

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.



Professor Babagana Ahmed, Deputy Vice Chancellor of Yobe State University, Damaturu at an MCN-supported workshop on research in conflict and peacebuilding. Source: Sabiu Adamu

KEY ACTIVITIES

This newsletter highlights the key activities undertaken by the programme in June-July 2019.

Summary of key activities include:

Conflict management, reconciliation and stability in communities:

- Traditional justice system record growing public confidence
- Post training evaluation show beneficial impact of training of traditional rulers

Addressing sexual and gender-based violence:

- Family Support Units responding to sexual offences
- SARC Steering Committees effectively advocating to address sexual and gender-based violence

Community policing and dialogue initiatives:

- Community Accountability Forum contributes to improved perception of security
- Voluntary policing sector groups help communities combat crime
- Dialogue platform moves children from streets to school

Promoting policy for peace and security:

- 150 academics and civil society actors trained on conducting research in conflict settings
- Stakeholders welcome findings of study on livelihood opportunities in communities

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT, RECONCILIATION AND STABILITY

Traditional justice system record growing public confidence

The Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) Programme’s interventions to strengthen the capacity of traditional rulers in undertaking alternative dispute resolution (ADR) is contributing to enhanced public confidence in the traditional justice system. The programme has supported the training of 2,111 traditional rulers from 12 emirates in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states as at July 2019. The newly introduced record keeping system (*Sulhu Scribe*) has recorded 3,809 cases out of which 3,246 (representing 85%) have been effectively resolved.



FACTS & FIGURES:

Traditional Justice System

Traditional rulers
trained

2,111

Cases handled

3,809

Success rate of
resolution

85%

The positive result of the training is also evidenced by the increasing number of cases where the traditional rulers referred the disputes to the courts and other responsible agencies for resolution (5 per cent of cases received).

The figures provide evidence for the important role that the traditional rulers continue to play in maintaining security and stability in their communities. The data has been made possible through MCN support provided to the Emirates and Chiefdoms to develop and maintain record keeping centres. The programme has so far supported the training of 1,626 scribes to service the centres that were established for each emirate and chiefdom.

Feedback from stakeholders shows growing public confidence in the traditional justice system:

‘The police now refer cases of disputes in the market to me. I have received 25 cases from the police and five from the courts.’

Abbatu Babati, Sarkin Kasuwa, Potiskum, Yobe State

‘Non-indigenes, elites and civil servants are fast recognizing the benefits of sulhu and voluntarily accepting its jurisdiction.’

Alhaji Hassan Sabo, Fika Emirate, Yobe State

Post-training evaluation shows positive impact of training of traditional rulers

MCN conducted a post-training evaluation exercise following the training of traditional rulers (TRs) in Borno State in November and December 2017. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the usefulness, impact and relevance of the training and the extent to which the participants have put the learning from the training into practice, in the period since the event.

In July 2018, the post-training evaluation questionnaires were sent out to the 100 TRs (all male) that attended the training. Fifty-eight questionnaires were completed and sent back.

The broad results of the evaluation are encouraging with 57 out of the 58 respondents stating that the training was beneficial to their work. Around one quarter of respondents (14) said the training has promoted the integrity of community leaders.

Fifty-two respondents (90%) said they have resolved disputes involving women since the training. A key learning point was the benefit of bringing the parties together (38% of respondents) and being able to acquire skills to encourage the parties in marital disputes to be tolerant with each other (41%).

Ninety-three per cent of respondents (54/58) said the way in which they relate with unemployed youths has changed since they received the training.

Forty-six respondents (79%) reported that their relationship with security and justice agencies has improved since the training. 32 of these mentioned the improved collaboration between TRs and these agencies and how cases are referred in either direction.

Twenty-nine respondents (50%) said that they have handled one or more disputes involving IDPs since the training. 55% of these cases involved IDP disputes and 28% related to relocation of IDPs back to their communities.

Forty-nine respondents (84%) said they have become more efficient in the way they do their work and 43 respondents (74%) said they had shared the learning with other colleagues.

Most participants are applying their learnings when they are resolving disputes and using the many different alternate dispute resolution (ADR) techniques to better manage difficult clients.

The findings showed that the TRs feel better prepared to handle cases involving women, young people and IDPs. All of these are very important if the traditional justice system is to retain its relevance in the communities in the north east.

The overall conclusion from this evaluation is that the training was well-received and the learnings have been put into practice by the participants.

ADDRESSING SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Family support units effectively responding to sexual offences

In September and October 2018, MCN trained 63 police officers (44 female / 19 male) from 11 police stations selected for the introduction of Family Support Units (FSUs). The Family Support Units are specialist units within a police station that deal with sensitive cases involving children or vulnerable adults. Many of these cases are sexual offences.

As well as training, MCN has also helped to establish appropriate infrastructure in many FSUs, including private interview rooms and facilities for children. Those FSUs that operate in close proximity to a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) have developed good working relationships with the SARC and are the conduit for casework that comes to the SARC where the victim of sexual assault wishes the matter to be reported to the police.

Since December 2018, five FSUs have reported details of their sexual offences casework since they became fully operational. The table below summarises the data available up to May 2019.

Table 1: Summary of results of FSUs

Total number of sexual offences case handled by FSUs	48
Number of cases involving female victims	39
Number of cases involving male victims	9
Number of cases involving victims under 18 years old	43
Number of cases involving victims over 18 years old	3
Number of cases involving victims whose ages are unknown	2
Number of cases where arrests have been made	36
Number of cases where suspects have been charged to court	16
Number of cases referred to FSUs by SARCs	23

Source: Nigeria Police Force, FSU records

The majority of victims are female (81%) and all but three of the cases involve victims under the age of 18 (93% of cases where age was reported), a clear indication of the vulnerability of young people, especially young girls to these offences.

Encouragingly, nearly half of the cases dealt with were referred to the FSU from a SARC, suggesting the key relationship between the SARC and the police is becoming well established (especially as many of the FSUs are some distance from the SARCs). The police have also shown their preparedness to actively pursue suspects in these cases with arrests being made in 75% of cases and suspects being charged to court in 33% of cases. These ratios far exceed those typically seen across Nigeria.

FSUs have great potential to play a key role in the investigation of sexual offences and by providing a sensitive and empathic environment are meeting the needs of the most vulnerable in society whose lives have been affected by the horror of sexual assault.

SARC Steering Committees record success in advocacy to address sexual and gender-based violence

Sexual Assault Referral Centres Steering Committees that have been established in the three states to lead advocacy for policy and practice changes required to address sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) are making progress in the midst of grave challenges. Notable is the successful advocacy for the establishment of new SARCs in Yobe State. Following the recognition that more SARCs are needed to address rising incidence of SGBV in the state, the SARC Steering Committee engaged the State Ministry of Health to advocate for establishment of SARCs. The result is that the State Government has designated 7 health facilities in the state where SARCs will be established. Medical personnel have been deployed to service the centres.

Moreover, the Yobe SARC Steering Committee has successfully engaged stakeholders to strengthen the penalty for sexual offences. The State legislature has passed into law a reformed penal code which stipulates heavier penalties for perpetrators of sexual offences, especially against minors. The heavy sanction for offences against minors was considered necessary because of its prevalence. Records from the SARCs show that 106 out of 134 (80%) clients attended to in the SARCs were minors aged 1-17 years.

The Yobe SARC has also contributed to a review of the court proceedings on cases of sexual offences. Following reports that medical doctors were declining invitation to courts to serve as witnesses due to protracted hearings, the Yobe State judiciary has amended the hearing process. Medical personnel are now

given preference in court sessions to enable them to return to their duties in the hospitals.

In Borno State, the SARC Steering Committee has successfully influenced the provision of a safe house for survivors of SGBV, who previously faced aggravated trauma of continuing to live in the same environment with persons that assaulted them. As a result of advocacy by the lobby group, the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) has provided a residential facility for survivors in Maiduguri. Survivors will be allowed to spend up to six months in the first instance in the safe house. So far, 5 survivors from the Borno SARC (N3ELEWA Centre) are recuperating in the safe house.

COMMUNITY POLICING AND DIALOGUE INITIATIVES

Community Accountability Forum contributes to improved perception of security

The Community Accountability Forum (CAF) established in Jere LGA, Borno State is contributing to enhancement of resident perception of security and safety. When the forum was convened in March 2019, residents complained about rising incidence of crime in their neighbourhood. Rising insecurity had affected safety of property in residential areas as well as security of farm produce in farms and barns. Several community members who spoke at the forum attributed the rising crime wave to poor presence of security in the communities as well as lack of opportunities for young persons. A representative of the police at the platform reported that the efforts of the security services to combat crime was affected by the non-cooperative attitude of residents in providing information to security operatives. This partly stemmed from mutual suspicion and distrust between the police and the community.

The Forum agreed to advocate for the deployment of more formal and informal security personnel to the area and to facilitate public enlightenment on public involvement in security through information sharing and cooperation with security agencies. The steering committee of the CAF was mandated to engage the respective responsible agencies to advocate for deployment of police and members of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) and sensitisation of community members by traditional and religious leaders to report suspected threats to security to appropriate authorities. Some of the religious leaders and traditional rulers also met with youths to warn them to desist from criminal activities and enlist in efforts to promote security.

As a result of the concerted action by CAF stakeholders, residents now report improved security:

‘We have seen more community youths and police patrolling in the night. Sometimes they stop by and talk to us reassuring us of security. We now feel more secured at night and can move freely.’

Hassan Musa, resident, Wachama garden in Jere LGA

‘The police now have more presence and are closer to the people. Considering the improvement, we are soliciting to extend the night patrol to neighbouring communities.’

Bulama Babakura Imam, village head, Old Maiduguri, Wachama garden in Jere LGA

The CAF is offering communities opportunities to engage with security agencies on service delivery and enabling security agencies to forge cooperative partnerships with communities for greater effectiveness and accountability. The MCN Programme has facilitated the establishment of 6 CAFs (two in each state). Lessons learned and the interest of members of the public who defy the security risks to congregate in public squares and town halls to hold the CAF meetings has encouraged the programme to extend the CAFs to other locations.

Consequently, MCN has partnered with communities to establish four more CAFs in Adamawa and Yobe States. The new CAFs are operating in Nguru and Potiskum LGAs in Yobe State and Maiha and Michika LGAs in Adamawa State. Twenty-four steering committee members for the 2 LGAs in Adamawa were trained in a workshop organised by MCN partners CLEEN Foundation and Community Reach-out Initiative in Yola on 30-31 July 2019.

Voluntary policing sector groups help communities combat crime

The MCN Programme has engaged 42 voluntary policing sector (VPS) groups in the three states to enhance their contribution to community policing. The engagement has led to the training of 427 VPS members and facilitation of coordination meetings between VPS groups and formal security institutions in target LGAs. The programme is also supporting advocacy for the development of guidelines for the operations of the voluntary policing sector groups.

The programme has also facilitated engagement with government stakeholders to mobilise support for the VPS groups. During the period, two success stories were recorded in Geidam and Nguru LGAs in Yobe State. In Geidam LGA, advocacy undertaken after a monthly coordination meeting in which the issue of welfare of VPS groups was raised, provided positive results as the local government chairman authorised the commencement of payment of monthly allowances to the VPS members.

In Nguru LGA, the VPS coordination meeting identified the lack of a driver to provide support for the movements of VPS groups. When the implications were presented to the chairman of the local government area, the recruitment of a driver was authorised to support movement of VPS members in patrol vehicles provided for them.

The results of a quarterly assessment conducted for the VPS groups show there is improvement in the perception of their involvement in community policing, their promotion and protection of rights of suspects, their understanding of the laws, and referral of cases to formal security institutions. This is evidenced by the following feedback from stakeholders:

'I have observed improved relationships amongst the various VPS groups. For instance, in Bajabure Estate at Girei, the Vigilante Group and Hunters Association jointly provide night watch for the people and this has really reduced the rate of kidnapping in the area.'

Dr. Saheed Owonikoko, VPS Mentor, Adamawa State

'I witnessed a case of sexual assault in the Dalori camp where people wanted to kill the perpetrator. The CJTF intervened by arresting the boy and handing him over to the police. They also took the young girl to the Air Force Clinic

inside the camp for examination. It is important to note the culprit could have been killed by the mob had the vigilantes not intervened.'

Dr. Yagana Bukar, VPS Mentor, Borno State

'Our vigilante and hunter groups are now trained, and they use skills acquired in solving the security challenges in Geidam. In recognition of their effort, the local government now provides monthly allowance and working materials for them.'

Hamza A. Kolo, Chief Security officer, Geidam Local Govt, Yobe State.

'I am delighted to see that MCN is bringing together both formal and informal security organisations together at the grassroot level to talk and strategize.'

Adamu Madaki, Commissioner of Police, Adamawa State

Dialogue platform move children from streets to school

The MCN Programme provided support to the NEEM Foundation to facilitate dialogue and reconciliation initiatives in communities recovering from the insurgency in Maiduguri, Borno State. This is based on the recognition of the debilitating impact of the insurgency on community resilience and social cohesion.

One of the communities selected for the intervention is Shokwari. The community is made up of largely of farmers who are generally uneducated. The lack of opportunity has put youths in the area at risk. Consequently, many youths from the community were reportedly recruited into the insurgent group.

The demographics of the community has remained a concern to community leaders and security agencies. At the commencement of the dialogue and reconciliation initiative, one of the key concerns raised was the high number of out-of-school children in the community. Some of the children are orphans of insurgents and victims of the insurgency.

The dialogue platform undertook a number of activities to sensitise the community on the value of education and the need to enrol their children and wards in school. To address the socio-economic driver of a high rate of illiteracy, the platform also engaged Save the Children International and the School Management Committee to help the children who enlisted into the school by providing them with uniforms and books.

Feedback from the community shows encouraging improvement in school enrolment. To date, 2,160 children have been enrolled into the community primary school.

'The initiative has woken the people from slumber. They now recognise the power of working together to build peace. This is evident in massive enrolment of their children in school.'

Mallam Ali Habib, Secretary, School Based Management Committee, Shokwari Community, Jere LGA

The platform also engaged youths on their involvement in anti-social behaviour especially during festivals that often result in violent crime.

The engagement with the youths led to the banning of the festival reducing the risks of violence.

PROMOTING POLICY FOR PEACE AND SECURITY

150 academics and civil society actors trained on conducting research in conflict settings

The MCN Programme, in partnership with the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Yobe State University in Damaturu organised a capacity building programme on conducting research in conflict and peacebuilding settings for researchers in academic and civil society organisations on 19-20 July 2019.

One-hundred and fifty participants, drawn from two universities, two colleges of education, two polytechnics, six monotechnics, the National Open University, the National Teachers Institute and 17 civil society organisations in the state, benefited from the training. The capacity building workshop exposed participants to qualitative and quantitative methods of research, ethical issues in conducting research, strategies for conducting applied research, and gender and conflict sensitivity in research.

The Vice Chancellor of the University said the initiative was necessary to equip academics and civil society practitioners who will need to be engaged to provide the knowledge and information that will drive peacebuilding and early recovery efforts in the state.



Participants at the research in conflict and peacebuilding workshop.
Source: Sabiu Adamu

'The workshop has enhanced the capacity of academics and civil society practitioners to apply for research grants, conduct action research and follow-up the implementation of the policy recommendations of research.'

Professor Yakubu Mukhtar, Vice Chancellor, Yobe State University, Damaturu.

Stakeholders welcome findings of study on livelihood opportunities in communities selected for early return of IDPs in Borno State

Stakeholders have welcomed the findings of a study on livelihood opportunities and security implications in communities selected for early return of IDPs. They expressed their views at a dissemination workshop organised by the Community Centre for Development and Research Network (CCDRN) on 18 June 2019 in Maiduguri.

The study, which was supported by MCN, was aimed at providing information that will foster the successful implementation of the policy of resettlement of internally displaced persons (IDPs) initiated by the Borno State government.

Key findings of the study include the predominance of primary occupation of agriculture (farmer and fishing) among returnees; non-availability of credit facility for purchase of fertilisers and inputs to returnees; decrease in available farmland to households due to rising population, especially of IDPs; and persistence of feelings of dissatisfaction with current occupation and means of livelihoods.

The study also found that some interventions of government and development programmes have not been sensitive to the context of the communities earmarked for resettlement and have contributed to heightening of tensions.

The study concluded that the enabling environment for resettlement is still evolving and offered policy options to governmental and non-governmental actors involved in the resettlement programme.

'The study encompasses all that UNDP is doing in the area of livelihoods with a focus on helping to restore people's livelihoods for sustainability, especially in terms of livestock distribution and agricultural inputs as well as vocational skills training. The research presents the real-life situation and the opportunities that other development partners could look into to reach affected population.'

Lilian S. Dahwa, UNDP Area Coordinator, Borno State

'I commend the research. Mine is an additional recommendation. MCN and other development partners should engage the returnees, especially women, and train them on various skills so they can become self-reliant. People are empowered when they can access the opportunities available to them without limitation and restriction. Women's empowerment is all about equipping and allowing women to make life determining decisions through the different problems in society. Empowerment of women is necessary for development of the society.'

Yagana Ali Abadam, Director, Borno State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA)

PROGRESS AGAINST EU INDICATORS

Indicator	Target 2021	Achieved at 31 July 2019	Comment
Number of staff from government institutions and internal security forces trained	1,210	4,809	Activity Years 2-4
Number of people participating in conflict prevention and peace building activities	2,860	17,346	Activity Years 1-4
Total number of community beneficiaries	2,278,580	1,735,596	Activity Years 2-4

UPCOMING ACTIVITY

- Policy dialogue forums in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states
- Study on gender and peacebuilding in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states
- Study on Community Resilience and Peacebuilding Initiatives in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states
- Youth peace initiatives in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states
- Stakeholder engagements for the adoption of a code of conduct for traditional rulers
- Meetings and initiatives in community peace and safety partnership 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
- Supporting the 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
- Potential for a period of industrial unrest and strikes

Find out more

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