YOUTH IN PEACE BUILDING IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

Edited By:
Chris M. A. Kwaja
Ruqayyayah Yusuf Aliyu
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We would like to thank the MacArthur Foundation whose generous grant to the Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD) made it possible to produce this book. We are indeed grateful to Dr. Chris Kwaja of the Centre for Peace and Security Studies, Modibbo Adama University of Technology Yola, Adamawa state and Dr. Ruqayyah Yusuf Aliyu of the Department of Information and Media Studies, Faculty of Communications, Bayero University, Kano for editing the book. The commitment and dedication rendered to this publication by the two scholars is very much appreciated.

We would also like to thank chapter contributors of the book for their commendable work in making the Youth in Peacebuilding in Northern Nigeria book a reality. To Emu Brown, who did the cover design and layout of the book, we say a big thank you!

Y.Z. Ya’u,
Executive Director,
Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD).
Foreword

When people speak about youth and violence, it is to follow a simple narrative of the visible dysfunctional youth expression, often pushed into marginal spaces of criminality such as sara suka, yandaba, yanbanga, etc, but youth can and indeed are veritable agents of peace building and countering violent extremism. The temptation to see young people as more of a problem in conflicts than part of the peace building architecture in resolving the conflicts is so strong conflict tend to have youthful face. This is because youth tend to predominant in the population of combatants to conflicts and also because media often does not focus on conflicts them. youth themselves, occupied with making difference in their communities do not have the time and support to document their stories by themselves. Instead, these stories are written by adults who are best are interested observers to the work on youth in peace building.

Over the last couple of years, CITAD has worked with a body of youth. We marvel at the incredible energy, passion and resourcefulness that they bring to the effort of peace building. Last year CITAD organized a series of ideas competition among students in northeast, namely in Yobe, Adamawa and Borno States, to harvest alternative ideas of how we can overcome insurgency in the region, and I was thrilled with the array of ideas we harvested, the novelty and creativity embodied in those ideas.

But youth are also vicariously victims of violent extremism. Each time I think of this, my mind goes out to the students of Buni Yadi and our Chibok girls. Countless others have paid the supreme sacrifice by offering themselves like Fanami to
prevent the death of other members of their communities. Yet we also have to acknowledge the thousands of young people forcefully abducted, forced into carrying guns and dying for a cause that they did not understand and certainly did not believe in.

Yet, the sacrifice, the passion and commitment that young people demonstrate in the efforts to build peace are not visible. It is important to hear these voices so as to inspire others. This is why CITAD over two years convened two rounds of conferences of young people working in peace building, providing them with the space to tell their stories by themselves. This book is a selection of some of the stories.

Youth in peace building have unique advantages: they are mobile, energetic and technology savvy, deploying it to mount campaigns against extremists and creating innovative initiatives in peace making. The selection in this book gives us a panoramic view of landscape of possibilities that youth are heroically making; from the initiative across the labyrinth of the allays of Kano city to the hilltop of the plateau in Jos and to the ridges of the desert plains of Yobe, we see these efforts in their brilliant colours. The stories from Maiduguri, where youth provided the backbone of Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) which was pivotal in sacking the Boko Haram combatants from the capital to the forest expeditions of Aisha Bakari Gombi, Gimbiyar Gombi with her youth army who confronted the insurgents, staking their lives to secure their communities are inspiring stories.

The voice of Asabe, a youth living with disability in Ganawuri of Plateau State draws our attention to the invisibility of people with living with disabilities in conflict situation. As people struggle to escape when violence becomes prescient, they are left on their own. Her story must ring strongly in our conscience, telling us that we need to think about getting
people living with disabilities out of violence zone. Our hope in bringing out this book is first and foremost, to give visibility to the work that young people are doing to build peace, restore peace, where it has been disturbed or ensure that peace is not disturbed in their communities. Many of these efforts are heroic and by getting them out to the wide public, we hope, they will serve to inspire more young people to engage in peace building. Third is that there is need to change the narrative of seeing youth as mere cannon folder ready to fire the trigger and set their communities on fire. Youth as we seen in these stories are part of the peace building architecture in communal conflicts. Even their ability to develop strong ties and friendships across divides is an element that can leverage in the efforts to bridge divides and create peace.

Fourth in deciding to do this book, we were breaking with two norms. The first was that youth should be listened to and we have allowed young people to tell their stories. the second norm we hope to deconstruct is the invisibility of success stories in the conflict narratives. By telling what these young people are doing, we are making heroic efforts more visible than the upbeat documentation on the horrors of conflicts.

Finally, rather than keep lamenting about the negative things we see around us, it is more inspiring to celebrate the good things that people are doing. By celebrating these fourth efforts, we are conjuring their heroism that should both motivate and inspire others to extend their hands necessary handshakes across divides as the foundation for restoration of peace in divided community and in working to ensure conflicts do not turn violent. It is our hope there that this book will play a role in getting more young people to engage in people building.

Y. Z. Ya’u
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Chris M.A Kwaja, Ph.D is currently a senior lecturer and researcher at the Centre for Peace and Security Studies, Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola, Adamawa State. His research and policy interests cover issues around conflict, security and security analysis and security sector governance in transition societies as well as the politics of identity in Africa. He has published extensively in these areas.

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She had before joining the University worked as a reporter for a national daily, Daily Trust newspapers between 2008 and 2011, where she covered the Kano film industry, Kannywood, health and State House, among other beats. Daily Trust offered her automatic employment when she emerged the overall
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the violence. Before his current roles including Assistant Secretary of Women Peace & Security Network, he has worked in many capacities as project officer, assistant researcher, state focal person of Nigeria Youth Network on Countering Violent Extremism, volunteer supporting Plateau Peace Architecture Dialogue/ State Conflict Management Alliance and many other roles that have added to his field experience within 6 years of development work.

Hamza Ibrahim is a peace advocate with a passion for good governance and societal development working with the Center for Information Technology and Development (CITAD) in Nigeria as a coordinator for Curbing Hate and Dangerous Speech in the Nigeria Project. He has been a contributor to numerous research projects and policy briefs, including the “Social Media and Conflict in Nigeria: A Lexicon of Hate Speech Terms” and “Fake Images as Dangerous Speech: An Advisory”. He is also an active peace campaigner on social media and a commentator on issues relating to Hate Speech and Conflict in national and international media. He holds a Diploma in Public Administration and B.Sc. in Mass Communication and is currently pursuing an M.Sc. in Mass Communication in Bayero University, Kano. Hamza Ibrahim produces and presents programmes in local radio stations around good governance, culture and contemporary issues. He has several published newspaper articles.

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Introduction: Youths, Violence and (In) Security in Northern Nigeria

Chris M. A. Kwaja & Saheed B. Owonikoko

Introduction

The world is increasingly becoming unsafe as a result of the prevalence of violent conflicts and acts of criminality. The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) report for 2018 revealed that, although the fatalities of conflict have reduced, violent crime and insecurity continue to spread in Africa, Asia and Middle East (Roudabeh and Melisa, 2019). The Institute for Economics and Peace's Global Peace Index in its 2019 publication, titled Measuring Peace in a Complex World also reported that the trend in World Peacefulness since 2008 shows that “global peacefulness has deteriorated” (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2019:6). A Major factor in the spreading of violence and deterioration in peace in the contemporary world is the youth factor. Unfortunately, this is hardly engaged in the contemporary literature on violence and peace. Nigeria is one of the countries in the world most affected by the spread of violent conflict and the deterioration of peace. From the three-year Civil War (1967-1970), the scope of insecurity has now significantly expanded. New terminologies which were not known to Nigeria and Nigerians have not found their ways
into the lexicon of the people. They include words like terrorism, insurgency, banditry and kidnapping, among others. All the six geopolitical zones making up the Nigerian state are not exempted from the orgy of violent crime and insecurity bedeviling it.

In the South-South geopolitical zone, which consists of Edo, Bayelsa, Rivers, Cross River, Delta and Akwa-Ibom States, the problem of militancy still looms large in spite of the implementation of the Presidential Amnesty Programme. Apart from the problem of militancy, other security challenges, such as cultism, kidnapping, armed robbery, inter-ethnic/communal clashes and farmer-pastoralist conflicts, among others, are major security threats in the region. In the South East, the agitation for self-government, which kick-started the Nigerian Civil War in 1967, has not abated. Groups such as the Movement for the Actualisation of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and a new group known as Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) are still pushing for the secession of South East region from the Nigerian State. The activity of the group and their clashes with the Nigerian security agencies have been a major source of insecurity in the region for the past few years. Apart from this, the region is also experiencing other cases of insecurity such as farmer-pastoralist clashes, kidnapping, cultism, armed robbery, communal, land and boundary disputes, traditional leadership and chieftaincy tussles, cultism, oil-related crises and indigene-settler crises, among others. In the South West, the pattern and trend in insecurity are quite different. The major security challenge experienced in the region is the NURTW members' brouhaha, “omo-onile” crises, farmer-pastoralist conflicts, especially in remote areas, and essentially, violence and insecurity usually motivated by political activities. In the North Central, issues like indigene-settler, ethnicity and religion, political conflicts, farmer-pastoralist conflicts, among others, are driving
insecurity in the region. In the North West, cattle rustling, rural banditry, kidnapping, farmer-herder crises, ethnicity and religion and political activities are some of the issues driving insecurity. In the North East, insurgency, cattle rustling, rural banditry, kidnapping, ritualism and farmer-herder crises are some of the security issues affecting the stability of the region. All these combined together all over to contribute to the fragility of security in the Nigerian state.

Dividing Nigeria territorially into North and South shows that the magnitude of violence and insecurity is higher in the North than in the South. Even states that were hitherto known to be peaceful have now become hubs of insecurity. Obviously, a very important factor in the entrenchment of old security issues and the emergence of new ones in Nigeria is the role played by the youth population. Research has pointed out that large youth cohorts or a surging youth population, acting with other factors, can lead to violence and promote insecurity (Urdal, 2006; 2007; Urdal and Hoelscher, 2009). Similarly, Nigeria regarded as the most populous country in Africa, has one of the largest population of youth in the world (Assad and Levison, 2013). How this contributes to the prevalence of insecurity in Nigeria, especially in the Northern region, is the major research question that this paper shall engage.

**Conceptual Clarifications**

**Youth**

The attempt to understand the concept of youth has been enmeshed in difficulties of definition. Policy makers usually adopt the age bracket model to situate their understanding of what constitute youth. Thus, the age bracket of youth varies from context to context. According to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2250, a youth is a person whose age falls between 18 and 29 (United Nations, 2015:1).
This differs from Africa Union's (AU) conception. The African Youth Charter of the AU sees a youth as someone whose age ranges from 15 to 35 (AU, 2006:11). On the other hand, for the Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development, it is 15 to 24 (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2018). Even from country to country, situating the age categorization has also been different. For instance, Kenya and Malawi define youth as someone whose age ranges from 15 to 39 years. Sierra Leone, Ghana, Madagascar, Senegal and India see it in their own policies as people between the ages of 15 and 35 while in South Africa, it is between 14 and 35 years (Brown and Larson, 2002; Richter and Panday, 2007). In Nigeria, the youth are defined as all “young persons of ages 18-35...” (National Population Commission, 2001). Cultural differences also have a role to play in the understanding of the interpretation of who a youth is. For instance, in the West, the definition of one is determined by age and not social context or one's interaction with other people. However, in sub-Saharan Africa, social context and not age determines promotion to youth. Thus, as Wessels and Johan explained, in sub-Saharan Africa people regard childhood as having ended “when a young person has completed the cultural script rite of passage” (Wessels and Johan, 2006:30). Although there are differences in the understanding and conceptualisation of youth by policy-makers, countries and from culture to culture, there is one thing which seems to bind all these together. How the term “youth” is defined within different context illustrates a general observation that seems to agree that the term is constructed to describe someone who is considered by the society as being in between childhood and adulthood. Thus, for the purpose of this study, a youth is someone who is neither a child nor an adult. In Nigeria, there is a contradiction on the age limit for who can be considered a youth. Section 2 (2) of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Act, Cap. 84, Law of the Federation of Nigeria (2004) provides that “a person shall
not be eligible to serve in the [Nigerian Youth] Service Corp if...he is over the age of thirty”. The implication of this is that a youth is someone whose age is not yet 30 years. This contradicts Nigeria's National Youth Policy, which says youth consists of those within the age bracket of 15 to 35 years. However, for the purpose of this study, the Nigeria’s National Youth Policy will be adopted. Youth therefore consist of people whose ages range from 15 to 35 (National Population Commission, 2001).

Violence
According to Tamuno, violence is the unlawful use of the threat of force, which could be a manifestation of despair and desperation (Tamuno, 1991). Anifowoshe further sees it as the use of the threat of a physical act carried out by an individual or an individual within a political system against another individual or individuals and/or properties with the intent of causing injuries or death to the person or destroy property (Anifowoshe, 1982). The definition given by Anifowoshe above is in tandem with Mackenzie (1958), who defines violence in three different categories. Firstly, he defines it as the exercise of physical force so as to inflict injuries on or cause damage to persons or property. Secondly, he sees it also as action or conduct characterised by this act of destruction. Thirdly, he sees it as the treatment or usage tending to cause bodily injury or to forcibly interfere with personal freedom. Furthermore, Degenaar (1990) defines violence as the intentional application of extreme force against a person or an object, such that it is destructive to such an object or may bring physical injuries to human beings. Corsini (2007) sees it as the expression of hostility and rage through physical force directed against persons or properties. As scholarly as these definitions are, one may say they are inadequate because they only look at violence from a physical point of view but it actually goes beyond that. As Albert (2006:122) has observed, violence cut across psychological,
structural and cultural aspect. However, these definitions will be applauded because they emphasize the most common expression of violence, which is the hub of this study. Beyond this however, it is expedient to consider other definitions that reflect the non-physical aspect of violence. The very first to consider will be Domenach. Domenach (1978) views violence from three different angles: the first is the psychological, which involves the emotional use of force. The second involves the vandalisation of the neighbour's property or abuse of all his/her property. This he called ethical violence. The third is what he called political violence, which involves the forceful seizure of power or the illegitimate use of power. Johan Galtung suggested that it is necessary to identify what is common to all phenomena termed violence. This made him suggest two commonalities, which are: the destruction of lives and property and, on a more abstract level, anything that impede human self-realisation (Galtung, 1981). The direct observation from this perspective is that the second commonality may be subjective but could be discerned. The corollary of Domenach and Galtung's definitions is that violence can be overt or covert. However, it may involve such activities as rape, assault, armed robbery, demonstration, riot, hooliganism, ethno-religious conflict, assassination, among others, that obstruct peace within the state.

**In) Security**

Security is the most important value that determines all other values. This is because except anybody is assured of his/her security, any other things are meaningless and useless. Thus, Imobighe (2001:39-40 as cited in Nwolise, 2012:12) observed very appositely that:

> Without security, individuals within a state will find it difficult to engage in productive activities. Similarly without security, the state is bound to experience great difficulty in harnessing its human and material
resources towards meaningful development and the promotion of the general well-being of the people.

Ikenna (2019:49) buttressed this point further when he observed rightly that “security is one of the most fundamental conditions required for human existence in the modern state” and that, in fact, “modern state itself is principally a product of the realisation of the need for security by the different individuals inhabiting the state. Hence the old maxim, salus populi estsuprema lex the safety of the people is the supreme law, the supreme duty of the state”. The crave for spiritual security in the midst of widespread insecurity in Nigeria is a testimony to the importance of security in human life (Owonikoko, 2016). What then is security? According to Nwolise, security simply means protection and safety the protection and safety of men, group, nations and the world from “fear, harm, turmoil, hostility, war, violence and danger; all of which generate uneasiness for humans” (Nwolise, 2012:12; See also Nwolise, 2014:47). Wolfers (1962) views security from both objective and subjective senses. In the former, it measures the absence of threats to acquired values, while in the latter sense, it talks about the absence of fear that such values will be attacked. The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences defines security as the ability of a nation to protect its internal values from external threats. The Security of the state in the traditional sense meant the protection of the state, its boundaries, people, institutions and values from external attack (Commission on Global Governance, 1995).

According to Allan Casble (1997), it may be enough to say that the maintenance of the core values of a society and the freedom of the population from grave and existential threats comprise the bulk of what is meant by security. The core values are the basic principles around which any society is ordered, socially, politically or economically, such as the rule of
law and fundamental freedoms. Furthermore, a coordinated pattern of behavior which places human lives or well-being at risk in sufficient numbers as to cause significant disruption in the ordinary functioning of a society will constitute a grave or an existential threat and thus will amount to insecurity. The opposite of security is insecurity. The concept of insecurity connotes absence of safety and protection. Beland (2005) defines insecurity is a state of fear or anxiety due to the absence or lack of protection. Achumba, Ighomereho and Akpan-Robaro (2013) see it from two perspectives. Firstly, insecurity is the state of being open or subject to danger or threat of danger, where danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury. Secondly, insecurity is the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety, where anxiety is a vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortune. These definitions of insecurity underscore a major point; that those affected by insecurity are not only uncertain or unaware of what would happen but are also vulnerable to the threats and dangers when they occur.

**Youth Population Increase and the Outbreak of Violence and Insecurity: Establishing the Theoretical Link**

There is a connection between the quality and quantity of a country's population and the peace and stability of the country. The establishment of this linkage was first done by Thomas Malthus in his seminal work, titled *An Essay on the Principle of Population as it Affects the future improvement of Society* published in 1798. He argued that population growth can lead to resource scarcity, such as productive land, freshwater and forests. The resource scarcity caused by increase in population density can lead to inter-group competition and under unfavourable economic and political conditions. This competition can take the form of violence, conflict and insecurity. This Malthusian perspective has been buttressed by the research of scholars like Homer-Dixon (1991;
Homer-Dixon, using the environmental and resource scarcity theory, explained three ways in which population density can result in the outbreak of violence. The first he identified was what he called violence caused by supply-induced scarcity in which increase in population leads to the degradation and depletion of natural resources, which then result in scarcity as a result of non-sustainable use of resources. The second he identified is Demand-induced scarcity in which increase in population growth results in diminishing resources per person (resource per capita). The third form he identified is structural scarcity. This is a form of scarcity that only applies to certain groups relative to other groups, especially when they are excluded from having equal access to particular resources. Staveteig found a higher risk of civil war or armed conflict appearing in countries with political instability, undemocratic regimes, lower per capita income and larger population sizes.

Another perspective is what is called the youth bulge theory. This was developed by Urdal (2006). Urdal maintains that the high population of youth- called youth bulge increase the risk of the outbreak of low intensity violence like internal armed conflict, terrorism and riot, among others. He also finds out that the youth bulge can become particularly volatile under different conditions. For example, the risk of terrorism and armed conflict can be very high when the youth bulge coincides with a period of long term economic decline and increased poverty. Mesquida and Wiener (1999) also show that one of the most reliable factors in explaining violent conflict is the relative number of young men whose ages are less than 30 compared to men whose ages are over 30. Population Action International, in a report published in 2007, also concluded that the age structure of the population
has a big impact on a country's stability, governance and economic development and people's wellbeing. In the study, countries were divided into four categories- Very young, youthful, transitional and mature. The study found out that countries with a very young and youthful population structure are most likely to experience more violence and insecurity but countries in transitional and mature categories are more stable and peaceful. In the same vein, Cincotta et al found a high risk of insecurity in 25 African and Asia countries based on 3 key developments relating to demography- High youth population, rapid urban growth and exceptionally low levels of crop land and fresh water per person. Collier also pointed out that large youth cohorts may be a factor that reduces recruitment cost for armed groups through the abundant supply of rebel labour with low opportunity cost, thus causing an increasing risk of armed conflict.

Much of what we have seen in developing countries in recent times is mortality decline, while fertility is high. This has produced a youthful population in many countries which is referred to as youth bulges. They provide both advantage and disadvantage for development. The literature has significantly pointed out that the nature of the demography of a country can determine the extent and level of peace that such a country can enjoy. Where a country is filled with more than average of youth populating it, it may be a significant factor in the prevalence of crime, violence and insecurity. However, what is not too obvious but remains a fact is that the youth population in a country is not inherently bad or negative. In other words, the negative implication of the youth bulge is not inherently given. It stems from many factors, which are inherent within the polity acting in concert with the youthfulness of the population to make such a country prone to violence and insecurity. These factors include bad governance, corruption, widespread poverty, unemployment among the youth, lack of political space for the youth, illiteracy and ignorance, among
Youth Demographic Group in Northern Nigeria

In 2015, the United Nations Population Fact cited in Danjibo (2019) estimated that there were 1.2 billion young people between the ages of 15 and 24 in the world and this accounted for one in every six persons in the world. Furthermore, the Fact also predicted that there will be a steady increase in youth population by 2030. It also predicted that while youth population will reduce in Asia by 2060, it will increase exponentially in Africa to the extent that it will host the most expanded youth population in the world. Countries mentioned to particularly be on the watchlist in Africa are Congo, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Tanzania where the youth population is already increasing steadily (Danjibo, 2019:378-379). Nigerian population has risen steadily. From over 37 million in the 1950s, it is estimated to stand at about 201 million in 2019. With this, Nigeria is one of the most densely populated countries in the world and the country with largest population in Africa. Similarly, It has one of the largest population of youth in the world. It is estimated that over 70% of the population is below 35 years of age. Unfortunately, a good number of the youth remains dependent. As shown in Table 1 below, from the age structure of the population of Nigeria, the youth population can be said to straddle ages, ranging between 0-14 and 25-54. Similarly, while the total dependent population stands at 88.2 percent of the total population, the total number of youth that are still dependent is put at 83 percent. This presents two facts. First is that Nigeria's population structure is composed more of population that can be categorised to be youth. The second is that this youth population, which is supposed to be the workforce of the country, is also highly dependent.
Table 1: Nigeria’s Population Profile as at 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Nigeria’s Population Statistics, 2018</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Population</td>
<td>190,632,261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Age Structure:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0-14 years</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15-24 years</td>
<td>19.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25-54 years</td>
<td>30.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55-64 years</td>
<td>55-64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>65 years and above</td>
<td>3.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Total dependency ratio</td>
<td>88.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Youth Dependency ratio</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elderly dependency ratio</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Potential support ratio</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: https://www.indexmundi.com/nigeria/demographics_profile.html.

This is also the scenario in the entire Northern Nigeria. The population of youth there is higher than the national average. According to the data obtained from statisSence, people under age 35 constitute over 80 percent of the population of people living in the North. This is particularly high in Gombe, Bauchi, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Nasarawa, Niger and Zamfara States. Youth population is higher in all the northern geo-political zones than any other zone in Southern Nigeria. As Table 3 has shown, in the North Central Geopolitical Zone, the percentage of the population that is under 35 years of age was 81% in Niger, Kogi and Nassarawa States. However, it was 79% in Plateau State and the Federal Capital Territory and 78% in Kwara State. The lowest however is 75% in Benue State. In the North West geopolitical zone, it is 81% in Kebbi and Katsina States. Meanwhile, it is 80% in Jigawa, Zamfara and Kaduna while it was 79% in Sokoto and Kano. In the North East geopolitical zone, it was 81% in Gombe and Bauchi and 80% in Borno, Taraba and Yobe while it was 79% in Adamawa.

This is sharply different from what it is in the South. For instance, in the South South, the highest percentage of the
population whose ages are less than 35 years is in Cross River with 76% of the population. However, States like Edo, Rivers and Bayelsa have 75% of their population under 35 years. Meanwhile, it is 74% in Delta and Akwa-Ibom. In the South East, data for Abia cannot be found but Ebonyi State has the highest number with 76% of the population falling below 35 years. Meanwhile, Imo and Enugu have 73% each while Anambra has 74%. In the South West, Lagos has the highest percentage of people under 35 years of age within the population, which is put at 81%. Meanwhile, Osun, Ogun and Oyo States have 74% each while Ondo and Ekiti has 75% each. With these figures, one can conveniently say that there are more youth in Northern Nigeria than in the South. This is however not a problem. It is supposed to be a blessing if the ideas and agility of the youth are a sufficient diversion to development. Unfortunately, the youth bulge in Northern Nigeria has acted in concert with many other socio-political, economic and culture factors to enhance the level of violence and insecurity we now witness in the region. Although, as argued from the preceding section of this paper that violence and insecurity are not only peculiar to Northern Nigeria, neither is it a Nigerian problem. It is a global phenomenon. However, Northern Nigeria that used to be known for peace and tranquility appears to be more affected by violence and insecurity. In the following section, we are going to look at some socio-economic and political factors that made youth in Northern Nigeria prone to violent crime and insecurity.
Table 2: Percentage of the Population Less than 35 years of age in the 6 Geopolitical Zones of Nigeria

### North Central Geo-political Zone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Population as at 2006 census</th>
<th>% of the Population Under 35</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benue State</td>
<td>4,253,641</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwara State</td>
<td>2,365,353</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nassarawa State</td>
<td>1,869,377</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plateau State</td>
<td>3,206,531</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCT Abuja</td>
<td>1,405,201</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kogi State</td>
<td>3,314,043</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger State</td>
<td>3,954,772</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,909,845</strong></td>
<td><strong>79.1%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### North West Geo-political Zone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Population as at 2006 census</th>
<th>% of the Population Under 35</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Katsina State</td>
<td>5,801,584</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jigawa State</td>
<td>4,361,002</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zamfara State</td>
<td>3,278,873</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sokoto State</td>
<td>3,702,676</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kano State</td>
<td>9,401,288</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaduna State</td>
<td>6,113,503</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kebbi State</td>
<td>3,256,541</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,130,781</strong></td>
<td><strong>80%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### North East Geo-political Zone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Population as at 2006 census</th>
<th>% of the Population Under 35</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adamawa</td>
<td>3,178,950</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borno</td>
<td>4,171,104</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taraba</td>
<td>2,294,800</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gombe</td>
<td>2,365,040</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bauchi</td>
<td>4,653,066</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yobe</td>
<td>2,321,339</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,164,049</strong></td>
<td><strong>80.3%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### South South Geo-political Zone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Population as at 2006 census</th>
<th>% of the Population Under 35</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  Edo State</td>
<td>3,233,366</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  Delta State</td>
<td>4,112,445</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  Rivers State</td>
<td>5,198,605</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  Cross River State</td>
<td>2,892,988</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  Bayelsa State</td>
<td>1,704,515</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  Akwa-Ibom State</td>
<td>3,178,950</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,386,812</strong></td>
<td><strong>74.8%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### South East Geo-political Zone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Population as at 2006 census</th>
<th>% of the Population Under 35</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  Anambra State</td>
<td>4,177,828</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  Imo State</td>
<td>3,927,563</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  Abia State</td>
<td>2,845,380</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  Ebonyi State</td>
<td>2,176,947</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  Enugu State</td>
<td>3,267,837</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,279,111</strong></td>
<td><strong>74%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### SouthWest Geo-political Zone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Population as at 2006 census</th>
<th>% of the Population Under 35</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  Osun State</td>
<td>3,416,959</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  Oyo State</td>
<td>5,580,894</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  Ogun State</td>
<td>3,751,140</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  Lagos State</td>
<td>9,113,605</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  Ondo State</td>
<td>3,460,877</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  Ekiti State</td>
<td>2,398,957</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,620,405</strong></td>
<td><strong>75.5%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Poverty as Catalyst for Youth Involvement in Violent Crime and Insecurity in Northern Nigeria

One of the factors driving youth involvement in violent crime that develop into insecurity in Northern Nigeria is widespread poverty. It does not really mean impoverishment in which a person or people actually live in as people always think but rather it means lack of real opportunities due to social and other constraints and circumstances that inhibit living a valuable and dignified life. In June 2018, Nigeria overtook India as the country with the largest number of people living in extreme poverty in the world. It was said as at then that 86.9 million Nigerians lived in extreme poverty while every one minute six persons became poor (The Punch 2018a; See also Kharas, Hamel and Hofer, 2018). By October 2019, the total number of people living in extreme poverty had increased exponentially. Out of the 198,370,189 estimated population of Nigeria, 94,583,286 were living in extreme poverty. This total number of people is 47.7 percent of the population (Owonikoko, 2019). Thus, poverty is not only high in Nigeria but it
While poverty is very high in Nigeria, it is higher in the three northern geopolitical zones even before Nigeria was rated as the poverty headquarters of the world. For instance, as at 2015, while the regional average of poverty was 27.36% in South East, 19.3% in South West and 25.2% in South South, it was 76.8% in North East, 80.9% in North West and 45.7% in North Central (Mathias, 2015) cited in Kwaja, 2019).
The study conducted by the United Nations Development Programme on the Multidimensional Poverty Index also indicated that poverty is more intense and well entrenched in Northern Nigeria, especially in the North West and North East. Out of the 10 states where poverty is more entrenched, five are in the North West - Sokoto, Jigawa, Kebbi, Kano and Katsina while three are in North East - Yobe, Gombe and Adamawa (The Punch, 2018b). This is however not the first time that statistics will be pointing at entrenched poverty in Northern Nigeria compared to other parts of Nigeria. The Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reported in 2010 that absolute poverty was estimated to be 61.9% nationally but in Northern Nigeria absolute poverty rates were higher than 70% (NBS, 2010a). During the early period of the Boko Haram crisis, Danjibo (2010:16) noted that Aljazeera made an impressive analysis about the situation in Nigeria, a country that is the 5th largest producer of oil in the world but where the vast bulk of the population lived below the poverty line of 1$ a day. Northern Nigeria was the worst hit by poverty as far back as 2009. Statistics presented by Charles Soludo, the former Central Bank Governor revealed that the North-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number of State</th>
<th>% of People Living in Poverty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>South East</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>South West</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>South South</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>North East</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>76.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>North West</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>80.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>North Central</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>45.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Kwaja, 2019: 358
Central recorded 67%; the North-West 71.1% and the North-East 72.2% of people living below the poverty line (Cited in Danjibo, 2010:16).

Illiteracy is also a major problem among the youth in Nigeria. As at February 2019, Nigeria had one of the highest incidents of out-of-school children in the world. According to the United Nations, five countries in the world are with highest number of out-of-school children among which Nigeria is the highest with 13.2 million children pulled out of school. Sixty nine percent (69%) of these children are in the Northeast Nigeria alone (UN cited in TV Continental News, May, 2019). It is true that the Boko Haram insurgency contributed to this. However, the fact is that dropping out of school has always been a major problem in Northern Nigeria. Statistics of the National Bureau of Statistics published in 2010 before the escalation of the Boko Haram insurgency attests to this (NBS, 2010b). The problem of unemployment is also a major crisis in northern Nigeria just like the rest of the country.

How all these negative socio-economic statistics have triggered youth restiveness that has metamorphosed into widespread violent crime and insecurity in Northern Nigeria can be explained using the relative deprivation theory. It explains that social deviance behaviours, such as youth restiveness, that may result in violence and insecurity in a country may be inevitable when what the society deprives a group of people can easily be accessed or gained through social deviance behaviours. According to Blau and Blau (Michael and Gary, 2007), youth experience an increasing sense of frustration as they grow up and experience poverty while they witness those who are well-to-do in their nearby neighbourhood. They may begin to think that since they cannot change their circumstances through the normal way, abnormal ways that may involve the commitment of crime and the perpetration of insecurity may be the alternative way.
This explanation above explains youth violent activities in Northern Nigeria and the entire Nigerian state today. This explanation played out very well in the metamorphosis of the Boko Haram terrorist group in Nigeria.

Although the group began in Maiduguri, Borno State, it quickly spread to other Northern states, such as Yobe, Kano, Adamawa, Gombe, Bauchi, Katsina and many other places. The group was able to use the paradox of scarcity in the midst of plenty caused by the widespread corruption among the political elites as a weapon of proselytization to convert many youths into its rank and file. The main narrative of the group, as outlines in Mohammed Yusuf’s sermons distributed throughout northern Nigeria via audio tape and open sermons, is total rejection of secularism, democracy, western education and any other thing associated with the modernity of west (see Mohammed, 2014). Although Yusuf had masterly used the Holy Books in Islam to justify his stance on the rejection of western culture, youths might have joined his group not because of his eloquence or convincing narratives. Many might have as well joined the group because of the economic hardship that they faced despite the wealth of Nigeria as the 5th largest producer of oil in the world and having seen the affluence and opulence exhibited by the political class around them. Tell Magazine learnt as far back as 2004 that parents and security agencies had exhibited worries about the activities of the sect and involvement of the youths.

...because students especially in tertiary institutions in Borno and Yobe states like the University of Maiduguri, Ramat Polytechnic Maiduguri, Federal Polytechnic Damaturu and others who constitute their members withdrew from school, tore their certificates and joined the group for Qur'anic lessons and preaching” (Tell, August 10, 2009, p. 34 cited in Danjibo, 2010:7)
To this end, Danjibo interrogated the extent to which Boko Haram can be attributed to religious overzealousness or serial bad governance leading to economic hardship for the youth. He explained that:

Perhaps the most viable explanation for the recurrent violence, including religious and sectarian violence, is the failure of good governance in Nigeria...The youths that are mostly engaged in acts of violence or serve as armies of this sectarian violence are the first victims of this bad governance and acute corruption. Those educated youths who tore their university degree certificates to demonstrate their loyalty to the sect, could have done that out of frustration. One can imagine the frustration for a young man or woman who had graduated from the university and could not secure job years after graduation. For such a person, Western education will ever remain valueless. As a matter of fact, such youths live in a country where education is treated with much disdain and where the educated are insignificant, but where uneducated political bandits are assigned status privilege (Danjibo, 2010:16).

The point is that poverty is widespread and even has a more daring consequence on the youths. To this extent, they are willing to give up on their loyalty, patriotism and civic responsibility to the Nigerian state for the meagre amount of money they may get through any act of violence. A relatively new security challenge that is facing northern Nigeria in contemporary times is youth gang violence. In recent times, states such as Katsina, Kaduna, Kano, Gombe, Bauchi, Borno, Adamawa, Sokoto and many others in the north, have experienced deadly activities of youth gang groups, such as “ECOMOG”, “Area Boys”, Kauraye, Yan dabá, Yan Banga, Yan dauka amarya,, Yan Sara Suka, Yan Kalare, Yan Shilla, Yan
Shinco, Gar da Gar, among others. All these are fallouts of youth restiveness caused by poverty, unemployment and illiteracy among the youth population in Northern Nigeria.

**Conclusion: Addressing the Youth Bulge In Northern Nigeria For Effective Security**

The point made in this paper is that a surging youth population coupled with other factors, such as widespread poverty and lack of opportunities, unemployment, illiteracy and lack of skills, poor governance and weak political participation of the youth, is fueling and driving youth restiveness, leading to a preponderance of insecurity in Northern Nigeria. There must be concerted efforts from all stakeholders to address the growing youth population and its security implication for the north. Firstly, there is the need for stakeholders to give attention to education in the north to address education deficit among youth. Especially in the North East where the problem of Boko Haram has resulted in the reduction of school enrolment as a result of deliberate attack against school, government should invest heavily on education and bring in the best hands to teach rather than use teacher employment as a political patronage. Once the gap in education is closed, opportunities for youth will be opened.

While it is not possible for everybody to be educated up to university level, it is important that governors from the region should see to the development of skill acquisition for the youths and be committed to sustaining it. Most times, the problem is not setting up skill acquisition centres. It is about sustaining them. For instance, during the period of Governor Nyako in Adamawa, so much was invested in setting up skill acquisition centres throughout the state to encourage youth enrolment into vocational training. Many youth enrolled in the programme and were trained. However, the subsequent regime that took over from him neglected the centres. The centres which used to be citadels of learning for willing youth
who wanted to acquire vocational training have now become moribund. This is typical of other skill acquisition programmes in states in the northern region. It is also not just enough to make the youth go through skills acquisition. It is important to ensure that they are set up after the skills have been acquired. For instance, the Operation Safe Corridor (OSC) is a very important programme targeting youth who have been radicalised by the Boko Haram members. The programme specifically ensured that they are deradicalised and trained in skills that will sustain them during reintegration. Many have been deradicalised and trained in skills but setting them up to practice their learnt crafts has not been smooth. Most of them have been trained but are yet to be set up (Interview with The Punch Correspondent in Yola, May, 2019). There may also be the need to put the population explosion in Nigeria into check. This is a new trend towards ensuring quality population in the world. Countries battling with increasing population, such as China and India, are incentivising family planning and population control. Unfortunately, Nigeria has not seen the need to take its surging population as a policy priority. This needs to be addressed.

Furthermore, there is good governance deficit in northern Nigeria. And this is responsible for why there is significant underdevelopment there. Good governance should be promoted in the region and voices should be given to the youth as the future of the region. With the population of Nigeria expected to increase as time goes on, the population of youth may also increase exponentially. This will also be the case in northern Nigeria. If the youth population is increasing exponentially, there is the need to make the climate for their transition to adulthood conducive by empowering them and making opportunities available for them. Unless the lot of youth in Nigeria is improved upon, there is a greater threat of insecurity looming in northern Nigeria. This however can be averted through consisted planning deliberately focused on
the youth.

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September, 2019.


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Chapter Two

Reclaiming Voices: Youth and Peacebuilding in Northern Nigeria

Chris M. A. Kwaja
&
Raffia Ikpambese Iankaa

Introduction

Young people alone by no means have the answers to the challenges the world and communities around the world face. Neither do older generations. By bringing together the vision of young people today and the experience of older generations, new answers to challenges are created (Matilda, nd). The importance of engaging young men and women in shaping lasting peace was recognized by the adoption of UNSCR 2250 in December 2015. This global policy framework spotlighted the nexus between youth, peace and security and also emphasized youth inclusion into institutions and mechanism for conflict prevention, resolution and building sustainable peace (Premium Times, 2016). It is increasingly recognized that young people are central to the issues of crime and violence in Africa because they are both victims and perpetrators of violence (World Bank, 2012). The reasons are not farfetched. Many analysts believe that with over two hundred million people aged between 15 and 24 years, Africa has the youngest population in the world and it is growing fast. By 2055, the continent's youth population (aged
15-24) is expected to be more than double the 2015 total of 226 million. Yet, the continent remains stubbornly inhospitable politically, economically and socially to young people (Mohammed, 2017).

According to the 2012 World Bank report on African youth (World Bank Survey, 2011), the continent is worst hit by the activities of violent armed groups because youth account for 60% of all the African unemployed. The report further showed that about 40% of those who join rebel movements say they are motivated by lack of jobs. The Arab Spring in North Africa has shown how lack of employment opportunities can undermine social cohesion and political stability. The above position is collaborated by the United Nations call for the attention of the world to the fact that more than 600 million young people live in fragile and conflict affected societies. They are considered to be arguably the most affected either as victims or as perpetrators of the myriad violent conflicts in the world today. This minimalist interpretation has contributed in securitizing them as a rising threat to global peace and security (Premium Times, 2016).

In South Africa, a study by the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention showed that young people who had been victims of violence were six times more likely to commit a crime than those who had not been victimized (Burton and Bonora, 2009). Taking a look at the economic front of the youth surge in Africa for instance, over 12 million young people entered Africa's labour force in 2015, but only 3.1 million jobs were created. That means that millions of young people were left without a stake in the economy (Burton and Bonora, 2009), making them vulnerable to be recruited by violent groups.

In West Africa, none of the countries in the region can claim
ignorance of the activities of violent groups that are principally operated and controlled by youth. Ahmad Salkida, a Nigerian journalist who has had rare access to the militant group Boko Haram, told Africa Renewal that, although the group is mainly driven by ideology, pervasive unemployment in northern Nigeria makes easy recruitment of jobless young people possible (Burton and Bonora, 2009). While it is obvious that a lot of youth are the engineers and perpetrators of violent crimes, it is also true that majority of youth are contributing to peace building and remain an essential instrument for sustainable peace. This new narrative supported by the United Nations Security Council challenges the former. A business-as-usual approach would risk exposing Africa not only to economic under performance and brain drain, but also to criminality, political and social unrest and even armed conflict. But Africa can thrive if its governments act now to tap the energy and dynamism of the burgeoning youth population. For him, a comprehensive policy agenda, comprising demographically informed measures that address political, cultural and economic exclusion in a synchronized manner, will address the massive age gap between Africa's young majority and their leaders now that the average age of an African president is 62, while the median age of Africa's population is 19.5, marking the world's largest age gap between Governors and the governed. This raises concerns about how well decision-makers understand the needs and aspirations of young people. This position is applicable in Nigeria precisely the Northern part of the country where the oldest crop of leaders has been produced in the country since the inception of democracy.

Only recently states in the south had youth in their early thirties emerge as political leaders in the just concluded elections. The north has continued to field older people, who do
not understand the importance of utilizing youth energy.

Another factor is the tradition of gerontocracy, meaning that young people's political participation and influence are restricted on cultural grounds. Leadership should be based on skills and qualification. It should go beyond just being the eldest, as it is obtainable in some parts of the north. To help overcome this barrier, governments should treat generational inequality with the same sense of urgency as other forms of inequality and accelerating efforts to introduce youth quotas for political parties, parliaments and other decision-making institutions. This can be done by enhancing structures that promote the participation of youths in nation building processes that will actively contribute to young people's engagement with decisions and activities that affect their wellbeing. It is the failure of that which is injustice that has given rise to the violent conflict in the North. Although violent conflict is not alien to the Northern Nigerian psyche, the region has been severally rocked by violent conflicts since pre-independence up to post-independence. However, the magnitude of the devastation occasioned by these conflicts has not been as intensely impacting on the region as it has been experienced in the last seven years of the Boko Haram insurgency in northeastern part of the country. This has affected the youth population in the north politically, socially and economically just to mention a few. The effect of the violent conflict situation on the youth was further aggravated by the challenges of weak institutions that also predisposed the youth becoming victims and the perpetrators of these violent crimes.

More so, the states in the north have experienced violent conflicts, criminality and banditry, owing to the activities of armed and violent extremist groups in varying degrees. This speaks to the existence of ungoverned spaces or illicitly
governed spaces and zones of mixed and contested governance where the state and violent extremists clash for control and supremacy made worse by the existence of at-risk youths all of which engender violent extremism (Oosterom, Wignall and Wilson, 2018). Despite the odds, some northern Nigeria youths have participated in pre, during and post conflict peace building activities but it has not given the desired result. Thus, for sustainable peace building in northern Nigeria, efforts for preventing youth violence must be put in place with a comprehensive approach that will aim at reducing the risk factors and strengthen resilience amongst the youth. Policies and institutions that enable investment in children and youth to succeed at the micro and macro levels in the form of full multi-sector programmes that target them in specific areas of activity, such as employment creation and/or peacebuilding projects, could be a starting point in northern Nigeria.

It is against this backdrop that this paper seeks to examine Northern Nigeria youth and their roles in peacebuilding in the region. It also seeks to examine the role government and non-governmental organisations can play in encouraging youth participation in peace building in the region.

**Literature Review**

**Youth:**
In the Nigerian context, youth refers to people between 18 and 35 years, who constitute “all young males and females aged 18-35 which are citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria” (National Youth Development Policy, 2001). Following this definition, the youth constitute about 60 per cent of the more than 200 million people in Nigeria. While this
definition may do justice to the age specification of youth, it is, however, grossly inadequate with respect to the social character of young people. Using this criterion, some of the important youth categories that deserve mention the street youth, college youth, school drop-outs and unemployed youth. The importance of delineating these categories is that it is one of the reasons why government policies targeted at young people often fail in Nigeria. Young people and youth are used interchangeably in this paper (David, 2017).

**Peacebuilding** is a term used within the international development community to describe the processes and activities involved in resolving violent conflict and establishing a sustainable peace. It is an overarching concept that includes conflict transformation, restorative justice, trauma healing, reconciliation, development, and leadership, underlain by spirituality and religion. It is similar in meaning to conflict resolution but highlights the difficult reality that the end of a conflict does not automatically lead to peaceful, stable social or economic development. A number of national and international organizations describe their activities in conflict zones as peacebuilding.

United Nations development program sees peacebuilding as a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management and laying the foundations for sustainable peace and development. Peacebuilding strategies must be coherent and tailored to the specific needs of the country concerned based on national ownership and should comprise a carefully prioritized, sequenced and therefore relatively narrow set of activities aimed at achieving the above objectives. This office works specifically with
peacebuilding in the context of conflict prevention. While United Nations peacebuilding support office, an umbrella body, thinks peacebuilding is rather the continuum of the strategy, processes and activities aimed at sustaining peace over the long-term with a clear focus on reducing chances for relapse into conflict. It is useful to see peacebuilding as a broader policy framework that strengthens the synergy among the related efforts of conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping, recovery and development as part of a collective and sustained effort to build lasting peace. This office works specifically with peacebuilding in the context of post conflict reconstruction.

The above peacebuilding views conceived in the context of post-conflict recovery efforts to promote reconciliation and reconstruction are restrictive, as there can be post-conflict peace building, which aims at preventing the occurrence of conflict ab initio and not necessarily a relapse of it. According to the United States Institute of Peace, the term “peacebuilding” has more recently taken on a broader meaning. It may include providing humanitarian relief, protecting human rights, ensuring security, establishing nonviolent modes of resolving conflicts, fostering reconciliation, providing trauma healing services, repatriating refugees and resettling internally displaced persons, supporting broad-based education and aiding in economic reconstruction. As such, it also includes conflict prevention in the sense of preventing the recurrence of violence, as well as conflict management and post conflict recovery.

For the purpose of this paper drawing from the above positions, peacebuilding involves a transformation toward more manageable, peaceful relationships and governance
structures. the long-term process of addressing root causes and effects, reconciling differences, normalizing relations and building institutions that can manage conflict without resort to violence in pre, during and post-conflict times.

**How Conflict, Violence Crimes Affect the Youth**

A range of conflicts is causing devastation across Northern Nigeria from farmer/herder violence and kidnapping to Boko Haram brutality and the use of children as suicide bombers that are only of a pattern of violence that has devastated the region. Violent conflict issues in Nigeria have revolved around revenue allocation, boundary adjustment and state creation, ethnic and religious differences, gender inequality, electoral violence, corruption, etc. These issues have thrown the nation into a state of chaos over the years. For example, secession moves by the eastern region to create Biafra was as a result of the minority apprehension of marginalisation in the Nigerian military. In Northern Nigeria, violent conflicts have been predominantly ethno-religious. They occur both in purely religious form and sometimes with ethnicity, the attacks are often characterised by reprisals. Higazi (2011) stated that violence in its contemporary expression became a problem in the north from the 1980s, continuing through the 1990s and after 2000. Similarly, Yake (2013) said that Northern Nigeria is synonymous to ethno-religious conflict, the Kano riots, the Maitasine attacks, and the Zangon-Kataf crisis of Kaduna lend credence to these assertions. This does not mean that other forms of conflicts are not in existence in the north.

The north has also played host to the Boko Haram insurgency since 2011 that has claimed thousands of lives and property. The intensity of its devastative dynamics prompted the Federal Government of Nigeria to declare a state of emergency in three states of the federation. In 2013, an edict repeatedly sustained
the reality of the non-abatement of terrorist attacks on Yobe, Adamawa and Borno states. Till today, the states are still under a state of emergency (David, 2017). Armed conflict has young people at the centre of it, with direct violence against civilians causing widespread insecurity that has resulted in over 20,000 deaths, the forced displacement of over 2 million people and the widespread loss of livelihood and access to essential social services. Fourteen million people across the six states (out of a total population of 18 million) were estimated to have been affected by the conflict, with 8.5 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in the three worst-affected states (Borno, Adamawa and Yobe).

In addition, as at 2017 1.2 million children under 5 and pregnant and lactating women were malnourished and an estimated 6.9 million people were vulnerable to disease in the absence of access to health care (United Nations, 2017). The resulting loss of human life, population displacement and the destruction of productive assets, economic infrastructure and social services, have significantly disrupted the economic and social systems essential for livelihoods, social cohesion and individual well-being. The destructive impact of the conflict has been exacerbated by preexisting structural factors stemming from the region’s historical, economic and social marginalization relative to the rest of the country. With an economy dependent on agriculture (with 80 percent of the population engaged in farming) and in the absence of additional investments from the federal government, growth has been below the national average for decades and constrained by high poverty levels, underdeveloped and inadequate economic infrastructure and social services and the weak presence of state institutions and governance (UNDP, 2017). These structural fragilities severely circumscribed the resilience of the economic systems in the
According to the Global Terrorism Index 2014, Nigeria produced 10.2% of the total number of deaths induced by terrorism globally. This ranks it as the fourth highest in the world (Temitope, 2017). Majority of the perpetrators and victims of these violence are youths because according to the National Bureau of Statistics (2012), Nigeria has a population of about 167 million people. The National Population Commission (NPC 2013) posits that about half of the population is made up of youth, who are people between 15 and 34 years of age.

As the Cinderella character, young people, though full of potential to be productive and live a fulfilling life, are constantly harassed by the vicissitudes of life. Although they constitute the cradle of development in any society, their skills and potentials are undermined and under-utilized. The situation is such that in Nigeria as the youth population grows, so does the unemployment rate. The implication is that young people are not encouraged to develop and use their skills, abilities and resourcefulness in an enabling socio-economic and political environment, leaving them to resort to violence, drugs, prostitution and armed robbery, amongst others.

Hence, the youths who are unemployed, under-employed and even unengaged are more than enough to undermine Nigeria's democratic process if they are recruited as willing fodder for violent conflicts in the nation. Therefore, they constitute a serious threat if engaged by the political class for clandestine and criminal activities (Adepegba 2011; Ibrahim 2011; Lartey 2011; Olatunji and Abioye 2011; Okafor 2011).
It is, therefore, glaring that the unfortunate resort to a culture of violence by the youth is a direct result of the example of hostility and pessimism that have characterized the comportment of the northern part of Nigeria, especially the northeast. Many young men and women have grown up under an atmosphere of state-sponsored violence and necessarily operate under the logic that might is right and violence is the answer to all problems. On this note, it is important to interpose that fundamentalist groups like the Boko Haram are an effect and not a cause. They are essentially a symptom of decades of failed government and elite delinquency finally ripening into social chaos. Alimba (2014) posited that the various communal crises experienced in northern Nigeria have enthroned developmental crisis and if not properly tackled can aggravate the governance crisis already facing the nation and military take-over may be experienced in the entire country.

By way of summation, young people northern Nigeria live under abnormal situations and are burdened with the strain of a number of factors, including unemployment, population growth and inadequate socio-economic structures, inappropriate school curricula and the rapid expansion of the educational system, so that in cases where they are able to acquire certificates, these are hardly enough to secure them jobs or even provide job security. They are forced to make rural-urban migrations in the hope of getting better deals out of life and end up gaping at the declining manufacturing sector in a social system that is “fantastically” corrupt. Amidst all these challenges, if it is true that bad leadership will naturally breed bad followership, the source of youth dysfunction in Nigeria is not hidden.
The Role of the Youth in Peacebuilding and Governance in Northern Nigeria.

The term “peacebuilding” first came to the limelight over 30 years ago through the work of Johan Galtung, who raised a call for the creation of peacebuilding structures that would promote sustainable peace by addressing the root causes of violent conflict and supporting indigenous capacities for peace management and conflict resolution (Cheng-Hopkins, 2010). It is a process that facilitates the establishment of durable peace and tries to prevent the recurrence of violence by addressing root the causes and effects of conflict through reconciliation, institution building and political as well as economic transformation. This consists of a set of physical, social and structural initiatives that are often an integral part of post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation. Peacebuilding is one of the United Nations cardinal models of peace process.

The concept was made globally popular in Boutro-Ghali’s “An Agenda for Peace”. Boutros-Ghali wrote this paper in 1992 while he was the United Nations Secretary General. It categorized peacebuilding into two: pre-conflict and post-conflict. According to him, pre-conflict peacebuilding includes such measures like “de-militarisation, the control of small arms, institutional reform, improved police and judicial systems, the monitoring of human rights, electoral reform and social and economic development”.

Peacebuilding goes beyond separating the disputants or just settling their dispute. It should build opportunities that would erase the memories of damage. It should promote more friendly relationships among old combatants. It should also create institutions and socio-facilities aimed at assisting the
former disputants to respect their mutual needs and interests for a peaceful society where meaningful development can take place. Peacebuilding plays very important roles in the promotion of peace and conflict resolution by focusing more on the ways through which the agreement will be implemented.

Peacebuilding can build opportunity networks in the reconstruction of social, economic and political structures to allow for the creation of sustainable capacity for peace and long-term conflict transformation decorum between parties. It includes early warning and response efforts, violence prevention, conflict resolution, peace advocacy, civilian and military peacekeeping, military intervention, humanitarian assistance, ceasefire agreements and the establishment of peace. Oftentimes, scholars have used the concept of peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding interchangeably, but in actual truth these concepts are different. It is an action used to bring hostile parties to agreement essentially through peaceful means. It addresses conflicts in progress, attempting to bring them to a halt, using the tools of diplomacy and mediation. Peacemaking in essence is a diplomatic effort embarked upon to move a violent situation into non-violent dialogue where differences are resolved through the use of national, multinational, and supranational representatives.

Peacebuilding differs from peacekeeping and peacemaking. Peacekeeping involves the use of force or the coercive instrument of the state or other agencies; peacemaking is essentially a diplomatic effort but events around the world and efforts from several peacekeeping and peacemaking operations have exposed that some of the countries in which these options had been taken often slip back into crisis, e.g.
Sierra Leone and Liberia. The reason is that institutional structures are not in place to handle post-conflict realities in these countries and global actors considered peacebuilding as a process that could bring about a successful conflict resolution plan by strengthening political structures and the institution of governance as well as the people. In essence, conflict situations arise in nations due to the collapse of state institutions, which should manage or mitigate its occurrence. This is the reason for the continued emphasis and focus of international and national organizations on rebuilding and strengthening state institutions in order to have sustainable peace (Temitope, 2017). None of the above activities can be successfully achieved in the northern part of post conflict without the involvement of the young people, who make up the energized population of the region. Hence the Organization of African Youth (OAY), formed as a result of the ratification of the African Youth Charter, has been working with young people all over Africa and advocating for the inclusion of African youth in all the spheres of society, as enshrined in Article 11 of African Youth Charter.

Article 17 of the Charter especially elaborates on the role of youth in promoting peace and non-violence and the role of state parties to strengthen the capacity of young people and youth organizations through the promotion of intercultural, interreligious learning, civic education, human rights education, promotion of democracy and mutual respect for cultural, ethnic and religious diversity. The challenge has been the inability of these international laws and treaties to penetrate into the different countries or better still the adoption of a youth-friendly policy to peacebuilding.

The inclusion of young people in governance processes in northern Nigeria is bound to facilitate sustainable peace in the
region by redirecting their energies to the implementation of constructive projects. Incorporating and utilising youth in peacebuilding processes would facilitate their transformation from agents of violent conflict to agents of peace in their societies. These idle youth are more likely to avoid violence and engage in peacebuilding if they are granted a specific set of opportunities, interrelated and mutually reinforcing, which we call threshold conditions for peacebuilding. These threshold conditions include engaging in political participation; forging connections between youth and their communities; building constituencies for peace; training youth for the workplace and building youth confidence and self-esteem.

The Organization of African Youth views peacebuilding as more than just signing agreements to stop violence (such as ceasefire agreements). Peacebuilding efforts should also involve social change that can be brought about by formal, non-formal and informal education; school-to-work transition; peace-building and conflict resolution; youth engagement, participation and empowerment; workforce development and livelihoods. It must be noted that a conflict situation or violent conflict cannot be brought to rest, managed or transformed, without adequately exploring how the energy of its primary agents could be redirected for the attainment of sustainable peace in a society or country.

The availability of adequate educational infrastructure and systems, employment opportunities and other structures through which youth can be active participants in making decisions concerning their wellbeing and that of the country at large would go a long way to redirect youth energy from conflict to societal development. This would consequently enable the development of sustainable peace and security in
societies.

The Challenges of Youth to peace building in the Northern Nigeria

Unemployment
Unemployment breeds social alienation and frustration among youths and can become a catalyst for criminality and violence. The current situation of Nigerian youth is as a result of the failure of the past and present government policies, which aimed at tackling the problem of the youths (Ahonsi-Yakubi, 2001). The high rate of unemployment in Nigeria has deteriorated for many years as a result of the fragile economy. It is expected that about 70% of the unemployed youth are teenagers between the ages of 13 - 25 years. More than 80% of them are jobless. However, about 10% are underemployed. The projected 10% in employment are overburdened and dejected with the entire reliance on family members and relatives (Youth Position Paper, 2007).

Unemployment has increased in the last decade in Nigeria as a result of rapid population growth and rural-urban migration from 12.3% in 2006 to 23.9% in 2011 and 24.3% in 2014. However, high unemployment is most severe among young people; 25% of them between the ages of 15-24 years are unemployed. This condition is not expected to decrease in the forthcoming years. The high and deteriorating rate of unemployment is a disturbing trend and has added to the high-income disparity witnessed in the country (NBS, 2017).

The unemployment population are heavily distributed in southern, northeastern and northwest states, including Kaduna and Sokoto, and two central states Nasarawa and
Plateau. North East and some North West states suffered the most from underemployment in the third quarter of 2017. Katsina, Jigawa, Gombe, Yobe, Kano and Niger states recorded the highest underemployment rates during the reviewing period of 46.19%, 43.01%, 38.38%, 36.70% and 31.55%, respectively. This high level of unemployment and under employment also aggravates poverty as underemployed youth are faced with the challenges of finding for large families (northern cultures permit marrying more than a wife). The problems now is that with a region that has the highest rate of youth unemployment coupled with poor governance and high level of conflicts and crimes, the effect on young people can only be imagined.

**Poverty:**
Over seventy percent of Nigerians lived on less than one US dollar per day in 2001 almost 90.2 percent in less than two US dollars per day in 2010 (Babatunde, 2014). The Global Poverty Ranking Index ranks Nigeria among the countries with a high number of the poor with the Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.423, which positioned the country as Number 142 out of 169 countries with a GDP per capita of US$2, 156 and life expectancy at birth of 48.4 years in 2006. The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) in the same year was 0.368 in Nigeria. The United Nation Human Poverty Index rated Nigeria among the 33 poorest nations in the World in 2014 (United Nations Development Programme, 2015).

The youth in Nigeria experience poverty like their counterparts in many sub-Saharan African countries. Unemployment and the poverty condition in Nigeria differ by gender and region. Experience has exposed that poverty waged more on youth than the adult population (NBS, 2010). This, therefore, suggests that many youth are living in poverty.
in both rural and urban areas. In a survey conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics of Nigeria, it was estimated that the total poverty head count increased from 27.2% in 1980 to 69.0% in 2010 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2010).

In spite of the fact that the Nigerian economy has unexpectedly developed, the proportion of the Nigerian population living in poverty is fast increasing every year. Their poverty is better appreciated within the percentage of the population (young people) surviving below the poverty line, with the north at the centre of the poverty situation, which has predisposed the region to the following.

i. The problem of youth street-begging, especially in the northern part of Nigeria, is associated with youth unemployment and poverty. Youths prefer to roam about or sit by the roadside or junction to beg for help in the form of money, food or clothes in order to sustain a living instead of attending school. This clearly indicates a threat to sustainable growth and development.

ii. Youth involvement in political violence in Nigeria is associated with youth unemployment and poverty. Many youths became political thugs who are used by politicians to foment electoral violence, such as attacking, maiming and assassinating political opponents as widely experienced in Adamawa, Borno, Kano, Kaduna, Sokoto, etc. They are also used to commit all sorts of electoral fraud and malpractices, such as ballot snatching and stuffing. This poses a threat to smooth democratic dispensation and sustainable growth and development.

iii. The rapid growth of ethnic militias, vigilantes and criminal gangs in Nigeria is associated with youth
unemployment and poverty. The emergence of Non-State Security Groups (NSSGs) to fight insurgents is as a result of the security gaps that the weakness of the state security forces created. Hence in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe, some of these groups have worked with the state government and security forces to root out Boko Haram members. They were initially made up of local vigilante groups and youth, who constituted themselves into Civilian Joint Taskforce (CJTF). Collectively alongside the military, they successfully engaged and liberated some areas that were captured by insurgents. CJTF were later joined by local hunters' groups in Adamawa and jointly they provided the main threat to Boko Haram (Ikpambese, 2019).

iv. The high rate of crime in Nigeria is associated with youth unemployment and poverty because the majority of suspected criminals caught by security agents are youths. The increasing criminal activities of these youths pose a threat to the security of life and properties as well as the economy (The Punch Newspaper 2007).

According to a report by the National Bureau of Statistics, which oversees and publishes statistics in Nigeria, 10 states are the poorest in the country with an over 70 per cent poverty rate. Most of the states, indeed nine, are northern and the exception was Ebonyi State from the South (Leadership Newspaper, 2019).

Poverty in the North is most of the time associated to factors, such as illiteracy, people's attitude to economic prosperity, corruption, bad governance, child destitution (like almajiranci and begging), income inequality, ethnic clashes and poor economic roadmap. However, the biggest threat to the North's
economic prosperity presently is insecurity. These challenges have the propensity of relapsing the fragile peace processes that are underway in the form of initiatives because the youths are the drivers of these factors that have culminated into insecurity in the region. Instead of participating as peacebuilders, they are now the peace spoilers in the north.

**Illiteracy:**
States in the northern Nigeria, for many years, have lagged behind in education among the 36 of the federation but not for lack of funding. The data on the literacy index recently published by the National Bureau of Statistics in 2014 revealed that the huge gap in the educational development between southern and northern Nigeria is yet to close up nearly sixty years after independence (Ajibola, 2017). According to the data, the states where majority of people can neither read nor write are those in the Northeast, Northwest and North-central. The data show that Yobe has only 7.23 per cent literacy level, the lowest in the country. The dismal record of Yobe is followed by Zamfara (19.16 per cent); Katsina (10.36 per cent); Sokoto (15.01); Bauchi (19.26); Kebbi (20.51) and Niger (22.88), respectively. Only Taraba is an exception with 72 per cent literacy rate. The situation in the North presents even a gloomier picture, according to the former Minister of Finance, Dr. Usman Shamsudeen. Speaking to the World Bank Statistics at the Northern Nigerian Economic and Investment Summit in 2011, Dr. Shamsudeen said the North had the highest number of out-of-school children not only in Nigeria but in the entire world.

According to Ajibola (2017), there is no doubt that insurgency in the north-eastern has seriously undermined the education progress of northern Nigeria. And the image of the North and northern people nationally and internationally is an image of
people opposed or resistant to western education. This narrative may not be true as the children who later turn into youths are willing to be educated. But the institutions are not ready.

**Drug/Substance Abuse**

Substance abuse, also known as drug abuse and substance use disorder, is a patterned use of a drug in which the user consumes the substance in amounts or with methods which are harmful to themselves or others and is a form of substance-related disorder. Drugs most often associated with this term include: alcohol, substituted amphetamines, barbiturates, benzodiazepines (particularly alprazolam, lorazepam, diazepam and clonazepam), cocaine, methaqualone, cannabis and opioids. A research carried out in Kano on the effects of drug abuse on the youths in 2016 indicated that they took depressants in order to have peace of mind as the only alternative to escape from frustration and committing other offences, such as robbery, theft, etc. Results obtained from the study indicated that a greater percentage of those engaged in drug abuse were youth 18-25 years and males were found to more in number than females. This may likely be due to the cultural and as well as religious factors that prevent females from participation and intermingling with their male counterparts. Peer group, the communication system and vendors and herbalists play a vital role in influencing youth into drug abuse (Ibrahim et al, 2016). It does not only destroy the affected person or individual but also has a negative effect on those connected to the individual (relatives, friends, etc.). According to Barry (1984), in a country drug abuse and alcohol have significant effects on serious crimes and also contribute hugely to fatalities.

According to a National Survey on Drug Use and Health
conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and the Centre for Research and Information on Substance Abuse (CRISIA) with the technical support from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Nigeria in 2016, findings revealed that the North-East zone, including Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe estimated annual prevalence of drug users was 13.6 per cent or over 2 million past year users, while the North-West zone, including Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara States, were estimated at approximately 25 million people in 2016.

From the above estimates, drug abuse amongst the northern Nigerian youth population has become a serious problem affecting everyone. Addiction leads many people, young people prominent amongst them, into a downward spiral of hopelessness that in some cases ends fatally. They range from glue-sniffing street children and teenage ecstasy users to hard core heroin and cocaine addicts (Nacada, 2005). Drug abuse is responsible for lost wages, destruction of property in schools, soaring health care costs and broken families. It is a problem which affects us all as parents, children, teachers, government officials, taxpayers and workers. The resultant effects of drug abuse is that it encourages laziness, lack of concentration, quest for quick wealth, impatience and criminal violence amongst the youths in different gradations, thereby affecting their involvement in nation building, which in turn affects peace building in the region.

**Bad governance** The northern Nigerian region comprises 19 states. Its economy has been based in the past on agriculture and mining natural resources. However, these sectors have been in an abysmal disarray for more than four decades, because bad leaders who could not manage two particular developments, that is, the disbandment of regional
governments and concentrating power in the central government and the almost total dependency on crude oil revenue, who end up embezzling funds meant for infrastructural projects. The absence of projects and other basic needs has been responsible for the increase in economic and social gaps between the rich and the poor and has led to a massive vacuum in infrastructural development. The result has been a continued level of poverty, illiteracy and unemployment within the ranks of average Nigerians, thus creating a perfect arena for breeding violent militancy in Nigeria. Rotberg (2004) observed that there is a link between poverty, poor governance and state failure. This combination provides a perfect breeding ground for militancy and subsequent instability.

Another study by Salaam (2012) suggests that the history of Boko Haram is synchronized with the lag in Western education in northern Nigeria. The disparity between the northern and southern regions in their attainment of Western education has played a major role in the rise of militant groups. Both before and after Nigeria gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1960, the northern region had remained backward in Western education. Western education was perceived as an alien philosophy and considered a tool used by Christian missionaries. This attitude continues to the modern day as a result of bad governance and the gap grows wider as the population increases. The study pointed out the important role of poverty and unemployment occasioned by bad leadership in the region as a major trigger for the rise of Boko Haram. Considering the level of poverty in the region, the youths continue to be vulnerable and recruited into any criminal group.

‘Yusuf (the late leader of Boko Haram) took advantage
of poor quality of our educational system, the incessant strikes, and cult activities. . . . the irresponsible leadership at all levels of government, unemployment, poverty, corruption and insecurity. And as he pointed out such failures, citing verses of Quran and the saying of the prophet, the youths saw him as the leader who will indeed deliver them from malevolence to the Promised Land (Sani, 2011)

Furthermore, the strategic approach of citing social injustice to recruit members into the movement is evidently working. The young, unemployed Nigerians, who rarely eat more than one meal a day, swiftly join any criminal group due to the perceived social injustice by the ruling elite.

Drawing from the above, poor governance in Nigeria has changed the internal dynamics of the socio-political and economic systems of the country. Political leaders, particularly in northern Nigeria, receive revenue from the sale of crude oil every month, thereby jeopardizing other potentially productive sectors of economic development in the region. The near total absence of basic infrastructure coupled with the dependence on crude oil revenue has centralized the wealth of the northern states in the hands of the ruling elites, who will soon be compelled by death to leave the stage. They have not prepared young people who can succeed them. Those around them are indecisive and willing to take over as godsons and sustain the pervasive corruption in public governance by their godfathers.

**Insecurity**

The North occupies about 70% of the land mass of the country; it also has the highest infant and maternal mortality
rates in the country (World Bank 2001). Similarly, it has the 
lowest rate of child enrolment in schools, the highest number 
of unemployed young people in the country and the highest 
levels of poverty as compared to the other parts of the country. 
Consequently, the region is faced with the challenges of 
security of lives and property that have remained a major 
issue today. These problems include inter-ethnic and 
interreligious conflict, insurgency and terrorism, such as 
Boko-Haram, among others. According to Temple (2013), the 
indices that measure human development are by far poorer in 
the 19 northern states of Nigeria compared with the rest of 
the country, ranging from the girl-child education to the 
Almajiri system, from women empowerment to the economic 
viability of states, from an immediate Marshal Planlike attempt 
at addressing the areas in conflict to how to create cooperation 
between states and groups. He further concluded that, as a 
result of the above, the region was faced with the worst 
security challenges since independence.

Similarly, other security challenges facing the region include 
armed robbery and kidnapping apart from insurgency and 
terrorism that have spread across the region like a wild fire 
across the polity and seriously need to be given adequate 
attention by the Government at all levels, as pointed out by 
Salawu (2010). Kidnapping is still young in the north, but is 
fast developing and penetrating almost every area in the 
region. The news media is constantly awash with killings in 
Zamfara, Katsina, Sokoto, Benue, Taraba, Nasarawa, Plateau, 
Kaduna, Borno, Yobe and Adamawa among others. Some of 
the killings are attributed to Boko Haram or bandits. Others 
are blamed on herdsmen. Yet, others are blamed on ethnic 
rivalry and religion.

A lot has been done in the last four years to drastically curtail
the activities of the Boko Haram in the North, but it appears enough has not been done, as the insurgents have morphed into bandits, cattle rustlers and kidnappers and spread their activities across North Central and North West. One of the major stakeholders who believe that the government is not doing enough to tackle insecurity is the Supreme Council for Shari'ah in Nigeria (SCSN). Recently, the SCSN said that it was unhappy with the federal government over poor efforts to tackle insecurity in the country. The group in a communiqué signed and read by the SCSN Secretary General, Nafiu Baba Ahmad, emphasised on the need for federal government to change its tactics in dealing with security challenges. They particularly noted that government’s effort in checkmating insecurity in Zamfara, Kaduna, Katsina, Taraba and Benue States “is grossly inadequate”. To this end, the Islamic body advised that government should live up to its responsibility by reviewing the current security strategy as well as holding security chiefs accountable for their actions and inactions.

**Recommendation**

Regulations and policies should be put in place that can be enforced by government and all interested parties to discourage poor parenting, as it is currently obtainable in the north, where some parents are grossly irresponsible. They give birth to children and abandon them to fend for themselves, exposing them to harsh conditions that endanger their health and distorts their psycho-social upbringing. Part of the regulations should include compulsory education at least at the primary and secondary level.

There is the urgent need for government and non-governmental actors to reach out to these youths and offer them alternatives that can discourage them from the life of banditry, terrorism, kidnapping and insurgency. The offer
should be first given to idle good youth who do not belong to criminal groups. The NOA should also be accompanied with skills acquisition programmes by the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) that promises a better life with peace of mind than what they are getting as bandits and outlaws in the outreach.

It is imperative for the government and non-governmental actors, the élite, politicians, civil society organisations and the citizenry to come to terms with the peculiarity of the insecurity in the north that is fueled by remote economic and social factors and collectively address the notoriety of poverty, illiteracy and unemployment in the region. A comprehensive DDR is recommended as a starting point to reduce the arms and ammunition in circulation and reintegrate the youths back into the wider society.

Considering the extent of the non-medical use of pharmaceutical opioids, tranquilizers and cough syrups among the adult population, while ensuring that controlled substances are adequately made available for medical and scientific purposes, it is imperative to address their diversion from licit channels as well as their illicit production or availability in illicit markets in the form of spurious or fraudulent medicines.

Political elites have failed the northern youths despite repeated advocacies to address the deep-seated issue of pervasive corruption. The youth must rise and make use of their numbers to elect responsible persons amongst them as leaders who, will recognize crude oil as a secondary source of revenue and revitalize other existing sources of income, social and economic justice and a sustainable economy.
Conclusion
In conclusion, although most young peace builders create a positive impact with minimal resources, it's important to provide them with the tools they need to become more effective change-makers by enhancing structures that promote the participation of youth in peacebuilding processes that will actively contribute to the young people's engagement with decisions and activities that affect their wellbeing. Policies and institutions that enable investment in children and youth to succeed at the micro and macro-levels should be encouraged. These could take the form of full multi-sector programmes that target youth in specific areas of activity, such as employment creation and/or peacebuilding projects. In concrete terms, this means giving them access to the teachers, facilitators, educational programs and networks that can hone their conflict resolution and leadership skills. Training opportunities can range from content-based topics, such as conflict or gender, to more practical-focused areas, such as advocacy or project management. By facilitating youth connecting on individual and organizational levels, ideas, challenges and best practices can be organically shared.

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Chapter Three

Nigerian Youths and Conflict: Their Roles in Violence and Peacebuilding

Ruqayyah Yusuf Aliyu

Introduction

People in their youthful ages are naturally active and energetic, such that they attend to whatever situation they find interesting with enthusiasm and courage. Therefore, they constitute a group which is normally exploited in anything involving physical and mental energy. Conflict is one of the activities youths are engaged in actively. The World Youths Report (2005) noted that youthful age is an important period of physical, mental and social maturation, where young people actively form identities and determine acceptable roles for themselves within their community and society as a whole. They are increasingly capable of abstract thought and decision-making in different new ways. Their sexuality is also emerging, as their bodies continue to change. They are presented with new physical and emotional feelings, social expectations and challenges. The youthful state is therefore a stage where the young minds can easily be inclined towards conflict or peacebuilding, depending on the situation they find themselves in.
Conflict is an inevitable situation, which could be as mild as a simple argument as a result of conflicting ideas/opinions, which if properly managed can help in development and be as big as destroying a whole society. Also, its consequences could be positive and constructive and negative and destructive based on the way it is handled. Conflict could be intrapersonal, interpersonal, intra-group, intergroup or organizational, depending on its nature, cause and management. Sambou (2017,p.5) also agrees to this. He wrote that “levels of conflict include intra-personal, inter-personal, intra-group and inter-groups, adding that conflict can be an opportunity for change and change for the better”. Galtung (2000) also wrote that conflict can also be seen as a natural process, which is part of life and relationships.

Because youthful age is the most active years in people's lives, it is a period when young people have all the mental, psychological and physical energy. Their involvement in conflict processes (in and against) cannot be overlooked. Nigeria has witnessed a number of violent and non-violent conflicts, ranging from the ethnic/tribal, the regional and the religious. There is no doubt such conflicts have negatively affected the society and the mostly hit is the youth. Also, the role of the youths in mitigating or curtailing conflict is also very crucial. One of such activities is their involvement in the Boko Haram insurgency in the North East, where they were brainwashed and used by the perpetrators of the Boko Haram ideology to carry out deadly terrorist activities and stand up against the ideology by grouping and arming themselves as the Civilian Joint Task Force (Civilian JTF) to fight insurgency in their localities. This is a typical example of the roles played by young people in conflict situations. The presence of different youth groups in peacebuilding, particularly in crisis ridden areas across Nigeria, is also a good example. It is based
on the above that this chapter discusses the roles of youth in and against conflict. Similar roles were played by them in different parts of the country that have in the past experienced different forms of conflicts, ranging from the religious, the tribal/ethnic, the political and the like. This chapter discusses the active participation of youths in conflict and peacebuilding, with a view of highlighting the ways young people should give emphasis and priority to peacebuilding as against conflict and violence to foster development, peace and unity.

**Conflict Defined**

Conflict has been studied over centuries by many great minds. But a more systematic study has been possible only since the twentieth century (Schellenberg 1996). Thakore (2013, p.7) is of the view that “conflict means expression of hostility, negative attitudes, antagonism, aggression, rivalry, and misunderstanding. It is also associated with situations that involve contradictory interest between two opposing groups. It can be defined as a disagreement between two or more individuals or groups with each individual or group trying to gain acceptance of its view over others.” Diez, Stetter & Albert (2006: 565) defined conflict as “a struggle or contest between people with opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values, or goals”. Conflict can therefore be referred to any disagreement through which the parties involved perceive a threat to their needs, interests or concerns and, therefore, strive to protect these perceived needs, interests or concerns.

Sambou (2017\p.3) also points out that “conflict is a struggle between two ideas fighting to occupy the same space at the same time. It is a struggle between interdependent organizations with un-matched goals and who fear interference from each other”. According to Galtung (2000),
Conflict is often used as a synonym for violence. Thus, it bears negative connotations. It can be defined negatively as a fight or struggle, as a disagreement between people with different ideas or beliefs or as an incompatibility (or perceived incompatibility) of goals and can also be defined positively as an opportunity for actors to express their differences, become aware of others' perceptions, interests and needs and thus use it as an opportunity for change and growth.

Conflict may be defined as a struggle or contest between people with opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values, or goals. It is inevitable. However, its results are not predetermined, as it might escalate and lead to nonproductive results or beneficially be resolved and lead to quality final products, according to the United Nations Statistical Charts and Indicators on the Situation of Youth. From the foregoing, conflict could be defined as a state of disagreement based on people's varying and conflicting interests, which could lead be as mild as a verbal disagreement or may lead to violence and destruction. Its effect might either be positive or negative, depending on how the situation is handled. Conflicts, especially violent ones, have a lot of multiplier consequences on the youth, ranging from the personal to the societal.

A Brief on Violent Conflicts in Nigeria
Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa with heterogeneous and diverse citizenry, has over the years suffered a number of violent conflicts, ranging from ethnic clashes, religious intolerance, political misunderstandings and the like. As Smyth and Robinson (2001) noted, Nigeria is usually characterized as a deeply divided state in which major political issues are vigorously or even violently contested along the lines of the complex ethnic, religious and regional divisions in the country. Ethnicity, which has been identified as
a major identity factor in the country, as noted by Osaghae and Suberu (2005), has over the years also served as a major cause of violent conflict among and between different ethnic groups in Nigeria. The three dominant religions in Nigeria are Islam, Christianity and the Traditional with the latter being the least politically active among them. A joint undated report of the National Working Group on Armed Violence (NWGOAV) and Action on Armed Violence (AOAV) stated that Nigeria's diversity “has proven to be both Nigeria's strength and- in the context of armed violence- a cause for concern.” Its return to democratic rule in 1999 has arguably spearheaded another divide among Nigerians, where citizens are divided along political party affiliations and subsequently the ethnic and religious divide. This situation coupled with the availability and accessibility of technology has arguably led to the escalation of hate speech among and between the various ethnic groups in the country.

Scholars have also written on different types of conflicts in Nigeria. Osaghae and Suberu (2005) wrote that:

It is helpful, as a backdrop, to identify the various types of identity-based conflicts that have ensued over the years in Nigeria. Broadly, these include ethnic conflicts, religious conflicts, regional conflicts, communal (sub-ethnic) conflicts, and the more complex conflicts involving more than one identity, namely, ethno-regional conflicts, ethno-religious conflicts, and ethno-cultural conflicts. What distinguishes these conflicts and underlies the characterization of Nigeria as a deeply divided state is the tendency of these conflicts to be violent because they often involve territorial claims in a context of (i) sharp and often overlapping cultural cleavages (ii) historical (pre-colonial and colonial)
conflict legacies (iii) competition for highly valued, but relatively scarce, resources, including land, new administrative boundaries and headquarters, bureaucratic and political placement, infrastructures, trading opportunities, and other goods (iv) actual and perceived horizontal inequalities in access to diverse resources and (v) state failure or mismanagement of inter-ethnic relations.

Ikechukwu (2012,p.15) traced the divide in the Nigerian polity, which up to date has influence on the violent conflicts experienced at different times to the years between 1952 and 1966. He wrote:

The years between 1952 and 1966 brought change in the political culture of the country, transforming the three regions into three political entities. Thus, the struggle for independence was reduced to the quest for ethnic dominance. At this time, ethnic and sub-ethnic loyalties threatened the survival of both East and West, while the North was divided religiously between Christianity and Islam. It was a period of politicized ethnicity and competition for resources, which worsened the relationships between ethnic groups. There was a high degree of corruption, nepotism and tribalism. The national interest was put aside while politicians used public money to build and maintain patronage networks. Since independence, the situation in Nigeria has been fraught with ethnic politics whereby the elite from different ethnic groups schemed to attract as many federal resources to their regions as possible, neglecting issues that could have united the country.
The country has witnessed a number of conflicts over the years. A few among the very many experienced lately include the deadly Boko Haram insurgency in the North East, the Jos “unending” crisis; Framer/Herdsmen violent clashes in Taraba, Benue and Nassarawa State, the incessant violent clashes in Kaduna; multiple violent attacks on communities in Zamfara State; militancy in the Niger Delta. It is argued that the youths are key players in this violent situations.

The Youth and Violent Conflict

Youth as a concept is in itself elusive. There have been varying views by scholars about what exactly constitutes the youth. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID, 2004) wrote that the concept of youth is itself debated and being redefined by various social and demographic changes in the recent decades. Some authors favour biological markers and suggest youth as the period between puberty and parenthood and others use cultural markers as a distinct social status with accompanying roles, rituals and relationships. Different organizations and scholars have defined the concept in different ways based on circumstances and contexts. The concept in many instances is understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood independence. However, the United Nations defines ‘youth’, as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years without prejudice to other definitions by member states while the African Youth Charter defines the term as persons between the ages of 15 and 35 years. However, for the purpose of this chapter, the definition of the African Youth Charter (2006) is adopted.

Because they are in their prime age when they are very active, they have in many instances been acknowledged for playing a key role in war and violent conflicts. Ebata, Izzi, Lenton, Ngjela
and Sampson (2006\p17) wrote that “it is often remarked that war would not be possible without youth as combatants of any war, in any part of the world, are made up primarily by young people.” However, despite their activeness in war and violent conflicts, youths suffer a great deal during such situations. Snoubar and Hamed (2015) noted that,

Since the youth is the most effective part in the conflict environment, they are the most vulnerable to psychological, social, physical and economic problems and exploitation by the militant fighters. Participation in the war means death, disability, prison, psychological and social problems, unemployment and dropping out of education and delay in marriage and family configure. These are the main problems faced by young people in armed conflicts and wars environment.

Because the youth are future leaders, whatever effect war or conflict has on them turns to be multiplier on the society as a whole. This is why it is very important to give priority to the young people in any policy decision for any meaningful development to be achieved. The more engaged they are, the less chances are there for them to engage in violence. Their activeness in violence could be blamed largely on neglect of the most active group in the society. Their positive contributions in the society must be acknowledged and they should be engaged in meaningful activities to harness their full potentials and not merely be regarded as negative or a threat to nation building because of their activeness in wars and conflicts.

The Youth and Peacebuilding
Peacebuilding as a concept came about in response to addressing cases of violent conflicts around the world. It
describes a situation of creating harmony between and among aggrieved members of a conflict or conflict-prone society. Waldman (2009) wrote that “the field of peacebuilding developed in response to some of the world’s most severe cases of violence and armed conflict. Essentially, peacebuilding seeks to prevent, reduce, transform and help people recover from violence and armed conflict, as well as empowering people to foster positive relationships at all levels of society”. The 1992 United Nations Report, titled “An Agenda for Peace” introduced the concept of peacebuilding to the UN as “action to identify and support structures, which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict.” Since peacebuilding formed part of the list of concepts in conflict and conflict resolution, the term has been defined by many in different words. In 2007, the UN Secretary-General’s Policy Committee described peacebuilding as:

A range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development. Peacebuilding strategies must be coherent and tailored to the specific needs of the country concerned, based on national ownership, and should comprise a carefully prioritized, sequenced, and relatively narrow set of activities aimed at achieving the above objectives.

Waldman (2009,p.7) wrote that **peacebuilding** “refers to activities that go beyond crisis intervention or conflict management, such as long-term development that focuses on developing social, governmental and nongovernmental (including religious) mechanisms that favour nonviolent, constructive means of resolving differences.” This implies that
peacebuilding mainly focuses on reconciliation, conflict resolution and sustainable peace. Waldman (2009) further explains that it goes beyond a holistic process of transformation more convenient and peaceful relationships as well as governance structures. Peacebuilding is distinct from both peacemaking and peacekeeping as it is proactive in dealing with conflict, rather than reactive. It is beyond mere conflict resolution, as it focuses more on building a 'positive peace' grounded in just societal relationships. Agreeing to this position, Barnett, Kim, O'Donnell and Sitea (2007) wrote that peacebuilding is generically understood as preventive and a sustainable measure in resolving conflicts. They explained the process as external interventions that are intended to reduce the risk that a state will erupt into or return to war. In the view of Cardozo, Higgins, Maber, Brandt and Le Mat (2015), peacebuilding encompasses core transformations that may contribute to post conflict societies moving towards sustainable peace, adding that key post conflict transformations necessary to produce sustainable or positive peace involves redistribution, recognition and representation. This correlates with the three Rs introduced by the Gowon led Nigerian government during the peacebuilding process of the Nigerian civil war experienced between 1967 and 1970. Nabhon (2010) noted that by the end of the 30 months-old civil war in Nigeria, the Federal Government declared “no victor, no vanquished but victory for common sense, and the unity of Nigeria as well as a policy of Rehabilitation, Reconstruction, and Reconciliation (3Rs).

In his submission, Oyeshola (2005,p.197) outlined the following as elements of reconciliation mechanisms in conflict situations:
1. Honest acknowledgement of human/injury each party has inflicted on the other.
2. Sincere regrets and remorse for the injury done
3. Readiness to apologize for one's role in inflicting the injury.
4. Readiness of the conflicting parties to 'let go' of the anger and bitterness caused by the conflict and the injury.
5. Commitment by the offender not to repeat the injury.
6. Sincere effort to redress past grievances that caused the conflict and compensate the damage caused to the extent possible.
7. Entering into a new mutually enriching relationship.

Writing on youth and their role in peacebuilding and the development process, Farmer (2004, p.307) noted that,

Conflict, war and violence damage the future of youth and make it extremely difficult to develop and empower them. Nonetheless, even laboring against these formidable constraints, young people are agents. They can be resilient and resourceful, and they can find ways to help rebuild their communities, and, in so doing, they can find fulfillment by developing and empowering themselves.

Farmer's statement therefore confirms that the youth have a crucial role in peace and nation building despite their susceptibility in times of violent conflicts and war.

**Conclusion**

It can be concluded that there is no substitute for peace. The contributions of young people in conflict and peacebuilding can never be exaggerated. This is to say the youth group is a major player in the processes of conflict and peacebuilding. While a lot engage in violence, many others are advocates for peace and peacebuilding. It is further concluded that the youth
are faced with a number of challenges and consequences during times of violent conflicts but even at that they are key in making amends and fostering peace and development in the society. Even though the youths have been active layers in perpetrating violence, it is notable the efforts of Nigerian youths in especially places that have in recent years been crisis ridden. The efforts of youths in Jos, Maiduguri, Yobe, Benue, Taraba and in the Niger Delta, among other places, in engendering peace through forming peace clubs, associations and unions are commendable. Therefore, the youth group should at all times be a prime target in fostering peace, which is ultimate in achieving any meaningful and sustainable development. There can never be any investment too much for preparing youth to being peace ambassadors. They should be encouraged on committing to peacebuilding activities, avoiding vengeance and working for peace and prosperity at all times.

Recommendations
Based on the issues discussed about youth involvement in conflict and peacebuilding, the following recommendations are made:

1. Government, Non-Governmental Organizations, Civil Society Organizations, Faith Based Organizations and all other stakeholders in peacebuilding should enhance the capacity of young people in it. This should not be limited to periods when the need arises but an all year round activity, so that the skills will be immediately tapped whenever there is the need for peacebuilding.

2. For sustainable peace in Nigeria, religious extremism among youths must be discouraged. This is because extremism inculcate in the minds of young people hatred, which makes them susceptible to engaging in violence against each other.
3. Fake news and hate speech should be checked. They disrupt peace and ignite hatred between and among particularly different youth groups. Key to this is particularly politically linked. It has been established that fake news and hate speech in Nigeria were heightened during the electioneering period of 2015.

4. Unity and peacebuilding should form part of the school curriculum and given priority right from the primary school level. This will help in nurturing the love and unity of the country in the minds of young people.

5. The media should as well strengthen its role of enlightening the populace on the imperatives of peace. This could be achieved through documentaries, drama, interview programmes and the like, showcasing conflict ridden areas and the consequences on people as well as the development processes of such societies.

6. Prioritizing the unity schools system and exchange programmes like the National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) in the country will in no small measure contribute to unity and appreciation of our diverse cultures and by extension foster peace in Nigeria.

7. Ensuring social justice for all is key in fostering the peace and unity of this country.

8. The proliferation of arms in the country must be checked. This is because the availability of such arms results in their misuse, particularly by energetic youths, who are in their prime in terms of both physical and mental abilities.

9. Youth empowerment is also a means of curtailing violence and extremism among youths. If checked, it will also contribute in youth channeling their energy to peacebuilding than war.

10. Peacebuilding should be a continuing process, especially in conflict-prone areas.
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Chapter Four

Students as Stakeholders of the Peace Campaign in Nigeria

Jamila Mohammed Dahiru

Introduction

Today, we are witnessing a time when the world is facing diverse challenges, ranging from the long-standing conflict in the Middle East, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the war in Syria, Yemen, Libya and Afghanistan. In Africa, there is the war in South Sudan, issues of Xenophobia in South Africa, illegal migration and agitations for secession with their devastating consequences. Some of these conflicts have been raging on for a very long time. It was estimated that about 1.4 billion people live in countries affected by fragility and conflict and that majority of these people are under the age of 30 (Devos, 2015). Here in Nigeria, there are various violent contestations taking place in different parts of the country. From ethno-religious and political conflicts, violence and agitations; issues of arms trafficking, banditry, kidnapping, herdsman-farmer clashes, cattle rustling, violent extremism and agitations such as the Niger Delta crisis, Boko haram and other security challenges.

Nigeria has a history of violence, especially during
electioneering campaigns. It is the nature of the Nigerian politics which has a tradition of aligning itself with religious, ethnic, cultural and regional identities. Politicians have usually sought their support from these primordial identities and have most often mobilized and manipulated these identities for their own selfish gain. Unfortunately, the youth are mostly used to fuel all of these conflicts and sadly, it is also they that are the most vulnerable. Right from the period of independence to date, Nigeria has witnessed several ethno-religious crises one of which culminated in the 1967-1970 civil war (James, 2011; Murano, Salahu & Ibrahim, 2014; Fadakinte, 2014)

The elections that took place in 2011 were reputed to have recorded widespread violence, which resulted in the death of an estimated 938 people with over 735 others injured. It also led to the destruction of millions of Naira worth of property. The violence that ensued from the 2011 elections was attributed to the hate language used by politicians disseminated in both print and electronic media and widely spread in the social media as well. A similar experience was also witnessed in the build up to the 2015 elections (UNESCO, 2015)

Now as the country is preparing towards another election in 2019, there are already hate and dangerous speeches being peddled in the media (Page & Tayo, 2018). There are also violent clashes in states where primary elections took place, as those who lost felt a recourse to the use of violence as a means of settling scores, as has happened in Zamfara, Ekiti, Plateau and of recent the crisis in the Kaduna States. Youths with dangerous weapons were mobilized to attack innocent people by killing and maiming. They are continually being used by bad actors to stir up and partake in conflict acts to distort peace
in our society. It's always common to find nicknames such as Yan daba, Yan Sara Suka, Yan Gunda, Yan Kalere', Yan Kyanwa, Area boys and Okirika boys among others for youth groups known for violent activities in our society. Evidence has shown how these group of people as potential stakeholders in our society continued to hinder societal peace, promotes violence and distort national unity.

It is pertinent to state that in all these incidences of recurring violence, many lives and property are lost and instead, of making progress and development, there are tremendous setbacks because of the huge losses suffered. There is a need to launch a national peace campaign to educate and enlighten the youths, especially to desist from violent and conflict activities and promote peace and unity in our country. One of such is this gathering.

Peace
The meaning and understanding of the concept of peace varies depending on the context and perspective or the situation at hand. According to KantiBajpai, peace can be viewed from three different perspectives. Peace as the mere absence of war that is hegemonic of deterrent peace. Peace as functional and economic interaction or what could be called transactional peace; and peace as a social condition in which accommodation rather than force mediates change. (Samaddar, 2004, 38-53).

Peace is necessary for development to take place. It is the sine qua non and a vital component of human progress and development. In emphasizing the role of peace towards sustainable development, Frederico Mayo, the former Director General of the UNESCO, once said:
Instead of the absence of war, it (peace) is increasingly seen as a dynamic, participatory, long term process, based on universal values and everyday practice, at all levels of the family, the school, the community, as well as the nation (Serto, 2003).

The culture of peace promotes a change of thinking based on values and attitudes that reject violence, promote dialogue and negotiation for the resolution of conflict. The fact is that peace can be built only through action and not passivity. This underscores the importance of collective efforts towards strengthening societal peace. Part of the collective efforts is a call for all stakeholders to buckle up towards promoting it to happen, be sustained and prosper.

According to Buchanan (1947), peace is not just a beautiful idea but a means where people become radically different. The thinking here is futuristic. There is a scope for everyone to be. To Anuradaand Bhuyan (2008), peace is not only a relationship of nations. It is a condition of mind brought by the serenity of the soul. It is not merely the absence of war but the state of the mind. He further stated that peace can only come through peaceful people.

Therefore, it will be safe to say that peace promotion is the responsibility of all to take action in supporting a global movement for the construction of a culture of peace based on the universal values of respect for life, justice, solidarity, human rights and equality between men and women. It is very important to promote peace in our society, as it enriches our community and individual lives. Peace directs us to embrace diversity and support one another through caring, generosity, tolerance and fairness to attain sustainable, just, meaningful vibrant and fulfilling personal and societal life.
Youth and the Peace Campaign

Though the motivation to incorporate youth in issues of peace and security is usually born out of a perception of youth as a potential security threat, it is very necessary for decision makers to engage them in talks that are about them and cultivate a desire to work with them as partners. The needs and aspirations of youth to ensure their meaningful participation in peace building processes and offer meaningful avenues for them to shape the future of their countries should be recognized. Young people as stakeholders can be effectively engaged in peace campaign and peace building processes. They can act as tools for peace and build bridges amongst their fellows to facilitate intercultural dialogue. Young people are in a unique position to reinforce a system of collective security and make the world a safer place (UNOY, 2104).

The generational divide that exists in all communities necessitates the inclusion of youth to reflect the dynamism of society and the issues it faces. Hence, infrastructure and institutions need to acknowledge the needs and aspirations of youth, such as students to ensure their meaningful participation in peacebuilding processes and offer meaningful avenues for them to be able to participate in peace building campaigns towards shaping the future of our countries.

Students as the dogmas of youth with experiences in terms of religious, cultural and political integration can better act as peace campaigners in the efforts to achieving global peace. Hendrik (2011) share the same view that youth can play an active role in peace building because they are open to change,
more knowledgeable about their peers' realities, future-oriented (peace “depends on whether the next generations accept or reject it, how they are socialized during the peace process and their perceptions of what that peace process has achieved), idealistic and innovative, as well as courageous.

**Student Involvement in Peace Campaign**
The UNOY (2015) recognizes that ensuring the active, systemic and meaningful participation of youth in issues of peace and security is a demographic and democratic imperative and a way of preventing conflicts. Students who constitute about 24% of our county's population can better serve as peace campaigners since they have more experience in terms of cultural, ethnic and religious integration. Thus students as the vanguard of youth can be better stakeholders of peace campaign when:

1. They are encouraged to be conscious of violent activities, know how it affects them and the society they live in; know what peace is and how it can promote sustainable development.
2. They are made to see themselves as major stakeholders and vanguards of peace. This can be by making sure that:
   i. Their representatives are included in the formulation of policy and the strategic direction of peacebuilding bodies and campaigns. There should be permanent mechanisms, such as a Students Advisory Council, through which student representatives can directly engage with the peacebuilding support offices for the policy operation peacebuilding projects.
   ii. Student representatives or union organizations establish an engagement strategy with the
government and ensure that they are always consulted and represented. This engagement must occur across peacebuilding processes in general and not limited to student specific issues.

iii. Seek for substantive and logistical support, such as funding, promotion and facilitation provided to civil society-driven efforts to enhance their role in peacebuilding campaigns.

3. Space is created for them to express their opinions and are listened to rather than simply acknowledged as victims or perpetrators of violence. This means they should be engaged as social actors with views and contributions.

4. Their knowledge and skills of peacebuilding is enhanced. This is important to provide them with the right tools that they need to become more effective change makers through access to the programs, tools or networks that can help their conflict resolution.

5. Inter-generational exchange is promoted among them rather than working with them in isolation. Peacebuilding projects seeking the engagement of youth should include parents and elders because youth are deeply influenced by the attitude of their entourage.

6. Their monitoring and evaluation approaches are strengthened to measure the impact of their engagement in conflict resolution, particularly using qualitative evidence research and participative approaches.

7. Those that are positively contributing to their communities are always supported. The focus on paying attention to the troublesome or problem ones should be shifted toward rewarding good work and encouraging same among them.
Conclusion
The Nigerian nation was founded on love, oneness and tolerance, as well as solidarity. Hence, it is high time it returned to embrace the dream of its forebears. It is paramount that Nigerians should uphold the principle of unity in diversity and pledge to sustain and maintain the peace that has bound the country together by ensuring that peace exists and only it can safeguard development. There is an indisputable connection between peace and sustainable development. Peace can guarantee the human security of today, but also the sustainable development of tomorrow. As Mahatma Gandhi—the greatest peace activists of India famously stated: 'If we are to teach real peace in this world, and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with the children'. He also said, 'The cry for peace will be a cry in the wilderness, so long as the spirit of nonviolence does not dominate millions of men and women, old and children’.

Recommendations
1. Students as the most active users of social media can develop contents for peace campaigns using their platforms. But efforts should be made to ensure self-regulations that every user must abide by to avoid hate speech.

2. Peace campaigns should focus on resilience by both youth and student. Students of tertiary institutions under the aegis of SUG and policymakers need to have a deep understanding of the empirical evidences that explain why youths voluntarily join insurgent groups.

3. More peace clubs and community development should be highly encouraged in all tertiary institutions. In Nigeria, a number of organizations utilize the peace club concept involving students, including CITAD,
African Projects for Peace and Love Initiative and West Africa Network for Peacebuilding Nigeria. The peace club helps to promote positive attitudinal change among students, trigger social change and ensure peaceful learning environments in schools. Peace clubs in schools provide platforms or forums for students, and perhaps also teachers, to share their viewpoints and experience, help to curb school-based violence and help a culture of peace in schools and the larger society.

4. Tertiary institutions should endeavor to develop pro-social opportunities for youth in building foundation for fulfilling careers.

5. Counter-hate speech and peacebuilding courses should be added to students' study curriculum at all levels.

6. Intervention for gender inclusion at the grassroots level as against the conventional approach of getting governments to institute policies or legislate for gender and social inclusion should be strengthened. This will go a long way to showcase the merits and advance the arguments for gender and social inclusion as an imperative for development at both community and national levels, thereby bringing about peace in the society.

7. Youth should create their own community-based task force that would identify issues affecting peaceful coexistence at the grassroots and also engage their grassroots people in peace campaigns. This will pave the way to create strategies in reaching out to youth, who are not integrated into traditional community institutions, such as those who do not attend school, the mosque or church or are otherwise left out of mainstream society and ensure that the admission policies for such programs emphasize non-violent,
harmonious behavior and attitudes.

8. Civil society and other constituted bodies should advocate for legislative or enacted laws in curbing hate speeches.

9. There is a need to launch a national peace campaign to educate and enlighten the youth, especially to desist from violent and conflict activities.

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Chapter Five

The Involvement of Young People in Peace building on the Plateau: The Perspective of Youth Initiative Against Violence & Human Rights Abuse (YIAVHA)

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Abstract:

The debate on the role of young people in the society towards peace building has been contested considering the persistence of conflict which has sustained narrative that they are only actors for violence. This has called for the need to continuously bring to limelight the efforts made by young people to change the narrative which has justified this work with focus on Plateau State. Key informant discussions and review of relevant literatures were used to access information on some of the activities of the young people. It was discovered that young people have been involved in networking, youth engagements, social media for peace initiation and development activities and consultancy activities among many initiatives. Amidst their involvement, it was found that they are faced with the challenge of resource mobilization to implement initiatives. It was suggested that they should build their capacity to think creatively and innovatively improve the quality and quantity of their
participation in the process.

INTRODUCTION
Plateau State of Nigeria enjoys a relatively temperate climate and is located in the middle belt zone bordered in the North West by Kaduna State, in the North East by Bauchi State, in the South West and West by Nasarawa State, while in the South East by Taraba State (Placa, 2004).

The state harbors over 50 indigenous language groups as well as a sizeable number of all the other Nigerian ethnic groups and foreign nationals staying mainly in the urban area. A large proportion of the population is engaged in farming and mining activities. Transportation and communication networks of the state also allow tourists and migrant farmers to visit the state. The state's many solid mineral resource endowments, especially tin, ore and bauxite, have for years served the country's export mineral demands before petroleum was discovered.

For many Nigerians, the Plateau state motto of “Home of Peace and Tourism” was more than an empty slogan (Onoja, 2010) given the relative peace enjoyed by inhabitants of the state and evident in the presence of a large number of foreigners who often came for yearly vacations and tourist visits. But in the inevitability of conflicts in social coexistence, the state has had its fair share of experience which dealt devastating and unprecedented blows to its socio-economic and inter-relational fabrics.

The conflicts that pervaded in the state have been divided into; inter-community conflicts and indigene versus settler conflicts. Although these conflicts would be said to possess
similar motives in line with conflicts elsewhere. In Plateau state, religion became a tool for mobilization among the belligerents (Fwatshak, 2007). These conflicts, spanning over 20 years (with 2001, 2008 and 2011 designated as the most devastating), have since taken so many lives, displaced individuals and families in their thousands, caused forced migration and destroyed economic and social viability for individuals and the state at large.

**Conflict Situation in Plateau state and Jos**

Jos, the capital city of Plateau State in Middle Belt part of Nigeria, has recorded a number of violent conflicts. These conflicts have claimed hundreds of lives, destroyed properties and livelihoods, and created colonies of internally displaced persons. Economic activities, especially industries (You have to be consistent in the referencing style, APA is the standard here), markets and tourism, once huge revenue earners for the state, have been severely affected. The conflict has negative impact on social relations as it has escalated mistrust and resentment among communities, which hitherto coexisted peacefully.

These conflicts have killed and displaced thousands and destroyed properties worth billions of Naira, generally crippling means of livelihood in the state. Examples among these violent conflicts include the Mangu-Fier border conflicts in 1984, the conflict in Jos and Bukuru, the Mangu-Bokkos conflict of 1992 and 1995, the Mangu-Chagal conflicts of 1997, the Jos Crisis of 2001, the 2004 clashes between rival ethnic militias in central Plateau state, the Yelwa-Shendam conflict and the Rukuba-Irigwe clashes of 2013 etc. (Best, 2007; Ambe-Uva 2010) among many other violence spanning across the election violence and farmer herder conflicts.
Following the violence, one can conveniently say that the violent conflict in Jos has apparently become recurring in nature and devastating in effect.

The Federal and Plateau State Governments had at different times made attempts to intervene to reduce the violent conflict. In addition to the deployment of security agents and provision of humanitarian assistance to some victims, the governments had set up at different times, panels of inquiry and committees to broadly investigate the remote and immediate causes of the crisis and recommend ways to forestall future recurrence of violent conflict in Jos and its environs.

At the height of the conflict crisis, the Federal Government under president Olusegun Obasanjo at a broadcast on May 18, 2004 declared state of emergency on the entire state in 2004 while president Goodluck Jonathan declared on few local governments in 2011 as reported by PREMIUM Times (2013).

In addition to these efforts by governments to prevent the recurrence of conflict, a number of Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs), Community Base Organization (CBOs), other civil society groups implemented peace-building projects and programs driven by local fund raising and support from international donor agencies. A number of workshops were organized for stakeholders. Many of these were capacity building workshops and trainings on responding to conflicts, which appeared not to have yielded much measurable results as the state remains vulnerable to little triggers which shouldn’t have been the situation because of the number of actors within the space. (Source?)
Youth Engagement in Plateau state.

It is important to note that Obaje and Okeke-Uzodike (2013) stated that “conflict situation or violent conflict cannot be brought to rest, managed or transformed, without adequately exploration how the energy of its primary agents could be redirected for the attainment of sustainable peace in a society or country” which justifies the concentration on youth who are mostly the major actors in conflict. This will change their orientation by equipping them with rational decision-making skills for the attainment of peace and leadership in society (Duncan, Jancar-Webster, & Switky, 2008).

There are youth activists, youth organizations, and other development organizations that have been involved in organizing youth engagements from community to state level discussions and trainings in recognition of the frequency at which young people were being radicalized and imbued with extremist ideas across Northern Nigeria or lacking in quantum for the right reasoning and motivation to occupy and discharge leadership roles. For example, Youth Initiative Against Violence & Human Rights Abuse (YIAVHA) has been involved in organizing community engagement forum for youths in communities of Plateau state cutting across Jos North, Riyom and Barkin Ladi (Jos Jarawa, Angwan Rukuba of Naraguta B, Jenta Adamu in 2017, and Barchi and Gashes in 2018) on preventing violent extremism and violence between farmers and herders. Participants who were perceived to be more vulnerable in terms of manipulation and actions towards violence as a result of their involvement with drugs are always brought together to engage in discussions especially with security personal and resource persons who normally guide the discussion. Community Action for Popular Participation (CAPP), Institute for Governance & Social Research (IGSR),
Plateau Youth Council (PYC), Youth Wing of Christian Association of Nigeria (YOWICAN), National Council of Muslims Youth Organization (NACOMYO) and many other organizations have been involved in series of activities that mobilize young people towards more socially acceptable behaviors that do not undermine the peace process in the state. As part of the various youth engagement programme, YIAVHA in 2014 also trained youth on leadership which brought youth from across Plateau state among whom most of them were former student leaders. Also, the chairman of Youth peace ambassadors network being a member of an initiative of Search for Common Ground (SFCG) under collaborative for violence prevention coordinated by me known as Jos Stakeholders Center for Peace (JSCP) organized a self-founded community discussion on developing ways of avoiding electoral violence. (The Guardian, 2018)

Youth collaboration: Youths have been involved in collaborative ventures where they network to take actions on issues they feel have potential for violence. For example, 'Women's March – Jos Peace March against Domestic Violence 2017': with the rising incidences of abuse of women and gender based violence, it became necessary that the role of women in both peace building and in general, societal development had to be emphasized and made public. This gave rationale for organizing the Peace March that was known globally as the 'Women's March'. The march led participants who are mostly young people to the Plateau State House of Assembly advocating for the policy makers to make laws to protect vulnerable groups against violence of all forms (Daily Trust, 2017). Also, there is the existence of an initiative of Community Action for Popular Participation (CAPP) known as Plateau Youth for Positive Change whose members' cut
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across youths in Plateau state from tertiary institutions, youth led and youth focus organizations as well as other youth community platforms. They promote healthy discussions and carryout advocacy towards promoting the voices of young people within Plateau state public space.

**International Youth Day.** As August 12 is regarded as United Nations international youth day, the celebration of the day by organizations has become a positive development that there are more groups celebrating international youth day in the state which creates awareness on many youth themes. For instance, YIAVHA in 2016 organized a state level seminar with the theme "Youth in Armed Conflicts" where researchers and experts facilitated a discussion with youth leaders on the said theme. In 2017, the same organization also celebrated the day with the theme, 'Raising Online Peace Builders in a Pluralistic Society' which focused on how youths can navigate the social media within their space for peace, Also, the Plateau Youth Council in what is seen as a deviation from what used to be the practice in years of existence has also adopted the celebration of international youth day through press conference, seminars, road walks, etc. This is a deviation from what has been obtained in time passed before the escalation of “Jos crisis” So for the fact that there is an increase in the number of actors within the space on international youth day, it indicates progress.

**Social Media Activism:** As this becomes the new frontier of engagement especially for young people, it is instructional to acknowledge that the engagement of people in such a platform also have traits of serious conflict potentials considering the wideness of the space. There are young people who are using social media to tell peaceful stories about their communities.
This is key because there are communities that have had bad publicity and because not all the time will they always have the resources to go to conventional media, they have found social medial as a cheaper platform for telling their stories. There are more young people involved in write-ups that they either address current issues or correct impressions or generate guided discussions along public policies. While some of the authors call their publication on Facebook and other social media platforms by different names like “Weekend Digest”, “Tuesday Corner” others not codify their such publications.

**Consultancy:** there are young people who are managing peace building initiatives in various organizations. Organizations now find it convenient to hire these young people believing that they should be able to influence their peers while discharging their roles. For instance, some are involved in collecting information to establish baseline situation before interventions, access project progress and end line project impact assessment. I have accessed firsthand information and data regarding the conflicts around natural resources especially between farmers and herders, and violent extremism mostly in Plateau and Kaduna states, and strengthening of democratic values. Outcome of such researches have given shape to new projects on addressing conflict traits in communities or have informed policy makers and development agencies. The author has worked in Jema'a, Kajuru, Kagarko, Lere, Soba, all of Kaduna state while in Plateau state, Jos North, Jos South, Barkin Lady, Riyom, Wase, Mangu, Bokkos, Shendam, Qu'a'anpan, Lantang North and LantangSouth under contractual agreement with different international and local organizations/networks. Also, deliberately, organization are hiring young people to inject
youth perspective into peace building programming. For instance, I am managing a pilot initiative for Search for Common Ground known as "Collaborative for Violence Prevention". This initiative promotes a collective impact approach where different stakeholders from different sectors cutting across representatives of selected government agencies, security establishments, academic institutions, business enterprises, civil society organizations, religious associations and delegates of various communities have agreed to collectively address the key drivers of violence in Jos North of Plateau state.

**Human Rights Activism:** Considering the centrality of building peoples' confidence in a post conflict society for the attainment of peace, rights protection has become a foundational approach to which peace is achieved because the continuous abuse of rights leads to war (Lambourne, 2004) and this explains why people say "there can't be peace without justice" There are young people that are involved in rendering free legal support to victims of human rights abuse either as lawyers in their chambers or as paralegals. In my capacity either as an individual or at organizational level, I have been rendering human rights support to individuals and groups especially those perceived to be vulnerable. I have been involved in settling over 30 cases at organizational, community and even family levels with the support of other youths in YIAVHA and friendly chambers like M.N. Dontoe Law firm. Also, as a consultant, I have facilitated the training of paralegals in Mikang, Jos South, Jos North and Barkin Ladi Local Governments for an NGO known as Bege Foundation under the ICSP/2015/359-478 Project Funded by European Union – EU. Participants were drawn from influential members of the community who were equipped with
knowledge to influence a change on certain harmful practices and policies with specific interest in children and women rights violations.

**Peace Ambassadors Network:** These are peace actors who are mainly between the ages of 18-35 years that have played very instrumental roles in averting reprisal violent attacks in their communities. They are situated in virtually all communities in over six Local Government Areas of Plateau state. They were selected by community leaders and were sent on an intensive training where they were equipped with knowledge on early warning and early response, trauma awareness, and some were subsequently equipped with economic skills for economic independence. These individuals, drawn from all tribes and religions formed a very strong network with a main goal of preaching peace and pluralism. During one of the outbreaks of the conflict, it was recorded that a particular Muslim Peace Ambassador housed the entire family of another Christian Peace Ambassador until security agencies came to the area. In the other key instance, the Peace Ambassadors played a vital role in evacuating the victims of the bomb blast that claimed so many lives at the temporary site of the Jos University Teaching Hospital. They ensured that nobody carried out reprisal attacks in their communities and no one or set of people were abused or intimidated in the course of the rising tensions. This group of young people have been trained and absolved into various security agencies and have been vital human tools in the peace building sector.

**Improved Media Engagement:** There are more young people who are currently coming out to talk on peace and government policies at the moment, thereby contributing to
the quality of discussion. They appear as radio and television guests to discuss pressing issues especially relating to youths. The author remembers how he was able to negotiate free radio slots for 2016 & 2017 International Youth Day to create awareness on the significance of the day, plight of youths and mostly, the great works of young people within the peace building space. We were able to secure 4 slots on Peace FM Jos, Tin city FM and Jay FM.

**Peace Clubs:** Peace clubs were established in secondary schools. Some of them are within formal and informal settings. Justice Development and Peace Caritas (JDPC), Peace Initiative Network (PIN), Centre for Peace Advancement in Nigeria (CEPAN), New Era Educational and Charitable Support Foundation, Women's Initiative for Sustainable Community Development (WISCOD), International Centre for Peace, Charities and Human Development (INTERCEP), Youth Initiative Against Violence & Human Rights Abuse (YIAVHA) and other organizations have been involved in peace education across the state where they use teachers and community volunteers as facilitators. The essence of these structures is to build in children a culture of ethnic and religious pluralism, peace practice and peace-building activism. Because of their involvement in the peace club activities, they consciously and unconsciously absorb the roles of a peace builder as taught through a well-crafted manual.

**ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR**

The ultimate beauty of every endeavor and intervention is located in the weight of its success. For YIAVHA and for me as an individual, our achievements include;
i. The contest for public elective office by two (2) participants at one of our trainings that was targeted at building the capacity of former student leaders to contest and engage in non-violent electioneering. The training was held in Jos and involved intensive sessions on leadership, democratic participation, social media communication, community mapping, and gender awareness. It was a motivating training which also served as the birth date of YIAVHA. Comrade Mafeng Gwallson contested for the position of member, House of Representative for Barkin Ladi and Riyom. Soon after our engagement he was later appointed as the youngest management committee chairman in Plateau state. Also, Comrade Bege Mullak contested for Plateau State House of Assembly but stepped down at the stage of primary election in the 2015 general elections.

ii. Strengthening of democratic space and contributing to the creation of peaceful atmosphere through community and media engagements, inclusive of social media and probono facilitations.

iii. The legal resolve of a case of unjustified and undignified termination of employment of two (2) young men which amounted to abuse of fundamental rights. This case was brought from Za'ang District of Plateau state, where 2 young men were dismissed from work unjustly without pay. The case was resolved in favor of the victims. Another remarkable success is a case we resolved where a staff (teller) of one of the banks in Jos diverted money deposits worth millions belonging to traders. Tellers were issues but deposited monies not lodged while the management of the bank didn't address the issue when reported to
them by the victims, I handled the case with the support of my colleagues and Barrister Dashe Nandan which led to the refund of the money to the victims.

iv. Policy influence. There are more youth platforms that are re-strategizing their engagement to influence government policies. Press release on Grazing Reserve: for example, at the height of governments intentions to establish a Grazing reserve in Plateau state without due consultation with the local people which was already creating tension in an already ethnically and religiously polarized Plateau, YIAVHA notably influenced government policy through a press statement that clearly rebuked government on its intention and suggested due consultation with both farmers and herders (Daily Post, 2016) This press statement was widely carried by media platforms. Eventually, government had to suspend its intention on that policy.

v. Improved media engagement: there are more young people who are currently coming out to talk on peace and government policies at the moment thereby contributing to the quality of the discussion. They appear as radio and television guests to discuss pressing issues especially relating to youths. The author remembers how he was able to negotiate free radio slots for 2016 and 2017 International Youth Day to create awareness on the significance of the day, plight of youth, and mostly, the great works of young people within the peace building space. We were able to secure slots on Peace FM Jos, Tin city FM and Jay FM.

vi. Being part of the process to the success of the NotTooYoungToRun Law which reduced the age limit for public officers in Nigeria. It was a collaborative
effort which young people and other critical stakeholders engaged through different means, either serving as a member of national strategy team or state advocacy teams. Some stakeholders got involved at either personal or individual organizational levels. We granted interviews to print and electronic media platforms, my social media platforms were also very handy as I continually posted our position on the bill through my "Weekend Digest" to justify why the bill should be supported. We supported Community Action for Popular Participation (CAPP) to strategize and implement ways of making the bill acceptable in Plateau state under Action Aids Strengthening Citizen Engagement in the Electoral Process (SCEEP) intervention.

vii. Contribution to research on farmers and pastoralists conflict in Kaduna and Plateau states which led to the design of a policy brief by different organizations I have worked with.

viii. The successful training of 175 paralegals in five Local Government Areas in Plateau state and increasing probono activities by young people has improved human rights status in benefiting communities, thereby reducing frustration and aggression that normally prelude conflicts.

ix. As part of our activities under the Peace Architecture Dialogue, the platform promoted an improved civil military relationship which saw a collaborative approach in dealing with potentials for violence in real time. Also, the platform created a system of accountability for critical stakeholders as holders of public trust including security and other managers of public trust appeared at monthly meetings to either
make presentations or be on alert to respond to emerging issues. At a point, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Plateau Peace Building Agency, Director of Press and many others gave account for their stewardship and responded to concerns of stakeholders especially on issues that had potentials for violence or to weaken democratic structures.

x. Promotion of dialogue in the farmer and herder conflict in Barkin Ladi and Riyom supported by Pharos Observatory, JDPC Jos and Interfaith Mediation Centre (IMC) under the “rights for peace” project which centered on trainings, workshops, youth camp, R4P peace clubs and radio programme.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Along the path of contributing to the attainment of sustainable peace and improved democratic culture in the state, quite a number of challenges were encountered. While some of them were as a result of individual idiosyncrasies, others were mainly systemic challenges that are associated to achieving milestones of great impact within conflict and post-conflict scenarios. Some of the challenges include;

i. **Resource Mobilization:** Owing to the fact that some of the interventions are managed without any form of external funding, mobilizing resources to organize programmes stood as a huge challenge for much youth programmes. For YIAVHA, in most instances, training materials needed to have been printed and other communication and logistics costs. Those costs had to be taken care locally through improvising or appeal to
the emotive components of project participants for them to stay motivated during the course of implementing activities. In most cases, YIAVHA had to make use of community classrooms and halls instead of renting a more conducive event space for activities. At the end, most communities admired our down-to-earth strategy and approach and came out in support and full participation of the program despite the lack of resources that would have made the activities more comfortable. In addition, I commit percentages of income gotten from all my consultancies to support activities of the organization including transport allowances of staff including trainings for them.

ii. **Refusal of Individuals to Report Issues of Rights Abuse for Fear of Victimization or stigmatization):** The Nigerian people like in most African societies still nurse the notion that victims of human rights abuse are further abused after failed prosecution attempts or be stigmatized depending on the nature of the abuse. This notion prevents individuals from speaking out and reporting issues of rights abuse which has built a culture of violence thereby increasing frustration. This has informed our approach towards awareness creation using different platforms.

iii. **Unequal Participation of Religious Representatives:** As a result of the religious nature of the conflicts in Plateau state, it became extremely difficult to get young people from different religions. More of the challenges would always come where the organization needs to ensure religious groups gender balance.

iv. **Influence of Post Conflict Experiences:** Dealing with people that have experienced violence can be difficult.
They most times seem distracted by their experiences each time they remember, they become emotional as some have had different categories of experiences. This makes implementation of intervention to be carried out with so much caution and sensitivity.

v. Lack of Cooperation Among Youths: There are many instances that young people have failed to achieve greatness because they seem not to agree to support each other. Such cooperation is necessary for they shall complement each other when they understand themselves better by working together. They sometimes engage in frivolous completion.

NETWORKING AND COLLABORATIONS

The key strength to achieving the goals of the intervention on ensuring peace, good governance and defense of Human Rights has been through strategic partnerships and collaborations that target young people and the holistic course of peace building and strengthening democratic structure in Plateau state. Some of the key networks and collaborations between YIAVHA and other actors within the peace building, human rights and good governance thematic areas include:

✓ Plateau Peace Practitioners Network (PPPN): Even though the network is currently going through challenges of legitimacy as a result of leadership gap, YIAVHA engages with the network at individual and organizational membership levels. The partnership basically focuses on contributing ideas and engaging in advocacy to government for the implementation of action and strategic plans for peace building which the network.
Women Peace and Security Network (WPS-N): This network promotes the engagement of women as agents of peace building and partners in the security architecture of the state. For the sake of emphasis, I am currently the Assistant Secretary of the Network in the state where I have been working to support women to have a better bargain in the society. The Network is working towards passing the Women Peace and Security law in the state and has been promoting the plight of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

Nigeria Youth Network on Countering Violence Extremism: As the Focal Person in Plateau state, I worked under YIAVHA with other network members across Northern Nigeria towards improving engagement on violent extremism and de-radicalization strategies. For the network in Plateau state under my leadership, as reported by daily post (2017) activities have been organized in communities with youth influencers and security with the aim of building a local network of young people to address particular drivers of violent extremism.

Coalition of Human Rights Advocates on the Plateau: At this coalition, we target a coordinated effort at ensuring that the fundamental human rights of citizens in Plateau state are protected. We work within communities by building trust with community members in order to address isolated cases of abuse of human rights and other related cases.

Not Too Young To Run campaign: the campaign comprises of individuals and organizations working towards the passage of the bill which focused mainly on reducing the age limit for elective public offices. At both official and individual levels, we got involved in
many advocacies that one can conveniently say it added to the acceptability of the bill. Apart from championing informal debates around the importance of the bill, or expressing endorsement of the bill through the social media, YIAVHA was engaged in media releases to demand for the passage of the bill as it were and to express gratitude to stakeholders when the bill was passed on the floor of the Plateaus state House of Assembly (Vanguard, 2017)

- **Plateau State Coalition on Electoral Reforms and Good Governance (PLASCER).** This is an initiative of Community Action for Popular Participation (CAPP) and it is a network that engages many stakeholders that aims at pushing for a robust reform within the electoral process. Among the many activities engaged by the network, YIAVHA was instrumental in establishing a situation room during the 2018 Plateau state local government elections. It has been engaged in building capacities and engaging state level election management stakeholders like political parties, Plateau state independent electoral commission, the security, national orientation Agency, etc.

- **New Era Educational and Charitable Support Foundation.** YIAVHA with a consortium under the leadership of New Era Educational and Charitable Support Foundation managed a programme known as “Strengthening Citizens against Radicalization through Leadership and Reintegration Training” in Northern Nigeria (Project SCARLIT) which looked at ways of promoting peace through reinforcement and creation of peace clubs on Countering Violence Extremism (CVE) and de-radicalization in schools and out of schools.
Strategic partnership with Simji Girl-Child Empowerment Initiative (SGEI) & Plateau Youth Council (PYC). Considering the need to use available resources strategically between partner organizations, YIAVHA has been involved in partnerships where partners' activities are used to pass key messages base on specific thematic areas. The partnership between Simji Girl-Child Empowerment Initiative (SGEI) and YIAVHA is such that, while SGEI empowers women through economic trainings, YIAVHA uses such programme time to pass key messages on the role of women in preventing violence and violent extremism which is its' strong thematic area. In this partnership, more than 1000 women in Jos North and Jos South of Plateau state have been directly reached. Also, within the span of such a strategic partnership, Plateau Youth Council (PYC) of Riyom Local Government Area of Plateau state in partnership with YIAVHA has organized a community awareness workshop on drug abuse and the dangers of electoral violence as reported by masarakim (2018), while YIAVHA provided logistics that it has advantages on, the PYC did the same which has made the activity possible and has opened door for more practical community engagements. Again, YIAVHA partnered with a South Korean youth platform known as “International Peace Youth Group” (IPYG) in the area of advocating for the passage of the “Cessation of war and attainment of world peace” law through signature campaign. We gathered signature of individuals and organized a workshop to create awareness on the importance of such a law.
CONCLUSION
Lessons so far

In the course of interventions in volatile terrains and particularly when it concerns young people, there are many lessons to learn. Thus, the following lessons were learnt:

i. Young people are willing to contribute to the larger picture of peace building if given the opportunity and sense of ownership of the process and intervention.

ii. False impressions of excess resource availability for project implementation may truncate efficiency and credibility of interventions in communities. There is no need to give false information because a program implementer may want to secure stakeholders buy-in.

iii. Collaborations and partnerships are extremely crucial for achieving the goal of peace building interventions. This is important because no organization can achieve a certain goal all alone except through such collaborations that is used to cover gaps in individual organizations.

iv. Harboring already defined prejudice about a particular group or community before an intervention undermines the ability to work objectively with them which is most times obvious.

v. Emphasizing the need for conflict parties to sign and enter any form of agreement is a source of threat to conflict on its own. Because at the point of signing the agreement, the groups hold the provisions of the agreement so strongly waiting for possible violation by the other group to justify violent actions.

vi. In designing interventions for young people, we should try as much as possible to make it participatory because young people are looking for a space to show
their ingenuity rather than being caged in the thought of another.

**Recommendations**

For the passionate young people willing to upscale and get involved in peace building within their communities, the following are recommended:

i. Implementing organizations should be able to show innovation and creativity while building on already established interventions. The essence of building on existent intervention is to cut the cost of starting up a new line of intervention which may be capital intensive, and when the resources become totally exhausted, the intervention suffers and eventually fades without any tangible impact. Moreover, building on existing interventions reinforces retention of the goal of peace building.

ii. Avoid making community-driven programmes centered in the cities (except for sensitive occasions and discussions). The overuse of cities to organize programmes where participants are always carried to big hotels in the city has the capacity of creating temporal distraction of participants' reality. Interventions should be carried out in the locality where beneficiaries are to be gotten.

iii. Build as much networks and collaborations as possible. This will aid in complementing areas of weakness and incapacibilities. It will further give access to diverse strategy options which other partners possess.

iv. Attend trainings, workshops and seminars as frequently as possible. These platforms expose one to new and evolving practices and trends in peace
The involvement of young people in peace building on the Plateau: building, project implementation, and general social impact. They also provide a platform for networking and testing of ideas in theory to check the viability on the field.

REFERENCES


Chapter Six

Students for Peace (S4P): A Model of Engaging Students of Tertiary Institutions in Peace Campaign

Hamza Ibrahim

Introduction

The value and quest for peace not only in tertiary institutions but in many other places of human endeavor is becoming more glaring and seems to be getting momentum almost every day. This perhaps will not be unconnected with the fact that people begin to understand that violence tatters societal harmony, understanding and progress and sustainably prevents the society from developing, realizing or utilizing both human and material capital for development. As the peace movement continues to emerge, students of tertiary institutions are never left behind as their peace umbrella “Students for Peace”, otherwise known as S4Ps gradually gets established in universities, polytechnics and federal and state colleges of education especially in the North East and West regions of the country. Being in their youthful age, most students of tertiary institutions have positive contributions to make in peace campaign. To depict youth relevance in peace campaign, Iwuoha M. cited in the UNOY Post (2015) Report is of the view that “using youth to preach peace can go a long way. When you see a fellow youth
talking 'my brother or my sister, stop violence, stop stealing, stop kidnapping, stop killing' that can make a difference. It will make more sense that a fellow youth is talking to you, rather than an elderly man”. Adding in the same vein,

Young people and youth peacebuilding organizations are in a unique and strong position to lead the movement for the rebuilding of trust among social groups. Bound by common interests such as education, innovation, sport, a youthful culture and a desire for a stable world to grow up in, young people can be effective agents of bridging social capital. To be more effective agents of bridging social capital, young people need access to human rights and peace education. Peace education, including non-violent conflict transformation, intercultural dialogue and inclusive leadership, is paramount to achieving a culture of peace. Positive peace must compliment negative peace efforts. The omission of peace and human rights education in a broad goal on ensuring stable and peaceful societies is a missed opportunity to rally resources, knowledge and youthful energy towards truly building sustainable peace.

From the foregoing, we can establish that young people can become tangible peace agents with shared interests, such as education, sport and innovation. These three and other factors can further solidify their resolve and passion for peace building. Access to human rights and peace education to young people will not only make them proactive peace agents but bridge social capital which in the long run becomes an asset that society can be proud of. Making another argument, Afarin, United States of America, of the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars believed:
The problem is that many of the young people are discouraged from participating in peace and development activities because they feel that they are looked down upon by the experts and older people in the field so they either become apathetic towards it or they choose extreme manners to convey their concern and desire to engage. Thus it is of utmost importance to guide their passion and energy through appropriate channels towards peace and development.

The manifestation of the above argument in young people poses a great challenge to the society, because rationally the youth are believed to be the driving force of their societies and peace is ideally something that every youth should engage themselves in bringing to their societies for progress and development to flourish. Therefore, this stigma if not addressed may continue to be a real obstacle in peace building. Young people should properly be utilised for peace not only in tertiary institutions but in every aspect of human endeavor.

**Methodology**

This paper adopted Focus Group Discussion and In-depth Interview as tools of sourcing data to eventually guide it’s discourse. The choice of these important sources of generating data stems from the desire to allow for tangible inputs from a variety of respondents of different groups. Because of the nature or somewhat newness of the concept “Students for Peace”, the paper finds it helpful to engage past leaders of the association in some tertiary institutions to engage them in in-depth interviews so as to generate data regarding how S4P started or is operated to be able to understand its trend or progress. Focus Group Discussion was as well conducted with some members to be able to accommodate different views and scenarios regarding
Students for Peace in selected tertiary institutions and how the student body can be used in peace campaign. The paper narrows its attention or scope to some tertiary institutions in the North East and West regions.

Sample under study to this paper
All the Students for Peace (S4Ps) set up by the Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD) are now located within the North East and North West zones of the country. There are 16 of them in total. Their years of establishment vary. As such, their functions equally vary. Those established earlier seem to have gone far in terms of engagements and programmes, while those established not long ago are just starting move on gradually. 2014 was the year the first S4P got established. Therefore, this paper chose BUK S4P and ATBU S4P to represent both the North West and North East and both were founded in 2014 to stand as the sample, even though the starting ones, such as KUST S4P, YSU S4P, SRCOE S4P and COE Azare S4P have also been consulted to be able to compare and understand the already existing and emerging S4Ps.

Objective of the study
The main objective of this paper is to leverage on how Students for Peace (S4Ps) in various tertiary institutions can be effectively used in peace campaign particularly in their campuses and beyond. It is again of interest to this paper to undertake an examination of the structure of the S4Ps from inception to date in the sampled institutions so as to understand the weaknesses, strengths and prospects of the students' body.
Students for Peace (S4Ps)
Students for Peace (S4Ps), as the coinage hints, refers to a voluntary association of students that are committed to peace building in universities, federal and state polytechnics and colleges of education and in any other tertiary institution. The shared and common interest among members is the resolve to pursue and propagate peace, especially within their campuses and their immediate communities. While there are no specific entry or membership criteria, the association regards love for peace and unity and respect for one another as priority. Therefore, members are expected to be tolerant and ready to accommodate and have for respect diversity and passionately volunteer towards the course of peace. In essence, they become peace advocates reaching out to their fellow students. Membership is open to students from all departments and faculties. S4Ps have a constitution which documents and gives guidance to the do's and don'ts of the association. Upon joining the peace movement, members are taken through the constitution in order to have a clear understanding on the operations of the union. There are leadership positions that are subject to renewal through election that holds after the expiration of a two-year tenure, even though the constitution also allows for consensus and negotiation among competing members.

Objectives of Students for Peace
Students for Peace as found out by the sources of generating data to this paper has three major objectives, as enumerated below:

- To maintain peace in the campuses of tertiary institutions, such as universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, etc and neighboring communities of their institutions.
To promote harmony and understanding amongst students in tertiary institutions.

To develop or participate in developing conflict-solution measures as they relate to the campus and students.

**The Activities of Students for Peace**

- Holding peace promotion events and lectures.
- Organizing programmes not directly related to peace but that have the goal of strengthening peace among students.
- Marking World Peace Day.
- Mentoring secondary school students on peace and rendering career guidance to them.
- Hosting Muslim and Christian students to an iftar (fast break) during Ramadhan to emphasize peace, tolerance, mutual coexistence, etc.
- Helping students to do their registration for free during sessional registration.
- Holding Peace Summit with Muslim and Christian clerics talking from their different scriptures.

In line with their mandate of maintaining and promoting peace especially on campus, Bayero University Students for Peace (S4P) in 2015 organized a lecture, which hundreds of students attended. The speaker was a famous radio presenter, Nuhu Tahir. The topic of the lecture was “Boyfriend-girlfriend relationship on campus”. The choice of the topic followed a conflict involving two ladies fighting over a guy which led to one stabbing the other with a knife. The unfortunate incident eventually led to the expulsion of the two fighting ladies. Therefore, BUK S4P decided that holding a lecture with a topic around that scenario will help to sensitize students on the need to avoid violence and embrace peace.
The Concept of Peace

Despite the dimensions and classifications of the term “peace”, scholars have arguably recognized its necessity and role in societal progress. This viewpoint by the former UN Secretary General concretely highlights our individual roles as members of the society. “Peace must begin with each one of us. Through quiet and serious reflection on its meaning, new and creative ways can be found to foster understanding, friendship and co-operation among all people” (Javier Perez de Cuellar, Secretary General of the UN, September 1986). When peace reigns and people appreciate and work towards it, unlimited opportunities get easily be unlocked. Understanding it from a broader perspective and putting the needed effort to achieve it can erase societal agony and flourish mutual coexistence.

Some people are apt to be startled or at the least raise eyebrows at the mention of an African perspective on peace. Peace, it is claimed, is a universal desideratum. This is not a contestable position. How then can we begin to particularize it by talking of an African perspective? How legitimate is it to talk of European peace or Asian peace? To conceptualize peace in this narrow way is manifestly absurd. In addition to the theoretical problems it raises it would seem to have undesirable consequences for peace scholarship as well as for the quest for peace and the peace movement. It compartmentalizes peace studies into narrow, chauvinistic and national or local concerns and fragments the peace initiative at a time when the need for unity is greater than ever. Although the state systems of most countries of the world claim that peace is desirable, the concept of peace, the obstacles to peace, what peace actually is and how it can be realized
are issues on which there is no agreement (McCandless and Karbo, 2011).

Regardless of the region or any part of the world, peace is a priority and does not have a coloration as to be differentiated based on location, but all the segments of the universe need it no matter their beliefs or aspirations. It is obviously limiting the horizon of peace to give it ownership and identity. That may jeopardize search and peace consolidation efforts. To be able to promote and let people cherish peace, it has to be seen from the viewpoint that it is an asset that everybody ought to have. As alluded by the above scholars, on the path to peace in many countries lie some challenges. There is no consensus on how the term can be attained.

**Peace Campaign**

“Only through an ambitious strategy to support young people and provide fairer economic development can they be offered a better future and their involvement in violence reduced”. Peace campaign is a voluntary movement geared towards propagating peace and creating awareness and education on peace through various means at school, community, local, state or national level. Campaigning for peace means the people involved in the movement focus on cautioning and discouraging people against violence of any category. People who join peace campaign are willing to bring changes in their environments, particularly regarding peace. United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 (UNSCR 2250) is the first resolution on youth, peace and security. Adopted by the UN Security Council in 2015, the resolution emphasizes the importance of youth as agents of change in the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. The resolution highlights Participation, Partnerships, Prevention, Protection and Disengagement and Re-integration as the five pillars for
action related to young people's contribution to peace processes and conflict resolution. Again, to effectively engage in peace campaign, young people ought to be engaged in peace building efforts. As Guiding Principles on Young People's Participation in Peacebuilding (https://www.youth4peace) observed:

Fostering social cohesion and trust through an inclusive and participatory peacebuilding process during and after a transition or conflict is a challenging but necessary task. Many key stakeholders remain on the margins or excluded from the processes. In particular, the potential contribution and inclusion of young people to effective peacebuilding has received little attention and support. Yet, young people's leadership and roles in preventing and resolving conflict, violence and extremism are rich resources essential to building sustainable peace. Young people are valuable innovators and agents of change, and their contribution should be actively supported, solicited and regarded as part of building peaceful communities and supporting democratic governance and transition. Young people's participation promotes civic engagement and active citizenship. Promoting the participation of young people in peacebuilding requires multiple approaches

(1) A human rights-based approach grounded in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the World Programme of Action on Youth;

(2) An economic approach that identifies young people as
central to the economic development of their country and promote their access to economic opportunities as essential for their own development;

(3) A socio-political approach that connects young people to civil society and the political arena and provides them with opportunities, training and support for their active engagement and participation in public life; and

(4) A socio-cultural approach that analyses the roles of young people in existing structures and supports dialogue, including an intergenerational dialogue, about these structures.

Considering the foregoing elaborate role of young people in peacebuilding and how they can be supported or empowered to engage more in peacebuilding, this paper finds it necessary to state that peace campaign needs to be clearly understood by students of tertiary institutions, their authorities and societies and collectively encourage its operation to be able to produce alot of peace advocates.

**The Relevance of Students in Peace Campaign**

Tertiary institutions are normally grounds where people of different backgrounds, tribes, religions, beliefs, etc converge to pursue educational careers in numerous fields. Young men and women spend years depending on their courses of study and academic capacity to obtain a variety of educational qualifications in universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, agriculture, etc. They stay long and relate with themselves and form associations. On completion of their study they go back to their different communities and societies. Certainly, the experience and attitude they develop overtime have an impact on the tertiary institutions and communities they go back to live in.
Therefore, having students of tertiary institutions who are passionate and ready to engage in peace campaign in their respective institutions is such a valuable endowment that must be cherished, nurtured and strongly supported by direct and indirect stakeholders for a number of reasons. One, while crises of a different nature become inevitable on campuses, students who engage in peace campaign will be the apparatus to resolving or rather preventing such conflicts. It is obvious that using students to address student problems will be a good approach. Two, the more students get engaged in peace campaign and the movement become more active with a large membership and concrete activities, the less the likelihood of violence eruption among students. Three, encouraging peace campaign among the students of tertiary institutions is as good as orienting and training peace agents, who not only carry out peace activities in their campuses, but in their immediate communities. “We periodically visit our neighboring communities (communities surrounding our university) to advocate and preach peace and in primary and secondary schools to mentor students there so that they too can be interested in peace, that in itself is preparing them to becoming future peace advocates” - Ismail Auwal Garba (BUK S4P Team Lead). Four, students in peace campaign have a long term positive impact on the nation at large, because, when those who engage in peace campaign in tertiary institutions graduate, whatever they become-enterpreneurs, civil servants, businessmen and women, etc, they go back to live either in their communities or communities outside their original environment. Therefore, it is expected that the orientation and mindset they have developed will eventually manifest into turning them into peace advocates which will be good to the nation in general. It's better to have alot of peace advocates than people who pay no attention or make efforts for peace in the society.
CITAD and Students for Peace (S4Ps)

As a component to its Curbing Hate Speech in Nigeria Project that is supported by the MacArthur Foundation, the Center for Information Technology and Development (CITAD) facilitated the establishment of Students for Peace (S4Ps) in many tertiary institutions of the North East and West regions with a view to engaging young people domiciled in various campuses in peace campaign. CITAD felt that as young people and students of tertiary institutions have a big role to play in peace building and peace advocacy, therefore, it came up with a Students for Peace to serve as an umbrella and machinery through which the students can advocate and promote peace within and outside their various campuses. By engaging in peace movement and campaign, the young men and women can help to maintain peace and encourage tolerance, especially among their fellow students and the neighboring communities of their institutions. Being their initiator, CITAD supports the S4Ps to run their peace activities. So far, CITAD has succeeded in establishing 16 students for Peace across North East and North West in Kano, Bayero University, Kano,

Yusuf Maitama Sule University (formerly North West University), Kano University of Science and Technology Wudil, Federal College of Education Kano, Sa'adatu Rimi College of Education and School of Technology. Umaru Musa Ya'adua University and Alqalam University are the S4P institutions in Katsina state while Federal University Dutse is the S4P institution in Jiagwa while Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi State University Gadau, Abubakar Tatari Ali Polytechnic and College of Education Azare are the institutions S4P is established in Bauchi State. In Yobe, S4P is established in Yobe State University Damaturu and Federal Polytechnic Damaturu while Taraba State University, Jalingo
and College of Education, Zing are the S4P institutions in Taraba State. With S4Ps functioning in the above mentioned states, CITAD continues to establish more of the students peace campaign umbrella, especially in Gombe, Adamawa and Borno states.

The Achievements of S4Ps

- Organized peace rallies to sensitize students and communities on the importance of peace and peace campaign.
- Held lecture series of peace
- Payment of registration fees of three students in Bayero University in the 2016/2017 academic session.
- Offered free online registration to 423 students in BUK.
- Securing membership in Bayero University's Peace Committee.

Lessons Learnt

- Young people are willing to participate in peace campaign and advocacy.
- Engaging students of tertiary institutions in peace campaign can help to foster unity, peace and tolerance, especially on their campuses.
- Students for Peace activities and programmes have a positive impact not only on students but on their tertiary institutions' neighbouring communities.
- Engaging students of tertiary institutions in peace campaign prepares them to become societal peace advocates.
- The more students join S4Ps in their campuses, the more the possibility of minimizing conflicts on campuses and beyond.
The Challenges of Students for Peace (S4Ps)

Like other associations with clear goals to achieve, Students for Peace (S4Ps) is also chained by variety of factors or challenges that hinder its operations. It is understood that a common challenge almost all the S4Ps face is scarcity of funding to carry out certain programmes that involve logistics. While these associations have no source of income; the demand to organize activities keeps growing, especially at a time peace campaign needs to be scaled up. In some tertiary institutions, it is the lack of understanding between the largest student body, i.e Students Union Government (SUG), and the S4Ps. SUGs regard S4Ps as opponents who are out to canvass for student support, confidence and loyalty. As such, the SUGs are never cooperative when S4Ps seek partnership or support to execute certain peace programmes. This situation remains a big challenge to S4Ps because of their low membership. In some tertiary institutions where there are 8000 or so students, they are all by compulsion SUG members. S4P struggles to record only 200 members. Therefore, as admitted by Hauwa Sa'id, the S4P President of Umaru Musa Yar'adua University “you need to collaborate with bodies like SUG to reach out to as many students as possible”.

Apart from the challenges there are also some problems facing the association. Notable among these problems is the lack of a unified leadership structure that is replicated in all the tertiary institutions where S4Ps exist. While some schools have six leadership positions others have up to twelve with no clear aims and objectives or direction. As such, many members only take pride in either holding positions or being members of the association, but are not aware of the guiding principles driving the peace body. Another problem that stagnates S4Ps is the inability to engage in wide publicity to sell the
association to both new and old students. It has also been noticed that hardly two of every ten students knew or heard of Students for Peace, even though some students might be in their 300 or 400 level. This largely happens due to uncommitted leadership and less active members. Although S4Ps are somewhat new considering the fact that most of them in the North East and West are below five years old, this paper can establish that they have done little in publicity. As such, the membership increases per annum is, in BUK 40 students, FUD, 10. Umaru Musa Yar'adua University, Katsina, 18; ATBU Bauchi, 21; COE, Azare, 11; FCE, Kano, 16; Bauchi State University, Gadau, 14; The establishment year for S4Ps in those tertiary institutions varies from 5 to 3 and 2 years.

**Recommendations**

There are many specific mechanisms and ways through which Students for Peace can be improved and be made more functional in tertiary institutions. Through the FGDs and the In-depth interviews conducted, this paper found certain peculiar problems. It therefore recommends the following as some the things to be addressed:

- All S4Ps need to have and maintain online presence to encourage and exchange peace ideas with a much wider audience.
- Only competent, less engaged and patriotic leaders should be allowed to steer the activities of the association.
- S4Ps should recognize and welcome diversity in their membership structure, thereby accommodating people from different backgrounds, religions, beliefs, etc.
- Like SUGs, S4Ps need to have a coherent structure,
clearly defined goals and institutional support to operate. School authorities need to give them recognition and help to design a working blueprint to the peace propagating body.

References


Chapter Seven

Women and Youth Building Peace in Nigeria: The Nigerian WANEP Experience

Bridget Osakwe

Introduction

This write up is based on WANEP’s contributions to human security through the Women in Peacebuilding program and the Active and Non-Violence Peace Education program for youth. It focuses on Nigeria's experiences in peacebuilding through women and youth as a contribution to the process of WANEP nation-building through interventions focused on peace and security. It is generally recognized that the process of building a capable state requires the participation of all the vital forces of a nation. A capable state is one that has the ability to effectively discharge its duties of delivering security, peace, prosperity and other public goods to its people. Although the state has traditionally been considered as the focal point of this process, other sectors, including non-State actors, women and youth have an important role to play. The importance of this role has grown significantly over time, as the limitations of the post-colonial state in providing for the needs of its people have been made very clear. Prominent amongst such non-state actors are Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), who have made significant efforts towards policy and practice change,
particularly in the area of Peace and Security.

**About WANEP**
The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP-Nigeria) was established to provide an organized platform for collaborative peacebuilding in Nigeria by indigenous organizations working in the area of conflict prevention, transformation and peacebuilding. Its operational framework is designed along the visions of the regional network operating in West Africa, with the overarching goal of building sustainable peace and development in the region. Prior to its establishment in 2001, the regional coordinating secretariat of WANEP at Accra-Ghana had been working with a loose network of independent Non-Governmental and Community Based Organizations in Nigeria to respond to the complex web of conflicts that have permeated and continued to challenge the national fabric and existence of the country. These organizations with diverse interests in human rights, conflict transformation and good governance have been committed to respond to conflicts in Nigeria and thus provided the bridge for WANEP's initial intervention programs. WANEP-Nigeria, like other country-based WANEP structures in the West Africa Sub-region, operates through a membership scheme that provides technical support and builds the peacebuilding capacity of its member organizations to intervene effectively at the grassroots level in various communities of the country.

Membership of WANEP-Nigeria, pursuant to constitutional provision, is for organizations with 40% conflict transformation and peacebuilding initiatives. These organizations, however, have core competencies in various areas of peacebuilding and, therefore, provide the opportunity for sharing experience and comparative learning among various network member organizations towards an holistic
intervention on various conflicts in Nigeria.

Since the establishment of a national network, WANEP has demonstrated sustained commitment to actualizing its vision of 'a Nigeria characterized by just and peaceful coexistence among communities where dignity of the human person is paramount and where the people can meet their basic human needs and decide their own direction'. It has implemented programmes ranging from Conflict Prevention; Women in Peacebuilding; Active Non-Violence and Peace Education; Democracy and Good Governance to Research and Documentation in line with its mission 'to enable and facilitate the development of mechanisms for cooperation among civil society based peacebuilding practitioners and organisations in Nigeria by providing cooperative responses to violent conflicts; providing structure through which these practitioners and institutions can regularly share experiences and information on peacebuilding, conflict transformation, social, ethno-religious and political reconciliation and tolerance; and promoting cultural values as resources for peacebuilding'.

**Women in Peace Building**

There is a global focus on women's participation in peacebuilding. Since the Beijing Platform for Action first called attention to the link between peace and women's participation in 1995, there has been accelerated recognition by the international community, national governments and policy-makers of the need for women's rights to be central in peacebuilding and post-conflict processes. UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325), adopted in 2000, broke new ground in recognizing the importance of women's equal participation and full involvement in all the efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. To
reinforce these commitments and support their implementation, the Security Council has passed a draft of related resolutions in the last decade.

However, these impressive international commitments have disappointingly largely failed to translate into increased participation of women in peace processes. Women remain marginalised or overlooked as peacebuilders both in formal peace negotiations as well as in their own communities. This has had serious implications for the inclusion of their rights and priorities and needs within peace processes and in post-conflict development agendas. When limited efforts have been made to increase their representation in international, national and regional levels of decision making in post-conflict periods, this has often been in nominal and not meaningful ways. Even when there are provisions related to women's rights on paper, in practice there is limited implementation.

Attention to the issue of women's participation in peacebuilding has tended to concentrate on national and international levels. As a result, the contribution of, and the challenges facing, women building peace at the local level have been largely ignored together with the impact of their involvement on women, their communities and on national-level peace processes. Local civil society organizations like WANEP are frequently at the front line of supporting women's participation in peacebuilding, but their efforts are also typically overlooked. Women make up more than 50% of the population, so without their input the national agenda will not represent all the people. It will be faulty. So, we have to use the contributions of women in peace and nation building.

Peace means different things to women and men because of their unique experiences as a result of conflict and, in turn,
how society is structured. Peace to women means putting food on the table, economic empowerment, access to healthcare and education and speaking up against abuse in the home. Women's role changes during conflict, even though the conflict affects them negatively. That role change leads to conflict within homes. Whether women are literate or illiterate, what they do to achieve peace in this country is written in history. There is violence in the home, but too often women are silent. That is not peace. “In a patriarchal society, it is extremely difficult for women to be heard, so it is important that women come together. Unless they act together, no one is going to hear them. They find security and strength in each others' experiences’.

WANEP-Nigeria, in recognition of the strong peacebuilding potential of women and the relevance of gender-responsive peacebuilding, launched the Women in Peacebuilding (WIPNET) program in 2002, a year after WIPNET was formally launched at the WANEP regional secretariat. WIPNET provides a platform for women organizations responding to conflict situations to form strong alliances towards promoting the inclusion and active participation of women in peacebuilding at all levels. It also promotes gender mainstreaming in local, state, national and international peace and security policies and processes through constructive actions aimed at creating a women's only space; providing a connection or holistic sisterhood in building relationships and peace to achieve common peace; making a link between what women face at war and conflict times and in the society everyday.

Working through an ideology of women's peace activism, WIPNET makes a link between what they face in times of war and in every day society and believes that the systematic and
engendered forms of violence women face at war time, such as rape, torture, forced prostitution and forced marriage, are expressions of a deeper disregard or discrimination against them in the larger society. Thus, WIPNET strives to address issues on women's peace and security by promoting social justice and challenging patriarchal systems that are preserved and reinforced by war and violence.

Women as key stakeholders in conflict prevention and peacebuilding have been underutilized and/or undermined. This is due to the fact that war and peace are highly gendered activities. Women and men not only have different access to power structures and material resources before, during and after the escalation of a conflict; they also experience the pre-conflict phase, the open conflict and the post-conflict situation in rather different ways. Violent conflicts in Nigerian communities as elsewhere in Africa illuminate masculinity and subjugate feminine expression. This situation has created a hierarchy where men are relied upon to develop frameworks and strategies for preventing conflict and/or rebuilding violence-torn societies. In a bid to ensure that their interests are duly considered, WIPNET works with women's groups to promote equality and partnership with men in all areas, including peace and security, bearing in mind their unique roles in community harmonization, mobilization and rehabilitation.

WIPNET has strengthened the coalition of women in peacebuilding organizations in the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria by mobilizing them to act collectively and mutually support one another in responding to peace and security issues. This ensures that competent female interveners are available to support gender based interventions as complements to holistic conflict transformation and peace
processes in affected communities. In addition, the programme has built the capacity of women to participate in formal peace processes and peace building initiatives, policy analysis and advocacy hence, improving the practice of peacebuilding amongst women.

Some of the areas women have come to the limelight are electoral dispute resolution, ADR mechanisms, mediation and dialogues. Their outstanding performance in dispute resolution frameworks has increased society’s appreciation of the potentials and roles that they can play in social cohesion and community management, which is key in conflict transformation, management and peacebuilding. The programme has initiated and implemented actions that have widened the space for the participation of women in peacebuilding mechanisms through a coordinated network that facilitates advocacy, reconciliation and transformation. WIPNET has remained a veritable and credible platform for women to address social injustices as well as enabled them to play critical roles towards actualizing their balanced inclusion in peace and security processes at all levels of the society.

The WIPNET strategic approach is to create a platform for rural women engagement and bridge policy and practice in the area of peace and security. Also, it is to mainstream gender and in particular women issues in international, regional and national mechanisms on women peace and security. WIPNET's vital inputs in the process led to the inclusion of WANEP as the only civil society member in the Inter-Ministerial Task Force on gender and peacekeeping and also the Steering Committee on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Nigeria. This partnership relationship has been sustained as evident in the joint design of Nigeria's NAP for the implementation of UNSCR 1325. WIPNET has also translated
the UNSCR 1325 into local languages, such as Ibo, Tiv and Ijaw, for easy comprehension by rural women across the country (http://www.peacewomen.org).

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), which was adopted by the Security Council on 31 October, 2000, is a comprehensive political framework within which women's protection and their role in peace processes can be addressed. Over the past seventeen years, this resolution has paved the way for supporting resolutions (1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122, 2242) and strengthened the normative framework for women's participation in decision making, conflict prevention and peace building; protection of women and girls' rights and prevention of sexual violence in conflict.

WIPNET as a programme of WANEP is fast evolving towards a complimentary peacebuilding network with a critical mass of over 1,000 women drawn from women professionals, groups, associations and organizations working. Together at different levels and positions to address abuse and violence against women across the country and across the West African region (www.wanepnigeria.org).

The drive to integrate rural women into peacebuilding prompted WIPNET Nigeria to empower local women with basic skills and knowledge of community peace building for key women leaders and representatives of women's organizations. Trained rural women were featured on the 'Voices of Women' community radio program to project the interests and concerns of women in conflict situations.

Cultural, social and economic systems of communities within Nigeria place women at a disadvantage and further reduce
their social status and limit their chances to participate in conflict management processes. In addition to these barriers, women in the region lack the skills of contemporary peacebuilding and conflict management, thus adding to the long list of justifications for their exclusion. Acknowledging the peculiar situation of the region, WIPNET Nigeria invested resources towards strengthening the capacity of women and generating a mass support base for them to become active participants in peace and security within their communities. Through its working relationship with other CSOs, WIPNET has built capacity and confidence amongst women and engaged with key stakeholders in security to increase the understanding and appreciation of the imperative to include women in peacebuilding systems within their communities. To improve local women’s access to basic skills and knowledge of community peacebuilding, WIPNET translated existing training methodology into indigenous Nigerian languages, e.g., Peacebuilding Training Manual for Community Women. The program has also led to the wider appreciation of the role of women in social cohesion and community management, which is key in conflict transformation, management and peacebuilding.

**Through experiential learning**

WIPNET designed, developed and sustained an Annual Lessons Learned Conference as a platform that offers network members, partners and critical gender sensitive stakeholders across the country the opportunity to deliberate issues that impact positively or negatively on women. It provides the opportunity to reflect, plan and guide future initiatives that support gender-based development, peacebuilding and human security across the six geopolitical zones.
Violence against women during armed conflict is globally condemned as a crime against humanity and an abuse of human rights. Sexual assault and mutilation not only have terrible physical and psychological effects on the victims themselves, but are also capable of disrupting psycho-social relationships in communities. In the inter communal conflict between the Nyough and Nyiev community of Kwande Local Government Council of Benue State, armed attacks between the two communities exposed women to multiple physical and psychological trauma/abuse. Media and eye-witness reports reveal that machetes, rods and other sharp weapons were flagrantly used to attack and mutilate women.

To monitor gender specific violence, WIPNET developed a unique Early Warning/Response mechanism that captures these gender-specific abuses through a standardized collection and organization of information based on regular or continuous observation, recording and reporting. (The publication is “Gender and Early Warning Training manual”). Monitors keep track of events in any situation and report their objective observation to a central body or response channels. This is because the harm inflicted upon women is often gender-specific with respect to its forms, causes or consequences or all three. Some gender-specific forms of harm may include various forms of sexual violence, gender-specific discrimination (i.e. employment or education restrictions, dress codes, voting rights), traditional harmful practices (i.e. female genital mutilation) and violence within the family or the community (i.e. domestic violence, forced marriage, dowry deaths, honour killings).

Like most violence that occurs in the course of armed conflict, violence against women is not accidental. It is a weapon of war, a tool used to achieve military objectives, such as ethnic
cleansing, spreading political terror, breaking the resistance of a community, intimidation, etc. The abuse of women in armed conflict is rooted in a global culture of discrimination that portrays women as objects. This is vivid in the North East where women and girls are used as suicide bombers and sex slaves. Social, political and religious norms identify women subtly or explicitly regard women as ornate objects of possession or the property of men and thereby legitimize violent appropriation of their bodies for individual or cultural gratification.

WIPNET'S national assessment of the impact of conflict on women and in Nigeria published in a book “Caught in the Divide” reveals that they faced cruel gender based violence, ranging from sexual abuse to various levels of physical violence. The findings of the report assessment team show that Internally Displaced women camped at make shifts and shelters repeatedly post traumatic fears of further attack and abuse due to the insecurity prevalent in the camp, especially as a result of the constant intrusion into the camp by strangers without proper verification of their intentions or status. Consequently, WIPNET is involved in psycho-social care working with a team of professionals within the Network that devote special attention to the health and psychosocial needs of the survivors of gender-based violence in conflict situations. Humanitarian assistance is considered especially during and after armed conflicts in many communities of the country with special attention paid to the specific needs of women and children displaced during such conflicts with the provision of minimal relief materials to include sanitary towels, disinfectants, toiletries, milk, etc.

WIPNET in her work builds relationship with gate-keepers: various stakeholders as policy makers, security institutions,
traditional/opinion, religious leaders, etc engaged within the
communities to build a synergy for women's participation in
issues of peace and security within their environment.

**Youth and Non-Violence Peace Education**

In December 2015, the United Nations Security Council adopted UNSCR 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security. The resolution was the first to recognize the important role young people can play in preventing conflict and sustaining peace. Conciliation Resources was invited by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to contribute to the Progress Report on UNSCR 2250. Young people are frequently 'othered' in discussions about conflict. This is a dangerous practice as youth can play a very positive role aiding peacebuilding in societies recovering from conflict (Ozerdem, A 2016).

According to experts, the potential youth hold for change and positive action is the subject of growing research agenda. This is particularly the case with the recent wave of social upheavals and humanitarian crises in different parts of the world. For much of human social interaction, the category called 'youth' has been perceived as a historically constructed social one, a relational concept and as a group of actors that is far from homogenous. A myriad of factors make childhood and youth highly heterogeneous categories in terms of gender, class, race, ethnicity, political position and age. They also have multi-faceted roles. Youth can be heroes as well as victims, saviors and courageous in midst of crisis, as well as criminals in the shanty towns and military entrepreneurs in war zones.

The positioning of youth in society has a bearing on their leadership potential and their possible role in peacebuilding. The tension between young and old has been one of the key features of inter-generational shifts pertaining to the control over power, resources and people. The tension lies in the
palpable impatience of youth, their desire to strive for more, their willingness to be seen as responsible and capable and the structural barriers to their social mobility. Independence from others and responsibility for others, such as taking care of a family or household, can be seen as the defining markers of pre-requisites of social adulthood.

What needs to be underlined is that youth should be conceptualized and studied as agents of positive peace in terms of addressing not only the challenges of physical violence, but also the those of structural and cultural violence and the broader social change processes to transform violent, oppressive and hierarchical structures, as well as behavior, relationships and attitudes into more participatory and inclusive ones. It is important to understand the engagement of youth in peacebuilding, first of all, youth mobilization and reintegration factors, such as who they are, what they did before the conflict, how they were recruited, what specific fighting roles they undertook and what they experienced physically, socio-economically and psychologically during armed conflict.

It is also opined that the enablement of youth as an active agent in peacebuilding cannot be considered without taking into account the challenges they tend to face due to the armed conflict, such as the loss of education, lack of employable skills and the destruction of a stable family environment. The wider socio-economic needs of youth are often ignored in post-conflict contexts, as they are not seen as a 'vulnerable' group. Therefore, it is important to provide them with training opportunities to take an active part in peacebuilding. With their youthful energy and capabilities and the ability of adaptation to new technological trends, for example, youth can act as mediators, community mobilisers, humanitarian
workers and peace brokers.

WANEP instituted the Active Non-Violence and Peace Education Programme to institutionalize non-violence and peace education in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Peace Education is a pedagogical approach aimed at promoting a culture of peaceful coexistence and preventing the incidence of conflict situations with active responsibility. Since the idea of Peace Education came into existence, its role has continuously increased and acknowledged as an essential component in peace to tackle all the challenges of conflict that may arise. Through the programme, educational institutions are triggered to set up in-school programmes and mechanisms to impart active non-violence and peace education skills amongst children and youth. It also promotes the mainstreaming of active non-violence and peace education into curricular and non-curricular programmes of primary, secondary and tertiary institutions while triggering them to carry out peacebuilding activities that promote peaceful coexistence within their host communities.

The program, which has been implemented in four states Enugu, Delta, Rivers and Ogun, has succeeded in training teachers and students in peace education and establishing peace clubs within selected schools in the identified states. The project evaluation report revealed the use of mediation skills by trained students to resolve disputes among their peers more quickly and effectively. It enhanced their creative thinking and willingness to forgive other students. Being mediators helped the students approach conflict in their own lives and in their communities in a non-violent manner, thus promoting peace within schools, communities and the state at large. Notwithstanding the commendable achievements by the
project, it experienced certain challenges. The reliance on WANEP by the benefitting schools as background support beyond the project lifespan was a huge challenge, as most of the schools could not take ownership of project and incorporate the established clubs into their school curriculum. The authorities of most of the schools acknowledged that the contributions and motivation of former club members were instrumental to the sustainability of the clubs. Tawo (2012) rated WANEP high in terms of the relevance of its work to beneficiaries, partners and donors. The network is providing key monopoly services, particularly in conflict monitoring and early warning that make it a relevant partner that must be sustained. In addition, the network has passed the benchmark of impact having influenced policy and practice change at different levels across the country. The score card of the network on effectiveness is equally high as all the programmes are complimentary to one another and contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the network. She opined however that there was the need for the network to consolidate its impacts, and develop mechanisms that would improve its effectiveness, especially in responding to emerging threats.

WANEP’s Approach was to target primary and post primary students with the goal of equipping them with knowledge and skills of non-violence and conflict resolution, which will influence their attitude to conflict. Thus far, the impact/result of the peace education project in Nigeria includes over 600 school teachers in 35 schools across five states successfully using standard pedagogic tools for peer mediation. This has facilitated an increase in the number of teachers with knowledge and skills on conflict resolution used to intervene in school based disputes amongst teachers and students. The Production of the Peer Mediation Guide and lessons learnt
handbook by WANEP- Nigeria has helped teachers and students in stepping down acquired peace education skills. This has increased the opportunity for improved social relationships amongst students from various backgrounds. Established peace clubs within schools have continued to function and served as avenues to train peer mediators amongst students. This has led to a critical mass of over 5,000 students who have been trained and enrolled as members of the peace clubs in pilot schools. Due to the set down training received by teachers who were not direct beneficiaries of the project, this has expanded it to non-pilot schools in the five project states. This voluntary involvement has fostered the institutionalization of the project in more schools within identified states, deepened appreciation and capacity for positive behavioral change by students in participating schools and expressed commitment to sustainable peace within their schools and communities.

The impact of the project on students emphasizes WANEP’s relevance in creating a unique platform for children and youth to engage in peacebuilding activities in Nigeria. Some of the instituted peace clubs have been able to develop their own constitution and structures, while others have developed club anthems and magazines to report their activities. In Ogun and Enugu states, feedback reports reveal that the level of fighting and bullying has reduced amongst students in pilot schools. Due to the commitment of the principal stakeholders in the educational sector in Ogun State, such as the State Ministry of Education, State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), Teaching Service Commission, etc. a road map has been developed for mainstreaming peace education into primary and secondary school curriculum in the states.

In all, the receptiveness of school authorities, state
governments and key educational institutions to the peace education projects is a clear indication of their willingness to work with WANEPNigeria towards the inclusion of peace education in their school curricular.

Reference:


Bandana Rana, Executive Chair, Saathi and member of UN Women Global Civil Society Advisory Group, Nepal
Http://www.peacewomen.org

www.wanepnigeria.org
Chapter Eight

Youth and Peace Building in the Aftermath of Boko Haram: Lessons from *Mufarka* in Kano State

*Nura Ahmad Muhammad*

Introduction

There is a large number of young people in northern Nigeria who are currently out of school and at risk of joining violent extremism in the aftermath of Boko Haram. Several investigations have linked them with the frequent outbreak of social, religious and political violence in the region. In July, 2017, BBC reported that Nigeria had the largest number of children in the world, who were not being educated, with 10.5 million children out of school (BBC, 2017). UNICEF estimated that 60% of Nigerian children not attending school lived in the north of the country (UNICEF 2018).

Kano State, the most populous state in the region, is also one of the states with a high number of out of school youth, particularly almajirai on the streets. The state has also experienced its own share of youth restiveness with a number of violent eruptions. Although not situated in the northeast, it was heavily impacted by the Boko Haram insurgency. On
January 20, 2012, Boko Haram launched a coordinated attack in the city of Kano, targeting police stations and government offices during which more than 185 people lost their lives. The group continued its attacks across the state, killing and injuring many (Sodiq, 2016).

Despite the fact that these unemployed and unemployable youth have served as a recruitment reservoir for insurgency and other violent activities, there have very little efforts in engaging them with a view to turning them away from violence into making them peace builders. They have not been directly involved in most of the peace building activities and instead much attention is focused in the involvement of young people in conflict (see for instance Momoh, 2000; Ya'u, 2000). Moreover while there are efforts to mainstream peace education in school, including the production of training manuals (for instance, WANEP, 2011, 2012), there are very few opportunities for those youth outside the school system to be socialized into peace building activities.

This situation made the Mufarka Youth Development Initiative; a community-based organization in Kano to initiate a project to innovatively and directly engage with excluded groups who are the major actors in violent and conflict situation. Although the youths are often seen as the source of instability, they can be empowered and given opportunities to show that they can be a leading force in promoting peace and good governance. Considering the conflict situation, Mufarka adopted the multi-stakeholders approach in delivering the project by reaching out to state institutions, political leaders, security agencies, religious organizations, traditional rulers, almajiri schools and youth organizations in order to generate support and buy in of the project. The Mufarka Youth Development Initiative is a community-focused organization,
working in partnership with a wide range of diverse organizations to increase the integrations of young people within the community through volunteering and youth-led projects. The organization places great emphasis on youth empowerment, educational development and peace building. The tools we use include research, sensitization and advocacy, capacity building training, town hall meetings, publications, media programme and outreach.

The main objectives of the organization include:

i. To encourage and prepare young people to be contributing members of their communities.

ii. To promote unity, tolerance, peace and harmony among young people in particular and society in general.

iii. To organize and conduct public enlightenment on matters related to education, health and leadership at the grassroots level.

About the Project
The project titled “Zaman Lafiya Don Kowa” (Peaceful co-existence for all), was a partnership between the Mufarka Youth Development Initiative and the Embassy of the United States of America. It was a one-year project (November, 2016 to November 2017) that worked with stakeholders, such as the Kano State Government, six metropolitan LGAs of Kano State, security agencies, traditional rulers, religions leaders, Almajiri schools and youth organizations. It was designed on the basis of three fundamental objectives:

1. To raise the awareness of young people about the importance of peace in their communities.

2. To introduce the participants to various peace building
tools in their locality.

(3) To provide training opportunities for the target audience on job creation, community development, basic literacy and peace building.

The project focused on six metropolitan local governments of the state. These are Dala, Fagge, Gwale, Kano Municipal, Nasarawa and Tarauni. They were selected partly because they have the highest concentration of youth out of school, have a history of youth violence and are also areas where income inequalities are more visible and more pronounced.

**Project Implementation**

The project was implemented sequentially as follows:

1. Networking visits and stakeholders meeting in six LGAs of Kano metropolitan. From November, 2016 December, 2016, Mufarka organized meetings in each of the project LGAs to introduce the project to dialogue with the relevant stakeholders about the implementation of the project and the role they are expected to play in it.

2. In January 2016, Mufarka conducted advocacy visits to some state institutions relevant in the project to advocate to them inclusion of young people in their activities as well as to respond to their political, social and economic needs. These institutions included National Orientation Agency, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Planning and Budget, Directorate of Youth Development and Kano State Hisbah Board.

3. With support from the project stakeholders, Mufarka selected 40 young people in each LGA
as the target audience of the project. The selected young people included Almajiri youth, out-of-school youth and leaders of youth organizations. These young people who were between 18 to 35 were selected on the basis of the following criteria:

Category 1 - Young people from the following special groups; out of school youth, almajiri youth and People With Disability (PWDs)

Category 2  Leaders of youth organizations and community-based organizations

4. Having successfully done the selection of the target audience, Mufarka conducted a two-day training for the selected participants as peace promoters. The training, which took place at the headquarters of each LGA, covered topics such as conflict prevention, community mobilization, advocacy and resource mobilization. This training introduced the participants to various peace building tools in the community as well as the strategies for stakeholders' engagement.

5. After the training, the peace promoters embarked on stakeholders' engagement in their respective LGAs through advocacy, community mobilization and outreach. The project staff of Mufarka supported the peace promoters in their activities during this stage of the project. This engagement provided a platform for the peace promoters to collaborate with community stakeholders in the peace campaign.

6. Having reached many stakeholders during their advocacy and community mobilization, the peace promoters with support from Mufarka
organized town hall meetings in their respective LGAs to bring together all the stakeholders so far reached during the advocacy and discuss issues related to peace building and youth empowerment. The town hall meeting therefore offered the peace promoters the opportunity to share some of their success stories in the peace campaign and further to present their plans of activities.

The town hall meetings in all the six LGAs were well attended by various stakeholders, including the policy makers, security agencies, traditional rulers, religions leaders and youth organizations. This was done from July August, 2017. At least, 1,200 people took part in the various town hall meetings held across the six local governments. From August October, 2017, Mufarka staff continued with mentoring peace promoters and radio programmes to share their experiences with members of the public. This was meant to extend the reach of the project and motivate other young people to either join the peace promoters or replicate aspects of the project in their communities. Mufarka staff and some peace promoters were featured in some radio programmes at Express Radio, Pyramid Radio and Aminci Radio.

1. Stakeholders meeting and lesson sharing of the project impact were the next activity under the project. It was a one-day meeting with government representatives, security agencies, traditional rules, religions leaders, media organizations, civil society organizations, youth groups and Almajiri head teachers. The meeting provided the opportunity to the peace promoters to share some of their success stories to the stakeholders in attendance.
Therefore, having heard the remarkable achievements of the peace promoters, the invited guests realized the importance of young people in peace building and emphasized on the sustainability of the campaign. The meeting provided the opportunity for Mufarka and the Peace Promoters to network and discuss areas of collaboration with the stakeholders in attendance. The two Special Assistants to the Executive Governor of Kano State on Youth Development and Primary Education respectively who attended the meeting pledged to work with Mufarka in supporting the activities of Peace Promoters.

Mufarka conducted visits to assess the coverage and quality of the project activities. The visits enabled the organization to compile data on the activities conducted and major behavior changes with our target audience. The project staff have been involved in monitoring the trained peace promoters as well as supporting them to ensure that their activities are conducted in an appropriate manner. Internal evaluation has been conducted on an on-going basis with a system of follow up to measure behavioral change, policy change and public awareness.

**Engagements by the Peace Promoters**

Mufarka has planned a continuous mentoring exercise of the trained peace promoters and keep them engaged in other activities. It has been following the activities of peace promoters. Below are some engagements that the peace promoters conducted in their respective LGAs:

**Gwale Local Government Area**

In Gwale LGA, the peace promoters conducted various advocacy visits to traditional rulers, security agencies,
community-based organizations and religious leaders. All the stakeholders visited expressed their willingness to work with the peace promoters. Gwale peace promoters have a strong partnership with the Department of National Orientation Agency in the Local Government. The peace promoters organized sensitizations for young people on drug abuse. They visited and donated food-stuff to Dorayi Rehabilitation Center in the Local Government.

**Fagge Local Government Area**

Fagge is a cosmopolitan area with diverse ethnic and religious groups. The composition of the peace promoters in the Local Government include young people from different ethnic groups and religions. The peace promoters in Fagge organized a one-day sensitization programme on religious tolerance. This resulted in the establishing a Fagge Unity Forum to continue with the sensitization on religious tolerance from time to time. The team of peace promoters, therefore, visited Zawiyar Khalifa Haruna Rasheed in Fagge D. It is a big Almajiri School with more than 500 youth and children. The school incorporated teaching civic education and basic literacy in their system. They have been supported with teachers and teaching materials by the Fagge Local Education Authority. Presently, some Almajiri head teachers are trying to replicate the system in their schools.

**Dala Local Government Area**

Dala peace promoters have been working with people with disabilities (PWDs). They organized Ramadhan break for them. During the month, PWDs called on the peace promoters to advocate for their welfare to the Local Government and State Government, respectively. Dala peace promoters partnered with the Association of Fashion Designers and
Tailoring Services in the LGA. The association pledged to train some Almajiri youth on tailoring services.

**Kano Municipal Council**
The campaign for peace in Kano Municipal has been groundbreaking. On 30\textsuperscript{th} April, 2017 the team of peace promoters visited the Member Representing Kano Municipal Constituency in the Kano State House of Assembly and had a quite engaging session with him. The Hon. Member commended the team of peace promoters for their initiative and accepted to partner with them in all their activities. The peace promoters, therefore, visited all the security agencies in the Local Government, including the Kwalli Police Division and Hisbah Office, Nigerian Security and Civil Defense Corps, etc. Moreover, Kano Municipal extended the campaign to some Islamiyya Schools in the Local Government.

**Nassarawa Local Government Area**
Nassarawa is a heterogeneous society and the team of peace promoters used this opportunity to organize Ramadhan break that was attended by both Muslims and Christians. One of the Pastors during the Iftar drew attention to the fact that it was the first time he attended such kind of event organized by Muslims. He said by inviting him to attend the Ramadhan break, Muslims had extended the hands of friendship to him and all Christians in the Nasarawa LGA.

**Tarauni LGA**
Tarauni peace promoters are now part of the Tarauni Local Government Empowerment Scheme. The chairman of Tarauni peace promoters is now part of the Local Government empowerment committee. Recently, five peace promoters were trained on fish farming by the Local Government. The
peace promoters also sensitized Almajiri youth on personal and environmental hygiene. Some of these youth are part of the empowerment scheme.

**Project Achievements**

**Some of the achievements of the project include:**

2. Peace promoters' forums were formed in each of the six LGAs and meet periodically to discuss issues related to peace building in their communities. They drafted work plan for their activities.

3. The peace promoters were introduced to some empowerment programmes both at state and national levels such as N-Power, National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and state and local government empowerment programmes. The programme provided a platform for young people, including Almajiri youth and people with disabilities to collaborate with community stakeholders on issues affecting them and their community.

4. The peace promoters from the six LGAs are currently engaged by various civil society organizations in Kano to participate in their activities. This has helped in deepening their understanding on matters related to peace building, empowerment, democracy, environmental sustainability and educational development.

5. Mufarka is currently working with some Almajiri schools in Kano to reform the Almajiri System to one that incorporates peace and civic education and personal hygiene as well as basic literacy and numeracy skills. As a result of the engagement, Mufarka has also opened a literacy center for the youth
in Kano Municipal. The center is registered with the Kano State Agency for Mass Education.

**Challenges**

On reflection, the following were the key challenges experienced:

1. Most of the peace promoters are lacking skills on documentation and organizational management. Mufarka is now mentoring them on event planning, such as meetings, advocacy visits, community mobilization and knowledge management.

2. Lack of self-esteem from peace promoters as a result of the social exclusion of young people more particularly Almajiri youth and out-of-school youth in public activities. During a stakeholder meeting, one of the Almajiri head teachers pointed out that it was his first experience of attending meeting with government officials. Mufarka is presently working towards introducing them to many aspects of public participations in policy making, more particularly on education, empowerment and environmental sustainability.

3. Expectation of money compensation, such as transport money or meals, is a hindrance for the replication of the effort without donor funding. The challenge here is to change the mindset of people from perceived development work, as something has to be financed by development partners to one that is rooted in the commitment of people to improve their conditions.

**Conclusion and Recommendation**

*Mufarka* is a community-based organization working with some partners, including governments, nongovernmental
organizations, development partners and philanthropists some of whom have offered tremendous support in the implementation of the project. Having secured a grant from Embassy of the United States of America, we become financially capable to undertake the project in six LGAs of Kano Metropolitan. Previously, Mufarka in partnership with Center for Information Technology and Development (CITAD) had conducted a successful peace building campaign in Kano Municipal. It works with various stakeholders for the successful operation of the project. Both Mufarka staff and the peace promoters at the LGA level have different engagements with policy makers, security officials, traditional rulers, religious leaders and youth organizations as well as Almajiri schools and their head teachers. The project has enhanced the capacity of Mufarka in peace building activities

The strategies used in the campaign introduced our target audience to the best practices of local peace building at the grassroots level. The approaches used addressed the root cause of the potential causes of violence in the society. Therefore, all the project stakeholders recognized the importance of young people in peace campaign. We learned that youth empowerment and peace building are the two sides of the same coin. Without the former, the latter will be contradictions in terms. Similarly, any peace building attempt that does not take into account aspects of livelihood will be very short-lived. Peace through entrepreneurship offers long lasting solution and sustainability. Peaceful co-existence is key to good governance and sustainable development. As such, concerted efforts must be made toward achieving sustainable peace in our various communities. Without peace, there will be no progress and when there is lack of progress, development is retarded and the human society is subjected to
untold suffering and hardship. The project therefore recommends that:

We must endeavor to explore all the ingredients that build, sustain and consolidate peaceful co-existence and in doing this young people should be engaged fully to ensure sustainable peace building. Governments at all levels must create job opportunities to reduce youth unemployment and restiveness, as unemployed youths are being used to perpetrate violence and are at risk of joining violent extremism. Young people should build the culture of peace among them by using innovative strategies and always say no to those who use them to cause violence. Violence is always evil and destructive. It is the responsibility of all patriotic Nigerians to work collectively toward curbing the plague of insurgency, violent agitations and hate speech threatening the peace and corporate existence of the country.

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Introduction

Violent extremism is a global challenge and concern which pose a major threat to peaceful democratic societies. It is a fact that violent extremism, thrives particularly where state authority is weak and increases fragility, weakens communities, and fuels forced displacement. Violent extremism is a direct assault on the United Nations (UN) Charter and is one of the most serious threats to UN efforts to maintain global peace and security, promote sustainable development, protect human rights and deliver humanitarian assistance. The appeal of violent extremism is growing around the world. Now, no country on Earth is untouched by one form of extremism, including developed countries. Over the past decade, Africa has been plagued with terrorism, violence and extremism and witnessed an exponential increase in the number of fatalities arising out of atrocities by extremist groups. USAID defines violent extremism as “advocating, engaging in, preparing, or
otherwise supporting ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic, or political objectives” (USAID, 2011, p. 2).

The Jama'atu Ahlusssunnah Lidda'awatiwal-Jihad (hereafter referred as Boko Haram) represents a particularly violent form of extremism, which has been a direct threat to the sovereignty of Nigeria and the human security of Nigerians. Although not well documented, assessed or widely known, the Boko Haram crisis is anything but recent. The crisis spans across the Lake Chad (Cameroon, Chad and Niger), creating waves of refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons. Since 2009, attacks by Boko Haram extremists as well as the counter-terrorism measures by the government of Nigeria has not only dislocated social and economic activities in North East Nigeria but had led to the death of thousands of innocent people and the abduction of several thousand including more than 200 schoolgirls from Chibok in April 2014 and 110 schoolgirls in Dapchi in February 2018 as well as widespread displacement, forcing millions of others to flee their homes, acute food and nutrition insecurity, violations of international humanitarian and human rights laws and a growing humanitarian crisis and slowed the economy (IA: Mission Report, 2016, p.1).

New security thinking led to violent extremism becoming a topical issue for governments and the world at large. The rise of violent extremism is a global problem and affects countries in both the Global North and the South. In response to extremist violence, governments have taken action to counter violent extremist groups often through hard power approach, such as military force and physical coercion. However, this approach only produces immediate success by tackling the
symptoms of the problem rather than addressing the root cause of violent extremism. Also, it cannot establish strategic long term and sustainable solutions and often exacerbate the problem by adding to the feeling of exclusion and fails to engage key allies, such as youth in countering violent extremism (CVE) and building resilience against extremism (Global Youth Forum, 2015).

In recent years, the role of young people in CVE has gained prominence among policymakers and practitioners when the international community shifted its approaches from purely security focused responses to the recognition that prevention should play a stronger role in the long-term perspective. The U.N. Security Council resolution focused governments on the task. In December 2015, the United Nations Security Council (UNSCR) unanimously adopted the ground-breaking and historic resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS). UNSCR 2250 (2015), for the first time, recognized the important, constructive and positive contributions of youth in the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. Resolution 2250 urges Member States to increase inclusive representation of young people in institutions and mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflict and for countering violent extremism and calls for an increase in political, financial, technical and logistical support the participation of youth in peace efforts and take account of their needs. That effort has seen added attention, as exemplified by the United Nations Plan of Action on Preventing Violent Extremism, which was presented by the Secretary-General in January 2016, which calls on Member States to develop national prevention plans. In this context, youth were given a central role.
Against this background, this chapter examines the drivers of violent extremism and analyzes the role of young people in CVE and promoting peace in North East Nigeria. The chapter enumerates some of the concrete initiatives by young people that are aimed at countering violent extremism in North East Nigeria. This, in turn, will inform policy makers and relevant stakeholders of key strategic and programming considerations for supporting young people’s participation in peacebuilding in line with the UNSCR 2250 in order to enhance the quality and sustainability of peacebuilding interventions.

2. Context: Youth and Peacebuilding

Violent extremism is concentrated heavily in countries, such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Nigeria, Kenya and others with large youth populations. At 1.8 billion, the current generation of young people aged 10-24 years old is the largest ever known. Young people often comprise the majority in countries marked by armed conflict or unrest (European Youth Forum, 2017). More than 700 million young people live in fragile and conflict-affected settings. Unfortunately they become victims of conflicts of which they are neither the cause nor the initiator. Over the past decade, the involvement of some young people, particularly young men, but also increasingly young women in violence and extremist groups, has led some to paint youth generally as a threat to global peace, security and stability. Thus, young people are often perceived as the main perpetrators of political violence, social unrest and violent extremism. However, this narrative fails to capture the fact that most young people are part of the solution. They represent promise and potential, not peril and problems. This framing is a harmful reduction of the role young people play in preventing violence and transforming conflicts and critically fails to note young people's vast and largely untapped capacity...
for peace building (Amman Declaration, 2016). Contrary to popular representations, majority of youth are not violent and account for the most active population. A growing body of research shows that youth who participate actively in violence are an extremely small minority, while the majority despite the injustices, deprivations and abuse they confront daily, particularly in conflict contexts, are not violent and do not participate in violence. From countering violent extremism to peace-building and from strengthening human rights to tackling inequality, it is often young people who pave the way with their innovative ideas and modern approaches. In reality, the role of young people in relation to building peace is poorly understood and young women and men have a critical role in promoting and maintaining international peace and security. While popular culture and public narratives depict young men mainly as perpetrators of violence and young women mainly as victims, young people and youth-led organizations around North East Nigeria are working to build peace and prevent violent extremism and are not turning to violence.

3. Research Methodology
This chapter used a combination of desk study to review the existing literature on the root causes of violent extremism and qualitative methods to obtain empirical data through open-ended in-depth key informant interviews (KII) on the role of young people in countering violent extremism and promoting peace in North East Nigeria. KII were audio-recorded to enable accurate capture of the data. Audio files were transcribed and then the researchers undertook a close reading of the data to independently identify salient themes. For the literature review, relevant materials utilized include books, journal articles, organizational reports, online
publications, documentation from religious and research organizations and conference/events papers. In addition, personal observation and experience of the researcher as a fellow of the North East Intellectual Entrepreneurial Fellowship (NEIEF) were used to support some of the findings of the study. The researcher ensured that the voices of women, girls, youth and other relevant voices in the communities were heard.

Youths have been radicalized into accepting violent and extremist groups as a result of the push and pull factors, which are the drivers of radicalization. Push factors are socioeconomic, political, and cultural in nature. They are those characteristics of the societal environment that are alleged to push vulnerable individuals onto the path of violent extremism. These include high levels of social marginalization and fragmentation; poorly governed or ungoverned areas; government repression and human rights violations; endemic corruption and elite impunity; poverty, unemployment and illiteracy and cultural threat perceptions (USAID, 2011, p. 3). Pull factors on the other hand, are the appeal of a particular leader, a self-appointed religious leader or inspirational figure or the material, emotional or spiritual benefits which affiliation with a group may confer. Pull factors that have a direct influence on individual level radicalization and recruitment include access to material resources, social status and respect from peers; a sense of belonging, adventure and self-esteem or personal empowerment that individuals and groups that have long viewed themselves as victimized and marginalized can derive from the feeling that they are making history and the prospect of achieving glory and fame (USAID, 2011, p. 4). These include the group’s ideology (e.g.: emphasis
on changing one's condition through violence rather than “apathetic” and “passive” democratic means), strong bonds of brotherhood and a sense of belonging, reputation building, prospect of fame or glory and other socialization benefits.

However, pull factors may create grievances and opportunities for violence; but the grievances and opportunities in question may not actually lead to violence in the absence of political entrepreneurs, ideologues and/or organizations that can frame and channel the relevant grievances in violent directions and that can make the most of the opportunities for violence with which a particular setting presents them (Deneux& Carter, 2009, p. 3). Around the world, young people are disproportionately affected by limited or inadequate access to social and economic opportunities, employment opportunities and a lack of educational empowerment, which contributed to economic isolation and discrimination, political disillusionment and social unrest. This hinders social cohesion and the ability for societies to engage in peace processes, as it limits the capacity to organize and act. Societies will not enjoy peace without economic development and will not enjoy economic development without peace (Amman Declaration, 2016).

According to Johan Galtung the factors that prevent individuals from reaching their full potential, such as economic deprivation, class discrimination and societal injustice and individual and group grievances, such as poverty, unemployment and illiteracy, make youth vulnerable to radicalization and extremist groups capitalize on that to find support and recruits for terrorist violence. In fact, the logic of the structural violence paradigm, as advocated by Galtung, underscores how socio-cultural systems, political structures
and state institutions act as the indirect instigators of violence (Galtung, 1979). The relevance of this can also be understood in terms of the societal challenges that are increasingly being conceptualized within the framework of human security. This is the central argument of Ted Robert Gurr's (1970) relative deprivation thesis where he stated that: “The greater the discrepancy, however marginal between what is sought and what seems attainable, the greater will be the chances that anger and violence will result”.

In North East Nigeria, widespread corruption is conducive to recruitment and radicalization by extremist groups. Thus, Mohammed Yusuf, the founder of Boko Haram, for example, successfully attracted followers from unemployed and marginalized youth by speaking out against oppression by the Nigerian police and the endemic political corruption and elite impunity there. Machina (2016) argued that poverty, unemployment and bad governance are not the only causes of the emergence and motivations of the Boko Haram violent extremism but also corrupted values, ignorance and religious fanatism. Boko Haram provided learning to new recruits on the basis of selective teaching of the Qur'an (Karim, 2014). Onuoha (2014) added that illiteracy and weak family structures also contribute in making young people vulnerable to radicalization. Parents due to inability to communicate, bond or provide a safe environment, education and upbringing creates the impression of lack of care and fosters rebellion in youths. This leads some to join or be bullied into extremist groups. Family members are also targets of recruitment by other members, who are already involved with extremist groups. Loss of a family member during military operations can and have led youth to join extremist groups for vengeance over the death of a loved one.
5. The Role of Youth in CVE and Promoting Peace in North East Nigeria

More than ever before, the response to violent extremism needs meaningful youth participation at all levels to effectively address the drivers of violent extremism and promote peace. Since violent extremist groups are recruiting young people, to effectively overcome this threat, it has become pertinent to reach out to the same young people and rally them to make sure that they are part of the solution and not the victims of circumstances. Against this background, the North East Regional Initiative (NERI) and the USAID Office of Transition Initiatives (NERI/USAIDOTI) set up the North East Intellectual Entrepreneurship Fellowship (NEIEF) as part of its CVE programme in North East Nigeria. NEIEF is a flagship youth-led program driving enriched engagement for the next generation of Nigerians addressing the challenges of violent extremism in North East Nigeria. The fellows represent a diversity of cultures, ethnicity and religious plurality submerged in a healthy mix of active young Nigerians, who are eager to pilot a new dawn in CVE in North East Nigeria. For ten months, NEIEF fellows were engaged in book clubs, training and mentoring sessions on the relevant subject matters and basic steps of a social media campaign and blogs to create messages for various social media platforms to counter and amplify alternatives to it.

NEIEF Fellows work across communities and religious groups to foster trust, dialogue and mutual understanding, building social cohesion and decreasing marginalization and injustice. They actively communicate stories and ideas that counter extremist narratives and instead amplify new stories about peace and positive role models, fostering discussion about a prosperous future without violence for the North East,
Nigeria and the world. This, in turn, educates young people on the dangers of violent extremism and radicalization on how to safeguard themselves from falling into violent extremism and becoming radicalized. In addition, the NEIEF programme assists young people to understand and articulate the intellectual arguments for plural democracy and the appropriate role of religion in society. Because it is realized that using force to advance one's individual opinions is not acceptable, religiously motivated violence is particularly dangerous. Religion should be a voluntary aspect of civil society if the country is to remain pluralist, tolerant and open to people of diverse backgrounds and ideologies. Pluralism and tolerance create economic prosperity for the Nigerian society and finally, young people's engagement increases peaceful cohabitation.

Through my experience as a fellow and interviews with other fellows in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states, I saw how young people have challenged extremist narratives through online engagements using the hashtag #NotAnotherNigerian on (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Medium blog). The #NotAnotherNigerian campaign was born out of a need for Nigerians to empathise with people from the north east who face destruction and displacement as a result of violent extremism. The hashtag advocates for an end to extremist attacks against Nigerians and in Nigeria. It aims to unite people in saying Never Again should we go through such pain as a people. In the following sections, I will share my testimonies and that of other fellows and explain how we worked to address violence extremism and educate for peace.

The Story of Ibrahim Mohammed Machina
I was a fellow from Yobe State. As violent extremist groups are
recruiting young people and to effectively overcome this threat, it has become pertinent to reach out to the same young people and rally them be part of the solution and not the victims of circumstance. I work in Yobe, one of the epicentres of the *Boko Haram* violent extremism. I focus on challenging extremist narratives and ideas through online engagements and social media campaigns using social media as medium for developing and amplifying alternative narratives that promote the culture of peace, unity and democratic values, support for gender equality and social inclusion and promote dialogue and religious tolerance. I was able to inspire and motivate young people online through social media. This was achieved through practical evidence-based online campaigns and advocacy. Furthermore, one of my responsibilities as a NEIEF fellow is to contribute to the establishment of a network of young people and relevant stakeholders committed to countering violent extremism in North East Nigeria. This includes reaching out effectively to communicate NEIEF objectives and encouraging young people to be part of the #NotAnotherNigerian campaign.

**The Story of Amina Garuba Ahmed**
She was a fellow representing Benue State. She organised security awareness and capacity building activities to counter violent extremism and empowered youth to promote peace and security. This was done through the Peace and Security Peer Education Programme (PS-PEP) initiated by her non-governmental organization (NGO), Ikra Foundation for Women and Youth Development. This programme was initiated to combat *Boko Haram* violent extremism by engaging youths who were the most vulnerable to recruitment for extremist violence in activities that shaped youth perception of conflict and guide them to explore alternatives to
violence as means to effective conflict resolution; educate youth on ways to collaborate with security agencies to positively contribute to the peace and security; educate youth on security and safety tips and sensitize them on the ways to protect themselves from security threats and recruitment for extremism and establish youth-to-youth connections and peer security education groups geared towards reducing distrust and fostering cooperation with security agencies.

In addition, during her NEIEF experience, the PS-PEP training manual was completed. 150 peer educators' peace and security clubs were established in 23 schools in Bauchi State. The PS-PEP was executed in partnership with the Bauchi State office of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) and the Bauchi State Ministry of Education. This enabled the training of youth with the mandate to create security consciousness and promote peace amongst school-age children and young persons. Peace and security clubs were introduced in all the schools in Bauchi. The clubs offer mentoring-to-be peace ambassadors imparting knowledge on civic responsibilities and nation building to participants as per the planned modules (Safety and Security, Leadership Development and Conflict Prevention/Resolution) and encourage students to express their ideas through music, mimes, drama, choreography, essay, debate, art and design.

**Other Testimonies**

Other fellows of the NEIEF programme also share similar stories of countering violent extremism and transformation. Habu Kale Tijjani, for example, narrated that the NEIEF fellowship has equipped him with knowledge, skills and confidence in preventing/countering violent extremist ideas and ideology. He utilized his capacity as youth leader among his
peers to constitute a committee to find a way to engage vulnerable young people in sporting and cultural activities and blending these activities with the social media campaign to counter and prevent violent extremism. He also narrated that in his community in Borno state, “people were more sensitized on violent extremism and radicalization of young people, de-radicalization and reintegration of ex-combatants and the promotion of tolerance between IDPs and host communities”. Suzanne Myada, a fellow from Adamawa State, added: “I have been creating awareness to members of my community because most of them were uneducated on the methods of radicalization, impact of violent extremism, and importance of tolerance in peacebuilding. Through the fellowship, I have been able to identify and raise awareness about some of the root causes and drivers of violent extremism in order to be tackled by government and relevant stakeholders. Chabiyada Eli also a fellow from Adamawa State explains: “I was more on a personal engagement with young people in my community to create consciousness and resilience in them to be brother’s keeper in terms of coming together to make peace reign irrespective of their religion or ethnic backgrounds. In addition, it has helped me in shaping the mindset of young people to use social media to prevent and counter violent extremism. The social media campaign has been very effective in the sense that I was able to influence a lot of young people in this direction”. For example, one group saw my work in this direction and decided to incorporate my initiative to help drive their cause. It is called Change Initiative Network (CIN). CIN is an initiative that creates awareness in the youth to come out and exercise their franchise as a means towards electing creatable leaders for positive social change. We also imbibe in the youth the spirit of self-reliance economic wise. In the same vein, Dr Mercy Wakawa from
Borno State was engaged in an Education Crisis Response (ECR) programme, which included gender-based violence, social inclusion and non-formal education multi-grade teaching sub-programmes for victims of insurgency, rape, sexual and all forms of violence in there.

6. How Can NEIEF Fellows Make UNSCR 2250 a Reality in North East Nigeria?

Resolution 2250 (2015) is a historical document not only because it is the first resolution on youth, peace and security, but also because:

I. It supports a new narrative: Youth are often portrayed either as victims or perpetrators of violence. However, the resolution recognizes that they are also engaged in building peace. It's an important step to change the negative perceptions and prejudices people hold against youth.

II. It provides recognition and legitimacy: It is not enough to build another perception of youth as peace builders. It is also crucial to recognize that a great part of young men and women are working at grassroots, local, national, regional and global levels towards sustainable peace. They deserve a seat at the negotiation table.

III. It promotes youth representation and participation: The resolution urges member states to take the needs and perspectives of youth from a variety of backgrounds into consideration, whilst demanding their participation at all levels in peace processes.

UNSCR 2250 (2015) affirms the important role of the youth in the prevention and resolution of conflict and stresses the
importance of engaging them as partners and leaders in peace building. It also urges Member States to increase the active and inclusive representation of youth in decision-making at all levels, as well as in institutions, and the mechanisms to prevent and resolve conflict and counter violent extremism. Since the adoption of Security Council Resolution 2250 in 2015, there is a growing recognition that, as agents of change, young people are critical influencers in conflict prevention and for sustaining peace. UNSCR 2250 is very crucial to countering violent and peace building, but it only has an impact if it is implemented at the local and national levels around the world. Implementing Resolution 2250 is a responsibility which is shared between all elements of society, but to begin implementing it young people and youth-led organizations need to take the initiative. In the spirit of collaboration embodied by Resolution 2250, youth and youth-led organizations in North East Nigeria working to counter/prevent violent extremism and build peace must partner and collaborate with relevant stakeholders to make resolution 2050 a reality. These alliances need to be cross-sectorial and intergenerational and must bring together youth and non-youth actors from different parts of the North East, so that they can all push in the same direction for a better and more peaceful future in Nigeria. This landmark Resolution recognizes for the first time the positive role of youth in preventing violence as active agents in peace building. This Resolution has identified five (5) pillars of action. They are:

I. Partnership: It was a global partnership that truly enabled 2250 to come to life: UN agencies, working in partnership with civil society organizations (CSOs), youth-led organizations, donors and scholars. Such partnerships between youth and non-youth, governmental and non-governmental actors
should be seen as a key principle of implementing Resolution 2250.

**II. Collaboration:** A culture of collaboration between UN, CSOs and youth-led organizations is something else that should be sparked locally. Additionally, having relevant government Ministries (including defense, education, youth and sports, Justice, women and social affairs and economy) also involved in the process is critical beyond just the Ministry of Youth.

**III. The Role of youth:** Through partnerships and collaboration, there may be a shift in the way institutions and individuals engage, invest and partner with youth away from seeing them simply as beneficiaries or troublemakers to seeing them as partners and leaders to address peace and security issues in a country. So at times, some efforts can be youth-led and at times the efforts can be those of youth as partners.

**IV. Sustainability:** It would be great for the partners collaboratively to develop a roadmap for the next 12-24 months that also include some measurable benchmarks to celebrate the accomplishments along the way.

**Conclusion**
My experience as an NEIEF fellow and of those I interviewed showed us how critical it is to counter the narratives that drive violent extremism in the effort to prevent and counter all the forms of violence that emerge from it. While popular culture and public narratives depict young men mainly as perpetrators of violence and young women mainly as victims; young people and youth-led organisations around North East
Nigeria are working to build peace and prevent violent extremism they are not turning to violence. They are highly engaged in transforming conflict, countering violence and building peace. The analysis of my story and those I interviewed shows the importance of investing in young people to countering violent extremism and support peacebuilding. This chapter argues that the solution to violent extremism and other threats to the safety and stability of the North East region can be found in working with young people and tapping into their talents and potentials to reform and rebuild their communities. This chapter also addresses the existing assumptions and theories of change regarding youth and peacebuilding by portraying young people as important drivers and agents of change. They demonstrate openness to change and to learn. They tend to be more future-oriented, more idealistic and innovative and more willing to take risks by using social media to open discussions on issues ranging from countering violent extremism to gender equality and social inclusion. NEIEF fellows developed and amplified alternative and constructive narratives highlighting real stories of young people addressing grievances in collaborative and nonviolent ways. Yet, their efforts remain largely invisible, unrecognized and even undermined due to lack of adequate participatory and inclusive mechanisms and opportunities to partner with decision-makers. This is why it is vital that governments and relevant stakeholders recognize their special contributions and engage them as partners.

Recommendations
For a policy framework supporting youth participation in peace building governments and relevant stakeholders must take urgent measures to support young people as actors in preventing and transforming conflict, countering violent
extremism and building peace. Hence, this chapter recommends:

I. Government at all levels and relevant stakeholders must support young people's socio-economic empowerment to address the root causes of violent extremism by investing heavily in human development to eradicate societal vices, such as injustice, poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and economic inequality. Addressing the conditions that make it possible for extremists to recruit young people in North East Nigeria can significantly diminish their strength and ultimately eliminate it altogether.

II. Young people should be educated in a way that they can differentiate knowledge and propaganda, so that they strike the right balance between the freedom of expression and the danger to feed violent extremist tendencies and hate speeches.

III. To weaken the extremist groups' abilities to radicalize and recruit young men, the Nigerian government at all levels, perhaps in collaboration with religious leaders, should monitor and regulate religious preaching and teaching to avoid the use of hate and dangerous speeches. Given that independent and roaming preachers are key propagators of distorted religious teachings, there is the need to regulate and monitor them.

IV. Government, the private sector and civil society organizations, including faith-based organizations and faith leaders, must recognize and support what young people are already doing in preventing violence and violent extremism. They should build upon their existing capacities, networks and resources in their countries and communities as well as
at the international level.

V. Government at all levels must build effective partnerships between the youth and the greater community (including law enforcement agencies). Building effective partnerships was seen as important in developing resilience to the divisive narratives expounded by extremist groups. Within communities, building effective partnerships also means educating and supporting practitioners inside the communities in addressing issues such as faith, culture and radical political thought.

VI. Government and relevant stakeholders should ensure that efforts to counter violent extremism are gender-sensitive and utilize best practices on engaging women and girls. Government must ensure that young men and women have equal opportunities and access to education and employment and create mechanisms to tackle gender discrimination, prevent gender-based violence and promote and protect the rights of girls in North East Nigeria.

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Introduction

Peace building is a deliberate and formidable effort to restore and sustain peace where conflict, war, riots and violence deny people their rights to life, association, movement, freedom and dignity. In any situation that people find it difficult to enjoy such fundamental human rights as a result of conflict, war or violence, both state and non-state actors must be on call and actively engage to ensure peace and harmony. This effort can only be achieved when certain organizations and a category of people are given priority and their relevance recognized as well. For instance, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and other Development Partners have always been part of success stories about development and peace building, particularly in Nigeria. So also are youth groups that form the supportive pillars of the society. It was reported that the population of youth (aged 15-24) in the world currently stands at 1.2 billion, the largest number to
have ever existed (18 per cent of the world’s population) (United Nations Inter Agency Network on Youth Development, 2016). Moreover, many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa have very high youth populations relative to their total populations (ibid). Thus, the contributions of these segments of the society always consolidate the effort of government to overcome so many challenges, especially security threats.

For several years now, Nigeria as a sovereign country has been experiencing a great security challenge that threatens its unity and national stability, particularly with the emergence of the Boko Haram movement in the north-eastern part of the country. The group, which has a significant number of young individuals as members, became violent in 2009 when it clashed with some security agents in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State. Since then the group has attacked security agencies, government places, mosques, churches and private individuals, who do not subscribe to their idea. More recently, the group took a different tactic of launching their attacks by detonating bombs in public places and using females and children as suicide bombers as well as abducting people. For example, they kidnapped Chibok school girls in 2014. These activities compelled the international community to declare the group as a terrorist organization similar to other groups, such as Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, Al-Shabah in Somalia and several others in different countries.

Over the years, the activities of Boko Haram have claimed several lives and displaced many families in Borno State and other neighboring states in the northeast. In view of the atrocities committed the youth in Maiduguri formed a group popularly known as ‘Yan Gora’ or Civilian Joint Task force (CJTF) in 2013 to complement the effort of the Military Joint
Task Force that was deployed to Borno as part of a counter-insurgency response by the federal government. This youth group, which is a branch of Borno Youth Vigilantes, operated mostly with swords, cutlasses, knives, sticks, axes cudgels, bows and arrows as their weapons. They had the support of both the state government and the official of JTF operating in the state. This gives the CJTF the authority to mount checkpoints in various locations within and outside Maiduguri to facilitate their stop and search operation (Olugbode, 2013; Kawu, 2013; Odomovo, 2014; Adamu, 2016).

However, on the other part of the effort to restore peace and improve lives in Borno State, huge support is being offered by several development agencies and Non-Governmental Organisations undertaking various projects in Maiduguri and other affected. Such organisations include UNICEF, WHO, Action Against Hunger, Medicine Sans Frontier, Mercy Corps and several others operating in different capacities. Some are primarily concerned with humanitarian services that include the distribution of foods and relief materials to internally displaced persons dwelling in the different IDPs camps located across the states, whereas some organisations offer socio-psychotherapy support and vocational training to affected youths to improve their lives and also empower them both socially and psychologically.

It is in this context that the Borno Coalition for Democracy and Progress (BOCODEP) emerged as one of the NGOs operating in Borno State with a capacity to offer support in areas relating to conflict resolution, peace-building, democracy and other relevant development programmes. This organization has been in existence for over two decades and undertaken various projects with support and funding from different development and donor agencies. With the recent situation in Borno state,
the organization is at the forefront of supporting youth in building peace and engendering harmony in most affected communities. BOCODEP kicked off a program to support youth in their effort to secure their communities and build sustainable peace. The platform is recognized as Youth Peace Platform (YPP), an initiative of Conciliation Resources (CR), which has a large network in Nigeria. The program has on its platform vibrant young individuals that are willing and committed to peace-building. Some of these youth are members of CJTF in their various communities. Thus, this paper focuses on the role of Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) and the intervention of BOCODEP in consolidating the efforts of youth to restore peace in Borno State.

The Concepts of Youth and Peace-building

It is worth noting to capture the remarks of United Nations Special Representative to the Secretary-General on Children in Armed Conflict, Olara Otunnu (McIntyre 2003) to lay a foundation regarding the significant role and responsibility of state and non-state actors in harnessing the potentiality and ability of youth in peace building. During a visit in Sierra Leone, the representative, observed that:

The youth...represent a tremendous resource for the future of the country. However, many missed out on education due to the war and suffer from a lack of employment opportunities. How to make them peace-builders, instead of potential spoilers of the newly won peace... is a major challenge. Every effort must be made to harness their potential and to engage them actively and constructively in the reconstruction process, including the speedy adoption and concerted implementation of a national youth policy, as well as
programmes targeting and benefiting young adults.

The African Charter refers youth or young people as every person between the ages of 15 and 35. This is unarguably the stage when a person is considered agile and vulnerable and thus encounter greater challenges. World Youths Report (2013:373) notes that: “during a crucial face of their development, not only are they confronted with the biological and psychological processes that characterized youth and development, but they must also grapple with formidable external pressures such as poverty, disease and violence.”

However, youth are generally regarded as a category of people that have the capability and potential to build-peace or threaten it. In most conflict or violent situations, youth form the substantive population of both perpetrators and victims. On the positive side, the youth are used as trouble-shooters, peaceful demonstrators, security operatives and military personnel to achieve peace, harmony and stable national security. They are also used as drivers to achieve any development programmes. However, on the negative side, they are recruited into illegal armed groups, such as militias, terrorists and radical groups to serve as foot soldiers, combatants and political thugs and most often fall victims of warfare (Kemper, 2005). According to the World Youths Report (2003:371):

Youths are often the targeted group during conflict. Young people’s participation in armed hostilities is facilitated through the trade of small arms and light weapons. The dearth of opportunities in their communities often leads them to gravitate towards violent conflict and acts of terrorism. Many are successfully mobilized through the ideologies of war.
As victims and witnesses, they cannot help but affected by the grim realities surrounding them.

This obviously explains the vulnerability of this category of the population and hence put a demand that every society must have a mechanism put in place to support, nurture and groom them to be part of a struggle for a better society. Article 11 of African Charter has outlined the following ways to enhance and uphold youth participation in every African society:

A. Guarantee the participation of youth in parliament and other decision-making bodies in accordance with the prescribed laws;

b. Facilitate the creation or strengthening of platforms for youth participation in decision-making at local, national, regional, and continental levels of governance;

c. Ensure equal access to young men and young women to participate in decision-making and in fulfilling civic duties;

d. Give priority to policies and programmes including youth advocacy and peer-to-peer programmes for marginalized youth, such as out-of-school and out-of-work youth, to offer them the opportunity and motivation to reintegrate into mainstream society:

e. Provide access to information such that young people become aware of their rights and of opportunities to participate in decision-making and civic life;

f. Institute measures to professionalize youth work and introduce relevant training programmes in higher education and other such training institutions;

g. Provide technical and financial support to build the institutional capacity of youth organizations;

h. Institute policy and programmes of youth voluntarism
at local, national, regional and international levels as an important form of youth participation and as a means of peer-to-peer training.

i. Provide access to information and services that will empower youth to become aware of their rights and responsibilities, j. Include youth representatives as part of delegations to ordinary sessions and other relevant meetings to broaden channels of communication and enhance the discussion of youth related issues.

Similarly, in view of the vulnerability of youth to violence and the increasing prevalence of armed conflicts, which has not been effectively addressed through traditional prevention mechanisms, the international community considered in its peace-building agenda early warning and prevention systems to identify and address risks. However, World Youth Report (2003) noted that the new policies and approaches present major opportunities for progress and thus pointed out that youth are recognized as critical in creating long-term stability, producing effective outcomes within communities and offering protection from future conflicts.

The Formation and Growth of Civilian Joint Task Force in Borno State
The incessant killings, abduction and harassment by Boko Haram members before 2013, particularly in Maiduguri, the state capital of Borno had literally left the city deserted, as hundredth of people fled every day, seeking for refuge in other places. During this peak period of the Boko Haram insurgency, young people indiscriminately became targets of most of the attacks as well victims of raid by security operatives, who were unable to differentiate between Boko Haram members
and sympathizers. At every instance of suspicion, young people were harassed, intimidated and often arrested and detained by the Military without proper investigation. This perhaps is not unrelated to the fact that young people constituted the majority of Boko Haram members then. At the initial stage of the Boko Haram movement, its leader took the advantage of the impressionable minds of these youth to convey to them the extreme ideology which eventually turned them into the violent group.

Agbiboa (2015 cited Onuoha 2014) reported that the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) in their effort to understand why young people join Boko Haram commissioned a study. The results suggested a number of factors that motivated youth among which include ignorance of religious teaching as opposed to violence among youth; widespread unemployment and poverty which make youths vulnerable to radicalization; children with difficult upbringings, combined with widespread illiteracy are more vulnerable to extremist views; and the excesses of the Nigerian security forces, including unlawful killings, dragnet arrests, and intimidation have often fuelled youth radicalization in the region. This range of forces might have been the factors that motivated Mohammed Yusuf, the leader of the sect to take the advantage by providing the disaffected youths with education, basic services and informal sector jobs. Additionally, the leader arranged cheap marriages between members of the sect, who could not afford the expenses of marriage (Mustapha, 2012; Agbiboa, 2015).

However, the fear that characterized that period of the intense Boko Haram activities in Maiduguri made it difficult for people to disclose vital information about Boko Haram activities or even reveal the identity of members who were living covertly
within the communities, for doing that could result to unavoidable killing by the insurgents. On the other hand, military operatives deployed to Maiduguri were in their high spirit to search and arrest the faceless Boko Haram members then, therefore believing that the young people were the first suspects since they refused to cooperate with the security to fish out the Boko Haram elements. This unchallenged trend continued for a very long time until when the youths grew tired of being targeted by both Boko Haram and official JTF and hence realized the need to support the security agencies and as well protect themselves from any attack (Agbiboa, 2015). In an interview with one of the members of the Civilian JTF by Integrated Regional Information Network[IRIN] (2014 cited in Agbiboa 2015:36), the member revealed that:

The army took us as the enemy ... We didn't see them as here to protect us. [If there was a Boko Haram attack] they don't come on time, they arrest whoever they see, or open fire, or burn shops and houses in revenge ... People were pressed to the wall, we needed to stand, to protect ourselves.

Raphael and Agena (2016:477) pointed out the following as the realities that might have prompted the mobilization of youth to form Civilian JTF:

i. The death of innocent citizens at the hands of the military, who, whenever the Boko Haram attacks any part of the state, regards everybody within that vicinity as Boko Haram member since the asymmetric nature of the conflict could not allow identifying who is a terrorist or not.

ii. The need to disabuse the minds of many citizens within the northern part of the country that the group enjoys the support of the people, especially because of the
religious posture of their campaign.

iii. The need to identify the real Boko Haram members and their hideouts and relay same to the military (intelligence and information gathering).

iv. The courage to protect their various communities by working in unison with the military, especially taking cognizance of the increasing number of deaths among the people as a result of the activities of the group

Tracing the beginning of this movement, Raphael (2016) and Al Chukwuma (2017) separately noted that one youth by name Baba Lawan at Hausari Ward in Maiduguri saw an armed Boko Haram member and decided to accost him. It was this courageous act of the young man that attracted other youth around to promptly come out to assist him to apprehend the insurgent. With this realization, the youth mobilized themselves as vigilante groups comprising some 500 young individuals in 2013 to support the effort of the security forces (Agbiboa). Though, they were poorly armed using only sticks, daggers, swords, bows and local rifles and also lacked military training, they became useful in supporting the military by providing links and information on the local terrain where members of the Boko Haram might be hiding (Leach, 2016). These youth far from being lawless mobs, aligned themselves to various military sectors stationed in the state capital and functioned as community-based police forces (Agbiboa, 2015). During the peak of the hunt for Boko Haram, the youth risked their lives, using their local intelligence to fish out lurking Boko Haram members in their various neighborhoods. This dauntless effort of the youth eventually strengthened the civil-military relations in the state (Agbiboa, 2015).

Civilian JTF, which started as a local initiative of youth in
Maiduguri to restore peace, was subsequently extended to other local governments in the state and even other affected neighboring states, such as Adamawa, Gombe, Taraba, Bauchi and Yobe. Bamidele (2016) noted that Baba Lawan Jafar, the then overall chairman of Civilian JTF in the Northeast, reported that there was nothing less than 15,541 registered civilian JTF, ranging from Adamawa (10,000 civilian JTF), Bauchi (1,200 civilian JTF), Borno (1,800 civilian JTF), Gombe (715 civilian JTF), Taraba (1,156 civilian JTF), and Yobe (670 civilian JTF).

With the immense support of the CJTF, Maiduguri, the state capital, which used to be the centre for the insurgent activities, was gradually neutralized and many of the Boko Haram members fled to rural areas to hide (Siollun, 2014; Agbiboa, 2015). In 2014, it was also reported that members of the CJTF killed at least 207 Boko Haram militants who stormed a military barracks and a neighborhood of Maiduguri and repelled several attacks in 2015, 2016 and 2017 especially in places such as Bama and Konduga that are not far from the city (Maiduguri), which until 2015 were controlled by the Boko Haram members (Agbiboa, 2015). Recently, when the Multi-Joint Task Force (MJTF) launched their operation in Sambisa to clear the remnants of Boko Haram, civilian JTF members were actively engaged in the operation and rescued many women and children as accounted by various media channels.

Despite the successes recorded by these youths they suffered great setbacks at different points in time. There were cases where some lost their lives in attacks by the Boko Haram while trying to protect their communities (Bamidele, 2016). The recent tactics of Boko Haram using female suicide bombers also affected a significant number of them, since the suicide bombers usually attacked public places, such as mosques,
churches, local markets and motor stations where Civilian JTF are stationed to secure the places.

However, the contribution of these teeming youth has never gone unrecognized. At the time they youth were making a name all over the country for their dauntless effort to fight Boko Haram and build peace, both government and non-governmental organizations began to regard them as an organisation that has the capacity to bring about peace and hence accord them official respect for their resilience and courage. Agbiboa (2015:37) noted that President Muhammad Buhari described these youth as “new heroes of the nation”. Similarly, the Borno state Governor, Kashim Shettima remarks that:

I have never been as proud of our youth in Borno State as much as I am today. The youth have since 2013 rose in firm defence of the good people of Borno State, and today, they have once again proved to all of us, that they have by playing complementary roles, taken our collective destiny in their hands and we are full of gratitude to them for their sacrifices that cannot be sufficiently rewarded (Information Nigeria, 2015).

Moreover, the activities of the Civilian JTF who started as an ordinary youth organisation apparently touched on the lives of the members of the public. In fact, the youths have contributed greatly towards liberating the public from humiliation and injustice. According to Bamidele (2016:138), one, Hyeladzira Malgwi, expressed gratitude to God and Civilian JTF by saying, “They are god-sent, especially since they're complementing the efforts of soldiers.” Therefore, in order to strengthen the CJTF and as well accord them official recognition, the state government initiates training for them CJTF as a form of orientation course known as 'Borno Youth
Empowerment Scheme (BOYES)'. In a word of the State Governor, Kashim Shettima, BOYES is aimed at ensuring that:

Youth discover or rediscover their potentials, enhance these potentials with necessary skills, indoctrinate them into having a better organized love for their fatherland, make them conscious of what goes within and around them, train them to be conscious of the security of wider civilian population without taking laws into their hands so that they can lawfully help in policing their own communities’

In addition, the state government continued to offer both financial and logistics support to the CJTF in the form of vehicles and other materials, including a monthly stipend, as incentives. The Borno State government is making a giant stride as part of its post-insurgency initiative to put in place a policy that will establish a youth empowerment agency to cater for their needs and welfare in the state including the Civilian JTF. There was also a plan for an agreement between the Borno state government and Nigerian military authorities to recruit and integrate those CJTF members that are qualified to serve in the army.

The Functions of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF)

Being a youth volunteer organization and a non-state security actor, the CJTF has a justifiable limit to certain operations and other activities, considering their unprofessional capacity. Though they are recognized officially as a non-state security outfit, their functions are limited. One of the recommendations by some scholars and activists is that CJTF should be retained but remain a volunteer organization and
not be given any authority to act like other security forces to avoid misuse of power. The Civilian Joint Task Force notwithstanding brings about peace in their various communities in Maiduguri and other affected areas. They offer the following functions:

a. Use local intelligence to track Boko Haram suspects and relay vital information to security forces.
b. Usually mount check-points to carry out stop and search operation within the city and the outskirts.
c. CJTF members support security forces at their sectors and check-points to provide maximum security.
d. They take part actively in military operations to give support, considering their knowledge of the local terrain and the community at large.
e. CJF provide security at public gatherings and occasions to ensure the peaceful conduct of events.
f. Civilian JTF members usually intervene at any slight conflict or dispute to settle the matter without waiting for official security intervention.
g. At any point the CJTF apprehend a suspect, they ensure that the suspect is handed over to the appropriate authority for any further action.
h. They ensure that early warning signals for attack or conflict are reported promptly to security agencies.
The Borno Coalition for Democracy and Progress (BOCODEP) and Youth Engagement for Peace-building

The Borno Coalition for Democracy and Progress (BOCODEP) is one of the several Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) working towards building peace and ensuring development in Borno State. With more than two decades of existence, the organization has carried out several developmental projects and partnered with many organizations to undertake programmes. The organization gives priority to peace building as one of the pillars for sustaining democracy and ensuring speedy development.

However, in the effort at the organisation to support youth in restoring and sustaining peace, BOCODEP secured funding from Conciliation Resources (CR) to undertake a project with the title Youths Platform for Peace (YPP). The CR and the Centre for Peace Advancement in Nigeria (CEPAN) initiated this program and at one time launched the project in Plateau State. Plateau has been experiencing recurrent crisis and violence for a long time. The situation there has led to the deaths of between 4,000 and 12,500 people, the displacement of 150,000 and the destruction of property worth millions of naira. The security threats in Plateau include ethno-religious tensions, cattle rustling, farmer-pastoralist clashes, election related violence, 'silent killing', reprisal attacks and military and security forces abuse (Conciliation Resources, 2013-2016). In view of this critical situation in the state, the CR and CEPAN put in place this project and the program has proved to be successful with youth. Thus, CR proposed a similar project and the network this time included Borno and Yobe State.

The project sought to empower and build the capacity of communities to play a central role in driving initiatives to resolve violence in communities (Conciliation Resources,
2013-2016). Hence, this similar project being undertaken by BOCODEP intends to build the capacity of youth including Civilian JTF, to prevent and respond promptly and efficiently to conflict and violent situations, especially with the current Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast. The organisation targeted at some selected communities in the state capital and local governments to mobilize youth and organize them into units under the umbrella of Youths Platforms for Peace (YPP). These communities include Benisheikh in Kaga local Government area where two wards: Lawanti A and Lawanti B, were further selected and also two other communities in Maiduguri, Bullumkutu Kasuwa and Bulabirin Ngarnam. Below is the work plan developed by BOCODEP to achieve the objectives of the project:
The above work plan describes the various activities and programs being undertaken by BOCODEP in collaboration with Conciliation Resources (CR), a UK-based organization that is working with people in conflict, especially youth. The programme was on youth engagement for peace-building.
The first activity to kick off the program is the inception meeting that aims at mobilizing youth and elders and introduce to them the need and importance of YPP, in the communities so as to ensure commitment towards achieving peace. At this point, a network is created to bring on-board the members that will form the Youths Peace Platform (YPP) which largely includes at-risk youth. BOCODEP offers counseling to these young individuals. Other major activities include the training of YPP members on a range of activities, which include dialogue and mediation skills and advocacy and policy influence. The trained members of the YPP are expected to facilitate dialogue and mediation between parties in conflict at community levels; with political leaders; security officials and regularly conduct conflict analysis, organize dialogue and meet stakeholders.

According to the Conciliation Resources report (2013-2016), YPP is comprised of approximately 30 youth in a community, with each YPP requiring a minimum of 30 per cent women members. Each YPP meets twice a quarter to reflect on the security situation in their communities. The YPPs have three main components of its task:

1. **Empowerment of youth** - The YPP members are required to reach out to vulnerable and marginalized youth to encourage them to participate and be positive members of their community. This demands creating a forum for discussion, learning and counseling and skills acquisition for youth.

2. **Dialogue and Mediation** - The YPP members are provided with the prerequisite training and support to facilitate dialogue and mediation in order to find solution to conflict at local level, especially that which affect the youth and other sectors of the community.

3. **Engagement with duty bearer at the community, local**
The YPP members are imparted with the skills and opportunity to raise the voice of local populations, particularly youth, with the individuals and institutions that have the capacity to change the design and implementation of response mechanism.

As part of the effort to build peace in the selected communities in Borno State, BOCODEP organizes a workshop for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), particularly those with interest in youth development in conflict areas. The training aims at providing capacity building in conflict transformation and peace building-policy and practice to the youth organisations. This is expected to expand the network of non-state actors that are committed to peace building.

**The Achievements and the Challenges So Far**

So far, BOCODEP has accomplished parts of its project on engaging youth for peace-building. The inception meeting took place on 19th and 20th September, 2017 in Maiduguri with the target youth and elders of the communities for formal introduction of the project. This effort has yielded a fruitful outcome in terms of successful mobilization, identification of at-risk youths and the creation of the network of Youths Platforms for Peace in each of the selected community.

Youth comprising Civilian JTF from Bullumkutu Kasuwa, Bulabirin Ngarnam and Benisheikh numbering about 36 persons received training on capacity building in conflict transformation and peace building, which took place between 3rd and 4th September respectively at Women Development Centre, Maiduguri. The training was successful, considering the commitments of the youth and their willingness to actively
participate and acquire skills to secure their immediate community. The training broadened their understanding of peace transformation, conflict analysis and dialogue and mediation skills. The root causes of conflict, such as the Boko Haram phenomenon, its transformation and long-term consequences, were identified during the session to provide in-depth understanding of the issues at stake.

An arrangement was also made to take the youth from the selected communities in Borno for a meeting with youth in Jos on 6th November 2017, where a similar initiative of YPP was implemented successfully. The meeting aimed at providing an interactive session that would enable Borno youths to learn from the experiences of those in Jos and as well acquire more dialogue and mediation skills and insights into violent conflict situations. However, these selected youth were expected to pass the knowledge and skills to their fellows back home to consolidate the effort towards peace building.

Moreover, the BOCODEP project on YPP has recorded great success. It was acknowledged by the elders and youth in selected communities that such a platform was the only one of its kind known to them that had given opportunity for women to participate in a meeting together around a table to discuss such an important issue. However, there was also an acknowledgement by the people in the community that the meeting had considerably recognized both religious faiths (Islam and Christianity) in the community, which is a vital way to encourage tolerance and peaceful co-existence.

On 2nd November and 3rd November 2017 respectively another training were scheduled for the at-risk youth in the selected communities. They were counseled by a counselor on activities relating to vulnerability and exposure to drug abuse
and other vices (BOCODEP Work Plan, 2017). This activity was organized to ensure that the youth grasp the implications of living a wild life and hence be able to transform their lives while also helping to improve security in their communities (Conciliation Resources, 2013-2016).

A major challenge that BOCODEP encountered had to do with the mobilization of youth and elders to understand the relevance and importance of organizing the Youths Platforms for Peace (YPP). In Benisheikh particularly, when the project team approached them, many of them thought the organization was a type of humanitarian aid organization that provided food supply and the provision of relief materials to the vulnerable. As such both the elders and the youth attended the inception meeting in large numbers. The project team had to explain to them that the organization was not there to provide such items but to support them in building their capacity to secure their communities. In addition, most of the teeming youth believed that the project teams were government officials and were there to create job opportunities. These were some of the challenges the organization had to contend with in the course of delivering the project to the target communities.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

Youth are agents of positive change that should always be given priority in any policy or decision-making by government or non-governmental organizations. A society invites threat if youth are downgraded and their needs neglected. The potential of youth in peace-building has been immensely harnessed by BOCODEP in Borno State, especially with the support of Conciliation Resources (CR), an organization that is committed to empowering them and providing capacity building for the young individuals in areas relating to security
and conflict matters to enable them efficiently to secure their communities. Youths Platforms for Peace (YPP) has offered a tremendous opportunity for youth including Civilian JTF, to acquire skills and capacity to engage their various communities in dialogue and mediation. The aim of the project is to redirect the vulnerable youth towards conflict and peace transformation.

BOCODEP as the implementing partner of Conciliation Resource (CR) has recorded success so far in the selected communities where Peace by the People projects kicked-off in terms of mobilizing the youth, providing training and creating an effective platform for them committed to peace-building. However, it is recommended here that Conciliation Resource and other Development partners should strengthen and further expand and extend such initiatives to all other affected communities in Borno State and the affected neighboring states. This will further expand the network to include more youth that are well trained in handling violent conflicts and other related matters. Additionally, the youth need more support in terms of job opportunities that will financially strengthen their commitment to what they are doing already. Poverty is a threat to peace in any society with a large number of vulnerable youth. Moreover, they should be recognized in any effort being made towards peace-building and also be considered in any decision-making process that affects communities at all levels.

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Young people are often othered in discussions about conflict. This is a dangerous practice as youths can play a very positive role aiding peace building in societies inflicted or recovering from conflict (Ozerdem, 2016).

Background/Context:

An estimated 1.3 billion 15-24 year olds are found all over the world with nearly one billion living in developing countries, which include Nigeria, where conflict is more likely to have taken place or is still taking place. This was reported by the UN World population prospects statistics (Ozerdem, 2016). Youth have multifaceted roles. They can be victims as well as heroes, military entrepreneurs in the war zones and criminals in shanty towns, as well as saviours and courageous in the midst of crisis (Ozerdem, 2016). But yet as a category, youth are frequently approached as a fixed group or demographic cohorts as those found in
northern Nigeria. Male youth aged 16–30 years have been found to be the main protagonists of criminal and political violence, which has been fueled with substance abuse. In other words, contemporary thinking about them tends to be mostly negative. It focuses more on the dangers posited by the disaffected youth as is evident in the connotations of the “youth bulge” or “at risk youth” concept (Ozerdem, 2016).

Across the world, substance abuse has become a major social problem with manifest conditions that are locally varied (WHO, 2011). Because of its potential to contribute to unintentional and intentional acts of violence and crimes among youths, it has become a subject of public concern globally (Whichstrom & Hegna, 2003; Daane, 2003). In Nigeria, the use of drugs has an impact that extends across socioeconomic, cultural, religious and ethnic boundaries. There has been a huge surge in the cases linked to the use and abuse of drug, especially among the young adolescents (10–24 years), despite efforts by governmental and non-governmental entities, such as the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), the National Agency for the Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), among others, to contain it (Oyakhilome, 1990; NDLEA, 1992/93). A recent study among youth in a rural community in North West Nigeria reported the prevalence of drug abuse among 10% of their studied sample. The most abused drug found was Tramadol (52.8%) (Gobir, Sambo, Bashir, et al., 2017). A significant association was also found between drug abuse and family type, the occupation of the respondents and family income. Family income was also a determinant of drug abuse with farmers being about 6.52 times more likely to abuse drugs than non-farmers. The study found that youth in the studied area abused Tramadol and marijuana and the farming occupation was a determinant of drug abuse.
Based on an UNODC (2018) report, the prevalence of drug use in Northern Nigeria was found to be 12.0% in the north-west zone 13.6% north-east zone and 10.0%, north-central zone. The peak level of drug use in the past year was reported among individuals aged 25–39 years with at least 1 in 5 people suffering from a substance use disorders (DSM V). In the past year just as mentioned from the above study by Gobir et al, an estimated 4.7%, that is 4.6 million people, used opioid 9 such as Tramadol, morphine and codeine for a non-medical purpose. The negative impact of drugs abuse was also reported to have resulted in several offences. Nearly one quarter of individual with a high risk drug use were arrested for drug related offences, with majority (73%) arrested for drug possession, 12% theft, 5% sex workers and 4% burglary crime (UNODC, 2018). As a result of drug use, two-thirds of people reported serious problems, which include missing school or work, neglecting family and friends and working poorly on the job (UNODC, 2018).

Worldwide, the most frequently reported substances abused by adolescents and young adults are the cheapest and most readily available in their environment (Jibril et al, 2008). For instance, in the North-East zone of Nigeria, the frequently abused substances were reported to be opioids, ecstasy and cough syrup, which was higher than national estimates, with Gombe State having the highest prevalence of 21%. The north-west zone of had cannabis and non-medical use of opioids and cough syrup as the most commonly abused substances. The north-central zone was reported to have a high prevalence use of cannabis, cough syrups and opioids (tramadol, codeine and morphine) (UNODC, 2018).

Most of the youth begin using substances before the age of 15 and commonly used alcohol and cannabis, which was found
highly abused in some parts of northern Nigeria on a daily basis (Gangi & Darling, 2012; Janichek & Reiman, 2012). The daily and/or chronic use of substances creates a greater risk of dependence and long term harm to individuals. Long term and regular uses of cannabis are linked to maladaptive coping strategies among youth. A study in North-Central Nigeria found cannabis to be the most abused drugs among prisoners (Armiya’u & Perez, 2016). Though it is primarily not associated with aggression or violence, its side effects might promote the risk for violence (Nunez, & Gurpegui, 2002) and cognitive deficit (Lundqvist drug-induced, 2010) as the reported above maladaptive strategies. According to Hoaken and Stewart (2003), withdrawal or smaller doses of cannabis promote the risk for aggressive behaviour, with an increased risk for interpersonal violence thus contributing to violent, criminal behaviour (Marijuana Makes You Violent (MMYV), 2014), which could explain the violence seen among youths in Northern Nigeria, especially during election periods. According to Dankani (2012), in a study conducted in five north-western states, results revealed that majority of the respondents (60%) had been taking cough syrup for a period of 3–5 years. Data from all the northern zones revealed cough syrup use as high.

Substances are readily available in Nigeria. That is another reason why the abuse of drugs by youth is rampant. Dankani (2012) reported that 33% of the youths generally source their drug from the chemist and pharmacies, 23% from drug dealers (wholesale) and 36% from drug dealers (retail). Another study conducted on northern Nigeria revealed that more than half of the people interviewed were initiated into drug abuse through peer pressure. The above findings are similar to a study conducted in Sokoto among the undergraduates of Usman Danfodio University, which showed
that 33.1% viewed pressure from friends as the reason for their substance abuse (Ahmed, 2012).

**Link between Substance Abuse, Violence and Peacebuilding amongst the Youth**

The pharmacological properties of a drug can be of effect to an individual, particularly when taken in a high dose. It might inhibit and lead to impulsivity, aggression, abusiveness, argumentativeness, agitation and grandiosity in the abuser and ultimately result in violent crimes. The link between illegal drugs and offending can also be explored further by focusing on criminal career (Makkai & Payne, 2003), focusing on providing mechanisms for organizing and structuring information, which describes patterns of offending over the life course of the offender (Makkai & Payne, 2003).

The variability in the effect of substances themselves suggests that social, cultural and personality factors also provide a link between substances and violence. Violence, which leads to the commission of crime and other acts of violence, is more likely to occur in certain settings and also among specific people in such settings. Gang members may use certain substances so as to prepare for gang fights or provoke episodes of peaceful group social interaction. These complexities suggest that violence occurs in situations that are characterized by the effects of substances, the physical setting where the substance is used, the personalities of people present, social rule about violence in that setting and the enforcement of such rules and the cultural expectations that shape the beliefs about violence. In this ecological dynamic, the use of substance plays a critical role.

Acts of criminality and violence related to substance abuse in
the society take different forms. These include violent crime perpetrated by or against individual substance users and the innocent individuals who are caught in the crossfire of violent drug culture, as evident in the activities of gangs, such as the *yan dabba* and *tsa tsuka* in Kano, Bauchi and Plateau states. Among these groups, there is a strong relationship between substance abuse and crime and other acts of violence, which they perpetrate. The case of the Boko Haram in the north-east zone of the country underscores the fact that higher rates of crimes and violence are related with a more frequent substance abuse.

Substance abuse may be a cause of, or response to a variety of social behaviours, which includes interpersonal violence. However, little is known about its contribution to victimization. This is because most studies are more concerned with violence/substance link with crime commission rather than victimization. The Sale of drugs often involves victimization from robbery and assault, as well as homicide (Goldstein, 1988). In homicide and assault offenses, victims are often engaged in verbal conflicts, which eventually lead to physical violence. According to Marvin Wolfgang (1957) definition of victim-precipitated homicide, it is the “homicide in which the victim was the initial aggressor and noted that these victims often have high blood-alcohol content upon autopsy”. Among rape-victims at the time of assault, studies also found high levels of alcohol but so also for the assailants. Even though alcohol may be a circumstance in these events, it does not qualify as the cause of the crime. It may alter the perception of social cues and the comprehension of verbal communication and thus increases the risk of misinterpretation. For the victim, it may impair his/her judgement regarding the perceived versus actual threats in another individuals, action or in the threats of a
certain location (Coid, 1986).

Considering the fact that 65% of the population on the African continent consists of young people, it becomes increasingly important that, rather than seeing them as agents of conflict and destruction, they should be seen as agents of peace, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue and advocates for social cohesion in their communities. In addition to substance abuse, which is highly prevalent among the youth, young people face a distinct risk in conflict situations because they are recruited as soldiers and sexually exploited and, in most cases, manipulated by political aspirants, who benefit from such conflicts. A study by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (2005: 9) states that:

There is an automatic tendency to problematize youth as a factor in violent conflict while overlooking their many positive contributions to a society, including their potential role in sustaining the social fabric and peace, as well as their survival in impossible environments

**Understanding the Youth, Substance Abuse, Violence, Development and the Peacebuilding Nexus**

The youth occupy a prominent place in the society. They are one of the greatest assets any nation can have. They are a particular segment of the national population that is energetic, sensitive, active and the most productive phase of life of a citizen. Youth are volatile and yet the most vulnerable segment of the population in terms of social, economic and other aspects of life (Ajufo, 2013). The reasons for substance use among them are varied. However, the most common
reasons are to boost self-confidence, to cope with stress and anxiety to get high (euphoria) (Dankani, 2012), to socialize, to keep awake and to try to sleep (Ahmed, 2012, Jibril et al, 2008). Some also include the reduction of emotional and physical pains, experiment and reduced feelings of hunger, among others (Gaidhane et al, 2008). As reported by Nsimba (2010), in several situations youths use substances as artificial problem-solvers, such as for frustration, idleness and stress. Others use substances for recreational purposes (Sokro, 2010). Youths most times use substances to experiment to find out more about the sensations they produce (Dankani, 2012; Jibril et al, 2008), which end up hooking them.

The World Health Organization (2011) describes substance abuse as the harmful and hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs. Psychoactive substance use can lead to the dependence syndrome “a cluster of behavioral, cognitive, and physiological phenomena that develop after repeated substance use and that typically include a strong desire to take the drug, difficulties in controlling its use, persisting in its use despite harmful consequences, a higher priority given to drug use than other activities and obligation/increased tolerance, and sometimes a physical withdrawal state” (WHO, 2011).

In this sense too, violence is also viewed as the intentional or purposeful use of power or physical force against self, others or against the community or group in an actual or threatened manner, which could eventually result to psychological harm, injury, deprivation, death or mal-development (WHO 2002). Over 1.3 million people globally die each year as a result of violence in all its forms, accounting for 2.5% of global mortality (WHO, 2014). Violence is the fourth leading cause of death worldwide for people aged 15 to 44 years (WHO, 2014).
Substance abuse is one of the causes of violence, especially when intoxicated or withdrawing from drugs. The presence of substance abuse on the West African continent and the violence associated with such is a cause for concern. The relationship between substance abuse and violence ranges from fighting between rival drug dealing gangs to drug traffickers and the pharmacological effects of such drugs, which intimidates the highest levels of national government in the countries involved (ECOWAS). Crime, on the other hand, is an act harmful not only to some individual but also to a community, society or the state (‘the public wrong”). Such acts are forbidden and punishable by Law (Martin, 2003). A study in Minna, Niger state found that drug abuse and violence were correlate. This has made politicians use youth to cause violence for political gain. It also makes the youths indulge actively in substance abuse, especially in the Northern part of Nigeria (Usman, & Usman, 2012).

For sustainable development, peace is required. “There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development”. This therefore brings together the strands of peace, human right, rule of law, development and equality to form a more complete and comprehensive forward looking framework (UNODC, 2018). For peace building and development, good governance is required and involves citizen participation and partnership among key actors at different levels of government. According to Shah and Shah (2006), good governance is not just about the provision of a range of local services but also about the preservation of the life and liberty of residents and facilitating outcomes that will enrich the quality of their life in this case youth, who are the drivers of an economy. Human development entails all the aspects of an individual’s well-being from their health status to their economic and social
well-being and also political freedom (UN Human Development Report, 1996). From the above definition, it is clear that the negative consequences of substance abuse are the exact barriers of what peace building and development stand for.

According to UNICEF (2014), the African continent is becoming more crowded, with the population density to almost quadruple by 2100. By 2050, there will be an increase of 80 persons per square kilometre from 39 per square kilometre in 2015. Nigeria was also rated fifth among the 10 most densely populated Africa countries with low-incomes (UNICEF, 2014). In the African continent, West Africa accounts for 45% of huge urbanisation with more of its population living in towns and cities. In West Africa, 53% of the population live below 1.25USD per day, with 74% living below 2USD per day. With the population explosion and high fertility rate in West Africa, necessary measures need to be taken with regards to the looming drug abuse problem, which ultimately results in crime, particularly violent crimes, due to the various effects of the drugs on an individual.

With several studies revealing youth as the largest population abusing drugs and in the prison environment, urgent action needs to be taken. The abuse of drugs has far reaching effects in their progression and aspiration. This determines how the individual can benefit from the available opportunities provided by the home, the community and the government. There is the need for constructive activities and mentoring programs to provide a strong environment for youths and young adults to reject any form of drug abuse and provide benefits across a wide array of indicators, such as school performance and self-esteem. These strategies should be central to the efforts of reducing youth and young adults drug
use because they actually work (Tierney, Jean, & Nancy, 1995). Researchers have noted that adolescence is a period when youths reject conventional and traditional authority figures in an effort to establish their own independence. During this period, drug use may be a "default activity", especially when youth have few or no opportunities to assert their independence in a constructive manner (Tierney, Jean, & Nancy, 1995). There should be educational campaigns on information, which is scientifically accurate, thereby achieving educational goals and becoming a more credible force with the younger generation. Special budgets should be provided by the Federal Government for reducing youth and young adults' drug abuse. This is because the war on drugs, despite being fought to save the future generation of children being hooked on drugs, is tragically insufficient (McCaffery, 1998).

On the other hand, addressing drug problems and violence requires a strategy to reduce supply so as to diminish the demand of drugs. Therefore, to take care of drug-related crime effectively, a multidimensional approach, requiring multi-professional assistance, is the way forward. Using law enforcement agents in reducing drug production and distribution has not stopped nor slowed down the abuse of drugs. As such, a more robust approach should be employed where a close relationship is built among all the parties involved in the control of drug trafficking, the treatment of drug abusers and law enforcement agents and those involved in research. The collaboration must be based on individual and collective responsibilities, directly or indirectly and for each party or actor involved in the prevention of drug abuse.

The Federal Government must give priority to illicit drugs and have a master plan that will enable states summarize their
policies, define priorities and assign responsibilities, including drug abuse control measures in the general framework of each state's social and economic development programme. There is the need for a coordinated approach through community involvement in the formulation of a drug control policy as most of the people involved in the abuse of drugs live within communities. They should be involved in the design and implementation of culturally acceptable and relevant community-based prevention and education programmes. Community-based organizations (CBO) need to be provided with human, financial, and technical resources in order to actualize this goal.

**Substance Abuse, Crime, Violence and the Eluded Youth Development**

The negative impact of substance abuse on the lives of individuals and the community is vital. It is an established fact that substance abuse is a major threat to human development, as it affects all the aspects of life adversely. It leads to deterioration in both physical and mental health. This state of poor health impacts negatively on the individual's physical and cognitive development, particularly the youth who begin the abuse of substances in adolescence. Consequently, they perform poorly in their studies and eventually drop out of school without acquiring the skills they need through education at the critical stage of their development. Furthermore, the fact that they begin abusing substances early in life does not give them a chance to imbibe values, which the society tries to inculcate in them. Ultimately, these young people constitute a nuisance to the society and a burden to government at the local level.

Frequent ill-health associated with the dependence and abuse
substances leads to absenteeism and poor concentration at work, which in turn leads to diminished productivity, thereby retarding economic growth and development. If substance abuse hinders effective human development then we can reasonably argue that abuse by youths clearly undermines governance and development in the northern substance region and country in general. A community cannot be effectively developed when its vibrant population is rendered unproductive and plagued by disease. Substance abuse also leads to an unskilled active labour force, which is as a result of ill-health, school dropout and lack of skill acquisition all of which culminate into poverty and invariably retard economic growth.

According to Ekong (2010), youth can be instrumental to community development by being alive to their social responsibilities, such as surveillance and vigilante services, cleanup activities and representing the community in football and other competitions. Therein lies the key to sustainable community and rural development. He also notes that youth can alternatively be instrumental to the destruction of community development by playing adverse roles that affect the community, such as sabotaging projects sited in proposed communities, vandalizing community projects and lack of supporting or being commitment to community development. These adverse roles which are instrumental to the destruction of community development, invariably are concomitant to substance abusing youths.

Substance abuse robs the youth of the ability to effectively participate positively in the growth of a community, as abuse leads to poor health, loss of job and redundancy. Having noted earlier that governance involves citizen participation, it therefore means that the failure of government to meet its
obligation when a large population of the citizenry, especially its active labour force is unable to actively participate in the affairs of the community represents a major challenge to development. Similarly, substance abuse has contributed significantly to social problems in Northern Nigeria, particularly along the lines of crime and violence that are often perpetrated by youth-led gangs (Armiya’u et al, 2013). It is therefore important to note here that substance abuse by youths turns them into veritable instruments of destabilization. Consequently, they pose great security challenges and retard development at all the levels of governance more especially at the local level.

Illicit drug use has become a public health issue that jeopardizes not only our well-being, but also the progress we have made in strengthening our economy-contributing to addiction, disease, lower student academic performance, crime, unemployment, and lost productivity (National Drug Control Strategy 2015). Substance use habit makes us lose the fortune of grooming nation builders (people who selflessly take initiative to develop their community).

Substance use could present an arcane level of national identity. The Global Commission highlighted the human cost of misguided policies and their inability to reduce the production and consumption of illegal drugs and thwart criminal organizations. The Commission also provided a comprehensive overview of the measures required to effectively address the consequences of these failed policies. These consequences include: the spread of infectious diseases, deaths from overdose and the use of adulterated substances, violence associated with repression and gang turf wars, corruption, a shortage of adequate drug treatment and pain relief, overcrowded prisons and the absence of any
perspective of social integration for people with a drug-related criminal record, including consumers and the non-violent actors involved in the illegal production or sale of drugs (Global Commission on Drug Policy, 2017).

When considering the reasons why someone might initiate substance use, psychological and moral explanations generally prevail, primarily the assumption that the person is “weak” or “immoral.” Thus, the general public often sees problematic drug use as an individual problem and not one that society needs to deal with. Another common stereotype of people who use drugs is that of people living on the margins of society, who are not equal members of it or entitled to the same rights as others (Global Commission on Drug Policy, 2017). These perceptions create an antithesis to nation building. The question is, are we laying blocks or rather destroying the very foundations of national integration. The acceptance and alienation of indigenous individuals draws a line between who should be concerned in carrying the caravan of a falling Olympus and who should stand aloof.

Substance users stand between two groups: those from the pre-colonial age and those in the millennial age. Factors that predispose these groups to use vary. For the pre-colonial substance users In Nigeria, a series of events that led to the collapse of democratic institutions in 1966 and subsequently a bitter Civil War and the ripple effects of these ushered these age bracket (45–70 years) to use abuse substances like tobacco, locally brewed alcohol, beer and snuff. The millennial age (18–35 years) also have their fair share of a failed political/democratic system suppressing their sense of national consciousness, which leads them to using substances like cocaine, marijuana, opioids and other amphetamine-like substances.
The Way Forward: Strategies for Combating Substance Abuse Youth Integration in Peacebuilding

Responses to the challenges posed by substance abuse cannot be left to government alone, either at the state or local level. There is the need to partner with all the stakeholders: the state and local governments in the northern part of Nigeria and civil society who are working in this field. In particular also, community and religious leaders as well as educational institutions need to be positioned to better confront the menace of substance abuse. On this note, states and local government, in partnership with civil society and other non-governmental organizations, should create public awareness by way of advocacy in all communities about the magnitude of the problem and the adverse consequences on peaceful coexistence in communities. The aim of this public awareness will be health promotion, prevention, the early detection and management of substance abuse and dependence in communities.

For sustainable peace in any society, the inclusion of youth is paramount, especially in northern Nigeria, where a lot of conflicts have taken place and are still on going. By directing the energies of this young people to the implementation of constructive peace projects, the goal of peaceful coexistence could be achieved. Utilizing and incorporating the youth in peace building processes would also facilitate their transformation from agents of violence to agents of peace. When they are granted specific sets of opportunities, which are mutually reinforcing, they are likely to avoid violence and engage in peacebuilding with specific focus on their involvement in politics and governance, building constituencies for peace, forging connection between and
youth groups in communities and building self-esteem and confidence, as well as mentoring among others.

Investments in quality education would create more opportunities for social mobility among the youth as a major catalyst for peace. Governments at all levels should establish youth development centres where vocational training, counseling and basic treatment for substance abuse/dependence are provided before referral to secondary or tertiary facilities, which the communities should own. These measures will help to engage the youth productively and improve societal well-being. Government is advised to develop more sporting activities and recreational centers to engage them. These will motivate youth to engage in productive ways of spending their leisure time and prevent idleness. Ultimately, this will promote healthy development of them and channel their energy in the right direction. Youth should be encouraged to form groups, such as vigilante groups, young farmers club, youth against drugs and alcohol and cooperatives among others. Government should engage them as such in its developmental programmes rather than deal with them as individuals. By so doing, they will feel a sense of belonging and be able to participate in community development. In this process, Government should give priority to those who do not abuse substances to serve as an incentive towards a drug-free life.

Governments at all levels as well as the private sector should demonstrate more commitment towards preventing substance abuse by subjecting applicants to drug test during recruitment and interviews, as a way of discouraging the use of substances and promote a drug free life. Other measures are sanctioning staff that use substances during working hours in order to promote work ethics, enact laws to ban smoking in
public places and discourage the use of substances by
government officials during official ceremonies.

Another measure to discourage the use of substances is for
government to ensure that educational opportunities are
provided for all citizens at affordable cost. This will keep
restive youth in school for their studies, give value to
education, inculcate discipline in them and enhance their
development. Furthermore, school authorities should
institute measures to prevent smuggling drugs and alcohol
into Boarding Schools, promote the establishment of drug free
clubs and sanction teachers who abuse substances,
particularly those within school premises.

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Section Two:
Interviews
Fighting Boko Haram, Marriage and Motherhood, tasking but worthwhile - Aisha

As part of efforts to curb insurgency and promote peace building, a lot of people, particularly youth have been involved in so many respects. The contribution of Aisha Bakari Gombi is an exceptional one, as she joins male hunters in the fight against terrorism in her state of Adamawa and its environs. In this interview with Hamza Ibrahim, brave Aisha explains how she has been coping with the very courageous task, how she copes with being a wife, an expectant mother and a vigilante and the challenges faced in the fight as well as recommendations for a more formidable combat. Excerpts:

Aisha Bakari Gombi

Can you tell us about yourself?

My name is Aisha Bakari Gombi I was born in 1977 in Gombi Local Government Area of Adamawa state, Nigeria. I did my primary education at Unguwar Faransa Primary school and my secondary school at GSS Gombi and graduated in 1987. That is where my formal education stopped.

I studied the holy Qur'an from a scholar called Muhammadu Cibado in Gombi town where I memorized the holy Qur'an two times. I also studied other religious books. I grew up among male siblings because I was the only female child in our house.
Growing up among males made me adopt masculine behaviors. Since my childhood, I had always been brave because I used to depend on my two immediate elders brothers whenever they were involved in any fight. I thank God for always being a champion during childhood fights. I can still remember that during Sallah celebrations when I insisted on wearing male clothes too, just like my brothers and if I was denied, I usually attacked one of them and forcefully took from any of them to the extent that they had to succumb to my wish. I also insisted on using their toys.

**Will you relate your braveness with your being the only female among males?**

Well, being among them has contributed to it but I believe my closeness to my parents and grandparents is the main reason for my braveness. I spent more time with my parents and grand-parents than my brothers, who most of the time were in school. My brothers are well educated three of them are now lawyers. One is a Commissioner, one is a Judge and all others too are highly paced due to their educational attainment. But for me, this is where I found myself.

**What are your likes and dislikes in life?**

I so much like tea and meat and I hate injustice. I hate it when a person lies to me. It is better when the truth is said to me no matter how bitter it is. I despise lies and whenever someone lies to me, my reaction is always very harsh when I realize it to the extent that I sometimes regret my action.

**How did you become a hunter? Did you inherit it or did you learn it?**

Well, hunting is my family's heritage. My grandfather was the lead hunter (Sarkin Baka) of his community during his time. My
father and his brothers all took after him I also took after my father. I was so attached to my grandfather that he took me anywhere he went to. He first took me for hunting when I was eight years and that was how I was initiated. When my grandfather died, my father took over. He taught me how to hunt using bow and arrow and later on how to use a locally made gun (adaka). When I was satisfied with the skills I acquired, I secretly formed my team and we sneaked to the bush to hunt even before the time my parents were convinced I was good enough to go hunting on my own.

**Do you mean you were exposed to hunting, which is assumed to be a male dominated trade since the age of eight?**

Yes, and I have not relented since then.

**Now that you spent the whole of your life hunting, how will you describe the difference between hunting during your youthful age and now?**

Hunting during my youthful age was fun and interesting; we had lots of animals in the bush to hunt, unlike now that the animals are scarce and we hunt criminal humans. That is the basic difference.

**What are the challenges you encounter being a female hunter?**

The biggest challenge I encountered as a female hunter was when we were given the mandate by the government to contribute in the fight against insurgency. When I joined the team, some people even thought I was insane. Others thought I didn't value my life. It was after showcasing my talent during the fight that people started appreciating my talent and intention.
Can you tell us about your marital status?

I am happily married to a supportive husband. We have a kid.

Boko Haram insurgents have in many instances confronted even trained military personnel and fight them. How do you summon the courage to confront them?

Looking at the damage done by Boko Haram insurgents in this country, it takes sacrifice and selflessness for any fighter to confront them. Therefore, the courage to confront them comes from patriotism and sacrifice to the nation.

What is the feeling like whenever you confront the insurgents?

The insurgents had in different instances invaded our communities but since we were then not given the mandate to defend, there was very little we could do. People during such instances ran to our house, knowing they could get some protection since I was there. We had a number of people that migrated to our house then. Some were from Mubi. We (the hunters) were really eager and looked forward to when the government would give us the go ahead but I knew it was not an idea my mother would support because of the fear of the unknown. Knowing that, I decided to be tricky with it. There is this deserted apartment in our neighborhood. I therefore told my mother that I was moving into the deserted apartment with some of the people that came staying with us since our house was then congested. She agreed, not knowing that I was looking for an escape route. I simply took some of the people there. I provided what I could and headed to meet other hunters to face the insurgents, who suggested I go back home because it was dark already. But I insisted and I had to go with them. I can still remember it was our first encounter with them after we were mandated by the government to engage them whenever they
struct. It was on a fateful day during Magrib, at around 6pm. They stormed the town while people were praying. The insurgents stormed in 13 Hilux vans and as God would have it, we fought them mercilessly. Only six of them survived and ran away in one van. One of our members we left in the bush ambushed and killed the six survivors of that attack. He also burnt down the van.

**What was the secret of your success during your first encounter with the insurgents?**

I would say the grace of God and also our steadfastness and doggedness. We were well armed but they were better armed, with weapons of different types. Some we had never seen. They also came along with several gallons of petrol and matches, with the intention of burning down the town but we overpowered, chased them back to the bush and fought them mercilessly. We all survived the attack. We were done by 10pm that night. Those of them we caught alive confessed they had never planned such a deadly attack like that very one we defeated them in. But unfortunately, luck was not on their side.

**What has been your husband's reaction to you going to the warfront?**

My husband has been very understanding and supportive. He only prays for my safety and success. He has never been against it.

**What have been your challenges facing the insurgents, especially knowing that they possess very dangerous and sophisticated weapons?**

I have never been frightened when confronting them. Our minds are hardened already we look forward to doing when we encounter them is to fight and defeat them. I have never been
scares when confronting them. There was a time we spent 62 days in the bush. My only worry then was my mother, who I knew was worried not hearing from me for long. There was no network there. We could not communicate.

**How would you describe life in the bush?**

It is a difficult one. We leave on fruits, some we have never seen or eaten, and unhygienic water where available. We simply survive by the grace of God and our conviction that it is worth doing.

**What has been your Sambisa Forest experience?**

I went to Sambisa six times and Aljazeera will feature my sixth trip to Sambisa very soon. Sambisa is a very big forest without any trace of humans that ever lived there. There are no foot-paths. It is widely held that there are no wild animals in the forest. The truth of it is that there are. It is a very thick forest and unimaginably big. During our last visit, which was during Ramahdan, we killed a number of the insurgents and arrested four, whom we handed over to the military. I have since then not gone back to the bush due to my pregnancy.

**How would you access the fight against Boko Haram?**

Frankly, only God will bring an end to Boko Haram. We have gallants that are ready and willing to fight the insurgency but the problem is lack of equipment to fight. The insurgents are heavily equipped that is why they are still not overpowered.

**How do you think this problem can be solved?**

There are many solutions but I will not say any here because am just an ordinary person, I have nothing to contribute than what I have been doing so far. I am a tailor by profession and
that has been my source of livelihood. I sold out my sewing machine to buy weapons to contribute in the fight against insurgency. This is simply for the love I have for my country. I also know of people who sold their food items and some their plots of land to buy weapons to fight the insurgency.

**Are you given needed support on your contribution to the Boko Haram fight?**

We were supported with fighting equipment initially but since we chased out the insurgents out of town, there seem to be not much attention given to us. Well, whatever the case, I derive joy on remembering the number of women and children we have so far rescued.

**Do you wish any of your children to take after you?**

I don’t mind but I want my kids to be educated, Qur'anic and Western. I will also love them to learn hunting and if possible let them too teach others.
Asabe Ganawuri is a lady with special needs with experience of the crises in Jos, Plateau State. In this interview, she explains how she and other people with disability are able to cope during crises as well as their contribution in fostering peace in their communities. She emphasized the need of the involvement with the people with special needs, saying their ability should not be underrated. During a interview with Hamza Ibrahim, Asabe also discusses her father's role in ensuring that she attended school. Excerpts:

Asabe Ganawuri

Tell us about yourself

My name is Asabe Musa Gyak, I'm from Ganawuri, Riyom Local Government, Plateau State. I live with disability. I am a victim of the monster, Polio. I was affected at eight months according to what my parents told me. They told me how they tried all possible options to see that I was able to walk like any other human being but all failed. At the age of ten, my parents got to know of a hospital in Sabon Layi, in Mangu Local Government of Plateau State and decided to give it a trial.
there I was treated and given an artificial limb, which helped me in walking, but we couldn't sustain it because of the money involved. It was supposed to be changed at intervals as I grew.

**What about your educational attainment?**

There was no proper school in my village at the time I was born, that was in 1972. Children in the village attended Classes One and Two in the small school we had in my village and then had to move to the nearby village, Kwakwai, where they continued their Primary There. Pupils had to trek to school but considering my condition, my father got a family in Kwakwai where it was negotiated that I would stay with them while I attended school. But I couldn't continue schooling because my host in Kwakwai kept maltreating me. I was not well taken care of, not fed well and had no sympathy shown for my condition, I had to leave at a point.

**Was that the end of your education?**

No, my father vowed that he was going to educate me no matter what it took. He was concerned that if I should drop put at that level, my life was in jeopardy. He decided to take me on his bicycle to and from school from my village to Kwakawai every school day. Sometimes I stayed back late in school if he couldn't make it early to pick me. On finishing primary school, my dad rented a close-to-school apartment for me to continue with my secondary school I finished in 1995.

A year after graduating from secondary school, my father took me to a computer school to learn how to type. He was interested in ensuring I had something to support my life, I spent nine months and obtained a Diploma and returned home. In 2001, an initiative known as “Poverty Alleviation”
came up and I was engaged and posted to the computer section, I spent three months in Riyom where the training took place. After the three months, they noticed my skills and advised that I proceed with computer training for a higher certificate. I was reluctant initially but decided to enroll when I got assistance from colleagues. I finally got employed in a secondary school as a typist, where I still work.

**Can you tell us about your family life?**

I am a single parent and the story behind it is a very long one. I am a devoted Christian and help my pastor with evangelism: we baptized our church members. Unfortunately, I was raped by one of my students in the church, whom I sheltered when it was raining and I got pregnant. I was advised to marry him on realizing my pregnancy but I declined because he had a wife already.

**Can you share your experience of crisis situations?**

On different occasions, it was rumored that our town was going to be attacked and we normally fled for safety but no attack took place. At a point, I vowed not to flee again, especially considering my condition. The first crisis that happened in my hometown, Ganawuri was in 1991 when the attackers struck and killed our Emir. Everyone scampered for safety but I decided to take mine on a Mango tree. It took me a long time before I returned after calm was restored; people even thought I had been killed.
How can you describe the challenges faced by people with special needs in terms of crisis?

People with special needs face a number of challenges in terms of crises. Take for example, a cripple who cannot run for safety so also a blind can hardly help himself. During crisis, people with special needs go to hell. Members of the community hardly help them because they too, are in danger and therefore run for safety. The only help people render us is sympathy; some can even shed tears in sympathy but not physical help and you don't blame them because they too are traumatized and scamper for help and safety. Only family members can make the sacrifice of taking the physically challenged when fleeing.

Generally, people with special needs are treated with stigma, injustice and less shown concern for their peculiarities. I can still remember when I trekked to school. People walked past without showing any sympathy and no assistance. That has been my greatest challenge in life. That treatment makes me feel worthless. There are a number of people living with special needs who went to schools, underwent training, acquired skills and obtained certificates but they were not given the chance when it came to job opportunities. In Ganawuri for example, we have different associations according to the peculiarities of our disabilities and we all together have a mother association, the Joint Association for People Living with Disability, but unfortunately, we are not given any form of recognition in the society. Can you imagine that all the people living with disability in the Riyom Local Government Area were recently given just three bags of fertilizer? This is to show you how bad our situation is. We are neglected and therefore face numerous challenges in the society.
How do you think people living with special needs can contribute in peace building?

The only way people with special needs can contribute in peace building is when they are involved in the process. We need to be seen and accepted in the society as equally important and intelligent and can contribute in peace building in the society. At the moment, we are stigmatized, neglected and frustrated by the society which is in itself is a conflict-provoking situation.

What are your recommendations with regards to improving the relationship between the society and people living with special needs?

The government should address the problems of inequality and the needs of people in the society. We need to be given a chance in the society like any other person. We also need our needs to be looked into, especially in terms of social amenities. When government is making any construction be it road, school, hospital or any other structure, special considerations should be made for us. We also want to get involved in the process of policy making and decisions open to others. And in crisis situations, we need to be given special considerations regarding our safety.