

Community Solutions to Farmer-Herder Conflicts

Resilience for Peace (R4P) facilitates the construction of cattle parks that promote collaboration, spur economic opportunities, and prevent herder-farmer conflicts.



Community volunteers help build a cattle park

In the northern border region of Côte d'Ivoire, herder-farmer conflicts often fall along ethnic lines. Fulani, who are traditionally nomadic herders, move throughout West Africa with their cattle. As Fulani settle into villages along Côte d'Ivoire's northern border, land and resource management become potential catalysts for interethnic conflict, and violent extremism.

In one northern Ivorian village, the traditional chief's field was destroyed by cattle that strayed away from their herder right before the field was harvested. The chief brought the cattle back to the village, but there was no place to secure them to prevent further destruction. Incidents like these can often result in violence, with Fulani cattle being slaughtered, property damage to farmer fields and escalating cycles of retribution, sometimes lethal.

Unsupervised cattle damaging crops can destabilize financial and food security for farmers and jeopardize social cohesion. Using R4P's community-centered approach, village leaders established the region's first cattle park. These parks act as a valuable land management tool, and a way to deeper integrate creative, community-led solutions that address emerging social tensions.

“The park was built at the right time. Because of inflation, the cost of fertilizer was unaffordable.” President of the women's group

retrieve their herd. The parks help mitigate conflict and implement a fair communal structure to prevent herder-farmer violence.

Over time, cattle parks have evolved into a critical element of community resilience that bolsters social cohesion. The Fulani community, along with women and youth from other ethnicities in the community, collectively design, build, and maintain the parks in interethnic and generationally diverse coalitions.

“This activity will help limit the vulnerabilities related to the herding and farming conflicts in the face of the rise of violent extremism.” Vice President of the local Fulani association

Cattle parks function as a physical barrier that contain wandering cattle from eating crops at night or when left unattended. When cattle are found unsupervised, presenting a possible risk to farmers' fields, communities can bring the cattle to the park. The owner pays a small fee, the same fee as the overnight rate, to

Cattle parks also serve as engines of economic opportunity and prosperity. In many villages, youth are entrusted to manage the park. This provides them with income generating activities and important societal responsibilities.



Community women participate in market garden activities

Cattle parks also benefit local, women-run market gardens as a source of free fertilizer, and local women's groups use the animal waste from the park to sell organic soil to farmers, at a time when, agriculture production costs had increased. They market the organic waste from the park to farmers at below market prices. Farmers in the community report higher quality, more profitable production due to the locally sourced fertilizer

By developing cattle parks established and maintained through inclusive collaboration, R4P contributes to powering resilient societies. Central problems such as cattle theft, crop destruction, and violent competition over land are mitigated through a system built on collaboration and maximizing available existing resources. In communities with cattle parks, violent clashes between herders and farmers have already declined, and communities realize they possess the needed tools for problem solving, gender integration, and economic development. By expanding existing inclusion initiatives such as training women to grow crops and sell animal feed, creating community veterinary services, and leveraging the Fulani community's knowledge of animals, each cattle park has the potential to sprout into a larger hub of economic opportunity and community resilience. R4P has helped four communities build parks to date, with an additional two parks planned for the year.