



REPORT OF RAPID ASSESSMENT INTO THE INCESSANT CRISES IN WUKARI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AAREA OF TARABA STATE

PREPARED BY

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PREFACE

There is no handy roadmap for reconciliation. There is no short cut or simple prescription for healing the wounds and divisions of a society in the aftermath of sustained violence. Creating trust and understanding between former enemies is a supremely difficult challenge. It is, however, an essential one to address in the process of building a lasting peace. Examining the painful past, acknowledging it and understanding it, and above all transcending it together, is the best way to guarantee that it does not – and cannot – happen again.

As an organization well vast in peace building activities in Nigeria, our experience has taught us that each society must discover its own route to conflict transformation. Transformation cannot be imposed from outside, nor can someone else's map get us to our destination, it must be our own solution. This involves a very long and painful journey, addressing the pain and suffering of the victims, understanding the motivations of offenders, bringing together estranged communities, trying to find a path to justice, truth, reconciliation and, ultimately, peace. Faced with each new instance of violent conflict, new solutions that are appropriate to the particular context, history and culture in question must be devised.

Despite the differences in religious obligations, cultural background and ethnicity, identities and ideologies, we are not proposing simple solutions, but we are offering a range of options, built on expertise and experience drawn from the work our organization, Women Environmental Programme (WEP) has been doing. We are providing a solid basis for constructing, adapting and adopting ideas, practical and effective ways to design the transformation process appropriate to a particular set of circumstances.

As we continue on our own journey towards peace in Nigeria, I commend this report to those who struggle for reconciliation and transformation of violent conflicts in Wukari, in Nigeria and in other contexts around the world. I hope that the recommendations and lessons from the assessment presented here will inspire, assist and support them in their supremely important task ahead.

Priscilla M Achakpa

Executive Director

Women Environmental Programme

ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
CDD	Centre for Democracy and Development
CON	Commander of the Niger
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DSK	David Sabo Kente
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
LGA	Local Government Authority
NDLEA	National Drugs and Law Enforcement Agency
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NSDC	Nigeria Security and Defence Corp

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Kwara University, Wukari Taraba State desirous of conducting a rapid assessment of the post-conflict affected Wukari LGA in Taraba State with the aim of identifying the reasons behind the conflict, finding solutions for promoting lasting and sustainable peace in the LGA, contracted Women Environmental Programme (WEP) in May 2013. The task of the assessment was to gather relevant background information on the conflict situation in Wukari LGA; review past and current government efforts in mitigating conflicts in these areas; gather data on best practices by other NGOs or actors who might have done some peace work in the area, and make critical recommendations for interventions. The assessment was to also design and make concrete findings that will be documented and used as reference towards ensuring good governance and meaningful ways of intervening in future conflictual situation.

The methodology involved critical assessment of the conflict areas using primary and secondary data. It employed desk reviews, field visitations and interviews with critical stakeholders in the target LGA to achieve the set objectives. The WEP Project Team traversed the length and breadth of Wukari LGA in Taraba State spanning through Benue State to painstakingly conduct the assessment and held debriefing meetings with her sponsors to share her findings.

The major findings of the May conflict was linked to the following, which have been categorised in remote and immediate causes;

REMOTE CAUSES:-

1. One of the remote causes of the crisis was linked to an incisive and provocative publication against the Jukun tradition, culture, founding and claim of ownership and date of settlement in Wukari by one of the Muslims whose siblings migrated from Kano and settled in Wukari in the days of old in the course of trading¹.
2. The infiltration of the Islamic and Christian Regions by overzealous Leaders and radicalisation of the two religions has led to un-scriptural teaching and incitement of members of their congregations against

¹ Publication in three National dailies

Traditional Authorities hence the present disregard and loss of confidence in age long authorities and traditional religious practices and authority.

IMMEDIATE CAUSE:-

3. The immediate cause of the crisis that occurred on the 3rd may 2013 was sparked off by shooting at the funeral procession of late Chief Abe Ashmate who was the Abon Ziken of the town and Second in Command to the Aku Uku of Wukari, which led to the retaliation by the traditionalists on return from the ceremony. Although the funeral rite coincided with the Muslim day of obligation but it was not meant to spite the Muslim and was not meant to interfere with the Muslim Jumat prayer time as the ceremony would have been concluded before the scheduled prayer time. It was observed that the attack on the burial procession was not done out of concern for the day of obligatory prayer but out of mischief and intention to cause trouble².
4. It was also discovered that there is an attempt to ensure that there is an institutionalization and legalization of an emirant in Wukari (taking lessons from Ilorin, Kwara State which is now an Emirate) hence, the incessant attack on the traditional authority and practices. Furthermore, it was observed that the people of Wukari on their own are taking a lesson from what had played out in Jos, Plateau State and are taking their time and are trying to avoid similar incident the Jos, Plateau State palaver where non-indigenes have taken over their land thereby rendering politically and economically incapacitated.
5. Some prominent sons and daughters from the Christians and Muslims in Wukari have instituted some peace initiatives in the LGA, but apparently require some support from independent neutral organizations and individuals.
6. Though not directly linked to the Elders of the Wukari community seemed to have diverted their attention from the happenings and management of their children and youths until the control of situations in the community slipped out of their hands. The recent crisis in Wukari seems to have come to awaken them to their responsibilities but then, the community has been moved to a critical situation. Whatever might have led to that really needs to be verified.

² Interview and focus group discussions of WEP Team in the field.

7. There is Class Distinction among members of the Wukari Community along Religious line (Traditional, Religion, Christian Religion and Islamic Religion), which has resulted in the planting of serious hatred and bitterness against each other due to incitement of the followers of the non-indigenous religions.
8. From the assessment it was discovered that, in response to the emerging trend of conflict in the LGA, the Taraba State Government, like other state governments, has been collaborating with all security agencies to contain the rise of violent conflicts in their domain. This is in line with Section 14 (b) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which provides that; “the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government”. To achieve this, statutory institutions and mechanisms have been put in place. They include the setting up of a Judicial Commission of Inquiry, the imposition of curfew from 4:00pm to 6:00 am up to the time of the assessment.
9. In spite of this, there exists no comprehensive security, conflict management/transformation or peace-building policy, as the response has been reactive, heavy-handed and uninformed against peace building principles.

Key recommendations made at the end of the assessment exercise include the need to go beyond the rapid assessment and analysis but, to put in place some serious measures that would address the conflict in the short, medium and long -term basis.

The short- term recommendation;

1. Map those that have been grossly affected by the conflict and provide immediate support in terms of rehabilitation, economic support and trauma counselling. This might require going beyond Wukari but also targeting Ibi, Takum LGAs and other surrounding communities.
2. Identify organizations and individuals that are already working on building confidence and trying to bring about peace and form a formidable team for synergy and adequate utilization of resources.
3. Institute an action that would bring all the various identified stakeholders together to start peace building processes, alternative dispute resolution, sensitization and trust building. This action must also identify the key persons who are displaced among the youth and

- women and who are not particularly residing in Wukari now but in the neighbouring communities such as Jootar, Kyado, and Kente etc.
4. Embark on serious sensitization and awareness creation for the uneducated youths who are mostly used as perpetrators of the violent conflicts.

The medium term

1. There is the need to identify and institute legal action against the conflict entrepreneurs, fuelers or sponsors. This action would go a long way in instituting fears and discipline into others.
2. Build capacity for the monitoring of early warning signals and reporting.
3. The team also recommends that, the Taraba State Government should, through various programmes, provide the enabling environment for socio-economic development, as well as putting in place confidence building measures among fractionalised communities.
4. There is a need for sustained capacity development programmes on peace-building mechanisms for stakeholders, improvement on information gathering and dissemination, and adequate equipment of security agencies as well as strengthening their capacities.

The long term

1. Identification, reconstruction and rehabilitation of the affected persons during and after the conflict is key.
2. Continuous trauma and psychological counselling of the affected persons.
3. Provide economic opportunities and activities for women and the youth (particularly those not gainfully engaged)
4. Continuous sensitization and awareness creation among the youths especially the uneducated ones

Chapter One: Introduction and Background

1. Overview of Conflict in Taraba State

Conflicts of varying magnitudes have posed enormous challenges to the peace and stability of the middle belt region of Nigeria. Nigeria faces significant challenges to its development efforts in the form of sporadic eruptions of violence in various parts of the country, such as the Niger Delta and indeed the northern and middle belt regions. These episodes of violence over resources and identity expressed in Nigeria is common to many developing societies undergoing rapid change and may be linked to the fact that the development process inevitably causes conflicts, as significant resources and relations between groups and sectors are redefined, and new power equations established.

The middle belt region of Nigeria has over the years witnessed large influx of people from other geo-political zones due to the abundance of fertile land in the region. States in this region share similarities and peculiarities such as ethnic groups, agrarian occupation and peasantry like Taraba, Adamawa and Bauchi in the North East; and Enugu and Ebonyi to the South East. The region comprises the following states: Benue, Niger, Nasarawa, Kwara, Kogi, Plateau and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of Nigeria, which prior to the division of Nigeria into six geo-political zones was part of the political Northern Nigeria. Though the region can be regarded as a multi ethnic one, the major ethnic groups include Beroms, Tivs, Jukuns, Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba, Igalas, Igbiras and Idomas. The search for identity and the disenchantment of the minority groups in the North led to the move for a Middle Belt identity since the early 1960s, shortly after the country's independence.

The rich and diversified natural endowment of the middle belt region has made it a major centre of attraction for migrants from other geo-political zones of Nigeria. This situation, in addition to the uneven distribution of the population within the region, has contributed to a high level of migration in search of larger parcels of land for farming and grazing. The fast growing population in the region, their continuous movement, and the seeming low level of development of the region has all combined to quicken the pace of competition for resources including land, ethnic rivalry, and agitation for political offices among other issues. As a result, the peace for which the

region was once commended for has gradually given way to a plethora of violent conflicts. Conflicts in the region revolve around several issues including boundary disputes, ethnicity, perceived marginalization, delineation of political constituencies, ownership and control of farmlands and fishponds, religion and chieftaincy.

The prevalent pattern of conflict challenges in the region over the years include: (a) inter- and intra-communal conflicts; (b) ethno-religious conflicts; (c) emergence of youth militia; (d) electioneering and politicking; and (d) conflicts between pastoralists and farmers.

Conflicts in this region have a long history, but there has been an escalation and intensification of these conflicts in recent years. States such as Plateau, which were known for their relative serenity, now find themselves among the worst conflict-affected areas in the country compounded by indigene/non-indigene conflicts, land ownership, and other identity conflicts. One other notable protracted conflict in the region is the Tiv/Jukun, Jukun/Chambas, Jukun/Kuteb, Jukun/Jukuns-Muslim versus Christians, Hausa/Jukuns conflict in the Benue/Taraba axis.

In recent years, the Federal Government of Nigeria has brought significant resources to bear on addressing violent internal conflicts, including a strong recognition on the part of federal authorities that these conflicts could threaten Nigeria's cohesion and stability if left unaddressed. Federal and state governments have been working closely with civil society to support a number of peace-making efforts in these conflict flashpoints. However, deep-seated mistrust of government intervention by local actors, as well as persistent divisions among the latter has hampered these efforts.

While a number of laudable efforts have been launched at the local level to mediate an end to the protracted inter-ethnic and inter-religious violence, these efforts have yet to coalesce into an architecture for sustained management and mitigation of perennial disputes over land, resources, indigene/settler issues, political representation, and participation, and local rights that manifest as violent.

2. BRIEF ON TARABA STATE AND VIOLENT CONFLICTS

Taraba State is bounded in the west by Plateau and Benue States and on the

east by the Cameroon. Taraba has sixteen Local Government Areas, which are governed by elected chairmen. They are as follows: Ardo Kola, Bali, Donga, Gashaka, Gassol, Ibi, Jalingo, Karim Lamido, Kurmi, Lau, Sardauna, Takum, Ussa, Wukari, Yorro and Zing. Taraba State lies largely within the middle belt region of Nigeria and consists of undulating landscape dotted with a few mountainous features. These include the scenic and prominent Mambilla Plateau. The state lies largely within the tropical zone and has a vegetation of low forest in the southern part and grassland in the northern part. The Mambilla Plateau with an altitude of 1,800 meters (6000 ft.) above sea level has a temperate climate all year round.

Rivers Benue, Donga, Taraba and Ibi are the main rivers in the state. They rise from the Cameroonian mountains, straining almost the entire length of the state in the North and South direction to link up with the River Niger. The major occupation of the people of Taraba State is agriculture. Cash crops produced in the state include coffee, tea, groundnut and cotton. Crops such as maize, rice, sorghum, millet, cassava and yam are also produced in commercial quantity. In addition, cattle, sheep and goats are reared in large numbers, especially on the Mambilla Plateau, and along the Benue and Taraba valleys. Similarly, the people undertake other livestock production activities like poultry production, rabbits breeding and pig farming in fairly large scale. Communities living on the banks of Benue River, River Taraba, River Donga and Ibi engage in fishing all year round. Other occupational activities such as pottery, cloth weaving, dyeing, mat making, carving, embroidery and blacksmithing are also carried out in various parts of the State.

Like most states in Nigeria, Taraba State has had its fair share of violent conflicts and tensions often resulting in the displacement of people and communities, wanton destruction of lives and property, human rights abuses and a climate of insecurity and mutual distrust and suspicion. Each conflict is unique in its origin and character, but underlying denominators are manifested in land space and boundary squabbles, indigene vs. settler palaver, chieftaincy tussles and disputed jurisdictions, competition to access scarce political and economic resources and population growths.

The ancient city of Wukari, which was founded at about 1596³ by Aku Katakpa after the disintegration of the Kwararafa Confederation. Wukari was for a while the headquarters of the historically famous Kwararafa

³ Kwararafa University website: About Us.

Confederacy which at the zenith of its powers extended to modern Niger, Plateau, Kogi, Nasarawa and Benue states and FCT in the north central geopolitical zone, Edo and Cross River in the South-South zone, Kaduna, Kano and Katsina states in the north west zone and Bauchi, Gombe, and Adamawa States in the north east zone beside its place as the cradle and pride of all Jukun, Wukari has over the years metamorphosed from a spiritual and cultural headquarters of the Jukun to a political and administrative headquarters of former Wukari Federation which now consists of Wukari, Donga, Ibi, Takum, Kurmi and Ussa Local Government Area of Taraba State. Wukari is also the seat of the Aku-Uka who is the supreme spiritual and political head of the Apa-Jukun. The position of Aku-Uka is one of the few traditional monarchies in Nigeria and is vested in two dynasties; the Ba-Gya and Ba-Ma. The current occupant of the throne His Royal Majesty, Shekarau Angyu Masa Ibi Kuyyon II (CON) is from the Ba-Gya ruling house and is the 24th Aku-Uka.

Wukari Local Government is also the Zonal Headquarters of the aforementioned Local Government Areas. It has a population of 241,546 people according to 2006 National population Census figures⁴. Wukari Local Government Area is made up of fifteen (15) district.

Wukari is a Local Government Area in Taraba State, Nigeria. The Donga River flows through the area of Benue Rivers and boundary with Benue and Nasarawa State to the northwest. According to the people, the town is the base of the Wukari Federation and a traditional LGA. It has an area of 4,308 km² and a population of 241,546 at the 2006 census and made up of fifteen districts.

1.3 Violent Conflicts in Wukari, Taraba State

Like most states in Nigeria, Taraba State and particularly Wukari has had its fair share of violent conflicts and tensions often resulting in the displacement of thousands of people and communities, wanton destruction of lives and property, human rights abuses and a climate of insecurity and mutual distrust and suspicion. Each conflict is unique in its origin and character, but the underlying denominators are manifested in land space and boundary squabbles, indigene vs. settler palaver, religious/ethnicity, and chieftaincy tussles and disputed jurisdictions, competition to access scarce political and

⁴ National Population and Housing Census 2006

economic resources, and population growths. In the context of Wukari, the prevalent pattern of conflict challenges in recent times are religious/ethnicity, inter- and intra-communal in nature, and some even have direct bearing on neighbouring states.

Based on information from WEP office in Jalingo, Taraba State, the recent violent crisis in Wukari indicates that the Jukun Christian people were observing funeral rites on Friday for one of their prominent sons who died and the Jukun Muslims protested why such funeral rites would be observed on Friday, their worship day, however, the Jukun Christians were patient until the funeral was over, then came back to revenge on the Muslims and this led to hundred of people being killed, thousands displaced and some being displaced and residing in the neighbouring communities of Benue State.

1.5 Rapid Assessment Methodology

The methodology employed during the assessment started with the interactive and debriefing of conflict exercise in Wukari local governments to understand the situation on ground and generally to follow accepted standard procedures of the conflict assessment exercise. The process involved a critical assessment of the conflict through review of documented materials, in-depth interviews with representatives of the conflicting parties through individual and focus-group discussions; community leaders, women and youth groups, local government officials, civil society groups and religious groups working with the parties, under the leadership of the WEP team.

The results and findings of the assessment exercise was synthesized and related to the structures and principles that govern constructive peace-building efforts. The exercise was followed by debriefing and interactive session with the Vice Chancellor of the Kwararafa University Wukari.

The guide adopted by WEP utilised open-ended questions and participant-based data as the path to specifying conflict processes. This approach is particularly useful for agents and students wishing to study conflicts, and possibly find fertile grounds for management and mediating in conflicts the Project Team employed an approach that valued primary information from the parties and stakeholders involved in the conflicts. This primary method involved gathering relevant documents relating to the conflict; stakeholders

meetings, interviews and focus group discussions with relevant government authorities and institutions, traditional and community leaders, prominent indigenes of the community, and women and youths. To achieve this, an assessment guide was prepared as a useful model to generate information about the dynamics of any specific conflict.

The team also reviewed available literature on the area as well as reports of other conflicts in the LGA, and unpublished submissions and positions of the various actors in the conflict to enable it identify the driving motivation of the community as well as the veracity or otherwise of their claims.

1.6 Limitation of the Assessment

1. As the title of the project refers, it was meant to be a rapid assessment hence the team had no sufficient time to cover all the areas as well meet with the other actors
2. Some of the government agencies were economical with information which made it difficult to really ascertain the certain situations and their level of involvement
3. The Police did not cooperate with the team and only sought to volunteer information when their superior ascends to it.
4. Most of the key actors mentioned to the team during the assessment were not sighted/residing in Wukari and in view of the time constraint and resources made it very difficult for the team to locate or travel to places where they residing.
5. The rapid assessment was single handled bank rolled by the Kwararafa University whose interest as an academic institution is in sustaining peace especially where children (youths) and future leaders from all walks of life study in their institution.

CHAPTER TWO: RESPONSE OF STATE AND NON-STATE ACTORS TO THE CONFLICT IN WUKARI LGA TARABA STATE

2.1 State Response to Conflict in Wukari

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria states that ‘... the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government... and that...national integration shall be actively encouraged [by the State]’. Notwithstanding this constitutional provision, the capacity of the Nigerian State to address the numerous security threats within its borders is weak owing *inter alia* to a poor policy framework with regard to peace building, conflict transformation and provision of security and the inadequacies of the major security organs and the ineffective conflict management methods employed by the State.

No comprehensive security, conflict management/transformation or peace-building policy has ever been developed by successive Nigerian governments in spite of the frequency and intensity of inter- and intra-group conflict in the country. Likewise no policies have been formulated to guide the nature, scope or form of state intervention in internal conflict situations.

State responses to serious armed conflict are consequently inadequate, reactive, heavy-handed and uninformed by peace promoting principles. Furthermore, the conception of *national security* as interpreted by successive governments is wholly restricted to the protection of the political interests of the incumbent governments to the exclusion of the peace and welfare of the citizens.

State response to violent conflicts in Taraba and indeed Wukari have taken the form of:

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1. Deployment of security forces to conflict areas to keep the peace and enforcement of curfew. However, chronic under-funding has created ill-trained, ill-equipped and demoralised security agencies and operatives in view of the fact that most of the conflict actors have more sufficated weapons than the security agencies.
 2. Relief responses, which involve the immediate and short-term provision of relief to victims of violence, after which no further steps are taken in order to restore peace completely or even address the underlying causes of the conflict.

3. The establishment of commissions and panels of enquiry on the conflict from a political standpoint. With this there is usually a problem of representation of the contending sides in the conflict on such panels while the reports are sometimes considered biased in favour of certain groups and most of the reports are not made public.
4. In the case of the May 2013 conflict, as is usual with government, the Army and Police were drafted to keep peace and of course have been deployed to enforce a 6am-4pm curfew after the violence as at the time of WEP assessment.
5. At the moment, Taraba State government has set up a commission of inquiry Chaired by the Acting Governor, but the report is yet to be submitted.

2.2. Non State Actors Response

a) Political responses

The Traditional and Religious leaders have been engaged in bringing about peace in the LGA, however the problem with this response has been that these leaders themselves are involved in the conflicts. Thus, they have lost the respect and trust of their subjects and therefore their role in the process has yielded minimal impact.

b) NGOs Responses

NGOs have been active in the provision of and the coordination of supply of relief materials to the affected communities. An identified problem with some of them is the absence of capacity. Those identified to have directly intervened includes;

DSK and TY Danjuma Foundations were the only organisations that provided relief for the Internally Displaced Persons within Wukari town. The Relief support was provided through the Christian and Islamic organisations;

Women Environmental Programme (WEP) Jalingo office paid a visit to Wukari to ascertain the extent of the conflict and sent a brief report to the office in Abuja which was yet to intervene due to lack of resources until contracted by the Kwararafa University to do so;

A committee made up of Christians and Muslims for peace-building processes have been instituted with the support and funding of one of the prominent sons of Wukari, Taraba State;

Some individuals also assisted the IDPs with clothing, food and accommodation. Indeed, they are still living with relations in the surrounding villages, as majority are yet to return back to Wukari;

The Wukari traditional rulers led by the Aku Uka are desirous of peace and have set a committee that would work towards bringing about peace among the warring factions.

CHAPTER THREE: IMPACT OF THE CONFLICT ON THE WUKARI LGA

3.1 Economic Impact

Wukari local government, which is the centre of economic activities, has a tropical region climate with two seasons; the rainy season, which lasts from April to October, and the dry season, which starts from November and ends in March. The temperature in the area usually fluctuates between 23oc and 31oc. Given the favorable climate and fertile lands in Wukari local government area, varieties of crop are produced in the area including Rice, Sorghum, Maize, assorted fruit trees, beniseed and vegetables. It is also blessed with large volume of mineral deposits such as salt lead, zinc, limestone, which makes it most suitable for this research work. Wukari is a centre with roads leading to numerous parts of the country thus making transportation of goods and services easy.

Wukari has modern infrastructural facilities, tourism and two higher institutions of learning, Kawararfa and Wukari Federal Universities, which is considered to be the highest in any LGA in the Nigerian State. This by implication means that people from all walk of life and around the world live have one thing or the other to do in Wukari especially with regard to knowledge acquisition.

A once bubbling town, as at the time of the assessment, normalcy was gradually returning even with the imposition of the 6am-4pm curfew, the town economic activities were relative on, as markets were open during the day, however most of the schools were closed except the higher institutions of learning.

3.2 Political Impact

Various studies have given analyses on the level and degree of political participation in many societies. Milbrath (1965) argues that, members of a society can be divided into four categories in terms of their degree of political participation. These are: (a) the politically apathetic, who are unaware of the political world around them; (b) those involved in spectator activities such as voting and taking part in thuggery or discussion about politics; (c) those involved in transitional meetings or making financial contributions to a political party; (d) the fourth group are described as gladiatorial. These seek and hold public officers or control party affairs.

Using Milbrath's model to locate Wukari people position on the political scale, one discovers that many are apathetic and uneducated. Few are mere spectators, this is particularly so with rural elite, while some are mainly used as instruments in terms of involving them in meetings and provision of information.

3.3 Social Impact

Like any other society affected by conflict, large percentage of the persons that have been affected in the violent conflict are women and children. This has serious repercussions on the lives of women socially and in their reproductive activities. Many of the young people in Wukari community are uneducated, have taken to drugs, rape of young girls and political thuggery. It was observed that some of the so-called leaders have become conflict entrepreneurs, as their source of livelihoods depends heavily on what the conflict situation is at a particular time and they would go to any length to ensure that the conflicts deepens. We make haste to state that until the urban elites -rural conflict sponsors realize that the only way to bring about development is the empowerment of the young people in a positive manner.

3.4 Psychological Impact

Truth telling dampens the desire for vengeance, thereby eliminating acts of retributive violence, and it has therapeutic value, healing psychological trauma of victims and survivors. This in turn facilitates reconciliation among warring groups, and dampens the risk of recurrence of violent conflicts. But does truth telling in fact have such salutary psychological effects? Some evidence indicates that victims and survivors prefer that the "truth" be told and "justice" be done, believing that it will bring relief from psychological pain, anguish and suffering. But are victims' positive expectations of the truth-telling process generally met after the truth has been told and justice dispensed? Do victims actually experience anticipated psychological benefits? Does truth telling in fact dampen feelings of vengeance? These and many more are the questions that the case of the Religious conflict in Wukari raise. The internally displaced persons that are scattered around the surrounding villages feels that the leaders are indifferent to their plight and would go to any length to plan and format more trouble.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

FINDINGS

Based on the methodology employed by the team, which included field visitations, personal interviews, focus group discussions, the team made the following findings:

The immediate causes of the crisis can be traced to:

1. The 3rd May, 2013 crisis can be traced to a previous armed attack on commercial banks in Wukari town suspected to have been carried by the members of an Islamic religious group. This remotely led to the Ibi crisis. That further led to the February, 2013 Wukari crisis that further gave birth to the present crisis under review.
2. Rumor mongering by some members of the community who exaggerate events and raise false alarm with the intent of inciting each group against one another for the purpose of seizing the opportunity to loot.
3. The inflammatory utterances by some members of the funeral procession that were conducting the final rites of a senior member of the Aku Uka's cabinet that coincided with a Friday, the Muslims' day of mass congregation afternoon prayer. Although, the burial ceremony would have been concluded before the prayer time.
4. The reaction of the Muslim community over the perceived fear of imminent attack while performing the Friday afternoon prayer brought about agitation by some of its members.
5. Muslim miscreants carried out the attack on the burial procession for the late Chief.
6. Concern for distortion in the present political equation as it affects the governorship position in the state. This has put the Christians and Muslims on warpath.

The remote causes of the crisis can be traced to:

1. Deep-rooted hatred among the members of the Wukari Community along Religious line (Traditional Religion, Christian Religion and Islamic Religion), which has resulted in a sharp, divide between the

Christians and Traditionalist on one hand and the Muslims on the other.

2. Loss of respect to constituted local traditional rulers' authority to mediate and resolve conflicts.
3. Activities of some individuals that are bent on distorting the history of the founders of Wukari town for selfish motives and employing newspaper publications to achieve that.
4. Activities of radical religious preachers from the Christian and Islamic religions.
5. Eminent threat to the extinction of the Jukun traditional religion by the followers of 'foreign' religions.
6. Elevating a few persons (from both sides) to be above the law, thereby shielding them from the wrath of the law as exemplified by non-prosecution of such persons ranging from the crisis in Ibi, the February 2013, football field incident and the person who fired the shot during the funeral rite procession on 3rd May 2013.
7. The derogatory statements made by persons without in-depth knowledge of Jukun history, tradition and culture during religious preaching and sermons leading to disregard and loss of confidence in age long authorities and traditional religious practices.
8. The youths are not involved in decisions affecting them.
9. The elders have almost lost control over the youths.
10. Rampant abuse of intoxicating drugs and substances amongst the youths.
11. Infiltration of political mischief-makers into the affairs of Wukari leads to the misuse of the youths and others members of the Wukari community.
12. External sponsorship and interference by some external interest to change the traditional authority and titles in Wukari hence the call for the dethronement or change in traditional Leaders.

13. High level of illiteracy among the youths in Wukari makes it easy for them to be manipulated by mischief-makers.
14. There is frequent use of provocative languages or phrases by the different groups against each other, such as, '*we have fought, killed and defeated them and nothing happened and we are going to repeat same*'. Such phrases always provoked crisis in already bottled-up anger.
15. Sense of claim of Royalty by most of the Youths in Wukari has to a very reasonable degree created apathy towards entrepreneurial drive among them and this has made them jobless and idle.

Recommendations

Based on our observations and findings, we hereby propose the following recommendations on how to ameliorate the present situation and how to avert future occurrences of crisis in Wukari town and its environs.

Short Term Measures:-

1. There is urgent need to identify Internally Displaced Persons' Camps in order for the government and other stakeholders to reach them for the purpose of alleviating their sufferings and for reconciliation to begin.
2. There should be stakeholders' forum to address fundamental issues bordering on religion, tradition, culture and mutual coexistence.
3. Those that encourage and propagate hatred and distort historical facts through publications and other means for mischief making should be brought to book to serve as deterrent to others.
4. Religious preaching and sermons should be coordinated and monitored by the Christian and Islamic organizations in order to prevent mischief-makers from propagating hatred amongst the Wukari residents. This shall also curtail the radicalization of religions leading misunderstanding and imbibing of wrong Islamic and Christian teaching and concepts.

5. There should be deliberate effort to disarm the community of sophisticated weapons in the possession of some individuals.
6. The law enforcement agencies should be given free hands to perform their duties at all times.
7. Traditional Village and Ward Heads should be held responsible for their inability to control any disturbances within their area of influence.
8. The Village and Ward Heads should commence the process of getting parents to resume their natural responsibility over their children and penalties set out for parents found to be incapable of managing the behaviour of their wards.
9. The Wukari community should be made to understand that the era of impunity is over and henceforth, ward/village head and other citizens found wanting should be made to face serious disciplinary actions and this should be supported by other local authorities such as Local Government and the Police.
10. There is the need to control the high consumption and abuse of intoxicants within and around the community.
11. There is the urgent need to re-orientate the youths towards entrepreneurial skills acquisitions in order to free them from being used as easy tools by mischief -makers.
12. The culture of identifying and punishing erring members of the community should be encouraged irrespective of religious or family background.
13. Rumor-mongering should be discouraged because some members of the community occasionally spread rumor and raise false alarm with the intent of inciting each group against each other for the purpose of

seizing the opportunity to loot people houses, shops and other property.

Long Term Measures:-

1. The history, tradition and culture of the Jukuns should be respected and citizens be allowed to practice the religion of their choice without intimidation or threat.
2. The government, community and religious leaders should sensitize, emphasize and encourage parents on the importance of education in modern world.
3. There should be deliberate attempt to integrate children from different religious backgrounds by encouraging their parents to enroll them and make them attend secular schools where religious studies are taught.
4. The youths should always be carried along in decisions affecting their lives and the community.
5. There should be provision of functional and adequate facilities for quick intervention in crisis situations such as the Police, NDLEA, NSDC, and Fire Service in Wukari.
6. The return and preparation of Political practicing field to lay a fertile ground for the 2015 political contest in Wukari.

Conclusion

The assessment of the aftermath of the violent conflict of May 2013 in Wukari Local Government Authority has been one of such projects WEP has undertaken in recent times. Given the short period of four days for the assessment of the whole exercise, it was quite intensive and given the gravity of issues that was and is to be addressed. It is worthy of note that this has further placed WEP in a strategic position to intervene in even more complex issues and projects. The principle of neutrality must at all times prevail in any peace project and with this principle at the back of the mind of WEP team a variety of diplomatic strategies were employed to get the optimum result.

We wish to state that Governments, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, social and educational institutions and other civil society players need to combine their efforts to encourage real peace.

To survive as a human being is possible only through love, peaceful co-existence and harmony. And when Thanatos is ascendent, the instinct must be to reach out to those we love, to see in them all the divinity, pity and pathos of the human and to recognize love in the lives of others even those with whom we are in conflict, love that is like our own.

It does not mean we will avoid conflict or death nor does it mean that we as distinct individuals will survive. But love, in its mystery, has its own power. It alone gives us meaning that endures. It alone allows us to embrace and cherish life. Love has the power both to resist in our nature what we know we must resist, and to affirm what we know we must affirm. Love is the only force that finally can counter the force of death, the death instinct. One cannot go through an experience of violent conflict where loved ones are killed and one is helpless and not understand the palpable power of love, the power of that one act of reconciliation and forgiveness. We therefore call on the Wukari people (Christians and Muslims to unite for the sake of harmony and development.

CHAPTER FIVE: WOMEN ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMME (WEP) EXPERIENCE IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT & PEACE-BUILDING

WEP's involvement in peace building activities in Nigeria dates back to 2001. Since then, WEP has accumulated valuable experience in the area of conflict mapping and research in the North Central region, and has regularly published its findings. WEP, with the support of various international and local partners has also successfully worked with youths and women in Benue state. Over the years, WEP has built

credibility for itself in this area. For instance, through WEP's intervention in Benue State, the *Network of Youth against Violence and Electoral Malpractice* now registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) as *Global Youth Foundation in Makurdi* was formed in 2003.

In addition, through the support of Irish Aid, WEP worked extensively with women groups in twelve (12) local government areas of Benue State leading to the formation of a network of women called *Benue Women Political Motivation Group*. These groups have been very active and operate independently.

Between 2001-2002 during the violent conflict between the Jukun and Tiv in Taraba and Benue states on the one hand and the Aragos and Tiv in Nassarawa and Benue States on the other, thousands of people were displaced in several camps in Benue State, WEP was involved in the peace-building initiatives and negotiations between the NGOs in Taraba and Benue States, as well as the management of the internally displaced persons (IDPs).

During the same period, the United Nations Assistance for Democracy (UNAED) through the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) supported WEP to implement a project on curbing the ills of electoral violence targeted at youths in the build up to the 2003 general elections in Benue and Taraba States. A similar action was again supported by Centre for Development and Democracy (CDD) in the build up to the 2007 general elections, targeting specifically youth and bringing youths from the Niger-Delta region to share their experiences of peace building initiatives and what lessons could be learnt with their counterparts in Benue State.

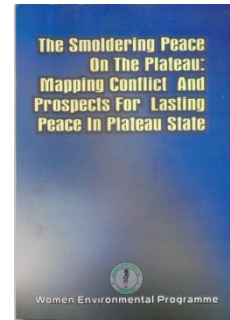
WEP also intervened in the outbreak of the violent conflicts in Plateau State in 2004 by mapping the conflict and conducting a needs assessment and stakeholder's forum, which led to a publication titled *The Smouldering Peace on the Plateau: Mapping Conflict and Prospects for Lasting Peace in Plateau State*. WEP also conducted a rapid assessment of violent conflicts in Nigeria called 'Hot Spot Nigeria' which was used as a discussion paper by the German government when it hosted over 30 Nigerians in Berlin in 2004.

With the support of the UNDP, WEP intervened in the Agila intra and inter-ethnic conflict under the project *Strengthening Community Based Early Warning and Conflict*

One aspect of WEP's Strategic Plan for 2008-2012 focuses on peace building and conflict transformation. WEP through this plan intends to intervene in the North Central region of Nigeria and erect structures targeting women and youths upon which long lasting and sustainable peace will be built.

7. *Monitoring Mechanism in Central States*. The intervention was with a view of building and testing an early warning system as well as a rapid mechanism in

Agila Community but WEP went further in bringing together prominent indigenes of the area to a roundtable talk thus initiating a process of reconciliation, healing and forgiveness.



- 8.
9. Another discernable outcome was the formation of peace networks by the Agila women and youths and a commitment to working for peace by the elders.

- 10.
- 11.

The Smoldering Peace on the Plateau: Mapping Conflict and Prospects for Lasting Peace In Plateau State with the support and funding of Konrad Adenauer Stiftung in 2004 as a result of the alarming rate of violent Conflict in the plateau. This emergence



have continued to raise concerns about the future of Nigeria as a country, the objective of this research was to conduct a Mapping exercise of violent conflicts in Plateau State imposing emergency rule and in the process explored prospect for lasting peace. The mapping exercise provided data for identification of sources of conflict that would provide the building block for the development of peace building strategies that accord with the realities of the state.

12.

Conflict in the Middlebelt Region of Nigeria: Engendering Peace in Agila Community

13. An intervention by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) implemented by Women Environmental Programme (WEP) in 2009. The project was aimed at *Strengthening Community Based Early Warning and Conflict Monitoring Mechanism in Central States*. It was carried out with the main objective being to develop and test a pilot conflict early warning system as well as a rapid-response mechanism in Agila Community in Benue State. Agila is a district in Ado Local Government Area in the southern part of Benue State. Agila shares a contentious border with the neighbouring community of Ngbo in Ebonyi state. The contention over the actual or perceived borders have resulted to violent clashes and heightened insecurity for the people in the area for many decades thereby hampering development. Consequence upon the findings and recommendations of this intervention, the UNDP and the Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) further supported WEP in the review of this publication in 2011 to incorporate activities like the provision of skill acquisition centers, high level dialogue meetings amongst other in Agila to solidify

14.

Connecting the Disconnect Through Women & Youth for Peace Building in the Middle Belt Region

15. The EU supported WEP on a project: Connecting the Disconnect through Women & Youth for Peace Building in the Middle Belt Region - to build a structure and a platform for connecting the disconnect for peace building and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in the Middle Belt region, in order to contribute to the development and promotion of lasting and sustainable peace through positive

Women and Youth engaging in peace building in the two project states of Benue and Taraba. One of the aims of this project was to critically evaluate structural and institutional safeguards put in place by government to check the escalation of violent conflicts in project target states and build a peace advocacy network of women and youth organizations who have been disconnected from peace building decisions and policies to connect in order to continually monitor and intervene for peaceful and harmonious relations in the project states. It also provided early warning and crisis response support to the government in situations of outbreak of hostilities. The project led to the formation of Pan-Middlebelt, a grassroots peace advocacy movement covering states within the Middlebelt region of Nigeria.

16. Although said to be one of the most peaceful states in the country, Adamawa State in recent years has been experiencing violent conflicts, largely resulting from competition over use of natural resources such as farm lands, fish ponds, water points, and cattle routes and so on. Conflict in the state also results from struggle over chieftaincy or differences in religion. Cattle rustling and armed banditry are also other forms of violent conflict in the state. These intermittent and isolated violent conflicts have affected many communities in Demsa, Song, Ganye, Toungo and of recent Lamurde LGAs. Almost all other Local Governments Areas (LGAs) across the state have experienced isolated cases of clashes between sedentary farmers and nomadic pastoralists especially during harvesting period.
17. **Community Based Early Warning Systems as Alternative to Violent Conflicts in Adamawa and Niger State: Ganye & Chobou (Adamawa) and Gbogifu & Lenfa Kuso (Niger) Communities as Test Case**

Women Environmental Programme (WEP) was contracted in the year under review by the Adamawa/Niger State Governments in partnership with UNDP under its Capacity for Good Governance Programme, to conduct a conflict mapping of two post-conflict affected communities in the State and test a pilot conflict early warning system as well as a rapid-response mechanism in these communities/LGAs, thus contributing to the development and promotion of lasting and sustainable peace in the target communities.

The aim of the action was to gather relevant background information on the conflict situation in Ganye and Lamurde LGA in Adamawa and Mokwa LGA in Niger; review past and current government efforts in mitigating conflicts in these areas; gather data on best practices by other NGOs or actors who might have done some peace work in the area, and make critical recommendations in setting up an Early Warning System. The mapping involved critical assessment of the conflict areas using primary and secondary data. Going further, there were sessions where community members in the target locations had their capacities built on rudiments of monitoring of early signs, advocacy, negotiation and Alternative Dispute Resolution skills as well as training of CSOs/ CBOs on Peace Networks and Coalition Building. Findings indicate that critical stakeholders in the peace and development process should see that women and the youth are moved to higher levels for meaningful contribution for societal development through various

empowerment strategies. The report also recommends that the Adamawa/Niger State Governments should, through various programmes, provide the enabling environment for socio-economic development, as well as putting in place confidence building measures among fractioned communities amongst others.

18.

On the Fringes of a City: Organizing for Infrastructural Development in Urban Slums

The challenges of urbanization continue to steer authorities of the Federal Capital Authority Administration and the neighbouring local councils in the face. With the increasing number of migrants into the territory induced by scarcity of land, impoverished soil, declining crop yields, poor harvests, soil erosion and the acquisition of some level of education or skills among other reasons, there is no gainsaying that the barely existing infrastructural facilities of the peripheries where the urban poor alongside the bulk of the migrants reside are fast becoming desolate, depleting and inadequate. The settlements deprived in nature are characterized by excessive residential densities, largely uninhabitable housing and the absence of sanitation, basic infrastructure and social services. Other problems of these settlements include lack of health and educational facilities, improper land use, insecure land tenure, rising traffic congestion, increasing pollution, lack of green spaces, inadequate water supply and sanitation, uncoordinated urban development and an increasing vulnerability to disasters.

19.

It is the light of the above that Women Environmental Programme (WEP) with support from Misereor carried out this infrastructural survey and prioritization of the developmental needs of the six communities of Gbagarape, Kabayi, AsoPada, Gurku, Aku and Tundu wada. The survey shows the plight of communities within the FCT and her environs.

Strengthening the Capacities of Peace Practitioners for Counselling and Trauma Healing

WEP implemented a project in Plateau State on *Strengthening the Capacities of Peace Practitioners for Counselling and Trauma Healing* with the funding support of EDWARDS/ USAID.

At the moment WEP with the support of the Delegation of the European Union to Nigeria, is intervening in the Tiv-Fulani crises in Doma, Keana and Guma LGAs of Benue and Nasarawa States respectively.

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A D Umar
Benson Attah
Dr. Hajia Aisha Akanbi
Wandedoo Peter Dooiyor
Mercy Chido Amajuoyi

Respondents

Professor Yakubu Ochefu- Vice Chancellor, Kwararafa University
Aku Uka of Wukari and his counsel of Chiefs
Chairman Wukari LGA
DSK representatives

NSCD

NDLEA

Police

Women groups

Youth groups

Non -indigenes residing in Wukari

Visit to Jootar and Kyado to interview the displaced persons

Students of higher institutions

TYAV Medical Services, Jootar Benue State
