

# Improving Participation in North-East Nigeria

Strengthening the economic and social participation of returnees, IDPs and vulnerable members of host communities in a gender-responsive manner

## The challenge

With more than 200 million inhabitants, Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa. It is also one of the poorest. Poverty, food insecurity and gender inequality are particularly severe in the Northeast. The activities of the terrorist organisations Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) have drastically aggravated the situation. Since 2009, there have been repeated violent attacks, in which more than 36,000 people have lost their lives and over 2.1 million have been displaced from their communities of origin. Most of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are now living in Adamawa, Yobe and Borno States.

It is estimated that there are approximately 210,000 IDPs and 830,000 returnees in Adamawa State alone, where the limited local capacities are overstretched and the available resources insufficient. As such, IDPs, returnees and vulnerable members of the host population, in particular women, lack economic and social participation.

The already significantly restricted scope for economic and social participation among women in the North-East - due to prevailing socio-cultural norms - has been exacerbated by the crisis. Women have not only lost existing resources but are also exposed to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) as well as abduction or enslavement. Gender roles in Nigeria are influenced by various cultures and religions (including religious laws) and are deeply rooted in society. More often than not women's roles in society are seen as working in the household and farming, not, however, in societal decision-making or paid employment. Besides the lack of basic services and scarce resources, the wide rift between the political and traditional elites on the one hand and the civilian population on the other is seen as a major contributing factor to instability and unrest in the region (e.g. the farmer-herder conflict,



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Lead executing agency	Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning
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ethnic clashes, Boko Haram). This instability and unrest have further undermined social cohesion, which primarily places vulnerable groups (women, children, older persons, minorities) at additional risk. Key government and non-governmental actors are unable to deliver relevant services that meet the target group's needs and enable them to secure a livelihood. Therefore, the population is distrustful of government actors and social relations within it are tenuous. Further, there are no participatory processes that involve all population groups, especially disadvantaged groups. For this reason, the target group's needs are only partially recognized if at all, and opportunities for combining relevant activities with measures to build participatory processes and strengthen capacities remain untapped. To this end, the Programme has set out to improve the social and economic participation of returnees, IDPs and vulnerable members of host communities whilst paying particular attention to the impact of gender.



L. to r.: A beneficiary family & Female participants of the CDP process



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*L. to r.: Female participants taking part in the CDP process, Beneficiaries receiving farming inputs & Trainee and trainer beneficiaries of the Community Based Apprenticeship*

## Our approach

On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH is implementing the Programme in Adamawa State.

Adopting an integrational approach by addressing IDPs, returnees and the host population, the Programme is primarily implemented at LGA and community level to ensure the direct benefit for the target groups.

Through Community Development Planning (CDP), the Programme strengthens the relationships between local communities and leaders, government institutions and civil society. The weakness of these relationships is seen as a significant contributing factor to unrest in the region. Simultaneously, the Programme builds the capacities of local and state governments as well as civil society to improve the individual and organisational conditions for boosting participation of the target group in the economy. Alongside the CDPs, the Programme will set up and consolidate spaces and mechanisms where women can meet to engage in dialogue to identify problems, needs and priorities and voice their concerns. Further, to improve conditions for equal participation, communities and leaders, including traditional and religious authorities, will be sensitized on the issue of gender equality.

The gender and governance measures are supported by livelihood activities in the agricultural sector. Here the focus is on group-based initiatives, which are in line with the CDP measures, that will give access to markets and improve conditions for economic participation. In doing so, the Programme will also raise the willingness and motivation of the target group to engage in CDP processes.

## The Results of our previous module

The participatory community development planning approach has been successfully piloted in the previous module. It contributed to consolidating bottom-up processes, fostering a community spirit and increasing the involvement of women and other disadvantaged groups. In addition to drafting community development plans, initiatives were taken to mainstream these plans in annual budgets of the states and have them implemented by state and local governments. The predecessor module has also built capacities in local authorities and civil society. Thanks to this successful initiative, the partners were more amenable and supportive and have expressed interest in receiving more advice on opportunities for vertical and horizontal upscaling, institutional mainstreaming and potential for incorporating the development plans into budgets. SEPIN will continue to build on these successes and bring together diverse community actors for their communities' development as well as improving economic and social participation of returnees, Internally Displaced Persons and vulnerable members of host communities in a gender responsive manner.

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*In the previous module, the Programme collaborated with the Adamawa State Government to launch Nigeria's first State and Local Government Citizen Engagement and Participatory Planning Policy (CEPP) and the attendant Implementation Guidelines. The policy seeks to enhance legitimacy and trust through an efficient and effective consultative decision-making process that manages citizens' expectations based on ownership of development processes.*

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