



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 (CCCF) mechanism to assess whether its design, implementation, and monitoring processes are aligned with conflict prevention and peacebuilding goals. Specifically, the study evaluated the CCCF'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.

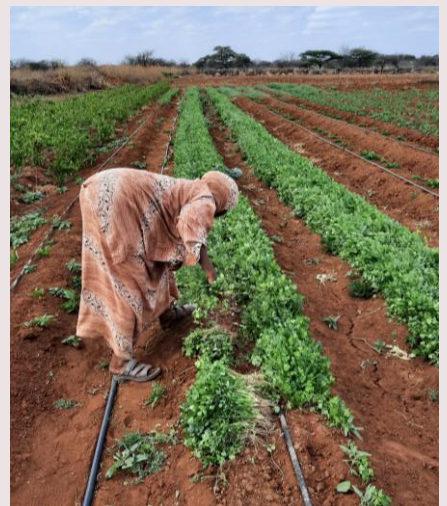
Case study. Enhancing water access and conflict management capacities in Buna Ward, Wajir

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.

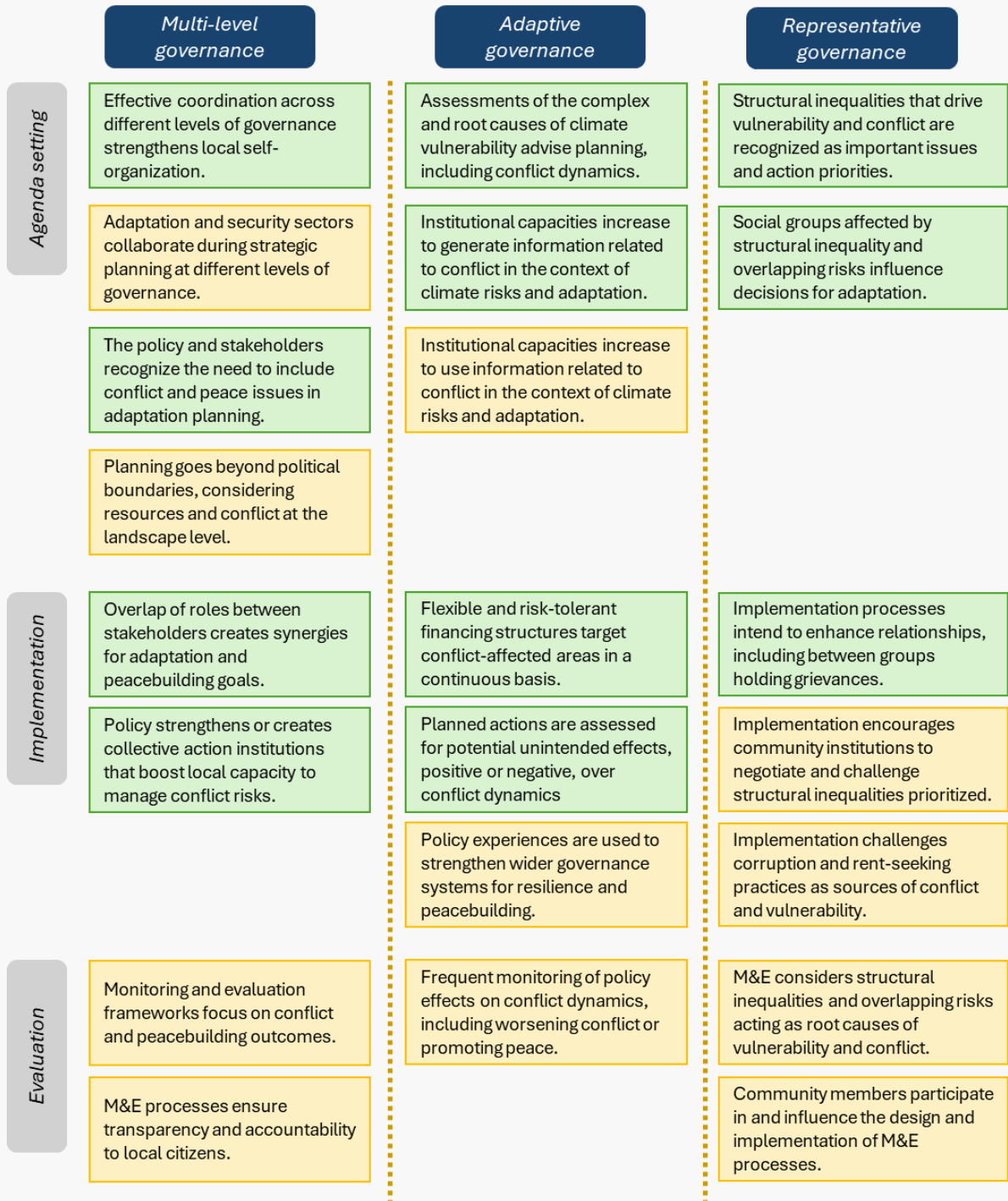
Two major participatory vulnerability assessments across wards, in 2013 and 2023, have informed CCCF planning in Wajir, identifying climate hazards, mapping vulnerabilities, and guiding investments. Wajir's semi-arid environment faces increasing climate

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.



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



Acknowledgments

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