Women in Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Peacebuilding in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State: Success and Challenges

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Abstract
This paper examined women in Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and peacebuilding in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, focusing on the success and challenges. It adopted a survey research design, gathering data from primary sources. Quantitative data were collected using questionnaires, whereby a sample size of 225 respondents was randomly selected from five communities: Maisandari, Ngomari, Bulabulin, Hausari, and Bulumkutu; while qualitative data were gathered through Focus Group Discussions, and Key Informant Interviews, particularly with two women organisations-Allamin Foundation, and Amina Dikwa Foundation, and the Ministry of Women Affairs. Descriptive statistics, including percentages, frequency distribution, and tables, were used for quantitative data analysis, while thematic analysis was employed for the qualitative data. Theoretically, the Feminist peacebuilding theory was used. Findings revealed that, women in NGOs record significant success in advancing peacebuilding efforts, advocating for gender-sensitive peace agreements, indulging in community dialogue and reconciliation, establishment of local support network, and participating in community-based development projects. However, they face numerous challenges, including exclusion from formal peacebuilding processes, cultural and societal restrictions, and limited access to resources. The paper concludes that despite these challenges, the success of women in the peacebuilding efforts within the area cannot be downgraded, and that there is thus, the need for viable policy frameworks that address these challenges with a view to enhancing even more success and

effectiveness in their peacebuilding efforts. The recommendations called for increased support for women's participation, addressing cultural and religious barriers, creating safe spaces for women, strengthening legal and policy frameworks, and encouraging community based initiatives.

Keywords: Women, Non-Governmental Organisations, peacebuilding, success, Challenges,

Introduction

Maiduguri Metropolis has experienced insurgency and protracted conflict characterised by violence, displacement, and socio-economic instability, starting with the Maitatsine crisis (1980-1983) and the Boko haram insurgency (2009-to date). This has led to the destruction of properties and loss of thousand lives, thereby affecting the most vulnerable members of society as a result, many children have been orphaned, and women have been widowed leading to trauma, hunger, and depression (Olatunji, 2024). It is estimated that there are more than 158 million widows across the globe out of which 15 million are Nigerians, among which 55,000 were within Maiduguri from 2009-2013 (United Nations, 2024). In the face of this widespread devastation in Maiduguri Metropolis caused by the Boko Haram conflicts, the pursuit of sustainable peace is a complex endeavour that requires the active participation of all societal actors. As a result of this, the pursuit of peace becomes multifaceted endeavour, requiring the engagement of various stakeholders across society. Among these, women in Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have emerged as crucial stakeholders of change.

Despite being the most affected victims, including gender-based violence and the loss of livelihoods, women have demonstrated remarkable resilience by actively engaging in grassroots peacebuilding initiatives. These efforts are crucial in fostering reconciliation, promoting community resilience, and building a foundation for sustainable peace in the city. Women's Organisations in Maiduguri operate at the nexus of community mobilization, advocacy, and service delivery, leveraging their unique position to address the root causes of conflict and promote sustainable peaceful relationship.

The peacebuilding initiatives provided by women in Non-Governmental Organisations in Maiduguri are numerous which include: Conflict mediation and reconciliation, capacity building and empowerment through skills acquisition training, education, and economic empowerment programmes, these advocacy and Policy engagements address the specific needs of women and promote gender equality in post-conflict reconstruction and development efforts, community mobilization, and awareness campaigns for peacebuilding and promoting a culture of tolerance and peaceful coexistence (Field Work, 2024).

While women can serve as peacebuilders, especially in conflict settings, performing different tasks, given the dynamics of conflicts, especially in Nigeria's northeast, empirical exposition on women's efforts in peacebuilding in NGOs is sketchy. It is against this background that the paper undertakes to examine women in Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and peacebuilding in Maiduguri Metropolis, with particular focus on the success and challenges. By so doing, this

paper aims to highlight how these women's initiatives are instrumental in strengthening community stability, resolving conflict, and promoting socio-economic empowerment in a post-conflict environment; and, by grasping the challenges that these women often encounter in the course of peacebuilding efforts, this paper pinpoint the specific areas around which future policy framework is needed so as to strengthen their active participation in this regard. To clarify the focus of analysis, the paper is organized into seven sections viz; introduction, conceptual clarification, study area, theoretical framework, data presentation and analysis, discussion of findings, conclusion and recommendations.

Conceptual Clarification

It is imperative to acquaint the readers with a proper understanding of the concepts around which the entire discourse is based. In this wise, two major concepts present themselves for clarification in this paper. These concepts are peacebuilding and Non-Governmental Organizations.

Concept of Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding is the identification and support of measure needs for transformation towards more sustainable, peaceful relationship and structures of governance, so as to avoid a re-lapse into conflict (UN, 2007). Peacebuilding is also perceived as attempts to conquer the structural, relational and cultural contradictions hastily causing conflict, especially in strong support of peace making and peacekeeping. Inspirations of peacebuilding are drawn from developmental imperatives facing mankind and conflict resolution initiatives (Ifesinachi, 2013).

Again, efforts of peacebuilding may be imported from outside the system thereby overlooking the structures and cultures of the parties concerned. The approach to the efforts of peacebuilding could be bottom-top and or top-bottom. Whichever base the efforts are directed to, the end results must be in respect, promotion and use of local human and socio-cultural resources. Peacebuilding has assumed such a prominent position in the minds of the international community members and all peace lovers of the world; hence the call for everyone to contribute in making peace a reality (Lamidi, 2019).

Thus, the United Nations (UN) Security Council enshrined peacebuilding as its number two-point agreement under the provision of chapter VI of UN charter. It is understatement to state that the aim or purpose of peacebuilding is to prevent conflict and create peace. A suggestion was made that peace has two different concepts; negative peace and positive peace. Negative peace refers to mere absence of violence but positive peace is said to be a stable social equilibrium in which the surfacing of new disputes cannot escalate into violence and war (Johnson & Johnson, 2011).

The emphasis on finding and resolving the root cause of conflict is criticized on the grounds that it is an overtly negative view of social conflict. Conflict may contribute to a dynamic and innovative society once it is not violence. Since it increasingly acknowledged that social conflict is inevitable, some approaches to Peacebuilding have shifted the emphasis from root causes of social conflict to good governance and peaceful settlement of dispute machination and

empowerment are key drivers of sustainable development and peace around the world (African Union, 2023).

Be that as it may, it is the opinion of this paper that, peacebuilding is an initiative that promotes peace by addressing the roots of conflict, preventing and mitigating all forms of violence, and fostering just and inclusive societies. This vision of inclusion is predicated on the inclusion of all members of society, particularly Women and strives to promote a culture of peace (George *Et al*, 2019).

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

According to the UN Department of Global Communications (2019) Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) is any non-profit, voluntary citizens' group, which is organised on a local, national or international level. Task-oriented and driven by people with a common interest, non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) perform a variety of services and humanitarian functions, bring citizen's concerns to Governments, monitor policies, and encourage political participation at the community level. NGOs provide analysis and expertise, serve as early warning mechanisms and shelp monitor and implement international agreements, and the Sustainable Development Goals (UN, DGC 2019). Therefore, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are independently from any Government, typically working on a wide range of social, political, environmental, or humanitarian issues. NGOs are often larger in scale, with formal structures and international or national reach. They may work in advocacy, service delivery, research, or policy development and often rely on donations, grants, or Government funding to support their activities. NGOs can be involved in both local and global initiatives. NGOs are Independent of Government influence.

NGOs tend to have a more formal, international scope and often focus on larger-scale or regional interventions. While many NGOs do engage in Peacebuilding, they might not always have the same level of localized, community-based impact as CSOs in certain contexts because CSOs is a broader term that refers to any non-Governmental, non-profit Organisations that operates in the civil society sector. This includes a wide range of organizations, from grassroots, local groups to larger national or international bodies. CSOs can include community-based Organisations (CBOs), advocacy groups, trade unions, professional associations, foundations, and NGOs. The defining characteristic of CSOs is that they work to advocate for or address the needs of the public, usually at a local or national level. CSOs can be small, grassroots, or large, with national or international reach Include a variety of organizations, such as community groups, advocacy groups, and professional associations primarily focused on community involvement, social change, or advocacy CSOs May or may not receive external funding, the Differences between NGOs and CSOs is that: NGOs are typically larger, more formal Organisations that may operate at national or international levels, and often have specific funding sources (like grants from Governments or international organizations) while on the other hand, CSOs is a broader term that encompasses any non-Governmental, non-profit Organisations working within civil society, which includes smaller, locally-focused groups and larger international entities. All NGOs are CSOs, but not all CSOs are NGOs (Götze, 2011).

Study Area

Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State, is located at latitude 11.50N and longitude 13.50E, covering an area of 50,778 square kilometers. It is the largest city in northeastern Nigeria. Locally known as "Yerwa," Maiduguri is both the largest and oldest city in Borno State. Situated along the seasonal Ngadda River, which eventually flows into the Fikkin swamps near Lake Chad, the city was founded in 1907 as a military outpost by the British and has since grown rapidly, with a population now exceeding one million. Historically, Maiduguri was part of the Kanem-Borno Empire, which flourished for centuries.

As of the 2006 census, Maiduguri's population was recorded at 1,197,497, of which 257,607 were women (NPC, 2006). More recently, the World Population Review (2024) estimated the city's population at 870,201. The city is home to various ethnic groups, including Kanuri, Hausa, Shuwa, Bura, Chibok, Marghi, Fulani, and other groups from Nigeria and neighboring countries such as Cameroon, Niger, and Chad.

Maiduguri enjoys a generally favorable climate, with an average annual maximum temperature of 34.8°C. The hottest months are March and April, with temperatures ranging from 30°C to 42°C. The city experiences cooler weather during the harmattan season, from November to January, which is the coldest period of the year. The Kanuri are the predominant ethnic group in the city, although English is the official language. Maiduguri has long been a hub of learning and commerce, enjoying a peaceful reputation as the "Home of Peace." However, it has also experienced prolonged periods of conflict, beginning with the Maitatsine uprising in 1980 and continuing through the Boko Haram insurgency that began in 2009 and persists to this day (Olatunji, 2024 in Fatima, 2025).

Theoretical Framework

While a modicum of theories have been propounded in a bid to provide comprehensive explanation and justification for women's inclusion and participation in peacebuilding globally, nationally, and locally, this paper however, begs to limit itself to the feminist peacebuilding theory.

Feminist Peacebuilding Theory

The success of women in NGOs in peacebuilding in Maiduguri metropolis can be related to feminist Peacebuilding theory, which emphasizes the importance of incorporating gender perspectives and recognizing the agency of women in peace processes.

The feminist peacebuilding theory was developed and founded by Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), one of the first feminist writers in the liberal tradition. And it was proposed by Olympe de Gouges in 1791 in China. Mary Wollstonecraft is seen by many as a founder of feminism due to her 1792 book titled, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* in which she argues that, class and private property are the basis of discrimination against Women, and those women as much as men needed equal rights (Mary 1792 as cited in Fatima, 2025). Angela Davis work titled, *for African Feminists* (2007 as cited in Fatima, 2025) viewed that, feminist peacebuilding theory is a movement that calls for social, economic and political equality between men and Women. It is

both an ideology and practice that should be exemplified and amplified. Therefore, Feminism and Peace (building) have intersecting values and provides an environment within which the feminist principles should be adhered to, respected, practiced and shared.

Feminist peacebuilding theory advocates for the inclusion of diverse voices, particularly those of Women, in Peacebuilding efforts. Women in NGOs in Maiduguri actively work to ensure that women's perspectives are integrated into peace processes, contributing to a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to building sustainable peace (Women's International Peace Centre, 2020).

Feminist Peacebuilding theory highlights the need to address the root causes of conflict, including gender-based inequalities and violence (Cynthia, 2008). Women in NGOs in Maiduguri often go beyond addressing immediate conflict symptoms; they tackle underlying issues such as social, economic, and political inequalities, aligning with the feminist perspective of addressing structural injustices for lasting peace. Feminist Peacebuilding theory emphasizes collaborative and transformative approaches to conflict resolution (W.I.P.C, 2020). Women in non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Maiduguri engage in dialogue, mediation, and community mobilization, embodying a collaborative ethos that seeks transformative change at the individual, community, and societal levels (Interview, Hajiya Allamin 25/04/2024)

Feminist Peacebuilding theory recognizes the importance of considering intersecting identities and experiences. In the context of Maiduguri, where conflict affects women differently based on factors like ethnicity, religion, and socioeconomic status, women in NGOs adopt an intersectional approach, addressing the unique challenges faced by diverse groups of women. By aligning with feminist peacebuilding theory, the success recorded by women in NGOs in Maiduguri reflects a commitment to a more inclusive, holistic, and gender-responsive approach to peacebuilding that recognizes the agency of women in shaping the trajectory of post-conflict societies.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The data for this study was obtained through a structured questionnaire, in which 225 respondents were drawn from five communities within Maiduguri Metropolis: Maisandari, Ngomari, Bulabulin, Hausari, and Bulumkutu. These communities were selected for their direct relevance to the paper and because they have been heavily impacted by the insurgency, thereby providing a representative sample of the broader population. Additionally, two women-focused organizations were included in the study: the Allamin Foundation for Peace and Development, and the Amina Dikwa Foundation for Humanitarian Support. To ensure the reliability and validity of the data, the Borno State Ministry of Women Affairs was also involved, providing an official governmental perspective on the findings, particularly concerning the women's Organizations.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1: Distribution of Demographic Information of the Respondents =225

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	78	34.6
	Female	147	65.3
	Total	**225**	**100.0**
Age	15-24years	17	7.6
	25-34years	85	37.8
	35-49years	78	34.6
	50-65years	35	15.6
	66-above	10	4.4
	Total	**225**	**100.0**
Academic Qualification	Primary	21	9.3
	Secondary	74	32.9
	Tertiary	41	18.2
	Quranic	86	38.2
	None	3	1.3
	Total	**225**	**100.0**
Occupation	Farmer	27	12.0
	Business	51	22.7
	Civil Servant	45	20.0
	Unemployed	14	6.2
	Student	34	15.1
	Full Time House Wife	54	24.0
	Total	**225**	**100.0**
Marital Status	Single	75	33.3
	Married	112	49.8
	Widow	27	12.0
	Divorced	8	3.5
	Separated	3	1.3
	Total	**255**	**100.0**

Source: Field Work, 2026.

The demographic distribution of respondents in Table 1 provides insight into the characteristics of individuals involved in peacebuilding through women-led NGOs in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria. This data highlights gender representation, age groups, educational backgrounds, occupations, and marital statuses, each of which can influence the impact of women in peacebuilding activities.

1.1 Gender: Female respondents are observed to have a greater representation than the male counterpart in the study area whereas, 65.3(n=147) where female and 34.6 (n=78) where male. This table clearly indicates that female respondent are more accessible than male, this also reveals that Women are more vulnerable than men and active participant in Peacebuilding activities, therefore, the engagement of women in Peacebuilding may results to the unique contributions Women bring particularly through NGOs.

1.2 Age: Most respondents are aged 25-34 (37.8%) and 35-49 (34.6%), indicating a primarily young-to-middle-aged demographic actively engaged in peacebuilding. This age range often aligns with increased social responsibility and active civic participation, essential in community-driven peace initiatives. Fewer respondents are under 24 (7.6%) or over 65 (7.1%), suggesting that peacebuilding efforts largely rely on a younger, working-age population.

1.3 Academic Qualification: The majority of respondents have secondary (32.9%) or Quranic education (38.2%), while tertiary education holders constitute 18.2%. This range of educational backgrounds is notable, as it shows a mix of formal and religious education among peace builders, reflecting the cultural and educational diversity of Maiduguri. The presence of respondents with primary or no formal education (9.3% and 4.0%, respectively) suggests that NGOs include individuals from varied educational backgrounds, which could influence their approaches to peacebuilding.

1.4 Occupation: Respondents come from various occupations, with the largest groups being full-time housewives (24.0%), businesspersons (22.7%), and civil servants (20.0%). The significant presence of housewives highlights Women's contributions to peace efforts from within the home and community. Businesspersons and civil servants are also actively involved, bringing skills from their professional lives into peacebuilding success. A smaller representation of farmers, students, and unemployed individuals adds to the socioeconomic diversity within NGOs.

1.5 Marital Status: A large portion of the respondents are married (49.8%), with singles (33.3%) making up the next largest group. This demographic reflects a range of social responsibilities and potential perspectives on community stability and peace. Widowed, divorced, and separated individuals (combined total of 16.8%) may bring unique insights into the consequences of conflict, emphasizing the need for peace and stability.

Table 2: Successes Recorded by Women in NGOs in Peacebuilding in Maiduguri Metropolis n = 225

S/n	ITEMS	SA	A	UD	D	SD	Total
1.	Women NGOs advocate for the inclusion of gender-sensitive provisions in peace agreements, ensuring that Women's rights concerns, and perspectives are addressed. Their efforts contribute to more inclusive and sustainable peace agreements that benefit all members of society	94 (41.7)	81 (36.0)	20 (8.8)	15 (6.6)	15 (6.6)	225 (100.0%)
2.	Women-led NGOs facilitate community dialogue and reconciliation initiatives that bring together diverse including victims and perpetrators of conflict in Maiduguri Metropolis	95 (42.2)	78 (34.6)	20 (8.8)	19 (8.4)	13 (6.0)	225 (100.0%)
3.	Women NGOs engage in advocacy that promote gender equality, human rights, and Peacebuilding in Maiduguri Metropolis	91 (40.4)	81 (36.0)	20 (8.8)	20 (8.8)	13 (6.0)	225 (100.0%)
4.	Women NGOs create many networks in Maiduguri Metropolis	90 (40.0)	83 (36.8)	22 (9.7)	17 (7.5)	13 (6.0)	225 (100.0%)
5.	Women NGOs engage in community-led development and reconstruction projects that address the root causes of conflict, promote infrastructure in Maiduguri Metropolis	96 (42.6)	77 (34.2)	21 (9.3)	18 (8.0)	13 (5.7)	225 (100.0%)
6.	Women NGOs ensuring that policies, programs, and interventions take into account the impact of conflict on Women, men, girls, and boys in Maiduguri Metropolis	91 (40.4)	80 (35.5)	22 (9.7)	20 (8.8)	12 (5.6)	225 (100.0%)
7.	Women-led NGOs succeeded in bringing the perpetrators of conflict and policy makers together for advancing Peacebuilding efforts in Maiduguri Metropolis	92 (40.8)	81 (36.0)	22 (9.7)	16 (7.1)	14 (6.2)	225 (100.0%)

Source: Field Work, 2026.

Table 2 highlights the successes recorded by Women in Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Peacebuilding efforts in Maiduguri Metropolis. A majority of respondents (77.7%) agreed that Women NGOs advocate for the inclusion of gender-sensitive provisions in peace agreements. This ensures that Women's rights concern and perspectives are addressed, which contributes to more inclusive and sustainable peace agreements. Women-led NGOs also play a crucial role in facilitating community dialogue and reconciliation initiatives, with 76.8% of respondents (42.2% strongly agree and 34.6% agree) recognizing their efforts in bringing together diverse groups, including victims and perpetrators of conflict. Furthermore, 76.4% of respondents (40.4% strongly agree and 36.0% agree) affirmed that Women NGOs engage in advocacy that promotes gender equality, human rights, and Peacebuilding. These advocacy efforts help advance broader societal goals of equality and justice in the Peacebuilding process.

Women NGOs have also succeeded in creating numerous networks in Maiduguri Metropolis, with 76.8% of respondents (40.0% strongly agree and 36.8% agree) acknowledging the establishment of collaborative platforms that enhance their collective impact in Peacebuilding efforts. This success emphasizes the importance of building networks to strengthen the influence of Women-led organizations. In terms of community-led development and reconstruction, 76.8% of respondents (42.6% strongly agree and 34.2% agree) highlighted that Women NGOs are actively engaged in projects that address the root causes of conflict and promote infrastructure development in Maiduguri Metropolis. This shows the tangible impact of Women-led Organisations in addressing the socio-economic consequences of conflict. Another significant success is the involvement of Women NGOs in ensuring that policies, programs, and interventions take into account the impact of conflict on all genders and age groups, with 75.9% of respondents (40.4% strongly agree and 35.5% agree) recognizing this contribution. It reflects the importance of considering the differential impacts of conflict on Women, men, girls, and boys in the development of interventions. Finally, 76.8% of respondents (40.8% strongly agree and 36.0% agree) acknowledged that Women-led NGOs have succeeded in bringing perpetrators of conflict and policymakers together, advancing Peacebuilding efforts in Maiduguri Metropolis. This underscores the critical role of Women-led NGOs in facilitating dialogue and fostering peace.

Supporting the findings above are insights from Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) conducted with community stakeholders, which highlight the successes of Women in Peacebuilding initiatives within Maiduguri Metropolis, including contributions from Women leaders and youth leaders.

The Chairperson of Allamin Foundation for Peace and Development during interview stated that:

> reconciliation meetings organized by women have been instrumental in rebuilding relationships between divided groups. These efforts contribute significantly to the healing process, particularly in post-conflict or post-dispute situations, where trust needs to be re-established.

Similarly, a Staff of Amina Dikwa Foundation for Humanitarian Support stated that:

> A campaign led by Women from their Organisations to promote peaceful coexistence among displaced persons in a specific community was truely commendable. The campaign was highly impactful, significantly reducing tensions and fostering a sense of community among displaced groups.

Also, a Staff of Ministry of Women Affairs emphasized:

> Women's instrumental success in advocating for gender-sensitive provisions in a recently developed local conflict resolution framework. This achievement represents a significant step toward more inclusive and equitable policies for Peacebuilding.

One of the Community Leader in Maisandari Ward was recounted:

> How women in this ward successfully mediated an inheritance dispute between two families. Their intervention not only restored harmony but also prevented the conflict from escalating into a larger community issue, showcasing their ability to resolve sensitive matters effectively. Women in NGOs also play a role in resolving conflict and creating a harmony in the society, example these Organisations succeed in resolving a dispute between a divorcee and the husband because they have children and they got marriage 20 years ago, this is a great achievement.

Table 3: Challenges of Women in NGOs in Peacebuilding in Maiduguri n = 225

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	UD	D	SD	Total
1	Women are often excluded from formal peace processes and decision-making forums, limiting their ability to influence outcomes and shape policies in Maiduguri Metropolis	90 (40.0%)	65 (28.8%)	24 (10.6%)	26 (11.5%)	20 (8.8%)	225 (100.0%)
2	Women peace builders in Maiduguri Metropolis are at risk of experiencing gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, assault, and intimidation, both within conflict-affected communities and during peace-building activities	91 (40.4%)	74 (32.8%)	21 (9.3%)	22 (9.7%)	17 (7.55%)	225 (100.0%)
3	Cultural issues and societal norms (e.g., Women are not allowed to settle conflicts among couples) may restrict	88 (39.1%)	75 (33.3%)	22 (9.7%)	20 (8.8%)	20 (8.8%)	225 (100.0%)

	Women's participation in Peacebuilding, as they are often perceived as less capable or knowledgeable than men in conflict resolution and security						
4	Women-ledpeace-building Organisations in Maiduguri Metropolis lack adequate resources and funding to implement projects, provide community support, and sustain activities long-term	91 (40.4%)	73 (32.4%)	21 (9.3%)	23 (10.2%)	17 (7.5%)	225 (100.0%)
5	Lack of training opportunities hinders Women's ability to develop skills and knowledge necessary for effective Peacebuilding, including mediation, negotiation, conflict analysis, and leadership in Maiduguri Metropolis	83 (36.8%)	80 (35.5%)	22 (9.7%)	21 (9.3%)	19 (8.4%)	225 (100.0%)
6	Religious norms may restrict Women's freedom of movement, speech, and association, limiting their engagement in peace-building activities and interactions with diverse stakeholders	94 (41.7%)	74 (32.8%)	20 (8.8%)	21 (9.3%)	16 (7.1%)	225 (100.0%)
7	The insufficient number of Women in non-Governmental Organisations in Maiduguri Metropolis is a challenge to Peacebuilding	82 (36.4)	85 (37.7)	19 (8.4)	21 (9.3)	18 (8.0)	225 (100.0%)
8	Women peace builders face security risks, including threats, harassment, and attacks, particularly in Maiduguri Metropolis	91 (40.4%)	88 (39.1%)	16 (7.1%)	16 (7.1%)	14 (6.2%)	225 (100.0%)
9	Women's contributions to Peacebuilding are often overlooked or undervalued in Maiduguri Metropolis	93 (41.3%)	82 (36.4%)	18 (8.0%)	17 (7.5%)	15 (6.6%)	225 (100.0%)

Source: Field Work, 2026.

Table 3 highlight challenges that women in NGOs face in peacebuilding efforts in Maiduguri Metropolis. The responses suggest that women encounter significant obstacles in their involvement and effectiveness in Peacebuilding, despite their active participation. A notable challenge identified by 68.8% of respondents (40.0% strongly agree and 28.8% agree) is the exclusion of women from formal peace processes and decision-making forums, which limits their ability to influence outcomes and shape policies. This reflects the broader systemic barriers women face in political and peacebuilding spheres, where their contributions may not be fully recognized or integrated into formal mechanisms. Furthermore, more than 73.2% of respondents (40.4% strongly agree and 32.8% agree) acknowledged that women peace builders are at risk of experiencing gender-based violence, including sexual harassment and intimidation, both within

conflict-affected communities and during peace-building activities. This highlights the vulnerability of women in the peacebuilding process, where their safety and well-being are often compromised.

Cultural issues and societal norms are also a significant challenge. Approximately 72.4% respondents (39.1% strongly agree and 33.3% agree) identify that women are perceived as less capable or knowledgeable than men in conflict resolution and security, which restricts their engagement in peace processes. This perception is further compounded by restrictive gender role, as women are often discouraged or out rightly forbidden from resolving conflicts, particularly in domestic settings, further marginalizing their role in broader peace efforts.

Lack of resources and funding for women-led peace-building organisations is another critical challenge, with 72.8% of participants (40.4% strongly agree and 32.4% agree), highlighting that women's organisations in Maiduguri Metropolis struggle to secure the necessary support to implement projects and sustain long-term activities. This limitation undermines the sustainability and impact of Peacebuilding initiatives led by women.

A significant 71.1% respondents (26.7% strongly agree and 44.4% agree) observed that training opportunities are also lacking. This implies that the absence of training hinders women's ability to acquire necessary skills in mediation, negotiation, conflict analysis, and leadership. Additionally, religious norms restrict women's freedom of movement, speech, and association, making it difficult for them to engage in peace-building activities and interact with diverse stakeholders. These restrictions are acknowledged by 74.5% of respondents (41.7% strongly agree and 32.8% agree).

The insufficient number of women in NGOs in Maiduguri Metropolis is also recognized as a challenge, with 74.1% of participants (36.4% strongly agree and 37.7% agree), reiterating that this limits the success and effectiveness of peacebuilding efforts. This issue reflects the broader underrepresentation of women in NGOs and decision-making bodies, further perpetuating gender inequalities in peace processes.

Security risks faced by women peace builders, including threats, harassment, and attacks, are highlighted by 79.5% of respondents (40.4% strongly agree and 39.1% agree) as another significant challenge, underlining the dangerous environments in which women work while contributing to peace efforts in conflict-affected regions. Lastly, the undervaluation of Women's contributions to peacebuilding in Maiduguri Metropolis is a recurring issue, with 77.7% of respondents (41.3% strongly agree and 36.4% agree) stressing that women's role are often overlooked or not sufficiently recognized, despite their significant contributions.

It is germane to corroborate the above quantitative findings with Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) conducted with community stakeholders to provide a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by women in the peacebuilding process in Maiduguri Metropolis. Thus, an interview conducted with the chairperson of Allamin Foundation for Peace and Development testified that**:**

> Cultural norms discourage women from participating in public affairs. Many women face resistance from their families and communities when they step into Peacebuilding role. This cultural stigma limits Women's opportunities to engage effectively in peacebuilding, even when they possess the necessary skills and motivations to make a positive impact.

Similarly, the Chairperson of Amina Dikwa Foundation for Humanitarian Support pointed out that:

> Lack of training and resources for women involved in Peacebuilding is a critical challenge that cannot be ignored. Even when women are eager to contribute, they often lack the tools, knowledge, and capacity to mediate effectively. Without proper training or resources, their efforts can fall short, and their potential to drive sustainable peace is hampered

Adding to the above statement, a Staff of Ministry of Women Affairs stated that:

> The cultural and societal barriers that limit Women's participation in Peacebuilding activities is indeed, disturbing. These barriers are compounded by the lack of funding for Women-led initiatives. As a result, many Women are unable to scale up their Peacebuilding efforts, making it difficult for them to have a broader impact on their communities. Without financial support, Women-led projects often struggle to expand and achieve long-term results.

Likewise, a Community leader in Bulumkutu Ward stated that:

> Some men do not take women seriously, which discourages women from fully contributing to Peacebuilding efforts. This attitude not only undermines Women's role but also perpetuates gender inequality within the community, preventing Women from having a meaningful impact.

Discussion of Findings

The findings highlight the notable successes of women in NGOs in advancing peacebuilding efforts. Women have successfully advocated for gender-sensitive provisions in peace agreements, ensuring that women's rights are recognized and protected. This advocacy for inclusive policies has led to more comprehensive peace agreements that consider the specific needs and rights of women, which is crucial for long-term peace. Additionally, through community dialogue and reconciliation efforts, women have played a pivotal role in bridging divides between victims and perpetrators, promoting healing and community trust. Their engagement in human rights advocacy, the establishment of local support networks, and participation in community-led development projects reflect a holistic approach to peacebuilding

that addresses root causes of conflict, such as socioeconomic disparities and lack of education or health resources.

The findings also detail the substantial challenges women in Peacebuilding face in Maiduguri, ranging from exclusion, violence, and cultural and religious restrictions to a lack of resources and training opportunities. These challenges highlight the structural and societal barriers that limit women's effective participation in peacebuilding. Exclusion from formal decision-making spaces, for example, restricts women's voices in key peace negotiations and limits their influence on policy. Religious norms that often limit women's public role further compound these issues, making it difficult for them to fully participate or even be acknowledged as key actors in peace efforts. Additionally, the lack of funding and training hampers their capacity to build skills and sustain initiatives, which limits the scale and impact of their efforts. Addressing these challenges is crucial for enhancing Women's contributions to Peacebuilding. Providing resources and creating supportive frameworks within NGOs and Government institutions could significantly mitigate these barriers and empower Women to take more active and recognized role in Peacebuilding. This finding supports a study conducted by Abdullahi and Musa (2023) on challenges in peacebuilding activities, in which women were excluded.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper has demonstrated that peacebuilding, especially in areas inherently ridden by insecurity like what is obtainable in Maiduguri, where Bokoharam insurgency has assumed the order of the day is a vigorous process that requires the efforts of all and sundry to be accomplished. As such, women, particularly those working under the aegis of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) within Maiduguri Metropolis and beyond have emerged as critical players in the process. In spite of numerous odds, challenges, and of course, complexities women led NGOs often intervene in conflict ridden areas, mapping out enviable strategies that help broker peace through advocating for gender-sensitive positions, education, community dialogue and reconciliation whatsoever. Yet, as the paper has exemplified, women in NGOs has, in their efforts to ensure that peacebuilding becomes a reality are regrettably confronted with tumultuous challenges, thereby dampening their morale in maximising their full potentials for the actualisation of this cause. Despite these challenges, the success recorded by women in their peacebuilding efforts within the area under discussion cannot be downgraded. There is thus, the need for viable policy frameworks that address these challenges with a view to recording even more success in their peacebuilding efforts. It is based on this premise that the paper ends up by recommending that;

1. Governments, NGOs, and other stakeholders should provide increased support to women in NGOs by offering training, resources, and platforms that enhance their skills and knowledge in peacebuilding processes. This would empower women to take on a more prominent role in peace negotiations and decision-making.

2. There is a need for on-going awareness campaigns to challenge cultural and religious norms that restrict women's participation in peacebuilding. Educational initiatives should focus on the importance of gender equality in peace processes and the benefits of inclusive peacebuilding for all members of society.

3. Efforts should be made to create safe spaces for women to engage in peacebuilding without the threat of violence or intimidation. This includes ensuring the protection of women involved in peace efforts and providing a secure environment for them to contribute to dialogue and reconciliation.

4. Policymakers should ensure that peace agreements and national policies include provisions that protect and promote the participation of women in peace processes. These policies should focus on addressing the unique needs of Women, ensuring that their voices are heard and their contributions recognized.

5. Local community leaders, including religious leaders and youth leaders, should be encouraged to support and endorse the involvement of women in peacebuilding initiatives. Community-based programs that promote collaboration between men and women can create more inclusive environments for peacebuilding.

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