

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 peace-building
- 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.



Jamatu Nasril Islam First Aid Group sharing materials to raise awareness about sexual and gender-based violence.

Source: Usman Ali

KEY ACTIVITIES

This newsletter highlights the key activities undertaken by the programme in February-March 2019.

Summary of key activities include:

Conflict management, reconciliation and stability in communities:

- 243 traditional rulers trained on dispute resolution
- Annual perception survey confirms increased confidence in traditional justice system

Addressing sexual and gender-based violence:

- Steering Committees of the sexual assault referral centres develop strategic plans
- Religious leaders join campaign against sexual and gender-based violence

Youth peace initiatives:

- Reformed youths mobilise against violence

Community policing initiatives:

- 355 voluntary policing sector trained on community policing

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT, RECONCILIATION AND STABILITY

243 traditional rulers trained in dispute resolution

The MCN Programme recorded progress on the second phase of its capacity building programme for traditional rulers on alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in February and March 2019. A total of 243 traditional rulers from six emirates benefitted from the second phase of training, including: Ganye and Numan (Adamawa State); Dikwa and Gwoza (Borno State); and Bade and Pataskum (Yobe State). A total of 958 traditional rulers have been trained between January and March 2019.

FACTS & FIGURES:

Traditional Justice System

Traditional rulers trained

1,404

Cases handled

1,409

Success rate of resolution

88%

The training focused on mediation, conflict management, civil and Sharia/customary law, human rights law and family law. In addition, the workshops gave traditional rulers the opportunity to interact with stakeholders in the justice and security sectors.

The purpose of the interactive session was to enhance collaboration in dispute resolution and administration of justice, amongst traditional rulers, security agencies, magistrates, and civil society practitioners. It provided an opportunity to discuss issues affecting collaboration and identify solutions to address them.

To ensure the sustainability of the intervention, MCN also supported the training of 150 mentors (25 mentors in each emirate) to cascade their learnings to other traditional rulers. The mentors were paired with mentees and received guidance on how to organise follow-up sessions. The role of the mentors is crucial in ensuring the application and replication of the knowledge and skills acquired.

During the reporting period, 450 scribes of traditional rulers were trained in keeping records of disputes resolved by traditional rulers. The programme formally handed over record keeping centres to emirates. Traditional authorities can now collate information on the number and category of disputes resolved and undertake measures to systematically address recurrent sources of conflict. This will enhance the contribution of the traditional justice system to peace and stability in the region.

‘This training will help us a lot, especially those of us who come from remote areas where there is no police or court presence.’

Chief Jorum Jared, Village head, Bachama, Adamawa State

‘The training has provided us with knowledge on how to serve our people better and avoid costly mistakes in dispute resolution.’

Adamu Rimi, Ward head, Dogonzare, Pataskum Emirate, Yobe State

‘We realised that we were not giving people their rights and we were doing things wrongly. The training manual given to us will help us a lot.’

Emmanuel, Village head- Mandla/Mbulo, Ganye, Adamawa State

‘We now understand that it is not all matters of dispute and conflicts that we can assume jurisdiction.’

‘The training strengthened our relationship with the security agents.’

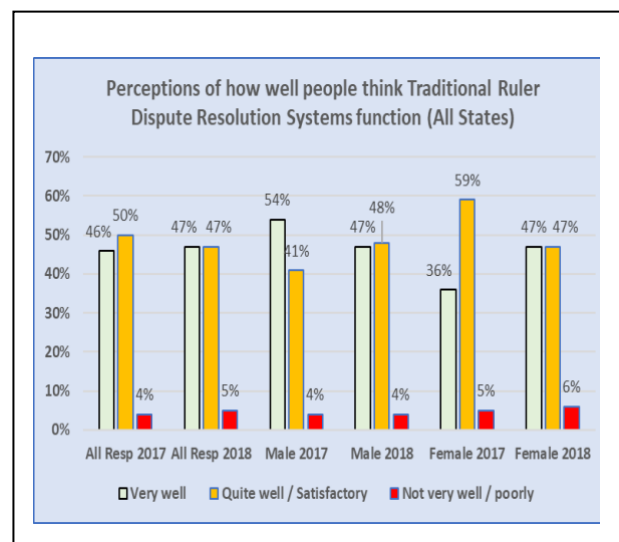
Alhaji Ismail Ibrahim, District head, Ndabkura/Ladade, Gwoza, Borno State

Annual perception survey confirms increased confidence in the traditional justice system

An annual perception survey was conducted by an independent survey company to track programme outcomes. One of the major findings was that the MCN Programme is strengthening the capacity of traditional rulers in dispute resolution, which is contributing to improved confidence in the traditional justice system in the programme’s target states. The results also demonstrate that there was more positive recognition of the roles of traditional rulers in target states (when compared to other states).

Participants were asked if they were aware of the traditional justice system in their community, and the role of traditional rulers in resolving disputes. They were then asked how well they think these systems function.

The chart below summarises the findings for the surveys conducted in the three programme states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe combined. Data is shown from the surveys in 2017 and 2018.



Summary of findings:

- Respondents are mostly satisfied with the traditional ruler system: 47% say it works very well, 47% say it is satisfactory, just 5% dissatisfied - figures that are largely unchanged from a year earlier.
- Seven 7% fewer men think the systems works well than a year ago, whereas 11% more women think it works well.
- There were much higher levels of satisfaction in rural areas compared to urban areas.
- 93% of those that knew of the role of traditional rulers said they would take a dispute to them if they needed to.

- Data for the three control states (combined) showed a decrease in those that think the system works well (from 72% in 2017 to 55% in 2018).
- The fall in satisfaction in control states (where there have been no initiatives to support traditional rulers) suggests that the maintenance of satisfaction levels in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe is something of an achievement.

ADDRESSING SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

SARC steering committees develop strategic plans

MCN initiatives aimed at mobilising awareness and interest among diverse stakeholders to combat sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) have continued to yield positive results. By February 2019, the programme has successfully supported the development of Strategic Action Plans for the Steering Committees of the Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) in the three target states.

The multi-stakeholder committees include members from state ministries of health, justice, women affairs and youth development; Nigeria Police Force, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, and representatives of civil society and media organisations.

The strategic planning workshops organised in Damaturu, Maiduguri and Yola provided platforms for committee members to identify policy and practice changes required to address SGBV in their respective states.

Committee members also brainstormed strategies to engage different stakeholders to raise awareness and mobilise action on strong preventive and support systems to address SGBV. The workshops were facilitated by the Coalition Against Rape and Violence (CARAV), which shared its experiences in Kano State.

Religious leaders join campaign against SGBV

Following the advocacy initiatives of the Borno State SARC Steering Committee to leaders of religious institutions, the subject of sexual and gender-based violence has started featuring in sermons. One of the leaders, Imam Zana Laisu of the Maiduguri Central Mosque, delivered a sermon that cautioned worshippers about the religious and social implications of SGBV. The sermon provided Quranic verses that forbid SGBV and the punishment reserved for perpetrators.

In addition, the respected religious leader drew attention to initiatives being put in place to combat SGBV and provided information on support services provided by the NELEWA Centre.

Posters containing information SARC services are being distributed in the premises of the mosque. MCN will be monitoring the results and scale of the campaign.

YOUTH PEACE INITIATIVES

Reformed youths mobilise against violence

MCN initiatives aimed at addressing youth involvement in violence is starting to bear fruit.

For example, a youth who was involved in inter-gang and political violence and drug peddling has abandoned these activities and is championing peace initiatives in his community. Ibrahim Abdullahi Duka, a resident of London Ciki, Jere local government area of Borno State, had joined the Babbanlayi Group for protection against harassment by other youth gangs.

The youth groups engaged in violent fights arising from gang rivalry, superiority and territorial claims. They were available for hire to politicians who used them to harass political opponents and cause mayhem at political rallies and elections.

In August 2018 Ibrahim participated in a sensitization event on youth non-violence and peace coordinated by the University of Maiduguri Muslim Women Association (UMMWA). The event created a platform for the interaction of youths from rival groups in a non-violent setting for the first time. Ibrahim said he found the experience of sitting together with traditional enemies to listen to non-violence messages and reflecting on the damaging impact of risky behaviour and violence on the socio-economic and physical wellbeing on youth a transformational process.

The turning point for him was when they looked at scars from violent confrontations: 'I asked myself, what will I tell my children when I get married and raise a family when they ask me how I got scars from knife wounds.'

After the workshop, Ibrahim joined other youths in renouncing violence and anti-social behaviour. He stopped collecting a weekly protection levy from the person who sells marijuana and other intoxicants to boys in his community. This loss of protection pressured the drug dealer to relocate, thereby breaking the source of drugs to youths in the communities.

Members of his group are working with leaders to keep their communities safe and peaceful. The result of the behavioural change is that community leaders trust the youths enough to ask them to accompany women who are due to be delivered of their babies at night to the community primary health care centre.

COMMUNITY POLICING INITIATIVES

355 members of voluntary policing sector groups trained

The MCN Programme has continued to enhance security in communities in the North East by supporting the training of 355 members of voluntary policing sector (VPS) groups. The training is a follow-up training of leaders of 32 VPS groups across Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States. Beneficiaries were trained on community policing techniques, human rights protection, coordination with security agencies and organisation management. The step-down training model empowered leaders to deliver the training under the guidance of the state-based mentors. The initiative also aimed to identify issues affecting the performance of VPS groups and community policing.

‘Before the training, I thought women didn’t have rights. This training has given me an insight on how to protect women.’

Fatima A. Musa, VGN, Geidam LGA, Yobe State

‘Unknowingly, I have been doing the wrong thing when called upon to settle conflicts and make unlawful arrests. This training has changed my attitude.’

Muhammed Mustapha, VGN, Nguru LGA, Yobe State

‘Learning about the violation of human rights has really changed my mindset in handling issues. I will always protect the rights of everyone.’

Alhaji Bukar, Secretary VGN, Gujba LGA, Yobe State

PROGRESS AGAINST EU INDICATORS

Indicator	Target 2021	Achieved at 31 January 2019	Comment
Number of staff from government institutions and internal security forces trained	1210	2,105	Activity Years 2-4
Number of people participating in conflict prevention and peace building activities	2860	7,201	Activity Years 1-4
Total number of community beneficiaries	2,278,580	1,211,880	Activity Years 2-4

UPCOMING ACTIVITY

- Training of female traditional rulers on alternative dispute resolution
- Training of scribes of traditional rulers on a record keeping system for the traditional justice system
- Consultation workshops for the development of a code of conduct for traditional rulers
- Meetings and initiatives in community peace and safety partnership in target LGAs
- Advocacy initiatives of the 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 political environment as political mobilizations start ahead of the 2019 elections
- Continuing challenges around health issues
- Potential for a period of industrial unrest and strikes

Find out more

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