



Ghana

Enhancing Community Resilience and Social Cohesion amongst Select Border Communities in Northern Ghana

Background information

Violent extremism in the Sahel has increased exponentially in recent years. Since 2019, violence has quickly spread southward, with countries located along the Gulf of Guinea experiencing increasing insecurity along their northern borders with Burkina Faso. Although no attacks have taken place in Ghana, border communities in the north are particularly vulnerable to infiltration and exploitation by violent extremists owing to their economic insecurity, including persistent multidimensional poverty and youth unemployment; health insecurity exacerbated by the arrival of COVID-19; and community and personal insecurities due to a lack of social services and the rule of law.

Goals and objectives

The key objectives of the programme are to: (i) strengthen trust and understanding between the three participating border communities and their respective local authorities on existing vulnerabilities and grievances, as well as how to address them; (ii) improve the capacity of community platforms to facilitate dialogue between communities, local authorities and border security officials; (iii) enhance awareness and commitment to mainstream the human security approach and gender equality into the national border management strategy; and (iv) increase knowledge and skills amongst participating border communities to withstand existing risks and vulnerabilities, and mitigate and prevent future challenges.



DURATION

December 2021 — May 2023



UN IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES

IOM, UNFPA



OTHER KEY PARTNERS

National Peace Council, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development



BENEFICIARIES

1,302,718 persons



TOTAL BUDGET

US\$ 300,000

POOLING OF RESOURCES



Beneficiaries

The programme directly benefits 1,302,718 people in the communities of Namoo, Pulimakom and Missiga Pusiga, especially the participating local authorities, religious and traditional leaders, as well as women and youth groups.

Applying the Human Security approach

Through the application of the human security approach, the programme supports communities to articulate their grievances and vulnerabilities, as well as to design and implement local solutions in an inclusive and participatory manner.

Through a human security perception study, individuals within participating border communities in northern Ghana, including women and youth, will define how best to respond to current and emerging risks and vulnerabilities. Coupled with town hall meetings and improved dialogue mechanisms at the local level, communities will determine their priority insecurities based on bottom-up strategies that will enable them to develop their resilience to difficult situations.

Using the human security approach, the programme proposes to complement and enhance the traditional hard security-based model by identifying vulnerabilities/grievances that could be exploited by Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs) and advancing locally owned solutions to address them. It also facilitates an in-depth analysis of the situation in select border communities in northern Ghana. This analysis enables the development of solutions that are grounded in local realities, capacities and coping mechanisms, while also informed by national and regional particularities.

Moreover, the programme adopts a hybrid bottom-up and top-down approach to improve social cohesion and community resilience, which are mutually reinforcing. In doing so, the programme can result in a proactive rather than reactive response to the threat posed by VEOs and the vulnerabilities they can seek to exploit.

Achievements

- The programme conducted participatory vulnerability assessment studies in three select border communities to understand the people's views on existing needs and grievances. These studies highlighted significant economic challenges, such as unemployment and high living costs, and were used by District Assemblies to incorporate the findings into their medium-term development plans, strengthening local border management.
- To address the identified vulnerabilities, the programme implemented livelihood projects, including the provision of 10 mechanized boreholes for irrigation, benefiting approximately 400 farmers. These initiatives helped stabilize the local economy, reduce poverty, and increase food security. Additionally, the programme conducted workshops on leadership, entrepreneurship, and income generation for 384 community members, enhancing their resilience to economic and security shocks. This resilience is crucial for sustaining development gains, strengthening social cohesion, and maintaining peace.
- The programme also established and strengthened community dialogue platforms, which facilitated ongoing communication and trust between border communities and their local authorities. Sensitization activities and capacity-building sessions on violent extremism were conducted to raise awareness of the risks and indicators of radicalization. Training sessions on violent extremism and early warning mechanisms were delivered, while radio discussions and jingles broadcasted in local languages educated approximately 6,500 people on border security threats and sexual and gender-based violence.



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