



The experience of the Malian Local Development Support Initiative (IMADEL) in recognising climate change in conflict resolution efforts in the centre of Mali

A case study on peacebuilding and strengthening livelihoods,
circle of Koro (Mopti region, Mali)

Produced by:



With the support of:



THE GOVERNMENT
OF THE GRAND DUCHY OF LUXEMBOURG

In association with:



Practice note

The experience of the Malian Local Development Support Initiative (IMADEL) in recognising climate change in conflict resolution efforts in the centre of Mali.

A case study on peacebuilding and strengthening livelihoods, circle of Koro (Mopti region, Mali).

Collaborators and disclaimer: The project “Environmental Peacemaking in Liptako Gourma” is being implemented as part of a partnership between TrustWorks Global (TWG) and the European Institute of Peace (EIP). The project is funded by the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. This note expresses the views of the implementing organisations and partners involved in this project but does not represent the views or official policy of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

Licence: This note is protected by TWG and EIP copyright. This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part and in any form for educational or non-profit purposes without special permission from the copyright holder, provided the source is acknowledged. This note may not be used for commercial purposes.



Contents

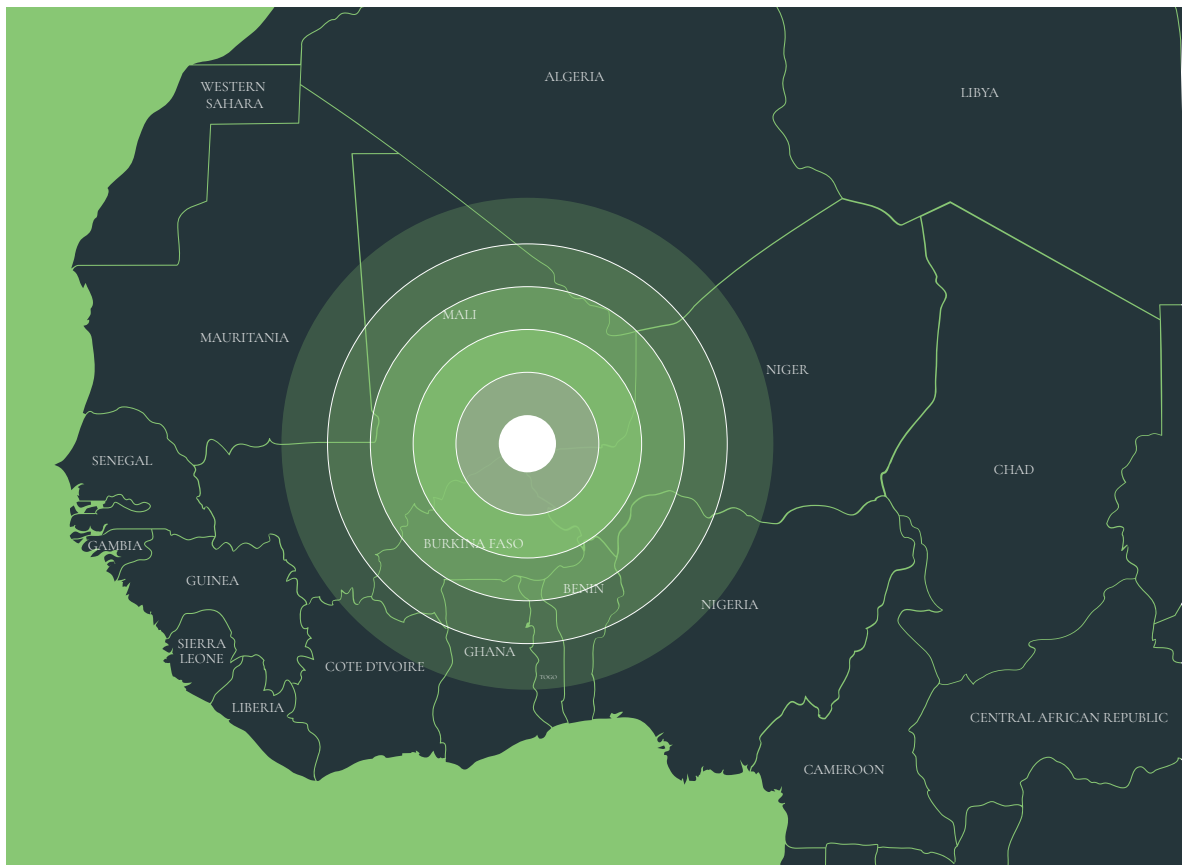
About the Liptako Gourma region	4
About the TWG-EIP project	5
About the Malian Local Development Support Initiative (IMADEL)	6
<hr/>	
1. Introduction: the initiative	7
2. Context: divisive environmental issues	8
2.1 Climate vulnerability and a surge in community conflict	
2.2 Economic issues and exploitation of resources	
3. The actors involved	9
3.1 The parties to the conflict	
3.2 The mediators	
4. The different phases of the initiative	10
5. Results, impacts and lessons learned	13
5.1 Impact of the initiative	
5.2 Lessons learned in the conflict resolution process	

About the Liptako Gourma region

The Liptako Gourma border region straddles Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger and spans an area of around 370,000 km². Nearly 80 per cent of the region's population lives in rural areas, and livestock farming is a key component of the area's rural economy, both in terms of economic weight and as a factor in structuring rural areas. What makes the Liptako Gourma region particularly interesting is the fact that it is made up of some of the most abandoned and deprived areas in the three countries, despite the area's agropastoral,

fishing, wildlife and mining potential.

This is due to a complex crisis that includes climate variability, fierce competition for scarce resources, poverty and demographic pressure, compounded by poor governance and political unrest. All of these factors contribute to increasing levels of violence which has since 2015, spread throughout the Liptako Gourma region.



About the TWG-EIP project

The stability and resilience of regions such as Liptako Gourma are seriously threatened by the combined effects of violence, poor governance and environmental vulnerabilities. Yet peace efforts rarely incorporate a deep understanding of the environmental factors that underpin conflict or peace. With the support of the Directorate of Defence of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the European Institute of Peace and TrustWorks Global have implemented the project “Tackling the Root Causes of Conflict: Environmental Peacemaking in Liptako Gourma”.

This project supports existing efforts to better manage and resolve conflicts in the Liptako Gourma region by applying an environmental approach to peace. Rather than setting up yet another peace initiative, it supports existing local, national, regional and international mediation and stabilisation actors, by contributing a particular angle of natural resource management that can enable peace processes to better address the root causes of conflict and deliver concrete peace dividends that promote the sustainability of agreements.

As part of the project, this practice note was prepared by Mamoudou Abdoulaye Diallo, Executive Director of IMADEL, with the support of the TWG-IEP project team: Arthur Boutellis, Oli Brown, Boubacar Ba, Albert Martinez and Amy Dallas. It is also informed by the workshop held in Niamey from 2 to 4 May 2023.



About the Malian Local Development Support Initiative (IMADEL)

The NGO, which was set up in 2005, signed a framework agreement with the State of Mali on 12 October 2010. IMADEL's mission is to:

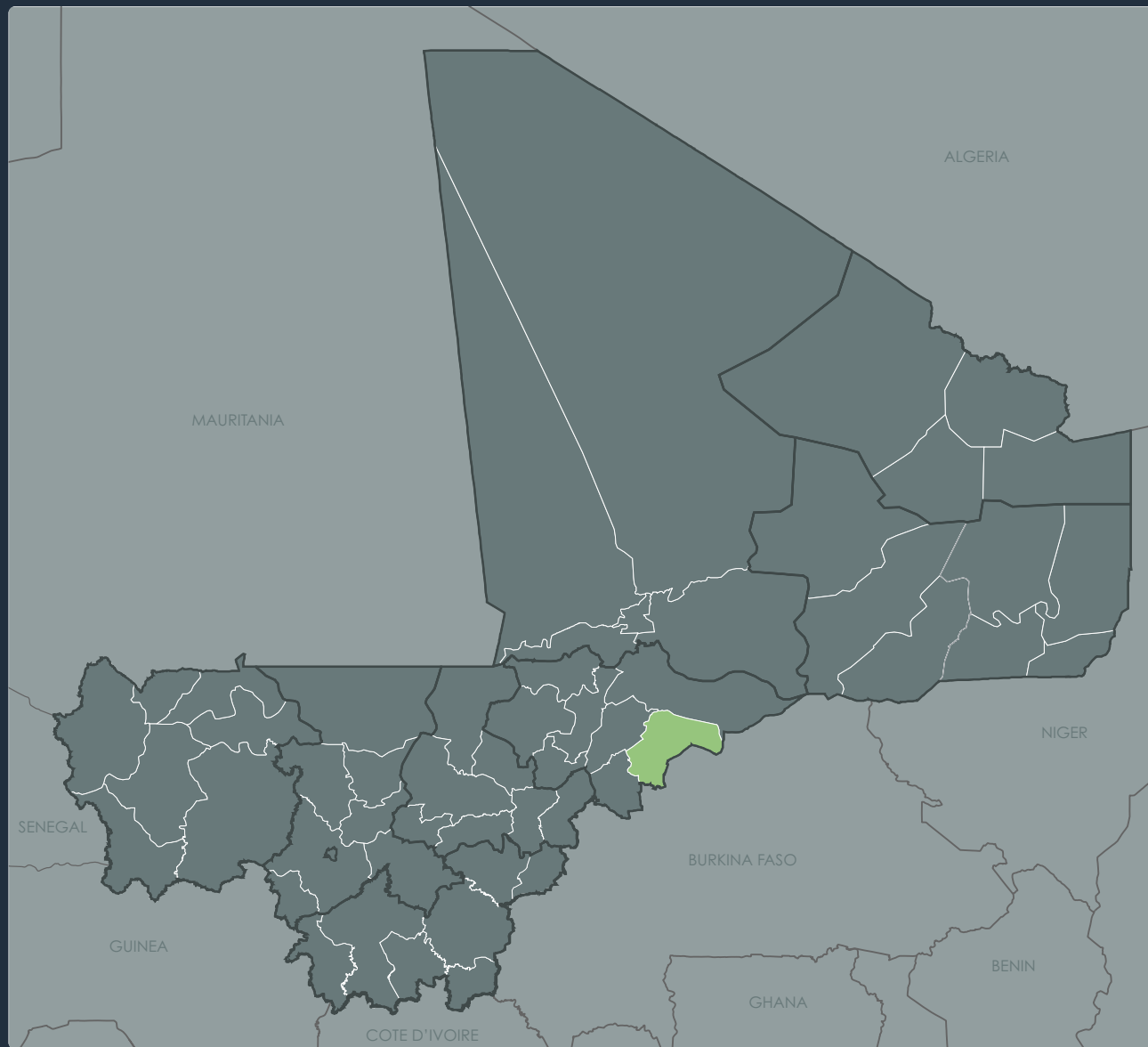
- Contribute to the economic and social development of Mali by promoting and supporting initiatives aimed at improving the living conditions of the population (rural, urban and other disadvantaged groups);
- Provide technical, material and financial support to associations or groups to improve their living conditions and promote their activities;
- Make a substantial contribution to the economic, social and cultural development of the people of Mali, in accordance with the reference framework adopted by the Government of Mali;
- Promote the strengthening of a civil society that participates in the formulation and implementation of development policies;
- Contribute to building the capacities of development actors with a view to accelerating ownership and responsibility for local development;
- Promote democracy and good governance and support the implementation of the country's decentralisation policy;
- Strengthen the partnership to boost the efforts of the State and partner NGOs in supporting communities.

Scope of Intervention

Kayes Region	Kayes circle: Segala and Same Diongoma communes
	Bafoulabé circle: Bafoulabé and Sidibela communes
	Nioro circle: Baniere Kore, Diabigue, Gogui, Guetema, Korera Kore, Nioro, Nioro Tougoume, Sandare, Simbi, Trougounbe and Youri communes
Ségou Region	Ségou, Niono, Macina, Tominan, San and Bla circles
Mopti Region	Mopti, Koro, Bankass, Djénné, Ténenkou, Douentza and Youwarou circles
Tombouctou Region	Timbuktu circle: Alafia and urban communes
	Gourma Rharous circle: Bambara Maoundé, Gossi and Rharous communes
	Goundam circle: Goundam, Tonka and Doukouria and Douékiré communes
	Diré circle: Diré and Sareyamou communes
	Niafunké circle: Léré, Soumpi, Soboundou, Fittouga, Koumaïra, Banikane Narhawa and Dianké communes
Gao and Ménaka Region	Gao circle: Gao, Sonni Ali Ber, Gounzouraye and Wabararia communes
	Ménaka circle: Alata, Anderamboukane, Inekar, Ménaka and Tidermene communes
	Ansongo circle: Bazi Haoussa and Bourra communes

1. Introduction: the initiative

This peacebuilding and strengthening livelihoods initiative took place in Mali in the circle of Koro, Mopti region, in two phases. The first phase ran from February 2018 to September 2020 and the second from June 2022 to 31 May 2023. The first covered the 16 communes of the circle while the second covered five.



Koro Circle, Mopti Region, Mali ▲

2.

Context: divisive environmental issues

2.1 Climate vulnerability and a surge in community conflict

The initiative takes place in an area where, at the time of its implementation, the population was experiencing the adverse effects of climate change, especially in terms of two main livelihood activities carried out by the communities; agriculture and livestock farming, both of which are highly dependent on the effects of climate change.

In recent years, climate change has resulted in a lack of rainfall, which has led to poor harvests and the increasing use of low-lying areas such as valleys and ponds to grow crops, as well as the premature drying up of wells and ponds that traditionally supplied drinking water for animals. The precariousness of these sources of water means that animals return early from their grazing areas in search of water, leading to the grouping of animals near the lowland fields. This often leads to tensions between farmers and herders on the one hand, and herders and local residents near boreholes on the other.

This situation, which is worsening as climate change grows in severity, has been exacerbated by the arrival of armed groups (militias and radicals) in the area, giving rise to inter-community clashes, particularly between pastoral and sedentary communities who have generally lived together and exploited agropastoral production systems according to their age-old traditions. These antagonisms and community tensions (such as numerous attacks and reprisals in the villages) have caused significant damage (physical, moral, material and economic) to the communities.

2.2 Economic issues and exploitation of resources

Community cohabitation in a context of widespread insecurity exacerbates tensions and reawakens social rivalries. In economic terms, the interests of the Dogon and Mossi are characterised by access to land in order to sow large areas and produce enough consumption and sale in markets, while the Peul want enough space for grazing and to keep their animals in good condition, as well as allowing for the rapid reproduction of livestock. The race for land has become an issue for both sides, leading to conflicts over access to natural resources.

The circle receives herders from several parts of Mali and the sub-region (Niger, Burkina, the circles of Youwarou, Djenné, San and Douentza, among others) who practice transhumance for a large part of the year. In particular, the circle of Koro receives a large proportion of the local livestock in addition to livestock from the flooded area of the central Niger delta, who leave the centre of Lake Débo for the circle of Koro during the rainy season and remain there until November. This creates tensions between farmers and herders.

3.

The actors involved

3.1 The parties to the conflict

The parties to the conflict are the Peul herders, mainly aligned with the radical armed groups known as jihadists, and the Dogon and Mossi, who are closer to the “dozo” armed groups or traditional hunters. Their interests are linked to the defence of cultural, sociological and economic values amidst rising insecurity and political instability. From a social point of view, the Peuls dominated the area at the time of the Peul Empire of the Macina under Sékou Amadou’s Diina in the 19th century, exerting their dominance over the other ethnic groups. Colonisation reversed this trend and brought other ethnic groups on board as allies. The latter were able to access education, while the Peul remained on the fringes of public education, this being considered unsuited to their way of life according to the precepts of their religion.

From the other communities, who are essentially sedentary, emerged senior members of the civil service and the army. Despite the level of education of the leaders, some sedentary people are apprehensive and feel that the Fulani community has little regard for them (aversion to mixed marriages, stigmatisation and a general negative view). This situation has created frustration and prejudice within the neighbouring Peul communities.

Furthermore, by exerting their dominance in the area, the Peul are claiming back ownership of all the land they have granted to sedentary groups over the years and centuries. Some communities claim to have settled sedentary villages in the flooded areas of Seno and Haïré after they were lent the land during the droughts of the 70s and 80s.

3.2 The mediators

Initially, the mediators were the staff of IMADEL and the Regional Reconciliation Support Team (ERAR) in Mopti, which then expanded to include the community members trained by IMADEL and grouped together in conflict prevention and management associations.

IMADEL’s role was to:

- Identify and diagnose local conflicts ;
- Analyse conflicts and propose solutions;
- Identify community leaders capable of leading social cohesion activities;
- Train community leaders in advocacy, mediation, communication and conflict transformation;
- Set up conflict management and prevention committees (CGPC);
- Train the members of the commissions;
- Support the members of the CGPCs in organising and holding mediation and community dialogue meetings;
- Hold community reconciliation forums,
- Drawing up a roadmap;
- Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the roadmap.

By the end of the process, there was a general feeling that the communities had become aware of the situation and that they could carry out the project’s actions themselves. As a result, during the second phase of the project, all the community mediators came from their home communities. The “Peace Dividend” projects have been promising, showing that these actions have brought peace to the communities. They have also led to concerted management of natural resources and community facilities, which used to be sources of inter-community conflict.

4.

The different phases of the initiative

In order to help resolve the inter-community conflict that broke out between the Peul and Dogon populations in central Mali, MINUSMA, through its Civil Affairs Division (DAC), financed a project entitled “Peacebuilding and Strengthening Livelihoods in the Koro Circle” (*Consolidation de la paix et Renforcement des Moyens de Résilience dans le Cercle de Koro*). Implemented by IMADEL, the aim of the project was to help resolve the conflict, consolidate peace and restore social cohesion. The initiative was comprised of the following stages:

Identification and diagnosis of the conflict

This was a conflict pitting the Dogon communities against the Peul communities in the area. Each accused the other of colluding with the enemy, which was either jihadist groups or Dozo hunters.

Analysis of the conflict and identification of potential partners or players and proposed solutions

The conflict was essentially communal. It was an exacerbation of the antagonism caused by the emergence of jihadist groups and local militias in the region.

Definition and implementation of the intervention strategy

- Putting in place experienced staff with a thorough knowledge of the project’s geographical area, cultures and practices
 - Rigorous identification of the actors in the field and how they are connected to one another, with a view to ensuring effective links between the project team, the beneficiaries and the community and local actors (leaders, traditional and local authorities, associations and groups, etc.).
 - Identify mechanisms for communicating with beneficiaries and actors on other levels (municipal, local, regional and national) with a view to raising the project’s profile and sharing project activities on a regular basis.
-

Operationalising the strategy by implementing activities

Drawing up activity implementation schedules, and identifying and sharing with implementing partners at community, local, regional and national levels, such as technical services, civil society, beneficiaries, leaders, etc.

Monitoring and evaluation of activities

- Define the various monitoring mechanisms to be put in place to measure the level of progress of the activities regularly and periodically and take steps to improve if necessary.
- In a context marked by the exacerbation of inter- and intra-community conflicts in the circle of Koro, the initiative consisted of a diagnosis of the conflict, its analysis, and the proposal of possible solutions. The entire process was carried out to enable the identification of the root causes of the conflict, which are sociological, economic and above all, linked to climate change.
- Rainfall deficits mean that watering points for animals are very close to crop fields (ponds and shallow water sources).
- The displacement of fields from their usual sites to lower-lying areas usually used by pastoralists
- Premature drying up of watering points, leading to competition from animals and people around wells and boreholes
- Recurrent droughts in the central and northern parts of the country, leading to a rush by farmers to sow more land at the expense of pastoralists
- Problems relating to access to and control of natural resources (land, water, grazing land)
- Insufficient farmland due to the mechanisation of agriculture
- Rapid human population growth
- Intense growth in the number of livestock due to improved health conditions following the disappearance or decrease of several epizootics such as anthrax and plague, which were wreaking havoc among livestock.
- Low rainfall, reducing the area available for cultivation, leading to a reduction in grazing and a concentration of livestock breeders and farmers in the same areas.
- Sharing of water points (wells and/or boreholes) by animals and local people, leading to conflicts between livestock farmers and local people.



▶ Pastoral boreholes in the Diounagni commune, Koro circle, built by IMADEL

Secondly, the in-depth analysis of the conflict context allowed for the identification of root causes, namely grievances over the management of natural resources, access to water, and the economic revival of young people and women.

Approaches to address these root causes of conflict included the creation of pastoral water points, animal crossings (tracks and lodges), the development of pastoral areas (creation of pastoral reserves), the multiplication and/or improvement of community water points, capacity building for stakeholders, particularly young people and women leaders, the holding of dialogues, workshops, and awareness-raising forums.

With a view to resolving the conflict, the mediators conducted several dialogues and reconciliation forums in several localities where tensions were very high, and cohabiting became such a major challenge that even the administrative, political and community authorities were concerned.

Gender and youth dimensions

Young men and women leaders committed to restoring peace have been identified, and thanks to their

contribution to the stability of their localities, the villages of Bodewal, Mbaná, Dianweli, Diankabou, Tini, Bandé, Madougou Dioungani, Niaki and Tanfadala have benefited from drinking water and pastoral water points that limit inter-community conflicts in the Dioungani, Diankabou, Madougou, Bondo and Dinangourou communes.

IMADEL has also encouraged and supported the emergence of community groups of men and women committed to the cause of peace and reconciliation, the most famous of which is "MONOBEME", which means "let's live together" in the local Dogon language.

The analysis of the context highlighted the important role that women could play in resolving the conflict, alongside young people. This is why this approach strives to include these social groups in the two communities. Inter-community integration can be easily facilitated by women, particularly through the promotion of income-generating activities (IGA) such as mill management, market gardening, dyeing, soap making, etc. As for young people, they are at the heart of the conflict, both as actors and victims, and their commitment to peace and living together is a determining factor in resolving this conflict and preventing others.



Mill kits for women ▲

5. Results, impacts and lessons learned

5.1 Impact of the initiative

Following the various dialogues and forums, the resulting recommendations and diagnoses made it possible to initiate projects that IMADEL has called "Peace Dividends" projects. These include:

- Building pastoral water points to separate animals from villages and fields;
- Creation of animal trails to separate pastoral and agricultural areas;
- Financing income-generating activities (fattening cattle, poultry farming, women's mills, etc.);
- Setting up conflict prevention and management committees;
- Training members in communication, advocacy, mediation and community conflict management techniques;
- Building the capacity of land commissions in reducing local land conflicts.

The projects cover poultry farming, cattle fattening, soap making, mills and transport carts in the Koro, Bondo, Diounagni, Diankabou, Youdiou and Koporopen communes. Funding for these projects has led to the signing of five reconciliation agreements in Dinangourou, Youdiou, Dinangourou, Dioungani and Madougou in 2019 and 2020. The agreements are relatively effective, enabling the communities to live together, attend the same fairs and use the same pastures in most villages in the Koro circle. However, the Peul communities avoid the town of Koro, the capital of the circle and home to the biggest weekly fair, because of the presence of the armed forces, who they fear will arrest them.

With the withdrawal of MINUSMA, IMADEL fears that the situation will deteriorate because of a lack of resources for monitoring programmes, threatening the effectiveness and sustainability of investments. As a result, MINUSMA's "Trust Funds" project has come to an end, although new income-generating "Peace Dividends" projects will begin in June 2023.

5.2 Lessons learned in the conflict resolution process

Today, while there are still attacks, kidnappings and other assaults in the neighbouring circles of Bankass and Bandiagara, the two communities (Peul and Dogon) live together. The peace process that is underway in the Koro Circle has already produced peace dividends: fewer people or animals have been abducted, fewer improvised explosive devices have been planted, and fewer conflicts between the two ethnic groups have arisen. Jihadist groups have



Peace dividend project for fattening cattle in Koro ▲

stopped their sieges and embargoes. Farmers are able to grow crops unhindered. Weekly markets take place without armed groups banning women from attending. Tensions between herding communities, farmers and the local population have subsided. It should be noted that the awareness-raising role of the association Monobème has been very useful to the peace process initiated by IMADEL in the Koro Circle.

IMADEL's approach has produced significant results. These include, among others; the prevention of forced displacement, the resettlement of people driven out of the village of Dioungani by armed groups since 2018, the cessation of hostilities between Fulani and Dogon communities and the establishment of a dialogue framework, the implementation of 50 income-generating activities in the Koro Circle and the resumption of agricultural and pastoral activities.

In terms of wider relevance and possible reproduction, the approach can be replicated in other circles or regions in the country, but access to funding limits the continuation of the action, which ended in May 2023. Since then, IMADEL has been the preferred partner of local actors, the administrative and political authorities of the Koro district, and international NGOs.



EUROPEAN
INSTITUTE
OF PEACE

European Institute of Peace (EIP)

Rue des Deux Eglises 25
1000 Brussels, Belgium

www.eip.org
info@eip.org



TrustWorks
Global

TrustWorks Global

Rue de l'Éveché, 1
Geneva 1204, Switzerland

www.trustworksglobal.com
info@trustworksglobal.com