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# DESIGNING AND EVALUATING PEACEBUILDING IN NIGERIA: THE EVIDENCE OF THE INSTITUTE FOR PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

## Olalekan A. Babatunde and Zainab Anyadike

Research Fellows and Peacebuilding Practitioners at the Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

The study presents evidence of how the Nigeria's Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) had designed and implemented peacebuilding and conflict prevention strategies in the country's conflict dynamics since 2000. This is important because Nigeria is notorious for violence and its adverse effects have claimed several lives, displaced millions from their homes and livelihoods. Therefore, understanding the Institute's approach at designing relevant peacebuilding and assessing its impact would go a long way to understand what had worked and what had not worked and why in Nigerian peacebuilding. Drawing from a wide range of sources to support qualitative and quantitative data, the study discovers peacebuilding activities that are relevant and appropriate to the underlying causes of violent conflict in the country. There is strong evidence to suggest that the peacestrategies were well implemented, but they did not go far enough to mitigate the threats or risks of violent conflict in Nigeria, as it often relapsed to violence as soon as it gained some respite. To achieve coherent, sustainable and long-term impact in peacebuilding, IPCR must scale up its interventions, promote community peacebuilding and institute follow up actions to all its implemented activities.

## INTRODUCTION

This article investigates the design, implementation and impact of the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) on peacebuilding in Nigeria, 2000-2014 with the aim of determining their relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. The assessment will help in understanding how peacebuilding programmes were designed and implemented for learning purposes. Besides researching into the causes of violent conflict in the country, IPCR was the Nigerian main agency saddled with the responsibility of promoting peacebuilding and advocacy. Understanding the study's outcome will not only guide the Institute in its programming but also the federal government, stakeholders, development organizations and other developing countries in their decision-making and public policy response to protracted violence and conflict. The period of study was chosen because of the completion of selected programmecycles which offered opportunities for measuring. Drawing on an array of sources, it reports on a range of peacebuilding evidence on women, youth, media, legislators, public servants, civil society and religious leaders in response to some identified drivers of conflict.

The entanglement in horrendous socio-political violence has retarded the country's growth since independence. Deep divisions and sharp differences in political, ethnic, religious and socio-economic lives have been blamed for the insecurity. With the outbreak of Boko Haram terrorism in 2009 and the persistent armed insurgencies that destroyed lives, property and displaced millions from their homes and means of livelihoods including the infamous abduction of the 219 Chibok school girls, could it be said that the Institute had not intervened in the promotion of peacebuilding and conflict prevention in Nigeria? Therefore, 15 years after its establishment, it became imperative to take stock of what IPCR had achieved by presenting evidence on what had worked and what had not worked and why. Answering this question begins with a concise conflict analysis of the country and IPCR's establishment history.

**Baseline Study and Establishment Mandate:** The immediate factors that led to the establishment of IPCR in year 2000 were the multiple adverse effects of the long years of military rule in Nigeria which culminated in violence as

Nigeria transitioned to democracy. Though the country inherited some political crises and a lopsided social and economic development at independence from the British in 1960, the inability of successive governments to right the wrong of the past complicated the issues. Upon its incursion into politics in 1966, the military led a long spell of autocratic and draconic rule that impinged on peoples' rights and freedom, silenced opposition and fueled extra-judicial killings. A popular example was the hanging of the Niger Delta environmental activist Saro Wiwa and the Ogoni nine by the General Sani Abacha, the former Head of State. The western world's sanctions that followed the execution isolated the country and fomented public anger toward the military. The dictatorship had bred untold feelings of aggression, frustration, discontent, despondency, vengeance, and intolerance of one another's views, suspicions and mistrust among the ethnic nationalities, individuals, groups, organizations and communities. Its reign also created inequality in economic and political opportunities, youth unemployment and fostered corruption and impunity. Agitations became the order of the moment.[1]Instead of peace, the democracy began to generate violence and displacement. Thus it did not take long before the democratic government began to witness its ripple effects of violence in every sphere of national life.

The first violence to erupt was on the third day after the inauguration of the civilian administration between the Ijaw and Itsekiri communities on 1 June 1999at Warri in Delta State. Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, a one-time military ruler was sworn-in as president and commander-in-chief of the armed forces. Almost in quick succession, violent conflicts were recorded at Sagamuin Ogun States between the Hausa community and the indigenes, Ife and Modakeke in Oyo State, and in Kano and Kaduna States.[2] Nigerians became intolerant of one another. There was proliferation of vigilante groups and resurgence of ethnic militias such as the O'odua People's Congress (OPC), Egbesu Boys of Africa (EBA) and Arewa People's Congress (APC) that portended high danger to the nascent democracy. There was an upsurge of crises after the above ugly incidents. For example, in 1999, there were 5000 internally-displaced people in Nigeria, most as a result of the violence.[3]Many killed and property destroyed. Similarly, the number of breaches of peace in 1997 was reportedly pegged at 7100 while it increased to 7519 in 1998.[4]Many could be attributed to outburst of a prolonged decay in the system and nonchalant attitude to peacebuilding and conflict prevention mechanisms. It is noteworthy to say that, during the military era, as soon as a conflict erupted, panels of enquiry were often set up to investigate its causes and other issues around it. The findings of the crisis were not made public let alone seen to be implemented. It could be argued that the military approach to resolve or manage conflict did not go far enough to ameliorate or mitigate the conditions behind most conflicts. That is to say,

the underlying factors behind the conflicts were not addressed, but left to brew and unfettered. According to the IPCR's Strategic Conflict Assessment (SCA) exercise carried out in 2003, it identified that the key perpetrators of the violence were the large numbers of unemployed and disillusioned youth whom the politicians, detractors of the system and other actors were recruiting to advance their agenda. Military and security agents' responses had not stemmed the tide and the root causes were left to persist. This led to the suggestion of a set of policy responses. For instance, the civil society, the media and the business leaders must play a constructive role and compliment the effort of the security agencies in addressing the recurring violence. Ever since Johan Galtung hinted on the idea of peacebuilding in 1975 and the subsequent definition of "post-conflict peace-building" by the former United Nations Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the concept had gained traction.[5] On assumption of democratic rule a new direction and commitment became necessary for the country to be among a comity of nations that pursued growth and development through promotion of peace and security where the civil population would be visible and impactful. Similarly, it had become a fashion in other parts of the world to have an institution to deepen the roots of democracy by promoting peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

Therefore, less than a year in office, the Obasanjo administration established IPCR in February 2000 to checkmate the recurring violent conflict through research, peacebuilding, advocacy, evidence-informed policy options and practice. The Establishment Act, No. 34 of the Institute mandated it to engage in conflict prevention, management and resolution in Nigeria and other parts of Africa.[6] Promotion of peacebuilding is enshrined in the United Nations' *An Agenda for Peace*, and in other regional integration and cooperation instruments. The populations this study sampled were the past beneficiaries of IPCR's programmes (20 persons and two organizations are selected in each state for the six geopolitical zones). Random sampling was chosen because there were a large number of participants both in persons and organizations that had attended the Institute's programmes. Primary data on records of programmes such as the Establishment Act of the Institute, concept note, work plans, reports, publications, etc. were reviewed during meetings with focal persons and programme teams. The data gathered was validated through double-checking sources of information to add quality to the result. Data analyzed using Atlas. ti 7 for validity and reliability. The main limitation of the thesis was the impossibility of evaluating all the implemented peacebuilding programmes of IPCR. However, the evaluated programmes were chosen because they are critical to the Nigeria's conflict dynamics and their peculiar life cycles. The thematic areas of the peacebuilding are governance, election, gender issues, conflict sensitivity and religion. The target groups in these areas included the women, youth, media, public servants, legislators, community and religious leaders and civil society groups.

**Responding to the Challenge:** Guided by the SCA, IPCR adopted strategies such as research, trainings, dialogues, advocacy, sensitization and awareness creation, early warning

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[1]Olalekan A. Babatunde (2018)*Impact of the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution on peacebuilding and conflict prevention in Nigeria, 2000-2014*, PhD thesis (unpublished), Department of History, University of Zululand, South Africa, http://uzspace.unizulu.ac.za:8080/xmlui/handle/10530/1641(accessed 25 August, 2018).

[2]Elaigwu, Jonah I (2005) Crises and Conflict Management in Nigeria Since 1980. In Yakubu, A.M., Dogo, B., and Adegboye, R.T. (eds.) *Crisis and Conflict Management in Nigeria.*Kaduna: Nigerian Defence Academy, p. 59.

[3] International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (2002) World Disasters Reports: Focus on reducing risk. *National Bureau of Statistics*, Nigeria, p. 210.

[4]National Bureau of Statistics (1999) Annual Abstract of Statistics. Nigeria, p. 149.

[5]  Ikeda, Daisaku (2002) 'Johan Galtung-Father of Peace Studies', http://www.sgiquarterly.org/global2002Jan-1.html [accessed 23 January 2017].

[6] Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (2007) IPCR Establishment Act, *Federal Republic of Nigeria Official Gazette*, 129 (94), pp. A1093-A1095.

mechanisms, peace education and a few others to address the underlying causes of the recurring conflict. Between 2000 and 2005, its activities were limited to research, advocacy visits, sensitization and awareness creations. It was not until 2006 that significant peacebuilding interventions were held across the country. It had partnered with a few national and international organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Children's Educational Funds (UNICEF), Open Society Initiative of West Africa (OSIWA), and recently with the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP), Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC), Department for International Development (DFID), and a host of other partners and networks around the country to implement its peacebuilding activities. The programmes were the *Election Conflict Management Project (ECMP); Mainstreaming Gender into Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention; Conflict Sensitive Reporting on Elections and Good Governance Advocacy for Media Groups; Conflict Sensitive Approach to Development and Budget Formulation for State Legislators, Public Servants, Local Government Chairmen, Traditional Rulers and Civil Society; and Interfaith Dialogues on Religious Tolerance and Peaceful Coexistence in Nigeria.* The following bar chart illustrates the frequency at which the programmes were implemented between 2007 and 2014:
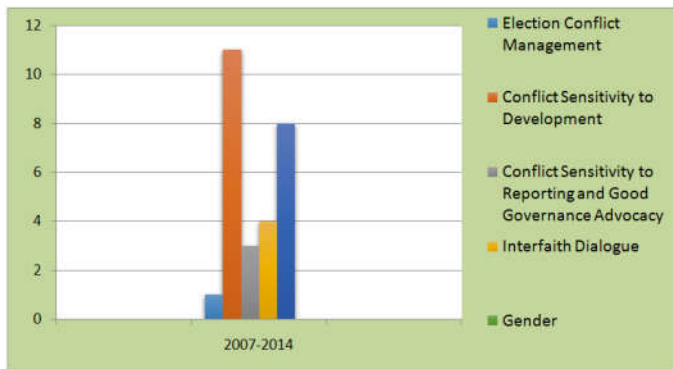


*Note: From the chart on the five selected peacebuilding programmes for this impact evaluation, capacity building trainings on conflict sensitive to development and budget formulation ranked highest with eleven workshops while mainstreaming gender into conflict prevention and peacebuilding was next. A workshop on conflict sensitive reporting and good governance advocacy for journalists was third while interfaith dialogue was fourth. Though implemented in four phases with distinct activities purposely for the 2007 elections, the election conflict management was fifth in the column chart.*

were the peacebuilding beneficiaries would drive change in the course of their engagements on the field. Training and dialogues (the main capacity building activities) were identified as the best methods to impact the change through development and strengthening of skills, instincts, abilities and processes of individuals, groups, communities and institutions involved. It was IPCR's conviction that it would accelerate and deepen peacebuilding efforts in Nigeria.

**The Evidence**

The following are the summary of the findings:

***Outputs*:** All the six geopolitical zones of the country had witnessed peacebuilding interventions. Though it was impossible to obtain the total number of activities conducted across the country, IPCR had trained a total of 2675 people in all its peacebuilding activities in the period under study. Beneficiaries cut across gender and socio-cultural backgrounds. Men represented 56% while women signified 44%. Due to their vantage position in peacebuilding, the Institute seized the opportunity to empower women and ensured they take ownership and leadership role in peacebuilding in Nigeria.

Another significant output was the formation of a national peace network in 2009- Innovative Initiative for Community Peacebuilding (IICP) whose goal was to promote peacebuilding at the grassroots was inaugurated among the various organizations and individuals that attended the Institute's peacebuilding. A few of their members are Zumuntan Matan Katolika, Katsina; Federation of Muslim Women of Nigeria; Christian Association of Nigeria; Trios Human Development Foundation, Ilorin; Women Development Partnership, Uyo; Kebetkache Women Development and Resource Centre, Port-Harcourt; National Council of Women Societies; Youth and Women Against Societal Violence, Benin; and, Godly Women Foundation.

*Note:* From the above table, it could be said that the number of women beneficiaries was significant because Nigeria, like most African societies, is patrilineal. So women inclusion and attendance meant a lot in scaling up the planned impact of the Institute's training interventions.

***Outcomes:*** The expected outcome of the programmes was to a large extent met going by the following results: Some 98% of the respondents had their expectations met at the trainings while 97.1% said the training was relevant to their professional needs. 93.3% of the respondents agreed to an increase in knowledge and skills in peace and conflict theories, principles

**Table 1. Descriptive results of gender indicators of IPCR peacebuilding trainings, 2006-2014**

| Variables | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Women | 170 | 158 | 193 | 139 | 200 | 146 | 126 | 123 |
| Men | 196 | 170 | 210 | 167 | 216 | 160 | 157 | 144 |
| Sub-total | 366 | 328 | 403 | 306 | 416 | 306 | 283 | 267 |
| Total: 2 675 | | | | | | | | |

In design, the overall assumption, i.e. theory of change, behind the programmes was that if national stakeholders or actors could be adequately trained in the strategies, skills and knowledge of peacebuilding and conflict prevention, there would be peace and development in Nigeria. The actors who

and practices while 92.3% had observed positive behavioural and attitudinal changes after the training. Interviews conducted in the 4 geopolitical zones of North West, North Central, South West and South East validated a review of the programme reports that it enhanced capacity of the beneficiaries. All

(100%) of the respondents (women and male counterparts) said their participation had improved the way they worked particularly in mainstreaming peacebuilding. Many (95%) attested that the Institute's peacebuilding was their first training experience which they regarded as a turning point of their career. According to the respondents, they were more equipped to build peace and make more contribution to issues of peace in their communities. The same number has also had their confidence and efficiency built in peace work. This suggests that the peacebuilding intervention was a success and a reflection of the effective design and implementation on the part of the programme team. More than 90.4% agreed that IPCR had strengthened democratic governance in Nigeria through peacebuilding while 9.5% was not so sure. For example, there is a robust evidence that suggests that the peaceful governorship elections in Osun and Ekiti States in 2014 can partly be attributed to the role played by journalists trained in conflict sensitive reporting by IPCR.

While the result figure is a success, the few responses that were not sure could be said to be respondents that felt that the democracy they had expected has not delivered good governance. It was observed that the trained women groups have taken the front seat in the promotion of conflict management and resolution in their communities. For instance, through peace education in Lagos and Kwara schools, students were inculcating values such as forgiveness, reconciliation and love. The students who were widely known for juvenile delinquencies have come together to form peace clubs in their schools under the auspices of the women peacebuilders. Furthermore, in the wake of displacement from the Boko Haram's attacks on some communities, a few women groups under the Justice Development and Peace Commission (JDPC) inYola who benefited in the programmewere providing humanitarian support to the Internally Displaced Persons camps in Gombe, Damaturu, Maiduguri and Lafia.as part of their post-peacebuilding programmes.
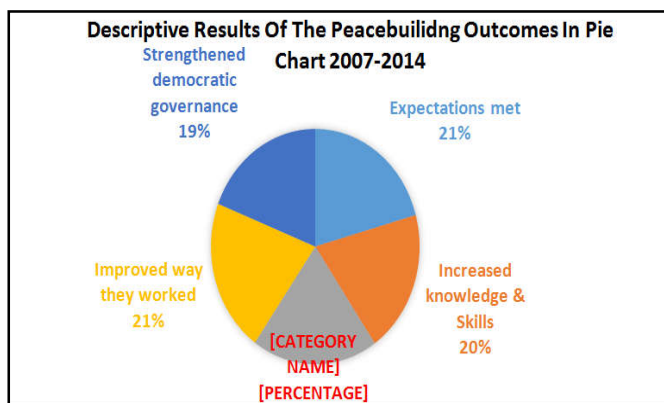


*Impact:* Despite increase in capacity of beneficiaries, the Institute's peacebuilding has not delivered a long-term or sustainable peace in Nigeria. There is a strong evidence to suggest that IPCR had only contributed to peace in the medium term as 77.1% of the respondents demonstrated while 20.9% indicated it was in short term and two percent of the respondents said long term.  This is an indication that IPCR had contributed to national peace but not quite enduring. However, in interviews with a few of the past beneficiaries, they were not certain if they could make causal attributes to the peace noticed during the period in some parts of the country to their work because of some other factors they thought could have been responsible. More so, there were

interventions by other stakeholders besides IPCR. But they were certain that in part, their contributions would have made meaningful impact to peace in their communities.

**Key analytical points**

- IPCR had designed and implemented relevant peacebuilding activities to address the conflict dynamics. However, it is observed that despite the overwhelming evidence of programme impact, the level of violent conflict had not abated. It seems likely that addressing the root causes of conflict was far beyond an agency such as IPCR and, therefore in need of larger, multi-agency cooperation and coordination to stem the tide of violence and conflict in Nigeria.

- Similarly, there is a strong evidence to suggest that IPCR had demonstrated some institutional strengths in programme planning and management. There was an existing committee on development agencies' supported activities headed by a Deputy Director. Nevertheless, integration of theories of change was not implicitly drawn as per the programme logic models.  Though peacebuilding TOCs were noticed in the programme concept notes and annual workplans. It needs to embrace programmebest practices such as monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in order to be able to track changes.

- Apart from positive changes in behaviour and attitudes of beneficiaries, it was difficult to trace the wider impact of intervention.

- Designed ad hoc peacebuilding intervention such as conflict sensitive reporting on election for the media had a visible impact on the intervention. It was easier to trace results of the peacebuilding.

- Funds was a serious limitation to its peacebuilding programming. Difficult to take ownership and make measurable impact if it is not self-supporting.

- Some of the missed opportunities included the ineffective exploitation of peace networks active at the grassroots level of the nation, trickling down the benefits of interventions, etc.

- Training formed 75% of its peacebuilding, followed by dialogue 10% while advocacy, awareness and sensitization campaigns such as public lectures, Peace Day celebrations and others made up the rest 15% of its programmes.

- To concretize gains of the peacebuilding, it was observed that the beneficiaries have to be trained more than once. About 13% of beneficiaries who attended similar workshops by IPCR demonstrated more lasting knowledge and deeper skills.

- Majority of the respondents believed that the conflict situations in the country would have been worse if IPCR had not been established. The difficulty to establish causality remains. That is, to attribute the peacefulness enjoyed in some parts of the country to IPCR.

- National and African capacity for conflict prevention strengthened. Institutionalizing peacebuilding can be emulated and early effort should be taken to preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) in Africa. If the underlying causes of

conflict were left unmitigated could lead to more escalation of violence.
- Even though peacebuilding implementations may be successful, they do not guarantee durable peace even when result of findings indicates so.
- The institutional capacity of IPCR was still under-utilized. There are enormous potential resources in its personnel to deliver on its mandate.

**Conclusions**

Taking the evidence into account, IPCR has contributed to the promotion of peace in Nigeria through relevant and effective peacebuilding programmes. However, the study does not claim to have comprehensively covered all the evidence to support IPCR programming. This calls for more research in this area. From the lessons learned from the study, there are things that should be done differently in the future. But essentially, the evidence, however small, serves as an acknowledgment of the Institute's capacity to support the sustenance of democracy in Nigeria. For IPCR to make a long-term and sustainable impact, it has to strengthen and deepen its peacebuilding planning and expand the implementation to include the community peace networks in order to mainstream the traditional, religious, women, youth and civic society leaders into peacebuilding. Improving its programme outcome and impact will reduce the escalation of violence and relapse of conflict in the country. As part of the public policy response to insecurity in Nigeria, the government can transform IPCR into a Peace Commission so that it can be fully funded and effectively discharge its mandate.

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