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## **Resilience Approach to conflict management to affected communities of Lake Chad Basin**

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### **Abstract**

*Over a decade there has been rising trends of resilience from conflict in the Lake Chad Basin region as the major effort to promote peaceful co-existence through conflict management by the stakeholders. In order to explore resilience in the region, this study states its objectives, to assess the provision of peace building to engender resilience and development in conflict affected communities, examine social cohesion for resilience and development in conflict affected communities, assess the level of prevention from escalation of conflict in conflict affected communities, and examine strategies for countering violent extremism for long term resilience, and development of conflict affected communities. The study adopted qualitative method of research and interpretive research design was used. The target population for the study were 300 community members of Borno and Yobe States in Lake Chad Basin region. The study used focus group discussion with the community members for data collection and explanatory method of data analysis by transcribing the oral interview data obtained from the focus group discussion. The result of the study revealed that substantial number of the conflict affected communities have not benefited from the peace building sensitization programmes neither from NGOs nor government. Such communities are mostly found trapped in rural areas highly risky for NGOs and government to reach. The communities include rural areas of Malam-Fatori, Kukawa, Abadam Kala Balge, Gashua and Guzamala LGAs. Yet the community members living in the major cities admitted that they have been benefiting from relief materials from NGOs and government but have not heard of the peace building initiatives. The result of the study further revealed that the major cities like Maiduguri, Biu, Damatu, Potiskum Bama, Jere, and Gwoza have benefited from NGOs and governments' training on social cohesion. The communities in rural areas of Abadam, Malam Fatori and Nganzai have no access to the training on social cohesion compared to the people in the state capitals and major towns of Borno and Yobe in the Lake Chad Basin Region which is as the result of difficulty in accessing conflict areas. The study recommended that Borno, Yobe States and NGOs should extend the peace building and social cohesion programmes to the rural communities in order to create an enabling environment for sustainable development in Lake Chad Basin region.*

**Keyword:** Resilience Approach, Conflict Management, Lake Chad Basin

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### **Introduction**

Resilience is a measure of the ability of a community to absorb changes of state variables, driving variables and parameters, and still persist. It establishes a shift from a

logic focused on clear threats to a new governmental logic which stresses uncertainty, ambiguity, and complexity which implies the impossibility of predicting threats. To be resilient, one must be prepared

for unknown societal risks and the ability to show adaptation, learning by doing and flexibility as a way to respond to shocks, to embrace change and to live with rather than completely eliminate uncertainty, ambiguity, and complexity. Resilience is the internal capacity of societies to cope with conflicts on the development of self-organization and internal capacities and capabilities rather than the external provision of aid, resources or policy solutions (Joseph, 2016).

Conflict is the use of forceful violence to acquire important interest or goals. The deadliest form of conflict is the armed conflict which includes genocide against unarmed civilians especially Boko Haram terrorism in the Lake Chad Basin region. The brutal acts of conflicts in the Lake Chad Basin region particularly North East Nigeria has escalated to serious breakdown of law and order and defamation of security agencies for failing to secure lives and properties of the communities in the North East. The situation has attracted collective security architecture of the countries of the Lake Chad Basin and the Non-governmental Organisation in providing conflict management strategies to secure lives and properties (Madalina, 2015).

Conflict management involve the adoption of resolution and stimulation techniques to deescalate conflict from its disruptive impact within an entity, while bringing people together by positive and constructive aspects of collaboration, cooperation and compromise. It also comprises of removing cognitive barriers to agreement and group synergy. It often covers an arrangement of measures of conflict resolution, problem solving, super-ordinate goals, and expansion of resources, avoidance, smoothing, compromise, authoritative command, and altering the human and structural variables (Donald, 2016).

The conflict in Lake Chad Basin region has increased number of Internally Displaced Persons fleeing to safer communities within the region. It has been noted that majority of these persons constitute women and children. The rise in the conflict in the region has brought about adverse effect on the population especially on women and children evident in the increased number of widows and orphans in Borno and Yobe States. The conflict escalated in destruction of lives and properties, kidnapping of women and children, and cattle rustling since 2009 thereby increasing number of IDPs in the region. From 2009 to 2010 IDP's rose to 100,000 and from 2010 to 2011 it increased to 130,000. From 2011 to 2012, the number of IDP's rose to 200,000. From 2012 to 2013 IDP's grew to 290,000 and from May 2013 to March 2014 it decreased slightly to 250,000. From May-June 2014, it rose again to 436,608 and from August to December 2015 it rose 613,000 in 2016, it also rose to 750,000m, from 2017 to 2020 the IDP's drastically to 1,921,000 in Borno and Yobe State (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) 2020). Total deaths in Borno and Yobe State related to the ongoing armed conflict from May 2011 to Nov 2015 are 123,461 people killed. People trapped in conflict-affected areas fear death and abduction, and 12,000 – 17,000 civilians are missing (UNOCHA 2020). Despite the escalation of conflict that led to loss of lives and properties in the Lake Chad Basin region, people are seen adhering to their livelihood in Borno and Yobe States.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In spite of the efforts of Nigerian government and Non-governmental Organizations in responding to the conflicts to establish resilience in the Lake Chad Basin especially Borno and Yobe States of Nigeria through implementation of several conflict

management programmes such as North-east Development Commission, Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR), Reconciliation, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (RRR) by the government, and Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Resettlement, comprehensively mutual and integrative approaches by the NGOs.

Yet only few researcher were able to publish on resilience and conflict management for example, Ana (2018) studied on Resilience in peacebuilding: Contesting uncertainty, ambiguity, and complexity, Contemporary Security Policy; Wagner and Anholt (2016) titled resilience as the EU global strategy's new leitmotif: Pragmatic, problematic, or promising?; de Milliano, and Jurriens, (2016) studied on realities of resilience in practice: Lessons learnt through a pilot EU Aid volunteer initiative. This study seeks to address some areas of conflict management that the previous studies failed to address in the Lake Chad Region especially the North – east Nigeria, these include peace building, social cohesion, prevention from escalation of conflict and provision of strategies for countering violent extremism for long term resilience, recovery and development of conflict affected communities in Borno, and Yobe States.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of the study is to provide a conflict management strategy for long term resilience in conflict affected communities in the Lake Chad Basin Region targeting Borno, and Yobe States. The specific objectives are to:

- i. assess peace building for engender resilience and development in conflict affected communities,
- ii. examine social cohesion for resilience and development in conflict affected communities,

iii. assess the level of prevention from escalation of conflict in conflict affected communities,

iv. examine strategies for countering violent extremism for long term resilience, and development of conflict affected communities.

### **Literature Review**

This section addresses literatures on peace building, social cohesion, prevention from escalation of conflict and strategies for countering violent extremism.

#### **Concept of Conflict Management**

Conflict management refers to techniques and ideas design to reduce the negative effects of conflict in a chaos settlement Ejodus (2017). Similarly, Juncos (2017) described conflict management as the process of handling disputes and disagreement between two or more parties in a community. Ejodus and Juncos (2018) defined conflict management as a process where disputes are resolve, and negative results are minimized for the development of a community. Joseph (2016) refers conflict management as the practice of recognising and dealing with disputes in a rationale, balance and effective way to establish a community where livelihood is not interrupted. Pospisil and Kühn (2016) described conflict management as the ability to identify and handle conflict sensibly, fairly, and efficiently for development. The conflict cannot be resolved if you do not first understand the causes of conflict. Only when a diagnosis develops into concrete terms, you will be able to propose alternate solutions. The following methods and skills will improve one's understanding about how to manage conflict. Therefore, this study adopted the definition of conflict management as planning measures to avoid conflict when possible, and taking rapid and effective measures when it is made.

#### **Peace Building to Engender Resilience**

Community-based approaches for peace building have been highlighted as important means of promoting peace and social cohesion in fragile contexts. For instance, the Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSD) finds that ‘since public institutions are often weak in conflict and fragile settings, community-based approaches can be used to re-connect the state with its citizens and to strengthen local governance’. Similarly, Ejodus (2017) asserted that reducing Armed Violence, also recommends making use of ‘comprehensive community-based programmes’ as well as building on already existing local mechanisms to undertake various key peacebuilding efforts, such as prevention initiatives, social intervention or law enforcement.

Despite its growing popularity in policy circles, the concept of resilience and what it specifically refers to remains particularly tricky to define. Initially used in fields as diverse as mechanical engineering, ecology and psychology, the term has been appropriated by peacebuilding actors and, in its simplest terms, refers to the ‘capacity to ‘bounce back’ after a disturbance or a shock’ (Ejodus and Juncos 2018). This aptitude is generally articulated in terms of the emergence of a whole system rather than a single occurrence. Indeed, a GPP publication highlights the fact that ‘most studies on resilience focus on the ability of systems to cope, adapt and reorganise in response to a chronic challenge’ (Joseph 2016). A European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) publication confirms this wide-set approach when it argues that the concept of resilience is ‘rooted in complex adaptive systems thinking’ (de Coning 2018). Also, Juncos (2017) observed an important qualification to this whole-systems lens, however, highlighting that it is not always necessarily the entire system that undergoes

adaptation: ‘at times it is only a sub-system that transforms in order for the system as a whole to adapt’. As such, it is quite evident that despite being increasingly used by practitioners across the international cooperation field, the concept of resilience is not easily defined or delineated and lends itself to multiple interpretations.

This definitional ambiguity is underscored by the fact that beyond the blurry boundaries of the term, it is equally challenging to determine what (i.e. the object or subject) ‘resilience’ refers to. In seeking to narrow down resilience’s implications for peacebuilding, Wagner and Anholt (2016) outlines four valuable and streamlined ways to conceive the relationship between resilience to conflict and change: 1) resilience as the ability to maintain a positive peace; 2) resilience as the ability to manage the process of transforming a negative peace into a positive peace; 3) resilience as a quest for status quo ante bellum; and, finally, 4) resilience as transformation. While it is evident that resilience still spans across a wide range of dimensions, even when it is considered with regards to a specific interactions, the above pathways show that it is possible to unpack and make use of the concept in an organised and coherent manner. The appropriation potential of resilience as a concept can be seen in the manner in which a handful of organisations have embraced it and created a specific vision or interpretation around it. For instance, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has succeeded in adopting the concept and creating a comprehensive approach drawing on it (IFRC, 2016). Doing so has involved explicitly defining key traits characterising resilient communities, among different criteria, as well as establishing a set of core principles that the IFRC considers conducive to resilience (IFRC, 2016). Such principles include respecting local

ownership, conducting comprehensive cross-sector assessments throughout planning and implementation phases, and adopting a long-term perspective (IFRC, 2016). Similarly, in its report entitled 'Concepts and Dilemmas of Statebuilding in Fragile Situations', the OECD chooses to define the opposite of fragility not as stability but as resilience (2011). As such, although questions still remain as to what exactly resilience embodies, the lack of definitional clarity surrounding it may also be considered an advantage in that it enables actors to seize it and build upon it constructively. Another notable opportunity highlighted by a GPP publication is that 'it shifts the focus from deficit to strengths' (Pospisil & Kühn 2016). Departing from an entrenched tendency to outline the flaws and shortcomings of a given object of study, it allows us to engage in a reflexive and productive exercise of identifying factors contributing to strength. Finally, perhaps a key takeaway from the concept of resilience is that it represents an illustration of the fact that local systems are able to function and develop their coping mechanisms without external intervention or assistance.

### **Social Cohesion for Resilience**

Community-driven development programmes promote social cohesion through community participation in decision-making, bringing divided people together, and addressing community needs (de Coning 2018). Similarly, Ejodus (2017) shows evidence of the impact of community-driven development programmes on social cohesion is mixed. Also, de Milliano and Jurriens (2016) shows positive effects on some aspects of social cohesion others show some positive effects and/or no adverse effects; but some show negative effects. Two multi-country studies both found very mixed effects.

Juncos (2017) argued that access to jobs improves social cohesion. This is because jobs can reduce tensions stemming from unemployment; improve people's economic condition, and enable different groups to interact. Pospisil and Kühn (2016) stated that evidence of the impact of job creation programmes on social cohesion is extremely limited: The study shows correlation between jobs and some outcomes typically associated with social cohesion, such as social well-being, but evidence of how individual experiences translate into interactions between groups is limited. Some of the literature highlights the negative impact jobs can have on social cohesion – for example, when labour markets are divided along group lines.

Ejdus (2017) suggested that social protection may promote social cohesion where it can reduce poverty, enhance the income security of vulnerable people, improve access to basic services and establish legal entitlements for previously excluded groups. Joseph (2016) stated that empirical evidence of the impact of social protection on social cohesion is limited. Different social protection modalities (cash transfers, conditional grants, social insurance, etc.) could improve social cohesion, but problems could arise if programmes are not designed carefully. For example, if targeting is carried out on ethnic lines, or weakened by corruption/mismanagement, this can exacerbate tensions. Wagner and Anholt (2016) asserts that education can be either a positive or negative influence on social cohesion. Implementing education reforms designed to improve social cohesion has provided but little evidence of positive impact. Examples include multilingual education systems, adopting a sector wide approach and addressing human rights and inequality and taking a holistic approach to curriculum design. Joseph (2016) observed

that civil society plays a role in peace building by adopting social cohesion through the impact of donor-supported interventions by civil society to promote social cohesion. However, there are guidelines for donors seeking to support civil society in this role which can also have a negative effect, particularly where it reflects societal divisions.

Social cohesion manifests in voluntary associations and family organization, in the absence of traditional crime, and that civic society and social cohesion are linked via secondary associations (Lockwood 2016). This is in agreement with study of Pospisil (2018) who studied on the effects of wartime violence on social cohesion, and discovers that violence-affected communities exhibit higher levels of prosocial motivation, measured by altruistic giving, public good contributions, investment in trust-based transactions, and willingness to reciprocate trust-based investments. This can be related to the study of Budman (2016) who relates group social cohesion with individuals' perceptions of outcome in the group, and defines three metrics to quantify social cohesion: individuals acting together towards a common goal, positive engagement around common goals, and a vulnerable and trusting attitude that fosters the sharing of private materials. Wagner and Anholt (2016) argues that attractive green areas in the neighbourhood may serve as a focal point of tacit coordination for positive informal social interaction, which strengthens social ties and social cohesion. Donald (2016) asserted that face-to-face interactions in small groups impose pressure upon individuals to follow group norms. The study argues that individuals have a drive to be accurately self-evaluated, and this affects group formation and group structure. In the following year. People want to be liked, and therefore conform more or less depending on

the forces opposing them in the group. The findings revealed that out that 75% of the participants in his experiments change opinions at least once, especially when they are the only ones with a contrary judgment, conflict analysis avails peace experts intervening in a conflict the opportunity of gathering necessary data or information that will facilitate bringing together of parties in dispute and reveal a expendable outcome stage.

### **Strategies for Countering Violent Extremism for Resilience**

Adinoyi and Muliru (2016) studied on counter violent extremism measures: African perspectives and research needs. The study identified the following counter violent strategies:

- i. Negotiation and Mediation: this counter violent extremism strategy involve the basic negotiation skills and basic mediation skills.
- ii. Dispute resolution: this counter violent extremism strategy involves the basic knowledge of drafting dispute agreement between the conflicting parties.
- iii. Do no Harm: this counter violent extremism strategy comprises of framework and principle do no harm.

Academy for dispute resolution (2017) identified mediation as strategy for countering violence extremism. The mediator in this case is expected to be of calm, reasonable, respectable, nonpartisan and patient amongst much needed traits. To be able to be accorded the honour and audience to come in between and facilitate the reconciliation process one is regarded as esteemed and of reasonable mature ground in resolution. Ana (2018) emphasizes further the need for perfect knowledge of the circumstances leading to the dispute, the parties involved and the ethical mode of performance by the mediator. In this case the

mediator professionally handles both information kinds with discretion and confidence so as not to jeopardize any positive sign whatsoever of reconciliation.

The Nationwide Academy For Dispute Resolution in the UK appraises the arbitration method for resolving disputes, doping it the best especially in commercial disputes although it is expected that the parties involved rarely redeem the initial business relationship they enjoyed prior to the conflict. The academy asserts that Arbitration is fundamentally adverse and legal in context consequentially ending in a winner-takes-itall situation (Academy for Dispute Resolution, 20017)

Communities are there with the major intent of living at peace and in harmony with each other. However, as the adage goes “we are all wired differently”, it follows that our ways of conduct, belief, interests and judgements vary from one person to another. Furthermore, our tolerance levels for these variations define the intensity of the dispute. According to The Nationwide Academy for Dispute Resolution in the UK, (NADR) Mediation is regarded as a deliberate, non-tying, impartial course of action. Proffessional third party mediators endeavour through dialogue procedures to bring the parties in dispute together in a binding or non-binding resolution. Where the mediation process ends with a binding agreement amongst the conflicting parties, then it follows that the agreement can be enforced, simply and quickly, by the courts should the need arise.

de Coning (2018) identified rehabilitation as a strategy for conflict management. The process involve making a new, of a person’s way of living, perceptions for life changing purposes, it is the activities that necessitate the turning point of an individual in need of intervention. It is a process of social, political and economic adjustment to, and

underpinning of, conditions of relative peace in which the participants, especially those who have been disempowered and immiserated by violence can begin to prioritise future goals beyond immediate survival. Survivors not only need a stake in achieving these adjustment goals but need ultimate direction over the means to achieve them.

### **Research Methodology**

The study adopted qualitative method focusing on the interpretative research design. The interpretive design was chosen as appropriate for this study because it is well-suited for exploring hidden reasons behind complex, interrelated, or multifaceted social processes, such as hindrances for accepting peacebuilding because of unforgiveness to take vengeance through reprisal attack, social cohesion and prevention of escalation of conflict.

The target population for this study are the community member of Borno and Yobe States in the Lake Chad Basin region. The study adopted focus group discussion with 500 community members as the basic method used in data collection, which include male and female, young and old people with equal proportion of participation in the focus group discussion. The study covered Maiduguri, Biu, Bama, Jere, Gwoza, Nganzai, Malam Fatori, Abadam, Kalabalge, and Kukawa Local Governments of Areas of Borno and Damatu, Potiskum and Gujba LGAs of Yobe. The study adopted explanatory analysis by transcription of the oral interview data obtained from the focus group discussion.

### **Result and Discussion**

The result of this study revealed that there are substantial number of the members of conflict affected communities who have not benefited from the peace building trainings neither from NGOs nor government. Such communities are mostly found trapped in rural areas highly risky for NGOs and

government to reach them, these include rural areas of Malam-Fatori, Kukawa, Abadam Kala Balge, Gashua and Guzamala LGAs. Yet the community members living in the major cities admitted that they have been benefiting from relief materials from NGOs and government but have not heard of the peace building initiatives. Therefore, not all the communities have benefited the peace building training by the government and NGOs in Borno and Yobe States. This result is in line with that of Musa (2017) revealed that peace building initiative have not been properly introduced to the communities of northern Borno state due the security challenges. The result is contrary to the findings of Donald (2016) shows that peace building has been successfully establish in the communities of Somalia.

The result on the social cohesion for long term resilience and development in conflict affected communities revealed that the only majors cities like Maiduguri, Biu, Damatu, Potiskum Bama, Jere, and Gwoza have benefited the from NGOs and governments training on social cohesion. The communities in rural areas of Abadam, Malam Fatori and Nganzai have no access to the training on social cohesion compared to the people in the state capitals and major towns of Borno and Yobe in the Lake Chad Basin Region this may be as the result of difficulty in accessing conflict areas. This result is in line with the study of Adam (2016) who revealed that social cohesion was not properly inculcated to the communities of Lake Chad Basin because of the security challenges in the region. Also, the findings of Ejodus (2017) concurred to this result, on the difficulty in accessing the stakeholders of the communities for training on social cohesion in Somalia.

The result further revealed that there is no substantial training to the community members on strategies for prevention from

escalation of conflict. Majority of the communities have no idea of the strategies for conflict prevention from escalation in both rural and cities of Borno and Yobe in the Lake Chad region. This result concurred to the findings of Pospisil and Kühn (2016) that the strategies for conflict prevention from escalation are not well implemented in the conflict areas of northern Mali, Afghanistan and Nigeria. Several governments and NGOs has developed strategies on the prevention of conflict northern Mali with limited access to the communities in conflict areas that post as threat to the success of the strategies.

The result revealed that the communities of northern Borno state and Yobe were not able to access the countering violent extremism for long term resilience training by government and NGOs due the security challenges in reaching out the communities trapped in the rural areas under the control of Boko Haram insurgents. This result is in agreement with study of Ali (2018) who revealed that training for countering violent extremism for long term resilience is very risky and difficult to implement in conflict communities in Afghanistan due to the security threats in the area which deter the community the opportunities of the training for countering violent extremism for long term resilience.

### **Conclusions**

The study examined conflict management for resilience in conflict affected communities in the Lake Chad Basin Region, with particular emphases on Borno and Yobe States of Nigeria. From the result of the study, conflict management that include peace building, social cohesion, prevention of escalation of conflict and establishment of strategies for countering violent extremism have not been implemented in rural communities of Lake Chad Basin.

The study deduced that most of the rural communities in the Lake Chad region are still

trapped in insecurity which hinder them from benefitting from the conflict management trainings for resilience. Most of the communities have no access to livelihood as their counterparts the cities such as Maiduguri, Bama, Damaturu, Potiskum, Gwoza, and Biu. In conclusion, the rural communities of Abadam, Kukawa, Malam Fatori, Guzamala, and Kala Balge have not benefited from the conflict management programmes by either government or NGOs.

### **Recommendations**

To solve the problems of Lake Chad Basin communities the following recommendations are made:

- i. Borno, Yobe States and NGOs should extend the peace building training to the rural communities in order to create an enabling environment for sustainable development in Lake Chad Basin region.
- ii. Borno, Yobe States and NGOs should put more attention in provision of social cohesion training to the rural communities who are trapped in the conflict areas and severely affected by psychosocial traumas. Therefore they should be encourage by provision of recreational centre for the youth activities such as football field, sport centre, viewing centre for the drama to demonstrate.
- iii. Borno, Yobe States and NGOs should provide ways of prevention of conflict from escalation, such as early warning response strategy should be necessary action to stop the conflict at early stage and such response method should be adopted throughout the communities.
- iv. Borno, Yobe States and NGOs should adopt strategies for countering violent extremism such as security based counter terrorism measures, which encompasses not only ongoing conflict but for the feature occurrence.

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