

COMPONENT BRIEF: STRENGTHENING MECHANISMS TO MANAGE CONFLICT AT THE STATE LEVEL

OBJECTIVE

Strengthen state conflict management institutions to be more inclusive, co-ordinated and accountable.

CONTEXT

Nigeria's security forces are often accused of human rights abuses including unlawful killings, arbitrary arrest and detention, extortion, sexual harassment and disappearances. This leads to mistrust and affects relations between security forces and the civilian population, which in turn risks increasing popular support for groups such as the Jama'atul ahl al-sunnah li da'awati wal jihad (JAS). Furthermore, civilian oversight over security institutions is ineffective and they remain largely unaccountable to the general public.

OUR APPROACH

We support the creation of State Conflict Management Alliances (SCMA), made up of governmental organisations, civil society organisations and security agencies. The aim is to improve their co-ordination and responsiveness to state-level security issues through deepening their understanding of the conflict context and assuring that conflict management activities occur in a manner that strive to improve the security environment. We ensure these structures are inclusive of groups marginalised from decision-making. This includes all women, young people and people living with disabilities.

WHERE WE WORK

We work in eight states: Bayelsa, Borno, Delta, Kaduna, Kano, Plateau, Rivers and Yobe.

WHO WE WORK WITH

- State security councils
- State legislatures
- Traditional rulers
- Religious leaders
- Centre for Development, Peace and Diplomatic Studies, University of Maiduguri
- Aminu Kano Centre for Democratic Research and Training, University of Kano
- Bridge Builders Association of Nigeria, Kaduna
- Centre for Niger Delta Studies, Niger Delta University, Bayelsa
- University of Port Harcourt
- Civil society organisations
- Women, Peace and Security Network
- Observatory on Violence against Women and Girls
- Youth associations



OUR WORK

Conflict management mapping: We conducted a baseline survey to better understand the relationships between security agencies, government and civil society groups in the states. The study also aimed to increase state awareness about community concerns and priorities for action around security and peace building.

State Conflict Management Alliances: We support State Conflict Management Alliances (SCMAs) – a platform for engagement and joint response on issues of peace and security at the state level. Participants include representatives from security agencies, state government representatives, civil society organisations, the state women, peace and security network, the state observatory on violence against women and girls, youth groups and relevant government agencies. Discussion results in action plans, which we support in their implementation.

Capacity building: We train all SCMA members in peace building, conflict analysis and mediation, which results in state security planning. We also deliver gender, human rights and conflict mitigation training for security forces, including the military, the police and civil defence, to effectively prevent and manage conflict. We also work with CSOs to strengthen their participation in the SCMAs and to implement peace-building activities on their own. We improve their knowledge about conflict management and encourage them to hold state authorities accountable on peace and security matters.

Advocacy: We create space for civil society to participate in state security management frameworks and the development of state security plans. By doing so, we increase awareness of the threats to and opportunities for peace that exist, leading to action that is responsive to these realities and that addresses the root causes of grievances.

CASE STUDY

Kano State: Security dialogue forum take actions to prevent violence

In Kano State, security agencies, government agencies and civil society organisations are working together to prevent violent conflict using a conflict-sensitive approach. We supported the creation of the State Conflict Management Alliance (SCMA) under the leadership of the Mambayya House Kano – the first SCMA in Nigeria. Utilising understandings of the context, the SCMA in Kano has developed an action plan that prioritises key security issues for the state. One problem identified was the frequency with which community members were harassed and asked for bribes at security checkpoints. As a result of discussion, security agencies distributed phone numbers that people can call to complain, with complaints documented and responded to, and created notices that were posted at the checkpoints, which reminded both the security providers and citizens that it is a crime to pay/ask for a bribe. This activity has responded to one of many drivers of conflict and, as a result, has led to a reported reduction in people being asked for bribes and an increased confidence in the security agencies.

FIND OUT MORE

Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme
www.nsrp-nigeria.org

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