CONTRIBUTING TO THE MITIGATION OF CONFLICT OVER NATURAL RESOURCES BETWEEN FARMER AND HERDER COMMUNITIES IN TARABA AND ADAMAWA STATES, NIGERIA (COMITAS II)

Conflict and Natural Resources Mapping Report

January 2024

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List of Acronyms

ADSEMA – Adamawa State Emergency Management Agency

CBOs – Community-Based Organisations

CRN – Conflict Resolution Network

CPSP – Community Peace and Safety Partnership

FGD – Focus Group Discussion

FoM – Freedom of Movement

IBN – Interest-Based Negotiation

IOM – International Organization for Migration

KII – Key Informant Interview

LGAs – Local Government Areas

LGC – Local Government Council

MC – Mercy Corps

NRMCs – Natural Resource Management Committees

NRM – Natural Resource Management

PCRC – Peace and Conflict Resolution Committee

PWDs – Persons with Disabilities

QIPs – Quick Impact Projects

SfCG – Search for Common Ground

Executive Summary

Natural resources conflicts between sedentary farmers and herders have protracted across several communities in Adamawa and Taraba States, contributing to the escalation of insecurities that impact human and community safety, food security, economic losses and access to livelihoods, social relationships, internal displacement, and conflict-induced/forced migration. As these conflicts increase, conflicting communities' access, use and management of shared natural resources threaten peaceful co-existence between farmers and herders. Although resource-based conflicts between these communities are foundationally about overlapping contests to access and use of land and water resources, pre-existing social relationships, historical communal affiliations associated with tribe and ethnicity, climate change and deteriorating environmental conditions, and economic issues complexify farmer-herder conflicts. Moreover, deep-seated resentments related to unaddressed trauma, stereotypical narratives around natural resources, controversial government policies or laws, competing histories about shared natural resources, and weak traditional negotiation and conflict mitigation mechanisms influence the intensity of resource-based conflicts.

The conflict and natural resource mapping conducted by MC's program team revealed the enormity of the socio-economic, political and environmental effects of resource-based conflicts, including the extent of their impacts on relationships and critical community infrastructures such as markets, schools, water sources, health services, and community halls. This mapping, which covered the 12 new communities of the COMITAS II project in Adamawa and Taraba States, showed a scarcity of land and water resources to support the livelihoods of farmer and herder communities. This scarcity is intricately linked to climate change, environmental deterioration caused by human activities, floods and drought, and communities' poor knowledge of regenerative and transformative agricultural practices. The assessment also showed that resource-based conflicts between farmers and herders pose a critical risk to geo-political stability because they intersect economic, social, and political interests. Following these intersections, the mapping revealed that resource-based conflicts are complex: they are decentralized, transcend geo-political and transnational borders, increase (and create) ethnic and tribal tensions, and facilitate opportunities for criminality, rural banditry, and social policing of groups. This mapping, which is utilization-focused, employed ethnographic methods, including qualitative and descriptive approaches, of data collection and analysis to present the mapping findings. The study recommends that strengthening the negotiation capacities of community conflict resolution structures and supporting them to design and implement resource-based action plans are central to transforming conflict relationships and reducing conflict intensity between farmers and herders.

Summary of Key Findings

> Overlapping **claims to natural resource control by farmer and herder communities negatively impact access to and use of land and water resources**. These claims are backed by historical antecedences that influence the intensity of direct violence and the perpetuation of various [counter] attacks by both groups, further increasing community fragility and group vulnerability.

> Geo-political factors and **the enactment of legislations or laws prohibiting natural resource-related activities, such as open grazing, increase the proliferation of natural resource conflicts** between farmer and herder communities and its accompanying humanitarian toll. These factors create forced displacement of some groups, especially herders, from their original communities where they cohabited alongside farmers to new communities, developing or aggravating already fragile relations within geographic areas where farmer-herder conflicts are prominent.

> Traditional **conflict resolution and management capacities are relatively weak to handle some contemporary dynamics associated with resource-based conflicts**. These capacity gaps overwhelm traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, forcing them to rely on other external factors, such as security actors, legal systems, and CSO/NGO interventions, to respond to conflicts.

> A combination of **cultural and structural factors such as patriarchy, cultural myths, fallacies, SGBV, and reinforced culture of silence affects women's voice agencies and their significant representation and participation in natural resource management**, conflict resolution activities, and decision-making in the project communities.

> Even though some farmers and herders are committed to post-conflict reconstruction, **resource-based conflicts impact critical infrastructure in the community** and the ability of these infrastructures to support social cohesion and natural resources-related livelihoods and value chains between farmers and herders.

> While some **community members have limited knowledge about the impact of climate change on resource-based conflicts between farmers and herders,** a significant number of them are unaware of and see no relationship between climate change and natural resource depletion or resource-based conflicts.

Introduction

Context Analysis

Conflicts over shared natural resources between farmer and herder communities have increased exponentially across Nigeria, particularly in the North-Central, North-East, and North-West regions. The escalation of resource-based conflicts between these groups constitutes a significant and persistent challenge to human and societal security. These conflicts are further complicated by expansion in human population, infrastructural development and urbanization, insurgency, rural banditry, kidnapping, and inter-communal clashes. Also, ecological factors and climate change affect environmental variability, increasing competition to access and use scarce shared natural resources. While changes in environmental factors that drive resource-based conflicts correlate with human activities that intentionally or tacitly exacerbate insecurity, climatic change also emerges due to unintentional human actions. For instance, desert encroachment, depletion of land and water resources, and spatial rainfall have forced farmer and herder communities to identify new ways to continue their agricultural activities and sustain individual livelihoods, to the detriment of their social relationships. While many farmers expand crop production to stock routes and designated grazing areas/reserves or monopolize water sources due to poor soil nutrients and the need to increase agricultural outputs, herders are often forced to migrate intermittently in search of alternative pasture and water for their livestock. Poor agronomic practices by farmers and herders increase competition for scarce land and water. These attitudes and behaviors contribute to prejudice, conflict proliferation, and the polarization of the identities with which both parties compete for shared resources or mobilize their communities for violence. Regrettably, the identities associated with natural resource use and how its related conflicts protract are embedded in the culture and tradition of farmers and herders, which both groups are usually unwilling to trade for anything.

In Adamawa and Taraba States, the manifestation of resource-based conflicts between farmer and herder communities is similar to other parts of Nigeria. Even though the conflicts are fundamentally about overlapping competition for access and use of land and water resources, this assessment revealed that pre-existing social and cultural relationships, deep-seated resentments between parties due to selective or flawed histories, unaddressed trauma, stereotypical narratives, and ethnic profiling amplify the conflicts. Besides, indiscriminate grazing, encroachment and destruction of farmland, sexual violation of women and young girls by conflict parties, the pollution of water sources, and indiscriminate felling of trees intensify grievance and conflict protraction. Furthermore, enacting laws and other legislations around the use of shared natural resources by the government increases the trust deficit between conflict-affected communities and the government and reinforces conflict patterns, particularly in rural areas. For instance, the Anti-Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law passed in Taraba State in 2017 has complex implications for resource-based conflicts and the quality of social interactions between farmer and herder communities to date. Moreover, the reception of some citizens to this law has weaned due to their disillusionment with government authorities regarding the delivery of essential services and other conditions that will improve public welfare and livelihood. Some farmers and herders describe the law as a strategy to distract citizens from demanding accountability and good governance in the state.

This conflict and natural resources mapping revealed that farmer and herder communities lay historical and traditional claims to lands in specific parts of their communities, especially those around designated stock routes. While participants from farming communities mostly insist on land ownership, herders asserted that some lands that have become farmlands were historically stock routes or grazing fields because they travelled and grazed these paths with their livestock for generations. Also, while the

mapping demonstrated that the prevalence of resource-based conflicts has amplified community fragility and group vulnerability to other forms of violent attacks and criminality, resentment due to the perceived roles that farmers or herders played in these violent attacks create feelings of betrayal and distrust among farmer and herder groups who used to live as one community. These feelings of unforgiveness between both groups often fuel the instrumentalization of pre-existing social networks and other historical and ethnic affiliations to perpetrate targeted attacks and reprisals. Increasing fears of targeted violence have also influenced the settlement patterns between farmers and herders, with herder communities being most hit and forced to settle in locations with limited access to quality essential services. The weak social interactions between both communities also impede access to and use of shared natural resources for female farmers and herders. This challenge causes women to suffer various forms of sexual and physical violations and exploitation, such as rape, beating, and misogyny, from male farmers and herders, depending on the side of the victim or perpetrator. These violations are further compounded by cultural norms and practices, such as restricted land ownership rights, which relegate women's roles in NRM and their contributions to resource-based conflict mediation to the background.

While resource-based conflicts affect food security and the sustainability of livelihoods associated with natural resources, the mapping reinforced that traditional conflict resolution mechanisms are overwhelmed and cannot address some of the dynamics with which contemporary resource-based conflicts manifest. Although traditional institutions play central roles in facilitating informal agreements between farmer and herder communities on shared resource access and use, participants reported that these arrangements often collapse because one or both conflicting parties violate them. Similarly, findings from the mapping also show that many community members possess limited knowledge of climate change and refuse to acknowledge its impact on resource-based conflicts and competition for scarce resources. Instead, they attribute low productivity and availability of land and water resources to intentional activities by farmers or herders to prevent one of the parties from using shared natural resources. They describe these actions as a tactic employed to exert control or dominance because of the social or economic benefits of the resources. This thinking contradicts the tacit role of climate stresses and stressors in aggravating the scarcity of shared natural resources, resource-based conflicts, deteriorating livelihoods, and increased migration of farmer and herder communities.

From the mapping, 12 community natural resource maps were produced. These maps indicated where shared natural resources exist in the new project communities and the hotspots where resource-based conflicts are more intense and prevalent. The revelations from the maps also demonstrated some of the ambivalent relationships between farmer and herder communities, particularly on some of the shared natural resources and critical infrastructures that should enable social cohesion between both parties. For instance, in communities like Monkin A, Monkin B, Abare B, Waduku, and Dong, farmers restrict the access of herders and their livestock to mountainous and less fertile areas to graze during the rainy season but allow them to migrate back into the community after harvest. Conversely, herders in communities like Lau A and Gorobi lead their livestock to the central water point in the community to contaminate it, preventing domestic use for farmers. These actions escalate violent conflicts and threaten the safety of community members. While the mapping highlighted the conflict dynamics around shared natural resources between farmers and herders, it also reinforced the relevance of capacity-building actions, community-led social cohesion activities, and QIPs that the program will implement. The assessment also provides the program team with sufficient knowledge of the local project environment to guide the development of appropriate strategies to implement various activities.

COMITAS II Implementation Wards in Taraba and Adamawa States

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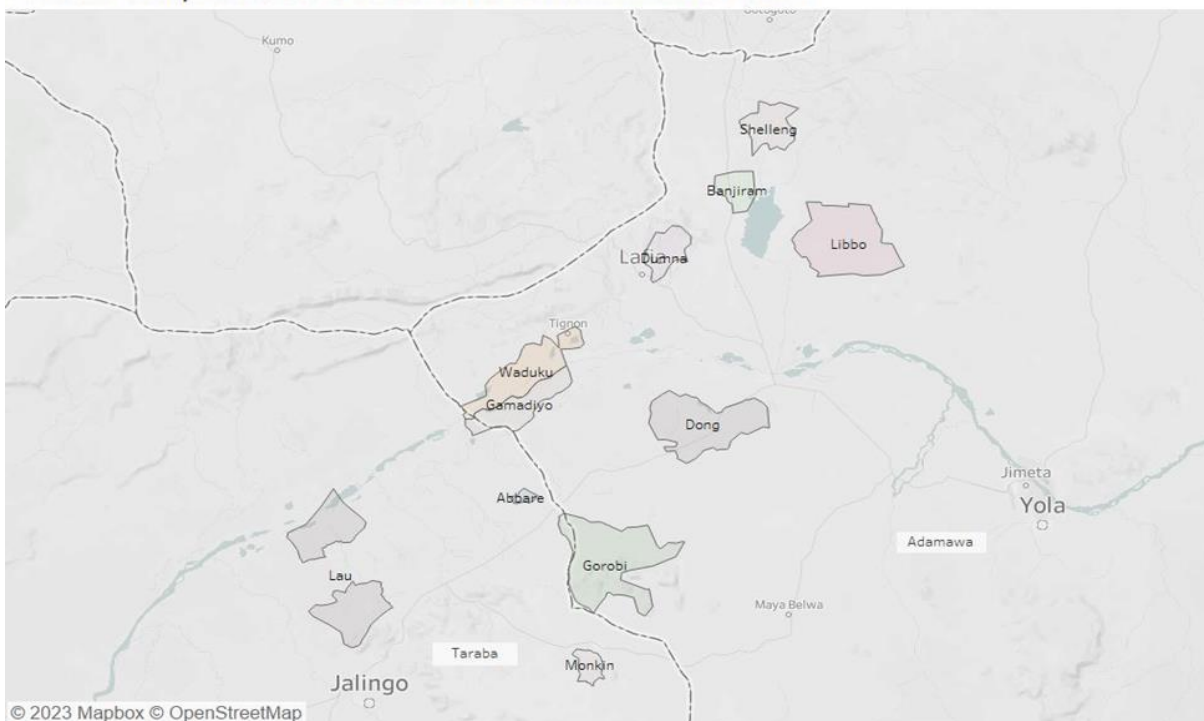
Table 1: List of COMITAS II program LGAs and Wards Covered in the Natural Resources Mapping

State	LGA	Wards
Adamawa	Demsa	Dong
	Shelleng	Shelleng and Libbo
	Lamurde	Waduku
	Guyuk	Dumna and Bajiram
	Numan	Gamadiyo
	Mayo Belwa	Gorobi
Taraba	Zing	Monkin A and Monkin B
	Lau	Lau A and Abbare B

Project Summary and Mercy Corps' COMITAS Response

Historically, farmer and herder communities in Nigeria enjoyed peaceful and symbiotic relationships that developed through reciprocity and mutuality. Herders secured access to water and pasture through historically established livestock migration routes. After their harvest, farmers allowed herders' livestock to feed on the farm residue while the herders' livestock fertilized the farms for the next planting season. These actions complete a symbiotic cycle of cooperation and interdependence that historically defined farmer-herder relations. Also, traditional rulers had authority over managing shared natural resources and resolved disputes between both groups in an amicable and timely manner, mitigating further conflicts. However, in recent years, land and water resources have become scarce due to a combination of factors, increasing competition for access and control between groups. Following this competition for shared natural resources, the relationship between farmer and herder communities began to erode, and the influence of traditional institutions in managing resources was reduced due to the introduction of modern

government systems. Besides, following this modernization, security agencies and the judicial system have become the primary mechanisms for maintaining law and order.

Following a clear understanding of the varying drivers of resource-based conflicts, the COMITAS project was conceptualised to provide strategic responses to transform the conflicts over shared natural resources between farmer and herder communities. This project builds on the comparative strengths of each consortium partner – IOM, SfCG, and MC – to strengthen early warning and response mechanisms. Most notably, it uses IOM's longstanding experience in flow monitoring and data analysis to facilitate the identification of early warning signals that arise from transhumance activities in Adamawa and Taraba states. The project also leverages SfCG's expertise in community mobilization to mobilize early responses to the early warning signals through established CRNs in the project communities. Meanwhile, to ensure that early warning signals related to competition over natural resources are addressed through this project, MC leverages its strength and experience in enhancing farmer and herder communities' capacity to negotiate resource-based conflicts and collaborate over natural resource management to strengthen the capacity of NRMCs. The NRMCs, which also work at the community level, work closely with the CRNs to develop local solutions to threats that could escalate conflicts associated with shared natural resources.

This project has four specific objectives:

1. Strengthened traditional conflict resolution mechanisms.
2. Improved trust in authorities.
3. Enhanced collaboration on natural resource management.
4. Improved intra and inter-communal perceptions.

These four specific objectives contribute to achieving the overall project goal: **to mitigate conflict over natural resources between farmer and herder communities in Adamawa and Taraba states of Nigeria**.

In this project, MC is primarily responsible for implementing activities under **Objective 3: Enhanced collaboration in managing the use of natural resources**. MC will facilitate local capacity-building activities for NRMCs in IBN to improve the negotiation skills of NRMCs. These skills will be effective in negotiating and mediating shared natural resource conflicts between farmers and herders. The capacity-building activity will also target government authorities at the state and local levels to improve their capacity to provide institutional accompaniment to the NRMCs and their local communities to manage resource-based conflicts and promote collaborative NRM between farmer and herder communities. Also, MC will support NRMCs and other stakeholders relevant to its objective to raise awareness about natural resources issues, mainly around land and water use, resource tenure systems, climate change, and collaborative NRM in communities.

Program Objectives

1. Strengthened traditional conflict resolution mechanisms.
2. Improved trust in authorities.
3. Enhanced collaboration on natural resource management.
4. Improved intra and inter communal perceptions.

Mercy Corps, while contributing to the overall goal, is responsible for the implementation of Objective 3
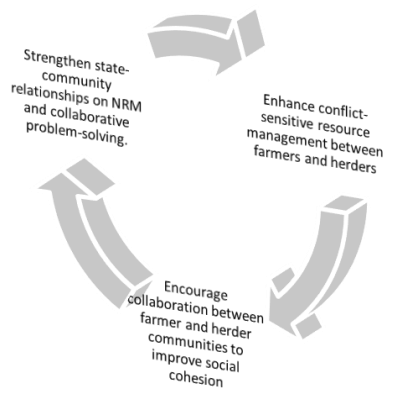
Enhanced collaboration on natural resource management.

Result 3.1 *Improved capacity to manage natural resources.*

Activity 3.1.3 *Raise awareness on sustainable natural resource management*

Activity 3.1.2 *Build capacities of local authorities' resource management capacity.*

Activity 3.1.1 *Establish Natural Resource Management Committees (NRMCs)*

Result 3.2 *Concrete resource solutions are identified and implemented.*

Activity 3.2.1 *Facilitate natural resource management planning and implementation*

Activity 3.2.2 *Assess resource availability and linkages to social cohesion*

As part of MC's response, while farmer and herder communities remain the central actors in facilitating the resolution of resource-based conflicts, the organization will support NRMCs and their respective communities to develop NRM action plans, some of which will translate into peace incentives and concrete solution initiatives, such as the construction of infrastructure projects called QIPs. These QIPs will address the project communities' prioritized land, water, or social cohesion concerns. MC will also ensure that NRMCs receive technical support from its program team and the technical units of relevant government institutions for effective implementation of the QIPs and sustainable management of the action plans and their [tangible and intangible] outcomes.

Strengthen state-community relationships on NRM and collaborative problem-solving.

Enhance conflict-sensitive resource management between farmers and herders

Encourage collaboration between farmer and herder communities to improve social cohesion

This approach will enable MC to transform the trust deficits and misconceptions between communities and the government over NRM. More broadly, the action plans will accomplish three main outputs: enhance conflict-sensitive resource management between farmers and herders, encourage collaboration between farmer and herder communities to improve social cohesion, and strengthen state-community relationships on NRM and collaborative problem-solving.

MC's approach to transforming the resource-based conflict acknowledges that inclusive business models can bring conflict groups – i.e., farmers and herders – together to address violence and improve collective livelihoods associated with shared natural resources. Therefore, MC will explore available opportunities for joint economic activities between both communities to strengthen their economic interdependence and collaboration to improve social cohesion. The organization will conduct a rapid assessment of the current business enterprise models in the project communities to identify the gaps experienced by the farmers and herders in the face of conflict to engage their livelihoods. From the identified gaps and needs, MC will provide tailored training to support community members to continuously pursue their livelihoods and cope with the negative impact of resource-based conflicts. This training will also reinforce how business enterprise models would promote social cohesion between the herders and farmers. MC will consequently support each community to develop inclusive business plans. Also, following the approval of these business models and the approach to training delivery, MC will support the project communities to implement the plans using the field farmer and pastoralist school approaches, supplying them with start-up kits to navigate through improving social cohesion through food security. This activity will increase social cohesion and community stability by building economically viable opportunities across lines of division because farmer and herder communities will benefit from tangible economic outcomes embedded in cooperation and collaboration.

Purpose and Methodology of Conflict and Natural Resources Mapping

Overview

MC conducted this utilization-focused mapping to identify the primary sources and secondary drivers of resource-based conflicts between farmer and herder communities across the COMITAS II project communities in Adamawa and Taraba States. The mapping findings will influence a deeper contextual understanding of resource-based conflict dynamics in the project communities and inform the development of strategies to implement various activities that MC's program team will implement throughout the project. It will also enhance the team's recognition of diverse sensitivities in these communities, the project's interaction with these sensitivities, and how the program team could collaborate with stakeholders to navigate the conflicts and improve relationships based on mutuality, reciprocity, negotiation, and mediation. Also, by mapping relevant natural resources in communities, MC's COMITAS team can visualize potential locations where they would collaborate with communities to implement joint community peace incentives and concrete solution initiatives to strengthen social cohesion between farmer and herder communities.

Specifically, the mapping set out to accomplish the following:

i.   Identify existing or potential natural resource conflicts (i.e., land and water).
ii.   Understand the characteristics of the actors involved in escalating resource-based conflicts.
iii. Identify the disconnect between natural resource availability, accessibility and use between farmers and herders.
iv.   Determine the natural resources that are critical to the livelihoods of communities.
v.   Examine the impacts of natural resource conflicts on vulnerable groups in the community – women, youths, PWDs, and children.
vi.   Assess the challenges of environmental protection and conservation and the opportunities for developing appropriate responses to climate change and its impacts on natural resource conflicts.

vii. The prospects for implementing concrete solutions and peace incentive initiatives that will benefit farmer and herder communities and improve social cohesion.

During the conflict and natural resource mapping of project communities, MC sought to answer the following questions:
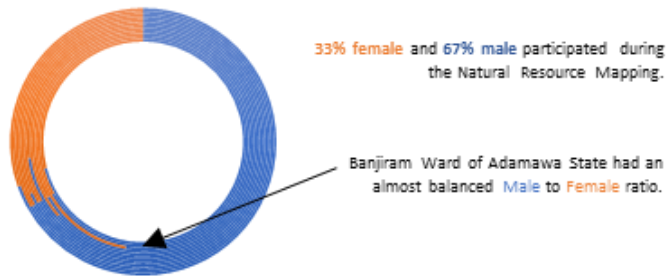
1. Where are the primary sites of natural resource conflicts, and with what frequency and severity?
2. What natural resources are at the root of the conflict?
3. What are the primary livelihoods that community members engage in?
4. How are men and women affected by the outcomes of natural resource conflicts?
5. How do conflicts impact livelihoods, particularly those directly associated with shared natural resources?
6. Which actors are responsible for conflict mitigation?
7. What environmental conservation efforts/methods exist within communities to address resource-based conflict escalation?

This assessment acknowledged the variance in the accessibility of natural resources by some farmers and herders because of their population and locations (i.e., residing between mountainous regions and lowlands). Hence, it sought to understand some of the common offsets that occur because of these corresponding geographic/settlement differences and the impacts of these offsets on access to and use of shared water and land resources. In addition, the mapping employed a participatory rural appraisal approach, which is community-based, to assess the social resources that enable conflict resolution and collaborative NRM across the project communities. Beyond achieving a keen and nuanced understanding of the context and conflict dynamics, MC's program team will utilize information from the mapping to offer justifications on the value of facilitating collaborative protection and/or restoration of natural resource capital based on the exercise's perceived benefits to the project communities. The knowledge will also guide the team's approach to conducting periodic conflict analysis in the project environments, dialogue facilitation around shared resources, and the planning and sustainability of joint natural resource projects that various communities will prioritize and implement.

Methodology and Participant Selection

MC conducted this mapping using participatory methods. FGDs were the primary method employed for the mapping. The program team conducted 37 FGDs for the 12 new project wards to answer key questions to understand the dynamics and trajectories of resource-based conflicts between farmer and herder communities. 261 (174 male and 87 female) participants participated in the mapping across the 12 wards. Also, 22 government staff from the different LGCs of the project and the State Ministries of Agriculture and Livestock, Water Resources, and the Department of Forestry participated in the mapping.
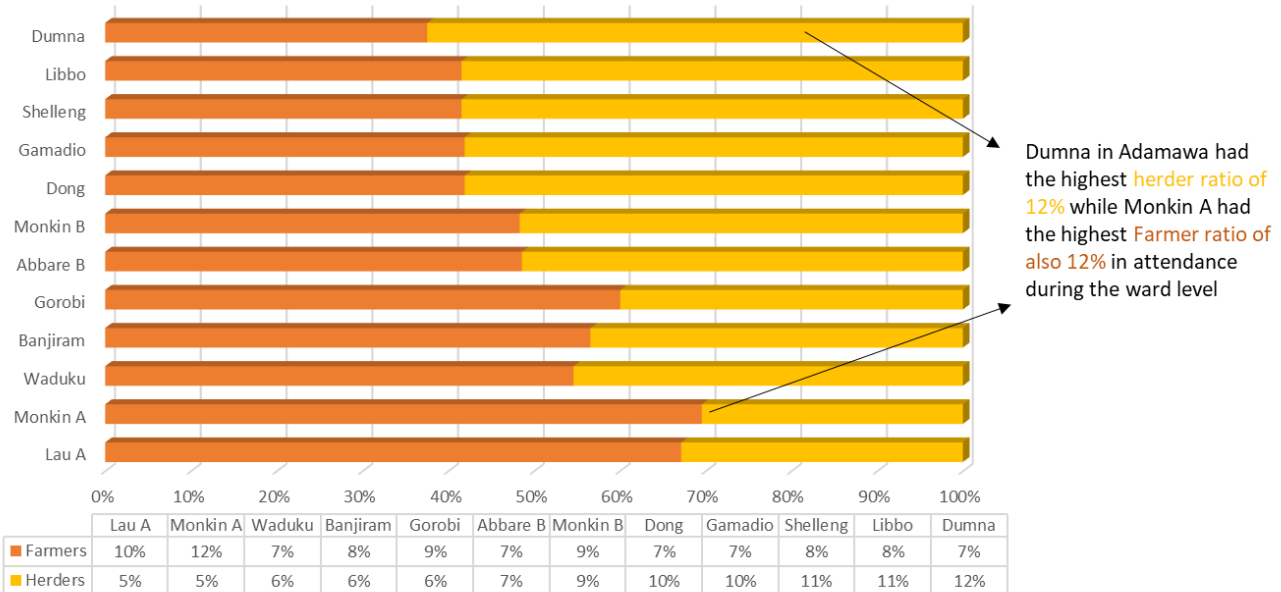
Participants Distribution By Gender

33% female and 67% male participated during the Natural Resource Mapping.

Banjiram Ward of Adamawa State had an almost balanced Male to Female ratio.

These participants are members of the NRMCs, comprised of traditional and community leaders, men, women, youths (male and female), religious leaders, and a spectrum of other stakeholder institutions from the communities, which are represented on the committees. Overall, the principles of credibility and transparency guided the approach to conducting this mapping. The principles entail that the most credible and reliable evidence from the mapping is appropriately utilized and analyzed to generate the assessment findings, triangulate information, draw conclusions, and make recommendations upon which the program team will act to guide project implementation in communities. MC's program team informed participants about the objectives of the mapping and the function of the information gathered in the delivery of various project activities.

Farmer Herder Participant's Livelihood Distribution Accross Wards

Dumna in Adamawa had the highest herder ratio of 12% while Monkin A had the highest Farmer ratio of also 12% in attendance during the ward level

	Lau A	Monkin A	Waduku	Banjiram	Gorobi	Abbare B	Monkin B	Dong	Gamadio	Shelleng	Libbo	Dumna
Farmers	10%	12%	7%	8%	9%	7%	9%	7%	7%	8%	8%	7%
Herders	5%	5%	6%	6%	6%	7%	9%	10%	10%	11%	11%	12%

Data Analysis

The natural resource mapping employed a qualitative method of data analysis. This descriptive method allowed MC's program team to harmonize, analyze, synthesize, and triangulate the results of the data collected and other multi-level perspectives presented by participants. These perspectives informed the categorization of findings and different [sub]themes presented in this report. MC's team listened to audio recordings of the mapping, transcribed the responses, and transferred all data documented in fieldnotes into the designed reporting template. The overall analysis of participants' responses ensured consistency with the mapping objectives. Also, the descriptive method of data analysis for the mapping utilized ethnographic summaries and manual content analysis to discuss the findings.

Limitations

The role that spill-over conflicts from communities outside the project scope play in resource-based conflicts are significant elements that should be captured on the map. While some participants wanted the mapping to capture these external conflicts affecting their wards' stability, the activity was confined to the project's communities. This decision was informed by the nature of discussions that MC intends to facilitate from internal resource-based conflict issues within the primary project sites. Although MC did not capture these external communities on the maps, the program team used special characters to indicate the influx of external conflicts on the further escalation of clashes over natural resources between farmers and herders on the identified sections of the maps. The team also documented the nature of these external conflicts and how they complicate resource-based disputes between farmers and herders in the project communities.

In addition, in some project communities, farmers and herders had different names for some locations where shared natural resources were situated and utilized by both groups. These different names are informed by ancestral or cultural activities conducted in these areas by their respective livelihood groups, i.e., farmers and herders. Also, most of these locations possess immense natural resources that both groups require to support their activities. Hence, they are named according to the cultural descriptions of the benefits that such resource sites provide. The program team observed that the different names provided for these locations by both groups indicate a tacit strategy with which they wanted to demonstrate absolute control of the resources. MC's program team understood the sensitivities around the emergence of some of these names and needed help to validate their accuracy or appropriateness. Therefore, the team captured the names with which both groups preferred to describe these contentious areas as a conflict sensitivity measure to prevent any indication that the program team was taking sides with any conflict parties.

Thirdly, the COMITAS project focuses on engaging stakeholders at the ward level, which comprises of various villages. Therefore, the data collected during the mapping is restricted to the ward-level conflict system and does not necessarily reflect the entire situation of the conflict throughout the LGA (consisting of various wards). Hence, it would be difficult to generalize some of the primary findings and meta-level analysis of resource-based conflicts across other wards in each LGA. By implication, the manifestations of shared natural resource conflicts between farmer and herder communities should be examined on a case-by-case basis.

Presentation of General Findings

Conflict Perceptions Vs Direct Violence

> Overlapping **claims to natural resource control by farmer and herder communities negatively impact access to and use of land and water resources**. These claims are backed by historical antecedences that influence the intensity of direct violence and the perpetuation of various [counter] attacks by both groups, further increasing community fragility and group vulnerability.

The conflict and natural resource mapping revealed that violent conflicts between farmers and herders are inspired by disagreements and overlapping claims for the control – access and use – of land and water resources. These claims are reinforced by historical activities, stories, or narratives about how the

ancestors of farmer and herder communities engaged in traditional activities, including livelihoods, around some disputed shared resources and their locations. These historical perspectives become transgenerational as actors from both communities sustain these narratives, paying little or no attention to the validity of these claims. For instance, participants from some farming communities averred that human settlements, farmlands, and grazing areas were historically allocated to herders by their forefathers during migration to the communities. Contrarily, some of the herders asserted that, historically, their ancestors controlled land and water resources, which became part of their [herders] inheritance as generations passed. These [counter] claims stir deep-seated resentment, leading to recurrent violent conflicts between both communities. A male farmer from Gamadio ward participant noted that:

> *Our forefathers gave land to herders when they first came here to settle in our community… but now, they claim areas that do not belong to them… they want to graze and farm anywhere… For instance, one of the main areas of tension is at the riverbanks because we farm there, and sometimes, these herders will intentionally take their cattle to someone's farm to graze. We said intentionally because they are not blind that they can't see somebody's hard work buried in the soil; they do it because they… don't understand the history of the land that they are in. They also have these same [conflict] issues with the fishermen.*

Due to these competing histories for access and control of shared resources, in some cases, both parties utilize dysfunctional activities to destroy the livelihoods of one another intentionally. These actions result in a hurtful stalemate in a few instances. Another male herder from Libbo ward mentioned that:

> *… our relationship with the farmers is getting worse because they [farmers] use chemicals on their farmland after farming so that it will affect our animals… in the past, they even allowed herders to graze their cattle on the farm after harvest, but they don't do that anymore… after farming, they just burn the farm residue or use chemicals on it, which is harmful to the animals.*

Besides the histories surrounding access and use of shared natural resources, participants revealed other historical elements shaping resource-based conflicts between farmers and herders. They highlighted that resource-based conflict escalation between both parties reflects an intersection of historical grievances associated with betrayal by groups, unaddressed trauma, mistrust, and perceptions of community occupation by farmer or herder groups due to the intensity of the natural resource activities.
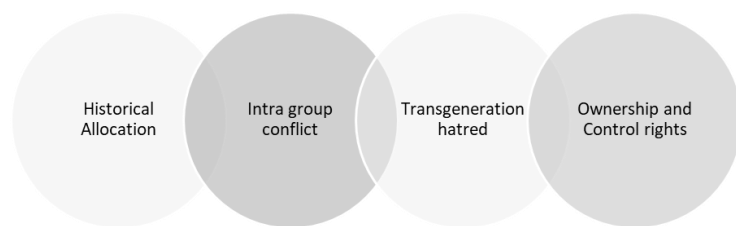
These combined factors and other intra-group disputes disrupt economic and livelihood sustainability, impede the development of collaborative resource management plans, and perpetuate different forms of criminality that complicate resource-based conflicts. More so, transgenerational hatred related to farmer-herder relations influences social policing and the development of besiegement narratives that enable ethnic profiling of groups, particularly towards the Fulani ethnic group, who are predominantly herders. Additionally, challenges around ownership and control of ancestral land are not only common to inter-group relationships between

farmers and herders. Contest for ancestral land occurs among farmers, mainly when it involves traditional leadership's roles in increasing the social power and political prestige that one group of farmers have over another. In Monkin B ward, farmers from the Sangwe and Dogwa tribes are contesting land ownership and tribal leadership for their communities. Ethnic leadership and control of the contested land will bring prestige to successive generations if either of the communities emerges victorious in the contest. This intra-group tension impacts the broader resource-based conflicts between farmer and herder communities. It also affects intra- and inter-group distribution and negotiation of shared land and water resources around these contested areas.

Evidence from the mapping alludes that in communities like Dong and Gorobi wards, historically, farmers and herders shared natural resources to support their livelihoods. However, following the conflicts in 2017 and 2018,[1] where some Fulani herders attacked communities in Demsa and Numan, one of which was Dong, farmers carried out reprisal on herders. These reprisals also led to farmers chasing the herders out of the community and creating an impasse on various activities that sought to facilitate reconciliation or the herders' reintegration into the community. During this period of expulsion, farmers blocked some of the stock routes and extended crop production to grazing areas. Some farmers also took over ownership of farmlands belonging to herders to create a 'new' homogeneous community dominated only by farmers, distorting a heterogeneous community. This conflict antecedence occurred in Monkin A, where farmers and herders, predominantly from the Mumuye and Fulani tribes, waged historical conflicts against each other due to shared natural resources.

While wards like Gorobi, Gamdiyo, and Waduku were not directly affected by the attacks in 2017 and 2018, most farmers within the Numan Federation[2] and Mayo-Belwa, to which these communities belong, developed and proliferated stereotypical narratives towards the Fulani tribe and herders from this ethnic group. These narratives, utilized to radicalize farmer communities, informed the violent expulsion of 'Fulani' herders in other communities within the Numan Federation and elsewhere. Although the mapping revealed that farmers and herders are participating in government- and NGOs-led negotiations and dialogues to reintegrate herders into some of these affected communities, some of these efforts have become counterproductive. Some farming communities gave unfavorable conditions for the return of herders to the community. For instance, some community participants revealed that one of the conditions for reintegration is that herders can come into the community to graze their livestock and leave afterwards. On the other hand, communities like Dong, Dumna, Gamadio, and Banjiram wards, who agreed to the gradual reintegration of herders, expressed suspicion over the return of only male herders to the community, leaving their wives and children to settle elsewhere. A male herder from Gamadio reported that "*we refused to come back to the community with our wives and children because we are afraid and suspect that the farmers can attack our households any time. So, it is better for only the men to be in the community for now.*"

Photo I: Community natural resource mapping with women from Lau A Ward.

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[1] See Amnesty International Report. *Harvest of Deaths: Three Years of Bloody Clashes Between Farmers and Herders in Nigeria.* Retrieved from: https://www.amnesty.be/IMG/pdf/nigeria_harvest_of_death_report_17_december_2108.pdf .
[2] The Numan Federation comprises Demsa, Numan, Guyuk, Shelleng, and Lamurde LGAs.

Geo-political factors and **the enactment of legislations or laws prohibiting natural resource-related activities, such as open grazing, increase the proliferation of natural resource conflicts** between farmer and herder communities and its accompanying humanitarian toll. These factors create forced displacement of some groups, especially herders, from their original communities where they cohabited alongside farmers to new communities, developing or aggravating already fragile relations within geographic areas where farmer-herder conflicts are prominent.

Beyond localized drivers of resource-based clashes between farmer and herder communities, the violence between both parties is also driven by political factors such as laws or other government legislation restricting access and use of shared natural resources or inciteful political rhetoric that exacerbates violence. These political outcomes are sometimes driven by specific geo-political trends on natural resource issues, which government actors [attempt] to implement to address resource-based tensions between farmers and herders. For instance, 15 states across Nigeria enacted open grazing prohibition laws: Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Benue, Delta, Ebonyi, Ekiti, Enugu, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo, Rivers, and Taraba.[3] The governments in states where these laws have been enacted designed the legislation to fundamentally address the recurrent resource-based conflicts between farmer and herder communities, including some of the broader impacts of these conflicts on insecurity. Nevertheless, although there are variations to the content and application of these laws in different states, an observable commonality which sparks opposition to the laws by herders is the use of the framing "***anti-open grazing prohibition***". While Adamawa State does not have an open grazing prohibition law, in Taraba State, this law seeks to accomplish the following:

i. Prevent the destruction of farmland, crops, shared water sources like rivers and ponds, and human settlements by open livestock rearing and grazing.
ii. Provide a framework for managing conflicts between farmers and herders.
iii. Promote environmental conservation, protect forest reserves, and prevent degradation or pollution from open livestock rearing and overgrazing.
iv. Promote and enhance the production of high and healthier breeds for cattle, sheep, goats, etc.
v. Ensure optimal use of relevant natural resources amid overstretched land, increasing population, and the devastating impact of climate change.
vi. Ensure prevention, control, and management of diseases that occur from natural resource activities.
vii. Enhance the production of high-quality and healthy livestock and farm outputs for domestic and international markets.

The anti-open grazing law in Taraba State applies generally to all forms of animal husbandry (such as goats, sheep, and cattle), making it unlawful for people to graze farm animals openly. In comparison to

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[3] Partners Nigeria (2021). *Open Grazing Prohibition Laws in Nigeria: Policy Challenges and Alternatives.* Retrieved from: https://www.partnersnigeria.org/policy-brief-open-grazing-prohibition-laws-in-nigeria-policy-challenges-and-alternatives/. Also, see Oludayo Tade. What's Triggered New Conflict Between Farmers and Herders in Nigeria? *The Conversation.* September 1, 2020. Retrieved from: https://theconversation.com/whats-triggered-new-conflict-between-farmers-and-herders-in-nigeria-145055. See Chris M.A. Kwaja and Katie Smith (2020). *Transnational Dimensions of Conflict Between Farmers and Herders in Western Sahel and Lake Chad Basin.* Retrieved from: https://www.sfcg.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SFCG_Policy_Brief_Transnational_Dimension_to_FH_Conflicts.pdf

other states in the South where the laws apply exclusively to cattle rearing, the application of the law in Taraba state is broad-based. It enables more inclusive legal frameworks for managing cases emanating from violations related to natural resource management. In addition, the anti-grazing law in Taraba state "provides for the establishment of ranches as alternatives to open grazing".[4] Even though this law is comprehensive and addresses natural resources and outcomes that support or manage the activities of farmers and herders, some stakeholders in the project communities perceive the law as anti-herders because it disrupts their cultural way of conducting herding activities. Although a majority of the community members from the farmer and herder sides demonstrated limited or no knowledge of the law, a government official in Lau LGC mentioned that *"…public knowledge of the law is poor… and for those who know about it, whether farmer or herder, they think that it is targeting herders… because they are the ones that carry cattle around."* When triangulated with responses from some of the participants who know about the open grazing prohibition law in Taraba State, this feedback revealed tacit sensitivities around the reception and implementation of the law throughout the state. These sensitivities relate to how the law confines grazing activities to specific spaces, interrupting the cultural grazing practices of groups and their ability to explore more grazing resources for their livestock.

Despite the challenges surrounding operationalizing the anti-open grazing prohibition law in Taraba, the state government in both COMITAS project states sign seasonal Executive Orders that mandate the exit and re-entry of herders and their livestock in predominant farming communities. The Executive Orders, meant to prevent the escalation of resource-based conflicts, usually direct herders and their livestock to exit and return to their communities between May to October and January to April, respectively. Even though all the participants of the natural resource mapping confirmed their awareness and compliance with these seasonal Orders in Adamawa and Taraba, the herders across the 12 communities revealed that transhumance herders were primarily responsible for crop destruction during the farming season. They stated that crop destruction that occurs during the farming season caused the state governments to enact these Executive Orders. However, the herders who live with other sedentary farmers are tasked to pay for crop destruction. These local solutions developed by the traditional institutions in these communities further marginalize the herders because they pay more financial compensation for crop destruction than the damage's actual value. Such actions stir resentment and violent acts that weaken their fragile relationship.

Geo-political and sub-national interests		
Political priorities influence approach to management of shared natural resources	Competing legislations (customary laws, executive orders and policy directives, local agreements)	Attitudes and behaviours of resource users towards one another

Besides government legislation, some project communities have customary laws and practices governing shared natural resources. Some of these customary practices are in informal agreements between farmers and herders in the project communities. However, participants in the 12 communities reported that some farmers and herders violate these arrangements and graze or cultivate crops in restricted areas, further escalating intra- and inter-group conflicts. For instance, some project communities

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[4] Ibid. Also see, Ebunoluwa Olafusi. *At a Glance: Edo, Imo, C'River — Six Southern States Yet to Enact Anti-Open Grazing Bill.* September 23, 2021. Retrieved from:
https://www.thecable.ng/at-a-glance-edo-imo-criver-six-southern-states-yet-to-enact-anti-open-grazing-law.

customarily designated areas as sacred sites where farming and herding activities are prohibited. The prohibition of access to and use of natural resources in these areas is associated with cultural connections and beliefs of communities, especially among farmers, that because their ancestors were buried there, their spirits live in these areas. For example, farmers in Lau A and Dong wards stated that many herders carry out grazing activities in 'sacred areas', violating the informal agreements between farmers and herders about engaging in natural resource activities in these sites. A female herder from Lau A ward revealed that *"our cattle must graze there [sacred areas] because there are farms everywhere and there is nowhere we will take our livestock to for grazing... the grass in these areas is very nutritious for our cattle."* Some of the participants reiterated that besides the sacredness of some of the areas where herders graze their cattle, community-based agreements prohibit under-aged herding because of the roles that their inability to control livestock plays in farmer encroachment, crop destruction and 'desecration' of these sacred areas. The mapping identified connections between the history of farmer-herder conflicts and [in]formal laws enacted to address natural resource conflicts.

While the centrality of historical factors is vital to understanding the intensity of resource-based conflicts between farmer and herder communities, the mapping revealed that these histories and local understanding of government legislation on NRM influence the role of pre-existing socio-cultural networks in episodic violence. At the same time, while evidence from the mapping showed that historical grievances between farmers and herders impact access to and use of shared natural resources, pre-existing social networks, often in other [external] communities, improve the conflict alliances and resources that both parties require to wage violence. For example, farmers in Libbo share social and

ethnocultural ties with Gwamba ward in Demsa LGA, dating back to the pre-colonial era when these communities were controlled by centralized, traditional systems, which took the forms of kingdoms before the establishment of administrative borders. Despite the change in the administrative status of both communities, the social and ethnocultural ties farmers in Libbo and Gwamba share constitute a crucial resource they leverage to provide defense and social security to each other during wartime. In the context of resource-based conflict, this social connection becomes available when farming

Photo II: Community natural resource mapping with male participants from Dumna Ward.

communities perceive a potential threat of violence from herders, especially during the seasons when the state governments sign Executive Orders on the exit of herders from the community. Moreover, because some herders settle in the mountainous areas in Libbo ward, farmers in Gwamba ward leverage their familiarity with warfare in mountainous regions to launch attacks and inflict harm on herders and their livestock during conflicts. These attacks impede herders' access to and use of natural resources, impacting their safety and economic vulnerability.

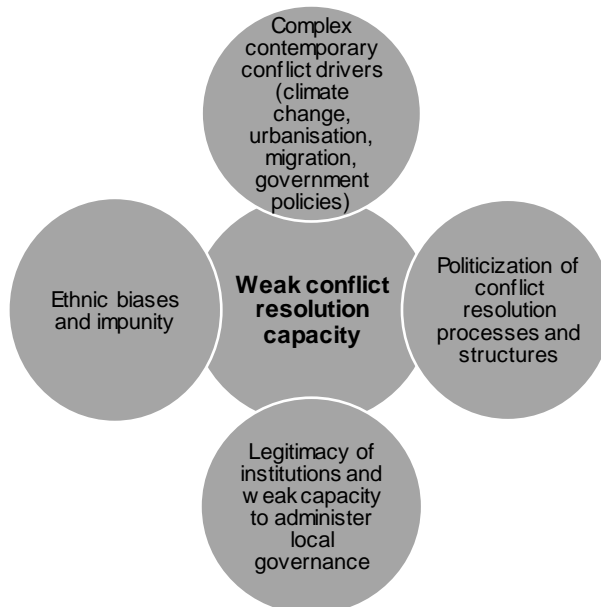## Status of Resource-Based Conflict Management and Resolution Mechanisms

Traditional **conflict resolution and management capacities are relatively weak to handle some contemporary dynamics associated with resource-based conflicts**. These capacity gaps overwhelm traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, forcing them to rely on other external factors, such as security actors, legal systems, and CSO/NGO interventions, to respond to conflicts.

The weakness of local mediation mechanisms to facilitate sustained natural resource dialogues in communities has encouraged resource-based violence. For several decades, traditional conflict resolution mechanisms played strategic roles in resource-based negotiations and conflict management between farmer and herder communities. These conflict resolution roles are informed by the familiarity of traditional leaders with the local dynamics of farmer-herder relations. Some of these conflict resolution structures in the communities include T-PAC, Tabital Pulaaku, Peace Committees, CPSP and Elders' Councils. The localization of resource-based conflict resolution mechanisms has proven to be adequate for resource-based conflict resolution; however, they have become overwhelmed by the dynamics and complexity of contemporary natural resource conflicts. These contemporary conflicts revealed traditional institutions' weak or absent technical and social capacity to manage tensions, particularly in an era when pluralistic factors, including physical and abstract elements, drive these conflicts. Following the complicatedness of these contemporary conflicts, traditional institutions across farmer and herder communities combine alternative dispute resolution and retributive justice approaches to manage conflicts. Besides, combining these approaches has become imperative, considering the emergence of various legal instruments and frameworks designed to expedite actions that traditional conflict resolution mechanisms have limited capacity and authority to address. The mapping also revealed that some of the conflict parties often undermine the efficacy of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms in addressing natural resource conflicts because of the weak administrative capacity of local governance structures, ethnic biases, politicization of conflict resolution processes, legal pluralism and competing interpretations and superiority of laws, and impunity.

Although the mapping demonstrated that some of the traditional resource-based conflict resolution mechanisms are deeply rooted in ancient customary practices that are not entirely suitable for contemporary conflicts between farmers and herders, participants assert confidence in the roles that they play in facilitating and strengthening trust-building, mutuality, and reciprocity between conflict parties. Participants from the new project communities revealed that traditional institutions play central roles in facilitating negotiations between farmers and herders when farm encroachment, crop destruction, or cattle rustling occur. For example, traditional conflict resolution structures attempt to estimate the value of damage done by cattle during farm encroachment and instruct the affected party to pay monetary compensation to the farm's owner. On the other hand, when cattle theft or rustling is reported and the culprit is caught, some communities subject the perpetrator to public flogging at community squares or the palace of the traditional leader. While these methods of conflict resolution are embedded in alternative dispute resolution and restorative justice, they do not cater for some of the criminal dimensions that resource-based conflicts between farmers and herders take.

The participants stated that, in the wake of the farmer-herder conflicts in Adamawa State between 2017-2019, which resulted in the expulsion of herders from most communities by farmers, efforts by traditional institutions and local conflict resolution mechanisms proved futile to achieve reconciliation and reintegration of herders into their original communities. Due to the deep-seated hostility between conflict parties, external actors, such as NGOs and special government committees like the PCRC set up by the Adamawa State government, intervened to complement the efforts of traditional institutions and other local conflict resolution mechanisms. These external actors convened several multi-stakeholder forums to discuss the root causes of the conflicts and address some of the futuristic outcomes the conflicts portend for inter-communal relations between farmers and herders. Similarly, in Taraba, the ability of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms to provide sufficient response to the Fulani-Mumuye conflict informed the involvement of other parties to manage the violence. Even though the mapping revealed that traditional natural resource conflict resolution mechanisms often failed to deliver desired outcomes because of their exploitation by some corrupt local actors within farmer and herder communities, overall, the varying efforts of these structures reduced the severity of the conflicts in many communities.

Complex contemporary conflict drivers (climate change, urbanisation, migration, government policies)

Ethnic biases and impunity

Weak conflict resolution capacity

Politicization of conflict resolution processes and structures

Legitimacy of institutions and weak capacity to administer local governance

While a female herder in Abbare B ward stated that "*it is because the government intervened in the conflict that we can sit together now… before, it was difficult to even agree to meet,*" another male herder in Dong ward reechoed the submission that "*…NGOs and the state government organised dialogues for us [farmers and herders] to chart a new course… from these meetings, we signed agreements that allowed us [herders] to return to the community.*" Across the conflict resolution efforts, CSOs, NGOs, and security actors played overlapping roles in facilitating conflict transformation using their unique technical and professional capacities and resources. These specialized skills they possessed and utilized complemented the existing efforts of traditional mechanisms to address resource-based conflicts and promote change in the quality of social interactions between farmers and herders.

A combination of **cultural and structural factors such as patriarchy, cultural myths, fallacies, SGBV, and reinforced culture of silence affects women's voice agencies and their significant representation and participation in natural resource management**, conflict resolution activities, and decision-making in the project communities.

Resource-based conflicts weaken the social capital of women, including further enabling the proliferation of harmful practices that relegate the voice agencies of women to the background. While women play important roles in social cohesion and conflict transformation, cultural and structural violence undermine their capacity to contribute to these processes and diverse, peaceful outcomes of resource-based

negotiations. Harmful cultural practices, negative masculinity, excessive male chauvinism, SGBV, and the weak leadership capacity of community women affect their inclusion in NRM, negotiation, and conflict prevention in farmer and herder communities. Even though the social interactions between farmer and herder women are stretched due to the conflicts, the mapping also showed that women's relative recognition in post-conflict reconstruction, community-rebuilding, and natural resource management endeavors within their communities is influenced by their weak economic status. Invariably, women's participation in resource-based conflict resolution across farmer and herder communities is inadequate or non-existent, further marginalizing their contributions to developing peaceful outcomes. Moreover, the fractured relationship between male farmers and herders is transferred to their women, who become caught up in webs of [in]direct violence because of the limitations that resource-based conflicts and other cultural factors and myths inflict on their socio-economic activities together.

The mapping revealed the existence of social constructs in communities that NRM and conflict resolution structures in communities should be male-dominated. This narrative unconsciously influences women's limited knowledge of and interest in understanding the trends and trajectories of resource-based conflicts between farmers and herders in their communities and dismisses their emotional intelligence to identify entry points for women's contribution to conflict transformation. For instance, in many herder communities, when the males begin to engage in transhumance activities to find pasture and water for their cattle, they employ patriarchal actions, enabled by their culture, to restrict the movement of their wives and other females to specific [parts of their] communities. This patriarchal power is amplified further by cultural practices that impede inheritance rights for women, limiting their ownership, access to, and use of shared natural resources. Participants asserted that these cultural practices are not unique to female herders but to farmers as well. A female farmer in Monkin B ward shared that:

Our culture does not allow women to own land… so we do not have lands of our own to farm. The [farmer] men always allocate land for us to grow crops, or they determine that we will work with them on their own farm… Sometimes, when they give us farmlands, and they see that the harvest that women get from the land is better than theirs, they collect the land from us and reallocate farmlands that are less fertile to us [women]… even if you inherit land from your father, it becomes your husband's property when you become married.
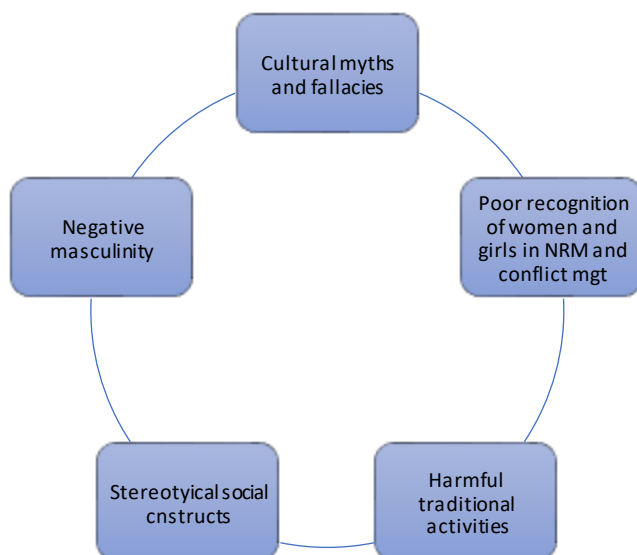
Similarly, a female herder in Waduku ward revealed that:

We do not follow our men when they are going to graze with the cattle in new communities. They can decide to leave us in the community or a different place while they proceed to graze with the cattle… this grazing sometimes takes months before they return to the community… so we only sell nono (local milk) to the farmers to support ourselves [economically]… we [women] do not even participate in the management of shared resources or resolving of conflicts around the resources.

While both assertions by the participants resonate with feedback from most women across the project communities, restriction of FoM and tactical resource control for women impact their livelihoods, economic independence, and ability to participate in decision-making around natural resources effectively. Although there are variations in cultural violence against women around access and use of shared natural resources in the project communities, the mapping revealed that female farmers enjoy some privileges. These female farmers often co-own land with their men, compared to female herders who depend solely on their husbands or fathers and nono business for economic independence. This observation emerged across the two project states, justifying the relative ease with which some female farmers can engage their male counterparts on natural resource access, use, and collaborative management. Despite these variations, women's voice agencies in collaborative NRM suffer setbacks because of the absence of quality women representation in community-based NRM structures. This poor representation of women in the NRM and conflict resolution structures affects their ability to develop and demonstrate profound leadership in NRM, facilitate negotiations, and improve the quality of peaceful outcomes that are gender-sensitive and responsive and support diversity.

Participants stressed that besides the impact of cultural and structural factors that affect women's roles in NRM, sexual violations and other forms of SGBV perpetrated within the context of natural resource conflicts occur in the project communities. Some male farmers and herders weaponize resource-based conflicts to exploit women sexually. For example, some female participants stated that when herders take their livestock to graze and the livestock encroaches on farmlands where women cultivate crops, they physically abuse, rape, or kill women who confront them. Specifically, female farmers from Gamadio ward

Photo III: Female farmer describing the community map of Gorobi Ward.

shared that following the reintegration of herders into their communities, male herders did not return to the community with their wives. Instead, some target and rape women on the farm during grazing. A female participant from the community narrated that *"...the herders refused to return to the community with their wives. When you ask them, they will say they are afraid that our male farmers would attack their families if they returned… But they [herders] have raped many [farmer] women while on their farms whenever they are taking their cattle to graze."*

Besides sexual violations, some female participants mentioned women's inaccessibility to land and water resources on days when traditional masquerades are released to celebrate cultural festivities and rites. They reported that because these cultural activities last the whole day, only men can go out during these

events. Women who attempt to go outside during these events violate cultural practices and could be severely punished, including physical or sexual violations. Although these trends occur across the project wards in Taraba State, they are more pronounced in Monkin A and B wards.

Although some of the experiences around sexual violations resonate with women from most project communities, the mapping revealed that sexual abuses are perpetrated by male farmers and herders, increasing some of the previous trauma associated with natural resource conflicts. Some survivors of resource-based violations do not speak up because of social stigma, fear of being killed, and perceived cultural taboos that enable a culture of silence among survivors. The impact of sexual exploitation and harmful cultural norms on gender roles and relations complicates women's capabilities to take the initiative and aspire to strategic leadership on activities that strengthen their contribution to NRM and peaceful co-existence within or outside farmer and herder communities. Therefore, for community engagement in NRM to yield the required result, the mapping revealed the crucial need to intentionally facilitate an intersectional understanding of women's needs and roles in NRM and resource-based conflict escalation. It also requires delegating critical responsibilities to female farmers and herders to weaken cultural stereotypes on women's influence in promoting and sustaining NRM, social cohesion, and community-building.
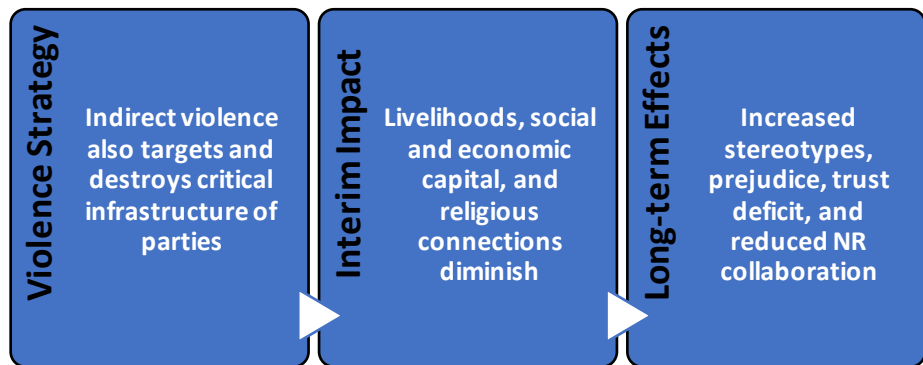
Impact of the Conflicts on Social Relationships

Even though some farmers and herders are committed to post-conflict reconstruction, **resource-based conflicts impact critical infrastructure in the community** and the ability of these infrastructures to support social cohesion and natural resources-related livelihoods and value chains between farmers and herders.

The project communities reinforced the enormity of relationships between nomadic and semi-nomadic herders and farming communities. These relationships rapidly shift, influencing the intensity or reduction of resource-based conflicts between affected communities. Understanding the shifting nature of farmer-herder relations in the project communities is crucial to recognizing the best approaches for structuring project activities to address the varying impacts of natural resource conflicts. The mapping revealed that although high-intensity farmer-herder conflicts have reduced in communities within the past year compared to 2017-2019, pockets of violence still exist in some of these project communities. Criminal activities like cattle rustling, armed robbery, and kidnapping are ongoing in most project communities. These activities and a history of violent conflicts that shaped farmer-herder relationships have increased mistrust, cycles of attacks, prejudice, instability, and hatred. The continuation of resource-based criminality and ideological violence provide breeding grounds for conflict re-escalation if current conflict resolution interventions, traditional institutional responses, provision of critical infrastructure that supports NRM, and reintegration of herders into conflict communities do not produce the desired outcomes.

The conflict and natural resource mapping revealed that when resource-based conflicts occur in project communities, critical infrastructures are often affected – either destroyed or abandoned by conflict parties. Although resource-based conflicts impact the settlement patterns of farmers and herders, with farmers occupying the towns and ward capitals and herders living in mountainous areas or the outskirts of the wards, the destruction caused to crops and shared water points by transhumance herders also instigate most of the violence that destroys critical infrastructures. For example, during the conflicts in Dong ward, which escalated to some other communities in the Numan Federation, farmers and herders attacked and destroyed human settlements, agricultural storage facilities, worship centers, water points (boreholes and wells), school buildings, the cemetery, and the main market. This destruction extended to some artificial short-term infrastructures that benefitted both conflict parties because of the alleged violence perpetrated by nomadic, semi-nomadic, and transhumance herders. Besides, the mapping revealed that because some farmers and herders in the project communities engaged concurrently in farming and herding activities, these overlapping livelihoods also influenced how groups targeted or protected critical infrastructure during conflicts and peace times.

Besides the prevalent physical infrastructure affected by resource-based conflicts in the project communities, other tangible structures that support natural resource access and use and social cohesion between farmers and herders were also affected.

Violence Strategy	**Interim Impact**	**Long-term Effects**
Indirect violence also targets and destroys critical infrastructure of parties	Livelihoods, social and economic capital, and religious connections diminish	Increased stereotypes, prejudice, trust deficit, and reduced NR collaboration

Some of these affected infrastructures are stock routes and artificial water points. For instance, participants generally reported that farmers intentionally block stock routes and other transhumance corridors during conflicts, preventing access for herders and their livestock. Also, some participants in Banjiram, Dong, Gorobi, and Waduku wards revealed that during farmer-herder conflicts, in a bid to prevent herders and their livestock from grazing on designated grazing lands or have access to drinking, farmers use herbicides on the grasses or poison water points. A male herder from Dong recounted that *"...six years ago, because farmers did not want herders' livestock to drink water from the pond, they poured pesticides inside it. The pesticide killed the fish in the pond… the fishermen could not fish there anymore because there was no fish."* Another female farmer from Waduku ward revealed that *"…when we had conflicts with the herders some years back because their cows encroached on our farms, some of us [farmers] went and sprayed herbicides in one of the main areas where they graze their cows."* Even though these resources are not physical infrastructures, they contribute significantly to strengthening social cohesion, enabling agricultural symbiosis, and improving the livelihoods of farmer and herder communities. As a result of these economic, relational, and infrastructural impacts of resource-based conflicts, participants across the communities emphasized that both parties enter into seasonal agreements on the allocation and use of shared natural resources. Some of these arrangements are operationalized during the dry season and restrict group access, mainly for herders, to sufficient land and water resources for the sustainability of their livestock.

Equally, the emergence of infrastructural development and urbanization in areas or corridors where traditional natural resource activities were conducted interferes with the culture surrounding the access

and use of natural resources among farmers and herders. While these activities create opportunities for economic improvement and community development, they unintentionally create new trajectories for natural resource conflicts or reverberate power asymmetry that already exists between farmer and herder communities. For example, constructing access roads, highways, and bridges along traditional stock routes and transhumance corridors alters the migration pattern of herders and their livestock, causing them to identify alternative paths through which herders can access land and water resources. These alternative paths are mostly farmlands. When livestock pass through farmlands because of alterations to or blockage of stock routes, they destroy crops, sparking physical confrontations between herders and the farm owner(s). The mapping revealed that livestock in some of the affected communities maintain some of the constructed roads as their transhumance corridor, causing traffic or accidents for road users. In some cases, livestock is made to move on the shoulder of constructed roads as they proceed to access water and pasture.

The outcomes of the conflicts that infrastructural development causes become complicated when under-aged herders supervise the grazing activities of the livestock, or these cattle are managed by youths who are under the influence of drugs and other abused substances. The mapping participants revealed that under-aged herding and drug and substance abuse often escalate tensions between farmers and herders. These issues are concerning because the parties involved lack the appropriate maturity or frame

Photo IV: Male and farmer community members harmonizing the community resource map of Dong Ward.

of mind to manage livestock herds. Moreover, even though infrastructural development and urbanization impact resource-based conflicts and farmer-herder relations, the farming practices employed by some farmers intensify the conflicts. For example, a farmer from Abbare B ward expressed that "*some development activities in the community, like roads and hospitals, were built on some cattle routes. Although all these [infrastructure] things benefit all of us [farmers and herders], some farmers still cultivate their farms up to the roadside, blocking access for herders. Why won't they [herders] destroy the crops?*"

From the mapping, infrastructural development within resource-based conflicts constitutes a paradox. While they facilitate improved opportunities for strengthening livelihoods and value chains associated with natural resources, they affect FoM and easy access of farmer and herder communities to relevant natural resources they used historically.

The Role of Secondary Conflict Drivers on the Conflict

> While some **community members have limited knowledge about the impact of climate change on resource-based conflicts between farmers and herders,** a significant number of them are unaware of and see no relationship between climate change and natural resource depletion or resource-based conflicts.

Evidence across resource-based conflicts demonstrates causal links between climate change and violent conflicts between farmer and herder communities. Although there is no evidence to show a direct relationship between climate change and violent conflicts, dominant perspectives assert that climate

change potentially contributes to competition for scarce natural resources, posing a threat to peaceful co-existence between farmers and herders and other communities that utilize land and water resources to support their livelihoods. By juxtaposing diverse views on the linkage between climate change and resource-based conflicts, it becomes crucial to acknowledge that in some circumstances, climate change can induce or worsen natural resource conflicts, particularly between farmers and herders. The resulting circumstances of climate change-induced conflict are deteriorating natural resource-related livelihoods, increased [and forced] migration and changes in the movement patterns of herders, and opportunism for increased criminality by conflict merchants and rural bandits.

- Increased human activities,
- Relative access to climate information
- Poor environmental conservation actions

- Increased climatic stresses and stressors (such as flash floods)
- Low productivity of natural resources,
- Reduced biodiversity
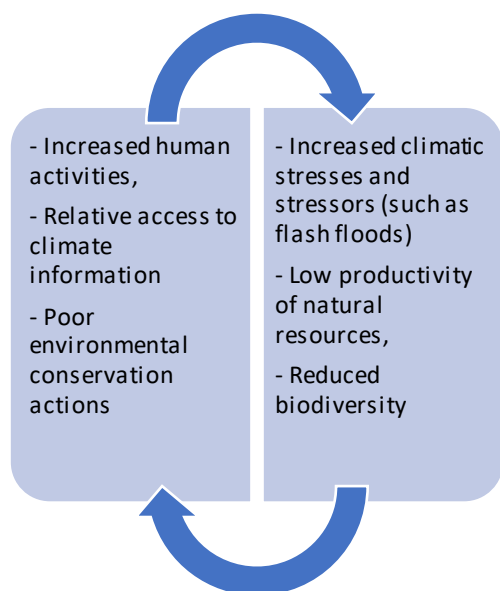
The conflict and resource mapping revealed poor knowledge among most members of the project communities about the correlation between NRM and climate change, the impact of climate change on deteriorating natural resources, or the nexus between resource-based conflict and climate change. While some communities could understand that land and water resources were reducing and articulated that changes in environmental conditions were responsible, they do not fully understand the best techniques to prevent its protraction. Also, despite relative knowledge about the connection between climate change and resource-based conflicts, participants reported that community members focus more on exploring the economic use of natural resources. They give little or no consideration to other affective dimensions – social and environmental – of natural resource use on conflicts. For instance, participants revealed that some community members engage in tree-felling for charcoal production and use wood from trees as alternative energy for local food preparation and processing. A female farmer asserted that "*we [farmers] use the wood from the trees we cut down as firewood while the herders use the leaves as pasture for their livestock*". Notably, both activities contribute [in]directly to environmental degradation and the depletion of the ozone layer. The felling of trees and burning firewood as fossil fuel exposes the ground cover, destroys windbreakers, increases desertification, and contributes to global warming.

Although the consequences of climate change vary across the different contexts of the project, findings from the mapping demonstrate that climate change impacts the physical landscape and productivity of the various natural resources that support community livelihoods. Besides its impacts on livelihoods, the feedback from participants shows that climate change contributes to the alteration of community geographical structure. For example, consistent experiences of flash floods and drought have contributed to the erosion of arable lands that hosted some farmlands, grazing areas, and human settlements. These occurrences led to forceful relocation within communities, increasing competition for diminishing land. They are largely associated with rising sea levels, which inevitably force some communities domiciled around coastal areas to be worse hit by environmental changes, including forcing inland migration, further adding pressure to the factors already exacerbating scarce land and water resource conflicts between farmers and herders.

While environmental stresses and stressors are integral contributors to resource-based conflicts between farmers and herders in the project communities, most participants from farming communities revealed that as part of land conservation and ancestral practices, community members agreed not to farm or graze in some parts of their communities. These agreements emerged in the communities because of the traditional affinities and cultural heritage that communities have with these lands. Hence, engaging in farming or herding activities in these conserved areas is tantamount to desecration of cultural or ancestral heritage. For example, in Gorobi and Abbare B wards, farmers noted that herders encroach into designated ancestral lands for their livestock to graze. These actions are regarded as disrespectful to farmers' cultural heritage, mainly because farmers do not cultivate crops in these reserved lands. A farmer from Gorobi ward recounted that:

> *…herders encroach into our traditional lands where we bury our ancestors… these places [lands] have been conserved for decades (and some for centuries). They [herders] shave the leaves from the trees and feed it to their cattle… you will not even imagine that they do night grazing on our farms and these culturally reserved lands… Our Sarkin Dodo (i.e., voodoo priest) wanted to conjure some charms so that when they enter those [conserved] areas, they and their cattle will die…*

While this kind of response demonstrates the significance of conserved traditional land to different groups, the mapping shows a tacit interaction between environmental conservation and the intensity of resource conflicts between farmers and herders. These interactions complicate social interactions between both groups, impacting their recognition of and commitments to arrangements around farming and grazing activities. While community members do not recognize that some of these natural resource conservation actions, although serving the cultural interest of one group, contribute to mitigating climate change, participants revealed their collective commitments to tree-planting campaigns. These tree-planting campaigns aim to promote afforestation and renewal of land resources that would benefit farmer and herder communities in the long term. Even though the mapping revealed that most members of the project communities have limited awareness of climate change and the relationship between environmental variability and resource-based conflicts, they recognize that future effects of climate change are likely to be severe. They realize that the severity of climate change will intensify the conflict if they do not implement actions that will conserve their already depleted and scarce land and resources. As largely agrarian communities based on a diverse landmass with wide climatic variations and limited adaptive capacity to manage the consequences of adverse climate change, they will remain inherently vulnerable unless they commit to implementing and sustaining adaptive collaborative NRM activities that will reduce conflicts and enhance their resilience capacities.

Recommendations and Conclusion

The conflict and natural resource mapping revealed the interactions between land and water resources and farmer-herder conflicts in the COMITAS II project communities. Based on the findings of the mapping, this report makes the following recommendations:

#1: Improved conflict resolution capacity of project communities enhances the recipe for collaborative problem-solving and inter-communal interactions.

Considering the impacts of protracted conflicts on social relationships between farmer and herder communities, capacity building on negotiation and the application of the IBN approach to conflict resolution should intentionally **emphasize trust-building using diverse social and community resources that drive social cohesion and would influence the transformation of collaboration around shared natural resource access, use, and management** in the project communities. Some of these social resources include leveraging cultural and religious festivities, localized dialogue platforms, and socio-economic spaces such as markets, water points, and community squares.

#2: Quality deliberations will produce more sustainable outcomes and strengthen inter-communal commitments.

In measuring the application of negotiation and resource management skills in communities, the MC team's parameter for ascertaining **the effectiveness of conflict resolution or community dialogues on shared natural resources should prioritize the quality of interactions between conflicting parties and how they reach consensus to solve problems**. The number of dialogue meetings or conflicts claimed to have been resolved should not be a basis for determining the effectiveness of negotiations or dialogues. These dialogues should employ the IBN's seven elements approach to negotiating shared natural resources and reaching mutually beneficial outcomes. The seven elements will enable farmer and herder communities to clearly articulate their needs, interests, and options and understand how to use their leverage(s) to achieve win-win results.

#3: The achievement of tangible results for farmer-herder conflicts is as vital as the intangible outcomes that reduce the intensity of resource-based conflicts.

Following the impacts that some of the delipidated shared infrastructural resources in the project communities have on the conflicts, **MC should conduct an infrastructure mapping to identify which concrete infrastructure exists and would better support social cohesion and collaboration on shared natural resource management** between farmer and herder communities. The infrastructure mapping will complement the information gathered during the natural resource mapping. It will inform the prioritization and implementation of different QIP options identified during the concrete solution action plans in communities.

#4: Facilitating women's inclusion in NRM and local conflict resolution processes is as political as it is technical. Therefore, improving men's understanding of gender roles in NRM will reduce discrimination.

Power imbalances and unfavorable gender norms in communities limit the effective participation of women and men in conflict resolution and NRM mechanisms in communities. **Using lenses of intersectionality, the program team should utilize gender and peace training for female NRMC members to determine pathways for facilitating the active**

participation of different categories of women in NRMCs and strengthen their voice agencies to engage for change on shared NRM and conflict resolution. The MC program team should replicate this training for men to facilitate an improved understanding of constructive gender roles and the building of positive masculinity. These actions will improve self-esteem among men and women and promote institutionalizing participatory gender-sensitive mechanisms for collaborative NRM and resource-based conflict prevention and resolution.

#5: The local programmatic environment and ongoing programs are mutually reinforcing. Programs that understand local political and social dynamics will produce quality and sustainable outcomes.

Poor interactions and trust deficit between project communities and government authorities affect community-government collaboration on NRM. The deteriorating relationship is further heightened by enacting laws or policies that tacitly impact FoM, access, and use of shared natural resources, particularly for herder communities. Therefore, **MC should conduct a conflict sensitivity assessment to understand the interactions between the project and its local environment.** This assessment should also examine the impact of government legislation on the project's approach to natural resource management and conflict resolution between farmers and herders to minimize the negative effects of the COMITAS II project and maximize positive outcomes.

#6: Community access to and use of timely climate information could mitigate resource-based conflicts.

MC's program team should enhance community knowledge on the influence of climate change and environmental variability on resource-based conflicts through **awareness campaigns, tree planting, community advocacy and engagement, and the publication of educational and information resources**. These activities will encourage action and resilience-building among community members by informing them about climatic conditions, enabling them to develop and implement local measures that mitigate the impacts of climatic shocks and stressors on their communities and livelihoods.

While the mapping shows some decline in natural resource management and farmer-herder relationships, the COMITAS II project presents a unique opportunity to improve local peace and NRM capacities. It provides creative opportunities to facilitate accompaniment for project communities to design and implement joint problem-solving, concrete solutions, and resource-based negotiation plans for farmer and herder communities. The mapping shows community exhaustion of the conflicts because of their open expression of a dire desire for conflict transformation among the main conflict parties. This desire presents an entry point for the COMITAS II project to utilize the institutions represented in the NRMCs to create a more comprehensive reach across farmer and herder communities on the significance of collaborative NRM and broader peacebuilding. Moreover, in contrast with some states where the farmer-herder conflict manifests, Adamawa and Taraba States present a rare example of how farmers and herders coexist side-by-side, carry out social and economic activities, and engage in intermarriages. The COMITAS project would strengthen its legitimacy within the communities by

capitalizing on various unique scenarios to advance effective and sustainable farmer-herder relations within and outside the project communities.

APPENDIXES:

Appendix 1: Conflict and Natural Resource Maps

Adamawa State:

Banjiram ward

Dumna ward

Dong ward

Gamadio ward

Gorobi ward

Waduku Ward

Shelleng ward

Libbo ward

Taraba State:

Abbare B ward
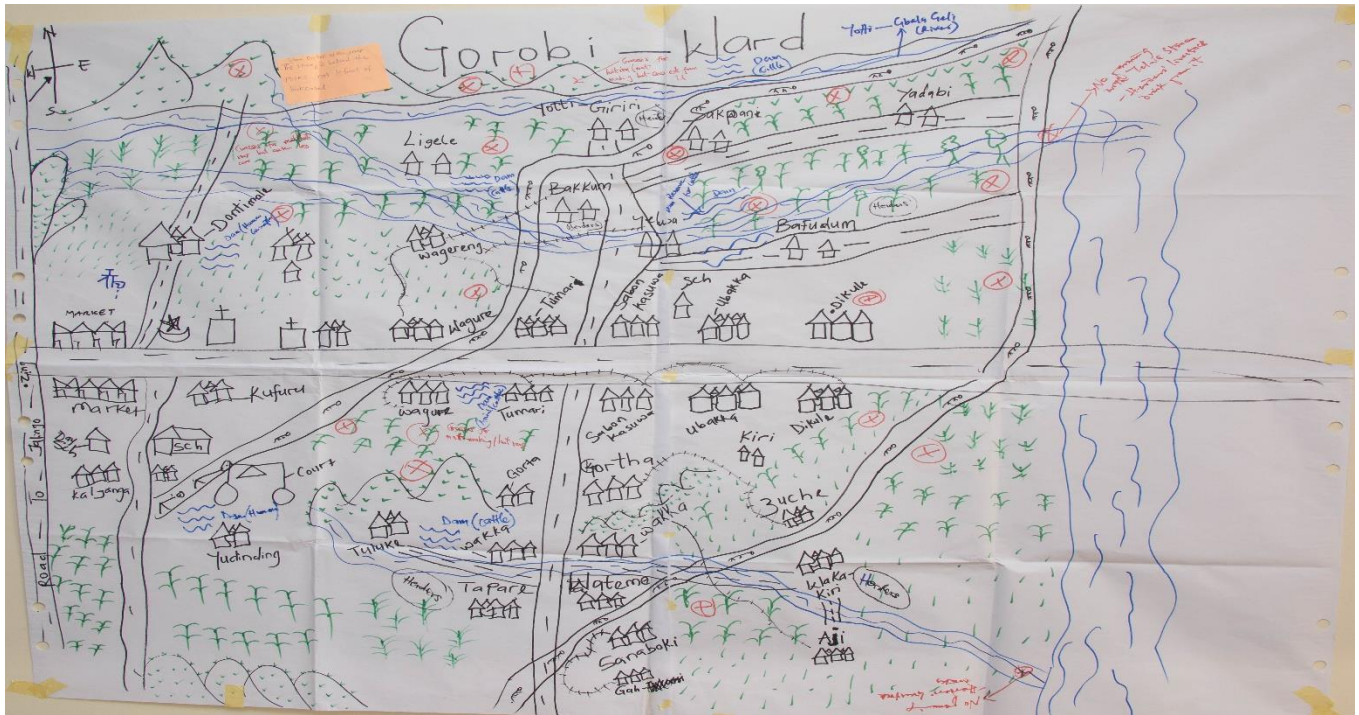
Lau A ward
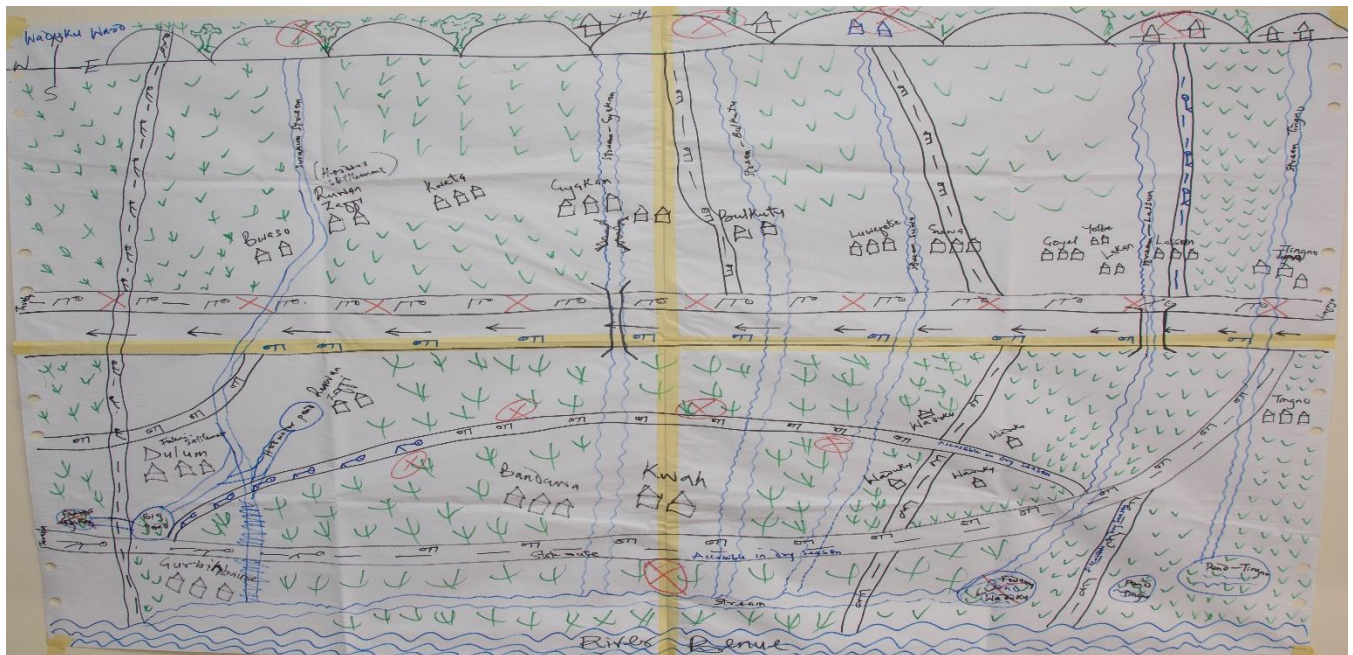
Monkin A ward

Monkin "A" Map

Monkin B ward

MONKIN 'B' MAP

Appendix II: ADSEMA Flood Dashboard 2022

ADAMAWA STATE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY, YOLA. DASHBOARD FOR FLOOD DISASTER 2022

S/N	LGA	2006 Population Census	2022 Projected Population	No. of Persons Affected	No. of Displaced Persons	No. of Injured Persons	No. of Death Persons	No of House Partially Damaged	No of House Totally Damaged	Farmlands Partially Damaged	Farmlands Totally Damaged	No of Schools Damaged	Livestock Lost	No of Road Affected	No of Culvert Affected	No of Bridges Affected	No of Health Centers Affected	No of Markets Affected
1	Demsa	178,407	295,316	12,996	438			6,257	438	1,193	958		310	2	2		2	
2	Fufore	209,460	346,718	15,258	235		3	7,821	235	2,731	2,142	2	219	1	-13	2		
3	Ganye	169,948	281,314	4,287	0								0	4	4			1
4	Girei	129,855	214,948	7488	28	3	10	2,971	28	657	235	1	55	7	7			
5	Gombi	147,787	244,631	738	0							2	18					
6	Guyuk	176,505	292,168	13,950	0			4,214		857	428	2	152		6		1	
7	Hong	169,183	280,048	2,018	12								21					
8	Jada	168,445	278,826	6361	0		1					3	52		2			
9	Lamurde	111,254	184,158	11,942	52			5,214	52	793	598		198	4	2			
10	Madagali	135,142	223,700	17,180	852	35	19	9,248	852	2,141	1,423	1	721		4			
11	Maiha	110,175	182,372	1,429	23	13	4	732	23	137	98		22					
12	Mayo-Belwa	152,803	252,934	3,000	0	0							23					
13	Michika	155,238	256,965	2,106	0	0							29	7	13	1		
14	Mubi-North	151,515	250,802	7,260	0								30	3	1	2		1
15	Mubi-South	129,956	215,115	738	0								15					
16	Numan	91,549	151,541	15,974	542	8	11	7,925	542	730	528	2	624		10		1	
17	Shelleng	148,490	245,795	14,547	12		1	6,954	12	701	623		245					
18	Song	195,188	323,094	13,968	32			3,841	32	574	474	7	124		2		1	
19	Toungo	52,179	86,372	5,688	0							2	0		2		1	
20	Yola North	199,674	330,519	9,971	66			4,358	66	1,396	589		123					
21	Yola South	196,197	324,764	14,802	73	12	9	7,402	73	1,483	862	1	254	1	3			
	TOTAL	3,178,950	5,262,100	181,701	2,365	71	58	66,907	2,353	13,393	8,958	23	3,235	16	63	12	5	3

SUMMARY:

2006 Population Cencus	3,178,950
2022 Projected Population	5,262,100
No of Persons Affected	181,701
No of Displaced Persons	2,365
No of Injured Persons	71
No of Death Persons	58
No of Houses Partially Damaged	66,907
No of Houses Totally Damaged	2,353 – Livestock Lost
Farmland Partially Damaged	13,393
Farmland Totally Damaged	8,958
No of Schools Damaged	23
No of Health Centers Affected	3,235
No of Road Affected	16
No of Culvert Affected	63
No of Bridges Affected	12
No of Markets Affected	5

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