

Introduction and Context

This paper outlines lessons learnt from NSRP's media to encourage greater professionalism and a sense of conflict sensitivity across the Nigeria media organisations, it . It summarises activities undertaken by NSRP with media stations, Tertiary Institution, media training centres, security agencies and civil society organisations. emerged. Capturing these lessons is intended to help sustain the progress made with these media organisations (Freedom Radio Kano & Kaduna, Wazobai FM Kano & Port Harcourt, BRTV Borno, YBC Yobe, Rhythh FM, Jos and Pot Harcourt, Royal FM Bayelsa, Crown FM Delta, Liberty FM Kaduna, Arewa FM Kano, Daily Trust Newspapers, Dandal Kuwa, Borno, Pemium Times Online Newspapers and Peace FM Borno) have made in conflict sensitive practices, and guide further activities which may be undertaken by other programme. Evidence of Lessons were identified by talking to media partner organisations, media mentors and project staff from across NSRP target states respectively.

The Nigerian media reaches millions of people in conflict prone areas of the country and has considerable potential to increase or decrease conflict.

NSRP implemented a media strategy and media mapping exercise in 2012. The strategy sought to enhance the ability of NSRP to reduce violent conflict by:

- Supporting, and helping to take to scale, the achievements of each NSRP output;
- Conflict sensitising the Nigerian media to play a more pro-active role in peacebuilding;
- Through the use of social media and interactive radio programming, increasing the participation of marginalised populations in debates and advocacy around conflict and its causes.

NSRP's Media Strategy, outlined below, was designed to engage media professionals and media outlets, government and the general public to use the media in a way that reduces the incidence and impact of violent conflict.

The strategy identified a number of challenges at the outset. These included:

- Limited media access in some states and for women and girls.
- In the past the Nigerian media, including social media users, has incited people to use violence in some situations.
- The media has been used by powerful Nigerians as a mouthpiece for partisan interests
- Interference by the government, particularly the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), that can impose sanctions on media in response to critical coverage.
- Poor standards of journalism

Importance of Radio

Despite gender and regional disparities, radio remains the most influential and cost-effective medium in Nigeria: in the eight NSRP focal states, data from the National Bureau of Statistics shows that 88% of people have access to radio and 83% have mobile phones.¹

- The fear within the media profession of being targeted by militant groups and others with vested interests.
- The difficulty for journalists and peace builders alike of verifying the authenticity of reports from “citizen journalists” using social media.

NSRP planned an integrated programme to increase the skills of journalists in conflict sensitive communication, sustain support from their managers, and work with government agencies and CSOs to improve collaboration with the media.

Review of NSRP Intervention and Actions

NSRP implemented the following activities:

- 1) Media mapping:** NSRP commissioned a study to map the media in target states, to better understand how local grievances and violent conflict were reflected in the media, analyse of how citizens source and consume media information, and the use of social media. This study informed the design of this output area.
- 2) Workshop-based training for partner stations in conflict-sensitive communications:** 1038 professional journalists, CSOs, information officers from security and emergency sectors received conflict sensitive communications trainings. A conflict sensitive communication modules and election reporting and programme management was produced for partner media organisations.
- 3) Workplace mentoring in partner radio stations:** NSRP trained senior journalists, and editors, to act as workplace mentors and to cascade conflict sensitive reporting techniques and content various media houses. The media mentors influenced through regular mentoring supports the adoption of the CSC approach in the media stations while regular editorial meetings was introduced to facilitates change in programming.
- 4) Provision of equipment and technical support to enhance partners’ interactive programming and audience engagement mechanisms (e.g. talkshows, phone-in programmes, social media):** This was intended to increase the participation of marginalised populations (including women and girls) in debates and advocacy around conflict and its causes. Dandal Kuwa radio International established in Maiduguri
- 5) Conflict-sensitive communications post-graduate distance learning courses:** NSRP collaborated with the Ahmadu Bello University Zaria to develop an online postgraduate diploma programme for journalists in conflict-sensitive communications, a classroom version of the CSC modules developed for the Nigeria Institute of Journalism (NIJ) these modules have been adopted as a curriculum for the school.
- 6) Media marketing training:** NSRP worked with media outlets to train media stations them in understanding how adopting conflict sensitivity can increase revenue. The intention was to align conflict sensitive practices with financial incentives driving media outlets to sustain interactive radio programmes.
- 7) Media relations training for security sectors decision makers and civil society:** This training aimed to improve trust, synergy between these organisations and the media and to strengthen co-operation in reporting violent conflict in the country. This would boost conflict sensitive reporting based on accurate information from security personnel rather than guesswork and rumours.
- 8) Measuring change in conflict-sensitive reporting (media monitoring):** A scorecard methodology was developed to analyse interactive radio programmes. The monitoring mechanism tracked improvements in how radio programmes was handled, result of the media monitoring used to inform training needs of media partners, the result continuously informed quality content of radio programmes and increased opportunities for audiences to dialogue on issues contribute to discussions around governance and

peace building, including violence against women and girls. It flagged lapses in conflict sensitive practices by partner media outlets, allowing mentors to step in and remedy the situation. It also monitored hate speech on social media, countering online messages which could contribute to conflict.

- 9) **Supporting media partners to host political debates during election periods:** Media partners in Kano and Bayelsa hosted election debates for gubernatorial candidates to diffuse political tension that existed in these state during the 2015 general elections. The debate adopted a conflict sensitive communication approach to address issues that could potentially cause conflict during elections. A communique was agreed upon to maintain peace during elections and post election period.

Lessons Learned

The media mapping exercise was effective.

Firstly, it helped to identify potential media partner outlets, as well as where there was a lack of effective media outlets or radio stations. For example, it was found that Maiduguri had few functional media organisation most of which were control by government government control. The established Dandal Kuwa international was as a result of the mapping studies carried out by NSRP at the inception period of the programme NSRP subsequently help set up a radio station there.

Secondly, the exercise guided subsequent programming to identify context-specific dynamics around conflict reporting and marginalised population like women and girls to participate in discussions around issues that concerns their community.. This helped identify barriers faced by journalists in reporting conflicts, pressures leading to self-censoring, public perceptions around media outlets, and usage patterns around social media.

The media strategy proved useful, including to identify risks.

The media strategy kept the programme on track, focused on risks, and manage reporting of policy and practice changes. It also helped identify key areas of integration of the various outputs and components as well as the impact. Achievements included media partners identification of potential conflict in communities, highlighting issues that could trigger violence, and helping to ensure government follow up to resolve issues by continuing to focus on issues that affect communities. In the case of Wazobia, Port Harcourt, community protests around the lack of government support for infrastructure development continued for three months and threatened to shut down the electricity company. It took the intervention of the NSRP supported radio programme before the situation was addressed.

In the North East, the problems of increased prostitution was continuously highlighted in the media until government intervened to reinforced polices that will prosecutes perpetrators and safe guard women and gilrs. Rumours around elections result and possible manipulation by government in Kano state during the 2015 general election was curtailed by the media parnters proactiveness and undetsanding of conflict sensitive communication- alerting the population and classifying the newsa as spin to cause conflict. The” Banda ni campaign meaning Count me out campaign against hate and violence during elections ” in Wazobai was a result of NSRP partnership with the station.

And by identifying risks at the outset, the programme was better able to mitigate when they arose, as there were already plans and risk mitigation actions in place.

Differentiate between state and privately owned media.

A challenge during the programme was to convince state owned media outlets to adopt conflict sensitive approaches. Privately owned outlets had more control over what they broadcast, but state owned media were more hesitant to be critical of the government and exhibited more bias in reporting. This issue was more pronounced in Maiduguri, for example, where conflict

had driven out private radio stations. In response, NSRP invested in the provision of radio transmission equipment to support the establishment of a new radio station in the region. This equipment was eventually provided to Dandal Kuwa Radio, which now broadcasts in Miaduguri.

Training, retraining and in-house mentoring of government owned radio stations in the region has helped them adopt more conflict sensitive practice. Media partners in the North East region (Maiduguri) now research more thoroughly, make more effort to balance their stories, and provide opportunities for women to contribute to on-air discussions.

Align benefits of conflict sensitivity with media outlet revenue generation.

Encouraging private radio outlets to adopt conflict sensitive practices in a meaningful way was challenging where there was no obvious link to revenue generation. To overcome this, NSRP conducted marketing training for media outlets, which helped them to identify how adopting conflict sensitive programming would boost audience and hence revenues. This supported the uptake of conflict sensitive practices amongst these radio stations.

Convene the different actors to build trust.

The mapping exercise identified a lack of trust and coordination between security forces and media outlets. Security forces viewed media outlets with mistrust and part of the problem; media outlets had no direct communications with security forces and often reported conflict on speculation. NSRP tackled this challenge delivering 10 media relations training workshops, which brought together security forces and media outlets. This helped both parties recognised the benefits of cooperation. NSRP's convening power helped align stakeholders for more conflict sensitive reporting.

Creating a cross-thematic platform helped promote uptake of NSRP issues.

An objective for this component was to establish platforms to disseminate evidence from other areas of NSRP's work. Engaging media outlets helped communicate NSRP's other activities in reducing conflict as well as enhancing participation of women and vulnerable groups. NSRP created dedicated radio shows to discuss themes based on NSRP's work, including women's talk shows. NSRP partner organisations were invited in to talk about their conflict and gender related work on these regular radio shows.

Build sustainable mechanisms for training and dissemination of best practice.

Training delivered to journalists, and monthly monitoring and assessment of conflict sensitive practices has helped generate more conflict sensitive reporting. To sustain this NSRP has supported the following activities:

- Centre for Crisis Communication – this organisation has been trained in conflict sensitive reporting and are continuing to deliver training themselves as NSRP has stepped back.
- The Nigerian Institute of Journalism will continue training after the programme.
- A post-graduate distance learning course on conflict sensitive communications has been established
- Journalists who have received mentoring have become mentors in their own right.
- NSRP facilitated radio shows will continue to provide a platform for gender inclusion and conflict mitigation
- The Nigeria Broadcasting Commission (NBC) has integrated conflict sensitive communications in their code of ethics. The commission requested NSRP's support based on work done with the media in the last five years.

Scorecard analysis, monitoring and mentoring drove sustainable outcomes.

NSRP implemented media monitoring and developed a scorecard system to monitor how partner media outlets were adopting conflict sensitive practices provided via training. The

regularity of this process was effective in flagging instances where practices lapsed, allowing mentors to intervene and provide support. The capability to provide support alongside the monitoring and reporting mechanisms meant that issues could be addressed rapidly, rather than just reported on.

At the outset understanding of conflict sensitivity varied amongst mentors, where some were more effective than others, but over time these imbalances were ironed out. Mentors also reported that while they engaged a wider range of media outlets in training, they were only able to work with a limited number of radio stations for mentoring. Expanding mentorship to other media outlets would have had wider impact.

Develop online *and* offline training materials.

NSRP intention to create a distance learning course on conflict sensitive communications faced a number of bureaucratic and technical challenges which severely delayed its implementation. This included delays in procurement from the software provider, as well as difficulty in getting the course official accreditation. To circumvent these issues, the course was reworked into an 'offline' classroom version. The first cohort of students who undertook the module have recently graduated.

Two Media managers round table forum conducted in Abuja and Kano state for media owners and editors to earn their buy-in and interest for a conflict sensitive communication radio programme with a strand of media marketing to help station generate additional revenue.

Support better practices and policies for safety of journalists.

Delivering training and providing support for the safety of journalists was important in conflict reporting. This in turn would boost quality and standards of reporting.

Conclusions

This element of the NSRP was established and ran as pilot, with advice and learning from others who had undertaken this type of work in other contexts, but with no specific blueprint. On balance, the programme was judged to have made some progress against this objective, and the programme staff and partner organisations believe the lessons identified will be useful for further work in this area, both in Nigeria and elsewhere.

The initial work to map the media and stakeholders, develop a strategy, and dig down in to the different contexts across the country was an essential first step. Contextualising the work, understanding the political economy driving the behaviour of stakeholders, and convening stakeholders to work together helped to embed the work in reality, and overcome some of the key challenges and barriers which were identified. The media monitoring mechanism was useful, but made more effective by the mentoring system established to address the issues it identified. And ultimately, the work to embed conflict sensitive practice in other institutions and organisations will, we hope, prove useful to extend the impact of this work beyond life cycle of project.