



**AFRICA CHRISTIAN YOUTHS DEVELOPMENT
FOUNDATION**

FINAL REPORT

OF

2006 NATIONAL DAYS OF INTERFAITH YOUTH SERVICE (NDIYS)

AND

GLOBAL YOUTH SERVICE DAYS (GYSD)

IN

JOS, PLATEAU STATE NIGERIA

21ST 23RD APRIL 2006



PREAMBLE

Young people are a major force in the contemporary world. They are at the forefront of global, social, economic, political, cultural and religious developments. In addition to their intellectual contributions to social transformation and their ability to mobilize support, youths have a very unique perspective. The growth and progress of our societies and communities today is determined, among many other factors, on how much young people are involved in the processes of strategizing, designing and building the future.

Religion and the youths are very powerful instruments or vehicles for the promotion of global peace, social harmony, friendship and sustainable partnerships. Religion has the capacity of facilitating the attainment of appropriate standards of excellence, motivating and equipping a compassionate response and influencing decision makers at various strata of society to become effective and powerful voices for the cultivation and promotion of growth, cultural exchange, sustenance of peace and social justice. The youths are creative agents for social change, transformation and renewal. When properly educated, directed, well informed, mobilized and positively engaged, the youths can initiate actions and projects capable of actualizing unprecedented societal growth and development.

Contemporary history has several examples of great men and women who at their youthful ages, initiated projects and actions that brought about positive changes, growth and development within their proximate and remote communities. Such examples include Jesus Christ, the historical poor man of Nazareth, who has left an indelible mark on human history, the prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon him), Mahatma Ghandi, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jnr, among others too numerous to mention.

PRELIMINARIES:

The Africa Christian Youth Development Foundation Organized the 2006 National Days of Interfaith Youth Service (NDIYS) and the Global Youth Service Days (GYSD) in collaboration with the Interfaith Youth Core, Chicago USA and the Youth Service America, from April 21-23, 2006 and was held at the Azi Nyako Youth Development Centre, Dadin Kowa, Jos-Plateau State, Nigeria, to promote interfaith dialogue, service and active youth participation for the promotion of peace, unity and development in Plateau State of Nigeria. The Case Foundation and the UN Foundation jointly funded the project. The theme of this year's event in Jos-Nigeria was: [*"Building Bridges Through Interfaith Dialogue and Youth Service"*](#).

The paramount purpose of the event was to help build an Interfaith Youth Movement that would have a positive impact on our state, our nation and to promote understanding and peace in our country, our continent of Africa and around the world. To fulfill this purpose, the project focused on achieving the following:

- a. Emphasizing the vital role of religion in bridging differences between peoples and helping us to resolve some of the common problems that threaten the very foundations of our collective human existence and our inevitable future.
- b. Bringing together comparative religion scholars and spiritual leaders from different faith backgrounds in Nigeria to explore and identify the common grounds between our different great wisdom traditions.
- c. Creating a powerful experience of facilitated interfaith dialogue for all young people who attended and participated in the program.

- a. Training, assisting and supporting those who want to become more effective in promoting interfaith dialogue, religious harmony and cooperation within their communities.
- b. Leading participants to a deepening of their understanding of the significance of service in their faith traditions.
- c. Inspiring interreligious respect by bringing young people together with youths of other religions for meaningful appreciative and personal conversations.

PRE-EVENT ACTIVITIES:

1. Formation of a steering committee: An event steering committee was formally constituted and inaugurated on Saturday February 11, 2006. Members of the steering committee represented diverse faith traditions and were also carefully selected from the three main faith traditions in Nigeria from the following organizations:

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|--|
| a. | Emmanuel Ande Ivorgba | -Africa Christian Youth Dev. Foundation |
| b. | Hassan Tijjani | -Muslim Students Association of Nigeria |
| c. | Hamza Abdullahi Shehu | -Nigeria Interfaith Youth Forum |
| d. | Patrick Agber | - Fellowship of Christian Student |
| e. | Hajara Mohammed | -Muslim Sisters Organization of Nigeria |
| f. | Philip K. Abimiku | -Teachers Without Borders Nigeria |
| g. | Katherine Onoja | -Religious Youth Service Nigeria |
| h. | Emmabel Afortey | -Africa Christian Youths Dev. Foundation |
| i. | Ebenezer Oyebamiyi | -Chapel of mercy, Jos-Nigeria |
| j. | Francis Akor | -Center for Youths and Leadership Dev. |
| k. | Hope Idot Robert | -Project Hope Nigeria |

The steering committee was chaired by Emmanuel Ande Ivorgba and met for a total of 9 times 11th February to 20th April 2006.

2. Advocacy and mobilization: The committee made a total of seven (7) advocacy visits targeted at government authorities in Plateau State, the leadership of the traditional council, religious communities, youth organizations and the media in the state. The steering committee was also at the following academic institutions in Plateau State to mobilize support and encourage students to attend and participate in the program.

- a. University of Jos, Jos Plateau State, Nigeria
- b. Plateau State Polytechnic, Jos Campus
- c. Federal College of Education, Pankshin, Plateau State Nigeria
- d. ECWA Computer Training Institute Jos-Nigeria
- e. Unity comprehensive College Dadin Kowa, Jos-Nigeria

The mobilization train also took members to the premises of the Aladura, Eckankar and Rosicrucians located in Jos.

3. Publicity and Awareness Creation: Much publicity and adequate public awareness was generated for the event. We printed and distributed 1200 event flyers and handbills, two large banners made up of 2 yards of white cloth each, produced one radio advert at the Plateau Radio and Television Corporation (PRTV) Jos. The steering committee members also made direct and personal contacts with members of their respective organizations which they represented, for the purpose of further creating awareness and mobilizing for participation.

4. Fundraising: A total of \$2,950 US, Equivalent to Three Hundred and Eighty Thousand, Five Hundred and Fifty Naira (N380, 550) only was generated

through grants and local contributions by members and supporters of the program. The above amount was generated from the following sources:

S/No.	Source	\$(Dollars)	N (Naira)
a.	International Grant	\$1000	N129, 000
b.	Africa Christian Youths Dev. Foundation	\$980	N126, 420
c.	Chapel of Mercy, Jos	\$500	N64, 500
d.	Nigeria Interfaith Youth Forum	\$470	N60, 630
	Total Amount Generated	\$2,950	N380, 550

5. Endorsements: The Jos Nigeria 2006 National Days of Interfaith Youth Service and the Global Youth Service Days events were officially endorsed by two elected Local Council Chairmen of Jos South and Mangu Local Government Councils respectively. In addition, Nine (9) organizations and youth associations in Plateau State also officially endorsed our event as well as sent in their representatives to attend and physically participate in all the event activities.

EVENT ACTIVITIES AND DETAILS:

1. Dialogue Sessions: A two-day interfaith dialogue session was organized at the Azi Nyako Youth Development Center, Jos from Friday April 21st to Saturday April 22nd 2006 from 9: 30am to 5: 30pm daily, during which a total of 126 young people between the ages of 16 - 35 years, among them five disabled youths participated actively. Participants were drawn from areas of conflict within Plateau State to discuss as brothers and sisters on "Living without wars", especially in the name of religion.



Participants listening attentively to paper presentation at the event

Major highlights of the dialogue sessions included dynamic presentations from leading Abrahamic faith traditions within Plateau State and Nigeria and included presentations from the following:

- a. Pastor Caleb Aondover from the Living Faith Chapel, Abakaliki in Nigeria
- b. Pastor Dr. Mike Ekpo of the Chapel of Mercy and University of Jos, Nigeria.
- c. Ustaz Mohammed Shehu Musa of Center for the Study of Islam
- d. Emmanuel Ande Ivorgba, Executive Director of the African Christian Youths Development Foundation, among others.



Some Participants in Group Photo in front of Azi Nyako Youth Development Center, Jos, venue of the Event.

The dialogue session provided a rich opportunity for interfaith dialogue and reflection for religiously diverse youths to dialogue with one another about the ways their traditions inspire them to serve and to partner in serve projects that improve their local communities. The distinctive aspect of the dialogue session was its focus on “Dialogue and service” in a culturally neutral atmosphere of trust and cooperative creativity. The entire dialogue session emphasized active youth participation, dialogue and service. The agenda for the dialogue session included prayers from different faith traditions, special scriptural readings from selected Holy Books, music, simple rituals and other forms of worship that reflect our rich “unity in diversity”. These were interspersed throughout each day to help evoke the human spirit and create a profound sense of our shared hope and celebration that are central and essential to interfaith corporation. Together, participants at the dialogue sessions made a strong commitment to continue to work together to embrace unity and to find acceptable ways to embody the power of love, compassion, universal responsibility and justice in this fragile and interdependent state and nation of ours.



Some Participants listening attentively to paper presentation at the event

An interesting aspect of the dialogue session included a special scriptural reading taken from the Holy Bible and the Glorious Qur'an and centered on the *"unity, oneness and love of God"*. The debates, contributions and comments that followed these readings were quite interesting and revealing. For certain, both the Christian and Muslim participants at the dialogue session agreed that *"You are God besides whom there is no other"* and that *"Allah is one and there is no other"*. Discussions on this point lasted for 3½ hours at the end of which one participant clearly captured the general feeling of the other participants in the following words: *"God or Allah, we mean the same Omnipotent Creative Being who lies beyond this visible cosmos and transcends it. The Bible calls him Creator and Sustainer, so too the Qur'an. Therefore, whether as Christians or as Muslims, we have a common origin and a common destiny. No need therefore for the quarrels, the killings and the hatred since our religions lead to same God"*.



Participants having their meal during break at the Dialogue Session in Jos



Participants in rapt attention at the NDIYS Dialogue Session in Jos

To demonstrate our love and oneness, the participants exchanged their seats, joined hands together standing in a circle and with one great-united voice sang: "We are one in the Lord" and never minding whether it was a Christian Song or not. When all were seated, one participant who said he was an atheist jokingly stood up and

all were seated, one participant who said he was an atheist jokingly stood up and told the Christian and Muslim participants to stop quarrelling and fighting themselves in the name of God or Allah and Religion, but to all work hard for what to eat and their children, and that by reason of this ceremony, begin to embrace each other as one and equal, since we all suffer together and together we shall all die. Christian and Muslim prayers were offered for the unity, peace and progressive development of our nation Nigeria. The traditionalists also prayed for the coming of the new rains, better planting season and bumper harvests in the year 2006. We also offered individual and collective prayers for our political leaders, in the state and Nigeria in general and in particular for our President, our Governors and other elected officials.



Participants at the Open Air Presentation on Day Two of the NDIFYS, Jos-Nigeria

Students from the University of Jos and the Plateau State Polytechnic, Jos Campus made very interesting and captivating presentations in the form of songs, drama and cultural displays to the admiration and joy of the participants at the dialogue sessions.



A drama Session by Students of the University of Jos-Nigeria at the Dialogue Session

2. Service Projects:

The purpose of the service segment was to encourage peace through service projects and education and to help participants to socialize across boundaries of faith and culture and to experience volunteerism from a faith based community of educators, experts and youths. The service segment was originally designed to center around the renovation of a Church, a Mosque and the construction of one Borehole to provide access to clean drinking water one rural community in Jos South Local Government Area of Plateau State. However, due to certain irreconcilable difficulties and associated problems in securing timely approvals from the relevant authorities, participants were subsequently engaged in town cleaning and beautification and the draining of culverts along major streets within Jos metropolis. A total of 98 participants took part in the service project, which lasted for about four (4) hours, beginning from 10:00am to 2:00pm on April 23rd 2006. Most participants ignored the Sunday Morning Service in order to serve and transform their community.



Participants clearing culverts at Yakubu Gowon Way Jos, during the Service Session

The service project took participants along two major streets within Jos namely; the Yakubu Gowon Way, beginning from the Azi Nyako Youth Development Center in Dadin Kowa, Jos right up to the Nasco Group of Companies Factory along the Old Airport Road Junction in Jos. Another major street covered during the cleaning and beautification exercise was the Rayfield Road, beginning from the Fadama Market end at Zarmaganda, up to the "House of Rest" Junction. Participants cleared water passages and removed debris from culverts in anticipation of the rainy season, collected, gathered and burnt pieces of paper and litters along the streets and public facilities.

EXPENDITURE

S/No	DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY	AMOUNT	
			NAIRA	DOLLAR
a.	Renting of Space	3 days x N10,000	₦30, 000	235.56
b.	Printing of Flyers & Handbills	1200 x N20	₦ 24,000	186.05
c.	Printing of Banners	2 x N1, 500	₦ 3,000	23.26
d.	Advocacy Visits	7visits x N2, 000	₦ 1,400	10.85
e.	Accommodation of Participants	50 Participants	₦ 150,000	1162.79
f.	Feeding of Participants	126 participants	₦ 157,480	1220.78
g.	Local Running	-	₦ 5,000	38.76
h.	Report Writing	-	₦ 500	3.88
	TOTAL		₦ 371,380	\$2,879
<u>Summary of Finances</u>				
a.	Total Income		₦ 380,550	\$2,950
b.	Total Expenditure		₦ 371,380	\$2,879
c.	Balance at Hand		₦ 9,170	\$71.1

SUMMARY OF EVENTS:

The National Days of Interfaith Youth (NDIYS) and the Global Youth Service Day (GYSD) are initiatives of the Interfaith Youth Core, a Chicago based international Interfaith Youth Organization and the Washington based Youth Service America. The two events are celebrated annually in many countries around the world to promote interfaith dialogue among young people, celebrate our common identity and "unity in diversity" and to encourage active service and youth participation in the process of creating change, promoting peace, democracy and social harmony.

From April 21-23 2006, the Africa Christian Youths Development Foundation, a Jos-Nigeria based Christian Youth Foundation in collaboration with its numerous local partners and supporters in Plateau State organized a 3-day interfaith dialogue and service program to mark and celebrate the 2006 National Days of Interfaith Youth Service (NDIYS) and the Global Youth Service Day (GYSD). The event was conducted at the Azi Nyako Youth Development Center, Dadin Kowa, Jos South Local Government Area of Plateau State Nigeria. The organizers planned and anticipated about 50 participants, but in the end, a total of 126 young people representing Christian, Muslim and traditional faith communities in Plateau State of Nigeria attended and participated.

This year's event in Jos was quite significant in many ways. Apart from facilitating the formal establishment of an Interfaith Youth Movement in Plateau State, it also created an understanding and commitment for the long term by involving tomorrow's leaders and thus ensuring a better society and the longevity of the project. The project also explored religion as a source of conflict and as a resource for peace by focusing on how each of the faith traditions promote inclusion, peace, tolerance, or exclusion, prejudice or violence against fellow human beings. The project provided a wonderful opportunity for honest, sincere, intimate, heart-to-heart and appreciative sharing of ideas, dialogue and problem solving, all in an atmosphere of trust, friendship, love, enthusiasm and cooperative creativity.

Participants at the 3-day program also made a commitment to establishing and sustaining a strong and viable network of young peacebuilders in Nigeria and of keeping constantly in touch, understanding and accepting others, sharing knowledge about their faith tradition, building relationships and bridges across boundaries and promoting friendship among themselves and others. Both the vertical and horizontal components affirmed by each faith community were well articulated and integrated in the program.

At the end, participants resolved to implement the following:

- a. Establish and facilitate small interfaith dialogue and service units within their immediate communities.
- b. Selected representatives who would meet again in Jos in the month of June 2006 to constitute and inaugurate the Plateau State Interfaith Youth Forum.
- c. Mobilize support, generate sustained interest and commitment of politicians, elected officials in the state and the International community for interfaith dialogue in Nigeria as a means of addressing some of the numerous problems confronting us in this Country.
- d. Participants also agreed to organize the National Days of Interfaith Youth Service and the Global Youth Service Day annually in Plateau State and to encourage their peers in other parts of Nigeria to actively participate.

Signed and dated this day, 24th April, 2006 in Jos, Plateau State Nigeria on behalf of all participants and the steering committee by:

Emmanuel Ande Ivorgba
Executive Director,
Africa Christian Youths Development Foundation
and Chairman of the 2006 Steering Committee

Hassan Tijjani
Rep. of Muslim Students
Association of Nigeria and
Secretary of the 2006
Steering Committee