



# Contributing to sustaining peace

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Efforts to ensure sustainable peace can help to support access to safe, reliable and affordable energy in the long term. Energy access in turn can help to reduce conflict due to specific food security and livelihood benefits, such as the ability to safely cook food and carry out income-generating activities. An in-depth analysis of context-specific conflict drivers is a necessary first step in working towards sustainable peace.

## Key issues

Conflict is a complex and multi-dimensional issue. It can significantly affect energy access for both local and displaced populations in protracted crises. On the one hand, individuals or groups of people require access to energy in order to address their basic cooking and livelihood needs. When this access is imperiled, it may become a cause or amplifier for conflict. On the other hand, in many cases conflict and associated forced displacement will put pressure on natural resources, affecting access to energy resources.

### The impact of displacement on host communities

Kenya has the largest refugee population in Africa. Conflict and tension are highly characteristic of the main refugee-hosting areas. The **Dadaab refugee camp** in Garissa County hosts approximately 250 000 refugees, who predominantly share the same ethnicity with the local population. However, the relationship between host and refugee communities is very tense. The large number of refugees, the congested conditions in the camp, the unclear boundaries of the settlements makes the movement of refugees very difficult to manage. As a result, refugees frequently use the surrounding environment to collect fuelwood and other natural resources to cover basic needs. This is an important conflict trigger.

The relationship between conflict and energy access is highly context-specific. Cultural practices, demographic patterns, environmental management mechanisms, governance capacity and political and economic considerations all play a significant role. Ongoing processes of urbanization, for example, are transforming traditional biomass products into market commodities such as charcoal, in some cases resulting in increased competition over natural resources. Furthermore, climate change, in the form of more

frequent droughts and erratic rainfall, leads to increased pressure on already scarce natural resources, especially in forced displacement settings. Potential conflict stressors include increasing population pressure, easy access to small arms, inter-ethnic violence, political marginalization, election violence and conflicting territorial claims. A number of important dimensions, particularly relevant in protracted crises include:

- **Ethnicity:** When analyzing conflict and energy access, it is important to take ethnicity into account. The ethnic composition of a certain area can be very diverse. Powerful and dominant ethnic groups are often in control of areas with more resources, leaving marginal areas by less dominant ethnic groups (FAO, 2015). In the drylands of Kenya, for example, more than 40 ethnic groups can be discerned.
- **Displacement:** Access to and control over natural resources is an important issue in the surroundings of refugee camps. Because of the location of many camps in environmentally fragile areas, with scarce availability of natural resources, tensions between different social groups is a frequent challenge. For example, charcoal producers may compete with local communities for access to trees which are used by the communities for the production of livestock fodder and shade for animals (USAID, 2010).
- **Pastoralism:** Pastoralism entails a highly mobile way of living, following rain patterns and good grazing grounds for livestock production. This takes pastoralists into territories of neighboring communities and across farmland. If and when existing land use arrangements are not respected, conflicts may arise. Cattle raiding across ethnic and administrative boundaries, historically a seasonal activity of restocking and linked to control over grazing resources, is becoming increasingly violent due to the proliferation of small arms and weapons. Cattle raiding has acquired a commercial dimension in recent years, as a source of income in the context of declining economic prospects.

# Technical considerations

A **SAFE approach must be conflict-sensitive**. FAO has extensive experience in conflict prevention, management, mitigation and recovery. The Organization has worked 'on' conflicts by analyzing risks and drivers, 'in' conflicts to save lives and support livelihoods and 'through' conflicts to advance sustainable development. Efforts to help prevent conflicts over energy resources should be supported. Careful attention should be paid to potential conflict stressors in order to address these in SAFE programmes, e.g. by building it into monitoring and evaluation systems. When conflicts do erupt, local governments and conflict-affected communities face enormous challenges in the aftermath. Human and financial resources are scarce, the capacity to deliver services is very weak and society may be highly divided. Effective, inclusive and sustainable local governance is therefore crucial to establish a lasting stability and peace. Being aware of and understanding the risk of tension and conflict over natural resources, such as fuelwood, is key to ensuring reliable and safe access to energy. Technical considerations include:

- Identification and support of programmes that help prevent and mitigate conflict, with attention to efforts aimed at building or restoring confidence and trust
- Establishment of mechanisms such as Conflict Early Warning and Response Networks (CEWARN) which take into account issues related to energy access
- Inclusion of measurements of perceptions of stability, security and social cohesion in natural resource management and energy access projects and programmes
- Development of tools which help to prevent energy-related violence at local level
- Creation of an enabling environment for inter-communal dialogue and meetings, through support and establishment of initiatives such as Joint Community Peace Committees and Dimitra Clubs

- Capacity building and institutional strengthening of local governments in order to work towards sustainable peace in the specific context of energy access and environment

## Charcoal trade and production

In **Eastern Congo**, the city of Goma hosts tens of thousands of IDPs, who are particularly dependent on wood energy. Around 90 percent of the wood supply comes from the Virunga National Park. A very profitable, but illicit, charcoal market has developed, with a considerable amount of resources coming from the illegal felling of trees. This charcoal trade is partly a by product of the violence in the region and the lack of an effective environmental governance and enforcement capacity. In the absence of legal authorities, "conflict entrepreneurs" seek to increase their power through active participation in these violent conflicts, gaining significant financial benefits.

**Contextualization** is a very important element in these technical considerations. The specific political, economic, social, cultural and historical context of a country will provide unique insights into conflicts over energy access in certain areas. To ensure an in-depth and accurate analysis of conflict drivers and windows of opportunity for conflict mitigation, all of these factors should be taken into account. Since conflicts often have a long historical background, achieving sustainable peace is a long-term process. Several decades may be needed to overcome pervasive and enduring mistrust. This makes collective action to address challenges of energy access very difficult. Furthermore, restoring confidence and building trust are processes which need to come from within. Hence, starting from the grassroots level is important. However, international actors can provide external support and incentives and help to reduce external



*Conflicts over the management of natural resources (land, fodder, water and energy) can arise between displaced and host communities and marginalized groups*





Community and civil society leaders could help ease tensions related to natural resource management (land, fodder, water and energy).

stresses. Conflict issues should feature prominently in energy assessments. The following are examples of questions that can be included in assessment methodologies (USAID, 2010):

- Is the main source of energy, e.g. fuelwood, subject to access limitations?
- Were there constraints or disruptions to energy access in the past?
- Do patterns of unequal energy access exist?
- Have there been periods of violence related to energy access?
- Has limited access to energy led to involuntary migration?
- What are the coping mechanisms employed by populations in response to unreliable and/or unaffordable energy access?
- How is access to energy structured and regulated at the community level?
- Does the (local-regional-national) government play a strong role in determining energy access?
- Is there a perception of corruption concerning energy access?
- Are mechanisms for conflict management in place?

## Policy recommendations

**Policies which focus on conflict management and sustainable peace** should include energy access concerns, with particular attention paid to the household energy needs of vulnerable populations in protracted crises. Similarly, energy policies should include issues pertaining to the risk of conflict.

- **Conflict management in energy policies:** In the context of energy access, initiatives such as CEWARN should be promoted in order to prevent attacks and provide rapid response actions in case of conflicts over energy. Support should also be provided to local and inter-communal conflict-resolution institutions. A conflict-sensitive approach should be incorporated in energy access mechanisms such as energy-related initiatives in the field of Disaster Risk Reduction.
- **Sustainable peace in energy policies:** People require a secure environment in which to move around. Local initiatives, particularly those with women as central actors in reconciliation

and confidence-building activities, are instrumental in this endeavor. The SAFE approach aligns itself with the Principle 9 of the Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises of the Committee on World Food Security (FFA-CFS), namely contributing to sustainable peace through food security and nutrition (CFS, 2015).

- **Social cohesion in energy policies:** Social cohesion is an important principle for sustainable peace. It refers to “a society where people are protected against life risks, trust their neighbors and the institutions of the state and can work towards a better future for themselves and their families” (UNDESA, 2012). It is the glue that holds society together and is built around three key values, namely social inclusion, social capital and social mobility. In strengthening access to energy to address questions of food insecurity and malnutrition, sufficient attention should be paid to the strengthening of social cohesion and trust.

# Tools/references/further resources

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