

# 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.



A local farmer with cattle. Source: MCN

## KEY ACTIVITIES

This newsletter highlights the key activities undertaken by the programme in June – July 2020.

Summary of key activities include:

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

- Farmer and herder groups sign peace pact
- Youth dialogue initiatives prevent violence between farmer and herders in border communities
- CPSP platform initiatives improve road safety

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

- Radio discussion programmes contribute to increased reporting of cases of sexual and gender-based violence

#### Economic empowerment initiatives:

- Women beneficiaries of economic empowerment initiative set-up market

#### Women peacebuilding initiatives:

- Peacebuilding initiatives address concerns of women

#### Community policing initiatives:

- Initiatives of community accountability forums address public security and safety issues

#### Promoting policy for peace and security:

- Study on the impact of COVID-19 in North East

## CONFLICT MANAGEMENT, RECONCILIATION AND STABILITY

### Farmer and herder groups sign peace pact in Guyuk, Adamawa State

Representatives of farmers and herders in Guyuk Local Government Area (Adamawa State) have signed a peace accord to end violence over access to land for farming and grazing. The peace agreement was signed on 4th June 2020. It was the result of dialogue and mediation initiatives facilitated by the Agaji Unity Foundation (AGUF) with capacity building and financial support from the Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) Programme.

## FACTS & FIGURES:

Traditional Justice System  
(July 2020)

No of traditional  
rulers trained

**2,197**

No of cases  
resolved

**14,682**

% of cases  
resolved

**86**

The signing ceremony was attended by traditional authorities, local government council officials, and security agencies. Leaders of the groups agreed on the actions required to prevent further escalation of conflicts to violence, including: an agreement on the period for harvesting of crops so cattle can graze on fallow land; the prohibition of grazing during periods of darkness and with the help of underaged children; the re-demarcation of grazing routes; and the establishment of dialogue and mediation committees to resolve disputes.

At the ceremony, there was a voluntary submission of weapons to symbolise the commencement of non-violent resolution of conflicts. The farmers and herders also exchanged baskets of kola-nuts, mats and kegs of oil representing their acceptance of the new policy and willingness to embrace peace.

The MCN Programme will be supporting initiatives to monitor compliance, resolve disputes, and administer agreed sanctions on violators.

**“This agreement will be adhered to and will outlive all of us. Based on the recommendation of the Dialogue and Mediation Committee, I have included representatives of herders and farmers on my cabinet. We will ensure there is monitoring of compliance with and enforcement all the terms of the agreement.”**

HRH Kuruhaye Dishion Dansanda II, Paramount ruler and Chairman of Lugunda Traditional Council, Adamawa State

**“As mothers who are usually at the receiving end of these violent conflicts, these past months following the dialogue has been a blessing. This peace agreement is one of the best things to have happened in this community in recent times.”**

Rebecca Manuel, Chairperson, Guyuk Women’s Association, Adamawa State

## Youth dialogue initiative prevents violence between farmer and herders in border communities in Yobe State

Youth peace ambassadors have successfully undertaken an initiative to prevent the resurgence of perennial violence between farmers and herders. The youth initiated the dialogue to prevent outbreaks of violent conflicts between farmers and herders in Madamuwa, Tigali in Bade LGA, and Dumsai and Yamuduogo in Nguru LGA during the rainy seasons.

After the violence in April 2019, the youth peace ambassadors were trained and mentored by the MCN-backed Taimoko Community Development Initiative. The organisation intervened to seek a lasting solution to the challenge which had lingered for over a decade. Drawing lessons of previous resolution efforts, the ambassadors brought youth to the table. Previous resolution

efforts had excluded the youth - major actors in the violent conflict - and did not yield the desired results.

The youth peace ambassadors secured the blessings of the Bade Emirate Council to organise dialogue sessions with the different stakeholders on the need for harmonious relations. Following the interventions, the groups agreed to resolve issues amicably without resorting to violence. As a token of their commitment, the herders (predominantly from the Fulani ethnic group) agreed to suspend the tradition of ‘Dongol Fulaku’- which prohibited them from engaging in economic transactions with persons from opposing groups.

Community members attest no violence has been recorded since the onset of this years’ rainy season as a result of the dialogue intervention and youth engagement.

**“This activity has brought us together to live as brothers and friends. We should forget what happened in the past and move on. We have asked our people to suspend Dongol Fulaku, - a type of economic sanction against people who oppose us.”**

Alhaji Mai Jibo, Ardo Jubo, Damsai, Nguru LGA, Yobe State

**“I am happy that there has been no incidence of violence since this laudable initiative started.”**

Umar Aji Suleiman, District Head, Tigali, Nguru LGA, Yobe State

## CPSP platform initiative improves road safety in Bade, Yobe State

Initiatives of the Community Peace and Safety Partnership (CPSP) platform in Bade LGA, Yobe State have contributed to improvement of road safety. Stakeholders had concerns about rising incidents of road traffic accidents linked to unsafe practices of operators of commercial tricycles - the main source of transportation in the area. They are often overloaded with limbs of passengers extended outside the vehicle and passengers exiting the vehicle from the left-hand side. This practice has led to collisions with other vehicles. In one case, an oncoming vehicle struck the leg of passenger who then bled to death. Mob action against the driver followed necessitating a rescue by the police before he was lynched by irate youths.

The CPSP engaged the local council authorities, the office of the Federal Road Safety Commission, and the local branch of the National Union of Commercial Tricycle Operators to undertake road safety campaigns to discourage overloading and stop people alighting from vehicles through the left hand side. As a result of the intervention, tricycle operators agreed to construct a metal barrier on the left-hand side to prevent passengers from using this side to exit the vehicle.

The Local Government Council established a multi-stakeholder enforcement team, including representatives of the CPSP to monitor compliance. Following feedback from monitoring teams that compliance was not total, the CPSP further engaged the Local Government Council to make a regulation that would make it mandatory for all tricycle operators in the local council to fix metal barriers. This led to the Local Council issuing an executive order on the mandatory use of metal barriers. Since the introduction of the measures, members of the public and Road Safety Officers in the LGA have reported a reduction in accidents.

**“This new structure has improved our confidence in patronising keke especially for mothers like us who move about with children.”**

Alhaji Yerima Hussaini, Chairman, Association of Tricycle Operators, Bade LGA

**“Our members have never cooperated and accepted any order in a short moment like this. We have complied and even our passengers are happy about it.”**

Alhaji Yerima Hussaini, Chairman, Association of Tricycle Operators, Bade LGA

**“There has been reduction in cases of accidents involving keke since this was introduced. We will advocate for adoption in other towns.”**

CSC DD Auta, Commandant, FRSC, Bade LGA

## ADDRESSING SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

### Radio discussion programmes contribute to increased reporting of SGBV cases

As part of efforts to address a reported increase in sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) during the COVID-19 pandemic and to sustain awareness and public enlightenment on the menace of SGBV, the MCN Programme supported phone-in radio discussion programmes in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states.

The programmes were held once a week in each of the states . They were organised in partnership with the Adamawa Broadcasting Corporation, Yola; the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (Peace FM), Maiduguri; the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (Sunshine FM), Potiskum; and the Yobe State Broadcasting Corporation (YBC), Damaturu.

Participants included stakeholders involved in addressing SGBV, such as members of the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) Steering Committees, traditional rulers, religious leaders, government officials, security officials, non-governmental organisations (NGO) workers, women leaders and youth leaders. An average of 5,000 people listened to each programme and had the opportunity to ask questions and make comments.

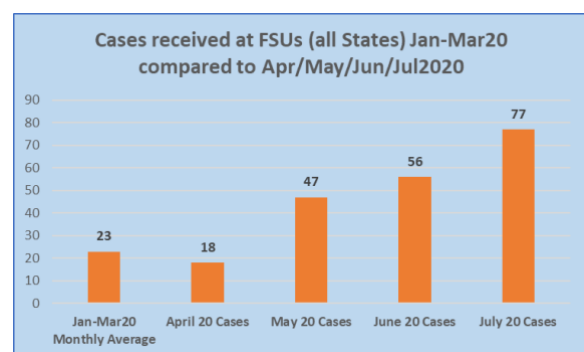
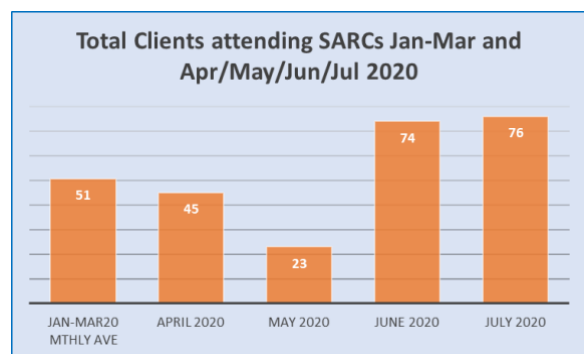
The programmes provided the opportunity for stakeholders to discuss the causes of SGBV, the increase in incidences in the context of COVID-19 pandemic, to raise awareness on SGBV, and the roles of various agencies and actors in curbing it. High points included publicising of services of the SARCs and Family Support Units (FSUs) and how to access them, including

information about hotlines; encouragement of reporting of cases of SGBV by survivors and their close relatives; mobilisation of traditional rulers and religious leaders to warn their members against perpetrating SGBV or abetting it through cover-up and out-of-court settlement; and enlightenment of the public on penalties for sexual offences.

Some programmes focussed on support for survivors. For example, the programme aired by YBC on 2 and 11 July 2020 featured doctors from the SARC who explained the role of the centre in not only providing treatment but also enabling effective investigation and prosecution of offenders. A key message shared was the need for timely reporting of cases. This theme was sustained in the next discussion aired on 18 July, which featured a panel made up of the Chairperson of the SARC Steering Committee, Chairperson of the Nigeria Bar Association (Yobe State Chapter) and a leader of the Yobe Civil Society Network. The panel discussed laws to tackle sexual offences and issues of child protection.

Immediate results include commitments by council officials, traditional rulers, religious leaders and security officials to breaking the culture of silence and ensuring the conviction of sexual offenders. Some of the participants followed up with their commitments. For instance, after participants raised concerns about the increase of SGBV in Potiskum and called for stiffer penalties, the local council authorities organised SGBV sensitisation events and provided contact information for survivors, their relatives or members of the public.

The radio discussion programmes have led to an increase in SGBV cases brought to the FSUs and SARCs. Managers of SARCs have reported an increase in the number of clients who come directly to the SARCs to receive treatment. This is evidenced by data presented in the figures below, which show that FSUs and SARCs attended to more clients in June and July than in the preceding months. The MCN programme will be supporting stakeholders to continue to raise awareness on SGBV.



## ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVES

### Women beneficiaries of economic empowerment initiative set-up market in Adamawa State

Beneficiaries of the economic empowerment initiative, implemented by the Women and Youth Economic Advancement and Health Initiative (WYEAHI) in Tamabaragabari, Michika LGA (Adamawa State) have established a market in their community. The women met with traditional leaders to highlight the need for a local market and to reduce the need for people to commute to markets in nearby communities. This advocacy was aimed at mitigating the hardship community members faced through travelling.

The initiative also aimed to enhance profitability of their small-scale businesses which would benefit by not having to operate outside their communities. The community leaders approved the request and allotted a land for the market.

Moreover, the beneficiaries who had received training on peacebuilding decided to use the market space for promoting social cohesion. The advocacy initiated by the women ensured that the market would not be segregated along religious lines, as other markets in Michika. The community members are happy that they can use a local market that is open to people from all, regardless of religion.

**“Prior to this intervention, we did not have a centralised market and there was dispute between Christians and Muslims. This market has removed the burden of travelling to the Michika main market and brought unity since both Christians and Muslims now trade together.”**

James Jawaye, Tamabaragabari community, Michika LGA, Adamawa State

**“The market has taken away the hardship associated with travel and has fostered unity and peace among our people. People from all religions and ethnic groups now come to trade without fear of discrimination or violence.”**

Haruna Abba, Tamabaragabari community, Michika LGA, Adamawa State



A market women. Source: MCN

## WOMEN PEACEBUILDING INITIATIVES

### Peacebuilding initiatives addressing concerns of women in Borno and Yobe states

Women associations, supported by the Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) programme, are undertaking initiatives to address security and safety concerns in their communities. The Community Engagement and Social Development Initiative (CESDI) in Borno and Yobe states trains women on economic empowerment. This has led the women to form advocacy groups on issues affecting health, livelihoods and rights of women as well as community security and safety. Some of the groups have already started recording successes.

In Bolewa, Potiskum LGA (Yobe State), the women's group identified drug abuse as a key source of concern in their community. The group embarked on sensitization activities to discourage the use of drugs. They engaged women whose children were using drugs and were involved in anti-social behaviour on the need to seek help for their children instead of protecting them. The women's group also engaged artisans and entrepreneurs to offer apprenticeship opportunities for youths willing to quit the habit and associated criminal activities. Through this intervention the women have successfully engaged 47 youths, and some of the youths have been integrated into apprenticeship programmes.

In Tsohon, Nguru LGA and Amshi, Jakusko LGA (Yobe State), the women's groups organised door-to-door campaigns to sensitise citizens on the problem of domestic violence that is rampant in both communities. The initiative resulted in the leaders of both communities agreeing to speak out against domestic violence. As a result, a man who was reported to be a habitual violator of his wife was apprehended by the police in Tsohon Nguru.

In Jaba, Jakusko LGA, 'Matan Jaba' the women's peace group organised a sensitization on girl-child education. This was aimed at addressing concerns that community members had withdrawn girl children from school due to fears of insurgents who kidnapped girls in a secondary school at the neighbouring Dapchi community. The community members were convinced of the importance of education and agreed for their girl children to return to school. 'Matan Jaba' was mandated to monitor the enrolment of girl children when schools resume.

In Gaidam, Mayo Belwa LGA (Borno State), a women's association supported by CESDI has undertaken dispute resolution initiatives on issues affecting women. One of its early success stories is the recovery of land of belonging to a widow, who lost the land after her husband was killed on a community policing engagement as a member of the CJTF. Through the intervention of the women's group, the person who trespassed has agreed to restore the land.

**“I am grateful to my mother for saving me from destroying my life. I never knew people could show me this much love. If I can change then others can also change.”**

Mohammed Ibrahim, Bolewa, Potiskum LGA, Yobe State

**“I am very happy to get my land back. It is the only source of livelihood for me and my children. I thank the women group and vigilantes for coming to my rescue.”**

Aishatu Abubakar, Gaidam community, Mayo Belwa LGA, Borno State

## COMMUNITY POLICING INITIATIVES

### Initiatives of community accountability forums address public security and safety issues in Yobe State

Community Accountability Forums (CAFs) were established with support from the Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) Programme to promote collaboration between security service providers and members of the public in community policing. In Yobe State, these platforms are convened by the Communal Support Foundation (COSFON) in four LGAs (Bade, Geidam, Nguru and Potiskum) and are responding to concerns of security and safety raised at community town hall meetings.

In Bade, Nguru and Potiskum LGAs, the CAFs have influenced the local councils to renovate and run remand homes to address the rising involvement of minors in criminal activities. This was considered necessary to protect the minors from criminal elements who house and use them for criminal activities. The initiative would also prevent children from becoming victims of extra-judicial killings given the risk of aggrieved victims of theft taking the laws into their hands.

In Nguru and Potiskum LGAs, the CAFs responded to public concerns about the presence and activities of drug peddlers and thieves in the central market and cattle market. Coordinated investigation and raids on the markets led to arrest of perpetrators. Members of the public report the markets are safer as result of the arrests made.

The Geidam CAF addressed two concerns of the public about road safety. Through the intervention of the CAF, the Works Department of the local council has reduced the size and increased the distance between road breakers to the satisfaction of road users. Action initiated by the CAF has also curbed parking on unauthorised spots on the road by lorries and other vehicles. The CAF also influenced local authorities to stop operations of illegal motor parks by commercial drivers and erection of make-shift stops by traders in unauthorised locations that undermined security.

In Bade, the CAF intervened to address reported extortion by security officers, which was affecting relations between members of the public and security agencies. Following meetings with the heads of security agencies in the area, signposts warning people to desist from giving money to security officers were placed in all checkpoints. The signposts also contained hotlines for use by members of the public. Community members attest that officers have stopped extortion since the measures were introduced.

**“We appreciate the leadership of the market for collaborating with us on stopping sale and abuse of illicit drugs. This has given us a sense of confidence that stakeholders are beginning to understand their responsibilities.”**

Fidelis Ihejirika, NDLEA, Area Commander, Potiskum, Yobe State

**“Our members now go through checkpoints with ease and without fear of extortion by security personnel. The relationship between drivers and security personnel has significantly improved.”**

Ali Ibrahim Dagona, NURTW Secretary, Bade LGA

## PROMOTING POLICY FOR PEACE AND SECURITY

### MCN commissions study on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on conflict dynamics

A study on the implications of COVID-19 on conflict dynamics, gender relations and social inclusion was commissioned by the Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) Programme. The report was presented to stakeholders at dissemination events online. Four webinars were organised with Yobe stakeholders (14 July 2020); Adamawa stakeholders (16 July 2020); Borno stakeholders (21 July 2020); and federal stakeholders (23 July 2020).

The webinars featured a presentation of the main findings and recommendations by Chitra Nagarajan, the researcher. This was followed by comments and questions by participants. Participants generally agreed with the key findings and that COVID-19 pandemic has largely negatively impacted on conflict dynamics, gender relations and social inclusion.

The impact on conflict dynamics is evidenced in challenges of movements during the lockdown on counter-insurgency operations. The lockdown, which also affected access of insurgent groups to their regular supply channels, resulted in more attacks on communities by insurgents for the purposes of restocking food and other supplies. Inter-group relations were also affected by the tendency for people to stigmatise people from areas with multiple cases of COVID-19.

Lack of trust of public institutions - a key source of weakened conflict management - worsened as people responded with government messages on COVID-19 with scepticism and cynicism. Hardships faced by the populace as a result of loss of economic opportunities and access to health care further alienated the people from government.

The management of distribution of government palliatives further eroded trust in government due to reported diversion and favouritism. Women, persons with disability, youths and people from minority ethnic groups and opposition parties were reportedly marginalised in the distribution process, thereby aggravating grievance over social exclusion.

Reported spikes in incidence of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) as a result of the lockdown, closure of schools, and the impact of job losses on masculinity are some examples of the impact of COVID-19 on gender relations. Although more men than women have been infected by the virus, restricted access to public services such as hospitals and markets and loss of jobs by male breadwinners created more difficulties for women. As a result, many women are adopting coping mechanisms that worsen their conditions and put them at risk of sexual exploitation and violence.

The MCN Programme is working with stakeholders to adopt the recommended measures to mitigate the impacts and respond to opportunities for adaptation.



COVID-19 prevention messages in communities. Source: MCN

## PROGRESS AGAINST EU INDICATORS

Indicator	Target 2021	Achieved at 31 July 2020	Comment
Number of staff from government institutions and internal security forces trained	1,210	7,983	Activity Years 2-4
Number of people participating in conflict prevention and peace building activities	2,860	50,387	Activity Years 1-4
Total number of community beneficiaries	2,278,580	2,747,656	Activity Years 2-4

## UPCOMING ACTIVITY

- Dissemination of study on community peace and safety partnerships in Borno State
- Meetings and initiatives of the community peace and safety partnerships in target LGAs
- Dissemination of study on implications of COVID-19 for conflict dynamics, gender relations and social inclusion
- Community reconciliation initiatives in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states
- 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
- Youth peace initiatives in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states
- Operations of family support units in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states
- Peacebuilding initiatives by women associations and youth groups in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states

### Find out more

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## Send-forth for Bob Arnot



The Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) Programme joined colleagues in the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption Programme (ROLAC) and Agents for Active-Citizen Transformation (ACT) to organise a send forth party for Dr. Bob Arnot who recently retired from the British Council.

The send-forth party, which held through a webinar on 30 July 2020, offered opportunities for colleagues, friends and partners to express their thoughts on the contributions of Dr. Arnot to reform initiatives in the security, justice and conflict sectors since he arrived Nigeria nearly two decades ago.

Notable among participants at the send-forth party were Barr. Adeola Ipaye, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Presidency, who represented the Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; Prof. Bolaji Owasanoye, Chairman of the Independent Corruption Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC); Moses Anibaba, Regional Director of British Council, Sub-Saharan Africa; Lucy Pearson, Country Director, British Council Nigeria; and representatives of Chief Judges of Enugu and Lagos states.

Until his retirement, Dr. Arnot was Portfolio Lead and Programme Director, Justice, Security and Conflict programmes of the British Council in Sub-Saharan Africa. During his tenure, Dr. Arnot led the design of MCN, ROLAC and ACT (all funded by the European Union), as well as the Deepening Democracy in Nigeria (DDIN2) and the Nigeria Policing Programme (NPP), funded by United Kingdom. He previously served as National Programme Manager of the UKaid funded Security Justice and Growth (SJG), Access to Justice, and Justice for All (J4A) programmes.

## ONGOING CHALLENGES

- The COVID-19 pandemic and other public health challenges
- Partial closure of public institutions due to COVID-19
- Restrictions of travel due to COVID-19
- Continued unrest in the North East and the impact to travel and work outside state capitals
- Capacity of civil society organisations and state institutions