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PRESS RELEASE

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WANEP and CJID Train 20 Community Leaders to Counter Violence-Inciting Disinformation in Kebbi State.

Kebbi, Nigeria – The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), in partnership with the Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID), has trained 20 community leaders in Kebbi State on countering violence-inciting disinformation and strengthening community resilience against harmful narratives.

The two-day training was implemented under the European Union-funded project, **Countering Disinformation and Empowering Democracy in North-western Nigeria**. Participants included traditional rulers, religious leaders, women and youth leaders, community mediators, development association, civil society actors, and grassroots influencers. The training strengthened participants' understanding of the link between conflict and information disorder. Sessions covered analysis of information disorder, the gender dimensions of Technology information disorder, conflict-sensitivity, fact-checking, and the Do No Harm principle, equipping community leaders with practical skills to address harmful information in ways that promote peace and protect vulnerable groups. A key outcome of the training was the development of community action plan, which participants will implement in select communities during the next phase of the project. The plans focus on promoting verified information, encouraging community dialogue, reporting harmful narratives early, and strengthening local mechanisms for peaceful response.

Speaking during the training, a community leader emphasized the importance of proactive efforts to prevent conflict before it escalates. The leader stated that: *"Kebbi is not always in the news for conflict, and that is something we want to preserve. Our focus is to address potential challenges before they become crises. By taking early action and responding to harmful narratives promptly, many conflicts can be prevented before they occur."*

The National Network Coordinator of WANEP-Nigeria, **Dr. Bridget Osakwe**, affirmed the importance of empowering communities to build resilience against disinformation. *"Countering disinformation requires strong partnerships and informed local leadership. By equipping trusted community actors with the knowledge and tools to identify, verify, and respond to harmful narratives, we are strengthening community resilience, promoting peaceful coexistence, and supporting democratic values at the grassroots."*

WANEP-Nigeria reaffirmed its commitment to working with CJID, the European Union, community stakeholders, media actors, and relevant institutions to strengthen democratic resilience and peaceful coexistence across Sokoto, Zamfara, Katsina, Kebbi, and Niger States.

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