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«The calabashes rhyme with peace»

Study on the Contribution of the Calabash Solidarity Approach to the Pacification of Local Communities

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Executive summary

In any human society, there are tensions and conflicts. Community conflicts are antagonisms between non-state groups. They manifest themselves in various forms in different contexts. They are a threat to human security (R. Sundberg, K. Eck and J. Kreutz, 2012). Seen from this angle, conflicts can lead to civil wars, which are very often disastrous from every point of view. The African continent, rich in natural and human resources, is the scene of conflicts of all kinds (Tshibilondi Ngoyi A., 2015, p. 203). In West Africa, for example, there are interpersonal quarrels, civil wars or armed conflicts, and the war against jihadism. The cases of Côte d'Ivoire, DRC, Mali, Burkina Faso and Chad, to name but a few, illustrate the conflicts that have marked this part of the continent.

Studies have shown that among the types of conflict noted in Senegal, interpersonal quarrels are the most recurrent (Ndiaye et al 2017). Unlike other African countries, Senegal, a secular and democratic country, is characterised by minor conflicts between groups. These are very often observed between herders and farmers or other specific actors around socio-economic issues of concern to them and less between communities as cultural or ethnic groups. The Casamance conflict, which began in the 1980s, is considered to be an old conflict between "separatist" factions and the central state.

However, in recent years there has been a rise in violence in many forms (violence against women, physical, verbal or economic aggression, and more recently political violence), causing amplifying shockwaves in individual and collective feelings. This phenomenon has risks and consequences for the economic and technological progress made in recent years, and weakens society's resilience in the face of other crises (pandemics, climate change, food insecurity, etc.).

What role do women play in conflicts? Women are often the victims, but they are also key players in conflict resolution. Having heard about the pacifying effect of the "Calebasses de solidarité" (CDS) in the intervention zones (without open and violent conflicts), the Swiss organisation, Action de Carême (ADC) wanted to scientifically measure the contribution of the CDS in maintaining social peace within the communities. It was therefore deemed important to document the contribution of the calabash solidarity approach to pacifying local communities in three (03) of the country's agro-ecological zones (South zone (Sédhiou and Ziguinchor), North zone (Podor and Pété), West zone (Thiès) and Centre zone (Kaffrine).



From a **methodological point of view**, a holistic approach was favoured by developing a participative and qualitative methodology based on a conceptual approach around the following concepts:

- *Community conflicts* are antagonisms between non-state groups. In Senegal, with the exception of the Casamance conflict, they are very often observed between herders and farmers or other specific actors around socio-economic issues of concern to them, and less often between cultural or ethnic groups.
- *Pacification* has two meanings: i) the action of re-establishing peace after a period of (military) conflict through negotiation, force or other means; ii) a peace agreement between two protagonists.
- *Gender* refers to the socially constructed characteristics, roles, duties and obligations and power relations between women and men, girls and boys. Gender roles refer to the activities attributed respectively to women and men in society and to the position that women and men occupy within it. Gender also refers to the differences and/or inequalities that characterise and influence the lives of women and men in a given context. Sex, on the other hand, refers to the biological differences between men and women. Conflicts were therefore examined from a gender perspective in order to determine their differential effects on men and women. By also ensuring that young people are taken into account in the pacification process or as actors in conflicts.

The approach chosen was to enter by agro-ecological zone, then by partner organisation (PO). 9 federal networks were selected on the basis of their representation in the solidarity economy and CDS ecosystem in the country.

The primary data was analysed with the target groups (members of the CDSs and other community players and differentiated according to gender, socio-professional category and position in society, taking into account power relations within the target groups and communities. Relevant variables such as gender, age, economic power and social role were cross-referenced to highlight the weight of the actors' contribution to the pacification of community conflicts.

This evaluation study produced the following results:

Characterisation of the nature of social and economic relations within communities.

In all the localities visited, the different ethnic groups, socio-professional groups and age and gender groups (M/F) enjoy good neighbourly relations, based on the cultural values of mutual aid and solidarity ("*jappalanté*" or "*dimbalanté*") cemented by blood ties and social kinship links. However, despite these



good relations, tensions and conflicts often punctuate social harmony. Indeed, as in any human society, there are internal contradictions, sources of tension and conflict that can explode at any time.

Characterising conflicts: types, nature and players involved

The typology of conflicts carried out shows that the tensions and conflicts that occur in the study areas are neither open nor violent. They are internal conflicts within villages/urban neighbourhoods, within families, between groups of people and old conflicts that have persisted over several generations. The most important conflicts are as follows:

- Family and marital conflicts
- Land disputes
- Conflicts between farmers and livestock breeders
- Conflicts between young people in sport
- Internal conflicts at CDS

The main players involved are members of the same family, members of different families, members of different communities (neighbouring villages), socio-professional categories (farmers, stockbreeders, fishermen, etc.), community players, the local authority and the State. In reality, conflicts are rooted in families and communities. They then spill over into society and affect inter-community relations.

The contribution of the solidarity gourd to the peace process

The members of the CDS have developed a number of approaches to guarantee peace within their communities, combat open conflicts and prevent their recurrence. The basis of their approach is *discretion* ("*suttura*"), in the image of the white cloth (symbol of peace) covering the calabash ("*Lékke*") and their *modus operandi*. They also rely on mediation and communication and on the social and organisational dynamics of the locality, working with influential community leaders (men and women) and customary and religious authorities (grouped together in a committee of wise men) to resolve conflicts.

CDS women are on the front line, ready to intervene to keep the peace. They are likened to "*djéegu pusso*"¹ ; in other words, they can be seen as *social peacemakers*.

¹ Literally "needles used to sew and strengthen the social fabric when it begins to disintegrate".



Ultimately, the involvement of gourds in peace-making was unanimously recognised by all the players. It is in this sense that the calabashes constitute a powerful lever to be strengthened, preserved and activated in times of crisis.

At the end of the analysis, **recommendations based on four areas of intervention** were defined to improve the contribution of CDSs to community peace-building: (i) capacity-building; (ii) structuring; (iii) awareness-raising, advocacy and communication; (iv) cooperation.



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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACCESS	Association d'Actions Concertées pour l'Entraide et la Solidarité (Association of Concerted Action for Mutual Aid and Solidarity)
ADC	Swiss Catholic Lenten Fund
ADK	Association for the Development of Keuri Kao
AGRECOL	Ecological agriculture
ALSE	Association for the Fight against Welding and Debt
ANSD	National Agency for Statistics and Demography
RECODEF	Community Grouping for the Self-Development of Families
CDS	Solidarity gourd
ESS	Semi-structured interviews
FG	Focus Group
KOUSSEK	Network for the development of women in Casamance
MARP	Accelerated participatory research method
MFDC	Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance
PFPC	Women's platform for peace in Casamance
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
UN	United Nations
OP	Partner organisation
POAS	Land Use and Development Plan
RDC	Democratic Republic of Congo
RENOLSE	National network of organisations fighting against hunger and debt
UCEM	Union of Ecological Committees of the Mininky Valley
UJAK	Koyli Wirnde Young Farmers' Union
SWOT	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats



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Figure 1: Map of agro-ecological zones and study locations

Figure 2: SWOT analysis of CDS

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and justification

In any human society, there are tensions and conflicts. These are rooted in the many social, political and economic inequalities that permeate society, and Senegalese society is no exception. Conflicts often manifest themselves through emotions such as anger, frustration, fear, resentment, aggression, verbal violence and physical violence against people and property, to varying degrees. But most conflicts can be seen from the outside. Nevertheless, the consequences for society, specific groups and individuals can be very severe (isolation, poverty, exposure to shame, psychological disorders, etc.).

Community conflicts are antagonisms between non-state groups. As such, they constitute a threat to human security (R. Sundberg, K. Eck and J. Kreutz, 2012). Seen in this light, they can lead to civil wars, which are very often disastrous from every point of view.

The African continent, rich in natural and human resources, is the scene of conflicts of all kinds (Tshibilondi Ngoyi A., 2015, p. 203). In West Africa, for example, there are interpersonal quarrels, civil wars or armed conflicts, and the war against jihadism. The cases of Côte d'Ivoire, DRC, Mali, Burkina Faso and Chad, etc., illustrate the conflicts that have marked the situation in this part of the continent.

Conflicts manifest themselves in various forms in different contexts. Studies have shown that among the types of conflict noted in Senegal, interpersonal quarrels are the most recurrent in Senegal (Ndiaye et Al 2017). Unlike these countries, Senegal, a secular and democratic country, is characterised by minor conflicts between communities. These are very often observed between herders and farmers or other specific actors around socio-economic issues of concern to them and less between communities as cultural or ethnic groups. Furthermore, the Casamance conflict, which began in the 1980s, is considered to be an old conflict between "separatist" factions and the central state.

The conflict in Casamance began in 1980 and was triggered by the death of a demonstrator during a strike by secondary school students over a lack of educational and school infrastructure. The bloody repression in December 1982 of the march organised by the MFDC was the trigger for the war between the rebels and the Senegalese army.

However, in recent years there has been **a rise in violence in many forms (violence against women, physical, verbal or economic aggression, and more recently political violence)**, causing amplifying shockwaves in individual and collective feelings. This phenomenon has risks and consequences for the economic and technological progress made in recent years, but also weakens society's resilience in the face of other crises (pandemics, climate change, food insecurity, etc.).

What is the **involvement and role of women in conflicts**? The answer to this question is that women are most often victims, but they are also key players in conflict resolution.

Women pay a heavy price in conflicts between West African states such as Mali, Burkina Faso and Nigeria and armed groups such as Bokho Haram. They are often victims of kidnapping, rape and sexual exploitation, and may be recruited against their will as informants and fighters by these groups. For example, the rape and forced marriage of women increased in towns such as Gao and Timbuktu in 2012. Women are also killed in clashes between these groups and governments, as was the case during the recapture of the Lake Chad basin by Nigeria and its allies in the Mixed Multinational Force from 2015 onwards (O. J. Walther, 2020).

On the other hand, women have always played a decisive role in conflicts in Africa. Traditionally, they encouraged men to go to war, and even intervened alongside them during conflicts. In other words, women often acted as fighters, first to defend themselves and then as actors in conflicts. This was the case in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Today, women are increasingly positioning themselves as players in conflict resolution, peace-building and democratisation processes in Africa, particularly in countries in conflict or post-conflict situations (UGDCPS, 2006; Tshibilondi Ngoyi, 2015). This is in line with "the vote on resolution 1325 of the United Nations Security Council, adopted on 31 October 2000, on women, peace and security. This resolution not only reaffirms the need to ensure respect for women's rights as victims of conflict, but also encourages national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of disputes to ensure that women are more fully represented" (UGDCPS, 2006:7). This UN initiative demonstrates the role of women in conflicts, but above all it aims to place them at the forefront of strategies for preventing and resolving conflicts of all kinds.

Having heard about the pacifying effect of the "**Calebasses de solidarité**" (CDS) in the areas of intervention (without open and violent conflicts), the Swiss organisation, Action de **Carême** (ADC), wanted to scientifically measure the contribution of the CDS in maintaining social peace within the communities.

ADC is active in fourteen countries around the world, working on the right to food, gender and climate justice. It focuses on providing guidance and support to local populations, enabling them to regain confidence in their knowledge, abilities and skills, so that they can manage their day-to-day lives more effectively together.

In partnership with the Réseau national des organisations de lutte contre la soudure et l'endettement (RENOLSE), the *Calebasse de Solidarité* (CDS) initiative was launched to contribute to the local economy and solidarity in 11 regions of Senegal. By 2021, there were 1806 CDSs with around 61,413 members, including 55,066 women¹. This initiative seeks to build more cohesive and equitable communities, starting by establishing rules of fairness and equality within the groups. It offers members a space for discussion and problem-solving, and encourages the re-establishment of links with traditional community values of solidarity. The CDSs are supported by technical teams in the field under the supervision of **AgriBio Services**' National Coordination.

It was therefore deemed important to document the contribution of the calabash solidarity approach to pacifying local communities in four (04) agro-ecological zones of the country (South zone, North zone, West zone and Centre zone).

¹ Source : www.calebasses-de-solidarite.sn

1.2 Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study was to describe the effect of solidarity gourds on community conflicts. Specifically, this involved :

1. Identify the characteristics of conflicts at village level or in the target area, taking into account small-scale conflicts (family) and large-scale conflicts (ethnic, religious and other groups);
2. Identify the strategies used by local populations to try to resolve these conflicts without the Calebasse de Solidarité ;
3. Highlight the contribution of the solidarity calabash to the pacification of local communities with evidence from testimonies, life stories and other tools and instruments;
4. If possible, quantify the effect of the calabashes;
5. Document around 5 examples in detail in different contexts for conflicts with different characteristics (size, nature, etc.). Describe the role of the Calebasse in resolving this conflict;
6. Through focus groups, highlight the effect of the pacification of the Calebasses de Solidarité for the communities (in general and not focusing on individual conflicts);
7. Also establish an idea of the effect on the non-emergence of new conflicts (or their management).

1.3. Expected results

Based on these objectives, the study is expected to produce the following results:

- A good characterisation of how conflicts manifest themselves in the target area;
- Good identification and documentation of the causes and consequences of conflicts;
- The organisational dynamics of populations to resolve conflicts or mitigate them were clearly highlighted;
- The contribution of the solidarity calabash to the pacification process was clearly demonstrated.

This evaluative study would have made it possible to assess :

- Characterisation, manifestations of conflicts and the players involved ;
- The causes and consequences of the conflicts identified ;
- The social and organisational dynamics of populations to resolve conflicts and tensions ;
- The contribution of the solidarity calabash to the peace process.

II.METHODOLOGY

A qualitative, participatory and gender-sensitive approach was used to achieve the objectives of the study, using documentary review and qualitative primary data collection methods. Data collection was carried out in a participatory manner, taking into account all the stakeholders, in order to gain a better understanding of

the experiences and perceptions of the issues at stake in the conflicts and the practices differentiated according to gender and the role of individuals, while taking into account the specific socio-cultural context of the respondents.

The study was conducted in four agro-ecological zones (South Zone, North Zone, Centre-West Zone and Centre-East Zone), as shown on the map below.

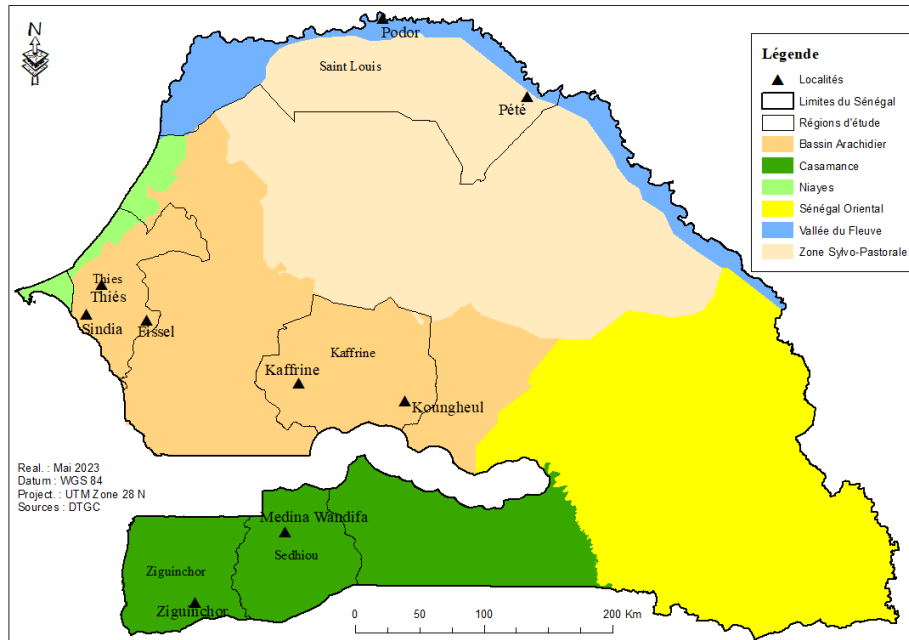


Figure 1: Map of agro-ecological zones and study locations

2.1. Research questions

This evaluative study began with a number of questions that served as a guideline for the collection of secondary and primary data and the conclusions. The main working questions were as follows:

- Apart from the positive effects on the living conditions of its members, does CDS have other social or political effects within the community?
- What are the pacification processes and strategies used in conflict zones?
- What role do CDSs play in regulating social, economic and political relations between social groups in the target communities?
- What mechanisms does the CDS use to help maintain social cohesion, peace and understanding between stakeholder groups?
- How were gender relations taken into account in the pacification process?
- How can peace-building initiatives be sustained to prevent new conflicts?

2.2 Literature review and analysis

The literature review and analysis made it possible to bring together all the relevant literature on the issue under study. Initially, information on the issue of pacification in conflict zones (violent or not) was gathered, followed by literature on the involvement of local populations and other stakeholders in conflict resolution

and management. Finally, we looked at the contribution of women to this process, in particular the members of the solidarity calabashes and the activities associated with them.

The team used the document analysis tool to conduct the document review, which identified the information contained in the grey literature (reports, unpublished working documents) and the scientific literature (published articles and books). On the one hand, this enabled us to obtain initial answers to the questions; on the other hand, it enabled us to identify additional information to be collected in the field with the targets and key players interviewed.

The main sources of secondary data consulted were :

- Official government statistical sources ;
- Reports on studies carried out by research institutes, United Nations bodies, international NGOs and technical and financial partners working on the issue of pacification and conflict resolution;
- Local and national associations.

The table below gives an overview of the issues addressed, the types of data collected (in relation to the objectives) and the indicators (qualitative and quantitative) used to measure the results of the analysis.

Study framework matrix

OBJECTIVES	Research questions ²	Indicators	Data sources
<i>Identify the characteristics of conflicts at village level or in the target area, taking into account small-scale conflicts (family) and large-scale conflicts (ethnic, religious and other groups).</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is the nature, scale and frequency of existing conflicts? ▪ What are the sources (origins) of the conflicts? When did they start? ▪ Which stakeholder groups are involved and what are their arguments? What resources and areas are being coveted? ▪ What are the real and potential consequences and risks for the community? 	The typology and characterisation of conflicts and/or tensions are established	Studies and research reports. Individual interviews with resource persons. Social card
<i>Identify the strategies used by local people to try to resolve these conflicts without the Solidarity Gourd</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What local (traditional) conflict resolution solutions does the community use? ▪ The legal channels used? 	Endogenous conflict resolution strategies are identified	Individual interviews with resource persons (traditional chiefs, village chiefs, technical team, etc.)
<i>Bring out the contribution of the solidarity calabash in pacifying local communities with evidence from testimonies, life stories and other tools and instruments?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Apart from its impact on the living conditions of its members, does CDS have other social or political effects within the community? ▪ How were gender relations taken into account in the pacification process? 	The achievements and actions in terms of results of the role of CDSs in conflict pacification are documented	Documentation. Focus Group. Life stories SWOT analysis
<i>Document around 5 examples in detail in different contexts for conflicts with different characteristics (size, nature, etc.). Describe the role of the Calebasse in resolving this conflict.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How does CDS contribute to the pacification of conflict zones? ▪ What role do CDSs play in regulating social, economic and political relations between social groups in the target communities? 	Specific cases of pacification in each agro-ecological zone are illustrated.	Case studies. In-depth one-to-one interviews. Documentation
<i>Through focus groups, highlight the effect of the pacification of the Solidarity gourds for villages and societies (in general and not focusing on individual conflicts).</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have CDSs helped to reduce inequalities (and gender inequalities)? ▪ What mechanisms does the CDS use to help maintain peace and understanding between groups of stakeholders? 	The effects on social cohesion and the reduction of socio-economic inequalities have been identified	Focus groups. Direct Observation data
<i>Also establish an idea of the effect on the non-emergence of new conflicts (or their management).</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How can peace-building initiatives be sustained to prevent new conflicts? ▪ How have local players taken ownership of the peace process initiated by the CDS? 	Actions and achievements in preventing future conflicts are known so that they can be capitalised on	Focus groups ESS

² These questions will also be structured in the interview guides and focus group checklists.

2.3. Primary data collection

The data was collected in a gender-sensitive way in order to understand the experiences of conflict, perceptions and peacemaking practices, taking into account the specific socio-cultural context of the respondents. This important step followed a scientific process, with the prior development of qualitative techniques and tools to elicit exhaustive responses on the respondents' perceptions and experiences. Then came the training of the facilitators, the testing of the tools and finally the actual data collection.

2.3.1 Collection tools and targets

Four tools were used depending on the targets. These were :

i) **An interview guide for semi-structured interviews (SSE)**

This guide, intended primarily for key informants and resource persons, was administered individually. The choice of key informants was refined in the field on the basis of their level of responsibility and knowledge of the subject of the study.

The main SSE targets are as follows:

- Technical staff from Agribio Services partner projects and CDS network coordinators
- Local stakeholders (traditional chiefs, religious leaders, community leaders, etc.)
- Local authority administrative authorities
- Leaders of grassroots associations and NGOs

ii) **A discussion guide for focus groups (FG)**

The FGs were organised at community level with the members of the CDSs. The criteria for inclusion and homogeneity of the discussion groups were refined in a participatory and consensual manner with the mission team and the heads of the CDS networks. As a result, focus groups of homogeneous groups (6 to 12 participants) made up of women only and focus groups with men only were conducted in each locality. The main themes of the in-depth discussions revolved around: the nature of social relations between the different groups living in the village/neighbourhood; the characterisation of present and past recurrent tensions and conflicts in the area; the causes of these tensions and conflicts and the actors involved; endogenous conflict resolution strategies; the role of the CDS in pacification. Points of divergence and points of consensus were identified, enabling a qualitative analysis of the perceptions of a section of the population in the communities in the agro-ecological zones visited. In short, the women and men who are members and beneficiaries of the Calebasses de Solidarité were the main targets.

iii) **A life story guide**

This tool for generating meaning and self-knowledge enabled us to learn from the people we interviewed about their involvement in the peacemaking process and their experiences of conflict. In both cases, the life stories helped to illustrate their trajectory, their current resources (family, social, economic, cultural, psychosomatic, etc.) and their degree of resilience. The life stories were told to 2 categories of people, on the one hand the victims of conflict and on the other, people who were very involved in the peacemaking process.

iv) **The social and resources card**

This Accelerated Participatory Research Method (APRM) tool was systematically developed in each village visited with resource persons (village chief or delegate, teacher, woman in charge of CDS, producer). It enabled the physical, human, socio-cultural and economic characteristics of the community to be understood. It also enabled us to understand the distribution of resources and access to them, as well as potential areas of conflict.



Social map of the village of Dodel (Podor) Social map of the village of Médina Boudialabou (South)

2.3.2 Sampling and selection of solidarity gourds

The approach chosen in conjunction with Agribio Services was to enter by agro-ecological zone and then by partner organisation (PO). So 9 federal networks were chosen on the basis of their representation in the solidarity economy and CDS ecosystem in the country. These networks (subdivided into local networks) are spread across 5 regions: Thiès, Kaffrine, St. Louis, Sédhiou and Ziguinchor. In each region, one to three communes were chosen in proportion to the population of the CDSs.

Given **the qualitative and participatory nature of the study approach, the reasoned method was chosen** (based on the criteria of dynamism, influence in the community and size) to select the gourds. The final choice was made with the support of the heads of the partner organisations. In all, **32 CDS** took part in the focus groups (see table 1 below). As for the selection of community players who were not CDS members, the final choice of the sample was determined in the field, thanks to the "snowball" technique facilitated by the key informants and the results of the documentary review.

The total number of people met in the 5 regions visited is estimated at **163** (see table 2).

Finally, a quality and ethics protocol was followed to the letter during the survey, respecting the principles of neutrality (avoiding any bias in relation to the conflicts), rigour (statements, perceptions and opinions must be based on facts) and respect for local cultural and religious practices.

As a reminder, the iterative process and the triangulation of questions with the various targets (members of the CDS, resource persons, other community players) enabled solid data to be generated, verified and validated in the final analysis of the results.

Table 1: Targeting partner organisations and affiliated gourds

Zones Agroécologiques	Réseau	Région	Commune	Quartier/Village	Calebasses	
Centre Ouest	ADK	Thiès	Thiès Nord	Keury Kao	- CDS Zone 3 - CDS Zone 5 - CDS Zone 19	- CDS Zone 7 - Corps des métiers - CDS Zone 4
	ACCES		Sindia/Diass	Mbayard	-Gamlaye 1 -Gamlaye 2	-Djilakh -Léro
	RECODEF		Fissel	Ngonème	-Soobème -Ndiobème -Ndiyoinème	-Backapome -Ngonème
Centre Est	UCEM	Kaffrine	Koungueul (Ida Mouride)	Thiakho	-Tiakho -Deggo -Calebasse 03 -And liggey	-bokk jom -And jappo -Kafo -Sant yalla groupe
	AGRECOL		Kaffrine (Diamagadio)	Médinatoul Salam 1	- Fass Diom	
Nord	UJAK	Saint Louis	Podor (Guédé Village)	Décollé-Taredji	-Kandol -Sessé Diam-Diam -Jaxiyol	-Bamtaré -Yakaar Taredji
	BAMTARE		Pété (Dodel)	Dodel/ Diery Diouga	-Fatimata Bineta -Halwaar -Tallbé	
Sud	ALSE	Sédhiou	Madina Wandifa	Kandion/ Banoungoune	-Kandion -Banoungoune	
	KOUSSEK	Ziguinchor	Enampor	Médina Boudialabou	-Sobéya -Sobiyabo -Doma	

Table 2: Number of interviews by target group

OUTILS	CIBLES			
	Membres CDS	Personnel Organisations Partenaires d'Agribio Services	Acteurs communautaires, autorités coutumières, religieuses personnel ONG,)	TOTAL
Focus Group	13	-	-	13
Entretien collectif	-	4	-	4
ESS	-	4	19	23
Récit de vie	-	-	7	7
Carte sociale	-	-	6	6
TOTAL	13	8	32	53

2.4. Data processing and analysis

The transcripts of the interviews (individual and focus group) were progressively coded and organised into categories to facilitate synthesis and preliminary analysis based on an analysis plan. The technique of discursive analysis of thematic content was used. Emphasis was placed on the approach combining deduction and induction for a more complete analysis was backed up by gender analysis.

While the strong correlation between gender inequality and violent conflict no longer needs to be proven, it is still not sufficiently taken into account in peacebuilding practice.

To do this, we approached the target groups in a differentiated way according to gender, socio-professional category and position in society, taking into account the power relationships

within the target groups and communities. Relevant variables such as gender, age, economic power and social role were cross-referenced in order to **bring out the weight of the contribution made by the players in the pacification of** community conflicts.

III. NATURE OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS

3.1. Solidarity: a shared cultural value

Studying community conflicts requires a prior understanding of the social, political, historical and economic dynamics that prevail within a given society or community. But it also requires an understanding of the nature of the relationships that exist between different social groups (men and women according to ethnicity, socio-professional category, age, origin, etc.).

A community (the village in particular), in addition to being a geographical space, is a socio-cultural space of belonging, a place of social relations based either on kinship ties (lineage) or on neighbourhood ties. In fact, in Senegalese society, certain neighbourhood ties are even considered to be kinship ties, as the Wolof saying goes: "*Dëkkendo bu yagg mbok la*". In other words, the inhabitants of the same community can all be considered as sociologically speaking "relatives".

One of the obligations of this **social kinship is to** "practise solidarity, that is to say, to be helpful on an interpersonal level, to render services whenever we are in a position to do so. The honest man must be constantly available, helping and rescuing" (Ly, 2016: 22)³.

These virtues in a man or woman of solidarity have a great deal of cultural recognition, giving them a certain social importance. **It is from this angle that we can also approach the members of the CDS who try to perpetuate these cultural values** (discussed below).

In all the communities we visited, solidarity and mutual aid ("*jappalanté*" or "*dimbalanté*" in Wolof, "*walludé*" in Pulaar) are unanimously recognised through some form of "help". This may take various forms, including the following:

- Do your neighbour a favour: for example, keep an eye on your neighbour's children;
- Taking part in collective work: helping to harvest collective fields, or helping someone who does not have enough labour for their subsistence activity,
- Providing assistance during happy or unhappy events, for example women will help to cook during family ceremonies (weddings, christenings, etc.).

In addition, the various groups (men, women, young people from different ethnic groups, farmers, herders, fishermen, traders, members of different castes, etc.) maintain relations based on the principles of understanding ("*deggo*"), cordiality, discretion ("*suttura*") and peace ("*jamm*"). All these elements of sociability contribute to **the functioning of collective solidarity, social stability between the different groups and the maintenance of social relations, a sine qua non** for living together in society.

In the following sections, the principle of solidarity and other types of social relationships are analysed in the different areas visited, as well as the specific nature of the CDSs, which constitute a mechanism for perpetuating the values of solidarity, mutual aid and discretion.

³ "La morale de l'honneur dans les sociétés wolof et halpulaar traditionnelles : une approche des valeurs et de la personnalité culturelles sénégalaises" (tome 2) in Etudes africaines.

3.1.1 In the North Zone

In the Saint-Louis region, and more specifically in the department of Podor, two localities were the subject of our field study, namely the villages of Décollé-Taredji and Djery Diouga in the commune of Dodel near Pété. The socio-economic organisation of these localities is essentially based on the rural economy, with agriculture as the main production activity, followed by livestock rearing and trade. Some of the population also work as fishermen (*subalbbé*). As for women, most are involved in market gardening and small-scale livestock rearing, as well as other income-generating activities such as trading. They often combine several activities.

In Décollé-Taredji, the socio-political organisation is based on the traditional model, which is highly hierarchical and religious. The imam, who is also the village chief ("*mawdo wuro*"), embodies religious and customary authority and holds great social and economic power. This power also gives him the legitimacy to intervene, as Mr T says: "*The Imam is the most listened-to person in this village, because religion occupies an important place in our community. He intervenes whenever there's a problem, to resolve it as a religious and customary leader*".

In terms of social and political influence, apart from the religious and customary authorities, a number of large traders are among the most influential in the two localities visited.

In Dodel, too, the imam has the same prerogatives as in Décollé-Tarédji. Traditional social organisation is based on the caste system, which obeys a hierarchy according to the social rank of each lineage or patronymic, as Mr A. S explains: "*It should be noted that the village is structured as follows: there are those known as 'DIA', who are mainly the Imams, there are the 'SALL', who are the village chiefs, and finally the 'THIAM', who are the mediators*".

As for social relations between groups of people, the inhabitants of the two localities told us of peaceful cohabitation and a historic understanding. The Halpulaar live in harmony with the Moors and some Wolofs who have come to the locality to trade in the shops and markets.

Several factors can explain this more or less harmonious cohabitation:

- Most of them belong to the same *Pulaar* ethnic group;
- The historical settlement of the locality by the same families who have lived together for generations or even centuries;
- Sharing the same socio-cultural, traditional and religious values (of the Tidjaniya brotherhood and mostly related to the family of El Hadji Omar Tall).

Furthermore, kinship or relationship by marriage has a positive influence on cohabitation, as testified by the woman **S. S. from Djery Diouga**: "*Yes, I can say that we cohabit peacefully, because we are in an area where almost all the inhabitants are 'Halpulaar' (Fulani), but we also have direct or indirect kinship links, whether in this village or in the surrounding villages, so we all know each other...*".



Photo: village of Diéry Diouga (Podor)

3.1.2 In the South zone

The study focused on the commune of Médina Wandifa, specifically the villages of Banoungoune and Kandion (Sédhiou) and the commune of Enampor (Ziguinchor).

This northern part of the country, known for its wealth of forestry and fishing resources, offers significant economic and cultural assets. Unfortunately, this part of the south has long been the scene of armed conflict since the 1980s, which has had a major impact on human relations and the area's economic development. The fact remains, however, that the communities have always maintained close secular relations, contributing to social cohesion which is reinforced by cultural practices such as traditional dances ("*koumpo*") which bring together all sections of the population.

In Ziguinchor, in the commune of Enampor, in **Médina Boudialabou** (nestled in the forest as its name suggests), which is divided into 3 neighbourhoods, different ethnic groups have lived together for generations, with a predominance of Diolas, followed by Socés, Peulhs, a few Wolofs and a Serer family. The local social groups and neighbouring communities (of all religious persuasions) enjoy good relations based on cordiality, respect for others, mutual solidarity, brotherhood, mutual aid and esteem. According to the people interviewed, everyone considers themselves "to be the brother or sister of the other", and this has always been the case since their great-grandparents created this social foundation on which community life rests.

The words of the **village chief's representative, 61-year-old S.N**, confirm this social model of community life. According to him: "*There is cordiality and respect among the inhabitants of this area. Peace reigns here. We Muslims and Christians live together in perfect harmony, and we maintain good relations by seeing each other and sharing our joys and sorrows.*"

Social organisation in this southern area is **governed by values (respect for elders, discipline, honour, uprightness, etc.), normative rules and traditions that must be respected**. In addition, the categories of people who are listened to most are the village chief, the imam and the elderly, who make up the 'Council of Elders' or '*Anifann/Anaxann*' in the Diola language. In a way, these people

play the role of social regulators and judges. Their words ("*kaddu*"), their advice and their directives are followed to the letter, because we have been brought up to respect the word of the elders", says **the village matron, Dame S.D.**. Added to these words are those of **a member of the Council of Elders, M.D., aged 63**, who confirms the role of the elders in conflict management:

"In any community, minor misunderstandings are inevitable. If the problem is not resolved, they try other solutions. If there are no solutions, the complaint is submitted to the Chief, which is very rare.

The Elders are older men and women with experience and knowledge of the village's history. They are chosen at the village congress. In addition, the president of the young people, as well as the elderly women, can play a major role in mediating in the event of conflict. **The involvement of women and young people indicates a more or less inclusive society, with less unequal gender and age relations.** This is in contrast to the north and centre, where patriarchy is still firmly entrenched in society.

As for **economic activities**, almost all of the area's inhabitants are involved in agriculture, particularly rice-growing in the "*faros*" during the winter period. Other activities include tree cultivation in the cashew nut sector, livestock farming, and trading in processed agricultural and fish products.

In Sédhiou, in the villages visited at Madina Wandifa, the majority cultural group is ethnic Diola. Similar to Ziguinchor, the people there enjoy good relations of brotherhood, solidarity, mutual aid and empathy. The inhabitants seem to enjoy the same social and peaceful relations with the populations of neighbouring villages. This peaceful cohabitation is reinforced by the ties of close kinship or marriage. In fact, exogamy⁴ is practised between families and even better, some women from the village of Kandion are married to men from the village of Bangounoune and vice versa. As **a 27-year-old woman from Banoungoune** put it: "*There's a good understanding between the inhabitants of Banoungoune and Kandion, because we're all diolas. With the intermingling of marriages, we've all become one family and we get on well together.*

The President of the ALSE association confirms these comments on social relations within villages, but also relations between villages, with this quotation:

"A good working relationship. Since I've been here, I've never noticed any problems. It's stability that reigns. The intermingling of marriages is one of the factors that has created this stability. The legacy of our ancestors is marriage between the children of these two localities, and understanding between them. The creation of a large association bringing everyone together plays a big role in this understanding. At night, you can find the children of Kandjion in Banoungoune together".

As for **community organisation to maintain social cohesion**, it is fairly inclusive, but defines precise roles for each category of person according to their social rank, wisdom and experience.

Culturally speaking, decisions (including the settlement of disputes) concerning communal life in the Diola environment are entrusted to the people who have the most say in the community. These

⁴ Marrying outside one's lineage or family

include the village chief, followed by the imam, the elders (wise men), the president of the youth group, and the women in charge of the Calebasses de solidarité. One of the women from the village of Banoungoune, K.D., confirms the importance of these people in the decision-making process: *"If we can't agree on something, or reach a consensus, there has to be someone who is listened to, someone who has the last word"*.

In the same vein, the president of ALSE explains the choice of the village chief as community leader and the person most listened to in these terms:

"Because in the Diola environment, chieftaincy is a question of heritage. The village chief is highly respected and listened to, and administratively he represents the village founded by his ancestors. He even has the power to expel anyone from the village who causes trouble".

In terms of economic organisation, both men and women are active in agriculture. Young people and women are also very active in market gardening and the trade in mangoes, cashew nuts and forest products (*madd*) depending on the season. As in Ziguinchor, women in the CDSs of **Kandion and Bangounoune**, for example, are involved in processing soap and other products as an income-generating activity, as well as goat and sheep rearing. The words of **D.D, aged 42 and member of a gourd in Kadion**, sum up all the activities carried out by the women:

*"The women don't just stay at home, they also engage in income-generating activities, because our husbands don't have steady jobs that pay a monthly salary. For example, each time there is a fruit harvest (*madd, pain de singe, Oul*), we go out into the fields to pick and then sell them at the *louma* (weekly market) in Bougaré, which is held every Wednesday. We also work in the rice fields."*



Photo: Village of Médina Boudialabou (Ziguinchor)

3.3. In the Centre-West zone

In this zone, which corresponds to the Thiès region, three districts have been chosen. These are **Thiès Nord** (Keuri Kao urban district), **Sindia** (Mbayar, Léro village) and **Fissel** (Fissel Escale and Ngonème village). Socio-demographically, the area is populated by Wolofs, Serers and Peulhs.

In **economic terms**, this agro-ecological zone is an agro-pastoral zone par excellence, where producers are active in agriculture, livestock farming, trade and fishing (in Mbour). The area is undergoing rapid urbanisation (in Thiès and Sindia-Diass), which is having an impact on agricultural land. Fortunately, the social and solidarity economy is highly developed here; the various socio-professional categories rely on low-interest savings and credit services to subsidise their trading, farming, livestock rearing and agri-food processing activities. In addition, the CDS initiative is very dynamic in the localities visited, and the calabashes contribute to the self-financing of these members, for their economic empowerment.

Socio-political organisation varies between urban and rural areas. In Thiès Nord (Keuri Kao), for example, decisions on neighbourhood affairs are taken by the mayor's representative, a neighbourhood delegate, supported by the imam, neighbourhood notables, development organisations such as ADK, the Bajenu Gox and leaders of women's groups. In rural areas, such as Mbayer or Fissel, this socio-political organisation is based on the guidance of the customary authorities and the village elders, more specifically the village chief (who is the most listened-to person), the imam or the abbot (for Catholic villages).

As for **cohabitation**, overall trends in the nature of relations between social groups and different communities show that they are unified, cordial, peaceful and marked by conviviality, mutual respect and solidarity. In *the Serer communities* (in **Sindia and Fissel**), for example, people advocate a **unified relationship** reinforced by the existence of extended families living in concessions. This further strengthens their **cohesion** and **good cohabitation** with other ethnic groups.

In the village of **Léro** (Mbayer), according to the members of this community and those living in the surrounding area, people maintain good relations, live in peace and harmony and help each other out, especially in difficult times or if a family has difficulty meeting its daily expenses. This is because almost all the people living in Gamlaye and Djila are relatives. **N.K.T, 32, a member of the Léro calabash**, sums up their cordial relations in these terms: *"We live together well, there's peace between us. We get married amongst ourselves (marriages between families), we are familiar with each other, we all know each other. We share our joys and sorrows, and we make our presence felt at our neighbour's house when needed"*. Another member of the CDS, B.C., confirms this relationship of conviviality, sharing and mutual aid within the village and between villages:

"We have no problems with each other and we're all equal (nëpp yèm). Even those who come from other places (Casamance, Kolda etc.) integrate easily into our locality. We take as an example the way our ancestors lived together, our mothers had a sense of sharing, especially when it came to food. At social ceremonies and other events, meals are shared."

In the village of **Ndomène** (Fissel), we find the same social characteristics as in the locality of Léro, as **W. D**, who tells us that: *"...our ties are so close that members of different families in the locality marry each other, we do everything together, so it's not so difficult for us to solve our problems internally"*.



Photo: FG with CDS by Fissel

3.4. In the Centre-East zone

In this area of the Saloum and groundnut basin, the departments of Kaffrine and Koungueul were chosen, with the communes of Diamagadio (**village of Médinatoul salam 1**) and Ida Mouride (**village of Thiakho**) respectively. Agriculture remains the main activity for both men and women, followed by livestock rearing and trade. Although women are involved in the family production unit for cereal crops, they are also active in market gardening, small-scale livestock farming and the marketing of processed agricultural products. As Mb. C., a farmer and trader and member of the *Fass Jom* CDS, sums up the activities of the women of **Médinatoul salam 1**:

"In winter, we all go out to the fields. So I can say that it's farming that dominates. At the end of the season, each of the women looks for an income-generating activity. Some of them do business or hairdressing, others do other activities and we pay them. At the moment, we have an agricultural project with the calabash - 2 collective fields ("tollu mbottay") with a few men. We grow lettuce, tomatoes, sweet and bitter aubergines, chillies and onions. One of the fields is just across the road and is almost 1 hectare in size, but we can't afford to fence it in. There's a tap inside, but we haven't yet fenced it in. There isn't enough water yet. The other is inside the village. The 4 sides are each 30 metres long. We've put a tap there to water the plants.

In terms of **socio-demographics and cohabitation**, the area is predominantly inhabited by Wolofs. They live alongside the Peulh, Bambara, Diola, Socé and a few Maures. As in other localities, the different social groups enjoy **peaceful, fraternal relations**, according to the inhabitants. In **Médinatoul salam1**, for example, the peaceful cohabitation between the predominantly Wolof families can be explained in part by their ancestral ties and their shared origins. This is what emerges from interviews with members of the community such as Mb. Cissé, 48, who said: *"We're all one community here. We have very good relations on all levels. In other words, we get on well. There have been misunderstandings in the past, but with the arrival of the Calebasses, they no longer exist.*

This is also the case in **Thiakho**, in the Koungueul region, where we brought together members of the CDS from three other neighbouring villages (*Ida Gadiaga, Ndiar meew, Darou djeuguine*) and the people are unanimous in their view that **multi-ethnicity and cultural mixing in no way hinder social harmony**: *"In Ida Gadiaga, we live very well together. It's inhabited by Peulhs and Wolofs,*

who are in the majority, followed by Sarakholé. They all live together peacefully, and it's hard to tell them apart because they're so close"; the village chief of Thiakho agrees, confirming the previous comments: "We speak more Wolof in this village, but there are Fulani and Sarakholé, who are not numerous. We also live with a community of Bambaras, Socés and Moors, but we are all united.



Photo: FG CDS Thiakho (Koungheul)

In terms of **socio-political organisation**, it has to be said that these are very hierarchical villages with a social organisation based on customary chiefs (village chief - "*Borom dëkk bi*") and religious chiefs (imam) who form a committee of wise men that includes other resource persons. These people are the social regulators chosen for their level of knowledge and commitment. In general, when there is an important event that concerns the whole community, it is the imam who is responsible for bringing people together and communicating.

All in all, in all the localities visited, social relations between the inhabitants seem to be in good shape. However, despite the good neighbourly relations, mutual aid and solidarity cemented by blood ties and social kinship, tensions and conflicts often punctuate social harmony. For in any society there are internal contradictions that can explode at any time.

IV. CHARACTERISATION OF CONFLICTS: TYPES, NATURE AND PLAYERS

This chapter looks at the types of conflict that occur, and analyses their implications, risk factors and the perceptions of local people on this subject.

The study areas are all free of open and violent conflict, although there are conflicts within villages, within families, between groups of people and old conflicts that have persisted over several generations. We have classified the conflicts in order of importance and prevalence, with variations in occurrence depending on the area visited.

It is worth noting the similarity of certain conflicts in the four zones surveyed, with differences between urban and rural areas and in the southern zone. The following conflicts were identified among other less important disputes. They are as follows

➤ Family conflicts

- **Land disputes**
- **Conflicts between young people in sport**
- **Conflicts between farmers and livestock breeders**
- **Internal conflicts at CDS**
- **Conflicts between social classes and castes**

The main players involved are usually: members of the same family, members of different families, members of different communities (neighbouring villages), community players, the local authority and the State.

We will discuss **four types of conflict** for which the data has been verified and validated, and which are presented below.

4.1 Marital, family and social conflicts

These conflicts begin as tensions between members of an extended or polygamous family unit, which when unresolved become open conflicts. In this category of conflicts, we have listed the main protagonists and the nature of the problem. These are quarrels :

- **Between husband and wife or between wives.**

In this respect, both men and women were reluctant to go into detail (for reasons of modesty) about this type of conflict, which has to do with the intimacy of the couple. A few reasons were given as to why: (i) problems of 'jealousy' (*fuirangué*) between spouses and between co-wives; (ii) when the husband marries a second wife (*takk náarel'*); (iii) the difficulty for the head of the household to adequately cover daily expenses.

However, these conflicts can lead to physical and emotional violence against the wife and separation of the children from one of the parents. Cases of domestic violence against women have been reported. In Fissel, for example, a RECODEF facilitator recounts the following case:

"We settled a marital dispute in which the husband was constantly beating the wife, while the other members of the household could do nothing about it. On top of that, the wife's needs were not being met because the husband was giving her nothing. It was one of the members of the calabash who noticed the situation and took the trouble to discuss with the husband the consequences of his actions and the risk he ran if the authorities became aware of his wife's situation. When he realised his mistake, he apologised and decided not to harm his wife again. They are now living happily ever after."

- **Between daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law or sisters-in-law.**

This type of conflict is very common in our patriarchal society. In such a society, a woman's social status and respectability is measured by her marital status as a married woman and her ability to fulfil her reproductive role (bearing children, bringing them up and doing the housework). When a woman joins the marital home, she is expected to show unfailing respect and behaviour towards her mother-in-law and sisters-in-law. This can lead to conflictual relationships. The following account, taken from the life story of **48-year-old M.C. in Kaffrine**, illustrates the nature of the conflictual relations she had with her mother-in-law.

"God didn't give me children. My husband was married to me for 10 years before taking a second wife. After 3 years of marriage, my co-wife became pregnant. As a result, she was considered a "princess" while I was abandoned. When she gave birth, people didn't want me to carry the baby, believing that if I touched it, it would die. My mother-in-law no longer saw me as her daughter-in-law. When I came to her room to say hello or have a chat, she wouldn't even look at me. My mother-in-law's co-wife knew that I was a strong woman who could have anything she wanted. However, my mother-in-law didn't want anything more to do with me. Everyone felt sorry for me because of what I was going through.

When my co-wife joined the marital home in time, she treated me like her big sister. We don't have any problems, even though her mother, aunt and uncle have tried to separate us because they think I'm a bad person.

Today, I look after several children who are not my biological children. My co-wife's child, who was taken away from me, has become very close to me. He would only accept me. The second child was the same. When he was just a year old, I was the one who bought him milk every day, because he had become so attached to me..."

These intra-household conflicts are very often managed discreetly (*suttura*) by certain women, members of the CDS who are known and respected for their discretion and the *Bajenu gox*.

4.2. Land conflicts

This type of conflict is common to all areas, but to varying degrees. The cases reported in this study can be grouped into 3 major problems:

- i. Tensions between members of a family or between two families over land ownership following an inheritance.
- ii. Land disputes, refusal to return a borrowed field or land belonging to families who had left the area because of conflict (as in the South).
- iii. The problem of land control by local populations linked to large-scale land acquisition.

Concerning the first two problems of inheritance and borrowing, we have testimonies in **the South** illustrating this. C.D., a member of a gourd in Brin, provides an explanation of quarrels between members of the same family or two families:

"Conflicts between family members over the inheritance of farmland are common, especially among the younger generation. Our grandparents shared the land without any problems, but now the children are arguing over the land inherited from their parents, because everyone wants to cultivate what they want or do what they want with the inheritance. Also, a family may lend a piece of land to someone else to cultivate for years and instead of returning the land, the person keeps it until they die. Their children continue to farm the land, believing it belongs to their deceased parent. The day the owner asks them to return the land, that's when the conflict begins.

According to Ziguinchor town councillor M.L.S., land disputes **between families** are becoming a recurring problem:

"In Niaguis, Boulouf, land disputes are becoming the number 1 conflict. This problem is the result of two factors: the return of families who had moved elsewhere because of the Casamance conflict and who have come back to find their land in the hands of other families who have settled in their village, some of whom have planted cashew nuts. The other problem causing conflict is that the land base has shrunk considerably, while demand for land is increasing. It's worth noting that women's demands are outstripping those of men. Is this the emergence of women's awareness of the importance of land?"

This type of conflict is handled amicably by the Imams or village chiefs, who often manage to resolve them after listening to both parties and mediating. If the dispute is not resolved, it is referred to the courts.

With regard to the problem of large-scale land acquisition, we are going to focus on the **North** and **Centre-West zones** in order to illustrate the dynamics and players involved. In recent years, we have witnessed a great deal of community tension and conflict over access to and control of agricultural land by local people, coinciding with the emergence of a local consciousness (among women and young people) about land issues. The land issue arises against a backdrop of **agribusiness development** to meet growing demand for agricultural produce; **land saturation** in rice-growing areas (Vallée du Fleuve); **rapid urbanisation**; a **reduction in the land base** for communes and **land speculation** (in the central west zone and in Niayes).⁵

In Podor, in the village of Décollé-Taredji, land tenure remains one of the major problems between members of the community, because according to the people interviewed, the "land rush" has led to a great deal of tension between the local people and between them and the local authorities, as confirmed by the president of the Ngalanka MSEs: *"People are beginning to know the value of their land holdings, which is starting to create tensions between people, so many are using tricks or force to grab hold of other people's land, and some are exceeding the authorised limit for building... So land has become a real problem in the locality, whether it's land for housing or for farming."*

In Dodel, still in the Podor department, the situation is similar, as Mr A. S., a community leader, testifies. S., a community leader, told us:

*"Almost all the conflicts are linked directly or indirectly to land, either between farmers who are fighting over a piece of land, or between farmers and herders who are in conflict because of the herds that enter the former's field, or the access roads that the herders used to take their cattle to the river have been cultivated. There were also very regular conflicts between the State and the local landowners, **over the transfer of large areas for large-scale agricultural projects that could be very promising.** But sometimes politics gets involved, which ends up dividing the population and compromising these projects at the*

⁵ Niang, Aminata and Knapman, C. (2017) *In Senegal, family farmers' access to land under threat*. IIED Briefing Paper, IIED, London.

same time... This is the case of a ten thousand hectare (10,000 ha) rice-growing project that the Moroccans had negotiated with the local authorities and the population. But some intellectuals and politicians cried scandal over the land grab, to the point where everything fell through. They didn't want the incumbent mayor to succeed with the project, because there was a political stake behind it... In the end, the government suspended the project, even though those in charge had already paid the demarcation fees, and the mayor's office had received an initial payment of two hundred million CFA francs. This money had been used to finance a number of the town council's activities.

In addition, in the Central West zone (between **Sindia** and **Diass**), apart from the problem of field boundaries between producers or the sharing of family land inheritance, the thorny problem remains land disputes between local communities and the State. These include the question of expenses, among other grievances following the installation of new infrastructures such as Diass Airport, the new urban centres, the port of Ndayane and the Regional Express Train. Some people feel they have been wronged, or even "dispossessed" of their land inherited from their grandparents ("*tollu mame*").

Mrs F. G of the ACCES network sums up the situation in the area as follows:

"There are two types of tension in the area: political conflicts and land conflicts, because land has become a highly coveted resource in this area. The Diass airport (AIBD) was built on the fields of local residents, and there is also talk of the Dagga kholpa urban centre, which is also likely to take over villagers' fields and land. The port of "ndayane" will also come here... All these major projects represent major stakes that will increase land speculation. In fact, there are even conflicts between members of the same family who are fighting over plots of land, so it's fair to say that the major conflicts in this area revolve around land.

It should be noted that land disputes in Senegal very often have a political connotation, or even colour, because the people in charge of land management at municipal and state commission level are generally elected politicians.

4.3. Conflicts between farmers and livestock breeders

This type of conflict is one of the oldest in any community in the world where these two categories of stakeholder cohabit. It relates to the problem of livestock roaming through farmers' fields in search of pasture and water. In reality, the root of the problem is the type of extensive livestock farming that persists despite population growth, agricultural development and changing lifestyles.

In **the north of the country**, where conflicts between farmers and herders are very common, women are the main victims. Their fields and women's vegetable gardens are often destroyed by small ruminants such as goats, which roam unsupervised. Some fields are neither fenced nor guarded, making it easy for the animals to get in. **S.M.B., a resident of Diery Diouga**, reminds us that "*in the past, the children were responsible for looking after the fields, but nowadays all the children go to school*".

Other studies (Diagne, 2022: 54) have highlighted the factors behind these conflicts, which include "competition for control of the land, cattle roaming, the increase in cultivated land to the detriment of pastoral land, the scarcity of grazing, etc.". Some accuse the French colonial administration, which in its policy of managing and controlling the populations of Djolof, had tried to introduce policies of sedentarisation (in terms of health, water and agriculture) of the nomadic pastoralists in order to bring them into the era of "modernity". In fact, it considered them to be a "backward" and "stagnant" people, using an archaic system of animal husbandry (Nd. Diagne, 2022; S. Fancette, 1999). This has not been without consequences, as it has led to conflict between these nomadic Fulani pastoralists and Wolof farmers.

The fact remains that the defence of territorial, socio-economic and socio-cultural integrity is a real issue for social groups insofar as pastoral land is occupied by farmers and crop land is violated by herders and their livestock (Diagne, 2019). This was all the more the case as the latter needed large areas of grazing land for their animals, just as groundnut cultivation did for farmers. Given that the colonial administration was against nomadism and encouraged groundnut cultivation, it militated in favour of extending arable land, leading to encroachment on grazing areas. This led to ongoing conflicts between these two entities in Linguère, Tambacounda, Louga, Kébémér and Kaffrine. In fact, in **Kaffrine**, particularly in **Thiakho (Koungheul)**, **Mr C., programme officer at UCEM**, confirms the above in the following terms:

"Transhumant herders come from Fatick, Thiès and Kaolack from the beginning of May to the end of June. This phenomenon often leads to a lot of tension because they bring their herds into farmers' fields without permission and cut down trees to feed their herds, spoiling everything in the process. They sabotage our harvest. In Touba Gouy (we have a calabash there), a transhumant shepherd cut off the hand of a father who forbade him to let his cattle into his field. He is now handicapped. At the time, he took the shepherd to court because he was seriously injured.

Still in Kaffrine, **this 50-year-old farmer from Médinatoul Salam 1 and member** of a CDS believes that: *"Land is the source of conflict between people, who argue about the 'digëloo', i.e. the demarcation of land to be farmed. Other disputes concern the 'yaqalante' (destruction) of other people's land. You see two people of the same mother but living in different households, one a herder and the other a farmer. The farmer may ask his children to take his cattle to graze in the other's field, and that creates problems afterwards".*

In **the south**, conflicts linked to animals roaming in farmers' fields are a thorny problem due to the lack of space for grazing animals. Indeed, the geomorphology of Casamance is made up of forests and is therefore not very suitable for livestock farming. The areas set aside for rain-fed agriculture, particularly rice-growing, are fragile ecosystems on which people depend for their livelihoods. Village populations cohabit as best they can with ruminants.

In the village of **Medina Boudialabou (Commune of Enampor)** and the surrounding villages, this type of conflict is noted, especially during the rainy season (when rice is grown) and in the off-season

(for market gardening). However, it should be pointed out that these conflicts between farmers and herders do not last long, as more often than not it is a relative's or neighbour's livestock that wanders off and everything is settled amicably between neighbours.

That's what the village chief of Médina told us:

"Animal straying is inevitable here. Sometimes a billy goat will wander into someone else's field, which is a really unpleasant situation that can lead to conflict between residents, but we always try to deal with the situation amicably, as it can happen to any of us. The two protagonists can settle their problems quickly and discreetly, but if the damage is significant, the person at fault can also reimburse the damage caused".

This is not always the case in other neighbouring villages, such as **Brin** (a predominantly Christian village), which applies one of the laws in the *charter of the kingdom of Enampor*, which allows young people to kill and consume any animal (except cows) roaming in other people's fields during the farming season. According to lady C.D., a resident of this village (who came to attend the CDS meeting in Medina Boudialabou):

"As winter approaches (in May), the village chief warns herders to restrict (tie up) their animals to prevent them damaging the fields. Young people from farming families go on patrol and if they find stray animals (goats, sheep, pigs) spoiling a field, they are allowed to kill them, with the exception of oxen. If they catch an ox, the owner can come and collect it in return for a fine".

As far as **initiatives and other mechanisms for preventing land conflicts** are concerned, there are administrative tools and rules for managing these conflicts, preventing tensions over the use of land resources and organising the players and activities involved. **This is** the case, for example, with the **POAS (Plan d'Occupation et d'Affectation des Sols - Land Use and Allocation Plan)**, land governance tools that indicate the places where crops can or cannot be grown, grazing areas, reserve areas, etc. This tool is widely applied in the Delta. This tool is widely applied in the Senegal River Delta.

4.4. Conflicts between young people in sport during Navétanes

Navétanes (nawétaan) is a kind of popular football championship between neighbourhoods or villages during the summer holidays. It is a sporting and cultural phenomenon that is played throughout the country. It is often punctuated by conflict and violence, particularly after the matches, with pitched battles between the different teams and even between different villages. This is the case in **Podor**, for example, where K.S., a youth worker at UJAK, explains: *"Conflicts between young people from the villages of Décollé Taredji and Donaye (a neighbouring village) break out during the summer holidays during the Navétanes. Fortunately, they are always resolved by the two village chiefs. These two meet to ease tensions and explain to young people the importance of peace, because they are neighbours".*

In the south, in Madina Wandifa, conflicts during the navétanes have led to sharp tensions between the villages of Kandjon and Banoungoune in the past. According to the president of the young people of Kandjon, the spark that ignited the fire was when the Banoungoune team lost to Kandjon and

refused to *play fair* by accepting their opponent's victory. The ensuing brawls between players created tensions that had a negative impact on inter-village relations. The situation returned to normal thanks to mediation by the youth president, the notables of the two villages, the two village chiefs and the members of the CDS, who worked to restore peace between the two villages. D.D., a resident of Kandjon and a member of CDS who was very involved in the peace process, explains below how the problem was resolved:

"It was the young people of the two localities who got into the conflict over a Navétane match. The parents also got involved, defending their children. The village chief, the imam, as social regulators, and the elderly women got together to discuss and reach a consensus on the strategy to be put in place to resolve the conflict. Afterwards, they called us (the parents) together to bring us back to our senses and urge us to unite better. For our part, we also took into account their unanimous desire to see the two localities reconciled by organising a reunion party. Now, the inhabitants of the two villages get on well together and relations have become much healthier. The inter-village weddings are perfect illustrations of how calm relations have become. That's how the CDS has contributed to this reconciliation.

In this area, the youth president plays the role of social regulator and works to build relationships between young people based on peace, solidarity and brotherhood.

4.5. Internal conflicts in gourds

Every organisation has internal tensions and latent or overt conflicts that are non-violent. The gourds are no exception to the rule because, although they are a unifying mechanism, their members (some of whom have divergent interests) often have differences of opinion for various reasons. On the whole, few cases of conflict between members of the CDS have been recorded, involving disagreements over management, access to resources, failure to comply with the calabash charter and lack of communication between board members and ordinary members. However, members have developed internal amicable solutions to resolve conflicts. Other peacemaking mechanisms have also been put in place, such as the *committees of wise men* (see next chapter), to manage conflicts, especially serious ones.

➤ Conflicts relating to fund management

Cases of embezzlement or misappropriation in the financial management of calabashes have been noted in some calabashes. This situation can break the trust between the board members and the ordinary members, leading to division and the abandonment of calabash membership. This is the case, for example, of a calabash⁶ in **Fissel**, where the treasurer and the president embezzled the money from their calabash, and the situation spread to the whole community, ending up at the Gendarmerie.

⁶ Given the sensitive nature of the problem, we respect the principle of confidentiality by not disclosing the CDS in question or the respondents.

The box below gives an overview of this case, as explained by the presenter who was a witness and player in the affair:

"I had a problem when I was supervising the CDS because the treasurer and the president had embezzled money from their gourd. I wanted to resolve the problem internally, but I couldn't because the people concerned had disappeared for a while. I had to write a report to my superior so that he could take care of it. Finally, we called in the gendarmerie because the problem was so complicated to resolve. To hide their theft, the two culprits proceeded as follows: they borrowed money from other people and put it in the calabash box before each meeting. And when someone wanted to borrow money from the box, they would tell them that they had come late and that other people had borrowed the money. The deception was finally discovered. During the first summons, I was able to recover some of the money from the treasurer. Now that the treasurer had paid off her debt, the president was left with a more complicated case, which brought the problem to a head. Many members were starting to leave the calabash. The case ended up at the gendarmerie, who summoned 4 people. This didn't please the village chief because in Serer culture, you can't have people from the same village being summoned to court. The villagers blamed me for taking the culprits to the gendarmerie⁷. Afterwards, we held a committee meeting during which the other members advised me to pay the money because, according to them, I could do it. My salary had to be cut to pay the money (130,000 CFA francs). After that problem, all the members of the calabash board were changed, and even the name of the calabash.

With regard to recourse to the courts, which is prohibited by Article 6 of the CDS Charter, internal disputes within the calabashes are for the most part settled out of court, with the exception of a few cases such as the one mentioned above. Otherwise, sanctions and fines ("*alaman*") **are** imposed on those at fault, in a discreet manner.

➤ **Tensions linked to loan repayments**

We have noted a few internal tensions for reasons of non-repayment of loans⁸ but these are quickly settled, often internally and discreetly, as the calabash charter requires. This is the case, for example, in Décollé Taredji (Pété) where K.S. (UJAK relay) states that "*when a woman takes out a loan that she cannot pay, this can create tension within the Calabasses. In this case, the Debbo Galle Committee intervenes with the woman to find a consensus on payment. If the reasons are valid and understandable, the Calabasse gives a new deadline. Otherwise, the women find another means of repayment through discreet advice.*

⁷ This is also contrary to article 6 of the CDS charter, which prohibits a CDS member from lodging a complaint with the police or gendarmerie.

⁸ Again for reasons of confidentiality, details of individuals are not given in the testimonies of the respondents, who are not very forthcoming when it comes to talking about internal conflicts.

Also in the north, in Diéry Diouga (Dodel) in particular, the *Khoulabé Khersabé* committee, made up of the wise women of the Calebasses, the Imam and the village chief, manages conflicts within the community and between the women of the CDS.

The women on this committee deal with slow repayment of credit. If the borrower is able to pay later, they grant another extension. But if the borrower is unable to repay for family reasons, they organise a collection among the women of the CDS, without disclosing the borrower's identity. The money collected is used to repay the loan, and the rest is given as a gift.

➤ **Some political tensions**

In the South zone, there is a new form of solidarity calabash known as the *emergence calabash*, financed by political players. Although these calabashes provide solidarity support for members, they implicitly oblige them to engage in politics, which is a violation of the charter of traditional CDSs. During the focus groups, the CDS women deplored this form of practice on the part of the calabasse de l'émergence which, through its approach, creates conflicts and distorts the basic objectives and fundamentals of political neutrality, voluntary contribution and free solidarity.

In reality, the problem we have here is a conflict of interest between members of the Ziguinchor network, some of whom accuse each other of being members of the emergence gourds. This situation creates additional tensions in an area that is trying to consolidate post-conflict peace (between separatists and the Senegalese army) and in a context of pre-electoral violence. Taking a political stance within an association or CDS can be a source of conflict, especially as it can lead to differences over funding and rivalries between CDS members, gradually breaking down relations of cordiality and community solidarity.

➤ **Other tensions**

Other problems exist within the gourds and compromise their smooth operation. These problems create tensions between members of the same gourd and/or between members of a CDS network. These tensions are linked to a lack of understanding of the charter on the part of certain members, individual competition, or a certain "jealousy" between members of different calabashes in the same network over travel opportunities or access to training. Faced with criticism from some women who say they do not have access to training, one of the leaders of the Koussek network provided clarification during an FG held in the village of Médina:

"You know, sometimes when we organise meetings at regional level, only the representatives of the villages have to come; we can't move all the members of the calabash, so we ask each calabash to send a representative. It is this representative who must inform the base on her return. As far as training is concerned, for example training in cereal processing, you have to bring machines with you; these run on electricity, but here we have virtually no electricity, so it's complicated to relocate the training and do it here. Especially when it comes to making potato-based 'cééré' (couscous), for example, because you need machines to dry the product properly so that it can be preserved. We also make sure that we ask each MSE to list its training needs, but often you don't do that.

The bottom line is that most tensions and conflicts originate in families and communities and end up in the same families and communities. Even if some of the seeds of conflict (with or without violence) can be found in external dynamics, the fact remains that **the forms of conflict are rooted in families and communities**. They then spill over into society and affect inter-community relations.

V. THE CONTRIBUTION OF CALABASHES TO PACIFICATION

Women are involved in conflicts in many ways. Historically, they have been actors in African wars (as informers and combatants) and victims of kidnapping, rape and murder (O. J. Walther, 2020). However, they are increasingly positioning themselves as players in conflict resolution and the pacification of democratisation processes in Africa (. Women play a vital role in the peace process in countries in conflict or post-conflict, such as Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo (UGDCPS, 2006; Tshibilondi Ngoyi, 2015).

In Senegal, the "**Calebasses de solidarité**" (CDS) initiative has brought about a major change in the lives of CDS members and in their access to resources, in a context increasingly characterised by inflation and women's difficult access to productive resources and formal credit. The programme's work in local communities has been unanimously recognised as having a positive impact not only on women's solidarity and community solidarity, but also on the pacification of the areas (with no open or violent conflicts). Community players (non-members of the CDS), village chiefs, customary, traditional and religious authorities and development workers have all attested to the effect of the gourds on social peace. **How do they contribute to the pacification of communities and the management of conflicts within them, as stipulated in article 7 of the Calebasses de solidarité charter?**

5.1. CDS approaches to community peace-building

CDS members (mostly women) have developed a number of approaches to guarantee peace in their communities, combat open or internal conflicts and prevent their recurrence. It should be noted that there is a similarity in their approaches, namely the *approach based on discretion* ("le suttura") in the image of the white cloth (symbol of peace) that covers the calabash and which, according to the women, helps to unite hearts ("*Muraay lekket yi dey défar xol yi*"). Their mode of operation⁹ also contributes to cohesion as well as social equity and the inclusion of vulnerable groups (women living with a disability or castrated) by granting them positions of responsibility in order to involve them as much as possible in the management of the CDS (in the north).

Examples of solutions provided by the CDS were mentioned in the previous chapter, but in this one, 3 participative approaches to peacemaking will be presented, as follows.

5.1.1 Cooperate ("*lekkëlo*") with traditional and religious chiefs and other social regulators

This approach is the first step in the pacification process at community level. In each locality, the members of the CDS must respect the organisation and the social and traditional rules established by their ancestors and perpetuated by the village chiefs, the kings (in the Diola environment), the *Djaraafs*, the committee of wise men (including a mature female "*ndiitël djigéen ní*" leader), the imams and the priests. The *Bajënu Gox* have recently been associated with these personalities. They are much in demand when it comes to resolving marital, family or even community conflicts.

It should be emphasised that the identity dimensions associated with age, gender, lineage (Pulaar and Serer), religious affiliation, whether or not one has been initiated (southern zone), whether one is married, the father or mother of a family, a "native" (belonging to one of the founding lineages of the village), are all criteria that condition the choice of and participation in mediation in our different societies.

Beforehand, a small committee of women (respected, listened to and influential) is set up internally. This group is the first point of contact for the conflict, but it is also the first vehicle for messages of peace and steps to resolve tensions between two antagonists. **The women in this small group will take the first steps with the community's guides and social regulators** (see also Chapter 3).

One example is **the Fissel CDS, supervised by RECODEF**, as explained by one of the network's coordinators:

"A committee has been set up made up of different members from each calabash in each commune to set up a communal network. Each of the 12 communes has a communal network whose sole remit is to monitor and identify cases of conflict that exist there and to organise itself to intervene, whatever the nature of the conflict, whether it's marital or community-based, and to offer the support that's needed. Each network has a 7-member

⁹ It should be pointed out that we did not deem it necessary to describe in this interim report the operation and activities of the gourds (organisation, activities of AVA, MAF, group purchases, fair trade, etc.), although this data is collected and processed.

board, and we provide technical support and capacity-building on human rights for the members.

Calabashes play an important role in resolving **conflicts resulting from gender-based violence (including domestic violence) and early and/or forced marriages**. We found these types of conflict just about everywhere, particularly in the West and Centre zones, with testimonies on how they were resolved. In the West zone, in the village of Ngonème, A.D. gave us an example of how to resolve a conflict involving domestic violence:

"We have a teacher in the village who always beats his wife (she's not one of the gourds). Often, the husband gives her 1000 FCA to prepare the meal and asks her to prepare something extraordinary for him. One day, the network coordinator asked me to have a chat with the husband. However, every time I call him on the phone, he doesn't answer. As I didn't want to harass him, I didn't go to his house. Then I went to see the sub-prefect, who is a woman and a member of our committee, to talk to him about it. I decided to summon the husband to her house so that we could discuss the problem together and resolve it.

In the same area, a case of negotiation to annul an early marriage was carried out using a calabash, as A.D.D. explains.

"We dealt with a case of early and forced marriage. A father wanted to marry off his daughter when she was only in fourth grade. When we heard about it, we went to the village chief to find out what was going on. To our great surprise, he told us that there was nothing he could do because his mind was made up. The girl in question was already suffering in the house as a 'helper' because her mother had been repudiated by her father. We took steps to intervene. We had to find the mother and get her to take the girl with her. Finally, we called a big meeting with the solidarity calabashes, the local networks, the communal network and the network for the defence of rights and conflict management, and the authorities, because in each village there is a child protection committee chaired by the village chief. We questioned the behaviour of the village chief for his silence as chairman of this committee, and the father was also lectured. The girl is now continuing her studies with her mother.

In **Thiès Nord**, a similar approach is being used to bring about peace. It should be noted that the mediation initiative first involved the calabash network before being extended to the community. The representative of ADK (a CDS partner network) explained how they went about it:

"When each calabash was created, a "committee of wise men" was set up for each of them. The role of this committee was to monitor conflicts within the calabashes. When a problem persisted and even the coordinator was overwhelmed, it was this committee of wise men (made up of the neighbourhood chief, the imam and a few notables) that was called in. We explained the situation to them and generally as soon as this committee took charge of the problem, it resolved it... We then decided that this committee should no

longer be limited to the gourds, but that it should extend its reach to the whole neighbourhood...".

5.1.2 Mediation, communication and amicable conflict management

In the South, North, Centre-East and Centre-West, a committee (often called a mediation committee) made up of influential members of the CDS and some of the above-mentioned authorities intervenes in the event of a conflict to find solutions to the problem. Mediation is therefore initiated and carried out with the utmost discretion, either within the families concerned or between individuals having a dispute. **Amicable management ("waxtaan ba déggo, jubbo") is therefore the most popular method** according to the people interviewed, as it is the most peaceful way of preserving social ties and preventing disputes from spilling over.

In **Ziguinchor**, mediation and dialogue are also used to manage community conflicts and family tensions. That's what S.D., a member of one of the **CDS in the village of Médina Boudialabou** and the community's matron, tells us below:

"We prefer to listen, discuss and agree in order to preserve everyone's dignity and family or community ties. People here don't want to go to the gendarmerie or to court or make the headlines ("buguñu siiw"), it's a question of honour, it's our culture. We prefer to settle problems amicably, and above all to follow the advice of our elders, who have the last word... Moreover, for the more delicate problems, we settle them with the village chief, but that's as far as it goes, because we always advocate discussing and settling things amicably, as a family, because it can happen to anyone, and as the saying goes, dirty laundry is washed in the family, so we prefer to settle everything between ourselves."

By getting involved in peace-building, particularly in resolving marital and family conflicts, the CDSs also help to strengthen fraternal and social ties in their community. This work is even recognised by the men, including D.S. from Thiakho (Koungheul), who said:

"Women play the same role as men in peacemaking, if not more. Take the example of my house: last year there was a problem between my 2 wives and it was the CDS wives who sorted it out. They intervene more than the men in these cases and they are more available. They deal with certain problems at their weekly meetings."

In the north, too, the **communication approach and the call for calm, dialogue and consensus** are the order of the day, according to A.S., coordinator of the Bamtaré programme in Podor, who explains below:

"When there are clear tensions, we do everything we can to avoid confrontation in the first instance. But when I feel that things could get out of hand, I'm obliged, as a community leader, to intervene to ease the tension by talking to each party to make them understand that the lack of understanding is due to a lack of communication... But generally speaking, when a conflict arises, we go through the family, social, alliance, customary and religious authorities. The political and judicial authorities are the last resort."

5.1.3 The organisation of "tours

The "tours", which are meetings in turn (combining the useful with the pleasant) between the members of the CDS of the proximity networks, are a mechanism for maintaining social harmony and a way of strengthening relations, maintaining peace and settling existing conflicts within a calabash, between two communities, or between two antagonistic people.

The practice of *joining scarves and jewellery together* during these meetings is a fine example of this strengthening of links between people and between social groups for lasting peace. The respective testimonies (below) of the Bajenu gox from the village of Santieu Amath Marame (**Kaffrine**) and of K.G., member of CDS *And jappo-Ndiar Mew Thiakho*, (**Koungheul**) clarify this cultural and playful practice:

"Frankly, we have good relations here, especially with the members of the calabashes, and relations have improved a great deal since their arrival. We're in the habit of making the "takalante ay musoor" (alliance of scarves) to have very good relations. We organise meetings to resolve tensions between us and between other members of the community. Each woman brings her scarf. At the end, two scarves are attached by chance to form alliances.

"Here, we practise the "lonko" or "takkanté lam" system (tying bracelets or rings), because we all have the same objective, which is to live in perfect harmony, despite each other's different interests. We do this at meetings just to establish acceptance of each other and to reduce tensions. The idea is to bring jewellery, whether bracelets, rings or other items, and hang them up in pairs. From then on, each person becomes the other's ally and they support each other when one of them is not feeling well, or they give each other advice. Calabashes rhyme with peace".

The contribution of the women from the calabashes was also appreciated by other community players who are men, as in the case of M.T. (President of the Federation of MSEs in Podor) who summarised the contribution of the CDSs below:

"There are now several calabashes in the locality, and each of them competes positively with the other calabashes, always trying to do something innovative compared with the others. Not only do they help to manage economic difficulties discreetly, but the gourds also give members experience in running an organisation".

Ultimately, women's legendary commitment to peacemaking is justified by the fact that they play their full social role as *primary educators*, a role assigned to them by society. Moreover, we were able to observe the women's commitment during the group interviews through the positions they took and their daily struggles in their households, workplaces, associations and communities. CDS women are therefore on the front line, ready to intervene to keep the peace, thanks to their tenacity and their experience as housewives and mothers. **They are likened to "djéegu pusso", literally "needles that serve to sew and strengthen the social fabric when it begins to disintegrate",** in other words, they can be considered as *social peacemakers*.

5.2. SWOT analysis of gourds

A rapid analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, *opportunities and threats (SWOT)* of the calabashes in the localities visited was carried out in order to better assess the capacity of the calabashes to contribute to the pacification of the communities. We took a very objective look at the organisation and operation of each CDS, cross-referencing the results with the testimonies gathered.

On the positive side, the diagram below shows a certain dynamism on the part of the calabashes, which have come to fully integrate the local solidarity economy system, the women's entrepreneurship ecosystem and fair trade. They are recognised as having a certain capacity to strengthen the age-old links of solidarity and mutual aid. They are often called upon to help resolve family conflicts and violence against women. To prevent overt or internal conflicts, or to combat their recurrence, the calabashes have developed several strategies. The women's commitment to the community, their power to negotiate and mediate, and their sense of cooperation with other members of the community are all strengths that guarantee the success of the calabashes in bringing peace.



Figure 2: CDS "Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

Weaknesses include poor collaboration with women's umbrella organisations such as the Platform of Women for Peace in Casamance and the local authorities. The CDSs are also poorly equipped in conflict resolution and have limited technical resources (for travel and communication) for conflict prevention. The lack of financial resources limits women's travel for conflict resolution negotiations. Another major weakness is that women are not very involved in land disputes. One of

the reasons for this is that land management is fundamentally an area where power relations are exercised; men often take decisions to the detriment of women and young people, who can use the land but have less control over it than men. Finally, there is an asymmetry in access to information due to fairly vertical internal communication between board members, which does not necessarily reach down to grassroots level (although they do use social networking platforms to share videos and photos of events).

As far as the **threats** are concerned, there is a risk that they will become major constraints on sustainability if they are not addressed now. These are mainly internal quarrels caused by the low motivation of members, misappropriation of objectives, petty competition between CDSs in the same network, etc. Concentration on the individual activities of certain members to the detriment of the collective objective (including the pacification of conflicts) is also an obstacle. The same applies to the personal ambitions of certain leaders, who give priority to their MSE and the search for individual funding.

Social norms and their triple burden as wife, mother and worker limit their full-time participation in pacification. Some women in the north, for example, experience tensions in their households because of their husbands' reticence about their calabash activities.

Another exogenous threat has been observed, particularly in the south, with the emergence of "emergence gourds" financed by politicians. This new situation could undermine the values of priesthood and the apolitical principle of the CDS and create division and even political tension at community level.

As far as **opportunities** are concerned, it has to be said that the context is favourable to the economic and political empowerment of women, and to their involvement in community development and decision-making. Regional (ECOWAS) and international (UN Women, UNESCO, etc.) bodies are also calling for women to be involved in establishing peace and security. They can take part in national and international meetings on community peace-building, particularly in relation to land disputes and conflicts over natural resources. They can share their activities on digital platforms to capitalise on and share experience and good practice and improve their visibility. There has also been a good involvement of men in the mixed CDSs in the South, which is a considerable asset for a wider contribution to conflict resolution actions and greater impact.

5.3. Other endogenous solutions for preventing and/or resolving conflicts

Apart from the CDSs, where and how can the tipping points be built to reduce the risk of conflicts spreading throughout the community and society as a whole? What are the ways and means used to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts? Which community players can act as spokespeople in the conflict resolution process? To answer these questions, we offer examples of cultural practices for strengthening social ties and preventing conflict.

➤ **Strengthening social ties and community solidarity**

In Mbayard (Sindia), to resolve the conflict between Serer farmers and Peul herders, who had been at loggerheads for years, the gourds bought oxen from the herders for weddings, funerals and other village events. This was a way of easing tensions between the two groups.

In the **Halpulaar** community **in the North**, the concept of *Jokkééré Endam* is important everywhere, as it reflects the strengthening of ties between relatives and neighbours through regular visits and enquiries about each other's situation.

➤ **Application of community rules and practice of cultural rites and traditional dances**

The southern part of Casamance offers perfect examples of how to prevent conflict and strengthen community ties. Socio-cultural anchoring is often considered a priority by people of all ages and both sexes. As a result, to prevent or resolve conflicts, communities can often resort to endogenous strategies to maintain peace and social stability.

Community rules agreed with the local population and approved by the customary chiefs (King, Khalife, Sages) are drawn up and work to maintain social stability. For example, *the charter of the kingdom of Enampor* is fully applied in the village of Brin and other surrounding villages in Médina Boudialobou (members of the Koussek network). According to the charter, as the rainy season approaches, the committee of wise men advises all families to keep their livestock in order to prevent them from straying into the rice fields. Any animal caught wandering could be captured, killed and eaten by the young people who are authorised to do so.

In addition, these same young people often organise **social dances**, during which the women of the gourds help to cook and organise the festivities. These include the *koumpo*, a festival of traditional dances during which the population consolidates intra- and inter-community socio-cultural relations. The surrounding villages are invited to come and dance, sing and eat together. These festivities are **a symbol of strengthening social ties, but also of contributing to equity and social stability**. A 55-year-old wise man from this village added the following explanations:

It is also an opportunity for members of the CDS who have not respected the debt payment deadline to bring provisions (sheep, for example) to the Koumpo feast as a fine, in accordance with the requirements of the calabash charter. Similarly, if a young person has shown disrespect to an elderly person, the latter, with the help of the village elders, can ask for the koumpo to be organised for him. In this case, all the young people in the village will have to contribute in kind and in cash to organise the party. And if a young person is unlucky enough to refuse to contribute, he or she may be punished. This festival helps to strengthen social relations between young and old.

The aspect of the old-young relationship has been analysed by other researchers, who believe that peace is a matter for individuals and communities affected by conflict. Consequently, community initiatives must emerge from these populations themselves as part of the management of the crisis in Casamance. It is important to remember that the Casamance conflict, which began in 1980 and was triggered by the death of a demonstrator during a high school strike (to protest against the lack of educational and school infrastructure), is still having an impact on social cohesion.

One of these strategies focuses on **age groups as a pacifying mechanism**. In the sense that 'the fact of having been initiated together creates strong bonds that can enable the group to put pressure on one of its members' (Tomás 2014: 161-162). Indeed, ritual practices (such as initiation, circumcision (*bukut*), prayer meetings) are events that can facilitate exchange between two sides and provide an opportunity to reconcile populations that were very divided in the 1990s by the conflict (Sánchez, 2018; Diédhiou, 2017). In addition, **other endogenous knowledge and cultural and cultic practices** were mobilised in the management of the conflict almost everywhere, as described in the literature. In the villages of Youtou and Kahène in the commune of Santhiaba Manjaque, the mobilisation of 'fetishes' helped to reconcile the villagers. The women of '*ébirey*' (sacred wood), like the *husana kasa of the women of* Mlomp in the department of Oussouye, are working for the return of peace to Casamance (Diédhiou, 2017:74).

In the end, many of the testimonies collected show that the Calebasse de Solidarité approach, thanks to the support of the federal networks, has helped to bring the different villages closer together and create social bonds of friendship between villages. This new mutual trust has greatly reduced the mistrust that had been created by the conflict between the separatists and the Senegalese army. In the commune of Enampor (Ziguinchor) and in Mandina Wandifa, where the survey was conducted, villagers continue to hold prayer sessions to invoke God's mercy for the maintenance of peace.

VI.CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Analysis of the nature of the conflicts and the issues at stake, depending on the agro-ecological zone, required a holistic approach and an analysis of community dynamics through the solidarity gourds. Senegalese society is characterised by numerous social, political, economic and territorial inequalities that create tensions between the social groups that make it up.

From a methodological point of view, the qualitative approach was favoured, with the aim of gaining an in-depth understanding of the contribution made by community players and solidarity gourds to the pacification of local communities, particularly in areas where there is no open or violent conflict. As a reminder, a number of questions were raised at the outset, namely: what are the ways and means used to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts? Who are the community players who can act as spokespersons in the conflict resolution process and, above all, what is the contribution of the CDSs to the peacekeeping process?

Gender-specific data collection enabled us to answer these questions and gain a better understanding of conflict-related experiences, perceptions and peace-making practices, taking into account the specific socio-cultural context of the respondents.

At the end of the mission and on the basis of these objectives, we were able to :

- Characterisation of the types of conflict in the target areas;
- Identifying the causes and consequences of conflict ;
- Analysis of the organisational dynamics of populations and endogenous mechanisms for resolving or preventing conflicts;
- The contribution of the solidarity gourd to the peace process.

Analysis of the sociability factors in each locality has shown that the values of mutual aid, assistance and solidarity between neighbours and between members of an association contribute to the functioning of collective solidarity, social stability between the different groups and the maintenance of social relations, which are *sine qua non* conditions for life in society.

The results on the nature of social relations show that the various social groups (intra-village) and communities (inter-village) maintain relations of peace, good neighbourliness, solidarity, mutual aid and cordiality, etc. It seems that social stability reigns in all the localities visited and that these relations are cemented by blood ties and social kinship. It seems that social stability reigns in all the localities visited, and that these relationships are cemented by blood ties and social kinship.

Despite these cordial relations, there are tensions and interpersonal conflicts within households and between age groups, socio-professional groups and villages. These conflicts are rooted in social, marital, land, economic and political issues.

Fortunately, there are local initiatives (traditional, socio-cultural, religious, customary) to prevent tensions and mitigate conflicts at community level. Indeed, it has been observed that each community

has its own specific way of resolving its conflicts. The cultural values that underpin community understanding and solidarity can also be called upon in the event of conflict, as can the most influential people in the community, as well as culture and traditions.

The involvement of the calabashes in pacification was unanimously recognised by all the players. The work of the CDS in resolving conflicts has been facilitated by the solidarity approach and cultural values based on discretion, mutual aid and trust. It is in this sense that the calabashes constitute a powerful lever to be strengthened, preserved and activated in these times that have become more uncertain since the Covid-19 pandemic.

Senegal (one of the few African countries not to have experienced a coup d'état) is currently experiencing unprecedented political and social strife and violence. While political violence is one of the most serious threats to equitable and harmonious social change, it also feeds on endemic violence in society. They also undermine the country's democratisation process and its stability, but above all they threaten community solidarity and the solidity of preventive union initiatives against community conflicts.

What's more, if conflicts are not stopped, **in the long term they can contribute to desecrating the values of propriety, solidarity and, in short, sociality that make us human beings.**

It is therefore necessary to remember the existence of cultural values and solidarity mechanisms at community level in order to draw inspiration from them. Finally, it is vital to maintain the neutral nature of the CDS and avoid any politicisation of these women's initiatives, in order to preserve their independence, their dignity and, above all, the discretionary nature of the calabash.

Recommendations

Four (04) areas of intervention have been identified to improve the contribution of CDSs to community peace-building and conflict management: (i) capacity-building; (ii) structuring; (iii) awareness-raising, advocacy and communication; (iv) cooperation.

1. Capacity building

- Organise training sessions for leaders of partner organisations on facilitation and conflict *prevention/peacebuilding toolkits*. In addition to informal negotiations, it is important to master the techniques for identifying a conflict, analysing it and making the link between societal (and gender) norms and tensions and conflicts. Understanding techniques for resolving and supporting the victims of conflict, but also ensuring that community members are trained, as they are naturally "influencers" and "peacemakers".
- Organise training sessions for CDS members and PO leaders in community involvement techniques, leadership, conflict resolution tools, psychosocial support for victims and early warning systems for conflicts (over land or pre- and post-election violence, for example).
- Train office staff in financial management and the principles of transparency and accountability in order to combat internal conflicts linked to mismanagement.
- Strengthen technical support (in terms of monitoring-evaluation, learning and gender-sensitive budgeting) and financial support for POs to better mobilise local network CDS.

2. Structuring CDS

- The office must have a person in charge of conflict prevention (internal and external) who will work closely with the leaders of the partner organisations. The job of this person, who

should preferably be young or have fewer family responsibilities, is to accompany the *bajenu gox* (or community relay) in their locality to visit houses, talk to young people, men and other players who are not members of the CDs, and raise awareness about violence.

- At the CDS meetings, the conflict prevention focal point reports on his work and makes proposals for monitoring potential cases of conflict.
- With the support of the National Coordination, the federal networks must organise regular meetings with the office of each CDS of the local networks to take stock of their involvement in the pacification of their communities. These meetings provide opportunities to harmonise approaches to negotiation and conflict resolution, share lessons learned and diagnose difficulties, and find inclusive solutions together.
- Develop synergies between regional networks and strategies for scaling up CDSs in all the country's departments.

3. Raising awareness, advocacy and communication

- Organise awareness-raising sessions for men on the role and benefits of CDS in peace-building, to encourage their commitment and support for women.
- To draw up a document capitalising on the socio-cultural and peaceful mechanisms for managing and resolving conflicts in the CDSs, which will be used as a basis for communication and advocacy for ADC and its partners on the importance of cultivating dialogue, even in times of peace.
- Make the work of CDS in conflict management visible on digital platforms and social networks.
- An in-depth study of traditional, socio-cultural conflict resolution strategies to draw lessons and key messages, which will serve as a reference document for gourds, but also for *peacebuilding* researchers and practitioners.

3. Cooperation

- Collaborate with local authorities and other organisations involved in peace-building.
- Engage other civil society organisations in co-constructing with the CDSs tipping points likely to reduce the risk of conflicts spreading in the community and in society as a whole.
- Facilitate access to collective land for gourds in communities experiencing land disputes, so that they can be turned into community gardens where women and young people (from different groups or from two neighbouring villages) can farm. This would strengthen social relations between people and help to pacify the communities or groups involved.

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VIII.APPENDICES: Tools

Semi-structured Interview Guide (SSI)

Date of interview :

Interview start time :

1. PRESENTATION OF THE INTERVIEWEE

- Locality (district, village)
- Region
- Profession

2. THE NATURE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN SOCIAL GROUPS AND COMMUNITIES IN THE AREA

- How do you feel about people living together in the locality?
- Which cultural groups do you think are predominant in your locality (neighbourhood or village)?
- How do you analyse the quality of social relations between social groups and communities in your locality?
- What is your relationship with your neighbours?

3. SOCIO-POLITICAL ORGANISATION OF THE LOCALITY

- Generally speaking, which category of person (man or woman, authorities, religious, customary, etc.) is listened to most in your locality?
- Why is she listened to more than the others?

4. TYPES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF CONFLICTS

- Types or nature of conflicts and tensions (social, economic, political, religious, etc.)
- When are these conflicts most common in the locality?
- **Why is this?**

5. CAUSES OF CONFLICT AND PLAYERS INVOLVED

- Which categories of people are most affected by these conflicts?
- What are the causes of the conflicts you see in your locality?
- Generally speaking, what social ties do the antagonists maintain (apart from tensions)?
- Do you ever get involved in conflicts?
- **If so**, please tell us about it (**ask about the** antagonists, the causes, the ending).
- What are the consequences of these conflicts?

6. ENDOGENOUS CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES

- How are tensions between neighbours resolved in your locality? (**Ask again about: the procedure, players, resources, etc.**)
- What regulatory methods are used to resolve these tensions? (**Relaunch on: actors, places, resources mobilised**)
- What role do women play in conflict management and resolution in your locality?
- What are the local initiatives (traditional, religious, customary) to prevent tensions at community level?
- Who are the people behind these initiatives?
- What are the local women's solidarity initiatives to prevent tensions at community level? (**Relaunch on: the names of the initiatives, how they work and the people behind them**).

- Other Local initiatives (CSOs, political NGOs (state) for the prevention of tensions at community level (*re-launch on: the names of the initiatives, the way they operate and the people behind them*). Actors behind these initiatives

7. KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE SOLIDARITY GOURD (CDS) AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO RESOLVING COMMUNITY CONFLICTS

- How do the CDSs help to regulate social, economic and political relations between social groups in your local communities?
- Please give us examples of tensions (overt and latent) where CDS played a decisive role in resolving them (*ask again about the type of conflict, the antagonist, the outcome, etc.*).

8. RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS ON CDS

- In your opinion, how can the CDS strategy be strengthened to bring about lasting peace in social and political relations between individuals and social groups in your area?

Thank you for your cooperation

Interview end time

FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

Date of interview :

Interview start time :

PRESENTATION OF PARTICIPANTS

- Locality (district, village)
- Region

- Target group(s) :
- Names: (names are *not compulsory*, but they can be used to attract people's attention)
- Profession/Activity of participants

9. THE NATURE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN SOCIAL GROUPS AND COMMUNITIES IN THE AREA

1. The cultural (ethnic) groups that predominantly inhabit your locality.
2. Quality of social relations between social groups and communities in your locality
3. Comments on living together in the locality

10. SOCIO-POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ORGANISATION OF THE LOCALITY

4. Professional categories (*farmers, stockbreeders, fishermen, shopkeepers, civil servants, immigrants, etc.*) who predominantly live in the locality? Who are the most influential people in the area?
5. Categories of people (men or women, authorities, religious, customary) most listened to? Groups of people (*dahira, Mbootay, daara, etc.*) who are listened to the most? Why or why not?

3. ORGANISATION AND OPERATION OF THE CALABASHES (*LEKET*)

3. CDS members (if yes, ***please provide details: name, when created, number of members (F/H), area or neighbourhood covered***)
4. Specific functions and activities of the gourd
5. Assessment of the economic and social situation of CDS members (***follow-up on the effects on the lives of members and their households***)
6. Changes in savings since their creation and the effect on their economic empowerment.

6. NATURE, CAUSES OF CONFLICTS/TENSIONS, PLAYERS INVOLVED AND EFFECTS

7. Nature of conflicts/tensions in the locality
8. Categories of people most affected by these conflicts
9. Causes of conflicts in the locality
10. Periods when conflicts are most frequent in the locality. (*relaunch Why?*)
11. Social links maintained between the antagonists in an ordinary way (without tension)
12. The consequences of these conflicts

7. CONTRIBUTION OF CALABASHES TO THE MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION OF COMMUNITY CONFLICTS

13. Effects of CDS in regulating social relations (between individuals, households, social groups, etc.).

14. List of tensions (overt and latent) where the role of CDS was decisive in resolving them (*ask again about the type of conflict, the antagonist, the outcome, etc.*).
15. Ways of regulating and pacifying to resolve tensions (*ask again about: the players, places, resources mobilised*)

8. OTHER ENDOGENOUS (Cultural) CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION STRATEGIES

3. The role and place of women in conflict management and resolution
4. Local strategies (customary, traditional and cultural) to prevent tensions at community level
5. Other Local initiatives (CSOs, political NGOs (state) for the prevention of tensions at community level (*re-launch on: the names of the initiatives, the way they operate and the people behind them*).
6. Players behind these initiatives

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

37. How to avoid or mitigate conflicts in the locality in a sustainable way
38. Recommendations for strengthening the CDS strategy with a view to lasting peace in social and political relations between individuals and social groups in the area.

Thank you for your cooperation
 Interview end time

LIFE STORY GUIDE

A tool for self-knowledge and meaning-making. It enables us to understand the person's trajectory (life history) and current resources (family, social, economic, cultural, psychosomatic, etc.). It enables you to analyse your motivations for success, your level of resilience in relation to the stages of early life (in relation to the problem) and your plans to continue.

TARGETS: 1. victims of conflict/violence

2. Peacemaker, a person who has made a significant contribution to peace-building and conflict resolution

1. IDENTIFICATION

- Department
- Municipality
- Village/neighbourhood
- Name
- Gender
- Age
- Marital/family status

2. CURRENT LIVING CONDITIONS

- Economic situation (activities, function)
- Standard of living (economic status poverty, wealth...)

3 TRAJECTOIRE

- Origins
- Education, training
- Its experience (in conflict or pacification)
- Important milestones

4. MAJOR DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

5. MOTIVATION

6. TERMINATION

5. OUTLOOK