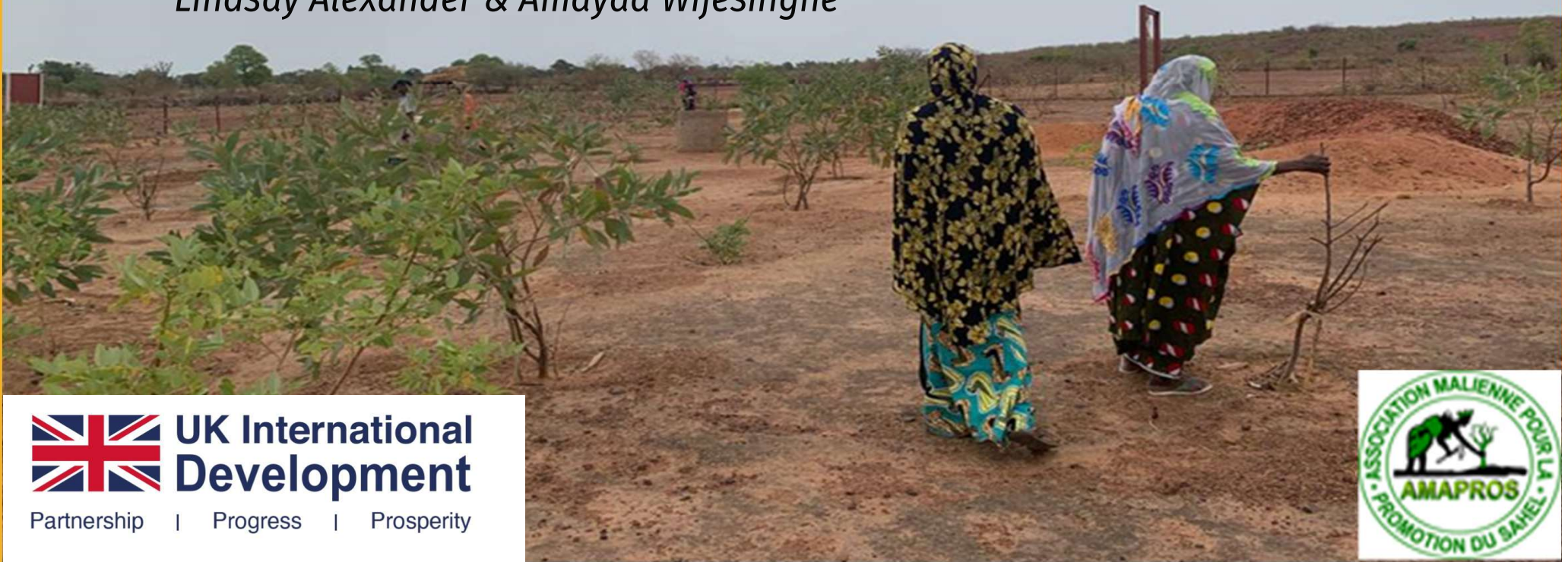




Credit: CARE Mali

Strengthening climate resilience, social cohesion & gender equality in Ségou, Mali: Learning from the ISF GENRE++ project

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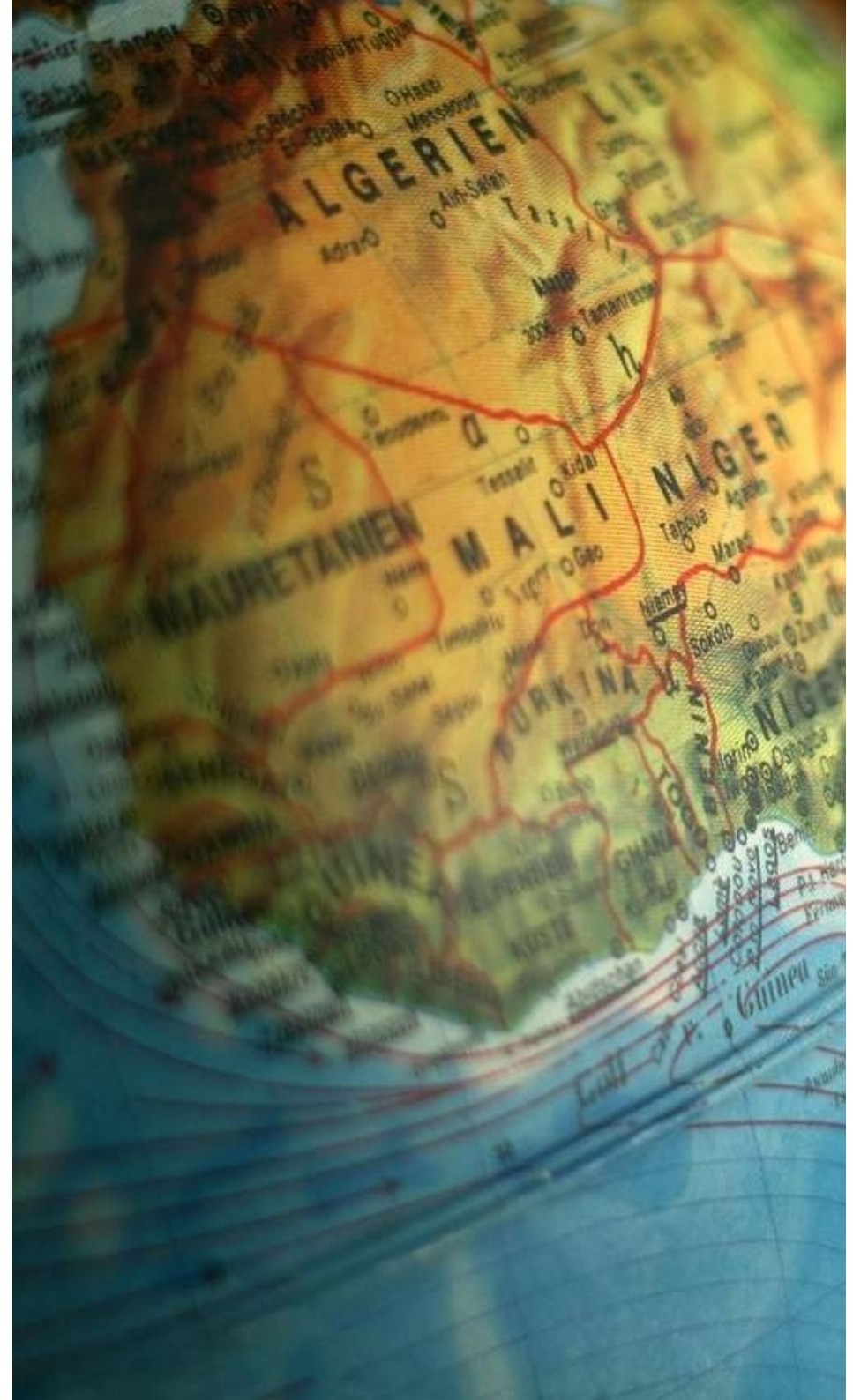
Partnership | Progress | Prosperity



This Session:

- Relevance
- Context
- Project objectives
- What change have we seen?
- How was this achieved?
- Challenges & learning:
What works?

Funder: UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and
Development Office (FCDO)



Relevance



 UK Government

UK Women, Peace and Security
National Action Plan 2023-2027



This project addresses cross-cutting FCDO global objectives:

UK ISF Strategy: The causes of instability (climate insecurity, weak governance, inequality) and those worst affected, including women and girls.

UK Climate Finance Strategy: Gender responsive and inclusive climate finance for adaptation and mitigation.

UK WPS Strategy: Women's meaningful participation, leadership and representation in decision-making processes and addressing the needs and participation of women and girls in humanitarian, justice and crisis response.


HM Government

Together for People and Planet

UK International Climate Finance Strategy



March 2023


Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

International Women and
Girls Strategy 2023-2030



Governance structures are in place to manage resources and resolve disputes:

- *State*: Land Commission (COFO), Village Chief's Councils, Water and Forest technical services.
- *Non-state*: Conflict Prevention, Waterpoint Management and Forest Watch Committees, Women's Associations and Youth Committees.

However:

- Decision-making has excluded women,
- Women cannot own land and can only access communal land,
- NRM regulations were often insufficient or unenforced,
- Understanding of current and predicted climate risks to build resilience and capacities in conflict prevention/ mitigation were limited, and
- Community trust and social cohesion was weak.

Project objectives (2023-25)

Through an **integrated climate resilience, gender equality and social cohesion approach** CARE and partners seek to catalyse locally-led responses by:

- 1. Improving governance in natural resource management (NRM)**, making it more inclusive, consensual and collaborative.
- 2. Revitalising conflict management mechanisms and strengthening community-based adaptation** to reduce vulnerability to climatic and social shocks.
- 3. Transforming negative gender social norms and strengthening women's participation** to ensure women's inclusion in strategic decision-making spaces related to NRM and peacebuilding





**What Changes
Have We Seen?**

1. Women's increased participation in NRM decision-making. Social norms are changing.

Women now hold positions of authority for the first time on bodies such as village councils, village land commissions and forest, environmental protection and conflict management committees.

Sixteen women have now been appointed to new leadership roles.

Women's confidence to negotiate has increased (46% to 56%)

Gender equal attitudes among men and boys have improved (73 to 83% reporting GE attitudes)

“Before we used to seek the advice of our wives discreetly at home to deal with a problem. Nowadays, women play this role directly in the COFO or as female representatives on the village council in order to resolve conflict.”

Male participant, Toukoro focus group.

Ramatou Dao: New Leader



Women are the main users of forest resources, however, the **Environmental and Forest Protection Brigade Committee** in the village of Kanouala had been made up of five male hunters.

In the past, women were rarely consulted on key decisions such as the schedule for harvesting forest products.

Ramatou now sits on the committee.

Since Ramatou's appointment, women are now actively consulted on the most suitable periods for harvesting.

This participatory approach ensures that women's needs and knowledge are considered and they are able to participate in the harvest, resulting in greater equity and higher yields, as well as greater respect for rules to prevent over-exploitation.

2. Increased community capacity and collaboration to adapt to the impacts of climate change

69% of respondents report that they have adopted practices to protect their livelihoods from climate shocks. This includes:

- Planting improved seeds
 - Sustainable farming techniques, including crop diversification
 - Reforestation initiatives
 - Creation of 16km of animal passages
 - Development of 24 women's market garden areas
- ➔ 3036 women can now either sell or consume their produce grown, strengthening their economic power and household food security
- ➔ Pressure on land has reduced

3. More robust and inclusive governance has strengthened NRM compliance and accountability

Participants have noted communities have become more respectful of established rules and greater compliance with governing the passage of animals and payment of fines since the implementation of new legislation:

➔ **75% respondents** felt that the rules governing the use and management of natural resources were now well understood and accepted by everyone (73% men/ 78% women).

More inclusive participation builds ownership and trust:

➔ **40% of respondents** said they had taken part in consultations/negotiations on NRM, (47% men / 34% women).

Improved NRM governance has helped:

- Secure the protection of tree species,
- Reduced abusive logging, illegal land clearing and bush fires and
- Reduced conflicts between farmers and livestock breeders.

4. Communal development plans (PDSEC) and budgets better respond to community-driven adaptation priorities

- To date, ten Communal Councils have taken into account 86 proposed climate adaptation actions identified by diverse community members in their annual financing plans or PDSEC.
- Of these, 34 actions are considered ‘gender-sensitive’.
- This demonstrates the influence of the project’s community mobilisation and advocacy initiatives and the potential for longer term, sustainable change through municipalities’ commitments to implementing inclusive actions to adapt to the effects of climate change.

5. Conflict is reduced

Increased capacity and use of traditional conflict prevention and management mechanisms has reduced NRM-related conflicts.

- The frequency of conflicts have reportedly reduced in the past 12 months from **60 to 22%**, and 100% of respondents believe that the intensity of conflicts has decreased (across both men and women).
- Of the respondents who had observed conflicts, 67% identified land disputes as the cause.
- Satisfaction with traditional conflict resolution mechanisms increased from **63% to 74%** (similar between men and women). Satisfaction with state mechanisms remains lower – not a project target (53%).
- Conflict management committees and awareness-raising campaigns are cited as the major contributing factor to conflict reduction.
- 40% of respondents said they were involved in mediation/conflict resolution decision-making processes, **though men (45%) remain more involved than women (36%)**.

Conflicts no longer escalate and are now addressed at community level

- The revitalisation of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms have prevented the escalation of NRM-related conflicts to town councils and the courts.
- In the village of Toukoro (Bla), the village chief estimates that over 80% of conflicts are now resolved using traditional mechanisms.
- Regular consultation frameworks demonstrate gradual strengthening of collaborative relations between villages, with a positive influence perceived even in surrounding villages outside the project area.

In **Beyan village**, prior to the project, every year during the rainy season, 3 to 4 land conflicts would escalate to communal authorities or the courts, sometimes between farmers and herders but mostly between farmers themselves. Since the project has helped set up a conflict management committee and provided capacity-building support, according to the Beyan Village Chief, *“During the 2023 rainy season, all the conflicts that arose were resolved.”*



**How was this
achieved?**

Development of 7 Local NRM Conventions and 12 Climate Adaptation Action Plans (CAAPs)

- **Climate and Conflict Vulnerability Capacity Assessments (CCVCA):** to analyse past coping strategies and the impact of climate shocks on livelihoods, gender equality and social cohesion, and to identify entry points for collaboration (participation of 285 stakeholders, including 99 women)
- Participatory development of **12 Climate Adaptation Action Plans (CAAPS)**, one per commune.
- **Seven new natural resource management conventions agreed for the first time:** 103 articles have been put in place to better manage natural resources linked to fishing, agriculture, livestock farming, forestry, quarrying, etc. Involving 558 young people, women and natural resource users, these were drawn up by the water and forest technical department based on legal texts/laws.
- **Awareness-raising sessions to promote climate change adaptation best practice** to support community implementation of the action plans.
- **Advocacy workshops** were facilitated between community groups and Communal Councils to support integration of community actions/priorities in municipal PDSEC and annual finance plans.

Strengthening NRM mechanisms for conflict prevention and building social bonds

- Capacity of existing mechanisms have been strengthened through training 494 stakeholders on conflict prevention and management techniques.
- Regular consultation and monitoring forums are facilitated with community stakeholders and decision makers to monitor commitments made under local NRM agreements.
- Mass cultural events, including football matches and traditional folk dances, are organised to build bonds between communities focused on collaboration, entertainment and awareness-raising related to peace and social cohesion.

Addressing tensions in Seimona

In the village of Siemona (Barouéli), tensions had been running high. A festival was organised to bring together neighbouring villages, with whom there has often been conflict over land management. One of the village's female leaders said: *“the festival was a decisive moment, bringing the villagers together despite their differences”*.

Building women's capacity to participate in decision-making

- Using **CARE's Women Lead in Emergencies (WLiE)** approach, women's groups collectively identified their own barriers to and strategies for more active participation and leadership in community decision-making.
- 48 WLiE action plans were developed and implemented by 1600 women, using budgets under the groups' control.

RSO

Priority actions included:

- Building women's literacy – 1290 women have participated in literacy courses;
- Women's awareness-raising and skills training on climate change/adaptation, women's rights and leadership in NRM and conflict resolution with women and male allies.

Community awareness and dialogue forums on women's participation

- 120 awareness-raising and dialogue forums on gender norms, obstacles to, and solutions for, strengthening women's participation in public decision making, including NRM (including over 2,500 women, men, young people and decision makers)

RSO

Just for info- some examples of other actions in the WLIE plans:

- Strengthen communities' knowledge of the impact and need to adapt to climate change (learning soil conservation techniques, use of compost, RNA)
- Seeking partners/funding for boreholes for market garden areas, cereal storage warehouses
- Strengthen collaboration and networking between VSLA groups to better address the barriers that prevent women from participating in decision-making bodies
- Strengthen women's economic power to facilitate their access to decision-making bodies
- Awareness raising on women's rights and importance of their participation in decision making bodies as well as importance of women's self-confidence and public speaking
- Mobilise and engage men as allies to promote acceptance of women's rights and raise awareness of the benefits of active female representation in decision-making processes relating to natural resource management and conflict resolution

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Challenges & Learning

On-going institutionalisation and investment in climate resilience is needed

- Climate resilient/adaptive practices have been adopted and access to livelihood services has improved.
- However, **58% of respondents still feel that their household is not well equipped to cope with climatic shocks**, with similar perceptions held between men and women.
- **75% of respondents said they had been affected by a climate shock** in the past 12 months (78% M/ 73% W). Flooding was the main concern (91%), followed by drought (20%).
- Further **institutionalisation of climate adaptation policy responses** among local/regional authorities is needed.

Consolidating NRM Governance Gains

- There remains a **moderate level of community knowledge about the existence of the local NRM agreements** and a low level of awareness of the content. This is an area to work on.
- Further investment in capacity of members **of the forest and environmental protection brigades is needed** (e.g. on their roles and responsibilities and the rules for managing impoundments in communities with recently signed NRM conventions).
- Strengthening non-state conflict resolution mechanisms has proven effective. However, as climate pressure increases, **state conflict resolution mechanisms need to be strengthened, and links between formal and informal mechanisms built (important for women's access to state systems).**

Consolidating women's participation & leadership in NR/conflict management

*66% participants (85% W/ 53% M) agree that increased participation of women in decision-making processes has led to **more effective solutions to conflicts over natural resources** (CARE research, March 2024).*

Women now actively collaborate in climate adaptation and awareness raising - beyond their traditional roles: *Women have launched reforestation initiatives, now practice Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) and participate in forest protection brigades in multiple communes.*

Women have access to NRM resources for the first time, increasing equity and reducing pressure on agro-pastoral land:

In Benguene, the new female representative on the Village Council successfully lobbied the Council and Cooperative Society for Cotton Producers for women to receive subsidised fertiliser, which until now, no woman had benefitted from.

In Ouedenbougou, following lobbying by the WLiE women's group, a certificate of transfer of a plot of land was, for the first time, drawn up in the name of the women of Ouedenbougou.

Women have more influence in decision making spaces and can actively defend the interests of women and other groups in NRM/conflict resolution:

Women's key role in drafting local NRM agreements has led to changes in legal regulations - notably in relation to allocation of at least 15% to women's and youth associations in the event of land development.

Shifts in male attitudes is creating space for more diverse voices in conflict prevention/mediation: *In Siribougou, five women are now invited to join the Council for crucial village decisions – a practice that was unheard of before GENRE + interventions. These women have recently acted as mediators in resolving a conflict between two producers.*

Women are working together in unexpected ways:

In Konodimini, women denounced the renewal of the all-male board of the Community Health Association (ASACO) and called for the application of law 052. The new board was renewed to meet the gender equality quota, with a balanced 50% representation of 7 women and 7 men.

Religious leaders are also consulting with women for the first time as their value in contributing to community affairs is being recognised.

However:

- Inclusive **participation** does not necessarily result in women's increased **influence** over NRM. Only 15% respondents (split evenly between men and women) reported that natural resource management integrates the needs of women and minority groups (CARE Research, March 2024).
- 12% of respondents (mainly women at 19% and men at 6%) say they have encountered challenges in integrating women into NRM decision-making. This is attributed to traditions and social norms that do not portray women as suitable leaders, and a lack of education and self-confidence among women.
- Lack of land availability and entrenched customary laws continue to restrict women's access to land, *though this is slowly changing*
- Women remain active predominantly in the areas where they traditionally play a role in NRM, as natural resources users (such as in firewood collection and market gardening), rather than as land owners – *however, again this is slowly changing*
- While new local NRM agreements now promote involvement of vulnerable groups (including women and children) in institutional NRM mechanisms, this is not a requirement, and women are still framed as a 'vulnerable group', rather than as active participants.

Promoting gender equity in climate and conflict resilience: What Works

Supporting women to identify and address barriers to their participation:

By building women's literacy, financial management skills, and climate knowledge, they now have access to information, manage their own books, can better organise and take notes and have increased confidence to participate in meetings.

Supporting women's economic independence: Women's market gardens are strengthening household food security and income, reducing pressure on land and building women's negotiation power in the household/community.

Supporting women's engagement in building resilience to climate/conflict shocks: Women are supporting more resilient practices and reducing the potential for conflict. This also demonstrates to the community the value of women's participation (role-modelling).

Facilitating attitudinal and behavioural change on the importance of women's participation: Safe community dialogue forums and awareness raising among community members/leaders is shifting gender norms, creating an enabling environment for women's participation in NR and conflict management.

Building connections between women, youth and wider community members

Cultural events and dialogue/consultation frameworks are bringing communities together to collectively discuss NRM and hold each other to account. Women and youth from different villages are connecting for the first time.

Building alliances with formal and traditional leadership in support of women's active engagement:

We have learned that elected community representatives must be involved throughout to guarantee transfer of accessible/productive land to women's groups by village authorities within new frameworks.

Institutionalising gender-responsive climate/NRM commitments: Community-driven advocacy for gender-responsive climate actions and tracking their integration into development plans and budgets is supporting commitment to sustainable change by state institutions.

Longer term FCDO investment has enabled more transformational, sustainable change: this is the second phase of the project (2021-2025, phase I&II, with phase II focused more on conflict prevention and women's participation)



Credit: CARE Mali

Community discussion in the women's rehabilitated market gardening area in Kamporosso I (Bla)

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THANK YOU!

