

MIDLINE REPORT

People Centred Public Safety (PCPS) Project

PROJECT LOCATIONS

Benue State (Guma, Katsina-Ala, Agatu)

REPORTING PERIOD

September 2025 – October 2026

DATE SUBMITTED

October 2026

Implemented by Lawyers Alert. Funded by Open Society Foundations (OSF)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 24 February 2026, the Benue State Government formally adopted the People-Centred Public Safety (PCPS) Model as state policy, marking the project's most significant institutional achievement during the reporting period. This development establishes a policy foundation for integrating community participation, conflict prevention and accountability into the state's public safety framework. And creates opportunities to sustain and expand the approach beyond the current funding period.

Supported by the Open Society Foundations (OSF), Lawyers Alert (LA) implements the People-Centred Public Safety (PCPS) project in Agatu, Guma and Katsina-Ala Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Benue State. The project builds on three years of work to operationalise relevant provisions of the Nigeria Police Act 2020 through Community Policing Committees (CPCs). This phase strengthens CPC functionality, promotes inclusive community participation, and improves conflict prevention and coordination with formal security institutions. During the reporting period, the PCPS project expanded to Agatu through the establishment of an inclusive CPC with representation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities.

The project's implementation is anchored in its integration within the People-Centred Public Safety Consortium, comprising eight organisations, coordinated by FIXED. The partnership brings together Lawyers Alert, Spaces for Change, Nextier, Dataphyte, SERAP, CJID, Citizen Gavel and the CLEEN Foundation, combining complementary expertise in community mobilisation, research, legal advocacy, institutional oversight, data systems and public communication. Its multidisciplinary approach strengthens capacities, improves networks, embeds accountability, generates and communicates evidence, and influences public safety policies and practices.

In Benue State, Lawyers Alert, the state's implementing partner under the PCPS project, leveraged the PCPS Consortium as a strategic platform to mobilise complementary expertise, strengthen project implementation and enhance results.

This included facilitating community entry for consortium partners, collaborating with Nextier and Dataphyte on research design and analysis, and contributing community perspectives to Nextier's policy work on community policing. Joint initiatives with SERAP, CJID, Citizen Gavel and Dataphyte advanced youth capacity strengthening, journalist engagement, public communication, evidence-based advocacy and legal accountability, including the PCPS impact documentary, state policing colloquium and litigation concerning the rights and protection of internally displaced persons.

Beyond Benue, Lawyers Alert facilitated cross-state learning with Spaces for Change in Bayelsa, while consortium-wide collaboration supported the Benue State project launch of the PCPS model, public safety dialogue and joint advocacy to the Inspector General of Police on inclusive community safety structures. Collectively, these efforts connected community experiences with research, legal action, public discourse and high-level policy engagement, demonstrating the added value of consortium collaboration in extending the project's reach and influence and opportunities for mutually reinforcing results across community, state and national levels.

Though safety is improving and life is gradually returning to normal in the project locations, there are still intermittent attacks, though much reduced. Against this backdrop, findings at midline demonstrate that the PCPS project, through the established CPCs is increasingly applying their capacities to prevent conflict escalation, protect vulnerable persons and facilitate community-led responses to emerging threats**.** In Gbajimba, Guma LGA, the CPCs under the project facilitated dialogues between Jukun and Hausa elders and religious leaders helped address recurring tensions, with no further clashes reported to the committee since the intervention. In a separate land dispute between the Mbakyase and Uyam

communities, CPC engagement helped avert a potentially dangerous excavation and encouraged the parties to pursue judicial resolution rather than confrontational measures.

The PCPS project, implemented by Lawyers Alert in Benue State, also demonstrated its effectiveness in mobilising timely, community-led protection responses through established local structures, particularly the Community Protection Committees (CPCs).

In Guma LGA, community intelligence enabled the CPC to intervene in a suspected attempt to lure six boys to an unknown destination, preventing their removal and facilitating the handover of the suspect to the Police for investigation. Beyond individual communities, the project facilitated dialogue involving Tiv and Kuteb stakeholders from Benue and Taraba States resulted in the establishment of a five-member Peace Committee and an agreement to pursue a permanent platform for continued engagement.

In Katsina-Ala, targeted outreach to market women, commercial drivers and students strengthened awareness of trafficking prevention, drug abuse and safe reporting mechanisms. Following these engagements, National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) leaders committed to supporting preventive measures among drivers, while radio outreach increased public awareness of PCPS community reporting channels, including a dedicated early warning contact number. Together, these examples demonstrate the practical application of mediation, early warning, community protection and referral mechanisms under the PCPS model, although broader changes in public safety conditions require continued monitoring.

Collaboration with government and security institutions has provided an important pathway towards institutional ownership and sustainability. Lawyers Alert's engagement with the Benue State Bureau of Homeland Security, the Nigeria Police Force and other stakeholders has strengthened opportunities for linking PCPS community-level interventions with formal security governance. The state-level multi-stakeholder Steering Committee provided a platform for strategic oversight and institutional dialogue, while the State Police Colloquium advanced discussions on civilian oversight, human rights safeguards and accountable policing. These relationships provide a foundation for translating the government's adoption of PCPS into operational arrangements and sustained support for community policing structures.

The replication of the PCPS approach in Kwande LGA, with support from other partners, further demonstrates interest in extending the model beyond the original OSF-supported locations. Cross-state learning exchanges with Spaces for Change also facilitated the sharing of community-level experiences. Although initial consortium coordination challenges were encountered, these were identified and addressed, reinforcing the importance of shared planning, clear responsibilities and continuous learning. Going forward, systematically connecting partner interventions and documenting their collective contribution to outcomes will be essential to demonstrating the partnership's effectiveness.

From a value-for-money perspective, the consortium approach leveraged complementary technical expertise, established community relationships and institutional networks to strengthen implementation and connect community-level protection efforts with research, legal accountability and policy advocacy. While cost-efficiency gains remain unquantified, this integrated approach broadened the project's interventions and strengthened opportunities for collective results.

Across 37 documented engagements and activities, PCPS recorded 4,785 participant attendances, comprising 3,086 males (64.5%) and 1,699 females (35.5%), including

24 attendances by persons with disabilities (0.5%). Participation covered Makurdi (1,675; 35.0%), Katsina-Ala (1,244; 26.0%), Guma (1,124; 23.5%), Agatu (622; 13.0%) and Abuja/FCT (120; 2.5%). Katsina-Ala and Guma jointly accounted for 2,368 attendances (49.5%), reflecting extensive community-level engagements, while Makurdi hosted major state-level policy dialogues, security-sector consultations and advocacy activities in collaboration with consortium partners, OSF, government and security institutions, and BENGONET. Community mobilisation, school engagements, sensitisation and media outreach further extended the project's reach beyond documented attendances. These figures represent attendances, not unique participants

Overall, the midline findings demonstrate that the PCPS project, implemented by Lawyers Alert in Benue State, has made progress across three interconnected dimensions. Strengthened community capacity to prevent and respond to public safety threats; enhanced strategic partnerships that leverage complementary expertise and connect community-level interventions with research, accountability and institutional engagement; and increased institutional ownership and policy recognition of the PCPS approach.

OSF's investment has strengthened community-led protection mechanisms and multidisciplinary partnerships that connect local safety concerns with wider governance and accountability processes. Emerging signs of improved community safety, including the reopening of schools and markets, the resumption of farming and trading, and women's return to livelihood activities in previously affected communities, suggest a gradual return to normalcy. Benue State's adoption of PCPS as state policy provides a critical foundation and opportunity for sustainability, but lasting results will depend on operationalising policy commitments, strengthening community-level protection structures and securing sustained institutional support and resources.

The remaining implementation period will prioritise consolidating PCPS implementation and CPC functionality, supporting policy operationalisation, strengthening consortium effectiveness and joint learning, and generating stronger evidence of protection outcomes, institutional responsiveness and sustainability.



For Benue's communities, safety isn't just the absence of an attack. As one local mother expressed at a recent meeting, safety is the ability for **her children to walk to school** and **her freedom to fry and sell bean cakes (akara) in the evening** without harassment.

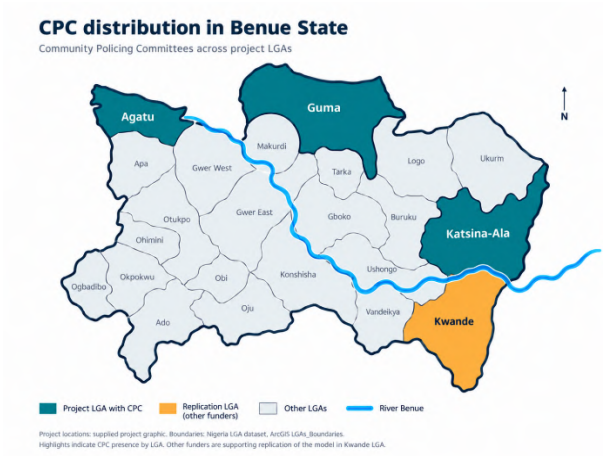
Rommy Mom
President, Lawyers Alert

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1.1. PROJECT CONTEXT

Benue State continues to experience persistent insecurity, recurrent attacks on farming communities and conflict-related displacement, particularly in communities exposed to cross-boundary conflict dynamics. In Agatu, Guma and Katsina-Ala Local Government Areas (LGAs), these conditions continue to threaten lives, livelihoods and community stability. Although attacks and displacement have not demonstrably declined, reported patterns of violence suggest increasing complexity, with periods of relative calm interrupted by severe and sometimes coordinated attacks. The June 2025 attacks in Yelewata, Guma LGA, illustrate the scale of civilian protection risks and the continuing vulnerability of affected communities.



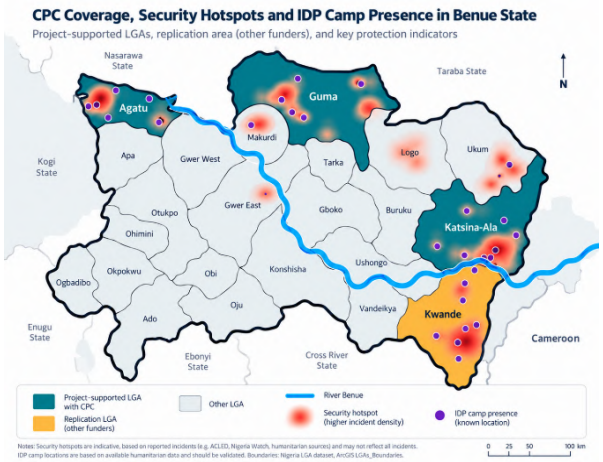


FIGURE 1: Project Location Map: *Geographical coverage of the PCPS intervention in Benue State, showing Agatu, Guma and Katsina-Ala LGAs.* FIGURE 2: Security Hotspots and IDP Camp Presence Map. Source: Lawyers Alert project mapping. The map illustrates selected security hotspots and IDP locations; it is not an exhaustive representation of affected locations across Benue State.

Displacement has further complicated local protection and recovery efforts. Across affected LGAs, including Agatu, Guma and neighbouring areas, displaced households continue to face barriers to safe and sustainable return. Some farmers access their farmlands temporarily while remaining in displacement locations due to insecurity. These challenges are compounded by longstanding gaps in community–security relations, including mistrust, fear of reprisals, inadequate reporting and response mechanisms, and limited community ownership of public safety processes. They also highlight the limitations of responses restricted to individual communities when the drivers and consequences of insecurity extend across administrative boundaries.

Against this backdrop, the People-Centred Public Safety (PCPS) intervention has evolved from establishing Community Policing Committees (CPCs) and building their capacities towards institutionalising community-led public safety systems across Agatu, Guma and Katsina-Ala LGAs. This phase focuses on strengthening CPC functionality, community leadership and inclusive participation. It also strengthens communities' capacity to identify and respond to local risks and engage with wider conflict dynamics. Importantly, the intervention builds on established partnerships and collaboration with the Benue State Bureau of Homeland Security, Nigeria Police Force and other relevant security and governance actors. These relationships provide channels for information sharing, early warning, referrals, coordinated responses and engagement on threats that extend beyond individual communities.

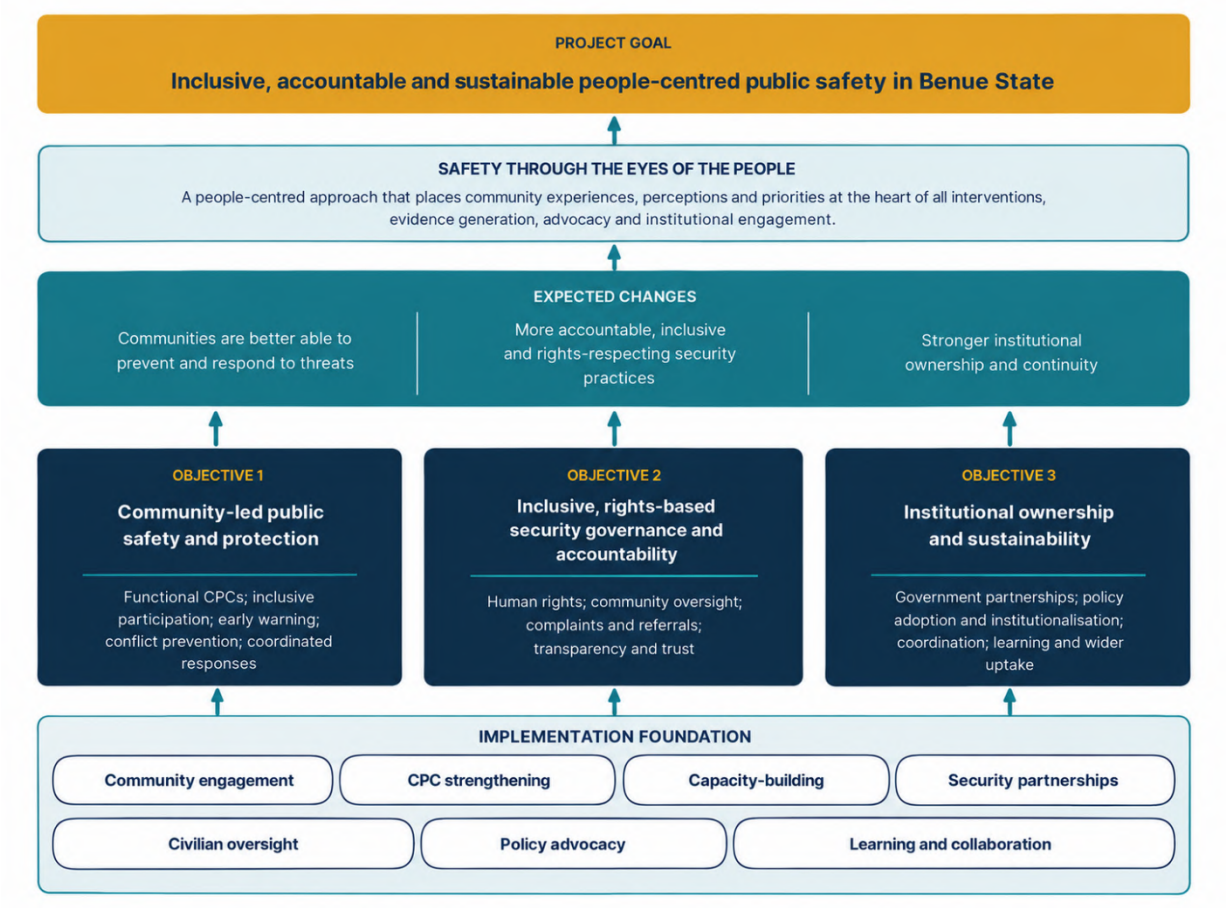
The institutional environment has also become increasingly supportive. The Benue State Government's adoption of the PCPS Model represents a significant development in the recognition of community-led public safety approaches. Engagements with local government authorities, traditional rulers, religious leaders and other stakeholders further support the integration of the model within existing governance structures. Operational replication in Kwande LGA, supported by other partners, suggests uptake beyond Lawyers Alert's direct intervention areas. Together, these developments reflect

progress towards stronger local ownership, institutional continuity and broader application of the model.

Within this evolving environment, the current intervention builds on earlier gains by strengthening communities' capacity to anticipate threats, prevent conflict escalation and coordinate responses. In doing so, PCPS contributes a complementary, community-centred dimension to broader efforts to address insecurity.

1.2 THEORY OF CHANGE, PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The PCPS intervention is premised on the logic that sustainable public safety requires meaningful community participation, accountable and rights-respecting security institutions, and sustained institutional support. As illustrated in Figure 3, the project's Theory of Change identifies three interconnected pathways: community-led protection, improved security governance and institutional ownership. Together, these pathways are expected to contribute to inclusive, accountable and sustainable public safety in Benue State



Key assumptions

Sustained community ownership, responsive and rights-respecting security institutions, and continued institutional commitment enable CPC mechanisms to remain effective beyond direct project assistance.

To translate this ToC into practice, the project advances three strategic objectives:

1. Community-led public safety and protection
2. Inclusive, rights-based security governance and accountability

3. Institutional ownership and sustainability of the PCPS approach**.**

Implementation builds on established CPCs and institutional partnerships in the Guma and Katsina-Ala LGAs, while extending the approach to Agatu. CPC strengthening, inclusive community engagement, coordinated prevention and protection responses, and civilian oversight remain central to consolidating gains. Policy engagement and shared learning will further support the institutionalisation of the PCPS Model.



FIGURE 2 **LA, Citizen Gavel, CJID, Dataphite, SERAP, advocacy visit to the IGP in Abuja**

1.3 Strategic Partnership and Consortium and Collaborative Implementation Approach

1.3.1 Partnership Framework and Complementary Expertise

The People-Centred Public Safety (PCPS) project in Benue State is implemented by Lawyers Alert within the wider PCPS Consortium, coordinated by FIXED and supported by the Open Society Foundations (OSF). The consortium brings together Lawyers Alert, Spaces for Change, Nextier, Dataphyte, SERAP, CJID, Citizen Gavel and the CLEEN Foundation, combining expertise in community engagement, research, legal accountability, institutional oversight, public communication and policy advocacy.

This section examines how consortium collaboration has supported Lawyers Alert-led implementation in Benue State. It focuses on joint interventions involving Lawyers Alert and relevant partners, rather than assessing the consortium's wider activities or performance across other implementation locations.

In Benue State, Lawyers Alert leads implementation in Agatu, Guma and Katsina-Ala LGAs, collaborating with relevant consortium partners within their respective scopes of work on the consortium.

1.3.2 Collaborative Implementation and Contribution to Results in Benue State

Community evidence, research and policy: Lawyers Alert facilitated community entry for consortium partners, including SERAP and CJID, drawing on established relationships and local priorities. Community experiences and testimonials informed Nextier's policy work on community policing, while its research on security trends and violent conflict examined the PCPS model and CPC approach. Lawyers Alert also collaborated with Nextier and Dataphyte on research-tool development, data collector training and ongoing analysis.

Community protection, legal accountability and public communication: Lawyers Alert collaborated with SERAP to train the youth arm of CPCs and worked with SERAP and Citizen Gavel on litigation concerning the rights and protection of displaced women and children. The proceedings extend community protection concerns into formal accountability mechanisms, although judicial outcomes remain pending. Lawyers Alert and CJID jointly produced a PCPS impact documentary and trained journalists on CPC activities, while collaboration with Dataphyte strengthened journalists' and community stakeholders' understanding of security flashpoints. Together, these interventions have extended community-level protection efforts into legal action, public documentation and communication.

Institutional engagement and policy advocacy: Lawyers Alert, Citizen Gavel and CJID jointly coordinated the State Police Colloquium in Benue, advancing dialogue on civilian oversight, human rights safeguards and accountable policing. Lawyers Alert also joined Citizen Gavel, CJID, Dataphyte and SERAP in advocacy engagement with the Inspector General of Police on inclusive public safety structures. These activities complemented Lawyers Alert's engagement with state security institutions and the multi-stakeholder Steering Committee, connecting community implementation with state and national policy discussions.

The consortium has also supported shared learning and visibility. All partners participated in the official PCPS launch in Benue State, while Lawyers Alert and Spaces for Change facilitated a cross-state community learning exchange in Bayelsa.

The Benue State Government's adoption of the PCPS Model as state policy on 24 February 2026 provides an important opportunity to institutionalise these efforts. Lawyers Alert's community implementation and the consortium's complementary research, accountability, communication and advocacy interventions are consistent with the pathway towards wider policy recognition. However, the available evidence does not establish their relative influence on the government's decision. The priority is now to translate policy adoption into defined institutional responsibilities, operational support and sustained CPC functionality.

1.3.3 Partnership Effectiveness, Coordination and Sustainability

Midline evidence shows that consortium collaboration has strengthened Lawyers Alert-led implementation in Benue State by connecting community-level interventions with research, capacity strengthening, legal accountability, public communication and institutional advocacy. Lawyers Alert's established community relationships have enabled partner engagement, while specialised contributions have extended local public safety concerns into wider policy and accountability processes. This integration

has broadened the scope of implementation beyond what community-level interventions alone could address.

The partnership demonstrates qualitative value for money by combining established community networks with specialised technical capacities across different levels of the public safety system. This approach supports shared learning, reduces duplication of effort and strengthens links between community implementation and wider advocacy. However, efficiency gains and cost savings have not been quantified.

Initial coordination and alignment challenges were identified and addressed during the reporting period, highlighting the importance of clear responsibilities, joint planning and timely information sharing. Continued coordination will focus on tracking how partner contributions translate into collective results, particularly institutional responsiveness, sustained CPC functionality and the operationalisation of Benue State's adoption of PCPS as state policy

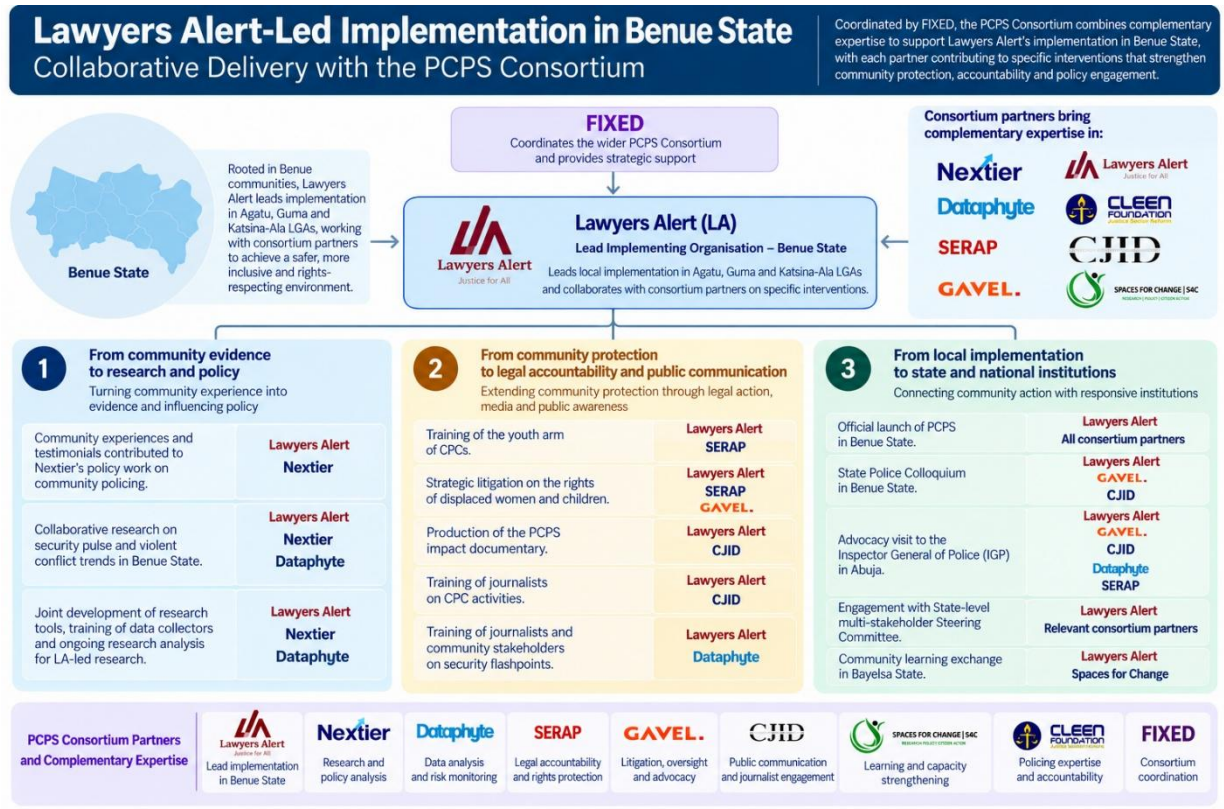


Figure 3: PCPS Consortium Collaboration and Complementary Contributions to Implementation in Benue State

2. IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS AND KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

During the reporting period, Lawyers Alert undertook community engagement, CPC establishment and strengthening, locally led public safety actions, research and institutional advocacy. The project strengthened existing CPCs in Guma and Katsina-Ala and expanded the PCPS intervention to Agatu LGA. At the state level, Lawyers Alert engaged government, security institutions and other stakeholders to promote inclusive, accountable and sustainable public safety.

Progress varied across the three LGAs. In Agatu, stakeholder mobilisation preceded the establishment of a CPC. In Guma and Katsina-Ala, existing CPCs carried out prevention, protection and peacebuilding activities. Research, coordination and policy

engagement also laid the groundwork for evidence-informed implementation and long-term institutional ownership.

The achievements below are organised under the project's three strategic objectives. They distinguish completed activities and immediate results from emerging outcomes.

2.1 Objective 1: Community-Led Public Safety and Protection

Implementation under this objective focused on establishing and strengthening inclusive CPC structures, supporting community-identified public safety priorities and enabling communities to identify threats, prevent escalation and coordinate local responses. The following activities were conducted within the reporting period to advance these priorities.

2.1.1 Expanding the PCPS Approach to Agatu LGA

The project expanded the geographical scope of the PCPS intervention to Agatu LGA, beginning with community-entry consultations involving local government authorities, security institutions and community representatives. Starting from 10th December 2025, these consultations introduced the PCPS approach, identified local security concerns and sought stakeholder support for the collaborative rollout of a CPC in the LGA.

The consultations brought together traditional and religious leaders, women, youths, security representatives and other community stakeholders. Discussions focused on community–security collaboration, inclusive decision-making, disability representation and the role of traditional institutions in public safety.

Following these engagements, an inclusive CPC was established in Agatu, with women and persons with disabilities represented among its members. This marked a significant milestone in expanding the PCPS intervention beyond Guma and Katsina-Ala. The CPC provides a local structure for identifying community public safety priorities and engaging with formal security institutions in Agatu LGA.

The key milestone during the reporting period was the establishment of an inclusive CPC in Agatu, expanding the PCPS intervention beyond Guma and Katsina-Ala.



Figure 4: The OSF media team filming a documentary on Lawyers Alert's People-Centred Public Safety (PCPS) Project in Katsina-Ala, Benue State.

2.1.2 Strengthening CPC Functionality and Locally Led Action Planning

In Guma and Katsina-Ala, implementation moved beyond the initial establishment of CPCs to strengthen their capacity to plan and undertake locally relevant public safety activities. In December 2025, Lawyers Alert facilitated CPC action planning in both LGAs. The engagements brought together CPC members, community leaders, women and youth representatives, persons with disabilities, local government officials and security personnel.

Participants identified public safety priorities, including protection from violence, freedom from fear, safe access to livelihoods and essential services. Each CPC developed a six-month action plan tailored to its local context. The plans covered stakeholder engagement, community sensitisation, CPC expansion and monitoring, with proposed activities and responsibilities.



FIGURE 5 **CPC in Kastina-Ala engage 60 students of Government Secondary School, on personal safety, child protection, drug abuse and peaceful coexistence.**

In Guma, the CPC proposed extending its reach across the LGA's ten council wards through decentralised coordination. The plan also identified roles for traditional and religious leaders and security agencies in community mobilisation and information sharing.

The principal output was the development of locally informed action plans that positioned CPC members and community representatives to determine public safety priorities. Implementation of the proposed ward-level expansion in Guma remained to be verified at midline.

2.1.3 Community Security Briefings and Early Warning

On 11 February 2026, Lawyers Alert facilitated a security briefing involving the Guma CPC, community leaders and security representatives. Participants reviewed threats including kidnapping, attacks on farming communities, resource disputes, motorcycle theft and communal tensions. They identified the need for stronger early warning, timely reporting and coordination with security agencies.

The briefing highlighted an early warning incident during the 2025 Christmas period. Members of the Fulani community alerted an Imam serving on the Guma CPC to suspicious motorcycle movements towards Gbajimba. The Imam promptly relayed the information to the Police, who mobilised and intercepted the individuals. The incident demonstrated the CPC's role in facilitating inclusive community information-sharing and timely security responses.

The briefing also highlighted a community-led measure to address tensions associated with cattle rustling and retaliatory violence. Following consultations convened by the CPC, stakeholders agreed to prohibit the sale and trading of cow meat in Gbajimba. The restriction was adopted, and residents subsequently observed reduced tensions and improved stability.

These reported changes provide an early indication of locally led conflict prevention.

Participants further committed to strengthening early warning, community sensitisation and collaboration with security agencies. Follow-up on these commitments remains a priority for the next phase, and wider project outcomes will be independently assessed during the endline.



FIGURE 6: Community awareness on CPC, EWER and public safety

2.1.4 Community-Led Mediation and Conflict Prevention

CPCs also applied dialogue and mediation to disputes that presented risks of escalation.

In Guma, the CPC intervened in the Mbakyase–Uyam land dispute in Ndzorov Council Ward. Through engagement with the parties, it helped avert a planned excavation that risked provoking confrontation and encouraged legal redress. The matter is now before the court. Although the underlying dispute remains unresolved, the intervention helped prevent immediate escalation and channel the matter towards judicial resolution.

On 3 April 2026, the Guma CPC, through Imam Mallam Dogara, convened Jukun and Hausa elders and religious leaders in Gbajimba to address recurring tensions. The dialogue enabled both sides to discuss their grievances and reportedly reach an immediate settlement. No further clashes between the groups have been reported since the intervention.

These cases demonstrate the CPC's practical role in convening parties, preventing immediate escalation and promoting peaceful or lawful approaches to dispute resolution. The longer-term durability of these outcomes will require continued monitoring.

2.1.5 Community-Led Protection of Vulnerable Persons and Conflict Prevention

The PCPS project strengthened community-led responses to protection threats and local disputes, with CPCs demonstrating their capacity to identify risks, mobilise timely interventions and engage formal authorities.

In August 2026, community intelligence enabled the Guma CPC, working with residents, to intervene in a suspected attempt to take six boys to an unknown destination. All six boys were prevented from being taken, and the suspect was handed over to the police for investigation. Reported concerns involving suspected fraud and alterations to identification documents remain subject to police investigation.

On 12 May 2026, the Guma CPC also convened Hausa and Jukun community representatives to address a reported child marriage concern, identify those responsible and discourage recurrence. The intervention provided a platform for community dialogue, although the final protection outcome was not documented.

Beyond individual protection cases, CPC engagement helped de-escalate the Mbakyase–Uyam dispute by encouraging judicial resolution rather than potentially confrontational measures. Cross-border dialogue between Tiv and Kuteb stakeholders from Benue and Taraba States also resulted in the establishment of a five-member Peace Committee and an agreement to pursue a permanent engagement platform.

Together, these results demonstrate the practical value of the PCPS model in translating community intelligence into timely protection action, connecting residents with law enforcement, promoting peaceful dispute resolution and establishing mechanisms for sustained dialogue. They also reinforce the importance of safeguarding, confidentiality and appropriate referral procedures in cases involving children.

2.1.6 Broadening Participation through Community Sensitisation

In Katsina-Ala, the CPC expanded public safety awareness through targeted community sensitisation and radio outreach.

Approximately 100 market women and commercial drivers participated in an engagement on trafficking prevention, drug abuse and safe reporting of suspicious activities. Following the session, NURTW leadership committed to sensitising drivers against suspicious transportation arrangements, particularly involving children, and discouraging drug abuse.



FIGURE 7: **100 market women and members of NURTW engaged in trafficking prevention, drug abuse and safe reporting of suspicious activities.**

The CPC also engaged approximately 60 students of Government Secondary School, Katsina-Ala, on personal safety, child protection, drug abuse and peaceful coexistence.

Through Ashi-Waves Radio, the CPC raised awareness of its mandate and publicised reporting channels, including a dedicated early warning contact number provided by the LGA Chairman. These activities broadened community participation, secured commitments from transport union leaders and improved access to information on reporting security concerns.

2.1.7 Progress towards Objective 1



Midline findings demonstrate significant progress in strengthening community-led public safety and translating CPC capacities into practical protection and conflict prevention outcomes. The establishment of the CPC in Agatu expanded community-based protection structures, while CPCs in Guma and Katsina-Ala demonstrated growing effectiveness through mediation, early warning and coordinated responses to security threats. Key results include the de-escalation of a land dispute, protection of

six boys from suspected trafficking, activation of an early warning channel and establishment of a cross-boundary Peace Committee.

Beyond these interventions, community accounts indicate improvements in everyday safety, including the reopening of schools and markets, the resumption of trading and rice processing, and renewed access to farmlands in some previously insecure communities. These changes are beginning to translate into tangible livelihood benefits. In Katsina-Ala, 45-year-old Torkwase, who had been unable to access her farm for over two years because of insecurity, reported returning to farming following community dialogue, mediation and early warning initiatives supported through the PCPS project:

> "*I can now go to my farm without fear, cultivate my crops, harvest them, and sell them at the market. That means everything to my family and me.*"

Her experience illustrates the human significance of community-led safety interventions: restoring confidence, mobility and opportunities to sustain household livelihoods. Collectively, these findings indicate progress beyond establishing CPC structures towards improved community protection, renewed economic activity and emerging recovery, while recognising that these changes reflect community-reported experiences and cannot be attributed solely to the project.



FIGURE 8: **The People-Centered Public Safety (PCPS) Project is helping restore peace and livelihoods in conflict-affected communities in Benue State**

2.2 Objective 2: Inclusive, Rights-Based Security Governance and Accountability

Under Objective 2, the PCPS project strengthened community-led oversight, rights-based complaints and referral mechanisms, and engagement with security institutions to promote transparency and accountability.

At midline, emerging results include increased community reporting and escalation of alleged rights violations, documented responses by security authorities to community complaints, and strengthened institutional dialogue on accountable policing and human rights safeguards.

2.2.1 Community Oversight and Accountability Engagement

The PCPS project strengthened community-led security oversight and accountability by enabling Community Protection Committees (CPCs), women and youths to document, report and escalate complaints of alleged misconduct by security personnel. In Guma LGA, complaints concerning prolonged detention, excessive bail demands and other alleged misconduct were escalated through the CPC to senior police authorities, resulting in the redeployment of two police officers. Communities also demanded direct engagement with senior police leadership, prompting the police to convene an accountability forum in response to their concerns. This marked an important shift towards greater community voice and institutional responsiveness in local security governance.

Beyond oversight, PCPS-supported structures demonstrated their capacity to mobilise timely protection responses and peaceful dispute resolution. In Guma LGA, community intelligence enabled the CPC to intervene in a suspected attempt to lure six boys to an unknown destination, preventing their removal and facilitating the handover of the suspect to the police for investigation. In the Mbakyase–Uyam dispute, CPC intervention encouraged judicial resolution rather than potentially confrontational self-help measures. The project also facilitated dialogue between Tiv and Kuteb stakeholders from Benue and Taraba States, resulting in the establishment of a five-member Peace Committee and an agreement to pursue a permanent platform for continued engagement.

Collectively, these achievements demonstrate strengthened community agency, emerging responsiveness by security institutions, and the practical application of community-led protection and conflict-resolution mechanisms. They provide tangible evidence of PCPS's contribution to more inclusive, accountable and responsive public safety governance.

2.2.2 Advancing Rights-Based Accountability Safeguards in State Police Policy Dialogue

Lawyers Alert contributed to discussions on human rights, public participation and accountability safeguards in the emerging State Police policy process.

At the Stakeholders' Colloquium on State Police, convened by Lawyers Alert in collaboration with the Benue State Bureau of Homeland Security in Makurdi, government officials, traditional rulers, security agencies, civil society and community representatives examined proposals for establishing State Police.

The colloquium provided a platform for advancing principles of professionalism, community oversight, accountability, and protection against political abuse in the proposed security framework.



FIGURE 9: **The Tor Tiv, the Paramount Traditional Ruler and Highest Traditional Authority of the Tiv People in Benue State, Nigeria**



FIGURE 10: **The Ochi Idoma, the Paramount Traditional Ruler and Highest Traditional Authority of the Idoma People in Benue State, Nigeria**

The platform recommended an independent civilian-led State Police Service Commission, a Police Complaints Unit, public security audits and regular community consultations. It also proposed equitable recruitment across Benue's 23 LGAs, inclusive oversight arrangements and at least five per cent representation of persons with disabilities.

Participants further called for public consultation on the proposed State Police Bill before its passage. These documented recommendations reflect the PCPS principles of human rights, inclusion and accountability, although they remain proposals rather than adopted safeguards or implemented reforms.

2.2.3 Broadening Inclusive Participation in Security Governance

The project strengthened opportunities for women, young people, persons with disabilities and community leaders to participate in local public safety processes.

In Agatu, consultations led to the establishment of an inclusive CPC with women and persons with disabilities represented among its members. In Guma and Katsina-Ala, CPC planning, security engagements and community outreach brought diverse stakeholders into discussions on public safety priorities, protection concerns and reporting mechanisms.

These efforts broadened participation in community–security engagement and created channels for groups often excluded from security decision-making to raise concerns. The next phase will assess how effectively their participation translates into influence over priorities, decisions and accountability processes.

Progress towards Objective 2

The project strengthened community-level mechanisms for reporting protection concerns, referring complaints and engaging security authorities on alleged misconduct. It also broadened participation in security governance and contributed to policy dialogue on human rights and accountability.

The State Police Colloquium produced documented recommendations for civilian oversight, complaints mechanisms and inclusive security governance. Together, these achievements demonstrate progress towards more accountable and rights-based security institutions. Further implementation will provide evidence of how community complaints are resolved and whether proposed policy safeguards are adopted and put into practice.

2.3 Objective 3: Institutional Ownership and Sustainability of the PCPS Approach

Implementation under this objective focused on strengthening government partnerships, advancing policy adoption and institutionalisation, improving coordination, promoting learning and wider uptake of the PCPS approach.

These efforts sought to build institutional ownership and establish the foundations for sustaining community-led public safety mechanisms beyond direct project support.

2.3.1 Government Recognition and Adoption of the PCPS Model

The Benue State Government's adoption of the PCPS Model on 24 February 2026 marked a major achievement in advancing institutional ownership and sustainability. It represented a significant step towards positioning community-led, people-centred public safety within the state's security governance approach.

This milestone built on high-level government engagement, beginning with the project's launch by the Deputy Governor of Benue State. It was reinforced by multi-stakeholder convenings that brought together traditional and religious leaders, academics, civil society, security institutions and other influential actors to build support for the PCPS approach.

Government adoption positioned PCPS for integration into the state's wider public safety governance arrangements, providing a foundation for wider institutional uptake, policy alignment and sustained collaboration between communities and security authorities.

The next phase will focus on translating this recognition into operational arrangements, including defined institutional responsibilities, continued support for CPCs and mechanisms for sustaining the approach beyond direct project funding.



FIGURE 11: Benue State Deputy Governor engages an Open Society Foundations representative during the official launch of the PCPS Model in B/S

2.3.2 Multi-Stakeholder Oversight, Ownership, and Coordination

The project established a state-level Steering Committee to strengthen institutional ownership, strategic oversight and coordination of the PCPS intervention. Its membership includes Lawyers Alert, the Nigeria Police Force, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), the Benue Volunteer Guard and civil society representatives.

The committee serves as a platform for engaging government and security institutions, building partnerships with communities and promoting shared responsibility for the project's implementation and wider uptake.

During the reporting period, the Steering Committee convened periodic sessions to review and advance adoption of the project implementation plan, helping align stakeholder priorities and responsibilities.

At community level, CPCs complemented this statewide structure through locally led planning. In Guma and Katsina-Ala, members developed six-month action plans identifying public safety priorities and responsibilities for outreach, advocacy and monitoring.

Together, the Steering Committee and CPCs provide complementary structures for institutional oversight and community-led implementation, strengthening the foundations for sustained ownership of the PCPS approach.

2.3.3 Institutional Partnerships and Policy Engagement

Lawyers Alert has continued to engage established partners, including the Benue State Bureau of Homeland Security, Nigeria Police Force and other governance and security institutions.

These relationships were developed during earlier implementation phases. Their continued relevance during the current phase is demonstrated through CPC security briefings, community–police information sharing and engagement on wider security governance issues.

The PCPS launch in Benue State, State Police webinar, State Police Colloquium and engagement with the Association of Local Governments of Nigeria (ALGON) formed part of the project's wider institutional engagement activities.

Together, these activities provide opportunities to communicate the PCPS approach, engage public authorities and discuss its relevance to local and state security governance. The documented colloquium recommendations demonstrate the substantive content of one such engagement.



FIGURE 12: school safety sensitization in Katsina-Ala LGA.

2.3.4 Research, Evidence Generation and Learning

As part of its evidence-generation component, Lawyers Alert undertook initial PCPS research activities across Agatu, Guma and Katsina-Ala LGAs, including the training of data collectors and field data collection. The research is intended to strengthen understanding of community safety priorities, institutional relationships and context-specific conditions affecting public safety across locations at different stages of CPC development.

Using a mixed-methods design, the research combines community perception surveys and key informant interviews with community and government actors to examine safety concerns, trust in security institutions, governance and the effects of insecurity across Agatu, Guma and Katsina-Ala.

At midline, the confirmed achievements relate to research preparation and data collection. Expert analysis, interpretation and publication of the findings remain outstanding. Accordingly, no research findings or conclusions are presented at this stage. Once analysed and validated, the evidence is expected to inform subsequent programming, monitoring and policy engagement.

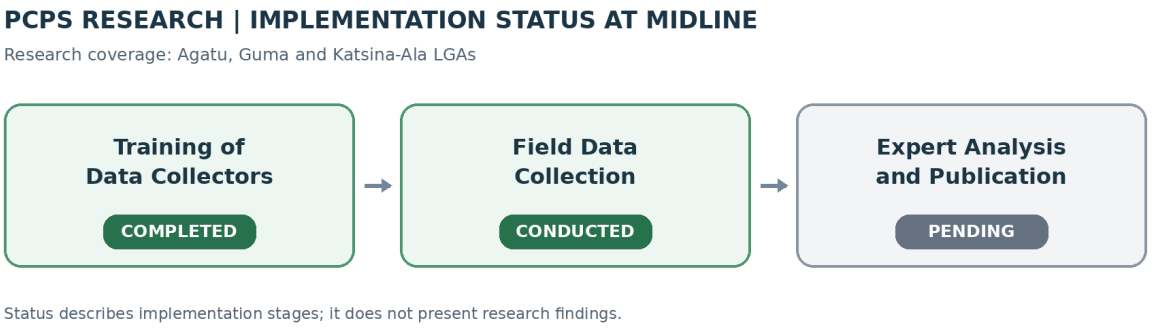


Figure X: PCPS Research Implementation Status at Midline — Agatu, Guma and Katsina-Ala LGAs.

The project also undertook documentary production to capture and communicate PCPS implementation experiences. In July 2026, Lawyers Alert presented its implementation experiences during an engagement with the visiting Open Society Foundations Vice-President and consortium partners. Beneficiaries also interacted directly with the delegation and shared their experiences of the PCPS approach.



FIGURE 13: Security agencies engage in discussions during the launch of the PCPS project in Benue state

Together, these activities contributed to project documentation, knowledge development, learning, sharing, and opportunities for stakeholder engagement.

2.3.5 Wider Uptake and Prospects for Sustainability

The operational replication of the PCPS approach in Kwande LGA, supported by other partners, indicates emerging interest beyond the three LGAs directly supported under the current intervention. This development is relevant to sustainability and the

potential wider application of the model. It is, however, not an intervention financed under the current OSF-supported project.

The combination of government policy recognition, established institutional relationships, CPC-led planning and partner-supported replication provides a foundation for continued institutionalisation.

Further efforts will focus on translating these developments into routine practices, operational responsibilities and sustainable support arrangements.

Progress towards Objective 3

At midline, the project achieved a major institutional milestone with the Benue State Government's adoption of the PCPS Model on 24 February 2026. High-level government engagement and the multi-stakeholder Steering Committee further strengthened strategic oversight, partnerships and institutional ownership.

At community level, CPCs advanced local ownership through participatory planning and public safety actions. The operational replication of PCPS in Kwande LGA, supported by other partners, also demonstrated wider uptake of the approach beyond the three LGAs covered by the OSF-supported intervention.

Together, these achievements provide a strong foundation for institutionalisation and sustainability. The next phase will focus on translating government adoption into operational arrangements, strengthening institutional support for CPCs and consolidating wider uptake of the model.

2.4 Overall Assessment of Midline Progress

At midline, the PCPS project has recorded significant progress towards improved community safety, enhanced security accountability and inclusive public safety governance across its three strategic objectives, moving beyond the establishment of community structures to practical protection interventions, stronger accountability mechanisms and growing institutional ownership.

1. Improved community safety and accountability: Community reports indicate the reopening of markets and schools and the gradual resumption of commercial activities in some locations. CPC interventions have supported early warning, timely security responses, child protection, conflict de-escalation and cross-border dialogue to address security threats. Regular engagement with security agencies is strengthening community reporting, responsiveness and emerging trust, while women and young people are increasingly participating in local security decisions. These developments suggest improving conditions for everyday safety, although broader security gains are yet to be evaluated.

2. Strengthened community-led protection and inclusive governance: The establishment of an inclusive CPC in Agatu expanded the project's reach, while CPCs in Guma and Katsina-Ala demonstrated growing capacity to address local protection concerns. Community-developed action plans, sensitisation and dialogue strengthened participation and ownership. CPCs also provided channels for reporting alleged security misconduct and engaging formal accountability institutions. The State Police Colloquium generated recommendations on civilian oversight, complaints mechanisms, human rights safeguards and inclusive policing.

3. The Benue State Government's adoption of the PCPS Model on 24 February 2026 marked a major institutional achievement. High-level government engagement and the multi-stakeholder Steering Committee strengthened strategic oversight, partnerships and shared ownership. The operational replication of PCPS in Kwande LGA, supported by other partners, further demonstrated the model's wider uptake beyond the three LGAs covered by the OSF-supported intervention.

Taken together, these achievements demonstrate a significant transition from establishing the PCPS approach to applying it in communities, securing government adoption and extending its influence beyond the original project locations. This progress is particularly important in a context of continuing insecurity, displacement and protection risks.

The next phase will focus on consolidating CPC functionality, strengthening accountability and referral mechanisms, and translating government adoption into sustained institutional support. Continued monitoring will also assess the durability of community-level results and the contribution of PCPS to longer-term improvements in public safety.

2.5 Project Reach and Demographic Profile

Across 37 documented engagements and activities, PCPS recorded 4,785 participant attendances, comprising 3,086 males (64.5%) and 1,699 females (35.5%), including 24 attendances by persons with disabilities (0.5%). Participation covered Makurdi (1,675; 35.0%), Katsina-Ala (1,244; 26.0%), Guma (1,124; 23.5%), Agatu (622; 13.0%) and Abuja/FCT (120; 2.5%). Katsina-Ala and Guma jointly accounted for 2,368 attendances (49.5%), reflecting extensive community-level engagements, while Makurdi hosted major state-level policy dialogues, security-sector consultations and advocacy activities in collaboration with consortium partners, OSF, government and security institutions, and BENGONET. Community mobilisation, school engagements, sensitisation and media outreach further extended the project's reach beyond documented attendances. These figures represent attendances, not unique participants



3. EMERGING OUTCOMES AND CONTRIBUTION TO CHANGE

Midline evidence shows that the PCPS project is progressing from the establishment of community public safety structures towards their practical use in prevention, protection, accountability and institutional engagement. The strongest evidence is the functioning CPCs in Guma and Katsina-Ala, where community actors have mobilised responses to specific threats and engaged formal security institutions.

While Guma and Katsina-Ala provide evidence of emerging community-level outcomes, the establishment of an inclusive CPC in Agatu represents an important foundation for extending these changes. The analysis below examines what the observed results mean for the project's Theory of Change and the sustainability of the PCPS approach.

3.1 From Community Participation to Local Ownership

An emerging outcome is the growing capacity of communities to organise and act on their own public safety priorities, rather than participate only in externally facilitated activities.

In Guma, the CPC's involvement in early warning, conflict prevention and child protection demonstrates that community representatives are using the committee to respond to immediate concerns. These interventions show a progression from identifying threats and developing action plans to mobilising people, engaging relevant authorities and taking preventive action.

In Katsina-Ala, engagement with transport workers, market women and students extended responsibility for public safety beyond traditional leadership structures. Commitments by transport union leaders to support trafficking and drug-abuse prevention indicate growing recognition of the role that community groups can play in identifying and reducing risks.

The establishment of an inclusive CPC in Agatu further extends the institutional basis for community ownership, with women and persons with disabilities represented in the new structure.

These developments suggest that CPCs are becoming recognised platforms for collective public safety action. The next measure of progress will be the extent to which varied community members continue to influence priorities and decisions, rather than participate only in consultations.

3.2 Practical Improvements in Early Warning, Protection and Conflict Prevention

The clearest community-level outcomes are found in cases where CPC interventions produced identifiable responses to specific threats.

During the 2025 Christmas period, information shared by Fulani community members with the Police through an Imam serving on the Guma CPC led to the interception of individuals whose movements had raised concern. The significance of this case lies in the functioning early warning pathway: information crossed community boundaries, reached a trusted CPC representative and prompted timely action by formal security authorities.

In another Guma intervention, CPC members and community stakeholders prevented six boys from being taken away by a suspected offender and handed the individual

over to the Police. This provides direct evidence of a community-led protection response with an immediate, identifiable result.

Conflict prevention efforts also produced encouraging outcomes. The Guma CPC helped avert a potentially confrontational excavation in the Mbakyase–Uyam land dispute, with the matter subsequently brought before the court. Dialogue between Jukun and Hausa representatives reportedly produced an immediate settlement, with no further clashes reported to the CPC following the engagement.

In Katsina-Ala and the wider Sankara area, a women-led peacebuilding initiative engaged families and communities affected by armed violence. Its account reports that some young men voluntarily disengaged from violent activity and surrendered weapons. These are potentially significant peacebuilding outcomes, understood as contributions arising through a wider community-led effort.

Cross-boundary dialogue involving communities in Katsina-Ala and neighbouring Taraba State also indicates growing efforts to address shared security concerns through cooperation rather than isolated local responses.

These cases demonstrate the practical relevance of community-based early warning, dialogue and protection mechanisms. They provide evidence of specific threats being addressed and tensions being managed, without yet establishing a general reduction in insecurity across the project locations.

3.3 Stronger Community Voice in Security Accountability

A further emerging change is the use of CPC structures to bring community concerns about security conduct into engagement with formal authorities.

In Guma, the CPC documented and escalated allegations of police misconduct, including prolonged detention and excessive bail demands. The two officers concerned were subsequently transferred. While the available evidence does not establish that the complaints caused the transfers, the case demonstrates that community members had an organised channel for raising accountability concerns.

The CPC also documented allegations involving military personnel and forwarded the account and supporting material to the Bureau of Homeland Security. This represents another practical use of community oversight channels, although the institutional response remains to be established.

Other interventions show CPCs encouraging lawful responses to protection and conflict concerns, including referral of a suspected offender to the Police and recourse to the courts in a land dispute.

At the policy level, the State Police Colloquium generated action points for civilian oversight, complaints mechanisms, inclusive representation and safeguards against political interference. These recommendations extend the project's rights-based accountability agenda into wider discussions about the design of security institutions.

The emerging outcome is therefore not simply greater community–security engagement. It is the development and use of channels through which communities can report concerns, seek institutional responses and contribute to discussions on accountability. The effectiveness of these channels will increasingly depend on how

authorities respond to complaints and whether proposed safeguards are implemented; that is the current focus of the project.

3.4 Government Ownership and Wider Uptake of PCPS

The Benue State Government's adoption of the PCPS Model represents a major achievement along the project's institutional ownership pathway. It marks a shift from securing stakeholder interest in people-centred public safety towards government recognition of the approach as relevant to the state's security governance priorities.

This milestone followed high-level government engagement and broad multi-stakeholder mobilisation. The state-level Steering Committee also provides an established platform through which government, security institutions and civil society can exercise strategic oversight, coordinate partnerships and support the wider uptake of PCPS.

The operational replication of the model in Kwande LGA, with support from other partners, provides further evidence of its relevance beyond the three LGAs directly supported by the OSF-funded intervention. Although this replication is not an output financed under the current grant, it demonstrates the model's potential for wider application.

These developments are significant because sustainability depends not only on CPCs continuing to function, but also on institutions recognising, supporting and taking responsibility for the approach. Government adoption, multi-stakeholder oversight and partner-supported replication provide complementary evidence of that progression.

3.5 Contribution to the Theory of Change

The midline findings provide evidence of progress across all three pathways of the PCPS Theory of Change.

1. Under the community-led protection pathway, CPCs are moving from establishment and planning to practical action. Documented interventions demonstrate their contribution to early warning, protection of vulnerable persons, conflict de-escalation and engagement with security authorities.
2. Under the accountable security governance pathway, communities are using CPC structures to report misconduct, seek lawful responses and participate in wider policy discussions.
3. Under the institutional ownership pathway, government adoption, strategic multi-stakeholder oversight and wider replication indicate that PCPS is gaining recognition and support beyond direct project facilitation.

These pathways reinforce one another. Effective community action strengthens the case for institutional support, while responsive security institutions and sustained government ownership can improve the effectiveness and continuity of CPCs.

The central midline finding is that PCPS is demonstrating practical value at the community level while gaining the institutional recognition needed for wider uptake and sustainability. The remaining implementation period offers an opportunity to consolidate these results and document their durability, particularly through follow-

up on protection cases, community feedback, institutional responses and continued CPC functionality.

4. Implementation Challenges, Adaptation, and Lessons Learned

Implementation of the People-Centred Public Safety (PCPS) project took place within a challenging security environment characterised by recurring communal tensions, displacement, protection concerns and uneven relationships between communities and security institutions. These conditions reinforced the relevance of the project while also presenting challenges for community engagement, coordination and the consolidation of results.

4.1.1 Persistent insecurity and complex community disputes

Recurring security threats and longstanding communal disputes continued to shape implementation in Guma and Katsina-Ala. Some CPC interventions prevented immediate escalation or facilitated lawful responses, but underlying tensions were not always resolved. Lawyers Alert responded by supporting locally led dialogue, early warning and engagement with relevant authorities, while recognising the need for sustained follow-up.

4.1.2 Dependence on institutional responsiveness

CPCs demonstrated their ability to identify threats, mobilise communities and escalate protection and accountability concerns. However, matters involving suspected criminal conduct or security personnel required action by formal institutions beyond the CPCs' authority. The project therefore strengthened community–security engagement and institutional coordination to support timely responses and appropriate referrals.

4.1.3. Translating government adoption into operational practice

While the Benue State Government's adoption of the PCPS Model marks a major institutional achievement. The challenge is translating this recognition into defined responsibilities, routine coordination and sustained support for CPCs. Lawyers Alert continues engaging government, security institutions and the multi-stakeholder Steering Committee to advance institutional ownership and implementation arrangements.

4.2 Lessons Learned and Emerging Good Practices

4.2.1 Trusted community structures can deliver practical protection results.

The CPC experience demonstrates that locally rooted structures can turn community information into timely action when they maintain trust and functional relationships with security authorities. Early warning, child protection and conflict prevention interventions show the value of combining community ownership with accessible referral channels.

4.2.2 Effective community protection requires responsive institutional partnerships.

CPCs can prevent escalation, convene stakeholders and raise accountability concerns, but they cannot replace the Police, courts or other responsible institutions.

Sustainable results depend on clear referral pathways, institutional responsiveness and continued follow-up on reported concerns.

4.2.3 Government adoption creates the opportunity for sustainability; institutional ownership must sustain it.

The adoption of PCPS, strategic oversight through the Steering Committee and partner-supported replication demonstrate growing institutional support for the model. The key lesson is that sustaining these gains requires practical responsibilities, functioning coordination mechanisms and continued support for community-led structures.

5. Sustainability and Priorities for the Remaining Implementation Period

The Benue State Government's adoption of the PCPS Model, functioning CPC structures and growing institutional partnerships provide a strong foundation for sustainability. The remaining implementation period will focus on consolidating these achievements through three priorities.

a. **Sustaining CPC Functionality:** Strengthen the capacity of CPCs in Guma, Katsina-Ala and Agatu to maintain locally led prevention, protection and referral mechanisms, with clear responsibilities, inclusive participation and continued engagement with security institutions.
b. **Translating Government Adoption into Institutional Practice:** Work with the Benue State Government, the multi-stakeholder Steering Committee and relevant security institutions to advance operational responsibilities, coordination arrangements and sustained institutional support for the PCPS approach.
c. **Strengthening Evidence and Wider Uptake:** Complete and disseminate the PCPS research, document emerging outcomes and use the findings to inform implementation, institutional engagement and opportunities for wider uptake of the model.

5.2 Priorities for the Remaining Implementation Period

The remaining implementation period will focus on consolidating CPC protection results and strengthening institutional ownership of PCPS. Lawyers Alert will support CPC action plans, inclusive participation and follow-up on protection concerns and referrals. Engage government, security institutions and the Steering Committee to translate policy adoption into defined responsibilities and sustained support. Complete and disseminate research to inform implementation and policy engagement. Document CPC interventions, institutional responses and outcomes to assess the sustainability of community protection and accountable security governance.

Medial and Photo Links

Media Links https://docs.google.com/document/d/1lYSQh_9VNjXUTAgyD5CsEgem65qQuT-hqBb6H7zRtfI/edit?tab=t.0Photos
Photos. https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1PALYuQV0BJJTaQQDXaPNyoB8_miceAdt