Peace-building from below
The role of locally employed INGO staff in contributing to sustainable peace in South Sudan

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Abstract

To build sustainable peace, all levels of society need to be involved, from the top governmental authorities (state actors) to the ground civilians (non-state actors). The grassroots level is getting more and more attention and is acknowledged as a crucial part in the peace-building process, despite that the official peace process commonly target the top level. Peace agreements signed by the elite will not be implemented thoroughly in society, unless the population living the conflict will have own agency.

This thesis uses South Sudan as a case study, with focus on locally employed INGO workers and their role and agency in moving towards sustainable peace. A literature review of well-known and recent research on the topic peace-building from below, along with interviews with the targeted group was used to establish if the theory can be reflected in practise in this specific context.

An inclusive approach with all levels of the society seems to be the best strategy for such a divided context as South Sudan, affected by present and past grievance and with weak governmental structures. The social infrastructures have been partially replaced with (I)NGOs, providing a vast amount of basic services across the country. Due to the high prevalence of humanitarian actors and consequently a high number of national staff, they could be a part of the bottom-up approach.

Though there is a consensus of an inclusive bottom-up approach in peace-building, the specific role of locally employed (I)NGO worker is not very well examined in the literature. National staff has clear benefits due to their role as (I)NGO workers such as respect and exposure in combination with their local expertise and network. This can contribute to a broader understanding of the situation - that wisdom should not be wasted and can contribute to them having possibility of having a voice and being a connector in the society. There is however not a clear result if this differs from the influence of other civilians and if it translates directly as a benefit in peace–building. More research is needed to determine the real agency of this group.
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List of abbreviations

ARCSS Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan
CPA Comprehensive Peace Agreement
FVP First Vice President
GoSS Government of Southern Sudan
GRSS Government of Republic of South Sudan
HCSS Hybrid Court for South Sudan
IDP Internally Displaced Person
IGAD Intergovernmental Authority of Development
(I)NGO (International) Non Governmental Organisation
NS National Staff = Staff employed locally in the country
PoC Protection of Civilians
UNMISS United Nations Mission in South Sudan
Preface

After working humanitarian for several years, in active conflict zones around the world, seeing peace agreements and cease fires break more or less as soon as the ink has dried - in South Sudan, in Yemen and in numerous other active conflicts around the globe. My motivation to learn more about how to create sustainable peace grew, not only from a political perspective but also from the grassroots - from the civilians whose everyday life is affected by conflict, those who tireless carry on and whose voice is seldom heard on the international arena. The people, who were born in the country, grew up and lived in conflict suffering the consequences, and who will create a future in the aftermath of the conflict.

This thesis is dedicated to the population of South Sudan. More specifically to all the staff I have met in my professional working life, those who have taught me about resilience. A special thanks to those who throughout my stay(s) in the country took the time to explain the history, culture and situation of South Sudan, and continually answered my questions when I wanted and needed to learn more to understand, to do a better humanitarian job and recently to write this thesis. Thank you, this is for you.

Anette Uddqvist, Stockholm, May 2018
1. Introduction

1.1 Objective and aim

Armed conflicts involve state actors (Högbladh, 2011, p.42). No matter international/interstate or national/intrastate conflicts the state has an obvious role both as conflict-makers and as conflict-solvers. Peace agreements in states of active conflict are commonly signed around the world, however a slight majority relapse to violence within a five years period\(^1\) (Ibid., pp.51-52). The political influence and the important role of state actors (both internal and external) in peace-building cannot be neglected. However other actors also influence the outcome: non-state actors like opposition groups, non-combatant actors as (I)NGOs ((International) Non Governmental Organisation) and private companies but also the common civilians - the population of the state involved in the conflict. Daily life does not take place at the negotiation table, it is lived on the ground - in the streets and in the homes. The elite might sign peace agreements, but there are missing links between the agreements and actually accomplishing sustainable peace (Wallensteen, 2015, p.54). Therefore it is not the sole responsibility of the official state to create sustainable peace. It needs to run on all levels, all the way from the top to the bottom, as different levels contribute with different factors for peace (Lederach, 1997, p.60).

The aim of this thesis is to analyse if peace-building from below is appropriate in South Sudan. As well as to explore if one specific non-state, non-combatant actor, namely locally employed (I)NGO staff has an agency to facilitate sustainable peace-building in the country.

**Research question:** Is peace-building from below a viable approach in South Sudan? If so can locally employed (I)NGO staff in Juba contribute to the process towards sustainable peace?

1.2 Justification

Armed conflict has shifted from being a state business to include the entire civilian arena, to the extent of targeted attacks towards civilians (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall, 2016, p.6). In recent years, the number of civilians’ casualties has overtaken the number of military deaths (Finnström and Nordstrom, 2015, p.379). According to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, security and safety is the second step after the most basic needs to be able to stay alive.

\(^1\) Between 1975-2011, 141 peace agreements were signed in areas in “active years of conflict”. 76 (54%) had relapsed to violence between the same actors within five years. Calculations based on numbers from Högbladh’s “Peace Agreements 1975-2011 – Updating the DCDP Peace Agreement Dataset”.
(Taormina and Gao, 2013, p.157). With the extended affect armed conflicts has on civilians in terms of social, mental, physical and economical aspects, not only their role as a victim but also their agency should be explored to find possible opportunities for their influence on peace-building (Mac Ginty, 2014, p.551). Among civilians is the group of national staff, employed locally by (I)NGOs with the purpose to serve the conflict affected population, though themselves affected by the same violence in one way or another. (I)NGOs have an advantage in their unique role of commonly being the only foreign (and in that sense “neutral”) actor present due to no social, emotional or obvious political ties to the conflict, as well as advocating a humanitarian impartial perspective (Autesserre, 2014, p.66). This includes the national staff under the umbrella of the humanitarian activities, which make it interesting to investigate their specific agency.

Research has been made to understand the impact of humanitarian activities on societies and peace-building (Goodhand, 2006, pp.108-109). This thesis will take it one step further, to locally employed (I)NGO workers who are both civilians and (I)NGO employees. They are experts on the local culture and context and exposed to influences from the humanitarian sphere. The more holistic understanding on how all levels of the society can contribute to sustainable peace and claim agency the more efficient peace process.

1.3 Delimitation and definitions

South Sudan is a highly diverse country. Different regions of South Sudan have been affected in different ways. For that reason only the capital of Juba will be investigated in detail, as it has a potpourri of different tribes (though mainly Equatorians), it is the home of the national government and with no natural resources nor birth place of present prominent political actors.

There is an extended collection of non-state, non-combatants which can be broken down to smaller groups based on anything from gender, to age, tribe, educational level, profession etc. Every person belongs to several groups. Different groups and individuals have various influences in the society. It could be difficult to determine which factor is the contributor to certain agency. In an effort to try to get one clear answer and single out one factor. One group standing out and easy to reach is locally employed (I)NGO staff: many are educated, speak English and are used to connect with foreign nationals. Therefore, the chosen group to investigate more in detail are local (I)NGO employees.
A locally employed (I)NGO staff member is defined here as a national staff (NS). In opposite to an international staff/an expatriate (expat), a NS has a long term perspective. As a holder of a national ID-card, resident in the country and area of intervention and hired locally in the specific location where the organisation is carrying out activities. This research examines the situation when the NS is considered to be an insider, seen as part of the setting (Anderson and Olson, 2003, p.36). Depending on position and qualifications some NS might temporarily travel to support other project locations as need be. Though the majority lives and work in the same location. In case of movement that specific person might be considered an outsider in the new location (Ibid.).

1.4 Paper division
The thesis starts with an introduction of the chosen methodology, followed by the recent academic standpoints in terms of peace-building from below to lay the foundation for further reading. Another stone in the foundation is a brief history and context of the chosen case study, South Sudan, and its ongoing peace process. This will be followed by a presentation of the primary data collection and lastly the analyses of the combined academic and empirical material and the conclusions drawn based on the research findings.
2. Methodology

2.1 Research set-up and analytical approach

The analyses will be based on a combination of qualitative research methods of data collection applied on one specific case. Originating from an extensive academic literature review to cover the theoretical and conceptual aspects and a primary data collection, by interviewing South Sudanese (I)NGO workers in Juba, to anchor the result in practise. This combination of academic research and on the ground empirical verification will enable a more comprehensive result.

2.1.1 Methods

Case study was selected as research design: The case of South Sudan was chosen to give a genuine view of the concept peace-building from below and the chosen specific actor’s agency in this particular setting. The choice was partly based on the author’s extended professional experience in the country during recent years of civil war, which has given contextual understanding. Additionally South Sudan offers an opportunity to examine an interesting context of protracted conflict, where despite signed peace agreement the conflict continues.

Literature review (secondary data collection): Relevant data was collected via literature review from various research angles (different approaches of peace-building from below, as well as different actors’ influence) giving a foundation and thorough introduction to the subject peace-building from below and an analyse how it is relevant in this setting. Research from both well-known and less well-known authors and institutes has been examined. Academic literature about South Sudan’s peace process in relation to Sudan seems to have been more researched than the present situation and not much material was found. This might be due to the relatively short time duration since the outbreak of the civil war.

Interviews (primary data collection): Semi structured interviews served as a reality check complementary to the literature review. In an attempt to verify the sustainability of concepts examined in the literature review, in the specific context of South Sudan. The primary data was compared with the secondary data to establish congruity and divergence. To focus the result,

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2 The author worked in South Sudan between 2013-2015 as Logistics Coordinator. During this period the recent civil war broke out. The author worked again in South Sudan in 2016-2017 as Project Coordinator. Both periods for Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF).
one specific group, locally employed (I)NGO employees was chosen. This group are experts on the context and culture of their own country (Anderson, Brown and Jean, 2012, pp.37-38; Autesserre, 2014, p.64). They have experienced great exposure to humanitarian values and multi-cultural teamwork. They could serve as inspiration for further influential efforts towards peace-building as they act as ambassadors between the humanitarian actors and the community (civilians and authorities). In the same time, just as any other civilian this group has extended firsthand experience of growing up and living in a state of armed conflict. The combinations of these factors lay the ground for interesting insights. Employed staff commonly has at least basic educational level. Above humanitarian exposure, they are also in common contract with a variety of influences from a broad staff pool and beneficiaries, creating a seedbed for new ideas.

The method chosen to conduct interviews was via mobile network and online social media, a mix between oral conversations and chatnography. All participants were given written and/or oral information prior to the interview (Annex B), as well as given the possibility to ask questions. Written consent was signed by all interviewees (Annex C). For security and confidentiality reasons, no names of interviewees will be revealed in the thesis. Quotes are displayed under pseudonym. The author will keep the interview records for 5 years.

2.2 Limitations and ethical considerations

Some limitations of the interviews: The author only contacted English speaking INGO employees, with a certain level of English skills, to be able to conduct conversations without a translator and ensure privacy with only the interviewer and the interviewee present. This however also excluded other INGO employees with lower level English that could have just as interesting input on the subject. Unfortunately, there was no face to face meeting. The online mode of communication exclude communication via body language and therefore some information is not obtained. From an ethical viewpoint, the author used to have a higher hierarchal position than the persons interviewed, which could have influenced the answers both in a positive and negative direction. There is a need to develop trust with interviewees to gain honest answers. All individuals interviewed have been working within the same office as the author at some point, this has lead to already developed trust after experiencing hardship together (civil war breaking out) and therefore the answers are considered honest.

3 None of the interviewees work for a peace-building (I)NGO, and are therefore not professional experts on the topic.
4 The use of social media and instant messaging apps to facilitate easy and informal conversations without being present in person, as a complement to formal interviews (Käihkö, 2018, pp.150-151).
3. Literature review - Peace-building from below

The literature review section will examine: the concept of peace-building from below; different approaches for implementation as well as the role of some specific key actors.

War has changed into increasingly affecting directly the civil society (Nordstrom, 2004, p.58). The concept of “new” wars, describes conflicts that are commonly fought with non-state actors, fighting for identity and extensively affecting the population, making them a pawn in the conflict, hence blurring the lines between the civil society and the actors, objectives and scheme of the conflict (Kaldor, 2013, pp.2-3). Naturally, this has consequences on how the peace-building, including reconciliation, should be handled, stretching over the entire society and addressing Peace, Justice, Truth and Mercy (Lederach, 1997, pp.28-29). The recent civil war of South Sudan is a typical “new” war. To reach sustainable peace in such setting there need to be a link with peace-building from below.

“Sustainable peace” will hereafter be defined as off Solomon’s foreword to Lederach’s Building peace: “Sustainable peace requires that long-time antagonists not merely lay down their arms but that they achieve profound reconciliation that will endure because it is sustained by a society-wide network of relationships and mechanisms that promote justice and address the root causes of enmity before they can regenerate destabilizing tensions” (1997, p.ix). To reach sustainable peace there is a need to include all levels in the society, from top to bottom. For this, there is a consensus in recent peace research (Autesserre, 2014, p.64; Kingston, 2012, p.333; Ripsman, 2016, p.3). Ripsman presents some “theories that imply that peacemaking should be most successful as a bottom-up process when key societal actors or society as a whole embrace conflict resolution for economic, political, or normative reasons and press their political leaders to negotiate peace” (2016, p.14)5. Even though there is an academic agreement regarding the need for all levels to be included, there are incompatible ideas on when the ground level should be included. Commonly the bottom level is considered first after the armed violence ended (Ibid., p.2) while Lederach thinks it is needed all along the entire process (1997, p.20). To put it simple, peace-building from below is an inclusive approach acknowledging the importance of the ground level to be able to reach sustainable peace.

5 Ripsman’s research focus on regional conflicts, examining a broad spectrum of bottom-up approaches in these settings, while intra-state conflict might have a slightly different set-up. Even though Lederach argues that also intra-state conflicts have international/regional links in terms of funding, flow of arms and movements of guerrilla forces and refugees (1997, pp.11-12).
The wide-ranging approach also has importance from a representation point of view. The real human cost of conflict on the ground, might differ from the politically expressed perspective and this will influence the peace process (Mac Ginty and Firchow, 2015, pp.309-310). In reverse the lack of representation can be the cause for violence, especially in weak states where the opposition is not given enough opportunity to provoke change with non violent means (Lederach, 1997, p.9). The significance of state building to create durable peace is emphasised by several scholars as it gives the population possibility to be included. Ripsman refers to Benjamin Miller’s state-to-nation congruence which highlights the societal influences on conflict “War is likely to occur when a single state contains many nations” (2016, p.24). To solve the conflict there is a need to acknowledge the ostracised nationalities to create balance in the society (Ibid.). This is how South Sudan was born as an independent state. South Sudan still contains many nations hence the theory can still be a tool for understanding the conflict and possible means for peace. State building does not only refer to representation and territory but also accessible institutions and basic services (Hanagen and Tilly, 2010, p.254).

Charles Tilly also includes the smaller scale “trust network” into the early state building equation, tightly bound groups sharing a, for them, significant factor (Ibid., p.255). This could be another wording for identity. Creating a more including “we” on an intuitional level, is discussed also by other scholars as a bottom-up approach (Ripsman, 2016, p.23). In the end it comes down to inclusion of all groups and building relations in-between. Coming back to Lederach who is an advocate for the importance of building relationships for reconciliation (1997, p.26). Building relationships is linked to openness and values, therefore, another important bottom-up approach is implementation of peace-building education. Basically teaching of critical thinking, celebration of diversity and non-violent measures to solve conflict (Lederach, 1997, pp.109-110; Nordstrom, 2004, pp.179-180; UN, 2018, p.15). This is extra important in protracted violent context like South Sudan. Peace-building takes time which is a good argument for internal peace-building running on all levels (Lederach, 1997, pp.77-78).

Other scholars focus more on the economic development when building peace from below. For instance via cooperate businesses due to trade opportunities (Rispman, 2016, p.22) or humanitarian activities funded by external donors and the succeeding implication on community participation to commence political and social change (Kingston, 2012, p.340).
Both approaches can be questioned in terms of peace-building, for example based on actual motivation to provoke or facilitate change for the ground level versus prioritising own objectives (Kingston, 2012, p.314; Ripsman, 2016, p.22). Therefore and due to the need for another level of actors’ involvement, this approach will not be considered in this thesis. There is though, an obvious need in South Sudan for external financial contribution for development (Virk and Nganje, 2016, p.28).

The affected population can be divided into different levels (top-middle-grassroots) depending on their influence in the society but also their amount. The top level is the smallest section – the elite of the country, while in contrast the grassroots is the biggest segment constituted of the major population (Lederach, 1997, p.38). Different levels have different position and authority in the peace process. Actors are also affected differently: “Unlike many actors at the higher levels of the pyramid, however, grassroots leaders witness firsthand the deep-rooted hatred and animosity on a daily basis” (Ibid., p.43). This highlights the importance of including all levels to break stereotypes and violent patterns. A signed peace agreement will not by itself affect the emotions and the grievance in a population. The grassroots might be occupied by ensuring day to day basic needs and prioritise survival in front of the peace building process (Anderson and Olson, 2003, p.24; Lederach, 1997, p.52). Lederach argues that the level with the prime opportunity to facilitate peace-building is the middle one, just as the position indicates, by being in the middle with links to both the elite and the community (1997, pp.60-61).

In conflicts, within all levels, there are connectors and dividers, as the name indicates they either bring people together or separate them. It is essential to understand the role of these forces and how to work with them in the most beneficial way, as well as to map and identify who or what they are (Wallace, 2015, p.27). A connector/divider is not a person as such but rather the behaviours which characterises the role, and has a ripple effect (Ibid., p.29). Connecting factors are commonly not as striking as they might just as well be normal parts of everyday life (Ibid., p.16). In armed conflicts normal civilians find everyday practises to live their life by, even in divided society, so called “everyday peace” (Mac Ginty, 2014, p.549). Some are mitigation measures and some can be connectors (Ibid., p.552). This can be unconscious changes of behaviour and cultures to adapt to the violent surrounding in an armed conflict. It is a kind of normalization process where what is “normal” gradually changes to be able to live a “normal” life in an extreme setting (Maček, 2017, p.52). Civilians
demonstrate an exceptional resilience and find solutions to the problems (Nordstrom, 2004, p.217). There are reports from several conflict settings of “islands of peace”, areas that stayed peaceful despite being surrounded by violence (Mac Ginty, 2014, p.550). “People stop war by creating peace, not by fighting war better or harder or meaner” (Nordstrom, 2004, p.179). Despite this their role in peace-building is not thoroughly examined.

An actor who is however more examined is the (I)NGO sector. An actor with the advantage of being in the middle with access to both communities and authorities (Goodhand, 2006, p.123), who therefore can mediate in-between. In the same time as they can move rather freely due to their shield of neutrality and impartiality (Ibid., p.115). Though there are continues discussions if (I)NGO activities in conflict zones are contributing to the situation or not. This includes the impact on peace-building. The “Do No Harm” concept points out the importance of being aware of one’s own influence on dividers and connectors. Basically (I)NGOs need to acknowledge that there might be consequences of the planned activities which was not as intended (Wallace, 2015, pp.15-16). If international staff makes the choice to intervene they have a responsibility to at least not make the situation worse (Anderson and Olson, 2003, p.21). This thesis focus on the role of people, therefore there will be no further discussion on the structural role of (I)NGOs.

Despite the research on (I)NGOs, one key group is commonly missed out: the national staff (NS). This is unfortunate in the sense the NS makes up the majority of all humanitarian staff and has an obvious advantage of already being part of the society and therefore an incentive to facilitate for positive outcome. Nevertheless, one does not rule out the other, both international staff and NS have their own benefits. Nationals are expert on the specific culture, context and situation due to the innate inclusion in society, not to mention their extended local network (Autesserre, 2014, p.64). Internationals can be considered “neutral” and with less emotional anchor in the conflict. They can therefore easier put some pressure on local authorities, then a NS bound to stay in the context, and therefore experience greater risk, whereas expats can be evacuated if need be (Anderson and Olson, 2003, p.22; Autesserre, 2014, p.66). A NS is commonly born in the country, have lived there their entire life (exceptions of foreign long-term stay due to being a student or refugee in other countries) and will stay in the country in the future (Autesserre, 2014, pp.63-64). A NS will commonly work for an organisation or within the same field for several years, whereas international staff by default stays maximum a few years in the same setting (Ibid., p.81). A NS can be expected to
have a long-term interest in the outcome for the country and therefore an extra incentive to facilitate peace for the benefit of themselves, their family and the society. Clearly this is no always the case, as some do gain from the conflict or has other individual interest in the outcome, and therefore might want to keep the status quo. This is another reason why international influences can be requested (Ibid., p.65). An international staff might however have a broader understanding of the global concept of conflict based on worldwide experience. Hence the importance of open cooperation where every actor brings their strong points, “Each side brings perspectives, networks, assets and leverage with particular constituencies that the other does not have” (Anderson and Olson, 2003, p.34). But you cannot build peace for someone else (Ibid., p.32). In addition, too much dependents on international input and staff refrain the development of local expertise on the subject (Autesserre, 2014, p.107). Never to forget that there is an asymmetry in power between international staff and NS (Anderson and Olson, 2003, p.35). Actions need to be taken with care. “The general tendency is to think of peace-building as being initiated with outside resources, whether money or personnel. But the inverse is probably true. The greatest resource for sustaining peace in the long term is always rooted in the local people and their culture” (Lederach, 1997, pp.93-94).

3.1 Research gaps

Even though there is a consensus for an inclusive peace process, the focus still seems to land on the state and the armed actors. There is room for more academic research on the agency of the grassroots groups and organisations. Even in the cases when bottom-up approaches are examined, the actor chosen are powerful compared to the broad population, for instance companies, institutions or structures. There are grassroots organisations working for and according to the idea of ground involvement, but empirical research is lacking behind and is needed to establish a better foundation answering: who, what and when (IPTI, 2016, pp.1-2).

Despite discussions on the role of (I)NGOs in conflict setting and in peace-building, in my study I have not found as much research made on the specific role of locally employed (I)NGO workers. There are discussions on organisational influences but not on the NS’s impact. However, there is a consensus in general of the importance of both insiders and outsiders in humanitarian work. The group of NS should be given more attention, being present in conflict zones throughout the world, to determined and strengthen their agency in peace-building processes.
4. Case study - South Sudan

4.1 Brief history and context

South Sudan became independent from Sudan the 9th July 2011 after a homogenous referendum result. Just two and half years later, on the 15th of December 2013, civil war broke out when the presidential guards of the president Salva Kiir’s and those of the vice president Riek Machar clashed. Kiir accused Machar of initiating a coup d’état to overthrow him. The commotion forced both individuals to gather support from their frequent associates, turning a political power struggle into an ethnical conflict (GCT, 2018). This marked the start of the current civil war.

The current civil war of South Sudan is a typical “new” war: it is a conflict fought between a government and a non-state opposition actor. On top of that both major parties continue fractioning into a myriad of smaller groups, creating new alliances or new opposition groups. The best example is the major opposition party who broke in two after the shifting of First Vice President (FVP) end of 2016 (Mutasa and Virk, 2017, p.18). This behaviour of dissolving relationships and power makes it difficult to identify the aptitude of the claimed leader and the accountability for the group as well as to establish proper structures that work in relation with the population (Lederach, 1997, p.14). In addition the failure of the state institutions to ensure basic needs, equal distribution of resources as well as adequate representation provokes fractioning of the society (Ibid., p.8).

The area of South Sudan is not foreign to conflict, identity has been a major cause for disagreements for long. Already in 1955 (the year before Sudan gained independence from the British) the south started to fight for independence from Sudan due to vast differences in identity (Virk and Nganje, 2016, p.2). Several civil wars were fought until finally 2005 a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed with Sudan (Mutasa and Virk, 2017, p.10). That gave some self-governess to the south with the freedom fighter Dr. John Garang sworn in as the First Vice President for Sudan and the introduction of “Government of Southern Sudan” (GoSS) as well as the determination of a future referendum in early 2011 (Hendricks and Lucy, 2013, p.2). At long last South Sudan gained its own official identity and independence from big brother Sudan, a struggled that had united the south for one common goal (Mutasa and Virk, 2017, p.10). With that objective reached a new struggle started - internally, for power and for identity.
Two years after the recent civil war broke out a peace agreement “Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan” (ARCSS) between the two main warring factions was signed in Addis Ababa, with the support of Intergovernmental Authority of Development (IGAD) (Virk and Nganje, 2016, p.3). This brought some temporary stability as well as former vice president Riek Machar’s return to South Sudan. However already in July 2016 intense fighting broke out in Juba, as well as in other strategic locations around the country and once again forced Riek Machar to go into exile (GCT, 2018; HRW, 2017). The absence of a major actor obviously hampered an already tensed peace process. Despite that the peace “implementation” continued now aided by Taban Deng, new FVP, previous in alliance with Machar (Mutasa and Virk, 2017, p.7). Deng has since his promotion been leading his own show which has further fractioned the opposition (HSBA, 2016, p.2). The most recent development in the country is a signed cease fire agreement from December 2017 which has not brought any visible change on the ground (Sudan Tribune, 2017).

Despite the on the surface political intention towards peace, South Sudan hold place 156 of 163 countries in terms of positive peace index (IEP, 2017, p.15), which is a deterioration from place 149 the year before (IEP, 2016, p.43). Worth mentioning is that both neighbouring states as well as foreign states have an interests in the development of South Sudan due to oil interests (Hendricks and Lucy, 2013 p.2). United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has been present in the area since independence, replacing United Nation Mission in Sudan (UNMIS). Since then both the size and the mandate have changed as a consequence to the development of the conflict (Virk and Nganje, 2016 p.26). For instance extended from existing peacekeeping operations via inter-mission cooperation to complementary force, which served to assist thousands of civilians in the Protection of Civilians Sites (PoC) that suddenly emerged inside various UN camps in the country (UNMISS, n.d.).

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6 Riek Machar fled the country when the initial conflict broke out (GCT, 2018).
7 Shortly after Riek Machar official FVP again fled the country in July 2016, Salva Kiir replaced him with Taban Deng Gai. An exchange which legitimacy has been questioned, and was not well received neither by Riek Machar nor the majority of the opposition (HSBA, 2016, p.1). Despite that Deng gained the recognition from the international community (Ibid., p.3).
8 A PoC is an Internally Displaced Person (IDP) camp protected by UN troops. When the violence erupted, six of these camps emerged around the country as civilian fled for their life into UN personnel bases. Four and half years later some civilians still live in these camps “protected” by UN.
4.2 Cultural context

South Sudan is a highly diverse country, the home of 64 different tribes\(^9\) which differ in terms of language, traditional beliefs\(^{10}\), customs and geographical location (Annex A) (Gurtong, 2018). The two main tribes are Dinka and Nuer, sitting on power throughout the country. Consequently the president is Dinka and the former FVP as well as present FVP are Nuer. The tribal groups are spread out heterogeneously through the presently 32 states that recently were divided to match with tribal majority as well as access to natural resources (Figure 1) (Mutasa and Virk, 2017, p.15). Different regions of the country have been affected in different ways, commonly linked to ethnicity and historical relations as well as distribution of natural resources (Virk and Nganje, 2016, p.15).

South Sudan is a tribal society, along with tribal affiliation, family relations and area of origin plays a major role in identity (Thomas, 2015, p.98). Majority of the population lives in rural areas and are pastoralists or farmers. At times there are violent clashes between the two groups due to disagreements on crops, grassing land or water. Cows play an important role

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\(^9\) For further reading see [www.gurtong.org](http://www.gurtong.org) / Culture / People’s Profile

\(^{10}\) Even though there is diversity in terms of religion in the country that has no major affect on the present conflict.
and are basically used as currency in rural areas. For instance to be able to get married a man needs to pay dowry in cows to his future wife’s father. No cows no wife (Warner, 2017). Of these reasons cattle raiding is common and it can turn bloody (Mutasa and Virk, 2017, p.3). Intensified by the high availability of small arms due to decades of conflict and the revenge culture of South Sudan, where the concept of an eye for an eye, or rather a life for a life is implemented (Virk and Nganje, 2016, p.20). The persistent inter-/intra-communal conflicts are deeply intertwined with the past and present civil war development (Mutasa and Virk, 2017, p.18). This contributed to insecurity also before the present war started, along with past grievances due to uneven distribution of resources (Virk and Nganje, 2016, p.15). With such a variety of nationalities and with past history of injustice, it is difficult to create one united identity.

4.3 Present situation
The region of southern Sudan has been neglected for long, since the colonial time of the British. This unfortunately did not change to the better during the Sudan time (Thomas, 2015, pp.85-86). South Sudan is in many aspects very different from big brother Sudan11 which was one factor of the neglect. Oil findings in 1974 awakened an interest from Sudan as well as other actors (Ibid., pp.82-83). The region is extremely under developed in terms of infrastructure (Ranganathan and Briceño-Garmendia, 2011, p.7). For instance there is only one route connecting South Sudan to the outside world (Ibid., p.14) and only 1% of the population have access to electricity which is not supplied 24h (Ibid., p.28). Health care wise there is only 1 medical doctor/66,000 people, unevenly distributed in the country (WHO, 2014, p.9). Education is lacking behind with expected years of schooling 4,9 (UNDP, 2016, p.200), a literacy rate of 31,9% and government expenditure on education 0,8% of GDP (Ibid., p.233). Of this reason external state and non-state actors like INGOs and private commercial companies have an extended influence, for good and for bad, on the development of the country. For instance (I)NGO’s are responsible for 80% of the health care delivered (WHO, 2014, p.8). There are more than 5,000 (I)NGOs registered in South Sudan (Virk and Nganje, 2016, p.9). Despite the crucial assistance there is an increase of both bureaucratic impediments (Ibid., p.10) and targeted attacks towards aid. In 2015 and 2016 South Sudan was the country with most reported violent security incidents involving aid workers (AWSR, 2017, p.2) hampering even more an already obstructed system. In addition to that, there are

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11 For instance Sudan and South Sudan does not share ethnicity, religion, language nor culture.
reports of both government and opposition side infiltrating (I)NGOs, which negatively affect the perception and accountability of (I)NGOs (Virk and Nganje, 2016, p.10).

The neglect has taken its toll, and so has the conflict, South Sudan is counted as 181 out of 188 countries in terms of Human Development Index (which is a decrease since previous years) (UNDP, 2016, p.200) and a Gini coefficient of 46.3 (Ibid., p.209). 89 % of the population are expected to be in multidimensional poverty (Ibid., p.219). The population of South Sudan is estimated to 12 million. At the moment 1/3 (4 million+) of those lives as Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) or refuges in neighbouring states (UNHCR, 2018). Not to forget the mental and physical consequences of such a prolonged dire situation, various studies showing a 40-53% prevalence of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (Amnesty International, 2016, p.17).

4.4 Peace agreement in relation to peace-building from below

The process leading up to the signed peace agreement for South Sudan 2015 became very elite driven (Virk and Nganje, 2016, p.23). This mirrors the absences of the grassroots in the actual document. In terms of implementation, the civil society got a limited role (Mutasa and Virk, 2017, p.11; Virk and Nganje, 2016, p.24). Civilians are considered mostly as victims that need to be compensated (IGAD, 2015, pp.40-41). With a detailed focus on justice, both with a Hybrid Court for South Sudan (HCSS) (Virk and Nganje, 2016, p.3) but also opening up for traditional courts. Except the detailed plans regarding justice there are no explicit implementation arrangements for other parts of reconciliation, like trauma healing. There are phrasings showing good intentions but difficult to put into place without an explicit plan. This could be due to justice being easier to frame then grievance.

Not to forget the consequences of the relapse to violence shortly after the signature of the agreement and the absence of a major actor, hampering even the political implementation. That in addition is criticised for being more beneficial for the elite (Mutasa and Virk, 2017, p.2). The relapse to intense armed conflict in less than a year since the signing of the agreement indicates the failure of addressing the underlying causes of the conflict (Ibid., p.11).

12 Traditional courts are very dominant in parts of South Sudan and very important due to strong cultural influences (Virk and Nganje, 2016, p.12).
5. Empirical data – INGO national staff in South Sudan

Five semi structured interviews were carried out with locally employed INGO staff, based in Juba, South Sudan. Though all live and work in Juba, they have been born in other parts of the country. The common factors for all interviewees were employer and gender (all male). Otherwise there were differences of positions, educational level, age and ethnicity. More interviews would have given better comprehensive insights. On the other hand there was quite a harmony of answers, with a slight divergence in terms of global view between different educational levels. The questions discussed can be found in the Interview guide (Annex D).

The view on the future of South Sudan was rather bleak due to the complex situation with tribal diversity and the major actors of the conflict being in different locations. Still, the conflict is not only viewed as a conflict between two rivals but has roots deeper down in the society. Although international and regional support was appreciated, in the end there was an agreement that peace-building should come from within and from below. The local hierarchal system was explained as one key to peace, with the need to implement inclusive meetings on all administrative levels to ensure complete representation, which is not ensured at the moment. One interviewee strongly argued that the educated youth needed to be included. As many governmental authorities lack education and do not want to make room for the new generation. Civil society was mentioned as another important actor for peace-building from below. For instance (I)NGOs providing basic services to the population and religious groups advocating for peaceful solutions after inter-communal clashed and advising the government in terms of reconciliation. Interestingly the view on justice, for revenge killing, got two vastly different solutions: one arguing for death penalty as it would be the only punishment harsh enough to satisfy the victim’s family and therefore stop the cycle of violence. While another opted for educational exposure and forgiveness as the solution. Clearly the common question in terms of peace versus justice remains a challenge in reconciliation.

Regarding the role of locally employed (I)NGO staff in contributing to sustainable peace. There was an agreement that NS can contribute to peace, with the advantage of being exposed to (I)NGO experiences and skills as well as access to information from across the country. In difference to the grassroots who have very limited information and understanding and are busy with basic survival needs. This echoes the idea of Lederach (1997, p.52). While digging more into the specific agency – there did not seem to be a big difference from other
We’ve seen a new trend in education, where instead of focusing on the influence of the staff, the emphasis is on individual network, positions, financial level, etc., rather than the factor of (I)NGO employment. In addition, organisations have different reputations and there is mistrust (both from community and colleagues) due to some staff acting with political interests which hampers the view of humanitarian actors and their representational role. Though one interviewee pointed out the benefit of (I)NGO staff having income and contributing to the local development by using the money in the market, which gives a ripple effect of social development.

The suggested main contribution of (I)NGO staff was to perform as role models and advocate for peace and forgiveness. In voice of one interviewee: “We’ve given too much chance to doing bad. We should turn around and start to give chance to doing good. [...] To our friends colleagues family and neighbours. [...] I look at it as a kind of a chain, everyone needs to be a part of it. You need to hook one person, another person will hook the other. [...] If you break you need to hook back and maintain” (interviewee #2). Starting small, in their house and in their home community where the (I)NGO staff earns respect and definitely has a voice. Specifically in the rural areas where the population lacks education and respect those coming back visiting from the capital: “Because we are their boys and their girls, and our ears and our brain where opened by the pen and the book” (interviewee #5). This can be translated into working as a connector and creating “everyday peace”. However, these are roles and behaviours that any educated civilian can take on, and not necessarily only (I)NGO staff. Two interviewees, though, wanted to take it one step further and suggested creating a committee consistent of (I)NGO NS raising issues and moving around the country sharing information.

All interviewees pointed out the difficulty for South Sudanese to move freely in their own country due to ethnic tension, a risk that is not mitigated by (I)NGO employment. The clear advantage of international staff is that they can move freely in the country, getting guidance from local staff in each location. There were requests both on the authorities to ensure safe passage but also for (I)NGOs to ensure balanced activities between various ethnical areas to mitigate risks. There was a 100% agreement that there is a risk for NS working for (I)NGOs in South Sudan. Though it was seen as justifiable for the greater good, two interviewees pointed out that even though the work brings risk, it also brings salary which helps to cover needs for their family. The general points correspond well with earlier research, seen in the literature review, with some context specific characteristics.
6. Analyses

Based on the indicators for human development and linked to Miller’s state-to-nation balance it is not surprising that such a weak and diverse country ended up in armed conflict. Taking into account repeated human rights violations by both sides (Mutasa and Virk, 2017, p.13), past grievances and cultural influences, adding layers to the conflict. It is clear that all levels of society are affected by the conflict and therefore the solution needs to include all levels in society (Ibid., p.11) to gain ownership not only of the conflict but also of the solutions. Despite visible political effort to unite the country, for instance with the slogan of “One people, One nation” (Figure 2), unity cannot be imposed upon people, it need to be built from the ground - moving from a political peace process to a social grounded process. Hence the need for peace-building that touches upon all levels in the society and with multiple angles for reconciliation to achieve sustainable peace. There need to be a comprehensive approach including many different actors, assuming various roles and responsibilities at different time of the process (Lederach, 1997, p.84). Peace-building takes time, hence the reason to focus on internal actors.

The peace agreement once signed is very fragile and the entire context is extremely sensitive for dividers, there is therefore a need to continually observe the situation and act accordingly. External actors with a longer distance to the causes, play a role in this. Regional actors have been giving support in terms of facilitating peace negotiations, arranging peace workshops and putting political pressure (Mutasa and Virk, 2017, p.4). (I)NGOs also play a part, due to their extended presence in the country and comprehensive role of delivering basic services to the population. Until this responsibility is fully adopted by governmental structures (which will take years). Humanitarian national staff makes out a vast amount of employed staff in South Sudan and are an untapped resource.

Their advantage cannot be neglected, as local experts of the culture, context and history of both the setting and the conflict. The innate network and interest of the outcome due to social
bounds should not be downplayed either, for the benefit it has for (I)NGOs. South Sudan is an extremely tribal society, with incredibly weak state institutions. In these settings, personal relationships are particularly important. Depending on the employing organisation (I)NGO staff can be seen upon with respect, while the government might be seen as corrupted and not the first line of response due to the collapsed social system. This has been observed also in other contexts (Anderson, Brown and Jean, 2012, p.86). This might lead to a higher credibility and increase of voice while interacting with beneficiaries as well as family members, neighbours, and own home community. The NS becomes ambassadors which could also act as connectors in the society. Basically they can build relationships to advocate for peace. The importance of relationships is thoroughly supported by Lederach (1997, p.94).

In South Sudan, at least some of the (I)NGO staff have a middle level role in terms of access to the community, via beneficiaries and as being a part of it themselves. They also have access to local authorities due to their work. In the present situation with lack of employment and stable income (including governmental employees), (I)NGO staff with regular salary all of a sudden places themselves over the grassroots’ daily struggle for survival (Virk and Nganje, 2016, p.11). The combination of financial benefit together with the humanitarian sector’s tendency to hire educated, English speaking individuals raise their status, and especially in rural areas become a source of respect which acknowledge their voice. This could be useful, at the time when the social system starts to pick up and providing services again. The NS could serve as a mediator between a humanitarian system used to run the show and a government eager to take on their responsibility (Anderson, Brown and Jean, 2012, p.90).

In addition, many bigger (I)NGOs or those being a part of UN umbrella have activities throughout the country, commonly with local staff hired in each location. At times, staff members from across the country are brought together for trainings, workshops, meeting, etc. This can create a “trust network” due to the combining factor of all being humanitarian staff, either within one organisation or for instance within a cluster. This might at the moment bridge external difference (CDA, 2010, p.3). This type of exposure can bring some understanding of other’s views in this vastly divided country. Though, the strength of this connector can be questioned - sharing work experience does not necessarily create an instant bound between people. Not to forget other downsides such as common reports on competition between organisations (Mutasa and Virk, 2017, p.28). Along with the infiltration of conflict
affiliated actors in organisations which adds to the distrust both for the community and among staff (Virk and Nganje, 2016, p.10). In addition movements of some staff are highly restricted in parts of the country, due to tribal affiliation. Persecutions on air strips are common. The common harassments and targeted security incidents does limit the space for NS’s voice.

Which brings the other side of the coin: not all organisations carry out on the ground what is planned in their strategies or what the beneficiaries expect. This can seriously hamper the view of national aid workers as they serve as a source of accountability in contact with the beneficiaries (interviewee #2). Not all organisations have the same reputation and it may vary over time and location, which influences the credibility of the staff, meaning that not everyone’s voice will have the same strength. In addition, the same factors that can give enhanced respect in terms of employment and salary can just as well be turned around if the rest of the society does not believe there is a transparent employment procedure. This is badly perceived in a context with high competition for work (Anderson, Brown and Jean, 2012, p.93; Virk and Nganje, 2016, p.11). The regular salary can in turn, become a security risk for the individual staff due to the increased risk of robbery because of the dire situation and general lack of income.

With the increase of targeted attacks towards (I)NGOs in an already tensed setting there is an extensive need to keep the NS safe. Even though interviewees stated that risks were justifiable for the greater good, this is still an important responsibility for the employer. In general, NS are more targeted then international staff. This is also true in South Sudan. Since the start of the civil war until April 26th 2018, 221 NS and 37 international staff were involved in some kind of (reported) security incident (AWSD, 2018) highlighting the unbalance of risks.

Indeed NS can act as ambassadors and can develop a lot of insights due to extended exposure, not only from national colleagues but also from international staff and beneficiaries, which can be shared with the surroundings. Exposure though goes two ways and it is just as important in both directions. Cooperation and exchange of ideas are extremely important to reach new conclusions. To transform a conflict there is a need to understand it, which demands information. Though, it is naive to think that all exposure leads to empathy and new insights. One study shows that curiosity is more important than exposure alone, to be receptive for new ideas (Kahan, et al., 2017, p.193). Exposure can just as well reinforce negative prejudices and therefore not work as a positive factor.
The advantages of locally employed (I)NGO staff cannot be neglected nor the need, at least in humanitarian activities. However in terms of peace-building it is not clear if these advantages are as significant in comparison with other civilians, and if they weigh up from the disadvantages. There are clearly opportunities to act as a connector but if that is true for all (I)NGO staff is doubtable, and rather linked to individual pre-conditions. There is not enough evidence to say either or. NS’s role might be just the same as for any other civilian, to be a role model and create “everyday peace”. (I)NGO should still apply the “Do No Harm” principle and enforce connectors, whoever they may be, in the society.

All advantages can be turn into disadvantages in this setting and influence seems to be more individual based then group based. Therefore, no clear answer can be given to the research question.

6.1 Recommendations and further lines of research

It is clear that the role of both civilians and (I)NGO staff should be thoroughly investigated. There is hardly any literature on the agency of the grassroots groups. For the academic world to analyse further if there is an actually role for (I)NGO staff, and if so how that can be used in a productive way for sustainable peace. To reach a more comprehensive understanding, field studies would be the best approach. Observing and interviewing people face to face. Focus group discussion would probably be a good approach, at least in South Sudan. Not only directing (I)NGO staff, but also those they interact with, to get a holistic view. As well as doing similar study of non (I)NGO staff, as a control group. Additionally, there are specific NGOs focusing on “everyday peace” and to strengthen the grassroots. These groups could provide valuable understanding and insights for further academic research.

Recommendations to the humanitarian world are for (I)NGOs to acknowledge the role of the NS as local experts, with long-term interests in the situation, and therefore take into consideration their influence on activities. This means ensuring to not enforce dividing behaviours according to the “Do No Harm” concept and encourage exchange between locations as a connecting measure. It would be naive to think all (I)NGO will engage in explicit peace building activities, but as the conflict is affecting all parts of life anything that become an “island of peace” or an “everyday peace” behaviour is a win.
Conclusion

The term peace-building from below is rather broad and seems more of a buzz word than an accountability term. Seemingly the only definition is “peace-building” activities by a non-state actor. Some focus on the established civil society, for instance aid or faith based organisations, other include cooperate businesses in the equations, while others takes it all the way to the grassroots, including the general population and the so called “everyday peace”. Despite this the idea of using bottom-up approaches to create sustainable peace is undisputed.

In South Sudan setting, based on present and historical situation an all-inclusive approach for sustainable peace is recommended. This is acknowledged and encouraged by local and regional actors. Despite the persistent and extensive (I)NGO dependency, the role of locally employed staff is an untapped resource in the process. Because of their employment they can gain respected in the society, and with an extended exposure to information and knowledge achieve greater understanding of the complex context and the different actors and topics involved. This combination makes them capable to act as connectors in the society. However, the humanitarian sector is not only viewed positively and extended security risks are a clear disadvantage for individuals and activities. Frankly, even though there are indications, if it is the (I)NGO employment that makes a significant difference or sole individual characteristics, is not clear based on this study. There is not a lot of literature available for the specific subject. The primary data collection had limitation in terms of quantity and organisations represented, to give a representative result. Therefore, the major recommendation is to further examine, how exactly locally employed (I)NGO staff can be a catalyst for peace. This should be made by thorough fieldwork, examining the view from both (I)NGO staff and beneficiaries and society as a whole.

In terms of embracing the bottom-up approach in South Sudan. Further research should focus even more on the additional factors needed to achieve sustainable peace, on all levels. On top of the signed peace agreement and advocate for the implementation in reality. Not only for (I)NGO staff, but taking it one step further, by answering the question: what does the civilian society need to create peace on the ground? The population in these settings already know about resilience and resistance, as they have been doing it for years. How can they contribute with their experience and knowledge? Obviously this is not a new idea, but there is room for more understanding in a world with increasing civilian targeting.
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Peace-building from below

Anette Uddqvist


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Figure 2: PaanLuel Wël Media Ltd., 2016. South Sudan nation is an album of tribal association. [electronic print] Available at: <https://paanluelwel.com/2016/01/20/south-sudan-is-an-album-of-tribal-association/> [Accessed 26 April 2018]

Annex A: Map – Distribution of Ethnic Groups in Southern Sudan

Source: OCHA, 2009
Annex B: Information sheet for interviewees

Information sheet

Exploring the role of INGO national staff in contributing to sustainable peace in South Sudan.

My name is Anette Uddqvist, I am studying a master in “Humanitarian Action and Conflict” at Uppsala University, Sweden. For my master thesis “Peace-building from below – The role of locally employed INGO staff in contributing to sustainable peace in South Sudan” I am trying to establish how humanitarian national staff can contribute to sustainable peace due to their role as INGO staff. I am trying to find the power of the locals in facilitating peace.

With sustainable peace I mean much more than just absence of active fighting between the warring parties and signed peace agreement. I refer to a situation when the population on the ground live in peace with each other based on to society-wide relations. Where justice has been reached and there are no hard feelings between opponents and no reason to once again start fighting for the same reason as before. To achieve this situation the entire society needs to be involved, but different groups might have different influence and role in this.

I would like to do individual interviews with INGO national staff, to find out your personal view on academic research on the topic of peace-building from below and your personal view on your own role as a NGO worker in contributing to suitable peace. There is no right or wrong answers.

Each participant will be asked a number of questions. The broad themes have been shared beforehand. Depending on the answers, additional questions can be added. The participation is completely voluntary, the participant is free to choose to not answer certain questions or to entirely leave the study at any point. For those who chose to continue, there might be a need to re-connect to some interviewees to ask further clarification questions.

The answers work as a reality control of the academic findings and will be presented in my master thesis. The final thesis will be published online on the Swedish Digital Academic Archive (DiVA). Due to privacy reasons, no individual names will be share in the thesis. Neither will the individual answers be shared in such a way that it is possible to identify the person who gave the answer. In case of using quotes in the thesis, it will be displayed with a number. Only the author will know which number belongs to which person. Simple transcriptions will be kept by the author, in private, for 5 years. If requested the final result can be shared with the interviewees.

Thank you for reading through this information and if you chose to participate please sign the consent form attached.

For any further information contact Anette Uddqvist:
Annex C: Consent form for interviewees

Consent form for interview participants

Each form was produced in two copies (one for the participant/one for the researcher)
I have read the attached information, and it was explain to me prior to the interview. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study
Print Name of Participant__________________________________________

Signature of Participant __________________________________________
Date (day/month/year)____________________________________________

Statement by the researcher
I have accurately explained the information sheet to the potential participant, and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant understands all the information about this project. I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been forced into giving consent, the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

Print Name of Researcher: __Anette Uddqvist_______________________

Signature of Researcher:___________________________________________
Date (day/month/year)____________________________________________

Contact information: E-mail address #__________ /Phone number #__________
Annex D: Interview guide

Interview questions to discuss with (I)NGO national staff, regarding their role in contributing to sustainable peace in South Sudan.

- Background questions:
  - Name, gender, age, birth area.
  - Occupation, working humanitarian for how long?

- How do you perceive the future of South Sudan (short-term and long-term)?
  - What/who can affect the situation and move towards sustainable peace?
  - Do you think civilians in general are represented in the peace process in South Sudan?
  - Do you think South Sudan population is ready for sustainable peace?
  - Do you have an interest in contributing to sustainable peace?
  - In a perfect world, if you as an individual could change anything what would that be?

- Do you think you in your role as NGO national staff, and with the experiences you got, can contribute to sustainable peace?
  - If yes - how? Can you give me examples?
  - Do you any have personal experience of actions you (or someone you know) taken towards sustainable peace?
  - If no - what is needed for NGO national staff to have an influence?
  - What/Who can make this change happen?
  - Do you think all NGO national staff can have an influence?
  - What would an ideal situation be for you, to be able to contribute to sustainable peace?
  - What are the biggest differences between you as a NGO national staff and other civilians in terms of possibility to contribute to sustainable peace?
  - What are the biggest differences between you as a NGO national staff and international staff in terms of possibility to contribute to sustainable peace?
  - What makes an NGO national staff having an advantage/disadvantage?
  - Do you think using this advantage can put you at risk?
  - If yes – how/why?
  - Is that justifiable for the greater good?

- Is there anything else you would like to share regarding this topic, that I did not ask about?

Thank you / Anette
**Annex E: List of interviewees**

Simple list to differentiate interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Years of humanitarian work experience with (I)NGOs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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