

# Chapter 11

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## **Examining Intercommunal Strategies For Conflict Prevention In Conflict Prone Societies: Models Of Peace In Jos**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Between 1980 and 2000 when several states in the northern part of Nigeria such as Kano, Kaduna, Bauchi, Borno and Adamawa witnessed large scale violence leading to the loss of thousands of lives and destruction of properties worth millions of Naira, Plateau State and Jos, its capital remained peaceful, with the state earning for itself the eulogy of being the “Home of Peace and Tourism.” However, underlying issues of indigeneity and identity politics reached a climax in September 2001, subsequently engulfing other parts of the state in the following years. The effect of the conflict in the capital city has been particularly pronounced due to its cosmopolitan nature. The hitherto heterogeneous settlements of people of various and divergent ethnic and religious affiliations meant that in the ensuing crisis, people who were in the minority in a settlement became victims, losing their properties and even their lives. The aftermath of this is the segregation of the city into ethnic/religious cleavages especially between the Hausa/Fulani who are almost wholly Muslims and the predominantly Christian ethnic Plateau people. Such exclusive settlements have become “no go” areas for the out-groups which has engendered the perpetuation of tension coupled with the reinforcement of prejudices through rumours.

Although the crisis in Jos was widespread, affecting almost every settlement, a few communities have withered the storm of the surrounding violence and have remained peaceful. These include Dadin Kowa, State/Federal Low-cost Housing Estates and Rantya communities in Jos South and some parts of Jos North Local Government Area.

The objective of this paper is to highlight the strategies that these communities have adopted, the challenges they withered, what needs to be done to strengthen these strategies and the lessons that others in communities that are at risk of crisis can learn to avert the impending catastrophe and turn around their situation. Those communities that have been embroiled in conflicts can also profit from some of the measures in order to arrest the cycle of violence and to begin to build peace.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study was purely qualitative, using mainly, observation and interview methods. Most of the materials were gathered from the public contributions of participants at the peace advocacy visits to the Dadin Kowa, State/Federal Low-Cost Housing Estates and Rantya communities organised by the Centre for Conflict Management and Peace Studies of the University of Jos from the 30th to 31st of May, 2012. Further follow-up interviews were also conducted to clarify some of the positions put forward during the visits and also enrich the research content.

## **CONCEPTUAL CONSIDERATIONS**

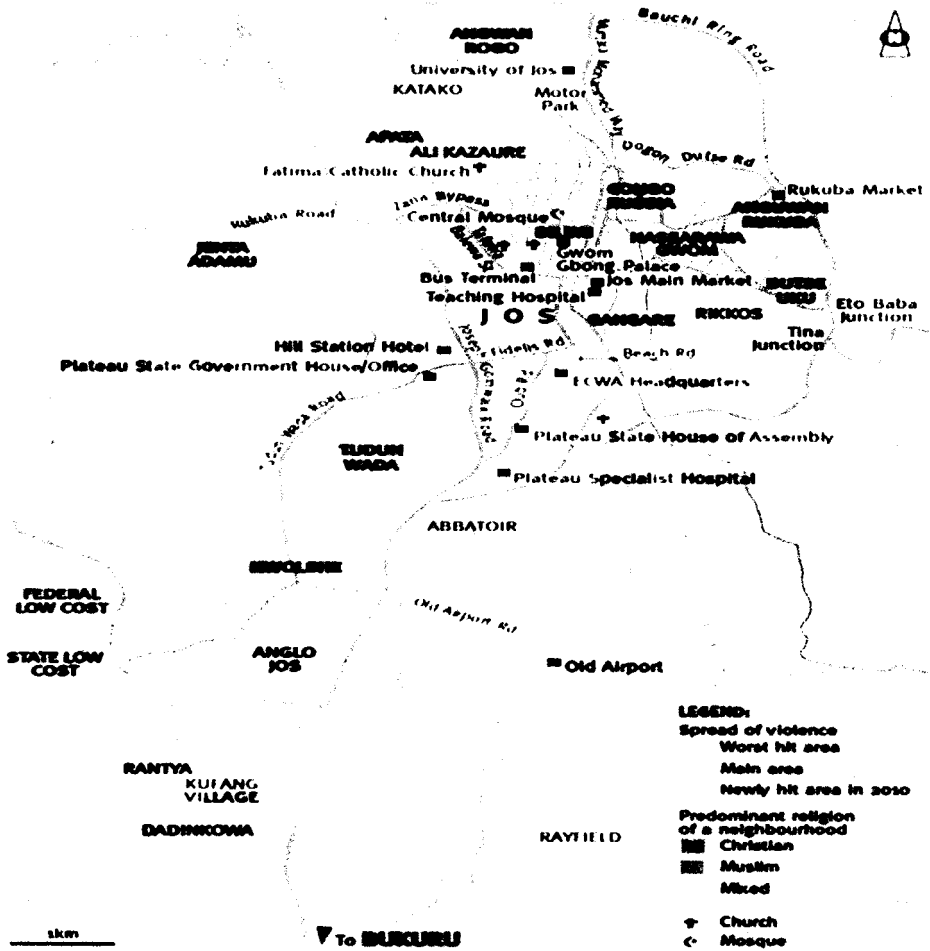
This study draws its ideas of a peace community from two sources: the Rotary Peace Community and the San Jose de Apartado Peace Community in Urabá in Northwest Colombia.

The Rotary Peace Community was originally conceived in Wagga Wagga, New South Wales, Australia on February 23, 1993. Peace communities are founded on the ideal that community service and the promotion of projects encouraging the rejection of violence, the resolution of conflict, and the promotion of community harmony, would flourish a constant and consistent desire for peace. This includes projects that advance tolerance, improve understanding and further peace within the home and neighbourhood. The purpose is to commit publicly, as a measure of civic goodwill, a community's belief in and intention to act as a Peace Community in accordance with the declaration suggested by Rotary or other peace organizations. These communities make certain undertakings to enhance peace, which could include the following:

- The communities resolve to share their time and material resources in a spirit of generosity to put an end to exclusion, injustice and, political and economic oppression;
- Defend freedom of expression and cultural diversity giving preference always to dialogue and listening rather than fanaticism, defamation and the rejection of others;
- Promote consumer behaviour that is responsible and development practices that respect all forms of life and preserve the balance of nature on the planet:

- Contribute to the development of their communities, with the full participation of all people and
- Respect for democratic principles in order to create solidarity together.

Map of Jos Showing Spread of Violence and the Peace Communities



Adopted from Krause, J (2011). *Deadly Cycle: Ethno-Religious Conflict in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria*

The communities' creed is respect for cultural diversity, the life and dignity of every person, without discrimination or prejudice; Rejection of violence towards all people in all its forms; Resolution of conflict within local and global communities; Reconciliation of differences in the pursuit of harmony.(Vincent and Jurak, undated)

The *San Jose de Apartado* Peace Community in Urabá in Northwest Colombia is an area that has had a history of systematic violence and massive displacements over the course of the conflicts in Columbia in which rebels fighting the government, constantly attacked communities. A collection of about 1,200 *campesinos* (Hispanic word for Latin American farmers), they are known for resisting violent displacement that many other communities in the area have experienced through a declaration of themselves as being a Peace Community, with the support of the region's Catholic Bishop. In 1997 the community claimed their territory as a neutral civilian community and refused to cooperate with any armed group of any form (including military or police). The community has since survived threats, killings, massacres, disappearances, food blockades, and arbitrary detentions.

Despite violent pressure from armed groups, the people of the San Jose Peace Community remain committed to building a community based on democracy, respect for plurality, and community work as an alternative to the violence that surrounds them (Forcolombia.org, 2010). The experiences that have come out of this need promote models of community strengthening that includes a holistic view of peace work which is not simply the absence of war, but is “the creation of a positive foundation for social, political, and economic growth, based on respect for fundamental human rights” (The International Human Rights Law Institute, 2007:11). The Urabá peace community is considered a proposal that needs to be preserved and protected in order to continue to be strengthened and grow as a social grassroots work that will create a much stronger foundation for the possibility of a true, sustainable peace in Colombia (Human Rights Accompaniment, undated)

This study has deduced certain defining features by which the two sources above, have classified themselves as peace communities and has identified these same features in certain areas of the conflict prone city of Jos. Specifically, the axis delineating Dadin Kowa, State/Federal Low-Cost Housing Estates and Rantya communities are captured here. The features include the following:

1. They reject violence and instead resort to the resolution of conflict, and the promotion of community harmony;
2. They invest in projects that advance tolerance, improve understanding and further peace such as the Dadin Kowa Development and Peace Initiative;
3. They share their time and material resources in a spirit of generosity to put an end to exclusion by inviting and entertaining each other in festivities and giving of gifts during weddings etc;
4. They have fora of dialogue and listening rather than fanaticism, defamation and the rejection of others;
5. They have resisted intervention by groups from outside who have sought to come into their communities and attack supposed enemies during crisis but have rather remained committed to building a peaceful community.

It is based on these that the term “Peace Communities” is used for Dadin Kowa, State/ Federal Low-Cost Housing Estates and Rantya.

Although conflict may be a normal intrinsic part of human existence, Francis isolates violent conflict as an anomaly that is avoidable (Francis, 2006). Violence itself does not only refer to physical and psychological violence (direct violence) but also includes structural violence which speaks of deliberate policies and structures that cause human suffering, harm or death as well as cultural violence which is the practise of cultural norms that results in discrimination, injustice and human suffering (Galtung, 1969). The practice of conflict resolution is concerned not only with the reduction of the use of violence, but involves the dissolution of the underlying incompatibility so that the conflict will not erupt again in the future (Melander and Pigache, 2010).

### **CONFLICT PREVENTION**

Researchers differ on the definition of conflict prevention depending on the aim of prevention, from reducing violence to resolving the incompatibility, the time perspective (using a short- or long-term view) and the means, in particular with regard to their coerciveness (Melander and Pigache, 2010). While Wallensteen (1998) defines it as constructive actions undertaken to avoid the likely threat, use or diffusion of armed force by parties in a political dispute, Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse (1999) see it as actions which prevent armed conflicts or mass violence from breaking out. For Boutros-Ghali (as cited in Wallensteen & Möller, 2003, p.5) – “Preventive diplomacy

is the use of diplomatic techniques to prevent disputes arising, prevent them from escalating into armed conflict...and prevent the armed conflict from spreading.” The Carnegie Commission (as cited in Wallensteen & Möller, 2003, p.5) considers that “The aim of preventive action is to prevent the emergence of violent conflict, prevent ongoing conflicts from spreading and prevent the re-emergence of violence.

Swanström and Weissmann (2005) note that conflict prevention as a concept is a fairly new sub-culture of security and foreign policy studies but in practice there have been a concern over the ages to prevent conflicts and deter the reoccurrence of conflicts. They also recognise the categorisation of conflict prevention into two: direct prevention and structural prevention. Whereas direct conflict prevention refers to measures that are aimed at preventing short-term, often imminent, escalation of a potential conflict, structural prevention focuses on more long term measures that address the underlying causes of a potential conflict along with potentially escalating and triggering factors. Direct conflict prevention is therefore concerned about responding in a crisis judged to be in a dangerous phase of military escalation, intensification or diffusion and the need to act to prevent increasing dangers. In structural prevention however, the idea is to create such conditions that conflicts and disputes hardly arise or do not threaten to escalate into militarized action (Wallensteen & Möller, 2003).

Väyrynen (1996) makes a distinction between three different phases of preventive action and three strategies of prevention. The first is conflict prevention, i.e. preventing disputes from arising between parties; the second, escalation prevention, i.e. preventing both the vertical and horizontal escalation of hostilities to more destructive forms of warfare and to involve additional actors; and thirdly, post-conflict prevention, i.e. preventing the re-emergence of disputes by reintegrating and reconstructing the society.

## **STRATEGIES FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION IN DADIN KOWA, RANTYA AND LOWCOST**

The Centre for Conflict Management and Peace Studies of the University of Jos (CECOMPS) organised peace advocacy visits in some of the conflict flashpoints in Jos North including Ungwar Rogo/Ungwar Rimi, Ungwar Rukuba and Jenta Adamu, 10th – 11th October, 2011; Rikkos, Fillin Ball and Dutse Ukwu /Tina Junction (Jos Jarawa) , 9th – 10th December, 2011. There were tales of agony and grief as a result of lives and properties lost in the various episodes of violence which rocked various Jos communities. Mutual hatred and mistrust has encouraged a tense relationship between various communities such that the process of healing is slow.

When the Centre eventually visited the south-west areas of metropolitan Jos, places like Dadin Kowa, State/Federal Low-cost Housing Estates and Rantya communities from 30th – 31st May, 2012, the setting was different. Christians and Muslims of different ethnic groups gathered together and recounted how they have successfully engaged each other through the turbulence of the surrounding mayhem to forge an atmosphere of peace where they still live side by side with one another. The following is an account of the strategies these communities adopted as related by various stakeholders who spoke freely on the occasions.

### **DADIN KOWA**

Dadin Kowa in Jos South Local Government Area is a mixture of a mostly Christian community with a significant Muslim population. It also has a mixed population in terms of economic and social status, with large houses on the outskirts and crammed streets of poor settlements in its centre (Krause, 2011). The residents still live peacefully side by side in spite of the violence in the surrounding environment. This has been as a result of a number of strategies the community has put in place to promote inter-communal relations. In the course of the advocacy visit, residents of the community enumerated the following:

There is cooperation between community leaders to identify intruders into the community who may have come in with the intention to cause disaffection among the residents. This also includes flow of information between the leaders. This cooperation was highlighted by two community leaders: one a Hausa Muslim and the other a Berom Christian. They discussed a case in point in which the latter had received a report that a miscreant **from the mainly Christian community had found his way into the Muslim community with the intention of stirring trouble.** He had asked the former to confirm the allegation, and upon confirmation of this information, the Christian youth within the community were mobilised, and they quickly went into investigation and not only were they able to identify the fellow but expelled him from the community forthwith and communicated same to the later.

A Christian youth leader also corroborated the submission of these community leaders showing that there is inter-religious communication between Christian and Muslim groups. This has made them see themselves as belonging to one community. Although they are aware that they differ in faith, they have a common denominator which is their habitation where they will have to dwell together to practice their different faiths.

An elderly women leader likewise commended the Imams and the Pastors because they have played a key role in ensuring that Dadin Kowa remained peaceful. A youth leader

also cited many instances in which violence would have erupted if not for Imams and Pastors helping to resolve the situation through dialogue with the youths.

Similarly, there is a joint vigilante group, comprising of the Berom and Fulani in Kangang which has helped avert eminent crisis and cases of cattle rustling. These teams undertake patrols together. The community leader of that settlement also attested to this. The community has also properly keyed into the police community relations committee scheme introduced in April 2004 by the Chief Olusegun Obasanjo administration, toward active partnership between the police and the members of the community for effective synergy and dislodgement of criminals and other undesirable elements in the society.

The community leaders' willingness to bear the cost of peace has been crucial in the peace process. The leaders were aware that peace would not come to them freely but they had to pay for it. A Christian clergyman shared this at the peace advocacy visit. He enumerated some of the things he had done in this regard including building the capacity of the youths for gainful employment especially in the construction industry. His house has also served as a refuge for people in distress during crisis. A youth leader and the Programme Officer for Dadin Kowa Development and Peace initiative confirmed this in an interview and further stated that the clergyman has successfully withstood attempts by youths from outside the community from coming in to attack anyone in the community.

The integrity and high moral standing of the community leaders has played a critically important role in the Dadin Kowa in processing peace. They have presented themselves as positive role models to the youths in the community therefore they revere them. Quite a number of community members admit that the elders of Dadin Kowa have not made divisive comments or instigated for conflict in any way, and that is why the community maintains its peace even when the entire town seems to be boiling in violence.

Another virtue demonstrated by the leaders, most especially men, as leaders within their families, is courage and truthfulness. This has given them boldness to rise up to occasions and risked their lives in the pursuit of peace. A woman recounted an instance which her husband had to stand in between armed and angry youths to keep them from engaging themselves violently, eventually prevailing on them to put down their arms.

Youths in Dadin Kowa have chosen to channel their energy as vanguards of peace instead of violence. A woman in the community commended the youths, noting that while in other communities, youth are the main perpetrators of violence, the youth in



Dadin Kowa, are vanguards of peace. In a focus group discussion, there was a consensus among the youths, who attributed their focus on peace to the fact that they seek counsel from elders before taking any step and their patience and willingness to respond in obedience to the elders helps in keeping them sane. This claim was confirmed by one of the elders who said that several times, Christian and Muslim elders would meet and call the youths. At such meetings the youths would be given a place of prominence within the community of elders, they would be encouraged to air their views, and are shown respect. In return, their obedience is demonstrated in the fact that they have always shunned any form of violence in reciprocation to their relationship with the elders.

The existence of a forum of common interest for stakeholders in the community has provided a channel of interaction and communication that has enhanced peace and development. The Dadin Kowa Development and Peace Initiative comprises of members from different ethnic and religious groups. As a result of this group they have been able to restrain themselves from engaging in acts that could lead to any form of destruction when there is conflict.

The response to conflict situations depends on past antecedents laid down by founding fathers of the community. A youth in the community who is from a mixed family of Christians and Muslims said that the peace in Dadin Kowa was planted long ago by elders who had integrity. He stated that his grandfather was the first Mai Angwa (Ward Head) of Dadin Kowa and that if it had not been for the integrity and exemplary nature of the people that started the community of Dadin Kowa like his grandfather, the present generation would have picked arms against one another. He concluded that the history of a place has a great role to play in the present reality of that place, stressing that the peace enjoyed in the community would not have been if not for the efforts of those that laid a strong foundation for peace long ago.

Divine sovereignty has been considered to be the overall factor in the prevalence of peace in any community. An Imam stated that although men must be commended, God is the author of the peace in Dadin Kowa. A young woman equally pointed out that prayers have helped in consolidating peace within the community.

Women have played a critical role in enhancing community peace within Dadin Kowa. A woman from the 'New Abuja' section of the community described how Christian and Muslim women have worked together to make sure any potential trouble maker in the community is identified and ejected before he or she causes any damage. This, they were able to do, by appointing women leaders on each street to monitor any strange person,

and notifying the other women in the community, so that necessary action is taken. This, she claimed has kept them in constant contact and encouraged them to foster peace.

## **STATE/FEDERAL LOW-COST HOUSING ESTATES AND RANTYA**

A large part of this community is in Jos South Local Government Area but a portion of it is located in Jos North Local Government Area. Like Dadin Kowa, this community is a largely Christian population with a Muslim minority mostly in the Federal and State low-cost areas. . The residents have also established arrangements to facilitate peaceful coexistence between them thereby enhancing peace. This was recounted during the advocacy visit as follows:

Leaders on both sides have made pledges and have taken responsibility to keep them, this has gone a long way in engendering peace. A Reverend and former president of ECWA (Evangelical Church Winning All, formerly Evangelical Church of West Africa), has been working hand in hand with leaders within Muslim community in the area to ensure that no matter what the level of crisis witnessed in other parts of Jos does not lure their community into violence. He and the Imam of the mosque in the State Low cost Housing Estate agreed that neither the Muslim nor the Christian community would be the first to launch an attack on the other and they were willing to take responsibility to ensure that it is upheld. This, he said has helped in entrenching the culture of peace in the community.

The cordial relationship between the duo was demonstrated in their social relations when, during the marriage of the Reverend's son, the Muslim community gave him a gift of ₦ 30, 000.00. Similarly, during the marriage of the Imam's daughter he attended the marriage wearing his Pastor's regalia. Two other men further supported this saying that they take advantage of religious festivities to intermingle which has further strengthened not only their relationship but that of the community as a whole.

The Imam of the mosque in the State Low cost Housing Estate, while acknowledging the contribution of people in building peace in the community, considered that 'God, who is the chief peace keeper and sustainer and is ultimately the reason for the peace in the community.' However, he adds that the understanding between the Christian and Muslim leadership which has flowed down to the youths. He cites an incident in which a few Muslim boys picked up arms to fight in response to reports of crisis in other parts of the city, but they were apprehended by fellow Muslim boys who did not see any gain in fighting. He acknowledged the same level of commitment to peace has been demonstrated on the Christian side.

Cordial relationship between the community and security agencies boosts the handling of security challenges. The Police Community Relations Committee in the State/Federal Low-cost Housing Estates and Rantya axis has played a key role in enhancing peace. The Public Relations Officer of the organisation highlighted some of the measures taken by them which he divided into two namely those taken before the crisis and during crisis period.

**Before crisis:** The leadership of the community held regular meetings with security agencies like the police, military, the SSS. When there were rumours, steps were taken to quickly dispel it before it is blown out of proportion.

**In times of crisis:** Elders risked their lives to keep peace. He said one night himself and other community leaders went out in the dead of the night when there were gunshots everywhere. He said a coward cannot work for peace.

The activities of Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have made tangible input into the peace of the community. NGOs have encouraged youths to take part in productive ventures instead of idling and becoming tools of violence and destruction. Some have organised trainings for the youths to acquire profitable skills so that they can be meaningfully engaged thereby taking them out of the streets.

Religious leaders (both Christian and Muslim) have done a great job in shaping the youths morally. This has helped in inculcating the morality of religion in the youths which has reflected in their conduct especially their readiness to take the counsel of the elders.

The willingness of community leaders to make sacrifices for the peace of their community has also been a boost to peace building efforts. There are leaders that have committed their time and resources in the interest of peace in the State/Federal Low-cost Housing Estates and Rantya. They sometimes even augment for certain inadequacies of provisions for security operatives, this serves as an incentive for these operatives to put in their best. Some of them do not sleep whenever there is crisis: they are willing to stake their necks no matter what time of the night, to venture into places at risk of violence. One of the religious leaders took time to real out names of prominent members of the community who have particularly made laudable contributions to the peace in the community.

The youths have been commended for taking their stand for peace. Once there is a crisis in town, they form a coalition of Christian and Muslim youths to start a vigilante to keep

away trouble makers that may want to infiltrate the neighbourhood. One of the youth leaders noted that whenever there was crisis in town the first step they took was to call both Christian and Muslim youths to talk among themselves. Once they have done this, no one would react negatively against someone from the other religion. He said this has really helped them in preventing incidences of violence such that none has ever been recorded.

Confirming the unity of the youths in taking actions, a youth member of the Federal Low-cost community cited an instance when a certain influential resident of the community who seemed to be a threat was forced to leave the area because the youths insisted on it. This ensured that the peace was not compromised by one individual no matter his social standing.

The planning of the settlement has also helped in facilitating peace. The Federal Low Cost areas cosmopolitan nature and its well planned streets have provided the residents a great opportunity to know each other, and relate with mutual respect. As an informant noted, '...people in Federal Low Cost have a long history of togetherness without regard to ethnic or religious leanings.' It has also been noted that education has also played a role in maintaining peace as there is no house that has a stack illiterate.

The Chairman of Federal Low Cost Residents Association further mentioned that in the Federal Low-cost, there are street chairmen who are responsible for investigating and reporting what happens in each street. This has been described as a well structured community association. This arrangement enhances effective communication leaving little room for rumour mongering. A prominent government official residing in the community noted that they are bold enough to even confront suspects and interrogate them to confirm or dispel any suspicion concerning them. He particularly cited a rumour that once spread that the mosque near his house was to be attacked. They met the potential trouble makers and talked to them and that ended the matter.

A female resident summed up the factors that have contributed to peace in the area as effective communication between the youths, women, elders and the police. This has been made possible because all stakeholders in the area have taken responsibility for peace and committing themselves individually and corporately to ensure it.

## **LESSONS LEARNT AND DIRECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE**

From the foregoing, we can deduce the following as factors that have kept the Dadin Kowa, State/Federal Low-cost Housing Estates and Rantya communities from being caught up in the crisis that has engulfed Jos metropolis from September 2001 to date. These are;

1. The communities recognise that peace is not a given: deliberate efforts must be made to secure it. As a result of this understanding, the various stakeholders have taken steps to establish structures to help them maintain the peace.
2. The leaders in the communities are conscious of their responsibility and are willing to pay the price for it by committing their time, resources and even risk their lives and that of their families in the process. This they have done because they judge correctly that it will pay the dividend of peace. If they did not, they may even pay a higher price.
3. Women have played critical roles as mothers to the youths who are the field actors in conflicts, the wives of the men who are behind the issues in contention and as members of their communities taking responsibility for peace.
4. Youths that are enlightened are most likely to resist the temptation of the negative exuberance of engaging in violence. The youths in these communities have opted to channel their energies towards peace.
5. Generally, the residents of these communities have come to the rational understanding that violence does not pay. Since they must live together even though they differ, they will need each to do so. They have therefore cooperated and worked to achieve it.
6. The NGOs in working in these communities have risen up to the occasion by engaging the youths meaningfully particularly in addressing the issue of unemployment which has been a major factor in youth restiveness that makes them readily available in times of crisis.
7. The religious leaders have recognised the reality of living in a pluralistic society and have allowed this understanding to transcend their particular beliefs for the purpose of harmonious coexistence without which they will not practice their faith. They have used their positions to guide the conduct of their followers to follow the path of peace.
8. The security agencies have keyed into the structures in these communities to intervene effectively especially through such forum as the police community relations. Security agencies therefore need the cooperation of communities to succeed in the peace process.

9. The residents of these communities have demonstrated a good measure of sincerity among themselves, being willing to expose from their midst, potential trouble makers. The elders and the youths have not allowed gaps in their relationship that can lead to tension and lack of cooperation. This has helped kept the youths in check.
10. Strong religious convictions have played a crucial role in ensuring that peace is promoted as members of the communities are conscious of their actions believing that they will be accountable for their actions beyond their present lives.

Several communities in Jos have experienced violent crisis in their environment leading to a collapse of their social and political fabric with consequences affecting their economic fortunes and general wellbeing. Demographic shifts have left some of those communities as exclusive religious and ethnic settlements with dire consequences for the present and even the future in a globalised world where diversity is a catalyst for growth and development.

Even though these communities have their distinctive characteristics which have shaped the conflict in their settings, the peculiarities are not so pronounced. With slight modifications, these communities can learn from the strategies that Dadin Kowa, State and Federal Housing Estates and Rantya have devised to prevent violence and build peace in their habitation. The Centre for Conflict Management and Peace Studies of the University of Jos with the support of the Netherlands Embassy in Abuja began such a venture when it invited leaders from these communities to attend the peace advocacy visits in the peace communities. There is need for a deeper level of engagement that may include arranging for leaders and even some members of these communities to interact over a period of time so that they learn from their experiences towards evolving strategies for their own communities. This will involve the initiative of these communities and the support of government and other stakeholders in the project of peace in Jos. Thus, even though the wholesale application of these strategies may not be appropriate, the basic principles would have profited these communities to advance the course of peace in their own environment.

## **ISSUES AND CHALLENGES**

As has been noted, the Dadin Kowa, State/Federal Low-cost Housing Estates and Rantya communities have continued to live in peace in spite of the spate of violence in other communities around them. Nevertheless, there are factors that can eventually violate the peace if not properly addressed. They include the following:

1. These communities continue to suffer neglect in basic infrastructures such as poor road networks, poor or non availability of pipe borne water supply and poor or lack of access to electric power supply and health facilities. This creates frustration that can be vented in aggression.
2. Youth restiveness is most times fuelled by idleness and socio-economic deprivation. Despite the activities of some NGOs in these communities, youth unemployment is still a challenge. Lack of access for further studies for those wish to further their studies even though they are qualified because of limited spaces in the higher institutions is another issue. Moreover, some of them have taken to drug abuse as an escape from their predicaments which has rendered them susceptible to being engaged in violence when the opportunity presents itself. This remains a time bomb in the event of an outbreak of violence in Jos because they can be ready instruments to be employed in crisis.
3. Youths in communities surrounding these peaceful communities have continued to provoke the youths in these communities to engage in violence whenever there is crisis in the metropolis.
4. Lack of a functional police station in Dadin Kowa as the existing one has collapsed. If the peace in these communities is taken for granted, there is possibility that some mischievous persons will take advantage of it to undermine its security. It is to be noted that some communities that remained peaceful for quite some time (like nearby Anglo Jos) eventually had violent eruptions when measures to secure the peace was not diligently observed.
5. Continuation of crisis in Jos (and Plateau state in general) threatens the peace in these communities because some of those who flee from violent areas come into these communities with tales of horrible experiences that usually create tension in these peaceful communities. Even the attacks in the rural communities in other parts of the state have had similar effects because some of those in these communities have their roots in these villages and their relations who are still there are the victims of these attacks.
6. The concern that certain residents of these communities sneak out to “help” their kin in communities involved in crisis has created a measure of mistrust that has the possibility of compromising the peace they have enjoyed.

Granting that Dadin Kowa has a reputation for being a peaceful community in the midst of the security challenges in Jos, it will not be the complete picture without noting that it has at some points come to the brink of being engulfed in crisis. It has been alleged that some mosques were burnt in 2001 at the onset of the violent conflict in Jos. It was also claimed that it was in response to the killing of some Christian youths at the onset of the crises in 2001 in Dadin Kowa.

There was also the incidence of an explosion in Dadin Kowa on 25th may 2010 that led to severe injuries to occupants of the house where it occurred. Even though the report was that it was dynamite meant for stone blasting, several residents believed it was a device meant to have been used to target people and cause havoc in the community. This could have led to a conflagration but for the intervention of all the stakeholders to stop it from escalating.

Although such incidences have not been witnessed in the Federal Low-cost Housing estate, the youths have had to, on a number of occasions, contended with intruders from surrounding communities attempting to invade the community during crisis in other parts of Jos. Some of the youths within have also threatened to attack members of the other ethnic/religious persuasion on hearing the news of casualties suffered by their kins in other settlements except that the community security structures have prevailed on them otherwise.

The implication of this is that the government and all stakeholders should take measures to ensure that:

1. The peacebuilding structures in these communities should be strengthened and reinforced by expanding the scope of the platforms for interaction among the leaders and residents in general. Avenues such as cultural activities that will showcase the rich heritage of the diverse groups in the communities, sporting activities and deliberate efforts by the leaders to visit each other should be explored.
2. Community leaders should step up their monitoring mechanism beyond ensuring that miscreants are not permitted into the communities to include those who are going out especially in times of crisis. This is to ascertain that they do not leave the community to be involved in violence in other communities only to return to their own safe haven as this will eventually boomerang on these communities and terminate the peace that has been secured and enjoyed over the years.



3. Security agencies should not take the peace in these communities for granted least it is compromised. Much as there may be no need for heavy security presence, a continues patrol around the communities should continue especially when there are reports of unrest in or around the metropolis.
4. Government needs to demonstrate that it pays to live in peace by providing these communities with such amenities as good roads and water. Rantya and the Federal Low-cost areas are particularly worse hit by the lack of these facilities.
5. Government, NGOs and well to do individuals as well as the leaders of these communities should establish and sustain skill acquisition centres and provide some minimal capital for youths to be profitably engaged in order to curb the threat of youth restiveness that comes with unemployment.
6. Efforts towards continues peace education through workshops, seminars, advocacy visits and the media should be encouraged as the knowledge gained from these activities will position the people to further resist tendencies towards violent response in conflicts thereby strengthening peace.

## **CONCLUSION**

The tendency of the media to project incidences of violence has beclouded efforts of peace in communities that have remained peaceful in the midst of the surrounding violence. Promoting the enterprise of these communities above the mayhem around would serve to propagate peace in belligerent neighbourhoods thereby stemming the tide of violence and entrenching peace. All stakeholders and especially government and Nongovernmental organisations involved in building peace in Jos and Plateau State in general should consider this as a critical input to putting an end to the crises that have disrupted the peace which has prevailed over the years in Jos and has virtually destroyed the social, political and economic life of the city. Measures to consolidate and strengthen the peace in these communities should be taken to perpetuate it and to serve as models for other violent prone communities in the state and beyond. This would confirm that just as violence can spread and multiply destruction, peace can also be proliferated to enhance development and increase the quality of life of people.

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