

20
26

THE CLIMATE- CONFLICT NEXUS

IMPACTS OF CLIMATE STRESSORS, CONFLICT
DYNAMICS AND VULNERABILITY ON
HUMANITARIAN PLANNING

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to thank our client, the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC), for the opportunity to produce this report. In particular, we appreciate the support of our focal point, Frances Crowley, whose insights and direction were invaluable throughout the research process. We also extend our gratitude to our mentor at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), Dr. Jennifer Melvin, for her guidance and constructive feedback.

Additionally, we are grateful to all DEC member charities and interviewees who generously gave their time to share their professional insights and experiences. Their honest insights and critical reflections form the foundation of this report.

DISCLAIMERS This report has been developed for the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). The views expressed are those of the authors and do not reflect those of the DEC. This report represents a partial fulfilment of the Humanitarian Consultancy Project course available in the MSc in International Development and Humanitarian Emergencies programme at the LSE.

Authors: Eleni Dragon, David Lubbock, Jakob Schwab, Hannah Sparrock, Rana Zeidan

Cover Photo Credit: CAFOD DEC Myanmar Earthquake Appeal

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Environmental degradation and climate change are among the greatest challenges humanity must reckon with. Across DEC-funded responses in Syria, Lebanon, Gaza and the West Bank (known as the DEC Middle East Humanitarian Appeal), and the DEC Myanmar Earthquake Appeal, climate-related pressures are not only intensifying vulnerability but also interacting with governance failures, resource constraints and conflict dynamics to produce differentiated and compounded risks.

Climate change and conflict do not simply coexist—they amplify one another, with environmental stress fueling instability and violence, while conflict in turn undermines the adaptive capacities communities need to withstand a changing climate. Violence and new forms of hybrid warfare only perpetuate this dynamic, affecting the response capabilities of humanitarians. To address this, the report answers the following questions:

1) *How do DEC members respond to vulnerabilities and disasters created and exacerbated by the intersections of climate, environment and conflict?* **2)** *What strategies can DEC members adopt to deliver more effective climate-sensitive responses in conflict-affected environments?*

Based on a combination of insights from the literature and semi-structured interviews with both DEC member charities and external practitioners and academics, findings from this report show that DEC member charities are already integrating climate considerations into humanitarian programming in several ways. These include risk-informed and anticipatory approaches, community-led and rights-based programming, and operational « Do No Harm » practices such as local sourcing and environmentally responsible sourcing. Climate action is also integrated within sectoral interventions like health, WASH, shelter, and cash assistance, although these efforts are sector-bound and do not fully capture the interconnected nature of climate and conflict risks.

However, these efforts remain fragmented and mainly reactive. Structural funding constraints, short-term programming cycles, and donor-driven silos limit the ability of organisations to design integrated climate-conflict responses. Capacity gaps, weak data systems and uneven coordination further constrain anticipatory action. In many cases, climate sensitivity is operationalised through phased adjustments rather than systemic change, with interventions often focused on predictable hazards rather than the underlying drivers of vulnerability linked to governance, resource access, and social dynamics.

In response, this report contends that adopting a climate-peace nexus approach can help shift humanitarian action from reactive hazard management towards more integrated and anticipatory strategies that address structural drivers of vulnerability, while considering the interaction of climate and conflict in the context of local dynamics. To support this shift, the report identifies the following key recommendations for tools and best practices.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1) Integrating climate risk assessments into conflict governance and analysis

- Expand conflict-sensitivity frameworks to include ecological resource dynamics (water, land, energy)
- Integrate anticipatory tools into conflict analysis (early warning systems, scenario planning, pooled funds, flood mapping, remote sensing)
- Strengthen differentiated vulnerability assessments using disaggregated data and community-led mapping, and integrate environmental health indicators into needs assessments
- Align humanitarian programming with national and local climate planning tools (heat action plans, flood maps, risk platforms)

2) Building multidisciplinary climate-conflict capacity

- Formalise cross-sectoral programme design by integrating technical expertise (engineering, energy, infrastructure, public health)
- Establish shared technical advisory pools and joint climate-conflict training across DEC member charities
- Expand partnerships beyond the humanitarian sector, including People-Public-Private Partnership (P4)

3) Strengthening community-led climate knowledge generation and action

- Adapt participatory vulnerability assessment tools to integrate conflict dynamics and enable community-led monitoring
- Support participatory environmental assessments and digital monitoring tools to track environmental harm and trigger anticipatory responses
- Strengthen youth engagement through climate education, community monitoring, and leadership initiatives

4) Making climate and environmental practice a standard part of humanitarian programming

- Integrate environmental considerations across the programme cycle using tools such as NEAT+ and environmental risk checklists adapted for conflict sensitivity
- Scale anticipatory funding mechanisms (forecast-based financing, Start Network alerts)
- Frame climate interventions through humanitarian outcomes (health, protection, livelihoods)

Overall, the report finds that while DEC member charities are already engaging with climate risks in meaningful ways, a more systemic, coordinated, and governance aware approach is required to effectively address the interacting challenges of climate change, conflict and vulnerability in humanitarian contexts.

ACRONYMS

AA:	Anticipatory Action
C&E:	Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organisations
CVA:	Cash and Voucher Assistance
DEC:	Disasters Emergency Committee
DRR:	Disaster Risk Reduction
EWS:	Early Warning Systems
FCAS:	Fragile and conflict-affected situations
GBV:	Gender-based violence
INGO:	International Non-Government Organisation
IDPs:	Internally Displaced Persons
NEAT+:	Nexus Environment Assessment Tool
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organisation
P4:	People-Public-Private Partnership
PCVA:	Participatory Capacity and Vulnerability Analysis
SBC:	Sociobehavioural Change
UN:	United Nations
UNOCHA:	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
USAID:	United States Agency for International Development
WASH:	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	1
Executive Summary	2
Acronyms	5
1. Introduction	7
1.1 Background	7
1.2 Research Approach	8
2. Research Design	9
2.1 Methodology	9
2.2 Study Limitations	11
2.3 Ethical Considerations	11
3. Analysis of Climate, Conflict, and Vulnerability in Context	12
3.1 Typology of Violence in Climate-Affected Conflict Settings	13
3.2 Climate-Conflict-Vulnerability Nexus	15
3.3 Case Studies: Myanmar, Lebanon, Syria, Gaza and the West Bank	18
3.4 Filling the Gaps: A Focus on the Peace-Climate Nexus	23
4. Lessons from Recent Responses: What DEC Member Organisations Are Doing	24
4.1 Participatory Assessments and Community-Led Tools	25
4.2 Anticipatory Approaches	27
4.3 Behavioural Change and Educational Approaches	27
4.4 « Do No Harm » Practices and Environmental Footprints	29
5. Critical Considerations in Operationalisation	31
5.1 Structural Funding Constraints and Limitations of Short-Termism	32
5.2 Reactivity Instead of Prevention	33
5.3 Capacity Limitations	33
5.4 Weak Data Systems & Fragmented Coordination	34
5.5 Market Constraints	35
5.6 Political and Institutional Barriers	35
6. Adopting a Peace-Climate Nexus Approach: Recommendations for DEC Members	36
6.1 Integrating Climate Risk Assessments into Conflict Governance and Analysis	37
6.2 Building Multi-Disciplinary Climate-Conflict Capacity	38
6.3 Strengthening Community-Led Climate Knowledge Generation and Action	40
6.4 Making Climate and Environmental Practice a Standard Part of Humanitarian Programming	41
7. Conclusion	42
8. Reference List	45
9. Appendices	49

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The intersection of climate change and armed conflict has become an increasingly central concern within humanitarian practice. Climate change is intensifying the frequency, scale, and unpredictability of environmental hazards, while contemporary conflicts—characterised by protracted civil wars, hybrid warfare, and fragmented governance—are increasing in number and complexity (Kaldor, 2013). These dynamics rarely occur in isolation; rather, climate stressors and conflict interact to compound humanitarian needs, disrupt coping mechanisms, and complicate recovery and adaptation processes (Buhaug & von Uexkull, 2021).

The humanitarian system itself is also undergoing significant transformation. Sweeping funding cuts by historically leading donors, particularly the United States, have intensified pressures on humanitarian organisations to deliver assistance in increasingly constrained and politicised environments. Concurrently, humanitarian action is evolving in response to changing patterns of crises and climate, with growing emphasis on localisation, resilience-building, and the integration of humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding approaches.

For humanitarian actors, understanding the climate-conflict nexus today is therefore a practical necessity. For organisations operating in fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS), interactions between climate stressors and violence, governance failures, and environmental degradation have direct implications for risk assessment, programme design, conflict sensitivity, and ethical decision-making. Strengthening humanitarian responses at this intersection thus requires both a clearer understanding of the nexus dynamics, and the development of approaches that can address climate and conflict risks in practice.

1.2 Research Approach

This report is based on the following research questions:

1. *How do DEC members respond to vulnerabilities and disasters created and exacerbated by the intersections of climate, environment and conflict?*
2. *What strategies can DEC members adopt to deliver more effective climate-sensitive responses in conflict-affected environments?*

To address this, the analysis focuses on the cases of Myanmar, Lebanon, Syria, Gaza and the West Bank, where the DEC has launched the Myanmar Earthquake Appeal and the Middle East Humanitarian appeal respectively over the last two years. Building on existing humanitarian and academic approaches, this paper contributes by applying a climate-peace nexus perspective to DEC-funded humanitarian programming.

The analysis finds that, while DEC member charities have begun integrating climate considerations into humanitarian programming, these efforts remain reactive and siloed. Therefore, **adopting a climate-peace nexus approach can help strengthen climate-sensitive humanitarian action by integrating environmental governance, anticipatory risk management and community-led action into responses in FCAS.**

The report is structured as follows. The first section outlines methodology, study limitations, and ethical considerations, followed by a literature review examining the forms of violence and pathways through which the climate-conflict nexus manifests. The analysis then traces how these dynamics unfold across the case studies, before evaluating current approaches used by DEC member charities to address climate-conflict vulnerability. Lessons from recent responses inform a subsequent section on tools and practices to strengthen climate-conflict programming, and the report closes with concluding remarks, key findings, and recommendations.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN

2.1 Methodology

The findings presented in this report are based on the following three complementary research methods. Data collection took place between October 2025 and March 2026. The research approach includes:

- A comprehensive literature review of existing academic research and grey literature revolving around the current state of knowledge regarding the climate-conflict intersection in FCAS.
- A review of internal documentation from DEC member charities, including evaluations and programme reports relating to the delivery of assistance across Phases 1 and 2 of the emergency responses.
- A total of (22) semi-structured interviews were conducted: (10) with staff members from DEC member charities and (12) with representatives from external organisations. An initial list of potential interviewees from 14 DEC member charities was provided by the client. Additional participants, including representatives from external humanitarian organisations, were identified through research and snowball sampling.

LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Table 1: Respondents in this Study, n=22

Organisation name	Role of Interviewee
ActionAid	Programme Quality and Assurance Specialist
ActionAid	Programme Quality & Assurance Manager
Age International	Humanitarian Programming Manager
British Red Cross	Operations Manager
CAFOD	Humanitarian Capacity Strengthening Officer
Center for Sustainability Transition	Professor
Habitat for Humanity	Senior Director
International Rescue Committee	Senior WASH Coordinator
International Rescue Committee	Health Coordinator
KMSS	Grant Management Consultant
Medical Aid for Palestinians	CEO
Oxfam	Humanitarian Lead
Save the Children	Technical Advisor
Save the Children	Technical Program Quality Climate
Save the Children	Climate Resilience and Environment Technical Advisor
Terre Liban	Founder
UNDP	Climate Change Advisor
UNESCAP	Environmental Affairs Officer
UNESCAP	Chief of Sustainable Urban Development Section
UNFCCC	Manager, Mitigation
USAID/Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance	Climate Technical Specialist
Youth Alliance for Local Adaptation & Peace	Executive Director

Note: Two interviewees – an NGO founder in Lebanon and a former humanitarian worker in Gaza – requested anonymity.

2.2 Study Limitations

The report considers the following limitations:

(1) Representation of DEC Member Charities: Due to time constraints, not all DEC member charities were able to participate in the interview process, which may have resulted in some perspectives being underrepresented.

(2) Transferability and Generalisability: The sample size is not numerically significant enough to represent the humanitarian sector as a whole, limiting the transferability and generalisability of the findings.

(3) Location of Key Informants: The majority of interviewees were based at headquarters, with only a minority representing country-level perspectives. This imbalance may have limited insights into the practical implementation of sustainability and localisation practices in field operations.

(4) Researcher Positionality: The research students have predominantly Western educational backgrounds, potentially limiting the interpretation of non-Western perspectives and practices.

2.3 Ethical Considerations

This study underwent LSE's Research Ethics procedure. It did not engage directly with affected populations or vulnerable individuals and no primary data was collected through interviews with people at risk. All participants gave informed consent to participate and all interviewees have been anonymised. Where tools and policies are shared, the research team has been given specific permission to do so.

The research team remained conscious of the demands placed on humanitarian actors operating in complex and high-pressure environments. Accordingly, efforts were made to minimise the burden on field staff and in-country stakeholders by consolidating requests for information and keeping consultations as targeted and efficient as possible.



3. ANALYSIS OF CLIMATE, CONFLICT, AND VULNERABILITY IN CONTEXT

Climate change, environmental degradation, and conflict intersect to produce complex, overlapping harms. This section analyses types of violence in climate-affected conflict settings, moving beyond visible, direct forms to include slower, ‘silent’ violence of structural and infrastructural harm. It then traces key pathways through the climate-conflict vulnerability nexus: livelihoods, resource stress, displacement, migration, urbanisation, and links between environmental degradation and health. Throughout, it considers what these dynamics mean for humanitarian actors.

3.1 Typology of Violence in Climate-Affected Conflict Settings

3.1.1 Direct and Visible Violence

Direct violence is the immediate, observable use of physical force by identifiable actors, resulting in harm, death, forced displacement, or the destruction of property and infrastructure (Galtung, 1969). In FCAS, the literature finds little evidence that natural hazards directly trigger the onset of armed conflict. Instead, they act as stress multipliers, worsening violence and prolonging conflict by weakening state capacity and enabling armed groups to exploit instability (Ghimire & Ferreira 2016). Post-disaster instability increases the frequency and severity of violent events, and crises can prompt greater state-led coercion and repression, as governments use force to maintain control (Eastin, 2016).

The extent of the influence of climate on conflict is context-dependent, operating under particular conditions and through specific pathways (Helman et al., 2020; Koubi, 2019). Raleigh and Kniveton (2012) stress that economic and political marginalisation mediates how climate shocks lead to violence. While Hendrix and Salehyan (2012) find that rainfall variability predicts civil and social conflict—especially in low-and middle-income, agriculture-dependent societies—Buhaug (2015) argues that political exclusion, poor economic development, and ethnic marginalisation are stronger drivers of conflict than climate alone.

For humanitarians, these findings call for treating climate disasters as potential conflict multipliers and vice versa, and designing conflict-sensitive responses that consider local dynamics, strengthen capacities, and prevent aid exploitation by armed actors.

3.1.2 Slow and Silent Violence

Slow and silent violence is incremental and accretive harm (Dehm, 2020). It is perpetuated by states through land confiscation and forced displacement, private companies through extractive operations that degrade environments under legal frameworks prioritising investment over human rights, and international institutions promoting neoliberal policies that commodify land (Woods, 2015). In FCAS, this form of violence undermines a state's capacity to rebuild, entrenching economic and social inequality. It mainly operates through structural and infrastructural forms of violence.

Structural violence refers to systemic inequalities within political, economic and social systems that restrict access to resources and opportunities (Galtung, 1969). Climate disproportionately impacts the rural poor, women, marginalised ethnic groups, displaced people and future generations (Augsten et al., 2023). Climate-related structural violence can appear as cultural marginalisation, psychological distress, physical harm through illness and mortality, and material deprivation through livelihood loss and reduced access to services (Mari et al., 2020). In FCAS, climate pressures strain fragile institutions and intensify competition over land and resources, leading to coercive practices, neglect of infrastructure, increased environmental hazards, and gender-based violence (GBV), as households adopt negative coping strategies and authorities rely more on control than protection (Crowley et al., 2021).

Infrastructural violence situates technical systems in a political arena shaped by decisions about design, distribution, maintenance, and destruction — intensified by environmental stress, protracted conflict, and governance failures that render basic services unobtainable for marginalised populations (de Boer, 2015). Water, sanitation, energy, housing, and transport systems become sites through which inequality and political power are reproduced (Crowley et al., 2021). Weak or repressive governance can deliberately expose vulnerable groups to environmental risks while denying them essential protections, and climate interventions, if poorly designed, risk reinforcing existing inequalities (Cucinotta et al., 2024). Plänitz (2020) illustrates this dynamic, showing how urban flooding can escalate into social disorder when marginalised populations bear disproportionate exposure or perceive disaster responses as neglectful.

Humanitarian actors must therefore engage critically with state-led climate governance to ensure it does not reinforce exclusionary practices, while advocating for inclusive adaptation frameworks that centre the rights and participation of marginalised communities rather than state control or top-down technical solutions. This requires considering structural drivers of vulnerability alongside political, environmental, and conflict dynamics in protracted crises. Analytical frameworks and operational tools that enable humanitarians to identify, anticipate, and mitigate infrastructural and structural forms of violence in climate- and conflict-affected contexts are thus explored in Section 6 of this report.

3.2 Climate-Conflict-Vulnerability Nexus

3.2.1 Livelihoods and Resource Stress

Livelihoods are central to how environmental stress interacts with conflict and vulnerability. Climate hazards disrupt agriculture and natural resource extraction, resulting in income loss and food insecurity, particularly in marginalised rural communities (Buhaug & von Uexkull, 2021). This prompts households to adopt precarious coping strategies that deepen poverty, especially in contexts of weak governance (Augsten et al., 2022). Conflicts further exacerbate these issues by damaging infrastructure and limiting access to resources, creating a 'vicious cycle' of violence and vulnerability (Buhaug & von Uexkull, 2021).

Livelihood collapse worsens inequalities and indirectly influences conflict dynamics, as food insecurity and unemployment may incite protests or recruitment into armed groups in the absence of state and social protection mechanisms. Climate shocks also affect resource competition and behavioural dynamics, though the literature warns against viewing resource scarcity as a direct driver of violence (Buhaug & von Uexkull, 2021). Institutional arrangements and political factors are crucial mediators (Berhe, 2022).

For humanitarian actors, addressing livelihoods is an entry point for reducing vulnerability and breaking the cycle between environmental stress, poverty, and instability.

3.2.2 Displacement, Migration, and Urbanisation

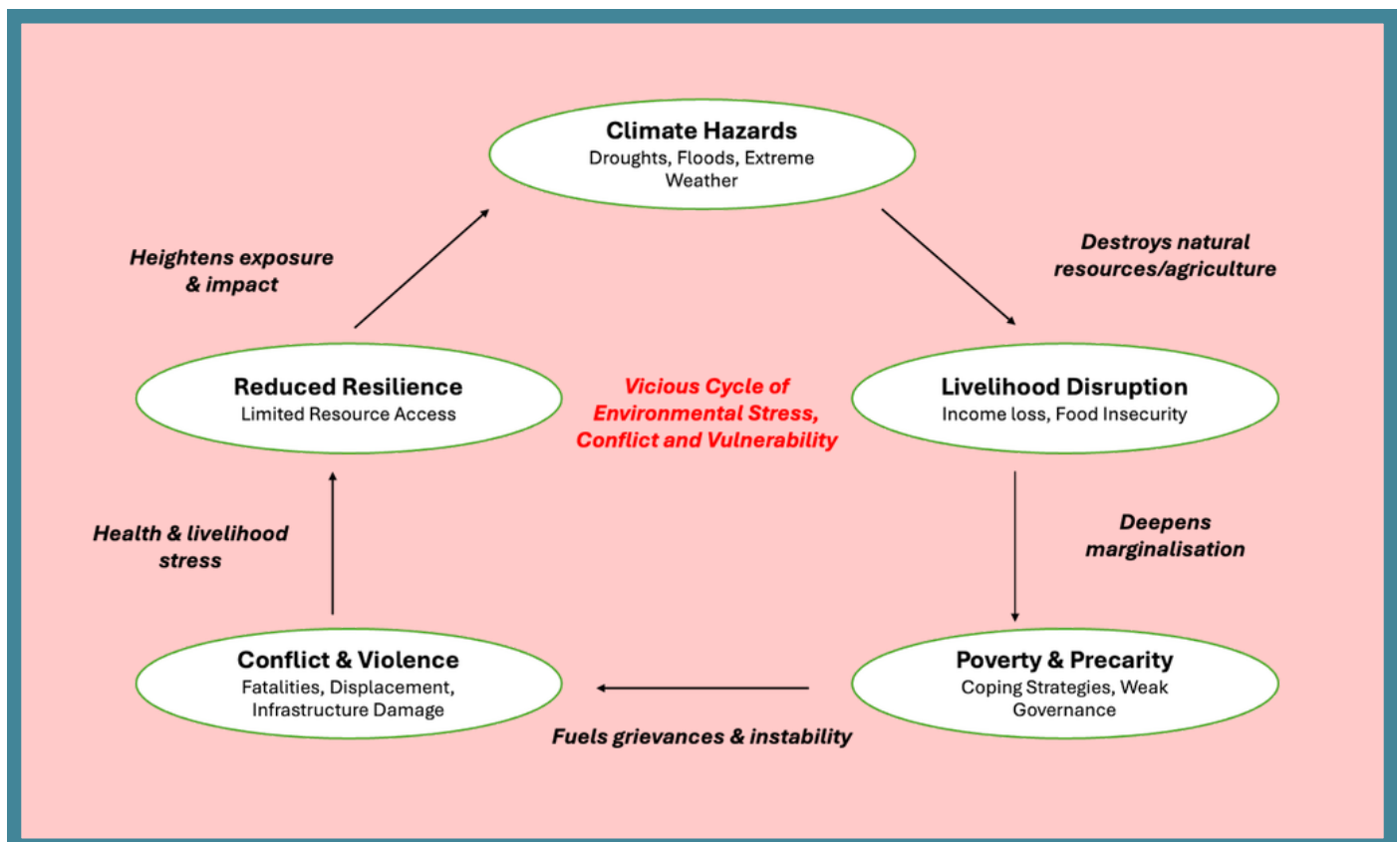
Climate change operates as an indirect driver of migration and displacement and as a ‘threat multiplier’ acting through pre-existing social vulnerabilities, poverty, and restricted access to resources (Hofmann, 2020). Climate stress and migration pathways enable movement for some while constraining others, resulting in involuntary immobility, which can trap vulnerable populations in high-risk environments (Cundill et al., 2021; Thalheimer et al., 2025). Conflict-induced displacement tends to be long-lasting and politically constrained, shaped by insecurity and violence, leading to protracted displacement, repeated movements, and barriers to safe return. In comparison, extreme weather-induced displacement is typically short-term, cyclical, and geographically proximate, with people often returning after risks subside (Cantor, 2023). Whether households adapt locally or migrate depends more on power dynamics embedded in patronage networks, customary norms, and state structures than on climate stress itself. Jayawardhana (2017) suggests effective climate adaptation requires shifting from technocratic risk-based frameworks toward political and social vulnerability approaches that foreground equity, participation, and justice, which will be explored later in the report.

Humanitarian action must therefore consider the compounding effects of climate stress, violence, and displacement while confronting the underlying power relations that structure both vulnerability and constrained mobility for marginalised populations.

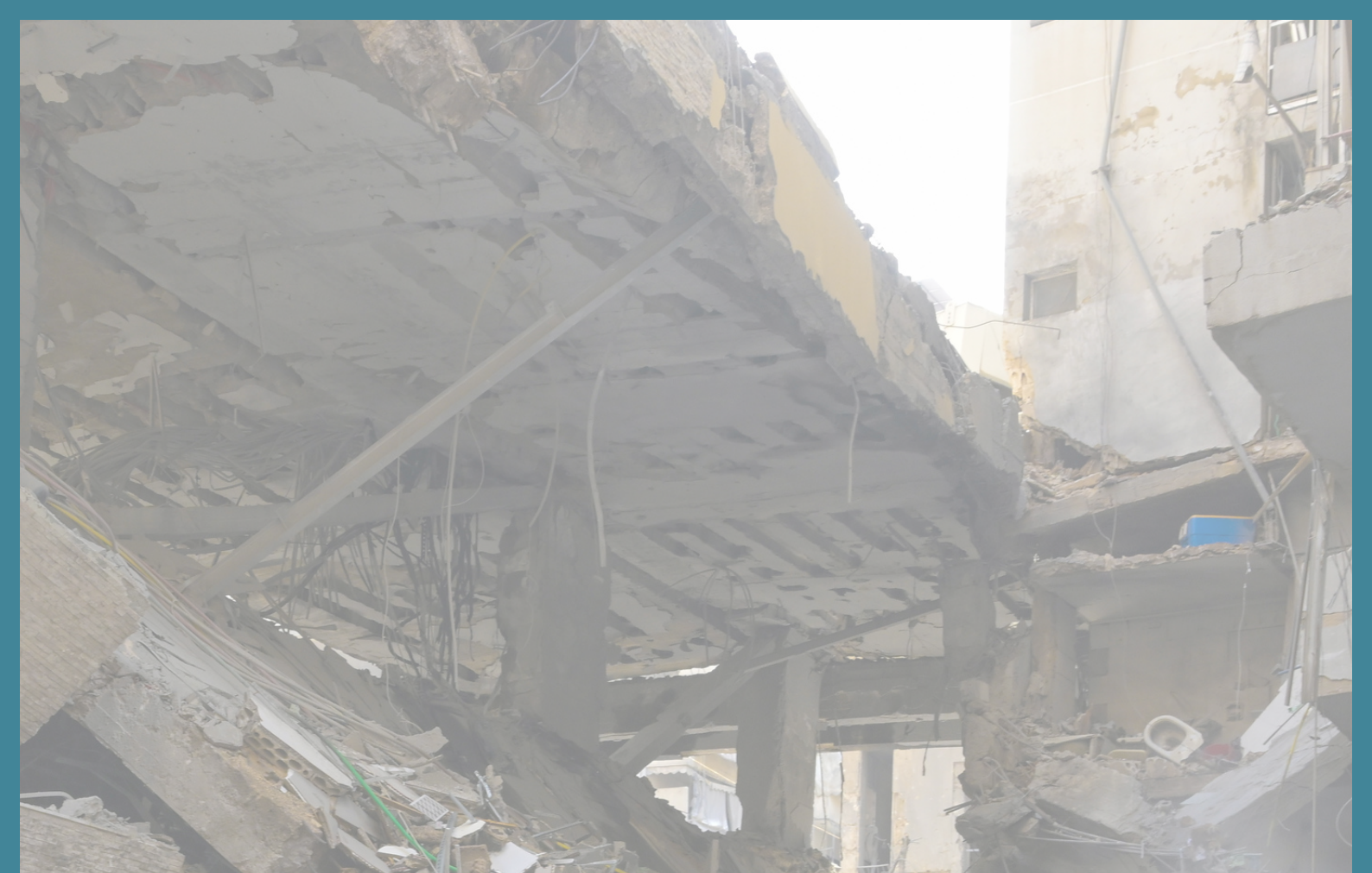


3.2.3 Environmental Degradation and Health

When conflict coincides with climate stress, infrastructure damage drives environmental contamination and disease, with effects persisting long after warfare ends (Ghobarah et al., 2004). Climate hazards further strain these systems, exacerbating pollution, increasing vector-borne disease transmission, and restricting healthcare access — driving malnutrition and long-term vulnerability (Beckline et al., 2016). In FCAS, slow violence obstructs rebuilding and raises difficult questions of responsibility amid systemic financing failures (Dehm, 2020). These health impacts are unevenly distributed, emerging gradually from chronic exposure to degraded environments rather than from discrete crises (Nixon, 2011). For humanitarians, this indicates that environmental neglect in FCAS is inseparable from WASH objectives.



Source: Authors' own diagram based on Buhaug & von Uexkull (2021)



3.3 Case Studies: Myanmar, Lebanon, Syria, Gaza and the West Bank



Building on current academic research, this section reviews the existing literature on the climate-conflict vulnerabilities relevant to the DEC-funded Myanmar Earthquake Appeal and Middle East Humanitarian Appeal.

Myanmar

In **Myanmar**, the climate-conflict nexus must be understood within the context of a long-running civil conflict, which fundamentally shapes contemporary vulnerabilities. Peripheral regions face growing exposure to floods, cyclones, and shifting rainfall patterns, with climate change compounding grievances rooted in ethnic discrimination and political repression. Agriculture-dependent households are often hit by simultaneous climate and conflict shocks, where climate-induced poverty further inflames local tensions (van Asselt et al., 2025).

Woods (2015) documents that **Myanmar's** shift toward a neoliberal economy has been associated with large-scale land acquisitions via conservation projects and hydropower dams, disproportionately displacing ethnic minorities. The government's 'Climate Change Master Plan' to convert 'wasteland' for industrial use illustrates how climate and development policies can contribute to land loss, deforestation, displacement, and weakened environmental resilience, particularly in conflict-impacted territories (Woods, 2015). Climate risks are mediated by violence and coercive governance, as seen in the operations of extractive industries and the resulting air and water pollution (Roberts & Mai, 2021).

Armed conflict compounds climate vulnerability by disrupting agriculture and causing food insecurity (van Asselt et al., 2025). Households facing both climate and conflict shocks employ similar coping strategies—reducing food expenditures, borrowing money, and selling assets—but these options quickly deplete, eroding long-term resilience. Conflict-driven displacement, coupled with environmental stress, restricts mobility, limits access to healthcare and livelihoods, and exacerbates health risks for internally displaced persons (IDPs) (Koning, 2019).

Overall, climate change and environmental degradation in **Myanmar** risk amplifying both structural and direct violence rooted in power asymmetries such as insecure land tenure and environmental degradation driven by extraction (Roberts & Mai, 2021). International climate programming is confined to areas under government control, creating uneven responses that may reinforce marginalisation. For humanitarians, climate vulnerability in **Myanmar** cannot be addressed through technical or apolitical interventions alone, but must be understood as inseparable from conflict, land governance, and ethnic exclusion. This requires locally grounded approaches that recognise structural violence and avoid reinforcing the political and environmental dynamics that sustain displacement and insecurity.

Lebanon

In **Lebanon**, decades of conflict have produced severe environmental degradation and long-term climate risk. Agriculture, forests, and water resources have repeatedly been targeted using cluster bombs and white phosphorus that contaminate soil and leave farmland unusable for years (Touhouliotis, 2018). Since October 2023, large areas of farmland and extensive forests have been destroyed, weakening ecological recovery and climate resilience (ESCWA, 2024). Contamination has caused chronic illness, including higher rates of cancer, infertility, and respiratory diseases (Touhouliotis, 2018).

Conflict-driven environmental harm directly undermines livelihoods in areas reliant on agriculture. Conflict disrupts planting and harvesting, restricts land access, and destroys infrastructure, pushing farmers toward short-term survival strategies like tobacco monocropping and goat herding (Khayyat, 2022). These practices increase long-term ecological damage and economic insecurity. Rising heat, unpredictable rainfall, and water shortages further threaten rural livelihoods in already damaged agricultural systems (Dagher et al., 2024). This causes both forced immobility and mass displacement. In Southern **Lebanon**, many cannot leave environmentally-degraded or insecure areas due to financial constraints or cultural ties to land (Diab, 2025).

Environmental degradation, disease, and livelihood loss are experienced as extensions of past wars, shaping collective memory and fueling distrust towards institutions and humanitarian interventions (Pseich, 2024). Lebanon's fragmented governance—state inaction, poor evacuation planning and limited access to public resources—increases vulnerability and turns climate and conflict stress into structural violence, hindering responses to environmental challenges and displacement. Humanitarian action, therefore, should address environmental degradation as a central component of health and protection, and livelihood support should avoid reinforcing coping strategies that intensify ecological damage.

Syria

In **Syria**, climate and environmental factors have played a role in conflict and in exacerbating socioeconomic conditions that contributed to unrest. Linke and Ruther (2021) found that drier conditions increased the risk of violence as livelihood losses increased, leaving Syrian farmers vulnerable to direct attacks aimed at capturing agricultural resources.

In Northern **Syria**, climate-induced fluctuations in temperature and precipitation led to more frequent disease outbreaks, a problem further exacerbated by high levels of displacement due to conflict (Tarnas et al., 2025). Between 2019 and 2020, abnormal rainfall combined with military activity associated with a sharp rise in accidental and deliberate fires led to a surge of wildfires, displacing millions of Syrians, exacerbating economic destabilisation and food insecurity, and fueling further cycles of violence simultaneously (Zubkova et al., 2021).

For humanitarian actors in **Syria**, these dynamics highlight the need for climate-sensitive programming that accounts for the weaponisation of agricultural resources and the compounding effects of displacement. Livelihood interventions should be designed with awareness of how climate shocks can trigger or intensify localised violence, while environmental recovery efforts—including fire management and land rehabilitation—must be integrated into broader stabilisation strategies rather than treated as separate technical concerns.

Gaza and the West Bank

In **Gaza and the West Bank**, armed conflict and occupation have trapped the territories in a vicious cycle of violence, vulnerability, and climate change (Mason et. al., 2012). Water and food insecurity are severe and expected to worsen with climate change, while armed conflict has further reduced access to water and put fragile infrastructure under strain (Mason et al., 2012). As of July 2025, only 8.6% of **Gaza's** cropland remained accessible, and just 1.5% remained both accessible and undamaged (FAO, 2025). Israeli military offensives have destroyed **Gaza's** infrastructure—including hospitals, water resources, and agriculture—making communities particularly vulnerable to climate impacts and unable to adapt (Buhang, 2021). Plans for reconstructing waste management, water treatment, and addressing pollution remain limited (Rintoul-Hynes, 2025). In addition, use of chemical weapons such as white phosphorus has immediate environmental consequences on agricultural areas, water, and livestock, while anticipated long-term environmental effects of the war include irreversible air, soil, and water pollution, and biodiversity loss in **Gaza**, leaving a toxic legacy that impedes recovery (Hassoun, 2025).

Considering this vicious cycle, effective humanitarian responses in **Gaza and the West Bank** should address the political and structural conditions that drive harm, prioritising environmental remediation and infrastructure restoration alongside immediate relief. Where access and resources remain severely constrained, humanitarian actors should prioritise environmental recovery and infrastructure restoration alongside immediate relief, while integrating environmental risks into assessments.

3.4 Filling the Gaps: a Focus on the Peace-Climate Nexus

A key gap in climate-conflict literature remains in understanding how short-term humanitarian efforts can align with long-term development and peacebuilding objectives to create multisectoral, holistic strategies that address the nexus.

To address this, scholarship is increasingly focused on the climate-peace nexus, which integrates peacebuilding into the humanitarian-development nexus (Fluhmann, 2025). Whether climate stress leads to fragmentation or cooperation depends on the quality of governance and the institutional capacity to manage these pressures (Abitbol & McCandless, 2022). This shifts attention to the destabilising impacts of climate change on the institutional, social, and political foundations of peace, undermining welfare systems, legitimacy, and social trust before violence erupts (Patt, 2022).

In FCAS, humanitarian organisations inevitably influence peace dynamics as assistance affects resource distribution, perceptions of fairness, and relationships with local authorities (Cucinotta et al., 2024). **If humanitarian interventions overlook who controls authority, resources, and legitimacy in climate governance, and who bears costs and benefits, they risk worsening vulnerability** by reinforcing exclusion, causing environmental degradation, or substituting for state services without addressing governance failures (Mena et al., 2022). Consequently, there is recognition of the need for stronger coordination between humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding sectors to address climate-related security risks.

In practice, integrating peacebuilding and climate resilience requires longer-term engagement than typical humanitarian programs and rigid donor funding allow (Fluhmann, 2025). Despite these limitations, climate resilience initiatives implemented during periods of relative stability can strengthen peacebuilding by reducing resource pressures and mitigating drivers of violence. Scholars highlight the potential for humanitarian organisations to integrate peacebuilding and climate adaptation strategies that reinforce one other, counteracting the negative effects of the climate-conflict nexus. Recognising these challenges and opportunities, this report adopts this lens to identify more effective climate-sensitive humanitarian responses in FCAS.



4. LESSONS FROM RECENT RESPONSES: WHAT DEC MEMBER CHARITIES ARE DOING

Within the appeals examined, DEC member charities employ a range of tools and practices that address the intersection of climate and conflict vulnerabilities to varying degrees. Interviewees emphasised that effective engagement with the nexus and minimising harm depends on a thorough understanding of local conditions, continuous monitoring and sustained community involvement.

4.1 Participatory Assessments and Community-Led Tools

Across the contexts, a transferable tool implemented is participatory assessments that situate climate vulnerabilities within community-led processes, drawing on local knowledge to complement technical data.

“We work with local communities to communicate, document problems and then transfer the problem into an actual project for donors”

Organisations employ Participatory Capacity and Vulnerability Analysis (PCVA): a multi-stakeholder risk analysis and planning process that engages local communities in identifying climate risks, coping capacities, and adaptation priorities. Using tools such as social risk mapping, seasonal calendars, and hazard timelines, PCVA captures seasonal livelihoods, gendered labour divisions, and resource access, producing prioritised action plans that distinguish between actions communities can undertake independently and those requiring external support.

However, PCVA is resource- and time-intensive, and its implementation in FCAS depends on sustained community access. In certain areas of **Myanmar**, a full multi-stage PCVA during the acute emergency phase was only possible through long-standing partnerships with local organisations which enables access to areas INGOs cannot operate in. The phased approach consists of an initial emergency assessment followed by a second stage focused on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and climate adaptation planning, which links adaptation to livelihoods and local financing, reducing dependency on international funding. In FCAS, participatory processes do carry risk, as discussions on conflict dynamics may expose communities to retaliation or undermine operational access, particularly where naming actors, resource control, or sources of tension remains politically sensitive. Their effectiveness is also constrained by their design for natural hazards, thus not systematically integrating conflict dynamics into climate vulnerability analysis.

Table: Example PCVA Guide table for practitioners

Table 1. Disaster risk reduction activity table – example of list of activities

Problem/risk	What can be done?	Without external assistance	With some external assistance
	Immediately		
	Medium term		
	Long term		

Table 2. Example of an action plan

Problem/vulnerability to reduce	Activities/tasks to carry out	Persons responsible for the task	Calendar	Resources required (internal/external)

Source: (PCVA Template, 2022)

Box 1: **Lebanon's** WATERLINK, a DEC-funded initiative, uses community-driven digital monitoring to improve climate-sensitive programming. Tracking water access and engaging local communities in resource management demonstrates the potential of participatory approaches for early warning and response.



4.2 Anticipatory Approaches

Various member charities have begun utilising trigger-based Anticipatory Action (AA) to initiate early interventions based on climate indicators. By monitoring rainfall patterns, drought indices, and temperature thresholds, organisations can pre-position resources such as cash assistance and winterisation supplies, and activate contingency plans ahead of predictable shocks. For example, one DEC member charity has formalised arrangements with the UK Met Office and the World Meteorological Organisation to access climate forecasting data for operational planning.

In **Gaza**, one DEC member charity incorporates climate risk analysis and conflict sensitivity into programme design through DRR assessments and seasonal calendars, enabling flexible, cross-sectoral responses to compounding crises and adapting as conditions evolve.

However, anticipatory mechanisms across the membership remain fragmented and dependent on informal collaboration rather than institutionalised systems. More fundamentally, they are designed for predictable climate hazards, whereas conflict dynamics are unpredictable and politically contingent. While climate triggers can drive early action, they cannot account for disruptions such as blocked supply routes, disrupted market access, or armed actor control. As a result, current approaches address climate risk in conflict settings, but do not yet capture their compounding interaction.

4.3 Behavioural Change and Educational Approaches

Ameliorating climate-maladaptive practices remains difficult in FCAS. In **Myanmar**, for example, agricultural cycles repeatedly expose communities to monsoon flooding, yet there is substantial resistance to changing long-established practices. One DEC member charity has addressed this through gradual sociobehavioural change (SBC) in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and local interest groups, introducing vocational training and home gardens as low-risk entry points for climate-adaptive livelihoods. By complementing rather than replacing existing practices, this approach reduces risk and has achieved higher uptake than more prescriptive interventions.

Box 2: In some areas in Myanmar unaffected by conflict, ongoing community work, effective government partnerships, and gradual behavioural change strategies are possible. Conflict regions, by contrast, face restricted access, displacement, and eroded institutional trust, making similar programmes far harder to implement. This underscores how heavily behavioural change and educational initiatives depend on context. Without a basic level of stability, sustained engagement and lasting change are difficult to achieve.

In **Lebanon**, one DEC member charity, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, implements the 'Green Generation curriculum' to integrate climate education into schools. The programme promotes environmental awareness and integrates it into learning activities to encourage long-term behavioural change by helping students understand the relationship between environmental protection and their everyday lives. This is reinforced through community-based DRR committees and child-friendly spaces, which encourage participation across age groups and integrate climate awareness within broader community decision-making.

"Combining education, youth engagement, and visible on-the-ground action has proven particularly effective. Empowering young people and activists to document violations and training educators strengthens accountability and builds long-term resilience"

Across contexts, interviewees stressed the importance of accessible messaging for effective climate action at the community level. This has included volunteer training on environmental hazards, community awareness campaigns, and pre-identified response actions linked to Early Warning Systems (EWS). One DEC member charity in **Myanmar** focuses on building local volunteer capacity and integrating DRR messaging within handover strategies, ensuring communities are equipped and resourced to implement preparedness activities.



4.4 « Do No Harm » Practices and Environmental Footprints

Across the appeals, climate action has been delivered primarily through sectoral programming rather than as a standalone pillar. In WASH and shelter, this includes solarisation, heat mitigation, and water efficiency measures; for example, several DEC member charities have supported solarised water systems in **Syria**, or installed solar-powered water filtration systems in **Myanmar**. In livelihoods programming, climate-smart agriculture and livelihood diversification have been promoted in recovery phases. Cash assistance has been used as a modality for flexible adaptation, with a DEC member charity in Syria providing conditional Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) to incentivise environmentally sustainable purchases.

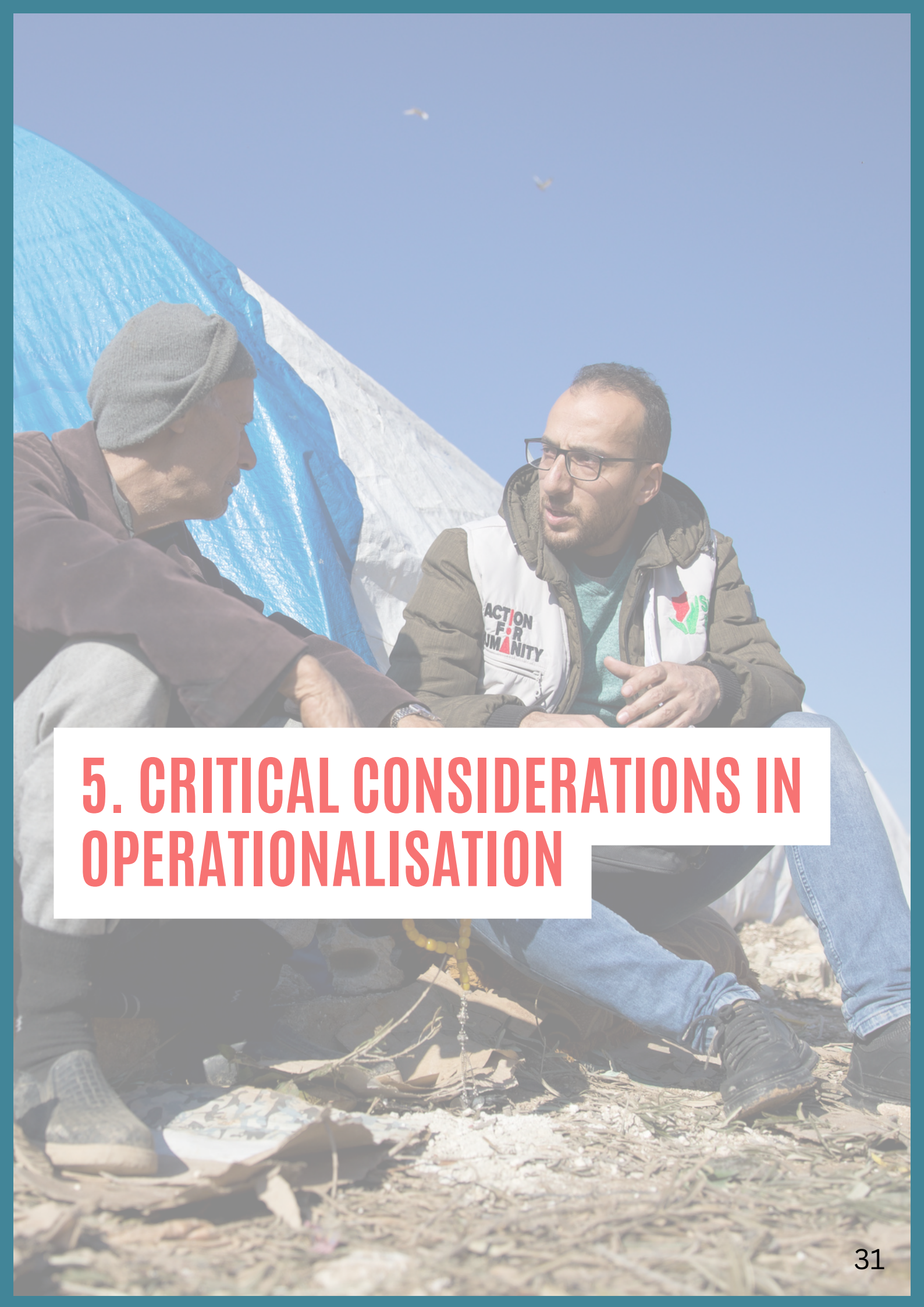
« Do No Harm » practices, which aim to minimise the unintended social, economic or environmental impacts of humanitarian interventions, are more consistently applied than formal climate-conflict integration strategies. Measures include minimising single-use plastics, reducing fuel consumption across logistics, as well as climate-smart procurement practices that prioritise local suppliers to shorten supply chains and reduce transport emissions. NGOs monitor the market impacts of aid, adjusting distribution modalities accordingly.

One proactive approach is represented by a DEC member's Environmental Stewardship Tool, treating environmental considerations as a programme design standard rather than an operational afterthought. Applied before implementation begins, it works through three tiers of environmental risk identification, risk profiling, and identifying mitigation measures. The tool covers Food Security and Livelihoods, DRR, Shelter, WASH, and Markets and CVA. In **Myanmar**, this informed practical changes such as waste management systems, reduced plastic use, and alternative distribution materials. It also highlighted trade-offs, for example, between using renewable materials like bamboo and the risk of deforestation from increased demand.

Interviewees stressed that monitoring market impacts is not only an environmental practice but a conflict-sensitivity one. Aid distributions can distort local markets, create competition over scarce resources and exacerbate tensions between communities. In **Myanmar**, several organisations were forced to abandon cash-based approaches in favour of physical distributions due to conflict-related disruptions to cash availability, increasing the environmental footprint of the response. This illustrates how conflict dynamics shape the options available for greener programming and why do no harm practices cannot be designed without accounting for the security context.

The broader pattern across this section is consistent with what the literature documents at the humanitarian sector level: **climate and conflict considerations are largely addressed in parallel instead of strategically integrated.** While « Do no harm » practices reduce environmental footprints, sectoral programming embeds climate considerations in assistance delivery, and participatory tools reveal climate vulnerability, there remains no systemic framework for addressing their interaction. This gap and the structural reasons behind it, is the subject of the following section.





5. CRITICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN OPERATIONALISATION

5.1 Structural Funding Constraints and Limitations of Short-Termism

DEC member charities identified structural funding constraints as a weakness in their current climate strategies. Funding cycles prioritise immediate outputs over longer-term programming. With recent cuts to humanitarian relief and environmental funding, the withdrawal of the U.S. from UN bodies, and the 'Humanitarian Reset' agenda's emphasis on 'hyper-prioritisation', interviewees expressed concern for the trajectory and capacity of their programmes, as organisations must reprioritise and reevaluate their objectives.

Interviewees highlighted that limited emergency funding, particularly for early warning systems, restricts AA. Organisations are often limited in their ability to address underlying flaws within existing programmes and to redesign systems, therefore only able to make minor adaptations to climate risks. This challenge is compounded in the implementation of nexus programming, as funding tied to specific sectors or outputs encourages siloed programming.

“The global financial architecture itself is acting as a barrier; the bulk of funding and decision-making processes are tilted towards unsustainable and UN climate funding investment”

5.2 Reactivity Instead of Prevention

Interviewees highlighted that climate action is often de-prioritised in conflict environments, where it competes with immediate humanitarian needs, leaving climate-sensitive programming reactive rather than preventive. Local staff frequently face the same shocks as affected communities, while access restrictions and infrastructure collapse further limit adaptive capacity. This tension is reinforced by the perception that focusing on longer-term climate impacts hinders emergency response, framing rapid aid delivery as a trade-off with environmental responsibility. Additionally, aid interventions themselves may inadvertently generate longer-term environmental pressures, further complicating efforts to align humanitarian action with sustainability goals.

“Everything is too short-term. If you want truly sustainable, long-term climate resilience programming, you need employment, community participation, and leadership from the communities themselves”

5.3 Capacity Limitations

In many NGOs, climate and conflict expertise remain institutionally separate, with few staff trained across both areas. Interviewees noted that this is particularly difficult where local organisations face staffing, technical, or geographical constraints, and where specialised expertise on environmental degradation and peacebuilding in FCAS is difficult to access. These gaps reflect a broader lack of integrated tools and frameworks for addressing the climate-conflict nexus.



5.4 Weak Data Systems & Fragmented Coordination

Reliable climate data is limited or contested in conflict settings, making early action harder to coordinate. Government restrictions on data collection, combined with uneven early warning system quality, mean anticipatory action remains uneven across responses. One interviewee identified weak in-country climate information and conflict in **Lebanon** as a key barrier, citing limited early warning capacity, poor forecast dissemination and fragmented information systems. Interviews also suggested that technological failure, especially when combined with other access and operational constraints (particularly 5.1 and 5.7), hinders climate-related programming.

“Ultimately, the system is a marketplace. We are competing for funding and excessive data-sharing can compromise our position”

UNOCHA and cluster mechanisms have improved the reach and coordination of assistance; nevertheless, interviewees stressed the need for stronger coordination between actors, particularly where resources are limited. The DEC membership and other NGOs do not always use shared data systems, making climate-risk analysis harder to harmonise. Coordination by local NGOs often depends on informal relationships, while competition for funding can contribute to duplication of effort, inefficiency or mismanagement.

5.5 Market Constraints

Market volatility is another barrier, especially in conflicts marked by unstable governance, inflation, border restrictions and access denial. These conditions limit supply options, meaning climate-friendly alternatives may be unavailable or inaccessible. For example, a DEC member charity installed solar panels in the West Bank, but strict restrictions in **Gaza** limited access to supplies for similar programming.

Market conditions also shape household coping strategies and aid effectiveness: inflation and shortages can push communities towards environmentally harmful practices, such as burning plastic, and reduce the effectiveness of cash transfer programmes. One interviewee also noted the limited availability of climate-resilient materials on the market, such as solar energy systems, water-efficient irrigation technologies, or heat-resistant seeds, is further constrained by competing institutional and governmental priorities.

5.6 Political and Institutional Barriers

NGOs cannot truly address environmental degradation and climate concerns at scale without state cooperation, which depends on political priorities and global policy dynamics. While the climate-conflict nexus remains an under-prioritised policy, mobilising support and funding is correspondingly difficult.

States can shape operational space by restricting targeting, access and programme flexibility, such as in **Myanmar**, where planned peer-to-peer learning for farmers was disrupted by restrictions.

These constraints reflect practitioner experiences across the cases considered. Addressing them would require greater financial, technical, and political support across local, national, NGO and international actors. The recommendations in this report take these challenges into account.



6. ADOPTING A PEACE-CLIMATE NEXUS APPROACH: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEC MEMBER CHARITIES

6.1 Integrating Climate Risk Assessments into Conflict Governance and Analysis

Interviewees highlighted that climate risks are shaped by resource access, governance failures and local politics, and can themselves lead to conflict. **The peace-climate nexus approach requires DEC member charities to shift from crisis response to prevention.** Climate programming should address who controls resources, who benefits from aid, and integrate ecological resource analysis into conflict sensitivity assessments to reduce both environmental risks and drivers of instability. Expanding conflict analysis to cover governance of water, fuel, and land would allow DEC members to better understand how environmental degradation fuels resource tensions and who gains or loses from climate impacts and aid.

Anticipatory action, as described earlier, emerged as a key theme during interviews. Participants valued tools like early warning systems, scenario planning for both climate and conflict, pooled contingency funds, flood risk mapping, and remote sensing. Integrating climate forecasting within conflict analysis would help DEC members anticipate how droughts, floods, crop failures, and migration might intersect with conflict. Mapping and remote sensing inform safer settlement choices and enable timely responses to minimise repeated displacement (see Box 3). Pooled funds can also support proactive responses to early warning signs. While they are becoming more prominent in the current funding landscape, their reach and impact in FCAS remain limited, highlighting the need to expand such mechanisms to efficiently enable anticipatory action.

Box 3: In **Syria**, where access to reliable environmental data is limited, remote sensing helps monitor environmental changes from a distance. NGOs use satellite imagery to track vegetation cover, water availability and agricultural productivity, providing early signs of drought stress or declining livelihoods.

Interviewees also stressed the importance of integrating differentiated vulnerability assessments, including disaggregated vulnerability profiling by gender, age, disability, displacement status and livelihoods. Community-led mapping helps identify households at highest risks, while climate vulnerability maps could help DEC member charities target regions where environmental stress and humanitarian needs overlap. This ensures DRR and adaptation programs address varied group vulnerabilities. Additionally, a clearer integration of environmental health risks into needs assessments, with explicit links between climate and health outcomes would enable earlier identification of health vulnerability, particularly in contexts like **Gaza**, where environmental degradation, water contamination, and overcrowding are directly driving mortality.

The use of existing local or national planning tools was described as a key factor in strengthening climate-sensitive governance. This would help DEC member charities identify priority risks, assign responsibilities, and guide preparedness planning, while aligning with existing national or municipal risk management systems (see Box 4). In FCAS, integrating humanitarian action with these frameworks improves coordination, avoids duplicating assessments, and strengthens long-term climate adaptation.

Box 4: Displaced populations and informal settlements remain largely overlooked in institutional climate planning across FCAS, despite being disproportionately located in hazard-prone areas. Integrating humanitarian programming with local planning tools, such as heat action plans, national risk platforms, and flood maps, would ensure these groups are included in climate threat identification, infrastructure planning, and adaptation measures.

6.2 Building Multidisciplinary Climate-Conflict Capacity

Interviewees highlighted that **climate-conflict challenges cannot be addressed by humanitarian teams working in isolation or by treating climate as an additional lens to existing frameworks**. Environmental risks intersect with areas like infrastructure, governance, public health, or social welfare, yet many interviewees noted that humanitarian teams often lack the specialised knowledge necessary in designing, conflict-sensitive and climate-adaptive interventions. Advancing a peace-climate nexus approach requires DEC member charities to strengthen multidisciplinary collaboration.

A practical step is to formalise cross-sectoral programme design, bringing together expertise across intersecting fields when environmental risks are high (see Box 5). As humanitarian interventions are deployed rapidly, infrastructure solutions are often implemented without adequate consideration of local environmental conditions — interviewees cited poor engineering assessments and construction ill-equipped to withstand local climate threats. Technical expertise must therefore be integrated into emergency programme design, particularly for energy, shelter, WASH, and public infrastructure. Building in climate-proofing measures and technical standards from the outset ensures interventions remain effective as conditions change, and reduces the need for costly fixes down the line.

“Better coordination between UN and private humanitarian actors is essential – engaging efforts that understand the environmental situation to deliver quick solutions while also building longer-term plans to sustain access to resources in conflict settings. Engineers, for example, could provide more strategic modelling: how quickly a water well might dry up, how fast pollution is spreading, and how long communities can realistically expect access to key resources.”

Box 5: In **Gaza**, healthcare professionals incorporated energy and infrastructure solutions into their medical work after widespread power shortages, introducing solar panels and battery systems to keep clinics running; not as a climate strategy but as a necessity for basic health services. This both demonstrates how climate-resilient programming relies on integrating sectoral expertise before systems reach a point of failure and highlights how conflict and climate solutions can overlap, alongside efficiency drivers.

Interviewees highlighted the benefits of shared technical advisory capacity across organisations. Rather than each DEC member charity maintaining a full in-house climate team, creating shared expert pools including: environmental engineers, renewable energy specialists, climate risk analysts, urban planners, public health professionals and governance advisors, could serve multiple organisations. Shared advisory support is especially useful in programme design, technical reviews, and contexts where climate stress impacts infrastructure and services; as climate-sensitive programming often needs expertise that individual teams cannot maintain alone. Developing joint staff climate-training programmes that combine climate analysis, conflict dynamics, and environmental governance, would help staff understand how climate factors interact with political and social contexts necessary in supporting more informed operational decisions.

Broadening partnerships beyond the humanitarian sector to include municipal officials, environmental NGOs, and private sector innovators, is also crucial. The People-Public-Private Partnership (P4) framework is relevant for joint development or humanitarian initiatives, putting local communities at the centre of decision-making. Additionally, connecting humanitarian teams to research and policy networks through research institutions, think tanks, and policy organisations would allow DEC member charities to access evidence and analytical tools for preventive programming. Such partnerships strengthen links between humanitarian response and wider systems, supporting more coordinated, sustainable programming.

6.3 Strengthening Community-Led Climate Knowledge Generation and Action

According to interviewees, communities usually detect social or environmental changes—declining water levels, rising temperatures, displacement shifts, increased waste accumulation or shifts in local coping strategies—before external actors do. **A peace-climate nexus approach should invest in community-led climate knowledge and action as a foundation for anticipatory action and local risk analysis.** These initiatives aim to strengthen and integrate local and indigenous knowledge into humanitarian programming, rather than shifting climate risk management responsibility onto crisis-affected communities.

DEC member charities should go beyond conventional DRR initiatives by enabling participatory environmental monitoring more directly focused on climate-conflict dynamics. Adapting tools like PCVA to include conflict dynamics would help DEC member charities better understand climate and conflict intersections. Communities could monitor indicators such as water, heat, pollution, waste, displacement, and environmental degradation, and assess their links to resources and power structures. Participatory environmental assessments are equally essential. Unlike externally driven risk analysis, they enable communities to document climate and environmental impacts, identify affected groups, and determine legitimate actions. This would help DEC member charities understand hidden vulnerabilities that standardised assessments may miss (see Boxes 7-8). Locally informed insights could then trigger anticipatory action and earlier responses, cash transfers, or settlement planning, particularly where government-led systems are limited.

“Minimising conflict damage requires a thorough understanding of the local conditions, careful planning, continuous monitoring and involvement of local communities and partners”

DEC member charities should strengthen youth engagement as central to legitimacy and long-term resilience. Initiatives like youth climate education, climate academies, environmental campaigns, and youth-led monitoring were all cited as key to building environmental leadership. Integrating youth engagement into humanitarian programming helps build local capacity to contribute to environmental monitoring, community preparedness, first response, and climate resilience.

Box 7: Interviewees pointed to digital tools as key to operationalising this approach. In **Lebanon**, one NGO's 'Green Police Academy' trains volunteers to identify and document environmental harm using a mobile app, continuously monitoring forests, water recharge zones, and dumping sites. This enables communities to track harm, identify responsible parties, and expose weak regulation.

Box 8: In **Gaza**, community waste cleaning addresses severe health and sanitation risks from accumulated waste. Additionally, local NGOs and communities help identify vulnerable areas and relocate informal settlements away from high-risk areas like flood-prone shorelines. These initiatives show how local actors manage environmental risk amid fragmented governance and limited aid.

6.4 Making Climate and Environmental Practice a Standard Part of Humanitarian Programming

All DEC member charities have committed to integrating climate and environmental consideration into humanitarian programming, as reflected in their endorsement of the Climate and Environment (C&E) Charter for Humanitarian Organisations. The Charter outlines a shared commitment to reducing environmental harm, strengthening climate adaptation, and improving the sustainability of humanitarian action (Climate Charter, 2026). While DEC member charities have developed internal tools and approaches, the priority now is ensuring these commitments are applied consistently, and C&E considerations systematically integrated into all stages of humanitarian programme design, procurement, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

Screening tools tailored to humanitarian settings, such as the Nexus Environmental Assessment Tool (NEAT+), can be used to rapidly screen for environmental risks across sectors early in programme design and consistently integrate environmental risk analysis into standard programme design. To strengthen their effectiveness in FCAS, these tools should also incorporate conflict sensitive risk analysis, to consider how interventions may affect access to natural resources, local power dynamics, and potential tensions between communities. This moves climate integration beyond « Do No Harm » commitments toward clearer expectations in both emergency and long-term contexts.

DEC member charities should advocate for and design similarly anticipatory funding models with donors, which better position humanitarians to respond at the speed environmental hazards demand. The 'Start Network' uses 'anticipation alerts' based on forecasts of emerging risks, which differ from traditional response alerts due to the focus on risk-based funding for droughts or floods. Funding is dispersed within approximately 72 hours for project implementations of less than 60 days. This approach enables more creative, context-specific climate resilience programming that reduces reactive, time-sensitive resource mobilisation.

Interviewees highlighted that the success of climate-sensitive interventions depends on how they are framed and communicated, not simply their design. DEC member charities should align climate action with humanitarian priorities like health, food, security, dignity and protection rather than focusing solely on climate objectives. For example, presenting solar panels in clinics as a way to maintain health services during power outages is more persuasive than focusing on emissions reduction. This framing also creates opportunities to position climate-sensitive programming as contributing to stability and resilience, by reducing pressures that can contribute to conflict. In conflict settings, framing climate work through a humanitarian security lens is critical for programming to be operationally relevant and publicly legitimate. DEC member charities should also position climate adaptation within recovery and reconstruction to raise its priority in operational and funding frameworks.

A photograph of two women standing in a dusty, outdoor setting, likely a refugee camp. The woman on the left is wearing a light blue long-sleeved shirt, a tan vest, and a white and grey patterned headscarf. She is holding a spiral notebook and a purple pen. The woman on the right is wearing a black headscarf, a black jacket, and a purple skirt. She is pointing at the notebook. In the background, there are tents, a solar panel, and a building under construction.

CONCLUSION

This report examined the context, challenges, and opportunities associated with the climate-conflict nexus and its implications for humanitarian action. In an era characterised by accelerating climate change and evolving forms of armed conflict, understanding how environmental stressors intersect with violence and fragility is increasingly urgent. For DEC member charities, these overlapping pressures directly shape vulnerability, risk, and the effectiveness of their crisis response.

Drawing on a literature review, analysis of recent crisis responses, and interviews with DEC member charities and external practitioners and researchers, this report has explored how humanitarian actors currently engage with the climate-conflict nexus and where significant gaps remain. The findings highlight a range of structural and operational challenges, including limited and inflexible funding, short-termism and reactive programming, capacity constraints, weak data systems, fragmented communication, ethical trade-offs, and broader political and institutional barriers.

Nevertheless, this report identifies promising approaches emerging within recent DEC responses: participatory and community-led assessments, anticipatory and risk-informed approaches, behavioural and education initiatives, and the integration of « Do No Harm » and conflict-sensitive practices into programme design. Together, these approaches demonstrate growing recognition of the need to respond to the interconnected risks posed by climate stress and conflict, even within significant institutional and operational constraints.

Based on these findings, this report recommends that DEC member charities further develop and operationalise a climate-peace nexus approach by:

- **Integrating climate risks assessments into conflict analysis and governance frameworks.**
- **Building multidisciplinary capacity on climate, environment, and conflict within humanitarian organisations.**
- **Strengthening community-led climate knowledge generation and locally driven climate adaptation initiatives.**
- **Embedding climate, environmental, and conflict considerations as standard components of humanitarian programming in FCAS.**

Although the climate-conflict nexus presents significant challenges, it also highlights opportunities for more integrated approaches through the climate-peace nexus. Strengthening climate resilience, improving natural resource governance, and promoting inclusive adaptation strategies can help reduce vulnerability while mitigating some of the social and economic pressures that fuel conflict. In this sense, climate resilience and peacebuilding are closely interconnected processes that can reinforce one another when addressed together.

While humanitarian actors cannot resolve the structural drivers of climate change or armed conflict alone, integrating climate-sensitive and conflict-aware approaches can play a critical role in reducing harm, strengthening social cohesion, and supporting communities facing increasingly complex crises. This report aims to contribute to this effort by identifying practical lessons, highlighting emerging practices, and outlining opportunities for DEC member charities to further strengthen their responses at the intersection of climate, environment, and conflict.

Reference List

- Abitbol, E., and McCandless, E. (2022). Transforming our Common Crisis: Complexity, Climate Change, and the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus. *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, 17(3), pp.251-256. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15423166221132467>.
- Asselt, V., Steinhübel-Rasheed, L., Aung, Z.W., Goeb, J. and Nang, S. (2025). Climate, conflict, and the coping capacity of farm households in Myanmar. *Journal of Rural Studies*, [online] 121, p.103909. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2025.103909>.
- Augsten, L., Gagné, K. and Su, Y. (2022). The human dimensions of the climate risk and armed conflict nexus: A review article. *Regional Environmental Change*, [online] 22. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10113-022-01888-1>.
- Beckline, M. (2016). Environmental degradation in conflict and post-conflict regions. *International Journal of Environmental Protection and Policy*, [online] 4, p.187. doi:<https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijepp.20160406.15>.
- Berhe, A.A. (2022). On the relationship of armed conflicts with climate change. *PLOS Climate*, [online] 1, p.e0000038. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pclm.0000038>.
- Buhaug, H. (2015). Climate-conflict research: some reflections on the way forward. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change*, 6(3), pp.269–275. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.336>.
- Buhaug, H. and von Uexkull, V. (2021). Vicious circles: Violence, vulnerability, and climate change. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, [online] 46, pp.545–568. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-environ-012220-014708>.
- Cantor, David James (2023). Divergent dynamics: disasters and conflicts as ‘drivers’ of internal displacement?. *Disasters*, 48(1). doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/disa.12589>.
- Cavalcanti, D. M., Lucas, Ferreira, A., Basterra, E. L., Pena, D., Monti, C., Barreix, G., Silva, N. J., Vaz, P., Saute, F., Fanjul, G., Quique Bassat, Naniche, D., Macinko, J., & Davide Rasella. (2025). Evaluating the impact of two decades of USAID interventions and projecting the effects of defunding on mortality up to 2030: a retrospective impact evaluation and forecasting analysis. *The Lancet*, 0(0). [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(25\)01186-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(25)01186-9).
- Climate Charter. (2026). Climate Programming in Fragile, Conflict-Affected Settings - Climate Charter. [online] Available at: <https://www.climate-charter.org/guidance-themes/climate-programming-in-fragile-conflict-affected-settings/> [Accessed 25 Mar. 2026].
- Crowley, F., Fraser, A., Anwar, N.H., Anjum, G. and Danesh Jayatilaka (2021). Violence-climate change interactions in cities: A Resource Guide. [online] Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/356175233_Violence-climate_change_interactions_in_cities_A_Resource_Guide.
- Cucinotta, G., Pirisi A., St-Louis, M., Mosello, and B., Munayer R.(2024).Mainstreaming a climate, peace and security approach: Challenges and entry points for humanitarian action.[online] Available at: https://www.unssc.org/sites/default/files/node/resources/field_resource/2024-09/HNPW%20publication%20-%20V3_compressed.pdf.
- Cundill, G., Singh, C., Adger, W.N., Safrá de Campos, R., Vincent, K., Tebboth, M. and Maharjan, A. (2021). Toward a climate mobility research agenda: Intersectionality, immobility, and policy responses. *Global Environmental Change*, 69, p.102315. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2021.102315>.

- Dagher, L., Farajalla, N., Jabbour, H., and Zreik, M. (2024). Climate Exodus: Navigating Climate Change, Migration and Security in the Levant. MPRA, Paper No. 122861.[online] Available at: <https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/122861/>.
- de Boer, J. (2015). Resilience and the Fragile City. *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development*, 4(1). doi:<https://doi.org/10.5334/sta.fk>.
- Dehm, J. (2020). Climate change, 'Slow Violence' and the Indefinite Deferral of Responsibility for 'Loss and Damage'. *Griffith Law Review*, [online] 29(2), pp.1–33. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/10383441.2020.1790101>.
- Diab, J. (2025) .The unmovable borderland: war, home, and the decision against displacement in South Lebanon. *Int J Humanitarian Action*, 10(15), pp. 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41018-025-00177-w>
- Eastin, J. (2015). Fuel to the Fire: Natural Disasters and the Duration of Civil Conflict. *International Interactions*, 42(2), pp.322–349. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/03050629.2016.1115402>.
- ESCWA (2024)'The multidimensional impact of Israeli attacks on Lebanon', Policy Brief 1, pp1-18. [online] Available at: <https://www.unescwa.org/publications/multidimensional-impact-israeli-attacks-lebanon>.
- FAO (2025). Land Available for Cultivation in the Gaza Strip as of 28 July 2025. [online] FAO. Available at: <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cd6493en> [Accessed 7 Feb. 2026].
- Fluhmann, R.M., Brown, S., Brown, S. and Mena, R. (2025). The Challenges and Opportunities of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus - Peace News Network. [online] Peace News Network. Available at: <https://peacenews.com/the-challenges-and-opportunities-of-the-humanitarian-development-peace-nexus/>.
- Galtung, J., Barker, K. and Joan, Diego. (2011, January 21. Breaking the Cycle of Violent Conflict. Peace Exchange, University of California Television. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=16YiLqftppo>.
- Ghimire, R. and Ferreira, S. (2015). Floods and armed conflict. *Environment and Development Economics*, 21(1), pp.23–52. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1017/s1355770x15000157>.
- Hassoun, A. (2025). War on Gaza. Springer Nature.[online] Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/389546012_War_on_Gaza_Consequences_on_Sustainability_and_Global_Security.
- Helman, D., Zaitchik, B.F. and Funk, C. (2020). Climate has contrasting direct and indirect effects on armed conflicts. *Environmental Research Letters*, 15(10), p.104017. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/aba97d>.
- Hendrix, C.S. and Salehyan, I. (2012). Climate change, rainfall, and social conflict in Africa. *Journal of Peace Research*, 49(1), pp.35–50. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343311426165>.
- Jayawardhan, S. (2017). Vulnerability and Climate Change Induced Human Displacement. *Consilience*, 17. doi:<https://doi.org/10.2307/26188784>.
- Kaldor, M. (2013). In Defence of New Wars. *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*, 2(1), pp.1–16. doi:<https://doi.org/10.5334/sta.at>.
- Khayyat, M.(2023).Resistant ecologies. *American Ethnologist*, 50, pp.181–195. <https://doi.org/10.1111/amet.13110>.
- Koubi, V. (2019). Climate Change and Conflict. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 22(1), pp.343–360. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-050317-070830>.
- Linke, A. M., & Ruether, B. (2021). Weather, wheat, and war: Security implications of climate variability for conflict in Syria. *Journal of Peace Research*, 58(1), 114–131. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343320973070>.

- Mari, S., Bentrovato, D., Durante, F., & Wassermann, J. (2020) Collective victimhood resulting from structural violence. In J. R. Vollhardt (Ed.), *The social psychology of collective victimhood* (pp. 231–251). Oxford University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190875190.003.0011>.
- Mason, M., Zeitoun, M. and Mimi, Z. (2012). Compounding Vulnerability: Impacts of Climate Change on Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 41(3), pp.38–53. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1525/jps.2012.xli.3.38>.
- Mena, R., Brown, S., Peters, L. E. R., Kelman, I., and Ji, H. (2022) ‘Connecting Disasters and Climate Change to the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus’, *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, 17(3), pp.324-340.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/15423166221129633>.
- Nixon, R. (2011). Slow violence and the environmentalism of the poor. [online]
doi:<https://doi.org/10.4159/harvard.9780674061194>.
- Patt, K. (2022). Climate Change and Positive Peace-A Study on the Effects of Rapid-Onset Climate Change on Positive Peace. Department of Peace and Conflict Research at the University of Uppsala, pp.1-105. [online] Available at:
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/379914107_CLIMATE_CHANGE_CONFLICT_AND_MIGRATION_CCM_NEXUS_AND_WATER_SCARCITY_STUDY .
- PCVA Template. (2022). Christian Aid Good Practice Guide: Participatory Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (PVCA). Available at: <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-09/christian-aid-good-practice-guide-pvca-oct-2009.pdf>.
- Peisch, S. (2025). South Lebanon: Unearthing Embedded Temporal-Spatial Dynamics and Effects. *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 31(3), pp.440–453.
- Plänitz, E. (2020). Natural disasters and political disorder: Why urban flooding turns violent. Applying a fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis. *Peace Economics Peace Science and Public Policy*, [online] 26.
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1515/peps-2019-0046>.
- Raleigh, C. and Kniveton, D. (2012). Come rain or shine: An analysis of conflict and climate variability in East Africa. *Journal of Peace Research*, 49(1), pp.51–64. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343311427754>.
- Rintoul-Hynes, N. (2025). Environmental Considerations for post-war Reconstruction of Gaza. *AMBIO*.
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s13280-025-02246-1>.
- Roberts, K.B. and Mai (2021). Everyday violence: Tigyit coal mine and coal-fired power plant in Shan state, Myanmar. *Geoforum*, [online] 124, pp.392–399. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2021.03.002>.
- Roy, A., Kumar, S. and Rahaman, M. (2023). Exploring climate change impacts on rural livelihoods and adaptation strategies: Reflections from marginalized communities in India. *Environmental Development*, [online] 49, p.100937.
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envdev.2023.100937>.
- Stoddard, A., Jillani, S., Caccavale, J., Cooke, P., Guillemois, D. and Klimentov, V. (2017). Out of Reach: How Insecurity Prevents Humanitarian Aid from Accessing the Neediest. *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*, 6(1), p.1. doi:<https://doi.org/10.5334/sta.506>.
- Tarnas, M. C., Almhawish, N., Ratnayake, R., Elferruh, Y., Aladhan, I., Alhaffar, M. B. A., & Abbara, A. (2025). Climate change, armed conflict, forced displacement, and epidemic-prone diseases: an exploratory study in northern Syria. *BMC Public Health*, 25(1), Article 2642. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-025-23918-3>.

Thalheimer, L., Cottier, F., Kruczkiewicz, A., Hultquist, C., Cascade Tuholske, Benveniste, H., Freihardt, J., Hemmati, M., Kam, P.M., Pricope, N.G., Den, V., Zimmer, A., Sherbinin, A. de and Horton, R.M. (2025). Prioritizing involuntary immobility in climate policy and disaster planning. *Nature Communications*, 16(1). doi:<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-025-57679-9>.

Touhouliotis, V. (2018). Weak Seed and a Poisoned Land: Slow Violence and the Toxic Infrastructures of War in South Lebanon. *Environmental Humanities*, 10 (1), pp.86–106. doi:10.1215/22011919-4385480.

Woods, K. (2015). Intersections of land grabs and climate change mitigation strategies in Myanmar as a (post-) war state of conflict. *MOSAIC Working Paper Series*, 3.

Zubkova, M., Giglio, L., Humber, M. L., Hall, J. V., & Ellicott, E. (2021). Conflict and Climate: Drivers of Fire Activity in Syria in the Twenty-First Century. *Earth Interactions*, 25(1), pp.119–135. <https://doi.org/10.1175/EI-D-21-0009.1>.

Appendix

Terms of Reference (TOR)

LSE/International Development Consultancy Project Proposal Template	
Organization and Department	Disasters Emergency Committee (www.dec.org.uk); Programmes & Accountability department
Project Working Title	Intersections of climate, conflict and vulnerability in fragile contexts
Background: Two short paragraphs. In the first, please provide a brief description of your organisation and its objectives. In the second, please provide a brief introduction to the topic to be addressed by the project. Why is the organisation interested? Why is the subject itself interesting?	The DEC is a unique membership organisation, comprising 15 of the UK's leading humanitarian charities. Since 1963 it has raised 2.5 billion to help save lives in disaster-affected communities around the world. This research will examine the dynamic relationship between climatic stressors and conflict, and the role of DEC members in navigating this increasingly common intersection. Prolonged conflict undermines local adaptation systems, leaving communities more exposed to climate shocks. Conversely, environmental degradation and resource scarcity - can act as stress multipliers, intensifying pre-existing tensions and contributing to the outbreak of conflict. Importantly, there are different levels of vulnerability, exposure to risks, and capacity for adaptation and resilience. This means that certain groups—such as women, children, the elderly - are disproportionately affected, facing heightened risks with fewer resources to cope with these overlapping challenges. DEC members face the challenge of responding to urgent humanitarian needs while addressing the underlying environmental and climatic factors that contribute to instability and related levels of vulnerability.
Question: One or two sentences. What is the motivating question? What is it, specifically, that your organisation would like to know?	How do DEC members respond to vulnerabilities and disasters created and exacerbated by the intersections of climate, environment and conflict?
Objective: Short paragraph that explains what you hope to get out of the answer and how you may use the students' work to advance organizational objectives.	This research question seeks to unpack how DEC members design and engage in interventions that are not only conflict-sensitive but also environmentally informed, how they integrate climate adaptation into emergency programming, and how they navigate the operational and ethical dilemmas that arise when working at the intersection of conflict, climate change, and environmental degradation. Our hope would be that this research would provide DEC members with a literature review and case studies that are illustrative of the intersections between environment, climate & conflict, as well as specific approaches or strategies that highlight any innovations/ best practice in responding to these interconnected issues. This could include, for example, the use of tools that facilitate an integrated conflict/climate/ environmental risk assessment, integrated monitoring approaches, or other climate/ conflict preparedness or resilience building initiatives.
Methodology: How the students are expected to answer the question. E.g. desk research, interviews, survey, review of internal documents, secondary analysis etc. If you wish the students to define the methodology please say so. Please note that no funds are available eg: for travel or translation etc.	The study would rely on secondary data sources and key informant interviews within the membership and beyond: § A document review of internal DEC reports § A document review of other grey and published literature on the subject § Remote interviews with a selection of Key informants among DEC members but also other organisations (UN, National and local authorities, INGOs and NGOs)
Critical skills: What – if any - specific skills are needed to deliver this project? For example, specific analytic skills. Please note that we cannot accept projects that require non-English language skills as critical to the project's success.	• Strong research and analytical skills • Knowledge of and interest in humanitarian assistance in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, environmental climate change adaptation, localisation, and anticipatory action • Experience of the DEC Appeal humanitarian contexts would be a plus: Myanmar, Middle East and Ukraine & region.
Contact: (Name and email address of the person/s in your organisation who will be responsible for liaising with students.)	Frances Crowley and Ed Beswick, fcrowley@dec.org.uk ; ebeswick@dec.org.uk

Photo Credits

Page 12 - Phyo Maung Maung/Arete- Myanmar Appeal

Page 16 - Aya Matrabie/Fairpicture - Gaza Appeal

Page 18 - ActionAid - Gaza Appeal

Page 24 - Care Myanmar- Myanmar Appeal

Page 26 - Palestine Red Crescent Society - Gaza Appeal

Page 28 - Stephen Ryan, ICRC - Myanmar Appeal

Page 30 - British Red Cross - Syria Appeal

Page 31 - Ali Haj Suleiman - Turkey / Syria Appeal

Page 34 - Palestine Red Crescent Society - Gaza Appeal

Page 36 - DEC - Myanmar Appeal

Page 42 - Ali Haj Suleiman - Syria Appeal