

Live-fencing mitigating farmer-herder conflicts in Southern Kaduna.

*Christian Rural and Urban Development
Association of Nigeria (CRUDAN)*

(A Case Study)

Overview

The LiFeMiLE Project was carried out in three communities (Kpunyai, Chenchuk and Mifi Attakar,) Zango Kataf Local Government Area in Kaduna State to reduce farmer herder conflict and protect farmlands. This is being facilitated by the Christian Rural and Urban Development Association of Nigeria (CRUDAN). The project introduced live fencing using native trees and shrubs to create natural barriers that prevent livestock from destroying crops while also supporting biodiversity and sustainable land use.



Source: CRUDAN

This climate-conscious peacebuilding approach helped farmers protect their harvests and improve productivity as communities that adopted live fencing reported no further crop losses. In addition, the project has led to the establishment of a Conflict and Peace Secretariat within Zango Kataf Local Government Area, to facilitate conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

Context

Communities in North West and North Central Nigeria experience destructive cycles of livestock encroachment, crop destruction, and retaliatory conflict. These incidents threaten food security for farming households and strains inter-community relationships. The problem was compounded by ineffective engagement mechanisms, that were inaccessible to herder communities with mediation conducted in English rather than Fulfulde, thereby excluding key stakeholders and perpetuating mistrust between project teams and pastoral populations. The absence of institutionalised mechanisms for conflict prevention and early response further limited communities' capacity to anticipate and manage emerging tensions before they escalated into violence.

Approach and Activities

The project provided **practical live fencing training** to youth leaders, farmers, and agricultural extension workers through **hands-on farm demonstrations**. Fulfulde-speaking agricultural extension workers were engaged to lead **mobilisation and training**, building trust with herder communities by addressing language and cultural barriers. The project successfully trained 65 men and women across three communities on live fencing propagation and maintenance. Participants received technical support to establish environmentally sustainable live fencing, helping to protect farmlands from livestock, stabilise agricultural production, and reduce conflict-related tensions.

An **Early Warning and Early Response system** that brings together peace ambassadors, community leaders, security actors, youth, and women from both farming and herding communities was set up to monitor and respond to conflict risks. In addition, 8 herders including 2 Miyetti Allah Chairmen from Kaura and Zango Kataf Local Government Areas, 3 Ardos from the participating communities, and 3 other herder representatives were integrated into peace ambassador structures. Through these platforms, they received capacity building on conflict resolution, Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) mechanisms and gained legitimate roles in community decision-making. This inclusive approach rebuilt trust and addressed historical marginalisation at community level. The establishment of a Conflict and Peace Secretariat further reinforced the recognition that sustainable peace depends on inclusive and well-structured systems.

To ensure sustainability, **Zango Kataf Local Government allocated a Conflict and Peace Secretariat within its headquarters** as a permanent home for peacebuilding activities. Community wide events, including a World Peace Day football match, brought farmers and herders together for the first time in over a decade, reinforcing positive behaviour change and peaceful coexistence



Source: CRUDAN

Results

The project established a Conflict and Peace Secretariat in Zango Kataf LGA, embedding peacebuilding as an official governance function. This initiative yielded immediate dividends. For instance, a football match organised to mark World Peace Day brought together farming and herding communities for the first time in over a decade. Also, peace ambassadors from both sides evolved from skeptical participants into proactive change agents through engagement in structured Early Warning and Early Response platforms backed by high-level political engagement and visible follow-up.

Farmers adopting climate-conscious live fencing reported eliminated crop losses and improved harvests, with youth leaders emerging as grassroots advocates to scale adoption among peers.

To date, the project has trained 65 natural leaders and 10 Agricultural Extension Workers (AEWs) across three communities on live fencing propagation and maintenance techniques; mapped and geo-referenced 5,800 fenced farms; and conducted nine community drama sessions to drive uptake all while successfully averting four volatile conflict situations in Mifi and Chenchuk communities, preventing escalation into full-scale violence.

The introduction of cactus, a plant species previously unfamiliar to many local farmers, proved innovative and effective in reducing livestock intrusion. Adoption was particularly strong in Kpunyai and Chenchuk, where farmers began propagating cactus for wider use. The exercise demonstrated community ownership and commitment to environmentally sustainable fencing solutions.

Lessons

The project shows that by pairing environmental solutions with credible dialogue, peacebuilding delivers tangible, everyday results people can see and trust. When people see real improvements in their daily lives such as better livelihoods or safer farms, they are more likely to trust and support peace efforts. Therefore, an intervention is likely to be more effective if it addresses the root causes of conflict rather than managing problems as they arise.

Peace initiatives also need to include communication methods and leadership structures that communities understand and relate to. For long-term impact, projects need to be built into local government systems with proper funding and staff. Most importantly, lasting peace depends on long-term relationships and follow-up that demonstrate to communities that their voices truly matter.

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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