

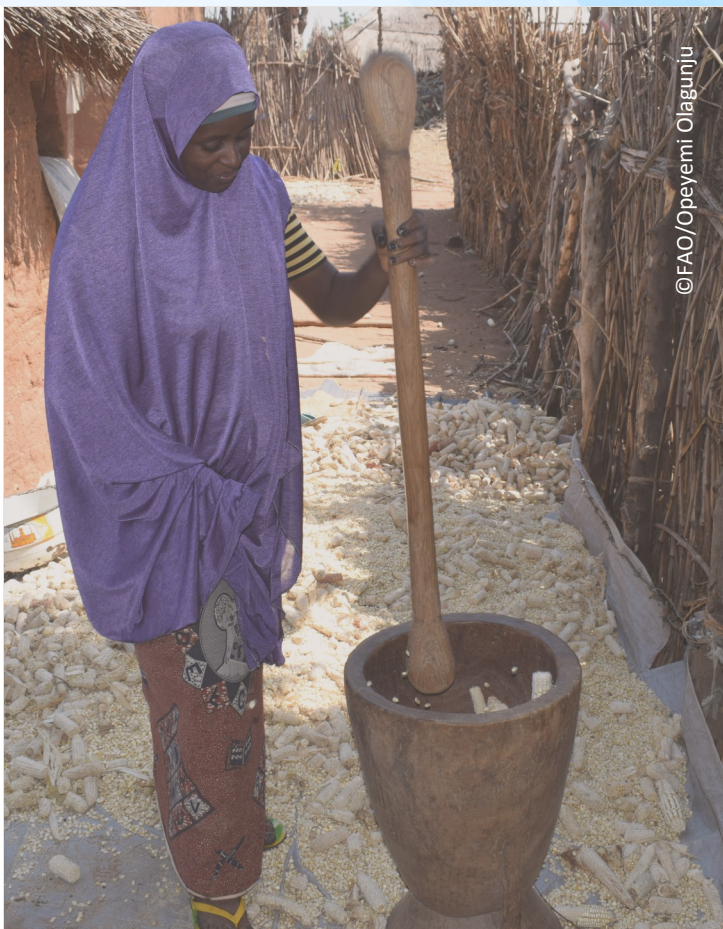


Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

Tales of a **new** beginning

FAO's 2020 rainy season
programme restarts
livelihoods among
conflict-affected farmers
in northeast Nigeria





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Appreciation to partners

More production means more food and income!

Dear partners,

Welcome to our publication on the 2020 rainy season farming interventions in northeast Nigeria. We bring testimonies by beneficiaries with whom we work to rebuild their lives as a result of the prolonged armed insurgency and the impact of COVID-19.

Since 2016, FAO has been implementing the interventions among host communities and internally displaced people (IDPs) in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe (BAY) states to improve food security and nutrition situation. So far the results on the ground are very positive with the supported farmers recording higher yields per hectare than was the case before. This means more food and income for households.

This is such a milestone that FAO together with other partners would like to sustain for a bigger impact and wider reach. It adds momentum to our other on-going programmes in the region including dry season crop production, farmer field schools, livestock restocking and Safe Access to Fuel and Energy (SAFE), among others.

We appreciate the continued support from partners enabling us to record these successes. Together we can achieve bigger and build-back better in the BAY states.

Thank you!



Fred Kafeero

FAO Representative in Nigeria and to ECOWAS

KEY FACTS ABOUT FAO'S 2020 RAINY SEASON SUPPORT



A total of 63 300 households (about 378 000 individuals) reached.



111.6 metric tonnes of assorted seeds distributed to the beneficiaries.



150 metric tonnes of fertilizers were distributed to the beneficiaries.



An increase of 40 percent higher in cereal crop yields among beneficiaries



Over 53 175 metric tonnes of cereals, vegetables and legumes/pulses produced



Over 3.4 million people (568 665 households) reached since 2016



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Ubandoma community, Adamawa State: Jouro amazed by the yield from his farm cultivated with seeds provided by FAO



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Fariyah community, Jere Local Government Area Borno State: Modu Bukar harvests fast-growing Amaranth from his farm

Better and more maize cobs



High yielding seeds exceed farmers' expectations

Jouro Umaru has spent at least 85 percent of his lifetime in Ubandoma community in Adamawa State. Now around 60 years of age, Jouro was barely a teenager when his clan migrated from Gombe State to settle in the area.

He cannot recall much of what happened then, but in terms of farming in his community Jouro is an institutional memory. He has been a farmer all his life, at some point he had over 500 livestock including goats and sheep. He also had a farmland on which he cultivated various crops.

When insurgents attacked his community in 2018, Juoro and his fellow villagers fled to safety, abandoning their farms, livestock and food stocks.

“The attackers took everything we had,” he says. Many months later when the villagers returned, they had nothing to fall back on.



Ubandoma community, Adamawa State: Harvests from family farms generate processing opportunities for rural women.

“The seeds we got were lifesavers, they gave us a chance to rebuild our lives faster than we thought,” Jouro says. The local varieties of maize, which the farmers were accustomed to, typically produced one cob per stick but the variety distributed by FAO produced better and more cobs of maize per stick. Therefore, with a small portion of land, the farmers were able to cultivate and harvest more.

The volatile security environment in the BAY states has limited accessibility to farmland for cultivation. The availability of high-yielding seed varieties has enabled the returnee farmers to maximize the productivity of the land they can access, significantly boosting food security and income generation. Women beneficiaries who received vegetable kits shared similar experiences.

The varieties of vegetable seeds they received were fastgrowing, which enabled them to harvest enough to meet household consumption needs and to sell the surplus for extra income. Jouro is amazed by the harvest he got from the size of land he cultivated.

A post-harvest survey by FAO revealed that the harvest allowed households to have food coverage for an average of 5.3 months. He expects to have a similar experience in the next farming season, the average yield of maize by FAO supported farmers in the 2020 rainy season rose by 231 kg from 2019. For Jouro and for many other farmers who lost their livelihoods to the conflict, the support provided by FAO has enabled them to start building back better.

Who wants the all-nutritious *Dambu*?



Harvest reboots processing opportunities for rural women

Considered highly nutritious, *Dambu*, a local delicacy in some parts of northern Nigeria, is prepared using a combination of cereal (maize or millet) and vegetables which are ground together and steamed over the fire. According to Maikudi Isa, a 40-year-old farmer with a household of eight, it was a meal that his family and his community used to enjoy. “For the first time in my lifetime, we could not prepare *Dambu*. If you do not have the ingredients, how do you make it?” explains Maikudi.

Returning to a ransacked house after insurgents attacked their community and carted away their food stocks, it was difficult for Maikudi and his family to access food and meet their basic needs. Things changed after he had a bountiful harvest from his maize farm, cultivated with seeds he received during the FAO 2020 rainy season programme.

Today, his wife can make *Dambu* for the family and for sale. Food processing has traditionally been a vocation for women in northeast Nigeria, enabling them to generate income using



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Asiya Mohammed invested earnings from processed okra in the production of the local seasoning, *Dadawa*



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Mrs. Maikudi happily preparing the ingredients for making the famous *Dambu*

easily accessible ingredients sourced from their family farms. Many of the households supported by FAO during the 2020 rainy season processed part of their harvests for sale.

Food processing is key to rural household income and nutrition. Adding value to harvested crops enables rural households to generate additional income which is often used to purchase other classes of food not cultivated on their farms. By processing the okra she harvested from her FAO-supported farm, Asiya Mohammed a 35 year old mother of four from Ubandoma community, has generated income that has enabled her to invest in the production of *Dadawa*, a local seasoning. Her new trade has enabled her to earn an income even during the offseason when there are no harvests to sell.



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The joyous Mr. Maikudi in a group



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The harvest from his FAO supported farm enabled Kunduli to restart his kolanut trade with support

Buying kolanut with one's own money

 *Kunduli's profit increases*

Kolanut, popularly called *Goro* in northern Nigeria, aids metabolism and is often eaten for refreshment purposes. For Kunduli Mustapha from Dikwa community in Borno State, kolanut means more than refreshment and boosting metabolism in human body. Now in his 50s, he started trading kolanut when he was just 17 years old. All of his other trades, including a robust farming and livestock trade, were built around the kolanut trade.

In 2014, Kunduli lost about 100 bags of cowpea and other crops to the attacks that led to Dikwa residents to desert the community for safety. After Kunduli returned home some years later, he could barely make ends meet.

To restart his livelihood, Kunduli began to trade kolanut again, buying on credit for resale. “When I used to buy on credit, it was Nigerian Naira 3 000 for a Takadda (a paper wrap). But today, with my own money I buy at Nigerian Naira 2 300,” Kunduli states. He received cowpea seeds from FAO during the 2020 rainy season and earned around Nigerian Naira 50 000 from the sale of his surplus harvest. He invested these earnings in his Kolanut business, buying in bulk.

As a result, Kunduli has managed to increase his profit margin, from less than Nigerian Naira 1 000 to nearly Nigerian Naira 2 000 per wrap and feels more hopeful of a better life now that he has his own capital to invest.

“It is like being in control of one’s life,” he says. With the extensive destruction of rural livelihoods owing to the ongoing crisis in northeast Nigeria, agriculture is the foundation for the restoration of livelihoods in the region.

Empowering disadvantaged smallholder farmers with critical inputs enables them to actively participate in the recovery process, thereby strengthening the humanitarian—development nexus.



Kunduli looking into the future with high hopes as his kolanuts business is picking up again.

Despite successes, climate change effects still challenging farmers

FAO's 2020 rainy season programme supported food production and income generation among vulnerable households and facilitated the gradual rebuilding of livelihoods. However, climate variability poses a significant challenge to vulnerable livelihoods.

Alhaji Yaya, a farmer in Adamawa State, who received cowpea seeds from FAO, explained that climate change was real and was affecting his crops.

In Dikwa community, Borno State, some farmers described how flooding had affected their crops while others complained of drought. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has further slowed the recovery of livelihoods in northeast Nigeria.

As we continue applying multisectoral approach in tackling this challenge, rural households in northeast Nigeria still need further support to cope with the situation.

On climate change, FAO is working with communities and state governments to build capacity and support with necessary equipment, improved seeds resistant to drought

and diseases, fertilizers and other farm inputs. Besides, FAO supported the affected communities in the affected states and is now working with federal and state governments to build capacities for disaster preparedness and response.

FAO has also finalized the development of the Resilience Strategy which is now being rolled out in the country in order to strengthen the farmers' ability to prepare and respond to disasters and mitigate effects when they occur.



Yahaya from Ubandoma, Adamawa State says that climate change is real and that it is affecting his crops.

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FAO Nigeria appreciates the continued support from all other partners that made it possible to achieve all these positive results in northeast Nigeria.

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