

# LOCALISATION CASE STUDIES

Case studies prepared by national and international organisations to share their experiences of consciously promoting locally led humanitarian action through equitable partnerships. These case studies were prepared as part of efforts to raise awareness of [DG ECHO's localisation guidance note](#) published in March 2023. The examples shared in these case studies are funded by a range of different donors.

## Localisation and nexus as drivers of change for peace and stability: Youth action transforming communities in the Lake Chad Basin

This gender-driven initiative supported youth groups in Niger, Nigeria and Cameroon to develop the data collection, digital literacy and advocacy skills of 700 young people. These skills were used to monitor and track local resources and infrastructure, enabling these young people to mobilise themselves and campaign for community changes and improvements across their communities. This youth engagement approach led to achievements in peacebuilding, financial autonomy, community cohesion, sanitation and drug reduction.



### Background

For many years, the Lake Chad Basin has been plagued by instability and prolonged violence, becoming a hotbed for insurgency action. This has led to destabilisation across the region, compounding tensions and igniting community turbulence. It has had a profound impact on all aspects of society and governance, from peacekeeping and conflict resolution, to issues like health, sanitation and drug use.



Figure 1: A peacebuilding and gender advocate champion running a GBV sensitisation session with young girls in Kaleri © Plan International

“Even in the days when Boko Haram insurgency was actively operating in the nooks and corners of Maiduguri, Kaleri used to be one of their hotbeds. But with this initiative, and thanks to the state leadership of young people, the community youth in that area, and Plan International, we have seen how collaboration, social cohesion, strategic investment, and a sound partnership with a shared vision have been able to change the narrative of young people.” ... *Tanimu A. Tahirm chairperson of the National Youth Council of Nigeria, Borno State Chapter*

<sup>1</sup> DG ECHO's guidance note [Promoting Equitable Partnerships with Local Responders in Humanitarian Settings](#), March 2023

Addressing these challenges became one of the main objectives and, subsequently achievements, of the Chad Basin Youth Led localisation project. The initiative saw youth groups in Niger, Nigeria and Cameroun use skills in data collection to help transform their communities into youth-led hubs of change.

Over the course of three years, 697 young people were trained in data collection, digital literacy and advocacy skills, which were then used in their communities to monitor and track local resources and infrastructure. Young people, then, used this information to mobilise themselves and campaign for community changes and improvements in the sectors that they identified.

Their actions led to a true community transformation with approximately 17,000 people experiencing a positive indirect impact thanks to youth mobilisation. As an INTPA funded initiative, this project is a pillar in the nexus action and showcases the need for gender driven, youth input.

## Setting up the initiative

The project was framed under a special proposal, known as the Support for Civil Society Organisations Piloting Initiatives of the AU-EU Youth Cooperation Hub. From its outset, its core objective was anchored on a rights-based approach with emphasis on building the capacity and knowledge-base of young people, particularly young women, on local issues, as well as their ability to implement change.

Plan International set out to identify potential candidates in each country. The selected groups were based in either registered or informal youth organisations in the respective areas. These groups already existed but lacked a sustainable platform to conduct work at community level.

Selection criteria included being active in the community, having some experience working in peace building/conflict transformation and being inclusive/gender balanced. These groups were then proposed before local authorities and community leaders for selection. Following a gender transformative approach, young women and adolescent girls represented the largest demographic of those involved in the project and became core agents of peace and localisation.

Project implementation, then began, with a budget of €1,555,000 to be used over the three years between each of the countries. The project took place in four stages:

- Young participants were tasked with deciding the key factors contributing to peace and stabilisation, for which they chose health, education, youth participation and economic empowerment.
- Young people were trained on digitalisation skills, data collection, mapping and reporting. They, then, started to map existing services in their communities, in order to report on gaps. This information was uploaded to the [Lake Chad Stability Map](#), an online database of organisations and resources within the region, which includes what services were lacking.
- Young people received training on advocacy and peacebuilding in order to encourage them to use the evidence they collected to advocate for change to local leaders and institutions. Local leaders were also sensitised to the concept of youth as vehicle of change, in order for

each group to contribute to responding to community needs in a coordinated and coherent way.

- Computer centres were constructed as a means of enabling youth groups to upload and access their data and research. Powered by solar energy, these centres are free to use and encourage continuous skills building and progression in digital literacy.

## The ripple effect of youth action

What began as an initiative driving youth engagement led to achievements in peacebuilding, financial autonomy, community cohesion, sanitation and drug reduction.

“Youths and other community members who don’t talk or relate with one another work together and before you know it, their grudges are gone and then peace sets in.” *Jamil Ahmed, member of Kaleri Youth Group*

Some of the people benefited by the project were in the Kaleri community in Nigeria’s Borno State, where youth-led initiatives contributed to a direct shift in community dynamics and social cohesion. From their time spent on data

collection, young people became more conscious of community-level issues and began to voice their opinions on new pathways. Aside from improvement on technical literacy, a formation of other groups has prospered, particularly on financial independence, such as the Kaleri Youth Group (KYG) and the Youths Savings and Loans Association (YSLA). They share benefits in financial development, communication and project management, all of which have enabled young people to mobilise on a variety of issues.



Figure 2: Beneficiary of the Youth savings and loan fund showcasing the business she invested in © Plan International

Networking among young groups is indeed bringing a longer-term positive impact. The immediate effect of the project was the ability to identify larger, government-based gaps, such as the presence of military groups in schools, despite government endorsement to end such practices over the course of five years under the Safe Schools Initiative. Further gaps identified were non-operational health care facilities due to multiple crises and conflicts, despite facilities being listed as functional. This left many communities without vital healthcare resources. Young people were able to use their newfound advocacy skills to raise these issues on a higher, governmental level. This led to government action to reinstate the facilities as a direct result of youth action.

## Positive impacts at different levels

Fanne, a 26-year-old woman from the Simari community in Borno, is one of the people benefiting from the shift in dynamics. Living with her mother and eleven siblings, Fanne struggled financially before joining the Kaleri Youth Group, where she received training on advocacy, peacebuilding,

“My life has changed, I have a source of income. As a young woman, I can contribute and support my siblings with some school needs. I also have my needs and sometimes, I can’t ask anyone, so I support myself.”

*Bintu Konto, Simari community resident*

encourage members to begin saving funds. As Fanne built up her shares, she qualified for a loan between group members, which she used to train herself on pillow making. Thanks to the training, she opened her own business. She now passes on her knowledge to other young people thanks to newly existing networks of communication.

“If Kaleri that used to be a hotspot for insurgency can now be relatively peaceful, very visionary, being participatory in terms of community affairs, definitely other parts of Borno will definitely be able to emulate and do the needful for our people.”

*Tanimu A. Tahirm chairperson of the National Youth Council of Nigeriam Borno State Chapter*

social cohesion, youth participation in decision-making and financial literacy. As a contributing member to the group, Fanne began to save money known as shares. This money was a minimum weekly contribution of a small amount that was pooled between members at each meeting, as an initiative to

Training on peacekeeping and advocacy strategies have also been effective, with the reduction of violent community challenges such as drug abuse, gang crime, extremism and exploitation. Instead, disputes are now solved with traditional methods of conflict resolution that offer a more sustainable response.

As a result of the initiative, a regional youth organisation called “Young Leaders Actors of Change” (LAC-LAC network) was set up by young people from the project implementing countries to continue their engagement and collaboration after the end of the project’s life cycle. LAC-LAC is now officially registered in Niger and has gained promising visibility from the Lake Chad Basin Commission Secretariat which has determined that such work can be classified as a pillar of stabilisation, as part of the strategy based on humanitarian transitional aid and development.

## Lessons learned to co-shape future initiatives

The approach taken in Lake Chad is a simple mechanism that increases access to existing platforms, networking between young activists, volunteers, civil society organisations and community-based organisations, and is improving a multi-stakeholder dialogue to quickly address needs across society and propose solutions with the support of local institutions or/and international actors and donors.

This model is replicable, cost-efficient, green and local with a global effect. It transfers power to local and national actors at different levels, with a potential for humanitarian aid being needs-based and community-youth driven, by simply offering a multiplier platform. The same approach can be linked



Figure 3: Young women in Kaleri community having their monthly YSLA meeting ©Plan International



to the collection of needs at the time of the needs assessment and throughout the life of a project as a feedback mechanism to strengthen local capacities where missing.

Communities are in the frontline. By recognising that, through localisation partners strengthen the tools for local and national authorities to be part of humanitarian aid by contributing to the development of Humanitarian Needs Overviews (HNOs) and Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs) when new/additional crisis arise.

“We never had knowledge about this, but through the capacity building received from Plan International, I have the knowledge to teach young girls about hygiene, gender equality, child rights, girls’ participation and the importance of the girl child.” *Lydia Barnabas, member of the Kaleri Youth Groupe and mentor*

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