

AGENTS FOR CITIZEN-DRIVEN TRANSFORMATION

The Agents for Citizen-driven Transformation (ACT) programme works with civil society organisations (CSOs) to enable them to be credible and effective drivers of change for sustainable development in Nigeria.

Our work focuses on strengthening the system of CSOs, networks and coalitions to improve their internal, external and programmatic capabilities. We also focus on providing a platform for multi-stakeholder dialogue for an improved, effective and inclusive regulatory environment for the operation of CSOs in Nigeria.

ACT is implemented in 10 states selected across the six geopolitical zones: Adamawa, Borno, Edo, Enugu, FCT, Kano, Lagos, Plateau, Rivers, and Sokoto.

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This case study and other ACT publications are available at www.justice-security.ng

FOSTERING A PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE BETWEEN FARMERS AND HERDERS IN NIGERIA



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WHY THIS CASE STUDY?

This case study demonstrates how ACT CSO partners are applying new knowledge and skills to advocate for change. It also underlines that with improved internal and external organisational capacity backed with sufficient funding, CSOs can contribute to a peaceful co-existence among communities.

BACKGROUND

Conflicts between farmers and herders in Nigeria have been occurring for several years. The conflicts have caused distrust among local communities, loss of livelihoods, and food insecurity. Thousands of people have been displaced and many have died due to violence from the conflicts.¹



Funded by
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¹ International Crisis group (2018). Stopping Nigeria's Spiraling Farmer-Herder Violence. Available at <https://bit.ly/2mQbND7>

Increasing urbanisation, population growth and climate change have drastically reduced available farmlands, grazing reserves and agricultural opportunities. This coupled with the underlying social issues of ethnicity, religion and culture are among the major factors identified as causing or contributing to the conflict.²

The government has been leading efforts to address the conflict, including policies to curb the competition amongst herders and farmers, community mobilisation to promote herder-farmer dialogue, and support to local peace initiatives. Other stakeholders, such as traditional and religious leaders, community-based organisations, development partners, and corporate organisations have all contributed to these efforts. CSOs have been at the frontline of finding lasting solutions to the conflict.



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APPROACH

The Centre for Social Change and Economic Development (CSCED) is an ACT CSO partner based in Adamawa state in the northeast of Nigeria. The CSO works on conflict management and mediation, education, food security, livelihood, empowerment, and governance.

CSCED benefited from ACT capacity development support and a grant to execute a development project of its choice in its locality. The CSO chose to address the herder-farmer conflict, a prevailing problem in the agrarian state of Adamawa. The organisation adopted an approach that could create livelihood opportunities for farmers and herders, and at the same time promote a peaceful co-existence between them.

CSCED presented to the farmers and herders the practice of converting farm residue into livestock feeds. The aim was to encourage both groups to work together or even depend on one another for their livelihoods. This agricultural practice is not a new innovation but was uncommon in the Demsa, Numan, Lamurde, Girei, and Fufore local government areas (LGAs) in Adamawa state, where CSCED operates.

CSCED mobilised and sensitised over 600 farmers and herders in the five LGAs to adopt the new practice. The farmers and herders were trained to use the urea treatment, which is a simple way of mixing farm residues with urea or animal wastes to produce protein-rich animal feed. The farmers provided the crop residues such as foliage (green leaves), straws, husks and corn stover, while the herders helped supply the animal waste.

CSCED used part of the grant from ACT to provide free starter packs of urea treatment to 15 groups of farmers and herders, helping these groups to kickstart the process.

RESULTS

Farmers changed treatment methods

Following the interventions by CSCED, the farmers started treating their farm residues differently. They saw new opportunities that could improve their livelihoods.

“

I used to push the rice straws and husks into the bush after harvest. Initially, I thought this urea treatment was poisonous to livestock. But I'm happy to see that a simple treatment in the evening can make the animals eat all the wastes by the next morning. ”

Yusuf Ahmed, farmer, Dasin Hausa, Fufore

“

I can now earn from what I saw before as waste and trash. ”

Habiba Garba, female farmer, Jabbi Lamba community, Girei LGA

“

I didn't know that I was unknowingly sleeping on a source of wealth. ”

Wodonkai Hanko, farmer, Numan LGA

² Brottem, L. (2021). The Growing Complexity of Farmer-Herder Conflict in West and Central Africa. Africa Security Brief No. 39, Africa Center for Strategic Studies. Available at <https://bit.ly/3XeBZGk>

The herders, in turn, realised that the agricultural practice is not only bringing the farmers extra income but it was generating cheap, easily accessible alternative feeds for their livestock. It was a win-win situation for both sides. Both the farmers and herders realised that they do not need to see themselves as fierce competitors for scarce resources, but partners in using the available resources. This gave them a reason to prevent any conflict between them.

“

This initiative should have been here long time ago. We would have avoided this unnecessary crisis between us and the farmers. ”

Lamu Bakari, cattle trader along the riverbank in Lamurde

“

This initiative will help address the incessant clashes between farmers and herders. ”

Juda Amisa, Chairman, Girei LGA

The formation of the 15 groups of farmers and herders improved the relationship between both groups, enabling them to trust and depend on each other more. CSCED later assisted some groups to form and register into a cooperative society, further strengthening the relationship between the farmers and herders.

LESSONS LEARNED

Perform a stakeholder mapping to strengthen advocacy

Before partnering with ACT, CSCED had tried to introduce a similar peacebuilding initiative in nearby Benue state, but the intervention was not as successful. Reflecting on these interventions, the CSCED team observed that the difference was largely in the approach used in both cases.

According to the CSCED Executive Director, the advocacy approach used in Benue was not well thought through as they did not do a stakeholder mapping to know the key actors that could influence the desired change, besides the farmers and herders. However, in Adamawa, CSCED performed a stakeholder

mapping and as a result advocated to more stakeholders, including the local government chairmen, agricultural extension workers, security officers, and community leaders.



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“

Our advocacy approach changed because of ACT capacity support. We now ensured deliberate inclusion of relevant stakeholders that can support our project implementation. ”

Idris Gabdo, Executive Director, CSCED

Trust breeds credibility in peacebuilding

CSCED soon realised that its contributions in curbing the conflict between farmers and herders across the five local government areas has increased its relevance and credibility. The organisation has gained more trust of the communities as they are now being approached for peace mediation on other issues in the communities.



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Find out more

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