



2016



BY

**DR. NAOMI E.N AKPAN-
ITA**

CONTRIBUTORS: Nkasi Wodu, Egondu
Esinwoke

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INTRODUCTION

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria lies between latitudes 4° and 6°North of the Equator and Longitude 4° and 8°East of the Greenwich Meridian. With an estimated landmass of 20,000 km², the region comprises of six South South geopolitical states of Nigeria; Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross Rivers, Edo, Delta, Rivers as well as Imo, Abia and Ondo. It is adjoined by other oil producing states like Abia and Imo. The region accounts for over 60% of Africa's largest mangrove forests, and remains one of the world's most extensive. It is inhabited by a collection of over 70 autonomous ethnic nationalities practicing Christianity, Islam and Traditional religion, all of who are affiliates to diverse political parties¹. These multiple diversities create windows for conflicts and violence to erupt, escalate or polarize, hence the incidence of very complex conflicts that rock communities in the region, making it one of the most volatile in Nigeria.

The Niger Delta region had witnessed a period of stable peace from pre-colonial times to the dawn of Nigeria's political independence². The period of stable peace was however, short lived with the discovery of oil in the region in the 1950s³. The demand for land by oil prospecting firms and arable farmers increased thereby creating unhealthy competition that began to generate conflicts. In the succeeding decades, Multi National Oil Companies (MNOCs), domiciled in the region and began to carry out oil exploration. As exploration intensified, the eco-system was destroyed through pollution and degradation set in, thereby negating efficiency of agriculture and attendant consequence of food and social insecurity.

This further relegated hitherto employed populations of farmers, mostly women and youths to seek alternative income-generating sources, the skills for which were inexistent. The youths began to engage with oil companies, for employment of qualified human resources, contractors and distributors from host communities as a backward integration and local content development strategy. The approach adopted by youths was however

¹ Eyinla P, Ukpo J (2006). Nigeria: The Travesty of Oil and Gas Wealth. Lagos: The Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria.

² Afinotan L.A, Ojajorotu V. (2009).The Niger Delta crisis: Issues, challenges and Prospects, African Journal of Political Science and International Relations Vol. 3 (5), pp. 191-198, May. Available online at <http://www.academicjournals.org/AJPSIR>

³ Adeyeri O. (2012) Nigerian State and the management of oil minority conflicts in the Niger Delta: A retrospective view. African Journal of Political Science and International Relations Vol. 6(5), pp. 97-103, June 2012 Retrieved from <http://www.academicjournals.org/AJPSIR>

mostly confrontational and lacking coordination. This plunged the region into a period of unstable peace that lasted up to the 1990s.

From the mid-1990s, the region rapidly grew from a stage of unstable peace to that of crisis. The Ijaw national struggle for self-determination spearheaded in the 1960s by the late Ijaw patriot, Isaac Adaka Boro inspired the various declarations like the Ogoni Bills of Right, the Kaiama and Akakalaka declarations for self-determination and resource control all of which culminated in the formation of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND).

Events like the killing of Ogoni activists including Ken Saro Wiwa further ignited a long stream of sporadic violent confrontations that plunged the region into full crisis by late 1990s and lasting till the early 2000s. Complimentary crisis diplomacy and allied interventions by state and non-state actors including the amnesty programme of Federal Government averted the degeneration of the crisis to civil war and returned the region to a post-conflict era with huge demands for rehabilitation.

Conceptual Background

Conflict is an inevitable consequence of human interactions. Defined by several schools of thought to suit diverse contexts, conflict could be defined as a form of natural competition over perceived or actual incompatible goals, values or limited resources⁴. By nature of parties involved, conflicts could occur at different levels and be classified as intra-personal, inter-personal, intra-group, inter-group, intra-state, inter-state and international. Conflicts are also classified based on their causal issues- religious, political, social, economic conflicts. Other peace and security experts use the terms resource-based, information-based, value-based, power-based conflicts etc.

Whether peacebuilders are engaged in conflict prevention, resolution or transformation, full understanding of the dynamics of communication and perception of a conflict are imperatives for success. So to effectively address conflicts, it is important to profile the conflict - identify and understand key actors, causes, issues and trends of conflicts.

⁴ Agev D. Akpan-Ita E. & Gana A (2004). Training Manual, Introduction to Conflict Management and Peacebuilding for the Military. Lagos: Grafix Impressions Ltd.

Typology of Niger-Delta Conflicts

The end of the world war and the evolving capitalist economy that followed by the dawn of the cold war affected the nature of conflicts globally. The theatre of conflicts relocated from inter-state to intra-state issues. Key actors also changed from militants against military to military against armed civilians and subsequently, civilians against civilians. Weapons used also declined in size from heavy firearms to small lethal weapons. This however, increased their availability for use by ill-trained civilians. Also, targets shifted from military troops to civilians⁵. Another phenomenon that emerged is the evolution of local technologies in the manufacture of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) by civilians especially home-grown Violent and Extremist Organizations (VEOs).

Since incidence of crisis in the Niger Delta region, many scholars and peace practitioners have used different nomenclatures as ‘resource-based, apolitical, ethnic and identity’ to classify conflicts in the region. Irrespective of the terms used, conflicts in the region comprise of political, ethno-religious conflicts and resource-based conflicts. Among these, resource-based conflicts constitute the highest proportion.

Within the region, there are political conflicts. Though minimal in number and intensity, these conflicts often instill bitterness and hate amongst political leaders of the various ethnic groups in the region. The conflicts are often between political leaders of the major and minor ethnic groups.⁶

Another genre of conflicts in the Niger Delta region is those rooted in ethnicity. Conflict between pastoralists and farmers have ignited sporadic outbreak of violence and killings between the host Christian-dominated Niger Delta communities and resident Hausa/Fulanis who are predominantly Muslims. Across the region, hate has been built along ethnic and religious lines. This hate has been effectively webbed to national ethnic and religious differences such that ethno-religious crises elsewhere in Nigeria tend to ignite reprisals or replication within communities in the region. Attacks against Christians

⁵United States Institute of Peace (2008). Training Manual for Online Certificate Course in Conflict Analysis. www.usip.org/training

⁶ Abednego e. e (2004). Boundaries and National Security. Abraka: Delta State University.25th march.

in Northern Nigeria ignited attacks on Hausa Fulani communities in not only in Onitsha, Anambra state but also in Cable Point-Asaba, Abraka and Warri in January 2012.⁷

Some authors claim that over 80% of the conflicts in the Niger Delta are resource based or related⁸. Often, such resource based conflicts induce boundary claims that further propagate violence.

In non-oil producing communities, of Delta, Bayelsa and Rivers states, there are incidences of prolonged conflicts involving agrarian communities over land. The inhabitants of these non-oil producing communities are highly reliant on arable farming and fishing for food security and livelihoods. This has generated unhealthy competition over land that induces conflicts especially where the lands are located on territorial boundaries of communities.

Similarly, oil-producing communities record high incidences of conflicts, often involving oil companies and security agencies. The conflicts arise out of host communities' agitations for perceived or actual marginalization and injustice in access to compensations, employment and scholarship opportunities as well as delivery of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) projects.

Factors Responsible for the Niger Delta Conflicts

Several structural and proximate conditions have festered the sustained conflicts within communities in the Niger-Delta. It would be erroneous to conclude that the crises in the region are caused by a singular issue. Some of the factors include:

Structural Deficiencies in Governance

The Nigerian federation contains structural imbalances that foster perceived or actual injustice among ethnic minorities in the Niger Delta thereby exacerbating conflicts. An example is the mineral rights in Nigeria under the 1999 constitution, where such rights held by the federal government, a structure which has been perceived to be unresponsive

⁷ www.nigerdeltarising.org

⁸ Hassan Tai Ejibunu (2007). Nigeria's Niger delta crisis: root causes of Peacelessness. epu research papers. Ronald H. Tuschl (Ed) a town for peace

to the Niger Delta grievances. As a result, the people of the Niger Delta region have through various declarations made request for self-determination and resource control⁹.

The Resource Deposit – Development divide and Oil Prospecting Related Injustice

At the centre of the root causes of the Niger Delta conflicts is the incidence of extreme poverty and deplorable state of livelihoods. Oil exploration has pooled huge revenues to the Nigerian government since 1957, accounting for over 60% of the country's GDP. However, the Niger Delta Human Development Report (2006), which notes that, the "analysis of poverty and human development paint a dismal picture" provides a sharp contrast between the amount of wealth generated from the region and its state of underdevelopment¹⁰. The deplorable situation of the region is expressed in the words of Tumi Makagbo¹¹:

"a region where time seems to have stood still and where people live the most meager of existences, leaving them bitter and angry from not having benefited from the black gold that makes Nigeria Africa's largest producer.

-Mukagbo (CNN Inside Africa)

The emergence of violence in the region may have been in line with some schools of thought which posit that the Niger Delta conflicts transcend issues of resource control to an expression of dissatisfaction with the level of development in the region comparative to the contributions of the region to the National GDP and relative to other states and the FCT which contribute far less to the GDP. This position is further affirmed by the words of the Ogoni activist Ken Saro Wiwa¹² shortly before his execution

⁹ Hassan Tai Ejibunu (2007). Nigeria's Niger Delta Crisis: Root Causes of Peacelessness. A town for peace. Ronald H. Tuschl (ed). EPU Research papers.

¹⁰ UNDP (2006). Niger Delta Human Development Report, New York: United Nations Development Programme.

¹¹ Tumi Makagbo is the presenter., *Inside Africa*. CNN, aired on 2nd October, 2004, <http://transcripts.cnn.com>, accessed June 26, 2007

¹² Ken Saro-Wiwa (2007). Corruption in High Places. <http://www.unitedijawstates.com>. Accessed June 27.

“...we all stand before history. I am a man of peace, of ideas, appalled by the denigrating poverty of my people who live on a richly endowed land, distressed by their political marginalization and economic strangulation, angered by the devastation of their land, their ultimate heritage, anxious to preserve their right to life and to a decent living”.

-Ken Saro Wiwa

However examined, oil exploration has negatively affected agriculture which is a major source of food and livelihoods security through environmental pollution and limited availability of arable land. It has thus created a mass of unemployed and vulnerable youths who in turn, become agents for perpetrating violence especially where viewed as an option for liberation and access to justice or where facilitated with monetary rewards and enticements.

Many conflicts in the Niger Delta also border on the issue of anticipated or active oil prospecting and its negative impacts. The advent of oil exploration induced an influx of foreign expatriate companies, most of which are domiciled within communities where their exploration facilities are cited. The relationship between these oil companies and host communities was characterized by mutual understanding up to 1960s. As the negative impacts of exploration activities intensified and these oil companies seemed ill responsive to addressing such negative impacts, violent conflicts began to emanate between host communities and the oil companies.

Negative impacts of oil exploration like river poisoning, oil spillage, gas flaring, etc. have made the region less supportive of agriculture and other income generating activities. It has not only destroyed the eco-system but also shortened life expectancy through exploration induced epidemics thus multiplying the vulnerability of women and youths to extreme poverty and unemployment. This has created dissatisfaction that brews conflict within communities.

Communities have continued to engage oil companies on delivery of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), including employment of qualified community members as

workers and contractors in their facilities, offer of scholarship opportunities to children and youths, infrastructural support and other human development services.

In line with global standards, oil companies have evolved CSR frameworks. However, as a result of politics and corruption, these CSR frameworks are often not effectively implemented.

Access to illicit arms

There has been a strong network of support for violence in the region. Non-state forces have had increased access to illicit international arms markets since 2003, leading to significant escalation in the sophistication and volume of importation of weapons in early 2006. This is blamed on the strength of armed surveillance in the region as arms supply is done through multiple channels that connect Militia groups, cult groups and gangs to sufficient firepower that empowers them to seriously challenge the authority of Nigeria's military and police forces. In the words of Stephen Davis¹³ security operatives are equally accomplices in this gap.

“With the complicity of security agencies, arms are sometimes being shipped and cleared through conventional logistics systems. Similarly, weapons have been landed at Niger Delta ports with the knowledge and complicity of senior state security officers. Local illicit arms dealers use Niger Delta ports to import weapons through import-export businesses, and then distribute the weapons through their state networks, particularly in Akwa-Ibom.”

- **Stephen Davis**

Within communities, arms are used during illegal oil bunkering in direct exchange or as part payment for smuggled oil.¹⁴

¹³ Stephen Davis (2006). The Opportunity for Peace in the Niger Delta . The Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies. Global Energy and Environment. Initiative. Retrieved from www.geei-sais.org

¹⁴ Stephen Davis and Dimieari Von Kemedi (2005). *The Current Stability and Future Prospects for Peace and Security in the Niger Delta*. Niger Delta Peace and Security Working Papers. August 2005. p.3.

Underhanded Activities of Security Agencies during Internal Security Operations

The deployment of military and allied security agencies into the Niger delta following upsurge in militancy activities in the region received criticisms from human rights groups. As anticipated, these armed security operatives engaged some communities believed to be hosts to resulting in human casualties. Such attacks prompted counter attacks from militant groups in the Niger Delta.

CONFLICT PROFILES

The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) report of 2011 reveal that a large percentage of households in the 5 Niger Delta states of Rivers, Bayelsa, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa and Delta, use unimproved water sources for drinking and unimproved sanitation. Similarly, the report stated that out of the 5 states mentioned above only Akwa Ibom had a low percentage (3.6%) of people in a household without toilet access (i.e. people using open defecation). Open defecation rates ranged from 16.6% to 32.1% in the other four states, hence the need for effective water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) projects in the identified states. Studies have however shown that conflicts do not only impact the success of such development projects but development projects could in themselves be sources of conflicts, or escalators of conflicts where they already exist. The need to mainstream conflict sensitivity into development projects therefore makes it imperative that a good assessment and understanding of the conflicts in these 5 Niger Delta states and their possible impact on the planned WASH projects be carried out.

Therefore, as part of promoting the provision of water and Sanitation, the UNICEF/PIND WASH project aims to assess the conflict situation in 10 identified LGAs in the 5 Niger Delta states, and build capacity of local actors to understanding and mitigating their local conflicts.

1. Conflict Profile- Nsit Atai Local Government Area

Nsit Atai Local Government Area (LGA) of Akwa-Ibom State, is situated within an area of about 17,000 square kilometers, shares borders with Uran, Okobo, Nsit Ubium and Ibekpo Asuan LGAs in the state. It is made up of sixty-five (65) villages that are located within three clans, namely Afaha, Ibedu and Ibiaikot, which is headed by a paramount ruler.

Agriculture provides employment and means of livelihood to the people of Nsit Atai. The land is generally fertile but the fertility rate is very low due to continuous activities, which results in low productivity, income and low standard of living. Nsit Atai as a result is classified by the Economic Study Report of 2005 in Nigeria as one of the local government areas with high poverty index.

According to the 2006 census in Nigeria, a total of 101,915 people (37,318 males; 74,595 Females) live in Nsit Atai local government area.

Although Nsit Atai local government area has 13 pre-primary schools, 25 primary schools, 9 secondary schools 26 adult education centres as well as some primary health care facilities, most of the schools and facilities are in decaying and deplorable conditions. Teacher student ratio is 1:50 students per physical structures, facilities / equipment and personnel are very much lacking in the medical centres.¹⁵

Basic amenities such as pipe borne water are in short supply or completely lacking as is the case in Ikot Edong where there is no functional bore hole in the entire community, leaving women and children to spend a good part of their day in search of water at the local stream. The lack of such basic amenities and the reliance on the stream as an only source creates a ripe and ready channel for conflict in such communities.

Conflict Situation in Nsit Atai LGA

Issues of conflict in Nsit Atai are mainly around Chieftaincy tussle, Land disputes, land border issues, farm produce harvest and use of revenues derived from the sales, youth unemployment and demand for recognition and compensation by youth for government projects as well as tension and violence between political rival groups. Many of such conflict situations have degenerated to violence and tension between different groups. Chieftaincy tussle related violence as well as palm fruit harvest related violence are the most prominent and regularly occurring forms of crisis in the LGA.

Some conflict situations currently ongoing include land border issues in Ikot Essen, (June 2005 to date), internally displaced persons as a result of Bakasi returnees (2001 to date); Chieftaincy issues in different communities (2012 to date),

Some of the identified communities where conflict has piqued recently include Adia Nsit, Ikot Essen and Ikot Asua.

In Adia Nsit an intra communal conflict that is as a result of Chieftaincy tussle has disrupted the peace of the community. This Chieftaincy tussle started after the burial of

¹⁵ www.nsitatai.org

late traditional leader. As tradition demands, the Kingmaker from the four families that make up the village met to zone where the next chief would emerge from among the four families. After the zoning process, Chief Godwin Etim Akpan emerged as the winner. The same family where the new chief emerged later rejected his selection on the basis that he was too young to be their leader thus they refused to support his leadership. The certification of Chief Akpan by the Traditional ruler council as the Traditional leaders of Adia Nsit community in 2012 was considered an imposition. The conflict was as a result of perceived high handedness and lack of sensitivity to the will of the people by the Council of traditional rulers.

...This leadership crisis started when the other family elected the wrong person (Chief. Akpan) as the Chief. The other villagers did not agree so they went and reasoned together and latter resolved and chose the right person. (KII Adia Nsit)

Although the rejection of Mr. A.F. Akpan was attributed to the fact that he had been imposed on the community, issues of values were playing out in this conflict. The values of leadership of the elderly seemed to be major factor as Mr. A.F. Akpan was considered rather young to hold the position of Community Leadership and an older person within the family was a preferred Leader by the community.

... what the disputants want is that the current chief should step down for an elderly person in the zoned family to rule. (FGD, Women Adia Nsit)

The backing enjoyed from the Council of Traditional Chiefs and from the neighbouring village however provided the support needed to keep the conflict strong and has proved to be one of the sustaining elements for the conflict.

The very significant role played by the village council and the *Adia Nsit Tomorrow* (community development group) is however very key for identification of an inroad into the conflict. As indicated in a KII with a businessman in Adia Nsit community, the Village council is one of the significant bodies with a peace agenda in the conflict.

...the village council is working to promote peace and well-being in the area

(Nsima James, KII Adia Nsit)

Also an FGD participant had this to say with regards to those who promote peace and well-being in the community:

...The Adia Nsit Tomorrow group usually gathers people together to plead with and advise them on the need for unity which is the only way a community can move forward. (FGD with Men in Adia Nsit)

The chieftaincy tussle situation is however still a source of tension in Adia Nsit community.

Another major conflict issues in Adia Nsit is the Palm Fruit harvest related issues which has been worsened by the chieftaincy tussle crisis which took a toll on the unity that earlier existed in the community and the palm fruit harvest. With the division in the community and the suspicion pervading community, ordinary decisions are misunderstood and reactions are based on suspicions. Whenever the village placed sanctions on the harvesting of palm fruit which is considered in the best interest of the community (in order to generate good revenue) the affected palm fruit owners expressed dissatisfaction and questioned the sharing and use of community generated revenue.

Unlike the case with Adia Nsit, other communities where conflict and violence are prominent in the LGA have been involved in inter-communal conflict rather than intra communal conflict. These include Ndon Ekpe which is in conflict with Ikot Ebitta and in January 2014 prevented members of Ikot Ebitta from gaining access to the water source in their community by blocking the road; Ikot Asua in land related conflict with Ikot Akpabio, resulting in threat to life when the Chiefs of both villages released the 'Ekpo' Mascerade to threaten members of the opposing community. Ikot Asua however is also engaged in Leadership and Palm fruit – Harvesting related conflict.

...There is a particular family that said power reside in their family contrary to the agreement they had as a family; so some family that make up the village said since they don't want power to be rotated so that other families

can benefit, their palm fruit should not be included whenever they want to plan for harvest. (FGD Women group, Ikot Asua)

Disagreements arising from Palm fruit harvesting which has its roots in power tussle for leadership of the community have resulted in violent conflicts, which began in 2013 and are still on-going. In August 2013, during the palm fruit harvest season, a collective harvest was organized by the community, but some individual owners attempted to harvest their farms by themselves and the village head resisted this. The farm owners were beaten up and their properties destroyed. The matter was taken to court and the case is yet to resolved.

The families who have been ‘denied’ leadership are also accused of instigating youth to cause mayhem during the harvest season.

...The families who are denied power and youths in the community are the parties that cause violence. The youth are instigated by those who are denied leadership to cause problem in the community. (FGD Women group, Ikot Asua)

Other opinions however show that Palm fruit harvest crises exist due to dissatisfaction of some community members with the use of the proceeds from the Palm fruit sales.

...The crises result as inequalities that exit in sharing resources and power. Palm fruit harvest crises exist due to lack of satisfaction of the community members on the use of money realized from palm fruit harvest. (FGD Youth group , Ikot Asua)

This would not be unconnected with the erosion of trust resulting from the leadership conflict in the community.

Poverty, lack of education/understanding, breakdown in trust from misinformation and inadequate or poor communication on the part of the youth are some of the elements sustaining the conflict. Structural analysis however points to feelings of marginalization – perceived exclusion and denial of rights as the root causes of this conflict.

... The village's head family who are heading the chieftaincy titles do not allow any other family and youths in the society to benefit from any good thing within, or development brought in for the community. (FGD Youth group, Ikot Asua)

The issue of indigeneity further buttresses the feeling of exclusion. Focus group discussions in the community show that the current leadership of the community considers the aggrieved families as being settlers/ non-indigenes of the community and as such should not be in any leadership position.

Establishment of understanding amongst the disputants through dialogue with the aim of achieving fairness in power rotation would be an effective approach for achievement of peace. In the case of palm fruit harvest peace approaches should aspire to remove the identified elements sustaining the conflict.

Ikot Essen is another community which has been identified as being in land dispute with a neighbouring community in Oron LGA. This conflict started in the early 2000s has been on-going for some years. Conflict trends have shown that this resource based conflict manifests especially during planting seasons when land is needs to be ploughed and planted, with women been harassed from both side leading to abandonment of the portion of land in contention as a result of violence engaged in by youth with the support of Elders from both communities. The recurrent conflict over the border land between Ikot Essen and Oron community may be attributed to the insufficient farm lands, lack of a clear boundary demarcation between the communities, refusal of the old sharing arrangement made by their ancestors, an unclear history and documentation of land ownership, and rapid population growth in the area.

Another source of conflict in the community is the scarcity of water, particularly during the dry seasons of November to March. Shortage of water leads to conflict and competition over the scarce resource many times results in violence.

The Ikot Essen youth group who are working to promote peace in the community would be an available inroad into the conflict. They are known to have played peace-making roles in conflicts within the community.

2. Conflict Profile - Obot Akara Local Government Area

Obot- Akara LGA of Akwa-Ibom State is made up of seventy-three (73) communities, and has a population of 148,281 - 76,579 males and 71,702 females. It is located in North East of Akwa Ibom State and shares boundary with Ikot Ekpene, Ikono, Ini and Essiea Udim local government area in Akwa Ibom state while it is bordered by Ikuano and Isiala Ngwa LGA of Abia State in the north. There are three clans in the LGA headed by the paramount ruler; the clans are Obot –Akara, Uto Edina and Ikot Abia.

The people of Obot-Akara are predominantly farmers but some are into hunting and craft making. The people identify strongly with such cultural practices and these are expressed in masquerades, folklores and dances such as Ekpo, Abiakpo, Uta, Asian Uboikpa, etc. Although the attachment of the people to culture and tradition is very strong, nonetheless, there are many who have embraced the Christian faith as noticed by the number of schools, hospitals and other facilities built and some still maintained by Christian organizations.

Obot Akara Local Government, is very much lacking in infrastructure and amenities. Many communities have dilapidated roads and bridges, and although there are some primary and secondary schools, there is a dearth of teachers and the health centers as well as police station are few and far apart.

Conflict Situation in Obot Akara LGA

The fact that Obot Akara is an LGA that shares boundary with neighbouring states makes conflict issues peculiar - issues of security are key to assessing the conflict situation in the LGA. In January 2013, Obot Akara was considered as having 95% crime rate with very rampant cases of robbery and kidnapping.¹⁶

¹⁶ <http://ibomvoice.blogspot.com.ng/2013/01/high-crime-rate-alert-in-obot-akara.html>

Issues of conflict in Obot Akara are mainly leadership selection issue in Ikot Egong (July 2015), borderland disputes (2013), farmland disputes, and chieftaincy disputes (2011, 2012, 2013) resulting in communal conflicts around the LGA. Although conflicts in the LGA are attributable to varied factors, which range from land competition, natural disaster, to environmental degradation, land competition, unemployment and poverty, poor water / sanitation and communal conflict/violence rank highest in the factors affecting conflict in Obot Akara. Many communities in the LGA have one conflict issue or the other, however some of the most conflict prone communities in the LGA include Abama, Usaka Annang, Ikot Obutk, Nto Ekpu Ikot, Ikot Utin and Esa Ikwen.

Land conflict is the most common and Okop community, Ikot Okun community, Ikot Utin community, Ikot Obuk community, Nto Ekpu ikot community, Abama community and Usaka Annang community all have significant land related conflict which usually comes up during the farming season.

Usaka Anang and Abama are boundary communities in Obot Akara and the major conflict issue in Usaka Anang is a land dispute with neighbouring Abia community while that of Abama community is the boundary dispute between Abama and Ndorie community also in Abia State.

The conflict in Usaka Anang which erupted into violence in 2009 lasted about 1 year and recorded incidences of killings, and disappearances of members of the Usaka Anang community.

The Abama conflict, which dates back to 1970, immediately after the Nigerian civil war, had recorded violence in the past (many years ago) during which communities had taken up arms against each other in a fight for ownership of a parcel of farm land known as 'Okporo' in Abama language and 'Nko bush' by the Ndorie.

The most recent case of violence was recorded in 2013 during which lives were lost, women (both old and young were raped) and property damaged.¹⁷ However the nature of

¹⁷ Focus Group Discussion held with youth of Abama, October, 2015

the conflict in the last 2 years shows that conflicts between the communities have been addressed in a more non-violent way. Abia and Akwa-Ibom States Governments have had to engage with the disputing communities, setting up a military patrol team within these communities to ensure that communities did not recourse to violence. The conflict situations have always being between Abama (Akwa-Ibom) and Ndorie (Abia) Elders who want to have control over the community land mass. Sometimes, the youths of both communities do go head for head on small issues and this sometimes escalates to crisis level. The conflict, which occurs during the planting season, is usually a result of what is considered trespassing by the other community to cultivate and expand their farm lands at the beginning of the farming season. This situation has persisted for years and though there have not been records of extreme violence in the area due to the presence of the military, there exists a very tense and highly volatile atmosphere in the area. Youth are on the alert and watching for what they termed ‘any strange movement and behaviours from non natives of Abama’.¹⁸ As expressed by a participant in the FGD for women in Abama community:

...The conflict according to our elders in the past led to killing of people especially women who either went to farm to harvest non-timber products to earn a decent living for themselves. These harassments usually happen during farming season when land preparation commences, in view of this, women have always been victim of the situation, in order to reduce this, our husbands always follow us to farm during the planting season which is not easy for them to leave their businesses. The situation is not always every year but one cannot determine when it will happen but we always prepare for this situation when the planting season is approaching.

The LGA chairmen of both sides are very critical stakeholders in the conflict as they are suspected of supporting and aiding their communities in executing the conflict by providing financial aid to prosecute the conflict. This conflict situation could easily conflagrate with the slightest trigger.

The non-availability of proper documentation of physical boundaries separating the two local governments in the two states may be seen as the major cause of the conflict.

¹⁸ ibid

It is noteworthy that some members of the Abama community believe that some members of the Abama community are conniving with the Ndorie community to forcibly take over the land in dispute using their financial clout. This belief has made Adama more stoical in its resolve to resist such moves.

...The people of Ndorie in of Ikuano LGA of Abia State believed that they are rich and powerful and with support of their political class could overrun the (Abama) community and grab part of our land for themselves. There are other natives of the (Abama) community who connive with the Ndorie community to acquire land forcefully. We the people of Abama are not ready to cede any part of our land to other communities hence we will protect it from intruders. (FGD with Men in Abama)

The fact that politicians are involved in this conflict with the aim of attracting political points amongst their people is another factor to watch as these may be sustaining elements for the conflict.

...The role of the politician, is to support them (communities) financially in order to gain support during the elections for their ability to acquire or seize the land. (FGD with Men in Abama)

Some groups that have been identified as groups working to promote peace and well-being in your area include Abama Youth Development Association, Nka Iban Women Group and the Men Group. These could be inroads into the conflict based on their peace agenda.

Other conflict in Abama include those bordered on issues of perceived oppression of the youth by the community elders thereby creating a permanently tensed atmosphere between the youth and elders. The implication of this is that other conflict situations in Abama would be further impacted and coloured by the tension existing between the elders and youth and this should be factored into interventions and approaches for peace in the community.

Apart from the land dispute which Ikot Obuk has with Ikot Upong (a neighbouring community), there are internal conflict issues between the youth and the elders resulting from the way the proceeds from the Palm fruit harvested in the community is managed. This peculiar conflict situation in Ikot Obuk community is aggravated by youth

unemployment as a result of bad roads, inadequate market structures and suspicions of fund embezzlement by community elders. Because the youth are unemployed, they are able to spearhead conflict especially on issues related to management of funds from sale of produce from economic trees in the community. Due to lack of gainful employment, the youth see such proceeds from the economic tree as their main source of income and as such insist on monitoring its sharing and utilization. As is the case in Abama, this situation also pitches the youth against the elders in the Ikot Obuk community and this takes its toll on the community.

3. Conflict Profile- Akuku-Toru Local Government Area

Akuku Toru Local Government Area of Rivers State is a riverine area with a landmass of area of 1,443 square kilometers, a population of 156,006¹⁹ and shares boundaries with Degema and Asari-Toru LGAs of Rivers State and Nembe LGA of Bayelsa as well as with the Atlantic Ocean. Akuku-Toru is comprised of seven (7) major towns - Abonnema, Obonoma, Kula, Idama, Abissa, Soku and Elem-Sangama. Fishing and trading are the predominant livelihood activities in the LGA.

Other prominent communities and fishing settlements include Abaji Okolo, Imoama, Leleama, Ibiapuama, Dere-ama, Opukiri, Lelekiri and Angalaobio among over 192 smaller communities and settlements.

The Local Government Area is blessed with abundant oil and gas reserves. Kula, Idama and Soku have network of oil pipelines leading to the multimillion-naira gas plant at Soku and Belema flow station where gas is supplied to the liquefied Natural Gas Project at Bonny. Akuku-Toru Local Government Area is also centrally positioned and easily accessible to all the neighbouring Local Government Area viz. Bonny, Degema, Asari-toru and Abua/Odual²⁰.

¹⁹ Nigeria, 2006 Census

²⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/AbonnematheYorkCity/posts/599445436806195>

Conflict Situation in Akuku Toru LGA

Some of the communities with recurrent conflict issues in Akuku-Toru LGA include Kongoma, Nongoma, Kula, Ibiame, Belema, Ekmeama, Saupane, Soku Ahenama, Oluama, Freet Town and New Town, Sangana, Abonema, Ogoni land and Olomaboko.

The main issues of conflict in the different communities in the LGA range from Kingship/Chieftaincy tussles in Belema (from the 1980s to date) to Militants/Cult clashes (Elem Sangana, to date), Power and supremacy tussle between youth groups in Belema to date, and Political Power tussle (in the entire LGA, 2014/2015). This political conflict that emanated from the 2015 elections engulfed the whole LGA. The conflict between Honourable Roland Sekibo and Chief Hope Opusingi who are both members of the same political party –PDP emanated from the process of selection of a candidate from Akuku – Toru constituency 2 for the Rivers State House of Assembly seat. Hon. Roland Sekibo’s candidate was Hon. Precious Jeremiah while Chief Hope Opusingi’s candidate wanted his Uncle Hon. Tonye Alalibo. The conflict between these two chieftains extended to all the communities in Akuku-Toru local Government Area including. This conflict later degenerated to a point where different cult groups were drawn into it, resulting in violence. Contrary to expectation that the conflict would be resolved after the 2015 general elections, it has persistent and is still on-going. The conflict has particularly hampered economic activities at different times in Belema, Offoin ama, Idama, Sangama and Abissa communities. The Hope Daniel led group claims it was the turn of the oceania communities to produce the House of Assembly member. They claim that since the creation of Akuku –Toru, it has been people of Abonnema that have been occupying the position. It was finally agreed that the position be ceded to the people of oceania but then again Hope and his group decided to field their brother for the position which the other group kicked against. The other group argues that any other oceania person be chosen for the position instead of Alalibo who is a brother to Hope²¹.

²¹ Focus Group Discussion , with Belema Concerned Citizens, October, 2015

Unemployment and poverty ranked highest as factors affecting conflict in the Akuku-Toru LGA. Other high-ranking factors affecting conflict include insecurity, abduction and killings, corruption of government officials, and gang violence.

Some of the key issues of conflict in the LGA include embezzlement of community development funds, bunkering activities, Chieftaincy/leadership selection processes, control and distribution of community resources as well as allocation of job and contract opportunities in the oil industry amongst the indigenes. Resource based conflicts are the most common types of conflict in the LGA, and disagreements over money and natural resources appropriation top the causes of conflict in the LGA. Value based conflict and issues of biological needs also are common conflict causing issues in the LGA. Some of the major conflicts identified were in Belema, Elen Sangama and Olomaboko.

In Belema the main conflict issue is the tussle over the Kingship of Belema, struggle for supremacy between the Ijaw Youth Council and the Niger Delta Volunteer Force which culminated in violent clashes.

The Kingship tussle, which began in the 1980s, is one that engulfed the entire community and led to litigation. Leaders from three different lineages are contending for the position of the king (Amayanabo) of Belema community. The parties in contention here are Chief Bourdilon Oko - the head of Oko house. Chief Ibinabo Kala-oriye – the head of Kala – Oriye house and Chief Opu-eze – the leader of Opu-eze family. Also involved in the conflict are the supporters of the CDC and Youth Exco struggling to be recognized by SPDC and other multinationals and oil servicing companies as relevant stakeholders, leaders and representatives of the Belema Youth. All parties involved in the conflict lay the claim to the throne and insist that the king of Belema must come from their faction.

The matter which is still pending in the court has left the community without a paramount ruler to date. The protracted and seemingly difficult-to-resolve conflict situation has been associated with the fact that Belema is an oil rich community and the desire to control resources accruing to the community has perpetuated the conflict. This resource-based conflict has over the years pitched members of the ruling houses in the community against themselves particularly when community development funds from oil companies

are to be shared in the community. Monies accrue to the community yearly from the GMOU with Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria (SPDC) and everyone to benefit from. The main cause of the conflict is thus the various interests to control the resources of the community. In a bid for survival and to maximally partake of the resources available, interest groups are formed and alliance made with parties of common interest.

The Polo Da Apu (compound leaders) are in charge of the resource sharing and as such leadership in this regard is extremely competitive and sometimes entails violence as expressed by an FGD participant in Belema.

...the most common things that cause conflict in my area are: struggle for the control of community fund, supremacy of stakeholders, money accruing to the community yearly from GMOU with SPDC from which everyone wants to benefit and have authority in the community. This struggle became violent during Polo Da Apu (compound leaders) elections where people brought cult groups to support certain aspirants. An incident, which led to people being seriously injured.

Although there are other conflict situations in Belema, for example, accusations against certain people, particularly community leaders of diversion of diesel meant for community use; inter-communal clashes arising from boundary disputes between Belema fishing communities and oil installation areas with Nembe and Odioma communities in Bayelsa State; another significant issues causing conflicts in the community is the competition amongst youth groups for the control of the community fund and employment opportunities.

The supremacy struggle between the youth groups escalated during the youth election as a result of formation of factions based on the protection of interest of the various actors on the kingship struggle. This coloration based on the long-standing kingship tussle led to crises amongst the youths. The Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) have been at logger heads with Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF) and this has often manifested in very violent clashes. The rife tension and division amongst youths who are members of different militant groups; the volunteer and IYC groups is such that any group that dominates chases out the others and control the benefits from the oil companies like SPDC. They

secure surveillance contracts and standby employment slots at the expense of the common citizens living in the community. This often cause tension and creates division in the community.

The leaders of the youth groups - IYC and NDVF as well as the Chiefs involved in the Kinship tussle are considered the main beneficiaries of the conflicts in the community. The youths affiliate with community leaders who sponsor these youth groups affiliated with them in the communities financially, thereby bringing tension and crises in the community during elections. The conflict situation scares other members of the community away leaving these beneficiaries to share oil related funds whenever they are available to their benefit. The youth leaders and chiefs are believed to ensure their control of the resources by causing such tension in the community that other deserving sons and daughters of the community cannot come to the community and compete for job opportunities or contracts. This way, the Chiefs and youth leaders seem to be the only available people for the companies to relate with.

The oil companies are also perceived as ‘shadow’ parties to the conflict. They are perceived as benefiting form the conflict situation in Belema and as such are ensuring its perpetuation from the background. This is expressed in a KII a member of the Community Development Committee (CDC) in Belema.

...Other parties involved the conflict are the oil companies operating in the area such as Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria (SPDC) and Chevron who support the various groups to induce conflicts between them to achieve their aim, thereby denying the youth, CDC (Community Development Committee) and Polo Da Apu (compound leaders) of their rights to have access to the companies to negotiate for the overall interest of the community. (KII, CDC member, Belema)

Due to the largely oil-related conflicts in the community Belema oil flow station operated by Chevron is considered as the most problematic areas in the community.

In all of the conflict, the community dwellers, particularly the unemployed youth and women are known to be the most affected by the conflict. Most of the chiefs and

stakeholders do not live in the village but stay in Port Harcourt and other cities, thus making it easier for them to divert funds meant for the community.

The resource based conflict has been long drawn mainly because the parties in conflict consider the monies and benefits from the oil company as their only means of livelihood so it becomes a 'do or die' affair as reflected in a KII with a fish farmer in Belema

...They (Chiefs and youth leaders) believe that is the only means they can make money. They go by the slogan (in kalabari language) that goes thus: kuro-kuro fi, which means the strongest survive (survival of the fittest).

Since the proceeds from oil revenue is the only means of sustenance for the key stakeholders in the conflict, the fear of returning to 'poverty and loss of status in the society' continues to drive their determination to sustain the conflict at all cost.

The value placed on money has made the conflict intractable as respected members of the community who could have been involved in the resolution of these issues are impoverished and despite the authority they wield, do not have the resources required to convene the conflicting parties. Such persons have in the past tried to bring conflict parties together and mediate at various times conflict but they could not achieve the expected peace because they do not have the capacity to do so. The persistent conflict situation thus leaves room for conflicting parties to control and enrich themselves with resources meant for the community.

The do or die attitude to the leadership tussle that has engulfed Belema makes this situation extremely volatile. All parties are optimistic of victory in the litigation and are looking forward to the outcome of the litigation. The court judgment in itself becomes something that needs to be watched and effort made to stop the impact of the court ruling on the people.

It is anticipated that the court ruling would be a likely trigger that would suddenly change the face of the conflict with a likelihood of large-scale violence unless something is done to stop this. Large scale sensitization of the implication of an adverse reaction based on the court ruling for the entire community would be needful.

In Elen Sangama, one current conflict situation is that based on the tenure of the CDC/Oil and Gas Committee. As is the case in other oil producing LGAs, conflict between SPDC Community Trust, Elem Sangama Oil and Gas Committee, and the Youth leaders is very rife. This conflict, which started in 2014, was centered on the expiration of the 3 year tenure of the Community Trust (CT) - an interface group with SPDC. The immediate past leadership of the community trust is believed not to want to relinquish leadership, but to retain the position against the wish of the majority of the people and this resulted in the factionalization of the community. The three major groups involved in this conflict over leadership and for recognition in the community are the Oil and Gas Committee; the Community Trust (CT) and the Elem Sangama Youth Movement. The leadership tussle is believed to actually be a bid to control monies and contracts from the oil companies. The oil and gas committee controls most of the contracts and this leaves the youths feeling sidelined. The youth feel that the leaders have sidelined them and have prevented them from benefits from the oil and gas industry. There are allegations that the CT and the Oil and Gas committee do not give the youths their due slot in terms of employment, contracts and other benefits. The youth at some point wrote a petition against the leaders of the CT and Oil and Gas Committee.

There is also the tussle for the headship of the skilled labour in the community, which is the position of the Technical chairman. A candidate was presented for the position by the oil and gas Chairman, while the secretary presented a different candidate for the position resulting in conflict. In a bid to resolve the conflict, the intervention of the chiefs was to ask the outgoing Technical Chairman to continue in the position (despite the fact that the tenure had elapsed), but this was not acceptable to the two nominees in conflict who disagreed and took the matter to court on the grounds that the community did not have the right to interfere or to impose the incumbent.

The leaders of the Oil and Gas committee and Community Trust are seen as the primary beneficiaries in the conflict as the conflicts provide the avenue to usurp opportunities that come to the community.

Other conflict issues in Elem Sangama include the attempted imposition of the regent of Oru Sangama on the people based on the Amayanabo's unilateral decision. Non-consultation with the chiefs led to the rejection of the regent, the suspension of the Amayanabo and litigation of the matter.

There is also the activity of bunkering cartels, which has resulted in a conflict between the Oru-Sangama and Oluasiri communities. Buildings were destroyed, fishing boats and nets were burned, and an unspecified number of people killed people in the Elem Sangama community. The crisis which was triggered by bunkering groups in both communities also led to the death of one person from Oluasiri before the intervention of the J.T.F to halt further hostilities. Although Elem Sangama boys are not involved in the bunkering activity, violent conflicts among bunkering groups and cartel affects the community as it disrupts their fishing enterprise. Such activities also cause pollution of the creeks thereby drastically reducing the fish harvested at such times in the creeks.

Militancy and cultism also affect Elem Sangama community and other communities in Akuku-Toru local government. Apart from clashes and struggle for supremacy and territory, militants disrupt fishing activities. Some demand for dues and homage, others seize fishing gears and boats in the event of perceived lack of loyal to their authority. There was a militant attack in Oluasiri in September 2015, which caused tension in the community due to the sound of the rapid gunfire.

Also boundary dispute between Elem Sangama, Oluasir and Soku over the ownership of the proposed gas plant, which began over 15 years ago, is still an ongoing conflict and this manifests as violent clashes from time to time. Soku, Elem Sangama and Oluasiri are laying claim over the same portion of the land. Conflict resulting from the claim of the disputed land by conflicting communities is as a result of the coming of an NLNG gas plant to be sited in the disputed area. The issue, which is yet to be resolved now has the involvement of the Rivers and Bayelsa State governments as key actors in the conflict. All communities involved now await the Federal government boundary adjustment verdict.

In addition to this, sea pirate attacks are frequent. September 2015, sea pirate attack in Elem Sangama is one such case. The pirates attack passengers and traders, steal personal belongings, kidnap victims and rape women and girls in the community. Due to the activities of sea pirates, members of the are afraid to go about their daily livelihood activities of fishing, periwinkle and other activities on which their survival depend.

...We are fishermen and women, we depend on the rivers and creek for survival, but the activities of sea pirates have crippled our activities. You will struggle through the night, toil, cast your net and lines. The little fish you will catch will be taken away from you at gunpoint. Government is not doing anything at all. Even the JTF are not doing anything they only protect the oil workers. There are instances where sea pirates steal our boats, the engine, rape our women and even kidnap passengers. Last year (2014), they kidnapped NYSC members that were posted to the community. The activities of the sea pirates are affecting everyone in Elem Sangama community (FGD with Fishermen, Elem- Sangama, October, 2015)

Sea piracy is known to occurs everywhere in Akuku-Toru LGA, especially in the Kula/ Abissa axis of the LGA.

Some respected persons in the community who are trusted and considered as able to engage in unbiased interventions in conflict issues within the community include Elder Frank Thomas; Elder Promise Alalibo; Madam Ibiere James; some pastors. These individuals have been engaged in mediating and settling disputes in the community. These would be good entry points in addressing the identified conflict issues in the community.

For Olomaboko community, one major conflict is the fight for territorial control between two militant groups - Olomaboko MEND and Kula MEND. The emergence of another militant group the MARINERS to contend with MEND has further complicated the face of the conflict. Competition between Nembe and the Kula Boats operator with regards to their operation on the coastal route; Youth leadership tussle, Kingship tussle and Militancy are other prominent conflict issues in the LGA

The main occupation of Olomaboko and Kula communities is fishing and both harvest fish from the Sombrero River. The link of the river is linked to the Atlantic Ocean made it open and easy to access to militants from both sides. The region provided lucrative business for the militants who collect a passage fee from bunkerers passing through their route. Although militants from both communities belong to the same group – MEND- they were autonomous and each group tried to protect its own interest. This led to disagreement between the two who both tried to assert control over the river. The disagreement which degenerated into a shootout between both parties led to the death of a Kula youth. Kula MEND accused Olomaboko MEND of causing the killing and this led to the destruction of Abaki-okolo and a break down of economic activities in the region. Other communities such as Okparakiri and Iboro-kiri were also affected by the crisis.

The MARINERS, another cult group, emerged as a means of checkmating a group of youth who were terrorising the Olomaboko community. When a group of youths decided to also go into the collection of ‘settlement fees’ from bunkerers plying the routes and needed to acquire arms and ammunitions since there were other rival groups along the coastal routes engaged in the same activities. Since they lacked financial power to stand on their own, they decided to seek support for arms and ammunitions from MEND by joining them as a faction. The fire power resulting from this was used to intimidate members of the community and other satellite communities. This terrorisation of the community spurred some other youth to join another militia group- the MARINERS.

Amidst the conflict between the two MEND groups of Kula and Olomaboko, The MARINERS and the MEND of Olomaboko also engaged in fierce attacks against each other along the coastal routes for control of the territory. Although the fierce attacks have been drastically minimized it may be said to still be brewing in the minds of both parties, creating a situation of very slippery peace between them.

The river (Sombrayo) is in the centre of most of the tension and conflicts recorded in Olomaboko. This is the place for the bunkering activities which have caused the militancy clashes and the quest for control of the river has caused division among the different bunkering groups. The river is also the source of the fishermen’s activities

which causes division amongst them as they compete for the best fishing spots in the river. Addressing conflict in this community would require that the river as a source of conflict be well analysed and brought factored into conflict management efforts.

4. Conflict Profile - Opobo/Nkoro Local Government Area

Opobo/Nkoro is one of the riverine communities in Rivers State. The LGA has a land area of 130 square kilometres and shares boundaries with Andoni LGA and Khana LGA in Rivers State and with Okirika and Bonny LGAs separated by water. Opobo/Nkoro is made up of sixteen (16) communities, including Opobo town. The predominant sources of livelihood in the communities are trading, fishing and farming.

Conflict Situation in Opobo/Nkoro Local Government Area.

71% of questionnaire respondents said there were no notable conflicts in the LGA. Kalasunju and Ekereborokiri were identified as communities, which significantly, had conflict situations in the LGA. Money was seen as the major conflict-causing factor in the LGA and conflict between youth and Chiefs as well as Political conflict are the identified forms of conflict currently in the LGA. Other forms of conflict witnessed by the LGA in the past include indigene settler issues (July 2014) which resulted in litigation and counter litigation and political elections related conflicts (199, 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015).

Unemployment and poverty are the highest-ranking factors affecting conflict. Poor educational system, poor water and sanitation as well as tension/violence between political groups are also identified as key factors affecting conflict in the LGA.

The key actors in conflicts across the Opobo/Nkoro LGA include the local Chiefs, the youths, some traditional rulers and members of the political class. The conflict issues in the LGA include land disputes, fishing rights, leadership, poor sanitary conditions and poor access to potable water and clamor for recognition and control.

Communities such as Iwoama-Nkonro and Kalasunku do not have any major conflicts currently. Day-to-day incidences of minor interpersonal conflict, which usually do not escalate beyond conflicting parties are what occurs in these communities.

In Iwoama –Nkoro, it was found that there are no significant current conflict situations in the community, and here have been no conflict situations in the community in the last three years beyond minor disagreements and disputes between individuals.

...No we don't have any current conflict situations in Iwoama Nkoro and not much in more than three years there have been no major conflict

(FGD with Men, Iwoama-Nkoro)

An isolated brief incident bordering on allocation and distribution of community resources was however recorded in 2014. This incidence caused a division amongst the elders but was quickly settled without any further escalation.

In Kalasunju, the most recent major conflict was a land dispute between Kalasunju and Okroboile in Andoni local government area in 2013, which was a land dispute between Kalasunju and Okroboile in Andoni local government area. The conflict manifested when people of Okroboile went into the Kalasunju forest to fell trees and fetch wood. The youth of Kalasunju intercepted them and queried them on their mission in the forest. The confrontation deteriorated into violence. The Nigerian Police and Navy as well as the Chairmen of the two local government areas got involved in the quelling of the violence and settling of the conflict.

Although there is currently no major conflict situation in the community, there are some factors that have the potential to provoke conflict in Kaslasunju. These include chieftaincy issues, politics and unequal distribution of community resources. Unequal distribution of community resources usually provokes disputes. The activity of political parties and the rivalry it breeds also brings about disagreement although the community's ability to adopt the zoning system for political positions and posts has enabled them manage such disagreements.

The very low records of major conflict in the community could be attributed to the binding factors within the community such as faith/religion, respect for values such as family ties and general issues of social cohesion.

...We all attend the same church together. The church we all attend is the St. Mary's Anglican Communion, because everyone in Kalasunju or nearly everyone is an Anglican. In the month of August, the community celebrates the Iri Ji Mmiri and Oka Mmiri festival. The community also plays Nwaotam festival on the 25th of December during Christmas. We also play the Owu festival during December. We also have the community's annual meeting on the 26th of December, immediately after the Nwaotam festival. On the 27th of December, each of the compounds in Kalasunju come together to have their own meetings. That means that all the five compounds i.e. the Senibo Ngia Kalasunju Dappa Compound, the Senibo Sunday Kalasunju Dappa Compound, the Senibo Zachariah Kalasunju Dappa Compound, the Senibo Harrison Kalasunju Dappa Compound and the Senibo Moses Kalasunju Dappa Compound all have their compound meetings on the 27th of December.

(FGD with Youth, Kalasunju Community)

In Ekereborokiri, land tussle between the community and neighbouring Ikoroloin Andoni is an ongoing conflict situation. Ikorolo community is considered to have intruded into land belonging to Ekereborokiri to fell trees and to bury dead bodies. This has sparked major conflict between both communities. The greatest fear of the Ekereborokiri community is that of displacement as a result of Ikorolo taking over their community in the course of the conflict. The fact that Ikorolo has a much larger population is the basis for the fear of the Ekereboroki community.

...The Andonis community is claiming that Ekereborokiri land belongs to them. The Andoni's came into the town to fight the people of Ekereborokiri. They remove MPP3 signboard, Ekereborokiri community signboard, Schools and church signboards in the town **(KII with Woman Leader, Ekereborokiri)**

... Ikorolo community is always intruding into our forest and Okojaja is always claiming ownership of our community. The Ikorolo people are being supported by People from Okojaja and a late Chief of Okojaja and a current Chief have spear headed the support. **(KII with Youth from Ekereborokiri)**

This may be classified as information-based conflict. The cause of the conflict has been attributed to erroneous information as reflected during a focus group discussion.

...the Andonis are making demands that our land belongs to them because of wrong information. The truth must be revealed to all by the government. (FGD with Men, Ekereborokiri)

Farmland disputes also occur occasionally among the community inhabitants during the planting season of February – March yearly. These conflict situations however do not usually degenerate into violence as community leaders settle such issues.

5. Conflict Profile - Etsako West Local Government Area

Etsako West Local Government Area of Edo State, has the town of Auchi as its headquarters. Etsako West is made up of four clans: Uzairue, Auchi, South Ibie, Awain clan and Agbede. The major towns in this LGA includes Auchi, Jattu, Agbede, Aviele, Jagbe and Awain clan (Ewora, Idegun, Ama, Ibhioba).

The Agbede's were originally the makers of the artifacts that are seen in Benin. There was a threatened elimination of the Agbede's in Benin, which led to the evacuation of the Agbede people from the Benin Kingdom.

The LGA has an area of 946 km² and a population of 197,609 at the 2006 census. It also has the Prestigious Federal Polytechnic attended by students all over the state²².

Conflict Situation in Etsako West Local Government Area

Some of the communities with current conflict issues in the LGA are Imeke, Isami, Iyuku, Iyamo and Elele. The conflict issues in Etsako West LGA are mainly around Land/Boundary disputes. Some other less prominent conflict issues in the LGA include Chieftaincy dispute, political dispute and age-group conflict.

Land/Boundary Dispute: There are various boundary disputes currently within the LGA. There is a boundary dispute between Isami community and Imeke community. The two

²² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etsako_West

communities are claiming ownership of farmlands situated at the boundary of the communities. Also a boundary dispute between Imeke community and Iyuku community has been a major source of tension as is the case with the boundary dispute between Iyamoh community and Elele Community. The disputed land between Iyamoh and Elele became an issue of conflict since 2013 when the Edo State University of Science and Technology was cited at the boundary between the two communities and named after Iyamoh community. Legal interventions have since been recourse to by the disputants to address the conflict as captured in the responses of an FGD participant in Iyamoh community:

...land was not an issue in Iyamoh community before. Land became an issue in Iyamoh community since when the Edo State University of Science and Technology was established in the community in 2013. Since when government has started building the University, land has become an issue in the community. Not less than ten (10) families are dragging some piece of land now and all the cases have been referred to the court of law for settlement.

Similarly, there is a conflict between Iyamoh community and Aforwa community over a piece of land situated at the boundary of the two communities. The two communities are laying claims to the ownership of the land, which is said to be a very fertile land for farming.

Chieftaincy Disputes: Chieftaincy disputes are also found in the LGA although not as rampant as land disputes. In Egono community, after the demise of the village head, there was conflict over the installation of a new village head. This is as a result of crisis within the ruling Houses over who should be the new community head. The conflict is still on going as the matter is yet to be resolved, thus, leaving the traditional stool of Egono still vacant.

In Ughieda community, there is a chieftaincy tussle between the two ruling houses in the community. Although, the state government based on a court judgment has installed the traditional ruler, traces of crises still loom based on dissatisfaction of the other party to the conflict with the court judgment. A similar situation exists in Iyuku community. The conflict which started with expression of dissatisfaction with the Traditional ruler resulted in the dethronement of the village head - Chief Momoh and replacement with

another - Chief Zekeri Abubakar. The forceful dethronement of the former village head led to full blown violence resulting in the killing and maiming of several members of the community. Although the crisis has abated, it has not been completely resolved because of the killings that took place during the full blown crises.

In Egono community, there is an ongoing conflict between the royal families over who should be the next village head. As a result, the community does not have a substantive village head till date. Similarly, in Odigie community, the community has not been able to install a new village head as a result of conflict among the royal families over who should be crowned the village head. As it stands now, the community has no recognized village head.

In Apana community the chieftaincy conflict has lingered on for years. The position of village head is still vacant because of the conflict between the two ruling families - Itoto family and Salawi family over who should produce the next village head. In Upper Ikhua community also, conflict among the ruling houses prevented the installation of traditional ruler for years. However, after court judgment, the most senior man in the clan has been installed as the traditional ruler of Jagbe under which Upper Ikhua is a community. However, there are still traces of hostility and antagonism among people of the clan over court judgment. This is also the case in Imiokono community, which is also an autonomous community under Jagbe clan.

Other types of conflict, which are also not very prominent, include political disputes and age group conflicts. In Isami and Omeni communities, there is conflict amongst indigenes of the communities as a result of a divide resulting from political party affiliations and alignment with one of the two major political parties in Nigeria. While some are members of People's Democratic Party (PDP), some are members of All Progressives Congress (APC). Conflict often ensues during political campaigns and rallies based on this divide.

Age group conflicts are also recorded in Isami community, where there are usually conflicts among newly installed age grade groups resulting from struggle for selection of

members to key executive and leadership positions such as Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary, etc. in their age groups.

6. Conflict Profile - Ovia South West Local Government Area

Ovia South-West Local Government Area of Edo State, has its headquarters in the town of Iguobazuwa. It has an area of 2,803 km² and a population of 135,356 at the 2006 census.²³

Conflict Situation in Ovia South West Local Government Area

Although Land disputes and unemployment were identified as the main issues of conflict in the LGA various other forms of conflict were identified with land disputes and employment identified as 6% and 7% of conflict issues respectively. The following conflict issues were identified across the communities. The other conflict issues identified are conflict arising from uneven distribution of resources, cult supremacy conflict, conflict between herdsmen and farmers, indigene/settler conflict and leadership tussles.

Land/Boundary Conflict: Land and boundary disputes are numerous within the LGA. Some of these include the land dispute between Iguogun community and Umaza community, Igue-Okunzuwa and Umaza community over Oduba land, Okponha community and Ofunwengbe community over Egboha land, Igbogor community and Ogunmwenyi community over Egbovia land, as well as Ofunwengbe community and Obaretin community.

Obaretin (Okponha) Community claims that Ofunwengbe does not have any land that they can claim because they used to be a community under them, while Ofunwengbe rejected this and insists they are an autonomous community on their own. The case is currently still in court. Pending the court decision on the land, youth of both communities are hostile towards any attempt to cultivate the land:

²³ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki>

... the youth insist that everybody should stay away from the boundary until it will be decided by the court or by the elders to show them where the boundary would pass between the Okponha (Obaretin) and Ofumwengbe

FGD with youth from Ofumwengbe community

Fulani cattle rearers and farmers: Issues of conflict between the Fulani Herds men and local farmers is rife in Ofumwengbe as well as Iguobazuwa communities. This has been the major conflict issue that has occurred in Iguobazuwa in the last 3 years. The main cause of the conflict is that the Fulani's take their cattle to the farm and destroy the crops, and the farmers cannot keep quiet about it. The cattle rearers bring the cattle to graze on farmlands whenever the farmers are not around and the cattle eat up the crops of the farmers thereby destroying the crops and making it impossible for them to reap the proceeds of the farm, which is the only source of their livelihood and income. The farmers then retaliate by attacking the cattle rearers, resulting in an intensified conflict situation and the violence, which engulfs the Iguobazuwa community. All attempts to drive the cattle rearers away have not yielded any fruit. The conflict was reported to the community leader to no avail. It is believed that the Fulanis have already paid some money to the community as settlement to ensure the continuation of their grazing activities within the community. The Fulani refuse to leave the community saying they already paid money to the Odionwere of Iguobazuwa to stay for some years and that they will not leave until the number of years paid for have been exhausted. Currently, the conflict is at a confrontational state and the common trends is that farmlands are infiltrated on market days and Sundays. This conflict began in 2012 and persists to this date and the most problematic area is the Imasabemwen farms area.

Conflict Arising from Embezzlement of Community Funds: In Udo-Aken community, there is an on-going conflict between the youths and elders. The conflict arose from sales of land belonging to other persons by elders in the community. Also in Aighobahi-Utesi community, there is conflict between Edo State Ministry of Agriculture, the Odionwere (the village head) and the village settlers. The conflict arose as a result of abrupt change of the Forest Rentage Agent to another. It is believed that the replacement of the female Agent by another person was responsible for increase in tenancy rate of the forest, thus

causing tension. In Okomu-Ijaw community, the Ijaw indigenes requested the Yoruba land users to pay rent for the land they farm on. Refusal by the Yorubas to comply with the directives of rent payment caused hostility between the Okomu-Ijaw community people and the Yoruba settlers. Tension still exists in the community because of the unresolved situation.

Conflict Arising From Uneven Distribution of Resources From The Community: In Siluko Community, conflict between the Ijaw youths and their Ilaje counterparts over sharing of proceeds emanating from the community still persists. The Ijaw youths refusal to share such proceeds with the Ilaje people on the grounds that they are not originally from the community angered the Ilaje youth who claim the community is jointly owned by both groups and as such all proceeds from the community should be evenly distributed.

Also in Udo-Aken community, there is conflict between elders and youths over sharing of the community proceeds. While the youths are claiming that they are entitled to a share of the community proceeds, the elders have insisted on the exclusion of the youth from such sharing. The situation is currently brewing hostility between the two groups in the community.

Other such conflicts include that between the Odionwere (village head of the community) and the community settlers over how the community borehole is being managed in Aighobahi Utesi community, the community and Okomu oil palm company PLC and the Okomu-Ijaw community (host community) over payment of compensation, and that between youth and elders in Igbogor community over sharing formula to be applied for sharing monies accruing to the community.

Other forms of conflict in the LGA include cult-related violence in Usen community in which rival cult groups of Eiye confraternity and Black Axe confraternity are in conflict over supremacy and territorial control of the community; as well as leadership tussle in Iguobazuwa and Udo-Aken communities.

In Iguobazuwa, there is a conflict over leadership of the youth association between two factions in the community. The obvious support of one of the groups against the other by Odionwere (the village head of Iguobazuwa) has further fuelled the conflict. In Udo-Aken community on the other hand, following the election of a new chairman by the youth group, the former youth chairman refused to vacate the seat and allow the newly elected chair assume the position. The situation has caused a lot of tension in the community.

7. Conflict Profile - Isoko South Local Government Area, Delta State

Isoko South is a Local Government Area (LGA) in the Isoko region of Delta State, Nigeria. With its headquarters at Oleh, Nigeria, it is one of the two local governments that make up the Isoko region.

The Isoko South Local Government Area covers a low-lying section of the larger Niger Delta Basin, interspersed with streams, canals and rivers. It is located in a region of deciduous and evergreen forests, with patches of mangrove forest, as well as a forest reserve along the Aviara clan area.²⁴

It has a land mass of 668 km² with a population of 150,836 (1991 Population Census figure). It comprises ten (10) clans - Oleh, Aviara, Uzere, Emede, Olomoro, Igbide, Umeh, Erohwa, Enhwe and Irri and each have a Traditional ruler.

Isoko South LGA is also one of the major oil producing areas of the state, with Agip having one of its largest fields there. The people are of the Isoko tribe and farming, trading and fishing are the predominant occupations. Current population centres include Oleh town - the seat of the Isoko South government - as well as the Olomoro urban community.

Oil and gas exploration activities began in the area in the early 1950s, and the second oil well in Nigeria was discovered in Uzere, Isoko South, in 1958. The massive growth of

²⁴ <http://www.citypopulation.de/php/nigeria-admin.php?adm2id=1010>

the oil and gas industries has created significant environmental challenges. Challenges such as gas flaring, oil spills from pipelines, deforestation and waste mis-management have been made more serious by federal laws which centralise control of the oil rich land and allow local government relatively little control over activities.²⁵

Conflict Situation in Isoko South Local Government Area

Unemployment, illicit economy, perceived government policies that marginalize and exclude, poor/inadequate education system, insecurity, and gang violence are the main reasons identified for conflict in the LGA. Causes of conflicts in the LGA are largely resource based with issues of money and natural resources ranking highest as factors that generate conflict.

Irri, Oleh, Igbide, Uzerhe, Emede,Ukpute, Emedee, Umeli and Odeh are some of the communities that have experienced conflict within the LGA. Community leadership/Kingship/Regency conflict are ongoing conflicts in the LGA however, conflict situations such as natural resources/oil conflict, political dispute, cult- related conflict, Fulani herdsmen/community farmers conflict, religious conflict, conflict over poor handling and location of projects, dispute over sharing of community funds, family dispute, and land/boundary disputes have also been recorded in the past in Isoko South LGA.

Community Leadership Tussle: In Oleh community, there is a leadership tussle between Odo-Ologbo (HRM) and the Community Development Council (CDC). This dispute revolves around supremacy between the two bodies. While Odo-Ologbo claims he is the Royal Majesty, the community development council members claim that they are duly elected by the people to lead the community. Similarly, within the community, the community women association is embroiled in conflict, resulting in creation of factions within the association.

In Irri community, there is a serious dispute over who controls resources accruing from oil proceeds. This dispute which is between the king and the Irri Community

²⁵ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki>

Development Council (CDC) also borders on issues of who administers the community. While the King claims he has the administrative responsibility of the community, the CDC members claim that they were elected by the people and therefore should be in charge of the administration of the community.

Other leadership tussles within the LGA include Aviara community, where there is a dispute over control of the Community Development Council (CDC), Emede community, where there is a conflict within the community women association, in Olomoro community, amongst the youth group where there was an allegation that the Youth President hijacked youth job slots and the executive members of the community alleged to have embezzled public funds. All these have been major causes of tension within communities.

Natural Resources/Oil Conflict: In Irri community, there is conflict between Irri Community Development Council (CDC) and Agip Oil over compliance to a Memorandum of Understanding. The CDC alleged that Agip Oil is not implementing the sharing formula agreed on, as contained in the MOU. This has fuelled tension between the community, represented by the CDC and Agip Oil. In this community too, a serious conflict is going on between the Community Development Council, oil landlords and the King of the community over control of the community resource.

Also in Oleh community there is a conflict between the Oil landlords, the community King, the Community Development Council and oil companies operating in the community (NPDC and AGIP). In Emede community, there is a conflict between the oil landlords and the King of Emede community. The issue is over pipeline surveillance contracts being handled by the king. The landlords allege that the king ensures that benefits of the contract accrue only to himself. This has fuelled resentment against the king and is also causing tension in the community. In Uzere community, there is a conflict between Uzere community people and Nigeria Petroleum Development Company (NDPC) which is the oil company that operates in the community. The conflict is over NPDC compliance to Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the oil company and the community.

Political Conflict: In Emede, Irri, Olomoro, Uzere, and Igbide communities, there are disputes between the two dominant political parties in Nigeria - Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressives Congress (APC) in these communities. The conflicts often result from their campaigns to win the hearts and minds of the electorates.

Community Leadership/ Kingship/Regency Conflict: In Uzere community, there was conflict between the "former king" of the community and his subjects. The community people alleged that the "former king" did not rule in the interest of his subjects. Therefore, he was dethroned and a new king was installed. However, government and other agencies have refused to recognize the new king but continue to give adequate recognition to the old king as the King of Uzere who is now in diaspora. In Enwhe community, kingship tussle led to the splitting of Enwhe into two communities. One is Enwhe community while the other is Okpolo Enwhe community.

In Emede community, there is conflict between the community King and his subjects. The subjects had demanded the king to carry out sacrifices to the gods as tradition demands. This was rejected by the king on the basis of his religious belief. This led to a conflict between the King and his subject. In the process, the subjects forced the king to go into exile.

In Aviara community, the regent and the Odio-Ologbo are in conflict over who will be in charge of the traditional stool after the death of the king. While the Odio-Ologbo is claiming that he has the traditional responsibility to act after the death of king for three years, the regency is also claiming that he has the same responsibility. In the process, the whole community is divided into factions. Some supporting the regent while others support Odio-Ologbo. The case is currently still in court.

In Irri community, the regent (Michael Universe Eba) and the Queen who is a step mother to the regent are in conflict over the control of the traditional stool of the community. This has also divided the community into factions. A similar dispute is also found in Okpolo-Enwhe community where there is dispute over who acts as Regent following the death of the king. These conflicts have split the communities.

Cult-Related Conflict: In Oleh community, there are conflicts among rival cult groups in the community especially between Eiyeye confraternity and Black Axe (Aye). The conflicts often revolve around supremacy and control of their territories, resulting in the death of some community members.

Emede community is also experiencing cult-related conflict. Apart from conflict among the rival court groups, there is also conflict between the cult groups and the community people. The conflict results from the fact that the community abhors cult activities within the territory of the community and does everything to kick against their association.

In Olomoro community, there is a conflict between cult groups and the community vigilante group. This led to the killing of Mr. Oyibo, a member of the vigilante group and houses of the cult members were burnt down in retaliation of the death of Mr. Oyibo.

Land/Boundary Dispute: In Aviara community, there is a conflict in Ukpudi Aviara quarters between a family and the community over the land where a primary school is built. The family is demanding a replacement of the land on which the primary school is built to enable them to use same for farming. Meanwhile, the community has refused replacing the land because their forefathers had freely and voluntarily given the land to the community to build the school for the benefit of the whole community several decades ago. The case is currently in court.

Oleh and Olomoro communities are currently in conflict over land boundaries. This has resulted in clashes between the two communities leading to several deaths and razing of houses. Similarly land disputes are rife, within Oleh and Olomoro communities, over farmlands.

In Emede community, there is a conflict between Emede community and a street in the community called Urhaka Street over the ownership ERU LAKE. The conflict is age long but the matter has not been settled

There is a boundary dispute between Okpolo-Enwhe and Enwhe community. Okpolo-Enwhe and Enwhe communities used to be a single community before a conflict situation divided them but their boundaries were not well delineated thus causing boundary dispute

between them. Within these communities, series of land disputes are going on among the quarters.

In Igbide community, there is land dispute between two families. These families are Igbi family and Friday family. The case is still in court till date. Also in Uweye community, there is an on-going dispute between Uweye people and the community executive council over sales of community land meant for play ground.

Dispute over Sharing of Community Funds: In Irri Community, there is a conflict between the oil landlords, the King and Community Development Council (CDC) over sharing of proceeds from AGIP OIL. The oil landlords complained bitter that the laid down sharing formula has not been adhered to in the sharing of the proceeds.

In Oleh community, there is a dispute between the landlords and the Community Development Council (CDC) over sharing of proceeds from NPDC. The landlord families complained that they were not given their own share in the proceeds.

Poor Handling and Location Of Projects: In Emede community poor handling and execution of projects have caused conflicts between the contractors and the community people. The location of these projects has also been an issue of conflict. This is also the case in Olomoro community where wrong location and poor handling of projects have caused conflicts.

Religious Conflict: In Emede community, the EKE deity shrine which is the war juju of the Emede people situated in URUAKA was burnt down and in its place a church was built. This brought conflict to the community. The conflict is between those who support the act of burning down the shrine and replacing it with a church and those who opposed it.

Fulani Herdsmen/Community Farmers Conflict: In Emede community, there is consistent conflict between the Fulani herdsmen and farmers in Emede community who complain that their crops are constantly destroyed by the cattle of the Fulanis.

8. Conflict Profile - Ndokwa West Local Government Area, Delta State

Ndokwa West is a Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria. Its headquarters are in the town of Kwale. It has an area of 816 km² and a population of 149,325 at the 2006 census. The people of Ndokwa are predominantly farmers and fishermen and the women are petty traders. The major towns in the LGA are Onicha Ukwuani, Utagbe Uno, Abi, Ogume, Emu and Utagbe Ogbe.²⁶

Conflict Situation in Ndokwa West Local Government Area

Although money, natural resources and beliefs were all considered causes of conflict, needs and values were the highest ranking causes of conflict identified in the LGA. Land competition, unemployment/poverty, insecurity, ethnic/religious tension, shootings/killings, and illicit economy/corruption are the highest factors of conflict in the LGA.

Community youth as well as elders/Chiefs and community leaders were identified as the principal actors in conflict within the LGA, while issues of land dispute, the activity of Fulani herdsmen, greed and corruption were the major manifestations of conflict.

Umusadege, Umuseti, Amoji, Ogbeani, and Utagba –Ogbe are some of the communities currently in conflict within the LGA. Some recent as well as ongoing conflicts include Umuseti Ogbe vs Umusedel (2013 till date), Obi Ukpo Ibabu vs Iselegu (2014/15), Etua-communities vs Nsukwa (2014/15), Obi-Ukpo Ibobu vs Iselegu (2012-2015), Obi-Ukpo Ibabu vs fulani herdsmen (2015), Fulani herdsmen vs Lagos-Ogbe (2014), Fulani herdsmen vs Lagos-Ogbe (2014), Ogbede Ogume vs Obodo Ugwa (2014) and Ogbede Ogume vs Igbe Ogume (2014).

The major conflict issues recorded in Ndokwa West LGA are as follows:

Land/Boundary Dispute: There is a land dispute between Ibabu and Iselegu Communities, two communities sharing a boundary. There is also land dispute between Umuseti and Ebendo, Umusedeti and Beneku, Emuobodoeti and Igbe-Ogume

²⁶ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki>

communities, Ebendo and Ushie communities, Amoji and Umuchime-Ogume, Etua-Ukpo and Nsukwa, Igbe-Ogume and Ogbeole, Obodougwa Ogume , Ebendo and Ogbeole Communities.

Land tussles also exist between families in Ogbeanu Community.

Leadership conflict: In Ogbeani Community, there is a conflict between the Old Community Development Council and the newly elected members. The newly elected members complain that the old CDC members are still presenting themselves as members of the CDC after handing over. This is also the case in Umuseti Community where the old CDC chairman that has handed still continues to perform functions that the new CDC chairman ought to perform.

In Umuseti-Uno Community, there is a conflict between former youth Chairman and Present Youth Chairman. In Umusadege-Uno Community, the appointment of a new president is brewing hostility in the community, especially among the youths. In Okwele Abbi, the election of the Youth Leaders is causing tension in the community

In Emuobodo Eti community, there is a formation of parallel community governing structure as a result of community leadership power tussle. A prominent Chief in the community leads each group.

Fulani Herdsmen Conflict: In Amoji Community, there is a conflict between farmers and Fulani herdsmen. The farmer complained that the cattle of the Fulani were destroying their crops thus demanding that the Fulani should leave their communities. Meanwhile, the Fulani has refused to leave saying they have paid for the land they occupy. About 4 people have died as a result of this conflict. There is also a conflict between Ibabu Community farmers and Fulani herdsmen following complaints by the farmers that the cattle of the herdsmen are destroying their crops.

In Olieogo-Umuseti Community however the conflict situation between community farmers and Fulani herdsmen seems to have been resolved. The community farmers complaint that the cattle of the Fulani were destroying their crops and that the cattle be

moved out of the community resulted in the Cattle rearers moving their cattle away from the community thereby saving their farmlands.

Oil conflict: In Ogbeani Community, there is a conflict between the Community Development Council (CDC) and the oil company operating in the community- Midwestern Oil & Gas. The CDC claimed that the company had refused to recognize the new community leaders introduced to them because they were not supported by the Okpala-Uku (a prominent local Chief), but the council of community Chiefs pressed for the recognize the new leaders by the Oil company.

Similarly, in Umuseti Community, the Community Development Council (CDC) is in conflict with Pillar Oil. They complained that the company had not duly recognized them, but were giving recognition to the old CDC. This lack of recognition of the new CDC was attributed to the fact that the old CDC had not properly handed power and authority over to the new CDC.

Other forms of conflict identified in the LGA include cult-related conflict/violence in Emuobodoeti Community, where there are complaints of cult group activities which disturb the peace of the community. Such activities have led to deaths and destruction of properties and also intimidation of innocent citizens of the community.

Conflict over electricity: In Ogbeani Community, an arrangement between the Community and the Power company office to pay electricity bill in bulk has resulted in conflict. The community reneged on their earlier arrangement and requested an oil company in the community - Midwestern Oil & Gas to be making the electricity bill payment for the community. The oil Company did not agree to this arrangement and this led to the accumulation of a huge bill forcing the Power company to disconnect power from the Community. This disconnection has further fuelled the conflict between the oil company and the community.

Finally, a peculiar conflict situation which started as interpersonal conflict, escalated into conflict between families, and has since engulfed the whole community, is found in Igbe-Ogume Community. The conflict between Adishi Family and Umu Nzete Family over adultery committed by one Mr. John Nwase against a married woman. The Community

asked that a sacrifice be performed in order to appease the gods but this was refused. As a result, the community stopped the culprit from continuing as an age grade Leader and threatened to ostracize him. This conflict has not only led to hostility within the community but also between the families of Adishi and Umunzete as the act committed was believed to have caused the death of the husband of the woman.

9. Conflict Profile - Brass Local Government Area, Bayelsa State

Brass Local Government Area of Bayelsa state has its headquarters in the town of Twon-Brass on the coast. It has a coastline of approximately 90 km on the Bight of Bonny and the Edumanom National Forest occupies much of the landmass. Brass LGA is made up of 152 towns and villages and has an area of 1,404 km² and a population of 185,049 at the 2006 census.²⁷

Conflict Situation in Brass Local Government Area

Although considered relatively peaceful, some of the conflict incidents identified in Brass LGA include partisan Politics motivated conflict, oil company/community conflict, land competition, unemployment related conflicts, community leadership disputes and land/boundary disputes. Of these unemployment and poverty related conflict were identified as the only conflicts currently experienced in the LGA - poor/inadequate health system, poor water& sanitation and poor/inadequate power supply, were identified as conflict sources in the LGA. Tension as a result of activities of political groups was also identified a s major source of conflict tin the past.

Money issues were identified as the major causes of conflict followed by natural resources and basic needs. Values and beliefs were not found to be major causes of conflict within Brass LGA.

²⁷ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki>

Land/boundary disputes: A number of communities in Brass LGA have either inter - or intra - communal land dispute. Egweama Community is in a land dispute with Liama Community over a portion of land where the BARAKUDA Oil well was discovered. The communities had never been in dispute with each other over the land until oil was discovered from the disputed land and the dispute is still ongoing. Egweama Community also has an on-going land dispute with Akassa/ Sangana Community. The land dispute between these communities is over a satellite town called Oruokolo which both communities are laying claim to.

Okpoama Community and Twon Brass Community are in dispute over land boundary. Okpoama Community claims the land given to Twon community has been washed off by erosion and as such Twon had no claims over the current boundary land. Twon Community on the other hand claims that their boundary extends beyond the eroded land. Odioma Community is also in a dispute with Okpoama Community over ownership of Ibidi and Akabele lands. Okpoama Community and Diema Community are also in dispute over land. Okpoama Community is laying claim to some piece of land along the boundary it shares with Diema Community while Diema Community is claiming that they do not have any boundary with Okpoama Community.

Also within Okpoama Community some families are embroiled in major conflict over land.

There are ongoing land disputes among some families in Sangana Community. These land disputes result from prevalence of erosion in the community. Furthermore, Sangana Community is in a land dispute with neighbouring Igbematuru Community in Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa. The dispute is over land boundaries and access to a River.

Other communities having land disputes are Cameron Ama and Sambo Ama, Kemmer Ama and Cameron Ama. Cameron Ama and Sambo Ama revolves around boundaries in Twon Brass Kingdom and Imbikiri Community. However, Imbikiri Community is the center of most land conflicts or disputes between Cameron Ama and Sambo Ama because both communities are laying claim to portions of land in the community. On the

other hand, the conflict between Kemmer Ama and Cameron Ama is over a portion of land in Kemmer Ama. There is also a dispute between Minibie and Apparanbie in Akassa Community over a portion of land which was ignited by recent discovery of oil on the disputed portion of land.

Dispute over light (energy dispute): There is a serious dispute between Okpoama Community youths and Agip Oil Company over electricity supply. The conflict has lasted for three years (since 2012) without resolution in sight. The Okpoama community youths complained that while Agip Oil Company, a tenant in their community is enjoying steady and uninterrupted power supply, the community power supply is epileptic. In reaction to this situation, the community youths seized Agip vehicles in Twon and burnt them. This triggered another conflict between Twon youths and Okpoama youths because Agip vehicles were seized by Okpoama Community youths in Twon community.

Furthermore, in reaction to the epileptic power supply in Okpoama community, youths of Okpoama Community seized all generator sets owned by the Chiefs of the community. The youths had done that because they feel that the chiefs have collected money from Agip to keep them in darkness. They also closed down Agip activities by blocking the gate to the Agip premises.

Odioma and Sangana Communities also experience similar power-supply generated conflicts.

Political dispute: election related disputes mainly between PDP and APC members and supporters were witnessed Okpoama, Imbikiri, Sambo Ama, Cameron Ama, Egweama, Liama, Sangana and Ewoama. These resulted in destruction of banners, billboards, posters, party secretariats and burning of houses.

There is also political dispute in Odioma Community. This is between PDP, APC and Social Democratic Party (SDP). The people of Odioma Community are saying they are the only Community in Brass Constituency 11 that has not produced a member representing the constituency at the state House of Assembly. They therefore agreed not give up the slot to Okpoama Community. This translated in there being no member representing Brass Constituency 11 in the Bayelsa State House of Assembly.

Employment Opportunities Related dispute: Disputes over employment opportunities within communities, between communities, or dispute between communities and oil and non-oil companies are very rampant in the LGA as this kind of dispute cuts across the whole Brass LGA. This is as a result of limited job opportunities, and the fact that the few available jobs are either hijacked by persons in authority or shared unevenly amongst very few persons or groups.

There is a dispute between Twon Brass, Okpoama, Ewoama communities and AGIP Company over employment slots. Similarly, there is a conflict between Sangana Community and CONOIL and TEXACO. This dispute results from the feeling of the community members that the youth in the community are being denied job opportunities.

Odioma Community is also in a dispute with oil companies in the community. The conflict resulted from the perception of the community people that the few job opportunities that are supposed to be given out to the community members were given to outsiders.

Leadership tussle: There is leadership dispute in Odioma community following the death of King OGONI XXI. There is also crisis amongst the youths over leadership of the youth organization in the community. Some groups in the community alleged that the tenure of the current executive elapsed and they refused to conduct fresh elections for a new executive to come on board.

In Minibie community in Akassa also has leadership dispute as a result of the death of the former King (King Anthony). The tussle is over who will succeed him and it involves all the royal families in the community. As a result of the tussle, the community has not been able to install a new king.

Other leadership tussles include the imposition of youth leaders by some powerful people in Odioma, Sambo Ama and Cameron Ama as well as the dispute between Sambo Ama and Cameron Ama over who came first and who is to be the right King of the community. This conflict is seen to be the basis of all other conflicts in these communities.

Other forms of conflict are the dispute over uneven distribution of scholarship slots by Agip in Sambo Ama, Cameron Ama and Okpoama community in which the scholarship slots by Agip for children of the poor were were said to have been hijacked by powerful people in the CDC and Chiefs council for their loved ones

Also, Oil conflicts arose as a result of the activities of the Joint Task Force (JTF) against oil bunkers. Many of the boys who lost their means of livelihood (bunkering) went into sea piracy, threatening the well-being of ordinary Nigerians, killing, raping and stealing belongings of innocent citizens on the waterways. These activities of sea pirates cut across the whole of Brass LGA.

10. Conflict Profile- Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area

Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area of Bayelsa State has its headquarters in the town of Kaiama. Much of the area of the LGA is occupied by the Bayelsa National Forest and it has an area of 361 km² and a population of 77,292 at the 2006 census. The major districts and towns in Kolokuma are Akaibiri, Aya-Ama, Ayibabiri, Ayokoroma, Gbarama, Igbanwa, Igbedi, Kalama, Odi, Ofonibiri, Okolobaa, Oloibiri, Oyobu, Sabagreia and Sampou.²⁸

Conflict Situation in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area

Only about a quarter of questionnaire respondents agreed that there were recent and ongoing conflict in the LGA and they believe poor/inadequate power supply seems to be a major source of conflict in the LGA. Some notable recent and on-going conflicts in the LGA include leadership/chieftaincy tussles, compensation sharing and financial impropriety, land/boundary disputes, employment opportunity related disputes, cult-related violence, conflict over location of government projects, political dispute and conflict arising from religious/belief system

²⁸ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki>

These varied conflicts have manifested in mass protests where women and youth were very much at the fore of protests, arrests and counter arrests, litigations, mob action and displacement. Money matters and issues bordering on natural resources are the major causes of conflict in this LGA.

Land/Boundary Dispute: Kaiama and Okorotomu communities have conflict over land ownership. Okorotomu community claim that they are the owner of a vast land occupied by Kaiama community whereas Kaiama claims Okorotomu people served as slaves to Olobiri community and as such cannot be land owners. The matter is presently in court. Olobiri and Okorotomu communities are also in a conflict over land ownership. While Okorotomu community is claiming that they are the rightful owner of the land occupied by the people of Olobiri, the people of Olobiri also claim that the Okorotomu people were accommodated by them and served as slaves to the extent of washing plates and pots during the Egbesu (deity) Festival and therefore cannot lay claim to ownership of the land in dispute.

Other such cases are between Orubiri and Okorotomu Communities, Ubabiri of Igbedi Community and Burudani of Okoloba Community and that between Kaiama Community and one Mr. Yeibake Dinipre Clifford. Kaiama community claimed that all natural lakes in the community belong to the community in general while Mr. Yeibake Dinipre is claiming that the particular land where a lake is being situated belongs to him thus royalties should be paid to him for making use of the lake. The matter is presently in the Appeals Court.

In the conflict between Ubabiri of Igbedi Community and Burudani of Okoloba Community, the matter had gone to court, but both parties later agreed to settle out of court, however the matter is yet to be amicably settled.

There is a land conflict between Ubabiri compound of Igbedi and Burudani of Okoloba. In fact this matter was so serious that, it was taken to court since last year till now. The key actors are Flint Egeme, Imbebele Onisha, Harbert Ineitiemo representing Ubabiri of Igbedi and Koki, Ebiogbo and others representing Burudani of Okoloba. Finally, Pere Idisenimi said the last time they went to the court, the both parties agreed to settle the matter at home.

FGD with Women in Igbedi Community

Leadership/Chieftaincy Tussle: In Igbedi Community, there is Chieftaincy tussle between Chief S.S.P Gbaranbiri and Engr. Eke Duncan. This has led to the formation of parallel government in all arms of the community organization. In other words, there are parallel youth executive council, women executive council and Community Development Council (CDC). This issue is still on ground till date.

A similar situation is also found in Ayakoro-ama community. The tussle is between two major families- Egbe and Itikiribo families. The major parties driving the conflict are Chief Egbe Ebikise, the acting paramount ruler on one side and Mr. Benson Itikiribo on the other side.

Furthermore, Odi Community is another community experiencing this kind of conflict situation. In Odi, the youth association has been suspended due to imposition of candidate by some prominent members of the community as against the wish of the majority of the people.

Conflict Over Sharing of Proceeds Accruing To Communities: Uneven distribution of compensation paid to Odi Community by the federal government as a result of military invasion of the community in 1999 is causing serious conflict in the community. The conflict is largely between the Col. Emmanuel Akpoluma-led committee set up for the distribution of the compensation and some aggrieved members of the community who felt the committee was not equitable and accountable in the discharge of their responsibility. The conflict has been on since early 2015 and the matter is still in court.

Parts of Kaiama, Okorotomu and Olobiri communities, which make up a political ward is also faced with similar situation as is in Odi. The sharing formula for monies accruing to this ward has constantly generated conflict between the 3 communities. In 2012 relief materials were sent by government and individuals to help those that were displaced by flood. The manner in which the materials were shared caused a conflict situation, which led to fighting among members of these communities. Till date, there are still feelings of hostility among these communities.

Conflict Over Non-Payment of Damages By Companies: There is a conflict between Abuwari Community and IDSL Seismic operators of SHELL over unpaid damages. Abuwari community people had written several letters to IDSL with no favorable reply. The community youth are threatening to react whenever the workers of the company set their foot on their land.

Employment Opportunities related Dispute: Employment is another cause of conflict situations in the local government. Employment opportunities by government, companies or other agencies are not shared amongst families in communities evenly and this cuts across virtually all the communities in the local government. Those who feel shortchanged are angry and there are cases of threats to life in Kaiama, Opokuma, Olobiri, Orubiri, etc as a result.

Cultism-Related Conflict: In Igbedi, Sabageia, Okoloba, Akaranbiri, Gbaranbiri and Odi communities, there are cases of cult activities and clashes leading to the serious injury and death of people and destruction of properties. These conflicts basically arise between different cult groups over who gets more influence in the communities and this also cuts across all the communities in the local government. Participants in FGDs were afraid to mention the names of the different cult groups despite assurances that everything they say would be treated as confidential and would not be shared with anyone. These cult groups most times strike during social gatherings such as burials, political campaigns, etc.

Conflict over Location of Government Projects: In Sabageia Community, it was reported that projects which provide amenities for public use end up with such amenities diverted by individuals for private use. Also in same community, the use of sub-standard materials for projects caused conflict between the contractor and members of the community.

In Olobiri, a water project was to be sited in one Mozi compound, however the youths of the community felt the project should be sited elsewhere. The youth mobilized themselves and stopped the project. Till date, the project remains unimplemented.

Political Dispute: Inequitable distribution of political power between Odi and other communities in Kolga constituency 1 is also gradually building feelings of marginalization and resentment in other communities. The people of Kaiama argue that from inception of democracy in 1999, only Odi community has produced all members representing KOLGA Constituency 1 comprising Odi, Kaiama, Olobiri, Sampou and Kalama communities.

Also, the people of Opokuma Clan alleged that since 1999, only the communities in Kolokuma Clan under KOLGA Constituency 11 have had the opportunity to produce members representing the people of KOLGA Constituency until the recent election which gave them the opportunity of producing the member representing the people of KOLGA Constituency 11. Opokuma Clan is made up of ten (10) communities. Orubiri, Gbaranama, Ayakoroama, Oyobu, Abuwari, Akaranbiri, Igbainwari, Ekpuwari, Gbaranbiri. This issue has resulted in gradual building of hostility and resentment, and caused a lot of tension although it is yet to develop into violence.

Conflict Arising from Religious/Belief System and Practices: In Olobiri community, there is subtle tension between Christians and adherent of Egbesu deity. The conflict often arises from the use of umbrella when there is rainfall while passing in front of the Egbesu shrine. People are barred from the use of umbrellas no matter how heavy the rains, while passing in front of the Egbesu shrine. Meanwhile, the Christians in the community refused to adhere to these beliefs, thus causing conflict between Christians and Egbesu worshippers.