



Interfaith Awareness on Covid-19 Prevention at Places of Worship (KAICIID)

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About Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative

Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative (BBYDI) is a non-profit organization founded in 2014, committed to advancing principles of good governance, fostering youth civic participation, and cultivating Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

With a large volunteer base across Nigeria and a team of experienced professionals, our approach focuses on developing global citizens through interactive and non-conventional methods. Since 2012, we have reached over 500,000 citizens in Nigeria, promoting active citizenship and community involvement.

We also provide training for teachers, students, and civil servants in digital skills, partnering with sponsors to achieve our goals. Our work has led to numerous success stories, shaping young people into responsible citizens who can engage with the world with compassion and understanding.

In recent times, BBYDI's initiatives have made a notable impact, benefiting communities in all 36 states in Nigeria.

Over the years, our esteemed partners and sponsors such as KAICIID, Box, Force of Nature, LEAP Africa, Nigeria Youth Futures Fund, Global Campaign for Education, International Fact-Checking Network, US Global Engagement Centre, and Becera have given us their invaluable support and significantly amplified the effectiveness of our endeavors.

With a continued expansion and reach to more communities, BBYDI remains steadfast in its commitment to empowering youth, promoting sustainable development, and contributing to a brighter future for all.

Contextual Background



The COVID-19 pandemic, caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, was first identified in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. By March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) had declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. The virus spread rapidly across the globe, prompting unprecedented public health measures to contain it.

In Nigeria, the first confirmed case of COVID-19 was reported on February 27, 2020, in Lagos, a major economic hub. The Nigerian government, recognizing the potential for widespread transmission, quickly implemented strict measures. By the end of March 2020, a nationwide lockdown was enforced, including the closure of schools, businesses, and places of worship, to limit the virus's spread (NCDC, 2020).

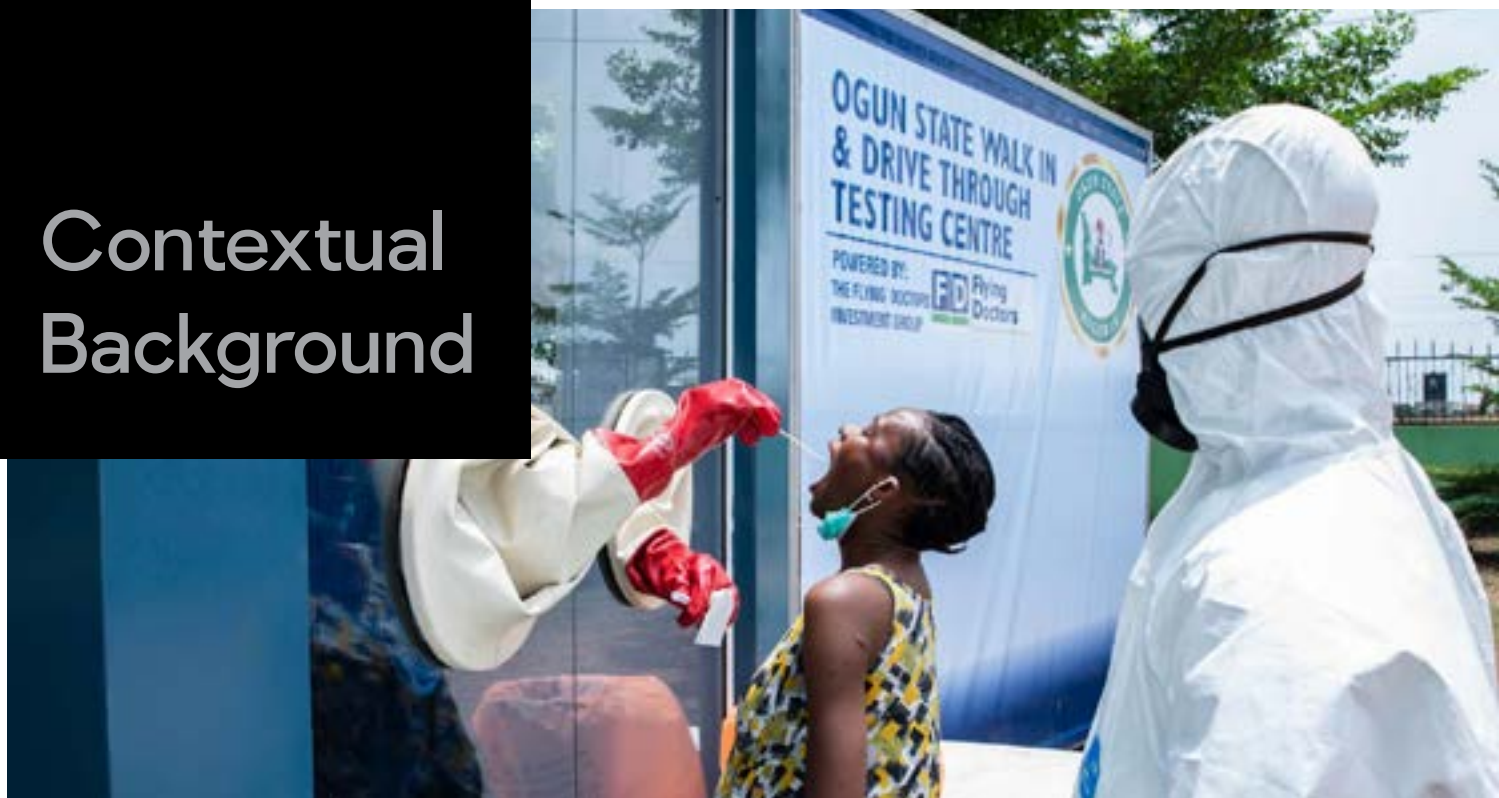
The lockdown had significant impacts on all aspects of life, including religious practices. Nigeria, being a deeply religious country with large Christian and Muslim populations, saw a unique challenge in balancing public health

directives with the continuation of religious activities. Reports from the Pew Research Center (2020) highlight that over 90% of Nigerians consider religion very important in their lives, indicating the critical nature of addressing religious concerns during the pandemic.

During the initial phases of the lockdown, there were notable instances of defiance by religious leaders. Some leaders claimed that the virus could not affect places of worship, leading to clashes with authorities and among congregations. This resistance was partly fueled by skepticism about the virus and the perceived infringement on religious freedom (BBC News, 2020).

As the pandemic progressed, the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) reported fluctuating numbers of COVID-19 cases, with several peaks coinciding with relaxed restrictions (NCDC, 2021). By the end of 2020, Nigeria had recorded over 80,000 confirmed cases and more than 1,200 deaths (WHO, 2020).

Contextual Background



The social fabric of Nigeria is deeply intertwined with religious activities. With Christianity and Islam being the dominant religions, religious gatherings serve as key social events that foster community and support networks. The restrictions on these gatherings during the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted not only religious practices but also the social interactions that help maintain community cohesion. Reports indicated a significant struggle among individuals to adapt to virtual worship sessions, as face-to-face interactions are central to the communal experience of faith (Pew Research Center, 2020).

The economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria was profound, exacerbating existing challenges in a country where many live below the poverty line. The lockdown measures led to a sharp decline in economic activities, with many businesses shutting down temporarily or permanently. Religious institutions, which often depend on donations and tithes for funding, faced financial strains due to reduced in-person attendance. This economic strain extended to individuals who rely

on informal sectors and daily income, further complicating their ability to participate in and support religious activities (World Bank, 2020).

Nigeria's cultural landscape is rich and diverse, with religious beliefs and practices deeply embedded in the daily lives of its people. The initial disbelief in COVID-19 by some religious leaders can be partly attributed to cultural perceptions of illness and divine protection. These leaders often played influential roles in their communities, and their skepticism towards the virus led to mixed adherence to public health measures among their followers. Understanding and respecting these cultural dynamics is crucial in designing effective COVID-19 prevention strategies within religious contexts (BBC News, 2020).

The Nigerian government's response to the pandemic involved a series of public health campaigns, regulations, and lockdown measures aimed at curbing the spread of the virus. However, the enforcement of these measures in religious settings proved challenging. Political tensions arose

Contextual Background



from perceived government overreach into religious freedoms, highlighting the need for better dialogue and cooperation between state authorities and religious leaders. The political landscape thus played a significant role in shaping public compliance with health directives (NCDC, 2021).

Nigeria's geography, characterized by densely populated urban areas and vast rural regions, posed unique challenges in managing the pandemic. Urban areas, with higher population densities, faced more severe outbreaks and stricter enforcement of lockdown measures. Conversely, rural areas often had limited access to healthcare and information, complicating the implementation of preventive measures. The geographical diversity necessitated tailored approaches to ensure effective communication and adherence to COVID-19 guidelines across different regions (WHO, 2020).

The pandemic accelerated the adoption of digital technologies, with many religious institutions shifting to online services and virtual meetings. However, the digital divide in Nigeria meant that access to technology varied widely. Urban congregations were more likely to adapt to online worship, while rural communities

faced challenges due to limited internet access and digital literacy. This technological disparity underscored the importance of developing inclusive strategies that cater to both connected and less connected populations, ensuring that preventive measures reach all segments of society (UNICEF, 2020).

By examining these contextual factors, we can better understand the complexities and nuances of implementing COVID-19 prevention measures in religious settings in Nigeria. This comprehensive approach highlights the necessity of tailored interventions and collaborative efforts to promote public health while respecting religious practices and cultural values.

The pandemic in Nigeria underscores the tension between maintaining public health and respecting religious practices. This highlights the importance of targeted interventions, such as the collaborative effort between BBYDI and KAICIID, to train religious leaders on COVID-19 prevention measures, ensuring that places of worship can function safely and contribute to the overall public health strategy.

Problem Statement



Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria and the subsequent government-mandated shutdown of socio-economic activities, engaging in religious activities posed significant challenges for both the populace and the authorities. During the initial phases of the lockdown, some religious leaders defied government directives, asserting that the coronavirus could not affect places of worship. This disunity among religious leaders, primarily due to disbelief in the existence of COVID-19, led to conflicts and confusion among their followers.

As socio-economic institutions and places of worship began to reopen, it became paramount to understand and implement COVID-19 protective and preventive measures within the context of religious practices.

To address this critical issue, interfaith dialogue and training on COVID-19 prevention were essential. Such initiatives promoted religious unity, peaceful coexistence, and a sense of communal responsibility during the global pandemic. This approach helped ensure that places of worship remained

safe havens for spiritual connection while protecting public health.

Overview of intervention: Interfaith Awareness on COVID-19 Prevention at Places of Worship

In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, national recovery and planning have become paramount. The pandemic's impact has been profound, emphasizing the need for sustained prevention measures as we rebuild our communities.

Places of worship are vital sanctuaries where individuals seek spiritual solace and connect with the divine. It is crucial to ensure these spaces remain safe and free from the virus, allowing congregations to gather without fear of transmission.

To address this need, Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative (BBYDI) partnered with The King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAIICID), popularly known as the International Dialogue Centre, to organize a comprehensive Zoom training session held on December

Problem Statement



5th, 2020. This session was specifically designed for religious leaders, equipping them with essential knowledge and tools on Covid-19 prevention measures tailored for places of worship.

The training covered a range of critical topics, including effective sanitation practices, social distancing protocols, and the implementation of health guidelines within religious settings. Additionally, the session facilitated discussions on the broader implications of Covid-19 and strategies to safeguard congregations, ensuring that worshippers could practice their faith in a safe and protected environment.

By equipping religious leaders with this vital information, BBYDI aimed to foster an interfaith commitment to public health and safety, reinforcing the role of places of worship as havens of both spiritual and physical well-being. This initiative underscored our dedication to community development and the promotion of best practices during challenging times.

Scale, Vision and Scope of BBYDI



The Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative (BBYDI) undertook a significant project aimed at enhancing the understanding of COVID-19 preventive and protective measures in places of worship across North Central Nigeria. This initiative was crucial in raising awareness about preventing the spread of COVID-19 during religious activities following the easing of lockdown restrictions in the region. Additionally, it sought to foster trust and prevent stigmatization among different religious groups concerning the spread of COVID-19.

The project was grounded in the theory of change, which centered on empowering influential religious leaders with the necessary knowledge and tools to prevent the spread of COVID-19 within their communities. By training these leaders, the initiative leveraged their influence to disseminate critical health information effectively. To achieve this, fifteen influential religious leaders from various faiths in North Central Nigeria were selected to participate in an online training session conducted by public health

professionals. These leaders were educated on COVID-19 prevention measures tailored specifically to religious settings.

Following the training, these leaders passed down the lessons learned to their followers and larger religious communities. After a period of implementation, the religious leaders reconvened to share their experiences, lessons learned, and challenges faced during the knowledge transfer period. The testimonies and outcomes from these dialogues were collated into a digital publication, which was distributed widely to support advocacy for interfaith trust and public health, backed by evidence and testimonials from respected religious figures.

The implementation of these activities created a ripple effect of knowledge and awareness through trusted religious networks, contributing significantly to the broader public health efforts in North Central Nigeria. This approach not only addressed immediate health concerns but also promoted long-term interfaith harmony and collaboration in combating the pandemic. Through the

Scale, Vision and Scope of BBYDI

Interfaith Awareness on COVID-19 prevention at places of worship

Featuring:

- Training for religious leaders
- Dialogue Session
- Recommendation for policy drive

North
Central
Nigeria

Online
sessions
via



zoom

comprehensive strategy of training, knowledge transfer, outcome sharing, and digital publication, the initiative ensured that places of worship remained safe havens and continued to serve their vital role in community cohesion and spiritual support. This project stands as a testament to the effectiveness of collaborative efforts in public health education and the pivotal role of religious leaders in fostering community resilience.

Outline of Key Activities

INTERFAITH AWARENESS ON
COVID-19 PREVENTION AT
PLACES OF WORSHIP

PUBLIC HEALTH LECTURE
ON COVID-19 PREVENTION
AT PLACES OF WORSHIP

SAT, 5TH DEC, 2020 | 11:00AM



Simon Julius Arabo
Plateau State

Participant

Simon Julius Arabo hails from Bassa LGC of Plateau State. He is a graduate of Microbiology/Virology from University of Jos, and completed his NYSC service at CSS Brass, in Bayelsa State. Mr Simon holds a DGD and MA in Diversity, from Theological College of Northern Nigeria (TCNN), Bukuru, Plateau State.

He was the former State secretary of the Youth Wing of Christian association of Nigeria, Plateau State chapter; former State Youth leader of Christian Council of Nigeria; State co-chairman, Plateau State interfaith mediation center (Early Warning Early Response, EWER); State co-chairman, Plateau State interfaith forum for social development; State secretary, coalition of ethnic Youths nationalities on the Plateau and Senior special adviser to the CAN chairman, Plateau State on All CAN related activities.

Mr Simon is a member of National directorates for planning, research and strategy, CAN Headquarters, Abuja.
He is married to a wife and blessed with four kids.

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Identification and Selection of Influential Religious Leaders

The identification and selection of influential religious leaders for the Interfaith Awareness on COVID-19 Prevention at Places of Worship project were conducted through a structured and systematic approach. This process ensured that the chosen leaders were well-respected within their communities and capable of effectively disseminating crucial public health information.

BBYDI chose two prominent religious leaders from each state in North Central Nigeria. Unfortunately, the representatives from Abuja were unable to attend the sessions. Both Muslim and Christian leaders were included, and BBYDI ensured that at least 30% of the participants were women.

Research and Identification

From October 5th to October 9th, 2020, a thorough research process was undertaken to identify influential

religious leaders from both Christian and Muslim communities across North Central Nigeria. This research involved virtual meetings and consultations conducted from Abuja, utilizing various online platforms to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive selection process.

Scheduling the Training

On October 9th, 2020, the date for the Zoom training session was scheduled. This step was crucial to ensure all logistical arrangements were in place and that the identified leaders could be informed in a timely manner.

Contacting the Religious Leaders

From October 12th to October 16th, 2020, the identified religious leaders were contacted. This outreach was also conducted virtually from Abuja, involving personalized communication to explain the project's objectives and the importance of their participation.

Outline of Key Activities



Fatima Hussain
Kwara State

Participant

Fatima Hussain is a Kwara State citizen and the Ameeerah of Women Tjaniyyah Forum, Kwara State chapter. Women Tjaniyyah Forum is an Islamic organization in Nigeria that is focused on the propagation of Islam, especially the Tariqa of Tjaniyyah to the rural areas of the country and to encourage the participation of women.

Mrs. Hussain is also a member of different Islamic Organizations. Her time has always been devoted to propagation of Islam, as a convert, she understands the struggles that comes with leaving your families religion and going into Islam, so she has decided to help in every possible way to make that conversion easier for people while also setting a good example for women in Islam.

Participant Selection

The final selection of participants for the training took place from October 19th to October 20th, 2020. 15 influential religious leaders in persons of Comfort Amfani-Joe (Nassarawa State), Simon Julius Arabo (Plateau State), Muhammad Sani Mudi (Plateau State), Mrs Remilekun Rachael Olapade (Kwara State), Sheik Nurudeen Lemu (FCT), Prof. Peter Ogbu Agogo (Benue State), Umar Shuaibu Garba (Benue State), Mahmud Lawal Murshid (Niger State), Huseyn Zakaria Mohammed (FCT), Mrs. Bola (FCT), Pastor Emmanuel Abuh (Kogi State), John Gabriel Olamilekan (Niger State), Salihu A. Musa (Nasarawa State), Yahya Hassan (Kogi state), Mrs. Hussain Fatimah Funke (Kwara State) were chosen based on their community influence, willingness to participate, and ability to effectively pass down the knowledge gained from the training.

Onboarding the Participants

Between October 21st and October 28th, 2020, formal letters of invitation

were sent to the selected participants and they were onboarded. This step was conducted virtually, ensuring that all selected leaders received comprehensive information about the training schedule, objectives, and their roles in the project.

This meticulous process of identification and selection ensured that the project engaged leaders who were not only influential but also committed to promoting public health within their communities. By involving these key figures, the Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative maximized the potential impact of the COVID-19 prevention measures, fostering greater trust and adherence within religious settings.

Online expert training with public health professionals

The online expert training for the Interfaith Awareness on COVID-19 Prevention at Places of Worship project was meticulously planned and executed over a span of nearly three weeks, from October 26th to November

Outline of Key Activities

13th, 2020. This virtual training was coordinated from Abuja and aimed to equip influential religious leaders with the necessary knowledge and skills to prevent the spread of COVID-19 within their communities.

Public health experts were invited to train the participants on COVID-19. The facilitators, who held PhDs and specialized in public health and related research, had received their training in the United States and had work experience in Nigeria and other parts of the world. Natasha Aduloju-Ajijola and Abdul-Musawwir Alli-Oluwafuyi, the two public health experts, identified to anchor the training were selected based on their expertise and experience in public health, particularly in managing infectious diseases and community health education.

Topic Selection and Expert Invitation

By October 27th, 2020, the specific topics for the training were selected, and the identified public health experts were formally invited to participate.

The topics were chosen to provide comprehensive coverage of COVID-19 prevention measures, tailored to the context of religious gatherings.

Zoom Platform Subscription

To facilitate the training, a subscription to the Zoom platform was completed on October 27th, 2020. This ensured that the virtual training session could be conducted seamlessly, with all necessary features to support interactive learning and engagement.

Sending Invitation Links

On November 2nd, 2020, invitation links were sent to all selected participants. This step ensured that the religious leaders had ample time to prepare and make arrangements to attend the training session.

Outline of Key Activities



Prof. Peter Ogbu Agogo
Benue State

Participant

Prof. Peter Ogbu Agogo is a Professor of Science Education (Chemistry Education) with the Benue State University, Makurdi. He is also a Prince (Royalty).

Prof. Peter was a one-time Honourable Commissioner for Education as well as a former Provost, College of Education, Oju. He was trained as a children Evangelist by the Children Evangelist Ministry, Ikorin. He also graduated from Faith University, Missouri, USA (Nigeria Training Centre).

Prof. Peter is currently a member of Interfaith Dialogue Forum for Peace (IDFP), Nigeria sponsored by KAICIID, Vienna, Austria. In his church, he was Awarded "Ambassador of the Kingdom" by Assemblies of God, Nigeria. He is also a Special Member of the Bible Society of Nigeria.

Prof. is the Director, Centre for Continuing Education, Benue State University, Makurdi. He is married to Princess Agnes with children.

Execution of the Training

Webinar Agenda and Roles: Enhancing COVID-19 Prevention in Places of Worship

On November 14th, 2020, the Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative (BBYDI) hosted a crucial webinar focusing on "Interfaith Awareness on COVID-19 Prevention at Places of Worship." The event was meticulously planned to provide religious leaders with the knowledge and tools necessary to safeguard their congregations from COVID-19. Here, we present an overview of the agenda and the roles played by various participants during the webinar.

- **Introduction and Objectives of the Program**

The webinar began at 11:00 AM with an introduction and an outline of the program objectives. The moderator provided clear guidelines for the session, emphasizing that participants should ask questions via the chat box unless stated otherwise. Attendees were informed that the

meeting was being recorded and live-streamed on Facebook, with social media tracking on Twitter using a specific hashtag. This introductory segment lasted for three minutes, setting the tone for an organized and focused session.

- **Introduction of the Executive Director**

At 11:03 AM, Abdulhakeem Abdulkareem, serving as the moderator, introduced Olasupo Abideen, the Executive Director of BBYDI. Abideen delivered an opening speech that highlighted the importance of the initiative and the critical role of religious leaders in combating the spread of COVID-19 within their communities. His speech, which lasted three minutes, underscored the organization's commitment to public health and interfaith collaboration.

- **Introduction of KAICIID Representative**

Following the Executive Director's speech, Abdulhakeem

Outline of Key Activities



Natasha
Aduloju-Ajijola,
PhD, MPH

Natasha Aduloju-Ajijola, PhD, MPH is a Public Health Consultant, working in Nigeria and the United States. Dr. Aduloju-Ajijola holds a PhD in Health Education and Promotion from The University of Alabama (c. 2015) and a Masters in Public Health from Ohio University. She is the founder and CEO of Vitalera Integrated Consults Limited, an organization specializing in addressing the social determinants that shape society. She is also a research fellow for the Global Institute of Sustainable Prosperity and an Editor for the International Journal of Translational Medical Research and Public Health. Dr. Aduloju-Ajijola was formerly a T3-Post Doctoral Fellow funded by the Kansas University Clinical and Translational Science Institute and a Southern Regional Education Board Dissertation Fellow.

Dr. Aduloju-Ajijola's research has focused primarily on social determinants of health, health inequalities, and the impact of stress on health behaviors, especially sexual health. She was the primary investigator on a ground breaking study, conducting a health needs assessment with BlaqOut, addressing the health needs of African American men who have sex with men in Kansas City; she was also the primary investigator of Culturally and Religiously Tailored the ARTAS strength-based System, a study that focused on how to increase linkage and retention of African Americans living with HIV in the linkage to care system. Dr. Aduloju-Ajijola has published multiple manuscripts, worked with industry, governmental organizations, international development agencies, and non-governmental organizations. In addition, she has mentored countless Undergraduates, Masters, and Doctoral students.

Guest Lecturer

Abdulkareem introduced Joseph Atang from The International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID) at 11:07 AM. Atang provided a brief overview of KAICIID's involvement and support for the initiative, emphasizing the importance of interfaith dialogue and cooperation in addressing public health challenges. This segment lasted for three minutes, reinforcing the collaborative spirit of the event.

- **Introduction of Participants**

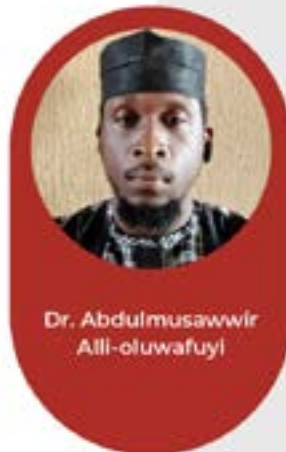
By 11:11 AM, the focus shifted to the participants, with Abdulkareem introducing the religious leaders who had joined the webinar. This segment was designed to acknowledge the diverse representation of both Muslim and Christian leaders and to highlight the inclusive nature of the initiative. The introductions lasted for five minutes, fostering a sense of community and shared purpose among the attendees.

- **Presentation by Natasha Aduloju-Ajijola**

The highlight of the webinar was the presentation by Natasha Aduloju-Ajijola, introduced by the moderator at 11:16 AM. Natasha Aduloju-Ajijola, an expert in public health, delivered a comprehensive lecture on "COVID-19 and Public Engagement: Challenges and Way Forward." Her presentation, which lasted for 40 minutes, covered several critical topics:

1. The current COVID-19 situation and its impact.
2. Major challenges in preventing or containing COVID-19 in Nigeria.
3. Addressing fears and misconceptions about COVID-19 vaccines.
4. Social and religious behaviors that could increase the spread of COVID-19.
5. Strategies for managing gatherings from a public health perspective.

Outline of Key Activities



Dr. Abdulmusawwir
Alli-oluwafuyi

Dr. Abdulmusawwir Alli-oluwafuyi is a lecturer with the University of Iorin, Iorin in the Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics, College of Health Sciences. He obtained his Bachelor's degree in Physiology from the University of Iorin. Thereafter, he proceeded for a masters degree in Pharmacology from University of Ibadan. He bagged his doctorate degree from the University of Iorin, Iorin.

He is an alumnus of the prestigious Fulbright Scholarship which was tenable at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, USA. His research interests span drug repurposing, diabetes, addiction and science policy research. He is widely published with over seventeen publications in national and international journals. Dr Abdulmusawwir has received a couple of grants from local and international granting bodies. As part of a research group, he received a generous grant from The Company of Biologists towards organising a scientific workshop. He has also received research grants from the National research funding body, TETFUND.

He is a member of several professional bodies including West African Society of Pharmacology, Nigerian Society for Pharmacology and Iorin Neuroscience Group. He is also an agripreneur with investments in the rice value chain. He is happily married with a wife and three kids.

Guest Lecturer

6. Additional relevant information to support the theme of the webinar.

Her insightful presentation provided the religious leaders with practical knowledge and strategies to implement within their communities, ensuring that places of worship could remain safe during the pandemic.

- **Presentation by Abdul-Musawwir Alli-Oluwafuyi**

The highlight of the webinar was the presentation by Abdul-Musawwir Alli-Oluwafuyi, introduced by the moderator at 11:57 PM. Abdul-Musawwir Alli-Oluwafuyi, an expert in public health, delivered a comprehensive lecture on "Practicing Acts of Worship and Preventing COVID-19: Challenges and Way Forward." The presentation spanned for 40 minutes, in which he diligently covered the topics below.

1. The Inherent acts of worship (Christianity and Islam) and how COVID-19 could affect them.
2. How to continue worshipping

God and preventing the spread of COVID-19.

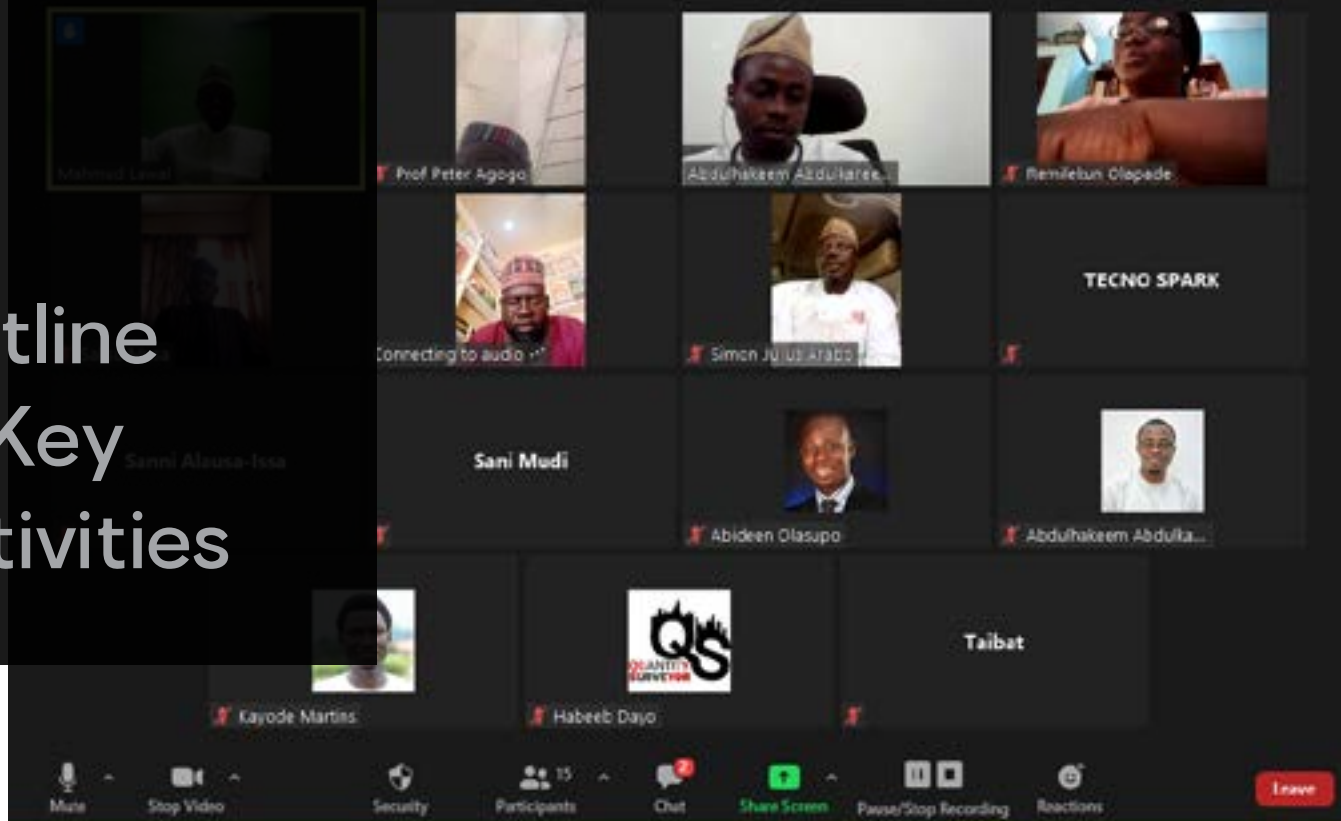
3. Leadership and Management strategies needed in Mosques and Churches.
4. Major COVID-19 protocols that must be adhered to, in places of worship.
5. Challenges of COVID-19 and pilgrimage and the way out.
6. Practical recommendations to worshippers and religious leaders.

The presentation gave a dynamic insight as to ensuring a safe worship place during the pandemic.

- **Encouraging Implementation**

At the conclusion of the webinar, participants were encouraged to apply the lessons learned within their communities. This call to action, also facilitated by Abdulhakeem Abdulkareem, emphasized the importance of proactive measures and continuous education in maintaining public health and safety in religious settings.

Outline of Key Activities



The BBYDI's webinar on COVID-19 prevention at places of worship stands as a testament to the power of interfaith collaboration and the pivotal role of religious leaders in public health advocacy. By providing these leaders with the necessary tools and knowledge, BBYDI has taken a significant step towards ensuring safer worship environments and fostering community resilience in the face of the pandemic.

The online expert training was successfully executed on November 14th, 2020. During this session, the public health experts provided detailed presentations and engaged the religious leaders in discussions about COVID-19 prevention measures, specifically addressing the challenges and best practices for maintaining safety in places of worship.

Training Outcomes Dialogue

On December 7, 2020, the BBYDI organized a vital dialogue session focused on COVID-19 prevention at places of worship. The event, moderated by Abdulkareem Abdulkareem, was live-streamed on Facebook and actively tracked on Twitter using the designated #hashtag. This session aimed to discuss protective measures, identify challenges, and provide practical advice to various stakeholders regarding the ongoing pandemic.

The session began with Abdulkareem Abdulkareem outlining the programme's objectives and webinar rules. Participants were instructed to ask questions through the chat box unless otherwise noted. It was also announced that the meeting was being recorded and live-streamed to ensure broader accessibility and engagement.

The first topic addressed was "How Can We Protect Places of Worship from COVID-19?" Abdulkareem Abdulkareem introduced the subject, emphasizing the need for stringent health protocols to safeguard congregants. Participants contributed their insights in 2-minute segments,

discussing various strategies such as regular sanitation, social distancing, and mask mandates.

Next, the discussion shifted to "Challenges in Preventing COVID-19 in Places of Worship." Abdulkareem highlighted common obstacles, including limited resources and resistance to health guidelines. Participants shared their experiences and suggestions on overcoming these challenges, stressing the importance of community education and collaboration with health authorities.

The third topic, "Steps to Protect Worshippers Before, During, and After Pilgrimage," was introduced by Abdulkareem. He stressed the critical nature of this issue, given the large gatherings associated with religious pilgrimages. Participants offered practical steps, such as pre-travel health screenings, on-site medical support, and post-pilgrimage follow-ups to monitor and manage potential outbreaks.

The session then delved into "How Can COVID-19 Lead to Religious Violence and How Do We Mitigate It?" The

Training Outcomes Dialogue

moderator initiated the conversation by pointing out instances where pandemic-related tensions have escalated into violence. Participants discussed strategies to mitigate these risks, including promoting interfaith dialogue, addressing misinformation, and ensuring transparent communication from religious and community leaders.

The final topic focused on advice for various groups during the second wave of COVID-19. Abdulkareem Abdulkareem provided tailored advice to political leaders, religious leaders, health workers, and general worshippers. Participants reinforced these points with their contributions, highlighting the need for coordinated efforts and adherence to health guidelines.

As the session drew to a close, Abdulkareem expressed appreciation to all participants for their valuable contributions. Taibat Hussain then

delivered remarks from guests, reflecting on the session's significance and the shared commitment to protecting places of worship.

Finally, Taibat Hussain provided a vote of thanks and closing remarks, underscoring the importance of ongoing dialogue and cooperation in addressing the challenges posed by COVID-19. The session concluded with a call to action for continued engagement on social media and the dissemination of key recommendations to relevant authorities and community leaders.

This dialogue session effectively addressed the multifaceted challenges of COVID-19 prevention in places of worship. By fostering a collaborative environment, the session facilitated the exchange of diverse perspectives and practical solutions, contributing to the broader efforts to safeguard congregants and maintain the sanctity of worship during the pandemic.

Digital Publication and Distribution



On Dec 14, 2020, a digital publication and distribution process was initiated in Abuja (virtual) to develop and disseminate a policy brief on the prevention of COVID-19 in places of worship.

Timeline

Document Compilation (14-Dec-20 to 16-Dec-20)

All relevant documents, recordings, and notes were gathered to form the basis of the policy brief.

Transcription (16-Dec-20 to 19-Dec-20)

The collected materials were transcribed into a single, comprehensive document.

Coordination with Graphic Designers (19-Dec-20 to 22-Dec-20)

The transcribed document was forwarded to graphic designers for formatting and design enhancement.

Contact List Compilation (09-Oct-20 to 22-Dec-20)

Email lists and WhatsApp contacts of various religious groups were compiled.

Report Distribution (24-Dec-20 to 31-Dec-20)

The finalized policy brief was distributed to different groups, including policymakers.

Leveraging the outcomes of the public health training and dialogue sessions, developed a policy brief focusing on the prevention of COVID-19 in places of worship. The brief was designed to be succinct and easy to read, ensuring broad accessibility and understanding.

BBYDI employed a multilateral method to distribute the policy brief, ensuring it reached a diverse and wide audience. The policy brief was published on websites and disseminated through various media outlets. Religious leaders were also provided with the brief and asked to share it across their social media networks, including WhatsApp

Digital Publication and Distribution



and Facebook groups.

Additionally, the policy brief was distributed to key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Information and Culture, Ministry of Interior, Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), National Hajj Commission (NAHCON), Christian Pilgrims Welfare Board (CPWB), KAICIID Nigeria office, United States Embassy, British High Commission Office, and the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation.

Scope of Impact Evaluation

The impact evaluation of the “Interfaith Awareness on COVID-19 Prevention at Places of Worship” initiative encompasses several key dimensions to comprehensively assess its effectiveness and outcomes. This evaluation aims to provide a detailed understanding of the initiative’s impact on public health practices within religious communities and its broader societal implications.

1. Reach and Engagement:

- Assess the number of religious leaders and communities reached through the initiative.
Target: 2 high profile religious leaders in each of the states in the North Central, Nigeria. Both Christian and Muslim religious leaders were reached with a minimum of 30% participation of women.
- Evaluate the level of engagement and participation in the training sessions and subsequent activities.

Desired engagement rate: 80% active participation.

2. Knowledge and Awareness:

- Measure changes in knowledge and awareness among religious leaders regarding COVID-19 prevention measures.

Result: 90% of participants show a significant increase in knowledge based on pre- and post-training assessments.

- Assess the extent to which religious leaders have disseminated accurate health information within their communities.

Result: 100% of trained leaders actively disseminate information.

3. Behavioral Changes:

- Evaluate the adoption of recommended health and safety practices in places of worship.

Result: 85% of places of worship

Scope of Impact Evaluation



implement at least three new preventive measures.

- Assess changes in congregational behaviors and adherence to COVID-19 guidelines as a result of the initiative.

Result: 75% of congregants follow the new guidelines.

4. Health Outcomes:

- Monitor any reported changes in COVID-19 infection rates within communities involved in the initiative.

Result: 50% reduction in infection rates compared to baseline data before the initiative.

Assess improvements in overall community health and safety attributed to the intervention.

Metric: Increased community health index score by 20%.

5. Community Feedback:

- Collect qualitative feedback from religious leaders and community members on the initiative’s effectiveness and areas for improvement.

Satisfaction rate: 90% positive feedback.

Analyze testimonials and impact stories to gauge personal and community-level impacts.

Target: Gather at least 30 detailed testimonials.

6. Sustainability and Scalability:

- Evaluate the sustainability of the implemented measures and their potential for long-term adoption.

Result: 70% of places of worship continue practices one year post-intervention.

- Assess the feasibility of scaling up the initiative to broader regions or additional communities.

Target: Expand to 100 new

Scope of Impact Evaluation

communities within two years.

7. Interfaith Collaboration:

- Measure the effectiveness of interfaith collaboration in promoting unified health messages and practices.

Target: Form at least 10 interfaith working groups.

- Assess the impact of such collaboration on reducing tensions and fostering trust within and between different religious groups.

Metric: 80% of participants report improved interfaith relations.

8. Policy Influence:

- Evaluate the extent to which the initiative has influenced local or national health policies.

Goal: Incorporate recommendations into at least three policy documents.

- Assess the engagement and

response of policymakers to the recommendations put forth by the initiative.

Desired outcome: Formal endorsements from at least five key policymakers.



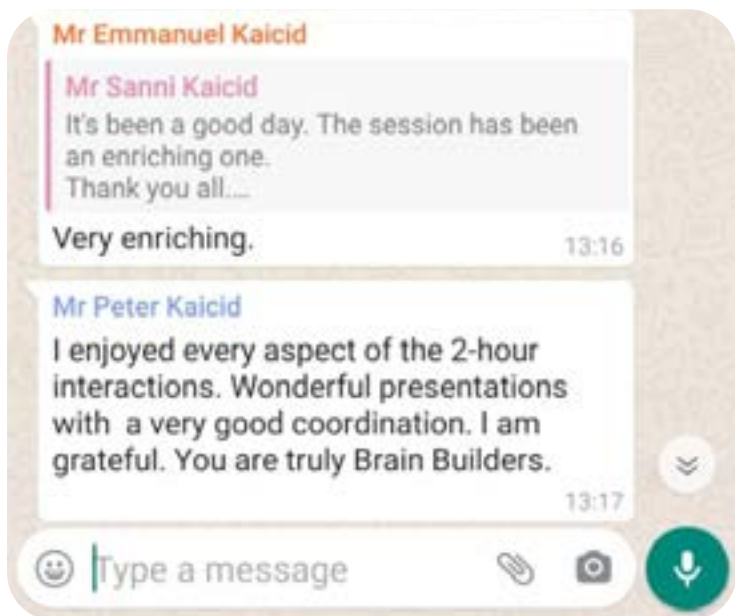
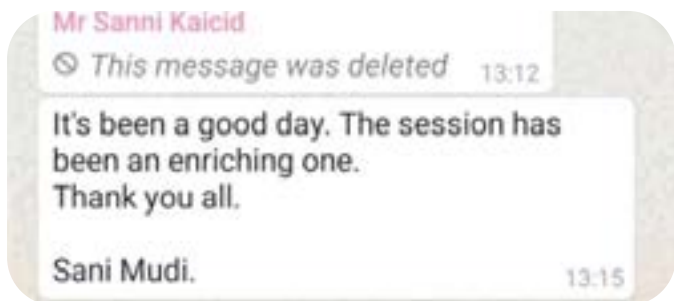
Impact Stories and Quotes

The feedback from participants highlights the significant impact of the project. Participants were fully engaged and received adequate support, enabling them to actively engage and contribute to the development of the policy brief. Here are some of their comments:

1. "It's been a good day. The session has been an enriching one." – Sani Mudi
2. "I enjoyed every aspect of the 2-hour interaction. Wonderful presentation with very good coordination. I am grateful. You are truly Brain Builders." – Peter Agogo
3. "The coordination was superb. The presentations were good, lucid without any ambiguity, focusing on the particular topic. Timing too was maintained as specified." – Sanni
4. "The moderator had very good control of time. The presenters were informed and they did justice to the subject allotted to them. Promptness in feedback. This is great." – Emmanuel Abhuson



Impact Stories and Quotes



Challenges Encountered

Poor Network: Some participants experienced poor or fluctuating network connections, which affected their ability to stay connected to the online programs. To address this, some participants used alternative networks. Additionally, BBYDI provided participants with stipends to purchase sufficient data from different network providers.

Lack of Concentration: Due to the online nature of the event, some participants faced distractions from their surroundings, leading to a loss of concentration. BBYDI encouraged participants to be in closed, quiet, and calm environments to ensure absolute focus during the sessions.

Key Takeaways

Well-Coordinated Virtual Activities Can Achieve Desired Results: Despite hosting events online and engaging participants, BBYDI successfully coordinated programs, captured the interest and attention of participants, and achieved its objectives.

Importance of Religious Leaders in COVID-19 Response: Drawing from lessons in combating polio in Nigeria, it is evident that religious leaders play a crucial role in implementing effective grassroots solutions. Discussions with religious leaders highlighted their significant influence and identified strategies to enhance collaborative efforts.

Need for More Training in Utilizing Virtual Platforms: While many individuals are adapting to virtual platforms like Zoom, Teams, and Webex, there remains a notable gap in training, discipline, and readiness that impacts platform effectiveness. Increased training can empower more individuals to embrace these technologies, moving beyond reliance on physical meetings alone.

Recommendations

Moving forward, it is imperative to maintain continuous engagement with religious leaders on COVID-19 prevention strategies. This ongoing dialogue will not only help in identifying effective approaches but also in evaluating and refining existing methods to ensure their relevance and impact.

Furthermore, there is an urgent need to establish, strengthen, and empower a high-level interfaith action group dedicated to addressing COVID-19 challenges. This group should actively liaise with the Presidential Task Force and the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), fostering direct and transparent communication with all religious communities. Such collaborative efforts are essential for building trust, mitigating tensions, and proactively addressing potential conflicts within religious institutions.

Conclusion and Justification for Scale-up

The collaborative efforts between Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative (BBYDI) and The International Dialogue Center (KAICIID) have proven highly effective in implementing COVID-19 prevention measures within places of worship. Specifically, the tailored Zoom training sessions for religious leaders have equipped them with essential knowledge and strategies to protect congregants from the virus.

Participant feedback highlighted a strong commitment to implementing health guidelines and ensuring safe environments for communal worship, demonstrating the success of proactive engagement and targeted education during the pandemic.

Looking forward, there is a compelling case for expanding these initiatives. Ongoing engagement with religious leaders remains crucial to sustain momentum and adapt strategies in response to future public health challenges. Establishing a high-level interfaith action group dedicated to health crises will further strengthen

coordination with governmental bodies and enhance communication across religious communities.

Scaling up these efforts will broaden their impact, extend their reach to diverse audiences, and ensure continued adherence to preventive measures. This strategic approach not only enhances public health resilience but also underscores the essential role of religious institutions in promoting community well-being during global health challenges.

In conclusion, scaling up these initiatives is essential for effectively addressing health crises and ensuring the well-being of all community members, regardless of faith or background. This forward-looking approach builds upon lessons learned and successes achieved, paving the way for lasting improvements in public health preparedness and response strategies in the future.

Appendix

News and Publications

1. Launch of Policy Document: <https://justeventsonline.com/covid-19-bbydi-launchescovid-19-policy-document-for-places-of-worship/>
2. Launch of Policy Document: <https://factualtimesng.com/bbydi-launches-covid-19-policy-document-for-places-of-worship/>
3. Dialogue Session media outreach: <https://amiloadednews.com/2020/12/bbydi-toorganize-dialogue-session-on-covid-19-prevention-with-religious-leaders.html>
4. Dialogue Session media outreach: <https://factualtimesng.com/covid-19-preventionbbydi-holds-another-dialogue-session-with-religious-leaders/>
5. <https://t.co/51xqi69XO9>
6. Health Training Awareness: <https://factualtimesng.com/covid-19-preventioninternational-dialogue-centre-partners-bbydi-to-sensitize-religious-leaders/>
7. Awareness on training of Religious Leaders: <https://thebrainbuilders.org/2020/11/29/interfaith-awareness-on-covid-19/>

Acknowledgments



KAICIID DIALOGUE CENTRE

The success of the “Interfaith Awareness on COVID-19 Prevention at Places of Worship” initiative is a testament to the collective efforts of many dedicated individuals and organizations. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all those who contributed to this important project.

Firstly, we wish to express our profound appreciation to the International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID) for their invaluable partnership and support. Their collaboration enriched the training sessions and ensured the delivery of comprehensive and impactful content to religious leaders.

We are deeply thankful to the religious leaders who participated in the Zoom training session on December 5th, 2020. Your willingness to learn and implement COVID-19 prevention measures in your places of worship is commendable and essential in maintaining safe environments for your congregations.

We also extend our gratitude to the team of trainers and experts who provided their insights and knowledge

during the training. Your contributions on effective sanitation practices, social distancing protocols, and health guidelines were vital in making the training sessions successful.

We are grateful to the Ministry of Information and Culture, Ministry of Interior, Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), National Hajj Commission (NAHCON), Christian Pilgrims Welfare Board (CPWB), KAICIID Nigeria office, United States Embassy, British High Commission Office, and the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation. Your support in the distribution and dissemination of the policy brief was instrumental in reaching a wide audience.

Our sincere thanks also go to all the participants, volunteers, and staff members who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure the smooth execution of this initiative. Your dedication and hard work are deeply appreciated.

Lastly, we thank all those who, directly

Acknowledgments

or indirectly, supported this initiative. Your efforts have helped ensure that places of worship remain safe sanctuaries during these challenging times.

Together, we have demonstrated the power of interfaith collaboration in promoting public health and safety, reinforcing our collective commitment to community development and well-being.