



COUNTRY PORTFOLIO REPORT NIGERIA

Prepared for
10th Board Meeting
11-12 June 2019
Ottawa, Canada

1. Background

In mid-2016, the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF) began investing in local organisations in the North Central Nigerian states of Benue, Kogi, Nasarawa, and Plateau, and supporting them to design and implement programmes to build community resilience to violent extremism. Each of the five Principal Recipients led a consortium of local and community-based organisations to implement preventing violent extremism (PVE) programmes. They carried out baseline and community needs assessments to identify vulnerable population groups and the drivers of violent extremism in the local context.

Despite initial scepticism regarding the relevance of working in Nigeria's North Central states, developments since 2016 have confirmed the importance of working in the aforementioned states. The Global Terrorism Index 2018¹ has highlighted these states (colloquial; also known as Middle Belt) as a current and emerging hotspot for terrorism due to the dispute between farmers and herders, known locally as the Fulani. The report points out: "Through an aggressive campaign of anti-grazing policies and military deployment, the Nigerian government has attempted to curtail the herder-farmer violence, but the government has yet to devise a solution satisfying both the Fulani and the farmers" (p.56).

Analysis identified the history of hostility in the region as a key structural driver of recruitment and radicalisation to violent extremism. Conflict between farmers and herders, fuelled by a cycle of cattle rustling, reprisals, and confrontations, exacerbated religious divisions and encouraged the propagation of violent extremist narratives. Thus, GCERF-funded PVE programmes aimed to foster peaceful coexistence and social cohesion in communities through peacebuilding initiatives, conflict resolution systems, platforms for intercommunal dialogue, and advocacy. A perceived lack of opportunities was also identified as a structural motivator of violent extremism, as well as material enticements from violent extremist groups as an individual incentive. Therefore, GCERF-funded PVE programmes aimed to build a sense of purpose for community members by improving access to social and economic opportunities, such as meaningful income-generating activities. Furthermore, communities were concerned about the presence of enabling factors, including misinterpretation of religion and the propagation of violent extremist ideologies. In this way, GCERF-funded PVE programmes raised awareness of the dangers of violent extremism and how to develop effective responses, and shared positive alternative narratives.

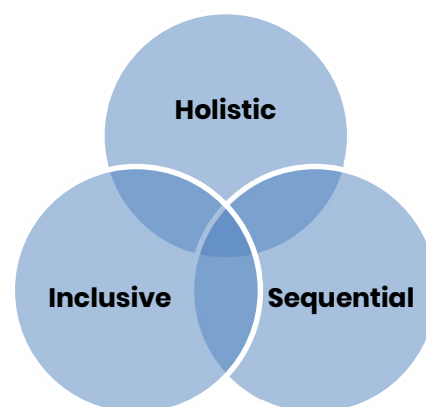
¹ <http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2018/12/Global-Terrorism-Index-2018-1.pdf>

Following the five Round 1 grants, completion reports were submitted and follow-up visits conducted by the Portfolio Management team. Select completion reports were complemented with end-line assessments, conducted by the grantee or consultants. This country portfolio report summarises the major results and lessons learned, and enriches the report with insights from external documents and sources.

2. Programming Approach: Holistic –Inclusive – Sequential

HOLISTIC

Impact is enhanced when PVE activities are designed deliberately to complement and reinforce each other. The more significant changes in attitudes and behaviours resulted from programming that engaged the whole community in diverse activities for a holistic intervention. For example, the same youth who participated in vocational training to increase economic resilience also participated in inter-generation peace committees that offered leadership opportunities while ensuring community security. Building community resilience requires sustained, long-term interaction with communities. [Resilience to violent extremism requires structural and perception changes in communities that take time, especially when operating in a volatile environment.](#) GCERF grantees have become aware of the great complexity of conflicts and other drivers of violence that exist in communities. Continuously supporting communities during the grant period was an effective way of helping them to build resilience.



Furthermore, grantees found that women and youth were particularly proactive in organising their own activities, supporting each other, and actively raising awareness in their communities. [A key lesson is that creating space and encouraging mentoring and peer support can greatly enhance the reach, impact, and sustainability of PVE programming.](#)

INCLUSIVE

[It is important to focus not just on individuals or certain groups, but on entire networks of relationships.](#) The successful PVE programmes consulted relevant community stakeholders and engaged them in the design and implementation of activities. The programmes gave communities space to voice their concerns, feedback, and achievements and to take ownership of the programmes in a sustainable way. This approach was successfully facilitated through initiatives such as Participatory Vulnerability Analysis, participatory

needs assessment processes, town hall meetings, and inter-community peer reviews. One grantee conducted 87 meetings with community members over the grant period to discuss programmatic challenges, successes, and ways forward.

The most effective PVE programmes were designed and managed to include and consider all different groups in the community. Because of power imbalances, bringing together men, women, youth, and different religious, ethnic, and social groups without foundational/introductory engagement can be self-defeating. [After preliminary work with separate groups, including youth and women, communities went on to establish successfully multi-stakeholder platforms](#) – such as the Community Action Response Teams (CARTs), made up of youth leaders, women leaders, and community leaders. In one community, the CART initiative led to the signing of a peace pact between farmers and herders – a conflict that has been exploited in North Central Nigeria by both Boko Haram and the Islamic State in West Africa.

The grants also ensured that activities were adapted to the local cultural context, taking the local language and levels of education of beneficiaries into account. This was particularly relevant and useful in awareness-raising activities.

SEQUENTIAL

[The intentional sequencing of different types of PVE activities optimises results while reinforcing positive gains.](#) This approach ensures individuals simultaneously enhance their awareness of violent extremism, their sense of purpose and supports integration in the community, and strengthens skills, confidence, voice, and access to opportunities.

3. Lessons and Insights

This section summarises key lessons and insights from the Nigeria portfolio with a focus on the following six topics:

- Engage with local authorities and local leaders
- Awareness-raising activities
- Community dialogue and platforms for conflict resolution and prevention
- Support for meaningful income-generating activities
- Sustainability and scale-up
- Gender responsiveness

3.1 Engage with local authorities and local leaders

Engaging with stakeholders in powerful positions was found to be an effective entry point to a community. This can include government officials because of their resources and decision-making role, and community, traditional, and religious leaders because of their cultural and personal influence.

Local leaders are gatekeepers; engaging leaders increases community mobilisation.

Grantees emphasised that local leaders play a critical role in mobilising PVE programme participants because their presence encourages and reassures the community of the legitimacy of the programme, and enhances attendance and engagement in activities. Religious leaders mobilise religious communities; youth leaders mobilise youth; women leaders mobilise women; and so on.

Actively cooperating and collaborating with respected individuals effectively increases the reach and impact of PVE programmes. Leaders sometimes also have the power and resources to support and replicate PVE programmes, which is key for sustainability.

Local authorities have the power and resources to contribute to scaling up and sustaining activities.

Advocacy and engagement can influence the priorities and agendas of local authorities. Consulting and including local authorities in PVE programming can increase their ownership of initiatives and ensure their support. Having support in the local and/or national governments can elevate PVE programme objectives to the level of longer-term priorities for leaders and ensure support for the continuation of activities once the programme has ended. One GCERF-funded consortium successfully petitioned the state government to establish, integrate, and institutionalise a PVE approach in its work. Another GCERF grantee found that working with the state government allowed the programme to expand its reach and sustainability – indeed, the government decided to replicate some of the programme activities. And all GCERF-funded consortia found that government entities were interested in engaging on PVE through the platform of national events such as the Global Peace Day.

Genuine support versus risk of instrumentalization. It can be challenging to distinguish between leaders (whether they are local authorities or community leaders) whose support for PVE initiatives is genuine, and those who are interested in using PVE platforms and projects to gain popularity and promote their own political agendas. All grantees are aware

External Evidence

If trusted leaders in the community are empowered to understand and mitigate the risks of VE, they will exert their influence to resist VE movements and levels of VE will go down.

Community leaders were also successful in facilitating inter-group connections; when leaders from different religions cooperated with one another on projects and in dialogue, others followed suit and reported improved attitudes toward members of the other religion. (1)

of such risk of instrumentalization and have handled this so far in a sensitive and responsible manner.

3.2 Awareness-raising activities

Programmes focused on awareness-raising to prevent the spread of violent extremist narratives, promote positive messages on peaceful coexistence in conflict-affected communities, and empower communities to identify threats and signs of violent extremism (and effective responses). Grantees learned that awareness-raising activities need to be diverse, engaging, interactive, and tailored to each audience.

[Different methods of awareness-raising complement and reinforce each other.](#) Grantees organised community activities to ensure that communicated messages are discussed and spread widely and effectively.

[Radio shows are consistently popular and are more compelling when they are live and interactive.](#) Interactive live shows received particularly positive feedback; one grantee partnered with another organisation to produce a live call-in radio programme that allowed listeners to express their opinions to local leaders, whilst being moderated to ensure constructive feedback.

Broadcasts in local languages amplified the number of people reached. In Kogi State, for example, jingles were aired in English and Pidgin as well as local languages. Interviews with community members found that 69% remembered the message of the importance of peaceful coexistence in communities.

Furthermore, the popularity of engaging and interactive *edutainment* activities to strengthen social cohesion went beyond radio shows. Participatory and interactive drama performances with audience engagement have been a particular success.

[Activity-driven, interactive awareness-raising activities specifically for youth.](#) Youth are keen learn about PVE, but they are best reached through activity-driven, interactive events. Spreading positive alternative narratives to youth is best accomplished through entertaining, sociable events, such as peace parties, peace walks, sport events, and peace clubs. One grantee found that 91% of participating youth had a good understanding of the causes and consequences of violent extremism after graduating from the peace clubs.

Journalists and media personnel acquired new skills through training on objective reporting and how to present a balance of voices from different groups. Working with media personnel also gave grantees the opportunity to receive feedback about the challenges faced when

reporting on conflict and violence. [Partnerships between grantees and media personnel proved highly effective](#) in both Nasarawa and Plateau States, with journalists and media personnel using their newly acquired skills; the training could be replicated elsewhere.

3.3 Community dialogue and platforms for conflict resolution and prevention

Intercommunal conflict has been identified as an underlying cause of violent extremism in North Central Nigeria. Therefore, once local leaders were engaged and community awareness of violent extremism had improved, grantees introduced constructive dialogue at the community level in order to address and resolve conflicts.

[Identify and bridge communication gaps in the community.](#) Platforms for dialogue made individuals feel empowered to speak up in their community. In communities where conflict is common, bridging gaps between different groups was very positively perceived, and had a highly visible and tangible impact on communities.

[Create linkages between voluntary watch groups, established security agencies, and community members.](#) GCERF grantees found that the communication gaps between these actors prevent communities from cooperating. Bringing these stakeholders together for consultation and dialogue gives them space to air their grievances and address communication gaps (e.g. capacity building workshops for neighbourhood watch groups, early warning workshops for Youth Peace Ambassadors).

[Peace committees and alternative dispute resolution \(ADR\) platforms have been highly popular and successful.](#) Grantees found that communities are very keen to welcome and engage in peaceful conflict resolution, but often the capacity and platforms are lacking. GCERF-funded programmes added value by building on what already exists to quickly resolve conflicts and prevent the escalation of violence that has been further exploited by violent extremist groups operating in the region.

External Evidence

A case study demonstrated that creating forums where diverse community groups could openly discuss VE led to a more accurate diagnosis and thus, a more appropriate response, to the threat. (1)

External Evidence

The relationship between the police and [voluntary watch] groups needs to be redefined. Joint patrols and other needs-based relationships should be replaced with long-term partnership agreements that clearly define the terms of cooperation between the actors. (2)

3.4 Support for meaningful income-generating activities

Effective programmes also address the challenges of individuals and groups who lack access to meaningful income-generating activities, perceive themselves as marginalised, and are therefore more vulnerable to recruitment.

Complementing technical and vocational training (TVET) or income-generating activities (IGA) with measures to build and strengthen self-confidence work well to build a robust sense of purpose for all genders. Safe spaces help to build a personal sense of self-worth. Furthermore, extra-curricular activities are highly popular and an effective way to encourage youth to be more active in their communities; one grantee found that after participating in the programme, 85% of youth engaged in positive life-building activities, compared with 14% beforehand. Self-confidence is then reinforced and made sustainable through skills acquisition and ensuring that youth and women have opportunities to become economically self-sufficient.

Interest and demand for TVET and IGA support outweigh the available resources. While GCERF grantees would like to expand the reach of these highly popular and visible activities that enhance community engagement and equal access to opportunities, the activities are costly, and scaling up would require significantly increased capacity and resources. Therefore, partnering with actors that have the capacity and expertise to provide this kind of support, such as specialised NGOs, local government, educational institutions, and the private sector, offers a promising avenue for collaboration. One GCERF grantee in Benue State has already partnered with a foundation to scale up their livelihood initiative.

3.5 Sustainability and scale up

Having the support of local authorities is not only essential during programme implementation, but also can be a key element for sustainability. While community members are motivated to continue activities after the programme has ended, it is local authorities who have the material resources to sustain and even scale up PVE activities. As discussed above, advocacy and engagement can not only ensure local authorities' support, but also influence their agendas and priorities in the long term.

External Evidence

CVE intervention programmes should strategically focus on both men and women. This is particularly important in the Nigerian context, as women's participation in violent extremist groups is greatly influenced by the male figure(s) in their lives. (4)

External Evidence

The greatest reduction in youth support for political violence [in Somalia] comes from the combination of participation in quality secondary education (which transfers knowledge and skills needed for future employment) and civic engagement opportunities (which empower youth to positively contribute to their communities). (3)

[Collaborate with local authorities to design exit plans that ensure sustainability.](#) GCERF grantees found that governments at the federal, state, and local levels were supportive and open to GCERF-funded PVE programmes and interested in the outcomes. Grantees also encouraged local authorities to foster enabling environments through investment in strategic areas, such as equipment and space for youth groups, recreational activities, and vocational training. One example is the involvement of the Federal Ministry of Youth Development in providing physical and technical facilities for Youth Peace Camps.

[Women play a key role for sustainability.](#) Women took the initiative to raise awareness of violent extremism and organise their own PVE activities. Women play an important role for sustainability. They actively share with peers, families, and neighbours, and they are enthusiastically organising their own PVE activities. For example, one grantee reported that almost 75% of the women who attended life skills training now voluntarily organise awareness-raising activities in their communities.

3.6 Gender responsiveness

[Religious and cultural norms affect the participation of women in PVE activities, so ensure women are involved in PVE programme planning and implementation.](#) Grantees found it challenging to engage young Muslim women. This was addressed by the active involvement of women in programme management, which increased female participation in activities. Women leaders played a powerful role in influencing, encouraging, and reassuring other women to take part in PVE activities and to amplify their voices. Grantees found that female participation increased progressively during the grant period, as women leaders involved in the project reached out to young women and girls. Nevertheless, female participation in some activities (particularly sport, cultural, and recreational events) remained low overall due to religious and cultural norms that discourage mingling with males, engaging in physical activities, and participating in social events outside the home.

Implementing female-only events has proven to be an effective platform to engage marginalised women, build their self-confidence, and encourage their participation in wider community events that include all genders. Sensitising men on how to build supportive partnerships with women, how to avoid marginalising women, as well as the key roles women play in peacebuilding and community resilience, is vital.

[Enhancing women's agency and self-confidence has strong, positive PVE effects on their communities.](#) Grantees found that giving women a stronger voice in the community empowered them to positively influence youth and men to denounce violence and promote

peaceful conflict resolution. Women's economic empowerment led to their more active participation in community governance and increased their influence.

4. Grant Performance and Results

This section summarises the grant performance of the five grants of Round 1 and the achievement of results. During this Round, the five grants reached a total of 167,000 direct and 1.85 million indirect beneficiaries.

The grant performance was assessed based on the newly introduced Grant Performance Assessment (GPA) framework as of December 2018. The GPA framework is a rating mechanism based on the below six criteria, which applies rubrics that describe and define four performance levels: *Exceeds Expectations*, *Meets Expectations*, *Approaching Expectations*, and *Below Expectations*. Some of the criteria are assessed quarterly, others semi-annually or annually.

1. Programmatic
2. Operational
3. Financial
4. Consortium
5. Alignment and Relevance
6. Outcomes and Sustainability

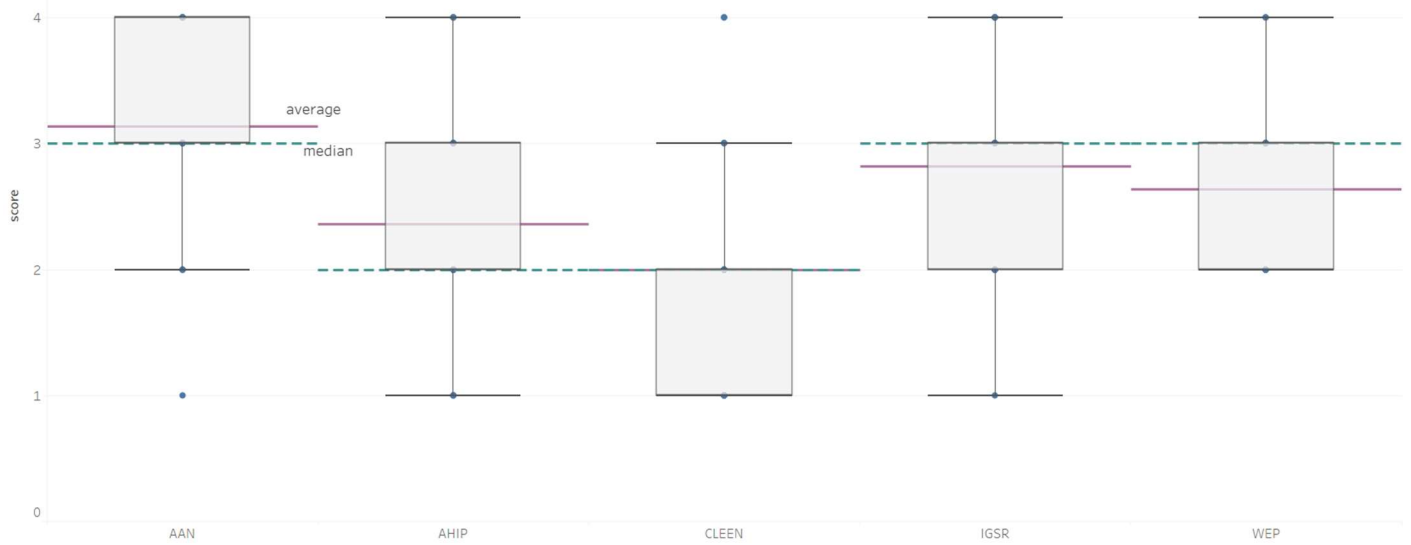
4.1 GPA Results (Grant Performance Assessment)

The GPA results by grantee are summarised in the following *Figure 1*. The score on the Y-axis corresponds to:

- 4 - *Exceeds Expectations*
- 3 - *Meets Expectations*
- 2 - *Approaching Expectations*
- 1 - *Below Expectations*

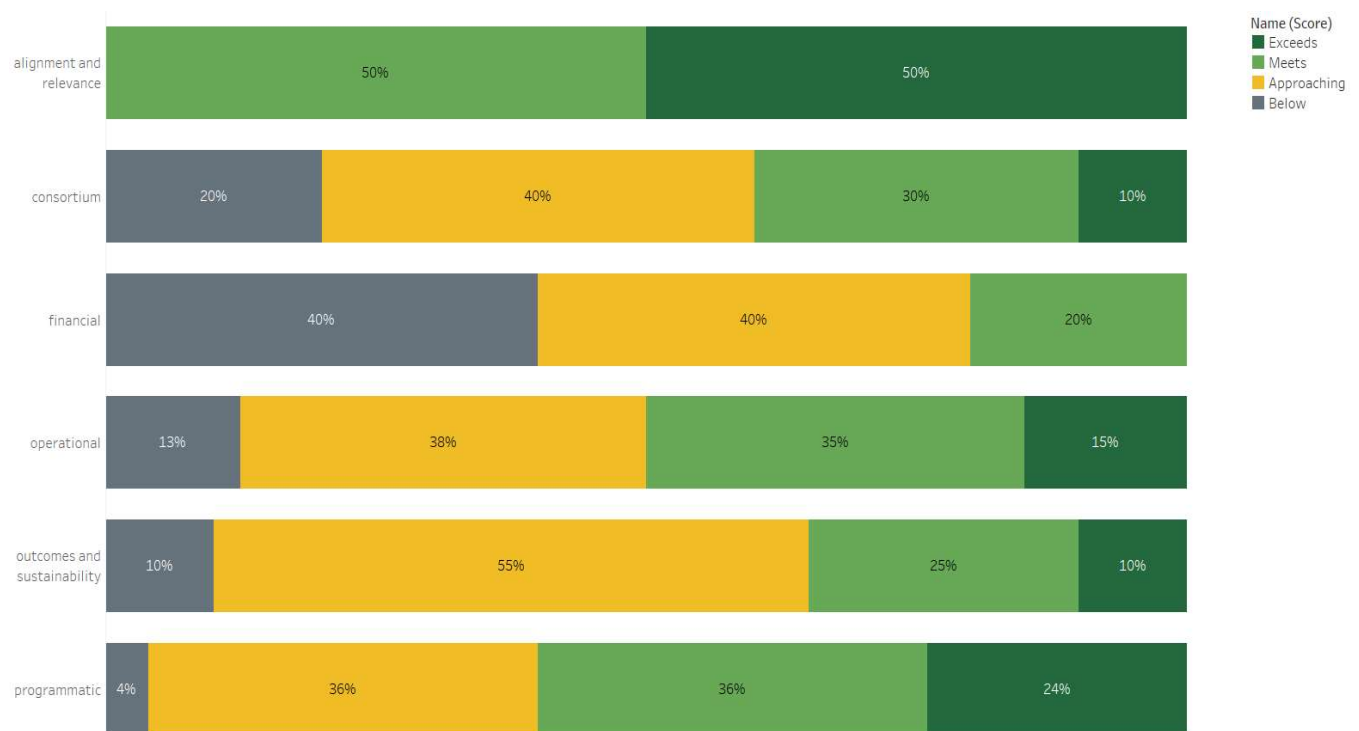
Figure 1 shows the average GPA score, the median, and the variance (range of scores). The grey area shows where 50% of the scores in the middle are located. In the case of CLEEN, the average and median are equal.

Figure 1: GPA results for Nigeria portfolio (as of December 2018)



The following *Figure 2* shows the score for each criterion for the Nigeria portfolio. While performance is strong for *alignment* and *relevance* as well as for *programmatic*, some grants did not perform well on *consortium management*, *outcomes*, and *sustainability*.

Figure 2: Nigeria portfolio performance by criterion

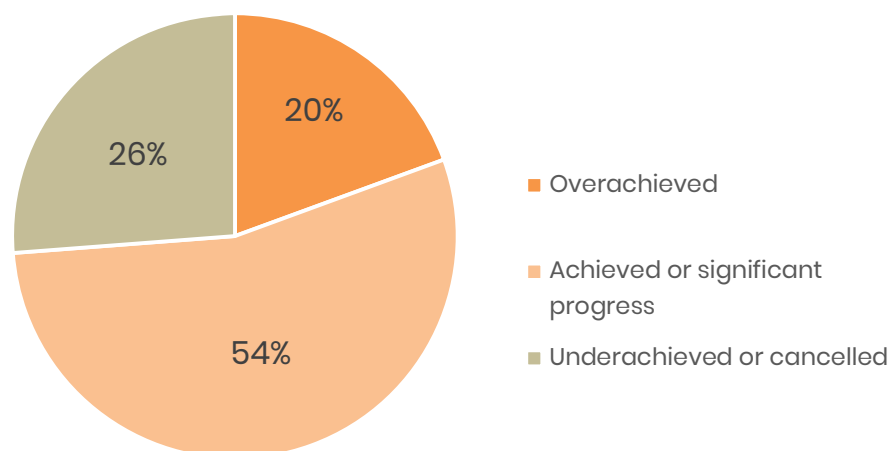


4.2 Achievement of results

In reference to the total number of outcome and output indicators (114), the following figure summarises the achievement of results. *Overachieved* means more than 100%, *Achieved or significant progress* means 90-100% and *underachieved* below 90%. This last category also includes outputs that have been cancelled during reprogramming in year 1 or 2 of implementation.

It is important to note that several targets were reviewed and adjusted during the revision of the workplans in mid-2017. This was necessary and useful as there was insufficient information and evidence available prior to the baseline studies. Also, the fact that PVE programming is relatively new and accepted benchmarks do not yet exist (e.g. for behaviour change), defining targets – especially for outcomes – can be very challenging.

Figure 3: Achievement of results – Nigeria portfolio



In the following, we would like to highlight several achieved outcomes that show GCERF grants making valuable contributions to PVE among different beneficiary groups:

- 1.63% of in-school youth demonstrate knowledge of radicalisation to VE; increase from 43%.
- 85% of in-school youth engage with positive life-building activities within and outside the school; increased from 14%.
- In six locations, conflict-affected communities have not experienced a conflict situation for at least one year after the programme started.
- 35 peace building platforms at community level have been newly established or supported to become functional. The platforms, for example, conduct awareness raising activities, discuss issues of concern and mediate in case of conflict.
- 69% experience peaceful coexistence among and within communities; an increase from 45%.
- 49% of youth actively use newly acquired skills in their communities and organise PVE related activities following their participation in the Peace Camps. Peace Camps were a new activity and comparative data does not exist. We consider it a good achievement if 1 out of 2 Peace Camp attendees continue the engagement.
- 94% of religious and traditional leaders demonstrate knowledge of radicalisation to VE following the programme.
- 74% of women who participated in awareness raising and training activities and who now actively practice their skills (e.g. conflict management, dialogue session, peer education).

9. 81% of the interviewed community members answered that the programme equipped them with the skills and confidence to address concerns directly with local authorities. 45% answered that such action has been taken following the intervention.
10. Four communities had established functional Community Action and Response Teams (CART) to prevent VE and mediate in case of conflict.
11. 18 joint farmer/herder events were successfully completed to address conflict between the communities. Initially only 10 such activities were planned but the uptake and interest meant that additional events were conducted.

YOUTH PEACE AMBASSADORS – A SUCCESS STORY

Establish platforms that empower Youth Peace Ambassadors to mobilise their communities

When empowered with the right knowledge and platforms, youth are highly effective at mobilising their communities. For example, the Youth Peace Ambassadors' Network empowered and encouraged young people to initiate PVE-focussed and other activities themselves. Furthermore, safe spaces allowed them to improve their status in the community, take responsibility and share their knowledge and opinions on VE. Indeed, grantees found that community perceptions of young people improved significantly. For example, while 70% of community members believed at the start of the programme that youth are involved in violence and criminal behaviour, only 50% held this opinion at the end of the programme. Grantees also reported that following the completion of activities and training, almost 3,000 young men and women were actively engaging in self-organised peaceful activities, including rallies, advocacy meetings, and social events. After receiving training on nonviolent communication, 50% of the youth used their skills to positively engage government authorities and community leaders in dialogue to address specific drivers of violent extremism, such as the farmer-herder conflict. In addition, more than half of the 1,711 youth who took part in Youth Peace Camps went on to serve actively and voluntarily as Youth Peace Ambassadors in their communities. It is planned to replicate and expand this intervention in Round 2 funding.

Endnotes:

- (1) <http://www.allianceforpeacebuilding.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/CVE-SSR-1.pdf>
- (2) <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR391-Understanding-the-Informal-Security-Sector-in-Nigeria.pdf>
- (3) https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/If%20Youth%20Are%20Given%20the%20Chance_LR_FINAL.pdf
- (4) <https://www.thegctf.org/Portals/1/Documents/Framework%20Documents/A/GCTF-Good-Practices-on-Women-and-CVE.pdf>