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Climate action in fragile contexts

The role of conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding in climate adaptation

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Glossary

Climate adaptation	Taking action to prepare for and adapt to current and future climate change impacts. This includes adjusting social, economic and ecological systems, infrastructures and institutions for example making cities flood resistant or agricultural practices drought resilient.
Climate security	The ways in which climate change interacts with and affects security and conflict. Climate shocks and long term changes can exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, while, conflict undermines the coping capacity of countries and communities to adapt to the effects of climate change.
Conflict drivers	Underlying factors that give rise to conflict and fragility. This could include, socio-economic inequality or exclusion, weak governance (including state legitimacy and accountability), gender inequality, political grievances (lack of access and power in decision-making), environmental destruction and lack of access to resources.
Conflict sensitivity	An approach that considers local conflict contexts and dynamics to help anticipate risks and ensure interventions and efforts avoid unintended harm and maximise positive impacts.
Conflict transformation	A holistic approach to resolving conflicts that goes beyond an immediate crisis or escalating situation by addressing the root causes. It focuses on changing systems, relationships, attitudes and behaviours.
Do no harm	A fundamental, ethical principle that underpins humanitarian and development interventions to ensure efforts do not inadvertently worsen existing conflicts or cause other negative impacts for communities.
Gender sensitivity	Incorporating an awareness of context-specific issues affecting or engaging men, women, and sexual and gender minorities into humanitarian, development and peacebuilding programme plans. This approach seeks to minimise exclusion and promote gender equality.
Human security	A people-centred understanding of security that prioritises the safety of individuals and communities rather than the state. This could include protection from poverty, health crises, violence or climate shocks.
Peacebuilding	Supporting people in or at risk of conflict to prevent or end direct violence and creating the conditions for sustainable peaceful coexistence and peaceful social change by addressing structural violence.
Peace integration	The proactive adoption of peacebuilding practices into broader humanitarian and development interventions and efforts. This includes embedding peace measures into programme plans and designs, and monitoring processes and results frameworks from the outset.
Peace-positive approach	Actions that reduce the risk of violent conflict, strengthen social cohesion and build conditions for lasting peace and stability. This can occur at the individual, community and institutional level.
Positive peace	The attitudes, institutions and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies, and help to develop thriving communities. Societies that are rich in positive peace are less likely to experience conflict.

Positive-peace outcomes	Measures intentionally embedded within humanitarian, development and peacebuilding interventions that contribute to long-term peace and stability. In practice, this might look like a programme for alternative livelihoods around natural resources that is intentionally designed to ensure benefits for all groups, reducing disputes and building trust within and between communities.
Structural violence	Harmful political, institutional, social and economic structures that prevent people from meeting their basic needs and reaching their full potential, while causing suffering. These structures include discriminatory laws, exclusion of certain groups in decision-making or adequate service provision or hindering access to resources for development. This form of violence differs from direct physical violence.

Introduction

Violent conflicts are growing in intensity and frequency around the world. In many fragile contexts, climate change acts as a threat multiplier, increasing conflict and security risks and their severity. Climate action itself is jeopardised by armed conflict and instability.

In fragile settings, people's climate vulnerability and coping capacity are significantly reduced by protracted conflicts, deep social divisions and fragile governance systems. Climate change increases the existing fragility of people, systems and nature, interacting with conflict drivers including poverty, weak institutions, and socio-economic and political exclusion. At the same time, violent conflict undermines the capacities of states and communities to prepare for and cope with extreme weather events, changing precipitation patterns and rising temperatures. Working to resolve and prevent conflicts as part of climate action is, therefore, especially important in fragile and conflict-affected settings (FCAS).¹ Yet, despite this, such places receive significantly less climate funding than other low-income countries.²

Importantly, climate action that fails to consider conflict dynamics in fragile contexts can inadvertently reinforce inequalities, deepen divisions, or fuel further violence. Changing this is possible and necessary. Climate action that is informed by an understanding of local conflict contexts, power dynamics and human security considerations can effectively mitigate risk and contribute to positive, lasting change. Moreover, integrating peacebuilding approaches into climate action is likely to deliver co-benefits in the form of social cohesion, conflict prevention, stability and justice, and critically, therefore, increasing impact and sustainability. Peacebuilding and climate action can be mutually reinforcing; dialogue can open spaces for cooperation on climate action across conflict divides and build trust.

Drawing on more than a decade of work by International Alert and its partners at the intersection of climate and conflict, this paper sets out arguments on why and how climate action, conflict prevention and peacebuilding can be done together, delivering sustainable impact for the most conflict- and climate-vulnerable communities. By presenting lessons and experiences from Alert's work on conflict sensitivity and peace integration, this paper offers approaches to and practical examples of achieving positive-peace outcomes within climate adaptation initiatives.

The paper is aimed at policy-makers in international climate governance, climate funders and practitioners who implement climate adaptation. It includes lessons and recommendations from programmatic work and Alert's extensive experience in supporting different actors to integrate conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding approaches into their development, climate and humanitarian work.

Recognising the link between climate change, conflict and insecurity

Engaging effectively in conflict-affected settings is critical to efforts to address and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Many countries at high risk from climate hazards are also affected by conflict. According to the Climate-Conflict-Vulnerability Index there is a strong overlap between climate hazards, vulnerability and conflict, with certain areas presenting so-called hotspots where all three factors score high, such as many locations in Niger, Yemen, Haiti, Syria and Somalia.³ Ten of the 12 countries experiencing the highest ecological threats are also experiencing armed conflict.⁴ Research confirms that “increased vulnerability as a result of climate change can increase the risk of violence as it interacts with specific social, political and economic contexts”.⁵

The climate crisis exacerbates people’s vulnerability and drives human insecurity by weakening livelihoods, threatening ecosystem services and infrastructures. In climate security hotspots, climate change, alongside population growth, degradation and mismanagement of natural resources, fuels scarcity of natural resources and increases the competition over them. Disaster-induced food and water insecurity creates additional grievances, which, paired with weak governance, can create a breeding ground for social unrest. Governments and communities in the midst of armed conflict are less able to prepare for and cope with climate stress effectively, further aggravating its consequences. Conflict and dysfunctional institutions further undermine states’ capacities to respond to crises. For example:

- Climate change increased the probability of flooding followed by a dam collapse in 2023 in Derna, Libya, and the legacy of war, corruption and weak institutions exacerbated its impact.⁶
- In Myanmar, communities have a reduced coping capacity for climate change impacts due to decades of authoritarian rule, land conflicts and armed violence.⁷
- In Tigray, Ethiopia, war undermines progress on climate and environmental action.⁸

The climate security nexus has ramifications for gender equality and human mobility. Between 2013 and 2022, on average 22 million internal displacements occurred globally every year due to floods, storms, droughts, wildfires and extreme temperatures,⁹ with 2024 marking the highest number in over a decade. Storms and floods accounted for most of the displacements. Moreover, the number of countries recording displacement both from disasters and conflict has tripled since 2009.¹⁰ Climate mobility, as adaptation or survival strategy, is going to increase significantly in the coming decades and it is most severe in FCAS.¹¹ Rural-urban migration and disaster-related displacement can fuel new conflicts over land and natural resources between host and migrant communities. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to climate but also conflict challenges.¹² Structural barriers exclude them from decision-making on land use or accessing financial services, while often their livelihoods are heavily dependent on farming. In sub-Saharan Africa, 66% of women’s employment is in agrifood systems (60% of men’s); in southern Asia it is about 70%,¹³ but only about 10-20% of those women hold tenure rights to the land they work on.¹⁴

There is growing recognition among international and national actors of existing and increasing climate security and conflict risks and the need to address them. Several states, including the UK, France, Germany and Ireland, have joined the Climate for Peace Initiative, investing in programmes

and partnerships on climate security.¹⁵ Since 2023, the European Union (EU) has been realising action under the Joint Communication on the Climate-Security Nexus,¹⁶ promoting, for example, the EU-United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) partnership with a programme on climate adaptation and peace.¹⁷ The United Nations (UN) created the Climate Security Mechanism;¹⁸ the African Union (AU), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) have also initiated action to address climate security risks.

Increasingly the climate sector is also acknowledging climate security issues in FCAS. At COP28 in 2023, the Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery and Peace was passed;¹⁹ at COP29 the presidency launched the Baku Call on Climate Action for Peace, Relief and Recovery,²⁰ and created the Baku Climate and Peace Action Hub.²¹ Several National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), including from South Sudan,²² Colombia, East-Timor, Somalia and Burkina Faso,²³ refer to the climate-security nexus, its challenges but also opportunities for peace and climate resilience by addressing it. Moreover, more than 30 countries refer to the link between climate and security in their National Determined Contributions (NDCs).²⁴ These initiatives are good first steps, but more needs to be done to translate commitments into concrete and effective action such as building capacity and setting up structures to operationalise responses to the climate-security nexus.

The role of climate governance

The entry points to integrated climate action and peacebuilding encompass climate governance, programming and operations. Climate governance refers to the systems, rules and practices that guide climate action. This may include the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) requirements and procedures or rules on accreditation for funding and programme monitoring mechanisms. Climate governance can be conflict sensitive by:

- ✓ acknowledging, analysing and monitoring the specifics of adaptation in climate security hotspots;
- ✓ adapting climate funding and interventions, its mechanisms, rules and procedures accordingly;
- ✓ incorporating mechanisms for participation of affected communities and civil society organisations; and
- ✓ improving institutional and programmatic systems for monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL).

In practice, adaptation programmes can be peace positive by contributing to addressing causes of structural violence and conflict in various areas, like natural resource governance and management, sustainable livelihoods,²⁵ food security,²⁶ ecosystem-based adaptation, infrastructure and the energy sector.

There has been progress among climate funders to address challenges for action in FCAS.²⁷ The Green Climate Fund (GCF) has initiated reforms of its accreditation process to make financial support more accessible, as well as launched funding for adaptation programmes that target Small Island Developing States, Least Developed Countries and African countries.²⁸ However, climate funding to FCAS is still too rare, especially integrated projects like GCF-funded work by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) in Somalia that seeks to foster long-term resilience as well as peacebuilding.²⁹ Too little funding is reaching communities suffering from the combined burden of violent conflict and climate change. The Climate Finance Vulnerability Index illustrates that countries

with high climate hazard risks have little access to climate adaptation funding; it is also apparent that many of those countries are in situations of fragility, conflict or post-war.³⁰

Existing programmes are still mostly working in silos, focusing on either peace or adaptation. Even if climate adaptation programmes do indirectly contribute to social cohesion, inclusive governance and easing tensions between conflict actors, these outputs are seldom measured. With programmes focusing on adaptation indicators, positive, unintended outcomes on peaceful relations and reduction of violence and conflict remain invisible. This leaves the potential of building peace through adaptation and the benefits of integrating both actions underexplored.

Integrating peacebuilding for impactful and sustainable climate adaptation

Climate adaptation policies and programmes in FCAS must urgently prioritise conflict sensitivity and the application of its principles. Doing so will help contribute to the sustainability and impact of climate interventions by reducing risk and limiting the disruptive impact of conflict on climate programming. This is also necessary both to reduce potential harm from interventions to people and the environment and to identify and strengthen opportunities to support positive dynamics, such as improving social cohesion or reinforcing local resilience. Given the nature of adaptation programming, we encourage climate partners to go further, especially in FCAS, by including peace-positive approaches. This means that climate adaptation action would intentionally seek to contribute to the conditions that foster peace, such as strengthening inclusive governance or enhancing trust between communities and institutions. In many climate security hotspots, where natural resource competition is fuelled by climate change, including peace-positive approaches is a key requirement to effectively meet the needs of local populations.

Applying a conflict sensitive, peace-positive approach to climate action

This can help to:

- ✓ reduce risks to staff and programmes and prevent maladaptation;
- ✓ enable sustainable and equitable impact for climate resilience;
- ✓ offer effective solutions to interconnected challenges because climate adaptation and peacebuilding are mutually reinforcing;
- ✓ enhance efficiency of climate adaptation;
- ✓ prevent triggering violent escalations of conflicts; and
- ✓ create opportunities for climate action in active conflict zones and situations of post-war reconstruction.

Risk reduction and preventing maladaptation

Any intervention, from policy to programme, has the potential to do harm or good. The minimum requirement for any adaptation measure on infrastructure, livelihoods, energy, food and water security and health is that it does not harm people or nature. This is achieved by assessing and managing risks. Reducing risks means greater stability, such that climate programming can be more impactful in the long term.

Conflict-sensitive approaches seek to avoid exacerbating existing conflict dynamics, or creating new ones, by understanding and monitoring the contexts and adapting interventions accordingly. The aim is to increase positive outcomes of activities by responding to conflict dynamics, actors and their relationships, history, gender norms and power dynamics. In adaptation, it is essential to prevent actions that increase existing poverty and marginalisation, and that create new or escalate existing tensions – for example, considering inequalities between groups, such as harmful and unjust gender dynamics, and conflicts over land, forests and water. A conflict sensitivity risk assessment should be part of any adaptation programme. Alert conducted such an assessment to inform a World Food Programme livelihood project on fisheries in Marsabit, Kenya. This allowed the interventions to be tailored to help address the ongoing conflicts between fishing and livestock-keeping communities in the area.³¹

Conflict sensitivity can also help to prevent maladaptation, when adaptation work risks undermining the long-term resilience of people and fuelling conflicts.³² For example, the introduction of new irrigation systems for farmers may reduce ground water levels, causing water stress for other groups and fuelling inter-group competition and tensions, and even drying up the borehole completely. Applying a conflict sensitivity lens to due diligence, risk assessment and risk management processes allows organisations to better identify, anticipate and manage the risks of maladaptation and potential conflicts. Conflict sensitivity and the inclusion of peacebuilding mechanisms can also offer insurance against the risk of losing adaptation investments to destruction and violent conflict.

Looking beyond risks and ‘do no harm’, assessments should consider climate change exposure, vulnerability and coping capacity, as well as conflict causes and dynamics, and analyse how they intersect. For an Austrian-funded project on the gender-climate-security nexus in northern Kenya, Alert conducted a climate security assessment, adding a gender lens to understand the effects on and roles and opportunities of women and men in relation to climate security and conflict risks. The assessment revealed that women in rural areas who are responsible for climate-sensitive issues such as water provision are often dismissed from decision-making regarding the resource; however, they do play an important role in inter-communal trust-building and cooperation over shared climate challenges. Their potential as agents of change for adaptation and peace is underexplored. The project activities could build on these insights as entry points to work with communities on climate adaptation and peace.

Assessments on climate vulnerability – for example, the climate change country risk profiles from the World Bank³³ – should systematically include a climate security risk dimension³⁴ and consider peace and gender dynamics. Too often, constructive actors like traditional mediators, positive practices and institutions that connect people and support cooperation are overlooked in analyses. These aspects are essential entry points for climate programmes to build on to achieve long-term positive change.

Sustainable impact for equitable climate adaptation

Many conflict and climate vulnerability challenges relate to governance, where it is inefficient, ineffective, elite-dominated or unjust. Especially in FCAS, governance institutions often lack legitimacy and resources, and/or are inaccessible for affected populations, either because they are absent in remote locations or due to structures that exclude certain groups from participating and benefitting from programmes. In these contexts, climate action can easily become a top-down and elite-benefitting exercise,³⁵ which ignores local needs and underlying conflict drivers such as inequality, discrimination and exclusion that correlate with climate vulnerability. Structural violence – for example, discriminating land rights or exclusion of women and youth from decision-making on natural resources or climate action – is a governance and societal challenge. By including a gender-transformative and peace-positive approach in adaptation governance and by creating synergies to address these structural obstacles and cultural barriers to equality and inclusion, climate action has the potential to foster equality and achieve long-term impact. Transformation can be achieved by working with men and women breaking down patriarchal norms and by creating mechanisms for the inclusion of marginalised groups in governance, by strengthening institutional structures and capacity of local stakeholders for peaceful conflict management and violence prevention. This helps to make adaptation action more equitable, sustainable and inclusive. This also supports local leadership, which means that responses meet the needs of affected populations.

Conflict-sensitive and inclusive adaptation planning at county-level in Kenya

Northern Kenya faces severe climate security challenges due to prolonged drought, and water and pasture mismanagement, leading to increased resource competition among communities and fuelling inter-community conflicts, which often lead to armed violence and stock theft. Exclusion of local voices from decision-making, historic marginalisation and political elites capitalising on these local issues present challenges to governance, including climate adaptation. Alert's work in Kenya illustrates how the integration of conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding approaches to county adaptation programmes helps to avoid maladaptation, reduces risks and can support structural change.

Kenya has a comprehensive climate adaptation policy framework. At the county level, governments developed climate adaptation plans and established County Climate Change Funds, under the World Bank-led Financing Locally Led Climate Action (FLLoCA) programme.³⁶ Alert's internal conflict sensitivity assessment, undertaken to inform the climate and peace work, revealed that when an initiative such as FLLoCA introduces financial resources to a local context where competition over government resources is linked to other conflict dynamics, there is a risk that it can exacerbate these conflicts. Climate adaptation initiatives risk becoming an elite-led, top-down, tick-box exercise, perpetuating the exclusion of communities. Recognising these issues, Alert worked with the governments of Turkana and West Pokot counties to support the establishment of Ward Climate Change Adaptation Committees in selected border locations. By training local government officials on conflict sensitivity, Alert worked to ensure that there was understanding of the risks of exclusion and elite capture in these structures. Working with the authorities and communities, Alert helped to ensure the committees became a mechanism for the participation of communities and marginalised groups to inform local adaptation plans.³⁷

Climate adaptation and peacebuilding are mutually reinforcing

In climate security hotspots, conflict intersects with climate vulnerability, for example, regarding exploitative and unjust natural resource management, socio-economic inequality and political marginalisation of certain groups such as pastoralists. Siloed, piecemeal responses are ineffective and fail to meet the realities on the ground. Addressing only single issues – either the unsustainability in natural resource management or inequitable distribution – would be ineffective and not bring long-term results for peacebuilding and climate resilience. Peacebuilding approaches such as conflict resolution and trust-building can create the necessary conditions to start adaptation, while adaptation initiatives can support social cohesion and cooperation. Integrating both objectives can increase the capacity of governments and communities to cope with both climate stress and conflict. For example, peacebuilding relies on trust in institutions and their governance, yet in times of food and water scarcity there can be an increase in community tensions and distrust in government, which can lead to violent unrest. Conflict sensitive and peace-positive planning and programming can respond to these intertwined challenges.

Addressing climate security challenges through Local Peace and Adaptation Plans in Nigeria

In Nigeria's Sokoto and Benue states, local governance systems often fail to address high climate security risks effectively. Escalating communal conflicts over land and water and climate challenges to agriculture, livestock herding and infrastructure are mostly addressed in silos.³⁸ In several communities, Alert has followed an integrated approach where trust-building and dialogue laid the foundations for the climate adaptation work that followed. Conflict resolution and intra/inter-community trust-building opened the way for extended cooperation on livelihood resilience and equitable, sustainable natural resource management across previous conflict divides. The cessation of hostilities and conflict resolution supported by Alert between the Tiv and Jukun tribes of Fiidi community in Makurdi, for example, made adaptation work feasible. Together the different groups engaged in a process to assess issues and develop Local Peace and Adaptation Plans, which laid out local needs and steps forward for responding to the intertwined challenges of climate stress and conflict. The establishment of community-led climate hubs, spaces for learning and dialogue on joint natural resource management and sustainable livelihoods, supported communities to develop their own solutions.³⁹

Efficiency

The emerging trend of reduced funding for development, peace and climate work, evident in 2025 and most obvious in the significant United States (US) aid cuts, means that synergies can be a way to increase efficiency by avoiding duplication and can lead to more cost-efficient interventions. That is not to say that all peacebuilding or climate action needs are met by integrated action; quite the contrary because both climate impacts and violent conflicts are on the rise. Yet, gains are evident when combining peace and climate work in places where climate security and conflict risks are present and escalating; it increases efficiency by minimising the need for parallel interventions.

Climate and peacebuilding work taking place in parallel in the same locations misses out on the gains of building on mutual progress and can obstruct the lasting impact of each programme. It is also inefficient because project partners such as local communities or government officials in the project implementation area might overlap. National Adaptation Plans, for example, should not be implemented in silos of food security, livelihood and peacebuilding interventions that are targeting the same communities – communities that are living the reality of the intertwined challenges of drought, floods, declining harvests, natural resource mismanagement and conflict. Strategic and operational coordination of interventions through partnerships on climate security challenges improve efficiency and effectiveness. Cross-sectoral partnerships, such as the Water, Peace and Security programme⁴⁰ of which Alert is an active member, are one example of cooperation on water insecurity and related conflict that bring together technical expertise on ecosystems, water data, climate research, water governance and peacebuilding. Multi-disciplinary partnerships can be efficient if there are a shared language, objectives and truly integrated approach tailored to meet the needs of affected populations. This will also help to overcome silos in countries navigating climate and conflict challenges, where governments need to overcome their internal barriers to inter-departmental coordination and cooperation.

Violence prevention

Conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding approaches in climate adaptation can prevent existing tensions from escalating into violence, for example, by mitigating social and political tensions over water use and distribution from erupting into violent protests, or preventing inter-community disputes from turning violent. Adaptation interventions that consider the presence of conflict actors and power dynamics such as historical inter-group tensions over land rights can prevent these escalations. For example, this can be achieved by including early warning systems and conflict management mechanisms like dialogue or mediation to effectively reduce tensions and directly prevent the outbreak of violence. Structural, long-term prevention of conflict escalation can also be included in adaptation. This is when programmes address discriminatory structures or practices that disadvantage certain groups, improve inclusive governance and create benefits for marginalised groups to counter socio-economic grievances, as well as rebuild relationships between conflict parties that are suffering high climate security risks.

Climate resilience and violence prevention through integrated programming in Mali

In Segou and Mopti in Mali, climate change is exacerbating people's livelihood vulnerability because subsistence farming and cattle herding are under pressure from changing rainfall patterns and rising temperatures. This is putting stress on natural resources, increasing competition and the risk of conflict between communities and different groups. The project Ben Ni Baara by Mercy Corps, Alert and Humanity & Inclusion used peacebuilding and adaptation strategies to address conflicts and build community resilience against climate change. The programme included adaptation support, including forage diversification and a mobile agricultural micro-insurance scheme, as well as measures to support entrepreneurship and economic opportunities. Activities on conflict management and cooperation between communities and the government were integrated with adaptation and entrepreneurial action.⁴¹ The project evaluation reveals the potential of cross-sectoral work to promote social cohesion and violence prevention.⁴² Those who took part in climate and non-climate activities, compared with those who only participated in climate adaptation activities, were less supportive of violence to defend their livelihoods and community. People who benefitted from peacebuilding and adaptation activities were also less likely to perceive members of other groups as a threat.⁴³

Opportunity for climate action in situations of active conflict and post-war reconstruction

In active conflict zones or situations of post-war reconstruction such as Lebanon, Syria, Sudan and Haiti, climate and environmental governance and programmes for adaptation are underfunded and often deprioritised by national governments and international funders. The Climate Finance Vulnerability Index illustrates that the funding gap is largest in contexts of armed violence or post-war situations.⁴⁴ In these contexts, climate funding needs to incorporate conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding approaches to help identify, track and mitigate risks associated with operating in highly volatile contexts. For example, a peace and conflict analysis can reveal the hampering and peace-supporting actors and structures in an area controlled or infiltrated by armed or criminal groups. By knowing who is controlling natural resource access, for example, a programme can be adapted to avoid security risks to staff and project participants. Programmes can also build on existing positive institutions such as local peace committees as an entry point for inter-group cooperation on adaptation. Moreover, supporting dialogue or a local mediation network for peaceful conflict management, or creating livelihood opportunities for risk groups such as (disarmed and demobilised) young men in rural areas, can contribute to the long-term success of climate adaptation in highly volatile environments. Synergies of peace and climate work can help to provide long-term positive impact for people's livelihoods. Prioritising funding for integrated approaches that tackle climate security risks will produce benefits for peace, security and climate resilience.

Recommendations

It is critical to recognise that achieving effective, equitable and sustainable climate adaptation and resilience requires specific approaches in climate security hotspots. Climate policy-making, finance and adaptation programming can do more than avoid harm; they can contribute positively to social cohesion and equality by adopting a conflict sensitive approach and integrating peacebuilding. By doing so, the climate sector can contribute to greater stability and positive peace, which will increase the likely impact and sustainability of climate interventions.

The recommendations below are informed by Alert's 20-plus years of experience, our partners and the wider sector. They provide entry points for responding to conflict and enhancing positive-peace outcomes in climate action.

From risk awareness to a mindset of conflict sensitivity across the climate sector

- Understand and recognise the links between climate change exposure, vulnerabilities, conflict causes and insecurity and embed this into strategy, policies, funding mechanisms and programme design from the beginning.
- Break silos between sectors: climate change, insecurity and conflict create complex, intertwined challenges that require in-depth system analysis and coordinated, integrated responses by various actors, ideally in strong partnerships.
- Adopt organisation-wide approaches to conflict sensitivity and risks. This requires an attitude change and not just checklists for project management. All departments of climate funders and organisations from strategy setting, programme design, operations, human resources and MEL have a role to play in incorporating a conflict and peace lens into climate adaptation.
- Integrate conflict sensitivity into due diligence, risk assessment, strategy and programme development, starting with robust peace and conflict analyses.

Proactive integration of peace and inclusion in climate action

- Go beyond 'do no harm' and support positive impacts for peace and climate resilience by proactively seeking ways to strengthen local capacity, not just for adaptation, but also for peaceful and effective conflict management, inclusive institutions and fair governance.
- Consider in strategy and programme design how the shared challenges of climate change in fragile communities can be an entry point to address inter-group conflicts over natural resources such as land and water and open opportunities for cooperation for peace and climate resilience across divides.
- Integrate activities for peaceful conflict management and trust-building such as dialogue or mediation into programmes to ensure climate action can deliver on peace outcomes for communities involved in conflicts.
- Improve gender transformative action because gender equality matters for impactful and sustainable climate adaptation and peaceful societies.
- Conflict and gender sensitivity as well as peace are not optional add-ons. They are essential to the effectiveness and sustainability of climate action and need to be embedded in results frameworks, key performance indicators, standard operating procedures, risk assessments, actor mapping matrices and evaluations.

Flexible and participatory approaches to adaptation

- Enable access to funding for non-state organisations and support local leadership in decision-making to achieve locally led adaptation.
- Invest in mechanisms to facilitate the inclusion and participation of affected populations and vulnerable groups in decision-making on climate policy, funding and action at every level. Consider how external facilitation can help to guarantee equal participation and enable locally led processes.
- Include capacity-building activities for community and local government representatives into programmes to help prepare them for meaningful contribution and equalise knowledge-power imbalances.
- Establish MEL systems for funding instruments as well as programmes to incentivise and measure change and apply learning. Results framework should include peace indicators.
- Create participatory spaces for learning, exchange, and advocacy for locally driven climate action.
- Build or strengthen existing accountability mechanisms accessible to communities and local partners to address maladaptation, its environmental and social consequences.

Capacity and structures for sensitive and integrated climate action

- Review processes for the selection of funding locations, projects and implementing agencies by applying a peace and conflict lens.
- Invest in awareness, capacity and institutional structures for conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding within funding organisations and implementers, or seek external support, for example, from existing helpdesks like Alert's Conflict and Context Sensitivity Hub in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Ukraine.⁴⁵
- Invest in partnerships across sectors and with local partners for integrated action. Conflict sensitivity should also guide the identification and selection of implementing partners. This would also strengthen localisation,⁴⁶ enabling locally owned processes that respond to local needs and priorities.
- Link research to practice. There are many stand-alone academic studies on climate security, climate adaptation and peace. More research should be linked and embedded into actual policy and practice to inform policy-making and programme design with evidence on what does and does not work.
- Make flexible, long-term funding available and accessible to enable the realisation of these recommendations.

Learn more about our approach to peace integration: <https://bit.ly/peace-integration>

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