



Framing note

Building forward better

A pathway to climate-resilient development
in fragile and conflict-affected situations

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Abstract

People living in places affected by fragility and/or violent conflict are among the most vulnerable in the world to climate change. In these situations, a natural hazard – such as a flood or a drought – can quickly trigger disasters and exacerbate protracted crises.

Individuals themselves cannot meaningfully be expected to adapt to climate change. What is needed is for actors in conflict-affected countries to work together to address the drivers of fragility, and enable peace, stability and systemic resilience – so that people have more options to manage challenges and embrace opportunities. We call this Building Forward Better.

Building Forward Better will require a transformation in the way humanitarian, development, peacebuilding, disaster risk management and climate adaptation actors work in fragile and conflict-affected settings. This Framing note argues for a new way of thinking about and delivering the climate agenda in fragile and conflict-affected situations: one in which programmes and investments by all actors are linked, layered and sequenced in such a way that they mutually reinforce and support each other, and are informed by a clear understanding of the drivers of conflict and climate risks.



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About this publication

New ways of thinking, delivering and financing work are needed to build the climate resilience of people living in fragile and conflict-affected situations. This publication sets out how stakeholders across the climate, humanitarian, development and peacebuilding communities can act collectively to support the transition to climate-resilient development in fragile and conflict-affected situations.

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Acronyms

BRACED	Building Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Extremes and Disasters programme
FCAS	fragile and conflict-affected situations
FbA	forecast-based early action
FbF	forecast-based financing
HDP	humanitarian, development and peacebuilding
IDP	internally displaced person
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
NCQG	new collective quantified goal on climate finance
PRIME	Pastoralist Areas Resilience Improvement and Market Expansion
PSP	participatory scenario planning
SUR1M	The Scaling-Up Resilience to Climate Extremes for over 1 Million People in the Niger River Basin of Niger and Mali project
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WASH	water, sanitation and hygiene

Executive summary

People living in places affected by armed conflict, violence and instability are among the most vulnerable in the world to the adverse effects of climate change because they lack the institutions, capacities and government support needed to adapt. In these situations, a natural hazard – such as a flood or a drought – can quickly trigger disasters and exacerbate protracted crises.

Individuals themselves cannot meaningfully adapt to climate change; expecting them to do so places an unjust burden on them by expecting that their ‘empowerment’ will enable peace, stability and systemic resilience. What is needed is for actors working across humanitarian, development and peacebuilding (HDP), as well as disaster risk management and climate change mitigation and adaptation, to support strengthening of systems and institutions – addressing drivers of fragility – so that people have more options to manage challenges and embrace opportunities. We call this Building Forward Better.

Understanding that conflict and fragility are drivers of climate vulnerabilities has several important implications for how we support climate action in fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCAS). The first is that we must focus not just on climate finance in FCAS, but also on resilience finance more broadly. Linked to this is another very important implication: that to Build Forward Better and move beyond just coping with crises requires systemic conflict and climate risk management in FCAS – working across the spectrum of humanitarian aid and disaster risk management to development and peacebuilding.

Layering, linking and sequencing HDP, disaster and climate interventions, and making interventions more conflict- and climate-risk informed, must become the modus operandi of actors in order to Build Forward Better in FCAS. It is only once we strengthen governance, build peace and lay the foundations of functional economies and systems through Building Forward Better in collaboration with communities and (where possible) governments that we can support people and governments to better anticipate, absorb and adapt to climate shocks, and ultimately enable them to transition to climate-resilient development.

This Framing note argues for a new way of thinking about and delivering Building Forward Better in FCAS. Section 1 introduces the need for a transformation in the ways HDP, disaster risk management and climate adaptation actors work in FCAS. Section 2 shows how, by helping FCAS to Build Forward Better, these actors can support countries on the path to climate-resilient development. Section 3 elaborates on good practice principles for Building Forward Better, including some real-world examples.

1 Introduction

Rapid, unprecedented and ambitious mitigation actions involving the transformation of human systems are urgently needed to meet the Paris Agreement goal of keeping mean global temperature increases well below 2°C, if possible 1.5°C. Current nationally determined contributions lead to a mean global warming of 2.8°C by 2100.¹ Even with warming limited to 1.5°C, we will require significant adaptation action, especially for agricultural and other natural resource-based livelihoods, and for those with already restricted access to food, water and healthcare. Delays in concerted global action to transform societies to climate-resilient development, in which just mitigation and adaptation are integrated with sustainable development, could lead to a future in which adaptation is no longer possible; hard limits will be reached.²

This urgency is even more pronounced in the case of FCAs, where institutional and social fragility, and/or violent conflict limit individuals', households', communities' and sometimes nations' capacities to withstand and adapt to climate-related impacts. As climate extremes of increasing severity and frequency overlay and exacerbate existing fragilities and conflict, they can worsen poverty, hunger and displacement, leading to protracted crises.³ In 2021, the number of countries experiencing protracted crisis rose to 36; of these, 25 are also classified as having high or very high climate vulnerability.⁴

The resulting pressures are placing an unsustainable burden on an already overstretched global humanitarian system. Over 80% of the UN-coordinated appeals respond to a handful of protracted crises.⁵ In 2022, the scale of the funding required to meet humanitarian needs globally jumped to a record high, which looks likely to be surpassed in 2023 according to preliminary data. An analysis of The International Federation of Red Cross' emergency natural hazard-related appeals indicate that the proportion of requirements met fell from 59% in 2021 to 53% in 2022.⁶

A more balanced funding structure needs not only to shift development and climate finance to FCAs, but also to reform the policies and practices of development and climate finance actors. Data shows that the countries most vulnerable and least ready to adapt to climate change are

1 UNEP, 2022

2 Soft limits are those for which no further adaptation options are currently feasible but some options might become available in the future. Hard limits are those in which adaptation is not possible (IPCC, 2022).

3 Protracted crises refer to situations in which a significant portion of a population is facing a heightened risk of death, disease and breakdown of their livelihoods (Humanitarian Coalition, 2021).

4 Development Initiatives, 2022

5 Development Initiatives, 2021

6 Development Initiatives, 2023

receiving the least climate finance per capita.⁷ FCAs represent 11 of the top 25 countries most vulnerable to climate change, yet they are also among the most underserved by available climate finance. Clearly, there is need for a higher level of risk-taking from both development and climate finance actors. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's (UNFCCC) new collective quantified goal on climate finance (or NCQG) is a high-level opportunity to prioritise, mobilise and deliver finance in a way that supports the most vulnerable and least able to adapt to climate change.

While increasing the flow of finance is essential, it is equally important that finance is spent effectively and efficiently. Assessing the effectiveness of finance for adaptation and resilience is often problematic, since – unlike mitigation that is assessed through a straightforward metric of tons of greenhouse gas emissions abated – there is no standard yardstick for appraising the adaptation and resilience outcome of an investment or measuring its actual success. This problem is heightened in FCAs, where measuring the adaptation and resilience outcomes of investments is challenged by the complexity of a context characterised by high levels of institutional and social fragility, conflict, poverty, hunger, and displacement. Improved metrics on adaptation and risk reduction for resilience are therefore urgently needed. Resolving measurement challenges is key at the investment level as much as at the global level to operationalise and monitor progress towards the UNFCCC Global Goal on Adaptation (Article 7.1 of the Paris Agreement).

Development and climate finance actors also need to make improvements to their systems and processes, many of which are not fit for purpose for FCAs. Institutional mandates and even the incentives of different actors to deliver funding in FCAs may also need to be revisited. For example, development actors could consider avoided crisis as a development outcome. Investing in hitherto underprovided global public goods, including peace, stability and a liveable climate, is at the centre of the reform of the multilateral development system. A successful overhaul of the multilateral system to pursue the triple mandate of prosperity, sustainability and global public goods can pave the way for other actors to better serve the needs of FCAs.

For these reasons, new ways of thinking, delivering and financing HDP, disaster risk management and climate adaptation action are clearly needed in FCAs – in short, moving from coping with crises to Building Forward Better. This Framing note is set in the broader context of climate-resilient development. As such, it acknowledges that the gap between needs and available funding cannot be closed by funding alone: we must also reduce the level of needs. This requires global climate mitigation action to reduce the frequency and intensity of hazards, at the same time as actions to reduce the residual risk through anticipatory action before shocks; humanitarian actions for relief and recovery; and scaling up of peacebuilding, disaster risk management and sustainable development to support countries' transformations to climate-resilient development.

7 Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN) index, historical climate finance volumes from OECD DAC database, and the country grouping of LDCs.

This note aims to contribute to the growing global efforts of an unprecedented range of stakeholders across climate and HDP to act collectively and cohesively towards the goal of climate-resilient development in FCAs. These efforts include but are not limited to the COP28 Presidency-championed Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery and Peace and associated package of solutions, and the Risk-informed Early Action Partnership's charter for managing risks 'Getting ahead of disasters',⁸ as well as the World Bank's Evolution Roadmap, which focuses on public goods such as conflict, climate change and public health.⁹ As disaster risk management and climate change adaptation are vital strategies for climate-resilient development, for avoiding disasters, and for sustainable development, the note aims to advance climate-resilient development within the context of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and elements of the UNFCCC climate framework including the Paris Agreement, the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance and the fund to address Loss and Damage.

8 REAP, 2023

9 World Bank Group, 2022

2 Building forward better: moving from coping with crises to preparing for the future

2.1 The ultimate objective: transformations to climate-resilient development

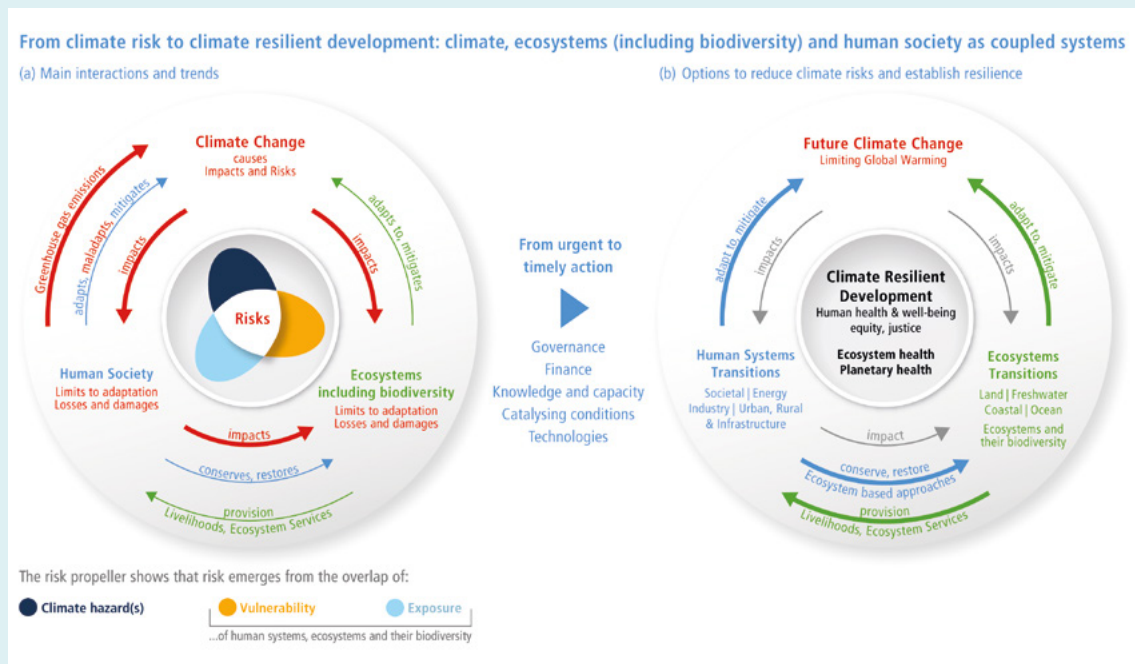
Concerted mitigation action, through transitions to low-carbon economies and more environmentally sound land use, is critical to reducing the frequency and severity of climate hazards under climate change. Simultaneously, there is an urgent need to minimise possible negative impacts of climate change by scaling up disaster risk management (including anticipatory and early action before shocks), climate change adaptation and the building of resilience across sectors. These combined actions taken by governments and citizens of a country – the incorporation of just mitigation, adaptation and disaster risk management within sustainable development – form the basis of a country’s transformation to climate-resilient development (Box 1).

It is not within the mandates or capacities of HDP, disaster risk management or climate action actors to deliver climate-resilient development anywhere, let alone in fragile and conflict affected settings. Yet we argue that it is only coherent and coordinated action across such actors, in collaboration with communities and governments (where possible), that can offer pathways for Building Forward Better. Building Forward Better requires us to address the underlying drivers of fragility and linked climate vulnerabilities, and peace and stability, in order to help scale up the ambition and scope of socioeconomic development: disaster-resilient transportation networks, stronger and more accessible financial systems, schools, healthcare, water and electricity and greater economic diversification. It helps to lay the foundations that FCAS countries could leverage to transform to climate-resilient development.

Box 1 What is climate-resilient development?

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) defines climate-resilient development as a process of implementing greenhouse gas mitigation and adaptation options within sustainable development for all in ways that support and advance human and planetary health and well-being, equity and justice (Figure 1). Climate-resilient development requires addressing issues of equity and system transitions in land, ocean and ecosystems; urban and infrastructure; energy; industry; and society, and includes adaptations for human, ecosystem and planetary health. To that end, it involves fundamental and transformative changes to how societies function, including changes to underlying values, worldviews, ideologies, social structures, political and economic systems, and power relationships.

Figure 1 From climate risk to climate-resilient development



Source: Adapted from Figure SPM.1 in IPCC (2022).

HDP, disaster and climate interventions often focus on the phases of traditional crisis risk management individually in FCAs:

1. **Preparedness** – encompassing things like early warning and anticipatory action before disasters;
2. **Prevention and Mitigation** – actions like strengthening national social protection systems and awareness and capacity-strengthening with communities before disasters;
3. **Relief and Response** – both during short-term disasters and protracted crises – through interventions to ensure access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and food aid, and the facilitation of safer displacement and support for host communities; and finding ways of keeping/enrolling children in school to minimise educational disruption;
4. **Recovery and Rehabilitation** – interventions taken post short-term disasters or where possible during protracted crises. These can include: transitioning humanitarian-run health centres to country health ministries; transitioning WASH interventions to community-led and sub-national water and sanitation systems; provision of agricultural and livestock inputs and work strengthening community-led nature-based solutions for minimising environmental degradation, enhancing livelihoods and reducing climate hazard impacts.

However, current siloed ways of operating within and across the phases of traditional risk management in FCAs contribute to ‘piecemeal’ conflict or climate-risk management interventions, in which drivers of fragility and conflict are not linked with climate vulnerabilities. As a result, it is difficult to move beyond situations of protracted crisis and work with communities, and (where possible) governments, to deliver on the peace and sustainable and equitable socioeconomic growth foundations needed before FCAs can transform to climate-resilient development. This calls for a rethink of how interventions are designed and delivered for risk management in FCAs, to enable them to contribute to more future-oriented Building Forward Better.

2.2 Building forward better: moving beyond crisis management

There will continue to be negative impacts (disasters) while stabilisation occurs; such residual risks will need to be proactively and reactively managed by humanitarian and disaster risk management actors. The question is: how can the interventions of all actors – HDP, disaster risk management and climate – be better leveraged to move beyond crisis risk management to support Building Forward Better in FCAs?

We argue that HDP, disaster and climate actors can deliver Building Forward Better by:

1. **Linking and layering across spatial scales**, from community-level to catchment/basin scales to the national scale, and sometimes across national borders.

Interventions must be linked and layered in order to address drivers of fragility¹⁰ at the sub-national to national scales (e.g. political and socioeconomic marginalisation, land and natural resource tenure insecurity; lack of access to justice and services; failure of governments to provide security and socioeconomic development, etc.) that create individuals', households' and communities' vulnerabilities and exposures to climate extremes and change. Where conflict occurs, this further exacerbates environmental degradation and undermines local to national capacities to anticipate and absorb shocks, let alone adapt to climate change (and other global changes). Interventions may also need to be linked and layered across sub-national and national borders, given the transboundary nature of livelihoods, economies and sometimes conflict.

2. **Sequencing across time scales**, with even short-term interventions focused on meeting immediate needs delivered in a manner that supports efforts to stabilise and promote just, environmentally sustainable and resilient socioeconomic growth.

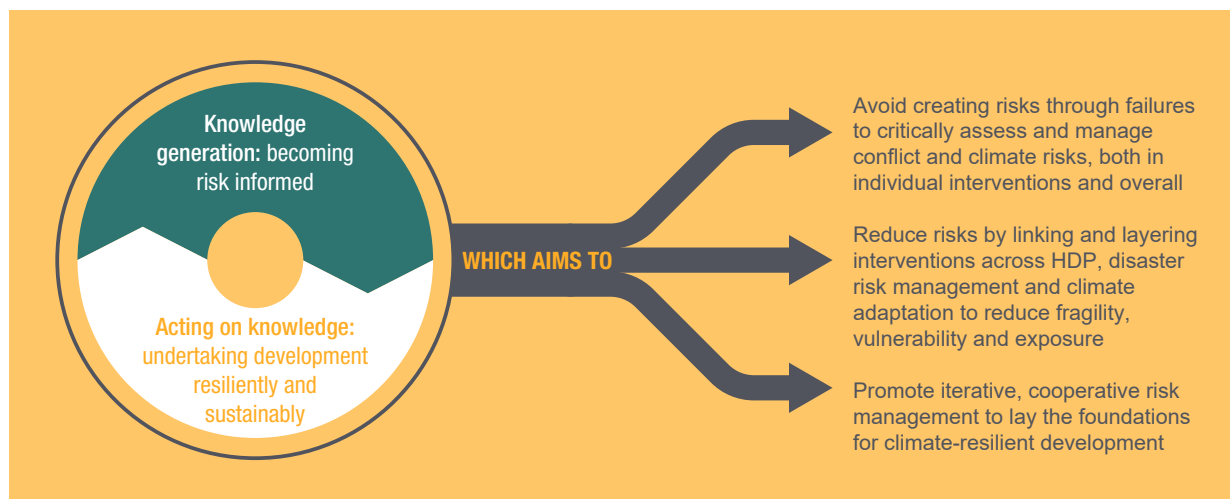
This requires the sequencing and coordination of policies, programmes and interventions – from anticipating and reducing human security needs ahead of a predicted crisis, meeting human needs during and after crises (recovery) and anticipating and addressing future risks through peacebuilding interventions combined with disaster risk management, to development action which addresses adaptation, and where appropriate, mitigation. Actions require multi-decadal commitment to lay the foundations of Building Forward Better, which will not happen within 5 to 10 years. Development and peacebuilding interventions need to tackle the indirect, messy, systemic and often political issues that drive both fragility and vulnerability. Ideally, sets of interventions that might be grouped as falling within Preparedness, Prevention and Mitigation, Relief and Response, and Recovery and Rehabilitation are being delivered simultaneously – as contexts, communities and (where possible) governments allow – and are mutually reinforcing.

¹⁰ Brooks et al., 2022

3. **Being ‘risk-informed’:** At the societal level, both current conflict and climate risks in FCAs are driven by fragility; this fragility drives local-level climate vulnerabilities and exposures. And without addressing linked fragility, conflict and vulnerability at different spatial and time scales, future climate change risks become locked in.

HDP, disaster risk management and climate actors often assess fragility, conflict and climate vulnerabilities separately – focusing one aspect to the exclusion of others. Building Forward Better requires programmes and activities, individually and when linked, layered and sequenced to be ‘risk-informed’. This entails jointly considering conflict and climate change risks and their drivers over different spatial and time scales that could undermine objectives (risks to the interventions, and to their linking, layering and sequencing). But poorly planned interventions that do not consider environmental, social or conflict dynamics can also end up creating conflict risks, exacerbating environmental degradation or locking in maladaptation (risks *from* the intervention(s)). The goals of being ‘risk-informed’ are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Goals of being risk-informed in HDP, disaster risk management and climate programming



Source: adapted from Opitz-Stapleton et al. (2019) with permission.

Through the appropriate, risk-informed linking, layering and sequencing of multiple interventions, actions taken under the guise of crisis risk management in FCAs can deliver toward more future-oriented actions. Under Building Forward Better, actions are ramped up that seek ‘triple wins’ of stability, mitigation and adaptation. This requires HDP, disaster risk management and climate actors to align and coordinate with communities and national socio-economic development priorities (and with national and subnational ministries and agencies, where appropriate), in areas including:

Accessible infrastructure

- integrated water, sanitation, flood and drought control systems, which may be combined with nature-based solutions, e.g. restoring degraded ecosystems to provide livelihood, human and livestock health, water management and adaptation and mitigation co-benefits
- low-carbon energy, transportation networks with a focus on low-carbon transport, expanding information and communications technologies which are critical for disaster early warning while also enabling greater participation in local and regional markets
- automated weather stations and surface and/or groundwater monitoring systems, capacity strengthening for national hydrometeorological agencies; working with sub-national and national government to support disaster-resistant and energy-efficient housing, buildings, and urban areas to meet population growth and urbanisation trends

Services

- healthcare, including public health insurance and public health campaigns (particularly around strengthening public responses for vector-borne disease, heat stress and outbreaks of water- or food-borne illness in heatwaves, droughts, floods or storms)
- multi-country surveillance and management systems for livestock and crop disease
- child and adult education; greater access to digital financial services at the household and community level
- social protection, including strengthening linkages between social protection and humanitarian assistance and investing in building national social protection systems

Climate readiness: capacity building and strengthening of governance and institutions, including:

- support for long-term social and political reforms to promote peace; identifying and engaging with multiple actors, even if they may be at odds with each other
- enhancing existing social media platforms for sharing knowledge internally and through South–South peer learning, so those most impacted can learn from each other
- debt servicing and write-offs
- support for developing disaster risk management, adaptation and mitigation and integrating them into medium – and long-term economic planning, budgeting, land use and urban planning, energy, water and other policies.

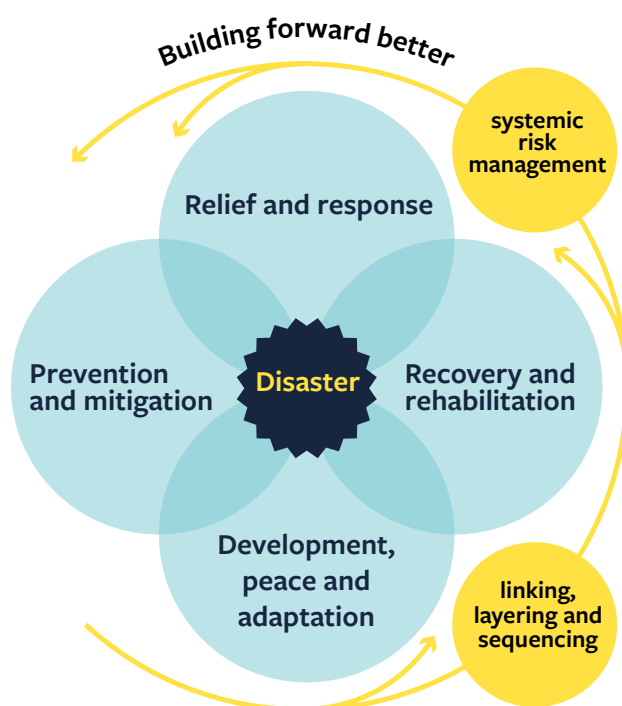
In this manner, Building Forward Better supports communities (and, where possible, governments) in FCAs in laying the foundation to transition to climate-resilient development (Figure 3).

Figure 3 Through better linked, layered, sequenced and risk-informed activities, actors working in FCAs can help countries Build Forward Better, reducing the frequency and severity of disasters and laying the foundations for climate-resilient development

Coping with crises



Climate risk management



Source: Opitz-Stapleton et al. (2023).

3 Good practice principles for Building Forward Better

Without addressing the causes and effects of fragility and conflict, and in the absence of state building and peacebuilding processes, the ability to support adaptation and resilience in FCAs is limited. Getting HDP, disaster and climate actors out of their silos to deliver on Building Forward Better is more easily said than done. However, this is not to suggest that there are no existing synergies between different actors nor lessons on ways of moving forward collaboratively and coherently for risk-informed layering, linking and sequencing of interventions.

There are a number of familiar good practice principles from the peacebuilding, development, humanitarian, natural hazards and disasters and climate change communities that are already applied to interventions in varying degrees.¹¹ They are worth reiterating here, as Building Forward Better will not be achieved without adhering to them. Other good practice principles may be important beyond these, but the six we consider essential are:

1. transparent and ongoing communication;
2. legitimacy and buy-in;
3. inclusivity and equity;
4. joint conflict-sensitivity and climate-risk analysis;
5. adaptive learning for responsive programming; and
6. scaling and embedding.

We also highlight some tools, resources and things to consider under each principle; these are by no means comprehensive or prescriptive, and should be used together.

Principle 1: Transparent and ongoing communication

Risk-informed layering, linking and sequencing of interventions over spatial and time scales can only be achieved through regular, transparent and ongoing communication. Such communication is essential to trust-building between intervention stakeholders – including individual, local and national beneficiaries – and other HDP, disaster risk management and climate actors. It helps to facilitate interventions’ legitimacy and buy-in across stakeholders. Effective and ongoing communication can foster joint conflict – and climate-risk analysis between HDP, disaster and

¹¹ See, for example, Willows and Connell, 2003; Lim et al., 2004; MacClune et al., 2013; IPCC, 2022; Silva-Villanueva et al., 2018; Opitz-Stapleton et al., 2019 or any of the resources listed in the tables under each principle.

climate actors, enhancing the sharing of fragility, conflict, vulnerability and risk information, and the effectiveness of interventions by actors that might not be particularly strong in conflict, climate or environmental risk assessment, or have the capacities to undertake them. Communication can also assist in integrating diverse risk perspectives, and finding appropriate entry points for addressing fragility, conflict and vulnerability – while supporting adaptive learning and responsive programming. Some key considerations, tools and resources for forging transparent and ongoing communication are highlighted in [Table 1](#).

Principle 2: Legitimacy and buy-in

In FCAs, where trust between communities and governments may be particularly low and power dynamics impact the effectiveness of interventions, it is crucial both to build the legitimacy of actors delivering interventions, and to strengthen buy-in among communities and other stakeholders.

Aligning HDP, disaster risk management and climate activities with country strategies and priorities is challenging in FCAs. Where the state is absent or has its legitimacy contested, there are additional challenges for such actors depending on their respective mandates. Often, the choice is not just a technical one, but a matter for negotiation between various political and strategic interests. Nevertheless, even in the most difficult environments, alignment (with local priorities, not necessarily defined by government) is still an essential principle. To disregard country policies and systems, however weak or fragmented, risks undermining the capacity and legitimacy of the state. Conversely, early progress on alignment can support states in re-establishing core functions and legitimacy.

Legitimacy and buy-in extend beyond empowering local and national stakeholders to lead in adaptation, mitigation, disaster risk management and ultimately transitions to climate-resilient development; this second principle also means avoiding the reinforcement or creation of structural or perceived inequalities experienced by socially, economically and politically marginalised groups as well as non-beneficiaries (including with other actors working in humanitarian aid, development, peacebuilding, disaster risk management and climate change). Legitimacy rests on individual perceptions, which are affected by objective and subjective factors that evolve over time; no programme, project or policy will achieve ‘total legitimacy’.

Key questions need to be asked that can be used to map intended stakeholders and their relationships to others within fragile and/or conflict-affected contexts ([Table 2](#)). These tools and associated decision metrics can assist in understanding power imbalances and determining who might gain or lose from the programme or action – necessary information for engaging and ongoing communication with a diverse array of stakeholders to secure legitimacy and maintain buy-in.

Table 1 Some considerations, tools and resources for communication

Considerations	Tools
Who are the key audiences or stakeholders with whom to engage? Why?	• Communication plans • Build common language around terms, goals
What are the appropriate formats for bringing together various stakeholders, taking into account cultural factors, levels of trust, and costs of participation (e.g. lost days of work and income)?	• Shared-learning dialogues • Focus groups
Are there preferred modes of communication by different stakeholders and/or are certain modes dictated by resources and conditions?	• Establish HDP, disaster, climate group • Participatory communication • Participatory communication Assessment
Who are the dedicated HDP, disaster and climate actors who will be the 'liaising face' to communities and (where possible) government? That is, who will be responsible for the communication process?	• Broad consensus building • Workshops
Is sufficient time being allocated for continued engagement and communication? Is there flexibility within the intervention to allow for more time?	Some resources Participatory communication: A practical guide (Tufte and Mefalopulos, 2009) Participatory approaches: A facilitator's guide (vso, 2004) Adaptation policy frameworks for climate change: Developing strategies, policies and measures (Lim et al., 2004) Routes to resilience: insights from BRACED final year (Silva-Villanueva et al., 2018) Risk-informed development: from crisis to resilience (Opitz-Stapleton et al., 2019) Climate adaptation: Risk, uncertainty and decision-making (Willows and Connell, 2003) Climate Resilience Framework: Training materials (MacClune et al., 2013) ACCC Resource Manual: Reflections on adaptation planning processes and experiences (Street and Opitz-Stapleton, 2013)
Which stakeholders play the strongest role in disseminating information? Which are trusted within the intended recipient community?	
What are the issues of most concern to different stakeholders – from recipients, government (where possible), to other HDP, disaster and climate actors? [<i>What is considered a 'risk' by some may not be a risk for others</i>]	
What is needed to develop common language and understanding around key concepts and terms like fragility, vulnerability, climate change and climate risk? Between which actors and stakeholders might such a common language be useful?	
How will the impacts of communication and engagement be monitored and adapted throughout the lifetime of the intervention?	
Is there the will and support within the parent organisation to foster long-term communication and engagement mechanisms with other HDP, disaster and climate actors within the FCAs?	

Table 2 Some considerations, tools and resources for securing legitimacy and buy-in with communities and governments in FCAS

Considerations	Tools
Who are the stakeholders targeted by the policy/ programme or action? Why these stakeholders? <i>[Grounds the programme/activity objectives]</i>	• Political economy (more complex and time-consuming) • Venn diagrams of stakeholders and their relationships (need to be updated as understanding of power dynamics increases) • Consultations and focus groups • Conflict analysis
What other stakeholders could it be necessary to engage (from community level upwards)? <i>[Establishes power dynamics that can disrupt intended outcomes, reduces the likelihood of inadvertently exacerbating negative power dynamics and leverages potentially beneficial relationships]</i>	
What stakeholders are aware of intervention objectives? How have their concerns and needs been incorporated in design, assessment and delivery? <i>[Enhances the legitimacy, responsiveness and adaptive learning of the programme/policy]</i>	Some resources Social Inclusion Toolkit (Hagerman, 2023) Impacts of social protection on social cohesion and reconciliation: Theories, experiences and case studies (Schjød, 2021) Windows of opportunity for risk-informed assistance: An anticipatory, early action, and disaster risk finance framework (Choularton and Montier, 2023) Guide to developing disaster recovery frameworks (GFDRR, 2015) Vulnerability Capacity Assessment Repository (IFRC and Global Disaster Preparedness Center, n.d.) Linking social protection and humanitarian assistance: a toolkit to support social cohesion in displacement settings (Commins et al., 2022)
What communication mechanisms are being used with which stakeholders? How frequently? Are these inclusive and appropriate? <i>[Maintains legitimacy and buy-in, fosters inclusivity and equity]</i>	
In what state/condition are relationships between local government/leaders and targeted communities? Is there enough trust to foster and leverage relationships so that local leadership can take a stronger role in working with the intervention delivery partner? In leading?	

In addition to mapping the relationships between intended stakeholders in fragile and/or conflict-affected contexts, it is critical to secure legitimacy and buy-in across other actors working in FCAS. Some initial considerations, tools and resources for securing legitimacy and buy-in from other HDR, disaster risk management and climate actors are suggested in [Table 3](#).

Table 3 Some considerations, tools and resources for securing legitimacy and buy-in with other intervention delivery actors

Considerations	Tools
Who are the other actors working within the intended project area (in humanitarian aid, development, peacebuilding, disaster risk management and climate change adaptation and mitigation)? Within the country? Have regular lines of communication and sharing of project aims and outcomes been established? <i>[Enhances coordination and reduces duplication/the potential for other actors to manipulate outcomes]</i> How are actors in the country jointly considering how to join up programming, when possible and appropriate, in order to deliver Building Forward Better? <i>[Enhances linkages between interventions of different actors]</i> Have these actors undertaken joint analysis and planning for delivery across the phases of conflict and climate risk management to ensure coherence and complementarity among all actors involved? <i>[Enhances coherent approaches across HDP, disaster risk management and climate work]</i> Have HDP, disaster risk management and climate actors identified which among them are better placed to deliver specific activities at various spatial and time scales, and determined how activities in different phases can be sequenced to build on each other? <i>[Enhances linking and layering of actions]</i> How have these actors collectively considered strategically coordinated geographical targeting, when appropriate? <i>[Enhances strategic coordination of interventions in different geographic areas]</i> What multiple solutions may need to be deployed in tandem to not only address short-term needs but also to support longer-term mitigation and adaptation? <i>[Supports long-term resilience in addition to immediate coping capacity]</i> How have activities been designed and delivered in a more complementary manner to respond earlier and more effectively to the dynamics of fragility, poverty and vulnerability? <i>[Supports transformational adaptation]</i> What are the concerns and implications raised by other HDP, disaster risk management and climate actors in the FCAS context that could impact on intervention objectives and outcomes?	• Consultations • Mapping projects • Establishing regular communication mechanisms • Joint funding proposals Some resources DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian–Development–Peace Nexus (OECD, 2023) Programming considerations for humanitarian–development–peace coherence: A note for USAID’s implementing partners (USAID, 2021) The climate and environment charter for humanitarian organizations (ICRC and IFRC, 2023) Integrating peacebuilding into humanitarian and development programming (Rogers et al., 2010) The humanitarian–development–peace nexus: What does it mean for multi-mandated organizations? (Fanning and Fullwood-Thomas, 2019) Triple nexus implementation and implications for durable solutions for internal displacement: On paper and in practice (Nguya and Siddiqui, 2021) Collective outcomes: Operationalizing the new way of working (OCHA, 2018)

Principle 3: Inclusivity and equity

Inclusivity and equity is about ensuring that people's ability to cope with and adapt to climate extremes and slow-onset climate shifts is not undermined, but rather enhanced. Inclusivity and equity are not only ethical imperatives but also sources of innovation. Each stakeholder group possesses unique agency, perspectives and risks; their exclusion from interventions is a missed opportunity in crafting more inclusive, holistic and durable solutions to address fragility, conflict and climate vulnerabilities.

Exploring the distinct roles that various stakeholder groups can assume in championing and supporting interventions should be a critical consideration in the layering, linking and sequencing of interventions. To achieve inclusivity and equity, projects must go beyond the participation of the most vulnerable and work towards addressing the root causes of their exclusion. Even smaller HDP, disaster risk management or climate projects should contribute in a small manner towards nudging structural changes in a society: changes that are needed to shift the existing balances of power that lead to inequality in the first place.

This good practice principle of inclusivity and equity also needs to extend between different actors working in FCAs. Current ways of working, which are siloed due to different mandates, capacities and funding sources, can foster exclusion between such actors. Drawing on champions willing to engage across silos, as well as more frequent engagement and communication – sharing of information, joint risk assessment and presenting coherent messaging when engaging with communities and government – can build equity and more inclusivity between them.

Table 4 outlines some questions that can be asked to assess programme design, delivery and linking/layering with other programmes for their inclusivity and equity, as well as links to some resources.

Table 4 Some considerations, tools and resources for inclusivity and equity

Considerations	Tools
Who is being included and excluded? On the basis of what data or rationale? <i>[Provides another check on programme implications for local power dynamics]</i>	• Equity Impact Assessments or Reviews • Venn diagrams of stakeholders and their relationships
What are the potential positive and negative impacts for individuals, households, and communities within an area? And what could impact fragility dynamics more widely – up to the national scale? <i>[Grounds the programme/activity objectives and targets]</i>	• Consultations and focus groups • Environmental monitoring • Inclusive development analysis • Vulnerability and capacity assessments • Fragility assessments
Who else might be inadvertently helped or harmed by the programme? There are always trade-offs. <i>[Establishes power dynamics that can disrupt intended outcomes, reduces the likelihood of inadvertently exacerbating negative power dynamics and leverages potentially beneficial relationships]</i>	Some resources
What are the environmental and natural resource implications of the programme at the river basin or appropriate ecological scale? What risks or opportunities do such implications create for different groups? <i>[Monitors natural resource bases and livelihood dependencies]</i>	Social Inclusion Toolkit (Hagerman, 2023) Impacts of social protection on social cohesion and reconciliation: Theories, experiences and case studies (Schjød, 2021) 10 Commandments for Preventative Diplomacy (EIP, 2020a) Gender and Peacemaking Strategy (EIP, 2020b)
Are interventions culturally, socially, environmentally and politically acceptable? <i>[Ties back in with legitimacy and buy-in, sensitively leveraging local knowledge and leadership, monitoring and addressing trade-offs in programmes]</i>	Suggested approaches for integrating inclusive development across the program cycle and in mission operations (Cotton et al., 2018) Measuring fragility: Indicators and methods for rating state performance (USAID, 2005)
What other existing interventions are working to address inclusivity and equity, including through vulnerability reduction? <i>[Linking and layering, learning]</i>	Inclusive Transitions Framework (Kaplan and Freeman, 2015)
What are the other interventions' experiences of working to become culturally, social and politically acceptable? Could they inform the planned intervention? <i>[Linking and layering, learning]</i>	Enhanced Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (IFRC and British Red Cross, 2018) A framework for analyzing resilience in fragile and conflict-affected situations (Bujones et al., 2013) Linking social protection and humanitarian assistance: a toolkit to support social cohesion in displacement settings (Commins et al., 2022)

Principle 4: Joint conflict sensitivity and climate risk analysis

Ensuring that programmes and interventions are ‘risk-informed’ – in relation to climate and conflict risks – requires screening for fragility, conflict, and vulnerability dynamics and overlaying this with the appropriate climate change and environmental information.

Risk screening helps to protect expected intervention outcomes from conflict and climate risks and reduces the risk that the intervention(s) will actually create maladaptation and worsen vulnerability, marginalisation or exposure. This requires a frank assessment of drivers of vulnerability and exposure to climate extremes and slow-onset shifts. In FCAs, many disasters – food insecurity, malnutrition, loss of livelihoods and asset destruction and displacement – may be triggered by climate hazards but are occurring because of chronically high vulnerabilities at an individual, household and community level that are driven by fragility.

Understanding the linked drivers of fragility, conflict and climate vulnerability is also an important step in identifying entry points for collaborative, linked, layered and sequenced HDP, disaster risk management or climate programmes and actions. This is where drawing on the specific expertise and mandates of each is important, using these coherently to target specific drivers of fragility, conflict and vulnerability.

Climate risk screening requires the combining of fragility, vulnerability and exposure information with climate change and environmental information. Which types of climate information, climate projections, and environmental information are needed for the climate risk screen depends on the scale (individual, household, community, city or national government), location (where in the country) and the likely lifetime of the impacts of the intervention – bearing in mind that considering climate change projections for the 2040s to 2100 is particularly important with any type of infrastructure (e.g. water, sanitation and energy), nature-based solution, land use or urban planning intervention (Table 5).

In FCAs, interventions also need to screen for latent or manifest conflict dynamics such as perceptions of injustice, power imbalances, political exclusion and marginalisation that create risks and impact activities even if those activities are not specifically peacebuilding interventions. It is important to stress that institutions may have their own biases, particularly in FCAs where political exclusion can be a cause and a consequence of entrenched conflicts. It is therefore crucial to implement politically aware approaches that address conflicting preferences at the local or national level, or across these. Although HDP actors generally adhere with ‘do no harm’ principles, it is important to consider how interventions, singly and together, could exacerbate power imbalances and to seek to avoid pitting groups against each other.

Table 5 Some considerations, tools and resources for climate risks evaluation

Considerations	Tools
What is the expected duration of the intervention versus how long the intervention will actually continue to have an impact (i.e. its actual sustainability)? For example, a ‘climate-smart agriculture’ intervention might be supported for five years but could have impacts many years beyond project end. What are the available sources of climate, ecosystem and natural resource information for the intervention area? What is known about their validity and reputability (e.g. do they come from reliable records compiled by hydrometeorological institutions?) Have climate scientists been consulted to ensure that the information is being analysed and interpreted correctly? What kinds of climate variables – e.g. minimum and maximum temperatures, precipitation, etc. – currently cause the most impacts to people, their livelihoods and assets, and the ecosystems on which they depend? <i>[Can be incorporated in fragility, vulnerability and conflict assessment]</i> How do these climate variables affect different communities within and around the programme area? <i>[Can be incorporated in fragility, vulnerability and conflict assessment]</i> How might these climate variables shift in the next five years, the next 10–20 years, or beyond 20 years due to climate change? What implications do these shifts over different time horizons have for individual and layered interventions? For their sequencing? <i>[Requires completing a fragility, vulnerability and conflict assessment first]</i> How might these shifts impact programme outcomes?	• Risk screening: consultation exercises; cross-impacts analysis; climate change scenarios • Qualitative, semi-quantitative and quantitative climate risk assessments: climate change scenarios; downscaling; scenarios analysis; cross-impacts analysis Some resources Climate risk screening & management tools (USAID, 2017) A guide to mainstreaming disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation (IFRC, 2013) Climate Risk Informed Decision Analysis (CRIDA) (Mendoza et al., 2018) The Nature Navigator: A handbook for disaster management practitioners (Bolte and Ikkala Nyman, 2022) Technical guidance on comprehensive risk assessment and planning in the context of climate change (UNDRR, 2022) Guide to climate-smart programmes and operations (IFRC, 2023) Compendium of good practices for greener humanitarian response (DG-ECHO, 2021) Climate and Disaster Risk Screening Tools (World Bank, n.d.)

Conflict-risk screening also seeks to identify elements of the political economy that can be positively affected by HRP, disaster risk management and climate adaptation actions given their mandates, and deliberately leverages these – recognising that if one implementer cannot make use of the opportunity, others who can are aware, informed and prepared to act. The key is to ensure that approaches are not siloed and that they mutually foster or complement efforts to move from crisis risk management to Building Forward Better. Types of questions to consider, and some tools for conflict-risk screening, are listed in **Table 6**.

Table 6 Some considerations, tools and resources for understanding conflict risks

Considerations	Tools
What existing sources of information on conflict risks are held by peacebuilding, development or other actors, that can be leveraged and built up to inform interventions?	• Conflict Wheels • Conflict Trees • Conflict actor mapping
Is the intervention prioritising (or perceived to be prioritising) a particular vulnerable group (e.g. based on ethnic, livelihood, urban, age or gender criteria) over others? And if so, what are the underlying reasons?	• Conflict Perspective Analysis • Conflict-related development analysis • Conflict timelines
Has the justification for targeting specific populations been effectively communicated with multiple stakeholders to reduce perceptions of bias that could fuel grievances and potential conflict between groups and communities?	• Inclusive political economy analysis • Context assessment
When identifying the target population, how has fragility driven local vulnerabilities?	Some resources Guide to: Conflict Analysis (UNICEF, 2016) Conflict Analysis Tools (SDC, 2012) Conflict analysis: topic guide (Herbert, 2017)
Are there other programmes targeting the same individuals, households, communities, localities or geographic areas that could be inflaming grievances over the short and long term?	Conducting a conflict and development analysis tool (UNSDG, 2016) Conflict sensitivity, peacebuilding and sustaining peace (UNSDG, 2022)
How is the project likely to be politicised by actors involved in the conflict?	Global Conflict Sensitivity Community Hub (csc-Hub, n.d.)
What are the state, non-state or external armed groups that could politically or economically benefit or lose from the interventions over the short and long term?	CTP in challenging contexts: Case study on CTP and risks in northern Mali (CALP Network, 2018) Conflict sensitivity tools and guidance (UK Government, 2016)
What are the potential impacts of the project – over the short and long term – on recruitment for state, non-state, or external politically organised armed groups?	Measuring fragility: Indicators and methods for rating state performance (USAID, 2005)
How are the peace dividends of the intervention being defined? What metrics will measure these and track outcomes beyond the end of the intervention?	A framework for analyzing resilience in fragile and conflict-affected situations (Bujones et al., 2013) Inclusive Transitions Framework (Kaplan and Freeman, 2015) Linking social protection and humanitarian assistance: a toolkit to support social cohesion in displacement settings (Commins et al., 2022)

Principle 5: Adaptive learning for responsive programming

The future is uncertain; interventions need to be flexible and responsive to shifting contexts. Adaptive learning through ongoing monitoring and evaluation can help interventions to be more responsive to changing conditions.

In highly unstable contexts policy priorities may change, meaning previous plans and priorities are abandoned. Interventions delivered without considerations of funding cycles, environmental changes to the landscape, or other economic targets and deadlines may miss or even damage opportunities and objectives. Additionally, new opportunities and risks will emerge, even in FCAs, as governance evolves and populations grow and change. For instance, people are shifting and diversifying their livelihoods; they are also more mobile and have greater access to information than ever before. At the same time, in contexts of protracted conflicts, criminality and the presence of armed actors may modify economic opportunities and have peace and stability implications. Interventions must monitor trends and shifts underway (learning) and anticipate and respond to changing conditions.

Responsive and adaptive learning entails a critical monitoring of how well interventions and collaborative processes are linking, layering and sequencing to support Building Forward Better, and critical reflection about what course corrections may be warranted. It also creates the opportunity to re-assess how socioeconomic, demographic, governance and politics conditions are shifting in a particular context and revisiting which assumptions and approaches are still valid, still legitimate and still consciously accounting for the appropriate climatic and conflict risks.

There need to be clearly defined metrics and monitoring and evaluation to track the effectiveness of the intervention alone and its effectiveness in layering, linking and sequencing with others. Ongoing monitoring is also needed to check that individual and suites of linked and layered programmes are not worsening inequalities, fuelling tensions, contributing to environmental degradation or locking people into maladaptation.

The crux of this principle is that for interventions and programmes to be effective, adaptive learning and responsive programming in dynamic contexts are not optional. Some key considerations, tools and resources for supporting adaptive learning and responsive programming are outlined in [Table 7](#).

Table 7 Some considerations, tools and resources for adaptive learning and responsive programming

Considerations	Tools
What are the processes and metrics for monitoring whether interventions are robust, flexible, and able to evolve with changing needs and priorities? To support long-term goals of peace, stability and country transitions to climate-resilient development? What are the resources and capacities required to actually deliver objectives and respond to changing conditions and needs? How can coordination between HDP, disaster risk management and climate interventions be used to mutually reduce resource and capacity needs around delivery? Can interventions respond flexibly to unanticipated changes, new outbreaks of conflict or instability or disasters as they occur? Do they include low-regret options that should be undertaken anyway? Do they incorporate uncertainty and safety margins? Are they flexible and mindful of actions by others? Is the intervention demonstrably reducing risks for the intended recipients (people, sectors and/or infrastructure) – that is, are there fewer injuries and less loss of lives, livelihoods and assets during and post climate hazards in comparison to past events? If not, or if only weakly, what lessons are there for modifying and adjusting the intervention? How can other HDP, disaster risk management and climate interventions be linked to extend the useful lifetime and impact of the planned intervention, so that it can support efforts toward multi-decadal stabilisation and risk reduction?	• Theory of action and change (map project's planning and expected changes) • Scenario planning (identify potential changes) • Cost-effectiveness analysis • Multi-criteria analysis Some resources Supporting adaptive management. Monitoring and evaluation tools and approaches (Pasanen and Barnett, 2019) Measuring and monitoring adaptive learning: A landscape review (LaFond and Haley, 2022) Monitoring, evaluation and learning for climate risk management (Noltze et al., 2021) Toolkit: Adaptive learning in projects and programs (USAID and Momentum, 2021) Putting learning at the centre: Adaptive development programming in practice (Valters et al., 2016) Peacebuilding design, monitoring and evaluation: A training package for participants and trainers at intermediate to advanced levels (Ernstorfer and Barnard-Webster, 2019) LearnAdapt: a synthesis of our work on adaptive programming with DFID/FCDO (2017–2020) (Laws et al., 2021)

Principle 6: Scaling and embedding

This sixth principle is about embedding interventions into existing country priorities and feeding inputs into local policy development and planning processes, as well as promoting multi-stakeholder engagement and building strong relationships with communities. Building Forward Better is particularly closely intertwined with peacebuilding and development choices and actions

that cover a variety of sectors and decision-making at the socioeconomic and political levels. Interventions delivered in isolation, without considering cross-sectoral effects and linkages, could also lead to missed opportunities and maladaptation.

Ongoing engagement acts to support local leadership and ownership and promote uptake beyond the lifetime of a project. To strengthen people's resilience and help influence positive transformation to climate-resilient development, change is required at all levels – from household, community and civil society levels up to the level of government. This requires that interventions link, layer and sequence their implementation efforts across spatial and time scales, such as by ensuring efforts are integrated into ongoing peacebuilding and government processes (Table 8). Bottom-up approaches from the project level can foster change, but their scope is limited without national and regional engagement from the top down – which, when it is included, can not only extend the scope of change but also promote the sustainability of interventions beyond the lifetime of a project.

Table 8 Some considerations, tools and resources for scaling and embedding programmes

Considerations	Tools
What actions, legislation, regulatory framework, incentives, investments, externalities, etc. are needed as prerequisites to implementation? Where are the gaps?	Political economy
Are interventions nested within domestic socioeconomic development pathways and not just a 'bolt-on'?	Policy analysis (international, national, and subnational)
What is the appetite or willingness among donors to extend interventions' multiple phases?	Consultations
How can coordination between HDP, disaster risk management and climate adaptation interventions be used to jointly reduce resource and capacity needs around delivery?	Country risk management platforms
Which actors – HDP, disaster risk management and climate – are better placed to continue multi-year to multi-decadal engagement and actions with government and communities to support stabilisation and development?	Some resources Framing note: Scaling up development programmes (UNDP, 2013) Scaling up integrated local development innovations (UNDP, 2011) Strategies to scale up social programs: pathways, partnerships and fidelity (Larson et al., 2017)
Which HDP, disaster risk management and climate actors have stronger working relationships with particular communities or government, and can help other actors strengthen their own working relationships?	Scaling climate services to enable effective adaptation action (Hansen et al., 2019) Guide to developing disaster recovery frameworks (GFDRR, 2015) Inclusive Transitions Framework (Kaplan and Freeman, 2015)

Good practice principles in application

Application of the aforementioned good practice principles can be found in a growing number of interventions – singly and together – in FCAs. Instances of where HDP, disaster risk management and climate actors have linked and layered interventions are still few, but are growing, and indicate an increasing recognition of the importance of breaking silos to Build Forward Better. Some interventions are highlighted in this section.

Box 2 Conflict-sensitive legitimacy to support recovery and relief in Pakistan

Good practice principles: conflict risk assessment, adaptive learning and responsive programming, legitimacy and buy-in, embedding

One approach to supporting Building Forward Better has been the use of conflict-sensitive inclusivity measures to post-disaster recovery and relief operations. Studies of the post-2010 flooding in Pakistan demonstrated the importance of designing interventions based on a systematic analysis of conflict dynamics and linking this analysis to the programme cycle of interventions, and including monitoring, evaluation and adjustment activities based on feedback received.

Establishing local–international partnerships were crucial in preventing aid distribution from being used to advance political agendas in the emergency response phase. An ongoing focus on the most vulnerable sectors of the population was then maintained through the reconstruction phase to establish and involve locally owned cooperatives, introduce cash-for-work and provide vocational training to support alternative livelihoods.

Source: Arai (2012).

Box 3 Disaster risk management, development and natural resource management interventions in Niger

Good practice principles: communication, legitimacy and buy-in, adaptive learning and responsive programming, scaling and embedding

The Scaling-Up Resilience to Climate Extremes for over 1 Million People in the Niger River Basin of Niger and Mali (SUR1M) project linked and layered disaster risk management, development and natural resource management interventions. SUR1M was implemented across 18 sites in Mali and Niger through the Building Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Extremes and Disasters (BRACED) programme from 2015 to 2019.

Under the rubric of disaster risk management, the project took a multipronged approach: co-developing community-managed disaster risk reduction and early warning groups, participatory radio campaigns and performance-based grants for gender-responsive disaster risk reduction planning. Alongside disaster risk management interventions, the project contributed to socioeconomic development by increasing women's access to finance through establishing Savings and Internal Lending Communities and linking up with microfinance institutions.

The impacts of the project were monitored through frequent contextual analyses, and supported responsive programming for developing project activities that focused on building intercommunity relations and increasing collaboration between communities and authorities. The SUR1M experience demonstrated that intervention design and delivery in FCAs needs to be strongly localised, including through the engagement of local residents and resources.

Source: Béné et al. (2018).

Box 4 Co-creation of weather services for pastoral disaster risk management

Good practice principles: climate risk screening, scaling and embedding, adaptive learning, communication

Launched in 2012 across the Afar, Oromia, and Somali regions, Pastoralist Areas Resilience Improvement and Market Expansion (PRIME) was a five-year multiagency programme that aimed to link development and climate adaptation. Through linking, PRIME aimed to support pastoralists by expanding markets, increasing the incomes of 250,000 households, enhancing natural resource management to support adaptation and improving nutrition.

Through the goal of enhancing natural resource management, one intervention supported by Mercy Corps and CARE focused on finding ways for communities to access seasonal weather information and fostered better cooperation, communication, and learning between the Ethiopian government and the served communities through Participatory Scenario Planning (PSP). At the core of such approaches was the establishment of inclusive and respectful forums where indigenous and scientific knowledge, including seasonal weather forecasts, could be shared and integrated.

This collaborative environment allowed stakeholders – including households, private sector entities and NGOs – to collectively analyse and interpret weather information. It facilitated the development of contingency plans to assist households, communities, and businesses in managing risks to pastoral livelihoods and markets, and seasonal weather uncertainty. In 2018, during a consultative workshop involving 128 PSP members in Year 6 of its implementation, participants reached a consensus on the integration of PSP into government annual planning.

Source: Craft (2019).

Box 5 Understanding conflict risks: Al-Shabaab and humanitarian and development programming

Good practice principles: conflict risk screening, legitimacy and buy-in

Humanitarian and development programmes in areas within the sphere of influence of non-state armed groups face the risk of being undermined and/or co-opted by such groups. The activities of the armed group Al-Shabaab in Somalia serve as a noteworthy illustration.

Following the 2011 famine that claimed over 250,000 lives, Al-Shabaab carried out systematic intimidation and taxation of humanitarian actors. They created a Humanitarian Coordination Office responsible for monitoring, regulating, registering and ‘taxing’ aid agencies operating in Al-Shabaab territory. This left humanitarian and development actors with a very delicate dilemma when it came to helping famine-stricken populations: either pay Al-Shabaab’s compulsory taxes, or risk being expelled and/or attacked by the armed group.

Al-Shabaab also uses the delivery of basic services to boost its legitimacy among the civilian population, while seeking to undermine the role of the government and aid delivery partners. Since 2011, Somalia has experienced several multi-year droughts. Al-Shabaab obstructed aid in areas under its control and set up drought committees to distribute food aid in several regions. By positioning itself as a relief provider, the distinction between Al-Shabaab’s actions and humanitarian effort was blurred for aid recipients.

Having knowledge of how and why a group exerts influence in a certain way can provide an indication of the level of control a group has and inform conflict risks to programming. The presence of such groups requires additional engagement strategies with communities within spheres of influence, working with such communities to secure legitimacy and buy-in and to co-develop ways of counteracting the influence of non-state armed groups.

Source: Mubarak and Jackson (2023); Jackson and Aynte (2013).

Box 6 Adjusting social protection design and delivery to effectively include displaced populations

Good practice principles: communication, inclusivity and equity, adaptive learning for responsive programming, scaling and embedding

Displaced populations (IDPs, refugees, asylum seekers, and other migrants) have complex needs that differ from those of the host population, even though in most low- and middle-income contexts often large segments of the host population can also lack access to effective assistance. Research has shown that displaced populations' needs will often continue to be context-specific in the long term, hence it is necessary to adapt programme design and delivery to their particular situation.

Adjustment of not only social protection design but also delivery to displaced populations proved to be one of the key factors ensuring assistance is effective. Having examined several social protection and humanitarian assistance programmes across the three countries included in the research and their transfer mechanisms, it was found that a) donors, governments, and practitioners should pay attention to the barriers preventing displaced populations from fully accessing social protection, and strive to remove those barriers, b) before employing social protection systems, they should verify whether the systems have been appropriately modified at each stage of delivery to better respond to the displaced populations' needs, and c) the successful adaptation of delivery systems is the result of a coordinated effort of 'legal frameworks, political will, financial resources, capacity, and coordination'.

Inclusion of displaced populations in national social protection systems can be hindered by many barriers, including technical obstacles, but also by political will. For example, social cohesion is considered by the Tanzanian government as conducive to refugees' staying in the host country – hence governments appear to deliberately choose to exclude displaced populations from programmes or impose restrictions on them. Yet, this strategy has so far just further isolated the displaced. On the contrary, provision of support to displaced populations rarely leads to tensions between host and displaced communities. Where tensions do exist, they are rarely caused by the assistance itself, rather being typically a symptom of existing social discontent within the host community. This dissatisfaction tends to be related to perceived institutional neglect of the host population's needs; therefore, careful and coherent communication strategies can alleviate any potential tensions.

Sources: Hagen-Zanker et al. (2022); Lowe et al. (2022); Commins et al. (2022); Sturridge (2023).

Box 7 Humanitarian disaster preparedness and mitigation through early action

Good practice principles: climate risk screening, adaptive learning and responsive programming, legitimacy and buy-in among humanitarian and development actors

Forecast-based early action (FbA) and related forecast-based financing (FbF) refer to predetermined early actions taken to prevent a crisis when forecasts indicate the likelihood of particular climate hazards (or other events). Such early actions include the prepositioning of food and cash aid, medicines and rebuilding materials, as well as the delivery of such assistance even before the hazard occurs. There is growing interest in anticipatory approaches as they can reduce losses and suffering, while also potentially saving money by reducing humanitarian response costs.

In one pilot example in Bangladesh supported by the Red Cross Red Crescent, cash transfers were made to pre-selected vulnerable households when a forecast predicted flooding above a danger level. The cash transfers helped people to get through crisis periods, protect assets and avoid negative coping strategies and deepening poverty. In Bangladesh, evidence for forecast-based cash transfers showed that flood-affected households were better able to avoid borrowing money at high rates of interest after the event; borrowing that had led to vicious cycles of poverty following similar flood events in the past.

While resourcing remains a challenge, recent early-action approaches have placed more emphasis on decision-making protocols, so different sets of actors know what to do on the basis of a forecast threshold, such as a flood of a certain predicted height. At the same time, cost-benefit analysis helped to provide a supportive evidence base demonstrating that this sort of investment was more cost-effective than conventional post-event humanitarian efforts.

Source: Tanner et al. (2019); Wilkinson et al. (2018); Wagner and Jaime (2020).

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