

# MANAGING CONFLICT IN NIGERIA

## GENDER RELATIONS IN YOBE

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.

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This policy brief and other MCN publications are available at [www.justice-security.ng](http://www.justice-security.ng)

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## INTRODUCTION

Yobe has witnessed significant violence, presence of armed opposition groups (AOGs) and displacement. It has experienced destruction of homes, markets, government structures and places of worship as well as (forced) recruitment into AOGs. In addition, Yobe sees other conflict dynamics at play, notably conflict between fisher folk, pastoralists and farmers due to competition for scarce resources as well as political violence. The Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) programme commissioned this assessment to investigate gender relations and implications for peace and conflict. Findings presented are drawn from interviews and focus group discussions in Damaturu, Geidam and Gujba in July 2019. In the three locations, focus groups were held with 11 women with disabilities, 7 non-disabled women and 8 non-disabled men. The author also interviewed 57 people (25 women and 32 men) who work for government, security agencies, Yobe-based and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), UN agencies and institutions of community leadership with the mandate to bring about peace and security, human rights and/ or gender equality in the state.

This policy brief starts by highlighting key conflict and security dynamics in the state. It then outlines the main gender dynamics. It next examines policies and programmes implemented by government and non-government actors, outlining their main results, challenges and lessons. It ends with programming and policy recommendations.



## CONFLICT AND SECURITY CONTEXT

**Fighting between AOGs and the state:** Wilayat al Islamiyya Gharb Afriqiyyah (Islamic State West Africa Province or ISWAP) has greater capability and attacks military bases while Jama'atu Ahl al-Sunna li-l-Da'wa wa-l-Jihad (JAS, translated as People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad) engages more in cattle rustling and abductions. ISWAP presence in Geidam, Gujba, Gulani and Yunusari is increasing. Recent months have seen attacks along the Damaturu – Maiduguri road. These areas see less government presence, fewer services and absent community leaders. ISWAP try to engage with local communities and recruit from them.

**Criminality and extortion:** Heightened insecurity and absence of state authority in areas with AOG presence have contributed to increased criminality. Respondents in Geidam and Gujba spoke of groups who come into villages and threaten to kill people if they do not give them money.. Respondents spoke of high levels of drug use to cope with frustration and anger at unemployment levels, corruption and failure of leadership. While there is no empirical evidence showing a connection, respondents perceive drug use as linked to increased criminality.

**Conflict over land and water use:** Increased use of grazing routes and reserves by farmers leads to conflict when pastoralists' animals enter farmlands and destroy crops. These conflict dynamics have been exacerbated as pastoralists no longer use grazing routes that pass AOG camps. Relatively safe routes do not provide enough grazing land if encroached upon by farming activities. However, some communities have tried to mitigate violence, for example demarcating already existing grazing routes and ensuring no farmers plant along these.

**Intra religious tensions:** National level dynamics affect relations between the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) and those of other religious backgrounds. People expressed concern that Yobe too may see national level protests leading to violence due to presence of Shia Muslims in some parts of the state and the potential for heavy handed security force response. Increased suspicion of and intolerance against IMN is growing. However, people are very conscious of the kinds of discussions that take place and the risk of triggering violence by what they say.

**Displacement trends:** Gujba and Gulani LGAs were most hit by violence with people fleeing violence to Damaturu, Potiskum, Nguru and Bade. At the time of data collection in July 2019, 133,000 people remain displaced. Many IDPs who returned to Gujba, Gulani, Geidam and Yunusari remain in LGA headquarters as they fear assistance will not reach them if they return to inaccessible and insecure communities. Women whose male family members have been killed or detained tend to remain displaced as they have to fight for homes and land occupied by others. The state government has tried to restore government

presence and services. Buildings have been reconstructed and personnel have returned. However, coverage of health workers is not universal. In Gujba, the General Hospital has not been renovated and health personnel have still not resumed properly due to insecurity, fear of abduction and as staff quarters are not fully renovated. Skeletal health services are provided during the day. Any medical emergencies at night, including childbirth, need to wait until the morning by which time, it may be too late.

## GENDER DYNAMICS

**Association with perpetrating conflict and violence:** As ISWAP strengthens its networks, women play active roles in economic activities, discussions around movement and intelligence gathering. Unlike men, women associated with AOGs do not receive skills training, counselling or programmes to shift ideology but are handed over to families. Life after leaving AOGs can be more difficult for women as men find it easier to leave the community or earn a living if rejected. Children associated with AOGs face lesser stigma and harassment than adults due to engagement to change attitudes. Women are also part of community militias. They engage in crucial tasks such as searching other women and investigating cases involving women and girls.

**Continuing physical and psychological impacts of violence:** AOG tactics focus on security forces and civilians injured in attacks tend to be by mistake. Meanwhile, people in places with low presence of AOGs have rebuilt their lives but live with physical impacts of violence, particularly people who had acquired disabilities during attacks. Indeed, many people continue to experience psychological impacts, exacerbated due to continuing insecurity and as they do not know the whereabouts of family members. Women and young people tend to be most traumatised, reflecting gendered patterns of violence. Many men fled violence or were killed whereas women and children experienced violence and continue to live with its consequence. Men who experience trauma are not always present in accessible areas.

**Livelihoods and economic conditions:** While livelihoods have started to recover in many LGAs, increased urbanisation, partly triggered by displacement, has led to challenges. Those living in areas experiencing high insecurity struggle to recover. Fulbe respondents spoke of high rates of theft of animals. In areas with AOG presence, many people are afraid to go to farms despite ISWAP reassurances or find livelihoods thwarted by military edicts. In Geidam, not only are people afraid to go to farm and graze but they are suffering disruption caused by military market closure. Families are now reliant on income women generate as husbands have been killed, detained, are no longer willing or able to provide or may have divorced wives. Women with disabilities face difficulties due to stigma, fewer social networks, low starting economic base and lack of support.

**Participation and voice in decision making and peacebuilding:** The 2019 elections saw one woman out of 6 members representing Yobe in the House of

Representatives. There are no women members in the Senate, no female members in the State House of Assembly and no women LGA chairpersons. These dynamics reflect women's lack of presence in public space. Women are better able to participate in decision making at the community level compared to 2017 but barriers remain. Many women engage in self-censorship, reluctant to speak in places where men are present. Yet, women are readier to take part in initiatives as they see failure to do so means decisions do not bring positive results for them. Still, improvements do not apply evenly to all women. Those chosen as representatives of groups to constitute platforms tend to be men. Consequently, women who are farmers, pastoralists, young, religious leaders, disabled and part of other groups are left out.

**Gender-based violence (GBV):** Most discussion on sexual violence focuses on child survivors. Sexual violence against women is rarely reported. Older girls and women are more likely to be blamed. Sexual violence within marriage is normalised. The abductions of girls from Dapchi in March 2018 has adversely affected girls' access to education. Sexual harassment in schools, religious institutions and workplaces goes largely unreported. Women and girls who exchange sex for money, food, protection and items due to lack of livelihood options are stigmatised, discriminated against and seen as 'harlots.' Domestic violence has increased as economic hardship has led to increased disputes and men asserting authority. GBV referral pathways are weak due to reduced financing. While the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) in Damaturu provides healthcare and counselling, serious gaps remain outside the capital. Very little work has challenged victim blaming. Rather than be shamed, many women and girls who become pregnant through rape terminate pregnancy, including through unsafe means. A combination of stigma, impunity and non-survivor centred institutions disincentivises pursuit of cases through the justice system. Survivors are less able to report when perpetrators have money, power and status. Other forms of GBV in Yobe are denial of resources, early and forced marriage and witchcraft accusations. There are particular categories of women and girls, including those with disabilities and adolescent girls, among whom GBV incidence is higher. While GBV is present across the state, respondents said there was higher incidence in areas of return and/ or with military presence.

**Changing gender norms and realities:** While roles and responsibilities have shifted, gender norms take longer to transform. As a result, men who have lost their livelihoods find their sense of identity affected. Meanwhile, women are playing increasing important roles in providing for families and in community decision making. Respondents spoke about how these ideas of masculinity and femininity had contributed to increased rates of divorce as it is shameful for men to not provide for families. Yet, some men are increasing open to and grateful for the work of women and girls. They proactively try to find ways in which their daughters and wives can benefit from activities. However, respondents wondered if women will be pushed back into gendered roles when life returns to 'normal.' Roles and

responsibilities have changed due to necessity and the need for family survival – how sustained this change will be is unknown.



## POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

### Results

**Improved policy and legislation:** Yobe state has increased penalties to life imprisonment for rape of minors and 25 years imprisonment for rape of adults. The Ministry of Justice and police have taken steps to make reporting easier and train personnel on GBV.

**Rising awareness of human rights, including those of women and girls, and (some) reporting of human rights violations:** As a result of sensitisation campaigns, people not only know their rights but are aware of where they can be supported when violations have taken place.

**Community leaders starting to be more inclusive and responsive:** MCN trains community leaders, scribes and women relatives on conflict management, human rights and record keeping. It is early days however more inclusive decision-making processes and proactive responses to community challenges were already visible in some locations.

**People coming together to mitigate conflict:** At the same time, institutions have become more inclusive and responsive in their decision making.

**Increase in youth engagement due to interventions:** NGOs have engaged with young women and men so they are more engaged in communities and able to start up their own businesses.



**Interventions have supported women's increased resilience:** Participants in women's economic empowerment have started businesses and report increased self-esteem.

**Changed attitudes towards people associated with AOGs and increased social cohesion:** Acceptance of people who return from AOGs has increased due to interventions.

**Changing attitudes around disability in locations of intervention:** Interventions that support people with disabilities and engage stakeholders change community attitudes and behaviour.

**Shift from early and forced marriage to desire and access for education:** Increasingly, girls tell parents they want to continue their education and learn skills before

getting married and mothers have been able to speak up for their daughters.

**Some changes in practices and attitudes around women's participation and voice:** Women are more able to contribute to family and community decision making. They are eager to start initiatives with the vanguard of women who first stepped forward having multiplier effects.

**(Limited) progress on GBV access to services and reporting:** Although challenges remain, more survivors are now reporting violations and accessing services particularly in Damaturu.

**Stronger coordination and collaboration, including on protection leading to joint action:** Given resourcing for Yobe interventions is not sufficient to cover needs, agencies are incentivised to ensure little duplication and coordination mechanisms are stronger.

## CHALLENGES

**Organisational bureaucracy and release of funds:** Internal and donor processes hamper responsiveness to changing dynamics and delay programming. This challenge cuts across many organisations and was raised by government, NGO and UN respondents.

**Reduced and decreasing funding levels:** As of 31 July 2019, 38.6 percent of funds required for humanitarian response in 2019 had been received,<sup>1</sup> most of it earmarked for Borno. Despite best efforts, gender mainstreaming has suffered with only 12.4 percent of GBV funds and 16.4 percent of child protection funds having been received.<sup>2</sup>

**Access and security hinder programming plans and results:** Security risks have increased. Actors are unable to access certain communities due to high insecurity and military restrictions..

**Overly militarised approaches set interventions back and cause civilian harm:** Undue emphasis is given to militarised rather than non-kinetic strategies that focus on ameliorating the situations of people affected by violence and winning hearts and minds.

**Insufficient political will and government ownership:** Respondents saw the state government wanting to maximise opportunities but complained bureaucracy delayed interventions and doubted the extent to women's rights are taken seriously.

**Lack of domestication of human rights laws:** Yobe has yet to domesticate the Administration of Criminal Justice Act, Child Rights Act, Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act (VAPP Act), Gender and Equal Opportunities Act, Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act or the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa also known as the Kampala Convention.

**Patriarchal norms hinder women's participation and voice without concerted efforts:** Women of all ages are

not supposed to speak up in public, particularly if (older) men are present. Many times, women continue to be excluded from decision spaces which tend to be all-male affairs and so lack information necessary for participation even in spaces to which they are invited. While these norms are changing, they hinder meaningful participation as many women and men have internalised this taboo around women being outspoken. Similar norms prevent young people of all genders from taking part in community discussions.

**Difficulties translating women's inclusion into meaningful participation and voice:** Attention can tend to focus on making up numbers without looking quality of representation, either by supporting women to contribute for example through women only sessions before main meetings or by ensuring women who are invited have the skills and capabilities to reach out to other women and girls to hear their concerns and reflect this in their participation.

**Male dominated security agencies hinder women's and girls' access to security and justice:** Outside Damaturu, particularly in areas with volatile security dynamics, there are often no women security agents among soldiers, police officers or NSCDC officers. As a result, many women and girls are unable to approach security agents with security and justice concerns.

**Having partially broken the culture of silence, support is not present for GBV survivors who report:** Community volunteers and mobilisers reportedly receive frequent telephone calls, sometimes daily, reporting GBV cases and asking for referrals for services which now have become more inaccessible due to reduced funding.

**Increased punishment for rape had led to more cases being dropped:** Although rape convictions were secured in 2017 and early 2018, numbers dropped after penalties increased due to pressure from the perpetrator which pushes survivors and their families to settle.

<sup>1</sup> OCHA, 'Nigeria: Humanitarian Funding Overview,' 31 July 2019

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

**Impunity for human rights violations including GBV for security force personnel:** The military has set up a human rights desk to which complaints are supposed to be reported but, in practice, this process is difficult to follow. Survivors are also more reluctant to speak out about what has happened to them if the perpetrators belong to security agencies.

**Lack of holistic responses makes progress on GBV difficult:** Although the SARC in Damaturu provides free and quality services, provision elsewhere is weak. Moreover, there are few interventions focused on removing survivors from violence. In the absence of

protection programmes and no accessible safe house, survivors face threats and attacks if they report. Indeed, lack of work combating stigma means survivors are re-victimised and disincentivised from reporting. A major gap continues to be work on prevention.

**Non-intersectional interventions mean all in communities, especially most vulnerable and marginalised do not benefit to equal extent:**

Programmes have also found it difficult to reach some of the most marginalised in society including adolescent girls, young women and women and girls with disabilities.

## LESSONS

**Work at the institutional and structural level is slow and painful but necessary and needs to be balanced with individual and community level interventions:** Both sets of interventions are required to bring about positive change.

**Longer-term engagement and proper analysis are required for sustained impact:** Agencies who did proper context and conflict analysis and built community trust and ownership found programming, even on potentially sensitive issues, went smoother and had longer-term impact.

**Programmes need to balance demand and supply interventions:** Alongside supplying services and infrastructure, actors should have engaged with communities, civil society and media to make demand more visible from the start to persuade government to act.

**Collaboration, coordination and partnership rather than competition delivers results:** Agencies competing over scarce resources has led to chaos and duplication while progress was more visible where actors came together.

**Proper community engagement needs to be at all levels (not just top down):** Ensuring buy-in of the entire community means reaching out to marginalised groups and holding town hall meetings and information sharing sessions. Otherwise, actors run the risk of elite capture, perceptions of closeness to those seen as corrupt and rumours of their 'real purpose' taking hold.

**Adults speak for younger people but do not know their issues and have their own biases:** Young people, women in particular, can feel and be discouraged to talk in group settings. Adults start from biased perspectives, for example blaming girls for rape or seeing unemployed young men as a 'menace to society'. Actors need to find ways to directly engage with youth and support them to mobilise and advocate rather than have others speaking for them.

**Rights awareness and education needs to be the bedrock of all interventions:** Any new programme, particularly one working in communities unused to interventions should run a basic programme of rights awareness and education alongside interventions.

**Supporting communities to act works – and should have been done earlier:** People are eager to do work themselves rather than wait for assistance from others.

Staff need to have direct contact with participants in interventions rather than via a third party so they can learn from and reflect this knowledge of community realities and suggestions into programming adaptation and design.

**Interveners need to build capacity first before bringing livelihoods interventions:** Financial skills and capacities need to be strengthened before giving grants.

**Trauma healing interventions are important in themselves and a pre-requisite to engagement for effectiveness:** Interventions can have little impact if they work with populations with MHPSS needs they do not meet. Alternatively, programmes that did trauma healing work alongside other interventions report better results.

**Address economic needs alongside engaging in peacebuilding interventions:** Given economic conditions are so difficult, interventions need to address income generation needs before or alongside peacebuilding work.

**Women are keen to participate in development and humanitarian activities in the state if supported but having women in the room is insufficient if organisations do not provide ongoing support alongside ensuring this inclusion:** When women are supported with building of skills and self-esteem, encouraged and are able to mobilise in safe spaces before engaging in mixed platforms, they play crucial roles in promoting good governance, managing conflict and mitigating violence, building peace and rebuilding their communities.

**Continued and sustained focus is needed to ensure women's participation and inclusion as (some) men tend to continue to exclude:** Even if interventions are designed to maximise women's active participation, without continued focus, this outcome can slide.

**Expansion in women's roles without working on masculinities adds to women's responsibilities and burdens:** Women are increasingly burdened while men struggle with feelings of redundancy and inadequacy. Yet, men and women in families where responsibilities are split more evenly report feeling happier and having less household conflict.

**Most work on GBV focuses on sexual violence against children, missing other types of GBV such as domestic violence and abuse, sexual harassment, early and forced marriage and sexual violence against women:**

Acting against sexual violence against children, if it occurs outside marriage, is likely to have widespread support as it does not challenge social norms around GBV. Yet, incidence of other forms of GBV is higher but not taken as seriously.

**One-off sensitisation can improve access to services but has limited other impact:**

Cases reported to the SARC increased after more people knew of its existence and how to access its (free) services. Yet barriers to access remain, particularly for people outside Yola. Moreover, one off sensitisation events in the absence of campaigns led by people in the community have little impact in preventing violence, combating stigma or ensuring convictions.

**Holistic GBV interventions are needed to make progress:**

**Areas requiring action are as follows:** 1) service provision beyond Yola; 2) case workers in place to support survivors (including but not limited to court appearances); 3) anti-stigma campaigns; 4) police and court systems to be more responsive to survivors; 5) victim and witness protection including through provision of accessible safe houses; and 6) attitudes, practices and norms to prevent violence.

**Opening up conversations around changing gender roles and supporting individuals, families and**

**communities through this change can mitigate**

**backlash and violence:** While norms perpetuate unequal power relations, any movement in gender realities can lead to increased violence as men feel the need to 'prove' power and control. Programmes that engage women and men separately and together can help individuals, families and communities adjust.

**Interventions need to be designed to facilitate meaningful participation of women, youth, people with disabilities and other groups usually marginalised:**

Inclusion and benefit needs sustained engagement from design onwards including through holding separate sessions with different groups during design, community entry and for feedback during implementation.

**Strengthening community institutions can work with sufficient buy-in and ownership:**

MCN interventions, while still at early stages, are starting to lead more people to come to community leaders and reduced the impunity of these leaders to make arbitrary decisions.

**Importance of radio to engage people in hard-to reach areas with high levels of insecurity:**

Radio can create awareness, share information and find out realities, challenges and ideas from listeners via call in programmes and help programmes to be community driven.

**Put in places checks and balances to guard against diversion and elite capture:**

Agencies should strategise ways to mitigate elite capture while making power holders feel included.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

After having examined conflict, security and gender dynamics in the state and outlined key results, challenges and lessons from policy and programming interventions to date, this final section turns to making recommendations for action.

**To the Governor:**

- Support speedy passage and assent to all outstanding human rights legislation namely Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA), Gender and Equal Opportunities Act (GEO Act), Child Protection Act (CPA), VAPP Act, Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act and domestication of the Kampala Convention once passed by the State House of Assembly
- Show leadership in and prioritisation for women empowerment and participation in discussions at the State Executive Council
- Provide leadership in developing non-kinetic responses to AOGs and facilitate joint working across MDAs in this regard through the development of cross- government approach and plan to mitigate the impact of insecurity on populations living in volatile areas

**To the State House of Assembly:**

- Pass all outstanding human rights legislation namely ACJA, GEO Act, CPA VAPP Act, Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act and domestication of the Kampala Convention

**To the Ministry of Health:**

- Include the SARC in 2020 and future budgets, building in a mechanism in place for continued championing of this

**To the Ministry of Justice:**

- Set up a Special Court on GBV that is a part of the existing High Court and operates in Damaturu and other judicial divisions with prosecution and defence lawyers, judges and court personnel trained in handling GBV cases, a practice direction sent out, procedures drawn up to protect survivors and suspects and outreach conducted to the police, NSCDC and communities.
- Set in place proper coordination mechanisms between police CID and DPP to bridge gaps

**To the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs:**

- Set up a programme of training and retraining community leaders to build skills and knowledge in

conflict resolution, mediation, leadership, gender and human rights through a cadre of qualified trainers with knowledge and training skills

#### **To the Ministry of Social Welfare:**

- Set in place proper programmes for social reintegration of children associated with armed groups including access to livelihoods and education, working with child protection actors to do so
- Create a protection framework for the state which brings all MDAs, UN agencies and NGOs on board to develop a road map for response to protection risks

#### **To the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development:**

- Set up a safe house for survivors of GBV and post and train people to run it
- Include interventions provided for in the State Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security in annual budgets and push for release of funds

#### **To the military:**

- (Re) train military personnel in the theatre on human rights, international humanitarian law, protection of civilians and community engagement
- Implement a zero-tolerance policy for cases of GBV which includes giving orders for military commanders to tell officers and soldiers that perpetrators will face consequences; reach out to NGOs in the area to encourage (but not force) reporting even if this is of trends rather than specific incidents; and publicise court martials for GBV so justice is seen to have been done.
- Provide mixed military and community militia patrols in areas of insecurity to enable people to go to farm, graze animals and collect firewood

#### **To the Commissioner of Police:**

- Deploy women to LGAs to enable better access to security and justice for women and girls
- Provide hazard pay to all police officers working in dangerous areas
- Increase outreach on Police Complaints Response Unit to NGOs and communities so people can report if police officers are found wanting
- Give clearance to the state CID head of gender to speak on radio programmes about the FSU
- Give instructions to DPOs in the state to work with officers posted to the FSU to increase awareness of the FSU among the general public through engaging in outreach
- Instruct state CID to inform FSUs how cases are progressing so they can inform survivors

- Set in place proper coordination mechanisms between police CID and DPP to bridge gaps and challenges
- Pass directive to all police stations to be forwarded to health centres that there is no requirement of a police report for treatment of sexual violence
- Institute a proper victim and witness protection programme and direct state CID and FSU officers to engage with survivors and witnesses about protection needs throughout the process.
- Provide adequate funds to provide materials and vehicles to ensure proper and timely investigation of GBV cases

#### **To the Commandant of the National Security and Civil Defence Corps:**

- Deploy women to LGAs to enable better access to security and justice for women and girls

#### **To MCN and other programme implementers:**

- Improve financial and operations systems to mitigate future delays
- Expand scope of work on GBV to look at other forms of violence beyond sexual violence against children through 1) reframing the SARC steering committee into a GBV response team; 2) including other forms of GBV within the FSU's remit and re-training police officers; and 3) integrating gender awareness including on different GBV forms into training provided to CPSPs, CAF facilitators, community leaders and vigilante groups
- Develop effectiveness of the current SARC by 1) providing refresher training for staff on how to interact with patients;<sup>3</sup> 2) setting up a system where requests for drugs and other items are made well in advance to ensure timely release; 3) expanding the SARC steering committee to include more GBV experts including representatives from INGOs and UN agencies and its remit to cover GBV in the state; 4) training SARC staff in how to engage with women with disabilities; 5) provide better disaggregated data on survivors that access the SARC in terms of age, occupation, households and type of violence
- Continue plans to create additional SARCs outside Damaturu with steering committee include all agencies working on GBV prevention and response as well as security agents, community women, members of child protection networks and any government officials and community leaders present. Community stakeholders should be sensitised and trained in handling GBV, a programme of community outreach including around anti-stigma and anti-victim blaming carried out and a multi-stakeholder steering committee established

<sup>3</sup> Some respondents praised the SARC for its work but said some staff required training as they were observed to be asking questions in a manner that suggested lack of empathy.



- Fund women's rights organisation to do sustained community engagement through case work, anti-stigma and prevention work via peer to peer campaigns, radio programmes, engaging men in positions of power and reaching out to women and girls usually marginalised
- Explore alternative means of punishing perpetrators through increasing community censure and stigma and decreasing income generation and marriage prospects for men who commit GBV rather than relying solely on the criminal justice process to punish and deter
- Support the Ministry of Justice to establish a Special GBV Court through advocacy to the new Attorney General, training of prosecution and defence lawyers, judges and court personnel, drafting of a practice direction, drawing up of procedures to protect survivors and suspects and outreach to the police, NSCDC and communities
- Increase engagement in coordination structures around GBV and child protection
- Institutionalise training of community leaders through engagement with the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs on a training of trainer model
- Increase women's participation and voice across all MCN interventions by linking women only forum with CPSPs and Community Accountability Forums (CAFs) and asking women what support they need to be able to more meaningfully participate
- Improve systems for increasing women's capacities for mediation and dispute resolution by setting up systems for monitoring and mentoring women title holders and women's groups
- Support people with disabilities (women and men separately and together) to mobilise, build social networks, interact with platforms and demand change
- Support women's rights organisations to work on masculinities through encouraging and facilitating discussions among women and men of all ages, separately and together
- Engage the military on human rights violations, including GBV, by working with other actors that interact with senior military leadership
- Start working on sustainability, learning from what has (not) worked for other organisations so the tempo of work is sustained after MCN ends
- Budget for parallel spaces for women, young people and people with disabilities to share information, analysis and needs ahead of community platform meetings, increase budget for refreshments to provide for children that women may bring along and provide transport to meetings for people with disabilities
- Support community stakeholders in Geidam to advocate for the opening of its market by the military
- Conduct regular context analysis integrating understanding of gender and social exclusion dynamics and update programmes to ensure continued effectiveness and conflict sensitivity
- Support partners to develop security and safety strategies given the highly sensitive nature of their work and potential for risk
- Put in place security assessments and procedures for community meetings such as CAF, for example having male and female members of community militias doing body scans of people before they enter and including payment for doing so in budgets
- Provide additional guidance and mentoring to MCN staff in technical skills including through on the job training and mentoring
- Build capacity of partners on conflict sensitivity so they do not inadvertently increase tensions through interventions
- Organise cross-state learning on engaging drug users and see if partner(s) in Yobe can learn from the model used by the University of Maiduguri Muslim Women's Association in Borno which has former gang members and drug users reach out to others
- Redress gender imbalance in the all-male MCN team by ensuring any further recruitment gives priority to women candidates

### Find out more

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