

JOURNEY TO RESILIENCE

(Women Environmental Programme (WEP's) approach to preventing violent extremism (PVE) in Benue State, North Central Nigeria.)

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FOREWORD

The project Connecting Women and Youth in Violent Extremist Prone Areas Through Empowerment and Skills Acquisition in Benue State sought to through collaboration with relevant organizations and institutions such as security agencies, civil society organizations, communities, the private sector and government agencies create and strengthen structures of the communities to prevent the recruitment and radicalization of young women and young men into violent extremism, facilitate resolution of disputes within and between communities, raise awareness against violent extremism, and enhance skills of women and youth for improved livelihoods. The consortium intended to facilitate a boost in economic conditions of the communities to create conditions that will reduce the vulnerability of young people succumbing to extremist ideologies and in the process support communities to implement community-driven initiatives that promote peace and security.

This project had four initiatives as elaborated in this publication with each bearing specific objectives and outcomes, working together to achieve the overall goal of preventing violent extremism in Benue State in particular and Nigeria in general.

Generally, the project has achieved its desired impact and we expect that there will be skills/ knowledge transfer in order to enhance sustainability. We have put together this document which is a compendium of our approach, activities and achievements. We hope that this document will provide valuable information to policymakers, partners, donors and other stakeholders to inform decisions that will prevent violent extremism.

We welcome every support and are open to collaborations, request for more information and funding to scale-up these initiatives to reach more beneficiaries in the State and beyond for just, peaceful and inclusive communities free from violent extremism in our context of intervention.

Anne-Marie Abaagu
Ag. Executive Director

BACKGROUND

The North Central Region has been prone to violent conflicts since the return of democracy in 1999. These conflicts are according to findings from our series of studies on conflict in the region generally attributed to the following reasons - the search for scarce resources due to desertification and climate change from the far north into the middle belt region by pastoralists has resulted to violent confrontations between them and crop farmers; political confrontations/disputes; communal disputes within and between communities over land and other natural resources and over chieftaincy positions. Another reason is the forced migration resulting from the activities of the Boko Haram extremist group from the North East which compelled people to migrate to relatively peaceful North Central states, where they settle and compete for resources with indigenes or promote their ideologies.

Recently, the trend of violence in the middle belt region has taken a trend similar to the extremist activities of the Boko Haram sect. Bomb blasts and carefully planned massacres have become common place. It is believed that Boko Haram extremist group which before now limited their operations to the North East are strategically migrating to the middle belt region, disguising as victims of crisis in the North East and secretly wooing the youth into their extremist ideologies. In 2014, the Abuja bomb blast in Nyanya area was allegedly linked to Sadiq Ogwuche an indigene of Benue State. These became a source of concern to WEP in her quest to help communities in the region achieve development, build resilience and find lasting peace.

According to findings from our interactions with affected populations over the years, the experience of violent extremism in the region can be attributed to the following which are the major drivers of violent extremism in the target location:

- The lack of a sense of purpose, self-confidence and esteem among young people in the region,
- Poverty brought about by marginalization, corruption and a lack of opportunities,
- The attraction to perceived improvements in status and power and promise of financial gain by joining violent extremist groups,
- Forced migration resulting from the activities of the Boko Haram sect in the North East;
- Politics, leadership tussle,

- Land and border disputes,
- Perceived injustice and marginalization
- Climate change from the far North which has forced herders into the region, resulting in violent conflicts between them and farmers.

PROJECT CONCEPTION

In view of the escalating Violent Extremism and WEPs research aimed at unraveling the root causes, we went into extensive consultations and Community Needs Assessments (CONAs) with communities to come up with initiatives to bring succor to the affected communities/individuals, curtail the spread of violent extremism in communities and prevent the recruitment and radicalization of the teeming youth and other vulnerable groups of the region into violent extremism.

After receiving contributions from communities on what initiatives they felt would help put an end to incessant violent conflicts and extremism in their communities, **Women Environmental Programme (WEP)** came up with a five pronged intervention whose implementation commenced immediately.

WEPs intention is for these interventions to help *achieve peaceful, just, safe and resilient communities with mutual coexistence between the populations and devoid of violent extremism.*

This we believe will be achieved if more economic opportunities are created or opened up to engage the idle and the unemployed; basic social services such as education, roads, healthcare, water etc are provided; communities are effectively represented in critical decisions that affect them; justice is effectively administered; security of lives and property of all community members within the state is prioritised and enhanced; political, traditional and religious leaders become more just, transparent, honest, unbiased and selfless in their services.

The challenge was how to come up with one project to achieve all of these, a challenge that the WEP team set to work to surmount giving birth to a unique multifaceted project with various interwoven activities all geared towards the same goal.

The result of our research, consultations, assessments and documentation birthed the

project titled: **Connecting Women and Youth in Violent Extremist Prone areas through Empowerment and Skills Acquisition.**

We chose **Ado, Agatu, Kwande and Logo Local Government Areas all in Benue State** for this first phase of intervention based on the findings of the community needs assessment (CONA) conducted.

We worked in the following locations (Wards) within the Local Government Areas:

Kwande

Adikpo Township

Agbaikyaan

Menev

Moon

Tondov I

Logo

Tombo

Ukemberagya/Tswarev,

Mbagber

Turan

Nenzev

Agatu

Egba,

Okokolo

Odugbeho

Obagaji

Usha

Ado

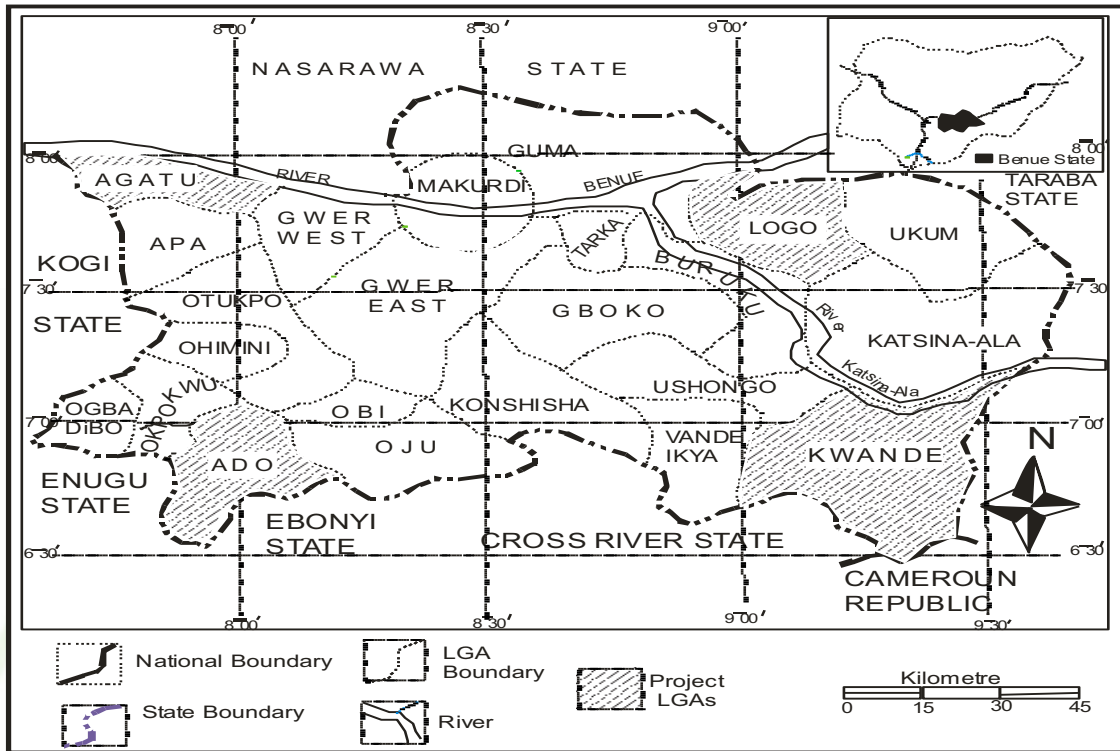
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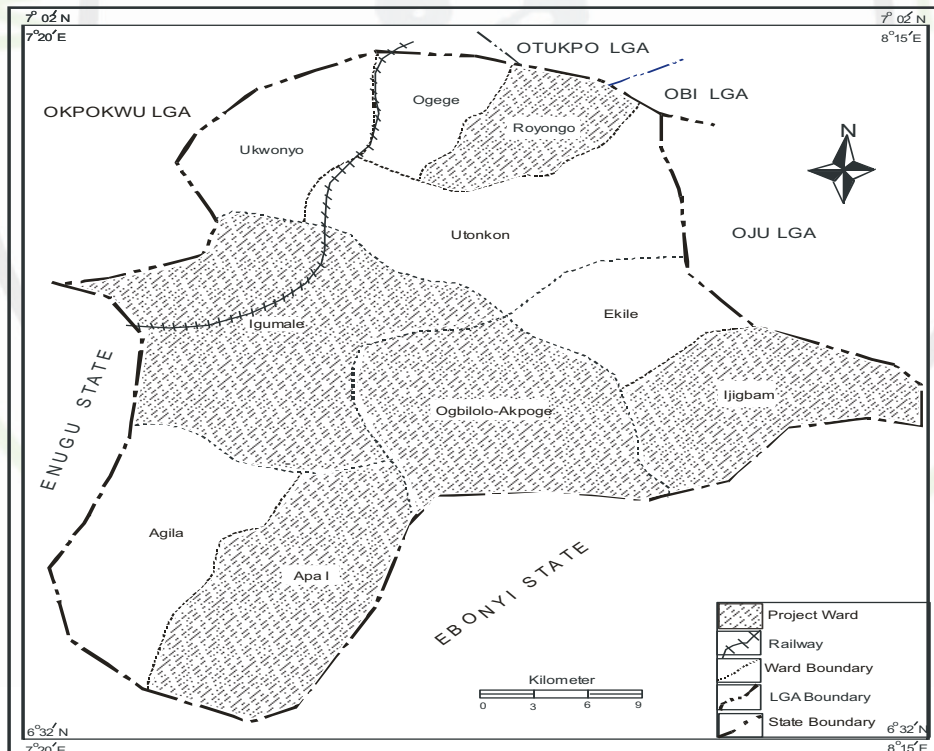
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Apa-Agila

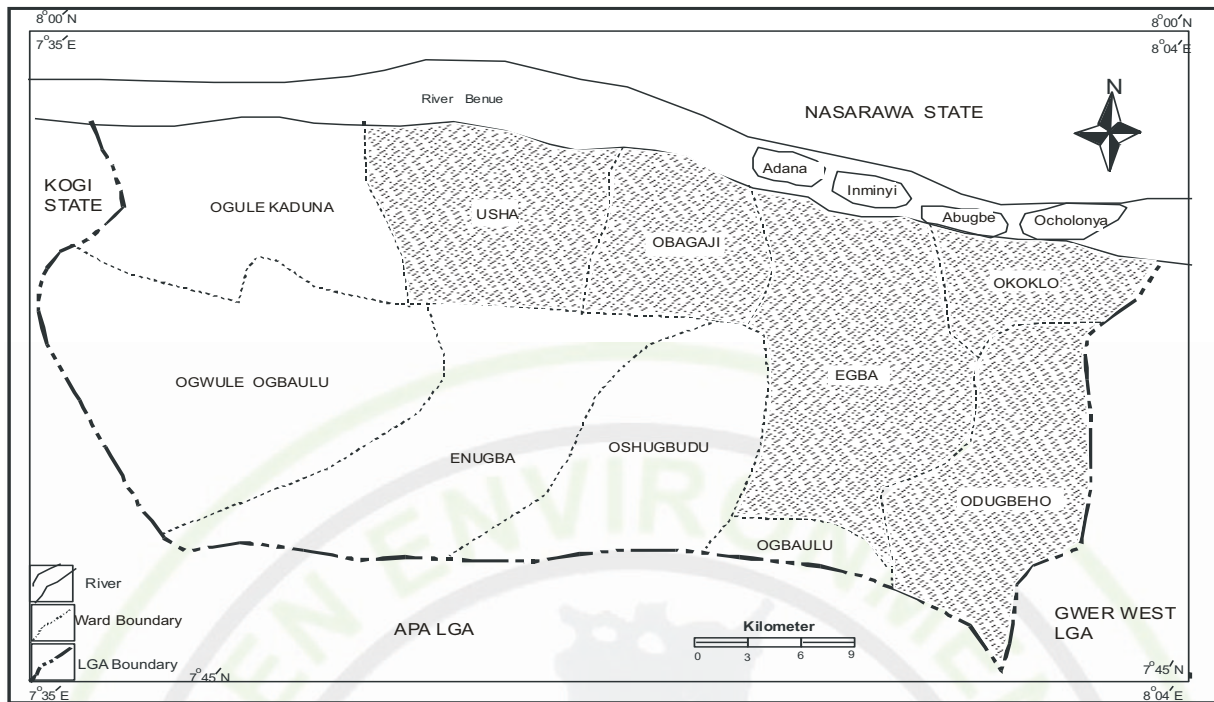
Ulahi



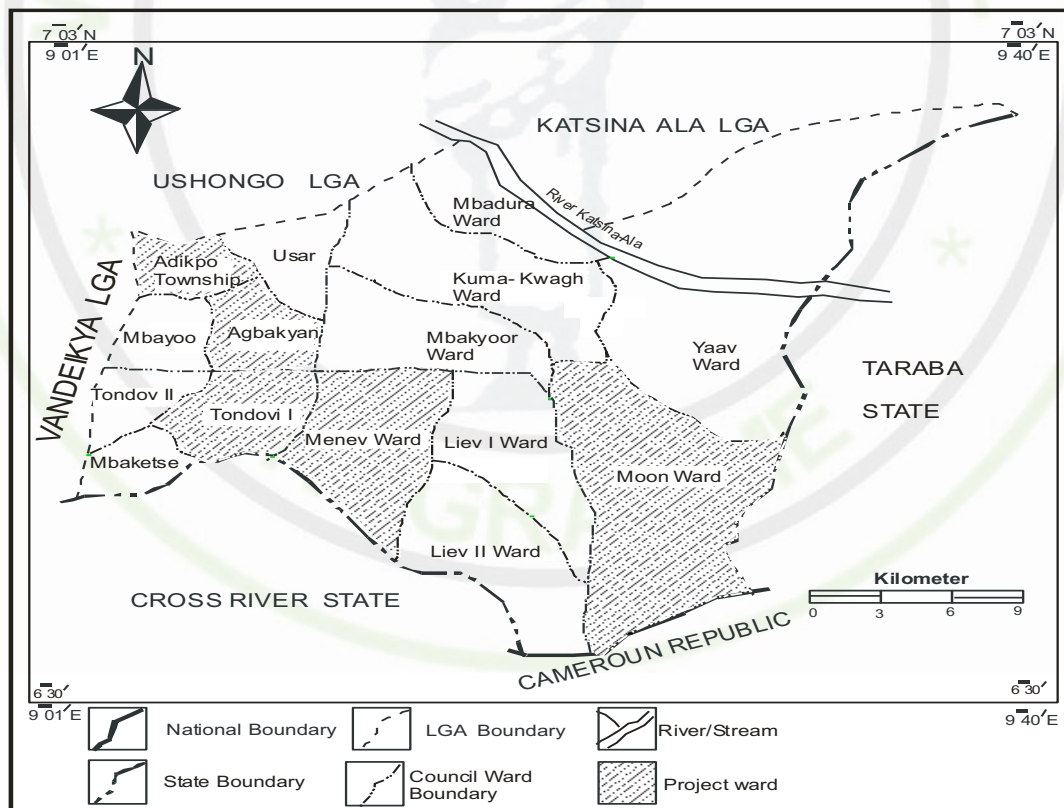
Map of Benue State showing the four Local Government Areas of project implementation



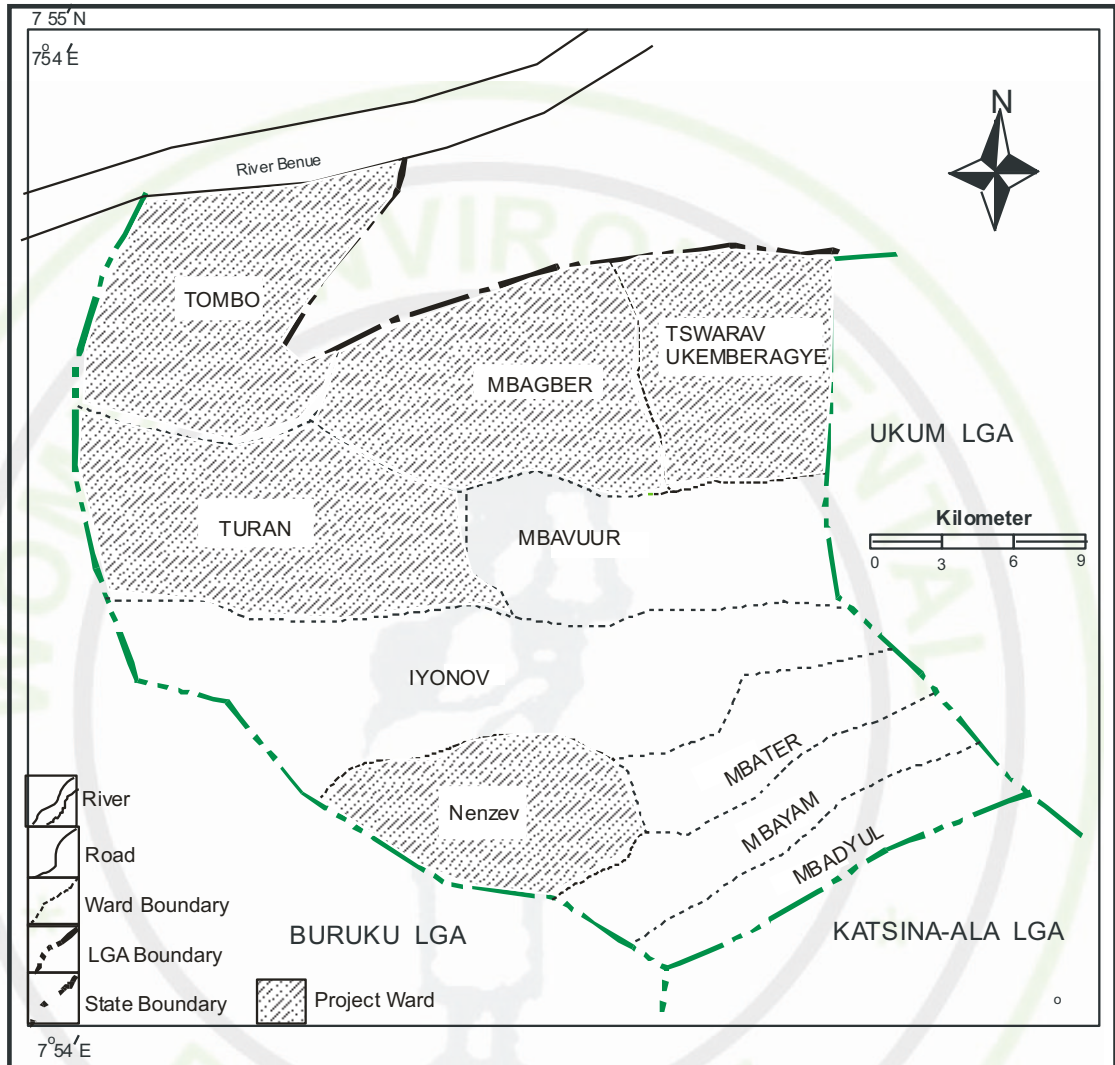
Map of Ado showing the five wards of project implementation



showing the five wards of project implementation



Map of Kwande showing the five wards of project implementation



Map of Logo showing the five wards of project implementation

HOW WE SOUGHT TO WORK

WEP adopted the consortium approach in the implementation of this project; we recruited 4 NGOs with extensive experience working and implementing activities in Benue State to serve as Sub Recipients (SRs) on the project. This was after they were screened through a due diligence process that involved organizational capacity and fiduciary assessments. They include: Angel Support Foundation (ASF), Centre for Development and Social Justice (CEDASJ), Foundation for Justice, Development and Peace (FJDP) and Gender and Environmental Risk Initiative (GERI).

WHAT WE SET TO ACHIEVE

Under this project, WEP sought to through collaborations with relevant organizations and institutions such as security agencies, civil society organizations, communities, the private sector and government agencies, strengthen the security structures of the communities, facilitate resolution of disputes within and between communities, raise awareness against violent extremism, and enhance skills of women and youth for improved livelihoods.

The thinking behind these actions was to address the following drivers of violent extremism within the communities of intervention:

- The lack of sense of purpose among young women and young men
- Poverty;
- The lack of opportunities for young people and
- An attraction to perceived improvements in status and power and promises of financial gain by joining violent extremist groups

We intended to facilitate a boost in the economic conditions of the communities to create conditions that will reduce the vulnerability of young people and other population members succumbing to extremist ideologies. The consortium sought to support communities to implement community-driven initiatives that promote peace and security. In addition, the consortium was out to advocate for good governance, infrastructural development in communities of intervention. Facilitate conflict resolution, social cohesion and community agency in the target communities.

We envisaged that these activities would:

- I. Enable communities build and strengthen positive options where communities and their members maintain cohesion during times of

societal change thereby enhancing community member's sense of belonging to an inclusive, constructive and positive group (social cohesion);

- ii. Strengthen the capacities of communities to mobilize, organize and represent their own interests (community agency);
- iii. Lift barriers that limit access to social and economic opportunities by making sure that more members of the community feel that they have equal opportunities for self-improvement and for achieving their aspirations; and
- iv. Help individuals become more resilient to radicalization to violent extremism through a stronger and more positive sense of self.

To achieve the above, WEP came up with the following interventions under the project:

PREVENTING RECRUITMENT AND RADICALISATION OF IN SCHOOL YOUTH:

This initiative targeted 16,000 in-school youth. We set out to work with 468 change agents drawn from school teachers, traditional leaders and local religious, local administrators, women and opinion leaders, building their capacities to prevent the recruitment and radicalization of youth into violent extremism across the 4 LGs of intervention. This initiative was also designed to provide young people in communities with ICT, Life and PVE skills through the provision of 8 (2 in each of the 4 LGs) Digital/Creative Clubs (a solar powered computer and training laboratory) where young people could gather and learn with their peers.

PROVIDING LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT TO OUT-OF-SCHOOL, UNEMPLOYED AND UNSKILLED YOUTH:

This initiative targeted 268 young women and young men whose vulnerability was increased as a result of an absence of opportunities for sustainable livelihood. We also targeted 120 change agents who would be provided with information on preventing violent extremism through special trainings and mentorship. The said youth were to be placed on training in vocational skills of their choosing and provided with start-up grants at the end of their training to enable them start-up businesses using the skills acquired under the guidance of their assigned mentors.

PREVENTING INCESSANT CRISIS BETWEEN HERDSMEN AND FARMERS:

The consortium sought to intervene in the incessant confrontations between farmers and herders across the middle belt. The project sought to create opportunities for over 420 herders and farmers to dialogue and interact in order to identify the sources of their disputes and volunteer possible solutions. We intended to build the capacities of communities and herders on community policing and introduce the concept of ranching by providing 4 Pilot Mini Ranches to demonstrate the possibility of ranching animals in line with the debate around ranching. We sought to engage with over 90 stakeholders including the leadership of Farmers associations and the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association (MACBAN) to find lasting, practical and stakeholder driven solutions to the crisis.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT:

This initiative sought to find solutions to the reoccurring boundary, chieftaincy, political and other sources of conflict within the target LGs. The initiative targeted stakeholders, government agencies and communities to find lasting peaceful solutions that will facilitate the restoration of peace among warring parties in communities in the target LGs. The project sought to through mediations, dialogue sessions, trainings on PVE, Advocacy, Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanisms (ADR) and community engagements reach out to 320 community members and 248 stakeholders in communities that have experienced one form of prolonged conflict or the other with the intention of strengthening the capacities of communities to build peace through self-driven initiatives involving the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms building community agency and social cohesion in the process.

THE PROJECT ACTIVITIES

With the challenge of a multifaceted approach for maximum impact, we came up with interventions addressing and targeting different population groups within these communities.

The activities under this project drawn from the various initiatives commenced October, 2016.

Project Inception Workshop

As soon as we were certain of the interventions to be undertaken, we called together stakeholders from within the state in general and the targeted LGs (Ado, Agatu, Kwande and Logo) in particular for a Project Inception Workshop. The workshop was held on the 19th of October 2016 at HallyDays Resort, Makurdi, Benue State and brought together stakeholders from the Benue State Government, the target LGs, Traditional/Religious leaders, CSOs and NGOs in the state as well as the Project Consortium drawn from NGOs working in the State. The workshop presented to stakeholders for the first time, the planned interventions and solicited their commitments to support the initiatives.



Group photograph of participants at the Project Inception Workshop October, 2016.
Picture: Otene Ogwuche/WEP Consortium

Stakeholders present at the workshop included a representative of the Governor of Benue State who sent apologies for his inability to attend in person Hon. B.B Nungwa, Commissioner of Police who came with 5 other high ranking police officers, representatives from the State House of Assembly representing Ado, Agatu, Kwande and Logo State constituencies, Traditional Rulers from the four (4) benefiting LGs the Ada Ado, the Ochi Agatu, the Ter Kwande and the Ter Logo, Sole Administrators of the 4 benefiting LGs of Ado (Hon. Alex Oketa), Agatu (Hon. Mike Inalegwu), Kwande (Hon. Daniel Orngu) and Logo (Hon. Tordue Ayo), Representatives from UN agencies operating in the state led by Mr. Sam Agwa the State Team Lead for the UNHCR, NGOs and Civil Society organizations operating in Benue State. The public relations officer of the Benue State Vigilante, Nigerian Television Authority, 2 representatives each from the Benue Christian Association and the Muslim Community, the state Commandant of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, a representative of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association (MACBAN), Radio Benue Makurdi, Radio Nigeria Harvest FM, Makurdi, the Benue NGO Network also attended with her member NGOs. A total of 60 persons participated in this activity.

This activity opened doors for WEP at various levels with state and non-state actors in Benue State which has helped establish a cordial relationship within the organization, partners, other relevant stakeholders and gate keepers within the state.



WEPS Executive Director **Dr. Priscilla Achakpa** giving her remarks at the Project Inception Workshop October, 2016. Picture: Otene Ogwuche/WEP Consortium



Hon. B.B Nungwa-Representative of the Governor of Benue State giving his remarks at the Project Inception Workshop October, 2016. Picture: Otene Ogwuche/WEP Consortium



Hon. Barr. Mwuese Mnyim-Commissioner for Women Affairs and Social Development Benue State at the Project Inception Workshop October, 2016 Otene Ogwuche/WEP Consortium



Project Manager-**Mr. Cliff Gai** presenting the various initiatives under the project at the Project Inception Workshop October, 2016 Picture: Otene Ogwuche/WEP Consortium



Representative of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps at the Project Inception Workshop October, 2016 Picture: Otene Ogwuche/WEP Consortium



The Rep of UNHCR Mr. Sam Agwa at the Project Inception Workshop October, 2016 Picture: Otene Ogwuche/WEP Consortium



Opening prayer and singing of the Nigerian National Anthem at the Project Inception Workshop October, 2016. Picture: Cliff Gai/WEP Consortium



A cross section of participants at the Project Inception Workshop October, 2016
Picture: Cliff Gai/WEP Consortium



The Sole Administrator of Logo LG, the Commissioner for Women Affairs and Social Development and the Sole Administrator of Ado LG at the Project Inception Workshop October, 2016
Picture: Cliff Gai/WEP Consortium

ASSESSMENT AND TRAINING OF SUB RECIPIENTS

WEP recognized the need for collaboration and partnerships to enable the organization successfully implement this project. It is in this regard that we conducted Organizational Capacity/Fiduciary Assessments of 4 Benue based NGOs, Angel Support Foundation (ASF), Centre for Development & Social Justice (CEDASJ), Foundation for Justice, Development & Peace (FJDP) and Gender & Environmental Risk Reduction Initiative (GERI). After the assessment of these organizations we came up with Capacity Development Plans for each organization and proceeded to strengthen their capacities and put them together in a consortium under WEPs supervision before we began the implementation of the project activities. These activities have boosted the confidence and capacities of all staff working on the project. Every activity and its implementation offer a new experience to further enhance learning and enrich experience for subsequent activities.



Fiduciary Assessment of FJDP. Picture: Cliff Gai/WEP Consortium



Organizational Capacity Assessment of CEDASJ. Picture: Cliff Gai/WEP Consortium



Organizational Capacity Assessment of FJDP. Picture: Cliff Gai/WEP Consortium



Cliff Gai the Project Manager facilitating a session during the Capacity Development Workshop for Sub Recipients. Picture: Otene Ogwuche/WEP Consortium



Group Work session during the Capacity Development Workshop for Sub Recipients
Picture: Cliff Gai/WEP Consortium



Evelyn Ugbe a Project Officer facilitating a session during the Capacity Development Workshop for Sub Recipients Picture: Cliff Gai/WEP Consortium



Valentine Kwaghchimim a Project Officer FJDP contributing to a session during the Capacity Development Workshop for Sub Recipients. Picture: Cliff Gai/WEP Consortium



Energizers



Lunch. Picture: Cliff Gai/WEP Consortium



Staff of Sub Recipients listening attentively during a session.
Picture: Cliff Gai/WEP Consortium

DATA ENUMERATORS AND PROJECT BASELINE SURVEY

WEP saw the need to establish a baseline on each of the target populations hence the need to conduct a baseline survey which helped to establish a baseline which will form the background upon which the outcome statement for each of these population groups will be measured. We hired and trained data enumerators who helped us collect data across the 4 target LGs (Ado, Agatu, Kwande and Logo). The data was analyzed and a report published which is the basis upon which we currently measure the success of all our interventions on the project.



A group photograph of first batch of Data Enumerators during their training.
Picture: Cliff Gai/WEP Consortium



Demonstration of the KoboCollect App used for capturing Baseline Data.
Picture: Cliff Gai/WEP Consortium





John Baaki of WEP facilitating a session on data collection using the KoboCollect App during the training for data enumerators. Picture: Cliff Gai/WEP Consortium



A group photograph of second batch of Data Enumerators during their training. Picture: Cliff Gai/WEP Consortium

PROJECT CONSORTIUM MEETINGS

The project consortium meetings are an avenue for the project team to meet in order to evaluate what has been done, the challenges met how to get through them and the learning from interactions in the field and the various changes that have occurred in our context of interventions. Held quarterly, they are used to also plan for the next phase of implementation and one of the opportunities for WEP to guide the SRs in the implementation of the various initiatives of the project.



Project Consortium Meeting in Session. Picture: Cliff Gai/WEP Consortium



The ED of one of the SRs - Angel Support Foundation (ASF) Mary Ugbaa and her Head of Programmes Bamber Terseer listening attentively at a consortium meeting.
Picture: Cliff Gai/WEP Consortium



Project M&E Officer Tracy Ogbonna explaining the M&E Framework Requirements of the project to consortium members. Picture: Cliff Gai/WEP Consortium



The Project Finance Manager **Julie Agema** speaking at a consortium meeting.
Picture: Cliff Gai/WEP Consortium



The Project Director **Dr. Priscilla Achakpa** speaking at a consortium meeting.
Picture: Cliff Gai/WEP Consortium

WHAT HAVE WE ACCOMPLISHED?

ADVOCACY

In order for our interventions gain the required acceptability, ensure sustainability and create avenues for scale up, the Project Consortium used a wide range of advocacy visits to stakeholders at the Federal, State and Local Government levels to inform critical stakeholders and administrators to solicit their support for the project's intended interventions. The advocacies sought to encourage ownership of the project, while putting in place measures to ensure that the project is sustained beyond the duration of its implementation.

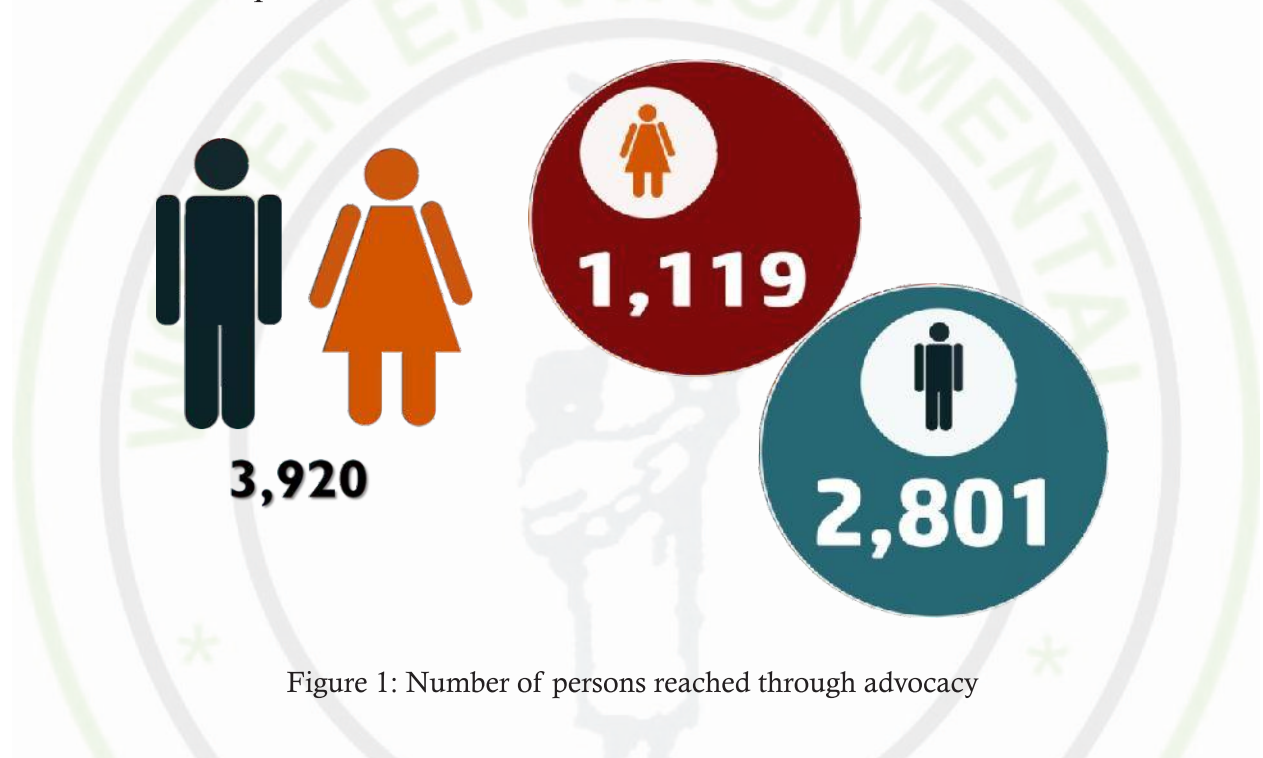


Figure 1: Number of persons reached through advocacy

Our advocacies enabled us to reach 3,920 persons made up of 2,801 men and 1,119 women and have helped to endear our interventions to stakeholders at all levels and stimulate a conversation around issues of violent extremism and how to prevent it in the communities of intervention. They also opened communities up for us with stakeholders offering support in terms of mobilization, information dissemination and the provision of a conducive atmosphere for us to operate. We have also through the same avenues created awareness, carried out sensitizations and gotten commitments for scale up of some of the components of our interventions especially those related to the provision of vocational skills for young people in communities to strengthen their livelihood support systems.



At the palace of the Ada Ado in Ado LG with his council of Chiefs.
Picture: Cliff Gai/WEP Consortium



The Project Team with the Head, UNHCR Field Office, Makurdi, Benue State.
Picture: Otene Ogwuche/WEP Consortium



Head, UNHCR Field Office, Makurdi, Benue State **Mr. Sam Agwa.**
Picture: Otene Ogwuche/WEP Consortium



At Benue NGOs Network Office, Makurdi, Benue State.
Picture: Otene Ogwuche/WEP Consortium



At Benue NGOs Network Office, Makurdi, Benue State.
Picture: Otene Ogwuche/WEP Consortium



At the office of the Security Adviser to the Benue State Government.
Picture: Otene Ogwuche/WEP Consortium



At the office of the Benue State Commissioner for Environment & Water Resources, **Engr. Nick Wende**. Picture: Otene Ogwuche/WEP Consortium



At the office of the Benue State Commissioner for Sports and Youth Development, **Hon. Lawrence Onoja Jnr**. Picture: Otene Ogwuche/WEP Consortium



With the Sole Administrator, Ado LG, **Barr. Alex Oketa** with his council.
 Picture: Nanen Gangese/WEP Consortium



With the Sole Administrator, Ado LG, **Barr. Alex Oketa** with his council.
 Picture: Nanen Gangese/WEP Consortium



Advocacy engagement with the Ada Ado, Ado LG & his council of Chiefs.
Picture: Cliff Gai/WEP Consortium



Advocacy engagement with Teachers of one of the benefiting Secondary Schools, Ado LG.
Picture: Cliff Gai/WEP Consortium



Advocacy engagement with Teachers of one of the benefiting Secondary Schools, Ado LG. Picture: Cliff Gai/WEP Consortium



With the Ardo (Herders Leader) of Ado LG and his council of Elders. Picture: Nanen Gangese/WEP Consortium



With Religious Leaders. Picture: Cliff Gai/WEP Consortium



With the Chief of Staff to the Benue State Governor at Government House Makurdi.
Picture: Otene Ogwuche/WEP Consortium



With the Chief of Staff to the Benue State Governor at Government House Makurdi.
Picture: Otene Ogwuche/WEP Consortium



With the Benue State Executive Council presided over by the Governor His Excellency,
Dr. Samuel Ortom at Government House Makurdi. Picture: Otene Ogwuche/WEP Consortium



With the Benue State Executive Council presided over by the Governor His Excellency, Dr. Samuel Ortom at Government House Makurdi. Picture: Otene Ogwuche/WEP Consortium



With a traditional ruler. Picture: Damaris Uja/WEP Consortium



With the Benue State leadership of Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association (MACBAN) at their office in Makurdi. Picture: Otene Ogwuche/WEP Consortium



With the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) Adikpo in Kwande LG. Picture: Tine Agernor/WEP Consortium



With the head of the Muslim Community in Adikpo, Kwande LG.
Picture: Faasema Solomon/WEP Consortium



With community members in Mbagba community, Kwande LG.
Picture: Faasema Solomon/WEP Consortium

WHAT HAVE WE ACHIEVED WITH THE INITIATIVES PREVENTING RECRUITMENT AND RADICALIZATION OF IN-SCHOOL YOUTH

We have under this initiative been able to build the capacities of community members on Preventing Violent Extremism.

I. Trainings on Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE)

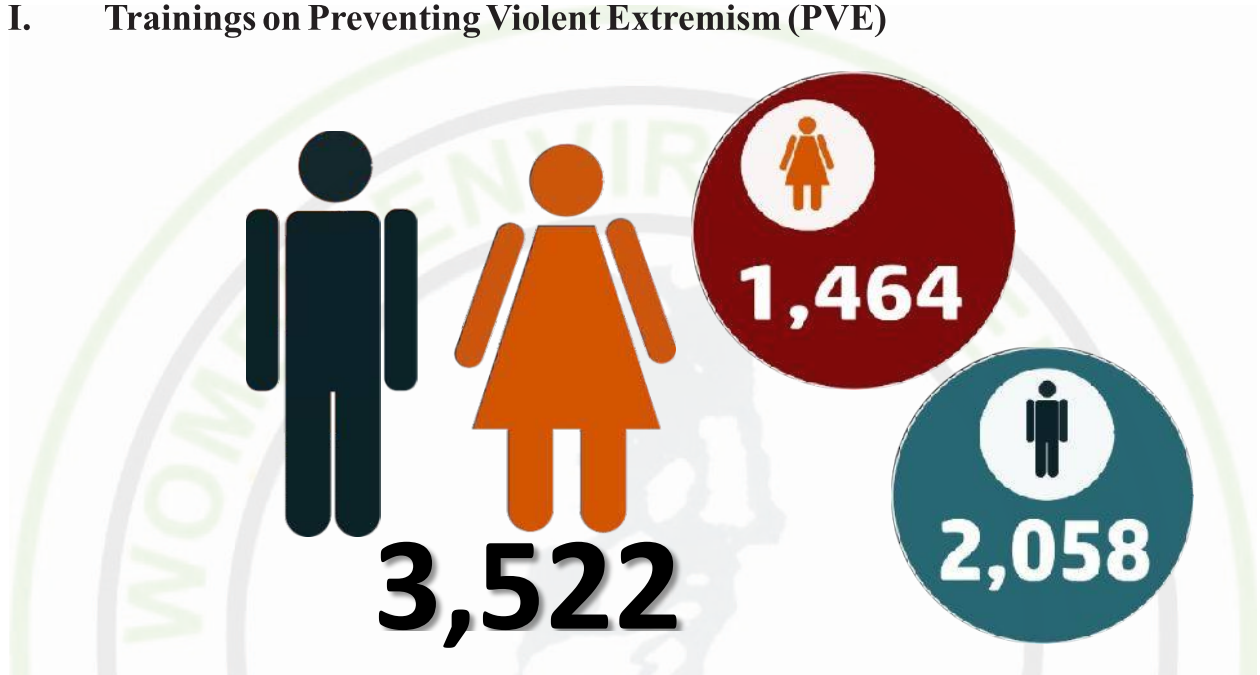


Figure 2: Number of persons reached with capacity development in PVE

We addressed the ignorance of communities on the issues of violent extremism through trainings that focused on building the capacities of community members on methods of recruitment of young women and young men into violent extremist groups, signs of radicalization and the consequences of violent extremism through our numerous trainings the project organized for local leaders, women, teachers, local religious as well as young women and young men. We were able to train community members on the general approaches aimed at PVE and the roles various community members can plan in order to prevent the recruitment and radicalization of young women and young men into violent extremism. In all our trainings reached a total of 3,522 made up of 2,058 men and 1,464 women across the four LGs of intervention. The participants have since began utilizing the knowledge gained from these trainings to initiate PVE activities within their communities.



Young women and young men developing a plan of action for youth led PVE activities in their community in Ado LG, Benue State. Picture: Cliff Gai/WEP Consortium





The Project Manager, Cliff Gai with the Chaplain and leadership of the Men of Discipline (MoD) after facilitating a training organized for the group by the Catholic Diocese of Katsina Ala to build their capacity on PVE as part of the contribution of the Diocese to PVE efforts in the state. Picture: Bamber Terseer/WEP Consortium

ii. Sensitization Rallies on PVE in Higher Institutions

We were able to hold sensitization rallies to reach out to young people in higher institutions across the state. The project was able to reach 8 higher institutions across the state, hosting rallies that hosted 9,724 students out of which 6,700 were young men and 3,024 were young women. Some of the institutions have made the rallies an annual event.

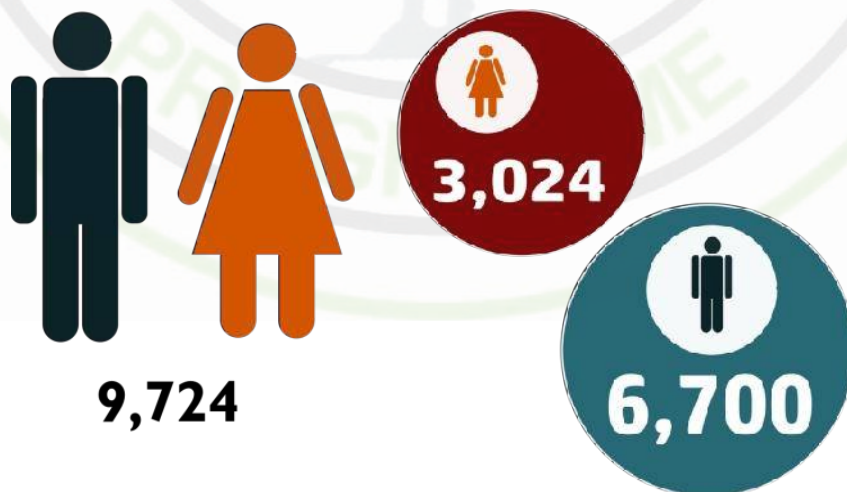


Figure 3: Number of persons reached through rallies in higher institutions



The Project Manager, Cliff Gai addressing students of the College of Education, Katsina Ala during a sensitization rally on PVE held at the school hall. Picture: Bamber Terseer/WEP Consortium

iii. Creation of Digital & Creative Clubs

In order to bring in-school young people together, give them life skills, offer them an opportunity to receive ICT skills and build their capacities on PVE, the project established and donated 8 digital and creative clubs (a room with computers for ICT and life skills). The idea of the digital/creative clubs was to create an environment that would attract young people and hold their interest enough to facilitate an atmosphere for their PVE capacity development. These facilities and equipment has enabled the project reach over 90,000 in-school young women and young men annually. The digital and creative clubs were established in the following schools:

- i. Igumale Community Secondary School, Igumale, Ado LG.
- ii. Apa Community Secondary School, Apa-Agila, Ado LG.
- iii. Methodist High School, Obagaji, Agatu LG.
- iv. Eagle Generation, Secondary school, Obagaji, Agatu, LG.
- v. Shangev-ya Community Secondary School, Koti, Kwande LG.
- vi. Turan Community Secondary School, Jato-Aka, Kwande LG.
- vii. God's Time Secondary School, Ugba, Logo LG.
- viii. Gaambe-Tiev Community Secondary School, Anyiin, Logo LG.





Commissioning and handover ceremony for the digital/creative clubs.
Picture: Cliff Gai/WEP Consortium

PROVIDING LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT TO OUT-OF-SCHOOL, UNEMPLOYED AND UNSKILLED YOUTH

The project over the course of three years addressed the issue of poverty which is one of the main drivers of violent extremism in the state. The project trained young women and young men on vocational skills and provided them with start-up grants to enable them set up businesses in the various areas they acquired skills in. They have in turn continued to offer the same training they received to their peers across the various communities of intervention. These trainings have increased/improved the income and livelihood opportunities of these young women and young men. The project trained a total of 268 young women and young men made up of 134 (50%) young women and 134 (50%) young men across the four LGs of intervention who have all improved their lives and incomes and are also helping other young women and young men in their communities to improve themselves through apprenticeship.

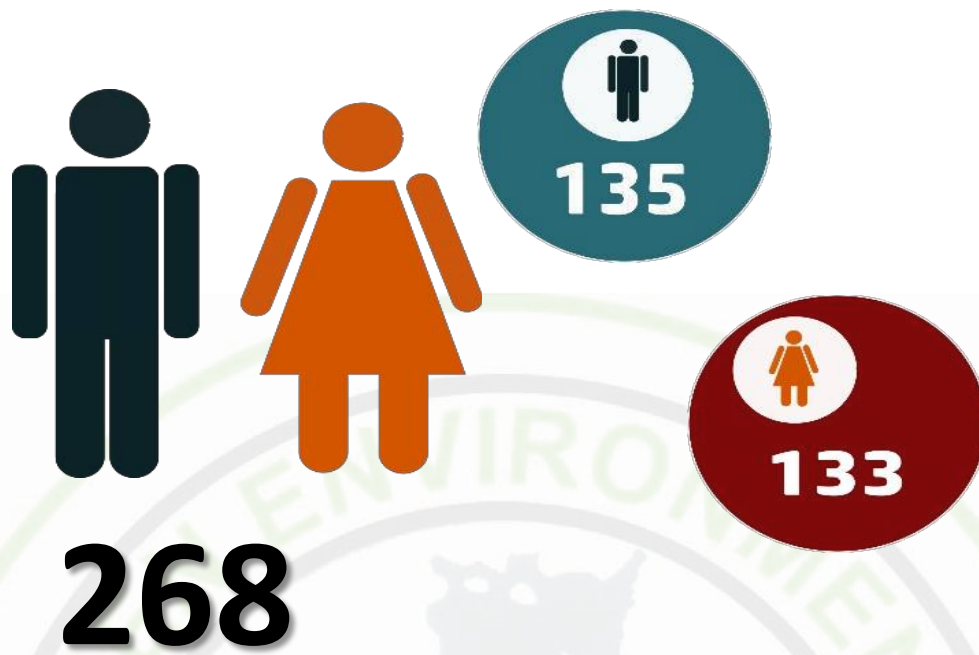


Figure 4: Number of beneficiaries of skills and grants



Two beneficiaries at their shoe making venture. Photo: Damaris Uja/WEP Consortium



A beneficiary of our vocational skills and start up grant in her shop.
Photo: Cliff Gai/WEP Consortium



One of the beneficiaries of our vocational skills and start up grant in her shop with her apprentices.
Photo: Cliff Gai/WEP Consortium

Preventing Incessant Crisis between Herdsmen and Farmers

The project brought together farmers and herders in dialogue sessions. The thinking behind this was to create opportunities for both parties to look into the remote and immediate causes of their often violent confrontations and foster dialogue between farmers and herdsmen to arrive at cordial ways of co-existing in order to reduce the clashes between them. The interactions also presented an opportunity to sensitize them on the need to adopt ranching as an alternative to open grazing which is largely responsible for the incessant clashes between them and farmers. 1,800 persons drawn from community leaders, herdsmen, local religious, young women and young men from the farmer communities and from the herdsmen participated in these events 1,200 of the participants were men while 600 were women. These dialogue sessions have resulted in the attainment of relative peace between farmers and herders within our communities of intervention. The project also established 4 mini ranches to demonstrate the practice of ranching.

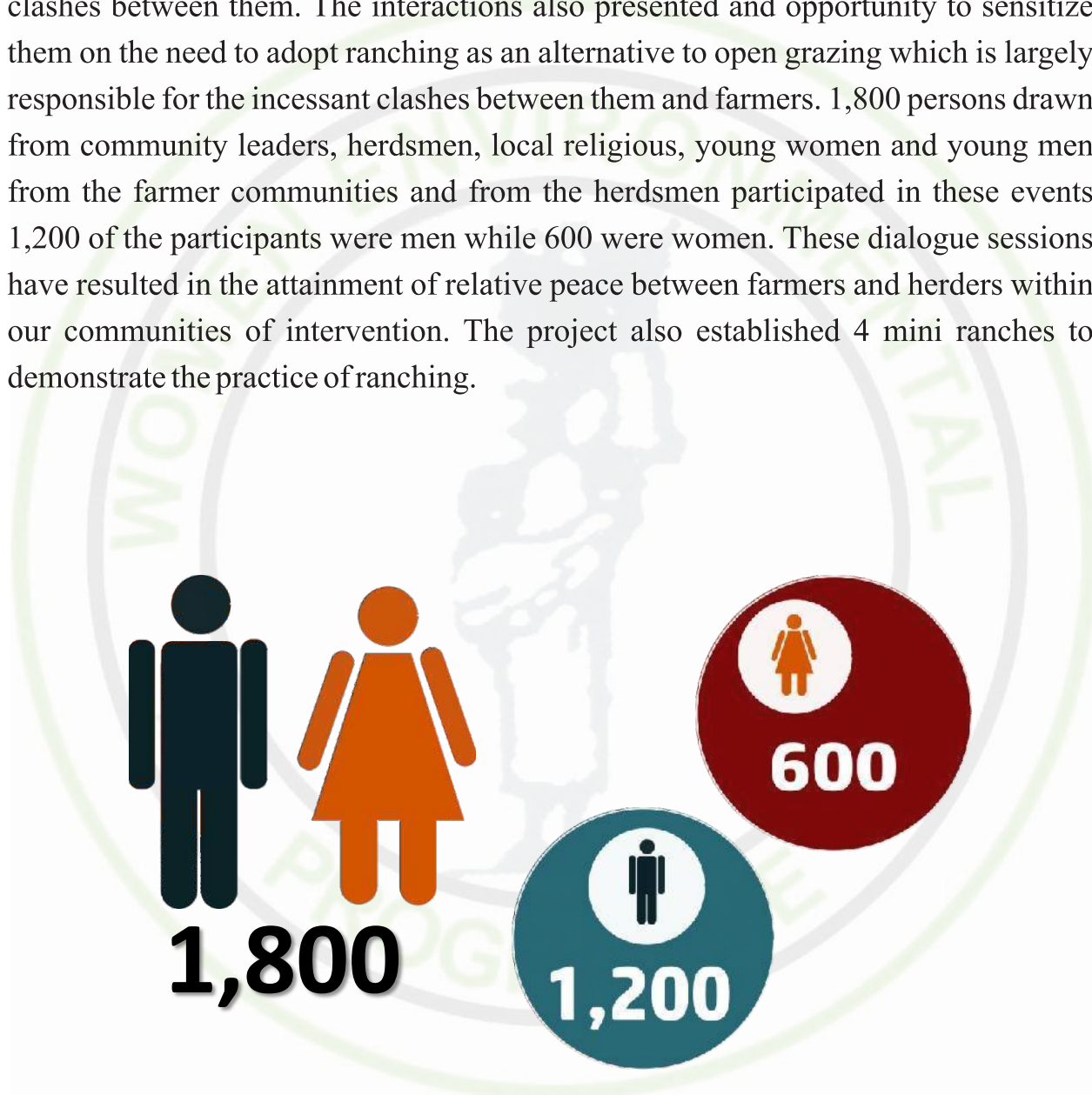


Figure 5: Number of persons that participated in dialogue sessions



A leader from a herder community speaking during a dialogue session.
Photo: Cliff Gai/WEP Consortium



One of the mini ranches constructed by the project. Photo: Dorcas Kwamande/WEP Consortium



Community elders in a dialogue session. Photo: Cliff Gai/WEP Consortium

Conflict Management

The project has been able to address the issue of existing conflict which was one of the prominent drivers of violent extremism in our context of implementation. Extremist groups before now found it easy to gain access to communities as a result of grievances from existing conflicts in such communities. They have in the past exploited these grievances to recruit young men and young women into violent activities. These conflicts in most instances had existed for over fifteen to twenty years. The project built the capacities of communities in the areas of community policing and vigilance as well as alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms. Communities are now able to resolve disputes without them escalating into violent confrontations that violent extremist groups can latch on to perpetrate violence and recruit young women and young men into their ranks. The skills gathered from the trainings have been used by communities to create community policing committees which are responsible for neighbourhood watch and liaising with security agencies to

ensure that communities and their borders are secured. The project also directly intervened in conflicts through dialogue sessions, mediations/negotiations and border meetings to help communities find lasting solutions to land disputes, communal conflicts and border disputes leading conscious efforts on the part of the government to demarcate boundaries that have been in contention for a long period of time. Our dialogue sessions, mediations and negotiations have helped communities achieve peace and mutual respect, holding dialogues and meetings on their own to find solutions to their disputes instead of resorting to violent confrontations as was the case in the past.

Our mediations hosted 720 community leaders 510 were men and 210 were women.

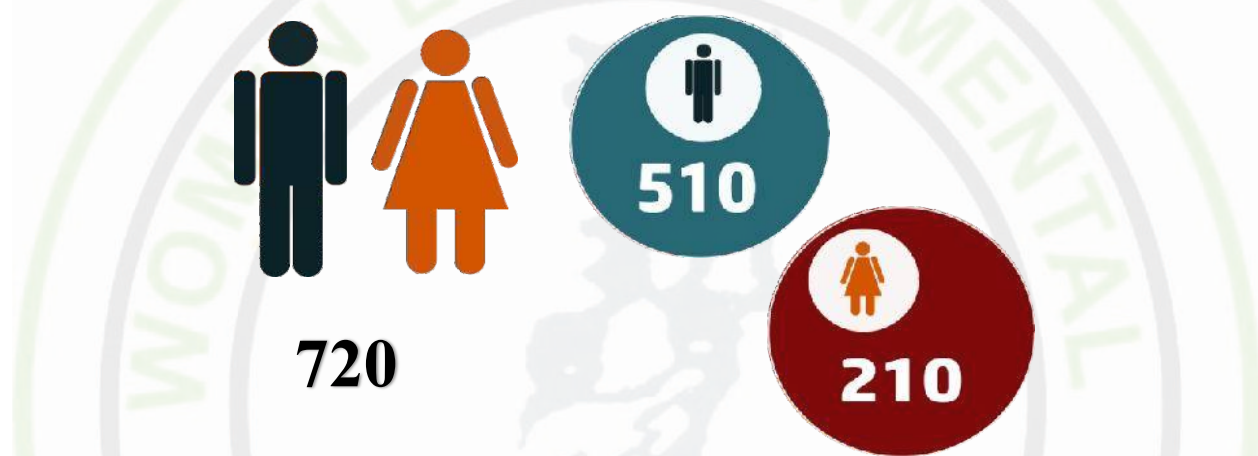


Figure 6: Number of persons that participated in mediations

Our trainings on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms had 1,410 participants made up of 816 men and 594 women.

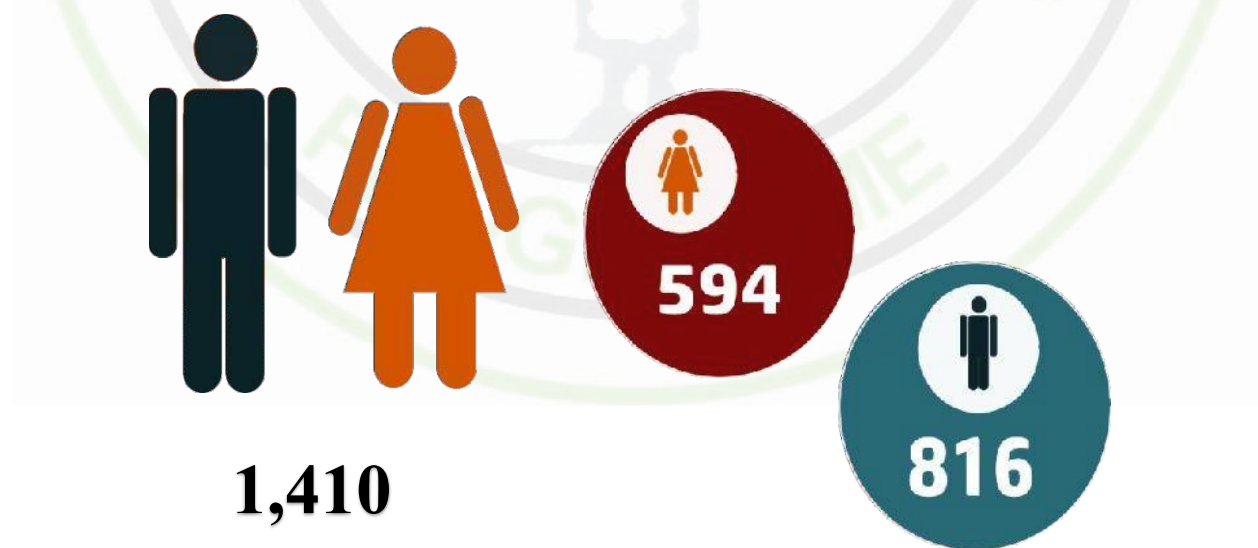


Figure 7: Number of beneficiaries of our ADR mechanisms trainings

Our trainings on community policing trained 600 community members made up of 400 men and 200 women. Communities that participated in this training have formed Community Policing Committees who are actively collaborating with security agencies to ensure peace and security in their communities.

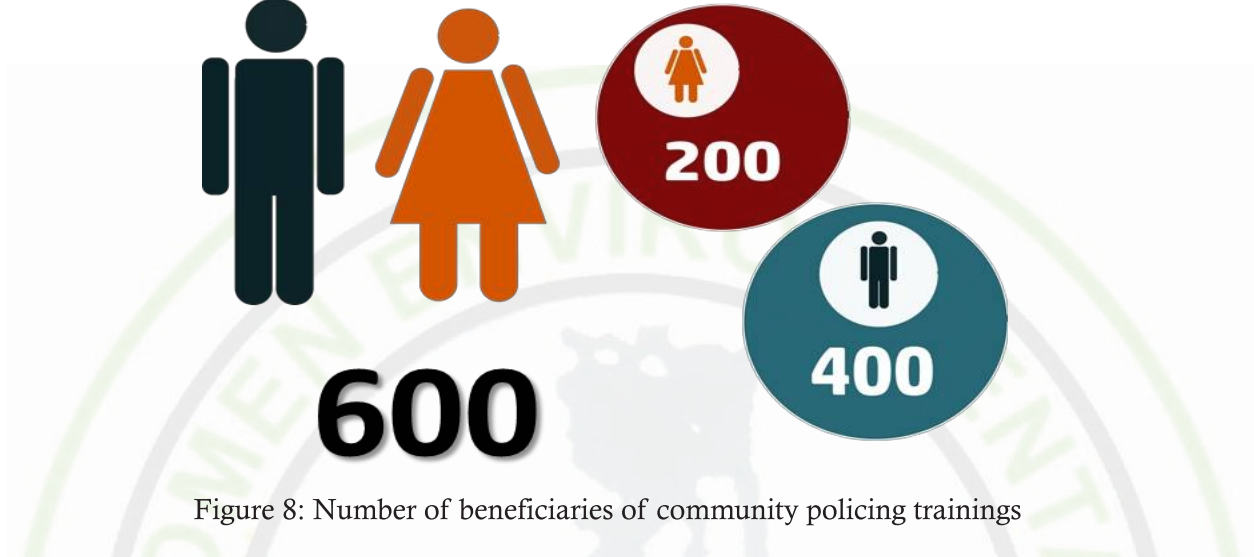


Figure 8: Number of beneficiaries of community policing trainings



Community members during a mediation meeting: Picture: Dorcas Kwamande/WEP Consortium



A woman contributing during a community dialogue and mediation meeting.
Picture: Cliff Gai/WEP Consortium



Participants at a training for young women and young men on advocacy and ADR.
Picture: Nanen Gangese/WEP Consortium.



**Women brainstorming to identify the roles they can play to entrench peace in their communities.
Picture: Dorcas Kwamande/WEP Consortium**

MEDIA PROGRAMMES

The project also embarked on an aggressive media campaign. A radio jingle was produced in the three major languages spoken in the state English, Tiv and Idoma. The jingles were aired on radio stations across the state alongside a drama in Pidgin English 'Stitches'. The jingle and drama have created an awareness on the need for stakeholders and communities to initiate actions towards preventing violent extremism (PVE) from taking root in the state.



1,550,000

Figure 9: Number of persons reached by media programmes.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

The project achieved the following specific outcomes:

- i. Communities have realized the need to work together as they find lasting solutions to Violent Extremism.
- ii. Increased interest and quest for knowledge on PVE methodologies has been stimulated and is in demand in communities.
- iii. The state is aware of the initiatives, is interested in seeking long term solutions rather than military responses.
- iv. 8 digital/creative clubs established across the LGs of intervention.
- v. Improved access to livelihood opportunities for beneficiaries and their family members.
- vi. Community Policing Committees (CPC) established by 20 communities across the 4 LGs of intervention.
- vii. Increased youth, individuals and community driven initiatives for peace through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms and PVE.
- viii. Increased knowledge and understanding of violent extremism (VE) and its impact and possible solutions.
- ix. Improved relations and relative peace in communities between farmers and herdsmen.
- x. 4 pilot demonstration mini ranches established across the 4 LGs of intervention.
- xi. Increased conscious efforts towards community policing in communities.
- xii. Increased awareness of PVE amongst local religious, traditional and administrative leaders/stakeholders.
- xiii. Improved community driven actions for sustainable peace.
- xiv. Reduced incessant violent confrontations between communities.
- xv. Improved women and youth participation in community driven initiatives for peace and PVE

LESSONS LEARNED

In the course of implementation, WEP identified the following as the lessons learned:

- I. Women can be very active in efforts aimed at PVE and the attainment of sustainable peace once they receive requisite capacity development.
- ii. The role the traditional institution plays in conflict management and addressing grievances within their communities is often inhibited by their lack of capacity to do so.
- iii. The violence sometimes stems from criminal activities and not necessarily about farming, grazing or VE.
- iv. The use of change agents has been very helpful in ensuring community participation and ownership of the project.
- v. Open communication through social media platforms between team members has helped project implementation and integration of lessons learnt.
- vi. We have encouraged communities to foster dialogue beyond the engagements and sessions organized by the project which has built trust.
- vii. Initiatives such as community policing committees have come out of our trainings and are serving the communities.
- viii. Consistent advocacy and follow up of change agents and stakeholders has been key in entrenching ownership of our initiatives.
- ix. In the course of dialogues and mediations, farmers, herdsmen and warring communities form alliances as change agents working together to bring about lasting peace and solutions to their incessant confrontations on both sides, this role as change agents and peace ambassadors is reversed to that of aggressors and adversaries.