

MANAGING CONFLICT IN NIGERIA

The Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) Programme aims to support Nigerians with conflict resolution, at both the state and community level. Our work focuses on reducing violence, promoting stability and strengthening resilience so that Nigerians feel more safe and secure in their communities.

We work in North Eastern Nigeria in three focal states – Adamawa, Borno and Yobe – some of the country’s most conflict-affected regions.

Our work focuses on the following areas:

- Conflict management, reconciliation and stability in communities
- The role of women in peacebuilding
- Support to women and girls affected by violence
- The reintegration of young people displaced by conflict
- Support to policy makers through research and policy dialogue

The four-year programme (2017-21) is funded by the European Union and implemented by the British Council.



Leaders of farmer and herder groups sign agreement to maintain peace in their community. Source: Sani Suleiman

KEY ACTIVITIES

This newsletter highlights the key activities undertaken by the programme in August-September 2019.

Summary of key activities include:

Conflict management, reconciliation and stability in communities:

- Community peace and safety partnership prevents clash between farmers and herders
- Community peace and safety partnership intervention leads to disbandment of violent youth gangs
- Improved confidence in dispute resolution capacity of traditional rulers
- Dialogue platform promotes reconciliation of two communities in conflict

Addressing sexual and gender-based violence:

- Hospital staff trained in the management of sexual and gender-based violence
- SARC Steering Committee addressing the culture of silence around sexual violence

Economic empowerment initiatives:

- Women and young girls benefitting from empowerment programmes

Promoting policy for peace and security:

- New approaches to peacebuilding proposed at International Day of Peace event
- Stakeholders share lessons on conflicts over land and water use at International Day of Peace event
- MCN training changing the way people work in key areas

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT, RECONCILIATION AND STABILITY

Community peace and safety partnership prevents clash between farmers and herders

The Community Peace and Safety Partnership (CPSP) in Gubio LGA of Borno State has helped resolve a perennial conflict between farmers and herders. The Gubio CPSP is facilitated by the Yelwa Community Circle (YCC) with support from the Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) Programme.



FACTS & FIGURES:

Community Peace and Safety Partnerships

Issues discussed

560

Actions taken

542

Issues resolved

134

A report presented by the vice chairman of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) at the meeting in August 2019 hinted at community concerns about the potential for violence between farmers and herders during the approaching harvest season. Attacks by farmers and reprisal attacks by herders in previous years had led to loss of life and property with many women and children displaced. The lack of clearly demarcated cattle grazing routes in the area and the consequent encroachment onto farmlands by cattle were at the root of the problem.

The CPSP constituted a committee to facilitate dialogue between the leadership of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association and the Farmers Association in the locality. Meetings were held during which farmers and herders were encouraged to exercise restraint and seek non-violent resolution in cases of encroachment and destruction of farmland and livestock.

An incident of encroachment and destruction of crops, which occurred during the intervention, became a test case for the dialogue process. The Committee facilitated the mediation process and the leaders of farmers and herders' groups settled the dispute. The accused herder whose cattle destroyed crops voluntarily apologised to the aggrieved farmer whose crop were destroyed. He also accepted to pay compensation as agreed during the mediation.

Following the resolution of this case, the CPSP platform engaged the leaders of the farmers and herders' groups to adopt measures to sustain the presence of the mediation process. This led to the leaders signing an agreement that included the following provisions:

- Farmers will not kill cattle that destroy crops
- Herders will promptly pay compensation for crops destroyed
- Herders will stop using underaged children to rear their cattle
- Herders will stop cattle grazing in the hours of the night

Feedback to the CPSP indicate compliance with the terms of the agreement, leading to reduction of tensions in the area.

'I apologise to farmers whose crop have been destroyed due to grazing. I promise that we will abide by the terms of the agreement and there will be no more trespass into farmlands.'

Kadai Fulata, Chairman, Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association, Gubio LGA, Borno State

CPSP intervention leads to disbandment of violent youth gangs

The Community Peace and Safety Partnership (CPSP) in Mafa LGA of Borno State has helped to address risks of youth gang violence in Gwozari and Zannari communities. A cleric who runs an Islamiyah school in Mafa reported that rival youth gangs who operate under the influence of hard drugs had clashed violently in previous years resulting in some fatalities. The CPSP, which

is convened by the Jamatu Nasril Islam (JNI) Borno State Chapter with support from the Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) Programme, set up a committee to engage the police to increase patrol in the affected communities. The approach adopted by the Committee ensured that the police remained committed to intensive patrols even after a change at Divisional Police Officer (DPO) level.

The increased police presence led to the arrest of suspected gang members involved in violent activities. Continuous police patrols were made possible by the added intervention of the Mafa LGA Council who provided funds for fuelling of police vehicles.

The improved sense of security has arisen from the disbandment of the groups as members voluntarily renounced violence to avoid arrest, prosecution and conviction.

'We feel safe because the youth gangs that caused violence have stopped their activities because of presence of police and the CJTF.'

Maimuna Adam, Female resident, Mala Kyariri Community, Mafa LGA, Borno State

'I disbanded the group and asked my members to go and find work for themselves because I realised that we are not benefiting from our activities and we face risk of being arrested. I have now gone back to school.'

Mohammed Usman Garba, Leader, Fansa Group, Mala Kyariri Community, Mafa LGA, Borno State

Improved confidence in the dispute resolution capacity of traditional rulers

Beneficiary feedback on the capacity building programme for traditional rulers show there is growing confidence both among the trained traditional rulers and other stakeholders in the justice system, on their capacity to resolve disputes successfully. The MCN programme has so far supported the training of 2,111 traditional rulers across the three states.

One positive element is that lower level traditional rulers (ward and village heads) have become more effective in resolving disputes which has helped reduce the case load at the district level.

Another significant enhancement is the improved capacity of traditional rulers to resolve disputes between members of their community from different religious backgrounds.

In Bachama Traditional Council of Adamawa State, which is predominantly Christian, traditional rulers reported being better equipped to resolve disputes among Muslims and disputes between Christian and Muslim community members.

The result is significant because lack of capacity and confidence in dealing with disputes involving persons from different religious backgrounds affected responses and increased misunderstanding and conflicts among religious groups in the area.

One of the early successes was the intervention of a traditional ruler to prevent inter religious violence that may have arisen as a result of mobilisation by some Christian youths to stop a Muslim youth from marrying a Christian girl. The Christian youths accosted a young Muslim from another community who visited a Christian girl in their community and destroyed his motorcycle. Sensing the risk of reprisals, the village head, Chief Jomrin Jarde, intervened and resolved the dispute by getting the consent of both parents for the courtship to continue.

‘With what we have learned from the training, we have been able to address the negative mentality of people and encouraged them to have cordial relations with their neighbours from other ethnic and religious backgrounds.’

Ishaya Talla, Village head, Bollere, Kwah District, Lamorde LGA, Adamawa State

Dialogue platform promotes reconciliation of two communities in conflict

The community dialogue platform facilitated by the Taimoko Community Development Initiative with support from the Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) Programme has successfully promoted reconciliation of Ajari and Hausari communities in Damaturu LGA of Yobe state.

The long-standing conflict between the two communities was aggravated by the perception of members of the Ajari community who are predominantly Kanuri, that young persons from the Hausari community who are mostly non-Kanuri molested and exposed their young girls to anti-social behaviour. This grievance reportedly contributed to the mass mobilisation of youths from Ajari into the Jama’atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda’awati wal-Jihad (JAS) also known as Boko Haram as they saw membership of the sect as an opportunity to retaliate against the Hausari.

The Ajari youths also formed Majalisa (informal joints) from where they embarked on activities that disrupted the businesses of residents, including those from Hausari. This increased tension and animosity leading to fears violence that could spread to other parts of Damaturu, the state capital.

When community members raised the fears of violence, the Dialogue Platform agreed to engage community leaders and the youth groups to find solutions to the lingering tensions. Youth peace ambassadors trained by Taimoko CDI on peace building were mobilised to interact with youths from the two communities and organised a football match to provide a peaceful focus for the rivalry.

The intervention of the dialogue platform and youth peace ambassadors have contributed to reducing tensions as leaders and youths from Ajari and Hausari have both agreed to continue to work for peace.

‘I was not expecting this day to come so soon...where I sit with leaders from the other community. I am happy the way the youths handled the situation.’

Shettima Bulama, Ward head, Ajari Community, Damaturu LGA, Yobe State

‘The problems between the two communities were caused by youths. We are happy that the youths have been involved and shown commitment to end the conflict and we have given them our blessing.’

Abdullahi Usman, Ward head, Hausari Community, Damaturu LGA, Yobe State

ADDRESSING SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Staff of hospitals trained in management of sexual and gender-based violence

The Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) Programme has organised training for hospital staff in the five local council areas of Yobe state on the management of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) cases.

The capacity building workshop took place in Kano from 23-27 September 2019. This followed the decision of the Yobe state government to designate five centres as referral centres for management of SGBV cases, including: the General Hospital in Potiskum; the General Hospital in Gujba; the General Hospital in Geidam; the General Hospital in Gashua, and the Federal Medical Centre in Nguru. The Yobe state government made the decision in response to advocacy by the Steering Committee of the Yobe State Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC).

The trained staff, who were nominated by the Yobe State Health Management Board, included 10 medical doctors, 15 nurses, 5 medical laboratory scientists, and 6 counsellors. The participants were trained on how to diagnose and treat cases of SGBV; how to diagnose and treat trauma associated with SGBV; how to collect forensic evidence to enhance prospects for prosecution and conviction of sexual offenders; and how to systematically collect, collate and share information on incidence of SGBV.

Following the training, survivors of sexual and gender-based violence now have enhanced access to medical and psycho-social support services at hospitals in all three senatorial districts of the state.



Medical personnel at the MCN-supported training. Source: Aminu Abubakar

SARC Steering Committee organises initiatives to address the culture of silence

The Yobe State SARC Steering Committee has undertaken a number of initiatives to address the culture of silence around sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), which is preventing survivors of sexual assaults from making use of the Yobe Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC). Working in partnership with the

Yobe State Chapter of the International Federation of Female Lawyers (FIDA) with support from the Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) Programme, the Committee has organised the following initiatives:

1. Sensitization of traditional and religious leaders on the existence of the SARC and the services it provides in order to encourage them to mobilise their community members to report cases of SGBV
2. Sensitization of students of secondary schools on the need to report cases of SGBV and the availability of the SARC to provide services to survivors
3. Capacity building workshops for leaders of Association of school principals, Association of teachers, Association of traditional birth attendants and National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW). This has focused on the rising incidence of SGBV and their respective roles in reporting incidents and helping survivors to access medical, psycho-social and legal support
4. Community enlightenment through the media to raise awareness on the rising incidence of SGBV and the services provided by the SARC, which has been rebranded 'Shifa Centre' (which means 'healing' in Hausa language adapted from Arabic language) to address concerns about stigma.

The interventions have recorded some successes:

- The advocacy initiatives aimed at school authorities and students have led to the establishment of gender desks in secondary schools where students can report cases of SGBV.
- School authorities have agreed to establish student clubs that will help to raise awareness about SGBV and encourage students to report suspected cases of sexual offences.
- There is a noticeable increase in the number of cases of sexual offences reported at the Family Support Units and the SARC.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVES

Women and young girls benefitting from empowerment programmes

The economic empowerment initiatives supported by the Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) programme is contributing to enhancing livelihood opportunities for women and young girls in Yobe state.

Four hundred women and girls have benefitted from the economic empowerment programme initiated in four LGAs: Busari, Damaturu, Fika and Fune. The programmes are implemented by the Women Youth Empowerment Initiative (WOYEIN) and Initiative for the Development of the Needy, Orphans, the Less Privileged and Widows (INOL) who have selected women and girls severely affected by the insurgency. Among the beneficiaries are young girls from Dapchi where students were kidnapped at the Government Girls Technical College School.

The economic empowerment programmes implemented by INOL in Damaturu, Fika and Fune LGAs have equipped women and girls with various skills and capital to be self-employed. Women beneficiaries have formed cooperative groups that have helped them to save and access loans at minimal interest rates to grow their businesses and attend to their family needs.

The intervention has led to the formation of 15 cooperative societies and trading associations made up of 20 women each in the three LGAs. Young women have been trained on tailoring,

computing, soap making, production of soap, detergents and body lotions, and preparation of sundry local snacks.

Apart from enhancing their income generation to support livelihoods, the intervention is contributing to women participation in peacebuilding.

The programme implemented by WOYEIN in Busari LGA has also exposed the beneficiaries to peacebuilding skills, leading to the formation of ten peace associations. The beneficiaries have also engaged with their respective Local Government Chairmen to request support for initiative.

Beneficiary feedback indicate that the women and young girls have better economic prospects and are making meaningful contributions to their families. Worthy of note is the enhanced capacity of the beneficiaries to contribute to the education of their children.



Hamsatu Maina used cash to invest in rearing of goats
Source: Mohammed Ali

'This intervention has helped to address the cause of domestic violence. I am happy that my children are in school as I hate the idea of my girl child going to hawk in the streets.'

Hadiza Yahaya Isa, Moramti Women Food Seller Cooperative Society, Damaturu

'Since I started engaging in the foodstuff business, I have been able to pay school fees and buy books for my children without difficulty. We are living as a happy family.'

Suzanna Elisha, Salama Cooperative Society, Damaturu

'The support received has changed the story of my family. Two years ago my children were withdrawn from school because we could not pay their fees. Now all of the three children are back to school.'

Hamsatu Maina, Al-Bishir Women Empowerment Association, Damaturu

'I am happy about the interest shown by the young girls in computer literacy. Since I started this business two years ago, I have trained 12 persons which were all male. This is the first time I have female students.'

Babale Abubakar, Hamdan Computer Training Centre, Dapchi

PROMOTING POLICY FOR PEACE AND SECURITY

Stakeholders propose new approaches to peacebuilding at the International Day of Peace event

The Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) Programme, in partnership with the North East Civil Society Forum, organised a policy dialogue to commemorate the 2019 International Day of Peace. The event was held at the University of Maiduguri on 25-26 September. Over 300 participants from the six states of the North East attended.

The participants appraised the developments in the region and noted progress recorded in stabilisation efforts. However, the participants stressed the need for new approaches to deradicalization and reintegration that will emphasize local ownership and participation if stabilisation efforts are to culminate in sustainable peace.

The key recommendations from the forum include:

- Improved coordination by tiers of government and their agencies in humanitarian, development and peacebuilding initiatives;
- Enhancement of the role of traditional rulers in local governance and community policing;
- Increased participation of women and youths in peace processes;
- Establishment of a special fund to support empowerment of youths and women; and
- Convening of public forums where members of the public will have opportunity to voice their concerns.

The MCN Programme is supporting the efforts of different stakeholders to follow-up with implementation of the recommendations of the policy dialogue.



Female participant speaking at the policy dialogue forum. Source: Ahmed Shehu

Stakeholders share lessons on conflicts over land and water use on the International Day of Peace

The Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) Programme and International Alert organised a lessons event to commemorate the 2019 International Day of Peace with the theme 'Climate Action for Peace'. The event, which was organised under the platform of the North East Peace and Security Network on 22

September 2019 in Abuja, attracted diplomats, civil society organisations and the media.

The MCN Programme used the opportunity to share the findings and recommendations of the study on conflicts over land and water use in Adamawa state. Dr Jude Momodu, one of the researchers from the Centre for Peace and Security Studies, Modibbo Adama University in Yola, who carried out the study participated in a panel discussion and highlighted some of the causes of conflicts between herders and farmers and the challenges of resolution.

The panel discussion also featured two members of the dialogue platform facilitated by the Murrushi Peoples development Association with MCN support in Bole Community, Yola South LGA. The members reported that the dialogue initiative has led to the reduction of conflicts between farmers and herders and improved trust among their communities.

Participants from Benue state, who have also experienced violent clashes between farmers and herders, agreed to explore similar approaches to the resolution of conflicts over land and water use in their communities.

MCN training changing the way people work in key areas

The Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) Programme has undertaken three 'Post Training Evaluations' of workshops that were delivered in late 2018. The evaluation involves re-engaging with the trainees from courses 6-12 months after the training and obtaining detailed information about how they have applied the newly learnt skills since the training.

The evaluations focused on three areas: (1) training for the Community Accountability Forum (CAF) Steering Committee members on how to engage with the public and solve problems; (2) training of Family Support Unit (FSU) officers in how to deal with victims of sexual abuse and other related issues; (3) and training of media personnel on gender and conflict sensitive reporting (especially around elections) and community unrest. All the training events were held in all three states in the northeast. However, not all states were included in the evaluation.

A total of 105 questionnaires were received back out of 144 questionnaires distributed. The table below shows the proportion of positive answers to the broad questions that were common to all the evaluations.

Question	YES
Was the training beneficial to you in your work and have you applied the learning since the training?	96%
Have you referred back to the training materials since the end of the training?	96%
Have you incorporated learning from the training into your day-to-day life?	71%
Has the learning made you more efficient in the way you carry out your duties?	97%
Have you shared the learning with other colleagues since the training?	88%

Each positive answer was followed by examples of how the training had been applied. CAF trainees recounted occasions when the human rights of women and minority groups had been accessed, whilst FSU trainees mentioned how they had been able to deal effectively with victims of serious sexual assaults and how communication with the victims was the key to being able to genuinely help them. The media trainees mentioned how

they had published articles on women's role in politics as well as discussing the negative impact of hate and dangerous speech around the elections. The highly positive outcomes of the training were summed up by a number of respondent's answers.

One CAF trainee wrote:

'It has improved civil-security relation in the community.'

Recognising that CAFs can play a key role in addressing local issues which if not resolved can become much more serious.

Meanwhile, one of the FSU trainees said:

'I learnt how to help parents and families of SGBV victims.'

Thereby demonstrating how the focus of their work had broadened beyond the victims and the suspects to consider the impact on the broader family (and even community).

One of the media trainees said:

'Such training is needed to bring back people drifting away from professional ethics.'

A reflection of how standards and levels of acceptable behaviour can easily deteriorate if not continually assessed.

PROGRESS AGAINST EU INDICATORS

Indicator	Target 2021	Achieved at 31 July 2019	Comment
Number of staff from government institutions and internal security forces trained	1210	4,809	Activity Years 2-4
Number of people participating in conflict prevention and peace building activities	2860	17,347	Activity Years 1-4
Total number of community beneficiaries	2,278,580	1,735,596	Activity Years 2-4

UPCOMING ACTIVITY

- Inauguration of state advisory committees in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states
- Validation of the study on gender and peacebuilding in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states
- Community reconciliation initiatives in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states
- Youth peace initiatives in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states
- Stakeholder engagements for the adoption of the code of conduct for traditional rulers
- Meetings and initiatives of community peace and safety partnerships in target LGAs
- Coordination meetings of voluntary policing sector groups
- Meetings of the community accountability forums in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states
- Advocacy initiatives of SARC Steering Committees in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states
- Operations of family support units in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states
- Community peacebuilding initiatives by women associations and youth groups in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states

ONGOING CHALLENGES

- Continued unrest in the North East and the impact to travel and work outside state capitals
- Capacity of civil society organisations and state institutions
- The protracted transition since the 2019 elections
- Continuing challenges around health issues

Find out more

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