Mainstreaming Conflict Prevention in Development Co-operation
Tip Sheet on the Links between Pastoral Livelihoods & Conflict Prevention

Michele Nori
Alec Crawford
Jason Switzer
International Institute for Sustainable Development
www.iisd.org/natres/security
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Tip Sheet on THE LINKS BETWEEN PASTORAL LIVELIHOODS & CONFLICT PREVENTION

**Pastoralism, practiced on a quarter of the globe’s surface, is critically dependent upon access to and conditions of range resources. Development co-operation can support conflict prevention in these areas by enhancing livelihood options and strengthening customary and formal conflict resolution mechanisms.**

This tip sheet uses the sustainable livelihoods framework to outline the range of conflict drivers within and between pastoral communities and neighbouring farming or urban communities. It offers guidance on strengthening the conflict sensitivity of programme design in pastoral regions, and gives additional sources for further information.

**KEY MESSAGES**

- **Violence** has often been a part of pastoral lives. Yet when external social, environmental, political and economic changes are narrowing pastoral livelihood options, the incidence and intensity of clashes within and between pastoral communities and other land users is likely to increase.

- A sustainable livelihoods-based conflict **analysis** should address agro-ecological conditions, existing livelihood strategies, and the socio-economic and political context. Particular attention should be given to local and national arrangements to negotiate resource access and resolve conflicts. Development programmes in pastoral areas need to identify their potential impacts, the winners and losers, and means for compensating the losers.

- Development programmes should aim at enhancing the efficiency and productivity of existing **livelihood strategies**; they should also attempt to diversify the mix of livelihood options available to communities. Examples are enhanced access to and fairness of pastoral product marketing mechanisms and strengthened pastoral participation in policy decisions.

- Targeted efforts to strengthen pastoral social and political capital can help communities adapt to change and integrate into the broader societal frame. Synergistic **relationships** within and between pastoral, farmer and urban communities need to be reinforced. Both traditional and formal-administrative mechanisms for managing conflict have an important role to play. Their respective roles and the interaction between them need clarification. Women’s participation in such processes needs to be enhanced in a culturally sensitive way.

- Livelihoods of pastoral communities are vulnerable to sudden or gradual changes in social or ecological conditions (shocks and stresses). Mobility remains a highly effective coping strategy in such an environment. Development programmes should therefore strengthen and **safeguard mobility** as the main pastoralist coping mechanism against drought, conflict and disease.

- As pastoralists often move across intra-national and international **borders**, development programmes must foster regional approaches and harmonization of treatment across borders.
INTRODUCTION

Despite their vital role in global food security and production on lands otherwise unsuitable to agriculture, pastoral communities around the world are in a state of crisis. In many societies, pastoral communities remain among the most politically and economically marginalized of groups. Customary rangelands and migratory transit routes are shrinking in the face of spreading cultivation, nature conservation areas and impermeable international borders, even as rural populations rise. Herds are threatened by lengthy droughts and diseases, while modern weaponry has made traditional confrontations more explosive. Preventing pastoral conflicts and resolving underlying drivers should be a priority for development assistance in arid and semi-arid regions.

KEY CONCEPTS

Pastoralism is the finely-honed symbiotic relationship between people, domesticated livestock and local rangelands in fragile and highly-variable ecosystems, often existing at the threshold of human survival. Pastoral groups inhabit arid areas where soil, rainfall and temperature conditions constrain land use options. This means that groups have to move seasonally between regions with their herds in search of grazing opportunities and freshwater sources. To reduce risks and maximize the productivity of variable and widely-dispersed resources, such communities depend upon flexibility (through seasonal mobility, temporary rangeland exploitation and herd diversification) and social capital (within and between pastoralists and other groups) to ensure access to resources.

The specific interactions between the natural resource system, resource users and the larger geo-political system define pastoral livelihood strategies, vulnerability and capacity to adapt to change. Given the high reliance of pastoralists upon a limited natural resource base, these processes are critical in that they can 1) increase resource scarcity (as a product of shrinking rangelands and rising demand), and 2) reshape power distribution and resource management mechanisms. A sustainable livelihoods perspective (Box 1) therefore offers useful insight into the emergence of (violent) conflict as a consequence of interactions within and between pastoral communities and other land users and economic interests.

Box 1. What are the Principal Drivers of Conflict in Pastoral Areas?

Livestock is a fundamental form of pastoral capital. It is the pastoralist’s means for the production, storage, transport and transfer of food, wealth and other services. Any threat to livestock – such as lack of fodder or water, raiding, price variation, and disease – is a direct threat to pastoral livelihoods.

**Threats to Natural Capital** – Together with the degradation of soil, water and plant resources, any limitation to accessing specific natural resources or migratory routes represents a major threat to pastoral livelihoods. These changes may result from excessive pastoral use (overgrazing) or from external encroachment, use by other groups, erroneous development investments (water schemes) or state policy and law (land privatization). Wild fruits, fuel wood, gums, resins, and salt are critical supplemental resources for pastoralists during times of scarcity or crisis. Threats to their access may generate tensions in such times.

**Threats to Human Capital** – Problems of violence, displacement, migration and HIV-AIDS can deal a serious blow to social mechanisms related to resource access rights, decision making,
knowledge transfer, and contingency exchanges. Variations in prices of critical staples may have repercussions on pastoralists’ nutritional and health status, especially that of children. The absence of appropriate service delivery, e.g. mobile health services and mobile schools, is a recurrent impediment to the well-being of current and future pastoral generations.

**Threats to Financial Capital** – Because the herd is the community’s financial capital, any change affecting it or the integrity of the group/clan can undermine a pastoral community’s financial capital. Specific economic risks include variations in market prices and problems in accessing remittance income and urban or market-based opportunities. Lack of access to alternative sources of income – such as government employment – can be perceived as evidence of injustice.

**Threats to Physical Capital** – These are obstacles to accessing critical infrastructure and facilities for water, communication, migration or grazing, and exchange opportunities with markets or urban environments. These assets connect remote rangelands with other areas to provide for complementary resources, especially vital in times of crisis.

**Threats to Social Capital** – Group cohesion is traditionally strong, allowing communities to spread risk, practice common resource management, and provide support to each other in times of crisis. Tensions may nevertheless emerge in pastoral societies over leadership and succession, due to generational and gender struggles or through external drivers (such as market integration, state regulation, privatization processes, etc...). These may result in a breakdown of customary structures based on trust, reciprocity and mutual exchanges.

Each of these forms of capital is affected by issues of power, politics and gender. They can be politicized or exacerbated when combined with historical, cultural or ethnic differences.

**KEY ISSUES TO CONSIDER WHEN GETTING INVOLVED**

1. **Analysing the Problem: What are Conflict Drivers, how do Communities Respond to Change?**

   Agro-ecological conditions and livelihoods strategies: Identify threats to pastoral capitals (Box 1). Understand the mix of livelihoods practiced, how these vary seasonally, geographically and ethnically and the coping strategies applied during crisis. Assess patterns of resource access rights and their link to environmental conditions.

   Context-specific socio-economic, political and cultural issues: Understand the diversity and interconnectedness of local societies. Pastoral rights and duties are usually set on a collective rather than individual basis. Economic studies (i.e. terms of trade) may help in understanding the degree to which herders are compensated for the sale of their products, while political power analyses may help in identifying the capability of pastoral groups to represent their interests vis-à-vis external interest and agents. Analysis of group perceptions regarding each other, the state, and development actors should shape programme design.

   Local customary arrangements aimed to prevent, manage or resolve conflicts: These include the (at times competing and partisan) roles of traditional chiefs, elders, women, local administrators and the judiciary. Changes in context affect these dispute resolution mechanisms (e.g. small arms availability, gender roles, water points). A principal challenge remains how to reconcile customary and modern decision-making structures and
governance processes – building upon ‘local knowledge’ while strengthening external protection of pastoral resource use and access rights, such as through formal legal rights (Pastoral Codes) and land-titling (cadastrage).

Mapping the political economy of development programme impacts: Who gains and loses from the proposed activities? Development programmes seeking to introduce new services - such as third party conflict resolution facilities, health clinics, or water management teams - have had little success in being perceived as impartial and equitable. Many of those that do gain community trust have demonstrated little long-term sustainability without continued external support.

2. Entry Points: What Should Development Agencies Do?

Development and humanitarian programmes that do not exercise due care and long-term focus are more likely to threaten the sustainability of pastoral livelihoods than to strengthen them. Recognizing that the context of each intervention is unique, and that local cultural and environmental realities should shape decisions, development programmes should deploy a mix of the following strategies in attempting to prevent and resolve pastoral conflicts:

- **Restore or ensure access to resources fundamental to livelihoods and coping strategies.** Resource access rights – to pastures, migratory corridors and water - are often interlinked and are vital to pastoral survival. Access rights to some resources may involve competing users and change from a season to another.

- **Enhance the efficiency and productivity of existing livelihoods** - Through the provision of animal health services, innovative techniques for production, preservation and storage (e.g. dairy processing, dry meat schemes, granaries), and exchange (e.g. market access).

Expand the mix of available livelihood options – to absorb surplus labour, diversify income streams, and reduce exposure to shocks. Financial assets, such as community microcredit schemes and urban-to-rural remittances are useful means to promote diversification. Schemes that rely upon semi-sedentarization and increased reliance on seasonal farming have often failed in improving local food and environmental security in the longer term.

Reinforce synergistic relationships among different land users. Enhancement of crop-livestock interactions such as the ‘manure contract’ between herder and farmer communities, increased trade, intermarriage, animal exchanges and others can help to strengthen positive relationships between groups and facilitate peaceful dispute resolution in times of crisis. Co-management of development projects between diverse stakeholders, enhancing communication opportunities (e.g. radio networks and transportation routes), and establishing shared public services (e.g. animal health) are specific examples.

Strengthen the capacity of the community to cope with ecological shocks and environmental stresses. Map coping strategies deployed by communities in times of crisis, scarcity or disaster. In a conflict-sensitive manner, restore ‘common resource pools’ (i.e. forests, pastures, wells) drawn upon by communities during such times. National and international agencies involved in a pastoral area should draft appropriate strategies to deal with specific crises and shocks (e.g. contingency funds for crises, safeguarding mobility as a coping mechanism). Traditional security forces may be needed
to prevent the escalation of hostilities during such times.

Reinforce traditional and administrative mechanisms for non-violent dispute resolution to maximize opportunities for ‘win-win’ interest-based negotiation between groups. Where local traditional leadership and decision-making structures are effective, their relevance and resilience should be recognized and supported. A principal challenge remains how to reconcile traditional institutions with modern institutions and governance processes.

Strengthen access to and fairness of market mechanisms. Projects that expand options for safe processing, storing and transportation of pastoral products, are effective ways to develop more equitable market relationships, integrating them into the broader economy. Further projects in this line can enhance information and communication facilities, and support communities in timing sales to maximize returns.

Foster regional approaches and harmonization of treatment across borders. The migratory nature of pastoralism collides with national or international borders, as rangelands are often frontier lands, and pastoral movements as well as exchanges often cross geo-political demarcations. Legal harmonization and special rights of passage need to be negotiated across states lines, and monitoring mechanisms need to be put into place to ensure equitable treatment.


Experience shows that successful peace-building interventions meld technical and social components and spur wider processes of social change. Four options to support empowerment and recognition of pastoral communities with a specific focus on conflict-resolution and peace-building are:

Strengthen trade networks to support peace by bringing groups together and demonstrate the mutual benefits that arise from trade. The potential for such opportunities to establish collaborative relationships has seldom been integrated into programme design.

Engage women in peace-building, as their multi-group kinship ties, primarily non-combatant status, and vulnerability as individuals, mothers and wives, can enable them to enlist the support of the elites, warriors, elders and the government in resolving conflict in ways not open to other actors. During post-conflict reconstruction, women can contribute significantly to reconciliation efforts, to the revival of local economies, and to the rebuilding of essential local services and networks.

Work through ‘civil society’. ‘Civil society’ in this context often refers to CBOs/NGOs that seek to support pastoralism, even if they are not made up of pastoralists. With this difficulty in mind, they may yet play a crucial role in peace-building and conflict-resolution initiatives, in establishing a political voice for pastoral groups, and in sharing experience between regions.

Strengthen political capital. Social and political capital that allows pastoral groups to interface with external groups or forces within the wider political framework are often weak. Long-term peace-building requires development of pastoral ‘political capital’ at the national, regional and global levels. Conflict risks inherent in helping groups to organize politically should be taken into careful consideration.
WORKING WITH OTHERS

Preventing Resource Scarcity Conflicts
Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC) – PASEL. The Support Programme for the Pastoral Herding Sector in Niger ("PASEL" in French) was established by SDC to reduce the incidence and intensity of conflicts between pastoralists and agriculturalists on key transhumant routes. It has reduced violence by integrating all relevant levels of government and traditional authorities within a hierarchy of progressively senior dispute resolution processes; by demonstrating win-win benefits for both bordering communities and pastoral users of transhumant corridor preservation; by clearly marking the resulting borders; and by working with community leaders and administrative authorities in concert to ensure that when disputes emerge, they are resolved transparently and equitably.
Ehihadji Moutari Mansour, SDC – Niger (communication in French only) pasel@intnet.ne

Women and Pastoral Peace-building
AU/IBAR "Women’s Peace Crusade” in the Karamojong Cluster: The traditional social institution of the alokita (‘a group of women united for a purpose’) was revived through the Women's Peace Crusade, which enables women to act as ambassadors of peace, bearing messages through songs, poems, dances and speeches performed for neighbouring communities. It has helped initiate dialogue and provide opportunities to create a common bond among different conflicting groups.
Modibo Tiémoko Traoré, Director, African Union Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources. Modibo.Traore@au-ibar.org http://www.cape-ibar.org

IIED/Jam Sahel “Enhancing Local Capacity to Manage Conflicts”: The IIED/Jam Sahel programme undertakes a gender-sensitive participatory approach to facilitate complementary male and female natural resource conflict management capacities. By improving women’s confidence, awareness and participation in the peace process surrounding NR conflicts, more possibilities for conflict resolution are available, and broader social change in other areas of gender concern are promoted.
Ced Hesse, Director, Drylands Programme, International Institute for Environment and Development, ced.hesse@iied.org, www.iied.org/drylands

Strengthening Pastoral Political Capital
IIED – Reinforcement of Pastoral Civil Society project: The IIED Drylands Programme is developing a training programme in partnership with pastoral civil society groups to help pastoral communities identify the value of their livelihood systems to broader society, and to use this in negotiation with authorities. Once complete, it is hoped that the pastoral civil society will have the tools to go into pastoral communities and teach them how to negotiate to meet their interests on the basis of more equitable knowledge without having to resort to violence.
Ced Hesse, Director, Drylands Programme, IIED, ced.hesse@iied.org, www.iied.org/drylands

UN-OCHA/IDS Horn of Africa Pastoral Communication Initiative: The Horn of Africa Pastoralist Communication Initiative (PCI) is an independent facilitation unit that seeks to develop receptive reaction to pastoralist voices and effective articulation of pastoralist interests, innovations and ideas at the global level. It believes that effective communication between pastoralists, government and international organisations is key to forming policies and programmes that will work for the livestock sector and thus reduce poverty in rural areas.
Alastair & Patta Scott-Villiers, The Horn of Africa Pastoralist Communication Initiative – UN OCHA, Scott-villiers@un.org, p.scott-villiers@ids.ac.uk, www.ocha-eth.org

WISP, World Initiative for Sustainable Pastoralism: The UNDP has launched this coalition of international development agencies and NGOs to bring together pastoral groups from around the globe, share knowledge and build support for sustainable pastoral development. WISP seeks to dispel myths undermining pastoralists and recognizes the centrality of land rights in conflicts involving pastoralists.
Maryam Niamir-Fuller, UNDP- World Initiative for Sustainable Pastoralism, maryam.niamir-fuller@undp.org
Reinforcing mechanisms for non-violent dispute resolution

Oxfam - Wajir Peace and Development Committee, Kenya: Oxfam has supported individual and group peace efforts by facilitating the organisational process that eventually produced the Wajir Peace and Development Committee (WPDC), in 1995. This was done with modest financial input, but significant moral support. The multi-stakeholder formation of the WPDC has proven to be effective in developing a systematic and institutionalized community-led mechanism for managing conflict. Through it, customary practices and formal institutions can complement and reinforce each other.

Izzy Birch, East Africa Regional Pastoral Programme Coordinator, OXFAM GB, ibirch@oxfam.org.uk, www.oxfam.org.uk

Systematizing pastoral land use rights

Organisation de Développement des Zones Arides - Code Pastorale Experience in Mauritania: The West African countries of Mauritania, Niger, and Mali have each established a ‘Code Pastorale’ to systematize pastoral land use rights within a system of legal protection. This Code seeks to regulate traditional forms of open access to rangeland resources, while also taking into account modern legislative measures to protect individual and group-specific land rights.

Ould Mohamed Ahmed Mohamed El Moktar (communication in French only), Organisation de Développement des Zones Arides - MDRE – Mauritanie, zones.arides@caramail.com

LINKS

- War-Torn Societies Project (WSP) - (www.wsp-international.org/)
- Reconcile (Resource Conflict Institute) - (www.reconcile-ea.org/)
- African Union/Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU/IBAR) – (www.cape-ibar.org)
- Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG) – (http://www.itdg.org/)
- Intl Inst. for Env. and Development (IIED): Drylands Programme - (www.iied.org/drylands/)
- ENDA GRAF Sahel – (http://www.enda.sn/graf/)
- SoS Sahel – (www.sahel.org.uk/)
- Oxfam UK (www.oxfam.org.uk)

3 Livelihoods are "the capabilities, assets (including both social and material assets) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base." D Carney, *Sustainable Rural Livelihoods – What difference can we make?* DFID, London, 1999.
4 Opening protected areas to contingency pastoral grazing (India) and establishing 'emergency wells' with access limited to times of critical environmental stress (Somalia) are two examples.
6 The 'Association pour la Redynamisation de l'Elevage au Niger' (AREN), for example, was established in 1990 to represent Nigerien pastoral communities in local, national and international debates, resolving territorial disputes between herders and farmers and building a shared voice for pastoral groups.