

# COLLECTIVE IMPACT + PEACE: JOS, NIGERIA

In 2017, Search for Common Ground launched an initiative to apply the collective impact methodology for youth-inclusive peacebuilding in Jos, Nigeria. The project was established to introduce a different way for organizations and individuals to work together on addressing and preventing violence. Unlike typical projects, where NGOs or donors drive the agenda and selectively invite stakeholders for participation at different stages, this approach puts the decision making power in the hands of the people most affected by and involved in the issue across different stakeholder groups (business, government, civil society, academia and religious platforms) for shared leadership and decision making. In Jos, the multi-stakeholder members took a joint decision to officially register as a network called the Jos Stakeholders Centre for Peace. Search currently provides “backbone” support, facilitating and guiding the network through a dedicated coordinator.



**The Jos Stakeholders Centre for Peace (JSCP)** is a network of 39 representatives of communities and organizations across critical sectors in Jos North dedicated to preventing and reducing violence in Jos North through collective action. JSCP enables shared decision making and collective action between people at the grassroots and those in positions of power and influence, based on locally-led analysis and evidence-based interventions.

## INCLUSIVE DECISION MAKING - ACROSS SECTORS & DIVIDES

JSCP members come from **religious institutions, business, civil society, academia, government and security agencies, and local communities** in Jos North. Inclusive decisionmaking processes ensure that the diverse perspectives of those most affected and involved are reflected in the network’s strategy, structure, and operations.

→ **Half of the members represent youth** organizations or are young people doing impactful work in their communities or representing organizations or government agencies.

→ **JSCP members nominated and ratified** a five-person advisory board of trustees, formed working groups to develop and oversee joint activities, developed the organizational structure and regulations for the network, and elected leaders to a central working group to manage the network.

→ **Search provides backbone support** through a dedicated coordinator to mobilize the diverse actors across all levels of the network and facilitate the collaborative processes.

→ The current central working group is led by a team of four persons drawn from **diverse ethno-religious backgrounds**: Mrs. Jennifer Yarima as Chair, Ms. Vivien Musa as Secretary, Mr. Ahmed Baba as Treasurer, and Ms. Aminah Ishaq Ibrahim as Publicity Secretary.

“Most of the NGOs engage us as participants who should only learn but under the collaborative for violence prevention project of SFCG, we are treated as partners thereby giving us the opportunity to initiate and monitor simple local initiatives that are relevant to our communities” -Garbati Abubakar, community youth leader and JSCP member

“I never knew that it will be possible to organize this because this is my first time of being part of those who organized the activity” -Member of a **state security agency** who joined JSCP

“I never knew that it was this easy to work with NDLEA [National Drug Law Enforcement Agency] as far as we write to them, I have always thought it’s an intimidating procedure or something not possible” - Suleiman Mohammed, chair of the working group on substance abuse prevention

## END VIOLENT CONFLICT

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## BOLD VISION & SYSTEMS FOCUS

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Too often, the people and organizations working on and most affected by violence have very different understandings of its root causes and how best to address it. A critical element of JSCP is **bringing together the diverse actors involved to review the data, develop a shared vision, and determine core pathways and strategies** for driving change. Our aim is to transform the system, not just improve it, and a bold shared aspiration helps us mobilize diverse people and organizations.

→ In November 2017, we brought together 27 diverse stakeholders to [analyze the wider system and interconnected contributing factors](#) to ongoing and recurrent violent conflict in Jos North. The [joint systems analysis](#) identified several interconnected factors driving violence, including: **a culture of violence, substance abuse, land conflicts, and exclusion and marginalization from governance.**

→ We then [commissioned a local research team](#) to conduct an [in-depth study](#) on the scope and nature of these interconnected factors, and potential “high-leverage” opportunities for addressing them.

→As a result, we have supported the members of the network to develop a **collective vision for our work** in Jos: “To build a society where young people are healthy, supported, and hopeful.”

Our study surveyed over 400 community members and technical experts across the city - revealing key gaps & leverage points:

- ♦ **Hate speech targeting religious groups** was identified as the most likely to cause violence, closely followed by derogatory messages about political groups, particularly during elections and cultural and religious festivals.

- ♦ Residents describe **high levels of mistrust** between community members and security agencies, undermining progress in reducing violence and substance abuse.

- ♦Although there are many organizations and interventions focused on security within Jos North, they **rarely involve youth or community leaders** in the analysis and design of interventions, and long-term coordination is limited.

- ♦**Interventions to combat substance abuse fail to address underlying causes of abuse** (e.g. stress, depression, rejection, shaming) or rehabilitation and reintegration of abusers.

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## JOINT & INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES LEVERAGE LEARNING & LOCAL RESOURCES

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Systems thinking allows us to **identify patterns and gaps, and focus on “high-leverage” opportunities** for individual and joint activities to have the greatest cumulative impact. While some of our activities are conducted jointly, others may be pursued independently by members taking different approaches to reach different populations at different levels. A **process of shared learning** has been invaluable as JSCP members coordinate and adapt these activities towards greater collective impact. Equally important to the commitment to learning, is the dedication that JSCP members have demonstrated to collective action, **volunteering and donating their time and resources** to stretch the limited budget as far as possible.



“What others have attempted to do and failed, it has taken the combined efforts of Jos Stakeholders Centre for peace and the DPO [Divisional Police Officer] to address. They have been able to reconcile communities that have been at loggerheads for a long time...” -Salisu Hassan, secretary of the Youth & Elders Forum in the Angwan Damisa community

“It’s the first time that Peace platforms are getting into the details of the conflicts in our community and we appreciate the resilience of the network doing things differently” -Chairperson of a community development association, at one of the Muslim-Christian dialogues in the Jos Jarawa community, a hotspot of violence and tension

→ JSCP created **working groups** to pursue activities around each of the [interconnected factors](#) behind violence in Jos

→ Ranging from inter/intra-community dialogues to substance abuse prevention training for community members by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, community-security agency meetings, to solidarity visits to bereaved families and communities, [our dozens of activities have directly reached over 1,600](#) attendees in total.

→ JSCP members [communicate and share information regularly](#) through Facebook and Whatsapp, as well as in-person meetings to review learning and adapt action.

→In 2017, [CDA Collaborative Learning Projects](#) joined Search’s initiative as a learning partner. They published a [learning paper on JSCP in January 2019](#).

→In 2019, JSCP **mobilized over 40% of the costs for collective action** through in-kind support from local communities and groups offering meeting places free of charge, volunteers who chose not to accept travel reimbursement or fees, and individual financial contributions.

→[The network secured two small local grants](#) for collective action, and is currently securing scholarships for students using a community based funding strategy.

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## BACKGROUND & CAPACITY

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**Search for Common Ground** (Search) is one of the largest conflict transformation organizations in the world. Since 1982, we have led programs around the world to help societies channel their differences away from adversarial approaches and towards collaborative solutions, with young people as key partners. Our long-term programming in 43 countries and network of over 1,200 partners around the world enabled Search to reach over 700,000 direct participants and 50 million people through media programs in 2016, in many of the world's most challenging conflicts.

Since establishing our Children and Youth division in 2002, Search has led the global peacebuilding field in working with young people as partners for peace.

As a founding co-chair of the Global Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security, we have convened UN agencies, NGOs, youth-led civil society and other partners to create what is now known as the youth, peace and security agenda. In close partnership with both young people and power-holders, we innovate at the edges of peacebuilding practice and bring what we learn into the mainstream. Simultaneously, we work with power holders to transform traditional establishments and ways of engaging young people. This approach has seen considerable results in recent years, including the adoption of UN Security Council resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018). We are currently at a key turning point to use these global frameworks to develop international and national mechanisms for meaningful youth participation.

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## CONTACTS

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**For inquiries within Nigeria**, contact Pwakim Jacob Choji, Consultant Coordinator of the initiative ([jpwakim@sfcg.org](mailto:jpwakim@sfcg.org))

**For all other inquiries**, contact Rachel Walsh Taza, Children & Youth program manager at Search for Common Ground ([rtaza@sfcg.org](mailto:rtaza@sfcg.org))

**For more information on Search for Common Ground's programs**, please visit the following links:

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