

**Knowledge network
Dutch Consortium for Rehabilitation
Research brief #14**

Conflict Sensitivity (Lubero, DR Congo)

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This brief is part of a series of research briefs of the DCR consortium. The purpose is to communicate lessons and corresponding recommendations for programme quality improvement. For information on the research methodology please refer to the full report, available upon request.

This summary report describes the lessons and recommendations that emerged from the study of conflict sensitivity associated with implementation of the Pamoja programme in the Lubero health zone. The aim of the study was to analyse and identify elements of tension and conflict that are present in the local communities and to understand their dynamics in order to minimise any negative impact and maximise the positive impact of Pamoja programme interventions. As the study shows, the implementation of the Pamoja programme often has positive impacts, but sometimes also negative impacts, on tension and conflicts in this zone in a (post)-conflict situation in the province of North Kivu in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The report briefly describes the main types of conflict and tension found in the Lubero health zone and then looks at the lessons learnt and recommendations made concerning the main causes and consequences of the tensions and conflicts analysed.

Elements of tension and conflicts were first identified and then analysed based on a principle of 'do no harm' and focusing on corollaries of Pamoja activities. There were three types of analysis: 1) analysis of conflicts encountered or identified, 2) analysis of tensions creating divisions in communities and which could lead to future conflict (tension factors or elements), and 3) analysis of the impact of Pamoja programme activities on these identified factors of division and conflict. Information was collected by means of semi-structured interviews, a participatory action research method and participatory methods using a conflict tree and pairwise ranking.

Identified elements of tension and conflict

The aim of the study was to identify and analyse the dynamics of tensions that could subsequently lead to conflict in the future and existing conflicts in the Lubero health zone.

The main conflicts identified were:

- land conflicts between local owners and tenants or buyers
- conflicts due to thefts, usually theft of harvests or animals
- conflicts of power between the legitimate and illegitimate descendants of traditional chiefs, characterised by investiture struggles and succession to power.
- conflicts linked to legacies, between brothers and sisters and other children born outside the marriage or as a result of polygamy
- conflicts related to debts and fraud, often caused by lack of willingness or ability to repay
- conflicts related to unwanted pregnancies in young girls (often minors) when the men or boys who get the girls pregnant deny their responsibilities related to the pregnancy or to the child once it has been born.

Most of the respondents emphasised that the most common conflicts are land conflicts and that the main causes of these conflicts are uncontrolled sales of land (illicit sales or sale of a piece of land to multiple individuals), misunderstandings between land chiefs, grazing by herdsmen's livestock and farmers not having enough cultivable land.

The main elements of tension or those which could lead to future conflicts that were identified during the study were:

- juvenile delinquency and sexuality that could lead to unwanted pregnancies

- drug use and alcohol abuse resulting in violence or rape
- lying and jealousy that could lead to disputes and quarrels
- illicit sale and renting of cultivable land
- livestock grazing that could lead to the destruction or consumption of farm crops, which provide a living and income for farmers.

Lesson 1 The Pamoja programme has a negative effect on tensions related to juvenile delinquency and sexuality

Most respondents felt that sensitisation and training sessions by Save the Children on children's rights may not always be well understood by the local populations. Most participants felt that the fact that Save the Children explains to children that they have rights encourages them to stop respecting adults, behave badly, or even become delinquent. Adult respondents give the impression of not being against the concept of 'children's rights', but rather that they do not know how to educate their children without using corporal punishment. So the Pamoja activities cause or exacerbate tensions not only between children and adults, but also between adults themselves; it would appear that some adults use children's rights as an excuse for accusing other adults of mistreating children and reporting them to the police so they are put in prison.

Lesson 2: It is felt that the Pamoja programme reduces tensions related to juvenile delinquency and sexuality, but the benefit is not fairly distributed throughout the zone covered by the programme.

As a result of training activities and education for children and adolescents (Save the Children) about juvenile delinquency, illiteracy and sexuality among young people in the Lubero health zone, adolescents have been educated and encouraged to avoid these problems. This reduces the risk of their drifting into delinquency and/or promiscuity as they have been warned about them or given useful work. Unfortunately, according to the participants, no training workshops for adolescents aged 14-18 who do not attend school are being run in Kanyatsi and other villages in the zone supported by Pamoja. In these villages, young people are likely to roam the streets and drift into delinquency and/or promiscuity, which subsequently may lead to tension and conflict within these unsupported communities.

Recommendations:

Recommendation 1:

For a better understanding and acceptance of sensitisation on children's rights (by Save the Children), the following points need to be emphasised:

- 1) children's' rights are not incompatible with the concept of parental authority;
- 2) it is possible to correct and discipline children without using violent educational practices or corporal punishment;
- 3) there are non-violent educational practices which adults or parents may use;
- 4) teaching children that they have rights also implies that they can be expected to respect the rules of their society, which leads on to the concept of children's responsibilities.

Recommendation 2:

Save the Children's intervention zone should be extended, educational activities need to be provided for young people and there needs to be collaboration between Save the Children and CARE in sensitising young people about parental responsibilities. So it is essential to:

- 1) visit and include villages in which Save the Children does not yet have a presence, notably Kirikiri and Lighine;
- 2) step up Save the Children interventions throughout the Lubero health zone;
- 3) schedule sensitisation workshops on parental responsibility, as suggested by some respondents;
- 4) strengthen the collaboration between Save the Children and CARE in order to reach not only a number of children, but also a number of adults.

Lesson 3: The Pamoja programme reduces tensions related to the sale of land and grazing by livestock

The study showed that land is a source of conflict in many cases. Most respondents shared the opinion that the Pamoja programme has a positive effect in reducing these tensions and preventing new land conflicts, notably through its activities concerning good governance, and meetings between farmers and herdsman organised by DCR.

Lesson 4: The Pamoja programme exacerbates tensions related to jealousy and thefts.

A consistent number of respondents felt that the distribution of donations of agricultural inputs and livestock by ZOA causes tension within the local populations. Even though beneficiaries are identified in collaboration with Local Development Committees in accordance with criteria for vulnerability previously defined by the local populations, certain individuals who fall within the range of the selection criteria but have not been identified as beneficiaries may feel discriminated against and be jealous of those who were selected. Some respondents felt that some jealous non-beneficiaries are even taking revenge on the beneficiaries by stealing their harvest or livestock during the night. Other respondents confirmed that sometimes certain beneficiaries receive more donations than others, creating a feeling of jealousy and injustice.

Lesson 5: The management of networked VSLAs (RAVEC) and the existence of other active organisations successfully setting up and managing VSLAs creates tensions, according to some respondents.

Tensions arise when members of one VSLA leave it to join the VSLA of another 'competing' organisation without fulfilling their obligations to the previous VSLA. The expansion of networked VSLAs causes tensions between members of the network committees and VSLA members. VSLA members are concerned that members of the committees running the networked VSLs consider themselves to be in charge of the network and they then impose illegal fees.

Impact of the Pamoja programme on conflicts and elements of tension

The Pamoja programme may have both positive and negative impact on existing conflicts or identified tension factors, depending on the type of conflicts or factors and the dynamics involved. For example, training workshops for young people by Save the Children in particular and the training sessions and sessions on awareness of violence and self-management

Recommendation 3:

Regulation of land and grazing livestock is needed to mitigate land conflicts, together with more Pamoja activities on good governance. The following actions are needed:

- 1) continue to sensitise local populations concerning good governance and peaceful conflict resolution;
- 2) continue with meetings between herdsman and farmers to find a joint solution to their problems;
- 3) build capacity for community 'Barzas' and establish peace committees, ensuring that these committees represent all level of society;
- 4) arrange training workshops in good land management for land chiefs and their vassals, as suggested by certain respondents.

Recommendation 4:

To reduce tensions and conflicts resulting from jealousy and thefts, the stakeholders in the Pamoja programme should:

- 1) ensure that members of the local community understand that the aim of Pamoja is not to favour certain individuals over others, but rather to help the community as a whole by a system of rotating credit which is intended to help as many individuals as possible for as long as possible;
- 2) draw up and then present a long term programme plan consisting of different phase, with the number of people involved in each phase and examples of concrete results obtained;
- 3) ensure that beneficiaries are identified and donations distributed in a completely transparent manner.

may have a positive impact, by reducing delinquency, juvenile sexuality, and frequency of rape and drug use. This may reduce various conflicts and tensions related to rape, sexuality and juvenile delinquency. Meetings between herdsmen and farmers organised by the DCR may reduce tensions and conflicts related to animal grazing. The opportunities offered by village savings and loan associations (VSLAs) may reduce conflicts related to debts and fraud by allowing people to borrow from the association rather than from individuals.

Conversely, sensitisation on children's rights (Save the Children) may lead to conflict between parents (adults) and children. Children's misinterpretation of their rights leads to their no longer respecting adults. This results in tension between adults and children. The choice of beneficiaries for distribution of agricultural inputs, livestock and implements may cause jealousy and create tension and conflict between non-beneficiaries and beneficiaries and/or people employed by DRC.

Recommendation 5:

The solution of these types of tensions is to achieve a clear understanding of the VSLA/ networked VSLA approach and collaboration between CARE and organisations offering savings and loan facilities in the Lubero health zone

- 1) increase awareness of the VSLA/ networked VSLA approach;
- 2) increase financial education workshops to ensure that all beneficiaries have fully assimilated the concepts of saving, budgeting and debt management;
- 3) have CARE carry out an investigation to analyse complaints made in the communities of Vusanza and Kivinduliro concerning the management of networked VSLAs;
- 4) finally, ensure that competition between other organisations running VSLAs does not lead to confusion in members of the communities and ensure that such competition is not unfair.