem and discussion with objective, open-ended questions in order to reach results.

Data Collection Approach

Basic data were collected by (10) key informant interviews (KII) mentioned in Annex (1), (4) focus group discussions (FGDs) referred in Annex (2), non-participant observation and others which fit the fieldwork research and help collecting data on the role of youth in peace building. Secondary data were sourced by reviewing existing literature: books, journals, articles, internet and other publications which have been written on youth and peace building.

Data Analysis Approach

Using a qualitative tools analysis through thematic approach is a set of techniques for: identifying categories and concepts that emerge from text; and linking the concepts into substantive and formal theories. The approach was developed by sociologists (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990) and is widely used to analyze ethnographic interview data. The mechanics of grounded theory are deceptively simple: (1) Produce transcripts of interviews and read through a small sample of text. (2) Identify potential analytic categories—that is, potential themes—that arise. (3) As the categories emerge, pull all the data from those categories together and compare them. (4) Think about how categories are linked together. (5) Use the relations among categories to build theoretical models, constantly checking the models against the data—particularly against negative cases. (6) Present the results of the analysis using exemplars, that is, quotes from interviews that illuminate the theory (Bernard, 2006, pp. 492-494). Collected data will be transcribed and thematized every day to guard against any losses.

Study Sampling

The study is qualitative so the sample is not a statistical sample; a systematic random sampling has been applied which helps us be able to analyze the data in simple separately for specific groups and we divided the population study according to their ethnic background; the big advantage of random sampling is that samples drawn in this way are representative of all features of the empirical elements (Flick, 2015, pp. 102-103). The population of the study included female and male youth from the different community ethnic groups, institutions: government and non-government, university students and civil society organizations.

Research Problem

Scientific studies and scholars mentioned that youth empowerment issues and participation of them in peace building are not get enough attention and support, although their roles in preventing and addressing

conflict and violence are essential, which have to be basic sources for sustaining peace and building peaceful communities through peace process period. As Carter Center conducted survey results highlight the special role that youth, particularly young women, played in fostering change is recognized in the Constitutional Charter that establishes the framework for the transitional period, the role and voice of youth, who represent more than 60% of Sudan's population, remain important (Poni, 2017, p. 37). Research problem is lain with understanding the roles of youth in local community peace building and their initiatives and mechanisms to make peace in their areas, therefore research problem would base on pivotal question: What is youth's role in community peace building areas?

Results

Youth in Gadarif State despite economic, environment and security circumstances seek to build peace through initiatives, emergency rooms and sports and culture programs. Youth are the main dynamic for peace building and they have participated through their initiatives and associations trying to create coexistence and fighting abominating missive. The effective methods of problem solving in Gadarif State include the Judia traditional mechanism, its informal mechanism. Emergency rooms that youth made have effective contributions in making social cohesion, and in fighting abominating missive.

The main challenges and barriers that youth face are elders' perceptions towards their contributions, insufficient finance support for youth in working to build peace and their finance need coming by self-payment, barriers in youth political participation.

Table 1

The Role of NGOs and Youth in Peace Building

No.	Organization	Peace building activity	Stockholders / beneficiaries
1	UNDP organization	Workshop training on coexistence	Youth organizations
2	British Council (BC)	Peace education	University students
3	USAID organization	Workshop training on coexistence	Youth organizations
4	DT.GLOBAL organization	Psychological support	IDPS and host community
5	Wisam for development and peace organization	Awareness	Host community
6	Gadarif support organization	Awareness	Host community
7	Jedian organization	Awareness	
8	Asdiqa Salam	Awareness and dialog	IDPs and host community
9	Shoruq culture forum organization	Awareness and dialog	Gadarif youth
10	Housh forum	Awareness and dialog	Youth
11	Tafaol association	Awareness and dialog	Youth organization
12	Afaq organization	Awareness and dialog	Youth associations
13	Peace and development center – Gadarif university	Dialog sessions	Community
14	Ministry of social welfare	Dialog sessions	Community

Note. Source: researchers.

Discussion

The discussion section of the paper delves into the critical importance of enhancing peace building methods and the participation of youth in associations and committees to bolster their roles in peace building initiatives within communities like Gadarif. It underscores the need to address the entrenched social and cultural barriers that hinder youth involvement in public issues. Moreover this study deals with youth

participation of peace building through program to understand their participation in developing policy and youth emergency rooms contributions in social cohesion.

Most participants in focus group discussions (FGDs) said that the effective methods of problem solving in Gadarif State include the Judia traditional mechanism, its informal mechanism, in which the mediators lead the process of mediation through organizing meeting between conflict sides and they provide some advices to them; the mediators usually know the problem causes as one of the FGDs said:

The family conflict would be solved through family methods and community conflict in Gadarif is different depending on the level of the problem sometimes traditional like Judia and also formal method like law. (Flick, 2015, p. 33)

This point agrees with Krishna Kumar (1999) who mentioned that indigenous mechanism has effective role in social reconciliation¹. Other participants of FGDs think that the informal mechanism is less effective in solving conflict because it tends to compensate the conflict parts rather than find strong punishment; this means the problem will remain in the grass root of community, in contrast to the formal mechanism; power of security institutions is also important mechanism; law method has interacted with the community members (Kumar, 1999, p. 5).

In the methods of making peace in Gadarif, the majority of the respondents of FGDs asserted that to make peace we need consciousness, awareness, utilizing many disciplines of science like anthropology, psychology, public relations and religion to build peace, and culture program, media roles such as TV program to reflect all community culture which results in social cohesion. And also through our experiences, other FGDs said government should make law that punishes anybody who use racism to help in making peace. Some FGDs said to discuss the problem causes, and then seek for problem solving. Generally, there are many youth interventions such as the Gadarif intervention for peace coexistence which conducts activities based on arts and awareness, rising different tribal groups as a result of workshop session which aims to build youth capacity in peace building².

Some FGDs respondents mentioned that peace would be built by building trust and transparency among community as one of the FGDs said:

For peace building in Gadarif, it's better to start from the family such as parents educated their children with peace issue, it's best method to build peace from the family level () even schools and universities can play role in peace building through the curriculum and organizing drama session on peace issue³.

Other FGDs respondents emphasize peace building through community initiatives by enhancing coexistence concepts in the area that is expected to be conflict point as early warning; drama programs attract community and we use suitable method to send messages in peace and get more effectivity. And also through awareness raised by social media and conducting workshops, implemented by peace center and ministry of youth in Gadarif in its intervention in Umgargur refugee camp, our message targeted to remember the importance of coexistence and tribal alliances⁴.

It agrees with Musa Adam (2023) who emphasized that the platform of the National Mechanism to Support Civil Democratic Transition has contributed to the restoration of the peaceful civil path by seriously communicating with the parties to the conflict and all relevant entities (Abdul Jalil & Kameir, 2023, p. 8).

¹ Focus group discussion with mix youth and elder in Gadarif State on 4-7-2024.

² Focus group discussion with female youth only in Gadarif State on 4-7-2024.

³ Focus group discussion with female and male youth in Gadarif State on 3-7-2024.

⁴ Focus group discussion with mix youth and elder in Gadarif State on 4-7-2024.

Several respondents of FGDs asserted that legal procedures often can play a role in peace building by making control on opposite people who raise problem in community because the formal parties have power and facilities to make control and punish criminal. The law protects mediator, helps the peace initiatives through considering human rights and encourages people to talk and gives people freedom, and also makes equal between women and men to build peace in society. As one of the FGDs referred,

We remember when there is a conflict between two tribes in Gadarif, the security device has separated between the conflict parts, this is what I consider as participation of police in peace building, but I don't remember any activity of peace building conducted by security and legal institutions. This role includes conflict solving, they arrest those who have basic role in conflict and punish them according to their role in specific conflict, the judge institutions also play important role in implementation of punishment of the offenders⁵.

Many FGDs respondents said that there are several supporters of peace building methods such as government ministry of social welfare, police, courts, NGOs, traditional leaders and civil society, youth as arts group, community accepting peace building activities, education curriculum in education institutions and experiences, NGOs. The whole of these parties must play role in the one line with coordination, each role completes other⁶. A study of Atta El-Battahani (2022) disagrees with this point, which referred now there are signs that some youth groups such as "Ga diboun" (very angry), "Milouk al-Ishtibak" (kings of confrontation), particularly among the 12-19 age group, are not afraid of confronting the security forces by throwing stones and using tear gas, not to mention roadblocks⁷. As it is mentioned in the Figure 1 below.



Figure 1. FGDs with young university students and their ages from 19 to 24 years.

The most FGDs respondents mentioned that there are several youth initiatives have been accepted from the Gadarif community through providing workshop and developing youth with peace concepts, community

⁵ Focus group discussion with female university students in Gadarif State on 3-7-2024.

⁶ Focus group discussion with mix female and male university students in Gadarif State on 3-7-2024.

⁷ Focus group discussion with mix youth and elder in Gadarif State on 4-7-2024.

dialog, social media video live and hashtag, songs, psychological support, cultural forums, awareness on the importance of coexistence, sports, like matches between youth. Others said coffee session, cinema, drama, television advertisements, song, playing games relevant to peace as culture, sports and arts tools have been used in peace building by youth in Gadarif State (El-Battahani, 2022, p. 17).

Many respondents in KII asserted the importance of youth roles in peace building considering youth dynamic in peace processes while they are the most damaged with war as one of them said youth have a big role in building peace when they find safe space. Nowadays, youth are most affected by conflict and they get direct harm from war and crises consequences specifically economic crises, when youth play their roles and find safe space, they will find solutions which fit community context and they activate real peace building tools⁸.

The researchers confirm that the methods have been used in Gadarif for solving conflict like traditional methods depending on Omdah and shikh such as Judia and Rakouba; Gadarif community accepts and finds support from formal and informal institutions. Bakhitah said that sports programs play important role in getting chance and safe space for opposite group to be together with limited rules and behavior, also it is a chance for social communication between different communities whose relations have been disconnected because of war, which helps youth and children address the negative perception spread within different background like religion to achieve tolerance.

The most FGDs respondents asserted that the subjects and issues undertaken by youth in Gadarif State are session and emergency rooms to build peace and fight abominating missive, for example racism is one of the subjects because racism leads to abominating missive. Equality, Islam religious education, coexistence issues and culture diversity, justice are discussed as the root causes of tribal conflict, as one of the FGDs mentioned:

Discussing the root causes of tribal conflict, to seek for the way of solving. They consider also the violence inside the university including GBV, and increase awareness on how the student girls can face such violence⁹.

Many FGDs participants referred that youth in Gadarif State have many contributions in making peace and fighting abominating missive through youth associations and initiatives activation among community, raising communication and awareness between them. Some respondents said that community provides advices for youth, and encourages their activities. Several respondents emphasize that youth in Gadarif have political participation through initiatives, awareness campaigns and associations; they work as one group within different culture and political ideological background¹⁰. It agrees with Carter Center survey (2021) that asserted female respondents were nearly three times more likely than their male counterparts to indicate that “equal opportunities for women” is an important feature of democracy (49% vs. 18%).

More than one in three women surveyed listed gender equality as one of the top five priorities. Across regions—and despite diverging views on other issues—youth representatives from resistance committees and civil society organizations consistently reported that the government should prioritize addressing unemployment, the rising cost of living, and basic service provision, including electricity, education, and health care. Survey respondents expressed strong interest in training—on public communication, social media, and the

⁸ Focus group discussion with female youth only in Gadarif State on 4-7-2024.

⁹ Interview with a doctor and peace building actor in age 39 on 4/7/2024.

¹⁰ Focus group discussion with female university students only in Gadarif State on 3-7-2024.

constitutional and peace-making processes—to allow them to effectively conduct advocacy and participate more fully in the transition¹¹.

Regarding the effective and efficient roles between male and female youth in Gadarif, many FGDs respondents said that female youth have more effective roles because NGOs encourage them to work and concern their rights and they have opportunities more than males; each role completes other such as emergency rooms that male and female youth together play effective role. Others said females as mothers have effective roles in children socialization, women fundamental rights of community; they are more effective and through them we can build peace; each group has its features, and female tends to think about the problem and issue in different way they may make mistakes. On the other hand, some respondents said that male has effective participation, because male has wider space to participate compared with female (The Carter Center, 2021, pp. 40-42).

KII said that fighting abominating missive, achieving coexistence and making peace are the most issues and subject youth work on, specially Gadarif State have more than 100 tribes; due to the flew of IDPs and spread of abominating missive and ethnic diversity, youth in Gadarif State work through workshop session and initiatives to create safe environment and coexistence¹². People in Gadarif support youth and their initiatives; youth have effective dynamic in social issues program, although their political participation depends on the political party loyalty or their cooperation with the regime. In peace building, roles of female youth are more effective than male in some services.

The majority of the FGDs mentioned that the opportunities for youth are available through the situation of community support, social media and initiative availability. Many respondents emphasize that youth utilize and benefit from the opportunities through elder experience, learning lesson and mobilization of peace building principles¹³. Regarding this point of view, it agrees with Carter Center survey (2021) which highlighted that government officials, civil society actors, political leaders, and other stakeholders need to increase avenues and opportunities for youth to engage in public life¹⁴.

Many respondents in FGDs asserted that youth in Gadarif State face several challenges in communication such as different language—in some areas people do not speak Arabic, political situation, elder perception towards youth, insufficient finance support and marginalization from government, government procedures and also lack of training opportunities. The most FGDs mentioned that youth face all those challenges and barriers to access peace through education, awareness, more practice and consciousness to know the way of intervention (The Carter Center, 2021, p. 6). The whole barriers that youth face in the study area are similar with the Asli Ozcelik and others' study (2021) that pointed insufficient capacity-building opportunities, local resistance to youth leadership and international involvement and socio-economic barriers and financial challenges¹⁵. On the other hand, two KII respondents said that:

Right now there is no more opportunity for youth to make peace due to current situation, it's unhelpful if youth activities are just some workshops and training sessions from NGOs and volunteer work, despite of that and the limitation

¹¹ Focus group discussion with mix youth and elder in Gadarif State on 4-7-2024.

¹² Focus group discussion with female youth only in Gadarif State on 4-7-2024.

¹³ Interview with journalist and actor in age 30 on 3/7/2024.

¹⁴ Focus group discussion with mix youth and elder in Gadarif State on 4-7-2024.

¹⁵ Focus group discussion with female youth only in Gadarif State on 4-7-2024.

of opportunity, economic, security and environment barriers, youth try to support IDPs camps by collecting money and self-effort and NGOs support some youth initiatives and programs¹⁶. (Ozcelik et al., 2021, pp. 13-16)

Several FGDs participants mentioned that the security, political and economic circumstances hinder youth roles in peace building due to lack of finance support, government support for initiatives such as sport and youth ministry, lock down; if youth want to conduct any activities, they should get permission from security office which makes that as challenges. Youth face security and economic challenges; main challenges are the economic barriers, because working in peace building and other relevant issues is voluntary work. Other FGDs respondents consider the security, political and economic circumstances as incentive for youth roles in peace building, for example Gadarif government supported medicine access initiative, encouraged youth freedom; without freedom there is no creativity and no development, but with positive freedom, international NGOs support for national organizations to work in peace issues¹⁷. As Lovise Aalen (2020) mentioned that challenge of the youth now is to transform the tactics that lead to the revolution to lead and work politically; cross the political spectrum, youth activists have no trust in established political parties. Parties are still led by elders and their programmes and ideologies are based on former generations' conflict lines. Even the youth sections in the parties are led by old men (Aalen, 2020, p. 3).

Several FGDs respondents said that there are many civil society organizations and non-government, safe environment that support youth program in peace building, specialist working on peace issues for example; international, national and local organizations have been mentioned in Table 1 above. All of them support working in peace building, like organizing training for university students in peace education, and international NGOs such as future team organization also have organized training for youth in peace building; development and peace organizations also implement training in peace issues such as dialog¹⁸. This point disagrees with Munzoul A. M. Assal (2016) that shows we need to be aware of excessive romanticization of the role of civil society in peace building (Assal, 2016, p. 19).

KII mentioned that in Gadarif there are several NGOs and civil society which support youth in fighting abominating missive and achieving coexistence between host community and refugees; particularly Gadarif is safe place, and youth have used different tools such as youth training which opens the door for youth to play effective roles; all those make youth initiatives have good impact on community. Knowledge gives youth the key and political empowerment; the whole needs safe context¹⁹. Two KII respondents said that:

Peace building needs infrastructure to achieve social stability such as safe environment for youth. Right now safe environment is not available due to the bad political, security and economic situation, but it is not default to create different tools which help in making psychological stability for example culture tools which related with sports and arts like cinema that proposed to peace building and learning and journalist writing, scientific research writing with focusing on youth and actors²⁰.

The most FGDs respondents asserted that youth in Gadarif State have strategies that work through to make peace by collecting data to conduct studies in peace, social media and forums such as Housh forum, Sihir

¹⁶ Interview with a university student and peace building actor in age 29 and with a pharmacist and emergency rooms actor in age 37 on 3/7/2024.

¹⁷ Focus group discussion with mix university students in Gadarif State on 3-7-2024.

¹⁸ Focus group discussion with mix youth and elder in Gadarif State on 4-7-2024.

¹⁹ Interview with journalist and emergency rooms actor in age 32 on 4/7/2024.

²⁰ Interview with a university student and peace building actors in age of 29, 24 on 4/7/2024.

Jobraca forum, strategically divided in timeline for short, mid and long term, association and conduct awareness session and any activities that support peace building issues. Some respondents referred that youth initiatives plan and conduct activities such as cultural forums²¹.

Many respondents said that youth participate in developing policy but it is very limited; they attend meeting, government such as social welfare ministry invites youth in their meeting, and at the level of NGOs, they participate in pre-survey which is implemented by NGOs, and plan to organize the activities. Other respondents said youth have participated only when there is election, due to the security risk in youth participation in public issues, as one of the FGDs mentioned:

Before revolution of 2019 there was little participation in developing policy, but after that the youth have participated actively in such activities; I know that there is participation with the chief of state government. But generally it's little participation²².

The majority of the FGDs respondents asserted that emergency rooms that youth made have effective contributions in making social cohesion, coexistence program, in fighting abominating missive, and in creating safe spaces for children and providing psychological support for family; emergency rooms have many activities for IDPs and integrate between host community and IDPs as it is referred in Table 2 below, despite that it exposed many challenges specially security risk, conducting psychological support to IDPs (Saadia, 2023, p. 3). Youth efforts in peace building in the Gadarif context agree with Mohammed Saadia research (2023) that shows young people have the potential to drive positive change and promote lasting peace²³.

Table 2

Emergency Rooms Activities on Peace Building

No.	IDPs activity	Host community activity	Location
1	Fighting abominating missive	Psychological support	Gadarif city
2	Psychological support	Fighting abominating missive	Gadarif city
3	Safe spaces for children	Social cohesion	Gadarif city
4	Social cohesion	Safe spaces for children	Gadarif city

Note. Source: researchers.

Many FGDs respondents mentioned that youth initiatives play effective role in fighting different diseases, Green October initiative for fighting cancer and training workshop, fighting drugs among community, Housh and Tafaol initiative in peace awareness, Afaq initiative in social cohesion, peace friends, and the whole existing civil society organization had worked in peace issues and they focus working on amalgamate IDPs with host community for example if running psychological support program for IDPs, there will be the same program running for host community, charity interventions, such as providing water and food to the IDPs, and medicine tools. And also conduct cultural days as it did mention in Table 3²⁴.

²¹ Focus group discussion with female university students only in Gadarif State on 3-7-2024.

²² Focus group discussion with female youth only in Gadarif State on 4-7-2024.

²³ Focus group discussion with mix university students only in Gadarif State on 3-7-2024.

²⁴ Focus group discussion with mix youth and elder in Gadarif State on 4-7-2024.

Table 3

Youth Initiative Activities

No.	Youth initiative	Activity	Location
1	Afaq	Social cohesion	Gadarif city
2	Sihir Al jobraca	Peace awareness	Gadarif city
3	Team future organization	Fight drugs among community	Gadarif city
4	Asdiqa Al salam	Peace awareness	Gadarif city
5	Takatof	Psychological support program	Gadarif city
6	Rahaf for development	Water and food	Gadarif city
7	Shoruq forum	Fighting different diseases	Gadarif city
8	Aidy Bida	Peace awareness	Gadarif city
9	Green October	Fighting cancer	Gadarif city
10	Housh and Tafaol	Peace awareness	Gadarif city

Note. Source: researchers.

Regarding lessons and stories of success, one of the FGDs referred that:

There is a successful story regarding youth initiative through Gadarif support organization initiative to organize day for peace building in Gadarif rural area, in south Gadarif in Dehima village there are still Gadarif youth working on that initiative to build peace, the activities are music, drama.

Recommendations

Gadarif government must put consideration and more attention on youth and their issues, specifically youth have abilities and many project programs and many things they want to do but they do not have potential and finance support. There are many organizations working on peace issues but the gap is still big; youth need organizations to follow up what has been done by youth and provide enough support.

Community and government institutions should put clear rules to treat the causes of hate speech, and this will be effective if it is declared in the Sudanese constitution. Everyone should support in spreading peace principals, particularly in social media platform.

Conclusions

This study as a joint discipline research, within challenges that had faced the researchers which related to the war situation in Sudan attempted to answer the research questions. The study emphasizes the pivotal role of young people in peace building efforts within communities like Gadarif, showcasing their capacity to contribute meaningfully despite facing significant social and cultural barriers. The research underscores the importance of recognizing and empowering youth in Gadarif areas to foster inclusive and sustainable peace building initiatives at the grassroots level. Despite the challenges posed by war and insecurity in Sudan, the study highlights the resilience and determination of the researchers in overcoming obstacles and generating valuable insights into the role of youth in peace building.

Challenges

There were many difficulties and limitations in undertaking this research such as: budget shortening; war situation makes the value of Sudanese currency eroded, through high inflation and rising prices, which had

serious effect on research planning and application. First plan was to study three localities in Gadarif State and west Darfur (about six villages), but due to budget constraints the study areas were focused on only Gadarif State.

Time limitation was a serious challenge faced the researchers in the whole stages of the research processes; time is key of any success, because war situation makes life very complicated such as electricity disconnection, and internet and phone signals collapse. According to the researchers' experiences, challenges in time management have been addressed. However, this research has some limitations, as the research has been conducted under very difficult circumstances of context, being affected by war.

Acknowledgments

We certify that the research paper submitted by us is an outcome of our independent and original work. We have duly the input of all authors and contributors, and all the sources from which the ideas, data, information, text or other intellectual property have been taken. The research paper is free from any plagiarism and has not been submitted elsewhere for publication.

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Ethical Considerations

Voluntary participation and written informed consent has been considered and respondents has been given an option to refuse to participate in the study. To this end promise and principle of anonymity together with confidentiality have been assured after names of respondents were not requested and emphasis will note that the information would be treated in aggregate and purely for research purpose.

Assessing possible violations and damages arisen from doing our project has been done before we start and respect the current regulations of data protection considered.

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Annex (1) Focus Group Discussion (FGDs)

No.	Date	Type sample	Group name	Participant numbers
1	3/7/2024	University students	Females only	7
2	3/7/2024	University students	Mix 6 females and 4 males	10
3	4/7/2024	Youth organization and associations	Female youth only	7
4	4/7/2024	Civil society organization	Mix 4 females and 3 males, elder and youth	7

Annex (2) Key Informant Interview (KII)

No.	Gender	Age	Education level	Role	Location	Date
1	Male	34	University	Doctor and peace building actor	Gadarif	3/7/2024
2	Male	39	University	Actor in peace building	Gadarif	3/7/2024
3	Female	23	University	Student and community actor	Gadarif	3/7/2024
4	Female	37	University	Pharmacist and emergency rooms actor	Gadarif	3/7/2024
5	Female	29	University	Student and community actor	Gadarif	3/7/2024
6	Female	24	University	Student and peace building actor	Gadarif	3/7/2024
7	Female	26	University	Student and peace building actor	Gadarif	4/7/2024
8	Male	31	University	Engineer and peace building actor	Gadarif	4/7/2024
9	Male	32	University	Journalist and emergency rooms actor	Gadarif	4/7/2024
10	Female	30	University	Journalist and emergency rooms actor	Gadarif	4/7/2024