

Securing the commons No.3

From conflict to consensus

Towards joint management of
natural resources by pastoralists
and agro-pastoralists in the zone
of Kishi Beiga, Burkina Faso

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Summary

Kishi Beiga is a vast pastoral zone situated in the extreme north of Burkina Faso. The zone is home to several different ethnic groups living in scattered villages and hamlets. This local population is both sedentary and semi-sedentary and they are joined regularly by transhumant herders from neighbouring regions. Environmental degradation in the area and extensive in-migration has largely destroyed the complementarity between agriculture and livestock, and the two systems now compete for land. Local management systems have broken down.

In 1991, GTZ and the Government of Burkina Faso initiated the Burkina Sahel Programme (PSB) to improve natural resource management and people's livelihoods. The project initially followed a participatory community-based land use planning approach, but found that this was inadequate to deal with the social realities and complexities of the region. Transhumant pastoralists were not represented, social relations between groups were affecting the outcome of project activities in a way that the project was unable to understand, and management of communal assets was problematic.

Activities were "put on hold" for a year while its approach and methodology were reviewed and a new strategy developed that focused on social groups rather than territorial units. With conflicts and rivalries simmering between almost every ethnic group in Beiga, the challenge was to create a situation in which all stakeholders would not only agree to participate in the consultative process but also to respect each other's rights to voice their needs and feelings. Programme activities shifted towards facilitating consultation and collaboration among the different groups within the community, using participatory methods.

The new approach acknowledged the role that historical processes played in causing local tensions and rivalries among the population in Kishi Beiga, thereby contributing to the breakdown in natural resource management systems. Successive political regimes, local power structures and land tenure policies have shaped social relationships within the region, frequently exacerbating conflicts and rivalries. Ignoring this socio-ethnic and political complexity threatened to derail development initiatives of the PSB. The willingness of people to recognise the importance of historical, social and cultural factors in current resource use and management practices was an important factor contributing to the success of the

consultative process. Other factors include finding appropriate entry points for discussion, changing the role of development agents, building partnerships and supporting legitimate local leaders and resource people.

The PSB provides an important example of an approach that tries to deal with the social diversity and complexity, typical of the Sahel, through establishing platforms for negotiation and consultation. However, such an approach is not without challenges, some of which are identified at the end of this publication.

Introduction

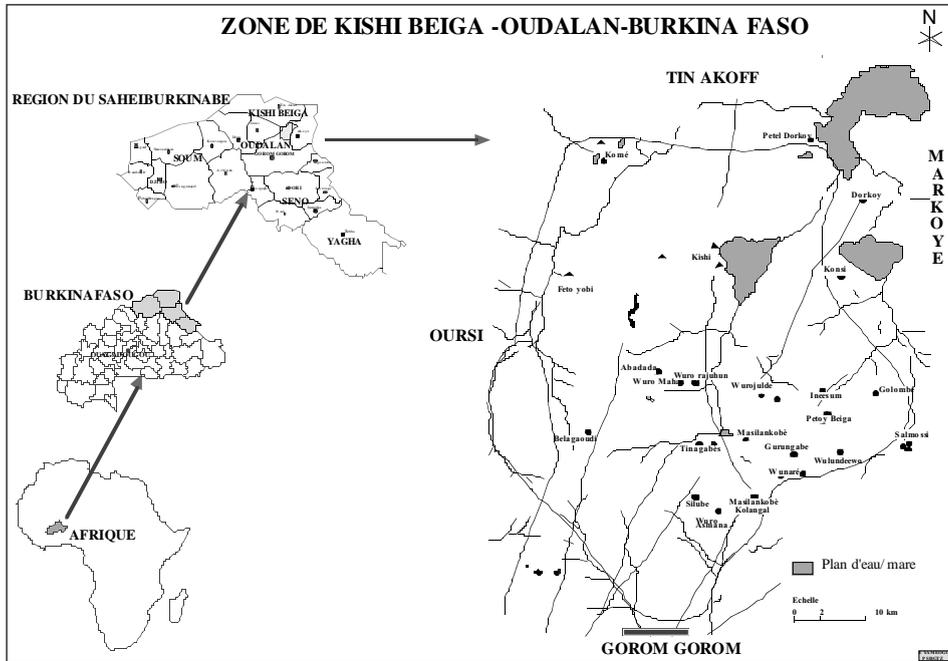
This paper traces the process that has led to the emergence of a development platform in the zone of Kishi Beiga, situated in the extreme north of Burkina Faso. Home to many different ethnic groups, the complex history of this pastoral zone has at times threatened to derail development initiatives such as the GTZ component of Burkina Sahel programme (PSB), which was launched in 1991 as part of a programme of German development aid to the country. After an initially shaky start, the PSB has facilitated a shift towards consultation rather than confrontation, and now involves a wide variety of interest groups at supra-village level: pastoralists and agro-pastoralists, former slaves and their masters, local people and transhumant herders.

The consultative mechanisms that have been developed during this process have enabled local people to take responsibility for the sustainable management of natural resources, and ultimately, the long-term development of the zone. To this end, a local agreement regulating the use of natural resources in the area has been drawn up and signed.

This case study will analyse the circumstances that initially stalled the collaborative process, as well as the conditions that allowed it to regain momentum. We will examine the underlying causes of the conflicts and rivalries that have shaped the history of the region, and show how political regimes, local power structures and land tenure policies have contributed to anarchy in the area. Finally, we will analyse the project, and assess why it was initially unable to promote the collaborative process among local people.

The success of the consultative framework shows how a truly participatory approach can bring people together, and by enabling them to resolve their differences, re-establish social harmony and further their development. It also highlights the delicate role played by external agencies as their interventions effect social change in societies struggling to find a balance between traditional hegemony and modern equity.

Figure 1 Map of the zone of Kishi Beiga



Source: F. Yameogo, PSB-GTZ evaluation and follow up unit

The context

A pastoral zone 'par excellence'

Kishi Beiga is a vast pastoral zone situated in Oudalan province in northern Burkina Faso (see map in Figure 1).¹ This Sahelian zone is characterised by dunes interspersed with areas of tiger bush and hardpan, and hills and low lying rocky ridges dotted with densely vegetated wetlands and flood plains. Millet is cultivated on the ancient erg², while the more recent erg (which is less clayey) and other types of land are used exclusively for pastoralism. At only 350 to 450mm, annual rainfall is low and varies considerably in time and space, which explains the local preference for rearing livestock and production systems with a certain degree of mobility.

The sedentary and semi-sedentary populations live in villages and hamlets and belong to several ethnic groups, namely the Tuareg, the Bella, various sub-groups of the Fulani, and the Mallébé.³ The principal village in the zone of Kishi Beiga is Beiga, the historic capital of Oudalan.⁴ According to custom, the zone falls under the authority of a Tuareg chief, who has since colonial times also acted as chief of canton for the whole of Oudalan. For administrative reasons he is now based in Gorom-Gorom, the provincial county town. The State is represented in different villages in the zone by village level administrators, known as RAVs.⁵

This zone has great potential for pastoral use, as the wetlands and recently formed ergs provide dry season pasture, while the areas between dunes can be grazed during the growing season, and the area is dotted with water holes, water courses and salt licks.⁶ These resources attract various groups of transhumant herders from neighbouring regions, who periodically come into the area and set up camp beside the permanent residents. During their stay they make use of stopover points and

1 Between 14°27' and 14°50' latitude north and 0° and 0°25' longitude west.

2 An area of sand dunes.

3 (Mallébé = weaver). Originally from the Fouta in Mali, this group came to the Oudalan zone during the troubles that preceded the creation of the Fulani Empire in Macina. It is mainly composed of Rimaibé Fulani who had been emancipated and freed long before they moved to the zone, but who were then subjugated to the Tuareg on their arrival in Oudalan, acting as their foot soldiers during wars and raids.

4 Balima, S. A. (1996), *Légendes et histoires des peuples du Burkina Faso*.

5 Responsables Administratifs Villageois.

6 Cf. Figure 2.

local representatives in the host village or zone, in a reciprocal arrangement that enables residents to move to other zones in times of hardship. According to the terms of this arrangement, local people cannot refuse in-comers access to resources.

In the rainy season, transhumant herds come from the more agricultural zones, taking advantage of the few cultivated fields in the area, while in the dry season the water hole provides a permanent supply of water. As the dry season progresses, herders from the zone of Beiga join the 'outsiders' moving up to the pastoral areas in the north, where pastures are generally more plentiful due to the low population densities and minimal agricultural activity.

A zone in crisis

Like the rest of Sahelian Burkina Faso, Kishi Beiga has been affected by the aftermath of the droughts of the 1970s and 1980s and the worsening economic and institutional situation. As natural resources become increasingly degraded through increased pressure, traditional social relationships and systems of production have changed significantly, dragging many households into a downward spiral of impoverishment.

Environmental degradation caused by successive years of poor rainfall after the major droughts has been exacerbated by the combined effects of natural population growth and the in-migration of people from areas where desertification is more acute. This has destroyed the complementarity between agriculture and livestock, and the two systems now compete for land. As more land is cultivated, less is available for pasture, and the traditional land use systems that relied on mobility, control over access to resources, social regulations and local pastoral knowledge, have been thrown into crisis.

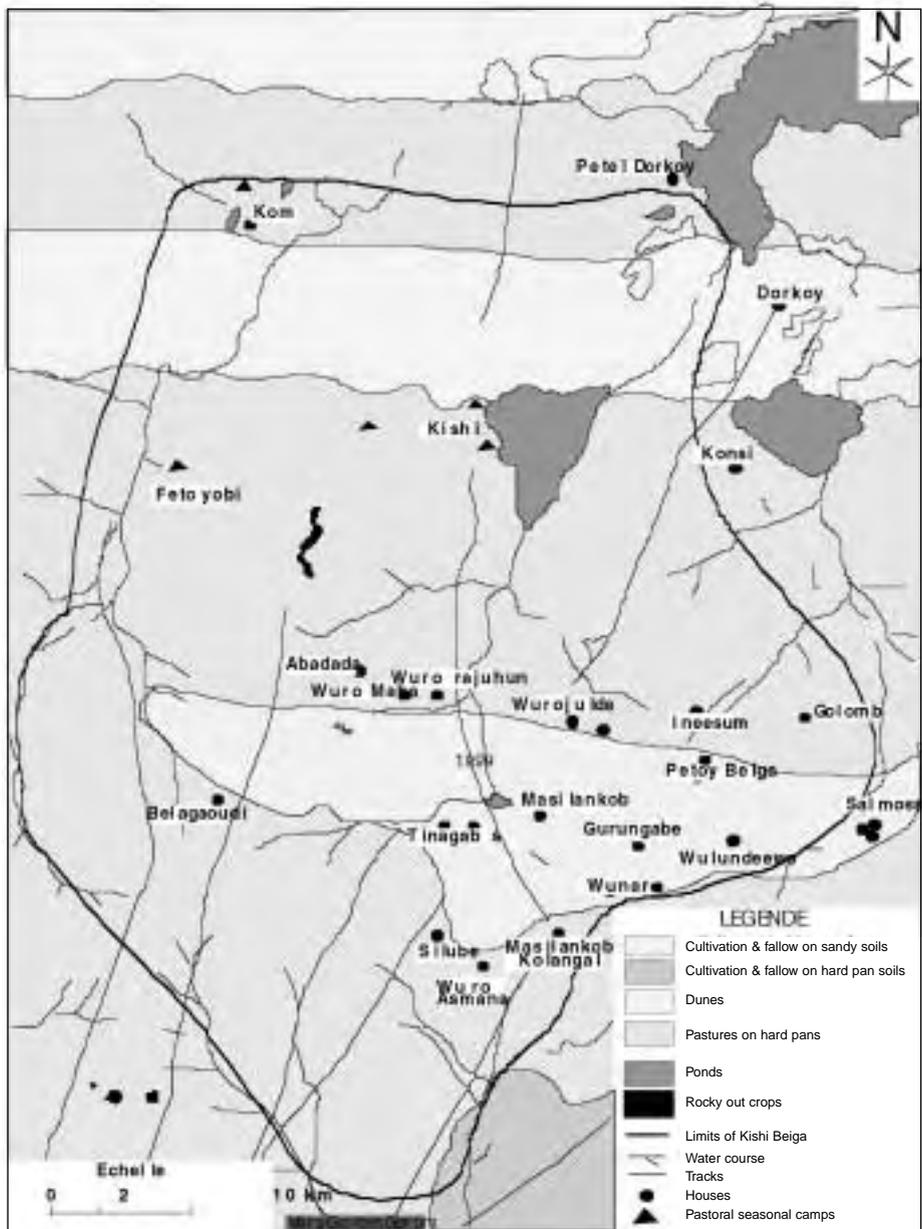
In the past, this pastoral 'Eldorado' was managed informally by a committee of elders selected by the canton chief.⁷ They were responsible for drawing up rules and regulations for access to and use of natural resources in their area (such as denying access to all animals with infectious diseases), and ensuring that they were respected. This type of management no longer exists, and with successive political regimes and local administrations the situation has descended into anarchy, marked by sometimes violent conflicts.

Tracing the causes of anarchy

The zone of Beiga, like the whole area between Dori and the River Beli, has long been fought over. The last conquerors before colonisation and the creation of the

⁷ Kalmogo, R. (1997), *Etude de systèmes traditionnels de gestion des ressources pastorales dans la zone de Kishi Beiga*.

Figure 2 Map of resources in the zone of Kishi Beiga



Source : F. Yameogo, PSB-GTZ monitoring an evaluation unit

'Upper Volta' were the Udalen Tuareg⁸, who were members of the Tenguereguedesh, a great Tuareg family that belonged to the confederation of Ulleminden.⁹ The Udalen came into the zone in about 1800,¹⁰ bringing their vassals (the Dagabe) and other groups of warriors.¹¹ In 1827 they wrested control of the zone from the Emir of Liptako¹² in a huge battle waged in the Kissi encampment,¹³ right in the centre of our study area. After being pushed back almost to the gates of Dori, the Emir's men were forced to pay tribute to the tribal chief of the Udalen, the *Aménokal*, until colonisation some seventy years later.

Colonisation: the initial source of conflict

After the Udalen Tuareg were defeated in 1898 by French colonial troops and their Fulani allies from Liptako,¹⁴ the defeated *Aménokal* of the Udalen, N'Djoug (or Nzuga) was obliged to take up residence in Beiga. This was one of the conditions of his surrender (clause 10 of an agreement ratified in 1899), which led to the creation of a pastoral zone, or reserve, shown in Figure 3 below. The Udalen nobles were forbidden to leave this area, and Clause 15 of the conditions¹⁵ of surrender specifically stated that no one was to cross the boundaries without permission from the commandant posted at Dori.

These measures were part of a policy of pacification in the Gourma¹⁶ at the end of the colonial conquest, aimed at subduing the military power of the Tuareg. After their defeat in separate battles, the different confederations and tribes were further isolated by the conditions of surrender imposed upon them. While the Udalen were permitted to reoccupy the Gourma, particularly the area around Beiga, other groups such as the Logomathen and the Ulleminden Tuareg were made to stay on the left bank of the river Niger, where their movements were monitored by military outposts along the river. It was a case of "giving N'Djoug the means of continuing to raise livestock...in order to make use of the unoccupied pastures in this zone...while keeping him out of mischief".¹⁷

Another element of the strategy focused on liberating the *Iklan*, or subjugated tribes; Clauses 7 and 12 denied nobles the right to raise levies, thereby

8 A Tuareg tribe from whom the present day province takes its name.

9 Balima, S.A. (1996), *Légendes et histoires des peuples du Burkina Faso*.

10 They actually settled around Bossey, a village near Beiga.

11 Delmond, P. (1953), *Dans la boucle du Niger: Dori, ville peule*.

12 Former Peul-Emirate.

13 Balima, S.A. (1996); Delmond, P. (1953).

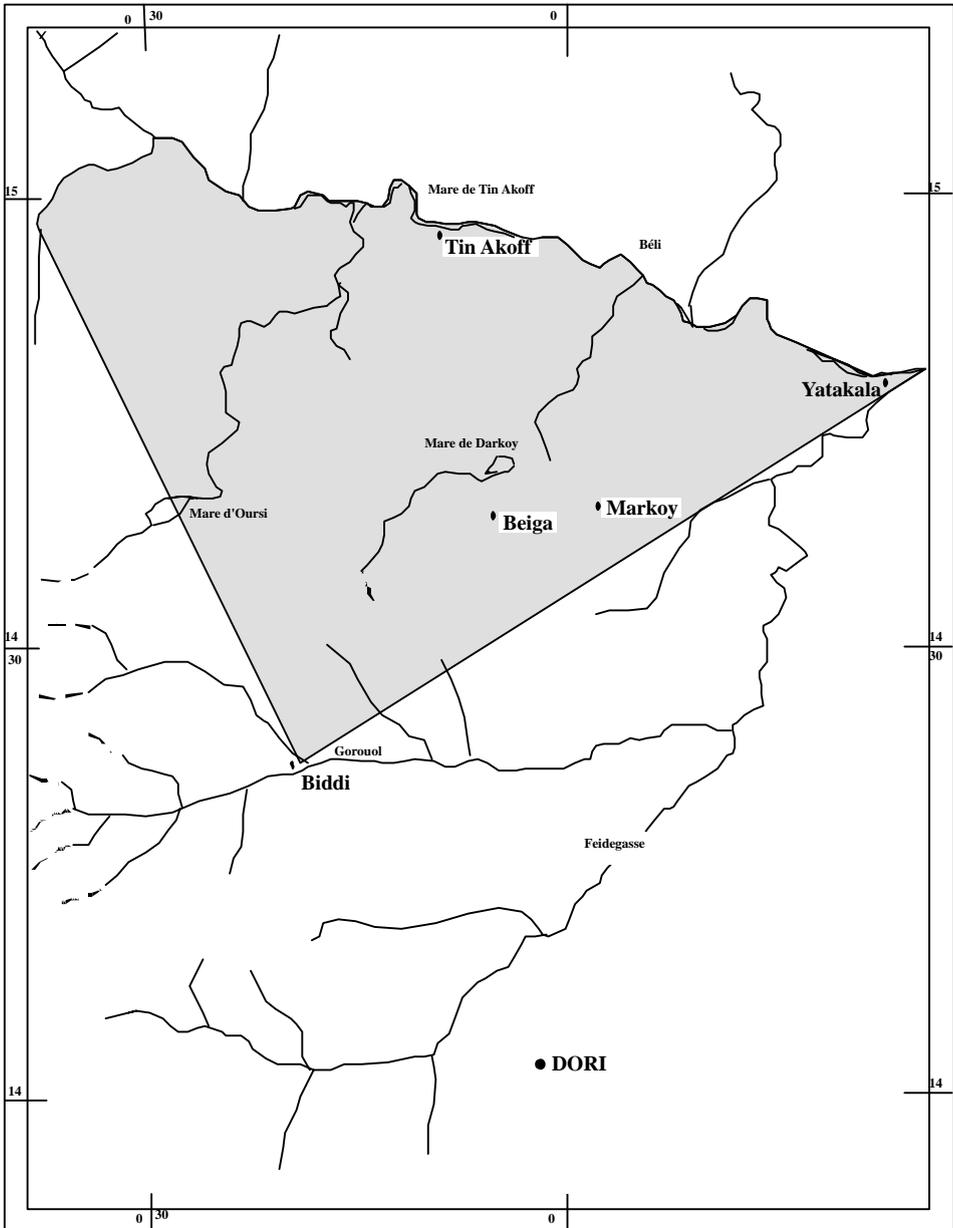
14 The Tuareg from the north of what is now Burkina Faso held out against colonialism for the longest, engaging in several violent confrontations (one of which was the Battle of Diogourou) before the decisive battle at the Yomboli water hole, near the present zone of Kishi Beiga; cf. Delmond P. (1953) and Kambou-Ferrand, J.M. (1993).

15 Kambou-Ferrand, J.M. (1993), *Peuples voltaïques et conquête coloniale 1885 - 1914*.

16 Right bank of the bend in the River Niger.

17 Extract from colonial reports quoted in Kambou-Ferrand (1993).

Figure 3 Grazing areas accorded to N'Djougi, Aménokal of the Udalen Tuareg, after his surrender to the French



Source: J.M. Kambou-Ferrand, *Peuple voltaïques et conquête coloniale 1885-1914*

undermining the political base of the Udalen *Aménokal* and nobles.¹⁸ In an attempt to destroy the social and economic fabric of Tuareg society, the colonial regime separated the different social classes, moving the various groups to different locations. In 1908, eighty-three Bella families were taken from the Udalen and moved to the Niger valley¹⁹, while members of the Gaobé, a group of Fulani that traditionally acted as herders for the Tuareg, were placed under the authority of the Emir, of Liptako. Other subjugated groups, such as the Dagabe, took the opportunity to leave the area and escape from under the thumb of the Udalen.

Unhappy with the terms of their surrender, the Udalen eventually instigated the regional uprisings of 1915 – 1916. With the benefit of hindsight, the colonial authorities recognised that their policy of divide and rule, which “was largely aimed at securing effective administrative control”²⁰, had actually acted against their own interests. They had not only destroyed the economic synergy between masters and slaves (who had provided the agricultural manpower the Tuareg herders needed to raise tributes and ply their commerce and crafts...). They were also responsible for the anarchy unleashed by their many intermediaries, who were difficult to control and not always capable of wisely exercising the power they had been granted.

Moreover, in confining the different groups to specific grazing areas, the colonial authorities had failed to take account of the fact that resources were spread across time and space, that different areas had interrelated uses, and that herders needed to move about freely. Because the pastures were badly degraded, they granted different groups special dispensation to graze outside their prescribed boundaries (something they actually already did in order to get round directives and avoid paying taxes), thereby sowing the seeds of the current chaos in natural resource management in the zone.

Paradoxically, it was in the interests of the colonial authorities to try and rebuild the traditional Tuareg society that they had previously tried to destroy. Mohamadine, the successor to *Aménokal* N'Djougi, had been sentenced to life imprisonment after the uprisings of 1915 and 1916, but his successor, Felan, was given administrative powers as ‘chief of the canton of Oudalan’. As they could not get the Bella to agree to step back into the yoke that had historically tied them to their masters, the colonial authorities proposed a series of “settlements or agreements regulating reciprocal relationships between the two groups”. However, they were apparently impossible to apply to the complex relations

18 Traditional Tuareg society was made up of the Imajehen (nobles), the *Imghad* (vassals), the *Ineslemen* (marabouts), the *Inaden* (blacksmiths) and the *Iklan* (dependents), also known as Bella in the Songhai language.

19 Guignard, E. (1984) Faits et modèles de parenté chez les Touareg Udalen de Haute Volta.

20 Kambou-Ferrand J. M., op.cit., p.360.

between different sectors of Tuareg society.²¹ In the end the authorities gave the Udalen Tuareg the go-ahead to “show who was boss”, so that some kind of order could be re-established. They did manage to achieve a kind of balanced natural resource management, but as they generally exerted their authority by rustling cattle, they also spawned a whole new series of scores to settle in the process. This government-sanctioned hegemony remained the norm until the 1980s.

The revolutionary period²² (1983 –1987): more of the same

Like colonialism before it, the revolution of 1983 had a profound impact on the cohesion of society across the whole country. A decree was issued stripping traditional leadership of its authority, and the canton chief in Kishi Beiga, Macedewal, was removed from office.²³ On a local level, power passed to the Revolutionary Defence Committees (CDRs), which had been set up to “flush out enemies of the Revolution and raise the consciousness of the masses”.²⁴ Composed mainly of youngsters, who were totally unqualified for their new authority, the ‘excessive zeal’ of the CDRs actually often undermined public order rather than maintaining it.

In the spirit of equality and freedom that prevailed after the Revolution, individuals from traditionally subjugated groups, such as the Bella and Mallébé, rose to positions of power and started settling old scores, sending out ripples that are still felt today. The outbreak of conflicts in the zone during this period was further fuelled by the “Trois Luttes”, a three-pronged campaign against bush fires, wandering livestock and excessive woodcutting, which the new government had introduced to combat desertification. Rather than introducing these measures as part of a consultative process, the CDRs imposed them in a spirit of ‘activism’ and militaristic reprisals,²⁵ and the strong resistance they encountered across the country gives some measure of the opposition traditional forces felt towards supporters of the revolution.

‘Correcting mistakes’ but not putting things right: the local power vacuum²⁶

After Thomas Sankara was assassinated, the new government set about ‘correcting the mistakes’ committed during the Revolution, re-establishing the rule of law, abolishing the CDRs and ‘restoring normal relations with traditional

21 E. Guignard J. M. (cf.op.cit.) estimates that at least a quarter of the captive Bella in the zone of Oudalan were either emancipated or descendants of mixed marriages with nobles. These groups were therefore free (although perhaps ultimately dependent on the Imajehen in the same way as the Imghad were) and could have Ikian. The Ikian themselves were divided into those with ‘domestic’ duties in the tent and those who worked as farm labourers in their masters’ fields.

22 The period when President Thomas Sankara held power.

23 Balima, S.A. *Légendes et histoires des peuples du Burkina Faso*.

24 *Idem*, p. 359.

25 Winkler, G. *Burkina Faso, groze Pläne und ihr Scheitern*.

26 This period covers the first few years after Blaise Compaoré came to power.

chiefs'.²⁷ Traditional power structures were restored in Beiga for the second time, although some elements of the previous set-up were maintained, and two distinct power bases were created: that of the State²⁸ and that of the traditional chiefs. This had serious consequences for the zone of Beiga. The customary authorities were much weakened but were not replaced by appropriate modern structures, and the management of natural resources was sidelined as representatives from opposing Tuareg and Bella camps came to power.

State involvement in natural resource management

In an early attempt to control the management of natural resources, the State appropriated certain areas of common lands (forest reserves) in the 1960s, soon after Independence. The ambiguity over the status of so-called 'vacant' lands was brought to the fore in the 1980s by the Revolution and the programme of Agrarian Land Reform (RAF), which granted the State exclusive rights to the nation's land assets²⁹. Under the new law, state property included areas that had previously been held according to customary rights, which partly explains the government's need to abrogate traditional leadership. The right to use – and obligation to exploit – state land could henceforth only be granted by state sanctioned authorities. The RAF also anticipated the demarcation of zones for pastoral use, and their allocation to groups under specific terms and conditions.

Since its introduction in 1985, the draft legislation has been rewritten several times³⁰ in an attempt to adapt it to the demands of evolutionary democratisation. Having only been voted in by Parliament in 1996, it has yet to be put into practice, and the text that was finally agreed³¹ only deals with a small part of the overall plan. It also recognises the theoretical authority of customary law over the allocation of land, and that this may operate parallel to statutory mechanisms.³² This law, which is incomplete and difficult to implement, has therefore created favourable conditions for open access to land and natural resources;³³ while a new wave of applicants, from District Commissioners and MPs to traders, etc. have taken advantage of its ambiguity to come forward and claim rights of ownership.³⁴ In the zone of Kishi Beiga, this has resulted in individuals pursuing their own ends to the detriment of the common interest.

27 Idem, p.385.

28 Represented by what was later known as the 'Responsable Administratif Villageois' (RAV), who was generally appointed by the Prefect (before decentralisation).

29 Thébaud, B. *Gestion de l'espace et crise pastorale au Sahel*.

30 Burkina Faso, *Textes portant réorganisation agraire et foncière, 1991*.

31 Burkina Faso, Loi no. 014/96/ADP, *portant réorganisation agraire et foncière* May 1996.

32 Articles 174 and 178 of draft legislation of 1991.

33 Thébaud, B. *Gestion de l'espace et crise pastorale au Sahel*, p. 421.

34 Barry, H. *Les conflits liés à l'exploitation des ressources pastorales au Sahel burkinabe*.

Table 1 Historical background to the anarchic management of natural resources in Kishi Beiga

Period	Context	Local power base	NRM in Kishi Beiga
<p>Pre-colonial period, 1899 – 1914</p> <p>Tuareg dominant</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feudal system. 	<p>Hierarchical domination.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional consultative mechanisms overseen by chief. • Complementarity in the use of natural resources.
<p>Colonial period, 1899 – 1914</p> <p>Tuareg society under attack</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct rule by colonial authorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater number of organisational bodies and chiefs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management by corralling groups into separate designated areas and restricting the movement of herds. • Increasing anarchy.
<p>Colonial period, 1914 – 1960</p> <p>Re-establishment of previous hierarchy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less direct rule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canton chief, with recourse to local councillors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempts to re-establish the previous form of management based on complementary use of land and consultation by controlled traditional structures.
<p>Independence: the First two decades 1960 – 1987</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National structures governed on the same basis as during the colonial period. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status quo. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status quo.
<p>The Revolution 1983 – 1987</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total restructuring of local political structures. • National Revolutionary Council. • The 'Trois Luttes'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abolition of traditional customary authority. • Revolutionary Defence Committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Settling of accounts'.
<p>Period of "correcting mistakes" and return to the rule of law 1988 onwards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Democratisation' of power. • Village level administrators (RAVs). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal restoration of customary authority. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative 'gap' between traditional and modern law. • Increasing anarchy.

The Agrarian Land Reform is part of a wider vision in which the State plays a leading role, and which is aimed at improving and developing land. Part of the plan involves drawing up land use surveys on several levels,³⁵ in order to establish the best use for particular areas, their boundaries, and a programme of development to address the constraints previously identified by government technical staff.³⁶ This approach has been used in pastoral areas in the central southern region of the country, where 'pastoral reserves' have been created and allocated to pastoralist 'settlers'.

The National Village Land Management Programme (PNGT) was another offshoot of the Agrarian Land Reform, set up in 1987 so that the RAF could be implemented without 'things getting out of hand'.³⁷ The recommended approach aimed at bottom-up participatory rural development and planning, which would give villagers a certain amount of power over decisions as to how land should be allocated and managed. The intention was that Village Land Management Committees (CVGTs) would be set up to facilitate this process.³⁸

This approach was used in many projects across the country, and the CVGTs soon became the backbone of local development. However, they were not always able to fulfil their legal obligations, as their ability to function effectively largely depended on how much power was still invested in traditional leaders³⁹. As the land chiefs and heads of lineage still exercised considerable influence, many Village Land Management Committees, which had no legal footing, fell somewhere between the externally imposed power structures and the effective traditional institutions, and were in fact virtually powerless. Because the RAF had not been implemented according to the agreed guidelines, there were no bodies with any real legal standing in the villages, and it was very difficult to draw up a system of universally applicable local regulations, or devise and apply sanctions for failure to respect them.

Although the successive reforms implemented during this period (including the RAF) have had little positive impact on the rural sector, the process of rural decentralisation initiated in 1998 could make it easier for village land management structures to gain recognition, by giving such bodies some kind of legal footing.⁴⁰ Unfortunately, the different administrative units do not go down to village level, and work still needs to be done to ensure that there is adequate communication and co-ordination between the agencies responsible for implementing the RAF and decentralisation.

35 At national, regional and provincial levels.

36 Burkina Faso, *Textes portant réorganisation agraire et foncière 1991*.

37 Thébaud, B. op cit., p. 421.

38 Article 107, Law 91.

39 Ouedraogo, B., Ouedraogo H. *Elaboration de l'avant-projet d'arrêté relatif aux CVGT*.

40 *Textes d'orientation et de la décentralisation (TOD)*.

Piloting the 'global approach': the Burkina Sahel Programme

The Burkina Sahel Programme (PSB) aims to combat desertification and further development in the Sahelian zone of Burkina Faso.⁴¹ It evolved out of national policy developed in 1986, analysis of previous interventions on natural resource management and the regional strategy of CILSS,⁴² which is based on a 'global approach'. The PSB is funded by several organisations, including the Federal German Republic via GTZ.⁴³

From 1989 to 1992, GTZ supported regional planning activities and a series of pilot programmes in the Burkinabé Sahel, and in 1991 it started a project whose main aim was to implement the village land management approach recently introduced at national level. Intended to test the applicability of this approach to the Sahel, and specifically to the agro-pastoral nature of the zone, project activities were concentrated in several 'test' villages selected according to certain criteria.⁴⁴

The project evolved out of the experiences and lessons learned as it ran its course. Its methodology was initially focused on producing development and management plans (PAGT) based on the interpretation of aerial photographs and identification of the possible uses of soils, as well as planning long-term development measures. After being reviewed in 1996/1997, it was adapted to take better account of what was actually happening on the ground. The focus shifted to supporting learning through a more dynamic and flexible approach, aimed at establishing a real partnership with local people. We will discuss the evolution of the project approach as we consider the case of Kishi Beiga.

41 Sahelian Burkina Faso includes the provinces of Séno, Yaaga, Soum and Oudalan, which cover a total of 36.829km², or 13,4% of the country, with a population of 662.129 inhabitants.

42 Comité Inter-Etat de Lutte contre la Désertification au Sahel.

43 Gesellschaft für technische Zusammenarbeit.

44 One criterion was that test villages should not be "riven by internal conflicts" (Rochette, R.M. *Le Sahel en lutte contre la désertification*). This condition was supposed to facilitate the implementation of the village land management approach, but actually proved to be the first stumbling block, as we shall describe later.

The Burkinabé Sahel Programme - the first phase

The PSB was launched in Kishi Beiga in 1991, and initially involved only the village of Beiga. It is now operative in nineteen hamlets from three administrative units (villages), and in 1998 was estimated to cover an area of 400km². Its first tasks were to set up a Village Land Use Management Committee (CVGT), install various utilities and start work on participatory diagnosis and various measures against desertification, such as bunds, tree planting, and *mise en défens*.⁴⁵ The evaluation of the initial phase highlighted the following problems:

- The CVGT was unrepresentative, as it was dominated by the more sedentary groups and did not take account of the interests of other people, such as transhumant pastoralists.
- Project staff had been unable to get to the bottom of a number of 'mysteries', and did not fully understand the complex relationships between the various groups with whom they were working.
- There were problems with the management of communal assets - both the economic structures such as cereal banks, and village utilities such as pumps and *boulis*⁴⁶; and no system governing the use of natural resources, such as the *mares*⁴⁷ and salt licks, or for clearing fields for cultivation.

The section below outlines the four main causes of these problems.

Conflicts over leadership

In the absence of any customary authority, the competition for leadership between different communities was exacerbated by the external factors described earlier in this paper. The traditional power of the Tuareg had declined since the Revolution, and as new powers sprang up at local level, conflict developed between the Mallébé, who saw themselves as the traditional power base, and the Bella, who had only risen to power after the Revolution, when they had been in the CDRs and held administrative positions.

⁴⁵ This technique puts a total ban on the use of a given area, so that vegetation may regenerate naturally.

⁴⁶ Small artificial water holes.

⁴⁷ Natural water holes and temporary ponds.

“Each community was jockeying for position”⁴⁸ through their leaders and government technical staff, administrators and politicians backing them in town, while a host of latent conflicts bubbled away under the surface. It did not take much to re-ignite them, and the arrival of outsiders to install utilities or other improvements could be enough to trigger a fresh round of hostilities. The PSB unwittingly became the target of the Macilankobé Mallébé, who had set themselves up as the main representatives for the zone and attempted to monopolise the support provided by the project. Other groups, particularly those in the Bella representative’s camp, felt that their interests were being ignored, and proceeded to express their discontent through various acts of sabotage, which did little to further the progress of the project.

Administrative anomalies

After the Revolution, the zone was divided up into a series of administrative units, or villages. Although it would have been extremely difficult to organise it coherently, this system is not really appropriate for an area with scattered housing and no major towns or cities. Membership to villages is based on affinity rather than residence or shared use of the land. This has resulted in some confusion, made worse by the fact that, because of the way that the initial test zones were defined, the project is only involved in one “village” in the zone, Beiga.

Lack of coherent natural resource management

After a succession of droughts in the 1970s, demographic pressure in the zone increased due to the combined effects of natural population growth and groups of herders coming in and setting up base in the area⁴⁹. Pastures were cleared as a significant number of people took up agricultural activities, while pressure from livestock also increased as the Bella, who had previously not been permitted to own cattle, took advantage of their new right to build up a herd. With no one responsible for the management of pastoral resources, the combined effects of the droughts and socio-political disorder swept away any form of rational management of natural resources in the zone.⁵⁰

Land tenure issues

Over the years there have been numerous conflicts between the Mallébé and the Bella, and the Mallébé and the Fulani, as well as internal disputes within each group. While we do not know the exact cause of most of these conflicts, they generally arise from problems over land tenure.

48 Barry, H. Les conflits liés à l’exploitation des ressources pastorales au Sahel burkinabé.

49 Here we distinguish between transhumance and migration, and are referring to groups that have moved their ‘home grazing territory’ into the zone and now go on transhumance from a more or less fixed camp within the zone of Kishi Beiga.

50 Kalmogo, R. *Etude de systèmes traditionnels de gestion des ressources pastorales dans la zone de Kishi Beiga.*

According to the traditional system of tenure, only 'noble' peoples could own land,⁵¹ Thus, the Tuareg chiefs retained the sole right to allocate or withdraw land. When everything changed after the Revolution, there were a number of disputes between those who were entitled to land and descendants of the *Iklan*.⁵² One such case occurred at Bellagaoudi, near the zone of Kishi Beiga:

"This dispute was between Tuareg and Bella farmers. The Bella community was up in arms against an old Tuareg man who had brutally attacked a Bella woman, and they retaliated by dishing out the same treatment to a Tuareg child. The Tuareg then demanded that the Bella hand back the fields that had been lent to them, claiming their rights as first occupants of the land of Oudalan, which they believed gave them the right to reclaim the land from individuals (or slaves) who were annoying them. However, the Bella claimed that the land was theirs, as they had inherited it from their parents or grandparents (...) When the trouble started, the Tuareg went to the police, but as they got no support from them they appealed to the county court at Dori, which ruled that the three Bella brothers should return the disputed land to them."

Disputes over land have also arisen with the recent influx of pastoralists into the outer edges of the zone, as Gaobé and Djelgobé Fulani, Dogabé, and Bella herders have been coming to spend the dry season close to the water hole at Kishi. Project workers were given a rough ride by the resident population when they asked the transhumant Fulani herders in Kishi about their involvement in local resource management. The resident Mallébé claimed that they had authority over the land, and as they considered the transhumant herders to be "outsiders", they said that the project should not work with the herders without their consent and involvement.

The programme approach

The approach taken by the PSB was originally heavily influenced by the 'technical interventionist' ethos of Agricultural Land Reform. Initially developed for finite agricultural areas, this systematic approach not only failed to take account of all aspects of pastoralism, but also ignored the complexity of the socio-ethnic and political situation in Kishi Beiga.⁵³ As numerous authors have observed, the strict application of the Village Land Management approach actually led to herders being denied access to natural resources.⁵⁴

51 Guignard, E. *Faits et modèles de parenté chez les Touareg Udalen de Haute Volta*.

52 Barry, H. op. cit.

53 Banzhaf, M., Drabo, B. *Mobilité et Gestion de Terroir – cas du Programme Sahel Burkinabè*.

54 Marty, A. *La Gestion des Terroirs et les éleveurs: Un outil d'exclusion ou de négociation?*; Toulmin, C. *Gestion de Terroir, principes, premières enseignements et conséquences opérationnelles*; Winckler, G. et al *Approche "Gestion de Terroirs" au Sahel, analyse et évolution*.

The criteria used to select the test villages did not take account of all the complexities of the social situation,⁵⁵ as attention was initially focused on the applicability of the Village Land Management approach in ideal conditions (i.e., with a homogenous population), and not on its adaptability to the realities of Sahelian Burkina Faso. The situation was compounded by the facilitators' poor understanding and grasp of the approach, the fact that until recently it was seen as a panacea for all ills, and as such, development workers seemed unable to implement the approach with sufficient objectivity.

Little thought was given to the best way of approaching the different groups in the zone, and during the pilot phase, project workers split into separate teams to work with the various ethnic (or 'socio-cultural') groups. While one team talked to the sedentary population about Village Land Management issues, another interviewed newly arrived transhumant herders about pastoral management. Rather than fostering a sense of partnership between all the participants and facilitating some kind of local consensus on the causes of previous conflicts, the methodology put the project in a position where different groups tried to use it to further their own causes. This was hardly the best recipe for developing consensual and sustainable management of natural resources.

55 Rochette, R. M. *Le Sahel en lutte contre la désertification*.

3 The process of change – finding a new approach

Because of the setbacks encountered between 1991 – 1994, activities in Kishi Beiga were put on hold for a year while the project approach and methodology were reviewed. A new strategy was developed, and in an attempt to open up the approach and facilitate a learning process, the focus shifted to social groups rather than territorial units, and access to and use of key resources. It was decided that the project should focus on facilitating discussions about consultation, using participatory tools⁵⁶ in an interactive and iterative process that would involve everyone without favouring any particular group. By following these guidelines and putting the emphasis on mediation, the project managed to draw every group into the process and set up a mechanism that enabled all sides to meet on equal ground, and which was sufficiently transparent to avoid it being hijacked by any of the groups. Without such a structure it would have been impossible to plan actions across the zone or work towards consensual and sustainable management of natural resources.

In the spirit of a new ethos of partnership, the people of Kishi Beiga set up a consultative mechanism that would act as a forum for representatives from every area, social group and sensibility: from Tuareg, Mallébé, Bella, Sillubé and Rimaibé Fulani agro-pastoralists, to Gaobé Fulani, Djelgobé and Dogabé pastoralists, as well as women and young people. Non-resident herders were represented by their resident hosts on the consultative committee.

The emergence of a consultative committee

The issue of whether the people responsible for each area of activity were sufficiently representative was raised at an annual planning meeting, with interesting consequences. The local 'key players', who had already been involved as 'representatives', had assumed tasks according to their 'area of expertise', and there was some discussion about the responsibilities of those working on 'zoning' and the demarcation of livestock corridors. It was felt in some quarters that the

56 See Waters-Bayer, A., Bayer, W. *Planification avec des pasteurs – MARP et au-delà un compte rendu de méthodes centrées sur l'Afrique*; Waters-Bayer, A. *Processus de Réflexion sur les outils de communication pour intégrer les pasteurs dans la gestion des ressources naturelles*.

representatives selected for these tasks were not the most appropriate people to discuss those issues, and that people who had previously been excluded from the process should now be taken on board. A number of Tuareg and elders from other groups (particularly Fulani herders) were brought in, and the idea of a consultative committee grew with the recognition that all sides had something to offer. A prominent Tuareg was appointed to lead the committee, in recognition of the fact that only a Tuareg would be able to unite the groups sufficiently to run this type of informal structure, whose objective was to bring together different parties in a spirit of conciliation and trust.

The consultative committee: how it is organised and how it works

The consultative committee meets periodically at the request of the secretariat or a member village or hamlet. Members discuss issues of common interest, and decisions are usually made by consensus, although they may occasionally go to a vote. Major concerns are initially discussed by the general assemblies in villages and hamlets, whose decisions are then taken to the committee for ratification by consensus.

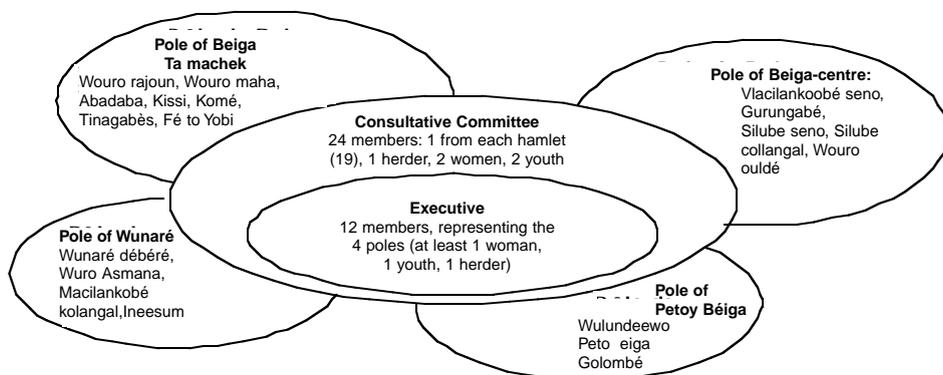
The committee organises and co-ordinates discussions and activities relating to development in the zone, and facilitates all contacts with external agencies. It takes a leading role in discussing funding for locally conceived programmes, manages conflicts over the use of natural resources, and oversees the application and enforcement of the rules governing their management.

Bearing in mind that its principal aim was to manage natural resources in a sustainable manner, the committee's primary management requirements were identified with the aid of PRA tools such as Venn diagrams. It became clear that other villages and hamlets would need to be involved in the consultative process, as well as groups coming into the zone on a temporary basis. Furthermore other groups came forward spontaneously and expressed their willingness to participate in the venture, attracted by the new spirit of understanding in the committee. This unity of purpose made it possible to re-establish a coherent zone comprising nineteen hamlets organised into three villages, corresponding to former sphere of influence⁵⁷ of Tuareg chieftain.

The consultative committee is a dynamic, evolving organisation that has developed a system of internal monitoring and self-evaluation. It has had some support from the Burkina Sahel Programme, mostly relating to methodology, in the following areas:

⁵⁷ Residence and grazing area of former Amenokal.

Figure 4 Structure of the consultative committee



Source: Committee internal evaluation

- Setting up four decentralised outposts of the consultative committee.⁵⁸ Their proximity to the base helps to make the committee more effective and spreads the workload across the zone;
- Improving the lines of communication by setting up a system of verbatim reports and summarising the outcomes of meetings between various groups, as well as keeping records at every level (committee, pôle/outpost, village and area).

⁵⁸ One pole/outpost serves the nearby villages and hamlets, which are seen as decentralised units of the consultative committee.

4 What the consultative committee has achieved

Conflict resolution

By making conflict resolution its primary aim, the consultative committee has gained considerable credibility with local people. It has been instrumental in resolving disputes between Mallébé and Bella agro-pastoralists and transhumant Fulani over the management of utilities such as water pumps, which had been souring relations between these groups, and has also set up a system for amicably resolving disputes over damage to fields. A considerable number of latent conflicts over contested rights and long-standing rivalries have also been resolved - thereby removing a serious impediment to development in the zone, of which the PSB was largely unaware. And on a more prosaic level, it has even cleared up problems over mysteriously disappearing revolving funds for local projects.

Assuming control of planning development activities and long term goals

The consultative committee has now taken charge of planning development interventions in the zone, helped partly by community-based planners trained by the PSB, and partly by the extra organisational capacity afforded by the decentralised *pôles/outposts*. Success in attaining the long-term objectives that local people have drawn up for natural resource management will largely depend on the effectiveness of this planning process.

Developing negotiating skills

Negotiating skills are the key to greater autonomy for the committee, and the expertise gained through its dealings with technical and financial partners has enabled it to mobilise resources for micro-projects on socio-economic issues and the protection of natural resources. This approach, which is now being adopted at national level, has been particularly fruitful in Kishi Beiga, where local people have taken it on board and forged a number of technical and financial partnerships (see Chapter 5) to support local initiatives. Their experiences will hopefully make them

more open to establishing a new type of association with development partners after decentralisation.

Regulating natural resource management

In the first year after the project was relaunched, the consultative committee drew up a set of rules for the use of resources such as post-harvest grazing,⁵⁹ bouli, salt licks, and for the protection of trees and natural water points.

The collective norms in force aim to provide a framework that will enable the different groups in the zone to use natural resources in a non-conflictual manner, without damaging the environment. For example, they prevent the anarchic installation of camps in vulnerable areas such as around water holes, as this can cause them to silt up. Such rules could be extended to cover the rotational use of pastoral resources and to protect measures in place to improve the land.

The consultative committee, the outpost committees and representatives from each hamlet/area are responsible for following up and enforcing regulations. In the first instance, attempts are made to settle all disputes amicably, and they are only taken to the judicial authorities if this is not possible. This arrangement has been formalised recently in a local agreement signed by the District Commissioner and people from the area, but the rules are by no means fixed, as they are evaluated regularly by the consultative committee, development partners and local authorities, and may be adapted to suit changing needs and conditions.

In less than three years, the consultative committee in Kishi Beiga has furthered development in the zone by helping to foster a climate of understanding in which the defence of the collective interest takes precedence over individual demands. This process is summarised in Table 2 below.

⁵⁹ For example, setting a fixed period when livestock have to be supervised in order to reduce damage to fields. This has been well respected, and has considerably reduced the number of disputes over damaged crops.

Table 2 Summary of the development of consultative natural resource management in the zone of Kishi Beiga

Step	Year	Action	Project involvement	Qualitative change achieved
Resumption of collaborative process	1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion with all known parties about how the collaborative process can be renewed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established set of working principles and rules: neutrality, transparency, respecting commitments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness to collaborate and draw a line under the past.
Period of reflection and reconsideration	1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a forum allowing all groups in the zone to discuss issues. • Analysis of situation; start to reconcile different interests. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiated discussion of key issues. • Facilitated planning with tools adapted to the zone. • Mediation on some unresolved issues. • Conflict resolution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest in peace process. • Redefinition of management structures of economic units and regeneration of their funds.
Creation of consultative platform	1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of skills and responsibilities involved in village land management and natural resource management. • Creation of committee of elders, based on traditional methods of consultation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitated at meetings. • Developed guiding role in the process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement on organisational objectives. • Local people taking initiatives in the consultative process.
Consultative committee settles into its role	1996 to 1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of conditions/criteria for organisation to be viable. • Getting the committee up and running • Clarification of criteria for membership. • Creation of outposts to act as link between the field and consultative committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offered consultative committee appropriate tools for diagnosis and self-evaluation, as and when they were needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing autonomy. • New people joining the process. • Greater decentralised management reinforces local participation. • Impact on level and quality of activity.
Formalisation of rules	1998 to 1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certain rules reinstated. • New rules drawn up. • Adoption and recognition of internal codes of conduct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitated discussions with administrative structures and judicial authorities. • Legal support, texts translated into local languages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultative committee becomes truly representative of the zone. • Common interest in NRM takes precedence over individual concerns.

Factors contributing to the success of the consultative process

Good entry points

By breaking the deadlock created by conflicts over issues such as water points and pumps, the consultative process was able to get under way. This confirmed Behnke's theory (1994) on focal point management, which concentrates on essential points of management such as access, rather than on clarifying rights of ownership. This approach facilitates the development of local tenure practices that encourage the use of community resources without requiring strict controls over territorial limits.

Willingness to recognise the importance of historical, social and cultural factors

With conflicts and rivalries simmering between almost every ethnic group in Beiga, the main challenge was to create a situation where all the stakeholders would not only agree to participate in the consultative process, but also to respect each others' right to voice their needs and feelings. Once everyone started to acknowledge the importance of past events and their effects on relationships between different groups, it was possible to set up a forum for discussion, based on traditional mechanisms for regulating access to natural resources in the zone. The courage with which people agreed to analyse their past and present situations enabled them to resolve many of the tensions that had hitherto soured relations between their communities.

One could ask why they had 'waited' for an external agency to come and sort out their troubles. The previous lack of initiatives to resolve disputes or problems with natural resource management can partly be explained by the traditional power structure and the way that local affairs of honour, overlapping conflicts and various hidden agendas fed into regional politics. It seems that the consultative process could only begin when a neutral and trustworthy third party came in to act as mediator.

Extension agents as facilitators for the consultative process

The success of facilitating such a process depends on a number of factors and requires a wide range of skills, starting with an intimate knowledge of the area and

fluency in local languages. The setbacks encountered in the first phase of the project were largely due to lack of knowledge about the situation, and the consequent failure to take account of political and socio-ethnic relationships in the area. Extension agents need good communication and listening skills, and to be able to operate at levels appropriate to the people with whom they are working. The individuals working with this process were chosen for their ability to facilitate discussions and activities with sub-groups, as well as in the wider consultative forum. The main principle was to encourage producers to reflect upon and discuss their situation, and to respond with new ideas and initiatives to the challenges facing them. Extension agents also needed to be able to act as observers, only intervening in the proceedings when absolutely necessary, or when specifically asked to do so by local people.

Interacting with local people

The internal evaluation of the consultative committee involved a certain amount of interactive work with the PSB, generating an additional momentum to that provided by the structured meetings, and enabling the project to evolve with the consultative group. As Hendrickson showed,⁶¹ this type of permanent action-research allows local people themselves to make progress in managing conflict over natural resources. By acting as a catalyst, the PSB gave producers a good deal of room for manoeuvre, enabling them to develop the process themselves and ensuring its sustainability after the project pulls out.

Keying in to local resource people

Most of the important decisions affecting a group are taken by its leaders, who are generally locally well known and respected. The leader of the Tuareg has been particularly active in getting the consultative process off the ground, using his long-standing position and experience to reconcile many of the different ethnic groups in the zone. Traditionally dominant over other groups, his power base has been reduced as many of the old hierarchies have been overturned,⁶² and his influence over the committee is now more benign, being of a moral rather than authoritarian nature.

Although it may initially seem surprising that he was accepted as a key figure in the process, the readiness to acknowledge his leadership can partly be explained by the traditional role assigned to Tuareg chiefs. Despite their history as warriors, the *Aménokal* and other leading members of Tuareg society were not authoritarian

61 Hendrickson: *Appui au renforcement des capacités locales dans la gestion des conflits liés aux ressources pastorales au Sahel*.

62 The president of the consultative committee is not the canton chief (the *Aménokal* of the Udalen), but a prominent figure from the zone of Kishi Beiga. The current canton chief is an old soldier from Beiga, who no longer has much contact with the zone. Having chosen to live in Gorom-Gorom, where he plays the role assigned to him by modern society, his contribution to the consultative committee is generally limited to offering moral support.

figures. Guignard⁶³ states that the *Aménokal* was at the heart, rather than the head, of the community, and that he drew his legitimacy from recognising the responsibilities attached to authority, as well as the power it confers: “ Those who submit to the outward authority of the chief also invest him with that power, which is necessarily associated with the search for consensus” .⁶⁴ This type of leadership may well be appropriate for the modern day consultative committee.

Building partnerships between external agencies

The positive interaction between local people would not have been possible without collaboration from and between technical, development and financial partners. Competition between the various agencies had for many years prevented a coherent approach to development interventions, but the departmental unit (the CDC)⁶⁵ responsible for liaising with technical and financial partners in the zone took a new approach to supporting local initiatives. These units were originally set up as decentralised structures responsible for getting the village land management approach up and running, and were intended to help project staff and members of the technical services with whom they were collaborating- to co-ordinate their work.

One of the main shortcomings of the project in its initial phase was that field staff, coming from government technical services, were seen as service providers, who changed what they said to the local people according to the client⁶⁷. After the self-evaluation it was agreed that they should work as a group of equal partners, distinguished by discrete roles but united by some common principles. This enabled development partners as a whole to be more credible in the eyes of local people and to avoid the duplicate use of resources. Initially the CDC was headed by the project, but it has been managed on a rotational basis since the evaluation, and this new openness has attracted other technical and financial partners to collaborate with local initiatives. With its commitment to the development of a culture of negotiation, this unit plays a critical role in the success of the collaboration with the people of Kishi Beiga.

63 Guignard, E. *Faits et modèles de parenté chez les Touareg Oudalan de Haute Volta*.

64 *Ibid.*, p. 24.

65 The CDC brought together the state technical services and NGOs working in the zone of Beiga.

66 The Departments of livestock, agriculture, water and forestry, and for organising the rural community.

67 Field staff could be “used” at the same time by several projects, which all provided them financial resources. They did not see contradictions in approaches as handicap but rather as means for optimising utility for themselves as well as for local people.

Future challenges

6

As the first of its kind in the region, most of those involved in the consultative process consider it to have been relatively successful. The project team and some development partners have been inspired to apply the approach to other areas of their work.

Although the consultative committee intends to play an active role⁶⁸ in the local structures that will be put in place with decentralisation, there are still a number of issues that need to be addressed, such as:

- Strengthening the fragile cohesion between different groups;
- Legally ratifying the consultative committee and the management rules it has devised.

We are aware that the apparent harmony and understanding in the zone could easily be shattered by a number of socio-political factors and latent conflicts. The project therefore needs to encourage a culture of questioning and self-criticism within the committee, so that it may better hold its course in the future.

The viability of the development platform and other related measures will always depend on stability in the zone, and on positive trends in national policy for rural development and decentralisation. The consultative committee, with its decentralised planning structure and focused activities, is the result of an experimental process that reflects the political will to encourage local people take responsibility for natural resource management. This objective is clearly expressed in the participatory approach to development, decentralisation and initiatives to promote local knowledge taken by the UN Convention to Combat Desertification.⁶⁹ However, the laws pertaining to natural resource management are out of step with this approach, and inappropriate to what is actually happening on the ground. They do not recognise the moral dimension to territorial issues in the zone of Kishi Beiga, although this is what underpins respect for the rules of natural resource management and enables local authorities to enforce sanctions

⁶⁸ According to the available information, there will be some leeway for this type of local institution after decentralisation.

⁶⁹ Ouedraogo, H. *Appui à l'élaboration des règles internes de gestion des ressources naturelles à Beiga.*

when they are broken. All future support for the consultative process should focus on resolving these crucial issues.

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