



JISRA Journey

A Photobook of Stories of Change

2021 – 2025



JISRA project has created a platform for PEACE to thrive in Dutsen Kura community of Bassa LGA, Plateau State. As a result, a Reverend and an Imam who are living in the same community met for the very first time. They decided to take the message of "peaceful coexistence" to their congregations.

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

Rooted in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on Freedom of Religion and Belief, 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).



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 'jisar' 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.

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.



JISRA NIGERIA PARTNERS



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)

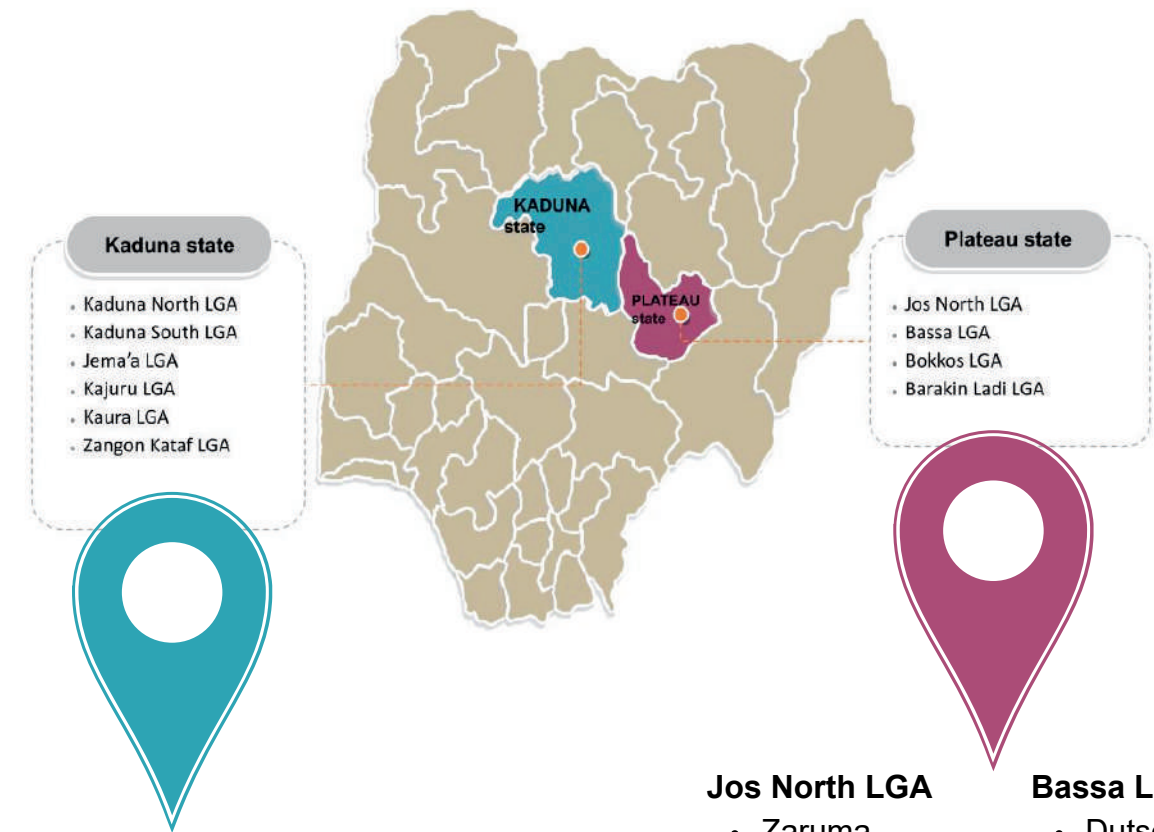


Women Interfaith Council (WIC)



Development Initiative of West Africa (DIWA)

JISRA Locations in Nigeria



Kaduna 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

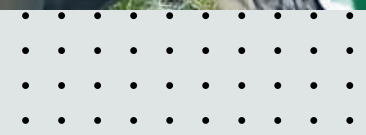
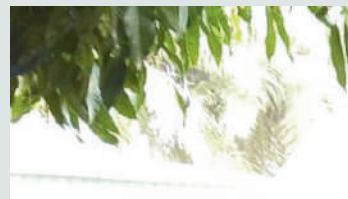
- Gindi Akwati
- Dorowan Babuje



An Iman who is a JISRA stakeholder expressing his appreciation for the peace and unity that his community is experiencing due to the coming of JISRA.



• Christians and Muslims rebuild their friendship in Faringada community through sporting activity and cultural festival, sharing wonderful moments with joy and laughter, breaking the barriers of religious and ethnic difference.





JISRA's effort to foster unity and peaceful coexistence amongst religious and ethnic groups, as well as upholding Freedom of Religion or Beliefs (FoRB) is yielding great impact as Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders from Kaduna and Plateau States are united for this just cause.



JISRA ensuring the voices of women are heard in their communities.



‘There have been other benefits from the VSLA aside from the financial help. It has helped in uniting us as we come to meet each other as people of different faith groups.’

Martha Isa
Manchok Community, Kaura LGA, Kaduna State, Nigeria.



Martha Isa winnows sunflower seeds – a business she started through JISRA’s Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) initiative.



‘Before JISRA, only men were involved in decision making in my community. Through JISRA's advocacy efforts, I became the first woman included in the stakeholders in the community. Now, we are 16 women.’

Constance Onye-Ezeugbo

Women Leader, Zaruma, Jos North LGA, Plateau State, Nigeria

In Zaruma, as in many Nigerian communities, leadership and decision-making were dominated by men, leaving women without representation or a voice in matters affecting their lives.



Recognising the need for gender inclusivity, JISRA, through its local partners, introduced leadership and gender equality training programmes in Zaruma. These sessions were aimed to equip women with the knowledge, confidence and skills to participate in leadership and decision-making.

Constance Onye-Ezeugbo 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 persistent engagement, she made the case for women's representation in leadership, highlighting how balanced decision-making would benefit the entire community.



Davou Raphael

Catechist of St. Peter and Paul Church Council, Congo-Russia

‘Even as a religious leader, my understanding of key issues was limited. But through JISRA's capacity-building workshops, I've gained deeper insight into the sanctity of life, peace, justice, love, forgiveness, and respect for all.’

Davou Raphael

Catechist of St. Peter and Paul Catholic Church, Congo-Russia, Jos

Interfaith relations in Congo-Russia community were strained. It was common for individuals to throw stones at the church building simply because it shared a boundary with the neighboring Muslim community. JISRA has improved Christian-Muslim relations in the community, once marked by tension. The local mosque now responds positively to church invitations, and Muslim youths even join Christians in protecting the church during Sunday services—a remarkable shift in a once-hostile environment.

Using the JISRA training manual during Bible studies, youth and women in St. Peter and Paul Church, Congo-Russia, now better understand gender equality, peaceful coexistence and conflict resolution. The church also took a bold step in October 2023 by appointing Mrs. Mary Peter Mandu as the first female chairperson of the church council—a position previously held by men for decades.



Mary Peter Mandu

Chairperson of St. Peter and Paul Church Council, Congo-Russia



Youth are building legacies of peace and positive change in their communities through sports. These friendly matches help to improve social cohesion along religious and ethnic divides.



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



Markus Achai, Village Head of Manchok Community, was deeply affected by a 2014 attack by unidentified herders. The trauma resulted in hatred, even making him reject "fura de nunu", a local milk delicacy associated with the herders. Training on forgiveness and reconciliation transformed Markus' mindset. When herders later destroyed his crops, he chose not to retaliate but forgave them. Today, Markus enjoys fura de nunu and mediates peace among community members.
Kaura LGA, Kaduna State, Nigeria.



Anya Sani, a 40-year-old Christian woman from Congo-Russia, Jos North, once harbored deep resentment after losing her brother in the 2008 Jos crisis. Her grief turned to hatred, even affecting how she treated Muslims at her food stall. But through Tearfund/SUWA interreligious peacebuilding workshops, Anya experienced a change of heart. She began serving all customers equally, earning the affectionate nickname "Mother" from Muslims in her community.
Congo-Russia, Jos North LGA, Plateau State, Nigeria.



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



Members of Zankan Community gather after their monthly interfaith sermon session, held every third Sunday of the month. Using the JISRA manual, Christian and Muslim leaders take turns delivering sermons—if a Christian leader preaches this week, a Muslim leader leads the next week—fostering mutual respect and understanding across faiths.
Kaura LGA, Kaduna State, Nigeria.



Mallam Garba Sale is the Ward Head of Baiya Arewa in Gidan Waya District, who resolved farmer-herder clashes in his community using the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) methodology. Garba's brother (now deceased) recognised the urgency to make peace and made a monumental decision to allocate a portion of his land as a new grazing route, ensuring that herders could move freely without disturbing farmlands. Jema'a LGA, Kaduna State, Nigeria.



Ardo Bako Abubakar of Dutsen Kura, Bassa LGA, builds a path for peace by preventing reprisal attacks and fostering unity among religious groups. By welcoming both Christians and Muslims to shared celebrations, he models the power of interfaith harmony in healing divided communities.



ALI TIGA, A YOUTH LEADER IN MISTA ALI

Photocredit: CAFOD

Before the intervention of JISRA, the Mista-Ali community lacked a platform where members of different ethnic and religions would come together and initiate activities tailored towards peaceful coexistence.

The coming of JISRA has brought a turnaround as different ethnic and religious bodies come together to celebrate festivals together, coming together for community projects like sanitation, joint security patrols, and joint action plans to mitigate conflict in the community.

The capacity training of local security actors and equipping them with gadgets to ease their job. JISRA has also brought a transformation in the area of security. The commitment of the security personnel enhances the influence on other members to be more active in the discharge of their responsibilities. This has equally helped the community to support and build trust and confidence in the local security architecture. Some parts of the community that for years have lacked drinking water and without hope of getting water have experienced a change in perspective as many boreholes have been rehabilitated and made functional, and wells have been made available. Also, many unemployed youths are actively engaged in vocational and skills training in various centers of learning, and lots of adults who are unable to go to school or drop out of school are now back in class, courtesy of the JISRA Adult Education Center of learning.



ZUMA JANG, A YOUTH LEADER IN ANGUWAN JARAWA

Photocredit: CAFOD

Before the coming of JISRA, the Angwan Jarawa community was plagued by cultism, drugs and other criminal activities, causing an atmosphere of fear and insecurity.

With training and support from JISRA, the community launched a sensitization and awareness campaign on 20th April 2024, in collaboration with local task forces, Sector One STF, and Katako Police Station. The campaign highlighted the dangers of criminal behavior and encouraged parents and youths to take responsibility for their actions.

As a result, many cult members and drug dealers left the area, and the community became significantly safer.

The lack of opportunities and community support deepened the challenges, creating a cycle of neglect and despair. However, the arrival of JISRA brought new hope and transformation to the community.

In 2024, JISRA identified the pressing need to empower the youth through skills acquisition. JISRA facilitated training programs in tailoring and barbing, targeting both male and female participants, including underprivileged individuals. Skilled professionals mentored the trainees, equipping them with practical skills to earn a living and contribute to the community's growth.

Today, Angwan Jarawa's youth are embracing self-reliance and purpose. The tailoring and barbing have opened pathways to employment and entrepreneurship, fostering a sense of pride and responsibility. This initiative showcases how targeted interventions can break cycles of hardship, uplift communities, and transform lives. This transformation demonstrates the power of collective action and serves as a model for building peaceful, inclusive communities.



Ishaya Pam is a community leader of Rafiki Community in Bassa LGA, Plateau State. After participating in a JISRA workshop on harmful cultural practices, he decided to include his two daughters in the family inheritance. His four sons initially resisted and argued that it was anti-cultural. Ishaya gave his sons time to reflect rather than forcing the issue.

A few months later, Ishaya gathered his four sons and two daughters for a heartfelt discussion. He explained his reasons for wanting to share the inheritance equally, emphasising the importance of gender equality and fairness. After a serious deliberation, his children agreed.

Word of Ishaya's decision spread through the community, and he faced criticism from some elders. One friend expressed disappointment, but Ishaya took the time to explain the lessons he had learned from JISRA about equality and respect for all genders.

Inspired by Ishaya's conviction, his friend decided to follow suit, gathering his children and ensuring his daughters received their rightful share of the inheritance.

Ishaya Pam includes his daughters in land inheritance, challenging harmful traditions promoting gender equality.
Rafiki, Bassa LGA, Plateau State, Nigeria.



Alhaji Buhari Adamu Jama'a - District Head of Gidan Waya, institutionalized the inclusion of women leaders in traditional council meetings, challenging gender norms and giving women a voice in decision-making processes.

Through JISRA, he also introduced a nonviolent conflict resolution model, ensuring that communal issues are first addressed through the traditional council before escalating to security agencies.

Jema'a LGA, Kaduna State, Nigeria.



"In my community, faith is often weaponized against women. But through dialogue, I've seen how understanding can dismantle harmful narratives."



'Women were almost sidelined in my community, but with the coming of JISRA, women now actively participate at the traditional council and political levels. Personally, my level of communication and relationship with people of other faiths has increased because of JISRA.'

Benardette Julius Bakura
Manchok, Kaura LGA, Kaduna State, Nigeria.



Women in a Kaduna community on a uniform "asoebi" attire showcasing interfaith unity among the women in the community.



Alice Abba, a women's leader in Zankan, Kaduna State, Nigeria, speaking out and freely expressing her views in a monthly interfaith gathering in her community.



Interreligious joint initiative on community sanitation in Kakuri Gwari Community, Kaduna South.





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

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.



An official letter of appointment was handed to Fatima Sani

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.





On International Women's Day 2025, community members engaged in media advocacy on the Rhythm FM radio show in Plateau, amplifying women's voices and highlighting their vital role in peacebuilding.



"This summit reminded me that we, as women, are not alone in this fight. Together, we are stronger, and our voices will change the world."

Resolutions and Commitments

A. Institutionalizing Women's Leadership in Governance and Peacebuilding

Achieving this resolution requires the following:

- a. Establishing inclusive policies mandate women's representation in decision-making processes at all levels of governance.
- b. Building women's capacities through leadership training to effectively participate in interfaith dialogue and initiatives promoting religious tolerance.
- c. Collaborating with policymakers and community leaders to reform harmful cultural and religious practices that marginalize women, ensuring their integration into societal leadership structures.



Women's Summit 2025

Interfaith Village Savings and Loans (VSLA) Activities in Communities

The VSLA groups form a key part of the sustainability plan for promoting peace and FoRB, as faith groups meet monthly to sustain dialogue and carry out other peace-sustaining activities.





The women from Gidan Waya, Bakin Kogi, and Dangoma communities held a joint activity to train women on soap making. This activity encouraged women to continue to live in peace with one another and strengthen the relationship between them.

In Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State, Nigeria, youth from Sabon Layi and Anguwan Jarawa communities carried out an advocacy visit to the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) of Katako Police Division. Through this initiative, they sought to strengthen collaboration between community security platforms and the police, demonstrating meaningful youth inclusion and representation in local security decision-making processes.



Christian and Muslim stakeholders in Zonkwa, Zangon Kataf LGA paying a courtesy visit to the Divisional Police Officer(DPO) to discuss the issues of peace and sustainability in their communities.

Religious leaders in Barkin Ladi facilitated a dialogue between the community and security agents, resulting in the formation of a joint committee. After the attack and murder of a security agent, security forces carried out village raids and mass arrests. Religious and traditional leaders trained by JISRA intervened by engaging with the security agency to advocate for a joint investigation leading to the arrest of suspects and the release of innocent civilians.

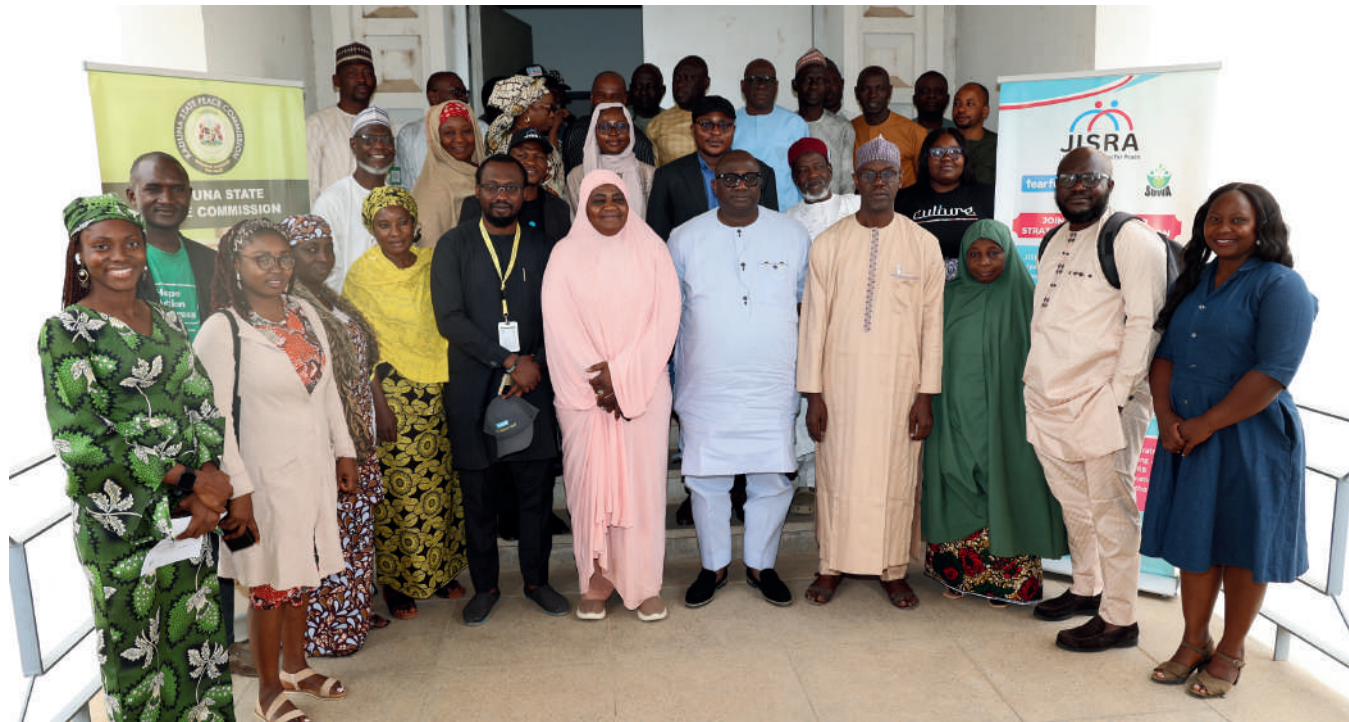


The Women Inter-faith Network Forum in the Dutsen Kura and Rafiki communities of Bassa LGA, Plateau State, developed a joint community-based initiative to clean their environment regularly as part of their sustainability plan.



Capacity strengthening and community exchange learning events

JISRA Nigeria Events



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



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



2025 Strategic Planning with Kaduna State Peace Commission

Policy Influencing



Taiwan International Religious Freedom Summit - Promoting Legislative Action in FoRB



International Day of Tolerance Celebration to promote FoRB



Elections Advocacy



2025 Strategic Planning with Kaduna State Peace Commission

JISRA Nigeria's Lobby & Advocacy Impact



Report on State Policing in Plateau State



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 Waya – a small town in Kaduna State – traditional rulers and councils hold a large amount of power, influence and respect 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 Waya 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 extremism. 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 marginalised 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 Waya as part of [The Joint Initiative for Strategic Religious Action \(JISRA\)](#). 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 realisation of peaceful and just societies.

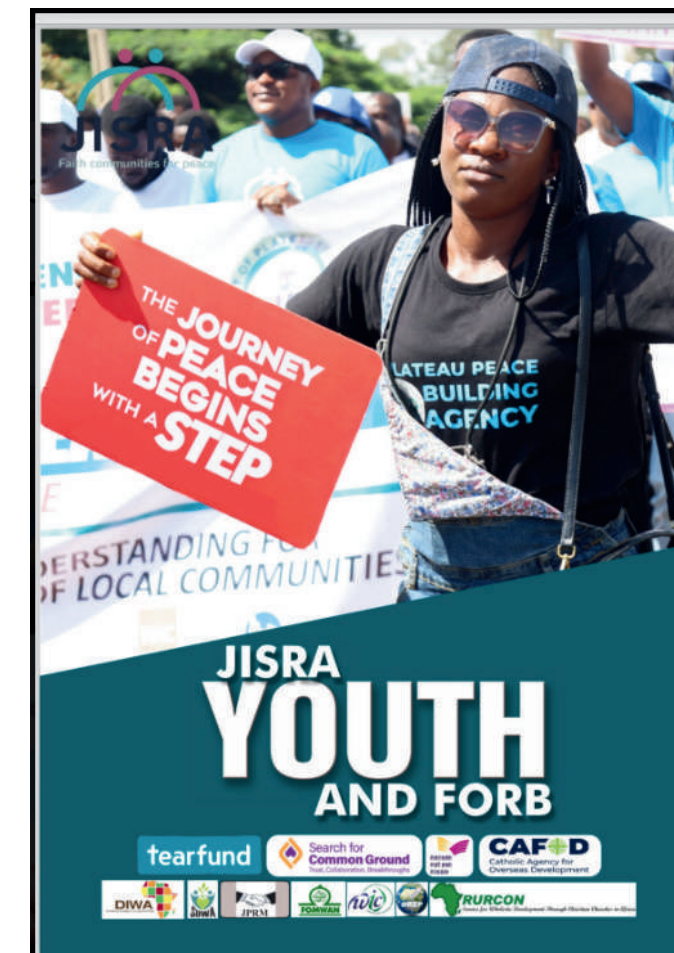
As part of the JISRA programme, RURCON decided to run advocacy training with communities in Gidan Waya. After the sessions, a group of local women began to meet together to discuss how they could ensure the inclusion of women in local decision making.

Before RURCON's training, different faith groups in Gidan Waya 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



Fact Sheet on FoRB and Women's Rights



Fact Sheet on Youth and FoRB

Key Achievements

- Capacity Strengthening for Media Practitioners in Kaduna and Plateau: The Role of Media in Interfaith Relations and Peacebuilding
- Capacity strengthening for Partners and project participants on Advocacy, Communications and Social Accountability
- Capacity Strengthening on Village Savings and Loans scheme
- Honoured Survivors of Religious Violence in August 2024
- Round table discussions and Dissemination of policy recommendations with legislators, traditional rulers, diplomats, academicians, government, peace practitioners and the general public
- Fostered Dialogue and Interfaith Understanding by creating platforms during notable international days all through the year (youth, women, peace and FoRB international days)
- Publication and Resource Sharing of articles in a peace journal
- Webinar: The role of faith leaders and legal frameworks for advancing FoRB in Nigeria.
- Sporting events as innovations to engage with the media and also promote interfaith harmony and cohesion
- Networking, alliance building and partnerships with INGOs, Government and NNGOs
- Establishment of interfaith networks at the community level
- Integrated community-led initiatives through the Participatory Grant-Making (PGM) and action plan implementation
- Inclusion of women and youth in decision-making processes (traditional councils and church committees)
- Change in harmful cultural norms and practices; women included in the sharing of family inheritance
- Use of JISRA manuals by Muslim and Christian religious leaders during sermons
- Co-organized Parallel event for CSW 69 Beijing 30+ themed 'Faith, Empowerment, and Equality: A Conversation with Women and Young Women of Faith.'
- Influenced the Nigerian Parliament on constitutional matters to prioritise four key areas: **traditional institutions, gender, security and religious freedom.**

Impact Data





MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION TRAINING



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE THE WALK



ROUND TABLE ON PEACE AND JUST SOCIETY



WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK



INTERNATIONAL DAY COMMEMORATING VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE BASED ON RELIGION OR BELIEF



NATIONAL CONSULTATION ON STATE POLICING FRAMEWORK IN PLATEAU AND KADUNA STATES





JISRA Journey

2021 – 2025