

Localising Climate Security Risk Assessment

An Inception Case-Study from
the Kaabong District of Uganda



A Network of People
Building Peace

CECORE

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The Center for Conflict Resolution (CECORE) is implementing a pilot project on localising climate security risk assessment in Uganda. This project is in partnership with the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflicts (GPPAC) and received financial support from UNDP. The assessment is based on a Guidance Note¹ – a practical step-by-step guide for the localisation of integrated climate security risk assessment anchored in the conceptual framework and toolkit developed by the UN Climate and Security Mechanism (CSM)².

The pilot of localising climate security risk assessment focused on the Kaabong district of the Karamoja region in North Eastern Uganda. The Kaabong district is semi-arid and characterised by dry spells, fights over water and pasture, and a culture of armed cattle rustling within and across the border with neighbouring pastoral communities of Kenya and South Sudan – a context that demonstrates a strong nexus between climate change and violent conflict.

This inception report outlines the process of the development of a localised climate security risk assessment methodology. It draws lessons learned from this process for consideration by relevant climate and security experts.

¹ The public version of the Guidance Note will be available in January 2023 at: <https://www.gppac.net/what-we-do/climate-security-and-emerging-threats>.

² The conceptual framework and toolkit developed by the UN Climate and Security Mechanism (CSM) can be found at: <https://dppa.un.org/en/climate-security-mechanism-toolbox-conceptual-approach>.

Developing Localised Climate Security Risk Assessment

During two inception workshops, the following five steps were undertaken by a total of 58 community participants from different backgrounds to develop a localised climate security risk assessment methodology:

Step 1

Understanding the link between climate and security

The starting point in developing climate security risk assessment is raising the community's conceptual knowledge and awareness of the linkage between climate and security. This provides a foundation for the community members to be receptive to the integration of climate security in their work to prevent conflict and build peace.

Understanding the challenges to peace should start with a reflection on what peace looks like at the community level. The participants started the discussion with the question: 'What do you like the most about Kaabong?' Most participants responded with references to Kaabong's natural landscape, animals, flowers, and air quality, among others. This reflection also serves as a reminder of the importance of continued resilient climate action in Kaabong.

Further, the participants noted a strong link between climate change and security. While climate change inevitably influences the security of people, insecurity impacts climate change. The table below lists examples of how climate change and conflict interact in Kaabong:

How climate change impacts conflicts in Kaabong	How insecurity impacts climate change in Kaabong
Climate change causes water scarcity and dry pastures, which forces pastoralists to move and leads to land confrontations and theft of animals.	Property owners start cutting down trees to fence their homesteads to protect against enemies, contributing to deforestation.
Poor harvests, famine and poverty spur negative coping mechanisms like encroachment on relatively fertile places and fights over mining sites for alternative livelihood.	Bush burning clears the way to see enemies from a distance which causes soil degradation.
The effects of climate change increase poverty which can increase domestic violence.	Migration causes population influxes in areas with abundant pastures and water, leading to limited access to health services.

Step 2

Uniting the key actors around common goals

The localisation of climate security risk assessment requires a multi-stakeholder approach. This serves as a foundation for key stakeholders and partners to engage in the development and support for risk assessment.

The Kaabong district mainly experiences climate change through increased droughts and flooding. The effects heighten insecurity due to increasing tensions among the various groups over scarce resources. The participants could identify the most affected community actors based on the analysis of who is most affected by droughts and flooding. They recognised livestock farmers, older people, people with disabilities, youth – especially schoolchildren, women, investors, political leaders, hunters and businesspeople as the main groups affected by climate change within their communities.

The participants also identified existing actors and structures in communities that already address these challenges and other climate-related conflicts. These were categorised into three categories: decision-makers, civil society and community groups.

Decision-makers	Civil society	Community groups
Local Government	Civil Society Organisations - e.g. CECORE, MercyCorps	Peace committees & groups
Local Councils	Community Based Organisations - e.g. DADO, KAPDA	Youth groups
Community Development Officers		CECORE peace champions
Cultural leaders – Akiriket		Farmer groups
Religious leaders		Women Peace Forum
Stakeholders' roles		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leading community mobilisation and sensitisation of community members on climate change Promoting cultural norms and practices that protect the environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organising community and cross-border dialogues Supporting capacity building on climate and security Supporting community sensitisation, via radio talk-shows, drama groups Raising awareness on rain predictions and guidance on what crops to plan. Collecting relevant indicators and communicating to decision-makers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participating in and supporting community sensitisation Arranging community mobilisation to collect data Facilitating cross-border peacebuilding meetings between neighbouring sub-countries and countries peacebuilding

Step 3

Developing methodologies for data collection

Once all relevant stakeholders are involved with clear roles, the methodology for risk assessment is developed. The methodology should be based on a combination of qualitative data gathered from key local stakeholders, as well as reliable data collected through on-the-ground stories, reflection sessions and secondary data. Local indicators are trends and facts rooted in community observations of the linkages between climate change and conflict.

The participants identified a number of local indicators related to climate change and conflict. Local indicators are collected by documenting stories people tell, so this is mostly about collecting opinions, observations, attitudes and feelings indicative of the interactions between climate and conflict. A few *local indicators identified* by the participants were 1) the sounds and movements of birds forecasting rain patterns and 2) the germination of some plant species projecting rain and atypical plant deaths that precede longer dry spells. The participants also focused on how using these indicators to predict climate events can prevent competition over land and resources.

The group brainstormed possible local responses to the local indicators mentioned above. One example of a response is to restore indigenous and drought-resistant plant species and focus on tree planting. Another response could be implementing a 'cut one tree but plant two' mindset to enable communities to protect the environment while still having basic necessities like firewood.

Recognising that climate insecurity has important gendered dimensions that shape men's and women's experiences is important. In Kaabong, women are disproportionately affected by the effects of climate change and conflict. To combat this, gender-transformative designs must be incorporated into climate interventions.

The participants developed research questions to continue this ongoing process of compiling and analysing local climate risk indicators:

What	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What climate change hazards do we face in Kaabong?• What are the gendered impacts of climate on security? How are other community groups affected?• What insecurity hazards do we face in Kaabong?• What can we do as the people in Kaabong to reduce those hazards?• What kind of disaggregated data do we have, or do we need?• What are the sources of reliable data?
When	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How often do we need to collect the information?
Who	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Generally determined by the community, but will involve the trainers, local council leaders, cultural leaders, teachers, and CECORE peace champions
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some of the preferred and appropriate methods are mapping, mobility map and calendars (e.g. for economic activities, done in particular months).

Step 4

Analysing collected data

After data is collected in line with an agreed-upon data collection method, the next step is to analyse available information to identify the pathways linking climate and security in the context of a particular community.

Data analysis presents sets of organised information that send a clear message to actors about 1) the climate change impacts that are more likely to cause insecurity and 2) existing capacities to mitigate climate insecurity – communities' assets that are directly related to climate change and security.

Step 5

Communicating findings

After analysing and developing potential solutions in an accessible format, the local participants communicate their data to allow the right audience – local government authorities, national, regional and global policymakers – access and use of the climate and security risk assessment. The local participants also connect with members of the community, whom they regard as one of the primary users of the shared information. This pre-emptive community response to climate change is commonly referred to as 'early action': communities now often respond to climate issues without waiting for an 'early response' from decision-makers at higher levels.

The participants identified the most appropriate avenues to communicate findings through the key decision-making platforms at the community level. In the Kaabong district, these include Akiriket (council of elders) Etem, Ekokwa, Epereti, drinking joints, watering points, dancing grounds and ceremonies. The communication with these platforms was agreed to be primarily done by elders, Kraal leaders, seers/foretellers, community experts (who read movements of the sun, moon, stars, etc.) and community members who preside over rituals.

At the same time, the participants acknowledged the weak linkage between local (traditional) and Government (formal) systems. This is because climate change information from the community to the government is only delivered during a major disaster. Further, the information gathered by the community using traditional indigenous knowledge and experience lacks reliability in the eyes of government experts. On a positive note, some government actors have started to appreciate the information collected by traditional actors. This year, communities were able to predict rains in Kaabong and the invasion of army worms. Both situations appeared true; therefore, the government started paying more attention to such knowledge.

The Path Forward

Based on the preliminary discussions on the localisation of climate security risk assessment in Uganda, the following key action points have emerged:

- The need to enhance coordination between traditional and formal structures on climate and security issues.
- Local experiences must be documented. Because local knowledge is normally not documented or takes the form of a story, it lacks reliability with government experts. A localised climate security risk assessment is an opportunity to document this valuable knowledge.
- Localisation is a multi-stakeholder process. Effective projects can only be accomplished within a three-tier leadership system, with the community (rights holders), councillors (responsibility holders) and government and CSOs (duty bearers) working together.

Localising Climate-Sensitive Risk Assessment

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