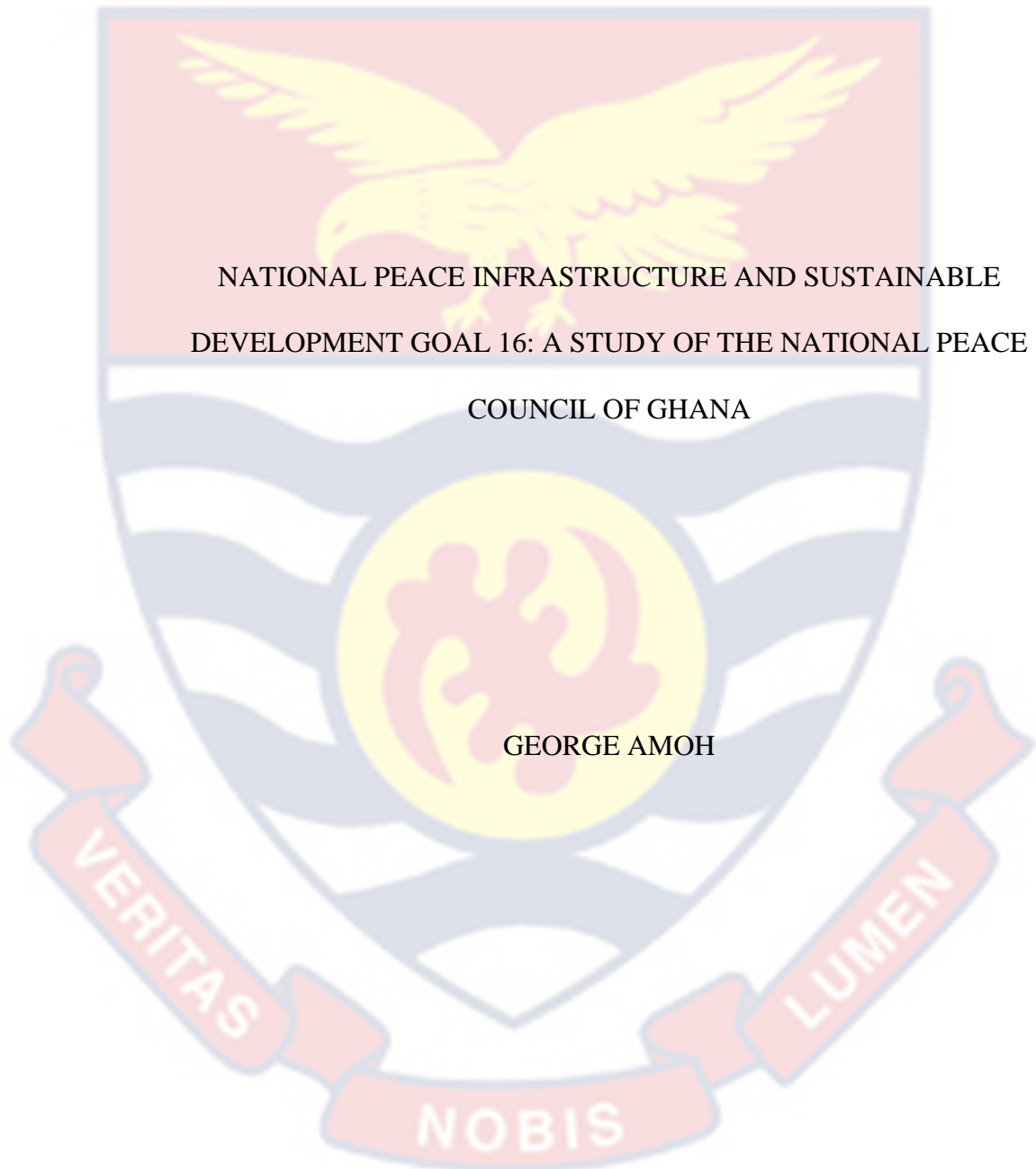UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

NATIONAL PEACE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SUSTAINABLE

DEVELOPMENT GOAL 16: A STUDY OF THE NATIONAL PEACE

COUNCIL OF GHANA

GEORGE AMOH

2024

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INFRASTRUCTURE FOR PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

GOAL 16: A STUDY OF THE NATIONAL PEACE COUNCIL OF GHANA

BY

GEORGE AMOH

Thesis submitted to the Department of Integrated Development Studies of the

School for Development Studies, College of Humanities and Legal Studies,

University of Cape Coast, in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the

Award of Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Development Studies

JULY 2024

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature..Date............................

Name: ....

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature.....................................Date...........................

Name: ....

Co-Supervisor's Signature..Date............................

Name: ....

ABSTRACT

Infrastructure for Peace (I4P) is considered a cost-effective and viable mitigation strategy to deal with the threats of violence to peace and development. This study assessed the contributions of Infrastructures for Peace to the realisation of the United Nations's Sustainable Development Goal 16, with reference to the National Peace Council of Ghana. The study is purely qualitative and uses an exploratory study design. Sixty-two participants were purposefully selected for the study, using expert sampling techniques. The interview guide was one of the instruments used for data collection. The data were analysed using thematic and cross-site analyses. The study found that the NPC promotes peaceful, just, and inclusive societies by working to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts. The NPC has prevented, managed, and resolved several conflicts in Ghana. Among these are chieftaincy and religious conflicts, politically motivated conflicts, and socio-economic related violence. Besides, it has organised several capacity-building workshops and seminars for civil society organisations (CSOs) in pursuit of its mandate to enhance the values of tolerance, diversity, and peaceful coexistence in the country. The main aim of these workshops was to build the capacity of the leaders of these CSOs to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts. Goal 16 of the SDGs, which aims at significantly reducing all forms of violence and promoting peace, justice, and strong institutions, has been enhanced by the NPC. The study concludes that the NPC as an infrastructure for peace plays a critical role in the attainment of the SDGs in the daily lives of Ghanaians. The delivery of the mandate of the NPC by facilitating and developing the mechanisms for conflict prevention, management, and resolution is making significant contributions to realising SDG 16. The study recommends that I4Ps should engage both state and non-state actors to build peaceful, just, and inclusive societies. The study recommends that the state and its agencies should do more to promote inclusiveness and respect for others with varied backgrounds, ethnic origins, faiths, genders, sexual orientations, and opinions by acting as change agents. By working together with state and non-state actors, the NPC can contribute immensely to the integration of the people of Ghana and work against discrimination and prejudice.

KEY WORDS

Conflict

Conflict Management

Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

Infrastructure for Peace

National Peace Council

Sustainable Development Goals

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DEDICATION

To my wife Grace and our children, Stephen, Deborah, and Salem.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
AU	African Union
CODEO	Coalition of Domestic Election Observers
EC	Electoral Commission
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EWS	Early Warning System
GPI	Global Peace Index
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MoI	Ministry of Interior
NCCE	National Commission for Civic Education
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NEEWARG	National Election Early Warning Group
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPC	National Peace Council
NPP	New Patriotic Party
NS	National Security
REEWARG	Regional Election Early Warning Group
RES	Regional Executive Secretary
RHC	Regional House of Chiefs
RPC	Regional Peace Council
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

The Global Peace Index (GPI) has consistently called on nations of the world to create the necessary preconditions for a more peaceful, just, and inclusive world by drawing attention to indicators that help nations to be peaceful or otherwise (Kumar, 2011). The key finding in the 2022 GPI, for example, is that the world became less peaceful for the eleventh time in the last 14 years, with the average level of a country's peacefulness deteriorating by 0.3 percent over the past year (Davies, Pettersson, & Öberg, 2023).

Sub-Saharan Africa continues to suffer as the most conflict-prone region in the world. According to the latest GPI, the overall peacefulness in the region fell to the lowest level since 2008, with a deterioration of 13.7 percent when compared to the year 2021. The largest deterioration in peace in the region occurred in Guinea following a coup in September 2021. Burkina Faso experienced the second largest fall in peace in the region, with deteriorations in all three domains largely influenced by a coup in January 2022 (Moody, 2023). Ghana is a relatively peaceful and stable democracy in the West African sub-region, which has been confronted with violent conflicts and insecurity.

The United Nations, since its formation in 1945, has focused on three main themes: peace, development, and the environment (UNDP, 2015). Indeed, the occupation of the Security Council has been in search of a peaceful world. It is in pursuit of this objective that in 2015, after the expiration of the Millennium Development Goals, the United Nations formulated the Sustainable

1

Development Goals (SDGs) as a framework to facilitate and guide nations to achieve the desired peace and development that the peoples of the world require (Tongeren, 2011).

There are seventeen (17) SDGs that have targets that are expected to be achieved by the year 2030. Goal 16, which seeks to promote peace, justice, and inclusive societies for sustainable development at all levels, is considered as transformative. The transformative potential of SDG goal 16 is reflected in its ability to formally link peace, justice, and good governance. The targets set for Goal 16 include significantly reducing all forms of violence; ending abuse and violence against children; promoting the rule of law; reducing illicit financial flows and corruption; and developing accountable and transparent institutions.

Several pathways exist for the drive towards achieving the targets set for SDG 16. Some of the approaches seek to link local and national level policies by providing support to national and local governance institutions. Many of the initiatives that have been implemented to ensure peace, justice, and inclusive societies as stated in SDG 16 highlight the relevance of infrastructures that will support the activities that are undertaken. The argument is that institutional arrangements and channels of coordination are essential for effective, accountable, and transparent institutions, as well as more responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making (Tongeren, 2011).

The focus on infrastructures as very critical for peacebuilding derives from the idea that the key ingredients should be available in society to drive peace. According to Ledarach (2012), building peace requires the provision of institutions, mechanisms, resources, and skills that create resilience, adequately address the structural causes of conflicts, and further support peacebuilding

efforts toward conflict transformation. The concept of "Infrastructure for Peace" (I4P) was first mooted by John Paul Lederach, a scholar in the field of social sciences. Referring to how the idea was conceived, Lederach (2012, p21), indicated in the following words:

I first began to formulate the concept of infrastructure for peace in the 1980s." He continued that "during several national peace processes, particularly a mediation effort in Nicaragua, the support mechanisms to sustain the changes under negotiation and which subsequently found their way into signed accords required both conceptual and practical development.

The concept was further strengthened in his book titled "Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies" in 1997. This position is strongly premised on the idea that the nature and characteristics of contemporary conflict suggest the need for a set of concepts and approaches that go beyond traditional statist diplomacy. Peacebuilding efforts, as indicated in SDG 16, call for infrastructure that is resilient. The idea of infrastructure for peace is not narrowly conceived as a rigid structure in the form of only the organization, but broadly conceived to include the processes, relationships, networks, policies, programs, and plans that span across all levels in any given society to ensure peace. Lederach (2012) in his book, envisioned functional networking among relevant actors and stakeholders for coordination and collaboration as critical ingredients of an I4P. Besides, he also noted in his book that the concept of infrastructure for peace is to build on the capacities and structures within countries and regions that are at risk of conflict, as opposed to relying on external interventions.

Tongeren (2016, p2) defined infrastructures for peace as "institutional mechanisms, appropriate to each country's culture, that promote conflict-resolution approaches based on dialogue and nonviolence within communities." Tongeren (2016) further explained that an infrastructure for peace is composed of a "dynamic network of interdependent structures, mechanisms, resources, values, and skills which, through dialogue and consultation, contribute to conflict prevention and peacebuilding in a society".

In his contribution to the subject, Odendaal (2010) noted that peace infrastructures serve as a platform that is responsive to day-to-day issues that arise in the ebb and flow of conflict while they sustain a clear vision of the longer-term change needed in the destructive relational patterns. The creation of such a platform serves as one of the fundamental building blocks for supporting constructive social change over time (Davies et al., 2023). An infrastructure for peace is, therefore, a relatively new phenomenon in peace and conflict studies. Further contributing to the concept, Odendaal (2012) explains that infrastructure for peace is the development of mechanisms for cooperation among all relevant stakeholders in peace building by promoting cooperative problem solving in conflicts and institutionalising conflict response mechanisms to transform them. Odendaal (2012) in addition, added that national, district, and local peace councils are cornerstones of such an infrastructure.

The African Union (AU) (2008) defines peace infrastructure as a dynamic network of interdependent organisations, methods, resources, values, and skills that use conversation and consultation to prevent and solve disputes with the proclaimed objective of establishing peace in society. It stresses that

4

infrastructure for peace" should be viewed more as a means toward a lasting peace than as an aim in and of itself. With South Africa, Ghana, and Kenya taking the lead, African states have embraced the idea of peace infrastructure over the past 20 years and have either already created or are in the process of doing so. In these three countries, the governments were convinced that a kind of peace infrastructure had to be established, as the structures that existed were inadequate to create the requisite trust and reconciliation that could prevent violence and resolve conflicts (Lederach, 2012).

The underlying claim is that many current disputes are so complex that they defy simple patterns or methods of resolution. To reduce poverty and achieve broad-based economic growth, much depends on an integrated system that utilises the concepts of peacebuilding and conflict prevention (UN, 2000). Development in general improves standards and exposes inequalities, sometimes aggravating the problems that contribute to social tension (UNDP, 2012). When progress stalls in particular cultures and circumstances, contrary to popular expectations, it may lead to intolerable strain that can incite violence. Therefore, development policies or efforts can transform society and consolidate peace when arrangements are introduced that have the capacity to build structural stability by addressing the root causes of potential and existing conflicts and by targeting peacebuilding efforts towards longer-term reconciliation and development (OECD/DAC, 2015).

In general terms, all the goals have therefore been conceived as applying both as ambitions and as challenges to all countries. All the goals and targets contain important messages and challenges for developed and developing countries alike. Goal sixteen (16) of the SDGs focuses on peace, justice, and

inclusive societies. The vision regarding Goal 16 presents the essential linkages between a peaceful and just society and human wellbeing and how this interaction could impact on sustainable development. The world has been engulfed in incessant conflicts, most of which are destructive and deprive people of development. In expressing their views on goal sixteen, Collier and Vicente (2012, p. 9) had this to say: Regarding peace, there is no doubt that both armed conflict and broader forms of violence undermine human wellbeing and reduce the ability of societies to achieve development.

The West Africa sub-region continues to suffer from a myriad of socio-economic and political issues that threaten the stability, peace, and security of the sixteen member states. The region currently faces threats from terrorism from the Sahel region and transnational organised crime in some border communities. Overthrow of democratically elected governments; dictatorship by leaders who use brute force to stay in power; and, most likely, the source of all problems, the youth bulge and associated unemployment; lack of participation in governance; and exclusion of women and youth from country development. The threat of violent extremism in West Africa provides opportunities for violent extremist groups to gain a foothold and recruit young people for their violent activities (Davies et al., 2023).

In Ghana, unresolved chieftaincy conflicts, political vigilantism, violence, and an uncompromising political environment during political seasons can affect the country's security profile. International interest in preventing regional instability is growing. High youth unemployment can also act as a conveyor belt for large-scale violence and terrorism.

Ghana is not immune to security threats in neighbouring countries. The country is currently confronted with national and international threats to its peace and development. Threats of violent extremism and terrorism, coupled with the increased proliferation of small arms and light weapons, require institutions, such as the Small Arms and Light Weapons Commission, the Ghana Police Service, and border security agencies, to be strengthened. The porous nature of Ghana's borders needs to be efficiently managed. Some interviewees, particularly those from the public, indicated that awareness-creation on cross-border security issues was crucial to enhance the understanding of the Ghanaian population of those threats and their own roles in early warning and prevention of violent extremism (UNDP, 2012).

Several factors have been cited as stressing the peace in Ghana, even though the country has for some time now been recognised as an oasis of peace in a turbulent region (Kendie, Osei-Kufuor & Boakye, 2014). A study that mapped all conflicts in Ghana identified chieftaincy and resource conflicts as dominant and with extensive coverage (Kendie et al., 2014). The 2017 Ghana Conflict Vulnerability Risk Assessment Report identified some structural vulnerabilities and some event-driven vulnerabilities that also undermined the peace of the country. Of the structural vulnerabilities, politics and governance were identified as the most vulnerable pillars, with challenges around corruption, accountability, and transparency, as well as problems with women's participation in politics and political violence (Moody, 2023). The major vulnerabilities affecting the country's peace were the increasing polarisation of the political landscape and other communal conflicts along political party lines;

the emergence of youth vigilante groups hired for election-related violence; and nepotism related to the distribution of government resources and positions.

Other vulnerabilities that were identified include problems associated with population and demographics, and with population growth and migration, recorded as the most challenging issues. The north-south divide in terms of development and the provision of social services constitutes a major threat to the peace of the country. The third most vulnerable pillar had to do with security, with illegal small-scale mining (galamsey) operations and a porous border, while communal tensions and chieftaincy disputes, and increasing criminality were affecting the peace of the country (Clark, 2012).

Social and institutional resilience factors embedded within the socio-cultural landscape of any society help to mitigate the conflict risk factors that affect the stability of that society. Peace infrastructures offer pathways to resilience in societies that have identify ed structural, institutional, and economic vulnerabilities. In addressing the structural causes of fragility, many countries have institutionalised and built capacities to deal with challenges in an inclusive and peaceful manner. Peace infrastructures take as their starting point, that social transformation often occurs in a context of conflicts and that these conflicts can be dealt with either violently or constructively through non-violent means (UNDP, 2012; World Bank, 2011). The problem has been how to provide conditions by which conflicts can be addressed effectively and without additional violence.

The infrastructure for peace acts through "dialogue, the promotion of mutual understanding and trust-building as well as inclusive, constructive problem-solving and joint action to prevent violence" (Odendaal, 2010, p. 3),

intervenes and transforms conflict. As an infrastructure for peace, local peace committees (LPC) enable communication among protagonists to address potentially destructive rumours, fears, and mistrust; mediate ongoing or new disputes to achieve joint problem-solving; facilitate reconciliation; and strengthen social cohesion through LPC-facilitated dialogue; a necessary precondition for sustainable, collaborative, and inclusive governance; preventing violence through joint monitoring; facilitating negotiations and joint planning for potentially violent events; and including enabling local and national information flow so that local peace-building challenges can receive proper attention at the national level (Odendaal 2010).

Trust is an important part of relationship transformation. Potential actors and personal transformation are often the products of trust-building and improved relationships between stakeholders in conflicts. The inherent capacity of infrastructure for peace to help build trust and confidence makes it essential for personal transformation and for the transformation of potential actors. Also, its conflict transformation capability can be traced to its inherent potential to build the capacities of conflict stakeholders, in addition to its capacity to promote their active participation in the peace process and other forms of dialogue. According to Hopp-Nishanka (2012, p. 10), it "brings stakeholders and their constituencies together as change agents and creates space for joint problem solving as well as creates, consolidates, and maintains a network of transformative actors".

One of the few nations in the world with a well-thought-out infrastructure for peace is Ghana; the National Peace Council (NPC) is Ghana's peacebuilding apparatus. The current NPC has its roots in the country's north,

where several post-independence issues, including inter-ethnic conflicts over power and control, intra-ethnic conflicts over chieftaincy succession, land disputes, and tensions related to elections, have combined to produce pockets of relative instability and armed conflict.

In many cases, the potential for violence is defused and pent-up grievances are redirected through nationally owned and nationally led processes and partnerships based on mutual respect and equality. This will enable the transformation to result in sustained human development, strengthen national and local institutions and leadership and support their efforts in preventing violence, managing conflicts constructively and engaging peacefully in political transitions. Lasting peace requires people, communities, and leaders with the skills, capacities, and opportunities to work together to reconcile political and sectarian divisions.

Infrastructures for peace consider justice and positive peace as essential to sustainable development. The research is based on theories such as the theory of a just world, the theory of peace, and the theory of Social Inclusion. This study has interrogated the extent to which national peace infrastructure promotes the attainment of SDG goal 16.

Statement of the Problem

Infrastructures for peace are considered central to the realisation of the SDGs. CODEO, for example, observed that the successful conduct of eight presidential and parliamentary elections between 1992 and 2020, as well as eight district assembly and unit committee elections, bears testimony to this achievement. Ghana has been acclaimed as a relatively stable democracy in the

West African Sub-Region, with considerable promise of prosperity, especially in the current environment of oil production.

The African Union Report in 2018 on Ghana's Structural Vulnerability and Resilience Assessment (CSVRA), referred to Ghana's infrastructure for peace as one key resilient factor holding the country in the face of the myriad of challenges that confront the country. The CSVRA provided quite significant reasons for the contributions of the National Peace Council to the peace and security of the country. This notwithstanding, it is significant to note that Ghana has been rated as the most peaceful country in the West Africa subregion from 2019 to 2022 by the Global Peace Index Annual Ranking with the NPC mentioned as promoting resilience through conflict prevention and management.

The National Peace Council was established by the Parliament of Ghana in 2011 (Act 818) with a specific mandate to "facilitate and develop mechanisms for conflict prevention, management, and resolution and to build sustainable peace in the country". The Act further establishes regional and district peace councils. At the time of writing this thesis, the Peace Council had created offices in twelve out of the sixteen regions of Ghana and only two district offices out of the two hundred and sixty (260) administrative districts in Ghana.

Though the NPC has been identified as an important institution that has made notable contributions to Ghana's peace and security, the country is confronted with a myriad of protracted and intractable conflicts with the potential to derail the country's peace and development. The Council does not have ownership over any of the offices, not even the head office. In addition, the Council is confronted with other challenges, including inadequate office

11

structures for its headquarters, regional and district offices, and a lack of regular sources of funds to support peace programmes. According to annual reports from the Peace Council, most of the programmes undertaken are sponsored or funded by development partners such as the UNDP, government, and the Commonwealth Secretariat, among others (NPC Annual Report, 2020).

Several studies on the NPC in Ghana have also identified several factors that influence the council in various ways (Tanguay, 2023; Osei-Kufuor, Amo, Appiah-Boateng, & Agboso, 2021). The composition of the governing board of the National Peace Council has come under criticism (Tanguay, 2023; Osei-Kufuor et. al., 2022). An evaluation by the Commonwealth Secretariat noted that the design of the Peace Council is problematic, as it does not allow for critical stakeholders, including women, youth, and academia, to participate. A key finding is that having part-time board members alongside a non-executive chairperson was problematic. The study further criticised the Peace Council for its exclusion of marginalised groups, including women, young people, and people with disabilities (Tanguay, 2023).

Despite the challenges with the functioning of the NPC, some studies have identified their centrality in efforts towards the realisation of SDG 16 (WANEP & GPPAC, 2019). This thesis, therefore, contributes to the conversation around I4P and the contribution of Ghana's Infrastructure for Peace to the realisation of Goal 16 of the SDGs contributing to Ghana having a peaceful and just environment. The key argument of the study is that Infrastructure for Peace is central to achieving the SDGs impacting on peace, justice, and inclusive governance.

12

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to assess the contribution of Infrastructures for Peace to the realisation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 16 using the National Peace Council for Ghana.

The specific objectives were to:

1. Examine the adequacy of the symbols, mandate, structure, and composition of the National Peace Council in relation to peacebuilding in Ghana.

2. Examine the strategies employed by the National Peace Council for the promotion of just and inclusive societies.

3. Evaluate the contributions of the National Peace Council towards building strong institutions to advance peaceful coexistence and development in Ghana.

4. Examine the pathways for linking infrastructures for peace to the attainment of SDG Sixteen (16).

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How adequate is the mandate, structure, and composition of the National Peace Council in relation to peacebuilding in Ghana?

2. How effective are the strategies employed by the National Peace Council for the promotion of just and inclusive societies?

3. What are the contributions of the National Peace Council towards building strong institutions to advance peaceful coexistence and development in Ghana?

4. What are the possible ways for linking infrastructures for peace to the attainment of SDG Sixteen (16)?

Significance of the Study

This study would provide actors within the peace and security sector with knowledge on the link between infrastructures for peace and the SDGs which is relevant for policy making around sustainable peace and national development. In terms of policy formulation in the peace and security sector, the findings are intended to provide guidelines for the stakeholders in Ghana to draw up programmes that will be geared towards minimising conflicts and violence and to provide recommended data for resilience.

This study, however, assesses the strengths and weaknesses associated with Ghana's infrastructure for peace and how that is contributing to Ghana's efforts towards the achievement of SDG 16 by the year 2030. The significance of this is in the fact that it has contributed to the theory of peace by advancing the argument that there is a positive correlation between a responsive infrastructure for peace and the attainment of positive peace.

Moreover, the study will also help the country to develop conflict-mitigating measures in an integrated manner using available stakeholders like the National Peace Council (NPC) and the National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE), whose content and scope must be issues-centred and problem-solving, which will help prevent or minimise violent conflicts. Thus, this study significantly contributes to the theory of social inclusion advanced by social theorists (Duffy, 1995).

Research will once again be a source of education for state and non-state institutions, as well as a source of scientific research for peace and security actors, academicians, professionals, and investors in the areas of sustainable peace and development. The study further establishes the relevant linkages

14

between peace and sustainable development in a country. It will explain how a peaceful environment is important for development and how, in conflict-ridden communities, business operations are disrupted due to conflicts. Finally, this study will contribute to assessing efforts by countries who have established infrastructures for peace or are in the process of establishing one towards achieving SDG 16, elements of peace, justice, and strong institutions.

Delimitation

The scope of this study, as can be understood from the research questions, does not seek to discuss complex issues relating to peace infrastructures and sustainable development, basically for reasons of limited time, resources, and space. It, however, aims at making an enquiry into the relationship between the emergence of infrastructures for peace in developing countries and sustainable development, using the Ghana Peace Infrastructure as a case study for the thesis.

As most developing countries strive to improve upon their economies and development, this thesis aims, besides those already mentioned, to examine how mechanisms and various approaches so far adopted by the Ghana Peace Infrastructure are impacting on the development agenda of the country.

The purpose and focus of this study are not to argue the conflict, prevention, management, and resolution roles of peace infrastructures in relation to a theory of justice, which is complex and will not take other legal theories. It takes modernisation development theory to bridge law and development. This is because the scope of this study is to examine to what extent national peace infrastructures serve as a developmental tool for developing countries in their national development concerns. The study also aims to

15

conduct only brief interviews in Ghana. It will, however, extend the interviews to embassies in Ghana whose countries have either established peace infrastructure or are in the process of establishing the infrastructure.

Organisation of the Study

The study has eight chapters. The first chapter introduced the study by discussing the background to the study, problem statement, research objectives and questions, limitations, and the significance of the study. Chapter Two reviewed related literature on the theoretical underpinnings, conceptual issues, and empirical studies. The conceptual framework of the study was also discussed in this chapter. Chapter three presented the methodology; that is, the research design, study area, data sources, target population, sampling procedures, data collection instruments, data processing and analysis, ethical considerations, and fieldwork challenges.

Chapter Four is on the mandate, structure, and composition of the National Peace Council. Furthermore, Chapter Five examines the strategies and mechanisms employed by the National Peace Council to resolve conflicts and their viability. It is followed by chapter six, which analyses the contributions of the National Peace Council towards building strong institutions.

Chapter Seven captures the assessment of the effectiveness of the infrastructure for peace in answering the question of inclusive societies. The final chapter, chapter eight, summarised, drew conclusions, and gave recommendations on the way forward to make Ghana's infrastructure for peace facilitate the attainment of SDG Sixteen (16).

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

In the previous chapter, the researcher justified the need for this study by outlining the background, the problem under study, objectives, research questions, and significance of the study. In this chapter, the theoretical and conceptual issues underpinning the study are discussed. This chapter presents a review of the theoretical and conceptual issues related to this study. It includes theories of the just world, peace, and institutional functionalism, as well as conceptual issues like peace infrastructure and a conceptual framework for the study.

Literature is reviewed on peace architecture, the concept of violent conflicts, conflict management mechanisms and their implication for conflict and development. The chapter also captured empirical studies that are associated with this study. The conceptual framework of the study was also discussed to complete the chapter.

Theoretical Review

The value of a theoretical framework in research cannot be overstated. Without theoretical framework, a study's design would be lacking in content, making it difficult to contextualize and narrow the scope of the investigation (Kumar, 2011). Three theories underpin this work. These are the theory of negative and positive peace, and the theory of social inclusion and exclusion.

The Theory of Negative and Positive Peace

Galtung (1969), considered by many to be the father of peace research, further modified Wright's views by using the categories "negative peace" and

"positive peace" that Wright had first put forward some 28 years earlier. Galtung developed a position and argued that negative peace was the absence of war, and that positive peace was the absence of "structural violence." To Galtung (1969), positive peace leads to development, and negative peace negatively affects society's development. Thus, if people starve to death when there is food to feed them in society or die from sickness when there is medicine to cure them, then structural violence exists since alternative structures could, in theory, prevent such deaths.

Peace under this rubric involves both positive and negative peace being present. Galtung's model (in addition to the community, within states, between states, and international levels of analysis), includes the global level of analysis, such as the global economy, which is influenced by non-state actors, such as Multi-National Corporations (MNCs). Forms of direct violence are instantly recognisable as such.

According to Galtung (2013, P. 21), however, there are also hidden forms of violence: "I understand violence as the avoidable impairment of fundamental human needs or, put it in more general terms, the impairment of human life, which lowers the actual degree to which someone is able to meet their needs below that which would otherwise be possible." The threat of violence is also violence. This understanding of violence goes far beyond direct violence, in which one or more people inflict violence on other people. In addition to direct violence, Galtung (2013) emphasises another form of violence, namely structural violence, which is not carried out by individuals but is hidden to a greater or lesser extent in structures. According to Galtung, this also jeopardises societal development. An example of this might be the

injustices of the worldwide system for the trade in goods, which creates more and more starving people every year.

A structure of violence not only leaves its marks on the human body; it also impacts the mind and the soul. The best way to understand the next four terms (penetration, segmentation, marginalisation, and fragmentation) is to accept them as constituent parts of the exploitation, that is, strengthening components contained within the structure. Their function is to prevent awareness and mobilisation of this awareness, which are two of the conditions needed to be successful in fighting exploitation. With the help of penetration, the consciousness of the underdog is reached with elements of the top dog's ideology; this penetration is linked to segmentation, which only allows the underdog a limited view of reality.

The latter is the result of two processes: marginalisation and fragmentation. This involves forcing the underdogs increasingly to the edges, condemning them as insignificant, dividing them and keeping them away from each other. These four terms describe forms of structural violence. Indeed, they are all also linked to the gender issue- even in circumstances in which death and illness figures for women are not higher and in which they have a higher life expectancy than men (Galtung, 1993). At the end of the 1960s, Galtung (2013) introduced the distinction between personal and structural violence into the discussion, supplementing this still further during the early 1990s with cultural violence. In the case of personal violence, the victim and offender can be clearly identified and classified. While structural violence also creates victims, they are not individuals but specific organisations or social structures.

This is not the fault of the way in which people live. Cultural violence is used to describe ideologies, convictions, traditions, and systems of legitimation, with whose help direct or structural violence is made possible, justified, and, indeed, legitimated. According to Galtung (1993), it is fair to talk about violence when people are influenced in such a way as to make the realisation of their actual physical and spiritual state less than that which would otherwise be possible.

The Institute of Economic and Peace (IEP) has contributed to the theory of peace developed by Galtung (1967) in very significant ways. According to the IEP, Positive peace actively focuses on fostering the 'attitudes, structures, and institutions that underpin and sustain peaceful societies' The institute lays out eight structures upon which a positive peace is built. This includes a well-functioning government, equitable distribution of resources, free flow of information, good relations with neighbours, high levels of human capital, acceptance of rights of others, low levels of corruption, and sound business environment. The United Nations (UN) in its contributions also conceptualize positive peace as "culture of peace". They defined culture of peace as "a set of values, attitudes, traditions and customs, modes of behaviour and ways of life that reflect and are directed towards respect for life, for human beings and their rights, the rejection of violence in all its forms, the recognition of the equal rights of men and women, the recognition of the rights of everyone to freedom of expression, opinion and information, attachment to the principles of democracy, freedom, justice, development for all, tolerance, solidarity, pluralism and acceptance of differences and understanding between nations, between ethnic, religious, cultural and other groups and between individuals."

This theory is relevant to this study because it explains the various factors that affect the peace of society. As Galtung (1993) explains that for perfect peace to be experienced in a society, all types of violence must be avoided. He explained that positive peace is desirable. According to the UN Positive peace must be promoted within nations, and at the international level to build the required resilience to deal with global threats, such as climate change, pandemics, nuclear proliferation, and terrorism. This theory has linked peace to development. Thus, sustainable development will not be experienced in a society without peace. It is therefore useful in this thesis since the impact of a national peace infrastructure on sustainable peace and development can be linked. Sustainable peace in a country leads to the realization of the other two keys of SDG goal 16: Just, Peaceful, and Inclusivity.

Theory of Social Inclusion

More than 50 years ago, David Pocock, an anthropologist and sociologist, stated that processes of inclusion and exclusion were characteristics of all hierarchies (Gumplowicz, 1963). The process of enhancing the conditions under which people and groups participate in society, improving the capacity, opportunity, and dignity of those who are disadvantaged due to their identity, is known as social inclusion (Duffy, 1995). The World Bank (2011, p. 14) describes social inclusion as "the process of improving the conditions for individuals and groups to participate in society" or, more specifically, "the process of improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of people who are disadvantaged on the basis of their identity to participate in society."

The theory of social inclusion is multifaceted; it covers aspects of the social, political, cultural, and economic spheres and functions on multiple social

levels. The three interconnected domains of markets, services, and spaces can be used to group the most important aspects (Berreman, 1967). As a result, exclusion can happen when associated with many aspects of an individual's identity. The concept of social inclusion is multifaceted; it covers aspects of the social, political, cultural, and economic spheres and functions on multiple social levels. Gumplowicz (1963, p. 6) averred that:

> We live in the state and in society; we belong to a social circle that jostles against and is jostled by its members; we feel social pressure from all sides and fight it with all our might; we experience a restriction on our free activities and fight to remove it; we require the services of other people that we cannot do without; we pursue our own interests and fight for the interests of other social groups that are also our interests. In short, we move in a world which we do not control but which controls us, which is not directed toward us and adapted to us, but toward which we must direct and adapt ourselves.

A set of social practises results in one being accepted, supported, or taken care of by the majority, or being shunned, overlooked, or belittled. These social behaviours are a result of interactions and levels of closeness between friends, acquaintances, families, coworkers, kinship groups, communities, cultures, and even entire societies, all of which are amenable to sociological investigation. As exclusion societies, caste systems perpetuate themselves and the positions of privilege provided to those included within them. Yet they are different from other exclusion societies because, across many non-caste landscapes of exclusion, mobility is conceivable, and emulation of status is

22

possible. However, in caste systems, placement within the exclusion or inclusion hierachy is ascribed at birth (Berreman, 1967).

Acts that denote including or excluding others as aspects of systems of social stratification may be as old as much of humanity itself. Undoubtedly, most societies display some degree of taboos and customs regarding forms of both social rejection and social acceptance (Douglas, 1966). It is morally right to promote social inclusion, and it also makes sound financial sense. Disadvantaged group exclusion can be expensive if ignored. The impacts that are most frequently measured at the individual level include lost wages, lifetime earnings, inadequate schooling, and poor employment outcomes. Additionally, racism and discrimination are harmful to one's physical and emotional health. Foregone GDP and human capital wealth can be used as measures of the economic cost of social exclusion at the national level.

Absolon (2010) used the inclusivity Wheel (Figure 1) as a tool to depict the inclusivity theory, which helps us to understand our realities and experiences by considering the influences of all elements of the whole on our individual and collective being.

23
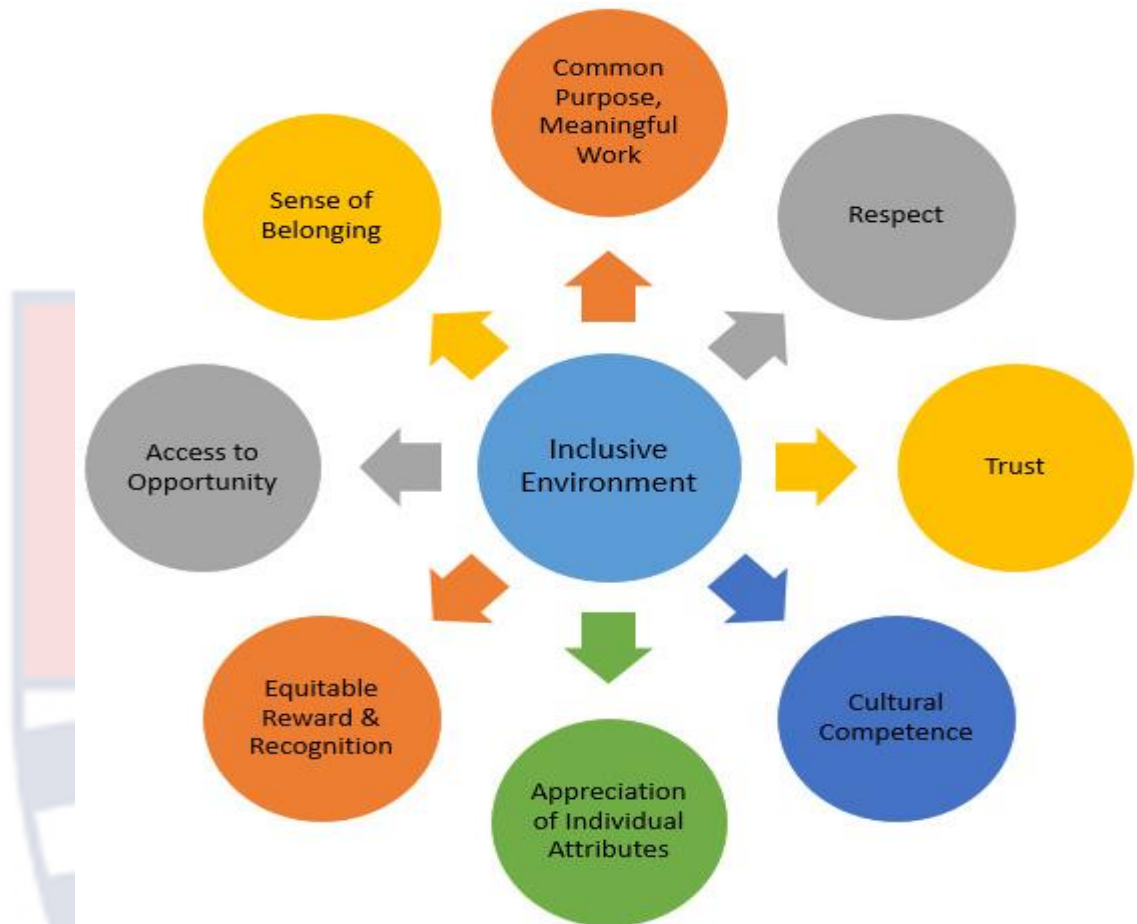
Figure 1: **Inclusivity Wheel**

Source: Adapted from Absolon (2010, p.76)

Some groups face obstacles that prohibit them from fully participating in political, economic, and social life in every nation. These groups may be excluded not just by the law, the market for real estate, and the labour force, but also by stigmatising or discriminatory attitudes, beliefs, or perceptions (UNDP, 2012). Disadvantages are frequently determined by a person's gender, age, place of residence, job, race, ethnicity, religion, citizenship status, ability, and, among other things, sexual orientation, and gender identity (SOGI). People who experience this form of social marginalisation lose their sense of worth, security, and chance at a better life. It will be difficult to support inclusive

24

growth that is durable and quick poverty reduction if the underlying causes of structural exclusion and discrimination are not addressed (UN, 2000).

One of the most inclusive processes in human history was used to create the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the UN. The resulting SDGs should rightfully be held up as an example of inclusive policymaking because participation, openness, and multi-stakeholders, which are signs of successful collaboration between the government, civil society, and the commercial sector, were high priorities throughout the negotiations (UNDP, 2015).

"Goal 16" aims at promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for long-term development; ensuring equal access to justice; and establishing effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels to reduce globally the incidence of all forms of violence and the associated fatality rates. The ability to embrace diverse communities and the unique voices they support is an integral component of sustainability; this is the goal of inclusivity (UNDP, 2013).

This theory is important to this study because SDG goal 16 seeks to achieve inclusivity, and this is what the theory of social inclusivity is about. Conditions must be established that enable individuals to have high-quality jobs that boost the economy without damaging the environment for society to achieve inclusive and sustainable economic growth (UNDP, 2015). All societal members must be included in the development of an equal workplace.

Conceptual Review

This section defines and discusses the concepts that drive the study. The central concepts reviewed include contextual issues in peacebuilding;

infrastructure for peace; sustainable development; conflict management; and conflict management mechanisms. These concepts are discussed in detail in the subsequent sub-sections.

Contextual Issues in Conflict

The term conflict, derived from the Latin word *conflictus, is* used to describe situations such as 'to clash or engage in a fight'. In other words, it describes a situation where individuals or groups engage in a confrontation when aspiring towards incompatible or competitive means or ends. Johan Galtung (1969), defined conflict as 'a dynamic process in which structure, attitudes, and behaviours are constantly changing and influencing one another'. In his contribution, Wall (1985) defines conflict as a process in which two or more parties. attempt to frustrate the attainment of each other's goals.

According to Wallensteen (2002), conflict may be either manifest, recognisable through actions or behaviours, or latent, in which case it remains dormant for some time, as incompatibilities are unarticulated or are built into systems or such institutional arrangements as governments, corporations, or even civil society.

Wallensteen (2002) identifies three general forms of conflict: interstate, internal, and state-formation conflicts. Explaining the terminology, he indicated that 'interstate conflicts are disputes between nation-states. Some of the conflicts that are internally driven and that engage the attention of the NPC include ethnic and chieftaincy conflict, land-related conflict, secessionist movements, conflict regarding community boundaries, and political and related disputes.

26

The Concept of Violent Conflict

Violence is the use of unlawful physical force towards a person, group of people, or property with the intention of hurting, killing, or injuring a person or damaging property (Sisk, 2008). According to Olusola (2018), a violent conflict involves at least two parties using physical force to resolve competing claims or interests. Violent conflict is a common feature of today's developing world. Most of the world's poorest countries have experienced violent conflict during the past decade (World Bank, 2011).

These conflicts have become increasingly concentrated in Africa and South-central Asia. Building sustainable peace is a complicated, time-consuming, and often very expensive process (Brukum, 2007; Kendie, 2010). One factor that strongly complicates this process is the fact that these countries are frequently confronted with multiple transition processes: from war to peace; from authoritarian to more democratic government; and from a state-directed to a market-directed economy (Orji, 2013). Transforming conflict-torn, politically unstable, and socially and economically disintegrated countries into more politically and economically stable, equal, and prosperous ones requires not only a clear and legitimate vision of the "peace" or future one wants to achieve, but also a clear understanding of how to get there (Sisk, 2008). One-dimensional approaches proposing magical solutions to ensure the peaceful co-existence of the different peoples in one country obviously do not exist.

Moreover, the question of why certain peace processes is more successful in establishing or transforming societies into more politically stable and peaceful ones is as important and urgent as ever. This leads us to the concept of "peace infrastructure".

27

Structural Violence

Gultang (1969) defined structural violence as 'any scenario in which social structures perpetuate inequity, thus causing preventable suffering'. According to him, structural violence drives the gaps between 'people's potential reality and their actual circumstances'. For example, consider the education of children in rural and urban Ghana. In rural areas, children face impediments to their education in terms of cost, distance, and teaching and learning materials, unlike their counterparts in urban cities. The sources of structural violence may be difficult to identify, but their results are normally visible.

For the NPC to be successful in achieving its mandate of facilitating and developing mechanisms for conflict prevention management and resolution, issues of structural deficiency must be intentionally addressed. The inequities and suffering in communities, some of which result in violent conflicts such as chieftaincy, may have a broader history of marginalisation, for example, the Bawku conflict in Ghana. The NPC must work to remove marginalisation, discrimination, and exclusivity from Ghanaian society to ensure social cohesion and peace.

Conflict Prevention

Lund (2002) defines conflict prevention as "any structural or intercessory means to keep intrastate or interstate tensions and disputes from escalating into significant violence and the use of armed forces, to strengthen the capabilities of potential parties to violent conflict for resolving such disputes peacefully, and to progressively reduce the underlying problems that produce these issues and disputes.".

28

Conflict prevention addresses causes and drivers of grievances with the potential to cause violence, violent forms of conflict engagement, curtail the re-occurrence of violent exchanges, or some combination of these elements. At the NPC, conflict prevention includes peace research, peace education, peace campaigns, peacebuilding training activities, and preventive diplomacy'. Conflict prevention at the NPC relies on the analysis of early warning signs that are reported or latent disputes to facilitate appropriate strategies for resolution or intervention.

Conflict Management

Tanner (2000) defined conflict management as 'the limitation, mitigation, and/or containment of a conflict without necessarily solving it'. Conflict management to him, then, does not seek to resolve but to manage it to prevent escalation. Preventing the escalation and negative effects of conflict is what conflict management processes seek to achieve. It's to ensure that conflicts and disputes are downgraded or contained to avoid the spread of the conflict. It is often followed by a reorientation of the issues creating the conflict situation. Conflict management should therefore be a process that is subjected to regular review for redress.

A variety of techniques have been identified and employed by the NPC in its conflict management efforts in all the regions of the country in accordance with Act 818, depending on the context of the conflict involved. The NPC manages conflicts at the national and local levels through facilitative dialogues, peace education, and peace messaging, as well as by developing mechanisms including training manuals, guidelines, and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

Conflict Resolution

Tanner (2000) described conflict resolution as 'approaches aimed at resolving conflicts through the constructive solving of problems distinct from the management or transformation of conflict'. Conflict resolution involves recognition by the disputing parties of one another's interests, needs, perspectives, and continued existence. To effectively resolve conflicts, the underlying causes of the conflict must be addressed through solutions that are mutually satisfactory, self-perpetuating, and sustaining for the parties in conflict. Conflict resolution can also be practiced with a variety of emphases, including but not limited to cooperation, non-confrontation, and non-competition. In such cases, the role of external parties can be critical in creating a balance of power, enacting sanctions or incentives, or acting as neutral mediators or invested facilitators. Not all conflicts lend themselves to conflict resolution techniques.

The Concept of Peace

The term peace is derived from the Latin word *pax*. Peace is a condition that ensures justice and social stability through formal and informal institutions, practices, and norms. Several conditions must be met for peace to be attained and sustained, including justice, equality, and accountability. In his book 'What is Peace Research?' Galtung gave two scenarios for the conditions of peace, which he describes as positive or negative peace. *He says negative peace is the absence of human violence and war, and positive peace is the absence of structural violence (Galtung, 1964, pp. 1-4).*

It is impossible to live in a world where conflict is absent. Peace, therefore, means more than the absence of war. A comprehensive understanding

30

of peace must be approached beyond the negative conceptions of peace, such as the mere absence of war or violent conflict. The NPC Act 818 (2011), in Section 3, indicates the aspiration of 'sustainable peace for the country'. The NPC, per its constituting act (Act 8180), aspires that Ghana should not only have peace, but the peace that country attains should be sustainable in line with SDG 16.

The Concept of Peacebuilding

The term "peacebuilding" was first introduced in the scholarly discipline in the 1970s through the works of the Norwegian professor Johan Galtung. In his work, he "called for the creation of peacebuilding structures to promote sustainable peace by addressing the "root causes" of violent conflict and supporting indigenous capacities for peace management and conflict resolution" (Lederach, 1997). Although the concept of peacebuilding is generally defined as interventions that are formulated to prevent the outbreak or relapse of violent conflict, there are divergent views among actors concerning its conceptualization and operationalization (Barnett, Kim, O'donnell, & Sitea, 2007). For instance, as cited by Hearn, Bujones, and Kugel (2014, p. 3), the UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in 1992 defined the concept of peacebuilding as "action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict." Barnett et al. (2007, p.38). also indicate in their article a definition of post-conflict peacebuilding offered by the UNDPA as "all external efforts to assist countries and regions in their transitions from war to peace, including all activities and programmes designed to support and strengthen these transitions".

While these definitions are more aligned to societies that have recovered from violent conflict, it is important to emphasise that the peacebuilding process

31

is also necessary in societies that have not experienced major violent conflict. Such societies, like the case of Ghana, need to establish mechanisms and structures to prevent wars and build sustainable peace. So, peacebuilding is not just a mechanism used in rebuilding devastated societies resulting from war, but as Lederach (1997, p. 20) clarifies, it is more concerned with "a comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates, and sustains the full array of processes, approaches, and stages needed to transform conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships". Lederach uses his multi-track peacebuilding approach to emphasise that, for such a peace to be successful, all levels of society must cooperate and work together (1997, p. 60). In support of this assumption, Galtung (1993) offers a more extensive explanation of the term. He introduces the concepts of positive and negative peace to further explain what peacebuilding should achieve. Negative peace is the absence of direct or armed violence; it is needed in a peacebuilding process that tends to rebuild post-conflict societies.

Accordingly, his definition of peacebuilding, which comprises the process of "creating self-supporting structures that remove the causes of war and offer alternatives to war in situations where wars might occur" (Galtung, 1976), clearly argues for society's efforts to create infrastructure for peace and stability. Such structures are to promote a non-violent resolution of conflicts; "positive peace" (Galtung, 1996). It is the kind of peace that goes further than just ending conflict, which, according to Haugerudbraaten (1998), is generally accepted as the aim of peacebuilding. *Positive* peacebuilding structures should have conflict resolution mechanisms integrated into them such that there is no need for other systems to support the structures. A self-supporting institution is

akin to a healthy body that produces its own antibodies. Galtung further argues that such peace structures should serve as a reservoir for the system itself to draw upon (Galtung, 1976).

The Canadian International Development Agency's definition of peacebuilding provides additional analytical support to the concept. It states that peacebuilding is "efforts to strengthen the prospects of internal peace and decrease the likelihood of violent conflict in order to enhance the indigenous capacity of a society to manage conflict without violence" (Hegre & Sambanis, 2006, p. 15). The definitions suggest that peacebuilding can be implemented to prevent and manage violent conflict. It also emphasises national ownership or local peace actor's efforts to develop mechanisms for cooperation among all relevant stakeholders in peacebuilding in dealing with conflict through non-violent measures.

Mediation

Different authors have differently defined mediation. According to Zartman (2000: p.222), it is a 'voluntary, informal, non-binding process undertaken with an external party that fosters the settlement of differences or demands between directly invested parties. The parties to the dispute decide who should be the mediator. The mediator does not have the authority to impose or coerce the parties in the mediation process. Mediation offers the parties in dispute the opportunity to communicate their cases and shift their positions to a common ground where both agree to an outcome acceptable to both parties.

Prof. Hizkias Assefa, who was one of the international experts who assisted the NPC in its formative stages, stated this in his book *Mediation of Civil Wars: Approaches and Strategies-the Sudan Conflict* states that 'in

33

traditional African mediation, the mediator is a neutral and powerless third party who has gained experience and is morally accepted as having personal characteristics such as wisdom and integrity but without the means for providing inducements and sanctions (Assefa, 2019).

Using a third party or mediator can help to overcome such imbalances through unbiased, fair handling of the negotiation processes (Bercovitch & Houston, 2000). The role is like that of a referee who enforces the rules and ensures fairness in a sports contest. It can provide confidence to weaker stakeholders. A third party can influence power and social relationships to some extent by influencing individual parties' understanding or behavior, providing knowledge or information, or introducing a more effective negotiation process. These sometimes help to equalise power relationships (Fischer, 2012).

Lastly, mediation helps in the maintenance and often improvement of the relationship between the parties involved. One of the main reasons for using mediation as an alternative to the judicial process is to preserve and potentially improve relationships between the parties (Shamir, 2003). The mediation process works well, especially in the case of a long-term relationship or interest-based disputes. In the process, the parties gain an understanding of each other's motives, needs, and interests (Bercovitch & Houston, 2000). This understanding can often improve the relationship between the parties.

In this study, the word is operationally used to mean the process that enables the NPC to bring individuals, groups, or communities who are in dispute or conflict to settle their differences in a manner that ensures that both parties can tolerate and coexist to do their normal business without fear of being attacked. The NPC mediates among parties in conflict using traditional and

34

other methods to ensure peace is restored. Section 3(d) confirms that, thus, the NPC 'facilitates the amicable resolution of conflict through mediation and other processes.

Dialogue

The ancient meaning of the word dialogue (dia lagos) is a "flow of meaning," which stands in stark contrast to the word "debate," which means to "beat down," or even the word "discussion," which has the same characteristic as "percussion" and "concussion"—to break things up (Dowd & Raleigh, 2012). Dialogue is an inclusive process. As the climate change talks demonstrate, dialogue brings together a diverse set of voices to create a microcosm of the larger society (Shamir, 2003). To bring about sustainable change, people must develop a sense of joint ownership of the process and become stakeholders in identifying new approaches to address common challenges.

Dialogue entails learning, not just talking (El-Bushra & Sahl, 2005). The process is not just about sitting around a table, but changing the way people talk, think, and communicate with one another. Unlike other forms of discussion, dialogue requires self-reflection, a spirit of inquiry, and personal change to be present.

Participants must be willing to address the root causes of a crisis, not just the symptoms on the surface. For instance, the 1979 Camp David accords between Egypt and Israel may have ended the armed conflict but arguably created no qualitative "below-the-waterline" difference in the relationship between their people (Van-Tongeren, 2013). That is, there was peace (understood as the absence of violence) but no personal change (which would lead to genuine and sustainable peace). Dialogue recognises each other's

35

humanity. Participants must be willing to show empathy toward one another, recognise differences as well as areas of common ground, and demonstrate a capacity for change (Shamir, 2003). To foster this kind of human interaction, a respectful and neutral setting, or "safe space," is preferred.

The dialogue stresses a long-term perspective. Other forms of conversation tend to focus on the symptoms rather than the root causes of problems. Finding sustainable solutions requires time and patience (Touval & Zartman, 1989). The process can be painstakingly slow and incremental, lasting anywhere from ten minutes to ten years—one-off interventions very often do not work to address deeply-rooted causes of conflict or to fully deal with complex issues.

Dialogue is not a one-size-fits-all strategy. It is not a panacea for resolving all the world's crises where there is deep political paralysis or a long history of violence. Rather, it is just one tool in the toolbox of policymakers; a process that is flexible and adaptable to different contexts and countries, and that is especially useful when the parties to a conflict are not yet ready for formal negotiations (Touval & Zartman, 1989). Dialogue requires that basic conditions be present first. When violence, hate, and mistrust remain stronger than the will to forge a consensus, or if there is a significant imbalance of power or a lack of political will among the participants, then the situation might not be ripe for dialogue. Moreover, participants must feel free to speak their minds without fear of retribution or rejection (Shamir, 2003). The NPC has been using dialogue in addressing key petitions brought to its attention such as the vigilante malaise the threatened the peace of the country ahead of the 2020 elections and the complaint regarding the wearing of the hijab by Muslim students in schools.

Negotiation

Negotiation is a method by which people settle differences. It is a process by which compromise, or agreement is reached while avoiding argument and dispute. In any disagreement, individuals understandably aim to achieve the best possible outcome for their position (or perhaps an organisation they represent). However, the principles of fairness, seeking mutual benefit, and maintaining a relationship are the keys to a successful outcome (Fischer, 2012).

Specific forms of negotiation are used in many situations: international affairs, the legal system, government, industrial disputes, or domestic relationships, as examples. However, general negotiation skills can be learned and applied in a wide range of activities. Negotiation skills can be of great benefit in resolving any differences that arise between you and others.

Stages of Negotiation

To achieve a desirable outcome, it may be useful to follow a structured approach to negotiation. For example, in a work situation, a meeting may need to be arranged in which all parties involved can come together. According to Heise (2010), the process of negotiation includes the following stages: preparation, discussion, and clarification of goals.

Before any negotiation takes place, a decision needs to be made as to when and where a meeting will take place to discuss the problem and who will attend. Setting a limited timescale can also be helpful to prevent the disagreement from continuing (Lopez, 2006). This stage involves ensuring all the pertinent facts of the situation are known to clarify your own position. Undertaking preparation before discussing the disagreement will help to avoid

further conflict and unnecessary time-wasting during the meeting (Freidman, 2008).

During this stage, individuals or members of each side put forward the case as they see it, thus their understanding of the situation. Key skills during this stage include questioning, listening, and clarifying. Sometimes it is helpful to take notes during the discussion stage to record all points put forward in case there is a need for further clarification. It is extremely important to listen, as when disagreement takes place, it is easy to make the mistake of saying too much and listening too little (Hensler, 2004). Each side should have an equal opportunity to present their case. From the discussion, the goals, interests, and viewpoints of both sides of the disagreement need to be clarified. It is helpful to list these factors in order of priority. Through this clarification, it is often possible to identify or establish some common ground. Clarification is an essential part of the negotiation process. Without it, misunderstandings are likely to occur, which may cause problems and barriers to reach a beneficial outcome (Lopez, 2006).

This stage focuses on what is termed a "win-win" outcome where both sides feel they have gained something positive through the process of negotiation and both sides feel their point of view has been taken into consideration. A win-win outcome is usually the best result. Negotiations have been of the key mechanisms the NPC has been using to build consensus among political actors in the country when issues of conflict of interest arises.

Infrastructure for Peace

Lederach first introduced the concept in his book *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies in 1997* (Lederach, 1997). He conceptualised it as basically consisting of a functional network that spans divisions and levels of society, which ensures optimum collaboration between the main stakeholders in the resolution of conflicts with minimal external contribution. It conveys the idea of linking a wide array of resources within a society to enable the prevention of violence and the building of peace.

The concept mirrors the peacebuilding and conflict transformation paradigm that aims to transform negative, destructive conflict into positive, constructive conflict. It focuses on the structural, behavioral, and attitudinal aspects of conflict and the rebuilding of relationships between conflict parties and the constructive changes in attitudes (Aning, 2001). There is no universally accepted definition of an infrastructure for peace. In view of this, most of the definitions given by scholars are based on their backgrounds, work experiences, and knowledge. Several authors used diverse names, such as *peace and dialogue structures*, *peace support structures, and infrastructure for peace,* to describe an infrastructure. There are few studies on infrastructure for peace because the concept itself is relatively new. The review in this section will focus primarily on these strands of literature (Tongeren, 2011).

According to Kumar, the emergence of infrastructures for peace is to allow societies and their governments to resolve conflicts internally and with local indigenous skills, institutions, and resources without any intervention by external actors (Mampilly & Bartoli, 2011). Similarly, Odendaal also argues that the objective is to mobilise the internal capacity of a nation to build peace

39

(Odendaal, 2012). It strengthens a nation's self-reliance and confidence in its ability to deal with its own conflict, which results in a strong sense of local ownership of the peace process.

A former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, also posited that the aim is to allow societies and their governments to resolve conflicts internally and with their own skills, institutions, and resources (World Bank, 2005). Although the components of an infrastructure for peace are not universal in scope, it is usually determined by a country's socio-political context as the experiences of conflict differ from country to country (Tongeren, 2011).

"Infrastructure for Peace" is still in its emerging stage in the field of conflict and peace studies (Quinn, 2016). Basing Quinn's (2016) model on Lederach's (1997) ideas, she observed that "peace infrastructures consist of diverse domestic, interconnected forms of engagement between conflict parties and other stakeholders." Their organisational elements can be established at all stages of peace and dialogue processes, at all levels of society, and with varying degrees of inclusion (Tongeren, 2011; World Bank, 2005).

The objective of peace infrastructure is to assist the parties (e.g., through capacity building or advice), the process (e.g., through mediation between the conflict parties or facilitation of public participation), or the implementation of process results (e.g., through monitoring and coordination of agreement implementation). Quinn (2016) continued that infrastructure for peace can be established at any stage of the peace building process and should not be restricted to specific functions only (Lederach, 1997). The Kenyan Peace Infrastructure, for example, has multiple functions at different levels of

conceptualization, which may be distinctly different from Ghana's infrastructure for peace.

National Infrastructure for Peace

Ideally, an established national peace infrastructure should assist Local Peace Committees (LPCs) by providing political, technical, and administrative support. These three aspects are interconnected, and failure in any one respect has a negative impact on the entire process (Giessmann, 2016).

A national multi-party body can also advise LPCs and facilitate access to national resources. A good example is Sierra Leone's National Code of Conduct Monitoring Committee; a multi-party body with the same composition as local bodies (Richmond, 2021). A technical facility can provide skilled facilitation, mediation, or other peacebuilding services to LPCs. Developing or supporting LPCs requires in-depth understanding of the demands and dynamics of peace processes and skill in managing them. LPCs should have access to professional, skilled conflict transformation practitioners trained and equipped locally to fulfil this role (Richmond, 2021). This training should be a continuous process of action and facilitated reflection, rather than a one-off event, and is one of the most worthwhile areas for external support.

The objective should be to develop a body of knowledge and skills that is culturally and contextually relevant (Strassel, 2016). If possible, full-time appointments should be made at a ratio of one professional facilitator for every three to five LPCs (which was roughly the situation in South Africa).

Administrative support can offer administrative and financial assistance to LPCs at a relatively low cost due to local buy-in. In principle, LPC members should offer to serve on a voluntary basis because they are working for their

own peace. Payment for services is not advisable and can be counterproductive. However, financing is necessary to support members' transport and accommodation costs and for expenditures incurred in the process of making peace (venue rental costs, public address systems, bus hire, etc.).

The largest budget items are for providing technical support and orienting and training LPC members. These activities also require a certain amount of logistical support (Rutten & Owuor, 2008). The eventual goal of a process to create LPCs is to locate all support structures within the national peace infrastructure. However, almost all successful national LPC programmes have required external support at some point. Over the years, the UNDP has played an important role in supporting LPCs in Ghana, Kenya, Sierra Leone, and other countries (Giessmann, 2016).

To ensure that national peace infrastructures and LPCs become self-sustaining, external support should be aimed specifically at building capacity and strengthening local and national ownership. However, there is an inherent dilemma in this respect: local ownership is a precondition for LPCs to succeed and relying on external support may weaken this ownership (Richmond, 2021).

Therefore, it is crucial that external agencies be extremely careful about the ways they provide external support, and they need to pay attention to matters of ownership and sustainability. This support should be specifically aimed at building the capacity of local institutions with managerial responsibilities.

Conceptual Framework

The idea of Infrastructures for Peace (I4P) is not brand-new, and it is receiving more and more attention from academics and practitioners. I4P has helped many nations throughout the world resolve conflicts brought on by

42

political, social, and economic change, particularly in settings when the ability to resolve conflict peacefully is limited.

Conflicts do not arise out of nowhere; they have a source or cause. The most basic cause of conflict is perceptions of goal and interest incompatibility. Identity defense is very frequent, especially in today's environment when group awareness and rights have gained prominence (Rugumamu, 2002). Identity, according to Collins (2008), is a key source of conflict. When members of a group believe their sense of self is being challenged or that they are being denied legitimacy and respect, identity conflicts emerge. Because identity is so important to one's self-esteem and understanding of the world, any danger to one's identity is likely to elicit a significant reaction.

This reaction is typically aggressive and protective, and it can quickly grow into an intractable confrontation. Such disputes tend to endure because threats to one's identity are difficult to dismiss. Assertions of unfairness, according to Maeise (2003), are the source of confrontations. People are often unwilling to compromise on their need for fairness. The standards, rights, and entitlements that are regarded to underpin decent human treatment are linked to an individual's sense of justice. Human needs theorists argue that many conflicts are generated by a lack of provision of basic human needs, which is directly tied to the issue of injustice (Rothman, 1997).

The last significant source of conflict is high-stakes distributional disputes (Coleman, 2003). Conflicts about who receives what and how much they get are also difficult to resolve. Tangible goods such as money, land, or better jobs, as well as intangible resources such as social prestige, will be

43

allocated. Boundary conflicts, natural resource conflicts, governance conflicts, economic development conflicts, and other conflicts all fall under this umbrella.

The root cause of a dispute must be known before it can be handled or managed (Hammill & Bescançon, 2010). The origin of the conflict might sometimes point to the management methods to apply and the actors or stakeholders to engage to reduce the dispute's harmful potential. It might be difficult to tell the difference between a conflict's cause and its repercussions. As a disagreement develops, the lines between cause-and-effect blur. Hostility can be the result of one phase of a conflict and the catalyst for the next. Identifying the origin or root causes of the conflict, on the other hand, is critical to the management process. Conflict analysis is therefore, an imperative for conflict management and resolution.

As illustrated in Figure 2, at the top of the framework are some of the potential causes of violent conflict, which are seen as inescapable, inevitable, and inherent in human existence and social progress. This is driven by the just world theory. The nexuses suggest that when conflict ensues, an effective peace infrastructure is a pre-requisite to determining the success or failure of a management process.

The ultimate way to sustainable conflict management is the introduction of an infrastructure for peace. The contextual issues of a conflict consist of the structural causes, the typology, nature, and the actors involved, with particular attention to interest groups and spoilers. Two main conflict management mechanisms are available: mediation, negotiation, dialogue, and preventive diplomacy, as well as other western-centred or formal mechanisms. The framework suggests that an effective peace infrastructure will prevent, manage,

and resolve violent conflicts. Effective peace infrastructure will lead to peace

inclusivity and justice in society.

45
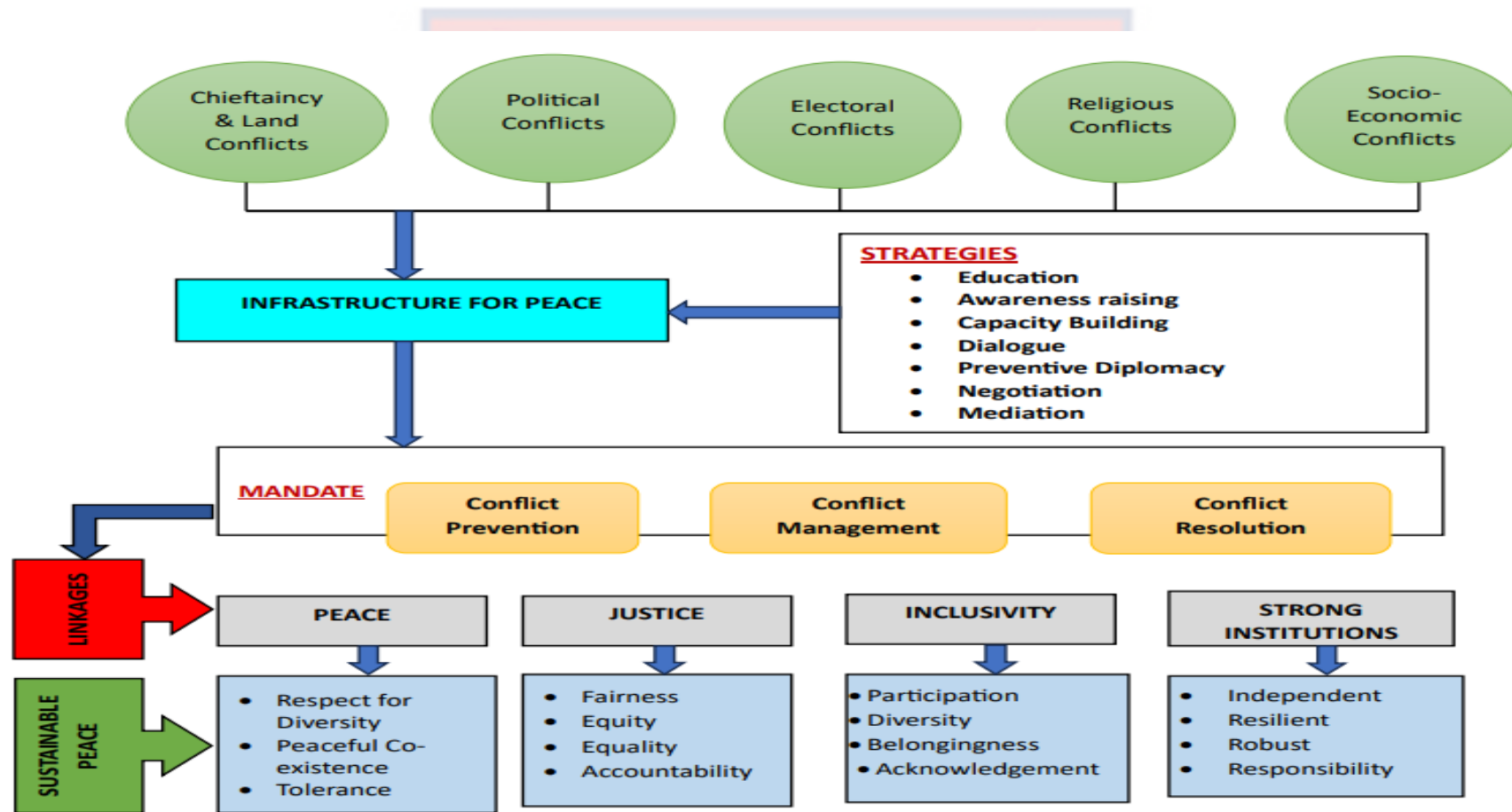
Figure 2: **Conceptual Framework**
Source: Author's Construct from Lederach (1997), Tongeren (2011) and Edward & Romero (2014).

46

The Need for Infrastructure for Peace

The understanding that peacebuilding requires sustained and deeply transformative work has contributed to the development of the concept of "peace infrastructures," alternatively called "infrastructures for peace." The concept was introduced by Lederach (1997) when he proposed his "modest theses" in 1997. He stated that the nature and characteristics of contemporary conflict suggest the need for a set of concepts and approaches that go beyond traditional statist diplomacy.

Building peace in today's conflicts calls for a long-term commitment to establishing an infrastructure across the levels of a society, an infrastructure that would empower the resources for reconciliation from within that society and maximise the contribution from outside. His model called for structural transformation within an extended and realistic timeframe. Lederach (1997) stated that infrastructure did not mean a rigid, centrally controlled system. Instead, it referred to a functional network that – like a spider's web – would cross the divisions and levels of society and beyond, ensuring the best possible collaboration and coordination.

Obviously, the key objective of elections in post-conflict or former authoritarian countries is to transfer power to a democratically elected government that enjoys the legitimacy of the citizens and international community as well as gets the nod for rebuilding (Strassel, 2016). Elections are therefore a means to initiate and consolidate the democratic process in a country. But while we cannot question its importance in building a peaceful democratic society, it remains a question whether elections can achieve its objectives. In developing countries, such as Ghana, elections are keenly contested, which in

47

most cases activates erstwhile tensions and root causes of conflict. It also has the potential to aggravate political fractures and tensions within a country (Rutten & Owuor, 2008).

The electoral system, for instance, can be a source of conflict. The majoritarian systems, or the absolute majority, which is used by Ghana, typically place power and national resources in the hands of only the winning party, making opposition parties feel that they have been denied access to resources (Höglund & Fjelde, 2016).

Höglund and Fjelde (2016) on elections clearly showed how the process has become a source of threat to peace in Africa. To avoid the violence that comes with elections and ensure a stable government transition, Richmond (2021) argues that states are required to build infrastructure for peace to deal with potential conflict issues that may erupt before, during, and after elections. He continues that, countries like Guyana in 2006, Ghana in 2004 and 2008, Sierra Leone in 2007, and others enjoyed peaceful elections through the creation and application of national capacities for conflict prevention and transformation, which were backed by UN initiatives. He also noted three similar elements that were key to electoral success across countries with formal peace structures (Annan, 2007).

The availability of conflict management and conciliation capacities at the district and local levels, for example, in the shape of local peace committees or similar mechanisms, Lastly, he mentions the activities of civil society, particularly religious and traditional leaders and mass membership civic groups, in executing organised advocacy for peace and engaging youth in their activities (Strassel, 2016).

These elements are constructive conflict prevention and management mechanisms (Asamoa, 1990). They encompass the three principles of conflict prevention noted by Richmond (2021), which include early reaction to signs of trouble; alleviation of the risk factors that trigger violent conflict; and an extended effort to resolve the underlying root causes of violence. These mechanisms are the features of building infrastructure for peace. Where these mechanisms are absent, keenly contested elections pose a threat to peace. The uncertainty behind elections in developing countries calls for establishing a viable internal mechanism that is committed to long-term peace advocacy (Van-Tongeren, 2013).

Straus and Taylor (2012) write that the collective failure on the part of the international community led to the violence and destructions that characterized the Ivorian elections. What took place in and what is currently happening in countries including Guinea, Mali and Burkina Faso are examples of the need for internally generated mechanism to prevent and manage insider conflicts. After six years of international peacekeeping and diplomacy, not much was done to establish internal infrastructure to bind the north-south divide in Ivory Coast.

The country at some point lacked a major political party or a mass-based civic organisation to work on binding the north-south divide. If national infrastructure for peace had been established in the previous decade, it might have prevented the polarised situation (Van-Tongeren, 2013).

Richmond (2021) posits that Gbagbo's refusal to accept defeat could have been dealt with by an immense national upsurge to counter his rule, but

49

for the lack of internal peace infrastructure, the country and the political spectrum were massively splintered and polarised.

I4P stands for "Sustainable Peace and Development"

Sustaining peace is an explicit and deliberate policy objective for all states, regardless of whether they are beset by violent conflict or not. It is underpinned by an infrastructure composed of institutions, norms, attitudes, and capacities spanning different sectors and levels of social organisation (Cling, Razafindrakoto & Roubaud, 2004). This infrastructure needs to be constantly nurtured and updated to adapt to changing contexts and circumstances. Sustaining peace is also conceived as a necessarily endogenous process that requires strong and inclusive national ownership and leadership (Hearn, Bujones & Kugel, 2014).

Finally, sustaining peace is multi-sectoral and all-encompassing, amounting to a meta-policy deserving of attention at the highest levels of national government. Perhaps the biggest challenge facing those seeking to understand and sustain peace is to define the concrete actions that will contribute to its effective implementation. The conceptual basis for sustaining peace can be traced back to Johan Galtung's seminal work on "positive peace" (Rutten & Owuor, 2008). Positive peace requires building and strengthening the factors that foster peace. These factors include "everyday peace" factors like solidarity and compassion among different ethnic groups, as well as systemic factors like equitable resource distribution, well-functioning institutions, tolerance for diversity, respect for others' rights, physical safety, and access to food and clean drinking water (Collier & Vicente, 2012). Sustaining peace seeks

to place greater emphasis on detecting and strengthening what is already working, not only what is in disrepair and needs fixing.

Sustainable peace must be an ongoing exercise, and states must not conceive it as a one-time intervention. Contexts change because of both internal fluctuations and external shocks, requiring a concomitant adjustment in the norms and institutions governing society (Richmond, 2021). For example, migration patterns alter the social balance of a society, and maintaining social cohesion in the face of such changes demands that citizens be willing and able to adopt new norms of social interaction and extend their threshold of tolerance (Rutten & Owuor, 2008). The inability to respond to changes, both internal and external, is an indicator of the weakness of a society's infrastructure for peace.

Sustainable peace is not a mirage but a political reality that can be created (Collier & Vicente, 2012). The European Union is a good example. In contrast to the first part of the 20th century, Western Europe has become a security community or an environment that has acquired all the attributes of sustainable peace (Lederach, 1997). A series of preconditions have proved to enhance the creation of secure communities: compatibility of political and economic values; "we-ness" feeling; democratic regimes of the member states; communication and mobility; political efficacy; and successful arms control (Rutten & Owuor, 2008). The concept of "security community" mainly refers to the interaction between states; however, the framework that Lederach (1997) propose has its principal focus on building peace between different conflict parties, groups, or communities within countries.

If one aims to study these processes, one needs an operational definition of sustainable peace (Van-Tongeren, 2013). The absence or presence of

sustainable peace can be assessed by looking at the output or the installation of the preconditions of sustainable peace. Sustainable peace is characterised by: - Absence of physical violence; -Elimination of unacceptable forms of political, economic, and cultural discrimination; -Self-sustainability; -High level of internal and external legitimacy or approval; and -Propensity to enhance constructive management and transformation of conflicts.

The essential requirements or pre-conditions-cited in the peace research literature-for creating such a sustainable peace can be clustered into five peace-building blocks: an effective system of communication, consultation, and negotiation; peace-enhancing structures and institutions; an integrative political-psychological climate; a critical mass of peace-building leadership; and a supportive international environment (Lederach, 1997). The underlying assumption is that these five peace building blocks are mutually reinforcing and therefore need to be present or installed simultaneously.

The failure of one of these building blocks can seriously jeopardise the overall stability and effectiveness of the peace-building process. The first building block focuses on the establishment of an effective communication, consultation, and negotiation system at different levels between conflicting parties or members (Suter, 2004). For example, in contrast to the negotiation styles used in most international organisations, the negotiation style within the European Union is predominantly integrative. Ample time and creativity are invested in generating mutually beneficial agreements. Without win-win agreements, the union would disintegrate (Rutten & Owuor, 2008).

The second building block emphasises the importance and nature of certain peace-enhancing structures. To achieve a sustainable peace, (conflict)

52

countries must install certain political, economic, and security structures and institutions (Suter, 2004). The political-legal reform process should aim to establish a legitimate political structure. Legitimate political structures are supported by the people when they are perceived or expected to deliver physical security, economic security, education, health facilities, etc.

Full-fledged and consolidated democracies tend to achieve the highest level of support. Partial democracies that do not satisfy the earlier mentioned basic needs lead to disillusion and violence. A widely noted United Nations survey of 19.000 Latin Americans in 18 countries in April 2004 produced a startling result: a majority would choose a dictator over an elected leader if that would provide economic benefits (Quinn, 2016). It is crucial to note that the transition from one state (e.g., non-democratic structures) to another (e.g., a consolidated democratic environment) is not without difficulties: the devil is in the transition. The economic reform process envisions the establishment of an economic environment that stimulates sustainable development and economic growth and reduces vertical and horizontal inequalities.

The security structures should be able to safeguard and/or increase the population's objective and subjective security. The most effective is the cooperative security structure (Suter, 2004). It provides, at the same time, human security, collective security, collective defence, and efforts to create stability in its external environment (Humphreys, 2003). The creation of an integrative climate is the third necessary building block for establishing a sustainable peace process (Cretz, 2015). This building block stresses the importance of a favourable political-psychological and social-psychological environment. Although the climate is less tangible and observable than the other

53

building blocks, it can be assessed by looking at the consequences. An integrative or disintegrative climate can express itself in the form of attitudes, behaviours, and institutions (Richmond, 2021). Characteristics of an integrative climate are, for example, the expectation of an attractive future because of cooperation, the development of a "we-ness" feeling, or multiple-loyalty and reconciliation.

According to Cretz (2015), the fourth building block is a supportive regional and international environment. The stability of a peace process is often crucially dependent on the behaviour and interests of neighbouring countries or regional powers. These actors can have a positive influence on the peace process by providing political legitimacy or support, by assisting with the demobilisation and demilitarisation process, or by facilitating and stimulating regional trade and economic integration.

However, these same actors can also inhibit progress towards stability, for example, by supporting certain groups that do not subscribe to the peace process. Likewise, the larger international community plays a crucial role in most post-conflict countries (Van-Tongeren, 2013). The international community, through UN agencies or other international (non-)governmental organizations, frequently provides critical resources and funding or even assumes direct responsibility for a wide range of tasks such as (physical) reconstruction, humanitarian aid, development cooperation, or third-party security guarantees (World Health Organization, 2002). The fifth building block is the presence of a critical mass of peacebuilding leadership. There are leaders in different domains: politics, diplomacy, defence, economics, education, media, religion, health, etc. Leadership can be situated at different levels: the

elite, middle, and grassroots level (Humphreys, 2003). The top level comprises the key political and military leaders in the conflict.

The middle-range leaders are not necessarily connected to or controlled by the authority or structures of the major opposition movements. They could be highly respected individuals or people who occupy formal positions of leadership in sectors such as education, business, religion, agriculture, health, or humanitarian organisations (Suter, 2004). The grassroots leaders include people who are involved in local communities, members of indigenous nongovernmental organisations carrying out relief projects for local populations, health officials, and refugee camp leaders. Finally, there are external and internal leaders (Kaldor, 2007).

In addition to the above-mentioned peace building blocks, we also need appropriate support systems and humanitarian aid. The installation of the building blocks needs to be backed up by the development of appropriate educational (media), legal, health, and technological support systems. Humanitarian aid is indispensable during the conflict and in part of the post-conflict phase (Richmond, 2021). The aim of humanitarian aid is to provide help to people who have been victims of man-made disasters (wars, conflicts, outbreaks of fighting) or structural crises (severe political, economic, or social breakdowns).

According to the EIU (2010, p 12) "the focus is mainly on providing goods and services (e.g. food supplies, medicine, vaccinations, water conveyance, psychological support, minesweeping, clothes, shelter, rehabilitation). The aid is also preventive (planting of trees to counter floods, etc.). Its sole aim of humanitarian aid is to prevent or relieve human suffering.

This assistance is directed mainly towards vulnerable people and, as a priority, to those in developing countries (Suter, 2004). A key point is that it is accorded to victims without discrimination on the grounds of race, religion, sex, age, nationality, or political affiliation. Humanitarian aid decisions are to be taken impartially and solely according to the victims' needs and interests. There are therefore no criteria or conditions for the aid, which is non-refundable "(Lederach, 1997, p 23).

Important issues in this respect are, for instance, the timing, the internal dynamics and progress, the sequence and prioritisation, and the mutual interdependence and interaction of the various building blocks. The design or infrastructure of these reforms or transformation processes is often the result of an ad hoc and, to some extent, technocratic decision-making process. Therefore, the collision of objectives and the negative or inhibiting influences of one building block on another are rarely anticipated and prevented. To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of peace building, we need to pay more (research) attention to the infrastructure of these peace processes.

Infrastructure for Peace and Conflict Resolution

States increasingly embrace systematic measures and institutionalised systems to develop the essential capacities to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts and promote peace to avoid violent conflict and move from fragile to resilient societies. Infrastructures for peace is one such strategy that provides a welcoming and courteous response (Cretz. 2015).

Conflict resolution can apply to all stages of conflicts and encompasses relatively constructive ways of conducting and transforming conflicts and then maintaining secure and equitable relations. Conflict resolution relates to all

domains of conflicts, whether within or between families, organizations, communities, or countries (Odendaal, 2012). The word "resolution" means "the quality of being resolute; a firm decision; an expression of opinion or intensions agreed on by a legislative body; the action of solving a problem or dispute; the process of reducing or separating something into components" (Humphreys, 2003). Thus, we can basically define conflict resolution as a situation where the conflicting parties enter into an agreement that solves their central incompatibilities, accepts each other's continued existence as parties, and ceases all violent action against each other (Brabeck, 2001). Conflict resolution refers to a range of processes aimed at alleviating or eliminating sources of conflict. Humphreys (2003) further argues that conflict resolution is an umbrella term for a whole range of methods and approaches for dealing with conflict: from negotiation to diplomacy; from mediation to arbitration; from facilitation to adjudication; from conciliation to conflict prevention; from conflict management to conflict transformation; from restorative justice to peacekeeping.

This stems from the fact that it is only through conflict resolution mechanisms that conflicts, rivalries, disputes, and incompatibilities can be checked and minimised so that peace can be established. This is the reason why great leaders, distinguished academicians, stalwarts, think tanks, the media, and civil society have laid much thrust upon the concept of conflict resolution. It is noteworthy to mention that conflict resolution is a mechanism of the peace-building and peace-making process. Fischer (2012) contends that conflict resolution, as a discipline of peace study, must emphasise that all conflicts of human society should have to be resolved by peaceful and non-violent methods

such as diplomacy, communication, negotiation, summit conciliation, arbitration, mediation, and through cooperative and confidence-building measures.

Effective conflict resolution in human society can be achieved when we give equal attention to the marginalized, minority, and unrecognised groups in society. In some other societies, Donais and Knorr (2013) state that there are different types of conflicts and for these conflicts to be resolved, different types of peaceful and non-violent methods and techniques need to be employed. Even though war is the last resort in political phenomena as stipulated by the UN Charter, there is a tendency by some states to use war as a way of resolving conflict.

The aim of methods and techniques of conflict resolution is not the elimination of conflicts, which is generally known to be impossible and undesirable. Instead, the primary objective of conflict resolution is to transform an actual or potentially violent situation into a peaceful one. In the following sections, the various conflict resolution mechanisms (negotiation and mediation) will be discussed. This is because the National Peace Council is permitted by the law to use mediation and negotiation to resolve conflicts.

Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), also known as the Global Goals) are 17 goals with 169 targets that all UN Member States have agreed to work towards achieving by the year 2030. All UN Member States endorsed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, which provides a shared roadmap for peace and prosperity for people and the planet

58

today and in the future (Persson, Weitz, & Nilsson, 2016). SDG Goal 16 seeks to promote Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions.

SDG Goal 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

The fact that one of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations in 2015 is focused on peace, justice, and strong institutions (SDG 16) is such a sign of major progress, particularly since the SDGs are universal and concern all countries worldwide, whereas the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) relate only to developing countries. SDG 16's inclusion in the Sustainable Development Goals came after a long and arduous campaign, and only after harsh talks. The terms used to define the goal, as well as the targets and metrics used, are far from neutral (Persson et al., 2016).

Their wording and choices set clear boundaries within the very broad field and multiple dimensions of governance – some of which are politically sensitive – and they shape the scope of this SDG. Goal 16 stands out as a particularly essential goal as the world sets new goals for sustainable development in the 2030 Agenda. Goal 16 commits the world to being more peaceful, to providing everyone with equal access to justice, and to ensuring that people all over the globe are served by institutions that are effective, accountable, and inclusive (TST, 2015).

The world pledged to "leave no one behind" on this "great collective journey" in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as address the challenge of financing and creating an enabling environment for sustainable development at all levels in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity. Proper indicators assessing peace, justice, and institutions will need to be selected,

59

tested, adjusted, and monitored to successfully assess performance. It is not easy to measure such complicated notions, but it is not impossible (Wheeler, 2015).

Among the 51 countries that have volunteered to report at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 2019, more than a third (18) were from Africa – the largest-yet contingent from the region reporting at the HLPF. This large attendance from Africa in the year that SDG 16 has been reviewed thematically should not be surprising (Richmond, 2021). Africa's forceful stance on the significance of establishing a specific target on governance and peace during the early phases of developing the SDGs was essential in forging a global agreement on SDG 16.

The continent has also demonstrated global leadership in promoting national efforts to measure governance over the past 18 years, notably through the African Peer Review Mechanism. The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), established in 2003, was Africa's own voluntary mechanism for countries to self-assess on governance and the Governance, Peace, and Security (GPS-SHASA) initiative, a pioneering effort launched in 2011 by the African statistical community to produce harmonised statistics on governance, peace and security (GPS), as part of the AU's Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA) (UNDP, 2013). Because of Africa's crucial role in the creation of SDG 16, it bears a specific duty to set an example in its implementation and monitoring. This is how the idea for this assessment of African preparations for the HLPF 2019 and beyond arose (UNDP, 2015).

A survey was administered to government officials from relevant ministries, parliaments, national statistical offices, and national oversight institutions as well as non-government actors (civil society organisations,

research institutions, and universities) across 38 African countries. African leaders recognise that SDG 16 is both a goal in and of itself, as well as a critical enabler for achieving the other SDGs. It requires strong institutions to build a nation, from assuring universal access to health and education, to encouraging decent work opportunities and nurturing safe urban areas. However, most respondents (66%) point out that strong political support for SDG 16 does not always translate into financial support for SDG 16-related processes (Fisher & Anderson, 2015).

After all, concerns about governance and peace are essential issues of sovereignty that have immediate and significant implications for any country's growth trajectory (Odendaal, 2010). Instead of adopting international governance indicators that may not always fit the specificities of their country, policymakers can use national governance statistics to undertake their own examination of the situation and its evolution over time (Herrera, Razafindrakoto, & Roubaud, 2007). Statistics experts, on the other hand, say that the resources required to gather, analyze, and quality-assure SDG 16 data are severely deficient. Only 16 percent of government respondents claimed their country had set aside money, particularly for the collection of SDG 16 data.

Inclusive Society

An inclusive society is described as a "community for all in which every individual, each with rights and responsibilities, has an active role to play" by the World Summit for Social Development (United Nations, 1995). Respect for all fundamental freedoms and human rights, cultural and religious diversity, social justice and the unique needs of marginalised and vulnerable groups, democratic involvement, and the rule of law must all underpin such an inclusive

61

society. The concept of inclusivity is supported by social policies that work to slash inequality and build tolerant and adaptable cultures that welcome everyone.

The process of ensuring that everyone, regardless of background, has an equal opportunity to realise their full potential in life is known as social inclusion. SDG goal 16 is also about inclusivity. This is a multifaceted process with the goal of establishing the conditions necessary for every member of society to fully participate in all facets of daily life, including civic, social, economic, and political activities as well as decision-making processes (Odendaal, 2010).

All members of society must be capable of and motivated to engage in civic, social, economic, and political activities at both the local and national levels to establish and maintain inclusive societies. A society will best promote the values of inclusivity if most of its members, if not all, feel as though they are contributing, have access to their fundamental necessities and means of subsistence, and are given the chance to engage in processes that have an impact on their lives (UNDP, 2012). The degree to which the contributions, presence, and viewpoints of other groups of individuals are appreciated and incorporated into a setting is referred to as inclusion. SDG goal 16 encourages inclusive and peaceful communities for sustainable development, ensures that everyone has access to justice, and creates inclusive, effective, and accountable institutions at all levels (UNPD, 2015).

Empirical Studies: Review on Infrastructures for Peace

The African Union reckons how much violent conflicts have impacted on the development of the continent. The AU has developed several conventions

62

and instruments, including its constitutive act (OAU 2000), the protocol relating to the establishment of the peace and security council (African Union, 2002). The decisions and communiqués from the AU's Peace and Security Council (PSC) and concepts such as Lederach's, the African Union, developed the Continental Structural Conflict Prevention Framework (CSPCPF) as the AU's coordinated response to structural conflict prevention. Some countries on the continent have responded by setting up infrastructure for peace in their countries. They include Ghana, Kenya, Zambia, South Sudan, and Zimbabwe (Lederach, 1997).

South Africa

During the apartheid period, South Africa developed a system of peace infrastructure. Upon independence in 1991, the National Peace Infrastructure for Peace Accord (NPA) was established in the country with a mandate to create trust and reconciliation between leaders and to prevent violence and resolve disputes (Suter, 2004). The period of transition from apartheid to democratic governance in South Africa had well-developed peace infrastructure, with local peace committees as the primary strategy to prevent violence. These structures effectively functioned between 1991 and 1994. They were, however, discontinued after the successful elections of April 1994. In pursuit of the National Peace Accord (NPA), signed on September 14, 1991, local peace committees were established with the active participation of the government, the major opposition parties, and the liberation movements.

The South African Infrastructure for Peace is comprised of the following structures:

1. National Peace Committee,

2. Regional peace committees (RPCs) are in each of the country's eleven (11) regions.

3. Local peace committees (LPCs), located in conflict-affected areas and

4. The National Peace Secretariat is tasked with the duty of establishing and coordinating the regional and local peace committees.

The RPCs were made up of regional representatives of all signatories to the NPA with a presence in each region. Besides, relevant regional civil society institutions, including faith-based groups, trade unions, business and industry, and traditional authorities, were represented. Government agencies, including the police and defense forces, were also represented. The mandate of the RPCs primarily was to oversee the establishment of LPCs, giving priority to those towns that experienced violence. LPCs focused on inclusivity, welcoming CSOs that wanted to be part of them. The LPCs had three main responsibilities:

1. Create trust and reconciliation between community leaders, including the police and army.

2. Preventing violence and intimidation is essential.

3. Resolve disputes that could lead to public violence.

Some of the most significant challenges that South Africa faced after a conflict were post-conflict reconstruction and development (PCRD) and peacebuilding. As the country makes progress in conflict prevention and resolution, the need for comprehensive and integrated actions and plans for the recovery, reconstruction, and development of conflict-affected societies becomes more pressing.

In his analysis of the South African concept, Andries Odendaal identified some lessons that may have relevance for indigenous peace initiatives

in other countries. He observed that the process of establishing a LPC was as important as the national mandate to establish them. A major setback to the South African Peace Infrastructure was that it did not involve the people at the local levels in its membership.

Kenya

In 1993, Kenya established a peace infrastructure that used the bottom-up approach. The initiative began with a group of women from the Wajir district. The structure consisted of civil society actors working together to sensitise the population to the need for peace (Van-Tongeren, 2013). The initiative was later formalised into one structure, named the District Development Committee. This formalised structure consisted of the government, NGOs, and citizen representations.

In 1995, the Wajir Peace and Development Committee was formed, with the district commissioner as chairperson. Members included the heads of all government departments, representatives of the various peace groups, religious leaders, NGO representatives, chiefs, and security officers. The model was replicated in other districts. The Office of the President, through the NSC, in 2009 published a national policy on peace building and conflict management which factored the lessons of the 2008 violent elections. The Kenyan Infrastructure for Peace, in short, was modelled upon the structure below.

1. A National Peace Commission (NPC), appointed by the president with the approval of parliament, with 13 commissioners, one from each province and 5 others representing women, youth, civil society, persons with disabilities, and academia, all with a national reputation The commission is to be supported by

a secretariat, headed by a secretary. The work of the NPC was to be guided by bipartisanship and independence.

2. A National Peace Forum, to be constituted as a platform for consultations, collaboration, cooperation, and coordination by all peace actors and stakeholders,

3. The Provincial Peace Fora is constituted as a platform for consultations and coordination at the provincial levels.

4. District Peace Committees (DPC) are hybrid institutions that bring together synergies between traditional and formal mechanisms for conflict resolution.

They have demonstrated their ability to manage intercommunity conflict and to contain or prevent violence, were able to integrate a broad range of local stakeholders who were locally perceived as relevant for conflict resolution and tackled cases of interethnic conflict.

The current financing arrangements for peace support operations in Kenya are widely acknowledged to be neither reliable nor predictable, particularly in the context of high-tempo combat operations. While partners have shown a great deal of flexibility and innovation, everyone agrees that the current financing arrangements are unsustainable.

Empirical Studies Outside Africa

In his review of the infrastructure for peace across the globe, Lederach (1997) observed that in the Central Americas, because of several internal wars in the 1980s, peace commissions were established upon the signing of the Central America Peace Accord in Guatemala by five countries to provide a mechanism specific to each country to deal with internal conflicts but in a

coordinated manner. Nicaragua established a national peace commission and a network of peace commissions at the local level.

The initial mandate of the Nicaraguan Peace Commission was to "document and investigate human rights violations." Overtime, however, it included intra-community disputes, land disputes, and crimes. In 1990, over sixty commissions had been established at different levels in that country. The Nicaraguan Model took the form of Insider-Partial Mediation, which involved mediators from within the conflict zones but who had a high level of trust and confidence, particularly church leaders (Kaldor, 2007).

Nepal established a Ministry for Peace and Reconstruction in March 2007. The country became the second country in the world to establish a ministry responsible for peace after the Solomon Islands. The establishment of local peace councils (LPCs) was a tough one as it encountered several contestations by stakeholders in the decision-making process. The question as to the independence of the LPCs was prominent in the discourse from 2005 until the creation of the Ministry. The ministry has sixty LPCs in Nepal, but they are not as effective in executing its mandate as you find in Nicaragua, for example (Van-Tongeren, 2013).

In the Philippines, the fall of the Marcos dictatorship in 1986 provided the opportunity for peace talks with the rebel forces. Consequently, the Office of the "Peace Commissioner" under the Office of the President was established. The position of presidential adviser on the peace process (PAPP) of cabinet rank was then established, with a full secretariat and the mandate to comprehensively deal with issues of peace in the country (Van-Tongeren, 2013). In 1993, three main principles underlying the peace process were adopted, namely:

1.   A comprehensive peace process should be community-based, reflecting the sentiments, values, and principles important to all Filipinos.

2.   A comprehensive peace process aims to forge a new social compact for a just, equitable, humane, and pluralistic society.

3.   A comprehensive peace process seeks a principal and peaceful resolution of the internal armed conflicts, with neither blame nor surrender, but with dignity for all concerned.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined gaps in the literature and presented an overview of the terminology of infrastructure for peace. After having the three theories underpinning the study, the goal 16 of the sustainable development goals and the conceptual framework, it is fair to conclude that research into the role of peace infrastructure in promoting the sustainable development goal 16 is of major importance.
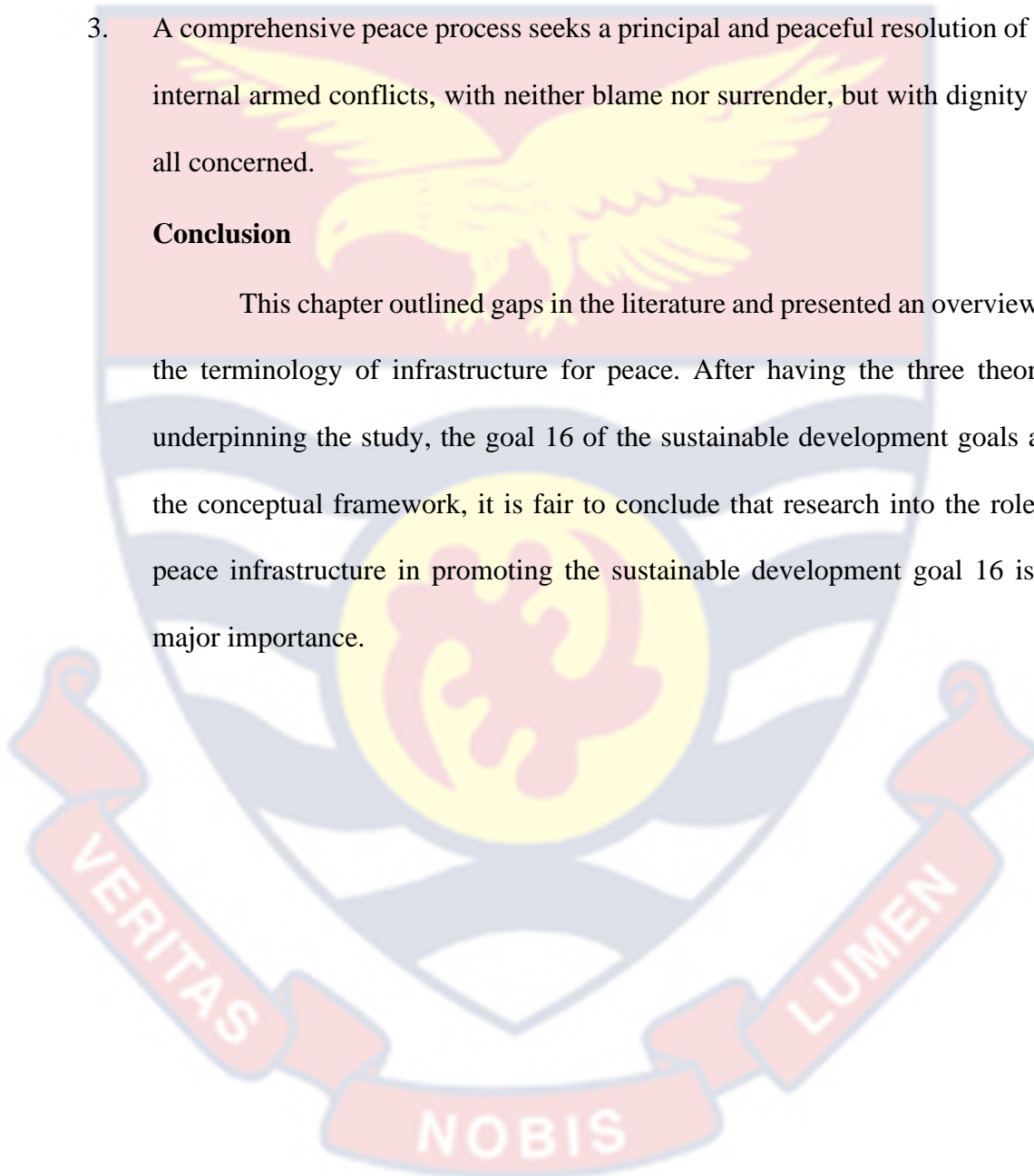
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology for the study. The research design and approach to the study are presented in this chapter. Furthermore, the sampling procedures and the methods of data collection are discussed alongside the methods for data analysis. The ethical procedures that guided the study are explained.

Research Philosophy and Design

The research philosophy is interpretivism with the approach as qualitative. The interpretivist paradigm is relevant for the study because it rejects the objectivist view that meaning resides within the world independently of consciousness (Collins, 2010). This approach seeks to understand the interactions between peace infrastructures and the SDGs through the eyes of the participants.

The study uses the exploratory research design to seek an in-depth understanding of the contribution of national peace architectures to the realisation of peace priorities as indicated in the SDGs, especially Goal 16. The exploratory research design is appropriate for the study because it is used to investigate a problem that is not clearly defined. It is conducted to have a better understanding of the existing problem but will not provide conclusive results. An exploratory research design is conducted for a research problem when the researcher has only a few studies for reference. According to Mason (2008), an exploratory study is usually conducted to gain a better understanding of an existing problem or situation. They are used by researchers to become

acquainted with an existing phenomenon and gain new insight into it to formulate a more precise problem. It begins with a broad concept, and the research findings are used to identify issues related to the research topic.

Exploratory research is conducted when a topic needs to be thoroughly understood, especially if it has never been done before. The goal of such research is to investigate the problem and its surroundings rather than to reach a conclusion. Such research will allow a researcher to lay a solid foundation for exploring ideas, selecting the best research design, and identifying variables that are important for the analysis. Most importantly, such research can help organisations or researchers save a significant amount of time and resources by allowing the researcher to determine whether the research is worthwhile.

Study Population

The study population includes staff and board members of the National Peace Council and staff of civil society organisations in the field of peacebuilding, such as the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP). In addition, peace and conflict studies lecturers in tertiary institutions, national security operatives and security personnel (military and police) in Accra formed part of the study population.

Sampling Technique

This study adopted the purposive sampling procedure. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which units are chosen because they possess the characteristics that the researcher requires in the sample. In other words, in purposive sampling, units are chosen "on purpose." This sampling method, also known as judgmental sampling, relies on the researcher's judgement when identifying and selecting individuals, cases, or

events that can provide the best information to achieve the study's objectives. As the target population have specialized expertise in the field for enquiry, the expert purposive sampling was used. The main goal of the purposive sampling procedure is to identify the cases, individuals, or communities best suited to assist the researcher in answering the research questions. As a result, when the researcher has a lot of background information about the research topic, purposive sampling works best.

Research on national peace infrastructures and Sustainable Development Goal 16 requires individuals with a high level of knowledge about this specific subject. Expert sampling was therefore considered the best for this study. Thus, the experts were chosen based on a demonstrable skill set or level of knowledge and experience in the field of study. When there is a lack of observational evidence, when investigating new areas of research, or when conducting exploratory research, this type of sampling is useful.

Sampling Procedure

The purposive sampling technique was used to select participants for the study. At the national level, the National Peace Council is governed by a governing body known as the Board, which is made up of thirteen distinguished individuals. The study selected seven current and eight past governing board members for the study. All staff with the rank of deputy director or above at the head office of the NPC were also purposively selected for the study.

The NPC is also made up of Sixteen Regional Peace Councils appointed by various institutions specified in Act 818 of 2011 in consultation with the Regional Coordinating Council. The President also appoints Regional and District Executive Secretaries of the NPC. Of this, twenty regional peace

71

council members and twelve regional executive secretaries out of the sixteen regional peace councils were purposively selected for the study. The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP-GHANA) and the Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) were two civil society organisations selected for the study. The Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) was selected for their expertise in the field under study. The sample size for the entire study was 60 participants. The breakdown of this is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Sample Size

Response Unit	Size	Percentage
NPC Governing Board (2020 to date)	7	11.3
Past NPC Governing Board	8	12.9
NPC Head Office staff	5	8.1
Regional Council Members	10	16.1
Past Regional Council Members	10	16.1
Regional Executive Secretaries	12	19.3
WANEP	2	3.2
CDD	2	3.2
KAIPTC	2	3.2
National Security Operatives	2	3.2
Security Personnel (Military and Police)	2	3.2
TOTAL	62	100

Source: Field Survey, (2022)

Data Sources

Both primary and secondary data were used in the study. Primary research methods were used to collect data directly from the subject of investigation. Primary data were gathered from National Peace Council staff and board members, national security operatives and security personnel,

72

peacebuilding experts such as KAIPTC and WANEP, and other NGOs that were carefully chosen.

The goal of this research was to gather information about the contributions of Infrastructures for Peace to the realisation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 16, with reference to the National Peace Council of Ghana, which required in-depth analysis.

Data Collection Methods

In line with the qualitative nature of the phenomena under study, one data collection method was used. This was the interviews method. In this study, the primary data collection method was in-depth interviews. It is an effective method of gathering qualitative data because it is "introspective," allowing participants to report on themselves, their opinions, beliefs, practices, interactions, and concerns (Freebody, 2003).

The in-depth interviews method had the advantage of establishing good rapport and creating a relaxed and healthy environment in which participants easily cooperated, answered questions, and expressed concerns about any aspect of the study. Some advantages of using interviews include the ability to observe the nonverbal behaviour of participants and ensure completeness. It also ensured a high response rate due to its ease of administration. However, the use of this instrument took time because some issues required clarification and probing.

Secondary Data

The main secondary data sources for this research included online sources, journal articles, political commentaries, and reports of the NPC. The

reports from the NPC were very helpful in providing useful information on how national peace infrastructures provide platforms for conflict prevention and response effort to protect and safeguard the nation from threats and security challenges from both domestic and international environments.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection started from March 9th to April 19th, 2022. In all 12 research assistants (RA), one for each regional office of the NPC, were recruited for the data collection. The RAs were individuals who could speak English because that was the language for the interviews. A one-day training workshop was organised for the RAs to familiarize them with the interview guides for the study. As indicated in Table 1, a total of 62 in-depth interviews were conducted for the study.

Processing and Analysis of Data

The qualitative data analysis placed emphasis on gathering and structuring the data for interpretation to understand what it represents. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and organised into specific cases for content and narrative analysis. This made it easier to use direct quotations when appropriate. According to Creswell (1998), in qualitative data analysis a typical format is to first provide a detailed description of each case and then identify themes within the case, known as a within-case analysis. Accordingly, all the details with respect to each interview were organised to identify the patterns that emerged from the text by grouping content into words, concepts, and themes. This was accomplished by discovering repeating themes in the text. These meaningful themes revealed key insights into the data from the interviews.

Through the thematic analysis, a code frame that captured the themes in terms of codes was developed. With the text reduced to categories, the focus shifted to the identification of certain words or patterns in relation to the research questions for the study. The phrases that implied the words or concepts under consideration were analysed typically for general trends and patterns.

The narrative analysis was used to make sense of the transcripts from the interviews. This approach was particularly useful for getting a deep understanding of the respondent's perspectives on national peace infrastructures and the SDG16.

Ethical Considerations

Before embarking on the actual fieldwork, the Institutional Review Board of the University of Cape Coast granted ethical approval. Permission was also obtained from the head of the selected institutions of the study areas. The researcher and research assistants introduced themselves to the participants to avoid impersonation and doubts. In addition, the purpose of the study and the nature of information being requested were made known to the administrators and participants of the study organisations. The respondents' fully informed permission was also requested. At the start of each interview, a statement about informed consent was read to the participants. Through a letter of consent, the informants' informed consent was requested. The respondents were made aware that participation in the study was completely voluntary and that their rights would be guaranteed and protected if they consented to be included.

All kinds of identification, including names, addresses, and telephone numbers, were avoided in the interviews to respect the participants' consent and anonymity.

Positionality

A positionality statement explains the researcher's epistemological position, personal qualities, and identities, which may impact the research process. (Walliman, 2006). Academics believe that in qualitative research involving human interaction, such as interviews or observations, the researcher's identity in relation to his participants, as well as his background and experience with the research topic, can either improve or degrade the data gathered and thus the study's results (Bryman, 2015). When study participants perceive the researcher as an insider with whom they share similar experiences, they are less likely to be suspicious of his intentions and the purpose of the study. This means that a researcher's familiarity with the research setting can benefit the research process. Walliman (2006), on the other hand, believes that familiarity with the context of an investigation can have a negative impact on the research.

Throughout the data collection process, I was aware of the issue of positionality and saw my position about my research subjects as an important factor that could either help or hinder the research process. As an employee of the National Peace Council, researching infrastructure for peace made me feel like an insider and therefore engaged the services of research assistants.

I was also not familiar with most of my research participants, the majority of whom I had not met before prior to the pilot fieldwork. My acquaintance with the study locations and the topic under examination made me a partial insider, providing potential for comprehension, yet my unknown status to the research participants could have classified me as an outsider, influencing

76

their response to my inquiry. I made the decision to behave myself appropriately

as a researcher to acquire confidence and trust of my respondents I knew.

Limitations

Here are two limitations of this thesis:

1. Limited Generalizability: The findings of this thesis may not be applicable to
   other contexts or populations due to the specific research setting, sample size,
   and methodology used. The results may be unique to the case or group
   studied and may not be representative of other situations or populations.

2. Methodological Constraints: The research methodology employed in this
   thesis may have limitations, such as the reliance on self-reported data or the
   inability to control for extraneous variables. These constraints may affect the
   accuracy, reliability, and validity of the findings, and may limit the ability to
   establish causal relationships between variables.

77
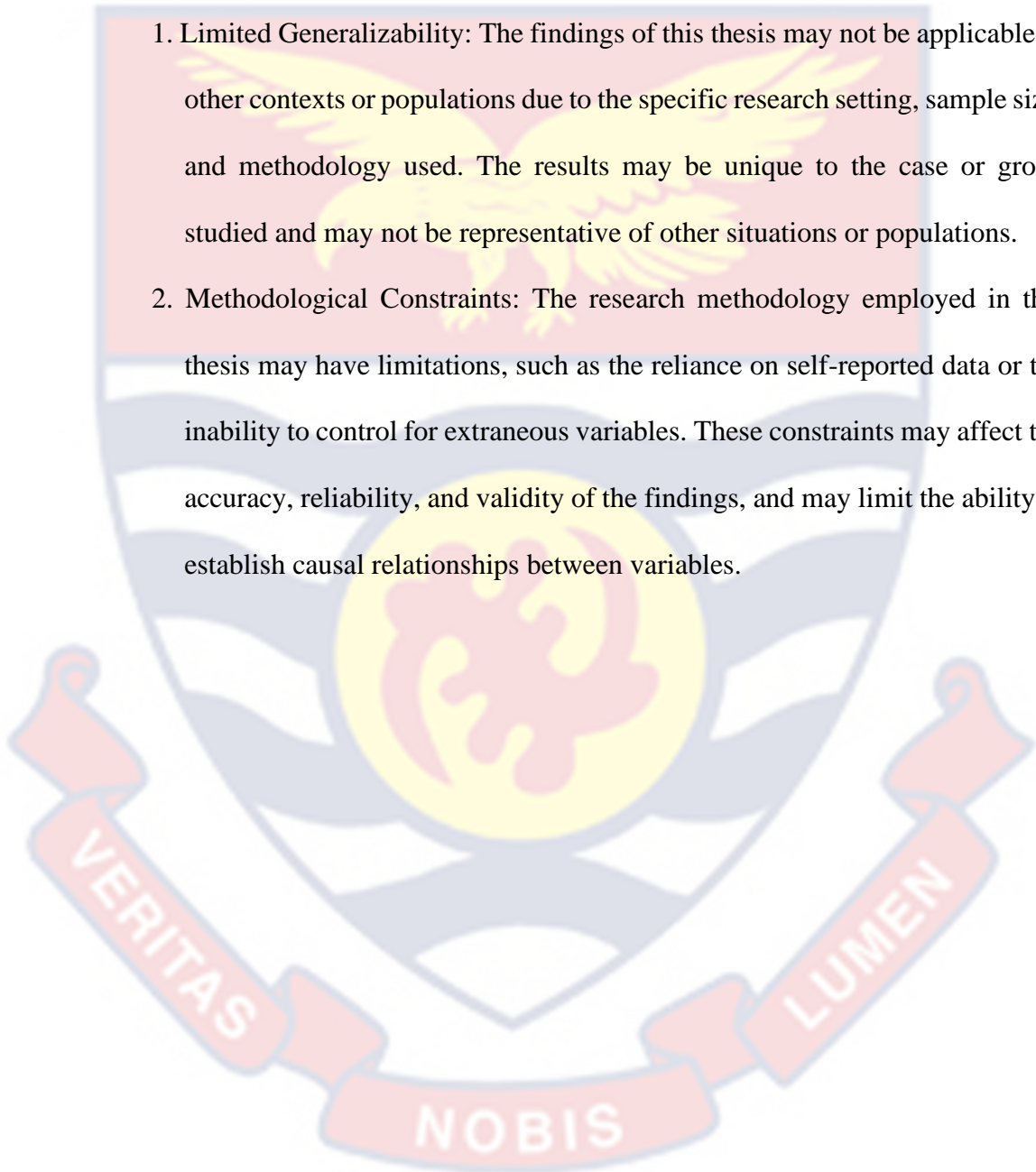
CHAPTER FOUR

THE MANDATE, STRUCTURE AND THE COMPOSITION OF THE NATIONAL PEACE COUNCIL

Introduction

The first objective of this thesis examines the adequacy of the symbol, mandate, structure, composition, and challenges of the National Peace Council. The data were collected from the staff and archival documents on the NPC, such as Act 818. This section is broken into two subsections, the first of which discusses Ghana's political history leading up to the founding of the NPC. The second portion focuses on the National Peace Council's mandate, structure, composition, and problems.

Historical Development Toward the Establishment of the NPC

A decade after attaining independence in 1957, Ghana experienced a series of internal political and governance challenges that threatened its embryonic independence. For instance, the 1964 amendment of the constitution effectively abolished multi-party politics and made the country a de jure one-party state. This saw fundamental rights and freedoms, especially the right to form political parties and to contest political offices, severely curtailed (Annan, 2007).

Following the rising upheavals, the first military coup that overthrew the first president, Kwame Nkrumah, was staged in 1966. In 1969, Ghana adopted a new constitution that transferred political governance to the civilian government under the leadership of Kofi Busia (Kotia & Aubyn, 2013). This development was, however, short-lived because there was a military coup in 1972, followed by two more in 1978 and 1981. Between 1981 and 1991, Ghana

78

was led by Flight-Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings, who had overthrown the elected government of Hilla Limann. The country returned to multi-party democracy in 1992 when it embraced political and democratic reforms.

A constitutional referendum was conducted in 1992, and this led to the promulgation of a new constitution and the lifting of the ban on political parties. The new constitution also introduced the "running mates" phenomenon in presidential elections, which, as Frempong (2005, p.2) rightly points out, "added flavour of a different kind to the presidential races." Increasingly, people with vice presidential ambitions have openly campaigned and even paraded delegations to extol their virtues. Issues of regional, religious and gender balance have dominated the nomination processes, but the final choices have often been full of surprises.

Since 1992, the political party system in Ghana has assumed a two-party dimension with political power alternating between the two main parties, namely the National Democratic Congress (NDC), which is a social democratic party, and the New Patriotic Party (NPP), which has a liberal democratic ideological orientation. Yet, the country has, according to one of the Ashanti Regional Chairman of the Peace Council, always grappled with transition between the parties.

As part of Ghana's national architecture for peace, the government decided to establish the NPC administratively in August 2006. But in 2011, the National Peace Council Act 818, gave the NPC official legal recognition under Ghana's legislations. Even though the NPC existed, it did not have constitutional legitimacy until 2011. Currently, the council has completed its first five-year strategic plan (2013–2017) for operationalising the 2011 legislative instrument,

with assistance from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The NPC operationalised Act 818 by creating regional and district peace councils with their respective secretariats by 2017.

The Northern Region Peace Advisory Committee (NORPAC), made up of representatives of Christian and Muslim entities, Traditional Chiefs, women's and youth groups, and security agencies, made the decision to establish the NPC based on the lessons learned through its operations. The 2002 Dagbon Chieftaincy conflict led to the establishment of the NORPAC.

The Ghanaian government made the decision to investigate the idea of expanding the council to the rest of the nation considering the council's performance, particularly after its role in helping to secure a comparatively calm election in the country's extremely volatile northern region in 2004. The success of the peace committee, which was set up by the Volta regional coordinating council in 2005 to arbitrate the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict in the Volta region of Ghana, gave this move further momentum.

Consequently, a review workshop on the fruitful experience of the NORPAC was organized with the pertinent major national players, with the technical and financial support of the UNDP. It was this review workshop that gave the Ministry of Interior the impetus to advocate for the creation of the NPC. Unsurprisingly, there was no political opposition to the plan. Due to NORPAC's and the peace committee's positive experiences in the Volta area, it obtained broad political support from all the major political parties and other key stakeholders. The first standing conference on stability, security, and development in Africa, held in Durban in 2002, also had a resolution that was in line with the NPC's creation.

It was decided at this meeting that by December 2004, every African nation should try to create a national framework for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts (Collier & Vicent, 2012). This appeal was recently reaffirmed at a regional summit on September 10, 2013, in Accra, Ghana, where both state and non-state actors present urged all African states to create national infrastructures for peace within the following three years.

Given the background of ethnic, religious, and other community conflict typologies and, more especially, the foregoing political context, Ghana has established the NPC as a mechanism through which a tapestry of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) peace building initiatives would be pursued. The NPC is a statutory body established through the National Peace Council Act of 2011(Act 818) as an epitome of national efforts geared towards enhancing the capacity of Ghana's peace infrastructure. Section 2 of National Peace Council Act (Act 818, 2011) states the mandate thus "to facilitate and develop the mechanisms for conflict prevention, management, resolution and to build sustainable peace in the country".

Section 3 of the National Peace Council Act (Act 818, 2011), then goes on to outlines the functions of the NPC as follows:

a. Harmonise and coordinate conflict prevention, management, resolution and build sustainable peace through networking and coordination.

b. Strengthen capacities for conflict, prevention, management, resolution, and sustainable peace in the country including but not limited to chiefs, women, youth groups and community organisations.

c. Increase awareness on the use of non-violent strategies to prevent, manage and resolve conflict and build sustainable peace in the country.

81

d. Facilitate the amicable resolution of conflict through mediation and other processes including indigenous mechanisms for conflict resolution and peace building.

e. Promote understanding of the values of diversity, trust, tolerance, confidence building, negotiation, mediation, dialogue, and reconciliation.

f. Coordinate the work of Regional and District Peace Councils.

g. Facilitate agreements and resolutions between parties in conflict.

h. Make recommendations to the government and other stakeholders on actions to promote trust and confidence between and among groups; and

i. Perform any other function which is auxiliary to its mandate.

Composition of the National Peace Council

Renowned and esteemed members of distinction from Ghana's recognised groupings are included in the council. Impeccable credibility, gravitas, respect, acceptance and professional integrity are some personal attributes that qualify them to be members nominated for the composition of the NPC Governing Body and the Regional Councils. Additionally, the public must perceive them as being nonpartisan, objective, and having the gravitas to lead any national peace process. As seen in Table 2, below, the National Peace Council Act 818 of 2011 (Act 818), provides for the appointment of 13 eminent members from organisations listed in section 4 of Act 818. Out of the 13 eminent members, are directly drawn from faith-based organisations. 4 from the Christian faith, 3 from Islamic faith, and 1 from practitioners of African traditional religion.

82

**Table 2: The Composition of the Governing Board of the National
　　　Peace Council**

Christian groups	Muslim groups	Traditional bodies	Presidential identifiable groups.
One person nominated by the Catholic Bishops Conference.	One person nominated by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission	One person nominated by the Practitioners of African Traditional Religions.	Two persons nominated by the president of Ghana, one of whom must be a woman.
One person nominated by the Ghana Pentecostal Council	One person nominated by the Al-Sunnah Muslims	One person by the National House of Chiefs.	Two other persons nominated by identifiable groups
One person nominated by the National Council for Christians and Charismatic Churches	One person nominated by the Tijaaniya Muslim group		
One person nominated by the Christian Council			

Source: NPC Report (2016)

As indicated in Table 2, the Christian denominations provide four
individuals, whilst the Muslim groups and the traditional autnorities are also
required to provide three and two individuals, respectively. The number of
people provided by each of these religious bodies reflects their percentage
distribution of the population in Ghana. Because they are frequently regarded
as neutral, non-partisan, and capable of bridging political divides, religious
leaders are held in high regard by Ghanaians, which is reflected in the
dominance of religious organisations (Kotia & Aubyn, 2013). Each of the
religious groups comes to an agreement on the nominees for the council. The
remaining NPC members are the two nominees of the President of the Republic
of which one should be a woman, as well as two additional individuals from

identifiable groups. Although they fall under the two nominations from identifiable groups, the Act 818 does not specifically provide for the representation of groups like trade unions, academia, business and industry, youth, people with disabilities, and women, unlike the Kenyan and South African peace infrastructures.

These groups exclusion, whether intentional or unintentional, has major repercussions for the future, especially anytime there is a religious conflict. Given the prominence of religious entities in the council, the question is who will arbitrate and broker peace if there is a religious dispute in Ghana. On the other hand, if such a circumstance ever arises, the council members will appeal to their constituents for peace (Kotia & Aubyn, 2013).

The president's nominations have also drawn criticism from several observers for their propensity to jeopardize the council's impartiality and independence. In an interview with a key participant, he said: *Only two of the council's 13 members are the president's appointees, and this cannot in any way jeopardize the independence of the 11 other members.* In Ghana, for instance, the president appoints the heads and members of organisations like the Electoral Commission (EC), the Commission on Human Rights, and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ).

Their independence has not been compromised in the least by this, though. For instance, the EC organized eight national-level elections where two political parties alternated in power. In any case, the NPC's members choose their own chairperson without influence from the government, in contrast to the EC and CHRAJ, whose president-appointed chairs are in place. Surprisingly, the requirement that one of the president's nominees be a woman is another

crucial part of his candidacy that seems to have been overlooked in every discussion. The potential that all the identifiable organisations may propose only male representatives to the council led to the purposeful inclusion of that clause.

Sadly, most of the membership is currently in this state. The president's nominee is the only woman on the NPC governing board because no other factions submitted a female candidate. The inclusion of female representation in the council has therefore been somewhat affected by the president's appointment. Despite this, it is crucial to remember that the NPC's general makeup is not gender sensitive. Surprisingly, only one woman is a member of the 13-member council, even though women make up around 51 percent of Ghana's population. This is strange and downplays the contribution of women to promoting peace and security; it needs to be reviewed (Kotia & Aubyn, 2013).

A member of the governing board who has been appointed may serve for a maximum of four years before being eligible for reappointment if the identified group in question supports the nomination. However, there are just four circumstances under which someone can stop being a board member. The first occurs when a member submits a letter of resignation to the president. The membership of a member who skips three consecutive meetings without good reason is also revoked (Kendie & Osei-Kufour, 2016).

Thirdly, Act 818 prohibits members from taking part in board discussions if they have a stake in the outcome. Such a member can be relieved of his duties on the board.

Finally, when a member passes away, the membership is deemed empty. The council's governing board meets at least once a month to discuss issues or pressing matters (Kotia & Aubyn, 2013).

The chairperson can call an emergency meeting, nevertheless, with the written consent of at least one-third of the board members. Act 818 also gives the council the authority to appoint resource individuals to serve as advisors at their meetings or to form committees with both board members and outsiders to carry out certain tasks as needed.

The Three-Tier Structure of the Council

In terms of configuration, the NPC is created as a three-tier structure, existing at the national level, the ten administrative regions and the 2012 districts of Ghana. This is to ensure the broad participation of all stakeholders and inclusiveness at all levels of society in the prevention, resolution, and management of conflicts (Kendie & Osei-Kufour, 2016). As of 2023, in addition to the National Governing Board, all 16 regions in Ghana have Regional Peace Councils (RPCs). The three district peace councils that were established in 2013 were converted to regional peace councils when the six new regions were created by the government in 2020.

The highest decision-making body at the national level is the governing board of the council, which is composed of thirteen distinguished individuals chosen by organized and religious organisations (see Table 2). The RPCs and DPCs operate at the regional and district levels, respectively. The RPCs and DPCs share the same representational structure as the national level in terms of membership, but they have distinct appointing authorities. The members of the RPCs and DPCs are appointed by the governing board of the NPC after

nominations by various identified groups, in collaboration with the Regional Coordinating Councils and the District Assemblies.

According to Article 195 of the Republic of Ghana's 1992 Constitution, an executive secretary nominated by the president oversees the administrative operations of each office of the council, from the national to the district level. The executive secretaries are both the councils' technical advisors and oversee running the council's daily. However, others have contended that the president's nomination of the executive secretary runs the risk of undermining the council's independence. This is because nowhere in NPC Act 818 does it state that the executive secretary must report to the president for him or her to be loyal to the president (Kendie & Osei-Kufour, 2016). Moreover, the executive secretary is only responsible for managing and coordinating the day-to-day operations of the councils; she or he has no authority to affect the decisions made by the council. The claim that the executive secretary's appointment will undermine the council's objectivity is unfounded as a result.

A peace building support unit (PBSU) may be established within Ghana's interior ministry under the terms of the NPC Act 818. The ministry ensures that the NPC receives all the supplies and logistical support it needs by acting as a liaison between the government and the council. Although the PBSU has not yet been constituted, it is planned that it will, among other things, act as a government liaison and promote assistance from government institutions for the NPC's operations. Additionally, it will oversee the government's early warning and analysis systems and help the government, or its agencies, put the council's recommendations into action. As illustrated in Figure 3, the NPC operates at the national, regional and district levels, with executive secretaries

heading each level. It also shows that the NPC is under the Ministry of Interior

with a chief director that has an oversight responsibility.
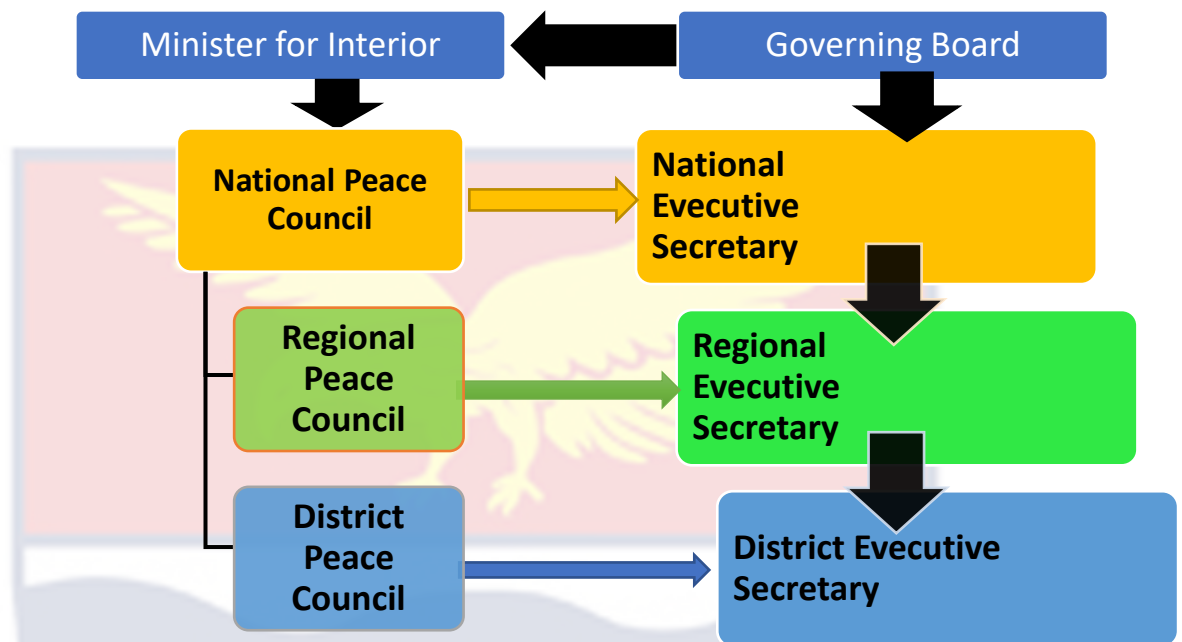
Figure 3: **The Three-Tier Structure of the Council**
Source: NPC Report (2016)

Symbols of the NPC

In an interview with one board member of the NPC, he explained that

apart from the Coat of Arm, which is used by all government organisations, the

NPC has two special symbols that are used to identify the institution. The

Adinkra symbol and the dove

The Adinkra Symbol

The participant explained that the Adinkra are a group of West African

symbols noted for their symbolism, significance, and ornamental elements.

They serve ornamental purposes, but their major function is to express notions

relating to traditional wisdom, life issues, or the environment. Adinkra symbols

are named after their original originator, King Nana Kwadwo Agyemang

Adinkra of Gyaman, Ghana. There are at least 121 documented Adinkra symbols. The NPC has adopted the *Ese Ne Tekrema as one of their key symbols.*

Ese Ne Tekrema

Ese Ne Tekrema, meaning "the teeth and the tongue," is an Adinkra symbol of interdependence, friendship, advancement, improvement, and growth (Ohene-Amoh, 2023). In an interview with one of the eminent members of the Central Regional Peace Council on the *Ese Ne Tekrema Symbol* the member said:

> The National Peace Council has symbols and icons they have adopted due to their meaning. This symbol represents the tongue and teeth's interdependent responsibilities in the mouth, and while they may occasionally clash, they must also work together, a value that explains the mandate of NPC. This sign is commonly used as a token of unity in diversity or friendship (Eminent member in Cape Coast, 22nd March 2022).

The *Ese Ne Tekrema* symbol is shown in the Figure 4.

Figure 4: **Ese Ne Tekrema Symbol**

Source: Adinkra Symbols

The Dove with a Green Olive Leaf

A participant mentioned the dove with a green olive leaf as another symbol of the NPC. This symbol is frequently associated with the ideas of peace and non-violence. They frequently feature in political cartoons, on banners and signs at peace-promoting events such as the Olympics Games, anti-war and anti-violence protests, and in pacifist literature. Doves, which are usually white in colour, are utilised as symbols of peace, freedom, or love in a variety of contexts (Ohene-Amoh, 2023). Doves can be found in the symbols of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and paganism, as well as military and pacifist organisations.

One board member who is a religious minister in the interview said that:

> According to the Biblical narrative in Genesis 8:11, Noah launched a dove to search for land after the flood; it returned carrying a freshly picked olive leaf, a sign of life after the flood and of God bringing Noah, his family, and the animals to land. The dove and olive leaf were understood in Rabbinic literature as peace, and therefore it is a symbol that explains the role of NPC (Board member in Accra, 25 March 2022).

According to the Board Chairman, of the NPC, the Peace Council has stuck to the use of Adinkra symbol for its official purposes.
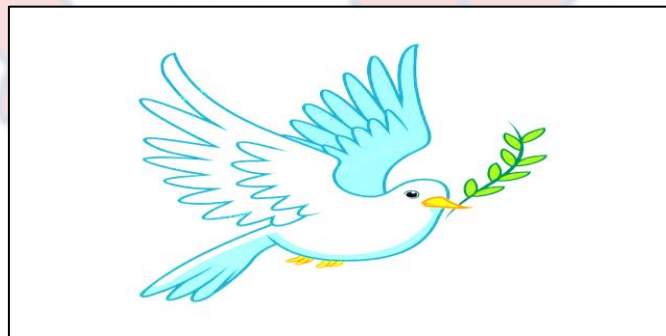
Figure 5: **The Dove and Olive Leaf**
Source: NPC Logo

The Role of National Peace Council in Ghana's Infrastructure for Peace

The underlying principle in the work of the NPC is volunteerism, bipartisanship, and impartiality. Unlike in Nepal, the Philippines, and Costa Rica, where the peace infrastructure is located within the government, Ghana's NPC is an independent national institution. In executing its mandate as enshrined in the Act, the NPC has adopted many strategies to address issues that create instability in the country. It is through these strategies and mechanisms that enable the council to effectively carry out its activities to make sure that Ghana's peace is not disturbed (Ojielo, 2007). These mechanisms include skills to prevent, manage, and resolve conflict. Also, strategic measures are used by the council in educating the public to become effective peace builders. In an interview with the Regional Executive Secretary of Central Regional Peace Council on the mandate of the NPC, he said:

> The National Peace Council's (NPC) mandate resonates with SDG 16+. Many of its interventions have been aligned with the targets of SDG 16, particularly those targets that relate to peaceful coexistence. The NPC has launched Peace Clubs as part of the implementation strategy for SDGs. The NPC is mandated to lead and facilitate the achievement of sustainable peace in the country (RES in Cape Coast, 22 March 2022).

Violent vigilantism and political thuggery are fast becoming a menace in Ghana's democratic and electoral environment (Ojielo, 2007). It has the potential to affect stability, democracy, and peace if not addressed. This poses a challenge to the security of the state and law enforcement (Pepinsky, 2006). The growth of political vigilantism has been attributed to a low level of

91

confidence in the policing, prosecutorial, and judicial systems, including political interference and the slow pace of justice delivery, as well as bulging youth unemployment (Fischer, 2002). Vigilantism has grown out of a subculture of client-patron relationships in Ghana's politics, which limits effective actions to address their growth. In another interview with a governing board member of the NPC, he said:

> When violence arises, the council conducts analysis of every conflicting issue to better understand the dynamics and offer the appropriate measures of response. The Council, through its partners, also undertakes research that will improve their understanding and assessment of conflicts in Ghana. An example of such measures is the research that was carried out on behalf of the council by the University of Cape Coast, which is mapped conflicts in Ghana. All the conflict hotspots in the country have been indicated, which makes it easier for the Council to know the location and dynamics of a conflict (Board member in Accra, 26 March 2022).

The NPC only employs soft power to urge peace between opposing parties. Furthermore, the NPC is prohibited from arbitrarily intervening in any issue unless it has been specifically invited to do so by the involved parties or the government (Kotia & Aubyn, 2013). Its mission is distinct from that of the national security council (NSC), which is empowered by the constitution to intervene in all situations of armed conflict. However, the NPC's mission is sometimes mixed up with those of the NSC and security services.

The NPC's primary responsibility is to promote national cohesiveness through peacebuilding and to offer Ghanaians a means of seeking out peaceful, non-violent dispute resolution. Its mandate is to support the development of systems for Ghana's long-term peacebuilding as well as for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts. In an interview with the Deputy Director in charge of Capacity Building at the NPC head office, she said:

> The NPC collaborates with and supports the activities of other state agencies like the NSC, EC, and National Council for Civic Education in carrying out these duties (NCCE). The council has fulfilled its mission over time by establishing and facilitating platforms for discussion between international actors and conflict-affected interest groups. The council also engages in mediation and other processes, including indigenous mechanisms of conflict resolution, negotiation, confidence-building, and reconciliation (Deputy Director at The Head Office, 23 March 2022).

Promoting understanding of the ideals of diversity, trust, and tolerance as well as raising awareness of the use of non-violent conflict prevention, management, and resolution techniques is another crucial duty of the NPC (Irene, 2015). The council is also charged with recommending measures to the government and other important stakeholders to foster trust and confidence between and among groups, as it is an independent institution.

Due to its limited resources, it frequently collaborates with regional civil society groups (CSOs) to carry out its mission, including the West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), the Institute of Democratic Governance

93

(IDEG), and the Institute for Economic Affairs (IEA). For instance, before the 2012 elections, the NPC and IDEG brought together all the presidential contenders for the first time to sign a peace pact pledging their commitment to peace and nonviolent free elections. A more recent instance of the NPC working in a similar way with CSOs was a one-day national summit in Accra in July 2013 with the theme: Ghana shall be strengthened by justice, peace, and reform (Kotia & Aubyn, 2013). In an interview with a governing board member of the NPC he said:

> This gathering was planned in cooperation with IDEG, the Ashantehene's Manhyia Palace in Kumasi, and the Civic Forum Initiative (CFI) to promote understanding of the value of inter-party communication in handling the important issues that were anticipated to surface following the Supreme Court's decision on the 2012 election petition. Through comprehensive training programs in conflict analysis, early warning systems, mediation, and discussion, WANEP has also been crucial in boosting the competence of the council members and staff (Board member in Accra, 22nd March 2022).

The Success of NPC

The accomplishments of the NPC of Ghana have been widely acknowledged by scholars (Awinador-Kanyirige, 2014). Nevertheless, the question one would ask is: what has really facilitated its relative success? A key participant put forward three main arguments to support this claim. This includes the composition of the membership; the independence of the council; and the consistent funding and support from donor agencies.

Regarding membership of NPC, a member of the governing board in an interview said:

Membership of NPC consists of at least all relevant parties who are respected and trusted as well as having high integrity, competence, expertise, and experience in issues pertaining to conflict resolution and peace. Additionally, because they are successful, prominent people who have reached the summit of their professions, these members do not require what is known as "political idol worship" or directives from any political leader to propel them into popularity (Board member in Accra, 22 March 2022).

These qualities have been the main pillar upon which the NPC has relied to cross political barriers and unite opposing parties. To put it another way, the council's work now has more local clout and legitimacy, thanks to the calibre of its members. Another factor contributing to the council's relative success is its independence. The NPC is a quasi-governmental institution having access to state resources, but the government does not control its actions, programmes, or decisions. The NPC Act 818 ensures the council's independence in carrying out its duties, which is not the case about peace infrastructures in other countries like Nepal (Kotia & Aubyn, 2013). In an interview with one key participant from WANEP, he averred that:

The government should not influence the activities of the Peace Council. The absence of government meddling will boost public legitimacy and acceptance of the council's work and choices. The government-determined pay of the NPC board members and the funding of their operations through the unified budget, however,

might potentially jeopardize the impartiality and independence of the council (WANNEP in Accra, 9 March 2022).

This suggests that the government may decide to stop paying the NPC if it determines that the NPC's actions are not in line with its policies and programmes. Even while the NPC can receive funds from outside sources, this clause could inadvertently give the government some sort of indirect control over the council's operations. There is little doubt that without the technical, material, and financial backing of donor agencies, the council would not have been somewhat effective. Commenting on this, a past member of the NPC said: The UNDP, the European Union (EU), the Department for International Development (DFID), Swiss Cooperation, and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency have all provided technical and financial assistance to the NPC since 2007 (Past board member in Accra, 21 March 2022). It may be argued that these individuals' contributions to the Peace Fund, along with the modest government funding, are what have enabled the NPC to continue operating today. It is essential to highlight that without the assistance of the UNDP most of the NPC's actions and interventions would not have been possible (Kotia & Aubyn, 2013).

Empirical case of the NPC interventions: the 2012 elections in Ghana

The NPC has made a lot of gains towards the de-escalation and reduction of violence in Ghana. So far, the council has actively engaged in finding sustainable solutions to chieftaincy and land disputes, communal violence, and election-related violence. But the most visible achievement of the NPC is the exceptional role it plays in preventing and defusing violence during elections in Ghana. In an interview, a participant from CDD said that:

A good example of the work of the NPC is the presidential and parliamentary elections of 2012. The NPC not only contributed to lowering political tensions during the election on which this section focuses, but it also helped prevent potential violence that might have thrown Ghana into war (CDD in Accra, 28 March 2022).

In accordance with Ghana's fourth republican constitution, it was one of the most competitive elections. While the current government, the NDC, was eager to hold onto power, the opposition, the NPP, was eager to take overpower at all costs. The political scene was flooded with acts of violence starting in the run-up to the election, including assaults, malicious and wanton destruction of property, molestations, defacing of posters, death threats made by anonymous phone calls and texts, hate speeches, slander, or insults. Regarding the context of these violent crimes, ensuring that the election was peaceful remained a veritable challenge. In an interview, a key participant who was an eminent member of the Eastern Regional Peace Council said:

The NPC, as one of the key stakeholders in the 2012 elections, carried out several initiatives to ease political tensions and guarantee that the voting process was as calm as any other event in the nation. First, the NPC offered political parties training programs on managing diversity and competing interests to address intra-and inter-party problems (Eminent member in Koforidua, 20 March 2022).

The NPC chairperson was also a member of the national enforcement body established by the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), a Ghana-based

97

think tank for public policy, to oversee the application of the political party code of conduct that was adopted by all political parties in 2012 to direct and regulate their activities (Kotia & Aubyn, 2013). In another interview, a Regional Executive secretary said that:

> The council sponsored public peace conferences and symposiums; peace education in local communities, schools, and universities; and national media (print, radio, and television) campaigns for peace. Ghanaians have adopted a culture of peace, tolerance, discussion, reconciliation, and the rule of law more and more because of these programmes. The peace forum that IDEG and the NPC organised in Kumasi, Ghana, gained notable popular acclamation as a significant event (RES in Accra, 2 April 2022).

At this meeting, the council used its authority to convene and credibility to persuade all the parties' presidential candidates to sign a peace agreement and make a promise to hold both peaceful and violent free elections. This occasion, known as the "Kumasi Declaration," was exceptional in two ways: It was signed and witnessed by Otumfuo Osei Tutu II (king of Asante), and former President Jerry John Rawlings.

Finally, it was historic because it was the first time in the history of Ghana, that political parties have committed themselves to such a peace accord. An Eminent Member of the Western Regional Peace Council said:

> Although it is very difficult to quantify the effect of this incident, it undoubtedly contributed to calming the tense political climate at the time. The NPC also made a significant contribution before the EC announced the results of the elections held on December

98

7, 2012, which is noteworthy (Eminent member in Takoradi, 30 March 2022).

According to the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, only the EC has the authority to announce the results of presidential elections. However, the NPP General Secretary, Mr. Kwadwo Owusu Afriyie, issued a press release on December 8, 2012, claiming that the NPP's Akufo-Addo had won the presidency with 51 percent of the vote and that party supporters should celebrate. The NDC also vowed in its swift response to declare their election results, which showed President John Mahama as the winner of the elections. Prior to the NPC's prompt action, this incident caused significant political strain. In an interview with a Governing Board Member, he said:

> The NPC, led by its chairman, the Most Rev. Prof. Emmanuel Kwaku Asante, issued a press release on December 9, 2012, at midnight, describing the NPP General Secretary's declaration as "premature" and incompatible with the constitution of Ghana. At that critical time, the NPC was the most dependable and respected stakeholder in the nation. He also urged moderation from all Ghanaians, notably the NDC, and warned the media not to host any more "premature" press conferences. In a similar declaration by the NDC, which could have led to violent conflicts, the NPC's statement soothed the rising political tensions and avoided such (Board member in Accra, 22 March 2022).

In another interview with another governing board member, she said:

> Shortly before the EC announced the election results on December 10, 2012, the NPP filed several complaints alleging electoral fraud and charged the EC with working with the NDC to rig the results. The council organised a meeting behind closed doors between the NPP, NDC, and the EC in anticipation of potential violence that would break out in response to the EC's announcements if these accusations were not cleared up. It was shown at this meeting that the NPP lacked sufficient supporting documentation for its assertions. The NPP complied with the EC's recommendation to seek an appropriate remedy in court after it announced the election's winner. The council did not stop there; instead, it addressed each party directly and surreptitiously to urge them to concede defeat after the announcement of the results. The council did not end the dialogue there but spoke covertly and overtly to the parties individually to accept defeat after the announcement of the results (Board member in Accra, 22 March 2022).

When the EC finally declared the results, the NPP had ultimately lost the election. What would have happened if the results had been revealed without the consent of all parties? It undoubtedly would have resulted in open discontent with the outcomes and potential bloodshed. Although the NPP later brought the case before the Supreme Court of Ghana for resolution, the NPC's interventions provided the parties with a space to participate in productive conversations. The council advised the NPP and the NDC to accept the court's ultimate decision

even during the proceedings at the supreme court through dialogue and mediation (CADA, 2016).

Challenges facing the NPC.

The National Peace Council has been confronted with various challenges since its inception. A Regional Executive Secretary in an interview revealed that:

> The council has not been able to satisfy the legislative requirement of establishing Regional and District Peace Councils in all the regions and districts of Ghana as required in Act 818 (2011). The National Peace Council can only function effectively if the regional and district peace councils are established and functioning effectively. This is because peace infrastructures depend on early warning signs to prevent conflict and sustain peace. Early warning signs are most effective when they are picked closest to the scene of the events. Until March 2023, the National Peace Council was not in four regions. These regions are Oti, North-East, Western North and Bono East. Until they were established, the region closest were given additional responsibility of taking care of the region without a council. This challenge, coupled with the lack of district councils compounds the already existing difficulties. There is, therefore, urgent need to address this operational challenge to make the National Peace Council more efficient (RES in Sunyani, 6 April 2022).

In another set of interviews, most of the participants stated that one key problem confronting the council is inadequate resources (human, technical, and financial) needed to fulfill its duties. One participant said:

> The lack of adequate support staff and professional skill training in early warning, conflict analysis, resolution, and management is essentially a manifestation of human resource constraints. The council also lacks offices or a conducive work environment for its important employees. Lack of sufficient finance is the root cause of all these difficulties. Although its cost is currently charged to the consolidated fund, most of its funds come from donors. For the council to effectively execute its activities, it requires adequate financial capacity. All these challenges are because of a lack of adequate funding (Past board member in Accra, 28 March 2022).

At present, though its expenditure is charged to the consolidated fund, most of its funds come from a few donors. For the council to effectively execute its activities, it requires adequate financial capacity. A key respondent said:

> Funding of programmes continues to remain a challenge to NPC. If enough funding was available, the secretariat could have touched on all the projected activities for the previous years. Added to this is the delay in receiving administrative support, which impeded effective and efficient office work. For instance, some managers of radio stations charge the council for airtime

102

used to persecute its activities, without funds these activities cannot be carried out (Head Office Staff in Accra, 3 April 2022).

Importantly, donor funding for the activities of the NPC is not only on the decline, but also there has been a shift away from "core funding" to project-based financing by donors. This means that the limited available funds tend to be provided based on short-term projects in programme areas that are more aligned with the goals of donors as opposed to the long-term goals of the NPC and the needs of citizens. One respondent who is a head office staff at the NPC explained the adverse impact of this changing financing infrastructure as follows:

> The donors sometimes specify the specific usage of funds they give to NPC. It could happen that NPC has other more important programmes they wish to implement, but a donor will not allow his funds to be used for them. So, for instance, a donor announces a call for proposals in peacebuilding in a particular community, and we must run in that direction, and we abandon office equipment that is hampering the work of NPC. Even though NPC may have pressed needs or demands for office equipment, nobody will find time and resources to address those concerns; we all run in the direction of the donor. So, it has led to a situation where national advocacy priorities are now being determined by donors (Staff Head Office in Accra, 22 March 2022).

With shrinking financial resources, NPCs have increasingly entered competition for funds in ways that have undermined prospects for networking and coalition building among them. As Gyimah-Boadi and Prempeh (2012)

103

aptly put it, 'Ghanaian peace infrastructure has a notoriously short attention span, marked by a tendency to hop from one issue to another, often driven by the goal of securing external-donor funding' (p.101).

Another challenge is how the NPC can effectively implement its five-year strategic plan, which involves the creation and recruitment of staff for its Regional and District Peace Councils. The NPC has the challenging duty of developing a clear implementation plan, networking strategy, and synergy among the National, Regional, and District Councils, particularly in early warning and analysis. The Council must also develop a strategy for resource mobilization because its expansion will have an economic impact. In an interview with an NPC staff at the head office, he commented on the financial challenges facing the NPC and supported it with the Table 3. He said:

> Out of the budgeted GHC 1,400.000.00 for 2020 only GHC 700,000.00 was received, which was inadequate (Staff Head Office in Accra, 22 March 2022). The table below shows the budget of the NPC.
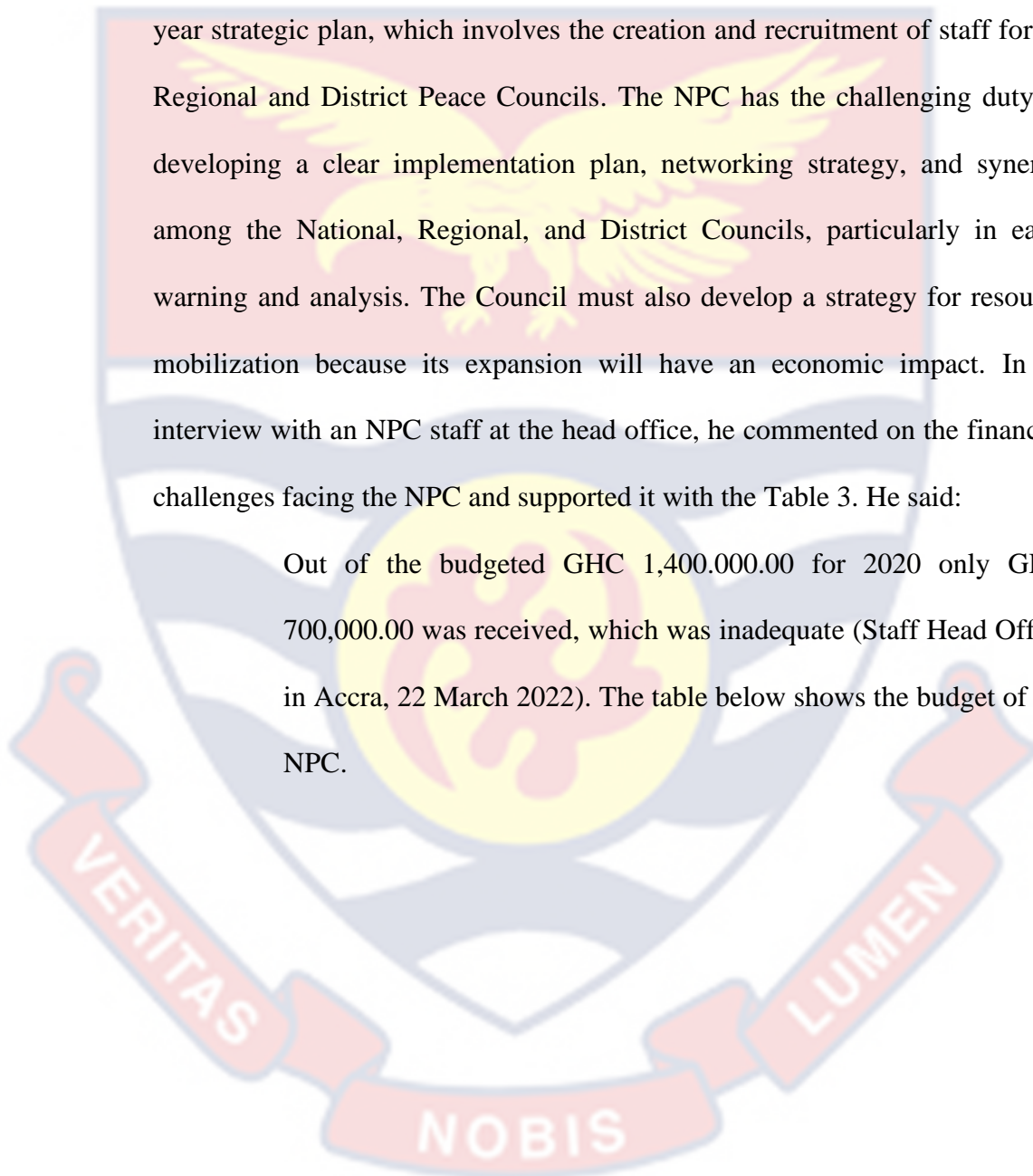
Table 3: Trend Analysis of Government Budget Allocations to the National Peace Council from 2018-2021

Item Description	2018		2019		2020		2021
	Approved Budget GHC	Actual GHC	Approved Budget GHC	Actual GHC	Approved Budget GHC	Actual GHC	Budget Allocation GHC
Compensation	3,968106.00	2,190,117.20	3,474,000.00	2,681,832.34	3,170,952.00	898,000.00	4,690,000.00
Goods and Services	600,000.00	400,000.00	800,000.00	520,000.00	1,400.000.00	700,000,00	1,000,000.00
CAPEX	200,000.00	200,000.00	580,000.00	580,000.00	-	-	-
Total	4,768,106.00	2,790,117.20	4,854,000.00	3,781,832.00	4,570,952.00	1,598,000.00	5,690,000.00

Source: NPC File, (2021)

Thirdly, the council is confronted with the challenge of inclusiveness. The composition of the governing body as well as the regional and district council by Act 818, does not favour the effective inclusion of women and the youth. In an interview, a governing board member explained that:

> The Ghanaian societies are patriarchal and therefore, it is usually the case that an institution asked to nominate someone to represent their interest will choose a man over a woman. In a similar manner, the youth are less acknowledged and noticed in society. It is, therefore, not strange that institutions who compose the governing board such as the Catholic Bishops' Conference, the Christian Council of Ghana, the Ahamadiyya Muslim Mission, Al-Sunnah Muslims, Tijaaniya Muslim Group, the National Council for Christian and Charismatic Churches and the Ghana Pentecostal Council have never nominated a female to represent them on the governing board of the National Peace Council. This challenge hinders the effective operation of the council. The situation denies the youth and women to be represented for effective peacebuilding activities (Board member in Accra, 22 March 2022).

Section 2 of the NPC Act (Act 818) states that the objective of the Council is to facilitate and develop mechanisms for conflict prevention, management, and resolution and to build sustainable peace in the country. This presumes that the NPC will be symbolic of all categories of people in society. A respondent from KAIPTC in an interview said:

Even though a look at the structure of the NPC finds an attempt at inclusivity, in that section 4 of the NPC Act provides that the NPC Board will consist of two people nominated by the president, one of whom will be a woman, two people nominated by identifiable groups, one representative of the National House of Chief, and one rep from each of the following institutions: Catholic Bishops Conference, Ghana Pentecostal Council, National Council for Christians and Charismatic Churches, Christian Council, Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, Al-Sunnah Muslims, Tijaaniya Muslim community, Practitioners of African Traditional Religions. How do you expect any of these institutions to nominate a woman or a young person to represent them on the NPC Board? There is a small chance that a woman will be nominated to represent the Catholic Bishops or the Al-Sunnah Muslims (KAIPTC in Accra, 22 April 2022).

This is a weakness in the design of the peace infrastructure. As a result, most regional boards have only one or two women on them. It is usually the one nominated by the president or the regional minister. You cannot find anyone who is a young person serving on the NPC Board (Awinador-Kanyirige, 2014).

Conclusion

The NPC's serve as a model for peace infrastructure in Africa. Its national mandate, broad membership, and bipartisan approach to peacebuilding have all contributed to the development of its credibility and legitimacy, enabling its continuity and sustainability notwithstanding the administration in

power. Additionally, it has played a role in averting violence, particularly during elections, with the 2012, 2016 and 2020 elections serving as prime examples. In fact, other African nations can draw inspiration from the NPC's experiences. The integrity of the council must be maintained going forward, as well as the confidence that many Ghanaians place in it.

The Council's gender mix must be reviewed. The NPC must also broaden its activities beyond the election-related concerns that currently dominate its efforts and create efficient synergies with other state organisations working on peace-related issues in Ghana as well as at the regional and continental levels. The council must also have a strong resource mobilization plan if it is to extend across all of Ghana's administrative regions and districts.
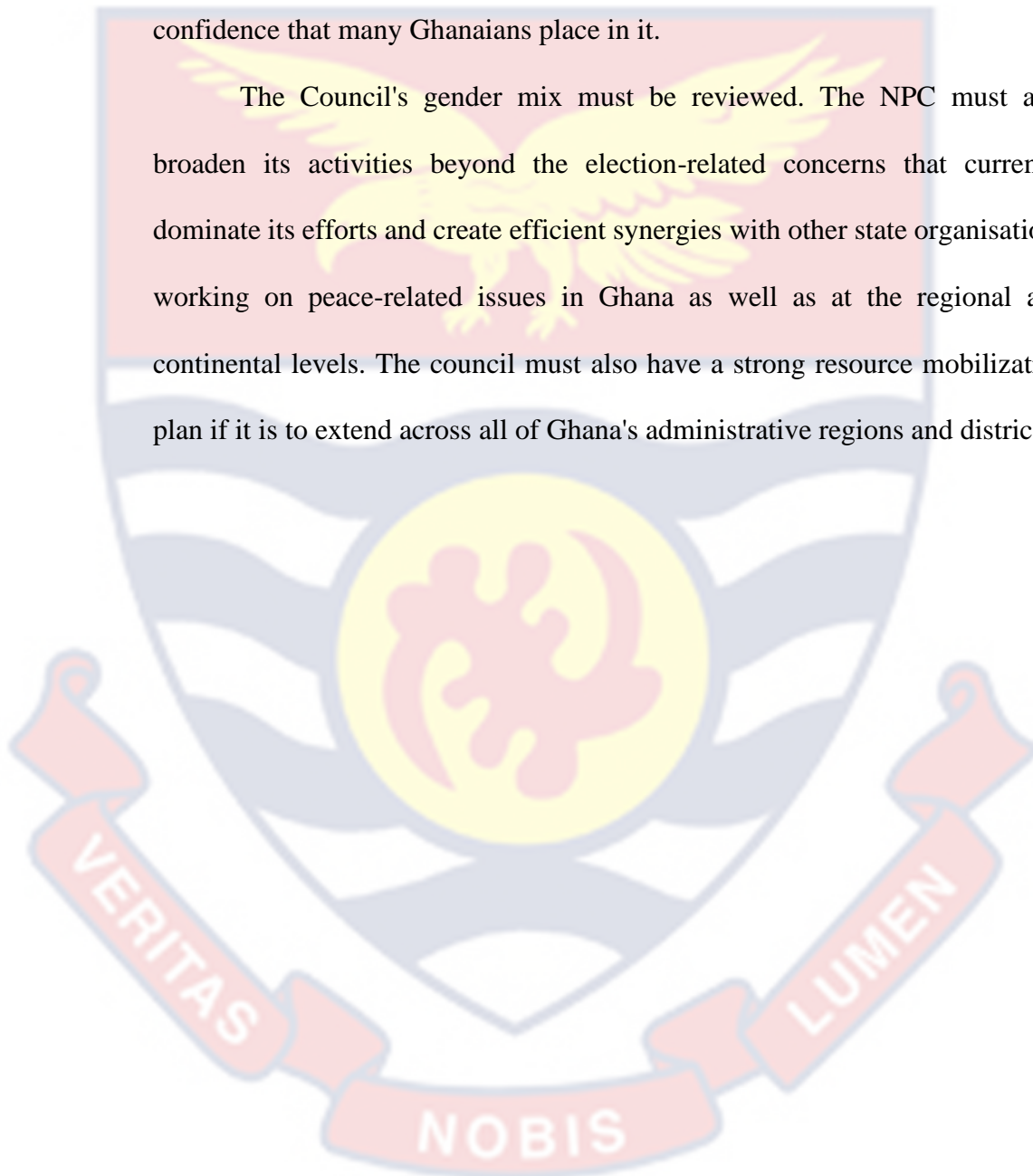
CHAPTER FIVE

MECHANISMS FOR PROMOTING PEACE IN THE SOCIETY

Introduction

The previous chapter examined the mandate, structure, and composition of the National Peace Council. The chapter outlined the historical development toward the establishment of the NPC and discussed the mandate, structure, composition, and challenges of the National Peace Council. In this chapter, the contributions, strategies, and mechanisms employed by the National Peace Council to promote peace in the society are discussed. Furthermore, the chapter analyzes the various tools used by the NPC to perform its roles.

Mediating Disputes before they Escalate

Significantly lowering the global death rates associated with all forms of violence is one of the objectives of SDG goal 16. Interviewees were asked for their opinion on the assertion that National Peace Council mediates disputes before they escalate, thereby lowering violence and its associated death in the society. Responses received indicate that majority of the respondents were of the view that the NPC is able and capable to mediate disputes before they escalate into violence. This aligns with the literature that suggests that a peace infrastructure must be able to avert violence through dialogue, negotiation, and mediation (Gulliver, 1979). In an interview with one Regional Executive Secretary, he explained that:

> The NPC has intervened in conflicts as an acceptable neutral
> third party who has limited or no authoritative decision-making
> power but who assists or facilitates the involved parties in

109

voluntarily reaching a mutually acceptable settlement of issues in dispute. The NPC has mediated in several disputes in Ghana which could have led to open violent conflicts (RES in Kumasi, 10 March 2022).

The National Peace Council uses dialogue, negotiation, and mediation to prevent, manage, resolve, and build sustainable peace in the society. This is mandate imposed on the NPC by the Act 818 of 2011. One of the primary functions of the NPC was to facilitate the amicable resolution of conflict through mediation (NPC, 2013). In an interview with one of the Regional Executive Secretaries of the Regional Peace Councils, he said:

There is a sub-committee of the Regional Councils that is responsible for conflict resolution known as the conflict resolution committee. The objective of the conflict resolution committee is to restore peace and good neighbourliness in areas experiencing conflicts and disturbances (RES in Ho, 10 April 2022).

He cited the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict as an example and explained that to promote peaceful co-existence and socio-economic development in the Oti Region, the conflict resolution committee of the Volta Regional Peace Council worked seriously to mediate the protracted conflict in the Alavenyo-Nkonya areas. Ultimately, the committee assisted the two neighbours in finding common grounds for resolving the fundamental contentious issues of the land boundary dispute and hence facilitate the restoration of enduring and sustainable peace and tranquilly to the area. This, according to the Regional Executive Secretary, brought some reconciliation between people living in these two communities. He said:

When we say inclusivity, we are talking about bonding members

of society together, which allows all individuals in the society to

feel being part of the larger group. The ripple effect of this is that

it allows free flow of communication which allows economic

activities to go on. This is what the NPC has done in the vicinity.

A bold attempt has been made to ensure that there is peace in

Alavenyo-Nkonya areas, and it has yielded a lot of fruits (RES

in Ho, 10 April 2022).

The strategies employed by the mediation committee, according to him,

were to re-orientate the two factions from a mind-set of suspicion, violence, and

warfare to that of peaceful co-existence and good neighborliness. NPC also

created an enabling environment within which the two communities could now

exploit the prevailing peaceful atmosphere by making known their grievances

for it to be resolved other than resorting to violence, to finally settle the land

dispute and all attendant differences. This was needed to have a peaceful, just,

and inclusive society (Heise, 2010). In an interview with a past member of the

Peace Council, he said:

The NPC does not only resolve conflicts, but it also prevents and

manages conflicts which is also needed to foster a peaceful and

an inclusive environment. Conflict management is the practise of

being able to identify and handle conflicts sensibly, fairly, and

efficiently to prevent escalation Since conflicts in societies are

natural, it is important that there are people or an institution who

understands conflicts and know how to prevent and manage them

in order not to divide society (Past board member in Accra, 15 March 2022).

This is one of the roles NPC plays which agrees with the findings of Heise (2010) that a peace infrastructure manages conflicts. In answering a question about how the NPC achieves peace, justice and inclusivity through conflict prevention and management, a member of the governing board of the NPC said:

> To achieve a comprehensive, constructive peace that goes beyond addressing the signs of violent conflict and insecurity, several concerns must be addressed. These include encouraging access to security and justice, fighting corruption, and dealing with outside elements, including the movement of weaponry, narcotics, and illicit money (Board member in Accra, 15 March 2022).

In another interview with the Director in Charge of Conflict Resolution at the Head Office of the NPC, he explained further using the Bimbila chieftaincy dispute as an example, he said:

> The NPC has been exceptional in creating a peaceful and inclusive society in Bimbila. For instance, the Bimbila chieftaincy conflict was determined in a court, a verdict has been passed, and an appeal has been filed waiting for another determination. However, the court process was slow, and tension was high between the two feuding parties. The NPC intervened to keep the society together as they waited for the determination by the court. This was a great effort on the part of NPC to manage the peace the area was experiencing. The NPC

used dialoging to manage the peace of the area. To avoid contempt of court, it was ideal the NPC did not mediate the case but use dialogue to manage it to prevent a second wave of conflict. Again, there were several stakeholders in the conflict who were not interested in the chieftaincy but could influence peace in the area and dialoguing with such stakeholders was a great strategy that helped Bimbila return to peace (Staff Head Office, 20 March 2022).

The Regional Executive Secretary (RES) of the Ashanti Regional Peace Council t recounted the role the NPC played in Agogo in the Ashanti region to promote justice to the parties in the conflict. The NPC peacefully resolved the Fulani herders and farmers' dispute, which was on the verge of dividing the people. Fulani herders and farmers engaged in several violent conflicts, which increased public anxiety, challenged food and water security, affected incomes, and increased poverty levels in the community. According to Tonah (2007), the major causes of farmer-herder conflicts were the destruction of fields and crops by cattle and intense competition for resources (land and water) between farmers and herders. Increasingly, this conflict upset the work of leaders in the area, including the District Chief Executive and the Member of Parliament. The Ashanti Regional Peace Council, on the 14 January 2015, embarked on a journey to find a lasting solution to this impasse. The RES said that:

> When the NPC received the report on the Agogo Fulani herder and farmer conflict, they decided to intervene and restore peace in the vicinity. Their first step was to gather data on the crisis at Agogo in the Asante Akyem North District. The NPC had the

opportunity to meet some key stakeholders in the conflict at the community center, where most of them had gathered waiting for them. The NPC and REGSEC members went to the place to find a solution to end the problem. In fact, hearing about the involvement of the NPC in the resolution of the problem increased the trust the people had for the team. They visited the farming site to observe the extent of the damage. From the data the NPC received, they saw that it would be best to use dialogue to resolve the impasse. After using that mechanism, the area became peaceful, accommodating the feuding parties in harmony (RES in Kumasi, 11 March 2022).

To achieve a peaceful and just society all around the country, the SDGs 2030 Agenda has served as a standard to the NPC. It can be argued that equitable, accessible, and affordable justice systems must serve as the cornerstone of more inclusive societies and help achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda. Unmet legal demands by residents in Agogo might have a negative impact on other facets of their daily lives, such as their ability to earn a living, keep their homes, maintain their health, or find employment. Commenting on this issue, the Chairman of the Ashanti Regional Peace Council was of the view that the Agogo farmers saw the Fulani headsmen as enemies until the interventions by the NPC. He said:

> The farmers saw the Fulani herders as bloody-toothed people and did not want to go near them. They had to hide themselves from them whenever they saw them coming. They did not want to sell their goods to them or engage in any activity with them.

114

The farmers and other natives closed their trading activities before six o'clock in the evening because of fear they had for the Fulani headsmen. But, thanks to the Peace Council's education efforts, that perception the natives had about the Fulani shifted a little. They now see themselves as one people, just that there is a misunderstanding between them which must be resolved. They wanted to protect their interests, but the method they were using was something we did not like (RES in Kumasi, 10 March 2022).

Due to the disparate legal difficulties faced by poor and vulnerable groups, unequal access to justice further erodes equality in society. Family, job, and housing disagreements that are not settled can result in additional legal, social, and health-related issues as well as conflict. Legal issues that cannot be resolved reduce economic opportunities, deepen the poverty cycle, and jeopardise inclusive growth and human potential. A respondent in another interview said that, if the NPC is helping to achieve sustainable peace in society, then they are contributing to achieving SDG goal 16. Conflict resolution at the court is expensive and many people cannot afford it. The participant said:

Seeking justice at the court is quite expensive. Therefore, the NPC is helping many communities obtain peace and justice through mediating cases brought before them. The price of the mediation itself, including the time required by the NPC to prepare and the cost involved in the process, is considerably lower than the price of getting a case ready for trial at the court. Even if the mediation is not scheduled until after the full investigation has ended and

significant costs have been incurred, it will still be less expensive to participate in mediation than it will be to go to court. This means the NPC makes the search for justice very affordable (Governing board member in Accra, 20 March 2022).

SDG Target 16.3 aims to promote the rule of law and ensure equal access to justice. This indicator focuses on the core function of justice systems, which is to settle disputes and conflicts. The aim of this target is to ensure that disagreements between families, individuals, businesses, institutions, and citizens and their governments are resolved. In an interview with a key respondent, he explained that the NPC supports this sustainable development goal by resolving conflicts over land and natural resources, holding governments responsible in maintaining peace, and boosting businesses' confidence by creating a peaceful environment for businesses to operate.

Another key informant explained that the shared view behind SDG16, to him, the development of inclusive communities where the rule of law and human rights are upheld is necessary for the advancement of peace and development. This respondent was of the view that the style NPC uses to resolve disputes is very flexible. After the resolution, members to the disputes do not see themselves as enemies.

The use of dialogue, negotiation, and mediation by NPC to resolve conflicts makes the process more flexible. In contrast to the court system, the NPC is chosen by the parties to resolve the case at hand. The parties to the conflict mutually agree to allow the NPC to mediate the case. Like how the mediation process can be created by the parties, unlike the court system, which has strict rules to follow. In some circumstances, it will be best to

keep the parties apart for the majority, if not the entire session. In other cases, the NPC will help the parties communicate directly. In addition, NPC occasionally employs a facilitative approach, guiding the parties toward agreement by concentrating on their needs rather than the case's legal issues. They occasionally employ an evaluative style in which they determine the likely result of the factual and legal issues if a case is tried in court. Different styles are appropriate in various cases. The styles that the parties decide will work best for their case are discussed during mediation by the NPC. This flexibility in resolving conflicts helps a lot to increase inclusivity, as SDG goal 16 seeks to achieve (Governing board member in Accra, 22 March 2022).

Another respondent was of the view that peace and security problems have risen to the top of the agendas of most of Africa's regional organisations as violent conflict has surged in recent years. If this continues, it will be very difficult for countries in Africa to realise the SDG goals, especially goal 16. This calls for institutions like the NPC to help in maintaining peace in the country. The African Union, for example, has established a comprehensive group of organisational structures and institutional arrangements to deal with conflict and peace: The African Peace and Security Infrastructure (APSA). The need for an African peace infrastructure was informed by the spread of violence across previously stable regions, the increased use of terrorism as a tactic of war, and the deployment of remote tactics of warfare that exacted a terrible human rights abuse which undermines SDG goal 16.

For the countries directly affected by ethnic conflicts, the impact of violence is measured not only in direct casualties but also in economic collapse,

117

the breaking apart of institutions, and the tearing of the social fabric. These are directly connected to SDG goal 16 (Chang & Luo, 2013). Attacks on civilian targets have significantly increased Peace and security policies and countries including Ghana are opting for an infrastructure for peace and security that will prevent the tearing apart of society. In another interview, a key informant when asked about Ghana's peace infrastructure and its viability in the promotion of peaceful, just and inclusive societies said:

> One of the key reasons for establishing a peace infrastructure in Ghana was to prevent violent conflict, which destroys societies. This is a very significant reason for a peace infrastructure, because preventing violent conflicts is a rational and cost-effective strategy for countries at risk of violence and for the international community at large. Beyond the moral value associated with saving human lives and preventing atrocities, prevention minimises the costs of destruction generated by cycles of violence. In fact, the peace infrastructure in Ghana is doing great since it has prevented any large-scale violence from occurring, thereby uniting Ghanaians. However, I think it has more work to do since there are several community conflicts in the country which, if not checked, could lead to large-scale violent conflict (CDD in Accra, 21 March 2022).

The NPC reduces the indirect costs of violence by preserving a landscape free of large-scale armed violence, as well as the tearing apart of society, the diversion of resources toward military expenditures, international spillovers to neighbouring countries and regions, and human capital losses (De

118

Groot, Brück, & Bozzoli, 2009). Given the characteristic persistence of violence once it starts and the likelihood of relapse, the benefits of prevention accumulate over time (Mueller, 2017).

Several studies have developed methodologies to estimate the cost-effectiveness of conflict prevention (Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, 1997; Brown & Rosecrance, 1999; Chalmers 2007; IEP 2017; Mueller 2017). These writers confirm that a vibrant peace infrastructure can save the country funds that would have been used for reconstructions. While the availability and quality of data remain major issues, this recent body of literature provides evidence that the prevention of violent conflict is associated with enormous returns in terms of cost avoidance because of holding society together. This shows that if there is a peace infrastructure like the NPC that will help prevent conflict in a country, then it will be a great means to avoid cost and promote justice in society. These returns are particularly high for conflict-affected countries but are equally meaningful for the international community as well. Therefore, if the establishment of a peace infrastructure in Ghana has helped to prevent large-scale violent conflict, then its contribution to the promotion of justice and inclusive societies is recommendable. Another key informant averred that:

> So long as we have different groups in the country, like ethnic
> or political parties, conflict will always be with us, and a viable
> peace infrastructure must be put in place to mitigate threats of
> violence to keep these groups together. A viable peace
> infrastructure starts by exploring and analysing the prevailing
> peace building environment and its specific problems and

characteristics. In other words, good peace architects start by conducting a comprehensive needs assessment of the peace building environment and its actors. There should be a comprehensive conflict map that shows all potential conflict regions. This assessment should enable the operators of the infrastructure to design a more effective, constructive, and cost-effective way of dealing with the (root) causes of the violent conflict and its potential solutions for creating a more sustainable peaceful society. The NPC has a good conflict map, an act, and core staff. I think this makes them a viable force in mitigating violent conflict in Ghana (NSO in Accra, 2 April 2022).

Most of the respondents agreed with Osula (2015) that violent conflict involves at least two parties using physical force to resolve competing claims or interests and that this will always occur in society. Violent conflict is a common feature of today's developing world. Most of the world's poorest countries have experienced violent conflict during the past decade (World Bank, 1997). However, a peace infrastructure can keep society together to assist in development. The identification of the real concerns, interests, and needs is essential in the analysis.

Mediating Political Conflicts

The NPC has resolved several political conflicts. Inter and intra-party-political conflicts become intense in the periods prior to parliamentary and presidential elections in Ghana. The NPC resolved most of these disputes and

120

prevented some from escalating. The Deputy Director in charge of Conflict Management and Resolution explained:

> The 2008 elections in Ghana almost became violent. When tension was mounting, the Council met with all the political parties in the country and discussed their challenges and areas of tension. From the data collated, the Council led by Most Rev. Professor Emmanuel Asante organised a meeting inviting the Ghana Police Service to inform the political parties on their measures to ensure peace and security for all electoral processes. The NPC also brought in Electoral Commission (EC) officials to pledge their commitment to fairness for all parties and inform the parties on the preparations made for the impending elections; and the National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE) to talk to stakeholders on how it has educated the citizenry and organise peace education to sensitise Ghanaians to accept the results the EC will provide. The Council also organised television and radio discussions on the elections and the role of all the citizenry in promoting peaceful processes. Videos of electoral conflicts that have happened in other countries were shown in the media for people to see the impact of electoral violence. The Council also asked a musician to create a series of peace songs and jingles, which were played on the radio stations with airtime paid for by the Council. All these efforts contributed to peaceful elections in 2008 (CDD in Accra, 29 March 2022).

The RES of the Central Regional Peace Council narrated how the CRPC, led by Dr. Kenneth Aikins, intervened in a near conflict in the Ekumfi Constituency after the 2016 general elections. It was reported to the CRPC that four people had sustained gunshot wounds and some property had been destroyed in the Ekumfi Constituency of the Central Region, following a series of post-election violence between supporters of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP). The victims were said to be supporters of the Member of Parliament (MP) elect, Kingsley Ato Cudjoe of the NPP. The glass windows of the residence of the defeated incumbent MP, Abeiku Crentsil, of the NDC, were also destroyed, and a vehicle belonging to the NDC had been burnt. The CRPC went to the constituency to mediate and manage the situation. The RES of Central Region said:

> The two-party leaders and their executives were brought together by the CRPC, and after almost five hours of mediation, the parties agreed to allow peace to prevail. The violence did not continue after the intervention of the NPC (RES in Cape Coast, 7 April 2022).

Another key respondent agreed that the NPC has contributed to managing and resolving some political conflicts that could have escalated into large-scale conflicts. He said:

> There has been a persistent conflict between NPP and NDC party supporters in the Northern Region over the years. This is rooted in the very social fabric of society, such that any time there is a clash it disrupts every activity in the community. The Council organised several consultation workshops for

representatives of the political parties in the region to discuss tensions and seek commitments to nonviolent activities during the election campaign in 2008. In addition, the Council Chair and his office provided a venue for registering complaints and seeking redress for stakeholders of both political parties. Because media reportage on political conflicts, especially radio broadcasts, often intensifies feelings and leads to inflammatory exchanges between factions, the Council organised a series of workshops for media groups on nonviolent election and the role of the media. This assisted media officials to build positive attitudes toward reportage for peaceful elections (Regional Council Member in Takoradi, 9 March 2022).

Mediating Religion-based Conflicts

The NPC has resolved some stern religious conflicts. There are about four Muslim groups in the Upper West Region, including the Ahamadiyya, Jameet, Al-Suni, and the Chief Imam's groups. These groups intensify their activities during Ramadan. During the period, each group organises special preaching and prayer gatherings. They purchase airtime on radio stations for preaching to the public. However, these groups exhibit doctrinal differences during their preaching, which creates tensions and sometimes clashes among them. The RES explained:

> The UWPC identified this problem and organised consultation visits to sensitise the groups on peace. They also brought the groups together in peace workshops that enabled them to pledge to uphold peaceful Ramadan and Eid celebrations. Through the

123

efforts of the NPC in 2009, all four groups came together for a
joint session for the Eid al-Fitr prayers, which has continued to
this day (Regional Council Member in Wa, 2 March 2022).

In May 2021, Wesley Girls High School in Cape Coast, dominated
headlines in Ghana after news emerged that the school was preventing Muslim
students from fasting during the Ramadan period because it could be
detrimental to their health. The Ghana Education Service (GES) in a statement
directed that student should be allowed to fast, indicating that parents of such
students will have to sign an undertaking to the effect that the school will not be
held responsible for any ill-health emanating from the fast. The Methodist
Church took exception to the directive, stressing that it could not accede to the
unilateral directive issued by the Ghana Education Service.

The Church, therefore, in a counter statement, rejected the directive of
the Ghana Education Service, insisting that the school's rules and regulations
have been used severally and have raised several impactful women in society
and should be maintained. The Deputy Director in charge of Conflict
Management and Resolution said:

> Having the core function to prevent, manage, and resolve
> conflict and to build sustainable peace in Ghana, the Central
> Region Peace Council visited the Wesley Girls Senior High
> School (SHS) on May 10th, 2021, to ascertain the peace situation
> on campus since the issue cropped up and gather facts from the
> original source of the impasse. This was reported to the NPC-
> Head Office. After this, the Council met with the leadership of
> the Methodist Church, Ghana, the Old Girls' Association, and

124

the Parents-Teachers Association of the School on Monday, May 10, for facts on the issue. The NPC dialogued with the stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education, the Ghana Education Service, the parents of the concerned child, and the leadership of the Muslim group to which the student and her parents belonged. The NPC gathered full facts on the issue to enable it to facilitate the necessary intervention strategies to resolve it completely. The NPC also appealed to the media to be circumspect in its reporting so that unguarded statements did not undermine the relative peace in the country. Calm was restored to the school after the intervention (Staff Head Office in Accra, 22 March 2022).

In terms of fulfilling its mandate, the Volta Regional Peace Council (VRPC) has been very active in the region in managing and resolving conflicts. One main intervention by the Council was an effort to prevent a conflict between the Traditional Council and the Moslems in Krachi, a town in the region. The RES said that:

In January 2014, the Council sent a fact-finding mission made up of four of its members to Krachi, following reports of a developing volatile situation between the Moslem community and the traditional council. According to the council's assessment, the situation had the possibility of degenerating into violence if immediate action was not taken.

The Volta Regional Peace Council (VRPC) met with all the factions in the dispute and appealed for calm. They impressed upon them the need to find

125

an amicable way to resolve their differences. The mission found that the factions had taken entrenched positions, each believing in the sanctity of their view. The Council managed to prevent the escalation of violence in Krachi, but the undercurrents are still deep and could erupt in the future. Given that all sides appear to favour a peaceful resolution of the conflict, the Council remained committed to engaging them in finding a lasting solution. They plan to undertake further visits to Krachi to continue the dialogue, subject to the availability of resources (Regional Council Member in Ho, 11 March 2022).

The National Peace Council has resolved or is in the process of resolving several conflicts in Ghana. Key conflicts include chieftaincy conflicts in Dagbon between the Abudus and the Andanis; the Bawku chieftaincy conflict between the Mamprussi and Kusasis; the Anloga Chieftancy dispute; and chieftaincy disputes in the Ga-Adangbe area in the Greater-Accra region; Winneba in the Central Region; and Gushiegu, Buipe, and Bimbilla, in the Northern Region of Ghana.

Achieving Peace through Election Monitoring

Elections bolster the political community's credibility and stability. It connects people to one another, just like national holidays, and so validates the survival of democracy (Galtung, 2007). Elections therefore aid in facilitating social and political inclusivity. Therefore, one way the NPC ensures peace and inclusiveness in society is through effective domestic general elections, which allow every qualified adult to take part in the government of their country. This is supported by Bawer (2007).

126

A key respondent from the National Security stated that elections are a key component of democracy and must be inclusive, giving everyone who is eligible the chance to cast a ballot and be elected to a position of power. An essential part of conducting an inclusive election is making sure that women and men can and do participate in it without discriminatory hurdles. Additionally, it is consistent with the numerous laws and resolutions that UN member states have ratified to support the advancement of women in their own countries.

A key participant from the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) averred that domestic and international election observer who monitored and reported on the 2020 general elections in Ghana undoubtedly contributed to deterring violence, fraud, and other forms of electoral abuse throughout the process. One of their most important contributions was made in ensuring the integrity of the ballot counting process. The National Peace Council took an active part in this exercise. Together with other stakeholders, they played a key role in monitoring elections in Ghana to ensure that every qualified citizen exercised their franchise without fear.

In an interview with a past member of the NPC, he was of the view that ordinary citizens could feel involved in the politics of the country due to the role played by election observers. Effective observation at the polling stations and ballot counting processes at the polling stations ensured that there was little opportunity for cheating. It also prevented violence during the elections. He said:

> The NPC and other CSOs have helped to ensure a safe society, especially during election periods. Their presence alone helps

voters believe that they are going to enjoy safety. Most citizens nowadays do not trust the security agencies; they perceive them as corrupt and biased towards the ruling government. They trust CSOs and state institutions such as the NPC when it comes to curbing electoral violence (Past board member in Accra, 12 March 2022).

Another respondent from the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center said:

In my constituency, the police and some voters protect the ballots by remaining at the voting station after casting their votes. They observe the remaining voting and then count the ballots to ensure fairness. This is a strategy that was encouraged by the Electoral Commission. However, you should know that such people will have to abandon their work to do this job. I think the NPC can perform this role better since the organisation is made up of eminent people (KAIPTC in Accra, 13 April 2022).

On the strategies to protect the voting materials and vote in hot spot constituencies, one expert participant from the Center Democratic Development said that a professional and independent Electoral Management Body is essential to a peaceful election. He spoke:

Your question reminds me of my experience during the elections in my constituency in the 2020 general elections, where voters were encouraged (by the Electoral Commission) to remain at the voting station after voting and until the counting

128

was finished and the voting station results were announced. This is unlike in most countries, where electoral regulations and established practise require that voters vacate the voting station environs unless they are casting their votes or preparing to do so (in the queue). This is done to prevent rowdiness and possible disruption or interference in the voting process by over-enthusiastic voters. And it assumes that observers and state organisations such as the NPC, being non-partisan, will represent the interests of the voters. However, the NPC does not have enough observers to cover every polling station. Or, in extremely polarised situations, even the NPC is not trusted (CDD in Accra, 20 March 2022).

Effective Civic and Peace Education Programs

The NPC is recognized as one of the pivotal actors in Ghana's democratization process. Its role in democratic consolidation is categorized under the following thematic areas: civic education and engagement, dialogue and preventive diplomacy, the signing of peace pacts, legal instruments, and capacity development for political parties.

First, the Council participates in civic engagement and education. For example, the NPC Chairperson participated in the national enforcement body established by the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), a Ghana-based public policy think tank, to oversee the application of the 2012 political party code of conduct. This was adopted by all the political parties to direct and regulate their activities (Fieldwork, October 2020). According to a response

129

Working along with The Ghana Chapter of Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiDAF), the NPC is now conducting road shows and peace demonstrations across the nation. Additionally, it collaborates with the Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD), which has trained a five-person peace mediation committee in each of the country's sixteen regions (CDD in Accra, 11 March 2022).

A respondent from the NPC head office stated that:

> We also work with the EC and National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) for public education, awareness creation, and outreach programs on elections, etc. Churches and the media are used to raise awareness of the value of peace and security in the community. Our target group was young people. So, we collaborate with the UNDP, for instance, to involve youth stakeholders in community durbars and advance peace and security via tradition by enlisting notable members of society, as was seen in 2012. Because our mandate does not include prosecution, we work with the Ghana Police Service to address matters that threaten to become criminal in nature. (NSP in Accra, 23 March 2022).

The Council supplemented this by holding public peace forums and symposia, peace education in communities, schools, and colleges, and media (print, radio, and television) campaigns for peace across the nation. Through these initiatives, Ghanaians have come to value the rule of law, discussion, peace, and tolerance more and more. According to the literature, there is a compelling case for improving the knowledge and application of peace education in formal schools, and schools can be instrumental in achieving the

goals of peace, justice, and inclusivity. It is a known fact that formal education shapes social and cultural values, norms, attitudes, and dispositions in addition to imparting information and skills.

Respondents were asked whether they agree with the assertion that the National Peace Council conducts effective peace educational programmes aimed at making society peaceful, just, and inclusive. Most of the respondents were of the view that NPC is effective in peace education. When an election is approaching, the NPC usually intensifies their peace education. They target special groups such as the youth, women, and traditional or religious leaders in the community. The youth, for example, have long been blamed for election-related violence in the country, making them the NPC's target. One NPC Regional Board member explained the approach to the youth:

> We organised several training sessions for youth and educated them about the need for peaceful coexistence and justice. We also showed them videos about the effects of conflict in other countries, such as Rwanda, Kenya, and Liberia. Therefore, I can say that the peace council's messages and training workshops for the youth has worked to ensure an inclusive society. To my surprise, the youth also helped to mentor their colleagues in their various institutions to expand the coverage of our education (Board member in Accra, 22nd March 2022).

The two figures below show staff of the National Peace Council taking school children through peace education.

Figure 6: **NPC engaged student in Central Region on Peaceful Coexistence**
Source: NPC File, (2021)

In Asawase, in the Ashanti region, the NPC trained a lot of youth in conflict prevention. The youth trained by the NPC formed a peace group termed the "UN" – the Peacemakers Association, and this consisted of members from all the political parties. The NPC officer in the Ashanti region was frequently invited to facilitate programmes aimed at ensuring peace in the community. The objective of these groups was to educate members on the need for peace and to avoid being used to start conflict and violence during elections. This example has been replicated in several other hotspots visited.

The NPC's main target was the youth, especially in the hotspot and zongo communities where conflicts are rampant. We use peace education to sensitise them to eschew violence and promote peace. When asked these youth why they engaged in violence, the answers they give is that various politicians had promised them different things, and they were willing to work to ensure that their chosen politician won the election fairly or unfairly (Regional Council Member in Takoradi, 2 April 2022).

In some communities, supporting a particular candidate during an election became a crime, as followers of certain political parties were barred from voting. It is possible that voters themselves in their strongholds

132

participated in electoral fraud. Education of the youth on issues of this nature will minimise the reoccurrences in the community. In another interview with a Regional Executive Secretary in the Volta Region, he confirmed the assertion that the NPC uses peace education to achieve peaceful, just and inclusivity in Ghana said:

> When NPC met the chiefs in my area, some politicians also promised some of these traditional leaders, and so NPC had to sensitise them on the need for peaceful elections. It is very surprising to find responsible adults like the chiefs persuading young adults to cause trouble by allowing the political party they support to gain an unfair advantage over another. The youth usually understood and accepted the peace messages of the NPC, and they promised that they would not engage in violence during the elections. They paid special attention to Muslim youth because they were involved in the violence, and some of them were beaten when they went for recreation at Gbi waterfalls (Regional Council Member in Ho, 11 March 2022).

A participant commented on peace education before general elections. He explained that if voters are well informed through education provided by the NPC, they will behave well at polling stations. They are not easily intimidated, if election officials can do their work in a safe and secure environment without interference and obstruction on the part of voters. Informed electorates deter fraud on the part of polling station officials when they know the voters who are watching them know what is right. An informant from the Center for Democratic Development said:

So, if the political parties can influence the youth through the digital media to intensify their political activism, which includes propaganda measures and conflicting issues, why is it that the NPC cannot use the same means to promote peace work? The lack of NPC's activities on digital media has affected the perspectives of the youth on the role of the NPC in Ghana. The older generation, on the other hand, listens to radio, reads newspapers, and attends political events, so they are well informed about the NPC's and political parties' activities (CDD in Accra, 28 March 2022).

Through NPC's underliesnal programmes, the public's capacity to use nonviolent ways to resolve conflicts is developed and strengthened to change behaviour by promoting respect and tolerance for diversity, knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and by highlighting the common ethical values and shared sameness that underlie human diversity.

Preventing Violence and Conflicts

The views of the respondents on the conflict prevention role of the NPC were assessed. The participants in the interviews recognised the conflict prevention role of the NPC. Various examples were given on the interlocutory work of the NPC during the interviews. In the interviews, the narratives of some of the respondents supported the general view during the interview that the NPC works towards averting violent conflicts. During the interview, one participant was of the view that:

> The NPC has worked effectively towards preventing conflicts in elections and in communities to avoid communal violence. In Bimbilla, Sawla, and other areas such as Yekini and Sirigu, the NPC regional offices intervened to avert communal clashes.

Effectively addressing violent conflict and destructive violence will also require the NPC stabilisation and prevention plans to include active cooperation with multilateral institutions and other donor nations. The NPC cannot do it alone. The United Nations and the World Bank are revising their strategies to significantly incorporate conflict prevention and peacebuilding, allowing them to leverage their programmes and diplomacy, i.e., to share the burden, in fragile and conflict-affected states (NSO in Accra, 21 March 2022).

Prevention of conflict is a process whose benefits to both society and the actors within it unfold over time. Early efforts at prevention were often hardly visible in countries that experienced violent conflicts. Successful implementation of inclusive economic and social policies such as peace infrastructure rarely attracts much attention.

Furthermore, it is clear from the interviews that informants from political parties share responsibility for previous acts of violence against institutions other than their own. Some blamed the police and the NPC for being biased towards their political party. Where issues like those of the activities of the party foot soldiers come up, political party informants tend to find reasons to justify the actions of their affiliated groups.

The NPC can do a lot to avert violence in the country if they remain neutral and help to maintain justice. Without justice, there cannot be peace. The people who usually engage in violence are hungry and they are without jobs, so they come to polling stations to protect the ballot boxes to get employment should their candidate win or join demonstrations to register their demand.

135

However, if the police try to disrupt them, they become violent and fight back. But the problem is that in Africa the security agencies always work in favour of the government, and we need to protect ourselves with these guys (referring to foot soldiers) (CDD in Accra, 12 April 2022).

None of the young people interviewed admitted to ever engaging in activities that lead to conflicts, especially during elections. This is perhaps because of their education level and their employment status. But the same cannot be said of the politicians who, through their work, have indirectly instigated conflict. The level of education and employment status of informants were therefore decisive factors which influenced their perspective of the work of the NPC and election-related violence.

The Council uses preventive mechanisms like early warning activities about possible security threats to alleviate tensions as they arise during elections. Activities like peace walks, games, and songs are promoted to enhance individual and group behaviour and relations. The execution of these preventive programmes builds confidence and trust among the citizenries. Reflections from informants suggested that the NPC has well established conflict prevention mechanisms.

The NPC has a conflict map, so we look at the map, we know the hot spot, and we try to normally put in strategies to offset any likelihood of a violent conflict. So, we are aware of the conflict hotspot, and we put in the checks for people to stand by to report any issues that border peace. (Board member in Accra, 22 March 2022).

Interviews with the respondents revealed that peace walks, football games featuring the youth, and sometimes politicians and celebrities, were organised to create awareness and foster confidence and trust-building.

I took part in a peace walk in May 2016, which I think was one of their activities. These activities can curb violence and make the environment peaceful. One banner had the Peace Council logo and name, and we walked from campus to Lizzy's complex to play games (NSO in Accra, 22 March 2022).

The Peace Council is a very effective force in conflict prevention in Ghana. It has been able to save the country from near-devastating conflicts during election periods. A staff at the Head Office of the NPC said:

When we saw that there was the likelihood of a conflict emerging from the 2008 elections, we were able to enter the realm and solve that problem. The key one is when the election results came in and Akuffo Addo thought he had won and Atta Mills also thought he had won, and there was a kind of tension growing. So, the Peace Council had to enter the fray and mediate. We were able to negotiate for peace, and President J.A. Kuffour was very helpful. I think Kuffour, at that time, played an important role in the peace council's efforts to broker peace between the two candidates. Yes, I think I want to stop at that. (Staff in Accra, 22nd March 2022).

Monitoring Volatile Regions

Most of the respondents were of the view that, to maintain peace, the NPC monitored volatile regions and areas considered as hotspots for conflicts

137

in the country. NPC's effective monitoring of conflict indicators and early warning systems began from the district level through the regions to the national level, and by this more attention was paid to volatile regions that have previously recorded violent conflict. The Council constantly evaluates the current National Early Warning System in Ghana to determine how best to ensure an effective and comprehensive solution to hotspot regions. In an interview with a staff member of NPC to give reasons why the council monitors volatile regions and hotspots, he said:

> The primary goal of the NPC monitoring volatile areas such as Alavanyo and Nkonya is to ensure that information about potential security threats reaches peace actors, especially the police, on time so that they can mitigate tensions quickly. The NPC is currently understaffed and therefore not able to carry out this task efficiently. I think they must build the capacity of both peace actors and the public to efficiently feed into the system (Staff in Accra, 13 April 2022).

The Council constantly strengthens its partnerships by building networks for collaborations and joint programming with relevant stakeholders to be more efficient in monitoring events in volatile regions and hotspots. As the nationally mandated body for peace and conflict initiatives, the Council also coordinates and harmonises all peace efforts for joint delivery. This is especially necessary at the region, district, and community levels where the council's presence is currently absent. The Council's use of this approach of fostering linkages with all peace actors ensures that peace initiatives are complementary and synergistic. Streamlining strategic partnerships for joint planning,

138

managing, implementing, and monitoring will lead to a broader impact of peace initiatives. In an interview an informant said:

> While there is widespread support for frequent monitoring of volatile regions, there is a need to consider at intervals whether periodic reviews are providing value-for-money and whether there would be greater benefit in adopting other approaches. I think getting offices in all the districts will be very important and will make this work easy. Decisions in this regard should take account of the perspectives of Members of Parliament in the various constituencies, watchdogs, and other stakeholders to ensure that the dual purposes of accountability and improvement are enhanced (Board member in Accra, 2 April 2022).

Conflict Early Warning

Respondents were asked whether they agreed, were uncertain, or disagreed with the assertion that the National Peace Council provides early warning signals to security agencies to avert conflicts. Conflict early warning has become an important strategy of any effective infrastructure for peace. Whereas rich literature exists on how early warning and response should be carried out, very little is known about how early warning happens, especially in field-based systems. Consequently, there is some scepticism about the entire concept of early warning among outsiders. Some of the respondents were uncertain or disagreed that the NPC provides early warning signs to avert conflicts. Early warning and early response (EW/R) are considered one of the pillars of operational conflict prevention. A respondent from WANEP said:

Inclusivity leads to a great commitment of citizens to the goals and aspirations of their country. Citizens are therefore prepared to defend and work towards the fulfilment of this goal with great commitment. Cohesion makes people sacrifice their personal interests for society's development (WANNEP in Accra, 9 March 2022).

Early warning assessments can be used by operatives of an infrastructure for peace for a better understanding of conflict, anticipation of likely turns of events, or disaster preparedness and intervention. This latter dimension is equally important but tends to be neglected in expert discourse. The key reason why NPC uses early warning is to prevent conflicts from occurring. Prevention is primarily an endogenous process, a responsibility of the government and society. In this sense, prevention enhances sovereignty; empowering each country to be violence-free is the product of many factors. It is often difficult to attribute violence to a single root cause. In another interview, one Regional Executive Secretary in the Eastern Region said:

One of the end products of inclusivity is peace. Cohesion leads to peace as members of society see themselves as one and are prepared to tolerate and forgive one another. National cohesion reduces the likelihood of a civil war occurring. People can settle their differences before they deteriorate into conflict (RES in Koforidua, 2 April 2022).

Violence is like a fever in a human body: it can be caused by many different illnesses. The question is not why societies have conflict, but why some groups choose violence to resolve their differences with other groups or

with the state. While it is necessary to avoid conflicts by providing an early warning to mitigate the impact of shocks, prevention also requires proactively addressing deeper, underlying risks that prevent sustainable development and peace. In most conflicts, these deeper risks create fertile grounds for mobilisation towards violence. With the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the United Nations member states are committed to building peaceful, just, and inclusive societies that are free from fear and violence; eradicating poverty and hunger; combating inequalities; and protecting and respecting human rights.

The 17 SDGs and 169 targets are seen as "integrated and indivisible, and they balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental" (UN General Assembly 2015, preamble). This agenda provides an overarching framework for action for states and other actors to work together toward conflict prevention and peace. The SDGs contained in the 2030 Agenda offer entry points for implementing the recommendations of this study. An informant from National Security said:

> Inclusivity leads to a unified approach when confronting external threats to the nation. Citizens unite and confront external terrorization. Information that is needed by those in authority to fight external threats is easily provided by citizens. They are prepared to expose people who are threats to the security of the country (NSO in Accra, 1 April 2022).

In every region of Ghana, the NPC formed Regional Election Early Warning and Response Groups (REEWARGs). According to a reply from the Director in charge of Capacity Building and outreach, he revealed that the main

141

goal of the REEWARG was to debate, plan, and recommend responses to violent threats to the general elections in Ghana scheduled for December 2016 and 2020. REEWARG was tasked with making sure that the reaction plans complied with electoral rules, were considerate of human security, and upheld moral principles and industry standards. REEWARG was expected to be a source of information for the security agencies and provide a Regional Early Warning System (REWS) in Ghana. According to Kendie and Osei-Kufour (2016), the NPC also shares notes with the security agencies on how they prepare to prevent any violence before, during, and after elections.

The National Election Early Warning and Response Group (NEEWARG), which was also created by the NPC, supports the regional groups' policies, and offers technical assistance. Because they functioned locally and were more readily apparent to the public, the regional groups were the focus of the researcher's attention in this study. A respondent who was a part of the 2016 REEWARG revealed that following the elections, the organisation was able to stop three instances of electoral violence.

Signing of Peace Pact

The NPC has significantly contributed to national peace and stability since its founding in 2005. The holding of effective, free and peaceful elections in an environment of consensus building has been the NPC's primary emphasis for democratic consolidation. Signing of peace pacts as a mechanism for building consensus ahead of general elections have been one key feature of the NPC strategy for elections.

Prior to the 2012 presidential and parliamentary elections, the NPC, the Asantehene, and the Institute of Democratic Governance (IDEG) organised a

142

tripartite initiative in Kumasi (Kumasi Declaration), which resulted in a peace accord of fair play declaration by all presidential candidates to accept the will of the people following the election.

Again, the presidential candidates running in the elections on December 7, 2020, signed a peace agreement in Kumasi on December 4, 2020, under the supervision of the National Peace Council, the Institute of Democratic Governance (IDEG), and the Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II. On December 1, 2016, a comparable event took place at the Movenpick Ambassador Hotel in Accra. The presidential candidates vowed to support nonviolent, fair elections. A member of the governing board of the NPC said:

> One great benefit of inclusivity is that it promotes national solidarity and togetherness in tackling national development issues. Togetherness brings development since people work in one accord. Every individual is prepared to contribute to making the country better. Oppositions to the ruling government criticise the government constructively and provide alternatives. Unity and harmony in dealing with national adversity and calamities leads to stability (Board Member in Accra, 22 March 2022).

The theme for the 2020 edition was "Strengthening Ghana's Democratic Stability, Peace and Unity." Two days after the event, described by many as historic, there were some skirmishes in the Ashanti Regional capital, Kumasi, raising concerns about the impact of the Kumasi Declaration.

Mr. John Mahama was reminded of the peace accord he signed prior to the election when his followers were on the streets protesting after he lost the 2020 elections. Another respondent stated that unless the leaders of the major

143

parties took immediate and decisive action to manage their supporters, the mere expression and signature of a statement stating measures for peace was not a guarantee of peace.

Figure 7: Presidential Candidates Signing the Peace Pact in 2020
Source: National Peace Council

Regardless of who won the election, the NPC claimed that the peace deal demonstrated Ghanaians' determination to live in a peaceful environment. Arnault (2000) supports this claim by asserting that peace agreements must be signed for a country to be stable and grow. This Pact should be honoured and observed in all its manifestations if the country has a document to which we may refer in our evaluation of the political climate in the country.

The Passing of the Vigilantism Act (Act, 999) of 2019

A bill that aims to dissolve political party vigilante groups and outlaw vigilantism in the nation was passed thanks to the work of the NPC. The NPC also travelled the entire nation to inform Ghanaians of the law. The National Peace Council (NPC) urged political parties, civil society organisations, and the media in the Awutu-Senya East constituency to educate voters about the steps for ending political vigilantism and the penalties for engaging in vigilantism

acts before the 2020 general elections. Vigilantism is the use of violence or threats of violence or intimidation by one person against another to achieve their own or another's objectives (Gyampo, Graham, & Bossman, 2017).

The Vigilantism and Related Offences Act 2019 (Act 999), according to the NPC, is going to "bite" anyone or group found guilty. The NPC made the call at a day-long advocacy campaign programme on the eradication of vigilantism and related offences in Kasoa. In an interview, a Regional Executive Secretary of the Western Region said:

> It seems clear that a low rate of crime might be a benefit of a cohesive community. There is a partial measure of a sense of safety. These focused chiefly on greater neighbourliness and not security cameras or the police presence in the area. The people themselves serve as security cameras and police for the community. The Neighborhood Watch group may not be officially constituted, but everyone acts as such for one another (RES in Takoradi, 13 March 2022).

A respondent who works with the NPC explained that any person who contravenes the provisions, including taking part in the activities of vigilante groups during elections, commits an offence and would be liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment of not less than ten years and not more than 15 years. He further explained that the NPC was monitoring to ensure that all political parties and stakeholders complied with the roadmap developed by the Council and stakeholders to promote peace and security before, during, and after the general election.

Establishment of a Situation Room

As a system for real-time information exchange for the quick response to conflict situations during the 2016 elections, the NPC established a situation room in Accra. There are now two more situation rooms, one each in Kumasi and Tamale. The data gathering room, analysis room, and decision room were the three components of the Accra situation room, according to the NPC's 2016 report. Direct communication with field observers was handled via the data gathering room. For analysis, they gathered all the data obtained from various media sources and an SMS platform. Ten specialists from the "Analysis Room," on the other hand, including lawyers, political scientists, human rights experts, gender experts, and communication experts, oversaw interpreting the data for informed responses. The Decision Room was comprised of eminent people who could use their good offices to influence a positive response to identified threats. The Regional Executive secretary of the Central Regional Executive Secretary said:

> National cohesion leads to building a strong and enduring identity that interweaves all the diversity into a robust national fabric. It gives a single identity to all citizens, which makes them see each other as siblings (RES IN Cape Coast, 11 March 2022).

A total of 750 observers were deployed throughout Ghana's ten regions to keep an eye on, analyse, and coordinate responses to any violent attempts to disrupt the peaceful conduct of the elections. Areas that had been noted as conflict hot spots across the nation were given additional attention during situation room operations. The situation rooms produced useful data that was

146

shared with the EMB, election monitors, and embassies. To maintain peace, the material was also made available to the broader public.

The situation room was a joint initiative with WANEP, the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), the Kofi Annan International Peace Training Centre (KAIPTC), the Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy (LECIAD), Transform Ghana Peace Project, Transform Network Ghana and Blogging Ghana/Ghana Decides. It was jointly financed by USAID, the Australian Development Agency, the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), and the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA).

147
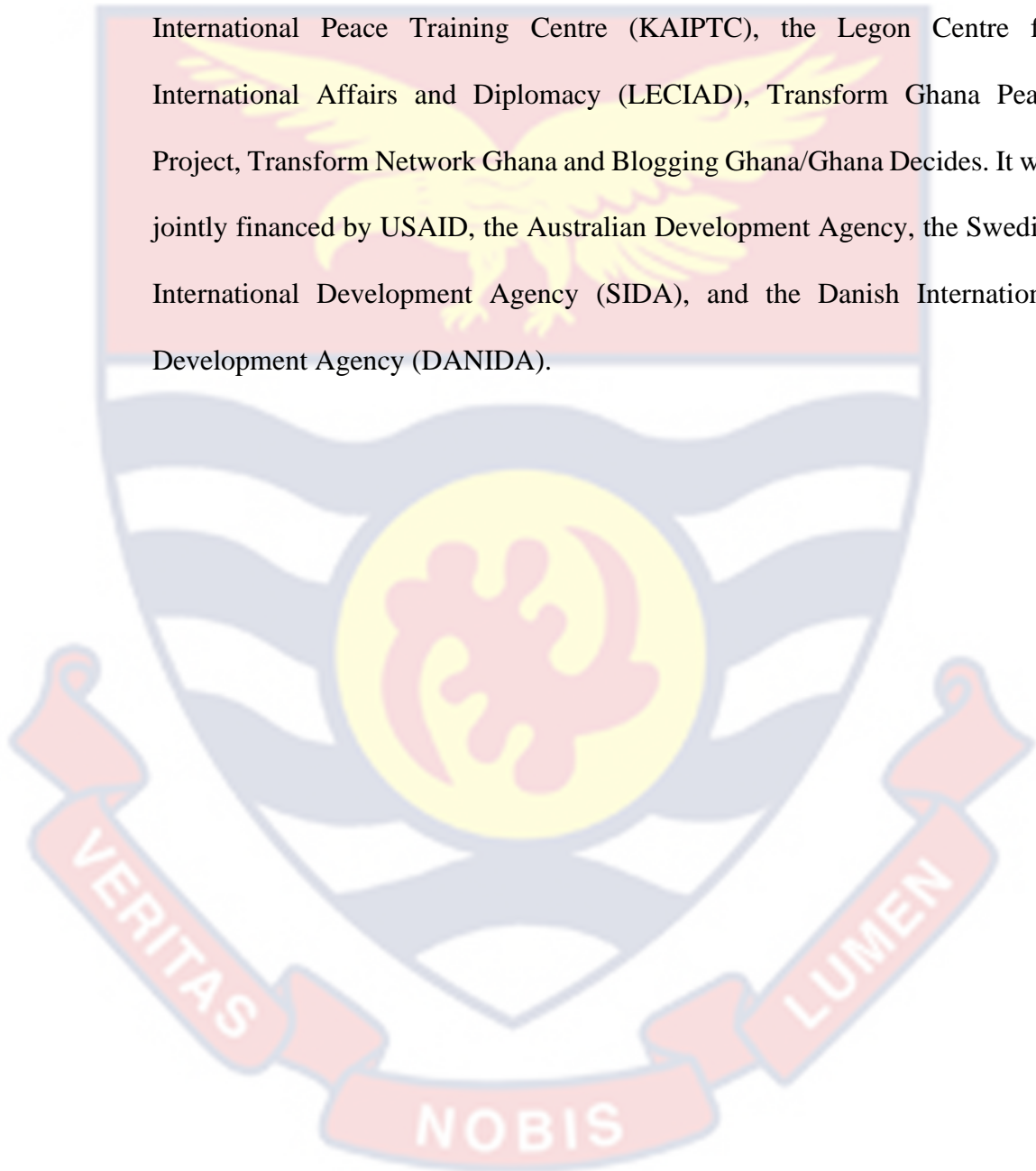
CHAPTER SIX

MECHANISMS FOR BUILDING STRONG INSTITUTIONS

Introduction

In the previous chapter, the study examined the NPC's strategies and mechanisms for the promotion of justice and inclusive societies. In this chapter, the study examines the contributions of the National Peace Council towards building strong institutions. Stable peacebuilding is built on solid institutions. Therefore, SDG 16, is focused on peace, justice, inclusivity, and strong institutions. This is a significant step forward, especially considering that the SDGs are universal and affect all nations, whereas the MDGs applied to developing nations, SDG 16 was only added to the Sustainable Development Goals after a protracted and difficult campaign and contentious negotiations. The language used to define the objective, as well as the goals and metrics employed, are not impartial (Persson et al., 2016).

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. The third specific objective of the study was to examine the contributions of the National Peace Council towards building strong institutions. One of the targets of SDG goal 16 is to develop effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels. The goal was to highlight the contributions of the NPC in developing effective state and non-state institutions in conflict prevention, management, and resolution, taking into consideration the processes, actors, and results. Building capacity at all levels, particularly in developing nations, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime requires strengthening relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation.

148

Civil Society Organisation

In this context, the term "civil society" refers to the non-state actors who started and oversaw processes for preventing, managing, and resolving conflicts in the country. They fall under the categories of religious bodies, community-based organisations, and non-governmental organisations. According to the field data, the National Peace Council, and the West African Network for Peace Building (WANEP-Ghana) were significant state and non-state actors in the resolution of several conflicts in northern Ghana. For instance, NPC and WANEP-Ghana worked with some community-based organisations (CBOs) in communities, such as the Central Gonja District, to implement their peace initiatives. Some of these CSOs and CBOs are Ambassadors for Reconciliation, Peace and Justice, The Human Help and Development Group, and the Centre for Rural Improvement Services (CRIS). The interventions of these CSOs or non-state actors in conflict prevention and management took the form of instruction, awareness raising, sensitization, mediation, negotiation, and facilitation.

This is consistent with McCandless' (2001) findings that if CSOs are equipped with the necessary knowledge, they can prevent and resolve conflicts by engaging in activities like civic education, advocacy for civil and political rights, as well as social, economic, and cultural rights, and advocacy for peace.

A two-day workshop was organised by the National Peace Council in collaboration with the Kofi Annan International Peace-keeping Training Centre for community-based NGOs operating in six regions in Ghana between March and July 2022. The NPC, with the assistance of the Canadian High Commission

149

in Ghana also trained the leadership of these CSOs and CBOs to further train members in their communities in conflict prevention strategies.

For instance, in partnership with the Central Gonja District Assembly and with the goal of fostering peace among residents of the Buipe traditional area, the NPC trained the leadership of The Centre for Rural Improvement Services (CRIS), a community-based non-governmental organisation operating in the Northern Region. To promote understanding and encourage dialogue in the resolution of disputes, the NPC has built the capacities of women, the young, chiefs, opinion leaders, religious organisations, security agencies, and other civil society organisations. The Director in charge of Capacity Building at the head office of NPC averred:

> The NPC has organised several capacity-building workshops and seminars for CBOs and CSOs in the country. The main aim of these workshops is to build the capacities of the leaders of these CSOs to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts. The NPC does not have enough offices and staff to operate in all parts of the country. Therefore, training these organisations helps to develop their skills and make them effective (Staff in Accra, 17 March 2022).

According to an interview with a Regional and Executive Secretary of NPC, topics covered in these training workshops were Conflict Prevention Strategies and Peace Building, along with Negotiation and Peer Mediation, the Concept of Early Warning and Reporting, and Building Self Esteem. One important lesson from this workshop was revealed during the interview with some participants. They explained that they teach the community that instead of

150

using violence, they should engage in dialogue. This method will help them solve their differences, which will result in real progress.

Again, The Human Help and Development Group (THUDEG), an NGO in Tamale, was committed to working for the elderly and kids in underprivileged communities. They planned activities with the intention of using the kids as peace ambassadors in the Buipe Traditional Area. Under its "Ghana Alert Programme," NPC and WANEP-Ghana provided support to THUDEG to launch this peace project that used kids to inform communities about the importance of peace in the nation.

Children in the Figure 8 marched in a procession while singing peace songs and holding placards that read: Love Peace for the Sake of God, Violence Free Election and No Peace, No Development. All of these were intended to send a message to decision-makers about their desire to put an end to the protracted conflict in a peaceful manner.

Figure 8: **Children marched in a Procession while Singing Peace Songs**
Source: National Peace Council

In another development, the NPC organised a two-day peer mediation training workshop for the women of Buipe to build their capacities. This

151

workshop was organised on September 30, 2016, for the female members of the Jinapor and Awusi families. The Canadian High Commission funded this workshop to put pressure on the feuding factions to put aside their differences and allow peace to reign in the Buipe Traditional Area.

This action was taken in response to the women leaders of the two families pointing out how the conflict was hindering Buipe's development and having a negative impact on the lives of women and children. After the Northern Regional Minister requested NPC and WANEP to intervene, they held two pre-dialogue meetings to sensitise members in the Bunkpurugu-Yunyoo District. A dialogue session was held in Tamale on May 15, 2016, and it was followed by a post-dialogue session, which was attended by representatives chosen by the parties involved in the land dispute between the Bimobas and Konkombas.

According to the regional Executive Secretary of the Norther Regional Peace Council that the dialogue was effectively handled by the women due to the training they received at the workshop, and this gave the rivals a chance to air their grievances regarding land-related matters. Mass training sessions on peaceful coexistence in diversity were facilitated by the NPC in conjunction with these dialogue sessions. Additionally, on June 21, 2016, NPC set up a meeting between the heads of the Bimoba and Konkomba ethnic groups at the Nayiri palace. Following this meeting, the factions chewed on "spirit cola," swearing not to engage in any acts of violence in the neighbourhood. The spiritual meaning of this act is that those who violate the agreement made while chewing spirit cola will be punished by the traditional area's gods. The study found that the NGOs' and CBOs' efforts to manage conflicts were encouraging if they are given the necessary skills.

In another development, the National Peace Council (NPC), in collaboration with the Canadian Funds for Local Initiative (CFLI), organised a two-day training workshop to equip civil society organisation leaders from Winneba (Central region) with conflict prevention skills. This workshop was organised from November 4–5, 2019, and it sought to enhance the role and participation of women in influencing political and public policy-making processes to promote, sustain, and consolidate peace in the region. Its goal was to bring together a new generation of female leaders who would actively promote peace and advocate for inclusive and gender-responsive policies in their respective societies. The workshop, which was successfully organized, was under the theme "Increasing the voices, participation, and inclusion of women in conflict prevention, before, during, and after the 2020 elections through training, dialogue, and consensus-building."

Four months after the workshop, the CFLI coordinator for Ghana, Marian Tadefa-Kubabon, organised a monitoring visit for experience sharing with the trained CSO leaders in Winneba, particularly women. This experience-sharing workshop took place on February 7, 2020. The results were that all the women who attended the review meeting had used the knowledge acquired at the workshop to either prevent, manage or resove a conflict in their community.

Figure 9: **Participants at a Training Workshop to Equip CSOs Leaders in Winneba**
Source: National Peace Council

Another CSO called Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) benefitted greatly from the skills development provided by the NPC. Even though this CSO is into water, sanitation, and hygiene, they decided to help in the campaign for peace. Through their activities in the Nanumba North District, they raised awareness about the risks of conflict at every turn of their interactions with locals. This is consistent with the findings of Osei-Kufuor and Bukari (2022), Osei-Kufuor et al. (2021), Galaa and Bukari (2014), and Annan (2013). These academics said that CSOs and CBOs offered, among other things, training in conflict prevention, management, and resolution as well as advocacy campaigns. The NPC equips these CBOs and CSOs to help them work effectively.

Interventions by NGOs and CBOs consistently reduced hostilities among locals, eased tensions, and fostered a climate where everyone in the community sought peace in the traditional areas. This confirms the OECD's

154

(2008) definition of conflict management, which includes actions addressing societies' inherent abilities to resolve disputes involving divergent interests amicably and disputes with the potential to cause instability.

Due to lack of adequate mediation skills, some of the interventions by CSOs in conflict management did not address the issues of respect; the need for access to and control over land (in Bunkpurugu), the worries about development imbalances, and the people's mistrust and fears (in Bimbilla and Buipe). For example, the discussions in Bunkpurugu did not deal with the fundamental problem of land access and control between the rivals. The fact that either group was more affluent or knowledgeable than the other due to access to important positions, which allowed the dominant group to maintain discriminatory tendencies, was once again not mentioned.

Intentions to delve deeper into the conflict are overshadowed by third parties' anxious desire to address the immediate issues. Capacity building workshops by NPC can address this problem faced by CSOs in addressing this problem. A key informant remarked;

> These CBOs are helping us, but it is not enough. What they do here to resolve conflicts is merely a formality. We only go there to their engagements to hear peace, peace, and more peace. They do not address the issues that will address the root causes of conflicts, and when you bring up such issues on such grounds, they perceive you as not being a peace-lover while the issues are not being addressed. I think they lack the necessary training and skills to maintain peace. It's very good that the National Peace

155

Council, who are mainly professionals, trains them to be effective (Regional Council Member in Accra, 18 March 2022).

This suggests that processes used by NGOs and CBOs, aside addressing the immediate causes or triggers, also failed to address the fundamental problems underlying the conflicts. The Catholic Church in Tamale and the Navrongo-Bolgatanga Diocese of the Catholic Church, which includes the Bunkpurugu-Yunyoo Districts and the Manprugu traditional areas, have been two significant non-state actors in the management of conflicts in the Bunkpurugu-Yunyoo District. These third parties' management activities with other collaborators took the form of informing, assisting, and sensitising enemies to make way for peace. If these non-state institutions are helping in conflict resolution, then they need to be equipped to do it more efficiently. This is one of the key activities of the NPC.

For instance, a key respondent explained that the Winneba Peace Initiative (WPI) established contacts in Effutu that assisted in bringing together groups and representatives of the Garthey and Ayerebi-Acquah families to discuss issues, providing neutral locations for events, and using its influence as a peace organisation respected for its objectivity to bring parties together amicably. Numerous times, the WPI dialogue sessions at Winneba for members of the Garthey and Ayerebi-Acquah families to discuss issues that will result in the long-term management of the conflict yielded very little results due to some lapses in the process they adopted.

In all the conflict situations where the CSOs and CBOs had intervened, it was revealed through an interview with a key informant that they assessed the conflict to determine its origins and current state. It creates an intervention based

156

on the findings and holds dialogue sessions. It employed tactics that appeared to be giving various parties the chance to converse, express grievances, and buy time for tensions to decrease.

Some early warning signs have been received from some communities through the work of the CSOs for stakeholders interested in peace in the districts and in the regions. It was discovered that because more guns would have been purchased after a bumper harvest, violence would be more likely to occur. However, reporting some of these important early warning signs is done wrongly. For instance, it was reported to a local radio station instead of the police, which sometimes further deteriorates the conflict situation.

The NPC equips the group members with skills in peace education, conflict prevention, early warning reporting, mediation and uses them as community peace promoters who will bring about change through personal transformation. The NPC also established Peace Clubs and Community Peace Committees, all of which participated in public forums and other forms of peace education and sensitization. The intention was to reach as many people as possible in the conflict-affected communities with the message of peace.

It can be said that these processes have been somewhat successful because the trained CSOs and CBO initiatives have reduced conflicts between the factions in the district. This result is in line with those of Badong (2009), Kendie et al. (2012), Annan (2013), Bukari (2013), and Osei-Kufuor and Bukari (2022), who found that religious leaders among Christians, Muslims, and Animists offer their followers counselling to restore peace and security in their communities.

Within the wider global development agenda, civil society organisations have been identified as key stakeholders playing pivotal roles. The efforts of CSOs in the global democratisation process, poverty reduction, advancement of human rights, good governance, debt relief, and good aid have been widely acknowledged. In the view of Veltmeyer (2009), civil society organisations have been broadly seen as agents for limiting authoritarian government; empowering a popular movement; reducing the atomizing and unsettling effects of market forces; enforcing political accountability; and improving the quality and inclusiveness of governance.

Similarly, Lewis and Kanji (2009) observed that CSOs have been recognised as important actors in the landscape of development, from reconstruction efforts in Indonesia, India, Thailand, and Sri Lanka after the 2004 tsunami disaster, to international campaigns for aid and trade reforms such as "Make Poverty History."

As development agents, therefore, CSOs are best known for undertaking two main activities: direct service delivery to people in need and policy advocacy. One major area that has experienced an increasing interest, visibility, and influence of civil society fraternity is peacebuilding and conflict resolution, and this, according to Ekiyor (2008), has grown globally. This wider interest, visibility, and influence in issues of peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and peacemaking is attributed to several reasons. Of critical importance is the fact that conflicts undermine the developmental efforts of CSOs. In times of conflict, the efforts and activities of CSOs are usually destabilized, and the attention of CSOs shift from policy advocacy to humanitarian assistance.

It is also argued that conflicts erode the gains made by CSOs in the areas of policy advocacy, education, health, and good governance. Barnes (2006) highlighted that the current interest in peacebuilding by CSOs stems from the fact that the cost of conflict has increased dramatically for ordinary people. Civilians, such as women and children, have become major targets of violence and civilian deaths.

The District Assemblies

NPC trains MMDCEs in conflict management and reporting to make the local government system more effective. The NPC organised a training workshop for all Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs) throughout the country. In the Eastern Region a two-day capacity-building workshop was organised on November 23, 2021, to train municipal and district chief executives (MDCEs) in the Eastern Region on conflict management and reporting. The programme, which was organised by the National Peace Council in collaboration with the University of Cape Coast and the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Decentralization and the Regional Coordinating Councils, aimed at equipping MMDCEs with conflict resolution techniques to help them manage it in their Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) and foster development. The RES of the Eastern Regional Peace Council averred:

> One of the key institutions that needs training in conflict prevention
> and management is the Metropolitan, Municipal and District
> Assemblies (MMDAs). They are directly in contact with the local
> people, and their understanding of this helps them to be very
> efficient. I suggest that the NPC organise more of these workshops

159

for presiding members and assemblymen and women to equip them
with skills to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts in their locality
(Board member in Accra, 2 April 2022).

The Chairman of the National Peace Council, Rev. Dr. Ernest Adu-Gyamfi, in an interview said that if countries worked to significantly reduce violence and strengthen relevant national institutions, Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, would be achieved. In support of this, he pointed out that the Ghana Shared Growth Development Agenda 2010/2011 and 2014/2015 calls for the resolution of political, chieftaincy, and inter-ethnic conflicts to ensure a decrease in conflicts and, as a result, advance economic and national development.

Given its potential to reduce poverty and the knowledge that "poverty increases societies' vulnerability to conflict while conflict itself generates poverty," the Rev. Dr. Ernest Adu Gyamfi characterised the role of MMDCEs in resolving conflicts as "critical." He therefore cautioned the MMDCEs to be mindful of the statements they make in public to not cause tension or escalate violence in their jurisdiction. A key participant said that MMDCEs going through concepts of conflict and peace and their implications for development was one of the best trainings that will improve the work of the MMD Assemblies. MMDCEs skilled on analysis of conflict (sources, triggers, causes and consequences), tools for conflict prevention, management, resolution and transformation, conflict early warning and response mechanisms will make them very efficient in sustaining the peace in their various communities. Other topics treated included vigilantism and its related offenses; a code of conduct to

160

guide political parties in the eradication of vigilantism; integrating peace in development planning and implementation at the MMDAs; and conflict reporting.

A past board member of the NPC in an interview said averred that those workshops of this nature for MMDCEs would improve their ability to recognise early warning signs of conflicts, integrate conflict sensitivity into developments, as well as improve their capacity to deal with and speak on conflict issues from a position of knowledge, so he was optimistic that it would enable them to develop the appropriate mechanisms needed to respond to potential or ongoing conflicts in their locations.

Chieftaincy Institutions

One of Ghana's oldest traditional institutions is chieftaincy. It has withstood attempts to be controlled and undermined by both colonial and post-independent regimes. The chieftaincy institution is acknowledged as a component of Ghana's government structure under Article 270 of the country's 1992 constitution. The work of the Committee of Eminent Chiefs, which the government established and backed to settle the protracted Dagbon chieftaincy issue, demonstrates the importance of chiefs to the government. However, chieftaincy disputes have consistently been a concern. Most chieftaincy conflicts have occurred in northern Ghana, where they have produced bloody skirmishes that have claimed hundreds of lives. They include the chieftaincy wars among the Dagbon, Bawku, Bimbilla, Bolga, and Bole peoples.

Chiefs oversee community lands and arbitrate conflicts. They are stewards of traditions and rituals and promote growth in their communities. The National Peace Council continues to support chieftaincy institutions to a

significant extent to make them more effective and efficient. Conflicts can happen in almost any institution, including the chieftaincy institution. Effective education on conflict resolution is a helpful practise that teaches valuable skills that improve well-being and productivity, such as how to handle conflict, reconcile emotions, and come to an understanding. Informants were asked to provide reasons why they think the NPC is helping to build a strong chieftaincy institution.

One Regional Executive Secretary of the Peace Council explained that the NPC has helped to resolve several chieftaincy conflicts. According to him, resolving chieftaincy disputes through litigation is not the best. He said:

> There are several chieftaincy conflicts in Ghana, and this has produced negative effects on the institution. Most of these cases are at the court for resolution, and it is very sad to know that some of these cases have been at the court for several years. The court passes judgement in favour of one party, and this leads to the losing party making governance difficult for the winning party. The NPC strategy of using mediation to resolve chieftaincy disputes is the best because it is less time-consuming, and it does not divide the faction after resolution (RES in Wa, 17 March 2022).

The Upper West Regional Peace Council (UWRPC) has addressed three key chieftaincy disputes that were disturbing the peace and security of people living in that area. This was made known by the RES of the UWRPC: He recounted:

(a) The Nadowli chieftaincy dispute, which has been going on for nine years, was resolved by the Peace Council. The Council organised consultation visits to solicit information on the situation from key stakeholders in the conflict. Views and opinions that were gathered from the factions in the conflicts were put together and used to design a mediation process, which has almost resolved the problem.

(b) The second is the Ase and Gusie chieftaincy dispute, which has been an albatross on the natives. The NPC studied the case and decided to refer it to the Regional Security Council (RSC) for support to resolve it. With the assistance of the RSC, the case has been resolved.

(c) The Chere Chieftaincy dispute has also been resolved by the NPC: The Council organised consultation visits to the parties in conflict. Information was gathered that formed the basis of the mediation process. Several peacebuilding workshops were organised to sensitise the factions. The conflict has now been resolved and a new chief has been installed (RES in Wa, 17 March 2022).

A conflict between factions of butchers has persisted, associated with the Dagbon chieftaincy crisis. These conflicts have led to several deadly clashes in the Tamale Metropolis, resulting in the loss of life and property and the burning of houses, vehicles, shops, etc. The NPC, in collaboration with UNDP and the Ministry of Interior, facilitated a series of mediation workshops with both factions to reach a resolution.

Increasingly, the complex nature of these ethnic, land, and chieftaincy disputes coupled with the introduction of external elements such as political interference has made their management and resolution very difficult and

challenging for the NPC. For example, most of the conflicts in northern Ghana, such as the Dagbon and Bawku conflicts, have taken political dimensions, with the two major political parties in Ghana, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC), aligning themselves with certain factions for votes. In view of that, during election periods, any slight provocation by one faction against the other leads to communal violence. A Board Member commented on the role of the NPC in conflict resolution.

Apart from the land, ethnic, and chieftaincy clashes, another disturbing trend is the growing nature of economic-related violence, which comprises settlers, farmers, pastoralists, Fulani headsmen, and illegal Chinese miners against host local communities. The NPC is assisting in resolving these conflicts. The other is the increasing nature of political violence in the form of election-related disputes. In terms of political violence, it is worth noting that all previous presidential and parliamentary elections since 1992 have been marred by violence. For example, the 2008 and 2012 elections were particularly characterised by violence in the form of open confrontations between the political parties, death threats, lynching; mob actions; molestations; intimidation; abductions; murder; and destruction of properties worth millions of Ghana Cedis. The member of the governing Board of NPC said:

> The NPC saved Ghana from open electoral conflict during the 2008 presidential election. More importantly, although these widespread conflicts have not yet exploded into full-blown conflicts, they are constantly threatening the peace and stability of the country. The NPC has a lot of work to do (Board Member in Wa, 17 March 2022).

164

One key respondent, who is a resident of the Northern Region, agreed with this respondent. She said:

> There are several chieftaincy conflicts in the Northern Region of Ghana, including those in Dagbon, Kadereso, Daboya, Bupei, and Nanung. Most of them are not even known to those outside the areas where the conflict is taking place. The NPC is working hard to resolve them. The NPC cannot resolve some of the conflicts because they have become the culture of the people. With some, the NPC has helped the communities to attain a commitment among the parties to peace but not a total resolution of the conflicts (RES in Tamale, 22 March 2022).

Some of the respondents were of the view that the NPC has contributed to preventing, managing, and resolving several chieftaincy and communal conflicts. This role is very important to sustain peace in the country. The RES of Upper West Regional Peace Council said:

> There were a series of conflicts between the youth of Kanvili and Jisonayili communities over a pipeline which runs across Jisonayili to Kanvili. There were several clashes that led to the arrests of several youths from both communities. The case was sent to court, but it could not be resolved after several postponements. It was later sent to NPC, and with the help of the mediation committee of the Council, the case was taken out of court and resolved. The Regional Police Commander collaborated with the NPC to withdraw the case from court for out of court settlement (RES in Wa, 17 March 2022).

165

In response to these conflicts, the NPC has been proactive in addressing the root causes of the issues at stake. In most cases, the first response has been the deployment of police and military forces to maintain a peacekeeping presence while also using force to subdue violence. But this has not led to the resolution of the underlying causes of conflicts rather than just managing tensions. It is the role of the NPC to intervene in these conflicts and find a lasting solution to them. Again, the use of the court system to settle disputes, particularly land disputes, has not helped. Many judicial cases remain unaddressed, and those that have been addressed may resurface soon. Even for the inter-ethnic conflicts such as the chieftaincy disputes in Effutu, Hohoe, Yendi, Bimbilla, and Buipe, which the court has ruled upon, the losing parties have either failed to accept the outcome or decided to intentionally ignore it.

Educational Institutions

Most of the respondents were of the view that peaceful environment affects the quality of education received by citizens. There was serious negative impact of armed conflict on education during the Ivorian armed conflict from 1999 to 2011 (Ouili, 2016). The study confirms that school enrolment and school attainment were greatly reduced during and after the conflict. This was the same as the data gathered during the interview; respondents were of the view that violent conflict has a negative impact on education. An informant from WANNEP talking about one conflict in the Northern part of Ghana said:

> There was an evacuation of teachers and other educational staff
>
> all over the affected areas to safer areas by RESEC. This led the
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> schools in affected areas to experience a shortage of teachers,

166

which affected the academic performances of schoolchildren (WANNEP in Accra, 11 March 2022).

Schools in about 17 communities in the Chereponi District of the North-East Region remained closed a year after communal clashes led to the loss of lives and destruction of properties and educational infrastructure. The situation has had a negative impact on academic activities in the district. In an interview with the RES of Northern Regional Peace Council revealed that in one of the affected communities, most teachers who fled the area during the clashes did not return when peace was restored. He therefore had to appeal to the government to provide new school infrastructure and post teachers to the area. He recounted:

> We have about four communities, including Tegenga, and we have a total of about three hundred children who are attending school in this community. Because of a community conflict in January 2020, all the teachers have left. So, all the schoolchildren did not go to school. This was a big blow to me as an assembly man in the community. What are these children going to do in the future? Their lives were now in danger because there was no teacher or classroom for them to stay in and learn in. So, I had to appeal to the government and the President to give us a classroom block as well as teachers. The only teacher who stayed behind was a NABCO trainee who managed the children (RES in Tamale, 20 March 2022).

According to Kagwiria-Kirimi and Njuguna (2014), thousands of Kenyan students did not start school at the start of the academic year in 2008

167

since the 27 December 2007 poll results plunged some parts of the country into violence. This disrupted the academic calendar of the country's educational system. Again, due to the massive displacement, many civilians were not living in their homes to access education. According to UNICEF Kenya (2008), insecurity and distance from school were the two major factors, which were cited by both teachers and pupils as preventing them from participating in school during and after the electoral violence. The NPC assisting in preventing, managing, and resolving conflicts in conflict prone areas in the country is one way they are improving education in the country.

The Security Services

Over the years, all conflict situations in Ghana have involved the use of military, police, and other security personnel in conflict prevention, management, and resolution efforts. The state usually uses security interventions through the District/Regional Security Committees. Both the military and the police have been involved in the effort to halt hostilities. For instance, a military/police contingent was dispatched to restore peace in Dagbon by the District and Regional Security Councils after the attack on Andani Dasana's palace on July 19, 2014. However, this resulted in the death of the overlord as well as the deaths of several other people. Their obligation was to safeguard people and property but that missions was not accomplished.

A curfew was in place as of the time the data was collected in Bawku in the Upper West Region, and the military and police ensuring compliance. At the palaces of the Dawuni and the regent in Bimbilla, there is a security camp. There are numerous additional security checkpoints spread throughout the districts in the northern part of Ghana and Alavanyo-Nkonya in the Oti Region.

168

Like this, since the beginning of the conflicts between the Garthey and Ayereb-Acquah families in Winneba in 1977, the military and police have been deployed to maintain peace any time there is a large social gathering in the area, especially during the celebration of the Aboakyer festival.

When violence broke out in any part of the country, military and police teams were always deployed simultaneously to take control of the situation. In line with the findings of Kendie et al. (2012) and Yelyang (2016), the government has historically sent security forces, including the police and the Rapid Deployment Force (the army), to several parts of the country to keep the peace when violence has broken out.

The military personnel are renowned for their intolerance of noncompliance. They demonstrate their willingness to respond to violence with violence. They use military equipment and weapons while enforcing curfews to dissuade factions from committing additional violent crimes. At times, to prevent conflicts, the security forces overreact, leading to severe human rights abuses.

According to a key informant, Ibrahim "Kaaka" Mohammed, a young civil society activist and participant in the "Fix the Country" political and social protest movement, was beaten to death by several unknown people. On Tuesday, June 28, 2021, residents of the town of Ejura in the Ashanti region gathered to protest his death. Two people died out of police brutalities before calm returned to the area, because the police and other security personnel violently intervened to put an end to the protest. On Monday, June 13, 2022, some students from the Kumasi Islamic Senior High School gathered on the Abrepo Junction-Barekese Road to demonstrate against the frequent collisions

involving pedestrians, including their classmates and teachers. The irate students gathered in a mass on the road to demonstrate and demand the installation of speed ramps on that stretch of the road. To maintain law and order, some police officers were sent to the school. Officers were captured on camera charging at the students while firing tear gas as they positioned themselves behind shields. Following the altercation, 25 students reportedly sustained injuries and were taken to the hospital. Due to this, several top police officers were detained, including DCOP Kwasi Akomeah-Apraku, the deputy regional police commander.

The NPC realises that when it comes to crowd control and citizens expressing their rage at their government, the Ghana Police style of handling such issues is problematic. To make the security institution effective, the NPC has organised several forums to sensitise and urge the police to adopt a different module that will enable them to employ the proper de-escalation techniques when dealing with an enraged crowd. The NPC imparted to the police that what they require is a Critical Incident Decision-making Module that will walk them step-by-step through the process of de-escalating public wrath toward the government. The citizens have every right to be incensed at their government and a police department that is acting improperly.

***Figure 10*: NPC Sensitizing Security Personnel on Critical Incident Decision-making Module**
Source: National Peace Council

Early Warning Signals to Security Agencies

To assist the security agencies in being more efficient in their operations, NPC provides early warning signals to them to make them act to prevent conflicts. Respondents were asked whether they agree, are uncertain or disagree with the assertion that the National Peace Council provides early warning signals to security agencies to avert conflicts. Most of the responses were in favour of the assertion. Conflict early warning has become an important strategy of any effective infrastructure for peace. Whereas a rich literature exists on how early warning and response should be carried out, very little is known about how early warning happens, especially in field-based systems. Some of the participants were uncertain or disagreed that the NPC provides early warning signs to avert conflicts. Early warning and early response (EW/R) are considered key pillars of operational conflict prevention.

The 17 SDGs and 169 targets are seen as "integrated and indivisible, and they balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic,

social, and environmental" (UN General Assembly 2015, preamble). This agenda provides an overarching framework for action for states and other actors to work together toward conflict prevention and peace. The SDGs contained in the 2030 Agenda offer entry points for implementing the recommendations of this study.

Political Parties

A respondent who is a political party executive in one of the hotspot constituencies affirmed that the NPC organised workshops on tolerance to which his political party was invited, and that this helped them to be proactive in maintaining peace during the election. These engagements were particularly useful, as observed in the interview response below:

> For instance, seven days before the 2016 elections, there was a clash between NDC and NPP youth, and it was bloody. Also, two days before the elections, somebody was shot dead in a nearby community, and it was attributed to electoral violence. The situation was tense. We had to be proactive during the period, and we strategically deployed security and heightened intelligence. The police had to even arrest some miscreants who were hiding in hotels in town waiting to cause trouble. The NPC intervened to bring peace in the constituency. They were mostly concerned with peace education and messages, which contributed significantly to the peaceful election we had here (Board member in Accra, 22 March 2022).

The infiltration of political vigilantes into Ghanaian politics is a seedbed for party mobilisation and electioneering. Political vigilantism has gained

recognition as a feature of political activism. In so doing, the groups threaten, harass, and beat up anyone perceived to be standing in their way, especially political opponents.

In 2019, three major steps were taken to disband political vigilantism— (1) the Justice Emile Short Commission, (2) a mediation role by the NPC, and (3) the passage of the Vigilantism and Related Offences Act, 2019 (Act 999). NPC would argue that law enforcement alone is not the "silver bullet" to eradicate the threats of political vigilantism and electoral violence in Ghana (Governing board member in Accra, 22 March 2022).

Development of a Conflict Map

The NPC in 2014 launched an electronic conflict map of Ghana, aiming to support the Council in peace building in the country. The map is a detailed research document, mapping almost all conflicts in Ghana. It was developed by the University of Cape Coast for the National Peace Council with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The map has offered Ghanaians the unique opportunity to understand the causes of conflicts, the actors involved as well as various peace-building approaches undertaken, which will help stakeholders to fashion solutions before conflicts escalate. The version will be updated on a regular basis and accessible to anyone, anywhere, providing useful planning inputs (Blalock, 1989). In an interview to know how a conflict map could contribute to sustaining peace in the country, a key respondent from KAIPTC said:

> A conflict mapper can use this mapping guide in numerous
> ways. It can be used by individuals and institutions to clarify the
> conflict from their own perspective. A mediator in a conflict

173

could interview the conflict parties with the help of the map and ask the parties questions that could make the mediation work very easy (KAIPTC in Accra, 21 March 2022).

A lecturer in Peace and Conflict Studies, in an interview, threw more light on how a conflict map could contribute to sustaining peace in the country. He said:

It offers Ghanaians the unique opportunity to understand the causes and nature of conflicts, the actors involved, as well as the various peace-building approaches undertaken. The map, which can easily be accessed by anyone anywhere, will help stakeholders to fashion solutions before conflicts escalate and provide guidelines for duty bearers for the purposes of planning (KAIPTC in Accra, 21 March 2022).

The National Peace Infrastructure uses the digital conflict map in a proactive way to anticipate and prevent conflict. The map has been of immense help to many institutions that work to ensure peace and security. The conflict map also serves as a guide for all citizens of Ghana, tourists, and businesses, among others. The map has become a tool for regional ministers, police commanders, and banks to scan thoroughly the environment in which they find themselves or to locate where their services are needed.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed extensively the various way through which the NPC has assisted in institutional development. The Chieftaincy institution, the Ghana Police Service, the Ghana Educational service, Community Based

174

Organizations, Civil Society Organizations were some of the institutions the

NPC has helped to develop.

175

CHAPTER SEVEN
MECHANISMS FOR PROMOTING JUST AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES

Introduction

The second specific objective of the study was to examine the contributions of the National Peace Council towards the promotion of peaceful, just, and inclusive societies in Ghana. In the previous chapter, the study examined the role of the NPC in promoting a peaceful society in Ghana. In this chapter, the study examines the contributions, strategies, and mechanisms employed by the National Peace Council to promote just and inclusive societies in Ghana.

It is widely accepted that effectively ensuring justice and inclusivity, which usually manifest in equal access to resources and opportunities for those who might otherwise be marginalised or excluded, such as people with physical or mental disabilities or members of other minority groups, is a deliberate policy (Quinn, 2016). To achieve just and inclusive societies, the NPC adopts several mechanisms to deal with the underlying causes of conflict in society. The various tools the NPC uses to perform their roles to achieve a just and inclusive society and their outcomes are examined.

Data were gathered from NPC employees, CSOs, and security personnel using an interview guide. Thematic analysis (within-case analysis) and cross-site analysis were both used in the analysis.

Inclusive Societies

According to the UN, an inclusive society is one that transcends disparities of colour, gender, class, generation, and location and ensures

inclusion, equality of opportunity, as well as the capability of all members of the society to choose an agreed-upon set of social institutions (Cook, Heintz, & Kabeer, 2008).

The National Peace Council seeks to use its activities to promote an inclusive society for all, in which each person has rights and responsibilities and an active role to play. This is in line with what was described as an inclusive society during the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995 (United Nations, 1995).

Achieving Just, and Inclusive Society

According to Awinador-Kanyirige (2014), the contributions of institutions such as the NPC in creating unity in diversity cannot be overemphasized. For instance, Awinador-Kanyirige (2014) mentioned that chieftaincy and political conflicts divide society and make the country porous. To achieve inclusivity in any society, effective conflict resolution mechanisms meant to prevent and manage violent conflicts are paramount and this is one of the roles of the NPC. In an interview with one of the Chairmen of the Regional Peace Councils on this subject he said:

> The NPC has been very formidable in creating unity in diversity in Ghana. Creating unity in diversity is something that does not happen by chance. An institution of a group of individuals must work on it. We have done so much in my region to create unity in diversity. We have mediated several conflicts that could have divided the society. You see, litigation used by the court divide individuals and groups, but mediation used by the NPC brings

individuals and groups together (Regional Peace Council Member in Bolgatanga, 25 March 2022).

This assertion by the above participant confirms the views of Pathak (2013), and Awinador-Kanyirige (2014). These authors said that contributions of peace infrastructure, such as the NPC, in creating unity in diversity cannot be overstated. Below are various mechanisms that the NPC adopts to promote peaceful, just, and inclusive societies in Ghana.

Gender Inclusive Programmes

Creating gender-inclusive environments where everyone is welcome is essential for the development of people because gender is so prevalent in daily life. Some NPC programs are intentionally designed to accommodate diversity, accept, and respect everyone's rights and liberties as well as those of others who hold dissimilar viewpoints. In inclusive communities, there are laws, regulations, and organisations that are intended to promote citizens' active engagement in political, economic, social, and cultural life (Dani, & De Haan, 2008).

Societies can gain a variety of advantages by embracing diversity and promoting an inclusive workplace culture, including enhanced innovation, better decision-making, higher employee morale and job satisfaction, and a stronger capacity to attract and retain top talent from gender workshops organised by the NPC. On Thursday 12 December 2019, the NPC organised a training workshop to build capacities of men and women on gender mainstreaming in Kumasi.

The Ashanti Regional RES in an interview commented on the significance of such workshops in achieving inclusivity in Ghana. He said,

employers must make sure that they are fostering an inclusive culture for their workforce to draw in and keep a diverse workforce. Organizational inclusiveness is the core aspect that aids in retaining diversity in the workplace.

He presented two crucial justifications for why inclusion is so challenging. He explained that exclusion occurs in Ghana when one side or both are worried that if they include the enemy into the political process, they would be beaten in elections and possibly side-lined politically and economically, and even punished. In these situations, he said that presenting a "reliable mediator to ensure participation that is inclusive of all conflict parties to the process" would be a good course of action.

The Kurofa Community Conflict

Kurofa is a farming community in the Asante Akim South District of the Ashanti Region, with Juaso as their district capital. The indigenes, who are mainly farmers, produce both food and cash crops such as cocoa, plantains, cassava, oranges, pears, and mangoes, among others. Because the community has large tracts of fertile land for farming, people from neighboring towns as well as outsiders are settling and farming on Kurofa land. Among these settlers are Juansa, Anyowuo, Nyankomase, Hwidiem, etc.

Recently, there have been some issues of threat of conflict in the community between the native Kurofa farmers and the native Juansa who are farming on Kurofa land on the one hand, and the Chief of Kurofa and one Alhaji Haruna Iddrisu Dabre on the other hand. The chief has allegedly leased 500 acres of land to Alhaji for a cocoa plantation and rubber project. There are some native farmers from Kurofa whose cocoa farms and food crops are found on the same area of land that the chief has sold to the alhaji for the project.

179

Eventually, the said Alhaji begun his project, which involves cutting down or destroying existing cocoa farms and other food crops grown by the native farmers on the said lands and replanting new cocoa plants. There are about eleven farmers whose cocoa farms were destroyed. They reported the issue to the Ashanti Regional Peace Council.

Women Representation

Developing research literature such as Kendie et al (2014) affirms the need for gender mainstreaming and women's representation and participation in conflict resolution, post-conflict healing, and peace-building processes. United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNCR) 1325 also claimed that gender mainstreaming lessens the impact of conflict on women and children and engage them in peacebuilding and conflict prevention activities. An analysis from a gender perspective on the Kurofa crisis is equally important on the grounds that it will ensure sustainable peacebuilding in the community.

The conflict affected many women who were farmers, including children whose source of livelihood depended on the land. Their right to education was also at stake because it affected the education of some of the children. This simply means that as the land is taken away from the people without due process or procedure, more than 100 people are going to suffer.

The female spoiler of this conflict is the Alhaji's wife (Hajia Barikisu Musa), who comes from Kurofa and is insisting that the husband's workers cut all the cocoa trees when even the husband was away. She believes she would gain more if her husband were not around.

The situation of social injustice is mostly true for females and children who are unheeded, marginalized, discriminated against, and excluded due to

uneven power relations, unequal access to resources, etc. Other female stakeholders and children were not contacted in the assessment process. It will be of great benefit to factor in the role of women in the mediation to enhance amicable resolution in this mediation process of the Council.

After engaging the Ashanti Regional Peace Council to mediate the dispute, an oral agreement that 400 acres of land should be returned to 20 farmers in the area was reached. The Alhaji was given 100 acres of land, and since then, peace and sustenance have existed in the Korofa until now. There is fair distribution with equal representation in the process of engagement.

According to him, a sustainable system "appears to be able to rebound from external shocks or potential flashpoints for conflict" when all four of these characteristics are met. Yet if none of the pillars are there, the system is "seriously undermined," he claimed.

For violence to break out, certain conditions must first be met, according to one key respondent, Violent groups take up arms when they feel there is something they can obtain through violence, whether it be economic resources, natural resources, or political power, or when they feel that they are righting some perceived wrong, addressing some insult, or addressing some historical grievance caused by some other group, he said.

When "all relevant identification groups in the society believe that they are able to use the resources being supplied by the government or by that society," he claimed, inclusivity decreases greed. Accessibility and fairness are "essential" components of undermining the underlying reasons of conflict, he said. According to the governing board chairman of the National Peace Council (NPC), women's absence from discussions about security and peacebuilding

181

poses a serious threat to achieving peace and prosperity. He noted that given the significant amount of power women have, especially over men, Ghana is characterised by several threats, including political and religious, even if they are hidden. These threats cannot be addressed without the active participation of women.

According to the data from the most recent census, there are nearly 500,000 more women in this country than there are men. It means that if this nation hopes to be successful in implementing policies that will make it more peaceful than it is, we must include our women.

Advocacy

A board member in an interview advised women to use their power for good to alter how the nation handled disputes. Also, he advocated for more women to take part in lobbying efforts to advance Ghana's tolerance and nonviolence culture. We are making progress, he said, and if more women take on the task and support the work of guys already working in the pitch, we will advance beyond where we are now. The RES of Central Regional Peace Council in an interview explained that the NPC implements programmes for the empowerment of girls and for instilling in them the idea that they are also deserving collaborators in establishing world peace.

Most often, women are the first to respond in times of conflict and they often contribute important resources. Unfortunately, this function is not acknowledged, and early warning strategies frequently marginalise women. Women are engaged in community leadership roles and are essential to the social fabric of society. Unfortunately, because they do not occupy political office, their contributions are frequently ignored in this regard.

182

Thus, communal life is impacted, and poverty is brought about when violence disturbs these activities. In times of war, women and girls are more vulnerable than men. They differ from one another not only in terms of biology and physiology, but also in terms of social status and unjust power dynamics. These catastrophes make inequality and discrimination worse. The predicament of women in these communities has worsened due to the lack of protection available to them, the discrimination they face, and the patriarchal social systems in these societies.

Reduced Acts of Intimidation

Respondents were asked whether they agree with the assertion that the National Peace Council reduced acts of intimidation in the country. Most of the responses during the interview indicated that they were uncertain whether reducing acts of intimidation was the work of the National Peace Council. I know that the NPC is mandated to prevent and resolve conflicts in the country. Reducing acts of intimidation is a human rights issue, and I think it should be the work of the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), civil society organisations (CSOs), or the police (NSO in Accra, 30 March 2022).

Acts of intimidation may concern not only human rights defenders and civil society, but the NPC as well. Intimidation is intentional behaviour that would cause a person of ordinary sensibilities to fear injury or harm by the system. Threats and intimidation, intentionally or knowingly, can put a person in fear of suffering a bodily injury or emotional disturbance. Even if the act is not carried out, it affects the peace of the person. To Galtung (1969), positive peace leads to development, and negative peace negatively affects society's

development. Galtung developed a position and argued that negative peace was the absence of war, and that positive peace was the absence of "structural violence," a concept defined in terms of the number of avoidable deaths and intimidations caused simply by the way social, economic, and other structures were organized. A participant said:

> Living in an inclusive society produces similar attitudes, values, and positive cultural traits in citizens, and this ethos is very beneficial to the nation. Cohesion covers a lot of divisions among people living in the country. People belonging to different ethnic groups enjoy the food, dress, music, and language peculiar to one ethnic group. If people put up with this attitude, the nation will gradually own such foods, dress, music, and language, and when it is practised anywhere, others are not shocked (WANNEP in Accra, 24 March 2022).

It must be noted that peacekeeping approaches are aimed at security. They include surveillance, punishment, and monitoring interventions to establish control and limit violence and intimidation in a state. On one hand, peacekeeping is a necessary condition for democracy; intimidation and even the threat of violence limit opportunities for education, constructive dialogue, and social development. However, the punitive ways in which violence is typically handled in a society can impede human rights.

Economic Empowerment of Women

One of the targets of SDG goal 16 is to ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels. A member of the Eastern Regional Peace Council averred that, making investments in women's

economic empowerment will help achieve gender equality, end poverty, and promote inclusive economic growth. Whether working on farms, enterprises, or as employees, women significantly contribute to economies. Nevertheless, women in Ghana continue to be disproportionately impacted by exploitation, prejudice, and poverty.

Women are a small minority of those in high positions and frequently find themselves in low-paying, insecure jobs because of gender discrimination. Access to financial resources like loans and real estate is restricted. It limits people's power to affect societal and economic policies. Most domestic work is done by women, so they frequently have limited free time to pursue employment alternatives.

The NPC seeks to achieve national cohesion through its activities. Inclusivity promotes equity in the sharing of state resources. Those in authority share national resources according to the needs of the people and not through other means such as ethnicity. This means recourses were sent to places where they are needed (Board member in Accra, 15 March 2022).

The programmes implemented by the NPC in collaboration with a range of partners, support women's abilities to obtain respectable employment, amass wealth, and have an impact on institutions and public policies that govern growth and development. Advocacy to evaluate unpaid caregiving by women and to take steps to make it easier for men and women to combine it with paid labour is a crucial area of concentration. A participant said:

> Similar aspirations and desires of both men and women in a country
>
> are needed to promote the growth and development of the nation. A
>
> divided nation will always fall. When there is cohesion, most of the

185

people have similar aspirations and desires, and this is needed in any country that seeks to develop. If a country is divided, even projects and policies that would be beneficial to the people are criticised and rejected. Inclusivity always improves economic performance and the well-being of people in a country (RES in Accra, 2 April 2022).

In all of NPC's programmes for economic empowerment, the institution reaches out to the women who are most in need, frequently by collaborating with grassroots, traditional rulers, and civil society groups. Some rural women, domestic labourers, some migrant groups, and women with low skill levels are some examples of particularly marginalised groups. The goal of NPC includes more security, including safety from violence; better access to and control over resources; and higher wages.

Figure 11: **NPC engaged Women Group during the 2020 International Peace Day**

Source: National Peace Council

Ending Violence Against Women

Peaceful, just, and inclusive societies are essential to attain the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). People everywhere need to be free of fear from all forms of violence One in three women endure physical or sexual abuse, most often at the hands of a close partner. Human rights are violated when women and girls are violently treated, and the immediate and long-term physical, sexual, and mental repercussions for women and girls can be fatal. This defeats SDG goal 16.

Women who experience violence are less able to participate fully in society and experience negative effects on their general well-being. It influences their families, their neighborhood, and the nation. It is extremely expensive, resulting in higher demands on health care, legal fees, and productivity losses.

As part of NPC Women's all-encompassing strategy, there has been collaboration with partners to improve data collection and analysis to provide a clearer picture of the kind, scope, and effects of violence against women and girls. Data collection and analysis also help the NPC determine which approaches to assisting women experiencing violence are effective and which are not.

Just Societies

A just society is defined as one that "strikes a balance between those who favour the rule of the common will and those who favour extreme liberalism. A just society tries to make things more equitable. Because of this, such a society respects and supports the rights and liberties of all individuals (Boylan, 2004).

187

In societies where there is a lack of transparency from the authorities, where mechanisms of accountability and access to justice are not available and widely disseminated, the fundamental prerequisites of a just society, as suggested by Boylan (2004) cannot be accomplished. Additionally, he thinks that in a just society, individuals work to foster greater cooperation and enact laws that discourage unhealthy competition.

To create just and inclusive societies, it is important to advance human rights, equity, participation, and equitable access to opportunities and services. When a society defends its citizens' rights, removes barriers to their effective participation in decisions that impact them, and offers access to basic social services, it satisfies the criterion.

Conclusion

The NPC will need to develop a clear implementation strategy that is well sequenced and prioritised to be a viable force in mitigating threats of violence (Barnett, Kim, O'donnell, & Sitea, 2007). This strategy should include a process for the establishment of regional and district boards; the recruitment of staff of relevant secretariats; an outreach and peace education strategy; and a resource mobilisation strategy.

The focus areas of activities should be broadened to encompass resource management disputes, especially those over land, mining, and forestry. Capacity building beyond peace education in schools should also include human rights, mediation, leadership and governance training for students, student leaders, youth associations, and women's groups.

CHAPTER EIGHT

LINKAGE BETWEEN INFRASTRUCTURES FOR PEACE AND THE ATTAINMENT OF SDG SIXTEEN (16)

Introduction

In the previous chapter, the study examined the contributions of the National Peace Council towards building just and inclusive societies to advance peaceful coexistence and development in Ghana. In this chapter, the study examines the relationship between peacebuilding and sustainable development. Interviews were used to collect data from leaders of selected CSOs, KAIPTC lecturers, the West Africa Network for Peace Building, the National Peace Council (NPC), and the security agencies. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data.

Sustainable Development Goal 16

Sustainable Development Goal 16 aims to promote peaceful, just, and inclusive societies for sustainable development. It is to provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels. Peace, stability, human rights, and effective governance, based on the rule of law, are prerequisites for sustainable development. Sustainable development is the overarching paradigm of the United Nations. The concept of sustainable development was described by the 1987 Bruntland Commission Report as a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability to meet the needs of future generations.

In a question, why do you think the contribution to Ghana's Infrastructure for Peace can contribute to fulfilling SDG 16? A Council member of the Upper West Regional Peace Council answered:

189

I have heard about the SDGs, but I don't know exactly what they contain and how the NPC can contribute to fulfilling them. I personally don't know the goal 16 you are talking about. If it is about peace, then it could mean that the NPC could help Ghana to fulfil it, but I am not aware of that goal (RES in Wa, 12 April 2022).

Sustainable Development Goals: 16 Targets

In-depth interviews with key informants showed that they were aware that there was a sustainable development goal. However, some of them were not able to mention the goals. The few who were aware of the SDGs were able to mention the targets of goal 16, which included:

- significant reduction in all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere.
- End abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence against and torture of children.
- -Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all.
- strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, to build capacity at all levels, in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime.

Dimensions of Sustainable Development

There are four dimensions to sustainable development: society, the environment; culture; and the economy. These dimensions are intertwined, not separated. Sustainability is a paradigm for thinking about the future. It is when the environmental, cultural, societal, and economic considerations are balanced in the pursuit of an improved quality of life.

Violent conflict has a devastating effect on development. Properties like buildings and vehicles that have been acquired at a cost could be destroyed in violent conflicts. In an interview with a key respondent on whether peace contributes to sustainable development, he said:

> There cannot be growth if there is conflict. The impact of peace on growth is clear if you've ever seen the Israel-Palestine conflict documentary. I saw the Israeli soldiers advising locals to evacuate before they demolished them in one of these videos. And to my astonishment, a bomb went off nearby, injuring dozens from neighbouring structures and causing hundreds of people to lose their homes, businesses, and possessions. Panicked people hurried to flee the buildings, but I believe that in most cases they were unable to save their possessions, including valuable papers, jewels, and cash. The Municipal Commercial Centre in Rafah, which housed a mall, a garage, numerous offices, and a hospital, was the target of one attack and was ultimately reduced to a jumbled skeleton of iron girders and concrete. Numerous families who were dependent on the businesses in this building for their livelihoods are now fighting to make ends meet (Regional Council Member in Kumasi, 22 March 2022).

A respondent who was a resident in Liberia during the political conflict recounted how the brutal civil war ravaged the nation, leading to the deaths of close to 250,000 people. Women were raped and mutilated; warlords recruited child soldiers to fuel the conflict; tens of thousands of people were displaced and fled the country. The environment was not left out. He said:

191

I was in Liberia between 1989 and 1992 when the civil war was ongoing. The conflict destroyed everything. Even rivers were not spared, as some bombs fell into them and some became the ultimate place for garbage disposal of various waste materials, which contained a large proportion of metals and human bodies. These materials were mainly dumped into the rivers, making the rivers very unsafe for swimming. People who have a great passion for fishing have lost their passion due to the low catch in the Mesurado and other rivers. It has not yet been determined why there is such a low catch, but it can be speculated that the violent conflict and related activities carried out in the rivers are adversely affecting the species' population (NSO in Accra, 22 March 2022).

Several items are drawn from the literature on the linkage between peace and sustainable development. Below are the responses received from respondents:

Curfew Retards Development

Violent conflict has several immediate consequences. One of the instant outcomes of violent conflict is the imposition of a curfew to reduce the intensity of the conflict. A curfew is an order establishing a specific time after which certain regulations apply, especially that no civilians or other specified group of unauthorised persons may be outside or that places of public assembly must be closed. One of the ways to stop violent conflict is by the imposition of curfews. Article 12 (1) of the 1992 Ghana Constitution guarantees freedom of movement to all Ghanaians. This means that all people have the right to move freely in

Ghana, the right to leave and to enter Ghana, and immunity from expulsion from Ghana. Article 11 of the constitution also provides for freedom of assembly and association. Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of their interests. The movement of people from one place to another facilitates development. However, if violent conflicts arise, a curfew could be imposed, which curtails this important human right. Respondents were asked whether they agreed, were unsure, or disagreed that curfews hinder development. The Regional Executive Secretary of the Northern Regional Peace Council in an interview said:

> During periods of violent conflict, a curfew could be imposed on the community experiencing it by the minister for the interior. When this happens, only employees of organisations working in areas such as health and security are allowed to operate. When this happens, you will then know the importance of peace. You become like an animal; you cannot go out of your room to do anything. Farmers are not allowed to go to their farms and no businesses operate. Know that areas enjoying peace will not be affected by this restriction, and that you are all buying from the same market. How can you compete with them? Peace is a very important commodity that we must all cherish (RES in Tamala, 5 April 2022).

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana says that freedom of movement shall be guaranteed to all, but during curfews, this freedom is limited by the time frame and boundaries. The inability to leave the community because all travel

from the area has been canceled, at least for the time being, due to the curfew is an indication of violation. A good example of this was the imposition of emergency measures following a chieftaincy dispute between two ruling families in the Northern Region of Ghana. This violent conflict led to the killing of the Dagbon King, Ya Na Yakubu Andani II, and 29 other people on March 27, 2002. A curfew was imposed on four districts, including Tolon-Kumbungu, Savelugu-Nanton, Gushegu-Karaga, and Zabzugu-Tatale.

In another development, the Interior Ministry announced on Wednesday, June 5, 2019, that an overnight curfew currently in place for the township of Bole (Northern region) had been extended following inter-communal clashes. The curfew hours were from 18:00 until 06:00 (local time) in Bole and its environs. A total ban on the possession of firearms, ammunition, or other weapons was also in effect. The security measures were increased after a rival chief arrived in the town to pray with imams during Eid al-Fitr. According to media reports, members of another community fired shots to disrupt the prayers, burned two houses and vandalised a vehicle. Additional security personnel were also deployed to the area.

In many instances, retail businesses, such as those that sell groceries, medications, health care supplies, and fuel, can remain open outside of curfew hours. But others, such as restaurants, bars, entertainment avenues, and personal care businesses, will have to close their doors at a specific time. On Sunday, January 9, 2022, Ghana's Interior Ministry renewed the curfew for Yendi, Tamale, and the surrounding areas in the Northern Region. According to government officials, a nightly curfew from 18:00 until 06:00 (local time) is in effect following advice from the Northern Region Security Council. Tensions

remain high between rival factions of the Dagbon community as the funerals end for two chieftains. I think they picked up intelligence that a localised outbreak of violence and civil unrest was possible without the curfew. As a result, there can be no development unless there is peace. From 18:00 to 21:00 is when almost all churches operate here, so you can imagine the effect on them (Regional Council Member in Tamale, 14 March 2022).

The curfew imposed because of violent conflicts retards the development of sporting activities. A respondent who is a footballer recounted how the imposition of a curfew contributed to the poor performance of his football team. He said:

> We must adjust our football league because of the curfew. We were not able to train the number of times we usually do. At each training session, we try to close early and make sure everyone can get home before 6:00 p.m. and the league is for all teams in the country. We couldn't train because of the curfew, but other teams were busy preparing in places where there was peace, so if we meet them in a competition, they'll be ahead of you; you can't beat them (Cl-2, 2021).

Another respondent, who operated a hotel, reported how her business was affected by the curfew. According to her, the hotel recorded low sales because of the curfew imposed during the conflict that erupted in the community: She said:

> A curfew was imposed on the people of this community due to yesterday's conflict. The following day, in the afternoon, there were four calls from my customers cancelling parties booked at

195

my hotel because of the curfew. Some customers who had also asked for reservations called to cancel them. In fact, it was a big problem for me because one of the parties was the next weekend, and preparations were far advanced to host the party. We lost a lot of funds because of the curfew. Typically, most businesses in this area open until 11:00 p.m., but the five-hour window being lost because of the curfew makes a great difference in sales (Regional Council Member in Tamale, 7 April 2022).

Linkages between Agriculture, Food Security, and Conflict

The global market for food is influenced by many factors. Violent conflict has a great impact on farming and agricultural productivity. One factor that promotes food security is peace or conflict prevention. As Pathak (2013) explains, conflict-affected economies are far more prone to food insecurity than those that enjoy peace. Significant empirical literature reveals adverse food insecurity as an outcome of war. The question is, how can peacebuilding promote food security? A key respondent said:

Violent conflict could reduce households' food availability and consumption. For example, the presence of violent conflict may effectively reduce food production in a country. Conflicts can make food production and purchasing more dangerous, raise food prices, and reduce food stocks and disposable income. Many Guinea fowl fly far away when they hear gun shots, and they don't return when the conflict ends. There was an instance where a large maize farm that was almost ready to be harvested

196

was set ablaze by an unknown person during the Chreponi chieftaincy violence (RES in Damongo, 29 March 2022).

Food prices and price shocks in relation to outbreaks of violence have been an area of increased scrutiny in development economics and conflict studies. Andvig (2007) provided evidence that changes in food aid have a statistical relationship with violence and unrest in urban settings in Africa. He found that a price spike predicts an increased likelihood of riots. Again, food price shocks are the drivers of unrest.

This finding was supported across a wider range of types of unrest and food price shocks, indicating the global importance of tracking food prices as a function of unrest and violence (Wilkinson, 2004). Alemika (2011) did a deeper analysis of food price changes and violence from 1990 to 2011. The finding showed that while rising food prices, particularly related to low-value-added primary products, did correspond with violence, food aid remained a relatively weak predictor of violence across models.

Peace Leads to Effective Human Resource Development

Violent conflicts can often lead to the loss of human lives and property. The bombs and guns used during conflicts or war often kill, maim, and disable people. Some innocent children are recruited to become child-soldiers and are placed directly in the firing line, killing most of them. After a violent conflict, landmines and unexploded bombs can remain a threat for years.

People may lose their limbs, sight, or cognitive capacity. In the Malian political conflict in 2012, there was also prevalent looting of financial service providers by armed groups which reduced the capacity to provide credit and

197

mitigate food security in the region (Andvig, 2007). In an interview with a participant from WANEP, he said:

> Any enterprise is managed by the people who make up the institution, plant, or office, and all else that makes up a modern form is unproductive except for human effort and the direction of all the tasks of the management. The sad issue is that during violent conflict, people lose their lives and others are disabled for life. These are the people who engage in productive activities to bring development to our communities. Anytime there is violent conflict, nurses, doctors, teachers, and other important workers leave the vicinity for a place where there is peace, and most of them do not come back after the conflict has ended (WANNEP in Accra, 22 March 2022).

A respondent who had suffered injuries during the chieftaincy conflict in Winneba narrated that:

> On the afternoon of September 5, 1999, I was attacked by a group of people in relation to the chieftaincy dispute. When the assailants got to me, they jumped on me and started hitting me with cutlasses and clubs. They did not give any reason for the attack and would not let me go either. It got to a point when a man who said he was the leader of the assailants got down from the Nissan Pick-up in which he was and hit me harder than the earlier ones. He said he got down to hitting me all because, to him, those of his men were seemingly having no effect on me

and his would affect me. True to his words, as he hit me with the club, I was forced to the ground (Al-2, 2021).

In 2011, Nigeria experienced electoral violence in the north in which an estimated 800 people lost their lives (Alemika, 2011). Many children and adults who are vulnerable die or become seriously ill from the effects of electoral conflict.

Violent Conflicts and Educational Development

The study, Armed Conflicts, Children's Education, and Mortality: New Evidence from Ivory Coast, conducted in 2015, was to explore the impact of armed conflict on three different outcomes during the Ivorian armed conflict from 1999 to 2011 (Ouili, 2017). The study found that school enrolment and school attainment were greatly reduced during and after the conflict. This was the same as the data gathered during the interview; respondents were of the view that violent conflict has a negative impact on education. In an interview with a respondent from CDD, he said:

> For education to thrive well, there is the need for a peaceful environment for the students to learn. Countries require robust educational systems that foster learning, life skills, and social cohesiveness. However, systems struggle to provide education services in difficult circumstances such as armed conflict, natural catastrophes, political crises, health epidemics, and widespread violence. Education can help children and teens prosper in the face of adversity (Board member in Tamale, 22 March 2022).

199

Providing a safe learning environment for children is more than just the NPC's mission. It is an essential requirement. Education plays a significant role in the success of NPC's strategy. There are few areas of development with as much potential to contribute to violence prevention and peacebuilding. As a result, education plays a significant role in establishing the social cohesiveness necessary for stability, as well as the skill foundation required for our client countries to progress in their development and attain economic prosperity.

Refugee Problem

A record of 65.6 million people around the world have involuntarily left their homes. These include nearly 22.5 million refugees who were forced out of their homes due to violent conflicts (Reilly, 2011). The total number of persons of concern (PoC) to UNHCR in Ghana at the end of June 2017 was 18,457. This was made up of 2,048 asylum-seekers and 16,409 refugees from over 25 different countries. Most refugees in Ghana come from Cote d'Ivoire, Togo, Liberia, Sudan, and Central African Republic, and most of them were displaced by electoral and ethnic conflicts (UNHCR, 2017). In an interview with a participant from National Security, he said:

> Violent conflict displaces people. People are forced during violent conflict to move into internally displaced persons (IDP) or refugee camps where they may live for years in extremely difficult circumstances, waiting for normal life to resume, if even that will ever happen (NSO in Accra, 9 March 2022).

The Mali political conflict in 2012 displaced thousands of people within Mali (IDPs) and to bordering countries such as Burkina Faso. The United Nations estimated that due to the political violence, almost 75,000 Malians were

200

internally displaced and 100,000 were refugees as of June 30, 2013 (UNHCR, 2017). This has a negative impact on sustainable development. Both the country losing the human resources and the one receiving them will be negatively affected. A key respondent from KAIPTC said:

> When the Chereponi conflict became intense, the National Disaster Management Organization (NADMO) set up temporary camps to house women and children forced to flee the raging conflict between the Konkombas and Chokosis in the Chereponi District. The figure of displaced persons stands at 2,600. Due to the intensity of the situation at the earlier stage of the conflict, NADMO was not able to reach out to all those displaced by the conflict. They were camped at Bungurugu Yunyoo with over 1600 people, and Gushegu had about 900 displaced people. The outbreak of violence in this community is having a negative impact on our development. Imagine two violent conflicts within three months. Chereponi residents opened the 2020 New Year with the same old violence. The armed struggle is over ownership of land believed to be nothing more than two acres but with ancestral significance (KAIPTC in Accra, 9 March 2022).

The Economic Costs of Conflict

In 2002, Dr. Kwame Addo Kufuor, Minister of Defence and acting Minister of the Interior, told students at the University for Development Studies at Nyankpala, northern Ghana, that attempts to reconcile the people of Dagbon had been very slow. He said the delay in resolving the conflict has led to a huge

201

cost for the country. The crisis broke out in March 2002. It was the result of nearly 40 years of conflict between the Andani and Abudu clans over the position of Dagbon king.

The clashes climaxed on March 27, 2002, when three days of violence at Yendi, the seat of the kingdom, resulted in the murder of the king and about 40 other people. Several houses, including the palace, were burnt. The government declared a state of emergency and imposed a curfew on the Dagbon traditional area while the king's remains were lying at the Yendi hospital mortuary under 24-hour guard at the cost of the government. The minister said the government spent over seven billion cedis (US $9 million) in 2002 to maintain the fragile peace in Dagbon. The money was used to feed security forces deployed to the area and provide logistics for the troops.

The costs of conflict and violence impact on civilians and institutions at a variety of levels but calculating specific numbers for losses and costs due to conflict is challenging (Brück & DeGroot, 2013). The Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) (2017, 2018) produced an estimate of the overall global cost of violence that is often cited in the media. A lecturer at KAIPTC reading from a document during the interview said:
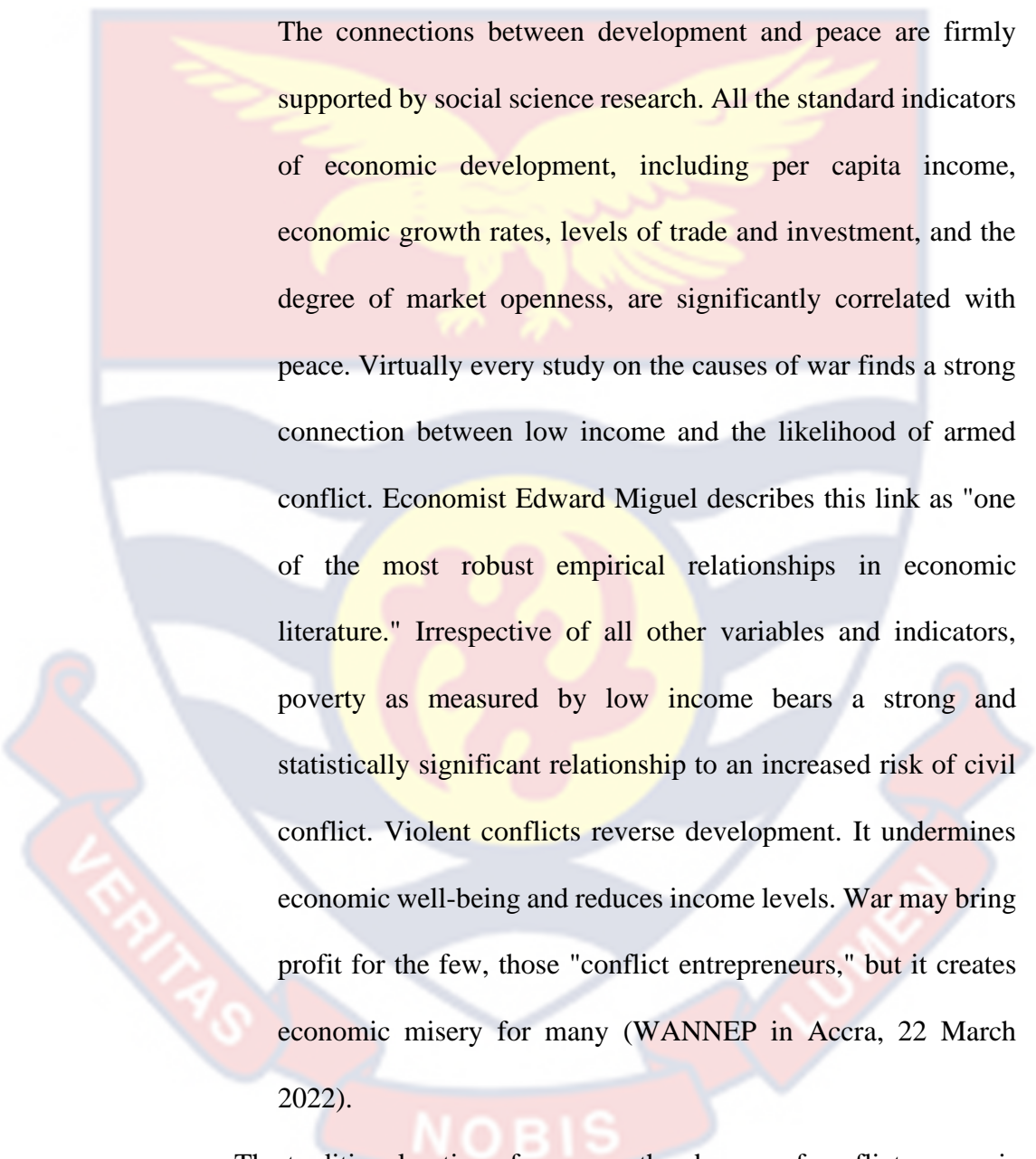
> Violent conflicts always have a devastating effect on development. The IEP uses a relatively direct method of accounting for a variety of economic and social costs associated with violent conflict annually. In 2015, the global cost of violence was US$13.6 trillion (KAIPTC in Accra, 9 March 2022).

Fjelde and Höglund (2016) used a different statistical technique to estimate the accrued costs over time imposed by conflict. Using an integrated economic model, they estimated that between 1960 and 2007, the global economy would be US$10.7 trillion larger without conflict. They also noted that rich countries experience positive economic effects during conflicts, while poor countries are negatively affected. In this way, conflict and violence tend to exacerbate the gap between the developed and developing worlds. Another lecturer stated her opinion on the link between violent conflict and development. According to her:

> A peaceful social environment is vital for development. This is a fact: in any conflict-ridden community, economic activities are disrupted owing to the defective social services and the pervasiveness of social problems such as human rights violations, hunger, crime, poverty, and inequality. To avoid structural, direct, or cultural violence, investors may be forced to close their businesses and relocate to safer areas, even as the people who remain in these conflict-ridden areas face poverty, hunger, and diminished opportunities (KAIPTC in Accra, 9 March 2022).

Conflict research has been dominated by the analysis of a limited number of failed states driven by civil wars, mostly in Africa (Fjelde & Höglund, 2016). This literature has provided vital insight into the destructive role of violent conflict, highlighting the occurrence of violent conflict in countries affected by civil wars and the role of violent conflict in reversing development in countries. Fjelde and Höglund, 2016 has been less useful in

203

identifying the mechanisms that may explain why some conflict-affected countries have historically been able to successfully transition to peace and stability, while others remain trapped in cycles of violence and insecurity. In the interview, another key respondent indicated that:

> The connections between development and peace are firmly supported by social science research. All the standard indicators of economic development, including per capita income, economic growth rates, levels of trade and investment, and the degree of market openness, are significantly correlated with peace. Virtually every study on the causes of war finds a strong connection between low income and the likelihood of armed conflict. Economist Edward Miguel describes this link as "one of the most robust empirical relationships in economic literature." Irrespective of all other variables and indicators, poverty as measured by low income bears a strong and statistically significant relationship to an increased risk of civil conflict. Violent conflicts reverse development. It undermines economic well-being and reduces income levels. War may bring profit for the few, those "conflict entrepreneurs," but it creates economic misery for many (WANNEP in Accra, 22 March 2022).

The traditional notion of peace, as the absence of conflict or war, is not enough to bring about sustainable development. Even if a government ends violent conflict without addressing its underlying factors, conflict may resume,

further disrupting business operations and exacerbating poverty, hunger, and inequality.

Peace Building and Health

It is an established fact that violent conflict is a serious public health problem. Besides direct casualties and injuries perpetrated on victims, violent conflict can upset the public health system and social cohesion. It can affect the human resources of the health sector in ways such as displacing health sector workers, creating unemployment, and poverty (Fjelde & Höglund, 2016). In addition, conflict and displacement have a tremendous impact on the general health of the affected populations. In an interview, a respondent in one community that recently experienced communal conflict said:

> The number of inpatients at the hospital quadruples anytime there are communal conflicts in this area. It puts the facilities we have here under pressure. Some of the patients will have no bed to sleep on because of the surge in the number of patients who will be admitted. Some of our workers leave the town for safer places, reducing our staff strength. Some of the cases that come during conflict periods are very disturbing. Severe injuries from gunshots and machetes We always pray that these conflicts will stop (Past board member in Bolgatanga, 22 March 2022).

Evidence already in existence ties violent conflict to poor mental and sexual and reproductive health, bodily injuries, acute and infectious diseases, starvation, and physical injuries. Conflict that is not constructive or healthy can be detrimental to all parties involved (Lederach, 1997). Conflict that persists and goes unresolved can strain relationships, increase tension at work or at

home, and even make individuals physically ill or in pain. In an interview, a another respondent stated:

> The health sector comes under pressure when there is violent conflict. The contribution of public health in supporting civilian populations during conflicts cannot be overemphasised. I pray for your outfit to work to prevent these conflicts. Please collaborate with political and policy actors involved in early warning and early intervention to prevent violent conflicts in this community (Board member in Accra, 22 March 2022).

Nations' health and wellbeing suffer catastrophically because of violent conflict. According to studies, conflicts are the leading cause of death and disability worldwide. They include persistent poverty, inadequate nutrition, disease, incapacity, social and economic degradation, and psychiatric disorders, to name a few (Pathak, 2013). These factors all hinder and impede sustainable growth.

Ghana's Infrastructure for Peace's Contribution to Development

The United Nations was created in 1945, following the devastation of the Second World War, with one central mission: the maintenance of international peace and security. The UN accomplishes this by working to prevent conflict; helping parties in conflict to make peace; deploying peacekeepers; and creating the conditions to allow peace to hold and flourish. These activities often overlap and reinforce one another, making them effective.

The National Peace Council has made significant contributions to maintaining the peace in Ghana, according to Angela Lusigi, the UNDP's Resident Representative in Ghana. She praised the NPC for its outstanding

efforts to promote social cohesion and peace in Ghana, particularly during the country's elections. To strengthen working ties with the Council, she paid Rev. Dr. Ernest Adu-Gyamfi, Board Chairman of the NPC, and his staff a courtesy visit and praised the Council for its excellent work.

Commenting on the achievements of the NPC, Rev. Dr Adu-Gyamfi said that the Council has been a formidable force in sustaining peace in the country. Speaking on the Council's work plan for the year 2021, aimed at sustaining peace in the country.

Peacebuilding is crucial for the achievement of the SDGs. Over the years, UNDP has been instrumental in the processes leading to the establishment of the NPC through the bi-partisan passage of the NPC Act (Act 818 of 2011). This strong partnership contributed to several successes, including the resolution of the Dagbon Conflict. For elections 2020, UNDP and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and the UN system in Ghana supported the Council's stakeholder engagements towards peaceful and violence-free elections. A Governing Board Member in an interview said:

Sustainable development is threatened by insecurity and violence, encouraging wider engagement in the fields of peace and development in working to build stability and resilience. Faith actors play various roles in peacebuilding, conflict, post-conflict reconstruction, development activities, and social cohesion (Board member in Accra, 22 March 2022).

Paul Collier has consistently presented this argument more persuasively than anyone else. He and his associates have demonstrated that the poorest nations are disproportionately affected by civil conflict. Civil war risk is closely

related to unemployment, poverty, and a general lack of development. They draw the infamous conclusion that "the failure of economic development is the main root cause of conflict." They believe that increasing economic growth rates and per capita income levels is the single most crucial action that can be taken to lessen the likelihood of armed conflict (Collier & Hoeffler, 1998).

Johan Galtung argued that there are two types of peace: negative peace and positive peace. He defined "negative peace" as "the absence of violence, the absence of war," and he classified violence into three types: direct, structural, and cultural. Structural violence refers to the unjust systems that marginalise certain groups (Galtung, 2013). Cultural violence pertains to social norms that justify direct and structural violence. Direct violence, such as war and crime, is an outcome of structural and cultural violence. Galtung described positive peace as the "integration of human society." Positive peace involves preventing or ending direct violence as well as structural and cultural violence. Unjust social structures and social norms are corrected to avert the occurrence of direct violence.

Positive Peace and Sustainable Development

The Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) (2005) identified eight distinct components with favourable economic, political, and social qualities that contribute to positive peace. They can foster both peace and the positive outcomes that are associated with it, such as variety, economic equality, and a better environment, all of which are characteristics associated with sustainable development. All eight of these results will be felt throughout the nation if the infrastructure for peace operates well. In an interview with a respondent from KAIPTC he enumerated the pillars of peace:

The eight factors behind positive peace, also known as the Eight Pillars of Positive Peace, are:

1. Well-functioning government

2. A sound business environment

3. Equitable distribution of resources

4. Acceptance of the rights of others

5. Good relations with the neighbours

6. The free flow of information

7. High levels of human capital

8. Low levels of corruption (KAIPTC in Accra, 9 March 2022).

Achieving Peace and Sustainable Development

Society's Positive Peace acknowledges that ending conflict is not enough and that true peace requires a more holistic approach (UNDP, 2012). The Eight Pillars of Positive Peace strengthen a society from within by creating an enabling environment that nurtures communities and supports enterprise. A society that can support businesses is a society able to provide basic social services and livelihood opportunities, resulting in peace as well as sustainable development. In a society where positive peace prevails, all sectors help bring about the positive economic, political, and social factors that lead to sustainable development. Businesses, for example, can pay their workers competitive wages, use responsibly sourced materials, and not participate in bribery. With decent wages, workers can afford basic needs, allowing them to become more productive. Comenting on this issue, a respondent from the National Security said:

209

When manufacturers use responsibly sourced materials, they contribute to positive change. And when companies do not engage in bribery, they help discourage employees, other businesses, and governments from enabling corruption. These outcomes help ensure greater profitability for enterprises in the future. Promoting peace and sustainable development reduces poverty and prevents conflict, translating to a healthier business environment that allows for a more effective delivery of products (NSO in Accra, 30 March 2022).

In terms of programs, NPC is engaged in peace education at the community level; capacity building of women's groups on conflict and peace; the role of women; facilitating the role of the youth in peacebuilding; women as peace promoters; campaigning for non-violent elections; women lobbying traditional authorities for peace; and sensitization and mediation between various groups in conflict. Concerning this, a respondent from the head office of the NPC in an interview said:

NPC has supported the Women in Peacebuilding Movement to build the capacities of women in communities to develop skills for conflict prevention and peacebuilding practice. Part of the support was also for the movement to implement sensitization and peace education in the districts and communities. The Movement has worked with traditional leaders, youth women's groups, and the District Gender Officers to develop what they termed Women in Peace Coalitions in seven districts in the Northern Region (Head Office Staff in Accra, 9 March 2022).

In addition to its work with Women in Peacebuilding, NPC supports its Regional Peace Councils to work with specific women's groups who are affected by conflicts. In this regard, the Council builds the capacities of the women to enable them to understand the issues and contribute effectively towards maintaining peace in their communities. An example is the women's mediation committee in the Volta Region.

Youth in the country are always used to fomenting troubles because of the energy they possess. They are used by politicians as "vessels of conflict" in communities where they want to implement their agenda. Because they are vulnerable in the communities, their services are easily procured by these conflict entrepreneurs and used to perpetrate violence (CODEO, 2020). Politicians have contracted and mobilised youth to fight on their behalf in various conflicts if they realise their chances of winning an election in a particular constituency are very slim. The reality is that the youth become the victims of these conflicts. A key respondent from WANEP averred:

> It is appropriate, therefore, that the NPC identified youth groups as critical community actors for peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Through their donors, NPC has supported the youth groups by organising workshops on conflict prevention and coexistence. In addition, each of the Regional Peace Council Offices works with identified youth groups to prevent violent conflict (WANNEP in Accra, 9 March 2022).

High levels of armed conflict and insecurity have a destructive impact on a country's development, often resulting in long-standing grievances. While some regions have fallen into seemingly endless cycles of violence and conflict,

others are enjoying a sustained level of peace, security, and prosperity. By no means, the first should be left behind. Another key respondent from the National Security said:

> As part of SDG4, the government should expand its public education programmes to incorporate peace education, early warning, and global citizenship as a method of mitigating or responding to recurring and emergent security concerns. The government should assist the National Peace Council and other relevant authorities in reviewing policies and curricula, advocating for SDG 16+ work, such as Peace Education Programs in schools, and implementing SDG 16+ work (NSO in Accra, 22 March 2022).

Conclusion

Goal 16 aspires to create peaceful and inclusive societies for long-term development, ensure equal access to justice, and establish effective, responsible, and inclusive institutions at all levels. Peace, stability, human rights, and good governance based on the rule of law are essential for achieving children's rights and ensuring long-term development. Governments can provide the first line of defence: birth registration systems grant children access to critical social services, equitable legal systems, and other forms of child protection. The NPC's commitment to achieving this aim focuses on eradicating the many forms of violence that children encounter around the world by assisting governments in developing stronger child protection systems and challenging prevailing conventions related to violence.

CHAPTER NINE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The study's findings are summarised in this chapter. It considers the key conclusions, recommendations based on the findings, and contributions of the infrastructure for peace with a focus on Ghana's National Peace Council in particular. The chapter includes suggestions for other research fields as well as the study's contribution to knowledge.

Summary

The main objective of the study was to assess the contributions of infrastructure for peace with particular focus on the National Peace Council to Ghana's sustainable development goal 16. The specific objectives were to:

1. Examine the adequacy of the mandate, structure, and composition of the National Peace Council in relation to peacebuilding in Ghana.

2. Examine the strategies and mechanisms employed by the National Peace Council for the promotion of just and inclusive societies.

3. Evaluate the contributions of the National Peace Council towards building strong institutions to advance peaceful coexistence and development in Ghana.

4. Discuss the possible ways for linking infrastructures for peace to the attainment of SDG Sixteen (16).

To achieve this, an exploratory research design was employed to assess the contributions of infrastructure for peace in attaining SDG goal 16, with particular focus on the National Peace Council of Ghana. The sample for data collection consisted of 62 participants, including key informants. The key informants for the field research included the National Peace Council Members, key stakeholders in conflict prevention in Ghana and others who were able to

213

contribute to peacebuilding, such as the police, WANEP, CDD, and KAIPTC. The purposive sampling technique was used to select all the participants. The study employed a qualitative approach to achieve its objectives.

The major findings of the study are summarized based on the specific objectives addressed in chapters five, six and seven of the study. The key findings of the study are presented according to the various discussion chapters which align with a particular specific objective. In Chapter Five, the study examined the mandate, structure, and composition of the National Peace Council in relation to conflict prevention and peacebuilding in Ghana. The key findings that emerged are as follows.

1. The study found that the NPC has not been able to satisfy the legislative requirement of establishing District Peace Councils in all the districts of Ghana, as required in Act 818 (2011). The council has the national and regional offices only.

2. Besides, the composition of the NPC is not inclusive enough to fully deliver on its mandate of facilitating and developing mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution, as critical sections of society, such women, youths, and academia are left out in its composition.

3. Women and youths are key in peacebuilding initiatives and actions, but they are underrepresented on the national board and in the regional councils. There is a low representation of women on our Peace Council in Ghana. Currently, women constitute 23% of the Governing Board of the National Peace Council, even though the council is making efforts to increase the representation of women on all its Regional Councils.

214

4. Research, advocacy and dialogues and mediation constitute the main mechanisms used by the NPC to pursue their mandate. For research, the collaboration with the University of Cape Coast leading to the development of the conflict map, training manuals for traditional and religious authorities and research on elections have shaped the work of the NPC. The use of nonviolent methods such as dialogues and mediation in addressing conflict situations have become effective and responsive means for conflict prevention and peacebuilding in Ghana.

The second specific objective for the study was discussed in Chapter Three. The focus of that chapter was to evaluate the contributions of the NPC towards building strong institutions for peaceful coexistence and development in Ghana. The key findings for the chapter are outlines as follows:

1. The NPC has organised several capacity-building workshops and seminars for state and non-state-actors such as CBOs and CSOs in Ghana. These capacity-building programmes were considered as having significantly contributed to the resilience of civil society in the country against violent extremism and other threats to peace.

2. The training of more than 300 Municipal, and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs) over a six-year period between 2016 and 2021 on key topics such as conflict sensitivity and reporting, and conflict prevention, management and resolution by the NPC has strengthened the capacity of MMDCEs and other key actors at the local government level. These training courses improved the capacity of various state actors in dealing with conflict situations.

3. In the pursuance of its mandate, the NPC has built partnerships with both state and none-state actors including the Ghana Police Service, the National

215

Commission for Civic Education, the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, and the National House of Chiefs. The NPC partnered these organisations to deal with communal and national disputes. For example, the Northern Regional NPC partnered with the Dagbon Traditional council to produce a new constitution for the traditional area. Another important output of the NPC partnership is the eradication of political vigilantism during the 2020 general elections in Ghana.

5. Political parties through the partnership and with time have developed trust in the authority of the NPC to work towards peaceful and credible elections. This has been demonstrated in the Peace Pacts that are signed prior general elections to commit to the various political parties contesting in the elections to peace, before during and after general elections. The Peace Pacts have become a regular feature of the country's election cycle since 2012.

The specific objective discussed under Chapter seven was to examine the strategies and mechanisms used by the National Peace Council for the promotion of peaceful, just, and inclusive societies. The following are the key findings under this objective include:

1. The study in reviewing the composition of the NPC membership, finds that the NPC governing board and the regional councils over rely on religious inclusivity to the neglect of other equally important sections of society. Consequently, minority groups such as women and the academia as well as the youth are excluded from the membership which has consequences for engaging such groups in NPC activities.

2. It was found for example that the NPC has addressed deficits in the justice delivery system by addressing chieftaincy disputes, religious conflicts, and

social disturbances. The dialogue organised by the NPC for Christians and Muslim leaders to address the issue of hijab and fasting in mission schools is a testament to this in the study.

3. The NPC through its peace education campaigns had sensitized several of the Ghanaian public on social cohesion and peacebuilding. Peace education addresses the issues of conflict and conflict resolution by teaching the public how to take creative approaches to the conflict and how to find different possibilities for conflict resolution.

The last chapter, Chapter Eight, examined ways for linking infrastructures for peace to the attainment of SDG Sixteen (16). The key findings are:

1. The SDG Goal 16 aims at significantly reducing all forms of violence in societies. Therefore, the NPC through its policies and programs has contributed significantly to reducing violent conflicts in Ghana and in effect contributing to sustainable peace, strong institutions, and enhanced inclusiveness in the Ghanaian society.

2. In addition, it is the finding of the study that availability of food and water is interconnected with Peace in the country. Violent conflict has great impacts on farming and agricultural productivity. The NPC in its programs to promote tolerance and peaceful coexistence is contributing to food security in the country.

3. The NPC, through its activities over the years, has contributed to sustaining the human resource of the country. Violent conflicts can often lead to loss of human lives. The bombs and guns used during the conflicts or war often kill or maim people and disable victims. However, through the contributions of NPC, the

217

country has escaped violence leading to atrocity crimes including genocide, ethnic cleansing among others.

Conclusions

The National Peace Council was established with a mandate to facilitate and develop the mechanisms for conflict prevention, management, and resolution and to build sustainable peace in Ghana. This study has established the fact that the Council through its various interventions is contributing to the promotion of peace and security of Ghana. However, the National Peace Council has a lot more to do in achieving the objectives set out in this research and thereby, contribute more effectively to realize the SDG 16 by 20230. In terms of examining the adequacy of the symbols, mandate, structure, and composition in relation to peacebuilding in Ghana, the National Peace Council can be said to have performed averagely. The symbol of the NPC adequately represents its purpose as indicated in section 2 of the establishing Act 818. The NPC could perform better if its composition is reviewed to include minority groups and other key sections of the society such as academia, women, and youth.

Regarding the objective to examine the strategies employed by the National Peace Council for the promotion of just and inclusive societies. The NPC has contributed above average with the various interventions undertaken since its establishment in 2011. It's hoped that if the NPC creates the District Peace Council across the country and recruit the full complement of staff as indicated in its Scheme of Service, it will be better positioned to do more to ensure peace, justice, and inclusivity in Ghana than what they are currently doing. Governments, development partners, civil society, and communities in

Ghana should show more interest by supporting the NPC to function more effectively. The strategies of the NPC would not be effective and responsive unless it develops relevant standard operation procedures (S.O. Ps) to guide its operations at the national, regional and district levels.

Regarding evaluation of contributions towards building strong institutions to advance peaceful coexistence and development in Ghana, the National Peace Council has contributed fairly to strengthening institutions, including the national and regional houses of chiefs, religious institutions, educational institutions, and civil society groups. The NPC needs to build a partnership with key stakeholders at national, regional, district and community levels to facilitate and develop the required resilience for effective conflict prevention, management and resolution in Ghana.

In terms of the objective to examine the pathways for linking infrastructures for peace to the attainment of SDG Sixteen (16), it's my view that the NPC needs a legislative instrument (L.I) that will detail effective linkages and collaboration in policy conception, development, and implementation at all levels and across ministries. The NPC has six strategic objectives to address the fundamental policy questions that affect its ability to accomplish its mandate. These objectives are addressed through the Council's functions outlined in section 3 of Act 818: to coordinate and harmonise all peace actors and initiatives within Ghana; to promote understanding of peace for behavioural change; to facilitate prevention and management of electoral violence; to prevent tensions from erupting into conflict; to manage conflicts to contain and limit further violent escalation; and to identify root causes and

219

resolve conflict. All these objectives aim at achieving sustainable peace in the country.

Due to a lack of access to justice and the cost of getting justice in the Ghanaian societies, issues go unresolved, and people are unable to seek protection and restitution. Institutions that do not operate in accordance with lawful laws are prone to arbitrariness and abuse of authority and are less capable of providing public services to all citizens. Adequate and reliable funding sources are critical for the realization of the SDGs. Lack of dedicated resources and budget to implement the SDG16, if not addressed can escalate violence, injustice, and exclusion. To achieve SDG 16, stronger and new relationships are necessary. As the study has revealed, governments, the commercial sector, civil society, youth, and international organisations need to collaborate more effectively to address the complex problems of peace, justice, and inclusion.

Recommendations

Though there is no one common acceptable method of dealing with conflict all over the world, based on the study's main findings and conclusions, I am able to make the following recommendations, which in my estimation will contribute enormously to attaining SDG 16.

Government and its Agencies

1. The government must find a coordinating mechanism for the   implementation of the SDGs 16 in the daily lives of Ghanaians. Relevant ministries and agencies of the state must develop plans for attainment in their respective operational areas and to have dedicated budget for implementation of the plans. The proposed coordinating mechanism must be able to monitor and evaluate progress of implementation.

220

2. State institutions should promote inclusiveness and respect for others with varied backgrounds, ethnic origins, faiths, genders, sexual orientations, and opinions by acting as change agents. By working together with CSOs and CBOs, Ghana can make it easier for everyone to live with dignity.

3. The NPC should work hard to remain neutral and apolitical. The National, Regional, and District Peace Councils should carefully select their board members and staff to be free of any suspicion of political influence. This will help to maintain the confidence the people have in them as an independent institution, and it will also assist in supporting the peaceful management and resolution of conflicts.

4. It's my recommendation that until the NPC Act 818 is amended to reflect inclusiveness of the Ghanaian society, the Council in writing to request for nomination of members from institution listed in Act should address the imbalances by indicating the kind of expertise, gender, and the age necessary for inclusiveness on the board and the Councils. Again, in selecting the two representatives of 'identifiable groups 'on the board and the Councils, preference should be given to minority groups such women youth and the disabled to address the imbalances in the current composition.

5. There is a need to work on the weaknesses of the infrastructure for peace by building the capacity of board members and staff of NPC and the security agencies who are responsible for conflict prevention to efficiently deliver on their constitutional mandate. This may be beyond the capacity of the government of Ghana to meet the financial commitments required to build the capacity of these institutions, and the support of international organisations is therefore required. The weakness of the NPC design affects the ability of the

221

institution to develop interventions informed by the people who are directly affected by conflicts. The design should be reconsidered to include women and youth on the board.

6. The NPC must build a strong synergy with partners in peace building to be effective in their work. For instance, the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) mandated by the 1992 Republican Constitution to provide civic education should be strengthened, and the NPC should collaborate with them to disseminate peace education.

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

1. Non-governmental organisations, particularly faith-based organizations, should focus on pre-conflict initiatives to inform and sensitize residents about the importance of peaceful coexistence. The educational programme may include any exercises that enhance attitudes, knowledge, and conflict-resolution skills.

2. CSOs should help in the civic education of the populace. CSOs ought to place a high priority on promoting peace among the next generation. The kids are the community's future leaders, thus formal education would enable them to recognise the society principles of peaceful cooperation and embrace a setting that allowed them to fulfil their material and social aspirations.

Political Parties

1. There must be a strengthening of the Inter-party Advisory Committee (IPAC) and other relevant platforms for consensus building. The Electoral Commission (EC) should promote discussions and consensus-building at IPAC meetings.

2. to ensure effective consensus building Political parties should establish internal party mechanisms to address intra-party complaints. This will provide avenues

222

for healing and strengthening resilience within the political party structures in Ghana.

3. Vigilantism laws must be enforced by leaders of political parties. The purpose of the law is to disband political party vigilante groups and forbid acts of vigilantism in the country, following the continuous violence that has characterised the country's by-elections.

The Contribution of this Research to Knowledge

Every academic work is justified by its capacity to close some known gaps. This work contributed to knowledge by filling several identified gaps. First, research on Ghana's peace architecture has mostly examined the NPC's function in averting conflicts. The effectiveness of the infrastructure for peace and its contribution to Ghana's sustainable development were comprehensively diagnosed in this study and documented. Conflict prevention, management, and resolution strategies, as well as their nature and forms, have been extensively examined. This study has thus added to the contextual issues surrounding NPC, which, depending on how they are handled, may create opportunities for progress in the management process.

The study also advances the field of conflict prevention, management, and resolution in relation to SDG goal 16 by creating a conceptual framework for it. The conceptual framework explains the essential components needed for effective conflict management to achieve a peaceful, just, and inclusive society.

Suggestions for Future Research

The present study covered the contributions of the infrastructure for peace in Building Sustainable peace and development in Ghana. Based on the key findings, the following thematic areas are suggested for future research:

223

1. Infrastructure for Peace and Peaceful Elections in Ghana

2. The Role of Infrastructure for Peace in Promoting Peace and Social Cohesion

in Diverse Communities

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225

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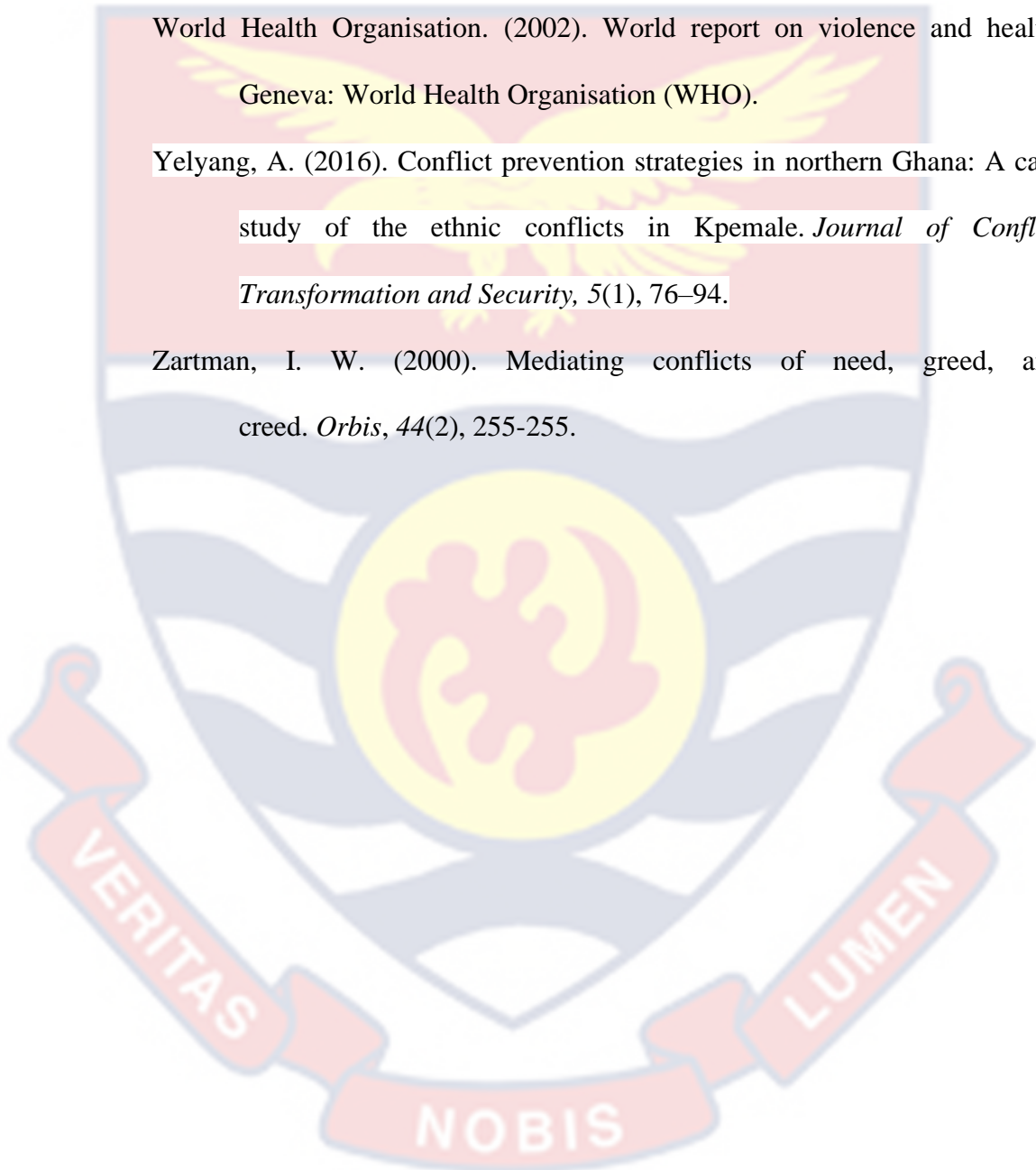
APPENDIX

INTERVIEW GUIDE

QUESTIONS

Introduction

1. Understanding of the term Infrastructure for Peace (I4P)

2. Description of Ghana's Peace Council (NPC)

3. Probe for ranking from a good model of an I4P to bad.

4. Seek for justification.

Research Question 1

1. Assessment of NPCs mandate to "facilitate and develop the mechanisms for conflict prevention, management resolution and to build sustainable peace in the country".

   2.1 Rate from a low rating of one (1) to a high of ten (10) delivery of NPC's mandate "

2. What is the structure and composition of the national peace council?

3. How adequate is the mandate, structure, and composition of the National Peace Council in relation to peacebuilding in Ghana?

4. Views on the meaning of key symbols used by the NPC.

5. The key challenges that confront the NPC to "harmonize and co-ordinate conflict prevention, management, resolution and build sustainable peace through networking and co-ordination".

Research Question 2

1. What is a just and inclusive society?

2. What are the strategies and mechanisms employed by the National Peace Council for the promotion of just and inclusive societies?

3. How viability is Ghana's current Infrastructure for Peace in mitigating threats of violence to peace and development in the country.

   3.1 Probe for reasons.

4. Awareness of NPC's Potential contribution to preventing conflicts from escalation as part of its mandate to "increased awareness on the use of non-violent strategies to prevent, manage and resolve conflict and build sustainable peace in the country".

   4.1 Seek for examples if available.

5. To what extent has the NPC performed in the role "promote understanding of the values of diversity, trust, tolerance, confidence building, negotiation, mediation, dialogue and reconciliation among the peoples of Ghana?

Research Question 3

1. Does the NPC contribute to building strong institutions in Ghana?

   1.1 Probe for reasons.

2. Name some of the institutions NPC contribute in building and improving its efficiency

   2.1 Probe for examples based on types.

3. What are the contributions of the National Peace Council towards building strong institutions to advance peaceful coexistence and development in Ghana?

4. How would you assess the performance of the NPC in building strong institutions; a low rating of one (1) to a high rating of ten (10)?

5. 6. Assessment of NPCs function to strengthen capacities of other institutions for conflict prevention, management, resolution and building sustainable peace in the country including but not limited to CSOs, Schools, chiefs, women groups., youth groups and community organization".

Research Question 4

1. Contribution of Ghana's Infrastructure for Peace is to the UN Sustainable Development Goal Sixteen (SDG 16)?

2. What are the possible ways for linking infrastructures for peace to the attainment of SDG Sixteen (16)?

3. Why do you think the contribution to Ghana's Infrastructure for Peace can contribute to fulfilling SDG 16?

4. Contributions of the National Peace Council within the larger peace and security framework of Ghana.

5. What is the extent of NPC contributed to National Development in Ghana?