

Empowering Communities for Peace

IMPACT REPORT

Northwest Climate Peace Hubs: A Climate Security Approach to Conflict Prevention



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We are grateful to all stakeholders who collaborated with us including the Katsina and Sokoto States government, Jibia and Illela local government areas administration, Nigeria Civil Defense Corps, Nigeria Police Force, civil society partners, youth groups, data collectors, trainers and others that were engaged during the implementation of this project.

This report captures only the activities implemented by Building Blocks for Peace Foundation between January to December 2024 as one of the implementing organisations of the entire ‘**Northwest Peace Hubs: A Climate Security Approach to Conflict Prevention** programme in Nigeria’ .

Lastly, the views shared doesn’t reflect that of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) or the Norwegian Embassy Abuja.

Executive Summary

Key Impact Highlight: *The Northwest Climate Peace Hubs: A Climate Security Approach to Conflict Prevention component led by Building Blocks for Peace Foundation strengthened community resilience and prevented climate-driven conflicts across Sokoto and Katsina States, directly engaging over 500 youths and 26 key stakeholders, restoring degraded environments through 540 trees planted, and inspiring local replication of activities by the Jibia Youth Student Association.*

The Northwest Climate Peace Hubs: A Climate Security Approach to Conflict Prevention was designed to address climate change as a driver of regional insecurity, focusing on the intersection of climate resilience and conflict prevention. The Northwest region of Nigeria is highly vulnerable to extreme weather, resource scarcity, and ecosystem disruptions, which can heighten competition for resources and escalate local tensions. The initiative aimed to enhance stability by fostering peace and resilience at the community level, particularly in Sokoto and Katsina States.

The project proactively established local hubs to build climate resilience and prevent potential conflicts. Its objectives included strengthening local resilience, mitigating resource-driven conflicts, and promoting collaboration. Activities included risk assessment and forecasting, community training and capacity building, policy advocacy, and collaborative ecosystem management.

The project achieved significant results. It engaged key stakeholders, including government officials, traditional leaders, and community groups, garnering their commitment to the project. Community awareness on climate action and peacebuilding was strengthened through sensitisation campaigns and the distribution of over 500 information materials. Over 500 youths gained skills in conflict prevention, climate action, and early warning, with 20 receiving focused training to support local early warning systems. Environmental restoration was advanced through 540 trees planted and pasture rehabilitation. Structures such as a Community Steering Committee and a beneficiary database were established to ensure coordination, accountability, and sustainability. A particularly encouraging outcome was the Jibia Youth Student Association's independent replication of the tree-planting initiative, demonstrating community ownership and the project's ripple effect.

Building on these successes, future interventions should integrate local knowledge and practices, strengthen the capacity of local stakeholders to respond to early warning signs and de-escalate conflicts, and make greater use of data and climate information to target resources where they are most needed.

The Northwest Climate Peace Hubs programme demonstrates the value of combining environmental action with conflict prevention, offering a replicable model for climate-resilient, peaceful communities in the Northwest and beyond.

Background

Globally, climate change is increasingly recognised as a critical driver of insecurity and instability. Acting as a strong threat multiplier, it exacerbates existing vulnerabilities and tensions, potentially leading to conflicts over scarce resources, forced migration, environmental degradation, and social unrest. Addressing these interconnected challenges requires a climate security approach to conflict prevention, which integrates climate considerations into strategies for peacebuilding and conflict mitigation.

This approach emphasises the intersection of climate change, environmental stress, and conflict. It recognises how climate-related issues such as resource scarcity, extreme weather events, and environmental degradation, can intensify existing tensions and increase the risk of conflict. By incorporating climate adaptation, sustainable resource management, and peacebuilding strategies, a climate security approach seeks to mitigate these risks and foster resilience in vulnerable communities.

In December 2022, as part of efforts to address climate insecurity and conflict in Northwest Nigeria, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) signed an agreement to launch the North West Climate-Peace Hubs: A Climate Security Approach to Conflict Prevention Project. The project, scheduled for completion in November 2025 targeted insecurity challenges in the region influenced by herder-farmer tensions, cattle rustling, and banditry. The states most vulnerable to these climate-related and security challenges include Sokoto, Katsina, and Zamfara. At the signing ceremony, H.E. Mr. Knut Eiliv Lein, Ambassador of the Royal Kingdom of Norway to Nigeria, emphasized the project's proactive approach, stating: "We will move from discussing the challenges to actually addressing them head on."

Similarly, Mr. Mohammed Yahya, UNDP Resident Representative, highlighted the project's objective of fostering resilience through a conflict-sensitive approach: "The project aims to strengthen resilience against climate and security risks in a manner that will improve access to data, informing policymakers on anticipatory actions to curb climate and conflict risks."

The project’s expected outcomes included: Improved access to data to support anticipatory decision-making on climate and conflict risks; Increased access for vulnerable and at-risk communities to climate-resilient livelihoods and green jobs; Strengthened collaborative systems and practices for communal management of natural resources.

To achieve these objectives, Building Blocks for Peace Foundation (BBFORPEACE), an NGO specialising in youth development, conflict prevention and peacebuilding, countering of violent extremism and climate security was engaged alongside other NGOs to implement the project in two Local Government Areas in Sokoto and Katsina states.

The organisation’s project responsibilities included: Establishing community-led and robust systemic risk assessment and integrated risk management systems, including community crowdsourcing tools; Producing regular, synthesised reports on patterns and trends in natural resource-related conflicts, incorporating gender-disaggregated data to highlight gendered dynamics; Providing policy support at state and sub-state levels aimed at curbing ecosystem destruction and improving natural resource management. These activities contribute directly to the project’s overarching outcome: “By 2027, people in Nigeria, especially the most vulnerable, will benefit from enhanced peace and security, protection from conflict, violence, and crime, through strengthened capacities and infrastructure.”

Table 1: Description of Project LGAs/Locations

Jibia, Kastina State	Illela, Sokoto State
<p>Jibia is a town and Local Government Area (LGA) in Katsina State, Northwest Nigeria. The population of the LGA was approximately 167,435 as of 2006, and the area is 1037 km². Jibia sits along on the Nigerian border with Niger. The Local Government shares borders with Batsari, Kaita, Katsina, Batagarawa and Zurmi (Zamfara State) Local Government Areas.</p>	<p>Illela is a Local Government Area in Sokoto State, Nigeria. Its headquarters is in the town of Illela. It shares a border with the Republic of Niger to the north. It has an area of 1,246 km² and a population of 150,489 at the 2006 census. The average annual temperature in Illela, Nigeria, is 33.71°C, which is 4.25% warmer than the country's average.</p>

Overview of Activity Implementation

Project Inception Workshop

The Northwest Climate Peace Hubs: A Climate Security Approach to Conflict Prevention project started with a project inception workshop in Sokoto State. This meeting brought together UNDP Nigeria partners, implementing organisations including Building Blocks for Peace Foundation, relevant government representatives and Civil Society Organisations operating in Sokoto and Katsina States.

The workshop objectives were to familiarise implementing partners (i.e. both government non-governmental and civil society organisations) with the project objectives and expected outcomes, strengthen linkages and collaborations between implementing organisations according to their roles and responsibilities during implementation to ensure the initiative's sustainability and lastly to strengthen the capacity of implementing organisations on project and programme implementation in line with UNDP policies and procedures.



Group photo from the inception workshop in Sokoto State

Household Listing

Before the commencement of the project in the target Local Governments in Katsina and Sokoto states, a household listing exercise was conducted by all implementing organisations to understand the nature of the people, the environment and the political composition of the target locations. In Jibia Local Government in Katsina State, communities in Ji Kusa and Ji Yangayya wards were the target locations, while In Illela Local Government in Sokoto State, communities in Arab Gidan Hamma ward were the target locations for the household listing carried out by Building Blocks for Peace Foundation. It is important to state that the target locations are predominantly occupied by Hausa-Fulani ethnic groups who are predominantly farmers and cattle rearers.

Table 2: Gender and PwD Composition of Household Listing Target Respondents

LGAS	MALE	FEMALE	PWD
JIBIA	154	142	24
ILLELA	134	76	7
TOTAL	288	218	31

The stakeholders engaged during the household listing exercise included households in rural areas, hard to reach communities, widow-headed households, nuclear families, polygamous families, divorcee-headed households, single-headed households, separated households, youth-headed, male-headed and female-headed households among others.

The main purpose of the household listing exercise was to capture and maintain data from households within Jibia and Illela which eventually birthed selected beneficiaries of the project. The household listing served as opportunity to train selected young people with data enumeration skills and also provided opportunity to increase awareness on the climate security project in the local communities of Jibia and Illela local government areas.

Advocacy Engagements

BBFORPEACE conducted extensive advocacy engagements with government and relevant stakeholders in Katsina and Sokoto States. The objective of the engagements was to introduce the Northwest Climate Peace Hubs project, especially BBFORPEACE component of the project and solicit support for its implementation and sustainability. Key takeaways from these engagements included the recognition of climate change as a significant driver of conflicts in the region and the commitment of stakeholders to collaborate on conflict prevention strategies.

Additionally, the engagements facilitated the establishment of partnerships between the project and relevant ministries and agencies, such as the Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps and the Nigeria Meteorological Agency, to enhance the project's effectiveness and reach. The stakeholders engaged included: District Heads of Jibia and Illela, the Emir of Katsina State, the Chief Imams of Jibia and Illela, Katsina State Manager of Nigeria Meteorological Agency, the Army Commandant of Jibia military base, the Executive Chairman of Jibia Local Government, The Sole Administrator of Illela, Katsina Coalition of Civil Society Organisations, Katsina and Sokoto States Commandant-Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps, Jibia Community Based Organizations, Jibia and Illela Divisional Officers-Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps, Katsina State Commissioner for Youth and Sports Development, Katsina State Commissioner for Internal Security and Home affairs, Katsina State Commissioner for Budget and Economic Planning, Civil Society Organizations in Jibia, Illela Divisional Police Officer, Village Heads of various wards, and Illela Women Leader.



Advocacy visits conducted in Katsina State

Capacity Building for Youth on ‘Conflict Prevention, Climate Action, Early Warning and Early Response in Illela and Jibia Local Government Areas.

From 3rd – 8th June 2024, BBFORPEACE trained 500 youths across Jibia, Katsina State and Illela, Sokoto State on ‘Conflict Prevention, Climate Action, Early Warning and Early Response’. The beneficiaries for training were randomly drawn from the database generated by enumerators who were engaged in the household listing exercise across all communities and wards of Jibia and Illela LGAs, respectively. The beneficiaries were largely youth, including young men, young women, and people with disabilities. For administrative convenience, the beneficiaries were divided into three batches of 80-85 beneficiaries, with each batch receiving a two-day training. The Divisional Police Officer, Divisional Officer (Civil Defence), and LGA Secretary in Jibia actively participated in the training.

The purpose of the training was to strengthen the capacity of youths on Early Warning and Early Response, Climate Change, and Conflict Management in Jibia and Illela as well as support advocacy for their inclusion in conflict prevention and climate adaptation. The training also served as an opportunity to identify and select activists, who were subsequently engaged for the tree planting initiatives.



A Two Day Training on Conflict Prevention and Climate Action in Illela, Sokoto State

Tree Planting and Rehabilitation of Degraded Pastures in Jibia and Illela

On the 18th of July 2024, Building Blocks for Peace Foundation (BBFORPEACE) launched its tree planting activity at the Local Government Secretariat in Jibia, Katsina State and Illela, Sokoto State. The exercise aimed to address climate change and climate-induced conflicts in Northwest Nigeria by rehabilitating degraded pastures through tree planting. A team of five active climate youth activists, carefully selected from previous training sessions, was engaged for the exercise. Each youth was responsible for overseeing tree planting across selected communities. The primary objectives of the tree planting session were to: Combat desertification and climate crises in Jibia and Illela; engage the community in sustainable environmental practices, and foster resilience and collaboration among community members. The tree planting and provision for rehabilitation of degraded pastures were also to promote environmental conservation and sustainable natural resource management practices by planting two hundred and fifty trees.

In Jibia, Community Day Secondary School Magama, Jibia Local Government Secretariat, Community Health Center Gadirge, General Hospital Compound Jibia and Jibia Local Government Water Board Kagadama were the targeted locations for the tree planting.



Tree planting exercise in Jibia LGA, Katsina State

The Chairman of Persons with Disabilities in Illela, Bilyaminu Garba, described the project as a project of inclusion. He commended BBFORPEACE for involving Persons with Disabilities in all the activities of the climate security project. He concluded by assuring the total support of the PWD community to the sustainability of the project.

In Illela, the trees were planted in the following locations: The Local Government Secretariat, Ubandawaki Model Primary School, Government Day Secondary School, Army Barrack, and Kulliya Arabic Girls School. The launch was attended by over one hundred (100) stakeholders, including: the Local Government Area administrator, district heads, village heads, religious clerics, traditional rulers, youth representatives, women representatives, security officers, representatives of People with Disability, government officials, representatives from relevant ministries, and community members.

In all, five hundred and forty (540) trees in ten (10) strategic locations across Jibia and Illela were planted by 10 selected grantees (climate activists). This served as a turning point to addressing the challenges of environmental degradation. The tree planting activity conducted by BBFORPEACE inspired Jibia Youth Student Association (JIYSA) to also begin a tree planting initiative. This has also fostered community involvement, raising awareness about environmental conservation and climate security.



The Sole Administrator of Illela Local Government Area presenting seedlings to Climate Activists

Project Achievements

- Engaged over 26 key stakeholders across Katsina and Sokoto States, including government actors, traditional leaders, youth and women groups, and civil society organisations, building their support and securing commitment for the project.
- Strengthened collaboration by working closely with traditional leaders and relevant government agencies, including NSCDC, NiMet Katsina State, and the Sokoto State Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning, to support smooth and effective implementation.
- Raised community awareness on climate action and peacebuilding through project launch activities and the distribution of over 500 IEC materials, reaching participants in Jibia and Illela and encouraging local involvement.
- Developed a comprehensive household listing and beneficiary database to guide planning and ensure the right people are reached.
- Set up a Community Steering Committee to support coordination, community ownership, and continuity of the project.
- Trained and empowered over 500 youth on conflict prevention, climate action, and early warning and response, including 20 youth who received more focused training to support early warning efforts in their communities.
- Supported environmental restoration through the planting of 540 trees and pasture rehabilitation activities across Jibia and Illela LGAs.
- Inspired the Jibia Youth Student Association (JIYSA) to start their own tree planting activity, an encouraging unintended effect from the project.
- Documented key achievements, lessons, and experiences in a project impact report.

Key Challenges

- Insecurity in some areas limited access to certain communities and affected smooth implementation of activities.
- Poor network connectivity made communication and coordination with stakeholders and beneficiaries difficult at times.
- Movement and instability among some beneficiaries made consistent participation and follow-up challenging.
- Inaccurate or incomplete information in the beneficiary database affected effective follow-up with some participants.
- Some community members were initially skeptical about the project due to past experiences with similar interventions.
- There were misconceptions among some stakeholders that the project would provide direct financial support, which required continuous clarification.
- A few stakeholders attempted to influence the project for personal benefit, which required careful management to maintain transparency.
- Reimbursing beneficiaries was sometimes difficult, as many relied on relatives' bank accounts instead of having personal accounts.
- Changes in local government leadership affected continuity and required renewed engagement with new officials.
- Some planted trees in Jibia were destroyed by community members during the construction of a mosque, despite the locations having been approved by the local authorities.

Lessons learned:

- Regular coordination is important, but overly frequent or inconsistent meetings can reduce efficiency. More structured and predictable engagement (e.g., monthly or bi-weekly) allows implementers to better focus on project delivery.
- Physical, face-to-face mobilisation of beneficiaries is more effective than relying only on digital processes, especially for ensuring accuracy and easier follow-up.
- Working through designated focal persons within ministries improves response time and coordination, compared to relying solely on formal letters.
- Scheduling activities with an understanding of local contexts, such as avoiding market days, helps improve participation.
- Holding some trainings in safer and more accessible locations, such as state capitals, can improve participants comfort and attendance.
- Building and maintaining strong relationships with traditional leaders and local government authorities is key. Their support helps strengthen community acceptance and smooth implementation.

- Using local languages during trainings increases participation, understanding, and engagement, especially among semi-literate beneficiaries.
- Promoting local ownership strengthens sustainability. Engaging community-based volunteers and maintaining communication platforms (such as WhatsApp groups) supported ongoing learning, accountability, and care for project activities like tree planting.

Recommendations

- Future programming should deliberately incorporate indigenous knowledge and local practices into climate adaptation and conflict prevention efforts to ensure solutions are practical and accepted by the community.
- There is a need to strengthen the capacity of local stakeholders to respond to early warning signs and effectively de-escalate emerging conflicts at the community level.
- Stakeholders should make better use of data and climate information to guide planning and decision-making, ensuring that resources and interventions are directed to the areas of greatest need.

Conclusion

The Northwest Climate Peace Hubs represent a groundbreaking approach to addressing the intertwined challenges of climate change and conflict. By proactively engaging communities in dialogue, conflict resolution, and sustainable practices, these hubs are not just reacting to the symptoms of climate-related stress, they are tackling the root causes of potential conflicts head-on. Through collaborative efforts, such as fostering partnerships between diverse groups, empowering youth, and promoting shared stewardship of resources, the Peace Hubs are demonstrating that climate security is not just about protecting the environment; it is about safeguarding peace and resilience in our communities.

As climate impacts continue to intensify, the work of the Northwest Climate Peace Hubs provides a crucial model for how we can collectively build a more secure and harmonious future. By uniting people around a common cause and prioritising proactive conflict prevention, these hubs are paving the way for a new kind of peacekeeping—one that recognises the inextricable link between a healthy planet and a peaceful society. Through their efforts, they are proving that when communities come together with a shared vision and a commitment to cooperation, they can transform the challenges of climate change into opportunities for lasting peace and security.

The Human-Interest Stories

Story 1: Umar Gidado Sulaiman – Turning Knowledge into Action (Jibia, Katsina State)

My name is Umar Gidado Sulaiman. I was born in 2005 and have since lived in Kusa ward, Jibia, a community beset by a mix of insecurity and environmental challenges. Banditry, kidnapping, and communal tensions are common, while drought, degraded pastures, and dwindling water bodies make farming and fishing increasingly difficult. For me, daily life is filled with uncertainty. I can't move around in my community anymore, and my crops no longer yield as they once did.

When BBFORPEACE visited Jibia to conduct training sessions on conflict prevention, climate action, and early warning and response, I found a lifeline. I am happy and lucky to be part of this training. Our community is facing critical insecurity, and the impacts of climate change are everywhere. This training came at the right time and taught me how to prevent conflict and mitigate climate-related challenges.

The impact of the training on me was immediate and practical. I recalled resolving a domestic disagreement between a husband and wife after a long day on the farm. Before the training, I didn't even know how to categorise conflicts. Now, I can recognise the types of conflicts, understand their nature, and apply effective resolution strategies.

Also, the early warning and early response component of the training has empowered me to commit to vigilance: If I see something now, I will definitely say something. I will apply this knowledge of climate adaptation and natural resource management, including tree planting, to reduce the harmful effects of climate change in his community.

The Human-Interest Stories

Story 2: Abubakar Musa – From Learning to Leading Climate and Conflict Resilience (Illela, Sokoto State)

My name is Abubakar Musa. I live in Illela, Sokoto State. At 27, I had already carved an impressive path academically and professionally, graduating with first-class honours in Geography from Usman Danfodio University, Sokoto and currently serving as an Assistant Lecturer at Shehu Shagari College of Education. Yet despite this feat, life in Gidan-Hamma village, Illela Local Government, is not without challenges.

For decades, Illela has grappled with insecurity, farmers-herders clashes, cattle rustling, inter-communal crises, kidnappings, and killings have repeatedly disrupted economic and social life. On top of this, climate change has brought desert encroachment, irregular rainfall, extreme heat, soil erosion, and dwindling crop yields, threatening livelihoods and food security.

Through the Climate Security Project implemented by BBFORPEACE in partnership with UNDP, I have gained critical knowledge on conflict early warning and response, and the tools to prevent violence escalation. This provided me with deeper knowledge of conflict and its early warning signs. I am now capable of responding effectively and resolving conflicts before they escalate.

Specifically transformative for me was the climate adaptation training. I learnt how to identify early signs of climate change, delayed rainfall, high temperatures, declining soil fertility, and strategies to adapt, such as afforestation, discouraging deforestation, eco-friendly energy, and mixed cropping. This knowledge is invaluable for securing food and livelihood sustainability for me and my community.

Motivated by the training, I commit to volunteer and support development activities for my community. For me, this program is not just about learning, it's about leading my community toward resilience and sustainability, bridging academic insight with practical solutions to the intertwined challenges of climate and conflict.

About Us

Building Blocks for Peace Foundation (BBFORPEACE) is a youth-led network/non-governmental organisation working on Conflict Prevention, Prevention of Violent Extremism, Peacebuilding, Accountability Governance, Climate Action and Sustainable Development. The organisation was incorporated with the Corporate Affairs Commission in Nigeria in 2017.

Vision: “A peaceful, just and inclusive Africa where young people, men and women lead and build resilient communities, accountable governance, and sustainable development.”

Mission: “Equip youth, men and women as peacebuilders to prevent conflict, safeguard civic space, and address emerging risks including climate and environmental pressure through knowledge-sharing, coalition building, advocacy, partnerships and programmes.”

Core Values:

BBFORPEACE reaffirms its guiding values of Integrity & Accountability, Inclusivity & Gender Equality, Innovation & Learning, Collaboration & Solidarity, Non-Violence & Do No Harm, Youth Leadership, and Non-partisanship.

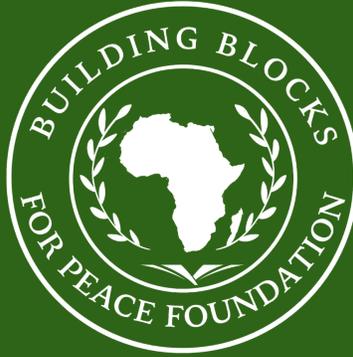
Strategic Pillars:

Over 2026 - 2030, BBFORPEACE will pursue four interlinked strategic pillars (impact areas): Peace Education & Youth Empowerment; Conflict Prevention, Governance & Accountability; Gender, Climate & Environmental Security; and Organisational Sustainability & Partnerships.

Building Blocks for Peace Foundation currently serves as the Regional Secretariat of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict in West Africa.

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