



March, 2021

Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 on Nigeria's Most Vulnerable Communities Through Key Stakeholders



THE
KUKAH
CENTRE
FAITH • LEADERSHIP • PUBLIC POLICY

www.thekukahcentre.org



Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 on Nigeria's Most Vulnerable Communities Through Key Stakeholders

March, 2021

Contents

Abbreviations and Acronyms
Executive Summary

Chapter 1 – Outline of the Project

Introduction
Background of the Project
Context and Rationale
Objectives of the Project
Project Period
Target and Expected Outputs of the Project

Chapter 2 – Evaluation Approach and

Methodology
Overview of the Project Evaluation Strategy
Methodology
Sustainability
Lessons Learned and Good Practices

Chapter 3 – Key Findings

Project Activities and Key Findings
Key Achievements of the Project

Chapter 4 – Conclusions and Lessons Learned

Chapter 5 – Policy Recommendations

Annexes

Annex I:

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACRONYM	EXPLANATION
ABC	Adamawa Broadcasting Corporation
ATV	Adamawa Television
CDD	Centre for Democracy and Development
COVID-19	COVID-19 (Coronavirus)
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DITV	Desmims Broadcast Nigeria Ltd
ELA	Evaluation, Learning, and Accountability
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GCSI	Government Communication Service International
KDI	Kimpact Development Initiative
KSPC	Kaduna State Peace Commission
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
LGA	Local Government Area
LGFO	Local Government Field Officer
NCDC	Nigerian Center for Disease Control
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHS	UK National Health Service
NTA	Nigerian Television Authority
NPC	National Peace Committee
PRTV	Plateau Radio Television Corporation
PWD	Person with disability
SDN	Stakeholder Democracy Nigeria
SM	Social Media
TKC	The Kukah Centre
TV	Television
UNICEF	United Nations Children Emergency Fund
WHO	World Health Organisation

MITIGATING THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON NIGERIA'S MOST VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

#mitigatingCOVID19



Executive Summary

The Federal Ministry of Health confirmed the first case of coronavirus in Nigeria¹ in February 2020. While the nation was not adequately prepared in all sectors to control the situation, nevertheless, the Government of Nigeria through the Ministry of Health, designed measures to ensure that the outbreak in the country was controlled and contained quickly. However, the uncertainty and panic created by the sudden outbreak of COVID-19 was further exacerbated by emerging narratives of denial, misinformation, misrepresentation and in some cases, sheer ignorance about the virus outbreak. The sense of confusion generated by the pandemic was clearly a threat to many, and put many vulnerable communities at a higher risk. The impact of the pandemic on women and girls was also a thing of concern. At the national level, the intervention of the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 was not inclusive, with only one female, and no representation from key community stakeholders at the local level. Furthermore, it appeared to undermine the security implications of the outbreak, with no strategy on how to deal with threats to national security and stability. Consequently, the need to counter misleading

information and provide expert opinion for local communities became urgent and necessary. It was also important to mobilized key stakeholders that are accepted and respected in the communities to support strategies that will mitigate the effects of COVID-19.

The project intervention documented increasing threats to national security/stability, the perception of the community dwellers on the pandemic and the impact of COVID-19 of women and girls. These findings were used to engage community leaders, sister agencies, organizations and key stakeholders such as members of the National Peace Committee whose involvement helped support government interventions in maintaining and security. The project identified (6) states in Nigeria with vulnerable communities for its intervention. These states are: Adamawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Sokoto and Plateau states. In each of these states, twelve (12) local government areas (LGAs) were identified for the project implementation. This brought the total number of LGAs to seventy-two (72). Each of these LGAs had 2 local government field officers (LGFOs)

¹ [Ncdc.gov.ng/227/first-case-of-covid-19-Nigeria](https://ncdc.gov.ng/227/first-case-of-covid-19-Nigeria)

that carried out the community engagement and sensitization process, with 1 state coordinator and 1 gender coordinator to manage the intervention at the state level. The entire project implementation team was made up of one hundred and fifty-four (154) personnel, consisting of 12 state and gender coordinators and 144 LGFOs across the six states.

Media sensitization to raise general awareness about the pandemic and general preventative measures, as well as issues affected by the pandemic such as gender and security was also carried out. This sensitization process involved the use of both old and new media – Television, Radio and Social media platforms - in the dissemination of awareness content on COVID-19 to local communities. To enhance the effectiveness of the sensitization process, it was imperative that the local context of the communities (and regions), in terms of perceptions, attitudes and behaviours be considered. Consequently, media contents created were translated into 9 local languages apart from English language. These languages included Hausa, Pidgin, Fulfulde, Chamba, Bachama, Ham, Tyap, Sakwatanci, and Zabarma. Findings from the research and data collection process were also utilized to target certain components of the project that needed to be amplified. To ensure wider reach and coverage, as well as to enhance local engagement and advocacy, these contents were disseminated via TKC's various social media handles as well as the media handles of the LGFOs and the state and gender coordinators.

The efforts of the National Peace committee cannot be overemphasized as their involvement

throughout the course of the intervention called the attention of key stakeholders at the state and national levels to the research finding and policy recommendations from the project.

The project recorded considerable success in informing the public on COVID-19, and correcting common misperceptions about the pandemic especially now, that the second wave of the outbreak is very much eminent.

In the course of the project cycle:

- **118,202 persons across over 2,000 local communities were polled via the online research and data collection component**

- **142,478 persons by physical engagement with the help of the LGFOs**

- **Over 1.8 million people were reached via the social media sensitization and**

- **5 million viewers/listeners over radio and TV jingles (based on estimated communication outfit bandwidth coverage).**

CHAPTER ONE

Outline of the Project

Introduction

The Kukah Centre (TKC), with the support of the Conflict, Security and Stability Fund (CSSF) program in the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO) implemented the Project titled, “Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 on Nigeria’s Most Vulnerable Communities Through Key Stakeholders.” The project implementation took place in 6 states (Adamawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Plateau, and Sokoto). The purpose of the intervention was to sensitize at-risk communities about COVID-19 and mitigate the impact on security and stability through key stakeholders. This was achieved via research and data collection on the evidence of COVID-19 infections and shared the data with sister agencies directly involved in mitigating the spread of the virus. Furthermore, the project undertook the sensitization of communities on the various misperceptions and misleading information regarding COVID-19 by providing the accurate information needed to stay safe. Additionally, the project highlighted the impact of COVID-19 on women and children and identified strategies for mitigating them. Finally, the project identified and documented incidences of any threats to security and stability such as riots, protests, human rights abuses by civilians and security officials, and security threats occasioned by non-state armed groups. The project also actively sensitized the various local communities through media platforms such as TV, Radio, and Social media. Lastly, key stakeholders (members of the National Peace Committee (NPC)) were involved at the state and national levels to help facilitate the mitigation of any threat to national security and stability by engaging with key stakeholders and sectors of the society. The project was signed and officially kick-started on 1st August 2020.

1.1 Project Background

On 27 February 2020, Nigeria confirmed its first case of coronavirus. This was the first case of coronavirus in sub-Saharan Africa², brought into the country by an Italian citizen who worked in Nigeria. He had returned to the country a couple of days prior through the Muritala Muhammed

International Airport in Lagos, fell ill the next day and was transferred to the Lagos State Biosecurity Facilities for isolation and testing where it was confirmed that he had tested positive for COVID-19.

When the cases of infection started to rise in the country, the Federal government imposed total lockdown measures in 3 states (Lagos, Ogun and Kano states) and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), with state governments imposing curfews as well. Furthermore, a ban was placed on public gatherings of more than 50 people, including religious, social, and market gatherings.³ Several high-profile individuals and Nigerian key stakeholders were also victims of the virus. Nigeria was slated to be significantly affected due to its large population, weak health care system, and limited capacity to manage a pandemic of this scale.

1.1.1 Context and Rationale

The unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 pandemic came with huge socio-economic and financial impacts globally. Nigeria stood a high chance of being significantly affected due to its weak health system and limited capacity to deal with major disease outbreaks. While government responses were geared towards mitigating the spread of the virus, there were certain gaps/limitations in the government’s COVID-19 Response Strategy. Firstly, various narratives of denial existed that were tied to religious misinformation and/or sheer ignorance; this exacerbated the situation, forcing some communities to ignore government directives on the lockdown. Secondly, the government’s ability to manage emerging threats to national security and stability occasioned by COVID-19 appeared to be not well assessed. There was also limited information on the number of women experts, advocates and agents who were contributing towards mitigating the spread of COVID-19 and how they could be supported. The Kukah Centre (TKC) therefore saw the need and opportunity for intervention by countering misleading information and providing expert opinions for

² "Nigeria confirms first coronavirus case". BBC News. 28 February 2020. Archived from the original on 2 March 2020. Retrieved 6 March 2020 – via bbc.co.uk.

³ "Nigerian Government Places Lock-down Measures against COVID-19". Archived from the original on 20 March 2020. Retrieved 19 March 2020.

local communities to lessen the impacts of the virus.

Before beginning the intervention, TKC conducted a desktop research to identify the various gaps and limitations in the government's COVID-19 Response Strategy. The research was also intended to highlight ways of improving on these shortcomings and also provide a baseline for the project intervention. This baseline data was culled from open-source news sources and agencies such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), United Nations Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), Yar'adua Foundation and COVID-19 Intervention, State-based COVID-19 Committees, and Research reports from local communities.

1.1.1.1 Perceptions and Misinformation regarding COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic virus at its onset and indeed as it progressed was encircled by a ton of misguided judgements and misconceptions. The WHO noted that the "infodemic" due to the jetting flow of posts on social media - several of which were false -, contributed to 'shifting human action' concerning the pandemic. Nigeria was no exception. Narrowing the context to Nigeria, the baseline research revealed that while many undoubtedly accepted that the virus was genuine, many others believed and even argued that COVID-19 was fake, or that it was a virus for the rich and individuals who did not have the necessary wherewithal to travel out of the nation. These existing narratives of denial tied to religious misinformation or sheer ignorance contributed towards exacerbating the perception of the pandemic, forcing some communities to ignore government directives on lockdown.

Some of the most prevalent pieces of misinformation and denials identified regarding COVID-19, both in daily life and over open-source media included:

- ***If you can hold your breath for 10 seconds, then you don't have the virus:*** This post had over 30,000 shares globally on Facebook, amongst which Nigeria was inclusive of the countries where this information was disseminated.
- ***The use of Saline Solution:*** Also, on Facebook, a viral post claimed that saline solution of warm water and salt or vinegar is a remedy to Coronavirus; a claim left uncorroborated by any health institution. This was debunked by

the UK National Health Service (NHS) who emphasized that while gargling with warm saline water for adults suffering from sore throats was helpful, it was in no way a solution to cure COVID-19. The NHS further noted that that no vaccine and no specific antiviral medicine to prevent or treat COVID-19 had been produced.⁴

- ***Desecuritizing COVID-19:*** A twitter claim by Mallam Garba Shehu, the Senior Special Assistant on Media and Publicity to President Muhammadu Buhari, on 1st March 2020 berating the media for headlining the coronavirus pandemic instead of the daily death toll occasioned by malaria, appeared to downplay the severity of the virus. Though the tweet drew lots of consternation, it also garnered over 2,400 likes and 716 retweets in less than 24 hours.
- ***No Coronavirus in Nigeria:*** A viral picture went online suggesting that Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, former President of Nigeria, said that there was no coronavirus in Nigeria and that the Nigerian Minister of Health had lied. Although the image bore the logo of the Punch newspaper, a popular Nigerian magazine, all signs pointed to the image being doctored. Nonetheless, even with President Obasanjo also denying the claim, scores of Nigerians had already seen and distributed the image.
- ***Cocaine cures coronavirus:*** A verified Twitter account owned by a Nigerian music and entertainment developer with more than 190,000 followers identified as Bizzle Osikoya, tweeted a doctored image from a television breaking news segment, proposing that cocaine is a cure for coronavirus.

1.1.1.2 Underscoring the Impact on and of Women

Gender mainstreaming including the use of gender analysis and/or evidence was oftentimes lacking. Though some research was done on the impact of COVID-19 on pregnant women and nursing mothers, gender disaggregation on issues of COVID-19 was missing. For example, there was no information on the number of women who had been infected, recovered or died as a result of the virus. There was also inadequate information on increasing levels of domestic violence occasioned by the pandemic and how it particularly affects women and children, the number of women who had reported cases of domestic violence to the security officials, the number of women able to access healthcare and information on women who

⁴ At the time of conducting the baseline research, no accredited vaccine for COVID-19 had been developed.

had lost their jobs, businesses and other means of livelihood as a result of the pandemic. Furthermore, there was also limited information on how COVID-19 impacted the traditional roles of women, as well as no emphasis on the role of women in mitigating the spread of COVID-19. It is unsurprising that gender mainstreaming was not prioritized, as the intervention of the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 at its establishment was not inclusive, comprising only one female, and no representation from key community stakeholders at the local level. The various COVID-19 state-based committees also did not have the rates of infections disaggregated by gender, or communities; this made it more difficult to assess the impact of communities that were most affected.

COVID-19 and Pregnancy

At the onset of the pandemic, it was not currently known if pregnant women were more vulnerable to COVID-19 than the general public, nor whether they were more likely to have serious illness as a result. However, it was expected that the bodily changes that occur during pregnancy, was likely to place expectant women at a higher risk for some infections. According to the WHO, pregnant women have had a higher risk of severe illness when infected with viruses from the same family as COVID-19 and other viral respiratory infections, such as influenza. The World Health Organisation warned that the transmission of the virus from a pregnant mother to the new born was feasible. Due to limited studies, COVID-19 had not been detected in breast milk; however, it is not known for sure whether mothers with COVID-19 could spread the virus via breast milk yet as research was still ongoing. The United Nations Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) warned that COVID-19 containment measures could disrupt life-saving health services such as childbirth care, putting millions of pregnant mothers and their babies at great risk. Countries with the expected highest numbers of births in the 9 months since the pandemic declaration were indicated to be: India (20.1 million), China (13.5 million), Nigeria (6.4 million), Pakistan (5 million) and Indonesia (4 million). Most of these countries had high neonatal mortality rates even before the pandemic and there was a high possibility that these levels would increase with COVID-19 conditions. UNICEF further noted that although evidence suggested that pregnant mothers were not more affected by COVID-19 than others, countries needed to ensure the accessibility of antenatal, delivery and postnatal services. Likewise, emergency services were also to be made available for sick newborns who are at a higher risk of death, and the necessary

support provided to new families for breastfeeding, medications, vaccines and the basic nutrition needed to keep their babies healthy.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic made it difficult for pregnant women to access maternity services at the hospitals across public and private hospitals in the country. Exacerbated by the lockdown, many hospitals and healthcare providers either shut down or halted the provision of certain services such as antenatal sessions so the women could practice physical distancing. Due to the poor level of the health services in Nigeria and across the states in Nigeria especially in the northern region, healthcare services were recorded as inaccessible by women and girls during the pandemic lockdown, thereby increasing the risk for women and girls of contracting complicated health issues especially pregnant women. A Public Health Physician, Dr. Chioma Nwakanma, noted that the COVID-19 pandemic made it increasingly difficult for pregnant women to access maternity services at the hospitals. She further indicated that, “about 19,000 women died in pregnancy, childbirth or within 42 days after childbirth in Nigeria between February and May 2020.”⁵

COVID-19, Women and Insecurity

Disease outbreaks like COVID-19 threaten the health and security of all. But women and girls are disproportionately affected. During epidemics, measures taken to protect populations and keep health systems afloat leave women and girls vulnerable to violence especially in underdeveloped countries. For instance, while quarantines and school closures were put in place to contain the spread of the virus, protocols were never established to protect girls and women from violence during the outbreak. This left women and adolescent girls vulnerable to coercion, exploitation and sexual abuse. According to the World Health Organisation, 35% of women globally have already experienced some form of sexual and gender-based violence in their lifetime. In some crisis settings, this number skyrocketed to more than 70%.

Incidence of Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

The rate of gender-based violence was estimated to increase during the pandemic as there was a concern that the lockdown measures put in place to curb the spread of COVID-19 would lead to an increase in sexual and gender-based violence. As predicted, in Nigeria, the reported cases of rape across the country largely skyrocketed during the lockdown, leading to riots and protests by women across the country. Human rights campaigners

⁵ <https://t.co/gnHuxqe0dM?amp=1>

rallied in Nigeria's capital city Abuja, where more than 200 protesters marched around the police headquarters in Abuja amidst the pandemic, to raise awareness about violence against women after a series of high-profile rape cases sparked an outcry in the country. Protesters also took to the streets in other states across Nigeria such as Edo and Kano states, to demand urgent action to combat rape and sexual violence against women.

Figure 1: Number of reported cases of GBV in Northern Nigeria from March-April 2020

Table 1: Number of Reported Cases of Gender-based Violence in Nigeria During March and April 2020 by State and Geopolitical Zone

Geopolitical Zone	State	No. of Cases Per State		No. of Cases per Geopolitical Zone	
		March	April	March	April
North East	Adamawa	16	20	50	115
	Bauchi	9	30		
	Borno	6	26		
	Gombe	19	39		
North West	Kaduna	6	23	52	87
	Katsina	23	33		
	Sokoto	23	31		
North Central	Benue	30	52	67	156
	FCT	5	31		
	Nasarawa	5	20		
	Niger	2	8		
	Plateau	25	45		

Source: Ministry of Women and Children Affairs.

Considering the three states placed under full lockdown by the federal government, the increase in reports of domestic violence cases in April was even more profound, as the number of cases rose from 60 in March to 238 in April, an increase of 297%. By contrast, in Benue, Ebonyi, and Cross River states, which were placed under less stringent lockdowns by their respective state governments, the increase in cases was only 53% between March and April. In fact, in Ebonyi state, where the governor refused to place the state under total lockdown, the number of cases decreased from March to April. Nevertheless, the effect of the pandemic lockdown was very apparent. The federal government only decided to place Lagos state, Ogun state, and the Federal Capital Territory under full lockdowns. This was expanded to include Kano state, the most populous city in the North of the country, in mid-April. Local state governments elsewhere in the country tended to implement some lockdown restrictions, but these were not as strict as the ones imposed by the Federal Government.

Additionally, not only was there limited information on the increasing levels of domestic violence occasioned by COVID, there was no database on the exact number of women and girls affected by the various forms of gender-based violence in selected communities compiled on a state and national bases, and no clarifications of the how and where these cases were reported to.

1.1.1.3 Rising Levels of Insecurity

The government's ability to manage emerging threats to national security and stability occasioned by COVID-19 was not well assessed. This was likely due to the fact that the virus was quite novel, therefore, it appeared to undermine the security implications of the outbreak, with no strategy on how to deal with threats to national security and stability. Since the advent of the lockdown in March and the subsequent ease in restrictions, there was a noticeable rise in insecurity in the Northern region of Nigeria. Killings, kidnappings, banditry and insurgency hold sway amid the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, since January 2020, Boko Haram insurgency, murderous activities of bandits, kidnappers, herdsmen and sectarian violence have claimed no fewer than 2,771 lives in Nigeria.⁶ While there was an upswing beat in the military's fight against Boko Haram in the early weeks of the pandemic, nonetheless, there were also reports of attacks on villages by suspected herdsmen and bandits, with dozens reported killed by armed criminals on motorcycles who raided five villages close to the border with Niger in Sokoto state. Also noteworthy was a targeted attack in Kajuru, Kaduna State, which included numerous women and children as part of the recorded victims.

Northern Nigeria has been wracked by years of violence involving clashes between rival communities over land, attacks by heavily-armed criminal gangs and reprisal killings by vigilante groups. While there have been lots of vigilante activity organized at the community and state levels to curb the rate of criminal activity, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic only intensified this struggle as additionally, due to the humanitarian crisis as a result of the Boko Haram conflict in the northeast, over 1.8 million people are internally displaced. This leaves the people even more vulnerable to issues such as acute malnutrition and diseases such as cholera. Sokoto and Zamfara are two of such states that have reported a rise in the rate of malnutrition in children.

Apart from the lack of a database linking the advent of COVID-19, the violence affecting northeastern

⁶ <https://guardian.ng/news/killings-kidnappings-banditry-hold-sway-amid-covid-19-pandemic/>

Nigeria is multi-faceted, but much of it can be divided among major overlapping categories. Moreover, with the confirmed number of cases of coronavirus climbing, there was a likelihood that the rising rates in insecurity could hamper Nigeria's response to fighting the pandemic. Based on reports from the PTF, the Ministry of Defense concluded plans for the commencement of "Operation Accord:" a major military exercise aimed at flushing out insurgents and other armed criminals from the contiguous states of Kaduna, Niger, Katsina, Zamfara, Sokoto and some parts of Kebbi state. The multifaceted layers of criminality involved and recurrent nature of the armed criminalities in the regions called for effective mechanisms to mitigate the threats they pose to peace and security in the affected states in particular, and Nigeria in general.

1.1.1.2 Other Gaps/Limitations

Some of the other gaps that were identified during the desktop research included:

- **Communication gap:** While the government had taken steps to inform the public on COVID-19 via social and traditional media, there was an issue of access because not all individuals possess the tools and gadgets to access the information.
- **Insufficient information and analysis:** regarding data presentation on the infected cases, there is no breakdown of data according to communities. Instead, this stops at the state level. Therefore, it was difficult to ascertain the communities that are most impacted. Furthermore, there is little or no information regarding what makes certain communities/states more vulnerable to COVID-19.
- **Insufficient test kits:** while the NCDC has been doing a commendable job so far at rapid testing and diagnosis of individuals, at the inception of the pandemic, the capacity for quick testing was limited to people who had recently traveled internationally or had contact with those confirmed or suspected to have the virus. Furthermore, the number of test kits and manpower required to carry out the testing remained inadequate. Therefore, it was safe to assume that cities and urban areas would be given priority at testing over some of the most vulnerable communities which due to a lack of infrastructure such as good roads, are also some of the hard-to-reach places.
- **Local community stakeholders not fully engaged:** in terms of awareness and sensitization, not enough been done at the community level. This is hugely impacted by the fact that local community leaders such as

religious and political leaders have been left out of the loop. There was a need therefore for a strategy to be designed aimed at community stakeholder engagement. This should encourage communities to be part of programme design, implementation and evaluation.

Bridging this gap

Against this backdrop, TKC undertook a 6-month project geared towards creating awareness and sensitizing at-risk (local) communities within 6 selected states (Adamawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Plateau and Sokoto) about the threats of COVID-19 and mitigating the impact on security and stability via key stakeholders, via:

- * **Research and Data Collection:** This involved:
 - Collecting existing information by conducting rapid qualitative and/or quantitative assessments to learn about the communities (knowledge, attitudes and perceptions about COVID-19, most at risk population and infection rates, communication patterns and channels, language, religion, influencers, health services and situations).
 - Identifying any increases in security threats in the 6 states and surrounding geopolitical region and,
 - Highlighting the impact of COVID-19 on women and children as victims of domestic violence, their inability to access quality healthcare and the various roles women can play as agents of change.
- * **Sensitization via active use of media such as TV and Radio stations, and social media:** This involved:
 - Developing messages and materials to transmit health protection steps in line with World Health Organization's message,
 - Correcting any forms of misleading information that have been spread to these local communities by their (religious) leaders. These messages were also adapted into local contexts by translating them into the dialects of the communities to reach as many local audiences as possible.
 - Mainstreaming gender equality in the awareness and sensitization process as well as ensuring all media content were prepared and presented using gender-sensitive language.

- * **Deployment of key community stakeholders:** to support the sensitization process at the local level by ensuring a more inclusive approach and engagement of the community in contributing to mitigating the spread of the virus.
- * **Engagement by the National Peace Committee members to help tackle threats to threats to security and stability:** the current response strategy appears to be driven solely by the government. The NPC helped facilitate the mitigation of any threat to National Security and stability by engaging with key stakeholders and sectors of the society - PTF, COVID-19 State Committees, Nigerian Governors' Forum & Office of the National Security Adviser via back-channel meetings and private calls.

The results and analysis of the data collected will provide strategies for engagement with the government and relevant agencies and devise measures that will make the COVID-19 response strategy more robust.

1.2. Objective of the Project

The project aimed to sensitize at-risk communities about the threats of COVID-19 and mitigate the impact on security and stability in Nigeria through key stakeholders with specific objectives as follows:

- Collect data and information on perspectives, beliefs, and attitudes of communities towards COVID-19 that will help support the monitoring and evaluation of the project implementation.
- Facilitate effective communication processes through key stakeholders such as religious leaders, traditional rulers, and women-led organisations to limit the spread of COVID-19.
- Advocate for a change in perception of local community dwellers towards COVID-19 in areas of risk communication and safety measures, by deploying local experts who speak the language, understand the socio-cultural contexts and have the skills to articulate and communicate the emerging threats associated with COVID-19.
- Deploy technology, the media (social and traditional media) to facilitate and augment project implementation throughout the intervention.
- Identify and document increasing threats to security and stability – such as riots, protests, abuses by security officials and security threats occasioned by non-state armed groups during COVID-19 lockdown.
- Deploy the voices of key stakeholders, such as

the National Peace Committee, to counter emerging threats to national security and stability.

- Pay particular attention to the way COVID-19 and responses to it affect women and girls and identify strategies to address them in selected communities.

1.3 Project Period

The Project commenced in August 2020 and was expected to last for five and a half months, ending mid-January 2021. However, the project was approved for a no-cost extension till 18th March 2021, to improve on successes gained during the lifecycle of the project and earn some quick wins through project activities, as well as strengthen sustainability plans.

1.4 Target and Expected Outputs of the Project

The beneficiary groups are local communities in 6 states (Kaduna, Plateau, Sokoto, Kano, Katsina and Adamawa). They were selected on the basis of the criteria that – they are states with emerging violence and potential for riots; they have increasing levels of human rights abuses by the security forces; they have high levels of religious extremist ideologies that present COVID-19 as a western product and they are states with high levels of IDPs, slums and vulnerable communities that make the spread of COVID-19 faster, and the security implications uncertain.

The plan to intervene with this project reflected the wishes of the beneficiaries, especially the key stakeholders from the communities whose voices represent that of the people.

The expected outcomes of the project included:

- Participant community leaders and members understand and are better informed about negative narratives on COVID-19 and how to oppose them.
- Key community stakeholders at the national level are provided with the data, information and key policy strategies for engaging the government and mitigating any threat to national security.
- Selected community leaders and members, especially women, can apply the information about COVID-19 to help mitigate its spread
- Community stakeholders jointly implement action plans that help reduce the spread of the virus and
- Community resilience will be built and infected cases will reduce.

CHAPTER TWO

Evaluation Approach and Methodology

2.1 Overview of the Project Evaluation Strategy

2.1.1 Evaluation Aim

The overarching aim of the evaluation is to assess the overall performance of the project and to determine the extent to which the project intervention facilitated peace against emerging threats to security and stability in the selected states, as well as the percentage of people who had a change in perception towards COVID-19, as indicated in the project's intended outputs and outcomes. This section captures the implementation processes, successes, impact, and challenges, and examines whether or not the intended targets were met. The specific objectives of the evaluation are to:

- a) Assess the effectiveness of the research and data collected in the course of the as well as how key stakeholders (members of the NPC) used the project findings in mitigating threats to national security.
- b) Assess the extent to which the project implementation process influenced community leaders' and members' understanding, in increase in COVID-19 awareness and correcting any misinformation on the virus.
- c) Assess the extent to which the quality of the recommendations and contributions made by the intervention influenced decision making by members of the community leaders, community members, and members of the National Peace Committee.
- d) Assess the extent to which the intervention influenced other COVID-19 Projects to promote policy engagement and discussions.
- e) Make recommendations on how to improve project design.
- f) Make recommendations on the sustainability of the Project Intervention.

The overall aim is to determine the relevance and fulfillment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of the project. The evaluation provides information that is credible and useful, that enables the

incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of the project beneficiaries, The Kukah Centre and its donor.

2.1.2 Use of the Evaluation

The evaluation findings will be useful to a broad range of internal and external stakeholders of TKC. These will include TKC Project Teams, the Federal government, the Presidential Task Force (PTF) on COVID-19, state governments of Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Plateau, Sokoto and Adamawa states, state ministries of health/COVID-19 Task Forces in the six beneficiary states, Security agencies and other relevant organisations. The indirect users of the evaluation findings will include the Evaluation, Learning, and Accountability (ELA) team at TKC, Donors, the FCDO, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) Consortiums.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 Evaluation Scope

The evaluation applied the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's/ Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) evaluation criteria: Relevance, Effectiveness, Sustainability, and Impact. This was used as the main analytical framework. The evaluation focused on the six selected states (Adamawa, Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Sokoto and Plateau), covering over 100 communities across the 72 selected LGAs. The respondents for the evaluation were selected from implementing partners, State coordinators, National Peace Committee, as well as targeted communities and field officers across the 72 local governments in the six selected states. As it was a short-term project, the evaluation was conducted monthly, to improve efficiency as well as positive affected the impact of the project especially in the area of community engagement via the questionnaire. For instance, the e-questionnaire deployed for the data collection was reviewed and modified to respond to the changing dynamics and enhance the utility of the research and data collection process.

2.2.2 Methodological Approach.

The evaluation has both formative and summative purposes (i.e. to improve TKC's future good governance programmes, as well as determine the extent to which the project intervention met its goals) and as such, it relied heavily on qualitative research methods⁷ as well as a review of secondary data sources.⁸ The research identified the various existing pieces of information in the government's COVID-19 Response Strategy such as the perceptions and misinformation regarding COVID-19, the impact of the virus on women and children, and the role of women as agents of change in mitigating the spread of the virus. The research also highlighted the rising levels of insecurity since the advent of the lockdown and restriction on movement. This identification was necessary to underscore the various gaps and limitations that exist in the COVID-19 Response Strategy and explore ways of improving on these shortcomings.⁹ The research methods were chosen to be complementary and to allow for cross-verification, corroboration, and triangulation of evidence to be collected from different sources which were done virtually and in coalition with other agencies engaged in similar projects. Thus, there was an enhancement in the reliability, validity, and timeliness of data that was collected for the 20 weeks of the community engagement. The evaluation methodology was process and outcome-based with the employment of triangulating data analysis procedures.

2.2.3 Evaluation Findings

This section presents the findings of the evaluation based on the review of the various project documents obtained from the project staff as well as primary data obtained through the 144 LGFOs. To facilitate the use of the findings, with a focus on key priority questions identified for this evaluation.

2.2.3.1 Relevance

Prior to the project implementation, there was an inception baseline research that tested the hypothesis and validity of the project. This research identified several gaps that TKC aimed to fill via research and data collection, sensitization

via the use of old and new media and the deployment of key stakeholders at the local, state and national levels. Consequently, this section is a measure of whether the project intervention was in line with the local needs and priorities of beneficiary targets. Thus, the evaluation took into consideration the following questions:

1. The extent to which the intervention mitigated the spread of COVID-19 and its impact on the most vulnerable people in the six selected states?

The community engagement and sensitization process reached out to over a hundred thousand people over the project duration, covering over 2000 communities across the 72 LGAs. This physical engagement process was supported by an aggressive media advocacy campaign via new and old media. Through old media (TV and Radio), over 5 million viewers/listeners were reached, based on the estimated communication outfits' bandwidth coverage, with over 1.8million people reached via social media.

A second indicator of success was the level of support from the various LGAs engaged. The feedback from the community stakeholders was very favourable and has gone a long way in supporting the engagement process, for in the succeeding months of the community engagement process, at least 10 of these local community leaders have been interviewed, with over 60 others spread across the six states verbally giving their appreciation and support for the project objectives. There was also increased engagement and support by key stakeholders for the project, at the state level.

The back-channel negotiations of the NPC with key stakeholders at the state and national levels also enhanced the utility of the data collection process. This is because, data from the field proved beneficial in carrying out engagements with key stakeholders in real-time. NPC engagements facilitated the process of getting across the data findings to the relevant entities, such as cost in hiring consultants and/or lobbyists to engage these leaders.

⁷ Sample of survey questionnaire for the project data collection

⁸ Baseline research report on the impact of COVID-19 among Nigeria's most vulnerable communities

⁹ TKC-CSSF-DFID Project Database prepared by The Kukah Centre (TKC) for the project titled, "Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 on Nigeria's Most Vulnerable Communities." 2 The sister agencies included agencies such as the World Health Organization (WHO Reports), Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), Centre for Democracy and

The use of local delivery partners i.e., the state coordinators and LGFOs was very efficient, as using indigenes in the implementation ensured that there is increased learning at the local community that could be stepped down by beneficiaries of the project; a critical mass of the people in the six states have been sensitized on the issues surrounding COVID-19 and a large number of LGFOs have been trained and sufficiently equipped to continue sensitization even after the project.

2. *The extent to which the targeted communities and audience know the intervention and understand its objectives?*

The LGFOs, being locals of the communities engaged, meant that they have a better grasp and understanding of the peoples and culture of the location(s) engaged, and so, were better able to advise on the best strategies to employ to achieve maximum results. At the inception of the project and before the start of the community engagement and sensitization process, training sessions were conducted for the project implementation team to introduce the LGFOs to the project and educate them on all its components, , understanding the questionnaire to ensure data collection was properly carried out, conducting interviews especially when soliciting information on Advocacy, COVID-19 prevention strategies , as well as the best approaches of engaging and sensitizing their various local communities via different media platforms.

3. *The extent to which the intervention changed the perception of the vulnerable people towards negative narratives on COVID-19 and how they opposed them?*

Assessing change in attitudes and perceptions of the survey respondents was crucial to the project, as it was a major indicator of the effectiveness of the implementation approach and sensitization process. The context of COVID-19 and the increasing levels of insecurity and economic down-turn meant that people's behaviour and attitudes to the programme implementation were likely to be affected by different factors that needed to be measured and which might be outside the scope of the project. However, measuring change in attitudes and behaviour require time, and observing how the implementation action affects these cannot be achieved within a short span of less than six

months. Another challenge was how to measure change in attitudes towards COVID-19 in the midst of increasing levels of insecurity; people's attitudes are likely to be drawn towards safety first rather than their perceptions on COVID-19.

To overcome the challenges of time, the e-questionnaire was modified to include questions aimed at analyzing a change in attitudes based on the media sensitization content put out daily on COVID-19 awareness. By the end of the project intervention, over 25% of the people engaged had their wrong perceptions about COVID-19 changed from the community engagement and media sensitization.

2.2.3.2 Effectiveness

This assessed the extent to which the interventions' objectives were achieved, or were expected to be achieved. The following evaluation criteria were considered:

1. The extent to which the intervention achieved its objectives

A review of the objectives of the project vis-à-vis its achievements confirmed the objectives were achieved to a very large extent across the six states of the intervention.

- Research and data collection on the perspectives, beliefs, and attitudes of communities towards COVID-19 was achieved as a total of 118,202 respondents were polled across the six states.
- Facilitating effective communication processes through key stakeholders such as religious leaders, traditional rulers, and women-led organizations to limit the spread of COVID-19 was also achieved as the buy-in of 144 stakeholders consisting of 121 males and 23 females, were engaged for the project. Community leaders and state-based COVID-19 committees were also engaged to gain their support.
- Advocating a change in the perceptions of local community dwellers towards COVID-19 in areas of risk communication and safety measures: This was achieved by deploying local experts (Field Officers) who speak the local languages and understand the socio-cultural contexts of the communities engaged. At the inception of the project, the LGFOs received training from the project staff and were equipped with the adequate knowledge/ skills to articulate and communicate the impacts of COVID-19, and

sensitize the local residents. These 144 LGFOs acted as advocates for peace and educated their fellow community members. Over the project duration, the LGFOs were able to reach out to 142,478 persons.¹⁰

- Deploying old and new media to facilitate and augment project implementation throughout the intervention: TKC carried out media sensitization via old (television and radio stations) and new (social media platforms – WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) media to raise general awareness about the pandemic and general preventative measures, as well as issues affected by the pandemic such as gender and security. Contents were created and translated into local languages to enhance the sensitization process. throughout the intervention, over 100 content were created. To ensure wider reach and coverage, and to improve local engagement and advocacy, these contents were disseminated via TKC's various social media handles as well as the media handles of the LGFOs and the state and gender coordinators. Over 1.8 million people were reached via the social media sensitization and 5 million viewers/listeners over radio and TV jingles (based on estimated communication outfit bandwidth coverage).
- Identifying and documenting increasing threats to security and stability: this objective was achieved using the research via data collection with the use of e-questionnaires; questions documenting these cases were included and this tool was able to capture some of these instances.¹¹
- Partnerships with Religious Bodies, Traditional Institutions, and some CSOs: the project partnered with at least 4 organisations for collaboration on other projects, based on the data generated from the project intervention. Newsletters based on the project findings were also shared monthly to 10 sister agencies, and organizations conducting similar projects or working within the context of COVID-19.
- Deploying the voices of key stakeholders, such as the National Peace Committee, to

counter emerging threats to national security and stability. This was achieved as 15 members of the National Peace Committee were engaged with the use of monthly report sharing of the project findings with them; the project also captured four members using some of the project findings to promote peace¹² via their various platforms, with recorded messages of 7 members encouraging citizens to adhere to the NCDC COVID-19 protocols.

- Lastly, examining the impact of COVID-19 on women and girls to identify the necessary policies to employ was actualized, through the use of the information collected from the field.¹³
2. *How the intervention increased the involvement of the National Peace Committee members in sending out positive messages and mitigating emerging security issues as well as their engagement with key sectors of the society*

Across the six states, the rate of insecurity is not consistent and differs in degree from state to state. Nonetheless, there was a general increase in the level of insecurity in November and December, compared to other months of project intervention. Cases such as Farmer-Herder conflicts, Banditry, Kidnapping, the impunity of security personnel, the ripple effects of the #EndSARS protests were among some of the prevalent forms of insecurity identified. Evidence from these states also showed that there was an increase in the engagement of community leaders and national peace community members to engage the government to help boost security in some of these areas. This was possible as a result of the utilization of the existing information that was gathered via the project research data that was shared with members of the NPC i.e., via the the monthly project reports. This was evident in some of the video interviews and written opinion pieces by some members in newspapers to mitigate violence and engage the security outfit of the country more. These members included Gen. Abdusalami A. Abubakar, GCFR, Bishop MH Kukah, Alhaji Sa'ad Abubakar III – the Sultan of Sokoto, and John Cardinal Onaiyekan.¹⁴

¹⁰ Some pictures captured by the field officers during their community sensitization

¹¹ Newsletters on documenting threats to national security and stability

¹² Video recording of members of the National Peace Committee using their office to propagate peace

¹³ Project gender report

¹⁴ Monthly report for October, November and December

3. *The extent to which the implemented activities contributed to achieving the objectives of the Intervention*

The various implemented activities by the project were targeted to ensure it fulfill the intended outcome and objectives. By the end of the intervention, the project achieved a percentage of 99.9. Some of the activities carried out include: capacity building of the project implementation team via project trainings¹⁵; monthly strategic meetings with the team were also carried out by the project staff to ensure close monitoring of the intervention; media sensitization via old and new media for advocacy, education on COVID-19 and its associated threats; research and data collection to assess the impact of the pandemic on vulnerable communities; and deployment of community stakeholders to support the advocacy process. Overall, the various activities implemented as highlighted¹⁶ were essential to the achievement of the project objectives.

4. *Challenges that affected the Project Intervention*

Several challenges were identified during the project intervention:

Gender disaggregation for the number of positive cases from the various state-based C-19 committees proved challenging and futile, as the committees indicated avoiding publishing disaggregated figures for avoidance of stigmatization of the infected patients by the public.

In Adamawa state, the State monitoring and working group has been dissolved as daily routine activities in the state have returned back to status quo. Any reports on C-19 will be made by the designated epidemiologist who will send reports to the Secretary of the State Government (SSG).

The dissolution of this group impacts the engagement and sensitization process as local community residents might relapse into a false sense of security and assume that C-19 and its effects no longer pose threats to the society. This also means that the contents disseminated aimed at C-19 awareness might not be as effective in sensitizing the people.

1. **The Lockdown:** the total lockdown imposed by the Federal government in Lagos, Ogun and Kano states, and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), as well as the curfews put in place by several state governments led to restrictions in movement. This necessitated some changes to the project design and approach, that led to delays in implementation
2. **Rising Community Expectations** through the project: While not entirely negative, this was a challenge as for several of the communities engaged, there was an implicit sense that the local community residents expected more than what the project was expected to deliver. This was to be expected as some of the communities engaged were post-conflict locations, with poor economic wellbeing of many members of the community. This saw majority of the community members that were engaged request for some financial compensation before acquiescing to participate in the survey. This challenge was managed by clearly explaining the objectives of the project clearly and sufficiently, assuring the communities during the engagement process that their concerns would be directed to the relevant authorities, and emphasize the point at which the responsibilities of the donor end.
3. **Difficulty getting respondents to take part in the survey:** The engagement majorly occurred in rural communities, and a great number of the community members are farmers. The LGFOs often had to go out to the farms to engage with these community members, often travelling long distances. Also, as the project cycle fell in between their harvest seasons, a number of the residents were usually too busy with their farm activities to interact with the LGFOs.
4. **Security of the LGFOs and coordinators:** to ensure the safety of the LGFOs as well as the coordinators, a situational analysis of all the LGAs was carried out so that wards/communities/LGAs that posed huge amounts of threats would be documented and avoided. Also, the coordinators were provided with letters of Introduction by TKC and the LGFOs, e-ID cards to facilitate a smoother engagement process. Towards the last 3

¹⁵⁻¹⁶ Final Monitoring and Evaluation framework report

months of the intervention, there was a significant increase in insecurity (some states more than others). LGFOs reported increasing forms of insecurity such as banditry and kidnappings across various LGAs which necessitated the avoidance of some of the communities and the need to provide an updated conflict analysis report on the 12 identified LGAs in each state. Furthermore, the #EndSARS protests¹⁷, which increasingly turned violent and chaotic due to the disruption of the protests by thugs and hoodlums ultimately resulted in the looting of warehouses in search of COVID-19 palliatives. This triggered a wave of insecurity such as theft, vandalization and destruction of public property and so on. These events necessitated the imposition of curfews in three out of the six selected states (Adamawa, Kaduna and Plateau states), impacted the community engagement process and affected the LGFOs' community engagement. With the imposition of the curfews and the general chaos in many of the communities, the LGFOs in the affected axes were asked to focus on virtual engagements till such times when the curfews were lifted.

5. Security of the LGFOs and coordinators: to ensure the safety of the LGFOs as well as the coordinators, a situational analysis of all the LGAs was carried out so that wards/communities/LGAs that posed huge amounts of threats would be documented and avoided. Also, the coordinators were provided with letters of Introduction by TKC and the LGFOs, e-ID cards to facilitate a smoother engagement process. Towards the last 3 months of the intervention, there was a significant increase in insecurity (some states more than others). LGFOs reported increasing forms of insecurity such as banditry and kidnappings across various LGAs which necessitated the avoidance of some of the communities and the need to provide an updated conflict analysis report on the 12 identified LGAs in each state.
6. The #EndSARS protests: The #EndSARS protests, which increasingly turned violent and chaotic due to the disruption of the protests by thugs and hoodlums ultimately resulted in the looting of warehouses in

search of COVID-19 palliatives. This triggered a wave of insecurity such as theft, vandalization and destruction of public property and so on. These events necessitated the imposition of curfews in three out of the six selected states (Adamawa, Kaduna and Plateau states), impacted the community engagement process and affected the LGFOs' community engagement. With the imposition of the curfews and the general chaos in many of the communities, the LGFOs in the affected axes were asked to focus on virtual engagements till such times when the curfews were lifted.

7. Network connectivity: This was a dominant issue in some of the local communities engaged where the quality and strength of the network connection was quite abysmal in some of the communities engaged. This meant that several of the respondents were not able to fill the online forms; timely reporting of project activities was also affected.

Although these challenges varied from state to state, some were beyond control and unpredicted; nonetheless, they have also helped to inform decisions towards a reviewed approach and new strategy.

2.2.3.3 Efficiency

The project effectiveness is highlighted below in line with fair and accurate reporting on the evaluation and to inform the key lessons and make policy recommendations. It also assesses the cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit.

1. *The extent to which inputs were converted to outputs in the course of the intervention*
 - * The project implementation had an appropriate monitoring and evaluation framework, which did not lack smart indicators selected to specifically address the aim of the project while the objectives were neither at diversity nor with the objectives of the project during its cycle.
 - * The presence of a baseline data aided the setting of relevant targets against which the achievements of the project intervention was measured against. The presence of this baseline data made the

¹⁷ The #EndSARS Protests was a series of mass protests against police brutality in Nigeria and an advocacy for the disbandment of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) by the government. The SARS, which was a unit of the Nigerian Police Force, were accused of human rights violations such as citizen harassment, unlawful arrests, kidnappings and extra-judicial killings.

establishment of attribution easy for the project. Some instances are highlighted below:

1. To carry out the community engagement process, 360 LGFOs were initially expected to be trained and deployed across all 72 LGAs in the six states. However, from the initial conflict analysis report conducted at the project inception, funds were reallocated to accommodate additional project activities. This reallocation affected a number of variables such as the total number of LGFOs to be accommodated per LGA. Consequently, the number of LGFOs reduced from 5 LGFOs per LGA, to 2 each. This brought the total number of LGFOs across all 72 LGAs who were deployed for the community engagement and sensitization process to 144.

To ensure that the quality of the work did not reduce and deliverables were achieved:

- * e-questionnaires were utilized to make the engagement process less tedious ie favoring 'click-to-fill' responses as opposed to paper-based questionnaires.
 - * Virtual trainings were conducted for all the LGFOs on best practices for a smoother engagement process.
 - * The media sensitization component of the project was also expanded from just the use of old media (TV and Radio jingles) to include new (social) media, for a wider audience reach.
2. Translation of the jingles into indigenous language was efficient and created effectiveness for the project as it increased the enthusiasm of the locals in engaging with the project and provided a better understanding of the issues surrounding COVID-19.
 3. The back-channel negotiations of the NPC with key stakeholders at the state and national levels enhanced the utility of the data collection process as

data from the field proved beneficial in carrying out engagements with key stakeholders in real-time; excluding the NPC engagements would have caused extra effort in getting across the data findings to the relevant entities, such as cost in hiring consultants and/or lobbyists to engage these leaders.

4. The use of local delivery partners i.e., the state coordinators and LGFOs proved to be more efficient than having staff from the central coordinating team travel to the states of implementation. For one, the use of indigenes not only saved unnecessary expenses such as travel costs, using indigenes in the implementation means that they have a better grasp and understanding of the peoples and culture of the location(s), and so, were better able to advise on the best strategies to employ to achieve maximum results.
5. The findings from the data collection process was relevant in creating content for public sensitization.
6. Data sharing with other organisations such as the UK Government Communication Service International (GCSI), Stakeholder Democracy Network (SDN) and the BBC Media Action Team Nigeria ensured that the objective of the project is amplified. TKC also availed this data to a number of other groups including the various state-based COVID-19 committees and other COVID-19 projects. For instance, the Kaduna State Peace Commission (KSPC) utilized the data of TKC's identification of communities that had had little to no sensitization on COVID-19 in selecting the areas where their intervention would occur.

2. *Efficient use of resources*

The project resources were well utilized from the accounting reports. **The project ensured that** inputs purchased for the performance and delivery of the project activities were obtained in a cost-effective manner and in compliance with TKC's policy on Procurement. For instance, 2 creative studios were contracted to produce

animation jingles for the media sensitization component of the project. Before their services were enlisted, both times, cost/price analysis was performed by requesting for their respective vendor bids and quotations. These were then evaluated based on product quality, technical compliance with specifications, total cost, and the vendor's acceptance of The Kukah Centre's terms and conditions per TKC procurement policies. Another instance when the project saved cost was in the translation of the indigenous jingles produced. As there were already existing English scripts of jingles created by TKC media project team, payments did not have to be made to rewrite the scripts, as they were only translated. Moreover, the approval of a no-cost extension to improve on quick wins and strengthen sustainability plans was possible due to the efficient management of human and financial resources.

2.2.3.4 Impact

The impact is defined as 'positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended'. The evaluation of the impact of the project intervention took into consideration the following:

1. *How often feedback was provided to the key community stakeholders and other COVID-19 Projects to promote policy engagement and discussions*

Newsletters based on the project findings were shared on a monthly basis to sister agencies, and organizations conducting similar projects or working within the context of COVID-19. The feedback from the other organizations and sister agencies who made use of findings from the newsletters shared with them were positive through the course of the project. There were also instances whereby influenced by the project activities and some of the findings shared, several organisations reached out to TKC for collaboration. They include: the Kaduna State Peace Commission (KSPC), Kimpact Development Initiative (KDI), GCSI, Caritas Germany, Knights of St. Columbus, the Hungarian Government, amongst others.

2. *The extent to which practical steps were taken by key stakeholders and/or community leaders to help change peoples' perceptions and facilitate peace against emerging threats to security and stability*

Evidence from video interviews and written opinion pieces in newspaper reviews by some members of the National Peace committee indicates that these stakeholders implemented the findings from the project data in their various recommendations. On recommendations from the intervention, there were also recorded messages of peace, where the NPC members also urged the masses to adhere to the COVID-19 protocols.

Over the intervention cycle, the project engaged all 15 members of the NPC through monthly report sharing of the project findings. From this engagement, 4 of these members utilized findings from the project reports in their video interviews and written opinion pieces in newspapers. These members include Gen. Abdusalami A. Abubakar, Bishop MH Kukah, Alhaji Sa'ad Abubakar III - the Sultan of Sokoto and John Cardinal Onaiyekan. Some of the members were also directly engaged to collect their opinions and feedback; these opinions informed part of our policy recommendations.

2.3 Sustainability

This is a measure of whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn and activities officially cease. The Sustainability criteria provides an assessment of the likelihood that the benefits produced by projects will continue beyond the project cycle period once external funding has ended. Although the project was considered a pilot phase with the potential for expansion or redesigning, the sustainability of the intervention was assessed by providing answers to the following questions:

1. *How is the engagement by the key stakeholder's likely to continue, be scaled up, replicated, or institutionalized after funding ceases?*

As the project is a pilot phase, there is high potential for both multiplier and sustainability effects. For starters, the implementation of the pilot phase has provided some benefits to the identified local communities in terms of awareness and sensitization on COVID-19 and has addressed a real need in the community in a participatory way, offering an inclusive process and working with the enthusiasm and the capacities of the community itself by promoting local community stakeholder engagement. This has helped to create community ownership of the project and led to high levels of commitment from

the project participants as well as the wider community. It has also created self-sustained networks of key community leaders, local peace architecture including women-led organisations as necessary local delivery partners by TKC through this project. From the data findings and reports by the LGFOs, the community engagement process was generally welcomed and well received by the people engaged. For example, the community leader of Girei LGA in Adamawa state was on record in expressing his gratitude to TKC and its donors for their efforts at sensitizing the community on COVID-19 as this was the first engagement that had occurred in the community since the incidence of the virus.

However, beyond these successes, more still needs to be done if Nigeria is to flatten the curve and eradicate the virus. There is need for improvement on the successes and address the challenges and observations from the pilot phase via a second phase which should be aimed at not just sensitization on **longer-term secondary impacts of COVID-19, but also include the alleviation of these impacts such as** including issues that deal with economic survival of the people. This would not be possible without funding and media contents to drive the sensitization process, despite the willingness of the network of key community leaders and local delivery architecture already put in place by TKC.

2. *To what extent do the project implementation team, community members and leaders 'own' the outcomes of the intervention and are willing to carry it forward?*

The project implementation team, community members, and leaders owned the outcome of the project. To achieve the aim of the project, 3 outcomes and 5 outputs were designed. The 5 outputs chosen adequately achieved the expected outcomes by sensitizing the selected local communities on COVID-19, gaining the support and buy-in of local community stakeholders in promoting the potency of the sensitization process to ensure sustainability and utilizing the influence and network of members of the NPC in engaging with and at the highest levels of government. Furthermore, to ensure sustainability, there was increased learning at the local community that could be stepped down by beneficiaries of the project; a critical mass of the people in the six states have been sensitized on the issues surrounding COVID-19 and a large number of LGFOs have been trained and sufficiently

equipped to continue sensitization even after the project. However, the extent to which the project implementation team, community members, and leaders are willing to carry it forward is dependent on adequate funding to sustain the engagement and sensitization process.

3. *To what extent will the benefits of the intervention continue after completion and without overburdening key stakeholders?*

The benefits of the intervention after completion of the project without overburdening key stakeholders might likely continue as many of the stakeholders themselves, supported the intervention and were willing to amplify the efforts of TKC by lending their voices to the sensitization process. On the part of sister agencies and organisations, interested in the project activities, several organisations reached out to TKC for collaboration, one of which is the Kaduna State Peace Commission (KSPC), who invited TKC to collaborate on two levels: the first, data sharing on findings from Kaduna state on communities that have had little or no government intervention, to help the KSPC select areas where the masks will be shared. Secondly, helping to disseminate facemasks and handbills on how to properly wear facemasks through the project LGFOs.

4. *What are the likely factors that will influence the non-sustainability of the intervention and how can these be managed?*

Some of the factors that might influence non-sustainability of the intervention include:

- Unprecedented rise in the levels of insecurity: this can be managed by leveraging the support of the government for the project to provide security in areas and LGAs that have been identified as prone to conflicts.
- Rising cases of infection of COVID-19: with the introduction of COVID-19 vaccinations, it is likely that there will be a reduction of infection cases. This depends on how well the government is able to ensure that the implementation is properly carried out when the vaccination process begins.
- Network connectivity: this can greatly hinder the media sensitization sustainability plan. This plan involves continuing the community sensitization process after the conclusion of the intervention via Telegram, where target

beneficiaries of the project, turned advocates, could continue the aim by taking community ownership of the project and continue the awareness on the pandemic.

2.4 Lessons Learned and Good Practices

- Getting the buy-in of key community stakeholders and gatekeepers at the community level to ensure a smooth data collection process and community sensitization is considered good by the evaluation as it ensured the transparency of the data collection process without bias as those who couldn't speak English were engaged with the local language.
- The training of the project implementation team members on the best approaches of engaging key stakeholders and sensitizing members of their various local communities via different media platforms, understanding the questionnaire to ensure data collection was properly done; also, COVID-19 prevention strategies and how to conduct interviews especially when soliciting information on Advocacy, was good practice as it improved the capacity of the team to implement project activities across these state effectively.
- The intervention allowed the document highlight of cases of infections, impact on women as a result of COVID-19, perceptions changed towards COVID-19 from newly informed religious and socio-cultural leaders through community sensitization and media engagement was considered great by the evaluation as it ensured that the use of the Research and Data collection by other COVID-19 Projects to promote policy engagement and discussions in the intervention states and beyond.
- The selection of the project implementing team which was based on the recommendation of the state and gender coordinators who recommended field officers that are knowledgeable about the terrain of the communities understand the languages with gender inclusion and religious diversity made it easy for them to work more effectively.
- The increase in the level of involvement of the National Peace Committee members also played a huge role in sensitizing and facilitating the mitigation of threats to

national security and stability at a different level with the findings from the project report have been utilized findings from the project report in their video interviews and written opinion pieces in newspapers as respected members of the society recommendations/view from them played a very crucial role especially during the by-elections, #EndSARS protest as well as the ongoing kidnapping and banditry in the context of C-19 in the states of the project focus.

- Do no Harm principle - throughout the project intervention, TKC strongly adhered to the Do No Harm principle, ensuring that all personnel involved in the project were out of harm's way, and employing strategies to avoid exposure to danger. The safety of women and children was also prioritized, in accordance with TKC's policies on Child Protection and Safety and the Prevention of Sexual Harassment.

Conclusion

The evaluation found clear evidence that the intervention of the project achieved its objectives. The participatory nature of the project design via the baseline survey and involvement of key stakeholders even at the community level set a good precedent for ensuring sustainability. The project, therefore, remains important to the community as well as essential at the national level. Going forward, in light of the successes recorded by the project, increasing the number of direct and indirect beneficiaries by expanding the number of LGAs to engage and sensitize will increase the amount of impact that the project will generate. Moreover, in light of the second wave of the virus, expanding the intervention to other states such as Lagos and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, where cases are still very high should be considered. This can best be achieved through sustained funding support to the implementing partner to have a continuous phase of the intervention in high-risk areas across the country.

CHAPTER THREE

Key Findings

3.1 Project Activities

The project was designed to sensitize at-risk communities about the threats of COVID-19 and mitigate the impact on national security and stability through key stakeholders. To achieve this, 3 outcomes and 5 outputs were articulated. These included:

Outcomes

Outcome 1: Research and data collection carried out in 72 LGAs in 6 selected states to document cases of COVID-19 infections, the impact of COVID-19 on women and threats to national security and stability.

Outcome 2: 25% of people with perceptions changed towards COVID-19 through community sensitization and media engagement.

Outcome 3: Documenting a 40% increase in involvement of the National Peace Committee members in sending out positive messages and mitigating any emerging security issues viz-a-viz the project intervention.

Outputs

Output 1: Project Implementation Team members to be selected, trained and deployed.

Output 2: Research and Data Collection on the Impact of COVID-19 in Vulnerable Communities.

Output 3: Media engagement to sensitize people in 6 states by the end of the project via different active media platforms.

Output 4: Deploy key community stakeholders across 72 LGAs in 6 states to support sensitization of communities on COVID-19 via research, media and engagement.

Output 5: Members of the National Peace Committee engage key government agencies to

sensitize and facilitate the mitigation of threats to national security and stability.

The project activities occurred at two levels (pre-implementation and implementation phases), and are outlined below:

Pre-implementation Phase

The following activities occurred during the pre-implementation phase:

3.1.1 Activity I: Baseline Research¹⁸

A baseline research was conducted on the six target states the project was implemented in. This data was culled from open-source news sources, government and sister agencies.¹⁹ The research identified the various existing pieces of information in the government's COVID-19 Response Strategy such as the perceptions and misinformation regarding COVID-19, the impact of the virus on women and children and how women can act as agents of change in mitigating the spread of the virus. The research also highlighted the rising levels of insecurity since the advent of the lockdown and restriction on movement. This identification was necessary in order to underscore the various gaps and limitations that exist in the COVID-19 Response Strategy, and explore ways of improving on these shortcomings.

3.1.2 Activity II: Strategic meeting with State & Gender Coordinators

A second pre-implementation activity that occurred were the series of strategic meetings held from 30th to 31st July 2020 with the 12 project State and Gender Coordinators that had been identified to be engaged on the project. The purpose of this meeting was to get their buy-in to the project and introduce all aspects of the project components to them.

Implementation Phase

Project Team Members to be Selected, Trained and Deployed (Output 1)

¹⁸ Project Database prepared by The Kukah Centre (TKC) for the project titled, "Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 on Nigeria's Most Vulnerable Communities"

¹⁹ The sister agencies included agencies such as the World Health Organisation (WHO Reports), Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD). It also included open-source articles and research reports from relevant states and local communities.

3.1.3 Activity I: Recommendation and Selection of LGAs and Local Government Field Officers (LGFOs) by State & Gender Coordinators

After the strategic meeting held with all 12 State & Gender Coordinators, the State & Gender Coordinators were asked to jointly recommend the LGAs²⁰ that the project was to be implemented in. Each state was to select 12 LGAs each, where community engagement and sensitization was to be carried out, leading to a combined total of 72LGAs.

The coordinators also recommended 144 individuals (at 2 persons per LGA), that would serve as Local Government Field Officers (LGFOs), engaging and sensitizing local residents in the various communities throughout the project duration.

3.1.4 Activity II: Screening of the LGFOs

All 144 persons that were recommended as LGFOs across the six selected states were screened by the Project Staff. These individuals were tested on their eligibility for the role via a Google form questionnaire which tested for their expertise and writing skills.

3.1.5 Activity III: Training of Project Implementation Team by the Project Staff

The training sessions for the LGFOs took place from Tuesday Friday 28th August to Tuesday 1st September 2020. The essence of the training was to introduce the LGFOs to the project and educate them on all its components, inform them on the expectations required of them as LGFOs and train them on the best approaches of engaging and sensitizing their various local communities via different media platforms. These training sessions were held virtually via Zoom. By the end of the training sessions, all 144 LGFOs (75 males and 69 females) had been successfully trained.

3.1.6 Activity IV: Media Content Dissemination and Selection of Indigenous Local Languages

Following the virtual training sessions, the LGFOs were introduced to their respective state and gender coordinators and added to their various state-based WhatsApp groups for ease of communication and continuous interaction.

Media Content Dissemination

All LGFOs with their state and gender coordinators were asked to conduct a situational analysis of their various LGAs and develop strategies on how best to carry out the sensitization process. Additionally, they were encouraged to kickstart the dissemination of content via social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn and via TKC website and podcast channel.

Selection of Indigenous Local Languages

As jingles were to be aired on TV and Radio in selected stations across the six states, the use of several Nigerian languages increased the likelihood of wider reach and engagement by local communities. To that effect, all state and gender coordinators were asked to recommend languages apart from English that the TV and Radio jingles would be translated into. The criteria for the selection of these languages are that the languages must be dominant indigenous languages, and spoken across as much of the state as possible. These recommended languages are listed below:

Selected Indigenous Languages:

SN	States	Language(s)
1.	Adamawa	Fulfulde, Chamba, Bachama
2.	Kaduna	Tyap, Ham
3.	Kano	Hausa (Kano Hausa), Fulfulde
4.	Katsina	Hausa (Kano Hausa), Fulfulde
5.	Plateau	Hausa, Pidgin
6.	Sokoto	Sakwatanci, Fulfulde, Zabarmanci

3.1.7 Activity V: Deployment of Project Implementation Team and Start of the Community Engagement and Sensitization Process

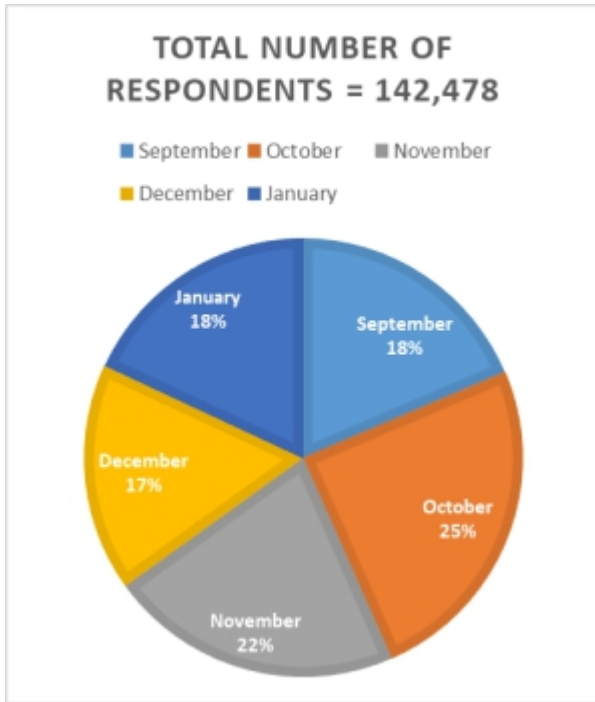
After the training sessions, the implementation team was deployed to begin the data collection process. The research and data collection process were conducted via e-questionnaires (google forms)²² and shared out to residents in the 72LGAs from 31st August 2020 – 8th January 2021. A total of 142,478 individuals, 18 years and above, were

²⁰ The list of the 72 LGAs the project will be implemented in is attached as Annex I.

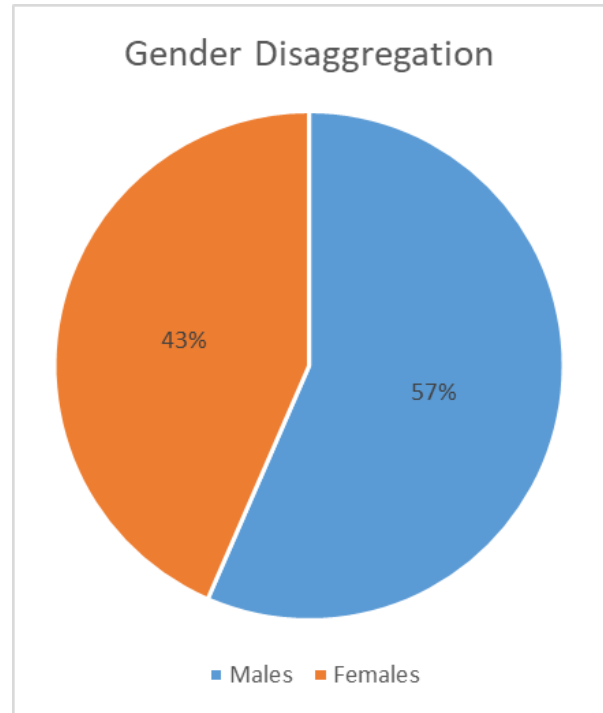
²¹ All training sessions were recorded and clips from the sessions shared on the various social media platforms of The Kukah Centre (TKC).

²² See Annex II (a and b) for a copy of the Questionnaire.

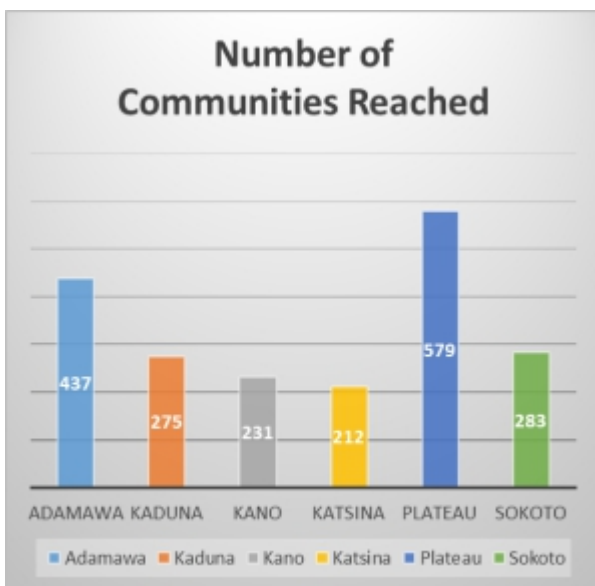
interviewed using the online survey. The interviews were conducted in English, Hausa, and/or the respondent's indigenous language. The use of several Nigerian languages was to reduce the likelihood of a non-response bias.



Gender: The proportion of male and female respondents showed 80,528 (56.5%) males and 61,950 (43.5%) females respectively.

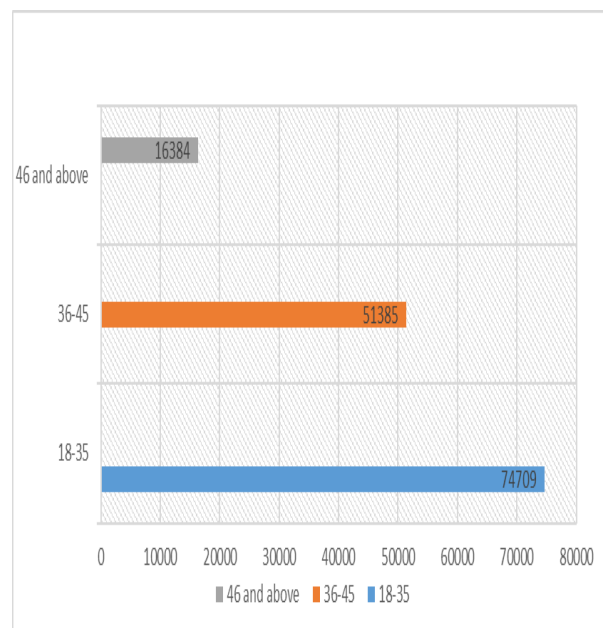


The community engagement and sensitization process also reached a total of 2017 communities across the 72 identified LGAs.



Age-Group: The age-group with the highest frequency of respondents was 18-35 (52.4%) with 74,709 persons. 51,385 persons (36.1%) were in the 36-45 age group, with 16,384 persons representing the lowest frequency in the 46+ age group (11.5%).

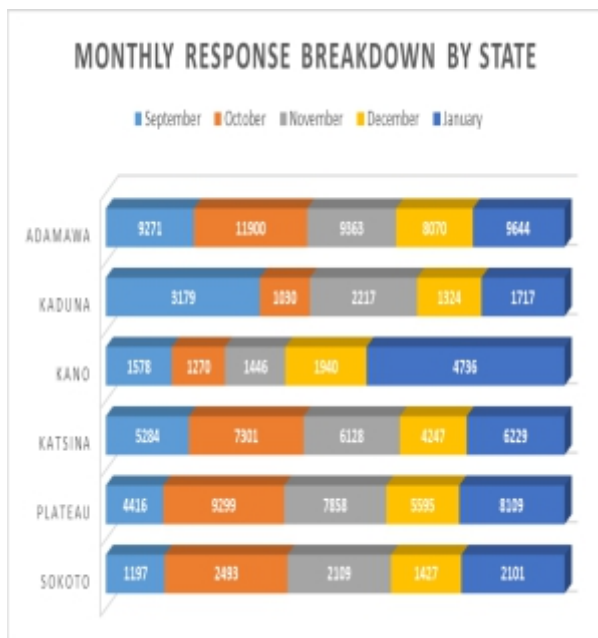
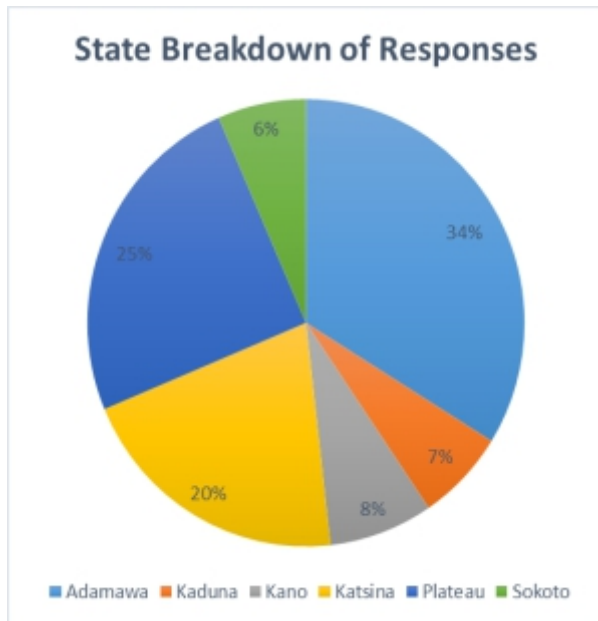
Age Distribution of Respondents



Demographic Distribution

The demographic distribution of the respondents was analyzed by gender, age group and state.

State: The total number of responses gathered and collated from the google form survey carried out by the 144 LGFOs across the 72 LGAs. Adamawa State has the highest number of responses with 9271 respondents who properly filled and submitted the google forms, Plateau reported 4416 respondents, 3179 for Kaduna State, 1578 for Kano State, 5284 for Katsina State and 1197 for Sokoto State.

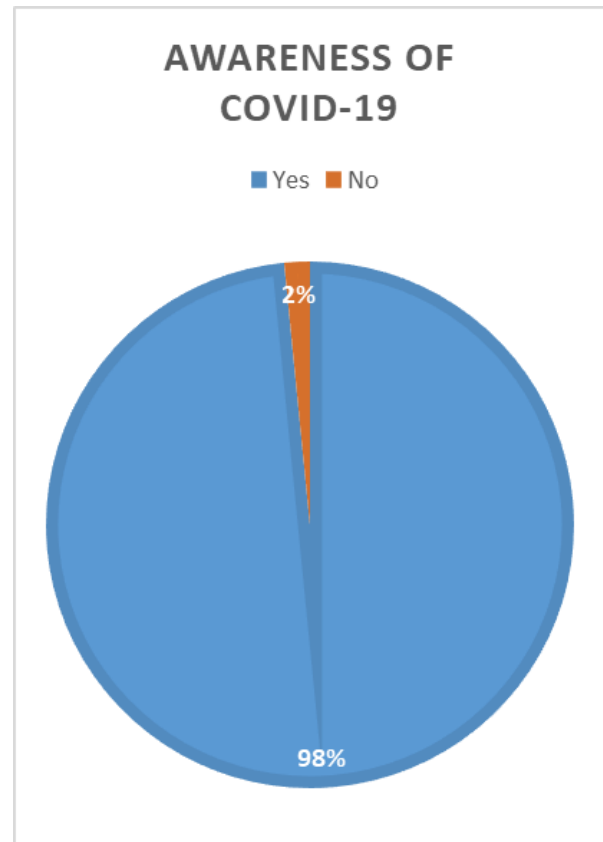


Key Findings from Online Survey

Awareness On COVID-19 Outbreak

116,352 (98.4%) of the respondents indicated their awareness of COVID-19 while 1,850 persons

comprising 1.6% of the total number of persons polled across the six states claimed not to be aware of the virus.



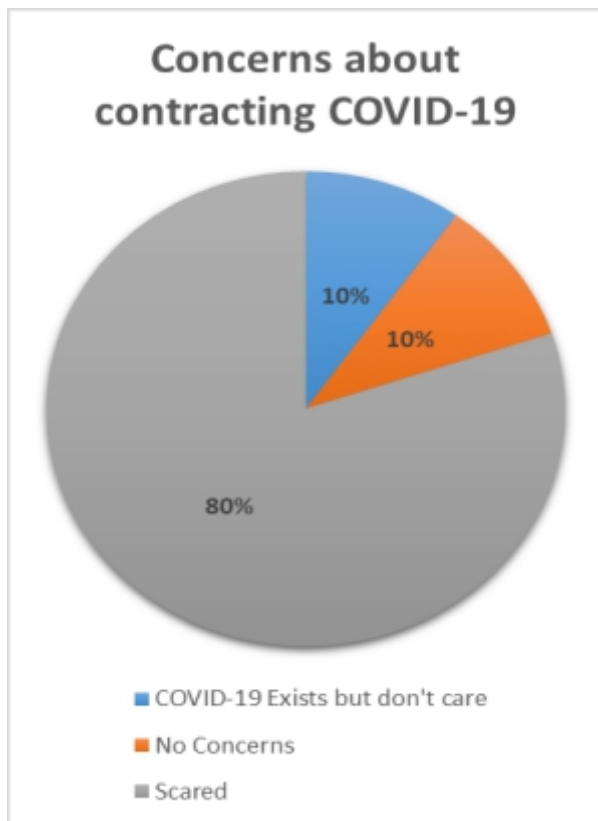
Identified Narratives and Misperceptions regarding COVID-19

While close to 80% of the total respondents acknowledged the reality of COVID-19, various other narratives existed. Apart from individuals who believed that the pandemic was fake, one of the most prevalent narratives included the fact that COVID-19 was a punishment from God. Others specified that it is a rich man's disease, with some mentioning that COVID-19 was brought into the country by politicians. Even more interesting were mentions of COVID-19 as a **“world-wide prank aimed at depopulating the world.”** It is worrisome to note at this stage that some Nigerians do not think that COVID-19 outbreak is real. This emphasizes the need for continuous sensitization on the threats of COVID-19 and the importance of preventative measures.

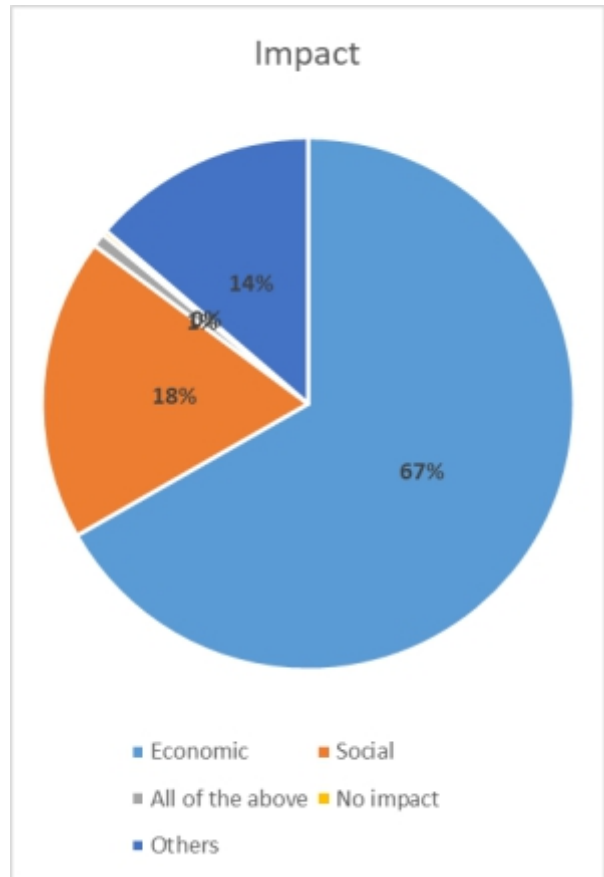
Concerns about Contracting Covid-19

On concerns about contracting COVID-19, an overwhelming 80% of respondents consisting of 92,226 persons indicated that they were scared of contracting COVID-19 while 22,861 persons noted that they had no concerns regarding COVID-19.

1166 persons (13%) stated that COVID-19 does not exist, while 672 persons (8%), though they believe it exists, do not care about the impact of the virus. Unsurprisingly, 5059 persons (57%) indicated that they are scared of contracting the virus with 1974 individuals (22%) making observations such as, “the approach to managing COVID-19 by stakeholders [is] confusing”, “Do not like how some doctors are going about managing the situation”, “Unsure of the accuracy of the figures reported by NCDC” and “COVID-19 is over-hyped and politicized.”

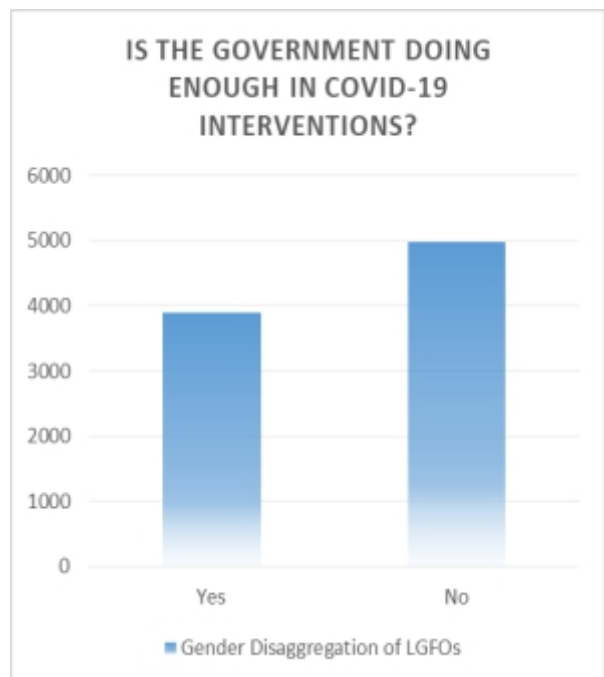


Impact of COVID-19 and the Lockdown
 67% of the respondents reported that the greatest impact of COVID-19 and the lockdown on them is mostly economic, with 18% highlighting that the impact affected their social lives most of all. Interestingly, 14% of the total respondents mentioned other various reasons as having an impact on them during the lockdown. Apart from the disruption to school and studies for many students, several noted the lockdown as an opportunity to spend more time with family, one woman particularly pointed out that, “the lockdown gave me the opportunity to get my husband's attention.” For others, it was a period for them to tap into their unexplored potentials and develop new talents. Yet also, many just spent the lockdown period idly.



Rating of the Federal Government COVID-19 Intervention

Opinions on the Federal Government's COVID-19 Response Strategy was split between approval and disapproval.



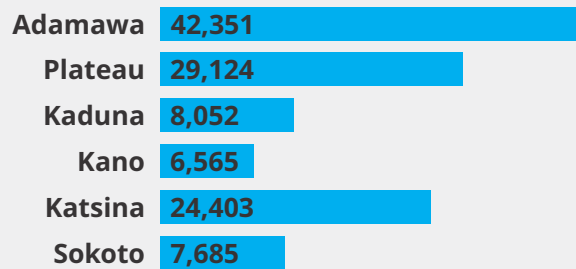
Issues of Gender: Impact on Women (and Children)

Disease outbreaks affect men, women and children differently. Following the impact of previous epidemics like the Ebola and Zika virus between 2014-2016, it was observed that the impact was felt differently.²³ On one hand, using Nigeria as context, males experience more of a direct impact of any disease outbreak mostly from an economic stand view. However, the females are not left out, because they play significant caregiving roles in almost all, if not all societies across the country especially in rural settings.

Women in Nigeria still form an underclass and lack equality of opportunity, both in the contributions they make to development and the benefits they receive from it. This is true of all women in Nigeria, though education, class, ethnicity, kinship, marital status and religion play a role in mitigating or elaborating this effect. The geographical division between the North, mainly Muslim, and the South, predominantly but not exclusively Christian is also an important dimension of the struggle for gender equality. The religious dimension has become more prominent when political liberalization allows for a greater degree of freedom. The vulnerability of women and girls in Northern Nigeria is more glaring due to the cultural and religious practices that further widens the gap between gender equality and equity. Northern Nigeria is particularly notorious for being high in poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, insecurity and currently, blatant abuse of the health and reproductive rights of women and girls across core northern states.²⁴ It is therefore unsurprising that human development outcomes for girls and women are worse in the North. The impact of inequality on the lives of girls and women is reflected starkly in health and education outcomes, nationally and between the North and South. During crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, women make essential contributions as leaders and frontline responders.²⁵ Paying attention to women's needs and leadership is expected to strengthen the #COVID19 response across the globe to provide a more holistic approach.

The gender aspect of the project aimed to access and provide gender mainstreamed information on core issues such as accessibility to healthcare services, incidences of gender-based violence, and women as agents of change - in creating awareness and sensitization on COVID-19, and also identify any involvement by women in peacebuilding process within their local communities. Consequently, it incorporated a robust gender engagement which was well designed and implemented. The project was able to reach about 100,000 women and girls, however, males were not excluded, as the responses, save for particular gender-specific questions, were open to response by both genders.

Total number of responses from the gender engagement from the six (6) States of project implementation from August 2020 to January 2021.



A total of 118,180 responses were generated from the gender engagement component of the project. A total of 42,351, responses from Adamawa State, 29,124 from Plateau State, 8,052 from Kaduna State, 6,565 from Kano State, 24,403 from Katsina State and 7,685 from Sokoto State.

Access to Healthcare Services

The pandemic significantly impacted access to healthcare services globally. And in low income earning countries²⁶ like Nigeria, the impact on the health system was immensely felt across the nation. This posed a huge gap in addressing the

²³ <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/policy-brief-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women-en.pdf> Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Women pp 2-3

²⁴ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335813076_Overview_of_Contemporary_Women's_Issues_in_North-Eastern_Nigeria Yunusa Hassan; Overview of Contemporary Women's Issues in North-Eastern Nigeria. EUROPEAN ACADEMIC RESEARCH Vol. VII, Issue 5/ August 2019. p4.

²⁵ Supporting the Health Care Workforce During the COVID-19 Global Epidemic <http://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/feature/2014/03/27/women-victims-conflict-or-agents-change>

²⁶ Okereke, M., Ukor, N., Adebisi, Y., Ogunkola, I., Favour Iyagbaye, E., Adiola Owbor, G., & Lucero-Prisno, D. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 on access to healthcare in low- and middle-income countries: Current evidence and future recommendations. The International Journal Of Health Planning And Management, 36(1), 13-17. doi: 10.1002/hpm.3067

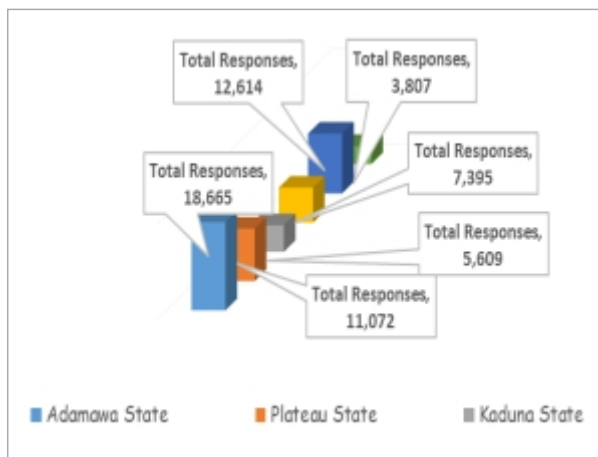
health concerns of community members, and also [potentially] exerted pressure on already fragile health systems in local communities with a resultant impact on healthcare providers.



There was no access to the health facility in Yola North during the lockdown, hence women and girls in need of urgent health attention resorted to depending on traditional medicine which in some case is very dangerous to their health”

-Respondent from Yola North LGA

Number of persons that had access to healthcare services since and during the lockdown in six (6) States from August 2020 to January 2021.



The figure above shows the total number of responses collated from the gender engagement carried out by LGFOs across the selected six (6) States and 72 LGAs. A total of 59,162 respondents reported that they had access to healthcare services. Adamawa state had a total of 18,665 respondents, Plateau state had a total of 11,072 respondents, Kaduna state had a total of 5,609 respondents, Kano state had a total of 7,395, Katsina state had a total of 12,614 respondents, and Sokoto state had a total of 3,807 respondents who all reported to have had access to healthcare services since and during the lockdown period.



In Kajuru LGA, it has become difficult for women to gain access to primary healthcare services due to COVID-19 safety.

- Kaduna State Gender Report for Week 16 (December 2020)

Major concerns reported as to why access to healthcare was difficult in local communities:

Difficulties in accessing healthcare could be linked to structural deficiencies in the health systems such as:

- High concerns about the lack of decent, functional, and effective healthcare centres; in most cases, the facilities were poor and grossly understaffed, with the absence of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) in most rural communities.
- Cost of accessing healthcare services: private healthcare facilities are more equipped but the medical bills are not affordable for many people in the local communities.
- Other COVID-19 protocols would not allow urgent response to patients without first being tested for COVID-19; this process made accessing the healthcare centers tedious for many locals.
- Absence of workable frameworks on access to health services especially for pregnant women in the local communities.
- Inadequate health personnel to cater to the growing needs of health care services: for instance, when strange and frequent deaths were reported in Kano state, concerns were raised, which fueled a lack of trust for the health system as locals were frightened to go to clinics or health centers for regular health checks.

On the other hand, in cases where healthcare centers were readily available the following concerns were highlighted by community members:

- Fear of infection as community members stay away from hospitals: Residents no longer wanted to access healthcare services for fear of exposing themselves to the virus. Many believed their homes are safer than healthcare centers.
- Lack of access to family planning services especially during the lockdown resulted in unprecedented and uncontrolled pregnancies which constituted a threat to population control.
- Lack of mobility also hindered local community members from accessing healthcare centers during the lockdown due to the restriction of movement. For example, reports from Plateau State showed that major health issues from local communities were

referred to Jos Teaching Hospital, which could be a long distance to commute depending on the location of the resident. Hence, local community members were discouraged from going to health centers. In Kano State as well, major health centers were a distance away from the reach of many other bigger communities.

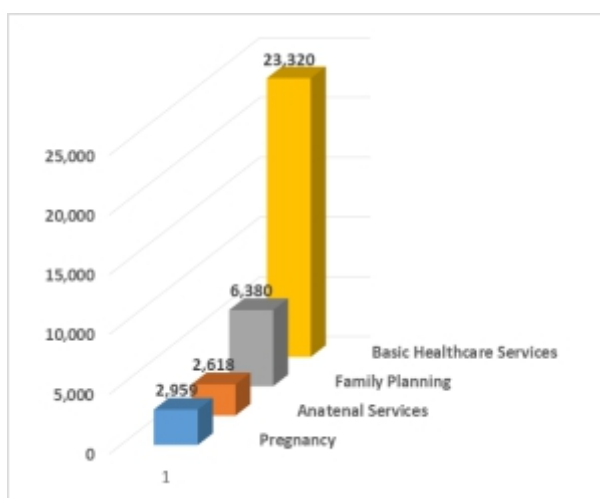


A visit to Bebeji Health facility and Tiga General Hospital and Gwarmai Hospital we found out that Antenatal Care is free and is accessible at the facility visited but some have to travel from different locations to Tiga and Bebeji to seek for proper attention as doctors are available in those places.

- Bebeji LGA, Kano State

- Due to economic hardship occasioned by the pandemic, petty traders, and low-income earning traders who earn daily income suffered due to financial constraints to foot their medical bills.

Number of respondents that had access to basic health care services, antenatal services, family planning and pregnancy tests.



In some communities, access to healthcare services was limited, truncated, and even absent. From the gender engagement findings, 50.1% of the

respondents across the 72 LGAs had access to general basic health and reproductive care services. However, in Sokoto state, accessibility to healthcare services was significantly difficult, compared to that of the other states. A likely reason for this is that many of the communities engaged were shifting communities, that is, the residents constantly migrated from one place to the other.

On the other hand, in some LGAs in Adamawa state, the LGFOs reported fear from some of the women engaged, who refused to go to health centres, as they believed that COVID-19 has no cure, and so, did not want to take the risk of confirming their worst fears.²⁷ Reports from Adamawa state also showed that several women in local communities did not gain access to health services, especially for antenatal, natal and postnatal (family planning) services. In some communities, children under five (5) were unable to access immunization services.²⁸ This posed another layer of public health emergency as there has been a rise in the service gap and infant mortality in the state. A UN report showed that child mortality in 2020 ranked highest since the new millennium in Adamawa State health service management register;²⁹ which has been attributed to COVID - 19 as our result validates.

Accessing health care services was majorly difficult as services rendered were limited and control due to lack of either manpower or hospital equipment in the name of adhering to COVID-19 guidelines. For example, in Jos North LGA in one of the local villages, an undisclosed husband refused his wife attending antenatal care for fear of exposing themselves to the risk of getting the diseases which resulted in the woman having complications with the pregnancy which resulted in the loss of the pregnancy.³⁰ Also, in Kafur LGA in Katsina in August 2020 cases of pregnant women who died as a result of lack of access to proper healthcare services to address issues of birth complications.³¹

Gender-Based Violence

Without any form of exception, GBV is an epidemic in all societies. During outbreaks like the COVID-19 pandemic that leads to the constraint of movement and families are forced to stay home, there is a higher likelihood of increase in levels of domestic violence and sexual exploitation.

²⁷ November gender report for Adamawa State

²⁸ Ibid.7

²⁹ Sharrow,, D., Hug,, L., & Liu,, Y. (2021). Levels & Trends in Child Mortality. Retrieved 18 February 2021, from <https://www.unicef.org/media/79371/file/UN-IGME-child-mortality-report-2020.pdf.pdf>

³⁰ End project gender report for Plateau State.

³¹ End of project gender report for Katsina State.

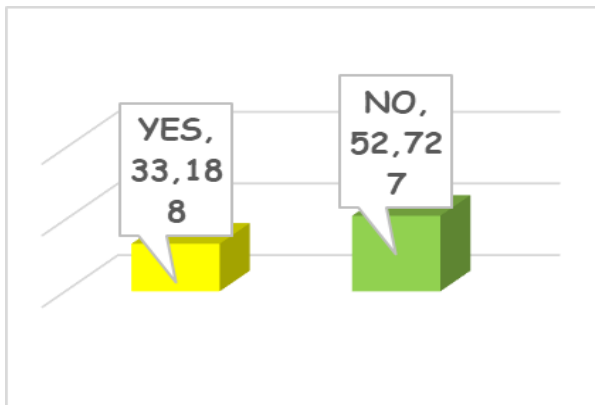
Furthermore, in many of these cases, women fall victims. Before COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, there were issues of GBV. However, the emergence of the COVID-19 particularly during the lockdown, led to the increase of GBV as obtained from the police and Hisbah as well as media reported cases.³²

This was evident in the project findings which showed that there was a significant rise in cases of domestic violence in the communities engaged, the more prevalent form being domestic violence caused by increased tension between spouses during the period of the lockdown. Also emphasized during the survey was the fact that survivors of GBV were mostly female, with about 70% of the identified cases being minors (both girls and boys).



In Zaria LGA, and in Shika Gari village in Giwa LGA respectively, two girls aged 7years and 11 years were raped by middle-aged men in their communities. Both cases were not reported to the police accordingly. However, the girls were admitted and hospitalized as they were severely injured”
- Zaria and Giwa LGA

Incidence of gender-based violence since and during the lockdown period in the local communities engaged



33,188 of the respondents indicated that they had seen, heard or experienced some form of GBV since and during the lockdown period, while 52,727 people claimed not to be aware.

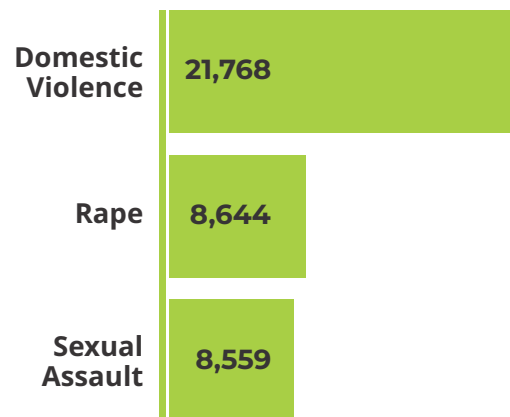
From the community engagements, through the LGFOs and State and Gender Coordinators, cases of GBV were at an alarming rate, however, the openness of the survivors to discuss these issues was impeded due to several reasons:

- It was exceedingly difficult for community members to respond to issues of GBV as the issues were perceived to be very private issues or even family issues that should be addressed within the family; hence, the difficulty for locals to report these cases.
- On the other hand, quite a number were reluctant to discuss GBV due to fear of exposure and/or a hesitance to admit to knowing the incidence of such forms of violence.
- Furthermore, due to religious and traditional dynamics, openness to report issues around GBV was hindered and curtailed thereby leading to the huge gap between the Yes and No responses.

Prevalent Forms of GBV

Domestic violence, rape and sexual assault were the major forms of sexual violence identified, with 21,768 cases of domestic violence, 8,644 cases of rape and 8,559 cases of sexual assault recorded across the selected six (6) states of project implementation. The rate of domestic violence and abuse has also increased at an alarming rate, unfortunately as shown by our results 90% of the perpetrators are the spouse or close relatives of the survivors.³³ This has added another layer of urgent need in the provision of protection services to survivors especially assaulted minors.

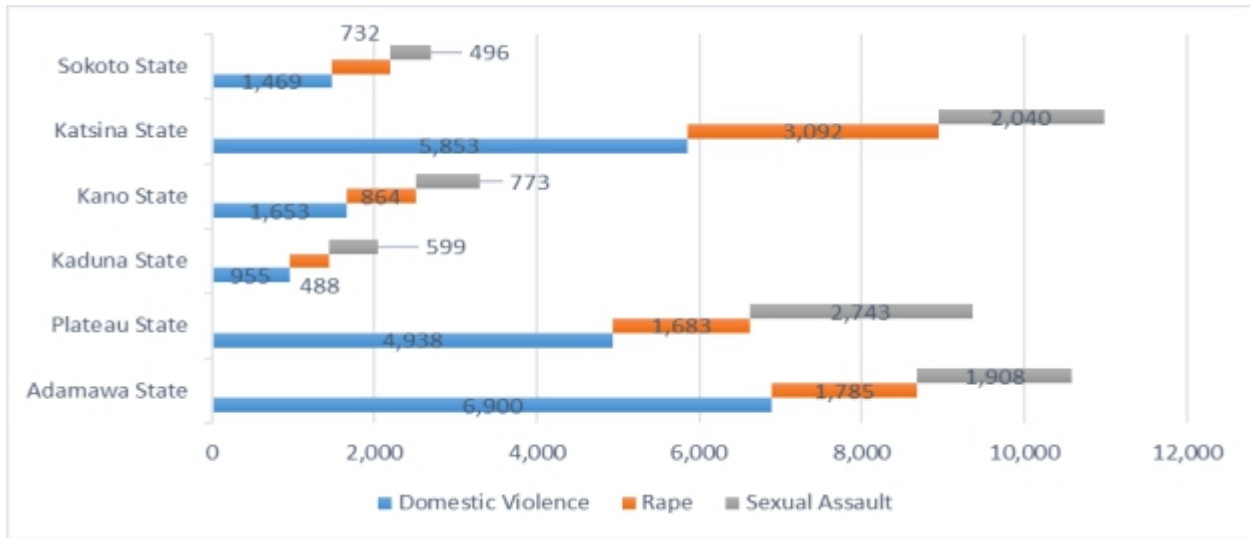
Prevalent Forms of GBV



³² November 2020 Kano State Gender Report.

³³ End of project Adamawa State gender report. 3rd February 2021

State breakdown of cases of GBV reported



The figure above provides a breakdown of the various forms of GBV identified during the project implementation.

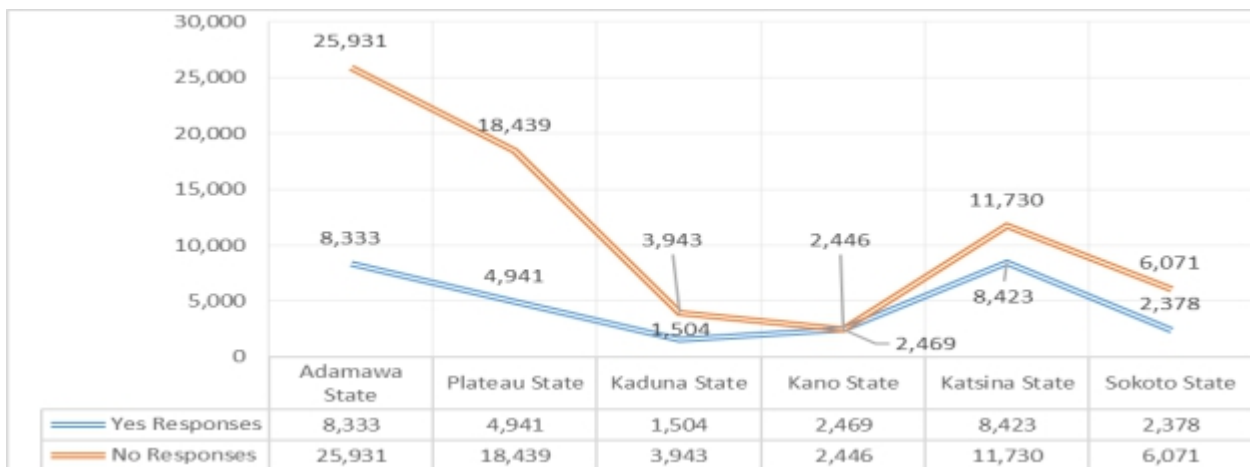
Women as Agents of Change

In Northern Nigeria, the role of women has primarily been limited to domestic and caregiving roles; this clearly hinders the involvement of women and girls in community development activities. From the reports from Plateau state, women in local communities are known for their traditional roles and as such, some of them have lost interest in taking part in active community engagements such as creating awareness or sensitization, as most of the leadership and decision making processes are occupied by men; women receive details of decisions made or even taken on their behalf.³⁴ Regardless of these traditional roles expected of women, in some of the

communities engaged, reports were received of women taking active roles in creating awareness and sensitizing their families and communities on COVID-19. For example, in a village in Dambatta LGA in Kano State, some women protested and distanced themselves from their returning husbands from other states of the country for fear of being infected because they were not sure if their spouses were negative to the virus.

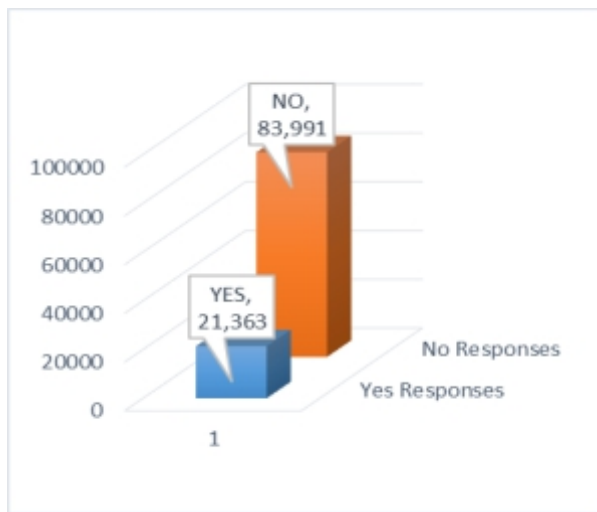
Number of women and girls involved in creating awareness and sensitizing their communities on COVID-19

A total of 28,048 people noted that women and girls involved in creating awareness and sensitizing their communities on COVID-19. However, 68,560 people stated that no women had participated in any community sensitization processes.



³⁴ November 2020 gender report by the Plateau State Gender Coordinator.

Women engagement in peace-building processes



In a similar vein, the role of women in peacebuilding processes was significantly low as well.



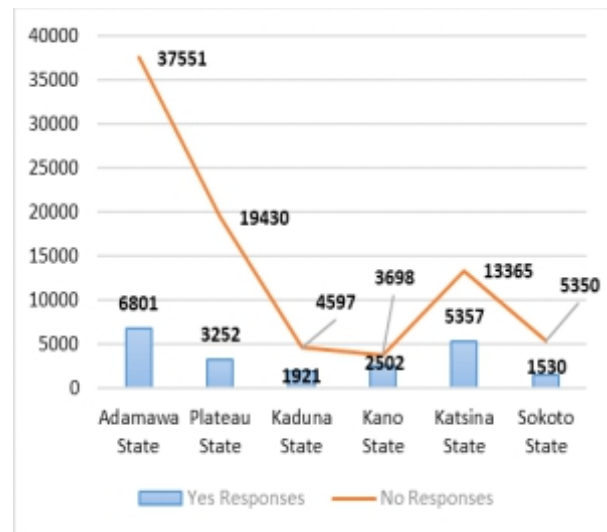
Due to religious and cultural factors, women and girls are not included or they do not engage in any top- or high-level meetings especially on issues of peacebuilding.

- Shagari LGA, Sokoto State.

It is important here to point out that this occurrence (or lack thereof) is not due to the incidence of COVID-19 but rather, has deep cultural and religious dimensions to it. Due to cultural and religious beliefs, women and girls are perceived to be lesser or weaker than men, therefore they are not involved in any form of decision-making processes in local communities. In Kano state for instance, religion and culture ensure that a significant number of women are barred from participating in social and public engagements.³⁵ Additionally, education is not readily available or easily accessed by women and girls in these local communities, hence making it difficult for them to participate in well-structured decision-making processes in their communities. Due to these hindrances, they end up with less access to finance and space to create awareness than their male counterparts. However, the emergence of the pandemic and its associated effects has made it imperative for women to be included in peacebuilding architectures.

³⁵ Kano State gender report October 2020.

State-based on women's engagement in peace-building processes



Traditional Role of Women and Adaptability to the impacts of COVID-19

The traditional roles of women and girls in local communities have experienced a significant shift with the emergence of COVID-19. Generally, COVID-19 has had a massive toll economically on women in all communities engaged. Primarily known as caregivers both at the family and community levels due to cultural and religious inclinations, many women stated that were unable to support their families unlike before the pandemic, as they had lost their businesses due to the economic strain brought on by COVID-19.



With the emergence of COVID-19 the traditional roles of women in local communities have experienced a significant change as women are taking up more financial responsibilities in most homes which is out of the normal in most of the local communities"

- Silame LGA Gender Report for week 15 (December 2020)

While this has not changed their traditional roles, the impact of COVID-19 has exerted more economic pressure on a lot of them who now have to do more to complement their spouses in fending for the family. While the level of response and adaptation differed significantly across the various communities engaged, the women in

question were steadily adapting, with most resorting to small-scale businesses to take care of their families. However, over 50% of the survey respondents indicated that they lack the necessary finances to start-up businesses as most of their business funds were squandered during the pandemic lockdown.

On a social level however, COVID-19 was noted to affect the traditional roles of women; for instance, in Makarfi LGA in Kaduna state, restrictions were given on how to go about festivals and way of life. However, more extreme incidences showed that women were deviating from their culture, traditions, norms and values in order to fend for their families, e.g., engaging in prostitution (Zaria LGA in Kaduna) which is against their religious practice.

Challenges

The participation of women was given priority in this intervention. For one, The Kukah Centre prioritizes the promotion of gender equality a crosscutting issue. Secondly, gender mainstreaming and disaggregation of the responses was essential to provide accurate analyses of the impact of COVID-19 on men and women, which will aid in recommending gender-responsive policies. Nonetheless, a few challenges were faced during the intervention process. These included:

- **Gender Inclusivity:** There was some difficulty in sourcing out eligible local women for the gender engagement due to the fact that a number of these women lacked the basic and relevant qualifications such as the academic and/or technological capacities required for this project, and/or the refusal of male figures (husbands/fathers) to allow the recommended women to take up the position of the LGFO. However, extra efforts were made to ensure that both men and women LGFOs were represented as equally as possible, because due to traditional and religious beliefs in some of the selected states and communities, male LGFOs would not be able to engage the women in the local communities. Therefore, the role of women as a part of the engagement and sensitization process was essential.
- Considering some of the blank responses gotten on questions targeting GBV, it is evident that a significant number of women and girls were not open to responding to what they deem sensitive/personal topics. This is

largely because women and girls are socially excluded from many forms of engagement especially in the north.

- Women in local communities in the north are less involved in peacebuilding and decision-making processes, as they face discrimination and marginalization in some of the communities engaged. This has led to their exclusion from, and non-participation in social engagements. This lack of exposure has also hindered the opportunity to hear their concerns. There was therefore, limited information on how best to proffer a more gender-sensitive response on issues of insecurity and COVID-19.
- Women and girls in the communities are not fully equipped with the basic skills to inform them on how to take part in the fundamental role in sensitization and creating awareness on issues that directly affects them in the community.

Recommendations

Mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment goals in peacebuilding and post-conflict peacebuilding requires an integrated framework for action. This framework needs to address institutional and structural barriers to equality in both the political/security and socio-economic realms. Women's capacity to participate in peacebuilding is intricately linked to their enjoyment of socioeconomic security and rights. Poverty, unequal gender norms, impunity for – and fear of – violence taken together prevent women from participating in and advancing from post-conflict processes, which is a major setback for peace, reconciliation, and the long-term recovery of societies. Governments and the international community must attend to the protection of women's economic and social rights around issues of insecurity and in this case in the context of COVID-19 settings and integrate this with efforts to build the political order. The recommendations given below suggest concrete ways to do this:

- Strategies aimed at preventing gender-based violence, adequate gender-sensitive policing and justice mechanisms should be developed.
- Adequate facilities should be put in place for medical, psychological, physical, and legal support for survivors of GBV.

- Special sensitization programmes to educate women on their rights and roles as citizens should be carried out to help women defend and assert their rights in the face of violations and/or threats.
- There is need for a special campaign to encourage women participation in peace building and prevention of gender-based violence and promoting peaceful coexistence in the community, especially the culture of silence in the event of gender-based violence
- The government and key stakeholders need to create workable platforms that support community members especially women's substantive representation in post-conflict governance, by providing direct technical and capacity-building support to women's involvement “at the table” in the peacebuilding processes.
- Research should be conducted on the state of women's economic and social rights and, with this knowledge as a benchmark, a plan and strategy should be devised for achieving women's economic and social rights.

Threats to Security

Over the course of the project lifespan, security remained a challenge as there were increasing reports of insecurity. Moreover, some states had certain forms of insecurity more peculiar to them, or were more affected than others. Nonetheless, all six states reported some form of insecurity or the other. Prior to the protests and lootings, other noteworthy forms of insecurity took place. LGFOs reported increasing forms of insecurity such as banditry and kidnappings across various LGAs which necessitated the avoidance of some of the communities and the need to provide an updated conflict analysis report on the 12 identified LGAs in each state. From the conflict analyses report carried out, the decision was made to leave the choice of the selected LGAs intact as the safety of the LGFOs could be guaranteed by ensuring they avoided the worst hit communities within the LGA.

Adamawa state reported a spike in insecurity due to the strain of the pandemic which saw many individuals shoulder heavier economic burdens. They reported domestic abuse, sexual assault (**Rape Cases are very high**), brigand activities and increased kidnappings as the most prevalent

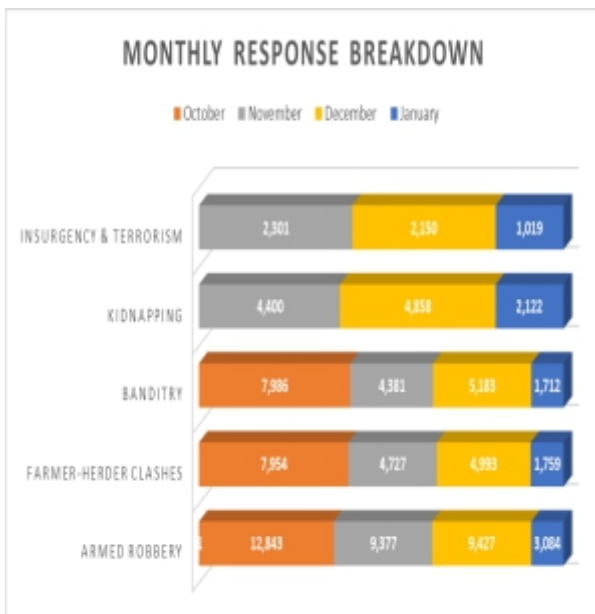
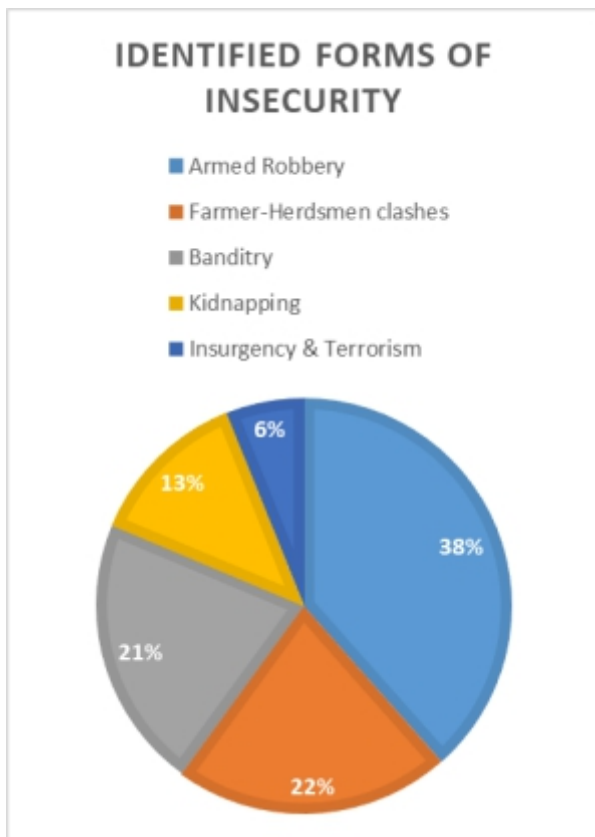
forms of insecurity, with individual residences exposed to health challenges, as government and private hospitals were out of services for emerging concerns except accidents and emergencies. In light of this, the stress on maternal and child health was also underscored. Katsina state reported a worsening security situation, with nine out of the state's 34 local government areas under the control of bandits at one point or the other. In the twelve LGAs the project engaged in, four were faced with real security concerns - Jibia, Dandume, Faskari and Kankara. For example, armed bandits reportedly attacked the Shau and Ruwan Godiya villages in Faskari Local Government area on Sunday, October 11 2020, killing at least eight villagers. Numerous people were also reported missing and were believed to have been kidnapped. Local residents said that security forces were deployed to the area following the attack. For the people of Dandume, both those living in the town and those living in the villages, fear has become a normal phenomenon. Dandume LGA especially reached out with a cry for help as it is facing serious security challenges. Other communities such as Kafur and Malumfashi were equally faced with pockets of banditry and kidnapping. The field officers from Kankara have also reported a weekly incidence of kidnapping and the complete non-effort by the security agents to forestall the ugly trend.

Sokoto state reported a general reduction in levels of insecurity except in Silame, Gangare (Gwadabawa), Wammakko and Brijingo (Goronyo). Herdsmen have been accused of carrying out attacks in Silame while thieves and other armed robbers in Wammakko. In some Gwadabawa communities such as Gigane and Gangare, it was reported that people were not allowed free movement. However, there was a dearth of information on who is hindering free movement in these communities.

Abuse and violations of human rights were also reported; most communities acknowledged high level of harassment by the security forces both during and after the lockdown period. According to some of the respondents, “people fear security forces more than the virus itself.”

Identified Forms of Insecurity

The most prevalent forms of insecurity identified across the 72 LGAs were:



Other forms of Insecurity

#EndSARS protests and Looting of COVID-19 Palliatives

The #EndSARS protests, which increasingly turned violent and chaotic due to the disruption of the protests by thugs and hoodlums ultimately

resulted in the looting of warehouses in search of COVID-19 palliatives. This triggered a wave of insecurity such as theft, vandalization and destruction of public property and so on. These events necessitated the imposition of curfews in three out of the six selected states (Adamawa, Kaduna and Plateau states), impacted the community engagement process and necessitated the intervention of the NPC. The origins of the looting was noted to have started from the discovery of sealed warehouses packed full with COVID-19 palliatives, that were not distributed to the masses, including the internally displaced persons (IDPs) either during or after the period of the lockdown.

Jos North, Jos South, Bassa and Riyom LGAs in Plateau state were high intensity or flashpoint areas of conflict during this period, which led to the imposition of 24-hour curfews in Jos North and Jos South LGAs from 20th to 22nd October 2020. In Kaduna, the security situation in Kaduna was a mixture of silent guns and underlying concerns. The #EndSARS protests originally occurred in Chikun and Kaduna South LGAs, and were generally peaceful until violence and looting began. To curb this, the Kaduna state government initially imposed 24-hr curfews in both LGAs but then extended the order to all 23 LGAs in the state as the insecurity spread to more LGAs. In Adamawa State, on 26th October 2020, the governor imposed a dusk to dawn curfew in Yola North, Yola South and Girei LGAs due to the rate of looting that was occurring. This order came with heavy regulation by the military; even police officers need to be in their uniforms to be granted a pass. Though there were no curfews in Kano State, there were serious incidences of insecurity as a result of the #ENDSARS protests by some youth in the Sabon gari area in Fagge LGA, and the protest was hijacked by thugs which resulted in loss of lives. There was also destruction of properties and a higher number in the cases of human rights abuses reported.

Farmer-Herdsmen Clashes

Reports from the LGFOs and residents in some communities engaged (particularly in Adamawa and Plateau states) indicated that the occurrence of clashes between farmers and herdsmen increased especially within November-December 2020, which is commonly known as harvest season for farmers. The majority of farmers in local communities are women especially in the northern and mid-belt states in Nigeria. According to the Federal Ministry of Agricultural & Rural Development, 75% of the farming population in

Nigeria is female. They are major contributors to economic growth and the predominant owners of small-scale farms. Female members of pastoralist households are equally involved in agricultural and economic activities around animal husbandry.³⁶ The local communities of Faskari, Kafur, Dandume, Kankara, and Jibia have been growing concerns over the insecurity in their communities. Generally, the impact of insecurity in those communities is the lack of access to their farm-lands to make the harvest of the farm produce as a result of the header-pastoralist clash and banditry.

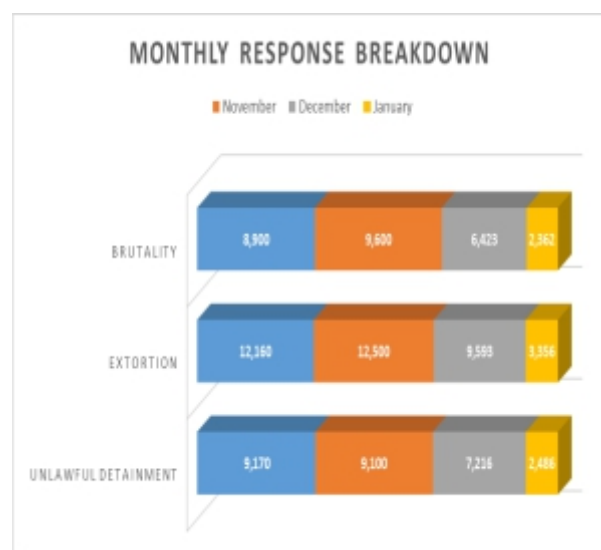
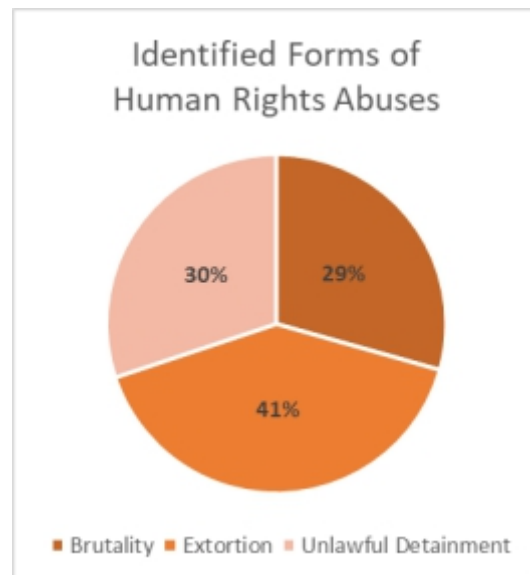
Generally, COVID-19 has impacted the people economically and has put a heavier strain on them. Due to the COVID-19 lockdown that started at the beginning of the planting season (March - May 2020), many farmers were restricted from undertaking early planting seasons. This situation was further exacerbated by the increasing levels of insecurity. Consequently, farmers abandoned their farms not only due to COVID-19 restrictions but also due to insecurity. This has affected current rates of harvests, as farm products have significantly dropped in many communities compared to previous years. Lack of sufficient farm produce affected the survival of both farming and subsistent families as well as herders constantly in search of hay for their herds. It has also increased contestation over farm produce between farmers and herders to a point that some farmers had to violate COVID-19 regulations to look after their farms, otherwise, herders could harvest the produce for their herds.

In a similar vein, the rate of banditry also increased, where bandits kidnap farmers in exchange for either money or foodstuff. Many of these bandits (and herdsmen) prefer to attack farms directly as this is where they can easily access the produce. This puts an additional strain on farmers to produce more (and more importantly, to retain what they produce) to be able to cater for their families. This often means that a huge number of these farmers resort to sleeping in their farms to be able to better defend their harvests from bandits and herdsmen who believe they have a right to these produces. The unwillingness of the farmers to willingly surrender their harvest to the bandits and herdsmen led to a significantly higher rise in clashes between farmers and herdsmen, as compared with previous harvest seasons pre-COVID-19.

Identified Forms of Abuses on Human Rights (HR)

The most prevalent forms of HR abuses identified across the 72LGAs were:

- **Extortion:** >37,609 respondents stated that they had been extorted by security officials
- **Brutality:** >27,285 respondents indicated that they had witnessed, heard and/or been victims to some form of brutality by security officials within their communities.
- **Unlawful detainment:** >27,972 respondents reported unlawful detainment by security officials



³⁶ The Role of Women in Agriculture1 Prepared by the SOFA Team2 and Cheryl Doss <http://www.fao.org/3/am307e/am307e00.pdf>

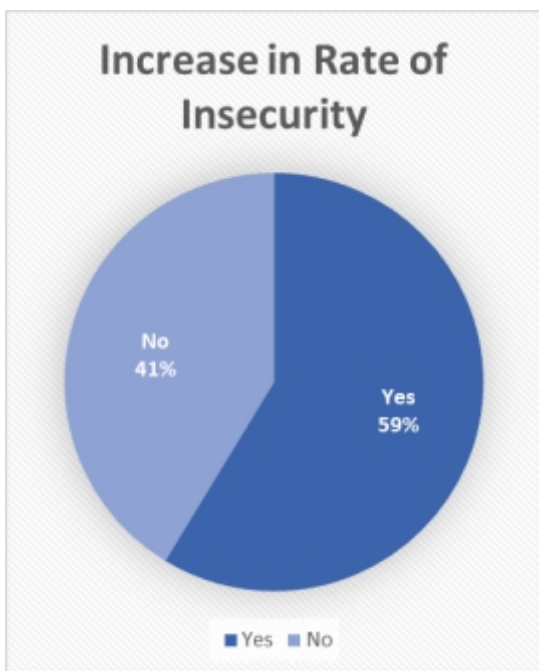
Impact of COVID-19 on Security

Some of the dominant/prevalent narratives that built up, such as the fact that some people still think COVID-19 is a hoax, and beliefs that insecurity and hunger kill more people than Covid-19, have (potential) inherent human security implications. From the evidence collected, some of the communities seem to suggest that attention should be paid to structural issues of poverty, insecurity and the culture of impunity among security personnel, rather than the pandemic. However, with the apparent incidence of the second wave, more people became worried about being affected both by the virus, and the structural issues occurring within the context of the pandemic. It was therefore imperative to test the beliefs held in the various LGAs and interrogate these narratives (if any) within the context of COVID-19 to see why they were happening.

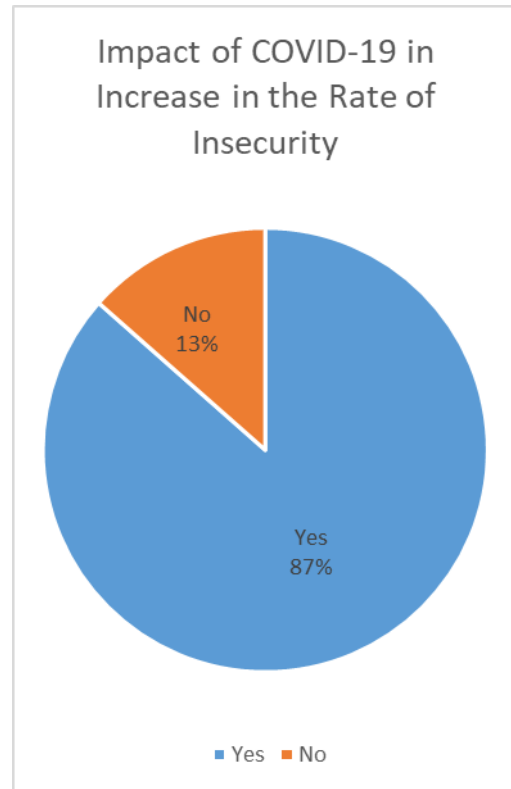
Consequently, the survey respondents were polled on:

*** Increase in Insecurity since the Emergence of COVID-19 and the Lockdown:**

Of 59,984 persons polled between October 2020 and January 2021, 58.7% consisting of 35,205 persons indicated that they believed the rate of insecurity in their communities had risen since the onset of the pandemic, while 24,779 persons (41.3%) noted that to them, there was no identifiable change in the rate of insecurity pre-and during COVID-19.



*** Impact of COVID-19 in the Rate of Insecurity** 86.5% (30,459 persons) of the 35,205 respondents who indicated that they believed the rate of insecurity in their communities had risen since the onset of the pandemic stated that they believe that this increase was impacted by COVID-19.



The Role of the National Peace Committee (NPC) in Mitigating Insecurity

The COVID-19 pandemic came unexpectedly and resulted in many facets of security challenges especially during the lockdown period. The unprecedented situation aided in the increase of the rate of crime and related issues, such as kidnapping, theft and handset snatching, riots, robberies, house breaking, drug abuse, rape, political thuggery and broken homes. These crimes were noted to have been mostly perpetrated by the youths as a result of poverty and joblessness. Additionally, the citizens' distrust of the government's genuine intention to contain the pandemic was high, as there was divided opinions that the government was not doing enough to curb the spread of the virus. Furthermore, the entirety of the COVID-19 Response strategy appeared to be driven solely by the government, with local community stakeholders not fully engaged in terms of

awareness and sensitization, for cascade down to their respective communities. Due to the need for community stakeholder engagement, the intervening power of the National Peace Committee (NPC) through its members, was deployed to support the advocacy and sensitization on COVID-19, as well as mitigate any reported threat to national security and stability by engaging leaders and key stakeholders at the highest levels of government – Presidential Task Force (PTF), COVID-19 State-Based Committees, Nigerian Governors' Forum, Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) & the Presidency.

The National Peace Committee (NPC), a non-governmental initiative, was conceptualized in response to emerging threats occasioned by the 2015 general elections. The committee comprises eminent elder statesmen and women, with the convening power to engage with leaders at the pinnacle of government. Due to its convening power, there have been calls for the committee to expand its mandate beyond election interventions to include interventions in other emerging conflicts such as seen in the northeast, northcentral and northwest. The Committee will also engage with the government at the highest level of policymaking to resolve some of the conflict issues. Examples of non-electoral conflicts include issues such as:

- Violent Extremism and Insurgency in the Northeast
- Kidnapping and Banditry
- Herder-Farmer conflicts
- Settler vs Indigene ideology
- Vitriolic rhetoric and incitement from political leaders

Given the uncertainty of the pandemic, with the (associated) rise in levels of insecurity that followed, the NPC deemed it crucial to lend their weight to mitigating the impacts of COVID-19. However, as non-electoral issues are a new area of engagement for the NPC, the Committee was selective and strategic in engaging in these non-electoral conflicts. Also, given its capacity constraints and the fact that these conflicts are protracted and require sustained engagement, the Committee worked closely with its Secretariat, The Kukah Centre, who through this project intervention, provided evidence-based reports to aid the Committee's interventions in these (potential) conflicts. The NPC also worked closely with national and local stakeholders to ensure that its interventions are impactful, sustainable

and long-lasting. These engagements were done via media/phone communications, back-channel negotiations, mediation etc.

Prior to the commencement of the project in August 2020, 6 key members of the National Peace Committee had sent out at least 20 recorded messages of sensitization to local communities and had participated on TV/Radio programmes in support of government measures and calling on people to respect safety regulations and guidelines. Over the course of the intervention, the project engaged all 15 members of the NPC through monthly report sharing of the project findings. 4 of these members then utilized findings from the project reports in video interviews, written opinion pieces in newspapers and engagement with key stakeholders. Due to the sensitive nature of their engagements, most of the engagements of the NPC are classified and cannot be disclosed, however, some of the open-source activities and interventions carried out include:

Media and Peace Advocacy Campaign: The NPC contributed to sensitization by lending their voices to the advocacy campaign. These came in form of recorded messages of NPC members in support of government measures and calling on people to respect safety regulations and guidelines:

- Social Media Engagement by the NPC Secretariat: The Secretariat of the NPC amplified the press statements, interviews and press releases by NPC members on all its social media platforms including publications by major media outlets on 24th October 2020. This statement was published in 5 major newspapers – Daily Trust, Sun newspaper, Leadership, Vanguard and The Nation. They were also aired on local news platforms such as Channels TV, African Independent Television (AIT), Arise News and the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA).
- Based on reports on the general lethargy of local residents in following the COVID-19 safety procedures, to emphasize the importance of practicing COVID-19 safety measures and promoting their online advocacy and sensitization, the NPC included in their December 4 statement calling for peaceful by-elections, the need for voters and stakeholders to abide by the COVID-19 regulations during the election process.
- A Statement of Solidarity, released through

the NPC Secretariat, with protesters on 13th October 2020 to end police brutality, improve security and carry out security reforms.

- The Plateau State Peacebuilding Agency, a state-based peace commission, on 25th October issued a statement calling for peace in the state, especially in some parts of Jos and Bukuru metropolis where the disruptions due to riots and protests was spiralling out of control.
- To emphasize the importance of practicing COVID-19 safety measures and promote their online advocacy and sensitization, the NPC included in their December 4 statement calling for peaceful by-elections, the need for voters and stakeholders to abide by the COVID-19 regulations during the election process. This was necessary as the by-elections were holding in two (Plateau and Katsina) of the six states that the project was being implemented in.

Engagement with Key Policymakers to Mitigate Threats to Security: The rise in incidences of insecurity necessitated the intervention of the NPC in engaging with relevant agencies and stakeholders to promote calm and peace:

- **Addressing the Farmer-Herdsman Clashes in Adamawa and Plateau states:** Based off reports on the increasing clashes between farmers and herdsman in Adamawa and Plateau states, private phone calls (and visits) to the governors of Adamawa and Plateau states were made by Bishop MH Kukah on behalf of members of the NPC to discuss best approaches on curbing the rising rates of violence and insecurity in the identified LGAs. In support of the victims of violence, some items such as wheel chairs for the disabled were also purchased. A follow-up meeting between the NPC and Governor Lalong of Plateau state was scheduled for January 2021 to support some of the victims of the crises and donate the wheelchairs. One of such examples was that of Ms Diana Emmanuel, a woman living with disability in Jos, Plateau state. Her story was published by Ms Vanessa Offiong, a seasoned journalist and CEO of Black Banana Media outfit, with the support of The Kukah Centre. Based on the findings of the FCDO project, Ms Emmanuel's story drew the attention of the Convener of the NPC, Bishop MH Kukah. In partnership with the Plateau State government and Black Banana Media, The Kukah Centre, Secretariat

of the NPC intervened to support Ms Diana with four commercial tricycles (Keke Napep) and full-time employment in the People Living with Disability Rights Commission of Plateau State. This event occurred on 8th January, 2021 in Jos, at the Plateau State government house, in the presence of the State Governor, Rt. Hon. Simon Lalong, Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah, Convener of the Peace Committee, Ms Vanessa Offiong, the journalist that wrote the story, and Fr. Atta Barkindo, the NPC Head of Secretariat and Director of the Kukah Centre.

- The relevant use of the project findings in connection with other states and issues outside the scope of the project such as the intervention in Zamfara state (which is a border state to Katsina, and one of the six selected states). Intervention in Zamfara was necessary as Katsina had reported and recorded numerous accounts of insecurity. Therefore, it was necessary to avoid any spillovers of insecurity especially viz-a-viz electoral violence.
- The reports also informed the Edo and Ondo State Governorship Elections, as reports of the likelihood of electoral violence in the state was high and COVID-19 still very much a reality.

Other Activities:

- **2-Day Seminar on Pandemic Outbreak, Insecurity and General Elections in Nigeria:** Based on the findings generated from the TKC-CSSF Project, the National Peace Committee, through its Secretariat, organised and conducted a two-day seminar on the pandemic outbreak, insecurity and peaceful elections in Nigeria. The seminar centred on electoral reforms that included how to mitigate the impact of insecurity generated by measures to curtail pandemic outbreak during general elections, and what role the NPC could play. The seminar was organised in partnership with the International Republican Institute, Inter-Party Advisory Council and INEC and took place from 18th - 19th December 2020 at the Grand Pela Hotel, Abuja.
- **Written Article to generate National Discourse on the state of Insecurity in Nigeria:** The security reports from the project, from the findings of the 72 LGAs and shared to the NPC for their engagement with state and national stakeholders, informed the article

written by Bishop Kukah, Convener of the National Peace Committee. This article called the attention of the government to the level of insecurity in Nigeria. Part of the intention was to bypass both government and non-government bureaucracy in order to generate national discourse and conversation around all the incidents of insecurity that have occurred particularly during the pandemic. It also called the attention of key stakeholders at the highest level of government to review their strategies in tackling insecurity.

- On the basis of the CSSF project findings, the NPC Secretariat in partnership with the Knights of St. Columbus in the US conducted research in Kaduna, Plateau and Zamfara states to record video testimonies of victims of violence. These testimonies informed policy recommendations that NPC members used in engaging the government as well as international development partners.

Challenges

Some of the challenges associated with the NPC-Stakeholder Engagement include:

- The bureaucracy involved in engaging with certain key stakeholders.
- The private nature of most of the engagements of the NPC; this oftentimes presented some challenges in adequately measuring the impact of their activities in relation to the project.
- The high risk of violence anticipated and on the basis of which the initial proposal was drafted did not happen, therefore, the platforms and avenues for the engagement of the NPC has to be strategic.
- The amount of time allocated to the engagement of the NPC takes lots of planning, logistics arrangements, phone calls and negotiations.

Media Engagement and Sensitization

The existing narratives of denial tied to religious misinformation and/or sheer ignorance did not help alleviate the effects of the pandemic being experienced, especially in rural communities. Many of these communities blatantly ignored government directives on COVID-19 protocol, leading to increased risk of exposure and contamination. To contribute towards mitigating

the effects of COVID-19, TKC carried out aggressive media sensitization to raise general awareness about the pandemic and general preventative measures, as well as issues affected by the pandemic such as gender and security. This sensitization process involved the use of both old and new media in the dissemination of awareness content on COVID-19 to local communities. To that effect, TKC project media team created content, that were shared daily on 4 identified social media platforms – WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. From 31st August 2020 to 15th January 2021, a total of 119 contents were created and shared. These contents were initially posted thrice daily (9am, 1pm and 6pm). However, to give people more time to engage with the disseminated content 2020 via comments, direct messages and other forms of social interaction, the posting schedule on the social media platforms was reduced to twice daily (1pm and 6pm) in the second week of social media sensitization.

To enhance the effectiveness of the sensitization process, it was imperative that the local context of the communities (and regions), in terms of perceptions, attitudes and behaviours be considered. Consequently, findings from the research and data collection process were utilized to target certain components of the project that needed to be amplified. Thus, the following numbers of jingles³⁷ were created:

- 3 jingles on COVID-19 awareness, preventative measures and narratives countering identified misperceptions and misinformation in the communities.
- 1 jingle advocating against gender-based violence (GBV).
- 1 jingle creating awareness on insecurity following field reports.

To ensure wider reach and coverage, as well as to enhance local engagement and advocacy, these contents were disseminated via TKC's various social media handles as well as the media handles of the LGFOs and the state and gender coordinators.

In addition to social media dissemination, these contents were aired on already identified TV and Radio stations in each of the six states. The stations include:

³⁷ Public service announcements (PSAs)

Table : List of TV and Radio Stations

State	TV Station	Radio Station
Adamawa	Adamawa Television (ATV)	Adamawa Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), Yola
Kaduna	Desmims Broadcast Nigeria Ltd (DITV)	Invicta FM
Kano	Rahma TV	Express Radio
Katsina	NTA Katsina	Radio Nigeria Kaduna (Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, KZS)
Plateau	Plateau Radio Television Corporation (PRTV)	Kat-tsat Truth FM (KT 103.9FM)
Sokoto	NTA Sokoto	Vision FM

During the course of the project, over 1.8 million people were reached via the social media sensitization and 5 million viewers/listeners over radio and TV jingles (based on estimated communication outfit bandwidth coverage).

Media Strategy

Media Objective	Social Media Goal	Metrics
Grow the brand	AWARENESS (Illuminate current and potential audience)	Followers, shares, subscribers
Turn audience to advocates	ENGAGEMENT (How Audience interact with contents disseminated)	Comments, likes, @mentions, views, listens, watch-time
Drive audience and advocates	CONVERSIONS (Effectiveness of social engagement)	Website clicks, email signups, Telegram subscriptions
Improve advocate retention	ADVOCATES (How active advocates think and feel about the brand)	Testimonials, social media sentiments and feedbacks, emails

The above table details the media objectives, goals and the metrics for the intervention. This media strategy aimed towards maximizing the sensitization process and effectively reaching the communities, and included a project sustainability tool (via a community of advocates

on Telegram group), to help gain the viewpoints and perceptions of all the individuals sensitized, and also answer any questions that might arise regarding COVID-19, security and gender related issues.

Analysis and Findings Insight Analysis from Local Government Field Officers (LGFOs)

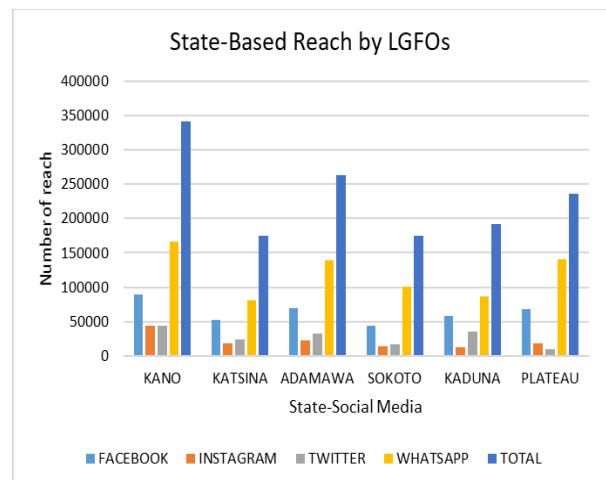
This data was collected over the span of the project using the google sheet tool from the social media insights of all 144 LGFOs, on all 4 media platforms identified below:

STATE	FACEBOOK	INSTAGRAM	TWITTER	WHATSAPP	TOTAL
KANO	89695	43180	43376	165679	341930
KATSINA	52700	18402	23628	80822	175552
ADAMAWA	69218	21863	32918	139916	263915
SOKOTO	44231	13411	16853	100397	174892
KADUNA	57379	12227	34607	87113	191326
PLATEAU	67426	18643	9436	141043	236548
	380649	127726	160818	714970	1384163

State-based reach of sensitization content by LGFO

Based on collation and analysis, the WhatsApp platform had the widest total reach of 714,970 people. Facebook was the second-highest platform reaching a total of 380,649 people, Twitter was the third-highest platform reaching a total of 160,818 people with Instagram reaching 127,726 people in this reporting period.

Graphical Analysis of State-Based Reach by LGFOs



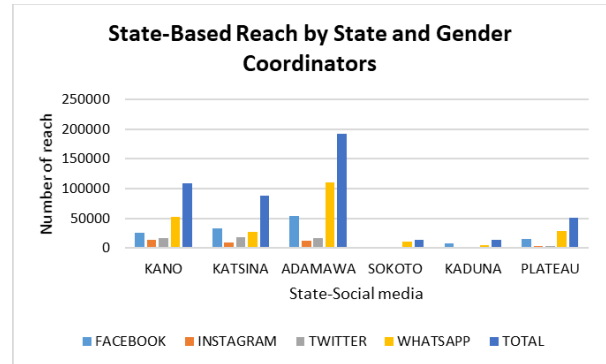
Graphical Analysis of LGFO State Based Reach

Insight Analysis from State and Gender Coordinators

STATE	FACEBOOK	INSTAGRAM	TWITTER	WHATSAPP	TOTAL
KANO	25744	13839	16483	52406	108472
KATSINA	33129	8828	18693	27282	87932
ADAMAWA	53497	12687	17088	109729	193001
SOKOTO	1457	490	461	11173	13581
KADUNA	6818	1321	754	3932	12825
PLATEAU	15059	3677	3251	29002	50989
	135704	40842	56730	233524	466800

State-based reach of sensitization content by State and Gender Coordinators

Graphical Analysis of State-Based Reach by State and Gender Coordinators



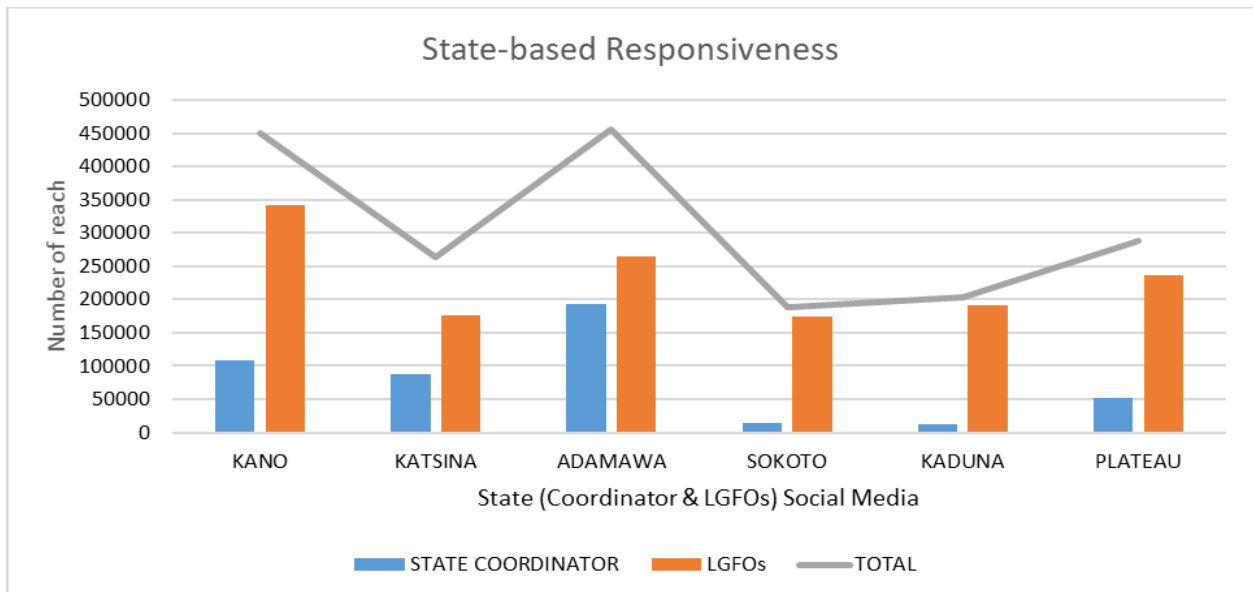
State-based Responsiveness

The chart and table below show the state responsiveness and total reach from both the coordinators and LGFOs. The table below shows that Adamawa state had more engagement with a

total reach of 456,916 people, followed by Kano state (450,402), Plateau State (287,537), Katsina State (263,484), Kaduna State (204,151) and Sokoto State (188,473).

STATE	STATE COORDINATOR	LGFOs	TOTAL
KANO	108472	341930	450402
KATSINA	87932	175552	263484
ADAMAWA	193001	263915	456916
SOKOTO	13581	174892	188473
KADUNA	12825	191326	204151
PLATEAU	50989	236548	287537
	466800	1384163	1850963

Graphical Representation of Responsiveness and Reach Data

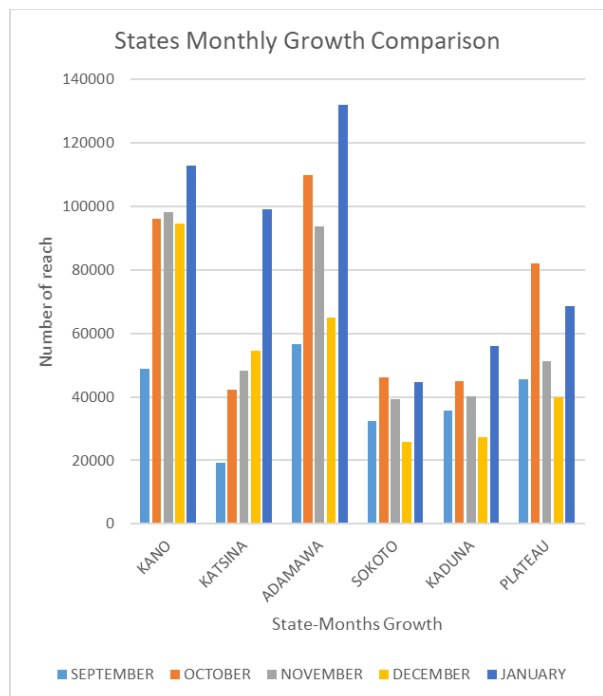
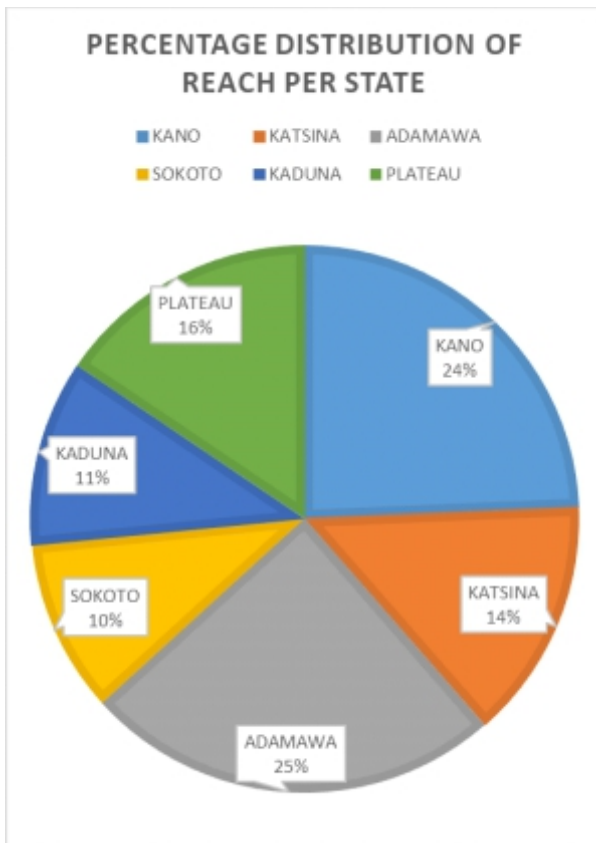


State Breakdown & Percentage Distribution of Total Reach via Social Media

S/N	STATE	SOCIAL MEDIA REACH (TOTAL)
1	KANO	450402
2	KATSINA	263484
3	ADAMAWA	456916
4	SOKOTO	188473
5	KADUNA	204151
6	PLATEAU	287537

Adamawa state stood out having the highest reach via social media with a reach of 25% (456,916), them Kano State (24%), Plateau state (16%), Katsina State (14%), Kaduna state (11%) and lowest reach from Sokoto state with a 10% reach.

STATE	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN
KANO	48877	95962	98170	94508	112885
KATSINA	19350	42258	48299	54566	99011
ADAMAWA	56588	109900	93607	64981	131840
SOKOTO	32370	46222	39266	25949	44666
KADUNA	35643	45072	40275	27243	55918
PLATEAU	45543	81975	51327	39969	68723



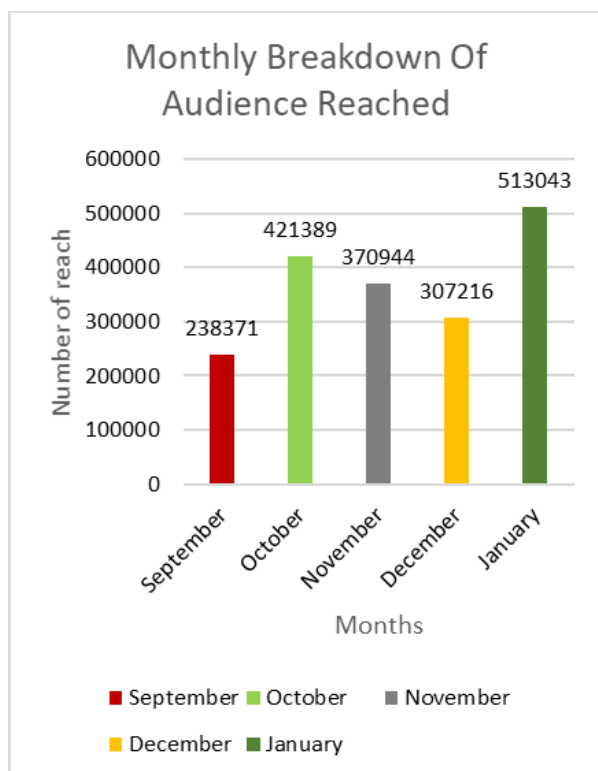
States Monthly Growth Comparison

The growth comparison table below gives in-depth knowledge on the performance of reach that was made all through the project lifespan, and insight on the breakdown of conversion from the inception of the project.

Monthly Breakdown of Audience Reached

A total of 1,850,963 people were reached via social media during the span of the project. The table and graph below show the rise and fall in the total audience growth across the months of project execution, with a start of 238,371 people reached in the first month (September 2020) and a 76.78% growth in the second month (October 2020), with a drop in growth by 11.97% in November and further downslide in December with 17.18%. However, in January 2021, there was a 66.99% rise from the previous month.

S/N	MONTHS	TOTAL REACH
1	SEPTEMBER	238371
2	OCTOBER	421389
3	NOVEMBER	370944
4	DECEMBER	307216
5	JANUARY	513043

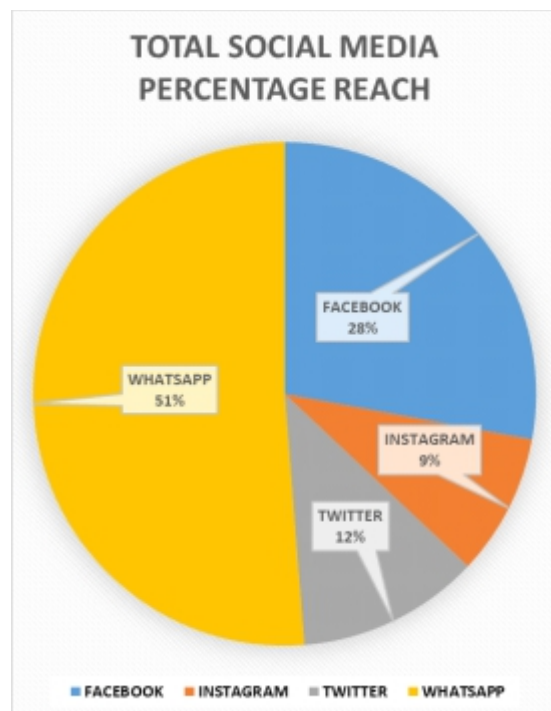


Total Social Media Percentage Reach

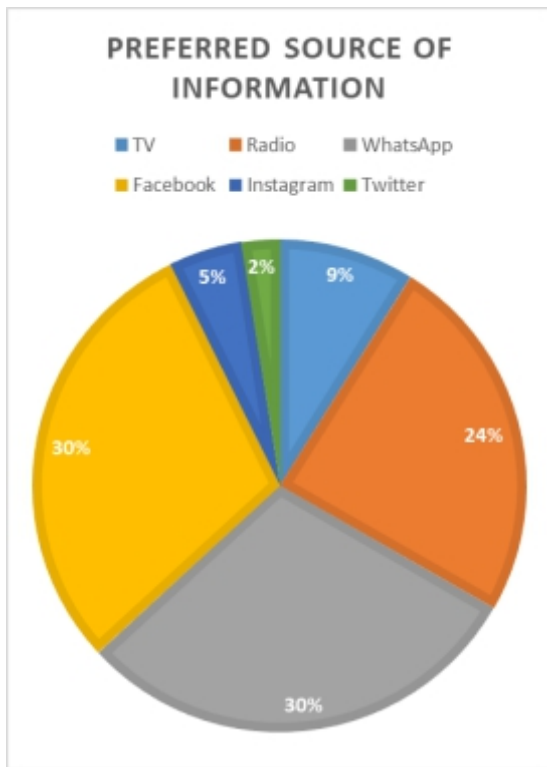
The WhatsApp platform proved to be the most effective in reaching the target audience as it had the greatest percentage reach with a total of 51%, followed by Facebook with a percentage reach of 28%, Twitter with 12% capture and the 9% via Instagram.

S/N	SOCIAL MEDIA	REACH
1	FACEBOOK	516353
2	INSTAGRAM	168568
3	TWITTER	217548
4	WHATSAPP	948494

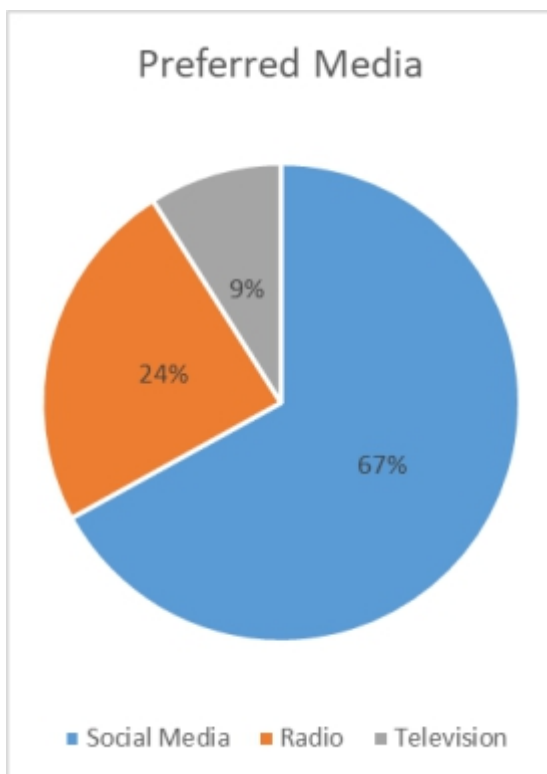
While these were the four social media channels maximized in driving the sensitization process during the project, media sensitization was also carried out on other platforms such as YouTube, WhatsApp and Telegram. With the Telegram group, the aim was not just a platform for advocacy, but to also serve as a tool for sustainability, long after the conclusion of the intervention, where target beneficiaries of the project, turned advocates, could continue the aim by taking community ownership of the project and continue the awareness on the pandemic.



Preferred Source of Information



Radio, social media and TV had the strongest reach as preferred sources of information source for the respondents.



Challenges

Some of the challenges associated with the community and engagement process included:

- Network connectivity:** There were some complaints by several LGFOs about the quality and strength of the network connection: some communities did not have good networks, and many people did not have data to fill the online forms.
- Issue of palliatives:** Many respondents complained of not having data to fill the e-questionnaires and often demanded compensation (oftentimes financial) after acceding to fill out the forms. As some of the communities currently engaged are post-conflict locations, the economic wellbeing of many members of the community are poor, and so, majority of the community stakeholders who were interviewed requested for some financial compensation and/or from the project before granting interviews.
- Rate of insecurity:** while the rate of insecurity was not consistent and differed in degree from state to state, it nonetheless had several impacts on the project implementation process in terms of the ability of the LGFOs to freely and openly engage in their assigned LGAs. For example, the spill-over of pockets of violence from the looting of COVID-19 palliatives and subsequent curfews imposed by various state governments such as Adamawa, Kaduna and Plateau hindered LGFOs from engaging in certain locations. Also, during the harvest season (November – December 2020) in the northeast, there was a recorded spike in banditry and clashes between farmers and herder pastoralists, who invaded farmlands, destroyed crops and in many instances, killed defenseless farmers who put up resistance.
- Change of LGAs:** The field officers either live a short distance away from, or already reside in the respective LGAs that they would be engaging in. However, in conducting the situational analysis, some of the field officers raised concerns of an increase in cases of insecurity especially banditry and kidnappings in particular wards in selected LGAs. This presented a problem as the project strictly adhered to the Do No Harm principle. The rise in insecurity and the identification of

this risk led to questions of the possibility of changing certain LGAs to more 'stable' alternatives. However, not all these alternatives met the criteria as 'vulnerable communities.' Moreover, part of the objectives of the project were to document, identify and address any issues and threats to security. While these incidents of insecurity were reported to occur mostly at nights, nonetheless, the locations of the affected wards were documented, and to mitigate this risk, the LGFOs concerned were asked to avoid any physical engagements in the affected wards.

Risk Management Strategies Deployed:

- Strict adherence to all COVID-19 protocols by the implementation team.
- Consciousness of security situations at all the communities engaged, with real-time reports by the LGFOs and state coordinators. As security challenges were highly unpredictable in some localities, the intervention had to deploy the use of early warning signals to help track the likelihood of attacks before embarking on their engagements. This also included frequently seeking security updates from the security agencies.
- Some local residents saw the LGFOs like spies in their communities. Therefore, before each LGFO entered any community, a 'gatekeeper' was identified within the community to introduce LGFOs to the leadership and members of the communities. Another strategy adopted by some LGFOs was to greet the people in their native languages. This built confidence in the locals.
- Many of the locals still did not that COVID-19 exists. This narrative was addressed through persistent explanations by the LGFOs and a breakdown of the need for information sharing.

Results

At endline, the project had achieved all the targets it had set out to reach at baseline, and had exceeded its target number of beneficiaries. Some of the outcomes of this intervention included:

1. Increased enlightenment of the local residents on COVID-19 and its impacts.

2. Increased adherence to COVID-19 safety protocols such as the wearing of facemasks due to the sensitization process.
3. The project findings informing NPC members in their engagements with key stakeholders.
4. Data sharing and use of project findings by other COVID-19 projects.
5. Invitation to collaborate by other organisations and COVID-19 projects.

3.2 Key Achievements of the Project

3.2.1 Gender Mainstreaming and Social Inclusion

Gender mainstreaming is a major crosscutting issue in conducting gender-specific analyses to enhance evidence-based research and better inform gender-responsive policies. The project mainstreamed gender into both the project planning and delivery activities, by ensuring that each output of the project included a gender component. For much of the project planning process, equal gender representation (as much as possible) was prioritized, also taking into account ethnic and religious diversities.

- The project implementation team comprised 6 project staff (3 males and 3 females), 12 state and gender coordinators (5 males and 7 females) and 144 LGFOs (74 males and 70 females).
- The research and data collection aspect of the project aimed at gathering data and relevant information on the impact of COVID-19 on men, women and children in local communities across the 6 selected states of project implementation. For example, to determine the impact of COVID-19 on women, the survey questionnaire included gender-specific questions such as incidences of GBV, the roles of women in community sensitization and as peacebuilders in their communities. The questionnaire also mainstreamed gender in other general COVID-19 impact questions such as ease of and accessibility to healthcare services.
- The media sensitization and engagement aspect of the project via old and new media mainstreamed gender by:
 - Creating gender-specific media content for sensitization. In this quarter, 24 gender related content were created for

media sensitization, including 1 video jingle advocating against GBV.

- o Informing the targeted communities on the gender-related impacts of COVID-19.
- o Promoting the involvement of more women and girls in the COVID-19 sensitization process.
- o Supporting the role of women in decision-making process as agents of change in their respective communities.

Efforts were also made to ensure that the involvement of key community stakeholders included men, women and youth groups, PWDs as well as religious leaders.

The project also made provisions to address specific needs of women and girls, by:

- Highlighting how COVID-19 affects women differently due to the domestic roles in the context of health and reproductive services, traditional roles etc.
- Providing ways women can seek medical care, including helplines for urgent medical attention. It also linked women up with GBV call centres especially in places like Kaduna and Yola so that women who suffered abuse, rape and assault during the COVID-19 lockdown could get immediate medical attention and legal services. For instance, a rape survivor discovered during engagement by one of the LGFOs in Yola North LGA in Adamawa state, was referred to Plan International for intervention. Plan International, with the support of a Social welfare worker, provided the survivor with psychosocial support as well as a job as a cleaner at Rima foundation, a school in Adamawa state.
- Identifying the role of men in promoting gender equality and respect for women. This includes the sensitization of men on their responsibilities in promoting the rights of women and the girl-child.

The intervention also ensured the active inclusion of people with disabilities and other marginalised social groups by sensitizing at-risk communities on the impacts of COVID-19, regardless of ability, religion or gender. The planning and implementation processes were also inclusive, where men, women, Christians, Muslims and

implementing partners with people who have disabilities were all included. In planning, PWDs and marginalised social groups were taken into consideration, by making sure that every activity was inclusive of these groups. For instance, the direct beneficiaries of the project included internally displaced persons (IDPs), slum dwellers in cities, rural farmers and victims and survivors of violent conflicts. In implementation, for instance via the community engagement and sensitization process, the project came across and reached out to these groups during this process; in instances where their complaints were outside the scope of the project, such cases were referred to the appropriate agencies and/or authorities. Furthermore, the NPC, based off project reports of farmer-herdsmen clashes in Adamawa and Plateau states, provided support to some of the victims (PWDs) of the farmer-herdsmen clashes in Plateau state.

3.2.2 Partners and other Cooperation

Since the implementation of the project, TKC shared the findings from the data collection process via virtual discussions and monthly newsletters with organisations such as GCSI, SDN, state-based peace architectures such as the Kaduna State Peace Commission (KSPC), and other local NGOs and CSOs. The importance of the nature of the project reinforced by the social media sensitization process saw several of these organisations reach out to TKC for (potential) collaboration on projects aimed at mitigating the impacts of COVID-19. An instance that highlights such partnerships was the invitation by the KSPC to collaborate on a project they were implementing in schools and LGAs in Kaduna state, where they distributed facemasks and handbills on how to properly wear facemasks to residents of local communities that have had little or no government intervention regarding COVID-19. The data from TKC's identification of communities was utilized in selecting the areas where the masks were to be shared. Also, the LGFOs on the project were used to distribute these masks and sensitize the local residents. These handbills and masks were shared to local residents in Kaduna South, Chikun, Igabi, Kajuru and Jema'a LGAs in Kaduna state.

Note: Beyond the donations and collaborations, The Kukah Centre has not entered into formal partnerships on the basis of the FCDO Project – Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 on Nigeria's Most Vulnerable Communities Through Key

Stakeholders. These formal partnerships could be maintained as related to this project when there is a likelihood that the project has some continuity. However, The Kukah Centre will also maintain its relationship with these organisations for future project implementation, and formal partnership(s) when required.

3.2.3 Level of Stakeholder support and engagement

The level of support from the various LGAs being engaged steadily improved over the intervention cycle. Initial reports from some of the LGFOs in some of the LGAs such as Rimi LGA in Katsina state indicated that they were barred from engaging in the community engagement and sensitization process, as there were suspicions as to the true motives and intentions of the project. To rectify this situation, letters of introduction were given to 21 key state and community stakeholders by the state coordinators and LGFOs. Additionally, the need for COVID-19 sensitization in the local communities was explained in order to gain the support and buy-in of these community leaders. All meetings were conducted with respect to COVID-19 safety regulations. The feedback from the community stakeholders was very favourable and went a long way in supporting the engagement process, for in the succeeding months of the community engagement process, at least 10 of the local

community leaders have been interviewed, with over 60 others spread across the six states verbally giving their appreciation and support for the project objectives.

At the state level, there was also increased engagement and support by key stakeholders for the project. For example, Plateau Radio Television (PRTV), a state-owned station, offered to air the video jingles for an additional month on completion of the project, at no cost. The Kano state coordinator also leveraged the opportunity to gain the support and engagement of key stakeholders at the Kano Stakeholders Peace Talk, which was coordinated by the Kano Peace Committee and attended by the Ministers of Defense and Agriculture as well as leaders from different communities and religious groups.

CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusions and Lessons Learned

4 Conclusions and Lessons Learned

4.1 Lessons Learned: what has improved since Baseline Research? What has worked, why and with what effects?

Community Stakeholder Engagement: The ongoing community engagement and sensitization process, apart from achieving the desired objectives, also highlights the importance of community stakeholder engagement in ensuring the inclusion and representation of the voices of the masses and less privileged in policy engagements at the highest levels of governance. From Jos North LGA in Plateau state, the community members appealed that TKC relate their sufferings to the government; they need the government to alleviate endemic poverty in their community and control the rising cost of foodstuff in the market so that families can have access to basic needs and food items. Similarly, one of the respondents from Katsina state notes, *“Most of the communities engaged are happy as they get a sense that their challenges will be made known to relevant authorities.”*

Importance of local context as a guarantee for success: the difference in the situational contexts of the six states of project implementation demanded the need for the translation of some of the media sensitization content into several indigenous languages for easier engagement by the local community residents. Translating these contents to indigenous languages secured better access for the dissemination of the messaging which created rapt attention and better understanding of the issues surrounding COVID-19.

Effectiveness of data-driven sensitization: the data collected from the research has been very relevant in contributing to the sensitization process and overall effectiveness of the project. As an LGFO from Wase LGA in Plateau state reported, *“the engagement was not satisfactory at the beginning because of the people’s skepticism and suspicion. But the narrative is changing, the people are beginning to see the good intentions of these engagements and are flowing better now,*

because they can relate with most of the content put out by the Kukah Centre and are following the centre on some of its social media platforms and also its radio programs.” This is similar to reports from Jos North LGA where the LGFOs stated that, *“Many of the community members have their radio sets with them at most times and have listened to the radio jingles and gained some good level of knowledge about the virus.”* Also, certain measures were taken to enhance the effectiveness of the data collection process e.g. in Kano state, due to the conservative nature of many of the communities, where male respondents choose only to engage with male counterparts and female respondents (especially Muslim women) with females, each LGA was required to have 1 male and 1 female LGFO each to carry out the engagement process, unlike states like Adamawa and Kaduna where gender balance in the selection of LGFOs was not as strictly enforced.

Sustainability: from the data findings, many of the communities engaged feel that COVID-19 is now overemphasized, with them believing that there are more pressing issues in the communities such as poverty and insecurity that need to be attended to by the Government and well-meaning Nigerians. However, with the onset of the second wave of COVID-19 officially reported by the NCDC, there is a need to continue community awareness and sensitization on the virus and the necessity for people to observe the COVID-19 prevention protocols, more aggressively, while also including issues that deal with the economic survival of the people in the realities of COVID-19.

Resulting actions from the learning curve:

From the above, the following resulting actions were taken:

- Rejigging the project activities to ensure the community needs and concerns were highlighted, to promote data-driven sensitization and aid in evidence-based policy recommendations.
- Recommendation of policy actions based on the findings to the government via the NPC.

- Translation of media sensitization content into 9 different languages for easier engagement by the local community residents.

Review of the Project Implementation Process

To respond to the changing dynamics and enhance the utility of the research and data collection process, a strategic meeting was held by the project staff. The aim of this meeting was to highlight methods on improving the project implementation process and outcomes. To this effect, a rejigging of the project activities, while maintaining the major components of the project, was carried out and recommendations were drawn up by the project staff and sent to the FCDO for their approval. These recommendations involved:

- Placing the issues of insecurity, instability, gender and incidents of violence as happening within the context of COVID-19 rather than being motivated by the issues of COVID-19.
- Highlighting in greater detail the role of the NPC within the project implementation.
- Deploying data and evidence collected from the field for sensitization without compromising sensitive information.
- Reviewing of the survey questionnaire and managing sensitive information.

Based on the approval of the recommendations above, the following actions were taken:

- Modifications were made to the project logframe³⁸, e-questionnaire (google form) and the project report template for the coordinators and LGFOs were made to reflect the approved recommendations.
- Deployment of data and evidence collected from the field for sensitization on the social media platforms (WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram and Facebook) of TKC, 12 coordinators and 144 LGFOs.³⁹
- Organisation of virtual re-training sessions for the coordinators and LGFOs to improve their general understanding of the project and the

deliverables and type of information to look out for in the data collection process.⁴⁰

The re-training sessions were carried out in the 9th week of the project. The training for the coordinators was conducted first to bring the coordinators up to speed on the direction of the project, ensure that this direction is properly and adequately understood by them, as well as have them well prepared to attend to any follow-up questions that the LGFOs might have after they had been re-trained.

For all the sessions, the purpose of the re-training was to:

- Explain the purpose of the meeting and the new context of the project implementation.
- Reinforce the importance and use of the revised reporting template and google forms.
- Discuss the community stakeholder engagement component of the project.
- Discuss any challenges currently faced in the data collection process, and
- Set deliverables and target deadlines for the coordinators and LGFOs viz-a-viz identified project tasks.

³⁸ The updated project logframe is attached to this report. This logframe has also been shared with WYG group.

³⁹ Find attached as 'Evidence-Based Sensitization Content' in Annexes folder.

⁴⁰ Video clips from the virtual training sessions and Attendance Form attached as Annex I.

From the evidence collected, there appears to be COVID-19 fatigue in the communities engaged. Furthermore, some of these communities seem to suggest that attention should be paid to structural issues of poverty, insecurity and the culture of impunity among security personnel, rather than the pandemic. While these suggestions have merit, the COVID-19 pandemic is still a reality that needs to be addressed. Consequently, TKC is putting forward the following policy recommendations:

State and Federal Governments

- The rise in the number of positive COVID-19 cases makes the need for more sensitization more urgent and necessary. Moreover, the increasing sense of a 2nd Wave nationally calls for a reviewed approach and new strategy of managing the pandemic. State governments should create more testing centres to facilitate the testing process. There must also be proper coordination between the federal and state governments to contain the threats of COVID-19. Emphasis must be laid on increasing community awareness on the virus to ensure proper sensitization and correction of any misperceptions and/or wrong narratives.
- The rise in insecurity and poverty, which appears to have been exacerbated by the pandemic, requires that the governments place more emphasis on the economic survival of the people in the COVID-19 Response Strategy. The inclusion of, and dissemination of palliatives to mitigate the increasing trend of social insecurity should be prioritized. Also, economic empowerment programmes for women and youth should be developed to help curtail rising crimes and insecurity.
- Gender mainstreaming including the use of gender analysis and/or evidence is oftentimes lacking in government policies. For instance, though some research was done on the impact of COVID-19 on pregnant women and nursing mothers, gender disaggregation on issues of COVID-19 was missing; there was no

information on the number of women who had been infected, recovered or died as a result of the virus. There was also inadequate information on increasing levels of domestic violence occasioned by the pandemic and how it particularly affects women and children, the number of women who had reported cases of domestic violence to the security officials, the number of women able to access healthcare and information on women who had lost their jobs, businesses and other means of livelihood as a result of the pandemic. Furthermore, there was also limited information on how COVID-19 impacted the traditional roles of women, as well as no emphasis on the role of women in mitigating the spread of COVID-19. The government must ensure gender disaggregation and mainstream gender equality to adequately address institutional and structural barriers, which will aid gender-responsive policies such as:

- * Research should be conducted on the state of women's economic and social rights and, with this knowledge as a benchmark, a plan and strategy should be devised for achieving women's economic and social rights.
- * Strategies aimed at preventing gender-based violence; adequate mechanisms on gender-sensitive policing and justice should be developed.
- * Adequate facilities should be put in place for medical, psychological, physical, and legal support for survivors of Gender-Based Violence (GBV).
- * The government and key stakeholders need to create workable platforms that support community members especially women's substantive representation in post-conflict governance, by providing direct technical and capacity-building support to women's involvement "at the table" in the peacebuilding processes.

Security agencies

Perceptions about the security services within local communities remain negative and unappreciative. They are often seen as collaborators with some of the perpetrators of the insecurity, and as more interested in exploiting the conflict. Additionally, culture of impunity among security personnel such as brutality, extortion and/or unlawful detainment by security officials, does little to aid the relationship between civilians and the various security agencies.

- Security agencies should boost and intensify the security at the level of the local communities especially the high-risk areas/states.
- The respective state governments and relevant security agencies must ensure that every security official involved in abuses of human rights is investigated and held accountable for their actions. This will help promote a greater sense of security in their various states.
- Security personnel should improve civil-military relationships and incorporate communities into responses to the conflict. This can be achieved through workshops, seminars, and a series of briefings.
- Security agencies should properly indicate and outline the proper avenues to report complaints and issues of injustices.

Non-Governmental Agencies (NGOs), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and International Development Partners

- International development partners should support the efforts of the state and federal governments in curbing the spread of COVID-19 by amplifying community sensitization processes. This includes educating local communities on the threats of the virus, the various safety protocols to adhere to, as well as promoting community stakeholder engagement in driving the narrative.
- Development partners should design and support a gender-sensitive strategy that addresses the tailored concerns of women, children, and those with disabilities. This should include programs of psychological counseling, confidence building, critical thinking, and participation in peacebuilding processes.

- Research should be conducted on the state of women's economic and social rights and, with this knowledge as a benchmark, a plan and strategy should be devised for achieving women's economic and social rights.
- Special sensitization programmes to educate women on their rights and roles as citizens should be carried out to help women defend and assert their rights in the face of violations and/or threats.
- An institute for women's development should be set up in northern Nigeria to broadly train women on public participation.

Community Leaders and Stakeholders

- Community stakeholder engagement is important ensuring the inclusion and representation of the voices of the masses and less privileged in policy engagements at the highest levels of governance. Therefore:
- Community leaders and stakeholders should support the efforts of the government and development partners in the COVID-19 sensitization process by taking ownership of the advocacy campaign. This will promote increased learning, that will be stepped down to the community residents.
- Traditional and religious leaders, as well as leaders of the men, women and youth groups must ensure that they pass the right narratives to their fellow community members during such advocacy campaigns.

ANNEX I:

List of the 72 LGAs the project will be implemented in.

LIST OF SELECTED LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS (LGAs)

STATE: **ADAMAWA**

S/N	NAME OF SELECTED L.G. A
1.	MUBI NORTH
2.	MICHIKA
3.	HONG
4.	GOMBI
5.	YOLA NORTH
6.	MUBI SOUTH
7.	GIREI
8.	DEMSA
9.	NUMAN
10.	GANYE
11.	MAYO BELWA
12.	JADA

STATE: **KANO**

S/N	NAME OF SELECTED L.G. A
1.	DALA
2.	FAGGE
3.	TARAUNI
4.	NASSARAWA
5.	GWALE
6.	MUNICIPAL
7.	DAMBATTA
8.	BICHI
9.	BEBEJI
10.	RANO
11.	UNGOGO
12.	KUMBOTSO

STATE: **KADUNA**

S/N	NAME OF SELECTED L.G. A
1.	ZANGON KATAF
2.	ZARIA
3.	MAKARFI
4.	KAJURU
5.	JEMA'A
6.	KADUNA SOUTH
7.	CHIKUN
8.	KADUNA NORTH
9.	SANGA
10.	JABA
11.	GIWA
12.	IGABI

STATE: **KATSINA**

S/N	NAME OF SELECTED L.G. A
1.	KATSINA
2.	JIBIYA
3.	MANI
4.	DAURA
5.	RIMI
6.	DUTSINMA
7.	KANKARA
8.	MALUMFASHI
9.	KAFUR
10.	FUNTUA
11.	FASKARI
12.	DANDUME

STATE: **PLATEAU**

S/N	NAME OF SELECTED L.G. A
1.	JOS NORTH
2.	JOS SOUTH
3.	BASSA
4.	RIYOM
5.	MANGU
6.	BOKKOS
7.	KANKE
8.	KANAM
9.	WASE
10.	LANGTANG SOUTH
11.	SHENDAM
12.	QUAN PAN

STATE: **SOKOTO**

S/N	NAME OF SELECTED L.G. A
1.	ILLELA
2.	GWADABAWA
3.	GORONYO
4.	WURNO
5.	SOKOTO SOUTH
6.	WAMAKKO
7.	KWARE
8.	SILAME
9.	BODINGA
10.	SHAGARI
11.	TAMBUWAL
12.	DANGE-SHUNI

Acknowledgments:

This report was produced by The Kukah Centre, a Nigeria-based non-profit, non-governmental and public policy organisation that offers alternative approaches to the challenges of leadership and the impact of conflict on national development. Interfaith dialogue is at the core of the Centre's work and involves actively promoting conversations among Nigeria's faith communities, as well as between leaders in faith and public policy. The Kukah Centre's core programme areas include: Interfaith Dialogue, Peace and Conflict Resolution, Leadership Training and Development, Good governance, Public Policy Research, Memory and Knowledge Preservation.

The Kukah Centre is particularly grateful to Alice Gore, Conflict Adviser at the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the Conflict, Security and Stability Fund (CSSF) program and the FCDO for the opportunity to work with them. Special thanks go to the Public Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC) for their support throughout the project intervention. The Centre also acknowledges the efforts of Fr. Atta Barkindo, Executive Director of The Kukah Centre and Head of Secretariat, National Peace Committee, for coordinating the research team, whose findings inform this brief. TKC thanks the Project Officer, Iguehi Omole-Irabor, the Gender Desk led by Vicham Hajara Waziri, the Media team led by Azubuikwe Ohakwu Clinton, all 12 Project State and Gender Coordinators, implementing partners and sister agencies such as the Kaduna State Peace Commission, Plateau Peacebuilding Agency, the Kano Peace Committee, the Justice Development and Peace Commission (JDPC), and the rest of the project implementation team for their valuable input and contributions.

More information on The Kukah Centre can be found at:

<https://thekukahcentre.org/>

You can also reach us directly via:

Email: kukahcentre@gmail.com

Tel: +234 (0) 903 114 9816



THE
KUKAH
CENTRE
FAITH • LEADERSHIP • PUBLIC POLICY



HEAD OFFICE:
Flat C1, American Specialist Hospital
Complex, (opposite Rockview Royale Hotel),
1, Luanda Crescent, Wuse 2, Abuja - Nigeria.

REGIONAL OFFICE:
#10 North Road, Abakpa,
Kaduna - Nigeria.

+234 (0) 903 114 9816
+234 (0) 810 9531 981

info@thekukahcentre.org,
tkc.abuja@gmail.com,
kukahcentre@gmail.com

www.thekukahcentre.org