

VILLAGE MONITORING SYSTEMS: NIGERIA EARLY WARNING EARLY RESPONSE IN KADUNA, PLATEAU, TARABA & ZAMFARA STATES

September 1, 2021 - August 31, 2023



UCLA



*Dedicated to Our Committed EWER Colleagues Who Lost their
Lives Fighting for Social Change*

List of Abbreviations

CAN	Christian Association of Nigeria
EWER	Early Warning Early Response
LRO	Local Resource Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
JNIM	Jama’ at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin
WPS	Women,Peace and Security
CAJR	Centre for the Advocacy of Justice and Rights
JDPC	Justice, Development, Peace Commission
PPPN	Plateau Peace Practitioners Network
LGA	Local Government Area
CLEEN	Centre for Law Enforcement Education, Nigeria
BYM	Berom Youth Movement
DSS	Department for State Security Service
NPF	Nigeria Police Force
JTF	Joint Security Task Force
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
EPRT	Emergency Preparedness and Response Team
DPO	Divisional Police Officer
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
KII	Key Informant Interview
NSCDC	Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps

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Acknowledgements

The Village Monitoring Project: Nigeria, an Early Warning Early Response programme would not have been possible without the involvement of the 160 EWER Forum members who demonstrated incredible commitment to conflict prevention and peace building in Kaduna, Plateau, Taraba and Zamfara states in Nigeria. We would like to extend our deepest gratitude and appreciation for their invaluable contributions and active engagement in making the project a success. Their willingness to claim ownership of the project by sacrificing their time, sharing their experiences, perspectives, and aspirations, has been instrumental in shaping the project's direction and outcomes. Their valuable insights have also provided us with a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities within the project's future. We are appreciative of their commitment.

We would also like to acknowledge the community and religious leaders who collaborated with us throughout this endeavour. Their partnership and support have been invaluable in implementing the project on the ground, ensuring its relevance, and maximizing its impact. Their dedication to the welfare of the community and their tireless efforts to facilitate our work have been greatly appreciated.

We also extend our appreciation to all the stakeholders, including government agencies, local authorities, and other relevant entities, with whom we have collaborated and been supported by throughout the project. Their cooperation and coordination have facilitated the smooth implementation of activities, ensuring the project's sustainability and long-term impact.

Additionally, we would like to express our gratitude to the State Coordinators: Sarah Menta, Busayo Emmanuel Rita Lasaju, Abdullahi Lawal, and Raymond Enoch who have worked tirelessly to implement the activities and achieve the project's objectives. Also, a special thanks to the consultants and experts who we engaged to develop training content, generate reports, facilitate meetings and provide strategic advisory services. Their commitment, professionalism, and passion have been essential in delivering high-quality services and creating a positive impact on the lives of the beneficiaries. Of particular import is Wumi Asubiaro Dada, the chief consultant on The Village Monitoring Project. We are indebted to her for her ongoing commitment to this work.

We would also like to thank our funders and collaborators, the U.S. Department of State Bureau for Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO) for their generous funding and trust in our capabilities to implement this project from the ground up. CSO's support has provided us with the necessary resources and consultation to implement the project effectively and support the communities facing pressing security challenges daily.

Lastly, the success of the project is owed to the strength of the collaboration and partnership that was established between CLEEN Foundation Nigeria, The University of California Los Angeles and The University of Toronto. The project implementation team first launched with Dr. Benson Olugbuo and then Gad Peter as Executive Director, Salaudeen Hashim, Director of Programme, Justina Johnson, Finance and Admin Manager, Chigozirim Okoro, Programme Manager, Gabriel Akinremi, Senior Information Technology Officer, Benard Ekobay, Senior Programme Officer, Nnamdi Odo, Programme Officer – Monitoring and Evaluation, Ebere Mbaegbu, Programme Officer, Helen Anwana, Finance Officer, and Olumayowa Olaniyi, Programme Research Officer. Together, they demonstrated unwavering commitment and hard work throughout the duration of the project. Equally, the team leads for the implementing agencies demonstrated sterling leadership that was instrumental to the project’s achievements.

We hope that the information provided in our Early Warning Project will be useful to others who are interested in deploying early warning systems for conflict prevention and as a peace building strategy in communities in dire need.

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1.0 Executive Summary

Overview

Historically, Northern Nigeria has experienced violent and complex conflicts. It is complex in the sense that there are multifaceted factors that range from ethnic and religious intolerance, political manipulation, economic deprivation and climate change which have manifested in scarcity of land resources for grazing and farming. Conflict in the region has intensified in recent times taking different dimensions including banditry, mass kidnapping of residents and school children as well as farmer-herder clashes. These have led to massive displacement and destruction of lives and properties in many communities. To build peace across the selected communities, EWER systems were established at different levels of engagement to enable the meticulous gathering and analysis of information to forecast emerging, worsening or recurring crises. The focus was and continues to be to enable pre-emptive action where conflict is eminent and for stakeholders to respond when the situation is still latent. The goal is to achieve aversion, transformation or resolutions to that conflict.

This report offers an overview of the EWER system implemented by CLEEN and its partners in addressing insecurity in selected communities within Nigeria’s Kaduna, Plateau, Taraba and Zamfara states. The project highlights the important work conducted by major stakeholders (comprising individuals, governmental and non-governmental organisations, civil societies, formal and traditional institutions, local security networks and government law enforcement agencies) in utilising EWER approaches to mitigating and preventing conflicts in the communities of the selected states.

The project envisioned an end to cycles of violent conflict in target regions of Northern Nigeria through the empowerment of community members, including women, to serve as peacebuilders. These peacebuilders were trained in early detection and early response to conflict, fostering their full participation as citizens in a more equitable economy and in more tolerant religious and cultural landscapes. Central to the project was the mobilization and training of local Nigerian constituencies to engage in and strengthen early warning and early responses systems from the ground up.

Project findings revealed that:

1. Featuring women in the architecture of EWER systems projects enables the ability for women to be empowered in their mission, and highlights how they are able to deploy pre-existing social-family networks and community support mechanisms to engage in healing following extreme conditions of loss. These components are key to the management of trauma in the communities under study.
2. New technologies, such as geospatial technologies, along with various platforms such as WhatsApp groups and other mobile/web-based applications, can offer communities the support they need to mitigate against violence in the short term. The

key to the success of EWER projects however, is the ability to assess warnings, respond in time, and then productively mitigate against violence. Such central modalities cannot be implemented successfully without ongoing investment in core social, political, and economic infrastructure including:

- Security support ranging from policing support, intelligence, and supervisory commanders
 - Employment opportunities and alternatives (especially for youth)
 - Implementation of laws that enable social equality and that function to protect and not evade justice.
 - A feeling of redress of past wrongs tied to ethic/religious/indigeneity issues
 - Recognition of and support for the burden that women bear in violent contexts
 - Local and regional government support and recognition of project importance
 - Reconceiving negative perspectives of women as leaders and mitigators of violence
3. There are early warning signs of a conflict which can and must be addressed before the physical threats it creates require immediate, emergent and reactive responses from state government. These early warning signs included long-standing factors embedded in social exclusion characterised by such conditions as economic inequality, unequal access to educational opportunities and resources, poverty, and unemployment.
 4. Despite allegations against conventional security agencies regarding their inability to respond promptly to early warnings, people still rely on them for protection. More importantly, there is evidence of synergies between local security networks, such as some of the many vigilante groups in Nigeria, the Civilian Joint Task Force, Hunters' Associations, and formal security sector commands in the communities. Synergies were especially apparent with information sharing, which if strengthened, can help restore peace.
 5. Although some form of early warning had already existed in some of the focal communities, they were largely uncoordinated and did not yield the desired results when needed. Establishing the *EWER Forum* fostered community collaboration which improved security responses and provided an opportunity to dispel tensions. This in turn resulted in a reduction in counter attacks.
 6. Creation of context relevant security measures was possible due to a forum that brought together perspectives from a wide range of people who represented several different demographics in the community. Considerations of demography included age, religion, ethnicity, and class. The members of the community were able to consider one another's specific situations and develop home grown, context specific solutions to major security challenges.
 7. Establishing a forum created an opportunity for increased recognition of the effectiveness and activities of EWER Forum members and an expansion of their work in each

community. Through the EWER Forum, community leaders had the opportunity to see and acknowledge the effectiveness and activities of its members, especially the women. The increased recognition resulted in dispute cases being referred to EWER Forum members for a resolution and more importantly, appointing EWER members to security structures at the state level.

Recommendations

In line with the key findings, the report recommends that:

1. Each community establish an EWER Forum and mandate the full inclusion of women in strategic ways which move beyond tokenism. This could be accomplished in part through an institutionalized quorum system centring women's contributions in meetings.
2. Reliable data collection is prioritized. Putting systems and structures in place that allow for the collection of trustworthy data can help to improve the effectiveness of early warning early response systems in communities.
3. Data gathered is specifically indicative of forms of structural discrimination, such as gender-based violence.
4. The EWER Forum is embedded within existing community structures like town hall meetings. Embedding a practice within existing community structures, can help ensure its sustainability as well as a sense of its ownership among community members.
5. Each forum should have a virtual platform for communication so that members can communicate quickly and notify each other of urgent news.
6. To save lives and protect properties in the immediate, government and security agencies direct more resources to protect the communities that are most affected by conflict. The project has shown that where there is increased security presence, attacks are likely to reduce.
7. Longstanding trends and immediate threats or acts of violence are proactively considered before an outbreak and escalation of violence. Proactive analysis of the contributing factors of conflict in a given community can improve early warnings and lead to a robust and context specific early response. This would, in turn, ensure better conflict response preparedness and, where necessary, a response that is measurable. Consideration of the contributing factors to a potential or ongoing conflict aid in the development of preventive mechanisms to address some of a conflict's underlying causes.
8. In order to resolve violence in the region, a long-term goal for government must be to adequately and fulsomely address the socioeconomic deprivation of communities, which has resulted in poverty, unemployment and structural inequalities.

2.0 Project Operating Context

2.1. Northern Nigeria's Conflict Landscape

For more than a decade, Nigeria has been witnessing frequent conflicts and mass violence which have led to large-scale destruction of human life and the displacement of unarmed civilians. At the centre of this recurring violence are several complex and inter-locking factors, including a volatile mix of historical grievances, political manipulation and ethnic and religious rivalries.¹ Although history has shown that Nigeria has had some moments of peaceful coexistence between its ethnic and religious communities, conflict in the region in recent times has intensified, taking different violent dimensions. Such violence has ranged from militancy and piracy in the southern region, and various ethno-religious crises, the rise of Boko Haram militancy, banditry, kidnapping (including mass kidnappings) and farmer herder conflicts in the northern region with significant casualties as presented in figure 1.

Media Reported Killings in Nigeria

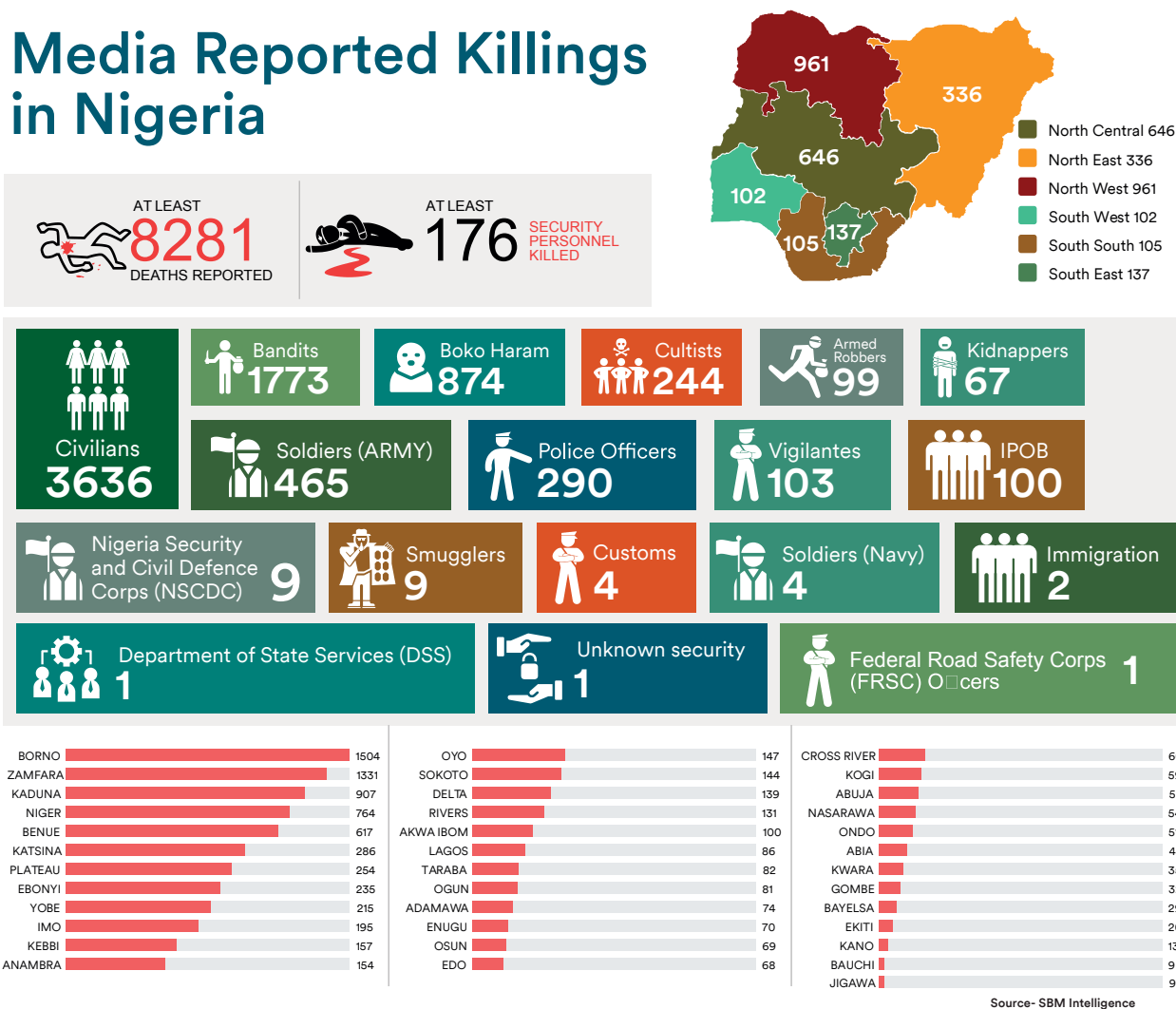


Figure1: Media Reported Killings in Nigeria January to September 2021

Efforts of the Federal Government, including the creation of legal and policy frameworks to regulate activities of violent individuals. Other responses to the conflict in Nigeria have been beset by challenges. For example, interventions by some State Governments such as the passage of anti-grazing laws² have, at times fuelled controversy over their implementation and accelerated conflict. Local civil society initiatives³ have also been working hard to help local governments to mitigate the ever-growing conflict and insecurity concerns in the country. However, participation by recognized authority groups, such as the police and security services, from affected communities, has remained low and this has led to limited effectiveness of interventions. Traditional male-dominated social norms have also continued to exclude women from peace-building efforts, despite the disproportionate burdens they bear because of the ongoing violence.⁴

This crisis in Northern Nigeria continues to split communities along political, religious and geographic lines. In the Northwest, Northeast and Northcentral states, the ISIS-Boko Haram conflict (in Nigeria and spread through West Africa) accounts for the majority of violence in the region, though the effects of climate change on the Lake Chad basin must not be overlooked as key triggers of additional conflict. The dramatic shrinkage of the basin has forced herders to migrate to other parts of the region to find fodder and water for their cattle. This forced migration has led to frequent conflicts between farmers and herders. The migration patterns of nomadic communities have raised serious security concerns. In late 2017, state governments within the western and southern parts of the country set up community policing strategies to address growing security challenges caused by the movement of cattle herders.⁵ Although today the movement of cattle from one region to another poses security threats to farming communities, historically farmers and herders were engaged in a symbiotic relationship. That relationship was characterized by the sentiment ‘my herd eats your stalk or left over harvest and drops dung as manure on your farmland’. This relationship, though not always ideal (and still involving some level of banditry and cattle rustling), was enabled through neighborly agreements that facilitated the movement of cattle along these communally established grazing routes.⁶ However, the impact of climate change has been to intensify conflict, as herders are forced to use new grazing routes for their cattle. Increasing poverty has also served to exacerbate conflict-causing tensions, as an increasingly larger number of people argue that they are forced to join the bandits in rustling cattle as a means of survival (even those herders who had also had their own cattle stolen).⁷ The presence of large groups of cattle has complicated this situation by incentivizing “conflict entrepreneurship,” as armed groups of young men across north central, northwest and southern parts of the country engage in cattle rustling. To curtail this trend, security experts and peace practitioners believe that one of the proactive approaches to conflict prevention is through Early Warning Early Response (EWER) engagements.

EWER systems are conceived to be the most effective means in the protection of people and the preservation of lives before the occurrence of violence. Early warning and early

response involves the “systematic collection and analysis of information coming from a variety of sources in order to identify and understand the risks for violent conflict in a country and to develop strategic responses to mitigate those risks”.⁸ According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), early warning is a process that (a) alerts decision makers to the potential outbreak, escalation and resurgence of violent conflict; and (b) promotes an understanding among decision makers of the nature and impacts of violent conflict.⁹ In Nigeria, traditional and cultural institutions have mechanisms for EWER that influence their conflict response and support a peaceful coexistence, such as village assemblies and town hall meetings. These mechanisms are not often documented, however they play crucial roles in peacebuilding and community resilience to violent conflict.¹⁰ The project has highlighted the importance of EWER in mitigating conflict and peacebuilding. It has work with contemporary and traditional organisations, mobilised women’s networks, and local governmental branches to strengthen community member engagement across regions and four states in northern Nigeria.

This work does not stand alone. Other civil society organisations like the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), Search for Common Ground (SFCG) and the Inter-Faith Mediation Center (IMC) are also deploying related EWER techniques in the northern region, particularly in Plateau and Kaduna states. These organisations are involved in sensitisation, capacity building, design, implementation and reporting of EWER programmes. Specifically, WANEP established a Nigeria Civil Society early warning-response mechanism, and SFCG runs a participatory EWER system in Plateau State. Their activities have had a significant impact on the reduction of violence in the region, hence the need for further collaboration with civil society organisations and other community members.

Selection of Local Government Areas (LGAs)

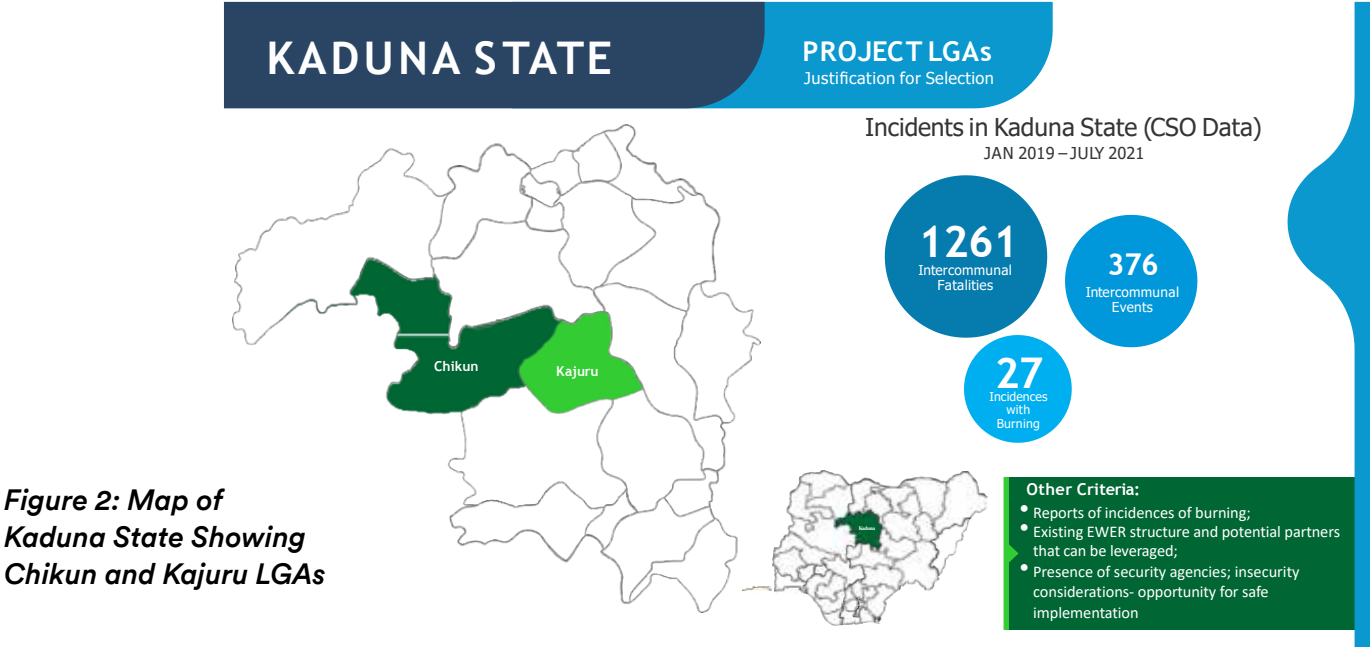
In selecting the LGAs as community partners for this project, we considered issues related to security, access, and presence/absence of existing EWER structures. Potential partners were developed with additional LGA stakeholders to achieve project objectives. Four criteria steered the selection of new LGA community partners. These criteria included identifying LGAs that: (1) experienced incidents of conflict that involved burning incidents, (2) were not too big or too small to have an impact (3) had the potential to leverage existing EWER systems without the risk of duplication, and lastly, (4) represented areas across the “middle belt” of Nigeria, spanning its North East, North West, and the North Central regions. Below is an overview of state contexts. The LGAs selected from each state are also specified.

2.2 Kaduna State context

Kaduna State presented a very interesting set of dynamics in the context of violent conflicts in Nigeria. It is one of the most diverse states on the continent in terms of being home to a variety of cultural, religious, and ethnic groups, each with diverse histories. Some of the major factors contributing to the diversity of the state are issues relating to desert encroachment as well as drought caused by climate change. Moreover, the large agricultural base of the state and its growing economy fuelled by the potential for trading activities, continue to contribute to the factors pulling people to the state. Its capital in particular, is highly cosmopolitan.

Among a wide range of faith-based practices and beliefs, Christianity and Islam are the dominant religions in Kaduna State and tensions between them remain significant contributors to violent conflict.

Kaduna State has born the consequences of frequent and violent conflicts since its return to democratic rule in 1999, after which many of the conflicts have remained intractable, appearing only to gain momentum, growing in their frequency and resilience. Many of the conflicts are driven by a scarcity of resources, while others stem from tensions between Christian and Islamic faith groups, which represent the dominant religions in Kaduna State. Still other conflicts arise from tensions between various ethnic groups. Between 2019 and 2023, Kaduna State continued to witness clashes and banditry between warring factions, which often triggered reprisal attacks, some of which have led to claims of genocide by those victimized by such violence. The most challenging security issues in the state today centre around cattle rustling, banditry, violent physical attacks and kidnapping. For instance, the Kaduna State Government 2020 Situation Report documented that in 2020 alone, 937 people were killed, 1972 people were kidnapped and 7195 animals were stolen. Numbers increased significantly the following year, with reports of the kidnapping of 3348 people.¹¹ Of that number, 1192 people were killed, according to the state government.¹² In response, some communities have formed “community defence forces” as means by which to protect against external threats to the safety of the community, especially where there are incidences of conflict and banditry between farmers and herders. Such threats to community security pose enormous challenges for rural communities. Amongst many implications, security challenges have negatively impacted rural economies, and by extension, the national economy. Various efforts by governments and stakeholders, to bring about lasting peace in the area, have yet to yield measurable results.



2.3 Plateau State context

Situated in the North-Central (Middle-Belt) region of Nigeria, Plateau State covers an area of 26,8902 Km2. The region accounts for upwards of 60% of Nigeria’s 374 ethnic groups, the consequence of which has been ongoing contestations over citizenship, land and the sharing of natural resources, as well as routine identity conflicts.¹³ In fact, there is no state in the North-Central region of Nigeria that has not experienced violent conflict over at least the last ten years. Conflicts in Plateau State have spanned over the last 30 years and have had devastating consequences which have included a significant number of deaths and displacement of people from their homes and communities, numbering in the thousands. Forced migration because of conflict has led to the destruction of countless economic and social livelihoods of the people in Plateau State.¹⁴

The state has a long history of conflicts between pastoralists and herdsmen over the control of land for farming and grazing, and water for irrigation as well as drinking ponds for cattle. Muslim Hausa/Fulani herdsmen and traders are often considered settlers or non-indigenes, while the farming tribes who are predominately Christians are considered indigenes. While conflicts in the state are often based in ethnic clashes, religious tensions remain significant as contributing factors.

Recent surges of violence in Plateau state have terrorized many and varied groups in semi-urban communities. For example, reports detailing the casualties of violent conflict in the state include Indigenous farmers, transient herdsmen, commuters and security agency employees. In 2017, the International Crisis Group (ICG) reported that renewed confrontations between herdsmen and farmers (largely in the LGAs of Jos South, Barkin Ladi and Bassa) claimed at least 75 lives, displaced 13726 people and saw 489 houses burned (ICG, 2017). Violence continued into 2018, leading to the killings of over 300 people in several LGAs (ICG, 2018; BBC, 2018; France 24, 2018). Between January and December of 2020, 71 people were reportedly killed in various communities across the State (European Asylum Support Office, 2021). Jos South and Barkin Ladi were selected as the LGAs in Plateau State, as highlighted in Figure 3.

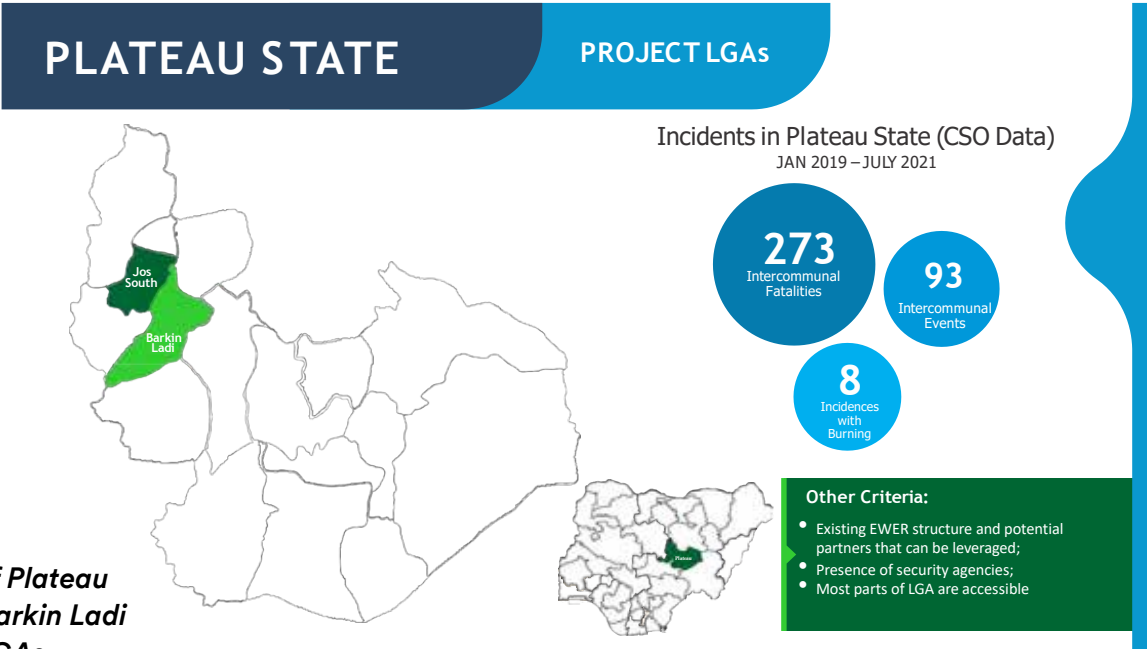


Figure 3: Map of Plateau State showing Barkin Ladi and Jos South LGAs

2.4. Taraba State context

Taraba State is in the Northeast geopolitical region of Nigeria. Through military decree, the state was created from a portion of the former Gongola State by President Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida in 1991. From its inception, the State has been grappling with the challenges of violent conflict, with many contributing factors. For example, with approximately 103 different ethnic groups, Taraba State has one of the largest and most diverse populations in Nigeria.¹⁵ Ethnic groups with significant numbers in the area include Mumuye, Jukun, Mambilla, Wukum, Kulung, Jenjo, Kuteb, Chamba, Kaka, Tiv, Fulani and Jibu. Religious conflicts are also contributing factors to ongoing conflicts. Like Kaduna and Plateau States, Christianity and Islam are among the dominant religions, though there are practitioners of several other traditional religions.¹⁶ The social and economic implications of high rates of unemployment and poverty (second only to Sokoto State¹⁷) also contribute to the desperation and conflict in Taraba communities, as people are forced into land grabbing and expansion among other lawless behaviours. Other sources of conflict include tensions between settler and indigene populations, cultural/ethnic clashes, and chieftaincy stool rivalry. Among the consequences of these conflicts are the decimation and displacement of the population, loss of life, and the destruction of crucial social and economic infrastructure such as hospitals, schools, police stations and outposts and various markets. Consequences also include a proliferation of arms and militia groups in many communities, as well as an increased prevalence of gangsterism, drug addiction, and school dropouts among other social issues faced by the state. More recently, conflicts between farmers and herdsmen which had previously engulfed a larger part of the middle belt, have spilled over into some parts of Taraba State. Conflict between these two groups has introduced new of criminality in the state including cattle rustling, human kidnapping for ransom, and armed violence in rural communities. Figure 4 below, highlights the LGAs of Wukari and Gassol, selected from Taraba State.

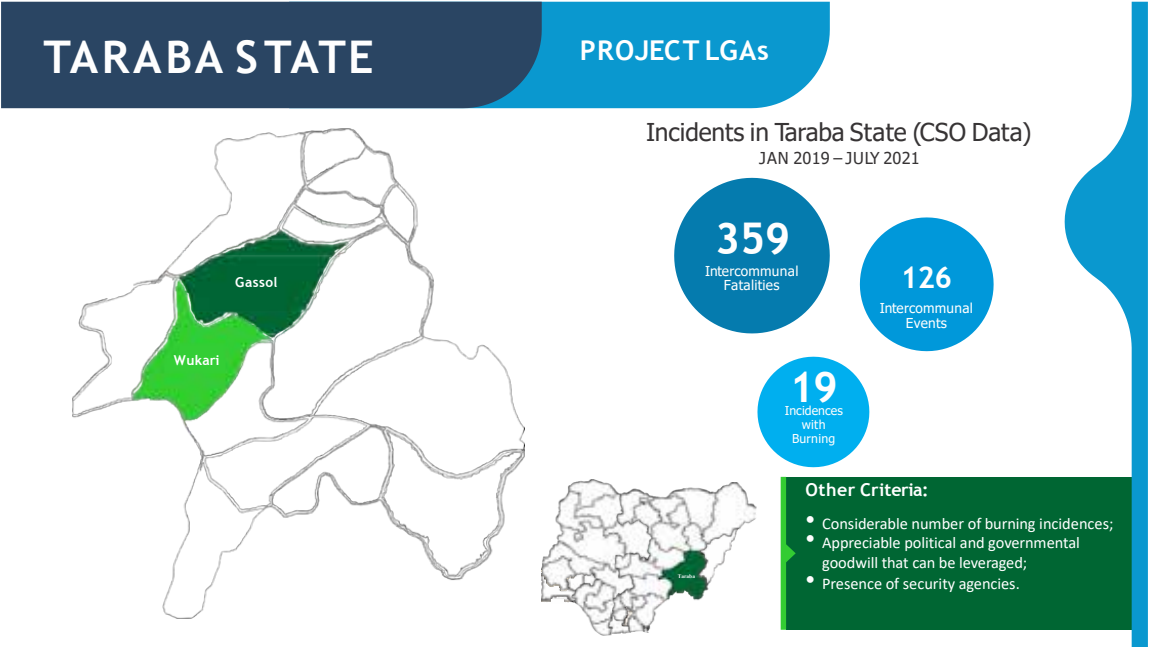
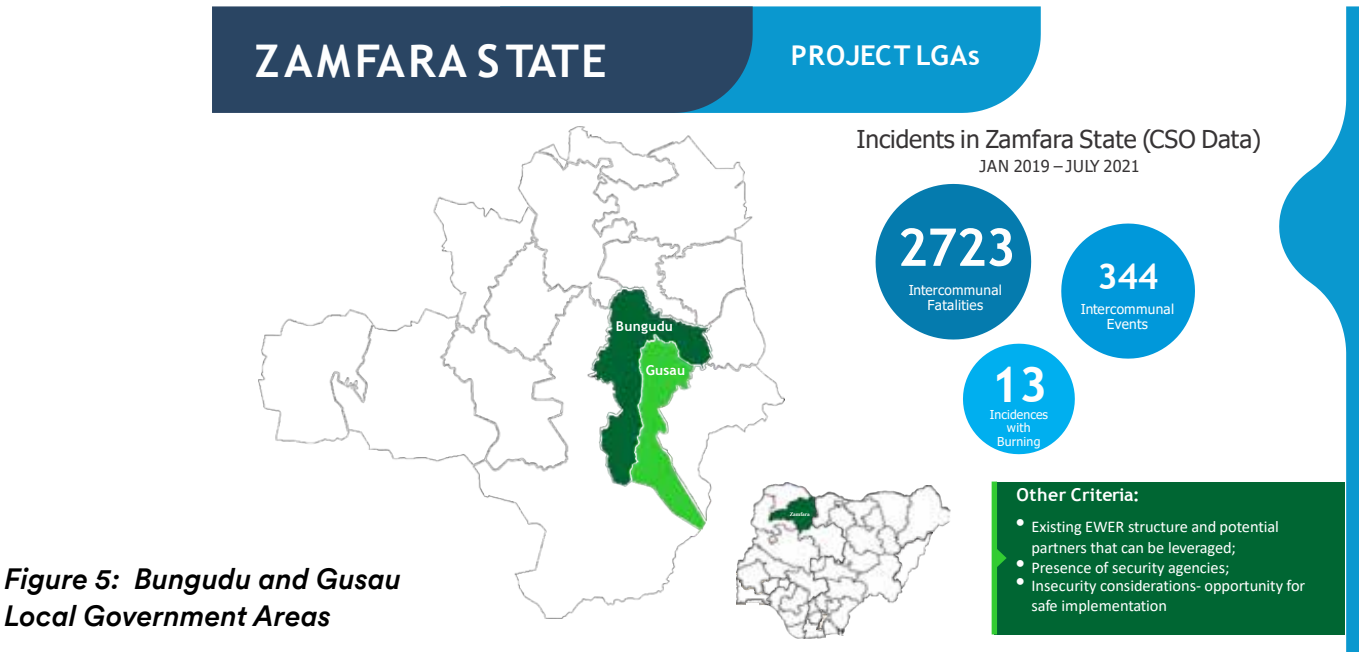


Figure 4: Map of Taraba State showing Wukari and Gassol LGAs

2.5 Zamfara State context

Zamfara State is characterised by its vast swaths of fertile land, suitable both for agricultural and livestock production. Crops such as millet, sorghum, cowpea, groundnut, beans, cotton, rice, and maize are grown in Zamfara during the wet season, offset by onions and tomatoes during the dry season.¹⁸ It also boasts various and large deposits of solid minerals including gold, zircon, pyrite, serpentine, kaolin, talc, chromite/ marble, alumina clay, iron ore, tantalite columbite, granite, spring water, precious stones, quartz, pisolite clay, laterite, barite, copper, wolframite, manganese, kyanite/ sillimanite, amethyst/topaz tarmaline, aquamarine, emerald, corundum, mica, illuminate/rutile and bentonite.¹⁹ Amid these promising economic resources, the region nevertheless lags in such development indices as education, health and the economy.²⁰ The 2019 poverty index indicates that Zamfara State has one of the highest poverty rates in Nigeria, with 74% of its population living in poverty. Only the states of Sokoto and Jigawa have higher poverty rates, with 87.7% and 87% respectively. The general correlation between poverty, illiteracy and violence is well documented. For Zamfara State, these three factors have had significant implications for ongoing violence.

Zamfara State is dominated by Hausa and Fulani ethnic lineages, who have shared some cultural ties for many years. Along with these groups, there are several other ethnic groups such as Igbos, Edos and Yorubas who have settled in the region and are involved in numerous and varied economic and commercial activities.²¹ In terms of religious composition, 98% of the population is estimated to be Muslim. Christians and practitioners of traditional religion only account for 0.8% and 0.5% of the population, respectively. Zamfara shares its borders with Kebbi, Sokoto, Katsina and Niger States, as well as Niger Republic in the North. With a significant number of shared borders, the porosity of Nigerian state borders, especially in the north, has made Zamfara State more vulnerable to conflict. This is largely because the high degree of border permeability allows for the smuggling of illicit weapons into the state and sustains activities that rely on violence. Between 2013 and 2023, violent conflict has led to the deaths of over 6000 people, the kidnappings of 3,704, the rustling of 343,028 animals and destruction of 4,016 properties as of June 2020.²² The situation is further compounded by the fact that more than 90% of Zamfara’s population, which totals over 5,000,000 people, are engaged in farming; 70% of these farmers could not access their farms due to incessant violent attacks by armed bandits. As a result, 11.7% of the state population have been displaced. Below, figure 5 highlights the selected LGAs of Bungudu and Gusau.



3.0 Overview: Early Warning and Early Response Systems

3.1. What are Early Warning and Early Response Systems?

Early warning and early response (EWER) systems are critical features of peacebuilding in any society that has been debilitated by conflict.²³ Early warning refers to information that enables institutions and individuals to respond proactively against an imminent hazard in order to minimize or prevent losses. Historically, early warning systems in local communities were the daily gossip between community members and informal social surveillance which helped to trigger responses to threatening misconduct.²⁴ With an increase of forced migration, along with increasingly complex social formations, national and international projects have been compelled to respond by developing platforms that provide early threat detection. For example, humanitarian agencies like UNHCR and UNDHA have recognized the critical need for better forecasting and response systems in order to enable the accurate and timely predictions of refugee flows, and enact effective contingency planning.²⁵ However, the decentralisation of EWER from international organisations to contemporary grassroots organisations led to the establishment of the first conflict prevention NGOs, such as International Alert in 1985. It was the advocacy work of International Alert that pressed the international community to think more deeply about early warning systems.²⁶

Early warning systems alert appropriate authorities (such as the UN Security Council, governments, and local security agencies) as well as major stakeholders, to new or renewed threats to peace at a sufficiently early stage.²⁷ They consist of integrated hazard detection subsystems, which involve the collection, analysis, and management of hazard data, and the blanket and standardized communication of warning messages. These subsystems are typically synthesized by various scientists, government technocrats and private sector stakeholders.²⁸ There are distinct differences between traditional intelligence and early warning systems. The former collects, analyses, and communicates information based on the premise that surveyed parties are adversarial. Conversely, three components can be differentiated within early warning systems. First, early warning systems work to estimate the magnitude, timing, and relative risks of emerging threats; Second, early warning systems analyse the nature of these threats and describe plausible scenarios; Third, early warning systems communicate analyses results to decision makers.²⁹ The object of early warning systems is primarily for the security of community members committed to sharing with each other the responsibility of security.

Early warning systems enable early responses aimed at reducing the impacts of, resolving, or transforming potentially violent situations, before conflicts arise.³⁰ Together, these systems create processes which are intended to alert community members, organizations, and governments in volatile areas, of immanent threats of conflict, while signalling the appropriate authorities to respond using protocols already in place.

Largely based on the analysis and processing of information from open sources, such as news reports and statistics (citations), early warning systems were first used as forms of military intelligence. These methods however, proved inadequate for comprehending the complexities of deeply rooted conflicts and context-specific and often remote situations about which there was little public information available.³¹ These initial approaches to EWER tended to view the systems as the end goals.³² However, the intention of this project is in part, to approach EWER systems as tools that move beyond the provision of information, which alone does not constitute an early warning system. Rather, gathered information must be subjected to analysis to determine its origin, and the timeline within which it has developed. Analyses in these capacities would better enable the receiver(s) of the results to forecast and prepare for appropriate and context-specific responses that are geared towards preparedness in the prevention and mitigation of potential conflict situations.³³

The importance of early warning in the prevention of violent conflict is well-documented.³⁴ Emphasis is currently being placed on anticipated and potential threats of conflict and violence and the strategic actions to address them. This emphasis has led to a change from a knowledge-based model to an approach that helps decision makers in formulating policies that can thwart or reduce the devastating effects of violent conflict. According to Keyserlingk and Kopfmüller, early warning efforts do not aim to suppress conflict. Instead, they seek to respond to conflict as it develops. As such, the functions of early warning include the continuous monitoring of violent conflicts, the provision of neutral information to appropriate authorities, the analysis of situations and prediction of their future trends, and changing the trajectory of conflicts in order to prevent or de-escalate violence.³⁵ Such early warning approaches can be used pre-conflict, during conflict, and in post-conflict situations, with goals to contain violence, minimise suffering and avoid the spread of further violence resulting from conflict. Post-conflict, early warning it is used to prevent the resurgence of conflict.³⁶ EWER systems address various threats to human security, including wars and armed conflict, genocide and politicide, humanitarian emergencies caused by natural disasters,³⁷ and other gross human rights violations.

The components of early warning are categorised into four areas: (1) The collection of information using specific indicators. (2) The analysis of information through its contextualisation, by the attachment of meaning to indicators and through the recognition of crisis development. (3) The formulation of best-case and worst-case scenarios and response options to these scenarios. (4) The communication of information and the results of its analyses, to decision-makers.³⁸ First, the collection of information entails documenting the perceived hazards and vulnerabilities of a particular location. This documentation plays a crucial role in the success of a EWER system, as it involves the interplay between establishing a community vulnerability assessment, risk assessment, and the gathering, storing and sharing of information. This interplay provides the baseline required to undertake further action. Second, results from the analyses of information enables the ability to forecast potential conflicts and issue appropriate warnings. Third, the proactive formulation of response options requires the

centralisation of information, plans, and inputs needed for timely and appropriate action. EWER systems can be enhanced by increasing public and institutional preparedness, or by automating emergency responses. For example, in the case of rapid onset disasters such as earthquakes, monitoring sensors could trigger actions to disable power and gas supplies and avoid further damage. Fourth, the dissemination and communication of information is centred around the digital infrastructure of cell phones, and includes the use of apps and instant messaging. These provide the opportunity for consistent and recognisable warning messages that have been vetted by institutionalised decision-making processes.

On a broader scale, the African Union (AU) has developed an EWER system known as the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) which serves to advise the Peace and Security Council on potential conflicts and threats to peace and security on the continent and to recommend the best courses of action in response to these threats.³⁹ CEWS has had varying degrees of effectiveness across Africa, which has led to its replication in East Africa by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) who renamed it, the Conflict Early Warning Response Mechanism (CEWARN). CEWARN has also experienced some successes in linking early warning to early response, particularly in relation to cross-border pastoral conflicts. Its system gathers and makes use of incident reports and perception-based situation reports, submitted by local monitors at regular intervals.⁴⁰ However, recent attempts to simplify and streamline the system in order to enhance its functionality, have resulted in unintended and complicated consequences that have led to the need to leverage increasing government commitments to addressing insecurity in the region.

In West Africa, the early warning system of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), colloquially referred to as ECOWARN, is one of the most advanced and integrated early warning, early response systems on the continent. This is in part, because it utilises different data streams, a comprehensive indicator framework, and on-the-ground, weekly incident and situation reporting from field monitors in each of the ECOWAS' member states.⁴¹ However effective as tools in the creation of the necessary conditions for peace, early warning systems do not themselves, create peace.⁴² The reliability of early warning systems is dependent on the level of support shown by political authorities by way of multifaceted and coordinated efforts between local and grassroot organisations.⁴³ Despite its successes, a lack of political support is in part why ECOWARN has been unable to consistently engender proactive responses to the various drivers of conflict in the sub-region of West Africa. Institutional shortcomings comprise part of the problem. For example, there are few formalised mechanisms for ensuring that the data gathered are proactively analysed and the results properly and appropriately disseminated to enable a prompt response.

Until recently, responses to early warning signals from those empowered to respond, have been inadequate. This was in part due to a lack of coordination between policymakers, civil society organisations, community members and other stakeholders in peacebuilding. Moreso, stakeholders and policy makers had not demonstrated much

sensitivity or responsiveness to early conflict indicators, which had implications for enabling effective response strategies. The shift from traditional and cultural approaches toward contemporary practices to EWER, has also shifted the dynamics of capacity, willingness and cooperation between previously uncoordinated, unresponsive and insensitive actors, towards positive change. Timely responses to early conflict indicators are important factors in the prevention of conflict. Understanding the early indicators places individuals and society in positions to avert or mitigate impending violence resulting from conflict. Early warning systems require continuous engagement. Apathy toward warning signals of conflict in Nigeria can contribute to its escalation and result in violence. An effective early warning system is a catalyst for future policymaking, conflict prevention and peacebuilding.⁴⁴

3.2. Gender Perspective in Conflict Early Warning and Early Response

In 2009, the United Nations (UN) published a resolution acknowledging the importance of, and need to develop effective gender-sensitive early warning mechanisms and institutions as part of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. This was a global recognition of the roles women play in peacebuilding as well as a call for early warning mechanisms that substantively incorporate women in their design. Gender-sensitive early warning systems can be defined by two factors: The first factor is the equal participation of men and women in early warning processes; And the second factor is the inclusion of gender-sensitive indicators based on the results of context-specific research of gender and conflict dynamics.

Two main arguments in favour of sensitising early warning systems to issues of gender, stand out. First, that early warning systems which incorporate planning from research-based knowledge of the roles that women play in conflict-affected areas, could result in an increase in gender rights and equality. The exclusion of women from early warning processes results in limited attention to needs particular to women in conflict-affected contexts. For example, indicators developed without the participation of women may fail to include ways of measuring types of violence particular to their experiences. More specifically, special attention must be paid to developing early warning indicators that specifically measure the risks of sexual violence against women as tactics of armed conflict. The 2008-2009 United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security further suggests that a lack of a representative gender perspective can result in responses that are harmful to women, or which exacerbate gender inequality.⁴⁸

Second, much of this literature indicates that gender-inclusive early warning systems could be more effective in anticipating and preventing armed conflict.⁴⁹ There is consensus among EWER scholars that gender-sensitive conflict analysis and early warning systems have the potential to contribute to a more effective prevention of violence as a result of conflict. SAFERWORLD is an international and independent

project that is premised on the understanding that women are critical to conflict prevention and peace as outlined by SAFERWORLD:

- i. Women are untapped sources of information. Early warning systems that fail to include the perspectives of women can miss important information that could be more readily available to women, or have a greater significance to women. As a consequence, early warning systems may fail to account for indicators that could prove vital in the anticipation of conflict.
- ii. Women are often working at a grassroots level. Women tend to be more visible and active at local levels as compared to their presence at national and international levels. Working with women on the ground, brings to light, the local factors that are contributing to conflict, and improves access to local information that would contribute to the fulsome design of early warning systems.
- iii. Women are peacebuilders. The importance of women's roles in peacebuilding activities is widely recognised, including in the UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions. The inclusion of women in conflict analyses and early warning processes can help to better facilitate their participation in designing and implementing peacebuilding responses.⁵⁰
- iv. Gender-inclusive research can reveal hidden causes of conflict. A better understanding of the relationship between gender and conflict dynamics can bring to light, the drivers and triggers of conflict which would not otherwise be obvious.

Literature regarding gender-sensitive early warning systems in African states, often distinguishes between root causes of conflict and violence, and the underlying trends that foreshadow violent conflicts. State fertility rates, percentages of women in parliament, women's participation in the formal labour sector, the prevalence of social norms condoning violence against women, and average levels of education among women, are considered among the root causes of violent conflict.⁵¹ Violations of the rights of women and girls are almost common place indicators of rising tensions.⁵² High rates of rape, domestic violence, sexual abuse at the hands of security forces, and displacement are among the underlying trends of violence. The disproportionate killing, abduction, and disappearance of women, the increased demand for women and girls to engage in survival sex and sex work, the imposition of restrictive laws that lead to abrupt changes in gender roles, a sense of impunity for perpetrators of violence against women, and inflammatory public rhetoric, propagandizing hyper-masculine behaviour and rewarding aggression, are also counted among the underlying trends of violence.⁵³

The NGO entitled, SAFERWORLD has outlined several EWER projects that foreground the importance of women's participation in data collection and conflict analysis. Crucial to the success of the projects were capacity building initiatives for the participating women. These initiatives addressed the reporting of information through the establishment of hotlines, and awareness of potential responses to emergency situations. For example,

the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) undertook a gender-sensitive conflict analysis and early warning process in the Solomon Islands, during which time it worked with men and women to understand their experiences of conflict and to monitor conflict dynamics. The participation of men and women was integral to the design of the research, the data collection and in its analysis. The data collected was disaggregated by sex and the differences between men’s and women’s responses in early warning questionnaires were highlighted in the advocacy and dissemination process and sought to clarify differences in approaches to violence and showed that there were stark differences and approaches.

The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) developed early warning systems which were aimed at preventing sexual violence by improving communication between women living in villages across the Eastern regions of Democratic Republic of the Congo and the UN mission. Mobile phones were distributed to hundreds of communities throughout the region, giving women direct contact with the mission. Similarly, United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), in conjunction with the Community Women Peace Dialogue Forum in South Sudan, set up a 24-hour hotline and distributed communications equipment to at-risk communities in an effort to enhance early warning systems.

Generally, early warning mechanisms tend to be male dominated and concentrated in the hands of authorities, particularly at the national level. This may be less accurate for local-level initiatives. In Mindanao, a large and populous island in the Philippines, for example, one study found that women were more involved in community-level early warning initiatives, than they were in formal, high-level initiatives. The author makes an argument for the promotion of community level initiatives as the most effective ways in which to improve women’s participation in early warning systems. Linking local and often informal efforts to more formal, national-level systems, represents a challenge in implementation.⁵⁴ It is clear that the participation of women in EWER systems is fundamental to the success of these systems in the early detection of, and early responses to threats of violence. Women engaged in processes of participatory conflict analyses can sometimes engage in peacebuilding, as these processes can build a sense of ownership over the process and trust between community members; they also create opportunities for reflection, action and communication between groups who may not otherwise interact. However, if not done in a way that is sensitive to the context of the participants, the participation of women in these processes has the potential to put them at risk for violence or exacerbate existing tensions within the community. Conflict sensitivity must therefore be built into every stage of the process.⁵⁵

Project Design

3.3. About the Village Monitoring System: Early Warning Project

The project goals envisioned an end to the cycle of violent conflict in Northern Nigeria through the empowerment of community members, including women, to serve as peacebuilders trained in early detection and early response to conflict. The project was designed to foster the inclusive participation of citizens in decision making. Central to the project is the mobilization and training of and collaboration with local Nigerian constituencies to engage in and strengthen early warning and early response systems from the ground up. Geospatial, ground-based technologies and data platforms were used to identify places, names of potential crime sites, map patterns of disappearances, locate and engage in depositing evidence for documentation as well as potentially building legal cases for future accountability. It is believed that community-based evidence mobilization to address such widespread violence and unrest will strengthen and build on civil-security partnerships to leverage the largely untapped capacity of local communities. The project also explored the role that women play in fostering mutual understanding and collaborative change in their various communities. The diagram below presents the goals of the project.



Figure 6: VMS Project Goals

3.3.1. EWER Project Objectives



Figure 7. Project Objectives of the EWER project.



3.3.2. The Theory of Change

The theory of change that underpinned this project was that if EWER networks are mapped out and established across collaborative regions, and partners are trained to demonstrate the capacity to detect and respond to alerts of potential attacks on communities, violence against civilians will be reduced. The theory aims to empower communities affected by conflict with knowledge of EWER, in order to help them in the prevention of violence and in the mitigation of conflict.

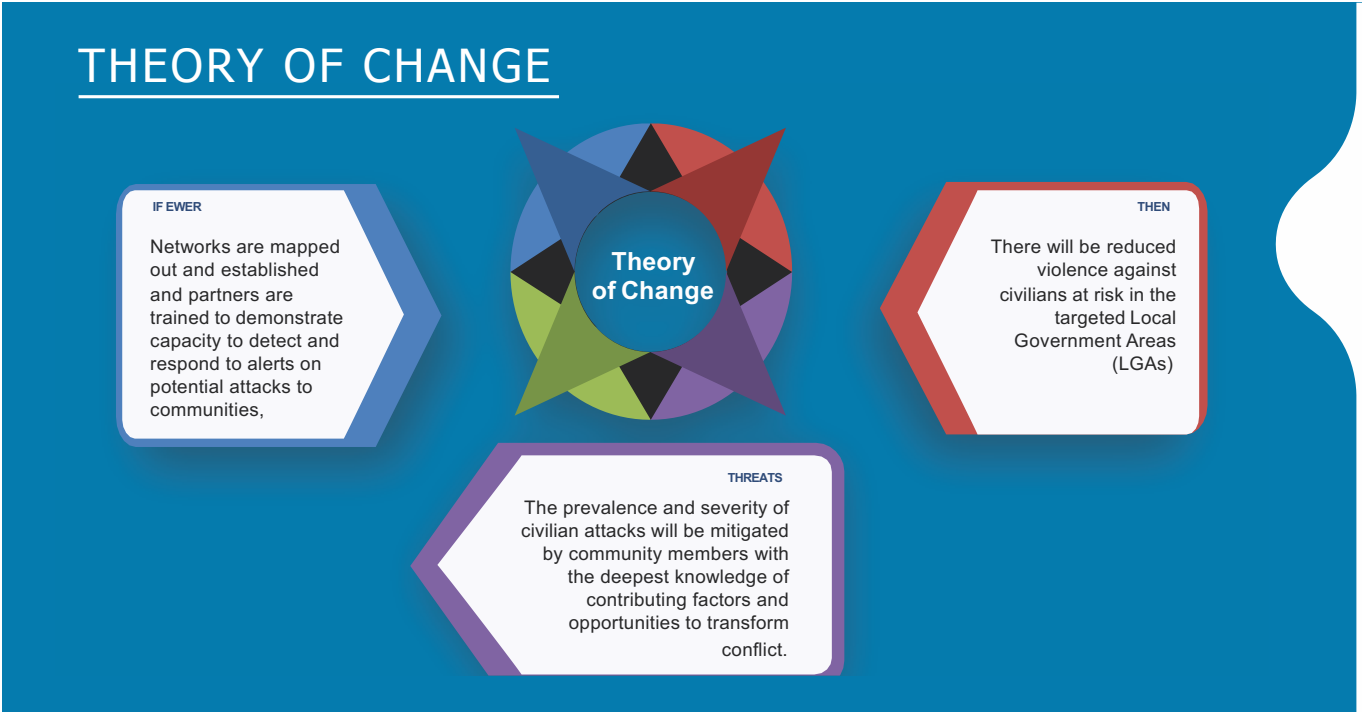


Figure 8. Theory of Change



3.3.3. How the EWER Project works

Project implementation followed several stages. Training and Planning was the first stage, which involved the training of community members and planning for institutional and security mapping. This phase included the translation of nomenclature, the creation of selection criteria, the establishment of the EWER Forum and the selection of Community Safety Partners (CSPs). The selection of CSPs involved input from the government, traditional rulers, and religious leaders. It also involved community channels created for EWER CSPs, occasional meetings, security reviews by the EWER Forum, training EWER Forum members on the use of technology, and establishing standard operating procedures along with risk mitigation protocols.

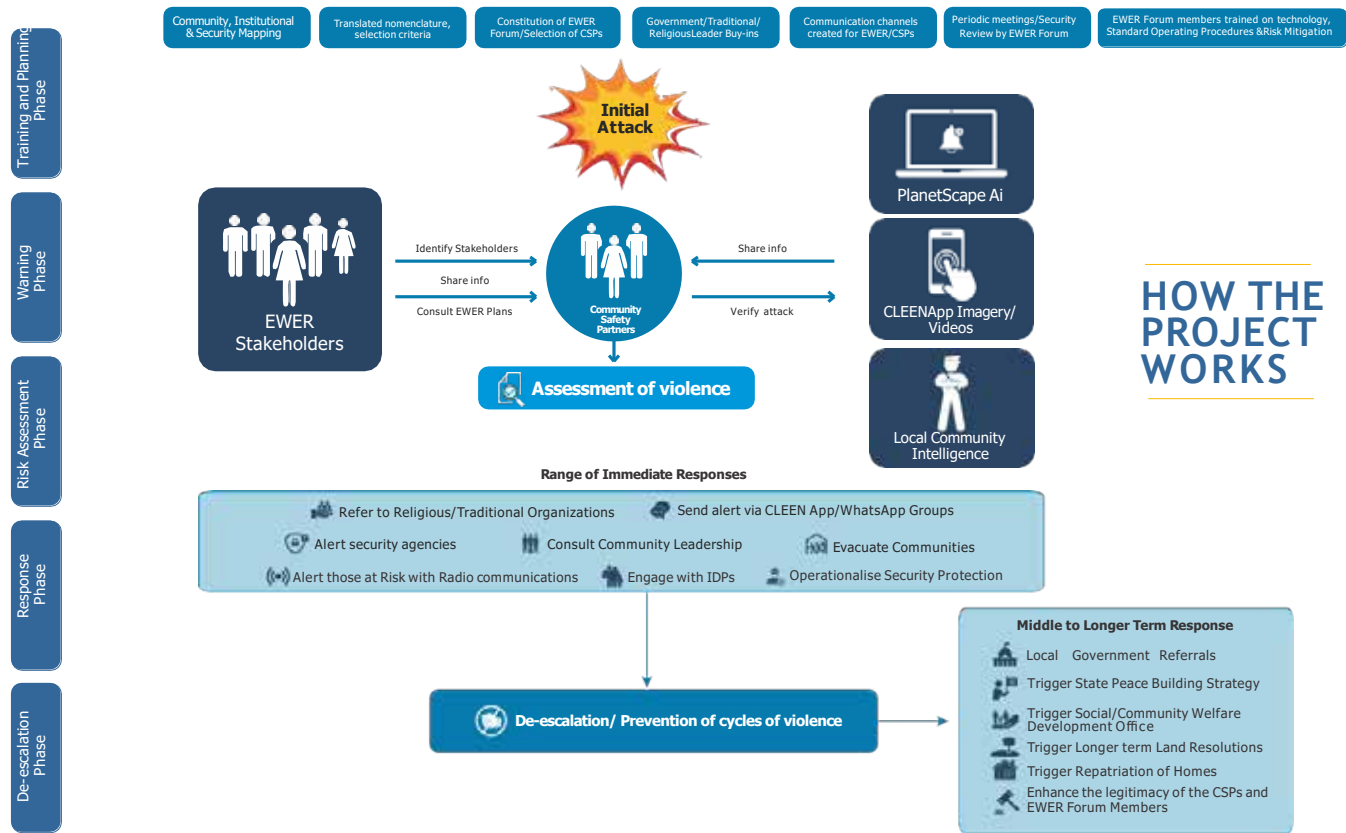


Figure 10

The stage that followed addressed the implementation of the warning. During this stage, stakeholders were identified alongside community safety partners, and asked to share information using the CLEEN app. The information was verified and assessed by EWER forum members to determine the nature of the conflict and the threat of violence.

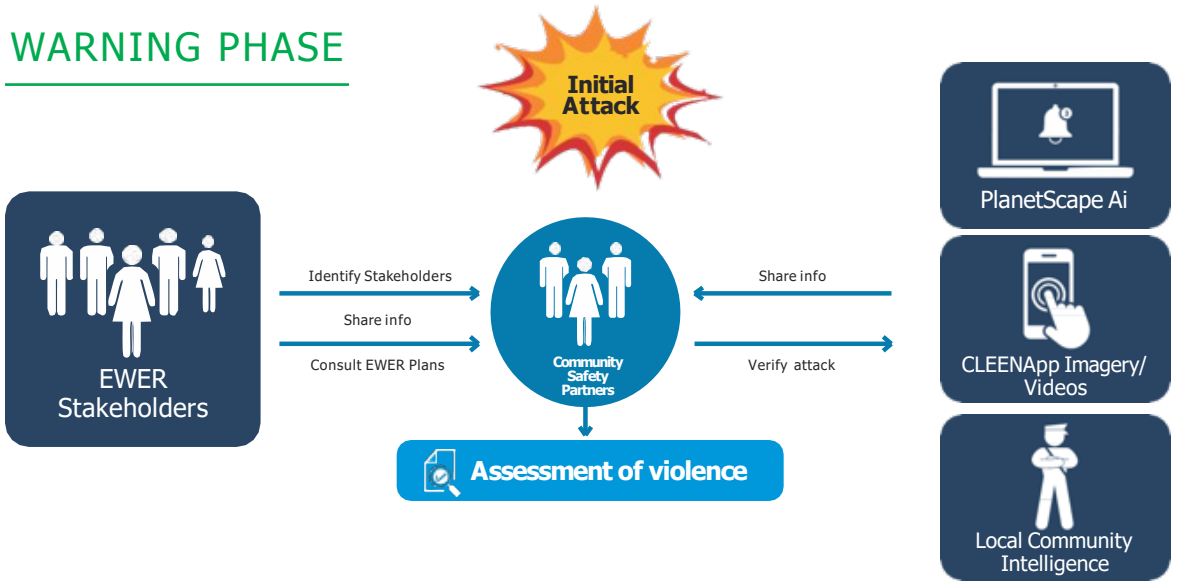


Figure 12.

Assessment of the threat comprises the subsequent stage, aimed at determining the nature of the conflict. For instance, community members assessed whether the event was a result of a communal clash, conflict between farmers and herders, banditry, political violence against the state and other hegemonic institutions, abductions, kidnappings, or ritual killings. Community members determined the response strategy based on their assessment of the threat. Figure 9 expands on the factors for consideration when assessing the nature of violence.

ASSESSMENT: WHAT IS THE NATURE OF VIOLENCE UNDERWAY

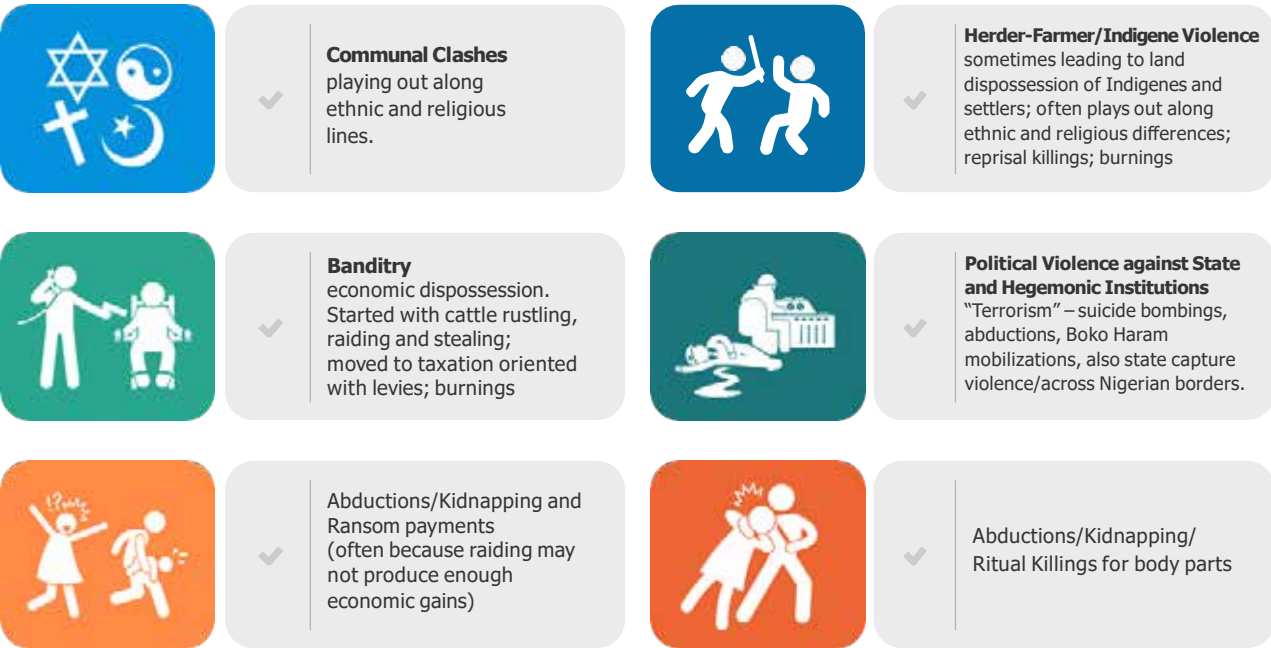


Figure 13.

The response phase was focused on the logistics of alerting a range of stakeholders to the imminent threat of violence. Stakeholders included traditional and religious leaders, security agencies and radio communication houses. This stage made use of the CLEEN App as a means by which to alert and evacuate communities.

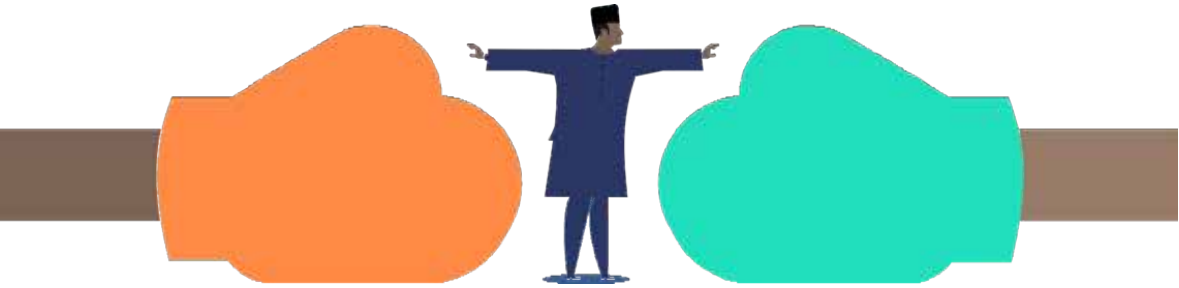
RESPONSE PHASE



Figure 14.

Next, the de-escalation phase proffered not only immediate solutions but encouraged team members to consider middle to longer term responses to conflict. For example, responses included referrals to LGAs, state peacebuilding strategies and the establishment of community welfare offices to support those suffering from the effects of trauma and loss. It also involved decisions regarding the resolution of land issues, reparation of homes damaged as a result of conflict, the legitimisation of CSPs and EWER Forum members, and capacity building and expansion of medical facilities in order to attend to victims of violent conflict.

DE-ESCALATION PHASE



Middle to Longer Term Directions

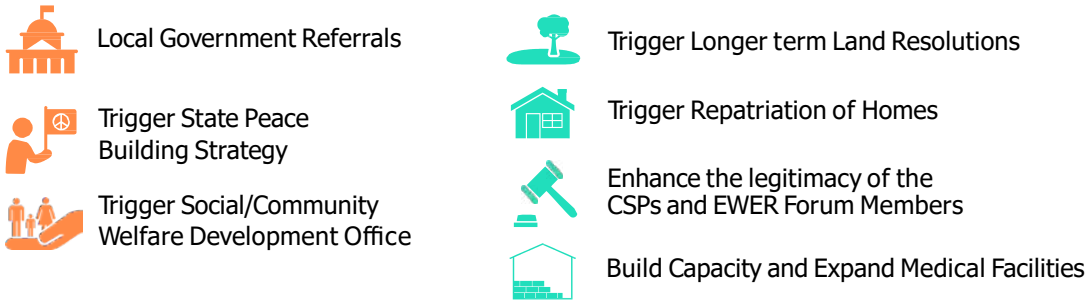


Figure 15.

4.0 Project Implementation

The implementation of the project involved a combination of partners who had existing early warning networks in target communities. Geospatial technology was used to identify stakeholders which included women and other marginalized communities as key players in the creation of sustainable EWERs. The goal was to enhance the capacity of women and other marginalized community members in the logistics of peace and security systems. Local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and academic partners throughout the country were invited to share their knowledge and understanding of the conflict in the region, as well as their knowledge of the existing on-the-ground networks that can be mobilized and trained to undertake successful violence prevention and mitigation activities. Given the inadequacy of existing early warning structures and slow responses by state security actors, mobilising community members to engage with EWER system processes, was considered the best strategy for turning the tide on violent conflict in each region. Along with a range of geospatial technologies, networks and partnerships were combined to monitor tensions and enhance local resilience in the face of threats. Through the development of Early Warning and Early Response Systems and the enhancement of existing systems, the combination of networks and partnerships and geospatial technologies, was considered useful in strengthening communities in their capacity to enact sustainable self-protection methods.

In the focal states, work was done with existing EWER networks that had been previously established by other organizations. In Plateau State, organisations included Search for Common Ground (SFCG), the Community Action for Popular Participation (CAPP) by Mercy Corps, Plateau Peace Practitioners Network, and the Women Peace & Security Network. In Kaduna, there was collaboration between Women Empowerment Foundation and Gender Awareness Trust. Across states boundaries, there were collaborations between West Africa Network for Peace Building (WANEP) in Zamfara and the Community Centre for Excellence in Taraba. Existing response systems allowed members of the research team as well as community-based organizations to train, establish warning indicators, and create and share knowledge with networks in order to verify threats, accurately anticipate violence and enable its interruption before it occurs. Widespread community participation, paired with the intentional and strategic use of technology, enabled the project to establish early response teams in the relevant communities, with the aims of mitigating violence directed toward civilians and enhancing their protection.

4.1. Mapping of EWER Communities

In order to generate a baseline data collection process for the project, a mapping of the focal communities was conducted. Both primary and secondary sources were used in the collection of data for mapping. Primary data was collected, via an EWER mapping tool developed by CLEEN Foundation and scripted in the CLEEN Mobile App. States included in the project had initially been selected based on their vulnerability to violent conflicts and the statistics that had been recorded in terms of deaths, injuries, and displacements. In each state, two local governments were selected, for a total of eight LGAs. The collection of demographic information such as age, gender, educational qualifications, and employment status, was undertaken using questionnaires that were administered to stakeholders in focal communities. Focused Group Discussions (FGDs), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and observations were also used to collect data, though the latter set of qualitative methods were only used in Taraba.

Several groups of people were selected as survey respondents, based on their commitment to community safety and peacebuilding. Consideration was also given to their capacity to mobilize support, their experience with community security, their knowledge of the community's history and relevant political issues, and to the integrity of the group's members, which must not have included any history of wrongdoing. These groups included traditionalists, youth groups, women, religious groups, as well as formal and informal security and/or vigilante groups. Additional respondents were categorised into development associations, hair stylists, trade/market unions, transport workers, students, religious organizations, and fashion designers, among other potential categories. The survey tool was designed to collect information on the nature of attacks, the types of reactions that communities had to violence, the nature of existing EWER mechanisms in the communities, the respondent's perceptions of the category and character of potential EWER Forum members, the respondents' perceptions of the involvement of women in EWER Forum and individual motivations for belonging to an EWER forum. The data was collected by 4 enumerators per local government which added to 32 enumerators for the 16 local governments. Each state collection exercise was coordinated by the CLEEN state coordinators for the project.

4.1.1. Key Findings from the EWER mapping

(I) Kaduna

a. *The nature and impact of violence:* Banditry, kidnapping and cattle rustling have taken a dramatic toll on the livelihoods and economic activities of residents from the Local Government Areas of Chikun and Kajuru. A common strategy for bandits to weaken the economic strength of these regions is to set fire to homes and grain stores. In most instances, bandits operate by establishing checkpoints in agrarian communities, denying local farmers access to their farmlands and forcing them to pay “taxes” on their properties.⁵⁶ The targeting of health facilities has also been a strategy that has enabled bandits to weaken critical social infrastructure and response capacities in these LGAs. For several decades, primary healthcare centres, hospitals, and private medical offices, along with medical transport vehicles, including ambulances and supply trucks, have been bombed, looted, burned, blocked, or occupied; And healthcare personnel and patients have been physically assaulted, intimidated, threatened, or blocked from receiving or providing care.

Analysis of unemployment in Chikun and Kajuru indicates that a majority of those who are unemployed are youth residing primarily in rural areas. Available data from 2018 to 2021 shows the number of unemployed youths in Chikun and Kajuru increased from 47.59 percent to 59.95 percent and local knowledge has suggest that this increase has correlated with the increase in attacks carried out by otherwise unemployed armed youth bandits.⁵⁷ This further complicates the dire security situations faced by these LGAs, as subsequent circles of violence are produced, which are propelled by increasing poverty rates as a result of unemployment, which in turn affect crime rates, leading to an increase in regional tensions, which often result in violence.

b. *Responses to EWER in Chikun and Kajuru by State and Non-State Actors:* The continuous activities of armed bandits in Kaduna State have given rise to complex informal security networks including armed local vigilante groups, ethnic defence forces and community policing, in order to protect local neighbourhoods. The inability of the Nigerian police and military to contend with bandit activities has forced residents to rely heavily on non-state actors. Informal security actors such as vigilantes and private security firms have played increasing roles in protecting communities from bandit groups. For rural communities in Chikun, vigilante groups are often preferred over the police because of the unpredictable availability of official security agencies.

c. *Sectorial EWER Plans in Kaduna State:* The Kaduna State Contingency Plan has sectorial response plans similar to Plateau State, which are put in place to address issues and/or events as needed. Sectorial response plans include Camp Management, Basic Education, Food and Nutrition, Information, Telecommunication and Logistics, Security, Protection, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Health, Emergency Shelter and Non-food Items (NIFs). Each sectorial response plan includes unique and context specific Objectives, Strategies, and Guiding Principles.

d. *Kaduna State Peace Commission:* In May 2017, the Kaduna State government established the State Peace Commission under Law No. 4/2017. The Commission was established with the objective of ensuring the “monitoring, mitigation and prevention of conflicts with the view to promoting peaceful and harmonious co-existence in the State.”⁵⁸ The Peace Commission is uniquely positioned to address coordination challenges and strengthen the linkages between state and non-state actors who are working to enhance early warning and early response in the state.

On 26th July 2021, the Tech Company Vatebra Limited partnered with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Kaduna State Peace Commission (KSPC) in the deployment of the CEWERS (Conflict Early Warning and Early Response System) solution. A CEWERS application allowed people in conflict areas in Kaduna state to properly capture and channel feedback from community actors. The app enabled security monitoring groups and individual citizens to provide both positive and negative information in regard to the progress of elections, issues of security, and crises within the state. This is system helped to ensure that timely counter-responses were carried out by appropriate authorities in order to avert violence or conflicts. On October 6th, 2021, KSPC formally launched a Conflict Early Warning and Early Response System (CEWERS) to facilitate an increased effectiveness in its peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities across Kaduna. The CEWERS arose from a need to reevaluate the chain of events from when threats are detected, to when they are reported and the response time of appropriate actors, after a threat has been detected.

Other conflict prevention programmes in Kaduna include Equal Access International, which launched the Community Accountability Forum (CAF) in 12 local governments, across 4 states Nigerian states, comprised by Kaduna, Kano, Plateau and Benue. The purpose of the CAF is to facilitate and promote early warning early response systems in selected communities for quick intervention and response, towards the resolution of potential violent conflict before they escalate. Mercy Corps is also implementing Community Initiatives to Promote Peace (CIPP), a five-year peacebuilding program funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). CIPP’s aim is to prevent violent conflict in the most at-risk communities in Nigeria’s Northwest and Middle Belt regions. These include the states of Katsina, Kaduna, Plateau, Kogi, Kano and Benue.

(II) Plateau State

a. *The Nature & Impact of violence.* Several communities in the LGAs of Jos South and Barkin Ladi in Plateau state have recorded countless attacks on people and the destruction of farmlands, crops and property. Although the conflict dynamics keep changing over the years, conflicts based on religion and ethnic differences have remained constant over the past two decades.

- i. Destruction of crops and farmlands: Communities comprised predominantly of Christian farmers often accuse Fulani herders of grazing on their farmlands. These accusations often trigger reprisal attacks and continuous agitation as both warring parties continue to defend their positions. The government's inability to mediate conflict and tensions, and to deploy security measures results in repeated and violent conflicts.
- ii. Cattle rustling: Historically, cattle rustling was a consequence of conflict. Over time though, the theft of cattle has transmuted from a consequence of conflict, to a trigger. It has contributed to the expansion of the scope of conflicts as well as to an increasing number of reprisal attacks in the Barkin Ladi and Riyom LGAs.
- iii. Mutual Suspicion: Ethnic and religious suspicion among the many ethnic groups in Plateau State have largely been attributed to the unending level of conflict. These alongside disenfranchisement, inequality, and other fears are the root causes of the conflict. Capitalizing on such conditions, many political rivals have used ethnic and religious diversity in the state to manipulate and mobilize support. This explains why each outbreak of violence deepens suspicion and compounds communal reconciliation with more ethno-religious polarization.
- iv. Poverty is and continues to be one of the most prevalent consequences of conflict in the region. Youth who are divided by ethnicity, engage in criminality that is propelled by such factors as poverty, unemployment, idleness, drug dependence, the proliferation of weapons and illiteracy.

b. *Responses of Security agencies to Early Warning signs:* Findings from respondents indicate that residents from communities that have been attacked, do report the possibility of such attacks to the police as well as to military deployed to their communities. However, reports are often disregarded or not responded to with the requisite attention by security agencies with a mandate to secure vulnerable communities against threats. Consequently, communities have formed local voluntary security systems to prevent future attacks. This is evident with the emergence of myriads of civilian security formations like Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN), Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) and Hunters Association. Findings further reveal that conflicts have given rise to high rates of mortality and morbidity among

males; the obvious direct and indirect consequences of conflict. Consequently, there are high rates of widowhood, sexual and gender-based violence, asset and income loss, forced displacement or migration, disruption of agricultural markets, deaths of household members and changes in the traditional household roles of women.⁵⁹

c. *Early Warning Structures in Plateau State:* Currently, Plateau State is the only state in North Central Nigeria that has systems in place for community security and an EWER Forum backed by law. These systems are carried out by the Plateau Peace Building Agency (PPBA) and Operation Rainbow.⁶⁰ Its functions and duties include but are not limited to (i) stop and search protocols at border entry check points into the state, (ii) the arrest of suspects and their relinquishment to the appropriate agencies for prosecution, (iii) joint intelligence gathering with neighbouring states, (iv) dialogue with relevant authorities, (v) taking measures to enhance peace and security within the state, (vi) coordinating the activities of state Neighbourhood Watch organisations, (vii) implementing skills acquisition programs in partnership and collaboration with NGOs, (viii) general patrols in conjunction with other state security agencies, (ix) acquisition of timely and accurate information in order to contain crime, (x) establish mechanisms to involve public participation in conflict prevention and peace building.

Operation Rainbow has an early warning and early response system effectively designed to collect and forward information to appropriate agencies for quick response. The system is designed around an online platform which functions to improve communication and reduce response times. The online system encompasses social media interfaces such as FaceBook, WhatsApp, Telegram, as well as the more traditional digital communication methods of email, short messaging services, and live chats. The headquarters at Operation Rainbow houses an incident / control room, and there is a surveillance Centre at its outpost at Dutse –UKU which uses distance CCTV cameras mounted to overlook the Jos City Centre. This Early Warning System response also has a toll-free phoneline for public use.

The Plateau Peace Building Agency (PPBA) was established in February 2016 by the Plateau State Government to respond to the challenges of peace and security in the state. The mandate of PPBA is to promote the culture of peace and harmonious coexistence among the various ethno-religious divides in Plateau. PPBA operates through strategic partnership with state and non-state actors. The agency also coordinates the conflict resolution and peace building interventions of stakeholders working in proximity to issues of peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

Community Based Organizations and NGOs in Plateau

There are several informal community-based early warning and early response systems in Jos South and Barkin Ladi LGAs. They include Community Police/Neighbourhood Watch, Vigilante Group of Nigeria, Hunters Association, Youth Wing Leaders, Gyel Development Association, religious and the traditional leaders, Bukuru Youth Leaders,

Bukuru Youth Forum, Damiyata, Plateau Youth 4 Peace, Berom Educational and Cultural Organization (BECO), Jama'tu Nasril Islam (JNI), Dialogue and Development Committee, Muslim Women Association, Ulama Council, Kugiya Market Security Group, Kashang Gwol Youth Development Association, Nyango Development Association and Committee Members, Police Community Relation Committee (PCRC), and community leaders. These community-based EWER structures meet at regular weekly, monthly, quarterly, and/or annual intervals to appraise security situations in their communities and identify gaps and ways in which to bridge those gaps. They also work to consolidate records and reports for the security agencies tasked with carrying out appropriate responses. More importantly, community-based EWER structures have digital platforms for community youths who are engaging in security surveillance, gathering verified information and sending it to the appropriate channels for necessary action. Complimenting this, local government councils organise monthly security meetings with other formal security actors including police forces, Department of State Services (DSS), Civil Defense Corp, Special Task Force (STF) and traditional councils at various local government secretariats.

There are some NGOs and Community Safety Organisations that had previously established EWER structures in both Jos South and Barkin Ladi. Examples of these NGOs include (but are not limited to) the Institute of Governance and Social Research (IGSR), Search for Common Ground (SFCG), the Centre for the Advocacy of Justice and Rights (CAJR), Humanitarian Dialogue (HD), the Centre for Peace Advancement in Nigeria (CEPAN), the Plateau Peace Practitioners Network (PPPN), the Justice Development and Peace Commission (JDPC), the Youth Initiative Against Violence and Human Rights Abuse (YIAVHA) and the Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN).

(III) Taraba State

a. *The Nature and impact of conflict:* Findings from mapping in Taruba shows that the constant security infringement arising from communal clashes, farmers-herders conflict and kidnapping has left community members with little choice other than to devise informal means to provide early warning and early response to conflict for themselves. Though the process is cumbersome, community members have their own reporting chain: First, they report information to their village heads commonly known as Maianguwa. In turn, Maianguwa report this information to the district head. Without the clearance to take action, the district head must report to the Chief, then the Chairman of the local government is briefed before the final report can be sent to security agencies who are usually the police and the State Security Service (SSS). Information pertaining to security is gathered and disseminated via mobile phones, internet, as well as formal and irregular community meetings held at local organisations.

It was also found that the two LGAs of Wukari and Gassol have similar security situations as they both have histories of continuous violence between farmers and herders. The prolonged Tiv-Jukun crisis, for example, led to the killings of several natives of farming communities including women and children. More recently, the Displacement Tracking Matrix reported that clashes between neighbouring Tiv and Fulani communities in Gassol and Wukari LGAs resulted in wave of population displacement totalling 1,628 individuals.⁶² Although banditry is relatively a new occurrence in the State, there are reports of bandit attacks in both local governments. In specific terms, bandit attacks were reported in some local communities of Gassol such as Gunduma, Mutum Biyu A and B and Maihula.⁶³ Some of the flash points are shown in Figure 3.

b. *EWER Stakeholders in Wukari and Gassol LGAs.* There are critical stakeholders with deep knowledge of safety and security in Wukari and Gassol LGAs. Each stakeholder plays important roles in mitigating communal conflicts and violence in the state. Responsibilities include monitoring potential conflict, identifying its location and assessing a community's proximity to violence.⁶⁴ For example, there are groups/platforms that provide information on safety and security to community members. These groups include members of the local government, traditional councils (Hakimi, Dagachi, Maianguwas, the village head, Jauros), youth leaders, religious clerics/Imams, vigilantes, and community members. Also, community members were in unanimous agreement that effective EWER systems require the participation of women, as they constitute the majority of victims.

c. *Early warning signs of conflict in Wukari and Gassol*

Literature on causes of violence in Nigeria identify several factors including government corruption and injustice, hunger, poverty, unemployment and despondency. Although the debate is ongoing, experts have argued that violent conflicts in the north east are a product of government neglect. For more than a decade, the majority of the population in the region have received little in terms of education, healthcare, infrastructure, electricity or other public services, making them more vulnerable to all forms of violence, including kidnapping. Respondents reported that before the eruption of conflicts in Wukari and Gassol, most community members took up professional farming and fishing, and started small-scale businesses, especially the youth population. However, during conflicts, many victims of violence, especially in the villages, were forced to abandon their homes and economic activities in order to take long-term refuge in encampments before finding new and safer places in which to settle. Put differently, many people were denied the opportunity to engage in economic activities during the crises.⁶⁶ As a result, another circle of violence is created, because when there is little opportunity for economic activity and the means of livelihood are destroyed, alternative means of survival must be devised.

Table 1: Community and Government Based EWER Stakeholders in Wukari and Gassol

Local Government	Traditional / Community-Based EWER Stakeholders	Government-Based EWER Stakeholders
Wukari	Wukari Traditional Council (Aku Uka, Abonchio, Abonziken,Kinda Chio and Secretary)	Nigerian Police Force
	vigilante/yanbanga	Local government Chairman/ Councilors
	Wukari Youth Central Body	Ward Leaders
	Angwan Gaya, Zungu, Aso, Gavyo (Rafin Kada youth)	Nigeria Immigration Service
	Christian Association of Nigeria	Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps.
	Hakimi Maianguwa	State Security Service
	Muslim Council	Nigerian Army
	Muslim Council Gidin Dorawa Youth	Mobile Police Force (MOPOL)
Gassol	Chief of Mutum-Biyu Alhaji Sani Kachala Duna Magajin Duna	Nigerian Police Force
	Hakimi, Dagaci maianguwas, Jauro	Local government Chairman/ Councilors
	vigilantes/hunters Association	Ward Leaders
	Leaders of ethnic groups	Nigeria Immigration Service
	Leadership of Christian Association of Nigeria & Muslim Council	Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps. State Security Services Nigerian Army

(IV) Zamfara State

a. The nature and impact of conflict: Although the security situation in Zamfara State in 2019 and 2020 was judged to have improved, violent events escalated in 2021.⁶⁷ Recently, armed bandits have relocated to some villages in Gusau and Tsafe LGAs, located in the central zone of the state due to pressure from military operations in the northern zone. This relocation explains why the zone has recorded an upsurge in kidnapping and armed attacks in areas such as Damba, Mareri and Tsauni which are located at outskirts of Gusau. Frequent roadblocks are mounted by armed bandits along Tsafe-Funtua Road, who then kidnap motorists who are using it. These roadblocks are strategic, as Tsafe-Funtua Road links people of Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara to the commercial city of Kano, the regional city of Kaduna and the FCT Abuja. Similarly, Talata Mafara-Sokoto were identified as flash points because two LGAs share boundaries. While one is in Zamfara State, the other one is in Sokoto, making it easy for bandits to engage in inter-state collaboration. Tsafe LGA is strategically located, as it is close to Munhaye Forest which serves as a hideout for bandits with its very large and long forest that stretches to Katsina State.

b. Government's Response to Conflict and Violence. In 2019, there was a change in approach by the government. Instead of deploying heavily armed military to confront the bandits, government decided to use the carrot approach. This involves non-kinetic strategies like round table discussions, dialogue and negotiations meant to hear from them what their grievances are. This approach led to the declaration of amnesty for any bandit willing to surrender. Thus, the concept of repentant armed bandits was coined. However, while there was cease fire for some months in 2019, the bandits later resumed hostilities in full force leading several attacks in any communities. In response to the continuous attack on residents, the State indirectly shifted its strategy to carrot and stick approach from 2020-2021 in which the military responded to attacks from non-repentant armed bandits.

The deteriorating security atmosphere in the State in August 2021 compelled the State Government to come up with a security task force which after appraising the situation recommended the closure some markets to block access to food and fuel supply to armed bandits. Similarly, the Governor reversed his decision of negotiating with the bandits. Instead, he declared never to negotiate with armed bandits again and further decided to shutdown mobile networks across the State. Other major decisions taken by the task force include reinstating the CJTF locally known as Yansakai to engage in joint operation with the military due to their knowledge of the terrain. Lastly, securing the declaration of armed bandits as terrorists by the Federal High Court Abuja in November 2021 which has pushed the Federal Government to heighten offenses against the armed bandits including deployment of fighter jets.

c. EWER Policy Initiatives in Zamfara State. The State Government initiated several policies aimed at addressing some of the security and humanitarian challenges

communities face. Some of the initiatives include the establishment of the following agencies:

1. Setting up Zamfara State Committee for Finding Lasting Solutions to Armed Banditry.
2. Establishment of Zamfara State Ministry of Home Affairs and Security.
3. Establishment of Zamfara State Directorate of Peace and Conflict Resolution (ZSDPCR).
4. Zamfara State Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development (ZSMHADMSD).
5. Establishment of Zamfara State Directorate of Strategy and Development (ZSDSD), among others.

d. Local and State Actors of EWER in Gusau and Bungudu. There are several local and state actors or stakeholders involved in EWER projects in Gusau and Bugundu. Prominent among these actors are the Primary Healthcare Care Centres in communities who often collaborate with armed bandits because they also need healthcare services when they are sick or injured. Development experts also use health care services as one of the 3 security strategies to get access to volatile communities. They tactically become accepted in the community through consent, approval, cooperation and at times even incentive. During these interactions, the in charge (i.e., health officials during the provision of services) could get access to plans and conspiracies of various actors. The role of National Union of Road Transport Workers in this cannot be over emphasised. They are a very powerful organization with networks all over the country and they travel to all nooks and crannies of the country engaging with different kind of people which give them access to first-hand information.

The Zamfara State Conflict Early Warning Indicators Monitors (CEWIMs) were inaugurated in 2019 in partnership between the Zamfara State Ministry of Home Affairs and Security, the Directorate of Peace and Conflict Resolution, and the Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR), Abuja. They have also established an EWER forum that is interfacing through physical meetings, WhatsApp, email and Zoom. Through these media, the monitors have been reporting issues of conflict across the State. Other actors are presented in the table below:

Table 2: Local and State Actors of EWER in Gusau and Bungudu

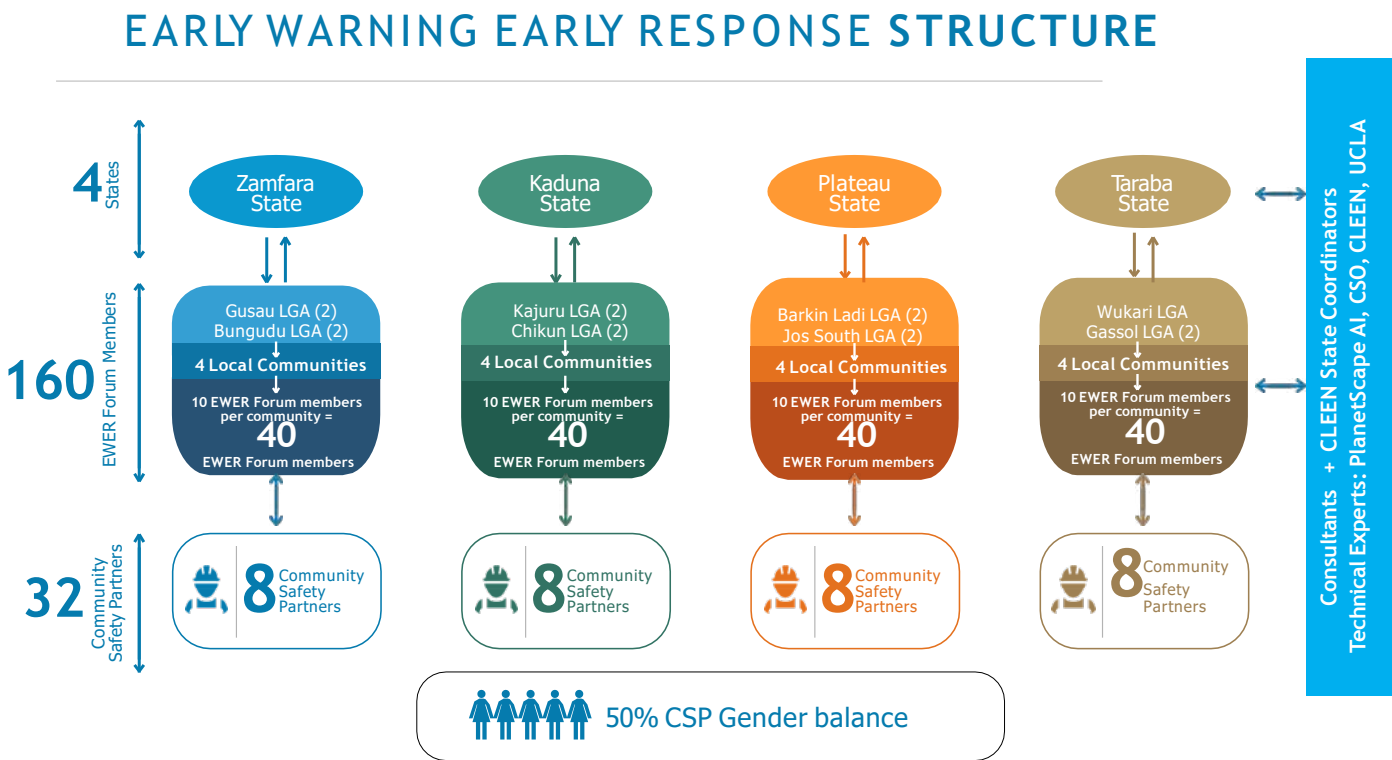
Local Actors	State Actors
Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN)	Zamfara State Ministry of Security and Home Affairs
Christian Women Association of Nigeria	Zamfara State Directorate of Peace and Conflict Resolution
Kungiyar Mata Masu Dubara	Zamfara State Task Force to Curtail Insecurity.
Christian Association of Nigeria	Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Abuja
Miyetti Allah Kautul Hore, Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN)	Zamfara State Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development
Jama’atul Nasrul Islam (JNI)-	Zamfara State Committee for Finding Lasting Solutions to Armed Banditry.
Jama’atu Izalatil Bid’ah Wa Iqamatus Sunnah (JIBWIS)	Zamfara State Directorate of Strategy and Development (ZSDSD)
Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Community Based Organisations	
Vigilante Association of Nigeria	
Civilian Joint Taskforce (Yansakai)	

4.2. Set up of EWER Forum in each State.

The Early Warning Early Response (EWER) Project launch was held in November 2021. As a means of acquiring cooperation from critical stakeholders, an overview of the project, including its goals, objectives, activities and expected outcomes were presented to the United States Embassy in Nigeria, Nigerian government institutions, International NGOs, Executive State Governors from the selected states, civil society organisations and the media. Participants strategized to ensure the effective implementation of the project, as a means by which to mitigate anticipated political and programmatic challenges. The project launch had three key outcomes:

- 1. Project buy-in and explicit commitment by government institutions, USAID, the US Embassy in Nigeria, civil society organizations and the media.
- 2. Project awareness was created using mainstream media for the coverage of the project launch.
- 3. An increased understanding of project implementation by important stakeholders.

Early Warning Early Response Structure



4.2.1. Selection Criteria for EWER Forum members

Selection of EWER Forum membership was undertaken using the same criteria as those used in the selection of the LGAs within the four selected states. These were, reliability and commitment to community safety, the convening power/capacity to mobilise support, past leadership or security experience, knowledge of the community’s history or political issues, and integrity. These criteria are diagrammed in figure 8.



4.2.2. Selection Criteria for Community Safety Partners

Community Safety Partners (CSPs)

Community Safety Partners are people who have an understanding of regional conflicts and are committed to the assessment of violence by mobilizing decision making and putting in place strategies to mitigate and contribute to the de-escalation of violence.

The CSPs will include people from civil society organizations, community leaders, state security and law enforcement bodies, and informal security groups that have legitimacy in communities they serve.



TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR EWER FORUM & CSPs

EWER Forum	Community Safety Partners
Periodically discuss emerging security issues and risks in the community	Periodically discuss emerging security issues and risks in the community
Select the members of the community safety partners	Gather security information and share within the group and the CLEEN app.
Gather security information and share within the group and the CLEEN app.	Receive security alerts
Provide institutional, political and physical support to members of the CSPs	Analyse security alerts and warnings and decide on actions to mitigate attack
Conduct performance review for the CSPs	Share experiences and lessons with other CSPs in other communities
Advise the CSPs on the best course of action depending on the nature of violence	Hold a monthly meeting and attend the bi-monthly meetings with EWER Forum members
Hold a bi-monthly meeting with CSPs	
Disseminate information about the Forum to the entire community	



4.3. Trainings for EWER Forum members

TRAINING AND PLANNING PHASE



Figure 11.

4.3.1. Training on use of technology

As part of the strategy to ensure the quality of the real time data to be collected for Early Warning, the CLEEN Mobile App and Esri Platform were designed for the accessibility of the EWER members to track reports and engage in sharing early warning information. Technology training on the use of the CLEEN Mobile App and Esri Platform was held with the EWER Forum members in the focal communities across the four states.

The detailed training introduced EWER Forum members to the tools available and the best practices during the reporting process. EWER Forum members were trained in the functionality of the CLEEN App and ESRI platform to facilitate uncomplicated documentation of any early information shared about violence in their communities. The platforms were designed to work with limited internet connectivity, enabling offline data collection, which is submitted automatically when within proximity to a stable internet connection. The CLEEN mobile application enables data collection through structured forms and allowed forum members to attach photos, videos, and audio files. Other features of the CLEEN mobile app included a verification mode and geo-location capturing. All of the data collected in the application was encrypted. The apps are password protected, keeping data inaccessible and providing additional security to Forum members and informants. At the time of data collection, metadata on photos, videos, or audio recordings is captured automatically. This metadata can be used to corroborate evidence and cross check with other facts. This capability limits the amount of fake pictures and videos being posted on the platform.

Following the technical training, EWER Forum members were deployed to their local communities to gather and record real-time data.

4.3.2. Training on risk identification and mitigation

Risk Mitigation and Response Plan training was conducted in Kaduna in June 2022. Participants included EWER members from Local governments, non-governmental, and community-based groups, community and religious leaders, Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association members, members from traditional groups, members from Jama’atu Nasril Islam (JNI), women and youth leaders, divisional police officers, as well as members of the NSCDC and vigilante groups. Participants were trained in the CLEEN Mobile App, an application entitled Survey 123, and the Risk Mitigation and Response Plan.

There were three key outcomes from the training activities:

- Enhanced understanding of the role of EWER Forum members in the project
- Improved capacity to use the CLEEN mobile app for incident reporting.
- Increased knowledge of EWER Forum members in the mitigation of risk when undertaking EWER functions.

4.3.3. Training the stakeholders

Capacity Building Workshops for Early Warning and Early Response stakeholders were held in Plateau, Zamfara and Taraba in September 2022. The training brought together EWER stakeholders from the six local government areas and twelve focal communities selected for the project.

The EWER stakeholder’s training sessions focused on the development of skills in conflict analysis, sensitivity, Do No Harm Principles, Risk Mitigation and the Response Plan. It also involved the use of the CLEEN Mobile App and the ESRI Incident Reporting Platform to improve data documentation and protection. EWER stakeholders discussed conflict mitigation across the various communities through the strengthening and expansion of their capabilities to identify, verify, escalate concerns, and intervene in violence and conflict. Forum members were reminded of their roles and responsibilities, and of the importance of collaboration and cooperation, as well as establishing and maintaining good working relationships with formal and informal security agencies in the realization of project objectives.

4.3.4. Train the trainers for women

Training for women on Conflict Analysis, Sensitivity, Triggers, Do No Harm Principles, and the use of the Eri Incident Reporting Platform was organized in Plateau, Zamfara and Taraba States. The women were introduced to the aspects of conflict analysis using various tools of conflict analysis. Over the course of their training, the women gained the ability to identify early warnings and provide realistic responses using the Risk Mitigation Plan developed by the project. Participants were also trained in conflict sensitivity, triggers and causes of conflict, the role of drivers of conflict, the effects of conflicts on women and children, the use of the CLEEN Mobile App and the ESRI Incident Reporting Platform in the reporting of real-time data, and their roles and responsibilities.

120 women were trained across the three states. Participants were enthusiastic about the level of training and the increased knowledge they acquired. The women pledged to share their new knowledge and insights with other women. Thus, a much wider reach of knowledge than was originally anticipated can be projected, as the potential for the spread of knowledge moves beyond immediate family members and toward the community at large.

4.4. Set up of the Community Accountability Forum in Kaduna

For many Nigerians, especially those in rural communities, informal policing groups are predominant, and in some cases, the only available means for safety and security. Community members encounter problems with the informal policing groups however, without a formal and connected system to document events and make complaints, it is difficult to hold perpetrators of violence accountable for their actions. In many communities, the situation is exacerbated by the traditional systems and values on which many informal, male-led groups, are founded. The Community Accountability Forum (CAF) was designed to facilitate interaction between community stakeholders and security agencies, in order to improve relationships within the forum membership and out in the larger community, with the overall intention of fostering effective EWER systems. Additional functions of CAF include addressing logistical issues with security, social issues, issues around conflict, particularly violence against vulnerable groups. CAF’s core objectives are as presented in Figure 16.



Figure 16. CAF objectives

Along with its objectives, CAF outlines six key principles:

1. Respect for human rights, including the rights of women.
2. Upholding democratic values based on the principles of inclusion.
3. The reception of, and response to complaints by members of the community, without discrimination or blackmail.
4. Joint discussion and decision making around identifying and solving problems.
5. Recognising that collaboration between the police and informal policing groups is critical in addressing the issues in any community.
6. “We are one”.

CAF structures were set up to ensure that there were no hiding places for individuals with criminal intent in the community. It contributed to a significant reduction in the likelihood of community members being caught up in crime, either as victims or as perpetrators. Figure 14 and 15 below presents the functions of CAF.

CAF FUNCTIONS:



Figure 17: The Functions of the CAF

WHAT CAN THE CAF ACHIEVE:

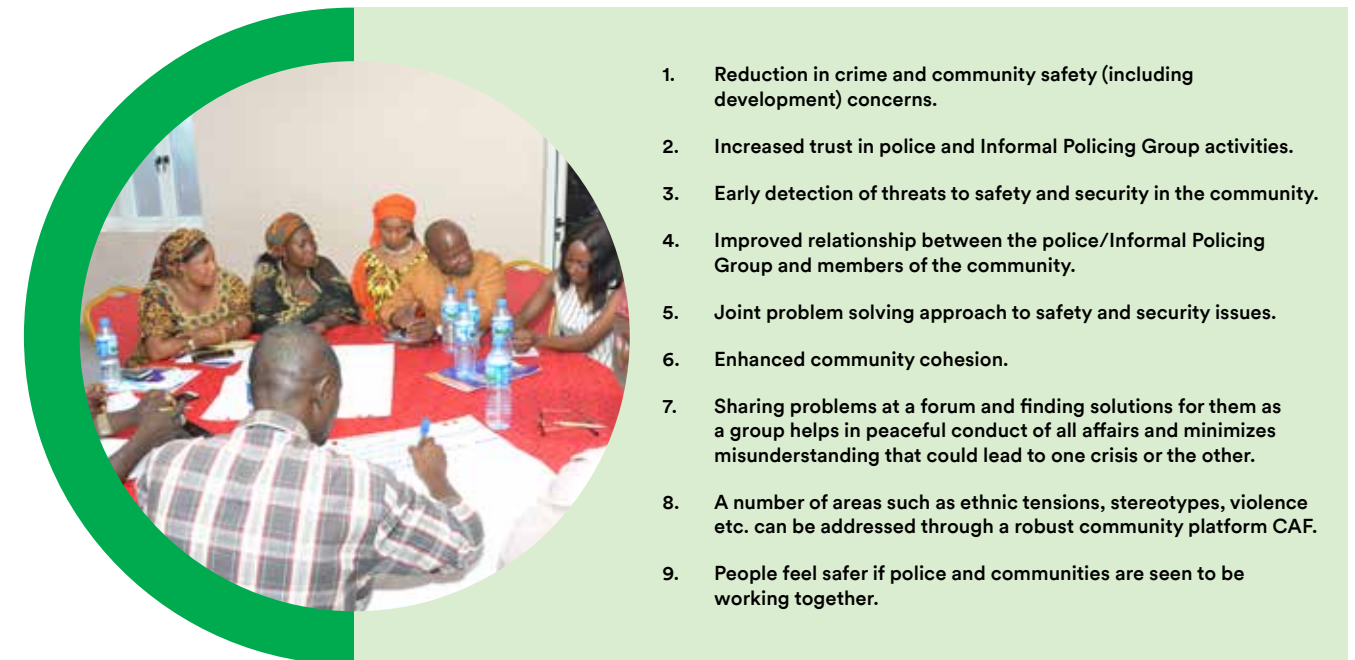


Figure 18: What can the CAF achieve

Becoming a participating member of CAF requires that potential members meet particular selection criteria. Similar to the criteria used in the selection of LGAs as well as EWER Forum members, criteria for CAF membership includes reliability and commitment to community safety, convening power/capacity to mobilize support, past leadership/security experience, knowledge of the community’s history/political issues, and integrity with evidence that there is no history of criminality.

4.5. Gathering intelligence and incidence data

4.5.1. About the ESRI platform

Throughout the project, the ESRI platform was used with the CLEEN Mobile app to ensure that incidents were captured properly, in order to enhance intelligence gathering and enable timely reporting to the appropriate actors within each of the focal states. The ESRI platform is a comprehensive app that uses data-driven maps and mobile forms to help EWER Forum members capture pertinent data regarding violence, while sharing its location in real-time.

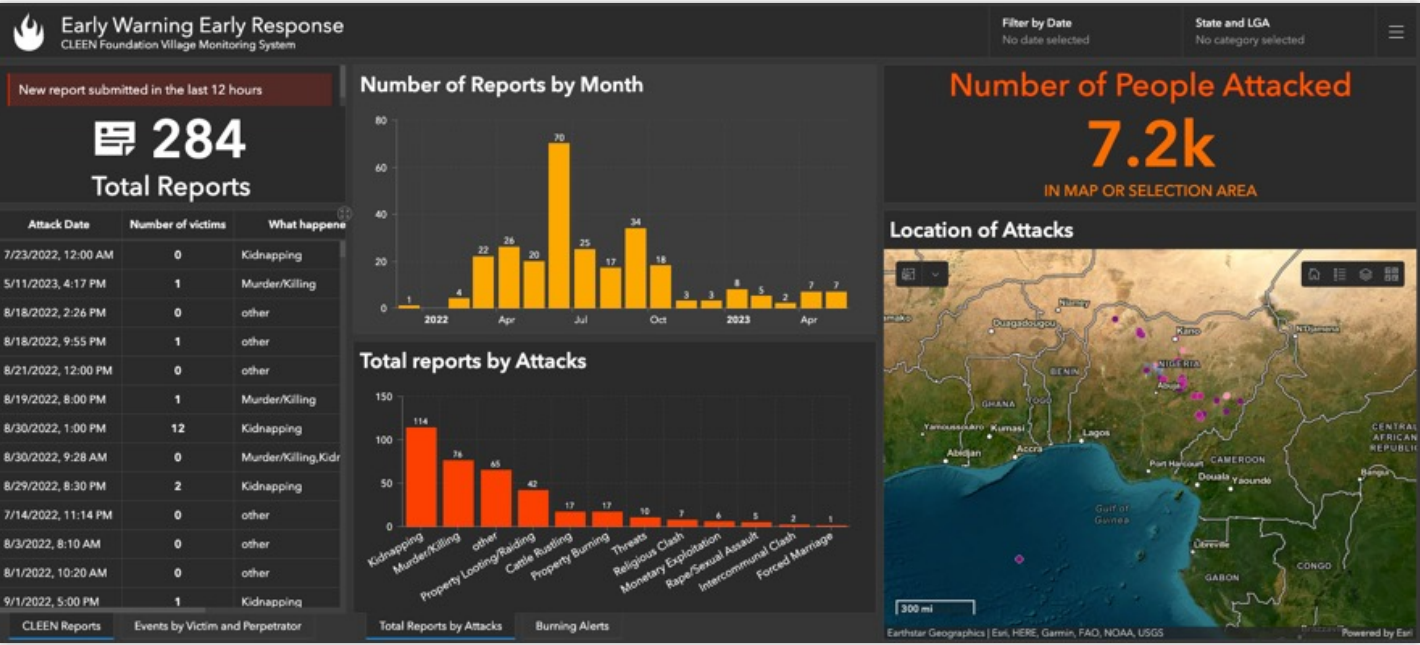


Figure 19: Overview of the CLEEN Foundation Village Monitoring System reporting data

The app streamlines the data to geo-locations, builds real time maps, reviews and validates data, and then performs spatial analyses, visualising the data for an increased ease of understanding and to enable for rapid responses.

As a means by which to advocate for the use of geo-tracking softwares within EWER systems, key metrics from the ESRI platform were presented to stakeholders during the public presentation of the report.

4.5.2. Incident reports from focal states

Focal states have been characterised by differing and wide ranging security threats. These include kidnapping, murder, the looting and burning of properties, cattle rustling and religious clashes, along with financial exploitation, rape and other forms of sexual assault, intercommunal clashes and forced marriages. Figure 17 is a presentation of the total number of reports recorded across the focal states, according to attack type, between September 2022 and August 2023. Kidnapping was the most prevalent incident type, with mass kidnapping characterising the activities of criminal groups in the northwest, especially in Kaduna and Zamfara States where school children were reported to have been abducted in large numbers. Reported cases of individual kidnapping characterised Plateau and Taraba states, targeting specific individuals in their homes.

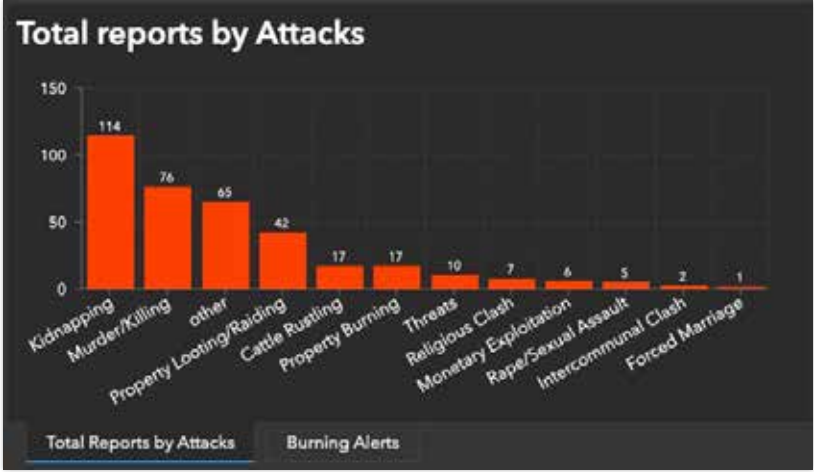


Figure 19 presents an overview of the number of reports recorded by month, from the project’s January 2022 inception, to May 2023. June 2022 was the peak of violent incidences, by a large majority while incidences stabilised through March, April and May, with an average of 18-25 cases per month.

Figure 19: Overview of the CLEEN Foundation Village Monitoring System reporting data

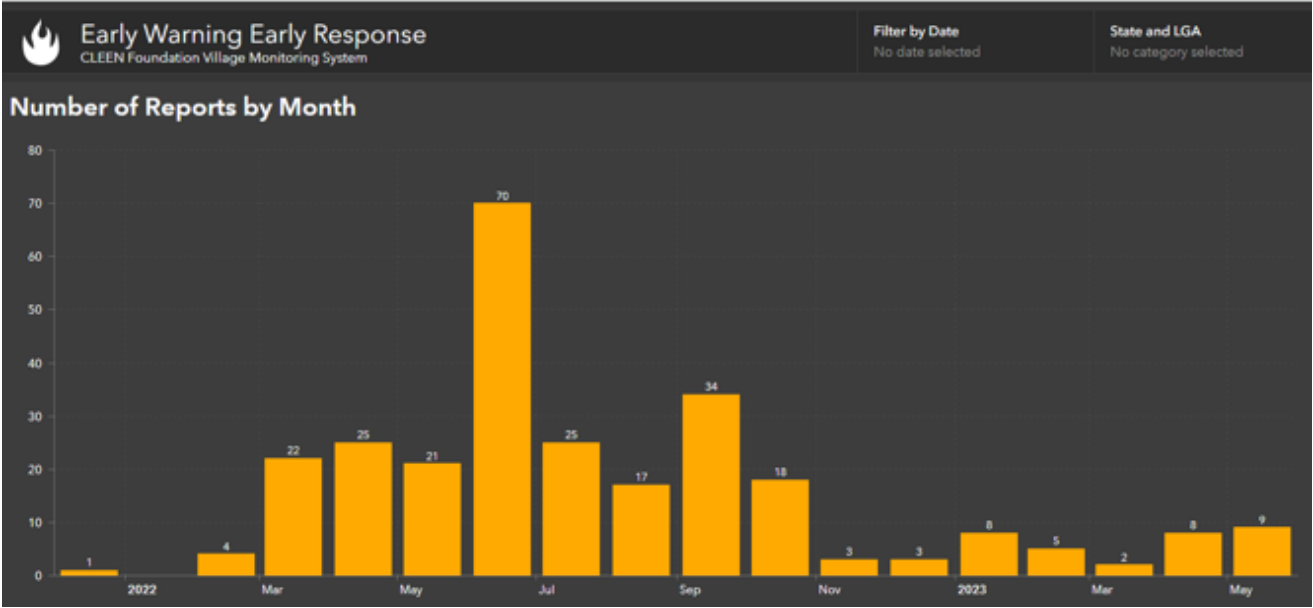
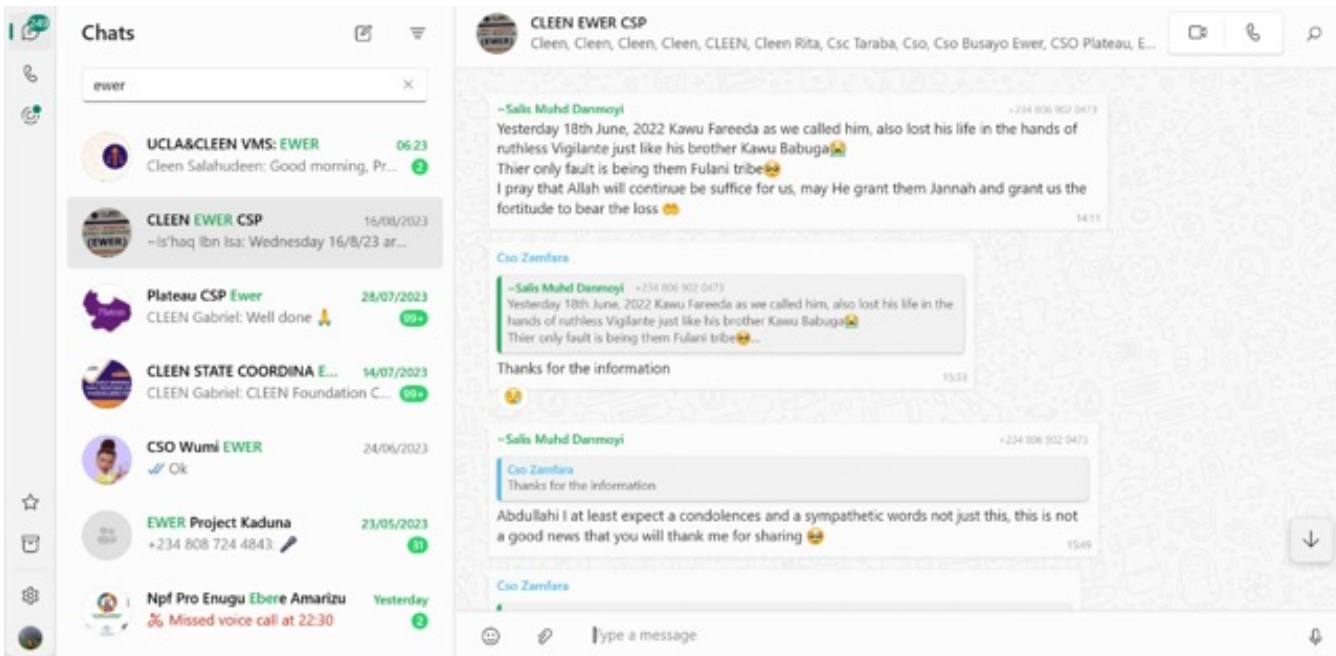


Figure20: Monthly report of attacks in focal states

The number of reports of violence by month are not necessarily indicative of all violent incidences, as not all incidences are reported, especially in the case of kidnappings in Kaduna. While it is beyond the scope of this report to theorize the possible factors influencing the data presented by Figure 18, it certainly raises many additional questions. It underscores too, the need for further research regarding the context-specific factors that may influence the reporting of incidences, as well as factors influencing why incidences go unreported. The long-term ramifications of influential factors of reporting trends would also be useful in increasing the effectiveness of EWER systems.

4.5.3. Snapshots EWER reporting, using WhatsApp



4.6. Activities of EWER Forum members

4.6.1. Monthly Meetings

Over the project’s two-year period, a total of 288 monthly meetings were held by the various EWER forums across the 16 communities in the four selected states. During these monthly meetings, in-depth discussions about violent incidences, threats to security and early warning signs of violence were held, guided by assessments of the situations and consensus-building around the risk mitigation strategy to deploy. The monthly meetings also served as an avenue for the performance of the three project phases described in section 3.3.3, were also discussed and employed where possible, during meetings. EWER Forum members, and the female members in particular, had the opportunity to demonstrate their leadership skills. A crucial strategy that enabled women to play a key role in the EWER Forum was the requirement of quorum in relation to the presence of women. Minutes from each meeting were kept by the appointed secretary and subsequently transmitted to the project’s state coordinator. Records of the minutes showed that the EWER Forum members did not limit their discussions to security situations but extended their conversations to general socio-economic issues which also have a direct implications for the precarious security situations within the states.

In general, particular meeting locations were selected by each EWER Forum, though some of the forums rotated meeting locations in an effort toward the inclusivity of, and cohesion among their members.

4.6.2. Visiting key stakeholders as advocacy work

One of the strategies identified for de-escalating regional conflicts and tensions was to make visits to key stakeholders in order to advocate for EWER systems. Over the course of the project, more than 60 advocacy visits were made to stakeholders like the State Commissioner of Police and to religious and traditional leaders. In some cases, the advocacy visits were community entry strategies organized to introduce the EWER Forum and its members to key stakeholders in an effort to secure their cooperation, collaboration and buy-in to the EWER system.

Over time, the advocacy visits resulted in improved responses by security agents such as the police and various community and regional security services.

4.6.3. Virtual Community of Practice Meeting

A total number of seven Virtual Community of Practice Meetings were held to bring all the 160 EWER Forum members and more specifically the 32 CSPs together to share experiences and lessons. The strategy of conducting at least one advocacy visit per month was initially shared by the EWER Forum in Zamfara before other states deployed the same strategy and reported some level of results from the advocacy visits.

5.0 Challenges and opportunities of the EWER Project across the focal states

5.1. Challenges

- 1. Early in the project, telecommunications were shut down by the government, threatening the implementation of the EWER Forums, particularly in Zamfara and Kaduna. The aftermath of the shutdown led to challenges in identifying and selecting enumerators for the mapping of EWER stakeholders.
- 2. Training enumerators also posed a problem during the implementation of the project. In person training was planned for enumerators but the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a switch to virtual training. Following the blockage of

telecommunication in the LGAs, enumerators did not have access to the virtual training and as a result, they had to be transported to the state capitals where the virtual trainings were being held. This transportation was often scheduled for late in the night, during a time when there was increased network stability. The unpredictability and instability of the network also posed a challenge to the EWER stakeholder's forum, which was forced to relocate from local meetings to meetings in state capitals. This again involved travel and lodging expenses, resulting in a significant impact to the project budget.

3. Following the selection of EWER members and their deployment to communities, there was a perceived lack of trust between security agencies and community members, made evident by social media discussions documented by the EWER platforms. A lack of trust within the community due to ethnic and religious differences was also evident. A lack of trust and coordination between Community Safety Partners had the potential for negative impacts on the project, which prompted the project team to move the date of the CLEEN mobile app training forward. Moving the training forward mitigated this lack of trust by ensuring that community members familiarized themselves with their comrades and built a working relationship with each other.
4. At times, inaccurate conflict analyses led to the incorrect identification of stakeholders thus, an error in the intervention approach. Erroneous interventions resulted in a lack of community buy-in, support for, and perceived ownership over the EWER structures. It resulted too, in a strong dependence on donor agencies and the lack of a sustainable plan for the EWER system. People in Fulani settlements reported being stigmatized during media discussions and talk shows, where blame for the conflict was placed on them. This stigmatization led to intense feelings of animosity, stereotyping and the ethnically-fuelled hatred of Fulanis; thus the Fulanis were made vulnerable to increase violence and poverty in already volatile situations, especially in Plateau and Taraba states. As a result, Fulanis faced widescale displacement as they searched for safer communities in which to settle. In fact, it has been reported that the conflict has led to 80% of Indigenous Fulani fleeing to other states, along with their livestock. Ironically, at times Fulanis were also simultaneously prevented from fleeing because of the widescale suspicions against them.
5. Thick forest terrain characterises many of the conflict areas, making their accessibility very difficult. With little or no road access, it is very difficult for security operatives to locate them. The mapping exercise also found that 60% of registered mobile network lines were being used by unregistered and unauthorized users. This enabled perpetrators of violence to avoid being tracked by security agents.
6. The under-registration of motorcycles across the four states further hinders tracing by security agents, as they are used frequently in banditry.

7. The proliferation of sophisticated arms in most parts of the four states has constituted a major challenge to security agencies, as it is alleged that many of the weapons possessed by criminals pose a greater danger to those held by security personnel.
8. A lack of collaboration between key EWER system actors hindered the operations of security personnel.

5.2. An Emerging Opportunity

1. **The Rescue Me App** - The Nigerian Police's **Rescue Me App** was developed as part of a project implemented with the National Human Rights Commission in 2019. Though it has already been in operation in many Nigerian states, it has not been formally launched because it currently does not have the necessary capacity to provide emergency services throughout the country. Recent numbers indicate that the Police force has 7 million users in place, however the subscription restricts the number of users who can participate on the platform.

In terms of functionality, users can create a profile that collects demographic and health related information that can help those in need in a general sense, as well as during emergency situations. When an alert is sent out, it is received by the command centre in each state, which are in turn, expected to deploy the closest police officer to the scene. There is also a feedback mechanism that can provide an update on the case reported. While this technology highlights an excellent possibility for an effective EWER system, challenges related to inadequate policing resources have significantly hindered the effectiveness of police responses. This has been especially true for states outside of Lagos, Abuja and Port Harcourt.

6.0 Key results of the EWER Project in the focal states

The project has been able to produce the following results in the focal states:

- i. Increased documentation of violent attacks within communities. The project documented evidence of violent attacks in the focal states and this documentation led to the aggregation of data for the purposes of the prediction of violence. A project impact assessment was conducted through the Nigeria Police Force's Public Relations Officer. The assessment found that there was an appreciation of the CLEEN Foundation for its continued delivery of security threat assessment

reports to the Police Force, ahead of emerging security threats and in particular, ahead of major elections . The continuous provision of assessment reports was useful to operational planning of security in Nigeria.

- ii. Fostering of collective community collaboration and intelligence response. Collectivity among community members has continued past the final dates of the project. For example, the Community Safety Partners (CSPs) established in the Chikun and Kajuru LGAs of Kaduna state, continue to hold meetings during which time, stakeholders share intelligence on security related developments in their communities, using the CLEEN Foundation Village Monitoring Systems. Another example is of the activities of the CSPs in Kujama community in the LGA of Chikun, which led to the rescue of a young girl abducted for marriage and conversion to Islam. In this instance, intelligence was shared by a member of the CSPs, which led to an arrest by community stakeholders and local police, as well as to a confession. The young girl was found safe and returned to her community.
- iii. Mitigation of attacks against civilians. The EWER Forum platform established through the collaborative efforts of community partners from 16 communities spread across the four states selected for the project, has successfully mitigated attacks against civilians. This was made possible through the involvement of community stakeholders and their prompt intelligence sharing. Additionally, there was a reduction of incidences of counter or reprisal attacks, particularly in the communities in Kaduna and Plateau states. This reduction was achievable because of the collegiality that EWER Forum members built over the course of the project's implementation. Additionally, having the formal structure of an EWER Forum provided an space for the deliberation of ideas, before the launch of counter attacks and for a consideration of issues that drive tensions. In Plateau State for example, the CSPs and EWER stakeholders were involved in averting an extra-judicial killing that had been planned for suspected informants to bandits and kidnappers. In many cases, EWER Forum members were successful in changing the minds of others', a testament to their positive reputations in the community.
- iv. Increased inclusivity of women in community and state security affairs. This project has succeeded in fore-fronting women in deliberations involving community security. This has resulted in women occupying positions as members of the EWER Forum and within the networks of Community Safety Partners across the locations tasked with gathering community intelligence and taking mitigative actions to address identified security threats. A key lesson from the project's implementation was that the inclusion of women must be mandated to enable their participation. Records indicate that the participation of women in the forum resulted in their increased confidence and promoted an increase of the positive perception of the capacity of women, to prevent conflict and protect their communities. A major success that came as the result of the participation of women as members of the EWER Forum was the appointment of a previous female member of one of the Plateau State EWER Forums, to the State's formal security system.

- v. Innovative Community Securitization. Through this project, EWER Forum members have been able to introduce a Vigilante Duty Roster and Schedule as a means by which to curtail incidents of theft in Du Community of Jos South LGA.
- vi. Positive Adaptation of Best Practices. EWER Forum members in the communities of Jos South and Barkin Ladi are now receiving referrals from community stakeholders. In the Jos community of Bisichi, EWER Forum members were able to settle community disputes which tended to escalate into conflict. The same EWER Forum members were applauded for facilitating the identification and arrest of the herder who raped a female member of the Bisichi community. The perpetrator was eventually arrested, which helped to alleviate tensions between farmers and herders. EWER Forum members are consistently being engaged in discussions on important security issues, with community stakeholders. These discussions have proved to be advantageous for the effective and timely reporting of, and responses to conflict and violence.
- vii. EWER Forum members are involved in advocacy programs and have been visited by influential community members. Community members are collectively engaging in the sharing of ideas to better understand effective strategies, as well as to engage in innovative projects. For example, the initiation of intervention programs such as the construction of bore holes and the provision of farming equipment in areas where young people are engaged in agricultural farming have had positive impacts on food security and served to increased employment opportunities in the community.
- viii. The knowledge and capacity of EWER Forum members and other stakeholders has increased the effective identification of early warning signs and risks, enhanced mitigation strategies and led to the prevention of conflicts. Over the course of the project, 160 EWER Forum members were trained in the use of technology to document and report incidences of insecurity, identify early warning signs for conflict and violent attacks, identify risks as well as their associated mitigation strategies. Over 300 community members were engaged with information pertaining to early warning and risks, across the four selected states.
- ix. In October 2022, the EWER Forum in Maraban Kajuru succeeded in organizing security meetings with the Council Chairman, the Officer Commanding (OC) of the army unit in Kajuru, and other security stakeholders within the community. These meetings are notable successes, because they have not been realized since the outset of violence. Similar arrangements were made by the EWER Forum in Maraban Rido, Kajuru LGA. The forum was able to come to a consensus with traditional and community leaders, to implement a historic resolution. the agreement of which was that the farmers whose farms were prone to security threats should farm collectively alongside the army and other security agencies who would offer protection. This resolution helped farmers to cultivate and harvest their crops.

- x. In December 2022, the EWER Forum in Maraban Kajuru held an assessment meeting, during which time they were able to reflect on the achievements and challenges of the forum in 2022 and the ways in which to ensure the continued sustainability of the project. The successes of the Forum in addressing early warning signs and mitigating conflict, led to a consensus that the project be sustained after its two-year pilot phase.
- xi. A major achievement For Kasuwan Magani Community, was the measures put in place to ensure active early warning even during holiday periods. Future plans were also set out for a series of activities aimed at strengthening the Forum and giving it greater community recognition through advocacy visits and increased collaboration with the community's key stakeholders.
- xii. The EWER Forum in Maraban Rido increased its membership of women in and effort to ensure gender balance. Four women who are active members of Maraban Rido Community as well as being involved in community peacebuilding activities were selected to the forum. The Forum also set plans in place for the coming year, agreeing that within the first quarter of 2023, strategic courtesy/advocacy visits would be made to community members who could potentially provide assistance for capital intensive projects. At the end of the project, the forum had plans to visit the military strike force, police outpost and community vigilantes' offices to foster an increased conviviality and collaboration between forum members and security forces.
- xiii. For Kujama community in Kaduna state, a major achievement of the project was the ability to communicate effectively with traditional rulers, youth groups and security agents about the practice of shooting guns or knocking people out as ways to celebrate the arrival of midnight during various celebrations. The Forum membership agreed that shooting guns during celebrations is a harmful practice which has led to the fleeing of community from their homes, in fear of erupting conflict. Sarkin Matasa Gunduman Kujama, a traditional leader who is also the EWER Forum Chairman, addressed the issue by leading a team to visit the palaces of sarakunan matasa of Kujama (traditional leaders in Kujama) and speak with them about the practice. As a result, the team was able to cooperate with other traditional rulers in the coordination of its cessation.

7.0 Recommendations from the EWER project

The following recommendations are proposed in response to assessments and findings from the project:

1. Each community should establish an EWER Forum and mandate the inclusion and participation of women in strategic ways. One way should include the institutionalisation of a quorum requirement in order for the forum to be convened.
2. The EWER forum should be embedded within existing community systems, such as town hall meetings and digital communication tools. Embedding the forum into previously existing systems increases its potential for its sustainability and effective use, as well as for a feeling of ownership and accountability among its members.
3. Project results indicate that where there is an increased security presence, the likelihood of attacks decreases. Thus, before an EWER system can be established, immediate action by, and resources from government and security agencies are required for communities facing immanent safety threats.
4. Long term solutions planning must consider and address the widespread socioeconomic deprivation and structural inequalities faced by many Nigerian communities. These conditions have resulted in high rates of unemployment and poverty, which are key contributors to tensions, conflict and violence in conflict-affected regions.
5. Data concerning multiple forms of structural discrimination, and in particular, gender-based violence, must be collected, and its reliable collection provided for, in order to improve the effectiveness of early warning, early response systems in communities.
6. Longstanding socioeconomic trends and immanent threats or acts of violence must be considered before a violent outbreak and escalation. A fulsome consideration of contextually and historically relevant factors can improve early warnings and lead to a robust early response. This would, in turn, allow for the development of preventative mechanism to address some of the underlying causes of conflict, increase preparedness for early responses to conflict and where necessary, allow for measurable response to violence.

Annexures

Annex

Risk Mitigation/Response Plan for Kaduna, Plateau, Taraba and Zamfara States

Risk can be defined as the chance of an unfavourable outcome associated with an action. Mitigation refers to the reduction of risk. The mitigation of conflict can refer to strategies, processes, and actions undertaken to address the causes of conflict, as well as to influence the behaviours and perceptions of the people involved. Conflict mitigation strategies can be used in its prevention as well as an intervention in conflict and post-conflict situations.⁶⁸ Minimizing risk requires a systematic approach that aligns strategy, people, technology, processes, and knowledge with the purpose of assessing, evaluating, and managing the risks faced by a community. Mitigation can be carried out in three phases:

1. Short-term measures: Short-term measures in the mitigation of conflict involve the disarmament of actors and demobilization of factions involved in the conflict, the provision of humanitarian relief, ensuring the accessibility of essential services, clear and effective communications, and building trust between community actors.
2. Medium-term measures: Medium-term measures in the mitigation of conflict involve establishing systems to aid in the integration and recovery of resettled populations, the rebuilding of critical infrastructure, and the prioritization of peace and justice.
3. Long-term measures: Long-term measures in the mitigation of conflict include the entrenchment of good governance, the promotion of respect for rule of law, effective and equitable democratic systems, and a system for the unequivocal protection of human rights. Long-term measures must also include a commitment to systems of distributive justice, sustained efforts in community development, structures for healing psychological wounds, a plan for long-term reconciliation and the institution of reliable, effective and context specific economic policies.

Together, the measures within these phases can address the underlying factors of violence and transform its widespread ethos. Risk mitigation is most effective when it is based on a comprehensive, data-informed and long-term plan that is developed before a threat is realized.

Types of Risk Mitigation

Outlined below are four types of risk mitigation:

Risk Acceptance: The acceptance of risk is the most common decision when other mitigation methods are not feasible or if the costs of other mitigation efforts outweigh the cost of the risk itself. A community that does not have a high possibility of risk occurrence or the one that does not want to direct money towards risk avoidance will accept the risk.

Risk Avoidance: Risk avoidance are actions taken to circumvent any exposure to risk. It is generally the most expensive option for risk mitigation.

Risk Limitation: Risk limitation is to some extent, is a combination of risk acceptance and risk avoidance, as its goal is to restrict a community's exposure to risk by taking some pre-emptive actions. This is a common and economical approach to risk mitigation.

Risk Transference: Risk transference refers to when a third party is entrusted to combat a risk. Outsourcing is a common example of risk transference and can be beneficial community members at risk are not well equipped to address it without support, or must focus on other factors. There must though, be resources that enable the outsource of risk.

Risk assessment and Response Plans for violent conflicts

There are different taxonomies of violence that have affected many local communities in northern Nigeria. The most effective mitigation of, and response plans to violent conflicts include the establishment of early warning indicators along with steps towards the reduction of the systemic and wide variation of harmful conditions that lead to violent conflicts. The Response & Risk Mitigation Plan for the EWER Stakeholder's Forum and Community Safety Partners in Plateau, Kaduna, Zamfara and Taraba states is presented in diagram below.

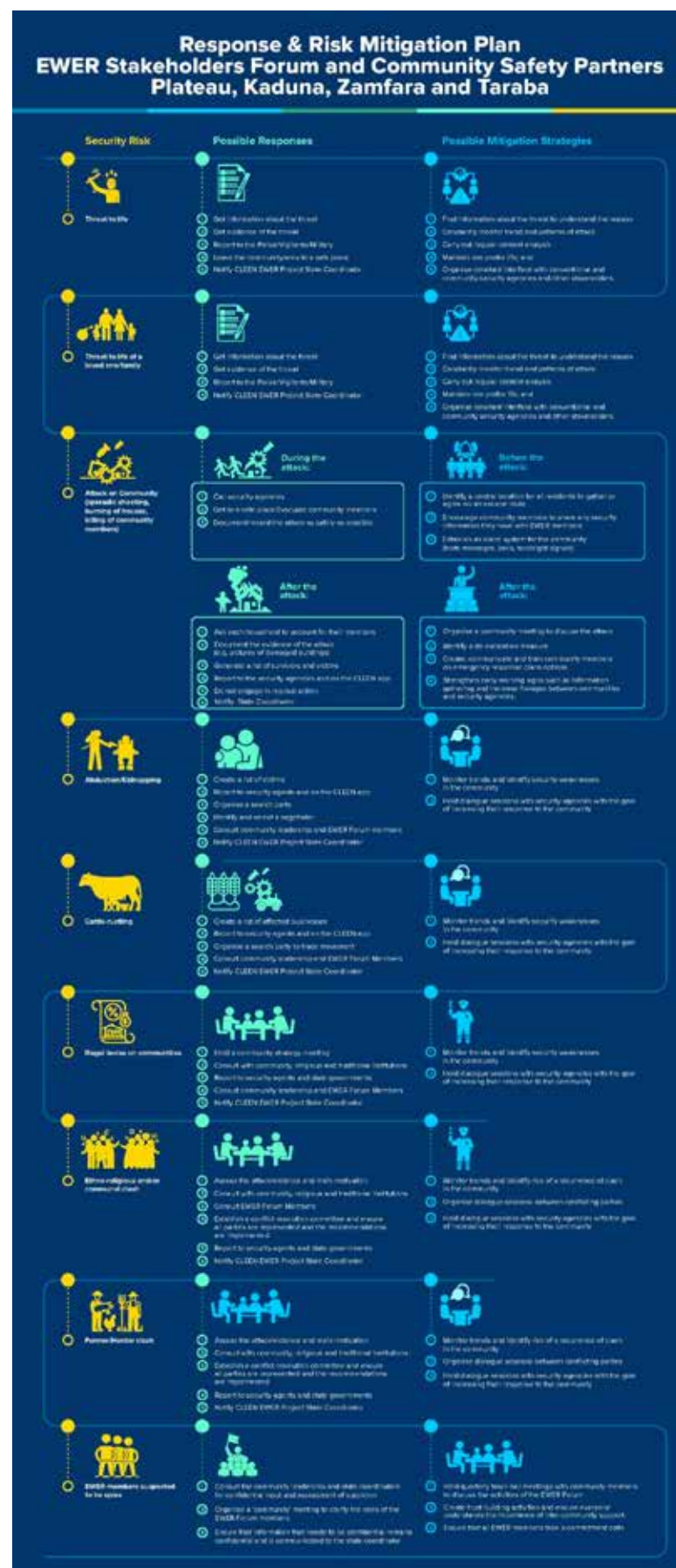


Figure 21.

Risk Mitigation Assessment and response plan in Plateau State

The risk hazards in Plateau state are many, and include bomb explosions, flooding, epidemics, gully erosion, dam overflows, communal clashes, terrorism and arson. Between 2001 and 2018, the state was plagued by unrelenting civil unrest. Examples of the unrest included conflict between farmers and herders, ethno-religious crises and the criminal activities of Boko Haram. These have resulted in extensive loss of life, the destruction of properties and the displacement many people, disproportionately affecting women, children and people with special needs. Between 2019 and 2020, the Plateau State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) coordinated a response plan to address the humanitarian crises. A plan accounting for multiple hazards was developed as a first step towards mitigating the impact of disaster, when accurate forecasting is difficult.

Based on the Establishment Act, the mandate to coordinate disaster management in Plateau state is carried out by the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA). Consequently, the multi-scenario plan ensures that the coordination of humanitarian players and the direction of resources towards the effective management of disasters is guaranteed under the guidelines established in the National Disaster Management Framework (NDMF). The Plateau State contingency plan lays out three multi-disaster scenarios: (1) Best case scenario, which addresses disasters affecting less than 5,000 people; (2) Most probable scenario, which identifies disasters affecting approximately 20,000 people, and; (3) Worst case scenario, which identifies disasters and the secondary threats of disasters affecting up to 300,000 people.

The Plateau State Contingency Plan has put sectorial response plans in place to address certain issues/events as the need arises. The sectorial response plans include refugee camp management, basic education, food and nutrition, information management, issues related to telecommunication and logistics, security and protection issues, access to clean water, issues relating to sanitation and hygiene (WASH), health issues, and emergency shelter and non-food item (NIFs).

In addition to the Plateau State Contingency plan, there are several local and international groups who are working to address Plateau's epidemic violence. These groups include the hybrid response between the military and the Civilian Early Response Security Force for Plateau State called Operation Rainbow; Search for Common Ground (SFCG) who are using their early warning system to collect data on violent incidents, tensions and rumours to address violence in the state. The system relies on SFCG trained community focal points and community leaders who send out reported information as daily alerts to service subscribers. Monthly trend reports are also prepared and sent to a network of stakeholders in order to garner support for community initiatives, to sensitize the media to EWER systems and to advocate for policy formulation.

The Interfaith Mediation Council's Conflict Management and Mitigation Regional Council (CMMRC) for Plateau State is a network that relies primarily on reports from

community peace observers, who contact CMMRC by calling, through WhatsApp, via direct messaging or through the use of two dedicated phone lines. CMMRC members are all prominent community leaders who are able to directly collect information about various issues and events during their daily activities (e.g., at religious gatherings). The information received is used by CMMRC members to coordinate early response activities which include mediations, mass instant messages about peace, messages conveyed over television and radio, and sensitization workshops.

Mercy Corps is also working to address conflict and violence in Plateau State. Their work has involved the training of a network of mediators in interest-based negotiations and supporting them in carrying out peacebuilding activities. Part of this support includes the mapping of the main conflicts in Plateau State by collecting information from the mediators. Although this is not intended as an early warning early response system, their data collection on conflict trends can be considered as a medium-term prevention strategy.

Risk Mitigation Assessment Plans for disaster in Kaduna State

Kaduna state is reported to have surpassed Borno state as the ‘epicentre of violence. More than 200 violent incidents resulting in over 1,000 fatalities, and 50,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) were reported by Amnesty International in 2020.⁶⁹ Conflicts over water and land use are escalating, and Ansaru, a less prominent Islamist group, has become active in the state. In its August 2020 report, the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) noted that “violence has been on and off in southern Kaduna since the aftermath of 2011 elections and it is on an escalating level”.⁷⁰ The military is at the fore front of risk mitigation and emergency response in Kaduna. The International Crisis Group reported that federal security forces (the army and the police) have launched several ‘anti-banditry’ operations in the North-West Regions of Nigeria, including in Kaduna.⁷¹ In May 2019, the Nigerian Air Force established its 27th detachment in Birnin Gwari, a region in Kaduna State, “to serve as a support base and blocking force for troops engaged in Operations Diran Mikiya and Sharan Daji.” Over recent years, hundreds of “men suspected of being part of herder-allied groups and criminal gangs” have been arrested or killed, with hundreds of kidnapped persons rescued, and weapons and ammunition recovered.

Along with the military, there are also civil approaches to EWER. The State Emergency Contingency Plan 2019 is a preparedness document which sets out a coordinated course of action to minimize risks that may result from an emergency. The plan adopted a multi-hazard model to accommodate predictable and non-predictable hazards and focused on the hazards with the highest probability including environmental disasters, conflicts, terrorism, communal clashes and epidemics.

The multi- hazard plan is a first step towards mitigating the impact of quick onset disasters when accurate forecasting is difficult and impact level cannot be ascertained. As is the case in Plateau state, the mandate to coordinate disaster management in Kaduna state is carried out by the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) based on its Act of Establishment. The Kaduna State Contingency Plan is designed for a response to the fourteen days (the “golden period”) immediately following a disaster. This plan is based on the premise that the state government has a primary responsibility to ensure the protection of its citizens and to respond to their needs in emergency and post-emergency situations.

Risk Mitigation Assessment and Response Plan in Zamfara State

In Zamfara state, a link between banditry, violence and illegal gold mining was observed. In a bid to curb the violence and return peace to local communities, military operations were launched by the Nigerian Armed Forces. These include Operation Harbin Kunama I, II, III and IV in 2015, to counter cattle rustling and armed banditry in the Dansadai Forest. The second part of Operation Harbin Kunama was launched in July 2017 to address cattle rustling, armed banditry and clashes between farmers and herders in North-West and North-Central Regions.⁷² The third phase was launched in May 2019 to end banditry in the forest areas of Katsina, Sokoto and Zamfara states in the North-West Region. In May 2020, Operation Accord was launched to tackle banditry in the North-West and North-Central Regions. In November 2020 it was reported that an operation launched to arrest illegal miners and reduce bandit activities was successful in in Zamfara and Katsina states.⁷³

Despite these military operations, the International Crisis Group concluded in its May 2020 report that security forces had been unable to subdue the armed groups, due to a lack of available human resources, logistics and equipment.⁷⁴ For example, troops lacked the motorcycles they needed to travel on roads that are impassable for cars and trucks. The army also lacked sufficient helicopters to deploy troops rapidly to remote locations. With an increased momentum of attacks, the Zamfara state government has shifted gears and has sought to curb violence by negotiating peace agreements with herder-allied armed groups and criminal gangs. The state established an ‘arms-for-cash program’ where bandits were offered amnesty during the surrender of their arms in exchange for money. During the implementation of the program, the police reported that approximately 1,000 herder-allied armed fighters and criminals renounced banditry and surrendered their arms in exchange for promises of money. Additionally, in November 2018, the state government, frustrated by what it called the Nigerian army’s “lackadaisical attitude” toward the armed actors, formed a Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) which initially recruited 8,500 young men. This initiative had limited effect because the army viewed the CJTF as a potentially parallel authority, and was thus unwilling to work with it. Additionally, the poorly armed vigilantes were

often outmatched by the groups they were meant to confront. A lack of support from the military led to the killings of vigilantes during the many confrontations in the state.

Government initiatives over the last twelve months demonstrated renewed efforts to negotiate peace with the herder-allied armed groups. For instance, the state's governor met the leaders of these groups in their forest camps or in the state capital and regional governments offered amnesty to the armed groups as incentive to end the attacks. This yielded some positive the release of people who had been held by herders since 2019, in exchange for the release of former members of herder-allied groups. The governors also pledged to disarm and disband the vigilante groups (a strong demand of herder-allied armed groups), rehabilitate and integrate herder-allied and other armed groups who were willing surrender their weapons, establish rural grazing areas that included settlements with social infrastructure including schools, hospitals, roads, electricity and water for the Fulani pastoralists. They also promised to rebuild houses destroyed by violence. Despite these government initiatives and promises, the violence continued.

Risk Mitigation Assessment and Response Plan in Taraba State

Like most states in Nigeria, Taraba State has experienced a great deal of violence between ethno-cultural groups and between religious groups. These conflicts have resulted in the displacement of people and whole communities, the wanton destruction of lives and property, human rights abuses and general ethos of insecurity, mutual distrust and suspicion. Underlying the violence are poor economic conditions in the State, longstanding conflicts over land, traditional leadership and political authority, and fears of marginalization.

The Taraba State government often relies on deploying the military to enforce order and restore peace. To strengthen the effectiveness of military in the state, officers are trained in Civil-Military Relations (CMR) as a strategy to mitigate the risk of human rights violations. However, in many instances, the conduct of military personnel fails to conform to the requirements of CMR, resulting in a perpetuation of distrust between the military and civilians.

Challenges in Risk Mitigation and Prevention

There are a number of historical, social and technical complexities in developing risk mitigation and prevention measures. First, despite the importance of mitigation measures in minimizing the effects of violent conflicts, such measures often receive negative reactions because good democratic processes are lacking. Second, some events are essentially unpredictable, which can be described as the third group under the taxonomy of known –knowns, known-unknowns and unknown-unknowns. Often there have not been enough observations of a particular phenomenon to measure its

likelihood or analysis of comparable information to observe its probability. Third, it is difficult to identify the impact and likelihood of risk. Exacerbated by a lack of data, the practical selection of likelihood and impact categories is often limited or done arbitrarily. Fourth, it is difficult to provide actionable information. Currently there are no risk assessment tools that can also inform resource mobilization. Fifth, discrimination based on religious and ethnic affiliation negatively impacts collaboration and the sharing of resources. Finally, there is lack of fair play, equal participation, accountability and transparency among community leaders.

Conclusion

Good and responsive leadership and governance at national, state and local levels are fundamental to the success of risk prevention and conflict mitigation systems. A priority for leaders must be ensuring the safety and security of its citizens, otherwise, ongoing insecurity and violence will continue. Current triggers of violence stem from the perpetuation of practices of exclusion and injustice based on perceptions of innate inequalities between groups. When an aggrieved groups assigns blame to another group or to the state for its experiences of economic, political, or social exclusion, it can lead to the festering of emotions, negative collective memories, and long-held frustrations, resulting in tension and violence. There is need for systems of inclusive decision-making which are fundamental to sustaining peace and to forming long-term policies that address the economic, social, and political conditions that have led to ongoing and devastating violence in Nigeria.

Fostering the participation of women and youth as well as the participation of the institutions, movements, and networks that represent them is crucial, as they are the community members with the deepest knowledge of the factors contributing conflict and the opportunities to transform it. Moreover, the changing dynamics of conflict are such that communities need to harness the potential that technology offers to improve data collection, monitoring and communication between law enforcement agencies and community actors, which would better enable immediate responses, especially in remote areas. The application of ICT and real-time data collection methods will help in the mitigation of risks associated with violent conflicts. Incorporating the theory of change is an important recommendation in this respect, as it emphasises the importance of mapping EWER networks and training partners to enhance their capacity in the detection of, and response to alerts about potential attacks. The intention here is the mitigation and reduction of violence against civilians.

Finally, in the four states where stakeholder mapping was conducted, each component of the EWER structure played a significant role in preventing violence and in mitigating conflicts. The importance of understanding, recognizing and attending to the multiple socio economic contributors to conflict must be underscored, along with importance of contributions from all community members in peacebuilding.

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Figure 22: Demonstration of how the CLEEN Mobile App works



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