

GOODLUCK JONATHAN FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

Anniversary Issue



LEGACY OF IMPACT

Celebrating our Journey

WALK WITH US



Success Stories/ Feature Articles



Summary of results achieved in the past ten (10) years



Spotlight on the Staff



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Goodluck Jonathan Foundation



Goodluck Jonathan Foundation

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Inside this Anniversary issue:

- Introduction, Thematic Pillars & Focal Countries
- Summary of results achieved in the past ten (10) years
- Success Stories / Feature Article
- Spotlight on GJF Staff



MESSAGE FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We remain eternally grateful to God Almighty for his grace that has carried and continues to carry us through every season – the trials, the triumphs, and the quiet moments of reflections. Honestly, without his guidance, personally I would not be standing here today. His favour sustained us in moments when strength alone was inadequate.

Since inception, the Foundation has remained committed to advancing the values of democracy, equity, and progress through strategic initiatives and collaborative partnerships.

Ten years later, we stand proud to say that together we have turned bold ideas into transformative action:

- We have strengthened democratic institutions through election mediation missions, participation in observation missions, policy dialogues, and strategic advocacy across the continent.
- Our annual Democracy Dialogue inaugurated in 2021 has grown into a vital platform for reflection, engagement,

and strategic action that brings together voices from across the African continent to interrogate the state of our democracy and chart pathways toward its renewal. In Accra this year, we gathered under the theme Why Democracies Die, a timely and necessary inquiry into the structural and systemic factors undermining democratic resilience both within Africa and globally.

- Through our advanced peacebuilding efforts, convening stakeholders in conflict-prone regions, we have fostered peaceful political transitions in various countries in the region and further promoted inclusive governance as a pathway to lasting peace.
- We are promoting the security of African states and their citizens within the context of the rule of law, fundamental human rights, and democratic principles via research, learning and knowledge exchange.
- We have also contributed to preventing violent extremism both online and offline at policy and community level, led initiatives aimed to improve

trust and collaboration between State institutions and citizens, in advancing peace and security.

- We have expanded our global footprint, forging partnerships with international organizations and amplifying African voices on the world stage.
- And above all, conceived in 2020 and in 2021 we launched the West Africa Elders Forum (WAEF) — my proudest achievement and personal passion project.

WAEF has grown into a powerful platform to engage in quiet preventive diplomacy, mediate conflicts, and support democratic transitions across West Africa. Watching WAEF evolve into a respected regional force has been one of the most fulfilling chapters of my leadership.

These milestones are not just accomplishments — they are proof that resilience, grace, and purpose can overcome scepticism, bias, and adversity. As we mark ten years of service and commitments, our mission remains clear. The challenges facing our continent ahead are great and demand bold ideas and collaborative action, but so is our capacity to meet them.

As we raise our glasses tonight, let us also raise our sights. With renewed commitments and under my leadership, the Goodluck Jonathan Foundation will continue to be a catalyst for change, a convener of hope, and a champion for a better future.

To friends, and partners of the Foundation, thank you for your trust and collaboration. To those who doubted us— thank you too. You sharpened our focus and strengthened our resolve.

Your excellencies, valued partners, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for walking this journey so far with us. Thank you for believing in the vision. And thank you for being part of this legacy.



ABOUT US

The GJF is an independent, non-governmental organisation established in 2015 for the advancement of peace and prosperity on the African continent. GJF serves as a platform to champion and catalyse democratic governance across Africa by focusing on promoting peace and stability, and women and youth inclusion. To advance this mission, our programs focus on three thematic areas: Democracy and Elections, Peace and Security and Gender and Youth Empowerment.

Over the last ten years, the Goodluck Jonathan Foundation has strengthened governance and leadership in West Africa, ensuring a transparent and peaceful transition of power in several African countries. This has been achieved largely through the deployment of the West African Elders Forum – the foundation’s powerful mediation platform – which has contributed to peaceful elections and

democratic transitions (in partnership with ECOWAS and AU) in The Gambia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Senegal. It has also used quiet diplomacy to address political challenges in Senegal and Côte d’Ivoire.

Utilising its convening power, a comparative advantage for the Foundation, GJF also organises strategic high-level meetings: the GJF Democracy Dialogue, the Peace Conference and the Policy Dialogue series, where collective action, knowledge exchange and ideation in response to the current and emerging challenges confronting Nigeria and the African continent are addressed.

This 10th anniversary newsletter gives an overview of the Foundation’s work so far, achievements, challenges, lessons and strategies to guide its interventions in the coming years.

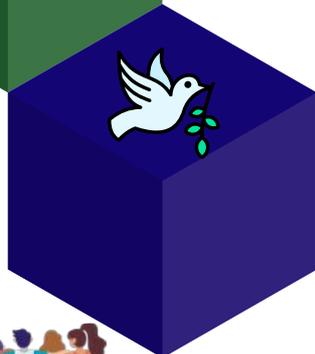
THEMATIC PILLARS

The Goodluck Jonathan Foundation operates on three pillars:



Democracy and Elections

Building a continent rooted in strong electoral institutions and systems that uphold equity under the law.



Peace and Security

Recognising that prosperity and progress flourish in peaceful environments, while conflict breeds stagnation and poverty.

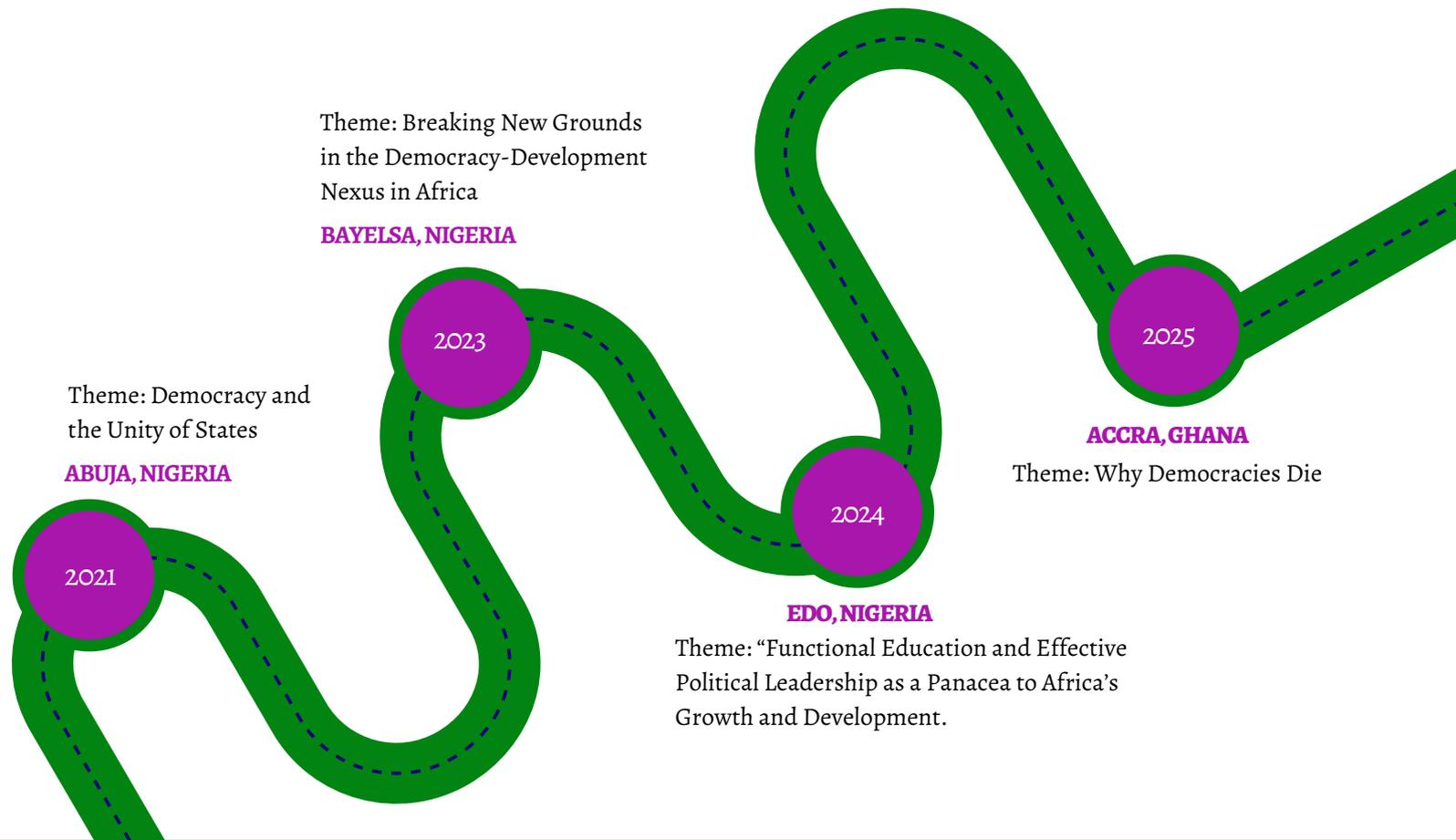


Women and Youth Development

Empowering women and youth to shape ‘the Africa We Want’.

The Foundation strengthens democratic governance, peaceful transitions and accountability across Africa through research and knowledge management, convenings and strategic engagements, capacity building and institutional strengthening, mediation, partnership and collaboration.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS ACHIEVED IN THE PAST 10 YEARS



Inclusive Platforms: Featuring sitting and former Heads of State, Academic community, Civil Society, Youth, media and Development Partners

GJF strengthened democratic governance and citizen engagement through its flagship Democracy Dialogue and a series of policy-influencing conversations. The Democracy Dialogues—hosted in Nigeria, Abuja (2021), Bayelsa (2023), Edo (2024), and Ghana (2025)—examined the state of democracy, unity, development, political leadership, and decline in governance.

These convenings brought together current and former Heads of State, academics, civil society, youth, media, and development partners to reflect and define new pathways for democratic renewal. Complementing this, GJF convened eight major Policy Dialogues, which enhanced the capacity of national and regional actors to respond to emerging governance challenges.

8 POLICY INFLUENCING CONVERSATIONS

PEACE AND STABILITY SUSTAINED

GJF significantly advanced conflict prevention and peacebuilding, particularly around elections and governance transitions. It convened two Peace Conferences (2019 and 2022), providing inclusive platforms where political actors, electoral bodies, security agencies, civil society, journalists, youth, and women's groups reflected on the drivers of electoral violence and explored strategies to foster non-violent elections. These convenings improved coordination, encouraged tolerance, and contributed to preventing electoral violence.

In addition, high-level roundtables on civic-security relations were hosted, which improved mutual understanding between citizens and state actors. These engagements helped promote rights-respecting security responses while safeguarding peaceful participation. In Nigeria, a notable engagement was the 2022 dialogue with the office of the National Security Adviser (NSA) on banditry and terrorism. It recognised the link between the two and culminated in a long-awaited consensus to designate bandits as terrorists.

The establishment and operationalisation of the West African Elders Forum (WAEF) in 2021 is one of the most significant contributions of the Foundation to peace and stability in the region.

The Forum is a home-grown and non-partisan platform comprising elder statesmen and women, religious and traditional leaders who promote national unity and progress in West Africa. Africa is deeply anchored in its rich cultural heritage, with elders serving as the custodians and pillars of these traditions. Within the West African Elders Forum, these respected figures advocate for democratic governance, urging today's leaders to prioritise people-centred leadership that leaves a meaningful and enduring legacy in the lives of everyday citizens.

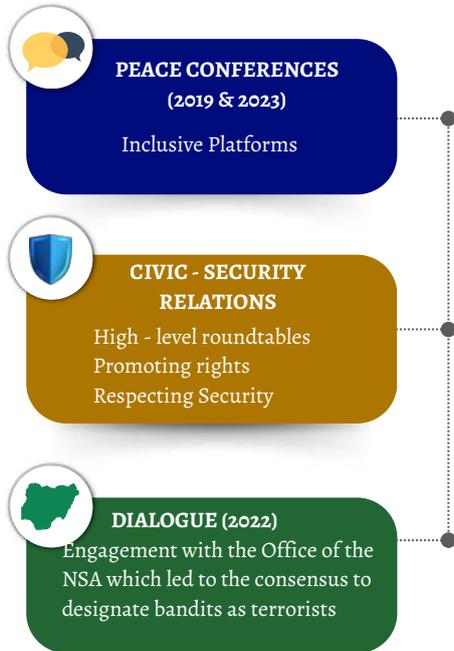
Between 2021 and 2025, the WAEF mediated peaceful elections in

The Gambia (2021), Sierra Leone (2023), Nigeria (2023), Liberia (2023), Senegal (2024), Ghana (2024), Côte d'Ivoire (2025) and Guinea-Bissau (2025). These missions provided quiet diplomacy, election observation, and negotiated between political actors, election management bodies, civil society, and security institutions. Their interventions contributed to attitudinal change in leadership, the concession of opposition parties before results were announced (in Liberia, Senegal, and Ghana), resulting in de-escalation of political tensions, sustaining dialogue at critical moments, and supporting peaceful elections and transitions.

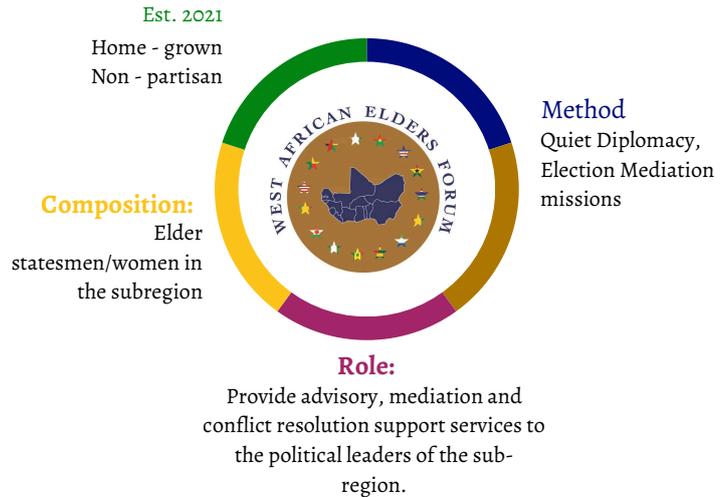


PEACE, STABILITY AND GOVERNANCE IN WEST AFRICA
Advancing Conflict Prevention and Fostering Democratic Transitions (2019 - 2025)

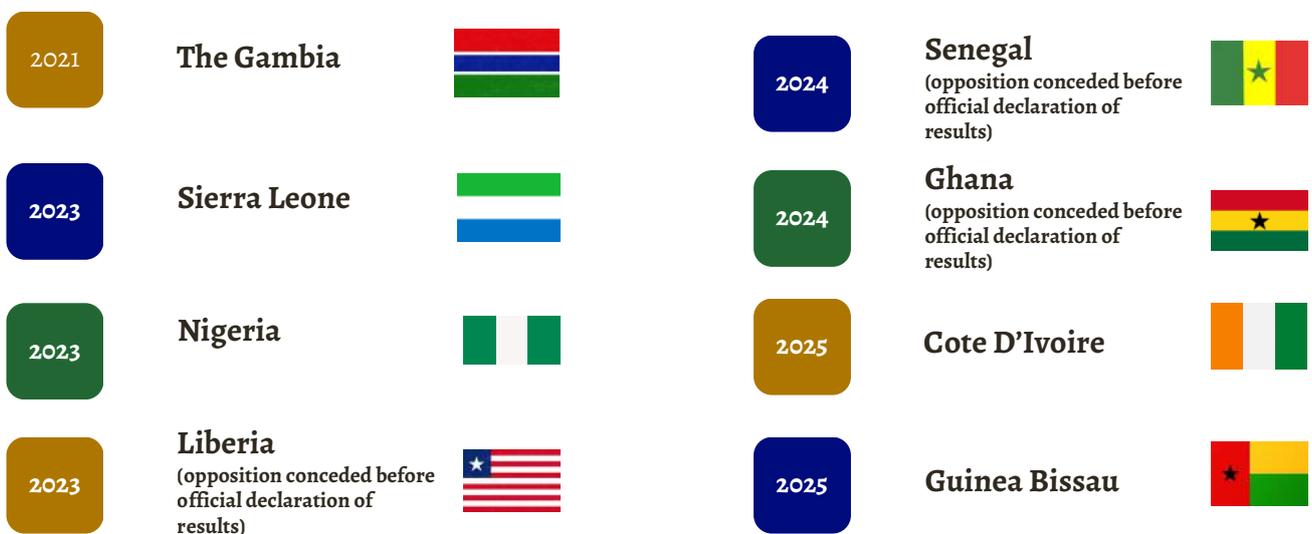
GJF CONFLICT PREVENTION PLATFORMS



WEST AFRICAN ELDERS FORUM (WAEF)



WAEF MEDIATION TIMELINE AND IMPACT



CORE IMPACT: Concession of opposition parties led to de-escalation of political tensions and sustained dialogue

The WAEF: Africa's Home-Grown Architects for Peace

West Africa has the highest decline in democratic processes among other African countries. According to the 2021 'Freedom in the World Report' released by Freedom House, five out of 12 African countries experiencing a significant decline in democracy, are in West Africa. These countries are Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, and Nigeria. Ghana and Cape Verde have remained fully democratic.

A look at the West African sub region reveals a timeline of military interference, manipulation of elections, crackdown of civil society, and militarization of politics. In the Gambia, when the incumbent President lost the elections and refused to accept defeat from 2016–2017 crisis erupted and the Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS) enforced the results through the military. The tense atmosphere between oppositions during the 2021 elections also required the intervention of ECOWAS peace keepers to prevent post-election violence.

Between 2023 and 2025 Liberia witnessed wide spread protests, electoral disputes and violent clashes (as with Nigeria during its 2023 elections), and questioned the credibility of its judicial system. In Mali, the last five years witnessed military coups (just like Guinea in 2021 and Burkina Faso from 2022 to 2023), dissolution of all political parties, indefinite delay of elections, banning opposition and rallies, as well as the abduction of activists who support democratic governance. Côte d'Ivoire's experience of third and fourth-term bids since 2020 led to protests and violence. Opposition leaders and dissents were either banned or arrested. Burkina Faso (2024-2025). postponed elections indefinitely and withdrew from ECOWAS.

Against this background, the West Africa Elders Forum was founded by the Goodluck Jonathan Foundation (GJF) in 2021 as a homegrown, non partisan, peacebuilding force. It comprises former elder states men and women (including past West African presidents and Vice-Presidents), religious leaders, and traditional leaders, who leverage their personal influence, acting quickly to resolve conflicts particularly before, during and after elections and in times of democratic transitions.

"Most of the crisis in Africa and West Africa emanate from poorly managed elections," said His Excellency, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, founder of GJF and former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

"When elections are poorly managed, those who are cheated are not happy. In most cases they begin to resist, one problem leads to the other and at the end of the day there could be a military coup or confusion in the subregion. We set up the West African Elders Forum to interact with leaders of West African countries and key stakeholders to make sure that if conflicts are coming up within the subregion, we will be able to discuss with key stakeholders to suppress escalation," he continued.

Her Excellency, Fatoumata Jallow Tambajang, former Vice President of the Republic of the Gambia and a member of the WAEF observed that the Goodluck Jonathan Foundation *"has really been instrumental in promoting the principles of democracy in Africa, including my own country, when we had the impasse in 2016, and during the process of the constitutional review."*

Working in partnership with ECOWAS and the African Union, among others, the WAEF is the Foundation's key pillar of unity and democratic integrity in fragile nations. It draws on the wisdom of elders, rooted in Africa's cultural reverence for elders, creating a homegrown peace architecture providing local solutions to African problems and stepping in when formal diplomacy fails.

"I have had a very pleasant experience and involvement with the West African elders Forum. It has been an honour and a privilege to be included in this eminent body," remarked His Excellency, Ibn Chambas, former ECOWAS President, who has participated in WAEF meetings and election observation missions.

"As a matter of fact, we were in Cote d'Ivoire on a pre-election visit where we met all the important stakeholders to urge for the conduct of peaceful, credible elections. We followed up with the actual observation during the elections of 25th October and stayed behind some days after in a preventive diplomacy, behind the scenes, to try and talk to key players, in order to maintain the peace." He added.

Between 2021 and 2025, the WAEF mediated peaceful elections in The Gambia (2021), Sierra Leone (2023), Nigeria (2023), Liberia (2023), Senegal (2024), Ghana (2024), and Côte d'Ivoire (2025). They provided quiet diplomacy, pre and post election observation, and negotiated between political actors, election management bodies, civil society, and security institutions. Their interventions contributed to the concession of opposition parties before results were announced (in Liberia, Senegal, Ghana), resulting to de-escalation of political tensions.

The WAEF has revolutionized West Africa’s conflict resolution landscape where wisdom and quiet diplomacy brokers peace. According to Ann Iyonu, the Executive Director of GJF,

“There is no other initiative on the continent like the WAEF. It’s a distinct initiative that we are all extremely proud of. It also plays a complementary role to the ECOWAS Commission.”

In the coming years it seeks to strengthen its relations with ECOWAS and other regional bodies for synergies, partner with the younger generation as co-creators, and expand beyond West Africa to other regions of the continent, to contribute more effectively in protecting Africa’s democracy.

His Excellency, Ernest Bai Koroma, Former President of Cote d’Ivoire, acknowledges that there is still a lot to be done; *“In spite of the gains that we have made within the sub region, we must roll up our sleeves for the challenges that are ahead. So, whilst it has been an impactful 10 years, we have to work hard to ensure that a lot more is achieved in the next decade.”*

Chambas who shares a similar view advised that having laid the foundation, the elders forum should engage more in early response especially as the sub region of West Africa has developed very good tools for early warning analysis which are often not being used, *“I believe that the West African Elders Forum can step in, along with the ECOWAS and AU early warning mechanisms, to engage more in early responses to prevent certain issues from deepening and evolving to major crisis.”*



WOMEN AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

EMPOWERING CITIZENS, BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES
Inclusion, Education, & Humanitarian Impact
**WOMEN AND YOUTH
INCLUSION**


- Empowering Future leaders
- Platforms: “Democracy and the Voices of women
- Impact: Amplified Women’s leadership, Gender Responsive Policies
- Cross - Country Dialogues: Meaningful Youth Participation


**EDUCATION AND
OPPORTUNITY**


- Initiative: NECO Exam Registration
- Target: Indigent Students across 10 states in Nigeria
- Impact: Continued Education opportunities


**HUMANITARIAN
RESPONSE**


- COVID -19 Pandemic Relief
- Scope: 12,000+ Households in Nigeria
- Aid: Protective wear, Food & hand sanitizers
- 


- Impact: Reduced Vulnerability, Eased Food Insecurity, Strengthened Community Resilience, Reinforced Trust

GJF prioritises women and youth inclusion as a cornerstone of democratic renewal and shaping the future of their communities and countries. Through platforms such as “Democracy and the Voices of Women” (2021), the Foundation amplified women’s leadership, strengthened advocacy for gender-responsive policies, and elevated women’s participation in democratic governance. In addition, cross-country dialogues and forums ensured meaningful participation of youth, equipping them to contribute to policy conversations and national discourse.

Recognising the foundational role of education in shaping empowered citizenship, GJF funded the National Examination Council’s (NECO) registration for 100 indigent students across Nigeria’s six geopolitical zones. This initiative supported young people from low-income households to continue their education and access equal opportunities to participate in society.

At the peak of the pandemic, GJF launched a national humanitarian effort to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on more than 12,000 indigent and marginalised households in Nigeria. The Foundation distributed life-saving protective wear, food, and sanitisers, prioritising low-income households whose livelihoods were adversely affected by public-health restrictions and economic downturn. This intervention buffered shocks, reduced household vulnerability, supported infection-control efforts, and eased food insecurity at a critical moment. The initiative strengthened community resilience, reinforced trust in local institutions, and demonstrated GJF’s commitment to responsive, people-centred governance.



FLAGSHIP KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS



GJF has emerged as a thought leader shaping policy conversation on democracy, security, and constitutionalism. It contributed to evidence-based knowledge products through periodic and in-depth analysis of socio-economic and political developments in Nigeria, the West African region and Africa as a whole.

The Foundation also produced the documentary “Respect for Constitutional Term Limits in West Africa,” amplifying public discourse on constitutionalism amid growing democratic backsliding.



GJF: Shaping Policy & Knowledge in Africa



DOCUMENTARY: RESPECT FOR CONSTITUTIONAL TERM LIMITS IN WEST AFRICA

Amplifying public discourse on constitutionalism amid democratic backsliding



COLLABORATING FOR IMPACTFUL CHANGE

The Foundation has, over the years, benefited from the working relationship with the ECOWAS Commission and Member States, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), the African Union, the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA), civil society organisations, among other stakeholders within the continent.

Its Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with UNDP contributed to promoting peace, ensuring peaceful elections and transitions, and coaching a new generation of leaders equipped with the skills and vision necessary for transformative leadership. Similarly, its MoU with the African Union contributed to building and supporting a culture of credible election management and peaceful political transitions in Africa, initiating and developing standard guidelines for constituting credible electoral management bodies in Africa and mainstreaming issues of human rights and accountability in electoral processes.

Transformative MOUs and Outcomes

AFRICAN UNION PARTNERSHIP

- Credible Election Management
- Standard Guidelines for EMBs
- Mainstreaming Human Rights & Accountability

UNDP PARTNERSHIP

- Promoting Peace & Peaceful Transitions
- Coaching a New Generation of Leaders
- Vision for Transformative Leadership

Our Partners



SUCCESS STORIES AND PARTNERS ARTICLES

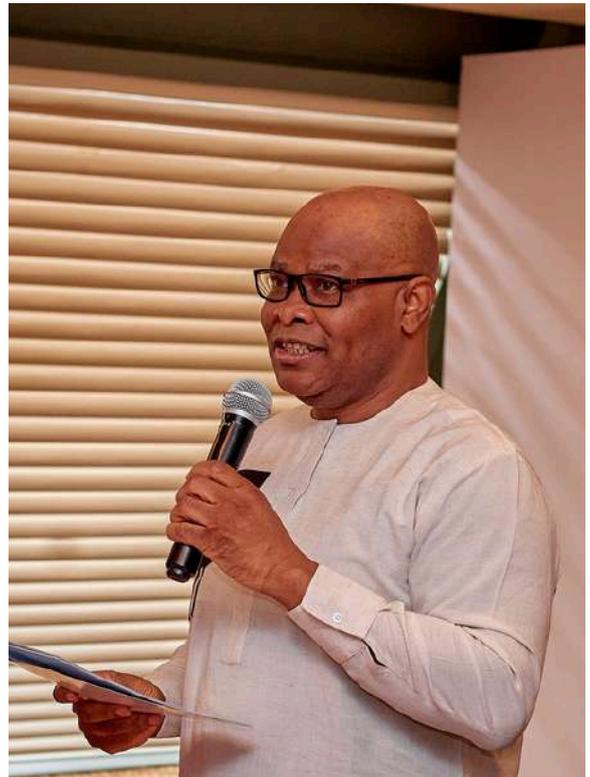
10 Glorious Years of Presence and Impact

It is incredible but true: The Goodluck Jonathan Foundation is 10 years old! Yet it seems only like yesterday that the Foundation was lunched to Carry out its task of democracy promotion and peace-building in Africa generally and West Africa in particular.

It is a testament not only to the full plate of initiatives and interventions which the Foundation has had to undertake from the first day of its establishment. From the time of its launching, the Foundation has had to combine its own institution-building imperatives with answering the calls of governments, inter-governmental organizations, and citizens to deploy its resources in their quest for mediation, peace, and justice. And what a journey it has been, from one end of West Africa to the other, the Foundation has played a frontline role in calming political actors so that the Peace can be preserved, defending the democratic gains that have been registered in the region since the 1990s, and encouraging a culture of dialogue and compromise among different societal actors.

I have been privileged to witness first hand, the work which the Foundation has very patiently carried out in the Gambia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Mali, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, etc. In each of these places and others, the exemplary skill, legendary patience, and acclaimed humility of H.E. President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan played a major role in helping to open doors and reassure the aggrieved that there is a tomorrow to look forward to.

In saluting the Foundation at 10, we must also serenade H.E. Jonathan for his foresight, and acknowledge the support given to him by the



small team in the Foundation led by Ms. Ann Iyonu, the Executive Director. Wishing the Foundation many more years of success.

Prof. Adebayo Olukoshi

Distinguished Professor, Wits School of Governance
Member of the Board, Goodluck Jonathan Foundation



SUCCESS STORIES AND PARTNERS ARTICLES

GJF at 10: A Decade of Dialogue, Democracy, and Peace

As the Goodluck Jonathan Foundation (GJF) marks its tenth anniversary this year, it is worth pausing to appreciate the quiet but steady influence the Foundation has had on democratic governance and peacebuilding in West Africa and beyond.

In a region grappling with democratic reversals, rising political tensions, and renewed threats to stability, GJF has emerged as a rare bridge-builder—one that combines moral authority with practical engagement.

Over the past decade, GJF has created trusted spaces for engagement through high-level Democracy Dialogues, inter-generational exchanges, and partnerships with regional and international institutions. These platforms have brought together political actors, civil society, youth, and experts to reflect, negotiate, and move forward.

In moments of political tension, the Foundation's commitment to quiet diplomacy, evidence-informed analysis, and inclusive engagement has helped defuse crises and strengthen trust in electoral and governance processes.

GJF's contribution goes beyond crisis response. Its work on engaging youth and women, and promoting peaceful elections has helped address deeper drivers of fragility. The Foundation's legitimacy—rooted in H.E. Dr. Goodluck Jonathan's well-recognized commitment to peaceful democratic transitions—gives it a convening power few institutions can match. This makes GJF a uniquely valuable partner in peacebuilding and leadership development across the region.

Looking ahead, the opportunity to deepen collaboration with organisations like EISA is both timely and strategic. Joint electoral risk assessments, early-warning initiatives, mediation efforts, and youth leadership programmes would allow both institutions to leverage their strengths in ways that advance democratic resilience.



Partnerships on research, learning platforms, and high-level dialogues could further amplify their collective impact.

Ten years on, the Goodluck Jonathan Foundation stands as a reminder that principled leadership and inclusive dialogue still matter—and that they remain essential ingredients for building a more peaceful and democratic Africa. The next decade will not only offer new challenges, but also a powerful opportunity to expand the Foundation's reach and deepen its partnerships across the continent.

Mathias C. Hounkpe

Head of the Election and Electoral Processes Department,
EISA

SPOTLIGHT ON STAFF

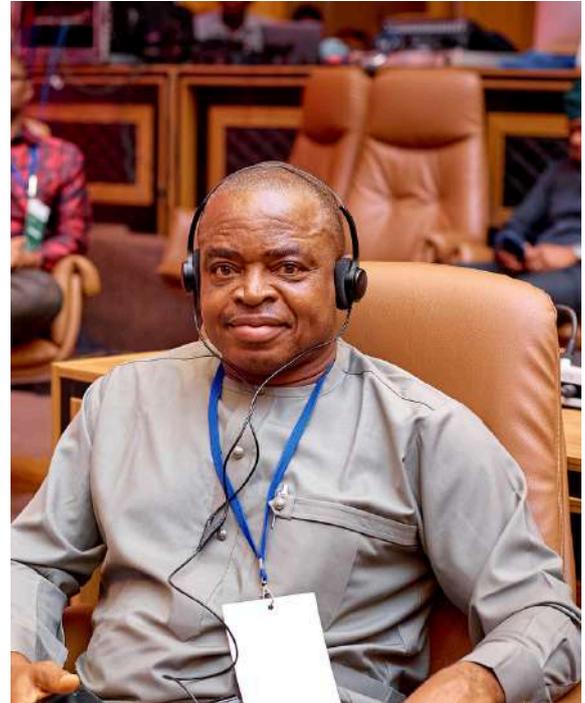
In the Line of Weapons: Ikechukwu's Frontline View of Mediating with Opposition Leaders

Ikechukwu, who is also a seasoned journalist, started working with Dr. Goodluck Jonathan after time as president in 2015. He describes his journey. *"like a dream coming this close to work with President Jonathan and to also learn at his feet. This a great leader that I used to see only from a distance. For me, it's a fulfilling experience to have the opportunity to serve him this close. I am happy to be part of an organisation helping to shape the continent and the subregion's democracy and peace."*

He highlights the Democracy Dialogue Series as an initiative that resonates most with him for bringing together government officials, civil society leaders, diplomats, and international organizations to exchange ideas and shape narratives that promote peaceful transitions of power and good governance across West Africa. Ikechukwu is particularly inspired by witnessing first hand, President Jonathan and members of the West African Elders Forum (WAEF), engage in diplomatic missions during post-election crises. A powerful moment in The Gambia in 2021, when tensions escalated after disputed election results, is etched in his memory:

"I was with him on that trip, and we had to navigate our way to enter his (the opposition leader) house, because the youth were actually masked in their thousands in front of his house. But as soon as they saw Dr. Jonathan coming to speak to them, it was like pouring cold water on a hot surface. Some of them who were holding weapons were already dropping them, and we were able to navigate our way into the opposition leader's House. Dr. Jonathan and his people spent about two hours talking to the opposition leader. It wasn't an easy conversation but it worked. Dr. Jonathan was able to calm the situation, and before dawn the following day, the situation was calm on the streets of Banjul."

A similar intervention occurred in Cote d'Ivoire, after elections where the WAEF, under Dr. Jonathan's leadership, encouraged opposition leaders to accept results and initiate national dialogue.



Mr. Ikechukwu Eze

Special Adviser on Media aide to His Excellency Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan

Ike acknowledges the challenges of promoting democracy in a region where institutions are fragile, and trust in government is low. Yet, he finds the work fulfilling, as it reinforces the Foundation's mission to foster inclusive governance, peaceful transitions, and people-centered leadership in Africa

SPOTLIGHT ON STAFF

Against the Odds: Navigating a Leadership Journey

“As the Foundation celebrates its anniversary, I find myself reflecting on what has been a deeply rewarding journey. Serving as Executive Secretary to His Excellency Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, as well as the Women and Youth Coordinator of the Foundation, has shaped me both professionally and personally in ways I could never have imagined.

Working closely with His Excellency has given me a front-row seat to the dedication, diplomacy, and quiet strength required to champion peace and democracy across the continent. It has been an honour to support the Foundation’s mission and to contribute, even in small ways, to the important work being done behind the scenes.

What stands out most from my time here is the sense of purpose and family within the Foundation. The work is demanding, but it is also meaningful.

As we celebrate this milestone, I am grateful for the trust placed in me, the opportunities to grow, and the privilege of being part of a team committed to building peace and nurturing the next generation. I look forward to many more years of learning, contributing, and serving with pride.



Ms. Gloria Biobemoye Dede
Women and Youth Advisor - Good luck Jonathan Foundation

SPOTLIGHT ON STAFF

From Hostility to Influence: A Founding member's reflection

David's decade-long journey with GJF began with a leap of faith, joining an organization that was treated with hostility at the time, due to the name of the Founder, and the tense political atmosphere in the country following the 2015 elections. Speaking on when he applied for the job, he said, *"They didn't tell me the name of the organisation, it was just new. I just joined by faith. The Foundation wasn't operational to the outside world until 2019 when they it hosted the peace conference. That was how the Foundation became known to the world."*

David also contributed to shaping the structure, policies, and credibility, of the Foundation, witnessing its evolution from a quiet organization with a skeletal structure to a continental force in peacebuilding and diplomacy. Despite early skepticism from stakeholders, David remained committed, driven by a belief in the Founder's vision.

His experience was totally transformed when he witnessed the power of quiet influence and strategic engagement in times of crises.



Mr. David Akuta

Finance Manager - Goodluck Jonathan Foundation

"There was a lot of destruction in the country", stated David. This was during the #EndSARS protests in Nigeria, when GJF's behind-the-scenes diplomacy prompted the President to address the nation, helping to calm national unrest.

"This was what the protesters were yearning for, and to my greatest surprise, this calmed the restive youths and populations that were rampaging and destroying things. It really taught me a lot that with quiet, subtle, backdoor diplomacy, a lot could be gained," he noted.

SPOTLIGHT ON STAFF

History Comes Alive: An Encounter with African Elders

Joseph, the Program Coordinator, personally experienced the tension surrounding the 2015 Nigerian elections, as a young person, and the relief brought by the Founder's decision to concede. *"The decision of His Excellency to concede meant a whole lot to me,"* stated Joseph. His work is driven by the rare opportunity to sustain and institutionalize the legacy of peaceful transition beyond Nigeria. He finds immense motivation and mentorship working side-by-side with a former Head of State, observing his diligence, professionalism, and humility firsthand.

In his words, *"That is a mentorship that I believe many young people would yearn for, so I count it every day as a privilege working or coming to work, knowing fully well that all I need to do is just to look up, and all the inspiration I need is there for me. I work in an environment where I'm fully motivated, not by ideas that are far but an ideal that is personalized in an individual. But beyond that is also I see enthusiastic and vibrant colleagues around me every day."*

He shares one of the most exciting aspects of his role; that once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to interact directly with, and learn from prominent, historical African elders and leaders he used to read about in school; *"Growing up, these are people you read about, either from the history books, or you get to study them as part of curriculum. Working with them today is more or less like for me, history coming alive!"*

Joseph is also excited about the Foundation's upcoming Leadership Program, which will leverage an intergenerational



Mr. Joseph Umaru Philip

Program Officer - Goodluck Jonathan Foundation

exchange of knowledge and ideas, fusing the wisdom and experience of leaders with the innovation and energy of young people to tackle the continent's emerging challenges and create a brighter future together.

SPOTLIGHT ON STAFF

Africa's Quest for Democratic Renewal: The Role of Goodluck Jonathan Foundation

Democracy on the continent today is threatened by a range of challenges, including corruption, state capture, inequality, misinformation, and weak institutions. These factors have continued to undermine democracy and the aspirations of good governance.

President of Ghana and host of Accra Dialogue, John Mahama, in his remarks, highlighted how these issues have continued to undermine the failure of democracy and make it difficult for nation-building. He cautioned that the fall of democracy in one nation weakens democracy in other countries.

He warned that: *“Democracy will not survive if we don't work for it. We need a reset of democracy and governance to ensure accountability. Anybody who wants to serve must be accountable to the people. Our citizens are tired of corruption, misgovernance, and lack of opportunities.”*

Mahama's statement serves as both an acknowledgement of the frustration of citizens and a clarion call on leaders. His words serve as a reminder to all leaders that democracy cannot survive without accountability. Democracy must go beyond rhetoric and be grounded in accountability and service that produces positive outcomes.

Former President of Nigeria and Founder of the Goodluck Jonathan Foundation, Dr Goodluck Jonathan, in his remarks, spoke on a very significant issues related to the theme of the Dialogue. He highlighted how election is the lifeblood of democracy.

He stressed that the election is the foundation of governance and the source of legitimacy. He said, *“If we had proper elections, a leader who fails to perform would be voted out. But in our case, people use the system to perpetuate themselves even when the people don't want them.”*

His points explain the role of elections in the sustainability of democracy, not just as a means of transferring power, but as a



Mr. Wealth Dickson Ominabo

Communication Officer - Goodluck Jonathan Foundation

guardrail of democracy and as a process that empowers citizens with the means to check those in power and hold them accountable. Manipulated elections, the enthronement of unacceptable leaders, create a legitimacy crisis, erode trust, and strain citizen-government relations, thereby contributing to democratic decline.

He warned that democracy could go into extinction if it fails to meet the people's expectations. In other words, democracy will die if it exists as a fig tree, with leaves without fruit.

SPOTLIGHT ON STAFF

From Challenges to Champions with Eyes on the Ball

Beatrice has worked with GJF from the very beginning and describes the experience as an accelerated and progressive growth with great impact. She promotes staff wellbeing and capacity strengthening, making sure the Foundation's values are upheld in operations, protocol, teamwork, professionalism, and maintaining integrity.

She also views challenges as opportunities for learning and winning and this motivates her approach to work. Celebrating the substantial progress made in advancing democracy, peace, and security in West Africa over the last ten years, Beatrice acknowledges that while the desired destination is not yet reached, significant ground has been covered, calling on partners to contribute to their future programmes,

“On our impact in West Africa, I see it extending its reach in a few short years. I see our peace conference which holds ahead of every election like a rallying point for enhancing electoral processes. I see a plethora of young leaders emerging into champions for transformation. So, as we celebrate our 10th Anniversary, we invite you to be a part of the next five to 10 years of impact by contributing in whatever way you can, financially or otherwise.”



Ms. Beatrice Chibo

Human Resource Officer - Goodluck Jonathan Foundation.

SPOTLIGHT ON STAFF

My Journey of Learning and Leadership at the Foundation

As the Foundation celebrates its anniversary, I look back with gratitude on my five-year journey here. Joining the team as a young professional and serving as an IT/Assistant Programme Officer has been both inspiring and transformative.

Working closely with His Excellency has given me an eye-opening understanding of what it truly means to serve—through discipline, humility, and a deep commitment to peace and development. Being part of high-level engagements and supporting programme activities behind the scenes has shown me how much dedication goes into promoting stability and democracy across Africa.

My time at the Foundation has challenged me, stretched me, and built my confidence. Every task—big or small—has taught me something valuable about leadership, teamwork, and responsibility. I have grown not only in technical skills, but also in my ability to engage with people, solve problems, and take initiative.

What I appreciate most is that, even as a young person, I was trusted with meaningful work. That trust encouraged me to push myself and to believe that I, too, have something important to contribute to nation building.

These past five years have shaped my career in ways I never expected, and I am proud to be part of a team that is making a real impact. I look forward to continuing this journey of growth and service with the Foundation.”



Ms. Azibataman Okadu

IT / Assistant Officer - Goodluck Jonathan Foundation



Anniversary Celebration

10 years of innovation, leadership,
and lasting impact in Peace and
democracy in Africa.