

LESSON 9:

APPLY CONFLICT-SENSITIVE AND PEACE-POSITIVE APPROACHES

Drought responses must be conflict-sensitive and support peace-building efforts where possible.

Understanding how drought interacts with insecurity, competition over natural resources and governance systems is essential to avoid exacerbating tensions and to promote stability and cooperation among communities affected by drought. Conflicts normally emerge because of many convergent reasons – for example, heightened competition for scarce natural resources (particularly pasture and water) in fragile, already conflict-affected settings – which drought and extreme heat can exacerbate. Conflict-sensitive approaches are vital to ensure humanitarian and resilience programmes do not unintentionally reinforce inequalities or fuel instability. In some cases, the need for greater community collaboration in the face of a shared drought and its impacts can even improve community cohesion.

Community ownership and participation are essential for success in insecure contexts, where local trust and accountability can protect projects from corruption and manipulation. Livestock and livelihood interventions should be carefully designed to avoid creating incentives for theft, worsening tensions or consolidating patterns of exclusion. Understanding how power relations, social networks and access systems shape who benefits from aid is critical for equitable and safe delivery.

Number of documents contributing to the lessons: 6

Average evidence scores of all documents contributing to the lessons: 3.5

Median evidence strength of documents contributing to the lessons: 70%

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Humanitarian and development actors should integrate conflict analysis into drought assessments, programme design and monitoring, recognising how drought interacts with existing tensions, power relations and governance dynamics.
- Humanitarian actors should ensure that targeting, resource allocation and delivery mechanisms are transparent and equitable to reduce the risk of exacerbating grievances or patterns of exclusion.
- Humanitarian, development and peace actors should strengthen coordination and information-sharing in drought-affected, conflict-prone contexts to support coherent and complementary responses.
- Humanitarian actors should support inclusive decision-making and community-engagement processes that help mitigate tensions and strengthen social cohesion during drought response.
- Humanitarian and development actors should invest in shared or collective assets, such as water infrastructure or natural resource management systems, where evidence suggests these can reduce competition and conflict risks.
- Humanitarian actors should regularly review and adapt programmes based on evolving conflict dynamics and feedback from communities affected by drought.