



Building capacities for peace-positive climate adaptation: lessons from Kenya's County Climate Change Fund

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Lessons learned brief



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Key highlights for capacity building under devolved governance in Kenya

- **Start from how institutions actually work, not how they are designed.** Effective capacity building requires participatory diagnostics of de-facto practices, power relations, and informal norms, to ensure training is designed based in real decision-making conditions.
- **Build on governance spaces that already convene actors.** Working through existing committees and coordination mechanisms strengthens legitimacy, continuity, and uptake, while avoiding parallel structures that compete for attention and resources.
- **Approach sectoral integration as a learning journey.** Climate action and peacebuilding follow different institutional logics; meaningful integration emerges through shared learning, design-thinking, and problem-solving rather than technical alignment alone.
- **Strengthen local collective action via intermediaries.** Civil society organizations, hybrid actors, and local intermediaries play a critical role in sustaining trust, learning, and institutional memory across political cycles and fragmented authority.
- **Think beyond silos and boundaries.** Capacity development should span sectors, counties, and governance levels to reflect the cross-boundary nature of climate risks and conflict dynamics, making coordination capacity as vital as technical skills.



Introduction

In regions already affected by fragility or social tensions, climate impacts can intensify existing grievances, overwhelm service delivery and social protection institutions, and heighten competition over essential natural resources and public services. These pressures do not automatically lead to violence, but they can intensify underlying inequalities or governance challenges that make conflict more likely. In such settings, considering how the design and implementation of climate action interacts with conflict dynamics becomes especially important, as well-intended interventions may unintentionally worsen conflict-related risks.

The urgency of climate action has accelerated global mitigation and adaptation efforts, yet these interventions can, and often do, generate unintended effects that extend beyond their goals. Recent research highlights how climate measures can create or sharpen tensions when social and political dynamics are overlooked. Although climate policy is often framed as supporting sociopolitical stability, it can also heighten grievances or generate new conflicts if implemented without careful attention to context.

Unintended consequences are well documented in mitigation initiatives such as conservation schemes, land-use restrictions, or renewable energy projects. These efforts can clash with local livelihoods, redistribute benefits unevenly, or intensify competition over resources. Adaptation measures can generate similar risks. Investments in water infrastructure, disaster preparedness, or urban resilience may reinforce inequalities or exclude marginalized groups from decision-making. These risks are amplified in fragile or conflict-affected environments, where climate impacts, weak institutions, and pre-existing tensions interact in complex ways.

Conflict-sensitive adaptation has emerged as an approach to address these challenges. Conflict sensitivity requires "do no harm" strategies, proactively identifying and minimizing the potential risks of a project exacerbating conflict. This involves conducting thorough conflict analyses to understand local power dynamics, resource dependencies, and social hierarchies that may influence how adaptation measures are perceived. Inclusive stakeholder engagement is also central, ensuring that interventions are designed in collaboration with diverse community members, including those most at risk of exclusion or harm. Special attention must be paid to marginalized groups, such as women, indigenous peoples, and youth, who are often disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change and violent conflicts.

Conflict-sensitive approaches also present an opportunity to enhance the peacebuilding potential of adaptation actions. Transparent, participatory processes that distribute benefits equitably can address longstanding grievances and promote social cohesion. For example, adaptation projects that provide platforms for collaborative resource management can build trust among conflicting groups, while initiatives that strengthen local governance capacities can increase institutional legitimacy and resilience in fragile contexts. Mechanisms for grievance redress and continuous feedback help interventions to remain adaptable in the face of changing conditions and responsive to emerging challenges.

However, many governance systems struggle to effectively integrate conflict sensitivity in climate adaptation due to the complexity of addressing problems that span multiple policy sectors and geographic and temporal scales. Traditional governance frameworks, which often operate through siloed strategies between policy sectors, find it challenging to detect and respond to cross-cutting issues, particularly when coordination is required among stakeholders with limited prior collaboration. The uncertainty and complexity surrounding both climate impacts and conflict risks further hinder integrated planning.

To facilitate conflict sensitivity, policy frameworks for climate action must consider not only climate hazards but also existing structural drivers of grievance, such as inequality,

exclusion, and weak accountability. Strengthening institutional arrangements across multiple levels of governance is essential to ensure that climate action contributes to social cohesion rather than unintentionally exacerbating conflict dynamics. However, the structures and processes capable of facilitating cross level and sectoral coordination under specific sociopolitical conditions ought to be designed and developed through processes of social and institutional learning that are led by stakeholders involved in them.

This policy brief presents lessons learned from an analysis and stakeholder engagement process exploring institutional capacity development needs for conflict sensitive climate adaptation in Kenya's arid and semi-arid regions.



Capacity development process and good practices

Kenya's arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) continue to face combined pressures from climate change, resource scarcity, and local conflict. Recurrent droughts, water shortages, and competition over pasture increase livestock loss and degrade pasture and water availability, which can heighten tensions between communities. As these pressures intensify, county governments must ensure that climate adaptation initiatives are designed and implemented in ways that reduce, rather than aggravate, local sources of conflict.

The [County Climate Change Fund \(CCCF\)](#) mechanism is one of Kenya's flagship models for locally-led climate action. The CCCF is a devolved climate financing and governance mechanism that enables Kenyan counties to plan, prioritize, and allocate resources for climate adaptation at both county and ward levels. It establishes formal institutional structures, including the County Climate Change Planning Committees (CCCPCs) and Ward Climate Change Planning Committees (WCCPCs), that bring together government officials, technical officers, and community representatives to identify local climate risks and design appropriate responses as prioritized by local communities.

In partnership with the Adaptation Consortium (ADA), CGIAR's Climate Security team conducted an assessment¹ of the CCCF to identify potential entry points and capacity building needs to mainstream conflict sensitivity in its operation. The study employed the Conflict Sensitivity Wheel, a diagnostic framework that helps assess whether climate and development policies account for conflict risks and peacebuilding opportunities, along with the institutional capacities and development needs to do so. The tool used a mixed-methods and multi-level assessment designed to understand how the CCCF operates in practice and to identify institutional needs for enhancing conflict-sensitive adaptation. It combined a detailed policy and document review with an extensive participatory needs assessment and the distribution of surveys among project beneficiaries.

The document review mapped the full CCCF policy cycle - agenda setting, implementation, and review - by analysing official legislation, procedural manuals, planning toolkits, climate risk assessment reports, budgets, and available evaluation literature. This mapping clarified how responsibilities, decision-making structures, and accountability mechanisms are intended to function from national to ward levels. Interviews and desk research complemented the review to capture how these structures operate in practice.

A participatory needs assessment through focus group discussions (FGDs) and a community survey was then conducted across six wards in Isiolo, Wajir, and Kitui, which are counties that piloted the CCCF. A total of 132 participants (community committee members, county officials, civil society, and local leaders) engaged in FGDs, offering deep insights into procedural bottlenecks, institutional capacities, local power dynamics, and conflict risks shaping adaptation outcomes. This process allowed stakeholders to articulate lived experiences within the CCCF, including how proposals are generated, how investments are prioritized, and where community institutions require support to engage effectively.

This method allowed the analysis to consider not only the CCCF's formal design structure but also the realities of implementation, the informal institutions that shape decision-making processes and outcomes, and the everyday governance challenges experienced by communities. This participatory approach ensured that recommendations for strengthening conflict-sensitive climate adaptation were grounded in local priorities, system realities, and Kenya's devolved governance context, which represents both an enabler and constraint for institutional development for Kenya's county governments.

¹ Medina, 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>

After the analysis, ADA and the CGIAR Climate Security team, partnered² with the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC), mandated to facilitate and promote equality of opportunity, good relations, harmony and peaceful coexistence between persons of different ethnic and racial communities of Kenya, and to advise the Government on all aspects thereof. This partnership provided guidance on how peacebuilding functions can be better aligned with county-level adaptation processes. Study findings from the CCCF assessment were then adapted to the institutional context of each case study county, resulting in three policy briefs for Isiolo³, Wajir⁴, and Kitui⁵, each presenting tailored recommendations for county governments on how to integrate conflict-sensitive approaches within CCCF planning and implementation.

To help counties move from recommendations to practice, the project then organized a design-thinking workshop in Nanyuki, Laikipia County, with representatives from Laikipia and Isiolo counties. This workshop brought together county climate change units, representatives of peace committees, sectoral departments, civil society organizations, and other local actors. Participants worked through a set of dialogues and case examples to analyze how institutional processes within the CCCF interact with conflict dynamics in their counties. They jointly came up with practical strategies for the institutional integration of peace and adaptation policy efforts.

Having both adaptation and peacebuilding stakeholders in the same space enabled a clearer understanding of how existing policies and coordination mechanisms can support each other. Discussions focused on practical measures to link the operation of the CCCF mechanism to existing structures intended for early conflict warning systems, peace committee activities, conflict response and resolution, and county-level peacebuilding sector plans, in ways that improve the conflict sensitivity of adaptation investments and leverage adaptation efforts towards peacebuilding goals.

² <https://adaconsortium.org/blog/collaboration-with-the-national-cohesion-and-integration-commission>

³ Medina, L.; Schapendonk, F.; Jaskolski, M.; Osumba, J.; Jebiwott, A.; Mutuku, M.; Takaindisa, J.; Giti, D. (2025) Strengthening conflict sensitivity in Kenya's county climate change fund: Isiolo county. 9 p. <https://hdl.handle.net/10568/176426>

⁴ Medina et al. (2025) Strengthening conflict sensitivity in Kenya's county climate change fund: Wajir County. 9 p. <https://hdl.handle.net/10568/176415>

⁵ Medina et al. (2025) Strengthening conflict sensitivity in Kenya's county climate change fund: Kitui county. 9 p. <https://hdl.handle.net/10568/176412>

Devolved governance in Kenya's ASALs: enablers and obstacles for capacity development

Kenya's 2010 Constitution set in motion a significant devolution process intended to redistribute power, resources, and political representation beyond Nairobi. Since 2013, 47 county governments have taken on responsibilities formerly centralized at the national level, including health, water and resource management, agricultural development, early education, local infrastructure, among others. Devolution also led to the development of new mechanisms for citizen participation and inter-county learning, facilitating more representative and locally grounded governance across Kenya's arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs).

Yet, as it is to be expected, devolution has not unfolded evenly across the country. Counties have experienced different institutional trajectories to devolution, developing governance systems at different speeds and through diverging strategies, with varying political incentives and administrative capacities. Within each county, policy sectors have furthermore devolved differently, producing highly diverse configurations of authority, coordination, and capacity. This divergence facilitates the adaptation of governance processes to local realities, but it also complicates policy harmonisation across sectors and counties, particularly for issues that cut across administrative boundaries, such as climate action and peacebuilding.

In the climate action sector, devolution has made county and ward actors the main players in adaptation planning. County governments are responsible for developing County Climate Change Action Plans (CCCAPs), integrating climate priorities into County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs), and overseeing climate budgeting. The County Climate Change Fund (CCCF) embodies this devolved model, enabling climate action planning through participatory structures such as the CCCPCs and WCCPCs, which facilitate representation and coordination across levels of governance. This institutional architecture has allowed climate action to be highly influenced by community priorities and local knowledge.

The peacebuilding and conflict management sector has followed a more hybrid path to devolution, combining national oversight with localized structures. The Constitution tasks counties with promoting peace and cohesion, yet national bodies, including the National Steering Committee (NSC) on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management and the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC), retain strong mandates in policy direction and coordination. Counties have responded through different strategies. Some have institutionalized peacebuilding directorates or integrated peace units in County government structures, while others rely more heavily on informal arrangements, including local peace committees and customary institutions. This asymmetry creates governance arrangements whose capacities, mandates, and operating cultures differ significantly from those in the climate sector.

For ASAL counties, these divergent modes of devolution represents both opportunities and constraints for institutional capacity development. Devolution has generated new spaces for self-governance, local priority setting, and context-sensitive climate and peace interventions. However, it has also intensified competition for control over power, resources, and territory. Coordination on peace and security matters between county and national governments has furthermore become increasingly tense, with disagreements over roles, authority, and priorities. These tensions have diminished the ability of both levels of government to respond effectively to emerging conflicts.

At the community level, citizen participation in decision-making remains low, and many residents feel excluded from county processes. This has reinforced perceptions that county politics primarily benefit elites rather than the broader population. The uneven distribution of political power among ethnic groups has also generated friction. While most communities are represented in county-level institutions, minority groups remain marginalized. Political

representation and access to county resources are quite intertwined with ethnic identity, with land control and infrastructure development acting as important sources of tension between social groups, due to their use as political tools to mobilize support, coupled with inadequate compensation for affected residents, and inadequate and ineffective consultation processes.

Informal governance and customary authority	In many ASAL counties, customary institutions (e.g., Dedha systems, elders’ councils, grazing committees) have well-established legitimacy and conflict-resolution functions. This embedded legitimacy can accelerate the uptake of conflict-sensitive climate practices in ways that formal training alone cannot.
Cross-county mobility patterns and social networks	Pastoral mobility routes and clan networks extend beyond administrative borders. Leveraging these existing interconnections can improve information flows, dispute resolution, and shared planning for climate-related risks.
Political incentives linked to performance visibility	Climate adaptation investments are highly visible to constituents. When county leaders perceive political gains from demonstrating conflict-sensitive climate actions, it becomes a strong incentive for institutionalising such capacity.
Presence of intermediary organisations	Local CSOs and peacebuilding networks often act as intermediaries between technical language, community priorities, national policy frameworks, and donor expectations. Their convening power, continuity, and trust networks can sustain capacity development even through political turnover and instability.
Social learning spaces created by climate shocks	Intense or recurrent climate shocks influence local narratives and open political windows for change. During these periods, communities become more receptive to collaborative approaches, resource sharing agreements, or co-management initiatives.

Box 1. Enablers of capacity building in Kenya’s ASALs.

Fragmented authority and overlapping mandates	Climate action, natural resource management, and peacebuilding fall under multiple laws and agencies. The resulting mandate overlap creates institutional friction, slows decision-making, and undermines coherent capacity development.
High political turnover and institutional memory loss	Frequent changes in county leadership and senior officers erode institutional continuity. Even a well-designed capacity-building programme can be reset every five years if mechanisms are not institutionalized in bureaucratic routines and processes.
Elite brokerage in adaptation and peace processes	Local elites often mediate access to resources, political processes, or conflict resolution spaces. When these individuals act as brokers rather than representatives, capacity development can privilege groups aligned with elites while marginalising others, which reinforces conflict risks by undermining legitimacy.
Ethnic politics and territorial contestation	Many counties in Kenya’s ASALs contain heterogeneous populations with politicised territorial claims. As a result, county-level institutions may struggle to enforce neutrality in participatory climate processes, as even well-designed efforts can be perceived as biased if underlying territorial grievances are not understood and incorporated in implementation strategies.
Donor-driven temporalities and shifting priorities	Capacities often develop in cycles aligned with donor funding timelines rather than local planning cycles. This mismatch can introduce intermittent patterns in institutional learning, weakening long-term consistency and local buy-in.
Social fatigue from repeated participation	Communities in ASAL counties are often asked to participate in multiple consultations (development, humanitarian, climate, peace, elections). Over time, this leads to participation fatigue, especially when participation is followed by unmet expectations.

Box 2. Constraints for capacity building in Kenya’s ASALs.

Recommendations for conflict sensitivity in the CCCF

The CCCF offers a well-established, scalable and locally legitimate mechanism through which climate adaptation and peacebuilding can be integrated. The CCCF can be leveraged towards supporting Kenya's peacebuilding goals by ensuring steady financing, building analytical and coordination capacities, formalizing connections with peacebuilding institutions, addressing existing gaps in transparency and accountability, and strengthening early warning systems. The following recommendations emerged from the workshop dialogue, which integrated perspectives from both the climate and peacebuilding policy sectors.

Increase capacity for conflict analysis and peace programming that aligns with everyday community experiences.

The overall sentiment among workshop participants is that mainstreaming conflict sensitive climate action requires tackling existing and potential conflict head-on, rather than merely avoiding conflict areas, and integrating peacebuilding expertise directly into the design and execution of climate adaptation projects. Participants emphasized the importance of designing projects that are conflict-sensitive and inclusive from the outset. Site selection for adaptation projects must consider potential hotspots and overlapping claims to avoid exacerbating tensions. Transparent management structures and participatory planning processes were highlighted as essential to ensure fairness in benefit distribution and to strengthen trust among communities. Gender-responsive approaches were repeatedly stressed, ensuring that women, minorities, and marginalized groups are actively involved in decision-making and project design.

Participants also stressed that community-managed climate adaptation projects within the CCCF must embed peacebuilding principles alongside locally led adaptation principles. These efforts should include: conflict-sensitive clauses in contracts, participatory governance models, and inclusive dialogue sessions. Projects should not only deliver environmental benefits but also strengthen social cohesion, reduce tensions, and empower communities to manage disputes peacefully. By integrating peacebuilding into every stage of the project cycle, communities can ensure that climate resilience efforts contribute to long-term stability and equitable development.

However, while ward and county climate committees within their CCCF mechanism have developed strong adaptive planning skills, they often lack formal training in conflict analysis. The CCCF's participatory climate resilience assessments (PCRAs) and participatory vulnerability and capacity assessments (PVCAs) already integrate discussions of security and resource-based conflict as experienced by communities. Still, these insights remain informal and poorly documented. Embedding modules on conflict sensitivity and peace-positive adaptation into CCCF training programs would support WCCPCs to systematically identify, document, and mitigate conflict drivers. Through these efforts, PCRAs/PCVAs conducted under the CCCF mechanism can contribute to generating missing information on conflict dynamics, especially as experienced by local communities.

Furthermore, technical assistance from county-level CCCF secretariats, which should involve technical staff from the County peace and social cohesion directorates, as well as peacebuilding institutions like NCIC, could review proposals generated by the WCCPCs not only from the lens of climate resilience but also for their implications on intergroup relations and social cohesion, strengthening capacities within the CCCF for conflict preventive action. Such coordinated efforts, according to workshop participants, would contribute to closing the capacity gap in terms of programming for peace in climate action.

Institutions responsible for managing peace and security within counties have limited technical staff and rely heavily on external partners for funding. Counties also face a

shortage of trained personnel who can design, implement, and monitor peace programs through context-specific approaches, leading to incomplete situational analyses and slow responses to emerging conflicts. A recurring theme in this regard is the need to map shared resources—such as water, grazing land, and forests—and to establish clear rules for their use. Communities should jointly assess resource availability and negotiate equitable sharing arrangements. Committees representing diverse stakeholders (elders, women, youth, and resource users) were seen as vital for preventing disputes and fostering local ownership.

Facilitate coordination between peace structures at the national, county, sub-county and community levels.


The discussions highlighted the importance of cross-community and cross-county collaboration, as well as coordination among levels of governance. Bringing together water committees, grazing committees, climate committees, peace committees and other local governance structures was seen as a way to harmonize perspectives and strengthen integration. Written agreements and treaties were proposed to formalize commitments, particularly around shared resources, while structured policies and regulations were identified as necessary to sustain climate resilience and peacebuilding across borders.

Peace institutions exist at the national, county, sub-county, and community levels, but they often work in isolation from each other and from climate-related institutions. The links between these levels are not clear, and coordination remains weak. The CCCF's multi-level governance model provides an opportunity to enhance coordination architectures that could facilitate structured dialogue platforms among climate and peace stakeholders. County Climate Change Units (CCUs) and County Technical Working Groups (TWGs) already convene inter-ward meetings and stakeholder mapping exercises; expanding their mandate to include peace and cohesion directorates would institutionalize coordination and reduce duplication. Over time, CCCF committees could serve as the operational nucleus for conflict sensitive climate action, helping counties meet both adaptation and security objectives under devolution.

Peace committees and customary institutions (like the Dedha system in Isiolo) already collaborate informally with WCCPCs, creating links between climate governance and traditional conflict management mechanisms. The CCCF can formalize these interactions by including peace and conflict advisors within CCCPCs and aligning the existing Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) and Early Warning Systems within the NCIC (see more below). Such institutional linkages would increase the coordination between peace and climate efforts, leveraging the CCCF into a mechanism that connects local peace actors, county peace directorates, and national institutions.

Strengthen the role of the Early Warning and Early Response mechanism for conflict threats.

There is a strong indication of the need to enhance and expand an effective and responsive conflict prevention tool, an Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) system, that can anticipate conflicts and trigger appropriate institutional responses. Kenya has an EWER system through its Conflict Early Warning and Response Unit (CEWERU) and a well-established network of civil society organisations. However, it lacks steady funding, staffing, and follow-up systems. Participants felt that these mechanisms tend to function best only during election periods, and responses to local conflicts are slow or incomplete because data collection and coordination are not sustained. According to workshop participants, an effective EWER in Kenya should 1) have a greater surveillance capacity in order to gather and analyse relevant information on possible risks and vulnerabilities, 2) generate timely and accurate warnings that are disseminated to the pertinent actors and 3) trigger pro-active response measures.



Through its participatory risk and vulnerability assessments, project monitoring, and grievance channels, the CCCF already collects a rich body of localized information on climate- and resource-related tensions, but this data is not yet systematized nor shared with relevant stakeholders. By standardizing the documentation of climate–conflict linkages during participatory assessments, and integrating these insights into the county monitoring and evaluation systems, the CCCF could become a primary data source for national EWER frameworks. Training WCCPCs to identify early warning signs, such as migration pressures or competition over water and pasture points, and linking their reports to county peace directorates would enhance anticipatory response. In effect, the CCCF could serve as a bottom-up monitor network for Kenya’s conflict response infrastructure.

Joint monitoring and evaluation emerged during discussions as a crucial component for effective project implementation. Participants recommended setting clear indicators and targets to measure progress, with all affected parties involved in data collection and analysis. Sharing monitoring data across peacebuilding and climate adaptation actors was seen as a way to enhance transparency, build trust, and ensure accountability. Continuous consultation and participatory monitoring were emphasized to capture diverse perspectives and adapt projects in real time.

Strengthen measures to counter and control the political drivers of conflict, such as nepotism and ethnic patronage.

In the stakeholder workshop, timely and transparent communication was repeatedly identified as critical to preventing misunderstandings and mistrust. Communities should be informed from the proposal stage through implementation, with mechanisms such as WhatsApp groups, feedback forums, and community meetings used to ensure inclusivity. Sensitization campaigns and information-sharing platforms were viewed as tools to unify stakeholders around common goals, while continuous dialogue was seen as essential for sustaining peace and cooperation.

The CCCF’s existing procedural safeguards can strengthen institutional barriers and controls against elite capture. These safeguards include transparent procurement, committee composition through popular election, public barazas for decision making, minutes and journals stored at the ward administration, and community-led oversight of adaptation investments. By fostering project legitimacy through consensus-based processes, the mechanism controls political co-optation, hence redistributing decision-making power towards communities. These positive aspects of the CCCF can be documented and used as examples for wider governance processes at the county level, within efforts to increase institutional capacities to curtail nepotism and patronage.

There is still the need, however, of expanding grievance redress mechanisms and of ensuring gender and social quotas in committee leadership, which can further prevent patronage, ensure equitable representation, and increase accountability. Furthermore, it was recognized that the CCCF mechanism needs to be more transparent about the available budget which community members can count upon when designing projects, and on the mechanism through which investments target specific wards over others in any given year. Increasing coordination with peace and security stakeholders while strengthening transparency and grievance redress mechanisms can support efforts to better account for existing grievances between communities and social groups, thereby reducing the risk of unintended negative consequences.

Lessons for capacity building processes

This section summarises a set of lessons learned from the case study experience as related to broader efforts to build institutional capacities under devolved governance systems, particularly in settings where complementary action across policy sectors, such as climate adaptation and peacebuilding, is a main end goal of capacity building.

Invest in participatory assessments of de-facto institutional practices, not only de-jure designs

Capacity development is most effective when it is grounded in a deep, multilevel understanding of how institutions actually function, rather than how they are designed on paper. In devolved settings, formal mandates, informal practices, customary authority, and political incentives interact in uneven ways across counties and sectors. The CCCF assessment shows that investing upfront in participatory institutional diagnostics - mapping decision-making pathways, bottlenecks, power relations, and informal norms - creates a shared baseline that makes later capacity-building efforts more realistic and better targeted. Without this, training risks strengthening isolated competencies that cannot be applied in practice.

Build on existing governance mechanisms that already convene actors

Rather than creating parallel coordination platforms, capacity-building efforts are more likely to be influenced by institutional practices and processes when they work through mechanisms that already structure participation and decision-making, such as the CCCF's ward and county committees. These spaces already host social learning, negotiation, and prioritization processes. Embedding peacebuilding capacities, such as conflict analysis or early-warning awareness, into these existing climate governance routines allows complementary policy goals to emerge organically, instead of being imposed through new institutional layers that struggle for legitimacy, resources, and institutional attention.

Treat sectoral integration as a learning process, not a technical fix

This case study highlights that climate action and peacebuilding have followed different paths of devolution, with distinct professional cultures, timelines, and accountability logics. Capacity development therefore cannot assume automatic alignment. Joint design-thinking workshops and scenario-based learning proved valuable precisely because they created protected spaces for the translation of institutional practices and cultures between sectors, helping actors understand how their procedures intersect in practice. Cross-sector integration can better emerge through shared problem-solving, not through formal coordination mandates alone.

Invest in local capacities for collective action through intermediaries, not only government institutions

Under conditions of rapid and uncertain climatic and environmental change, social change, high political turnover, and fragmented authority, institutional memory is fragile and unpredictable. The experience documented in this brief shows that intermediary organizations, local CSOs, and hybrid actors play a critical role in sustaining learning, trust, and continuity across political and social-ecological cycles, including elections, seasonal patterns, resource-use cycles, and cultural practices. Capacity-building strategies that recognize and strengthen these relational infrastructures, rather than focusing exclusively on government actors, are more resilient over time and better able to bridge climate and peace agendas.



Adopt and foster holistic capacity development approaches that transcend silos, sectors and territorial boundaries

The case highlights the risks of designing capacity-building efforts that are confined to single counties, sectors, or administrative units. Climate risks, mobility patterns, and conflict dynamics routinely cross boundaries and temporal scales. Capacity development that brings together neighboring counties or multiple sectors helps reduce institutional short-termism and can mitigate competition among involved actors, as often created by devolution processes. In this sense, capacity for coordination across administrative boundaries, policy sectors, governance levels, and even different points in time, becomes as important as technical capacity itself.



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