CONFLICT SENSITIVE PLANNING IN THE NANUMBA NORTH DISTRICT OF GHANA

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ABSTRACT

Conflicts have, for a long time, been considered as constraints rather than development problems. Consequently, District Development planning in conflict prone areas has failed to adopt conflict sensitive development strategies. This paper is based on a study that utilized key informant interviews, focused group discussions, and historical documentations in the Nanumba North District to determine the prospects of adopting a conflict sensitive planning framework. The study revealed that although 67% of the respondents indicated that there was the possibility of another outbreak of violent conflict, conflicts were considered security issues and thus isolated from development. All stakeholders were unanimous in their view that the challenges of mainstreaming conflict into the development planning process could be surmounted through political commitment and the allocation of resources.

Keywords: Conflict, Planning, District, Nanumba, Security

INTRODUCTION

Beyond the claim that Ghana enjoys relative peace and stability compared to its neighbors in the West African sub-region, there are pockets of persistent protracted communal conflicts that continue to thwart efforts towards poverty reduction and accelerated growth. Given the intensity and violent nature of the conflicts in Northern Ghana, especially those between the Mamprusis and Kusasis in Bawku, the Nanumbas and Konkombas in Nanumba North District, and the Dagbon crisis over the Dagbon Kingship, one would have expected the Assemblies in these conflict prone areas to mainstream conflict management into their development planning processes.

The fact that District Development Planning deals with the allocation of scarce financial and other resources between competing interests coupled with the need for participation and transparency in decision-making, makes conflict very visible in the development planning process itself (Cornwell, cited by Cousins, 1998). In spite of this observation, development planning in Ghana has tendered to gloss over the potentials of conflict embedded in the planning process (Akelo, 2002; Shall, 1993). Furthermore, Planners in conflict prone districts in Ghana rarely venture beyond identifying the persistent conflicts as development constraints, to isolating them as core development problems requiring their attention. According to Gmalu (2004) the Nanumba North Dist is one of the conflict prone areas in Northern Ghana. A study was therefore conducted to

investigate the prospects of adopting a conflict sensitive framework in the development planning process in this conflict prone district.

METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

The study made use of historical documents, interviews, focused group discussions and observations to obtain the necessary data to analyze and find appropriate responses to the following research questions:

- What are the contexts and dynamics of conflicts in the Nanumba North District?
- What has been the impact of these conflicts on the development of the District?
- What efforts have been made to link the recurrent conflicts to the District development planning process?
- How can conflict sensitive planning be integrated into the overall development planning process in the District?

The selection of key informants for the study was based on a sampling frame made up of four broad groups including opinion leaders (i.e. Youth Associations and Chiefs); the district administration (comprising mainly of Assembly Members, the District Planning Coordinating Unit (DPCU) and the District Security Council (DISEC) members); NGOs such as the Ghana Network for Peace (GANEP), the Unity Centre of the Catholic Church; and other institutions working to promote peace-building in the district such as the National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE).

Sources of data for the study varied widely. The historical account was obtained from a key informant interview with a local historian who had witnessed two major violent conflicts in the district within the last 20years and was also directly involved in the 1994/1995 peace efforts. This was complemented by literature from secondary sources on conflicts in Ghana and the Nanumba District in particular. A stakeholders' workshop was also held in the District to present the preliminary results of the analysis for validation and feedback.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDY AREA

The Nanumba North District (with its capital in Bimbilla) is located in the eastern corridor of the Northern Region of Ghana, between latitudes 8.5°N and 9.25°N, and Longitudes 0.5°E and 0.5°W of the Greenwich Meridian. The district was carved out of the erstwhile Nanumba District in August 2004, and it now shares boundaries with Yendi Municipality to the North, East Gonja District to the west and Nanumba South to the southeast (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Map of Nanumba North District
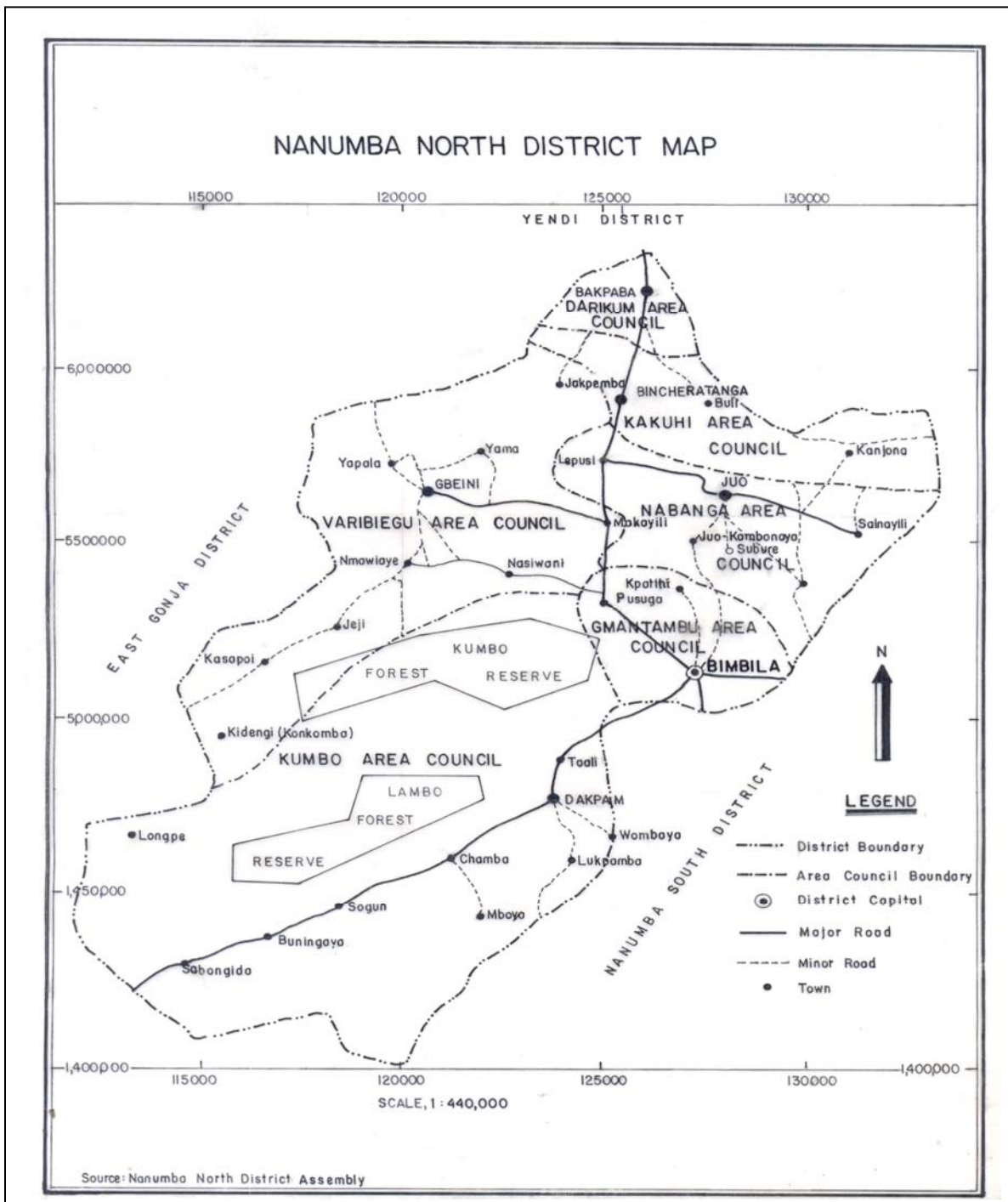
The tropical continental climate and the fertile soils in the District are suitable for the cultivation of crops like yams, maize, millet, guinea corn and groundnuts. Consequently the district experiences temporary net in-migration of farmers from other districts during the rainy season to farm. The activities of these migrant farmers sometimes come into conflict with the local people. Another significant migration pattern is the movement of Fulani cattle owners from the neighbouring countries in search of grazing grounds for their herds of cattle and they often come into conflict with farmers.

According to the Population and Housing Census in 2000, the population of the district was predominantly youthful, with those aged 0 – 14years constituting 46.2%. This is a potential source of conflict because majority of the youthful population are neither employed nor in some kind of skills training or school. This confirms the widely acknowledged view that the youth are the most involved and affected whenever there is conflict (Bever, 1996).

THE CONTEXT AND DYNAMICS OF CONFLICTS IN THE DISTRICT

The two major ethnic groups in the District are Nanumbas and Konkombas. There are other ethnic groups like the Bassare, Ashante, Dagombas etc. Land in the District is vested in the Bimbilla Naa as the paramount chief of the Nanumba Traditional Area. Land acquisition for farming and other purposes, which is normally through the Bimbilla Naa or his divisional/village chiefs, is one major source of tension between the Konkombas and the Nanumbas due to long standing difference of opinions between them. The Nanumbas perceive the shifting cultivation system of farming practiced by the Konkombas as wasteful whilst the Konkombas' viewpoint is that, the land is left fallow to regain its fertility for future use.

The religious composition in the district can be largely associated with ethnicity. The Nanumbas are predominantly Muslims, whilst the Konkombas are largely Christians and traditionalists. Ethnic and religious affiliations in the district are very strong and they have been sources of tension which often leads to a crystallization of identities as postulated by Linde and Naylor (1999).

The Nanumbas and the Konkombas coexisted peacefully until the 1970s despite isolated cases of violence due to differences in religion, identity, farming and other cultural practices. The 1970s witnessed the formation of ethnic based youth associations, whose activities are believed to be the major factors that led to the violent conflicts in 1981, 1994 and 1995 (Skalnik, 1983; Linde and Naylor, 1999; Brukum, 1999; Oquaye, 2000). Table 1 depicts milestones of the coexistence of the two ethnic groups.

Some of the causes of the conflict were traced to the British system of indirect rule in the colonial era. Nanun was administered under British protectorate from 1914 to the time of Ghana's independence. Since the indirect rule policy of the British was to empower chiefs from dominant ethnic groups in the given areas to rule over other ethnic groups, the Nanumba chief was elevated. Consequently when the Konkombas migrated to Nanun in 1938, they were required to pay allegiance to the Bimbilla Naa. This later became the source of discontentment and one of the major issues underlying the emancipation movement embarked upon by the Konkomba Youth Association (KOYA).

Table 1: Milestones in Nanumba - Konkomba Co-existence

Year	Milestone/Event
1930s	First Contact between Nanumbas and Konkombas
1938	Massive Migration of Konkombas from East Dagbon
1970s	Formation of Ethnic-Based Youth Associations
1981	The First Violent Nanumba/Konkomba Conflict
1994	Conflict affecting some districts in Northern, Volta & Brong Ahafo Regions
1995	Nanumba-Konkomba violent conflict in Bimbilla

Sources: Skalnik (2000), Brukum (2004), Field Survey, 2005

In the context of conflict analysis it is important to identify the '*dividing*' and '*connecting*' factors that influence the relationship or coexistence of the conflicting parties (International Alert, 2003). Interviews with chiefs, youth associations and some community members from both ethnic groups revealed that the two ethnic groups had different perceptions about certain issues, and these differences were the dividing factors fuelling the conflicts. These differences in perceptions are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Nanumba and Konkomba Perceptions on Some Issues

Nanumba Perspectives	ISSUES	Konkomba Perspectives
Nanumbas see the obligation as a way to integrate new settlers in Nanun into the local tradition and it is applicable to all settlers including Konkombas	Obligation to Provide Farm Labour to Chiefs	Obligation to work on Chief's farm as a form of paying allegiance, etc. applied to only Konkombas
Shifting cultivation system of farming is a Konkomba practice that leaves the land poor and exhausted	Shifting Cultivation	Shifting cultivation allows the land to regain its fertility
Konkombas can have their Chiefs, but they must be properly enskinned by the Bimbilla Naa	Chieftaincy	Konkonbas are not allowed to choose their own chiefs
Mainly Islam	Religious Beliefs	Mainly Christians and Traditionalists
Acknowledgement of Nanumbas as natives and owners of the land	Superior/Inferior relationship	Felt & treated as second class citizens (inferior)

Source: Skalnik (1983); Linde and Naylor (1999); Field Survey, January 2005

The acts of violent conflicts in the district were conditioned by one critical cognitive factor, i.e. the superiority and inferiority complexes in the relationship between the two ethnic groups. As indicated in Table 2, the Konkombas felt that the Nanumbas looked down on them as second-class citizens. On the other hand, the Nanumba respondents emphasized the need to acknowledge that the land belongs to Nanumbas and they expressed fears that the Konkombas could rule over them in their own land because of the demographic weight of the Konkombas. According to Linde & Naylor (1999), Konkombas form the second largest ethnic group in the Northern Region after Dagombas.

An understanding of these perceptions could provide an entry point that could ensure the active participation of the two ethnic groups in a conflict sensitive development planning process.

ANALYSIS OF THE MAJOR CAUSES AND IMPACTS OF CONFLICTS

From the perspectives of the different ethnic groups and other stakeholders, the underlying causes of the conflicts varied widely. However the study established that the underlying causes were mainly associated with the land tenure system and chieftaincy, which have become more evident with the demographic change, where the Konkomba population outnumbered the Nanumbas. This led to rising numbers of young people in need of land but who are not happy with the existing arrangement for land alienation. Although the land tenure issue was addressed in the Kumasi Peace Agreement with the Konkombas acknowledging the Nanumbas as the sole custodians of the land, empirical studies confirmed that grievances over land have persisted. Since agriculture is the mainstay of the district economy and key to sustainable livelihood, access to land will remain an issue of concern.

Observations confirmed respondents' views that the impacts of the past conflicts were still prevalent in the district and are said to include the district economy and administration, social, political and psychological impacts.

According to the respondents the major impact of the conflicts on the district economy was the fact that scarce resources (both private and public) were diverted from development and channelled to security. After every violent clash, reconstruction and rehabilitation of destroyed facilities and infrastructure became additional burdens for both the District Assembly and individual households. The insecurity had deprived the District from benefiting from several development interventions by many agencies and NGOs, and scared investors and civil servants away from the district.

The destruction of social infrastructure like schools, water and health facilities during violent conflicts severely impacted on the development of education and health in the district. This was further exacerbated by the refusal of teachers and health workers to take up postings to the district.

The major psychological impact of the conflicts is that it created severe division and mistrust between the two ethnic groups. As many as 67% of the respondents indicated that the conflict could erupt again due to the fact that Government and some politicians from both ethnic groups were not adequately addressing the issues at stake. Only 23% of the respondents thought otherwise, claiming that there was absolute peace and good relationship between the various ethnic groups in the district. Meanwhile the segregation between the two ethnic groups was still obvious as settlements like Bimbilla remained predominantly inhabited by Nanumbas.

There were some positive developments in terms of local political representation. The Nanumbas now recognise Konkomba chiefs and the latter had some representation in the Nanumba Traditional Council. There was also a fair representation of

both ethnic groups in the District Assembly. However political positions such as District Chief Executive (DCE) and Member of Parliament (MP) remained potential sources of conflicts.

The discussions have revealed that although the inter-ethnic conflicts appeared to have "died-down", the fear of instability in the District has serious implications for socio-economic development. This together with the cost involved in managing conflicts should have clearly informed development planning in the district.

INTEGRATION OF CONFLICTS INTO DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT

This section examines the views of the community members on conflict, peace and development. It also examines the efforts made by the District Assembly to mainstream conflict into the development of the district.

Community Views on Conflict, Peace and Development in the District

The views of the community members on conflict and development in the District were assembled by collating their experiences, fears and interest during focused group discussions involving chiefs and elders, the youth, women and children in selected communities.

The results revealed that community members regard conflict management and prevention as critical for the achievement of development in peace in the district. The strategies they outlined to achieve the desired development in peace included open and broad-based participation in the discussion of potential causes and prevention of conflicts, constant dialogue over potential issues of conflict, managing potential conflict actors coming from adjoining districts and neighbouring countries (e.g. Fulani Herdsmen), and promotion of tolerance and respect among people of diverse ethnic, social and economic groups. These strategies were the views expressed by the elders, youth, women and children in the district.

The major concerns of the elders included uninterrupted supply of farm inputs and willingness of extension workers to accept postings to their communities to help them increase their agriculture produce. On the other hand, women and children were more concerned about improved maternal and child health services. The peculiarity of the views of the later indicated the significance of involving all elements of the communities in the planning process, as each group had their own peculiar interest and needs.

It can be deduced that conflict and its related consequences form the core problems as indicated by all the social groups of the communities. It was therefore abundantly clear that conflict was a serious development issue that must be incorporated into the development planning process of the district.

Conflicts and Development Planning Process

This section presents the results of the investigations into the efforts being made by the District Assembly towards mainstreaming conflict management into the development planning process and the extent to which the views of the two major ethnic groups were incorporated. The respondents included the DPCU, DISEC and Assembly members. The views of these stakeholders were assembled into two main themes i.e. main development problems and causes of insecurity in the district. Under each of them five indicators were used to determine the stakeholders' general position with a ranking from 1 to 5 in order of priority.

As shown in table 3, low literacy was ranked highest instead of civil insecurity in spite of the fact that 67% of the respondents in the communities were of the view that the violent conflicts were likely to re-occur in the future. The second half of table 3 shows that as many as 45% of the respondents indicated that ethnic and chieftaincy issues were the two major causes of insecurity in the district. The implication here is that even though the major stakeholders in terms of Development Planning in the district were aware of the implications of conflict for development they did not see it as a major development problem. Thus the conflicts were seen as normal social problems that affect development negatively but were not considered priority when it came to identifying major development problems for consideration.

Table 3: Major Development Problems and Causes of Insecurity by Rank

Main Development Problems	1	2	3	4	5	To-tal	Causes of Insecurity	1	2	3	4	5	To-tal
Low Literacy Level	21.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	24.2	Ethnic Conflicts	12.1	6.1	0.0	6.1	0.0	24.2
Unemployment	9.1	0.0	0.0	6.1	6.1	21.2	Chieftaincy	18.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	21.2
Low Income Level	9.1	3.0	3.0	3.0	0.0	18.2	Individual or Group disputes	6.1	6.1	3.0	3.0	0.0	18.2
Civil Insecurity	6.1	3.0	3.0	0.0	6.1	18.2	High Crime Rate	6.1	0.0	3.0	3.0	6.1	18.2
Food Insecurity	0.0	3.0	6.1	3.0	6.1	18.2	Perennial Bushfire	3.0	3.0	12.1	0.0	0.0	18.2
Total	45.5	9.1	12.1	12.1	21.2	100	**Total**	45.5	15.2	18.2	12.1	9.1	100

The Development Planning Process in the District

According to the DPCU the process of preparing the Medium Term Plan started with consultations with stakeholders at the area council level. Each area council compiled their plans or projects from the respective unit committees, which were then forwarded to the Development Planning Sub-Committee at the Assembly.

Interviews with the chiefs, assembly members and community members revealed that the plan preparation process at the community level ensured the participation of all social and ethnic groups during the community meetings, which normally take place at the chief's palace. At such meetings, the community members deliberated and agreed on their needs which were then channelled through the assembly members to the Assembly. Community members expressed dissatisfaction with the delay in the approval of projects and the limited number that were approved. It is clear from this account that conflict management is not mainstreamed into the development planning process.

MAINSTREAMING CONFLICT ANALYSIS IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

One of the techniques for mainstreaming conflict in development outlined in the relevant literature is conflict analysis. Although as many as 60% of the expanded DPCU officials said that they integrated conflict analysis and conflict management into their planning, an examination of the Medium Term Plan proved that the analysis was inadequate. Out of the 40% of the DPCU members who indicated that they did not integrate conflict analysis and conflict management into their programme planning, 50% said that they did not see the need to incorporate conflict issues into their programme activities because it was not part of the terms of reference of their work. This confirms what the literature stresses that many development actors think that project/development work should not interfere with conflicts and advocate for projects to fold up when violent conflicts break out. This is no longer tenable because conflicts have been singled out as key development issues in the international community.

As many as 50% of the respondents said that conflict analysis was not effectively undertaken due to lack of staff, and 25% mentioned budget constraints. In terms of frequency of conflict sensitive analysis all the respondents indicated that these were carried out only when tensions reached alarming proportions. Since the analysis was only carried out when the need arose, the results of the analysis were not often incorporated into the planning process.

Although the planning authorities seem to be familiar with some conflict management techniques such as dialogue and negotiation, the degree to which these techniques were applied in the planning process was rather superficial.

Conflict Sensitive Programme/Project Planning

Conflict sensitive planning leads to a fair understanding of how programmes or projects can escalate or de-escalate conflicts (Resource Pack, 2004). For example when planning to provide a borehole in a village where there is a chieftaincy dispute, an analysis of the persons to contact, the location of the borehole and the reactions of feuding parties for instance should be part of the conflict sensitivity framework that could determine how the project will be implemented without causing conflict.

According to Braimah & Jagre (2007) some boreholes in the District were sited based on ethnic considerations to separate the users in order to avoid an escalation of petty quarrels into violent conflicts. They further noted however that although boreholes served as points where petty quarrels especially among women were rife they could also be good sources of reconciling the two ethnic groups. When members from both groups share a common borehole and come together (e.g. through a WATSAN committee) to resolve problems regarding the facility, they will integrate faster than when they stay apart. Furthermore if water facilities are shared there is a lesser probability that those facilities would be destroyed in times of conflicts. One respondent even mentioned that sitting of schools often brought about conflict and the subsequent separation or withdrawal of children from schools that are perceived to belong to or located in "enemy" territory.

Another challenge for planning in conflict prone communities is the high probability of associating everything with the conflict. In this district in particular project approval decisions and delay in project implementation for genuine reasons such as funding problems were often interpreted as acts of deliberate discrimination. Planners under such circumstances must play their negotiation and mediation roles well by explaining the rationale for the approval of projects to the various groups.

Integrating a Conflict Sensitive Framework into the Planning Process

The analysis here focuses more on the assessment of the willingness to apply a conflict sensitive planning framework for district development. It is interesting to note that whilst as many as 80% of the respondents from the district administration and the decentralised departments agreed that integrating a conflict sensitive framework into the district planning process could help to reduce or prevent violent conflicts in the district, only 20% suggested that the Assembly should take responsibility for conflict analysis. About 40% of the respondents suggested that DISEC should take the responsibility of mainstreaming conflict in the development planning process. Also 60% of the respondents indicated that conflict analysis should be done on an annual basis, whilst 20% implied that conflict analysis should be carried out only when the need arises such as tensions reaching alarming proportions, or when violence was eminent.

The respondents had several views regarding the effectiveness of a conflict sensitive framework. Some suggested the formation of a community forum to air their views and concerns with regards to peace and coexistence before the implementation of the framework. Others thought that until the framework was implemented it would be difficult to measure its effectiveness.

In terms of how a conflict sensitive framework could best be applied for development in the district, 60% of the respondents suggested that it should be first discussed with all stakeholders, especially opinion leaders in the district, and if it is accepted then it can become part of the district annual action plan. However 20% of the respondents were still sceptical about the implementation of the framework because the ethnic issues go beyond the boundaries of the District. Some respondents indicated that the framework had shortfalls in terms of difficulties in getting all stakeholders to be part of the process.

The resource requirements to carry out conflict sensitive development planning activities were reported to be huge in many experiences (Resource Pack, 2004). These financial difficulties could be overcome as long as there was political

commitment. The chances of obtaining political commitment in the district was good in view of the fact that as many as 75% of the assembly members interviewed indicated their willingness to support a motion for a special budget allocation to promote conflict sensitive planning in the district. The respondents from the District Administration indicated that they were willing to allocate about 1.5 - 5% of the district budget for conflict sensitive activities. In 2004, only 30 million out of 5.4 billion cedis, (representing a paltry 0.06% of the district revenue) was allocated to conflict resolution efforts. However one respondent from the district administration hinted that the 5% of the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF) that was allocated for contingency and disaster management could be used to promote conflict sensitive planning activities. Even though the current guidelines for the use of the DACF did not explicitly state so this could be accommodated.

Although the general response indicated that the Assembly was willing to include conflict analysis and management into its planning activities, the DPCU did not regard conflict as a major development problem. This was probably because they considered conflict as a security matter and that was why most of them (i.e. 40%) thought that conflict analysis should be carried out by DISEC.

INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Five different types of institutions including NGOs, the Traditional Authority, Youth Associations, DISEC and the NCCE were identified to be actively engaged in programmes aimed at promoting peaceful coexistence within the communities. The NGOs were involved in capacity building of assembly members and traditional rulers on peace issues, good governance and human rights.

A District Peace Committee consisting of assembly members and traditional rulers was formed to extend the message of peace to all the communities in the district. However, due to financial and other logistics constraints, much of the outreach activities could not be realized. The traditional rulers interviewed reported that they were still performing their conflict resolution roles in their localities, which normally involved settling disputes between families, youth, and clans.

DISEC indicated that there was some kind of security 'early warning' system in the district. The mechanism involved in the detection of early signs of rising tensions, and followed up to take action based on the findings.

Other institutions involved in mediating and resolving conflicts included the Department of Social Welfare and the Commission on Human Rights and Justice (CHRAJ). The contribution of the District Magistrate Court towards conflict resolution in the district can not be ruled out. However, some respondents from the Assembly and opinion leaders indicated that the security information in the district remained a domain of the DISEC and this was not being shared with other stakeholders in the district.

The existence of these institutions serves as an opportunity for the adoption of a conflict sensitive planning process with the Assembly playing the coordinating role and involving all these stakeholders.

GAPS IN THE APPLICATION OF CONFLICT SENSITIVE PLANNING

Mainstreaming conflict has become an indispensable element of the planning process in many districts in Ghana mainly because out of the then 138 districts in 2003, 26.1 % of them were affected by conflicts concerning chieftaincy, ethnicity and land ownership. In spite of this frequency of occurrence of conflicts the guidelines for development planning do not explicitly incorporate conflict analysis as a requirement. This gap is responsible for the absence of preventive measures, leaving only suppression of conflicts by force and short-term post conflict interventions as the only conflict management strategies which have had limited impacts in terms conflict prevention in a sustainable manner.

The planning guidelines did not advocate the adoption of conflict sensitive approaches, because conflicts were regarded as constraints to the development planning process and therefore isolated and put under the security domain, meanwhile the impacts of violent conflicts are directly linked to development. Ironically there was substantial awareness of the relationship between conflict and development planning at the district level. Yet, the extent to which conflict was mainstreamed and integrated in the development planning process was still superficial. Although in general, the stakeholders of development in the District were receptive to the application of conflict sensitive planning frameworks, the tendency of regarding conflicts as security issues remained dominant.

The results of the study however revealed that the challenge of mainstreaming conflict into the development planning process in Ghana was surmountable. The prospects in conflict prone areas like the Nanumba North District was good because the study revealed that the stakeholders appreciated the need and were willing to do so. Fortunately the NDPC is currently piloting the mainstreaming of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) into the Planning Process in ten districts in Ghana with UNDP support. The result of the pilot is likely to lead to the preparation of District Development Planning guidelines that will include the mainstreaming of DDR into the development process in Ghana. This would be the best opportunity to mainstream conflict into the development process from the national to the local level since conflict is a significant aspect of disasters in Ghana.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

As indicated above the adoption of a conflict sensitive framework calls for planners and all other stakeholders of development to consider conflicts as major development problems. Key factors that determine the successful implementation of such a framework vary from national to local levels. At the national level, it is the responsibility of the NDPC to prepare conflict sensitive planning guidelines and the necessary capacity building to ensure implementation. The Ministries also need to adopt conflict sensitive approaches in their sector programmes in order to bridge the gaps identified in this study.

One sustainable way to budget for the mainstreaming of conflict management into the development planning process in order to overcome the much anticipated financial constraints is to re-designate the 5% of the DACF normally reserved for contingency for conflict and disaster management related activities. Not less important is the commitment of the highest level of government and political leadership to support shifting of conflict management policy framework from reactive to

preventive measures. This includes the ratification of a regulatory framework and institutional reforms to facilitate the process.

The regional level must be empowered to support the District Assemblies and their sub-district structures because they are supposed to be directly involved in the effective coordination and implementation of development plans. The main factors here are the capacity of the planning authorities to undertake the conflict sensitive activities and the commitment of the Assemblies to allocate the required financial resources, and to pass bylaws when necessary for effective implementation of the framework. In this sense, basic technical knowledge of conflict management techniques in development should be part of the necessary qualification for planning staffs in the districts.

Another factor worth noting in the implementation of the framework is the role of civil society. There are many NGOs and CBOs in the country that are working to promote peace. Their programmes and projects could complement Government efforts at all levels (including national, regional and district/local) and also provide checks and balances to ensure accountability in the implementation of conflict sensitive planning. The media and academic community are not least important. The media, not only can warn, but also air violent outbreak of conflicts. They can also perform the function of monitoring and evaluation, while the academic community carries out evidence based research in support of policy formulation and implementation.

The discussions above have revealed that the challenges of adopting a conflict sensitive development planning framework in Ghana include inadequate capacity in terms of conflict sensitive planning skills and the commitment to support a paradigm shift towards conflict sensitive development planning. These challenges could be managed by institutionalizing conflict sensitive approaches in development planning at all levels of government and by making it an integral part of the development planning process.

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