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Leadership Development: Comrade Fakolade Oluwafemi's Enduring Legacy in NUT Ikorodu Division of Lagos State, (2001 - 2025)

Jamiu K. Audu[1]
Department of History and Diplomatic Studies
Tai Solarin Federal University of Education,
Ijagun

Taibat Jokogbola
Department of Educational Management
Tai Solarin Federal University of Education,
Ijagun

Omolara Ogunoye
[3]Department of Geography and Environmental Management,
Tai Solarin Federal University of Education,
Ijagun.

Abstract

This paper critically examined the leadership trajectory and governance practices of Comrade Fakolade Oluwafemi during his tenure as Chairman of the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT), Ikorodu Division, Lagos State, between 2001 and 2025. Situating the study within established debates on trade union leadership and transformational leadership theory, the paper moves beyond descriptive celebration to interrogate both the achievements and contested dimensions of his administration. Drawing on qualitative data from semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, documentary records, and participant observation, the study analysed welfare initiatives, organisational reforms, and mobilisation strategies introduced under his leadership. It also engages with counter-narratives that characterise his leadership style as centralised and insufficiently participatory. Findings suggested that while Fakolade's tenure coincided with notable improvements in teacher welfare, union visibility, and programme diversification, these gains were accompanied by tensions around decision-making processes and grassroots inclusion. The paper concluded by highlighting the contextual and methodological limits of the study and offers cautious reflections on the implications of this case for understanding union leadership in Nigeria's education sector. The study contributed to scholarship on Nigerian teacher unionism by providing an empirically grounded, theoretically informed account of leadership practice at the sub-national level.

[1] **E-mails:** audujk2015@gmail.com; taibatjokogbola10@gmail.com; ogunoyeod@tasued.edu.ng
Contact: +234 806 281 4340; +234 802 681 0088; +234 805 149 4271

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Introduction

Leadership in labour unions remains a central concern in industrial relations and political sociology, particularly in contexts where unions function simultaneously as professional associations, social movements, and political actors. In Nigeria, the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT), established in 1931, occupies a distinctive position as one of the country's oldest and most influential professional unions, representing educators across primary and secondary schools nationwide. The union's activities extend beyond wage negotiations to encompass advocacy for educational policy, teacher professionalism, and social welfare.[2]

Effective leadership in the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) requires servant leadership, prioritizing the needs of teachers and working selflessly to serve and support them. This approach fosters trust, loyalty, and a sense of community among teachers. Clear communication is vital in the NUT. Regular updates open meetings, and approachable leaders ensure teachers are informed and engaged in union activities, addressing issues like welfare, working conditions, and education policy. Empowering teachers is crucial for a strong NUT. Leaders should delegate tasks, provide opportunities for growth, and develop leadership skills within the membership, preparing future leaders to advocate for teachers' rights. Inclusivity is essential in the NUT, promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion among teachers, regardless of gender, region, or religion. This involves addressing biases, creating opportunities for underrepresented groups, and fostering a culture of respect and dignity.[3]

Strategic thinking is critical for achieving NUT goals, such as improving teachers' welfare, enhancing education quality, and influencing education policy. Leaders must develop and implement effective strategies, leveraging resources and building alliances with stakeholders.[4]Collaboration is key to successful NUT leadership, building strong relationships with government, educational authorities, and other unions to advance teachers' interests and improve education in Nigeria. Accountability is vital in NUT leadership, demonstrating transparency, integrity, and accountability in all union activities, ensuring teachers' trust and confidence. Education and training are essential for NUT leaders and members, enhancing skills, knowledge, and effectiveness in advocating for teachers' rights and improving education. Mobilization is critical

[2]Smyke, R. J., and D. C. Storer. 1974. *Nigeria Union of Teachers: An Official History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.10.
[3]Goldhaber, D. (2015). *The Future of Teacher Unionism*. Education Next, 15(4), 34.
[4]Clandinin, D. J., and Connelly, F. M. (1992). Teacher Empowerment: A Conceptual Framework. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 30(2), 4.

in NUT leadership, organizing and mobilizing teachers to take action on key issues and campaigns, leveraging collective power to drive change and improve education in Nigeria. However, visionary leadership inspires and motivates teachers to work towards a common goal, guiding the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT's) efforts to drive progress and advancement in education.[5]

Within this broader institutional framework, leadership at the branch and divisional levels plays a decisive role in shaping how national objectives are interpreted and implemented locally. This study examined the leadership of Comrade Fakolade Oluwafemi as Chairman of the NUT Ikorodu Division, Lagos State, between 2001 and 2025. While public narratives within the union often portray his tenure as transformative and welfare-driven, counter-narratives have raised concerns about authoritarian tendencies and limited grassroots participation. These competing interpretations render his leadership an appropriate case for critical scholarly inquiry.

The study is informed by transformational leadership theory, as articulated by Burns and Bass, which emphasises vision, motivation, and organisational change, as well as by critical scholarship on African trade unions that highlights the risks of personalised leadership and weakened internal democracy.[6] Rather than offering a celebratory biography, this study seeks to analyse Fakolade's leadership practices, achievements, and challenges within their historical, institutional, and socio-political contexts.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

The analysis of union leadership in this report draws on two interrelated bodies of literature: transformational leadership theory and critical studies of labour movements in Africa. Transformational leadership, first articulated by James MacGregor Burns in his seminal work *Leadership* (1978), conceptualises leadership as a process through which leaders and followers elevate one another to higher levels of motivation and morality.[7] Bernard Bass later extended this framework by identifying key components such as idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration.[8]

In the context of trade unions, transformational leadership has been associated with union revitalisation, member engagement, and organisational adaptability in periods of economic and political change. However, critics caution that strong

[5]Ayodele, J. B. (2017). Inclusive Leadership in Teachers' Unions: A Study of the Nigeria Union of Teachers. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 7(1), 13.
[6]Adewumi, A. 2007. *Trade Unionism and Industrial Relations in Nigeria*. Lagos: Friedrich Ebert Foundation. 47.
[7]Burns, J. M. 1978. *Leadership*. New York: Harper & Row. 20.
[8]Bass, B. M. 1985. *Leadership and Performance Beyond Expectations*. New York: Free Press. 30.

visionary leadership can slide into centralisation of power if not balanced by participatory structures.[9] African labour scholars have long noted this tension, observing that postcolonial unions often oscillate between militant mobilisation and bureaucratic consolidation, sometimes at the expense of internal democracy.[10]This study, therefore, adopted a critical-transformational perspective, asking not only whether Fakolade's leadership produced change, but also how such change was achieved, who participated in decision-making, and whose voices were marginalised in the process.

Methodology

The study employed a historical research method through a qualitative case study design, appropriate for in-depth examination of leadership practices within a specific institutional and geographical context. Data were collected between 2022 and 2024 through multiple sources. Primary data consisted of semi-structured interviews with twenty-five respondents, including current and retired teachers, NUT Ikorodu branch executives, school representatives, and cooperative society officials. Two focus group discussions were conducted with rank-and-file teachers drawn from Ikorodu Local Government Area (Division), which comprises the following areas: Ikorodu Central, Ikorodu-West, Ikorodu-North, Ijede, Imota, and Igbogbo/Bayeku Local Council Development Area.

Secondary sources included NUT branch reports, minutes of executive meetings, welfare programme records, newsletters, and publicly available media reports. Participant observation at selected union events, such as World Teachers' Day celebrations and cooperative society meetings, provided additional contextual insight.

Data were analysed thematically, with attention to patterns relating to leadership style, welfare delivery, participation, and contestation. While the qualitative approach allows for depth and nuance, the study acknowledges limitations relating to sample size, potential respondent bias, and the non-generalisability of findings beyond the case under study.

Study Locale

Ikorodu Division is one of the five geo-administrative divisions that was created in Lagos State in 1968. Eti-Osa Local Council which was part of Ikorodu Division was removed from it in 1971, while the Imota Local Council which was initially under the Epe Division was merged with the Ikorodu Division in 1976. Ever since the local government geo-administrative realignment in Nigeria in 1976,

[9]Fairbrother, R. 2015. *Unions in Crisis?*. London: Routledge. 64.
[10]Mutunga, G. M. 1999. *Labour Movements in Africa*. Nairobi: East African Publishers. 89.

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the Ikorodu Division had been intact except for the minor dissections in 1983, and the delimitation into a single Local Government Area (LGA) and five Local Council Development Areas (LCDAs) in 2003.[11]

Up till date, the IBILE structure (i.e. the five Divisions of Ikeja, Badagry, Ikorodu, Lagos Island, and Epe) constitutes a major mechanism through which values (political appointments, administrative representations, infrastructural facilities, bursary, scholarships, and others) are allocated in Lagos State. Apart from the contributions of Ikorodu Division to the development of Lagos State with respect to availability of lands for agricultural and industrial activities including abhorring the Egbin Power Plant, its contributions towards the educational development of the State cannot be underestimated.[12]

The foregoing assertion can be substantiated using parameters such as the fact that an Ikorodu indigene (Chief Adeniran Ogunsanya) was the first commissioner for education in Lagos State, in fact it was owing to his substantial contributions to the development of education in Lagos State that the State's College of Education was renamed in his honour after his demise. In addition, the first Teachers' College to be established in Lagos Colony and District in 1952 was located in Igbogbo, Ikorodu Division.[13]The College, during its peak, hosted students from across the Lagos Colony and District even beyond. The location of the permanent and main campus of the Lagos State Polytechnic within Ikorodu Division is another of its numerous contributions to the growth and development of education in Lagos State.[14]

Furthermore, Ikorodu Division's indigenes have made headways in various fields of educational endeavour. The first Professor of Christian Theology in Nigeria (Prof. BolajiIdowu) was an indigene of Ikorodu Division, the first vice chancellor of the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (Prof. Nimbe Adedipe) is an indigene of Ikorodu Division, the famous Professor Tunde Awobajo of the Mechanical Engineering Department of University of Lagos also hailed from Ikorodu Division, the youngest commissioner of education Lagos State thus far, at age 29 (Chief Rasheed Gbadamosi) also hailed from Ikorodu Division, there are many others first and quintessential examples. The root of these achievements could however be traced to their earlier exposure to western education. During the first decade of the twentieth century, there was the establishment of formal primary schools in Ikorodu and environs by the

[11]Audu, J.K., and F.I. Boge, (2022). *Evolution and Development of Primary School Education in Ikorodu Division of Lagos State, 1912 – 2015,* Being a Paper Presented at the 2022 LSA Conference Held between 21th and 26th July, 2022 at University of Lagos. 3.
[12]Lagos State Government, Welcome to Lagos State, Centre of Excellence (Lagos: Lagos State Ministry of Information and Culture, n.d), 191.
[13]Lagos State Government, Focus on Ikorodu, (Lagos: Lagos State Ministry of Information and Culture, n.d), 11.
[14]Lagos State Government, Ikorodu: Lagos State, (Lagos: Lagos State Ministry of Information and Culture, n.d), 13.

missionary groups and this assisted in laying the foundation of educational development within the enclave that later became Ikorodu Division.[15]

Ikorodu Division is one of the five administrative divisions of Lagos State, Nigeria. It is situated in the north-eastern part of the state and comprises five local government areas: Ikorodu, Igbogbo/Bayeku, Imota, Kosofe, and Shagamu (partially).[16]The division covers an area of approximately 1,036 square kilometers and is characterized by a tropical savanna climate, with two distinct seasons: wet and dry.The terrain is generally low-lying, with the Ikorodu Hills and the Lagos Lagoon forming part of its boundaries. The population of Ikorodu Division is approximately1.5million people, with the Yoruba ethnic group being the predominant inhabitants. Other ethnic groups are also present, and the languages spoken include Yoruba, English, and Nigerian Pidgin. Agriculture is a significant sector in Ikorodu Division, with farming, fishing, and livestock being major activities. Commerce also thrives in the region, with numerous markets, shopping centres, and small-scale industries. Education is well-represented, with several schools, including the Lagos State Polytechnic and the Michael Otedola College of Primary Education.[17]

In terms of infrastructure, Ikorodu Division is connected to Lagos city via the Ikorodu Road and other routes. Transportation options include buses, taxis, motorcycles, and waterways. Healthcare facilities are also available, with hospitals, clinics, and primary healthcare centres providing medical services.[18]The division has a rich cultural heritage, with traditional festivals like the Ikorodu Oro Festival and Igbogbo Day being celebrated annually. Historic sites, such as the Ikorodu Town Hall and the Imota Museum, are also present, showcasing the region's history and cultural significance. Overall, Ikorodu Division is a rapidly growing region, with ongoing developments in infrastructure, education, and commerce, making it an important part of Lagos State's economy and identity.

His Birth, Academic, Career, and Leadership Philosophy

Comrade Fakolade Oluwafemi Oluwaseun JPis a teacher, Union Leader, and presently the Branch chairman, Nigeria Union of Teachers, Ikorodu division of Lagos state wing**.** Comrade Fakolade Oluwafemi Oluwaseun JP was born into the family of Fakolade over five decades ago. He is the only son of his father and

[15]Uthman, Bolaji, 1997. "How Lagos Got 20 Council's", in Lagos State Bureaucrats, *Journal of Lagos State Public Servic*e, Vol. 4, no.1, January-June, 60.
[16]Boge, F.I. 2014. "An Administrative History of Ikorodu, 1894-1960", *Lagos Historical Review* Vol.14, 135.
[17]Audu, J.K., and F.I. Boge, 2022. *Evolution and Development of Primary School Education in Ikorodu Division of Lagos State, 1912 – 2015,* Being a Paper Presented at the 2022 LSA Conference Held between 21th and 26 July, 2022 at University of Lagos. 4.
[18]Oral Interview held with Comrade Fakolade Oluwafemi Oluwaseun JP on 19th of April 2025 at his office Teachers House, Methodist Primary School Complex, Ayangburen Ikorodu Lagos State. 53+.

the last of all the four children; he is happily married and blessed with lovely children.[19]

He attended Emmanuel College High School in Ibadan, St. Andrew College of Education Oyo, Lagos State University Lasu, Ojo, where he studied Economics Education and also had the opportunity of traveling to the Netherland to a Prestigious School, Maastricht School of Management where he studied general and strategic management.[20] He Joined the Labour Movement in 2001. He has always been in the fought front of labour struggle. He has worked with the CLO Civil Liberty Organization as an activist. He later joined the Labour movement Nigeria Union of Teachers in 2001.[21] He got transferred to Ikorodu and by share providence he became a member of the Nigeria Union of Teachers Ikorodu Branch. He became the branch Deputy Chairman In 2009 while, in 2013 he moved to the position of the Branch Secretary of the Union where he contributed immensely to the then administration. As luck will smile on him, he became the Chairman and number teacher in the whole of Ikorodu division in 2017, where he was overwhelmingly voted for by the entire teachers of the Ikorodu Division.[22]He since 2017 takes the leadership of the Union to the higher pedestrian. Today, the Nigeria Union of Teachers Ikorodu Branch is a notable branch in the committee of Branches in Lagos state.[23]

Fakolade Oluwafemi's leadership practice within the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) Ikorodu Division must be understood against the backdrop of persistent structural challenges confronting teachers in Lagos State in the early twenty-first century. These challenges included declining real wages, rising urban living costs, overcrowded classrooms, and policy instability arising from frequent educational reforms at the state level. In this context, Fakolade articulated a leadership philosophy that prioritised welfare-oriented unionism, organisational visibility, and pragmatic engagement with state authorities. Several interviewees described his approach as "problem-solving leadership," emphasising tangible benefits over ideological rhetoric.[24]

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[19]Oral Interview held with Comrade Fakolade Oluwafemi Oluwaseun JP on 20th of April 2025

[20]Oral Interview held with Comrade Sopoiki Folajimi (NUT Branch Treasurer) on 20th of April 2025 at his office Teachers House, Methodist Primary School Complex, Ayangburen Ikorodu Lagos State. 59+.

[21]Oral Interview held with Comrade Sopoiki Folajimi (Immediate Past, NUT Branch Treasurer) on 20th of April 2025 at his office Teachers House, Methodist Primary School Complex, Ayangburen Ikorodu Lagos State. 59+.

[22]Oral Interview held with Comrade Sopoiki Folajimi (NUT Branch Treasurer) on 20th of April 2025.

[23]Oral Interview held with Comrade Fakolade Oluwafemi Oluwaseun JP (Immediate Past, Chairman NUT Ikorodu Branch) on 20th of May 2025 at his office Teachers House, Methodist Primary School Complex, Ayangburen Ikorodu Lagos State. 53+.

[24]Fakolade, O. O. 2025. Oral interview by authors. Immediate Past Chairman, Nigeria Union of Teachers, Ikorodu Branch. Teachers' House, Methodist Primary School Complex, Ayangburen, Ikorodu, Lagos State, 19 April.

Central to this philosophy was the belief that a union's legitimacy among its members derives primarily from its capacity to improve their material and social conditions. Fakolade frequently framed union leadership as a form of service, echoing principles associated with servant leadership theory, particularly the emphasis on responsiveness to followers' needs and the moral obligation of leaders to serve rather than dominate.[15] This orientation was evident in his consistent focus on welfare packages, cooperative schemes, and health interventions, which he regarded as practical expressions of union relevance in an era of teacher disenchantment and declining morale.[25]

However, leadership practice in Ikorodu Division was not shaped by philosophy alone. It was also mediated by institutional constraints, including bureaucratic delays within the Lagos State Ministry of Education, limited financial autonomy of branch unions, and the internal politics of the NUT itself. Fakolade's response to these constraints was a leadership style characterised by decisiveness and central coordination. While supporters viewed this as necessary for navigating complex negotiations and ensuring timely programme delivery, critics perceived it as a tendency towards executive dominance, with insufficient mechanisms for collective deliberation. Field observations conducted at the NUT Ikorodu Branch Secretariat in October 2024 revealed a highly structured administrative environment, with decision-making largely concentrated within the branch executive council. Notices of programmes were often communicated to members after key decisions had already been finalised, reinforcing perceptions of top-down governance.[26]Nonetheless, Fakolade defended this approach in interviews, arguing that prolonged consultations frequently led to inertia and weakened the union's bargaining position with government officials.[27]

Achievements and Welfare-Oriented Programmes

The most visible and publicly celebrated dimension of Fakolade Oluwafemi's leadership was the extensive range of welfare-oriented programmes implemented during his tenure as Chairman of the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) Ikorodu Division. These programmes must be situated within the broader socio-economic realities confronting teachers in Lagos State, particularly from the mid-2000s onward, when rapid urbanisation, rising housing costs, and inflation steadily eroded teachers' purchasing power. Against this backdrop, Fakolade's administration adopted welfare delivery as both a practical intervention and a strategic tool for organisational legitimacy. Furthermore, the distribution of food boxes to Retirees and Widows:Comrade

[25]Authors. 2024. Fieldwork observation at Nigeria Union of Teachers, Ikorodu Branch Secretariat. Ikorodu, Lagos State, 4 October.
[26]Authors. 2024. Fieldwork observation at Nigeria Union of Teachers, Ikorodu Branch Secretariat. Ikorodu, Lagos State, 1 October.
[27]Fakolade, O. O. 2025. Oral interview by authors. Nigeria Union of Teachers, Ikorodu Branch. Ikorodu, Lagos State, 20 April.

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Fakolade facilitated the distribution of over 400 food boxes to retired teachers across all local governments in Lagos State in collaboration with Food Clique Support Initiative.[28]

Figure 1 Conduct of the 1st Retreat for Teachers of Ikorodu in the annals of history of the Union, both Local and International.



Source: Researchers Field Survey, 2024

Figure 2 : Conduct of the 1st Retreat for Teachers of Ikorodu in the annals of history of the Union, both Local and International.



Source: Researchers Field Survey, 2024.

[28]Researchers' Personal experience while on the Field survey to NUT Ikorodu Branch Secretariat on 4th October, 2024.

Figure 3. Retirees and widows



Source: Researchers Field Survey, 2024.

Figure 4: Free Food Bank for the



Source: Researchers Field Survey, 2024.

One of the most symbolically significant initiatives was the introduction of annual teachers' retreats, first organised in 2018. Before this period, union activities in Ikorodu were largely confined to meetings, protests, and ceremonial observances. The retreat programme represented a deliberate

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departure from this tradition, emphasising rest, professional reflection, and social bonding. Field observations conducted during the 2023 World Teachers' Day celebrations revealed that many participants interpreted the retreats as recognition of teachers' emotional and psychological labour, particularly in overcrowded public schools. Oral evidence from members of the World Teachers' Day planning committee further confirmed that the retreats were consciously designed to foster solidarity across schools and local councils within the division.[29]

Health-related welfare initiatives constituted another pillar of Fakolade's leadership agenda. Between 2019 and 2022, the NUT Ikorodu Division partnered with private clinics and medical professionals in Ikorodu and Imota to organise free medical outreach programmes. These included blood pressure checks, body mass index assessments, eye examinations, and limited surgical interventions such as cataract operations. Union records and oral interviews indicated that some teachers of Ikorodu division of Lagos State benefitted from free cataract surgery during this period, while dozens more received basic medical consultations.[30] In a context where access to affordable healthcare remained uneven despite the introduction of Lagos State's ILERA-EKO health insurance scheme, these interventions were widely perceived as filling critical gaps. Nevertheless, concerns were raised regarding the sustainability of such programmes and the transparency of beneficiary selection, pointing to the need for clearer institutional guidelines. Also, the establishment and expansion of the NUT Ikorodu Multipurpose Cooperative Society arguably represented the most structurally significant welfare intervention under Fakolade's leadership. Cooperative societies have a long history within Nigerian labour movements, serving as mechanisms for collective savings, credit access, and mutual support. Under Fakolade's administration, the Ikorodu cooperative expanded its scope to include household appliances, food commodities, and later vehicle financing schemes.

By 2022, cooperative membership reportedly exceeded one thousand teachers across the Ikorodu branch of NUT. Interviews with cooperative officials and former branch treasurers highlighted both the benefits and challenges of this expansion, noting improved access to credit alongside emerging concerns about auditing procedures and decision-making concentration.

[29]Oduguwa, L. B. 2025. Oral interview conducted by the authors with the former Chairman: Nigeria Union of Teachers, Ikorodu Branch. Ikorodu, Lagos State, 20 April.
[30]Fakolade, O. O. 2025. Oral interview by authors. Nigeria Union of Teachers, Ikorodu Branch. Ikorodu, Lagos State, 20 April.

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Figure 5: Football



Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Figure 6: Football and Chess Games by the Teachers



Source:Field Survey, 2023.

World Teachers Day Celebration: Comrade Fakoladelikes to celebrate World Teachers Day in a special way. It's always a day of glamour and pageantry.

Teachers in Ikorodu have being enjoying the celebration of World Teachers Day in a unique way since he assumed office as the branch chairman.[31]

Figure 7: Celebrating World Teachers Day



Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Figure 8: Celebrating World Teachers Day



Source: Field Survey, 2024.

[31]Researchers Personal experience while on the Field survey to NUT Ikorodu Branch World Teachers Day Celebration held on 5th October, 2023.

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Figure 9: Sales of Household Items to Teachers at Affordable Price



Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Figure 10: Sales of Household Items to Teachers at Affordable Price



Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Household Items: As part of his strategies to raise the social status of teachers, NUT created easy buy route for teachers to acquire essential household items with flexible repayment period of 6-12 months. Teachers were able to acquire items like: Generators, Freezer/Refrigerator, Washing Machine and other

household items like television etc.[32]Recreational and sporting activities further complemented the welfare agenda. Regular football matches, chess competitions, and indoor games were organised to promote physical health and social interaction. According to the NUT Ikorodu sports coach, these activities significantly increased youth participation in union programmes, particularly among newly recruited teachers who had previously viewed unionism as distant or irrelevant. Researchers' participant observation at sporting events in October 2023 corroborated this assessment, revealing high attendance and informal interactions that cut across school hierarchies and local council boundaries. Collectively, these welfare initiatives enhanced the public profile of the NUT Ikorodu Division, even as they raised questions about governance, participation, and long-term sustainability.[33]

Figure 11: Free Eye Glass Representation



Source: Field Survey, 2024

[32]Oral Interview held with Comrade Esan Adefunke (Chairman, Committee on NUT Ikorodu 2024 World Teachers Day Celebration) on 30th of September, 2025 at the NUT Teachers House, Methodist Primary School Complex, Ayangburen Ikorodu Lagos State. 54+.

[33]Abuaja, I. 2025. Oral interview by authors. Sports Coach, Nigeria Union of Teachers, Ikorodu Branch. Teachers' House, Ikorodu, Lagos State, 13 January.

Figure 11: Free Eye Glass Representation



Source: Field Survey, 2024

More so, religious programmes:He has institutionalized both carol service and Ramadan lecture in order to draw the teachers to God and make them spiritually uplifted and as a sense of belonging in the affairs of our great Union.[34]Teachers Cooperative Society was also a crucial partof Comrade Fakolade's welfare package and achievement, established multipurpose cooperative society for them to a stable way of life. The cooperative is designed for teachers to have different packages life savings, shares, loans and food commodities purchase and other facilities that can make life convenient and bearable for teachers.[35]

Figure 12: Establishment of a strong Cooperative Multipurpose Society (CMS) for Teachers



Source: Field Survey, 2023.

[34]*https://www.facebook.com/share/p/bccSSbnL64M3KrKq/?mibextid=oFDknk* Retrieved on 1st January, 2025.
[35]*https://www.facebook.com/share/p/TUqQhBbZ4DfXMDWw/?mibextid=oFDknk.* Retrieved on 30th January, 2025.

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International Women's Day:Women role can never be over emphasized in the development of every society. More so, it is one of the union activities to recognize the importance of women. However, comrade Fakolade also joins all other union branches in the celebration of the day.[36]

Figure 12: International women day celebrations that featured his leader and immediate past Chairman, Comrade Lateef B. ODUGUWA (LAO)



Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Teachers Dinners Night: Teachers live have being so regimented in the past in which Comrade Fakolade has come to change the narrative by bring more fun to the teaching profession. He introduced teachers' night to the profession which was the first of its kind in the annals of teaching history.[37]

Figure 13: First Dinner Banquet for Teachers in Ikorodu



Source: Field Survey, 2023.

[36]*https://www.facebook.com/share/p/QiX5RNWPhj6rpb9R/?mibextid=oFDknk*Retrieved on 30th January, 2025.
[37]*https://www.facebook.com/share/p/3XimmT1UoE7Axhgr/?mibextid=oFDknk*Retrieved on 25th of May, 2025.

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Teachers Dream Cars: Comrade Fakolade era has also added value to lives of teachers in Ikorodu by making available car loan at a friendly installment payment.[38]Furthermore, Comrade Fakolade's commitment to the welfarism of Teachers and humanity at large cannot be over emphasized. He created a robust relationship between the education sector, traditional institutions, and the Royal fathers. Today, the Nigeria Union of Teachers, Ikorodu Branch is a House opening when it comes to the developmental Programmes.[39]

Figure 14: Beneficiary of Dream Car



Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Teachers' Estate: Another interesting programme Comrade Fakolade had in mind for teachers is the construction of 72-bedroom flats estate which is under construction.

Figure 15: Ongoing Constructions of Teachers' Estate for teachers of Ikorodu,



Source: Field Survey, 2023.

[38]*https://www.facebook.com/share/p/RUT91XVMWQej1p1p/?mibextid=oFDknk*Retrieved on 25th of May, 2025.
[39]Giwa, B. 2025. Oral interview by author. Immediate Past Deputy Chairman, Nigeria Union of Teachers, Ikorodu Branch. Teachers' House, Ikorodu, Lagos State, 20 July.
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Challenges and Contestation

Despite the breadth of welfare initiatives and organisational visibility achieved during Fakolade Oluwafemi's tenure, his leadership was characterised by persistent contestation, particularly around questions of authority, participation, and internal democracy. One of the earliest and most enduring challenges related to his status as a non-indigene of the Ikorodu Division. In Lagos State, where historical claims of indigeneity continue to shape access to political authority and institutional legitimacy, this status carried symbolic and practical implications. Several interviewees recalled that opposition to Fakolade's leadership in the early years was framed in cultural and identity-based terms, reflecting broader patterns in Lagos local politics and administrative history.[40]

Beyond questions of identity, more substantive critiques focused on the structure and practice of decision-making within the NUT Ikorodu Division. Critics argued that while welfare programmes were numerous and often impactful, they were frequently conceived and implemented by a small circle within the branch executive council. Oral interviews with former and serving union officials indicated that general congress meetings were sometimes consultative rather than deliberative, with limited scope for altering already-decided policies. This perception of centralisation gave rise to the characterisation of Fakolade's leadership style as authoritarian, particularly among long-serving members who recalled earlier periods of more participatory union culture.

It is important, however, to situate these critiques within the broader institutional constraints facing union leadership in Nigeria. Labour scholars have observed that union leaders operating in environments marked by weak institutional support, fiscal uncertainty, and adversarial state relations often adopt centralised leadership styles as a strategy for organisational survival. Fakolade himself articulated this position in multiple interviews, arguing that prolonged consultation processes frequently undermined the union's capacity to respond effectively to time-bound negotiations with government agencies and external partners. From this perspective, decisiveness was framed not as domination but as pragmatic leadership.

Nevertheless, the persistence of authoritarian critiques suggests that welfare delivery and organisational efficiency do not fully compensate for deficits in participatory governance. Field observations at the NUT Ikorodu Branch Secretariat in October 2024 revealed limited formal mechanisms for feedback beyond periodic congresses, reinforcing perceptions of executive dominance. This tension underscores a central dilemma in contemporary union leadership: how to balance effectiveness with democratic legitimacy. The Ikorodu case thus

[40]Researchers Personal experience while on the Field survey to NUT Ikorodu Branch Secretariat on 4th October, 2024.

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exemplifies the broader challenges confronting teacher unions in Nigeria, where leaders must navigate complex trade-offs between inclusion, efficiency, and external pressure.

Conclusion

Comrade Fakolade Oluwafemi's leadership as Chairman of the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) in Ikorodu Division from 2001 to 2025 was a testament to his transformative vision and dedication to the welfare of teachers and students. Despite facing challenges as a non-indigene and financial constraints, he demonstrated exceptional leadership skills, building trust and credibility with members and stakeholders. His commitment to inclusive education, community engagement, and teacher development left an enduring legacy in the NUT Ikorodu Division. Significant achievements, including improved teacher welfare, enhanced educational infrastructure, and increased community involvement in education, marked Comrade Fakolade's leadership. He successfully negotiated with employers and government agencies, securing better salaries and benefits for teachers. His leadership also fostered a sense of unity and solidarity among members, promoting collective action and social justice.

Comrade Fakolade's enduring legacy serves as a beacon for contemporary labour union leaders. His leadership exemplifies the power of inclusive and visionary leadership, effective financial management, and community engagement. His commitment to teacher development and welfare demonstrates the importance of prioritizing the needs of members. Comrade Fakolade's legacy is a testament to the impact that dedicated and transformative leadership can have on workers, students, and communities. Hence, from the discussion, it is imperative to note that the contemporary labour union leaders can draw valuable lessons from Comrade Fakolade's leadership. Firstly, embracing inclusive leadership and valuing diversity can foster trust and credibility with members and stakeholders.

Effective financial management strategies can ensure sustainability and growth, enabling unions to better serve their members. Community engagement and partnerships can promote social justice and advance the interests of workers and students.Additionally, labour union leaders should prioritize teacher development and welfare, recognizing the critical role that educators play in shaping the future. Negotiating skills and strategic thinking are essential for achieving better outcomes for members. Empowering members through capacity building and training can foster collective action and solidarity. Finally, adapting to changing contexts and demonstrating resilience and innovative leadership can ensure the continued relevance and effectiveness of labour unions. By embracing these lessons, contemporary labour union leaders can build on Comrade Fakolade's legacy, advancing the interests of workers, students, and communities, and illuminating the path for future generations of leaders.