

Promoting Traditional Ways of Handling Land Disputes in Western Uganda

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ABSTRACT:- The discovery of oil in Uganda created a lot of anxiety; citizens expected employment opportunities and general improvement in standards of living. However, this has not been the case, at moment, there is a massive increase in land-related conflicts particularly land grabbing, a huge backlog of court cases, and corruption leading to the delay and denial of compensation. Efforts by various players have not yielded expected results, the local actors who experience the conflicts directly have been largely sidelined and traditional conflict resolution practices have fallen into disrepair. This article explores traditional conflict resolution and peacebuilding infrastructures in the Bunyoro sub-region of western Uganda. The research used an action research approach with three phases – exploring the problem, planning and implementing an intervention and evaluating the outcomes. In the exploration phase, data was collected using focus group discussions with local people and in-depth interviews with key informants. In the intervention phase, an action team was formed to help resolve land-related conflicts in their communities, using traditional conflict resolution approaches. The short term outcomes indicate that local peacebuilding capacities were enhanced and that many land-related conflicts can be resolved using traditional conflict resolution approaches.

Key words-Traditional, land disputes, Western Uganda, Promoting

I. INTRODUCTION

Globally, more than 1.5 billion people are living in areas affected by violence, wars, and crimes, a situation that has curtailed achievement of the 2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Therefore, a post-2015 agenda must acknowledge and specify sustainable peacebuilding and state-building goals (Tsuma, Pentori and Mashiko 2014: 9). The central goal towards peacebuilding efforts in the 21st Century should aim at localizing peace by partnering with local actors to put more vitality into the peace process (Funk, 2012:7; 2012:392). While increasing evidence reflects the failure to resolve conflicts by externally driven international intervention due to the absence of local actors' involvement, the evidence also shows that participation of local actors in peacebuilding has contributed tremendously to sustainable peace. This is seen, for instance, in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda (MacGinty and Richmond 2013: 763); Musingafi *et al.* 2011: 75; Moix 2016: 59).

Relatedly, Yousufzai and Goha (2005) cited in Nizar *et al.* (2013) also observed that many achievements have been realized by the efforts of local practitioners and peace builders in the communities they serve using traditional approaches and indigenous institutions. Nizar *et al.* (2013: 106) further contend that it is of great significance to enhance local actors because they are cheap to maintain, they are always within the community, they are reachable, and can quickly be involved if there is any peacebuilding activity. Reliance on the local will of the people and active participation begets much stronger local identification. There is a need for utilizing and empowering indigenous resources in averting conflicts in our societies (Funk 2012:392). In Zimbabwe, great achievements in regard to conflict resolution and general peacebuilding in rural areas have been realized under traditional leaders because they are regarded as 'custodians of traditional law' (Rukuni *et al.*, 2015:75). In Rwanda, though the hearing of genocide crimes under the *Gacaca*, a traditional court ended in 2010, an immense work was done. Today, *Abunzi*, local mediators in post-genocide, are still doing an indispensable job in executing the agenda of local ownership of conflict resolution in their communities (Mutisi 2012:41). In the Ethiopian region of Afar, traditional elders have done work in resolving conflicts among clans and tribes (Kwesi and Fantaye 2012: 89).

Michell and Hancock (2012: 2-3) rightly assert that, most often, much concentration has been put on prevention, peacekeeping, peacemaking and humanitarian assistance. However, what has been lacking in most initiatives is enhancing local communities to prevent conflicts on their own in the future. Thus, it is always prudent for the local communities to be equipped with knowledge and skills so that possible future violent conflicts are handled early before they escalate. In the same vein, Funk (2012: 392) concurs by adding that efforts directed towards peacebuilding, in most cases, have alienated local actors, local expectations have been ignored and, in the end, they have replaced one set of problems with more problems, not solutions.

In Uganda, traditional approaches have been used in peacebuilding in northern Uganda, an area which was torn apart by Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). According to Bainomugisha and Tumushabe (2005:50), during LRA conflict in Northern Uganda, the religious leaders were instrumental on the issues of conflict resolution and played a key role. The traditional approach of peacebuilding was undertaken using *Mato Oput*, a mechanism for ensuring law and order in the Acholi region (Murithi 2002:292). In Buganda, *Ekika*, a kinship group, entails an endogenous system of conflict resolution; it has been at the forefront of peacebuilding within Baganda, the largest ethnic group in Uganda, since the pre-colonial era (Sentongo and Bartoli, 2012:14). In the Bunyoro sub-region and the Albertine region in general, both formal (local council leaders and district land tribunals) and informal (cultural institutions and elders) mechanisms are helping in resolving conflicts in the local communities (International Alert 2013: 37).

II. EMERGING THEMES

There are eight themes drawn from the interviews and discussions. Some themes have emerged from the poor state of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms while others emanate from the consequences of new challenges caused by the discovery of oil in the Bunyoro region.

Theme one: Traditional peacebuilding infrastructures in Bunyoro are in a state of inertia

It was observed that infrastructures for peace, right from the family level up to the highest level (cabinet), in the Bunyoro kingdom leadership, are inactive. Much as the structures are in place, it has been found that they have not been active in peacebuilding work in the region. It is possible to attribute this to the modern affluent life that people have adopted and who consider traditional ways as archaic and out-dated. Boege (2006: 06) argues that most traditional societies have changed under the influence of modern realities. These include the Europeans, capitalist expansion, colonialism, imperialism, and globalization ... and it would be misleading and unrealistic to think of customs as unchangeable and static.

Apart from the clan leaders who have been involved in mediating some cases within their communities, the rest have not been functioning fully. Indeed that is why there is a myriad of unresolved conflicts in the region. In addition, there is an increase in the backlog of cases in the magistrates' courts because platforms responsible for managing and resolving these conflicts have not done so. During an interview with a police community liaison officer in September 2017, he noted that,

If other structures responsible for resolving community conflicts were active in Bunyoro, we wouldn't be having many cases of violence here at the police. But because they are not doing what they are supposed to do, that's why you see the police yard is full of people coming to lodge their complaints to us. At a certain point, we should be sending back some of the cases which are not criminal in nature to be resolved by, let us say, the community courts, but they are not functional at all.

The point of departure here is to have as many peacebuilding infrastructures as possible in the form of local peace committees such as Bunyoro Traditional Peacebuilding Action Team (BTPAT), rejuvenated clan courts and sub-county courts to be supported by the government so that the emerging conflicts in the region are nipped in the bud. It is feared that these conflicts emerging in oil resource areas must be dealt with as early as possible lest Uganda becomes the next victim of the oil resource curse. Nevertheless, Olanya (2015: 49) affirms that the Government of Uganda is working diligently to avoid the resource curse by devising *The National Development Plan* with the main theme of "Growth, Employment and Socio-Economic Transformation for Prosperity." Through this undertaking, the government is aiming at using oil revenues to transform Uganda into a middle-income country by 2040 through investing in infrastructures and industrial development.

An aspect which receives little attention in the National Development Plan is the conflicts which have dramatically increased since the advent of oil. Refurbishing existing conflict resolution mechanisms and building new architectures for peace is also essential if Uganda is to avoid the resource curse.

Theme Two: Local Councils, the Police and CSOs have overshadowed traditional peacebuilding work in the Bunyoro region

As earlier noted, whenever there is a conflict or dispute, most people prefer settling it with the local council one leaders, the police and/or some CSOs such as Healthy Communities Uganda (HCU) and Navigators of Development Association (NAVODA), which are involved in mediation. HCU is a company based in Hoima

town; it focuses on the provision of Alternative Dispute Resolution Services (Mediation). They work with various players in the Judiciary, and other Public and Private entities to enable them peacefully to resolve conflicts without the necessity of Litigation in Courts. Their mission is to provide holistic empowerment services to individual persons, communities and institutions through professional guidance and counseling, conflict resolution strategies, peace initiatives, and peace building programs for peaceful and harmonious Ugandan society. NAVODA is a community-based organization in Hoima. Its mission is to navigate with communities for sustainable and holistic development without compromising the rights of future generations. The question that emerges is: What has caused people to lose trust in the traditional peacebuilding approaches? From the insights and observations made during this study, it was evident that the kingdom management has been largely passive. Other kingdoms have tried to reclaim their properties which were taken by the government when they were abolished in 1976. According to Asiimwe (2018), Tooro kingdom negotiated the return of their assets. A report by Kabengwa (2018) indicates that the President and Buganda officials agreed on the return of kingdom property. However, the Bunyoro kingdom has not put enormous pressure to reclaim its assets, nor have they been returned.

An official from one of the CSOs operating in the region in September 2017 commented as follows, I think, to be honest with you, traditional systems have been killed off by the new local council system. For example, now that we have LC 1 structures, I am very sure people would listen more to the LC1 chairperson than to the elder in the village. It does not mean that traditional systems have been wiped out but, rather, as a kingdom, it is expected and [you] would think of them being active, but they are more passive ...

Second, the kingdom officials have been cited in land grabbing sagas. For instance, it was found out that part of the Bugoma Forest has been sold by kingdom officials and used for housing and shop development. Consequently, the former kingdom prime minister was fired for, among other reasons, leasing the kingdom land for three billion Uganda shillings (approximately \$840,000). Other anecdotal information indicates that the said kingdom officials have been selling land and share the spoils with the king himself.

Other kingdom officials have been involved in partisan politics, something which compromises their integrity and consequently loses the trust of the people. One CSO employee commented in September 2017 as follows, The kingdom has become political. Some members within the kingdom are politicians, especially when there are cultural celebrations (*empango*), you find that the organizers are from one [political] party, yet the kingdom is for all the people from all religions, all tribes in Bunyoro, but it is segregative. It has also been cited in issues of land grabbing. Some officials have been mentioned in land grabbing [deals], so it cannot be trusted with deciding or mediating disputes. Such individuals cannot stand on their feet to decide your fate or mediate your case. In other words, our kingdom has lost power and authority to comment because many times they are perpetrators.

Such actions and allegations have tainted the image of the kingdom, and thus it becomes difficult to trust them with conflict management in the region.

Third, civil society organizations have been more active than kingdom authorities. As a result of the oil discovery, most CSOs have mushroomed and they are more active in advocacy. This gives them more clout than the kingdom. Thus, most of the peacebuilding work is being done by civil society organizations and local council leaders. So, whenever there are conflicts which should be handled by Bunyoro traditional authorities, these are taken to the Local council I (LCI) chairperson, LCII or LCIII because, as earlier noted, the kingdom peacebuilding infrastructures that are supposed to handle small conflicts in the community are weak and considered obsolete. This is in stark contrast with other kingdoms like Buganda and Acholi where the kingdom authorities are on top of everything, despite the presence of a strong civil society fraternity in the central and northern regions respectively. All these factors, in one way or the other, have rendered the kingdom authorities untrustworthy with conflict resolution responsibilities.

Theme Three: Ignorance of the law by traditional leaders

During the implementation stage with the action team, it emerged that clan leaders who have been resolving conflicts have not been aware of civil laws and land laws. Through BTPAT mediations, it was common to find people dwelling on the decisions of the clan leaders following the death of the household head. The decisions they made have often backfired and led to conflicts, and consequently, have ended up in the courts. For instance, one clan leader confessed during the training of the kingdom officials that,

For me, to be honest, I have been involved in mediating land conflict and disputes between families, but I have not been aware that in a situation where the head of the family dies without a written will, the law requires that an official widow is supposed to have 15% of the entire family land and again share the remaining 85% with the rest, such as the children of the deceased. I have just learned this from these facilitators of today's training.

This clearly shows that civic education about the laws governing the country is needed. The 1995 Constitution and some important Acts could be translated into local languages so that the common person in the

remotest area can know the basics. If a seven-person team has been able to create a considerable impact through the mediation of land conflicts, awareness creation, and training in a short period within communities in Hoima district with limited resources and time, then the government can do better. The government could commission CSOs to educate people in rural communities focusing on themes such as land rights in Uganda, land tenure systems; land transaction and protection of land rights; succession and inheritance rights; land administration; and land justice. Spreading such knowledge will build transparency, trust, justice and a sustainable resolution of conflicts.

Theme Four: Communalism and trust over land have broken down

Although in the past, land was allocated freely to those in the community, it has become a source of conflict because of blurred demarcation lines and the land ends up being claimed by two or more parties. In the past, the first person to live in an area was supposed to show where his land stopped and give another land to the second, likewise, the third person would give the fourth person and the fourth to give the fifth and so on. That said, precise boundaries were not defined. The subsequent generations are now in conflict because, whereas people in the past generations had strong trust in each other, to the extent of signing blood-pact agreements (cutting the body and licking each other's blood), this is not the case with the current generation. The past generations had no clear boundaries because they treasured friendship more than land and everything was owned communally. The story of one elderly man illustrates their point well:

In the past, because wild animals were rampant during those days, whenever someone came looking for land, you could show him where you stop so that you live near each other, whenever [you were] attacked by the wild animals, you would be assured that you have a neighbor. Whenever you make an alarm, he would come to your rescue with his sons. However, it was hard to know the exact boundaries, since land was so vast and we were treating each other as brothers. In some cases, women would invite their brothers to come and live near where they are married so that there are many relatives in the neighborhood. Look at me, I came here because my sister was married here in Bunyoro in the 1950s, and she invited me to come from Kigezi region (where we used to cultivate in the mountains) to come and occupy free, flat and fertile land here. I never had any complaints with my sister or brothers-in-law. [Yet] some misunderstandings have come recently between her grandchildren and my grandsons after giving them their portions of land.

The above narrative clearly indicates that land has become a more treasured property to the detriment of relatives and persons we live within the neighborhood. In Bunyoro, as a result of the oil, land has become a major trigger of disputes within and between families that were never previously experienced in the region when communalism and trust prevailed.

Theme Five: The truth about conflicts and solutions are known best by the community members, not outsiders

The BTPAT team observed consistently that truth is almost always known by the community members. Much of the mediation success resulted from the narratives by community members and elders whenever they were allowed to speak. And apparently, whenever the two parties were asked to comment on the narratives by the community members and elders, they usually agreed with them, leading to a conclusion of the case. Indeed, those cases with less involvement of the community members who understood the conflict were always harder to mediate, while some are still pending. In addition, there are people within the community who, when given a chance to talk about what they know, revealed issues which hitherto were previously not known to the mediators. We learned to treat such information with care, lest it derailed the case. In this respect, we carried out consultations among team members that we popularly called 'clinicking'.

Another important aspect noted is that, much as traditional mediation methods evolved a long time ago, some procedures are no longer practiced in Bunyoro – for example, ritual ceremonies after a successful mediation. At the end of mediation, reconciliation of the parties was done by hugging each other, shaking hands, taking pictures with members of the family from both parties, drinking beer and encouraging the rest of the community members to join them in merry making.

The following two themes emerged as a result of the poor state of traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution in Bunyoro:

Theme Six: Key players in the oil and gas industry are operating in isolation

The oil companies operating in the region, for instance, the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC), Tullow Oil Uganda (TOU), and Total are operating largely independently from local government, CSOs, and the kingdom authority. They are all operating in isolation. The national government is not involving other actors in its dealings with the oil companies. Local government, kingdom authorities, CSOs, and the local communities were largely left out during decision making and planning, and continue to be ignored during operations. The ideal situation should be that the government, the oil companies, civil society organizations, the

kingdom authorities, the local communities and other actors in the oil sector should be engaged rigorously in order to reap from the oil benefits. A system of formal and on-going dialogues between companies, various levels of government, and kingdom authorities need to be established. Without transparency, the door is open for corruption and exploitation. As one interviewer in September 2017 commented, There are political figures involved in displacement and eviction of the people. For instance, in Rwamutonga, there are unknown people allegedly coming from State House who connive with the security officials to arrest and evict land owners adding that they are following 'orders from above'.

A report by the Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group CSBAG (2017: 09) indicates that people have been displaced with minimal or no compensation at all, the most affected districts being Hoima and Buliisa. All these issues have emerged as a result of government and oil companies side-lining other stakeholders during planning.

Relatedly, on the issue of environment, it has emerged that there are government officials involved in the destruction of the forests. One youth leader in Kyangwali on 10th November 2017 was quoted as saying,

We were given hot-lines by Mid Western Region Anti Corruption Coalition (MIRAC) to report any person ferrying timber from the forest. Some months ago, I saw a lorry ferrying timber from the forest. However, when I sent the message, there was no response. I decided to alert the police and the police managed to stop the truck. To my surprise, the truck was later released by the police and when I asked the police officer why, he told to me he got 'orders from above' to let go of the lorry. It was later discovered that the owner was an official from State House who is currently a minister.

Theme Seven: Land compensation in Bunyoro region is hugely problematic

Land has proved to be the single largest driver of family, individual, community and tribal conflicts in most parts of Uganda. When it comes to the Bunyoro region where oil has been discovered, land compensation has become a major challenge and is likely to be a source of more impending conflicts in Bunyoro region. Some people have been given less compensation money which has caused more havoc and, up to now, some people have rejected two million Uganda shillings per acre as compensation (approximately \$556) and are insisting on at least three million Uganda shillings per acre (approximately \$833). Some are yet to be compensated, while others have not been given anything at all. This is one of the reasons why the government has decided to introduce a land bill so that the government can acquire land from individuals and compensate them when it has already acquired the land. Ideally, to be compensated, the value of the land has to be taken first; then, the value of the developments on the land is also considered, including buildings, structures, crops, and cultural heritage sites. The District Land Board compiles a list of rates of compensation for the crops, buildings, and structures. Compensation is then paid based on the current market price of the land in the area established annually by the District Land Board, (Section 59 (1) (e) & (f) of the Uganda Land Act, (Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, 2017: 10).

Currently, according to the Ministry, the government has created the Land Acquisition Act CAP 227, which gives the minister responsible for land powers to acquire land compulsorily where the owner is not willing or ready to sell by agreement to authorized bodies (an acquiring authority). The chief government valuer is the Assessment Officer who advises the government on the compensation amount. Throughout this study, the issue of compensation was a common topic during the radio talk shows. Callers expressed dissatisfaction and bitterness about how compensation to people whose property was affected by the government projects was handled. Moreover, during community sensitization meetings, community members were very negative on the issue of compensation. The words of one elderly man in Kigorobya sub-county reflect the feelings of many people:

The Uganda of tomorrow will be survived by those who work in government because there are no longer people-centered development projects. What the common man owns is being taken away by the government. When you look at what the government is doing to the common person it is saddening: instead of pulling us out of biting poverty, they are doing the opposite. Sometimes, we regret why oil was discovered in this region ... Instead of bringing a smile on our faces, we are losing what we worked for over many years. Can two million Uganda shillings help me acquire enough land for my family of eight members?

Compensation has stirred domestic violence in homes which have received compensation money. Rather than planning to buy another land for the family, some men have often misused it by marrying more women and resorting to prostitutes, while others are reported to have bought music systems and other wasteful expenditures. At the end of the day, when the money is finished, their households are full of anger and conflict. However, in most homes, men are untouchable because Bunyoro is a patriarchal society. All these have created conflicts which emanate from oil.

Theme Eight: Poor psychological, emotional and general health abound in the rural communities

It is clear that, along with oil, has come conflict and disputes. To the extent that these have not been resolved, peaceful co-existence in Bunyoro communities has broken down and led to an increase in psychological and emotional problems. According to the information obtained from the Police Lands Desk during interviews, an average of ten land cases are lodged daily. Imprisonment has increased due to conflicts turning into assault, malicious damage, some of which have been masterminded by the land grabbers who snatch land from the genuine owners when they are in prison.

III. THE INTERVENTION

This section describes three intervention activities organized at the second phase of the research, that is: to design and implement a program to strengthen the traditional infrastructures in respect to the handling of land disputes. It began with an inception planning and training workshop. Subsequently, an action team of seven voluntary participants: one clan leader, one elder, one kingdom official (the Bunyoro Kitara Public Relations Officer [PRO]), two CSO members, one Local Council One (LC1) leader, and one female member was formed with the name Bunyoro Traditional Peacebuilding Action Team (BTPAT). The role of the author was to facilitate their meetings and field activities. The action team, of which the author was a key member, was intended to devise a complete action plan with intervention activities, to agree on objectives, reporting mechanisms, and to identify and reflect on the achievements and challenges of the intervention. Its objectives were to raise awareness of the traditional peacebuilding approaches as a viable means of resolving emerging land-related conflicts, rather than using formal courts, so that community members could bring their conflicts to traditional kingdom leaders, the BTPAT, or any elder or clan leader in their communities.

Strengthening Traditional Mediation

This was the first activity implemented by BTPAT. Mediation under Bunyoro tradition undergoes five phases: an initiation stage, a preliminary stage, the actual mediation stage, the agreement drafting stage and, finally, the reconciliation stage. The first stage is the initiation stage where one of the conflicting parties (the complainant) approaches the chief/elder or clan leader seeking assistance. The chief/elder or clan leader listens carefully in order to see if the case is within his mandate. The complainant gives the names and contact details of the other party (the defendant), and the mediator gets in touch with the defendant through the phone or by writing and invites him/her to a preliminary meeting. If the defendant comes, (they may refuse) their side of the story is heard as well. With this, the mediator tries to understand the conflict and how it can be resolved. The mediator also determines whether the case is civil or criminal and whether it can be mediated or must be referred to the formal courts.

The second stage is the preliminary stage, which starts with a briefing on the ground rules, plus any other communication relevant to the parties. Under this stage, there is working together with both conflicting parties after they have accepted mediation, with the main goal of restoring the hitherto good relationship that existed between them. It entails further understanding the background of the conflict and agreeing on the terms and conditions, such as where and when to kick-start the real mediation process.

The third stage is mediation. At this stage, the complainant is given a chance to speak first. Their version is heard by everyone present. Mediators know that parties speak many words, but they must listen carefully and identify the real conflict and problem in the dispute. Then the defendant gives their version of the case. Again, the elders and clan leaders listen carefully to everything said. While listening, the mediators take notes which, in the end, help to identify the real problem and also find out the truth. "What is the real dispute/conflict?" and "What exactly is the problem?" are usually asked of both conflicting parties again and again. It was observed that some parties report land disputes when actually they have other issues or conflicts. It is at this time that the mediators dig deep and cross-examine to get to the gist of the matter. Once the complainant has finished explaining, the other party is given equal time to narrate.



At the locus during mediation of 35year-old boundary conflict in Totema Kyangwari, Hoima district

The next stage is agreement signing. Assuming a mutually acceptable agreement is reached, it is then documented. In cases of land-related boundary conflicts, visiting the specific locality follows in order to establish the proper boundaries. The last stage is reconciliation. The conflicting parties are invited by the chief mediator to come over hug, shake hands. Local beer is brought and members of the community start to drink in jubilation.

After mediation, a consent note detailing all points agreed upon is signed by all parties and witnesses. However, everything is done in order to reconcile both parties and to prevent the breakdown of the relationship between them and their communities. While giving judgment between the conflicting parties, the focus is always put on reconciliation and, throughout the court judgment, efforts were always made to prevent the breakdown of the relationship between conflicting parties.

Promoting Traditional Mediation via Radio

A second activity implemented by the BTPAT in Hoima district was the promotion of traditional mediation via radio. In so doing, sensitization messages focused on the advantages of traditional mediation approaches and the disadvantages of using formal courts of justice. During sensitizations, and at the end of the sensitization campaign, the emphasis was put on encouraging all people with land disputes to file them either with traditional leaders for mediation or to the BTPAT to receive quick and affordable justice, instead of going to the police or formal courts.

During radio talk shows, listeners were given a chance to call into the studio for discussions, clarifications, and sometimes for directions where we could be found. Many callers thanked us for this initiative of reviving traditional approaches of mediation

Promoting Traditional Mediation via Community Meetings



A community sensitization meeting in Nyamirima, Hoima district

During sensitization meetings, the team encouraged people to forward their grievances to the BTPAT for mediation instead of going to the police or formal courts. We emphasized peaceful co-existence amongst tribes living in Bunyoro. Our message was clear: all tribes need to tolerate each other for the betterment of the region. Stress was also put on the need to utilize the advantages of being a multi-ethnic region, showcase cultural diversity to attract investors as one of the means of fighting poverty in the region.

The meetings provided an opportunity for communities to be sensitized on the role of Bunyoro Kitara kingdom in peacebuilding in the region and holding the kingdom accountable. In order to increase acceptability, this topic was purposely handled by the elders and clan leaders as members of the action team whom we thought had more clout, are more recognized and their message accepted in the society than the rest of the action team members.

IV. CONCLUSION

It is important to be cautious about generalizing these results reported here but they clearly add to other studies which show that traditional conflict resolution practices and infrastructures can be successfully applied to non-traditional conflicts. Such practices need the encouragement and support of government at all levels.

The BTPAT team employed traditional methods of conflict resolution and the involvement of individual team members was motivated by their strong desire for peace and harmony in their communities. In addition to the direct benefits to those embroiled in disputes over land, there was a personal benefit to the action team members in the form of recognition as peace actors. A clan leader in the team intimated that as a result of the research, the kingdom authorities are now planning to rejuvenate their conflict resolving activities by greater collaboration with clan leadership. Finally, it is likely – perhaps almost inevitable – that outsiders will focus on the technical aspects of reintegration whereas most of the challenges identified in this research involved resolving conflicts and restoring relationships. As Fisher and Zimana have argued, a technically good project can certainly facilitate reintegration but the sustainability of such projects relies essentially on transformed relationships. Jean-Paul Lederach's various writings on conflict transformation – involving truth, mercy, justice, forgiveness, and reconciliation - is essential reading for those concerned with social harmony (Fisher and Zimana, 2009).

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