



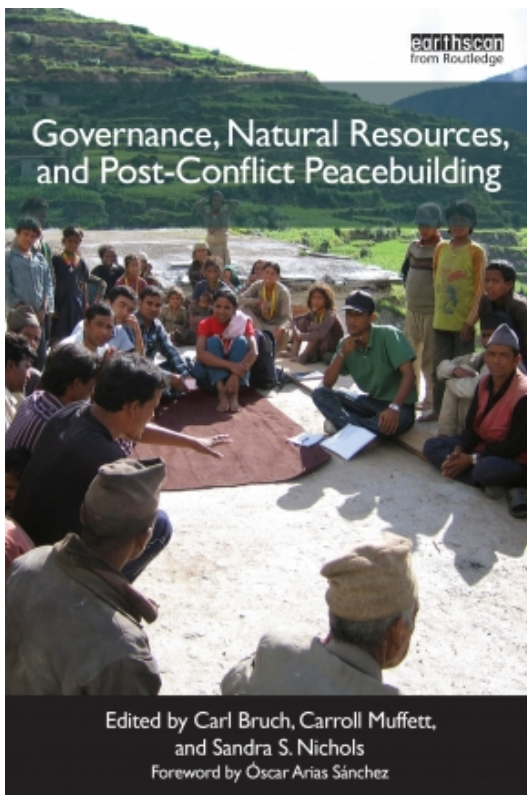
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**Mitigating Natural Resource Conflicts Through Development Projects: Lessons Learned from World Bank Experience in Nigeria**

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# Mitigating natural resource conflicts through development projects: Lessons from World Bank experience in Nigeria

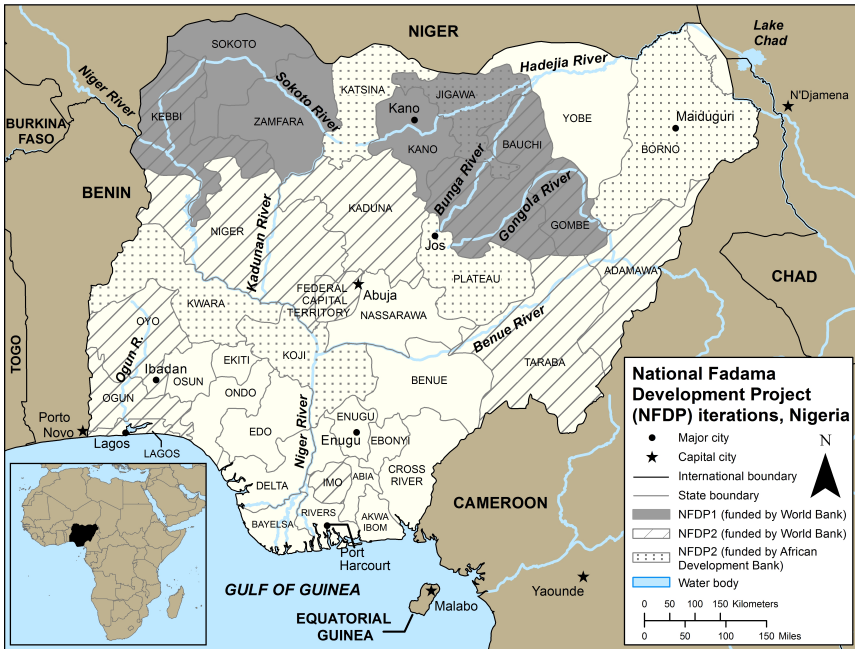
*Sandra M. Ruckstuhl*

Development operations of all types present opportunities for peacebuilding. Whether pre-conflict or post-conflict, sustainable development programming should be inherently conflict sensitive by incorporating a theory of practice that considers the range of conflict risks. This chapter seeks to contribute to a theory of conflict-sensitive renewable natural resource development practice. The chapter reviews experiences from a series of World Bank projects in Nigeria, which was concerned with tensions resulting during modifications to traditional land use. In so doing, the chapter provides the basis for a critical discussion about opportunities and limitations of large donor organizations in contributing to the broader global development objective of peacebuilding.

Despite a popular focus by researchers and the media on natural resources and conflict, experience suggests that societies can be highly resilient to these risks. Fragile communities facing violence are still capable of constructively managing localized conflicts. Furthermore, renewable natural resources such as land, water, and forests that are used for livelihoods present special opportunities for cooperation in integrated ecosystems management, enabling peacebuilding across a spectrum of stakeholders and socioeconomic groups. A holistic approach to conflict and violence prevention, which is an integral part of sustainable development programming, considers the catalytic role that these natural resources play in both fostering social cohesion and in provoking violence. And while many practitioners recognize the potential risks of disputes over livelihood resources, there exists limited documented practical experience and technical guidance to demonstrate modalities for addressing these risks preemptively through conflict-sensitive development approaches.

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**Figure 1. National Fadama Development Project iterations, Nigeria**

*Note:* NFDP3, funded by the World Bank, has been implemented in all of Nigeria’s thirty-seven states.

In 2009, the World Bank published an analysis of six development projects affecting natural resources in conflict-sensitive regions: *Renewable Natural Resources: Practical Lessons for Conflict-Sensitive Development* (Ruckstuhl 2009). The study sought to identify good practices and lessons learned, and it provided a toolkit for implementing those lessons. Highlighting the importance of conflict-sensitive project design, this chapter draws from and builds on that analysis by tracing experience of the World Bank in addressing natural resources and conflict in Nigeria’s highly productive plains located along its major river systems—known as the fadama lands. The First National Fadama Development Project (NFDP1) was borne out of the perceived success of prior World Bank agricultural aid projects in the region (see figure 1 for states included in NFDP1 and subsequent project iterations). However, NFDP1 proved problematic, as it did not entirely and proactively address the potential for conflict inherent in the fadama lands. After examining challenges associated with NFDP1, this chapter turns to the Second National Fadama Development Project (NFDP2) and examines how this effort sought to improve upon the previous development intervention. Drawing on that experience, it identifies lessons of wider potential relevance to development programming, emphasizing principles for building institutional and organizational capacity to support constructive conflict management. The lessons inform a holistic, conflict-sensitive approach to development projects involving

renewable natural resources. Next, moving on to the Third National Fadama Development Project (NFDP3), this chapter compares its approach with that of NFDP2. Finally, this chapter concludes with a discussion of the role of conflict-sensitive programming in fragile socioecological systems.

## **BACKGROUND AND THE FIRST NATIONAL FADAMA DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (NFDP1)**

By the 1970s, reduced farming output was generating concern about food security in Nigeria. The World Bank responded by introducing agricultural development projects (ADPs) to increase agricultural output from irrigated and rain-fed crops by encouraging farming during the dry season. ADP funding, eventually amounting to US\$1.2 billion, targeted agricultural activity in the fadama lands.

Agricultural production from ADPs was lower than expected overall. However, fadama production performed better than rain-fed crops and exceeded expected fadama output, leading the World Bank to deem the ADPs a success (World Bank 2012). Based on this success, the World Bank implemented NFDP1 in 1993 in the northern states of Bauchi, Gombe, Jigawa, Kano, Kebbi, Sokoto, and Zamfara. The primary purpose of the project was to “sustainably increase the incomes of fadama users” (World Bank 2003, 2). To achieve this, the project focused upon financing low-cost irrigation technology, drilling shallow groundwater wells, constructing access roads, and improving marketing infrastructure. NFDP1 was completed in 1999.

Although initially judged a success because it boosted agricultural production as planned, it was realized that NFDP1 focused too narrowly on crop production, causing tensions between farmers, fishers, and pastoralists (Ruckstuhl 2009). Because the fadama lands support a range of user groups with different livelihood strategies that includes farmers, fishers, pastoralists, hunters, gatherers, and various service providers, NFDP1 unintentionally exacerbated conflict between fadama users—particularly between farmers and pastoralists.

Historically, the interaction between farmers and pastoralists was mutually beneficial, with cattle grazing on crop residue and depositing nourishing manure (Blench 2003). With the advent of dry season cultivation, and especially the emphasis on growing maize and potatoes, crop residue became unfit for cattle consumption. These changes created various tensions, but these disputes were generally settled through informal or traditional mechanisms without resorting to violence.

Over the course of the twentieth century, population growth and development have increased the pressures exerted on natural resources in the region. Fadama land, which is covered by grasses used for grazing during the fallow season, was increasingly converted for food production (Ajuwon 2004). The expansion of dry season farming through the ADPs further decreased pastoralists’ access to both land and water (Blench 2003). This aggravated historically modest competition, sometimes leading to violent flare-ups between agriculturalists and pastoralists.

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In northern and central Nigeria, seasonal changes in precipitation push herders southward every January in search of water and grazing land, bringing them into closer contact—and natural resource competition—with farmers. In the last decade, the frequency and severity of drought has increased, which, combined with the expansion of croplands under development initiatives, has intensified this competition, adding fuel to an already volatile mixture of economic, ethnic, and sectarian tensions (Nyong 2005). The result has been recurring and often deadly conflict bearing strong sectarian elements, much of it in the transition zone between the country's Muslim North and Christian South. As a result of the close alignment of specific user groups with different religions, the conflict over natural resources began to incorporate a religious dimension (Blench 2003).

The confluence of recent in-migration, militarization, and drought added to the tensions between the agriculturalist and pastoralist communities, triggering additional social stresses. In this context, fadama users perceived a “prisoner's dilemma,”<sup>1</sup> as the socially hostile and increasingly competitive environment contributed to a sense of economic, environmental, and social insecurity. The result in some locations was a rights discourse over common property resources that took the form of purposeful and systematic violence and destruction, including assault and murder, destruction of irrigation canals and other infrastructure, burning of settlements, damage to farm produce, and trampling and sabotage of crops (Ruckstuhl 2009). These actions degraded the land and put further pressure on the natural resources at stake.

By benefitting one group over another, NFDPI unintentionally aggravated these factors. Taking note of this problem, the World Bank designed a follow-on project—NFDPI2—incorporating lessons learned from the first iteration (Ruckstuhl 2009).

### SECOND NATIONAL FADAMA DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (NFDPI2)

NFDPI2 was launched in 2004, five years after the conclusion of NFDPI. It was implemented in twelve of Nigeria's thirty-seven states and covered the north central states as well as the western and eastern parts of the country, including the Federal Capital Territory. Complementary work by the African Development Bank (ADB) extended the project's reach to six additional states (ADB 2005). NFDPI2 incorporated a more explicit conflict-sensitive framework, informed by a social and environmental assessment and a targeted conflict analysis (Ajuwon 2004). In the design phase, project developers engaged development

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<sup>1</sup> The prisoner's dilemma, based in game theory, assumes that in certain circumstances individuals make decisions with the objective of minimizing negative impacts on themselves, even if it harms others. The resulting decision-making system that is driven by personal interest or self gain, where the personal gain of one party equals the loss incurred by another party, is referred to as a “zero-sum game.”

professionals with conflict expertise to provide technical guidance and support to the project.

In light of its ultimately negative assessment of NFDPI, the World Bank designed NFDPI2 to address conflict mitigation explicitly, stating: “The objective is to increase the incomes of fadama users, who depend on fadama resources by empowering communities and reducing conflict between fadama users” (World Bank 2007, 3). This project rationale implied a causal feedback loop between livelihood development and conflict management, which internalized the notion that equitable development can be a tool used to manage conflict.

In this iteration, “fadama users” were expanded to include crop and livestock farmers, pastoralists, fishers, hunters, and gatherers. In this way, the project addressed components of the rural economy beyond the farming sector (Ruckstuhl 2009). The project specifically attempted to involve diverse stakeholders by applying a community-driven development (CDD) model, which intended to empower community members by allowing them to design, implement, maintain, monitor, and evaluate projects that they determined were a priority (World Bank 2003).

Project designers recognized that the environmental characteristics of fadamas, such as seasonal scarcity, could have subsequent livelihood and other social impacts. Social division and competition between user groups over the natural resources on which their livelihoods depended could escalate as environmental conditions and insecurity worsened. Yet, the project designers understood that while there is an inherent risk of conflict in the fadama region, as was evidenced by the violence that followed the implementation of NFDPI, knowledge of the local environment and user needs could be used as a launching point to facilitate benefit sharing and foster sustainable and equitable development.

Pre-project conflict analysis documented community experience with regard to conflict and violence. The findings outlined three categories and several sub-categories of user group conflicts (Ajuwon 2004):

1. Conflicts within communities over access rights.
  - Fisher-fisher (for example, overfishing and stealing).
  - Pastoralist-pastoralist (for example, overgrazing, particularly when the dry season is severe).
2. Conflict between communities over access rights.
  - Farmer-pastoralist (for example, cattle graze on crops and crop remnants without permission, and crop fields block passage of herds, resulting in crops being trampled).
  - Fisher-pastoralist (for example, fishermen block river crossing points for herds with nets, and fishing gear is damaged or destroyed by crossing herds).
  - Pastoralist-migrant gatherer (for example, pastoralists collect vegetation typically collected by migrant gatherers and use it to feed animals).

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3. Conflict between users (individuals or groups) and authority.
  - Farmer-authority (for example, users divert water for their own purposes, contributing to conflict over water resources).
  - Resource user groups (within national parks and other protected areas)-authority.
    - Gatherers collect wood to use as fuel or to make potash.
    - Hunters poach birds and animals.
    - Fishermen catch fish.
    - Pastoralists allow their animals to graze.

The analysis found that of these types of conflict, those between farmers and pastoralists were by far the most common and significant. It also identified the most intense competition where population density was highest, although the nature and outcomes of these conflicts varied from state to state due to differing spatial, economic, and social conditions. To address the social causes of conflict—some of which were unintentionally introduced during NFDPI—the World Bank implemented numerous measures to both preempt and better manage disputes (World Bank 2003).

### Changes in renewable natural resources

Long-term land degradation and decreasing productivity for grazing fodder contributed to environmental and social stresses. From a quantity perspective, competition resulted from relative reduction in the per capita availability of land and water resources. Seasonal water stress, which was exacerbated by increasing desertification in the Sahel, contributed to socio-environmental insecurity.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, rainfall variability and increasing drought have reduced river flow and productivity in floodplains, decreasing the area available for crop and live-stock production (Ajuwon 2004).

Learning from its earlier attempts at improving the productivity of fadama land users and the negative impacts these projects had on regional tensions, the World Bank incorporated a number of conflict management measures in NFDP2. First, it focused on building the capacity of user groups to facilitate technical innovation and to fill key knowledge gaps about sustainable natural resource management (World Bank 2003). Second, the World Bank incorporated environmental mitigation plans into all community investment projects. These measures prompted community implementation of more sustainable natural resource practices—including more sustainable land management—and heightened awareness and investment among farmers in income-enhancing sustainable land management activities (World Bank 2008a).

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<sup>2</sup> The Sahel is an area that is mainly defined by its climate. It is located between the high rainfall areas of the West African coast (including southern Nigeria) and the arid zone of the Sahara.

In the fadama lands, sensitizing communities to sustainable land practices helped reduce the risk of conflict. Many of the project's beneficiaries were members of traditional societies that rely on established practices to maintain their livelihoods. Unfortunately, given the environmental and demographic changes the region is experiencing, some of these customs are not sustainable (Ruckstuhl 2009). The project provided technical training on issues (such as pest control) and oversaw community sensitization campaigns to promote environmentally friendly practices (including in the area of pest control) (World Bank 2003). Both traditional community leaders and opinion leaders were involved in approving these projects in order to validate some of the changes in practice. Project staff viewed these activities as critical to changing long-standing norms and behaviors associated with customary natural resource management, which if unchecked would have inevitably contributed to environmental degradation and conflict.

### **Other physical changes**

Population growth and other demographic changes have added pressure to the tense fadama social landscape. For instance, migrating pastoralists intentionally destroyed tubewells and washbores to sabotage water access and demonstrate their grievances. In order to address these challenges, NFDP2 gave community-based organizations the opportunity to determine investment needs and produce their own local development plans (LDPs). By allowing community members (both settled and nomadic) to prioritize projects to receive funding, the World Bank sought to reduce and mitigate conflicts between competing user groups (World Bank 2003). The project gave preference in matching grants to micro-investments that sought to resolve existing natural resource conflicts. Targeted areas for these additional grants concentrated on primary flash-point issues, and included (1) stock routes; (2) watering points; (3) grazing reserves such as grass planting; (4) aquaculture (for example, to prevent fisherfolk from artisanal fishing in unfettered territories); (5) grass harvesting (for example, to prevent bush burning by hunters); (6) sustainable land management investment activities; and (7) provision of mobile veterinary services.

A second measure for managing conflicts arising from physical changes was an effort to build the capacity of the governance regime to address illegal activities. As a result of these conflict management measures, less community infrastructure was destroyed and more cattle herders settled near project-supported grazing reserves and watering points, rather than competing with farmers for access to land.

### **Social changes**

Social dynamics and changes had a major impact on the conflict in the fadama region. For example, unsustainable natural resource management practices were



underpinned by existing attitudes and norms. Historically, fisherfolk, farmers, hunters, and herders have attempted to use the same resources, which led to the creation of cooperatives that allowed the various resource user groups to share use of the land (Blench 2004). More recently, this common property system has deteriorated as a result of overuse and donors encouraging individual land-ownership (Blench 2004). The system that was once appropriate to precolonial populations is now facing pressure resulting from population growth and increased demand for natural resources. The outcome is thus an increase in localized conflict (Blench 2004).

Divisions between different user groups have been increasing over the last fifty years. New and more militant pastoralist groups arrived, some of which do not pay traditional homage to local leaders. These new arrivals sparked an increase in gang activity and helped arm more militant groups. Institutional changes also added to the tension; NFDPI was perceived as contentious among pastoralists who felt that other user groups were given preferential treatment and that the project threatened their grazing rights during the dry season.

As social and natural resource-related stresses and insecurities heightened, group identities became more salient.<sup>3</sup> The environmental stressors combined with preexisting tensions between different ethnic and religious groups caused the animosity to escalate to aggression that manifested along group identity lines. These tensions were only aggravated by gang-like and illicit behavior, militant posturing on the part of pastoralists, and efforts to block natural resource areas.

In order to address the stresses that accompanied these social changes, NFDPI2 took a multilayered CDD approach to promote transparency, participation, social inclusion, and empowerment. It incentivized community participation by providing financial benefits to those who formally participated in the project and, as mentioned above, it gave preference to micro-investments that encouraged conflict prevention and resolution.

Pluralistic and democratic approval processes were institutionalized by the creation of over 2,000 LDPs. Each LDP was designed as a collaborative product of various formally registered fadama user groups (FUGs) under the umbrella of a fadama community association (FCA). The LDP was then approved by the local fadama development committee, which comprised local government officials, traditional rulers, and civil society members as well as representatives of the FCAs. Although complex and potentially human resource intensive, this multi-layered structure helped ensure transparency and participation, and mitigated the risks of inequitable distribution and elite capture.

The formal participation process guaranteed the inclusion of all FUGs, which helped to address conflicts between natural resource users. Membership in a FUG

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<sup>3</sup> For an examination of the connections between natural resources, conflict, peacebuilding, and identity, see Green (2015).

is voluntary, and each FUG must provide a “written commitment to embrace the Project’s socially inclusive approach” (World Bank 2003, 82).

NFDP2 also formed conflict resolution committees, composed of community opinion leaders, to deal with disputes as they arose. The committees met regularly to discuss conflict issues and to make decisions resolving disputes that hindered the implementation of sub-projects, and in turn the overarching goals of NFDP2. Project staff said the committees proved valuable to the project, and that they empowered groups that might have otherwise been marginalized or afraid to confront issues publicly. The committees provided an outlet where such groups could express their frustration and seek guidance from trusted leaders (Ruckstuhl 2009). Conflict committees, which were integral to the CDD approach in NFDP2, also promoted transparency, participation, and social inclusion; and provided an avenue for complaints about corruption to be raised, making illicit practices more difficult to conceal.

### **Eco-economic changes**

Eco-economic changes—changes associated with stakeholders’ shifting “value of and relationship to resources” (Ruckstuhl 2009, 9)—have led to heightened competition over land.<sup>4</sup> Competition has increased due to crop encroachment into traditionally pastoral areas. The development interventions that have encouraged the expansion of agriculture on to land that was previously left fallow, including NFDP1, have furthered this trend. To ease competition, NFDP2 employed the CDD approach to collaboratively plan projects, with all stakeholder interests represented, and implemented conflict-preventing micro-projects such as the establishment of grazing reserves and cattle watering points. It also promoted information sharing to enhance transparency, build legitimacy, and increase trust. Technology-literate audiences benefited from the World Bank’s ImageBank and externally hosted project websites. In addition to these modern tools, projects used more traditional communication approaches, including community meetings and bulletin boards, news and entertainment media (including newspapers, magazines, radio, and television), and workshops. These tools helped create awareness about resources, decisions, and finances, which aided in countering misperceptions and encouraged dialogue, relationship building, and innovation at the local level. Together, these measures enhanced inclusivity and transparency, which produced a structured and legitimate fadama governance regime that has fostered tolerance and respect for diverse needs and natural resource uses.

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<sup>4</sup> Examples of eco-economic changes include changes in “social and economic values, resource demand and dependence, [and] domestic and foreign market dynamics” (Ruckstuhl 2009, 9). This category of change is discussed in more detail in Ruckstuhl (2009).

## Outcomes

Following completion of NFDP2, a World Bank review of the project found that outcomes with respect to conflict reduction were overwhelmingly positive and exceeded project expectations, as seen in the twelve states included under the World Bank's portion of the project. It determined that by "December 2009, six of the participating states registered zero conflicts, while the remaining six states reported only a few cases of minor conflicts, reflecting a reduction of 85 percent compared to the baseline" (World Bank 2013).

Despite these successes, the situation has remained volatile in some regions, and natural resource-related conflicts remain embedded in larger conflict dynamics in the country. After the assessment of NFDP2 was completed, violence broke out near the city of Jos in Plateau State in early 2010, despite the area having been included in NFDP2 under the parallel component funded by the ADB. The region has a long history of violence between farmers and pastoralists, and the first three months of 2010 saw a series of interethnic, interfaith clashes between Fulani herders and Christian farmers, leaving hundreds of both communities dead or displaced (ICG 2012). While the initial attacks coincided with the onset of seasonal cattle movements, and the violence involved Muslim herders on one side and Christian farmers on the other, the roots of the conflict involved larger disputes over control of land, access to economic opportunity, political power, and identity (Higazi 2011).

The violence in Plateau State struck in the midst of a national leadership crisis between an ailing president (a Fulani from the North) and a Christian vice president from the South. Although the timing of local and national events appeared coincidental at first, they quickly intertwined. Within days, the violence in Jos led to the ouster of a pro-president security minister in favor of a new minister with ties to the vice president, food shortages in a neighboring state because of interrupted cattle transport routes, calls from terrorist-linked groups for a Muslim uprising in the country, and a suggestion from one foreign leader to split the country into separate Muslim and Christian states (Obateru and Aziken 2010; Maduforo 2010; AP 2010). Although order was restored, periodic reprisals continued, contributing to the security challenges confronting the acting president and a new government.

## Conflict-sensitive development practices learned from NFDP2

The World Bank's experience with NFDP2 yields eight key lessons that development practitioners should take into account when designing projects that involve multiple natural resource user groups. These include (1) providing equal opportunity for development, (2) disseminating information, (3) encouraging broad public participation, (4) providing incentives for participation, (5) fostering accountability, (6) building conflict management capacity, (7) promoting micro-investments, and (8) furnishing dispute resolution mechanisms.

*Make livelihood development opportunities equally available across the socioeconomic spectrum (for example, to the landed and landless, and to those who rely on forest resources and those who do not).* Equal opportunity and the promotion of equitable outcomes encourage sustainable environmental practices and prevent conflicts between beneficiary groups. Sharing benefits (such as ecological and resource improvements or monetary income) allows community members to improve their livelihoods, welfare, and food security, and determine their own priorities, thus reinforcing participatory management. In many of the project cases, when communities saw benefit—and particularly equal benefit—from jointly managing natural resources, they experienced less conflict and violence and expressed more satisfaction with the initiative. As seen in the contrasting experiences of NFDPI and NFDPI2, inequitable distribution and elite capture can escalate violence, while inclusive and democratic procedures for proposing and implementing projects can mitigate this problem.

*Cultivate a broad relationship with renewable natural resource stakeholders by making information accessible.* Equitable opportunities are underpinned by an awareness of and access to information regarding natural resources, development and conservation efforts, decision-making processes, finances, and project impacts. Knowing the capacities of a stakeholder audience is essential, as information needs to be conveyed in ways that make it readily available to both literate and illiterate stakeholders, and to both high-tech and low-tech parties. Creating awareness helps to sensitize stakeholders to forthcoming ideas and change, counter misperceptions, and encourage dialogue, relationship building, and innovation.

*Foster meaningful and broad participation through flexible and phased processes.* The role of participation in promoting peacebuilding and building conflict-management capacity is a critical component of conflict-sensitive development that extends beyond renewable natural resource projects. Establishing meaningful participation requires the following phases, which are not mutually exclusive:

1. Building awareness.
2. Internalizing egalitarian values and norms.
3. Building trust.
4. Analyzing the issues.
5. Contributing to planning.
6. Participating in management.

Participation has multiple benefits (Ruckstuhl 2009). It ensures the incorporation of local values into policies and plans, and builds local analytical, problem-solving, and governance capacity. It also reinforces self-esteem and a sense of empowerment. Engaging stakeholders can sometimes require proactive facilitators, for example, when engaging spoilers or marginalized groups such as women. The involvement of respected and fair community leaders helps to guarantee that disputants' interests are considered and protected.

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In Nigeria, all project-related groupings (FUGs, FCAs, and local fadama development committees) were built on the premise of inclusion and shared natural resources that belong to the people who rely on them for their livelihoods. All stakeholders are included in these fora and are encouraged to engage in intergroup dialogue. These group systems are formalized and based on the primary registration of the FUGs, which is required to access the grant mechanism. This incentivizes the formal and explicit buy-in of different user groups, and mitigates the risks of spoilers.

*Incentivize broad participation through conditional access to different types of benefits.* Project benefits have included access to natural resources, technical assistance services, and micro-financing. In the case of NFDP2, organizational registration and representation in planning committees (which is open to all stakeholders) is required for micro-financing eligibility. The project team can also promote participation through incentives related to second-order benefits, such as community or market development, political capital, and social influence.

*Foster norms of accountability and value diverse renewable natural resource interests through community involvement.* Group ownership and increased self-esteem advance values for protection of renewable natural resources and resistance to spoiler groups. Promotion of these values can help rectify historical grievances due to marginalization and access limitations. The case study demonstrates that closely involving stakeholders in natural resource management efforts fosters protection and ownership of results. With improved intergroup relations, management of renewable natural resources becomes a source of cooperation and joint opportunity, and less a focal point of dispute and conflict. Consequently, better management of renewable natural resources fosters norms that promote equity and positive relations between stakeholder groups. In Nigeria, this philosophy extended to younger people as well as to vulnerable groups; it ultimately led to both of these having more influence in an otherwise unbalanced system of power, thus building capacity to foster long-term social change.

*Utilize educational activities to build conflict-management capacity.* Skills development and promoting intellectual and institutional growth are broadly valuable objectives in development activities, regardless of whether there is a focus on natural resources. Training can be targeted to fill identified gaps in behaviors, norms, knowledge, and skills. Education further equips communities to be resilient and adaptable to environmental, social, and economic changes by promoting innovation, challenging assumptions, and changing behaviors. Sensitizing stakeholders to environmental issues through education, as was done during NFDP2, supports conflict management in that such efforts often catalyze improvements in natural resource practices and institutions. By changing long-standing norms and behaviors associated with traditional natural resource management, well-designed education initiatives can counter practices that have become unsustainable as a result of environmental and demographic changes.

*Target micro-investments to support conflict management.* Micro-investments should be prioritized to resolve existing natural resource conflicts. In Nigeria,

such an approach ensured that the areas most commonly affected by conflict were given precedence and signaled to the public the importance of addressing these issues.

*Provide a safety valve, such as a mediation body or grievance reporting mechanism, to address active disputes over renewable natural resources.* Direct support to establish conflict resolution bodies outside of formal judicial institutions has been useful to build a more effective overarching system of conflict management. These conflict resolution bodies go beyond mediation to include grievance reporting and monitoring. In Nigeria, conflict committees set up under the project effectively resolved disputes that hindered implementation of local project activities and empowered groups that might otherwise be marginalized. Mediation and other conflict resolution mechanisms can thus be an important guarantor of broad stakeholder participation.

### **APPLYING LESSONS LEARNED: NFDP3 AND BEYOND?**

NFDP3 began in July 2008, and though originally scheduled to run until the end of June 2013, it is now expected to be completed by December 31, 2017. The World Bank is implementing it in the nineteen states which were not included in NFDP2, in addition to the eighteen states covered by NFDP2—six of which are funded by the ADB—thus covering all thirty-seven states in Nigeria (World Bank 2008b). The purposes of NFDP3 are to increase food security, decrease poverty, and generate employment in rural areas—objectives that are in line with the Nigerian government’s goal of increasing growth in areas outside the oil sector. To achieve these objectives, the World Bank has provided the Nigerian government with funds to invest in infrastructure with the aim of boosting agricultural output, expanding employment opportunities, enhancing social capital through building the capacity of community organizations, and promoting sustainable natural resource management and social inclusiveness (World Bank 2008b). The project is designed to target a wide range of groups: farmers, pastoralists, fisherfolk, nomads, traders, processors, and hunters and gatherers, as well as specific disadvantaged populations such as widows. According to the World Bank, this inclusion of a broad range of beneficiary groups aims to address conflicts resulting from competitive natural resource use.

Social unrest and insecurity remain identified risks in relation to NFDP3 (World Bank 2008b). Thus the Bank has sought to minimize “the legacy of grievance in some areas and . . . the likelihood of conflict over natural resources” by incorporating principles of social inclusion into the design of NFDP3 (World Bank 2008b, 36); this includes granting all beneficiary groups access to decision-making processes. Additionally, the project supports the establishment of conflict resolution mechanisms in line with traditional approaches—in the same manner as in NFDP2—but also encourages the creation of new mechanisms to deal with emerging challenges (World Bank 2008b). Project documents expressly envision that development through participation will “enhance group cohesion and reduce

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conflicts arising from the competition to access the scarce water and land resources in the Fadamas, especially the tradition-bound farmer-pastoralist conflicts” (World Bank 2008b, 47).

The project design of NFD3 recognizes most of the lessons that the World Bank learned from NFD2 (World Bank 2008b). Information distribution to potential beneficiary communities is mandated and is consistent with what was done under NFD2 to maximize transparency. Educational activities will be used to train project staff, facilitators, and state, local, and community institutions in participatory approaches and conflict management techniques. The World Bank created a plan for stakeholder participation at all stages of project implementation. Beneficiary groups will participate in directing decision making and project planning, allowing all parties’ interests to be considered, and enhancing transparency and conflict prevention. NFD3 goes even further by including youth as a beneficiary group, whether they are farmers or pastoralists, increasing the chances of preventing future conflict between the two livelihood groups. The expectation is that this participatory process will promote ownership of the project, contributing to the community’s feeling of empowerment and accountability, with the hopeful result of a more sustainable outcome.

The CDD approach and multilayered structure of community participation (composed of FUGs and FCAs) that contributed to increased transparency under NFD2 are also being replicated under NFD3. The multilayered structure is reflected in the membership and organization of the FCAs. FCAs are composed of FUGs, which present project proposals to the FCAs. Projects may only be reviewed by an FCA of which the FUG is a member (World Bank 2005). Transparency is further enhanced through a multilayer monitoring mechanism, which includes monitoring at the federal and local levels, and monitoring by nongovernmental organizations, community members, and specialists in formal and informal conflict management (World Bank 2005, 2008b).

The World Bank’s most recent status report on the project indicates that NFD3 has, as of March 2014, been relatively successful (World Bank 2014). Out of 5,391 FCAs, 4,430—more than 80 percent—had received training on procurement, financial management, environmental management, and conflict resolution. And of the 64,043 registered FUGs, 48,597—approximately 75 percent—received training on financial management, marketing, environmental planning, and conflict resolution.

NFD3’s project design does not explicitly mention prioritizing micro-investments that achieve conflict management objectives, equalizing livelihood development opportunities across the socioeconomic spectrum, or developing grievance committees. However, it does say that project implementation will “follow detailed procedures . . . based on the Fadama II PIM [Project Implementation Manual]” (World Bank 2008b, 31). And since the PIM seeks to ensure that “conflict arising from the competition to access the scarce land and water resources in the Fadama and non-Fadama beneficiary communities is acknowledged and addressed” (GON 2009, 2), there is reason for optimism. In fact, a

number of the strategic design aspects seem to be incorporated in the new project: the PIM mentions that some grant resources will be allocated to “finance infrastructure investments that cut across FCAs . . . to support conflict reduction or for effective management of shared natural resources” (GON 2009, 27).

While the World Bank has been applying the lessons learned from NFDP2 to NFDP3, it has decided to not apply those lessons in the context of larger scale, commercially-oriented agricultural projects. For example, the Commercial Agriculture Development Project (CADP) is being implemented in five states included in NFDP3. Although the World Bank considered including this project in NFDP3, and implementing a CDD approach, it chose not to do so because it believes that CDD “will not be as effective with the target group of commercial farmers who have different needs for information and finance” (World Bank 2008c, 11). Nor is NFDP2 referenced in the lessons learned section for CADP, except as it relates to road building.

The lessons learned from this case study demonstrate the need for conflict-sensitive development approaches in renewable natural resource projects. A key outcome of that analysis is a practically oriented Renewable Natural Resource Conflict Management Mechanism Tool Box can be utilized by practitioners to inform development projects relating to or affecting renewable natural resources.<sup>5</sup>

## **CONCLUSION**

A conflict-sensitive approach is relevant in the design and implementation of development interventions related to renewable natural resources, even when conflict and violence are not immediately evident. This is particularly important when considering the fact that factors driving livelihood-related conflicts over natural resources are ever-changing, unpredictable risk multipliers. Development interventions associated with natural resources can inadvertently generate violence from overlapping claims and latent conflict, particularly in fragile situations or where distributional imbalances are relatively large. In these instances, natural resource-related stressors interact with and aggravate other factors that can spark violence. As seen in NFDP1, conflict insensitivity can negatively affect development and contribute to poor social and economic outcomes. Incorporating a conflict-sensitive lens at the earliest stages of a project is an effective risk management mechanism and can translate into sustainable results.

Approaches that are sensitive to conflicts over natural resources should be incorporated into country- and policy-level analyses to facilitate stakeholder thinking around these issues. In Nigeria, these analyses led to a project design and implementation that emphasized providing equal opportunity for development, disseminating information, facilitating broad public participation providing

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<sup>5</sup> For the tool box, see Ruckstuhl (2009).



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incentives for participation, fostering accountability, building conflict management capacity, promoting micro-investments, and furnishing dispute resolution mechanisms. Project assessments to date indicate that the incorporation of these tools led to substantially improved conflict outcomes of NFDP2 when compared to NFDP1. At the same time, developments in Plateau and other states highlight that natural resource management in Nigeria—as elsewhere—remains embedded in a complex and often deeply rooted conflict dynamic that touches issues of ethnicity, religion, and social and economic justice. Anticipating and responding to this dynamic requires not only an understanding of baseline conditions, but a willingness and ability to adapt project parameters as information and circumstances change.

The universe of tools available for doing this is large and continually expanding. The challenge, of course, remains choosing the right suite of tools for the job.

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