

2024 Annual Report



**Cardinal Onaiyekan
Foundation for Peace
(COFP)**

Message From The Executive Director

As we close the chapter on 2024, the Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace (COFP) extends profound gratitude to the Almighty and to all our esteemed partners, collaborators, donors, and supporters whose steadfast commitment has enabled us to advance our mission across Nigeria and Africa. Your continued engagement has been vital in strengthening peace, fostering dialogue, enhancing social cohesion, and empowering communities through inclusive and transformative action.

Throughout the year, COFP remained deeply engaged at the intersection of faith, development, and peacebuilding, empowering individuals and communities through transformative dialogue, capacity building, interfaith cooperation, and responsive grassroots initiatives. We focused intentionally on addressing the root causes of violence and conflict whether driven by misconception, harmful social norms, or systemic inequalities and worked alongside faith leaders, women, youth, and civil society actors to foster more resilient and inclusive societies.

We amplified African voices at global and continental fora, including in New York, Addis Ababa, Lusaka, and Abu Dhabi. In these strategic spaces, our leadership underscored the pivotal role of faith actors in addressing societal challenges from violence against children to climate change, governance deficits, and social exclusion. We responded swiftly to Nigeria's worst flooding emergency in over a decade, delivering life-saving relief and livelihood support to flood-affected families. Our annual tree-planting campaign not only promoted climate awareness but actively engaged schoolchildren in shaping a greener, more sustainable future. Our advocacy for child protection took center stage during a specialized workshop in Abuja, where educators, caregivers, and religious instructors were trained on detecting and preventing abuse, while strengthening community responses in line with the Nigeria Child Rights Act and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

While 2024 brought great accomplishments, it also brought moments of grief. The COFP family mourned the passing of the beloved father of our Executive Director, Rev. Sr. Agatha Chikelue, and stood together in solidarity, comfort, and prayer. As we look ahead to 2025, COFP stands firm in its vision of building a peaceful, just, and compassionate society. We will continue to deepen our partnerships, invest in local leadership, and advance grassroots initiatives that promote dignity, inclusion, and shared prosperity while continuously learning and adapting to the evolving challenges of our time.

We thank you for journeying with us and invite you to continue walking alongside us as we build bridges of peace and hope in an ever-changing world.

Warm regards,

Agatha O. Chikelue Sr., DMMM,
Executive Director, Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace (COFP),
Chair, Religions for Peace International Women's
Coordinating Committee (RfP/IWCC)



Who We Are

The COFP is committed to driving social transformation and peace processes in Nigeria and across Africa. Established in 2010 by John Cardinal Onaiyekan, the Foundation recognizes that many conflicts in Africa stem from deep-rooted structural issues, often exacerbated by ethnic, religious, political, economic and gender divides. To effectively tackle these challenges, COFP advocates for governance systems that prioritize moral and just principles. In pursuit of its mission, COFP focuses on promoting ethical leadership and facilitating dialogues for peace and development among religious leaders, citizens, and political stakeholders at all levels. By emphasizing the importance of local solutions, the Foundation aims to create sustainable and meaningful change in communities.



“My experience with the COFP Fellowship Program has been nothing short of transformative, empowering me to become an agent of change and a champion for peace. From classroom to community, this journey has reaffirmed my belief in the power of grassroots activism and the resilience of the human spirit in overcoming even the most formidable challenges”.

Daret Timothy Paul (COFP Fellow-Nigeria, Class of 2024)

Our Vision

We envision a peaceful, cohesive and inclusive society that upholds dignity of human person, good governance and rejects all forms of violence.

Our Mission

We are committed to foster lasting peace, harmony and transformative development through social justice, dialogue and resilience building.

Our Goal

Use dialogue to lead community driven social change, build mutual respect, prevent & resolve conflicts and enhance cooperation among adherents of different faiths and culture



“My experience is quite unforgettable. I have not had such an encounter before where Muslim leaders and their Christian counterparts interact objectively and sincerely. I went to the Fellowship Program with an open mind, though with some reservations. My experience with my Muslim Fellows as well as people from different ethnic backgrounds and nationalities has brought me to a deeper knowledge and conviction of the common values, we all share”.

Fidelia Gowon (COFP Fellow-Nigeria, Class of 2024)

Our Thematic Program Areas

Rather than focus all our energy on the barriers, we concentrate on creating more sustainable communities, opportunities and potentials that bring the change that we want to see through our thematic programs areas



“COFP Fellowship has profoundly impacted me, shaping my perspective, enhancing my understanding of diversity, and equipping me with essential skills for fostering harmony and resolving conflicts. Through the program, I have cultivated a greater sense of tolerance and acceptance towards people from different backgrounds, appreciating the richness of diversity and the value of inclusivity in community-building. Engaging with individuals from various religious traditions has deepened my understanding of their beliefs and practices, fostering mutual respect and empathy across religious divides. I have also gained practical skills in conflict management, communication, and mediation, which are crucial for promoting constructive dialogue and reconciliation in diverse settings”.

Adam Abdulrahman (COFP Fellow-Nigeria, Class of 2024)

Success Spotlight

280

Local Actor/Fellows trained on dialogue negotiation, conflict resolution and mediation via on-year Fellowship program

166

Teachers and Caregivers equipped to protect children against abuse and violence

361

IDPs and destitute children received scholarships to access basic education

1,754

Internally displaced & rural poor women benefited from our vocational skills training & were supported with starter packs to enable them set-up their own business

143

Youth counselled, treated, empowered and supported to live healthier, non-violence and drug free life

1,235

Youth participated in 42 matches during soccer for peace

4,576

Less privileged families received free medical services

Over
77.2

Million individuals reached through our Covid-19 Intervention

Over
5,126

Benefited from our WASH Projects



“We build dialogue that forms the foundation for actionable project at COFP.”



BUILDING COMMON GROUND FOR PEACE

Common action for peace is the hallmark of COFP Foundation. It is needed and crucial for strengthening diversities, respecting differences, building the capacities of faith leaders and their communities in interfaith dialogue for peace, just and harmonious societies.



"The COFP Fellowship stood out as a very unique opportunity for me. I have been thoroughly refreshed in mind and rebuilt in body by the training received and I am ready to ensure peace in my workplace and society as a whole".

Panden, Peter Emmanuel (COFP Fellow-Nigeria, Class of 2024)



COFP International Fellowship Program Enters Its 7th Year

The Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace (COFP) proudly marked the seventh year of its International Fellowship Program in 2024. This flagship initiative is designed to strengthen the capacities of local actors in conflict management, mediation, and peacebuilding across Africa. The program has become a pivotal platform for fostering interreligious understanding, social cohesion, and grassroots peace efforts in communities affected by violence and division.

“Participating in the COFP Fellowship program has significantly impacted my personal and professional growth. It has broadened my perspective, deepened my expertise in specific areas, and facilitated connections with like-minded individuals. The Fellowship has afforded me invaluable networking opportunities, enabling me to forge connections with peers, experts, and mentors, which I anticipate will lead to fruitful collaborations, mentorship, and future career prospects”.
Abdulrasheed Isah Zubairu (COFP Fellow-Nigeria, Class of 2024)





2023/2024 Fellowship Cohort Concluded

The 2023/2024 Fellowship continued with the successful implementation of community peace projects by 48 Fellows across thirty-two Nigerian states and six African countries. This practical phase enabled participants to apply their training in real-world contexts, directly impacting their communities and strengthening resilience against conflict. Following their project implementation, Fellows gathered for the third and final module of the program, which concluded with a graduation ceremony. During this event, each Fellow received a certificate in Interreligious Dialogue, Conflict Transformation, and Mediation jointly issued by COFP's Partners, Veritas University and Nile University of Nigeria. These certificates affirmed the Fellows' successful completion of the year-long program and their demonstrated competency in key peacebuilding practices. Fellows were also honored as Ambassadors of Peace and formally inducted into the COFP Africa Network of Peacebuilders (CANEP). With the addition of the 2024 cohort, CANEP now comprises 281 members spanning sixteen African countries. The induction ceremony featured testimonies from both past and current Fellows, who shared the transformative impact of the program on their personal lives and professional trajectories. The event also fostered networking, collaboration, and a spirit of unity among the participants.



2024/2025 Fellowship Cohort Launched

The 2024/2025 Fellowship Program commenced following a competitive selection process that yielded 48 successful applicants out of 1,009 applications received. The selected Fellows represent five African countries: Zambia, Liberia, Ethiopia, Ghana, and Nigeria. The program officially began in July 2024 with a grand opening ceremony that launched the first module. The first and second modules, held in July and December 2024 respectively, laid the foundation for the Fellows' peacebuilding journey. These sessions focused on building essential knowledge and skills in dialogue, negotiation, and conflict management. Fellows were empowered to conceptualize and design community peace interventions tailored to their unique contexts. This capacity-building process set the stage for the successful implementation of peace projects by COFP Fellows in the months that followed.

In Conclusion, now in its seventh year, the COFP International Fellowship Program continues to grow in reach and impact. By equipping grassroots leaders with the tools, knowledge, and networks required for effective peacebuilding, COFP remains at the forefront of efforts to foster inclusive, just, and peaceful societies in Africa.

Highlights of COFP Fellow's Peace Project - Translating Dialogue into Concrete Action in Africa

It has become customary for each set of Fellows to initiate, design and implement a Peace Project following the completion of the second Module. The 2023/2024 cohort conducted their peace initiatives from December 2023 to March 2024. This project is designed to apply the theoretical concepts learned during the first and second modules into practical actions for peace and development. The goal of COFP is to transform communities through its Fellowship program. Fellows received both technical, financial and moral support in executing life changing projects in various communities. Here are some of their stories.



From Nyali Constituency of Mombasa County, Kenya, a powerful story of unity unfolded through the joint efforts of two extraordinary women, Mary Bowen, a Christian, and Sureya Roble, a Muslim, Fellows of the Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace (COFP). Defying religious and social boundaries, they implemented community bridging peace project that brought together a diverse mix of religious, political, educational, and community leaders, along with school children on ***Dialogue on Peaceful Co-existence in a Pluralistic Society***. This initiative was a clear evidence that when true knowledge is embraced, it transcends all divides and lights the path to harmony.

With over 130 participants in attendance, the workshop created a space where awareness about the risks and root causes of violent extremism especially among children was openly discussed. More than just dialogue, it empowered both youth and adults to take active roles in preventing violence by recognizing early warning signs and fostering mutual support, regardless of faith or background. From that shared experience, a sustainable platform was born for continued exchange, vigilance, and community healing. Mary and Sureya's joint project became a living example of what peace looks like in action: deeply human, courageously collaborative, and grounded in the shared values to nurture the next generation with compassion, wisdom, and hope.

Mary Bowen & Sureya Roble, COFP Fellows, 2023/2024, Kenya.

In Nigeria's Federal Capital City and particularly in the heart of Durumi 2, Garki, Abuja, where the sounds of daily hustle often mask simmering tensions, Tony Abah saw an opportunity - not to win a game, but to win hearts. Tony harnessed the unifying power of sport to bring together youth from Muslim and Christian communities under one banner of peace. With the Interfaith Football Competition held from January 27 to 28, 2024, he transformed soccer into a symbol of shared humanity, laughter, trust and friendships that defied boundaries of culture and religion for 75 players and 6 coaches along with other spectators.

What began as a two-day event has ignited a long-term vision of a future where faith differences are not fault lines but stepping stones toward solidarity. Through this project, Tony has sown seeds of reconciliation, proving that when peace is the goal, everyone can be on the same team.

Anthony Abah, COFP Fellow, 2023/2024, Abuja, FCT.



In a community long scarred by violence and religious mistrust, *Daret Timothy Paul*, a determined and visionary Fellow of the *Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace (COFP) 2023/2024*, rose with a mission that would alter the trajectory of his homeland. Deeply rooted in the troubled soil of *Muna Community, Jere LGA, Maiduguri, Borno State*, his project: **“Youth and Conflict: Interfaith Challenges and Opportunities for Peaceful Co-Existence”**, brought together 65 vibrant young men and women from both *Christian and Islamic* backgrounds. For two transformative days, they sat not as rivals, but as hopeful builders of peace, learning to see each other not as threats, but as allies in a shared struggle for harmony and healing.

Daret’s initiative sparked a very bold and constructive action towards rebuilding the broken bridges of trust and tolerance Borno state. To achieve this, a network of grassroots peacebuilders emerged from the workshop, fully equipped to spread the seeds of peace and reconciliation across the state. As a result of Daret’s transformative project, he received grants from other organizations like the CRS to replicate the workshop in other parts of the state.

Daret Timothy, COFP Fellow 2023/2024, Borno State.



With a vision to sow seeds of harmony early in children in a quiet yet vibrant communities of *Dadin Kowa and Hwoishe in Plateau State*, **Sumaye Fadimatu Hamza**, a Fellow of COFP Fellowship led a peacebuilding workshop under the theme: *“Catch Them Young: Children in Peacebuilding.”* She carried out peace education workshops among 150 school children including their teachers hence, creating an atmosphere where children not only *heard* about peace but *felt* its meaning in their hearts.

With every rhyme sung and every hand raised in the peace-quiz, they were silently rewriting the story of conflict into one of unity and peace. Sumaye’s work echoes the true spirit of the COFP Fellowship; empowering local voices to lead transformative change. In their laughter and learning, the children became more than students, they became torchbearers of peace, inspired by a Fellow who believes in planting tomorrow’s peace today. --**Sumaye Fadimatu Hamza, COFP Fellow, 2023/2024, Plateau State**



In far away Uganda’s *Kasana Luweero Diocese*, *Florence Nassanga* lit a candle of harmony that still burns bright. Through a workshop titled *“Harmony Unveiled”* she convened 60 women comprising Muslims, Christians, and traditional cultural leaders on February 15, 2024, for a conversation peace and harmony in the community. Her one-day dialogue was not merely about sharing stories but crafting means of addressing conflict, building community resilience, and interfaith trust. By sunset, women who once kept silent in suspicion during the workshop began to laugh, speak, and envision peaceful future together. A circle of strangers became a sisterhood of bridge-builders, pledging to champion peace beyond the hall’s walls. Florence watched as barriers melted and a fresh network of collaboration emerged, living proof that peace begins with presence, and change with conversation. *Harmony Unveiled* became not just a project, but a journey, one that Florence continues to nurture in the quiet strength of dialogue and the unstoppable courage of peace.

Florence Nassanga Musoke, COFP Fellow, 2023/2024, Uganda.



Stories of Success Contd.

With the ever-present shadow of religious tension in the Sabon Gari area, Timta stepped forward not just with a project but with a mission to disarm hate speech and ignite the light of peace in Faggae, Kano State, on the 9th of January 2024. He brought together 102 participants, including Imams, Pastors, youth leaders, and community influencers, for a life changing dialogue. The gathering was a heartfelt encounter where diverse voices dared to dream of a united community. These leaders, often caught on opposing sides of tense narratives, sat shoulder to shoulder to understand the roots and repercussions of hate speech and more importantly, how to end its cycle.

This awareness birthed a renewed commitment not just to avoid hate speech, but to actively counter it with messages of peace, tolerance, and shared humanity. Inspired by the success of Timta's initiative, other COFP Fellows across Kano pledged ongoing support for similar peace efforts, in order to keep the momentum alive.

Timta Luka Musa, COFP Fellow, 2023/2024, Kano State.



Yitkyim Leah Datong illuminated hope in Jos on January 12, 2024, as she convened 70 women for a life changing two-day workshop titled: *The Firefly Effect: Gender-Based Empowerment and Peacebuilding*. With the steady guidance of the Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace and support from the international Organization for Peacebuilding and Social Justice (PSJ), Leah's vision was clear and bold, peace must be inclusive, and inclusion must be empowering. She recognized that financial independence is not just a tool for survival but a weapon against marginalization, especially for women in conflict-prone communities.

The impact was immediate and soul-stirring. Women of different ethnicities and faiths sat side by side for capacity-building sessions and financial literacy modules which generated empowered set of women not only with skills but with solidarity. A WhatsApp group now connects them beyond the workshop, sustaining their unity and commitment to peace.

Yitkyim Leah Datong, COFP Fellow, 2023//2024, Plateau State.

Stories of Success Contd.



On January 25, 2024 in Ondo State, Ibrahim Shodehinde, COFP Fellow brought together 72 religious and community leaders: Muslims and Christians alike, under one roof for a workshop on *Empowering Religious and Community Leaders as Gatekeepers* in order to help them rewrite hate narratives in their localities.

Inspired by the knowledge and trust built during the training, participants pledged to take the new learning back to their communities, multiplying its impact across towns and villages. More than that, they made a collective commitment to view each other not through the lens of difference but of shared humanity. Thanks to Ibrahim's initiative, Akure witnessed the birth of a quiet revolution that religious gatekeepers into champions of peace, and communities previously at odds into partners in healing.

Ibrahim Shodehinde, COFP Fellow, 2023/2024, Ondo State.

In the quiet, often-overlooked community of Angwalambu in Keffi Local Government Area, Nasarawa State, Sister Uzonna Rosemary Ngozi became a symbol of hope and transformation. Through her two-day initiative titled *Interreligious Dialogue and Empowerment of Women & Youth*, held on January 12th and 13th, 2024, 16 women and young people experienced a life-changing encounter that went beyond skills acquisition. With starter kits distributed including sewing machines, Sister Rosemary planted the seeds of dignity and economic empowerment in a community longing to be seen and heard.

Today, the once-muted voices of young women and youth now resonate with purpose and productivity, as many have begun to earn income from the very skills they acquired, supporting their families and tackling daily challenges with confidence. More than an event, Sister Rosemary's project stands as an example to what happens when compassion meets action when a religious sister steps into a vulnerable space and creates room for hope to flourish. With each product sold and each stitch sewn, the participants are not just surviving, they are thriving, rewriting their stories and uplifting their community from within.

Uzonna Rosemary Ngozi, COFP Fellow, 2023/2024, Nasarawa State





COFP Participates in a High-Level Forum in New York

From March 26–27, 2024, the Executive Director of the Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace (COFP), Rev. Sr. Agatha Chikelue, participated as a panelist at the Multi-Religious and Multi-Stakeholder High-Level Forum on the Role of Faith in Advancing Positive Outcomes for Children, Families, and Communities, held at the Church Centre for the United Nations, New York, USA. Representing COFP, Sr. Chikelue underscored the critical role of religious leaders and faith communities in preventing violence and harmful practices often driven by social and gender norms, misinterpretation of religious teachings, and recurring or emerging conflict situations.

She provided practical examples of how faith leaders working at the grassroots continue to intervene in these situations, and stressed the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration to achieve lasting, effective outcomes.



World Interfaith Harmony Week under the theme of

“Interfaith collective action to foster peaceful coexistence, Human Dignity, Development, Preservation of the environment and to counter hate speech, Violence and Xenophobia”



Celebrating the 2024 World Interfaith Harmony Week and Golden Rule Day

As part of COFP's commitment to promoting interfaith cooperation, peace, human dignity, environmental preservation, and combating hate speech and xenophobia in Africa, Sr. Agatha Chikelue served as a keynote speaker at a major event in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Held from April 15–16, 2024, this event marked the celebration of the 2024 Golden Rule Day and the World Interfaith Harmony Week, with a focus on "Africa's 2024 G20 Agendas."

In her address, Sr. Agatha emphasized the growing need for interfaith collaboration amid the multifaceted crises confronting Africa. She noted that insecurity and lack of peace are major





INTEGRATING SOCIAL CHANGE THROUGH ETHICAL LEADERSHIP

Ethical leadership and good governance is a precondition for sustainable economy, social development, peace and security. Bringing together neglected perspectives and voice to the table for creative exchanges is one of the ways we provide creative solutions, new approaches best practices and effective governance.

*“Wherever I see Truth, I follow it
Wherever I see Peace, I pursue it
Wherever I see Justice, I insist on it”*

Onaiykean



Celebrating the 80th Birthday of Our Founder and Icon

In February 2024, the Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace (COFP) joined countless well-wishers in celebrating a momentous occasion of the 80th birthday of our esteemed Founder, Father, Mentor, and Icon, His Eminence John Cardinal Onaiyekan. This milestone honored a life devoted to the pursuit of faith, peace, justice, and social change. The celebration, which spanned February 1st to 3rd, featured a series of heart-warming events. It began with the launch of His Eminence's latest book, *Religion for Peace: Not War – Post-Retirement Reflections of John Cardinal Onaiyekan on Interfaith Dialogue*. This publication offers profound insights drawn from decades of experience in promoting dialogue across faiths.

A solemn Thanksgiving Holy Mass followed at the Cathedral of the Twelve Apostles, bringing together worshippers and dignitaries in a collective expression of gratitude. The commemorations



concluded with a grand reception at the Trinity Event Center, Abuja, where friends, colleagues, and admirers from diverse sectors, including high-ranking religious leaders, government officials, captains of industry, academia, and members of the public gathered to pay tribute to the Cardinal's enduring legacy. The celebration not only reflected His Eminence's remarkable contributions but also reaffirmed his continued influence as a beacon of peace and unity in Nigeria and beyond.

Briefly, John Cardinal Onaiyekan, the fourth Nigerian Cardinal, was born on January 29th, 1944, in Kabba, Kogi State of Nigeria. He began his education at an early age of 5 and maintained distinctions and first class all through his academic pursuits. Journey to his priestly life commenced with an ordination in his home parish when he turned 25 in 1969. Ordained as the auxiliary Bishop of Ilorin in 1983 at the age of 38 by Pope St. John Paul II, thus making him one of the youngest Bishops of his time. Onaiyekan assumed the position of Bishop of Ilorin in 1985. In 1990, he was appointed the Co-adjutor Bishop of Abuja by the same Pope. His elevation continued as he became the first metropolitan Archbishop of Abuja in 1994, a position he held until his retirement in November 2019. In November 2012, Pope Benedict XVI elevated him to the status of a Cardinal.

Over the past decades, John Cardinal Onaiyekan has established himself as a prominent figure in the realms of intra/interreligious dialogue and leadership. His expertise in this domain is consistently sought after, both domestically and internationally, resulting in numerous accolades and prestigious awards. He has toured round the world delivering lectures at prestigious institutions as well as high level conferences on global justice, peace and human development.

Revered as the Metropolitan Catholic Archbishop Emeritus of Abuja, Nigeria, he currently serves as the Founder and Chairman of COFP Foundation and Co-Founder, Interfaith Initiative for Peace (IIP). Cardinal Onaiyekan (CON, Ph.D) served as the Co-Chair of the African Council of Religious Leaders



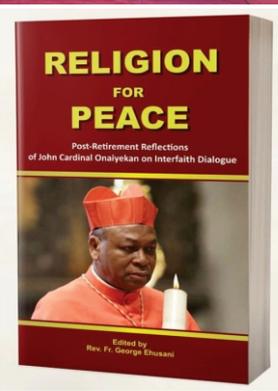
(ACRL-RfP) and the immediate past Christian Moderator of the World Conference of Religions for Peace (RfP) International. Presently, he holds the esteemed position of Honorary President at RfP International and Chair Board of Trustee ACRL-RfP. His involvement in these global platforms, among others, has granted Cardinal Onaiyekan a profound understanding of the intricacies, challenges, and possibilities inherent in fostering interreligious collaboration and effective governance on a global scale.

In order to perpetuate the legacy of His Eminence, John Cardinal Onaiyekan, the COFP Foundation was established as a conduit for advancing sustainable peace through interreligious dialogue, cooperation, and initiatives for social change. Noteworthy among his literary contributions are books such as "Seeking Common Grounds: Interreligious Dialogue in Africa" (2013), "Theology in Context: Evangelization and Inculturation in Africa" (2016), "The Word of God in the Church in Africa" (2019), "Let The Truth Prevail" (2021) and "Religions for Peace Not War" (2024). His conviction rests in the idea that common ground provides the foundation for collective action since our joint efforts are more robustly anchored in shared principles.



For Cardinal Onaiyekan, a Nobel Peace Prize Award Nominee in 2012 and a recipient of several peace laurels, including the 2012 Pax Christi International Peace Prize and the Grand Official of Italian Friendship conferred on him by President Carlo A. Ciampi of Italy in 2003 (Grande Ufficiale 1 Classe: Ordinedella Stella della Solidarieta Italiana), true peace means upholding justice & fairness, openness to reconciliation and forgiveness, understanding that what we have in common is greater than our difference & that our differences are nothing but stepping stones towards embracing our commonalities. This is the vision that drives our work at COFP Foundation.

We at the COFP Foundation thank God for John Cardinal Onaiyekan's gift to us and for the incredible person he is. For always been a guiding light, inspiring us with his wisdom and compassion. We honor his illustrious life and career and wish him many more years of good health and continued service to God and humanity.





COFP Appoints a Deputy Director

In its continuous pursuit of growth and effective leadership, the COFP Foundation approved the creation of the Deputy Director position in 2023. This move came in recognition of the increasing demands of the organization and the expanding responsibilities of its Executive Director, Rev. Sr. Agatha Chikelue, DMMM. In January 2024, Rev. Fr. Boniface Neibo Achor, a COFP Fellow and a priest of the Catholic Archdiocese of Abuja was appointed as the Deputy Director. In his remarks, Fr. Boniface expressed deep gratitude to God, the Board, Cardinal, and the Executive Director for the opportunity to serve, reflecting on the beginnings of his appointment with a meeting at Cardinal Onaiyekan's residence.



Fr. Boniface brings with him extensive academic and pastoral experience. He holds Bachelor's degrees in Theology and Philosophy from the Pontifical Urban University in Rome, a diploma in Education and Political Science and Administrative Studies, as well as a Master's degree in Political Science and Diplomacy from Veritas University. He is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in the same field at the University of Abuja. Since his appointment, Fr. Boniface has been warmly welcomed into the COFP family and has assumed his responsibilities with dedication and enthusiasm.





Media Inclusion for Persons Living with Disabilities (PLWD)

Committed to promoting the rights, dignity, and inclusion of Persons Living with Disabilities (PLWD), COFP recognizes that they deserve equal access to opportunities in all aspects of life, education, employment, social participation, and community engagement. Our media inclusion campaign advocates for the visibility, representation, and empowerment of individuals with long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments.

For the past five years, COFP has sponsored the weekly “Caring Heart Talk Show” aired on Armed Forces Radio 107.7 FM, Abuja. This program serves as a vital platform to boost the voices of PLWD, drawing attention to issues of marginalization, exclusion, and underemployment. It also highlights the persistent failure of institutions to fully implement the 2018 Disability Act and other legal protections. In 2024, the program achieved remarkable reach, expanding its audience to neighboring states like Kogi, Nasarawa, Kaduna, and Niger and also, attracting listeners from other African countries through Facebook Live. The talk show has been instrumental in catalyzing greater awareness and action, prompting stakeholders to give renewed attention to the Disability Act.

“At COFP, our programs are designed to move people & communities from exclusion and competition to inclusion & collaboration”

The program is led by Mr. Gbenga Adeusi, a disability rights advocate and media professional who is also living with a disability. Reflecting on the impact of the initiative, he shared: “This talk show is designed to promote tolerance and mutual respect among persons with and without disabilities, address cases of abuse, and encourage individuals with hidden disabilities to seek proper support and assistance.”

Through sustained advocacy and storytelling, COFP continues to champion the inclusion and empowerment of all persons, regardless of ability, fostering a society where every voice counts and every person matters.





The Executive Director of COFP - Sr. Agatha Chikelue Honored with Global Award

Hard work, passion, and unwavering dedication rarely go unnoticed. It is no surprise that on March 26, 2024, COFP's Executive Director, Rev. Sr. Agatha Chikelue, DMMM, was honored with the international prestigious accolade known as the “Women of Excellence in Multi-Religious Action Award” by Religions for Peace (RfP), the world's largest and most representative multi-faith organization.

Chosen from among 100 global nominees, Sr. Agatha was one of three women recognized for their exceptional commitment to interfaith dialogue, social justice, and community development. The award underscores the profound role that women of faith play in promoting peace, inclusion, and transformation in their communities and beyond. This inaugural award, launched in 2023, seeks to uplift and honor the often-unsung contributions of women across different faiths. Ms. Deepika Singh, Deputy Secretary General and Director of Programs at RfP, praised the recipients: “These women have not only greatly impacted their communities but also serve as role models in the ongoing global mission to promote gender equality and interfaith collaboration. Religions for Peace is proud to shine a light on their invaluable work”.

Sr. Agatha, deeply moved by the honor, expressed heartfelt thanks to God and dedicated the award to all women striving for peace especially, those working in the most difficult and marginalized contexts. We join in congratulating our inspirational and visionary leader and Executive Director for this well-deserved global recognition.





SUSTAINING PEACE FOR DEVELOPMENT

It is common wisdom that sustainable development can only be achieved when there is peace. COFP devise new ways of advancing peace by empowering the poor particularly, women and girls living in refugee/IDP camps through poverty alleviation programs.





Scholarship Program for the Underprivileged Children

COFP recognizes that education not only boosts young people's confidence and self-reliance but also provides them with vital exposure to life's opportunities and challenges. Unfortunately, many families are unable to afford even the minimal fees required in public schools that offer 'free' education. In response, the Foundation remains committed to ensuring that children from extremely poor backgrounds can access quality basic education.

Through its annual scholarship program, COFP provides financial support to destitute children in 26 primary and secondary schools across the FCT Abuja, Nasarawa, and Niger States during the 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 academic sessions. The Foundation's staff conducted outreach visits to communities to identify out-of-school children and enrolled them in schools within their localities. Regular monitoring and evaluation (M&E) visits are conducted each term to assess the beneficiaries' academic performance, address challenges, and identify areas for improvement.

Notably, several scholarship recipients have benefited from COFP's support over multiple years, from primary through secondary education as a result of their strong and good academic performances. This initiative affirms COFP's belief in education as a pathway to breaking the cycle of poverty and building more equitable societies.





COFP in Kenya for Hilton Foundation's Convening

Sister Agatha Chikelue participated in the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation's Catholic Sisters Initiative convening for grantees, partners, and stakeholders, which took place from May 29–31, 2024 at the Taj Pamodzi Hotel in Lusaka, Zambia. The convening centered on building partnerships, enhancing collaboration, and promoting synodality. Participants explored shared visions, strengthened networks, and discussed ways to advance the common good through dialogue and cooperative action.





Timely Climate Response in Borno and Adamawa States

Nigeria experienced its worst flooding in over a decade, displacing more than two million people, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The environmental devastation has deepened economic inequality and exacerbated insecurity. In September 2024, the release of water from a dam in Maiduguri led to severe flooding in Borno and Adamawa states, displacing thousands and destroying homes and farmland.



In response, COFP initiated emergency relief interventions in Demsa LGA (Adamawa) and Jere (Borno) through its Fellows in those states. Despite challenging conditions, COFP Fellows delivered livelihood support, to 40 individuals and their families in Adamawa while 81 households in Borno received cash grants ranging from ₦10,000 to ₦50,000. Support was provided regardless of religious or ethnic identity, reinforcing COFP's mission of inclusivity and compassion. Beneficiaries



"The Fellowship Program has impacted me immensely. I am now a better spiritual leader and counsellor, and I understand more the importance of coexistence with all God's creatures and the need to live in harmony with all of them".
Dimohey Fatima (COFP Fellow-Zambia, Class of 2024)



Tree Planting Drive in Niger State

The Foundation has made it an annual event to embark on climate action through tree planting exercise as one of the ways to mitigate the impacts of climate change in our communities. In a bid to make young people aware of their role in protecting the environment, the inclusion of every child becomes necessary in this campaign. Hence, children emerge not merely as spectators, but as vital protagonists in the saga of environmental preservation. With this conviction, the Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace (COFP) took its Tree Planting drive to Government Day Secondary School, Kurmin Sarki, Suleja, Niger State on September 26, 2024. The event focused on addressing climate change by planting over 200 seedlings, including flowers and economic trees, while teaching students the importance of caring for the environment.



With their unyielding curiosity, boundless creativity, and innate sense of justice, they stand poised to forge a path towards a greener, more sustainable future. This effort underscores the importance of involving youth in climate action. By nurturing their natural curiosity and sense of justice, Rev. Fr. Boniface Neibo, the Deputy Executive Director of COFP, during this event encouraged young people to become proactive guardians of a greener, more sustainable future.





Combating Violence and Abuse Against Children

As reported by the United Nations, over one billion children globally experience violence annually, a troubling trend highlighted by the United Nations. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), ratified by Nigeria, guarantees every child protection from all forms of violence. In line with these documents, the Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace (COFP) hosted a one-day workshop on Thursday, 24th October 2024, at Ajuji Hotel Abuja, aimed at equipping teachers, caregivers, and religious instructors with tools to recognize, prevent, and address violence against children.





The workshop featured a presentation by a representative from the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), who called for collective efforts to combat human trafficking and emphasized the evolving tactics of perpetrators. COFP Team further highlighted on the strategies for child care and protection, exploring key legislation like the Nigerian Child Rights Act of 2003. Participants were engaged in discussions enabling them to gain insights into strategies that prevent and address child abuse, neglect, and exploitation. They pledged to apply the knowledge acquired in protecting children, combating violence and trafficking in their communities.

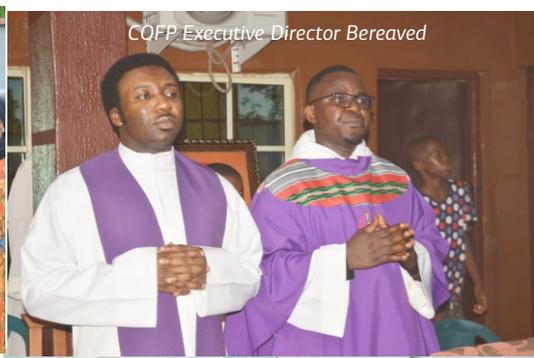


COFP Executive Director Bereaved

With the passage of time comes the passing of every life on earth, humans included. Yet, for us as people of faith, death is not the end but a gateway to a greater life beyond, one of eternal union with God, filled with light, joy, and peace.

Late Pa Donald Obi Chikelue, father of the Executive Director of Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace (COFP), Rev. Sr. Agatha Chikelue, DMMM, passed on at the age of 87 and was laid to rest in his hometown of Awkuzu, Anambra State on October 31st, 2024. He was survived by his wife, children, grandchildren and great-grandchild. The funeral was attended by John Cardinal Onaiyekan, CON, other Bishops, priests, religious leaders, family, In-laws, friends and well-wishers. COFP Foundation was represented during this event by staff members led by the Deputy Executive Director, Fr. Boniface Neibo. May the soul of Pa Donald rest in peace, and may God grant the family the strength to bear this loss.







COFP in Abu Dhabi for the GNRC Sixth Global Forum

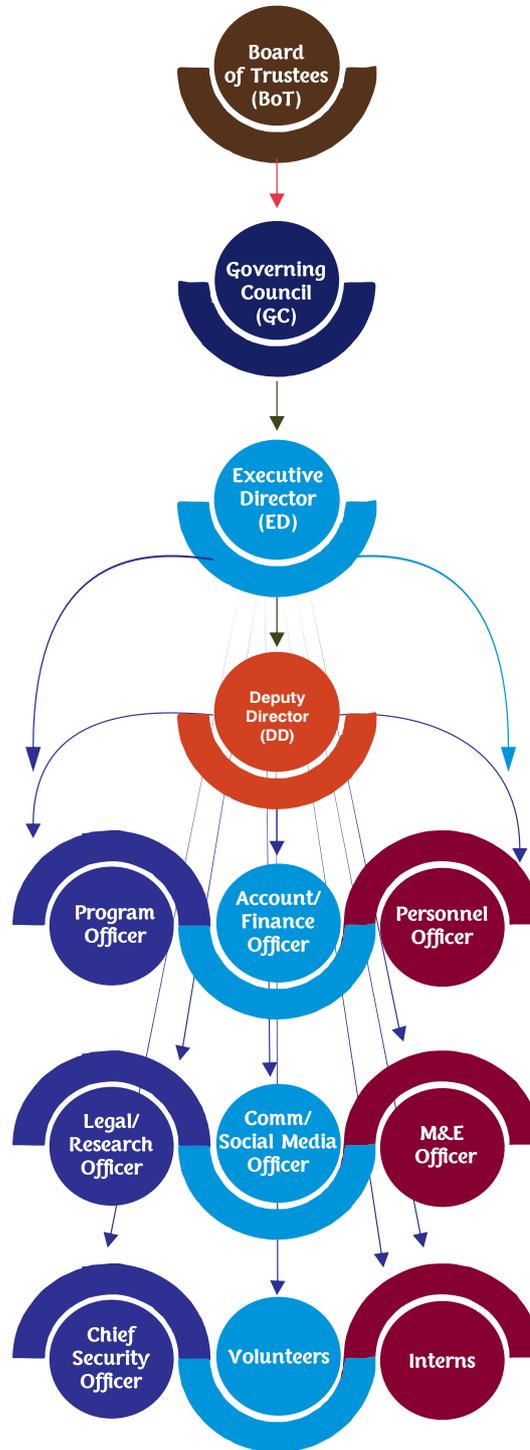
The Foundation participated in the Sixth Global Forum of the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirate UAE, from November 19-21, 2024 under the theme: “The Child Is Calling: Interfaith Cooperation to Build a Hopeful World for Children.” Led by COFP’s Founder and President, His Eminence John Cardinal Onaiyekan, CON, the delegation also included Executive Director Sr. Agatha Chikelue and Program Officer Mr. Nicholas Dike.

“It has been a privilege and an amazing experience for me at COFP Program. I have been enlightened, educated and empowered with much knowledge on peacebuilding, dialogue, conflict management, mediation skills and how to communicate effectively with people of other faith”.
Ukachukwu Mercy Onyioza (COFP Fellow-Nigeria, Class of 2024)

As panelists, the COFP team addressed pressing issues threatening child well-being, including insecurity, intolerance, and digital vulnerabilities. They advocated for strong family values, inclusion, and the urgent need to equip children with the tools to navigate today's challenges. The forum highlighted the importance of partnerships between families, educators, faith communities, and policymakers in building a safe and hopeful future for all children.



COFP Functional MAP



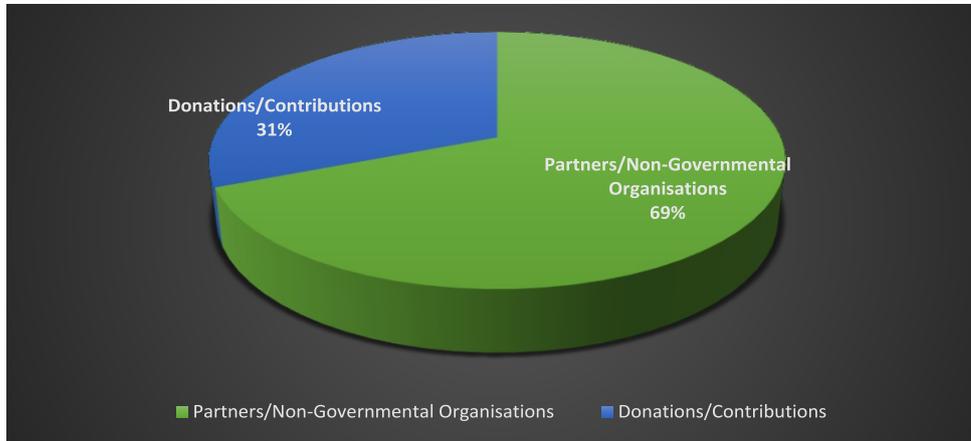
"I am overwhelmed by the impact of the Program and the study, as it eliminates biases built on prejudices and has given me the impetus to be a bridge builder. It has given me the opportunity to network with other Fellows across Africa and has built my capacity in Conflict mediation and Peacebuilding".

Ajegena Akumbugu Immanuel (COFP Fellow-Nigeria, Class of 2024)

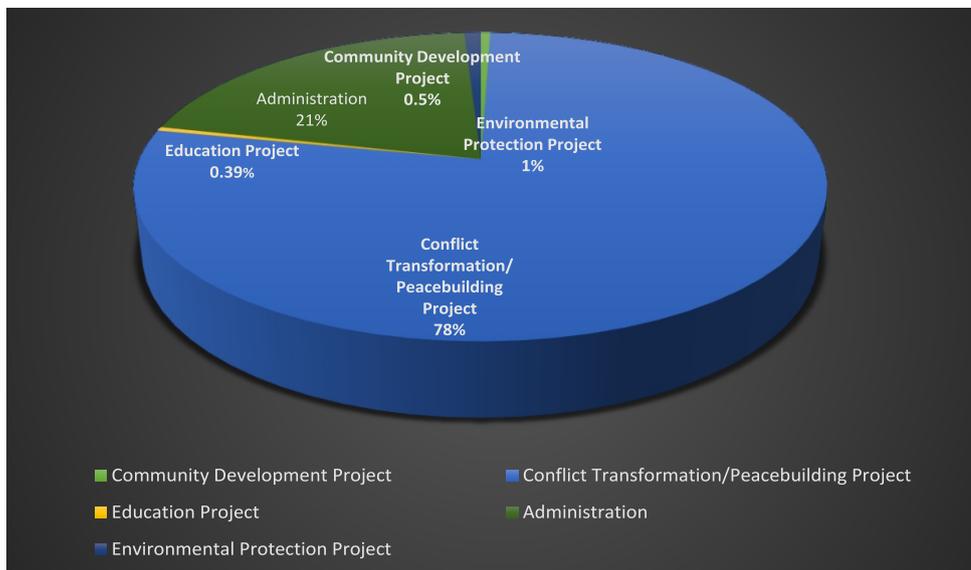
"Indeed, words cannot capture my experience as I conveniently claim that I am a new born peace ambassador and peace lover. The Fellowship Program has changed my perception on what interfaith relationship should be and more importantly, how to look at people of the other faith".

Shodehinde Olalekan Adeshina (COFP Fellow-Nigeria, Class of 2024)

SOURCES OF FUNDS	AMOUNT in NGN
Partners/Non-Governmental Organizations	265,602,053
Donations/Contributions	120,000,000
Total	385,602,053



USES OF FUNDS	AMOUNT in NGN
Community Development Project	1,472,700
Conflict Transformation/Peacebuilding Project	223,266,073
Education Project	1,128,775
Administration	58,971,765
Environmental Protection Project	2,620,100
Total	287,459,413



OUR SINCERE APPRECIATION GOES TO OUR DONORS

Conrad Hilton Foundation, the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and other numerous partners.



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