

Environment, Climate, Peace and Security

Environmental challenges whether caused by degradation, climate change, or human activities can exacerbate conflict and instability. They impact the livelihoods of communities, resources like water, pasture, land and food, and even habitations, leading to displacement in some cases. This further affects peace and security, and challenges efforts at building social cohesion.

Though, well mitigated, the challenges can open spaces for community dialogues, and the adoption of integrated approaches like environmental peacebuilding and initiatives that foster cooperation and prevent risks of conflicts and insecurity at the local and even national levels.

Recognizing these interlinkages and designing solutions that involve, amongst other aspects, combining peacebuilding with environmental approaches, and addressing root environmental issues, as well as integrating climate security considerations into conflict prevention strategies and policies, is critical.

Considering the above context, the Commission (NCIC) and Adaptation Consortium [ADA] have partnered to strengthen the peacebuilding potential of Kenya's County Climate Change Fund (CCCF) Mechanism for locally-led adaptation (LLA) and mitigation and community resilience programming initiatives, and enhance conflict-sensitivity in the governance of related efforts in the Country. The CCCF Mechanism is implemented at the Community level through Kenya's Devolved Climate Finance (DCF) Model.

Attached find 4 policy briefs on: Strengthening Conflict Sensitivity in Kenya's County Climate Change Fund at the National Level, and in the Counties of Isiolo, Wajir and Kitui.

Strengthening conflict sensitivity in Kenya's County Climate Change Fund: Isiolo county



Introduction

Governments facing a combination of climate vulnerability and conflict risks must proactively address the potential unintended consequences of their climate actions. It's crucial for them to integrate conflict-sensitive approaches into existing adaptation instruments. This ensures that adaptation efforts support peace or, at the very least, avoid exacerbating existing conflict drivers. However, many governments struggle to incorporate conflict-sensitive thinking into climate adaptation because climate issues often intersect with various sectors, such as water, land, and security, and can unfold across both time and space, making them complex to manage.

This policy brief shares the main outcomes and recommendations from a joint study conducted by the Adaptation Consortium (ADA) and the Alliance of Bioversity International – CIAT (CGIAR). The study analyzed Kenya's County Climate Change Fund (CCCF) mechanism to determine if its design, implementation, and monitoring effectively prevent new conflicts, support peaceful dispute resolution, and leverage climate actions as opportunities for peacebuilding.

This brief presents the results for Isiolo County. Isiolo is a predominantly pastoralist county, where herding of cattle, goats, sheep, and camels remains the backbone of livelihoods. Its population is ethnically diverse, comprising Somali, Borana, Turkana, Meru, and other communities whose seasonal movements and resource use often intersect. The county faces recurrent climate challenges including prolonged droughts, erratic rainfall, and resource scarcity, which heighten competition over water and grazing lands and exacerbate underlying tensions.



Key messages

The County Climate Change Fund (CCCF) in Kenya has demonstrated strong potential for conflict-sensitive climate adaptation. However, further steps can be taken to improve conflict sensitivity.

Sources of conflict sensitivity in the CCCF

- **Multi-level governance and legitimacy:** Isiolo's CCCF empowers WCCPCs as autonomous, community-led bodies that shape ward plans feeding directly into the County Integrated Development Plan, elevating grassroots voices into county politics and reinforcing accountability.
- **Integration of customary systems:** WCCPCs formally include peace committees and the Borana Dedha system, aligning CCCF projects with long-standing rangeland and grazing agreements that reduce inter-communal tensions.
- **Conflict as an explicit risk:** Vulnerability assessments systematically identify conflict risks—resource competition, crime, domestic violence, and human–wildlife encounters—embedding them into adaptation planning and county reports.
- **Inclusive representation:** Ward committees are designed to guarantee participation of women, youth, people with disabilities, and the poor, with dedicated rules and allocations to address intersectional risks.
- **Challenging inequalities:** Participatory assessments apply gender and intersectional lenses, surfacing structural vulnerabilities, though project design (e.g. water access) does not always reflect women's safety concerns.

Opportunities for conflict sensitivity in the CCCF

- **Systematic cross-boundary planning:** Ward-based approaches often exclude neighbouring communities reliant on shared grazing lands and water points; landscape-based, cross-ward collaboration is critical.
- **Institutionalizing peace roles:** Customary and peace actors contribute informally but lack defined roles or protocols. Documenting and formalizing their engagement would strengthen links between adaptation and peacebuilding.
- **Transparency of funding: Limited disclosure of CCCF budget allocations erodes trust, especially when county-level changes alter approved projects.**
- **Funding continuity:** Interruptions in mandated CCCF allocations due to political turnover undermine community confidence and leave projects unfinished.
- **Robust M&E on peace outcomes:** Though designed with socio-political indicators, Isiolo's M&E framework has not been systematically applied, weakening the ability to track or demonstrate peace dividends.

Why conflict sensitivity matters for climate adaptation

Climate adaptation is vital for strengthening community resilience in the face of rising climate risks. Yet, when adaptation measures are designed without accounting for local social, political, and economic dynamics, they may inadvertently fuel tensions or exacerbate existing conflicts—particularly in fragile and conflict-affected settings.

To mitigate these risks, a conflict-sensitive approach is essential. This approach ensures adaptation interventions are grounded in a robust understanding of the local context, including power dynamics, patterns of resource access, and existing grievances. Conflict-sensitive adaptation not only minimizes harm but can actively support peacebuilding by promoting inclusive governance, dialogue across divided communities, and trust in local institutions.

This study identifies three governance strategies that can embed conflict sensitivity in climate adaptation:

- **Multi-level governance** – Aligns adaptation policies with security considerations and local realities through coordination across sectors and governance levels.
- **Adaptive governance** – Builds institutional capacity to anticipate and respond to environmental and conflict-related change, informed by learning and feedback loops.
- **Representative governance** – Prioritizes the meaningful participation of conflict-affected and marginalized groups to address root causes of vulnerability and exclusion.

Case study. Conflict around the Bibi water pan in Kinna ward, Isiolo

The Bibi water pan, located along a key livestock corridor near Kinna market, has long been vital for pastoralist communities. Established in the 1970s, its location complemented boreholes, which allow controlled access. In contrast, water pans provide open access, making them valuable yet potentially contentious during scarcity. As part of the CCCF pilot, the Kinna pan was expanded in 2014 with fencing, tanks, a pump, and a distribution system to channel livestock to designated drinking points. A management office was also built to oversee access and protect nearby pastures. These improvements aimed to regulate use while ensuring fairness for local pastoralists.

By 2020, however, the site had become a flashpoint between Somali and Borana communities. Somali herders from Garissa were denied access, as the Borana, who had set the rules, excluded them from decision-making. Combined with drought pressures and insufficient water, tensions escalated. The Somali viewed the restrictions as illegitimate, and both groups clashed repeatedly over access.

The violence displaced people and rendered the water pan unusable. In the absence of security, infrastructure was vandalized and looted. Ongoing tensions, partly driven by broader territorial disputes across county borders, have hindered recovery. Although once considered safe due to its peaceful history, increasing scarcity has transformed it into a conflict zone. This case underscores the need for conflict-sensitive adaptation: inclusive rule-making, conflict monitoring, and robust security are essential to safeguard infrastructure and community relations.



The County Climate Change Fund in Isiolo County

The County Climate Change Fund (CCCCF) is a multi-level adaptation mechanism rooted in Locally Led Adaptation (LLA). Launched in 2012 under the name of Isiolo County Adaptation Fund (ICAF), it enables Kenyan county governments to establish dedicated climate funds accessible to Ward Climate Change Planning Committees (WCCPCs), which are composed of community members who identify and oversee local adaptation projects.

The CCCCf strengthens links between community planning and county governance by addressing challenges such as weak coordination, limited climate data use, and underfunded local efforts. It supports Kenya's devolution agenda by empowering counties and communities to lead climate resilience planning.

WCCPCs, selected through public vetting, identify local priorities and develop proposals, which are reviewed and supported by the County Climate Change Planning Committee (CCCCPC). The also CCCCPC develops the County Climate

Change Action Plan, based on participatory risk assessments, and provides technical support for proposal development. It also offers recommendations to the WCCPC and serves as the secretariat to the CCCCf steering committee.

Isiolo County piloted the CCCCf in 2011, establishing a fund to support public investments in resilience. Isiolo then formalized the CCCCf through the County Climate Change Fund Act in 2018, creating a legal framework for fund management. Between 2013 and 2018, the model expanded to Garissa, Kitui, Makueni, and Wajir, replicating Isiolo's success in channelling climate finance to local levels.

The mechanism is now being scaled nationwide, supported by the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA), as part of Kenya's National Climate Change Action Plan. It aims to institutionalize climate finance systems that are inclusive, accountable, and responsive to local needs.



Sources and opportunities for conflict sensitivity in Isiolo's CCCF

The findings of this analysis are structured in accordance with three main stages within the conventional policy development cycle: 1) agenda setting and policy formulation, 2) policy implementation, and 3) policy evaluation. For a more detailed analysis of the CCCF, see the full report¹. Traits marked in green below represent features and capacities that contribute to conflict sensitivity within the CCCF, whilst those marked in yellow represent entry points to further strengthen conflict sensitivity within the mechanism.

	Multi-level governance	Adaptive governance	Representative governance
Agenda setting	Effective coordination across different levels of governance strengthens local self-organization.	Assessments of the complex and root causes of climate vulnerability advise planning, including conflict dynamics.	Structural inequalities that drive vulnerability and conflict are recognized as important issues and action priorities.
	Adaptation and security sectors collaborate during strategic planning at different levels of governance.	Institutional capacities increase to generate information related to conflict in the context of climate risks and adaptation.	Social groups affected by structural inequality and overlapping risks influence decisions for adaptation.
	The policy and stakeholders recognize the need to include conflict and peace issues in adaptation planning.	Institutional capacities increase to use information related to conflict in the context of climate risks and adaptation.	
	Planning goes beyond political boundaries, considering resources and conflict at the landscape level.		
Implementation	Overlap of roles between stakeholders creates synergies for adaptation and peacebuilding goals.	Flexible and risk-tolerant financing structures target conflict-affected areas in a continuous basis.	Implementation processes intend to enhance relationships, including between groups holding grievances.
	Policy strengthens or creates collective action institutions that boost local capacity to manage conflict risks.	Planned actions are assessed for potential unintended effects, positive or negative, over conflict dynamics	Implementation encourages community institutions to negotiate and challenge structural inequalities prioritized.
		Policy experiences are used to strengthen wider governance systems for resilience and peacebuilding.	Implementation challenges corruption and rent-seeking practices as sources of conflict and vulnerability.
Evaluation	Monitoring and evaluation frameworks focus on conflict and peacebuilding outcomes.	Frequent monitoring of policy effects on conflict dynamics, including worsening conflict or promoting peace.	M&E considers structural inequalities and overlapping risks acting as root causes of vulnerability and conflict.
	M&E processes ensure transparency and accountability to local citizens.		Community members participate in and influence the design and implementation of M&E processes.

¹Medina, L.; Schapendonk, F.; Jaskolski, M.; Osumba, J.; Jebiwott, A.; Singh, R.; Takaindisa, J.; Pacillo, G. (2025) Conflict-sensitive adaptation governance: Assessing Kenya's County Climate Change Fund. CGIAR FOCUS Climate Security. 60 p. <https://hdl.handle.net/10568/169314>

Sources of conflict sensitivity

Coordination across governance levels enables collective action. Isiolo's CCCF has strengthened local governance by establishing WCCPCs as extensively autonomous bodies for diagnosing, planning, and implementing adaptation priorities. In Isiolo, WCCPCs not only guide CCCF-funded projects but have also played a decisive role in producing five-year Ward Development Plans that feed directly into the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP). This elevates ward-level voices into county politics, enhancing legitimacy and bottom-up accountability.

Considering customary practices strengthens conflict sensitivity. WCCPCs in Isiolo include representatives from peace committees, Dedha (the Borana customary rangeland governance system), water user committees, and service sectors like health and education. This coordination has formalized pathways for integrating traditional and state institutions, allowing local knowledge and customary conflict management practices to shape adaptation priorities. The Dedha's grazing agreements, for instance, inform water and pasture investments, linking CCCF projects with time-tested systems for reducing inter-communal tensions.

Conflict risks are recognized and integrated into adaptation planning. Vulnerability assessments² conducted across Isiolo consistently highlight conflict as a climate-related vulnerability. Wards reported that climate change aggravates livestock competition, domestic violence, crime, and human-wildlife conflict. These risks are not only discussed during consultations but are also systematically documented in county-level reports, providing a body of evidence that directly links climate impacts to security dynamics.

Investment planning and design fosters the representation of vulnerable groups. The process for composing the ward planning committees is designed to ensure both equitable representation and community-driven selection. Crucially, funding is consciously allocated, and guidelines and rules provided, to support the inclusion of populations affected by intersectional risks by integrating participatory governance structures that ensure representation of marginalized groups, including women, youth, people with disabilities, and the poor.

Participatory assessments and planning processes support the challenging of structural inequalities. Vulnerability assessments as conducted through the CCCF mechanism incorporate a gender and intersectional lens as an important factor in shaping priorities, allowing for structural vulnerabilities and inequalities, such as power imbalances, to surface during the prioritization of adaptation investments. Despite this, proposed activities under CCCF projects, mainly related to water availability, do not always account for women's access to water or the safety risks they face.

"Each of these committees come from locations and represent the people from this location, and also some come from peace, some come from CBOs, so they represent the issues they work on in these functions"

Chairperson of WCCPC

² County Government of Isiolo (2023). Isiolo County Participatory Climate Risk Assessment Report. https://maarifa.cog.go.ke/sites/default/files/2024-06/REVIEWED-%20PCRA%20ISILOLO_1.pdf

Opportunities for conflict sensitivity

Account for inter-group dynamics, particularly across administrative boundaries, in a more systematic manner. Although some CCCF projects in Isiolo have improved inter-group relations, especially around shared resources, systematic approaches to cross-boundary planning remain underdeveloped. Ward-based planning often produces localized solutions that exclude neighbouring communities who depend on the same resources. Strengthening cross-ward coordination, particularly along county borders, would ensure that adaptation investments foster inclusion and prevent disputes linked to shared grazing lands and water points.

Promote more proactive inter-ward collaboration through landscape approaches to adaptation. CCCF projects rarely extend this collaboration into structured cross-ward planning. Adopting landscape-based and nature-based solutions would enable projects to span ecological zones and political boundaries. Inter-ward collaboration is particularly critical in Isiolo, where rangeland and water systems cut across administrative borders and regularly spark disputes.

Document experiences on policy implementation to support peacebuilding efforts. While informal engagement with peace committees and customary systems such as the Dedha has proven valuable, there are no defined roles or protocols for peace actors in CCCF processes. This gap reduces opportunities to integrate peace perspectives into proposal development, inter-ward coordination, and monitoring. Moreover, where CCCF projects have supported peace dividends—such as reducing disputes at grazing areas or water points—these experiences are not systematically captured or shared with wider governance systems. Documenting and institutionalizing such outcomes would allow CCCF actors to influence

county and national peacebuilding agendas, while also creating evidence for how adaptation can contribute to conflict prevention.

Enhance transparency of available budgets. There is a widespread perception in Isiolo that CCCF budget allocations are opaque. Communities are rarely informed about the amounts released annually for CCCF projects, and changes made at the county level often alter project scope without consultation. This lack of disclosure undermines trust in the CCCF.

Ensure continuity of mandated funds. Interruptions in CCCF funding caused by changes in county political leadership have undermined community trust and created frustration when approved projects were left unfinished. In Isiolo, the mandated allocation of funds under CCCF legislation has not always been consistently followed, creating a gap between community expectations and county delivery.

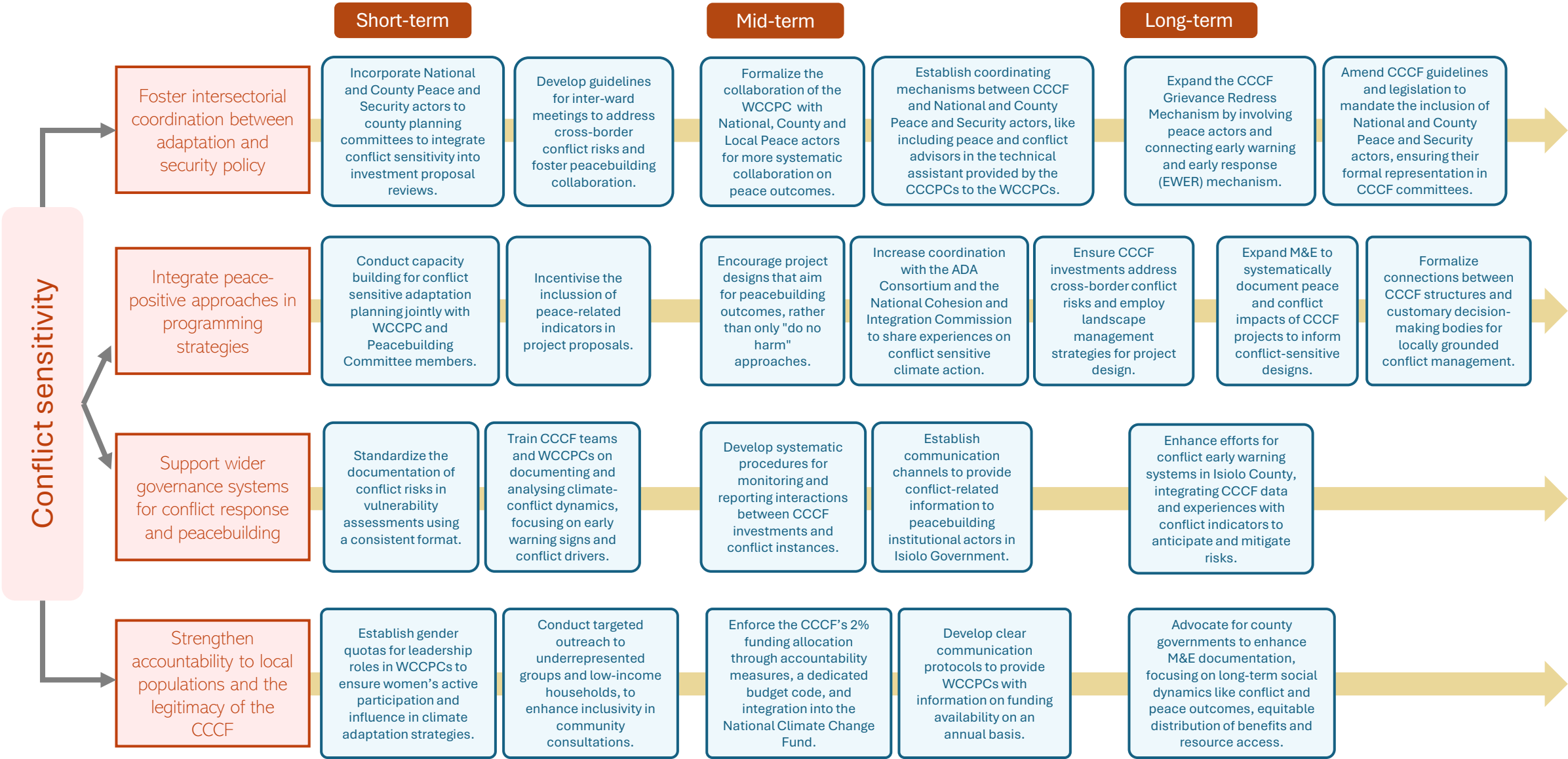
Increase efforts for M&E processes, while including conflict and peace outcomes. Isiolo's CCCF design included a robust M&E framework intended to track socio-political outcomes alongside climate and livelihood impacts. However, beyond the pilot phase, these tools have not been fully implemented. Without systematic tracking of peace and conflict outcomes, opportunities to refine project design and anticipate risks are lost.

"The information is not clearly reaching the ground, but in the forum there are some leaders who will clearly explain, but the county does not clearly explain things to the people...why did the county not invest in the plans, because they were changing priorities, they addressed conflict, they addressed covid, but we cannot talk on behalf of the counties, because we have not been told, these are all assumptions"

Member of a WCCPC

Integrating conflict sensitivity into Isiolo's CCCF

The following figure summarises the insights and recommendations that emerged from the analysis. Recommendations are grouped according to their feasibility of implementation in the short, medium, and long term. Together, they form an action plan towards conflict sensitivity in Isiolo's CCCF.





Acknowledgments

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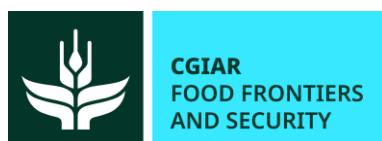
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Strengthening conflict sensitivity in Kenya's County Climate Change Fund: Kitui county



Introduction

Governments, particularly those facing compounding climate vulnerability and conflict-related risks, must proactively address the potential unintended consequences of climate actions. Doing so requires strengthening existing adaptation instruments by mainstreaming conflict sensitive approaches, so that adaptation efforts are able to contribute to sustaining peace or, at the very least, do not 'do harm' by exacerbating existing conflict drivers. However, many governments face challenges. It's not easy to include conflict-sensitive thinking in climate adaptation. This is because climate problems often cut across many sectors—like water, land, and security—and can stretch across both space and time.

This policy brief shares key findings and recommendations from a joint study by the Adaptation Consortium (ADA) and the Alliance of Bioversity International – CIAT (CGIAR). The analysis focused on Kenya's County Climate Change Fund (CCCF) mechanism. It evaluated whether the CCCF is designed, implemented, and monitored in ways that: 1) prevent new conflicts; 2) support peaceful ways of solving disagreements; and 3) use climate actions as opportunities to build peace. This brief presents the results for Kitui County.

Kitui's residents depend largely on smallholder farming, charcoal production, and livestock keeping, livelihoods that are highly sensitive to rainfall variability and land degradation. The county's population is predominantly Kamba, with minority groups engaged in trade and migration across county borders. Kitui experiences recurrent droughts, water scarcity, and soil erosion, challenges that undermine food security and strain natural resources, heightening the risks of competition and conflict over access to land, water, and forest resources.



Key messages

The County Climate Change Fund (CCCF) in Kenya has demonstrated strong potential for conflict-sensitive climate adaptation. However, further steps can be taken to improve conflict sensitivity.

Sources of conflict sensitivity

- **Inclusive local decision-making:** WCCPTs and project committees apply democratic practices of representation, accountability, and grievance redress, fostering trust and peaceful conflict management.
- **Conflict risks integrated into adaptation:** Vulnerability assessments explicitly address resource competition, crime, and human–wildlife conflict, with some wards framing adaptation as a peace dividend.
- **Coordination across actors:** WCCPTs link with ward development committees and resource-user associations, though the absence of county-level peace structures underscores the role of national bodies like NCIC.
- **Conflict-avoidant project design:** Investments avoid contested areas, clarify access rules, and sometimes promote inter-ward cooperation, with grievance mechanisms reinforcing peaceful outcomes.
- **Addressing inequalities through participation:** Gender and intersectional lenses highlight unequal access to resources; women, youth, and persons with disabilities are represented, though structural issues persist.
- **Monitoring peace outcomes:** M&E tracks vulnerable groups but remains focused on process indicators; outcome-oriented metrics are needed to demonstrate peace dividends such as reduced disputes.

Recommendations to strengthen conflict sensitivity

- **Strengthen cross-boundary planning:** Move beyond ward-level approaches to more systematic collaboration across political and administrative boundaries.
- **Ensure funding consistency:** Avoid delays in mandated allocations and insulate CCCF funds from shifting political priorities to maintain trust.
- **Expand project sustainability:** Empower committees to develop cost-recovery, enterprises, or partnerships that sustain impacts and livelihoods beyond county cycles.
- **Improve M&E systems:** Incorporate peace and conflict outcomes to capture long-term social and political impacts and demonstrate dividends identified by communities.
- **Leverage peace insights:** Document and feed dispute-resolution experiences into broader governance systems to strengthen early warning and conflict prevention.
- **Reconcile procurement and local priorities:** Balance transparency and anti-corruption safeguards with communities' preference for local service providers to align fairness with economic participation.

Why conflict sensitivity matters for climate adaptation

Climate adaptation is vital for strengthening community resilience in the face of rising climate risks. Yet, when adaptation measures are designed without accounting for local social, political, and economic dynamics, they may inadvertently fuel tensions or exacerbate existing conflicts—particularly in fragile and conflict-affected settings.

To mitigate these risks, a conflict-sensitive approach is essential. This approach ensures adaptation interventions are grounded in a robust understanding of the local context, including power dynamics, patterns of resource access, and existing grievances. Conflict-sensitive adaptation not only minimizes harm but can actively support peacebuilding by promoting inclusive governance, dialogue across divided communities, and trust in local institutions.

This study identifies three governance strategies that can embed conflict sensitivity in climate adaptation:

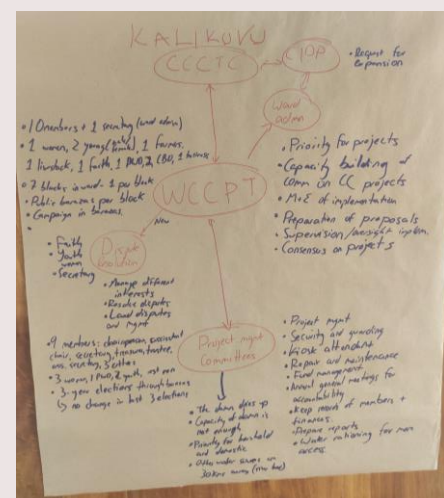
- **Multi-level governance** – Aligns adaptation policies with security considerations and local realities through coordination across sectors and governance levels.
- **Adaptive governance** – Builds institutional capacity to anticipate and respond to environmental and conflict-related change, informed by learning and feedback loops.
- **Representative governance** – Prioritizes the meaningful participation of conflict-affected and marginalized groups to address root causes of vulnerability and exclusion.

Case study: Reducing inter-communal conflict risk in Mutha Ward

Mutha ward, located in Kitui South and home to about 13,500 people, identified drought, human-wildlife conflict, and disease as key climate hazards. In response, the community prioritized water harvesting infrastructure to support crop resilience and improve livestock quality. Although human-human conflict was not ranked as a top climate risk, Mutha has experienced long-standing cross-border tensions with Somali pastoralists over pasture and water access.

The CCCF-supported Kalikuvu earth dam was selected following a contested site selection process, with various communities demanding equitable access. Resolution was achieved through community barazas mediated by the WCCPT and local leadership, ensuring consensus and transparency.

The dam has delivered significant adaptation benefits by increasing water availability, supporting drought planning, and improving economic resilience. It has also reduced conflict risk, as residents no longer need to access water from high-risk areas. This shift has eased tensions with neighbouring pastoralist groups, while a nearby market has fostered trade and interdependence, strengthening peacebuilding outcomes alongside climate resilience.



Governance of CCCF adaptation investments in Mutha ward

The County Climate Change Fund in Kitui County

The County Climate Change Fund (CCCF) is a multi-level adaptation mechanism designed to localize climate action in alignment with Kenya's 2010 Constitution and devolution framework. Operational in Kitui County since 2022, following legislative approval in 2018, the CCCF empowers communities to shape their own climate adaptation responses through structures rooted in the principles of Locally Led Adaptation (LLA).

At the core of the mechanism are Ward Climate Change Planning Teams (WCCPTs), which identify priority investments, develop proposals, and supervise implementation through site management committees. These teams are systematically selected according to a set of rules and guidelines based on equity and inclusivity, with reserved positions for women, youth, and persons with disabilities. While the County Climate Change Planning Committee (CCCPC) provides technical support and aligns

projects with county planning instruments.

A 2023 Participatory Climate Risk Assessment (PCRA) conducted across Kitui revealed that intensifying droughts, compounded by flash floods, environmental degradation, and rising temperatures, pose the most severe climate threat. These hazards are undermining food and water security, disrupting livelihoods, and contributing to broader socioeconomic challenges, including migration, household conflict, and insecurity. In some wards, especially those bordering Tana River County, climate pressures have escalated into inter-community tensions over access to water and pasture. Through the CCCF, Kitui County is building an adaptive governance system that links climate risk reduction to inclusive decision-making, offering a model for addressing the intertwined challenges of environmental stress and social vulnerability.



Sources and opportunities for conflict sensitivity in Kitui's CCCF

The findings of this analysis are structured in accordance with three main stages within the conventional policy development cycle: 1) agenda setting and policy formulation, 2) policy implementation, and 3) policy evaluation. For a more detailed analysis of the CCCF, see the full report¹. Traits marked in green below represent features and capacities that contribute to conflict sensitivity within the CCCF, whilst those marked in yellow represent entry points to further strengthen conflict sensitivity within the mechanism.

	Multi-level governance	Adaptive governance	Representative governance
Agenda setting	Effective coordination across different levels of governance strengthens local self-organization.	Assessments of the complex and root causes of climate vulnerability advise planning, including conflict dynamics.	Structural inequalities that drive vulnerability and conflict are recognized as important issues and action priorities.
	Adaptation and security sectors collaborate during strategic planning at different levels of governance.	Institutional capacities increase to generate information related to conflict in the context of climate risks and adaptation.	Social groups affected by structural inequality and overlapping risks influence decisions for adaptation.
	The policy and stakeholders recognize the need to include conflict and peace issues in adaptation planning.	Institutional capacities increase to use information related to conflict in the context of climate risks and adaptation.	
	Planning goes beyond political boundaries, considering resources and conflict at the landscape level.		
Implementation	Overlap of roles between stakeholders creates synergies for adaptation and peacebuilding goals.	Flexible and risk-tolerant financing structures target conflict-affected areas in a continuous basis.	Implementation processes intend to enhance relationships, including between groups holding grievances.
	Policy strengthens or creates collective action institutions that boost local capacity to manage conflict risks.	Planned actions are assessed for potential unintended effects, positive or negative, over conflict dynamics	Implementation encourages community institutions to negotiate and challenge structural inequalities prioritized.
		Policy experiences are used to strengthen wider governance systems for resilience and peacebuilding.	Implementation challenges corruption and rent-seeking practices as sources of conflict and vulnerability.
Evaluation	Monitoring and evaluation frameworks focus on conflict and peacebuilding outcomes.	Frequent monitoring of policy effects on conflict dynamics, including worsening conflict or promoting peace.	M&E considers structural inequalities and overlapping risks acting as root causes of vulnerability and conflict.
	M&E processes ensure transparency and accountability to local citizens.		Community members participate in and influence the design and implementation of M&E processes.

¹Medina, L.; Schapendonk, F.; Jaskolski, M.; Osumba, J.; Jebiwott, A.; Singh, R.; Takaindisa, J.; Pacillo, G. (2025) Conflict-sensitive adaptation governance: Assessing Kenya's County Climate Change Fund. CGIAR FOCUS Climate Security. 60 p. <https://hdl.handle.net/10568/169314>

Sources of conflict sensitivity

Representation in local decision-making fosters collective action and conflict resolution. In Kitui, WCCPTs serve as inclusive, community-led bodies that drive climate risk assessments. Project management committees established to oversee implementation have evidenced highly democratic practices, with transparent selection of members, clear accountability to user associations, and open forums for addressing grievances. These practices have not only improved project performance but also provided peaceful mechanisms for conflict management, reinforcing trust in adaptation governance.

Conflict risks are recognised within vulnerability assessments and feature in adaptation planning processes. During vulnerability assessments², communities in Kitui identified conflict risks—including resource competition, crime, and human–wildlife conflict—as integral to climate adaptation. Importantly, some wards explicitly prioritized peace dividends, treating adaptation not only as a technical response to climate stress but as an opportunity to reduce human–human and human–wildlife tensions.

Bringing together local actors strengthens coordination for conflict sensitivity. WCCPTs coordinate with Ward Development Committees and integrate climate priorities into broader ward and county development plans. They also engage with resource-user associations, such as forest and water management committees, to ensure coherence in project planning. However, unlike Isiolo and Wajir, Kitui has fewer established peacebuilding structures at the county level. This makes the involvement of national peacebuilding institutions, such as the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC), particularly relevant to sustain and institutionalize peace dividends generated by local adaptation efforts.

Investments designed to avoid conflict yield visible peace outcomes. CCCF projects in Kitui generally adopt a “do no harm” approach by avoiding contested areas and clarifying access rules. Beyond this, some projects have been deliberately located to foster inter-ward cooperation or reduce cross-county tensions, making peace a tangible dividend of climate adaptation. Mechanisms such as the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) provide peaceful channels for resolving disputes, helping to consolidate these positive outcomes.

Participatory planning addresses inequalities, but with limits. Participatory planning processes apply a gender and intersectional lens, surfacing issues of inequality in access to water, land, and other resources. While many CCCF projects have focused on immediate needs, especially water access, these do not always reflect women’s safety concerns, such as risks associated with distant water points. Nonetheless, representation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities in WCCPTs and management teams fosters the challenging of this structural issues.

Monitoring and evaluation processes account for the challenging of structural inequalities. Project monitoring and evaluation in Kitui often include indicators addressing vulnerable groups, but these tend to be process-oriented and easily quantifiable. While useful, they fall short of capturing the broader peace dividends that communities themselves recognize, such as reduced disputes at water points or improved inter-ward cooperation. Building stronger outcome-oriented indicators could help demonstrate how adaptation generates peace.

“Now we are able to co-exist. Before, we weren’t able to talk to one another. The dam definitely played a role in that.”

Ward Administrator

²County Government of Kitui (2023). Kitui County Participatory Risk Assessment Report.

<https://maarifa.cog.go.ke/sites/default/files/2024-06/Kitui%20County%20PCRA%20Report%20Reviewed.pdf>

Opportunities for conflict sensitivity

Adaptation planning should take into account inter-group dynamics – particularly across administrative boundaries – in a more systematic manner. While some CCCF projects in Kitui have improved inter-group dynamics across administrative boundaries, systematic trans-boundary planning remains underdeveloped. Ward-level approaches often lead to localized solutions that exclude affected neighbouring communities. Enhancing cross-ward collaboration, especially near political boundaries, would enable more inclusive and effective adaptation planning.

Ensure continuous funding, even under changing political priorities, to avoid unmet constituent expectations. Funding consistency is another key challenge. Delays in allocating the mandated 2% of development funds, due to shifting political priorities, have disrupted CCCF operations and risk generating unmet expectations among constituents. This can undermine trust in adaptation processes and entangle climate investments in electoral competition.

Foster the capacity of project management committees to secure and expand project impacts. Kitui's CCCF should also strengthen the role of project management teams to design alternative funding streams through commercial strategies. For example, developing cost-recovery mechanisms, community-based enterprises, or public-private partnerships. Such strategies could secure the sustainability of projects beyond county budget cycles while creating livelihood opportunities that reinforce peace dividends.

Build a more robust M&E system that captures peace dividends. Kitui's CCCF M&E framework includes conflict indicators, but in practice it has been applied narrowly to procurement and early project milestones. There is little systematic tracking of long-term social, political, and environmental impacts. Strengthening M&E to include conflict and peace outcomes is critical, not only to evaluate project success, but also to demonstrate the tangible peace dividends that communities themselves identify.

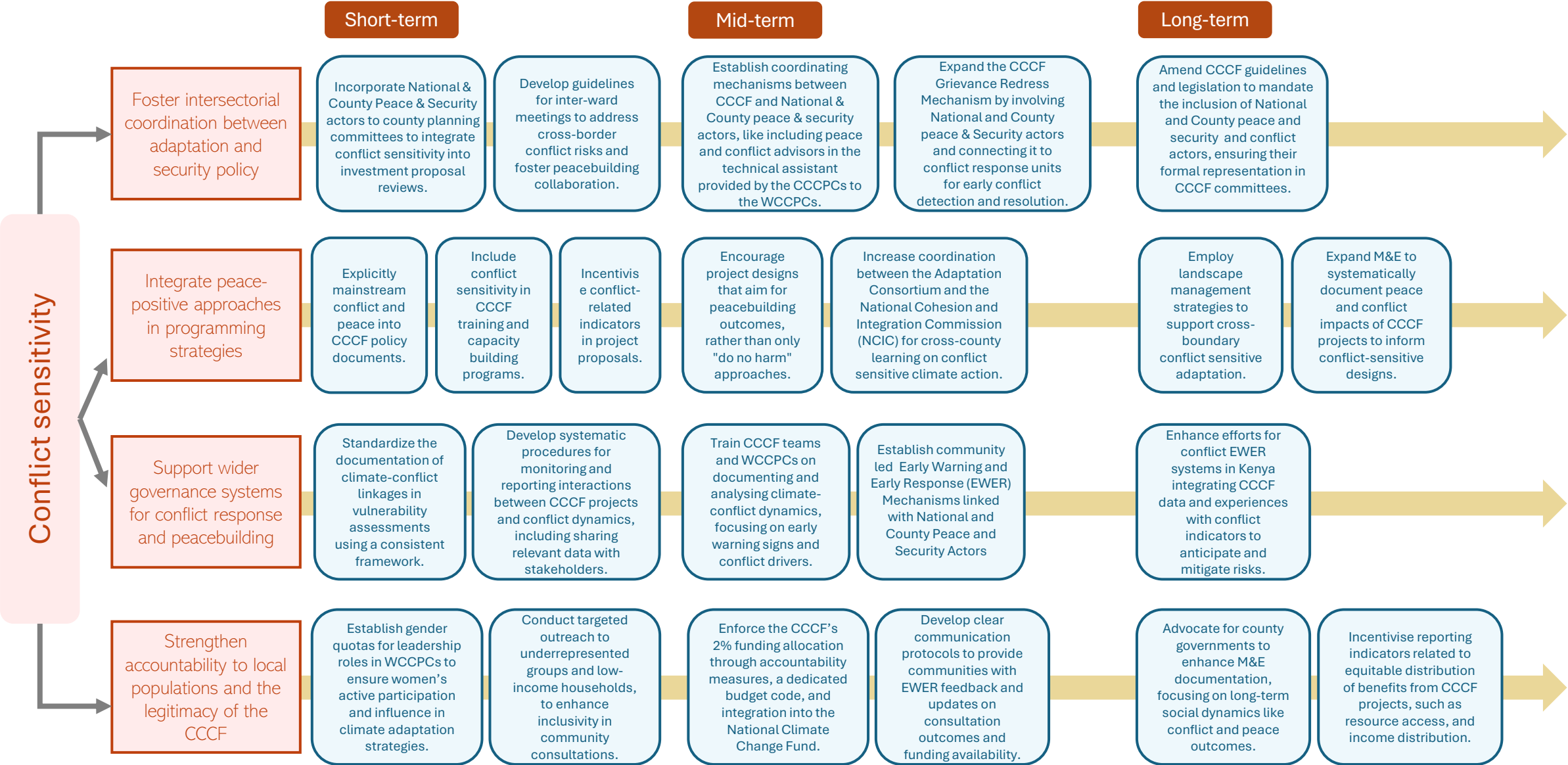
Information on peace and conflict generated during project implementation and operation should be better leveraged towards supporting wider governance systems. Although CCCF actors like WCCPTs and site committees have created informal mechanisms for managing disputes, peace-related outcomes and conflict interactions are rarely documented or used to inform broader governance systems.

Reconcile transparency frameworks with community expectations. Kitui's CCCF aligns with national frameworks on transparency and procurement, embedding strong anti-corruption measures into project implementation. However, at the county level, open tender procedures sometimes create tensions with WCCPTs and communities, who prefer the selection of local service providers to ensure benefits remain within the county. This gap highlights the need to reconcile formal procurement frameworks with community expectations of fairness and local economic participation.



Integrating conflict sensitivity into Kitui's CCCF

The following figure summarises the insights and recommendations that emerged from the analysis. Recommendations are grouped according to their feasibility of implementation in the short, medium, and long term. Together, they form an action plan towards conflict sensitivity in Kitui's CCCF.





Acknowledgments

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July, 2025

All photos credited to CGIAR.





Introduction

Governments grappling with overlapping climate vulnerabilities and conflict-related risks must take proactive steps to mitigate the unintended consequences of climate actions. This involves reinforcing existing adaptation mechanisms by integrating conflict-sensitive approaches, ensuring that climate adaptation efforts contribute to peacebuilding or, at the very least, avoid intensifying existing tensions. Yet, embedding conflict sensitivity into climate adaptation remains a significant challenge. Climate issues often span multiple sectors - such as water, land, and security - and unfold across diverse geographic and temporal scales, making it difficult to apply cohesive, conflict-aware strategies.

This policy brief presents insights and recommendations from a collaborative study conducted by the Adaptation Consortium (ADA) and the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT (CGIAR). The research examined Kenya's County Climate Change Fund (CCCCF) mechanism to assess whether its design, implementation, and monitoring processes are aligned with conflict prevention and peacebuilding goals. Specifically, the study evaluated the CCCC's capacity to: 1) prevent the emergence of new conflicts; 2) promote peaceful resolution of disputes; and 3) leverage climate actions as strategic opportunities to foster peace. This brief presents the results for Wajir County.

Wajir is a predominantly pastoralist county, where communities rely on herding cattle, camels, goats, and sheep across vast arid rangelands. The population is largely Somali, with strong clan-based social systems that shape local governance and resource management. The county faces extreme climate challenges, including recurrent droughts, water scarcity, and occasional flash floods, all of which intensify competition over grazing areas and water points, amplifying the risk of inter-clan conflict and cross-border tensions.

Key messages

The County Climate Change Fund (CCCF) in Wajir has demonstrated strong potential for conflict-sensitive climate adaptation. However, further steps can be taken to improve conflict sensitivity.

Sources of conflict sensitivity in the CCCF

- **Local self-organization:** WCCPCs, grounded in pastoralist traditions, enable diverse clans to collectively diagnose, plan, and implement projects. This inclusive design strengthens ownership in a county historically marked by rivalry.
- **Participatory dialogue:** Barazas provide space for open debate and consensus-building on priorities. These assemblies have been crucial for embedding peace-conscious decision-making in a fragile context.
- **Linkages with community structures:** WCCPCs coordinate with peace committees, rangeland groups, and water associations. Overlapping memberships help bridge efforts, though coordination remains largely informal.
- **Stable funding streams:** Unlike many counties, Wajir's CCCF has been continuously resourced since piloting, reducing the risk of unmet expectations and fostering accountability.
- **Conflict risk recognition:** Vulnerability assessments explicitly link drought and resource scarcity to violence, ensuring that climate projects integrate conflict considerations.
- **Do-no-harm safeguards:** Elders and peacebuilders advise against siting projects in contested areas, while rules for borehole or pan access are set collectively to prevent disputes.
- **Transparency frameworks:** Public tenders, posted beneficiary lists, and documented consultations reinforce community trust in CCCF investments.

Opportunities for conflict sensitivity in the CCCF

- **Formalize peace coordination:** Stronger protocols with actors like the Directorate for Peace and Cohesion would embed conflict sensitivity more systematically.
- **Resource administration adequately:** With only 3% of funds for administration, capacity and coordination remain underfunded, limiting adaptability to conflict risks.
- **Enhance women's influence:** Formal representation exists, but cultural barriers persist; creating safe channels for women's input could strengthen inclusivity.
- **Address inequalities directly:** Gender gaps and marginalization of informal settlement residents remain drivers of grievance, requiring clearer attention in project design.
- **Leverage local lessons:** Ward-level successes are not systematically documented or fed into county or national systems, missing opportunities for policy learning.
- **Strengthen monitoring and evaluation:** Data is collected but rarely analysed for peace outcomes; more robust M&E could inform early warning and adaptation.

Why conflict sensitivity matters for climate adaptation

Climate adaptation is vital for strengthening community resilience in the face of rising climate risks. Yet, when adaptation measures are designed without accounting for local social, political, and economic dynamics, they may inadvertently fuel tensions or exacerbate existing conflicts—particularly in fragile and conflict-affected settings.

To mitigate these risks, a conflict-sensitive approach is essential. This approach ensures adaptation interventions are grounded in a robust understanding of the local context, including power dynamics, patterns of resource access, and existing grievances. Conflict-sensitive adaptation not only minimizes harm but can actively support peacebuilding by promoting inclusive governance, dialogue across divided communities, and trust in local institutions.

This study identifies three governance strategies that can embed conflict sensitivity in climate adaptation:

- **Multilevel governance** – Aligns adaptation policies with security considerations and local realities through coordination across sectors and governance levels.
- **Adaptive governance** – Builds institutional capacity to anticipate and respond to environmental and conflict-related change, informed by learning and feedback loops.
- **Representative governance** – Prioritizes the meaningful participation of conflict-affected and marginalized groups to address root causes of vulnerability and exclusion.

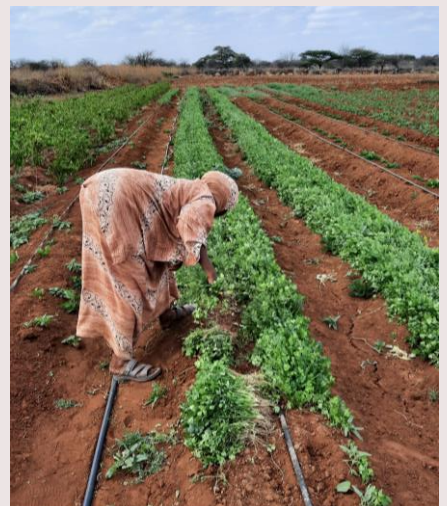
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Buna, located north of Wajir Town, is a 3-hour drive on an unpaved road. While flash floods have caused damage—most recently in 2024—Buna primarily suffers from drought, which heightens health risks and undermines pastoralist livelihoods in the semi-arid landscape.

Two CCCF-funded climate adaptation projects in Buna focus on improving water access for agriculture, livestock, and domestic use. The Buna Water Supply, completed in 2023 in Shuriako Village, uses an elevated pan and tank to enhance household water access. The Bohol Borehole, implemented in 2024, supports drip-irrigated vegetable farming and provides water for homes and livestock.

Access to water in Buna is tightly linked to inter-clan relations, and water management decisions are made through a conflict-sensitive lens. Community barazas and planning meetings often debate project risks, sometimes leading to project rejection over peace concerns. Traditional bodies like the Borehole Committee, led by a bayregga (a culturally recognized water manager), guide implementation and resolve disputes.

While CCCF projects improve water access and support livelihoods, sustainability challenges persist. In 2024, a malfunctioning pump at the borehole and delays in county-level repairs led to shortages, heightening competition over water and undermining trust in the project's long-term viability.



The County Climate Change Fund in Wajir County

The County Climate Change Fund (CCCF) is a multi-level adaptation mechanism based on principles of Locally Led Adaptation (LLA). First piloted in Isiolo in 2011, it aims to empower communities by financing climate-resilient investments through Ward Climate Change Planning Committees (WCCPCs). Wajir County was the second to adopt CCCF, launching its pilot in 2013 and formalizing it through legislation in 2016. Wajir's County government has generally upheld the mandated 2% allocation from county development funds to the CCCF.

Two major participatory vulnerability assessments across wards, in 2013 and 2023, have informed CCCF planning in Wajir, identifying climate hazards, mapping vulnerabilities, and guiding investments. Wajir's semi-arid environment faces increasing climate

risks: erratic rainfall, prolonged droughts, floods, dust storms, and rising temperatures. These changes strain pastoral livelihoods, degrade ecosystems, and exacerbate food and water insecurity. Environmental degradation—driven by overgrazing, deforestation, poor land use, and extractive natural resource management policies—has led to desertification and more frequent bushfires. Climate impacts intersect with deep-rooted conflict dynamics. Historical marginalization, contested boundaries, and clan-based divisions undermine governance and fuel natural resource-based conflicts. Women and marginalized groups face disproportionate burdens, with gendered inequalities limiting adaptive capacity. In this context, CCCF efforts in Wajir must navigate a complex web of environmental, social, and political challenges to foster resilience and peace.



Sources and opportunities for conflict sensitivity in Wajir's CCCF

The findings of this analysis are structured in accordance with three main stages within the conventional policy development cycle: 1) agenda setting and policy formulation, 2) policy implementation, and 3) policy evaluation. For a more detailed analysis of the CCCF, see the full report¹. Traits marked in green below represent features and capacities that contribute to conflict sensitivity within the CCCF, whilst those marked in yellow represent entry points to further strengthen conflict sensitivity within the mechanism.

	Multi-level governance	Adaptive governance	Representative governance
Agenda setting	Effective coordination across different levels of governance strengthens local self-organization.	Assessments of the complex and root causes of climate vulnerability advise planning, including conflict dynamics.	Structural inequalities that drive vulnerability and conflict are recognized as important issues and action priorities.
	Adaptation and security sectors collaborate during strategic planning at different levels of governance.	Institutional capacities increase to generate information related to conflict in the context of climate risks and adaptation.	Social groups affected by structural inequality and overlapping risks influence decisions for adaptation.
	The policy and stakeholders recognize the need to include conflict and peace issues in adaptation planning.	Institutional capacities increase to use information related to conflict in the context of climate risks and adaptation.	
	Planning goes beyond political boundaries, considering resources and conflict at the landscape level.		
Implementation	Overlap of roles between stakeholders creates synergies for adaptation and peacebuilding goals.	Flexible and risk-tolerant financing structures target conflict-affected areas in a continuous basis.	Implementation processes intend to enhance relationships, including between groups holding grievances.
	Policy strengthens or creates collective action institutions that boost local capacity to manage conflict risks.	Planned actions are assessed for potential unintended effects, positive or negative, over conflict dynamics	Implementation encourages community institutions to negotiate and challenge structural inequalities prioritized.
		Policy experiences are used to strengthen wider governance systems for resilience and peacebuilding.	Implementation challenges corruption and rent-seeking practices as sources of conflict and vulnerability.
Evaluation	Monitoring and evaluation frameworks focus on conflict and peacebuilding outcomes.	Frequent monitoring of policy effects on conflict dynamics, including worsening conflict or promoting peace.	M&E considers structural inequalities and overlapping risks acting as root causes of vulnerability and conflict.
	M&E processes ensure transparency and accountability to local citizens.		Community members participate in and influence the design and implementation of M&E processes.

¹Medina, L.; Schapendonk, F.; Jaskolski, M.; Osumba, J.; Jebiwott, A.; Singh, R.; Takaindisa, J.; Pacillo, G. (2025) Conflict-sensitive adaptation governance: Assessing Kenya's County Climate Change Fund. CGIAR FOCUS Climate Security. 60 p. <https://hdl.handle.net/10568/169314>

Sources of conflict sensitivity

Effective coordination across levels of governance enables local self-organization and collective action.

In Wajir, the CCCF has fostered autonomous local decision-making through WCCPCs. These committees, rooted in pastoralist practices that dominate livelihoods, lead the diagnosis, planning, and implementation of adaptation projects. Their inclusive design allows diverse clan groups across territories to contribute, reinforcing both local ownership and collective action in a county long marked by inter-clan competition.

Climate adaptation planning and proposal processes are based on participatory structures and strengthen local institutions.

The use of barazas (community assemblies) plays a crucial role in selecting WCCPC members and debating adaptation priorities. These gatherings enable open dialogue on project benefits, risks, and conflict sensitivity, ensuring that decisions are made by consensus. Given Wajir's history of inter-ethnic and clan tensions, the reliance on consensus-based decision-making has been central to promoting peace-conscious planning.

Bringing together local actors strengthens coordination for conflict sensitivity.

WCCPCs often harmonize efforts with existing community structures, including peace committees, rangeland management systems, and water user associations. Individuals that serve simultaneously in multiple platforms strengthen coordination and prevent duplication. In Wajir, peace committee members are directly invited into climate planning, ensuring that adaptation initiatives are informed by peacebuilding considerations. Nonetheless, outcomes could be improved through more formalized coordination mechanisms between these structures.

Continuous funding streams create accountability and avoid unmet expectations.

The CCCF mechanism in Wajir has been continuously operating since it was piloted, evidencing a higher resilience towards shifting political priorities than other counties. This reduces the risk of unmet expectation by local communities.

Recognition of conflict risks in adaptation planning.

Vulnerability assessments in Wajir frequently highlight the way climate stressors, such as drought, intensify inter-clan violence, livestock theft, and resource competition. Historical clan rivalries remain a salient factor shaping vulnerability. By embedding these dynamics into planning consultations, CCCF processes in Wajir integrate conflict considerations and view social cohesion as integral to climate resilience.

“Do-no-harm” investments prevent tensions.

Local peacebuilders and elders play an advisory role in planning, helping WCCPCs avoid projects in contested grazing areas or water points. Clear rules for access to CCCF-supported infrastructure—such as boreholes or water pans—are developed through community consensus, ensuring trust and equitable access across groups.

Implementation processes recognize and prevent corruption and rent-seeking practices.

The CCCF in Wajir applies robust anti-corruption frameworks aligned with national regulations. Transparency practices, such as documenting consultations through minutes journals, broadcasting tenders on radio, and publicly posting beneficiary lists, have reinforced community ownership. Survey data from Wajir indicates high confidence in the CCCF's transparency.

Opportunities for conflict sensitivity

Strengthen coordination with peace security actors. Although ward-level WCCPCs often engage informally with peace committees, the CCCF lacks formal mechanisms to integrate peace and security actors into planning and implementation. This gap is particularly evident at the county level. The Directorate for Peace and Cohesion, which is highly active in county forums and inter-clan mediation, has not been included in CCCF processes. The absence of structured coordination protocols weakens opportunities to mainstream conflict sensitivity into climate planning.

Ensure adequate investment in CCCF administration and capacity development. In Wajir, only 3% of CCCF funds are allocated to administrative costs, far below the 10% allocation recommended in the CCCF design. This shortfall undermines the ability of committees to coordinate effectively, build capacity, and engage in systematic learning. Without sufficient resources for training and institutional support, the CCCF's ability to adapt to evolving conflict and climate risks remains constrained.

Promote meaningful gender participation and leadership. While women are formally represented in WCCPCs and project committees, cultural norms often prevent them from openly voicing concerns in mixed forums. This limits their influence over decision-making, even where numerical representation exists. Developing culturally appropriate mechanisms—such as parallel women-led forums that feed directly into CCCF planning—could create safe spaces for women to voice their priorities.

Address structural inequality more clearly and directly through CCCF processes. Inequitable access to resources and decision-making remains a driver of conflict in Wajir. Gender

disparities, together with the marginalization of groups such as informal settlement residents, restrict the inclusivity of CCCF projects. Greater emphasis on assessing and addressing structural inequalities within vulnerability assessments and project design could help ensure equitable distribution of benefits and reduce grievance risks.

Previous experience on policy implementation could be better leveraged towards supporting wider governance systems. Although CCCF processes have generated positive outcomes at the ward level, such experiences are not systematically documented or fed into broader governance systems. Establishing feedback mechanisms to share lessons learned with county and national actors would help integrate CCCF practices into wider policy reforms.

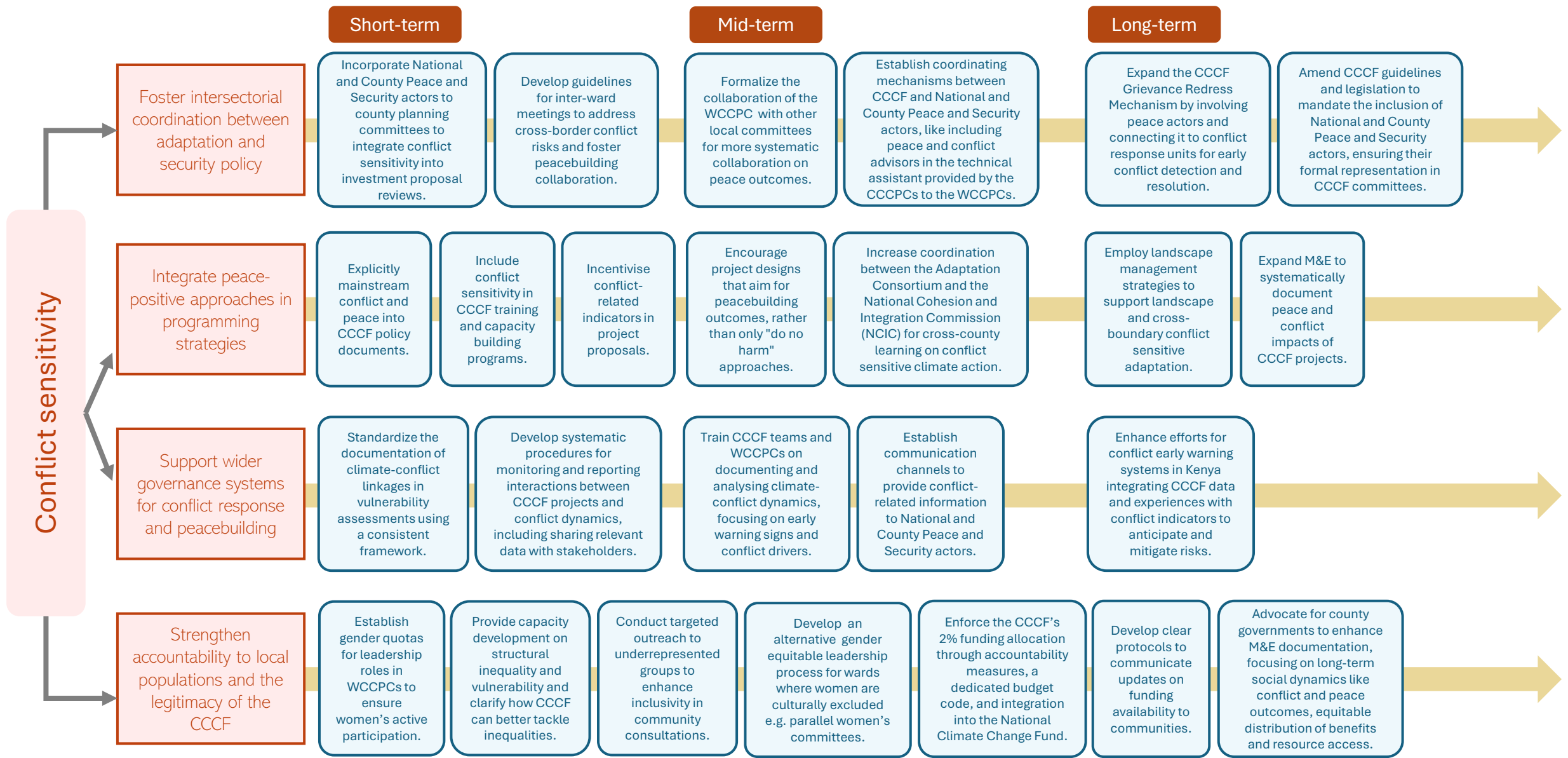
Strengthen monitoring and evaluation processes on peace and conflict outcomes of CCCF projects. Local-level data on CCCF projects is collected but rarely analysed in ways that reveal peace and conflict impacts. The absence of systematic reporting and publication at the county level reduces opportunities for responsive governance. Building stronger M&E systems, including indicators on peace dividends and conflict risks, would enable the CCCF to better inform early-warning systems and adapt to lessons learned.

"In all our understandings as the planning committee, we consider peace...because in this world of ours we have conflict with the communities bordering with us...we have passed through many tribal conflicts...so our priority first of all is peace"

WCCPC member

Integrating conflict sensitivity into Wajir's CCCF

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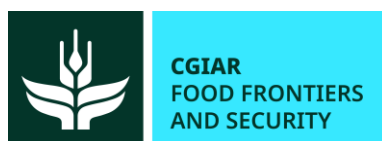
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July, 2025

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Strengthening conflict sensitivity in Kenya's County Climate Change Fund



Introduction

Governments, particularly those facing compounding climate vulnerability and conflict-related risks, must proactively address the potential unintended consequences of climate actions. Doing so requires strengthening existing adaptation instruments by mainstreaming conflict sensitive approaches, so that adaptation efforts are able to contribute to sustaining peace or, at the very least, do not 'do harm' by exacerbating existing conflict drivers. However, many governments face challenges. It's not easy to include conflict-sensitive thinking in climate adaptation. This is because climate problems often cut across many sectors (like water, land, and security) and can stretch across both space and time.

This policy brief shares key findings and recommendations from a joint study by the Adaptation Consortium (ADA) and the Alliance of Bioversity International – CIAT (the Alliance). The analysis focused on Kenya's County Climate Change Fund (CCCF) mechanism. It evaluated whether the CCCF is designed, implemented, and monitored in ways that: 1) prevent new conflicts; 2) support peaceful ways of solving disagreements; and 3) use climate actions as opportunities to build peace. This policy brief summarizes the results from the analysis, which included Wajir, Isiolo and Kitui counties as case studies. For the full report, [access here](#).

Isiolo and Wajir are predominantly pastoralist, with communities relying on herd mobility across arid rangelands, while Kitui's residents depend on smallholder farming, livestock, and forest-based livelihoods. The counties bring together Somali, Borana, Turkana, Kamba, and other groups whose identities and institutions shape governance and resource use. All face recurrent climate challenges—drought, water scarcity, erratic rainfall, and land degradation—that threaten livelihoods and intensify resource competition. Together, these cases show the need for climate actions that are both technically sound and sensitive to social dynamics and realities on the ground.



**CGIAR
CLIMATE
ACTION**



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AND SECURITY**



Key messages

The County Climate Change Fund (CCCF) provides a promising model for conflict-sensitive climate governance by empowering ward-level planning committees and fostering inclusive, community-driven decision-making. Despite its successes, several opportunities for conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding integration remain.

Sources of conflict sensitivity in the CCCF

- **Inclusive local governance:** The CCCF promotes inclusive governance by empowering community-based committees like WCCPCs and project management bodies, which enhance ownership, accountability, and trust. These structures align adaptation efforts with local priorities and strengthen legitimacy and state-society relations.
- **Vertical and sectoral coordination:** The mechanism improves coordination across government levels and sectors through technical support and inter-ward collaboration. Participatory risk assessments help tailor adaptation strategies to specific local needs.
- **Corruption prevention and transparency:** CCCF operations incorporate strong anti-corruption safeguards aligned with national laws, including transparent procurement and public oversight. Community broadcasts, documented consultations, and formal complaints systems reinforce accountability and build public confidence.
- **Conflict prevention measures:** CCCF projects are designed to avoid conflict by using consensus-based planning and locating activities in non-disputed areas. These efforts improve inter-communal cooperation and reduce tension over shared resources.
- **Grievance mechanisms:** Structured feedback channels allow communities to raise concerns and seek redress, enhancing trust, accountability, and responsiveness within the CCCF framework.

Opportunities for conflict sensitivity in the CCCF

- **Increase and formalize coordination with security actors:** Peacebuilding institutions like the NCIC are not formally involved in CCCF planning, and conflict sensitivity is unevenly integrated into learning tools and assessments.
- **Establish protocols for policy continuity** and build capacity among committee members to mitigate disruptions caused by turnover.
- **Increase funding for administration and learning,** aligning with CCCF's design recommendation of a 10% allocation in support of coordination and capacity-building.
- **Improve trans-boundary and landscape planning:** CCCF projects often focus narrowly on local issues, overlooking opportunities for broader ecosystem-based approaches and sometimes exacerbating tensions over shared resources.
- **Increase budget transparency and guarantee consistent funding:** Inconsistent funding and unfulfilled government commitments erode community trust, while weak communication after assessments leads to frustration and undermines local engagement.
- **Implement conflict-sensitive M&E:** While participatory assessments highlight local conflict dynamics, these insights are not systematically documented or used, and the strong M&E framework from the pilot phase remains underutilized.
- **Systematize learning from implementation:** Experiences with peacebuilding outcomes should be documented to inform governance systems for conflict response.

Why conflict sensitivity matters for climate adaptation

Climate adaptation is vital for strengthening community resilience in the face of rising climate risks. Yet, when adaptation measures are designed without accounting for local social, political, and economic dynamics, they may inadvertently fuel tensions or exacerbate existing conflicts—particularly in fragile and conflict-affected settings.

To mitigate these risks, a conflict-sensitive approach is essential. This approach ensures adaptation interventions are grounded in a robust understanding of the local context, including power dynamics, patterns of resource access, and existing grievances. Conflict-sensitive adaptation not only minimizes harm but can actively support peacebuilding by promoting inclusive governance, dialogue across divided communities, and trust in local institutions.

This study identifies three governance strategies that can embed conflict sensitivity in climate adaptation:

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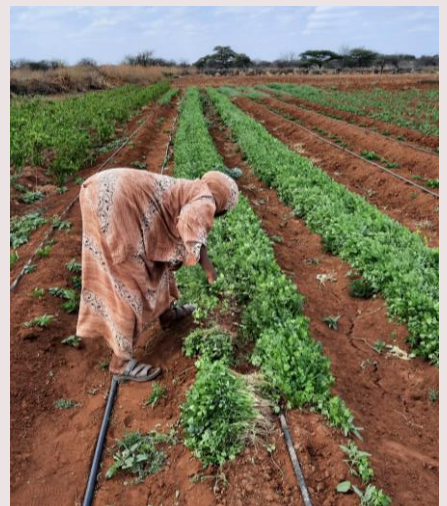
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While CCCF projects improve water access and support livelihoods, sustainability challenges persist. In 2024, a malfunctioning pump at the borehole and delays in county-level repairs led to shortages, heightening competition over water and undermining trust in the project's long-term viability.



Climate, peace and conflict linkages in Kenya

During adaptation planning processes, the CCCF should support the systematic integration of climate-security linkages into investment decisions. Recognizing how climate risks intersect with local conflict dynamics is essential to ensure the long-term effectiveness and resilience of CCCF-funded initiatives. Addressing these linkages can help mitigate potential threats to stability, while positioning CCCF investments as a catalyst for sustainable peace. The following are frequently observed relations between climate change and conflict in Kenya:

- 1. Increasing resource scarcity emerges as a central concern within conflicts triggered by changing resource management norms and institutions:** Since Kenya's devolution in 2013, county governments have gained greater control over land and natural resources, supported by new legislation like the Community Land Act and Forest Management and Conservation Act (2016). This has encouraged more inclusive and sustainable management. However, areas with limited institutional capacity and competing interests face regulatory gaps and tenure conflicts, exacerbated by climate shocks. While many communities adapt local systems, institutional constraints hinder responses and fuel tensions with authorities.
- 2. Threats to resource-dependent livelihoods modify mobility patterns and exacerbate violence:** Unpredictable precipitation has led to reduced pasture productivity, increased livestock deaths, and forced migration in search of water and forage, exacerbating the risk of disease and predator attacks. These migrations often cross political and ecological boundaries, which increases the risk of violent conflicts over scarce resources. While historical cattle rustling was culturally accepted, it is now more deadly due to influxes of small arms weaponry and more frequently associated with territorial disputes, violence over resource access, and connections to organized criminal economies. Furthermore, the loss of livelihoods increases women's workloads and reduces their political participation, while men's feelings of ineptitude contribute to higher household violence.
- 3. Climate threats facilitate the political instigation of violence:** The impacts of climate change in Kenya's ASALs are intertwined with the region's historical and socio-political context. Colonial land management and contemporary political exploitation of ethnic divisions contribute to a volatile environment where climate change acts as a catalyst for violence. Political elites may manipulate land disputes for electoral gains, exacerbating inter-ethnic tensions. High levels of vulnerability among young populations makes them susceptible to recruitment for violence. Extractive activities like oil exploration further amplify climate vulnerabilities and conflict risks. These sociopolitical factors compound to existing historical grievances and contribute to threats of conflict.
- 4. Climate threats trigger both collaborative and conflictive community responses:** Local communities in Kenya have developed strong collective action capacities to address climate and environmental challenges, fostering alternative livelihoods like bee and butterfly keeping, tree nurseries, eco-tourism, and cultural initiatives. Inclusive civil society groups enhance resource management, deter illegal extraction, and promote inter-ethnic harmony. However, limited employment opportunities lead some to unsustainable and illegal resource extraction, causing conflicts over natural resources. Efforts to enforce resource-use bylaws are hampered by rent-seeking practices and impunity for well-connected individuals, hence increasing grievances and inequality.
- 5. Displacement from extreme events threatens safety and social cohesion:** Despite improved disaster risk systems, recurrent floods around the Lake Victoria Basin and the ASAL regions – especially after long periods of drought – can cause displacement, crop loss, and infrastructure damage. Stagnant water spreads disease, while camps increase security risks like crime and early marriage. Recovery is hindered by a lack of support, forcing many into unsafe living conditions or illegal activities.

Kenya's County Climate Change Fund

The County Climate Change Fund (CCCF) mechanism was launched in Kenya in 2012 as a pilot in Isiolo County, aiming to strengthen local adaptive planning in the country's arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs). Developed initially by the Ministry of State for Development of Northern Kenya and IIED, it later became part of the Adaptation Consortium (ADA), which now provides technical support to counties. The CCCF was designed to address key governance challenges—such as poor coordination, weak integration of climate information, and budget constraints—by devolving climate finance and planning authority to counties and wards. The pilot phase supported 39 projects focused on water access, pasture management, and livestock health, leading to the formal establishment of ADA as an NGO and the mechanism's expansion to four additional counties (Wajir, Garissa, Makueni, and Kitui)

with DFID and SIDA support. The National Drought Management Authority eventually took over management following the dissolution of the original ministry. Central to the CCCF is its emphasis on Locally Led Adaptation (LLA), with Ward Climate Change Planning Committees (WCCPCs) identifying priority investments through participatory vetting. These are reviewed by County Climate Change Planning Committees (CCCPCs), which offer technical assistance, coordinate proposal development, and support oversight structures.

The CCCF is now being scaled nationwide, with support from the National Treasury, and forms a key component of Kenya's National Climate Change Action Plan. It aims to institutionalize inclusive, transparent, and responsive climate finance systems rooted in community priorities.



Sources and opportunities for conflict sensitivity in the CCCF

The findings of this analysis are structured in accordance with three main stages within the conventional policy development cycle: 1) agenda setting and policy formulation, 2) policy implementation, and 3) policy evaluation. For a more detailed analysis of the CCCF, see the full report¹. Traits marked in green below represent features and capacities that contribute to conflict sensitivity within the CCCF, whilst those marked in yellow represent entry points to further strengthen conflict sensitivity within the mechanism.

	Multi-level governance	Adaptive governance	Representative governance
Agenda setting	Effective coordination across different levels of governance strengthens local self-organization.	Assessments of the complex and root causes of climate vulnerability advise planning, including conflict dynamics.	Structural inequalities that drive vulnerability and conflict are recognized as important issues and action priorities.
	Adaptation and security sectors collaborate during strategic planning at different levels of governance.	Institutional capacities increase to generate information related to conflict in the context of climate risks and adaptation.	Social groups affected by structural inequality and overlapping risks influence decisions for adaptation.
	The policy and stakeholders recognize the need to include conflict and peace issues in adaptation planning.	Institutional capacities increase to use information related to conflict in the context of climate risks and adaptation.	
	Planning goes beyond political boundaries, considering resources and conflict at the landscape level.		
Implementation	Overlap of roles between stakeholders creates synergies for adaptation and peacebuilding goals.	Flexible and risk-tolerant financing structures target conflict-affected areas in a continuous basis.	Implementation processes intend to enhance relationships, including between groups holding grievances.
	Policy strengthens or creates collective action institutions that boost local capacity to manage conflict risks.	Planned actions are assessed for potential unintended effects, positive or negative, over conflict dynamics	Implementation encourages community institutions to negotiate and challenge structural inequalities prioritized.
		Policy experiences are used to strengthen wider governance systems for resilience and peacebuilding.	Implementation challenges corruption and rent-seeking practices as sources of conflict and vulnerability.
Evaluation	Monitoring and evaluation frameworks focus on conflict and peacebuilding outcomes.	Frequent monitoring of policy effects on conflict dynamics, including worsening conflict or promoting peace.	M&E considers structural inequalities and overlapping risks acting as root causes of vulnerability and conflict.
	M&E processes ensure transparency and accountability to local citizens.		Community members participate in and influence the design and implementation of M&E processes.

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Sources of conflict sensitivity

The CCCF provides a promising model for conflict-sensitive climate governance by empowering ward-level planning committees and fostering inclusive, community-driven decision-making. Despite its successes, several opportunities for conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding integration remain. This summary outlines key findings.

Effective and inclusive coordination across levels of governance enables collective action.

The CCCF facilitates the creation of extensively autonomous local decision-making bodies, such as the WCCPCs. WCCPCs and project management committees promote broad community representation, fostering local ownership, accountability, and trust. These committees also strengthen state-society relations and build political legitimacy by aligning adaptation activities with local needs. The CCCF furthermore enhances coordination among governance actors through mechanisms like technical advisory support and inter-ward meetings.

Bringing together local actors strengthens coordination for conflict sensitivity. WCCPCs serve as a platform to harmonize different community structures, including peace committees, traditional rangeland management systems, water user committees, and sectors like education and health. Often this coordination takes place in formal policy planning mechanisms, such as the five-year Ward Development Plan.

Conflict risks are recognized and integrated into adaptation planning. Vulnerability assessments regularly identify conflict risks linked to climate impacts—such as competition over resources, domestic violence, crime, and human-wildlife conflict. Across counties, multiple wards reported that climate change worsens these risks in their vulnerability assessments. This information is furthermore documented in county-level reports.

Investments are designed to avoid triggering conflict. Local peacebuilders and traditional conflict-resolution actors are involved in CCCF planning to advance a “do-no-harm” approach in adaptation investments. Conflict-prevention measures like avoiding contested areas and ensuring clear access arrangements are common. Community consensus helps secure buy-in and fair access to resources.

Investments can support sustainable peacebuilding processes, although not usually done in a conscious manner. The CCCF instrument has proven effective in building trust and strengthening relationships within communities by enabling the development of locally relevant, climate adaptation projects. While this potential appears most evident within the immediate community benefiting from individual CCCF investments (see Kitui example below), the benefits for social cohesion under CCCF projects could be strengthened if consciously integrated as a goal across communities.

Investment planning and design fosters the representation of vulnerable groups. The process for composing the ward planning committees is designed to ensure both equitable representation and community-driven selection. Crucially, funding is consciously allocated, and guidelines and rules provided, to support the inclusion of populations affected by intersectional risks by integrating participatory governance structures that ensure representation of marginalized groups, including women, youth, people with disabilities, and the poor.

Participatory assessments and planning processes support the challenging of structural inequalities.

Vulnerability assessments as conducted through the CCCF mechanism incorporate a gender and intersectional lens as an important factor in shaping priorities, allowing for structural vulnerabilities and inequalities, such as power imbalances, to surface during the prioritization of adaptation investments. Despite this, proposed activities under CCCF projects, mainly related to water availability, do not always account for women's access to water or the safety risks they face.

Implementation processes recognize and prevent corruption and rent-seeking practices.

The CCCF mechanism has established robust frameworks to prevent corruption and rent-seeking, particularly in procurement processes, aligning with national and county-level regulations like the Procurement and Asset Disposals Act and Public Financial Management Act. Furthermore, a formal complaints procedure enables stakeholders to challenge unethical conduct. Hence, structured channels for community feedback enhance transparency and accountability across CCCF operations, building trust and enabling redress processes.

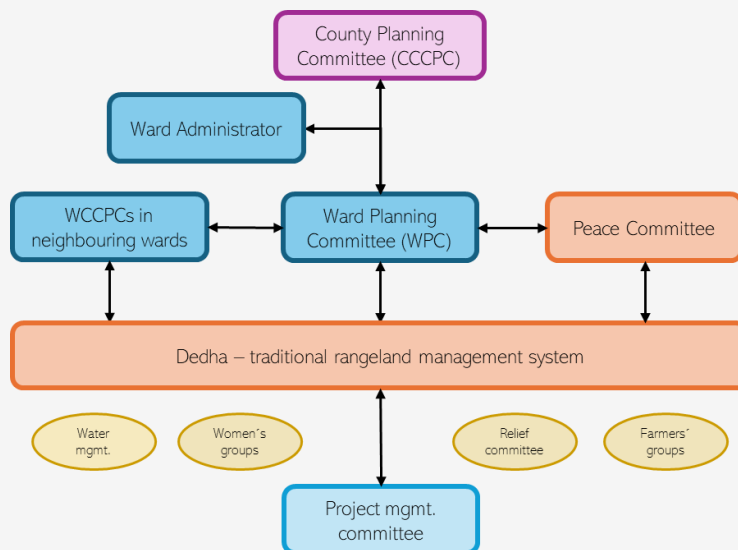


Ward Climate Change Planning Committees strengthen local peacebuilding capacities

Garba Tulla's WCCPC was formed through a participatory, community-led process. This began with a series of public engagement barazas, or meetings, in which community members from all local areas gathered. Initial meetings were held at the village level across various locations, with a larger baraza held centrally in Garba Tulla. During these gatherings, the purpose and importance of forming the WCCPC were explained, and community members reached a consensus on representatives for elders, youth, women, and people with disabilities.

Through these village-level barazas, 44 representatives—four from each of the 11 locations—were selected. To further refine this group, a centralized meeting with a stakeholder committee and community members takes place to review the 44 representatives based on specific criteria: each candidate needed to be from the local area, fluent in both the local language and English, and have a reputation of integrity and prior involvement in community initiatives. Ultimately, one representative from each of the 11 locations was chosen, ensuring that each area and group was equitably represented in the WCCPC.

Each member of the WCCPC serves as a representative not only of their specific community but also of the particular group to which they belong (such as women, youth, elders, or persons with disabilities). In addition to the main community representatives, other key committees, like the traditional rangeland management systems (Dedha) and the Peace Committee, also contribute to the WCCPC. While there is no formal requirement for these bodies to participate, their involvement was identified as valuable by the ward members themselves, underscoring the grassroots-driven nature of the WCCPC's composition.



Operation of the WCCPC in Garba Tulla ward, Isiolo county

Dedha: A customary Borana rangeland governance system that manages grazing, water, and resource use through communal decision-making.

WCCPC: A community body that identifies and designs climate adaptation projects, ensuring local priorities shape county climate planning.

Ward administrator: A local government official who helps draft CCCF proposals and serves as a link between WCCPCs and CCCPCs.

Peace Committee: A community forum for conflict resolution and mediation, consulted by WCCPCs to ensure projects do not heighten local tensions.

Project management committees: Community-run groups that implement and monitor projects, ensuring transparency and activating conflict response if needed.

Neighbouring WCCPCs: Committees coordinate across ward boundaries to ensure harmonized planning and prevent intercommunal disputes.

Opportunities for conflict sensitivity

Increase coordination with institutional security actors. CCCF structures across all assessed counties lack formal involvement of peace and conflict actors. For instance, peace and conflict stakeholders, such as the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC), are not formally represented in CCCF planning. This may limit CCCF's capacity to embed conflict sensitivity and address local conflict dynamics within climate initiatives. The absence of formal roles for peace actors results in a lack of established protocols for incorporating peace considerations into proposal development, monitoring, or inter-ward coordination.

Leverage adaptation investments to address inter-group conflicts, especially across administrative borders. Customary institutions for conflict management are well integrated in CCCF investments. While effective, these are not always sufficient to prevent conflict escalation between communities. The CCCF planning process faces challenges when addressing projects near political or administrative boundaries, particularly in contested territories. While there are mechanisms for trans-boundary planning and coordination, ward-level approaches often limit projects to localized, small-scale solutions.

Increase documentation and use of previous experience on policy implementation towards supporting wider governance systems for peace. There is a de-facto interaction between local peace and security bodies and adaptation efforts under the CCCF. However, the outcomes and interactions of projects with conflict dynamics are not systematically documented or leveraged to improve governance systems for peace and conflict response. For instance,

or leveraged to inform governance or research frameworks. This lack of documentation undermines the potential of CCCF actors to learn and adapt to evolving conflict risks.

Ensure continuous funding, even under changing political priorities, to avoid unmet constituent expectations. Interruptions in the operation of CCCF legislations due to changing county government priorities can lead to unmet expectations that increase local resentments and undermine legitimacy. While CCCF legislation mandates the allocation of at least 2% of county development funds for climate adaptation, non-compliance by county governments has disrupted investments. As a result, adaptation initiatives have become entangled in the broader political and electoral competition over development funds, undermining their effectiveness. The uncertainty allocation the mandated funds not only limits adaptation efforts but also undermines trust in the CCCF Committees.

Enhance transparency of available budgets. There is a lack of transparency about the yearly budget made available at county level for the implementation of CCCF projects in Isiolo. This limited disclosure of CCCF budgets undermines community trust and leads to tensions when county-level changes alter project scopes.

Increase efforts for Monitoring and Evaluation processes, while including conflict and peace outcomes. The CCCF developed a robust M&E framework designed to capture conflict dynamics and incorporate community-driven insights. However, evidence suggests that the framework has not been implemented beyond CCCF's pilot phases. Current M&E practices are limited to the early project stages, focusing on procurement quality, initial operational metrics, and financial accountability. Project management committees at the ward level document community users and financial flows, but there is no systematic tracking of the socio-economic, political, or environmental impacts of CCCF investments supervised by the County government.

Document experiences on policy implementation to support wider governance systems for peace. There is a de-facto interaction between local peace and security bodies and adaptation efforts under the CCCF. However, the outcomes and interactions of projects with conflict dynamics are not systematically documented or leveraged to improve governance systems for peace and conflict response. This lack of documentation undermines the potential of CCCF actors to learn and adapt to evolving conflict risks.



Two contrasting cases of CCCF investments for adaptation

Social cohesion arising from the Kalikuvu earth dam restoration in Mutha ward, Kitui county.

The restoration of the Kalikuvu earth dam in Mutha ward, Kitui County, originally built during the colonial era and revitalized under the CCCF pilot, has significantly improved local water access in a drought-prone region. Though its site selection initially raised concerns about equitable benefit distribution, inclusive consultations led by the Ward Climate Change Planning Team fostered community acceptance and ownership. The dam's presence has since reduced reliance on distant, conflict-prone water sources, lowering residents' exposure to cross-border tensions with pastoralists from Tana River County, especially during droughts. The dam has also brought a range of additional benefits. Children now attend school more regularly, and women participate more in farming and trade. Water rationing during dry spells, managed by a community site committee, ensures equitable access, while informal trade and agreements promote flexibility. The dam has also supported livelihood diversification through gardening and reforestation, boosted pasture and food security. These benefits have reportedly improved relations with conflictive pastoralist neighbours through and market interactions, ultimately fostering social cohesion.

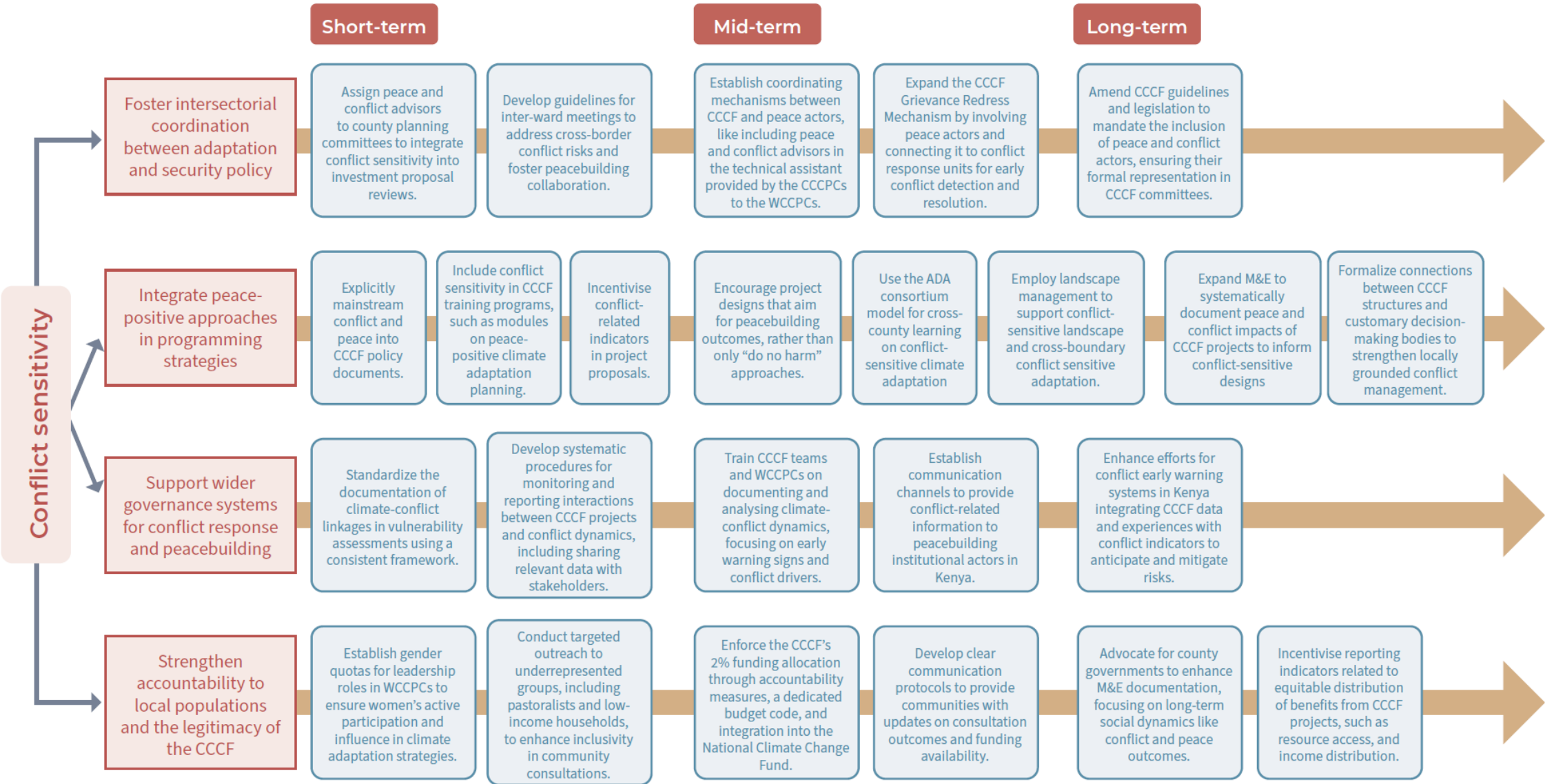
Conflict around the Bibi water pan in Kinna ward, Isiolo county.

The Bibi water pan in Kinna ward, a critical water source for pastoralists since the 1970s, was expanded during the CCCF pilot phase in 2014 to improve access and sustainability. Infrastructure upgrades—including fencing, water tanks, a pump, and a livestock distribution system—aimed to regulate usage, protect surrounding pastures, and maintain fair access. Initially considered a low-conflict area, the site later became a flashpoint amid worsening drought and rising resource competition. By 2020, tensions escalated between the Borana and Somali communities over access to the pan. The Borana, who had overseen the project's management, restricted Somali pastoralists from Garissa, whose influx strained limited water resources. These access rules were contested by the Somali community, which perceived them as illegitimate, particularly during the extreme 2020 drought. The conflict led to displacement, halted use of the site, and left the pan vulnerable to vandalism and theft in the absence of security. This case reveals the fragility of shared resource governance under stress. It underscores the need for inclusive decision-making, conflict-sensitive planning, and robust security measures. Even historically peaceful sites can become conflict hotspots when adaptation interventions fail to anticipate evolving inter-community dynamics and the pressures of climate-induced scarcity.



Integrating conflict sensitivity in the CCCF

The following figure summarises the insights and recommendations that emerged from the analysis. Recommendations are grouped according to their feasibility of implementation in the short, medium, and long term. Together, they form an action plan towards conflict sensitivity across the CCCF.





Acknowledgments

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