

KAICIID
IN ACTION



REBUILDING FRAYED INTERCOMMUNITY RELATIONS IN NIGERIA

2016-2019





IDFP members meet to discuss hate speech prevention and national security issues, Jan. 2019



- **Cover photo by Godwin Oisi:**
KAICIID works with local partners to empower women to contribute to peacebuilding efforts.

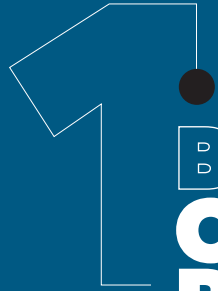
What is Interreligious Dialogue?

KAICIID and its partners are committed to a value-based transformative and inclusive approach to dialogue, which contributes to promoting human rights and responsibilities.

While the word “dialogue” can often simply refer to a conversation between different people, KAICIID understands “dialogue” as a form of interaction in an intellectual and compassionate spirit of openness. Interreligious dialogue, often referred to as interfaith dialogue, is about people of different religious identities seeking mutual

understanding and respect which allows them to live and cooperate with each other in spite of their differences.

Both interreligious and intercultural dialogue contribute to a paradigm shift away from winning arguments and controlling outcomes, towards collective and inclusive decision-making for a sustainable common good. Dialogue is at the heart of positive peacebuilding, its processes are in all phases, from prevention of conflicts, to peacemaking and post-conflict rebuilding.



BACKGROUND
ON KAICIID'S
PROGRAMME
IN NIGERIA

Why

is it critical to invest in interreligious dialogue in Nigeria?

Although Nigeria's religious composition is often disputed and politicised, the country is politically founded on a compromise between a predominantly Muslim North and Christian South (along with traditional religions), with interfaith cooperation serving as a cornerstone for modern Nigeria.

Unfortunately, rising tensions along religious, regional, ethnic and political fault lines, as well as a lack of resources for basic livelihood, have damaged interreligious relations in Nigeria. As a result, social cohesion and stability are under pressure due to the lack of sustained dialogue. These tensions include an increase in violence in Northern Nigeria by extremist groups, such as Boko Haram, as well as the cyclical farmer-pastoralist conflict.





KAICIID's approach to Nigeria ●

In order to heal religious and ethnic divisions, KAICIID builds interfaith networks, convening Christian, Muslim and traditional community leaders from across Nigeria to work together for peace. The Centre believes that religious leaders have a tremendous amount of influence globally and locally, which gives them the means to correct stereotypes and quell incitement to violence. This is especially true in the context of Nigeria, where religion is sometimes misused to justify violence.

To this end, KAICIID has partnered with religious actors from all regions and states in Nigeria to establish the Interfaith Dialogue Forum for Peace (IDFP), which was launched in December 2017. The IDFP works to address the main drivers of conflict, through policy and advocacy, as well as local dialogue initiatives at the grassroots level.

KAICIID's key milestones and achievements in Nigeria

Since 2017

the **IDFP** has been a KAICIID-supported platform registered as an NGO under Nigerian law.

MEMBERS
INCLUDE

100

RELIGIOUS
LEADERS FROM
ACROSS NIGERIA

7

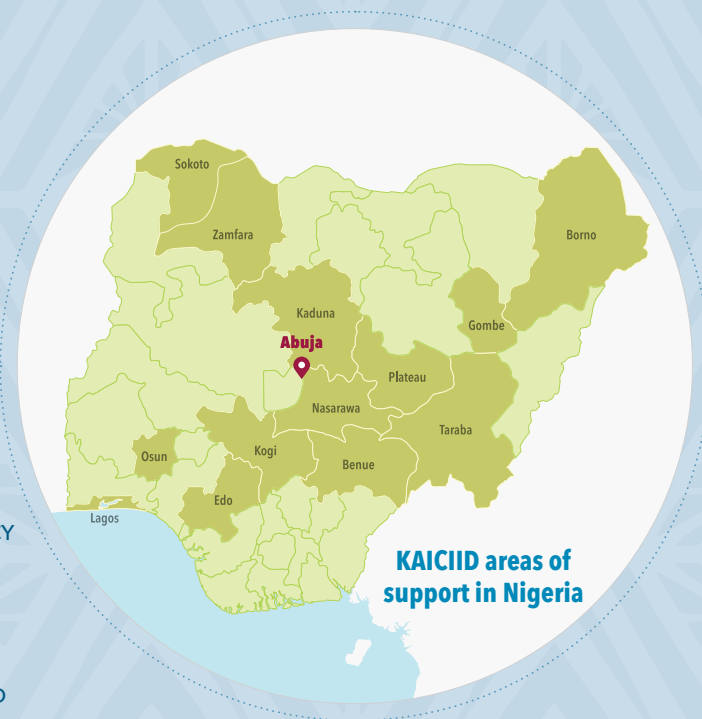
LARGE ADVOCACY
AND DIALOGUE
INITIATIVES

9564

PEOPLE REACHED

AT LEAST 5
MUSLIM SECTS
REPRESENTED

AT LEAST 5
CHRISTIAN
DENOMINATIONS
REPRESENTED



Grants and projects



24
PROJECTS
AND GRANTS

4333
PEOPLE
REACHED

ACTIVITIES ACROSS
15
STATES



SEEKING
SOLUTIONS
**FOR LOCAL
CONFLICTS**

Due to the changes in the social structure of Nigeria, threats by violent groups in the North-East, depletion of natural resources, as well as environmental changes, pastoralists and their cattle have moved to search for pasture and water outside of their villages, clashing with farmers over scarcity of resources. Because the groups are predominately divided along ethnic and religious lines - with mainly nomadic and Muslim Fulani pastoralists, and Christian farmers of various ethnicities - communities often perceive the attacks as religiously motivated. The conflict poses a serious risk to the country's stability and unity, with thousands dead or displaced.

Facing an urgent situation with no easy solution, the IDFP, with the support of KAICIID, initiated a two-month sensitisation programme, primarily in the troubled areas of Benue, Kaduna, Plateau, Taraba and Zamfara states, in order to encourage and increase interfaith dialogue between the two communities.



"The advocacy visits were an opportunity that millions of Nigerians don't have: a platform of hearing and interacting with victims of conflict and violence." - Stephen Ojapah, IDFP member.

"Like many of us who went with a biased mind, I came back heartbroken and sympathetic to their plight as Nigerians" - IDFP advocacy visit participant



Addressing Violence through Advocacy

In 2018, the IDFP deployed advocacy teams to consult with affected communities and hear their solutions for the farmer-pastoralist conflict. Holding town halls and dialogue sessions, the Forum met with critically affected individuals and families, as well as

traditional monarchs and high-ranking leaders to hear firsthand about their grievances and concerns. Participants called for concrete actions to address the violence, which included policies targeted to address marginalisation, injustice and poverty; building capacity of women to support with peace processes; employment opportunities for young people; educating children on tolerance and respect; and increased fact-finding missions in order to regularly hear from critical stakeholders on the ground.

In recent years, the IDFP has increasingly engaged with communities affected by conflict.

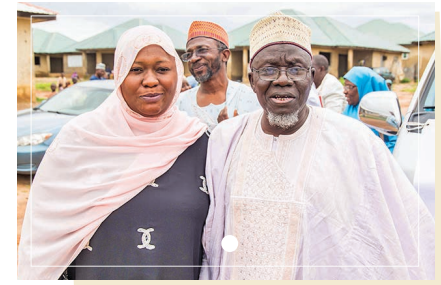


Supporting Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

During fact finding visits to internally displaced person camps, which had been the target of numerous violent attacks, the IDFP found that the lack of security continued to fuel instability across the state. Members of the Aguldi camp reported they had lived there for over three months, and were still waiting for the security situation to improve before they could safely return to their villages. The IDFP advocacy team also visited Christian and Muslim IDP camps across Taraba State, where they donated food and spoke with camp residents. Many of them depend on outside organizations, religious bodies and other Nigerians for the means to survive. Additional aid, as well as the collaboration of the international community and donor agencies, is desperately needed in order to resolve issues of internal displacement.



"It's disheartening to have people forced out of their abodes by crisis. All these crises are a result of a lack of knowledge on the true teachings of religions that we profess in our country." - **Bishop Sunday Onuoha**, IDFP advocacy team leader





USING
INTERRELIGIOUS
DIALOGUE
TO COMBAT HATE SPEECH



Hate speech poses a major challenge for Nigeria, fuelling ethnic conflicts, giving voice to violent extremists, igniting electoral violence, and shaping the conflict around resource control. In an already polarised country, hate speech threatens peacebuilding and reconciliation processes, widening the internal divide among Nigerians, cementing distrust and weakening attempts to implement crisis solutions.

Hate speech is widespread throughout the country, popping up on media and information platforms. A lack of training among journalists has divided media outlets between northern and southern interests, pushing regional political agendas and further exacerbating conflict. Furthermore, social media platforms have afforded extremist groups the opportunity to spread hate without restraint in unprecedented proportions, as individuals threaten violence and promote discrimination.

The IDFP brings members from all faiths together to advocate dialogue and an end to conflict.



Countering Hate Speech through Dialogue

KAICIID works with both local and national partners to implement initiatives throughout the country which target hate speech prevention, as well as media sensitisation - for example, through training women and young people on hate speech awareness and peace advocacy.

The IDFP also hosts a nationally aired television and radio programme which invites Christian and Muslim leaders to discuss weekly topics such as "Hate Speech and Politics," "Hate Speech and Gender" and "Hate Speech and Disabilities".

Promoting Conflict Sensitive journalism

With KAICIID's technical and financial support, the Strength in Diversity Development Centre has hosted training in conflict sensitive journalism, inviting participants to critically assess Nigeria's media landscape and the role of mass media in promoting non-violent, credible elections. Representatives from Nigeria's major media outlets identified that a perceived lack of media independence and the pressure of conflicting political interests pose the biggest challenges to credible journalism. During the training, media representatives proposed to strictly enforce a media code of ethics and further build the capacity of editors and journalists to report in a more professional, responsible way.



Bringing Christians and Muslims together to **stop hate**

The Centre also encourages initiatives which bring together Christian and Muslim religious and community actors to combat intolerance and hate speech. In 2018, KAICIID supported the Muslim League for Accountability (MULAC) through the "My Neighbor" project, which aimed to sensitise participants on hate speech in Kaduna State. MULAC also hosted roundtable discussions with Christian and Muslim students from fifteen educational institutions, forming the first student network in Kaduna State for the prevention of hate speech.

In 2019, KAICIID and the IDFP worked with local religious leaders to launch a widespread ad campaign for violence-free elections. Christian and Muslim leaders called on their communities to exercise restraint, avoid hate speech and rumour-mongering and prevent incitement to violence.



**EMPOWERING
YOUNG PEOPLE
& WOMEN TO
CONTRIBUTE TO PEACE**

Equipping Women Leaders

with Tools for Conflict Resolution

KAICIID sponsors Nigerian organizations which work to equip women with skills for peacebuilding and mediation. In 2018, the Centre supported initiatives by the Justice Development and Peace Commission of Sokoto and other partners which engaged women in the protection of holy sites and in the promotion of religious tolerance. The project also aimed to foster mutual understanding and respect between Christians and Muslims by promoting a deeper understanding of the common values of human dignity which are found in both religions.

Additionally, the Centre works with other local partners such as the Women Interfaith Council, the Women Wing of the Christian Council of Nigeria and UN Women to provide better training for women on best approaches to conflict resolution and interreligious and intercultural dialogue.

In 2019, KAICIID and the IDFP partnered with UN Women Nigeria on the Sensitisation of the Rights of Women and Children. Through a series of workshops, participants examined the rights of women and children in Nigeria, particularly from Christian and Muslim perspectives, and the linkages to peace and security in the country. They also developed strategies to increase the inclusion of women in peacebuilding processes, calling for more equal participation and further capacity building for women in terms of conflict resolution.



Engaging young people as Peace Champions

Making up more than half of the country's estimated population, which has risen past 200 million, young people are the most crucial, yet one of the most vulnerable segments of Nigerian society. Many youth face staggering unemployment, lack of welfare services, drug addiction and exclusion from decision-making processes.

KAICIID and the IDFP have supported numerous initiatives for youth, with a particular focus on the promotion of peace and security. In 2018, the Centre joined forces with the Nigerian Army Resource Centre and the Interfaith Initiative for Peace to educate young people on the ways in which religion can be manipulated or misused, as well as identification of potential security risks.

KAICIID and the IDFP also supported the National Interfaith Peace Summit, held by the Youth Wing of the Christian Association of Nigeria, which welcomed over 250 young Christians and Muslims from leading youth organizations across the country. Participants discussed ways to counter hate speech and prevent incitement to violence, as well as best practices for implementing sustainable peace.





**REBUILDING
PEACE AND TRUST IN
THE AFTERMATH OF
COMMUNITY VIOLENCE**



Healing Post-Conflict Trauma in Borno State

Nigeria's decade-long conflict with extremist groups such as Boko Haram has resulted in a large-scale humanitarian crisis across the country. According to the 2018 Human Rights Watch Report, over two million people have been internally displaced by the conflict, and seven million people are in desperate need of humanitarian assistance. The violence has devastated Nigerian communities, slowed the country's economy, and ignited interfaith tensions. According to a study commissioned by KAICIID and local partners in 2016, high unemployment, a misunderstanding of religion, and a history of trauma were driving factors in Boko Haram recruitment. KAICIID recognises that sustained peace cannot be achieved without understanding and addressing the root causes of violence.

KAICIID has supported the Supreme Council for Shariah in Nigeria with the development of an action plan which targets the effective deradicalisation and reintegration of ex-extremist fighters. The action plan focuses on advocacy and mass media campaigns on the dangers of extremism, as well as the development of counter narratives which promote peaceful coexistence.

Borno state and its capital Maiduguri have been particularly affected by the Boko Haram insurgency. Although the security situation has improved, these fragile communities are still plagued by lack of trust and dialogue, as well as the stigmatisation of victims.

KAICIID has partnered with the Muslim Sisters Organization, Borno State Chapter and the Maiduguri Metropolitan Council to implement a project on peace and tolerance education, targeted at male youth in four local communities. The project provided space for victims of Boko Haram violence to share their experiences and deal with post-conflict trauma.

The project also equipped youth with peacebuilding and conflict resolution techniques, such as sensitisation, role plays and dialogue groups held in their local languages.



All of us Here Once had Houses: COMMEMORATING VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE



The IDFP and KAICIID observed the United Nation's International Day of Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief by visiting IDP camps surrounding Abuja and providing essential relief services.

The IDFP team first visited the Malaysian Gardens camp, home to more than 1,500 people who rely on philanthropy and charity to survive the harsh living conditions.

Alhaji Usman Adamu, the assistant leader of another IDP camp in Kuchingoro, said they have no choice but to live in the camp. "We have no alternative means of livelihood as a

result of the Boko Haram crisis. All of us here once had houses and inheritance. But the Boko Haram crisis has changed everything," he explained.

The IDFP reiterated its solidarity with victims of violence, and called on all adherents of Christianity and Islam to seek the shared values of peace and justice.

Additionally the platform called on all adherents of religions in the country to respect the rule of law and fundamental rights to worship, including immediate measures to respond to the plight of IDPs for rehabilitation and resettlement.



(KAICIID)

About The International Dialogue Centre

With its distinctive governance structure, The International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID) represents the first international organization that is mandated to bridge the gap between religious and political representatives and provide a platform for a facilitated dialogue to foster peace and combat radicalisation. Its unique mission promotes dialogue to foster respect among cultures and religions, and works to counteract discrimination and contribute to social cohesion.

About The Interfaith Dialogue Forum for Peace (IDFP)

In an effort to promote more effective and sustainable collaboration across religious and cultural lines in Nigeria, KAICIID facilitated the establishment of the Interfaith Dialogue Forum for Peace (IDFP), which convenes 100 Christian and Muslim religious leaders from across Nigeria.

Since then, the IDFP has acted as a dialogue facilitator, empowering communities and individuals affected by conflict. The Forum has adopted an action plan focusing on the establishment of interfaith networks, freedom of religion, protection of holy sites, interfaith education and exchanges, media sensitisation and hate speech prevention.

The Forum has established a safe space for dialogue, built capacity and supported local initiatives which promote mutual respect between the country's various religious and ethnic communities. The Forum envisions a Nigeria where there is religious tolerance, an end to hate speech and guaranteed freedom of religion.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED:



As a
stakeholder/
individual



Follow the IDFP
and KAICIID's
updates on the web
and social media



Engage with the
IDFP or their member
organizations at one of
their activities or events



Apply to the
KAICIID Africa
Fellows Programme
at [www.kaiciid.org/
fellows](http://www.kaiciid.org/fellows)



Contact the IDFP to
discuss collaboration on
an interfaith/interreligious
dialogue initiative at
idfpnigeria.org

As an organization



Apply for a KAICIID small grant

Provide financial support to the IDFP and to other local partners in Nigeria

Contact the IDFP to discuss collaborations on one of its key priorities:

Preventing violence pre and post elections.

Conducting dialogue initiatives in conflict-prone areas.



Countering hate speech.

Engaging journalists and social media influencers to promote social cohesion.

For more information,
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