



The Spectrum of Faith in Trauma Healing in Post-Conflict Reconstruction in the Great Lakes Region

Martin Ouma,¹

¹ *Corresponding author

Abstract

Received: 2 January 2026
Revised: 12 February 2026
Accepted: 19 March 2026
Published: 11 May 2026

Citation: Ouma, M. (2026). The spectrum of faith in trauma healing in post-conflict reconstruction in the great lakes region. *National Security: A Journal of the National Defence University-Kenya*, 4(1), 144–160
<https://doi.org/10.64403/rmf41433>

Copyright: © 2026 by the authors. Submitted for possible open access publication.

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of NDU-K and/or the editor(s). NDU-K and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.

Faith Spectrum as a construct of post-war reconstruction manifests under operational scale, liturgical praxis, and relational ethics, which, if well-structured and efficiently coordinated, lead to successful social restoration and realisation of desired peacebuilding goals. The objective of this study is to examine the roles and mechanisms through which the spectrum of faith, as defined in this study, represents the convergence of Biblical understanding, psychological support, and peacebuilding, and how it can be applied in post-conflict reconstruction in the Great Lakes Region. The Great Lakes region hosts a dozen distinct ethnic groups and over 250 ethnic communities. The region has experienced a myriad of conflicts that have led to the displacement of the human population. Most peacebuilding strategies applied in the region have been unsuccessful. This study, therefore, adopts an eclectic approach that integrates a spectrum of theological, psychological, diplomatic, and peacebuilding frameworks as a model for a holistic peacebuilding approach. This goal is further achieved through the theoretical frame of Restorative Justice Theory (RJT) and religious Track II diplomacy. The study adopted a qualitative-priority, mixed-methods design. This specific framework was chosen because the research objective is centred on the thematic exploration of deep-seated psychological and spiritual constructs that cannot be fully captured through numerical data alone. The study concludes that the spectrum of faith model challenges traditional peacebuilding interventions by creating holistic and comprehensive healing methodologies. The study recommends that the spectrum of faith model be adopted as part of the governance framework by conflict-prone nations in the Great Lakes region, due to its social ethics and non-violent means of reconstructing the social fabric severed by conflict. There is an urgent need for the regional organisations to work in collaboration with the various Non-governmental Organizations operating within the Great Lakes region to infuse a spectrum of faith into their operations to guide their participation in peace processes.

Keywords: Conflict, faith spectrum, trauma healing, post-war reconstruction, Great Lakes region

¹ Senior Lecturer, University of Nairobi. Email: martin.ouma@uonbi.ac.ke

Introduction

Faith Spectrum as a construct of post-war reconstruction manifests under operational scale, liturgical praxis, and relational ethics, which, if well constituted and coordinated, leads to successful social restoration and realisation of desired peace-building goals. The objective of this study is to examine the roles and mechanisms through which the spectrum of faith, which, as applied in this study is the convergence of the Biblical understanding, psychological support and peacebuilding as applied in post conflict reconstruction in the Great Lakes Region of Africa.

Faith spectrum is a framework premised on the abilities of religious, psychological, peace-building and diplomatic actors to address complex grievances and express the transformative message of peacebuilding among recovering communities in post-war state-building initiatives. Payne (2020) argues that the concept of faith spectrum is dependent upon motivated actors' abilities to leverage localised and relatable circumstances to identify conflict vectors as well as conciliatory steps that resonate with recovering communities. More still, faith spectrum may instil moral character, social ethics, and non-violent means to reconstruct the social fabric that might have been severed by conflict. Faith Spectrum has the ability to synthesise spiritual and social needs, when well-thought-out, and may shape perceptions of mental illness and the healing process (Naama, 2025), thus enhancing survivors' understanding of varied expressions of forgiveness and making sound judgment.

As a component of the faith spectrum, trauma healing has the ability to recall traumatic information, make connections between spiritual facts, draw conclusions from suffering, identify moral injury, and use theological reasoning (Wood, 2025). This study adopts Amos's (2023) definition of trauma healing as the ability to process and comprehend the emotional pain presented in a post-conflict context, to understand the moral injury, identifying important spiritual details, making inferences about divine presence, and synthesising hope across generations. Trauma Healing, therefore, enables the development of strong resilience attitudes, which are essential for societal success in all levels of reconstruction.

The survivors with such abilities and knowledge, therefore, will understand the root of suffering, summarise key grievances in their emotions and make inferences based on the theological material, achieve the goals of peace, extend the knowledge and experiences to the community, construct meaning during and after recovery, and adapt the strategies that match the context and their goals. This study focused on the Great Lakes region, which is the geographical space that spans a series of major lakes in the East African Rift valley, including lakes like Albert, Edward, Kivu, Malawi, Tanganyika, Turkana and Victoria (See figure 1 below). The region is the source of 25% of the world's surface fresh water and supports 50 million people across ten countries (Emmanuel, 2023). The Great Lakes region is home to a dozen distinct ethnic groups and over 250 ethnic communities. The region has experienced a myriad of conflicts that have led to the displacement of thousands of the human population. This study has established that most of the peacebuilding initiatives applied in the region have not been very effective. This study therefore adopts a unique eclectic approach that integrates a spectrum of theological, psychological, diplomatic, and peacebuilding frameworks as a

model for holistic peacebuilding. This is further achieved through the theoretical frame of Restorative Justice Theory (RJT) and religious Track II diplomacy.

Figure 1

Map Showing the Great Lakes Region



Source: Google Maps (2026)

Theoretical Framework

To achieve an eclectic, integrative approach of theological, psychological, diplomatic, and peace-building framework, the study was anchored on Restorative Justice Theory (RJT) and religious Track II diplomacy. Restorative justice theory, as proposed by Ouma et al. (2023) and expounded by practitioners like Denis (2019), holds that crime and violent conflicts are fundamentally a violation of relationships rather than just a transgression against the state. Thus, justice is processed not only through a retributive lens of punishment, but through a restorative chain of healing where each act of truth-telling and reparation is either integrated into the social fabric or addressed through communal mediation. Furthermore, RJT holds that social harmony is acquired, stored, and applied through the use of the following three stages: encounter, reparation, and reintegration.

In this study, RJT provides a theoretical framework to explain how survivors and perpetrators learn to comprehend complex historical grievances and coexist. RJT has been used effectively to study peacebuilding processes, such as the Christian Gacaca, because it recognises that to process complex trauma, individuals must engage in multiple cognitive and spiritual operations like truth-telling, acknowledging harm, storing new narratives of peace, and extracting lessons for the future. RJT also considers the factors that influence the development of post-war reconstruction, such as prior cultural knowledge, the structure of the community, the religious context, and transformative memory. By understanding the components of RJT, peacebuilders

and religious leaders can design interventions that are more effective in helping communities acquire, store, and utilise the knowledge of peace (Denis, 2019).

The Religious Track II Diplomacy theory, as discussed by Odak (2021) and Çupi (2018) supports the relationship between faith spectrum, trauma healing and post-conflict reconstruction. This theory holds that religious leaders and faith-based actors possess a unique moral-social standing that allows them to facilitate unofficial negotiations when formal Track I political channels are stalled. As applied in this study, this theory recognises that peace is not merely a technical solution but a spiritual and relational praxis involving trust-building and values-led dialogue. Since diplomacy is the established, peaceful method of influencing the decisions and behaviour of foreign governments and entities through dialogue, negotiation, and representation (Corcino, 2025), this theory is therefore an important academic tool for analysis in this study, which spans a region covered by ten countries.

Methodology

The study was anchored in Kenya, serving as the primary entry point for accessing refugee populations within the Great Lakes region. While the physical data collection was coordinated from Kenya, the study extended to displaced persons originating from or residing in South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda, and Burundi. This was achieved through a strategic network system and snowballing technique, leveraging the interconnected nature of refugee communities. Specifically, the researcher utilised churches in Kenya as the mobilisation hubs to identify and connect with prospective respondents across the region. This approach allowed for a cross-national data set that captured the unique spiritual and socio-political dynamics of the Great Lakes refugee diaspora while maintaining a centralised operational base in Nairobi.

The study adopted a qualitative-priority, mixed-methods design. This specific framework was chosen because the research objective is centred on the thematic exploration of deep-seated psychological and spiritual constructs that could not be fully captured through numerical data alone (Dehalwar & Sharma, 2024). The study further utilised a purposive, non-probability sampling framework, integrating network-based mobilisation and snowballing to access the refugee population. The sample consisted of 20 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), with a target of 15 participants per group, resulting in a robust total sample of 300 participants. To ensure a comprehensive evaluation of the faith-peace nexus, participants were segmented into three specific cohorts, beginning with representatives of houses of worship, which included clergy and lay leaders providing front-line spiritual care. This was followed by refugee focal persons, comprising community administrators and elders acting as guardians of homegrown wisdom, and finally, students, consisting of youth participants aged 18–25 whose engagement is considered critical for long-term regional stability.

The study focused on qualitative analysis due to its ability to provide deeper insights. Data was grouped into key emerging themes from which the study examined the emerging trends

regarding the spectrum of faith in trauma healing in post conflict reconstruction in the Great Lakes region.

Findings and Discussion

The Influence of Faith Spectrum on Post-War Reconstruction

The study coding approach for the theme characterised systematic exploration of FGD texts to demonstrate the influence of the faith spectrum on trauma recovery. This follows a deductive identification of predetermined nodes (Jones, 2020). The presentation is logically arranged, beginning with Faith as a Source of Meaning as the foundational theme linking spiritual conviction and psychological restoration. Other themes include Faith-based Mechanisms for Healing and the Faith Spectrum as a Risk Factor.

The coding for this study was conducted as a thematic analysis, which characterised systematic exploration of naturally occurring text from FGD discussions to demonstrate the influence of the faith spectrum on post-war recovery, following a deductive identification of pre-determined nodes, referred to as dimensions (Jones, 2020). The presentation is grouped logically for readability, beginning with the Moral Authority as the first theme linking the faith spectrum and post war reconstruction. Other themes are Social Capital, Conflict Transformation and service provision. The dominant notes under each theme are presented therein.

Faith Spectrum is a Moral Authority

The analysis of the qualitative data establishes that the moral authority of religious leaders is not merely a cultural preference but a functional prerequisite for post-war reconstruction. Faith spectrum is a fundamental psychological gateway through which stable governance may be legitimised. The high recurrence of the node of Relational Ethics among the FGD discussions reveals that survivors view formal legal frameworks as structurally incomplete without spiritual adjudication. This discovery aligns with Obondi (2018), who posits that churches leverage scriptural authority to speak with a credibility that political actors, often tainted by the conflict, cannot replicate. It further corroborates Meruțiu (2025), asserting that the moral voice through faith leaders is an important predictor of national reconciliation. Supporting this narrative, a key informant asserted, "*the police look at the law,*" signalling that holistic and effective reconstruction only takes root when leaders "*look at the soul.*"

The findings further reveal a moral hierarchy among war survivors, where the reduction of local violence is contingent upon the perception of religious actors as non-partisan moral prefects. This ethical legitimacy suggests that secular peace proposals often lack the inert force required for post-conflict reconstruction unless a moral heart narrative commonly driven by faith-based communities underpins them. This aligns with Tsuruta's (2015) findings in the DRC, where religious networks provide a resilient hub for mediation when the state is perceived as predatory or absent. Similarly, the results reflect the work of Githigaro (2012) on

the NCKK in Kenya, proving that moral standing is a strategic tool used to convene adversaries and transform national dialogues from sectarian disputes into ethical imperatives.

Furthermore, the results highlight a critical moral contradiction in which purely secular judicial models are frequently dismissed as culturally ineffective unless they are backed by a spiritual mandate. This finding is highly consistent with Kimani (2017), whose study of Nairobi's informal settlements demonstrated that where political brokers fail due to perceived bias, faith-based groups utilise trust relationships to reconcile rival factions. This affirms that the faith spectrum serves as the ultimate source of relational ethics, bridging polarised ethnic divides through the perceived impartiality of the clergy. Ultimately, the research reveals that moral authority is a functional necessity and remains a primary mechanism for dismantling structural violence and providing the ethical architecture for inclusive human rights reforms in a post conflict recovering society.

Faith Spectrum as a Social Capital

The study observed that the faith spectrum serves as a robust repository of Social Capital, given its dense networks of trust and reciprocity across believing communities. As such, the faith spectrum may function as a trusted governance system that is less polarising and predatory. The high recurrence of the node of operational scale, which highlights the capital potential of religious associations to act as a bridge between belligerent groups within traumatised communities. This discovery aligns with Tsuruta (2015), who observed in the DRC that religious networks derive their mediation legitimacy from long-term presence. It further corroborates the findings of Githigaro (2012), who argued that the mobilisation of church networks as social capital was the most significant predictor of de-escalating tensions during Kenya's post-election violence.

The research further uncovers a structural reality where religious social capital is the special vehicle for conflict transformation. Initially articulated as a binder for social cohesion, the data reveal that this capital is operationalised through joint prayers, peace rallies, and interfaith dialogue forums. This study reveals that the efficacy of these interventions, such as the reduction of ethnic clashes in Kuresoi, is rooted in the ability of faith actors to transform intergroup narratives from suspicion to coexistence, as documented by Oduor, Ouma and Abuya (2025). This aligns with Brown, Mena and Brown's (2024) Triple Nexus theory, which posits that in fragile states, faith-based social capital allows religious actors to move seamlessly between humanitarian relief and post-conflict peace building, thereby institutionalising peace gains through local mediation structures.

Furthermore, the results highlight that religious social capital is a functional necessity for transitional justice and communal harmony. This is particularly evident in the reintegration of ex-combatants and gang members, where political brokers often fail due to perceived bias. As noted in the study of Nairobi's informal settlements by Kimani (2017) and the interfaith grassroots work in Yumbe, Uganda (Kafeero, 2025), the legitimacy of faith-based groups flows from their everyday interactions. This validates the key informant's assertion that "*in the church, there is no Hutu or Tutsi,*" illustrating that faith-based social capital provides the

inclusive vocabulary necessary for restorative justice. The research again reveals that this capital is not a static asset but a dynamic tool that shapes societal narratives around forgiveness and accountability, a sentiment echoed by Mahmududdin (2024) regarding the role of religious symbols in framing national reconciliation.

Faith Spectrum provides a platform for Inclusive Conflict Transformation

The study observed that faith-grounded approaches facilitate significant reductions in local violence by transforming sectarian identities into collaborative social frameworks. The findings suggest that the efficacy of peace-building is not merely a product of secular diplomacy but is deeply rooted in the liturgical praxis and transformative justice mechanisms that allow for emotional and spiritual restoration. The shift in focus from punitive measures to soul reconciliation enables faith-based actors to bridge the gap between formal peace agreements and the lived reality of survivors. In line with the Religious Track II diplomacy as applied in this study, this discourse implies that the orientation of religious commitment, whether inclusive or intolerant, may serve as the primary predictor for communal stability and the success of regional reconstruction.

An emphasis on transformative justice through dialogues and inter-group trust restores social harmony. This highlights a pervasive sense that formal legal systems are often insufficient without a corresponding spiritual adjudication that addresses the root of ethnic cleavages. A Key Informant noted, *“the police look at the law; the elders and the pastors look at the soul... If the soul is not reconciled, the law is just a piece of paper that will be burnt tomorrow.”* Further evidence of this restorative capacity is found in the use of liturgical praxis as a psychological gateway for transforming attitudes. The results presented in Table 1 rank this as a high-priority intervention because it provides a safe space for communal grief and the reframing of traumatic narratives. A community leader in South Sudan observed that *“in the church, there is no Dinka or Nuer; we are just survivors seeking a way forward together”*, thereby acknowledging the central position of faith spectrum in the healing course.

The transition to inclusive social cohesion illustrates how religious devoutness becomes a positive predictor of peace when combined with tolerance and inclusive governance. The findings indicate that inclusive interfaith bodies legitimise shared governance and reduce political volatility by acting as a buffer against election-related violence. This alignment leverages the neutrality perception that faith actors enjoy, thus acting as a bridge across volatile ethnic lines.

Table 1
Ranks in Faith-Based Peacebuilding Practices

Intervention	Effectiveness Rank	Primary Rationale for Success
Transformative Justice	1 (Highest)	Deep soul-level reconciliation; high community trust.
Liturgical Praxis	2 (High)	Provides a psychological gateway; a safe space for grief.
Interfaith Dialogue	3 (Moderate)	Reduces suspicion; institutionalises peace gains.
Civic Advocacy	4 (Low-Mod)	Limited by political interference; requires state alignment.

Source: Field Data (2026)

This strongly implies that when faith is anchored in shared spiritual values rather than sectarian identity, it creates a triple nexus of humanitarian aid, development, and peace. However, the data also warns that the content of religious messaging is a double-edged sword. As noted by the recurrence of the code relational ethics, success is highest when interventions utilise scriptural teaching to change exclusionary narratives (Alamdari & Alamdari, 2022). On the other hand, the study indicates that despite the high potential for cohesion, the sector remains vulnerable to identity politics if religious leaders are not intentionally non-partisan

Conflict transformation is most sustainable when it moves from punitive justice to restorative harmony. Secular models provide the structural requirements for post-war recovery while faith spectrum provides the moral and emotional legitimacy required to sustain them. The transition from exclusionary practices to interfaith harmony validates that the holistic peace achieved through inclusive spiritual platforms is a necessary bridge to a justice-oriented and stable regional future (Espartinez, 2026).

Faith Spectrum is a paradox of Service Provision

The analysis of the faith spectrum in post-war reconstruction confirms a systemic paradox where religious organisations act as indispensable lifelines for state substitution while simultaneously functioning as potential drivers of sectarian exclusion. The main nodes that featured in the FGDs included provision of healthcare, provision of education facilities and opportunities, which identify church-linked infrastructure as the primary provider of essential services in zones where state capacity has collapsed. This discovery aligns with Collegio Universitario Aspiringenti Medici Missionari (CUAMM) (2024), who observe that FBO-managed facilities in fragile African contexts, particularly the DRC, serve as resilient hubs that maintain continuity of care despite infrastructure gaps. It further corroborates the findings of Akoko and Oben (2006) regarding the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, which illustrates how religious bodies step into roles typically associated with the state, providing food, shelter, and schooling based on a spiritual mandate that fosters a sense of communal belonging.

Initially articulated as a form of humanitarian aspect, the research uncovers a structural reliance on churches to provide critical livelihood kits that sustain life, alongside theological principles

that promote life and cohesion. This study reveals that this integration, as seen in the Borabu–Sotik border region of Kenya (Nyang’au, Ogwora & Ogolla, 2025), is likely to stabilise communities by meeting basic needs while offering counselling and emotional support necessary to cope with trauma. The triple nexus model supports the argument that the church functions as a first responder and a long-term recovery actor, effectively reducing secondary violence by addressing the desperation of vulnerable populations. However, the results highlight a critical and recurring paradox regarding equity of access and identity politics. While FBOs fill vital gaps, the research reveals that this reliance is sometimes compromised by theological selection, where aid becomes a tool for exclusionary patronage. This finding is consistent with Oduor, Ouma and Abuya (2025), who warn that while FBOs enjoy deep trust, the emergence of parallel systems may lead to biased provision of public service and access based on religious affiliation. One focus group sentiment observed, “*help depends on who you pray with,*” illustrating a discriminating habit in meeting universal human-rights standards required for inclusive governance.

Furthermore, the analysis identifies notable gaps in managing ethnoreligious tension, where service provision can inadvertently reinforce group divisions, especially among antagonistic communities. According to Oduor, Ouma and Abuya (2025), when religious leaders discriminate during political crises, the very infrastructure intended for reconstruction can become a barrier that hinders socio-economic development. This affirms that without mandatory transparency and alignment with state policies, faith spectrum remains a source of both salvation and fragmentation. Consequently, the research reveals that for service delivery to contribute to sustainable peace, the lifeline of state substitution must be decoupled from sectarian bias, ensuring that the church’s care capacity supports a pluralistic rather than a fragmented regional future.

Faith Spectrum is a Source of Meaning, Coping, and Resilience in Post Conflict Reconstruction

This study established that healing is fundamentally intertwined with the survivor's faith and beliefs. This perspective provides the core pillar that situates the faith spectrum as an architecture for trauma recovery. The research observed high recurrence of the node of diagnostic frameworks, which reinterprets survivors’ lived experiences of war through a spiritual lens in regaining agency. This position aligns with Skalisky *et al.* (2022), who demonstrated through mixed-methods analysis among displaced refugees that religious coping is uniquely associated with adaptive psychological outcomes and resilience. It further corroborates Jerome *et al.* (2023), who observed that across different traditions, a strong core belief system in a supreme being acting as a powerful, stabilising, and beneficial force that enables survivors to adaptively cope with severe life events.

The research also uncovers structural reliance on spiritual narratives to build integrative coping strategies, particularly regarding living wounds. This significance was observed by a refugee in a Kenyan camp, who stated: “*Only God can promise healing; our prayers are the primary avenue for treating what the war broke.*” This therefore illustrates that faith frames the preferred coping strategies for PTSD, consistent with Ersahin (2022), who found that the strength of religiosity provides significant predictive power in the direction of Post-Traumatic

Growth (PTG). This aligns with the perspective that faith is a protective buffer that supports adaptation, mirroring the ecological framework of Alamdari et al. (2022), which highlights that cultural meanings and values at the individual level are critical for preventing dysfunctional coping strategies and fostering social integration.

Furthermore, the results highlight that religious beliefs are central to the reduction of PTSD symptoms as survivors use faith narratives to reframe traumatic events. This finding is highly consistent with Madigele (2025), who argues that in Sub-Saharan Africa, spirituality is a vital protective factor that, when blended with evidence-based approaches like Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, enhances psychological well-being by modifying negative thought patterns through culturally rooted soulful solutions. However, while faith functions as a resilient resource, the research also notes the complexity identified by Morgan *et al.* (2026) in marginalised South African contexts, where religious norms can paradoxically perpetuate trauma suppression through spiritual bypassing or premature forgiveness if institutionalised practices lack specialised care. The study reveals that faith is a foundational framework for meaning-making, acting as the primary lens through which survivors transform narratives of victimhood into stories of survival and spiritual endurance. This underscores the argument by Orogun (2024) that mental healthcare interventions in Africa are deeply rooted in the quality of religious conversations, emphasising the need for collaborations that integrate spiritual care as a form of compassion science to achieve improved well-being.

Trauma Healing in Faith Spectrum is a Precondition for Reconciliation in Post Conflict Reconstruction

The study establishes that trauma healing is a functional prerequisite for breaking cycles of generational revenge and ensuring long-term regional stability. The psychological restoration of citizens serves as a primary predictor of their ability to engage constructively in formal peacebuilding. This discovery aligns with Corcino (2025), who, through an analytical framework applied to NGO projects in Rwanda, argues that trauma healing interventions are essential because they ensure the non-recurrence of violence and the consolidation of sustainable peace. It further corroborates the perspective of Worthington and Robles (2022), who assert that internal healing and the individual experience of forgiveness are critical because they signal trustworthiness and create the necessary desire for reconciliation within a fractured society. This validates the participant's observation that faith intervention in the healing process is what lets us look at our neighbour again, moving the community beyond the psychological bleeding of past atrocities.

The research uncovered a structural reality where communal harmony is contingent upon the success of psychosocial interventions. Initially articulated as a form of emotional relief, the data reveal that healing in the spectrum of faith as a framework is a strategic tool for transforming post-conflict societies from polarised factions into cohesive units. This study shows that the efficacy of reconciliation is rooted in the ability of trauma programs to facilitate a shared journey of re-humanisation. This is supported by Bigabo *et al.* (2025), whose study on Rwandan reconciliation villages demonstrated that action-based reconciliation models (ABRM) lead to practical healing, the restoration of friendships, and improved social cohesion,

specifically within these intentional living environments. This aligns with the argument by Hultman and Mousa (2025) that while international peacemaking manages immediate violence between organised actors, grassroots peacebuilding efforts are required to change the attitudes of individuals to foster intergroup trust and shared identity, thereby breaking the conflict trap of long-term distrust.

Furthermore, the results highlight that community-based healing strengthens the social immunity of a population, enabling them to manage political tensions without reverting to armed violence. This is captured by a local mediator who stated that trauma programs within the framework of the spectrum of faith strengthen the ability to manage political tensions without picking up weapons. This finding illustrates that healing supported by this framework acts as a Socio-Political Buffer, transforming the survivor's narrative from one of reactive trauma to proactive peacebuilding. This systemic transformation is reinforced by Nayak (2025), who emphasises that sustaining the shared task of reconciliation requires reciprocity and spaces for decolonial dialogue that address deep-rooted power dynamics and colonial legacies within the social fabric. Ultimately, these interventions shift the survivor's focus from a history of subjugation toward a future of collaborative reconstruction and collective resilience.

Faith Spectrum Strengthens Participation and Governance in Post-Conflict Reconstruction

The study established that trauma healing, the framework of the spectrum of faith, is a functional driver of Inclusive Governance, as the psychological restoration of the individual directly facilitates the capacity for collective civic life and socio-economic recovery. The discussions were mostly pivoted towards inclusive governance, which reveals that trauma-informed peacebuilding by a spectrum of faith increases the structural willingness of marginalised communities to trust and engage with formal political processes. The results support Bevan's (2022) findings, which observed that therapeutic processes can actively bridge the personal and the political spheres by stabilising individuals immobilised by crisis and mobilising them toward restored functioning and values-aligned social engagement. It further corroborates the work of Reimann and Clarke-Habibi (2026), who emphasise that addressing collective and transgenerational trauma is a requirement for peacebuilding, as it allows for the deployment of participatory and relational approaches that empower affected populations to engage with governance structures.

The research uncovered a structural reality where healing is a prerequisite for Social Mobilization and the restoration of livelihoods. Initially articulated as a form of private recovery, the data reveal that community-based healing through the framework of the spectrum of faith acts as a dignity restorer, allowing survivors who were previously withdrawn to organise for social justice and participate in national dialogue. This study shows that the transition from trauma to participation—captured in the assertion that “*healing is what gives us the dignity to participate*” essentially for the success of governance reconstruction. This is supported by the conceptual framework of Neriya-Ben Shahr (2026), which suggests that ritual economies and communal spaces provide spiritual agency and a system of mutual insurance for risks that formal institutions fail to cover. This ritual creativity challenges the

binary between the private-emotional and institutional-rational spheres, positioning lived experiences as foundational to communal cohesion and collective action.

Furthermore, the results highlight that trauma-aware mediation is a critical success factor in the acceptance of peace agreements. This finding is highly consistent with Sonpar (2025), who argues that sustaining peace requires a systemic psychosocial lens that moves beyond narrow mental health definitions to embrace all domains relevant to peace, including the rebuilding of social trust. By addressing the conditions that foster chronicity in violent conflict, interventions can create the psychological architecture necessary for resilient democracies. This is further reinforced by the participatory theodicy proposed by Espartinez (2026), which suggests that transforming systemic failures requires embodied solidarity and practices—such as reparations and collective liturgies—that move from mere justification to active, participatory agency.

Conclusion

The study concludes that post conflict reconstruction should be an intricate spiritual and relational process that extends far beyond the traditional political interventions. The spectrum of faith model challenges traditional peacebuilding interventions by creating holistic and comprehensive healing methodologies. While religious organisations offer unique healing capabilities, it is crucial to recognise that secular and faith-based approaches are not mutually exclusive. The most effective trauma support emerges from collaborative models that respect diverse intervention strategies, drawing strength from a pool of spiritual wisdom, psychological support, peacebuilding and diplomatic strategies. The goal is not to position one approach as superior, but to create flexible, responsive support and restorative ecosystem that can adapt to individual and community needs.

Recommendations

The study recommends that the spectrum of faith model be adopted as part of the governance framework by the conflict-prone nations within the Great Lakes region due to its social ethics, and non-violent means to reconstruct the social fabric severed by conflict. This will involve developing an integrative analytical framework that links religious authority, Psycho social support and political legitimacy within contemporary peacebuilding and diplomatic practice.

The study also recommends that there is an urgent need for the regional organizations like the African Union, sub-regional organizations like East African community and IGAD in collaboration with the various Non-governmental Organizations operating within the Great Lakes region to infuse spectrum of faith into their operations to guide their participation in peace processes. These may include advisory councils, interfaith task forces, conflict mediation protocols and accountability, alignment with human rights standards.

References

- Alamdari, S. M., Bishop, C. M., & Alamdari, M. M. (2022). Resilience factors among adults affected by mass conflict: Recommendations for researchers. *Journal of Social Inclusion (JoSI)*, 13(1).
- Akoko, R. M., & Oben, T. M. (2006). Christian churches and the democratization conundrum in Cameroon. *Africa today*, 25-48.
- Amos, P. M. (2023). Spirituality and mental health in post-conflict zones: A socio-ecological approach. *Journal of Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, 26(4), 312–328.
- Bevan, J. (2022). *Therapeutic Holding Spaces: a response to young people experiencing trauma through community displacement* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Worcester).
- Bigabo, F., Biracyaza, E., Kanazayire, C., Kangabe, J., & Gishoma, D. (2025). Reconciliation villages in post-genocide Rwanda, beyond rhetoric to practical reconciliation and psychosocial reintegration. *Discover Social Science and Health*, 5(1), 60.
- Brown, S., Mena, R., & Brown, S. (2024). The peace dilemma in the triple nexus: Challenges and opportunities for the humanitarian–development–peace approach. *Development in Practice*, 34(5), 568–584.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09614524.2024.2334774>
- Corcino, L. S. (2025). Trauma healing interventions and peacebuilding: A case study of NGOs projects in Rwanda. *Conjuntura Austral*, 16(73), 22-35.
- Çupi, X. (2018). *Faith-based peacebuilding challenges in the Republic of Kosovo* [Conference paper]. University for Business and Technology International Conference, University for Business and Technology. <https://doi.org/10.33107/ubtic.2018.391>
- Dehalwar, K. S. S. N., & Sharma, S. N. (2024). Exploring the distinctions between quantitative and qualitative research methods. *Think India Journal*, 27(1), 7-15.
- Denis, P. (2019). Christian *gacaca* and official *gacaca* in post-genocide Rwanda. *Journal for the Study of Religion*, 32(1). <https://doi.org/10.17159/2413-3027/2019/v32n1a1>
- Emmanuel Ntakarutimana (2023). Peacebuilding in an Interfaith Context in the Great Lakes Region of Africa: The Challenges of Creating New Approaches. *Journal of Moral Theology*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2023): 106–118
- Ersahin, Z. (2022). Post-traumatic growth among Syrian refugees in Turkey: The role of coping strategies and religiosity. *Current Psychology*, 41(4), 2398-2407.
- Espartinez, A. (2026). Divine lament and the problem of systemic evil: A participatory theodicy of tragic agency. *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*, 61(1).
- Githigaro, J. M. (2012). *Faith-based peacebuilding: A case study of the National Council of Churches of Kenya*. *Peace and Conflict Studies*, 19(1), Article 4.
<https://nsuworks.nova.edu/pcs/vol19/iss1/4>

- Hultman, L., & Mousa, S. (2025). From international peacemaking to individual peacebuilding: Lessons from the past and challenges for the future. [In Press].
- Jerome, A., Allen Heath, M., Williams, M., Winters, R., & Cutrer-Párraga, E. A. (2023). Traversing trauma: Resilient women's religious and spiritual stories of hope and strength. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 54(2), 177.
- Jones, R. L. (2020). Pastors as first responders: Enhancing care capacity through trauma-informed education. *Theology Today*, 77(2), 145–162.
- Kafeero, s. (2025). The community own resource persons model: a case study of Yumbe District in Uganda, implemented by MCJL under the joint initiative for strategic religious action programme. *Lex localis*, 23(s6), 697-713.
- Kevin Oduor, Ouma Martin and Abuya Edwin. Easing Refugee Pressure on Host States and Communities: The Contribution of the Faith Based Organizations in Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya. *African Spectrum 1-19-2025*
- Kimani, C. (2017). Faith based groups role in conflict solution in Nairobi slums. *European Journal of Philosophy, Culture and Religious Studies*, 1(1), 66–76.
<https://www.ajpojournals.org>
- Mahmuluddin, M. (2024). Bridges of peace: The role of symbols and rituals in peacebuilding. *Journal of Contemporary Rituals and Traditions*, 2(1), 61-72.
- Madigele, T. (2025). Soulful solutions: The harmonious blend of cognitive behavioural therapy and spirituality for healthy ageing in Sub-Saharan Africa during COVID-19. *Stellenbosch Theological Journal*, 11(2), 27-46.
- Meruțiu, M. (2025). Faith and reconciliation: comparative insights from South Africa and Rwanda. *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai-Studia Europaea*, 70(2), 221-239.
- Morgan, L., Nadar, S., & Keygnaert, I. (2026). 'I just want the pain to go away': Religious coping and sexual trauma recovery in South African, marginalised contexts. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 28(2), 275-287.
- Naama, A. L. (2025). *Mental health and divine healing: An ethnographic study of West African Pentecostal Church in the UK* [Doctoral dissertation, Queen Mary University of London].
- Nayak, S. (2025). Decolonizing the curriculum of group analysis. *Group Analysis*, 58(4), 544-568.
- Neriya-Ben Shahaar, R. (2026). A women's ritual economy: Amen meals as a system of material, emotional, and symbolic capital. *Religions*, 17(3), 352.
- Nyang'au, J. M., Ogwora, E., & Ogolla, M. (2025). Church Strategies in Conflict Management Among Communities Bordering the Borabu-Sotik Border in Kenya. *Journal of the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO*.
- Obondi, K. (2018). Role of the religious organizations in conflicts resolutions in Africa. *International Journal of Education and Research*, 6(7), 37–50.

- Odak, S. (2021). The sound of the sun: Religious understandings of peace and the role of religious leaders in peacebuilding—A qualitative study in Bosnia and Herzegovina. *Peace and Conflict Studies*, 28(2), Article 8. <https://doi.org/10.46743/1082-7307/2021.1705>
- Orogun, D. (2024). African accounts of religious conversations and interventions in mental healthcare. *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, 50(2), 1-19.
- Ouma, S., Vogt-William, C., Obeng-Odoom, F., Oduro, A. D., Lewis, T. J., Pheko, L. L., ... & Kvangraven, I. (2023). Reconfiguring African Studies, reconfiguring economics: centring intersectionality and social stratification. *Critical African Studies*, 15(3), 239-259.
- Payne, L. (2020). Accountability and conflict prevention through faith-based initiatives. *Global Change, Peace & Security*, 32(2), 189–205.
- Reimann, C., & Clarke-Habibi, S. (2026). Trauma-awareness in peacebuilding: An introduction. In *The Routledge international handbook of trauma-responsive peacebuilding* (pp. 1-22). Routledge.
- Skalisky, J., Wanner, S., Howe, B., & Mauseth, K. (2022). Religious coping, resilience, and involuntary displacement: A mixed-methods analysis of the experience of Syrian and Palestinian refugees in Jordan. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 14(4), 539.
- Sonpar, S. (2025). Sustainable Peace: Thinking Through a Psychosocial Lens. In *Psychosocial Interventions for Social Issues in Contemporary India* (pp. 225-252). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.
- Tsuruta, T. (2015). *Religious networks in post-conflict Democratic Republic of the Congo: A prognosis*. Birmingham: GSDRC / University of Birmingham.
- Wood, T. (2025). Diagnostic frameworks of trauma in refugee contexts. *Journal of Trauma & Dissociation*, 26(2), 188–205.
- Worthington Jr, E. L., & Robles, J. M. J. (2022). Forgiveness, reconciliation and hope in trauma healing. *Revista d'Humanitats*, (6), 19-19.