Interfaith Mediation Centre of Muslim Christian Dialogue Forum (IMC-MCDF)

Nigeria
Changemakers Archive

Project Summary

Concise Summary: Help us pitch this solution! Provide an explanation within 3-4 short sentences.

Our work at IMC/MCDF addresses the challenge of building peace. We do so by using a faith-based approach to promote acceptance of differences (religious, cultural, gender and other social differences) that exist in society and the use of non-violent methods in solving problems. This strategy acknowledges the fact that people are passionate about their religion and that nearly all people in Africa belong to one religion or another. It also draws on the immunity, moral authority and influence that religious leaders have on religious communities. The leaders of all sides to any conflict in Africa belong to one religion or another. Faith is therefore, a master key of sorts. Our work started in the city of Kaduna in Northern Nigeria. Kaduna has until fairly recently (the last four years), been the hotbed of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria. It is estimated that in the last decade, over 150,000 lives have been lost to such conflicts in Nigeria. Recent examples of our work from Nigeria include coordinating the formation of Kaduna Peace Committee and the adoption of the Kaduna Peace Declaration of August 2002. The President of Nigeria, Governor of Kaduna State and members of the diplomatic corps witnessed this event. Similar initiatives undertaken in Plateau State of Nigeria since it became engulfed with crises include mediation of the Yelwa-Shendam Peace Affirmation that was signed February 19, 2005 and facilitating the Peace Initiative of Pan and Goemai (July 19, 2006). Another initiative at Dillimi-Kwang has led up to the rebuilding of the community’s market with support from United States Institute of Peace (USIP) Washington DC and Japanese Embassy (foundation laying/ground breaking ceremony took place in March 2006).

About You

Location
Project Street Address
Project City
Project Province/State
Project Postal/Zip Code
Project Country

Your idea

Focus of activity
Dialogue Processes

Start Year
1995

Positioning in the mosaic of solutions

Main barrier addressed
Culture of violence

Main principle addressed
Humanize the other

Innovation

Description of initiative:

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Description of innovation:
In addressing peace-building challenges, we use scriptural texts that promote peace and collaborate, partner or network with other peace practitioners and institutions. Further, we undertake peacemaking initiatives that establish frameworks for achieving peace at both high policy and community levels. We have programs that encourage partnership across the religious divide by supporting economic empowerment activities of interreligious women groups in conflict torn communities. We also promote good governance as a vital tool in conflict prevention, using faith-based approach. We partner with governments, community based organizations, religious institutions and traditional leaders, educational and other social institutions in carrying out our work. Sometimes, the initiative is ours and sometimes theirs. As recognition of the value of our work in Nigeria, we have been asked to undertake peace-building assignments in Africa and other parts of the world. On the continent, we facilitate empowerment activities through training in conflict management, peace building and reconciliation. We also undertake/promote healing and trust building activities as in countries like Sudan, Burundi, Kenya and Sierra Leone. We have recently facilitated two high level consultations in February 2006 and May 2006 for Christian- Muslim relationship in Kenya. We also facilitated a Christian-Muslim relationship for Sudan in Uganda. Beyond Africa, we have been presented as role models in the Global North in Croatia, Northern Ireland and among Native Americans in the United States of America. We were presented as role models for peace at the Co-existence initiative organized by the State of the World Forum held in Northern Ireland. Apart from being role models, we have participated as resource persons in Switzerland on building a network of Abrahamic religions to achieve peace. We were also facilitators on Forgiveness and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland.

**Delivery model:**

IMC-MCDF uses participatory training and learning workshops and symposiums; multi-track approach using scriptural texts; organisation building and networking; media advocacy; learning, courtesy and advocacy visits; production of flyers, stickers, posters and manuals to deliver on our goals. We also use the project/programme approach to development. Projects and programmes are designed according to needs of target communities and support mobilised towards realising objectives of the initiative.

**Key operational partnerships:**

IMC-MCDF is affiliated to the following national networks: Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, Christian Association of Nigeria, Jamaâ??atu Nasril Islam, Conflict Management Stakeholders Network, Non- state Actors, West African Civil Society Forum. The Centre is also affiliated to the following international associations: International Centre for Reconciliation, Coventry, UK; Initiative of Change, Caux, Switzerland; Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), Hague, The Netherlands; Open Society Initiative of West Africa, Dakar, Senegal; FTL films London, UK; Library of Congress Nigerian People Forum, USA; Nigerian Reconciliation Group, UK. Our Centre collaborates with the following organizations: National Democratic Institute (NDI), Abujaâ??; Nigeria; Strategic Empowerment and Mediation Agency (SEMA) Kaduna â?? Nigeria; Academic Associate Peace Work (AAPW) Abuja â?? Nigeria; Human Right Monitor (HRM), Kaduna â?? Nigeria; Civil Liberties Organization (CLO) Kaduna â?? Nigerian; The Kaduna Peace Committee (KPC) Kaduna â?? Nigerian; German Technical Co-operation (GTZ), Abuja, Nigeria; Institute of Democracy in South African (IDASA) Nigeria Office, Abuja; Responding to Conflict (RTC) Birmingham UK; Conflict Management Initiatives, Evanston IL, USA; International Alert (IA) Clapham, London, UK; Search for Common Ground, Washington D.C. USA; Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding, US; Ashoka, Abuja-Nigeria; Diversity Matters Forum, Australia.

**Impact:**

**Financial model:**

Our financial model is action based. Initiatives are projectised and financial support mobilised locally and/or internationally to implement the project. The main sources for financial support of our activities are state governments, intergovernmental organisations, local and international donor agencies.

**Costs as percentage of income:**

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**Financing:**

â??Financing: We rely on grants, donations and volunteer contributions. The IMC-MCDF has been supported by the following agencies: British Council, Lagos-Nigeria; Coventry Cathedral, UK; British High Commission, Abuja-Nigeria; United State Institute of Peace, US; Open Society Initiative of West Africa, Abuja; International Center for Reconciliation, UK; United State Embassy, Abuja; Christian Aid, UK; International Foundation for Education Sell Help (IFESH), Nigeria; Canadian High Commission, Abuja; Japan Embassy, Abuja-Nigeria; German Embassy, Abuja-Nigeria; Embassy of The Netherlands, Abuja-Nigeria; Commonwealth Foundation, UK; United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Nigeria; Christian Association of Nigeria; Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs. We have also received support from State governments in Nigeria such as Kaduna and Plateau State Governments.

**Effectiveness:**

Difficult as it were to determine the impact of peace building activities, we have a number of tangible results to show for our efforts. i. Peacemaking; establishment of frameworks for achieving peace, Kaduna Peace Declaration, Yelwa-Shendam Peace Affirmation, Pan and Goemai Peace Initiative. ii. Programs and projects that promote peace and good governance; establishment of peace constituencies, bring together elected representatives and the electorate in Kaduna State of Nigeria. iii. Increased demand for our services as Facilitators or Mediators iv. Establishment of faith institutions the Bureau for Religious Affairs, Kaduna Government and Plateau State Inter-religious Council. v. Establishment of Networks Kano Interfaith group, Kaduna Peace Committee of Religious Leaders, Senatorial Peace Constituencies of Kaduna State, Conflict Management, Mitigation Regional Council of Nigeria. vi. Establishment of peace clubs in schools; peace curriculum for schools and colleges in Nigeria and Northern Ghana.

**Scaling up strategy:**

Stage of the initiative:

<i>Scaling Up</i> stage.

**Expansion plan:**

Promote the faith based approach to peace building at local, geo-political, national, sub-regional, continental and global levels. In order to achieve this goal we will develop initiatives that will be implemented through the following activities: establishing peace constituencies;
establishing resource centres; mapping of faith based practitioners/organisations at all levels of society; conduct needs assessment on training requirements of faith based peace building organisations and practitioners; organise conferences of faith-based peace builders; organise training workshops; publish a book on best practices, training manuals and newsletter; produce audio visual documentary from practitioners viewpoint; promote intra and inter religious dialogues on Radio and TV; advocacy for adoption of faith based peace building initiatives; support income generating activities for women across religious divides.

**Origin of the initiative:**

IMC-MCDF was founded in 1995 by two former bitter religious enemies, the Pastor and Imam. It is a story of transformation on the basis of acceptance â?? from hate to love, vengeance to forgiveness, exclusion to inclusion. After nearly a decade of religious violence in Kaduna State, Nigeria the collaboration started with a chance meeting between the Pastor and Imam at Kaduna State Government House in1995 when they both attended a meeting. This program was facing resistance from communities and the Kaduna State Government decided to invite influential members of the clergy to help discuss the matter. After the meeting, a mutual friend of the two, a liberal Muslim, brought them together Amazingly they discovered that they shared a common perspective on the problems facing the country. On that note they parted with an agreement to meet again. After one year they decided to form an inter-faith consortium, Muslim-Christian Dialogue Forum, to create a better understanding and peaceful coexistence among religious organisations.

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