

Empowering Women to Build Peace: A Case Study of Grace to Heal Trust in Lupane District

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Abstract

Research on the role of women in peacebuilding and other community development projects suggests that they are listed among the absentees of peace processes and left out of development agendas. This perception is paradoxical to the role women play in society, and they are most affected by lack of peace and development (poverty, violence, social insecurity, etc.) This action research assesses the impact of empowering women in peacebuilding programs in the Mzola Central Ward in Lupane District, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe by Grace to Heal Trust (GTH), a civil society organisation, in order to establish women's potential to engage in peacebuilding and development activities. Forty women were selected from various rural communities through purposive and convenience sampling, and they were given training in a series of peacebuilding programs via action research cycles. The overarching argument underscored by this chapter contends that equipping women with skills and enforcing gender inclusivity in resolving community problems and promoting a peace and development agenda has proven very productive and helped change the fallacious perceptions about women's agency and resiliency in peace matters. Furthermore, this inquiry reveals that women regained confidence and recognition in their active and interactive participation in responding to conflicts constructively; they also contributed to the development of their respective communities.