

# COMPONENT BRIEF: MANAGING CONFLICT OVER LAND AND WATER USE

## OBJECTIVE

Support communities in northern Nigeria to manage conflicts over the use of land and water.

## CONTEXT

Deep-seated grievances about economic inequalities and poor governance with regards to natural resources, such as land and water, underlie many of Nigeria's violent conflicts. In North Central Nigeria, conflicts between farmers and pastoralists have turned increasingly violent in recent years. Existing institutions and mechanisms to manage conflicts around resource use are weak, obsolete and exclude women and young people.

## OUR APPROACH

We support institutions and mechanisms that enable communities to agree on rules for land and water use, and provide them with mediation skills to prevent violent disputes. We work to build a constituency that will influence government reform of land and water use policy and practice.

### WHERE WE WORK

We focus this work in six local government areas (LGA) in Plateau State and one LGA in Kano State.

### WHO WE WORK WITH

- Local Government Council officials
- Traditional and community leaders
- Religious leaders
- Representatives of farmer and pastoralist associations
- Women's groups
- Youth associations
- Persons living with disabilities
- Agriculture extension workers



## OUR WORK

**Preventing conflict through dialogue:** We recognise that the lack of dialogue around the issue of land and water use exacerbates conflicts. Using a conflict sensitive approach, we facilitate more effective and sustainable communication between key actors experiencing conflict around land and water use. We do this through supporting the creation of formal dialogue forums that are shaped by communities through consultative exercises including women and young people. Issues underlying conflict are discussed and frameworks for resolving them developed. The aim is to institutionalise the process of communities talking with each other and to translate dialogue processes into long-term peace building efforts.

**Mediation training:** We have supported mediation training for traditional rulers and women, young people, community and religious leaders, to provide them with the skills to effectively resolve conflict over water and land use in their communities.

## CASE STUDY

### Understanding the drivers of conflicts around land and water issues

We supported partner peace and conflict research institutes to map existing conflicts around land and water issues in target communities. The aim was to better understand local dynamics, the factors that drive conflicts and inter-relations of various stakeholder groups in communities. Conflict over land has heightened over the past five years especially with population growth, declining employment opportunities for young people and unclear demarcation of grazing lands. Mitigation strategies have also not been effective and conflict has been protracted. However, there are some encouraging signs of conflict management mechanisms that work. If this good practice can be supported and shared elsewhere, incidences of violent conflict over land and water use will be minimised.

## FIND OUT MORE

Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme  
[www.nsrp-nigeria.org](http://www.nsrp-nigeria.org)

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