

A Locally Led Approach to Preventing Violence Related to a Chieftaincy Dispute in Kato, Ghana: Summary of Project Impact and Indicators of Impact

Project Overview

The Purdue Peace Project (PPP) has been involved with preventing violence related to a 15-year long chieftaincy dispute since March 2015. Stemming from an impasse between two royal families, the Naentene family and the Minimini family, over the next chief to be installed, the community members of Kato, Ghana, have lived in a state of fear of the potential outbreak of violence. Indeed, due to many disputes over the years, police protection and intervention has often been required. While attempts have been made to resolve this dispute, none have been successful.

The PPP convened an actor meeting in March 2015 to engage community discussion on the chieftaincy dispute, as well as determine strategies to move forward and achieve peace. Members of both royal families attended this meeting, as well as representatives of the youth, government leaders, and market women, all of whom are affected by the conflict. As an initial step in the peacebuilding process, participants at this meeting indicated it triggered a healing process among the families and community members, and inspired many to preach peace in their community. Following this meeting, the PPP made a return visit to Kato in May 2015, which confirmed relations have changed for the better. At this meeting, representatives formed a local peace, which they called the Odo Na 3y3 Committee (meaning "love is good") or LIGC, to enact strategies for peace identified at the meeting.

Indicators of Impact

The following are indicators that the Kato chieftaincy dispute project has contributed to a reduction in the likelihood of political violence. Indicators are based on comparative data over time as well as specific critical incidents that have occurred.

Comparative

- The initial actor meeting in March 2015 inspired a newfound peace between the two families and within the larger community. Despite earlier indicators that one family may not attend, representatives of both royal families were present as well as youth, government officials, and market women.
- Updates from a meeting in September 2015 indicated relative peace in the area.
- During this same meeting, committee members shared that the two royal families had been seen greeting each other and engaging activities together.
- Despite complications in relationships between the two families, the West Africa program manager reported no incidents of violence through March 2016.
- In May 2016 the conflict escalated when one side attempted to install a chief. One person was killed. While tension remains, the PPP works to monitor the situation and consider strategies for peaceful relations.



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Critical Incidents

- During the March 2015 actor meeting, one citizen suggested that they revisit the history of the chieftaincy dispute. In this moment, the meeting devolved into a shouting match and tensions in the room were raised. However, the citizens in the meeting were able to calm the factions down and continue on with the meeting.
- In the May 2015 follow-up meeting, tensions started building again when a few of those present started disagreeing with each other over the history of dispute. People began shouting over each other and in some cases started standing up and gesturing. However, a few others in the room stepped in and encouraged them to focus on the need to build and maintain peace. They eventually all agreed to work together to that end.
- During the follow-up meeting, participants of both families formed a nine-member peace committee to act on the strategies proposed. Named Odo Na 3y3 Committee (meaning “love is good”) or LIGC, the committee has initiated collective clean-up efforts of the community in an effort to help rebuild relationships.

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