

From Shadow to Provider:

How Fatima Rebuilt Her Dignity in Madagali



- Name: Fatima (Pseudonym used for protection)
- Location: Madagali Local Government Area, Adamawa State, Nigeria
- Programmatic Pillars: General Protection (GP) & Food Security & Livelihoods (FSL)
- Note: Pseudonym used to protect beneficiary identity and confidentiality.

France Embassy Project: From the Beginning

In the frontline community of Madagali, Adamawa State, years of conflict left deep economic and emotional scars. For Fatima, a widowed mother of four, the loss of her husband brought not only severe economic hardship, but also deep social isolation. Without a reliable income, Fatima was forced to choose between begging or performing grueling, low-paying manual labor to keep her children fed.

"Before this project came to Madagali, I felt like a shadow in my own village," Fatima recalls. "I had lost my husband and my dignity to the conflict, and people looked at me with either pity or shame. I was always tired, always afraid, and I didn't see a future for us."

Integrated Support: From Crisis to Self-Reliance

Recognizing that conflict-affected women face compound risks, the Grassroots Researchers Association (GRA) deployed an integrated humanitarian response in

Madagali. By combining psychological safety with sustainable livelihood support, the intervention provided Fatima with a clear path toward long-term recovery:

- **Psychosocial Care & Safe Spaces:** Through GRA's Women & Girls Safe Space (WGSS), Fatima found peer support networks, trauma counseling, and a safe environment to heal alongside fellow survivors.
- **Climate-Smart Agriculture:** GRA provided Fatima with climate-resilient, drought-resistant seeds and hands-on agricultural training tailored to the changing local environment.
- **Community Resilience Shop:** To diversify her income beyond seasonal farming, Fatima was integrated into a community-managed Resilience Shop equipped with a commercial grinding machine.

The Turning Point: Daily Income & Restored Dignity

The combination of sustainable agricultural training and a shared stake in the community grinding business transformed Fatima's day-to-day reality. Instead of relying on uncertain seasonal rain or seasonal labor, she now earns a steady daily income that covers fundamental household needs.

"When I received the drought-resistant seeds and the training, I didn't just see plants; I saw a way out," Fatima says. "Now, I don't have to wait for the rain to have money. I have a share in the shop, and the daily income means my children eat every day and I have started paying their school fees. The Safe Space gave me sisters who understand my pain."

The transformation extended beyond finances—it reshaped her standing within Madagali.

*"For the first time in years, I feel like I belong to the community again because I am providing a service they need. **I am no longer a 'victim'—I am a provider.**"*

Looking Forward

Today, Fatima is no longer focused solely on day-to-day survival; she is actively planning for the future. Her goal is to expand her agricultural production and mentor other vulnerable women in her village.

- **Farming Expansion:** Utilizing savings from the grinding shop, Fatima plans to acquire a small irrigation pump to cultivate high-value vegetables during the dry season.
- **Peer Leadership:** She continues to participate in GRA's Safe Space sessions, encouraging other women facing similar hardships to step forward and rebuild their lives.

"I want to stay active in our Safe Space to help other women who are still hiding in their rooms, so they know they can also stand on their own feet like I am doing now."