

## **University Student – Host Community Tensions, Port Harcourt, Nigeria Fact Sheet**

### **Context**

In November, 2012, four undergraduates of the University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria, were killed by members of the host community over allegations of stealing.

### **Indicators of Potentially Violent Conflict**

This incident was a concern because of the history of Nigerian students avenging such attacks. Often times, students' reprisal results in the loss of lives, and violence can spill to neighboring communities. There was general distrust between the host community and the university. Prior to PPP's involvement there had not been an opportunity for dialogue among the host community, the university, and the students, nor had there been discussion about the ways to prevent the likelihood of violence as a result of the incident. The acrimony created feelings of mistrust, suspicion, and hatred towards the students, a situation that could have potentially triggered violent conflict between the students and the community members.

### **Locally Defined Strategies and/or Activities**

The Community Peace Development Initiative (COPEDI) emerged, with the support and encouragement of the PPP. They hosted several radio programs about peace. Later, prior to the Nigerian national elections, they hosted radio programs about peaceful elections.

### **Impact**

There has not been further violence between the host community and students in Port Harcourt. The local peace committee formed peace partnerships with other social organizations in the state (e.g. with Rotary Club, Center on Peace & Ethnic Conflicts, University of Port Harcourt). COPEDI is now cited as a reference point for peacebuilding in the state. Group mention couple examples they were cited by chiefs, academe, & lawyers. COPEDI has become as a legally recognized peacebuilding nonprofit in Nigeria.