

# Local Radio and Peacebuilding: An Assessment of Bauchi Radio Corporation (BRC) FM's Integration with Conflict Prevention Initiatives in Bauchi State, Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

Local radio remains a critical communication platform in conflict-prone societies, particularly in contexts where access to formal peace infrastructures is limited. This study examines regular listeners' perceptions of the extent to which Bauchi Radio Corporation (BRC) FM integrates with and complements broader peacebuilding initiatives in Bauchi State, Nigeria. Using a quantitative survey design, data were collected from 380 regular listeners drawn from an estimated audience population of 487,350. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were employed to analyze responses. Findings indicate that listeners perceive BRC FM as playing a significant integrative role within the state's peacebuilding ecosystem by providing a platform for government agencies, civil society organizations, traditional institutions, and community leaders to disseminate peace-related information. Respondents further perceive that the station enhances public awareness of conflict resolution mechanisms and facilitates information exchange among peace actors. However, listeners also report limited follow-up mechanisms and weak monitoring of promoted initiatives, which may reduce the sustainability of its perceived impact. The study concludes that, from the audience's perspective, BRC FM contributes meaningfully to conflict prevention through informational and procedural integration. Strengthening institutional coordination and accountability frameworks may enhance its effectiveness. The findings underscore the importance of local radio as a perceived connective infrastructure within multi-actor peacebuilding systems.

**Keywords:** Radio, peacebuilding, audience perception, conflict prevention, media and conflict

## INTRODUCTION

Local radio has emerged as a strategic communication tool in conflict-prone societies due to its accessibility, affordability, and cultural relevance. In fragile contexts, radio often functions not only as a source of information but also as a platform for dialogue, public engagement, and coordination among peace actors. Scholars argue that beyond shaping public perception, media institutions can serve integrative roles within broader peacebuilding ecosystems by amplifying initiatives, facilitating stakeholder interaction, and enhancing awareness of conflict resolution mechanisms.

Nigeria presents a complex environment characterized by ethno-religious tensions, political contestations, and localized communal conflicts. In northern Nigeria, including Bauchi State, periodic disputes related to land use, religious identity, and political competition continue to pose challenges to social cohesion. Within this context, media institutions particularly local radio stations are positioned to influence conflict dynamics through their programming strategies and institutional collaborations.

While existing studies acknowledge the role of radio in promoting dialogue and countering inflammatory narratives, limited empirical attention has been given to how local radio integrates with other peacebuilding actors such as government agencies, civil society organizations, and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. Understanding this integrative function is essential because sustainable peacebuilding requires coordinated efforts rather than isolated interventions.

Bauchi Radio Corporation (BRC) FM, a state-owned broadcaster with wide listenership across Bauchi State, operates within this complex peace environment. The station airs programs addressing governance, community development, and social cohesion, positioning it as a potential connective platform among diverse peace stakeholders. However, the extent to which its programming complements and integrates with broader peacebuilding initiatives remains underexplored.

This study therefore assesses the role of BRC FM within Bauchi State's peacebuilding ecosystem, focusing specifically on how its programming integrates with and complements existing conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Local radio has long been recognized as a critical communication platform in conflict-prone societies due to its accessibility, linguistic adaptability, and cultural proximity to grassroots communities (Benson & Nganje, 2022; Livengo, 2021). In fragile environments, media institutions are not merely transmitters of information but potential actors within broader "infrastructures for peace," contributing to coordination, dialogue facilitation, and awareness creation (Lederach, 2021). Effective peacebuilding, however, requires systematic interaction among multiple stakeholders—including government agencies, civil society organizations, traditional authorities, and media institutions—rather than isolated interventions (Putzel & van der Zwan, 2022).

In northern Nigeria, persistent ethno-religious tensions, political contestations, and communal disputes continue to challenge social cohesion and sustainable development (Egbujor & Okonkwo, 2021). Bauchi State reflects these broader dynamics, with recurring local conflicts linked to land use, political competition, and identity-based divisions. Within such contexts, communication gaps and weak coordination among peace actors can undermine conflict prevention efforts and reduce the effectiveness of reconciliation initiatives (Putzel & van der Zwan, 2022). Media institutions—particularly local radio—are therefore strategically positioned to bridge informational divides, enhance transparency, and amplify both formal and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms (Kyeyune, 2023; Livengo, 2021).

Bauchi Radio Corporation (BRC) FM, as a state-owned broadcaster with extensive listenership across Bauchi State, regularly airs programs addressing governance, community development, religious harmony, and security awareness. By virtue of its reach and perceived legitimacy, the station has the potential to function as a connective platform linking institutional actors (such as government ministries and security agencies) with traditional authorities, religious leaders, and civil society organizations. While prior research has examined media framing and peace journalism practices in Nigeria, limited empirical attention has been given to how local radio stations integrate operationally with structured peacebuilding initiatives, particularly at the sub-national level.

Furthermore, although radio stations may disseminate peace-related information, the extent to which such broadcasts reflect structured collaboration, sustained follow-up, or measurable complementarity with existing conflict resolution mechanisms remains underexplored. Without systematic evaluation of how local radio integrates within state-level peace architectures, opportunities to optimize media as a strategic peacebuilding partner may be overlooked. This gap is particularly significant in Bauchi State, where hybrid governance structures combining formal institutions and traditional authorities require coordinated communication channels to sustain conflict prevention efforts (Kyeyune, 2023; Lederach, 2021).

Therefore, there is a need to empirically examine how audiences perceive the integrative role of BRC FM within Bauchi State's peacebuilding ecosystem. Understanding this perceived integration provides insight into the station's effectiveness as a communication bridge among peace actors and highlights areas requiring strengthened coordination and accountability frameworks.

### **Objective of the study:**

To examine regular listeners' perceptions of the extent to which Bauchi Radio Corporation (BRC) FM integrates with and complements other peacebuilding initiatives in Bauchi State, Nigeria.

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**Research Question:**

How do regular listeners perceive the extent to which BRC FM's programming integrates with and complements other peacebuilding initiatives in Bauchi State?

**LITERATURE REVIEW****Media Integration within Peacebuilding Ecosystems**

Contemporary peacebuilding scholarship increasingly recognizes that sustainable conflict prevention requires coordinated interaction among multiple actors, including government institutions, civil society organizations, traditional authorities, and media institutions. Rather than functioning as isolated communication channels, media platforms can serve integrative roles within what Lederach (2021) describes as “infrastructures for peace” — networks of institutions and processes designed to manage conflict constructively.

Radio, particularly local radio, is uniquely positioned within such ecosystems due to its reach and cultural accessibility. Livengo (2021) argues that radio contributes to peacebuilding through informational integration (disseminating knowledge about peace initiatives), procedural integration (providing platforms for peace actors), and collaborative integration (partnering with organizations in program development). These integrative functions strengthen coordination among stakeholders and enhance public awareness of available conflict resolution mechanisms.

In African contexts, studies demonstrate that community radio stations frequently act as connective platforms linking state actors, traditional institutions, and grassroots communities (Benson & Nganje, 2022). By broadcasting information about mediation efforts, reconciliation processes, and government policies, radio enhances transparency and improves accessibility to peace resources. This connective function reduces fragmentation within peace efforts and promotes shared understanding among diverse actors.

**Media and Traditional Conflict Resolution Mechanisms**

In many African societies, traditional institutions such as elder councils, religious leaders, and customary courts retain cultural legitimacy in resolving disputes. However, their impact is often geographically limited and less visible to broader audiences. Kyeyune (2023) notes that radio can complement traditional conflict resolution mechanisms by amplifying their processes, broadening participation, and enhancing transparency.

By integrating traditional conflict actors into programming through interviews, discussions, and live broadcasts, radio extends the reach of indigenous peace mechanisms. This integration fosters legitimacy and promotes wider community engagement in peace processes. Such complementarity strengthens both modern media systems and traditional governance structures.

**Media as a Platform for Government and Civil Society Peace Initiatives**

Media institutions also play important roles in communicating government peace policies and civil society interventions. Putzel and van der Zwan (2022) emphasize that effective public communication enhances legitimacy, improves public trust, and increases citizen participation in peace initiatives. Where communication gaps exist, peace programs may fail due to lack of awareness or misinformation.

In Nigeria, local radio stations frequently disseminate information regarding security measures, reconciliation programs, and dialogue forums. However, empirical studies examining the extent to which such broadcasts formally integrate with structured peacebuilding initiatives remain limited. Existing research has focused largely on media framing and peace journalism practices, leaving the integration dimension underexplored, particularly in northern Nigeria.

This study therefore contributes to the literature by examining how BRC FM functions as an integrative communication platform within Bauchi State's broader peacebuilding architecture.

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## Peacebuilding Architecture in Bauchi State

Peacebuilding processes in Bauchi State operate within a hybrid governance structure that combines formal state institutions with deeply rooted traditional and religious authorities. Unlike generalized models of community radio engagement across Africa (Benson & Nganje, 2022), conflict prevention in Bauchi is shaped by socio-political and institutional arrangements specific to northern Nigeria. These arrangements influence both the structure of dispute resolution mechanisms and the channels through which peace-related communication is legitimized.

Bauchi State experiences periodic communal tensions linked to land disputes, farmer–herder conflicts, political competition, and ethno-religious divisions dynamics also observed in broader northern Nigeria (Egbujor & Okonkwo, 2021). However, conflict management in the state is mediated through multiple layers of authority. At the formal level, government institutions such as the State Ministry of Religious Affairs, local government councils, security agencies, and ad hoc peace committees play roles in mediation and crisis response. These institutional mechanisms typically operate within bureaucratic frameworks, guided by statutory regulations and administrative procedures.

Alongside these formal structures, traditional institutions retain substantial cultural legitimacy in dispute resolution. The emirate system in Bauchi State, headed by emirs and supported by district and village heads, functions as a customary governance structure with enduring influence over community affairs. Religious leaders, Islamic scholars (ulama), and Christian clerics also serve as moral authorities capable of de-escalating tensions through dialogue and reconciliation processes. As Kyeyune (2023) observes, traditional and religious mechanisms often derive legitimacy from cultural embeddedness and relational trust rather than formal legal mandates.

This coexistence of institutional and traditional mechanisms creates a pluralistic peace architecture in which coordination and communication are essential. Lederach's (2021) concept of "infrastructures for peace" emphasizes that sustainable conflict prevention depends on connective mechanisms that link various actors across governance levels. In Bauchi State, the effectiveness of peacebuilding efforts therefore relies not only on mediation structures themselves but also on the communication channels that facilitate awareness, coordination, and public engagement.

Within this hybrid framework, local broadcast media can serve as a bridging platform connecting formal institutions with traditional authorities and grassroots communities. As a state-owned broadcaster with extensive reach, Bauchi Radio Corporation (BRC) FM operates at the intersection of these structures. Its programming on governance, religious harmony, and security awareness positions it as a potential intermediary capable of amplifying official peace initiatives while also giving visibility to indigenous conflict resolution actors.

However, the nature and extent of this integrative function within Bauchi's specific socio-political context require empirical examination. While African scholarship highlights the general role of radio in peacebuilding ecosystems (Livengo, 2021; Benson & Nganje, 2022), the unique configuration of Bauchi's institutional and traditional authorities necessitates localized analysis. Understanding how audiences perceive the station's role within this hybrid peace architecture provides insight into whether BRC FM functions merely as an information disseminator or as a connective communication infrastructure within the state's conflict prevention system.

## Theoretical Review

This study is anchored in Media Framing Theory, originally developed by Goffman (1974) and further refined by Entman (1993). The theory posits that media shape audience understanding by selecting and emphasizing certain aspects of reality, thereby influencing interpretation and response. In conflict contexts, framing determines how audiences perceive causes of disputes, assign responsibility, and evaluate possible solutions. Applied to this study, Media Framing Theory helps explain how BRC FM structures and presents peace initiatives, government policies, and conflict resolution mechanisms in ways that influence public awareness and facilitate integration within Bauchi State's peacebuilding ecosystem.

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## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative survey design to assess listeners' perceptions of BRC FM's integration with broader peacebuilding initiatives in Bauchi State. The quantitative approach was considered appropriate because it enables systematic measurement of attitudes and perceptions across a large population and allows statistical analysis of patterns and relationships (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

### Population of the Study

The population comprised regular listeners of BRC FM in Bauchi State. According to the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission (2023), the station has an estimated regular listenership of 487,350 individuals across the state.

### Sample Size Determination

The sample size was determined using Taro Yamane's (1976) formula at a 95% confidence level:

The calculated sample size was approximately 400 respondents.

### Sampling Technique

A multistage sampling technique was employed. First, selected local government areas were stratified to ensure geographical representation across Bauchi State. Within each selected area, respondents were randomly selected among regular listeners of BRC FM. This approach enhanced representativeness and minimized sampling bias.

### Instrumentation

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising closed-ended items measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1). The instrument captured demographic characteristics and perceptions regarding BRC FM's integration with peacebuilding initiatives.

### Validity and Reliability

Content validity was ensured through expert review by scholars in media and peace studies. A pilot test was conducted with 30 respondents outside the study sample. The reliability of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.78, indicating acceptable internal consistency.

### Data Collection Procedure

Trained research assistants administered the questionnaires physically across selected communities. Of the 400 distributed copies, 380 were completed and returned, representing a 95% response rate.

### Data Analysis Technique

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. A decision rule of 3.0 was adopted as the benchmark for agreement. Mean scores of 3.0 and above indicated positive perception of integration, while scores below 3.0 indicated weak or negative perception.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Response Rate and Demographic Characteristics

Out of the 400 questionnaires distributed, 380 were successfully retrieved, representing a response rate of 95%. This high response rate strengthens the reliability and generalizability of the findings.

The demographic distribution indicates that respondents were predominantly male (60%) and largely within the economically active age group of 26–45 years. A substantial proportion possessed tertiary education (41.1%), suggesting that respondents were sufficiently informed to evaluate media content critically. Furthermore, nearly half (49%) reported daily listenership, indicating high exposure to BRC FM programming and increasing the likelihood of measurable perception regarding its peace-related initiatives. The demographic diversity strengthens the credibility of the findings, as perceptions were drawn from various occupational and social groups within Bauchi State.

### **Integration of BRC FM with Peacebuilding Initiatives**

The core objective of this study was to assess the extent to which BRC FM integrates with and complements other peacebuilding initiatives in Bauchi State thus:

#### **Platform Provision for Peace Actors**

Respondents strongly agreed that BRC FM provides a platform for diverse peacebuilding stakeholders ( $M = 3.88$ ,  $SD = 0.97$ ). The relatively high mean score indicates that listeners perceive the station as an active communication bridge among government agencies, civil society organizations, religious leaders, and traditional institutions.

This finding supports Livengo's (2021) argument that radio serves as procedural integration infrastructure by offering space for multi-actor engagement. It also aligns with Lederach's (2021) concept of "infrastructure for peace," where media function as connective mechanisms within broader conflict management systems.

The relatively moderate standard deviation suggests general consensus among respondents, reinforcing the reliability of this perception.

#### **Awareness Creation of Government Peace Initiatives**

The study found strong agreement that BRC FM creates awareness about government policies aimed at promoting peace and security ( $M = 3.79$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ).

This suggests effective informational integration, where radio programming amplifies formal peace efforts and enhances public knowledge. As noted by Putzel and van der Zwan (2022), communication of policy initiatives is critical for building legitimacy and fostering citizen participation. The findings indicate that BRC FM contributes to this process by disseminating relevant peace-related information.

#### **Broadcasting of Conflict Resolution Mechanisms**

Respondents agreed that BRC FM broadcasts information about available conflict resolution mechanisms within Bauchi State ( $M = 3.75$ ,  $SD = 1.02$ ).

This demonstrates the station's role as a navigational communication platform, guiding audiences toward institutional and traditional mechanisms for dispute resolution. Such functionality strengthens accessibility to peace resources and reduces fragmentation in conflict management efforts. The finding is consistent with Kyeyune (2023), who argues that radio enhances the visibility and reach of traditional and formal peace structures.

#### **Collaboration with Local Organizations**

The mean score for collaboration with local peace organizations was moderately high ( $M = 3.62$ ,  $SD = 1.08$ ), suggesting that listeners perceive some degree of partnership between BRC FM and other stakeholders.

However, the slightly higher standard deviation indicates variability in perception, which may reflect differences in exposure across communities or inconsistencies in collaborative programming.

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## Complementarity with Traditional Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

Respondents agreed that BRC FM complements traditional conflict resolution mechanisms ( $M = 3.54$ ,  $SD = 1.10$ ).

Although positive, this score is comparatively lower than other integration indicators. This suggests that while complementarity exists, it may not yet be fully institutionalized or systematically structured.

This partially supports empirical findings by Egbujor and Okonkwo (2021), who argue that stronger integration between media and indigenous peace systems enhances legitimacy and participation.

## Weakness in Follow-Up and Monitoring

The only item that fell below the 3.0 benchmark concerned follow-up on promoted peace initiatives ( $M = 2.95$ ,  $SD = 1.25$ ).

This indicates a perceived weakness in monitoring outcomes and accountability. The relatively high standard deviation reflects divergent experiences among listeners.

This finding highlights a structural limitation: while BRC FM effectively disseminates information, it appears less consistent in tracking the outcomes of the initiatives it promotes. This gap reduces sustainability and long-term impact within the peacebuilding ecosystem.

## Overall Assessment of Integration

The grand mean score of 3.59 ( $SD = 1.07$ ) indicates overall positive perception of BRC FM's integration with broader peacebuilding initiatives in Bauchi State.

The results suggest that BRC FM performs primarily as an informational integrator, a procedural platform provider and a connector between state and community actors. However, the findings also reveal institutional gaps in follow-up mechanisms, and monitoring processes.

## CONCLUSION

This study examined regular listeners' perceptions of the extent to which Bauchi Radio Corporation (BRC) FM integrates with and complements broader peacebuilding initiatives in Bauchi State, Nigeria. The findings indicate that listeners generally perceive BRC FM as performing a significant integrative function within the state's peacebuilding ecosystem. From the audience's standpoint, the station serves as an informational and procedural platform that connects government agencies, civil society organizations, traditional institutions, and community stakeholders through the dissemination of peace-related content.

Respondents perceive that BRC FM contributes to awareness creation regarding government peace policies and available conflict resolution mechanisms, thereby enhancing coordination and accessibility within the conflict prevention framework. In this regard, the station is viewed as functioning as a connective communication infrastructure within Bauchi State's hybrid peace architecture.

However, the study also reveals that listeners perceive weaknesses in follow-up programming and systematic monitoring of promoted peace initiatives. While BRC FM is seen as effective in disseminating information, perceived gaps in outcome tracking may limit the sustainability and long-term impact of its integrative efforts.

Overall, the findings reinforce the argument that local radio can extend beyond agenda-setting and framing roles to be perceived as an embedded actor within multi-stakeholder peace architectures. At the same time, strengthening structured coordination mechanisms and accountability processes may enhance the depth and durability of its integrative role within Bauchi State.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:**

### 1. Institutionalized Partnership Frameworks

BRC FM should formalize its collaboration with government agencies, civil society organizations, and traditional institutions through structured partnership agreements. This would strengthen strategic coordination and enhance program coherence within Bauchi State's peacebuilding ecosystem.

### 2. Establishment of a Peace Coordination Desk

The station should consider creating a dedicated peacebuilding or conflict-prevention desk responsible for coordinating peace-related programming, stakeholder engagement, and follow-up activities. This would enhance systematic integration rather than ad hoc collaboration.

### 3. Structured Follow-Up Programming

To address the identified gap in monitoring, BRC FM should introduce periodic follow-up segments that track the outcomes of peace initiatives previously promoted. This would improve accountability, transparency, and audience trust.

### 4. Strengthening Integration with Traditional Institutions

Greater involvement of traditional conflict resolution actors in program design and broadcast planning would deepen complementarity and cultural legitimacy of peace messaging.

### 5. Periodic Impact Assessment

The station should conduct regular audience-based impact assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of its integrative role and adjust programming strategies accordingly.

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