



FOUNDATION FOR PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES IN THE NIGER DELTA

Partners For Peace In The Niger Delta - A Platform For Collective Action In Conflict-Prone Region

PIND CASE STUDY SERIES
& PRACTITIONERS GUIDE -
NOVEMBER 2020

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Acronyms

- **AAR** After Action Review
- **ADR** Alternative Dispute Resolution
- **ACAYOC** Awarra Court Area Youth Council
- **BOT** Board of Trustees
- **CSO** Civil Society Organizations
- **CWC** Central Working Committee
- **DDR** Demobilization, Demilitarization. Rehabilitation and Reintegration

- **EWER** Early Warning and Early Response
- **FFP** Fund for Peace
- **FGDs** Focus Group Discussions
- **GMOU** Global Memorandum of Understanding
- **HBR** Harvard Business Review
- **IEC** Information, Education and Communication
- **INEC** Independent National Electoral Commission
- **IPDU** Integrated Peace and Development Unit
- **JTF** Joint Task Force
- **KII** Key Informant Interviews
- **LGA** Local Government Area
- **P4P** Partners for Peace
- **PIND** Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta
- **SMS** Short Messaging Service
- **UBE** Universal Basic Education
- **UNDP** United Nations Development Project

Abstract

Christina Okuma is a young female business development manager in a private company in Imo State. During weekends and on the days she is off-duty, she spends her time organizing and facilitating peacebuilding activities in her state.

Shaaban Abdullahi is from Kano State of Nigeria but has lived most of his life in Bogobiri, Cross River State where he runs a fashion designing shop with his younger brother. He invests the little money he earns from the shop in helping to mediate between local communities to resolve conflict.

Abidoye Irene Odijie is a nurse and mid-wife in Ondo State. Irene spends her spare time coordinating peace clubs in schools in the State so children can learn the value of peace from an early age.

Tamunomie Wariboko is a community leader in Igbaisikikala-Ama community – Borokiri part of Port Harcourt town in Rivers state – which is known for its volatility and youth restiveness. To promote peace in his community, he spends his money to organize sporting competitions with token gifts between warring youth to bring them together.

Christina, Shaaban, Irene, Tamunomie are just few out of the thousands of men and women from different spheres of life who work as peace volunteers in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. They do this under the Partners for Peace (P4P) Network, a platform for collective action on peace established by the Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND), a non-profit organization set up with initial grants from Chevron Corporation.

This case study documents the stories of the many peace actors that make up the Partners for Peace Network (P4P). It also documents the processes put in place by the Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND) in establishing the Partners for Peace Network as a grassroots architecture mobilized for conflict prevention, mitigation and peacebuilding in Nigeria's Niger Delta region.

The Partners for Peace (P4P) Network has grown exponentially since its establishment in 2013 as a response to widespread conflicts in the region. From its beginnings with 120 members to over 9,000 members in 2019, P4P continues to meet its objective as a community led initiative contributing to the reduction of violent conflict in the Niger Delta.

P4P's strength lies not just in its membership strength but in its diversity and its openness to anyone committed to building peace in their communities. Its members consist of traditional rulers, government officials, civil society actors, reformed militants, security operatives, youth leaders, women leaders, small enterprise owners, private individuals and others. Collectively, these volunteers are working to reduce conflicts as a key constraint to economic development in the Niger Delta region.

The P4P model, which is rooted in the social network theory¹, has been shown to be effective in peacebuilding and conflict mitigation. This case study describes and explains how PIND built and operationalised this Network of volunteers' corps for collective action, to serve as body of knowledge for its possible replication as a model for peace building and conflict prevention. It touches on fundamental aspects of mobilization, establishing structures and processes, describing the impact of P4P's work, and providing warning for pitfalls. It is meant to serve as a guide for practitioners and other organizations willing to put the time and effort to establish an indigenous platforms for people to create meaningful impact in their communities.

The data for the case study was collected from key informant interviews (KIIs) with PIND's peacebuilding team that facilitated the evolution of the Network, some P4P focal members in each State and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with representatives of the Partners for Peace (P4P) chapters in each of the nine States of Nigeria's Niger Delta region. Additional data was sourced from P4P and PIND project documents.



¹ Second schedule, Part 1, Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 as amended.
National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) data on poverty and inequality in Nigeria (2019)
Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND): 2019 Annual Conflict Report

Background & Context for the P4P Network

The Niger Delta is the economic backbone of Nigeria. It is the region where oil is produced in the country. And oil is the mainstay of Nigeria's economy, accounting for more than 70 per cent of government's revenue. Oil was discovered in the region in 1956 and production began two years later. While the region's natural wealth should have provided the springboard for development, it rather became the main source of conflict. What began as a quest for resource control and economic justice, exacerbated into decades of serial conflicts which affected peace and development in the region.

Nigeria is a federation of 36 states and a Federal Capital Territory. The Country's federal system operates largely with a strong and powerful central government and state governments with a certain degree of autonomy. The Federal Government has complete control of natural resources which in the Nigerian Constitution are listed on the exclusive legislative list². The Constitution gives the Federal Government the exclusive powers to legislate on issues relating to the exploration and production of crude oil, which is Nigeria's most valuable resource. In addition, oil revenue is shared with the rest of the federation, with a higher percentage going to the oil producing states in what is known as the Niger Delta region.

In spite of the significant resources being explored from the region, a large percentage of the population still live in poverty³ prompting perceptions of exploitation and marginalization from the indigenes of the region. This triggered a sustained period of armed violence against the Federal Government from 2007 – 2009 which led to significant drops in oil revenue. Consequently, the Federal Government under the leadership of former President Umaru Musa Yar'adua established the Presidential Amnesty Program to bring about stability in the region.

However, the relative stability gained through the amnesty program has been eroded by the reemergence of other forms of violent conflict in the region. Conflict issues include communal tensions, political competition, organized criminality, and resource-based conflicts. Incidents include militancy, piracy, cultism, election violence, communal violence, armed robbery, kidnapping, human trafficking, mob violence, and land disputes.⁴ Although these conflict issues were prevalent, involving multiple overlapping factors and actors, anecdotal evidence also points to the

existence of individuals committed to maintaining peace in their communities. These peace actors were integral to conflict prevention and resolution efforts in their communities either as community leaders, civil society, clergy, women leaders, traditional rulers etc. However, in most cases, these actors existed independently of the other, with particular constraints to their efforts and without an overarching platform to encourage leveraging and networking.

Though the peace actors contributed to peace building in their communities, such efforts were often isolated, disjointed and unappreciated. They did not have the platforms to collaborate and expand their activities. This reality was the window that gave birth to the Partners for Peace (P4P) initiative that spans the nine States of the country's Niger Delta region: Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo, and Rivers. PIND's aim of establishing the Partners for Peace Network was to catalyze a dense network of peace actors with skills, knowledge, and lines of communication, to enable an environment for rapid dissemination of early warning signals and for scaling and replication of conflict management efforts in the region.⁵

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“taken together, the P4P network is an experience of peace for its members, at least some of whom recount stories of personal transformation. It is a symbol and model of peace for those inside and many outside the network, broadly reported to act according to a set of values and ideals congruent with broadly-held understandings of what peace would mean for the Niger Delta.”⁶ - says Professor Brian Ganson⁷ of the University of Stellenbosch Business School and an expert on social-political risk management, conflict prevention and collaboration.

This case study presents a guide to peacebuilding practitioners and planners on how to build a Network of peace volunteers for collective action. Chapter One introduces the necessity for the Network, Chapter Two discusses finding the members from the scratch and Chapter Three explains motivating and incentivizing them to action. In Chapter Four, the case study throws insight into building and equipping a sustainable Network of peace volunteers and in Chapter Five, it x-rays ways of leveraging the volunteers for conflict mitigation and peacebuilding. Chapter Six presents the critical success factors in building such a Network while Chapter Seven enumerates the pitfalls that must be avoided in the building process. Finally, Chapter Eight summarizes a step by step guide for replicating the model at various stages of implementation.

² Second schedule, Part 1, Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 as amended.

³ National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) data on poverty and inequality in Nigeria (2019)

⁴ Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND): 2019 Annual Conflict Report

⁵ Measuring PIND's Peacebuilding Impact – 2012 -2018' report published in 2018 by the Fund for Peace

⁶ Prof Brian Ganson; Partners For Peace In The Niger Delta: Capability Building Assessment 2016

⁷ <http://ganson.org/>

Finding Volunteers as Network Members from the Scratch

► An eye for Potential Volunteers

Volunteering is about freely offering to do something or support a cause, without expecting payment. A Partners for Peace focus group discussion respondent in Ondo State described being a member of the Network as ‘selfless service’ by “people of same minds targeting peace so development can thrive”. According to the peace volunteer, “you sacrifice your time, talent and treasure... you are totally committed to do so without anyone forcing you to do so”.

At the onset of the Partners for Peace project, PIND had one goal – to find people of like minds who would freely volunteer to be peace actors. PIND’s Peacebuilding Program Manager explained that

“just as we have people mobilizing for violence in every community, we believed there were people who want to do the same for peace... It could be a school teacher who organizes an after school peace club; a market woman who stands for her community and her market women association against touts who come to collect illegal taxes, or even a clergyman who uses his pulpit to change people by reconciling them to God and giving them a purpose in life” - PIND’s Peacebuilding Program Manager, Nkasi Wodu explained.

In searching for such volunteers, PIND looked out for some core criteria that pre-disposed certain individuals to be peacebuilders, creating a common interest that is foundational for the emergence of a social network.



► Participatory Research as Tactic for Locating Existing & Potential Peace Volunteers

As a first step to finding existing peace actors, PIND deployed participatory research to identify drivers of conflict and locate existing peace actors.

PIND organized an intensive conflict assessment of the region that enabled them to map and hold extensive consultations with representatives from all key stakeholder groups including men, women, youth, militants and ex-militants, political leaders, civil society, business owners, traditional leaders, religious leaders, community group leaders, government officials, and peacebuilding experts across all nine states of the Niger Delta to understand how they have experienced conflict and its impact on their livelihoods.

// Through the interviews, PIND identified prospective individuals who fit into the potential volunteer profile and subsequently invited them to a series of consultative workshops that held in each of the nine states of the region.

The event set the stage for recruiting the first set of peace volunteers at State levels. According to Chief Africa Lawal, PIND’s Partners for Peace Network Coordinator “these people who were at the consultative meeting were invited and that was what formed the initial members we had for the Network”.

Initial peace volunteers had been recruited but they were still operating in silos. It was time for PIND to take steps towards bringing the actors into a common platform to leverage the power of their shared interest as a social network.

► Formal Launch of the Volunteers Network through the Peace Camp

In August of 2013, PIND organized a Peace Camp that brought together over 100 of the recruited peace actors from communities across the region to formally launch the Partners for Peace (P4P) Network. *“It was a two-week launch where we had different sessions on peacebuilding”* Africas recounted.

The Peace Camp marked the start of the Network as the participating peace actors created and adopted a Terms of Reference for the new P4P Network and began evolving the Network right after departing from the camp. *“After the launch of P4P, we came back and began holding regular meetings, then started going for peacebuilding interventions”* a Delta State P4P participant of the Peace Camp shared, adding that *“coming back, we were motivated to do more, taking peace seriously”*.

► Localizing the Volunteers Network

Nkasi Wodu⁸ noted that a sustainable peacebuilding infrastructure *“does not take its eyes off or neglect local capacities for peace”*. With the new peace volunteers launched at the Peace Camp, the new Network needed to be domiciled in each State to facilitate access to more local actors and ensure there are networked peacebuilders operating across the region.

One regional network would not achieve this. PIND encouraged the new recruits to go and establish Chapters of the Network in their individual States, which led to the launch of nine (9) State Chapters of P4P in 2013. A Network member in Akwa Ibom who attended the Peace Camp reflected on how, after the event, *“we started to create the Network in the State through courtesy visits... from the state capital, we extended to local governments”*.

► Recruiting More Existing and New Peace Volunteers

Recruiting over a 100 peace volunteers was just a starting point. The real target was to *“cultivate social infrastructure and social capital across the Niger Delta to build a foundation for sustainable peacebuilding over the long term”*.⁹ To achieve this, PIND needed *“a dense network of peace actors with skills, knowledge and lines of communication”* who would create the enabling environment for *“rapid dissemination of early warning signals and for scaling and replication of conflict management efforts”*. A network of 100 peace actors was far from ‘dense’.

Communications Strategy as a Mobilisation Tool

Using data from the conflict assessments, inputs and experiences of reputable organizations and the already recruited peace volunteers, PIND evolved a communications strategy that focused on mobilising a grassroots movement which will *“generate wider awareness, interest and support of the Network leading to increased membership”*.¹⁰ The modus operandi of the strategy was to motivate audiences (in this case the potential peace volunteers) by giving them *“concrete ways to be part of P4P’s inspiring, meaningful Network”*¹¹ and that *“individuals in the community are motivated to be vocally supportive”*. The communication strategy employed information dissemination about the Network through several social mobilisation techniques:

Public outreach events that used the recruited members to distribute information about the Network to communities outside the formal network as a means of introducing them to the work of the Network and encouraging them to get involved. Sometimes, the Network members organized the events themselves as exemplified in September 2017 when the Abia State P4P held a rally with stakeholders to share its work and successes with them and the Akwa Ibom State Chapter that conducted a *‘school to school’* program against increasing recruitment of youth into gangs/cult groups in the last quarter of 2017.

In other cases, they are invited to the events, as the Imo P4P Chapter members recounted *“we attended the August meeting of women in Otawara and Ochia. These communities, they invited us and we attended and many of them promised to join P4P”*.

They further added that *“we also meet people one on one and sensitize them. We sensitize communities and churches also and sell the idea of our Network, Partners for Peace”*.¹² The school system commanded one of the important outreach centres as the P4P Chapters established Peace Clubs in secondary schools through which they engage hundreds of school children on an ongoing basis.

These public events use the **word of mouth** means of passing information as *“telling people what the Network is, that’s the work we are doing”*¹³ said the Edo State P4P Chapter *“it’s fantastic, people are buying the idea. They love it”* they enthused. A member of the Akwa Ibom P4P Chapter confirmed *“I have been evangelizing for membership. I have mobilized a number of people that I know very well who have registered with P4P as a way of growing the Network and expanding our membership”*.¹⁴

The events are further supported with the use of **Information, Education and Communications (IEC)** materials such as T-shirts, caps, stickers and other useful novelty items that serve as a 'kit' for the Network members and help in creating brand association for the Network. *"Sometimes, we wear our P4P uniform to go to communities. When people see it, many of them will ask questions 'what is the meaning of this?' and we tell them and they buy the idea"* the Imo State P4P members recalled. The kits attract the attention of would be peace volunteers and opens access to engage them in discussions as *"because of either the T-shirt you are wearing or the P4P fier you have, you see people get interested and ask you questions and you tell them 'this is the value of the organization, this is where you can visit and be part of it'"* added the Imo State P4P members.

The communications strategy included a **slogan** **"Peace, Yes"** for the Network that aided the outreach events as they helped easy recall of the Network and its recruited members. The Imo State P4P chapter found the slogan particularly useful. *"When you shout out "Peace, Yes!" everybody will be jumping up, saying they want peace" shared the members, restating that "the slogan is a very powerful instrument for transformational change in the attitude of people"*.

Interpersonal Communication: The recruited peace actors leveraged their personal relationships to spread the message of the Network through one on one communication. Many of the peace agents interviewed during the case study mentioned learning about the Network from friends. According to a member of the Akwa Ibom P4P, *"I heard about P4P from a friend in 2015, he told me what it was all about"* and another narrated that *"in 2016, I partnered with some friends and was told about P4P"*. This typifies the 'betweenness'¹⁵ power of social networks where people serve as 'bridges' or 'facilitators' to connect others they have direct relationship with to the P4P Network within a short span. It also exemplifies the 'eigenvector'¹⁶ factor of social networks that leveraged the influential relationships of the recruited volunteers to influence others in their network into the P4P, such as the case of the Akwa Ibom P4P member whose 'boss' led him into the Network: *"I heard about P4P in 2014. I was working in an organization as a census worker, and my boss then who was part of the foundational structure of P4P when it was about to kick-start told us about it"*.

Peacebuilding Initiatives in target communities: In some instances, the recruited members used 'action' to attract new members into the Network by planning and executing peacebuilding activities in target communities or helping them to resolve conflict issues.

Edo State P4P members shared how they used this to grow their Network: *"we go to the communities with several activities, training, building the people's capacity in sustainable development work and then, telling them that with peace, all things are possible"*. Beneficiaries of their peace 'activities' spread the message to others who sought out the P4P. A member of the State Chapter recounted a particular experience of this: *"something happened in Uromi one certain time. The man had to travel from Uromi to Benin because he had heard of our group and said to himself 'let me go and see if they can resolve this issue for us' and we tried to do that. And today, one of them is a member of the P4P"*.

Traditional Media outreach: The communications strategy understood that person to person outreaches can only reach a handful of people at a time and therefore could not be relied on as the singular method of broadening awareness of the Network and recruiting new peace volunteers. The 'Measuring PIND's Peacebuilding Impact – 2012 -2018' report published in 2018 by the Fund for Peace found that *"despite the benefits that these outreach events provide, the number of people that PIND has been able to reach through this avenue has fluctuated substantially over time. In some periods, PIND has been able to engage thousands of people throughout the region in a wide variety of events. Mostly, however, they are only able to reach five hundred or fewer per quarter"*.¹⁷

As a complementary measure, the P4P recruits incorporated varieties of media outreach through radio and television to promote peace messages or champion an issue to attract membership.

"Last year, I appeared in one of these radio stations to talk about conflict analysis, and mediation in Cross River State and after that, I gave out my phone number for people to call. In fact people across the State called me and some promised to meet me one on one because they are so much in love with what I am doing and want to belong" - Shabaan Abdullahi, the Cross River P4P PREVENT Committee Chairman attests to the efficacy of using the media

Besides single-day appearances, the volunteers also held multi-day, multi-episode campaigns. PIND's peacebuilding Manager recounted how, in 2018, the Delta State P4P Chapter ran a weekly program on the Delta Broadcasting Service (DBS) for six months, reaching millions of people in the process and how, in 2017, the Rivers State P4P commenced a 13-week live call-in program on a local radio station and while broadcasting one of the episodes, some gang members called in requesting for their audience in their camps to help broker a peace deal with the State Government.

¹⁵ Betweenness centrality measures how many times an element lies on the shortest path between two other elements. In general, elements with high betweenness have more control over the flow of information and act as key bridges within the network. They can also be potential single points of failure.

These are just examples of how the P4P had utilized media to reach millions of people.

PIND's Peacebuilding Program Manager, Nkasi Wodu, surmised the result of the social mobilization approach to recruiting Network members:

“Two of the States that have the greatest numbers as at 2018 are Abia and Imo. One of the factors that is attributed to that growth was the fact that the two States have a strong media outreach program. They also have strong grassroots mobilization programs. They would go from community to community talking about peace, just like a health worker would go about doing sensitization on polio. That is what they do. They would go to churches and schools talking about peace. Then, people would say they want to be part of this program. Even when they carried out interventions in communities, people saw people like themselves, not well-read persons with PhD but people like them engaging and proffering solutions to disputes and issues that would have escalated to violence. And then, the people wanted to be part of this”.

Online media: PIND's 2012 annual report observed that *“at the community level, traditional communications channels are indispensable. But for knitting together a network beyond the community level, new media hold enormous potential”*¹⁸. To tap into this potential, P4P set up its own new media platforms on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube social networks ([Partners4peace @p4p_nigerdelta](#) and [Partners for Peace in the Niger Delta](#) respectively) through which the peace actors communicated at group and individual levels, attracting followership on the platforms that, in some cases, translates into new Network members. PIND assisted the Network to set up a highly interactive website ([www.p4p-nigerdelta.org](#)) that provided a virtual forum for existing and potential peace actors to meet, exchange information and work together for peace – this was linked to the social media platforms. Together, these online platforms contributed to new volunteers influx into the P4P Network, as shown by the testimony of a member of the Akwa Ibom State P4P: *“My source (of hearing about P4P) is the internet. I got the information online and after getting the information, I tried to search for the Coordinator of the State Chapter, and that was in 2015”*.¹⁹

Creating Sub-Chapters to Expand Grassroots Membership

At the start, majority of the mobilization efforts were at State level. To mobilize volunteers from the grassroots and foster continued recruitment of new volunteers, P4P needed to go beyond urban centers and drill down

to the local government area (LGA) level. This need led to the inauguration of many sub-chapters in LGAs across the States of the Niger Delta. According to the *‘Measuring PIND's Peacebuilding Impact – 2012 -2018’* report, the extended presence of the network via sub-chapters *“connects the Network to more people on a regular basis, helping membership growth, which is reflected in the fact that the number of members per capita by state is closely, though not perfectly, correlated to the number of sub-chapters per capita”*.²⁰

At the FGD in Asaba with the Delta State P4P, the members shared about the role Sub-Chapters played: *“we started with inaugurating chapters in various communities, starting from State to Local Government. That was one good way of bringing people into the platform because if people do not hear about P4P, there is no way they will join”*. According to PIND's fourth quarter progress report of 2019, 119 sub chapters had been created as at the end of December 2019²¹.



¹⁶ Eigenvector centrality measures how well connected an element is to other well connected elements. In general, elements with high eigenvector centrality are the leaders of the network, though they may not have the strongest local influence.
¹⁷ Ibid p.45

¹⁸ Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta; 2012 Annual Report P42 ([www.pindfoundation.org](#))
¹⁹ Focus Group Discussions Akwa Ibom State P4P Chapter

²⁰ Ibid P41

²¹ Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta; 2019 Quarter Four Progress Report P31 ([www.pindfoundation.org](#))

State	Local Governments with P4P Sub-Chapters	State	Local Governments with P4P Sub-Chapters	State	Local Governments with P4P Sub-Chapters
Abia	Bende Umuahia North Umuahia West South Isiala Ngwa South Isiala Ngwa North Ikwuano Ukwa West Ukwa East Obingwa Osisioma Ngwa Aba South Aba North Ugwunagbor Ohafa	Akwa Ibom	Oron Eket Etim Ekpo Ikot Abasi Onna Etinan	Bayelsa	Ogbia Nembe Brass Ekeremor Southern Ijaw Kolokuma-Opukumo Sagbama Yenagoa
Cross River	Calabar Bakassi Calabar Odukpani Akamkpa Biase Ugep Ikom Obudu Yankurr	Delta	Isoko North Bomani Warri South Warri North Patani Isoko South Burutu Okpe Oshimili North Ika North East Ndokwa West Ukwani Aniocha North Ndokwa East	Rivers	Ogu/Bolo Emohua Ogba/Egbema/ Ndoni Asari-Toru Ahoada East Obio-Akpor Eleme Akuku-Toru Khana Okrika
Ondo	Okitipupa Ese-odo Odigbo Irele Ifedore Akure South Akure North West Akure North East Ilaje	Edo	Akoko Edo Etsako West Etsako East Owan East Esan West Egor Ikpoba Okha Orhionmwon Uhunmwode Esan South East Esan North East Igueben Ovia North East Ovia North East	Imo	Oguta Mbaitolu Isiala Mbano Ezinihitte Ideato North Ideato South Ihitte/Uboma Ngor-Okpala Njaba Nwangele Obowo Ohaji/Egbema Okigwe Orlu Owerri-Municipal Owerri North Owerri West

Table 1: Table showing the LGAs with P4P Sub-Chapters