

PURDUE PEACE PROJECT

A Locally Led Approach to Resolving Inter-ethnic Conflict in the Upper West Region, Ghana: Summary of Project Impact and Indicators of Impact

Project Overview

In this project, the Purdue Peace Project's (PPP) work focuses on preventing political violence in an inter-ethnic and inter-community conflict between the Dagara and Sisaala people in the Upper West Region in Ghana. This project currently focuses on conflict between citizens of two districts: Nandom and Lambussie. The inter-ethnic conflict has contributed to land disputes in the region and between the two districts specifically. These disputes have led to a loss of lives and property, contributed to food insecurity and a lack of development in the two districts, and resulted in a lack of inter-community and interethnic relations. Over the course of the project, the PPP, in collaboration with the Nandom Youth for Peace and Development (NYPAD), has helped convene the actors involved in these disputes to identify ways forward. NYPAD, a group of youth that came together to organize the football tournament initially started by DASIPEC (see **Nandom Land Disputes**), has been instrumental in bringing together disputing groups, and its members have emerged as agents of peace in their own right.

Indicators of Impact

The following are indicators that the Nandom-Lambussie inter-ethnic conflict 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

- Meetings with representatives from the two communities, called actor meetings, occurred in November 2015. More than 100 people were in attendance at the Lambussie Actor Meeting, despite only 60 people being invited. Approximately 50 people representing nine communities were present at the Nandom Actor Meeting. Participants in the meetings included chiefs, elders, land custodians, queen mothers, women, assembly members, and youth, among others. The level of attendance at both meetings showed interest in discussions about peace. Additionally, because the meetings were organized with the assistance of NYPAD, as a group of youth from Nandom, it was especially significant that Lambussie participants attended.
- At both meetings, participants agreed that everyone was responsible for implementing strategies to promote peace, and that conflict should end as soon as possible.
- Based on the post-meeting evaluation, participants from both meetings identified the need for cooperation and dialogue between communities as something they will never forget from their experience in the meetings. Additionally, evaluation feedback suggests participants obtained a deeper understanding of peacebuilding and conflict resolution.
- Through post-meeting evaluations and interviews, participants from both communities expressed a commitment to respect each other and engage in positive relations.
- While many strategies were discussed, next steps were identified from the two meetings. The first strategy was to host a joint actor meeting with representatives of both communities. While both communities agreed to send participants to this meeting and

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one was planned for December 2015, it was cancelled after one of the community's elders expressed reservations about the time not being right for such a meeting.

- Following a series of inter-ethnic football matches, NYPAD reports that there has been an increase in the positive interrelations between the youth in the two districts, with some of the youth becoming friends and going to the other community on the weekends. The Lambussie chief reported that the youth from Nandom are now coming to greet him. Previously they would not have had the confidence to do so.
- A resident of Bullegaung, a Dagara community in Nandom, indicated that through NYPAD's messages of peace and encouragement to engage in dialogue with the Sisaala, they have been able to sit down together and resolve their land dispute with Lambussie.
- In December 2015 the PPP team witnessed firsthand the camaraderie that was beginning to develop between the two chiefs, as they smiled and joked with each other, and reiterated their commitment toward a joint-actor meeting between representatives of Lambussie and Nandom. As of July 2016, the relationship between the paramount chiefs of Nandom and Lambussie had seemingly improved since the PPP's involvement as well. Their relationship in the past had been tense but they had since been talking regularly and on good terms.
- Based on a reported need for peacebuilding in the Lambussie area, NYPAD helped facilitate meetings in Lambussie in early 2017 that resulted in the emergence of the Lambussie Youth for Peace and Development (LYPAD). This 9-member peace committee has been working to identify strategies to build peace within Lambussie. It is anticipated that the two committees will operate independently to organize activities within their respective districts but also collaborate on activities to improve relations and build inter-ethnic peace between the two districts. NYPAD has continued to offer support and encouragement to the newly formed committee.

Critical Incidents

- A strategy that was identified at the meetings was the immediate step of attending each other's festivals in Nandom in November 2015 and Lambussie in December 2015. Community members did attend both festivals. The following incidents are noteworthy:
 - A group of women and male youth representatives marched with placards and distributed letters for the general public at the Nandom festival.
 - Representatives participated in a radio program during the Nandom festival to discuss the need for peace and to share the strategies for peace identified at the Nandom and Lambussie meetings.
 - Dancing groups from Lambussie also participated in the Nandom festival.
 - During the Lambussie festival, NYPAD organized a football match between Nandom youth and Lambussie youth, which was attended by an estimated 1,000 people.
 - The Lambussie chief reported that there was a tremendous increase in the number of people from Nandom who attended the Lambussie festival. He noted, "That never happened before."

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- Another strategy discussed at the meeting was hosting inter-community and inter-ethnic friendly football matches. In addition to a match held during the Lambussie festival, a second match occurred in March, attended by more than 500 people. The teams were addressed before and after the matches about upholding peace. A few Sisaala youth from Nandom joined the Nandom team.
- The Lambussie chief attended the Nandom Kakube festival in November 2015, and sat with the Nandom chief. Reports indicate that they chatted amicably throughout. The same was said of them at the Lambussie Mifele festival in December 2015. The climax of this festival was the Lambussie chief's pronouncement that he would not tolerate anybody who refused to allow a Nandom (Dagara) citizen land for farming or construction.
- In late 2016, NYPAD organized a peaceful elections workshop in Lambussie attended by 55 people, including men, women and youth, as part of their efforts to ensure a violence-free election in December 2016. No incidents of violence were reported before, during or after the election.

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