



# Yusufu Bala Usman Institute

16 Circular Road, GRA, Zaria, Kaduna State, Nigeria.

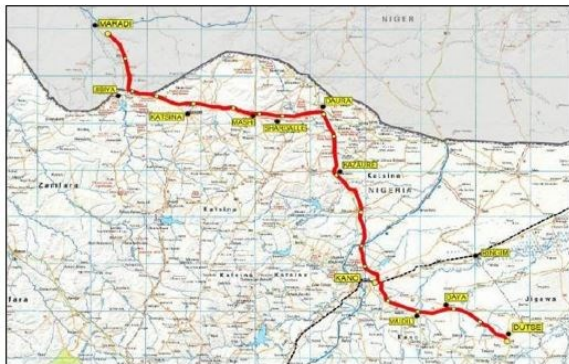
[info@YBU-Institute.org](mailto:info@YBU-Institute.org). Phone: +234 8068609088

## 2022 End of Year Report

As 2022 winds down, we exit the year with a sense of satisfaction at what we have achieved during the year. We managed to complete a number of projects that we are very proud of and which we feel have advanced the reputation of the Institute and further developed its capacity to engage in a wider variety of activities in the future.

## Social Impact Assessment (SIA) for the Kano-Maradi Rail Project

The first few months of the year saw the completion of the Social Impact Assessment Report for the Kano to Maradi Railway Line Project that had occupied us for most of 2021. This was a major activity that involved extensive social and economic surveys & human rights impact assessment across Kano - Jigawa- Katsina states as part of the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment which was a requirement for the implementation of this very important



*Map of proposed rail route*

infrastructure project being sponsored by the Nigerian Government with funding from several international lenders and being built by Mota Engil, a Portuguese construction firm.



*Reconnaissance study of proposed rail route*



*Reconnaissance Study of proposed rail route*



*Training survey enumerators in Kano*

We worked as Sub - Consultants to Allott Nigeria Ltd who are the Environmental Advisors on this major trans boundary infrastructure project. Our SIA (Social Impact Assessment) Report was favourably received by the participating parties, and we feel we have learned many important skills in the course of

the work that will stand us in good stead in the future in the area of environmental & social impact studies.



*Conducting household survey in Kano*

## **New Building:**

We were fortunate that the income derived from the consultancy fees for the above ESIA project has enabled us to reach the final stage in the construction of our new office building that had been started in 2021, as well as pay the running costs of the Institute. We will move to our new offices from our present rented premises which have become too small for our needs. The new building contains expanded space for our library and archives, a large conference hall, podcast studio, meeting rooms, offices, and a kitchen and coffee room. The building will be self-sufficient with an excellent borehole for water supply and completely powered by solar energy. At present, finishing touches are being applied and landscaping of the garden area has begun. We expect to be able to move in the first month of 2023. Needless to say, we are all very excited about the move and are eagerly looking forward to being able to expand the range of our activities due to the expanded facilities that will now be available.



*New Institute building*

## **Library:**

Our library collection was expanded during the year with the incorporation of the collection of the Institute's Director and also very generous donations of books from George Padmore Institute in London and a collection of volumes donated from the collection of Sarah White, the widow of John La Rose. We were deeply saddened by Sarah's death in February and we are honoured to be the recipients of a portion of hers and John's precious collections. We will always treasure the memory of Sarah and John who did so much to help us in so many ways over the years. We will also treasure the books we have been gifted through the help of Glenda Pattenden. They will have a special place in our library and be available to serve many readers and open new vistas for them.

The new acquisitions have been catalogued, and the list of our collection now has passed 5000 volumes. The complete listing of our holdings is being prepared to be put in the cloud so that it can be widely accessed.

## Archives:

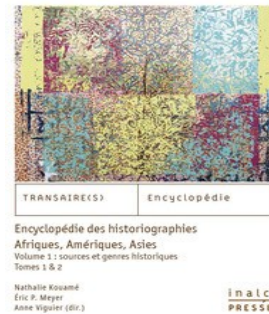
As a result of a grant from IFRA (the French Development agency in Ibadan) a selection of documents in our archives pertaining to the political activities of Yusufu Bala Usman and his participation in various radical political parties in Nigeria (NEPU, PRP, MDJ) have been digitised by our Archivist, Abdullahi Mohammed and his team, so that they would be put in the cloud and made accessible to scholars and other interested individuals. The work of digitisation has been completed, and the Director of IFRA, Mr. Vincent Hiribarren, expressed his satisfaction with the quality of the work. He noted “I must say that their content is really impressive. The folders were neatly organised and the pdf files carefully named. I must say I am really impressed by the work of Mr. Abdullahi and his team.” Needless to say, we were very pleased with his assessment.

In our new building we will have more space dedicated to archive storage and also a separate room for digital access to the files. We intend to continue working on the archives, consisting of well over 3000 files with a wealth of material on a vast array of subjects, which reflect the broad range of interests and activities of Yusufu Bala Usman, and which he was careful to file and document.

## Biographical Entry on Yusufu Bala Usman for French Historical Encyclopaedia (*Encyclopédie des Historiographies d'Afrique, d'Amérique et d'Asie*)

The Institute was requested to provide an entry for the French Historical Encyclopaedia on Dr. Yusufu Bala Usman. We wrote a biographical sketch focussing on his contributions to the study of history, emphasising his holistic

approach to the discipline and his original perspectives which were a fundamental break from previous approaches. We expect that the full publication will be available in 2023. This will introduce Yusufu Bala Usman to the world of French historical scholarship and make his works more widely known.

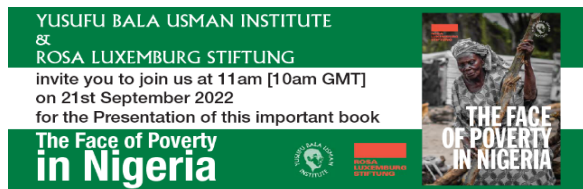


## Research Project on The Face of Poverty in Nigeria

This research project, supported by the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, was begun in 2021 with intensive interviews of individuals from all parts of Nigeria in order to “penetrate the statistics on poverty and shine a light on those men and women who are actually experiencing it, and document in their own words how they live, their problems, and their strategies for coping with often impossible situations.”

The analysis and final write up were finished in the first few months of the year, and the result was published in book form, with an initial print run of 2000 copies. Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, which paid for the printing costs, specified that the 2000 copies were to be distributed free to educational institutions, libraries, NGOs and other individuals and organisations for the purposes of public enlightenment on the issues. We are presently in the process of carrying out the distribution.





A virtual event was held on 21<sup>st</sup> September, the date of the memorial anniversary of Yusufu Bala Usman who died in 2005, to launch the book in a public presentation on Eventbrite. Three reviewers presented their perspectives on the book: Owei Lakemfa, a noted journalist and labour leader; Dr. Hauwa Mahdi, specialist in gender studies and Professor at the School of International Studies at Gothenburg University in Sweden; and Dr. Hussaini Abdu, an experienced human rights activist and Director of CARE Foundation in Nigeria. The discussion was moderated by a foremost economist, Professor Mike Kwanashie, presently of Veritas University in Abuja. There was excellent attendance at the zoom meeting, with a very lively discussion among participants both from within Nigeria and abroad. This public



presentation has given our Institute an opportunity to be much more widely known.

Already the book has generated considerable public interest. On 23<sup>rd</sup> November, the Institute was invited by Kadaria Ahmed, a well-known journalist and producer, to send a member of our team to appear in a TV panel discussion to talk about issues of poverty and democracy arising from the book. Abdullahi Mohammed represented the Institute in this discussion. The event gave our Institute and the book wider publicity.

In addition, The Rosa Luxemburg Foundation intends to hold three round table discussions with partner institutions to discuss the issues raised in the book in 2023.

## Setting up of a Public Opinion Polling Unit in YBUI

The Institute signed an agreement with a Public Opinion Polling organisation based in Russia to help us in establishing a unit to conduct public opinion polls in Nigeria, mainly to gauge views on public policy issues and other issues relevant to our core interests. The organisation conducted several virtual training sessions on zoom with members of the Institute to instil the fundamentals of the necessary procedures. Work on this is continuing.

## Zaria Afforestation Project

Activities on this project which began in 2021 continued throughout 2022, with the aim of restoring the green vegetation cover in areas of Zaria metropolis where old growth trees had been felled in the course of new road construction. Many seedlings of primarily indigenous trees were acquired and nurtured

while waiting for the start of the rainy season when planting would commence. Stakeholders from the community were engaged as partners in the project, including the Emir of Zaria and members of the Emirate Council, ward heads and other community leaders.

An official launching of the project was held on World Environment Day, 5<sup>th</sup> June, at a prayer ground in Zaria. Many notable guests were in attendance including a representative of the state governor, the Emir of Zazzau, the Chairman of Sabon Gari Local Government Council, Representative of Zaria Gari Local Government, and many members of the public. The event was well covered by local radio and print media.



*Tree planting by dignitaries at the Launching*

The rains commenced about the time of the launching and planting began. This activity continued throughout the months of the rainy season, which witnessed unusually heavy rain compared to the norm in Zaria. By the time the rains ceased in October we had planted a total of 3,213 trees. We will nurture the remaining seedlings through the dry season and begin planting again when the rains begin in 2023.



*School children engaged in planting.*

In order to sustain this project, it was decided to register it as an independent NGO and remove it from under the umbrella of the Institute. The name “Zaria Afforestation Project” was not approved by the Corporate Affairs Commission in charge of registering corporate bodies, so the name was changed to “Reforestation Zaria Initiative”. Registration of this new organisation is currently in progress. In addition to continuing with the tree planting, there are plans for establishing a botanical garden and accelerate the work of educating and sensitising members of the public on the need for supporting the project and improving the health and welfare of the community through planting and maintaining the tree cover.

## **Application to INEC**

We have applied to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to register for inclusion in the list of Election Observers and other INEC Activities. This request is currently being processed by INEC and we hope it will soon be approved so that we can participate as observers in the upcoming national election in 2023.

## **Conclusion**

Our Institute has been in existence for just about three years, having been incorporated on 4<sup>th</sup> October, 2019. We feel very gratified that in this short time we have been able to accomplish so much, thanks to the hard work and dedication of all of our members as well as our friends in Nigeria and elsewhere, colleagues and associates. We are looking forward to the future with expectations that we will be able to surpass what we have been able to do so far. We are eager to confront new challenges and new opportunities that will enable our Institute to grow stronger and continue to expand our perspectives and our experience.

Norma Perchonock,  
Director,  
Yusufu Bala Usman Institute.

December 2022