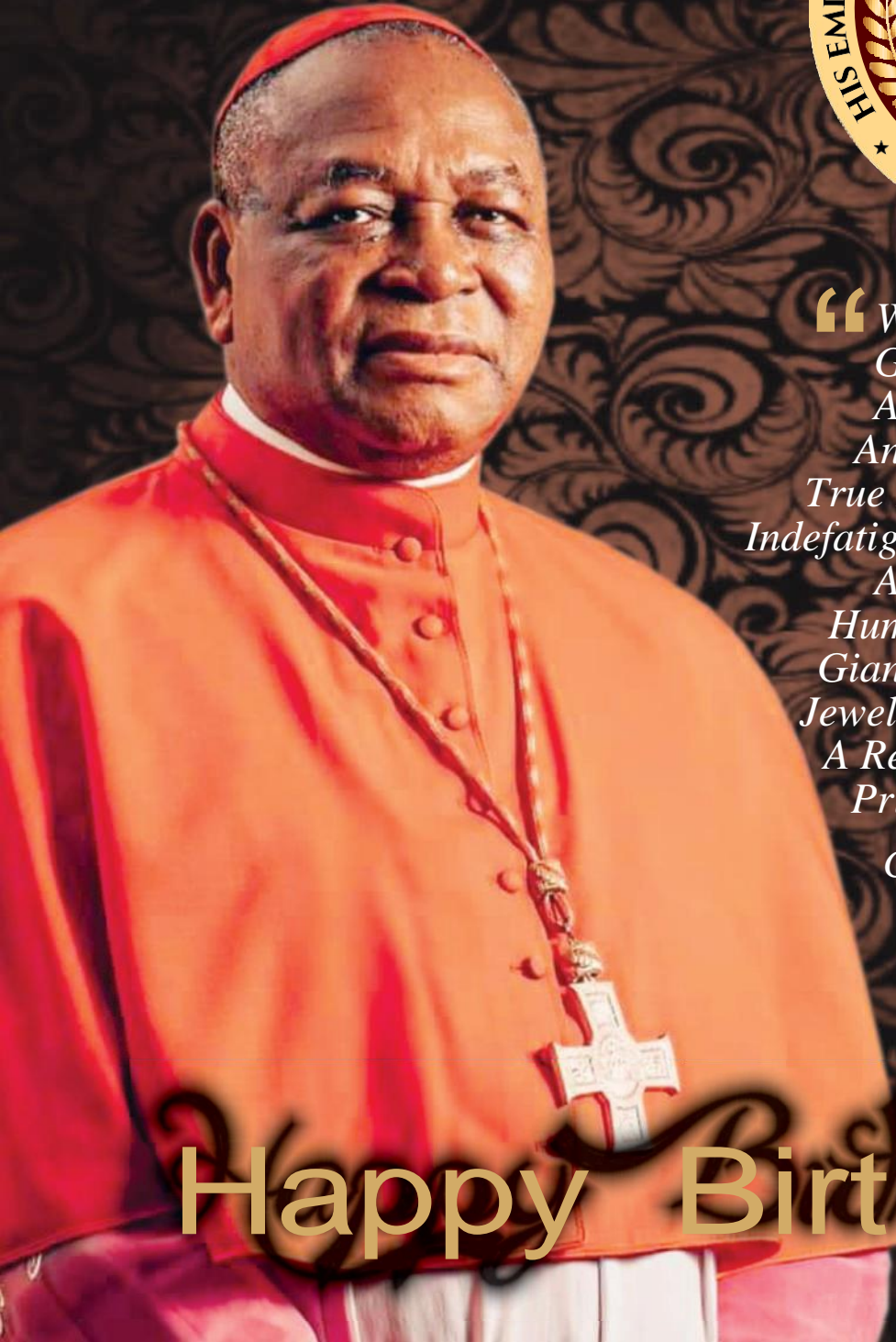




Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace (COFP)



2023
Annual Report



*“ We Celebrate You
Great Compatriot
A Man of Honour
An Apostle of Peace
True Prophet of Our Time
Indefatigable Advocate of Justice
A Beacon of Hope
Humble Servant of God
Giant of Our Generation
Jewel of Inestimable Value
A Rear Creature of God
Prince of the Church ”*

COFP Foundation

Happy Birthday

Message From The Executive Director



Dear Friends and Partners,

I am delighted to share with you the remarkable strides made by the Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace (COFP) in 2023. This past year has been a testament to the unwavering commitment and dedication of our team and supporters, as we continued to expand our reach and impact across Africa. As we reflect on the achievements of last year, 2023, we can't help but extend our heartfelt thanks to the Almighty and You for collaborating with us in reaching these significant milestones.

Throughout 2023, COFP has diligently pursued its mission, achieving significant landmarks and overcoming challenges along the way. Our programs have grown in both scale and effectiveness, with the COFP Fellowship program, in particular, making impressive strides. Since its inception, the program has empowered about 300 individuals from 16 African countries, a confirmation to its growing influence and impact of our efforts in promoting peace by illuminating the intricate connections binding us together.

Despite the challenges of the past year, we have remained steadfast in our commitment to transforming lives and communities in Africa. The stories of transformation that have emerged from our initiatives are a source of inspiration and motivation, driving us to do even more in the years ahead.

None of this would have been possible without the generous support of our partners and donors from around the world. Your contributions have been instrumental in turning our vision into reality, and for that, we are truly grateful for your trust and the opportunity to continue serving humanity. Thanks to the COFP team (Board, Council, Management, Staff and Volunteers) whose efforts enabled us to touch numerous lives, fostering bonds and building resilience.

As we look to the future, we are filled with optimism and excitement for the opportunities that lie ahead. We remain committed to our mission of fostering peace and development among people of diverse backgrounds, and we look forward to continuing this important work with the support of our partners and team.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to COFP and its mission. Together, we will continue to make a real and lasting difference in the lives of people all over Africa.

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.

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

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



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



“It has been a mind-blowing journey, an eye opener, excellent and hands-on experience on the need and importance of peaceful co-existence in our communities. With well-trained and informed facilitators, I must say it's a unique learning opportunity that every religious and traditional leader should engage in for the course of peaceful coexistence in our communities”.
Eucharia Solomon (COFP Fellow-Nigeria, Class of 2023)

Success Spotlight

280

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

126

Teachers and Caregivers equipped to protect children against abuse and violence

316

IDPs and destitute children received scholarships to access basic education

517

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

Youths counselled, treated, empowered and supported to live healthier, non-violent and drug free life

1,070

Youths participated in 42 matches during soccer for peace competitions

4,576

Less privileged families received free medical services

Over
77.2

Million individuals reached through our Covid-19 Interventions

Over
5,126

Benefited from our WASH Projects



BUILDING COMMON GROUNDS 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..



COFP Fellowship Program in It's 6th Year

The COFP Fellowship program commenced with the implementation of Fellows project in more than twenty-five states in Nigeria and nine countries in Africa. This was followed by the 3rd and final module of the 2022/2023 Fellowship Program which was marked by the graduation of 60 Fellows from across the continent along with the grand celebration of the 5th Anniversary of the COFP Fellowship Program in May 2023. One certificate each on Interreligious Dialogue, Conflict Transformation and Mediation, from the prestigious Veritas and Nile University Abuja, were issued to all Fellows by the COFP Foundation, to certify their completion of their One Year Fellowship Program. Fellows were also given awards as Ambassadors of peace as they were inducted into the COFP Africa Network of Peacebuilders (CANEP). The COFP Africa Network of Peacebuilders (CANEP) was established to sustain the impact of the Fellowship program beyond graduation. CANEP unites Peace Fellows from various African countries like Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, Kenya, Ethiopia, DR Congo, Liberia, Niger, Benin Republic and others. The 2023 CANEP Induction welcomed new members and celebrated the Fellowship's influence in Nigeria and other many African countries. Past and current Fellows shared success stories, highlighting the program's transformative power. The induction ceremony integrated the 2022/2023 class into CANEP, fostering collaboration and solidarity among 60 international Fellows.





COFP Fellowship Program in It's 6th Year Contd.

Following a rigorous selection process, another set of Fellows, 50 in all, were selected from the many individuals who applied for the 2023/2024 COFP Fellowship program. The first module of the 6th annual and 3rd International Peace Fellowship began in July 2023. The 2023/2024 COFP Fellowship program was ushered in with a grand opening ceremony for participants who had come from different African countries including Uganda, Zambia, Kenya, Cameroon, Niger and Nigeria. After the completion of the first module courses in July, the second module of the Fellowship program commenced in November 2023. The main objective of this module was to provide a solid foundation in dialogue negotiation and conflict management. Participating in this module, equipped the Fellows with the skills necessary to design and implement peace projects tailored to their respective communities and address their local context.

“My experience with COFP has been an eye-opener, coming from a volatile community and a minority group, the experience is overwhelming and it has given me hope that peace and development will be back in my community”.
Sumaiya Abubakar Muhammad (COFP Fellow-Nigeria, Class of 2023)



“At the COFP Fellowship Program, I was able to grasp many theoretical concepts and practical skills for transforming conflicts and conducting dialogues for peace. Besides, I was able to come together with my African Fellows to find solutions to our African problems”.
Megerssa Abinet Girma (COFP Fellow-Ethiopia, Class of 2023)

Our Stories of Success: COFP Fellows Localizing Peace Across Africa

Over the past six years, the COFP has diligently trained religious and community actors from a multi-religious and cultural backgrounds in Africa through its Fellowship program. The program aims to empower these individuals to promote peace, justice, and equity in their local communities, contributing to positive change on a local and global scale. We are excited to share some success stories from Nigeria and across Africa, showcasing the impact of the 2022/2023 COFP community peace projects.

According to **Daniel Mugeru from Kenya**, the program enhanced his self-awareness and understanding of others. Interacting with Fellows from different faiths and nations in Africa has in no small way broadened his perspective and reinforced his belief in collective efforts towards building better nations and a stronger continent. His peace project, **the Garissa University Support Program-GUPS Project 2023**, focused on **Building Resilience and Healing Wounds of Terror**. The project hosted 33 undergraduates from the University, which was significant as the university had experienced a terrorist attack 8 years ago, resulting in the loss of over 147 lives, mostly Christian undergraduates. This tragic event had created a divide between Christians and Muslims in the university community. However, after the 2-day program, many traumatized undergraduates received trauma healing and learned about interfaith dialogue and the importance of peaceful co-existence. Hence, the gap created by fear and deep mistrust in the University community was greatly bridged and efforts towards supporting and aiding recovery to one another were jointly accomplished. **(Daniel Mugeru Kathuri, COFP Fellow, 2022/2023, Kenya).**



"I consider myself privileged to have participated in this program. It has completely shifted my perspective on the Muslims and has been tremendously instrumental in fostering strong relationships not only with Muslims but also with my fellow Christians." This realization laid the foundation for Priscilla's impactful community peace project, **'Promoting Religious Tolerance among Muslim and Christian Male Youths,'** in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council, Borno State Nigeria. The project reached 15 male youths from both the Islamic and Christian faiths. The transformation experienced by these young men is truly inspiring. Prior to the project, they were unemployed and willing to resort to any means to make ends meet. Fortunately,

Sister Priscilla's initiative came at the right time. Through the training provided in Shoe Making, Tie and Dye, Liquid Soap, and Vaseline Production, these youths gained valuable skills and received starter kits to kickstart their businesses. Today, they have successfully ventured into entrepreneurship and are thriving in their respective endeavors." With proceeds from the business, 10 of them have returned to the university to continue their studies in various disciplines.

(Ezugwu Priscilla Nnedinso, COFP Fellow -2022/2023, Maiduguri, Nigeria).

“The window for sharing experiences and ideas widened my concept of promoting peaceful co-existence wherever I find myself...” Resolved to reach out to as many people as possible **Muhammad Idris Kolo** employed the traditional radio Media and ensured that his project, **Peace Message on Radio and Doko Peace Walk** was heard through the airwaves of Doko Radio Nigeria Power FM For over three months, the peace message was on the airwaves. The peace walk with an attraction of over 200 participants was an absolute success too. In Idris's words: “During the walk, people came together irrespective of status, age, gender, religion, ethnicity, and political affiliations. We interacted with and received the blessings of the community Leader (Etsu Dazhi Doko) and the religious leaders in the community, the parting message was that we should put humanity first and shun violence of any sort”. As a result of the educative and tremendous religious impact of the radio peace program, organisations like the Da'wah Institute of West Africa (DIWA) approached Idris for a partnership to sustain the radio peace initiative. (**Muhammad Idris Kolo, COFP Fellow -2022/2023, Niger State, Nigeria**)



Rafatu's heartfelt desire to see women become agents of change, working towards the peace cause spurred her to spearhead a transformative peace project in her community. She organized a **1-Day Interfaith Peacebuilding Workshop on Promoting Peaceful Co-Existence Through Religious Understanding** at Mararaba, Karu LGA of Nasarawa State for 100 participants, mostly women. In Rafatu's words “The project has brought about a remarkable change in my community!” The participants were excited about the valuable lessons they received, especially since it addressed misconceptions about the teachings of Islam and Christianity. Many attendees, who were previously unaware of the truths from both faiths, were enlightened. Decades-old religious barriers were shattered as participants gained insights they never knew existed. One attendee shared, “Prior to the seminar, I was unaware of the parallels between the two religions. Now, my understanding has deepened, and I recognize the importance of fostering harmony and peaceful coexistence among followers of both faiths.”

(**Rafatu Abdul Hamid, COFP Fellow -2022/2023, Nasarawa State, Nigeria**).

Sister Jethro, the second Cameroonian to participate in the Fellowship program, gratefully seized the opportunity provided by the COFP community peace project to facilitate peace in her Mayordale community in the Adamawa region of Cameroon. The project, titled **“Women-Led community-driven Actions for peaceful Co-existence Between Host Community and Internally Displaced Persons (IDP'S) in Mayordale Adamawa Region, Cameroon,”** aimed to address the ongoing conflicts arising from land disputes between internally displaced persons and original settlers. This conflict had led to divisions along ethnic and religious lines within the community. The initiative brought a sense of relief as 31 women from diverse religious backgrounds attended a 2-day skill acquisition program where they were trained in agribusiness, catering, and sewing. They received starter kits to kickstart their self-sufficiency. The initiative aimed to reduce idleness, gossip, and hate speech that can lead to violence. One participant started peace talks in her family after the training, while a young IDP girl who lost her family found joy in receiving a sewing machine, expressing gratitude to the COFP Foundation and funders, and reaffirming her faith in God.

(**Nkenglefac Jethro, COFP Fellow -2022/2023, South West Region, Cameroon**).



Our Stories of Success Contd.

Climate change is a pressing global issue, and any opportunity to address it is a step in the right direction. This was the driving force behind *Folashade's* community peace project, which took place in the AMAC and Bwari area councils of the FCT, Abuja on February 14, 2024, involving 400 school children. The project's focus was on the theme "**Education at the Intersection of Climate Action for Peaceful Co-existence.**" During the event, the children were educated on various aspects of climate change, both globally and within our nation, and were empowered to take action, no matter how small, to help mitigate these changes and protect our planet. The project was successful in equipping the children with knowledge and enthusiasm to improve their relationship with the environment. They are now eager to implement more environmentally friendly practices in their homes and schools. Looking ahead, they are excited about the upcoming launch of the Green Actors Club in their respective schools, where they can engage directly with best practices and strategies to contribute to saving our planet. (*Folashade Adepaju, COFP FELLOW 2022/2023, Abuja*)



Sister Blessing enthusiastically shared, "*Discovering the COFP Fellowship program was a transformative experience for me. It empowered me to initiate a community peace project that has had a profound impact in my community. It was both a privilege and a wake-up call, reminding me of the importance of fostering peace in our world, regardless of religion, color, or nationality. The community peace project was a poignant and memorable endeavor, allowing me to witness firsthand the vulnerability of life through the stories shared by each participant, particularly the hardships faced by widows.*" Inspired by their narratives, *Sister Blessing* focused her project on *Interreligious Dialogue and Empowerment for Vulnerable Christian & Muslim widows in Makurdi, Benue State*. The initiative aimed to equip 20 widows with various skills and essential knowledge about their rights as women and widows.

Consequently, these women were revitalized, enabling them to embrace life anew, regain their independence, and better provide for their families. The financial support provided enabled them to establish small-scale businesses and unite against those seeking to exploit their vulnerabilities in society. Despite their differing religious backgrounds in Islam and Christianity, these women forged a sense of unity that transcends religious divides, fostering a spirit of solidarity and support among them.

(*Okpe, Aladi Blessing, COFP FELLOW -2022/2023, Makurdi Benue State, Nigeria*).

Mohammed Sow Sheriff implemented a very strategic and impactful project titled *Building resilient youth against electoral violence in Liberia ahead of the October 2023 Elections*. All 50 participants in attendance learnt first-hand about the devastating effects of war, how to prevent electoral violence, and coexist peacefully with people of different religions and faiths. Liberia has its sad history of wars and violence and *Sheriff* refreshed it in the minds of his participants at his 2-day interfaith workshop and 1-day football and kickball matches held from the 14th-16th of February 2023 at Monrovia. The interfaith football and kickball matches brought the Muslim and Christian boys and girls together before the peace workshop where they learned first-hand from one of the longest serving Catholic priests in Liberia, Rev. Fr. Garri of the dangers and devastating effects and outcome of the war. It was an impactful event as young people were urged to be instruments of humility and service for the country, standing for the truth and playing roles in sustaining peace and counter electoral violence.

(*Mohammed Sow Sheriff, COFP FELLOW 2022/2023, Monrovia, Liberia*).





The life-changing peace project by **Sister Dumka** in the Kuje community of Abuja FCT, titled **"Strengthening Peaceful Co-existence by Enhancing the Economic Capacity of Sauka Women,"** resonates deeply within the community. The impact of this initiative on the twenty-three beneficiaries has been profound. Following the empowerment program, all the farmers experienced a significant increase in their crop yields, particularly those who cultivated groundnuts. Despite receiving a small quantity of seeds during the program, they were able to harvest numerous bags of groundnuts. Many of these bags were stored for the next planting season, while others were sold, generating substantial profits. As a result, these farmers are now self-sufficient and actively involved in empowering others through their successful groundnut farms. This was also the experience of those who received animals such as goats, cow, and so on. The impact from their new business is simply amazing as many of them testified.

(Dumka Michael, COFP FELLOW -2022/2023, Kuje, Abuja).

Aliyu's visionary community project aimed to empower undergraduate students from various tertiary institutions with **the knowledge and principles of ethical social media usage.** By fostering positive interactions between Muslim and Christian youths, his week-long interfaith workshop, which commenced on January 10, 2023, brought together 50 enthusiastic participants from Sokoto State. Through engaging activities and discussions, the workshop not only promoted constructive communication and information sharing on social media platforms but also united young individuals from diverse backgrounds in a shared community. This initiative encouraged mutual respect, understanding, and appreciation of each other's beliefs, cultures, and viewpoints, paving the way for a harmonious and connected generation of informed youths.



(Binanchi Aliyu Balarde, COFP FELLOW 2022/2023, Sokoto State Nigeria).

To address the prevalence of interreligious and ethnic conflicts in Gombi, **Jones** initiated a project titled **"Inter Religious and Ethnic Dialogue: Panacea for Peaceful Coexistence and Economic Development in Gombi."** His goal was to establish this community peace project as a model for fostering peaceful coexistence and economic growth. A one-day interfaith Peacebuilding workshop, with 64 participants, took place in Gombi, Adamawa State on January 2, 2023. Jones observed a positive shift in the community members' attitudes towards one another following the program. Instances of religious and ethnic intolerance decreased as mutual appreciation among the people grew. Consequently, peace is gradually being restored in the community, accompanied by an improvement in economic activities.

(Kadabiyu Dimga Jones, COFP FELLOW- 2022/2023, Gombi, Adamawa).





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 voices to the table for creative exchanges is one of the ways we provide creative solutions, new approaches, best practices and effective governance.

COFP Train and Deploy Observers for the 2023 General Elections in Nigeria

Following accreditation by the Independent National Electoral Commission to observe the 2023 general elections, the COFP Foundation organized a 2-day national training workshop under the theme "ARISE, O COMPATRIOTS, NIGERIA'S CALL OBEY". The primary objective of this workshop was to provide comprehensive training to 100 COFP Peace Ambassadors representing diverse regions of Nigeria on Election Monitoring. This initiative aimed to equip participants with the necessary knowledge and skills to actively engage in the electoral process. The training program took place on the 20th and 21st day of February 2023. His Eminence John Cardinal Onaiyekan, in his opening remarks, stressed that the task of observing and monitoring elections is a critical gateway for ensuring that our elections are free, fair and credible. It was most elating to also have on board Sheikh Muhammad Nuru Khalid, Rev. Fr. Professor Cornelius Omenorkhua, Executive Secretary of the Nigerian Inter-religious Council (NIREC), Dr. Sylvester Dachomo, President, COFP Africa Network of Peacebuilders, Professor Kareem Ramota, Vice-Chancellor, Fountain University, Oshogbo and Rev. Fr. Boniface Neibo, Secretary General, COFP Africa Network of Peacebuilders.

The major facilitators of this training program were; Mrs. Anthonia Onda, who is the Senior program officer of "The Youth Initiative for Advocacy, Growth and Advancement (YIAGA Africa)" and Mrs. Nkechi Abu who is the Deputy Director, "Election Monitoring and Observation", INEC. Anthonia educated participants on election procedure and observation, stating what to expect, what to come along with, what observers should look out for and what they should do if the statutory election procedure is tampered with while Nkechi's presentation focused on the roles and responsibilities of an Election Observer, the essential issues in election observation and the key elements of INEC Regulations and Processes for election observation. It was such joy to know that everyone who had been a part of the workshop was more enlightened and a lot more enthusiastic to actively engage in the 2023 election monitoring and observation exercise.



COFP Train and Deploy Observers for the 2023 General Elections in Nigeria Contd.

Following the training workshop, the Foundation adequately monitored the 2023 General elections across 30 states in Nigeria, including the Federal Capital Territory. The first of the election exercise observed by COFP was the Presidential and National Assembly elections which took place on Saturday, 25th February 2023. The second and final lap was the Gubernatorial and State Houses of Assembly elections which held on Saturday 18th March, 2023. The Foundation carried out this major national assignment by keeping its major goal of driving social change through good governance in forefront. During the election exercise, we identified challenges such as late arrival of officials, malfunctioning BVAS machines, voter intimidation, vote buying, disenfranchisement and other irregularities. After the general elections early in the year come the off-cycle elections which gave us another opportunity to observe elections in Kogi, Imo and Bayelsa states on November 11th 2023. Our key findings during these elections include voter apathy, late arrival at polling units, incidents of coercion and intimidation, and low voter turnout compared to previous elections in the past. Despite the obstacles, election process in 2023 as observed in polling units was not completely disrupted. Our observations and recommendations were fully reported to the INEC in order to enhance the process in the future.





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

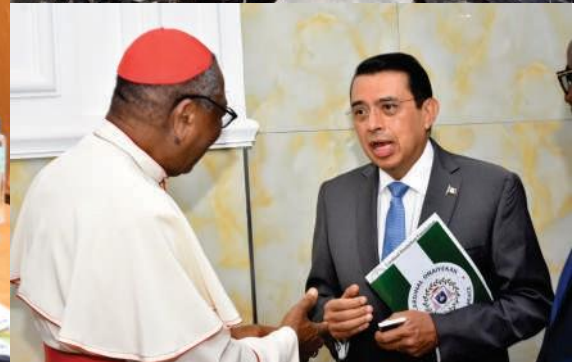
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COFP Convenes Diplomatic Community for Dialogue on Peace in Africa



Inspired by the life, times and legacies of Nelson Mandela, the Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace, the Foundation convene diplomatic community in Nigeria to mark the Nelson Mandela International Day on July 18th, 2023 in Abuja Nigeria, with a focus on “Dialogue on Peace in Africa Today”. Dignitaries, including ambassadors and diplomats standing as representatives of various countries and some high-level organizations were in attendance.

Key speakers, Sister Agatha Chikelue and His Eminence- John Cardinal Onaiyekan, underscored the critical role of peace in Africa. The Deputy Director, Rev. Fr. Boniface Neibo anchored the Panel discussions which addressed pressing issues such as inequality in South Africa, governance in Nigeria, and conflicts in the Republic of Congo as a template for prevailing socio-economic issues across the continent and Nigeria in particular. Proposed solutions included attracting investors to generate employment opportunities, fostering accountable leadership, and resolving resource-driven conflicts and entrenching a justice system across board were proffered. Participants highlighted the importance of peacebuilding initiatives like the African peer-review mechanism and New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). Archbishop David Okoh, the President of the Christian Association of Nigeria, CAN and Co-Chair, Nigeria Interreligious Council NIREC, concluded the event by stressing the necessity of responsible governance for Africa's advancement, urging a collaborative approach towards building a peaceful continent.



People Living with Disability & Media Inclusion

For the past four years, the Foundation has continuously supported People Living with Disability (PLWD) by sponsoring their Radio Program titled “Caring Heart Talk Show” aired on Armed Forces Radio, 107.7 FM, Abuja. The program brings to the public domain the marginalization, exclusion and underemployment suffered by those living with disability. The program apart from giving the people living with disability a voice, it further connects and exposes the extent to which the provisions of the Disability Act of 2018 and other enabling laws are complied with by government and other relevant bodies.

In 2023, the Foundation sponsored the radio program from May to October, achieving 90% coverage including neighbouring states like Kogi, Nasarawa, Kaduna and Niger States. Listeners from other African countries join the program through Facebook live coverage. Mr. Gbenga Adeusi, the team lead of the radio program reported that there were 60 to 70% achievement in terms of application of the 2018 Disability Act. He mentioned that they were very happy when a person with disability was appointed as the Special Adviser on Disability Affairs to Mr. President under this current regime.





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



Nigeria Women of Faith Network Convening

The Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace (COFP) in collaboration with Religions for Peace Nigeria Women of Faith Network (NWFN) convened the leadership of multi-religious women organizations in Nigeria under the umbrella of the Nigeria Women of Faith Network from 13 – 15 May, 2023 in Abuja to discuss the multidimensional issues affecting women in Nigeria and how to mitigate the problem more effectively. It was observed that with the COVID 19 in 2020, Gender Based Violence GBV has been on the increase affecting more women in all ramifications across the country.

Therefore, the meeting served as an avenue to strategize and develop programs/objectives with the aim of improving lives of women, men and youths as well as ending GBV. Women leaders from Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA), Catholic, Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN), Presbyterian, Organization of Africa Instituted Church (OAIC), Sunni and Ahmadiyya Muslim, Women Wing of the Christian Association of Nigeria (WOWICAN) and the Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN) participated in the two-day event.





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.



COFP Scholarship Program for Underprivileged Children

Ensuring children have access to quality education is a vital gift and right that parents and governments can pass on to the next generation as one of their integral responsibilities. Education, particularly for young people, not only enhances confidence and self-reliance but also exposes them to life's ideals. Regrettably, many families struggle to afford even the smallest school fees. In response, the COFP Foundation, through its corporate social responsibilities, has stepped in to provide financial aid to the poor children unable to pay their fees, safeguarding their right to education and ensuring that they are well educated. During the 2022/2023 academic session, COFP sponsored the fees of 45 children from 12 different schools, spanning primary, junior, and senior secondary levels. Notably, some students have been on scholarships for years, with the continuation of funding contingent on their academic performance. In the coming year, we are looking forward to expanding our scholarship scheme to include tertiary institutions of learning and plans are already being put in place to this effect.



YOLDA Beneficiaries Share Their Success Stories

COFP among its other activities do assist young people who are into drug and substance abuse/addiction to live a healthy and responsible life. The program is tagged, “Youth Living Above Drug and Substance Abuse/Addiction” (YOLDA). Our YOLDA scheme targets unemployed youths in the suburbs are used as tools for violence. Through this one-year program, we take one step at a time with our beneficiaries guiding, counselling, providing medical support, enrolling them on different livelihood skills and providing start-up materials/equipment's to enable them set-up their petty businesses after the program. Going through this life changing program has afforded them the opportunity to quit drugs & substance abuse and get themselves busy with some meaningful economic activities in order to fend for themselves and even their families. The Foundation in 2023 gave additional financial support to some of these beneficiaries who were doing well in different areas of their businesses. The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) team of the Foundation visited the beneficiaries and gathered stories of success below from some of them.

As one of the Beneficiaries of the YOLDA Program, Blessing who was into drug abuse and solely depend on her aged mother and siblings for survival did not only quit smoking but became a professional hair dresser and make-up Artist. Now she has a saloon of her own and takes care of herself and her aged mother. Blessing promised to train anyone who is ready to learn hairdressing free of charge in appreciation to what COFP has done for her. She received additional financial support from the Foundation to stock her shop with goods as a way of encouraging her to do more.



Abah who was one of the YOLDA program beneficiaries has this to say “I’m a painter and a producer of paint because of YOLDA, I now get contracts to paint people’s houses. I’m grateful to COFP Foundation. David who was enrolled by the Foundation to learn how to produce paint in a paint production company successfully completed his training. With his previous experience in painting, David produces paint and carry out painting work as well. He reported securing different contracts at different locations in FCT and some neighboring states. The Foundation also supported him financially to boost his paint production business.

Another beautiful story of success came from Joseph who is a YOLDA beneficiary was previously empowered by the Foundation to co-set-up a barbing saloon business. With the additional financial support from COFP in 2023, Joseph became a proud owner of barbing saloon. He expressed his excitement that YOLDA has really helped him to discontinue from taking hard drugs which is why he is now very useful to himself and able to take care of his financial responsibilities.

After the training period of his YOLDA program, Williams chose to go into catering services. The Foundation took care of the training and supported him to start his own catering business. Today, Joseph is currently running a catering business for birthdays, weddings and other occasions. He was able to purchase a car in 2021 to help him in his catering activities.

“I started indulging in drug abuse as a result of intimidation from my uncle considering the fact that I was idle, but now I have regained my respect because the YOLDA program helped me not only to quit drug abuse but empowered me with generator and a clipper to start my own barbing saloon says Bartholomew”. He expressed joy and gratitude to the Foundation for the opportunity to be part of the YOLDA program.

Mercy could not hide her gratitude to God for the YOLDA program as it has helped her to quit drug abuse and now concentrates more in her academics. Mercy was given a small Tiger generator for her small business center after her graduation from the YOLDA program. She reported that she is making use of the generator for her photocopying business at her hostel in University of Abuja and uses the money that she makes from the business to support her education at the university.



Inclusion of Every Child in Climate Change Campaign

In societies where the echoes of nature's distress grow louder with each passing day, there exists a beacon of hope, a force both tender and mighty - our children. As we celebrate World Children's Day, we at COFP Foundation illuminate not just their innocence, but their profound capacity to become stewards of our planet. In the narrative of "Making Young People Aware of their Role in Protecting the Environment, Inclusion of Every Child," become necessary. Children emerge not merely as spectators, but as vital protagonists in the saga of environmental preservation. With their unyielding curiosity, boundless creativity, and innate sense of justice, they stand poised to forge a path towards a greener, more sustainable future. Inclusion isn't just about inviting them to the table; it's about recognizing the immense power they possess to shape the world they will inherit. This is what drives the celebration of the Children's Day for COFP this year. We are convinced that together, we can nurture their innate connection to nature, empowering them to become catalysts of change, guardians of our precious Earth, and ambassadors of hope for generations yet to come.





World Children's Day is celebrated every year on November 20th to honor the rights of children. The Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace marked this day on September 28, 2023, with a special focus on climate change. The theme for the event was "Making Young People Aware of their Role in Protecting the Environment: Inclusion for Every Child". Participants were taught various actions they could take to save the planet, such as planting trees, adopting renewable energy mechanism, afforestation, reforestation, climate-resilient agriculture, reducing food waste, and more. At the end of the one-day event at Mararaba Gurku Primary and Secondary Schools in Nasarawa State, students, pupils and their teachers were made to planted approximately 120 seedlings, including flowers and economic trees, in their school premises.

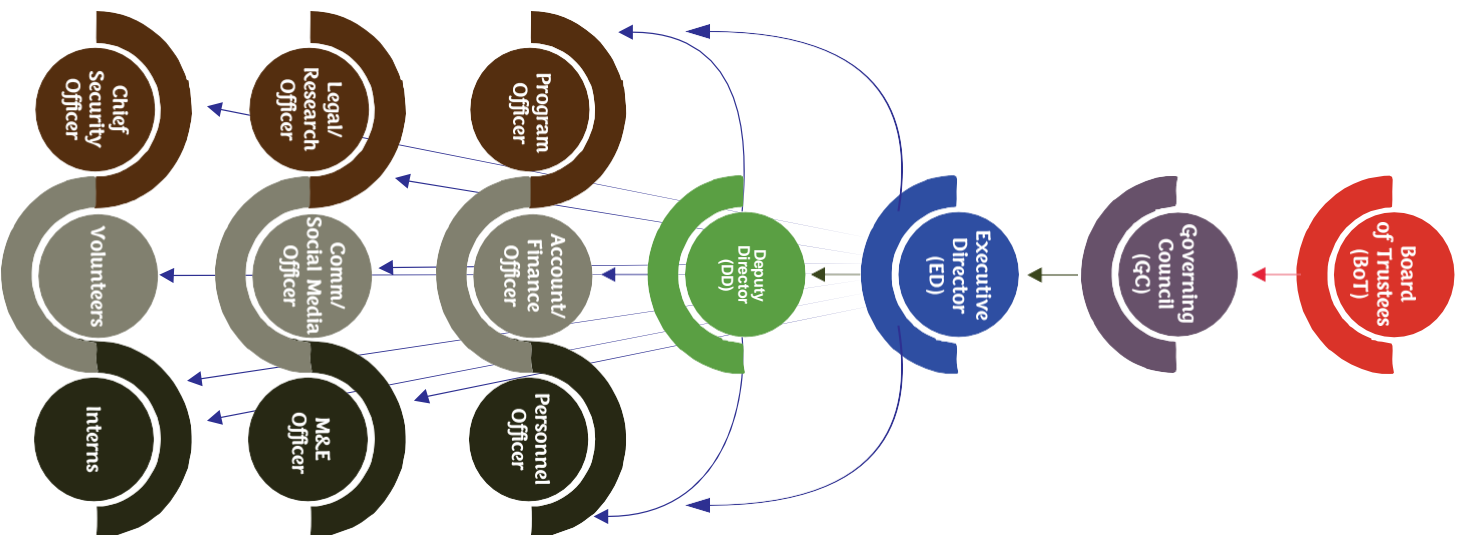


Ending Violence and Abuse Against Children (EVAC)

Children are the leaders of tomorrow as often said! But can they become leaders tomorrow if they are abused and battered at their young age? The absolute reality is that within the confines of homes, schools, and communities, children face threats that cast long shadows on their well-being. It's a narrative we often choose to overlook, yet the urgency to address and eradicate violence against children cannot be overstated. We must recognize that no form of violence against children is justifiable, and that every child deserves care and protection. COFP Foundation in the light of the above organized a one-day program tagged, "Ending Violence and Abuse Against Children" EVAC, on the 2nd of November 2023. The event brought together teachers and care givers from primary and secondary schools within the FCT and some parts of Nasarawa state. No violence against children is justifiable and all violence against children in all settings are preventable. The day featured lectures, group discussions, question and answer session. To conclude the event, the Foundation urged that all must join hands together to take the necessary steps and ensure that children are safe from any form of abuse and violence.



COFP Functional MAP



“It is difficult to put all I learned, or understood into writing. It was an experience that changed my negative perspectives to the positive in many things about life and relationship with other people. The program was detailed, and the resource persons were all unique in their own way, impacting knowledge with so much zeal and grassroots understanding of their subject. The welfare was near perfect (good accommodation and meals).

Dedicated staff and above all, a good seed fund for the project which I did not expect considering the economic meltdown. I pray that the Fellows nurture and support their projects so that all the efforts of the Foundation geared at Peacebuilding shall not go in vain, Amen”.

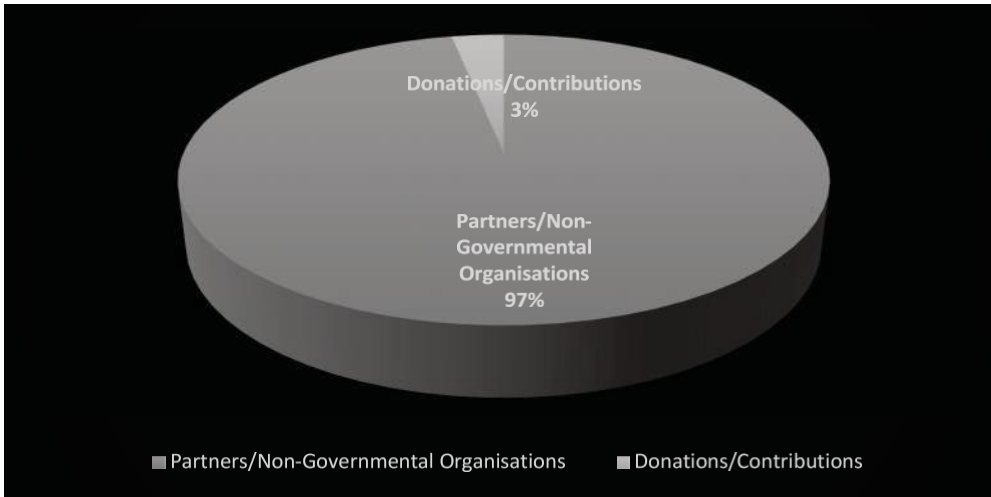
Agbo Hadiza Abigail (COFP Fellow-Nigeria, Class of 2023)

“I have been attending programs since the year 2000 with lots of certifications but none comes close to the COFP Fellowship program in terms of organization, conduct, and system of imparting knowledge on peace and project management. I have been writing proposals but I understand proposal writing better in the COFP Fellowship program. The liberty of interaction with people from other faiths, tribes, and countries has expanded my horizon. I can now interact with other Fellows from different African Countries and states in Nigeria, ask questions, get information on what peacebuilding is like in other places, and even replicate good project initiatives by myself. The selection of capable Facilitators made the program unique in terms of imparting knowledge logically”.

Saadatu Hashim (COFP Fellow-Nigeria, Class of 2023)

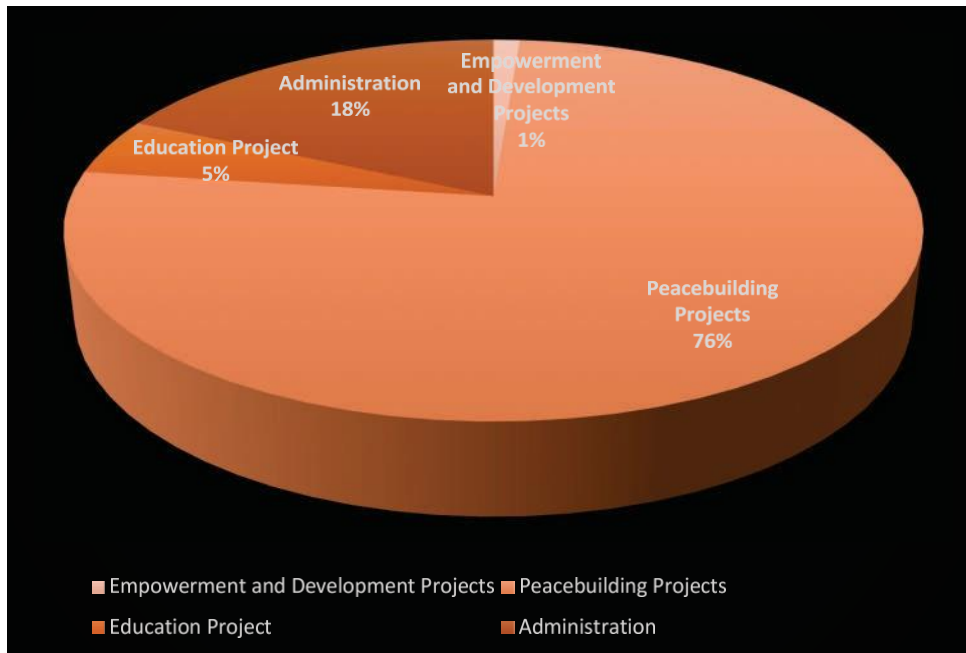
SOURCES OF FUND

TOTAL : N175,793,910



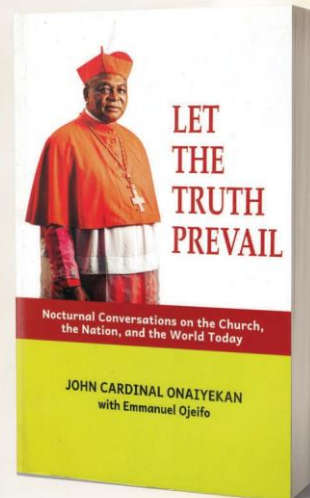
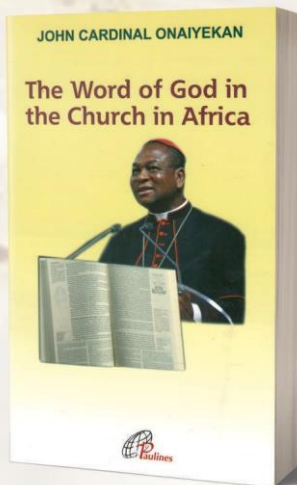
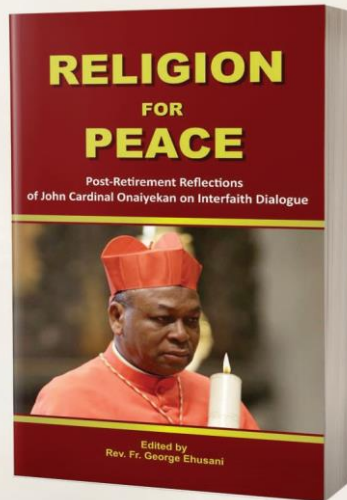
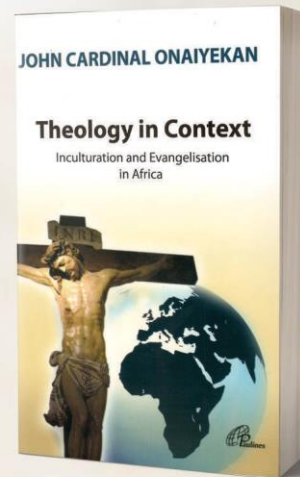
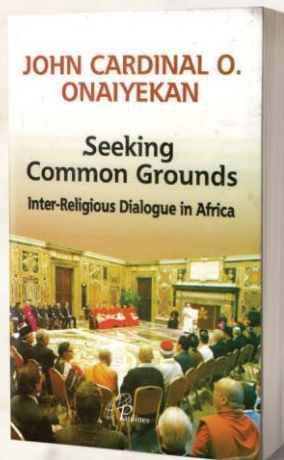
USES OF FUNDS

TOTAL: N279,352,574



OUR SINCERE APPRECIATION GOES TO OUR DONORS

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



Authored By:
His Eminence
John Cardinal Onaiyekan, CON



COFP Strategic Plan 2020-2025


Mandate


To provide the platform for inspiring and equipping grassroots leaders to work together genuinely in building their own solutions for social change & common humanity.


Read more @ www.cofpfoundation.org




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