TRANSFORMING CONFLICTS OVER AGRO PASTORAL RESOURCES INTO MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL ALLIANCES

We are very happy to present to you the second edition of the Break Through magazine, which comes at the tail end of the second year of the implementation of ‘In Search of Common Ground (ISCG) project’. This gives us a unique opportunity to highlight some of the outcomes of this on-going project. Despite some challenges, it is quite encouraging what this project is doing in the lives of Mbororo cattle herders and their crop farming neighbours. With the amicable conflict management approach, conflicts between herders and crop farmers are on the decline in all 23 target communities (9 pilot and 14 new) within the North West Region. At the moment, we have 53 conflict mediation forums known as Dialogue platforms in all beneficiary communities. The use of dialogue in conflict resolution has enhanced peaceful cohabitation within the principal beneficiary communities. We also have 92 farming alliance pairs in the communities who are currently benefiting from each other’s activity, leading to improved productivity and production of cattle and crops. Furthermore, 7 communities have benefited from the construction of pilot bio-gas plants (digesters) as an alternative form of energy supply, thereby, ensuring better management of the environment. Access to water being one of the major areas of conflict between croppers and herders, 4 communities benefited from the protection of their catchment areas and the supply of clean and safe water. In the area of pasture improvement, all 14 new communities have one hectare of improved pasture (Bracharia) and one hectare of local pasture demonstration plots. This provides an opportunity for community members to learn and do same to ensure the sufficient supply of rich pasture for cattle. In the area of education, Government Bilingual Secondary School (GBSS) Sabga benefited from the construction of 4 classrooms.

On the whole, the ISCG project has received remarkable support from various and diverse stakeholders, particularly, the Government and our executing partners. During the next year, which is the third year of the project implementation, hopefully, more lives will be touched positively through our project outcomes. We hope you will enjoy reading and be motivated by the stories in this publication. Your feedback in order to improve on future editions will be very much welcomed. Also visit our website (www.mboscuda.org) and Facebook page (MBOSCUDA-Cameroon) for additional information on MBOSCUDA’s works. Thanks for being our partner in the development journey.

SaliDjango
Project Manager
MBOSCUDA NWR
Before the introduction of the ISCG project, conflicts between crop farmers and cattle herders in the North West Region were rampant. These conflicts result from increasing competition over access to natural resources (land, water and pasture) that are central to the livelihood of croppers and herders. Dialogue platforms were introduced in the 23 beneficiary communities of the project, as an innovative alternative to legal/administrative and customary conflict settlement.

It is worth noting that, the legal/administrative and customary systems of conflict resolution have been used in these communities prior to the introduction of the Dialogue platform approach. Dialogue platform leaders are male and female herders and croppers who are elected democratically by the communities. They lead the dialogue process and mediate between herders and croppers when conflicts arise. In addition to reducing conflicts between herders and croppers, this approach has effectively led to negotiated and shared use of agro-pastoral resources and consequently a more peaceful cohabitation of herders and crop farmers of the beneficiary communities.

Prior to the ISCG project, the Dialogue platform approach was piloted in 9 communities in 3 Divisions (Ngoketunjia, Donga Mantung and Menchum). The ISCG project has extended the approach to 14 other communities in all 7 Divisions of the North West Region with a total of 58 Dialogue platforms. Divisional Paralegal Extension Officers (PEOs) accompany the Dialogue platforms and also facilitate the whole project implementation at field level. Community Resource Volunteers (CRVs) act as relays between the Dialogue platforms and project staff.

Experience: Alhadji Useini is the Dialogue platform (Dialogue platform) president for Wum Central Sub Division.

In the interview below he shares his experiences working with the Dialogue platform.

Excerpts
I am called Alhadji Useini Adamu, married to two wives and a father of six children. I am president of the Dialogue platform in Wum since 2007 when the idea was first initiated.

How is work in your Dialogue platform going?
When we started work, we used to have many cases to mediate. Overtime, and thanks to continuous sensitization and counselling of conflicting parties, the situation has greatly improved. Unlike in the past when we used to have as many as 30 cases in a month, this time we can have just 2 to 3 cases to address. Sometimes we can even go for a month or two without any case. The situation has greatly improved. When we intervene in a conflict situation, we make sure both the complainant and the accused are satisfied, by following up and making sure that what is agreed upon as a solution to the problem is implemented.

Are the women in your Dialogue platform very cooperative in the work?
The women are very serious with the work in the Dialogue platform. Most of the members we started with in 2007 have been replaced. The former members thought that it was a payable job, so when they discovered that there were no payments for the job they went away. Ma Helen and the treasurer started the work with us since 2007. The women farmers are very hardworking in the Dialogue platform.

Any challenges so far?
Yes. We have challenges with means of movement. It is not easy to conflicting parties in far off farms. Sometimes, the people involved in the conflict help in paying for our transport but most of the time we sacrifice our resources and time. This notwithstanding, our biggest pay is the peace that reigns now in our community.
Alliance farming (AF) is a fairly new concept in the project communities. A pastoralist and a subsistent crop farmer agree on the shared use of resources like land, water, pasture (including crop residue) and cattle manure. Alliance farming is an outcome of the conflict mediation process (dialogue platform initiative), whereby cattle croppers and herders agree to allow cattle graze on crop farms after harvest. It facilitates negotiated and shared access to land for herders and croppers. This system of farming offers several advantages to pastoralists, crop farmers, and the environment. When adequately practiced, this practice improves production and productivity of both cattle and crops thereby reducing poverty. Presently there are 92 pairs of herders and croppers practising Alliance Farming in the beneficiary communities of the ISCG project. The points below illustrate various benefits to those who practice it.

Crop farmers
- Increased household income because of increased crop yields with reduced expenditure on inorganic (chemical) fertilizer.
- Stronger social relationships between farmers and pastoralists.

Environment
- Reduced or stoppage of the use of inorganic (chemical) fertilizers which is more expensive for farmers.
- Increased soil fertility through the use of organic manure.
- Alliance farming practice enhances agro-biodiversity management.
- Better use of available agro-pastoral resources reduces further expansion into new lands and also land degradation.
- Seasonal movements (transhumance) of grazers and cattle to farmlands especially during the dry season give pasturelands the opportunity to rest and regenerate.

Pastoralists
- Cattle that graze on crop residues and richer pasture in fallowed farms are healthier, produce calves earlier and yield more milk.
- Reduction of conflicts between herders and croppers by at least 60% (SNV/MBOSCUDA field reports).
- The accompanied trainings organized by the NGOs that promote this approach improve on skills in sustainable animal husbandry practices.
ALLIANCE FARMING: An Integrated System

by Mohammed Bawuro, Agro-pastoral Project Officer for MBOSCUDA-NWR

As land size remains constant and the demand for farmland and pasture land continue to grow, crop farmers and herders frequently come into conflict over land. Thus, improving and properly managing pasture is one of the key elements of the ISCG project. According to Mohammed Bawuro, Agro-pastoral Project Officer for MBOSCUDA-NWR, ‘managing natural pasture and providing nutritious foliage for cattle will go a long way to reduce the demand for extensive grazing land and cattle movements, improve cattle production and productivity, and reduce conflicts between agro-pastoral resource users.’ Within the framework of the ISCG project, 14 pasture improvement demonstration sites have been established, including the cultivation of the very nutritious Bracharia grass. Some of these demonstration sites have been very successful while others have not been as successful. Mr.Bawuro appreciates the successes recorded in this activity especially in Konchep community in Donga Mantung Division.

PASTURE IMPROVEMENT AND MANAGEMENT

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‘I noticed that my neighbours were practicing alliance farming with the grazers around and I decided to emulate their example’

(Chief Kedze Donatus of Naikom Village)

Naikom is a village in Wum Central Sub Division. The traditional leader (chief) of this village learnt the example of his community members and decided to engage in ‘Alliance Farming’ as well. The chief of Naikom Village shared his experience with us.

I am chief Kedze Donatus of Naikom Village. I have been chief for 3 years, married to two wives, but inherited 5 from my late father. I have 7 children and 32 inherited children as well.

I have a large farm which I inherited from my uncle. We grow crops like maize, plantains and oil palm. I noticed that my neighbours were practicing alliance farming with the grazers around and I decided to emulate their example. My closest grazer neighbour is called Alhadji Dere. When we harvest our maize, he brings his herd of cattle to stay on our farm during the dry season when pasture is scarce. The cattle feed on the weeds and crop residues, while depositing cow dung and urine, which improve on the fertility of our soil. He practised this with other farmers and I saw how well their crops were growing. I then invited him to do same with me. If you see the maize in the farms of those who practice alliance farming, you will like it. Since I noticed this practice is a good one, I called a family meeting and enlightened my family members on the practice. In fact, it is a lot cheaper than using chemical fertilizers. Life is very easy now and this practice unites community members better than before.

As concerns setbacks in this practice we have not had any so far. We rather have problems with some grazers who don’t respect boundary lines. When they come for grazing land, we give particular portions of land to them. Unfortunately, some grazers keep grazing into farmlands and that is where we have problems with them.

We will henceforth encourage them to fence their grazing land to avoid straying animals, and to stay on farms only within the framework of an agreed alliance. We will also work very closely with the dialogue platform members here to resolve any conflicts between croppers and herders amicably.

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Alhadji Julie: A Role Model in Pasture Development

Alhadji Julie is a member of the Konchep community in Donga Mantung Division. He is in his late 40s, married with 2 wives and a father of 7. He provided land for the planting of Bracharia (a demonstration site). He perceives this pasture improvement as a way of ensuring security for his grazing land by enhancing legitimacy of ownership, and avoiding loss of productive grazing land to invasive weeds. He strongly believes that pasture improvement will help him enhance the productivity and health of his cattle.

Assisted by other community members, he invests time in the realization of this activity by constantly weeding the demonstration plot. On their part, his wives supply food to community members during community work on the demonstration plot. The one hectare of Bracharia plot is growing very well and are free from weeds.

Adamu Nuhu

The notion of pasture improvement is fairly new to the inhabitants of Baba II, reason why it was not easy to acquire a demonstration plot for the growing of Bracharia. This difficulty motivated the CRV in the person of Adamu Nuhu to provide his piece of grazing land for the demonstration. Nuhu is married and is a father of 8 children. He is quite dynamic and proactive in the ISCG project as a whole.

He says most of the tilling of the plot was coordinated by him as the CRV in collaboration with some few community members. Today, he is happy with the results on the field. Though sunflower and other weeds invaded the pastureland, school children on holidays helped in uprooting the weeds.

Nuhu adds that most community members visit the demonstration site today and ask lots of questions to learn, with the intention to replicate on their lands, hopefully next rainy season. To him, the peace that reigns in Baba II now between the farmers and the grazers is the best pay for all his endeavours. He says years past, the relationship between farmers and grazers was not very cordial. Since the inception of the ISCG project, harmony now exists between these two groups of people.

Adamu Nuhu

The demonstration plot in Barare did not register much success. Although Alhaji Yusufa, a polygamist with about 20 children, is quite passionate and cooperative in the realization of the project, the weather acted as a setback for this activity. When the Bracharia seeds were planted, there was an anticipation of normal rainfall since it was the rainy season. Unfortunately, an unexpected prolonged period of drought in this locality did not favour the germination of the Bracharia seeds. As a way forward, community members agreed to transplant Bracharia suckers on the piece of demonstration plot, so that this community can secure good pasture for their cattle as well as have a demonstration plot to encourage similar initiatives.
This year, MBOSCUDA-NWR implemented 4 water projects: 2 in Nkambe Council area benefitting Bih and Mbacamp, and Lipti and Maka communities, 1 in Batibo council area benefiting Ashong community, and 1 in Fundong council area benefiting Mentang, Bainjong, Fundong and Ngwaikuma communities. Whilst some communities benefited from the protection of water catchments, others benefited from the construction of clean and safe water supply systems. These projects were implemented thanks to the synergistic efforts of donors of the ISCG project, community members and respective municipal councils of these communities. Below are summary stories to give you an overview of the respective water projects. It is worth mentioning that funding for 5 other water projects have been secured from many donors in the UK with the support of MBOSCUDA-NWR’s UK partner Village Aid. The communities in line to benefit from the earmarked projects due to start in the third year (August 2015-July 2016) of the ISCG are Binshua and Konchep in Nkambe Council area, Baba II in Santa Council area, Achain in Fundong Council area and Njah-Etu in Mbengwi Council area.

ASHONG WATER PROJECT
The existing water scheme was up-graded to increase the volume of water and extend supply to quarters that did not have water before the coming of the ISCG project. Batibo Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with MBOSCUDA as did Fundong and Nkambe Councils, to support the project with some pressure pipes in order to facilitate the extension of water to other quarters. A new water source for cattle herders was identified and developed with 4 stand taps built at strategic spots, to serve the cattle herders of the community. The community (croppers and herders) contributed in kind (mostly labour) to the realisation of this water project. The existing Water Management Committee (WMC) which was made up of only crop farmers was restructured to include cattle herders and also women from among croppers and herders. This water scheme has greatly enhanced the peaceful co-habitation between the herders and croppers thus reducing water-related conflicts.
A water source was identified and developed in Mbacamp community to serve Mbacamp, Maka and Lipti communities. Since these communities are far apart the cost of the project was high. However, it was agreed that the ISCG project will develop the water source by building the catchment, a storage tank of 10 m$^3$ and 5 stand taps at strategic points. The construction of the catchment and tank has been completed but pressure pipes were not enough to channel the water to Maka and part of Lipti. The communities were very committed and active in providing community labour during the execution of the water project. An elite, Ma Margaret mother of former Secretary of State for Public Works Mr. Shey Jones Yembe, contributed some pressure pipes, for the extension of water to Lipti and Maka. Additional efforts are being made by the Maka community members to generate more funds for more pressure pipes. It was observed that the relationship between the three farming communities (Mbacamp, Lipti and Maka) and the pastoralist community has improved as a result of this water project and other activities of the ISCG project. This was demonstrated by the active participation of the communities during the implementation of the water project and the creation of a fairly representative water management committee (WMC).

This project started much later than planned, because it took a long time to identify a reliable water source to serve the Bih community by gravity. With the help of the local officials of the Ministry of Water and Energy (MINEE), a good water source that is about 9 km away from the village was identified. The water project was jointly sponsored by MBOSCUDA and the Nkambe Council. Due to limited funds and the high cost of this water project, it was agreed that 5 stand taps be constructed at strategic locations: the Fon’s palace, the market square, the health centre, Magang, an accessible quarter and the school. Bih community has constituted a WMC which is composed of female and male crop farmers and cattle herders.
Mbacamp is one of the 14 new communities where the ISCG project is currently being implemented. It is a quarter in Binka village of Donga Mantung Division, which plays host to many grazers and farmers. Scarcity of clean water used to be one of the biggest challenges in this community. Ardo Gede is the leader of the grazers in Mbacamp. He has three wives and is a father to many children. He says, ‘In the past, women and children would trek for close to 2 kilometers to get water from a distant source in the valley. The water was muddy, coloured and smelly, necessitating pre-treatment such as keeping the water overnight for the mud to settle, particularly during the dry season. The containers for water storage would change colour to dark brown. This generally contributed to the frequent poor health situations especially of children and women in the community. When the water project was initiated, I community members who actively participated in the execution of the project by providing labour (excavation for the installation of pipes.) I personally supervised the work with much enthusiasm. Today, the story is different because there is a stand tap right in my compound which is not only clean but serves my family members and nearby community members. Women and children no longer have to trek for long distances to fetch the muddy looking water they used to bring home. No matter how long you store this new water, it stays the same, clean and safe as before. This water project in particular has brought unity between the crop farming and cattle herding communities that experienced bitter farmer-grazer conflicts before the coming of the ISCG project. Life is generally enjoyable now especially as I no longer receive many conflicts cases between the farmers and grazers. I appreciate the efforts of the dialogue platform members here for the peace enjoyed today in my community.

Dialogue platform members visit a maize farm in Naikom Village to learn the example of using cow dung for soil enrichment

Mr Wasi Jacob of Wum showing his Maize farm to visitors
‘I used to be very aggressive towards herders, but through Dialogue platform activities I am now promoting peace between herders and croppers’ (Mr Fang Richard, secretary of the Dialogue platform in Wum)

‘I was very aggressive towards all herders whom I thought were our greatest enemies. I led demonstrations against herders through street matching. In 2007, when the activities of dialogue platforms and alliance farming were introduced in Menchum Division, I changed to promoting peace between herders and croppers and I am a strong alliance farming partner to a herder. I fought for the representation of herders in Aghem Development and Cultural Association (ADCA). Now traditional authorities are very considerate in the allocation of land to farmers to avoid conflicts’.

‘Dialogue platforms and alliance have gained grounds and the support of the local administration’ (Alhadji Useini Adamu, President of the Wum dialogue platform)

Alhadji Useini attests that and alliance farming activities has gained grounds in Wum and is highly supported by the administration of the Division. ‘The farm of one Madame Kukuru at Naikom where she practices alliance farming with Alhaji Sule was quoted as a model by the judicial authority during a court session handling farmer-graizer conflict, to motivate other persons take up alliance farming.’ He adds that another glaring achievement of the Wum Dialogue Platform is their negotiation to access Bu valley for transhumance by herders after 10 years of blockage by croppers.

‘I call on all Dialogue platform members to set good examples by practicing especially alliance farming to improve on their living standards so that the wider community can follow their example’. Mr. Mokom Christopher Dialogue platform president of Baba II challenged by the Exchange Visit in Wum

Mr. Mokom Christopher is the Dialogue platform president of Baba II a village in Santa Sub-Division of Mezam Division. He participated in the exchange visit that took place in Wum. He is about 60 years old, married, and a father of 8 children. He was elected Dialogue platform president in 2014 when new Dialogue platforms were established in the 14 new communities of the ISCG project. After his trip to Wum, he shared his experiences with his other Dialogue platform members.

‘This project has educated me and my people a lot on the amicable settlement of conflicts and I saw very good examples of the practice of alliance farming in Wum. I saw very healthy looking crops like maize, beans, plantains and cocoyam simply because they were grown on soil enriched by cow dung. Wum is a very peaceful place today thanks to the win-win solution that is promoted by the Alternative Conflict Management approach that has been up-scaled by the work of ISCG project. It was my first time to go to Wum thanks to the opportunity offered by the project and it was a journey worth taking.

At a personal level, using the amicable settlement of cases has helped me gained time and financial resources. I call on all Dialogue platform members to set good examples by practicing especially alliance farming to improve on their living standards so that the wider community can follow their example. I also call on my team to follow the rich experiences of Wum and make the once hostile Baba II a model to follow like that of Wum.’
Biogas is a renewable energy that uses cow dung (manure) to produce domestic gas used for cooking. This year, 7 demonstration biogas plants have been set up in Achain- Boyo Division, Mbakam and Binshua in Donga Mantung Division, Njah-Etu and Ashong in Momo Division, Baba II in Mezam Division and Barare in Bui Division respectively. Biogas technology can benefit communities that are in competition over natural resources in a number of ways.

- Firstly, the cow dung necessary for the digestion process that produces gas, is a resource that cattle herding communities have in abundance and can share, with their crop farming neighbours.
- Sharing cow dung (manure) and bio-slurry for crop fertilization with farming neighbours, is the origin of Alliance Farming and Biogas promotes sharing this vital resource, to help meet domestic energy needs.
- It reduces dependency on expensive fuel woods which are contributing to deforestation, and consequently climate change.
- Biogas is a clean and smokeless alternative to wood which means that women are less likely to suffer health problems related to over exposure to wood fires and smoke.
- This technology also relieves girls who frequently have to fetch wood before going to school.

It is hoped that from this pilot demonstration Biogas plants, many households will learn and take up the initiative of constructing theirs for the betterment of their lives.

**Experience**

The cooking chore in the home of Alhadji Adamu Saidu of Baba II village in Santa Sub Division has become a more enjoyable task following the construction of the biogas plant. Alhadji Adamu is married to two wives and has 12 children. Grazing cattle is his main occupation and he was born and bred in Baba II village some 47 years ago.

He says, before the biogas plant was constructed in his home, his wives and children had to walk long distances to fetch fuel wood for energy supply. This was quite time consuming especially for his children, who had to do so even during school days. He believes that this had a negative impact on their performance in school as they were usually late. Also, he generally had his meals late due to the long hours needed to prepare them, particularly, during the rainy season when dry wood is scarce. His wives also complain of the smoky nature of this energy source, which most often affected their eyes in particular and health in general.

When the ISCG project was introduced in his community, he was selected as one of the Dialogue Platform (Dialogue platform) members because of his love for peace. When the concept of biogas development was introduced, he opted to be the host family for the project because, he wanted the improvement of his family welfare.
This year, MBOSCUDA-NWR signed contracts with five community radio stations/houses in the North West Region namely: Rainbow FM Mbengwi, Boyo Community radio Fundong, Bui community radio Kumbo, Donga Mantung FM Nkambe, Radio Hot Cocoa Bamenda. These stations are channels for sharing information on the ISCG project to respective community members and the wider North West Region audience. The Divisional Paralegal Extension officers (PEOs), co-host different programmes in collaboration with staff of the respective stations. To Hamadu Belo (PEO for Boyo Division), using the radio has helped improved his communication skills. The radio has equally helped in generating positive changes in the communities, especially in terms of amicable settlement of disputes. He adds that, people of far off communities like Wum also listen to the radio programmes. Since the construction of the Biogas plant, many people visit him just to see how the biogas works. Alhadji and his wives are greatly admired by community members because of the biogas in their home. His wives testify to loving their husband more for giving them such a gift and these days, meal time is so enjoyable by the children who adore their father for the gesture. Every morning, the elderly children churn in dung with water to ensure the continuous flow of gas. They have also promised to keep some cattle home for the supply of dung during the dry season when cattle will go for transhumance. This, he says, has made other community members not implicated in the project, to be aware of project ideals and even emulate them in their respective communities. He adds that those who have featured as guests in the programme are now looked upon in the community as role models, who have a good mastery of the project. One of the ways they also use the radio is to let community members tell their positive stories directly to the audience. This, he says, helps him a lot in the field. He also encourages community members to use the radio as a reference unit when they forget issues about the project.

Ousman Haman is the PEO for Mezam Division who also carry out programmes with radio Hot Cocoa. He shares almost the same feelings like Hamadu Bello. He however says it has been quite challenging working with the radio sometimes especially during power seizures in the course of programme execution.

He shared this decision with his wives and they all unanimously agreed to engage in the process. All unskilled labour for digging and fetching of water, was provided by his household. He also contributed some local materials like sand and gravel needed for the construction of the plant, and was always there to supervise the work. Alhadji Adamu adds that, after a period of about a month, when the plant had finally been constructed, his family life has greatly changed especially, during fasting periods, when meals have to be prepared very early in the morning and late in the evenings.

Alhadji Adamu’s children now eat on time each day

Alhadji Adamu’s children fill in dung into the Biogas digester

Hamadu Belo PEO of Boyo Division at MBOSCUDA Head Office in Bamenda

BIOGAS: A Healthy Domestic Energy Alternative

Community Radios, the Voice of the Voiceless
Community Radios, the Voice of the Voiceless

Continued from behind

This is a recurrent situation especially in the rainy season. ‘Sometimes, a guest would be sharing a very good experience and the blackout will just happen and frustrate the entire programme’”, he said. Another challenge he witnesses is when a guest fails to show up. He says when this happens, he takes the place of the guest while the in-house staff questions him on the theme of the day. ‘Despite the few challenges experienced this far, working with the community radio has been quite interesting and inspiring’ Haman concludes. On the part of community members, most of them are thrilled especially when they participate as guest in the respective programmes.

The Civil Society Strengthening Program (PASC) project complements ‘In Search of Common Ground (ISCG) project’

The PASC project is a European Union funded initiative. It aims to contribute to the improvement of responsible and participatory political, economic and social governance in Cameroon, through better involvement of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the definition, programming, implementation, monitoring and assessment of development programmes and policies. MBOSCUDA benefited from this grant and executed the project titled “Strengthening the collective voice of Mbororo pastoralists for the promotion of local governance in the management of pastoral resources in the North-West Region.” The project was executed from December 2013 to April 2015.

Training of Mbororo councilors on lobbying and advocacy techniques

This project had as main objective to strengthen the collective voice of the Mbororo pastoralists through the improvement of the organizational capacity of CBOs (Community Based Organizations) as well as their capacity to efficiently plan and carry out advocacy actions. Specifically, the project aimed to strengthen the organizational/institutional capacities of Mbororo CBOs in the region and strengthen the capacity of Mbororo municipal councilors in lobbying, advocacy and representation in public governance forums. To achieve the various objectives of the project, MBOSCUDA commissioned Rural Development Consultancy (RDC) to facilitate the various capacity building workshops. RDC is a service provider with extensive experience in group dynamics, resource mobilization and advocacy.
The community of Sabga benefited financial support from MBOSCUDA-NWR and her Village Aid partners that enabled them construct 4 classrooms at Government Bilingual Secondary School (G.B.S.S). Sabga village is located in Tubah Sub Division in Mezam Division of the North West Region of Cameroon, approximately 25km on the highway from Bamenda to Ngoketunjia and Bui Divisions. G.B.S.S Sabga which was created in 2011, is now a form four school with a student enrolment of 110 (71 girls and 39 boys) composed of 73 students from the Mbororo pastoralists’ community, and 37 students from the non-Mbororo community.
Sabga School Project: Ensuring Education for all.

For the past 4 years since its creation, the school witnessed quite a good number of problems some of which are:
- Insufficient infrastructure (classrooms and administrative offices) on the officially approved site
- Inadequate tables and chairs for the teachers,
- Inadequate benches for students,
- Lack of computers to facilitate learning for students who are obliged to sit for the computer subject during the end of course examinations,
- Lack of toilets and urinary facilities for students and teachers
- Lack of portable water and electricity
- Lack of permanent access road to the school.

It is against this backdrop that a series of contacts and meetings were carried out involving the dynamic new school administration, traditional and administrative authorities, the Sabga community and MBOSCUDA-NWR. It is in this regard that, the sum of 3,175,150FCFA (£4,177.8) including materials contributed in-kind (sand, cement, stones and trees etc) were raised on the spot by the community members in a fund raising meeting which took place in November 2014. This gesture motivated MBOSCUDA-NWR to announce the contribution of 4,560,000FCFA (£6,000) secured by her partner, Village Aid in the UK to boost the project. With a total amount of 7,735,150FCFA (£10,177.8) available for the project, discussions to kick start the construction of four classrooms started. It was however evident that this amount would not be sufficient for cementing the floors, plastering the walls and putting up the ceiling. This decision meant that when the 4 classrooms are built, the students will start using the classrooms while the administration will continue searching for more funds to complete the remaining work.

To ease the work and to ensure transparency, a Project Management Committee (PMC) was put in place.

The committee was made up of crop farmers and grazers. Training on their role and responsibility was planned and carried out by MBOSCUDA-NWR. Responsibilities for the various project stakeholders were as follows:
- The G.B.S.S Sabga school authority to write a letter to the Municipal Council of Tubah to solicit funds to complete the school building.
- The school principal and the Fon of Babanki to solicit support from the Livestock and Fisheries Development Project (LIFIDEP). LIFIDEP is a Cameroon government and Islamic Development Bank project, with a component for building 100 classrooms and opening/rehabilitating 500km access roads in the North West Region.
- MBOSCUDA-NWR to extend the community’s appreciation to Village Aid and its partners for the valuable support to the school and appeal to Village Aid for additional funding.
MBOSCUDA organized a 5 days strategic planning workshop in February 2015, that brought together field and office staff of the organization, Board members, elected Regional Executives and one benchmarker - Health Development Consultancy Services (HEDECS), a Civil Society Organization. The main objective was to develop a 5 year strategic plan (2016-2020) for MBOSCUDA-NWR. Mr Nuhu Jallow, a UK based development expert and former Programme Coordinator of MBOSCUDA-NWR, was the main facilitating consultant. Village Aid-UK provided financial and technical support.

The major outcomes of the 5 days workshop were:

1. A new organogram that was suggested to the BOD, in order to ensure efficient implementation of the strategic plan; a SWOT analysis of the ‘In Search of Common Ground’ (ISCG) project and MBOSCUDA itself, and a 5 year strategic plan for MBOSCUDA-NWR.

A historical timeline of MBOSCUDA-NWR activities from 1992 to 2015, led to the following six strategic objectives developed on these thematic areas:

1). Agro-pastoral development: Improve skills on sustainable livestock and crop production, through greater cooperation between different users of agro-pastoral resources.

2). Health, sanitation and hygiene: Promote and facilitate access to primary healthcare, knowledge of general health and nutrition in collaboration with service providers.

3). Education (literacy, building schools, access to education, career development, women, Islam): Consolidate and expand Mbororo pastoralists’ access to education, and promote career development opportunities especially for women and youth.

4). Securing livelihoods (especially for women and youth): Promote and facilitate sustainable livelihoods in communities through enterprise, skills development and self-employment.

5). Governance: Promote Mbororo pastoralists’ voice, visibility, participation, representation, and the ability to secure their rights and entitlements.

6). Strong organisations: Consolidate MBOSCUDA’s achievements and secure its future through strategic partnerships and self-help initiatives.

A detailed budget was developed for each of the strategic objectives and MBOSCUDA overall core costs. The various documents produced at the end of the strategic planning workshop can be accessed from MBOSCUDA’s website: www.mboscuda.org.
I set out on a journey to Wum in Menchum Division late June 2015, to meet with the various stakeholders involved in the execution of the ISCG project. My main objective was to talk with these stakeholders, find out how they perceive the progress of the ISCG project, and how collaborative their services were to the realization of the project goals. For this task, I was assisted by the Dialogue Platform (Dialogue platform) president Alhadji Useini who accompanied me throughout exercise. 

‘Of recent, not many people come and complain on farmer-grazer issues to me.’

Mr. Kouekam Guy Honoré, the dynamic D.O of Wum

At the D.Os office, Mr. Kouekam Guy Honoré welcomed us and was kind enough to respond to our questions. He appreciated the efforts of MBOSCUDA in supporting communities to resolve farmer-grazer conflicts amicably. He acknowledged that, of recent, not many people come to him to complain on farmer-grazer issues. To him, this is evidence that Dialogue platform members are working efficiently in the field. We bid him goodbye and moved to the council where we met with the Mayor.

‘The ISCG project has projected the image of the Mbororo people positively’

The Lord Mayor of Wum council- Mr Dighambong Anthony Mvo

On reaching the office of the Divisional Delegate of Agriculture and Rural Development, we met with Mr. Nkwenti Stephen Fru who is a very jovial and welcoming person. He was newly transferred to this Division and had been working for 9 months. He had lots of information on the farmer-grazer conflicts and knew that MBOSCUDA –NWR is working with Dialogue platforms to resolve the various conflicts. Considering that he was fairly new, he suggested that to him the conflicts can best be resolved amicably by the parties concerned. Working in a network is the best way to address some of the problems being experienced. At this level, I seized the opportunity and told him about the objectives, activities and ideals of the project and gave him a leaflet with a summary of the project. Mr. Nkwenti promised visiting the Regional office of MBOSCUDA-NWR when he comes to Bamenda. This ended our visit at the delegate’s office.

Our last stop was at the Delegation of MINEPIA (Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Breeding), headed by Dr. Mfouapon Njeuya Martin Luther.
Our Extra Ordinary Stakeholders in Wum

‘I promise to learn from my collaborators issues of the project and to give my assistance as deemed necessary.’ Dr. Mfouapon Njeuya Martin Luther Delegate of MINEPIA (Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Breeding) Wum, He was very receptive to us in spite of his busy schedule. Since he is also newly transferred to Wum, he promised to learn from his collaborators issues of the project and to give his assistance as deemed necessary. Wum being one of the pilot beneficiary communities of Dialogue platform and alliance farming activities simply proved to be quite outstanding to the success of the ISCG project. Proof of this is the shared testimonies of the interviewed administrative stakeholders.

Bih Sylvia Atanga- Communication Officer MBOSCUDA

Mayors of Nkambe, Batibo and Fundong Councils align with MBOSCUDA to boast water supply in their communities

This year, three mayors representing their respective councils, distinguished themselves by contributing both financially and technically to the realization of the Bih, Ashong and Bainjong community water projects. Through the memoranda of understanding (MOU) signed with MBOSCUDA-NWR stipulating clearly the role of the respective councils, the Mayors of Nkambe Mr. Ngabir Paul, Mr. Tanjoh Fredrick Tetuh of Batibo council and Mr. Denis Awoh Ndang of Fundong councils kept their promises. It is worth mentioning that, the Mayors of Mbengwi and Santa councils have been solicited to contribute to the realization of the water projects in their communities by MBOSCUDA–NWR as well. There are prospects of positive collaboration from these mayors.
Like any other project, the ISCG project experienced some setbacks during this second year. Some of the setbacks were natural as well as human. However, appropriate measures have been put in place to address the setbacks so that the project outcomes could be realized as planned.

Availability of committed community resource volunteers remains difficult: To ease community work in the respective project areas, community volunteers based in the said community was identified as a good work strategy to facilitate project activities. Due to constant mobility of the various community volunteers, it was not easy to get credible committed volunteers for the project. As a way forward community members help in identifying and recruiting better volunteers for the process when need arises.

Lack of labour force for land preparation for improved pasture plots: This caused land preparation to last longer time than anticipated because the period coincided with land preparation for farming in the North West Region. As a result of this, labour became very scarce and expensive for this purpose. However, a remedial plan was put in place for the Dialogue platform members to complete the work in the respective communities. Also, in areas where the possibility of using tractors was available, it was difficult to secure them because of the high demand during the period of farming.

Low germination rate of Bracharia seeds on improved pasture plots: Some seeds of Bracharia did not germinate well in 3 out of 14 (21.4%) communities (Akum, Barare and Mbongso). The main cause was a drought period of three weeks (April 2015) that occurred just at the time that the seeds were sown. A remedial plan was put in place to uproot and replant Bracharia suckers in these communities collectively by the herders. This was effectively done.

Increasing cost of construction materials for water and biogas projects: After the commencement of water and biogas projects, prices of cement and other construction materials increased due to increases in the price of fuel. As a way forward, other partners like the councils were lobbied for support. For example the Nkambe council has already supported water projects in its area with 300 pipes. Also, communities benefiting from the water projects have been contacted to provide more support to the projects. As a response, Bih community bought 60 additional pipes and the host family for the biogas plant at Achain also bought additional cement to complete work on the plant.

Slow compliance of some host families for the construction of Biogas plants: The construction of biogas plants was relatively slow due to the slow compliance of some host families to provide materials to support the projects. For instance the host family of Barare had to be changed to a more proactive host family to ensure continuity of the project. Also, technically, not many technicians are also familiar with the construction of biogas digesters. As such, the few knowledgeable technicians available had to be used from community to community which required more time for the project implementation.

Interruptions of community radios and the dissemination of project information
Frequent seizure of electricity supply often interfered with the smooth airing of various radio programmes which disturbed the efficient execution of this activity. As a way forward, programmes that are not fully aired due to electricity seizures or other technical problems are often re-broadcast in the various localities.
MBOSCUDA-NW says goodbye to Madam Caroline Ngum Tanji

After 18 years of dedicated service as the finance officer for MBOSCUDA-NWR, Madam Caroline Ngum Tanji was sent off on the 31st August 2015, in a ceremony organised in her honour by the organisation. This was a way of saying ‘Thank You’ to Madam Ngum for her dedicated and committed services to the organisation for close to two decades. In very emotional speeches, the board chair Barrister Unusa Karimu, Project coordinator Sali Django and staff present, all heartily appreciated Madam Ngum for her professional expertise exhibited in dealing with finances in the course of her tenure as Finance Officer. They all wished her well in all her endeavours. In response, Madam Ngum said, she is very much a part of MBOSCUDA and is ready to assist when need arises. She appreciated everyone present and promised to be an ambassador for MBOSCUDA everywhere she goes. The day ended with exchange of lots of gifts, a photo session and a cocktail party.

World Echoes Newspaper Recognizes MBOSCUDA-NWR

In the course of the year, MBOSCUDA- NWR was given an award by World Echoes Newspaper in its 7th anniversary 2015 Trinity National Press Icons Award. This recognition came as a result of the work MBOSCUDA is doing through the’ In search of common Ground Project’ in particular and the general empowerment of the Mbororos in general. The event that took place at the Pope John Paul II hall in Catholic Mission Bayelle, saw the participation of people from all walks of life. Apart from MBOSCUDA-NWR, Mayors, Administrative Authorities (Senior Divisional Officers), Principals/Directors and schools were recognized for their various outstanding performances.

This gesture served as a great booster to the dedicated team of MBOSCUDA, who saw it as reward for their endeavours in the development of grassroots communities that include Mbororo pastoralists and their subsistent crop farming neighbours.
Mr. Sali Usmanu a former REFLECT Coordinator of MBOSCUDA-NWR is back on board. This time around, he is the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Officer, as well as the Assistant Project Coordinator. He is a seasoned Rural Development expert with a wide range of experiences related to sustainable livelihoods approaches in development. According to him, in this present era of work in MBOSCUDA-NWR, ‘we must do things differently to scale up work while respecting the organization's values which will effectively help in achieving the vision of MBOSCUDA.’ He stressed that, monitoring is the bedrock for evaluation, which features in all phases of a project cycle. Monitoring starts with proper planning, which are results orientated. During his first official meeting with all staff, he encouraged teamwork. He believes in teamwork where everyone diligently plays their role in a way that leads to success for the organization. He stressed on the ‘supper team’ not a ‘supper individual’. With eight years of experience in Heifer International Cameroon as the Livelihood Development Coordinator, MBOSCUDA-NWR will definitely benefit from his expertise.
MBOSCUDA PARTNERS July 2014-June 2015

All the great achievements this reporting period was made possible through the technical, moral and financial support of many valuable partners like Village Aid and the Big Lottery Fund, PASC project (Cameroon-EU partnership), Pennsylvania University, International Land Coalition, University, International Land Coalition, Rural Development Consultancy (RDC), the Mayors of Nkambe, Fundong, Batibo and Wum, heads of technical services like MINEPIA, MINADER and MINEE in the areas we work in, and all those who gave us support. We appreciate everyone very much.

Our sources of funds
The pie chart below shows exactly the financial contributions of our respective financial partners who enabled us carry out the various projects.

We would appreciate more support (financial and otherwise) from other benevolent donors to enable us continue the work in other needy communities in Cameroon. You can make your donations through the various addresses below. Thanks in advance.

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