Strengthening the Climate Resilience of Conflict-affected and Vulnerable Communities

Recommendations for Governments, Funders, Non-profits and Community-based Organisations

Contributors

This policy paper was compiled by Louise Brown based on insights shared by participants at the workshop on Strengthening the Climate Resilience of Conflict-affected and Vulnerable Communities held in July 2023 as part of the Summer Academy on Land, Security, and Climate.

The workshop participants were Sahalatou Adam, Nicholas Bishop, Peter Cross, Rena Meyers-Dahlkamp, Pem Dem, Idorenyin IniAbasi Ekanem, Ahmed Ekzayez, Kelechi Eleanya, Martha Udom Emmanuel, Annika Erickson-Pearson, Hesta Groenewald, Lina Hillert, Petna Ndaliko Katondolo, Pierre Lokeka, Raquel Munayer, Magdalena Munini Mutuku, Déthié Soumare Ndiaye, Christina Parandii, Peter Rundell, Cláudia Santos, Commander Shangpliang, Vivian Silole, and Patrick Worms.

The examples and case studies presented in this publication were shared by participants in the workshop, and the findings and recommendations set out were jointly developed through an interactive session on the final day of the event. The workshop was convened at the Caux Palace, Switzerland, in parallel with the Caux Forum, by the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, Initiatives of Change and Triple Capital, in collaboration with the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform and Earthbanc. The workshop organisers were Anna Brach, Alan Channer, and Louise Brown, with support from Emanuela Lamorte and Aili Channer.

Contents

1. Introduction

Climate change can devastate communities. From Afghanistan to Guatemala and from Nigeria to Myanmar vicious cycles of climate disruptions, conflict, environmental degradation, and food insecurity are escalating. Globally, vulnerable communities face the great injustice of being on the front lines of a nexus of crises that they did not create. However, these communities are innovative and resourceful in devising locally appropriate solutions with limited means. Financial and other support from the international community to address climate change, conflict, and insecurity is insufficient, often siloed, and often ill-suited to the needs and priorities of grassroots communities. New international financial instruments such as the Green Climate Fund have been developed with the aim of enhancing climate funding to vulnerable countries and communities. Yet only a tiny proportion of climate finance is currently reaching vulnerable communities, particularly those affected by conflict, with the most climate vulnerable countries receiving a quarter of the finance, on a per capita basis, that other developing countries[1] receive.

In July 2023 a workshop of the Summer Academy on Land, Security, and Climate convened a diverse group of practitioners, thought leaders and policymakers at the Caux Palace in Switzerland to discuss the theme of strengthening the climate resilience of conflict-affected and vulnerable communities.[2] Participants representing grassroots organisations, international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), think tanks, UN agencies, and governments showcased and explored case studies and experiences of approaches that have been applied to strengthen climate resilience, tackle conflict over land and natural resources, and empower local actors in these efforts. Some of these examples represented good practices that have achieved success, through which communities have reaped the benefits of enhanced peace, prosperity, and resilience to climate shocks. Others represented cases in which solutions have been unforthcoming due to a variety of factors that have hindered success. This policy paper sets out some of the collective findings of the workshop discussions and the recommendations that they reveal for governments, funders, NGOs, and communities.

---

1   https://www.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/2022-11/20221108_ClimateSmartFinance.pdf
2   https://www.gcsp.ch/global-insights/fostering-collaborative-solutions-nexus-climate-resilience-conflict-and-peace

2. Enabling factors for success

Across geographies, sectors, cultures, and contexts, five common factors enable success, while their absence hindered successful outcomes, as discussed below.

2.1 Good governance, leadership and institutions

Good governance was found to be a critical ingredient that enabled successful outcomes at the nexus of climate resilience, conflict resolution and land restoration. Strong leadership, which often goes hand in hand with good governance, enables coordination and collaboration across disciplines and among diverse stakeholders. It encourages cohesion and the building of trust rather than division and distrust. It puts the collective good ahead of individual interests and creates an environment that incentivises others to do the same. Good systems of governance are implemented through effective institutions that are properly capacitated and accountable for delivering on their mandate. For example, Bhutan's democratic constitutional monarchy system of governance is founded on the principle of Gross National Happiness (GNH)[3] as a measure of societal development and well-being. The Center for Bhutan and GNH Studies administers[4] national GNH surveys every five years that underpin national development planning.

The importance of good governance is often most keenly felt in its absence. Where governance and institutions are weak and inefficient, corruption and rent seeking are more likely to flourish, often to the detriment of the most marginalised populations and environments. In Guinea-Bissau rising sea levels have resulted in the inundation of the coastal village of Djobel[5], leading to displacement and a search for new ground. This has reignited old conflicts with the nearby village of Arame, owing to the competition over access to the natural resources and social amenities available, and the residents of Arame have responded by refusing to share their land and resources with Djobel. The situation has been aggravated by the government's inability to mediate the conflict and find a viable solution.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), one of the world's most natural-resource-rich countries, a brutal colonial legacy, weak governance, a vast geography, international greed and exploitative extraction activities, and widespread corruption combine to create a context in which the unchecked exploitation of people and the environment by profit-hungry companies and militia violence flourish. Local communities struggle to find support to implement solutions to the interlinked challenges of environmental degradation, climate vulnerability, food insecurity, and frequent atrocities against women and children in a context where the status quo benefits a minority of powerful actors.

2.2 Enabling policy environment and coordinated planning

The policy environment can enable and incentivise innovation and the spread of good practice or hinder them by creating barriers and bureaucracy. An enabling

---

3   https://ophi.org.uk/policy/bhutan-gnh-index/

4   https://www.bhutanstudies.org.bt/

5   https://www.cmi.no/publications/8435-uneven-displacement-how-a-village-in-coastal-guinea-bissau-is-battling-rising-sea-levels

policy environment for climate resilience, conflict resolution, and sustainable natural resource management is one that devolves rights and responsibilities over land and natural resource management to its custodians and creates incentives or removes disincentives for good custodianship.

In Côte d'Ivoire the legal and policy environment for forest management placed the ownership of indigenous trees on both state and private or customary land in the hands of the government. Without the possibility to manage indigenous forests sustainably for their own benefit, farmers and communities had a strong incentive to clear forests and plant cocoa and other crops over which they had ownership. Under this policy environment, Côte d'Ivoire has seen its forest cover shrink from over 16 million hectares in the early 1900s to only 3 million hectares in 2019.[6] Similarly, due to an unfavourable policy environment, Nigeria continues to experience high rates of deforestation despite a commitment to maintain at least 10% of the country under forest cover.

In Niger the colonial and post-colonial forestry code put the ownership of all indigenous trees in the hands of the state. Farming communities were required to obtain a permit to cut, prune or harvest indigenous trees, and thus viewed them as a burden rather than a resource. The focus of the state was on planting exotic species using Western forestry practices that were not successful in the Nigerien context. The result was widespread deforestation and desertification. However, a gradual loosening of the enforcement of the forest code gave farmers the right to own and manage the trees occurring on their land[7]. This changed the incentive structure and promoted the uptake of a process known as farmer-managed natural regeneration (FMNR), whereby farmers protect and prune shoots of indigenous trees and benefit from the shade, fodder, fuel, and food they provide, in addition to the ecological functions they offer such as enhancing soil quality, water retention, and biodiversity. In 2020 a presidential decree formalised land and tree tenure in order to consolidate FMNR.

An enabling policy environment can also unlock the power of the private sector and make it part of the solution by creating opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship and incentives for investment in locally led solutions, while limiting the potential for exploitation and abuse. In Namibia the rights of private land owners to own and manage the wildlife that occurs on their land has been enshrined in law since the 1970s. Similar rights to community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) were extended to rural communities on communal land in 1996. This policy regime has created strong incentives for the sustainable management of wildlife on private and communal land. It has also enabled joint venture partnerships between communities and private sector tourism operators[8], in terms of which private sector companies operate lodges, tours, and hunting concessions in communal conservancies, sharing the benefits of profits, employment, and game meat with the communities. Under this policy environment, wildlife numbers have increased significantly and species such as elephant, lion, rhinoceros and cheetah that were previously decimated under

---

6   T. DeJong, *Tree and Land Tenure Nexus in Côte d'Ivoire*, USAID, 2021, https://www.climatelinks.org/sites/default/files/asset/document/2022-08/ILRG-Tree-and-Land-Tenure-Nexus-in-CDI_final.pdf.

7   www.tropenbos.org/file.php/2552/tbi-niger-fmnr-review-web-lo-final.pdf

8   https://communityconservationnamibia.com/support-to-conservation/livelihoods/tourism

colonial-era policies that put the ownership of wildlife in the hands of the state now have healthy populations.[9]

2.3 Local ownership

Resilience building is inherently local. The interlinked challenges of climate change, environmental degradation, conflict, and insecurity are experienced by people on the ground in ways that are context specific. The menu of possible solutions is also context specific and differs from one locality to another. Local actors are best placed to design and deliver the solutions that work for them, drawing on local traditions, decision-making processes, and structures to consult, plan, and build consensus around needs, priorities, and the course of action to follow.

In Kenya the Indigenous Movement for Peace Advancement and Conflict Transformation (IMPACT) carried out consultations with indigenous communities to explore local solutions for building trust in parts of northern Kenya challenged by violent conflict over land and natural resources, which is being exacerbated by climate change. The findings were used to inform the design of the programme Sustainable Conflict Management in Arid Land Ecosystems, or SCALE, implemented in Samburu county by a consortium of local NGOs and an international NGO, which made use of customary institutions and collaborative processes to strengthen environmental peacebuilding in the region.

When local actors take ownership of their future and are supported to do so with appropriate funding, tools, and networks, solutions are more likely to have the buy-in that will enable them to be sustained and have impact over the longer term. When proposed solutions are top-down, driven by donors or political actors with little understanding of the realities on the ground, they are less likely to be appropriate and impactful. For example, the Great Green Wall Initiative launched by the African Union in 2007 aimed to restore 100 million hectares of degraded land across 11 countries in the Sahel. The approach has been criticised for failing to integrate local knowledge and solutions for land restoration, instead using a top-down Western approach of tree planting. A 2020 progress report found that it had achieved only 4% of its target, due to weak governance, lack of integration into national planning and related policies, and lack of civil society and community engagement.[10] Many stakeholders and observers, including Transparency International, have called for a more bottom-up approach grounded in locally led solutions[11], combined with respect for local knowledge, greater transparency, and enhanced engagement of civil society and local communities[12] in the design of interventions.[13]

9   Conservation Namibia, *Keep Namibia's Wildlife on the Land!*, Windhoek, NACSO Natural Resources Working Group, 2018/19, https://www.nacso.org.na/sites/default/files/2019_Wildlife-on-the-land_rgb_F_201207s.pdf.

10   UNCCD (United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification), *The Great Green Wall: Implementation Status and Way Ahead to 2030*, 2020, https://www.unccd.int/resources/publications/great-green-wall-implementation-status-way-ahead-2030.

11   https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/great-green-wall-stop-desertification-not-so-much-180960171/

12   https://www.transparency.org/en/news/great-green-wall-protecting-the-sahel

13   E. Basemeg Kihel et al., *Governance, Mapping and Assessment of the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative*, Transparency International, 2023, https://www.transparency.org/en/publications/governance-mapping-assessment-great-green-wall-for-sahara-and-sahel.

2.4 Appropriate funding

A recurrent theme of the discussions in Caux was the disconnect between the requirements and processes of international funders and the needs and priorities of the communities on the ground who are on the front lines of the climate and conflict crises. For local communities, the challenges of land degradation, conflict over natural resources, poverty, and climate change are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. However, funders tend to tackle these issues in siloes. For example, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) wanted to develop a project to enhance the resilience of agro-pastoral production systems in the Liptako-Gourma region on the borders of Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, an area where a changing climate is shifting transhumance patterns and exacerbating conflict between pastoralists and agriculturalists. However, this region is also a conflict zone with a strong presence of various armed militia groups, and the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the funder of the project, does not fund conflict-related issues, but instead views conflict settings as risky. As a result, ECOWAS had to revise the project concept to reframe the zone of intervention to a wider set of countries with a less acute conflict risk.

While funders are increasingly recognising the importance of holistic, locally led action on climate change and environmental peacebuilding, this recognition is rarely translated into practice. In reality, funding providers and intermediariesoften have preconceived ideas of how funding should be deployed and by whom, combined with complex procedures and requirements that create barriers to access for local actors. These funding processes are often rooted in power dynamics that protect and maintain a status quo that is fundamentally unjust and inequitable, disempowering countries and communities that are the most economically disadvantaged and socially marginalised.

The GCF, intending to make climate finance more accessible to developing country institutions, adopted an approach that gives national and subnational institutions "direct access" to climate finance following a rigorous accreditation process. This approach, first piloted by the Adaptation Fund, has broadened the set of actors that can access climate funding beyond the traditional limited set of UN agencies and multilateral development banks. Yet the process remains overly complex, slow, and bureaucratic, and has not gone far enough in expanding access to climate finance to vulnerable groups, with most of the GCF's funding still flowing through international agencies.[14]

A small minority of funders are exploring ways to break away from existing paradigms of entrenched inequality by putting local and marginalised populations at the forefront of decision-making and providing financing directly to local communities. The Fund for Frontline Power[15], for example, provides direct grants to grassroots organisations led by and serving black, indigenous, and people of colour communities in the United States for inclusive and regenerative climate change solutions. Another example is the Climate Justice Resilience Fund[16] (CJRF), which provides grants directly to grassroots organisations around the

---

14   M. Caldwell and G. Larsen, *Improving Access to the Green Climate Fund: How the Fund Can Better Support Developing Country Institutions*, World Resources Institute (WRI), 2021, https://doi.org/10.46830/wriwp.19.00132.

15   https://www.fundforfrontlinepower.org/

16   https://www.cjrfund.org/

world for implementing homegrown solutions aimed at strengthening climate resilience. The CJRF has recently replaced its board of directors, formerly made up of funders, with grassroots activists and practitioners.[17]

2.5 Knowledge, information and data

Access to knowledge, information and data is essential to inform the design of impactful programmes. This should include traditional and indigenous knowledge, as well as modern scientific knowledge and the use of technology to gather and process data. In Nigeria an exchange visit to Niger to learn about FMNR from practitioners on the ground proved to be a simple and effective way of gaining knowledge on the approach. Seeing first-hand the success that farmers in Niger have had using FMNR and the impact it has had on their livelihoods was a more powerful means of conveying the information to communities in the northern region of Nigeria than any theoretical lesson. In Syria funder requirements for modern scientific data on climate change and an unwillingness to take into account the traditional knowledge of local communities have proved to be obstacles to designing projects for climate resilience in a post-conflict setting. Furthermore, the framing used by funders can often be difficult for communities to relate to. For example, a community facing a problem of access to water or failing crops may find it difficult to articulate a climate change rationale for an intervention.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) developed a transhumance tracking tool[18], building on its displacement tracking matrix[19] that tracks the movement of pastoralist populations and their livestock across the Sahel using GPS technology. The transhumance tracking tool provides real-time alerts via mobile phone to inform communities when herders are moving, thus averting and avoiding conflict between pastoralist and agricultural communities. This tool was integrated into a project to enhance water resource management in conflict-affected regions of Somalia implemented in collaboration with the UN Environment Programme and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, which also made investments in improved water infrastructure to reduce farmer-herder conflict over limited water resources.[20]

National or subnational institutions' use of traditional approaches for conflict mediation can also be an important factor in their success. The National Cohesion and Integration Commission of Kenya, for example, has supported the formation of grazing committees in various communities that experience conflicts over natural resources that are exacerbated by climate change. These structures create a platform for dialogue and negotiations on the issues of livestock migration and access to and use of natural resources like water and pasture, and provide a dispute resolution process through community mediation when conflicts arise among pastoralists, or between pastoralists and farming communities. The grazing committees comprise elders from the communities, security agencies and other stakeholders who form part of the national peacebuilding infrastructure.

---

17   CJRF (Climate Justice Resilence Fund), "CJRF Shifts Power into the Hands of Practitioners", 14 November 2022, https://www.cjrfund.org/news/2022/11/14/cjrf-new-governing-board.

18   https://dtm.iom.int/

19   https://dtm.iom.int/

20   European Commission, "Breaking the Climate-conflict Cycle: EU-backed Initiative Revitalises Galmudug, Somalia", 27 April 2023, https://fpi.ec.europa.eu/breaking-climate-conflict-cycle-eu-backed-initiative-revitalises-galmudug-somalia_en.

3.   Recommendations to key actors for strengthening the climate resilience of conflict-affected and vulnerable communities

3.1 Recommendations for funders

Funders, including donor governments, climate and peacebuilding funds, international financial institutions, and funding intermediaries such as UN agencies could enhance the impact of their funding through the following actions:

- **Align funding for climate resilience and peacebuilding with the needs of communities on the ground.**

The principles for locally led adaptation developed by a consortium of NGOs and endorsed by over 80 organisations globally comprise eight principles to ensure that local communities are empowered to lead sustainable adaptation.[21] These include devolving decision-making to the local level; addressing structural inequalities faced by marginalised groups; providing funding that is flexible, patient, and predictable over long time frames; strengthening local institutions; drawing on indigenous knowledge; and enhancing transparency and accountability to communities.

- **Channel substantially more funding to the local level.**

The direct access approaches of the Adaptation Fund and GCF represent an important paradigm shift in the ownership of climate funding, but the various advantages of direct access are not being fully realised due to the complexity of the accreditation process and inadequate investment in building the capacity of national and local institutions.[22] The Regenerative Economies Organizing Collaborative promotes four pathways to funding grassroots organisations[23], emphasising how funding a community directly is distinctly different from funding local communities through intermediaries such as international NGOs. Furthermore, funders could do more to get funding to local communities. This requires a further paradigm change that embraces learning and institution building, as well as a more constructive regard for failure, because grassroots organisations who have limited prior experience of managing funds learn by doing.

Several funders are exploring innovative ways to deliver funding to the local level. For example, the IOM administers a matching grants programme to deliver funding to fragile and conflict-affected regions of Somalia, through which communities come together to identify local development priorities and to raise contributions (which may be in-kind) towards the identified projects.[24] The IOM

---

21   H. O'Connor et al., "Principles for Locally Led Adaptation", International Institute for Environment and Development, 2022, https://www.iied.org/principles-for-locally-led-adaptation.

22   L. Brown and N. Alayza, "Why the Green Climate Fund Should Give Developing Countries Greater Direct Access to Finance", WRI, 4 June 2021, https://www.wri.org/insights/why-green-climate-fund-should-give-developing-countries-greater-direct-access-finance.

23   https://reocollaborative.org/four-pathways/

24   IOM (International Organization for Migration), *2021 IOM Somalia Programmatic Overview*, https://somalia.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1041/files/documents/iom-somalia-programmatic-overview-2021-copy.pdf.

provides matching grant funding at a ratio of double or more, determined by several criteria, which is channelled directly into a bank account created by the community for the project. This initiative has also tapped into diaspora funding through a crowd-funding model to co-finance the projects.

- **Ensure that funding interventions are informed by research into and knowledge of the context.**

For example, efforts by the international peacebuilding community to reduce jihadism in the Sahel have historically been focused on military interventions and identifying and targeting young men at risk of joining extremist groups. However, a recent UNDP study explored the drivers of violent extremism in the Sahel and found that recruitment is driven primarily by economic issues and disillusionment with government.[25] The study advocates a different approach to addressing violent extremism that is rooted in addressing the drivers of poverty and unemployment in communities and supporting local peacebuilding initiatives. Understanding the context also requires that funders are aware of the multiple interlinked challenges that grassroots communities face and adapt their funding requirements to respond to these realities rather than focusing only on a single theme.

3.2 Recommendations for NGOs and think tanks

Both international and national NGOs and think tanks play an important role as thought leaders in sharing research, influencing policy, and bridging the information divide between funders and policymakers at the international level and communities on the ground. Some ways in which they can be part of the solution include the following:

- **Establish platforms for information sharing and exchange that create linkages among international, national, and local actors and provide opportunities for grassroots voices to be heard in the international arena.**

Spaces that provide a platform for grassroots actors to freely share their experiences and perspectives, learn from each other, and strategise without interference can offer a powerful impetus for grassroots action. The Bangladesh-based Gobeshona conferences on locally led adaptation[26], for example, provide a platform for local organisations to showcase their work and network globally, including providing translation into local languages. The Community of Practice on Environment, Climate, Conflict, and Peace[27] hosted by the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform comprises over 700 practitioners and policymakers from around the world and aims to foster collaboration, dialogue, learning, and exchange on topics relating to the environment, climate, conservation, conflict, security, and peace. Similarly, the Environmental Peacebuilding Association[28]'s hundreds of members meet online and in person regularly, and contribute to an expansive online repository of resources.

---

25   UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), *Journey to Extremism in Africa: Pathways to Recruitment and Disengagement*, 7 February 2023, https://www.undp.org/africa/publications/journey-extremism-africa-pathways-recruitment-and-disengagement?.

26   https://conference.gobeshona.net

27   https://www.gpplatform.ch/content/environment-climate-conflict-and-peacebuilding

28   https://www.environmentalpeacebuilding.org/

- **Support local organisations to advance climate justice by holding governments, the private sector and financiers to account for abuses.**

For example, in 2010 the Dutch peace organisation PAX published a report documenting the complicity of Swedish energy company Lundin Energy in international human rights violations and war crimes committed in South Sudan, resulting in the Swedish public prosecutor laying charges against the company, in a case that is still ongoing.[29] Similarly, PeaceNexus, a Swiss organisation that supports collaboration with and capacity-building of organisations around the world to enhance peacebuilding and reduce conflict, has supported several local NGOs to constructively engage with companies to inform their local practice and engage in dialogue on human rights, socio-economic, and environmental impacts. For example, it supported a coalition of community-based organisations in Myanmar (before the coup in February 2021) to enter into dialogue with the China National Petroleum Corporation to improve practices along the oil and gas pipeline running through Myanmar from the Bay of Bengal to China's Yunan province. PeaceNexus also supported 474 Myanmar civil society organisations to lodge a complaint with Norwegian authorities against telecom multinational Telenor for putting the security and human rights of the Burmese people at risk as it rushed to sell its assets in Myanmar following the coup. This complaint led to agreement on a preliminary memorandum of understanding[30] that captures the status of the mediation discussions, the agreements and acknowledgements reached thus far, and a path forward for further mediation and agreement.

- **Work with grassroots organisations to carry out research and bring experiences, lessons, and good practice from the ground to inform governments and funders.**

For example, Triple Capital, a Namibian think tank, worked with the Environmental Investment Fund (EIF) of Namibia to share lessons and experiences from EIF projects funded by the GCF, and to draw up recommendations for how the GCF can better support direct access to climate finance.[31] This work is currently being expanded in partnership with a local NGO to bring experiences from local communities that received grants from the EIF to identify how climate funds can better channel climate finance to the grassroots level.

- **Support the development of improved metrics and approaches for monitoring impact and enhancing accountability.**

For example, Everyday Peace Indicators in Conflict-Affected Communities[32], an international NGO, works with local NGOs around the world to support communities affected by conflict to develop locally relevant indicators using participatory approaches to measure and track progress towards building peace in their own communities.

---

29   ECOS (European Coalition on Oil in Sudan), *Unpaid Debt: The Legacy of Lundin, Petronas and OMV in Block 5A, Sudan 1997–2003*, 2010, https://www.ecosonline.org/reports/2010/UNPAID_DEBT_fullreportweb.pdf.

30   https://www.somo.nl/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/OECDNCP_Telenor_SOMO_MoU_12July2022_FINAL_Signed.pdf

31   L. Brown et al., "EIF's Experience with the Green Climate Fund", Triple Capital, 7 July 2022, https://triplecapital.com.na/eifs-experience-with-the-green-climate-fund/.

32   https://cnxus.org/resource/everyday-peace-indicators-in-conflict-affected-communities/?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAiA9dGqBh-AqEiwAmRpTC1ZAfwZY0ZrAWBrNONpJoqvqCpVwDOvaktzRcJUlzByGBqP2X4ZHNhoC4-kQAvD_BwE

- **Help to bridge the information gap between communities and funders by providing technical support and sharing information.**

International and national organisations tend to be better connected to international networks of funders, policymakers, and technical partners, and can be well positioned to support communities in finding funding opportunities, gathering key information, creating concise project plans conceptualising and developing projects, navigating complex bureaucracies of funders, and overcoming challenges such as physical and language barriers. When international NGOs partner with local NGOs in the delivery of technical support rather than delivering it directly, this can help to build technical expertise and knowledge in local institutions that have a better understanding of the country context and are more invested in the outcomes.

3.3 Recommendations for governments of developing countries

Governments at the national and local levels play a crucial role in creating the legal and policy environment that either enables or hinders the uptake of solutions at the nexus of climate resilience, land restoration, and conflict resolution. They also set the vision and direction for sustainable development at the national, sectoral, and local levels. Governments can ensure positive outcomes for climate resilience in conflict-affected and vulnerable communities through the following actions:

- **Set a clear long-term vision with coherent, inclusive planning and enabling policy across all relevant sectors and levels of government.**

The Government of Bhutan set a clear vision for the country to achieve peace, prosperity and happiness and adopted the GNH approach (see above) as an overarching government policy, enshrined in the constitution, that tracks people's happiness through nine domains: psychological well-being (including spiritual well-being), health (including mental health), time use (including harmonious work-life balance), education, cultural diversity and resilience, community vitality (including volunteerism), good governance, ecological diversity and resilience, and living standards (housing, income, etc.). This approach underpins the country's medium-term development planning and is used to screen new policies and potential projects to ensure that they will advance the country's goals.

- **Create a policy environment that devolves rights over natural resource management to the local level and incentivises good environmental stewardship.**

Experience from various countries has shown that when the communities and farmers who are the custodians of natural resources have secure rights to manage and benefit from these resources, they have every incentive to conserve and manage them sustainably. This was the case in the examples of FMNR in Niger and CBNRM in Namibia, as discussed above.

- **Organise collectively and engage funders to advocate for increased and more appropriate funding.**

For example, the Vulnerable 20 (V20)[33], a forum that brings together finance ministries from 58 climate-vulnerable countries, advocates for developed countries to enhance action on tackling climate change and to increase their financial commitments to vulnerable countries. Using the collective influence of many small economies, the V20 is vocal in calling for reforms[34] to the international financial system and the terms of climate finance that are often unfavourable to vulnerable and highly indebted countries, as well for increased finance for disaster risk management.

3.4 Recommendations for grassroots organisations

Despite the ongoing challenge of having their expertise valued and receiving access to adequate and just funding, communities at the grassroots level continue to innovate and develop as powerful agents of change. Some ways that local and community-based organisations can advance solutions include the following:

- **Take ownership of the vision, priorities, and action plan for responding to the challenges being faced, and bring funders on board.**

For example, the collaborative research on environmental peacebuilding priorities undertaken by IMPACT in northern Kenya provided a clear set of recommendations for implementing solutions for conflict resolution and resilience building that could be integrated into the design of projects (see above). This meant that IMPACT could engage with funders with a clear set of requests drawn from the voices of the community and was not beholden to donor-driven priorities. Another example is in the state of Meghalaya, north-east India, where the unity of the 15,000-member Hill Farmers' Union enables farming households to influence state, national and internationally funded projects.

- **Start taking action with the resources at hand.**

Some impactful initiatives can be implemented with limited funding, and can be a starting point for demonstrating impact and bringing on board partners and funders. For example, in Kenya's Samburu county, in response to growing conflict between pastoralists and agriculturalists, pastoral communities adopted a process of sending elders from their communities to negotiate with the villages they would move through, which has been effective in reducing farmer-herder conflict.

In Nigeria's Akwa Ibom state the Family Empowerment and Youth Reorientation Path Initiative[35] founded by the state's former first lady supports the economic empowerment of girls in order to combat gender-based violence, and runs a wide range of programmes targeted at empowering marginalised members of society to find solutions to the challenges they face. Despite limited funding, the initiative has been successful in mobilising support from local leaders and business people, and has also attracted support from various international funders.

---

33 https://www.v-20.org
34 https://www.v-20.org/accra-marrakech-agenda
35 https://feyrep.org.ng

- **Define and own the narrative through community storytelling.**

For example, Yole!Africa, a grassroots NGO based in Goma, eastern DRC, fosters social innovation through art and a decolonial curriculum to support young people to address the pressing social and ecological injustices in their communities. In a region traumatised by a violent colonial legacy, ongoing violent conflict, and international exploitation, Yole!Africa is reframing the narrative for young people, providing a space for non-violent self-expression and critical thought through training in the visual arts, collaborative media, film-making, music, dance, writing, and computer skills.[36]

36   C.R. Ndaliko, "Yole!Africa: Negotiating Art and War in the East of Congo", *Journal of African Art History and Visual Culture*, Vol.8(2), 26 August 2014, pp.201-220, https://doi.org/10.1080/19301944.2014.939438.

4. Conclusion

The findings and recommendations emerging from the workshop in Caux are not new. In fact, grassroots organisations and other actors have long been calling for the reform of the entrenched power structures that maintain systems of inequality, injustice, and environmental destruction. For example, local communities and indigenous peoples in Africa have called for action by government and funders to protect nature[37], and civil society groups in the Congo Basin have called for action to safeguard this biodiverse and climatically importance region from overexploitation[38]. These calls sometimes feel futile in a world in which the majority of global wealth sits in the hands of a powerful minority, and in which investment in fossil fuels still exceeds financing for a cleaner, greener planet. Yet the spirit in the room at Caux was one of hope and energy, spurred by a recognition that each and every individual can be an agent of change in charting a more resilient, sustainable, and just future, and that by collectively organising and collaborating we can have an impact that is greater than the sum of our individual voices. Ultimately, the feeling was that these messages bear repeating and sharing, because it is often through patient dialogue, experience sharing, perseverance, and incremental progress that old paradigms are challenged and real change is forged.

---

37   https://ecojurisprudence.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/The-IPLCs-Kigali-Declaration-to-APAC2022_English-Final.pdf

38   https://afsafrica.org/kinshasa-declaration-on-reconciling-food-production-with-biodiversity-conservation-and-climate-emergency-in-the-congo-basin/

5. Contributors

Caux Initiatives of Change Foundation

Established in 1946, the Caux Initiatives of Change Foundation organises and coordinates international and local conferences, seminars and training in Switzerland, primarily in its conference centre, the Caux Palace, bringing together a true diversity of people. Caux Initiatives of Change provides a safe space to inspire, equip and connect individuals, groups and organizations from around the world to engage effectively and innovatively in the promotion of trust, ethical leadership, sustainable living and human security. It operates in line with its key approach of bringing global change through personal change and with its core values of absolute respect for human dignity, of truth, solidarity and care at every level of public or personal life.

Initiatives of Change International

Initiatives of Change International (IofCI) is a non-profit association of national legal bodies and international programmes of Initiatives of Change, registered in Switzerland. As such, IofCI serves as the hub for a global network of IofC teams and individuals who are leading community-based initiatives. IofCI's aims are to foster trustbuilding, ethical leadership and sustainable living. One of its six international programmes, Initiatives for Land, Lives and Peace, organises Dialogues on Environment and Security at Caux, in partnership with the Caux Initiatives of Change Foundation. The first of these dialogues was in 2011.

Geneva Centre for Security Policy

The Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) is an international foundation that aims to advance global cooperation, security and peace. The foundation is supported by the Swiss government and governed by 54 member states. The GCSP provides a unique 360° approach to learn about and solve global challenges. The foundation's mission is to educate leaders, facilitate dialogue, advise through in-house research, inspire new ideas and connect experts to develop sustainable solutions to build a more peaceful future.

Triple Capital

Triple Capital is a think tank based in Namibia, that aims to align societal, ecological and financial returns for a more inclusive and sustainable future. It partners with governments, financial sector actors, and non-profits to share knowledge and advance interdisciplinary solutions towards thriving, inclusive and sustainable societies, ecosystems and economies, with a focus on sub-Saharan Africa. For more information visit: https://triplecapital.com.na/

Centre for Bhutan & GNH Studies

Centre for Bhutan & GNH Studies (CBS) is a social science research institute which conducts inter-disciplinary studies on Bhutan for advancing its social, cultural, economic and political wellbeing. It was established in November 1998 by the Royal Government of Bhutan. Ever since its establishment, the centre has been conducting research on Bhutanese history, society, culture, religion, economy, politics and related themes. Centre for Bhutan & GNH Studies as an autonomous government institute studies Gross National Happiness by deepening the GNH concept, developing GNH index and GNH indicators to influence public policy and development, and designing tools to integrate GNH into national planning process.

Earthbanc

Earthbanc is a Climate Fintech Company on a mission to accelerate regenerative finance and drawdown carbon at scale to avoid runaway climate change. We have an official partnership with the UNCCD to restore 2.5B hectares of land by 2030. We're committed to accelerating and scaling ecosystem restoration, for the benefit of people and the planet.

Enforlar

The Evergreening Network for Forest and Land Restoration (ENFORLAR) is a non-profit organization with a strong passion to bring landscapes and ecosystems into restoration. Our focus is to strengthen local action on restoration of forest landscapes, degraded lands and ecosystems across Nigeria and the African continent. Since 2018, ENFORLAR has been at the forefront of people-centered land restoration in Nigeria through direct tree-based restoration activities in communities, hosting annual restoration conferences with stakeholder partici-pation, leading international learning opportunities for farmers, youths, women, state and national government representatives on sustainable land management practices such as FMNR. Furthermore, funding and support from the Government of Germany, Heinrich Boll Foundation Abuja and other partners have been a key pivot to achieving ENFORLAR's mission.

Family Empowerment and Youth Re-Orientation Path-initiative (FEYReP)

Family Empowerment and Youth Re-Orientation Path-initiative (FEYReP) is a non governmental, not for profit organization based in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Established since 2015, the organization was set up with the aim of creating a robust economic empowerment pathway for women, girls and support widowed families through a well defined economic empowerment framework that is target specific and sustainable. In addition, feyrep provides integrated support for female victims and survivors of various forms of Sexual and Gender Based violence including survivors of trafficking, especially female returnees trafficked for sex and related abuses.

Instituto de Ciências Sociais

The ICS-ULisboa (Instituto de Ciências Sociais of the Universidade de Lisboa) is a university institution devoted to research and advanced training in social sciences. The mission of the ICS-ULisboa is to study contemporary societies, with special emphasis on the Portuguese reality and on the societies and cultures with which Portugal has historical relations, both in Europe and in other geographic areas. These activities are carried out in an interdisciplinary context and from seven Research Groups.

IUAF – the International Union of Agroforestry

IUAF, the International Union of Agroforestry, was founded at the World Congress of Agroforestry in Montpellier in 2019 to respond to the increasingly urgent calls from researchers and practitioners around the world for a movement able to influence policy, promote research collaboration, and encourage new vocations amongst young students and farmers. Most importantly, IUAF's mission is to help the world seize the immense potential of this transformative set of agricultural interventions to ensure that, as we move deeper into an increasingly uncertain Anthropocene, we can raise enough food of a high quality for an ever-growing and ever-richer population while simultaneously helping to deal with global heating and the biodiversity crisis.

Agroforestry is the future of global agriculture, and the unions job is to bring their future closer. Visit iuaf.org for more.

National Cohesion and Integration Commission, Kenya

The National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) is a statutory body established under the National Cohesion and Integration Act No.12 of 2008. The establishment of NCIC recognized the need for a national institution to promote national identity and values, mitigate ethno-political competition and ethnically motivated violence, eliminate discrimination on ethnic, racial and religious basis and promote national reconciliation and healing. Its vision is a just and equitable society living in peace, unity and dignity. The mission is to promote national unity, equity and the elimination of all forms of ethnic discrimination by facilitating equality of opportunities, peaceful resolution of conflicts and respect for diversity among Kenyan communities.