

Chapter 15

Building the Capacity of Civil Society Organisations in Nonviolent Campaigning: A Case Study from South Sudan



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Abstract Civil society organisations (CSOs) have increasingly become vital forces in discourses, initiatives, and programmes that foster peace, democratic reforms, and service delivery across the world. Despite their important role, the civil society sector in Sub-Saharan Africa continues to face capacity deficits in its efforts to efficiently prevent violence, manage conflicts, and build peace in the region. In South Sudan, most CSOs have limited knowledge of nonviolent campaigning; its principles, methods, and strategies; and the specific skills needed to use them. This chapter focuses on building the capacity of CSOs in nonviolent campaigning with reference to a PhD action research case study from South Sudan. Drawing on data gathered through focus group discussions, interviews, questionnaires, and structured observations, this chapter highlights how primary data from a targeted action research team can help design training contents and methods. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the most significant short-term outcomes realised by 24 action research participants in their efforts to build peace through nonviolent campaigns and how the author envisages the experience can be replicated in other contexts of Sub-Saharan Africa and beyond.

Keywords Civil society · Nonviolent campaign · Peacebuilding · Qualitative research · Action research

15.1 Introduction

South Sudan's history of resistance dates from the early sixteenth-century Islamic sultanates (1504–1821) and the nineteenth-century Turko-Egyptian occupation of Sudan (1821–1885), the Mahdist State (1885–1898), and the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium colonial rule (1898–1956) to the independence of Sudan in 1956 (Sudan People's Liberation Movement 2016). The Islamic rule of Mahdiyya worsened conditions, as it raided and forcefully conquered some parts of South Sudan (Johnson 2016,

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p. 2). In August 1955, merely a few months before Sudan would gain its independence, a civil war erupted in Torit, which lasted for 17 years (Nyaba 2000, p. 14–21). In 1972, the Addis Ababa Peace Agreement was signed between the Anyanya One Movement and the Khartoum government. Ten years later, the agreement was dishonoured, yet another example of an agreement being dishonoured by the Khartoum regime (Alier 1990, p. 2). The violation of the agreement, coupled with continued economic, social, and political marginalisation, led to the second civil war in May 1983.

On 9 January 2005, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed between the National Congress Party (NCP)-led government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) and, among other agreements, gave the people of Southern Sudan the right to self-determination (Nyaba 2013, p. 10). The country attained its independence from Sudan on 9 July 2011, following a referendum held in January of the same year (Mulla 2018, p. 6). South Sudan became a sovereign state after more than 50 years of struggling for emancipation and freedom from social, economic, and political domination by Sudan. The political history of many countries is often associated with an armed struggle for freedom and independence. Freedom narratives typically support the common belief that violence is indispensable for obtaining freedom from foreign subjugation, and such a belief ignores the power of civilian-led nonviolent resistance and the historical role that it has played in many national quests for liberation (Bartkowski 2013, p. 1).

Unfortunately, in December 2013, tensions within the ruling Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) party led to the outbreak of armed conflict between the SPLM and the opposition movement, which became known as the SPLM-In Opposition (SPLM-IO). The conflict continued in July 2016 due to clashes in the presidential palace in Juba between the government and the opposition SPLM-IO forces, which led to the collapse of the peace deal signed in August 2015. The violent conflict has created one of the worst humanitarian crises in modern times. In September 2018, a Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (RARCSS) was signed in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. However, the implementation of the agreement is faced with some challenges, including a lack of funding, the limited political will to implement the agreement, and regular clashes with the holdout armed opposition groups.

People suffering from social, economic, and political emancipation can use a variety of means ranging from violent to nonviolent means or a combination of the two. Thus, a campaign can be violent or nonviolent depending on the means being used. A nonviolent campaign does not involve physical violence against human beings, their properties, and the environment. Individuals or groups take actions in pursuit of social, economic, and political objectives without violence. A nonviolent campaign, as the name implies, refers to a series of organised and observable tactics that are repetitively directed to prevent, transform, or address a specific injustice to achieve the desired goal. A campaign is not an event but a series of actions employed to put pressure on the opponent to achieve specific results (Mandikwaza 2016, p. 24). Civil society often constitutes a large part of pressure groups not only in Sub-Saharan Africa but also across the globe. There is much contention in scholarly

circles regarding the meaning and definition of the term *civil society*. I define it as organic, diverse formal and informal groups or associations of people pursuing common, interrelated, or complex interests to improve their societal welfare. Thus, civil society organisations encompass more than merely formally registered non-governmental organisations. They include civic, faith-based, and community-based associations as well as professional unions and networks.

While stories of violence dominate the public discourse in South Sudan, student unions, faith-based groups, and traditional authorities have long had an active role in resisting colonialism, preventing conflicts from becoming violent, and building peace. For example, in the 1920s, throughout the southern region of Sudan, chiefs refused to cooperate with and pay taxes to the colonial administration, facilitate the free movement of their expedition forces, and assist the administrators in settling (Kacuoil 2008, p. 21). An anecdote from the 1980s revealed that the South Sudanese rural women of Kachipo and Murle succeeded in stopping the communal fighting by refusing to have sex with their husbands until the men of the two rival tribes had made peace. At an individual level, a female peace activist refused to milk the cow that her husband had stolen (Japan International Cooperation Agency 2017, p. 8). Furthermore, ecumenical church clerics from the south travelled internationally to spur boycotts of oil companies doing business with the Khartoum regime. They campaigned against oil companies because of their roles in fuelling war in Sudan (Ashworth et al. 2014, p. 178). Churches and the New Sudan indigenous non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the early 1990s facilitated the Wunlit people-to-people peace dialogue, which reconciled the Dinka and Nuer communities as well as the SPLM/A leaders (Ashworth et al. 2014, p. 158). In January 2014, the women of the South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC) organised a prayer to denounce the war, which had broken out in late 2013. Monthly peace and anti-war marches of the civil society have increased pressure on the government and opposition groups to accommodate the will of the people (John et al. 2018, p. 9). Mass participation increases the effectiveness and longevity of nonviolent political struggles, particularly when women are involved (Principe 2016, p. 4). The New Tribe, a nonviolence social movement, which incorporates all 64 tribes of South Sudan, has released several press statements, petitioned the office of the president regarding prisoners who are being held unlawfully, and held peaceful demonstrations and online campaigns to end war and early and forced marriages (New Tribe 2019, p. 4).

Despite the relative importance of South Sudan's civil society sector in peacebuilding, democratisation, and service delivery, civil society organisations (CSOs) have struggled to make significant improvements to the socioeconomic and political conditions in the country. This is because they have been faced with significant internal and external capacity challenges. Internally, most CSOs working on peacebuilding lack capacity or are not even aware of the potentials of nonviolent techniques in peacebuilding. General knowledge of the principles, methods, and strategies of nonviolent action and its relationship to peacebuilding is limited among the South Sudanese. Recent examples of nonviolent action campaigns launched by CSOs have lacked strategic focus (John et al. 2018, p. 2). In addition, there is the challenge of poor documentation and coordination of activities between CSOs, particularly

regarding those activities relating to campaigning to reduce people's vulnerability to different forms of violence and building peace. The gaps in the documentation of CSO's achievements and challenges in implementing nonviolent campaigns in the country are yet another challenge. Externally, CSOs face deliberate harassment, intimidation, and sometimes the detention of activists by state security apparatus. Thus, CSOs in South Sudan operate within a fragile, risky, and limited civic space in discharging their legitimate roles and responsibilities in society.

The main aim of this chapter is to discuss how my PhD action research project, with a focus on building the capacity of CSOs through training in nonviolent campaigning, was able to contribute to transforming the socioeconomic and political conditions in South Sudan. Training, whether for CSOs, diplomats, conflict parties, the military, the police and security forces, or other stakeholders in the field, is a key need in peacebuilding and development contexts. This is because many practitioners still lack some of the core competencies for engaging effectively in peacebuilding (Hallward/Hoger 2019, p. 237). As emphasised by Wilson (2014, p. 23), local actors should be empowered through training to take a lead role in local peacebuilding processes and their sustainability. Peacebuilding is any activity that aims to tackle different forms of violence, injustice, and unbalanced power relationships that prevent people from enjoying their rights and livelihoods and achieving their potential. Meaningful peacebuilding empowers individuals, groups, and their constituencies with the knowledge and skills to undertake nonviolent actions to balance power relationships and reinforce dialogue and meaningful negotiation to realise mutually acceptable solutions that satisfy the interests of the parties in a conflict.

This chapter contributes to the relevant body of knowledge by unveiling the experiences of members of the CSOs who applied the theories of nonviolence in peacebuilding, as reported in the project's short-term outcomes.

The specific objectives of the study were:

- To assess the effectiveness and capacity of the South Sudanese CSOs in the development and implementation of nonviolent campaigns between 2011 and 2017
- To explore examples of nonviolent campaigns that CSOs have implemented in selected countries in their efforts to transform socioeconomic and political conflicts
- To design, implement, and evaluate the outcomes of a nonviolent action training programme with a sample of 25 NGO workers, university students, members of faith-based groups, and other members of civil society

Research on nonviolence has never dominated the academic field of peace research, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Sudan. People's armed conflicts have been studied in depth, but very little attention has been paid to the contributions of unarmed resisters. Evidently, many library shelves are filled with books on wars in people's history, but almost no documentation on the nonviolent resistance of the ordinary people in South Sudan exists. Even in modern forms of media, a story is not worth reporting if it does not involve violence. The results are

meagre coverage and documentation and the nonviolence potential being sidelined (Johansen 2009, p. 69).

To my knowledge, no previous research has been carried out on building the capacity of CSOs to develop and implement nonviolent campaigns in South Sudan. My study fills this gap and contributes to the body of knowledge in this under-researched area by documenting the short-term outcomes of a nonviolent action training programme with members of the country's civil society.

15.2 Methodology

I employed an action research approach and gathered qualitative data using focus group discussions, interviews, questionnaires, and structured observations. A cardinal prerequisite of successful research lies in the careful selection of the research methodology to achieve the study's aim and objectives, given the available time and financial resources. I preferred a qualitative design because I was interested in assessing the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour of the action research participants towards nonviolence and nonviolent campaigning. Qualitative research is any data-gathering technique that generates narrative data rather than numerical data (Monsen 1992, p. 73). As the name implies, quantitative research deals with elements that can be counted, and it often uses the statistical manipulation of numbers to process data and summarise results (Locke et al. 1998, p. 123). Quantitative research is weak in understanding complex social interactions or settings in which people interact, and the voices of the participants are not directly heard or captured. Qualitative research compensates for this weakness (Creswell 2009, p. 9). Mixed methods research to utilises both qualitative and quantitative data within the same study. Creswell/Clark (2007, p. 5) noted that purposeful data integration enables researchers to seek a more panoramic view of their research landscape, viewing the social phenomena under investigation from different viewpoints and through diverse research lenses (Allison/Joanna 2017, p. 74). A mixed methods design is appropriate for fulfilling research objectives that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods could achieve alone (Ivankova et al. 2006, p. 18). Despite the benefits of using mixed methods in scientific inquiries, no research method is without its weaknesses. For instance, Wisdom/Creswell (2013) argued that the process of mixing methods within one study can add to the complexity of conducting research. It often requires more resources in terms of time, personnel, and technical skills in sample selection, data collection, data analysis, and data integration. Taking into consideration the challenges of a mixed methods study, I chose a qualitative design to gather and analyse data.

In the study, I followed an action research design, which encompasses four components: exploration, devising and implementing an intervention, and evaluating its outcomes. Action research is one of the few research approaches that embraces the principles of the participation, reflection, empowerment, and emancipation of people and groups interested in improving their social situation or condition (Berg 2004, p. 195). It aims to not only identify social problems but engage society in proactively

contributing to resolving the prevailing problems. The primary reason for engaging in action research was to connect the theories of nonviolence in peacebuilding to the practices and test them. The approach helped me to shift away from the traditional methods of scientific inquiry that produce theoretical solutions and focus on those methods that are more practical and effective for building peace in the community. As Kaye and Harris have argued:

Research has to produce more than just a book. Without people's participation in developing a solution, the solution is more likely to fail as whatever is proposed has to be done with, not to, the people involved. People are capable of understanding and participating in change. Action research is intended to focus this understanding and then to expand it with the aim of change and improvement (Kaye/Harris 2017, p. 11).

The concept of action research can be traced to the works by John Collier (1890–1947) in the 1930s. However, the more systematic and methodological work on action research is linked to Kurt Lewin, who first used the term *action research* in 1944 and later published a paper entitled *Action Research and minority* in 1946. Lewin believed that it was possible to conduct an experiment in a real-life situation with the aim of achieving a specific goal that had a bearing on problem solving and social change (Bloor/Wood 2006, p. 10). The action research approach has “a cyclical inquiry process”, which incorporates diagnosing a problem, planning action steps, implementing, and evaluating outcomes (Babbie/Mouton, 2001, p. 53). It allows for the collection of in-depth data from the small action team and the evaluation of both human actions and their perspectives (Babbie/Mouton 2002, p. 270). Data collection represents the key point of any scientific inquiry (Bryman 2016, p. 5). Figure 15.1 depicts an overview of the action research plan that I designed and followed.

I used a purposive sampling technique to select 24 action research participants from 32 respondents who participated in the focus group discussions (FGDs). They represented NGO workers, university students, faith-based groups, and other members of the CSOs working in peacebuilding. To identify and contrast the gaps in the South Sudanese peace movement, it was imperative to explore the literature to gain insights into how non-state actors in other parts of the world have employed the tactics and strategies of nonviolence to tackle their socioeconomic and political conditions. Hence, I explored literature from selected countries, which addressed the first and second objectives of the study. The insights obtained were used to develop a nonviolent action training curriculum and implement the subsequent training of 24 participants.

15.2.1 The Plan, Action Training Contents, and Methods

When preparing for any training, it is often crucial for the trainer or researcher to plan in advance to ensure that the training goal and objectives are achieved. In the case of this study, the preparations included socioeconomic, cultural, legal, and political context analyses to better understand the research context. This was particularly

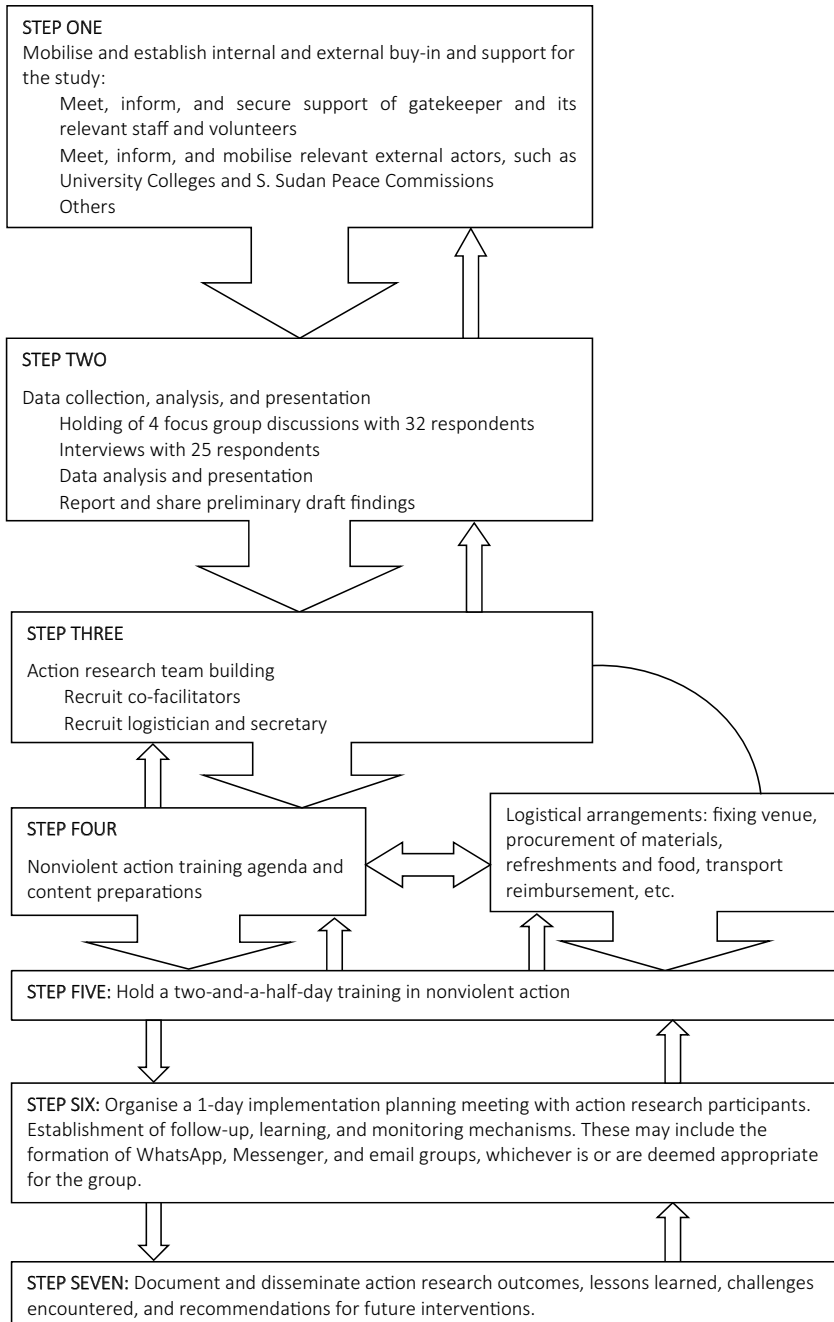


Fig. 15.1 An overview of the action research plan. *Source* Author's design 2019

important because nonviolent action training can be more effective when it is adapted to the sociocultural and political context and needs of the people in a given society. Connecting the training with the felt needs of the people will undoubtedly make it more relevant and sustainable.

I drafted a plan to guide me when to gather data, when to recruit co-trainers, support staff and participants and when to develop the training agenda and curriculum. Table 15.1 presents this plan.

A plan is one matter but its implementation can be another experience. Although I had planned to gather the data within 1 month, but it took four 4 months. This is because the timing for data collection is dependent on the availability of the respondents rather than the researcher. In addition, establishing the initial contacts and buy-in of relevant stakeholders is more vital than rushing to collect data as their support is needed. In my experience, FGDs require much time to group participants according to the constituencies that they represent and the preferred language. While the original plan was to target approximately six to eight individuals for a one-hour conversation, in practice, one FGD was attended by nine participants for obvious reasons. However, the participants did not have much time to emphasise what they wanted to discuss. Thus, the lesson that I learned was that the fewer the number of participants in the FGDs, the more time they would have to share their experiences. Accordingly, I reduced the number of participants in the subsequent three FGDs to five to six participants; this allowed more time for discussions, and I still reached the target of 32 respondents in the FGDs.

The number of training days was also adjusted from 2 to 2.5 days, which allowed the participants to cover the planned content. The adjustment was carried out in consultation between the co-facilitators, the research support team, and the participants. The extension enabled covering the planned agenda and responding to the participants' queries. WhatsApp and Messenger groups were created to share information and support the implementation of the participants' plan. This engagement proved to be useful in reminding the participants of their commitments and reporting the short-term outcomes.

All but two of the 26 participants who attended the FGDs and interviews went on to become action research participants. More than half of the participants were women. The selection of trainers was carried out after a careful analysis of a variety of factors, such as the power dynamics and balance between the male and female trainers. The identification of one experienced female nonviolent action co-facilitator to work side-by-side with the two male counterparts was crucial in the male-dominated society of South Sudan. It was meant to inspire gender mainstreaming and encourage women's participation in the peace movement.

To follow the ethical requirements of the Durban University of Technology and clarify and manage the participants' expectations, I requested each participant to sign a consent letter acknowledging that they were aware that no participant would be paid for participation or requested to pay co-researchers. The study topic and the training aim and objectives were also communicated in advance, as were the training days. I administered pretraining questionnaires before the actual training to assess the extent to which the participants understood violence, conflict, nonviolence, and

Table 15.1 Tentative overview of the data collection and training plan. *Source* Author

Activity	Why?	When?	How long?	Response achieved
Preliminary meetings with the key stakeholders	To inform the stakeholders, learn from them, secure their buy-in, and ensure the needed support for the success of the study.	The meetings were planned for 2 weeks (20 February to 5 March 2018). This lasted until 9 March 2018	14 days	Space, internet, access to libraries, and volunteers were secured at no cost. The support was received from the gatekeeper, the University of Juba, and other partners
Pretesting of research data collection tools	To validate the soundness, relevance, and correctness of the instruments.	6–11 March 2018. This lasted until 21 March 2018	5 days	The tools were revised to ensure the simplicity and clarity of the questions. The same tools were translated into simple Juba Arabic
Data collection and analysis	To obtain information about the research topic from the respondents' point of view	22 March to 21 April 2018. This lasted until 1 June 2018	30 days	Participants' understanding and perceptions of conflict, violence, and nonviolent campaigns and their effectiveness, with reference to the work of CSOs, were assessed and the capacity gaps were identified
Recruitment of co-facilitators and support staff	To recruit two experienced nonviolence trainers, two support staff for logistics and secretariat to co-plan the training	26 March– 2 April 2018. The recruitment occurred in April 2018	7 days	Two nonviolence trainers and support staff were recruited and engaged in the planning of the action project
Nonviolence training curriculum development	To ensure training content, methodology, and learning objectives are planned in advance	22 March– 5 April 2018. Agenda and training curriculum development were completed on 2 June 2018	14 days	The research team of three co-facilitators reviewed and adapted the training agenda and curriculum

(continued)

Table 15.1 (continued)

Activity	Why?	When?	How long?	Response achieved
Invitation of action research participants	To officially invite the participants for the training	26 March–2 April 2018. This did not occur until 3–12 June 2018	7 days	26 participants who attended the FGDs were invited, and only 24 attended the training
Sharing of training agenda with the researcher's supervisor and other trainers for comments	To seek feedback, clarify, and ensure that the methods to be used are relevant to impart the skills and knowledge in non-violent campaigning	5–7 April 2018. However, this took more than 2 months	2 days	Feedback was received from the researcher's direct supervisor, two co-facilitators, USIP nonviolent action trainer, and ONAD experienced trainers. Feedback was incorporated in the training agenda
Purchase and mobilisation of stationery, prepare the training venue, etc.	To ensure training materials and venue are ready and appropriate in time	8–10 April 2018. This was practically handled in July 2018	3 days	Stationery was secured, materials photocopied, and the training venue prepared in advance
Hold a 2-day nonviolent action training	To introduce the concept, principles, methods, and strategies of non-violent action and how they work in practice	12–13 April 2018. The training was convened between 26 and 27 July and on part of 31 July 2018	2 days	24 participants attended the training. Participants were assured that they could leave the training at any time they wished
Hold a 1-day implementation planning meeting	To develop participants' implementation plans	14 April 2018. The 1-day activity was held on 31 July 2018 for half a day	1 day	A total of 21 participants developed their plans. Three participants did not make it for health reasons
Regular follow-up and hold a 1-day evaluation meeting	To gather data for monitoring and evaluation and reporting purposes	15 May 2018– 15 January 2019. This took place on 12 June 2019	9 months	Short-term research outcomes were reported and documented to fulfil the third study objective

nonviolent actions. Five questionnaires were translated from English into Arabic for the Arabic speakers.

The data collected from the 24 completed questionnaires indicated that:

- All respondents were aware of conflict and violence. Close to half of the respondents argued that violent means could be more effective in South Sudan than nonviolent tactics, given the military background of the ruling elites and their harsh responses to peaceful protests.
- Almost all the respondents defined nonviolence as the absence of violence and the peaceful way of handling conflicts without harm. Most respondents said that they had a limited understanding and practice of nonviolent methods and strategies to shift power. Five participants acknowledged that they did not know about nonviolent action and its methods and strategies.
- All the respondents expressed having limited experience in planning, organising, coordinating, and implementing nonviolent campaigns.
- Three-quarters of the participants doubted the effectiveness and potentials of nonviolent campaigns to address socioeconomic and political conflicts, citing repressive responses and a lack of democracy. One participant commented that “Nonviolent action can best work in a democratic and less repressive context than in a very violent and repressive context of South Sudan”.
- Almost all the participants were of the view that power lies with leaders who have political, military, and financial resources rather than with the citizens. Most respondents viewed power as the privilege of leaders. However, two respondents had different views: one respondent argued that both leaders and citizens have power, and that power means the ability to voluntarily influence decisions without coercion, while the other respondent emphasised that power lies in education for liberation and critical self-awareness and empowerment.¹

In order to meet the third objective of the study, a two-and-a-half-day training session in nonviolent action for 24 action research participants was planned and implemented in Juba. The training was designed based on preliminary findings of the capacity gaps or weaknesses identified in the South Sudanese CSOs in their experience in planning and launching nonviolent campaigns, as reported in this chapter. Historical records underscored the importance of training in equipping and preparing the participants to carry out nonviolent campaigns and contribute to building peace. For example, the success of the civil rights movement in the United States was greatly attributed to training in the theories and practice of nonviolent action (Bloch 2016: 3). Sporting teams practice their skills before facing the competing team; the same is true with regard to undertaking nonviolent campaigns. Training is an integral part of human development and capacity building, which aims to ensure that individuals’ knowledge base, skills, and abilities are strengthened.

The necessity of training was echoed by more than three-quarters of those reached through the FGDs and interviews as a need to bridge the capacity gap within civil

¹ Agnes Batuel and Wilson Saturlino, on 26 July 2018, during the pre-nonviolent action training assessment.

society to develop and implement nonviolent campaigns. Some respondents argued that the understanding of the concept and popular practice of nonviolent methods and strategies are still limited in South Sudan. This insight was expressed by almost all prominent nonviolent activists. One activist noted:

Training in nonviolent action is critical to build movement's internal human resource capacity to train others who reach out to the grassroots population, inspire frontline nonviolent and human rights activists to connect their local peace activism to national peace movement and consolidate people's power.²

Training is important in educating participants on how to sequence and use diverse nonviolent methods and strategies to bring about a political change. It is necessary. There are needs to develop relevant campaigns to change unjust power relations between men and women as well as between the government and the governed. The training is also critical to developing context-specific tactics and supporting individuals in overcoming their fears and retaining strong self-discipline in resisting the temptation to respond to provocations or to fight back (Bloch 2016, p. 14).

Some respondents suggested alternative training methods, such as mentorship, seminars, reading literature related to nonviolent campaigns, watching documentary films, using creative arts and theatre, community and political dialogue, movement-building conferences, and exchange programmes as equally important potential avenues, tools, and opportunities to build the capacity of civil society to implement nonviolent campaigns. For instance, one respondent commented:

Most training is often conducted with insufficient preparation and with no or less follow-up strategy and is not connected to specific ultimate change objectives. Training is often perceived as an end by itself rather than a means to an end. Thus, many community practitioners and researchers rush to organise training, to keep attendance sheet and training photos as evidence to justify training has taken place. This attitude and abuse of training approach have disappointed some community members to dislike training events.³

This constructive criticism informed me to critically prepare the training intervention in such a way as to respond to the participants' needs, aspirations at the community level, and beyond. I used different participatory training methodologies, such as brainstorming, role plays, exercises, case studies, group discussions, documentary films, questions, answers, etc. The available time, uniqueness, and relevance determined the use of each method. The training was conducted with members of CSOs based in Juba but engaged with wider civic and faith-based communities in the rural parts of South Sudan.

² Victoria Lawrence, on 14 June 2018, in Juba, during the one-on-one interview with the researcher to validate the preliminary findings from the focus group discussions.

³ Deng Chol, in Juba, on 19 June 2018, during an interview with the researcher to validate the preliminary findings from the focus group discussions.

15.2.2 Day One: What is Nonviolent Action and Why Use It?

Prior to addressing the main theme of understanding nonviolent action, the training commenced with prayers, introductory remarks from the co-facilitators and support staff, and an official opening from the Organisation for Nonviolence and Development (ONAD) administrator. This was followed by a participants' introduction and affirmation exercise, where every participant shared one unique aspect (attitude, behaviour or talent) that they loved about themselves. The exercise helped to create a sense of trust as everyone felt that they had something unique of which they could be proud.

The participants then completed the pretraining questionnaire in either English or Arabic. This was because five participants were Arabic pattern students; they could follow the discussions in English but could best express themselves or write in Arabic.

Subsequently, the research team took the participants through a buzz groups process to establish the training community golden rules and outline what they expected to gain from and share with the training participants. This preliminary session was covered in 2 hours to allow the participants to interact, build rapport and fill in the pretraining questionnaires. This was followed by a 20-minute tea break. The break was necessary as some participants came from the outskirts of Juba City, and some might have missed their morning tea in order to arrive on time.

To introduce the participants to the concepts of nonviolence and nonviolent action, the researcher took the participants through an ideal village game. The participants were divided into three groups of eight. Each group was named after a fruit (Orange, Apple, and Banana). I instructed each group to draw (on a large flip chart paper), in not more than 15 minutes, a picture of an ideal village that they dreamed of seeing in South Sudan.

When the groups' depictions of their villages took shape with rivers, trees, schools, marketplaces, recreational centres, etc. on the paper, the facilitators transformed into the chief executive officers (CEOs) of a multinational corporation interested in extracting resources from the community (water, fossil fuels, land, etc.). Each of the three facilitators made several visits to each community, admiring the village and offering to use the land in return for money, jobs, electricity, etc. On the third visit, each facilitator escalated the conflict by taking some parts of the village, that is, by tearing off part of the community map for a factory, coffee plantation, mall, or other entity. This action angered the Orange and Apple village members and led them to protect their village violently using firearms and traditional weapons against the investors. The Banana village was unfortunately destroyed by the so-called investors and the game ended in chaos.

To unpack the game, the researcher involved the participants in a debriefing session where the researcher questioned the participants on what their feelings were when the investors visited the village, what actually happened (facts) and whether the communities won or lost, whether they had tried any tactics, if there had been a

strategy, what had worked and what had not, and what lessons or experiences could one learn from this game for the future.

In response to these questions, the participants were able to comprehend that, in conflict situations, people respond either violently or non-violently or a combination of the two. One of the researcher’s co-facilitators then introduced (on previously prepared placards) the definitions of nonviolence and nonviolent action, as well as their principles and methods, to the class. These definitions, principles, and methods have been developed and experimented with by peace movements and researchers over time, some of which are presented in Table 15.2.

Building on Sharp’s 198 methods of nonviolent action, the researcher introduced the participants to the four broad categories of nonviolent protest and persuasion, non-cooperation (social, economic, and political), direct intervention, and constructive programmes. These methods and more had already been practised by people and

Table 15.2 The principles of nonviolence and nonviolent action

Principles of nonviolence	Principles of nonviolent action
<p>Search for the centre of conflicts – nonviolence calls for action, not for passivity. We are called to act where people are suffering under violence, oppression, and injustice (King 1999: 101)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show respect to your adversaries as much as you respect yourself and others – treat all people in a conflict as equals. Remember, nobody can degrade you without your permission. Gandhi argued that it was possible to hate the sin, not the sinner (Nagler 2012: 1) • Remember that everyone can change and that there is something good in all people. In nonviolence, we do not seek to be winners or rise over others; we seek to learn and to make things better for all. • Ends and means have to be compatible; for example, if we want peace, we have to pursue it in a peaceful way. Gandhi stated that peace is the road and not only the goal. • If suffering is unavoidable, take it on yourself rather than harming someone else. The cycle of violence stops with me. Nonviolence involves risk-taking. Thus, resisters must be willing to take risks when necessary and prepare to suffer any consequences to transform injustice (King 1999: 101) • No one has a monopoly on the truth – the challenge is to bring our own and our adversaries’ truths together (John et al. 2006: 17) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support mass participation: successful nonviolent campaigns choose tactics that enable more people to participate. Larger numbers of participants strengthen the power and legitimacy of a nonviolent campaign and make it more difficult for the campaign to be crushed. According to Stephen/Chenoweth (2008) no campaign that attracted around 3.5% of the population has ever failed to achieve its objectives • Maintain nonviolent discipline: successful nonviolent campaigns use tactics that leverage power while maintaining nonviolent discipline. Keeping actions nonviolent increases participation and reduces the potential for repression by authorities. If repression does happen, it often backfires in favour of nonviolent activists in the form of loyalty shifts or defections from the authority’s supporters • Invest in planning: Successful nonviolent campaigns and movements engage in ongoing strategic planning that harnesses assessment, sequencing, escalation, and innovation of tactics to lead to a successful end game. Planning encourages creativity, imagination, connectivity, and sustainability (Bloch/Schirch 2018: 9). • Unity of protesters and campaign leadership

civil society actors across the globe (Engler 2017, p. 14). I connected the methods of nonviolent action to the village game as potential options that the participants could have used or could use in future violent conflicts that they were likely to experience in their daily lives. To connect the principles to the methods of nonviolence, I made a brief presentation in which I explained the importance of using nonviolent methods, with reference to nonviolence principles, to prevent violence and realise success.

After a 40-min lunch break, the participants embarked on a context and power analysis. Common forms of violence and injustices in South Sudan were identified. To address the injustices, a co-facilitator took the training through the “Almighty finger” power exercise. To energise the participants after lunch, this exercise was performed in a circle outside the hall. The facilitator gave the following instructions: form a circle and then one person gets the “almighty finger” to silently or non-verbally give orders by pointing at any person in the circle to act – the orders could be “sit down”, “go out”, “look up”, etc. After 3 minutes, the participant with the almighty finger would hand it over to another participant who would then use it. In the exercise, most participants obeyed the orders, while a few disobeyed. To understand the exercise, I debriefed the participants by asking them the following: What happened? What did the almighty finger do/ask? Why did you obey? Should we be disobedient sometimes? Why? Were Jesus and the Prophet Mohammed disobedient sometimes? Why? What effect did it have?

The responses from the participants regarding authority and power in relation to obedience revealed that most participants attributed an obedient response to a reaction to a fear of sanctions: the subjects obeyed because they felt threatened by the power holder. Two participants disobeyed because they were not happy with the way the authority was used, which they described as unfriendly. When the authority or the person with power was challenged, he (the person who played the role of a power holder in the exercise) asked for more volunteers to support the authority, but this again failed as more volunteers were unwilling to cooperate with the authority when they were ordered to do as such.

This exercise clearly communicated to the participants that power is never the property of an individual. It lies with the people, and once the authorities have been disobeyed or challenged, power vanishes.

After a 15-minute tea break, a 30-minute question-and-answer session was held. This allowed the participants to share their experiences and feelings about what they had learned and what they would like the co-facilitators and the support team to do differently on the days that followed. Suggestions for improvement were also provided. These included arriving on time, being precise, and avoiding repetition to allow for more participation and to save time. The participants requested handouts, which were provided.

Day one was concluded with prayers, and the participants were paid their daily transport reimbursements worth SSP 500 (a mere 500 South Sudanese Pounds), the equivalent of approximately USD 2.5.

15.2.3 Day Two: How Can We Plan and Implement Nonviolent Campaigns?

The second day began with prayers and a summary of what had been covered or learned the previous day. The participants cited the village game and the “almighty finger” exercise as the most creative methods that introduced the nonviolence methods and principles as well as the understanding of power. Most participants acknowledged that they then knew the different methods of nonviolent action, which they could use to manage and confront injustices when they occurred.

To explore how individuals and groups plan and implement nonviolent campaigns, an episode of the documentary entitled *A force most powerful* on South Africa’s economic boycotts was screened and debriefed. The questions used included the following: Which methods of nonviolent action were used? Did it work? Did the organisers stick to nonviolent discipline? What else can we learn from the South African experience?

The researcher then facilitated a session where he divided the class into three groups: the national (South Sudan), regional (Africa), and international (Asia, Europe, and the Americas) teams. Each group was tasked to briefly (in 20 minutes) write down the nonviolent action experiences of which they knew in their specific context. After the groups had completed most of their assignment, the researcher directed each group to hang their flip chart paper on the wall and assigned one representative to report back. In a world café style, the participants toured the three different groups and were introduced to different experiences, and individuals from the groups were allowed to add unreported nonviolent action experiences to each other’s groups. After the session, a summarised handout of contemporary stories of nonviolent action in South Sudan was handed over to the participants as a reference. The researcher also encouraged the participants to search for online sources to gain more knowledge on how nonviolent campaigns were being planned and executed in other countries of the world.

To practise skills in creating nonviolent campaigns, the researcher’s co-facilitator divided the class into three groups. She directed each group to engage in a brief conversation and identify a violent scenario or injustice at home, in the workplace, or in the community that had not been challenged or resolved. By using creative role-playing activities, each group would then plan, prepare, and act using nonviolent methods to address or transform the injustice. Scenarios that were identified encompassed early and forced marriages, armed robbery, and corruption. The role plays demonstrated the participants’ ability to plan and carry out nonviolent campaigns. This session lasted for an hour and 45 minutes, as more time was required to plan, rephrase, and present the different role plays and debriefings.

After a 45-minute lunch break, a co-facilitator introduced the class to the pyramid of strategic planning in developing and implementing nonviolent campaigns. The pyramid includes the vision and core values, mission, assessment, setting SMARTT goals, taking strategic steps, and implementing plans and tactics (Bloch/Schirch 2018, p. 51). The session was complemented with a brainstorming session on how

strategic planning supports activists in building just and sustainable peace. As evident in Yogi Berra's well-known saying, "If you don't know where you're going, any road will take you." It was clarified that much as the participants may work individually to plan and tackle specific injustices, it was advisable that they work in groups and coordinate their actions with credible syndicate organisations, peace movements, and networks to have a greater impact. The class was also divided into two groups and was taken through a lion, hunter, rabbit, and mountain exercise. This exercise enabled the group to practise how to strategise for nonviolent action. In the session, the participants also brainstormed on how to deal with fear and state-engineered repression. Day two was concluded with the distribution of training and New Tribe background handouts.

15.2.4 Day Three: What Next?

Day three focused on the practice of nonviolent action. To gauge whether the participants were able to put their knowledge and skills acquired within the previous 3 days into practice, the participants were requested to share their most recent experience where they had used nonviolent action to resolve conflict and build peace. From the reported experiences, a female participant revealed that the training had empowered her, and, as a result, she had approached her husband and resolved family grievances. She reported:

It all started with coffee taking over the weekend. I chatted with my husband, remembering the old good days following our marriage. I then requested if we talk about a concern that has been bothering me which my husband quickly accepted to listen to. I narrated to him how I felt irritated and bad when he insults me before the children and abuses me when drunk. I spend most of my time crying and regretting our marriage. Before I finished, my husband broke into silent tears. He responded, 'I did not know that I have offended you that much'; he then apologised for the bad behaviour and promised to love and respect me. He too appreciated the way I approached him. Since that time, our relationship improved, and love to each other increased.⁴

She added that persuasion is an effective method of non-violent action, which she had learned 3 days earlier. Other participants shared stories of intervening to resolve conflicts in public transport and the workplace and initiating mediation to resolve a domestic conflict. Although the stories demonstrated the immediate result of this action research project, more outcomes are yet to be harvested. This experiment revealed that the participants were capable of applying the methods of nonviolent action to change their lives and those of their communities.

The second part of day three revolved around planning the application of nonviolent campaigns, networking, and sustainability. Joint training and application planning enhances effective campaigns and ensures a higher possibility of success and informs one how to deal with obstacles as they occur (Bloch 2016, p. 14). The

⁴ Grace Linda, on 31 July 2018, in Juba, during the 1-day implementation planning workshop.

researcher led the class through a simple planning session where the planning and the plan were defined. As Simon Sinek agreed with the former US President Dwight Eisenhower that, “Planning is everything and the plan is nothing” (Mrics 2021, p. 2).

To help each participant with that which they wanted or intended to work on to contribute to tangible peace, the researcher introduced simple planning questions, which included the following: what? (for the activity), why? (for the objectives), where? (for the location), when? (for time), with whom? (to establish who else would be involved) and how? (to establish which methods and strategies would be employed).

Each participant was given 35 minutes to prepare and present the post-training implementation planning not more than 5 minutes. The plans were subjected to questions for clarification and further improvement. In researcher’s view, planning constitutes an important aspect of life. Nevertheless, having a plan does not necessarily translate into achieving concrete results unless the plan is put into practice. So planning is crucial to guide the participants in implementing the skills learned to employ nonviolent campaigns. Though the plan was developed in a participatory manner, the co-facilitators may have, at no cost, encouraged and technically supported the implementation process, but the major responsibility for implementation and the choice of methods and strategy fall solely on the shoulders of the trained participants, as argued by Miller (2006, p. 42). In the development of effective strategies, activists must identify the issues and challenges at stake, consider where they come from, generate a dream of what the group wants, articulate its main objectives, and devise a strategy to collectively achieve these objectives (War Resisters’ International 2009, p. 35).

With regard to networking, the researcher’s co-facilitator posed questions to the class: Do you think it is necessary to stay connected after the training? Why and why not? How can we stay together and for what? In answering these questions, most participants voluntarily agreed to stay connected through WhatsApp and Messenger groups to share information, mobilise, organise, and support each other in implementing nonviolent actions and campaigns. Two social media groups were preferred because not all the participants had both Messenger and WhatsApp accounts. It was also agreed for the groups to be for closed members only, to be used to share related follow-up and application information, and to be named “PhD AR Parts” as a shortened version of “PhD action research participants 2018”. Two training participants voluntarily agreed to assist the researcher in establishing the network groups.

After this, the participants were given diaries in which to record their stories as they occurred. It was announced that there would be a follow-up meeting after 6 months, and 1 day would be allocated to an evaluation workshop that was to be convened in 2019. The exact dates would be communicated through the WhatsApp and Messenger groups.

15.3 Results

15.3.1 *Measuring Short-Term Outcomes*

At the end of the training, post-training questionnaires were administered. Each participant was assigned a unique code comprising the first three letters of their surname and a serial number. This code was only known to the researcher and was deliberately used to ensure that the researcher was able to assess each participant in terms of their level of knowledge and nonviolent action skills before and after the training. Thus, the same questionnaire that was used for the pretraining assessment was distributed to the participants according to their codes 3 days after the training programme in an effort to gauge the short-term outcomes of the training. The collected and analysed data indicated the following findings:

- Almost all the participants had understood that violence and conflict are two different concepts: they are similar but not identical.
- Almost all the participants had understood the concept of nonviolence and were able to clearly differentiate between nonviolent action and nonviolent campaigning as well as their principles, methods, and strategies.
- More than half of the participants had gained optimism and expressed faith in using nonviolent tactics to address injustices and conflict, citing empirical evidence as documented by Stephan/Chenoweth (2008). One young participant commented that he was 100% confident that nonviolent campaigns remained the only hope and means to defeat violence and restore just peace in South Sudan. He added that “we have used violent means for more than 55 years in Sudan and South Sudan, and it has not worked. The only means that we are yet to popularly try is nonviolent campaigns. If they have worked in other countries, I do not see why they cannot work in South Sudan. You never try, you never know.”
- More than three-quarters of the participants were in agreement that power lies with the “group of people” or citizens at large and can only be enjoyed by a leader based on the voluntary consent of the governed. If a group of people or citizens choose, for any reason, to withdraw their power and disobey a leader, power vanishes.
- A handful of the respondents had appreciated the knowledge and importance of planning, organisation, and coordination in implementing nonviolent campaigns.
- Close to three-quarters of the participants had appreciated the different methodologies used by the co-facilitators to introduce different themes. Role plays; exercises; and documentary films, such as *The Force Most Powerful*, were graded as the most useful in internalising concepts and theories and using them in practice. Role plays on tackling specific real-life scenarios were liked by many.

Most participants rated the participatory approach as the best methodology used by the co-facilitators throughout the training. The facilitators adopted experiential learning techniques in which the participants reflected on and learned from their experiences and did not merely rely on the co-facilitators. The use of contemporary

local examples of nonviolent actions connected theory to practice. The use of the village game; the “almighty finger”; role plays; and a film documentary, entitled *The Force Most Powerful*, were liked the most. The case studies of how nonviolent actions had been successfully employed in other countries of the world were stated as not having been exhausted by the facilitators.

The morning review of the previous day’s discussions refreshed and reminded the participants to connect the different sessions. Evidently, it also informed the participants who had missed some sessions of the discussions. The translation of the questionnaires and some handouts from English to Arabic was viewed as helpful, as were some limited energisers used between the sessions, particularly in the afternoons and after lunch, which kept the training lively. The food and refreshments were rated as good, although one participant expressed environmental concerns over the use of bottled water and suggested using jugs instead.

The provided handouts were appreciated but fell short of the participants’ expectations as some materials, such as success stories of nonviolent actions in other countries, had not been provided. Three participants expressed concerns over the training hall, which they generally rated as good but lacking air conditioning (the hall was equipped only with fans). The participants’ transport reimbursements were rated as poor, as most participants were using motorcyclist transport services, which were charging twice as much as the daily transport reimbursements being paid.

15.3.2 Short-Term Outcomes

Short-term outcomes, as the term implies, are short-term changes that can be directly attributed to the action research project. They were determined by that which the participants and their institutions did differently as a result of the training and the consequences that would not have occurred without the contribution of the training. Building on the participants’ testimonies and experiences, the training generally had a positive impact on most participants and their constituencies. The participants not only learned together but were able to undertake nonviolent campaigns more confidently after the training to change their conditions using various methods of nonviolent action, such as peaceful marches, stand-up and sit-in protests, petitioning, social media, and offline campaigns, aimed at bringing about change in their communities. The short-term outcomes are summarised in Table 15.3.

In addition to the short-term outcomes summarised in Table 15.3, the participants reported other benefits of training. For instance, almost three-quarters of the participants acknowledged that the training had positively shaped their worldview, attitudes, and behaviours towards nonviolence. It connected the participants to like-minded civil society partners, leading to the exchange of contacts and information, increased coordination, better organising skills and joint actions. The research project bridged the coordination and learning gaps between CSOs.

An elderly participant revealed that “the training was an eye-opener” for him. He added that:

Table 15.3 Outcomes and contributions of action research participants and their organisations in addressing the problems being faced

Title of nonviolent action	Which problem, violence, or injustice was addressed?	Contribution from action research participants and/or their organisations	Outcome story
Protesters marched against alleged mass rape in Bentiu	The systematic rape of women as a weapon of war has been practised with impunity in South Sudan. Most of these actions are being committed by men in uniform	Five action research (AR) participants were part of a women coalition tasked to prepare and commemorate 16 days of activism against gender-based violence (GBV). They seized this annual global event to protest the suspected mass rape	More than 1,000 protesters, drawn mostly from over 40 women and other civil society organisations, marched to the Ministry of Gender and the National Parliament on 10 December 2018 and expressed their disappointment in the alleged mass rape of 150 women in Bentiu (UNMISS 2018)
CSOs launched #MaMaraSakit (Juba Arabic for #NotJustAwoman) campaign	Negative perception that undermines women's potential in South Sudanese society	Eight AR participants and their organisations were involved in the planning and implementation of the campaign launch. They used their constituencies to defuse misperceptions of women	More than 60 women-and-youth-led civil society organisations launched the #MaMaraSakit campaign, Juba Arabic for #NotJustAwoman, she is everything. The launch took place at Logali House in Juba on 6 December 2019
Civil society petitioned the Minister of Information for poor telecommunication services	Poor quality and expensive telecommunication services in South Sudan	One AR participant mobilised other civil society organisations to sign the petition	On 9 January 2019, over 100 civil society organisations from across South Sudan petitioned the Minister of Information, Telecommunication, and Postal Services for poor and expensive telecommunication services (Radio Tarmazuj 2019).

(continued)

Table 15.3 (continued)

Title of nonviolent action	Which problem, violence, or injustice was addressed?	Contribution from action research participants and/or their organisations	Outcome story
Students peacefully protest tuition fee hike leading to its suspension	Taxes and tuition hikes are common responses from the governments to fix the collapsing economy in the country	Four AR participants, in collaboration with the students' union and other student associations, planned, organised, and implemented the campaign in front of the vice chancellor's (VC's) office, carrying placards demanding the revoking of the tuition hike	The president revoked the fees hike and returned the fees to the previous scale. This decision was celebrated by all the students at the University of Juba
Campaign lobby to prevent environmental pollution and its consequences in oil-rich Upper Nile region	Human beings and animals have reportedly died due to dumping of expired chemicals in the bush, leakages of oil pumps, and smoke pollution of oil and gas industries	Three AR participants collaborated with CSOs, the University of Juba, and the Parliamentary Committee on Wildlife, Forestry, and the Environment and discussed the impacts of pollution in the oil-rich region	In August 2018, civil society activists peacefully lobbied the National Parliament to impose a penalty on oil companies that were not following environmental safety standards. They also called for immediate environmental audits to be conducted in the oil-rich Upper Nile region and the enactment and reinforcement of strong environmental policies

(continued)

Table 15.3 (continued)

Title of nonviolent action	Which problem, violence, or injustice was addressed?	Contribution from action research participants and/or their organisations	Outcome story
Women lobbied for a 35% women quota as representation ratio in all levels of the government in South Sudan	Women, like youth, have always been under-represented in decision-making processes at the family, community, and political decision-making levels	AR participants from women organisations lobbied throughout the year demanding an affirmative quota of 50%. On 12 September 2018, the parties signed a peace deal granting a 35% women representation at all levels of the government	In 2018, women groups held grassroots, national, and regional meetings in Entebbe, Uganda, and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, campaigning for an increase of 50% in women's representation at all levels of the government. They used media, workshops, radio talk shows, and lobbying in Ethiopia to influence the negotiating parties to consider their demand

Nonviolent action is not actually new. Our ancestors have used its tactics severally without knowing it. The training helped me gained insights on how nonviolent action can be used strategically to shift power in conflict situation in order to set parties to dialogue and negotiate in good faith to address their grievances.⁵

Another respondent acknowledged that the training had helped him to become nonviolent in terms of disciplining his children:

I learned that people sometimes use violence out of ignorance or lack of knowledge about alternatives to violence. I used to beat my children, thinking beating was a way of discipline. I was wrong and ignorant that it was actually violence. After the training, I changed to using nonviolent ways of discipline, such as cleaning the compound and dishes, writing a story about what had happened, and watering flowers. I also show my children love, care, and respect. I always explain to them, I want them to be good and responsible children to become successful in life. This way, I gained love and respect of my children. If one of them wrongs, he or she can report, seek forgiveness, and promise never to repeat the wrong.⁶

A few participants reported having incorporated the nonviolent action training components into their peacebuilding, human rights, and civic education interventions. Four participants underwent the advanced training of trainers in nonviolent action organised by local and international partners in Juba and Nairobi. Following the release of a report entitled *Born to Be Married* by the British charity Oxfam, stating that more than 70% of girls in Nyal, South Sudan, are married off before the age of 18 (Oxfam South Sudan 2019). An action research participant launched the #Back to school campaign targeting schoolgirl dropouts. She used community-based organisations and churches to educate the community, raised awareness of the short- and long-term impacts of early marriages and pregnancies, and encouraged dropout girls to re-enrol and continue with their schooling. The result was an increase in girls' enrolment in Magateein schools in Juba.

Not all the participants were optimistic about the power and potential of nonviolence. Some were pessimistic but, with time, learned to appreciate that nonviolent action is effective. A younger respondent reported:

I did not believe that nonviolent action will work in South Sudan, but I tried it. I, together with more than 200 family members, blocked politicians from addressing funeral prayers held on 4 March 2019. This political non-cooperation succeeded. We insisted to just hear the word of God from the church leaders with no opportunity for political leaders to address the masses as usual. We did that as a protest for the government failure to pay salaries of civil servants for the last six months. Political non-cooperation with politicians who do not commit and fulfil their obligations and duties is the way to resist their injustices. The training helped me to think and act differently.⁷

Some participants reported that they had resolved disputes in their families and workplaces and offered free legal services to the victims of gender-based violence. Conflict management and peacebuilding approaches have often worked with nonviolent resistance to restore broken relationships and build harmonious communities.

⁵ Arkangelo Tombe, 12 June 2019, in Juba, during the 1-day action research evaluation meeting.

⁶ Solomon Gimba, 12 June 2019, in Juba, during the 1-day action research evaluation meeting.

⁷ Lilian Patrick, 12 June 2019, in Juba, during the 1-day action research evaluation meeting.

15.4 Conclusion

People around the world have used nonviolent campaigns to build just peace and democratic societies. Despite the challenges of the limited capacity and shortage of literature on nonviolent campaigning, this chapter established that nonviolent activism has existed in South Sudan and that CSOs have on several occasions implemented the techniques of nonviolence in peacebuilding. The short-term outcomes of the action research project revealed that the participants not only learned together, shared information, and established sustainable networks but also used the tactics of peaceful marches, petitions, press statements, sit-ins, political non-cooperation, and other forms of nonviolent campaigns to advance social, political, and economic change. Supporting civil society with technical skills and knowledge on nonviolent campaigning as well as facilitating coherent peacebuilding coordination mechanisms and the attainment of financial resources are critical for building a safe, democratic, and prosperous country.

As Chigas/Woodrow (2018, p. 166) argued, significant progress towards sustainable peace can be achieved through more effective alliances, such as consortia, networks, platforms, etc. The establishment of the New Tribe coalition of nonviolence social movements is a practical example of efforts to strengthen and sustain CSOs' peacebuilding work. Close to half the action research participants have already joined the New Tribe coalition and other syndicate CSOs pursuing ongoing campaigns, using diverse tactics and approaches. The action research approach in peacebuilding facilitates such an experiment, which can be replicated in other contexts in Sub-Saharan Africa and beyond.

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