



European
Union

PRESS RELEASE

30th July 2026

WANEP and CJID Strengthen Community Information Resilience Through Leadership Training Across Sokoto, Kebbi, and Niger States

Abuja, Nigeria – The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP-Nigeria), in partnership with the Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID), has successfully concluded a series of capacity-building trainings for community leaders across Sokoto, Kebbi, and Niger States under the **European Union-funded project**, Countering Disinformation and Empowering Democracy in North-western Nigeria. The initiative marks a significant milestone in strengthening community resilience against violence-inciting disinformation and promoting peaceful, democratic communities across the region.

Over the course of the three state-level engagements, 59 community leaders comprising traditional rulers, religious leaders, women and youth leaders, community mediators, civil society representatives, market leaders, media practitioners, and grassroots influencers enhanced their capacity to identify, verify, and respond to harmful information that fuels conflict and undermines social cohesion.

The training equipped participants with practical skills in narrative analysis, fact-checking, conflict-sensitive communication, counter-narrative development, gender-responsive approaches to information disorder, and the application of the Do No Harm principle. Participants also developed community-specific action plans to strengthen local information resilience and foster peaceful coexistence.

The initiative reflects a growing recognition that trusted community leaders play a vital role in preventing the spread of misinformation and disinformation before it escalates into violence. Through interactive learning, scenario-based exercises, and collaborative dialogue, participants strengthened their ability to promote verified information, encourage constructive community engagement, and support early response mechanisms to emerging tensions.

Participants described the training as timely, practical, and highly relevant to the realities facing their communities. They reaffirmed their commitment to applying the knowledge gained to promote responsible information sharing, strengthen community trust, and prevent violence driven by misinformation and harmful narratives.

Traditional, religious, women, and youth leaders participating in the programme emphasized the importance of community leadership in safeguarding social cohesion. They noted that trusted local leaders are often the first point of contact when rumours or misinformation

emerge and therefore have a critical responsibility to verify information, reduce panic, encourage dialogue, and promote peaceful responses within their communities.

Commenting on the successful completion of the training in three states, WANEP-Nigeria, through its National Network Coordinator, Dr. Bridget Osakwe, reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening community resilience through locally led peacebuilding initiatives and strategic partnerships:

"Building resilient communities requires trusted local actors who can identify harmful narratives early, promote verified information, and foster dialogue before misinformation escalates into violence. Through this partnership with CJID and the support of the European Union, we are strengthening local capacities to safeguard information integrity, promote peaceful coexistence, and enhance democratic resilience across North-western Nigeria."

The successful implementation of the trainings across Sokoto, Kebbi, and Niger States demonstrates the value of investing in community-based leadership as a cornerstone of conflict prevention and democratic resilience. By strengthening local capacities to respond to information disorder, the project contributes to more resilient communities, increased public trust, improved civic participation, and sustainable peace.

WANEP-Nigeria remains committed to working closely with the **Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID)**, the **European Union**, government institutions, media organizations, civil society, traditional institutions, women and youth groups, and other community stakeholders to deepen information resilience and strengthen peaceful coexistence across the implementation sites in Sokoto, Zamfara, Katsina, Kebbi, and Niger States.

Contact

West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP-Nigeria)

Email: wanep-nigeria@wanep.org

Website: www.wanepnigeria.org

Disclaimer

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of WANEP-Nigeria and the Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.