

Building peace and social cohesion through farmer-herder cooperation.

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*GoGreen Environmental Health Sustainability
Initiatives*

(A Case Study)

Overview

SPRING has been supporting GoGreen Environmental Health Sustainability Initiatives to provide integrated agropastoral training and co-create demonstration farms that adopt sustainable resource management practices in Guma and Makurdi areas of Benue State.



Source: GoGreen Environmental Health Sustainability Initiatives

Key results include improved cooperation between farmers and herders, adoption of sustainable agropastoral practices, the reopening of a previously closed community market, and resolution of 70 local disputes through Community Peace Committees. The intervention demonstrates that combining livelihoods, natural resource governance, and inclusive dialogue can significantly reduce conflict and strengthen community resilience.

Context

Communities in Guma and Makurdi LGAs experienced recurrent farmer–herder conflict driven by competition over land and water, eroding livelihoods, markets, and social cohesion. The Go Green intervention is minimizing the high risk of tensions that increase the risk of violence, displacement, economic loss, and environmental degradation, all of which undermine local stability and food security.

Approach and Activities

GoGreen Environmental Health Sustainability Initiatives began with **community entry and conflict analysis** in Guma and Makurdi LGAs, followed by **joint agropastoral training** for farmers and herders on sustainable land use, grazing, and crop production. **Demonstration farms were established** to model cooperation and good practice. **Community Peace Committees were then formed and trained** to mediate disputes and manage resources, supported by engagement with traditional leaders, local authorities, and security actors. These stakeholders were critical in legitimizing agreements, resolving disputes, and enabling sustained collaboration.

Results

The activity strengthened cooperation between **800 farmers and herders** in Guma and Makurdi Local Government Areas (LGAs), improving relationships and reducing tensions over land and water.

A total of **765 farmers and pastoralists** benefited from shared agropastoral skills, **633 benefitted** from bio-fertilizer training, 952 were trained on pasture preservation skills, while **1141 received training** on crop residue production and preservation.

This increased their productivity and led to clearer resource-use agreements. **120** Community Peace Committee members, **15 from each community**, gained mediation skills, **resolving 70 local disputes** through mediation and negotiation without external interference.

The most significant result was a demonstrable reduction in farmer–herder conflict in Guma and Makurdi LGAs, evidenced by the peaceful resolution of 70 local disputes through trained Community Peace Committees. The reopening of a previously closed community market signals restored trust and economic recovery.

“We were never free to sell dairy to host communities before now due to fear of crises and lack of trust and prefer to trek far distances to sell to Hausa/Fulani communities, but now we go to the houses of the host communities to sell to them as a result of this project”.

- Zulei Abdulkadir, a pastoralist from Abinsi.



Source: GoGreen Environmental Health Sustainability Initiatives

Lessons

One of the lessons learnt through this initiative is that integrating livelihoods, sustainable resource management, and inclusive community-led dialogue effectively addresses root causes of farmer–herder conflict and delivers more durable peace outcomes.

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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