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PROJECT BRIEF

Support to Improving Social Cohesion through Community Development Planning

Biu | Kwaya Kusar | Guyuk LGAs
Borno and Adamawa States.



IMPLEMENTED BY:

OXFAM

Yaharakari Foundation

CRUDAN

(CODERNI) NIGERIA INITIATIVE

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This brief was developed to deepen public understanding of participatory Community Development Planning, share lessons from the Support to Improving Social Cohesion through Community Development Planning project in North-East Nigeria, and inform inclusive, locally driven development programming and policymaking. For further information on the issues raised in this brief, please contact: infonigeria@oxfam.org

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The information in this publication is correct at the time of going to press.

Published by Oxfam in Nigeria

4B Justice Chukwudifu Oputa Street, Asokoro, Abuja, Federal Capital Territory.

Cover Photo: Maxwell Osarenkhoe and Bluewale Creations for Oxfam

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Contents

PROJECT AT A GLANCE **04**

CHAPTER 1: Introduction 05
CHAPTER 2: Project Approach and Methodology 08
CHAPTER 3: Key Achievements of CDP 10
. Stories of Impact 14
. Voices from Communities 27
CHAPTER 4: Challenges Encountered 29
CHAPTER 5: Lesson Learned 31
PHOTO GALLERY 33

ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym	Full meaning
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
BoQ	Bill of Quantities
CDO	Community Development Officers
CDP	Community Development Plan
CDPIT	Community Development Planning Implementation Team
CODERHI	Community Development and Reproductive Health Initiative
CRUDAN	Christian Rural and Urban Development Association of Nigeria
EU	European Union
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
LGA	Local Government Area
LGAs	Local Government Areas
LGDCC	Local Government Development Coordination Committee
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDA	Ministry, Department and Agency
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
NEDC	North East Development Commission
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PHC	Primary Health Centres
PWD	Person with Disability
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WDSC	Ward Development Support Committee
WDSCs	Ward Development Support Committees
YWYEF	Yaharakari Women and Youth Empowerment Foundation

PROJECT AT A GLANCE

PROJECT TITLE

Support to Improving Social Cohesion through Community Development Planning in 3 LGAs in North-East Nigeria

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Oxfam and GIZ, with funding from BMZ and the European Union, partnered with CRUDAN, CODERHI, and YWYEF and implemented a 24-month project that strengthened community development in three North-East states of Nigeria, Guyuk (Adamawa State), Biu, and Kwaya Kusar (Borno. The project, titled "Support to Improving Social Cohesion through Community Development Planning, It promoted inclusive and participatory planning, enhanced social cohesion through locally driven development efforts.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

To improve participatory engagement and community development planning between local communities and government stakeholders towards improved socio-economic outcomes of communities

To strengthen social cohesion through capacity building of stakeholders on inclusive and participatory development planning (CDP) as well as implementation, and monitoring of community development plans.

PROJECT GOAL:

To increase citizens' participation and strengthen social cohesion through the delivery of community driven development interventions.

LOCATIONS

Borno State: Biu & Kwaya Kusar LGA
Adamawa State: Guyuk LGA

TARGET

3100

Direct participants

30% returnees, 60% members of host communities, 10% internally displaced persons, 50% Women, 500,000 Indirect participants

DURATION

1st December 2024 to 30th November, 2026

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

31
Wards covered
Across three LGAs

3,537
Community participants jointly identified development priorities

789
WDSC members
378 men and 411 women

85
Government finance officers trained in the National Chart of Accounts

Additional achievement:
24 local government officials and WDSC representatives acquired practical Excel and ICT skills for budget preparation, monitoring and reporting.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Context: Northeast Nigeria.

Human migration within and outside countries has been a cause for concern globally, especially migration that results from conflicts. The rising number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees in Nigeria, especially in the North-East region of the country, is a consequence of prolonged insurgencies and has significantly altered the sociocultural milieu of the region. The displacement has negative effects on both the displaced people and their host communities, thereby negatively impacting the social cohesion of the people. The difficulties experienced by displaced persons to adapt to the unfamiliar environment due to the lack of basic support needed, as well as the host community's perception of IDPs as a threat due to limited resources to accommodate the new entrants often snowballs into subtle crises. This increases the incidence of violent crises and the volatility of the already tense environment. Likewise, the poor adaptation and receptivity of host communities often lead to the breakdown of social cohesion within the communities.

Displacement, Vulnerability and Social Cohesion Gaps.

These community-based challenges are further worsened by the nonexistence of a government plan or a structure for proper community integration of displaced individuals, particularly at state and local government levels. Gender differential effects of displacements and lack of social cohesion have especially been observed as women, children, and people with disabilities become even more disadvantaged, thereby increasing their vulnerability. Hence, there is a need for a local and comprehensive integrative approach to bring all members of the community on a path towards sustainable growth with the active involvement of the communities concerned.

Institutional Capacity Gaps and Weak Citizen–Government

Key government actors and institutions do not have the required capacities to deliver relevant services that meet the people's needs and enable them to

secure their livelihoods. Therefore, the population is distrustful of government actors and social relations between the governed and government are tenuous. Furthermore, there are no institutionalised consultative or participatory planning or engagement processes or mechanisms that involve all population groups, especially disadvantaged groups. For this reason, citizens' needs and priorities are only partially recognised and acted upon, if at all, and opportunities for combining relevant activities with measures to build participatory processes and strengthen capacities in this regard remain untapped

Challenges

The initial Citizen Engagement and Public Budget Consultations forum in September 2022, in Borno and Adamawa States, revealed significant gaps and lessons in the current planning and budgeting processes at the Guyuk, Biu, and Kwaya Kusar Local Government Areas. Key gaps and lessons include inadequate citizen engagement and participation in budget preparation processes, leading to a limited understanding of community needs and priorities. This resulted in ineffective resource allocation and implementation of projects that do not address the actual needs of the communities.

Another gap identified was the lack of transparency and accountability in budget preparation and implementation. Citizens were not provided with accessible budget information, making it difficult to track implementation progress. Furthermore, the forum highlighted the need for capacity building and institutional strengthening in local governments to ensure effective implementation of budgets.

Of significant challenge is the mismatch between Local Government Area (LGA) budgets and their actual revenue-generating capacity. This limits the ability of local governments to finance community-identified and budgeted priorities, even where these needs have been formally captured in approved plans and budgets.

Furthermore, the integration of community and ward-level CDPs into LGA and state development plans is often slowed down by bureaucratic procedures and administrative bottlenecks. These challenges are compounded by delays or inadequate releases of approved budgetary funds, which affect the timely implementation of planned projects and programmes. Concerns around limited transparency and accountability in procurement and contract-award processes at both state and local government levels also undermine public confidence and make it difficult for communities to track resources and hold duty bearers accountable.



The CDP: The Vision For Change.

In response to these challenges, The Support to Improving Social Cohesion through Community Development Planning in Three Local Government Areas in North-East Nigeria project was launch in December 2024 to support 3 LGAs in Adamawa (Guyuk LGA) and Borno States (Biu and Kwaya Kusar LGAs) with a view to improving social cohesion among IDPs, returnees and members of host Communities through participatory and inclusive community development planning (CDP) processes as well as capacity development for local actors on inclusive and participatory planning and social and fiscal transparency and accountability at local government and community level.

Funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the EU, the twenty-four (24) month project is designed to establish a local but comprehensive integrational approach to bring all members of the community on the path of sustainable growth with the active involvement of the communities concerned and relevant government and non-governmental structures in Biu and Kwaya Kusar of Borno State and Guyuk LG of Adamawa States.

The general objective of the project is to increase citizens' participation in governance and decision-making processes, promote social cohesion, and enhance community development through gender sensitive and participatory planning processes in the target areas. The project seeks to empower local communities to identify and address key development challenges while fostering unity, cooperation, and resilience through the delivery of community-driven development interventions in 31 wards of Biu (11), Kwaya Kusar (10) and Guyuk (10) in Borno and Adamawa State respectively.

The specific objectives of the project include:

1. To improve participatory engagement and planning between local communities and government stakeholders towards improved service delivery.

2. To strengthen social cohesion through capacity building of stakeholders on inclusive planning, implementation and monitoring of community development plans.



CHAPTER 2

Project Approach and Methodology

1. CDP:

The project adopts a participatory, community-driven and inclusive approach, placing communities at the centre of identifying their needs, setting priorities, and influencing decisions that affect their lives. Its central instrument is the Community Development Plan (CDP), regarded as the community's people's voice. A collectively agreed framework that reflects local priorities and provides a basis for engagement with government and other development actors.

2. Community Participation and Strengthening of Ward Development Support Committees:

Through community consultations, participatory capacity development and engagement with traditional institutions, civil society organisations and government stakeholders, the project supports communities to develop and validate their CDPs. The 31 Ward Development Support Committees serve as platforms for coordinating community priorities, mobilising local resources, undertaking advocacy, and monitoring development interventions.

3. Strengthening Government Capacity and Promoting Accountability in Governance:

At the government level, the project strengthens the capacity of state and local government officials to translate community priorities into actionable plans and budget provisions. It also promotes constructive engagement between citizens and public institutions to improve transparency, accountability and public trust.

4. Social cohesion:

Social cohesion is integrated throughout implementation. Communities are encouraged to work together across social, economic and identity differences, identify shared development priorities, and undertake collective initiatives that strengthen relationships and peaceful coexistence.

5. Partnership and Relationship Building:

The project adopts a collaborative approach to partnership and relationship building, working closely with GIZ, CRUDAN, CODERHI, YWYEF, government institutions, traditional leaders, civil society organisations, and community structures across Adamawa and Borno States, particularly in Biu, Kwaya Kusar and Guyuk.

6. Strong Collaboration with Government MDAs Promotes Sustainability

Engagement with state Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in Adamawa and Borno revealed significant alignment between community development priorities outlined in CDPs and existing state government sectoral plans. This presents opportunities for integrating community priorities into government programmes and mobilising institutional support. Establishing clear communication channels and designating MDA focal persons are important for strengthening coordination, improving responsiveness, and promoting the sustainability of community development interventions.

CHAPTER 3

Key Achievements

70-year land dispute between Wawa and Kubuku resolved; their Traditional leaders are best of friends now

7 marriages have been consummated after the peace accord between **Wawa** and **Kubuku**. Out of them, two have welcomed new babies.

34 CDP priority items from the three LGAs were captured in the 2026 state budgets (20 in Adamawa, 14 in Borno) for implementation across communities. Twenty of the items captured in the budget, and others not captured, are already completed or ongoing in the various LGAs and communities. In addition, 67 CDP priority line items were also included in the three LGAs' budgets for 2026. Out of the 67, 10 had been completed/implemented or were ongoing in the various communities.

Improved interaction between community members and local and state government MDAs. Five state-level advocacies with CDP were recorded, 40 advocacies from WDSCs to the local and state governments, reflecting increased confidence among community members to engage duty bearers and enhanced social accountability interactions with administrative and political office holders. The advocacies resulted in the implementation of six capital projects in the LGAs by the state and local governments.

789 WDSCs (378 men, 411 women) from across the 31 wards led community development, advocacy, fundraising and project implementation after training. The participants included 93% host community members, 6% returnees, and 1% IDPs. Additionally, 4 (1%) participants were PWDs.

The leadership of the various WDSCs had tackled some of the problems/priorities identified as captured in the CDPs across 31 wards.

Out of the 366 items listed as super challenges/priorities, there are replications of such challenges across approximately 269 communities and 2,254 hamlets/settlement and villages in the three LGAs and two states (69 communities, with close to 744 hamlets and settlements in Guyuk; 123 communities, with 680 hamlets and settlements in Biu; 75 communities, with 830 hamlets and settlements in Kwaya-Kusar). The WDSCs working in the 31 wards have mobilised community manpower, expertise and financial resources through donations and natural resources to tackle 217 problems.

Following extensive training given to the Ward Development Support Committees, they gained robust capacity in raising funds, using such funds for community development and providing accurate accounts to both community members and donors of such funds. The performance of WDSCs was assessed/graded using structured assessment tools.

For each of the LGAs, the most outstanding Wards in terms of community participation in project selection and implementation, good record keeping, accountability and reporting to community members and leaders were rewarded handsomely with cash prizes, while others received consolation cash prizes.

After the pilot awards, WDSCs returned to their various wards where they utilised the grants to implement even more projects such as repair of broken-down boreholes, repair of electricity transformers, renovation of school blocks/classrooms, supply of drugs to Primary Health Centres (PHCs), renovation of PHCs, repair of roads, among others. This was followed by another round of assessment on all the projects using another assessment tool. The assessment process was neutral, as the team comprised process-independent evaluation/assessment teams from both state governments. At the end of the evaluation, a final grant award was issued to the outstanding wards.

To implement some community projects, the WDSCs and community members raised additional funds to supplement the grant awards as at Oct. 2026.

Members of Ward Development Support Committees (WDSCs) are champions in the thirty-one wards, leading advocacy and implementing self-help projects. As a result of their contributions, they are nicknamed "masu kawo canji mai kyau, masu kapasiti" (the WDSC brings positive changes and demonstrates capacity).

CDP has indirectly supported four school quiz competitions to enhance academic excellence and oratory.

Chairmen of the three LGAs have adopted CDP as the major template for budgeting at the LGAs, with Kwaya Kusa chairman pledging to absorb 30% of all pending priorities annually for the next two years

24

(24 F7, M17)

Local Government Budget Director and Planning Officers alongside Community Development Officers, Monitoring and Evaluation Officers and Representatives of Ward Development Support Committee members now effectively use Excel to prepare, monitor and report LG fiscal operations, project and track annual budgets after knowledge of Excel and ICT for LG officials.

Eight of the trainees on Excel and ICT reported touching laptops/computer for the first time.

The CDP has improved social interactions.

CDP promoted financial inclusion (reaching the unbanked) by opening a total of bank accounts for community members. Guyuk 169 (117M, 52F), Biu 49 (37M, 12F), Kwaya Kusar 151 (98M, 53F)

Stakeholders who participated in local governance activities and agree that their local government is better at meeting their needs using the CDPs developed (disaggregated by gender/age/disability/location)

CDP boosted participation in budgeting and encouraged transparency and accountability through the following initiatives:

Participatory problem identification in three LGAs, joint costing of identified priorities, use of Town Hall meetings to discuss budget performance, and three LGA Chairmen providing performance scorecards and a roadmap for the next year. Printing of LGA budgets and sharing the same with WDSCs and community members for targeted Advocacy. Monitoring of Public projects with Budgets and BoQs. Training LGA officials and community members on inclusive budgeting and joint monitoring. Distribution of copies of CDP to WDSCs as reference and advocacy tools,

A total of **eighty-five (85)** Local Government Budget Directors, Planning Officers, Revenue Officers, CDOs, Finance Officers, Auditors, Accountants, and Treasurers gained capacity to use the National Chart of Accounts for budgeting, reconciliation and reporting

Some sustainability systems and processes developed in the project:

- Digital monitoring system for public facilities and budget spending
- Developed an M&E framework for monitoring the CDP implementation for the next five years.
- A five-year Community Development Plan for each of the three LGAs (Biu and Kwaya Kusar LGAs of Borno State, Guyuk in Adamawa State). It is used for advocating capital investment in projects and services.
- Ward Development Support Committees for each of the thirty-one wards (community members) with each constituting 13 females and twelve males; they organise communities, plan advocacies, lead/oversee project implementations, reporting to community members.
- Local Government Development Coordinating Committees in Adamawa state and Community Development Planning Implementation Team (CDPIT) in Borno state. They are made up of LG political and administrative representatives and community leaders who oversee and coordinate WDSC/ward operations, liaise with the state. It is chaired by the elected LG Chairman. Income-generating training is transferred to WDSCs/community members as an additional revenue window and micro-enterprise hubs across all thirty-one wards.
- Development of a Costed Action Plan as a guiding tool for estimating costs for implementing all the projects and services identified in the CDP document.

Stories of Impact

From a 70-Year Dispute to Renewed Relationships: How CDP Brought Kubuku and Wawa Closer

For nearly seven decades, a land dispute strained relations between Kubuku and Wawa communities in Kwaya Kusar LGA, Borno State. The disagreement persisted across generations, creating mistrust, weakening relationships and making joint community activities difficult. Tensions also extended to traditional leadership, with disagreements between the two village heads further highlighting the depth of the division.

When the Community Development Planning (CDP) project was introduced, some stakeholders questioned whether the two communities could participate in a shared development process.

Recognising the sensitivity of the situation, the project team engaged the District Head of Kwaya and the village heads of Kubuku and Wawa, with support from Oxfam. Following consultations, both communities agreed to a two-day CDP exercise, with the first session held in Kubuku on 13 October 2025 and the second in Wawa on 14 October 2025.

Each session attracted approximately 100 participants, with women accounting for 50 per cent. Traditional leaders, women, young people and other community members came together to identify and discuss their development priorities.

The arrangement respected the initial concerns of both communities while creating an opportunity for their leaders to interact. During the sessions, the village heads sat together, engaged in discussions and shared meals.

Engagement continued beyond the two-day exercise, as representatives from both communities



subsequently participated jointly in Ward Development Support Committee (WDSC) training and CDP review and validation activities. These engagements provided further opportunities to build relationships and promote collective action.

A New Chapter of Cooperation

The intervention has contributed to improved interaction between the two communities. Residents increasingly participate in joint social gatherings, communal activities and football matches. Community members have also worked together on repairing the access road linking the two wards.

According to Mallam Buba, a community member from Wawa, seven marriages have taken place between members of the two communities since the CDP engagement. While these marriages cannot be attributed directly to the project, they reflect the growing social connections reported by residents.

From Division to Collective Action

Cooperation has extended to community security. Following incidents of motorcycle theft along the Wawa–Kubuku route, locally known as Gonan Mai Angwan, residents from both communities began voluntarily supporting joint security patrols.

What began as a sensitive development planning exercise has helped open doors for renewed interaction between two communities whose relationship had been strained for generations. Their growing participation in social activities and collective security efforts offers encouraging signs of improved coexistence and community cooperation.

The experience from these communities demonstrate how inclusive community engagement can create opportunities for dialogue, rebuild relationships and encourage cooperation around shared development concerns.

Community Action Improves Learning Conditions for 145 Pupils in Gunda Ward

From Dilapidated Classrooms to a Conducive Learning Environment

Location: Gunda Ward, Biu LGA, Borno State

Background and Context

Gunda is one of the wards in Biu Local Government Area, Borno State, where the project supported community development planning and follow-up through Ward Development Support Committees (WDSCs). The wider project sought to increase citizens' participation and strengthen social cohesion through community-driven development interventions.

Education was one of the sectors addressed through the CDP process. Community development planning gave ward stakeholders a framework for identifying priorities and discussing how they could be addressed through community action, resource mobilisation and engagement with relevant authorities.

The Challenge Before the Intervention



For years, pupils in Gunda Ward, Biu LGA, Borno State, had to learn in a dilapidated classroom block with a damaged floor, broken doors and windows, a destroyed veranda and a roof partly blown off by windstorms. Broken desks and chairs further undermined the learning environment, highlighting the need for urgent rehabilitation.

These structures, though in bad condition were still put to use before the intervention. A specific issue addressed was the need to rehabilitate the dilapidated classroom block in Gunda Ward- a structure which needed routine maintenance.



What changed?

Understanding that a dilapidated classroom block can undermine the suitability of the learning environment, the a rehabilitation initiative which was initiated by the Gunda Education Foundation (GEDEF) through their contributions.

Recognising the importance of a conducive learning environment, the Gunda Education Foundation (GEDEF), through contributions from its sons and daughters, initiated efforts to rehabilitate the facility. The Gunda Ward Development Support Committee (WDSC) supported the initiative by supervising the work and contributing direct labour. This demonstrated how community structures can mobilise local resources and collective action to address development priorities.

Through this collaboration, the classroom block, comprising two classrooms and an office, was successfully rehabilitated and restored to functional use. During a monitoring and mentoring visit on 18 September 2026, YWYEF verified the completed facility and confirmed that the two classrooms were serving 145 pupils, comprising 78 boys and 67 girls.

Beyond restoring the physical structure, the intervention has provided pupils and teachers with improved facilities and a more conducive environment for teaching and learning. It also demonstrates the value of community ownership, resource mobilisation and collaboration in addressing local development challenges.

The Gunda experience highlights how Community Development Planning can translate identified priorities into practical action. By working together, community structures and local stakeholders can mobilise resources, improve essential services and sustain development initiatives.

Miringa Ward: Community-Led Response to Cholera Outbreak Through Health Support and Collaboration

Situation

Following reports of a cholera outbreak in Miringa Ward, the Ward Development Support Committee (WDSC), in collaboration with the Primary Health Centre (PHC) Miringa, convened a meeting on 12 October 2026 to discuss immediate response measures and ways to prevent further spread of the disease.

Community Efforts

Recognising the urgency of the situation, the WDSC engaged the Local Government Health Department through the Community Development Officer, securing support in the form of chlorine for spraying and disinfection of affected areas. The committee also mobilised resources to procure essential medical supplies worth ₦150,300, demonstrating its commitment to addressing emerging public health challenges through collective action.

The supplies included doxycycline, Flagyl IV, Salvent, syringes, Cipro Big, Jik, ceftriaxone, zinc tablets,





Renga, normal saline, Osteocalcin and 4.3. These items were made available to the PHCC Miringa medical team to support the provision of care to affected community members.

Outcome

The intervention strengthened collaboration between the WDSC, the PHC and the Local Government Health Department, while supporting the health facility's capacity to respond to the reported outbreak. It also demonstrated how community structures can mobilise local resources, engage relevant authorities and support essential service delivery during public health emergencies.

The Miringa experience tell the story of community ownership and collective action in addressing local development priorities. Through its engagement and resource mobilisation efforts, the WDSC demonstrated how community-led structures can complement institutional efforts to respond to emerging health challenges and promote community wellbeing.

Key Achievement: The Miringa WDSC facilitated the provision of chlorine and mobilised ₦150,300 worth of medical supplies in collaboration with local health authorities to support the response to a reported cholera outbreak.

Garubula Ward: Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Borehole to Improve Access to Safe Water



In a demonstration of inclusive leadership and commitment to community-driven development, the Executive Chairman of Biu Local Government Area made a significant contribution towards addressing water access challenges in Garubula Ward, one of the wards located farthest from Biu town. Following his awareness of the project's efforts to promote inclusion and community participation through the Community Development Planning (CDP) process, the Chairman contacted the Director of Works and remarked, "Now that you people are doing inclusion, let me also give my own contribution to the project." He subsequently authorized the Director of Works to facilitate the intervention, resulting in the payment of ₦3,600,000 to a contractor for the reconstruction of the borehole.

The existing borehole had remained non-functional for an extended period and was considered irreparable after stones were reportedly dropped into the drilled hole by children. Consequently, a new borehole had to be drilled to restore water access to the community. The intervention involved the procurement and installation of essential water infrastructure, including a submersible pump, two additional solar panels, pipes, and other materials required for drilling and completing the water facility. The reconstructed borehole is expected to serve approximately 123 households, including Fulani communities who traditionally travel from distant locations to access water. Before the intervention, community members reportedly walked approximately half a kilometre, while some travelled distances of up to one kilometre in search of water. The provision of the new borehole is expected to reduce the burden of water collection, improve access to water, and contribute to the wellbeing of households in Garubula Ward.

Beyond addressing the immediate water access challenge, the intervention represents an important outcome of the CDP process in mobilizing government support for community-identified priorities. The Chairman's contribution demonstrates how inclusive engagement and participatory planning can encourage local government authorities to take ownership of community development initiatives and commit resources towards improving essential services.



The intervention also reinforces the project's broader objective of strengthening collaboration between communities and government institutions, promoting social inclusion, and enhancing community participation in local development planning and service delivery.

Key Achievement: The Executive Chairman of Biu LGA contributed ₦3,600,000 towards the reconstruction of a previously non-functional borehole in Garubula Ward, providing an improved water facility expected to benefit approximately 123 households, including Fulani communities, and demonstrating increased local government ownership of community-identified development priorities.







Community Action Improves Road Access and Market Connectivity in Dumna



WDSC with community members

Location: Dumna Community, Guyuk LGA, Adamawa State

Poor road conditions and uneven surfaces in Dumna community, Guyuk LGA, made movement difficult for residents, particularly during the rainy and harvesting seasons. For local farmers, the situation posed additional challenges in transporting farm produce to markets, potentially limiting access to buyers and affecting their livelihoods.



BEFORE



DURING

Recognising the importance of accessible roads to community livelihoods, the Ward Development Support Committee (WDSC), in collaboration with community members, initiated a self-help intervention to improve the affected road sections. Through collective effort, residents undertook manual sand spreading and levelling to make the road more accessible and ease movement within the community.

The intervention improved road conditions, making it easier for residents to move around and transport farm produce to markets, particularly during the rainy and harvesting seasons. Beyond addressing an immediate infrastructure challenge, the initiative demonstrated how communities can mobilise local labour and resources to respond to shared needs without relying entirely on government or external support.

The experience in Dumna is encouraging, proving the value of community participation in local development. By working together, the WDSC and community members not only addressed a practical access challenge but also strengthened community ownership, encouraged collective responsibility and promoted social cohesion to make foster peaceful

coexistence. It demonstrates how simple, low-cost, community-led initiatives can improve access to markets and essential services while advancing sustainable, community-driven development.



Restored Confidence in Public Education: How Peta Ward is Tranforming Its Public Schools

Location: Kwaya Kusar LGA, Borno State

For years, teacher shortages at Peta Primary School and Peta Junior Day Secondary School (JDSS) in Kwaya Kusar LGA of Borno State affected teaching and learning, weakening parents' confidence in the schools. Concerned about the situation, some parents enrolled their children in neighbouring communities and private schools, further undermining enrolment in the ward's public schools.

The situation became a priority during Community Development Planning (CDP) sessions in October 2025. Recognising the need for a practical solution, the Peta Ward Development Support Committee (WDSC), on 22 December 2025, convened a meeting with the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), School-Based Management Committee (SBMC) and other community stakeholders, where they agreed to mobilise qualified graduates from the community to volunteer as teachers. This effort resulted in the recruitment of 18 volunteer teachers (17 males and one female), who were formally introduced to the community on 5 February 2026.

Noticing this progress, community members introduced a termly contribution arrangement to provide stipends for the volunteers, with payments determined by their attendance and performance. This local financing mechanism helped recognise the teachers' contributions while promoting commitment and accountability. The CDP project supported the process by strengthening the WDSC's capacity to identify community priorities, convene stakeholders and coordinate collective action.

The journey so far

The initiative has recorded encouraging results. Enrolment at JDSS increased from 40 to 95 students, while Peta Primary School recorded an increase from 100 to 180 pupils, bringing the combined enrolment to 275 learners, an increase of 135. School records also indicate that academic performance in both institutions improved from Poor to Average.

Furthermore, some parents who previously enrolled their children in neighbouring communities and private schools are reportedly transferring them back to Peta's public schools.

The Peta experience demonstrates how Community Development Planning can turn identified needs into practical and sustainable action little by little. By mobilising local expertise, pooling resources and strengthening collaboration among education stakeholders, the community has helped address a critical staffing gap, improve access to public education and rebuild confidence in its schools.

Promoting Safer Water Use and Hygiene in Bantine, Gunda Ward through Strategic Community Action

Location: Bantine Community, Gunda Ward, Biu LGA, Borno State

Access to safer water was a concern in Bantine community, where people and animals reportedly relied on the same pond for drinking water, while some residents also washed close to the water source. This shared use raised concerns about possible contamination and the safety of water for use by community members.

Recognising the need to address the situation, the Gunda Ward Development Support Committee (WDSC) mobilised community members to undertake a self-help initiative aimed at improving water-use practices. Through their collective efforts, the water body was divided into two sections, one designated for human use and the other for animals. Residents were also encouraged to wash clothes farther away from the water source. The intervention was implemented at a reported cost of ₦67,000.

The initiative has reportedly benefited more than 500 people, including members of the Fulani community, who predominantly reside in the area. Community members expressed appreciation for the arrangement, noting that the separation of the water-use areas had made it easier to access water designated for human consumption. The community has also reportedly maintained the arrangement through regular cleaning and measures to prevent stray animals from entering the designated human-use area.

This intervention, shows how community structures can mobilise residents to address shared environmental and public health concerns through practical, low-cost solutions. The continued involvement of community members in maintaining the separated areas also reflects a growing sense of collective responsibility for protecting shared resources.

The Bantine experience highlights the importance of community-led action in promoting improved hygiene practices, local ownership and social cohesion. It also reinforces the importance of collective responsibility in managing shared resources and sustaining community development initiatives.

From Abandoned Facility to Sustainable Community Resource: Reviving Public Sanitation in Peta Market

Location: Peta Ward, Kwaya Kusar LGA, Borno State

For four years, a communal toilet constructed by IFAD at Peta Market remained non-functional due to poor operation and maintenance. With the market attracting more than 3,000 people every Sunday, the absence of a functional public toilet contributed to sanitation challenges, including open defecation around the market. What was originally built to serve the community had become a neglected public facility.

Recognising the need to address the situation, the Peta Ward Development Support Committee (WDSC), working with IFAD's Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Committee (WASH-COM), mobilised market traders and community members to restore the facility. On 27 December 2025, shop owners and traders contributed ₦28,000 towards the rehabilitation. A subsequent community cleaning and rehabilitation exercise on 16

January 2026 restored the toilet, while repairs to the existing IFAD-drilled borehole reconnected the water supply, eliminating the need to purchase water for its operation.

Beyond restoring the facility, the WDSC established a local management system to ensure its continued operation. A caretaker, Mr Hassan Musa, was appointed to oversee daily management and maintenance, while users pay between ₦50 and ₦100 per visit. The revenue generated is divided into three equal portions: one-third for the caretaker, one-third for cleaning and maintenance, and the remaining third for the WDSC to support other community self-help initiatives. This arrangement provides an incentive for the caretaker while creating a local financing mechanism for the facility's upkeep.

The intervention has restored access to public sanitation for traders and market visitors, with separate toilet arrangements for women and men.

According to community observations and the caretaker, open defecation around the market has gradually stopped since the facility became functional. More importantly, the initiative has demonstrated its wider community value. During a recent cholera outbreak in Peta Ward, the WDSC contributed ₦20,000 from the proceeds of the public toilet towards procuring hygiene and disinfection materials to support the response.

The Peta experience demonstrates how community development planning can turn neglected public infrastructure into a functional and income-generating community asset. Through collective contributions, local management and revenue reinvestment, the community has not only improved sanitation but also established a practical model for sustaining essential services and financing other development priorities.

Community Action Restores Safe Access Between Bayan Tasha and Tabra Fulani Communities

Location: Bayan Tasha and Tabra Fulani Communities



A damaged bridge linking Bayan Tasha and Tabra Fulani communities had become a serious safety concern for residents, particularly at night. For approximately one year, the deteriorating structure posed risks to people crossing between the two communities. The danger became even more concerning following an accident in which a child reportedly fell from the bridge and sustained a fracture.

Concerned about the situation, community members raised the issue through a member of the Ward Development Support Committee (WDSC), bringing the safety challenge to the committee's attention. Recognising the urgency of the matter, the WDSC mobilised resources and coordinated efforts to repair the damaged bridge at a total cost of ₦151,000.

The intervention addressed an important community safety concern, restoring a safer crossing point and improving movement between the two communities. It also provided relief to residents who had faced the risks associated with using the damaged bridge, particularly as the rainy season approached, when movement could become more difficult.

The initiative demonstrates the value of responsive community structures in identifying local challenges and translating community concerns into practical solutions. Through collective action and local resource mobilisation, the WDSC helped address a shared infrastructure concern while reinforcing trust, cooperation and social cohesion between Bayan Tasha and Tabra Fulani communities.

Community Champions Food Assistance Support for 45 Vulnerable Elderly Residents in Kola Ward



Location: Kola Ward, Guyuk LGA, Adamawa State

For many vulnerable older people in Kola Ward, Guyuk LGA, accessing sufficient food has become increasingly difficult due to limited financial resources, age-related economic dependence and rising food prices. With little means of meeting their daily needs, some rely on family members, neighbours and occasional assistance to supplement their household food supplies.



Recognising the challenges faced by these vulnerable residents, the Kola Ward Development Support Committee (WDSC) used funds from the second phase of the grant competition to organise a food assistance intervention. The committee identified and selected less privileged and older community members across the ward to ensure that support reached those most in need.

Through the initiative, **45 beneficiaries**, comprising 30 women and 15 men, received three measures of grains each to supplement their household food supplies. The distribution provided immediate relief, helping beneficiaries ease some of the financial pressure associated with purchasing food and meeting their daily needs.

Beyond the immediate assistance, the initiative demonstrates the importance of community structures in identifying vulnerable groups and mobilising resources to address their needs. By prioritising older and less privileged residents, the WDSC reinforced the values of inclusion, solidarity and collective responsibility.

The Kola Ward experience highlights how community-led interventions can provide meaningful support to vulnerable households while strengthening social cohesion. It also underscores the importance of complementing immediate food assistance with longer-term interventions that address the underlying causes of food insecurity.

New Classroom Facilities Secured for Arah Primary School in Bobini Ward through Community Advocacy



Location: Bobini Ward, Guyuk LGA, Adamawa State

For pupils of Arah Primary School in Bobini Ward, access to a conducive learning environment was a major challenge. The school lacked sufficient classroom facilities to accommodate its growing enrolment, resulting in overcrowding and forcing some pupils to receive lessons under trees. The situation highlighted the urgent need for additional classroom infrastructure to support effective teaching and learning.



Recognising this priority, the Bobini Ward Development Support Committee (WDSC) adopted an advocacy approach to attract support for the school. The committee engaged Mrs. Rahila Gyandi, a daughter of the community who works with the Adamawa State Universal Basic Education Board (ASUBEB) in Yola, and presented the school's infrastructure challenges, appealing for her support.



Moved by the community's concerns, Mrs. Gyandi took the request further by engaging her superiors at ASUBEB. The sustained engagement eventually secured the Board's intervention, resulting in the construction of a block of three classrooms and an office at Arah Primary School.

The intervention has addressed a critical infrastructure gap and provided additional classroom space to support a more conducive learning

environment for pupils and teachers. It also demonstrates how community structures can leverage local networks, strategic relationships and institutional engagement to attract government support for identified development priorities.

The Arah Primary School experience highlights the value of organised community advocacy in translating local needs into tangible development outcomes. It reinforces the importance of community development planning in strengthening local leadership, promoting ownership and creating opportunities for communities to influence improvements in essential public services.

Growing a Greener Future Through Tree Planting in Biu LGA



Location: Biu Local Government Area, Borno State

Promoting environmental conservation and climate resilience requires collective action, particularly in



communities increasingly affected by environmental challenges. Recognising the importance of tree planting in protecting the environment and creating future economic opportunities, Ward Development Support Committees (WDSCs) across Biu Local Government Area mobilised community members to participate in a tree planting initiative.

Through the initiative, **1,302** community members received a total of **1,430** economic and environmental tree seedlings for planting across their communities. The seedlings included guava, black currant, cashew, orange, neem and kesha, providing residents with opportunities to contribute to environmental preservation while cultivating tree species with potential economic value.

The distribution was made possible through collaboration between the WDSCs and the Great Green Wall initiative, which donated some of the seedlings, while the committees procured additional supplies. The procurement component amounted to







₦1,980,000, demonstrating the committees' commitment to mobilising local resources and supporting community-driven environmental action.

Beyond increasing access to tree seedlings, the initiative sought to strengthen community awareness of climate change, encourage household-level environmental stewardship and promote opportunities for future income through tree products. It also demonstrated how collaboration between community structures and environmental programmes can expand participation in local conservation efforts.

The community ownership is a very important step in advancing environmental sustainability and climate-resilient livelihoods. By mobilising residents and combining external support with local resources, the WDSCs have taken practical steps towards promoting a greener environment and building a foundation for future economic and environmental benefits.



Voices From Communities

"The CDP project provided an opportunity for us to rebuild relationships and learn to live together peacefully. Even the tongue and the teeth sometimes clash... but people must learn to move beyond their differences rather than allow past disagreements to stand in the way of progress."
— Lawan Mustapha Ali, Village Head of Wawa

"The land dispute occurred long before we were born, but its history affected us. After the CDP sessions, I married a woman from Wawa. When she needed a C-section, people from both communities supported us. During our baby's naming ceremony, Kubuku members traveled to Wawa and were warmly received."
— Modo Mustapha, Community Member, Kubuku

Registered pupil enrolment increased from 100 to 180, and academic performance improved from Poor to Average following the recruitment of volunteer teachers. This would encourage parents to enrol their children in local public school.
– Mr. Saidu Musa, Head Teacher of Peta Primary School

The construction of the new classroom block by the WDSC and community members has contributed to improvements in education at Wara Primary School. Before the intervention, the school had approximately 40–50 pupils, but reports show that enrolment has since increased to 70 pupils. There are improvements in pupils' academic performance, which I believe reflects the positive changes taking place in the school.
Mallam Usman Isa – Community Member, Wara

"The rehabilitation was initiated by sons and daughters of Gunda Ward living outside the community under the auspices of the Gunda Education Foundation (GEDEF), who mobilized funds to purchase cement, sand, zinc and paint, and repair broken chairs and tables, while the WDSC and community members provided the labor. Before the intervention, the classrooms were in poor condition, but the rehabilitation has restored a functional learning environment, with two classrooms and an office now serving 145 pupils. Following completion, parents and teachers reported increased pupil attendance, greater enthusiasm for school, improved teaching conditions and better pupil comfort, as children no longer sit in dusty classrooms. Beyond improving the learning environment, the initiative has strengthened community ownership and created opportunities for greater collaboration between GEDEF, the WDSC and parents in supporting education in the ward."
— WDSC, Head teacher
Gunda Ward, Biu LGA

Mohammed Ali – Motorcycle Rider (Okada), Bwala Community
Mohammed Ali, a motorcycle rider from Bwala Community, welcomed the road rehabilitation and culvert construction, noting that the improved road has made movement and transportation of goods to the market and other locations easier, as well as improving access for residents and road users.

"Seven marriages have taken place between members of our communities since the CDP engagement. We also started voluntary patrols along Gonan Mai Angwan to keep our roads safe for everyone."
— Mallam Buba, Wawa Ward Resident



The renovated communal toilet constructed by IFAD at Peta Market.

The rehabilitation of the facility has not only improved access to sanitation for market users but has also created an employment opportunity for me. Under the management arrangement established by the WDSC, the revenue generated from the toilet is shared into three portions every week. One portion goes to the WDSC Treasurer, another is paid to me as the caretaker, while the third is set aside to purchase cleaning materials and other items required to maintain the facility. The facility is increasingly being used by traders and other market visitors, while open defecation in and around the market has gradually stopped since the toilet became functional again. The arrangement provides an opportunity to earn an income while contributing to keeping the market environment clean.

- Mr. Hassan Musa – Caretaker, Peta Market Public Toilet

"Before the intervention, transporting goods to the market was difficult. However, the improved road has made it easier for traders to move their goods to the market without the challenges they previously faced". Fatima Ali, a trader from Bila Community, expressed appreciation to the WDSC for mobilising support to rehabilitate the road and construct culverts in her community. She commended the WDSC for its efforts in addressing this important community need.

Fatima Ali – Trader, Bila Community



The village head of Kubuku and Wawa during the Ward Development Support Committee training

Hussaini Hassan Wara – Traditional Leader, Wara

The traditional leader, Hussaini Hassan Wara, explained that the construction of the classroom block has encouraged more families to send their children to school. He acknowledged the WDSC's efforts and appreciated its commitment to addressing the educational needs of the community. He recognized that the improved learning environment has renewed community confidence in the school and encouraged parents to support their children's education.

CHAPTER 4

Challenges Encountered



Security-Fragile Locations:

Security has remained a persistent concern throughout project implementation. While most project locations have remained relatively safe, some communities, particularly in Borno State, have experienced occasional attacks, leaving certain areas inaccessible and the security situation unpredictable. To address this, the project brought community members to relatively safer locations to participate in project activities, minimising their exposure to security risks. Project visibility and physical presence have been significantly reduced in locations experiencing heightened security concerns to minimise exposure of staff, partners and community members. Additionally, implementation activities are adjusted in response to evolving security conditions, prioritising the safety of all stakeholders.

Political Transition and Personnel Changes:

Changes in political leadership, including the loss of re-election by some political office holders and the transfer of officials, resulted in the loss of trained members of the Local Government Development Coordination Committees（LGDCCs） and CDP teams, affecting institutional continuity and retention of project knowledge was a huge challenge. The team had to facilitate refresher and catch-up training for newly appointed officials to ensure continuity of project activities. Briefing sessions were held with incoming officials on project progress, objectives and implementation processes, and integrated them into ongoing learning activities. To reduce dependency on certain office holders, the project expanded participation by including both senior and mid-level government staff in institutional memory, promoting knowledge retention.

Difficult Terrain, Poor Road Access and Long Travel Distances:

The project also encountered a challenge in accessing remote communities. Some locations were hard to reach due to poor roads and long travel distances. These constraints occasionally resulted in delays in the commencement of project activities and affected implementation schedules.





CHAPTER 5

Lesson Learned

1. Participation of Traditional Leadership.

Oxfam learned that traditional leadership follow-through in project implementations ensures cultural sensitivity and compliance with basic standards. This was demonstrated in how the Emir of Biu, the first-class Chief of Biu and Kwaya Kusar LGAs and his counterpart, the Kwandi Nunguraya of Guyuk LGA have in separate occasions appreciated the project for cultural sensitivity, respect for religious tenets, and activating unprecedented transformation in all the communities and making people attract development to their various wards, reviving long-forgotten cordial relations and social life and making the act of living more harmonious than ever. "I have participated in different projects, but this CDP kept me amazed with all manners of positive reports and transformations happening simultaneously and, in every ward, some are unimaginable", the Emir confessed. The Emir also wrote an official letter to the Oxfam Country Director, appreciating the contribution to his people.

2. Strengthening Civic Engagement and Citizen-Government Relations

The project has strengthened civic engagement by empowering community members and leaders to take active roles in local governance and engage relevant stakeholders through evidence-based, data-driven advocacy. In response, government stakeholders have increasingly recognised these efforts and are creating more opportunities and platforms for constructive citizen-government interaction, dialogue, and participation in decision-making.

3. Government Ownership Drives Institutional Sustainability

Capacity strengthening and knowledge transfer to state and local government officials are critical to promoting government ownership and sustaining participatory development approaches. The CDP experience demonstrated that equipping government actors with the skills to facilitate participatory planning and produce quality implementation reports enhances their ability to replicate and institutionalise the approach beyond the project lifecycle.

4. Community Ownership Accelerates Local Development.

Community ownership and collective action are essential for advancing local development, particularly where financial resources are limited. The project demonstrated that voluntary labour, small-scale local fundraising and collaboration with traditional leaders can mobilise local resources (Human, Natural and Economic) and accelerate community-prioritised needs, like boreholes, classrooms and road maintenance.

5. Adaptive Programming Enhances Effectiveness and Community Ownership

Flexibility in project implementation is essential to achieving results in resource-constrained contexts. The experience of relocating borehole installations to more viable sites when water yield was low demonstrated the importance of adapting interventions to local realities. Including communities in these decisions strengthened ownership, ensured more effective use of resources, and encouraged replication of successful approaches in other communities.

Photo Gallery










Photos of Self Help Community projects and other Project community engagements across the 3 LGAs.

Photo Gallery















Photos of Self Help Community projects and other Project community engagements across the 3 LGAs.





The Yawi WDSC facilitating briquette-making training for 49 women in Biu, using ₦30,000 from grant competition pilot funds to support the instructor and promote women's economic empowerment and livelihood diversification.







The Member Committee,Ward Development Support committee in collaboration with , repaired of the community in Bobini repair the bridge that at the stage of collapsing in their community.



The Ward Development Support Committee in Bobini, in collaboration with other members of the community, working together to repair the road linking Bobini to Gombe State.























Photos of Self Help Community projects and other Project community engagements across the 3 LGAs.

Project Team

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