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NIGERIA AND LAKE CHAD BASIN PROGRAM

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BH	Boko Haram
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EWER	Early Warning, Early Response
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
GBV	Gender Based Violence
IWD 2021	International Women's Day 2021
ISWA	Islamic State in West Africa
LGA	Local Government Area
NERI	North East Regional Initiative
NLCB	Nigeria and Lake Chad Basin
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
TAP	Transition Activities Pool
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Nigeria and Lake Chad Basin (NLCB) program, funded by the United States Agency for International Development Office of Transition Initiatives (USAID/OTI) and implemented by Creative Associates International, began in 2018 and provided targeted assistance to strategic towns and corridors in the northeast to help local partners deny Boko Haram (BH) and the Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA) the space to operate. In response to U.S foreign policy objectives, in September 2020, NLCB pivoted to focus on community resilience and support for conflict prevention mechanisms in the Middle Belt with activities in Kaduna and Plateau states. NLCB has two cluster-level objectives: 1.) Improving community security and recovery of livelihoods; 2.) Improving the ability of vulnerable individuals and communities to represent their interests and promote peaceful resolution of conflict. This report highlights program activities from October 2020 to March 2021.

COUNTRY SITUATION AND POLITICAL UPDATES

In the reporting period, Nigeria had an increase in insecurity and grappled with persistent issues like economic inflation, a second wave of COVID-19 and poor governance. In October 2020, a nationwide anti-Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) protest (tagged #ENDSARS) broke out over the failure of the government to end the notoriously brutal police unit accused of disappearances, injuries, and killings. The police unit was subsequently disbanded; however, the government has faced criticism of how the events were handled. In the wake of increasing violence and worsening insecurity, the defense, army, navy, and air force chiefs of staff were replaced in January 2021. However, President Buhari appointed them to ambassadorial positions in February, raising allegations that they were rewarded for their failures.

In the Middle Belt, large-scale abduction, particularly of school students, became a more pronounced trend during the reporting period. In Plateau and Kaduna states, there were attacks that seemed intent on dislodging residents, with 76 and 84 villages sacked, respectively. Previously violence seemed focused purely on economic gains. The recent period has witnessed more targeting of those who have vocally opposed violence and banditry, including an incident where 5 Fulani *Ardos* were assassinated in Plateau State for opposing violence. There has also been an uptick on attacks against government forces with five attacks on military enclaves versus three over the past few years in the Middle Belt. Increasingly, there is communication and coordination between BH and ISWA groups in the northeast and bandits in the Middle Belt. The Governor of Kaduna has confirmed this trend and noted that the increasing pattern of attacks on the military may indicate improved training and equipment of armed groups in the Middle Belt.

SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

During the reporting period, the security situation continued to be unpredictable and flare ups of intracommunal conflict and attacks by bandits impacted security across wide swaths of the Middle Belt.

On February 6, the Kujeni community in southern Kaduna was attacked, driving out community members and destroying homes. Community peace volunteers evacuated women, children, and the elderly to safety in the neighboring Kajuru LGA Secretariat. As a result, NLCB suspended this activity in Kujene that was working to help people return by improving community security through the provision of solar streetlights and housing materials. This activity was ultimately cancelled as the security conditions remain unsafe for programming and the community members are unable to return to their homes. This incident highlights a well-established lesson learned on NLCB that it is not possible to effectively program in communities that lack an effective security presence or response in the event of an attack. Community security programming needs to be bolstered by an effective response of security organs in the event of an attack or other crisis nor is community security programming an appropriate replacement for an efficacious security presence.

LESSONS LEARNED

During the period under review, NLCB learned a couple of critical lessons which include:

- Women in the middle belt have traditionally been excluded from Early Warning Early Response (EWER) activities and security because these activities are seen as the domain of men. NLCB struggled to incorporate women into EWER activities as communities were reluctant to incorporate them. As a result, NLCB explored avenues for opening up these trainings and discovered that improving training materials for EWER to include modules on preventing GBV would serve as an incentive for female participation and would also raise awareness of these issues among the men. Based on the success of EWER trainings, NLCB is currently finalizing a Hausa version of its EWER training manual.
- Supporting grassroots initiatives to promote peace at the community level, can improve results because the communities perceive these initiatives as legitimate. An example of this is the Jema'a Community Peace Action Forums which helped convene a meeting of 6 chiefdoms in the LGA. The peace forum was seen as a community-driven effort, which contributed to its effectiveness because other conflict resolution efforts were focused on the elite level and were not embraced by the grassroots. In a show of unity, all 6 chiefdoms developed and signed a peace pact that has been widely accepted by communities.
- Working with committed, energetic government partners amplifies the impact of programming. As exemplified by the excellent coordination of the 2021 International Women's Day events by the Kaduna Ministry of Human Services and Social Development, Kaduna state has an array of young, educated and highly talented technocrats managing its ministries and agencies. Local authorities are closer, have increased interaction and are more accepted by locals than other tiers of government, so leveraging the involvement and active participation of local government generates results.

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

From the program's inception to March 31, 2021, the program implemented a total of 232 activities, 202 of which are now closed.

CLUSTER I: IMPROVING COMMUNITY SECURITY AND THE RECOVERY OF LIVELIHOODS

From September 2020 to March 2021, NLCB cleared 12 activities under this newly established cluster. One activity was suspended during the reporting period due to a security incident rendering the activity location inaccessible.

Under this cluster, NERI supported a rapid needs assessment of Bassa and Mangu LGAs, two priority local government areas (LGAs) of Plateau state, in order to ascertain the drivers and manifestations of conflict within the LGAs, map out communities recently attacked and identify victims, and to design initial interventions and inform subsequent relief and advocacy efforts.

The activities under this cluster provided support to increase community security in Kajuru, Jema'a, and Chikun LGAs by establishing streetlights to increase visibility throughout vulnerable communities, particularly around porous entry points, and reinforced those entry points with concertina wiring to deter attackers from entering these communities. These communities were also provided with boreholes to supply the communities with



Farming initiative for displaced communities

Distribution of food and non-food items to displaced families

reliable and consistent sources of water; before, many community women and girls were responsible for fetching water for their families, requiring them to leave the relative safety of their communities and trek many kilometers through dangerous areas in order to access water, rendering them vulnerable to attacks.



Activities under this cluster additionally supported resettlement efforts by supporting the rebuilding of over 50 destroyed homes for displaced families in Barkin-Ladi, Bokkos, and Mangu LGAs of Plateau state, and supplying displaced families with essential emergency relief food and non-food items in an effort to support displaced families to return to their homelands. NERI additionally

began an activity to support displaced communities rebuild their livelihoods by providing these communities in Kaduna and Plateau states with the land, material, and training required to establish communal farms aiming to grow enough food to feed the communities.

As a new initiative, NERI began an activity providing psychosocial support to 200 members of six conflict affected communities in Kajuru and Jema'a LGAs of Kaduna state, training community members as psychosocial first aid responders to provide peer-to-peer counseling to other community members who have been affected by the trauma of violence and abuse in recent years. NERI additionally established bi-weekly trauma clinics and provided ongoing mentoring to newly trained peer counselors.

CLUSTER 2: IMPROVING THE ABILITY OF VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES TO REPRESENT THEIR INTERESTS AND PROMOTE PEACEFUL RESOLUTIONS TO CONFLICT

During the reporting period, NERI cleared 12 activities under this new cluster, five of which are now completed or closed. Layering on support provided under Cluster 1, many activities under Cluster 2 provided the same communities with Early Warning, Early Response (EWER) training and equipment. These activities trained community members, frequently community youth who have volunteered to safeguard their communities but required capacity building and equipment to properly conduct their watch, raise warning, analyze and resolve or refer incidents. The EWER training prepared community members to prevent and mitigate the impacts of violent conflict in their communities and to identify and respond to conflict warning signs and avert impending conflicts in their communities.

Activities under this cluster additionally supported peace messaging developed and broadcast by radio stations rehabilitated by NERI in regions where there are perpetual mutual suspicion, mistrust, accusations, and counter-accusations, leading to further violence and killings. Target areas often lack a medium to disseminate peacebuilding messaging and security information. In these areas, NERI supported peace messaging campaigns to engage audiences in dialogues on peace and tolerance, promoting positive messages that encourage working together to reduce tensions and prevent future conflicts. (See Annex B Success Stories for more information)

On March 8, NERI celebrated International Women's Day 2021 (IWD 2021), choosing to challenge gender bias and inequality and celebrating women's achievements by organizing a peaceful march calling for greater women's inclusion in peacebuilding and stability processes in their communities. NERI's IWD 2021 celebrations additionally included a visit of internally displaced women



March for greater inclusion of women in Kafanchan's peacebuilding processes

with high-ranking women dignitaries and women who have undergone NERI's psychosocial training in order to advocate for the benefits of psychosocial support, inform key stakeholders how psychosocial support has helped their healing processes, and how to access psychosocial support in their areas.

One of the speakers during the International Women's Day celebration in Kafanchan was the Salama Sexual Assault and Referral Center (SARC). NERI is supporting the Salama SARC with furnishing supplies for children, and a sensitization campaign to raise community awareness about the SARC and the services it provides. During the reporting period, sensitization visits were carried out in Jema'a and Kajuru LGAs as well as advocacy with the high court in Kafanchan to ensure an effective referral protocol for gender based violence (GBV) cases. Early results of the sensitization campaigns indicate an uptick in cases being reported to the SARC. Sensitization campaigns are planned in additional LGAs for the next reporting period.

ANNEX A: NLCB ACTIVITIES BY CLUSTER

Cluster 1: Improving Community Security and Recovery of Livelihoods

ACTIVITY NUMBER	ACTIVITY TITLE	AWARDEE	START DATE	END DATE	STATUS
NERI003	Provision of Water Boreholes and Streetlights in Kajuru LGA	Kajuru LGA	2020-10-26	2021-05-31	Cleared
NERI004	Improving Security through Installation of Fences and Streetlights in Zikpak	Jema'a LGA	2020-10-26	2021-04-30	Completed
NERI005	Supporting the Return of Kujeni and Kujeni Dutse's Communities	District Head of Kufana	2020-11-09	2021-03-31	Cancelled
NERI008	Rapid Assessment in Bassa and Mangu LGAs in Plateau State	Plateau State Peace Building Agency	2020-11-02	2021-04-23	Completed
NERI013	Psychosocial Support to Conflict Affected Communities in Kajuru and Jema'a LGAs	safer World Foundation	2020-11-23	2021-07-07	Cleared
NERI015	Supporting Resettlement Efforts in Barkin Ladi and Bokkos LGAs of Plateau State	Christian Solidarity Worldwide Nigeria	2020-12-17	2021-06-30	Cleared
NERI016	Supporting Resettlement Efforts in Mangu and Bokkos LGAs of Plateau State	HighFLOW Channels	2020-12-17	2021-04-30	Cleared
NERI018	Provision of Emergency Supplies to IDPs in Gwagwada, Chikun LGA	TBD	2020-12-22	2021-02-28	Closed
NERI019	Improving Community Security in Gwagwada, Chikun LGA	Chikun Local Government Council	2021-02-02	2021-05-31	Cleared
NERI020	Improving Water Access and Sanitation in Gwagwada, Chikun LGA	Society for the Transfer of Appropriate Sustainable Technology and Expertise (TASTE)	2021-03-01	2021-08-31	Cleared
NERI021	Farming Initiative for Displaced Communities in Nigeria's Middle Belt	International Christian Concern (ICC)	2021-02-26	2021-09-01	Cleared

Cluster 2: Improving the Ability of Vulnerable Individuals and Communities to Represent their Interests and Promote Peaceful Resolution of Conflict

ACTIVITY NUMBER	ACTIVITY TITLE	AWARDEE	START DATE	END DATE	STATUS
NERI001	Equipping Existing Local Community Early Warning Structures in Kajuru LGA	District Head of Kufana	2020-10-26	2021-02-28	Closed
NERI002	Equipping Existing Local Early Warning Structure in Zikpak, Jema'a LGA	District Head, Kafanchan Kewaye	2020-10-26	2021-02-28	Closed
NERI006	Supporting Salama Radio Station Peace Messaging Campaign	Salama FM	2020-10-30	2021-04-30	Cleared
NERI007	Supporting Kaduna State Media Corporation to Broadcast Peace Messaging	Kaduna State Media Corporation (Rockside FM)	2020-11-11	2021-05-31	Cleared
NERI012	Support to the Southern Kaduna Joint Peace Committee	Southern Kaduna Joint Peace Committee Platform	2020-11-02	2021-06-30	Cleared
NERI014	Jema'a LGA Grassroots Stakeholders' Community Peace Actions Forum	Jema'a LGA	2020-11-30	2021-01-31	Closed
NERI017	Kafanchan Sexual Assault Referral Center Material and Communications Support	Kaduna State Ministry of Human Services and Social Development	2021-02-01	2021-05-07	Cleared
NERI024	Reconciling Angwan Bido and Gwandara through Dialogue and EWER	Jema'a LGA	2021-03-19	2021-05-31	Cleared
NERI028	Celebrating IWD 2021: High-level Visit Supporting IDP Women from Igabi LGA	Kaduna State Ministry of Human Services and Social Development	2021-03-01	2021-03-25	Completed
NERI029	IWD 2021, Kafanchan: Marching Towards Greater Inclusion in Peacebuilding	Fantsuam Foundation	2021-03-02	2021-03-25	Completed
NERI030	Psychosocial Support Services for Conflict Affected Communities in Plateau State	Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)	2021-03-24	2021-09-01	Cleared

ANNEX B: SUCCESS STORIES

Improving Zikpak's Community Security through Collaboration with Local Structure

Located in Jema'a LGA, Zikpak has long had a history of peace in contrast to the rest of Kafanchan town, an area troubled by ethno-religious and communal conflict. On July 24, 2020, this history of peace was shattered when suspected Fulani bandits attacked the community, killing ten civilians and burning down 12 houses. To address Zikpak's security vulnerabilities, the USAID/OTI Nigeria Early Recovery Initiative (NERI) provided the community with a holistic package of community security support including streetlights, concertina wiring, and training and equipping members of Zikpak's neighborhood watch group.

Before the attack, Zikpak had about 100 community youth members of the volunteer watch group. Now, the Zikpak volunteer watch group has over 500 members. To bolster the efforts of the watch group, NERI



Members of Zikpak's volunteer neighborhood watch group after receiving EWER training and equipment

provided 40 members of Zikpak's volunteer watch group training on EWER to build their capacity to conceptual and practical means of promoting peace and security in their community. The group was also equipped with basic EWER tools, including light-weight motorcycles able to navigate Zikpak's dirt roads.

Once trained, the members were able to informally cascade their knowledge and skills to other members of the group. The training allowed the members to use radio, television, social media, and their networks to gather, triangulate, and analyze security information. The group also has access to the Zone 3 Nigeria Police Command of Kafanchan, Jema'a Local Government Council (Chairman and Chief Security Officer), Military Forward Operation Base in Kafanchan, traditional rulers, and other local authorities with whom they share any security concerns with for swift action to forestall break down of law and order in Zikpak. These channels of communication, along with the provision of basic equipment, will help Zikpak to communicate effectively with security providers in the event of subsequent unrest.

"If we have had this training before the attack, I am certain we would work with the local authorities and security agencies to avert the attack. We now verify all information; we treat every information as extremely important and share the ones with security implications with relevant authorities starting with community and traditional leaders. We will never repeat the docility and laxity that we treated the information that precedes the attack which we treated as mere rumors."

– Ladi Martins, Zikpak community member

Promoting Peaceful Coexistence in Southern Kaduna through Radio Peace Programming

Between January and September 2020, verified sources recorded over 110 incidents of violence against civilians in southern Kaduna, leaving at least 437 civilians dead and scores more injured, indicating an upsurge in violent attacks in southern Kaduna. The violence follows similar patterns with attackers storming rural communities, perpetuating mutual mistrust between the indigenous, predominately Christina communities and Fulani and Hausa communities.

To address this mistrust and reach rural communities, USAID/OTI Nigeria Early Recovery Initiative (NERI) initiated peace message programming on two radio stations in Kafanchan, Salama FM and Rockside FM. These two stations are able to reach over 3.5 million listeners throughout southern Kaduna and other parts of Nasarawa, Plateau, and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). The peace messaging programs discuss topics

Discussing 16 Days of Activism on Salama FM



Developing scripts for peace messaging programs

such as peaceful coexistence and tolerance, interactive live programming during which stakeholders tell their stories and phone-in segments for community members enable discussions on peace. This programming engages a wider audience where community members are able to take greater ownership of and involvement in the peace process.

Salama FM's host, Isa Musa, said that community members now call him, "Salama!" (which means "peace" in Hausa). He added that many listeners now use their phones and small transistor radios to tune into the regular peace programs. In Kafanchan, a series of protests led to blackouts, but the area of Kagoro was not affected; NERI found that community members reported that Kagoro was unaffected because they had listened to peace programming and refrained from attacking critical infrastructure. Peter Ofoegbu, a community member born and raised in Kagoro, reported that he speaks to his fellow community members about the peace programming and asks others to spread the message of peace.