PEACE (RE)BUILDING INITIATIVES:
INSIGHTS FROM SOUTHERN KADUNA, NIGERIA

This fact sheet presents findings from the RESOLVE Network Policy Note "*Peace (Re)building Initiatives: Insights from Southern Kaduna, Nigeria*" by Benjamin Maiangwa. Violent conflicts and crime have reached new heights in Nigeria, as cases of kidnapping, armed banditry, and communal unrest continue to tear at the core of the ethnoreligious divides in the country. Southern Kaduna has witnessed a virulent spree of communal unrest in northern Nigeria over the last decade due to its polarized politics and power differentials between the various groups in the area, particularly the Christians and Muslims, who are almost evenly split. In response to their experiences of violence, the people of that region have also shown incredible resilience and grit in transforming their stress and suffering. This policy note focuses on the transformative practices of the Fulani and other ethnic communities in southern Kaduna in terms of how they problem-solve deep-seated socio-political rivalries and violent relations by working through their shared identity, history, and cultures of peace. The note explores how peace practitioners and donor agencies could consolidate local practices of sustaining peace as complementary or alternative resources to the state's liberal system.

For more, see: Maiangwa, Benjamin. *Peace (Re)building Initiatives: Insights from Southern Kaduna, Nigeria*. RESOLVE Network, 2021.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Healing through shared identities

Any odds of peacebuilding will remain low so long as communities in Southern Kaduna see themselves as "tribalized" adversaries and not as members of a shared identity who should engage their differences in a dignified manner to form constructive relationships at various levels. Some avenues of fostering shared identites include:

→ **Shared rituals.** Joint conversations, prayers, and reflections among different groups will provide the platform for people to listen to each other and take responsibility for actions that might be upsetting the peace in the land.

→ **The moral code of Pulaaku.** Rather than focusing on characteristics and traits that have led to conflicts, focusing on characteristics that have traditionally been associated to positive connotations could be an option. One of such traditions is Pulaaku, which finds expression in daily acts of privacy, piety, and respect.

→ **Rethinking community, individualism, and masculinities.** The torturous relation that people have with the state might provide a fertile ground for the renegotiation of community dynamics and the definition of individual responsibilities in maintaining positive community dynamics. Masculinities and men's role in community dynamics specifically ought to be unpacked and explored.

→ **(Re)visiting shared history.** An understanding of how a conflict arose in the first place, which steps were taken to solve it (or not), and how learned lessons can inform future efforts is critical for communities that seek to engage in peacebuilding.

Healing by co-building a legacy

Any odds of peacebuilding will remain low so long as communities in Southern Kaduna see themselves as "tribalized" adversaries and not as members of a shared identity who should engage their differences in a dignified manner to form constructive relationships at various levels. Some avenues of fostering shared identites include:

→ **Reimagining dialogue.** Dialogue and mediation have been part of the peacebuilding repertoire of the different communities in Kaduna. These peacemaking measures are managed at the community and family levels by elders, parents, and religious leaders.

→ **Contested identities, survival, and shared resources.** Approaches to communities engaged in local peacebuilding should be based on both their understanding of the shared identity that each has with the other groups and their own sense of rootedness in the area.

→ **Critical enablers for a meaningful dialogue.** A storytelling program is a way of "staying in touch" and passing on folklores of moral relevance to the younger generation. It may also provide the platform for cross-community engagement between the different adversarial groups in Kaduna.

Social media, local representation, & knowledge-brokering

Social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter have been a veritable platform for the practice of activism. Donors and peacebuilders could also set up and or work with existing news platforms in Kaduna such as the House of Justice Radio and other local radio and TV stations in the state to initiate a series of documentaries to showcase positive contact among the different ethno-religious groups in the state.

→ **Reimagining the state: Autonomous Local Governance.** Decoupling the chieftaincy structures from the fiduciary and financial responsibilities of the Local Government Areas and the state might be a way of decentralizing power and managing the distribution of state-level resources. This self-sustaining local governance model can provide the services that the state often ignores due to the ethno-religious dispositions of ruling politicians.