

Community based trauma counselling building resilience.

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Carefronting Nigeria

(A Case Study)

Overview

Carefronting Nigeria has been facilitating strengthened psychosocial support, under the FCDO SPRiNG programme for conflict-affected communities in Kaduna, Katsina, Plateau and Benue States. This has involved the provision of advanced Trauma Consciousness and Resilience Training. The intervention delivers locally accessible, trauma-informed psychosocial care by equipping community-based counsellors to identify, respond to, and prevent the escalation of conflict and SGBV related problems.



Source: Carefronting Nigeria

The project has trained 240 counsellors (including persons with disabilities) in trauma-informed counselling, child-friendly approaches, and safe-space facilitation. It has also led to the establishment of 63 community listening centres in project communities.

Context

Existing reports indicate that in conflict-affected communities across Kaduna, Katsina, Plateau, and Benue States, violence, banditry, and Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) have left deep psychological trauma among women, children, and families, with few accessible support services. These impacts, if not addressed, creates causal pathways to wider social problems such as high school dropout rates, distortions in social cohesion and heightened risks of self-harm.

Approach and Activities

The Carefronting approach involves **partnering with credible subject-matter agencies** such as the Red Cross which has provided facilitation support during the specialist knowledge transfer sessions. **Knowledge and skills were transferred** through active learning and practice as well as some form of mentoring and shadowing.

The intervention **built on earlier basic training**, by delivering advanced trauma consciousness and resilience training to 240 counsellors across four states. The programme **sequentially strengthened skills** in therapeutic counselling, child-friendly approaches, trauma assessment, and referral pathways, while supporting the establishment of 63 community and school-based listening centres.

Listening centres established include: the Ukpaim listening centre at the IDP Camp in Guma LGA of Benue State, PHC Dutsin Ma Listening centre in Dutsin Ma LGA of Katsina State, Madrasatul Islam Centre in Barkin Ladi of Plateau State and Bible Goodnews Church, Maraban Kajuru in Kaduna State, among others. Trained counsellors then applied skills through counselling, step-down training, and outreach.



Source: Carefronting Nigeria

Results

The most significant result was the establishment of accessible, trauma-informed psychosocial support at community level. This was evidenced by the training of 240 counsellors and the activation of 63 community- and school-based listening centres across four states. Since commencement of the project, 25 cases have been formally received and managed in Benue State.

Counsellors demonstrated the ability to identify trauma triggers and provide appropriate support and referrals, including a documented intervention in Chikun that prevented a suicide attempt. Beneficiary feedback shows improved emotional wellbeing, strengthened family relationships and increased help-seeking, addressing a critical gap in local MHPSS provision while supporting SPRiNG's peacebuilding objectives. In addition, the trauma counselling training experiences have empowered counsellors to recognise the need to address their conditions and experiences of trauma.

“By the end of the month, my husband sent money for food. Light has returned to my home.”

—Counselling beneficiary, Barkin Ladi, Plateau State

Lessons

This project highlights the value of phased capacity building, localisation, and embedding psychosocial care within trusted community institutions for sustainable impact.

About the SPRiNG Programme

Strengthening Peace and Resilience in Nigeria (SPRiNG) is a UK-funded initiative designed to support a more peaceful and climate-resilient Nigeria. By addressing the root causes of conflict and vulnerability, SPRiNG works to reduce violence, strengthen local systems, and promote inclusive governance across conflict-affected areas in North-West and North-Central Nigeria.

SPRiNG is grounded in a politically informed, evidence-based approach that integrates environmental science, political economy, and conflict analysis. Our goal is to create a more stable and peaceful Nigeria where citizens benefit from reduced violence and increased resilience to the pressures of climate change.



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