



Narrative report

Project: We want Peace Now

PROJECT FUNDED BY: KIDS RIGHTS

Cameroon, Maroua

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Information about the project	3
2. Summary of Project Status.....	4
3. Introduction and background of project.....	6
4. Progress made towards and all activities.....	7
5. Monitoring.....	9
6. Profile of the children and child participation.....	9
7. Conclusion.....	9
8 Recommendations.....	9
9. Photos	11
10. Attachment (<i>children's declaration on preventing violent extremism and enrolment in armed groups</i>)	13

1. INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT

Project title	Area of operation	Target group	Timeframe	Overall objective
Children for Peace	Maroua	Religious children and street children	1 month	Stimulate a civic and voluntary engagement of children in the fight against violent extremism and radicalization in the district municipalities of Maroua 1 and Maroua 2 by preventing their enrolment in armed groups.
Total cost				€ 10 000

“When the power of love will be greater than the love of power man shall have another name who is God”

Divina Stella Maloum

COORDINATOR OF CHILDREN FOR PEACE

2. SUMMARY OF PROJECT STATUS

2.1 Basic Data

Children are the main victims of the intimidation and terror campaign which has been imposed by Boko Haram on the civilian population. Countless numbers of children, women and men have been abducted, abused and forcibly recruited, women and girls have been targeted for particularly horrific abuse, including sexual enslavement. Villages and towns have been looted and destroyed. Schools have been attacked. The conflict is exacting a heavy toll on children, affecting not just their wellbeing and their safety but also their access to basic health, education and social services.

2.2 Objectives and Target Groups

- **Overall objective**

Stimulate a civic and voluntary engagement of children in the fight against violent extremism and radicalization in the district municipalities of Maroua 1 and 2 by preventing against their enrolment in armed groups

- **Specifics Objectives**

- Increase intercommunity dialogue against enrolment of children in terrorist groups by utilizing Children as potential agents of peace and vector of resilience
- Increase Children's participation in inter community enterprises against radicalism

- **Target Groups**

Religious children and street children

2.3 Activities Implemented

Key activities that were planned for and successfully executed during the project reporting period are as tabulated below:

Activities	Target Location/Beneficiaries	Number of interventions
• Workshop on culture of peace	district municipalities of Maroua 1 and 2	1
• Inter Community Children Peace Camp	district municipalities of Maroua 1 and 2	1
• Establishment of five Peace Clubs in mosques	Mosques of district municipalities of Maroua 1 and 2	5
• Sensitization through communities' radios and TV	Communities radios and TV	
• Children's declaration on counter violent extremism	district municipalities of Maroua 1 and 2	1
• Design and distribution of peace cartoons	Yaoundé & Maroua	500

2.4. Challenge

Due to kamikaze attacks occurred in Far North during the period covered by the project and perpetrated by two street children, a curfew has been imposed for fear of imminent threat of terrorist attacks and therefore compromised activities with street children rendering of the project sites inaccessible.

So in order for C4P team to reach its objectives towards that street children, the team convene to deal with their representatives and a few number of street children by attiring their attention on the

danger of violent extremism and enrolment in armed groups.

2.5. Children's stories

When members of Boko Haram attacked 13-year-old Aisha's hometown in

Borno State, they killed her father and abducted her mother. She fled with

an older sister in the refugees camps of Minawo where she leaved during a moment. Months after, her sister and she arrived in Maroua where they were received by an orphanage. She now goes to school and receives counseling. "I enjoy the school here," she said, but I still want to go back to my village.

Zeinabou, 18 years old watched while members of Boko Haram attacked her village and began killing the men who lived there, including her

husband. As she fled into the bush with her three children, she caught sight of her home being set ablaze. "We didn't bring any thing with us. We just ran," she said. Her 2-year-old son passed away while they were in hiding. "He died from the stress," Zeinabou explained even though she knows she has lost her home and cattle, Zeinabou longs to go home. "I

want to go home and harvest so we can eat."

Moussa, a 15-year-old boy, explained how Boko Haram recruited a number of inferior children. For him it is the precariousness of the families and the lack of a reinforced education of the children on the phenomenon of Boko Haram which facilitates enlistment in the terrorist sect. When the family no longer has enough authority over the child and when religious leaders do not introduce messages of awareness about the phenomenon, it makes children more vulnerable. The followers of Boko Haram use begging children often with the complicity of some parents to perpetrate kamikaze attacks. In exchange for some food products, several girls and boys have been instrumentalised. For him and for many religious leaders, the Children for Peace Initiative is commendable and will help strengthen the information and understanding of families and children on the issue of violent extremism.

During the implementation of activities, the Children for Peace team met Hamidou, a 17-year-old who told us that after the

death of his parents in Kolofata following an attack by Boko Haram in his village, he fled to the city of Maroua him and his brother of 22 years where they found a family home. After losing everything, they agreed to join the local vigilance committee to counter the Boko Haram actions with adults. After taking note of this story, the Children for Peace team decided to meet the vigilance committee of the neighborhood where Hamidou lived. It was noted at the end of the meeting that many children are an integral part not only of this committee but of many others in the region. For many

children and families, it is their way of participating with the army and the government for national defense against the terrorist group. The Children for Peace Team drew the attention of several parents, children, to the UN concept of child soldier as "anyone under the age of 18 who is or has been recruited or employed by a force or armed group, regardless of

the function they perform. If their original intention was not bad in itself, since the general mobilization against Boko Haram is necessary to combat it, they were advised not to act outside international standards. Children should not be part

3. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF PROJECT

of vigilance committees, but could be educated to be less exposed to the phenomenon.

3. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF PROJECT

Since May 2014, attacks by the Nigerian based militant group Boko Haram have intensified along the Cameroon's northwest border resulting in the looting of villages, transforming children as human bomb, destroying many families, undermining the education of children. According to UNICEF Cameroon¹, 104 schools in Far North reported hosting internally displaced students, 38% of schools reported having been directly affected as a result of the armed conflict in the region, 30% of host schools reported being or having been occupied by community members, 8% reported having been occupied by armed groups while 18% of schools indicated incurring structural damage as a result of the conflict, with 11% of schools reporting having been looted (loss of school equipment and material).

Among assessed households containing school-aged children by UNICEF Cameroon, 30% reported security concerns related to the presence of Boko Haram as the primary reason for not allowing their children to participate in formal schooling.

The conflict has forced thousands of people to live their homes. Children are the main victims of the campaign of intimidation and terror which has been imposed by Boko Haram on the civilian population. Countless is the number of children, women and men have been abducted, abused and forcibly recruited in terrorist group. Women and girls have been targeted for particularly horrific abuse, including sexual enslavement. The conflict is exacting a heavy toll on children, affecting not just their well-being and their safety but also their access to basic health, education and social services.

Children are experiencing immense suffering. Many have seen parents, siblings, relatives or neighbors killed, tortured or abducted. Many have had to run to save their lives and walk for days to reach safety. Alarming rates of malnutrition have been observed in the areas worst affected by the crisis, especially Minawoa in Cameroon. In some refugee camps, screenings among newly arrived children reveals global acute malnutrition rates of 18 %, which is above the emergency threshold of 15%.

To respond to that multifaceted threats in Far North Cameroon especially in Maroua, Children for peace (C4P) has formulated the current project with the key objective to stimulate a civic and voluntary engagement of children in the fight against violent extremism and radicalization in the district municipalities of Maroua 1 and Maroua 2 by sensitizing them to prevent their enrolment in armed groups.

□ Information on implementing organization

United Nations Young Leaders Network (UNYLN) is an associative platform whose goal is to valorize the leadership of youth including children to address the problematic related to peace.

Actually, UNYLN has changed name and become African Network of Young Leaders for Peace and Sustainable Development (ANYL4PSD) with aim at mobilizing Africa's young people and children for

¹ Education Sector Rapid Needs Assessment

peace and sustainable development. The headquarter of the network is in Yaoundé-Cameroun and the network has focal points in some African countries. www.anyl4psd.org

4. PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS AND ALL ACTIVITIES

4.1. Activities

During the period covered by the project, C4P engaged target beneficiaries in series of peace interaction activities

- ***Workshop on culture of peace***

The aim was to educate children on peace and stimulate their civic and voluntary engagement in the fight against violent extremism and enrolment in armed groups in order to make them the change maker in their communities by participating actively in the peace initiatives .C4P team have educated 100 children.

- ***Inter Community Children Peace Camp***

Children for Peace have engaged dialogue with traditional, religious leaders, women and Children. The aim was to change their negative perception of each other and to help them to have confidence each other regardless of their ethnic affiliation or origin. Some family members from different communities took resolution to lower tensions existing between them and to improve their relationship.

- ***Establishment of 5 Peace Clubs in 5 mosques***

C4P team visited 8 mosques to assess the possibilities and the need to establish peace clubs. C4P Team has discussed with religious leaders. The main questions were to know if such initiative (peace clubs) already existed in the town. And if they were ready to accept the creation of peace clubs within mosques. Another important question was to understand dynamics that could limit or facilitate effective running of peace club. As the result of the discussion, it appeared that Peace Clubs run by children didn't exist. Five religious leaders accepted the creation of peace clubs in their mosques and found the idea original. The three others were skeptical. They wanted to know more about the project and its sustainability. The dynamic that could limit effective running of peace clubs is the customs. North Cameroon is predominated by the patriarchal traditional culture. Management of conflicts is normally defined as the task of father and it is difficult for families to conceive that their children will play such important role even if they will be trained.

- ***Sensitization through communities' radios and TV***

C4P Team has raised awareness on benefits of culture of peace between communities as only credible tool to counter violent extremism. This activity was implemented in mosques, streets and in one communitarian radio and TV as *Salama channel*

- ***Children's declaration on counter violent extremism***

C4P team engaged target Street and religious children to express their position and aspirations towards violent extremism and radicalization. Their ideas have contributed to develop the Children declaration on fight against violent extremism among children.

- ***Design and distribution of peace cartoons***

After gathering all inputs of target children, the C4P Team has designed peace cartoons with the technical support of Sweet Art’Frica and they shared 500 peace cartoons in order to enhance sensitization through images.

4.2. Results

The accomplishment of the above peace activities with Children yielded several tangible results

- 70% of children from district municipalities of Maroua 1 and 2 have decided to join the movement children for peace
- 45% of children from district municipalities of Maroua 1 and 2 are fruitfully engaged in intercommunity dialogue against child soldier.
- 100 children have been directly touched and about 2500 children have been touched through radios and TV
- 5 peace clubs “children for peace” have been created in 5 mosques in the district municipalities of Maroua 1 and 2
- children’s declaration on counter violent extremism has been written Children for district municipalities of Maroua 1 and 2 in association with C4P team
- Local authorities of district municipalities of Maroua 1 and 2 have decided to involve actively children in counter radicalism initiatives

4.3. Beneficiaries

Religious children and street children

4.4. Impact on target groups

The project had an impact on cultural and social level and in the local governance.

On social and cultural level, the project has enable children to understand what violent extremism, conflicts and Boko Haram causes in our society and how to be enrolled as children peacebuilders. It has enabled families and authorities to change their perception on Children. They can be activists of conflicts prevention and management.

On local governance, Children have been introduced in the management systems of some mosques. Peace clubs in mosques organize their education peace modules that enable Children to continue interacting and keep awareness on their crucial role as agent of peace in their community. Children have more and more confidence in themselves and are engaging their community and family against terrorism and to live in harmony.

4.5. Resources involved

Imams, authorities, families

5. MONITORING

C4P team has set up focal points on district municipalities of Maroua 1 and 2 .These focal points have a responsibility to follow up the activities of target group and to regularly inform C4P team.

6. THE CHILDREN AND CHILD PARTICIPATION

The project principally targets children. Children (boys and girls) between 03 and 20 years old participated in the project. 40% were scholars and students. 60% were non scholars. These activities were carry by Children for peace Team constituted principally by one boy and four girls with the facilitation of their mentor. Targeted children participated fully in the different steps of the project.

7. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the issue of involvement of children in the peace process in order to make them resilient to violent extremism highlight the new configuration of the war in north Cameroun against terrorist group. In fact Cameroon record a high percentage of children involve in suicide attacks (21) between January 2014 and February 2016 followed by Nigeria (17) and Chad (2). Children as young as 8 are being used as bombers by the insurgent group, while more than 75 % of the children involved are girls. Then C4P attire the attention of international community to change its paradigm in the area of peace building by recognizing, encouraging and supporting the commitment of children in peace initiative.

C4P intends to pursue its peace building efforts by engaging children of 10 communities in inter community inter action against radicalism and enrolment of children in armed group within the next 6 months.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

• For United Nations (UN)

- Create an international platform of children engaged in peace building from developing countries
- Grant an international recognition of children's efforts in peace building
- Hold annuary international peace summit for children
- Fight against enrolment of children in vigilance committee

• For Donors

- Support financiary children's peace project
- Finance the capacity building of leaders of peace children

8. PHOTOS

Inter Community Children Peace Camp



Workshop on culture of peace



During the testimony time of target children and their imam on the enrolment of children in armed groups and the issue of radicalism among children in their community



C4P team with some street children and their representatives in sensitization activity to attire their attention on the risks of manipulation by the enemies of peace and also to highlight their vital place in children’s peace building efforts



Interview between C4P team and the representative of street children on the establishment of “street peace clubs”.



Children for Peace team with some community and religious leaders



10. ATTACHMENT

CHILDREN’S DECLARATION ON PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND ENROLMENT IN ARMED GROUPS

We, Children for peace (C4P),

Unequivocally condemning all acts of terrorism against children and offering sincere sympathy to victims, their families, and the people in Cameroon, Nigeria and Chad,

Acknowledging that involving children in armed groups constitutes a serious threat to regional and international peace and security, undermining economic development and social cohesion,

Recognizing violent extremism among children and their recruitment in armed groups is not bound by national boundaries and requires cooperation at all levels, local, national, regional,

Stressing the need to work with others stakeholders in order to address the conditions conducive to the growth and spread of violent extremism in society and recruitment of children in armed groups,

Reaffirming the vital role of children, violent extremism,

Recognizing that education of children is pivotal to promote moderation, that emphasizes tolerance, understanding, mutual respect and inclusiveness, as a core value in preventing their recruitment in armed groups and their sensibility to violent extremism,

Rejecting process aims at dis associate children to peace initiative,

Reaffirming support for the effective implementation of all relevant United Nations resolutions and declarations on youth and girls, especially 1325 and 2250 including Global-Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the UN General Assembly resolution entitled “WAVE: Prevent Violent Extremism A/RES/70/109” World Against Violence and Extremism,

Hereby declare as follows:

C4P have reached a common understanding to:

- 1. Denounce violent extremism among children in all its forms and manifestations,*
- 2. Reject any willing or approaches aims at using children as human bomb ,*
- 3. Work to support each peace children efforts to counter the threat of enrolment in armed groups,*
- 4. Cooperate to counter violent extremist ideology and propaganda by, among children, promoting positive messages of respect, tolerance, co-existence, inclusion, diversity and social cohesion,*
- 5. Promote the role of education and society in building resilience against violent extremism, including fostering inclusion and respect for different cultures and beliefs, as well as enhancing children’s role in preventing and countering violent extremism,*
- 6. Collaborate to successfully rehabilitate, de radicalize, and reintegrate radicalized children to bolster social cohesion,*
- 7. Encourage closer dialogue with other stakeholders as well as between civil society, religious, cultural, educational and other institutions on preventing and countering violent extremism among children,*

8. Strengthen the determination of children in order to advocate for resolving conflicts, eradicating poverty, eliminating marginalization, promoting sustainable development, good governance, human rights and the rule of law, improving intercultural understanding, and ensuring respect for all religions, religious values, beliefs and cultures .