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WOMEN IN FARMER- HERDER CONFLICTS

Case studies from Sudan and Nigeria

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About SPARC

Climate change, armed conflict, environmental fragility and weak governance, and the impact these have on natural resource-based livelihoods, are among the key drivers of both crisis and poverty for communities in some of the world's most vulnerable and conflict-affected countries.

Supporting Pastoralism and Agriculture in Recurrent and Protracted Crises (SPARC) aims to generate evidence and address knowledge gaps to build the resilience of millions of pastoralists, agro-pastoralists and farmers in these communities in sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East.

We strive to create impact by using research and evidence to develop knowledge that improves how the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), donors, non-governmental organisations, local and national governments, and civil society can empower these communities in the context of climate change.

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ACRONYMS

FGD	focus group discussion
KII	key informant interviews
NGO	non-governmental organisation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Women are seldom mentioned in studies on farmer–herder conflict. When they do feature, they are predominantly portrayed as victims of conflict rather than actors exercising agency. Although recent literature on women and conflict has begun to consider voice and agency, this is less evident within farmer–herder conflict or the broader land and conflict nexus. This SPARC research addresses this gap, using qualitative case studies in Sudan and Nigeria.

In Sudan, the research examines conflicts between farmers (mixed ethnic groups) and Fallata pastoralists in Azaza Sogora village in Gadarif State. In Nigeria, the research examines conflicts between Fulani pastoralists and Tiv and Hausa farmers in Jangargari village in Awe Local Government, Nasarawa State.

Focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) highlight distinct dynamics of farmer–herder conflicts and their impacts, which are shaped by local contexts that interact with state policies, environmental conditions, wider insecurity and other factors. While both areas face challenges related to resource competition and gender inequalities, the intensity of conflict and the roles of women in livelihoods and conflict differ significantly.

Key findings from the study areas

Gender norms

Gender norms remain patriarchal. Women are rarely involved in decision-making around land allocation and conflict resolution, but they are involved substantially in farming, trading and food production.

The nature and intensity of conflicts

In the study area in Sudan, farmer–herder conflicts occur mainly between individuals and households around livestock trespassing and crop damage, and they rarely involve armed violence or loss of life. Tensions arise over competition for land and resources, where policy favours agriculture. In Nigeria, conflicts arise around land and access to resources, with ethnic and political dynamics inflaming tensions. Rapid agricultural expansion and land acquisition by urban elites fuels disputes. Conflicts often result in deaths, displacement and widespread insecurity. In both contexts pastoralists are increasingly losing grazing areas and facing restricted mobility.

Women's experiences and roles in conflict

Women are protagonists in conflict in Sudan when their land or livestock are affected. Farmer women utilise conflict resolution mechanisms, while pastoralist women defer to traditional leaders. Neither are represented within conflict resolution structures, however. Some play a role in conflict avoidance and peacemaking, and some as aggressors. Women in Nigeria experience violence and displacement. Across both farmer and herder communities they evacuate people and assets, care for the wounded, and caution against conflict and violence. Women are not represented in conflict resolution or post-conflict peacebuilding processes. Some instigate or participate in conflict.

Women's livelihoods and coping strategies

Economic pressures in Sudan have pushed farmer women into wage labour and small-scale trading, and pastoralist women into agricultural wage labour, which is relatively new among pastoralists. Farmer-herder conflict has increased these trends. Women's options for mobility and diversification remain constrained. At the same time, access to loans and agricultural inputs enabled by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have allowed farmer women to increase their landholdings and engagement in food and cash crop farming, which in turn has enhanced their role in governance. In Nigeria, conflict and market closures have severely curtailed women's trading, farming and livestock activities, leading to widespread poverty, food insecurity and dependency on men. Women tap into various – but limited – coping strategies, and they face heightened risks of violence and exploitation. Tiv and Hausa women have extremely limited opportunities in farming and post-harvest activities; Fulani women have lost access to milk processing and trading. Women's reduced economic options have magnified their exclusion in other areas; for example, hampering farmer women's ability to access land in safer locations.

Land use and governance

In Sudan, customary systems dominate, and land is owned primarily by farmers. Most is owned informally, though formal registration has increased, with land titles mainly held by men. Lending institutions that provide cash and agricultural inputs have increasingly enabled women farmers to buy and rent land, albeit informally. Pastoralist men and women rely on communal or private lands and are less land-secure than their farming counterparts. Land governance in Nigeria is also dominated by customary systems – Hausa and Tiv hold more influence than the Fulani, and men hold most land.

Social and cultural cohesion

Economic pressures and conflict have affected livelihoods in Sudan, but less so cultural and social structures. However, women do face greater workloads and responsibilities due to the out-migration of men, which strains family cohesion and affects women's physical and psychosocial well-being. Economic pressures magnified by conflict have also delayed marriage among youth. Due to recurrent violence in Nigeria, most of the remaining local population is dominated by women. Cultural and inter-community cohesion has eroded, festivities have ceased, local markets have closed and women feel isolated.

The centrality of land

Farmer and herder women of all ages in Sudan acknowledge land availability, allocation and access as root issues in farmer–herder conflict. Balanced and inclusive land allocation and planning systems are needed that benefit both groups. In Nigeria, women emphasise the need for grazing areas and access routes for pastoralists, and a stronger government military presence to monitor and manage violence.

Recommendations

Integrate women into conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes

Civil society organisations, development partners and researchers should partner with informal and formal conflict resolution bodies to identify the constraints to women's participation. Efforts should leverage traditional leadership structures that already include influential women,

and women should be trained as mediators and facilitators for conflict resolution and peacemaking.

Include women to address the root causes of farmer–herder conflict

National and local governments, researchers and development partners should assess opportunities to promote policies, institutions and processes that prioritise inclusive and participatory land use planning. Women should be included in these processes.

Strengthen women’s leadership in local governance

Local governments (including informal governance structures), civil society organisations and grassroots community groups should increase women’s representation in dialogue and decision-making processes. Women-led initiatives should be supported, and targeted training should be provided on conflict resolution, resource management and legal rights.

Enhance women’s livelihood options and protect their access to land, markets and resources

Researchers and civil society organisations should work with women farmers and pastoralists to define the skills, inputs and resources they need to expand their livelihood opportunities within and beyond subsistence agriculture and herding. Local governments, communities and development partners should invest in these aspects and provide safe trade routes to markets. Banks, donors, development partners and community associations should promote financial products for small-scale women producers, support women’s cooperatives, and provide training on financial literacy and entrepreneurship.

Foster collaboration between farmers and pastoralists

Local government, civil society, community organisations and development partners should work together to strengthen or create inclusive and multi-ethnic community-based forums, including women-led peacebuilding initiatives. These forums can define pathways for equitable access to critical resources to avoid tensions, and assess opportunities to reintroduce community events, festivities and networks to foster social cohesion.

Protect and support women affected by conflict and violence

Local governments, development partners and humanitarian practitioners should provide gender-responsive psychosocial support for women and children, collaborating with communities to create safe spaces and support networks for women. Service providers should improve the coverage of existing assistance programmes, and regularly assess the impacts of conflict and violence on women’s livelihoods and social cohesion so that services meet their needs.

Design targeted research to understand women’s roles and experiences in local farmer–herder conflicts

Researchers should design targeted studies so that governments and practitioners can identify context-specific entry points for gender-sensitive interventions. This would address the gap between national-level policies and discourse and local realities for women. Studies should assess how women’s voice, influence and social standing change in conflict, and whether any gains made by women shift when conditions return to ‘normal’.

1 INTRODUCTION

Women are mentioned rarely in the literature on farmer–herder conflict (Nassef et al., 2023). Where they do feature, women are mainly described as victims of conflict, and less so as instigators or as peacemakers – i.e. as actors exercising agency (ibid.). This absence is generally echoed in other reviews (Brottem and McDonnell, 2020; Caroli et al., 2022; Janoch et al., 2024). Although there is a growing body of research on women, and on voice and agency across different aspects of conflict and transitions from conflict, this is not the case for farmer–herder conflict (Castillejo and Domingo, 2022a) or from a wider land and conflict perspective (Castillejo and Domingo, 2022b).

This paper explores the experience of women in farmer–herder conflict and the impacts upon them, drawing on case study findings from Sudan and Nigeria. It is intended for practitioners working on (or with an interest in) women’s support and empowerment in contexts affected by farmer–herder conflicts, and researchers with an interest in gender issues in similar settings. Recommendations target policy-makers as well.

This focus on women was elicited from a wider study in both countries on the causes and impacts of farmer–herder conflicts. Those who wish to engage further around conflict dynamics and the drivers of farmer–herder conflict in Sudan and Nigeria are encouraged to read the respective country reports (Suliman, 2024; Momale and Higazi, 2024).

Nomadic woman in dry season Fulani camp, Taraba State, Nigeria. © Adam Higazi



2 METHOD

FGDs and KIIs were conducted in both study sites. Areas were selected where traditional farming and pastoral food production systems remain dominant, and where farmers and herders could be accessed who had knowledge of recent and local farmer–herder conflicts. These farmers and herders include women and both male and female youth. The locations were also considered stable enough politically for the study to take place, and safe and accessible for researchers and participants.

In Sudan, Azaza Sogora village in Gadarif State was selected as the case study location. Ten FGDs were held involving 84 farmers (41 men and 43 women) and 78 pastoralists (37 men and 41 women). Female FGD facilitators played an active role in discussions with women to encourage confidence and responsiveness among participants. Four FGDs were conducted with women only. Eight KIIs were conducted (four with farmers and four with pastoralists, with equal numbers of men and women for each). The study concentrates on farmer–herder conflicts between farmers¹ and Fallata (also known as Fulbe or Fulani) pastoralists who constitute the largest of several pastoralist ethnic groups passing through the area. Fieldwork took place in November and December 2023.

In Nigeria, Jangargari village in Awe Local Government within Nasarawa State was selected as the case study location. This is close to the border with Benue State. Jangargari comprises 15 community clusters, of which four were chosen to hold FGDs (two farmer clusters – one Hausa and one Tiv, and two herder clusters – both Fulani). Twenty-four FGDs were held across the four community clusters, with six focus group discussions conducted in each. The groups comprised: male elderly, female elderly, male youth, female youth, male (mixed ages) and female (mixed ages). Each FGD was conducted over two days to allow the groups to comfortably address the issues without overburdening participants. In total, 296 people participated in the FGDs, of which 162 participants were women (55%). Across all participants, 135 were herders (81 women, 60%) and 161 were farmers (81 women, 50%).

FGD participants were identified through community leaders. As in Sudan, female facilitators encouraged confidence and responsiveness among women participants. Twenty KIIs were conducted to further explore themes emerging from the FGDs. Interviewees were purposively identified during the FGDs based on their specific knowledge of farmer–herder conflicts and the dynamics of this. Interviewees included local government officials, community and opinion leaders, traditional leaders, religious leaders, elderly persons, and leaders of different ethnographic socio-cultural groups. Fieldwork took place in March 2024.

Questions were included in the broader study to elicit the experiences and the impacts of conflict on women,² with lines of enquiry used uniformly across all FGDs and KIIs.

1 The ethnic groups in Azaza Sogora who identify as farmers include: Fur, Zaghawa, Bulala, Salamat, Kajaska, Masalit, Burgo, Tama, Tunjur and Misseriya (Suliman and Abdal-Karem, 2023).

2 Questions and tools used in the FGDs focused on the general stages and timeline of conflict, mapping the locations and spatial dynamics of land use and conflict, mapping stakeholders, and the relationships and power dynamics in conflict. Questions in the KIIs focused on gaining a deeper understanding of livelihoods, services and livestock production in the study area; of land use, land use change and land governance systems; and of the causes and impacts of conflict.



Men and women in straw market in the dry season, Jigawa State, Nigeria. © Adam Higazi

In the portions of the FGDs dedicated to mapping stakeholders,³ relationships and power dynamics in conflict, the facilitators asked participants in the mixed groups and women-only groups to what extent and how women feature in this picture, and what this says about the role of women and men in conflict. In the portions of the FGDs where a conflict tree was drawn with participants to elicit deeper information on the causes and impacts of conflict, the mixed groups and women-only groups were also asked whether men and women experience the impacts of conflict in the same way or differently and how; and whether the roles of men and women in conflict and conflict resolution differ and how. KIs probed the role of men and women in farming and pastoralism, whether impacts of conflict are different for men and women, and what role women and men play in conflict and in conflict resolution.

Limitations

The research team in Sudan was small because the ongoing country-wide conflict meant that few researchers were available in-country to undertake the work. This explains the variation in the numbers of FGDs in Sudan compared with Nigeria.

3 Fighting parties as well as influencing parties

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

A comprehensive scoping review on farmer–herder conflict in Africa identified only 88 primary research studies among over 1,000 search results. Within these, only 25 mention women in relation to conflict, mostly as victims and less frequently as actors exercising agency (Nassef et al., 2023).

3.1 Gender norms and women’s agency

Gender norms across much of rural Africa remain typically patriarchal, where men make decisions and lead, and women follow and take care of the home, often with limited voice and input in important conversations that affect them and their communities (Odary et al., 2020; FAO, 2021; Janoch et al., 2024). In Sudan, for example, country land laws do not discriminate against women but, in practice, local patriarchal socio-cultural factors strongly influence women’s land rights and often curtail them (FAO, 2021). This exclusion is also visible in conflict settings:

Often when our farms are invaded, and we report to the traditional rulers, our complaints are usually not taken seriously. Sometimes we are just dismissed. (Woman in northern Nigeria, quoted in CDD, 2018: 25)

Women’s muted role has been internalised, accepted and perpetuated by many, including by women themselves (Bond, 2014; FAO, 2021; IGAD, 2021). However, at the same time, women have influenced, acted and instigated within the confines of, and in some places in spite of, prevalent norms, including in conflict settings.

Gender norms are also not static, and developments within communities and societies can have an impact on them. For example, in Kajiado District in Kenya, women organise themselves into formal and informal groups to improve their economic condition and challenge their marginalised status (Campbell et al., 2000). In Laikipia, women and men have highlighted the need for women to be in more prominent leadership roles, suggesting a broader readiness for including women in decision-making (Bond, 2014). Such progress within communities is also associated with evolving gender norms at national and global levels.

3.2 Women’s experience of and role in conflict

Women’s prominent role in food production systems in much of rural Africa⁴ implies they have direct and indirect involvement as stakeholders in contexts of conflict. Examples include when livestock damage women’s or a household’s harvests, or when women’s or a household’s livestock are killed, stolen or confiscated. Alternatively, women’s farms may encroach on

⁴ Across Africa, women (and youth) are key actors in food production systems, playing critical roles in production, markets, and household economic and food security (Gnisci, 2016; Adelehin et al., 2018; FAO, 2023; Mugo and Kinyua, 2023).

grazing land or migratory routes, and their livestock may trespass onto farms and damage harvests belonging to other households (Adelehin et al., 2018).

Women farmers in Nigeria have reported and protested against incursions onto their property with lukewarm responsiveness from authorities (Apeh et al., 2021). In northwest Cameroon, women have been forcefully and effectively marching and demanding justice following crop destruction – sometimes with violence – since the 1950s (Mbiih, 2020). In Nigeria, farmer–herder conflict has been caused by direct attacks from women.⁵ However, this is reported as a finding without being discussed in detail (Dimelu, 2016). Thousands of women have marched to enforce an anti-grazing law in Benue State, Nigeria (ICG, 2018).

Women have withheld prior information on imminent attacks that could prevent violence; collected information on opposing parties to help inform new attacks; helped men prepare for attacks; protected perpetrators of acts such as killing, sexual abuse or cattle rustling; chanted war songs, ridiculed men's inaction or questioned their masculinity to incite them to conflict; participated in the trade of small arms; and transferred animosity and negative perceptions to children which embeds ill will in the next generation (Adelehin et al., 2018; CDD, 2018).

The trauma of women's previous experience with conflict – particularly violent conflict – can increase their propensity for anger, bitterness and despair, which manifests as a desire to seek revenge or retribution and contributes to a cycle of conflict (Adelehin et al., 2018).⁶

A Fulani is always a Fulani and is noted for raping people on the farm and robbery. As far as they are in your community, there will always be problems. The government must chase them away to their country because they are not part of us. Their cattle even feed on shea nut, which is a major source of income for women in the shea butter business. I am a Dagomba by tribe, and they are Fulani. If the herders were Dagombas, I do not have a problem with that because they are my people. (Female farmer in Ghana, quoted in Ahmed and Kuusaana, 2021: 12)

Among pastoralist communities in the Horn of Africa, women have exploited close family relationships to incite conflict. For example, young pastoralist women of marriageable age in the Karamoja region encourage eligible men to bring in the largest number of cattle from cattle raids as bride price and ridicule those who do not. In the Mandera triangle, women encourage men to take up arms and to fight, sometimes using folklore and song, and they shame men who show reluctance (Odary et al., 2020).

Conversely, women also play an active role in conflict avoidance and peace. They collect and communicate early warning information on conflict to avoid violence; call for the cessation of conflict and peaceful resolution through media and other platforms such as peaceful protests and rallies; set up legal, medical and psychosocial support centres for women affected by conflict; and support reconciliation post-conflict (Adelehin et al., 2018).

Pastoralist women in the Horn of Africa have also been shown to more easily leverage informal grassroots networks beyond their primary kinship group than men for peace advocacy, to negotiate safe passage through enemy-held territory, or to bring combatants to the negotiating

⁵ Among other causes

⁶ However, a review of wider literature underscores that this is one possible outcome among many.

table (Odary et al., 2020). In Laikipia County, Kenya, women work with community elders to stop young women from inciting cattle raids among young men, a practice that has decreased overall within the community (Bond, 2014).

In broader war contexts, women have become breadwinners and led families; they have sheltered and cared for others fleeing violence, or shared savings; they have set up groups and mechanisms to convene women from across conflict divides; and they have influenced humanitarian actors and authorities to bring assistance closer to where conflict-affected women can reach it, and to set up frequent night patrols to stave off break-ins and assaults (Janoch et al., 2024). Typical gender norms are sometimes unravelled by the upheaval of conflict, creating clear opportunities for women to take centre stage as breadwinners and decision-makers within families and communities, and sometimes as fighters. However, these windows of change can be short-lived or curtailed once peace is restored (Coulter et al., 2008; Janoch et al., 2024).

3.3 The impact of conflict on women

Farmer–herder conflict has debilitating impacts on women. These impacts are irrefutable and often pronounced, particularly given that women are more constrained in conflict settings than men. While livelihoods and food security are crucial issues for women in conflict (Janoch et al., 2024), also of major concern are women’s physical and psychosocial well-being and their weakened role as ‘connectors’ within communities.

In conflict settings, men have greater mobility than women and, in turn, wider livelihood choices beyond local food production systems. This is linked to social and cultural norms which enable men’s mobility more than women’s. Women depend mainly on local food production systems for their livelihoods, income and food security; and they are disproportionately affected when conflict disrupts farming and pastoral production, when it shuts down access to productive assets such as land and livestock, or when it closes markets or makes them inaccessible.

When men are absent, the responsibilities within food production systems fall squarely on women, increasing their already heavy workload (FAO, 2021). In addition, their compromised ability to produce or sell in conflict conditions, combined with the absence of men and loss of men’s income, pushes rural women into precarious positions. They engage in poorly paid wage and menial labour, petty trade, sex work or domestic roles to meet basic needs in the absence of other options – and this, in turn, directly affects their well-being and resilience and often takes them away from families for long stretches, which affects family cohesion and how children are raised (Adelehin et al., 2018; CDD, 2018).

Women’s physical and psychosocial well-being⁷ is profoundly affected in conflict settings, particularly where conflicts are violent and where they experience or witness killing and destruction. This can generate a debilitating sense of fear which interferes with women’s abilities to carry out day-to-day tasks, and it may expose them to violence too (CDD, 2018; Apeh et al., 2021). Trauma makes it difficult for people to identify or embrace much-needed changes, and healing and psychosocial support is often lacking in such contexts (Adelehin

⁷ Psychosocial well-being is a composite of psychological and social well-being and the interplays between social and psychological factors (Hayes et al., 2018, in Sisodia and Jobbins, 2022).

et al., 2018). As covered extensively in the literature, women and girls also face increased exposure to sexual and gender-based violence, particularly in contexts of violent conflict (Adelehin et al., 2018; CDD, 2018; ICG, 2018; Janoch et al., 2024).

Additionally, conflict weakens women's role in nurturing and sustaining social cohesion. Family structures are disrupted due to injury, displacement, destitution and the death of family members, while inter-group relations can erode. In Nigeria, for example, it is not uncommon for farmer–herder conflict to render women the sole breadwinners within families, caring for an additional 10 or 20 extended family members while being displaced and uprooted themselves (Adelehin et al., 2018). The cumulative impacts of sustained conflict result in women's poor mental and physical health, reduced quality of life, and difficulties managing work and family life, which has a knock-on effect on families and communities (ibid.). It is also common for a breakdown of inter-community trust and a reduction in joint social activities to make it difficult for women on both sides to 'embrace the other' (ibid.).

Specific support for women affected by conflict falls short of needs. Aside from inadequate psychosocial support, support programmes such as cash transfers or entrepreneurship schemes are largely missing (Adelehin et al., 2018). Women struggle to access loans from the government and NGOs who offer aid and support to families (CDD, 2018).

Nomadic women in Adamawa State, Nigeria. © Adam Higazi



4 FINDINGS FROM AZAZA SOGORA VILLAGE, SUDAN

4.1 Context

Gender norms in Azaza Sogora village are typical of Sudan more broadly, where men are public leaders and decision-makers and women are expected to follow, under a patriarchal construct. Women are also responsible for tending to home life and caring for the household (Sulieman and Abdal-Karem, 2023).

Local livelihoods, including women's livelihoods, mainly depend on small-scale rain-fed crop farming and traditional livestock production. These food production systems remain dominant sources of livelihoods, income and food in the study area, but nationwide inflation – which has doubled the cost of basic food items – has pushed people, including farmer and pastoralist women, to turn to agricultural wage labour and other economic activities. The area also sees significant out-migration among male youth (Sulieman, 2024; Sulieman and Abdal-Karem, 2023). These trends are exacerbated by farmer–herder conflict.

The dominance of large-scale agriculture in the area and a policy environment that favours this have squeezed growing populations of pastoralists and small-scale farmers into limited spaces. Multiple waves of wider violent conflict in the country have contributed to this concentration of people, fuelling localised conflict between the two parties as they compete over limited land and resources (Sulieman, 2024).

In addition, an overall policy bias towards farming has soured relationships between farmers and pastoralists over the years (Sulieman and Abdal-Karem, 2023), as pastoralists continue to lose grazing land and migratory routes to farm expansion. This trend has gone largely unchecked.

The relationship of local smallholder farmers with the land is changing in the study area. The practice of buying and selling land has emerged since the late 1980s, when before land was allocated by traditional leaders (omdas and sheikhs). The majority of cropland in the village is unregistered, informal private land, but in the last 15 years there has been a growing trend towards formal registration of agricultural land to enable access to loans and agricultural inputs through proof of collateral (Sulieman and Abdal-Karem, 2023). Most land titles are registered to men, though women are also increasingly buying and renting land (albeit informally), as their access to cash has improved through lending institutions (see **4.2 Role of women in food production systems on Farming women**).

Local pastoralists, on the other hand, rely on a combination of open-access communal rangelands (e.g. the Butana in the north), government-owned land (e.g. local forests), and privately owned land and water. Many of these resources – particularly the communal rangelands and government-owned land – are shrinking due to land use change. Some pastoralists have begun growing crops in the last 30 years (mainly sorghum for home consumption), renting farmland from settled communities and buying land.

Privatisation of resources is one strategy pastoralists now use to secure access to land (Sulieman, 2015). While the evidence does not indicate whether it is pastoralist men or women who buy and rent land, it is assumed that mostly men engage in these transactions as men own and control most of the livestock wealth and are therefore in stronger financial positions to engage in such transactions. Local pastoralists (men and women) do not engage with lending institutions (Sulieman and Abdal-Karem, 2023).

Despite significant issues around land, farmer–herder conflict in Azaza Sogora mainly occurs between individuals and individual households due to livestock trespassing onto crops and crop damage, rather than between communities. It rarely involves armed violence or loss of life.

4.2 Role of women in food production systems

Farming women

Farming in Azaza Sogora is a household activity, with men controlling household plots and women and youth supporting this endeavour and also providing labour. Women have traditionally owned their own plots through inheritance, although these are usually smaller than household plots or men's plots. They work their own plots when they have fulfilled their responsibilities on the household plot, cultivating primarily for household consumption, with surplus sold to cover household costs such as schooling, food and healthcare. Unprocessed crops, and occasionally livestock, are sold to traders in the local market or are transported to Gadarif City and weekly markets in neighbouring villages.

Women have increased their engagement in agriculture on their own land and are now also buying and renting their own land, albeit mainly informally. This has been possible given women's improved access to cash through lending institutions, which began in Azaza Sogora around 14 years ago. Women's access to finance was enabled through NGOs working on women's economic empowerment, who connected women to banking and lending institutions that provide loans to individuals and to groups registered as cooperatives.⁸ Most loans take the form of agricultural inputs and cash (Sulieman and Abdal-Karem, 2023), with hundreds of local women currently receiving loans from banks in Gadarif City. While women continue to play typical traditional roles within the farming community, access to finance over the last decade or so has increased their engagement and efficiency in agriculture on their own land holdings, as well as their visibility, power and voice in the community.

Within the study area, 75% of women now hold their own agricultural plots (either bought or rented) and they are better able to expand the smaller landholdings that they owned previously through inheritance. On these plots, women have expanded their activities from growing only food crops to growing cash crops for income (mainly sesame and groundnut). Access to cash has also enabled women to use agricultural machinery. This is a change from the past when the farming process was strictly manual, which limited how efficiently women could cultivate and the amount of land they could render productive. Access to cash has also allowed women to increase the number of livestock they own, as a supplement to crop cultivation (ibid.).

⁸ All locally registered cooperatives are women's cooperatives. Women organised themselves as cooperatives to better enable access to loans and finance.

Banks prefer to give loans to women because they are more committed to paying back their debts after harvest. While collateral to access finance is usually in the form of land titles, most local land is registered in the name of men, with few women holding registered plots. However, banks have accommodated direct agreements with women in the absence of formal titles, based on trust and a history of high loan repayments by women. The effective role of women in the agricultural sector has also attracted the attention of decision-makers. For example, in November 2022, the Locality Executive Director issued a local order that water facilities in Azaza Sogora should be managed by a women's committee (ibid.).

The increased participation of women in their own farming activities has affected the supply of agricultural labour. With more women busy on their own farms, men have increasingly had to hire agricultural labour to work the land, instead of relying on women's labour available within households.⁹

At the same time, women are affected by general economic hardship. In the last decade, some women have increasingly turned to wage labour on agricultural schemes to help meet their basic needs. They have also become involved in trade, setting up small stands in front of their homes to trade crops and other items, while others sell food and tea in local markets.¹⁰

Like women in general, young women participate in farming on household plots, and some cultivate their own land, mainly focusing on groundnuts as these are not costly to cultivate. Others work as agricultural wage labourers.¹¹

Pastoralist women

Among pastoralists, there is a clear division of labour between men and women. Men are responsible for the herd, including mobility and livestock sales in markets; women are responsible for the home, livestock in and around the home (particularly young or sick animals), and producing livestock products to sell in local markets, with the proceeds going towards household needs. Women own their own livestock which they bring with them when they get married, as a contribution from their families. The norm dictates that a man cannot sell this livestock without his wife's agreement, since it was gifted to her by her family and does not belong to him, even if he manages those animals within his own herds.

Pastoralist women are mobile as well as settled, with an increasing trend of settlement. Settled women no longer accompany men during mobility, partially due to insecurity in the areas where herds move.¹² Some settled pastoralist women also practice crop farming alongside livestock rearing,¹³ while others work as wage labourers on agricultural farms, mainly weeding and harvesting. The latter is a relatively new trend, having started about 15 years ago. Similar to their farming counterparts, women have turned to wage labour due to general economic hardship but also due to loss of livestock to confiscation following trespassing on farmer's fields. They also undertake wage labour to avoid losing their livestock or paying high fines in the event that their livestock trespass on farmers' fields.

9 KIL_FM_E; KIL_FW_N

10 KIL_FW_N; KIL_FW_A

11 KIL_FW_A; KIL_FM_E; KIL_FM_E

12 KIL_PM_A; FGD_PF_Y

13 FGD_PF_Y

Pastoralist women have a different relationship with the land to their farming counterparts. Women inherit land and livestock, although some inherit only livestock, as there is no land to be passed on.¹⁴ Like the wider pastoral community, women do not engage with finance institutions.

Young pastoralist women's roles are similar to those of women in general. Often, they are the ones who fetch water (which can be far from home, up to 5 km away) and collect firewood, alongside doing household chores.¹⁵

4.3 Women's experience of and role in conflict

Farming women

Like men, women (including young women) can be considered parties to farmer–herder conflicts when their land is encroached upon by the livestock of others.¹⁶ Women seek resolution to crop damage through the same conflict resolution channels as men, sometimes by themselves and sometimes through male family members or their children.¹⁷

In 2017, my crop was damaged by sheep and goats owned by pastoralists. I went and brought the police to the site of the damage and the shepherd was arrested by the police. There is no difference between men and women. The woman can work on the procedures for opening the report and litigation. My husband was there but I did all the steps on my own. I moved in with the crop damage assessment committee. After that, the Damage Assessment Committee came and set the compensation at fifteen sacks. (Female farmer, FGD participant)¹⁸

In 2022, there was an infringement of my cultivation, and I did not find the perpetrators, but I followed hooves of their animals and found them at a distance. They refused to admit that they had done the damage. I interviewed them and asked them about the route they took during that time. I recorded the conversation on my mobile device. I then brought the police to the location where the shepherds were. At first, the shepherds denied that they had done the damage, but when I played them the recording in front of the police, they admitted that they had done the damage. Then they paid for the damage. My husband would accompany me through all these steps. (Female farmer, FGD participant)¹⁹

In 2018, my mother did the procedures alone, as the camels entered her crop, so she took the camels who attacked the crop alone and went to the police station. The problem was resolved amicably and then became an amicable relationship between us and the abusive shepherds. After that, they started storing their equipment with us at home when they went away. Sometimes a peaceful social relationship is established

14 KIL_PM_A; KIL_PW_A; KIL_PM_I

15 KIL_PM_A; KIL_PW_F

16 KIL_PM_A; KIL_FW_A; KIL_FM_E; KIL_FW_N; FGD_FMF_Y; FGD_FF_Y; FGD_FM_Y; FGD_FW_M

17 FGD_FMF_Y; FGD_FMF_M; FGD_FM_M; FGD_FM_Y

18 FGD_FMF_M

19 FGD_FMF_M

between the shepherds and the farmers after the infringement. (Female farmer, FGD participant)²⁰

Women in some families are supported throughout the process of seeking reparations. In other families, women's participation is discouraged and, as a result, women may forego compensation.²¹

[S]ome men encourage the woman to take measures and not leave her right to compensation and push her forward to go to the police and in some cases pay some of the financial costs of the procedures. (Young male farmer, FGD participant)²²

[I]n some cases, the man pressures the woman to waive her right to compensation for damage and to accept the evaluation, because most men do not prefer that their women go to court and thus the woman waives her right. (Young female farmer, FGD participant)²³

In sum, a woman's involvement in cases of crop damage depends on whether her family is open to her involvement. In general, steps towards case resolution are a matter of internal family discussion. In all cases, women have the right to accept or refuse conciliation or compensation, and resolution of the issue is only concluded when she or the family (usually the male family representative), or both, are satisfied with the outcome. While women interact with informal and formal conflict resolution institutions, they are not represented in them.²⁴

One male key informant from the pastoralist community said that women (both farmers and herders) may fuel conflict. They are protective of their families and can be vocal when their sons are affected by or implicated in conflict, which can exacerbate tensions as women push for action behind the scenes.²⁵

Pastoralist women

Like their farmer counterparts, pastoralist women can be considered parties to farmer–herder conflict when their land is encroached upon or when their livestock damage crops.²⁶ Unlike farmers, however, pastoralist women are not involved in the conflict resolution process, which is done solely by men.

Pastoralist women do not seem to sit idly by, though, and can aggravate tensions at times. Young women, for example, may become physically involved in conflict.

If there is a quarrel, we carry sticks to defend our brothers and sons. (Pastoralist woman, KII participant)²⁷

20 FGD_FMF_Y

21 FGD_FMF_Y

22 FGD_FMF_Y

23 FGD_FMF_Y

24 FGD_FMF_Y; FGD_FM_Y; FGD_FW_M; KII_FW_A; KII_FW_N

25 KII_PM_A

26 KII_PM_A; KII_PM_I

27 KII_PW_F

We, the young girls, if we are exposed to friction with the farmers, we may meet on it and make a blow. Such friction occurred a lot and the farmer fled as a result of beatings by young women. (Young pastoralist woman, KII participant)²⁸

Young women support the young men, so they have a role in the conflict. (Young pastoralist woman, KII participant)²⁹

Women can also play a calming role, however. For example, older women try to allay tension³⁰ – an inna wuro (older woman) recognised and respected for her wisdom within each pastoralist encampment or farig³¹ is said to calm tensions during conflict and give advice and guidance.³²

4.4 Impact of conflict on women

Across KIIs and FGDs, it was reported that farmer–herder conflict has a collective impact on the whole household, albeit with variations in how impact is experienced by different genders and age groups.³³ Most impacts are felt within food production systems and livelihoods, and the ability to meet basic needs as a result. Impacts are also felt in terms of social fabric and family cohesion, roles in the family/community, and physical and psychosocial well-being.

Farmer women

Some farming women are increasingly engaging in agricultural wage labour due to general economic hardship. And, like men, they are further pressed to turn to wage labour when they or their families lose harvests due to crop damage. Women are mainly contracted on a day-to-day basis in large-scale mechanised schemes.³⁴ When women are not at home, they leave their eldest daughter responsible for the household. Some cannot go to work, because they must mind children at home.³⁵

The out-migration of men has exacerbated the burden on women, affecting family cohesion and magnifying economic hardship. In the absence of men, women play the role of father and mother at home, while also seeking work opportunities outside the home. When family cohesion and economic circumstances are stressed in this way, children may drop out of school.³⁶ It is also harder for women to seek reparations for crop damage when men are absent,³⁷ including in women-headed households³⁸ since they often rely on the support of male family members to help with this process. Such burdens extend women's already over-stretched workloads – the Food and Agriculture Organization reports that, under normal circumstances, women in rural Sudan spend 80 hours per week on unpaid activities alone,

28 KII_PW_A

29 KII_PW_A

30 KII_PW_A

31 A distinct pastoralist encampment comprising a group of pastoralist families – usually relatives

32 FGD_PW_M

33 FGD_FMF_M; FGD_FM_M; FGD_FF_Y; FGD_FW_M; KII_FM_E; KII_FW_N

34 FGD_FW_M

35 FGD_FMF_Y

36 KII_FW_A

37 FGD_FF_Y

38 FGD_FM_M

which is already the equivalent of two full-time jobs (FAO, 2021). Young women are equally affected.

The encroachment on the crop affects us. The majority of students pay tuition fees from crops and thus, infringement affects education through the inability to pay tuition fees. Also, there is an inability to pay for treatment. We have no other source of income. (Young female farmer, FGD participant)³⁹

Farmer–herder conflict also impacts young women and men through delaying marriage – generally seen as a positive milestone in life – due to lack of financial means.⁴⁰ Similarly to their older counterparts, it pushes young women into agricultural wage labour on large-scale farms, petty trade and work in local markets.⁴¹

Pastoralist women

Farmer–herder conflict is making it increasingly difficult for pastoralist women to remain in livestock production. Due to the heavy fines they get for livestock trespassing in the context of farm expansion,⁴² women (particularly young women) turn to wage labour in agricultural fields to cope with losses. They also turn to wage labour as a coping strategy when the men are away.⁴³

I came to this site and I had a quantity of cows, sheep, and goats. I lost all these livestock because of the conflict. Now I work for farmers as a daily wage labourer ... we have become wage workers. (Young female Fallata pastoralist, FGD participant)⁴⁴

Women feel the impacts of conflict acutely, especially when their husbands are detained due to animal trespassing into crop fields. Some husbands are frequently away from the family searching for pastures in remote areas where farming is limited, in order to avoid their animals trespassing into agricultural fields. Some might be absent for months and return home only for short breaks. This is a great source of stress for women.⁴⁵ Women, like men, are also burdened and stressed when they have to guard animals against crop trespassing.

One day, I had to tie a donkey at my feet during the night so that he would not enter agriculture. We are afraid of farmers with large agricultural projects because they have police guarding their projects. (Pastoralist woman, FGD participant)⁴⁶

The absence of men, like in the farming community, means that all family responsibilities fall on the shoulders of women.⁴⁷ And young men and women delay marriage because they are

39 FGD_FW_M

40 FGD_FM_Y

41 FGD_FF_Y: FW_M; KIL_FW_A

42 FGD_PW_M

43 FGD_PM_Y

44 FGD_PF_Y

45 FGD_PF_Y

46 FGD_PW_M

47 FGD_PW_M; KIL_PM_A; FGD_PF_Y; KIL_PW_F



Young Fallata women taking a break from work on a large-scale mechanised farm in southern Gadarif, Sudan. © Hussein Sulieman

unable to save enough from herding or face hefty fines from livestock trespassing.⁴⁸ One positive impact shared by young women respondents is that, currently, no man has more than one wife – men are too busy herding and trying to avoid animal trespassing, and besides they cannot afford marriage due to heavy fines linked to animal trespassing.⁴⁹

4.5 Women's perspectives on solutions to farmer–herder conflict

According to most farmer and pastoralist women, land availability and access are the key factors to resolving farmer–herder conflict. They advocate for land allocation and planning so that both small-scale farmers and pastoralists are able to participate in their respective food production systems with dignity and without conflict.

⁴⁸ FGD_PF_Y

⁴⁹ FGD_PF_Y

5 FINDINGS FROM JANGARGARI VILLAGE, NIGERIA

5.1 Context

Local livelihoods – for men and women – in Jangargari village remain dependent on small-scale rain-fed crop farming and traditional livestock production,⁵⁰ though both production systems have been substantially affected by farmer–herder conflict. Unlike in Sudan, the conflict in the Nigeria study site is often violent, leading to loss of lives and displacement. Farmer–herder conflict has escalated to serious violence six times in Jangargari village since the 1980s (1980, 1989–1990, 2000–2003, 2007–2009, 2013–2015 and 2017–2023).

Cycles of violent farmer–herder conflict have caused substantial loss of life; the destruction of homes, property, harvests and livestock; the theft of property and livestock; and the closure of schools and the local Jangargari market (since 2017), which was a lifeline for the community, especially for women. Widespread fear has made farms and grazing areas inaccessible, and it has repeatedly displaced many people. Criminal gangs and criminality are now a prominent local feature.

The impacts on women are substantial, particularly given that most of the population that remains across Tiv, Hausa and Fulani groups is dominated by women and young children (Momale and Higazi, 2024). And yet, their situation is often ignored or neglected in policy formulation and the design of post-conflict rehabilitation efforts. No strategies or interventions are being implemented or even conceptualised at local, state and national levels for the victims of cyclical conflicts. There is also extremely limited humanitarian and social assistance from governments or international actors for local women (ibid.), because of the remoteness of the area and because government and non-government institutions that have the potential to assist are located in towns further away. The only assistance for women observed in the study site is some occasional humanitarian assistance provided in areas of displacement within Benue State.

Land and land governance is central to farmer–herder conflict in Jangargari. The last decade has seen increasing contestation over land, as well as agricultural expansion by the two main farming groups in the area, the Hausa and the Tiv, and now also cultivation by Fulani pastoralists. Urban elites within and outside Nasarawa State are also buying land for intensive and commercial farming, which means that grazing land is lost and pastoral mobility is restricted. This heightens pastoralist anxiety over access to critical resources for their livestock.

⁵⁰ The main ethnic groups are Hausa, Tiv and Fulani, with the former two dominating the crop production sector and the latter dominating livestock production.

The last ten years have seen a major clearing of pastures and forests for agriculture. National policies and national and local biases favour crop production, allowing unchecked agricultural expansion (Momale and Higazi, 2024). While the main issue for the Fulani is lost grazing resources and access to land, the Hausa and Tiv are also in conflict over land ownership and boundaries.

Formal governance plays a secondary role to customary governance systems, but it comes to the fore in relation to large-scale land transactions. The Hausa and the Tiv hold more influence in customary governance – the Hausa are the political class who control land; the Tiv play an influencing role alongside the Hausa, as they are more educated and have networks with other Tiv community political and pressure groups. The Fulani are represented least and see local chiefs as siding mainly with the farmers. Pastoralists feel this is because they do not have educated people who fight for their rights, which puts them on the back foot. They are also not represented in local institutions (such as Local Government Area councils), so they have limited voice. In general, farmers are represented to a greater extent than pastoralists and are prioritised from national level to state level. While there are urban Fulani elites who are political and involved, they are not representative of rural Fulani pastoralists.

The relationship of local farmers to land is changing in the study area. Leaders (usually men) in the Hausa community are the land administrators and are meant to hold land in trust for all. In the past, land was allocated free of charge for cultivation to all groups, but a rental and sales market has emerged, with mainly Tiv and Hausa owning land (mostly men, although some Hausa and Tiv women own land, obtained through inheritance or through purchase of land from other farmers and from local leaders). Some village heads, sometimes supported by paramount traditional rulers and Local Government Area administrators, are increasingly selling large tracts of land to wealthy individuals from urban areas. This land is bought for commercial crop cultivation, and there has been an apparent high demand for this, especially in recent years, due to the increasing cost of food crops and the profitability of farming activities (Momale and Higazi, 2024).

Pastoralist livestock traditionally grazed uncultivated land, but there has never been any specific allocation of grazing spaces or recognition or protection of grazing land within the area. Herders (mainly men) are now buying land to try to secure access and use rights, but mainly for cultivating crops and settlement rather than for grazing livestock. Increased sedentarisation among pastoralists is also observed, given difficulties in sustaining herds – some families' herds are falling below viable thresholds due to livestock loss from lack of grazing land and water, cattle rustling and confiscation.

As herders settle, they add to the demand for agricultural land by embracing cultivation. Those who continue to practice mobility (mainly men) no longer find pastures close to home in either the wet or the dry seasons and they must move further away for longer periods of time. This severely curtails women's access to milk which they depend on for income, since women now rarely move with the herds and are largely settled.

High-level politics fuels farmer–herder conflict and influences social relations. For example, a state-wide grazing ban (Momale and Higazi, 2024) that was aggressively enforced in neighbouring Benue State (with a dominant Tiv constituency) resulted in violent confrontations, with considerable spillover effects on farmer–herder conflict in Jangargari (ibid.). The hostile environment towards pastoralists in Benue also concentrated pastoralists in Nasarawa, because they have been unable to move through Benue as freely as before.

Fortunately, recent changes in leadership in Benue State have relaxed the hard stance against grazing and pastoralists, with herders now able to move livestock into the State and graze them there, some even with their wives and children without provocation and fear of attack. This is unlike between 2018 and 2023 when pastoralist mobility was curtailed (Momale and Higazi, unpublished). Benue State is still wary of pastoralists, however, with the governor there recently expressing concerns about the influx of herders.

In this bigger picture, gender norms remain predominantly patriarchal in Jangargari. Women are rarely involved in decision-making, for example around land allocation and conflict resolution, but they are involved substantially in farming and trading activities (Momale and Higazi, 2024). The process of accessing land is also stacked against women, and weaker purchasing power (in general and as a result of conflict) limits their ability to pay for land or access land in an increasingly commercialised environment. These factors affect women's ability to adapt and manoeuvre.

5.2 The role of women in food production systems

Farming women

Crop farming is mainly undertaken by Tiv women, followed by Hausa women, and increasingly by Fulani pastoralist women. They cultivate crops on household plots mainly for home consumption, with the surplus sold in local markets. The income from this is primarily controlled by men. The sale of home-reared animals is also an important source of income for women farmers.

Responsibilities in crop production are traditionally divided along gender lines. Men (young and old) take the lead in production, from initial land preparation to planting, harvesting and transporting harvests (though Tiv women also play a role in land preparation, weeding and harvesting). Women play pivotal roles in post-harvest activities, such as storage and processing (threshing, grading and packaging). Tiv and Hausa women also participate in the marketing and trading of produce. However, recurrent conflict has constrained women's roles (as well as men's) in crop production and marketing and trade.

Beyond farming, some women (especially Hausa) used to own shops in Jangargari market selling items to meet local community needs, as well as a few retail crops in the Awe market. However, women's engagement and trade in markets has been seriously curtailed, particularly since the closure of the Jangargari weekly market. This has limited economic activities that were local and easily accessible for Hausa and Tiv women (and Fulani women as well) (see more in Section **5.4 Impact of conflict on women**). Closure of the local market has also removed an important avenue for exchange and social connection between women across ethnic groups.

Pastoralist women

Livestock are kept by pastoralists for food security and they constitute their main source of income. Men own most cattle and are responsible for herding and cattle sales. Household income, mainly controlled by men, covers household expenses such as food, school fees and medical bills. Some women also own cows, mainly through inheritance from their parents. However, the income from the sale of such cows is also primarily controlled by men. It is uncommon for husbands to give cattle to their wives.

Patterns of mobility have altered with conflicts. Men move with the herds, and women currently rarely participate, unlike in the past. In exceptional cases, a few pastoralists migrate as a family, but even then, women are transported using cars to either dry or wet season camping sites, rather than accompanying the animals during the trekking. Most women are now settled and their access to the larger herd is severed for much of the year.

Traditionally, the marketing and trade of milk and dairy products is the domain of pastoralist women and a main source of income. However, the participation of women in the sale of dairy products (for example locally processed yoghurt popularly called Fura da Nono) has all but disappeared due to their settlement and the absence of the main herd from the homestead. This has drastically affected women's food security and income (see Section **5.4 Impact of conflict on women**). Around the homestead, pastoralist women still own sheep, goats and poultry, whose sale and income they control. Goats contribute significantly to household cash income, while sheep are kept for consumption (mostly during ceremonies) and sale. Young girls sell milk and dairy products in local settlements (Momale and Higazi, unpublished), when animals remain around the homesteads.

Across all ethnic groups, home-reared small ruminants and poultry are very important for women. Hausa and Fulani women keep sheep, and all women keep goats and poultry. The sale of such livestock is currently an important source of income for women. However, extremely limited local grazing, water, feed and insecurity make it increasingly difficult for women to continue raising such livestock at home. All groups record substantial losses when violent conflicts erupt, as the women mostly abandon their animals when they flee, which are then stolen.

5.3 Women's experience of and role in conflict

When conflict is brewing or erupts in Jangargari, women across Tiv, Hausa and Fulani communities mostly flee. Hausa and Fulani women and children flee towards Awe town and other safer settlements in Nasarawa State, while the majority of Tiv women and children flee to safer settlements in Benue State (Momale and Higazi, unpublished).

While fleeing, women across ethnic groups help with the evacuation of children, the elderly, livestock and other moveable assets to safer places.⁵¹ Their role in evacuation is seen as central because, unlike men, they are generally not the targets of attacks. Those women who stay provide support such as caring for the wounded before they are taken to hospitals or after they have been discharged.

We help in the evacuation process when the conflicts break out. Since the men are the main targets of attack and are the first to run off, we are left to move our children and the old. (Female Tiv farmer, FGD participant)⁵²

51 MF_FGD_GidanJemma_HFE (herder female elderly)_08.03.24

52 MF_FGD_GidanUkoha_FMF (farmers mixed female)_20.03.24

Some mothers try to dissuade their husbands and children, particularly their boys, from participating in violence.⁵³ This is particularly true in the pastoralist community, where many young people have been lost to violence.

Research we conducted back in 2000 showed that women can play a role in conflict resolution. They can serve as advocates for peace in the environment. Men have always been at the forefront, that is why conflicts are never fully resolved. But when you are fighting, and a woman is saying 'kuyi hakuri' (meaning be patient) that would go a long way; hence more women should be trained for peace resolution and advocacy. (Chairman of NGO coalition, KII participant)⁵⁴

Some women organise themselves into movements, pushing community leaders to work with youth to end conflict (Momale and Higazi, unpublished).

While it is clear that women play an informal role in advocating for peace and in conflict avoidance, women (and youth) are rarely involved in conflict resolution interventions. Despite their obvious roles, they are often excluded in negotiation processes to end conflicts or in post-conflict peacebuilding processes (ibid.). Most conflicts and post-conflict processes are handled by local traditional leaders (mostly men) from the Hausa, Tiv and Fulani communities, and by local authorities, with the army stepping in during episodes of violence (Momale and Higazi, 2024). Also, women are not represented in any local government bodies – such as in village, district and emirate councils – and only a few women hold positions of authority at state level, such as the Commissioner of Women Affairs in Lafia, the Nasarawa State capital. The activities of such institutions are rarely felt at village level such as in Jangargari (ibid.).

Generally, women are not involved in aggression and in carrying out violent attacks. Tiv women farmers clearly stated: 'We do not enter into any conflicts. We are usually attacked'.⁵⁵ However, respondents hinted at a more aggressive role in conflict. For example, some Hausa women said that in the early years of the conflict in the 1980s and 1990s, Tiv women would instigate conflict in Jangargari, beating war drums and boosting their men's morale, sometimes helping the men cut meat from killed cattle to take back to their communities. Since that time, the violence has increased in scale and it has evolved from the use of basic weapons to sophisticated arms, mainly carried by men. As a result, women are less involved in the physical arena of violence today, though this historical perspective suggests women may still instigate and fuel violence, only from behind the scenes now.

Occasional conflict occurs between women within settlements around access to water, which is rarely reported or addressed.

Even yesterday we fought with the Tivs at river Dakala ... we went to fetch water from the stream, and they tried to stop us from fetching water from the stream, saying that the land does not belong to us and we should go back to our ancestral land, we resisted and fighting erupted between us, though we got beaten up very well but we were able to fetch the water. At the same time this will not stop us from transacting business with them. We sell hens to them and we also buy yams from them too. This will not stop

53 MF_FGD_GidanJemma_HFE (herder female elderly)_08.03.24

54 MF_KII_Lafia_male_Chairperson_Coalition_NGOs_19.03.2024

55 MF_FGD_GidanUkoha_FMF (farmers mixed female)_20.03.24

us from fighting tomorrow. The Tiv women always wants to instigate the fight but we always try to avoid it until we are pushed to the wall. (Young female Fulani pastoralist, FGD participant)⁵⁶

Conflicts between Tiv and Fulani women around water are relatively new and have been reported mainly since the most recent and protracted period of violence (2017–2023). These confrontations likely result from the shifting and increased settlement of pastoralists due to conflict, which has increased demand for water and other resources within settlements.

Young women are also not shy to push for the use of force if their grievances are unheard.

Near the boundary at Asuku Forest, land was taken over by the Tiv farmers. Our leaders were informed that action should be taken and if not, then we will decide to take it by force. (Young female Hausa farmer, FGD participant)⁵⁷

5.4 Impact of conflict on women

Farmer–herder conflict has a collective impact on the household, albeit with variations in how different genders experience it. Most impacts felt by women relate to food production systems and livelihoods, their ability to meet basic needs, social fabric and family cohesion, and physical and psychosocial well-being.

Women’s livelihoods in crop and livestock production and associated trade have been destroyed or severely curtailed by conflict. Prices have gone up due to the scarcity of many staple food items, as well as the difficulties and distances associated with getting goods in and out of Jangargari from markets further away since the closure of Jangargari weekly market in 2017. Poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition are now daily realities for women farmers and herders, and the livelihoods and income options for both have severely contracted. Many rely on coping strategies outside of farming and herding, and their dependency on men has increased.

The closure of the local Jangargari market has significantly narrowed economic, social and networking opportunities for women. The market was a major trading hub for local women, a means of meeting household needs close to home, and a key space for exchange and interaction between communities.

Conflict has also had a substantial impact on women’s physical, social and psychosocial well-being. Recurring displacement has caused many women – particularly the young and the old – to relocate to safer locations away from the Jangargari area. Many families now have dual homes, one in their settlement within Jangargari and one in a safer location, with many young and elderly women more permanently based in the safer location due to fear of periodic harassment by opposing groups in Jangargari. Many women across ethnic groups are also widowed, and loneliness is reported, particularly among young Fulani women.

⁵⁶ MF_FGD_GidanJemma_HFY (herder female youth)_10.03.24

⁵⁷ FGD_Jangargari_FemaleYouthFarmers_14.03.24

Conflict amplifies pre-existing socio-economic and social inequalities within the community and heightens vulnerabilities. The risks of violence, including arbitrary killings, torture, sexual abuse and forced marriage are far greater for women than men (Momale and Higazi, 2024). Conflict further weakens the already limited purchasing power of women, and in many cases it takes away small avenues of financial independence. Even before conflict, women are limited socially to local options such as markets and key events for social interaction and exchange, while men have always had more flexibility to interact further afield. While the impacts of conflict on women are evident, there is extremely limited humanitarian and social assistance from governments or international actors for women (ibid.).

Farming women

Women in farming communities have lost income and food due to restricted access to farms. They face risks travelling from their homes to farms because the environment is beset by insecurity, volatility and the presence of arms, while they cannot access farms at all during periods of temporary or longer-term displacement. Long-gestation and high-income crops such as yams and cassava were once local staples, but these are avoided now due to unpredictable and risky farm access. Farmers' yields have declined significantly as a result, and food insecurity is a daily reality. Many women now spend much of their time on immediate domestic responsibilities rather than on markets and sales, due to the constraints imposed by insecurity (Momale and Higazi, unpublished).

The conflict denied us access to our farmlands, our farms were encroached and crops destroyed, even our economic trees were burnt or cut down during conflicts. Since the conflict, we barely cultivate enough to eat not to talk of selling. Also, we have had to change or switch from the type of crops we cultivated earlier. For instance, before the conflicts we cultivated long-term crops such as yam and cassava. Since the conflicts, however, we have shifted to short-term crops mostly grains for fear of recurrence of conflict. (Young female Tiv farmer, FGD participant)⁵⁸

We now have little income and reduced productivity. Before, we could get about 10,000 yams at harvest season, but now, no yam which we can sell and consume. Now, one can barely get 100 yams. Millet is our main staple food and the production is reduced as well. The effect of this was and still is hunger that is very much with us today. (Young female farmer, KII participant)⁵⁹

The last two and most recent conflicts had a significant impact on our lives because they occurred during the harvest period when all of the crops were ready for harvest. Many of us fled and left our produce on the farm which got looted or burnt or even eaten by the animals. (Older female farmer, FGD participant)⁶⁰

58 MF_FGD_GidanUkoha_FFY (farmers female youth)_14.03.24

59 MF_KII_GidanUkoha_FMY_(female farmer youth)_16.03.24

60 MF_FGD_Jangargari_FFE (farmer female elderly)_10.03.24

Before the conflict, we used to have enough yields to feed from and sell. There was enough to eat all year round and you had options of eating what you preferred. However, during the conflict, we barely had enough to eat. We ate anything and everything to survive the day. (Female farmer, FGD participant)⁶¹

In Hausa and Tiv communities, trade opportunities for women are significantly affected due to the closure of Jangargari market. Other markets are far away and roads to markets are of poor quality and often risky, especially for young women. The closure of the market has devastated the trading activities of Hausa women, and poverty and deprivation among women is now widespread.

Before the conflict, women had capital and engaged in micro and small businesses, but this is no longer the case. They now rely on the seasonal mangoes and their relatives elsewhere for support. (Elderly female farmer, FGD participant)⁶²

Before the conflicts, there was no way we would miss a single market day. There was a lot to take to the market for sale. The attacks from the herders have affected our livelihoods, and that has denied us access to the few opportunities we have for peaceful relations. The tension has increased in the last 10 years. Before the outbreak of the first conflict our relationship with the herders was very friendly, but we can't say the same now. (Elderly female farmer, FGD participant)⁶³

Women employ various coping strategies to deal with this loss of livelihoods and income (Momale and Higazi, 2024):

- **Women expand farms in safer locations and into previously uncultivated spaces to compensate for conflict-induced losses.** However, this fuels further conflict with mobile pastoralists over land and access.
- **Women engage in menial labour**, working as hired farm hands (especially when displaced to other areas); selling cooked food, mostly by adolescent girls in villages, towns and local markets; serving as domestic workers, mainly among adolescent girls or elderly women in towns during periods of displacement; and selling fuelwood mostly at Jangargari and other settlements immediately after returning in the aftermath of violence.
- **Some Tiv and Hausa women have turned to fishing** to boost household food security and income, when access to farms is not possible. Trade in fish has brought Tiv and Hausa women together and has introduced a new space for positive communication and exchange.
- **Women switch to fast-maturing crop varieties**, which provide lower but more reliable income.
- **Women plant economic fruit trees, such as orange and palm.** When mature, these trees are expected to remain in the fields even during conflict and displacement, as they are not

61 MF_FGD_GidanUkoha_FMF (farmers mixed female) _20.03.24

62 FGD_Jangargari_FemaleElderlyFarmers_10.03.24

63 FGD_GidanUkoha_ElderlyFemaleFarmers_11.03.24

eaten by livestock and don't require daily care. The fruits augment meagre incomes when women return.

- **Women make and sell charcoal.** This is an important source of income, particularly among the Tiv and some Hausa when income from farming is lost. However, this practice also causes the large-scale clearance of trees and loss of local forests.

Trauma linked to violence and loss is a common experience in the current context, as is domestic violence.

My mother was traumatised because her shops, three grinding machines, livestock, and houses were burnt down. This led to her being hypertensive, and she developed an eye problem and some mental issues. (Young female Hausa farmer, FGD participant)⁶⁴

After the conflict, some of our men are involved in domestic violence and some even divorced their wives because they cannot afford their normal life expenses because they have no job and their normal incomes are not forthcoming because of the conflicts. (Young female Hausa farmer, FGD participant)⁶⁵

Pastoralist women

Poverty and food insecurity are also common among pastoralist women due to protracted conflict. For the last decade, pastoralist women (including young women) have not been able to depend on milk and dairy products, which traditionally have been their main sources of food security and income. Today, the family herd providing the milk supply is either insufficient or absent from the area for many months due to inadequate local grazing and insecurity. With many women now settled, their links to a milk supply have been severed.

Goats, sheep and poultry kept near the home are now a lifeline for Fulani women. However, their ability to rely on this small stock for milk and marginal income is tenuous. Natural grazing is lacking due to the conversion of forests and hillsides, and they face the threat of looting of small livestock when conflict erupts. Given the extreme difficulties of sustaining themselves with livestock, Fulani women have begun cultivating vegetables around the home for household consumption and sale. This is a new practice, but it is still insufficient to cover household food needs or income. Many Fulani women are now entirely dependent on their menfolk, even for buying the most basic items such as food seasoning.⁶⁶

All the conflicts have brought about a loss in income because there are no cows within reach for us to milk and sell in the market. Most of us have not sold milk in the last 10 years. The standard of living has also been affected due to total dependence on the heads of households. (Young female Fulani pastoralist, FGD participant)⁶⁷

⁶⁴ FGD_Jangargari_FemaleYouth Farmers_15.03.24

⁶⁵ FGD_Jangargari_FemaleYouth Farmers_15.03.24

⁶⁶ FGD_GidanJemma_FemaleElderlyHerders_08.03.24

⁶⁷ FGD_GidanPate_FemaleYouthHerders_15.03.24

There is not enough food and no milk, and this has led to malnutrition among our children and poor health among us. We have no income and are totally dependent on our husbands because of poverty. (Female Fulani pastoralist, FGD participant)⁶⁸

Men support these testimonies.

The women no longer engage in any economic activity while the men experience a reduction in their incomes as well because the quality and quantity of their livestock have declined. (Elderly male pastoralist, FGD participant)⁶⁹

The conflict affected our women's access to resources such as milk. Our women no longer go to the market to sell milk to support the household, and we don't have cattle in our settlement in Gidan Jemma. We leave our women for three months. Sometimes we don't know how they eat or go to the hospital. (Elderly male pastoralist, FGD participant)⁷⁰

Like in the farming community, pastoralist women employ various coping strategies to deal with their lost livelihoods and income (Momale and Higazi, 2024):

- **Women engage in menial labour.**
- **Women settle to protect their families from the uncertainties of conflict, violence and insecurity, instead of moving with the herds and their spouses.** Sedentarised women resort to farming, keep small ruminants near the home, and engage in home gardening. However, sedentarisation increases competition for resources in places of settlement.
- **Women undertake farming to diversify and supplement their income.** Increasing numbers of pastoralist families have begun to buy or rent land (with transactions mainly undertaken by men) to cultivate staples such as maize and sorghum.⁷¹ This is also being taken up as pastoralist women have become more sedentary, although families still prefer their previous nomadic lifestyles where livestock provided all means of sustenance.

We no longer have enough milk and food to feed the children and ourselves. To augment the food supply shortages, we are diversifying to cultivate crops like millet, sorghum and maize. This cannot be produced in sufficient quantities to last throughout the year, being that we are not farmers, rather herders. However, the harvest which is usually a few bags of grains is so important to us. (Young female pastoralist, FGD participant)⁷²
- **Women are changing their diets and taking up home gardening.** Due to absent herds and the loss of staple dairy food sources, women have turned to less nutritional cereals for food. Some have planted home gardens in areas of settlement, cultivating peppers, okra and spinach, intercropped with cereals. Excess is sold locally and provides marginal income for women.

⁶⁸ FGD_GidanPate_FemaleMixedHerders_20.03.24

⁶⁹ FGD_GidanPate_MaleElderlyHerder_08.03.24

⁷⁰ FGD_GidanJemma_MaleElderlyHerder_12.03.24

⁷¹ FGD_GidanJemma_FemaleElderlyHerders_07.03.24

⁷² MF_FGD_Gidan_Jemma_HFY (Herders female youth)_13.03.24

The psychosocial well-being of pastoralist women has been severely affected by conflict, with men conceding that the hardships for women are greater.

What affects us also affects our women and children, but we feel the women are affected the most because it impacts their food security, constant fear, mental health, and managing losing their husbands and children. Sometimes, when a woman loses her son, we wait for a little time [before informing her] to manage her reaction and grief to such news. The women and children are left at home with inadequate resources. (Elderly male pastoralist, FGD participant)⁷³

The separation of families and the loss of local cultural festivities, which provided important social connections and support for women, have also taken their toll. Loneliness is now commonly reported.

As a result of the fights with the Tiv farmers and subsequent bomb blasts, our Hirde celebration had to be stopped. The Hirde celebration is an occasion where we and our young men dress up to celebrate weddings. This is where we meet potential husbands, socialise and exchange information. We have not had one in the last three years. This is really hurting us that we cannot celebrate Hirde again. (Young female pastoralist, FGD participant)⁷⁴

We are seriously missing the previous days when there was peace because we could follow our husbands wherever they went. Our husbands now leave us behind for months, spending only two or three days with us when they come back and then they go back to the animals in Benue State. The younger ones among us leave their matrimonial homes and move in back with their mothers because of the lack of companionship. (Female pastoralist, FGD participant)⁷⁵

5.5 Women's perspectives on solutions to farmer–herder conflict

Women from both pastoralist and farming communities recognise that contestations over land and access to resources drive farmer–herder conflict. Pastoralist grievances related to lost grazing land and denied access to land, water and grazing routes are also acknowledged. Women emphasise the importance of providing grazing areas and access routes for pastoralists, as well as an increased military presence to monitor and manage violence.⁷⁶

Shrinking pastoral lands through conversion of land use from pasture lands and cattle routes to farmlands by the farmers drastically reduces the available grazing land, resulting in overgrazing. This leads to cattle grazing in farmlands and destroying crops. This brews anger and tension and causes conflicts between parties. (Elderly female Hausa farmer, FGD participant)⁷⁷

⁷³ FGD_GidanJemma_MaleElderlyHerdors_12.03.24

⁷⁴ FGD_GidanJemma_FemaleYouthHerdors_10.03.24

⁷⁵ FGD_GidanJemma_FemaleMixedHerdors_14.03.24

⁷⁶ FGD_Jangargari_FemaleMixedFarmers_20.03.24; FGD_GidanPate_FemaleYouthHerdors_14.03.24

⁷⁷ FGD_Jangargari_FemaleElderlyFarmers_10.03.24

6 DISCUSSION

Farming and pastoralist food production systems, and the land and resources required for them to function, are intimately connected to farmer–herder conflict. Given their substantial involvement in food production systems, women are de facto protagonists in conflict. Furthermore, it is women who largely remain in conflict-affected contexts.

While women are often not the main physical actors in conflict and/or violence, they play a role both as affected parties and as strategic actors. They have agency in the context of gender norms and changing conflict dynamics, and as such they play a direct or indirect role in conflict. Not all farmer–herder conflicts are the same, however. The intensity and context of the conflict very much influences the way that conflict is experienced by women, their actions and options, and how they speak about conflict. In all cases, women act and are strategic, but in different ways.

In the study area in Sudan, farmer–herder conflict is largely limited to individual cases involving disputes over resources and access. These are resolved individually, and episodes do not escalate to broader conflict or violence. Here, in this relatively stable context, women seek reparations and resolution of conflict through informal and formal channels, either themselves or through male family members or traditional leaders. Also evident, but less prominent, is women's role in conflict avoidance and peacemaking, and as aggressors.

In the study area in Nigeria, farmer–herder conflicts escalate cyclically to violence. This has happened six times since the 1980s, with each episode lasting between one and six years. The fallouts of violence have therefore been experienced repeatedly, including loss of human life, homes and assets, and criminality and violent assault. This has established an environment of fear, trauma and anxiety. Here women flee, evacuating children, the elderly and moveable assets (like livestock, household items, etc.) to safer areas; they care for the injured; and they caution youth and men against violence, with some indication of peacebuilding initiatives led by women. In the past, some women were noted to instigate and fuel violence. While less involved in the physical arena of violence today, this suggests that women may still do so, only from behind the scenes. 'Normal' farmer–herder conflict is talked about rarely, since violence is such a prominent feature in the study location. For example, women (particularly Tiv and Fulani) clash around access to water in an environment where access and availability are limited, but this conflict is mentioned little because it concerns women specifically and is outside the main arena of violence. Such conflicts are still important, however, as they can fuel rivalries and ethnic tensions, while also presenting possible entry points for rebuilding relationships.

While men's productive and economic options can extend beyond food production systems (for example, seeking work opportunities elsewhere, such as in gold mining), women in Sudan and Nigeria depend mainly on these systems or related activities for income and food security, and they typically remain local. Conflict therefore affects women's livelihoods, income and food security substantially. In Nigeria, due to the added dimension of violence, these impacts are pronounced. When conflict erupts, women's ability to secure food and meet household needs is severely compromised due to damaged harvests and lost livestock. They lose access to productive assets (land, harvests and livestock) and markets. To survive, women resort to

a limited number of coping strategies that are mainly local, labour- and time-intensive, and often with poor economic returns. These strategies have a knock-on effect on the quality of life within the household and, by extension, the wider community. This applies to farmer and pastoralist women alike.

However, a more positive lens can also be applied. Women exercise agency and are resourceful, despite limited local options and a constrained operating space. When women have access to resources – such as loans and finance in Sudan among farming women – this can broaden their ability to respond and manoeuvre. Access to loans and finance in Sudan has increased the visibility of women’s contribution to society and the economy as food producers, it has unlocked and encouraged their abilities as organisers and as decision-makers, it has bolstered their confidence, and it has opened up opportunities for greater civic engagement. Insights from Sudan demonstrate that providing women with access to skills, inputs and resources in conflict-affected contexts can expand their options to respond to and navigate obstacles.

At the same time, women experience substantial physical and psychosocial impacts from conflict, and these must also be acknowledged and addressed. Trauma, loneliness and fear are prevalent, and opportunities for social exchange and interaction are reduced, if not removed altogether. When added to the increased economic and caring burden on women created by conflict, this affects women’s ability to cope and to respond. Addressing the physical and psychosocial impacts of conflict on women can also support the rebuilding of family and community cohesion, which contributes to conflict reduction.

While women’s positive and negative roles in conflict are captured in the research in both case studies, there is scope for these roles to be explored more deeply. In both sites, women may be involved in fuelling conflict or physically participating. For example, in Sudan, young pastoralist women participate in skirmishes with farmers; in Nigeria, women have been reported to encourage their menfolk to violence and have participated in clashes with other women around access to resources. But they can also calm conflict. For example, in Sudan, each pastoralist encampment has an *inna wuro* (a wise and respected older woman) who is seen as a leader among women and who can calm tensions and provide advice. In Nigeria, women have organised themselves into movements to push community leaders to work with youth to end conflict. Understanding this nuance around women’s roles, influence and agency in conflict has wider implications for the well-being of families and communities and it would bring to the fore opportunities to engage.

Across both study locations, women across all age groups acknowledged land availability, allocation and access as root issues in farmer–herder conflict. They emphasised the need to address these issues to find long-term solutions to conflict and violence. In Sudan, women underscored the need for balanced and inclusive land allocation and planning that benefits small-scale farmers as well as pastoralists. In Nigeria, women emphasised the importance of providing grazing areas and access routes for pastoralists, along with an increased government military presence to monitor and manage violence.

7 CONCLUSION

The findings from Azaza Sogora, Sudan, and Jangargari, Nigeria, highlight distinct dynamics of farmer–herder conflicts and their impacts, which are shaped by local contexts. While both areas face challenges related to resource competition and gender inequality, the intensity of conflict, governance structures, and the roles of women in livelihoods and conflict differ significantly.

Support to women in farmer–herder conflict needs to be mindful of, and specific to, local context. It must respond to patterns and recurring themes and it should be informed by the lived realities of the women affected. In violent contexts, more emphasis is needed on critical social support and humanitarian assistance for women. As shown in Nigeria, this type of assistance is currently very limited or lacking, particularly for Fulani women, because Jangargari is remote and institutions that could assist are located in towns further away.

Women are de facto protagonists in farmer–herder conflict due to their substantial involvement in rural food production systems. While they are often not the main actors in conflict or violence, they play a direct and indirect role as stakeholders – and this is often overlooked. Women in both case study areas are involved in fuelling conflict and physically participating, but they can have a calming effect too. There is scope to explore these aspects further. Particular attention should be paid to their positive contributions, while also understanding the grievances and incentives that drive more confrontational participation. This is essential to identify entry points to break cycles of conflict and violence.

As demonstrated in the Sudan case study, women’s resilience and resourcefulness are significantly increased when they have access to finance and resources. Enabling access to loans in Sudan was not a specific response to conflict, and it mainly benefits women in the farming community; however, it emphasises the transformations that can be brought about for women through access to tools, resources and an enabling environment. In conflict contexts, such support needs to be balanced. It should be provided to all parties affected by conflict (farmers and pastoralists alike) to avoid perceptions of bias. It also needs to be conscious of existing inequalities among women within specific communities to avoid introducing or deepening inequalities.

This research constitutes new data and analysis on women’s experience of and role in farmer–herder conflict at the local level. It is an important contribution to the currently scant evidence on conflict, women and girls, and speaks to the gaps in understanding of local conflict dynamics and how these affect women and influence their actions. The research underlines the value of understanding local experiences, as these are distinct from urban and national political economies of conflict. Of course, these are interconnected, but much existing knowledge on women and conflict focuses on the national and elite level.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations address the distinct challenges faced by women while acknowledging their potential as change agents to reduce conflict and build resilience.

Include women in addressing the root causes of farmer–herder conflict

- National and local governments, researchers and development partners should assess opportunities to promote policies, institutions and processes that prioritise inclusive and participatory land use planning. This will help ensure equitable land and resource availability for both farmers and herders.
- A broader range of stakeholders should be included within these efforts – especially women – to ensure their perspectives are heard and their specific needs are met.

Strengthen women’s leadership in local governance

- Local governments (including informal governance structures), civil society organisations and grassroots community groups should identify opportunities to increase women’s representation in dialogue and decision-making processes.
- These actors should encourage and support the establishment of women-led initiatives, such as water or agricultural committees, to address resource conflicts and enhance resilience at the community level.
- Local governments (including informal governance structures) should work with development partners to provide tailored training programmes for pastoralist and farmer women focused on conflict resolution, resource management and legal rights. This will enhance women’s ability to participate in decision-making processes.
- National and local governments should invest in education, healthcare and social services for women to enhance their overall well-being and expand their options for participation in society.

Integrate women into conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes

- Civil society organisations, development partners and researchers should partner with existing informal and formal conflict resolution bodies to identify the constraints to women’s participation. Awareness should be raised within these bodies of the benefits of including women in conflict resolution processes, drawing on examples where women’s participation has led to more comprehensive and effective solutions that benefit the whole community.
- These efforts should leverage traditional leadership structures that already include influential women, such as the inna wuro among the Fallata in Sudan.

- Researchers, development partners and civil society organisations should train women as mediators and facilitators to strengthen their role in conflict prevention and resolution.

Enhance and protect women's livelihood options, and strengthen and protect women's access to land, markets and resources

- Researchers and civil society organisations should work with women farmers and women pastoralists (both in situ and displaced) to define the skills, inputs and resources women need within their contexts to expand their livelihood opportunities within and beyond subsistence agriculture and herding. Local governments, communities, and development partners should invest in making these skills, inputs and resources available. This would improve women's ability to respond and manoeuvre in conflict contexts.
- Local governments, trade associations and communities should support women's involvement in local markets by securing safe trade routes to markets. Opportunities should be explored for reopening the local Jangargari market in Nigeria.
- Banks, donors, development partners and community associations should build on the progress of women's access to agricultural loans and cooperatives in Azaza Sogora in Sudan. They should promote financial products for small-scale women farmers and support women's cooperatives, whilst remaining mindful of including the most vulnerable women to avoid introducing or exacerbating inequalities among women.
- Banks, business associations and civil society organisations should provide training on financial literacy and entrepreneurship to empower women to diversify their livelihoods and strengthen food security, particularly in Azaza Sogora.
- Local government (including informal governance structures) and civil society organisations should work with local women and men to facilitate, where appropriate, gender-responsive land registration processes. This would formalise women's land rights – for example through joint land titles for couples in Azaza Sogora – and enhance their decision-making power in land use and ownership.

Foster collaboration between farmers and pastoralists and address power imbalances

- Local government, civil society and community organisations and development partners should bring women together from across ethnic groups to discuss and define pathways for peaceful and equitable access to water and other critical resources. Women should be supported to lead in implementing jointly defined processes.
- These actors should work together to create or strengthen inclusive and multi-ethnic community-based forums to address farmer–herder tensions, including women-led peacebuilding initiatives that represent all ethnic groups.
- Local governments and civil society organisations should work with communities to assess opportunities to reintroduce community events, cultural festivities and women's networks.

This will foster social cohesion and reduce isolation for affected women, particularly in Jangargari, Nigeria.

Protect and support women affected by conflict and violence

- Local governments, development partners and humanitarian practitioners should provide gender-responsive psychosocial support and trauma healing for women and children, including in areas of displacement in Nigeria.
- These actors should partner with communities to create safe spaces and support networks for women, particularly to address risks of violence in Jangargari.
- Local governments should increase gender-disaggregated social support and partner with humanitarian relief organisations to improve the coverage of assistance, particularly for Fulani women in Jangargari.
- Within existing assistance programmes, service providers should regularly assess the impacts of conflict and violence on women's livelihoods and social cohesion.

Increase research focused on women in local farmer–herder conflict contexts

- Researchers should design targeted studies to increase local, evidence-based understanding of the role and experience of women in farmer–herder conflict across different conflict contexts. This would help governments and practitioners identify context-specific entry points for gender-sensitive interventions, helping to address the gap between national-level policies/discourse and local realities for women.
- Research should be designed with a specific focus on women, rather than adding a gender dimension to a broader study. This will allow space and time to delve into emerging issues.
- Research should also seek to understand the implications of changing roles and perspectives among women and men in conflict contexts. Studies should assess whether and how changes have affected women's voice, influence and standing within their families and society, and whether any gains made by women could shift when conditions return to 'normal'.

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