

# Ten years on

A decade of interfaith work promoting good governance and sustainable peace in Kaduna State, Nigeria



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## Foreword

Imagine a world without poverty, where the systems and structures that perpetuate poverty are a thing of the past, and where it is possible to build a movement for change through partnerships that empower and mobilise communities, strengthen and build solidarity with civil society and put pressure on government to be responsive to its citizens and put in place policies that protect and promote citizens' interests.

In Nigeria, interfaith governance remains a vital approach, especially with recent communal and inter-religious conflicts that have deepened the challenge of good and participatory governance. For the past 10 years, Christian Aid has worked in partnership with Interfaith Mediation Centre (formerly Muslim and Christian Dialogue Forum) in Kaduna State. Together they have implemented an interfaith governance project with focus on grassroots governance, using an interfaith approach which has brought about a number of successes as well as challenges.

Learning from this work will inform the design of future programmes with interfaith identity to promote cross-community understanding; working for common goals to build cohesion and encourage peaceful co-existence that ensures good governance for all.

Let me use this opportunity to thank independent consultant Dr Mohammed Bawa and his team for doing a great job of documenting what worked, what did not and what must change. My gratitude also goes to the Christian Aid staff who have been involved on this project, providing technical support and fundraising within and outside the organisation to sustain this partnership and empower communities to bring about the change they rightly deserve.

**Temitope Fashola**  
**Programme Manager, Christian Aid Nigeria**  
**December 2014**

**'The real tragedy of the poor is the poverty of their aspirations.'**

Adam Smith

## Executive summary

This document contains key findings from an assessment of the Interfaith Mediation Centre (IMC) and Christian Aid's interfaith governance project and its effect on the lives of the people of Kaduna State, northern Nigeria.

Since 2004, Christian Aid Nigeria has funded and provided technical support to IMC to promote effective, responsive and accountable governance in Kaduna State.

Kaduna State, located in the centre of northern Nigeria, is politically divided. The north is largely inhabited by Hausa/Fulani Muslims, while most people living in the south belong to one of many minor, mostly Christian, ethnic groups. Animosities have long existed between these two communities, arising from the pre-colonial political structure of the Hausaland region, and reinforced by political and economic imbalances dating back to colonial times.<sup>1</sup>

Before 2004, when our partnership with IMC began, Kaduna was in a state of religious tension, recovering from a crisis triggered by Muslim and Christian clashes. Most notable were those of 2000, which erupted after Christians rejected the adoption and implementation of Shari'a law in the state.

IMC's interfaith approach to effective governance uses references from the Bible and Quran to overcome tensions and reduce conflict between the groups. It is also aimed at tackling increasing poverty and boosting community development in the region by involving poor and marginalised people in local governance.

Our work with IMC aims to ensure that all citizens, no matter their religion or beliefs, can constructively participate in both formal and informal decision-making, as a way of promoting transparency, accountability and peaceful coexistence.

Our partnership has so far implemented 10 year-long projects in four local government areas (LGAs). The first was held in Chikun, and later ones took place in Kaduna North, Kaduna South and Igabi. During 10 years of working together, we have supported more than 3,000 people to learn how to realise their rights and hold the state to account more effectively.

We have also supported IMC's organisational development, together strengthening their systems, which include financial and human resources, increasing their capacity for effective programme management, monitoring and evaluation. Our 'exchange and learning' visits, plus annual review meetings held since 2009, have helped to improve staff skills in key areas of implementing a demand-side governance program using tools such as scorecards – basic tools for citizens to measure the progress made by government – and community parleys – platforms for community groups to engage in common discussion to determine their development.

As a result of our work, the organisation now develops policies to guide its operations and to increase its ability to secure funding for future projects.

**'Before 2004, when our partnership with IMC began, Kaduna was in a state of religious tension, recovering from a crisis triggered by Muslim and Christian clashes.'**



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<sup>1</sup> (Kaduna Intervention Initiative: touching the grassroots)

## Project approach

Governance in many Nigerian states tends to be ‘top down’, with decisions initiated at the highest level and decision makers failing to account for themselves to citizens.<sup>2</sup>

While the country now has an elected leadership, a long-running military presence in the past partly explains why citizens are reluctant to partake in governance processes and rarely hold elected officials to account.

This has allowed leaders to govern in a non-transparent, non-participatory way, resulting in the exclusion of marginalised and other vulnerable groups, a failure to deliver social services and a lack of development.<sup>3</sup>

The interfaith governance project aims to promote accountability and transparency of government at local and state levels, by organising and encouraging communities of all faiths to participate in decision-making that affects them.

Using our ‘interfaith approach’, which we created along with IMC to respond to the situation in the state, the project has successfully boosted peaceful coexistence of groups in some of the target communities, which has, in turn, promoted development there.

One project participant, in Afaka community, summarises the approach as one that ‘dwells on attitudinal change with emphasis on peaceful co-existence regardless of differences in faiths as bedrock for prosperity’.

The work we have already completed focused on ways to engage with communities and groups to serve as a counterweight to government at all levels, building their ability to demand improved services, communicate with leaders and other relevant stakeholders, and increase development in communities.

Between 2004 and 2009, the project engaged at the state level with the leadership of relevant networks, groups and associations such as Jama’atul Nasril Islam, the Christian Association of Nigeria and various civil society organisations (CSOs). Later, between 2010 and 2011, we shifted our focus to engaging with local politicians/duty bearers and organisations.

During all these time, we concentrated mainly on establishing networks to promote peaceful coexistence among different groups by helping to organise people. To support citizens to engage effectively with elected representatives, the IMC produced a faith-based training document – the Interfaith Guide on Good Governance, which is still used by the various networks.

Between 2011 and 2012, we started working directly with communities, encouraging the establishment of organisations to strengthen them. Before that, the project had mainly targeted institutions, government, and other influential figures in the state.

For example, we helped form community development associations (CDAs) – which act as umbrella organisations, ‘people’s parleys’ – open spaces where community members can discuss issues with each other and with elected representatives – and networks of faith-based advocates to promote good governance.

**‘The project has successfully boosted peaceful coexistence of groups in some of the target communities, which has, in turn, promoted development there.’**



<sup>2</sup> (Innovative Consultancy and Agricultural Services Ltd, Kaduna, 2014)

<sup>3</sup> (Innovative Consultancy and Agricultural Services Ltd, Kaduna, 2014)

We assisted the establishment of budget monitors, community groups which ensure that local and state government deliver services to communities by helping to lead engagement with them.

We also supported the introduction of community peace action networks and observers, who work to ensure that crisis situations are averted. The observers report any instances of conflict to the network, which collates and sends this information to IMC, which can alert security agencies if necessary.



## Key findings

In the last 10 years, the project has delivered a number of changes.

These have included people becoming more empowered through increased knowledge of their rights, and improved ability to organise themselves to demand these.

People have also reported changes in their attitudes, which have helped them to get on better with people of different religions.

There is also evidence that changes in the way that communities and government interact, as a direct and indirect result of the project, have led to improved delivery of community services.

Evidence of these changes is detailed below.

### Public accountability and responsiveness

Throughout the project, communities have become better at identifying and prioritising their needs, and engaging with CSOs and government officials to press for delivery of services. This, in turn, has helped improve officials' responsiveness to communities' needs.

To help achieve this, the project supplied community members with scorecards, to be used as a tool to make governments more accountable to the public when delivering services, to encourage people's participation in government planning and to ensure this is prioritised according to community needs. People used the scorecards to assess the performance of public services, and give to service providers to help them express any concerns they had.

For Hajiya Rabi Yusuf Usman, from Badarawa, in Kaduna North, this work has enabled her community to become involved whenever the government plans any work – which is vital in holding it to account for meeting the community's needs.

'In the past, the government allocated its budget and carried out other projects without the knowledge of community members, but now, the community gets involved before the government carries out any projects,' she said.

She added that it has completely altered her perception of what government money is for.

'Before the project, I thought government budgets were all about officials sharing money among themselves, but after training with IMC, I know that it's actually about making financial plans according to a community needs,' she said.

### Project highlights

Our work to increase government responsiveness to community needs have resulted in:

- an increase in fertiliser, from one trailer to two, supplied to local farmers in Nassarawa ward (Chikun LGA) – facilitated by the councillor representing the ward
- construction of link roads in Nasarawa and Makera/Kakuri wards to help with transportation of goods and services to and from the communities
- the rehabilitation of the community primary school, the building of 18 classrooms and the provision of teachers and an additional transformer in Afaka ward, Igabi LGA
- the construction of boreholes to supply clean water in Kasaya community in Chikun LGA.

## Case study

### Peaceful coexistence for community development

Ibrahim Umar, from Makera, Kaduna South LGA, became aware of the IMC in 2006 when it was featured in a television programme covering Muslim/Christian dialogue.

For Ibrahim, the project started as an interface among the IMC, communities and elected officials in 2011. He took part in four IMC trainings on peaceful co-existence and governance.

In Ibrahim's opinion, the training has impacted on him and his community because they now live in peace and harmony in Kakuri Hausa irrespective of differences in ethnicity or religion.

Ibrahim said: 'Before, we lived as cat and dog between the Christians and Muslims or between the Gwari and Hausa. Today the reverse is the case.'

This would not have been achieved without the interfaith governance intervention.

Ibrahim added that the interfaith work has strengthened the capacity of his community through the sensitisation on governance. This training helped people to seek an audience with the elected member representing Makera in the state House of Assembly in order to discuss legislative issues bothering the community.

'Before the IMC's governance programme we never had such avenue to discuss with our elected leaders – especially when they are inside those big, big jeeps – but now we meet any time we seek their audience,' he said.

In addition, as part of an effort made by the IMC to measure the level of commitment of the community on governance, a vocational centre in Kakuri that produces groundnut oil has been handed over to the community in order to proceed in running the affairs of the vocational centre.

Between 2005 and 2013, we also successfully used media to hold elected officials to account, by supporting a series of discussions on effective governance, attended by local and national elected representatives, and broadcasting these on television and radio.

Publicising officials' records in this way, using progress reports and scorecard performances, helped strengthen their responsiveness to communities. The latter found this to be an effective way of guiding discussion between them and their elected representatives.

## Learning and sharing

In order to improve project performance and generate fresh ideas, we supported IMC to conduct learning visits to organisations with expertise in participatory development and governance and related techniques, such as the use of scorecards.

The impact assessment identified this process as a key factor in increasing project impact, alongside the building of project staff's capacity for new areas of work to improve programming and support for organisational development.

The assessment found that these visits allowed for mutual exchange of information, knowledge and ideas on good governance, as well as increased exposure to best practice, such as the use of research to support evidence-based advocacy and participatory governance.

For example, IMC learned about people's parleys and other useful governance techniques after a visit to the Justice, Development and Peace Commission, in Ijebu Ode.

In 2012, we introduced IMC to the principles of the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) – the humanitarian sector's first international self-regulatory body. This brought a vital change in the implementation of the project by helping IMC to engage with communities to enhance grassroots development.

As a result, IMC's increased transparency helped it earn the trust of communities as it worked to increase their understanding of the importance of 'downward' accountability and being responsive to community needs.

## Building an organisation

Christian Aid also supported IMC's organisational development through various capacity-building activities, including mentoring individual staff to help them carry out programme management implement of demand-side governance work effectively.

In 2005, our training – such as project management sessions – resulted in the organisation strengthening its systems, by developing its gender policy, financial guidelines and operational manual.

Additional training on financial management resulted in the establishment of a financial management system and promoted effective management of project funds by IMC. This has also improved transparency, downward and upward accountability between IMC, Christian Aid and the communities involved.

IMC also reports that its capacity for monitoring and evaluation has increased, with staff better able to undertake monitoring and evaluation activities and track long-term and sustainable change.

Additional competencies acquired by IMC through the partnership include an understanding of the concept of a community scorecard to enhance public accountability of service delivery, and conducting community parleys. These were achieved through learning visits facilitated by Christian Aid to other organisations in Nigeria.

**'IMC reports that its capacity for monitoring and evaluation has increased, with staff better able to track long-term and sustainable change.'**





These have cumulatively resulted in more effective programme implementation and have led to IMC being able to achieve a greater involvement of state actors, CSOs and communities in participatory planning and development.

This organisational development support has contributed to IMC winning a multi-year grant from USAID.

### Community ownership and active citizens

A faith-based democratic people's parley was held in 2006 with community members and elected representatives as the primary focus. This led to the establishment of a platform for community engagement with elected representatives. The platform enabled community needs and solutions to be discussed. Elected representatives took advantage of the platform and used it to establish a good working relationship with their communities.

The establishment of CDA platforms proved to be a formidable force in making demands. Strategies such as community scorecards, understanding budgets and knowing how to engage with duty bearers have been key in the delivery of projects.

'With this umbrella association, we were able to influence the local government to increase fertiliser allocation, which had not been so in the past because people had been going there as individuals,' said Alice Zaka, a member of the community-based association (CBA) from Sabon Gari Kujama community in Chikun LGA.

'Our politicians don't consider you as an individual, but when you go to them in a group they listen. That was how we got increased fertiliser at a subsidised rate. In addition, we were able to seek rehabilitation of the road linking Kujama community to the major road,' she added.

Budget monitors with defined roles for effective budget monitoring at the LGA level were appointed in communities as a result of workshops on participatory budgeting conducted between 2007 and 2009. These targeted faith-based organisations, non-governmental organisations, traditional rulers, men's and women's groups, religious leaders, youth groups and officers in local government planning and budget offices. In addition, this work led to the participation of religious and community leaders in budget monitoring in their communities.

Despite the active involvement of community members and leaders in engaging with the government about their needs, changes still take time and, in some cases, come in trickles. An example is the vocational skills centre in Afaka (Igabi LGA). This started in 2013 and was completed in 2014, but is yet to be equipped and put to use. However, some of the changes with tangible evidence which have been recorded include:

- A link road was repaired to improve movement of motorists, farmers and community members in Kujama, Chikun LGA.
- A drainage system was constructed in Unguwar Shekara in Kaduna North LGA, arranged by the councillor representing the ward.
- Rusty water pipes were replaced in Badarawa in Kaduna North LGA to reduce water-borne diseases; this was organised by the councillor representing the ward.

**'Our politicians don't consider you as an individual, but when you go to them in a group they listen.'**

Alice Zaka, member of the community-based association, Sabon Gari Kujama Chikun LGA



## Case study – Health worker turned to community change agent

Toyin Yusuf is a nurse living in New Afaka community (Igabi LGA). She became involved in the interfaith work through her husband, an IMC staff member, when IMC visited the community to update him about their plans and programmes.

According to Toyin, one major area where IMC's intervention in the community has made a great impact is in helping to curtail the rate of drug abuse by young people. The community's total population is about 500,000, with youths accounting for about 50-60% of this number.

Half the youths in the community were jobless. This accounted for the high numbers involved in drug taking and touting activities, thereby risking their future and posing a threat to society.

'As a result of the enlightenment training and workshop we received from IMC, and as a qualified nurse who operates her own chemist shop, I saw the need to help safeguard the future of these youths, as well as reduce to the barest minimum the social ills that arose from drug abuse by the youths in the community,' she said.

'Hence, my collaboration with other patent medicine

vendors (PMVs) – seven of them – in 2013. They further relayed the message to other PMVs to ensure that drugs such as cough syrups and other drugs usually abused by these youths are no longer being sold to them, but to parents only.'

The evidence that this collaboration is working is that four of these youths are now in school and two have started vocational skills training.

Toyin added: 'Some who have not yet repented from the act do come to me with complaints that other PMVs are unfriendly and are not selling drugs to them any more, castigating them, and promising to withdraw their patronage from them to me, believing that being a woman they can easily cajole me to sell it to them, but to no avail.'

'With our determination to see that the future of youths are secured and also have a crime free society, I believe that this impact will be sustained as well as yield even more results. I want to specially thank IMC for this timely and invaluable intervention, without which the situation of youths in the community would have been worse by now. I want to also urge them to keep up the good work.'

## Challenges and lessons learned

Even though the project aimed to improve governance for the provision of social services to benefit society at large, there have been no clear and well-articulated strategies to engage poor, marginalised and vulnerable groups on a sustained basis.

The absence of an impact model, results framework and effective monitoring and documentation at the earlier stages of the project has undermined the effective tracking and reporting of impact assessment, including calculations for value for money indicators. This has made it difficult to attribute some changes recorded in the community to the intervention alone. It can only be concluded that the project contributed to the observed impacts, both intended and unintended, and other causal factors, such as a desire for peace and improved livelihoods, democratic space and the government's remoteness from people, played an enabling role.

Yearly projects were carried out as one-off projects, as most were with select representatives of groups, associations, networks, associations or communities. This, coupled with inadequate follow up with the communities to deepen issues, is considered to have undermined the maximum effectiveness of the approach.

In addition, a key learning point for the partnership has been to critically analyse the best fit branding for information, educational and communication (IEC) materials for entry into new communities, factoring in cultural and religious sensitivity. This is important because there could be a misconception in some areas that Christian Aid is a faith-based organisation rather than an international development organisation.



## Sustainability

The sustainability of the interfaith faith governance work is of importance to both partners. In light of this, Christian Aid and IMC introduced several activities to support the sustainability of the project:

- Effective community mobilisation (a wide spectrum of stakeholders), which led to community ownership of the process.
- Capacity building at two levels – both IMC staff and community members (including women and young people) have undergone capacity building sessions on diverse topics/areas with the aim of using the knowledge and skills gained in advancing project ideas.
- Establishment of CBAs, with communities taking ownership of the process. CBAs include community development associations (CDAs), Kaduna peace committee, community peace observers and action networks, and budget monitors. These groups are led by the community members and currently serve as a common platform for each community to take action collectively for the benefit of their residents, thus widening the space for decision making at a community level.
- Uniqueness of some of the community-based groups:
  - The community peace observers are volunteers who monitor and observe early warning signals and report these to IMC and community leaders for early response.
  - The CDAs are made up of local men, women and youths and are co-chaired by people from both Islam and Christian faiths. This has helped to bridge the religious gap, fostering peaceful co-existence.
  - The Kaduna peace committee is made up of highly respected religious leaders and scholars from both faiths working together to promote peaceful co-existence among residents of Kaduna State.
- Networking and collaboration – IMC and CBAs have been supported in networking and collaboration. This is to enable both IMC and CBAs to use those links for the long-term sustainability of the project beyond Christian Aid's support.
- Design, production and distribution of IEC materials – several types ranging from training manuals/guides, posters and handbills have been designed and distributed for specific target groups. This has helped to share project knowledge and ideas beyond the project communities. For instance, the handbills on peaceful co-existence with scriptural references from Bible and Quran have been widely distributed and readers are using the project ideas/materials to foster peace within their communities.

## Case study

### From the military to a community governance advocate

Alhaji Yusuf Usman, 66, spent 35 years serving in the Nigerian Air Force. Despite his service to his country, he never felt he had the right or the responsibility to advocate for change in Nigeria.

In 2005, attended training organised by IMC, learning about his rights, the importance of bringing together the whole community – both Christians and Muslims – and how to monitor local government budgets so they could collectively challenge corruption.

‘Government may come to our village and think that we need electricity to light our houses. It is true that we need this, but maybe something else is more important,’ he said. ‘Maybe, for us, it is more important that we build a school to educate our children.’

For Alhaji, the will to change things was absent before the IMC's intervention. He has been involved in politics before, but he has never been this close to interacting and challenging authority.

On describing the impact of this governance project on the community, Alhaji said community members meet regularly to discuss their needs as a community and to identify their priorities. They meet about once a month, or more often if there is an emergency. He added they want to help the grassroots of this community know their rights and campaign for the services they deserve.

He said: ‘Change does not come with magic, it requires patience. The government is responding better to us now and we hope that this will gradually change. Awareness on both sides will increase. Change does not come with magic. Teamwork can have a great effect!’

Provision of basic services by the local government authority	Location	LGA	Potential benefits/impacts
Construction of link road	Nasarawa ward	Chikun	Ease of transportation of goods and services, reduction in accidents and death, reduction in wear and tear on vehicles (and subsequent reduction in maintenance cost) and reduction in thefts
Construction of link road	Makera/Kakuri ward	Kaduna South	Ease of transportation of goods and services, reduction in accidents and death, reduction in wear and tear on vehicles (and subsequent reduction in maintenance cost) and reduction in thefts
Rehabilitation of community primary school – building 18 additional classrooms and providing extra teachers	Afaka ward	Igabi	Increase in pupils' enrolment, attendance and completion, improvement in learning outcomes, increased motivation for pupils
Increase in fertiliser allocation for local farmers	Nasarawa ward	Chikun	Improved yield, increased savings, improved standard of living
Provision of additional transformer	Afaka ward	Igabi	Increased number of new business enterprises, increased business outputs and performance of existing and new enterprises, job creation, reduction in thefts and robbery
Construction of vocational skill centre by local government (ongoing)	Afaka ward	Igabi	Increased number of new business enterprises, increased business outputs and performance of existing and new enterprises, job creation, reduction in thefts and robbery
Sinking of boreholes	Kasaya	Chikun	Increased access to potable water, reduction in water-borne diseases and death caused by water-borne diseases, reduction in family expenditure on water, time saving for women and children, increased punctuality at school for girls
Construction of a new hospital	Kasaya ward	Chikun	Accessibility to quality healthcare, reduction in disease prevalence and reduction in preventable death
Creation of refuse dumping site	Tudun Wada ward	Kaduna South	Reduction in environmental health-related problems
Local birth attendants trained and employed	Rigasa	Igabi	Job creation, increased income, improved standard of living, increased ability to cope with family issues
Upgrading a community clinic to a hospital with inpatient unit by the state Ministry of Health (ongoing)	Afaka	Igabi	Accessibility to quality healthcare, reduction in disease prevalence and reduction in preventable death

**Figure 1: Impacts of community projects**



## Appendix

### Enabling factors

We understand that for the project to have made the impact/strides that it has, there have been certain enabling factors which worked in the context of Kaduna State. Identifying enabling factors for promoting good governance and peaceful co-existence is one of the key lessons drawn from the analysis of the partnership.

- **Desire for peaceful coexistence** – past and recurring ethno-religious conflicts have brought unbearable hardship for people and a desire for peace was one of the enabling factors responsible for the impact recorded. Peace is also seen as an essential commodity that cannot have a monetary value.
- **Deepening poverty levels and a desire to improve livelihoods** – poverty levels have been worsened by ethno-religious conflict, leading to difficult lives for ordinary citizens in many communities in Kaduna State.
- **Democratic space** – a safe space has been provided for community engagement and other interfaith governance activities, such as peoples' parleys, community scorecards, media engagement, participatory budgeting and workshops on participatory governance with the elected officers and other government officials.
- **Community profile** – the presence of influencers, interest, commitment, organisation of the community members and the long-term exposure to IMC interfaith governance activities contributed to the observable impact, both intended and unintended, of the interfaith governance approach.
- **IMC's profile using an interfaith platform** – this greatly contributed to the impact observed. As a result of IMC's leading track record in the promotion of peaceful coexistence among religious groups, meant that trust from the government, communities and other stakeholders could easily be tapped.





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