

Training For Traditional Rulers In Girei District Of Adamawa Emirate

Girei District is the largest among the administrative districts in Adamawa Emirate, Adamawa State, North-East Nigeria. It is home to various ethnic groups and has also recently played host to a large number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) as a result of the Boko Haram insurgency in the area. The district has had its fair share of communal clashes, trade disputes, farmer-herder conflicts, and land disputes, among others. If not properly managed, the situation might escalate and lead to hostilities that could eventually undermine the peaceful coexistence of the district and affect the state as a whole. The district was in dire need of solutions to its numerous challenges.

A sliver of hope and opportunity came in 2017 when the district head of Girei, Dr. Ahmad Mustafa, and some village heads from the district participated in a 5-day training on, mediation and conflict management that was designed for Traditional rulers. The training was organised by the British Council under the European Union-funded Managing Conflict in Nigeria programme (MCN). The Training, which was delivered by Green



Horizon, included a roundtable consultation attended by representatives of the formal and informal justice sector institutions where inter-agency grievances were raised and addressed and areas, collaboration, mutual challenges, and possible solutions were explored.

Impressed by the training, the Girei District head decided that all the traditional rulers in his domain should go through the same training in order to redeem his district from the risk of violence. Accordingly, he sought further engagement with Green Horizon, which in November 2019, expanded the training to cover the 144 Girei district traditional rulers *pro bono*. The Girei District office and the Girei Local Government Council assisted by paying the transport costs of the participants.



With the capacity of all the traditional rulers strengthened in the key areas of mediation and conflict resolution the Girei district has witnessed a positive transformations. It is now the only district in the Adamawa Emirate whose traditional rulers have had their skills improved in understanding of conflicts, conflict management strategies, and respect for human rights and the ability

to make distinction between crimes and civil wrongs. It could also be This has enabled them to resolve and manage conflicts better and to prevent them from escalating into violence. There has also been a noticeable appreciation of the need for documentation of disputes resolved for ease of reference.

The training also had a huge positive impact on the relationship between the Girei District traditional rulers and the formal justice institutions like the courts and the police, resulting on enhanced level of trust and cooperation among them. It is worthy to note that for the first time ever, the Divisional Police Officer in the district was honoured with an award in recognition of maintenance peace in the district.