

2021-2025

JISRA JOURNEY



**A COMPENDIUM OF IMPACT,
KEY LEARNINGS AND
SUSTAINABILITY PLANS**



Acknowledgements

This is to acknowledge the efforts of all participants, volunteers, field officers, facilitators, partners and staff on the JISRA programme from 2021 to 2025 in promoting peace and Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) in Nigeria.

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Foreword

JISRA JOURNEY: 2021-2025

The Joint Initiative for Strategic Religious Action (JISRA) is a global interfaith peacebuilding initiative working to promote Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) and peaceful coexistence across seven countries: Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iraq, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria and Uganda (with supporting lobby and advocacy in Europe and the USA).

The journey of JISRA in Nigeria is a testament to courage, collaboration, and transformation. In a country where religious diversity is both a strength and a source of tension, our collective efforts have shown that peace is not only possible but it is also sustainable when rooted in mutual respect and shared values. Since 2021, the Consortium has worked with faith-based and civil society organizations to address religious intolerance, violence, and marginalization in Plateau and Kaduna States.

Through inclusive dialogue, community action, and advocacy, JISRA supports young people, women, religious leaders, and local authorities to become agents of peace. JISRA challenges harmful narratives and builds bridges across religious and ethnic divides.

This compendium captures the heartbeat of our work: the stories of women who now play stronger roles in governance and traditional councils; youth who mediate conflict, and faith leaders who have shifted harmful norms and practices in their communities.

Central to this success are the JISRA manuals for Christians and Muslims, as well as our Participatory Grant Making (PGM) approach, which empowers communities to design and implement their own solutions to FoRB challenges.

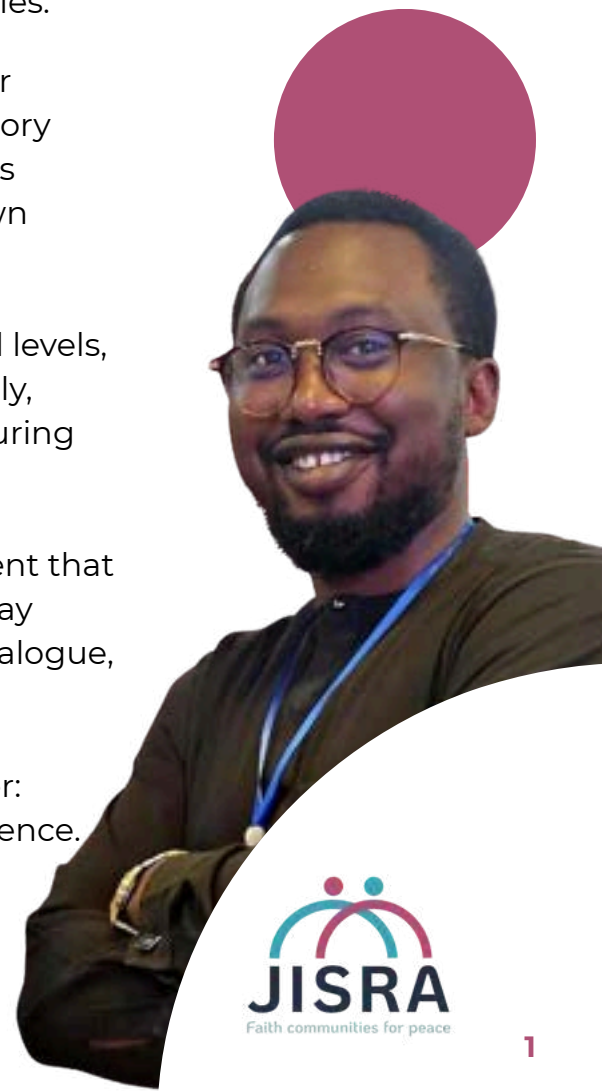
While we advocated at both national and global levels, the greatest transformation has happened locally, which is now a source of inspiration to neighbouring communities and regions.

As the project concludes in 2025, we are confident that the foundations we have laid will endure and may these pages inspire continued action, deeper dialogue, and enduring hope.

I hold a firm belief and offer a constant reminder: religion should serve as a tool for peace, not violence.

JUDE LIKITA

Country Coordinator,
JISRA Nigeria



About JISRA

The Joint Initiative for Strategic Religious Action (JISRA) is a partnership of 50 civil society organisations based in Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iraq, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria and Uganda (with supporting lobby and advocacy in Europe and the USA). This international, interreligious partnership is implementing a five-year programme (2021-2025) in partnership with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to further peaceful and just societies where all enjoy Freedom of Religion and Belief (FoRB).

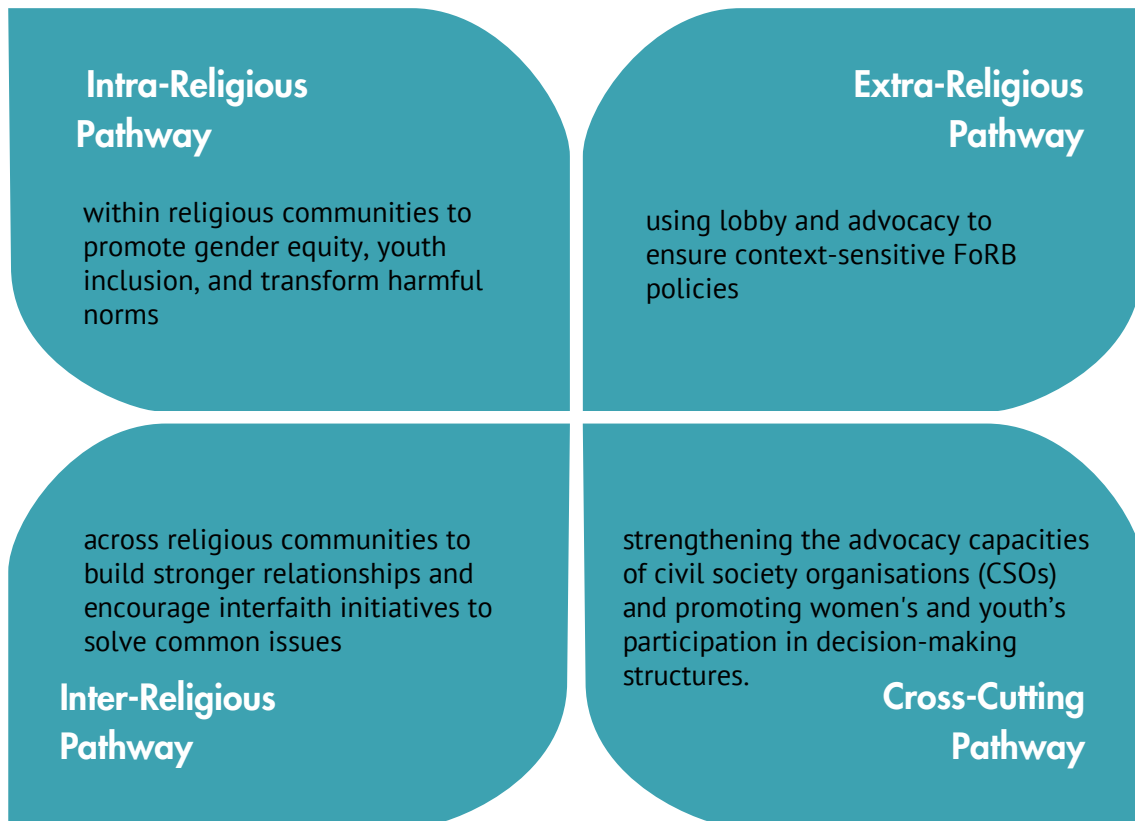


The basis of the programme is JISRA's conviction that Freedom of Religion and Belief and interfaith dialogue are essential and integral to the realisation of peaceful and just societies. In addition, diverse religious actors, including women and youth, can and need to play an important role in this process as change makers. JISRA believes their voices must be heard.

That is why JISRA stimulates positive forces within and between religious communities for more peaceful and inclusive societies. From the word 'jisir' which means bridge in Arabic, JISRA leverages the constructive role of religious actors. This programme addresses harmful norms and narratives within religious communities, stimulates cooperation between religions and shows that different religious traditions can come together in a common vision for a better and fairer society.

JISRA pays special attention to increasing the role of women and youth in setting the vision and solutions to advancing FoRB and promoting youth and women's participation in decision-making fora.

The JISRA programme's theory of change focuses on 3 pathways of change and 1 cross-cutting pathway:



JISRA's THEORY OF CHANGE

Conceptually, the programme is based on a theory of change (ToC) that seeks to address specific challenges that inhibit FoRB in the seven (7) countries and at a global level.

The overarching ToC can be summarised as follows:

IF Religious actors are capacitated to address othering, harmful norms, and transform radical and extremist tendencies within their communities.

AND IF Interaction between religious communities is promoted and facilitated to overcome mutual grievances and foster meaningful engagement.

AND IF Policies negatively affecting the practice of FoRB are addressed at national and international level.

THEN Religious communities and actors become increasingly active in the civic space.

THEN Legal and social obstacles to FoRB will be minimised or removed.

AND THEN Religious communities will mutually benefit from the free experience of FoRB.

JISRA's Theory of Change

Ultimate Goal	Peaceful and just societies where all enjoy Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB)		
Long-Term Impact	Resilient and inclusive communities in which religious actors are sustainable advocates of FoRB and interfaith peace		
Medium Term Impact	Inclusive, open and constructive religious communities	Peaceful interaction within religious communities	Context and religion-sensitive FoRB policies and practices
Pathway	Intra-religious Pathway	Inter-religious Pathway	Extra-religious Pathway
Long Term Outcomes (LTO)	LTO 1.1 Targeted religious communities have more open and tolerant religious norms and practices towards gender, age and people with other (non) beliefs.	LTO2.1 Religious actors have established a long-lasting culture and system of collaboration across religious divides	LTO 3.1 Duty bearers and decision makers adopt, improve and implement religion and context-sensitive FoRB policies and practices based on evidence and interaction with diverse religious actors and CSOs
	LTO1.2 Targeted religious communities prevent and address harmful religious extremist norms and practices	LTO 2.2 Religious communities utilise spaces to jointly address their grievances that drive exclusion and conflict, and promote peaceful coexistence	LTO 3.2 Security actors adopt, improve and implement inclusive people-centred, prevention-oriented responses that strengthen the protection and empowerment of all people
Long Term Outcome (Crosscutting)	LTO 4: Women and youth have increased representation in the decision-making process at the community, local, national and international levels that advance FoRB		
Mid Term Outcomes (MTO)	MTO 1: Religious actors use inclusive faith literacy within their communities and promote (gender) inclusive and tolerant attitudes and challenge harmful norms, attitudes and behaviours including extremist tendencies.	MTO 2: Religious actors work across religious divides to promote FoRB	MTO 2.1 Duty bearers (including decision makers) adopt evidence-based issues put forward by religious actors and CSOs and advocate for these issues
			MTO 2.2 Religious leaders and CSOs have increased representation in policy-making processes, including in inclusive and legitimate inter-, intra- and extra-religious platforms, that advance FoRB and hold duty bearers to account
Short Term Outcomes (STO)	STO 1: Religious Actors of supportive of FoRB and share positive values around gender equity and inclusivity	STO 2: Religious actors are supportive of interfaith actions within and beyond their own community of faith	STO 3 Religious leaders and CSOs ensure that religious communities' needs and demands - whilst safeguarding other human rights - are voiced at relevant spaces that impact increased FoRB
Short Term Outcome (Crosscutting)	STO 4: CSOs (including consortium partners) have increased resources and ability to meaningfully engage with religious communities, religious actors and duty-bearers in inter-, intra- and extra-religious settings.		

JISRA's Origin

- JISRA was developed under the Power of Voices policy framework to strengthen civil societies.
- JISRA aimed at promoting civic space through strengthening CSOs and their contribution to inclusive, sustainable societies.
- Local and consortium partners were actively involved in the design and development of JISRA's programme, and are part of its decision-making bodies.

JISRA's Alignment with Human Rights and SDGs

- **JISRA is rooted in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDR) on Freedom of Religion and Belief (FoRB)**
- **JISRA contributes to Sustainable Development Goal 16 (Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies) and Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls).**



Article 18

- Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.



16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



5 GENDER EQUALITY



Photo Credit: Nelson Asoh/Search for Common Ground

Everyone
deserves
the right to
freedom of
thought,
conscience
and religion.



A Reverend and an Imam from Dutsen Kura community of Bassa LGA, Plateau State, met for the very first time at a JISRA Community Dialogue Session. They decided to take the message of peace and FoRB to their congregations.

JISRA NIGERIA PARTNERS

JISRA JOURNEY: 2021-2025

Consortium Partners



Mensen met een missie



Catholic Agency for Development (CAFOD)



Search for Common Ground



Tearfund

Implementing Partners



Rural Development Counsellors for Christian Churches in Africa (RURCON)



Federation of Muslim Women's Associations of Nigeria (FOMWAN)



Dialogue, Reconciliation and Peace (DREP) Centre



Scripture Union West Africa (SUWA)



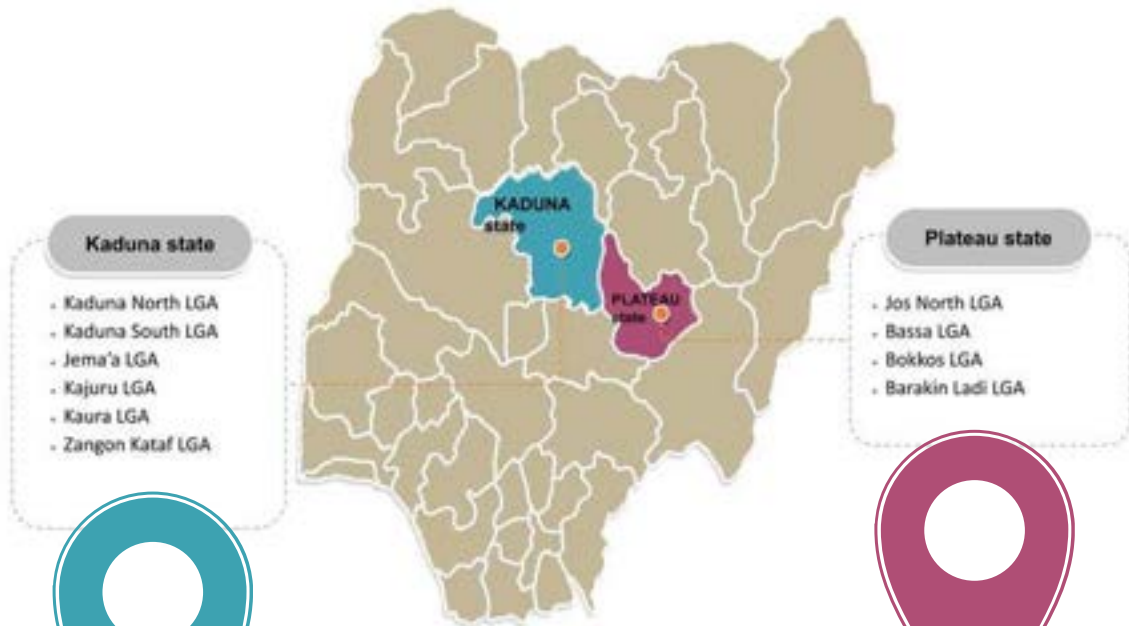
Women Interfaith Council (WIC)



Development Initiative of West Africa (DIWA)



JISRA Locations in Nigeria



Kaduna state

- Kaduna North LGA
- Kaduna South LGA
- Jema'a LGA
- Kajuru LGA
- Kaura LGA
- Zangon Kataf LGA

Plateau state

- Jos North LGA
- Bassa LGA
- Bokkos LGA
- Barakin Ladi LGA

Kaduna North LGA

- Anguwan Yaro
- Badarawa
- Anguwan Maisamari
- Hanya Banki

Kaduna South LGA

- Kurmin Marshi
- - Kakuri Gwari
- Kakuri Hausa

Jema'a LGA

- Gidan Waya
- Bakin Kogi
- Dangoma

Kajuru LGA

- Kasuwan Magani
- Idon Hanya

Kaura LGA

- Fadan Atakar
- Manchok
- Zankan Morda

Zangon Kataf LGA

- Ayagan
- Zonkwa

Jos North LGA

- Zaruma
- Kwanan Soja
- Sabon Layi
- Anguwan Jarawa
- Angwan Rogo
- Congo Russia

Bassa LGA

- Dutse Kura
- Rafiki
- Mista Ali
- Jebbu Bassa /Jebbu Miango

Bokkos LGA

- Daffo
- Kwatas

Barkin Ladi LGA

- Gindi Akwati
- Dorowan Babuje

CONTEXT ANALYSIS

(Baseline)

Nigeria's population is predominantly made up of followers of Islam, Christianity, and African Traditional Religions. The religious divide is across more than 250 ethnic groups, as well as deep political divisions that cross religious lines. Conflicts in Nigeria are linked with religious and social tensions, which sometimes include explicit restrictions on freedom of religion or belief. Plateau state has witnessed incessant religious conflict in 2001, 2008, and 2010 when the region suffered from violent clashes between Muslims and Christians from various tribes. The 2008 conflict, sparked by local elections, resulted in many lives lost, and the burning of mosques, churches and a local seminary. In both Kaduna and Plateau states, Christians and Muslims dwell in almost equal numbers, but live in separate settlements. Interfaith marriages and conversion to a different religion are frowned upon, and both states have a long history of communal conflict.

Since March 2021, insecurity has greatly increased in the Plateau and Kaduna states, especially kidnappings and lethal attacks on communities by criminal groups have continued, due to increased competition for land, lack of economic opportunities, drugs and substance misuse, etc. The high unemployment rates in Kaduna and Plateau states are push factors for youth to join criminal and/or violent extremist groups. Further, environmental change manifesting in the form of desertification and climate variability has led to increased competition for limited water and land resources, thereby generating conflicts among farmers and herders, amplified by local, political, economic or religious competitions for power. Many people perceive government policies as biased or self-interested, and the security and justice system favours the most powerful and politically well-connected.

FoRB POLICIES, LAWS & LEGAL FRAMEWORKS IN NIGERIA

In Nigeria, there are two government policies of relevance to FoRB: the federal constitution and the Kaduna State religious preaching (regulation) law, 2016. Further information retrieved through KIIs with officials of the state peace commission reveals that FoRB is a constitutional right. The Nigerian constitution guarantees the right to freedom of religion and association, and while there may be no specific policies or laws in the various states, the country's constitution upholds freedom of association and religion.

The provisions of the Nigerian constitution provide the national framework for engendering FoRB. The states of the federation are encouraged to establish agencies like the Kaduna Peace Commission and the Bureau for Inter-faith in Kaduna state, Plateau State Peace Building Agency, Plateau State Inter-Religious Council, and similar agencies in other federal states. At the state level, in 2016, Kaduna State enacted the Kaduna State Religious Preaching (Regulation) law. The law permits the establishment of Preaching regulatory committees, State inter-faith regulatory council and local government inter-faith committees. The overall aim of the committees is to regulate religious preaching in the State to promote religious harmony and peaceful co-existence among state residents.

While FoRB is a fundamental human right enshrined in the Constitution, people experience discrimination in their access to services, as well as interreligious tensions and religious violence that exist in Nigeria. The Constitution does not specify prejudice and hostility against some ethnic groups, or pertaining to discrimination against religious minorities. There are several laws and policies that, if better implemented, will improve FoRB and promote inclusion.

Overview (2021)

Access to project locations has remained stable throughout most of 2021. Notable exceptions include two Local Government Areas (LGAs), Bassa in Plateau state and Zanggo Kataf in Kaduna state, that experienced a series of attacks and reprisals between July and August 2021, re-igniting the region's farmer-herder conflict. Separate attacks and kidnappings took place in Kaduna state in May, July, and November of 2021 which led to a shutdown of communication services and a ban on commercial motorcycles during October and November. This restricted access to the affected LGAs sparked mutual suspicion and distrust along ethnic and religious lines among the target groups.

FoRB was a new topic, as people were hesitant to engage in FoRB discussions for fear of being misunderstood by their religious group. Often, people would rather not speak on such issues for their own security or respect for their local religious community.

JISRA's aims and objectives were presented to solicit support in August and September from the Plateau State Human Rights Commission; the Kaduna Human Rights Commission; the Kaduna State Peace Commission; the Kaduna and Plateau State Peace Building Agencies; the Nigeria Police Force, Justice Development and Peace Commission, the Nigerian Army and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, and the Peace Practitioners Network in both Kaduna and Plateau.

Training sessions were conducted with all partners to ensure a common understanding of gender mainstreaming and facilitating equal representation of women and men in community engagements.

¹⁰Nanlong, M. T. (2021, August 2). Gunmen attack Plateau community, kill 7, raze over 275 house. *Vanguard*. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/08/gunmen-attack-plateau-community-kill-7-raze-over-275-houses/>

Religious/Traditional Leaders

As a result of JISRA's trainings and workshops with religious leaders to champion FoRB and inclusivity, there was increased collaboration across the different religious denomination groups.

For example, a pastor from an Anglican Church was invited to preach in a Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN), and a COCIN pastor preached in a Christ Apostolic Church. Pastors across denominations have also come together to pray and discuss issues in their communities and established peace clubs.

Religious leaders formed different committees that intervened in farmer/herder conflicts and prevented a reprisal attack between Muslim and Christian communities.

Women

Partners organised an inter-religious dialogue between women, in which 60% of Muslim women and 40% of Christian women participated. The dialogue was reinforced by the involvement of traditional leaders.

Thus, women were bringing their communities together to promote peace and cohesion, provided financial support to each other through savings and loans associations, and sensitised each other on legal rights and access to justice.

Leaders are also actively advocating for women's inclusion and participation in their traditional council meetings, which contributed to the setup of leadership structures for women for the first time. Thus, women have gained confidence and advocate against harmful traditional practices like child marriage, FGM/cutting, and report situations of domestic abuse.

Also, key stakeholders in JISRA's work such as community and religious leaders, are taking steps to encourage more women and youth participation and their inclusion in decision-making processes. For example, in October 2022, after attending JISRA trainings, the ward head of Sabon Layi (a Muslim dominated community) appointed an equal number of women and men in his council, and women were given equal opportunities to contribute during the meetings.

CSOs

- Joint Lobby & Advocacy strategies were developed in 2022 with stakeholders and within the consortium. Organisations collaborated to influence decision-making on FoRB, especially in the UPR process. Furthermore, contacts were made with the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and other CSOs to address plans for the UPR process in Abuja.
- In May, partners jointly held high-level meetings in the United Kingdom with the All-Party Parliamentary Group for FoRB, the United Kingdom's FoRB Special Envoy, Deputy Special Envoy and FoRB team, and officials of the FCDO in the FoRB team.
- Tearfund and Search for Common Ground organised an event in which local voices were brought to international policy makers such as the government of the United Kingdom. Hence, the JISRA Country Coordinator (CC), Tearfund, Search for Common Ground global L&A team members, and representatives of JISRA partners in Nigeria engaged with parliamentarians of the United Kingdom, the Special Envoy and the FoRB advisor of the United Kingdom's Prime Minister. This event was organised to connect local experiences and realities with international actors as an incentive to deal with policies that restrict FoRB spaces at the local level and to mobilise support for CSOs working in FoRB. A total of three JISRA LPs from Nigeria were invited as panellists. The consultations aimed to understand the root causes of the conflicts, identify the role that women and youth play in promoting sustainable peace and development and explore how other actors can support their work. The consultations brought together high-level representatives of the Department of State and the European Union (EU), as well as grassroots actors from Burkina Faso, Ghana, Gambia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal.
- Search for Common Ground was invited to participate in a consultation ahead of the EU-Nigeria human rights dialogue in early 2023, and the JISRA team also met with the delegation of parliamentarians of the United Kingdom, including the Deputy Special Envoy on FoRB, who took JISRA's recommendations to the Nigerian Defence Minister and other officials.

Outcomes (2022)

JISRA JOURNEY: 2021-2025

JISRA promoted peaceful elections

In November 2022, JISRA Nigeria had a number of lobby meetings with various stakeholders in Kaduna State. The focus was to promote a peaceful general election in Nigeria, which was held in February 2023. Dialogue meetings were held with the Independent National Electoral Commission, National Orientation Agency, National Human Rights Commission, National Youth Service Corps, and the Kaduna and Youth Leaders of various political parties. JISRA Nigeria also conducted various trainings attended by community leaders (traditional, religious, women, youth) on advocacy, social accountability, election, women and youth inclusion.

One of the village heads and traditional leaders of Kurmi Mashi, Nigeria, is often asked by community members to solve disputes. Up until 2021, there was a clear gender bias in his judgements. After attending the JISRA trainings and dialogue sessions organised by the Women's Interfaith Council, he improved his understanding on gender equality and women's rights and incorporated this in his judgements.

FoRB in practice: Peace Pact among traditional leaders

In June 2022, Scripture Union of West Africa (SUWA) facilitated the formation of a network for Traditional Leaders at Jebbu-Miango. This resulted in the signing of a Peace Pact agreement between Irigwe and Fulani in Bassa on July 13th, 2022. The objective of the Peace Pact is to support "warring" communities to stop hostilities and find alternative peaceful ways of resolving conflicts.

Celebration of International Days of Peace and Tolerance

Policy-makers, government agencies of peace and CSOs in Kaduna and Plateau states collaborated with JISRA's activities and amplified FoRB-related issues, especially during the International Days of Peace and Tolerance.

Partners' Highlights (2022)

JISRA JOURNEY: 2021-2025

Inclusive Training on Advocacy

Before conducting advocacy visits to communities in Kaduna State, Tearfund organised an advocacy training in Kaduna State in November 2022. To ensure inclusivity, participants included religious leaders, traditional leaders, women, and youth leaders of the Christian and Muslim faiths (34 Christians and 22 Muslims). They received advocacy training to help them advocate for FoRB, gender equality, and inclusion at the local and state levels.

Youth Inclusion in JISRA Activities

Community Platforms supported local partners in ensuring youth participation and inclusion in all activities related to JISRA at the community level. Youth were targeted for training and other programs related to religious freedom. This caused a positive influence on youth to broaden leadership roles, shun violence and drug abuse, and spread the message of FoRB in their communities.

Event Highlights (2022)

JISRA JOURNEY: 2021-2025

International Day of Peace



Event Highlights (2022)

JISRA JOURNEY: 2021-2025

International Day of Peace



Overview (2023)

The JISRA project has contributed immensely to the socio-political context especially by promoting **Religious Collaboration for peace** during the reporting period. LPs carried out sensitization and advocacy initiatives contributing to influencing the turnout of the general elections of 2023. Faith Actors building synergy and collaboration within and across religious lines have influenced the response of political sympathizers at the outcome of results of the 2023 general elections In the JISRA project locations.

The Nigeria Lobby Advocacy and Communications Working Group (LACWG) conducted capacity building workshops for traditional leaders, community leaders, church actors, and security actors as part of their work on election advocacy

JISRA partners delivered refresher intra- and inter-religious trainings for religious leaders, traditional leaders, women, and youth to champion Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) and peaceful coexistence.

Key Achievements

- **Knowledge and Skills in Action:** Participants shared how they applied training lessons in their communities, collaborating across denominational lines to promote FoRB, gender equity, and inclusivity.
- **Advocacy:** Equipped with advocacy and social accountability skills, religious and community leaders organized courtesy calls and sensitization campaigns that helped ensure peaceful elections—a significant shift in communities once prone to electoral violence.
- **Dialogue and Mediation Capacity:** DIWA's scorecard dialogues strengthened the ability of leaders to manage ongoing tensions and review action plans despite delays caused by security challenges in Plateau State.
- **Security Agency Engagement:** Annual capacity-building sessions with the Army, Police, NSCDC, and human rights offices fostered a network forum to improve civil-security collaboration on FoRB protection. Security actors, despite heavy workloads, actively participated—showing openness to learning and partnership.

Outcomes (2023)

JISRA JOURNEY: 2021-2025

Danjuma Yerima, a Christian local security actor and farmer in Dutsen Kura gave a Muslim Fulani man his piece of land to cultivate during the 2023 farming season.

In Idon Hanya community, for the first time, three women have been appointed to the traditional council and are allowed to contribute to decision-making within the traditional council.

Religious actors of Kurmin Mashi community led the initiation of interfaith farming with Muslims and Christians, and together they have planted maize, guinea corn and beans.

A Fulani woman selling cow milk was bothered by some kids, and she was refused compensation by the mother of the child because of her ethnicity. Another community member, who had previously participated in JISRA activities, intervened and made sure that the woman was compensated.

Some youth leaders jointly signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a 'wall of peace', which is a platform where community and youth leaders come together to discuss and execute actions to promote interfaith cohesion between the community members.

in Kajuru, leadership positions were only held by Adara ethnic group; however since September 2023, three positions in the community are now allocated to non-Adara people. Although these new leadership positions led to some unrest, dialogues were held to avert conflicts.

Outcomes (2023)



In Kaduna, the Lobby, Advocacy and Communications Working Group went to the Nigeria Police Force outpost in the Local Governments and solicited for more security presence during the elections and this was made available to the communities during the elections.

Photo Credit:

Outcomes (2023)

JISRA JOURNEY: 2021-2025

A member of a youth group from the Ayagan community (Zangon Kataf LGA, Kaduna State in Nigeria) earlier hardly tolerated people who were not of the same faith as him. RURCON organised refresher training that helped remind him to appreciate the value and sanctity of human life. In June 2023, a man from the Kataf ethnic group was very sick and needed a blood transfusion but had no money.

The young man went to donate his blood but it was not a match; however, he searched and got a match to save the sick man. He felt obligated to donate blood to the sick man for him to survive, because he had learnt that blood does not have religion or tribe and everyone has the same colour of blood.

"We are living very harmoniously with people of other faiths, without any incidents of misunderstanding or conflict. This peaceful coexistence is a testament to the mutual respect and open communication we have cultivated within our diverse community. The collaborative efforts, such as interfaith dialogues and joint community activities, have further strengthened our bonds and fostered an environment of unity and understanding. ~

Female Community Member from Daffo, Plateau State

Women's associations were established in Jema'a and Zango-Kataf LGAs of Kaduna state and Jos North LGA of Plateau state to promote women's inclusion and engagement in peace processes and community development.

A woman was appointed as a leader for Dutsen Kura, in Zaruma, and Kajuru local government areas.

Partners' Highlights (2023)

JISRA partners organised a training session to strengthen the capacity of CSOs, faith actors, traditional leaders, and security actors, resulting in the establishment of a network to facilitate ongoing conversations and collaborations to resolve conflicts around religious lines. Local government authorities and security actors were engaged to ensure security presence during the elections, thereby contributing to peaceful conduct and voter confidence.

During the Feminist Foreign Policy Festival on 31 October 2023, preceding the Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy Conference on 1 and 2 November, MM, in collaboration with Tearfund NL and Faith to Action Network, organised a session on the role of religious actors and leaders in the promotion of FoRB and the prevention of extremism with Dr. Rhoda (SUWA) in attendance.

Tearfund organised learning events with the UK FoRB Forum to highlight the themes of engagement of youth and women, and the importance of a peacebuilding approach to FoRB, with UK audiences and policymakers. This is in collaboration with the Conflict Prevention Team of the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office. DIWA presented on 'Advocating for Conflict Prevention across the UK government', sharing good practice and learnings from JISRA.

SUWA presented the JISRA UPR recommendations and shared insights on the political and FoRB context in Nigeria. This contributed to a better understanding of JISRA's interventions in Nigeria

Partners' Highlights (2023)

JISRA JOURNEY: 2021-2025

JISRA Nigeria at the United Nations

JISRA Nigeria, with the support of Tearfund, MM and other consortium partners, supported the development of the JISRA Nigeria analysis and recommendations for the UPR review of Nigeria in the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. In close collaboration with the Nigerian Human Rights Commission and other organisations, a civil society shadow report on the status of FoRB in Nigeria was submitted to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and bilateral and multilateral meetings with the Nigerian government were organised. The recommendations were shared with strategic partners and decision makers at national (Nigeria) and international levels (European institutions such as EEAS and INTPA, and UN member states). This contributed to more visibility of the JISRA recommendations and their inclusion in the official national report. In December, JISRA, represented by Tearfund, participated in Nigeria's UPR pre-session in Geneva, presenting the recommendations on improving FoRB to several permanent missions and other relevant key stakeholders. This was JISRA Nigeria's first engagement with the UPR process, and the implementation was successful. The report and policy recommendations put together by JISRA Nigeria have been highlighted in the published summary of stakeholders' submissions on Nigeria, put together by the OHCHR.

Partners' Highlights (2023)



Cross section of participants at the FoRB Exchange Learning Visit Programme With MM Partner From Cameroon/ Courtesy Visit to Christian Association of Nigeria (C.A.N.)

Photo Credit: Tearfund



JISRA team in collaboration with other FORBs project (I-RENEW) from Search and support from TEARFUND, local partners, and various stakeholders at the state levels, demonstrated a unified commitment to actively participate in the annual 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

Photo Credit: Search for Common Ground

Partners' Highlights (2023)

JISRA Nigeria in Collaboration with Stakeholders

JISRA Nigeria collaborated with the National Human Rights Council for the validation of the alternative UPR-Report, promoted FoRB, and had meetings with the Dutch embassy and the EU delegation in Abuja to share the UPR recommendations.

JISRA partners have also collaborated with the National Orientation Agency in the run-up to the elections to conduct a pre-election sensitization in JISRA project communities in Kaduna and Plateau states; to educate community members on election procedures at the polling unit, inter-religious collaboration for security and peace in the communities after the outcome of the results.

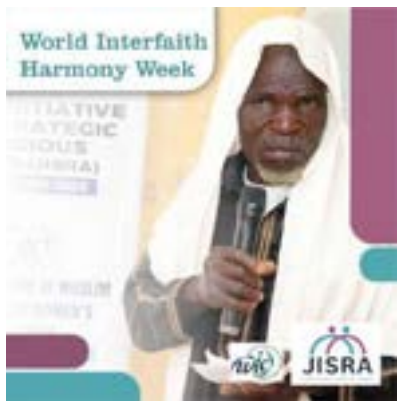
JISRA also collaborated with the INGO forum to conduct a session during the 'INGOs in Action: partnership and coordination' event in Abuja and presented JISRA's success stories.

The FoRB exchange learning visit programme with a partner organisation from MM from Cameroon to the Christian Association of Nigeria was a significant initiative to encourage shared experiences, learning, and best practices on FoRB.

"There has been a significant improvement in the relationships between Muslims of different sects. In the past, intra-faith management, political differences, and business transactions were often challenging due to sectarian divides. Now, there is a much better understanding across religious sects, with members participating in each other's prayers, weddings, and funerals. Additionally, joint meetings between Muslim religious leaders from various sects are being organized to discuss security and other communal issues"

Religious Leader from Idon Hanya Community Kajuru LGA, Kaduna

Event Highlights (2023)



The Nigeria JISRA consortium and LPs held several social media campaigns during the period under review, e.g, World Interfaith Harmony Week from 1st - 7th February 2023.



JISRA team in collaboration with the INGO forum celebrated the International Day commemorating the victims of violence based on religion or belief on the 22nd to 23rd of August 2023, which was part of the INGOS IN ACTION: PARTNERSHIP AND COORDINATION event in Abuja.

Overview (2024)

JISRA JOURNEY: 2021-2025

The JISRA Nigeria has strengthened security measures and improved communication between communities to determine how and when movements are carried out in areas of implementation. In Plateau State, the necessity of relocating activities to safer areas such as Jos showed the importance of adaptive strategies to maintain project effectiveness.

The differing outcomes of the protests in Plateau and Kaduna highlight the importance of interfaith harmony and peaceful coexistence for JISRA stakeholders. The peaceful protest in Plateau was characterized by religious harmony, gender inclusion, youth participation and peacebuilding initiatives despite the challenging context. In contrast, the violence in Kaduna underscores the challenges JISRA faces in addressing conflict and promoting stability in areas with pre-existing tensions. The Early Warning, Early Response (EWER), and FoRB Training was conducted both in Kaduna and Plateau states with representatives of ministries, institutions, and JISRA Community Network Leads in attendance.

The Round Table on Peaceful and Just Societies, titled "State Police as the Sentinel of Peace in Plateau State," was organized by JISRA through the Lobby, Advocacy, and Communication Working Group (LACWG). It provided a platform for key stakeholders to recommend policy frameworks on state policing in Nigeria.

The commemoration of the International Day Commemorating Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief served as both a day of remembrance and a call to action, drawing attention to violations based on religious identity in Nigeria. It reinforced national and global efforts to protect victims, prevent violence, and promote interfaith peace, helping to build a more just and harmonious world.

The Women's Summit, themed "Empowering Voices and Advancing Women's Rights within Faith and Society" was a medium JISRA used for advocating for women's inclusion in the decision-making process.

In October 2024, JISRA communities in Plateau and Kaduna (Jos North, Bassa, Kaura and Jema'a) had peaceful elections that brought in Local Government Officials. JISRA contributed to this outcome by conducting pre-election sensitization campaigns.

Outcomes (2024)

In Doruwa Babuje community, religious actors and stakeholders involved in the JISRA project collaborated to proactively prevent the spread of a religious conflict that had erupted in Mangu LGA, Plateau State. Their joint efforts successfully contained tensions and contributed to maintaining peace within their community.

Additionally, in Doruwa Babuje community, the interreligious network of trained religious actors initiated a communal farming project aimed at supporting the most vulnerable members of the community. The harvest from this initiative is shared with the less privileged, demonstrating a practical expression of interfaith collaboration and social solidarity.

“There has been a notable enhancement in living peacefully and understanding one another, exemplified by attending weddings together and visiting during both Christmas and Sallah celebrations. This mutual respect and shared experiences have strengthened our community bonds, thanks to the engagement of JISRA and other peace-building efforts by various stakeholders.

Community Leader in Kakuri Hausa Community, Kaduna

Youths participated in the interfaith unity games across several JISRA communities. The event provided a platform for these youths to engage in positive social activities, fostering unity, teamwork, and a sense of belonging within the community.

In Kurmi Mashi, Kaduna State, Nigeria, following a JISRA inter-religious training session, youth and elders jointly organized town hall meetings with key stakeholders to address issues of drug abuse and crime in their community

Event Highlights (2024)

JISRA organised the commemoration of the Annual International Day Commemorating the Victims of Violence Based on Religion or Belief in Abuja. JISRA successes were introduced to members of the National Assembly, Directors of both Federal and State Government Agencies, UN Experts, INGOs, and diverse faith leaders (including women and youth) from around Nigeria.

National media featured JISRA in articles on Peace Journalism, FoRB film screenings, and policy conferences in Abuja and Plateau State; Conducted Street interviews, photo-voice projects, and advocacy jingles

Tearfund took the lead to facilitate a media workshop in Kaduna and Plateau to enhance awareness and advocacy on FoRB and humanitarian principles. The workshop focused on strengthening conflict-sensitive reporting, fostering interfaith collaboration, and equipping participants with effective networking skills for advocacy.

DIWA, in collaboration with other JISRA partners, organised a Women's Summit on Empowering Voices and Advancing Women's Rights within Faith and Societies. The Summit contributed to an enhanced commitment from governments and other stakeholders to address the needs and concerns of women in matters related to religion or belief.

Collaborations with Stakeholders (2024)

Level of Collaboration	Activity
Local	<p>Worked with local government agencies including Moro'a Development Association (MDA) and Takad Development Association (TDA) in Kaduna State.</p> <p>Engaged with traditional councils and religious institutions to establish safe spaces, mobilize volunteers, and foster local ownership of peacebuilding initiatives.</p>
National	<p>Partnered with major religious bodies such as Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI) and the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN).</p> <p>Collaborated with government agencies: House of Representatives, Nigeria Police Force, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), and National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).</p> <p>Participated in the National Conference on FoRB, co-hosted with Search for Common Ground, Nigerian Youth-CARE, and I-RENEW (196 participants), resulting in MoUs with federal institutions, launch of a toll-free line for survivors of violence, and broader FoRB awareness.</p>
International	<p>Engaged with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Nigeria INGO Forum, and Bellwether International.</p> <p>Contributed to Universal Periodic Review and constitutional reform processes.</p> <p>Participated in regional learning and advocacy events led by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA).</p> <p>WIC advanced the Marrakesh Declaration and supported faith-based women's mediation efforts across Africa.</p>

Participatory Grant Making (PGM)

Promoting Interfaith Collaboration and Community Empowerment for Sustainable Peacebuilding

JISRA's participatory grant-making (PGM) has been one of the most innovative programming components being implemented across all countries. Through PGM, youth-led groups and women-led groups have been able to identify important issues affecting FoRB in their communities, design initiatives to address these, and determine how best to allocate financial resources to maximise impact.

In 2022, JISRA successfully launched the first cycle of PGM. The initiative aimed to enable CSOs and local communities to collaborate, design, fund, and implement programmes addressing inter-religious difficulties in their regions. This innovative method empowered the communities that JISRA collaborated with to design and decide which initiatives were to be funded in a participatory way, ensuring that their requirements and priorities are reflected in the programmes that will be supported by JISRA.

The PGM programme focused on women and youth community groups to address inter-religious challenges at the community level. The PGM programme was also a learning programme as it was expected to provide more insight into what is really needed to strengthen community voices and to promote inter-religious collaboration at the local level. The implementation of PGM activities was led at the local level by dedicated facilitators who are supported by local/implementing partners

In 2024, the second cycle of JISRA's PGM was completed and the third and final cycle was launched. While the PGM would be evaluated at the end of the programme, anecdotal evidence and reporting from participants made it clear that it was a very effective way of helping youth make important decisions which influence FORB within their own communities.

The PGM has addressed religious divides and social needs through borehole construction, interfaith football, abuse prevention, and economic empowerment, improved trust between communities, and strengthened collaboration with local authorities.

Participatory Grant Making (PGM)

JISRA JOURNEY: 2021-2025

S/N	Group Name	Identified Problem	Activity Implemented	Location
1	Farin Gada Women and Youth Association	Water scarcity and religious divides in the community	Construction of a motorized borehole	Plateau state
2	Sabon Layi Community Development	Water scarcity and religious divides in the community	Construction of a motorized borehole	Plateau state
3	Mista Ali Community Group	Drug and alcohol abuse, water scarcity, and interfaith tensions	Prevention of drug abuse, rehabilitation of boreholes, and digging of wells	Plateau state
4	Interfaith Leaders in Kakuri Gwari/Hausa Community	Environmental degradation affecting peace efforts	Tree planting initiative by interfaith leaders	Kaduna state
5	PGM Interfaith Football Group	Lack of interfaith interactions leading to tensions	Interfaith football match between religious leaders	Kaduna state
6	Interfaith Skills Acquisition Group (Badarawa Community)	Economic vulnerability and lack of livelihood opportunities	Skills acquisition training for religious leaders to promote peaceful coexistence	Kaduna state

Participatory Grant Making (PGM)

JISRA JOURNEY: 2021-2025

S/N	Group Name	Identified Problem	Activity Implemented	Location
7	Unity and Progress Women Group	Religious discrimination in marriage	Awareness campaign promoting inter-religious marriage	Plateau state
8	Progress Youth Group	Drug and substance abuse among youth, lack of interfaith collaboration	Community sensitization on drug abuse and an interfaith football match	Plateau state
9	Aminci Women Group	Poor hygiene and sanitation affecting interfaith relationships	Community sensitization on hygiene and sanitation activities	Plateau state

The PGM has led to significant transformative results at community level during and after implementation. One of the most notable outcomes has been the increased agency and leadership of community actors, particularly religious leaders, youth, and women, in advocating for Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB). Through targeted advocacy training, many participants have successfully engaged local authorities, security agencies, and traditional councils to address religious intolerance and interfaith conflicts. In Kaduna and Plateau states, interfaith dialogue initiatives led by PGM participants have strengthened trust and collaboration between Christian and Muslim communities, leading to joint community projects and peace committees that continue beyond the program's lifespan.

Restoring Trust and Unity in Zankan



Mallam Abubakar Musa Salihu, Imam of Zankan Community, Kaura LGA, Kaduna State & Reverend Yohanna Bitrus, Chairman, Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Kaura LGA, Kaduna State, after an interfaith sermon held in their community on the 3rd Sunday of every month, using the JISRA Interfaith Manual.

Photocredit: SUWA

In Zankan, a deep divide existed between people of different faiths. Years of crises and violence, particularly between farmers and herders, had eroded trust and understanding. Fear and suspicion governed interactions, making it difficult for community members to coexist peacefully. Social gatherings were strained, and interfaith relationships were nearly nonexistent. The lack of dialogue and reconciliation created an environment of hostility, leaving many feeling isolated and unsafe.

With the arrival of JISRA, hope began to take root in Zankan. Through different training sessions and teachings on love, the sanctity of life, and forgiveness, JISRA partners equipped community members with the skills to rebuild broken relationships.

These teachings helped people reflect on the past and envision a peaceful future built on mutual respect.

Community members who embraced these teachings began organizing step-down training sessions to spread the message of unity and peace. These grassroots efforts encouraged even more people to see the benefits of interfaith dialogue. Over time, the community decided to establish monthly interfaith sermons, held every third Sunday, where Christian and Muslim teachings are shared alternately.

The transformation in Zankan has been remarkable. Where fear and suspicion once prevailed, confidence and love have now taken root. People of different faiths now **celebrate festivities together** and support one another in times of need.

Restoring Trust and Unity in Zankan

A significant sign of this newfound unity came in 2022 when Mallam Abubakar Musa's brother was getting married. Instead of relying solely on his faith community, they borrowed chairs from the local church hall for the wedding. This simple yet powerful act symbolized the growing mutual trust between religious groups in Zankan.

Today, religious leaders from different faiths work together with mutual respect, ensuring that peace continues to thrive in the community.

Zankan's journey shows that **peace is possible when communities embrace dialogue, forgiveness, and shared values**. Thanks to JISRA's intervention, the community now understands that differences in faith do not have to lead to conflict. Instead, these differences can enrich relationships when approached with respect and understanding.

The success in Zankan is a testament to the power of interfaith collaboration in conflict-prone communities. By continuing these teachings and fostering deeper connections, the people of Zankan are setting an example for others to follow—proving that love, peace, and unity can triumph over division.



Zankan Community members after their monthly interfaith sermon session, which is held every 3rd Sunday of the month.

Photocredit: Promise Salawu/Tearfund

Stories of Change

Christians helped Muslims clear the Eid Prayer Ground in preparation for the Sallah celebration

Kasuwan Magani Community in Kajuru LGA, Kaduna State, has long been plagued by ethno-religious crises, resulting in deep divisions and distrust among its religious and ethnic groups. The JISRA (Joint Initiative for Strategic Religious Action) project aims to tackle these issues by promoting peaceful coexistence and mutual respect.

A recent milestone in this endeavor occurred when Christians assisted Muslims in clearing the Eid Prayer Ground. This act of solidarity was a significant step towards building trust and dismantling barriers of mistrust and animosity. The event marked a pivotal moment for the JISRA project, contributing to healing and reconciliation within Kasuwan Magani and laying the groundwork for lasting peace and unity in the community.



Christians helped Muslims clear the Eid Prayer Ground in preparation for the Sallah celebration in Kasuwan Magani, Kajuru LGA, Kaduna State

Photocredit: DIWA

This joint effort highlighted the community members' commitment to fostering interfaith dialogue and understanding, setting an example for other communities facing similar conflicts. It underscored the importance of grassroots involvement in peacebuilding efforts and enhanced social cohesion by creating a shared sense of identity and purpose.

In summary, the collaborative action of Christians and Muslims in Kasuwan Magani symbolizes a transformative change towards a more harmonious and united community, demonstrating the positive impact of the JISRA project.



Community members in Kasuwan Magani, Kajuru LGA, Kaduna State

Photocredit: DIWA

Breaking Barriers: Appointment of Female in Traditional Council



Fatima Sani Abdullahi as the first Jakadiyan Matan of the Doruwan Babuje muslim community in Barkin Ladi during her turbaning ceremony

Photocredit: DIWA

In a historic and progressive move, the traditional leader of the Doruwan Babuje muslim community in Barkin Ladi Local Government Area of Plateau State, has announced the appointment of Fatima Sani Abdullahi as the first Jakadiyan Matan of the community. This milestone signifies a shift in societal norms, recognizing the invaluable role of women in leadership. The appointment of Fatima Sani Abdullahi is not just a title but a testament to the evolving perspectives on inclusivity and women's contributions to community development.

As a result of JISRA's capacity-building workshops on peacebuilding and women's rights protection, advocacy visits were conducted to relevant stakeholders in the community, highlighting the importance of gender inclusivity in governance and religious affairs.



Breaking Barriers: Appointment of Female in Traditional Council



An official letter of appointment handed to Fatima Sani

Photocredit: DIWA

The traditional leader, influenced by dialogues and sensitization efforts, recognized the value of women's leadership and took a bold step in appointing Fatima Sani Abdullahi as the first Jakadiyan Matan. This appointment represents a tangible shift in behavior and attitudes, demonstrating that women can hold influential positions and contribute meaningfully to community development.

Women now have a voice in community leadership meetings, fostering a more balanced and inclusive governance structure. Additionally, younger women and girls in the community have gained newfound confidence, seeing a clear example of how they, too, can aspire to leadership roles. The decision also aligns with JISRA's broader goal of ensuring a just society where freedom of religion or belief is respected and upheld, as it promotes a culture of inclusivity and equality.

Breaking Barriers: Women in Leadership in Zaruma

In Zaruma, women had no representation in leadership. For generations, decision-making in the community was dominated entirely by men, leaving women without a voice in matters that directly affected their lives. This exclusion meant that issues concerning women and families—such as healthcare, education, and economic opportunities—were often overlooked. Many women felt powerless, unable to contribute to shaping their own futures. One of them was Constance Onye-Ezeugbo, a determined woman who yearned for change but lacked the platform and support to challenge the status quo.

Recognizing the need for gender inclusivity, JISRA, through its local partners, introduced leadership and gender equality training programs in Zaruma.



Constance, carrying out advocacy efforts in her community, Zaruma

Photocredit: Levi Ezekiel/Tearfund



Constance Onye-Ezeugbo

Photocredit: Promise Salawu/Tearfund

These sessions aimed to empower women with the knowledge, confidence, and skills to participate in leadership and decision-making. Constance Onye was one of the women who attended the training, where she learned about leadership, advocacy, and the importance of women's voices in governance.

Inspired and equipped with new skills, Constance took action. She led advocacy efforts, engaging the traditional council and male leaders to push for greater female inclusion. Through dialogue and advocacy, persistent engagement, she made the case for women's representation in leadership, highlighting how balanced decision-making would benefit the entire community.

Breaking Barriers: Women in Leadership in Zaruma



Constance and other women leaders in Zaruma community

Photocredit: Levi Ezekiel/Tearfund

Constance's advocacy efforts yielded remarkable results. She became the first-ever female leader in Zaruma—a historic milestone that broke long-standing barriers. Her leadership paved the way for further change, as the community saw the value of female participation in governance. Soon after, 15 more women were appointed to leadership positions, bringing the total number of female leaders in Zaruma to 16. With women now actively participating in decision-making, the community has experienced positive transformations. Issues affecting women and families are no longer sidelined, and there is a more inclusive approach to governance. Women now have a say in shaping policies and community projects, ensuring that their perspectives are represented and valued.

The success of female leadership in Zaruma is a testament to the power of inclusion and the impact of JISRA's intervention. It demonstrates that when given the opportunity and support, women can lead, advocate, and bring sustainable impact in communities.

Stories of Change

A Path to Peace: Restoring Harmony in Baiya Community



Garba Sale

Garba Sale a traditional leader mentioned that for many years, Baiya community-Gidan Waya Jema'a LGA has been caught in a seemingly unending conflict between our farmers and herders. This discord stemmed from the increasing population and the resulting scarcity of farmland, which led farmers to en-

croach upon the designated grazing routes, known locally as Labi. Traditionally, these routes were essential for the herders, providing a safe passage for their cattle. One day, after a particularly insightful session on Dialogue and Mediation, I decided to approach my elder brother, who owned a considerable amount of land.

We sat down and had a heartfelt discussion about the ongoing conflict and the urgent need for a solution. Inspired by the principles of dialogue and cooperation that I had learned from JISRA, Garba and his brother in 2023, brainstormed possible ways to re-establish the grazing routes without further disrupting the farmers' activities.

Garba's brother, recognizing the importance of restoring peace, agreed to allocate a portion of his land to serve as the new grazing route "Labi". This was a monumental step towards resolving the conflict. As a community we organized a series of mediation meetings at Himma, where both farmers and herders were invited to discuss and negotiate the new arrangement. These sessions, facilitated by the skills and knowledge imparted by JISRA, were crucial in fostering mutual understanding and respect.

Establishment of Central Islamic School Fosters Improved Relations in Idon Hanya

In a rural community with a diverse population of minority Muslims, misunderstandings were prevalent due to a lack of respect among differing sects. The fragmented Islamic education system, with schools following various ideologies, perpetuated divisions and hindered meaningful dialogue.

To address this, DIWA-JISRA participants facilitated a dialogue session using the scorecard approach, bringing together religious leaders and members from different sects to discuss and resolve the issues. This process led to the development of an action plan to address the discord.

Through months of collaboration, stakeholders and community members united to establish a centralized Islamic school, utilizing the community mosque for educational sessions. This effort marked a significant milestone, as children from various sectarian backgrounds began attending the same school, fostering a cohesive and supportive environment.

The shift in attitudes and behaviors was profound. Community members started engaging in more respectful and meaningful dialogues, promoting mutual understanding and cooperation. The unified school became a catalyst for social cohesion, transforming the community from fragmentation to unity.

Summarily, this journey signifies a shift in perception, demonstrating the power of collective action in overcoming divisions and building a harmonious and progressive community

"There has been a notable enhancement in living peacefully and understanding one another, exemplified by attending weddings together and visiting during both Christmas and Sallah celebrations. This mutual respect and shared experiences have strengthened our community bonds, thanks to the engagement of JISRA and other peace-building efforts by various stakeholders.

Community Leader in Kakuri Hausa Community, Kaduna

Education and Advocacy Transform Lives in Kurmi Mashi and Hanyin Banki, Kaduna - Nigeria

Before the JISRA intervention, Kurmi Mashi and Hanyin Banki faced serious challenges of child marriage and poor access to education, especially for girls. Early marriage in Kurmi Mashi deprived girls of schooling, while many children in Hanyin Banki dropped out due to financial hardship.

Through the Women's Interfaith Council in Kaduna, JISRA supported community-driven solutions. In Kurmi Mashi, Maryam Saleh championed girls' education and spoke boldly against early marriage. In Hanyin Banki, religious leaders and community members identified five children who had dropped out and provided school uniforms, sparking wider conversations on the value of education.

Maryam Saleh's efforts inspired parents to keep their daughters in school, reducing cases of early marriage. In Hanyin Banki, the five children who returned to school became symbols of hope, motivating other families to follow their example.

Conversations about education and child marriage now occur more openly. Parents increasingly recognize education as a pathway to a better future, and relationships between religious leaders and the community have strengthened, ensuring continued advocacy.

The transformation in Kurmi Mashi and Hanyin Banki shows the power of community-led initiatives to break cycles of poverty and inequality.

"Thanks to our involvement in the JISRA project, the interaction between people of different faiths has markedly improved. Recently, as a community, we collectively agreed to periodically maintain the grave sites of all faiths together."

~Traditional Leader from Doruwan Babuje Community, Barkin Ladi LGA, Plateau State

Advocating for Religious Inclusivity at Kaduna State University

At Kaduna State University (KASU) in Nigeria, Christian students faced a significant challenge: the absence of a dedicated worship space which led the Christian students to worship in classrooms. Without a designated place for prayer and fellowship, many students experienced emotional distress and a sense of exclusion. This lack of accommodation hindered their ability to freely practice their faith in an institution meant to promote learning and inclusivity.

Recognizing the urgency of the situation, the Women's Interfaith Council (WIC) took decisive action. On March 28, 2024, following their Round Table discussion on justice, human rights, and freedom of belief, WIC conducted an advocacy visit to KASU. The visit aimed to engage university leaders in meaningful dialogue on the need for a Christian worship space. During the visit, the WIC team met with the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Abdullahi Musa, and other key university officials. They presented the concerns of Christian students and emphasized the importance of religious equity on campus. Their advocacy underscored the right to freedom of belief and worship, as well as the university's responsibility to provide an inclusive environment for all students.

The advocacy visit yielded a remarkable breakthrough. The Vice Chancellor announced that the government had approved land for constructing a Christian chapel, a move further supported by the Director General for Interfaith, Kaduna State. This commitment marked a turning point in the university's approach to religious inclusivity. This was more than just an infrastructural change. It was a validation of their religious rights.

Sustainability Plans (2025)

- To ensure the sustainability of JISRA's work in its final year, partners made several commitments during the annual planning meeting that was conducted in September 2024 to carry out actions across advocacy, networks, impact showcasing, media, and community engagement. At the local level, partnerships with government agencies, traditional councils, and religious institutions will continue to be strengthened to embed JISRA's initiatives into existing community structures. Advocacy efforts will involve engagements with Peacebuilding Agencies, security actors, and legislators through town hall meetings, coordinated advocacy plans, and follow-ups with State Assemblies and key government ministries to push for tangible commitments.
- There are community structures conducting dialogue sessions to address multiple issues that affect them. These sessions, as noted by the community members, have been helpful and effective in preventing and resolving conflicts and will continue routinely.
- The VSLA groups are self-sustaining as they meet monthly to continue to dialogue and conduct other VSLA activities.
- Since women can influence their election into leadership positions largely as a result of their engagements in JISRA's advocacy campaigns, trainings on gender equality and youth participation, they are aware that if they strategise and lobby and advocate correctly, they can achieve far-reaching outcomes and successes for themselves.
- Keeping JISRA's message visible and accessible is essential for its sustainability. Billboards, posters, and policy briefs will remain prominent in key locations to reinforce the advocacy messages.
- The consortium, with support from the Assistant JISRA Global Coordinator, conducted advocacy visits to key stakeholders such as the National Orientation Agency (NOA), Nigeria Human Rights Commission (NHRC), and Plateau Peacebuilding Agency (PPBA) to strengthen collaborations and advocate for project sustainability.

Sustainability Plans (2025)

- Networks and collaboration will also be reinforced by strengthening Communities of Practice (CoP), hosting quarterly expert-led webinars, and integrating peace education into schools through teacher-student mobilization and awareness campaigns..
- JISRA partners will focus on showcasing JISRA's impact through success stories, advocacy tools, and community-based experience sharing, using techniques and materials like photo voices and fact sheets in Hausa and English. Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials will be widely distributed, including stickers, posters, and policy briefs.
- Media outreach will be expanded with audiovisual jingles, press conferences, and a JISRA Nigeria documentary to amplify project messaging.
- Community-level and state-level closeout events were held in Plateau and Kaduna, engaging key stakeholders such as youth groups, CSOs, government agencies, media, and INGOs.
- A transition strategy was developed from January 2025, including mapping post-JISRA advocacy actors and ensuring that community representatives play a central role in shaping sustainability efforts. Through these strategic actions, JISRA aims to embed its impact beyond its final year, securing long-term influence and continuity.
- Previous rounds of PGM implementation have provided valuable lessons that are being carried forward to enhance future rounds. One key lesson is the importance of **strengthening local ownership**, ensuring that communities play an active role in decision-making and project design. This has led to increased engagement with religious leaders, traditional councils, and youth groups, fostering a greater sense of responsibility and sustainability.

Impact Data



5

Legislations/policies supported related to FoRB



120

Local peacebuilding networks established/strengthened



267

Faith leaders trained with increased understanding of FoRB, religious tolerance and gender equity



31

Communities across **Kaduna and Plateau states** are engaged with peacebuilding and FoRB activities



605

Women and youth empowered to lead peacebuilding initiatives



48

VSLA Inter-religious and Intra-religious groups



200,000+

Community members reached



Photocredit: Levi Ezekiel/Tearfund

Community Activities

JISRA JOURNEY: 2021-2025



Interfaith Football Match Fosters Unity Across Faiths
Christians and Muslims came together for an interfaith football match to symbolize acceptance, freedom of religion or belief, and peaceful coexistence across faith lines. The event showcased how sports can bridge divides, foster dialogue, and strengthen unity in diverse Nigerian communities.



Setting up the JISRA billboard carrying peace and FoRB messages.



Cultural and religious celebrations building interfaith harmony among Christians and Muslims



Interfaith Village Savings and Loans (VSLA) Activities in Communities

Consortium Activities

JISRA JOURNEY: 2021-2025



World Interfaith Harmony Week in collaboration with Kaduna State Peace Commission and Bureau of Interfaith - February 2025



Capacity Strengthening on the Role of Media in Interfaith Relations and Peacebuilding



2025 Strategic Planning with Kaduna State Peace Commission



Conference on International Day Commemorating Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief Held in Abuja



The Role of Security Actors in Peacebuilding



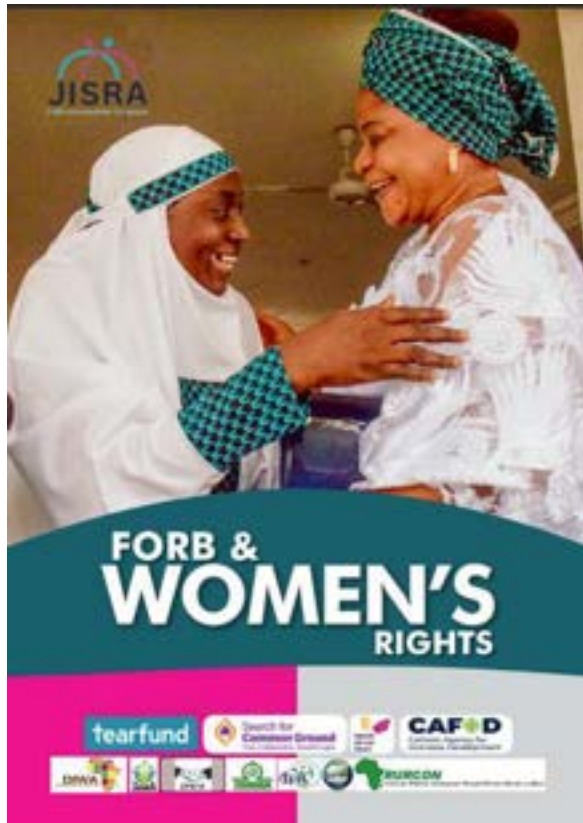
Recipients of Recognition Plaques for Peacebuilding efforts as victims or survivors of FoRB-related incidences.



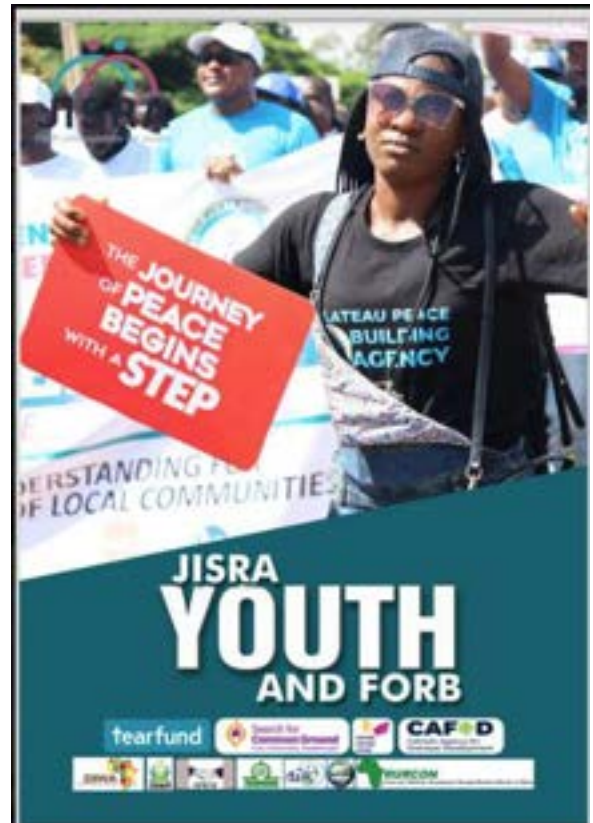
Roundtable on Just and Peaceful Societies: State Police as the Sentinel of Peace in Nigeria

Lobby & Advocacy Impact

JISRA JOURNEY: 2021-2025



Fact Sheet on FoRB and Women's Rights



Fact Sheet on Youth and FoRB



Advocacy case studies

Advocacy in Nigeria: Peacebuilding and women's inclusion

Summary: Tearfund's partner provides advocacy training to a local community in Nigeria, supporting them to achieve women's participation in local governance structures and religious tolerance.

In Gidan Wasa – a small town in Kaduna State – traditional rulers and councils hold a large amount of power, influence and regard in the community, particularly around development issues and conflict resolution. These councils are vital to the attainment of economic progress and political stability at the local level. However, women in Gidan Wasa have not historically had the opportunity to participate in traditional council meetings.

The southern region in Kaduna State has struggled with communal, farmer-herder conflict, religious conflict, and violent persecution. These tensions and conflicts have led to displacement, fatalities and have also exacerbated the gender divide in the region, especially for women who were already excluded and marginalized in decision-making processes. All these factors have created a climate of unease and some people fear openly manifesting their religion.

RURCON, a local NGO that Tearfund partners with, is working in Gidan Wasa as part of [The Joint Initiative for Sustainable Religious Tolerance \(JISRT\)](#). The JISRA consortium (that Tearfund and RURCON are members of) believes that freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) and interfaith dialogue are essential and integral to the realization of peaceful and just societies.

As part of the JISRA programme, RURCON decided to run advocacy training with communities in Gidan Wasa. After the session, a group of local women began to meet together to discuss how they could ensure the inclusion of women in local decision-making.

Before RURCON's training, different faith groups in Gidan Wasa were largely living away from each other with little dialogue or interaction between groups. RURCON provided a space for both Christian and Muslim women to establish and strengthen friendships, working together to advocate on the issue of women's inclusion in local governance.

Case Study on Peacebuilding and Women's Inclusion



Women play an important role in the advancement of FoRB and their voices must be heard

Lobby & Advocacy Impact

JISRA JOURNEY: 2021-2025



Report on State Policing in Plateau State

[UN Universal Periodic Review, Nigeria 2023 - 2024](#)

Recommendations by the JISRA consortium in Nigeria



JISRA's UPR Submission



2021-2025

