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Touching Lives,
Transforming Households,
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Project Magazine



CULTIVATING RESILIENCE: A NEW HARVEST IN NORTHWEST NIGERIA

A Special Feature on the FCDO-funded Resilience Building and Smallholder Farmers Support Project, implemented by Life Helpers Initiative and WFP

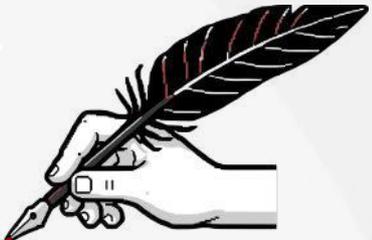


World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



Editorial



NOTE

Welcome to the first edition of Cultivating Resilience. This feature tells the story of a transformative journey unfolding across the farmlands of Sokoto and Katsina States. Over six months, from inception to impact, the Resilience Building and Smallholder Farmers Support Project, a partnership between the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the World Food Programme (WFP), and Life Helpers Initiative (LHI) has moved from planning to profound action.

Inside these pages, you will find the stories behind the statistics, the voices of the farmers, the dedication of the partners, and the tangible progress being made across Northwest Nigeria. Covering the intensive period from September 2025 to February 2026, this report captures a season of laying strong foundations and celebrating the first fruits of resilience, growth, and renewed hope.

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Executive MESSAGE



Across communities in Sokoto and Katsina States, hundreds of families are beginning to see new possibilities. Through our partnership with the World Food Programme and with the generous support of UK Aid, Life Helpers Initiative is supporting vulnerable households with farming support, financial inclusion, and community strengthening activities.

From stakeholder meetings to beneficiary registration, the project started with one clear goal: to help families move from food insecurity toward sustainable livelihoods. Today, thousands of smallholder farmers and vulnerable households are actively participating, receiving tools, training, and opportunities that are changing their futures.

The journey is not only about numbers; it is about dignity. Farmers who once struggled to access financial services now have bank accounts. Women are organizing into savings groups and leading their communities toward economic independence. Communities are taking ownership of development activities, ensuring that the impact we create together will last for years to come.

We are grateful to our donors, our partners, and most importantly, the resilient communities who welcome us. The impact continues to grow.

Uzo Okpara
The Project Manager (LHI)



The

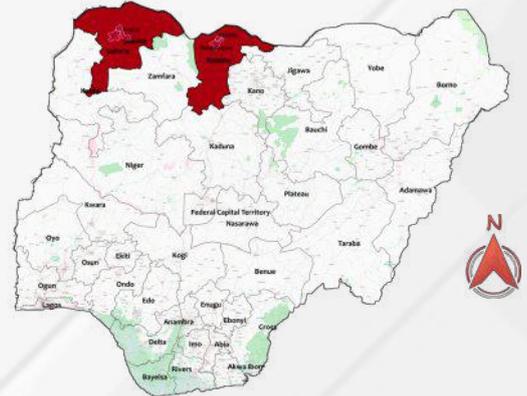
OVERVIEW

Big

PICTURE:

The project addresses challenges faced by smallholder farmers in Sokoto and Katsina States, such as unpredictable rainfall, limited access to quality farming inputs, weak market linkages, and limited financial services.

In response, it adopts a holistic strategy designed to build resilience through multiple reinforcing pathways that move households from vulnerability to stability and growth.



01

Immediate Support:

Cash-Based Transfers (CBT) provide a critical safety net, enabling vulnerable households to meet urgent needs while also investing in small businesses and livelihood opportunities.

02

Agricultural Strengthening:

The provision of high-quality seeds and fertilizer, combined with training on Good Agronomic Practices (GAP), boosts productivity, improves crop yields, and supports dry-season farming to extend income opportunities beyond the traditional growing cycle.



03

Financial Inclusion:

Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) empower communities, especially women, to save, access small loans, and build a financial identity.

04

Infrastructure & Digital Innovation:

The construction of Farmer Service Centers and the deployment of the AgriFIMS digital platform create long-term, sustainable systems for market access, processing, and data-driven support



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The Impact

TIMELINE

Project at a Glance:
Major Activities and
Milestones Across
Sokoto and Katsina

Project Implementation Timeline
September 2025 - March 2026 • Agricultural Development Program

9,025 Beneficiaries | 2 Farmers Service Hubs

Project Launch Foundation Rollout System Strengthening Milestone

Task / Activity Sep 2025 Oct 2025 Nov 2025 Dec 2025 Jan 2026 Feb 2026 Mar 2026

Project Launch & Targeting

LGA Inception Meetings (4 LGAs)	█						
Community Engagement & CTC Formati...	█						
Training of Enumerators (32 trainees)	█						
Beneficiary Targeting (9,025 profiled)	█						
SHF & CBT Beneficiary Registration		█					
VSLA & Farmer Group Formation		█					
Infrastructure MoU & Site Surveys		█					

Foundation

Beneficiary Registration & Targeting		Beneficiary Reg...					
VSLA & Farmer Group Formation		VSLA & Farmer G...					
Infrastructure (Wamakko Hub)		Infrastructure...					
Lead Farmer & PMC Training							
BVN/NIN Enrollment Campaign		BVN/NIN Enrollm...					

Rollout

Seed & Fertilizer Distribution			Seed & Fertiliz...				
Cash-for-Work Activities			Cash-for-Work A...				
AgriFIMS Development & Prototype			AgriFIMS Develo...				
Wamakko Hub Commissioning					◆		

System Strengthening

Continuous SHF Monitoring (107 farms)				Continuous SHF ...			
All 64 VSLA Groups Registered				All 64 VSLA Gr...			
VSLA Savings Accumulated (₦7.46M)				VSLA Savings Ac...			
Cash-for-Work Completion (95%+)				Cash-for-Work C...			
Wamakko Hub Operations							
Stakeholder Engagement (94 participan...)							
AgriFIMS 60-70% Development							
Farmer Monitoring (Harvest Stage)						Farmer Monitor...	
GPS Farm Mapping (2,748 farms)						GPS Farm Mappi...	
AgriFIMS Data Migration (3,371)						AgriFIMS Data M...	
AgriFIMS Training (74 participants)							
VSLA Strengthening & Certification						VSLA Strengthen...	
Batagarawa Center Construction (95%)						Batagarawa Cent...	
Batagarawa Hub 100% Completion							◆
Batagarawa Hub Commissioning							◆

64 VSLA Groups Active & Registered | ₦7.46M Total Savings | 2,748 Farms GPS Mapped | 3,371 Records Migrated | 95% CFW Attendance 95%+ Participation

Coordination

SUCCESS

Synergy in Action: Building Trust from the Ground Up

Effective coordination has been the backbone of this project's success. From local government secretariats to the halls of community palaces, the project has fostered a culture of transparency and collaboration

Joint Monitoring for Accountability:

In January 2026, the project hosted a joint monitoring visit by WFP and FCDO teams. The mission went beyond a simple site visit. They conducted gender-segregated Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with 23 women and 17 men, ensuring that feedback was honest and uninhibited. Key Informant Interviews with beneficiary groups provided deep insights into the lived experience of the project's impact.

Government Engagement:

The project has actively engaged with state and local government actors. A courtesy visit to the Katsina State Ministry of Agriculture and an advocacy visit to the Kware LGA secretariat have solidified local ownership. In Kware, local authorities expressed "strong satisfaction" with the project's impact, reaffirming their commitment to continued collaboration. This ground-level buy-in is essential for the long-term sustainability of the interventions.



Voice of Change

REAL LIVES

REAL IMPACT

HARVESTING PROSPERITY TWICE A YEAR



Jafaro Baro, a 44 year-old father of nine from Katsina LGA, has transformed his farming through improved seeds and training from the WFP/LHI project. Previously limited by poor seeds and low yields, he now uses high-quality cabbage and tomato seeds that mature in just 60 days, compared to 80 days previously, allowing two harvests in the time of one.

"Wannan irin da aka ba mu yana girma cikin kwanaki sittin kacal." (This new seed matures in just sixty days.)

His cabbages are larger and healthier, selling for ₦500 to ₦600 each compared to the previous ₦175 to ₦200. Buyers now come directly to his farm, and he returns home with money daily.

"Yanzu babu rana da zan koma gida babu kudi a hannu na," he says. (Now there is no day I return home without money in my hand.)

With improved practices and strategic mono-cropping, Jafaro expects to double his seasonal income, a powerful example of how quality inputs and training build resilience.



FROM HUNGER TO HOPE: JAMILA'S DAILY MIRACLE

Jamila Malami, a 50-year-old mother of seven from Wammako LGA, transformed her family's life through a ₦10,000 loan from her VSLA group. Previously struggling with food insecurity and able to send only four of her children to school, Jamila used the loan to start a soya bean cake business. She now earns over ₦3,000 daily, supports her husband, and has enrolled all her children in school. Beyond financial gain, she credits the VSLA training and group support for bringing peace and stability to her home.



"Gidana yanzu yana da salama, muna cin abinci sosai," (My home is now peaceful, and we eat well.)

Jamila's journey shows how small, well supported investments can restore dignity, strengthen families, and build resilient communities.

"Na gode wa WFP da LHI. Sun ba mu damar rayuwa mai kyau," (Thank you to WFP and LHI. You gave us a chance at a better life.)

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FROM EIGHT YEARS OF STRUGGLE TO RENEWED HOPE

For eight years, Murja Yari, a 50-year-old widow and mother of 11 from Katsina, Nigeria, struggled to survive. After her husband's death, she was left with no steady income, business, or savings, and faced the overwhelming task of feeding her large household alone. Life became a daily battle against hunger.



"There were times when we spent up to five days without anything to eat. I was afraid my children would be forced to beg," Murja recalls.

Despite the hardship, she worked hard to protect her children's dignity. She took in laundry, washing clothes for neighbors, but the small payments were never enough. Even her eldest daughter, who had reached marriageable age, remained at home—not for lack of suitors, but because the family could not afford the basic preparations for a wedding.



Murja's turning point came when she learned about the World Food Programme's Cash-Based Transfer (CBT) intervention, implemented in partnership with LHI. Initially, she was skeptical. "I thought it was a lie," she admits. "But when I finally received the ₦75,000 WFP Cash-Based Transfer support, it felt like someone had given me one million naira."

With her children, Murja made a strategic decision to invest part of the money in food supplies—10 measures of rice, five measures of beans, cooking oil, and soya beans—to start a small food-selling business in their community. This initiative built on a lesson from the past: years earlier, her son had suggested selling donated food in the market, remembering how their father once traded. Without capital, that small effort had faded, but this time, they had the resources to sustain it.

Today, Murja sells food from morning until evening. She has also joined a Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA), allowing her to save money weekly. What began as a desperate struggle is now a path toward stability.



After eight years of uncertainty, Murja is rebuilding her life. With determination, family support, and the catalytic impact of WFP's cash assistance, she is moving forward—one meal, one sale, and one hopeful day at a time.



SAVING A FAMILY BUSINESS

For over 15 years, Mustafa Almajiri, a 44-year-old father of five from Batagarawa, Nigeria, earned a living washing and selling traditional Hausa caps. But by March 2025, his small business was failing. Customer turnout had declined, and his income could no longer support his two wives and five children.

“The market was very slow and my family’s needs were increasing. I was already thinking about closing my shop because I could not keep up,” Mustafa recalls.

At that critical moment, he received ₦75,000 in financial support through a WFP livelihood initiative, funded by the UK Government and implemented with LHI. The assistance became his turning point.

Mustafa invested wisely, first purchasing a ram and cap-cleaning supplies to improve his services. Later, he sold the ram and used the profits to expand into buying and selling caps, not just washing them. This diversification strengthened his income and attracted more customers.

The improvements brought renewed pride. “When my youngest son told me that my shop looks more beautiful now, I felt very proud,” he says.

Now Mustafa offers both cap sales and washing services, creating greater stability for his family. He also hopes to enroll his younger children in formal education. Through timely support, Mustafa transformed his struggling business into a growing enterprise with a more resilient future.



A Group That Grows Together

In Bankanu community, Kware LGA, Sokoto State, 25 women formed a Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) to strengthen their financial resilience. Through weekly savings, the group successfully mobilized ₦196,000, plus a ₦3,390 social fund, within their first cycle.

Rather than providing loans to individual members, the Bankanu VSLA made a collective decision to pool their resources and invest jointly. They purchased three bags of maize, stored safely for future resale. This group strategy reduces individual risk, builds trust among members, and generates profit that benefits everyone equally.

The Bankanu VSLA demonstrates how empowered women can leverage savings and solidarity to create shared economic opportunities. Their approach strengthens livelihoods, enables community investment, and supports greater financial stability for all members and their households.

FOUR COBS ON ONE STALK



At 65, Karba Mohamad, a father of 13, from Dabaibayawa Ward, Batagarawa LGA has farming since childhood with his father. Despite years of experience, inconsistent seed quality and rising input costs limited his dry season farming potential. Through the WFP supported Resilience Project implemented by LHI and funded by FCDO, Karba received improved maize and tomato seeds, fertilizer, and technical guidance to optimize production.

“A rayuwata ban taba ganin masara mai kwaya hudu a jiki daya ba,” he says with pride. (In my lifetime, I have never seen maize with four cobs on one stalk.)

The improved inputs significantly boosted his yields. He anticipates at least ten additional bags of maize this season compared to previous years. Already, he has sold four baskets of tomatoes while maintaining household consumption.

“Noman rani yana sa ka girbi sau biyu maimakon zama babu aiki,” he adds. (Dry season farming allows you to harvest twice instead of remaining idle.)

Karba’s thriving farm now serves as a learning point for neighbouring farmers. His experience demonstrates how access to quality inputs and knowledge enhances agricultural productivity, food availability, and economic resilience within farming communities.



FROM SILENCE TO STRENGTH: ATIKA'S JOURNEY FROM HOPELESSNESS TO HEALING

Atika Abas, a 40-year-old mother of six from Gabashi Ward in Wammako LGA, Sokoto State, has faced profound loss but has also found a renewed sense of hope. Having tragically lost three of her children over the years, life had turned into a relentless struggle.

Her husband sells vegetables, while Atika used to process rice, but without any capital, her business fell apart. By 2025, poverty had left her in a state of stagnation no business, no income, and no dignity.

“A wancan lokacin, rayuwa ta tsaya cak. Ina zaune kawai a gida ba tare da aiki ba,” (At that time, my life was stuck. I was just sitting at home doing nothing.)

Everything took a turn for the better when she joined the Gabashi VSLA, a program supported by the Life Helpers Initiative (LHI) and the World Food Programme (WFP). With a ₦20,000 loan, she was able to buy water, firewood, and a bag of unprocessed rice to kickstart her rice processing business again.

In just one week, she processed and sold the rice, allowing her to purchase another bag. Food began to flow back into her home, and stability returned to her children.

“Cikin sati guda na sayar, na sake sayen wani buhu. Gida ya fara samun abinci,” (Within one week I sold and bought another bag. Food returned to our home.)

For the first time, Atika was able to pay for her children's PTA and school needs without relying on her husband. Her kids now attend school regularly and even help her with the business.

Initially, she worried about keeping up with the weekly VSLA contributions. But just two months later, she can now afford five bags of unprocessed rice, sell processed rice, and even gets paid by community members to process rice for them.

“Yanzu mutane suna biyana in sarrafa musu shinkafa,” (Now people pay me to process rice for them.)



Her daughter reflects on the transformation:

“Yanzu mamamu kullum tana murmushi. Muna cin abinci, kuma ba a dawo da mu gida saboda kudin jarabawa ko PTA,” (Now our mother is always smiling. We eat well, and we are no longer sent home because of exam fees or PTA.)

Atika's story is not just about money it is about restored dignity, stability, and purpose.

“Na gode wa LHI da WFP. Sun dawo da rayuwa cikin gidana,” (Thank you to LHI and WFP. You brought life back into my home.)

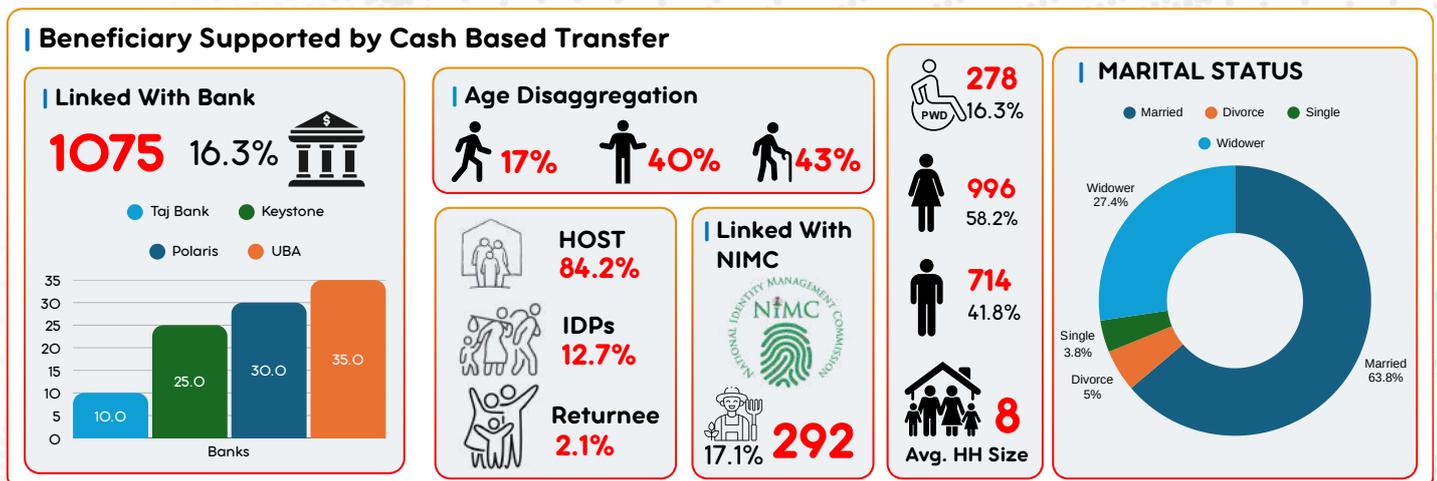
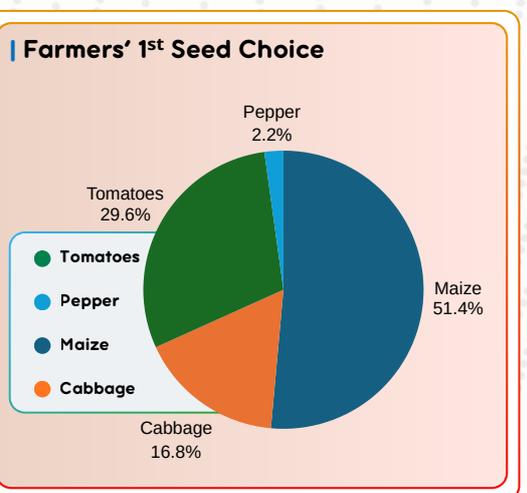
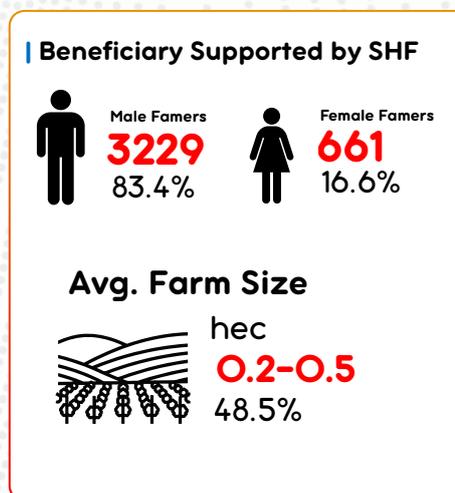
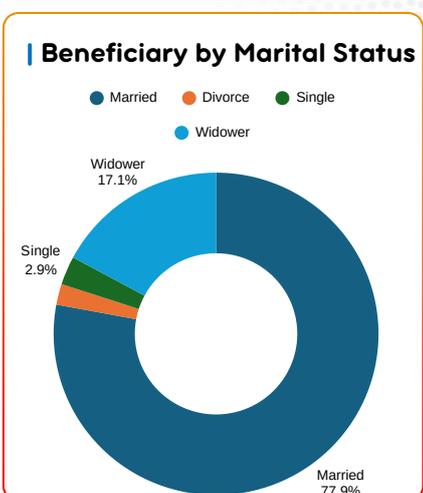
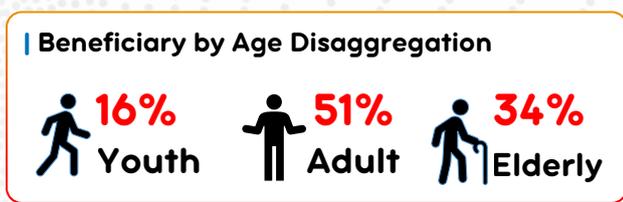
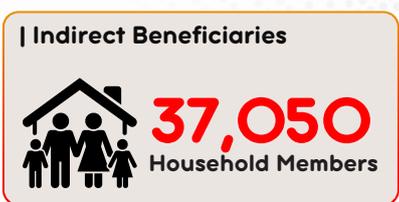
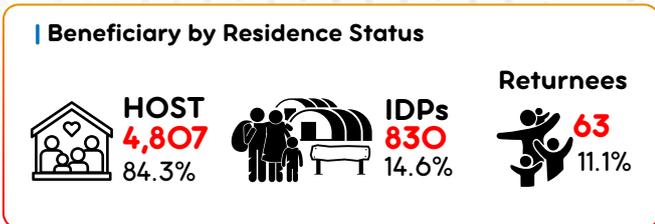
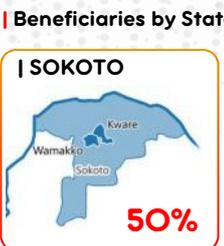
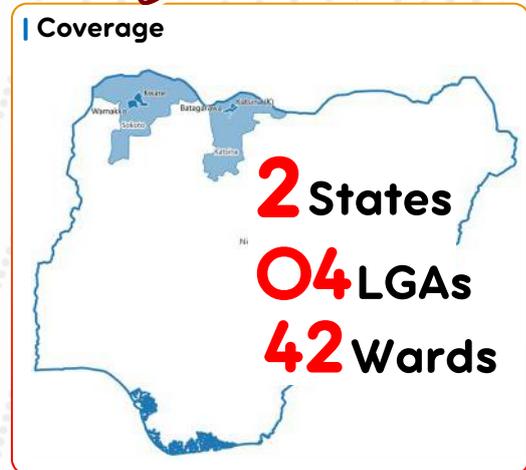
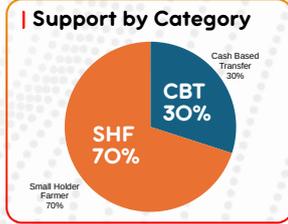
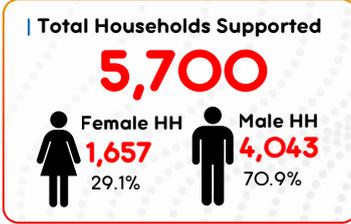
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Data Digest

IN DATA
WE TRUST



World Food Programme

PROJECT IN NORTHWESTERN NIGER (SOKOTO & KATSINA STATES) KWARE AND WAMMAKO DISTRICTS SOKOTO STATE

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NOMA TUSHEN ARZIKI HUB

Farming Wealth

Wamakko LGA, Sokoto State

FROM FOUNDATION TO FULL OPERATION

In the face of climate shocks and market disruptions, the resilience of smallholder farmers in Wamakko LGA, Sokoto State is being fortified by a combination of physical infrastructure

- Core Agricultural Services
 - Processing Power
 - Milling Capacity
 - Inventory Strengthened
 - Equipment & Mechanization

What began as a construction site in October 2025 has transformed into a bustling community asset. The Noma Tushen Arziki Hub (meaning "Farming Wealth" in Hausa) was officially commissioned on 27th November 2025, marking a major program achievement. The facility was designed to be a one stop shop for agricultural support, and by December, it had transitioned fully from infrastructure development to active service provision.

DECEMBER

2025 REPORT EXCERPT:

"The hub officially commenced operations on 10 December 2025... Since the commencement of operations, farmers have actively utilized hub equipment and agro-processing services, indicating early demand and relevance."

- Hire Services
- Cold Storage
- Fish Farm
- Car Wash
- Charging Dock

Expanding Services: BEYOND THE FARM

By February 2026, the hub was not just operational; it was expanding. Monitoring reports confirm that all units were functioning at full capacity, with daily supervision by the Facility Management Committee (FMC) ensuring accountability.



Demonstration Farm:

Showcases mixed cropping and seeding techniques for farmers to learn.



Hire Services:

Community members can rent farm tools through an accessible hire-to-use model.



Milling Capacity:

Upgraded from 1 to 3 rice milling machines, achieving 200% capacity increase.



Fish Farm:

New unit stocks 500–700 fingerlings per cycle for fish production.



Cold Storage:

Provides produce preservation, cooling, and ice blocks for dry-season needs.



Charging Dock:

A solar-powered phone charging station providing essential community energy services.



Inventory Strengthened:

New assets added in January 2026 include: 12 head pans, 5 wheelbarrows, irrigation pipes and 3 rolls of irrigation hoses



Training Space:

Serves as a venue for smallholder farmer training, VSLA meetings, and nutrition demonstrations (e.g., "Tom Brown")



Governance:

Active FMC oversees daily operations, ensuring community ownership and accountability.



Car Wash:

Youth-focused enterprise created from community demand and FMC input.



Mobile Solar Irrigation:

Solar-powered wheelbarrow pumps water for all-season farm irrigation.



Community Reach:

Focal point for economic and social activities strengthening Wamakko livelihoods.

Gidan Arziki

FARMER SERVICE CENTER

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Batagarawa Farmer Service Center stands as the second major agricultural hub being established under the FCDO-funded project in Northwest Nigeria. Located in Batagarawa Local Government Area of Katsina State, this facility is designed to replicate the success of the Wamakko model while addressing the unique agricultural needs of Katsina's smallholder farmers.

GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

Learning from the Wamakko model, the project prioritized sustainability from the start. A Facility Management Committee (FMC) was formally established even before construction finished. This committee comprises 20 members (12 male, 8 female), ensuring inclusive governance and women's representation. To prepare for launch, selected farming equipment was transferred to the center and formally handed over to the FMC lead, strengthening accountability and asset management.



The Batagarawa

FEBRUARY 2026

REPORT EXCERPT:

"In Batagarawa LGA, Katsina State, the construction progress of the Farmer Service Center reached 95% completion... Structural development advanced to the roofing stage earlier in the cycle and is now near operational readiness, with all key structural components in place."

Core Agricultural Services

-  Processing Power
-  Milling Capacity
-  Inventory Strengthened
-  Equipment & Mechanization

-  Hire Services
-  Cold Storage
-  Fish Farm
-  Car Wash
-  Charging Dock

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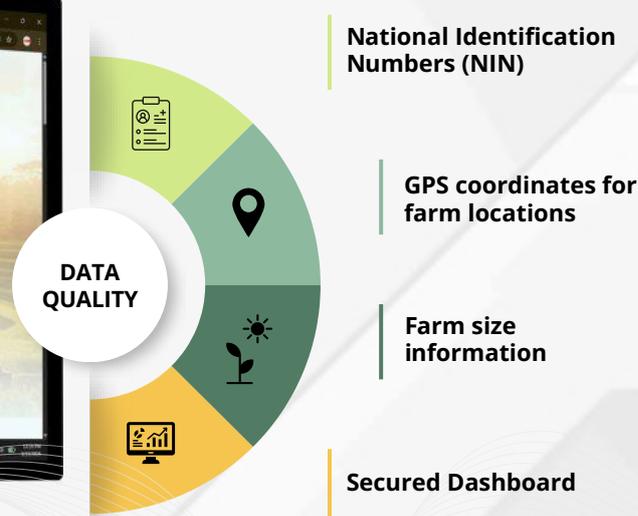
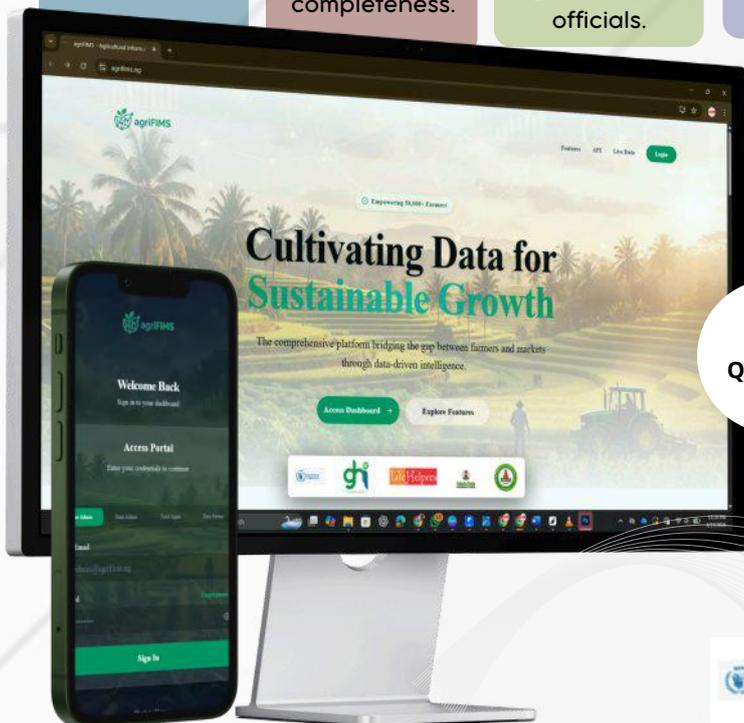
Digital Revolution

The AgriFMIS Overview

The Agricultural Farmer Management Information System (AgriFMIS) represents the digital backbone of the FCDO-funded resilience project in Northwest Nigeria. Designed to enable data-driven decision-making, this innovative platform aims to create a comprehensive, geo-referenced database of smallholder farmers across Sokoto and Katsina States. By leveraging modern cloud technology and user-centered design, AgriFMIS transforms how agricultural data is collected, managed, and utilized for the benefit of farmers and stakeholders alike.

The Six Key Technical Work Packages

System Architecture and Framework	Data Migration and Validation Protocols	User Interface Standards (UI/UX)	Training Modules	Sustainability Plan	Cloud Deployment and Domain
The foundational blueprint defining the platform's structure, components, and technical specifications.	Standards and procedures for securely transferring existing beneficiary data into the new system while ensuring accuracy and completeness.	Design guidelines ensuring the platform is intuitive, accessible, and user-friendly for farmers, extension workers, and government officials.	Structured learning materials and curricula designed to build capacity among users and administrators of the system.	A long-term strategy outlining system maintenance, upgrades, financial viability, and institutional ownership beyond the project lifecycle.	The platform was successfully deployed on Amazon Web Services (AWS) and activated on a dedicated domain: www.agrifims.ng



National Identification Numbers (NIN)

GPS coordinates for farm locations

Farm size information

Secured Dashboard



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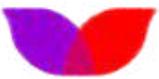
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LIFE HELPERS INITIATIVE A row of small social media icons for Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube.





NIDAKE

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Easy to wash



Eco-friendly



No chafing



Save money



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Great for sports



NIDAKE Reusable pad

...For you, For me, For every women





WESPEAK (MUYI MAGANA)

WeSpeak, also known as Muyi Magana, is a weekly radio program implemented by Life Helpers Initiative in Sokoto State and aired weekly by Radio Nigeria (Royal F.M 101.5). The program cuts across all thematic areas, health, education, livelihood, agriculture, and gender equity.

The platform provides timely information, encourages dialogue, and creates space for questions, feedback, and external complaints. Community members share concerns, receive referrals, and learn about available services. Civil society organizations are also invited to use the platform to raise awareness about their work and promote collaboration.

The radio program has touched the lives of many people across Sokoto State by increasing awareness, promoting positive behavior change, and strengthening accountability.

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OUR MISSION

Be a leading non-governmental organisation working to maximise all opportunities to empower the marginalized people.

OUR VISION

A more Fulfilled Life for Everyone

    **LIFE HELPERS INITIATIVE**

