

PASTORALISM AND CONFLICT:

TOOLS FOR PREVENTION AND RESPONSE IN THE SUDANO-SAHEL



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GROUND

Partnership for Stability and Security in the Sudano-Sahel

This report was produced in collaboration with the U.S. State Department, Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO), as part of the project *Partnership for Stability and Security in the Sudano-Sahel (P4SS)*. The goal of this project is to inform stabilization and development efforts in communities across the Sudano-Sahel affected by cross-border farmer-herder conflict by identifying proven, data-informed methods of conflict transformation.

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Methodology and Development

The findings and recommendations in this Toolkit were identified based on a meta-review of program evaluations and scholarly research in French and English, supplemented by a series of key informant interviews with program implementers. The Toolkit was validated through review by an Advisory Council of external civil society practitioners and researchers as well as practitioners from Search for Common Ground's field offices across the Sudano-Sahel (Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Nigeria, Niger, South Sudan, Sudan).

This analysis primarily focused on pastoralism-related development or conflict prevention programs conducted in the past ten years (2010-2020) in major conflict zones within the Sudano-Sahel ecological zone. The geographic focus included: (i) the Liptako-Gourma triangle at the intersection of Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso; (ii) Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin; (iii) the Central African Republic and surrounding border regions; and (iv) the Sudan/South Sudan border region. Where relevant, lessons learned have also been included from other regions where pastoralism is common – including sub-humid areas of West Africa (Benin, Togo, Ivory Coast) and East Africa (Kenya, Uganda).



Members of the Forum on Farmer-Herder Relations in Nigeria construct a systems map of the local drivers of conflict.

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Acronyms

CAR - Central African Republic

CEWARN - Conflict Early Warning and Response Network

DRC - Democratic Republic of the Congo

ECOWARN - ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network

ECOWAS - Economic Community of West African States

FAO - Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FFARN - Forum on Farmer-Herder Relations in Nigeria

GNNT - National and Nomadic Guard of Chad

GTD - Global Terrorism Database

IGAD - Intergovernmental Authority on Development

IOM - International Organization for Migration

LRA - Lord's Resistance Army

MINUSCA - United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR

MONUSCO - United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC

NSAG - Non-state armed group

OHCHR - Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

SGBV - Sexual and gender-based violence

UPC - Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique

UNDP - United Nations Development Program

VEO - Violent extremist organization



Presentation on conflict transformation in South Sudan. Credit: Search for Common Ground

What is this Toolkit?



The purpose of this Toolkit is to provide funding agencies, diplomatic staff, and aid practitioners with strategic guidance on how to design interventions to prevent or resolve conflict associated with cross-border pastoralism. Drawing on a wealth of research and programmatic experience across the Sudano-Sahel, from Mali to Sudan, the Toolkit serves three objectives:

1. Provide a framework for interveners to assess the sources of pastoralism-related conflict in their own context and identify opportunities for engagement;
2. Highlight lessons learned from the Sudano-Sahel on “what works;”
3. Promote multi-sectoral collaboration by illustrating how development, conservation, and trade all play an essential role in addressing this crisis.

How to Use

This Toolkit helps users design interventions to fit the needs of their context. It is structured into **eight sections**, including an introduction and seven Modules. Each Module is tailored to a different sector and presents 3-5 tools and strategies that can be used to address one slice of pastoralism-related conflict. These tools and strategies are based on a review of past programs and include guidance on **what makes these interventions succeed or fail**. Each Module also contains a brief **list of questions** to guide context analysis and planning, and links to external resources.

Users may read this Toolkit from top to bottom or jump to the sections that are most relevant to their interests by clicking on the appropriate hyperlink. It is recommended that all users read through the [Introduction to Pastoralism and Conflict](#) before exploring the Modules.

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[INTRODUCTION TO PASTORALISM AND CONFLICT](#) – Analyzing the acute and systemic sources of conflict.



[MODULE 1 - RURAL DEVELOPMENT](#) – Cultivating equitable rural economic growth and reducing chronic causes of conflict.



[MODULE 2 - ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION](#) – Incorporating pastoralism-related conflict into conservation efforts.



[MODULE 3 - GOVERNANCE AND RULE OF LAW](#) – Encouraging public participation in the governance of pastoral rangelands.



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[MODULE 7 - LAW ENFORCEMENT AND COUNTERTERRORISM](#) – Addressing the intersection of cross-border pastoralism, criminality, and insurgency.



[MODULE 8 - DIGITAL PEACEBUILDING](#) – Integrating new technologies into conflict prevention.



[ADDITIONAL RESOURCES](#)

Why Focus on Pastoralism?

The governance and security challenges covered in this toolkit are not unique to pastoralism-related conflict, but we explore these issues through a pastoralism lens for four reasons:

1. Pastoralism – and farming – is a livelihood and production system that is deeply connected with culture, identity, and socio-political organization.

Debate over the role of pastoralism in the African economy is also a debate over the culture and lifestyle of pastoral communities. It is all too easy to focus on economic and development policies without sufficient consideration of how they will impact the social relationships between groups whose identity is closely intertwined with their livelihood.

2. Pastoralism is an essential livelihood and potential source of tension between communities in the regions where major conflicts are unfolding

- The conflict dynamics discussed in this Toolkit have fueled widespread violence, social unrest, and insecurity for economically or politically marginalized populations. The escalating scale of violence presents an urgent need for a coordinated and strategic response.

3. The future of pastoralism as a production model is contested

- The efficacy of pastoralism as a dryland livestock production system and its social and environmental impact is the subject of ongoing and fierce disagreement among policymakers and experts. The lack of consistent policies creates tensions around resource governance, food production, and cross-border movement that can escalate into violence and undermine regional stability.

4. The impacts of climate change, demographic growth, and changing production systems on pastoralism will only become severe

- The pastoral livestock value chain involves millions of herders, farmers, and businesses. When this system is disrupted by violence, forced displacement, or failed land management, the consequences ripple across the region, threatening food security and economic stability.

Cattle on migration in Chad. Credit: A. Hissien/I. Bourdjo, Project Transhumance at Crossroads

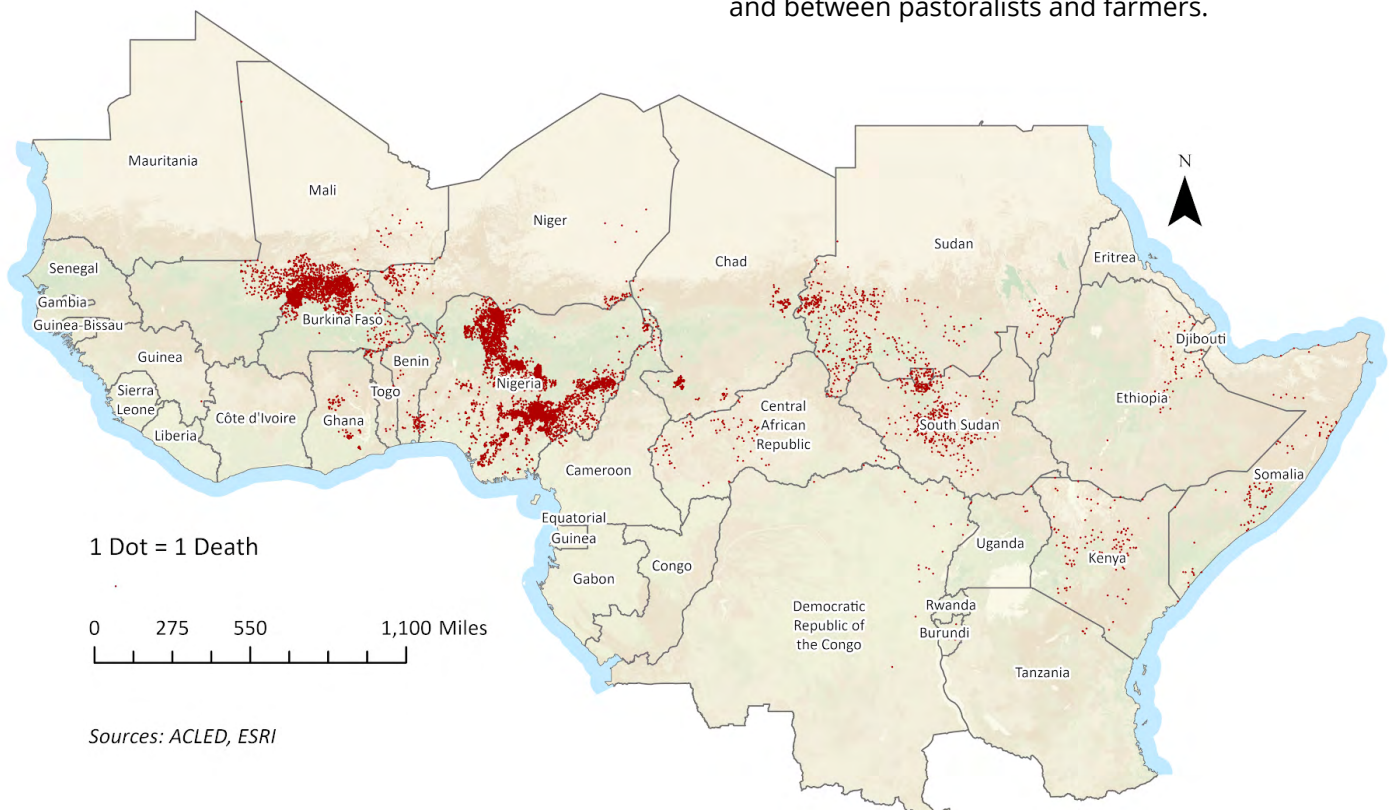


Why the Sudano-Sahel?

The *Sudano-Sahel* is an ecological zone that spans from the Sahara in the north to the tropical humid climate zone in the south and covers countries from Senegal in the west to Sudan in the east. This Toolkit focuses on the Sudano-Sahel because it is a region in which pastoral livestock production and related value chains are central to human survival. Specifically, our analysis tends to focus on four sub-regions that have experienced acute violence and instability associated with pastoralists and pastoralism in recent years:

1. The **Liptako-Gourma** triangle at the intersection of Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso has been host to various armed insurgent movements that have targeted livestock and fueled cycles of interethnic violence.
2. **Nigeria** has suffered from severe levels of violence both as a result of intercommunal conflict in the diverse Middle Belt and rising banditry in unstable regions in the northeast and in the Lake Chad Basin.
3. The **Central African Republic** and its surrounding border regions have become a hotspot for pastoralism-related violence as armed groups that have seized control over remote areas have targeted the livestock that migrate in from Chad, Cameroon, or Sudan.
4. In **Sudan** and **South Sudan**, cattle raiding practices have become more professionalized and various militia forces backed by political elites have exacerbated cyclical intercommunal conflicts among pastoralist populations and between pastoralists and farmers.

DEATHS RELATING TO PASTORAL CONFLICT 2016-2020



This map represents the number of deaths from conflict events in the Sudano-Sahel where one or more party are described as "pastoralist", 2016-2019. Data sources: ACLED, ESRI.



Long horns cows fighting in a Mundari tribe camp, Central Equatoria, Terekeka, South Sudan. Credit: Eric Lafforgue/Art in All of Us/Corbis via Getty Images.

Introduction to Pastoralism and Conflict

A Brief History

Since livestock were first domesticated ten thousand years ago, humans have relied on different techniques to raise them, from the large ranches found in the American West or Argentina to the long migrations of nomads in the Central Asian steppe. Livestock have played an integral role in defining not just a civilization's economy, but its cultural identity and historical heritage. **Pastoralism** is a system of raising livestock in which they are mobile in some form.¹ This can be used with various forms of livestock, from cattle to camels to goats and more. It is a practice rooted in both ecological necessity and the cultural heritage of nomadic peoples, from the Sami in Sweden to the Bedouins of the Arabian Peninsula.

Pastoralism is an umbrella term that covers diverse cultural practices and modes of livestock mobility, including nomads who are continuously on the move and cover thousands of miles year-round to semi-nomadic herders whose livestock move seasonally or only over short distances. It is an adaptive practice that is necessary in the semi-arid, low rainfall conditions of the Sudano-Sahel, where access to feed and water is often uncertain. Herds are kept in drier areas during the rainy season until resources decrease as the dry season advances, when they are moved to more humid climates. Wide-ranging mobility along known seasonal paths (**'transhumance'**) is required to ensure consistent grazing and potable water. As ecology determines when and where livestock can move, migration routes typically traverse national borders and comprise entire geographic sub-regions.



Cattle breeds and production methods feature prominently as a cultural symbol and defining element of rural livelihoods in societies all over the world. Shown here: a longhorn cow, an iconic image in the American southwest (top); a young bull at a cattle show (middle); a traditional cattle race in West Sumatra (bottom). Credit: Larry D. Moore CC BY-SA 3.0 (top; Edward McCabe (middle); Farida Ridhwan (bottom).

¹The precise definition of pastoralism has been a matter of debate among some experts but is generally intended to indicate a production system or lifestyle that is based on movement or mobility.

Mobile pastoralists and sedentary farmers tend towards different understandings of their relationship to land. Historically, access to pasture or water was not conditioned on private ownership - livestock would graze in public or communal land and rely on access to shared water sources. Access to public lands would be mediated through local leaders, but these lands were not exclusively owned. Moving to new areas allowed pastoralists to adapt to changing rainfall and avoid overtaxing the resources in a particular area. In contrast, crop production necessitates a longer-term occupation of the land in order to cut, clear, plant, and harvest. Even in areas of light population density, farmers value the ability to retain long-term use of a demarcated and fertile area.

Despite these differences, pastoralist and farming communities are frequently interdependent. Pastoralism has historically helped meet agricultural economies' demands for animal products (milk, cheese, hides, meat, etc.) through barter or sale of grains and produce. Many farmers would allow livestock to consume post-harvest crop residuals and passing livestock would fertilize arable lands with manure. In turn, pastoralists' right to access public water or pasture was protected through customary agreements with local host communities. With the same groups using the same routes annually, relationships would develop with sedentary residents.

These relationships were never conflict-free. Farmland would occasionally encroach into designated the pathways or "corridors" where livestock were known to travel, obstructing them from grazing, water, or markets. Passing livestock would routinely stray and into farms and damage crops. In some cases, farmers would retaliate and attack trespassing livestock. Such issues were more than just minor property damage. Subsistence farmers² may need to wait a year for damaged crops like cassava to regrow, leaving their family to go hungry. Similarly, the loss of even one cow may be equivalent to the loss of a month's worth of a middle-class salary. Various customary practices developed across the Sudano-Sahel to establish fair



Encounters between livestock and farmland are a common occurrence. Shown here a farmer in Tana river county, Kenya keeps an eye on passing pastoral cattle. Credit: Omar Mwandaro.

compensation or penalties and prevent these conflicts from escalating into violence. In recent years, however, new environmental, economic, and security pressures have caused relationships between pastoralist groups and sedentary residents to deteriorate.

²*Subsistence farming is a practice in which most or all crops are used to support a farmer or their family, rather than being sold or traded.*

Pastoral livestock production can involve many stages, and the **interventions outlined in this Toolkit will focus on engaging with pastoralists and their livestock at different points in this process, such as:**

1. HOME AREA

Many pastoralists practice a semi-nomadic lifestyle, living in a settlement for a time and then taking their livestock on migration during the dry season or to take them to market. Such settlements may be a permanent town or a temporary camp and may be essential focal points for engaging pastoral communities.

2. TRANSHUMANCE

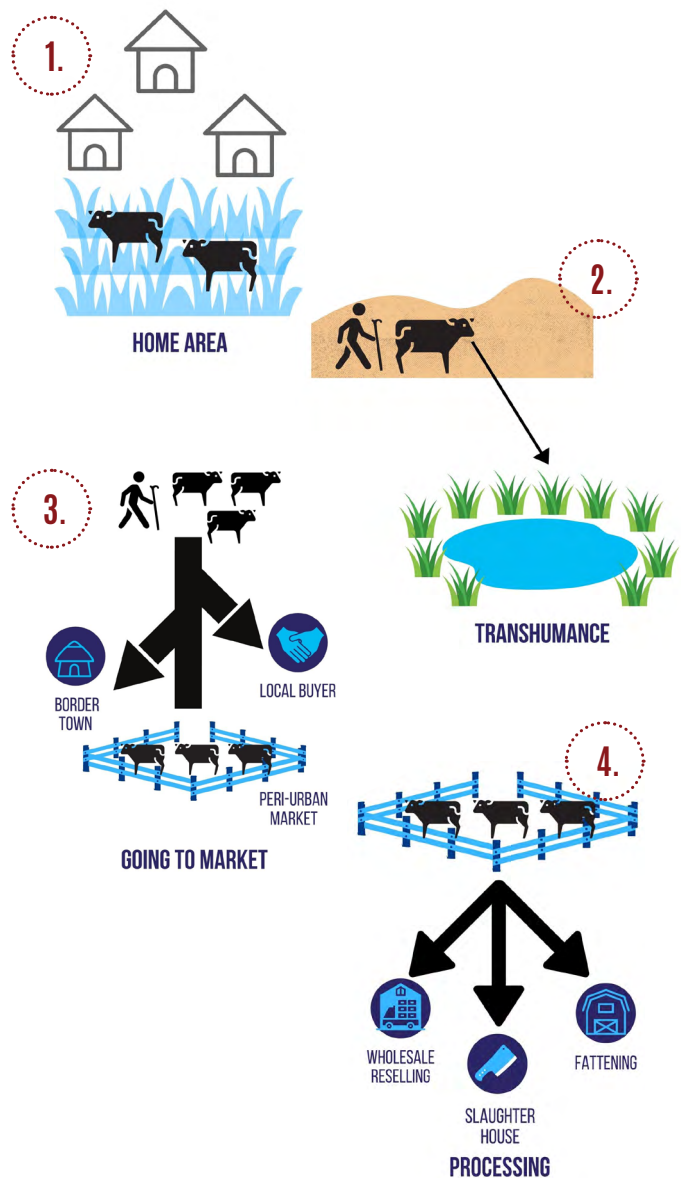
Some pastoral livestock migrate along established routes to access water or pasture when the season changes, a process known as transhumance. These migrations will often bring livestock into contact with farmland, national borders, or other spaces where conflicts may emerge.

3. MARKET

When pastoralists are ready to sell their livestock or animal products, they take them to different buyers – e.g., a local butcher, a middleman in a border town, or markets on the outskirts of major cities. This trade can create opportunities for strengthening regional economic integration, but also creates risks when markets are targeted by criminal groups.

4. PROCESSING

To satisfy the rising regional demand for meat and animal products, pastoral livestock may be fattened or resold to other national markets in the region. A strong regional production chain requires investment not just in water access or transhumance routes for raising livestock, but also in other rural infrastructure (e.g., cold storage, transportation, electrical grids).



Pastoralism is not just a rural phenomenon. Though this Toolkit highlights the challenges facing pastoralists in rural and remote regions, pastoralism is not limited to the hinterlands. Herders will take their livestock to urban areas to access markets or processing centers. The future of pastoral production will have significant implications for the future of Africa's urban centers. Shown here a herd of cattle passing through Nairobi, Kenya. Credit: Jean Chung/Getty Images.

Pastoralist Groups in the Sudano-Sahel

Various ethnic groups across the Sudano-Sahel are often described as “pastoralist,” in the sense that pastoralism is a principle livelihood practice among these groups and plays an influential role in their cultural identity. This can include, but is not limited to, the Tuareg, Moors, and Saharawi in the Saharan regions; the Toubous in Chad, Sudan, Libya, and Niger; the Baggara in the Sudanese regions of Darfur and Kordofan; and the Fulani who are spread from Senegal through Nigeria and the Sahel and into Central Africa. Many of these groups speak their own languages and follow their own traditions that are linked to livestock or nomadic movements and set them apart from their neighbors.

But these groups are not homogenous. The [Fulani](#), for example, are an ethnic population numbering in the tens of millions with hundreds of sub-clans. This includes people who do not practice pastoralism as their primary livelihood but may still consider it to be a part of their cultural heritage or identity. There can be sharp linguistic or social divisions between the members of a pastoralist ethnic group who live a nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyle and those who live a sedentary life.

MODES OF PASTORAL LIVELIHOODS

These are just some of the different practices found across pastoral populations.

SUBSISTENCE HERDERS

Approximately 80% of pastoralists in the Sahel fall below the poverty line,* and may only manage small herds.



ELITE OWNERS AND HIRED HELP

Livestock are an lucrative investment for the wealthy, who often rely on hired assistance from nomadic populations to take their livestock on migration.



AGRO-PASTORALISTS

Many pastoralists practice other livelihoods (farming, fishing, etc) rather than rely on livestock alone.



SEMI-NOMADIC COMMUNITIES

While some pastoralists are fully nomadic, others will live in settled communities and only leave to take their livestock on seasonal migrations or to go to market.



*Prospects for Livestock-Based Livelihoods in Africa's Drylands. World Bank Studies, ed. Cornelis De Haan, (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2016).

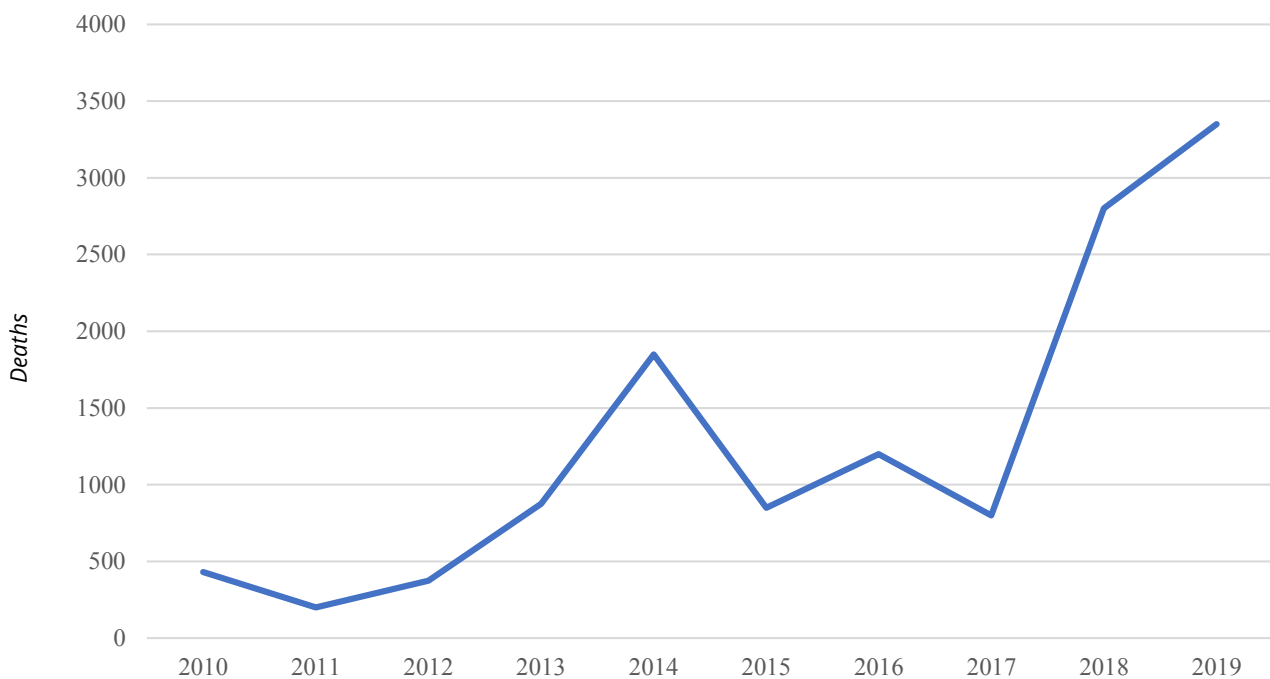
Conflict in Present Day

In recent decades, pastoralists and other inhabitants of remote rangelands have faced new threats from increasing statelessness and multiplying insurgencies. Violence and instability has increased in the border regions and other spaces where pastoralists have historically operated: eastern Chad; the border regions of Sudan and South Sudan; the border regions of Kenya, Uganda, and South Sudan; the border regions of Kenya, Uganda, and South Sudan; the Central African Republic (CAR) and its borders with the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Chad; the Middle Belt and northeastern Nigeria; across the four countries of the Lake Chad Basin; the Liptako-Gourma tri-state zone.

Increasing numbers of civilians are losing their lives in conflicts that are related to pastoralism in four ways:

1. Everyday confrontations stemming from grievances like damage to crops or livestock;
2. The escalation of everyday disputes into chronic cycles of revenge between pastoralist ethnic groups or between pastoralists and farmers;
3. Armed groups or state security forces targeting pastoralist communities and their livestock;
4. Pastoralists participating in criminal activities or non-state armed groups (NSAG), whether because they seek to achieve political goals, safe passage, or financial gain.

Deaths from conflict events in the Sudano-Sahel where one or more party are described as "pastoralist"



Though the severity of pastoralism-related violence fluctuates over time, there have been significant spikes in the past decade. This chart represents the **number of deaths from conflict events in the Sudano-Sahel where one or more party are described as "pastoralist", 2010-2019**. Data source: ACLED.



Violent conflict creates risks for pastoralists who have to move through insecure territory. Many are forced to either risk losing their livestock or find new migration routes. The widespread losses in livestock are a crisis both for pastoralists' livelihoods and regional food security. Shown here cattle abandoned in Malam Fatori, Niger after people have fled to take shelter from Boko Haram. Credit: ISSOUF SANOGO/AFP via Getty Images

Economic Impact of Conflict

This violence has a direct impact on legal trade, production, and economic growth throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. A [2016 World Bank study](#) noted that livestock partially or fully supports the livelihoods of about 110–120 million people, or roughly 70 percent of the rural drylands population of West and East Africa. As outlined below, the impact of conflict is often easiest to decipher in terms of the formal rural economic growth lost but is also a function of the increase in illicit economic activity, such as smuggling, cattle raiding, or human trafficking.

Pastoralists, many of whom are already struggling with structural poverty, are vulnerable to shocks from extreme weather patterns, civil unrest, wildly fluctuating prices, and outbreaks of zoonotic (animal-based) diseases. In the last decade, conflicts across the Western Sahel have displaced more than 1 million people, a significant share of whom are livestock herders. The international community has responded by providing an [annual flow of about \\$1 billion](#) in humanitarian emergency aid, aid that impacts an average of 5 million people per year.

A 2015 Mercy Corps analysis suggested that if conflicts in Nigeria's Middle Belt between pastoralists and farmers were to cease, the benefits attributable to the peace would be \$13.7 billion annually, or 2.79% of the nation's gross domestic product (GDP). The average conflict-affected household would see at least a [64% increase in income](#).

A [report](#) from the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimated that South Sudan may have experienced a decline between \$1.34 and \$2.04 billion to its GDP over a two-year period as a direct consequence of the impact of the civil war on the livestock markets.

A [study](#) conducted through the BRACED program of cattle markets in Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso found that a market's proximity to violent conflict correlated with a decrease in the local price of cattle.

Why Has Conflict Increased?

The increasing severity of pastoralism-related conflict has emerged as the result of three recent factors: macro-economic and ecological changes, a crisis in the governance and security of remote rangelands, and social and political division. This section offers a brief review of these trends, but a more detailed analysis can be found in the complementary report, [Pastoralism and Conflict in the Sudano-Sahel: A Review of the Literature](#).

1. CLIMATE AND MARKET PRESSURES HAVE INCREASED STRESS ON RURAL POPULATIONS

Environmental pressures and increases in the number and geographic scope of populations have progressively shifted patterns in livestock production and agriculture, transforming relationships between pastoralists and settled farming communities:

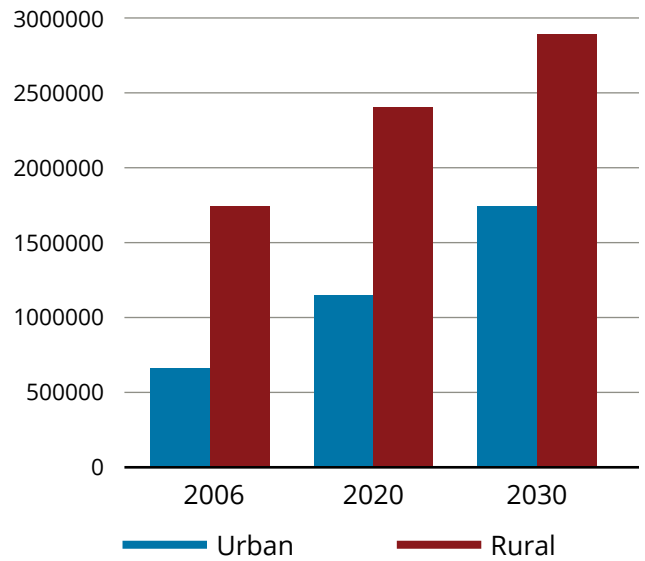
Growing urban populations have been [driving substantial increases in the demand for meat, outpacing some countries' abilities to supply](#).

Progressive desertification and erratic rainfall patterns caused by climate change have disrupted the availability of resources – already uncertain in the Sudano-Sahel – displacing communities and placing some pastoralists at risk of losing their livelihood.

Periods of drought followed by heavy rainfall in the 1970s and 1980s led to agricultural intensification and expansion into new geographic areas, including those that historically served as grazing areas or corridors for livestock migration.

Small-scale subsistence farms are being replaced by large-scale agricultural development. Shown here farmers at work in Nigeria. Credit: Search for Common Ground.

Demand Projections for Beef in Sub-Saharan Africa, in metric tons.



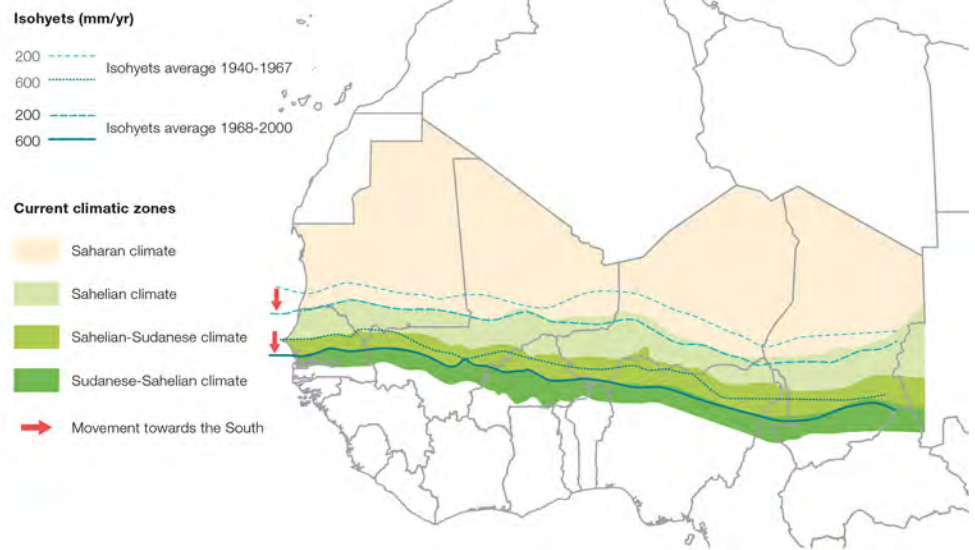
The chart above illustrates the rapid projected growth in demand for beef, particularly among urban populations. Regional supply would need to dramatically expand to meet this demand.

Data source: *Prospects for Livestock-Based Livelihoods in Africa's Drylands*. World Bank Studies, ed. Cornelis De Haan, (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2016) citing the source as Robinson, T., and G. Conchedda. 2014. "Livestock Production Systems." Technical paper prepared for the Economics of Resilience background paper on livestock.



Variation in Isohyets Between 1940-1967 and 1968-2000

This chart illustrates the variation in the average rainfall in the Sahel over the last century. The southward movement indicated in this map illustrates one key challenge for pastoralists – cattle from the Sahel will have to move further south to access water resources, where they have to navigate borders with coastal countries.



Source: OECD/SWAC, Regional Atlas on West Africa 2009
 Extract: OECD (2014), An Atlas of the Sahara-Sahel: Geography, Economics and Security, OECD Publishing, Paris
 © 2014. Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat (SWAC/OECD)

One consequence of these environmental and economic shifts has been the corrosion of productive interdependence between farmers and pastoralists. Some pastoralists have settled down and adopted small-scale farming or commerce even as some farmers have begun raising livestock. With the increase in the number of farmers raising livestock and the advent of artificial fertilizers, fewer farmers now depend on passing livestock to fertilize their fields. Younger generations of farmers may see passing pastoral livestock as pests that destroy their fields instead of a productive complement to their livelihood.

In the past, these communities – both the farmers and the herders – had been living peacefully, and conflicts were resolved at the traditional level. They go to their traditional leaders and they are able to resolve the conflict, but you find that it is not the case, as it is now.³

³Interview with researcher in Nigeria, May 2020.

Other factors have reduced the availability of common use land for grazing or planting, such as:

Land may be allocated to private companies for commercial agriculture use, especially land along waterways that are often essential for pastoralists during the dry season. Political elites, responding to the increasing demand for animal products, are investing in commercial livestock production, leading in some cases to the privatization of land that pastoralists could previously access through customary rights.

Access to certain land may be prohibited under new conservation decrees that seek to protect microclimates and rare species.

All these factors have resulted in **competition over resources in ways that existing state institutions and traditional mechanisms are ill-equipped to address.**

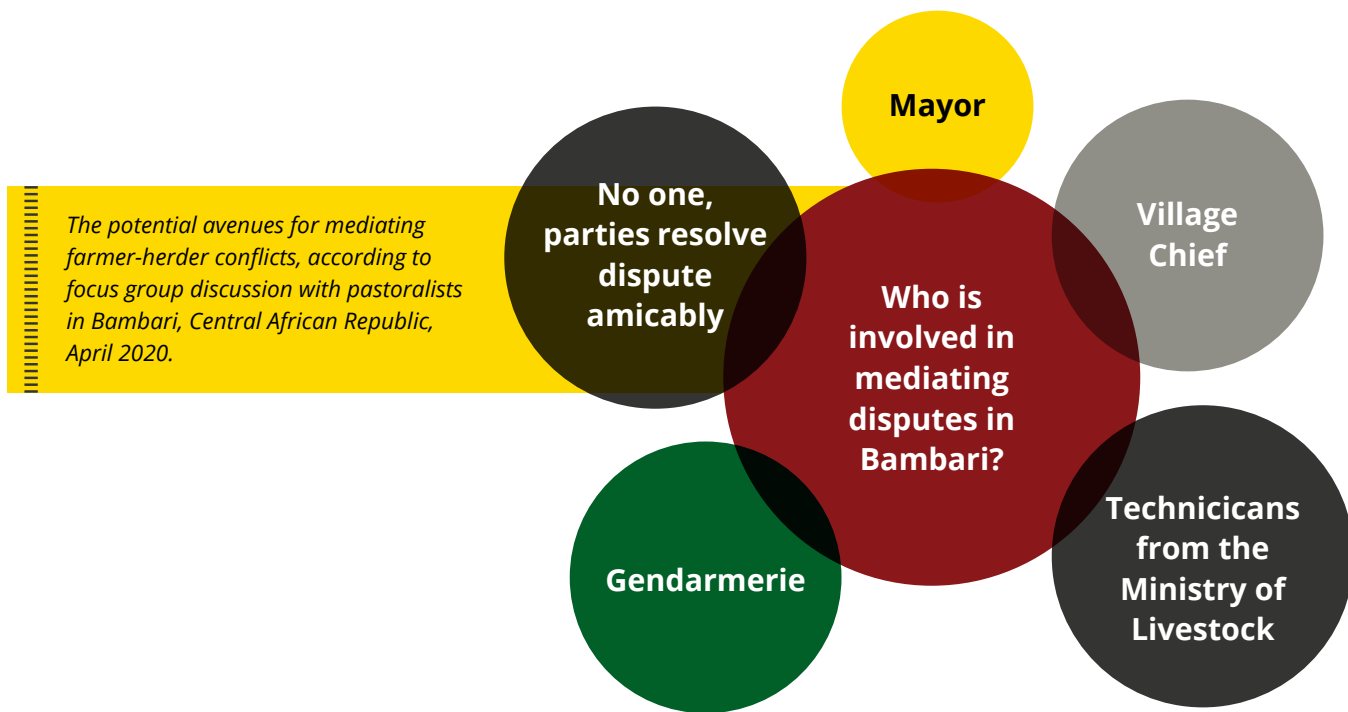
2. PASTORALISTS AND OTHER RURAL POPULATIONS OPERATE IN A CONTESTED GOVERNANCE VACUUM

State authorities in most parts of the Sudano-Sahel exercise limited control over rural territories. Policies governing resource management, land ownership, or livestock movement exist on paper but are often not properly implemented. Many pastoral and farming communities continue to turn to traditional leaders or customary courts to negotiate access to resources or adjudicate disputes. The end result is a pluralistic system whereby various authorities (traditional chiefs, town councils, mayors, customary courts, agricultural ministries, law enforcement agencies) all exercise authority but rely on different rules or practices to resolve conflict. The governing authority of both the state and customary leaders in active conflict zones has been further undermined by the presence of NSAGs.

In areas where state authorities do exercise control, their policies often privilege settled populations. Both before and after the independence period, policymakers and development experts across the Sudano-Sahel have often seen pastoralism as irreconcilable with a modern commercial agriculture and livestock sector. Many states instituted reforms that contravened the customary practices that pastoralists and farmers had relied on to negotiate the use of shared territory. While access to water and public land in rural areas

was historically mediated by traditional leaders, many states passed legislation that allowed them to assume more direct control over these resources. New land tenure laws supported the private sale and commercial development of rangelands, changing the rules for pastoralists who could at one time negotiate land use through their relationships with local leaders.

Under a modern state system, pastoralists cannot practice their livelihood without some measure of official recognition and protection; they depend on the ability to move across borders and to access resources in land overseen by state authorities. Over time, more and more officials and livestock experts have acknowledged that any future vision for Africa's rural development needs to explicitly support pastoralism. Various multilateral declarations - such as those passed in [Nouakchott](#) and [N'Djamena](#) - have called for collective action to support pastoral livelihoods, and various national governments have implemented legal and development reforms to incorporate pastoralism into a modern governance system. This includes everything from multilateral agreements that guarantee free passage of livestock across borders, to investments in public water infrastructure along transhumance corridors.



3. INSECURITY IS INCREASING AND CAUSING CYCLES OF VIOLENCE

Pastoralists have been affected by the various shocks to stability felt across the Sudano-Sahel – non-state armed groups, civil war, transnational crime. These shocks fuel a vicious cycle, where both pastoralists and settled communities are pressured to take up arms or illicit activities to protect or provide for themselves, in turn driving more instability. The average pastoralist in Mali or CAR, who may have only their own gun and a makeshift fence of branches to guard their herd, are attractive targets for banditry and exploitation of armed groups. Even subsistence herders may be responsible for cattle that are each worth more than half of a year's wages for someone living at the poverty line. Cattle theft or protection taxes are an increasingly common practice and a lucrative source of income for insurgent groups. Cattle raids between rival pastoralist groups - a longstanding practice in some regions - have become more professionalized as livestock are targeted by local militias, as in conflicts in [Sudan and South Sudan](#).

It is no longer the theft of cattle but a total abduction of the herd by a certain number of armed groups.⁴

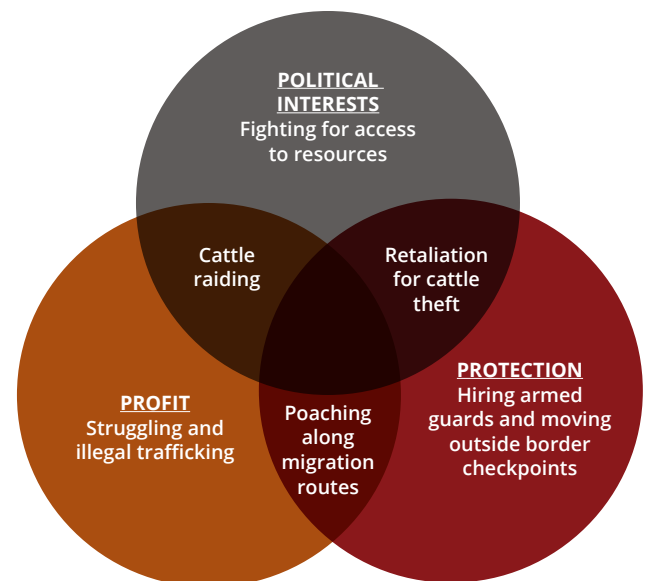
These threats are often not effectively addressed by state security forces who lack the resources or capacity to work with communities and find solutions. To protect themselves and their livelihood, pastoralists take ownership over their own safety in ways that make them appear like a threat to host communities - arming themselves, hiring armed guards, or organizing self-protection militias. This is one small element

of a much larger increase in the proliferation of small arms across the Sudano-Sahel. In some cases, pastoralists will even join or form alliances with local insurgent groups to avoid being targeted. Despite the large numbers of people who practice pastoralism, pastoralist communities are still frequently stigmatized as violent outsiders. Policymakers, media outlets, and security forces frequently treat pastoralists as proxies for insurgent groups and as suspicious “foreigners.”

Although many are victims of exploitation themselves, some pastoralists and members of traditionally-pastoralist ethnic groups [participate in criminal or insurgent activity](#). Their motives can include any combination of profit, politics, or self-protection. As experts in navigating open rangelands, avoiding authorities, and crossing borders undetected, pastoralists can be an asset for smuggling operations. As the vast majority of pastoralists live below the poverty line, the economic opportunity that comes from these illicit activities can be a powerful incentive. Various insurgent and militia groups - from the [Katiba Maacina](#) in central Mali, to the [Islamic State in the Greater Sahara](#) in the Liptako Gourma region, to the [Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique \(UPC\)](#) in the CAR – make appeals specifically to pastoralists or pastoralist ethnic groups. Many such ethno-nationalist movements or vigilante groups are organized around an ethnic or tribal identity of which a pastoralist livelihood is an essential component. Resource conflicts between pastoralists and farmers are often intertwined with other forms of intercommunal violence between those groups that are traditionally pastoralists or farmers.

WHY DO SOME PASTORALISTS ENGAGE IN ILLICIT ACTIVITY OR VIOLENCE?

Why do some individual pastoralists participate in criminal or insurgent activities? The influencing factors may include some combination of pursuing political interests, economic opportunism, and the need for self-protection.



⁴Interview with the leader of a pastoralist organization in Niger, April 2020.



What Can Be Done?

Despite the escalation of violence, there are promising opportunities to create a peaceful future for pastoralism. In Nigeria, pastoralist and farming groups who have been caught up in horrific cycles of vigilante violence have come together to discuss grievances that divide them. Across the Sudan-South Sudan border, community leaders are restoring pastoral migration practices that had been disrupted by years of political conflict and militia violence. Western Sahelian states have passed national legislation that nominally protect pastoral access to resources and increase the authority of local governance systems, which may help restore the ability of community leaders to manage conflicts effectively. **This Toolkit outlines these and similar strategies and offers guidance on how to implement future interventions with insights gleaned from past efforts.**



All across the Sudano-Sahel people are finding collaborative solutions to pastoralism-related conflict. Shown here herders and cattle owners during dialogue in Ughelli, Nigeria. Credit: Search for Common Ground

Jump to:



MODULE 1 – RURAL DEVELOPMENT – [Cultivating equitable rural economic growth and reducing chronic causes of conflict.](#)



MODULE 2 – ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION – [Incorporating pastoralism-related conflict into conservation efforts.](#)



MODULE 3 – GOVERNANCE AND RULE OF LAW – [Encouraging public participation in the governance of pastoral rangelands.](#)



MODULE 4 – REGIONAL INTEGRATION – [Understanding the regional, cross-border aspects of pastoralist livelihoods and their relationship with conflict.](#)



MODULE 5 – GENDER AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT – [Strengthening the role of women in decision-making and understanding gender in pastoralism-related conflict.](#)



MODULE 6 – CONFLICT MANAGEMENT – [Promoting social cohesion and resolving conflict nonviolently.](#)



MODULE 7 – LAW ENFORCEMENT AND COUNTERTERRORISM – [Addressing the intersection of cross-border pastoralism, criminality, and insurgency.](#)



MODULE 8 – DIGITAL PEACEBUILDING – [Integrating new technologies into conflict prevention.](#)



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



A farmer tends to his crops in the Middle Belt of Nigeria. Competition over resources has been a flashpoint for conflict between pastoralists and farmers in the Middle Belt, as elsewhere. Credit: Search for Common Ground

Module 1

Rural Development



THIS MODULE COVERS HOW TO:

1. Ensure that resource management practices do not become triggers for conflict;
2. Design strategies for rural development that are sensitive to the interests of pastoralist populations.

A man tends to his cattle in Nigeria's Middle Belt.
Credit: Search for Common Ground

The Issue

The rural economies of the Sudano-Sahel are experiencing a dramatic upheaval, and the development and governance of rural rangelands are often a source of tension between pastoral groups and state governments. Many policymakers have viewed pastoralism as incompatible with a modern economy and a practice that should be phased out in favor of other forms of production. This attitude has further pushed pastoral voices to the margins ([see Module 3 – Governance and Rule of Law](#)). Critics of pastoralism have cited overgrazing, soil erosion, and desertification as inevitable conclusions of pastoral practices, influenced by the prevailing narrative of the “Tragedy of the Commons.” Though these arguments [have been widely challenged](#) by many policymakers and scientists, they continue to inform development policies.

Formalized codes governing land ownership from the colonial-era onward did not recognize customary rights to access pasture or water, as many countries saw the expansion of large-scale agriculture as the key to growth and a settled population as an essential source of tax revenue. Development investments have focused on intensifying food production. This can be seen in the shift from smallholder farms to large private conglomerates, and the development of a market for animal genetic material and feed from foreign markets to increase the size and output of Sahelian cattle.

These changes often appear to benefit investors and economies overseas at the [expense of local producers](#), and have increased competition between pastoralists, local farmers, and private investors for land. Loss of land means loss of subsistence for rural communities, yet such policies are imposed from above without due consideration of their consequences. The assumption is often made that privatization (or, in some cases, conservation and tourism) will generate employment for local pastoralists and farmers, creating a “win-win” for all parties. The results have been [mixed](#).

INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

[1.1 - Land Tenure Reform](#)

[1.2 - Infrastructure and Development Planning](#)

[1.3 - Natural Resource Management](#)

[1.4 - Service Provision for Mobile Populations](#)

[1.5 - Conflict Sensitivity Assessments](#)

1.1 - Land Tenure Reform

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: POLICY

Description: In much of the rural Sudano-Sahel, pastoralists depend on land and resources that are controlled by the State, even if these lands have historically been governed by customary leaders. Customary rights to land are not legally binding and may be upended by state institutions or companies when land is traded or loaned for private use. Legal reforms to land tenure laws can be one method for replacing zero-sum competition over land between farmers and pastoralists with equitable and easily understood regulatory frameworks. External interveners are frequently involved in providing technical assistance to these reform processes. When done well, interventions can reduce tension over land use by facilitating consultation with local communities, identifying points of conflict between state law and customary practice, and putting pressure on national or state governments to institute reforms that align with accepted principles for governance (see the African Union's [Policy Framework for Pastoralism in Africa](#) or the FAO's [Improving Governance of Pastoral Lands](#)).

What Makes Tenure Reforms Succeed?

> **Interventions reconcile legal frameworks with customary practices.** Intervenors should recognize the legitimacy of both customary and statutory systems and avoid superimposing one over the other. In practice, many pastoralists and farmers alike will continue to adhere to customary practices, which can result in parallel and conflicting systems. Legal reforms in Niger, for example, legitimized customary practices by affording Nigerien pastoralists the right to have primary access to communal land and water in their home areas - although this policy most directly

benefits the pastoralists who reside in Niger rather than those from outside.

> **Policy reforms protect access to public land or water resources.** Pastoralism in the Sudano-Sahel has historically enjoyed an abundance of communally accessible grazing land, space for migration routes, and water access points. When access to such resources are cut off by private land sales or development schemes, there is a risk that pastoralists will feel dispossessed. Intensive, good-faith listening and negotiation with pastoralist groups prior to any major transformation of common-use resources in transhumance areas should be a standard practice.

> **Policies are made accessible and socialized.** Formalized policies on land tenure are rarely well-socialized among the communities who are expected to follow them. Policymakers tend to invest significant attention to the legal reform process but do little to communicate these changes through media or other channels that will actually reach nomadic or illiterate populations. Pastoralists, who often have limited access to formal education and speak local dialects, are poorly placed to master their legal rights. They are generally more familiar with the customary rights and practices that govern their everyday lives and will often follow those practices even if they differ from the state laws. Without an understanding of their legal rights, pastoralists can be vulnerable to being dispossessed by the private land sales and commercial development. Land tenure rights and policies need to be made accessible by diffusing the knowledge through radio programs in local languages, communicating with pastoralist organizations or mobile paralegals, or outreach through field schools ([see 1.4 - Service Provision for Mobile Populations](#)).



Well in the Dosso district of Niger.
Credit: Nasque, CC-BY-SA 4.0

NIGER'S RURAL CODE

In 1993, the Government of Niger instituted a new Rural Code to improve management practices for rural lands and replace an informal system in which land rights were largely controlled by traditional chiefs. The Rural Code was not intended to wholly subvert customary practices; it recognized property rights that were acquired by customary law. This included recognizing that pastoralists have priority access rights to land and water in their home areas (i.e., the territory that they live in for most of the year between migrations). The 2010 [Water Code](#) further expanded access rights for pastoralists by making public water access points accessible to all, even pastoralists from other countries. These public water points are supposed to be governed by a Management Committee, though the pastoralists who do not stay close to these water points year-round are often underrepresented in these governing bodies.

What Makes Tenure Reforms Fail?

> **Legal reforms don't translate into practical change.** Over the past decades, numerous policy frameworks offering broad guidelines are written into law but not set in motion. Mali's 2001 Charte Pastorale, for example, outlines the value of pastoralism to the Malian economy and calls for consultations between pastoralist and sedentary communities and the state, but does not provide the details of how this system will be implemented and enforced. Such ambiguity may be intentional, as it gives authorities flexibility in implementing the law who do not want to provoke latent tensions in customary and statutory law.

> **Women are excluded under customary laws.** Interventions that strengthen customary institutions or align formal policy with customary law may reinforce women's and other marginalized groups' exclusion. In Niger, for example, women's rights to buy and sell land is protected under law but often disallowed under customary rules. Efforts to expand women's rights through land tenure reform have prompted backlash from traditional authorities in places like Mali.

> **Tenure reforms disproportionately benefit elites.**

The private registration and sale of rangelands typically benefit economic and political elites who are not dependent on communal lands or access to public resources. Officials may feel more accountable to investors rather than the smallholder farmers or pastoralists who get displaced. Elite acquisition or appropriation leaves poorer farmers to compete over reduced resources. Similarly, the demarcation of grazing reserves or pastoral corridors may appear to local farmers as a move to push them from land in favor of pastoralists, who are often seen as wealthy because of the value of their livestock. Tenure reforms should be sensitive to implicit power differentials that privilege state and economic interests over those of the citizen occupants.

> **The State lacks the capacity to implement tenure reforms in ungoverned land.**

Implementing new laws or systems requires that the State has the capacity to exercise authority over lands, while it may have limited resources to do so or must compete with NSAGs for authority. In these circumstances, the laws on paper may be far less important than decisions of community leaders or the NSAGs who control the territory.

1.2 - Infrastructure and Development Planning

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: PROGRAMMATIC

Description: Risks of conflict between pastoralists and local communities need to be considered in long-term local, national, and regional plans for development. The interventions outlined in this Toolkit will have limited impact unless they are reinforced by supportive institutions, funding, and political buy-in. Pastoralists depend on access to common resources, particularly water, during their migrations. Historically, watering and grazing sites are demarcated and maintained per local custom. Yet the traditional practices for negotiating access to public or shared resources have been strained by expanding livestock production, agriculture, and private rangeland development. Improved physical infrastructure – such as markers for migration corridors or grazing reserves, [public wells or other water access points](#), and checkpoints where herders can access veterinary care – can help prevent transhumance from becoming a source of confrontation and conflict.

What Makes Investments in Rural Development Succeed?

> **Policymakers and development actors prioritize the process as much as the result.** Investments in infrastructure or clever development planning alone will not prevent competition over resources. If a State builds fencing along a migration corridor, for example, there is still a risk that local farmers or pastoralists will ignore that fencing if the communities themselves are not consulted during the process and recognize the demarcation. In Nigeria, experts and policymakers saw the establishment of a series of communal grazing reserves as a way to keep pastoralists from incurring into farmland, but these reserves were met with stiff resistance from farming communities that saw the investment as a land giveaway to herding communities. Development actors need to have an intentional plan to engage pastoralist communities, because they often are not consistently present to participate in consultative processes in the same way as sedentary communities. Consultations with pastoralists may require outreach to communities

based in another country or coordination with pastoral trade associations that can represent their interests ([see Module 3 – Governance and Rule of Law](#)).



Access to water is critical during transhumance, particularly in the arid climate of the Sahel. Pastoral systems often rely on some degree of supportive water infrastructure – reservoirs, wells, etc. Shown here pastoralists draw water at a well near Naqa, Sudan (top) and pastoral livestock drink from a trough in Wadi Muqaddam, Sudan (bottom). Though much of this Toolkit focuses on pastoral cattle, small ruminants like goats can also be pastoral livestock. Credit: DeAgostini/Getty Images

> **Programs and infrastructure are adequately resourced, maintained, and protected over time.**

Grazing reserves need to be properly cultivated, checkpoints need staffing and resupply, fencing needs maintenance. If the infrastructure is dysfunctional or does not support local livelihoods, then pastoralists and farmers are unlikely to keep their activities within designated areas. Development investments need to adopt a long-term view, rather than treating fencing, wells, or grazing reserves as a “quick fix.”

> **Policymakers align agricultural and livestock development planning.**

In many regions, agricultural policy tends to dominate rangeland policy. Crop production is an essential priority for addressing widespread food insecurity, as farms feed more people than livestock. Farming revenues can improve more household incomes per capita than pastoralism, as livestock are too expensive for many of the poorest. However, both farming and livestock production are part of an interconnected value chain. Both crop and livestock production depend on a finite amount of public land or water, and planning for expanding agriculture will naturally have a direct impact on pastoral livelihoods (and vice versa). For the same reason, it is also essential to consider other

investments in rural development (building roads for transportation of livestock by truck, strengthening the electrical grid to support cold storage facilities) as part of a holistic vision. All rural producers (including both farmers and pastoralists) need to be consulted as stakeholders as part of holistic development planning.

> **Programs and development investments encourage integrated economic activities and social services.**

Pastoralists and farmers have effectively managed competing interests for so long in part because their economic and social lives were productively interdependent. Investments in rural infrastructure can catalyze cooperation among communities sharing landscapes who are otherwise separated by identity-based tension or geographic distance. In the contested region of Abyei in Sudan, local markets provide much-needed space for trade and storage and increase everyday interaction between pastoralist groups and local communities who would otherwise not interact ([see Module 7 - Law Enforcement and Counterterrorism](#)). New connections may be made through investments in animal health or water infrastructure that have multiple beneficiaries.



Weak rural infrastructure is a challenge throughout the livestock production chain. Shown here a man works at a slaughterhouse in northern Cameroon. Credit: Patrick Meinhardt/AFP via Getty Images

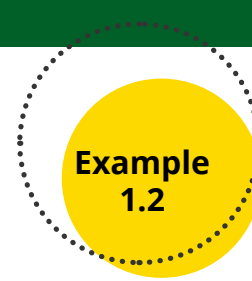
What Makes Investments in Rural Development Fail?

> **Development plans are thrown off by a changing landscape.** Pastoralism is a dynamic practice to subsist in fragile ecosystems, where herders move their livestock in sync with seasonal changes. Yet erratic rainfall and severe weather can interrupt resource availability and access, often temporarily but sometimes permanently. Gradual changes in the climate in CAR over recent decades, for example, has created an abundance of grazing resources, attracting more livestock producers and increasing the need to establish or revitalize migration corridors or livestock markets. Planned investments in development need to be suited to a dynamic climate and should be flexible enough to adapt to shifting migration routes, or seasonal rainfall accumulation.

With the traditional way of living, it is not the same exact corridor that you can take in each season; like this year when you pass between Village A and Village B, so next year when you come back it's possible that you pass behind the Village B.⁵

> **Infrastructure investments privilege one community to the detriment of others.** Decisions about where and how to invest in grazing reserves, water access infrastructure, or other rural development projects need to be informed by local socio-political dynamics. Establishing a new water point along a particular migration route may directly benefit one pastoralist group, but offer no benefit to nearby groups, who may see such investments as demonstrating partiality. When pastoralists or farmers see prevailing arrangements as unfair, even well-intentioned interventions can trigger hostilities. This risk can be mitigated when development schemes integrate conflict-sensitivity and political economy assessments account for pastoralist perspectives ([see 1.5 - Conflict Sensitivity Assessments](#)).

⁵Interview with leader of civil society organization in Chad, April 2020.



NIGERIA SETS ASIDE LAND FOR GRAZING RESERVES

In 1965, Nigeria's northern regional government developed the Northern Region Grazing Reserves Law, which created corridors for the passage of migrating livestock and 415 grazing reserves throughout the country. The reserves were envisioned to section off large swathes of land to be exclusively used by herders to graze their livestock. While initially considered a solution to the increasing conflicts between pastoralists and farmers, population growth, urbanization, and migration encroached on these designated areas, reducing herders' access to and usage of the reserves. Pastoralists were often unable to find sufficient pasture and water within the reserves due to irregular rainfall and little maintenance by state and federal governments. Maintaining their livestock in one place also increased herd vulnerability to disease and banditry, which drove some to move beyond the boundaries of the reserves.



Nigeria's grazing reserves have been seen as a way to support livestock production while minimizing opportunities for conflict between pastoralists and farmers. These reserves can serve as settlements for pastoralist communities, where they can be close to land designated for grazing while securing the benefits of a fixed settlement. Shown here is an aerial view of a Fulani village in the Kachia Grazing Reserve in Nigeria. Credit: Florian Plaucheur/AFP via Getty Images)

Transitioning from Mobile to Sedentary Lifestyles

Under certain circumstances, pastoralists sometimes transition from a mobile to a sedentary lifestyle. This can be an informed, voluntary decision to take up different livelihoods or to get better access to the basic services (schools, medical care) available to settled citizens. By settling down in villages, for example, pastoralists in Cameroon can secure official recognition by authorities that affords them more leverage to ask for public schools or water infrastructure. This transition can be particularly beneficial for [pastoralist women](#), who are rarely involved in livestock migration but can pursue other trades in settled communities.

This process – also referred to as *sedentarization* – can also be a deliberate or incidental consequence of the intervention strategies outlined in this Toolkit. Pastoralists are sometimes deliberately incentivized to settle when they receive training, subsidies, or other inducements to take up more resilient livelihoods, such as agriculture or ranching. In Nigeria, for example, the state and federal governments have invested in communal grazing reserves and ranches in the hopes of encouraging pastoralists to transition to more settled forms of animal husbandry and thus prevent conflicts with farmers. Pastoralists can also be pressured to settle when new laws restrict access to communal land or water resources that have been privatized or redeveloped.

Sedentarization can be a good option for some, but it is not feasible for all pastoralists. The vast majority of pastoralists in the Sahel are poor and cannot afford to pay for land for their herds, supplementary feed during the dry season, or transport costs to take their livestock to market. Those in underdeveloped regions who have invested their wealth in livestock often cannot easily liquidate their cattle into capital or access banks or other financial services. Intervention strategies that aim to phase out pastoral systems run the risk of leaving behind a large population of vulnerable herders.

REASONS TO SETTLE

DIVERSIFIED LIVELIHOOD

Pastoralists may adopt a more sedentary lifestyle so they can supplement their income by cultivating land or adopt other livelihoods.



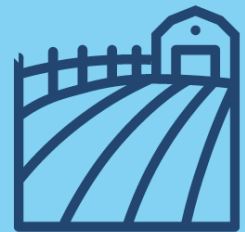
ACCESS TO SERVICES AND MARKETS

Settling closer to urban centers can provide pastoralists with better access to public services or livestock markets.



INCENTIVES

Pastoralists may be enticed to settle by programs that allow them to acquire land for farming or ranching.



LACK OF OPPORTUNITY

Restrictions on pastoral mobility or threats from armed groups can make pastoral livelihoods untenable.



1.3 - Natural Resource Management

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: PROGRAMMATIC

Description: In shared landscapes, proactive and participatory management of land and water resources is essential to preventing conflict. Instituting [grazing agreements](#) or demarcating transhumance corridors, for example, can help set boundaries between farmland and pastoral land. For these practices to be effective, they need to balance the interests of all stakeholders, including both community leaders and state authorities. Even well-designed management schemes can break down when they are not adhered to or when they disenfranchise one group (as has often happened with pastoralists). External interveners can play a crucial role in promoting participatory management by facilitating consultations with representatives of pastoralist and farming communities or providing technical training to local councils or customary leaders.

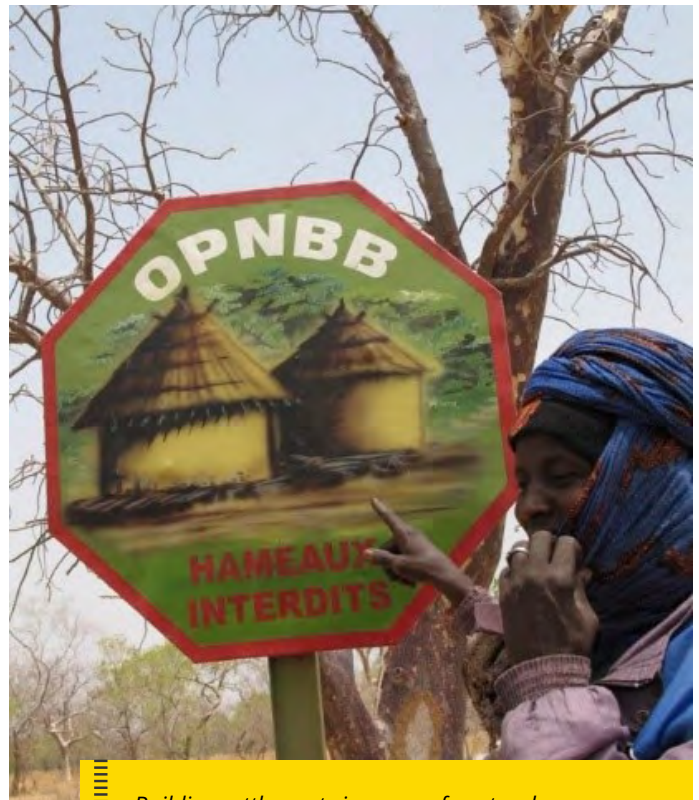
What Makes Community-Driven Resource Management Succeed?

> **Programs help community leaders establish protocols for enforcement and accountability.**

Traditional land tenure and resource access rights are subject to received traditions that often lack formal definition or objective means of application. Who is formally mandated to stop an intruder from settling their cattle on local grazing reserves? What about preventing artisanal miners from excavating around watering holes and blocking access for cattle? Some communities have well-established procedures to handle such eventualities, including redress in the form of compensation or mediation by tribal leaders. Where such procedures are absent, external interventions can support local capacity for mediation and oversight.

> **External interveners support impartial management practices that include all stakeholders.** Managing shared rangeland resources requires leaders to administer fairly and in the public

interest. However, the credibility and influence of certain traditional leaders and state authorities has been compromised by partisanship, rent-seeking behaviors, or co-option by national elites. Trust and buy-in is essential for enforcing rules about access to resources – particularly among nomadic populations who can evade accountability to settled authorities. External interventions should prioritize impartiality and support management systems that give space for input from all stakeholders, including traditional leaders, representatives of nomadic communities, and state authorities.



Building settlements in areas of pastoral migration is a common cause of conflict. Shown here a sign prohibiting the building of settlements outside Boucle de Baoule National Park in Mali. Credit: Leif Brottem

> Programs increase inclusivity in decision-making structures. Participation in resource management is closed to many women, youth, or minority groups, particularly where lines of authority are rooted in custom, family lineage, and local culture. Opening closed doors protected by patriarchy and tradition may require creating parallel channels for marginalized groups to provide input. In Sudan, for example, youth who were given a chance to form their own resource management committee helped introduce new dispute-resolution practices; recommending that pastoralists and farmers keep a mobile phone on their person as they tended to their livestock or crops so that they can contact tribal leaders to quickly intervene in the case of conflict.



The use of telecommunications tools can help connect pastoralist and settled communities that have traditionally been separated by physical distance. See [6.4 – Bridging Social Distance](#). Shown here a man takes a photo of his cattle in the Kachia Grazing Reserve in Kaduna State, Nigeria. Credit: Luis Tato/AFP via Getty Images.

Example 1.3

LOCAL FARMERS AND PASTORALISTS MAP MIGRATION CORRIDORS

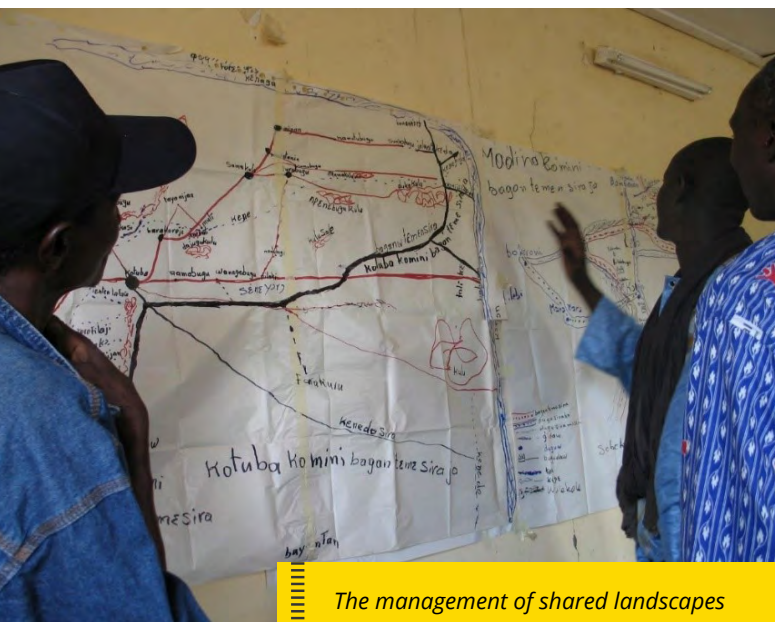
Even though pastoral livestock often migrate along consistent routes, these corridors may lack formal recognition and protection, leaving open the risk for that land to be appropriated for cultivation or other purposes. In North and South Kordofan, Sudan, SOS Sahel engaged leaders of farming and pastoralist communities to conduct a participatory identification and demarcation of these corridors to distinguish them from farmland. Demarcation through community consultation was the first step in a longer effort aimed at social cohesion and collaborative rangeland management. When these corridors threatened to disrupt water access, communities worked to rehabilitate water ponds (*haffirs*) using sand dams. For long-term maintenance, SOS Sahel supported joint committees charged with the upkeep of these corridors and addressing any related disputes.

Along the Nigeria-Niger border, the *Programme d'Appui au Secteur de l'Elevage* (PASEL), supported by Veterinaires Sans Frontieres, led a similar effort to secure transhumance corridors. PASEL established a series of Technical Corridors of Passage Committees (CTCP) led by sub-prefecture officials and traditional chiefs. They identified corridors and rest stops in consultation with local farming and pastoralist communities. Once demarcated, the corridors were overseen by monitoring committees composed of village chiefs, farmers and herders. Monitoring committees were tasked to ensure that corridor lanes were respected, and that any related livestock disputes were addressed.

What Makes Community-Driven Resource Management Fail?

> **Experts provide technical training and resources on land-use planning where necessary.** Informed land management practices can maximize the use of limited resources and prevent scarcity from becoming a source of conflict. Organizing when and where cattle graze in communal areas, for example, can help mitigate the degradation of certain areas and allow pasture to regrow. Negotiating land use in shared territory can carry a high degree of complexity and local administrative entities and customary leaders may lack the expertise. Local leaders and decision-making bodies may require specialized technical training or access to technological resources (such as GPS data on the available biomass or water resources).

> **Programs reinforce existing forms of exclusion.** Existing customary or state institutions are not necessarily representative of the various peoples who use the resources. When engaging with pastoral populations, it is important for external interveners to remember that pastoralist communities are not homogenous. Wealthy owners of large herds may have very different interests and more social or political capital than smallholder pastoralists. Pastoralists who live in nearby settlements and take their livestock on seasonal migrations may have different interests than pastoralists who pass through from other countries. Women or youth in pastoralist communities will have few opportunities to participate in formal governing bodies than traditional leaders in their community. Programs that provide opportunity for input from a limited number of pastoralist voices risk further excluding marginal voices.



The management of shared landscapes should be a cooperative process. The input of community leaders is essential in demarcating routes for livestock migration. Shown here local stakeholders discuss a map of transhumance routes in Mali. Credit: Leif Brottem

Most of the herders you will meet with animals in the village are not the owners of the cattle. The real owners are sometimes big bosses and big men in towns or even outside the area. So it is not always easy to find the right person to discuss with, when it comes to dialogue between herders and farmers.⁶

> **Informal agreements are not respected in practice.** Informal agreements about the use of public or communal resources rely heavily on voluntary compliance and social enforcement. Upcoming generations of pastoralists and farmers may respect the established migration corridors or grazing agreements or break with them out of self-interest or financial desperation. In rural areas outside of the reach of state authorities, it can be difficult to hold farmers accountable for settling down in migration corridors or hold herders accountable for allowing their livestock to overgraze. For this reason, interventions to promote participatory resource management need to prioritize cultivating community buy-in and outline clear protocols for enforcing the rules that can be administered by local leaders.

⁶Interview with a civil society practitioner in DRC, March 2020.



Example 1.4

FIELD SCHOOLS PROVIDE EDUCATION TO REMOTE COMMUNITIES

Lack of access to the education services available in major population centers limits pastoralists' ability to learn and adopt new techniques to deal with increasing pressures from climate change or changing land tenure systems. This can leave pastoralists vulnerable to environmental shocks, zoonotic (animal-based) diseases, and displacement by commercial development, and leave them with limited economic alternatives outside of illicit activities. Pastoralist field schools - a model [originally applied in Kenya](#) but since adopted elsewhere - has been one solution to fill this gap. Pastoralist field schools typically consist of a small group of pastoralists who meet regularly with an experienced facilitator and talk through good practices or innovative solutions to improve their livestock production or adapt to stressors like climate change. Rather than imposing external reforms to pastoral livelihoods, this is meant to be a process of capturing and building upon local knowledge and supporting pastoralists as they adapt to the emerging challenges in their ecosystem.

Field schools can also be used to provide more basic education services - such as literacy programs - to the children who aren't able to attend fixed schools. The federal government of Nigeria, for example, has formalized these education services through the National Commission of Nomadic Education. Their efforts can range from the setting up temporary huts or structures along nomadic routes to the use of [interactive radio instruction](#) to broadcast lessons on numeracy, literacy, and basic life skills to nomadic adults and children as a way to supplement the limited time for in-person instruction.



1.4 - Service Provision for Mobile Populations

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: PROGRAMMATIC

Description: Mobile pastoralist communities often lack access to basic social services - education, medical care, job training - that are typically provided in urban centers. The lack of access can create a society set apart, limiting opportunities for youth (or others) to pursue other livelihoods or move into new social systems. Targeted mobile service delivery programs, like the use of "field schools," can connect remote and mobile populations with social services and even socialize good practices for cooperation with sedentary communities. In addition to the delivery of social services, there is also value in expanding access to financial services, which

are an essential resource for transforming pastoral livelihoods and lifestyles that are generally inaccessible for nomadic populations.

What Makes Mobile Service Delivery Succeed?

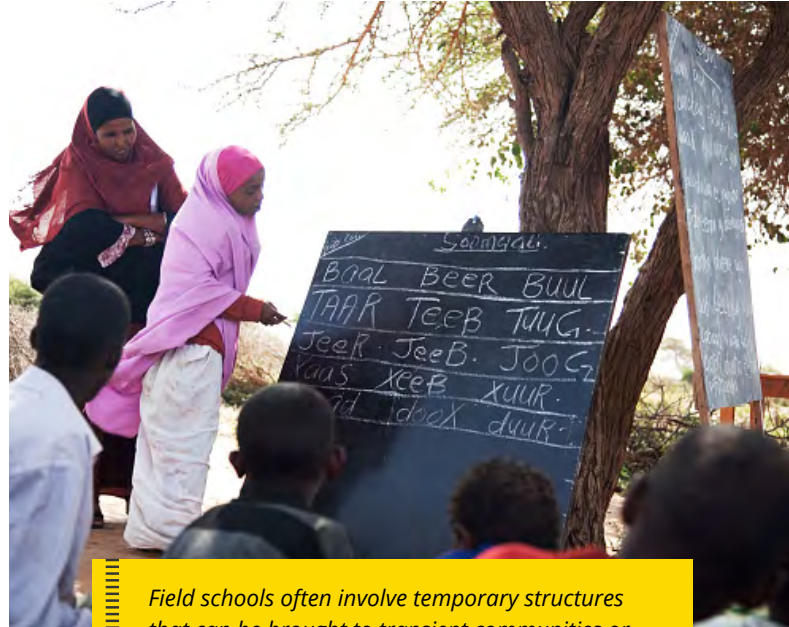
> Programs engage with pastoralists where they congregate or reside. Most pastoralists are not permanent nomads, and still maintain a home base or and set up settlements in the areas where they take their livestock. These locations can range from permanent villages to congregating areas around cattle market towns. In Sudan and South Sudan, pastoralists bring their livestock together in "cattle camps," where they set up shelter and a community life. These locations are ideal focal points for mobile services.

> Service delivery programs support social cohesion.

Service providers, like educators in field schools or cattle vaccinators, can be leveraged as strategic partners in bridging divides and fostering cohesion. In Abyei, for example, the UN [FAO trained animal health workers](#) from Dinka Ngok communities to participate in vaccination campaigns for cattle from the Misseriya community, people with whom they had been in active conflict. Although humanitarian service delivery and conflict transformation are often siloed, there are many untapped opportunities collaboration.

> Programs support skill-building for pastoralist youth.

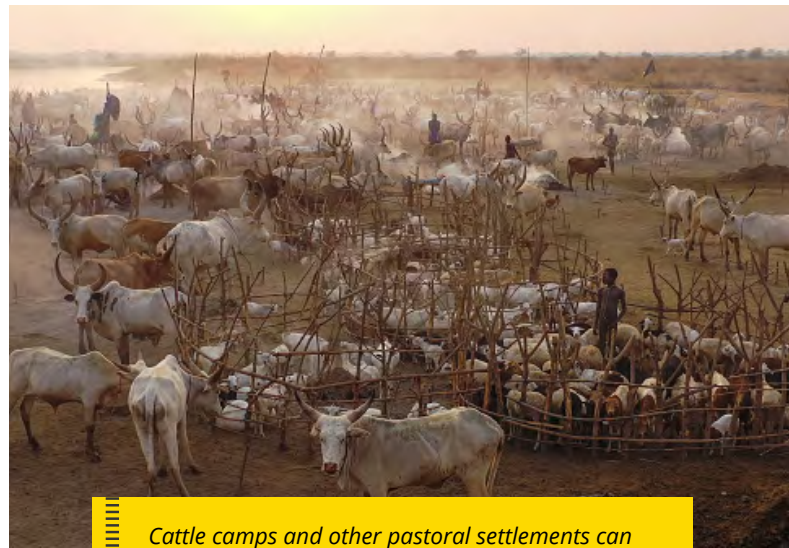
The next generation of pastoralists will struggle to catch up to a rapidly changing world. These youth lack the same resources and opportunities as their settled counterparts, making it more difficult to make their way in an evolving economy. The lack of opportunities can make them more susceptible to recruitment by criminal networks or NSAGs that can offer economic opportunities or social status. Field schools or other training initiatives that can lead to basic service roles, such as veterinary aids or rangeland liaison officers, can increase the range of available opportunities.



Field schools often involve temporary structures that can be brought to transient communities or classes conducted out in the open. Shown here children of pastoralists learn attend school under a tree in Somaliland. Credit: In Pictures Ltd./ Corbis via Getty Images

What Makes Mobile Service Delivery Fail?

> Programs raise and frustrate expectations. Service delivery to remote and/or mobile populations can be costly or logistically difficult to maintain and may be disrupted amidst conflict as the presence of NSAGs limits humanitarian access to rangelands and borderlands. This can result in frustration from beneficiaries who already have an experience of being poorly served by public institutions. Skill-building training for youth, for example, with no segue to viable entrepreneurship risks driving them to the NSAGs or illicit networks that are destabilizing their homelands.



Cattle camps and other pastoral settlements can be entry points for service delivery and training. Shown here is an aerial view of cows in a Mundari cattle camp, Central Equatoria, Terekeka, South Sudan. Credit: Eric Lafforgue/Art in All of Us/Corbis via Getty Images

1.5 - Conflict Sensitivity Assessments

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: PROGRAMMATIC

Description: Development initiatives aimed at helping rural communities and pastoralists modernize their practices will inadvertently alter relationships between pastoralists and other communities sharing the landscape. Traditional assessments are often not suited to account for nomadic populations, as they tend to prioritize the permanent residents of a community who are more visible. Evaluating the socio-political, economic or environmental repercussions of any development effort, no matter its size or scale, is essential to any program design phase. This may require tapping the specialized expertise of anthropologists, political economy experts, or others who understand the nuances of engaging with pastoralist populations.

What Makes Conflict Sensitivity Assessments Succeed?

- > **Assessments are conducted and updated regularly, even where violent conflict is absent.** Numerous development projects have eroded relations between mobile pastoralists and farmers, but donors rarely hear of them. The risk of conflict escalation is ever present when working with communities whose survival depends on scarce resources in landscapes under threat of collapse. Risk assessments should focus on potential conflict triggers - natural or man-made - as a standard practice in programs dealing with livestock or crop production in rangelands.
- > **Tools and resources are tailored to local pastoralist realities.** Discussions of agricultural development are frequently kept separate from discussions of pastoralism even though any changes

in rural livelihoods or resource management will affect all communities sharing the landscape. Specialists in agriculture, aquaculture, or water management may not be experienced in analyzing sectoral overlap and how this can trigger or appease conflict. Furthermore, pastoralists are often less visible than other communities due to their mobile lifestyle and assessing their needs and interests may require additional resources or time for outreach and consultations. Hence, the importance of specialized guidance on pastoralism, including conflict sensitivity training and political economy analysis (PEA) for staff working with pastoralists.

[Many pastoralists are] a nomadic population that moves a lot. So we can't work with them in the sense that we can find them all the time.⁷

- > **Assessments consider the potential impacts for the entire population, not just the target demographic.** Much of this Toolkit focuses on pastoralists, but the impacts on other rangeland residents are equally important. Local sedentary groups may feel disenfranchised by large, visible interventions dedicated to pastoralists, or may feel threatened by programs that encourage pastoralists to settle down and compete for limited resources. Similarly, there are distinct and differing interests and needs among pastoralist groups that are often overlooked - women, youth, minority ethnic groups, or poorer herders may all have fewer opportunities to voice their perspectives and contribute to conflict assessments.

⁷Interview with a civil society practitioner in Mali, April 2020.



Example 1.5

WORLD BANK INVESTS IN CONFLICT EXPERTISE

In 2015, the World Bank launched two major development initiatives focused on support for pastoralism and agro-pastoralism: the *Projet Régional d'Appui au Pastoralisme au Sahel (PRAPS)* in six Sahelian countries, and the *Regional Pastoral Livelihoods Resilience Project (RPLRP)* in three East African countries. Both initiatives sought a substantial investment in local infrastructure and resource management practices in contexts where resource access was a flashpoint for conflict between pastoralist and farming communities. Recognizing the need to prevent these investments from triggering further hostilities, the Bank developed a specialized set of tools to train and sensitize implementers on the relationship between conflict and pastoral development. Under the *Pastoralism and Stability in the Sahel and Horn of Africa (PASSHA)* program, the Bank embedded dedicated conflict experts with the implementing organizations for both PRAPS and RPLRP who could train project staff on how to identify potential risks of conflict and including in the use of a [Practical Guide on Conflict Sensitivity and Prevention for Livestock Sector Development Projects in Sub-Saharan Pastoral Areas](#) and a [Field Level Project Appraisal Checklist](#).

Questions to Consider

WHEN ADAPTING MODULE 1 TO YOUR CONTEXT

1. To what extent are pastoral livelihoods factored into long-term strategies for agricultural and rural development?

- How, if at all, have pastoralist communities been involved or consulted in national or state-level development strategies?
- What is the long-term vision for the livestock sector? Is it expected that pastoral practices will be phased out or modernized? How does this vision align with the needs and interests of pastoralist communities?
- What are the baseline assumptions on climate, demand for protein, cold chain and logistics infrastructure?

2. To what extent are pastoralists' needs and interests reflected in local resource management?

- What governing bodies or leaders (state-run or customary) are responsible for overseeing ownership and access to land, water, and other

natural resources? How are resident or non-resident pastoralists included in these bodies?

- What are the major ambiguities between customary, local, regional and national guidance?
- Are there laws or customary practices that allow pastoralists to access public pasture, migration routes, and water resources? Are these laws or practices respected by both pastoralists and local authorities?

3. How do land tenure laws or customary practices impact pastoral communities?

- Are pastoral communities able to access public land or own communal lands? Where do pastoral groups fit within customary law?
- Have pastoral communities been dispossessed from migration routes or water access due to changes in land ownership?
- Do existing land tenure laws reflect the input of pastoral communities? How do these laws differ or conflict with local customary practices?

4. Do investments in development support cooperation between pastoral and host communities?

- Are there clearly demarcated pastoral migration routes? How recently have they been updated? Are these respected by both pastoral and farming communities?
- What investments have been made, if any, in water collection and access along pastoral routes? Are these sufficient to meet the needs of both crop production and livestock? Are these water resources equitably managed and accessible to all populations who operate in the area?
- Is the pastoral infrastructure (fencing of migration routes, grazing reserves, wells) regularly maintained and functional? By who?

5. Do nomadic communities or remote pastoral settlements have access to basic public services (education, healthcare)?

- How do education systems adapt to meet the needs of children and youth in nomadic communities?
- Could service delivery programs support access to other services or programs (legal services, conflict resolution, education on rights)?
- Do pastoral communities have access to financial services (credit, insurance, etc.)?

6. How, if at all, is conflict sensitivity factored into development decision-making?

- Are conflict dynamics factored into risk assessments for livestock or agricultural development programs?
- Are there forums or channels to solicit the input from all local stakeholders, including non-resident pastoralists, as part of rural development programs?
- How often are conflict, PEA or gender analyses updated?

Jump to:



MODULE 1 – RURAL DEVELOPMENT – [Cultivating equitable rural economic growth and reducing chronic causes of conflict.](#)



MODULE 2 – ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION – [Incorporating pastoralism-related conflict into conservation efforts.](#)



MODULE 3 – GOVERNANCE AND RULE OF LAW – [Encouraging public participation in the governance of pastoral rangelands.](#)



MODULE 4 – REGIONAL INTEGRATION – [Understanding the regional, cross-border aspects of pastoralist livelihoods and their relationship with conflict.](#)



MODULE 5 – GENDER AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT – [Strengthening the role of women in decision-making and understanding gender in pastoralism-related conflict.](#)



MODULE 6 – CONFLICT MANAGEMENT – [Promoting social cohesion and resolving conflict nonviolently.](#)



MODULE 7 – LAW ENFORCEMENT AND COUNTERTERRORISM – [Addressing the intersection of cross-border pastoralism, criminality, and insurgency.](#)



MODULE 8 - DIGITAL PEACEBUILDING - [Integrating new technologies into conflict prevention.](#)



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

What infrastructure exists to support livestock production? Shown here a slab of beef is prepared at a slaughterhouse on the outskirts of Abidjan, Nigeria. Credit: Sia Kambou/AFP via Getty Images.





Climate change is affecting the availability of essential water resources and ecosystems that pastoralists depend upon. The vanishing of Lake Chad represents a dire risk for the future of pastoralism in the Sahel. Shown here cattle cross through a section of Lake Chad near Guite, Chad. Credit: Philippe Desmazes/AFP via Getty Images

Module 2

Environment and Conservation

THIS MODULE COVERS HOW TO:

1. Support rural adaptations to climate change while minimizing potential triggers for conflict;
2. Manage competing interests and promote complementarity between pastoralism and conservation efforts.

Pastoral livestock can be found in many protected ecosystems. Here livestock rest while traveling through Zakouma Park in Chad. Credit: Avalon/Universal Images Group via Getty Images.

The Issue

Pastoralists are a critical but overlooked element of conservation and environmental policy and programming. Erratic weather and prolonged drought, punctuated by increased rainfall in some areas, make transhumance increasingly hazardous and uncertain. This is not a fundamentally new challenge – mobile pastoralism is a system especially suited to handle environmental fluctuations and scarce water and pasture. However, the increasing desertification of the Sahel, soil erosion, and other long-term pressures will make pastoral livelihoods ever more difficult over time. As the total number of livestock rises to accommodate demand, larger herds can quickly exhaust communal lands. Some short-term strategies to help rural populations adapt to resource scarcity and erratic weather, however, can spark tensions. Promoting resilience by diversifying livelihoods (e.g., farming, fishing) is a common approach, but even this can create competition and conflict at the community level.

Pastoralists can be natural allies in conservation. Adaptive and flexible, pastoralism is often seen as a less destructive system of livestock production. It avoids land degradation by not concentrating herds in single locations for long periods, exhausting surrounding resources. Pastoralism may also reduce the emergence or spread of zoonotic diseases that propagate faster in concentrated livestock production sites.

The ecological consequences of pastoralism, however, must be acknowledged alongside its promises and potential. Where pastoral herds are distant from veterinary services, they can act as [vectors for diseases](#) originating with wildlife or vice versa. In many protected areas, such as the Zakouma National Park (Chad), Chinko Reserve (CAR) and the W-Pendjari Biosphere Reserve (Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger), pastoralists sometimes engage in poaching or wildlife product trafficking (e.g., ivory). As a result, some conservationists treat pastoralists as adversaries instead of allies. Designating rangelands as protected zones can limit pastoral access to grazing and migration routes. Balancing these competing interests requires closer study of the roles, both positive and negative, that pastoralists play in a region whose environmental vulnerabilities are attracting global concern.

INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

[2.1 - Protection of Ecosystems](#)

[2.2 - Resilient Livelihoods Programming](#)

[2.3 - Public Messaging on Pastoralism and Climate](#)

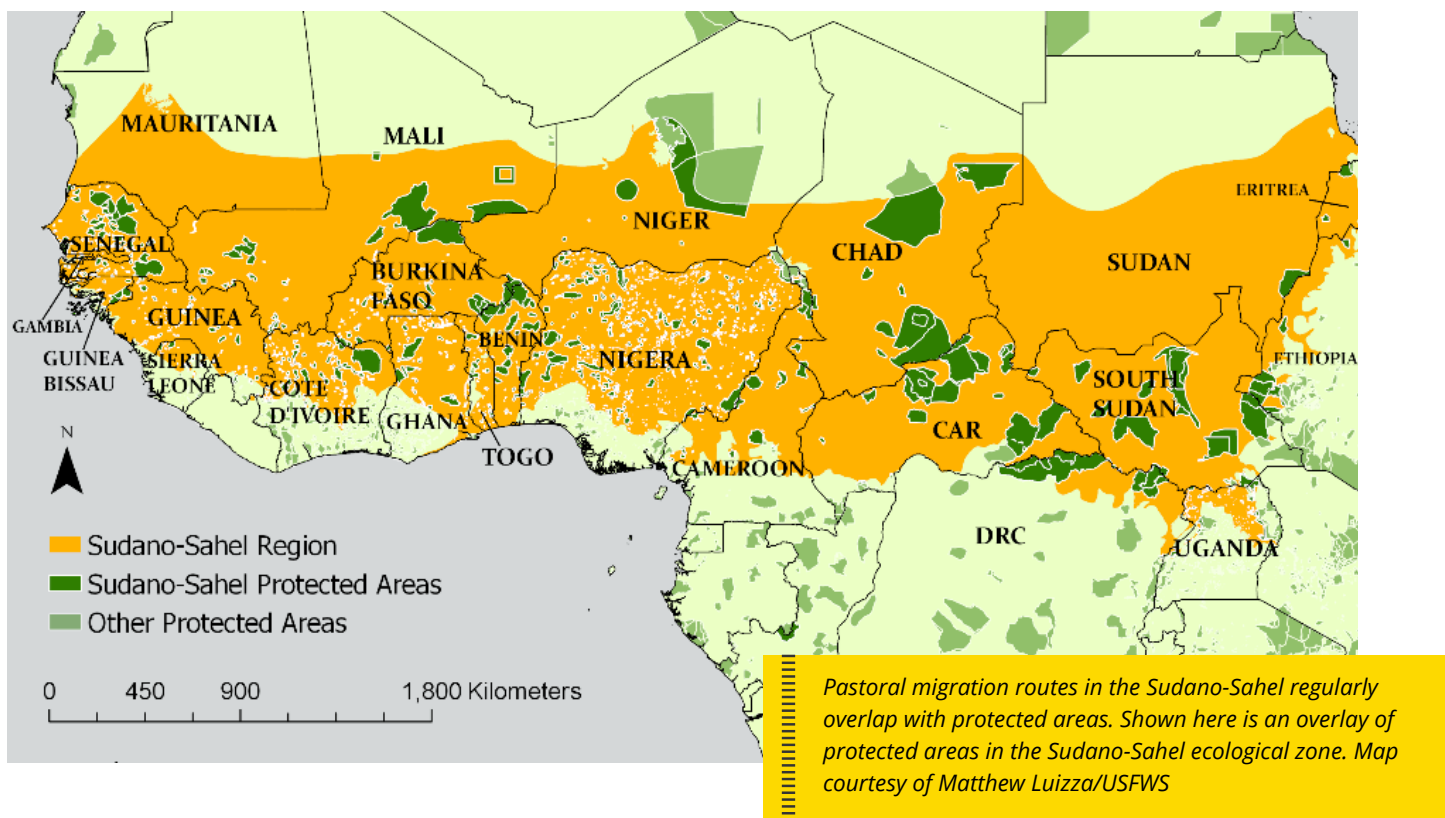
2.1 - Protection of Ecosystems

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: PROGRAMMATIC

Description: Many arid landscapes host both livestock and at-risk wildlife. Pastoralists travel through these lands while on migration, which can disrupt the balance of fragile ecosystems and present a risk to endangered species. Even within officially protected lands, state authorities or civil society wildlife protectors may have limited capacity to enforce the rules over land use or adjudicate competing interests from pastoralists and park managers. Pastoralists in some regions depend on access to protected land for resources or evading armed groups. Efforts to block pastoralists from accessing these lands (fencing, park rangers, etc.) can escalate tensions without necessarily offering a workable solution. Instead, external interventions should look for “win-win” solutions, such as participatory management models where pastoralists maintain limited access and engage in local decision-making.

What Makes Ecosystem Protection Programs Succeed?


> **Programs engage with pastoralists as stakeholders and invest in long-term relationships.** As temporary inhabitants of a given landscape, it can be tempting to see pastoralists as outsiders with limited claims on local resource management. Yet even without primary ownership rights they are also stakeholders. As livestock migration routes change due to climate pressures or insecurity, other pastoralists may also enter the landscape. The fact of their temporary presence means that securing pastoralist buy-in for conservation requires a long time-horizon and the flexibility to engage with people whose primary residence may be elsewhere, even in another country.



Example 2.1

KENYAN CONSERVANCIES BUILD PARTNERSHIPS WITH PASTORALISTS

In Kenya, the Northern Rangelands Trust has adopted an approach to managing wildlife conservancies that prioritizes building partnerships with local pastoralists and supporting pastoralist livelihoods. The Trust takes steps to build good faith relationships with the pastoralist communities who operate in conservancies, by serving as an intermediary in purchasing livestock at stable rates and taking them to market. This trust enables local leaders to implement effective participatory management practices. In the West Gate Conservancy, for example, the practice of allowing cattle to graze freely was identified as a contributing factor in the ecological degradation of the grasslands. Local leaders proposed an alternating grazing scheme, similar to fallowing in agriculture, that consolidated herds into one area at a time, allowing neighboring areas to recover.



In shared rangelands, cattle migration routes cross through conservancies where they look for pasture alongside wildlife. Shown here pastoral cattle graze near a herd of zebra in the Loisaba conservancy in Kenya. Credit: Tony Karumba/AFP via Getty Images

> **Programs or policy reforms create options for resource access.**

A key concern for many mobile pastoralists is that new regulations will prohibit access to territory formerly allowed under customary arrangements. Potential conflicts can be avoided when recurrent pastoralist groups can negotiate alternative arrangements for grazing or passage. In Burkina Faso, for example, local management committees allow pastoralists to access land set aside for conservation or hunting for an agreed fee. Some conservancies in Kenya will differentiate between core zones, where access is prohibited to protect at-risk species, and buffer zones where pastoralists are permitted. It is in the long-term interests of both conservationists and pastoralists that any designated grazing areas or water access points are resourced, strategically located, and well-maintained by the appropriate governing authorities.

> **Programs are designed around “win-win” solutions.**

Pastoralists who are being asked to limit their movements within protected zones need to see clearly how such measures benefit them, as compliance is difficult to enforce. Similarly, park managers or conservation activists need to see pastoralists as potential allies and not spoilers. Appreciating this potential will motivate them to invest

the time and energy in building trust and strengthening relationships. Pastoralists, for example, may benefit from land restrictions in protected areas because less utilization means less degradation of migratory routes. Or they may benefit from the protection offered by rangers from criminal syndicates. Park managers, similarly, may benefit from pastoralists' assistance in monitoring adherence to the established grazing routes or anti-poaching measures. Focusing on building buy-in and acceptance for any rules and regulations is a more effective tactic than competing for control.

> **Programs establish links with dispute resolution and security mechanisms.**

Pastoral lands and protected ecosystems are frequently far removed from central governing authorities, creating openings for criminal activity. Authorities need to be confident that poaching or grazing in protected areas will be punished. Pastoralists want assurances that respecting designated boundaries will reduce risks of theft or damage to their livestock. While security guarantees may be provided to an extent by rangers or other mobile forces, they cannot be present everywhere. Supporting community-level dispute resolution through recognized leaders is a well-established best practice.



Passing livestock and pastoralists have been known to present a danger to certain wildlife populations, such as lions. Shown here are lions in the Pendjari National Park in Benin, an area where pastoralists operate. Credit: DeAgostini/Getty Images

> **Interveners elevate input from conservationists and pastoralists on land tenure reform.** The future of land tenure legislation is crucial for conservationists and pastoralists, despite conflicts of interest. Land tenure systems protecting customary rights to passage can afford pastoralists a degree of legal protection during migration, while conservationists may prefer to see these lands under stricter controls. As land tenure laws are codified or reformed, it should be a priority for conservationists to support consultations with pastoralist communities and ensure that cooperative practices remain at the heart of rangeland management ([See 1.1 - Land Tenure Reform for more](#)).

What Makes Management of Protected Land Fail?

> **Programs fail to account for the risks to wildlife.** The presence of large cattle herds can negatively impact ecosystems and their wildlife populations, most notably through either the spread of infectious disease or poaching. Some pastoralists in the Chinko

reserve, for example, [have been reported](#) to hunt buffalo and giant eland to sell the meat for economic gain and poison lions to protect themselves or their herds. A holistic approach to protecting rangelands should ensure that animal health services are accessible to pastoralist populations and robust accountability measures are put in place to prevent poaching.

> **Officials or armed groups adopt extortionist practices.** Implementing grazing fees or other pay-for-access measures may be necessary to cover the upkeep or protection of certain ecosystems but can also be a source of tension. Across the Sudano-Sahel, pastoralists are frequently subject to extortion from armed groups or state officials who impose high taxes on passing livestock. Imposing these fees without buy-in from pastoral communities may appear as just one more example of predation and undermine trust between pastoralists and local authorities. Restricting access to certain territory or implementing fees should be done through a participatory process in which pastoralist communities can be a part of an informed discussion on the rationale behind such measures.

2.2 - Resilient Livelihoods Programming

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: PROGRAMMATIC

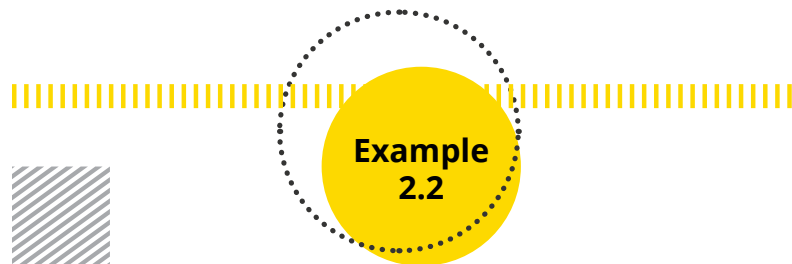
Description: Increasingly erratic weather, droughts, and storms associated with climate change have led to substantial investments in resilient rural livelihoods and sustainable food production. Such investments can help rural populations avert severe food shortages, and keep illicit economies to a minimum, and assist in coping with new environmental pressures. However, these programs can also inadvertently reinforce the sources of conflict between pastoralists and settled rural communities. Investments in expanding land used for agriculture, for example, can encourage farmers to incur into pastoral migration corridors. Programs to encourage pastoralists to diversify their livelihoods - through farming, fishing, or other trades - can fuel new forms of competition over access to land or waterways. Interventions focusing on building resilient rural livelihoods need to prioritize Do No Harm principles and conflict sensitivity in design and delivery, even where armed conflict is absent. (See also [Module 1 - Rural Development](#) for more information on rural livelihood interventions).

What Makes Livelihood Resilience Programs Succeed?

> **Interveners develop risk assessments that are attuned to the dynamics of pastoralist communities.** Any dramatic changes to the use of resources in shared territories will invariably have unintended secondary effects. In Burkina Faso, for example, some pastoralist groups have contributed to agricultural expansion when settling down to diversify their livelihood with farming, which has incited conflict with sedentary groups competing for land and water. Furthermore, it has been observed that they often tend to settle in pastoral corridors, which block their use by other pastoralists. Risk assessments should seek input from local conflict experts, including pastoralists, who are better attuned to the social and economic interplays among rural populations.

> **Disaster risk reduction programs are multi-sectoral and proactive.** Periods of sudden shock

or environmental disturbance can push pastoralists and farmers together in common cause (survival) or isolate them. Given that climate-related disasters are recurrent, proactive investments in resilience, not just post-crisis recovery, should be a priority. Experience in resilience programming shows that single-sector programs have a higher chance of failure in arid regions where subsistence options are drastically limited. Proactive resilience strategies may include experimental farming plots along pastoral migration routes, or agreements to pre-position cattle feed along established routes to avoid local crop destruction.



SATELLITES HELP PASTORALISTS FIND RESOURCES IN MALI

Access to grazing and water resources can be unpredictable in the Sahel, particularly as climate change affects rainfall patterns. For some, adapting to climate change may involve taking up livelihoods that are less subject to instability, but efforts have also been made to stabilize pastoralists' ability to make informed decisions about where to travel in search of pasture or water. In Mali, SNV - the Netherlands Development Organization - and the Netherlands Space Office developed a [dedicated information service](#) for pastoralists known as GARBAL. The system provides pastoralists with access to satellite data on available food and water resources along different migration routes that can be accessed through a mobile phone service, which informs their decisions about where to travel.

> **National governments include pastoral adaptations when requesting resources to combat climate change.** Building a livestock industry that can withstand desertification and environmental shocks is an urgent priority that is not always reflected in the resources that are devoted to addressing climate change. Basic investments in animal health services, early warning systems, and market integration to build resilience against shocks are [far less costly](#) than what is already being spent in food security. Robust

veterinary care services through community animal health workers who can reach remote pastoral populations, for example, can curtail the rapid loss of young livestock following severe climate shocks. This can help prevent costly disruption to the regional food supply chain. As national governments request resources for climate change adaptation from sources like the Global Environment Facility, it is important that these can be used to support such investments in pastoral resilience.



Livelihood diversification is one strategy used to help pastoralists withstand ecological shocks. This has often involved retraining or financing pastoral communities to adopt farming or other livelihoods. Shown here a young Tuareg herder works on irrigation canal as part of the project conducted in Agadez, Niger. Credit: Boureima Hama/AFP via Getty Images

2.3 - Public Messaging on Pastoralism and Climate

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

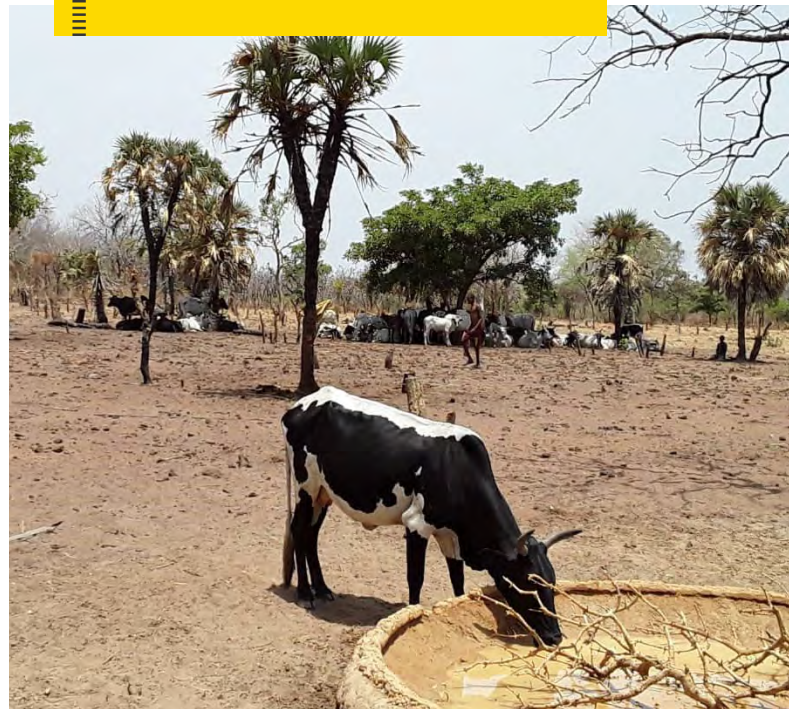
Description: Public officials and activists frequently point to pastoralism-related violence as a key example of the need for global action on climate change. Often, the argument is that conflicts between pastoralists and farmers are increasing due to the scarcity of resources caused by drought or the depletion of critical water resources, as is the case in the Lake Chad Basin. While climate has a real impact on livestock and crop production, framing conflict as an inevitable consequence of a global phenomenon both overly simplifies a complex issue and shifts focus away from local solutions. Global action on climate change is essential for the Sudano-Sahel, but it is not a precondition for preventing conflict. Public officials and media outlets have a critical role to play in framing the public conversation about pastoralism and climate and driving both long-term actions to mitigate the impact of climate change and short-term actions to prevent violent conflict.

What Makes Public Messaging on Pastoralism and Climate Succeed?

> **Public officials and analysts acknowledge socio-political causes of conflict alongside the environmental causes.** As noted throughout this Toolkit, pastoralism-related conflicts are not merely the result of scarce land or water or the displacement of pastoral communities caused by drought or flooding (as seen in Sudan during the 1984 drought). These are very real pressures, but only tell a fraction of the story. Public statements from officials should avoid portraying the environment as the primary culprit behind political instability and social flux, as it diverts responsibility from civic leaders who are responsible for mediating disputes over resource access, protecting against banditry, or ensuring that subsistence herders or farmers are not dispossessed by commercial development.

> **Public officials and analysts communicate both the ecological benefits and risks associated with pastoralism.** Pastoralism has long been dismissed by policymakers and scientists as inadequate to support populations and as environmentally destructive. Portrayals of pastoralism as destructive to biodiversity can reinforce stereotypes and further misunderstandings between pastoralists and conservationists. Yet romanticizing pastoralism for its 'light footprint' and efficient use of resources can mean less attention to its direct costs to the environment and wildlife. Public messaging should be balanced and reflect the evidence-based benefits of pastoralism to the environment, while acknowledging associated risks to be addressed in partnership with pastoralists.

The drying up of water resources is an urgent concern for pastoralists in the Sahelian drylands. Here cattle in Chad at a watering point. Credit: A. Hissien/I. Bourdjo, Project Transhumance at Crossroads



Questions to Consider

WHEN ADAPTING MODULE 2 TO YOUR CONTEXT

1. How is pastoralism integrated into national or regional strategies on climate change?

- Is the adaptation of the pastoral economy an explicit consideration in environmental policy?
- Is it supported with the necessary resources and political support?
- Do pastoralist households have access to the human and financial resources to adapt?

2. What are the potential secondary impacts of livelihood resilience programs?

- Will new livelihood practices create an increased demand for scarce resources (land, water, etc.)?
- Are there mechanisms to protect pastoral migration and access to water amidst agricultural expansion?
- To what extent do livelihood resilience programs provide unintended opportunities for women, youth, or pastoralists generally?

3. How does pastoral activity impact wildlife?

- Do nomadic pastoralists regularly move through natural reserves or areas where they might be a risk to wildlife populations? If so, is there evidence of the impact they have had on wildlife or the wider ecosystem?
- Do they have access to alternative options for grazing that are feasible and safe from criminal groups that might target their livestock?

4. What is the relationship between conservation stakeholders (e.g., park rangers, natural conservancies, civil society organizations) and pastoral communities?

- Do they have channels to communicate with one another?
- Do they see one another as adversaries?
- Do they have shared interests or goals?

Jump to:



[MODULE 1 - RURAL DEVELOPMENT - Cultivating equitable rural economic growth and reducing chronic causes of conflict.](#)



[MODULE 2 - ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION - Incorporating pastoralism-related conflict into conservation efforts.](#)



[MODULE 3 - GOVERNANCE AND RULE OF LAW - Encouraging public participation in the governance of pastoral rangelands.](#)



[MODULE 4 - REGIONAL INTEGRATION - Understanding the regional, cross-border aspects of pastoralist livelihoods and their relationship with conflict.](#)



[MODULE 5 - GENDER AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT - Strengthening the role of women in decision-making and understanding gender in pastoralism-related conflict.](#)



[MODULE 6 - CONFLICT MANAGEMENT - Promoting social cohesion and resolving conflict nonviolently.](#)



[MODULE 7 - LAW ENFORCEMENT AND COUNTERTERRORISM - Addressing the intersection of cross-border pastoralism, criminality, and insurgency.](#)



[MODULE 8 - DIGITAL PEACEBUILDING - Integrating new technologies into conflict prevention.](#)



[ADDITIONAL RESOURCES](#)



Members of the Forum on Farmer Herder Relations in Nigeria gather to discuss advocacy strategies. Credit: Search for Common Ground.

Module 3 **Governance and Rule of Law**

The Issue

Far from urban centers of decision-making, pastoralists and the rural populations with whom they share the landscape often have little voice in State government.

These populations face barriers to participation in public institutions, formulating their concerns in policy-ready language, and ensuring these interests are represented. However, pastoralists seeking to protect their freedoms from central authorities may not see policy measures as a solution, see the government as their ally, or see a lack of civic participation as a problem. Most pastoralists find their interests better served through long-standing peer networks or customary institutions, rather than the centralized governments found in many states of the Sudano-Sahel. Interventions that strengthen state institutions at the local or national level that are known to neglect pastoralist concerns risk inciting further polarization.

The tensions between pastoral communities and central authorities have a long historical legacy, beginning in colonial land management and continuing through post-independence. While land tenure policies and border controls in some states have been revised or superseded by legislation that protects pastoral livelihoods, this legacy of state hostility is not quickly forgotten. These suspicions are confirmed when states impose fees on border crossings, restrict pastoral movements, or privatize public lands. Circumventing state control by avoiding border checkpoints or rejecting cattle licensing systems are common practices. This non-compliance, in turn, feeds stereotypes of pastoralists as criminals.

Increasing the representation of pastoralist communities in state institutions can help assuage these tensions but is not always feasible. Malian pastoralists who migrate into Nigeria are directly affected by Nigerian policies but will not have the same opportunities to affect political decision-making as Nigerian citizens. In many regions, pastoral groups are an extreme demographic minority who face the same obstacles to inclusion as any minority group but compounded by their lifestyle that keeps them distant from political centers.

THIS MODULE COVERS HOW TO:

1. Create opportunities for pastoralists and other rural communities to participate in democratic governance;
2. Hold duty-bearers accountable for governing remote landscapes in a fair and inclusive manner.

Yet the problem of exclusion varies between contexts. In some sub-regions, pastoralist ethnic groups comprise large and influential political constituencies that dominate local politics, even if they are a minority at the national level. This is a [concern of farming communities](#) in central Mali, for example, who decry that they have been marginalized by pastoralist influence in policy circles. This favoritism is reportedly due to the political elites who own large herds that are serviced by paid pastoralists, a common phenomenon across the Sudano-Sahel.

INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

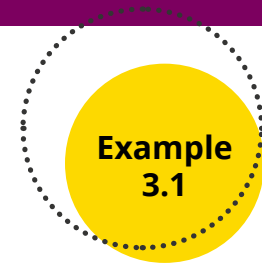
[3.1 - Collective Advocacy](#)

[3.2 - Raising Awareness of Rights and Policies](#)

[3.3 - Access to Justice](#)

[3.4 - Decentralization](#)

3.1 - Collective Advocacy



TYPE OF INTERVENTION: PROGRAMMATIC

Description: Operating in remote areas and at the margins of state authority, pastoralists are rarely in a position to advocate effectively or to challenge state policy through official channels. They often lack direct experience with legislative process and familiarity with participatory governance. Supporting the formation of representative bodies to help pastoralists defend their interests is a starting point. Trade associations for pastoralists are present already in most Sudano-Saharan countries. However, they, and other civil society networks, may lack the technical knowledge to pursue legislative reforms on complex issues such as land tenure or may serve primarily as a platform for traditional leaders rather than representing the diverse voices of all pastoralists in their network.

What Makes Programs to Strengthen Collective Advocacy Succeed?

- > **Interveners build capacity for both local and transnational advocacy.** Pastoralist livelihoods depend on supportive policies and institutions at the local, state, national, and transnational levels. Access to basic resources such as water can be mediated by local institutions, whereas land tenure laws are set at the state or national level. Cross-border mobility can be dependent on national legislation or multilateral agreements. Pastoral representation at only one of these levels is often insufficient, and more effective alliances organize nationally or regionally for optimal strategic leverage. Program planners should anticipate the need for capacity-building at multiple levels, support operational linkages between these different points, and ensure a regional perspective.
- > **Capacity-building programs for trade associations or civil society networks incorporate conflict literacy.** Conflict dynamics are not taken into consideration in the development of livelihood

CIVIL SOCIETY NETWORKS ENGAGE IN JOINT ADVOCACY

Across the Sudano-Sahel, trade associations and civil society networks work to bridge the gap between centralized policy decision-making and remote pastoral populations. Founded in Burkina Faso in 1998, *Le Réseau de Communication sur le Pastoralisme* (RECOPA) is one such network that serves both as a focal point for disseminating information on livestock management to the pastoralist member groups, and to advise local and national institutions on policies impacting pastoralists. In Nigeria, the Forum on Farmer-Herder Relations in Nigeria (FFARN) brings together academics, civil society, and representatives of pastoral and farming associations to share research and pursue joint advocacy. The FFARN has served as a platform for civil society voices to produce locally-led [analyses](#) of Nigerian state and federal policies, and to advise policy makers within Nigeria and internationally on the local dynamics of farmer-herder conflict.



Pastoralists and pastoralist ethnic groups often face both social and logistical barriers to making their voices heard. Here Fulani leaders in Nigeria sit during community advocacy meetings with Search for Common Ground. Credit: Search for Common Ground

interventions (see [Module 1 – Rural Development](#)). Trade associations that include pastoralists and farmers are a logical mediator to help determine how policy reforms or development programs will impact their constituencies and help anticipate conflict triggers. Yet these skills need to be developed, and interventions involving local trade associations can start with basic training on conflict sensitivity and political economy analysis.

> Programs support communication and joint action between farming and pastoral interest groups.

Programs to build advocacy capacity can have a greater impact on policy when they link divergent populations around common goals. Farmers and pastoralists often belong to distinct ethnic or religious groups, yet they share a common stake in the future of Africa’s dryland economy. Programs that facilitate consensus-building and joint action across these dividing lines can help frequently marginalized rural stakeholders have a louder voice in policy decision-making.

they prioritize constituency interests, and address internal accountability and transparency. Women and youth are often excluded and may require their own groups to defend their interests.

> Interveners overlook the role of certain interest groups as actors in conflict.

There are a wide array of different interest groups that are involved in livestock production, including associations formed to represent the interests of specific pastoralist ethnic groups. Some such interest groups may be directly or indirectly involved in conflict or maintain links to ethno-nationalist militia groups. Interveners should be careful to assess the risks of engaging with potential partners.

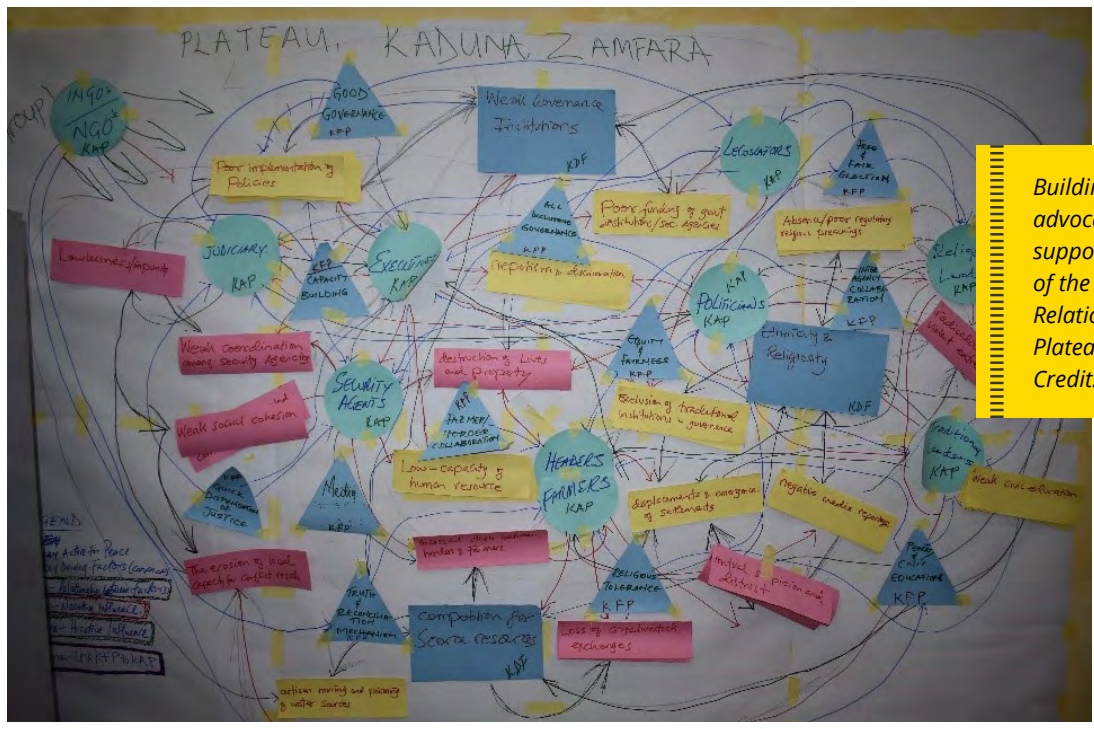
> External support raises unrealistic expectations.

When authorities show no concern for pastoral or farming interests, enthusiasm for advocacy and engagement with the state will wane. Effective channeling of pastoral voices requires pressure on policymakers to take civil society input seriously. Natural allies for this task include other interest groups with overlapping agendas, such as nature conservancies or other trade associations that benefit from livestock value chains.

What Makes Programs to Strengthen Collective Representation Fail?

> Support for one association or group reinforces exclusivity.

Pastoral communities are not homogenous and may not agree on policy concerns, strategy or tactics. Trade associations and other interest groups are often formed to represent a specific ethnic base or voice the opinions of traditional leaders. When working with such alliances, it is important to assess their claims to fair representation, how well



Building the conflict literacy of advocacy networks can be essential in supporting joint action. Here members of the Forum on Farmer-Herder Relations map the drivers of conflict in Plateau, Kaduna, and Zamfara states. Credit: Search for Common Ground

3.2 - Raising Awareness of Rights and Policies

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: PROGRAMMATIC

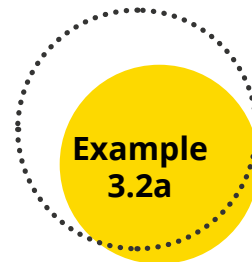
Description: Pastoralists, who have limited access to information and low levels of trust in central authorities, are often unfamiliar with the policies that govern their livelihoods. Local customs are generally far more important, as the State has limited capacity to enforce official policies in peripheral territory. However, low levels of familiarity with state policy can leave pastoralists vulnerable to being penalized for violations that they are unaware of, further exacerbating tensions. It also limits pastoralists' ability to hold duty-bearers accountable for upholding their established rights, such as the right to move livestock freely across borders, which is enshrined in regional agreements like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Transhumance Protocol. Awareness-raising initiatives tailored to pastoralist populations can help prevent real or perceived abuses by government authorities. Connecting pastoralist communities with mobile paralegal services is one way to bridge this gap.

What Makes Raising Awareness of Pastoralist Rights Succeed?

- > **Communications are tailored to reach pastoralist populations.** New legislation drafted in state capitals may never reach the remote populations subject to them. Pastoralists in Mali or Chad, for example, are often unaware of which specific tree species are protected until they are fined for cutting branches to make a temporary shelter. Publicizing policies through written materials are often less effective for pastoral audiences given high levels of illiteracy, but there are many ways in which information can be communicated to mobile audiences. This includes publicity on radio programs or by word-of-mouth via mobile veterinary clinics, pastoral associations, or outreach to local customary leadership.
- > **Capacity-building programs increase legal expertise within pastoralist communities.** Rights education or paralegal services can be most effective when provided by trusted intermediaries who understand the needs of pastoralist populations and

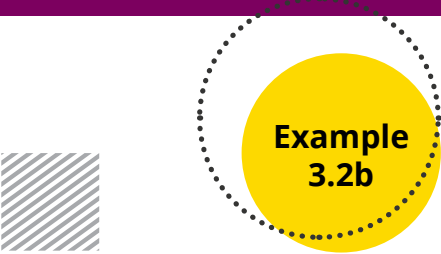
can become community mobilizers in their own right. Providing training or support to local organizations or individuals who come from pastoralist groups ensures that communities have sustained access to legal expertise.

- > **Legal aid programs help communities navigate the balance between state and customary law.** The existence of overlapping customary and statutory



PASTORALIST PARALEGALS IN KENYA RESIST PRIVATIZATION

Pastoralist communities in Kenya, as elsewhere, have depended on the ability of their community to hold land in common so that they can maintain large areas for grazing and mobility. This practice was given legal recognition through the 2016 Community Land Act, which allows groups to register their land as a collective, so that the land cannot be divided and sold off without the consent of the group. This practice has become common and, in some cases, pushes pastoralists to search for new grazing land, creating competition and conflict with neighboring communities. To help communities assert their claims to communal land ownership, organizations like Namati, Samburu Women's Trust, Indigenous Movement for Peace Advancement and Conflict Transformation, Kenya Land Alliance, and Il'laramatak Community Concerns have trained members of pastoralist communities as paralegals. Pastoralist paralegals in communities like [Lengurma](#) and [Kuku](#) not only guided their community through the process of registration, they also helped organize demonstrations and advocacy to local officials that helped safeguard their rights and prevent the private sale of land, which drove some to move beyond the boundaries of the reserves.



Example 3.2b

PASTORALISTS AND OFFICIALS ALONG THE CHAD-CAR BORDER BUILD A SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF REGULATIONS

Along the border between the CAR and Chad, low levels of trust between pastoralists and border agents has undermined effective border management. Pastoralists, concerned that they will be detained or fined for taking their cattle across the border as they have done for years, avoid official checkpoints. Border agents, in turn, are frustrated over their inability to monitor who is coming and going in a region that has been heavily impacted by criminal activity and NSAGs. In an effort to establish a baseline of trust, in 2019 the International Organization for Migration (IOM) developed a guide to help pastoralists understand their legal rights, so they could feel confident that they could move through border checkpoints without being unfairly exploited. The guide has been used as a tool to educate both pastoralist civil society networks and law enforcement officials on the existing frameworks.

laws can create tensions by allowing parties in a dispute to invoke competing rules and authority. What happens when one group wishes to assert its legal ownership over land that has been registered with the state, but another group asserts that they have been traditionally allowed to access water on that land? When the state has limited capacity to enforce decisions, this kind of disagreement can escalate into something much bigger. Rather than privileging one system over the other, mobile paralegal experts can help communities make sense of the application of state and customary laws for themselves.

> **Programs train officials to respect the appropriate rights and policies.** Pastoralists are not the only ones who follow rules other than those prescribed by central authorities. Local officials have also been known to defer to customary institutions or demand bribes to allow livestock to pass. Many pastoral codes or land tenure laws are ambiguous about how they are meant

to be applied in practice, which makes it challenging to hold officials accountable to consistent practices. In West Africa, for example, the ECOWAS Transhumance Protocol requires pastoralists to obtain a certificate to exercise their right to cross-border movement, but some border regions simply don't have government staff who are trained in how to issue or update these certificates and so don't follow this practice. Efforts to familiarize local populations with existing regulations should ensure that authorities and citizens receive the same information. Such programming can be linked to anti-corruption campaigns.

What Makes Raising Awareness of Pastoralist Rights Fail?

- > **Programs raise expectations that cannot be met by governing bodies or development agencies.** Even with access to expert legal advice, pastoralists will still face obstacles to protecting their rights given the widespread gaps in rule of law in remote rural areas. Holding duty-bearers accountable or working through the legal system may not be a feasible solution for communities that are under the effective control of insurgent groups, or where state officials are corrupt or under-resourced. Initiatives that promote awareness of legal rights can raise and frustrate expectations, further widening the trust deficit between citizens and state authorities or other development actors.
- > **Existing policies do not support pastoral livelihoods and may serve as a focusing event for conflict.** Expanding awareness of statutory law may have a mixed impact on local conflict dynamics when the laws themselves have been a source of conflict. Settled rural communities may benefit more from legal support than pastoralists, because it may help them assert claims to land ownership while pastoralists' secondary rights are not protected by law. Expanding rule of law may be disadvantageous, in some ways, to pastoral communities who need a flexible system where they negotiate access with different local leaders. Interveners should be careful to assess and adapt to the potential secondary effects of these initiatives, particularly where the benefits of legal services differ between mobile and sedentary communities.

3.3 - Access to Justice

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: PROGRAMMATIC

Description: While pastoralists and farmers have long maintained customary or informal practices for mediating disputes, these practices are not always appropriate or adequate for providing justice in pastoralism-related conflicts. In South Sudan, for example, some have argued that traditional compensation mechanisms for acts of theft or homicide have broken down as elites have accumulated such large herds that the usual cattle payments no longer have the same impact.⁸ Customary justice systems may also be ill-suited to assist traditionally marginalized populations, as is the case for victims of sexual and gender-based violence (see [Module 5 – Gender and Women’s Empowerment](#)). Yet without trusted third parties to address complaints over crop damage, livestock theft, or assault, pastoralists and farmers increasingly seek restitution through violence.

Access to formal justice mechanisms is often limited in the rural and remote areas where pastoralists live and operate. State justice institutions may not be present, their procedures may be unfamiliar, and they may have limited capacity to enforce their decisions. Where the State does exercise control, pastoralism-related crimes may be referred to a wide range of authorities (security forces, municipal government, customary courts) that don’t work in concert and don’t follow the same procedures. In the short term, external interventions can help address these gaps through mobile courts or programs to build consensus among the various local authorities.

What Makes Access to Justice Initiatives Succeed?

> **Programs invest in local justice mechanisms before violence escalates.** Even rural communities in stable regions often lack systems for adjudicating

and enforcing disputes between pastoralist and host communities. Displacement from conflict or severe weather events can push pastoralists into new regions where no accepted agreements or traditions exist to resolve resource disputes, as demonstrated through the influx of Mbororo pastoralist communities in the northern DRC. Building strong justice and mediation systems should be a priority before unresolved local disputes escalate into mass violence.

> **Programs link justice systems across borders where feasible.** Pastoral cross border movement complicates conflict mediation. Stolen Nigerian cattle taken to Mali or Nigeria cannot be returned without coordination between a number of security agencies and community leaders, who themselves lack formal cooperation protocols and procedures (see [Module 7 – Law Enforcement and Counterterrorism](#)). External actors can play a valuable role in facilitating these linkages, although such activity requires programs that have the legal or budgetary flexibility to work across borders.



⁸N. Pendle, “The dead are just to drink from’: recycling ideas of revenge among the western Dinka, South Sudan,” *Africa* 88, 1 (2018): 99-121.

> **Intervention strategies balance the need for both short-term support and long-term capacity building.** State-run justice and rule of law has been chronically limited across the insecure and remote areas where pastoralists often operate. Building effective justice institutions in these areas may be a long-term goal that is hindered by limited resources or instability. In the interim, external interveners can support stop-gap solutions that expand legal services to these communities. This can include, for example, the use of mobile courts or paralegal services.

> **Local authorities are intimidated or threatened.** Interventions that aim to build the capacity of local authorities may make them targets for armed groups that want to maintain a monopoly on the right to administer justice. Similarly, when court systems are perceived to challenge or undermine established customary practices (e.g., [fighting hereditary slavery in Mali](#)), members of the local populace have been known to intimidate prosecutors and threaten legal personnel. Expanding the role of the formal justice system in resolving pastoralism-related crimes or disputes may be seen as a threat by some customary leaders who have traditionally exercised authority in these matters.

What Makes Access to Justice Initiatives Fail?

> **“Forum shopping” undermines effective justice. Who has jurisdiction to resolve pastoralism-related crimes or disputes?** While the exact authorities vary from one community to the next, there are often multiple potential channels available to the parties in a dispute. Individuals may have the option to take their claim to the municipal government, security forces, an ardo, a village chief, a NSAG, or others. Each of these authorities may have their own set of rules to establish compensation for victims, which can encourage each party to “shop” around for the option that best suits their needs. This practice creates opportunities for local authorities to exploit the system for their own gain and allows each group a different legal basis for their grievances. In CAR, for example, though a standardized metric for compensation payments is supposed to be set by the Ministry of Livestock, in practice the existence of competing authorities leads to confusion and opens the door for racketeering and influence-peddling. Where parallel justice systems exist, the priority should be to harmonize and reduce distortion, rather than elevating one system over another.

Having the certainty that his case will be settled within the standards, by impartial judicial authorities, calms the complainants and promotes better cohabitation.



⁹A title held by traditional leaders among some pastoralist communities.

¹⁰Participant in a focus group discussion with pastoralist organizations in Bambari, Central African Republic, April 2020.

3.4 - Decentralization

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: POLICY

Description: Decentralization has been a public sector reform strategy employed by some Sudano-Sahelian states to increase autonomy for local communities who have been frustrated by years of systematic exclusion from political authority. Devolving administrative authority over natural resources from federal to local government ideally creates more accountability to local interests. Vesting control over migration corridors or grazing reserves to local village councils, though, does not automatically result in more inclusive governance of these resources. Interventions that support decentralization should be designed to help reconcile competing rules and customs in resource governance and set into motion participatory governance practices that are accessible to mobile populations.

What Makes Decentralization of Resource Governance Succeed?

> **Policy reforms protect established customs for accessing resources.** Pastoralists often depend upon tradition or customary laws to guarantee their right to access certain pasture, migration corridors, or water access points. These are practices that are not codified or validated legally, and decentralization may jeopardize their access when local authorities exercise more direct control over public resources. Interventions to support the decentralization of resource governance can assist local authorities and community leaders in identifying and reconciling points of tension between state law and local customary practices. Interveners should consider how pastoralist groups may be disenfranchised through decentralization. For example, devolving authority to an elected body may disadvantage non-resident pastoralists who are not a part of the electorate. Similarly, delegating authority to customary leaders may further exclude minority groups (who could be pastoralists, farmers, or others) whose customs differ from the established leadership.

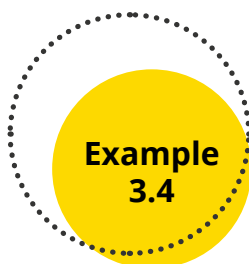
> **Interveners provide technical training in participatory land management practices, where needed.** Rangeland management is a complex and resource-intensive responsibility that may exceed the technical capacity of local government, even in stable contexts. Administering the shared use of territory requires infrastructure, advance planning and sufficient resources to ensure grazing reserves, water access points, migration corridors, and technical expertise in land use planning (see [Module 1 – Rural Development](#)). Without sufficient resources or capacity to support their work, local pastoralists and farmers will see no dividends from decentralization. External interventions can support this process by providing technical training to governing authorities and civil society on how to balance the interests of pastoralists and local farmers.

What Makes Decentralization of Resource Governance Fail?

> **Strengthening local governments leads to competition with traditional leadership.** The existence of dual or parallel administrative systems, where state and customary authorities preside over resource management, complicates decentralization. The ability of local governments to exercise control over natural resources may be undermined by local customary leaders who are reluctant to support reforms that threaten their authority. Where tribal leaders and state agriculture agencies find themselves leading parallel negotiations over cattle migration routes, which authority holds?

> **Devolving political authority to local levels provides an opportunity for better-organized interest groups to consolidate control.** This can disadvantage pastoralist minority groups, who may be pushed off land as dominant sedentary groups leverage their control over political and governing

institutions. In other cases, pastoralist ethnic groups who are politically powerful at the local level will be the ones to benefit. External support to decentralization reforms can encourage local power-sharing agreements among the local resident groups - including pastoralist populations who reside in the area between seasonal migrations - but these arrangements may not benefit pastoralists who travel through the territory but are not long-term residents.



MALI DEVOLVES CONTROL OVER LAND TO LOCAL INSTITUTIONS

Mali's long history of centralized government from the colonial era forward was reversed in 1992 with a new constitution announcing major administrative reforms that decentralized oversight and management of public services, including lands. The aim was to accelerate the pace of rural development by granting sub-national authorities greater autonomy over local resources, infrastructure, jobs and growth, all while strengthening national unity. While promising greater local control over budget, planning, policy and service delivery, the move from theory to practice took years of parliamentary deliberation to draft, approve and transfer legal responsibilities to newly created local communes. These reforms, however, largely failed to accommodate customary laws regarding land ownership and access, resulting in competition between proponents of state rule and traditional authority.

Questions to Consider

WHEN ADAPTING MODULE 3 TO YOUR CONTEXT

1. Who represents pastoralists?

- Who are the trade associations, civil society networks, or individual leaders that represent pastoral interests? What are the differences between them?
- Are they considered to be inclusive of the interests of all pastoralists, or do they only represent the interest of certain groups or traditional leaders?
- Are there specific pastoralist groups that exercise greater political influence than others?

2. Are the voices of nomadic pastoralists heard?

- What are the opportunities for pastoralists to input into policy decision-making at a state or national level?
- Are these opportunities accessible to those who are not permanent settled residents?
- What is the level of involvement, if any, of pastoralists and pastoralist interest groups in national politics? In local or state politics?

3. Are the voices of settled rural communities heard?

- Are rural farmers or other settled populations able to participate in the governance of their own land and resources?
- Do they exercise more or less political influence than pastoralist groups?

4. What is the perception of civic engagement?

- If given the opportunity, do pastoralist populations see a value in participating in governing institutions or resolving their grievances through democratic systems?

5. Who exercises authority in resource governance?

- Do public land and water resources fall under the jurisdiction of federal, state, or local authorities?
- Do customary leaders play any role in resource governance? What is the position of minorities who do not share the primary traditions or customs of the region?

6. Are policies clear and accessible?

- a. Are the state policies on land tenure, resource management, and pastoral mobility clearly established in law, or is there ambiguity in how they are applied? Is the role of different entities clear?
- b. Are these policies widely known among pastoral communities and available in local languages?
- c. To what extent are there differences between policy and practice?

7. Do state policies and customary norms conflict?

- a. What are the points of tension between state laws governing land tenure, resource management, and pastoral mobility and customary practices?
- b. Is there a system for identifying and resolving those discrepancies?

Jump to:



MODULE 1 - RURAL DEVELOPMENT
– [Cultivating equitable rural economic growth and reducing chronic causes of conflict.](#)



MODULE 2 - ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION – [Incorporating pastoralism-related conflict into conservation efforts.](#)



MODULE 3 - GOVERNANCE AND RULE OF LAW – [Encouraging public participation in the governance of pastoral rangelands.](#)



MODULE 4 - REGIONAL INTEGRATION – [Understanding the regional, cross-border aspects of pastoralist livelihoods and their relationship with conflict.](#)



MODULE 5 - GENDER AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT – [Strengthening the role of women in decision-making and understanding gender in pastoralism-related conflict.](#)



MODULE 6 - CONFLICT MANAGEMENT – [Promoting social cohesion and resolving conflict nonviolently.](#)



MODULE 7 - LAW ENFORCEMENT AND COUNTERTERRORISM – [Addressing the intersection of cross-border pastoralism, criminality, and insurgency.](#)



MODULE 8 - DIGITAL PEACEBUILDING – [Integrating new technologies into conflict prevention.](#)



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



Cattle at local market in the Sahel.
Credit: Shidiki Abubakar Ali

Module 4

Regional Integration



THIS MODULE COVERS HOW TO:

1. Facilitate peaceful cross-border movement of livestock and regional trade.

Livestock trade links communities across borders. Pastoralists travel from Sudan, Chad, Cameroon, and elsewhere to sell their cattle at markets in Central African Republic. Shown here livestock at a market in CAR. Credit: Paul Ronan.

The Issue

Pastoral migration routes traverse national borders and administrative divisions, building regional networks for rural food production and trade. The basic reason for practicing pastoralism is that grazing resources in the Sudano-Sahel vary significantly throughout the year. The distances between available resources at different times in the year means that transhumance is necessarily cross-border, a fully regional subsistence practice. Numerous regional agreements exist to promote increased economic integration, but each requires application by national government and provincial administrations.

The movement of livestock from grazing lands to urban markets creates value chains that connect producers, herders, buyers and sellers along the way, across borders and between states. Pastoralists benefit by accompanying their livestock directly to regional markets, eliminating transport costs and heavy logistics. Along the way, small-scale trade with local farmers and their communities adds to the regional value chain. Such exchanges may involve the sale of crops or animal products, livestock feeding on crop residuals, or the fertilizing of local crops with manure. Heavy livestock losses due to disease, theft or violence can mean disrupted meat supplies to major capitals, or trade delays in neighboring countries.

The flow of people and livestock across porous borders, however, also has implications for regional security. Border regions across the Sudano-Sahel have become focal points for criminal and insurgent activity. The productive connections made by livestock are disrupted by border closures or other measures aimed at countering transnational armed conflict, terrorism and smuggling networks. While some pastoralists have been implicated in cross-border crime, closing borders to transhumance has a wide-ranging impact, including on local farmers or traders whose prosperity depends indirectly on the circulation of livestock. The economic consequences of border closures are as devastating as terrorism or COVID-19, [according to some researchers](#).

INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

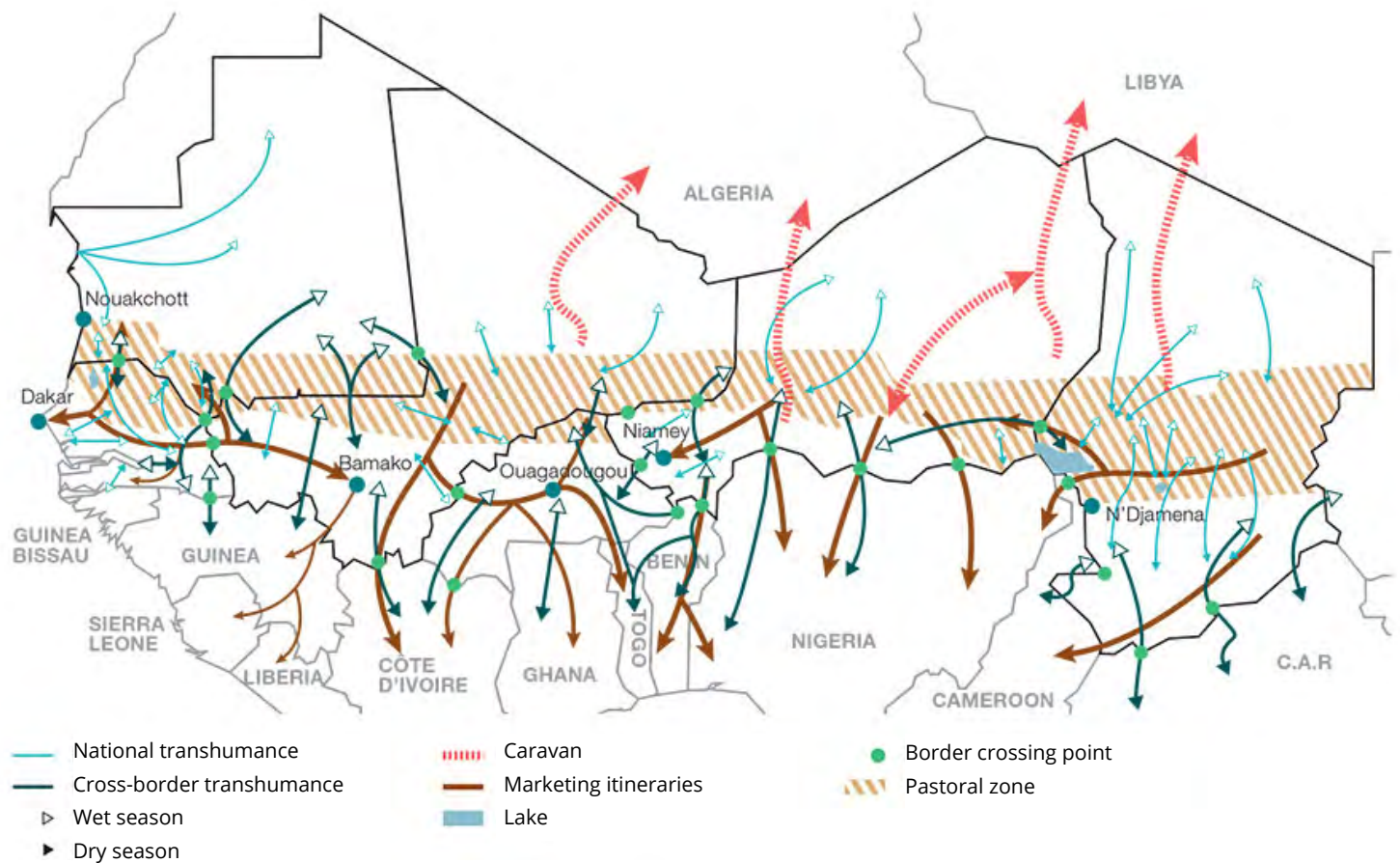
[4.1 - Transhumance Agreements](#)

[4.2 - Negotiation of Cross-Border Migration](#)

[4.3 - Regional Security Coordination](#)

[4.4 - Research on Regional Value Chains](#)

TRANSHUMANCE AND NOMADISM



Sources: FAO-CIRAD, Atlas of trends in pastoral systems in the Sahel 2012; OECD/SWAC 2009

Extract: OECD (2014), An Atlas of the Sahara-Sahel: Geography, Economics and Security, OECD Publishing, Paris.

© 2014. Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat (SWAC/OECD)

Transhumance routes frequently cut across national borders, as illustrated in the map below. Clear policies for governing the flow of pastoralists and their livestock are essential.

4.1 - Transhumance Agreements

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: PROGRAMMATIC/POLICY

Description: The long-term viability of cross-border pastoralism as a production system depends on the application of a consistent framework across the wider region. One country's decision to restrict mobility can impact the economic welfare of its neighbors. For this reason, various regional bodies have proposed and developed multilateral agreements to support and regulate transhumance. These frameworks aim to smooth border crossings by replacing ad hoc regulations with consistent policies that are easily followed and implemented at all border posts among participating member states. However, in practice, these frameworks frequently fall short of effective implementation.

What Makes Transhumance Agreements Succeed?

- > **Programs facilitate the local and national application of agreements designed at the regional level.** Transhumance frameworks can provide a common set of guidelines and shared assumptions between member states, but still need to be put into practice through legislation and funding. The ECOWAS Transhumance Protocol and Regulation, for example, requires each Member State to define measures such as when and where livestock are allowed to travel and how many livestock are allowed in a region at a given time. Provisions need to be made for taxation, access to any vaccinations that are required when crossing borders, and registration and identification of animals. These regulations then must be enforced by local authorities who will need to have the capacity to monitor the flow of thousands, if not millions, of animals. This should be a process driven by the State but can be supported by external interventions that provide technical training for officials on how to encourage compliance among pastoralist populations, identify stolen cattle being trafficked across borders, or address other gaps in capacity.
- > **Rules and regulations are tailored to pastoral populations.** Transhumance frameworks usually require that pastoralists voluntarily comply with some level of official regulations, such as passing through approved checkpoints, maintaining identification, or verifying livestock health. When these requirements are onerous or inaccessible, pastoralists may simply double down on existing habits and avoid state authorities. Any new requirements need to be accessible and manageable for pastoral populations. If, for example, pastoralists are required to present national ID for customs clearance, border authorities should anticipate simplified procedures to obtain required documentation that are accessible to transient or illiterate populations.
- > **Programs communicate the benefits of adherence to pastoralist populations.** Regulations that are not seen as an advantage to both pastoralists and local authorities will not be respected, no matter how diligent their dissemination, education, and application. Regional agreements that guarantee the free movement of livestock, when well socialized among local populations, provide pastoralists with legal protections so that their livelihoods are less subject to arbitrary border closures or extortion from local officials. Registration of livestock and strong relationships between customs and local herders can also enable law enforcement to more effectively respond to livestock theft (see [Module 7 – Law Enforcement and Counterterrorism](#)). The value of participation needs to be clearly communicated, whether through trade associations or other mobile service delivery programs (see [Module 1 – Rural Development](#)).

Example 4.1

ECOWAS GUARANTEES FREE MOVEMENT OF LIVESTOCK

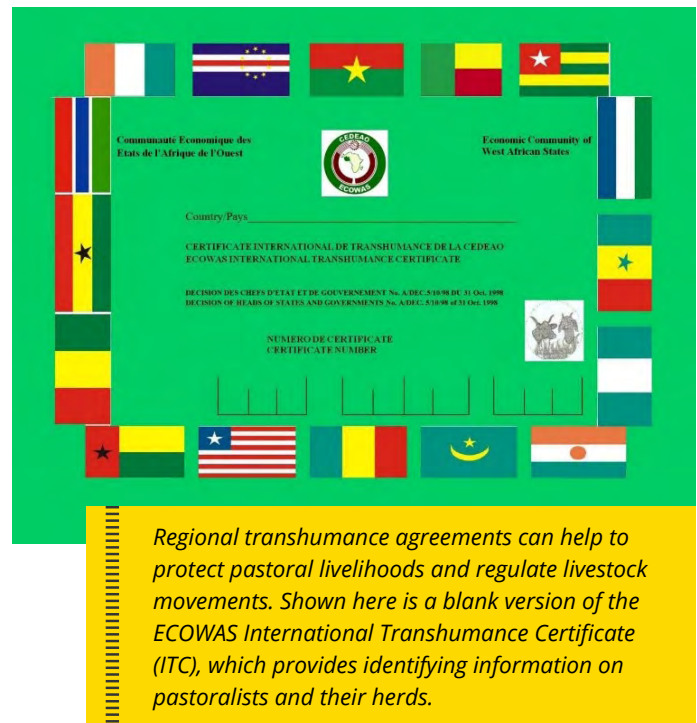
In 1998, ECOWAS was the first regional organization in Africa to adopt legislation governing the passage of livestock between member states. This Transhumance Protocol guaranteed the right to free passage of all animals (cattle, goats, camels, horses) across the borders of Member States. This right, however, was conditioned on adherence to a new regulatory framework - pastoralists were required to obtain an International Transhumance Certificate (ITC)*, enter and exit only through approved border checkpoints, and adhere to the restrictions on the timing and location of migration implemented by each Member State. The implementation of the Protocol has [varied between Member States](#), as some have integrated its provisions into national policies (e.g., Niger) while others have not (e.g., Nigeria). Pastoralists and border agents alike are often unfamiliar with provisions of the Protocol. Even those who are willing to participate may face obstacles to obtaining an ITC, as many border regions do not have veterinary services or border outposts that are set up to issue or update the ITC.

*The ITC is a kind of passport that outlines the composition of a given herd, their itinerary, whether they've been vaccinated, and other details.

What Makes Transhumance Agreements Fail?

> **Pastoralists are disincentivized from using official checkpoints.** Transhumance agreements generally require that pastoralists abide by officially demarcated routes and border crossings. Even when border crossings are clearly marked and known, pastoralists may be disincentivized from using these crossings for a variety of reasons. Border checkpoints may be few and far between and require that pastoralists go far out of their way to cross. Checkpoints may be ideal targets for criminal syndicates looking to target herds. State officials may impose additional fees for crossing, even if free passage is guaranteed under the regional agreements. These concerns can be mitigated if regional agreements are designed and implemented with consistent input from pastoralist populations.

> **Officials lack the capacity to monitor adherence.** Regulating the flow of livestock requires dedicated human resources in border regions that are often remote. There need to be accessible veterinary services to certify animal health, enough staff at border checkpoints to inspect passing herds, and strong enough border controls to prevent unregulated crossing. Maintaining the staff and infrastructure



needed for this work can be challenging, particularly in regions where NSAGs exercise de facto control and borders are porous.

> **Regional agreements are contradicted by national legislation or local custom.** As noted throughout this Toolkit, pastoral activities are often governed by

competing authorities. The rules set out through a regional or bilateral agreement may be superseded by national or local policies or even by influential traditional leaders. Togo and Benin, for example, [limit the number of animals that may enter each year and have established fees for entry](#), despite the fact that both countries are party to the ECOWAS Transhumance Protocol that stipulates that cross-border mobility is to be free. Similarly, local leaders across the ECOWAS region have been known to impose their own fees for passage.

> **Regional agreements do not address movement of livestock between economic zones.** To date, most transhumance agreements are either bilateral or limited to the Member States in a given economic zone (ECOWAS, IGAD, CEMAC). However, livestock migration patterns are not necessarily self-contained within each economic zone. Livestock move regularly between economic zones around the Lake Chad Basin or between Sudan and Central African Republic. There will continue to be a need for consensus-building and a shared set of rules and practices governing cross-border pastoralism that extends across the jurisdictions of these regional bodies.



Borderlands are key areas for livestock-related commerce. Cattle are frequently bought and sold at markets along national borders. Shown here a group of Fulani pastoralist men exchange money after cattle transactions at Illiea Cattle Market, Sokoto State, Nigeria. Illiea is the last Nigerian town before Niger's border and the cattle market is one of the largest of West Africa receiving pastoralists from several countries in the region. Credit: Luis Tato/AFP via Getty Images

CROSS-BORDER TRANSHUMANCE AGREEMENTS

The social and economic value of pastoralism as a regional linkage is enshrined in numerous multilateral agreements, declarations, and policy frameworks.

- > The [ECOWAS Transhumance Protocol](#) (1998) and the [Regulation](#) (2003) on its implementation, has been a guiding model for the regulation of transhumance in the region. The Protocol and the Regulation guarantee the free movement of livestock between Member states and outline regulatory practices governing travel itineraries, registration of herds, animal health requirements, and the resolution of conflicts.
- > The [Intergovernmental Authority on Development](#) (IGAD) Protocol on Transhumance (2020) similarly enshrines the free movement of livestock within the IGAD region and calls upon Member States to set in place provisions to regulate herd movement and support and protect pastoral livelihoods.
- > The [African Union Policy Framework for Pastoralism in Africa](#) (2010) is the first continent-wide agreement to call for protecting the rights and livelihoods of pastoralists and emphasizes that transnational character of pastoralist systems requires harmonized, regional approaches.
- > The [Declaration of N'Djaména](#) (2013), produced as the outcome of a convening of Sahelian states, issued a call for improved international cooperation in support of cross-border transhumance. This was followed up by the [Declaration of Nouakchott](#) (2013), a commitment by six Sahelian states (Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Senegal, Chad) to increase pastoral production, including strengthening regional cooperation and cross-border transhumance.
- > Various bilateral agreements also set out provisions for cross-border transhumance between states. Mali has negotiated such agreements with four of its neighboring countries, and in 2003 the governments of Niger and Burkina Faso signed a memorandum of understanding that implements the provisions of the ECOWAS Protocol. In Sudan, the protection of livestock corridors and cross-border mobility is specifically referenced in the Darfur Peace Agreement (2006) and the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2005).

4.2 - Negotiation of Cross-Border Migration

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: PROGRAMMATIC

Description: Pastoralists' migration routes have long taken them across political borders, but these movements have become delicate affairs as states increasingly regulate migration for security or political reasons. Movement across contested borders can be a trigger in wider inter-state conflict, particularly when cattle are escorted by armed guards. Community leaders have played an essential role in ensuring that regular cross-border migrations can happen peacefully by negotiating agreements or open channels of communication between migrant and host groups. Tensions over the Sudan-South Sudan border provide a perfect example. Arab pastoralists from Western Kordofan, the Misseriya, have historically grazed their cattle in Bahr al Ghazal, a border state in South Sudan. Hostilities and bloodshed with resident Ngok Dinka forced the border to be closed until 2014, [when both parties met](#) to find agreement on transit routes and compensation for violence. External interventions can play a role in facilitating peaceful cross-border migration by creating space for communities to meet and negotiate.

Example 4.2a

BORDER COMMUNITIES ORGANIZE PRE-MIGRATION CONFERENCES IN SOUTH SUDAN

The 2011 establishment of an international border between Sudan and South Sudan raised new challenges for the pastoralist and sedentary communities who had long been neighbors but had become polarized during the civil war. The border cut across traditional cattle migration routes, creating a new legal and political barrier for northern pastoralists and cutting off southern communities from their usual sources of meat and milk. In response, traditional leaders formed Joint Border Committees that could adjudicate issues relating to seasonal migration (cattle theft, crop damage, killing). In addition to the work of these Committees, a series of pre- and post-migration conferences were organized in various states along the border. These conferences provided an opportunity for community leaders from local tribes, government officials, the Joint Border Committees, and women and youth associations to discuss the logistics of the seasonal migration (timing, routes, grazing areas) and address lingering grievances or concerns.



Transhumance movement has long been a practice in the Sudan-South Sudan border regions. Here cattle walk along a dirt road in contested Abyei region. Credit: Ashraf Shazly/AFP via Getty Images.

What Makes Migration Agreements Succeed?

> **Agreements clarify explicitly how conflicts will be addressed.** While some communities have developed compensation protocols for livestock, crop damage, and agreed migration corridors, these systems are rarely codified and interpretations may differ between pastoralists and local populations. In the absence of universally agreed-upon rules, parties in a conflict may engage in “forum shopping,” seeking favor from one or another of the various authorities who may have jurisdiction. Cross-border migration policies and authorities can thus benefit from clear, practical guidance on settling disputes and averting escalation. This may include adjudication by traditional leadership or local peace committees.

> **Programs allow agreements to be revisited and reaffirmed annually.** Pastoral migration is not mechanical. The timing and direction of travel changes with climate fluctuations, market dates and prices, or other factors. Effective agreements are living and flexible, as they reflect a dynamic relationship between nomadic and host communities.

> **External interveners encourage proactive, clear communication.** The physical distance between pastoralists and farming communities can spark suspicion and fear. Ensuring open lines of communication between respective camps can bring predictability to cross-border movements and provide insights into the motives of all parties. A pastoralist leader may alert a distant village chief of approaching cattle using a foot messenger, text, or radio. Some pastoralist groups in South Sudan, for example, will send messengers several days in advance to assess available pasture lands and plan a route that minimizes confrontation with host communities.

What Makes Migration Agreements Fail?

> **Interventions that are resource-intensive cannot be easily replicated.** Large-scale dialogues or workshops may prove critical in times of crisis - a border misunderstanding or following reprisal violence - but may not be exercises that local leaders maintain as a permanent practice given the cost and

logistical demands. Convening pastoralist leadership can be particularly cost-intensive, given the need for travel to remote or inaccessible areas. Discussions of cross-border migration should be a long-term practice that is “right-sized” to match local capacity. When large-scale dialogues are organized, participants can use the occasion to agree on future communication modalities that are flexible and adapted to weak infrastructure.

> **The stakeholders involved are not in alignment.** Negotiating cross-border movement is both a domestic and transnational issue. Community leaders in border regions have a direct interest in who crosses at which border post, and how disputes with migrating groups will be addressed. National governments and the armed forces have a shared stake in tracking livestock movements not only from a national security perspective, but also for the purposes of obtaining revenue through taxes. Agreements will break down if state officials and local communities are not adhering to the same set of rules and expectations.



Establishing clear lines of communication is a key component for ensuring that cross-border migrations do not become a flashpoint for conflict. Shown here a man from the Mundari tribe (a traditionally pastoralist group) talks on his cell phone in Terekeka, South Sudan. Credit: Eric Lafforgue/Art in All of Us/Corbis via Getty Images.

4.3 - Regional Security Coordination

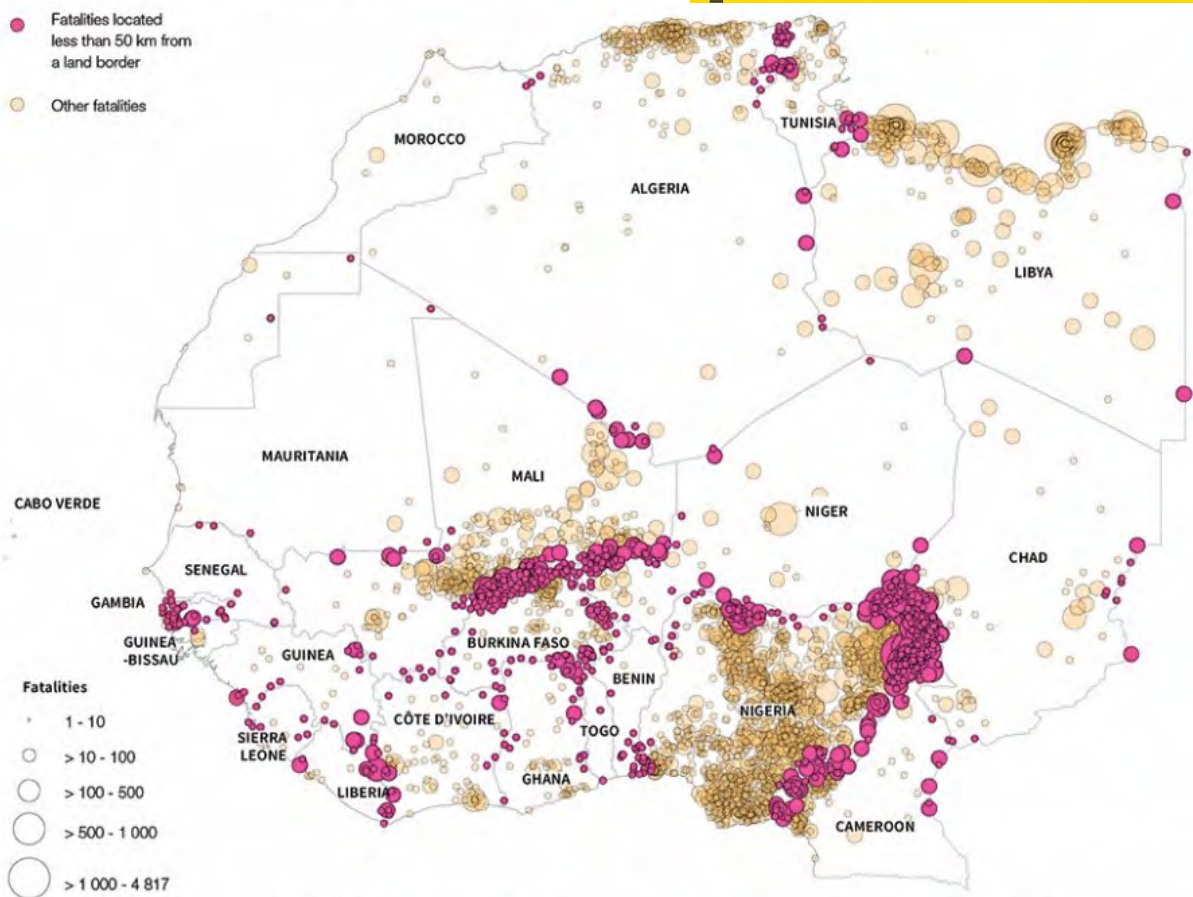
TYPE OF INTERVENTION: PROGRAMMATIC

Description: Many of the borderland regions that have long been pathways for pastoral livestock have become a key nexus for transnational crime and insurgency.¹¹ Regional counterterrorism frameworks, such as the G-5 Sahel, multi-state administrative entities, such as the [Liptako Gourma Authority](#), have responded to the need for a coordinated approach to security. Yet such

coordination is often limited to armed forces and state governments, when it could be extended to civilian actors who support regional security. Facilitating the safe and legal movement of livestock requires a regional security architecture that engages the community leaders who have long played a leading role in negotiating livestock migrations, mediating conflicts, and protecting livestock against theft (see [Module 7 – Law Enforcement and Counterterrorism](#)).

DANGEROUS BORDER AREAS

Victims of political violence by border distance, 2009-19



Border regions across the Sudano-Sahel have been major hotspots of violence, as shown here in the case of the Liptako-Gourma and Lake Chad regions, both of which are critical zones for pastoralism.

Extract : Walther, O. (2019), "Frontières, sécurité et développement en Afrique de l'Ouest", West African Papers, No. 26, OECD Publishing, Paris.

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Source: ACLED (2019).

¹¹E.g., the Liptako Gourma region, the Lake Chad Basin, the Sudan/South Sudan border, the border regions of CAR-DRC-South Sudan or CAR-Chad-Sudan.



Example 4.3

CONFLICT MONITORING SYSTEMS INFORM REGIONAL ACTIONS OF PASTORALISM

Pastoralism-related conflicts have been a key focus for the conflict monitoring systems embedded within regional multilateral institutions in West and East Africa. ECOWAS' Early Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN) and IGAD's Conflict Early Warning and Response Network (CEWARN) were both established to provide analysis for Member States on security concerns that fall outside of the jurisdiction of any one state. Monitoring cross-border pastoralism-related events was the primary mandate for CEWARN during its first decade (2003-2012). Both systems rely on a network of local monitoring units who report identified risks of conflict back to a central hub, where that data is used to inform relevant authorities in Member States. The success and effectiveness of these mechanisms depends substantially on the capacity and interest of these local units. Since many of the remote borderlands that are monitored by these systems are beyond the reach of the central authorities of the Member States, local units and partnering civil society organizations are critical to implementing effective responses.

What Makes Regional Security Cooperation Succeed?

- > **Programs facilitate direct coordination between border communities.** Conflicts involving cross-border pastoralism may be highly local but carry regional consequences. Coordination is critical among national governments and security forces, but local stakeholders within border communities require similar agreements and lines of communication. Border closures due to terrorism or pandemics increase the urgency of such channels. Interventions can link traditional leaders, pastoralist or farming associations, or peace communities on both sides of a border to share data on conflict trends, resolve low-level conflicts, and coordinate with security forces in their respective localities.
- > **Programs support data analysis and collection at the local level.** Compiling accurate information on violence in the remote rangelands and borderlands where pastoralists are active is essential to making informed decisions about regional or national security. However, these regions may not be accessible to state officials. Effective data collection often depends on local civil society leaders, who are best positioned to monitor the events and risks in their own community. Channels for capturing this information and feeding it

up to national decision-makers have been established both among ECOWAS (through the [ECOWARN](#) system) and IGAD (through the [CEWARN](#) system) Member States. In both cases, though, effective data collection depends on a strong network of civil society monitors, and external interveners can play a crucial role in building the capacity of these data collectors at a local level.

- > **Security forces coordinate with civilian humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts.** There are a wide array of security forces and civil society actors who have a stake in monitoring or safeguarding cross-border transhumance, such as border patrols, militaries, UN peacekeeping missions, traditional leaders, and trade associations. Despite the shared interest in maintaining a safe environment where regional commerce can thrive, these actors can end up working at cross-purposes. Shutting down cross-border movement for security purposes, as in the case of the CAR-Chad border, can encourage pastoralists to adopt new routes to cross the border outside official checkpoints and bring them into conflict with farmers in the borderlands. Interventions can establish lines of communication between the multiplicity of local and regional security forces and civil society leaders who all have a stake in preserving peaceful livestock migration.

What Makes Regional Security Cooperation Fail?

> **Regional initiatives are not supported by local authorities or civil society leaders.** Regional coordination requires close linkages with both local leaders and rule of law institutions mandated to contain local disturbances. Even where opportunities arise for regional coordination, it is the responsibility of national or local actors to drive the response. A regional early warning system may signal an alert for violence in a border town, but intervention requires a directive from law enforcement authorities at the central level. External interventions can encourage national authorities to foster direct linkages between local actors and regional security initiatives.

> **Lack of coordination among security actors.** Along insecure border regions, there are often a number of security forces on both sides - rangers, border patrol agencies, police, militaries, peacekeeping missions, and counterterrorism forces are all responsible in some way for securing borders during transhumance.

The challenge of coordinating between these various actors is compounded by the fact that they are often under-resourced and operate in some of the deadliest regions in the world, leading to turf battles and confusion - as, for example, military forces adopt border security into their mandate.

> **Diplomatic relations between states are disrupted by conflicts over cross-border transhumance.** Violence at the borders can force borders to close, disrupt trade, and muddy inter-state relations. Herd movements were a point of contention throughout the political negotiations and the peace process accompanying the establishment of the Sudan-South Sudan border, which transected established migration routes. Accusations that pastoralist groups were mobilizing as proxy militias for various political interests escalated cross-border movement from a common practice to an urgent security matter.



Securing the vast and remote border regions has been a challenge for security actors across the region. Here a soldier from the French Army monitors an empty rural area in northern Burkina Faso, along the border with Mali and Niger. Credit: Michele Cattani/AFP via Getty Images.

4.4 - Research on Regional Value Chains

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: PROGRAMMATIC/PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Description: Pastoralism's contributions to rural economies are poorly documented and understood. For centuries, transhumance has linked multiple nodes of regional commerce across the Sudano-Sahel. Livestock raised in the drylands of Niger or Mali are moved south to access wetlands or markets in coastal states like Nigeria and Benin and as they travel they generate revenue and value through payment for veterinary services, trade with local farmers, or providing fertilizer for crops. This intra-continental trade is essential for satisfying the increasing demand from urban centers for meat products and adds value to agricultural production that would not come from ranching or other modes of production. The total value add of this economic activity is often difficult to quantify, as informal contributions such as manure can be substantial but not readily reflected in existing data. Producing and disseminating accurate information about the role of pastoralism in regional value chains is essential for policymakers and investors to make informed decisions about how they can support the livestock sector.



The contributions of pastoral livestock regional value chains are not always immediately visible or well captured. Livestock can support subsistence farming by providing draught power; milk from pastoral livestock is essential for meeting rising regional demand while also supporting local livelihoods. Shown here land clearance in northern Benin (top) and Malian pastoral woman milking a goat (bottom). Credit: Leif Brottem

Example 4.4

LOCAL RESEARCHERS QUANTIFY PASTORAL VALUE CHAINS

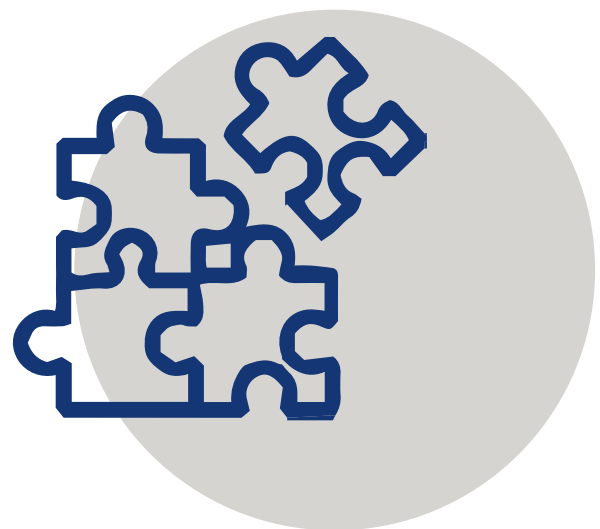
Some researchers have begun to capture the economic contributions of pastoralism that are not easily quantified due to the challenges of collecting data on informal economic activities. In 2015, for example, the International Institute for Environment and Development supported a [series of nine studies](#) conducted by Kenyan and Ethiopian university students to employ different approaches to measuring the “total economic value” of pastoral production in the Horn of Africa. Their findings shed light on the ways in which pastoralist activity supports other traders and livelihoods and contributes to public revenues.

What Makes Research on Regional Value Chains Succeed?

- > **Information is made public and accessible to funding agencies and investors.** The productive interdependence between pastoralists and rural farmers has persevered despite resource scarcity, armed violence and illicit smuggling in many parts of the region. As economic data is continually refreshed and new trends emerge, these added data points should be shared with decision-makers and the private sector who have a direct hand in creating either a supportive or hostile atmosphere for pastoral trade. In particular, highlighting declared revenues as livestock cross borders can help reframe views that pastoralism is obsolete in a modern economy.
- > **Research programs highlight the economic and social costs of conflict and insecurity.** The economic impact of conflict and instability is substantial but poorly quantified. Escalating cattle raids during the civil war led to substantial losses in herd populations in South Sudan. The presence of Boko Haram and predatory criminal syndicates in northwestern Nigeria have forced pastoralists to change their routes and seek out new markets. Conflict has also displaced pastoralist communities across borders, as in the case of Mbororo pastoralist communities who have been displaced by instability in Sudan and CAR into northern DRC. These are important costs that are understudied, and better data will provide donors and decision-makers with a more complete picture as they consider their investments in conflict management.

What Makes Research on Regional Value Chains Fail?

- > **The latest research does not translate into policy decision-making or private sector investment.** Popular perceptions of the economic value of pastoralism have formed over generations, influenced by the popularized belief in the “tragedy of the commons” and heavily weight new innovations in intensifying meat production. While the scientific consensus on pastoralism has evolved substantially over recent decades and there is no longer the same skepticism about the value of pastoral practices, many of these views are still influential and are not quickly reframed by emerging research. Even when pastoralism is recognized for its contributions to regional value chains, many policymakers and investors do not see pastoralism as the main engine to increase the supply of beef and milk in the region.



Questions to Consider

WHEN ADAPTING MODULE 4 TO YOUR CONTEXT

- 1. How are commitments to cross-border transhumance enacted in practice?**
 - a. If the national government is a party to any transhumance agreement, have the provisions of that agreement been enacted through domestic policy?
 - b. Are local authorities and pastoralists familiar with these agreements and do they comply with them?
 - c. Do local customs or laws deviate from these agreements?
- 2. What systems are in place to guide seasonal migrations?**
 - a. Do pastoralist groups have established practices for coordinating cross border movement with host communities?
 - b. Are there agreed-upon protocols in place to resolve conflicts that emerge during migration?
- 3. Who are the stakeholders involved in cross border movement of livestock, and do they work together?**
 - a. Border security? Community leaders? Government agencies? Livestock traders?
 - b. Are there coordinating bodies with an explicit mandate to resolve disputes, or deal with crimes that occur during cross-border migrations?
- 4. What sources of data exist to inform regional trade policies on livestock?**
 - a. Does existing research capture the indirect costs and benefits of the pastoral livestock sector?
 - b. What are the economic costs of other cross-border movements, including population displacement, smuggling, rustling?

Jump to:



[MODULE 1 - RURAL DEVELOPMENT](#) – [Cultivating equitable rural economic growth and reducing chronic causes of conflict.](#)



[MODULE 2 - ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION](#) – [Incorporating pastoralism-related conflict into conservation efforts.](#)



[MODULE 3 - GOVERNANCE AND RULE OF LAW](#) – [Encouraging public participation in the governance of pastoral rangelands.](#)



[MODULE 4 - REGIONAL INTEGRATION](#) – [Understanding the regional, cross-border aspects of pastoralist livelihoods and their relationship with conflict.](#)



[MODULE 5 - GENDER AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT](#) – [Strengthening the role of women in decision-making and understanding gender in pastoralism-related conflict.](#)



[MODULE 6 - CONFLICT MANAGEMENT](#) – [Promoting social cohesion and resolving conflict nonviolently.](#)



[MODULE 7 - LAW ENFORCEMENT AND COUNTERTERRORISM](#) – [Addressing the intersection of cross-border pastoralism, criminality, and insurgency.](#)



[MODULE 8 - DIGITAL PEACEBUILDING](#) – [Integrating new technologies into conflict prevention.](#)



[ADDITIONAL RESOURCES](#)

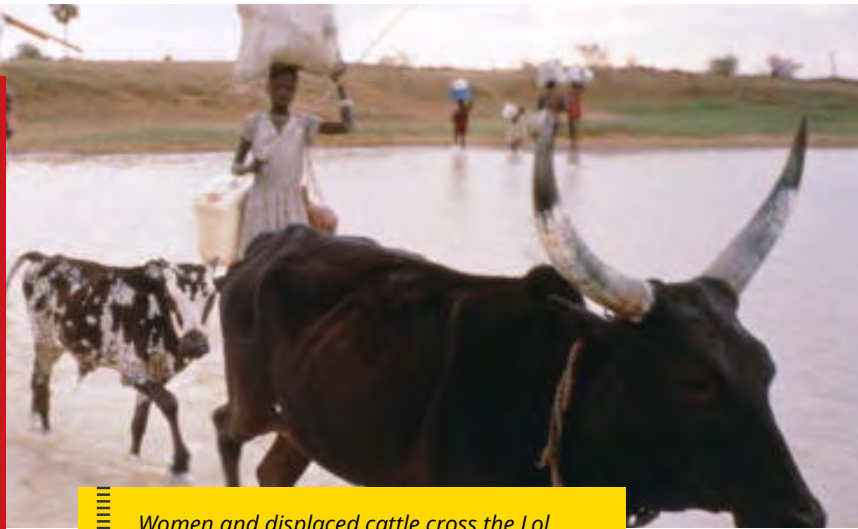


Women play an essential role in livestock production and are key stakeholders for influencing community affairs in pastoral societies. In many pastoralist communities, women are leaders in the production and sale of milk or other animal products. Shown here a Peuhl woman in Senegal pours milk. Credit: BSIP/Universal Images Group via Getty Images

Module 5 Gender and Women's Empowerment

THIS MODULE COVERS HOW TO:

1. Increase awareness of the impact of gender norms in conflict;
2. Strengthen the role of women in preventing and resolving pastoralism-related conflicts.



Women and displaced cattle cross the Lol River in Bahr El-Ghazal, Sudan in 1998. Credit: Malcolm Linton/Liaison via Getty Images.

The Issue

Women are agents of change, resilience, and development in pastoral societies. They play key roles in pastoral value chains, including milk processing, local commerce, and managing small ruminants. Yet, across the Sudano-Sahel, rural women are sparsely represented among governing bodies, trade associations, and customary institutions that handle disputes and manage natural resources. Though women in pastoralist or other rural communities often have fewer opportunities to serve as formal authority figures, they exercise influence in other ways. Pastoralist women are more likely to stay behind in villages or home areas to manage household and economic affairs while their relatives take the livestock on migration. This allows them to engage in sedentary trades (tanning animal hides, farming, taking animal products to market), maintain social and economic bonds with neighboring farmers, and shape the attitudes of the youth who also remain behind. While the economic and social roles of pastoral women vary across the Sudano-Sahel, they are critical stakeholders who are still chronically overlooked in development and conflict transformation initiatives.

Despite their leadership in community affairs, women's voices often go unheard when interveners prioritize traditional or public forms of leadership. Engaging pastoral women as allies and direct beneficiaries in programming can be difficult, as access must often be mediated through traditional (and generally patriarchal) institutions. Their distinct experiences of violence receive little attention: as victims of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) during conflict or as the

ones left to provide for their family with limited trade skills and opportunities when men are killed in conflict. But women are more than victims. They are also social influencers who can support reconciliation or act as spoilers. Though women are rarely combatants in violence between pastoralists and farmers, their voices can incite or dissuade violence in others.

Traditional gender norms can also contribute to conflict dynamics involving pastoralists. Ideals of masculinity shape expectations of how livestock, clan, and family must be defended. In some pastoral cultures, youth conduct cattle raids both as a rite of passage to manhood and to acquire livestock to cover the high costs of a bride price, which remains a common practice. These raids can trigger repeat cycles of theft and retribution between communities that take on particular social or emotional significance given their relationship with gender roles.

INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

[5.1 - Gender Equity in Resource Governance](#)

[5.2 - Women-led Peacebuilding](#)

[5.3 - Addressing Sexual and Gender-Based Violence](#)

[5.4 - Awareness-raising Around Gender, Pastoralism, and Conflict](#)

PASTORAL WOMEN AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

Building on their Role as Influencers

TRADERS AND PRODUCERS

Women forge and reinforce economic ties with other communities through trade in animal products.



EDUCATORS AND SOCIAL INFLUENCERS

Pastoral women are often leaders in household affairs and community life, setting social norms for youth when other institutions (e.g., schools) are absent.

DECISION-MAKERS

Women influence decisions about how to raise livestock and use resources in shared landscapes.



SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CONNECTORS

Women play a key role in maintaining intercommunal harmony through marriage, cultural activities, and relationships with women in settled communities.

5.1 - Gender Equity in Resource Governance

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: PROGRAMMATIC/POLICY

Description: Women are equal stakeholders in the use of rangeland resources, yet their voices are generally not represented in the state or community-led institutions that manage these resources. Women constitute a significant proportion of subsistence farmers and participate in pastoral livestock production as both caretakers and sellers of animal products. When they are left out of decision-making processes, efforts to reform land tenure or mediate resource disputes are less likely to serve the interests of the whole community. When external interventions recognize the traditional barriers to the inclusion of women in both formal and informal governance, they can play a valuable role in opening opportunities for women's leadership.

What Makes Empowering Women in Resource Management Succeed?

> **Programs integrate gender sensitivity into policies on resource management.** The relationship between gender norms and resource management is still not a universal consideration in policy decision-making or program design. While there are some resources to help interveners and policy-makers assess the needs and interests of pastoral women – such as the tools produced by the [International Fund for Agricultural Development](#) – gender is still often a secondary consideration in governance reforms or rural development. Interventions working on these issues can help mainstream gender sensitivity by supporting specialized mapping of risks and opportunities for women when working with pastoral communities. Policymakers and governing agencies should be advised to consult with specialized legal, gender, and cultural experts when new policies and development schemes are designed.

Women are the ones that are traveling long distances to fetch water, that aspect has to be one consideration. If you keep talking with the man, the man is only talking about the water for his livestock.¹²

- > **Programs and public officials support women's leadership in both state and customary institutions.** Pastoral rangelands are often governed by plural systems where customary leaders and state bodies both exercise authority. Increasing women's representation in state bodies, like land management committees, is critical to protecting their formal rights and informing the allocation of state resources. However, ensuring that they are consulted alongside traditional leaders during informal processes - such as community discussions over the location of transhumance routes - may have a more direct impact on how limited resources are apportioned. Women face unique barriers to entry in both official and customary governance that should be analyzed before designing programs or policies to promote equity and inclusion.
- > **Capacity-building and media programs create visibility for models of women's leadership.** As more women take on public leadership roles in resource governance, they act as role models that pave the way for others. In Rwanda, Search has found that [women who have become mediators in land conflict](#) have encouraged their peers to seek election to traditional conflict resolution institutions. Elevating the visibility of women involved in resource governance - through women-led media programs or civil society organizations - is a key element in the long-term transformation of gender norms.

What Makes Empowering Women in Resource Management Fail?

- > **Programs that advocate for greater recognition of women's interests and rights appear threatening to traditional power structures.** Securing the buy-in of traditional leaders to reform land tenure laws, for example, will be harder if reforms are seen to expand women's right to land ownership in contradiction to local custom. Efforts to equalize the inheritance rights in Mali in 2009, for example, [sparked major controversy](#) among the Islamic religious establishment. Such reforms may only be feasible over a longer timeframe with the support of local champions, as they require both shifting attitudes toward gender norms and overcoming structural barriers.
- > **Declarations in support of women's leadership at the national or regional level are not reflected in local implementation.** Despite international interest in increasing representation of women in resource governance and transhumance discussions, these changes are not always reflected at the local level. As reflected throughout this Toolkit, there is often a wide gap between the decisions of national leaders and the lived experience of the pastoralists and rural farmers living by customary practice. Greater representation of the interests of pastoral women in regional conferences or dialogues should not be mistaken for greater inclusion in relevant decision-making and oversight.



¹²Interview with development practitioner in Kenya, April 2020.



Access to shared water resources is a common focal point for conflict between pastoralists and other rural populations. This can create challenges for women, who are often the ones responsible for accessing water for their household, farms, or livestock. Shown here Somali women fill water cans tied to a donkey at a traditional cistern for harvesting rainwater, called a berkad, in the village of Carro-Yaambo. Credit: Scott Peterson/Getty Images

Example 5.1

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN'S INPUT IN MAPPING MIGRATION CORRIDORS IN CHAD

Beyond the inherent value of engaging all community stakeholders in resource governance, women can bring experiential knowledge that is critical for decision-making. In Chad, the Association des Femmes Peules and Peuples Autochtones du Tchad led a process to create a 3-dimensional map of local resources and migration corridors to guide policymakers on effective land management. The participatory process that created this map incorporated local insights and data shared by community leaders. After an initial map was developed by the male leaders, women were invited to review. They quickly began correcting the location of water points and other resources, recommendations that were later validated by their male counterparts.

5.2 - Women-led Peacebuilding

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: PROGRAMMATIC

Description: Women's channels of influence in community affairs are rarely reflected in customary leadership or state institutions but can constructively influence peacebuilding efforts. Too often, "leaders" are seen as those who hold official authority rather than those who have the capacity to influence those around them. This limited understanding of leadership can sideline women, who often have limited access to public leadership roles but still exercise significant influence. Women who lack official roles or positions may still be mobilized as mediators, emissaries, or peace advocates. They can play a role as a bridge-builder between pastoralist and agricultural communities, leveraging their social and economic ties with women in other communities who are also absent from formal peacebuilding or governance activities. However, building partnerships with women within pastoral communities can be challenging for outsiders. Most of the ways of establishing communication channels and making connections (e.g., through traditional leaders or trade associations) are dominated by men.

What Makes Empowering Women as Peace Advocates Succeed?

- > **Interveners invest time in building trust to facilitate access.** Barriers to engaging pastoral women can be high, as they are less active in the public sphere and male leaders can interpose as gatekeepers. Engaging women in traditional communities may require cultivating trusting relations with customary authorities. In other cases, access may be mediated through service programs, such as vaccination campaigns or mobile maternal care, or building rapport through trade associations like milk marketing groups. Entry points will be different in each context but frequently require cultivating strong relationships with intermediaries.
- > **Programs support social cohesion between settled women from farming and pastoralist communities.** Pastoralist women tend to remain in place during mass herd movements, where they maintain economic and social links with their rural neighbors. When conflicts emerge among these settled communities, women



Example 5.2a

WOMEN MOBILIZE TO LEAD DIALOGUE AND EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS IN NIGERIA'S MIDDLE BELT

To address ongoing conflicts between pastoralist and farming communities in Nigeria's Middle Belt, the UN Development Program (UNDP), UN Women, FAO, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) launched a joint program to strengthen the role of women in resolving intercommunal conflict. Women leaders in Taraba and Nasarawa states organized town hall meetings that brought together women from across different ethnic groups, including Fulani herders and Tiv farmers, which were later expanded to include men. The short term results of these dialogues have [been mixed](#), but the initiative has helped to carve out greater formal recognition of the role of women in mediating conflict. In 2020, for example, the Taraba state government budgeted funds for the first time to support the UN Women, Peace, and Security Agenda.

may be better positioned to improve intercommunal relations than their male counterparts.

> **Programs build upon women's existing leadership roles.** Although women's influence as leaders in local trade, education, or animal caretaking is often less visible than formal positions of authority, it is no less significant. Peacebuilding initiatives should first consider how women's existing roles as leaders can be strengthened. This may be through supporting formal women-led networks, or building women's capacity in informal roles, such as mediating disputes amongst settled communities while men are out on migration.

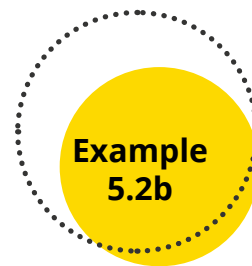
> **Programs are designed to reach the quiet enablers of violence, not just active combatants.** Women play an important role in shaping attitudes toward violence, even if they do not engage in violence themselves. Some pastoralist women in South Sudan, for example, have a traditional practice of singing songs to encourage men to participate in cattle raids or revenge attacks. Just like their male counterparts, women feel pressure to resolve violence with violence. One survey on attitudes toward conflict in South Sudan found that women were just as likely as their male counterparts to believe that violence against another tribe is justified. Reaching these potential spoilers is rarely the focus of programming, which tends to focus on working with women only in their capacity as victims of violence or existing champions of peace.

What Makes Empowering Women as Peace Advocates Fail?

> **Women peacebuilders are isolated.** In contexts where men defend and reinforce traditional gender roles, programming aimed specifically at women may arouse suspicion, even hostility. Even when effective, women mediators may not be respected by their male counterparts, or may be dismissed as relevant only in cases involving other women. Women in these leadership roles may be subject to social ostracism or violence from armed groups. Programs should be careful to abide by Do No Harm principles and avoid pushing women beneficiaries to assume roles that will make them targets.

> **Programs allow customary leaders to be sidelined.**

Attempts to increase women's visibility and capacity within traditional communities can meet resistance and limit local support. During one education initiative in the Sahel, for example, pastoral men steadfastly refused to take classes with the women of their community, forcing implementers to set up parallel classes. Programs that are perceived to import outside values and practices will backfire. This is a particular risk for programs that aim to empower women to take on new responsibilities such as dispute mediation or resource governance that have traditionally been held by customary leaders.



WOMEN MEDIATE CONFLICT THROUGH RITUAL PRACTICE IN CAMEROON

In Cameroon, women play influential roles in ensuring good relations between pastoralists and Gbaya farming communities. Mbororo women [solidify their economic ties](#) with their Gbaya friends by trading the milk from their livestock for vegetables before they take it to market. Gbaya women have also played a critical role in peacebuilding as practitioners of Soré Nga'a mo, a ritual practice in which a cocktail of Soré leaves and sacred water is sprinkled across people or a village. The ritual is used in a variety of contexts - resolving conflicts, reconciling with enemies, legitimizing local authorities, or purifying a village after conflict or natural disaster - and illustrates one way in which women have traditionally exercised influence as peacebuilders. In the early 1990s, for example, the practitioner Koko Didi was called upon by government authorities to perform the ritual to help end ongoing conflict between the Gbaya and Fulani communities. In addition to the ritual performance, [Koko Didi](#) served as part of a reconciliation commission between the two communities that facilitated an end to the violence.

5.3 - Addressing Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: PROGRAMMATIC/POLICY

Description: Rural and nomadic populations are often far removed from the legal and medical services offered to victims of SGBV. SGBV is an all-too-common occurrence among many rural women and can be yielded as a weapon in hostilities between pastoralist groups, or between pastoralists and settled communities. Absent legal systems to hold perpetrators to account, SGBV can add fuel to cycles of retaliatory violence. Securing justice and accountability is a social and legal challenge in weak and fragile states as it requires accountability for acts of SGBV to be an accepted norm and public institutions that recognize it as a crime. A multi-sector, holistic response to SGBV in pastoral rangelands may require mobile courts or legal services and awareness-raising programs that are adapted to pastoral realities.

What Makes SGBV Programs Succeed?

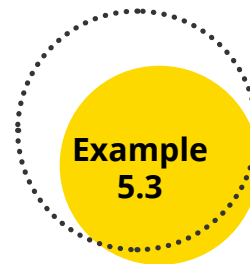
> **Programs engage trusted interlocutors to reach mobile communities.** Efforts to socialize SGBV awareness can be challenging among mobile pastoralist communities who are often beyond the reach of legal, medical or social services. Yet many pastoral communities do maintain periodic contact with service providers (e.g., animal health, mobile schools) who can serve as conduits for SGBV awareness raising, as they are already known and trusted. Even where justice services may be limited, programs to promote social accountability for preventing SGBV may still be powerful.

> **Programs support mobile justice systems.** Pastoral rangelands are typically underserved by state justice systems, which tend to be centralized in larger towns and regional capitals. This creates a major barrier for victims to secure justice, as customary justice systems often fail to address these crimes. As a stopgap measure, mobile courts or mediation services can provide some accountability and resolution in cases

of SGBV, as seen in [case studies in Sierra Leone, the DRC, Somalia](#), and elsewhere.

What Makes SGBV Programs Fail?

> **The unreliability of second-hand accounts.** Pastoralists are often suspected of violence (including SGBV) because they can be armed and move outside the sight of local communities or authorities. The mutual suspicion and misunderstandings between pastoralist and settled communities is fertile ground for rumors and there is always a risk that accusations of SGBV can be instrumentalized in intercommunal conflict. In the absence of robust reporting systems, anecdotal reports of pastoralists as perpetrators of sexual violence should be treated carefully and with an eye toward conflict sensitivity.



SGBV AS A WEAPON IN INTERCOMMUNAL VIOLENCE

Data on incidents of SGBV are often still anecdotal, given the absence of reporting mechanisms and justice services for rural women. [One study from Nigeria](#) noted reports that girls in Adamawa and Gombe states were sexually assaulted as part of retaliatory violence between farming and herding communities, this time triggered in part by destruction of property. Empirical, corroborated evidence that SGBV is a part of a wider phenomenon is still limited.

5.4 - Awareness-raising Around Gender, Pastoralism, and Conflict

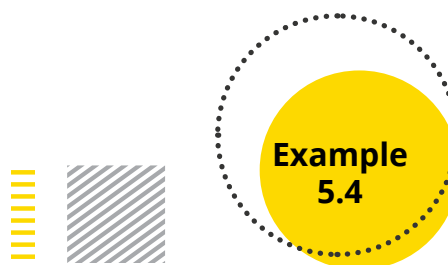
TYPE OF INTERVENTION: PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Description: With a limited body of empirical research and few opportunities for pastoral women to share their perspectives with national and regional audiences, government officials and aid practitioners often lack firsthand evidence to guide their policies and programs. Improving understanding of the role of women and gender norms by supporting locally-led research and the inclusion of women in public diplomacy activities is an essential starting point.

What Makes Raising Awareness Around Gender, Pastoralism, and Conflict Succeed?

> **Diplomats and public officials raise attention to the role of women.** At the most basic level, external interveners should ensure that gender and women's empowerment is on the agenda for addressing pastoralism-related conflicts. This may include meeting directly with women mediators or leaders of women's trade groups, promoting gender parity in conferences on transhumance, or highlighting the efforts of women peacebuilders in public statements. Women leaders can often be left out of public diplomacy initiatives either because they do not occupy recognizable public roles as authorities or because they have not had previous opportunities to form social networks with public officials.

> **Research highlights the experiences of women not just as survivors but as community influencers.** It is vital to document how women are affected by pastoralism-related conflict both as testimony and to ensure their experiences inform future interventions. Women play critical roles in shaping the relationships between pastoralist groups and their neighbors, whether through joint cultural celebrations, inter-



PASTORAL WOMEN ISSUE A CALL FOR ACTION

In 2010, a group of pastoralist women from 32 countries (including Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali, and Niger) gathered in Mera, India to increase the recognition of women's voices in the development of pastoralism policies and issue a global call for action. The resulting [Mera Declaration](#) called on governments to accept 23 points, including recognizing pastoralists' role in environmental conservation, ensuring the equal rights of pastoral women, creating specific policies to assist pastoral lifestyles, and giving equal representation to pastoralist women. The Declaration was a novel concept as the first such statement that specifically focused on the role of pastoralist women, though it is not yet clear whether it has effectively catalyzed policy change in the Sudano-Sahel.

ethnic marriage, and everyday trade relationships. These are important opportunities for connection that can be lost or eroded during periods of conflict. Future research must delve deeper into the role of women as community stabilizers and drivers of group recovery.

> **Analysts mainstream gender perspectives across all forms of pastoral research.** The influence of gender resonates across all conflict dynamics highlighted by this Toolkit. Because gender is often compartmentalized as a niche area of expertise, it can be neglected in research on wider development trends in conflict settings. A gendered lens is critical in all areas of study, from livestock value chains to cattle raiding to land tenure.

Questions to Consider

WHEN ADAPTING MODULE 5 TO YOUR CONTEXT.

1. How do women exercise influence?

- Are there women-led trade associations or civil society groups that include women pastoralists or farmers? What informal networks of women participate?
- What role do women play in influencing decision-making in the community? What are the traditional roles for women in peacebuilding or resource governance?
- How are women involved in building social or economic bonds between pastoralist and host communities?

2. What are the barriers to engaging with pastoral women?

- Will outreach to pastoral women require buy-in from customary authorities?
- Are women in remote areas able to travel to participate in activities, or will they only be able to participate in interventions that are available in their home area?
- What are the risks that women beneficiaries will be ostracized or threatened with violence?

3. How are women acting as peacebuilders or spoilers?

- Do women have different attitudes toward the use of violence than the men in their community?

4. How do gender norms influence participation in conflict?

- How do social norms around masculinity influence participation in violent acts, such as cattle raiding?
- Are there positive gender norms that can be highlighted as alternatives?

5. What are the barriers to the inclusion of women in resource governance?

- Are there customary laws or social pressures that prohibit women from being elected or appointed to govern the use of resources?
- Were women consulted in the design of livestock

or agricultural development plans?

6. How have women been impacted by pastoralism-related conflict?

- In what ways are pastoral women economically or legally vulnerable?
- Do they have the skills to provide for their families if their male relatives are lost in violence?
- Have there been credible reports of SGBV being instrumentalized in intercommunal violence?

Jump to:



[MODULE 1 - RURAL DEVELOPMENT -](#)

[Cultivating equitable rural economic growth and reducing chronic causes of conflict.](#)



[MODULE 2 - ENVIRONMENT AND](#)

[CONSERVATION - Incorporating pastoralism-related conflict into conservation efforts.](#)



[MODULE 3 - GOVERNANCE AND RULE OF](#)

[LAW - Encouraging public participation in the governance of pastoral rangelands.](#)



[MODULE 4 - REGIONAL INTEGRATION -](#)

[Understanding the regional, cross-border aspects of pastoralist livelihoods and their relationship with conflict.](#)



[MODULE 5 - GENDER AND WOMEN'S](#)

[EMPOWERMENT - Strengthening the role of women in decision-making and understanding gender in pastoralism-related conflict.](#)



[MODULE 6 - CONFLICT MANAGEMENT -](#)

[Promoting social cohesion and resolving conflict nonviolently.](#)



[MODULE 7 - LAW ENFORCEMENT AND COUNTERTERRORISM -](#)

[Addressing the intersection of cross-border pastoralism, criminality, and insurgency.](#)



[MODULE 8 - DIGITAL PEACEBUILDING -](#)

[Integrating new technologies into conflict prevention.](#)



[ADDITIONAL RESOURCES](#)



*Nigerian farmer and herder shaking hands.
Credit: Search for Common Ground*

Module 6

Conflict Management

THIS MODULE COVERS HOW TO:

1. Strengthen existing mechanisms to prevent the escalation of disputes involving cross-border pastoralism;
2. Address the social polarization that can ignite intercommunal violence between pastoral groups, or between pastoralists and host communities.



Creating spaces for dialogue is an essential element in helping communities deal with conflict nonviolently. Shown here Nigerian youth meet in a discussion group. Credit: Search for Common Ground

The Issue

Conflicts between farmers and pastoralists in the Sudano-Sahel have been going on for centuries. Over time communities have developed techniques to resolve these conflicts and mitigate their destabilizing effects. These resolution mechanisms were usually informal, and ranged from customary courts, to assess compensation for livestock or crop damage, to dispute mediation by reputable traditional figures or councils of elders. In recent years, these informal tools have struggled to cope with the rapid spread of small arms, the growing power of NSAGs and terrorist networks, and deteriorating social and political stability. Customary leaders and local institutions are seeing their influence diminish or be co-opted by the State or insurgent groups. Relations between the nomadic and sedentary groups who have long lived together in diverse societies have deteriorated. As they travel to other regions, pastoralist groups are treated as “strangers” or “foreign invaders” and subject to exclusion and suspicion. Disputes over livestock have sparked horrific acts of tit-for-tat violence. In Mali and central Nigeria, farmer-herder is a major element of ongoing tensions between pastoral Fulani and other ethnic groups. In 2018 in Plateau State, Nigeria, ethnic Fulani and Berom herders blamed one another for a series of unresolved cattle thefts, which eventually escalated into a [two day massacre of civilians](#) in Barkin Ladi in which more than 200 people lost their lives. The attacks inspired a reprisal where Berom youth attacked Fulani travelers on a highway. A [similar massacre](#) occurred in the Malian town of Ogossagou, when members of an ethnic vigilante group killed 160 people in a town largely populated by a rival herder community, which sparked further reprisals.

Such exclusion has become more severe in recent years with the rise of violent extremism and ethno-nationalist militias. In CAR, for example, self-defense militias formed with the stated goals of defending against armed bandits who included Arab and Mbororo pastoralists, even as state security forces clashed with NSAGs who claimed to be defending pastoralists. As fear and suspicion intensified following the uprising by the rebel Seleka coalition in 2013, “anti-balaka” militias began attacking all Muslim communities, including Mbororo pastoralists who were presumed guilty by association. These attacks led to a spike in mobilization by Mbororo communities to retaliate and defend themselves, as well as new iterations of NSAGs led by Mbororo such as the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique and 3R.

INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

[6.1 – Alternative Dispute Resolution](#)

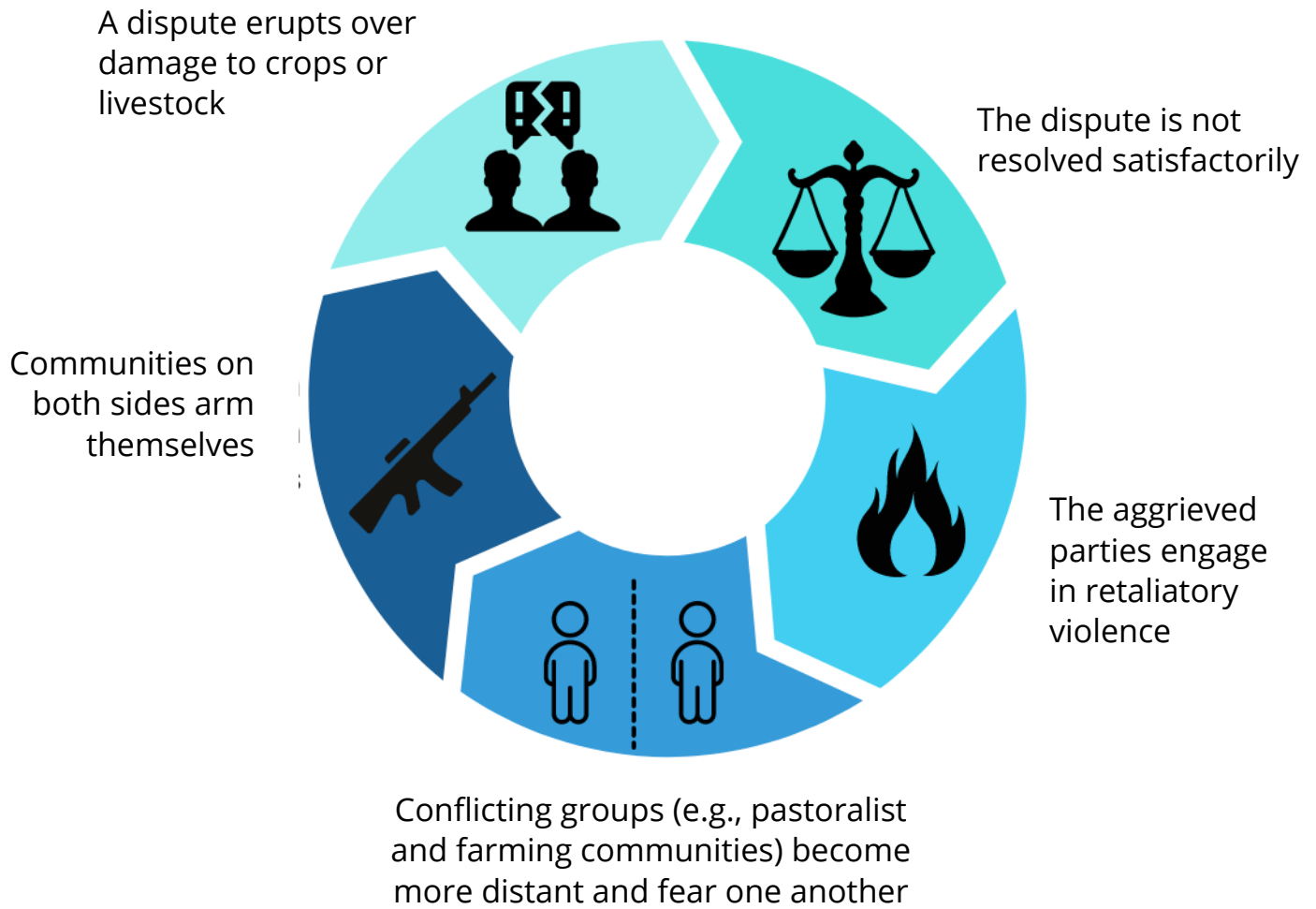
[6.2 – People-to-People Interventions](#)

[6.3 – Cultural Heritage Activities](#)

[6.4 – Bridging Social Distance](#)

[6.5 – Inclusive Language in Public Messaging](#)

CYCLE OF INTERCOMMUNAL CONFLICT



6.1 - Alternative Dispute Resolution

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: PROGRAMMATIC

Description: Many pastoralist and farming communities prefer to resolve disputes by allowing trusted elders or chiefs to mediate, particularly as they are often unable to depend on state justice institutions that are absent or unfamiliar. Traditional mediation practices have been an important tool for resolving complaints over crop damage, livestock theft, or assault before they escalate into something worse. However, many of the traditional dispute resolution practices in the Sudano-Sahel have been corroded by years of instability, political and social polarization, and armed violence. Without credible channels for parties in a dispute to agree upon a resolution, pastoralists and farmers increasingly turn to militias or mob violence to get justice. Increasing the capacity of the formal justice sector in these regions is a critical step (see [3.3 - Access to Justice](#)), but it is also important to support options for alternative dispute resolution (ADR). Dispute resolution practices that rely on trusted community leaders will be familiar to many pastoralist and farmer communities and are necessary for finding flexible solutions to the kinds of problems they encounter. When a group of farmers begin cultivating land in the middle of a well-established transhumance route in public land, there may be few legal solutions available to pastoralists, but they may be able to negotiate a solution if there are trust mediators who can intervene. External interventions may involve, for example, providing technical training to local leaders or helping to set up a local peace committee.

So, the traditional mechanisms through which they used to settle the issues are no longer functioning... anytime a cow, or a sheep, goes to a farm and destroys something the family will use a cutlass to just kill the animal.¹³

What Makes Alternative Dispute Resolution Succeed?

- > **Programs build upon existing customary practices and leadership.** Most pastoral groups have well-established practices to handle low-level disputes among themselves and with other groups. This may include, for example, set compensation schemes for livestock theft or crop damage that are administered by customary courts. Wherever possible, programs should look to complement and build on these systems, rather than establish new, competing mechanisms. There is not, however, always one system that works for every stakeholder. Pastoralists, for example, may prefer to resolve disputes through mediation between traditional leaders who will recognize their existing claims to access public water or grazing resources, while settled communities may wish to turn to the police whose decisions will likely favor settled citizens.
- > **Interveners cultivate partnerships with development, conservation, and security actors.** Disputes taken to local mediators or customary courts are often rooted in more fundamental tensions over communal land use, cross-border movement, or predation by armed groups. For instance, a 2020 analysis of the Liptako Gourma region conducted by FAO highlighted land sales and property speculation as a principal reason why traditional conflict resolution mechanisms in that area have broken down.¹⁴ Local mediators can provide short-term solutions, but often do not have the capacity to address the systemic issues that are causing and perpetuating conflict. Programs that aim to have a transformative impact on conflict need to be designed and delivered in close collaboration with other interveners who are supporting land tenure reform, facilitating service delivery to pastoralist communities, or influencing commercial investment in the livestock sector.

¹³Interview with a civil society practitioner in DRC, March 2020.

¹⁴Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *Analyse Des Conflits Liés Aux Ressources Naturelles Dans La Région Du Liptako-Gourma: Résultats Des Trois Analyses De Conflits Réalisées Au Burkina Faso, Au Mali Et Au Niger*. Food and Agricultural Organization (Rome: 2020)

What Makes Alternative Dispute Resolution Fail?

> **Programs reinforce exclusion of women, youth, or other marginalized populations.** Programs that focus on revitalizing customary dispute resolution practices or institutions can run the risk of further excluding those groups that were traditionally left behind by those institutions. Simply because there are long-standing leaders or practices in place does not make them representative, trustworthy. Youth [who are desperate for alternatives](#) to traditional lifestyles may be alienated by ADR interventions that reinforce existing power structures. Interventions should be careful to balance the need to build on existing dispute resolution practices with the need to have a system that works for all parties.

> **ADR mechanisms are dominated by settled leaders.** It is important for interveners to be sensitive to the inherent advantages available to settled communities. Settled leaders will have an easier time being physically present to participate in a peace committee or other dispute resolution mechanism than their nomadic counterparts. Pastoralists who travel from other countries or live in societies that are set apart from settled populations may find that these dispute resolution mechanisms do not reflect their accepted norms and customs. If one group believes that the mechanism is partisan, they will simply seek a resolution through a competing forum, creating further cause for conflict.



Example 6.1

MEDIATION COMMITTEES IN THE RUZIZI PLAIN RESOLVE DISPUTES BETWEEN FARMERS AND HERDERS

Though pastoralists and farmers have cohabitated in eastern DRC for generations, political tensions and the proliferation of armed groups in recent decades have eroded the traditional mechanisms by which these communities resolve disputes. Clashes between armed groups and military forces have displaced many pastoralists, who are forced to take their animals to new areas where they do not have established agreements with farming communities and inevitably the animals stray onto farmland. Many of the herders - who often do not own the livestock themselves - are stretched thin. Despite laws requiring that there should be one herder for every eight cows, some are managing a hundred or more.

In the absence of effective mediation options, these disputes have incited cycles of retaliatory violence - farmers killing trespassing livestock or pastoralists taking up arms to protect their herds. In response, Search - along with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and South East Asia (ZOA) - established a series of local peace committees in 18 villages in coordination with local leaders and village chiefs. Committee leaders were trained on contemporary mediation techniques and have used their expertise to settle upwards of a hundred disputes within a year period. This has allowed local communities to have a viable alternative to either violence or reliance on higher authorities that are often inaccessible.

6.2 - People-to-People Interventions

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: PROGRAMMATIC

Description: Conflicts between pastoralist and farming communities are often deeply interwoven with group identity and interethnic tensions among different pastoral groups or between pastoralist and sedentary groups. Many established practices for building intergroup trust are grounded in Contact Theory – the hypothesis that regular contact between two groups can increase tolerance and acceptance. However, building intergroup acceptance through programs that rely on regular people-to-people contact can be challenging given that the nomadic livelihood of pastoralists involves social and political distance from local residents. Yet pastoralists are never completely isolated from settled communities – many live in their own settlements when they are not on migration with the livestock, or maintain

regular contact with the people they meet along their migration routes or when they travel to markets. There may be a number of opportunities to bring pastoralists in contact with their settled counterparts through common interests such as markets or cultural events. Leveraging these common interests, people-to-people interventions can uproot the fears and skepticism between pastoralist and sedentary communities or among conflicting pastoralist groups.

Participatory theater can be a powerful tool to help communities grapple with the grievances that are creating divisions. Shown here community members act out a clash between farmers and pastoralists and how they were able to resolve it peacefully in Jos, Nigeria. Credit: Search for Common Ground



Example 6.2

FULANI PASTORALISTS AND FARMERS BREAK DOWN DIVIDES USING MOBILE THEATER

In response to rising hostilities between Fulani pastoralists and sedentary farmers in Nigeria's Middle Belt in 2016, Search for Common Ground [hosted a series of public performances](#) of a dance production called "I Follow the Green Grass." The performance presented Fulani pastoralist lifestyles rarely seen by outsiders. Part of this portrayal involved community conflicts and how these were overcome. A film version was later screened as part of a mobile cinema project. These screenings allowed citizens from diverse ethnic backgrounds to share their reactions and concerns about the state of intercommunal hostilities.

What Makes People-to-People Interventions Succeed?

> **Programs reinforce a shared sense that all groups are part of common, pluralistic community.**

While pastoralists may not be residents of the communities they pass through during migration, they are predictable actors in the landscape as service providers or trading partners. Even so, they are often seen as 'outsiders,' and not just by sedentary communities. Many pastoralists would define themselves outside any national identity, as their independence and distance from settled life is integral to their lifestyle and culture. While it is important to acknowledge how these communities chose to see themselves, people-to-people interventions should not be framed as linking settled residents with "strangers." Instead, these interventions are an opportunity to appreciate that all the many and varied peoples who live in the landscape are part of a common society in which people practice different cultural practices and lifestyles. Program implementers should also help ensure marginalized groups, such as pastoralists, are represented throughout the program cycle, including aiming for diversity in local staff by recruiting from diverse ethnic, religious, and livelihood groups.

> **Programs reinforce services that are mutually beneficial to sedentary and nomadic populations.**

Interveners need to identify and corroborate which basic services are in demand across otherwise divided communities - local markets, cultural events, veterinary services - and leverage those spaces. These spaces are often distant from the population centers where program implementers are generally based and may require additional travel and security provisions to access remote areas.

> **Interveners adopt a long-term view.** Opportunities to connect highly mobile populations with sedentary groups are determined by seasonal fluctuations, patterns of violence, and the timing and location of markets. Given such unpredictability, interventions will need a longer time horizon and multi-country presence in order to plan and produce successful

people-to-people engagements. Agile funding instruments and flexible planning cycles are also key.

Trust building with a typical farmer will take less time than when you do it with a pastoralist... because pastoralist is not in one place. So you could do one meeting with him today, and before you could meet again it could be another six months.



Boy participates in a discussion during a screening of "I Follow the Green Grass" in Jos, Nigeria. Credit: Search for Common Ground

What Makes People-to-People Interventions Fail?

> **Programs leave systemic political issues unresolved.** Tensions between pastoralist and sedentary communities are not just a function of different customs and social distance. People-

to-people interactions may be ephemeral if they are not complemented by efforts to address the systemic inequalities in resource access that create polarization in the first place. In the northern DRC, for example, Mbororo pastoralist groups who have relocated or been displaced from Chad and CAR (but also Cameroon and Sudan to a lesser extent) maintain tense relations with local populations due to disagreements over land use and concerns that the Mbororo are supporting local armed groups, which are exacerbated by the spread of false rumors of other Mbororo threats to the population. Dialogues between the Mbororo and local residents have created some measure of good faith between groups. But this is one part of the deeper question of whether the Mbororo should be allowed to stay or forced to return to their countries of origin.

> **Instability or violence threatens the shared spaces supported by people-to-people programs.** The spaces where pastoralists and settled communities interact may be threatened by the proliferation of armed groups. Local cattle markets, for example, are prime targets for criminal syndicates, which drives away traders and opportunities to form bonds through commerce. Providing security solutions may be an essential component in building people-to-people interventions.

> **Programs are not designed to address root causes of hostility between diverse pastoral and sedentary groups.** There are tens of millions of Africans who practice pastoralism, and the pastoralists operating in a given area can come from a wide range of ethnic, national, or cultural backgrounds. Widespread armed conflict, absence of basic services, and shrinking state presence across the Sudano-Sahel today are pushing pastoral groups into new areas where they encounter settled communities with whom they have no prior relationship. Goodwill between local residents and one pastoralist group does not automatically extend to all other pastoralists. Settled communities in the CAR may maintain relations with Mbororo herders who pass through seasonally but react angrily toward Arab guards protecting large herds arriving from Sudan. People-to-people interventions need to be designed with an awareness of the multiple relationships between pastoralist and settled groups and different interventions may be necessary over time to address new intergroup tensions brought on by displacement or changing migration patterns.

Women are often social connectors between pastoralist and farming communities. People-to-people interventions should also create space for dialogue between women when appropriate. Shown here women during dialogue in Obudugwa community of Ndowka West, Nigeria. Credit: Search for Common Ground



6.3 - Cultural Heritage Activities

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: PROGRAMMATIC/ PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Description: The pastoralist way of life is more than a means of survival; it is both the source of group identity and a unique cultural heritage. This cultural pride is a defining asset and an opportunity to educate others who inhabit the same lands but fear pastoralists. Events designed to highlight the diversity of cultural heritage among all those inhabiting these unique landscapes can reinforce solidarity and help prevent the escalation of future conflicts. Such events can also remind state officials and the wider public that pastoralism is more than an ancient means of survival, but a celebration of human adaptation and perseverance in a harsh, demanding climate.

What Makes Cultural Heritage Activities Succeed?

- > **Programs celebrate the diversity among the communities that share Africa's rangelands and acknowledge their shared history.** Efforts to celebrate cultural heritage should provide opportunities for pastoralists and other groups to celebrate their distinctiveness. Rural communities may share landscape and resources, but their experiences, customs and traditions are unique. Rarely do they have occasion to convene and share in this way, or to learn directly from others about themselves. Showcasing the diverse traditions of herders, farmers, or fishers who share remote terrain through cultural festivals or community events can help participants acknowledge differences and communicate their own self-understanding.
- > **Programs acknowledge the diversity among pastoralists.** Often misunderstood as monolithic, pastoralist groups are hugely diverse in their practices and worldviews. In some cases, these differences can

be a source of intragroup conflict - more sedentary herders frequently occupy positions of political, social, or economic power relative to their more nomadic counterparts. Celebrations of cultural heritage should accommodate this diversity rather than including a small sample that is not representative.



Fulani women in Lafia, Nigeria perform a traditional dance. Credit: Search for Common Ground

What Makes Cultural Heritage Activities Fail?

- > **Programs inadvertently increase group polarization.** Efforts to promote cultural heritage can highlight some groups and alienate others who are unable to participate due to distance, group dispersion, or other constraints. In designing activities, interveners should be mindful of the barriers to equal

Example 6.3

access and the historical forms of exclusion that have prevented some minority groups from being visible.

> **Lack of participation from mobile communities.**

Pastoral groups can be difficult to engage as participants in programming. They rarely figure in national censuses or possess identification papers, and their mobile lifestyle may make it difficult to commit to time-bound activities. Commercial livestock breeders, herders, and traders who are part of pastoral groups but practice a sedentary lifestyle may be more accessible but are not necessarily representative of their nomadic counterparts.

WRESTLING TOURNAMENTS UNITE COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH SUDAN

Traditional wrestling is a popular sport in South Sudan that has served as a cultural connector between communities that have been divided by civil war, including pastoralist groups like the Mundari or Dinka. [Tournaments in Juba](#) and other urban centers bring together groups from across various tribes and ethnic groups to compete over prizes like cattle. The events can attract large public crowds and help to restore good faith between communities that may be parties to conflict or cattle raiding.



Wrestling matches provide an opportunity for members of differing pastoralist ethnic groups in South Sudan to interact and restore social relations that have been torn apart by years of violent conflict. Shown here members of the Mundari ethnic group wrestle in a dusty patch where they have brought cattle and sheep for sale. Credit: Roberto Schmidt/AFP via Getty Images.

6.4 - Bridging Social Distance

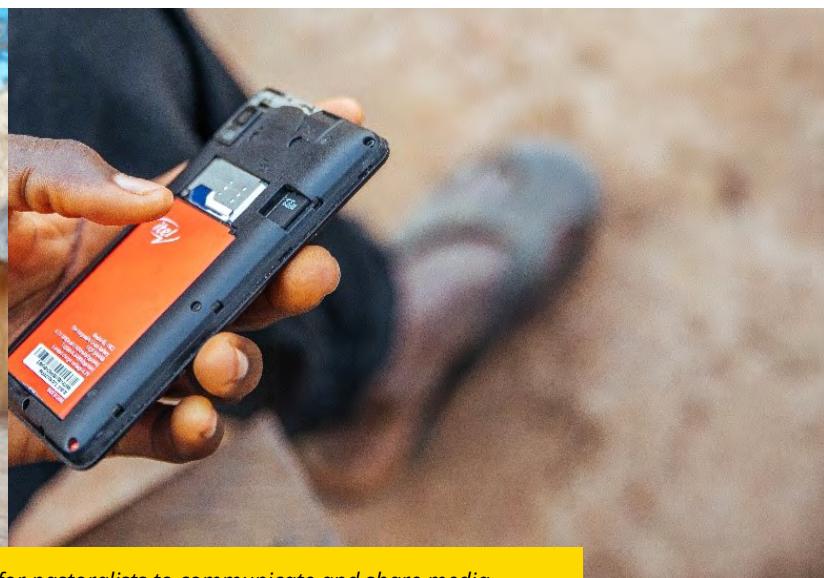
TYPE OF INTERVENTION: PROGRAMMATIC

Description: Transforming relationships between mobile and sedentary communities can be complicated by physical distance across remote landscapes with little communications technology, digital or otherwise. The absence of face-to-face encounters in a region dominated by violence can intensify this polarization. Where people-to-people programming is unrealistic because of conflict or physical distance, mass media (radio, television) and direct communication tools (phone services, social media) can help bridge groups across dividing lines, rebuilding trust and solidarity. Telecommunications services may be limited or inaccessible to communities living in remote areas, but there are still a variety of ways in which communications tools can be used creatively to reach mobile populations.

Example 6.4

PEACE COMMITTEES USE MOBILE SD CARDS TO REACH PASTORALIST AUDIENCES IN CAR

In eastern Central African Republic, conflicts have arisen between mobile Peuhl and local farmers. In response, Invisible Children enlisted all parties, including local authorities, in messaging campaigns to counter these hostilities. Messages and music were recorded in Fulfulde (the language spoken by Peuhl pastoralists across Central Africa), with civil society leaders even traveling to a Peuhl wedding to record traditional music. The messages and music were then loaded locally onto micro SD cards to be disseminated among pastoralists, copying a popular way for pastoralists in that region to share music or other media.



SD cards for mobile phones are one tool for pastoralists to communicate and share media where access to telecommunications services are limited. Shown here a group in the CAR listens to peace messages from a shared SD card (left) and an SD card in phone (right). Credit: Nathan Garcia for Invisible Children, 2018

What Makes the Use of Communication Tools in Peacebuilding Succeed?

> **Programs use communication channels that are familiar and trusted by pastoralists.** Even among those outside the reach of phone services or internet, long-distance communication is still possible, such as through the use of mobile SD cards. Long-distance analog communication techniques used by peoples without access to telecommunication may be limited to word-of-mouth (scouts, messengers), but this makes them no less effective. Interveners should focus on identifying and utilizing the communication channels that are in use and validating these practices with pastoralists.

> **Programs institute channels for regular information-sharing.** Consistent communication is a key component in managing resources in shared landscapes, which is challenging for communities that have infrequent contact. Where telecommunication services are accessible, programs may encourage direct links between mobile and sedentary leaders. Pastoralist leaders can alert the nearby village chief when cattle will be in the vicinity. If the herds begin trampling or eating local crops, complaints can be quickly transmitted and addressed. Information on subjects like migration timing and routes may also be shared via radio programs, or other mass media, where telephone coverage is scant. Though this kind of information sharing is most effective when accompanied by face-to-face communication. Communication tools can also be used for educational purposes (such as the radio-based literacy programs run by Nigeria's National Commission for Nomadic Education).

What Makes the Use of Communication Tools in Peacebuilding Fail?

> **Local communities lack communication services or digital literacy.** Pastoralists migrating their livestock through remote rangelands are often far beyond the range of telecommunication networks. This isolation, as well as the low levels of literacy generally, may limit digital literacy in pastoral communities.



Radio programs can help to bridge the physical and social divide between mobile and settled communities. Shown here the Chairmen of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria and the All Farmers Association of Nigeria lead a discussion as part of the Plant Naija radio program. Credit: Search for Common Ground



VERNACULAR LANGUAGES IN WEST AFRICA

CYCLE OF INSTABILITY IN PASTORAL AREAS



Extract: OECD/SWAC (2017), Cross-border Co-operation and Policy Networks in West Africa, OECD Publishing, Paris
Source: OECD/SWAC 2009

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Programs should be adapted to the linguistic landscape. There are no widely shared languages in the Sudano-Sahel, and the physical distance adopted by pastoralist groups is often due to language barriers. Pastoralists, who often have limited access to formal education, may encounter language barriers with host communities or with the central state. Learning the geographies of specific lingua franca (Hausa, pidgin Fulfulde) will enhance intervention strategies, sharpen media content, and inform outreach efforts.

6.5 - Inclusive Language in Public Messaging

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Description: Public messaging around pastoralism and conflict risks stoking hostilities through implied blame or accusation, fueling deeper identity-based tensions. Media personalities, diplomats, and other public figures play a critical role in shaping whether people see pastoralists as violent invaders or members of a common community (see also [7.3 - Public Messaging on “Fringe Pastoralism”](#)).

What Makes Public Messaging Inclusive?

> **Officials solicit diverse perspectives.** Conflicts rooted in subsistence practices, such as livestock production and farming, reach to the core of cultural identity and can evoke strong emotions that reverberates beyond the immediate parties involved.

It is easy for public messaging about these conflicts to become reductive and polarized by those in capital cities or urban areas as misinformation is amplified in the media. But the narratives popularized in media or by prominent figureheads may not accurately reflect the lived experience of pastoralists or the remote rural populations. Journalists, diplomats, and public figures should prioritize a range of voices - not only pastoralists but all those at the periphery - reaching judgement or conclusions about pastoralism-related conflict events.

> **Public messaging acknowledges the multiple drivers of conflict and empathizes with victims of violence.** As illustrated throughout this Toolkit, pastoralism-related conflicts are often driven by an intersection of multiple factors and causes, from land-use policies to ethno-nationalist movements.



Example
6.5

ETHNICIZED DISCOURSE IN WEST AFRICA

Various insurgent movements in the Sudano-Sahel have built support by appealing to pastoralist grievances or ethno-religious identities, from the [Islamic State in the Greater Sahara](#) to the [UPC](#) in the CAR. A principal part of the platform of the Katiba Maacina insurgency in Mali, for example, is free access to the rich grazing resources of the inland Niger Delta and these appeals have resonated among Fulani pastoralists who make up a significant portion of the group's membership. The participation of (traditionally pastoralist) Fulani communities in organized insurgencies and intercommunal violence is often portrayed in the media and public discourse as a move toward “Fulanization” or “Islamicization,” rather than a response to competition over resources. Even when this rhetoric is employed to draw attention to violence committed against civilians - as in the case of violence against Dogons in Mali or Christian farmers in Nigeria - it can have damaging consequences. The use of such charged language can erode the important distinction between the Fulani as an ethnic people numbering in the tens of millions and the small number of people who engage in insurgent or violent activities.

Isolating one cause of conflict while neglecting others can signal to certain communities that their experiences or grievances are insignificant. To focus narrowly on criminal activity, for example, is to dismiss the legitimate concerns of populations who are excluded from resources on ethnic grounds. Public messaging should acknowledge the intersectional and historic nature of these conflicts but not ignore the government duty to secure the safety, rights, and access to services for all citizens.

What Makes Public Messaging Divisive?

> **Messaging justifies collective blame of whole populations.** When a news headline or public statement fixates on the ethnic or religious identities of a perpetrator, it can contribute to the false perception that all members of that group are to blame. This is a frequent challenge in the description of attacks involving Fulani. The use of monikers like “Fulani terrorist” reinforces the perception that Fulani

ethnic identity is somehow a cause for violence. This can be a difficult line to navigate when discussing conflicts involving militia or insurgent groups that are organized around a particular ethnic base or religious identity. Interveners can address this risk by supporting training for local journalists in conflict-sensitive reporting practices and by ensuring that any statements from public officials avoids language that stigmatizes specific identities.

> **Officials appear biased by disregarding the testimony of minority groups.** Parties to identity-based conflicts perceive themselves as the victims, never as the perpetrators. Efforts to highlight or prioritize one group’s perspectives or demands, even if in the interest of fairness, can be perceived as a slight to other groups. This Toolkit has focused on the concerns and realities facing pastoralists, but the perspectives and experience of rural farmers are equally valid. The concerns of all communities need to be inventoried and incorporated into any public exercise, from messaging campaigns to public hearings.

OPINION | COMMENTARY

The New War Against Africa’s Christians

Fulani raiders ‘are Islamic extremists of a new stripe, more or less linked with Boko Haram,’ but present throughout Nigeria.

Nigerian Christian killed in Fulani ambush attack as violence skyrockets

By Jackson Elliott, Christian Post Reporter [FOLLOW](#)

Rise up, defend your state against herdsmen attack – TY Danjuma

Sunday, March 25, 2018 8:18 am | Daily News Headlines | 3 Comment(s)

The representation of pastoralist ethnic groups in news media can reinforce intergroup prejudices and cycles of conflict. Shown here are a selection of news headlines that illustrate how potentially divisive language appears in the media, from Wall Street Journal (top left), PM News (top right), and Christian Post (bottom).

Questions to Consider

WHEN ADAPTING MODULE 6 TO YOUR CONTEXT

1. Who provides justice?

- To whom do community members turn to resolve disputes relating to livestock?
- Are there competing or overlapping forums to resolve disputes?

2. Are these systems sufficient/satisfactory?

- Do community members feel that the structures or mechanisms for addressing resource conflicts are fair and lead to satisfactory results? How are women adequately represented in these structures and mechanisms?
- Are the community leaders or local authorities seen to fairly represent the interests of both mobile pastoralists and sedentary populations?

3. How do pastoralist and host communities relate?

- Where do pastoralist and farming populations regularly interact?
- What are the social or economic links that tie them together, and how can these be documented?

4. How do you reach pastoralists?

- What is the level of communication technology available to people in remote areas?
- What are the existing channels for pastoralists to communicate with one another and with other communities?
- What kinds of informational, educational, and entertainment programming can reach diverse groups of pastoralists?

5. How are pastoralists represented in media and public discourse?

- Do host communities see pastoralists as a security risk?
- How reliable is media reporting?
- Is it common to see collective blame or retribution in crimes involving pastoralism? Is that blame justified in terms of ethnic, religious, or tribal identity? What information sources drives these narratives?

Jump to:



MODULE 1 - RURAL DEVELOPMENT
– [Cultivating equitable rural economic growth and reducing chronic causes of conflict.](#)



MODULE 2 - ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION – [Incorporating pastoralism-related conflict into conservation efforts.](#)



MODULE 3 - GOVERNANCE AND RULE OF LAW – [Encouraging public participation in the governance of pastoral rangelands.](#)



MODULE 4 - REGIONAL INTEGRATION – [Understanding the regional, cross-border aspects of pastoralist livelihoods and their relationship with conflict.](#)



MODULE 5 - GENDER AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT – [Strengthening the role of women in decision-making and understanding gender in pastoralism-related conflict.](#)



MODULE 6 - CONFLICT MANAGEMENT – [Promoting social cohesion and resolving conflict nonviolently.](#)



MODULE 7 - LAW ENFORCEMENT AND COUNTERTERRORISM – [Addressing the intersection of cross-border pastoralism, criminality, and insurgency.](#)



MODULE 8 - DIGITAL PEACEBUILDING – [Integrating new technologies into conflict prevention.](#)



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



Civil society and security forces collaborate as part of Search for Common Ground programming in South Sudan. Credit: Search for Common Ground

Module 7

Law Enforcement and Counterterrorism

THIS MODULE COVERS HOW TO:

1. Develop community-centered approaches to security that are adapted to the needs of pastoralist populations and do not fuel polarization.

The Issue

Pastoralism is increasingly referenced in policy and programming discussions of transboundary crime and armed group activity, as pastoralists are often presented as potential vectors for violent crime and/or transnational terrorism. While grounded in valid concerns about the activities of some pastoralists, this lens is also used to justify discriminatory or abusive practices by government forces and local communities.

All over the world, livestock production has been a focal point for criminal activity when the demand for meat and animal products skyrockets, as has been the case in the Sudano-Sahel. Livestock are among the most valuable things people can own in rural areas, and pastoral migration routes frequently cross through the remote territories where criminal groups thrive. Cattle rustling or extortion of livestock owners is not a new practice, but in recent years the proliferation of arms and growing strength of criminal and insurgent groups has led to more frequent and deadly clashes between professional rustlers and armed cattle guards. Policing borderlands and rural territories is a challenge even outside of active conflict zones and many states lack the resources to protect against the increasing banditry.

To protect their livelihoods, pastoralists have adapted in different ways. Wealthier livestock owners hire more armed guards when they need to move their livestock through insecure territory, while many subsistence

pastoralists are forced to move to new regions or routes where they may end up in conflict with local farmers. Some pastoralists have formed alliances with local armed groups, acting as conduits for supplies or communication. For instance, some Mbororo pastoralists in the northern DRC have been accused of providing support to the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), although the Mbororo themselves are often victims of violence from the LRA.

Though pastoralists are common targets of theft or exploitation, some also engage in trafficking or poaching. Pastoral migration routes that cross through remote territories and across borders outside of state supervision can be ideal for moving drugs, guns, or other illicit goods. Though the pastoralists who engage in violence or criminal activity are only a minority, their behavior has often been invoked to stoke fear of pastoralists or specific pastoralist ethnic groups (see [Module 6 – Conflict Management](#)). The perception that pastoralists generally are a security threat is seemingly justified because of the tactics they use to survive - arming themselves to protect against bandits, avoiding state authorities when crossing the border, or traveling along routes that have been co-opted for smuggling. In the public eye, these nuances are diluted into a black and white depiction of pastoralist groups as criminals, a simplification unchallenged by national law enforcement and counterterrorism officials.

INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

[7.1 - Community-Oriented Security](#)

[7.2 - Security Sector Reform](#)

[7.3 - Public Messaging on “Fringe Pastoralism”](#)



Pastoralists often carry small arms to protect herds. Shown here a man with a rifle walks among cattle in Udier, South Sudan. Credit: Simon Maina/ AFP via Getty Images

CYCLE OF INSTABILITY IN PASTORAL AREAS



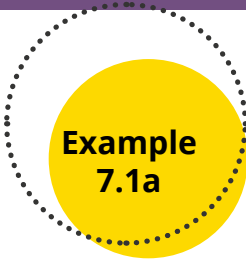
7.1 - Community-Oriented Security

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: PROGRAMMATIC/POLICY

Description: Community leaders are often the first to identify and respond to violent threats, particularly in remote rangelands where security forces are thinly deployed. These local leaders can serve as eyes and ears for security forces to help focus their interventions on high-risk areas for cattle rustling, smuggling, kidnapping, or reprisal killings. In addition, civilian-operated early warning systems (EWSs) in remote regions can provide overstretched security providers with critical information on where to focus their limited resources (see also [4.3 - Regional Security Coordination](#)). Community-oriented security in contested or stateless areas, though, requires a careful balancing of interests and substantial trust-building. Fostering collaboration with pastoralist groups may be particularly challenging as trust in state authorities may be very low after a long history of neglect.

What Makes Community-Oriented Security Succeed?

> **Programs pilot opportunities for collaboration between civilians and security forces to build trust.** Effective community-led security solutions are not possible when local citizens fear security forces. The latter can subject citizens to racketeering, perform rent-seeking behaviors, or openly collude with criminals. Where pastoralists have had similar experiences, they will avoid state security forces. Rebuilding this trust requires increasing the frequency and depth of positive interactions between civilians and security actors. In Niger, for example, Search created opportunities for contact and connection between security forces and local citizens through shared participation in [camel races](#). Open lines of trust and communication can enable pastoralists and local security forces to work together in recovering stolen livestock, even across national borders. Practical



Example 7.1a



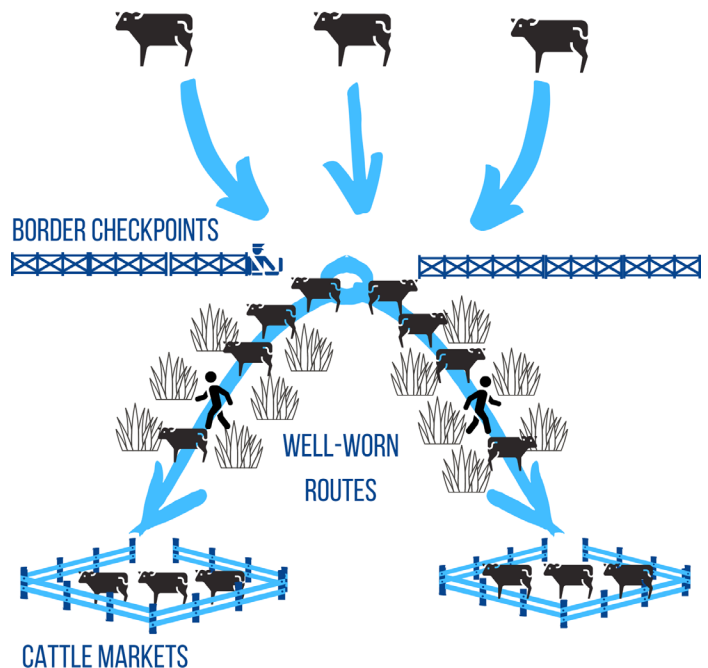
COMMUNITIES AND BORDER AGENTS CONFRONT CATTLE RUSTLING IN LIPTAKO-GOURMA

Along the border between Mali and Niger, law enforcement responses to cattle theft have been hindered by the movement of stolen livestock across borders. Nigerien authorities who come across stolen cattle from Mali have no way to know how to get in touch with the owners. And the victims of theft have no channel to reach authorities and have to take it upon themselves to wander out in search of their livestock. Beginning in 2017, Search led an intervention to build trust and coordination between authorities and local communities in border areas. This included inter-command dialogue between security forces, the establishment of an early warning network, and organizing forums for pastoralists to speak with security forces directly. The result has been stronger channels for information sharing. Victims of theft could report critical information, such as the time and location that their animals were taken, rather than feeling the need to take justice into their own hands.

forms of local cooperation (e.g., neighborhood watch committees) should be reinforced by advocacy activities that hold duty-bearer accountable for rights abuses committed against pastoralist (or other rural) groups.

> **Security forces open the space for humanitarian services and local peacebuilding.** Across the Sudano-Sahel, many of the key hot spots of pastoralism-related violence are insecure regions where peacebuilding and development programs cannot operate. Peacekeeping missions or other security forces can provide “safe spaces” where program staff and beneficiaries can meet for dialogues on transhumance routes, mobile field schools, or local commerce.

> **Participatory risk analysis allows citizens to inform law enforcement in high-risk areas.** In remote contexts where law enforcement is under-resourced and poorly staffed, rural banditry can become a serious public menace, interrupting local livelihoods and putting cattle holdings at risk. Local communities often have valuable knowledge about how criminal actors operate in their environment, often more than the state security forces who are generally outsiders. This advantage puts the community on equal footing with law enforcement and creates an opening for joint problem solving with the community as a partner, not just as a victim, information source, or suspect. Redefining public safety through community partnerships can help law enforcement prioritize specific public threats that matter most to citizens.



What Makes Community-Oriented Security Fail?

> **Communities mobilize into self-defense groups.** Vigilante activity is a major source of instability in the remote areas of the Sudano-Sahel where civilians do not have access to justice from state institutions. Communities under direct threat from NSAGs or rival groups cannot count on state protection and may take up arms in self-defense. Pastoralist or farming communities may form self-defense militias to protect livestock or crops or to seek retribution in response to attacks or property damage. Interventions focused

The movement of pastoral livestock through insecure areas leaves them vulnerable to theft or extortion schemes. There are a number of potential “choke points” where livestock may be at risk. Cross-border movement can be a high-risk moment for theft, as moving stolen livestock across jurisdictions can allow them to elude capture, and security forces are often stretched past capacity to monitor remote borderlands. Well-established transhumance routes can also be easy targets for armed groups that set up roadblocks and demand fees-for-passage. Finally, cattle markets can also be high-risk areas, as they are areas where cattle will gather en masse and often offer little physical security infrastructure.



In CAR, armed groups have used roadblocks to extort passing herders, which has forced some pastoralists to take their livestock to other areas or abandon their livelihood. Shown here a pastoralist takes his cattle to a market on the outskirts of Bangui, CAR. Credit: Jean Chung/Getty Images

Example 7.1b

on community-led solutions to security should be careful to avoid creating opportunities for vigilante violence or reinforcing the credibility of militia groups. Programmatic interventions that are well managed and establish mutually agreed-upon roles and responsibilities for civilians and security forces can be a valuable measure to prevent reliance on vigilante protection or justice.

> **Local or national authorities see community-oriented approaches to security as threatening.**

The institutional structure of law enforcement varies across the Sudano-Sahel, and there is no one-size-fits-all model that works across the region. Interventions to strengthen the role of community leaders in local security can be seen as challenging to local or national authorities, particularly in regions where state authority is already challenged by NSAGs.

PEACEKEEPING FORCES PROTECT MARKETS IN ABYEI

In the contested border region of Abyei between Sudan and South Sudan, access to grazing and farming land has been a key point of conflict between the Misseriya and Dinka Ngok communities. Misseriya pastoralists from the north have long migrated their livestock south to Abyei to access pasture and water during the dry season, and traders from both communities would rendezvous in local markets to sell livestock and other goods. Amid civil violence and South Sudanese independence, however, these interactions broke down. Economic ties were partially revitalized in 2016 with the Amiet market, which was established following a series of trust-building efforts between communities facilitated by third party organizations like Concordis International and the FAO. Due to continued insecurity on the border, the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei stepped in to provide protection for the traders. Without the coordinated approach between civilian peacebuilding interventions that could reestablish intercommunal relations and the presence of international security forces that could provide an element of security, this trade venue would not have been feasible given the ongoing strife.



Security forces with a specialized mandate and capacity to address pastoralism-related security issues are essential, but who should play that role? Shown here a peacekeeper of the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) stands guard in Abyei in 2010. Abyei has been a key faultline in conflict along the Sudan-South Sudan border, and is a key region for cross-border transhumance. Credit: Guillaume Lavalee/AFP via Getty Images

7.2 - Security Sector Reform

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: PROGRAMMATIC/POLICY

Description: The open rangelands and porous borders that pastoralists inhabit are ripe for armed groups to engage in smuggling, cattle rustling, or other illicit trade. As easy targets for theft or extortion, pastoralists have responded by aligning with militia groups, hiring private security, or removing livestock from recognized routes and official border checkpoints. Reinforcing security in these remote territories and guaranteeing safe transhumance would reduce violence and cut off revenue to insurgent groups and criminal syndicates. In some states, these areas are monitored by specialized security forces (as in the Nomadic Guard in Chad or the Agro-Rangers in Nigeria). In theory, these types of forces fill a critical gap in law enforcement as a light, easily mobile force that has the capacity to engage with communities in more remote areas. However, such forces are often under-resourced compared to local criminal groups. Specialized law enforcement and border security struggle with a lack of resources and technical capacity, challenges which are compounded by a lack of public trust and accountability. Any security sector reform agenda aimed at addressing rural banditry and insurgent activity should be adapted to address potential tensions between security forces and pastoralist populations or other inhabitants of remote territories.

Chad's National and Nomadic Guard are one example of a force that is more specialized for policing livestock-related crimes in the frontier. Shown here camel guards patrol on the Sudan-Chad border in Abulu Kore (Darfur), Eastern Chad. Credit: Thomas Coex/AFP via Getty Images.

Example 7.2

MOBILE LAW ENFORCEMENT IN CHAD

The National and Nomadic Guard of Chad (GNNT) (originally the Territorial Guard) is a domestic Chadian security force formed in the 1960s to provide security for officials, protect government buildings and prisons, and maintain order in rural areas. Officers operating on horseback or camel are adapted to negotiate the terrain in nomadic regions. As the ones responsible for maintaining rural order, they are the agency that often deals with monitoring transhumance routes and activity in national parks and addressing cattle theft. Though the GNNT represents an example of a law enforcement agency adapted to a context of nomadic pastoralists, they have faced accusations of discrimination, excessive punishment, and [poor coordination with other security forces](#). In [October of 2018](#), for example, GNNT General Saleh Brahim arrested 15 village chiefs for refusing to sign a document to renounce their right of land ownership and subjected them to degrading treatment.



What Makes Security Sector Reform Succeed?

- > **The mandate of relevant security forces is revised to include pastoralism-related violence.** Pastoralist participation in insurgencies or violent crime presents unique challenges for law enforcement and the wider security sector – such as tracking cross border movement, building access and trust with remote communities, and distinguishing between armed citizen herders and part-time combatants. There is a clear need for security providers who have the skills, expertise, and mandate to address cattle rustling and related violence in pastoral areas. However, pastoralism has not been consistently integrated into the mandate and mission of the military, counterterrorism, or peacekeeping forces that are dealing with these issues. One [review of UN peacekeeping missions](#) in the Sudano-Sahel found that only one – the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR (MINUSCA) - of the six missions that deal with pastoralism in their operations made any reference to it within their 2019 mandate. Without a more explicit focus on pastoralist-related violence, collaboration with citizen groups working to address root causes will remain ad hoc.
- > **Rights monitoring and reporting mechanisms are mobile and well-adapted to the specific needs of pastoral communities.** Pastoralist ethnic groups have suffered abuse and atrocities not only from intercommunal attacks, but also through state-sanctioned violence. In 2020, for example, the revelation of mass graves of predominantly Fulani victims found in Burkina Faso led [citizens to accuse](#) government forces of targeted executions. Rights monitoring for pastoralist communities face any number of challenges, first and foremost lack of access and trust. Highly networked, mobile strategies are required to reach pastoral groups on the move. Alternatively, civilian monitors may embed with state security forces patrolling remote pastoral areas where cattle raiding, smuggling, and armed crime flourish. Rights monitors can also operate through intermediary institutions (veterinary services, mosques) to track reports and confirm secondary accounts through settled family relations, or other indirect forms of research and verification.

- > **Cross-border pastoralism is included within the scope of anti-corruption and security sector reform initiatives.** Tracking and monitoring cross-border transhumance presents state security forces with unique opportunities for extortion, collusion with trafficking networks, and racketeering. State authorities, similar to armed groups, have been known to impose right-of-passage taxes on passing livestock or demand kickbacks in exchange for facilitating smuggling or illicit trafficking. Pastoralists whose entire livelihood is tied up in taking cattle to market have little choice but to comply. The absence of legal oversight means impunity for security agents operating far from central authority. Training for security forces or border agents on human rights, public accountability, community-driven security, and anti-corruption measures should include specialized content on pastoralism.
- > **Programs familiarize security forces with transhumance rights, laws, and customs.** Policies and multilateral agreements governing resource access and cross-border movement are often ambiguous or unclear about how they should be applied in practice (see [Module 3 – Governance and Rule of Law](#)). This leads to situations where security forces and pastoralists harbor different assumptions about what is permissible. Refresher trainings for personnel responsible for policing borders or livestock movements can improve application of the laws in force.
- > **Programs facilitate greater coordination between border agents, law enforcement agencies, and judiciary across national jurisdictions.** Cross-border transhumance is a concern shared by government agencies that may not otherwise collaborate - from national military forces monitoring arms trafficking to park rangers dealing with poaching to border agents watching for stolen cattle. The ideal vision for securing these borderlands will involve balancing the distinct capacities and mandates of different security forces. Military forces may be well-suited to secure the border from attack but should not be used to substitute for the border guards who are responsible for verifying that passing herds are properly registered. An effective system will involve a clear delineation of responsibilities and strong

mechanisms for collaboration between different security forces on both sides of a given border.

> **Programs expand access to new technologies for tracking cattle movements.** The ability to monitor cattle on a mass scale is invaluable in preventing theft, regulating herd size on public lands, and tracking the spread of diseases. Technologies like [GPS collars](#), already adopted by some livestock owners in Nigeria, can reduce the burden on under-resourced border and security personnel. Drones and other aerial surveillance can also be critical tools to monitor herd movements in vast and insecure rangelands, as [MONUSCO has done](#) in some areas of the DRC. Implementing new technologies is not just a matter of investment in new tools, knowledge, and infrastructure; it requires buy-in from pastoralists who have little contact with authorities. The rollout of new tracking tools should be part of a wider trust-building and partnership strategy involving reliable intermediaries such as vaccinators or trade associations.

What Makes Security Sector Reform Fail?

> **Existing laws and policies permit punitive tactics.** Many of the extortionist or punitive tactics that create hostility between pastoralists and security forces - fees for passage, prohibitions against grazing in public land, or fines for cutting tree branches to make shelter - are not signs of corruption, but are sanctioned or required by law. Trust-building between pastoralists and the security sector may struggle to gain traction when official policies are hostile to pastoral livelihoods.

> **Security forces discriminate in the protection of citizens.** Citizen's relations with security actors are influenced by the same prejudices and identity divisions that drive dynamics between pastoralists and host communities. The lack of equal protection

from security forces in the Sahel, for example, has helped to fuel the growth of ethno-nationalist militias, including among pastoralist populations. As outsiders, pastoralists migrating their livestock into other countries can be vulnerable to extortion and abuse. Strengthening the presence or capacity of security forces without accounting for these dynamics will only exacerbate existing conflict.

> **Intervention strategies that are driven by security interests will undermine civilian peacebuilding.** Conflicts relating to cross-border pastoralism often require some blend of both securitized and non-securitized responses. Large-scale cattle raiding, mass killing, and the involvement of pastoralists in armed insurgencies may be tackled by some combination of law enforcement, peacekeeping, or military operations. However, these forms of violence are often linked to everyday resource disputes or polarization between ethnic groups. Relying on military, counterterrorism, or law enforcement to handle every form of pastoralism-related conflict contributes to the reputation of pastoralists as "security threats." "Right-sizing" and aligning the mandate and reach of security forces and those of civil society peacebuilders should be a priority.



Cattle rustling has become an increasingly professionalized and deadly phenomenon in many parts of the Sudano-Sahel and an urgent priority for law enforcement. Shown here police force officers on search the Dajin Gomo Village in Sumaila local government area in Nigeria where police command found stolen cows from suspected cattle rustlers. Credit: NurPhoto/NurPhoto via Getty Images.

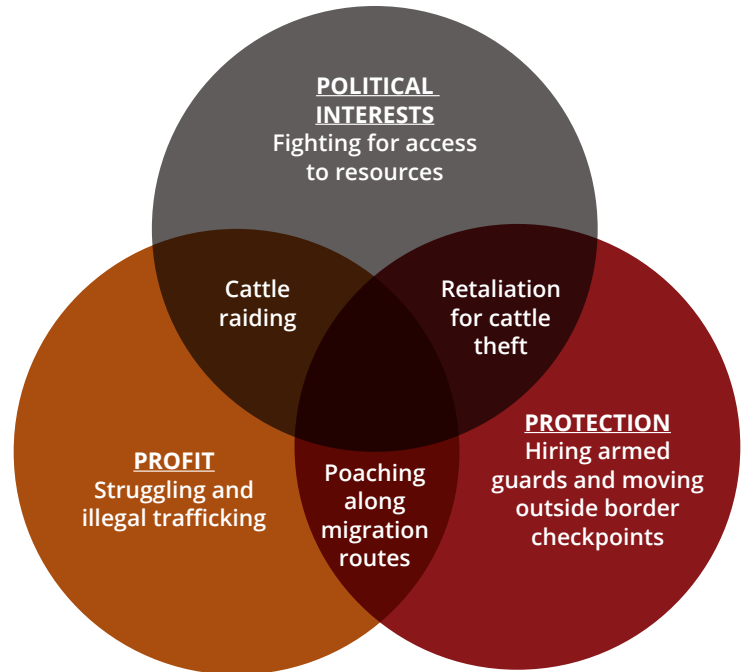
7.3 - Public Messaging on “Fringe Pastoralism”

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Description: Various public officials and security agencies who are responsible for securing borderlands and pastoral rangelands have raised concerns about the comparatively small percentage of the pastoralist population that engages in criminal activity and insurgency, described by the UN Economic Commission for Africa as “[fringe pastoralism](#).” There are valid reasons to be concerned that there is a connection between pastoral livelihoods and illicit activity, as outlined in this Module. However, the activities of fringe pastoralists are often cited to legitimize suspicion of pastoralist practices writ large or to demonize pastoralist ethnic groups. The perception that pastoralists (or members of pastoralist ethnic groups) are violent criminals has fueled discrimination and intercommunal violence. It is the responsibility of both media outlets and public officials to shape the narrative in a positive way and present a balanced and accurate picture of the actions of fringe pastoralists. Training on conflict sensitivity can help reporters and officials challenge their own prejudices about pastoralist groups and craft communications that are not incendiary.

What Makes Public Messaging on “Fringe Pastoralism” Succeed?

> **Communications are precise in distinguishing armed actors.** Not all pastoralists who engage in violence or criminal activity are part of an organized insurgency or criminal syndicate. If every violent incident involving a Fulani or Mbororo is treated like an act of terrorism or national security threat, armed forces will respond indiscriminately or with excessive force. Officials should be precise in noting differences between ethno-nationalist militias, criminal groups, mob violence, and lone actors.



Why do some individual pastoralists participate in criminal or insurgent activities? The influencing factors may include some combination of pursuing political interests, economic opportunism, and the need for self-protection.

- > **Communications describe events, causes, and outcomes without reference to ethnic, religious, or racial identity.** Various NSAGs are identified with a specific ethnic or religious group, and that identity tends to dominate how they are described in media and public discourse. When public officials repeat phrases like “Fulani terrorist,” they legitimize partisan bias and collective blame of a wider community. Media headlines and especially statements from public officials should focus on condemning behaviors and avoid demonizing specific identity groups.
- > **Incentivize good reporting practices.** Much of the available information on pastoralism-related conflict is filtered through local media sources, which can skew public narratives. Even locally, observers may associate resource disputes with terrorism, for example, because the parties involved are based in insurgent-controlled areas. Language barriers and physical remoteness can make pastoralists less

accessible to journalists and researchers. At the same time, intercommunal hostility often leads to rumors and misinformation about which group is responsible for an attack or crime. Training programs on conflict-sensitive journalism can help identify the causes of bias and mitigate its consequences. Corroborated, fact-based journalism improves the quality of reporting that can inform official policy and state action in pastoral drylands. In Nigeria, for example, Search developed an early warning system in which it was a requirement that all reports of conflict events had to come from two or more independent services before being disseminated through the system. This simple practice ensured that the early warning system was not actively contributing to the spread of unverified information.



**Example
7.3**



CODING DATA ON TERRORISM OBSCURES THE ROLE OF FULANI

Fulani pastoralists in West Africa have been frequently stigmatized as a militant community, leading to abuse or violence directed against Fulani civilians. The perception that the whole Fulani population are part of an organized, militant threat has been subtly reinforced by the way they are represented in some research and mainstream media. One key example is the representation of Fulani in conflict event data sets like the Global Terrorism Database (GTD). The GTD compiles data on terrorist events all over the world by drawing primarily on local news sources. The system has used the umbrella term “Fulani militants” to categorize attacks where Fulani individuals or groups have been implicated as the perpetrator by local media. This can include incidents where media sources report that the perpetrators are suspected to be Fulani, even if that has not been confirmed or verified by law enforcement. Coding the data this way can create the illusion that these attacks are all committed by a unified group, even though they may be wholly unrelated.

Drawing on this data, the [2015 Global Terrorism Index](#) - which analyzes global trends in terrorism - presented “Fulani militants” as the fourth deadliest terrorist organization in the world, comparable to Boko Haram or the Islamic State. This point was reiterated in [mainstream media](#) sources, stirring anti-Fulani sentiment at the local level. The presentation of “Fulani militants” as a group was removed in [later GTI reports](#), and discussions of the Fulani in the data have been supplemented by a disclaimer on pastoralism-related violence.

Questions to Consider

WHEN ADAPTING MODULE 7 TO YOUR CONTEXT

1. Who has the mandate and capacity to deal with pastoralism-related crime?

- a. What security, military, and law enforcement agencies are most directly involved in responding to pastoralism-related conflict or criminality?
- b. Are there security providers with a specific mandate to address cross-border criminality or NSAGs? If so, do they have a clearly defined strategy or approach to dealing with the risks associated with cross-border pastoralism?

2. Where are the gaps in coordination between security forces?

- a. To what extent, if any, is there coordination between security providers in rangelands or border regions?
- b. Where are there opportunities for regular communication and collaboration between military and civilian responses to pastoralism-related conflict?

3. How do security forces relate to the civilian population in rural and border areas?

- a. Are border security agents involved in extralegal activities that target pastoralists or pastoral mobility?
- b. Are there civil affairs services or community liaison structures? What is the communications strategy to key groups?

4. What is the perception of the connection between pastoralism and criminality or insurgency?

- a. What data sources exist to monitor or analyze trends in criminality or violence associated with pastoralism?
- b. How are criminal activities that involve pastoralists presented in the media and public discourse?
- c. Do policymakers and analysts clearly understand the distinction between organized NSAGs and pastoralists?

Jump to:



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[MODULE 8 - DIGITAL PEACEBUILDING](#) – [Integrating new technologies into conflict prevention.](#)



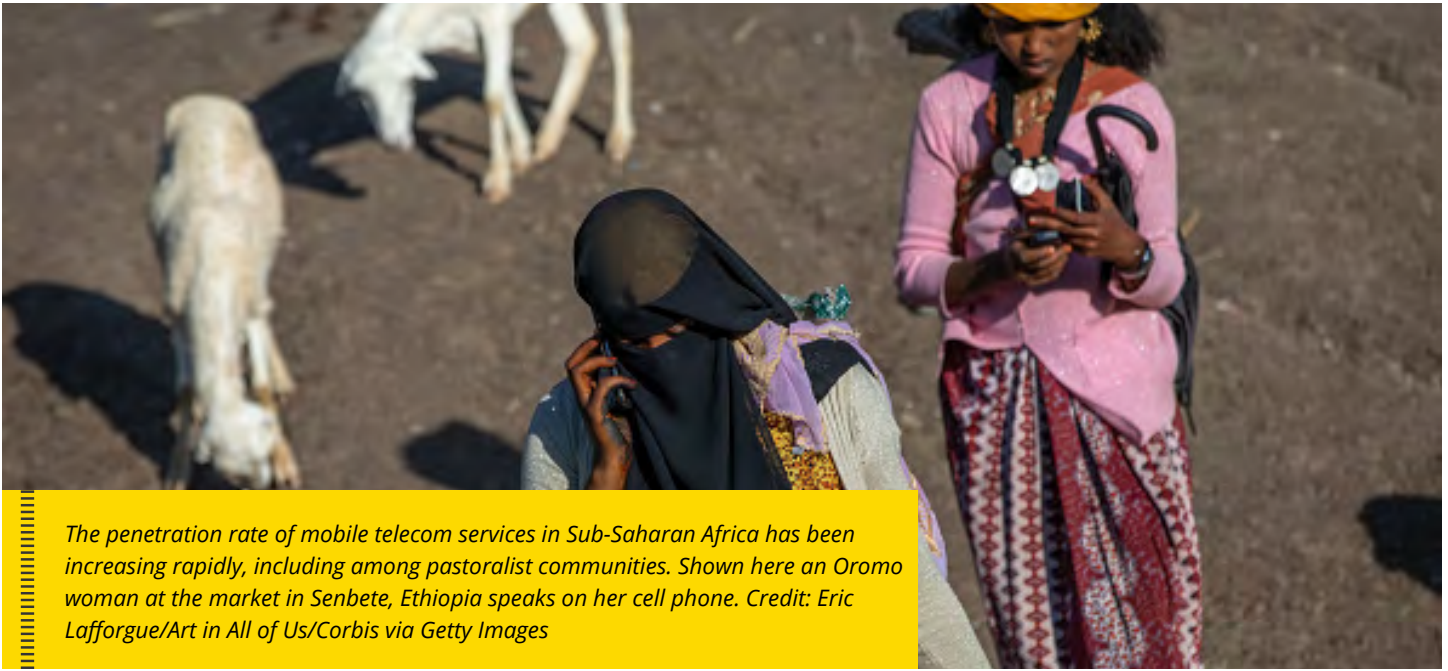
[ADDITIONAL RESOURCES](#)



The spread of inexpensive mobile devices is radically transforming the livelihoods of pastoralists and farmers by expanding their access to digital information. Shown here a farmer in Kenya uses a text messaging service called iCow. Credit: Sudarsan Raghavan/The Washington Post via Getty Images.

Module 8

Digital Peacebuilding



The penetration rate of mobile telecom services in Sub-Saharan Africa has been increasing rapidly, including among pastoralist communities. Shown here an Oromo woman at the market in Senbete, Ethiopia speaks on her cell phone. Credit: Eric Lafforgue/Art in All of Us/Corbis via Getty Images

THIS MODULE COVERS HOW TO:

1. Harness emerging digital technologies to support stabilization and security with pastoral communities.

The Issue

The spread of digital technology in the Sudano-Sahel is transforming the way pastoral communities practice their livelihood in the context of growing environmental, social, and political instability. Although pastoralism is often viewed as a practice from a pre-modern era, it has always been adaptive, and pastoralists are now adapting to the digital age. The rapid spread of inexpensive mobile devices is enabling residents of rural areas the ability to communicate across distance and access valuable information. The penetration rate of mobile telecom (SIM) in Sub-Saharan Africa is expected to reach 86% by 2025. In eastern Africa, pastoralists have been early adopters of mobile phone applications and in western Africa they have been the principal users of SIM-based climate information services.

Increasing access to new technological platforms and tools has the potential to reduce risks of conflict by strengthening the services available for mobile populations – from access to natural resources to protection against livestock theft (see Module 1). Direct access to geospatial data can help local leaders and individuals make more informed decisions about how to harmonize pastoral migration routes and farmland. Innovations in remote tracking tools for livestock can help authorities respond more effectively to theft in insecure areas.

While new technologies hold the potential to support peacebuilding, they are not an automatic solution. Investors and practitioners must be mindful of the limits of any new technology including the cost and scalability. Most importantly, efforts to introduce new technologies must be accountable to the needs of the local pastoralist or farmer who will use them. The most effective tools are not always the ones that are the most technologically innovative, but the ones that are accessible and useful to the communities they are intended to help.

This Module outlines several different types of digital technology that each have the potential to support peacebuilding outcomes. Many of these technologies are still evolving but are likely to play a substantial role in the future of pastoralism in the Sudano-Sahel.

INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

[8.1 Geospatial Technology](#)

[8.2 Climate Information Services](#)

[8.3 Anti-Theft Technology](#)


8.1 - Geospatial Technology

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: PROGRAMMATIC AND POLICY

Description: Historically, local communities have accommodated pastoral migrations through shared understanding of the routes where herds pass through and places where they need to graze. However, in recent decades, greater resource pressure and changes in the timing of livestock movements have increased the need for stricter demarcation of migration corridors at a national or regional scale. Efforts to map and mark migration routes are complex and cumbersome, which has increased the need for technological support. The introduction of handheld global positioning systems (GPS) technology – such as in phones - and digital maps allow local stakeholders to easily access comprehensive and up-to-date information. GPS and digital mapping technology can be used to identify the areas where seasonal resources are available and where there is a need for corridors to connect such areas across agro-pastoral landscapes.

These tools can be used to facilitate more inclusive and equitable resource governance. In Sudan, for example, scientists and practitioners are using geospatial data collected from GPS and satellite sources to pinpoint the reasons why livestock herds begin their seasonal movements through areas such as Kordofan, which is the location of many large-scale farming operations that may block livestock movements. Identifying resources or migration corridors in a map makes it easier to promote public awareness of land use agreements and protect against misuse (such as cattle

traveling into unauthorized areas or farms expanding into migration corridors). However, access to geospatial data and even handheld GPS devices varies across the Sudano-Sahel. It is essential for interveners to be aware of the risk that the transition into the use of new technology can reinforce economic and regional inequalities.



Example 8.1

PASTORAL NETWORKS MAINTAIN A DATABASE OF CORRIDORS AND GRAZING AREAS IN BURKINA FASO

Who should be responsible for maintaining digital maps? Keeping up-to-date maps often requires a level of infrastructure and technical expertise that may be out of reach for many local civil society leaders. In eastern Burkina Faso, the civil society network Le Réseau de Communication sur le Pastoralisme (RECOPA) developed a cartographic database of livestock corridors and grazing areas in 27 municipalities that can be accessed by local governments and members of their pastoralist network. RECOPA created this database with the help of their own geographic information system (GIS) experts and field agents and has sustained it at low cost by using an open-source platform and integrating with local livestock markets. The maps provide a necessary service to pastoralists, who rely on them to avoid cultivated areas during their seasonal migrations.

However, as a grassroots organization, RECOPA faces significant constraints in its use of technology. Hardware and software limitations prevent it from utilizing cloud-based data storage and deployment, which prevents rapid and efficient modifications to its maps. A lack of capacity building opportunities means that its agents do not necessarily gain exposure to best practices or technology innovations that could strengthen their practice.

What makes *interventions with geospatial tools* succeed?

- **Interventions are designed to help rural communities develop a deeper understanding of their own resource constraints.**

Maps are more than just tools to demarcate migration routes; they can be rich sources of information that is otherwise very difficult for rural residents to access. An individual pastoralist or farmer may intuitively understand the resource pressures they face but lack the larger-scale perspective that maps can provide. Cartographic data (i.e., maps) can help an individual pastoralist understand the changes in climate that are influencing livestock movements hundreds of kilometers from their own territories or visualize the extent to which land use has changed over time, not just where they live but in surrounding areas. For this reason, it is important that this data is made accessible to the public wherever possible. Programs to generate geospatial data should invest in translating that information into a language and format that does not require technical knowledge of cartography.

- **Maps are made accessible to all potential users.**

Resource maps must be easily, reliably, and inexpensively accessible to the people who live and travel through that land. Users should not be required to access computers or travel long distances to view mapped information. Ideally, information is available via mobile phones, which pastoralists use frequently while herding animals. Placing maps on mobile devices opens the possibility to link that information to other services, such as weather conditions or security alerts. In cases when maps are not available online or in the public domain, trusted actors must be tasked with providing access to them. Municipalities or civic associations can act as regional hubs where users can come to access maps and see, for example, where the livestock corridor or grazing areas are located in a given community. This often requires a certain level of technological infrastructure such as computers, printers, software licenses, and electricity in rural areas. By making this information available, digital maps enable local municipalities to protect pastoralists' legal rights to resource access, as has been observed in Mali.

- **Maps are consistently updated and revised.**

Successful mapping efforts must be responsive to the dynamic nature of pastoral mobility and resources in the Sudano-Sahel. Land use and available resources change on an annual basis so there is a constant risk that maps become outdated and lose their utility for local stakeholders. The need to keep maps up to date is particularly important for larger-scale mapping efforts (district/national/regional) where maps do not capture fine-scale changes in resource use. For example, a livestock corridor that is critical for hundreds or thousands of animals may be as narrow as 50 meters in some places so it can easily be blocked by as little as one new field. In order to remain useful, mapping interventions should be implemented as a long-term investment, with a plan to regularly update the data and share that data with users.



Digital technology must often be complemented by non-digital processes. Shown here communities in western Mali produce a map of pastoral resources using GPS-collected field data. Credit: Leif Brottem.

➤ **Mapping interventions are complemented by consensus-building activities.**

Efforts to map natural resources or pastoral migration routes can be contentious and often require balancing the needs and interests of groups who want to exercise a claim on a given territory. For example, local farmers may agree to demarcate a route for passing livestock in areas of low grazing value but prohibit it in places where pasture is most nutritious. Tools like GPS and digital mapping can provide more detailed information about the available resources and migration patterns, but that information will not automatically resolve the disagreements between local decision-makers. Interventions should continue to prioritize interpersonal consensus-building as a complement to digital mapping tools.

What makes *interventions with geospatial tools* efforts fail?

➤ **Interventions do not provide sufficient resources to ensure that maps are viable and up-to-date.**

Mapping natural resources or pastoral migration routes is expensive, time consuming, and complex even with access to the latest GPS technology. Successful interventions must make substantial investments in technical expertise by engaging cartographers in the design stage and recruiting mapping teams who are familiar with the technology and local terrain. When maps are used to demarcate pastoral migration routes or land for grazing or cultivation, the final product must be validated and accepted by a range of stakeholders from local government to pastoral and farming associations. Validating maps and building consensus – particularly when engaging mobile communities – can be time-consuming and cost-intensive. Even once maps have been validated, they will only remain viable if they can be regularly revised and updated, which often requires securing long-term support from a state institution, local livestock market, or civil society network. Interventions will be unsuccessful or backfire if they take shortcuts.

➤ **Mapping interventions are siloed from one another.**

There have been numerous discrete attempts to map resources and pastoral migration routes, from the local to the transnational level. Even when they cover the same territory, these interventions often involve different data sources, design processes, and stakeholders. The practice of parallel mapping process creates the risk that communities will have conflicting reference points for making decisions about resource management. It is important to encourage alignment and information-sharing among different mapping projects, and to ensure that maps designed at the national or regional level are reflective of those designed locally.

➤ **Mapping interventions spark new conflicts among resource users.**

Resource mapping is a deeply political endeavor and agro-pastoral lands are often contested spaces. Creating geographic boundaries around local territories and redefining areas for livestock movement can lead to new conflicts if not done carefully. Land or water resources that have historically been accessed by pastoralists through customary rights may have been sold to private owners or may have an unclear status under the law. Interventions that attempt to formalize explicit boundaries can result in pastoralists or farmers being displaced from lands they believe they have the right to access, and thereby fuel intercommunal conflict. There are many documented examples of farmers quickly establishing fields within livestock corridors after their establishment in order to secure their access rights or signal their disapproval to local leaders and livestock keepers. Even as digital mapping efforts are scaled up to a national or regional scale, it is still essential that local communities have a voice in creating those maps and protecting the mapped resources.

8.2 - Climate Information Services

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: PROGRAMMATIC

Description: To survive in arid Sahelian climates, pastoralists must be able to adapt to changing conditions in their environment. Understanding where to access surface water and pasture year-round, particularly during drier periods, is essential to the survival of pastoral herds. Pastoralists have traditionally coped with this uncertainty through non-digital approaches, such as sending out scouts ahead of their herds. However, digital climate information services can provide pastoralists with more detailed data on resource availability or weather patterns through a combination of satellite images, georeferencing tools, and informants on the ground. This information can then be transmitted to the public via radio broadcasts, SMS, call-in centers, or applications for mobile devices. These services frequently expand beyond climate data to cover a range of other relevant information including livestock prices, locations of veterinary stations and vaccination parks, disease occurrences, concentrations of cattle, and areas of conflict. Advances in cloud computing and user interface facilitate a seamless link between data source and local users. As a result, pastoralists in remote areas can access information to help them plan their migration routes, find necessary resources and, at times, avoid confrontations with farmers, bandits, or other pastoralists.

Climate data also has potential applications to guide investments in stabilization, development, and responses to conflict. Advances in data analysis tools enable experts to anticipate risks for drought or resource shortages that are likely to displace pastoralist communities and spark local conflicts. With this information, development agencies and others can take pre-emptive action to assist pastoral and sedentary communities before they are devastated by natural disasters and before conflicts escalate.

What makes *climate information services* succeed?

- **Programs are designed to foster local partnerships for data collection and dissemination.**

Even the most sophisticated digital tools have their limitations. Climate information services work best when they are complemented by a network of local informants or associations who can “ground truth” the information derived from satellite images and capture information that cannot be remotely sensed, such as disease and market prices. Building information



Example 8.2a

EARLY WARNING SERVICE PROVIDES WEST AFRICAN PASTORALISTS WITH REAL-TIME INFORMATION

The Pastoral Early Warning System (PEWS) – developed by Action Contre la Faim – is an information service that shares data with governments, humanitarian actors, and pastoralists via email, local radio, SMS, and online [bulletins](#). Satellite images provide information on pasture (biomass) and surface water availability and accessibility, and paid local informants submit weekly surveys via SMS on topics including pasture, livestock concentration, water sources, cattle health, market prices, bush fires, and conflict. Both sets of data are analyzed by artificial intelligence and further validated by local actors and government ministries. This system illustrates how digital data collection and local, experiential knowledge can be complementary and mutually reinforcing. By providing this information through public channels, PEWS can be used by pastoralists to support all kinds of decisions for managing their livestock.

services that allow local partners to input their knowledge can add legitimacy to the service and ensure that it is responsive to the real needs of pastoralists, farmers, and others. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, at the suggestion of the pastoral network Réseau Billital Maroobé (RBM), Action Contre la Faim developed a platform to alert pastoralists in the Sahel about border closures, market closures, and price increases caused by pandemic response.

➤ **Information services are designed to be accessible to pastoralists.**

For information services to be effective, the average user must be able to easily access and comprehend the available data. Information must be transmitted in local languages and presented in terms that are familiar to individuals who have not received a formal education (as many pastoralists have not). For illiterate populations, information should be provided over the radio or phone, rather than through text-based messaging. Interveners should design services that are suited to the devices that are already owned by pastoralists in their respective context – such as using radios and feature phones rather than mobile applications for smartphones. Services must be inexpensive for the user, as the vast majority of pastoralists in the Sahel live below the poverty line. In Mali, for example, the telecom company Orange subsidizes 80% of the cost of calls to the GARBAL platform produced by SNV Netherlands.

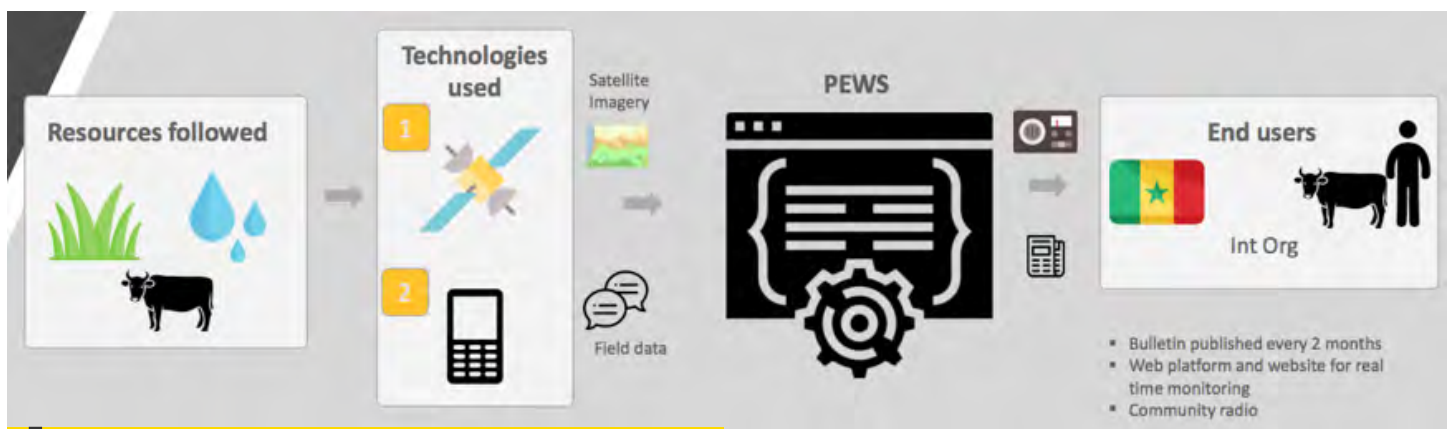
➤ **Services collect information that has a practical utility for pastoralists.**

For information services to have practical value, they should cover a broad geographic range, be updated

frequently, and include holistic information. In terms of geographic coverage, they should ideally extend for the entirety of pastoral routes, including across borders. The PEWS system, for example, extends across Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, and Senegal (see Example 8.2a). Information should also be updated and/or disseminated with high frequency. Most operational and effective programs reviewed in the research for this toolkit update their platforms every 7 to 10 days. Finally, users will find more value in the service if it can provide information beyond water and pasture availability, such as market prices, cattle health, or cattle concentration which are also influenced indirectly by climate variations. In Kenya, pastoralists' ability to access these other types of information via the AfriScout platform has contributed to reduced livestock mortality during the dry season.

➤ **Climate information services are designed to complement, not replace, current practices.**

Climate-related information is not the only factor pastoralists consider when determining their migration route, and climate information services cannot replace traditional sources of knowledge. Information received through technology platforms will ideally reinforce personal understandings about climate and the migration route obtained through historical knowledge or local indicators such as plants and wildlife behavior. Pastoralist communities will likely continue to rely on scouts and personal networks to plan their route and negotiate access with local farmers, but access to information about available resources or risks of drought can save time and money by minimizing the number of places they send scouts. When socializing



PEWS data inputs and information outputs. Credit: World Bank.

new information services, it is important that they are presented as building on, not subverting, these other practices.

➤ **Climate data is used to prevent conflict and guide development investments.**

Data collected by climate information services can be used to anticipate shocks to the livestock sector and even heightened risks of intercommunal conflict. Using a system like PEWS, for example, governments and development agencies can track biomass production and send out early warning bulletins if they notice any abnormalities or mobilize relief services before livestock are lost (see Example 8.2a). Or, if the data or informant networks indicate that herds are going to arrive before harvest and potentially damage crops, water and fodder can be provided to pastoralist to delay their movements until post-harvest. Using advanced analytic tools, experts can also use climate data to better predict the impact of climate change on local populations and develop data-driven solutions (see Example 8.2b). Interventions to develop and socialize climate information services should be mindful of the multiple potential uses of the data they collect and should look for opportunities to make these technologies a part of the conflict prevention agenda.

What makes *climate information services* fail?

➤ **Programs are designed with a short time horizon.**

It takes time to develop, market, deploy, and scale up these kinds of systems. Socializing new technologies among pastoral communities who operate in remote areas and have high levels of illiteracy requires the time to build trust and troubleshoot problems with user access and interface. Interveners will need time to invest in partnerships with pastoralist networks and local informants, who are often essential for “ground-truthing” data and reaching the target audiences. Without sufficient resources and long-term commitment, these kinds of interventions will be less likely to take root.

➤ **Services are not designed for sustainability.**

Climate information services are generally not a profitable business, particularly when these services need to be affordable to pastoralists, the vast majority of whom live under the poverty line. The long-term vision for sustainability should be addressed prior to program implementation, so that these services are not dependent on short-term donor funding and so that the cost for the users does not become so high that it is no longer accessible to the smallholder pastoralists who need it. Building public and private partnerships with telecommunications businesses, including radio stations and phone providers, is one step that some services have taken to ensure sustainability. However, since climate information alone is rarely profitable, platforms run by private companies often must be linked to other services or a part of something bigger, especially if they are partially subsidizing costs.

Example 8.2b

CLIMATE DATA PREDICTS RISKS OF CONFLICT IN SOMALIA

While pastoralists in the Sudano-Sahel consistently adapt to uncertain weather conditions, severe events like flooding or drought can force them to migrate to new areas and bring them into conflict with local host communities. Using advanced data mining algorithms, the crowdsourcing platform Omdena designed a system to predict conflict hotspots in Somalia based on climate and migration data. These data mining tools (including Support Vector Machine and Random Forest algorithms) allowed Omdena and to predict where flooding or drought events are likely to displace large groups of people and push them into regions where conflict risk is high because of insufficient resources for both the migrants and host population. That information was provided to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian partners to inform their decisions about how to allocate resources.



Analysis of climate data can help humanitarian and government agencies anticipate and respond to erratic or severe weather events that displace pastoralist communities. Shown here, pastoralists from the Southern Nationalities, Nations, and People's State in Ethiopia walk their cattle through flooded areas that they have been forced to leave after severe floods in 2006. Credit: Abraham Fisseha/AFP via Getty Images

8.3 - Anti-Theft Technology

Description: Pastoral livestock and the herders who take them on migration are frequently targeted for theft by bandits and armed groups, fueling the proliferation of small arms (see Module 7). Livestock are an appealing target, in part, because they can be easily hidden in an isolated area such as a protected forest or quickly sold in a nearby market. Once they are stolen, they are difficult to find and recover. The rampant increase in livestock theft across the Sudano-Sahel has increased the need for innovative technological solutions to policing pastoral rangelands. In Senegal, for example, the mLouma network allows livestock keepers to rapidly communicate theft incidents using internet and cellular networks to law enforcement authorities with the goal of making it easier to track and recover livestock quickly. Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) have also been used to monitor isolated areas where thieves may attempt to hide stolen livestock before they can sell them.

The most commonly used technology for keeping track of livestock is radio frequency identification (RFID) tags. RFID devices allow animals to be remotely tracked (over a limited distance) and allow for greater transparency in buying and selling livestock. RFID devices hold an electronic record of the ownership of an animal, along with veterinary records and other information. This technology makes it easier to regulate livestock markets and enable merchants to accurately verify the owner of a cow before it is sold. Using RFID devices in conjunction with tamper-proof electronic record systems (e.g., blockchain) has the potential to transform livestock markets by replacing paper records of an animal's health or origin with more secure digital records. These tools can make the livestock trade more transparent and easier to regulate, which will diminish the market value of stolen livestock and make the industry more attractive to investors. However, within the Sudano-Sahel, each of the technologies described in this section are in limited use, particularly in regions that are outside the effective control of law enforcement.



Radio frequency identification (RFID) devices use electromagnetic fields to trace and, in a limited way, track the movements of tagged animals. Usually, these devices involve a microchip that is ingested or embedded under the skin of an animal, so they cannot be easily tampered with or removed like ear tags. This microchip stores information and emits a trackable signal. Shown here is Livestock247's RFID digital livestock traceability tool used in Nigeria. Credit: Livestock247.com.

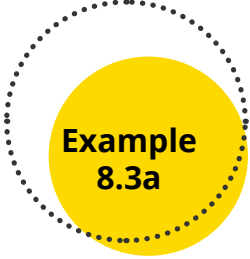
What makes *anti-theft technologies* succeed?

> The benefits of anti-theft technologies are clearly communicated to pastoralists and other users.

For tools like RFID devices or digital reporting systems to be effective in reducing theft, pastoralist users must be able to trust that the information they report to authorities will be used to investigate cases and identify culprits. Using these digital tools can reduce the risks for fraud or misinformation. Digital records can be far more secure than paper records, especially when the records from RFID devices are stored in distributed ledger systems, as [some livestock markets have attempted](#). However, as illustrated in the case of CaTRIS, users will not adopt a technology if they are worried about how that information will be used (see Example 8.3a). Interveners who are promoting the adoption of any new technology need to prioritize building confidence among potential users and clearly communicating the benefits of having reliable, neutral, and accurate digital records. Beyond providing potential protection against theft, having a traceable digital record of livestock health and origin can reduce the risk for buyers and encourage investment in the cattle industry (see Example 8.3b). This is particularly important when engaging with certain pastoralist populations who would prefer to operate outside the eye of authorities and are reluctant to secure even paper registration.

> Technology developers design tools for users with low levels of technological literacy.

The majority of pastoralists in the Sudano-Sahel have limited literacy and prior experience with sophisticated technologies. Devices must be designed first and foremost with the end user in mind. The CaTRIS livestock theft alert system in Nigeria, for example, went through several design iterations before it had a user interface that depended on visual symbols embedded in mobile phone text messages (see Example 8.3a). The use of audio information, when possible, can also be used to overcome user constraints. If complex or costly traceability technologies become the standard used among livestock in a given region, there is a risk that the poorer and less-educated pastoralists will be disenfranchised from the market.



Example 8.3a



NIGERIAN PASTORALISTS ALERT AUTHORITIES IN REAL TIME TO CATTLE THEFT

The Center for Information Technology and Development (CITAD), based in Kano, Nigeria, established a web-based system to provide officials and law enforcement agencies with real-time alerts of cattle rustling. The Cattle Rustling Information System (CaTRIS), used social media-based crowdsourcing and Ushahidi open-source software to collect information and communicate with users at minimal cost. The crowdsourcing platform enabled victims of theft to send out an alert to other users of the CaTRIS system along with information on the probable location of their stolen cattle and the markets where the livestock were likely to be taken. In order to make the system usable for illiterate populations, CITAD created a user interface based on symbols identified through focus group input. Despite the service's relatively low cost (<\$1 USD), the CaTRIS system had difficulties attracting users due, in part, to the fears of reprisals from corrupt authorities who are benefitting from livestock theft. Without revenues from user fees, maintaining the web infrastructure became financially untenable.

What makes *anti-theft technologies* fail?

➤ **Technologies are not designed to suit the practical needs of pastoralist populations.**

To be functional for pastoralists who migrate over long distances in remote areas, the tools and platforms profiled in this section must have a wide geographic range and long lifespan. Tracking signals for RFID devices and surveillance tools (e.g., UAVs) are most effective over short ranges. Digital platforms for reporting theft must be accessible across different telecommunications networks to cover the whole length of a pastoral migrations. Microchips or other identification devices often have a limited battery life, which makes them less effective for pastoralists who spend long periods of time in isolated areas. These constraints can make anti-theft measures costly or prohibitive for many livestock owners.

➤ **Anti-theft technologies are not backed up by law enforcement.**

Cattle tracking, reporting systems, and remote surveillance can all be important tools to assist authorities and law enforcement who have limited capacity to monitor pastoral areas or prevent theft from armed groups. However, these technologies are only effective insofar as they complement law enforcement activities. In under-policed areas, criminals can quickly sell stolen livestock to be slaughtered or trafficked to urban areas and neighboring countries long before they can be tracked or recovered. Livestock theft frequently takes place in well-established black markets that involve the complicity of the authorities and other political actors. Efforts to increase the transparency of livestock trade will have limited impact as long as illicit markets are commonplace. The tools described in this section should be introduced where they can be properly supported by law enforcement.

➤ **New technologies are not universally adopted within the market.**

Tracing devices like RFID are only effective in bringing transparency to the livestock market if they are widely used by both cattle owners and buyers. If no one checks the device when a cow is taken to market, then there is no opportunity to identify theft at the point of sale. Any initiative to promote the use of new technology needs to be complemented by robust regulations or social

norms that ensure the technology is used properly throughout the market.

➤ **The cost of using the technology outweighs the benefit for individual users.**

The viability of tools like RFID for individual pastoralists depends on whether it is financially sustainable for its users. Livestock owners must purchase individual tracing chips and pay for their occasional maintenance and replacement. Ingestible (i.e., bolus-based) tracking devices can cost up to \$7.40 USD to register and \$6-7 for annual maintenance. The most cutting-edge RFID tracking chip in use in western Africa costs \$15 per unit and requires a \$100 chip reader. Additionally, in order for RFID to be able to track livestock movements, it must be supported by a substantial level of technological infrastructure (data processing and storage) that may be unavailable in rural areas. All these factors can disincentivize individual pastoralists from using the system, even if it has potential benefits.



**Example
8.3b**



LIVESTOCK MARKETS ACROSS SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA EXPERIMENT WITH TRACEABILITY SYSTEMS.

Various livestock tagging and tracing systems have been attempted across the African continent, but often with limited success in scaling up into a universal practice. Livestock theft was a serious problem in Botswana until the country implemented a comprehensive livestock traceability system in 2000 to meet the sanitary standards of the European Union, the country's main livestock market. The legal requirement that all cattle must be tagged and registered in the system's database at birth has become a significant deterrent to theft. A key to the system's success is sustained public sector support: the Botswana government

Example 8.3b

has invested up to \$100 million USD in the system since 2000 and it continues to subsidize the cost of tagging animals. The tracing system uses a variety of identification technologies including rumen boluses that cost up to \$3-4 per individual tag.

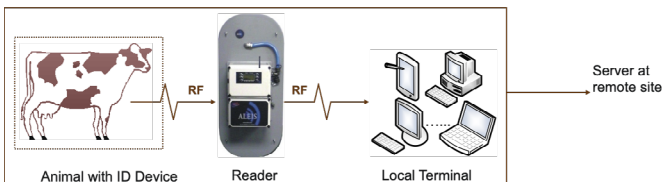
Overall, traceability systems have had more limited success within the Sudano-Sahel. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) piloted a regional traceability scheme in eastern Africa, but it was limited to approximately 2000 head of cattle and did not scale up due to a lack of adoption by users and inadequate political support from authorities. In part, this system was limited by the insufficient cellular network coverage in many parts of the region. In Nigeria, private sector firms such as Livestock247 are attempting to replicate Botswana's success, but have been hindered by the high costs and low level of demand. Nigeria's unreliable electrical grid drives up the cost of using mobile technologies, and because livestock markets are mostly informal, the demand for costly traceability technologies is low because they currently do not translate into a higher price for livestock sellers.

Questions to Consider

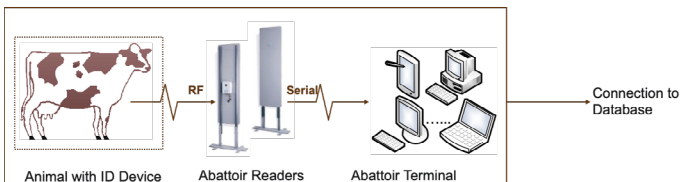
WHEN ADAPTING MODULE 8 TO YOUR CONTEXT:

1. **Is the technology accessible to pastoralists or other potential users?**
 - a. Do all potential users have access to the devices (e.g., mobile phones) or technological infrastructure necessary to benefit from the information or service provided?
 - b. What is the level of literacy and technological literacy among potential users?
 - c. Is the technology or service accessible to pastoralists during migration, or does it require access to a centralized platform or information node?
2. **How will the adoption of this technology affect existing social norms and political relationships?**
 - a. What are the financial or logistical barriers for marginalized groups to adopt or benefit from this technology?
 - b. Will information produced by this technology impact the way local communities negotiate claims to land, water, or other resources?
 - c. How will this technology affect communication between communities and local authorities?
3. **Who are the local stakeholders or influencers who will facilitate the spread of this technology?**
 - a. Is there a need for data collected from local informants?
 - b. Are there trusted community leaders or networks who can champion this new technology among pastoralists or other potential users? What concerns or resistance are they likely to encounter from users?

At Crush/Kraal/Farm



At Abattoir



Shown here Animal Identification and Recording (AIR) system for livestock in sub-Saharan Africa. Credit: Dominic Ferguson, Consult IT Ltd. Botswana.

4. Do potential users face social or political pressures to avoid using the technology?

- a. Will users generate and share information that has political or security implications?
- b. Will adopting the technology put users in physical danger or political jeopardy by implicating authorities or other influential individuals in illegal activities?
- c. Can the technology be manipulated to shame or marginalize certain vulnerable groups such as migrant farmers or women?
- d. Can the technology be instrumentalized by parties to long-running conflicts?

5. What are the cost implications of bringing this technology to scale?

- a. What are the costs of the technology for the average user? Will that be a barrier to entry for poorer pastoralists or other users?
- b. Is there a viable revenue model to bring this technology to scale by integrating it with local markets or public-private partnerships?

6. What opportunities are there to deploy this technology to prevent conflict?

- a. How will data from this technology be used in practice? Will it be shared with other organizations and actors who can support conflict prevention?

Jump to:



[MODULE 2 - ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION](#) – [Incorporating pastoralism-related conflict into conservation efforts.](#)



[MODULE 3 - GOVERNANCE AND RULE OF LAW](#) – [Encouraging public participation in the governance of pastoral rangelands.](#)



[MODULE 4 - REGIONAL INTEGRATION](#) – [Understanding the regional, cross-border aspects of pastoralist livelihoods and their relationship with conflict.](#)



[MODULE 5 - GENDER AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT](#) – [Strengthening the role of women in decision-making and understanding gender in pastoralism-related conflict.](#)



[MODULE 6 - CONFLICT MANAGEMENT](#) – [Promoting social cohesion and resolving conflict nonviolently.](#)



[MODULE 7 - LAW ENFORCEMENT AND COUNTERTERRORISM](#) – [Addressing the intersection of cross-border pastoralism, criminality, and insurgency.](#)



[MODULE 8 - DIGITAL PEACEBUILDING](#) – [Integrating new technologies into conflict prevention.](#)



[ADDITIONAL RESOURCES](#)

Additional Resources

The following is a short selection of additional resources on some of subjects covered in this Toolkit. For a more detailed compilation of resources, please check out the companion report:

Brottem, Leif and Andrew McDonnell. [*Pastoralism and Conflict in the Sudano-Sahel: A Review of the Literature*](#). (Washington DC: Search for Common Ground, 2020).

Engaging with Nomadic Populations

[*Effective Engagement with Pastoralist Populations: Guidance for USAID Operating Units*](#). (USAID, 2020).

[*Toolkit: Engaging with pastoralists – a holistic development approach*](#). (International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2018).

Understanding Transhumance

[*Cross-border coordination of livestock movements and sharing of natural resources among pastoralist communities in the Greater Karamoja Cluster*](#). (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2019).

Davies, Jonathan, Claire Ogali, Lydia Slobodian, Guyo Roba, and Razingrim Ouedraogo. [*Crossing Boundaries: Legal and Policy Arrangements for Cross-Border Pastoralism*](#). (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Union for Conservation of Nature, 2018).

[*Pastoralism in Africa's Drylands: Reducing Risks, Addressing Vulnerability and Enhancing Resilience*](#). (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2018).

Leonhardt, M. [*Regional Policies and Response to Manage Pastoral Movements within the Ecowas Region*](#). (Abuja: International Organization for Migration, 2017).

[*How to do: Livestock Value Chain Analysis and Project Development*](#). (International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2016).

De Haan, Cees, Etienne Dubern, Bernard Garancher, and Catalina Quintero. [*Pastoralism Development in the Sahel: A Road to Stability?*](#) (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2016).

[Online Course: Pastoralism and Uncertainty](#). PASTRES.

[*Pastoral Livestock Farming in Sahel and West Africa: Preconceptions Put to the Test*](#). (Inter-Réseaux Développement Rural).

Land Tenure in Pastoral Lands

Davies, Jonathan, Pedro Herrera, Jabier Ruiz-Mirazo, Jennifer Mohamed-Katerere, Ian Hannam, Emmanuel Nuesiri. [*Improving Governance of Pastoral Lands: Implementing the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security*](#). (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2016)

Hughes, Oliver. [*Literature Review of Land Tenure in Niger; Burkina Faso, and Mali: Context and Opportunities*](#). (Catholic Relief Services, 2014).

Behnke, Roy and Mark Freudenberger. [*Pastoral Land Rights and Resource Governance Overview And Recommendations For Managing Conflicts And Strengthening Pastoralist' Rights*](#). (USAID, 2013).

[*The Land we Graze: A Synthesis of Case Studies about How Pastoralists' Organizations Defend their Land Rights*](#). (Nairobi: International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, 2011).

Gender and Pastoralism

[*How to do: Gender and Pastoralism*](#). (International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2020).

[*Women and Pastoralism*](#). Livestock Thematic Papers: Tools for Project Design. (Rome: IFAD, 2012).

Flintan, Fiona. [*Women's Empowerment in Pastoral Societies*](#). (World Initiative for Sustainable Pastoralism, Global Environment Facility, International Union for Conservation of Nature and United Nations Development Programme, 2008).

Livestock-Wildlife Interface

Luizza, Matthew. [*Transhumant Pastoralism in Central Africa: Emerging Impacts on Conservation and Security*](#). (Washington, DC: United States Fish and Wildlife Service Division of International Conservation, Africa Branch, 2017).

[*The Dryland Livestock Wildlife Environment Interface Project: Experiences and Lessons from Livestock-Wildlife-Environment Interface Management in Kenya and Burkina Faso*](#). (UN Environment Programme and African Union Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources, 2009).

Peace and Security

[*How to Prevent Land Use Conflicts in Pastoral Areas*](#). (Rome: International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2020).

[*Preventing, Mitigating & Resolving Transhumance-Related Conflicts in UN Peacekeeping Settings: A Survey of Practice*](#). (United Nations Departments of Peace Operations, 2020).

[*Pastoralism and Security in West Africa and the Sahel: Towards Peaceful Coexistence*](#). (Dakar, Senegal: United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, 2018).

[*New Fringe Pastoralism: Conflict and Insecurity and Development in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel*](#). (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2017).