

*Intergenerational dialogue  
and storytelling contributing  
to peace.*

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*Youth Initiative Against Violence and  
Human Rights Abuse (YIAVHA)*

**(A Case Study)**

## Overview

This case study presents an intergenerational dialogue intervention implemented across some conflict-affected communities in Plateau State. The intervention is anchored by the Youth Initiative Against Violence and Human Rights Abuse (YIAVHA) with support from the SPRING programme. It involved the creation of safe spaces where youth and elders jointly reflected on respective experiences with conflict, coexistence, and community resilience.



Source: Youth Initiative Against Violence and Human Rights Abuse (YIAVHA)

YIAVHA adopted the Intergenerational Dialogue through Storytelling Model in targeted SPRING locations, to strengthen cross generational trust and communication between generations, as a pathway to counter divisive and violent messaging at community level. Early results suggest that locally rooted, low-cost storytelling approaches can deliver measurable peacebuilding outcomes when strategically applied in fragile contexts.

## Context

In several communities across North Central and North West Nigeria, historical conflict narratives have triggered youth violence and distorted social cohesion. These divisions are behind some of the reinforced extremist narratives that have shaped conflicts in some communities. The SPRING programme is seeking to address the extremist narratives through the YIAVHA intervention. Beyond testing this unique model in a few pilot communities, the approach presents a blueprint that can be upscaled by other practitioners in the peacebuilding space.

## Approach and Activities

YIAVHA began by mapping conflict-affected communities in the project States and highlighting those with a history of youth violence. This was complemented by a stakeholder identification process that sought to clarify which youth and elders could be targeted for the dialogue series and what types of cross-generational relationship platforms existed in the communities.

Next, a series of **intergenerational dialogue sessions** were held. These sessions were moderated by trained facilitators who created safe spaces where community elders and young people felt comfortable sharing personal and collective stories of conflict, coexistence, and resilience.

Also, local leaders and storytellers played key roles in legitimising the process and guiding the conversations. Consensus building was a main part of the process as sessions concluded with agreements reached around the practical actions which the communities would take to counter divisive narratives that distort peaceful community relations.

*"Telling my story helped me heal gradually, I no longer thirst for vengeance."*  
- Dalyop Timothy Toma,  
Peace ambassador.

## Results

The most significant achievement was improved intergenerational trust and communication in SPRiNG target communities, evidenced by increased willingness to engage peacefully with elders and peers from different backgrounds facilitated dialogue sessions strengthened social cohesion by reviving positive community narratives and reinforcing non-violent norms.

After attending storytelling dialogues, youth who once avoided rival communities began entering those spaces without fear and forming cross-community relationships. Trained peace ambassadors now lead peace activities, tell stories of reconciliation, and facilitate further dialogues in their own communities.

A total of **2,886 participants took part** in the intergenerational dialogue. Of these, 1,688 were male and 1,198 were female. In terms of age distribution, 2,608 participants were below 35 years, while 278 were adults aged 35 years and above.

*“Before, when we meet in the bush, we would insult each other and sometimes engage in fights that may even escalate but now because of the meeting we had with them, we are now friends.”*

**- Mu’azu Sanusi Musa, Participant.**

## Lessons

This intervention indicates that when indigenous knowledge and community ownership are embedded as part of delivering conflict sensitive programming in fragile contexts, programme results are more likely to be sustained.

# 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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