



THE ROLE OF INTERFAITH DIALOGUE IN PEACEBUILDING IN NIGERIA

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Are there religious conflicts in Nigeria?

- Interfaith dialogue is not about resolving religious conflicts only.
- Interfaith dialogue is about using religion and religious leaders to resolve all types of conflicts.

However, can we say there are conflicts that are purely religious in Nigeria?

Examples, if yes.

Why religion and religious leaders?

Sources of conflict

- **Resources:** land, money, natural resources (oil, minerals, etc)
- **Psychological needs:** respect, human dignity, a sense of belonging, etc
- **Values:** religion, ethnicity, race, political ideology, culture, tradition
- **Information:** misinformation, disinformation, lack of information, etc

Value based conflicts are the most intractable. Religion is the most powerful of values. Examples.

Religious leaders are the most influential because they are closest to the people. They influence everyone including the political leaders.

Dialogue and Interfaith Dialogue

Dialogue is:

- a communication style that allows people to understand each other's viewpoints, choices, beliefs, and convictions, etc so they can co-exist. It is not a debate or argument.

Interfaith Dialogue is:

- cooperative, constructive, and positive interaction between people of different [religious](#) traditions (i.e., "faiths") and/or [spiritual](#) or [humanistic](#) beliefs, at both the individual and institutional levels. Each party remains true to their own beliefs while respecting the right of the other to practise their faith freely. - *Wikipedia*

What Interfaith Dialogue intends and does not intend

Interfaith Dialogue seeks to:

- Increase mutual understanding and good relations.
- Identify causes of tension between and amongst people and groups (usual political, economic and social).
- Build understanding and confidence to overcome or prevent tensions.
- Break down the barriers and stereotypes which lead to distrust, suspicion and bigotry.

Interfaith Dialogue is not:

- About talking away or brushing aside differences. It does not aim at coming to a common belief.
- A way of converting the other. In dialogue each party remains true to their own faith.
- A space for arguing, attacking or disproving the beliefs of the other. It is about increasing mutual knowledge, understanding and trust.

Models of Interfaith Dialogue

1. Dialogue of life.
2. Dialogue of action.
3. Dialogue of theological exchange.
4. Dialogue of religious experience (Dialogue and Proclamation).

Interfaith Landscape in Nigeria: Stakeholders

National and State Governments

- Special Advisers; Advisory Council for Religious Affairs (ACRA), Nigeria Interreligious Council (NIREC) (National); Special Advisers; Inter-Religious Bureaus/Committees (State and LG)

Universities and Study Centres (over 10)

- Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR); Department of Peace and Conflict Management, Univ. of Jos; Institute for Peace and Security Studies, Univ. of Ibadan, etc

Regional Organisations

- Arewa Consultative Forum; Afenifere; Ohaneze Ndigbo; Middle Belt Forum; etc

Religious Institutions (Over 20)

- Daawah Centre, Minna; Justice Development and Peace Commission; Peace Chapel International; Abuja Muslim Forum; etc.

Civil Society Organisations (Over 30)

- Interfaith Mediation Centre; The Kukah Centre; Savannah Centre; Interfaith Dialogue Forum for Peace

Women Organisations (Over 10)

- Women Interfaith Council; Women in Daawah; Plateau Muslim Sisters for Peace; etc

Youth Organisations (Over 15)

- Catholic Youth Organization of Nigeria; Christian Youth for Peace and Development Initiative; Jama'atu Nasril Islam Youth Wing; National Council of Muslim Youth Organization of Nigeria; etc

International Organisations (Over 35)

- KAICIID; USAID; DFID; UNDP; Ufuk; etc

Networks

- Partnership Against Violent Extremism (PAVE)

Socio-Economic Injustice

- Structural violence - 62.6% Poverty Rate (2015)
- Struggle for land and grazing resources between transhumance pastoralists and farming communities

Politicization of religion

- By political actors; fundamentalist Christian denominations; radical Islamic sects; and violent Islamist groups

Ethnic and Linguistic Diversity

- 191,836,000 population (2017 projection)
- 527 ethnic groups/languages
- Lack of unity in diversity

CHALLENGES OF IRD ENGAGEMENT 2

Low IRD Knowledge and Skills

- IRD and facilitation techniques not adequate given situation on the ground
- Research and analysis of all aspects of IRD in Nigeria very low

Government use of force

- Deployment of security forces during conflict instead of dialogue and post-conflict humanitarian work

“Dialogue fatigue”

- At various levels of society, particularly in the local communities

Representative National Muslim and Christian Bodies

- No acceptable central control in Islam regarding leadership and theological issues
- JNl; NSCIA not acceptable to the Shia and Izala groups
- Factionalized Christian Association of Nigeria

Hate Speech Legislation

- No coherent policy on hate and provocative speeches generally by government at federal, state and local levels
- Hate speech bill sponsored by IMC, IPCR, PLAC, KAICIID, etc in the works.

Regulatory Framework for Religious Functionaries

- No coherent policy on violent extremist religious proselytization
- Weak provisions in the Criminal Code and Penal Code; recent attempt by the Kaduna State government.

Structural and Operational Inefficiencies of government IRD agencies/institutions

- Too subjected to government bureaucracy to be effective
- Structurally dysfunctional – overstaffing, overlapping departments, duplication of roles
- Wracked by internal conflicts and suspicions
- Either lack budgets or are poorly funded (NIREC)

IRD in Educational Institutions

- Very few fully fledged independent conflict resolution departments
- The few are poorly funded
- Depend on “expert” academics from other departments.

Convergence of IRD Activities

- Many initiatives
- Few networks to coordinate efforts
- Danger of duplication and inefficient use of resources available

CHALLENGES OF IRD ENGAGEMENT 5

Lack of Focus/Goal
For example, to discuss:

- complex theological issues
- personal values and experiences
- Religious minutiae

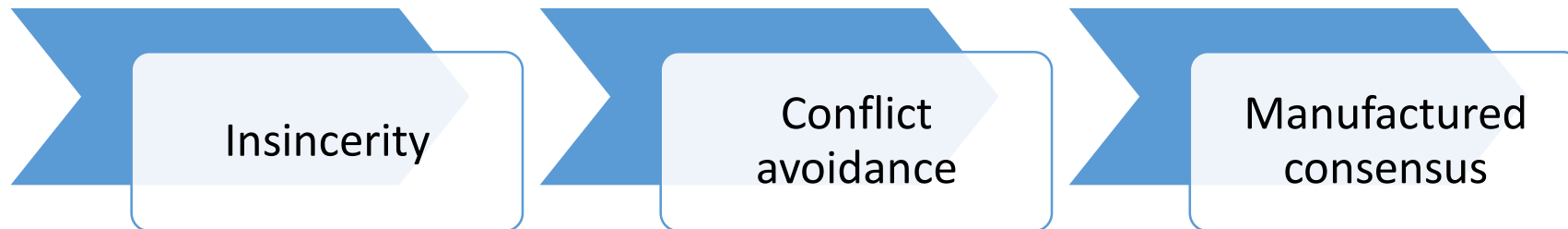
Feeling of a need to “water down” or compromise religious identity in order to fit

- Both parties should agree to disagree.
- Both parties should accept that differences exist and seek to understand them without compromising their own beliefs

Proselytizing or attempting to convert the other

- Participants should dialogue to **learn** about other religions, not to **promote** their religious beliefs

CHALLENGES OF IRD ENGAGEMENT 6



CASE STUDY
INTERFAITH DIALOGUE FORUM FOR PEACE (IDFP)

ABOUT KAICIID

ORGANIZATION HISTORY



2005

Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques launches interreligious dialogue initiative.

2007

Meets Pope Benedict, agreement to collaborate

2008

*Conference for Dialogue Madrid
UN Declaration New York*

2009

Treaty negotiation process begins

2012

Treaty enters into force

ABOUT KAICIID

GOVERNANCE

KAICIID Governance is comprised of a Council of Parties (The Founding States of the Centre: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Republic of Austria and Kingdom of Spain and the Holy See as an Observer), and a Board of Directors representing the major world religions, with the support of an Advisory Forum of up to 100 members of other religions, cultural institutions and international organizations



The Council of Parties



The Board of Directors



The Advisory Forum

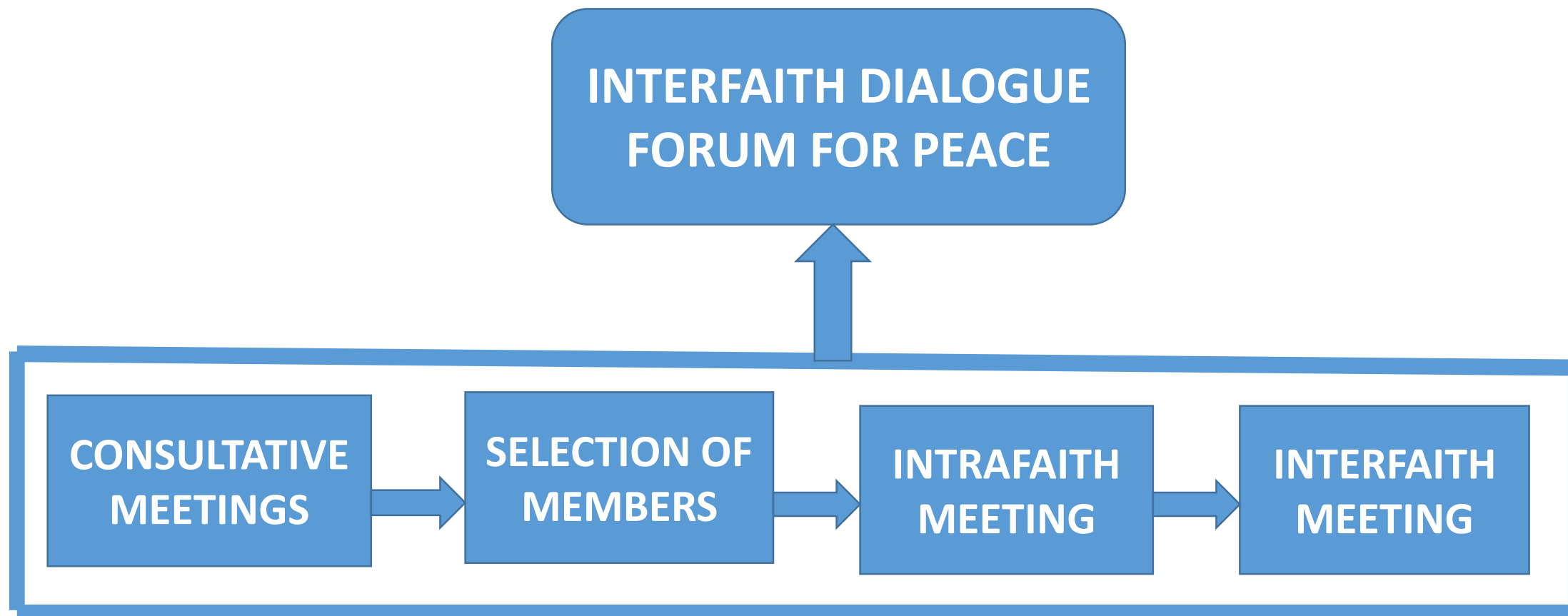
KAICIID MANDATE

The KAICIID Mandate is to promote dialogue to foster cooperation between religious leaders & policy makers, to counteract stereotypes and prejudice, and to foster peace and reconciliation

KAICIID PROGRAMMES

1. Arab Region Programme
2. Nigeria Country Programme
3. Central African Republic Country Programme
4. Myanmar Country Programme
5. International Fellows Programme
6. Refugees in Europe Programme
7. Dialogue Knowledge Hub
8. Scouts Movement Programme
9. Local Austrian Outreach

ESTABLISHMENT PROCESS



IDFP: FACTSHEET

MEMBERSHIP AND COMPOSITION OF THE ORGANS

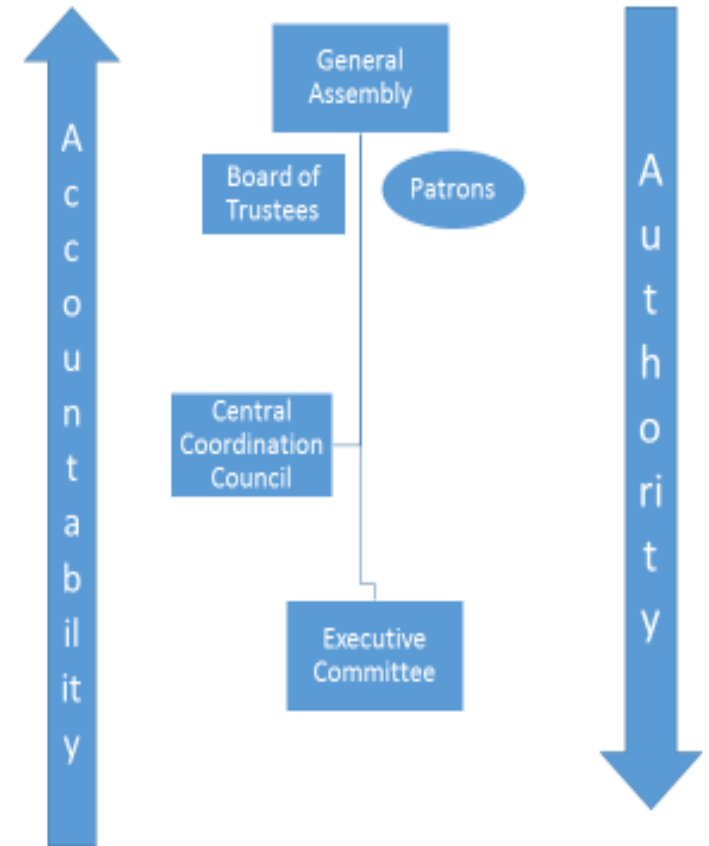
- An interfaith platform of 100 religious leaders (50 Muslims and 50 Christians)
- The Executive Committee as operational arm of the IDFP consisting of 10 people (5 Christian and Muslim each) who are meeting bi-monthly
- The Central Coordination Council comprising 15 Muslim leaders and 15 Christian leaders meets quarterly. Members of the Executive Committee are also members of the CCC, making a total of 40 people in attendance.
- The Board of Trustees: 10 members, again 5 Christians and 5 Muslims.
- Two Patrons : The Sultan of Sokoto & the President of the Christian Association of Nigeria.

THE INTERFAITH DIALOGUE FORUM for PEACE (IDFP) – based on Draft Constitution

Mission: Promote religious tolerance, integration and openness, all in the spirit of mutual trust, sincerity or purpose through dialogue.

Structure: The IDFP is composed of three different levels (i) the GA, (ii) the CCC and (iii) the Executive Committee.

Interaction with the member organizations: According to the subsidiarity principle.



VISION: IDFP envisions a Nigeria where there is religious tolerance; hate speech is prohibited and freedom of religion is ensured

Foundational Activities 1

- **Identification of 50 Christian and 50 Muslim key religious leaders**, carefully selected to represent all identifiable religious blocks, sects and denominations.
- **Simultaneous intrafaith meetings of the selected 50 Muslim leaders, and 50 Christian leaders in September 2016** to set the tone for the platform at the intrafaith level and identify intrafaith issues that must be tackled by the platform.
- **Interfaith meeting of the selected 50 Christians and the 50 Muslims in January 2017** also to set the tone for the platform at the intrafaith level and identify interfaith issues that must be tackled by the platform



The interfaith meeting in September 2016

Foundational Activities 2

- Adoption of a Constitution
- Adoption of By-laws
- Registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission
- Development of Financial Guidelines
- Development of an Action Plan, 2018
- Development of a Work Plan for 2018
- First General Assembly in January 2018
- Establishing **partnerships with local and international organizations**



The interfaith meeting in September 2016

➤ **Conference on Protection of Holy Sites – Concluded 2017**

- IDFP and SFCG partnered on this initiative
- IDFP Members from both faiths contributed to the discussions

➤ **Capacity Training for Youth on Peacebuiding – Concluded 2018**

- IDFP partnered with the National Army Resource Centre
- 120 attendees were trained in interfaith dialogue and sensitized to hate speech

➤ **Programme on Interfaith Co-existence – Concluded 2018**

- 3 day programme in Katsina on resolving conflicts through dialogue
- Exchange among religious communities
- 450 people reached



IDFP PATRONS – PRESIDENT OF CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA AND
THE SULTAN OF SOKOTO

- Southern Kaduna Peace Process on Trustbuilding and Peaceful Coexistence – **Concluded 2018**
 - Aiming at creating and supporting peace architecture toward conflict transformation in Southern Kaduna
 - In partnership with CAN, Kaduna Chapter
 - Advocacy visits to stakeholders took place June 21st, 2018 in Kaduna
 - Interfaith advocacy town hall meetings
- Ecumenical Women Forum against Hate Speech – **Concluded 2018**
 - Took place on June 22, 2018 in collaboration with the Women Wing of Christian Council of Nigeria (WOWICCN)
 - Sensitized women for interfaith responses to hate speech



SUNNI AND SHIA IDFP MEMBERS DURING THE LAST GENERAL ASSEMBLY

IDFP INITIATIVES

- Intra-Faith Round Table on De-radicalisation in Nigeria for Muslim religious preachers and teachers – **Concluded 2018**
- Peace advocacy visitations to 5 flashpoint states on the farmers/herders conflict (Kaduna, Plateau, Benue, Taraba, Zamfara) – **Advocacy and fact finding activities concluded in 2018. Follow-up interventions to be concluded by third quarter of 2019.**
- Pre-election national advocacy campaign to ban hate speech
 - Hate speech bill in partnership with other organisations - **Ongoing**
 - National campaign through sensitization workshops, regular and social media – **Concluded 2019**



IDFP INITIATIVES

- Youth Summit on Interreligious harmony and media engagement on the protection of holy sites – **Concluded 2018**
- Role of Youth and Religious Leaders in Peaceful Elections (**Concluded 2018**)
- National Peace Conference (**To be done in Q3 2019**)
- Sensitization workshop on Women and Child’s Rights - **Concluded 2019**)
- “My Neighbour” – **Concluded 2018**
 - Aiming to increase understanding and respect among youth and women religious leaders
 - Working with Muslim and Christian student leaders on religious tolerance and engagement in protection of the holy sites



IDFP INITIATIVES

- Building Community Resilience in Southern Kaduna to Ensure Peaceful 2019 General Elections (Workshop with stakeholders; Separate dialogue forums for religious leaders, community leaders, youth, women, and security agencies – **Concluded 2019**)
- Awareness on Religious Minority Rights As Strategy For Promoting Freedom Of Religion – **Concluded 2019**
- Strengthening Interfaith Voices Against Hate Speech in Plateau and Kaduna States – **Ongoing**
- Safeguarding our Common Religious Dharma for North-West Nigeria – **Concluded June 2019**
- National symposium on Corruption, Insecurity and the Challenges of National Cohesion in Nigeria: Building a Resilient Nigeria – **Concluded 2019**



PROF. MOHAMMED ABU-NIMER, PROF. PATRICE BRODEUR, BISHOP MATTHEW KUKAH, BISHOP PRAISE, MATTHIAS EDER, PROF. OSHITA O. OSHITA AND OTHERS DURING THE INTRAFaITH MEETINGS IN 2016

Recommendations

- ✓ Interfaith dialogue must transcend conflict resolution to good governance.
- ✓ Respect for the democratic principle of representation in areas of obvious intrafaith and interfaith cleavages.
- ✓ Appreciate the impact of the international environment on Nigeria's ethno-religious crises.
- ✓ Joint action against corruption, mismanagement of resources, bad governance, widespread diseases, the fallen standard of education, the collapse of moral and family values, etc.
- ✓ Check the growing international networking of fanatical religious individuals and groups.

Recommendations 2

- ✓ Cooperation between Christians and Muslims in the task of building a just, peaceful and democratic Nigerian society.
- ✓ Greater networking among IRD civil society groups for maximum impact.
- ✓ Encourage many more joint (Christian-Muslim) social welfare and community development programmes and projects.
- ✓ Ensure uniform standard of human rights across all national and international cleavages.
- ✓ Ensure justice for all irrespective of differences

Recommendations 3

- ✓ Appreciation of the futility of violence even in the face of real or perceived injustice.
- ✓ Christians and Muslims staying faithful to the injunctions of both religions on peace.

Christian: Jesus is the Prince of Peace; the Golden Rule; turning the other cheek; vengeance belonging to God; reconciliation initiated by the victim (offering); etc.

Muslim: Islam is a religion of peace; revenge; etc

- ✓ Elite consensus

Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi

- Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
 - Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
 - Where there is injury, pardon;
 - Where there is doubt, faith;
 - Where there is despair, hope;
 - Where there is darkness, light; and
 - Where there is sadness, joy.
- O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
 - to be understood as to understand;
 - to be loved as to love.
 - For it is in giving that we receive;
 - it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and
 - it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen

K A I C I I D
CIID
D I A L O G U E
C E N T R E

Thank You