NIGERIA CROSS-SECTORAL CONFLICT ASSESSMENT

AUGUST 2014

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

LIST OF ACRONYMS

APC	All Progressives Congress
BENGONET	Benue NGO Network
CAF	Conflict Assessment Framework
CALM	Conflict Abatement through Local Mitigation
CAN	Christian Association of Nigeria
CAPP	Community Action for Popular Participation
CCPS	Center for Conflict and Peace Studies
CDCS	Country Development and Cooperation Strategy
CEDI	Community Empowerment and Development Initiative
CEPID	Center for Peace Initiative and Development
CEHRD	Center for Environment, Human Rights and Development
CMM	Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (USAID)
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DNH	Do No Harm
DRG	Democracy, Human Rights and Governance
DRL	Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (U.S. Department of State)
EGE	Economic Growth and Environment
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
FFP	Food for Peace
FOMWAN	Federation of Muslim Women's Associations of Nigeria
GMOU	Global Memorandum of Understanding
GON	Government of Nigeria
HPN	Health, Population and Nutrition
IAH	Initiative for the Advancement of Humanity
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFESH	International Foundation for Education and Self-Help
IMC	Interfaith Mediation Center
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
IOC	International Oil Company
JIV	Joint Investigation Visits
JNI	Jama'atu Nisril Islam

JTF	Joint Task Force
LEAD	Leadership, Empowerment, Advocacy and Development
LGA	Local Government Area
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered
LITE	Leadership Initiative for Transformation and Empowerment
MACBAN	Miyette Alla Cattle Breeders' Association of Nigeria
MARKETS II	Maximizing Agricultural Revenue and Key Enterprises in Targeted Sites II
MAPS	Malaria Action Program for States
MARPS	Most-At-Risk Populations
MEND	Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
NAPEP	National Poverty Eradication Programme
NDDC	Niger Delta Development Commission
NEITI	Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
NOSDRA	National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency
NSRP	Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives (USAID)
OFDA	Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID)
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PAP	Presidential Amnesty Programme
PDG	Peace, Democracy and Governance
PDP	People's Democratic Party
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PMI	President's Malaria Initiative
PPPN	Plateau Peace Practitioners' Network
SACA	State AIDS Control Agency
SACE	Strengthening Advocacy and Civic Engagement
SFH	Society for Family Health
SHiPS	Strengthening HIV Prevention Services
SHOPS	Strengthening Health Outcomes through the Private Sector
SURE-P	Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Program
TOLERANCE	Training of Leaders on Religious and National Coexistence
TRUN	Tricycle Riders' Union of Nigeria
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program

USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USIP	United States Institute of Peace
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
YARAC	Youth, Adolescent Reflection and Action Center
You WIN	Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In early 2014, USAID/Nigeria invited the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM) to conduct a cross-sectoral conflict assessment focusing on USAID programs and the risk of violence during the 2015 presidential elections. The Mission sought guidance on how to implement programs in a conflict sensitive manner, emphasizing Do No Harm principles, and maximize peacebuilding opportunities. Given that USAID conducted a conflict assessment in Nigeria in 2010 and a desk study of violent extremism in 2013, the 2014 assessment focused primarily on how conflict dynamics have shifted since the 2011 elections in the areas where USAID is operating and how USAID's programs interact with those changing conflict dynamics. The Assessment Team focused on six high-risk states in three regions where USAID has programs: Kaduna and Sokoto in the North West; Benue and Plateau in the North Central; and Delta and Rivers in the Niger Delta, or South South region.[1]

FINDINGS

Nigeria is a large, diverse country and conflict dynamics can be highly localized. However, the following patterns emerged across states and regions over the course of the assessment:

Winner-take-all politics have devastating consequences. Conflict at all levels of Nigerian society is mostly driven by competition over resources. Political and military elites compete for oil and government contracts from which they steal for their own benefit with impunity. Election or appointment to influential government positions can translate to significant opportunities to amass wealth. A winner-take-all attitude among politicians and between parties leads to candidates employing divisive, identity-based rhetoric to secure votes and political control, often with little regard for national unity. The results are elections-related violence and rioting and rising identity-based tension. Poor service delivery due to diverted funds and low capacity of some elected officials to implement policies perpetuate grievances from one election cycle to the next.

Ineffective natural resource management and increasing competition for land leads to conflict. Climate change, displacement due to Boko Haram violence in the North East, and encroachment on nomadic herdsmen's corridors and grazing reserves have decreased the land available to both pastoralists and farmers. Conflicts arise from the absence of conflict management mechanisms that could enable all parties to adjust to changing conditions and agree to peaceful solutions. In this policy vacuum, violent conflict over land use is increasing, a trend that is most dangerous when it plays out along ethnic and religious lines. It has been exacerbated by criminal activity, including large-scale cattle rustling in rural areas where state security is absent or insufficient, as well as by unprofessional and inflammatory media coverage that has sparked revenge attacks. Many communities have developed grassroots conflict mitigation mechanisms to manage competing demands over land. Their techniques include mediation, land rental, and advocating with local government officials. Because these efforts are highly localized, they are generally not coordinated with one another nor are communities able to share experiences about the most effective ways to keep the peace when land conflict arises.

Economic need and economic grievance contribute to violence. In 2012, the youth unemployment rate stood at a staggering 54 percent.[2] Sixty-four million Nigerians are between the ages of 15-35.[3] While inter-religious and interethnic grievances are a significant source of violent conflict, poverty among this cohort also

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[1] The Niger Delta team also conducted some field work in Edo State.
[2] "54% of Nigerian youths were unemployed in 2012". *The Vanguard*, December 17, 2013.
[3] National Bureau of Statistics. "2012 National Baseline Youth Survey." 2013, page 8.

motivates some youth to engage in violence because of economic need. Extreme poverty and unemployment leads them to seek employment with political candidates or "cult"[4] leaders, loot stores during riots, or engage in oil bunkering. Poverty itself is also a grievance, especially when coupled with extreme inequality as in the Niger Delta, where poor residents know that oil is enriching their leaders while they hardly benefit from the resources. Youth who are unable to secure gainful employment are particularly susceptible to joining criminal gangs or politicians' militant groups and cults, not only because they are angry at injustice but also because they seek economic opportunity. One young respondent summed up what was echoed in many interviews throughout the assessment: "All of these crises are because the youth don't have jobs."[5]

Violence-weary Nigerians are coming together more than ever before. Throughout the three regions in this study, many government and civil society actors were taking action to prevent elections-related violence. In Sokoto, the state government convened an inter-party committee to prevent violence ahead of the 2015 elections. In Kaduna, religious civil society organizations (CSOs) such as the Christian Association of Nigeria and Jama'atu Nasril Islam have created interfaith working groups to address conflicts as they arise instead of voicing their differences through inflammatory media articles. In Plateau, local branches of these CSOs, along with the Catholic and Anglican Churches and Federation of Muslim Women's Associations of Nigeria, have been reaching across the religious divide. The Interfaith Mediation Centre, a USAID grantee, organizes Youth Peace Committees of Muslims and Christians that hold dialogues on topics of concern to both youth leaders and marginalized youth. Respondents in the Niger Delta emphasized how their desire for continued peace and stability outweigh any benefits they might gain through armed conflict. While most state governments have failed to muster the political will to address the sources of conflict, these bright spots represent opportunities for USAID to support local capacities for peace.

Nigerians demonstrate remarkable resilience, devising creative coping mechanisms to survive. Everyday citizens who have not benefitted from Nigeria's natural resource wealth continue to start enterprises and find ways to get by however they can. In Port Harcourt, shops, stores and restaurants are filled with youth laborers. In Jos, local youth have organized themselves into neighborhood protection brigades to keep the peace. Throughout the country, streets are filled with "hawkers" of every kind of merchandise whose sale supports families at home. The many local governments and countless CSOs that are counterbalancing conflict drivers with interfaith dialogues, conflict mediation, and protection and care for those most affected by conflict are testaments to Nigerians' capacity to create coping mechanisms to survive. That Nigerians are not waiting for their government—or anyone else—to save them is a source of resilience that USAID's development response should leverage.

These conflict dynamics present both challenges and opportunities for USAID/Nigeria. In this volatile environment, where conflict can erupt with little warning, it is all the more important for the Mission and implementing partners to apply conflict sensitivity principles to mitigate the risks of inadvertently doing harm.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Nigeria's citizens have devised a wide range of coping mechanisms in the face of weak state capacity and even state failure. As such there are a number of specific actions that USAID can take to mitigate grievances and build peace:

Issue a mission order on conflict sensitivity.[6] The Mission should require conflict sensitivity in all procurements by including it as an evaluation factor. Solicitations should also encourage applicants and offerors to identify peacebuilding opportunities in addition to conducting sectoral activities in a conflict-sensitive man-

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[4] Cults in the Nigerian context are shadowy groups composed largely of youth. They are linked to much criminal activity and violence across Southern Nigeria.
[5] Interview with male youth in Kaduna-based NGO, 14 June 2014.
[6] See Annex A for definitions of conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding.

ner; proposals that identify peacebuilding opportunities should be favorably scored. Conflict sensitivity skills should factor into evaluation criteria for key personnel. Monitoring and evaluation activities should explicitly examine potential Do No Harm[7] concerns, and M&E key personnel should have academic or professional expertise in conflict sensitivity. Finally, as many activities as possible should feed into one overarching conflict early warning and response system; currently there are several efforts which would be more effective if properly coordinated.

Develop local partner capacity in conflict sensitivity across all sectors. Many local implementing partners are operating amidst ongoing conflicts but do not have sufficient capacity to navigate them. USAID's program designs should include plans for contractors and grantees to train their local staff and local partners in conflict sensitivity. This support should include regular trainings, not just one-time workshops. This will help to ensure that local partners stay up to date on best practices and that their organizations internalize and institutionalize the practice of conflict sensitivity.

Develop a stand-alone youth livelihoods activity. Because the combination of youth and unemployment is a significant factor in exacerbating conflict, an effective youth livelihoods activity would likely have a meaningful impact on local conflict dynamics. In order to be successful, however, the activity must respond to market demand. Based on a market analysis, USAID should fund an integrated activity that combines on-the-job training, classroom components, life skills training, and counseling.[8] Youth also need recreational activities to address the boredom that may lead them to participate in riots and other forms of crime and violence. Each component should target male and female youths, cognizant of the opportunities and constraints that apply to each gender in their local environment and seeking to reduce the gender gap. USAID should implement this activity in high risk locations (e.g., where youth are the primary participants in riots) in order to reduce their frustration and incentive to commit violence out of either grievance or economic need.

Adding cross-cutting youth-focused components to USAID sectoral activities may also be beneficial. However, because youth have specific needs that differ from those of adults, these components must be carefully designed to be effective. [9]

Adjust the Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) to concretely mitigate sources of conflict. Many aspects of the CDCS address factors that contribute to conflict dynamics. These include the strategy's goal of reducing extreme poverty, special objective on credible elections, and intermediate result of strengthening local governance. However, USAID should pay more attention to short term poverty alleviation to complement long term intermediate results such as agriculture competitiveness. Two notable gaps in the CDCS are youth programming and resource governance, both of which factor strongly into conflict dynamics. USAID can address these gaps by creating a stand-alone youth activity as described above and commissioning a study of effective land management practices and land-based conflict in Nigeria, in order to inform future resilience-focused resource management activities. The Economic Growth and Environment Office can pilot activities to build upon the experiences of positive deviant, or "bright spot" cases, i.e., local government areas in violence prone states where conflicts over land have been successfully mitigated and resolved.

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[7] See CDA's Do No Harm program at http://www.cdacollaborative.org/programs/do-no-harm for more information.
[8] USAID, "State of the Field Report: Examining the Evidence in Youth Workforce Development" (February 2013), page 9. See also USAID's "State of the Field Report: Examining the Evidence in Youth Education in Crisis and Conflict" (February 2013) and "State of the Field Report: Holistic, Cross-Sectoral Youth Development" (February 2013).
[9] See USAID's Youth Development Program Guide at http://www.equip123.net/docs/e3-LivelihoodsGuide.pdf for a full description of the necessary components.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

In early 2014, USAID/Nigeria invited the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM) to conduct a cross-sectoral conflict assessment focusing on USAID programs and the risk of violence during the 2015 presidential elections. The Mission sought guidance on how to implement programs in a conflict sensitive manner, emphasizing Do No Harm principles, and maximize peacebuilding opportunities. Given that CMM conducted a conflict assessment in Nigeria in 2010 and a desk study of violent extremism in 2013, the 2014 assessment focused primarily on how conflict dynamics have shifted since the 2011 elections in the areas where USAID is operating and how USAID's programs interact with those changing conflict dynamics. The Assessment Team focused on six high-risk states in three regions where USAID has programs: Kaduna and Sokoto in the North West; Benue and Plateau in the North Central; and Delta and Rivers in the Niger Delta, or South South region.[10]

One major development since the 2010 conflict assessment is the rise of Boko Haram, then a smaller and less effective movement and now a significant threat to the nation's security. The group's kidnapping of over 200 schoolgirls in Chibok, Borno State in April 2014 as well as repeated terrorist attacks in Abuja, Jos, Kaduna, and other locations have attracted international media attention urging the Government of Nigeria (GON) to "bring back our girls." Boko Haram's initial rise can be attributed to the lack of federal investment in the North East and the security forces' brutal suppression of its leaders in 2003 and 2009. Some charge that the state's tactics of extra-judicial executions of suspected Boko Haram members, including children, fueled the movement's expansion.[11] The pattern of state neglect and counterproductive security enforcement is prevalent throughout Nigeria and serves as an enabling environment for Boko Haram and other conflict entrepreneurs. These structural factors must be addressed in order to prevent the spread of this and similar conflicts to other regions.[12]

At the same time, Boko Haram is far from the only manifestation of violent conflict in Nigeria. Land use disputes between farmers and herders have led to massacres of entire villages in the North Central region with increasing frequency. Politicians' youth filled cults and criminal networks in the Niger Delta continue to cause bloodshed. Given the frequent bursts of violence and high levels of inter-identity group tensions prevalent today, the 2015 elections have a high likelihood of triggering violence especially if they are perceived as rigged. USAID should continue activities that foster good governance, mitigate conflict, and address the structural problems that have led to Boko Haram's rise, such as ineffective service delivery and lack of state legitimacy. If the GON manages to administer credible elections and provide security for its citizens, it can begin to mend Nigeria's crippled state-society relationship.

TIMING AND METHODOLOGY

The assessment began in May 2014 with an issues paper documenting the evolution of conflict dynamics in Nigeria since the 2010 assessment and identifying lines of inquiry to be explored in 2014. In June, a six-person team consisting of three Americans and three Nigerians[13] conducted key informant and group inter-

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[10] The Niger Delta team conducted some field work in Edo State.

[11] United States Institute of Peace, "What Is Boko Haram?" Special Report, June 2012.

[12] According to the State Department's 2013 human rights report, state security forces were second only to Boko Haram in committing abuses such as "extrajudicial killings, torture, rape, beatings, arbitrary detention, mistreatment of detainees, and destruction of property". See http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/220358.pdf.

[13] Team members included USAID staff Cybèle Cochran (USAID/CMM) and Felicia Genet (USAID/Nigeria), consultant James Shyne (Democracy International) and Nigerian country experts Hussaini Abdu (Action Aid), Adebowale Olorunmola (Democracy International), and Samie Ihejirika (Strategic Empowerment and Mediation Agency).

views in the states mentioned above. USAID/Nigeria selected these areas because they currently receive USAID programs, experienced violent conflict during the 2011 electoral cycle, and were secure enough for team members to travel to in 2014.

Field research resulted in 79 interviews with a total of 281 persons (30 percent female and 70 percent male).[14] The team applied USAID's Conflict Assessment Framework (CAF) methodology[15] and "Do No Harm" (DNH) principles to structure data collection, synthesis, and analysis. Following the CAF allowed for the rapid identification of the most salient factors contributing to and mitigating conflict in each state, as well as in Nigeria as a whole, and proved helpful in analyzing how USAID programs interact with conflict dynamics.

The findings presented below are based primarily on interview data collected during field work, but are also informed by desk research performed prior to and following the field work. The purposive sampling methodology placed a strong emphasis on selecting respondents in each of the six states who were knowledgeable about local conflict dynamics and/or were directly involved in implementing USAID activities. Findings and recommendations therefore apply most directly to the six states where field work was conducted. At the same time, respondents from all three regions mentioned several recurring themes that play out across the country, manifesting differently according to changing local contexts. The assessment points to the importance of being sensitive to local political and social factors in program implementation.

FINDINGS

Conflict at all levels of Nigerian society is largely driven by competition over resources. These include financial resources as well as land, water and other natural resources such as energy. Political and military elites compete for access to and control over national resources which they often corruptly accumulate with impunity. Election and appointment to influential government positions translate to significant opportunities to amass wealth. A winner-take-all attitude among politicians and between parties leads to candidates employing divisive, identity-based rhetoric to secure votes and political control, often with little regard for national unity. The result is elections-related violence and identity-based tension and rioting. Poor service delivery due to diverted funds and low capacity of some elected officials to implement policies perpetuate grievances from one election cycle to the next.

Weak governance and pervasive, increasing corruption undermine development and access to basic services such as security, transportation infrastructure, education, and healthcare. Public resources are routinely diverted before reaching their intended beneficiaries. The quality of basic services has worsened over time. The state is ineffective at implementing policies to regulate economic activity or manage natural resources such as crude oil, land, water, and forests that are needed to sustain a growing population.

Nigeria's citizens have devised a wide range of coping mechanisms in the face of weak state capacity and even state failure. Some rural communities have developed local land use and management practices to balance the needs of farmers and pastoralists. Urban and rural communities alike organize self-protection

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[14] See Annex C for a more detailed list of respondent profiles and organizational affiliations.

[15] The CAF 2.0 is USAID's unique methodological approach for implementing a conflict assessment to help its USAID Missions and operating units better evaluate the risks for armed conflict, the peace and security goals that are most important in a given country context, how existing development programs interact with these factors, how the programs may (inadvertently) be doing harm, and where and how development and humanitarian assistance can most effectively support local efforts to manage conflict and to build peace. See http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pnady739.pdf for a full description.

groups, or vigilantes, to fill the void left by the corrupt, [16] under resourced,[17] and poorly trained state security agencies. Many people generate and manage income through resourceful, informal economic activities such as street vending and lending and savings collectives. Civil society organizations and traditional institutions continue to develop community based responses to the rising conflict and bridge identity group divides even in the face of inflammatory political rhetoric.

Widespread and extreme poverty is straining these coping mechanisms beyond their capacity. When fundamentally resource based disputes turn violent they can overwhelm the capacity of local structures to manage the conflict and flare out of control, often along ethnic and religious lines. Extreme poverty and economic desperation may also lead some people to get involved in a range of harmful activities, from taking drugs to looting during riots to assassinating for money.[18] High youth unemployment provides a large pool of cheap labor for unscrupulous political leaders seeking to advance their agendas through the extra-legal use of force.

As the country gears up for the 2015 general elections, four overlapping sources of conflict could turn violent or become more violent. First, President Jonathan's bid for reelection threatens the informal system of power rotation among the six geopolitical zones at a time when tensions between the north and the south and between Muslims and Christians are on the rise. Second, the Boko Haram insurgency has exacerbated this trend, challenged the federal government's ability to provide security across the national territory, and led to an increase in the use of religiously divisive language by public figures at all levels. Third, in the oil rich Niger Delta, the 2009 Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP) for armed militants has failed to address the roots of the longstanding conflict among local communities, oil multinationals and the Nigerian state.[19] The amnesty is officially timed to expire in 2015—a development that may trigger a return to organized, armed violence.[20] Fourth, a recent spike in resource driven conflict between sedentary farmers (mostly Christian) and pastoralists (mostly Muslim) in the North Central zone threatens to assume a more overtly religious dimension and overwhelm the already overstretched security forces' capacity to respond.

Based on this context, the 2015 elections are likely to be accompanied by violence, especially between groups loyal to the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressives Congress Party (APC) candidates in closely contested races and wherever there is the widespread perception of electoral fraud. There is an acute risk that politicians at all levels will once again manipulate ethnic, religious and other group identities to gain or retain power.

These conflict dynamics present both challenges and opportunities for USAID/Nigeria. In this volatile environment, it is all the more important for the Mission and implementing partners to apply conflict sensitivity principles to mitigate the risks of doing harm through sectoral development programs. The assessment team observed many examples of conflict sensitivity in action, though it also identified opportunities to make

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[16] The *Guardian* reported on 11 July 2014 that the armed forces in Nigeria often find themselves under-resourced at the local or barracks level due to the misallocation or misappropriation of federal funds officially budgeted to support them.

[17] The BBC reported on 19 August 2014 that soldiers in the North East were threatening to mutiny rather than deploy in the fight against Boko Haram with weapons and vehicles they described as old and "not up to the job."

[18] A number of respondents mentioned youth being hired as killers. The National Bureau of Statistics' 2012 National Baseline Youth Survey listed the top five youth crimes as marijuana usage, murder, theft, aggravated assault, and armed robbery. National Bureau of Statistics. "2012 National Baseline Youth Survey." 2013, page 57.

[19] The assessment team heard many criticisms of the PAP. Some believe the state has failed to meaningfully reintegrate ex-militants and provide them with alternative means of employment, while many others perceive that those who were supposed to benefit from the amnesty program have been left out. Many accuse the program of corruption, providing benefits to those individuals connected with political or military elites.

[20] Many observers doubt that the Jonathan Administration, if reelected, would allow the amnesty to expire, though President Jonathan's reelection could itself trigger violence in other regions.

these efforts more consistent and more firmly based on best practices. The team observed unintended conflict mitigating outcomes in current activities as well as opportunities to build on local peace capacities.

FINDINGS BY REGION AND STATE

NORTH WEST: SOKOTO STATE

Violent conflict in Sokoto tends to erupt around elections, though the state's relatively homogeneous population has helped to keep such violence from flaring out of control. Political actors have thus far not been able to use ethnic or religious identity to galvanize voters, since neither religion nor ethnicity is a major source of differentiation. Electoral violence generally manifests through political competition when candidates' youthful followers fight one another on campaign trails, when posting or tearing down candidates' posters, or when the perception of vote rigging brings protesters to the streets—and the protests turn violent and sometimes deadly. Losing candidates have been accused of fomenting such violence with the goal of contesting results or hoping to gain a conciliatory post from the winner.

Youth followers' motivations are important to understand when seeking opportunities to prevent violence. These youth, many of whom are desperately poor, are paid to hang posters and accompany candidates during the campaign. Many are not loyal to the politicians and will switch sides depending on who pays them. Youth take these jobs for the economic opportunity they present, not out of dedication to the candidate or party. As such, there is no deep seated grievance to mitigate or ideology to counter. Youth who work for candidates are in many cases poorly educated, low income urban residents. Lack of alternative income generating opportunities may make them more susceptible to being hired to perform violent and dangerous work.

This is not to say that Sokoto citizens do not hold grievances against the state. To the contrary, they are deeply frustrated with the state's lack of capacity to deliver the basic services they need to survive. The highest priority issues articulated to conflict assessment team members were youth unemployment and accompanying poverty. Many respondents expressed frustration with the state's failure to deliver education that would prepare young people for gainful employment. Poverty exacerbates these issues: the lower the quality of education, the less qualified a young person is to contribute to her or his family's financial security. Too many boys and girls who should be in school are instead on street corners hawking merchandise to supplement their families' meager incomes. In some cases, female adolescents engage in sex work to make a living or contribute to the household. Likewise, the poorer the family, the higher the incentive for youths to accept potentially dangerous campaign work for politicians.

The relative lack of identity based grievances in Sokoto helps to keep political violence from flaring out of control. Elections have triggered violence in the past, with the print and social media publishing often unverified reports using inflammatory language. Violence may momentarily escalate in the lead up to and during elections, but then dissipates thereafter. Life returns to a relatively peaceful status quo according to the election calendar.[21]

In preparation for the 2015 elections, Sokoto provides an encouraging example of political will to prevent violence. The political leadership, working across party lines, and security agencies have taken a number of steps to remove potential triggers and compel candidates to adhere to agreed-upon norms. For example, state officials suspended the use of large campaign posters that in the past have led to fights among opposing candidates' supporters. Advertising space at roundabouts, the scenes of previous clashes, were instead rented to banks. Assessment team members observed these public spaces being respected, as well as the absence of large posters at party headquarters. In addition, the police commissioner convened an inter-party

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[21] Interview with implementing partner, 11 June 2014, Sokoto.

dialogue committee to manage the ranging contention between the two major parties in the state.[22] This effort has contributed to managing political tensions state-wide. As a result of the conflict mitigation measures that Sokoto State has put in place, most respondents expressed confidence that the elections would spark minimal violence. Many did note, however, that the perception of widespread electoral fraud would trigger outrage that could overwhelm security forces. The potential for violence could be further exacerbated if the justice system fails to investigate allegations of fraud or hold proven perpetrators accountable.

NORTH WEST: KADUNA STATE

Kaduna is a volatile and dynamic place. Inter-religious violence has grown over the past 15 years, especially since the 2000 crisis[23] sparked by contention over the introduction of Shari'ah law. The violence was among the worst in Kaduna's history, resulting in the killing of hundreds of people and the destruction of property worth billions of naira.

With the subsequent crises in 2002, 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2014, Kaduna has become more and more segregated, with a mostly Muslim population in the north and a mostly Christian population in the south. An unofficial dividing line runs through Kaduna city. Residents who are in the minority on either side of town feel less and less safe. The newly balkanized character of many schools and residential neighborhoods reduces opportunities for contact among people of different religious affiliations and economic classes. As one district elder said, "The young generation doesn't have any experience of the peaceful coexistence that their forefathers had."[24] Many youth have no direct memory of when Muslims and Christians lived together harmoniously. Because young people have such limited exposure to peers from other identity groups, stereotypes can inform perceptions more than human interaction.[25]

Respondents confirmed that young men are the primary perpetrators of intergroup violence, but they also asserted that women have participated and at times encouraged men to fight even when they may not have wanted to. They pointed to the influential role that wives and mothers have over their male family members, whether to encourage or discourage violence. Respondents described how women have urged men to participate in violence either to protect their community in rural settings or to stand up and support their identity group in urban settings. One Christian female respondent recalled the 2001 violence in Jos, where women cooked for the male fighters and sent them into the conflict: "The women said to the men, 'Are you not a man? Go out [and fight]!'"[26]

Women can also discourage male family members from fighting. An urban female respondent described the senselessness of fighting since Muslims and Christians are obligated to interact with one another: "We cannot do without the person [from the other side] whether we like it or not. We fight and the next minute we are together. Let's advocate for peace."[27] In rural areas, older women are influential voices to both younger women and the community at large.

Politicians often manipulate religious identity to gain support from their constituents, resulting in a factionalized democracy. The likelihood that a Muslim will vote for a Muslim candidate, and a Christian for a Christian, is very high. Politicians who are not considered defenders of their ethno-religious identities risk losing

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[22] The inter-party committee was mentioned in several interviews; an interview with members of one Ward Development Committee on 11 June 2014 credited the police commissioner for convening the committee.
[23] Nigerians use the term "crisis" to refer to riots, clashes, and other instances of mass public violence.
[24] Interview with emir and village elders, 14 June 2014, Kafanchan.
[25] A similar situation exists in Jos, the capital of neighboring Plateau State, as discussed below.
[26] Interview with a Christian NGO focused on peacebuilding, 16 June 2014, Kaduna. In this interview and several others, respondents cited conflict examples in the North Central region. They considered certain conflict dynamics to be consistent in both places.
[27] Ibid.

their positions to opponents promising to fight harder for their identity group.[28] Since members of each group feel unsafe and underserved by the government representatives they elected into office, they can be easily swayed by opposition candidates that promise to champion their cause. Respondents frequently criticized the harmful rhetoric that further divides Kaduna's residents, clearly expressing that politicians, not religious divisions, are the problem. Compounding the issue is impunity over this tactic; neither the state nor the media has been effective at holding politicians accountable, though civil society actors have voiced their concerns. In addition, poverty and low educational attainment reduce voters' capacity to question politicians' motives and messages.

Traditional and social media can exacerbate identity group conflicts when they employ inflammatory language or publish unverified reports. For example, many respondents noted that when rural massacres occur, the media often call the attackers Fulani instead of "unknown gunmen."[29] Some even charged that the media "reinforces" rumors.[30] One respondent, a journalist, described his assignment to cover a terrorist bombing that he eventually discovered never took place. He said that several newspapers ran the story anyway using the photograph of a home that had been bombed years earlier. The stories sparked reprisal killings.[31]

On the one hand, public trust in the media seems low for these reasons. On the other hand, people still depend on the media for information and therefore are susceptible to its messages. Because citizens—many of them traumatized by previous violence—live in an atmosphere of insecurity, they interact less and less with people outside their identity groups and get their news from less objective sources. Under such conditions, views of the "other" may be distorted, making people quick to form erroneous stereotypes that can fuel violence motivated by fear and anger.

Conflicts across Kaduna State have common roots in the struggle for control over scarce resources, but outright violence tends to be triggered by different issues in urban and rural areas. Political contestation, often couched in religious terms, and fraudulent elections were reported to be the most common triggers to violence in urban areas. Urban violence can spill over into the countryside, as during the 2011 elections, but rural conflict has its own dynamic that neither respondents nor analysts could fully explain. One factor is historical grievances that fuel tension between Muslims and Christians. Human Rights Watch summarizes Kaduna's religious and political history as follows:

> Relations between the Hausa-Fulani and the predominantly Christian ethnic groups in southern Kaduna have long been tense. Prior to colonial rule, the peoples of what is now southern Kaduna were regularly subjected to slave raids by forces under the control of the powerful Zaria (also known as Zazzau) Emirate. Under British rule, southern Kaduna communities, which had long resisted northern conquest, were placed under the direct control of the emir of Zaria—in many areas for the first time. Since 1960 intrastate politics have continued to be dominated by claims of marginalization and exclusion voiced by southern Kaduna community leaders, who claim that the state government openly favored its Hausa-Fulani population. These tensions have boiled over into deadly ethnic and sectarian violence.[32]

Conflict between residents claiming "indigene" status and those considered "settlers" or non-indigenes, also exists in Kaduna State and can compound religious and ethnic tensions. In rural areas of Kaduna especially, the issue of indigeneity can trigger violence over land. Indigene/settler conflict refers to the historical divide

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[28] At the same time, candidates for governor, senator and other high offices are often forced to seek support beyond their ethnic and religious groups to win election.

[29] Interview with NGO, 13 June 2014 Kaduna—though many other respondents reported this as well. Fulani were also accused by many respondents of perpetrating attacks on rural farming villages in Plateau and Benue States.

[30] Interview with NGO, 13 June 2014 Kaduna.

[31] Interview with male journalist, 16 June 2014 Kaduna.

[32] Human Rights Watch. 2013. *Leave Everything to God: Accountability for inter-communal violence in Plateau and Kaduna States, Nigeria.* New York, NY: Human Rights Watch, 2013, pages 39-40.

between those who are considered indigenous to a locality and more recent arrivals. As discussed in the Nigeria 2010 Conflict Assessment Report:

> [L]and ownership is determined by a patchwork of local customs and legislation across the country, but a common principle known as indigeneity is typically used to determine which groups are the original owners of land and where individuals originate for purposes of determining such basic rights as voting, access to state services (such as scholarships), and buying land. Typically, local governments, often in consultation with local traditional rulers, make the classification of who is an 'indigene.' Without a certificate of indigeneity, individuals often face additional hurdles to voting or running for public office in that locality, may be denied public services, and can often face barriers to land ownership.[33]

An overlapping factor, however, is the struggle between farmers of many ethnic groups and nomadic Fulanis in rural Kaduna and many other parts of the country. Fulanis' nomadic corridors have decreased significantly in recent decades due to climate change and encroaching human development. As a result, paths they have traveled for generations now cross over highways, farms, and buildings. The North Central section of this report discusses in more detail this contest over land in Plateau and Benue States. In Kaduna, revenge seems to play a greater role in violence than land use. Massacres with no proximate cause happen with alarming frequency in southern Kaduna; even during the conflict assessment field work, two attacks left over 100 dead. The villages attacked have generally been Christian and attackers are assumed to be Fulani though no evidence was presented to the Kaduna assessment team. A traditional leader in majority Christian southern Kaduna expressed fear that violence against Christians elsewhere sparks local reprisal attacks on Muslim minorities: "When you touch a Christian in the north, the easiest target is the Muslim here."[34]

When team members asked respondents what has changed since the violent 2011 elections, many pointed to new initiatives to prevent and mitigate violence. A pastoralist advocacy NGO increased its conflict mitigation activities among government and community stakeholders instead of only representing herdsman. Its executive director explained, "We work with entire communities, not just pastoralists. We do everything jointly now. If you want peaceful, harmonious societies that reinforce each other, then you work with all of them together." Muslim and Christian faith-based NGOs are also working together, unlike in 2011. The Kaduna branches of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI) have a working relationship and meet on a regular basis instead of lashing out at one another through the media when problems or misunderstandings arise. These developments represent opportunities for USAID to support locally led peacebuilding.

NORTH CENTRAL: PLATEAU STATE

Plateau State has been a locus for in-migration from across Nigeria throughout the colonial and post-independence period.[35] According to several respondents, for decades the state enjoyed a reputation for hospitality, tourism,[36] and tolerance among residents from diverse backgrounds.[37] It also served for years as a safe haven for those fleeing communal strife in other parts of the country. Ironically, the state's very openness to outsiders may have led to increased competition over land and political power between members of different identity groups over the course of the 1990s. This competition turned violent in 1994, when Muslim and Christian residents of the capital city Jos clashed over the leadership of the majority Muslim Jos

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[33] USAID. 2010. *Politics by Other Means: Nigeria conflict assessment.* Washington, DC: USAID, 2010, page 18.

[34] Interview village elders, 14 June 2014, Kafanchan.

[35] Extractable minerals, most notably tin, and favorable agricultural and climatic conditions attracted Nigerians from all parts of the country for over a century. See Plateau State Government website for more information: http://www.plateaustate.gov.ng/?ContentPage&secid=16.

[36] The state's official motto is "Home of Peace and Tourism."

[37] Interviews with local civil society groups, 9-10 June 2014, Jos.

North LGA. Intercommunal violence in Plateau State spiraled out of control during the 2000s, beginning with a wave of deadly riots that swept Jos and spread to rural areas in September 2001.

Violent conflict in Plateau State springs from several sources, including competition over urban and rural land, citizenship rights, and political influence between members of opposing identity groups. These groups are various and the fault lines of intergroup contestation are multiple and overlapping. Intergroup rivalries most closely linked to violence in recent years include those between so-called indigenes and non-indigenes; between the (mostly Christian) Berom and (mostly Muslim) Hausa-Fulani; and between largely Christian sedentary farmers and pastoralists, most of whom are Muslim. Each of the above conflicts can quickly escalate to more general conflagrations between Christians and Muslims such as those that engulfed the capital city in 2001 and many times since. This tendency toward escalation along religious lines is largely due to the manipulations of citizens by religious and political leaders motivated by ideology or ambition.[38] Incautious and inflammatory messages sent by phone, social media, radio, and other channels have both sparked violence and facilitated its spread. Bomb attacks perpetrated by Boko Haram insurgents against Christian churches and neighborhoods in Jos, beginning on December 24th, 2010, have killed scores of people and triggered waves of inter-religious violence that have claimed hundreds more lives on both sides.[39]

Jos today is a divided city, having self-segregated over the course of the 2000s into a mostly Muslim north and a mostly Christian south. A tense peace between opposing groups in Jos has prevailed since 2012, but there remain "no-go areas" for members of both religious communities, and nighttime activity city wide is minimal. The *de facto* segregation of residential neighborhoods is also felt in many of the city's public and civic institutions, from hospitals and health clinics to schools, markets, and sporting venues. As in Kaduna, where Muslims and Christians once came together in the daily practice of peaceful co-existence, in Jos they now face daily reminders of the violence and distrust that has riven their city.[40] The May 2014 bomb attack by Boko Haram targeted Jos's central market, frequented by people of all ethnic and religious backgrounds. Unlike earlier bombings of Christian churches and neighborhoods, this incident did not trigger large scale violence but rather a coming together by community members of both religious traditions to care for the wounded.[41] This highlights a growing local capacity to keep violence in check through early warning systems and community protection brigades, or vigilantes, working together across the sectarian divide to prevent lynchings and reprisal attacks and report violent incidents to the authorities.[42]

In rural Plateau State violence is trending in the opposite direction. The longstanding competition between farmers and pastoralists over land and grazing rights has turned violent on many occasions over the years, with rapes, killings, and other grave human rights abuses committed on all sides while the state has largely stood by and watched. The Obasanjo government did intervene in the Plateau crisis in May 2004, dismissing the then governor, appointing a retired army general to serve as interim administrator, and instituting a state of emergency. However, these measures were widely criticized by national human rights and civil liberties groups and to date, there has been no effective prosecution of the perpetrators of violence.[43] Since the 2010 massacres, attacks are reported to have increased markedly both in frequency and intensity. As in Kaduna, many respondents describe what they claim to be a new phenomenon of entire villages being slaughtered, homes burned and looted, and crops destroyed in the middle of the night by unknown gunmen often alleged to be Fulani. Human Rights Watch estimates that from 2010-2013 more than 500 Christians,

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[38] Interviews with local and national civil society groups, 10 June 2014, Jos.
[39] Human Rights Watch. 2013, Chapter III.
[40] Interview with local youth group, 11 June 2014, Jos.
[41] From separate interviews with Christian and Muslim NGOs, 10-11 June 2014, Jos.
[42] From interview with national NGO, 10 June 2014, corroborated by local leader of a youth vigilante group, 11 June 2014, as well as by an academic official, 12 June 2014, all in Jos.
[43] "Nigeria: Legislators give Obasanjo sweeping powers in Plateau." IRIN News, June 2, 2004.
http://www.irinnews.org/report/50099/nigeria-legislators-give-obasanjo-sweeping-powers-in-plateau.

nearly all of them Berom farmers, were killed in such attacks in northern Plateau State.[44] Representatives from an international NGO specializing in conflict mediation and resolution expressed the belief that the indigene-settler question was at the root of most violent conflict in Plateau State, and that a constitutional amendment might be required to resolve it once and for all.[45]

Socioeconomic factors threatening the peace in Jos and undermining efforts to provide security to rural areas include continued, widespread poverty and unemployment, rising rates of HIV/AIDS, prostitution, and drug and alcohol consumption, especially among conflict affected youth.[46] Respondents frequently decried the lack of employment opportunities for youth in Jos and across the state.[47] The sustained period of violence has severely disrupted economic activity, from urban service and retail firms to agricultural producers, processers, and supply chains.[48]

In the sphere of public security, significant small arms proliferation is said to be occurring across the state.[49] Some respondents described deeply rooted fears among indigene Christians of a supposed Hausa-Fulani agenda to Islamize Plateau State and the entire Middle Belt.[50] Violent conflicts in neighboring states such as Kaduna and Nasarawa, as well as the ongoing Boko Haram insurgency in the North East, also have the potential to undo the peacebuilding progress of the last two years in Jos and further inflame the worsening situation in the countryside.

Finally, the near total failure by the state to bring perpetrators of violence to justice is a major source of grievance across many groups involved in the Plateau crisis. Impunity for killers and those who have incited others to violence, lack of compensation to victims and retributive justice for perpetrators, and the inability or unwillingness of political leaders to deal with the legacy of mass violence, greatly impede efforts to consolidate a just and lasting peace. Many respondents expressed deep frustration at the state's failure to resolve the crisis in Plateau State, with two local NGO representatives in particular lambasting state and local leaders, respectively, for doing nothing to contribute to the cause of peace[51] and not caring about anything but their own reelection.[52]

Important triggers to violence in Plateau State include Friday afternoon prayers, Sunday church services, and religious holidays and feasts throughout the year. Elections (local, state and national) and administrative, policy and zoning changes such as the creation of Jos North LGA can also be highly explosive events. Finally, relatively mundane events such as the construction or rebuilding of homes destroyed by mob violence, or any effort to reintegrate ethnically and religiously cleansed neighborhoods can also trigger wildly disproportionate, violent responses.

Mitigating factors include the proliferation of progressive and moderate civil society groups, many of them faith-based, working across communal divides. These include the Interfaith Mediation Center, JNI, CAN, Catholic Church, and Federation of Muslim Women's Associations of Nigeria, or FOMWAN. The Plateau Peace Practitioners Network (PPPN) is an umbrella organization bringing most of these local groups togeth-

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[44] Human Rights Watch. 2013, Chapter III. It is important to note that the assessment team assigned to the North Central region contained no Muslim team members and was not able to interview any Fulani pastoralists to incorporate their perspective on the conflict.

[45] Interview with NGO representatives, 12 June 2014, Jos.

[46] Interviews with local and national NGOs, 9-11 June 2014, Jos.

[47] Interviews with local, national and international civil society, 9-12 June 2014, Jos.

[48] Interview with private sector, 11 June 2014, Jos.

[49] Interview with Muslim representative of a local NGO, 10 June 2014, and with Christian representative of an international NGO, 12 June 2014, both in Jos.

[50] Interview with local NGO, 9 June 2014, Jos.

[51] Interview with Plateau State NGO president of 10 June 2014, Jos.

[52] Interview with local NGO leader of 11 June 2014, Jos.

er and lobbying local, state and national government agencies for peace. In the wake of the May 2014 Boko Haram bombings in Jos, PPPN was instrumental in issuing public appeals for calm and working to prevent reprisal attacks.[53]

NORTH CENTRAL: BENUE STATE

Violent conflict in Benue is concentrated in rural areas, where it is driven primarily by increased competition over agricultural and grazing land between farmers and pastoralists. As in Plateau and Kaduna, economic drivers of conflict often play out along ethnic and religious lines. As in the other states, many respondents in Benue spoke of a history of peaceful coexistence between groups currently engaged in violent conflict.[54] Farmers of the Tiv ethnic group, who are mostly Christians, and the mostly Muslim Fulani pastoralists have seen their longstanding competition over scarce land and water resources intensify and turn much more violent in the last three years.

Historically, competing claims to land in Benue have led to conflict pitting the Tivs and, to a lesser extent, the Idomas, who constitute the majority ethnic groups and regard themselves as indigenes, against the Hausa-Fulanis and the Agatu, whom they regard as settlers. The seasonal influx of Fulani herdsmen to Benue was said by several respondents to have increased in recent years,[55] perhaps as a result of insecurity caused by the Boko Haram insurgency in the North East and related violence in neighboring Plateau and Nasarawa States.

In the past, when conflicts arose between individual farmers and pastoralists, they were mitigated and resolved by local institutions. In recent years, however, there has been a graduation to communal conflict between many farmers and increased numbers of herders. Lines of communication between herdsmen and farmers that previously had helped to resolve disputes have largely broken down, greatly hindering efforts to address the current crisis.[56]

Representatives of groups involved in the conflict point to brutal killings of men, women and children by both sides.[57] A propaganda war appears to be underway between groups who support the Christian Tiv farmers and pro-Fulani interests who highlight killings and disappearances of Fulani youth, blaming them on the Tiv. Large numbers of displaced Tiv farmers have been thrown into absolute poverty and deprived of their livelihoods. Displaced farmers and their families have been camping in different parts of the state, often in deplorable conditions.[58] Though the North Central sub-team was not able to interview Fulani pastoralists with direct experience in the conflict, the team did interview Fulani youth and business association leaders. They provided secondhand accounts of killings of pastoralists and their herds in rural areas as well as disappearances of Fulani and Hausa youth, including motorcycle taxi (okada) drivers in Makurdi.

Several respondents warned that the inability of displaced farmers to return to their land and the resultant loss of their banks of seedlings could lead to serious local food shortages in the coming months. Likewise, hundreds if not thousands of pupils have dropped out of school as a result of the conflict. The result has

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[53] Plateau Peace Practitioners Network (PPPN), 2014. "This Spree of Killing of Innocent Citizens Must Stop," Press Statement, May 21, 2014.

[54] Separate interviews with orphanage director and Christian church leader, 14 June 2014, corroborated by interview with two local NGO representatives, 16 June 2014, Makurdi.

[55] Interview with two representatives of an agriculture focused NGO, 14 June 2014, Makurdi.

[56] Interview with former IDP worker, 13 June 2014, Makurdi.

[57] Interview and graphic photographs alleged to show murdered Tiv farmers, provided by Christian church leader, 14 June 2014, Makurdi; Interview and list of names of alleged Hausa and Fulani victims of the conflict provided by Fulani former military officer and current business association leader, 16 June 2014, Makurdi.

[58] The assessment team visited a camp of displaced persons mostly from Guma LGA squatting at St. Mary's Primary School on the North Bank of the Benue River in Makurdi, where it was reported that eighteen displaced persons died in the camp due to exposure to mosquitoes and unsanitary living conditions.

been increased numbers of vulnerable people. The conflict is said to be in part responsible for rising rates of prostitution, rape and gender based violence, and drug and alcohol abuse among idle and conflict affected youth.

Recent trends leading to the current crisis in Benue and complicating efforts to resolve it include a large and growing youth population, widespread and deepening poverty, and rising unemployment. Tiv and Fulani respondents provided separate, corroborating accounts of criminal collusion between Tiv and Fulani youths in schemes to steal and slaughter cattle, which triggered wider conflict between the two groups. These accounts of organized criminal activity involving collaboration between youth from herding and farming communities are consistent with those heard by the assessment team in Kaduna State.

The proliferation of small arms and the alleged involvement by well-armed mercenaries in organized attacks on Tiv farming villages were repeatedly mentioned by Christian respondents as defining characteristics of the current crisis. Whereas in the past, the Fulani were said to have come with their wives and children and carried only sticks and homemade rifles to protect their herds, they now were said to be composed increasingly of single young men, armed with assault rifles and other sophisticated small arms. As noted above, these accounts should be interpreted cautiously, as the North Central assessment team was not able to incorporate the views of rural Fulani pastoralists directly affected by the conflict. They are, however, consistent with statements made by representatives of an NGO focusing on issues affecting herding communities in Kaduna State. As noted in the Kaduna section above, they explained that the deteriorating security situation in rural areas had led Fulani men to begin migrating alone with their herds, leaving women and children behind in towns for their own safety.

Both sides acknowledged that corruption among traditional Tiv rulers, 2nd and 3rd class chiefs, may be the source of misunderstandings that have led to violence, as when chiefs steal funds provided by Fulani to pay for grazing rights, rather than handing it over to the farmers to whom it is due.

The common practice by wealthy political and business leaders to purchase large herds of cattle, then hire and arm Fulani youth to manage and protect them, has likely contributed both to the rise in violence in rural areas and the perception by many Tiv of mercenary involvement in the crisis on the Fulani side.

The inability of the federal and state government to resolve the conflict or provide security in the countryside or many neighborhoods of Makurdi has led to the rise of local vigilante groups across Benue, though they are not yet as well organized as the groups observed in Plateau.

NIGER DELTA: DELTA AND RIVERS STATE

Violent conflict in Nigeria's Niger Delta has been driven for much of the past half century by the struggle among local communities, multinational oil companies, and the Nigerian state for control over the resource rich territory and the oil revenues upon which all sides have come to depend. Though the principal oil producing states of Delta, Rivers, Akwa Ibom and Bayelsa are among the nation's richest in terms of per capita income, an exceedingly unequal distribution of wealth has left many residents of the Niger Delta living in extreme poverty.

Poor governance and inefficient service delivery have stunted development while deepening public distrust of politicians. Government initiatives such as the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), the Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (You WiN!) Programme, and the Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P) have had limited success due to low capacity and corruption among implementing government agencies. Those elected to office continue to renege on their responsibilities to their constituents, many of whom are unaware of their rights and responsibilities as citizens. The assessment team heard of several alleged cases of absentee officials who made no pretense of representing the interests

of those who elected them.[59] In other cases, officials elected through the unofficial zoning system that has arisen to promote power sharing between ethnic groups in the Niger Delta have refused to respect the informal agreement and remained in office beyond their agreed term. As one respondent explained, "because so many people see how easy it is to steal and get away with it, politics is the new business in town; one can change their life from zero to zenith with politics."[60]

The problems of weak governance and corruption are also prevalent at the community level. Male leaders, or elders, frequently hold onto power and hoard resources, often leading to violent power struggles, particularly between youth and elders. Several respondents stated that these tensions are exacerbated by increased competition over land, with one describing a situation whereby urban expansion is raising the value of land in formerly rural, now peri-urban communities.[61]

One of the most glaring results of poor governance in the Niger Delta is the widespread environmental devastation resulting from oil spills, pipeline explosions, and gas flaring. It is perceived that the oil companies and the GON have consistently failed to take responsibility for environmental cleanup and restoration as recommended, for example, by the Shell-funded 2011 United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Environmental Assessment on Ogoniland.[62] There has been a similar lack of political will to implement the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Act, and allegations of corruption and mismanagement by oil companies and the National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA) in the execution of Joint Investigation Visits (JIV).[63] The JIV regime was designed to promote transparency and collaboration between oil companies, government agencies, and communities when investigating the cause and extent of oil spills, in order to determine fault and appropriate compensation. Many respondents in Delta and Rivers expressed the belief that oil companies routinely coopted members of the community syndicates charged with participating in the JIVs, to ensure favorable reports even in cases where the company was at fault.

Oil bunkering also contributes to environmental destruction. The illegal bunkering, refining and sale of petroleum products on the black market is reported by Nigerian government mandated task forces, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI), local and international NGOs and community members themselves. These actors report that illegal bunkering involves community leaders, contractors working for international oil companies (IOCs), JTF (Joint Task Force) members, every level of the GON (local to national)[64] and foreign international thieves. This vast, criminal network has been called "effectively Nigeria's most profitable private business," estimated to generate illicit revenues of up to US $2-3 million each day. According to high-end estimates, nearly $50 billion in oil revenues have gone missing, mostly at the hands of Nigerians. Bunkering is also among the country's dirtiest businesses, injecting pollutants directly into the region's lands and waterways and destroying livelihoods and ecosystems in the process. The destruction of mangroves on a massive scale as a result of this pollution has devastated riverine fisheries and led to heightened mortality from mosquito borne diseases such as malaria.[65]

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[59] Local NGO, 11 June 2014.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Local women's NGO, 9 June 2014.

[62] United Nations Environment Programme, 2011. Environmental Assessment of Ogoniland. Nairobi, Kenya: UNEP, 2011.

[63] Amnesty International. 2013. "Bad Information, Oil Spill Investigation in the Niger Delta." London, UK: Amnesty International, 2013.

[64] Discussion with donor embassy, 8 July 2014.

[65] In addition, oil bunkering proceeds fund political campaigns in the Niger Delta and are used by ex-militants to purchase weapons. Women are significantly involved, usually serving as distributors, and youth are equally as involved, running the refining operations which are severely hazardous and have resulted in several deaths and injuries in recent years. Lastly, access to tapping points has been a point of violent contention between cult groups/ex-militants and their respective communities, and between these groups and the JTF. The latter have devastated entire communities trying

This bleak scenario was said by one respondent to be creating a new generation of youth who are growing up without hope for a better future, while a new generation of militants has "started rumbling."[66] Deep grievances about poverty, inequality, unemployment, poor governance, and environmental degradation have led many in the Niger Delta to take up arms and organize themselves into criminal cults, organized crime gangs, and militant organizations. The latter espouse political agendas but are also often involved in piracy, kidnappings, and oil bunkering. Many of the region's militant groups came together over the course of the 2000s to form the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). Intense fighting between MEND and the federal government's Joint Task Force (JTF) in 2009 threatened to bring oil production in much of the Niger Delta to a halt, and impelled the late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua to offer an amnesty agreement to about 26,000 armed militants.

Though opinions of the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP) vary widely, many respondents shared the belief that "the amnesty program was successful in keeping the peace"[67] for the last five years. At the same time, it is clear that for many Delta and Rivers State residents, the underlying grievances that led to militancy and violent conflict in the past have not been addressed. As one respondent wondered, "what about the vast amount of people in the Delta that have not benefitted?"[68] Many respondents in Delta and Rivers States believe that those who benefitted from the amnesty were not fighters but opportunists who gained entry through corrupt means. As one stated, "many are still waiting for assistance…those who were sent to universities abroad to study engineering could not have been those carrying guns because most of them could not even write their names."[69]

While the federal government has announced that it would end the amnesty in 2015, few in the region expect this to happen, at least under a Jonathan government.[70] While some former militants have benefited from skills trainings and monthly stipends, and former warlords have received security contracts to protect oil pipelines and other infrastructure, most citizens in the Niger Delta region continue to make ends meet however they can. With an over dependence on oil by both the GON and local communities, other areas that could offer opportunities for employment and improved livelihoods have been ignored. The bounties from lucrative oil-related enterprises have generated massive corruption and the overt exercise of impunity, particularly among the elite and militants. As a result, those who have found success through these means have become role models for youths who now view force as an acceptable means of making a living. As one respondent put it, "those who have remained peaceful have had no rewards to them; the people who do bad keep getting rewarded and are increasing their converts."[71]

In many cases, youth see cultists, militants, pirates and kidnappers as role models. They are often eager to join "prestigious" gangs or cults that engage in oil bunkering, drug and small arms trade, and political violence as forms of gainful employment. As one interviewee pointed out, "they believe in political loyalty for their oga (leader). They will do anything for their oga, they will break legs and kill for their oga."[72] Many law abiding youths lack access to land, credit and basic skills including literacy. A pervasive sense of hopelessness has driven many to seek solace in religious institutions, where some are further exploited by opportunistic religious leaders.

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to stamp out oil refining/bunkering operations–but mostly as a means to eliminate competition rather than eradicate the problem.
[66] Interview with local implementing partner, 10 June 2014.
[67] Interview with local NGO, 13 June 2014.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Interview with local NGO, 11 June 2014.
[70] Eze, Chinedu. "Nigeria: FG Plans to End Amnesty Programme in 2015." *AllAfrica*, June 20, 2013.
[71] Interview with local NGO representative, 11 June 2014.
[72] Interview with local NGO representative, 10 June 2014.

Several confidential sources in the Niger Delta explained that cult groups–akin to gangs in the U.S.–are often used by political actors as a mechanism through which grassroots support can be garnered or forced. Rival cult groups have a history of instigating violence at the behest of politicians. Cults are actively supported by political parties, particularly APC and PDP, and are being used to shore up grassroots support, particularly among youth, in addition to committing acts of violence against political opponents and their supporters. Recent fights between cults over politics and control of territory could affect stability in surrounding areas.

Contacts based in Rivers, Delta, and Bayelsa States have affirmed that elections will serve as flashpoints, as candidates both between and within the APC and PDP vie for control in their respective areas. The influence of "cultism" is strong in most aspects of Niger Delta society; many youth complain of cult activity in primary and secondary schools, as well as in their communities and even their families. The combative political atmosphere in Rivers involving the current governor, and the gubernatorial and presidential campaigns ahead, does not help matters. Though it is not certain that these kinds of events will lead to violence on a massive scale, each conflict has the potential to spread beyond its natural boundaries, and further entrench long-simmering conflicts in the region.

The lack of understanding of the Boko Haram phenomenon in the North East among many in the majority-Christian Niger Delta has led to increased suspicion of Muslims by Christians in the Delta. This is in part due to political manipulation and incorrect and/or inflammatory rhetoric by media sources as well as political and religious leaders. Many respondents, from the unschooled to the highly educated, expressed suspicion that Boko Haram could represent the views of all Muslims in Nigeria. There was an overwhelming assumption among Christian respondents in Delta and Rivers that Muslims are trying to establish an Islamic country through the actions of Boko Haram. This perception is particularly alarming given the trend toward negative political rhetoric and reprisal violence as the 2015 elections approach–a trend exacerbated by loyalty to religious and other leaders. If Boko Haram were to successfully launch a terrorist attack in the Niger Delta, in the current political climate it could lead to revenge attacks against specific ethnic groups and Muslim worshipers, potentially unleashing a series of inter-ethnic/religious reprisals throughout the country.

Several respondents pointed to unemployment as the top issue affecting the Delta, with one stating that "if a leader offers some money, goes and buys weapons and says to someone 'let's start a revolution,' he or she is willing to do anything. They are waiting to be used by the cults and warlords."[73] Unemployment is exacerbated by the fact that many young people are being denied the opportunity to gain lawful employment because individuals in office are not retiring from service at the end of their tenure and because, as mentioned above, those elected or appointed to political office through the informal zoning system often refuse to respect the agreement and remain in their positions.

A deeply embedded entitlement mentality and dependency on payments from IOCs among community members in oil producing communities, particularly in the creeks,[74] has often resulted in their using force to secure their demands.[75] While many unemployed youths trying to gain lawful employment lack the appropriate skills, many others see no reason to work and instead depend on handouts from IOCs. The irregular power supply and the deplorable condition of roads discourage even those who have skills from launching businesses or seeking employment because the cost of doing business is so high. Access to jobs often depends on personal connections rather than merit, while some jobs are simply sold to the highest bidder.

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[73] Interview with local NGO representative, 13 June 2014.
[74] The Niger Delta Region is composed of a dense network of waterways and creeks. The term 'creeks' as employed here and elsewhere in this report refers to the riverine communities that are often located in hard to reach locations, many accessible only by boat. Many of these communities have been hurt the most by oil spills due to their dependence on the water and livelihoods linked to it, including fishing.
[75] Interview with local NGO representative, 10 June 2014.

These conditions continue to exclude large populations of youths and particularly women from the national workforce.

A more promising development has been the establishment of a Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMOU) drafted, signed, and implemented by IOCs, community leaders, and local government representatives. While in some instances the GMOU process has instigated rather than prevented conflict, overwhelmingly, GMOUs have helped to promote transparency in the distribution of compensation funds at the community level. It represents a significant step toward repairing relationships between community stakeholders and IOCs.

Unfortunately, many women in the Delta region have been marginalized from these and other initiatives due to harmful cultural practices that keep them and their children in poverty. Women are frequently excluded from local governance structures.[76] As one respondent noted with frustration, "the eldest women in the community in many Delta States are not allowed to visit the village council, but any levy or decision that is made the women have to implement without any say."[77] Low literacy and lack of empowerment further incapacitate many women from participating meaningfully in governance and addressing their own needs and those of their children. In addition, widows often have their wealth taken from them by their in-laws, leaving them and their children with nothing. Many of these children join cults, both for the camaraderie they provide and as a means to put food on the table. They are thus brought up in an environment of anger and grief, an upbringing that "encourages negative behaviors".[78]

RECOMMENDATIONS

APPROACH

To ensure that its activities do no harm while contributing as much as possible to the cause of peace in Nigeria, USAID should target the factors that most aggravate or mitigate conflict. The team observed three overarching themes that recurred throughout the six states.

POVERTY AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Poverty and unemployment—especially among youth—were the grievances most commonly expressed by respondents from all states and regions covered by the assessment. They are the source of much of the frustration, anger, and desperation that conflict mobilizers such as corrupt politicians and religious zealots tap into to advance their agendas.

From Sokoto to Rivers, be they urban or rural residents, respondents from all walks of life consistently mentioned how poverty exacerbated conflict dynamics. Poverty made voters more susceptible to identity-based messaging because of the perception that only a representative of their group would deliver desperately needed services like education, water, and healthcare. Poverty made parents take children out of school and push them into street vending or sex work in order to generate the income necessary for the family's survival. In the North Central region, rural parents sent children into cities for education or to earn money. As children grew into adolescence, poverty pushed them to work for unscrupulous politicians in the North West, as cattle rustlers in the North Central, and cult members in the Niger Delta. Respondents stated repeatedly how marginalized youth worked for corrupt leaders and later participated in riots because they had no better way to make money.

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[76] Leadership Initiative for Transformation and Empowerment. "Rural Women's Development Strategies When Excluded from Community Decision Making." LITE Community Report. 2014.
[77] Local women's NGO representative, 9 June 2014.
[78] Local NGO representative, 11 June 2014.

Though not sufficient for mitigating conflict, reducing poverty or alleviating its effects is necessary. USAID should target extreme poverty throughout its sectoral programs, especially economic growth and local governance strengthening. These efforts could range from engagement with political officials who demonstrate the will to implement pro-poor policies, to designing programs that maximize opportunities for participants to develop healthy coping mechanisms.

SHORT-TERM RESULTS

Many respondents stressed the need to deal with poverty and unemployment in the very near term, calling for urgent action, especially for idle youth. In the North West and Niger Delta, a number of respondents used the same phrase to describe the effect of chronic poverty: "People are suffering." The team observed how the effects of poverty led to desperate actions to meet urgent needs like food and healthcare. Decisions such as removing children from school damage families in the long term but may be successful in alleviating short-term misery. Structural challenges like corruption, an adverse regulatory environment, and lack of electricity all contribute to poverty but will take decades to change. Poor families are making day-to-day decisions that cannot wait until macro-level issues are resolved. Adopting an approach that balances long-term objectives with short-term needs would allow USAID to address the immediate concerns of poor families whose coping mechanisms can contribute to conflict dynamics while still working to transform the national-level policies that must change to allow for sustainable economic growth.

GROUND-LEVEL GOVERNANCE

Nigeria's federal system allows for considerable decision-making at every level of governance—even traditional leaders outside the state system are legitimate leaders in the eyes of many. Because they and state and local governments have considerable decision-making authority, they represent an important opportunity to respond to residents' most pressing needs. The North West team witnessed this phenomenon while visiting participants in the Leadership, Empowerment, Advocacy and Development (LEAD) activity. Villagers, local government officials, and community leaders alike expressed appreciation for this USAID-funded program that taught them to work together to address constituents' prioritized concerns. The budget and policy decisions that these leaders made led to a rapid improvement in community members' quality of life and in the state-citizen relationship.

Although corruption and mismanagement also abound at the local level, several respondents described traditional leaders and local government as the best hope for change in Nigeria. Local officials are closest to their constituents and, in the opinion of these respondents, cared more about serving their community than other politicians did. They also may be more motivated. Unlike officials working in Abuja and living in gated mansions, many local leaders have to face their constituents on a daily basis, and therefore might more readily be held accountable to them. These findings are not limited to Peace, Democracy and Governance activities but apply to all sectoral activities that engage local government or traditional leaders.

CROSS-CUTTING RECOMMENDATIONS

While the team found no evidence of USAID activities doing harm, there was a widely shared opinion among implementing partner respondents that USAID is missing opportunities to mainstream conflict sensitivity and adhere to Do No Harm guidelines. International and local partners alike described how they adjusted plans and processes when violence erupted, to protect their staff and participants from harm, and to implement activities more effectively in communities in conflict. These independent efforts were not coordinated or necessarily based on best practices. Nor were they required, which reduced incentives to put Do No Harm principles into practice. One respondent lamented that despite her professional background in peacebuilding, she sometimes forgot to apply conflict sensitivity on her project because the deliverables in the contract took priority. She and other respondents expressed the desire for USAID to require conflict sensitivity in all activities.

In consideration of the above, the assessment team recommends that USAID/Nigeria take the following cross-cutting actions to more effectively promote peace and mitigate conflict through all of its programming:

ISSUE A MISSION ORDER ON CONFLICT SENSITIVITY

Because conflict affects all sectors in Nigeria, the Mission should require conflict sensitivity in all procurements. Conflict sensitivity should be included as an evaluation factor with points associated with it in proposals. Proposals that identify peacebuilding opportunities within sectoral activities should be favorably viewed. Conflict sensitivity skills should also factor into evaluation criteria for key personnel. Monitoring and evaluation activities should explicitly examine potential Do No Harm concerns and key personnel should have academic or professional expertise in conflict sensitivity. Finally, as many activities as possible should be incorporated into and their staff members trained to participate in a community-based conflict early warning and response system. Ongoing conflict early warning efforts such as those included in the Training of Leaders on Religious and National Coexistence (TOLERANCE) and Support for Electoral Reforms activities would be more effective if coordinated.

DEVELOP LOCAL PARTNER CAPACITY IN CONFLICT SENSITIVITY ACROSS ALL SECTORS

Program designs should include plans for contractors and grantees to train their local staff and local partners in conflict sensitivity. This support should include regular trainings, not just one time workshops, for local partners. This will help them to remain up to date on best practices and better ensure that their organizations and programs internalize and institutionalize conflict sensitive practices. The team observed many impressive conflict sensitive practices employed by their local partners but also noted missed opportunities to incorporate conflict sensitivity due to lack of capacity. For example, one partner organization described how it sent Muslim staff into Muslim communities and Christian staff into Christian communities to protect the staff and increase communities' participation in the activities. This practice reflects Do No Harm principles by protecting staff from harm. However, it misses out on opportunities to build trust. A better practice would be to send a Muslim and a Christian to implement activities together whenever feasible, so that communities might observe members of both identity groups working well together. Training local partners in best practices like these would enable them to maximize peacebuilding opportunities in their sectoral activities.

DEVELOP A STAND-ALONE YOUTH LIVELIHOOD ACTIVITY

Because the combination of youth and unemployment is a significant factor exacerbating conflict, a youth livelihoods activity would be likely to have a meaningful impact on local conflict dynamics. In order to be successful, however, the activity must be based on a market analysis to assess labor demand. Based on its findings, USAID should fund an integrated activity that combines on-the-job training, classroom components, life skills training, and counseling.[79] Youth also need recreational activities to address the boredom that riots and other forms of crime and violence can alleviate. Each component should target male and female youths, cognizant of the opportunities and constraints that apply to each gender in their locales. USAID should implement this activity in high risk environments (e.g., where youth are the primary participants in riots) in order to reduce their frustration and as well as their economic incentives to commit violence out of either grievance or need.

Adding youth-focused components may be beneficial to other activities across sectors. However, because youth have specific needs that differ from those of adults, these components must be carefully designed and follow best practices[80] to be effective.

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[79] USAID, "State of the Field Report: Examining the Evidence in Youth Workforce Development" February 2013, page 9. See also USAID's "State of the Field Report: Examining the Evidence in Youth Education in Crisis and Conflict" (February 2013) and "State of the Field Report: Holistic, Cross-Sectoral Youth Development" (February 2013).
[80] See USAID's Youth Development Program Guide at http://www.equip123.net/docs/e3-LivelihoodsGuide.pdf for a full description of the necessary components.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO TECHNICAL OFFICES

EDUCATION

Respondents from all three regions pointed out that unemployed and idle youth often drop out of school to try to earn a living to sustain themselves or their families. Poor, out of school youth are more susceptible than their better off peers to recruitment by corrupt politicians, organized crime syndicates, cults, and extremist religious groups. They are also more likely to engage in random acts of violence such as looting and rioting during periods of unrest. Multiple respondents across states and regions noted that violent conflict disrupts schooling and leads to increased dropout rates.

In view of the above observations, the assessment team makes the following general recommendations for future USAID/Nigeria education programming:

Explore ways to keep youth in school: Consider support for conditional cash transfer programs and other interventions that provide economic incentives for school attendance. The Support for Vulnerable Households activity, which opened in 2014 and includes an incentive component for keeping children in school, could provide a model for urban environments if successful. Promote alternative schedules that allow children to engage in income-generating activities while staying in school. Promote "second chance" pathways back into school for dropouts like married girls.

Restart learning environments interrupted by conflict: The North Central region has an increasing number of IDPs from local conflict as well as the conflict in the North East. In Benue, schools in regions affected by violent conflict, including those in Makurdi that have sheltered IDPs from rural areas for much of 2014, are not functional. There is a general need across much of North Central and Northern Nigeria for programs aimed at getting pupils back into learning environments, be they formal or informal, and for strengthening existing informal educational systems such as vocational and Koranic training, through conflict sensitive interventions.[81]

Take advantage of peacebuilding opportunities in sectoral programs: Include peace messaging in literacy programs to counteract the negative messaging youth encounter in the media, from political and religious leaders, and from peers.[82] In Rivers and Delta, several respondents said that children and young adults should be taught conflict mitigation techniques in school. They recommended conflict resolution programs for primary and secondary school children to provide the foundation for dealing with conflict when it arises. In Kaduna and Plateau, people-to-people children's programming could help build bridges for peaceful coexistence and friendship across the states' balkanized urban and rural environments. Similar efforts could help to reverse the worrying trend, related to the Boko Haram crisis, of increased suspicion of Muslims by Christians in the Niger Delta. Activities that bring together children of different identity groups and teach shared values and culture could reduce their susceptibility to hate messaging.[83]

Support livelihoods to reduce the pool of recruits for corrupt leaders: Support vocational training tailored to the specific needs of rural and urban youth. Respondents in all six states called for interventions in support of youth empowerment, vocational training, and youth run micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), adding that often, training alone is not sufficient to secure jobs for youth and launch successful youth led

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[81] The USAID 2013 *Countering Violent Extremism in Northern Nigeria* report discusses several conflict-sensitive options for supporting the *almajirai* system, as well as *Islamiyya* schools. These include teacher training and supplemental community-based literacy, civics, and peace education classes.

[82] For examples of peace literacy programs, the Development Experience Clearinghouse offers many such as Literacy for Peace and Development in the Philippines (pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pdacy456.pdf).

[83] See USAID's People to People programming guide for more information: http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/CMMP2PGuidelines2010-01-19.pdf.

businesses.[84] A targeted program to train and empower young girls and boys who are out of school be-cause of the death of their parents would also be appropriate in places like Plateau with displaced and oth-erwise conflict-affected populations.

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND ENVIRONMENT (EGE)

The assessment team identified several areas where carefully designed and targeted EGE activities can re-duce the likelihood of conflict across all three of the regions covered in the assessment.

Study and build on bright spots in land administration: From Kaduna in the North West to Rivers in the Niger Delta, and across North Central Nigeria, contested claims to land, whether for urban development or agricultural production, have been the root cause of much intergroup violence for decades. However, rolling out an ambitious land tenure reform activity in local government areas (LGAs) already affected by conflict could easily lead to negative unintended consequences. USAID/Nigeria should commission a study to identi-fy LGAs in conflict-prone states that have managed to avoid land based violence, and build upon these bright spot LGAs to pilot land based conflict prevention and mitigation activities.

Support youth employment and extended livelihood development training: Another set of economic devel-opment challenges common across regions and closely related to conflict are poverty and unemployment, especially as they affect youth. In Delta State, for example, former participants of USAID's Basketball for Peace activity explained that intensive, six to twelve month skills acquisition programs are needed in any conflict mitigation program, coupled with career development.[85] The assessment team recommends that, consistent with the cross-cutting recommendation for youth programming presented above, the EGE office focus on supporting job creation strategies targeting youth.

Improve access to microfinance for farmers and cooperatives: Several respondents noted that support for basic education and even targeted MSME development and job skills training, while appreciated, were often insufficient to launch successful small businesses or meet basic needs. Microfinance banks abound in Nigeria but the poor are generally unable to access loans because they lack sufficient collateral or a co-signer. USAID could provide support for microfinance targeted to the specific needs of men, women, and male and female youth. In the short term, USAID could support savings and loans circles. In the long term, USAID could introduce best practices in microfinance to banks so that larger segments of the population can access loans.

Build CSO capacity to advocate for environmental and livelihood concerns in the Niger Delta: In Delta and Rivers, there is an urgent need to strengthen the capacity of women's organizations to participate in envi-ronmental governance, and a more general need for increased CSO capacity to lobby oil companies and the GON more effectively to adopt environmental best practices, implement the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Act, and reform the National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA) as well as the Joint Investigation Visit (JIV) regime that it oversees.

Support national and international efforts at environmental rehabilitation in the Niger Delta: The EGE office should play a greater advocacy role with stakeholders in environmental cleanup. For example, the office could advocate for more assistance to environmental cleanups related to oil production and support the GON's development of sounder environmental regulations on logging. EGE should also amplify its support of the Shell-funded 2011 United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Environmental Assessment on Ogoniland report. Though the report was published more than three years ago, GON officials and commu-nities lack awareness and political will to implement the recommendations. USAID, through the EGE office, should use the report's findings to identify points of collaboration with state and local governments either

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[84] See USAID's "State of the Field Report: Examining the Evidence in Youth Workforce Development" for more in-formation.
[85] Interview with implementing partner, 10 June 2014, Warri.

for co-funding activities or forming policy. There is also a lack of awareness among Niger Delta residents of how oil bunkering is compounding harm to the environment from oil extraction. Responses include partnering with the Education Office to advocate for environmental education in schools or funding civil society efforts in awareness-raising of these issues. Finally, EGE should seek to build cooperation between the Ministry of Agriculture and aquaculture farmers.

Support medium-to-long term food security for farmers and IDPs affected by conflict in Benue: The Maximizing Agricultural Revenue and Key Enterprises in Targeted Sites II (MARKETS II) activity should be extended to help agricultural producers and processors in Benue bridge the gap caused by disruption in farming due to the ongoing conflict. Support for seedling production and distribution is urgently needed for farmers who lost their seed banks to the violence. Direct food assistance may be required for IDPs to head off a potential food security crisis. Any such assistance should prioritize emergency nutritional support for orphans and vulnerable children, including internally displaced children. EGE could collaborate with USAID offices like the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) and Food for Peace (FFP) to complement MARKETS II activities.

HEALTH, POPULATION AND NUTRITION (HPN)

Collaborate with TOLERANCE-like activities to provide trauma counseling for men, women, youth, and orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs): Respondents in all three regions expressed a need for additional services in support of trauma victims of all conflict related violence, especially survivors of gender-based violence including rape and men whose mental health needs often go unnoticed in Nigerian culture. Community based trauma support and counseling programs should target urban and rural populations directly affected by the conflict and be specific to the unique needs of men, women, youth, and orphans and vulnerable children. Religious leaders may be best positioned to participate in or encourage participation in trauma counseling programs. Because of their influential roles in the community, they may help reduce the stigma for seeking help. PDG's TOLERANCE activity, implemented by the Interfaith Mediation Centre (IMC), currently offers trauma counseling for a limited population. Furthermore, IMC has made headway in providing trauma counseling but in order to expand would need more funding. HPN can continue to identify opportunities to collaborate in trauma counseling activities with IMC.

Support activities to alleviate health-related grievances about environmental mismanagement: In Delta and Rivers, respondents reported increased mortality from mosquito borne diseases such as malaria due to the destruction of mangroves, as well as severe adverse health effects of pollutants in soil and water. Health activities that target oil producing communities and the creeks, particularly those affected by oil spills but not yet receiving assistance, would do much to alleviate local grievances.

Encourage better collaboration within the GON and across USAID activities: In Sokoto, respondents noted that while USAID convened HPN implementing partners on a quarterly basis, not all relevant GON agencies attended these meetings. They felt this was a missed opportunity. This recommendation may also apply to other states where USAID funds activities given the beneficial effect of convening government stakeholders to formulate policy around common issues. Sokoto respondents also expressed a concern that USAID activities did not necessarily complement one another. Indeed, the Focus States Assessment report indicated that activities had been developed independently, making it harder for implementing partners to collaborate.[86] Respondents echoed the report's calls for better designed complementarity among programs. The quarterly meetings are a potential space for addressing current conflict issues by adding an agenda item for partners to share conflict concerns and conflict sensitivity best practices, and to seek recommendations on how to handle conflict related challenges. Again, these findings would likely be relevant throughout Nigeria.

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[86] USAID. 2013. *Focus States Assessment (FSS) Final Report.* Report prepared for USAID by the Mitchell Group. Washington, DC: USAID, 2013, page 11.

Complement family planning with services in higher local demand: Several respondents explained that communities were frustrated with family planning activities because they do not address the communities' most critical needs. For example, a community whose highest priority was getting a borehole felt increased frustration, not satisfaction from service delivery, when they were offered contraceptives instead. Respondents recommended pairing relatively less popular child spacing services with services in higher demand, such as those directly addressing maternal and child health concerns around water and sanitation. A community based needs assessment would be an appropriate way to identify and rank these priorities.

HIV/AIDS

Ensure safe passage to clinics in "no-go" areas for members of minority, at-risk and stigmatized populations: In places that have experienced religious or ethnic balkanization, such as Jos and Kaduna City, or very high rates of armed criminal and political violence, such as much of Rivers and Delta, one challenge is that service points such as clinics are often located in areas that are dangerous for members of certain groups or the community as a whole to access. Not only do members of certain groups sometimes feel unsafe traveling to places where services are offered, but USAID may be perceived as favoring whichever group has the easiest access. People-to-people programming could alleviate this challenge by bringing leaders from the respective identity groups together to discuss the problem in private and to come up with solutions for enabling members of all groups to access services.

Support a range of conflict-sensitive programming measures in Rivers, Delta and Edo states: Local implementing partners under the Strengthening HIV Prevention Services (SHiPS) for Most-at-Risk Populations (MARPS) activity often work in communities with ongoing conflicts. They would benefit from training in conflict sensitivity to bolster their current practices. For example, they have learned to engage stakeholders and "gatekeepers" at the outset–a habit that could be valuable in other states as well by fostering understanding and smoothing the path for activity implementation. Respondents noted that in addition to mandating conflict sensitivity, USAID should support direct peacebuilding measures within these activities. Specific interventions might include a community outreach program that brings people of opposing ethnic groups together through art and sports.

Focus resources on conflict-affected youth, including OVCs, in Benue and Plateau: In Benue, targeted interventions are needed to ensure that much needed HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria prevention and treatment support reaches youth and OVC populations in rural areas affected by the violent conflict, as well as internally displaced persons and communities sheltering in urban areas. In Plateau, additional support is required for young girls, including those who have become sex workers to support themselves and their families,[87] as well as for OVCs affected by the conflicts.

PEACE, DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

Focus short-term support on strengthening the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), expanded elections monitoring, and nonviolent messaging: Respondents in all six states mentioned the 2015 elections as potential flashpoints for violence, with many pointing to the unraveling of the regional power rotating agreement and the viable challenge that APC poses to PDP hegemony as particular risk factors. The timing of the elections to coincide with the expiration of the Presidential Amnesty Program for militants in the Niger Delta and the intensifying Boko Haram insurgency centered in the North East sets the scene for major regional and possibly national crises.

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[87] The staff of an international NGO focusing on conflict mediation in Plateau State described a successful recent program that brought together girls ages 12-16 from across ethno-religious as well as socio-economic groups to train and empower them to serve as agents of positive change and peacebuilding in their communities. In the same interview, they gave specific examples of gender-based violence against girls in this age cohort, including by alleged perpetrators from the state security forces. Interview with international NGO, 12 June 2014, Jos.

Support activities like Leadership, Empowerment, Advocacy and Development (LEAD) and TOLERANCE in other conflict prone states: Local governance strengthening activities such as LEAD have demonstrated conflict mitigating benefits by decreasing tensions between communities and local governments and enabling the latter to better meet constituents' stated needs with limited resources. Conflict-mitigating activities like TOLERANCE have also contributed to peacebuilding in six states by fostering constructive dialogue and understanding among Muslim and Christian citizens. Future activities can provide economic opportunities to youths directly involved in violence and thereby decrease the attractiveness of politicians' money.

Strengthen grassroots CSOs in the Niger Delta: The assessment team observed two overarching needs: women's empowerment and conflict mediation. Many women's associations are working on issues relevant to conflict, such as environmental concerns. However, women generally do not hold decision-making positions either in their communities or local government. The team observed women's eagerness to participate more fully in community decision making. To that end, PDG should invite local women's CSOs (e.g., farmers associations) to identify ways to create openings for women and build their leadership capacity in a male-dominated environment, while recognizing that women's empowerment training must include men as equal partners in community development. Many local CSOs and NGOs would benefit from capacity building activities such as those currently provided through the Strengthening, Advocacy and Civic Engagement (SACE) activity including NGO management, proposal writing, advocacy, and coalition building. These organizations encounter conflicts on a regular basis and need training to deal with them effectively. Future youth programming, such as Basketball for Peace, under the prior USAID activity Conflict Abatement through Local Mitigation (CALM), should incorporate lessons learned from the activity by expanding to include youth who are interested in diverse activities; components could include drama, music, and arts in addition to sports in conflict mitigation projects that focus on youth. The conflict mitigation aspects of CALM have been successful, though participants would have benefitted from more intensive training in relevant livelihood skill development (respondents suggested trainings of 6-12 months).

Reinforce peacebuilding efforts in Plateau, Kaduna, Benue, and the Niger Delta: Respondents in Jos from all sides of the communal conflict praised the work of TOLERANCE, but many lamented the failure of political leadership within state and local governments to support peace efforts. One way to address this situation is to support local governance strengthening activities like LEAD in Plateau, which would enable communities to articulate their concerns about conflict to local governments. Informal security forces also represent a peacebuilding opportunity. In Plateau and Benue, local vigilante groups provide the only semblance of security for many urban and rural communities but state security forces have not consistently or sufficiently trained them in security measures. USAID should work with the US Embassy and the GON to design a program to train vigilante leaders and their members in human rights and conflict mediation. USAID should support people-to-people programming in Kaduna and Plateau, where divided neighborhoods and balkanized local governments lead to diminishing interaction between identity groups. People-to-people programming could also help to reverse the trend, related to the Boko Haram crisis in the North East, of rising suspicion of Muslim minority residents of the Niger Delta by their Christian neighbors.

Extend positive lessons learned from LEAD in Sokoto to other activities and states: The assessment team observed a number of aspects in LEAD that other activities should replicate. First, LEAD modeled conflict sensitivity by engaging gatekeepers on an education project in which it had encountered difficulty enrolling girls. Activity staff met with the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations of Nigeria (FOMWAN) and religious leaders to raise awareness about the school's intent to respect Islamic and traditional norms, thereby gaining their buy-in. In another instance, a local government official described how he and his colleagues initially thought that LEAD was an American spying program until he noticed that all staff were from Sokoto and that the training was of high quality. In a Muslim state where suspicion of the USG runs high, activities like LEAD have the potential to establish credibility for USAID and smooth implementation of potentially controversial activities such as vaccination campaigns. Third, LEAD strengthened local systems instead of bypassing them for state institutions. Traditional leaders, local governments, civil society and community members participated together in trainings and weighed in on community decision-making. Many respondents expressed a positive view of their local institutions, formal and informal, and pointed to LEAD as the

reason why. Finally, ward development committees—a local decision-making body—had one male and one female representative from each community. While the assessment team was not able to ascertain whether or not the presence of women led to effective advocacy on women's interests, this approach to equitable representation demonstrated the democratic values that local governance programs should champion. It would be very interesting and beneficial to examine LEAD's influence on women's effective representation and potential changes to gender norms, however incremental.

COUNTRY DEVELOPMENT COORDINATION STRATEGY

Overall, the Country Development Coordination Strategy (CDCS) targets the right entry points for conflict prevention. The goal of reducing extreme poverty aligns closely with the assessment findings which clearly reveal extreme poverty to be a contributing factor exacerbating conflict dynamics across the six states studied, both as a grievance mobilizing people to anger and desperation, and as a risk factor predisposing the poorest of the poor to involvement in violence whether as victims or as perpetrators.

The proposed indicators on families' coping mechanisms are particularly useful from a conflict perspective. Unhealthy coping mechanisms such as involvement in criminal enterprises, from drug trafficking to sex work, and political and criminal violence, can all contribute to conflict dynamics. The special objective on elections credibility is crucial to mitigating the single most important trigger to violent conflict in Nigeria's foreseeable future. Intermediate Result 2.1, for community-government engagement, has the potential to reduce grievances (as LEAD has done) and can be sustainable if the relationships it fosters are strong enough to last beyond the life of the activity.

The CDCS would do more to mitigate the potential for violent conflict by making three adjustments:

- Youth: As mentioned in the Mission-level recommendations, a stand-alone youth program would be ideal because of the urgent needs of this population and their direct relevance to violent conflict. Currently, youth is a cross-cutting issue in the draft CDCS. This raises two concerns. First, it is unclear how this idea will be put into practice. Cross-cutting issues often fall through the cracks unless their application is clearly articulated and responsible parties identified. Without a detailed plan for the Mission to incorporate youth throughout USAID activities, youth risk being forgotten. Second, and also as previously described, youth have specific needs and cannot be readily added to existing activities otherwise designed for adults. The assessment team strongly recommends that the Mission elevate youth concerns and meaningfully address them.

- Land tenure and resource governance: Because land disputes are the source of so much conflict in the North Central region, the CDCS should include land tenure and resource governance activities there. USAID/Nigeria's EGE office should commission a study of land management practices and land-based conflict in Nigeria and pilot activities designed to build upon the experiences of positive deviant, or "bright spot" cases, specifically LGAs in violence prone states where conflicts over land have been successfully mitigated and resolved.

- Short-term poverty alleviation: Some intermediate results in the CDCS address structural factors contributing to extreme poverty such as reforming the business environment and increasing agricultural competitiveness. While these long-term changes are necessary, they need more short-term intermediate results targeting the proximate sources of conflict. Youth and their families need access to microcredit and livelihoods training as soon as possible, to allow them to forgo illicit income-generating opportunities. Communities need to establish relationships with their local governments and articulate their most pressing needs to reduce their suffering. The CDCS should seek more short-term intermediate results to complement the existing framework.

CONCLUSION

This assessment provides an updated analysis of conflict dynamics and their relation to USAID activities in three regions of Nigeria where the likelihood of elections-related violence in 2015 is high. The assessment confirms that many longstanding drivers of violent conflict across the North West, North Central, and Niger Delta Regions remain firmly in place. Widespread poverty and underdevelopment, alongside high rates of unemployment, especially among youth, remain deep sources of grievance expressed by respondents across all six states covered by the assessment. Competition for land and other resources, in the absence of effective resource governance and conflict management systems and institutions, remains the root cause of continuing cycles of violence between identity groups defined by birthplace, religion and ethnicity. Winner-take-all elections remain triggers to violence at the local, state and national levels. The nation's factionalized, corrupt, and patronage-based political system has consistently failed to supply the public goods, services and infrastructure that are the necessary foundation for broad-based, sustainable economic growth.

In addition to these longstanding drivers of conflict, the assessment calls attention to four recent developments that have the potential to exacerbate underlying conflict dynamics significantly in the near future.

First, the informal system of regional power rotation that has helped to mitigate conflict between the country's major ethnic and religious groups is being challenged by President Jonathan's candidacy in 2015 and the rise of the APC as a viable challenger to the PDP. Second, the growth of Boko Haram into a full-fledged armed insurgency capable of sowing terror and insecurity across much of the North East and, to a lesser extent, the North West and North Central regions, has led to the State of Emergency in place in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe States since March 2013. The rise of Boko Haram and the heightened insecurity felt across the country has led to increased tensions between Muslims and Christians nationwide—most acutely in states with large Muslim or Christian minorities and recent histories of communal violence, such as Kaduna and Plateau. Third, the potential expiration of the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP) for militants in the Niger Delta threatens to unleash a new wave of armed violence there. Fourth, the acute and worsening resource-driven conflict between sedentary farmers and pastoralists in the North Central zone, which also plays out along religious lines, threatens to overwhelm the state security forces' capacity to respond.

At the same time, the assessment team found evidence of countervailing trends and sources of resilience which USAID/Nigeria should seek to reinforce. These include supporting local government conflict prevention efforts like those in Sokoto, and encouraging the still fragile peace that has begun to take hold in the Niger Delta, Kaduna, and Jos—thanks in large measure to the efforts of local peace builders from both sides of religious and ethnic divides.

Because violent conflict in Nigeria has both long-term, structural causes (e.g., poverty and underdevelopment) as well as proximate triggers (e.g., elections) the assessment's recommendations include both short-term measures that each of USAID/NIGERIA's technical offices can adopt between now and 2015, and suggestions for making the Mission's overall development strategy more conflict-sensitive.

ANNEX A: TECHNICAL OFFICE RECOMMENDATIONS

This annex summarizes the conflict assessment team's sector-specific recommendations based on the issues paper, field research, and input from technical teams received during out-brief meetings.

The recommendations address existing and potential USAID activities as well as policy advocacy with GON counterparts with respect to **conflict sensitivity** and **peacebuilding**. Conflict sensitivity refers to the way USAID works to ensure that its activities do nothing to exacerbate conflict dynamics, while not necessarily trying to change those dynamics. An example would be an agricultural activity in a conflict-affected community that seeks to benefit the opposing parties equally, to avoid creating resentment. Peacebuilding activities, on the other hand, seek to change conflict dynamics for the better. An example would be if the same agricultural activity brought the opposing parties together on a common project with the goal of re-establishing relationships and building peace.

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND ENVIRONMENT OFFICE

USAID supports the GON's efforts to alleviate poverty by improving agricultural productivity while creating jobs in rural areas. It also works to improve market access, increase the country's energy supply, reduce obstacles to trade, and expand access to clean water. USAID is helping to develop a policy environment that is supportive of small businesses and to expand access to market-driven vocational and technical training centers linked with private sector employment opportunities. U.S. assistance also focuses on expanding access to commercial financial services, including microfinance.

NIGER DELTA: DELTA AND RIVERS

Environment

- Diversify livelihood opportunities in oil-producing areas, be it through partnerships with the GON, policy advocacy, public-private partnerships, or USAID activities
- Build CSO capacity to further these initiatives:
    - Engage oil companies/GON more robustly in adopting best practices
    - Raise more awareness and implementation nationwide on the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Act
    - Support reforms of Joint Investigation Visit (JIV) standards and the JIV Form
    - Encourage participation of relevant women's organizations (e.g., fish farmers) in resource governance
    - Advocate for environmental cleanup
- Advocate with the GON for these policies:
    - Encourage better environmental regulations on logging
    - Improve oversight and accountability of relevant GON agencies, such as National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA)
    - Raise awareness of the 2011 United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Environmental Assessment on Ogoniland report and recommendations

Aquaculture

- Build capacity within the Ministry of Agriculture for transparent and equitable disbursement of funds, for example through Chevron's Partnership in the Niger Delta (PIND) program, a trusted partner by both farmers and the government

- Add the following subjects to existing USAID training-of-trainer activities for farmers:
    o Deeper technical skills to improve livelihoods
    o Increase access to microcredit for farmers
    o Aquaculture production
    o Advocacy skills to articulate needs to the government and to financial institutions, etc.
    o Civic education

NORTH CENTRAL: BENUE AND PLATEAU

Benue

- Support and enhance youth livelihoods and workforce development, designed for urban and rural youths
- Continue MARKETS II program to bridge possible gaps caused by disruption in farming due to conflict between farmers and herdsmen
- Potential collaboration with OTI or OFDA:
    o Support for seedling production and distribution for farmers who lost their seed banks to conflict
    o Direct support to IDPs to head off potential food security crisis
- Establish TOLERANCE-like project in Benue State, with a focus on mediating conflict between (Muslim) Fulani herdsmen and (Christian) Tiv farmers
- In close collaboration with DFID's activities in Kogi and Kano, support TOLERANCE-like or ongoing Search for Common Ground activities
- In close coordination with the above, pilot a land tenure administration and sustainable natural resource management activity. This activity should target locations in Benue State where Tiv and Fulani have not yet devolved into crisis

Plateau

- Support out-of-school youth livelihood activities, including innovative youth entrepreneurial training programs with provision of tools and possible start-up loans
- Potential collaboration with OFDA: Follow up ongoing MARKETS II activities for provision of soya based food supplements to orphans and vulnerable children

NORTH WEST: SOKOTO AND KADUNA

- Potential collaboration with OTI or OFDA:
    o Increase access to microcredit for poor families: husbands, wives, and youth
    o Monitor the Support to Vulnerable Households for Accelerated Revenue Earnings (SHARE) activity as a potential model for urban activities
- Concrete ways to incorporate youth as a cross-cutting issue:
    o Consider providing conditional cash transfers to encourage families to keep children in school (SHARE may provide a model)
    o Livelihood development: Support workforce development and livelihood activities to reduce the incentive to riot or work for unscrupulous politicians
    o Provide literacy, numeracy and vocational training for out of school youth

EDUCATION OFFICE

USAID programs support equitable access to high quality basic education through teacher training, support for girls' learning, alternative schooling, community involvement, and reading and literacy skills development. In addition, USAID strengthens the capacity of state and local governments to plan and manage education services and promotes accountability and informed resource management processes in the education sector.

NIGER DELTA: DELTA AND RIVERS

- Support conflict resolution programs for primary and secondary school children to provide the foundation for dealing with conflict when it arises
- Advocate with the GON for better education policies and offer technical support for improved peace and civic education curricula
- Provide youth empowerment and vocational trainings specifically tailored to the needs of rural and urban youth
- For out-of-school youth:
  - Consider establishing programs to encourage youth to return to school by working with families and addressing income needs (e.g., alternative or flexible schooling)
  - Provide literacy, numeracy, and vocational training for those who will not return to school

NORTH CENTRAL: BENUE AND PLATEAU

Benue

- Youth empowerment: Support life skills and workforce readiness activities that integrate with Peace, Democracy and Governance programming, designed to address issues specific to rural and urban youth
- Restart learning environments state-wide in places affected by conflict

Plateau

- Support youth empowerment, vocational training, and youth-run enterprises (micro-credit, tool kits, etc.)

NORTH WEST: SOKOTO AND KADUNA

Sokoto

- Advocate with the GON for official harmonization of school systems: codify the integration of secular and religious schools that many children, particularly girls, attend. Support Ministry of Education in this effort and keep young people connected to state systems
- Support literacy, numeracy, and "second chance" education opportunities for married adolescent females

Kaduna

- People-to-people children's programming: bring children of different identity groups together and reduce their susceptibility to hate messaging

- Literacy programs and messaging: Work with existing literacy programs to integrate peace messaging and conflict resolution concepts into curricula

HIV/AIDS Office

USAID is implementing initiatives to prevent mother-to-child, sexual and medical transmission of HIV. These activities are integrated into all of USAID's care and treatment activities, including HIV counseling and testing services. USAID also provides antiretroviral drugs and services, as well as laboratory support for the diagnosis and monitoring of HIV-positive patients. For patients co-infected with tuberculosis and HIV, activities are designed to reduce transmission of tuberculosis, improve diagnosis, and manage multi-drug-resistant adult and pediatric cases, especially among orphans and vulnerable children.

NIGER DELTA: RIVERS AND DELTA

- Expand activities' reach into insecure and therefore underserved places, e.g. creeks
- People-to-people programming: community outreach/peacebuilding program that brings people from opposing identity groups[88] together socially through art and sports
- Targeted vulnerable populations support: human rights advocacy with key community members (e.g., law enforcement, medical personnel and community leaders) and protective measures such as safe houses
- Monitor and amplify implementing partners' success in conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding: ask about conflict issues during mid-term evaluations and develop success stories for dissemination
- Advocate with the Regional Security Office for low-profile security details when visiting community sites; lowering their profile will reduce the perceived distance between USAID staff and program participants
- Support current HIV-AIDS activities in oil producing communities, particularly those adversely affected by oil production in the creeks that are not currently receiving assistance, to alleviate grievances

NORTH CENTRAL: BENUE AND PLATEAU

Benue

- Trauma support and counseling programs targeting rural populations affected by the conflict as well as IDPs in Makurdi
- Potential collaboration with OTI or OFDA: intensify HIV/AIDs intervention in rural areas affected by the violent conflict
- Support anti-infectious disease (malaria, TB, HIV/AIDS) activities targeting internally displaced persons and communities (Tiv and Hausa/Fulani) directly affected by violence

Plateau

- Provide greater support for orphans and vulnerable children
- Support awareness raising and implementation of the national youth policy

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[88] Including majority Christian and minority Muslim residents, as the latter have been objects of rising suspicion as a result of the Boko Haram crisis.

- More targeted programs aimed at young girls who have become sex workers to support themselves and their families
- People-to-people programming for access to services in segregated areas: where regions or neighborhoods have self-segregated, the identity group that left often no longer feels safe accessing services in the locations dominated by the now-majority identity group. People-to-people programs could bring together leaders of both sides in private and public settings to work out safe passage for the excluded group.

NORTH WEST: SOKOTO AND KADUNA

- Encourage more coordination among GON partners to improve service delivery and establish lasting relationships after USAID-funded activities end
- Support mediation and negotiation training for local partners: since much of their health work involves advocacy to change behavior, they need to learn how to work with adversaries in an effective way
- Better coordination of USAID activities to maximize impacts from current investments by inviting non-HIV implementing partners to quarterly meetings
- Wherever possible, include participation of religious and traditional leaders throughout the program cycle

HEALTH, POPULATION AND NUTRITION OFFICE

USAID coordinates with the GON to improve human resources for health, deliver high-impact services, and strengthen leadership, management, governance, and accountability for program ownership and sustainability. USAID is also shifting its focus to state and local governments to improve capacity in planning, management, and leadership of programs that address HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, maternal and child health, family planning, reproductive health, and malaria.

NIGER DELTA: DELTA AND RIVERS

- Seek opportunities to expand MAPS interventions such as mosquito net distribution into neighboring states, including Creek communities
- Local implementing partners are working in communities in conflict; their staff need formal conflict mitigation training
- Local IP staff are also required to work in complex political environments; they would benefit from trainings focused on mitigating conflict between government bodies such as the State AIDS Control Agency (SACA) and Ministry of Health

NORTH CENTRAL: BENUE AND PLATEAU

- Trauma support for the men, women, youth, and children affected by violence—especially IDPs in Makurdi
- Religious leaders also need help and are best positioned to reduce the stigma for men seeking help

NORTH WEST: SOKOTO AND KADUNA

Sokoto

- Encourage more coordination among GON partners to improve service delivery and establish lasting relationships after USAID-funded activities end
- Increase coordination among USAID activities for maximum impact on alleviating the adverse health effects of extreme poverty: for example, integrate the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) with activities like MAPS and TSHIP
- Recommend that implementing partners include an agenda item about conflict issues in quarterly coordination meetings
- Help GON demonstrate more ownership of the activities in order to increase legitimacy
- Teach ESMPIN's interpersonal communication agents, who encourage behavioral change by sharing information about family planning, maternal and child health, and malaria, to transmit information on topics that communities request

Kaduna

- Mediation and negotiation training for local partners: since much of their health work involves advocacy to change behavior, they need to learn how to work effectively with adversaries
- Increase coordination among USAID activities to maximize impacts from current investments by inviting non-HIV implementing partners to quarterly meetings

PEACE, DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE OFFICE

USAID supports responsive governance at the federal, state and local levels, enhanced credibility for elections, and increased capacity for civic engagement. USAID builds capacity in key government agencies to strengthen fiscal responsibility and improve transparency. In addition, USAID advances the rule of law by strengthening the capacity and transparency of the justice system and increasing judicial independence at the federal level.

NATIONAL: SUPPORT FOR ELECTORAL REFORMS PROJECT

- Support the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in enforcing the Electoral Act
  - o Investigate reports of people being paid to do multiple registrations
  - o Prosecute electoral fraud
- Promote issues-based (as opposed to identity-based or party-based) elections: promote, highlight and organize via town halls, media, etc.
- Encourage INEC to start planning presidential election security as soon as possible to make sure polls and materials are safe; potential role for USAID in convening stakeholders
- Support internal processes to check credibility of staff and reduce corruption among employees
- Advise INEC on conducting an outreach campaign (internet, television, mobile phones) to establish/maintain credibility with voters:
  - o Provide clear information about voting and elections tailored to urban and rural environments
  - o Increase number of ads about why, how, when and where to vote
  - o Use creative and comical short cartoons showing what to do and what not to do during elections

- o Broadcast one to two jingles per week early in the election cycle so voters can get used to them (previously, jingles all started at the same time, which confused voters)
- o Radio should focus on one or two jingles, spread apart over a lengthy pre-elections period, and continuously run
- o Offer a television channel dedicated exclusively to the elections, as was done in Kenya
- o Ads should encourage voters to think critically about politicians' messaging
- o Invite local CSO participation

NIGER DELTA: RIVERS AND DELTA STATE

- In preparation for 2015 presidential elections:
  - o Trust building between security services and the community, especially in oil producing and urban areas
  - o Monthly town hall meetings or similar interactions
  - o Civic education
- Focus more on local governance: communities should be trained in advocacy techniques for budget accountability, oversight and transparency, as is done through LEAD
- Invite local women's CSOs (e.g., farmers associations) to identify ways to create openings for women and build their leadership capacity in male-dominated environments; include male champions and teach techniques for gaining male buy-in
- Provide capacity building for local CSOs in NGO management and conflict mitigation
- Build on successes of the International Foundation for Education and Self-Help (IFESH)/ Conflict Abatement through Local Mitigation (CALM) Basketball for Peace Project, with activities that include drama, music, and arts in addition to sports; incorporate long term, 6-12 month, livelihood development skills training into conflict mitigation activities.
- Community and CSO training in the following:
  - o Advocacy
  - o Conflict mitigation based on traditional methods
  - o Civic and voter education
  - o Civic education campaigns
- Provide more elections observers on the ground, particularly in the creeks and rural areas

NORTH CENTRAL: BENUE AND PLATEAU

Plateau

- Bring local governance strengthening activities to Plateau; seek co-funding opportunities with state governments to increase ownership and sustainability
- Train local vigilante groups in human rights protection, gender-based violence prevention, conflict mediation and resolution
- Support for free and fair elections, to include:
  - o Vigorous and sustained voter education and non-violent messaging campaigns to begin as soon as possible, along the lines of those proposed above for the Niger Delta Region
  - o More elections monitors
  - o Logistical support to INEC

Benue

- Support activities like TOLERANCE and Search for Common Ground to support Tiv farmers and Fulani pastoralists in managing, mediating and resolving rural conflict
- Bring LEAD-like activities to Benue to improve quality of local governance and relationships among communities, traditional leaders, and local government
- Train local vigilante groups in human rights protection, gender-based violence prevention, conflict mediation and resolution
- Explore options for integrating women in nonviolent vigilante activities
- Provide vigorous and sustained voter education and non-violent messaging campaigns as soon as possible (as opposed to later in the elections cycle–early is important)
- Support for the drafting and passage into law of a national policy on conflict resolution that addresses the roots of land-based conflict between herders and settled farmers
- Support for free and fair elections along the lines of activities proposed for the Niger Delta Region to include:
    - Voter education and non-violent messaging campaigns to begin as soon as possible
    - More elections monitors
    - Logistical support to INEC

NORTH WEST: SOKOTO AND KADUNA

Sokoto

- Support for youth activities (livelihoods, peacebuilding, and skills acquisition) should include a critical thinking component to reduce youths' vulnerability to political messaging
- Offer voter education before the 2015 elections with a separate youth-friendly campaign
- Work through local systems (e.g., JNI, Jebbis, Islamic scholars, and parents) to reach youth

Kaduna

- Increase USAID activity coordination: Most respondents had never heard of other USAID activities operating in Kaduna
- Urgent need for peacebuilding programs beyond TOLERANCE:
    - Build on local interfaith initiatives: provide technical support in conflict mediation and resolution for groups already meeting together such as CAN and JNI
    - Support people-to-people programming to begin to mend the social divisions caused by Kaduna's increasingly segregated neighborhoods and local government areas
    - Include males and females: target male and female youth as well as those who influence them such as peers, parents, village elder men and women, and traditional leaders
- Youth focus:
    - Build on existing local-level youth peace clubs by supporting their activities with technical support
    - Youth and media: Explore working with USIP on youth media activities

ANNEX B: MAP OF FIELD RE-SEARCH
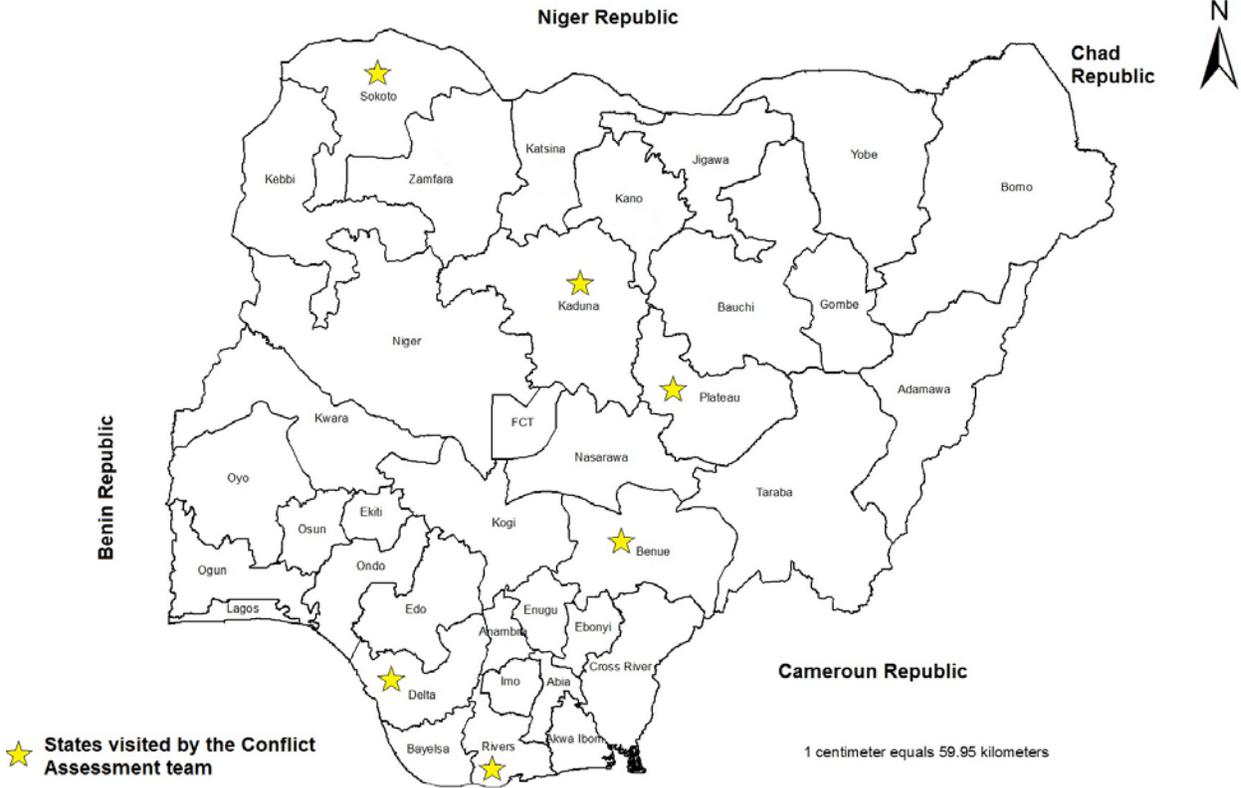
ANNEX C: LIST OF RESPONDENT ORGANIZATIONS

	Organization	Location	Date	Males	Females
1	USAID Education Office	Abuja	4-Jun	2	2
2	USAID Health, Population and Nutrition Office	Abuja	4-Jun	1	3
3	USAID Peace, Democracy, and Govern-ance Office	Abuja	4-Jun	4	1
4	USAID Economic Growth and Environ-ment Office	Abuja	6-Jun	3	2
5	Support to Vulnerable Households for Accelerated Revenue Earnings (SHARE)	Sokoto	7-Jun	0	1
6	Leadership Empowerment Advocacy and Development (LEAD)	Sokoto	9-Jun	5	2
7	Centre for Development Initiative	Sokoto	9-Jun	1	0
8	Adolescent Rights and Development Cen-tre	Sokoto	9-Jun	0	1
9	Sokoto State Coalition of NGOs	Sokoto	9-Jun	1	0
10	Society for Family Health (SFH)	Benin	9-Jun	3	3
11	African Women's Empowerment Guild	Benin	9-Jun	0	1
12	Inter-Gender Development Center	Jos	9-Jun	3	0
13	CAPP	Jos	9-Jun	1	1
14	Local Governance Civil Service Commis-sion	Sokoto	10-Jun	1	0
15	Sokoto House Assembly	Sokoto	10-Jun	5	0
16	Sokoto State Governor's Office	Sokoto	10-Jun	2	0
17	Life Helpers Initiative	Sokoto	10-Jun	1	0
18	Targeted States High Impact Project (TSHIP)	Sokoto	10-Jun	8	2
19	CEDI	Warri	10-Jun	0	1
20	Basketball for Peace	Warri	10-Jun	2	0
21	Leadership Initiative for Transformation and Empowerment (LITE)	Warri	10-Jun	0	2
22	Impromptu discussions with community schools	Warri	10-Jun	2	0
23	Interfaith Mediation Center	Jos	10-Jun	0	1
24	Plateau Peace Practitioners Network (PPPN)	Jos	10-Jun	1	0

	Organization	Location	Date	Males	Females
25	Federation of Muslim Women's Associations of Nigeria (FOMWAN) - Plateau State	Jos	10-Jun	1	3
26	League for Human Rights	Jos	10-Jun	1	0
27	CEPID	Jos	10-Jun	1	0
28	Society for Family Health	Sokoto	11-Jun	11	1
29	Sokoto Village District Administration - Head	Sokoto	11-Jun	1	0
30	Ward Development Committee -Bodinga	Sokoto	11-Jun	10	0
31	Progressive Fish Farmers Association - Warri	Warri	11-Jun	5	6
32	Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta	Warri	11-Jun	2	0
33	FDCE	Warri	11-Jun	1	0
34	Tricycle Riders' Union of Nigeria (TRUN)	Jos	11-Jun	1	0
35	Grand Cereals	Jos	11-Jun	5	1
36	YARAC	Jos	11-Jun	9	1
37	Youth Vigilante Group Leader	Jos	11-Jun	1	0
38	National Poverty Eradication Programmme (NAPEP) -Keke Drivers	Jos	11-Jun	2	0
39	Society for Family Health	Port Harcourt	12-Jun	6	6
40	Strengthening Advocacy and Civic Engagement (SACE)	Port Harcourt	12-Jun	0	1
41	Dept. of State Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO)	Port Harcourt	12-Jun	2	2
42	Search for Common Ground	Jos	12-Jun	1	2
43	Stephanos	Jos	12-Jun	1	0
44	University of Jos, CCPS	Jos	12-Jun	1	0
45	Society for Family Health (SFH)	Kaduna	13-Jun	2	1
46	Interfaith Mediation Center - Leaders	Kaduna	13-Jun	4	0
47	Interfaith Mediation Center - Youth Leaders	Kaduna	13-Jun	2	0
48	Pastoral Resolve	Kaduna	13-Jun	4	0
49	Initiative for the Advancement of Humanity (IAH)	Port Harcourt	13-Jun	15	1
50	Stakeholder Democracy Network	Port Harcourt	13-Jun	1	1
51	Center for Environment, Human Rights and Development (CEHRD)	Port Harcourt	13-Jun	1	2
52	Former Federal Justice Official and Local Chief	Makurdi	13-Jun	1	0
53	Former IDP Worker	Makurdi	13-Jun	1	0

	Organization	Location	Date	Males	Females
54	Traditional leader in Jamaa village	Kafanchan	14-Jun	11	1
55	Village chief representative	Kafanchan	14-Jun	3	0
56	Village meeting	Kafanchan	14-Jun	7	8
57	Youth Peace Committee -Young Women	Kafanchan	14-Jun	0	10
58	Orphanage Director	Makurdi	14-Jun	1	0
59	Egalf Ventures, Ltd.	Makurdi	14-Jun	2	0
60	Anglican Church of Nigeria	Makurdi	14-Jun	1	0
61	IDP Group Leaders	Makurdi	14-Jun	7	0
62	Roman Catholic Church, Makurdi Diocese	Makurdi	15-Jun	1	0
63	Strengthening Health Outcomes through the Private Sector (SHOPS)	Kaduna	16-Jun	1	1
64	Christian Association of Nigeria Secretary	Kaduna	16-Jun	2	0
65	Christian Caregivers	Kaduna	16-Jun	2	1
66	Interfaith Mediation Center - Women	Kaduna	16-Jun	0	2
67	Journalist	Kaduna	16-Jun	1	0
68	FHI 360	Port Harcourt	16-Jun	6	1
69	Trip to Ogoniland	Port Harcourt	16-Jun	1	0
70	State Accountability and Voices Initiative	Kaduna	16-Jun	0	1
71	Federation of Muslim Women's Associations of Nigeria (FOMWAN) -Kaduna State	Kaduna	16-Jun	0	2
72	Jama'atu Nisril Islam (JNI)	Kaduna	16-Jun	1	0
73	Benue NGO Network (BENGONET)	Makurdi	16-Jun	1	1
74	Society for Family Health -Benue	Makurdi	16-Jun	1	2
75	Benue State Vigilante Group (Hausa-Fulani)	Makurdi	16-Jun	3	0
76	Miyettes Alla Cattle Breeder's Association of Nigeria (MACBAN)	Makurdi	16-Jun	1	0
77	Roman Catholic Justice and Peace Commission	Makurdi	16-Jun	4	1
78	Christian Association of Nigeria - Women	Kaduna	17-Jun	0	2
79	Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP)	Abuja	20-Jun	0	1
			Total	**196**	**85**
			Percent	**70%**	**30%**

ANNEX D: USAID/NIGERIA ACTIV-
ITY DESCRIPTIONS

This annex provides summary information on the activities mentioned in this report. It is not a comprehensive list of USAID/Nigeria programming, but rather background information relevant to the preceding analysis and recommendations.

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND ENVIRONMENT OFFICE

Maximizing Agricultural Revenue and Key Enterprises in Targeted Sites (MARKETS) II: Increased smallholder income from agricultural development promoted through enhanced private sector participation and investment in targeted value chains (rice, cassava, sorghum, aquaculture, and cocoa).

Support to Vulnerable Households for Accelerated Revenue Earnings (SHARE): The purpose of the Cooperative Agreement is to strengthen the participation of an estimated 42,000 very poor households in rural economic growth activities and to improve their livelihoods, nutrition and health. The project aims to break the vicious cycle of poverty and under-nutrition for these households. Interventions under this project integrate the very poor into the agricultural rural economy by increasing their productivity; by building their income and assets; and by improving their nutritional status, especially with regard to women and children. The mission expects to provide these households with a stable foundation to gain better access to market-driven opportunities that provide them a sustainable pathway out of poverty. The Support to Vulnerable Households project enriches mission capacity to provide integrated programming focused specifically and directly on poverty reduction, and provides an approach that can be replicated in other communities, and through other donor mechanisms.

Conflict Abatement through Local Mitigation (CALM): USAID/Nigeria awarded a five-year, competitively bid grant to the International Foundation for Education and Self-Help (IFESH) to implement the program in five states of Nigeria from June 2005-June 2010. The program had four objectives: (1) increased opportunity for engaging youth; (2) development of Early Warning Systems (EWSs) and response mechanisms; (3) mainstreaming of conflict management in targeted organizations; and (4) targeted conflict mitigation interventions in non-focal states. An additional short-term objective was added to support local, state, and federal elections education for election observers and post-election youth advocacy. Basketball for Peace, a sports and conflict mitigation activity, was a component of CALM.

HEALTH, POPULATION AND NUTRITION

Expanded Social Marketing Project in Nigeria (ESMPIN): ESMPIN expands and improves knowledge of, and access to, effective and sustained use of family planning, reproductive health, malaria and maternal newborn child health (MNCH) methods and products. The project works in the private sector nationwide through a social marketing approach with sales of commodities, product promotions and educational activities with providers. Most products are sold at a fraction of their commercial price in order to make them accessible to a larger proportion of the Nigerian population.

Targeted States High Impact Project: TSHIP is a five-year project implemented in two northern states. It supports and strengthens the states' health systems for improved delivery of maternal and child health, reproductive health, and family planning services. The HSS strategies include: Governance, Policy & Advocacy,

Commodity Security for Essential Life Saving Commodities, Improving Quality Services, Strengthening Pre-Service Education, and Demand Creation.

HIV/AIDS

Community-Based Support for Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Nigeria (CUBS): The Community-Based Support for Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Nigeria (CUBS) project is a five-year, US$20 million, PEP-FAR-funded USAID contract being implemented by Management Sciences for Health (MSH) in 11 Nigerian states. Its implementation states are Kebbi, Sokoto, Taraba, Gombe, Ekiti, Bayelsa, Enugu, Imo, Rivers, Akwa Ibom, and Delta. The project commenced in October 2009 and aims to reach 50,000 vulnerable children and 12,500 vulnerable children caregivers by September 2014, through a variety of community-based, family-centered, service delivery approaches that support the implementation of Nigeria's National Priority Agenda for vulnerable children.

Strengthening HIV Prevention Services for Most at Risk Populations (SHiPS for MARPS) and the Initiative for the Advancement of Humanity are implementing a five-year project (2012-2017) designed to support the Government of Nigeria's efforts to address the HIV/AIDS epidemic. With emphasis on evidence-based programming, the project will simultaneously reach targeted populations through multiple interventions and service delivery techniques. This will ensure a comprehensive yet tailored approach to HIV prevention that is ideal and specific to each MARP group. The project will also provide technical support to state and national government institutions as well as civil society organizations and networks to strengthen implementation and coordination mechanisms for HIV prevention

PEACE, DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

Leadership Empowerment Advocacy and Development (LEAD): This local governance project builds the capacity of local and state governments to assume greater responsibilities in addressing the demands of their constituents. The project works with local and state governments to improve service delivery in health, education, and water and sanitation. It promotes citizen participation in government decision-making processes to ensure and maintain greater transparency. The project also assists state and local government units to establish devolved authority for local decision-making and service delivery and to regularize mechanisms for citizen participation.

Strengthening Advocacy and Civic Engagement (SACE): The SACE project is meant to strengthen civil society's ability to influence the development and implementation of key democratic reforms at the national, state, and local levels. Specifically, the project supports increased engagement and efficacy of civil society to advances selected reforms aimed at increasing transparency, accountability, and responsiveness of government institutions for increased service delivery.

It explicitly aims to engage marginalized populations, such as women, youth, people with disabilities and other minorities in the process and emphasizes leadership and innovation. The project will support six Nigerian anchor civil society organizations to become sectoral leaders and stewards of their advocacy issues. It addresses corruption by focusing on improvements in government service delivery that will result in tangle benefits for citizens and reduce the incentive for corrupt acts.

Support for Electoral Reforms: This activity was awarded in June 2014, during the conflict assessment. It has three objectives: 1) strengthen the professionalism and capacity of INEC leading to improved public confidence in elections and their outcomes 2) strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations to become integral parts of electoral processes and 3) strengthen Nigerian political parties' internal democracy in preparation for the 2015 electoral cycle and beyond, to strengthen the roles of women, youth, and people with disabilities.

Training of Leaders on Religious and National Coexistence (TOLERANCE): TOLERANCE supports stability in Nigeria by enhancing the legitimacy and capacity of governance structures to defend religious freedom. It

supports community-based approaches by strengthening the capacity of religious and traditional leaders, women and youth groups, government officials, and civil society to mitigate and manage conflicts, and improve responses to outbreaks and threats of violence in six Northern and North Central states.

The table below provides an overview of the suite of USAID activities in each state.

State	USAID Activities
Sokoto	TSHIP, Fistula Care, DELIVER, ESMPIN, RARA, MARKETS II, SHARE, TOLERANCE, LEAD, MSH-PROACT, SOCIETY FOR FAMILY HEALTH (MARPS)
Kaduna	SHOPS, ESMPIN, NEXTT, MARKETS II, TOLERANCE, SOCIETY FOR FAMILY HEALTH (MARPS)
Plateau	TOLERANCE, ESMPIN
Benue	MAPS, ESMPIN, MARKETS II
Delta	SFH, ESMPIN
Rivers	SUWASA, LEAD, SOCIETY FOR FAMILY HEALTH, HEARTLAND ALLIANCE, IAH, FHI360-SIDHAS, ESMPIN

ANNEX E: REFERENCES

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