

# MANAGING CONFLICT IN NIGERIA

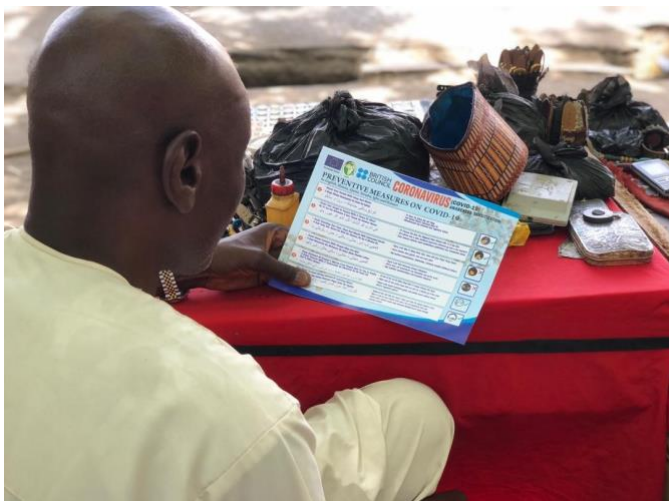
The Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) Programme aims to support Nigerians with conflict resolution, at both the state and community level. Our work focuses on reducing violence, promoting stability and strengthening resilience so that Nigerians feel more safe and secure in their communities.

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.



MCN-supported platforms embark on COVID-19 prevention strategies in communities. Source: MCN

## KEY ACTIVITIES

This newsletter highlights the key activities undertaken by the programme in February – March 2020.

Summary of key activities include:

**\*SPECIAL\* COVID-19 response:**

- MCN-supported platforms mobilise quickly to prevent the spread of COVID-19

**Conflict management, reconciliation and stability in communities:**

- Growing public confidence in the traditional justice system in Yobe state
- CPSP takes action to stop environmental degradation

**Addressing sexual and gender-based violence:**

- Yobe SARC stakeholders develop standard operating procedures to address SGBV

**Economic empowerment initiatives:**

- 600+ women benefit from economic empowerment initiatives in Yobe and Borno states

**Youth peacebuilding initiatives:**

- Women associations implementing peace initiatives

**Policy dialogue initiatives:**

- Policy dialogue on youth engagement and inclusion in Adamawa
- Policy dialogue on economic empowerment strategies in Borno

## COVID-19 RESPONSE

MCN community platforms mobilise quickly to prevent the spread of COVID-19

**Community Peace and Safety Partnerships**

The Community Peace and Safety Partnership (CPSP) platforms supported by the Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) Programme are mobilising quickly to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in their communities. In Mayo Belwa in Adamawa State, concerns were raised at a CPSP meeting held in March regarding the spread of coronavirus. The platform agreed to engage religious leaders to sensitize their members on ways to prevent the virus, raise awareness on the need to monitor persons traveling in and out of their communities, and encourage the local production of soap for handwashing.



## FACTS & FIGURES:

Traditional Justice System  
(January 2020)

No of traditional  
rulers trained

**2,190**

No of cases  
resolved

**6,195**

% of cases  
resolved

**86**

With MCN support, the CPSP immediately hosted a meeting with religious leaders. A COVID-19 action plan to cascade the information was developed and agreed. Information, education and communication materials were produced quickly (in English and local languages) and disseminated throughout the community. The materials focus on COVID-19 symptoms, preventative measures and how to refer cases to local health authorities.

### Economic empowerment programmes

The Community Engagement and Social Development Initiative (CESDI) - a local CSO implementing a women's economic empowerment programme with MCN support - has also leveraged its platform with key women groups to share handbills disseminating information in local languages on the symptoms and how to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 in Yobe and Borno states.



Women targeted by MCN-supported platforms to raise awareness about COVID-19 and prevention strategies. Source: MCN

Feedback received to date indicates that there is growing awareness of COVID-19 with community members. Citizens are taking measures to prevent the rapid transmission of the virus.

**“I and 15 other village heads are now better informed about COVID-19 as a result of the awareness session organised by the CPSP. Following that, I hosted a meeting with my ward heads to discuss how to prevent transmission and the spread of COVID-19 in our area.”**

Alhaji Ibrahim Jauro, Village Head, Mayo Belwa, Adamawa State

**“The CPSP shared information on symptoms, preventive measures and how to refer cases of COVID-19. I shared this knowledge with my colleagues and we have commenced several**

**church activities, including house-to-house sensitization on how to prevent the spread of the virus.”**

Pastor Amos Joshua, Chairman, Christian Association of Nigeria, Mayo Belwa, Adamawa State

## CONFLICT MANAGEMENT, RECONCILIATION AND STABILITY

**Public confidence in traditional justice grows as trained traditional rulers resolve landmark case in Yobe State**

The traditional justice systems supported by the Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) programme in Yobe State have recorded growing public confidence. The programme has trained 775 traditional rulers in the state and supported the establishment of four record keeping centres. Data from the centres indicate that 4,633 cases have been handled by trained traditional rulers and the success rate of dispute resolution is 89%.

The programme's 2019 Annual Perception Survey indicates more respondents believed the system functioned than in the 2018 survey. Most of the respondents said they would take their disputes to the traditional rulers and would also be happy to respond to summons from the traditional courts if others reported cases against them.

Further evidence is the increased willingness of formal security and justice institutions to refer cases to the traditional rulers. A case in point is the longstanding land dispute between two families in Potiskum, Yobe State. The case had dragged on for years and was transferred from the Sharia Court in Borno State to the Sharia Court in Potiskum, following the creation of the Yobe State in 1991.

After initial efforts to resolve the case failed in Potiskum, it was referred to Sharia Court of Appeal in Damaturu. However, the court could not sit for over seven years due to the insurgency. When the court resumed sitting after the situation improved, the case was further stalled by the death of the Grand Khadi who was the presiding judge. When the case was brought up before the newly appointed Grand Khadi, he opted to refer the matter to the Sulhu Centre in Pataskum Emirate for speedy resolution.

The Sulhu Centre speedily conducted further investigations into the matter. It was discovered that the land originally belonged to the father of the petitioners who allowed his brother, the father of the defendant, to farm on it. The defendant took over farming on the land after his father's death and later leased it to another person to farm. The problem arose from the decision of the defendant to put up the land for sale to the person he had leased the land to.

The ruling of the Sulhu Centre, which was in accordance with religious and customary laws, was acceptable to the disputing parties and helped to reunite the families.

**“We are grateful to the Sulhu Centre for the mediation because we are old...now in our 80s. We wake up every day wondering whether we are going to pass on the conflict to our children and grandchildren. This would not happen now with this resolution. Our family is now reunited.”**

Idrissa Zulu, Potiskum, Yobe State

In Bade Emirate, the Sulhu Centre also resolved a major inter-communal conflict which had resulted in violence between Kurkushe and Tasga communities. The conflict, which arose from competition over access to a shared river for fishing purposes, led to violence in which many persons from both communities sustained injuries. The Emir of Bade summoned the leaders of the communities and the district head and referred them to the Sulhu Centre for resolution.

Following the intervention of the Sulhu Centre, an agreement was reached on the demarcation of the river among users for fishing, the cessation of reprisal attacks, the recourse to a peaceful resolution of future conflicts, and mop-up of arms used by the two communities during the violence.

**“The training and the record keeping centre have greatly supported our work. We can now respond to conflict in our communities in a timely and effective way. Traditional institutions are better able to complement government’s efforts to maintain peace and stability**

Garba A. Budde, District Head, Gogaram, Bade Emirate, Yobe State

## Gujba CPSP takes action to stop environmental degradation

The Community Peace and Safety Partnership (CPSP) in Gujba LGA of Yobe State has taken action to stop environmental degradation. This action followed a report made at the January CPSP meeting on the indiscriminate cutting of trees for commercial and farming purposes in the local council area. The report noted that the large-scale cutting of wood was contributing to flooding and desertification, thereby further undermining access to livelihoods for people who have already been heavily impacted by the insurgency. The platform also expressed concern that the activities of wood loggers was likely to lead to conflict since resource users compete for access to the depleting forest resource.

The platform engaged traditional rulers, the local government authorities, and the State Ministry of Environment to investigate and take measures to stop the activities of the illegal wood loggers who were violating the law. Following advocacy meetings with these stakeholder, the local government authorities conducted a monitoring visit to the area with support from the CPSP platform.

The visit led to the arrest of illegal wood loggers, the seizure of wood, and the imposition of fines on those caught. The authorities also decided to engage forest guards to undertake regular monitoring to ensure compliance with rules on environmental conservation.

Following these actions, feedback from stakeholders at the CPSP meeting held in March indicate that there is a remarkable reduction in illegal wood logging activities in the area.



Wood seized by authorities. Source: Minjiyawa Ali

**“Although we were aware that some illegal logging was taking place, we did not realise the scale until the CPSP drew attention to it. We are pleased that the CPSP has helped us to take action to stop further destruction of the environment.”**

Bukar Kaku, Acting Chairman, Gujba LGA, Yobe State

## Community dialogue platform mobilises to stop drug abuse

The community dialogue platform has successfully initiated activities to address the high risk of drug abuse among youths in Bade LGA, Yobe State. The dialogue platform was initiated by Youth Peace Ambassadors trained by the Tamaiko Community Development Initiative, a beneficiary of capacity building and financial support from the Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) programme.

The dialogue platform was convened to address the high rate of youth drug abuse in the area, which is vulnerable for recruiting by non-state armed groups and engaging in criminal activities.

The dialogue platform analysed the drivers of drug abuse. It identified the lack of employment opportunities and the availability of addictive drugs in patent medicine stores. It was agreed that the Emir of Bade and the local government council will be engaged to increase access of vulnerable youths to skills and jobs in order to enhance their engagement in productive activities. As a result of these efforts, 10 youth were enlisted at the vocational centre in Bade.

The platform’s steering committee also engaged the association of patent medicine dealers in the local council to help check access of youths to hard drugs. As a result, the association signed a memorandum of understanding to ensure its members dispense drugs (often abused by youths) only based on prescription by competent medical authorities.

**“We appreciate the good initiative of the platform. It alerted us to youth vulnerability and their likely recruitment into armed groups. We will build on this to enhance livelihoods for young people, so they can be useful to their community.”**

Adamu Dagona, Acting Chairman, Bade LGA, Yobe State

## ADDRESSING SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

### Standard operating procedures developed for the investigation and prosecution of sexual offences in Yobe

The Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) programme provided support for the development of standard operating procedures to guide investigators and prosecutors of sexual and gender-based violence in Yobe State. This followed advocacy by the Steering Committee of the Yobe State Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC), which recently successfully influenced the enactment of legislation to prosecute sexual offenders.

Stakeholders believe that operational guidelines will enable investigators and prosecutors to benefit from global best practices and overcome challenges that encumber the speedy and effective investigation and prosecution of sexual offences.

The standard operating procedures, developed with the Yobe State Ministry of Justice and Yobe State Police Command, will help to standardize investigations and prosecutions. It will be formally adopted by the state government after ongoing validation by stakeholders.

## ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVES

### 300 women benefit from skills acquisition programme in Yobe State

The Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) programme has supported the empowerment of 300 women in Yobe State. The beneficiaries - selected equally from Potiskum, Jakusko and Nguru LGAs of the state - are participating in a livelihood enhancement project implemented by the Community Engagement and Social Development Initiative (CESDI).

The women were selected after vulnerability and market assessments were conducted. They were enrolled in trainings on savings and loans, life skills, peacebuilding, and community engagement. Beneficiaries were further exposed to skills ranging from livestock production, modern farming techniques, groundnut oil production, Kalwa preparation, tea spices preparation, making of food spices, fish processing, and production of liquid soap wash, shampoo, body and hair cream. Vocational trainings were based on an assessment of local market needs and resources.

Upon conclusion of the training, the women have formed groups and are organising community peace initiatives aimed at addressing local concerns, such as domestic violence, engagement of out-of-school children in street trading, and drug and substance abuse among youths.

CESDI, the implementing partner, has also leveraged on the platform of the women groups to share handbills disseminating information in local languages on the symptoms and how to prevent the transmission of COVID-19.

### 300 widows benefit from economic empowerment programme in Borno State

The Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) programme has provided support for the empowerment of 300 widows who lost their husbands as a result of the insurgency. The women were drawn from 14 LGAs in Borno State. The project, implemented by the Community Engagement and Social Development Initiative (CESDI), is aimed at supporting the recovery process in the state.

The women have so far received life-skills training, psycho-social support, social engagement training, and vocational training. Vocational skills - selected based on market assessment of needs in their localities - include cap making, livestock production, fishing processing, the production of groundnut oil, the processing of local beverages and spices, and the production of soap and local perfumes.

The beneficiaries have also been grouped into clusters of 20 members in each of the LGAs and are being supported to undertake initiatives to improve social conditions in their communities. They have also been engaged in sensitization initiatives of CESDI on COVID-19.

**“My husband was killed five years ago leaving me with 12 children. I stayed with two children whom I enrolled in school. While 10 others were living with our relatives. With this support, I have now brought back four more children to live with me and plan to bring others back as my business grows.”**

Malama Gambo, Jagana, Konduga LGA, Borno State



Training of women's groups in Potiskum. Source: CESDI

## WOMEN PEACEBUILDING INITIATIVES

### Women associations contributing to peace in Adamawa communities

The Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) programme has supported an initiative aimed at enhancing the participation of women in peacebuilding in Adamawa State. The initiative, implemented by the Global Peace Development (GPD) and Centre for Health and Development in Africa (CHEDA), targets 15 women associations from Mubi South, Mubi North and Yola North LGAs for capacity building. After the training, the groups received grants to organise peace initiatives in their communities. Some of the initiatives are already yielding positive results.

One of the initiatives is being implemented by CAN Women Association, Jambutu, Yola North LGA. The women addressed religious tensions in the community, which have been aggravated by allegations of discrimination against individuals as a result of their faith.

The group organised an interfaith dialogue which brought together leaders of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and Muslim Council of Nigeria to discuss measures needed to reduce tensions and promote religious harmony. A decision was made to create an interfaith committee that would address issues likely to undermine relations. Made up of prominent members of the community drawn from the two main religions, the committee is also mandated to ensure equitable distribution of opportunities and resources allocated to the community.

This was evidenced by recent recruitments to the Nigeria Police Force that were managed by the committee to reflect the diversity of the community.

**“The interfaith dialogue organised by CAN Women Wing enabled us to sit down and discuss how to foster harmonious relations between Christians and Muslims in Jambutu. As a result of the agreements reached and the activities of the committee, we now have equal access to resources.”**

Salisu M. Kwaranga, Secretary, Muslim Council, Jambutu

**“I am very happy about the improved relations between Christians and Muslims in Jambutu. When a job opportunity came up recently both Christians and Muslims were given slots. I hope this continues.”**

Rev. John Mark Balan, Member, CAN, Jambutu

Another MCN-supported initiative implemented by the Women Alliance Union, Gyella in Mubi South LGA has recorded strong community support. Aimed at addressing the high incidence of substance abuse and sexual and gender-based violence in Gyella, the initiative led to the formation of a peace club in the main secondary school in the community.

The women will train and provide mentorship to the students who are members of the club to undertake peer to peer enlightenment on substance abuse and SGBV. The novel approach adopted by the women has caught the interest of the District Head who has asked for establishment of peace clubs in all schools in the area.

## **POLICY DIALOGUE INITIATIVES**

### **Policy dialogue on youth inclusion and engagement**

The Adamawa State Ministry of Youths and Sports Development organised a policy dialogue on youth inclusion and engagement with support from the Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) programme. The dialogue was organised on 20 February 2020 in Yola and attracted senior public servants from relevant ministries, heads of security and para-military agencies in the state, civil society organisations, and youth groups.

The dialogue was aimed at generating ideas and practical suggestions on how stakeholders, particularly the Adamawa

State Government, can ensure more positive engagement of youths in order to prevent youth involvement in violence and crime.

A communique was issued with key recommendations for the positive engagement and inclusion of young persons in the state:

- Review the educational curriculum to ensure students acquire literacy, numeracy, and skills required for the changing job market
- Revitalise skills acquisition centres in different districts on the state to train youths
- Enhance access to credit for small scale businesses
- Reform the Almajiri system to ensure parents support the upkeep of their children
- Affirmative action by political parties to devote a percentage of posts to young persons
- Introduce youth parliaments at state and local council levels to serve as a training ground for youths in governance and provide an avenue for the inclusion of youths in socio-political processes.

The MCN programme will be supporting stakeholders to advocate for the implementation of these recommendations.

### **Policy dialogue on economic empowerment strategies**

The Borno State Ministry of Poverty Alleviation organised a policy dialogue on economic empowerment strategies with support from the Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) Programme. The dialogue was held on 10 March 2020 and aimed to generate information to feed into the development of a blueprint on economic empowerment currently being prepared by the state government. This is in line with the thinking of the state government that enhancing economic opportunities for the people, particularly youth, would help create the enabling environment for ending the insurgency.

Participants included senior government officials, representatives of civil society organisations, and delegates from the local government areas in the state. The dialogue reviewed previous and existing empowerment programmes and drew lessons to inform the government’s strategy document.

**“With the relative improvement in security, our attention is focused on resettlement and economic recovery. We appreciate the participatory and inclusive approach adopted for the policy making process.”**

Dr. B.G. Wakil, Chief of Staff to Governor, Borno State

**“It is important for every citizen to be empowered with a skill. We will listen to the views of the people from different communities who know what would work best for them.”**

Hon. Nuhu Clark, Commissioner for Poverty Alleviation, Borno State

## PROGRESS AGAINST EU INDICATORS

Indicator	Target 2021	Achieved at 31 January 2020	Comment
Number of staff from government institutions and internal security forces trained	1,210	6,726	Activity Years 2-4
Number of people participating in conflict prevention and peace building activities	2,860	27,909	Activity Years 1-4
Total number of community beneficiaries	2,278,580	2,165,566	Activity Years 2-4

## UPCOMING ACTIVITY

- 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
- Community reconciliation initiatives in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states
- Youth peace initiatives in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states
- Meetings and initiatives of the community peace and safety partnerships in target LGAs
- 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

- The COVID-19 pandemic and other public health 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

### Find out more

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