



SOCIAL MEDIA PEACE CAMPAIGN:

LESSONS FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF CITAD



MacArthur
Foundation



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INTRODUCTION

In June 2013, CITAD received a 2-year grant from MacArthur Foundation to implement a social media based peace campaign, titled Using Social Media to Promote Peace, National Cohesion and Accountability in Context of Violence in Nigeria. The objectives of the project include:

1. Conduct training for civil society organizations members to use social media to promote tolerance, diversity and peace in Northern Nigeria.
2. Develop and deploy social media platforms to be used to promote tolerance, diversity and peace in Northern Nigeria.
3. Engage civil society organizations and other stakeholders to articulate alternative appropriate and effective framework for addressing the myriad of violence afflicting the country.
4. Document cases of extra judicial killing, disappearances and torture.
5. Conduct advocacy activities to selected community and religious leaders in communities affected by violence and target both state and federal government officials (including) legislators with a view to getting them buy in the alternative framework for rolling back violence.

Implementation commenced in October 2013. In December, 2014 CITAD administered various tools to assess the first year implementation of the project. This publication documents the successes, gains and lessons learnt from the implementation of the project.

WHAT WAS DONE?

1. Training of CSOs on use of social media for peace advocacy: Over 200 representatives of CSOs, students and journalists were given training in several rounds of social media for peace advocacy. The training was conducted as follows:
 - a. Social media training for CSOs in Jigawa State on 9th December, 2013 at Manpower Development Centre, Dutse
 - b. Social Media for CSOs in Kano State on 30th April and 1st May, 2014 at Tahir Guest Palace Kano
 - c. Social Media for CSOs in Yobe State held on 18th and 19th of February 2014 at Nassarawa Guest House in Kano.
 - d. Social Media Training for CSOs in the North East States: 15th September, 2014 in RiverEdge Hotel, Bauchi
 - e. Social Media Training for CSOs in the North central State : 11th and 12th of June, 2014 in West Point Hotel, Abuja.
 - f. Training for Students for Peace leaders in April 2014 at CITAD, Kano
 - g. CITAD4PEACE Coordinators, media and CSO members on 1 and 2, May, 2014 at CITAD, Kano
 - h. Training for Teachers/advisers of Peace Clubs in Kano State: 30th September 2014 at CITAD's Multipurpose Hall.
 - i. Training for teachers/advisers for Peace Clubs in Bauchi State: 20th September, 2014 at Govt. Girls College, Bauchi

- j. Two-day training of trainers on the use of social media for peace campaign for Sa'adu Rimi Students for Peace Club members on 1st and 2nd June, 2014.
2. Research on human rights abuse in the context of insurgency: To have a better understanding of the situation, the project commissioned a team of researchers to document human rights abuse under the insurgency situation. They include the abduction of women in Maiduguri, the impact of the insurgency to the right of children to education in Bornu, community resilience and human rights in Bauchi and Jos, the plights of widows of policemen killed in Kano and human right abuses in Abuja.



Participants during the workshop on Research on Human Rights Abuse in the Context of Insurgency held at Bolton White Hotel, Abuja on 21st November, 2014

These reports have been edited and published in a book titled "Insurgency and Human Rights in Northern Nigeria". The book has been distributed to various groups and individual peace campaigners, while an electronic version has been uploaded in the campaign website (www.citad4peace.org.ng.)

3. **Advocacy and Peace Campaign:** This involved three strands of activities. First was carrying the campaign to key stakeholders such as traditional rulers, religious leaders, celebrities, other organizations etc.



CITAD4PEACE delegation during a peace advocacy visit to the Emir of Machina, HRH Alhaji Ashir Albishir Bukar Machinama (OON)

Under this, more than 50 prominent personalities were visited and given various advocacy materials. A number of them made encouraging statements that were amplified in the social media while others



CITAD4PEACE delegation during the peace advocacy visit to the palace of the Emir of Katagum, HRH Dr. Muhammad Kabir Umar (CON)



CITAD4PEACE delegation during a peace advocacy visit to Alh Rabilu Musa Ibro (Middle) at his Wudil residence

even went ahead to set up their social media tools. The second is working with other organizations to advocate on specific issues. Under this, the organization in addition to various press releases issued, worked with several organizations in the region to jointly address a number of press conferences. Six such conferences were held (one in Abuja, two in Kano, one in Dutse, two in Bauchi). The third is taking part in other collective peace building activities.



Participants at the Workshop on Social Media for Peace Campaign for Civil Society Organizations in the Northeastern region held at RiverEdge Hotel, Bauchi

Among the various peace initiatives that CITAD had engaged were the Peace and Security Working Group (PSWG), the Bring Back Our Girls Family, the Kano Civil Society Peace Initiative and the Bauchi Peace Forum.

4. Policy Briefs: Two policy briefs were produced to help point out the ways to addressing some of the critical problems associated with the insurgency. The first was "Towards a Unity of Purpose: Collective Responsibility and People-Centred Approach to Addressing Insurgent Violence in Northern Nigeria", which focuses on strategies for enhancing the effectiveness of the counter insurgency of the

government. The second is "Responding to the Plight of Internally Displaced Persons in Northeastern Nigeria" which focuses on problems of IDPs especially in the northeast part of the country. Both documents have been widely circulated in addition to being placed on the campaign website as well as shared using various social media platforms and tools.

5. Social media campaign: The social media campaign was prosecuted using the following platforms:
 - a. Dedicated
 - i. Peace Now- a face book group with over 25,000 members, including many professionals, academics, youth, women, traditional, religious leaders.
 - ii. PEACE NOW a facebook campaign page, which serves the campaign anchor space.
 - iii. ICTAdvaocotes: a campaign twitter handled which is linked to the facebook page such that all posts placed are automatically also disseminated here.
 - iv. CITAD3 another twitter handle used for the campaign.
 - v. Peace campaign website (www.citad4peace.org.ng) which not only reports on the campaign activities but also provides key resources for peace campaign, documents, and

other materials such reports about peace building activities.

vi. CITAD4Peace and CITAD, two watzapp accounts for the campaign.

6. Partner Platforms: Consistent with the objectives of the project that CITAD will work with other organizations to expand the scope for campaign for peace, during the period CITAD joined or partnered in several other peace building initiatives. These include:
 - a. Nigeria Peace and Security Working Group.
 - b. Northeast Peace Working Groups.
 - c. Kano Civil Society Peace Initiative.
 - d. The Bauchi Peace Initiative.
 - e. Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room.

7. Spin off Platforms: Many of the people who were trained on Use of Social Media for Peace Campaign have set up various platforms for the campaign and have been very active. These include:
 - a. NORTH-EAST CSOs AND MEDIA FOR PEACE FORUM
(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/642198559183057/>)
 - b. JIGPOLY STUDENTS 4 PEACE
(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1450241768541348/>)
 - c. NWU STUDENTS FOR PEACE
(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/472677589522187/>)

- d. CITAD ALUMNI
(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/128066890642329/>)
- e. BUK STUDENTS FOR PEACE
(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1402970346625791/>)
- f. F.U.K STUDENT FOR PEACE
(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/706439612782869/>)
- g. Social Media peace Ambassadors
(SMP Ambassadors)-
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/smpambassadors/>
- h. Abubakar Tafawa Balewa
University Students for Peace
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1523369307921419/> ATBU
- i. Saadatu Rimi College of Education
Students for Peace
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1418834295033886/> SAADATU
RIMI
- j. Gombe State University Students
for Peace
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/251867734984490/> Gombe
state university
- k. Kano State Polytechnic Students
for Peace
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/562924853853002/> kano poly

- l. Kano University of Science and Technology Students for Peace
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/819902404693250/> KUST
- m. Umar Yaradua University Katsina Students for Peace UMYUK
- n. NORT-EAST PEACE RESTORATION GROUP (NEPRG)
(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/371839299574105/>)
- o. Network of CSOs on Education Governance
(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1471744563096230/>)
- p. GAYA YOUTH AWARENESS ASSOCIATION (GYAA) -
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/gayayouthawarenessassociation/>
- q. NEW MEDIA FOR ADVOCACY GROUP (NEMAG)-
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/685213781533704/>
- r. Kano state teacher peacementors -
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1406740642960881/?pnref=lhc>

8. Peace Activities in Secondary Schools: To further drive the campaign, CITAD thought the partnership of some states ministries of education with a view to establishing pilot peace clubs in secondary schools that would serve the purpose of socializing the pupils into the imperatives of peace building as well as use it as an advocacy tool to advocate for the mainstreaming of peace education in the school curriculum. The objectives of the peace clubs include:

- Raise the awareness of students about the importance of peace in the society
- Expose the students to basic security and personal safety tools
- Advocate for the inclusion of peace education in the school curriculum
- Serve as a mentoring platform that brings students with their seniors in tertiary institutions
- Mobilize students of secondary school on peace building efforts

In the period, CITAD entered into partnerships with the relevant ministry in three states namely Bauchi, Jigawa and Kano where permission was granted us to pilot the clubs. Working with the ministries, the schools were selected and by the close of 2014, the peace clubs were as follows:

- a. Kano-25
- b. Bauchi-15
- c. Jigawa-10



TOP: Bayero University Kano Students4peace (S4P) members during a peace rally
BELOW: Northeast University Students4peace (S4P) members in a group photograph

9. Engaging with Students of Tertiary Institutions:
Noting many of the youth who are on social media are students, CITAD thought to create a platform to engage the students in peace campaign. That platform crystallized in Students for Peace (S4P) which allows students to engage in peace building campaign both within their campuses and in their home communities. The objectives of the platform are:

- a. Raise the awareness of students about the importance of peace in the society.
- b. Expose the students to various peace building tools.
- c. Provide training opportunity for the students on peace issues.
- d. Serve as a leadership training platform for the students.

So far the platform has membership in over 20 institutions of higher learning across seven states of Bauchi, Bornu, Gombe, Jigawa, Kano, Katsina and Yobe. Some of the activities they have done included:

- Peace Concert and rally held on 24th April 2014 by BUK Students for Peace.
- Advocacy visit to Freedom Radio by North West University Students for Peace.
- Peace sensitization lecture by SRCOE Students for Peace.
- Peace counseling by members of S4P in various secondary schools.
- Volunteer in the recent NWU 2014/2015 Post-UTME Exercise by guiding the

candidates to their respective venues on 25/10/2014.

- Creating partnership with other associations within the university and this include: MSSN, ISRF, English and Arabic Club, HISSA, Computer Sciences, Islamic Studies, Student Progressive Forum etc.
- PEACE PROGRAM AT DALA FM 88.5 (Muryar Zamani) by Students for Peace, Northwest University on 23rd November, 2014.

10. Public Fora

- a. Public lecture on Use of Social Media for Peace Campaign on 23rd November, 2013 at Mambayya House, Kano. It was delivered by Prof. Abdulrashid Garba, then Deputy Vice Chancellor, Bayero University, Kano.
- b. Seminar on Participation on Peace Building addressed by CITAD Students4Peace Coordinator, Comrade Abdulganiyyu Rufai Yakub at the America Corner, Kano State Library, Kano on [March 30, 2014](#).
- c. Public seminar on 'Islamic Perspective on Peace Building delivered by Dr. Mustapha Ismail of the Department of Arabic, Bayero University, Kano on [April 14, 2014](#).
- d. Various radio and television programmes on peace campaign.



Participants during the public lecture on Use of Social Media for Peace Campaign held at Centre for Democratic Research and Development, Mambayya House, Kano.



Dr. Mustapha Isma'il of the Department of Arabic, Bayero University, Kano delivering a seminar on 'Islamic Perspective on Peace Building' at CITAD centre

11. Publication : The following publications were produced as part of the project:

a. Books

- i. Social Media Campaign for Peace: Training Primer.
- ii. Insurgency and Human Rights in Northern Nigeria.
- iii. Spreading the Word, Creating Hope: A Book of Peace Messages.

b. Leaflets

The following leaflets were also produced and distributed as part of the campaign:

- i. With Peace, Everything is Possible.
- ii. Time to Stop the Blood Bath.

WHAT WAS ACHIEVED?

1. 230 CSO members, students and journalists were trained on the use of social media for peace campaign.
2. More than Twenty five (25) different social platforms were set up by various groups to amplify peace campaign messages.
3. Have signed Memorandum of Understanding with ministries of education in three states namely Kano, Bauchi and Jigawa States on the need to pilot peace clubs in public schools in these states.
4. Twenty-two (22) students for peace (S4Ps) groups have been set up in institutions of higher learning across seven states.



A 2-day workshop on Social Media for Peace Campaign for CSOs in North-Central held at Westpoint Hotel Abuja



A workshop on Social Media for Peace Campaign for CSOs in North-east held at Nassarawa Guest Palace, Kano

5. Fifty-five (55) peace clubs have been established in secondary schools in three states, namely Bauchi, Jigawa and Kano.
6. 56 teachers have been training on use of social media for peace campaign.
7. A training manual on use of social media (which is useful not just for peace campaign) has been developed and circulated to various CSOs, libraries, development partners and individuals.
8. Produced a book of peace messages which other organizations have found useful in terms of their messaging efforts on the social media.
9. Produced two set of policy briefing documents.
10. Carried out a research on human rights abuses in the Context of Insurgency which has been issued as a book titled: Insurgency and Human Rights in Northern Nigeria.

WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES?

1. There is increasing evidence that many people and organizations are using social media to campaign for peace.
2. There is increased concern and commitment by the public, especially youth to work for peace building as evidenced by the increased in the number of posts of peace messages on our platforms and other related social media platforms.
3. One major outcome for us is the establishment of the student network for peace (S4P).
4. We have been able to establish partnership with state ministries of education to carry out peace work in schools. This has opened up a vista for Peace

work and for the incorporation of peace education in the educational curricula of the schools.

5. The piloting of peace clubs in secondary schools provides a platform to mainstream peace work in schools.
6. It has contributed to a more informed public understanding of the insurgency, moving it from the domain of conspiracy theories to a reality that all Nigerians have to work together to overcome.
7. Our Peace Pages have turned a common ground for discussions and peace messaging from all ethnic groups and faiths.
8. Northwest University, Kano as a result of our peace campaign on using social media, added a topic on CITAD Using social media for peace building in their GSP 2201 Course on Peace and Conflict Resolution.



LEFT: CITAD4PEACE delegation during a peace advocacy visit to Sheikh Karibullah Sheikh Nasiru Kabara, the West African leader of the Qadiriyya Sect at Darul Qadiyya, Kano

RIGHT: CITAD4PEACE delegation during a peace advocacy visit to CAN President Kano Branch Bishop Ransome Bello at the Calvary Church, Kano

WHAT ARE THE GAINS?

1. The establishment of Peace Clubs: This has opened up a vista of peace building activities by engaging pupils of secondary schools, socialization to the basic tenets of peace building and an advocacy plank for mainstreaming of peace education in the curricula of secondary schools. The project also connects with the soft strategy of the Federal Government , the Countering Violence through Education (CVE).
2. The establishment of Students for Peace: This has provided a structure for more effective campaign for peace both at level of campuses and in the communities.
3. The successful launch of Dangerous Speech Monitoring: the project did not start with an intention to monitor and counter hate speech. However, during the implementation, an important link was made between our positive peace messaging and countering of hate speech. The project afforded CITAD to acquire the necessary skill and started a hate speech monitoring and countering project in the country.
4. The project has canvassed for alternative strategies for counter insurgency as well as in addressing the plight of IDPS. The policy brief on IDPs has in particular placed their plight in greater public domain and provides CSOs with ready-made advocacy material.
5. The project has also helped to raise public consciousness on the important fact that peace is

a collective responsibility and that citizens must play active role in its making.

6. The project has helped to enlist the support and engagement of a number of stakeholders including artists, students, CSOs and journalists.
7. The campaign has helped to counter many dangerous and hate speech by its peace messaging in the social media.

DIFFICULTIES

1. As social media had low penetration in the country, especially in the north east, there was lack of awareness that these are tools that could be used for peace campaign. At the beginning it was difficult for the messages to reach wide audience. However, we incorporated raising awareness on the use of social media and demonstrated its use for various causes which helped to raise awareness about the utility of social media for social causes thus allowing many more people to get to use the social media.
2. The collapse of telecommunication facilities in the north east means that social media was literally shut off in the zone. For the duration this lasted, we had very little to do to address it other than to call on relevant authorities to reconsider the shutdown. However, we encouraged our partners to continue to organize and work for peace at community levels
3. Our researchers experienced problems given the nature of the subject of their researches. Seeking out contacts, respondents (both victims and insurgents) to document was not easy. But for their persistence, they might have come out with nothing.

4. CSOs in the northeast of the country are generally weak to organize effective campaign for peace building without support from philanthropies, foundations and donor organizations.
5. We were not able to carry out advocacy visits to notable figures in the three states of Yobe, Adamawa and Bornu.
6. We found that unlike in other parts of the countries, most people of influence such as traditional and religious leaders and celebrities in the northern part of the country are not on social media.
7. Traditional and religious leaders are not on social media and are wary of its use. Often you could create account for them but many do not like this especially given the high incidence of social media account cloning by criminal minded people.
8. Many of the civil society members we trained are not focused on peace building programmes. Thus although their skill in the use of social media for advocacy had been enhanced, they are not directly applying this new skill into peace advocacy but mainstreamed social media skill into their programme focus.
9. There is also the fact many people just got in forums without understanding the purposes or the etiquette of the forum. This results in the posting of irrelevant, and times offensive messages.
10. While many people are on the social media, many are passive and hardly make comments or posts. Evaluating campaign on the basis of social media engagement alone will thus be misleading since

many people who might have been influenced do not necessarily express this in terms of social media engagement.

11. While from the perspective of ease of use, twitter appears to be the simpler, we found that penetration of twitter use in the north, especially in the northeast is very low.

WHAT ARE THE KEY LESSONS?

1. It is extremely difficult for CSOs to operate in both Bornu and Yobe States, the main centres of the insurgency: yet these are the areas in much need of campaign to mobilize people to work for peace building. Social media is disrupted in many places as GSM networks with which many people access social media have been disrupted: in the circumstance, the best media with greater reach is radio.
2. The student population when properly cultivated is a major campaign tool for peace building.
3. There is clear acceptance by people of the key message that peace is a collective responsibility and therefore people are willing to engage, giving whatever contribution they could to restore people. These various contributions need to be harnessed.
4. Social media campaign without a complementaries of offline grassroots activities would not produce the desired results. It is therefore necessary to complement social media campaign with effective structures that would work offline with the messages in building peace. This is why CITAD has paid attention in building offline structures and mechanisms such as the peace clubs, the students

community neighborhood peace committees as well as encouraging broad partnership among CSOs for peace building.

5. There is need to focus on use of Hausa language in peace messaging as there is vigorous use of Hausa in the social media.
6. There is still misconception about social media which means that people engaging social media for any advocacy will need to bear this in mind so that they work with strategies that will clear up these misconceptions as they roll out their campaign.
7. Different people embrace different social media tools for different reasons. It will be wrong therefore to assume that all segments of target groups for peace campaign could be reached through a particular tool or platform form. For example, there is more preponderance of people on facebook but most people tend to be active on whatsapp than either facebook or twitter.
8. Our engagement has reinforced our understanding that the social media is double-edged tool which can be used for good or for bad. We found in particular peace messages contesting for space and attention with rumours and hate speech in the social media
9. Social media campaign requires painstaking discipline for ensuring that postings within the social media platform remain focused to the cause of the campaign. Active moderation is required.

ABOUT CITAD

CITAD (www.citad.org) is a capacity building civil society organization whose activities covers research, advocacy, training and publicity in all areas of ICTs. Its vision is; a knowledge-based democratic society free of hunger while its mission is; using ICTs to empower citizens for a just and knowledge-based society that is anchored on sustainable and balanced development.



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