Since 2016, Burkina Faso has experienced attacks by non-state armed groups against civilian populations, the military, and state symbols. This growing insecurity leads to significant population displacements, the majority of whom are children, to perceived safer areas. These population movements, particularly in the province of Bam in the Centre-North region, pose many challenges in terms of protection, education, and social cohesion.

With funding from the Kingdom of Belgium, Search For Common Ground (Search) is partnering with Plan International (PI) to address these challenges. Launched in June 2020, the 24-month project "Protective Environment for crisis-affected Children and Youth in Bam Province" contributes to improved protection, education, resilience, and social cohesion for conflict-affected children and youth ages 3-24 in Bam Province. This consortium-based intervention has three components:

- Improving child protection in the North Central region;
- Supporting functional, inclusive, and quality education in the North Central region;
- Restore an environment conducive to peaceful coexistence between internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host communities.

A NEXUS APPROACH: HUMANITARIAN- DEVELOPMENT-PEACE

In this project, humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding operations are conceived as a set of parallel and simultaneous interventions. This three-tiered approach ensures integrating these three sectors and provides a comprehensive response, emphasizing both the coherence and complementarity of actions and actors.

To do this, PI relies on its dual humanitarian-development mandate to strengthen children's resilience, protection, and education in emergency situations. At the same time, Search, an expert in peacebuilding, is laying the groundwork for an environment conducive to peaceful coexistence between displaced persons and host communities and the realization of children's right to education.
PROMOTING PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE BETWEEN INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPS) AND HOST COMMUNITIES

As part of the project's social cohesion component, Search contributes to preventing inter-community and inter-generational conflicts in areas hosting IDPs by building trust and mutual understanding.

**Activity 1:** Strengthening conflict prevention and management mechanisms: Training of 60 peace actors on conflict prevention and transformation; support to the National Observatory for the Prevention and Management of Community Conflicts (ONAPREGECC) in the creation and revitalization of 8 departmental and village observatories; and development of an action plan, including solidarity and mediation activities.

**Activity 2:** Participatory theater to address trauma: The performances dramatize a real problem or conflict in the community. Through the participatory approach, the audience can reflect, dialogue, and ask questions about the problems and traumas experienced and propose a solution to improve the situation, avoid violence and transform the conflict.

**Activity 3:** Facilitation of dialogue frameworks: Organization of 40 sessions of inter-and intra-community dialogues on access to education, including IDPs and host communities, to strengthen ties and encourage the search for collaborative solutions; Organization of 8 Town Hall Meetings (THMs) to deepen the issues arising from the dialogues, encourage interactions between communities, civil society, authorities, and security and defense forces, and support the implementation of identified solutions, particularly in terms of securing educational spaces.

**Activity 4:** Production and broadcast of radio spots: Training of 15 media professionals and journalists from three partner radio stations in conflict-sensitive journalism. Using their new skills, these journalists co-produce and broadcast, in collaboration with communities, 72 peace education programs to improve access to information, combating rumors, and promoting behavioral change for peaceful coexistence.

CREATING A MORE PROTECTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN

The project contributes to improving inclusive access to a protective and gender-sensitive school environment for conflict-affected children from IDPs and host communities. To this end, PI is establishing Youth Friendly Spaces (YFS) and Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS), offering a wide range of activities, an appropriate environment, and staff. In collaboration with the Ministry of Social Action and the International Committee of the Red Cross, PI also supports family reunification for unaccompanied and separated children.

SUPPORTING QUALITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

To address education-related issues, the project helps increase the capacity of schools located in communes with a high presence of IDPs. To do this, PI creates and equips temporary learning spaces (TLS), rehabilitates classrooms, provides sanitation facilities for people with disabilities, and provides financial support to students from vulnerable households. To ensure that schools are safe and welcoming learning spaces, PI also trains teachers in psychosocial first aid and in identifying and referring vulnerable children.