



LAKE CHAD BASIN PROGRAMME

ANNUAL REPORT

2025

*Large-scale media influence, paired with
targeted community action, defines
Search for Common Ground Nigeria's
2025 peacebuilding approach.*

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WORD FROM LAKE CHAD BASIN COUNTRY DIRECTOR



About Karno Ouattara

As we reflect on the year 2025, the conflict dynamics across the Lake Chad Basin continue to demonstrate both complexity and resilience. In Cameroon, tensions linked to social fragmentation and the growing influence of digital spaces on public discourse have required adaptive peacebuilding strategies that integrate media and community engagement. In Chad, particularly in the eastern provinces, the intersection of displacement, fragile service delivery, and localized intercommunal tensions has underscored the importance of conflict-sensitive, triple-nexus programming. Meanwhile, in Nigeria, communities continue to navigate insurgency, farmer-herder disputes, and banditry, alongside pressures of misinformation and political polarization. Across these contexts, conflict remains dynamic, shaped by historical grievances as well as emerging risks that demand timely analysis, early warning, and locally led response mechanisms.

In this environment, Search for Common Ground (Search) has reinforced its commitment to addressing root causes rather than symptoms of violence. Through rigorous baseline assessments, conflict scans and snapshots, Search has ensured that its interventions remain evidence-based and responsive to evolving dynamics. Its centralized early warning and early response platform, headquartered in Abuja, Nigeria, has strengthened the capacity of communities and response actors to detect and mitigate emerging threats before they escalate. In Chad, tailored conflict sensitivity strategies and

sustained coaching for consortium partners have enhanced the integration of peacebuilding principles across humanitarian and development interventions. These efforts collectively demonstrate that sustainable peace requires institutional accountability, community ownership, collaboration, and continuous learning.

Yet, peacebuilding is not the responsibility of institutions alone. The stories emerging from our programs remind us that the responsibility to promote peace and prevent conflict rests with each of us. Whether it is a youth leader transforming conflict within her own family after receiving training on the Common Ground Approach, or religious and community actors choosing dialogue over division, these examples affirm that peace is built through deliberate efforts. In societies strained by distrust and polarization, choosing collaboration is both a moral duty and a strategic imperative.

This annual report captures a comprehensive account of our collective efforts throughout 2025. It highlights our programmatic achievements in conflict prevention, digital peacebuilding, security sector reform, and policy influencing as well as our partnerships across civil society, government and security actors. The report also presents stories of change that demonstrate impact at both community and institutional levels, outlines the priorities of our 2025-2028 Lake Chad Basin Strategy, and offers a financial and operational snapshot of our work.

Who We Are

Search for Common Ground (Search) is the world's largest peacebuilding organization working on the frontlines of today's conflicts where millions of lives are at stake. We are a locally rooted, global peacebuilding organization working in 33 countries worldwide.

Our mission is to find local solutions to today's toughest violent conflicts and save millions of lives in

the process. Hence, we shift the everyday interactions between hostile groups of people so they can work together to build their communities through joint problem-solving over violent means. We use key principles to align people's aspirations and influence their actions to achieve transformations that last well beyond our intervention and map the thresholds we need to facilitate change at the highest order.



In Nigeria, Search has worked since 2004 and have implemented over **20 projects** nationwide and maintains offices in Plateau, Adamawa, Delta, Bayelsa, Bauchi, Benue, Kaduna, and Taraba, with its country office in Abuja.



2011–2017: Initial focus on security, media, and youth engagement.

2023–Present: Returned via the RESPECCT programme. Leading conflict analysis and sensitivity strategies, bridging gaps between security forces, civil society, and marginalized groups and supporting displaced and host communities in N'Djamena and Eastern Chad (Sila, Ouaddaï, Wadi Fira).



In Cameroon, Search operates across all ten regions in partnership with around fifty women's and youth civil society organizations. Since 2019, programmes have consistently integrated the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agendas, contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and supporting the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2250 (2015), alongside subsequent resolutions.



What We Do

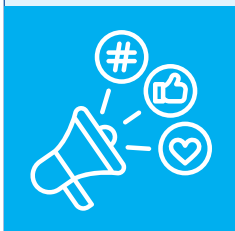
CONFLICT PREVENTION, RESPONSE, AND RESILIENCE



Search for Common Ground (Search) works collaboratively with key stakeholders to address the causes of conflict, foster peaceful coexistence, and strengthen community resilience against crises. Utilizing its Common Ground Approach, Search facilitates dialogue sessions, raises awareness on peacebuilding, and establishes mediation platforms to transform conflicts and empower at-risk communities. Search engages diverse groups, including youth, women, religious and community leaders, and persons with disabilities, ensuring inclusive participation in peacebuilding efforts. In 2024, Search successfully implemented five projects across Northern, Western, and Southern Nigeria, directly impacting farmers, herders, youth, women, security actors, private sector players, civil society organizations, government officials, and policymakers. These initiatives focused on mitigating conflict, enhancing response mechanisms, and fostering resilience within communities. By deploying non-adversarial conflict strategies, Search helps rebuild trust and social cohesion in post-conflict settings. Through inclusive dialogue and capacity-building, the program equips communities with the tools to prevent, respond to, and recover from conflicts, ultimately contributing to sustainable peace and long-term stability.

Our programs are cross-cutting and address issues related to women, peace, and security; youth, peace, and security; as well as fundamental human rights issues. Search support local advocacy in sensitive areas.

MEDIA AND DIGITAL PEACEBUILDING



For over 40 years, Search for Common Ground has been a global leader in using media and digital technology to amplify marginalized voices, transform conflict, and build bridges across dividing lines. Our media programs reach millions annually, sparking critical conversations on the root causes of violence and inspiring solutions for peaceful coexistence. We empower local media producers to create compelling content that drives social change, promotes inclusive dialogue, and highlights underrepresented perspectives. Through engaging storytelling, we transform contentious issues into opportunities for education, understanding, and consensus-building. Our approach demonstrates that the media can inform and entertain while also uniting people in the search for solutions. In Nigeria, our Digital Peacebuilding Strategy leverages digital technologies to counter polarization, combat misinformation, and promote positive online engagement. Our programme addresses key challenges, including digital platform governance, media literacy, and the protection of vulnerable communities. We are pioneering innovative solutions to ensure that online spaces become catalysts for peace rather than drivers of division. With donor support, we can scale these efforts, expanding the reach of media-driven peace initiatives and harnessing the potential of digital platforms to create a more informed, resilient, and peaceful society.

In Cameroon, we systematically integrate digital dimensions into our peacebuilding programmes, recognizing the critical role that online spaces play in shaping perceptions, narratives, and social dynamics across Africa.

In addition, during the October 2025 presidential election campaign, Search Cameroon actively engaged media platforms, working with more than 30 media outlets that benefited from our “conflict-sensitive journalism” training. These partners leveraged digital tools and online channels to promote a peaceful electoral environment and counter hate speech and fake news.

EARLY WARNING AND EARLY RESPONSE (EWER) SYSTEM



Search for Common Ground has developed a comprehensive and technology-driven Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) System, headquartered in Abuja. This system leverages customized real-time communication technologies to detect and respond to emerging conflict risks, ensuring proactive and effective interventions. The EWER System operates through a multi-source intelligence framework, gathering data from Primary and Secondary sources. The Primary Sources are a network of trained Early Warning Observers, Monitors, and Project EWER Focal Points who provide on-the-ground reports on conflict indicators. The Secondary

Sources are insights from civil society organizations, research and academic institutions, media outlets, project partners, and other relevant agencies engaged in conflict monitoring across Nigeria. At the core of the system is the Data Management and Control Hub, where real-time data is analyzed to generate response scenarios. These insights are channeled to Response Agencies and Referral Pathways, comprising both kinetic (security forces, law enforcement) and non-kinetic (mediation, dialogue, and peacebuilding organizations) responders. To ensure continuous improvement and adaptability, the system undergoes rigorous evaluation, assessing the effectiveness of alerts, response actions, and identified gaps. These insights drive enhancements, making the EWER system more agile, data-driven, and impactful in mitigating conflicts across Nigeria.

RESEARCH



At Search for Common Ground, research is the foundation of our peacebuilding initiatives. Our projects are strategically designed based on rigorous conflict analysis, ensuring that interventions address the root causes of conflict rather than just its symptoms. We employ a data-driven approach, leveraging key research tools such as Conflict Scans to provide in-depth assessments of conflict dynamics and emerging tensions. The baseline studies establish benchmarks to measure project impact and effectiveness, while the conflict snapshots offer real-time monitoring of conflict trends to guide adaptive programming. By incorporating these research methodologies, we ensure that our projects remain evidence-based, context-specific, and results-driven. Additionally, we conduct targeted research on specific conflicts and their drivers, tailoring our interventions to maximize impact and inform future programming. Through this continuous cycle of research, action, and evaluation, Search for Common Ground enhances sustainable peacebuilding efforts, ensuring that every initiative contributes meaningfully to conflict transformation and community resilience.

SECURITY REFORM



This program enhances community-led security solutions by fostering trust, dialogue, and collaboration between civilians, security actors, and local stakeholders. Through capacity-building and conflict transformation strategies, it strengthens crisis response mechanisms, reduces human rights abuses, and improves the relationship between communities and security forces. These empower local populations to actively participate in their protection. The program promotes sustainable, community-driven safety frameworks, ensuring long-term peace and resilience.

CONFLICT SENSITIVITY APPROACH

In Chad, Search provides technical support to partner member organizations of the RESPECCT triple nexus program consortium by facilitating training sessions for the program's consortium teams on the following topics: peace, conflict sensitivity, conflict transformation, peaceful cohabitation, social inclusion, and gender equality. The training modules will be adapted based on the results of capacity analysis and conflict analysis to best meet the expectations of consortium members and the needs identified in the program's intervention areas.

Search relies on the conflict sensitivity strategy developed at the outset of the program, within which capacity building is a fundamental pillar. This strengthening includes both training and awareness-raising for teams, so that they understand the core principles of conflicts, grasp the specific dynamics of conflicts in their intervention area, and adopt a reflective stance in their actions. It involves integrating the conflict-sensitive approach throughout the project cycle: geographic targeting, community targeting, recruitment, procurement, communication, etc., while deviating from standard organizational practices. Thus, Search strengthens the consortium teams' understanding of conflict sensitivity and improves their ability to effectively integrate this approach into the various program components. The support also aims to equip teams with the reflexes needed to adopt an autonomous and adaptive stance throughout implementation. This approach is continually adjusted according to the needs expressed by international and national partners, in order to directly address their issues. Technical strengthening is adapted to the different levels of team engagement to remain practical and operational. The objective is not to address conflict sensitivity in a theoretical or general manner but to provide targeted responses to specific needs according to profiles: field teams, logistics or procurement personnel, etc. These teams benefit from concrete training, for example, on managing sensitive discussions with communities or negotiating in tense contexts.

In addition to training, Search conducts coaching sessions to assist each partner in the gradual adaptation of its activities and approaches in response to the evolving context. These sessions allow partners to express their needs, discuss specific difficulties encountered in integrating the Triple Nexus and conflict sensitivity, and fill any gaps identified during the initial trainings. Participants exchange with Search experts about their concrete challenges, set priorities to address, and adjust their actions accordingly. The coaching thus aims to consolidate the gains from the training and to respond in a targeted, evolving, and individualized manner to the needs of each organization. Dedicated work plans are developed to structure this activity: they specify the topics to be covered, the format of the sessions, the tools to be developed collectively, the expected results, as well as a shared schedule and evaluation criteria to measure the impact of the program. This format enables translating the different strategies into concrete actions, tailored to on-the-ground realities, and ensures ongoing adaptability to the evolving context in the program's various intervention zones.



Our Impact and Key Results

Nigeria Country Program Reach Number 2025



Overall Reach
Total people reached:
58,955,349 people

REACH BREAKDOWN:



Media
(TV/Radio audiences)
Reached
58,493,239
People



Digital campaigns
Reached
462,110
People

Direct in-person participants
Reached
13,970
People

Community-led initiatives
Reached
6,466
People

KEY INSIGHT:

Most of the program's reach comes from mass media broadcasting, while in-person engagement targets smaller but deeper impact groups.



Gender and Youth Participation (Direct Activities) - From training, mentoring, and other direct engagements:



Adult Women
2,353



Adult Men
3,239



Young Women
3,656

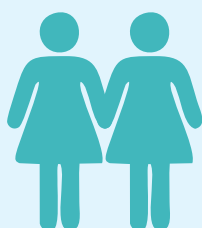


Young Men
4,722

Total direct
engagement:

13,970
people

ADDITIONAL INDIRECT BENEFICIARY BREAKDOWN:



6,009
Female



7,961
Male

INTERPRETATION

- Youth participation is the largest group reached directly
- Men slightly outnumber women overall
- Programs show strong youth engagement focus

INSTITUTIONAL AND PEACEBUILDING OUTCOMES

INSTITUTIONAL ACTORS ENGAGED

233
actors

CONFLICT MEDIATION TRAINING



871 Women trained
as mediators
1,550 Men trained
as mediators

PEACEBUILDING OUTCOMES

339

Conflicts mediated/resolved

4

Policy dialogues / policy papers

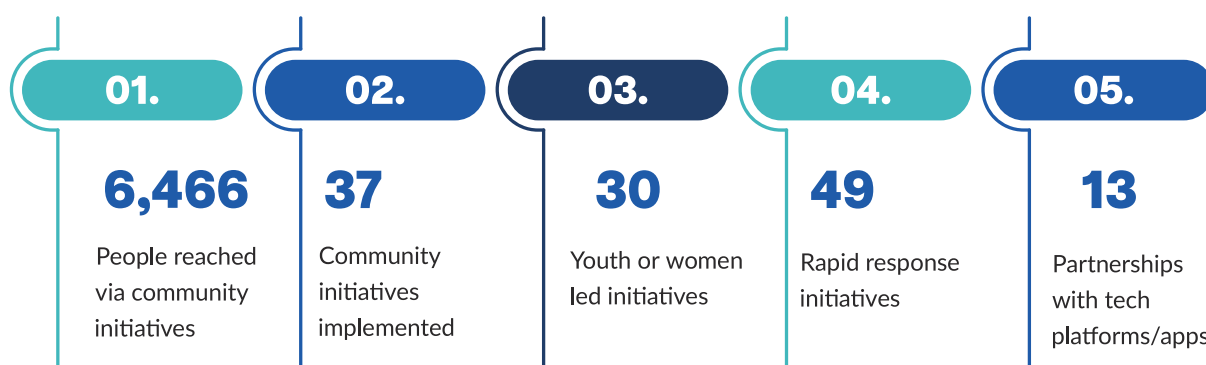
Programs emphasize community
mediation and conflict prevention,
with over

2,400

trained mediators.



COMMUNITY-LED PROGRAMMING



Community programming is highly localized and responsive, with many initiatives led by youth and women groups.

PROJECTS WITH THE LARGEST REACH

Top media-reach projects

30,808,896

Promoting & Protecting Freedom of Religion and Belief (PP-FORB)

17,269,126

Community-Centred Approach to Transforming Criminality & Violence

3,145,000

ECPS Nigeria-Benin Border Peace Initiative

2,900,000

I-RENEW Women Religious Engagement

1,370,217

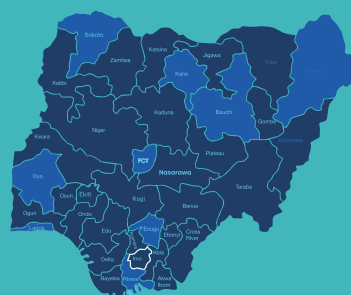
Nigerian Youth CARE



Two projects account for over **80%** of the media reach, largely through radio and broadcast campaigns.

MEDIA REACH BY LOCATION (RADIO STATIONS)

Major broadcast locations include:



**Lagos
Abuja
Rivers
Kano
Sokoto
Enugu
Bauchi
Maiduguri
Ibadan**

These broadcasts were delivered through stations such as: Wazobia FM, Vision FM, Dream FM, Splash FM, Freedom Radio, Caliphate Radio, Al-Ansar Radio. These stations collectively reached tens of millions of listeners.



WHAT THE NUMBER SHOWS

In 2025, the Nigeria Country Program reached nearly

59 million people,

primarily through radio and media campaigns focused on peacebuilding, religious tolerance, and conflict prevention.

At the community level, the program directly engaged nearly



14,000 participants,

particularly youth and community leaders, through training, mentoring, and mediation initiatives.

More than

2,400 mediators



were trained, helping resolve over

300 community conflicts.

Community-led initiatives also played an important role, reaching over

6,400

additional beneficiaries through

37 locally driven peacebuilding activities.



Chad Reach in 2025



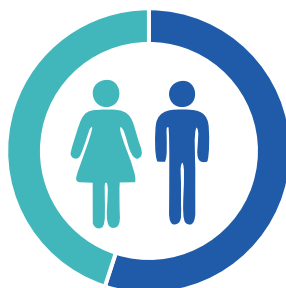
Coverage:

76 villages across
Ouaddaï, Sila, and
Wadi Fira provinces.



DIRECT PARTICIPANTS

Reached
9000
people



4,950
(55%)
Male

4,050
(45%)
Female

PEACE COMMITTEES

Reached
50
people



30
(60%)
Male

20
(40%)
Female

LOCAL CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

Reached
30
people



INDIRECT PARTICIPANTS

Reached
7000
people



30
(60%)
Male

20
(40%)
Female



PEACE

**our PROJECTS
and ACHIEVEMENT**

Strategic Innovations and Flagship Programs

SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND NIGERIA, FLAGSHIP PROJECTS



Impact Showcase

PROJECT 1: I-RENEW

Inclusive Religious Engagement in Nigeria Enhanced by Women

 Funder European Union (NDICI CRISIS)	 Duration Feb 2023- Jul 2025 (30 months)	 Geography Kaduna and Plateau States	 Partners DREP & FOMWAN
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OVERVIEW

Implemented over 30 months across Kaduna and Plateau States, I-RENEW strategically empowered women religious leaders, youth activists, and male faith leaders to transform inter-religious dynamics from a source of division into a foundation for collaboration. Implemented against the backdrop of the 2023 General Elections and volatile security conditions in Nigeria's Middle Belt, the project built a sustainable infrastructure for peace from the ground up – leaving behind empowered local champions, institutionalised dialogue platforms, and concrete policy outcomes.

KEY IMPACT NUMBERS

95.5% of women & youth believe they can make a positive difference	97.9% of trained participants achieved at least one advocacy goal	100% of trained male faith leaders demonstrated correct knowledge of women's rights & FoRB
81,500+ Social media engagements on peace content	72 Radio episodes of Common Ground Matters aired	850 University students sensitised on FoRB

HOW WE ACHIEVED IT: KEY INTERVENTIONS

Empowering Women and Youth as Peacebuilders

At the heart of I-RENEW was the formation and training of a **24**-person Project Cohort – **12** women religious leaders and **12** youth activists – drawn from both Kaduna and Plateau States. This cohort received intensive training on the Common Ground Approach (CGA) to Advocacy and Religious Engagement, equipping them with the tools to identify advocacy issues, facilitate interfaith dialogue across dividing lines, and develop non-adversarial strategies for change. The cohort facilitated **22** step-down learning sessions, cascading core principles of religious engagement to an additional **539** community members (**227 male, 312 female**) and creating a powerful multiplier effect throughout their communities.

Transforming Male Faith Leaders

Recognizing that gender-inclusive peace requires the buy-in of influential men, I-RENEW trained **30** male faith leaders on women's empowerment and FoRB. Post-training assessments revealed a **22.62%** knowledge gain. Leaders shifted from overlooking women's contributions in religious circles to actively creating opportunities for women's participation. By the project's end, **100%** of trained male religious leaders could correctly answer questions on women's rights and FoRB — surpassing the **70%** target by a full 30 percentage points.

Community-Based Initiatives That Built Everyday Trust

Twenty women- and youth-led community initiatives across Kaduna and Plateau served as powerful demonstrations of interfaith cooperation. These included installation of **12** solar streetlights across eight communities, rehabilitation of multiple boreholes providing clean water, upgrade of a Primary Health Care Centre in Miango, and provision of educational materials to secondary schools. By addressing shared community needs — regardless of faith — these initiatives reduced tensions over shared resources. The final evaluation found that **58%** of surveyed people in target areas reported collaborating across religious divides on a community initiative, building a practical foundation for sustained coexistence.

"We are overwhelmed with joy for the tremendous support you have brought to our community. This hospital serves as a common ground that brings us together. We believe it will greatly enhance unity among the people, regardless of religion."

— Community Member, Miango

Driving Policy Change Through Advocacy

Equipped with CGA-to-Advocacy training, the cohort conducted **28** high-level advocacy visits to faith leaders and policymakers. This sustained engagement produced concrete policy outcomes: the issuance of Plateau State Executive Order 003 addressing road blockages during worship — a community-identified flashpoint. Six actionable policy briefs were produced through Conflict-Sensitive Policymaking workshops with government directors, formally integrating community-driven solutions into government policy agendas.

Institutionalising Dialogue: The Plateau Youth Interfaith Forum (PYIF)

One of I-RENEW's most enduring legacies is the formal establishment and gubernatorial inauguration of the Plateau Youth Interfaith Forum (PYIF). Constituted with representatives from youth organizations including YOWICAN, NACOMYO, TEKAN, and FOMWAN, PYIF is co-chaired by a Christian and a Muslim, reflecting the very coexistence it seeks to promote. The Governor of Plateau State personally inaugurated PYIF, signaling strong state ownership. PYIF members received dedicated training on CGA to Advocacy and Religious Engagement, ensuring the forum is equipped to function as a permanent youth advisory body within the state's peace architecture. A formal organizational framework was also developed and handed to the Plateau State Government through the Commissioner for Information.

Media and Digital Outreach at Scale

I-RENEW deployed a comprehensive media strategy to shift public narratives. Seventy-two episodes of Common Ground Matters were broadcast across four radio stations in Kaduna and Plateau. Two hybrid radio town halls brought together women religious leaders, policymakers, and CSOs for live, streamed dialogue. The project produced and aired **500** Voices of Peace clips from community leaders and engaged **10** social media influencers who created **39** short viral videos generating over **81,500** engagements — likes, shares, and comments — demonstrating massive online reach and resonance.

SUSTAINABILITY AND LEGACY

- 01.** **Plateau Youth Interfaith Forum (PYIF):** A government-inaugurated, youth-led advisory body with a formal organisational framework — a permanent feature of Plateau's peace architecture.
- 02.** **Memorandum of Understanding with Kaduna State Government:** Formalising continued collaboration on FoRB structures and peace mechanisms.
- 03.** **28 trained cohort members:** Women, youth, and male faith leaders continuing to advocate through skills and networks built by the project.
- 04.** **Policy Briefs & Advocacy Plans:** Six policy briefs and advocacy strategies guiding ongoing engagement with state agencies.
- 05.** **Media Ecosystems:** Journalists, radio presenters, and social media influencers continue to produce conflict-sensitive FoRB content.
- 06.** **WhatsApp Networks:** Platforms for continuous dialogue among trained faith leaders and journalists, sustaining peer accountability and learning.

Transformative Human Stories

ISAAC BOBBAI: FROM DECADES OF RESENTMENT TO RECONCILIATION

Isaac Bobbai arrived at the I-RENEW Faith Leaders' training visibly uncomfortable around Muslim participants. His pain was rooted in personal history: in 1992, his parents suffered during a crisis in Narayi, Kaduna State, and 18 years later, his home was destroyed. For decades, Isaac harbored deep aversion. The training's sessions on conflict analysis and forgiveness — including a documentary showing two teenage girls from opposing faiths becoming best friends — shifted his perspective profoundly. Isaac learned that the actions of a few do not define an entire community. He left transformed, grateful for the opportunity to unlearn fear and begin the work of reconciliation.



RHODA SADUS: FROM AWARENESS TO ACTION

Rhoda Sadus, a legal practitioner and woman religious leader from Jos, emerged from I-RENEW's faith leader training as a community multiplier. Moved by the responsibility she felt as a religious leader, Rhoda organized a follow-up training session for her colleagues — spreading conflict-sensitive messaging skills further. Her story exemplifies how I-RENEW's investment in one champion reverberates through entire networks.

COMITAS

Contributing to the Mitigation of Conflict Over Natural Resources between Farmer and Herder Communities



Funder
European Union (NDICI
CRISIS)



Duration
Sep 2023 – Sep 2025
(24 months)



Geography
Adamawa & Taraba
States + FCT



Partners
IOM & Mercy Corps
Nigeria

OVERVIEW

COMITAS addressed one of Nigeria's most entrenched and deadly conflicts: the ongoing struggle between farming and herding communities over land, water, and natural resources in Adamawa and Taraba States. Over 24 months, Search for Common Ground worked with consortium partners IOM and Mercy Corps to establish robust community-level early warning and response systems, restore trust between farmers and herders, strengthen collaboration with state authorities, and shift public narratives through conflict-sensitive media. The project created a multi-tiered peacebuilding architecture — from village-level Community Response Networks to state-level Peace Architecture Dialogues — that has fundamentally changed how communities identify, communicate, and respond to conflict.

KEY IMPACT NUMBERS

87.2%

Of surveyed community members
express improved trust in authorities

94%

of trained EWER members demonstrate
improved knowledge & behaviour

95%

of community members report improved
intra- and inter-communal perceptions

32

Communities with improved early
warning access

226

Community Response Networks
Meetings held

6,070

Direct participants in mobile screening

HOW WE ACHIEVED IT: KEY INTERVENTIONS

Building a Pyramid of Peace: The Three-Tiered Architecture

Through the COMITAS project, Search established a three-tier structure that ensured information and responses could flow from the community LGA to the state level. At the base, Community Response Networks (CRNs) were established or reactivated in **32** communities — **22** existing and 10 new — each with at least **30** registered members comprising farmers, herders, women, youth, and community leaders. CRNs held **226** monthly meetings, building trust and tracking early warning signs. Above them, Community Security Architecture Dialogues (CSADs) in **9** LGAs

convened security agencies, traditional rulers, and community leaders to analyze and respond to signals reported by CRNs. Capping the architecture, Peace Architecture Dialogues (PADs) in Adamawa and Taraba brought together government ministries, security agencies, academia, and civil society across 34 monthly meetings — creating a state-level forum where community-generated evidence directly informed policy and security responses.

Early Warning That Saves Lives

Across the project's 32 communities, CRN members identified and responded to hundreds of early warning signs — from blocked cattle routes and crop destruction to kidnapping threats and inter-ethnic tensions. In one illustrative case in Gengle community, a CRN member successfully intercepted an armed group from a farming community that was mobilizing to attack a herder settlement, preventing what could have been a deadly reprisal. In Kodomti, Numan LGA, herders who previously feared entering the community can now freely conduct business — a direct result of sustained CRN dialogue and sensitization. In Taraba's Monkin communities, 50 military personnel were deployed after CRN advocacy brought the threat of kidnapping to the attention of authorities. These are not isolated cases; across all 32 communities, documented early warning responses show a consistent pattern: faster identification, calmer responses, and violence avoided.

"Since the entry of Search for Common Ground in Abbare B, there has been significant change and cordial relationship between farmers and herders in the community. Most neighbouring communities have been asking what has happened here, because there has been peaceful coexistence between us and the herders."
— Community Leader, Abbare B, Taraba State

Reopening Markets, Cattle Routes, and Livelihoods

Beyond conflict prevention, COMITAS restored the economic fabric torn apart by years of violence. The Gerbu market in Girei LGA — closed for eight years following violent farmer-herder conflict — was reopened after CRN and CSAD members collaboratively worked to restore peace in the Tambo community. Cattle routes that had been blocked across multiple communities were reopened through mediation, enabling herders to access water points and grazing areas without destroying farmlands. In one instance, a farmer who had encroached on a cattle route by 50 meters agreed to return to the status quo after dialogue. The economic impact of these restorations is immense, as markets and cattle routes are the economic arteries of rural life in Adamawa and Taraba.

Research, Evidence, and Policy Advocacy: AFFAHR & TAFFAHR

COMITAS went beyond community peace to establish evidence-based advocacy platforms. The Adamawa Forum for Farmer and Herder Relations (AFFAHR) and Taraba Forum for Farmer and Herder Relations (TAFFAHR) convened academics, policymakers, traditional rulers, and civil society for interdisciplinary research and policy engagement. Both forums commissioned and completed research on climate change and resource-based conflict — generating findings that revealed how erratic rainfall, land degradation, and water scarcity are intensifying farmer-herder tensions. These research findings were validated by external stakeholders and translated into two policy briefs — one per state — formally presented to government. The TAFFAHR research directly contributed to advocacy for the establishment of a Taraba State Peace Commission, which was subsequently created as the Bureau for Peace and Conflict Management (BPCM).

"In an ordinary situation, the farmer and herder live peacefully but conflicts emanate as a result of disparity of interests. Search must be commended for introducing a hierarchy of structures from the CRNs up to AFFAHR."
— Calvin Pelene, CSAD Chairman, Numan

Conflict-Sensitive Media and Social Media Fellowship

Media plays a decisive role in either inflaming or cooling farmer-herder tensions. COMITAS trained **40** media professionals across Adamawa and Taraba on Common Ground Journalism and conflict-sensitive reporting. The flagship radio program Wurro Lafiya aired **178** episodes in Hausa and Fulfulde across six radio stations, reaching the primary target audience of farmers and herders with themes including land disputes, water access, drug abuse, and the need for dialogue. Mobile cinema screenings of the film Gambo da Sambo in **32** communities reached **6,070** direct participants, sparking reflective discussions on root causes and community-driven solutions. A social media fellowship engaged **30** youth fellows who created and disseminated conflict-sensitive digital content, building a generation of digital peacebuilders in Adamawa and Taraba.

Capacity Building at Every Level

COMITAS delivered a comprehensive suite of capacity-building interventions across the project's full two-year lifecycle. These included EWER training for **514** community focal persons and LGA mobilizers, advanced conflict transformation and dialogue training for **66** LGA and state-level stakeholders, a Training of Trainers for **66** focal persons who subsequently facilitated step-down training in **22** communities, sustainability and resource mobilization training for **72** platform members, and project management and grant proposal writing training for community leaders. Across all trainings, pre- and post-test analyses consistently documented knowledge gains of **21-36%**, demonstrating the effectiveness of Search's participatory training methodologies.

SUSTAINABILITY AND LEGACY

What Remains After the Project

- 01. Bureau for Peace and Conflict Management (BPCM), Taraba State:** A government institution established as a direct result of COMITAS advocacy — permanently institutionalizing conflict management at the state level.
- 02. Memoranda of Understanding with Local Governments:** Signed MoUs ensuring local government commitment to sustaining CRN and CSAD activities beyond the project.
- 03. 32 Active CRNs and 9 CSADs:** Community-owned peacebuilding platforms equipped with meeting materials, trained membership, and action plans.
- 04. PAD registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission:** Formal legal recognition enabling the Peace Architecture Dialogue to independently attract funding and partnerships.
- 05. Two State-Level Research Reports and Policy Briefs:** Evidence base for continued advocacy on climate, migration, and resource conflict.
- 06. LGA-Funded Peace Structures:** Guyuk LGA Chairman allocated N100,000 to run CSAD activities independently — a marker of genuine local ownership.

Transformative Human Stories

HERDERS HELPING FARMERS HARVEST:

Gerreng's New Reality: In Gerreng community, Girei LGA, a scene that would have been unthinkable before COMITAS is now routine. Herders are actively assisting farmers to harvest their crops before allowing their cattle to graze the fields. This reversal of a longstanding conflict dynamic speaks volumes about the depth of relationship change that COMITAS has catalyzed in its communities.



FROM HOSTILE TERRITORY TO SAFE SPACE:

Kodomti LGA: For years, the Kodomti community in Demsa LGA was characterized by violent clashes that made herders afraid to enter. Under COMITAS, herders have found safe spaces to dialogue with farmers. As the community leader noted: they no longer feel threatened entering the community or stopped from performing their legal businesses. This transformation was achieved not through security deployment, but through sustained CRN dialogue, mediation, and joint problem-solving.



NIGERIAN YOUTH CARE

Inclusive Religious Engagement in Nigeria Enhanced by Women



Funder
U.S. Bureau of
Democracy, Human
Rights & Labour



Duration
Sep 2023 – Sep 2025
(24 months)



Geography
Bauchi, Plateau &
Gombe States



Partners
Young Leaders Network
(YLN)

OVERVIEW

Nigerian Youth CARE positioned young people as the central architects of sustainable peace in Bauchi, Plateau, and Gombe States. Over 24 months, Search for Common Ground and the Young Leaders Network (YLN) empowered diverse youth to advance Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) through a dual strategy: offline youth advocacy and institution-building through the groundbreaking Bauchi Youth Religious Advocacy Network (BYRAN), and online digital peacebuilding through a trained network of micro-influencers, community stewards, and digital campaigns. The result: Bauchi State now has its first unified youth platform for FoRB advocacy, and over 500,000 people have been reached with positive interfaith content online.

KEY IMPACT NUMBERS

90%

Youth who participated report increased influence over the state-level policy environment

95%

of participating youth organisations report operating more efficiently

80%

of government stakeholders say BYRAN's advocacy informed their understanding of FoRB

500K+

Impressions from digital peace campaigns

570+

Original content pieces created by micro-influencers

100%

of peer learning participants built at least

one new strategic relationship

HOW WE ACHIEVED IT: KEY INTERVENTIONS

Establishing BYRAN: Bauchi's First Youth FoRB Platform

Before Nigerian Youth CARE, young people in Bauchi State had no platform for networking, mentorship, or coordinated advocacy on FoRB. The project changed that fundamentally. In April 2024, BYRAN was formally established at a two-day convening of 22 youth-led CSOs, uniting diverse organisations — including the Network of Women with Disabilities — under a shared mission. The network was introduced to the innovative Youth-360 approach, equipping them with skills in identity and conflict analysis, social media advocacy, and peacebuilding strategy. BYRAN then held 16 consecutive monthly meetings across Bauchi, consistently gathering 30–45 participants from government ministries, security agencies, faith organisations, and community groups. These gatherings transformed BYRAN from a newly formed group into a recognised and respected platform for policy dialogue.

Technical Capacity Building That Created Institutional Change

Three specialized technical capacity-building workshops strengthened the organizations within BYRAN. Financial Management training equipped **58** participants with skills in record-keeping, budgeting, and procurement. Program Implementation and M&E training reached **29** program managers, improving project design and evaluation capabilities. Organizational Leadership and Governance training engaged **44** CSO leaders and board members on succession planning, board effectiveness, and sustainability. The organizational impact was profound: the Ganvi Women and Youth Empowerment Initiative developed **27** core organizational policies. Partners Global Initiative successfully submitted **10** independent grant proposals and won new funding. The final evaluation confirmed that **95%** of participating youth organizations reported operating more efficiently and effectively as a direct result of project engagement.

The Hada Kan Alumman Initiative: Bridging Yelwa and Gudum

Through a participatory grantmaking process, BYRAN members identified and selected their flagship community initiative: Hada Kan Alumman Yelwa Da Gudum — bringing together the communities of Yelwa and Gudum in Bauchi. These communities had been marked by interfaith suspicion and tension. BYRAN implemented four interfaith dialogues, two intra-faith dialogue sessions reaching **190** participants, two sports-for-peace football matches, and two participatory community theatre performances titled Unity in a Diverse Community that reached **328** audience members. Eight community advocacy visits and **19** state-level advocacy engagements were also conducted. The results: two standing **15**-member interfaith peace committees established in both communities, co-chaired by a Christian and a Muslim — concrete, community-owned structures for sustaining dialogue long after the project ends.

"People should be careful when it comes to religion; it is something that should be in the heart. We must love one another — humanity comes first."

— Bayaran Anguwan Rimi, Community Elder

Intergenerational Mentorship: The Advisory Body Model

To bridge generational wisdom and youth energy, the project established BYRAN's **20**-member Advisory Body, comprising **10** veteran religious activists from Bauchi and **10** youth peace activists from Plateau. The Advisory Body mentored BYRAN members through regular coaching sessions, providing experienced guidance on advocacy planning, stakeholder engagement, and resilience. The effectiveness of this model was confirmed by the final evaluation: **74%** of participating adult mentors affirmed that youth participation significantly contributes to peacebuilding processes. The intergenerational exchange also produced policy outcomes — Advisory Body guidance helped BYRAN develop a draft bill for the establishment of a Bauchi State Peace, Security, and Conflict Mitigation Forum.

High-Level Advocacy That Secured Institutional Commitments

BYRAN conducted 10 high-level advocacy visits to key government institutions — including the Ministry of Internal Security, Ministry of Religious Affairs, NDLEA, NHRC, NSCDC, Nigeria Police Force, Ministry of Youth and Sports, and National Directorate of Employment. Each visit was grounded in BYRAN's evidence-based policy roadmap. The results were significant: the Ministry of Internal Security received and accepted a memorandum and draft bill for a Bauchi State Peace and Conflict Mitigation Forum; NDLEA committed to joint sensitization programs on drug abuse as a conflict driver; NHRC pledged technical support for FoRB-related violations; and the Ministry of Religious Affairs committed to establishing interfaith dialogue and peace committees. Four BYRAN members were appointed to local security councils, giving youth voices a direct channel into early warning and response systems.

Building a Digital Peacebuilding Ecosystem

Nigerian Youth CARE's second objective was to shift online narratives on FoRB across three states. This began with two participatory social media listening and analysis workshops for 38 youth influencers, equipping them with tools like CrowdTangle and Phoenix to identify and counter harmful narratives. Content creation training for 22 micro-influencers taught responsible storytelling using Canva, KlingAI, and other digital tools. Three quarterly virtual exchanges connected Bauchi micro-influencers with national-level digital advocates for peer mentorship. Two exposure tours to peacebuilding communities in Plateau State grounded influencers' online advocacy in lived experience — 100% of participating micro-influencers cited actionable takeaways they incorporated into their content.

The results were measurable and remarkable: 24 trained micro-influencers created and disseminated over 570 original content pieces under campaigns including #YouthAdvocate4FoRB and #NigeriaYouthCARE, generating more than 500,000 impressions and 10,000+ direct engagements across Facebook, X, TikTok, Instagram, and LinkedIn. The final evaluation confirmed a measurable shift in the information environment: 71% of consulted social media users reported exposure to positive or constructive FoRB content in the past six months.

Online Community Stewards: Making Digital Spaces Safer

To protect online communities from misinformation and hate speech, Nigerian Youth CARE trained 21 Online Community Stewards — administrators of WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram groups — on conflict-sensitive moderation, fact-checking, and digital safety. A series of Ask Me Anything expert webinars on topics from hate speech mitigation to cybersecurity reached 344 participants across four sessions. The impact was direct: 90% of trained community stewards reported feeling more confident in fostering safer online spaces, and 90% could demonstrate at least two specific lessons they had integrated into their moderation work.

SUSTAINABILITY AND LEGACY

What Remains After the Project

- 01.** **BYRAN — Bauchi State's First Youth FoRB Advocacy Network:** The formal registration process and government handover are underway, positioning BYRAN as an autonomous institution with a sustainability plan aligned with the Bauchi State Government's My Bauchi Plan 2.0.
- 02.** **Two Interfaith Peace Committees in Yelwa and Gudum:** Community-owned structures co-chaired by Christian and Muslim leaders — sustaining dialogue at the grassroots level.
- 03.** **Four BYRAN Members Appointed to Security Councils:** Youth voices now embedded in early warning and response systems at the local level.
- 04.** **A Network of 24 Micro-Influencers and 21 Community Stewards:** Independently driving digital peace campaigns and safer online environments across Bauchi, Plateau, and Gombe.
- 05.** **Draft Bill for Bauchi State Peace, Security, and Conflict Mitigation Forum:** Submitted to and accepted by the Ministry of Internal Security — a policy achievement that could permanently institutionalise peacebuilding in Bauchi.

COLLECTIVE IMPACT ACROSS THE THREE FLAGSHIP PROJECTS

POLICY AND GOVERNANCE	COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE	PEOPLE TRANSFORMED
Plateau State Executive Order 003 issued addressing road blockages during worship (I-RENEW)	32 Community Response Networks active in Adamawa & Taraba	539 community members reached through step-down learning sessions (I-RENEW)
Taraba Bureau for Peace and Conflict Management established (COMITAS)	Plateau Youth Interfaith Forum inaugurated by State Governor	850 university students sensitized on FoRB across 10 tertiary institutions
Draft Bauchi State Peace Forum bill accepted by Ministry of Internal Security (Youth CARE)	4 Interfaith Peace Committees established in Yelwa, Gudum, Kaduna & Plateau	500+ trained across EWER, conflict transformation & journalism (COMITAS)
MoUs signed with Kaduna & Plateau State Governments and 9 LGA Chairmen	Gerbu Market — closed for 8 years — reopened after peace restoration	1,500+ direct participants in Nigerian Youth CARE across 3 states

Transformative Human Stories

DORIS ALI: FROM FEAR TO FRIENDSHIP

Doris Ali grew up in deep personal trauma — her family home was nearly burned down, and her father directly threatened, during religious conflict. Before BYRAN, she believed people from other faiths were 'bad people.' Through structured dialogue, training, and peer exchange, Doris transformed this fear into empathy and leadership. As BYRAN's Public Relations Officer, she introduced the practice of allowing individuals to pray according to their own faith during meetings — normalizing diversity and mutual respect. Today, affectionately known as the 'preacher of empathy,' Doris counts as friends those she once feared.



AMINU GUYABA: FROM COMMUNITY SKEPTICISM TO DIGITAL PEACE AMBASSADOR

When Aminu began posting FoRB content online, community members questioned his motives — some accused him of attempting religious conversion. Even family members confronted him. Rather than retreat, Aminu deepened his engagement with the project's training and exposure visits. He witnessed Muslims and Christians living together peacefully in Plateau communities, which reshaped his worldview. Today, widely known as Jakar Zaman Lafiya (Ambassador of Peace), Aminu uses his digital platforms to amplify stories of coexistence and counter religious misinformation — a testament to how the right support can convert skepticism into sustained peace advocacy.

SHARED APPROACHES ACROSS THE THREE PROJECTS

SEARCH CAMEROON



YOUNG CAMEROON

Youth Organisations' Upraised Network for Growth and Peace in Cameroon



Funder
European Union (NDICI
CRISIS)



Duration
Feb 2023 – Jan 2025
(24 months)



Geography
All 10 Regions,
Cameroon



Partners
SEARCH & Local Youth
Corner (LOYOC)

OVERVIEW

The YOUNG Cameroon project positioned young people as the central architects of sustainable peace across all 10 regions of Cameroon. Over 24 months, Search for Common Ground (SEARCH) and Local Youth Corner Cameroon (LOYOC) empowered 50 youth-led civil society organisations to advance peacebuilding through a dual strategy: strengthening institutional capacities and coordination between youth-led organisations, and increasing youth participation and leadership in peace and security policy at both community and national levels.

The project adopted a phased approach guided by SEARCH's Youth 360 model and LOYOC's extensive grassroots experience. It worked across conflict-affected areas — including the Northwest and Southwest regions — navigating significant operational challenges including weekly lockdowns and bureaucratic bottlenecks to deliver sustained impact.

The result: Cameroon now has its first-ever collaborative National Action Plan (NAP) on Youth, Peace and Security — shaped directly by youth — and a national coalition of 50 youth-led CSOs that will continue to advocate, coordinate, and implement community peace initiatives well beyond the project's close.

KEY IMPACT NUMBERS

5000+

Young people directly reached across the 10 regions of Cameroon

50,000+

Young people estimated to have benefited from community based peace initiatives through seed grants

50

Youth-led CSOs trained, networked, and operationalised within the national YPS coalition — one from each of Cameroon's 10 regions (5 per region)

1

National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security — developed with direct youth input and pending government validation

10

Women-led organisations that received dedicated capacity-building under the WINS partnership

807

Individuals directly reached through community-level peacebuilding initiatives — 519 women (64%) and 288 men

86.7%

Of community initiative participants were under the age of 35

30+

Community-level peacebuilding initiatives implemented through seed grant funding

HOW WE ACHIEVED IT: KEY INTERVENTIONS

1. National Consultation and Baseline Study

The project began with a comprehensive baseline study and national consultations across all **10** regions, engaging a diverse sample of **421** youth. Informed by LOYOC's earlier research and aligned with SEARCH's Grounded Accountability Model (GAM), the study combined document review, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions. Key findings revealed that approximately **3,500** CSOs operate in Cameroon — around **500** focused on YPS — but that most youth organisations were active at regional level while the majority of conflicts affecting youth occurred at divisional and sub-divisional levels. The study also confirmed a significant gender imbalance in youth organisation leadership, which shaped the project's subsequent gender-mainstreaming activities.

2. Operational Capacity Building for 50 Youth-Led CSOs

Ten three-day Operational Capacity Building Workshops were held in September and October 2023 across all **10** regions, targeting five youth-led organisations per region. Each organisation sent two representatives — one from programmes and one from finance — ensuring both strategic and operational dimensions were addressed. Training covered fundraising, project management, project design, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation, and advocacy. Seven women-led organisations participated. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with participants citing the training as directly responsive to their operational challenges.

3. Common Ground Approach (CGA) and CGA for Advocacy Training

Two-day training sessions delivered to **60** youth organisations and **20** government focal points from the Ministry of Youth Affairs (MINJEC) across multiple regions. Sessions were fully bilingual (English and French) and introduced SEARCH's CGA and CGA for Advocacy (CGA4A) methodologies. Government officials participated alongside youth CSO representatives, building essential synergies and demonstrating institutional buy-in. Each participant committed to conducting stepdown training sessions in their communities, creating a multiplier effect.

4. Stepdown CGA Training Across 10 Regions

Building on the central CGA training, **200** young people (20 per region) participated in one-day CGA stepdown sessions between August 1 and 24, 2024. Regions included South (Ebolowa), West (Bafoussam), Littoral (Douala), Far North, North, Adamawa, and Centre (Yaoundé). Participants were then tasked with disseminating the methodology in their own communities through dialogue sessions, peer discussions, and workshops — creating a cascading reach into grassroots networks.

5. Capacity Building for Women-Led CSOs

In December 2023, a dedicated workshop trained **21 women from 15 women-led organisations**, primarily from the conflict-affected Northwest and Southwest regions. Coordinated with SEARCH's WINS (Women in New Security) project and attended by representatives from the Ministry of Women Affairs, the training focused on conflict sensitivity, CGA, CGA4A advocacy, inclusivity, and cultural competence. Participants conducted restitution sessions in their communities afterwards, one of whom — a woman from the Mbororo Fulani community — went on to sensitize women and girls in her community on participation in decision-making in line with UNSCR 1325.

6. Support and Learning Sessions for Young Women in Conflict-Affected Regions

Two dedicated one-day learning sessions were held for young women in conflict-affected regions: one in Maroua (**15 participants from Far North and North regions**) and one in Buea (**15 participants from Southwest and Northwest regions**). Sessions provided space for collective reflection on the challenges and opportunities young women face in YPS and WPS contexts, and produced a set of concrete recommendations on improving young women's participation in peacebuilding — serving as an advocacy tool for policy change at local and national levels.

7. Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on YPS

In December 2023, LOYOC organised the first Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Youth, Peace and Security in Douala, with support from the Regional Delegate of Youth Affairs. The **27-person dialogue — 51.9% women** — brought together youth organisations, local councils, development partners, traditional authorities, and religious leaders. It served as the foundational platform for shaping the emerging National Action Strategy on YPS, deepening stakeholder understanding of youth's role in peacebuilding, and building the cross-sectoral relationships essential for coalition formation.

8. Establishment of the YPS Coalition and Resource Centre

A national youth coalition of **50 CSOs from all 10 regions** was formally established and operationalised through LOYOC's Youth Peace and Security (YPS) Secretariat, led by a dedicated Secretariat Manager. Monthly coalition meetings provided a safe, structured space for youth leaders to collaborate, report on activities, and build mutual support — free from government presence. To support this, LOYOC launched the YPS Resource Centre at its Yaoundé headquarters: a physical and virtual hub for resource sharing, capacity building, and networking. Over **200** young people accessed the resource centre during the project period.

9. National YPS Colloquium and Development of the National Action Plan

A three-day National Colloquium held from November 20–23, 2024 at the International Relations Institute Campus brought together **300+** stakeholders — including 50 technical experts and youth leaders from all **10** regions — to shape Cameroon's National Action Plan on YPS. Coalition members played an active role, contributing insights from their community-level work. Youth representatives proposed key additions to the draft NAP, including mental health programmes for conflict-affected youth, stronger gender-sensitive approaches, increased youth roles in decision-making, and strategies to address root socioeconomic drivers of conflict. The inception report was finalised; government validation is expected by February 2025.

10. Regional Advocacy Meetings and High-Level Stakeholder Engagement

10 regional advocacy meetings were held in November 2024, led by BYRAN coalition members with support from LOYOC's regional focal points. Meetings engaged MINJEC regional delegates, local council authorities, traditional authorities, and key CSOs. MINJEC, GIZ, SEARCH, and LOYOC also held a working dinner with members of parliament — resulting in a public commitment from the Parliamentary Network for Youth and Child Advocacy to raise YPS in parliament. The Minister of Youth Affairs personally received LOYOC and youth CSO leaders to hear their perspectives on peace and security.

11. Seed-Funded Community-Based Peace Initiatives

10 community-level initiatives were selected through a competitive seed grant process and implemented across all regions in November 2024. Initiatives ranged from football peace matches and intergenerational friendship events (East region), Peace Theatre radio podcasts (West), cultural jamborees (Far North), anti-hate-speech campaigns in schools and streets (Littoral/Douala), building common ground between students and teachers through peace clubs (Northwest), and radio sensitization on drug prevention (Southwest). An estimated **50,000** young people benefited, and the creation of sustainable peace clubs in schools was a key legacy outcome.

12. Youth Protection, Safeguarding and Reporting Mechanisms

A two-day Training of Trainers on safeguarding and protection was held in July 2024 for **10** LOYOC staff directly involved in the project. This was followed by one-day safeguarding awareness trainings for **102** coalition members across all **10** regions in August 2024. A dedicated LOYOC safeguarding focal point was designated, and a phone-based safe-line reporting mechanism was established — allowing project participants to report protection concerns directly to LOYOC and SEARCH. The structure ensured each region had dedicated safety focal points embedded within the coalition.

"According to the project's design, the goal is to encourage young people to participate in national peace and security issues. It is evident today that young people are completely disinterested in politics and decision-making. This project is giving young people a second chance to start thinking about life, security, and peace considerations."
— Youth Participant, Southern Region

SUSTAINABILITY AND LEGACY

What Remains After the Project

01.

A National YPS Coalition of 50 Youth-Led CSOs: The coalition established under YOUNG Cameroon has its own Secretariat, Resource Centre, and monthly meeting structure — providing the institutional infrastructure for continued coordination, advocacy, and peer learning across all 10 regions of Cameroon, independently of project funding.

02.

Cameroon's First National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security: The draft NAP — shaped directly by youth voices through the colloquium process — is pending government validation. Once adopted, it will serve as the national framework for institutionalising youth participation in peace and security for years to come. The government has pledged to continue involving trained youth in the NAP's implementation and monitoring.

03.

LOYOC Admitted to the National YPS Commission: LOYOC's formal admission to MINJEC's National YPS Commission gives the coalition a permanent seat at the table in national peace and security policy processes — ensuring that youth civil society remains embedded in government-led YPS efforts beyond the project.

04.

Peace Clubs in Schools Across 10 Regions: A key structural legacy of the community-based initiatives is the creation of peace clubs in schools across the country — sustainable grassroots platforms for sensitisation, dialogue, and social cohesion that will continue without external support.

05.

Parliamentary Commitment to YPS: The public commitment by the Parliamentary Network for Youth and Child Advocacy to raise YPS in parliament creates a new institutional avenue for youth peace advocacy at the legislative level — a direct result of the project's high-level engagement strategy.

06.

A Trained Network of 200+ Youth Peacebuilders and 50 CSO Leaders: The individuals trained in CGA, advocacy, organisational management, and safeguarding carry these skills forward independently. The project's emphasis on stepdown training ensures that knowledge continues to cascade through networks and communities long after the project's close.

07.

A YPS Resource Centre at LOYOC Headquarters: The physical and virtual resource centre — already accessed by over 200 young people — remains operational, providing a hub for knowledge-sharing, training materials, and networking for youth peacebuilders across Cameroon.

THE COMMON GROUND APPROACH

All three projects trained participants to identify shared interests across dividing lines — focusing on what communities have in common rather than what divides them.



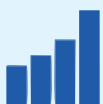
Inclusive Participation

Women, youth, and marginalised groups were deliberately centred — not as passive beneficiaries but as active agents of change in every project.



Evidence-Based Programming

All projects began with conflict assessments and baselines, and were continuously adapted based on monitoring data and community feedback.



Local Ownership for Sustainability

Platforms, committees, and forums established under all three projects were designed to be community-owned from the start — with government endorsement and independent registration processes underway.



Media as Peacebuilding

All three projects used radio, digital media, and social media to shift narratives, reaching audiences far beyond direct participants and embedding peace messages in everyday discourse.

Transformative Human Stories

A YOUTH CSO LEADER: FROM BURNOUT TO RENEWED PURPOSE

A leader of a youth-led CSO in Cameroon arrived at the Operational Capacity Building Training on the verge of giving up. Struggling to retain volunteers and manage her organisation's operations, she had begun to question whether to continue at all. The training — delivered by young facilitators who shared real-life tools and examples — reignited her sense of purpose. In her own words: "This training has helped me see where we were failing. It has been hard for me to even keep my volunteers. At times I felt like I should stop doing this job and find something else. I was inspired to see that the trainers were young and shared real-life examples and tools on how to keep an organization running. The organizers should be proud of their work; it is great for the future of youth-led CSOs."



A MBORORO FULANI WOMAN: SENSITISING THE MARGINALISED

A participant from the Mbororo Fulani community — one of Cameroon's most historically marginalised groups — attended the Women-Led CSO capacity-building workshop in December 2023. What she took back was not just skills, but a mission. Following the training, she began sensitizing women and girls in her community on the importance of participating in decision-making at community, regional, and national levels, directly referencing UNSCR 1325. Her story illustrates how targeted investment in women from marginalised communities creates a ripple effect far beyond the training room.

SEARCH CHAD



RESPECCT

Résilience Économique et Sociale des Populations de l'Est face aux Conflits et Changements Climatiques au Tchad



Funder
European Union (NDICI
AFRICA/2022/435-662)



Duration



Geography
Sila, Ouaddai, Wadi Fira —
Eastern Chad



Partners
Concern Worldwide (lead),
IRC, Search for Common
Ground

OVERVIEW

The RESPECCT programme aims to strengthen, in the short, medium and long term, the resilience of communities affected by forced displacement, climate shocks and intercommunal conflicts in Eastern Chad. It is implemented by a consortium comprising Concern Worldwide (lead coordinator), the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Search for Common Ground (SFCG), operating across three provinces: Sila, Ouaddai and Wadi Fira.

The programme is structured around three complementary results: ensuring the most vulnerable populations can access resources to meet their basic needs in crisis situations (Result 1); strengthening the economic and environmental resilience of households (Result 2); and building the capacities and systems for managing, preventing and transforming inter- and intra-communal conflicts, with specific attention to gender-based violence (GBV) and gender inequalities (Result 3).

The reporting period covered by this document (February 2023 – July 2024) corresponds to the start-up, geographic and community targeting, and activity initiation phases across the three provinces. Key activities – particularly in conflict analysis, conflict sensitivity, and initial cash distributions – were launched despite delays linked to administrative procedures and the complex security context of the region.

KEY IMPACT NUMBERS

HOW WE ACHIEVED IT: KEY INTERVENTIONS

1. Conflict Analysis and Results-Sharing Workshops

From 3 to 16 April 2024, Search for Common Ground organised workshops in the three provinces to present the results of the 2023 in-depth conflict analysis to local authorities and communities. The sessions allowed participants to validate their lived experiences, deepen their understanding of local conflict dynamics, and co-design interventions adapted to their realities. **A total of 60 people participated (20 per province)**, including local authorities and partners. These workshops established a shared foundation of knowledge that informed all subsequent programme activities and strengthened community ownership of the analytical process.

2. Conflict Sensitivity Focal Group Meetings in the 3 Provinces

In advance of the Crisis Modifier emergency response in Sila Province at Kerfi, Search conducted a rapid context update. The first conflict sensitivity focal group meetings took place in April 2024 across the **3** provinces. Composed of **23** focal points including **6** women, these groups discussed major contextual shifts — notably rising tensions between the Dadjo and Mouro communities in Kerfi over agricultural land — and collected up-to-date field data to allow the programme to adapt its interventions in real time.

3. Conflict Sensitivity Training for Consortium Field Teams

From 8 to 24 February 2024, Search for Common Ground delivered conflict sensitivity training to consortium field teams across the three provinces (Sila, Ouaddai, Wadi Fira). A complementary session for senior staff from all consortium organisations was held in N'Djamena from 8 to 9 July 2024. **A total of 84 people were trained (including 18 women)**. Training covered conflict analysis tools (problem tree, actor mapping), the five principles of conflict sensitivity (participation, impartiality, transparency, respect and accountability), and the steps for integrating the conflict sensitivity approach into the RESPECCT programme cycle. Pre/post-test scores recorded an average improvement of **44.5%**.

4. Conflict Snapshot Across the 3 Provinces

From 20 June to 23 July 2024, Search carried out the Conflict Snapshot — a rapid analysis method designed to provide real-time data on key conflict dynamics identified during the 2023 in-depth analysis. **A total of 360 quantitative surveys and 17 qualitative surveys (7 focus group discussions and 10 key informant interviews)** were conducted. The study identified tensions linked to mutual resource accusations, perceived inequalities in aid distribution, and social pressures between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. Recommendations from the Conflict Snapshot directly shaped programme adaptations — including more transparent communication on selection criteria, training for complaint management mechanism members, and the creation of women's cooperatives.

5. Strategic Conflict Sensitivity Focal Points Workshop in Abeche

From 29 to 30 October 2024, Search convened the conflict sensitivity focal points from all three provinces in Abeche for a strategic workshop. The objective was to establish a functional structure for managing the focal groups — defining roles, responsibilities, communication channels and information-sharing mechanisms — and to deepen participants' understanding of antagonistic versus collaborative approaches, as well as the impact of identity on conflict dynamics. The workshop resulted in the appointment of group leads per province and the definition of a clear communication channel for inter-provincial information flow.

6. Geographic and Community Targeting

During the reporting period, IRC and Concern teams engaged the geographic and community targeting process across the three provinces. Joint IRC-Concern field missions were conducted — including in Sila Province in July 2024 — to share information and launch targeting activities with administrative authorities. Targeting was based on the Household Economy Approach (HEA) methodology and inclusive vulnerability criteria, with particular attention to elderly persons, people with disabilities, widows, GBV survivors, pregnant and breastfeeding women, and households without active members or productive assets.

7. Unconditional Cash Distributions

The first rounds of unconditional cash transfers to the most vulnerable households were initiated under Result 1. Each distribution was officially launched by local authorities, ensuring legitimacy and transparency. Monitoring mechanisms included Distribution Monitoring (DM) during distributions and Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) two weeks after the first transfer — allowing the programme to identify issues and adjust subsequent distributions. PDM data confirmed strong beneficiary satisfaction with the distribution process.

8. Crisis Modifier Emergency Response in Kerfi (Sila Province)

Following a rapid context update in Kerfi — which identified an influx of refugees, a sharp rise in the cost of living due to poor rainfall, a fire at the main market causing economic losses, and intercommunal conflicts between the Dadjo and Mourro communities over natural resources — a Crisis Modifier emergency response was activated. This response demonstrated the programme's capacity to adapt in real time to emerging crises, drawing directly on the early warning system strengthened under the programme.

9. General Consortium Staff Induction

In July 2024, a general induction for all consortium staff was organised in Abeche with the support of the Consortium Coordination Unit (CCU). The session ensured that all personnel across the three member organisations fully understood the programme's objectives and were familiar with each organisation's safeguarding policies. It strengthened team cohesion and built a shared understanding of common procedures — essential preconditions for harmonised and effective programme implementation.

10. Engagement with Authorities and External Partners

The programme built close collaborative relationships with local authorities and state technical services throughout the reporting period. Concern's Early Warning System (EWS) strategy was presented to SISAAP staff in N'Djamena in July 2024 for validation and endorsement. The programme also coordinated with UNHCR to obtain lists of highly vulnerable refugees, with WFP during cash distribution launches in Wadi Fira, and with the PARCA project to avoid double assistance in shared villages. The National Commission for the Reception and Reintegration of Refugees (CNARR) was also briefed on programme activities.

"This training made me realise that objective criteria alone do not guarantee the success or acceptance of our interventions. In our emergency activities, we rely almost entirely on the objectivity of our actions. But now I see that we need more than that. We need to be transparent — to communicate widely about what we intend to do for the community. We need to communicate with them first, so they understand before any intervention takes place. This will make them feel involved, and they will take ownership of the action much more readily."
— Participant at the conflict sensitivity training, N'Djamena — July 2024

SUSTAINABILITY AND LEGACY

What Remains After the Project

- 01.** A Conflict Sensitivity Focal Point Network Across 3 Provinces: Trained, structured and equipped with clear roles and responsibilities, these focal points represent a durable community-level infrastructure for conflict monitoring and early warning — one that will continue to function independently of direct consortium activities.
- 02.** A Strengthened and Nationally Validated Early Warning System (EWS): The EWS strategy developed by Concern and endorsed by SISAAP in N'Djamena is embedded within Chad's national early warning system — ensuring that the mechanisms established by RESPECCT will continue to feed into state structures beyond the project's lifespan.
- 03.** Conflict Data and Analysis Shared with and Owned by Communities: The in-depth conflict analysis and Conflict Snapshot — presented to and validated by local authorities and communities — constitute a shared knowledge base on conflict dynamics across the three provinces, useful to all future development and humanitarian interventions in the zone.

04.

Field Teams Transformed by the Conflict Sensitivity Approach: The 84 trained staff across the three consortium organisations have internalised conflict sensitivity reflexes applicable to all their current and future programmes — creating a multiplier effect that extends well beyond the RESPECCT programme itself.

05.

Inclusive and Transparent Community Targeting Structures: The targeting committees and accountability mechanisms established in intervention villages are participatory structures that strengthen local governance and community trust in NGO interventions — a foundation for sustained engagement and programme acceptance.

06.

A Strengthened Partnership with National Civil Society Organisations: The due diligence assessment of 13 national organisations and the selection of 3 partners for Result 3 lays the groundwork for a meaningful transfer of peacebuilding and conflict management expertise to Chadian civil society — building local institutional capacity that will outlast the programme.

Transformative Human Stories

FROM OBJECTIVITY TO COMMUNITY SENSITIVITY

A participant at the conflict sensitivity training held in N'Djamena in July 2024 shared a fundamental professional realisation: before the training, his approach to emergency activities had been almost entirely based on the objectivity of technical criteria. The training led him to understand that transparency and communication with communities — before any intervention takes place — are just as essential as technical standards. This shift in professional posture, replicable across all 84 trained staff, illustrates how targeted capacity building can permanently change the way field teams approach their interactions with the communities they serve.



BUILDING BRIDGES ACROSS COMMUNITIES

Following the strategic workshop in Abeche in October 2024, the conflict sensitivity focal points from the three provinces came to a shared realisation — through exercises on antagonistic versus collaborative approaches — that despite their differences, people always share commonalities that can be mobilised to resolve conflict. This insight, experienced collectively by 24 participants representing communities with different histories and tensions, lays the groundwork for a network of community-level relays capable of defusing tensions proactively and feeding timely information back to programme teams in real time.

Search Programme Approaches





The Common Ground Approach

The Common Ground Approach is Search for Common Ground's signature conflict transformation methodology. It is premised on the belief that even in deeply polarised environments, individuals and groups share interests that can serve as entry points for constructive engagement. Rather than framing conflict as a zero-sum contest, the approach shifts dynamics from adversarial confrontation to collaborative problem-solving.

It combines dialogue facilitation, trust-building, systems thinking, and institutional strengthening to address both immediate tensions and structural drivers of violence. The approach is grounded in rigorous conflict analysis and conflict sensitivity, enabling interventions that are context-specific and responsive to evolving dynamics. It integrates relationship transformation with policy and systems reform, recognising that sustainable peace requires both behavioural change and institutional accountability.

The Approach strengthens social cohesion and builds the capacity of communities and institutions to manage disputes non-violently. Across fragile and conflict-affected contexts, it provides a structured yet adaptable framework for preventing violence, mitigating tensions, and sustaining long-term peace.



Participatory Theatre for Social Change

Participatory theatre is a methodology of Search for Common Ground, grounded in our conflict transformation principles and commitment to locally led dialogue. Building on theatre's longstanding role as a medium for storytelling, information dissemination, and social commentary, this approach uses drama as a structured tool for reflection, dialogue, and behaviour change. By presenting relatable conflict scenarios on stage, audiences are able to observe their own realities from a critical distance, fostering empathy and self-awareness.

What distinguishes Search's participatory theatre model is its interactive design. Performances are deliberately structured to engage community members in facilitated discussions during and after the production, creating safe spaces to unpack the underlying drivers of tension at individual, interpersonal, and community levels. Through dramatizing current and emerging conflict dynamics, the methodology enables participants to collectively analyse root causes and explore practical, context-appropriate solutions.

In several contexts, performances delivered by trained local theatre groups complement broader media initiatives, such as radio mini-series, reinforcing key peace messages across platforms. Post-performance dialogues encourage audience members to reflect on the fictional scenarios, articulate their perspectives, and co-develop actionable responses to the issues presented. By using fictional yet realistic narratives, the approach lowers defensiveness, promotes open expression, strengthens community-based problem-solving structures at community and Local Government levels, and contributes to social cohesion and sustainable conflict resolution.



Digital Peacebuilding

Recognising the growing influence of digital ecosystems in shaping conflict dynamics, Search integrates digital innovation into its peacebuilding work. Through multimedia campaigns, counter-misinformation initiatives, online dialogue spaces, and capacity strengthening for media actors and influencers, we promote constructive narratives and social cohesion. Digital peacebuilding efforts counter hate speech, misinformation, and polarising content, particularly during elections and crisis periods. By leveraging both traditional and digital media platforms, Search transforms narratives that fuel division into opportunities for inclusion and coexistence.



Peace Architecture Platforms

Search for Common Ground continues to lead efforts in sustainable peacebuilding through its peace architecture model, a strategic, scalable, community-rooted conflict prevention and response framework. This Model establishes multi-stakeholder platforms that bridge communities, local authorities, and security actors to drive coordinated, inclusive responses to complex conflict dynamics at every level of governance. Its adaptability and proven impact make it a valuable model for replication and investment. These multi-stakeholder structures bring together traditional leaders, women and youth representatives, religious actors, civil society, and government institutions to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts. The platforms institutionalise early warning and early response systems, mediation processes, and referral pathways, contributing to coordinated and sustainable peace infrastructures.



Policy Influence, Advocacy, and Partnerships

Partnerships and collaboration sustained by strategic advocacy are vital for building trust, working strategically to meet corporate goals and project objectives, mobilizing needed resources, sharing risks, driving innovation with audacity, and accessing new opportunities, enabling individuals and organizations to achieve greater success together than facing the tide alone. They encourage sharing diverse skills, knowledge, and capacity, improve individual and collective efficiency, amplify reach, and build credibility, ultimately leading to faster problem-solving and sustainable growth at all parties. The year 2025 started with the loss of two projects as a result of the stop work order and eventual closure of USAID - United in Security: A Collaborative Approach to Civilian Protection - U.S. Department of State – DRL) and Strengthening FoRB in Nigeria through Legal Support, added to the fact that COMITAS had just ended while I-RENEW and Nigeria YouthCare Project were at their closing phases. The pressure for more projects and funding was real, and needed Search Nigeria to re-strategise in line with the global and regional strategy.

Consequently, the Lake Chad Basin Office of Search for Common Ground, understanding the regional and global strategy, had a robust partnership drive aimed at elevating the corporate image of the Search and its portfolios in all facets, with considerations to the existing and future project deliverables. Consequently, the following sectors were earmarked for engagement:

International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGO): Co-creation of projects and partnering with other agencies to bid for projects was the way to go in the new dispensation. Hence, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the International Rescue Committee (IRC), Danish Refugee Commission (DRC), while awaiting that of Malteser International, and Action Aid.

National Non-Governmental Organisations (NNGO): We also saw that donor organisations preferred working with a consortium, learning from our experience with the EU on the Niger Delta Project. While we sought partnership with International organisations, we never left national organizations. We had a consortium with the Foundation for Partnership Initiative in the Niger Delta (PIND), Stakeholders Democratic Network (SDN), Plateau Youths Inter-faith Forum, DRAC, and FOMWAN on various projects. These are organisations we worked with at various levels in 2025.

Security Sector: Nigeria, over the years, has been overburdened with various security issues, ranging from insurgency, banditry, kidnapping, militancy, cultism, separatism, farmer/herder conflict, to mention a few. While some of our projects work with security agencies to build peace, trust, and social cohesion in fragile communities, we also acknowledge that we need the help of the security agencies in the implementation of activities. Consequently, we sought to collaborate and partner with the National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) under the office of the National Security Adviser, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Operation Rainbow, Nigeria Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), The Nigeria Police Force (NPF), and the Directorate of State Security. In 2025 we were able to sign a standing MOU with Operation Rainbow of Plateau state and NSCDC. Others work with Search at various levels, but have yet to sign an MoU.



SFCG collaborated with the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps in celebrating the 2025 International Day of Peace: Country Director of SFCG, About Ouattara with the FCT Commandant, NSCDC, Olusola Odumosu

Exchanging the signed MoU between SFCG and Operation Rainbow Plateau state: Country Director of SFCG, About Ouattara, with the Commandant General of Operation Rainbow, Maj. Gen. Steve Gua (Rtd.)

Government Ministries, Departments, and Agencies: Peace and security is one of the major deliverables of government. The work of Search and other civil society organisations is just a support to the government. Therefore, working with the government is a must. Consequently, we partnered and collaborated with the following Ministries, Departments and Agencies: Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC), National Orientation Agency (NOA), Federal Ministry of Regional Development, Federal Ministry of Youths Development, Federal Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning, Federal Ministry Interior, Benue State Government of Nigeria, Plateau State Government of Nigeria, Taraba State Government of Nigeria, Office of the Special Adviser to the President on Community Development (South-South), Office of the Special Adviser to the President on Community Development (North-West), Bayelsa State Government of Nigeria, Delta State Government of Nigeria, Rivers State Government of Nigeria, Kaduna State Government of Nigeria, Bauchi State Government of Nigeria,



Advocacy visit by the Search Nigeria team to the Hon. Minister of Youth Development, Ayodele Olawande Wisdom.



The SFCG Director for Youths and Children, with the representative of the Hon. Minister of Youths Development, Chief Okafor, and the Director of the Network and Social Mobilization Department, Hajia Amina Muhammad Duaran.

The SFCG Director for Youths and Children, with the representative of the Hon. Minister of Youths Development, Chief Okafor, and the Director of the Network and Social Mobilization Department, Hajia Amina Muhammad Duaran. The Search Director for Youth and Children, Saji Prelis, in Nigeria to facilitate the training of the National Coalition on Youth Peace and Security(NCYPS) and staff of the Federal Ministry of Youth Development on the development of the second National Action Plan(NAP) on Youth Peace and Security(YPS)

International Organisations/Diplomatic Communities: As an international organisation and considering the need for funding, we needed to play in the circle of the diplomatic community. In 2025, Search significantly worked with the Peacebuilding Forum of the Office of the Resident Coordinator - UN Nigeria Office, Nigeria INGO Forum, where we are a co-chair, Embassy of Finland, Embassy of the Netherlands, and more.



The EU delegation to Nigeria visited Bayelsa state in September 2025 to inspect our community projects and was hosted by the Government of Bayelsa state.

Academic Institutions: A major area of Search's work is research. In some cases, we work with prominent research organisations in our projects. In view of that, we collaborated with the University of PortHarcourt in the Carbon study for the Niger Delta, Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution in the ACRA-Sel research and training project. In view of Search's interest in digital peacebuilding, we sought to partner with the American University of Nigeria, Yola - Adamawa State, University of Portharcourt and other institutions in the development of the curriculum and pilot. Other Institutions like the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR), Abuja, and Veritas University- Bwari, Abuja, also sought our partnership in the training of their students as Interns.

Policy Influencing: Under the I-RENEW project, Search was able to develop three policy briefs for Kaduna state titled, "Building Trust on Religious Regulation as a Pathway to Peaceful Coexistence in Kaduna State", "Religion leaders' role in preventing Crops-livestock farmer conflicts in Kaduna State", and "Leveraging Religious Actors in promoting peace in Kaduna State". Under the same project, three policy briefs were developed for Plateau State titled "Comprehensive Land survey and documentation initiative for Plateau State", "Fostering harmony among ethnic groups in Plateau state through cultural reintegration in secondary schools", and "Countering hate speeches among clerics in Plateau state". In the project, Search developed a governance framework for Plateau Youths Inter-faith Forum, which was submitted to and approved by the state Governor, and used till today to run the affairs of the forum. In 2025, Search for Common Nigeria got an award for community development from the Office of the Special Adviser to the President on community development (South-South). This was in recognition of the work of Search in the Niger Delta zone of the country.

SFCG Nigeria received an award from the Office of the Special Adviser to the President on Community Development (South-South) for excellence in community development and youth empowerment



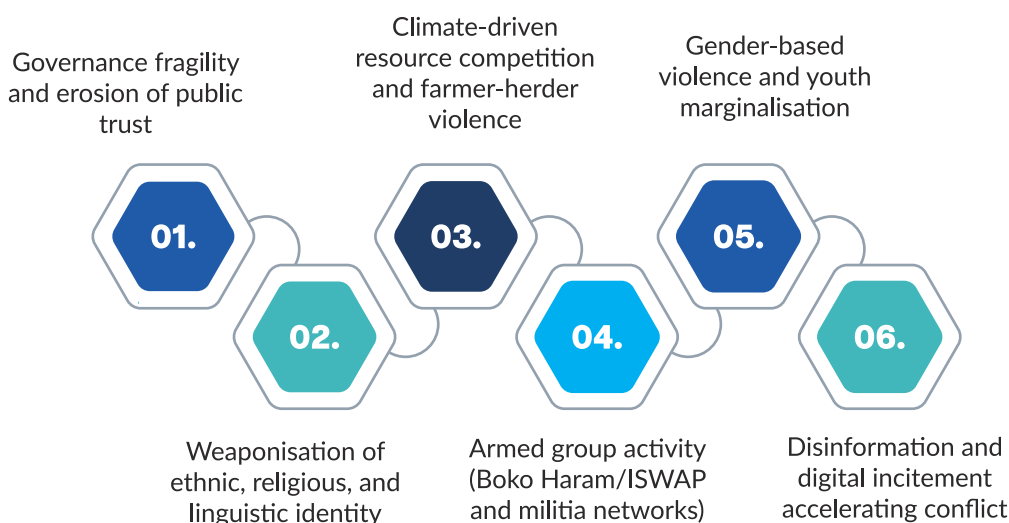
SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND

Regional Strategy 2026-2030 | West and Central Africa

REGIONAL CONTEXT AND STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

The West and Central Africa region comprising Nigeria, Cameroon, and Chad forms a contiguous arc of fragility shaped by cross-border armed group activity, transnational climate shocks, identity-based mobilisation, and deep governance deficits. These dynamics do not respect national borders, demanding coordinated responses across the region.

SIX KEY CONFLICT DRIVERS



Despite these pressures, significant opportunities exist: over 60 percent of the regional population is under 30, decentralisation reforms are opening new governance spaces, and growing mobile connectivity creates viable platforms for digital peacebuilding.

COUNTRY PRIORITY AREAS



NIGERIA

Nigeria operates within multiple, overlapping conflict systems spanning the Boko Haram/ISWAP insurgency in the North East, farmer-herder violence across the Middle Belt, banditry in the North West, and separatist tensions in the South East. Governance weakness, corruption, and deepening identity polarisation compound these dynamics.

Priority Focus Areas:

- Natural resource governance and farmer-herder conflict transformation
- Youth civic leadership and economic empowerment
- Women's protection and technology-facilitated GBV prevention
- Social cohesion in conflict-affected and displacement-hosting communities
- Digital peacebuilding and counter-disinformation



CAMEROON

Cameroon faces the protracted Anglophone armed crisis now in its ninth year, farmer-herder conflicts in the Far North and Adamawa regions, and a governance landscape marked by restricted political space. The Anglophone/Francophone divide and state legitimacy deficits are principal drivers of division requiring long-term reconciliation investment.

Investment Bank Annual Report 2025



CHAD

Chad hosts the largest refugee population in Africa, with over one million people displaced by the Sudan war adding to existing caseloads. Political transition fragility, governance patronage, Boko Haram residual violence in the Lake Chad Basin, and farmer-herder conflicts in the southern provinces define the operational landscape.

FIVE STRATEGIC PILLARS FOR 2026-2030

#	STRATEGIC PILLAR	DESCRIPTION
01	Community-Led Conflict Transformation	Locally owned dialogue platforms, mediation mechanisms, and peace committees targeting farmer-herder tensions, displacement conflict, identity-based division, and youth vulnerability.
02	Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding	Centring women's leadership across all programming, with dedicated investment in TFGBV prevention, women's political participation, and gender-sensitive programme design.
03	Digital Peacebuilding and Information Integrity	Building expertise in counter-disinformation, early warning, online dialogue facilitation, and TFGBV, positioning this as a flagship organizational competency.
04	Climate-Conflict Resilience	Integrating conflict transformation with climate resilience, natural resource governance, and livelihood diversification, with the Lake Chad Basin as the operational focus.
05	Common Ground Leadership and Coalition Building	Cultivating a regional network of peacebuilding champions across all three countries, supporting multipartial coalitions and sustaining relationships over the full strategy period.

KEY OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- 01. ADOPT A LAKE CHAD BASIN PROGRAMME ARCHITECTURE:** Establish a cross-border programme hub with dedicated regional coordination capacity across Nigeria, Cameroon, and Chad.
- 02. INVEST IN A DIGITAL PEACEBUILDING CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE:** Develop organizational expertise in TFGBV, counter-disinformation, digital dialogue facilitation, and AI literacy.
- 03. DEVELOP A STRUCTURED DONOR DIVERSIFICATION PLAN:** Commission a comprehensive strategy identifying institutional, foundation, private sector, and individual donor targets.
- 04. BUILD A REGIONAL COMMON GROUND LEADERS NETWORK:** Map and systematically invest in existing leaders; establish an annual Regional Common Ground Summit across all three countries.
- 05. STRENGTHEN MEAL AND IMPACT COMMUNICATION:** Invest in robust monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems and develop compelling impact narratives for diverse audiences.
- 06. DEEPEN SUB-NATIONAL GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT:** Expand engagement with mid-level governance actors to institutionalise peacebuilding gains and strengthen policy influence.

CONCLUSION

The 2026-2030 period presents Search for Common Ground with its most significant challenges and most compelling opportunities in West and Central Africa. By building on proven methodological strengths, addressing gaps in digital capacity and donor diversification, developing cross-border programme architecture, and mobilising a generation of Common Ground Leaders, the organisation is uniquely positioned to lead a regionally integrated peacebuilding mission at scale.

STRATEGIC PILLARS

Pillar 1: Conflict Prevention and Early Warning and Early Response Systems

Search will strengthen institutionalized, community-rooted Early Warning and Early Response mechanisms that enable timely and coordinated responses to emerging conflicts.

Priority areas include:

- Strengthening community-based EWER networks
- Institutionalizing state and national peace architecture platforms
- Strengthening government-community coordination
- Integrating digital early warning and predictive conflict analysis
- Supporting cross-border information sharing and coordination

Pillar 2: Social Cohesion and Community Resilience

Search will strengthen relationships across communities, particularly among youth, women, religious leaders, and marginalized groups.

Priority interventions include:

- Intercommunal dialogue and reconciliation processes
- Prevention of violent extremism through community engagement
- Youth leadership and peace entrepreneurship
- Gender-transformative peacebuilding
- Reintegration and trauma healing programming

Pillar 3: Accountable Governance and Access to Justice

Search will support formal and informal justice systems to enhance accountability, trust, and conflict resolution capacity.

Priority areas include:

- Strengthening alternative dispute resolution mechanisms
- Improving community-state trust
- Supporting human rights monitoring and protection systems
- Strengthening justice institutions and legal awareness

Pillar 4: Climate, Natural Resources, and Peace

Search will address climate-related conflict drivers by strengthening collaborative resource governance and climate adaptation.

Priority interventions include:

- Supporting natural resource dispute resolution
- Promoting climate resilience and peace dividends
- Supporting climate-sensitive livelihoods programming
- Facilitating multi-stakeholder climate-security dialogues

CROSS-CUTTING APPROACHES

Search will systematically integrate:

- Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
- Youth participation and leadership
- Localization and community ownership
- Trauma-informed peacebuilding
- Conflict sensitivity and Do No Harm
- Safeguarding and ethical programming
- Digital peacebuilding and mass media engagement

HOW WE WILL DRIVE IMPACT

OUR CHANGEMAKERS

WE CULTIVATE COMMON GROUND LEADERS WHO ARE:

- Applied visionaries who imagine new possibilities and take action to bring them about;
- Conveners of multipartial coalitions that unite unlikely allies;
- Resource mobilizers who attract long-term resources to create systemic change;
- Advocates who champion dignity, embrace cooperation, and make our impact easy to understand and support.

WE MOBILIZE MULTIPARTIAL COALITIONS THAT:

- Represent all parties and actors who may have a role in driving sustainable change;
- Advocate for dignity, cooperation, and the pursuit of just societies even when pressured to take a side;
- Come from the communities we bring together;
- Work collaboratively to address the root causes of conflict.

MEASURING CHANGE: THE PEACE IMPACT FRAMEWORK

Search will use the Peace Impact Framework (PIF) to measure impact in the multifaceted ways that reflect people's lived experience of conflict, safety, and dignity. The framework goes beyond direct violence, capturing the often overlooked vital signs of healthy societies that are essential for creating lasting change:

- **VIOLENCE:** Are people physically safe?
- **POLARIZATION:** Do people trust one another across lines of difference?
- **AGENCY:** Are people taking action in their communities?
- **LEGITIMACY:** Do people trust the institutions that govern and serve them?
- **INVESTMENTS:** Are resources allocated to non-violent, collaborative conflict resolution?

WE DRAW INSIGHTS FROM THREE SOURCES TO ASSESS THESE VITAL SIGNS:

LIVED EXPERIENCES: Perspectives of people directly affected by conflict.

ALIGNED MEASURES: A set of indicators aligned with global standards.

EXPERT OBSERVATIONS: Insights from frontline peacebuilders and agents of change.

WHY THIS FRAMEWORK?

- It is simple: 3 Pillars, 5 Themes, only 10 indicators.
- It is structured to encourage sharing and collective learning.
- It is designed to evolve as the world changes.

It was developed with input from people leading through and living in conflict.

Stories of Change





In New Bussa, Niger State, where insecurity once reign, the ripple effects of peacebuilding started by Search are reaching beyond communal tensions, transforming even the most personal conflicts. Jamila Ayuba Ladidi, a youth leader trained by Search for Common Ground under the Enhancing Community Peace and Security (ECPS) Project, funded by the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs faced a challenge closer to home: a bitter, years-long rivalry between her siblings over inheritance. Arguments had fractured their family, creating divisions so deep that family gatherings turned into battlegrounds of resentment.

“The same anger I saw in our community during the bandit attacks, I saw in my own home,” Jamila recalled. Determined to act, she drew on the Common Ground Approach skills she learned during Search for Common Ground’s conflict resolution workshops. These sessions, designed to address communal clashes, taught her to listen without judgment, identify shared needs, and reframe disputes as collaborative problem-solving opportunities.

Jamila organized a family dialogue, mirroring the community mediation processes she had observed in New Bussa’s Local Peace Architecture (LPA) meetings. She began by asking each sibling to share their grievances, ensuring everyone felt heard. Gradually, she guided the conversation toward common values: their parents’ legacy and the

importance of unity. “I reminded them that our strength as a family, like our community, lies in working together, not fighting,” she explained.

The breakthrough came when Jamila spoke with her mother to see the need for her siblings to apologize to one another. What began as a stalemate transformed into a mutual understanding, restoring trust and cooperation. “I was able to resolve a longstanding siblings’ rivalry using the Common Ground Approach training I received from Search. Today, my family is one united, big family,” Jamila shared with pride.

This personal victory echoes broader successes in New Bussa, where Search for Common Ground’s interventions have empowered residents to address conflicts at all levels. By equipping young women like Jamila with adaptable peacebuilding tools, the project has sparked a cultural shift from resolving domestic disputes to communal clashes. Jamila’s story exemplifies how grassroots training can create cascading change. As families heal, communities grow stronger.

Now, Jamila mentors other youth, teaching them to apply the Common Ground Approach not only in public conflicts but within their homes. “Peace starts small,” she says. “When we fix our families, we fix our neighborhoods, and soon, our entire community thrives.”



From Fear to Digital Peacebuilder

Growing up in Bauchi State, Grace Yusuf Baba's childhood was filled with the fear of religious violence, with school days often interrupted by conflicts. These experiences left her with a deep sense of dislike and mistrust for people from other faiths.

When Grace became a micro-influencer in the Nigerian Youth CARE project, her perspective shifted. She was trained in digital peacebuilding and now uses

her social media to promote tolerance and Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB). Grace now sees people of other faiths as "partners in progress and for peacebuilding" and has gained a public identity as someone actively involved in conflict resolution.

"I have become receptive to people from other religions. I now see that with collaboration, we can all make our nation a better place."

Sheik Umar Faruk's Story of Change

In the heart of Jos, Plateau State, North Central Nigeria, a region often fractured by intercommunal tensions Sheikh Umar Faruk Muhammad, Muslim cleric, stands as a quiet force of resilience, forgiveness, and peace.

Known by many as “Ustaz” or “Sheikh,” Umar is a respected community leader, a father, and a peace advocate. On January 10, 2010, violence erupted in his neighborhood. What began as whispers of unrest soon spiraled into devastation.

Sheikh Umar was away dropping his children off at school when chaos consumed his home. His two wives, a newborn baby, and his elderly father were caught in the crisis. With no way to return home, he wandered for days in a singlet and trousers, displaced, broken, and desperate. “I became a beggar,” he recalls. “Even eating was difficult. My clothes were stolen, my house destroyed, and I didn't know where my family was.” But amidst the ashes, something else emerged: his belief in compassion. He forgave those who looted his home, even those he later saw wearing his personal belongings.

Years later, Sheikh Umar found new strength through I-RENEW (Inclusive Religious Engagement Enhanced by Women), a project implemented by Search for Common Ground, funded by the European Union in Nigeria. Through the initiative, he participated in training on

digital peacebuilding, early warning and response, and countering misinformation. One particular exercise left a lasting impression. Participants were asked to write a word representing peace, then asked to tear it. Many did without question.

But Sheikh Umar refused. “Why should I tear peace?” he asked. “People don't ask questions. That's how conflicts start.” That single act echoed a larger transformation. With the knowledge gained from Search's training, Sheikh Umar became even more intentional about his role as a bridge builder. He now leads conversations around tolerance, shares counter-narratives when fake news surfaces, and mentors youth to think critically before acting. Today, his relationships across faiths are stronger than ever. Christians worship with him, work with him, and serve beside him in the community. “Even my mosque maintenance staff is Christian,” he says with pride. “It's not about religion, it's about character.” For Sheikh Umar, the I-RENEW project didn't just reinforce his values; it gave him tools to act boldly in truth and empathy. “The program came at a time when the world wanted to divide us,” he reflects. “But it reminded me to keep my ears and eyes open and never let others use me for their gain.” His story is a powerful reminder that peace isn't passive. It's built one action, one message, one restored relationship at a time.



Strengthening Community:

A Youth Leader's Journey With The Common Ground Approach

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Following the training on the Common Ground Approach, Maxi Prosa, an artist and member of a partner association, organized a concert aimed at raising awareness of women's rights in the Far North region of Cameroon: an area known for its deeply rooted cultural traditions.



PHOTO SPEAK



Participants across our projects





Launch Workshop of the UPR project in Cameroon



Training of journalists: media and conflict sensitivity



CGAA training and practice



Training of local partners on Conflict transformation

Our donors

DONOR	PROJECT	IMPLEMENTATION AREAS	BUDGET	STATUS
European Union, NDICI CRISIS FPI, (EU IcSP)	COMITAS – Contributing to the Mitigation of Conflict over Natural Resources	Taraba and Adamawa State	EUR 6,500,000	December 2020- Jan 2025, Completed
NDICI CRISIS FPI, European Union	Inclusive Religious Engagement Enhanced by Women	Kaduna and Plateau State	EUR769,023.00	Feb 2023 to July 2025 Completed
European Union, NDICI CRISIS FPI	A Community-Centred Approach to Transforming Criminality and Violence	Delta Rivers and Bayelsa	EUR 6,500,000	Nov 2023 – May 2026 On-going
French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Crisis and Support Centre	Nigeria-Benin Border Communities Peace Initiative	Katsina, Zamfara, Niger, and Kebbi.	\$600,000	Aug 2024 – Dec 2025
Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Join Initiative for Strategic Religious Action	Plateau and Kaduna States	EUR 1,682,253	May 2021-Dec 2025
DUTCH Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Promoting and Protecting Freedom of Religion and Belief	36 states	EUR 1,286,993.43	Sep 29, 2022- Dec 31, 2025



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands



Funded by
the European Union



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Direction du développement
et de la coopération DDC



CONFLICT HAS A FACE. PEACE DOES TOO.

Behind every smile
is a story of resilience.

When communities choose
dialogue over division,
healing begins.





Search for Common Ground expresses its sincere appreciation to the governments, institutions, and communities across the Lake Chad Basin whose partnership made the achievements of 2025 possible. We are grateful to the national and sub-national governments in Nigeria, Cameroon, and Chad, as well as public institutions and security actors who collaborated with us in strengthening conflict prevention, dialogue, and community-based peacebuilding initiatives.

We extend our deepest gratitude to the communities, youth leaders, women's groups, religious actors, and civil society organizations who continue to champion peaceful coexistence and serve as frontline agents of change.

Our appreciation also goes to our valued donors, diplomatic partners, and multilateral institutions whose trust and investment continue to make this work possible. Your support enables us to implement innovative programming, expand digital peacebuilding initiatives, strengthen early warning and early response systems, promote freedom of religion and belief, and support locally led solutions to complex conflict dynamics.

We equally recognize the contributions of our consortium partners, academic institutions, media professionals, and technical collaborators whose expertise and dedication have strengthened the quality and impact of our work.

Finally, we acknowledge the unwavering commitment of Search for Common Ground's staff and leadership across the Lake Chad Basin. Their professionalism, creativity, and dedication continue to drive our mission of transforming conflict and building societies where differences become opportunities for collaboration rather than division.

Together, we remain committed to advancing sustainable peace, resilience, and cooperation across the Lake Chad Basin.
