

Highlights from the Environmental Peacebuilding Conference

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About the Environmental Peacebuilding Conference

- What is environmental peacebuilding?
 - “Building sustainable peace through environmental, resource-based cooperation, management and/or development intervention, action and engagement”
 - Environmental peacebuilding integrates natural resource management in conflict prevention, mitigation, resolution, and recovery to build resilience in communities affected by conflict.
- The **Environmental Peacebuilding Association** (aka EnPAx) comprises researchers, practitioners, and decision makers providing a platform for sharing experiences and lessons from managing natural resources in conflict-affected settings, access new research on the topic, and participate in events to support the growing network of professionals active in environmental peacebuilding.

About the Environmental Peacebuilding Conference

- 2nd Annual Conference was held from February 1 – 4, 2022 in partnership with UNEP, the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, the Geneva Water Hub, the Geneva Environment Network, and the PeaceNexus Foundation.
- The conference consisted of 5 thematic tracks:
 - Climate change
 - Rights and justice
 - Public health
 - Business and markets, and
 - Building the evidence base.



Rennie Jordan

**CLIMATE CHANGE, SECURITY RISKS, AND ACTIONS
IN AFRICA
DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND PEACEBUILDING**

Bridging Silos

- Environmental Peacebuilding
 - Multiple actors/entry points
 - Not necessarily referred to as environmental peacebuilding
- Disaster Risk Reduction and Peacebuilding
 - “Rare conversation to happen”

Disaster risk reduction (DRR) and peacebuilding: “Terra incognita”

- Data availability
 - Lack of empirical evidence (climate adaptation, conflict, peacebuilding)
 - Research focused on Sahel/Sub-Saharan Africa
- Scale of analysis

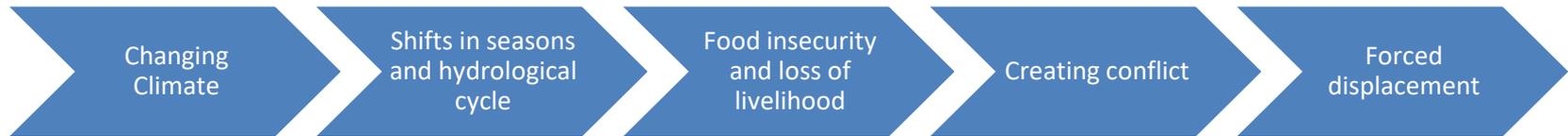


Aurelie Ieroncig

CLIMATE CHANGE, FCV, AND FORCED DISPLACEMENT

Breaking linear assumptions

Climate Change, FCV, and Forced Displacement



- Growing tendency of placing climate change as the root cause of challenges.
- While important to recognize climate change may play a role, several factors will contribute to fragility, violence and conflict, as well as force displacement.
- Other key factors: political dynamics, historical relationship/land claims, historical and current use of resources, etc.
- Climate change often exacerbates challenges already faced, it is a threat multiplier.

Key considerations for interventions

- Importance of addressing **root causes** – which often entail focus on creating strong institutions, and developing skills, human resources, leaderships, etc.
- Interventions need to take into **consideration the wider, complex system** in which they are being implemented.
- There needs to be a focus on **knowledge** and having a better sense **contributing factors** – ultimately better understanding the wider ‘ecosystem’.
- Interventions needs to be **multi-level and multi-sectorial**.



Natalie Martin

GENDER AND ENVIRONMENTAL PEACEBUILDING

How is gender taken into account in Environmental Peacebuilding programmes

- Many weak points in how gender is addressed in Environmental Peacebuilding work:
 - Treating gender as a matter of “interpersonal relationships” as opposed to a structural issue
 - Ignoring the role of women who might participate and support conflict, despite the negative impacts on them
 - Ignoring the gap between grassroots level work and higher level diplomatic work
 - Ignoring the role of the extractives industry in fuelling conflict – an area where gender is often ignored

Implications for gender considerations in our work

- Looking at the language we use when talking about gender
- Ensuring an intersectional lens
- “Putting power at the centre of the analysis”
- Bridging the gap: grassroots initiatives vs higher-level diplomatic efforts; horizontal vs vertical approaches



Shaida Mahmoud

COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACHES

Community-based Approaches

- **Decolonization and Environmental Peacebuilding**
 - Indigenous knowledge and belief that we are all related : basic foundation of relationships
 - How do we impact these relationships when we intervene as outsiders from a very different cultural background?
- **Climate Change, Security Risks, and Actions in Africa: Examples of Cooperation around Adaptation and Mitigation that Support Sustainable Peace**
 - Conflict arising from natural resources in dispute, holistic responses needed to address root causes
 - Working in silos makes implementation incredibly challenging
 - Need for local ownership, bringing people together around shared concerns
 - Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim
 - Building around Indigenous and traditional knowledge of the communities
 - Cannot build sustainable peace without the people being affected, deserve recognition and consideration
 - How can we better share traditional knowledge for future generations?
 - Building tools that then promote the development of policy at the national level and beyond
 - Adapt to community needs rather than force communities to adapt to tools they are not suited to (i.e. inaccessible paperwork, spreadsheets, etc.)

What does this mean for us and our work?

- Considerations to think about:
 - Are we appropriately engaging with stakeholders and experts on the ground?
 - How can we use our position as a firm from the Global North to better advocate for and support the communities impacted by our work?
 - What role do we play in environmental peacebuilding initiatives?
 - How might our cultural backgrounds and personal experiences impact these interactions/perspectives?
 - Are there efforts or changes we can make to ensure a more collaborative approach that amplifies and centres around the voices of community stakeholders?



Eric Abitbol

SYSTEMS CHANGE EVALUATION: IS ENVIRONMENTAL PEACEBUILDING READY?

Environmental Peacebuilding: A Systems Approach

Key Question(s)

- Is the field of environmental peacebuilding adequately accounting for systems framings, complexity, approaches... and what does this mean for environmental peacebuilding evaluation?

Environmental Peacebuilding: A Systems Approach

Global Context

- No overarching cooperation on environmental peacebuilding, at the UN and across the system (lack of understanding, lack of political will, lack of methodological coherence, very high complexity. Major gridlock at UNSC, but progress nonetheless – Theory and practice, UN Climate Security Mechanism (2018)
- Great stories of environmental peacebuilding: EcoPeace on water cooperation in the Middle East
- Highly biodiverse areas see less conflict impact, until after conflict – resource plunder and exploitation: Colombia and forest loss
- Environmental peacebuilding expectations: Unrealistic?
- Can we speak of transforming a global system, or creating islands of peace?
- Very different implications for M&E

Environmental Peacebuilding: A Systems Approach

M&E Systems

- Environmental gains (indicators) do not necessarily reflect peacebuilding progress
- Peacebuilding progress (indicators) do not necessarily capture environmental considerations
- What is the scale at which environmental peacebuilding should be situated and recognized? Accounting for policy coherence.
- Attribution and Contribution challenge – so many actors in a system

Indicator Development

- Three Theories (of Change) of Environmental Peacebuilding
 - Hydrohegemony and hydropolitical peacebuilding: Hardball politics and the transformation of power
 - Extending the horizon of the future: Relationships, investments
 - Functionalism: Technical cooperation and integration
- Indicators in FCV Contexts
 - Leading indicators
 - Context indicators
 - Systems dynamics indicators
 - Complexity aware monitoring
- Evaluating actors, actions and contributions to systems change, systems change (a page from OCA rubrics)

Questions/Comments