



# Paving the Way: Kofar Waika's Journey to Success



# VOICES

The opportunity presented itself, when members of the Kofar Waika community received an invitation to a Town Hall Meeting. *"They said they shared our pain and had our interests at heart - I only believed them because I recognised one of them. He is a member of this community,"* said Lawan Wada, a 46-year-old trader. Lawan had lost his stock to floods some years ago, so his anxiety heightened whenever the rainy season drew near. He knew very well the hardship that could follow. So, he did not plan on letting the Town Hall Meeting slip by, *"All we need is for the government to fix the road that connects Goron-Dutse and extends into Kofar Waika"*, Lawan said emphatically.

Kofar Waika, a densely populated community in Dala Local Government, Kano State, was confronted with the challenges associated with bad roads and broken drainages that caused intense flooding. The rainy season brought with flight to find higher ground, navigating through flooded and pot-hole-riddled routes.

They could hardly manage the commute that brought modest income from the toil of minor economic activities and at times spent these meagre earnings treating ailments that accompanied the flood-washed dirt. They wished for the day when the government would heed their plight and alleviate their worries.

In 2016, PERL initiated support for participatory planning and budgeting - offering communities opportunities to prioritise projects and guiding the government to enhance accountability and responsiveness to citizens' needs. The State Ministry of Planning and Budget, collaborating with citizen groups conducted town hall meetings. The town halls were facilitated in each LGA, and subsequently, clustered by the Emirates.

The Ministry compiles the citizens' prioritised projects and integrates them into the state's annual budget based on available resources. Beyond the submissions, Yakubu Sabiu, the Director of Budget, affirmed, *"We ensure that citizens' representatives are involved from the point of estimating the budget size for the coming year."*

Further, mechanisms have been put in place to monitor the execution of budgets, *"Through our constant engagements, even traditional rulers can now track budgets, women groups pay advocacy visits to ensure their projects are implemented, and the youth are not left out,"* he continued. The turning point was in 2019 when a significant number of citizens' needs were incorporated into the budget. Since then, the state has sustained the annual practice of collating, validating, and incorporating citizens' input from across the state.



*Newly built road in Kofar Waika*

The rehabilitation of the Goron Dutse-Kofar Waika Road was one of the nominated projects that was incorporated into the budget. The new road was commissioned for use in 2019.

In recent years, the responsiveness of government has been demonstrated by improvements in fund releases and project execution - solidifying the link between citizens' demands and improving service delivery.

"...the issue of poor road networks and flooding are now things of the past. Our youth are engaged in the corner shops and plazas built along the road. More members of the community are employed, and even pay taxes to the government." The people of Kofar Waika now feel seen and heard by the government - Lawan Wada

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