

The peacebuilding potential of community-based disaster risk reduction: insights from displacement-affected communities in Iraq and South Sudan

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Abstract

This thesis examines how community-based disaster risk reduction (CBDRR) generates peace-positive outcomes in displacement-affected communities, focused on how shared natural resources and environmental risks shape these dynamics. Designed as a qualitative multiple case study focused on Iraq and South Sudan, it draws on interviews and documents to examine the conditions under which, and the processes or mechanisms through which, CBDRR fosters peacebuilding or, conversely, entrenches existing grievances and conflict dynamics. This thesis shows that CBDRR does not generate cooperation by resolving structural drivers of vulnerability, but by creating provisional arrangements through which communities negotiate shared risks, articulate grievances, and establish minimally legitimate rules. These outcomes are modest, uneven, and contingent, yet they demonstrate that CBDRR's influence operates through relational and procedural shifts rather than technical improvements alone, shaped by how interventions engage with existing political economies, formal and informal governance structures, and social and structural asymmetries. The analysis highlights that environmental peacebuilding cannot be understood without attention to relational power. The findings do not suggest that CBDRR can transform structural inequalities or resolve the "wicked problem" of environmental insecurity and displacement. Rather, they show that under certain conditions, CBDRR can lay the foundations for more durable forms of cooperation that make peacebuilding feasible. This thesis underscores the need for environmental interventions that recognise political and institutional constraints while engaging directly with the differentiated vulnerabilities of displacement-affected communities.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Forcibly displaced populations in fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCAS) are increasingly exposed and vulnerable to protracted, slow-, and sudden-onset natural hazards. Protracted displacement and the local (re)integration of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees into already fragile, resource-stressed host communities intensify pressures on governance capacities and natural resources, heightening risks of environmental and social tensions. As internal displacement reaches unprecedented levels, durable solutions and peaceful coexistence in displacement-affected settings has become increasingly urgent. Against this backdrop, this thesis examines whether, how, and under what conditions community-based disaster risk reduction (CBDRR) contributes to or undermines peace-positive outcomes, and the pathways through which these effects unfold in protracted, non-camp displacement-affected communities in Iraq and South Sudan, focused on how shared natural resources and environmental risks shape these dynamics.

Environmental peacebuilding provides the overarching analytical lens, complemented by a political ecology perspective that highlights how power relations and institutional arrangements shape vulnerability, access to resources, and the distribution of benefits. This thesis adopted a qualitative multiple-case-study design. Data collection proceeded in three stages: a literature review to establish conceptual foundations; a case-specific document review of publicly available, geographically and contextually grounded material on displacement-affected communities in Iraq and South Sudan; and semi-structured interviews with practitioners and researchers working in disaster risk management, natural resource management, displacement, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding. A framework-driven thematic coding approach guided the analysis, combining deductive categories derived from environmental peacebuilding frameworks with bounded inductive insights.

The findings show that CBDRR generated peace-positive outcomes, particularly regarding capabilities, substantial integration, and symbolic rapprochement, yet these gains were not automatic and were consistently modest, uneven, and contingent. Cooperation around water, land, and seasonal mobility did not arise because CBDRR resolved underlying structural problems, but because it created temporary spaces and meaningful opportunities within and between groups to negotiate shared risks, articulate grievances, and establish rules perceived as minimally fair. These processes helped stabilise relations and reduce the likelihood of escalation, but they rarely altered the deeper political and economic structures that shape vulnerability and exclusion.

The findings reinforce that CBDRR interventions operate within complex networks of authority—tribal, customary, bureaucratic, and political—that determine who participates, whose claims are recognised, and who benefits. In some cases, CBDRR broadened participation by creating inclusive dialogue platforms, committees, co-designed bylaws, or hybrid governance arrangements that strengthened local institutions for managing environmental issues and opened pathways for cooperation, trust-building, and dispute resolution. In other cases, it inadvertently reinforced existing power dynamics, especially when interventions relied

on local gatekeepers or when civic space was constrained. These dynamics matter because they shape whether CBDRR reduces grievances or reinforces them.

This thesis also shows that displacement fundamentally reshapes perceptions of fairness. Interventions that did not explicitly address the differentiated vulnerabilities of IDPs, hosts, returnees, women, and youth often intensified grievances, even when technically successful. Evidence across both cases reinforces the importance of substantive representation for women and youth with real decision-making authority, alignment of livelihood support with their priorities, modest remuneration and leadership pathways, and protection from political and security risks. Where these conditions were met, communities demonstrated stronger ownership, improved maintenance of shared resources, and greater prospects for sustained peace-positive outcomes.

Overall, the findings do not suggest that CBDRR can transform structural inequalities or resolve the “wicked problem” of environmental insecurity and displacement. Rather, this thesis shows that under certain conditions, CBDRR can create the relational and procedural foundations for more durable forms of cooperation and collective action. These relational and procedural shifts are modest and always shaped by the political and institutional landscapes in which they unfold. Under the right conditions, they can reduce tensions and support cooperation in places where trust is low and displacement has reshaped social relations. Recognising both the potential and the limits of these processes, and the conditions under which they operate, is essential for designing interventions that contribute meaningfully to peacebuilding in fragile, displacement-affected settings.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBDRR	Community-based disaster risk reduction
CSO	Civil society organisation
DRM	Disaster risk management
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
FCAS	Fragile- and conflict-affected situation
IDP	Internally displaced person
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
KI	Key informant
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NRM	Natural resource management
UN	United Nations

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research problem

Forcibly displaced populations, most often in fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCAS), are increasingly exposed and vulnerable to protracted, slow-onset, and sudden-onset natural hazards, as well as environmental degradation (Easton-Calabria et al., 2025). Protracted displacement and the local (re)integration of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees into already fragile, resource-stressed host communities intensify pressures on governance capacities and natural resources, heightening risks of environmental and social tensions (Cavanagh, 2025; Warner et al., 2010). Host communities often perceive displaced persons as contributing to environmental degradation, fuelling competition (Tafere, 2018); securitised narratives depicting them as “exceptional resource degraders” often drive scarcity-induced conflict (Cavanagh, 2025, p. 158). Yet, growing evidence shows that communities often manage shared natural resources, degradation, scarcity, and intergroup tensions in non-violent, cooperative ways (Krampe et al., 2021; Krampe & de Coning, 2025; Martin, 2005). Understanding how communities adapt peacefully to climate and environmental shocks and manage resource competition is therefore critical for assessing how disaster-related interventions can both reduce risk and foster cooperation rather than exacerbate grievances.

The rapid rise in internal displacement has increased the urgency of durable solutions amid compounding social, environmental, and institutional stress. By 2025, more than 80 million people were internally displaced due to conflict and disasters, representing a significant surge over previous decades (IDMC, 2025). This trend coincides with a policy shift away from camp-based responses towards supporting sustainable return or local integration within host communities, where most IDPs already reside (Easton-Calabria et al., 2025; Pape et al., 2019). Amid intensifying climate and environmental risks that increasingly shape vulnerability, IDPs, returnees, and host communities alike face heightened exposure (Pape et al., 2019; UNHCR, 2025b; UNSDG & IASC, 2025), underscoring the shared socioeconomic, political, and environmental pressures that characterise displacement-affected settings. Together, these dynamics raise a central analytical challenge: in contexts where environmental and conflict risk intersect, how can disaster risk reduction (DRR) shape cooperation and social cohesion?

1.2. Research gap

Where disaster and conflict risks are mutually reinforcing—often driven by overlapping vulnerabilities, weak coping capacities, and constrained governance—DRR and peacebuilding can likewise function as reinforcing processes (Peters & Peters, 2021; Walch, 2018). Despite the conceptual overlap, the potential for DRR to contribute to peacebuilding remains underexplored, where risks are compounded and institutional capacities are weak (Conca & Beevers, 2018; Jensen & Kron, 2018; Peters & Peters, 2021; Peters et al., 2019a; Peters et al., 2019b; Rüttinger, 2020; Siddiqi & Peters, 2019). While recent scholarship suggests that cooperation around natural resource management (NRM) and shared climate and environmental risks may support peacebuilding, persistent theoretical and empirical gaps remain, especially regarding locally driven initiatives (Ide et al., 2023; Krampe et al., 2024;

Sändig et al., 2024), causal processes, and local dynamics of environmental peacebuilding (Ide et al., 2021; Ide et al., 2023). Peters and Kelman (2020) emphasise the need to clarify when, where, by and for whom, and under what conditions approaches addressing shared disaster and conflict risks strengthen cooperation and support peace. Likewise, Krampe et al. (2021) note that, although evidence is growing, understanding of how and why such environmental initiatives generate peace-positive outcomes remains limited. That is, natural resources can drive tension across societal, political, and spatial scales (Jensen & Kron, 2018), but NRM is also increasingly recognised as an entry point for conflict prevention and peacebuilding (Bursee et al., 2025; Conca & Beevers, 2018; Peters et al., 2019a; Rüttinger, 2020).

Community-based disaster risk reduction (CBDRR) offers a lens for exploring how participatory, localised risk management in vulnerable communities may support conflict prevention and peacebuilding, as such communities are central to effective DRR (Šakić Trogrlić et al., 2022). However, its adequacy as an approach for conflict prevention and peacebuilding warrants further study (Peters & Peters, 2021; Peters et al., 2019a). This research, therefore, explores whether, under certain conditions and through specific processes, CBDRR can facilitate dialogue, foster cooperation, and strengthen social cohesion within and between groups around shared natural resources and environmental risks. Does CBDRR generate peace-positive outcomes, reproduce existing power asymmetries, or exacerbate competition, and how does the broader enabling environment—including power relations, conflict legacies, and governance arrangements—shape these dynamics? Answering this question underscores the need for context-sensitive empirical evidence on the conditions under which CBDRR can function not only as a risk-reduction strategy but also as a catalyst for conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

1.3. Research purpose and questions

This thesis contributes to environmental peacebuilding scholarship by providing empirical analysis of the conditions and processes through which CBDRR shapes peacebuilding in protracted, non-camp displacement-affected communities in Iraq and South Sudan. It addresses the need for more context-sensitive, process-oriented evidence to examine whether, how, and under what conditions risk reduction interventions and climate adaptation at the local level contribute to or undermine peace-positive outcomes, and the pathways through which these effects unfold. Attention is given to how shared natural resources and environmental risks shape these dynamics. This thesis is guided by three questions:

- RQ1: Under what conditions does CBDRR foster or constrain peacebuilding?
- RQ2: Through what mechanisms or processes does CBDRR enable peace-positive outcomes between local groups or entrench existing grievances?
- RQ3: How might the findings refine or extend existing environmental peacebuilding frameworks, particularly regarding CBDRR in displacement-affected contexts?

2. METHODOLOGY

This chapter sets out the methodological approach to answer the research questions, detailing the research design, data collection and analysis methods, and key limitations.

2.1. Research design

This thesis adopted a qualitative multiple-case-study design to examine whether, how, and under what conditions CBDRR-related processes generate peace-positive outcomes in displacement-affected contexts. The analytic use of multiple cases generated temporally- and contextually sensitive empirical insights into causal relations within and across distinct settings (Mills et al., 2010; Yin, 2003) regarding the conditions and processes through which CBDRR may contribute to conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

This thesis followed a hybrid deductive–inductive logic of inquiry. Theoretically informed expectations derived from two existing environmental peacebuilding frameworks¹ guided data collection, coding, and thematic analysis. At the same time, the analysis remained open to emergent patterns in the data (Mills et al., 2010), allowing sub-themes to be generated inductively within the broader theoretically derived structure. These frameworks informed the identification of peace-positive outcomes, processes and mechanisms, and expected enabling and constraining conditions. Conceptualisation, therefore, preceded observation (Becker, 2023), with iterative engagement refining the interpretation of theoretically derived themes. Analysis of secondary and primary data thus involved movement between theoretical expectations and empirical observations, assessing whether those expectations were corroborated, challenged, or refined (Popper, 2002).

2.2. Case selection

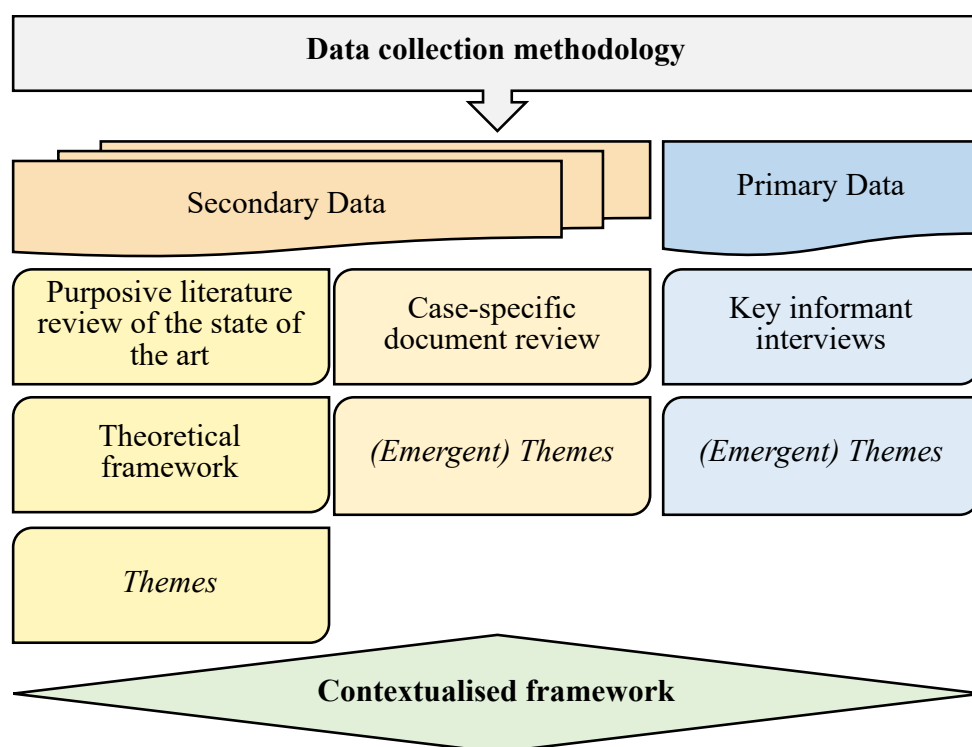
Case studies were selected using criterion-based sampling to ensure analytical coherence. Iraq and South Sudan were chosen based on five criteria: (i) existence of protracted internal displacement in a fragile or conflict context; (ii) exposure to multiple natural hazards; (iii) experience of natural resource-related tension, contestation, or cooperation relevant to intergroup relations; (iv) evidence of community-based approaches for DRR, climate adaptation, or related initiatives that involve engagement with shared natural resources or environmental risks; and (v) data availability and feasibility of data collection.

2.3. Data collection

Data collection combined secondary and primary sources, and as illustrated in Figure 1, was conducted in three stages. First, a purposive literature review was conducted to identify state-of-the-art developments in the academic and grey literature. Second, a case-specific document review was conducted to collect contextualised secondary material. Third, semi-structured interviews were conducted alongside the case-specific document review to generate primary data addressing the research questions and to triangulate findings across empirical sources.

¹ Elaborated in Chapter 3.

Figure 1. Overview of data sources and analytical progression



2.3.1. Secondary data

Secondary material for this study was collected through a two-stage approach. First, a purposive literature review was conducted to establish the state of the art. This overview engaged with key concepts and debates related to climate and environmental security, power dynamics, environmental peacebuilding, DRR and community-based approaches, and displaced and host community dynamics. This stage informed the conceptual foundation², analytical expectations³, and the interview protocol⁴.

Second, to directly address the research questions, a case-specific document review was conducted to collect publicly available, geographically and contextually grounded material on displacement-affected communities in Iraq and South Sudan. These materials⁵ provided essential contextual understanding and supported triangulation (Blaikie, 2010) of the case studies alongside primary data to identify relevant actors and community-based interventions, group relations, contestations, enabling and constraining conditions, and other structural and social dynamics shaping disaster risk and peacebuilding.

The document review process comprised peer-reviewed academic literature and grey literature, including programme reports, assessments, and policy recommendations produced by

² Chapter 3 introduces core concepts and the state of the art.

³ Refer to Table 1 'Theory-informed analytical themes and a priori coding framework' in Chapter 3.

⁴ Refer to Appendix C for the interview protocol.

⁵ The full list of secondary sources included in the document review can be found in the References.

international organisations, policy and research institutions, regional and national institutions, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Material addressed DRR, community-based initiatives, natural resource use, management, and conservation, and/or climate security and peacebuilding specifically in relation to IDPs, returnees, and host communities in Iraq and South Sudan. This thesis prioritised sources published between 2019 and 2026 to ensure compatibility with the study's contemporary focus, recognising that case-specific secondary data may involve a time lag between collection and reporting (Blaikie, 2010). Due to limited empirical data on the nexus examined in this thesis, the geographic scope of the document review extended to national-level analysis and multiple cases of displacement-affected communities across the state.

Four search strategies were applied to identify documents for review:

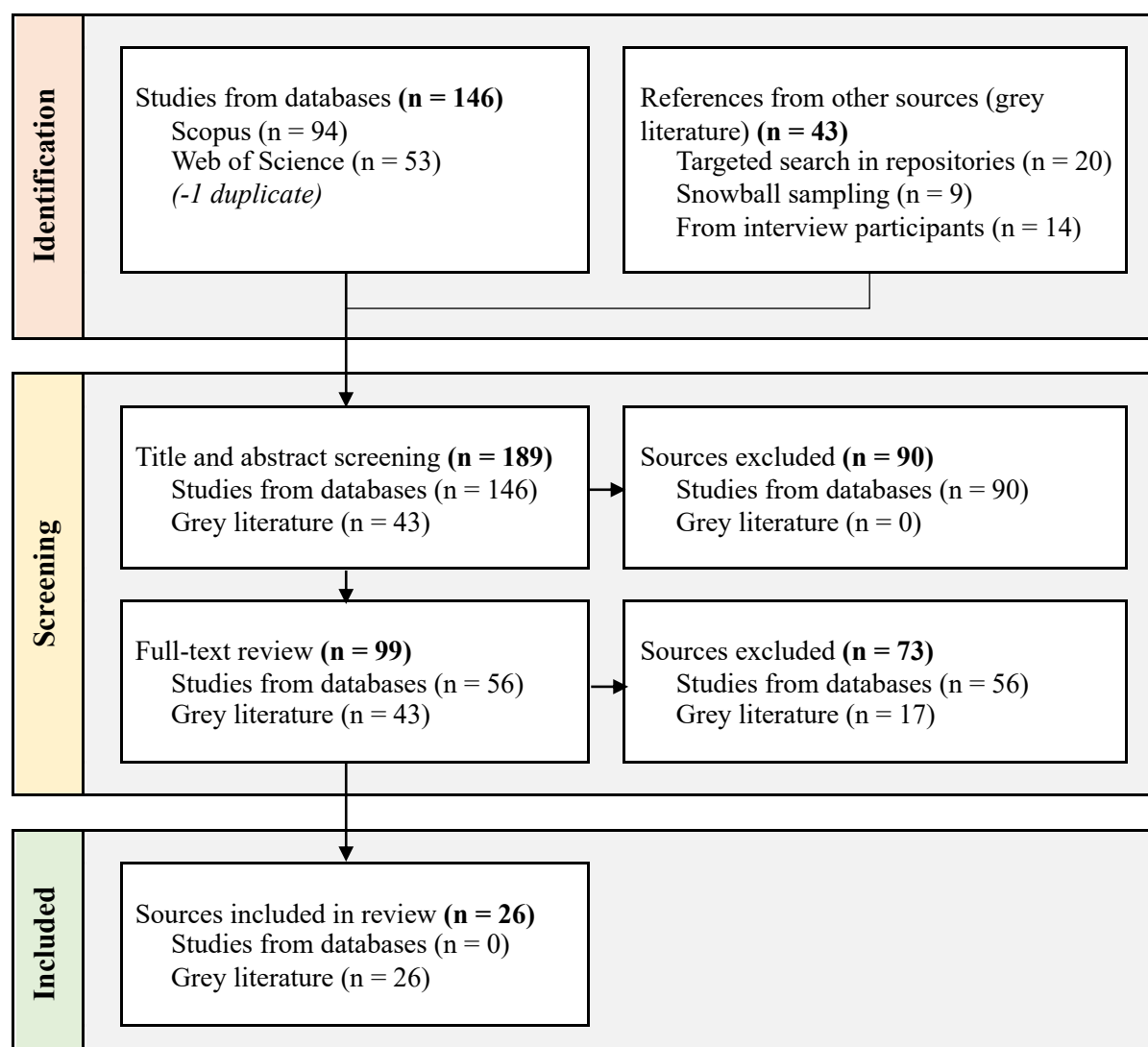
- (i) Boolean search strings⁶ were applied in Scopus and Web of Science to identify peer-reviewed articles.
- (ii) Targeted searches were conducted within publication repositories of relevant institutions, using country-specific keywords for each case.
- (iii) Snowball sampling was conducted through backward and forward citation mining, and by reviewing contributing authors and advisors cited in documents to identify additional relevant publications.
- (iv) Documents referred to or recommended by interview participants were included.

The search results were first subjected to a title and abstract screening, followed by a full-text review (including keyword searches within the documents). Documents were included or excluded based on a filtering criterion⁷ developed to assess contextual relevance, quality, and credibility. Figure 2 illustrates the document review selection process. Based on the filtering criterion, all identified peer-reviewed studies were excluded, as none provided empirical evidence on community-based DRR, CCA, or related interventions involving natural resources or environmental risks in—explicitly—displacement-affected communities in Iraq or South Sudan. This outcome reflects the specific search parameters and inclusion criteria applied in this thesis; broader or more systematic search strategies might have identified peer-reviewed work with partial relevance, but not necessarily the grounded, case-specific material required to address the research questions. This highlights the empirical case-study gap in the peer-reviewed literature on this topic, reinforcing the need to rely on grey literature for context-grounded analysis. Screening of relevant grey literature stopped after reaching saturation.

⁶ Refer to Appendix A for Boolean search strings used to identify peer-reviewed literature.

⁷ Refer to Appendix B for the literature inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Figure 2. Workflow of document identification, screening, and selection for inclusion



2.3.2. Primary data

Primary data was collected through semi-structured, one-on-one remote interviews with key informants, including practitioners and researchers working in DRR, CCA, NRM, displacement, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding.⁸ Interviews were conducted to elicit qualitative observations that are under-documented in the existing literature. Semi-structured interviews were suitable as they maintained flexibility to explore emergent topics (Creswell, 2013). Flexibility and fluidity were crucial, especially for exploring complex contexts, in which interviewees held knowledge and experiences that the interviewer could not necessarily engage with using a fully structured approach. Conducting remote interviews facilitated access to difficult-to-reach actors in remote regions of Iraq and South Sudan and enabled a broader geographic reach within a limited timeframe.

⁸ Refer to Appendix D for an overview of interview participants.

Interview participants were selected using purposive and snowball sampling to capture multi-scalar, diverse perspectives. Purposive sampling ensured that interviewees had relevant knowledge of DRR, community-based initiatives, peacebuilding, environmental governance, or non-camp displacement-affected community relations in the case study contexts. Snowball sampling was appropriate because it yielded information-rich participants through networks of individuals with contextual knowledge (Blaikie, 2010; Creswell, 2013), which was especially valuable in fragile- and conflict-affected, or otherwise difficult-to-access, situations.

An initial group of 14 researchers and practitioners were consulted across a range of international development and humanitarian organisations, NGOs, civil society organisations (CSOs), universities, and research institutions to identify potential interview participants. Forty individuals were then invited to participate. Of these, 12 accepted—6 had expertise specific to Iraq, and 6 had expertise specific to South Sudan. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' permission and transcribed to preserve the full context of their responses. Given the sensitive nature of the contexts in which the interviewees work—and for methodological coherence—all interview participants are treated anonymously throughout this study.

2.4. Data organisation and analysis

Secondary and primary data were analysed thematically using a framework-driven coding approach. The deductively developed a priori analytical framework⁹ defined the thematic structure, within which codes were generated through a combination of deductive categories and bounded inductive insights.¹⁰ Inductive codes were incorporated only when they clarified or enriched the predefined themes or directly informed the research questions; inductive observations outside this scope were noted but not carried forward into the analysis.

NVivo was used to code and systematically categorise excerpts from documents and interview transcripts. Following Creswell's (2013) approach, coding was conducted in two rounds. In the initial round, deductive and inductive codes were applied and grouped under the predefined themes, allowing simultaneous coding aligned with the research questions. The second round refined and consolidated these codes to ensure consistency and strengthen alignment with the analytical framework. Coded excerpts were then reviewed within each theme to capture context-specific nuances without expanding the analysis beyond this study's scope.

Thematic patterns were analysed across cases to assess how contextual variations shape the peacebuilding potential of CBDRR and contribute to environmental peacebuilding debates. Within each case, however, secondary and primary data were analysed together to facilitate triangulation between documentary evidence and practitioner perspectives. Analysing interviews and documents jointly strengthened contextual interpretation and helped identify convergences and gaps across data sources.

⁹ Refer to Table 1 'Theory-informed analytical themes and a priori coding framework' in Chapter 3.

¹⁰ Refer to Appendix E for the codebook.

2.5. Scope and limitations

This thesis adopts a country-level case study design rather than a single geographically bounded locality, and while it examines two cases, it is not a comparative study. The cases serve instead as contextual lenses for exploring patterns and processes, rather than as units of structured comparison. This study does not aim to produce micro-level ethnographic accounts, nor to evaluate outcomes of a specific intervention. Instead, primary data draws on perspectives of practitioners with knowledge of engagement in these settings. As such, it focuses on practitioner-observed processes and mechanisms enabling peace-positive outcomes, without capturing lived experiences or making definitive claims about community-level outcomes.

This research was shaped by access constraints in FCAS, which influenced data-collection strategies and the types of evidence available. Opportunities to engage directly with affected communities in Iraq and South Sudan were constrained by political sensitivities, security risks, logistical barriers, and ethical considerations. Restricted access to stakeholders in-country was therefore mediated through remote interviews and secondary data. As this study relies on secondary sources, data on displacement-affected settings were, to a degree, uneven and fragmented, produced by others with specific mandates. To ensure data reliability and mitigate bias, the analysis therefore triangulated across multiple sources.

Data interpretation and representation also influenced the depth and balance of qualitative insights. Minor language challenges that arose during interviews and risked a loss of nuance were mitigated through follow-up prompts for clarification. Moreover, the secondary data focused on available documentation produced in English and did not fully capture local perspectives or informal governance arrangements. This limitation was partially mitigated by prioritising sources grounded in local fieldwork and by triangulating documentary findings with interviews with locally experienced practitioners.

Finally, this thesis is subject to sampling, temporal, and causal limitations. While no substantively new themes relevant to the research questions emerged after five interviews per case, it is difficult to determine whether data saturation was achieved, given the limited number of respondents. Moreover, the findings are sensitive to rapidly changing conditions in Iraq and South Sudan, where community-based initiatives and peacebuilding processes unfold over extended periods, whereas available data often capture short project cycles. Rather than claiming direct causality between CBDRR and peace, this study instead focused on identifying enabling conditions, contextual factors, and plausible pathways that shape observed dynamics.

3. CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

This chapter introduces the conceptual lens guiding the thesis by drawing on scholarship on disaster risk, governance, environmental peacebuilding, power, and displacement. These concepts are essential for understanding how CBDRR processes unfold in FCAS and how they shape pathways between environmental stress, social relations, and peacebuilding. Together, they provide the basis for the analytical framework used in this thesis.

3.1. Understanding risk as a social and political process

Climate change is intensifying the frequency and severity of climatic extremes, resulting in substantial—and in some cases irreversible—losses across ecological and human systems (IPCC, 2023). Hazards are processes arising from natural systems, human activities, or their interactions that may generate events or trends with adverse effects on human life, health, infrastructure, livelihoods, ecosystems, and environmental resources (Coppola, 2020; IPCC, 2023). Such hazards can trigger compounding effects, in which secondary disruptions amplify impacts, often reflecting underlying vulnerability more than the initial event (IPCC, 2023). Disasters associated with climatic and environmental hazards—whether slow- or sudden-onset hydrological, meteorological, geological, or biological—are therefore disruptions to societal functions that emerge from interactions between hazard, exposure, vulnerability, and coping capacity (Becker, 2023; Coppola, 2020; Peters & Peters, 2021; Wisner et al., 2012).

Disaster risk is thus socially mediated and unevenly distributed. Patterns of exposure and vulnerability are embedded within and shaped by broader political, institutional, economic, and social conditions, highlighting the role of DRR and climate adaptation in strengthening human security and resilience (IPCC, 2023). Understanding environmental risk as socially mediated and politically structured shifts analytical attention from hazards to institutions and governance. DRR is therefore a systematic approach to addressing structural drivers of risk by reducing exposure and vulnerability, while strengthening capacities to anticipate, recognise, adapt to, and learn from slow- and sudden-onset shocks and stresses (Becker, 2023; UNDRR, 2017).

3.2. Governance, fragility, and the conditions shaping environmental (in)security

Because risk is socially mediated, governance becomes the critical determinant of whether climate and environmental stress lead to conflict or cooperation. Disasters linked to natural hazards and environmental degradation can generate pathways to either outcome, with structural or political conditions shaping the direction of change (Ide, 2019; Martin, 2005). In FCAS, hazards such as floods, droughts, and water scarcity interact with poor governance and weak institutions, deepening vulnerabilities and insecurity (Schaar, 2021).

Conflict, in this thesis, is understood as a social situation in which contested incompatibilities manifest in personal (direct) violence and/or structural (indirect) violence (Galtung, 1969). Disasters, environmental degradation, fragility, and conflict can, under certain contexts, act as reinforcing phenomena that, in turn, can increase exposure to hazards, heighten vulnerabilities, and deepen grievances (Peters, 2021; Rüttinger et al., 2015; Siddiqi, 2018; Tänzler, 2018). In FCAS, slow- and sudden-onset disasters from natural hazards can further destabilise already

vulnerable communities, disrupt resource availability, erode economic opportunities and livelihoods, and drive displacement (Rüttinger et al., 2015).

Fragility reflects deficits in capacity and legitimacy (Brinkerhoff, 2010). It refers to a state's inability to meet its obligations, often marked by weak capacity, authority, and legitimacy to govern, deliver security to protect citizens, and build public trust and constructive relationships with society (Brinkerhoff, 2010; Rüttinger et al., 2015). Where states fail to prevent or manage disasters, deliver basic services, or mediate resource disputes, slow- and sudden-onset disasters can widen inequalities, erode state legitimacy, and deepen societal distrust and discontent (Rüttinger et al., 2015; Schaar, 2021). Climate change can, then, act as a so-called 'threat multiplier', compounding disaster, fragility, and conflict risk rooted in shared vulnerabilities (Swain & Öjendal, 2018).

In contrast, a resilient society is defined by its capacity to peacefully absorb, adapt, and transform in the face of shocks, while (re)shaping its structures and relationships to support long-term sustainability (Pendall et al., 2010). Resilience is then reflected in positive peace, which extends beyond the absence of violence to encompass livelihood and environmental security, as well as institutional and societal norms that support lasting peace (Galtung, 1969; Peters & Peters, 2021). Peace manifests along a continuum—from the cessation of hostilities to the development of norms of equity, entropic participation, and socio-political integration (Galtung, 1969; Galtung, 1976; Ide, 2021). Resilient states and societies are characterised by a strong social contract, effective and inclusive institutions, and the reliable provision of essential services (Rüttinger et al., 2015).

Field-based evidence shows that unequal social and environmental outcomes often play a more decisive role in shaping conflict dynamics than environmental change alone. Economic, political, and cultural processes that structure power relations and mediate how environmental stress translates into violent conflict, or, alternatively, conflict prevention, resolution, and cooperation (Barnett & Dabelko, 2019). Environmental insecurity, as with disaster risk, is thus shaped not only by exposure to environmental change, but also by vulnerability and power differentials, and adaptive capacity—factors influenced by poverty, governance quality, decision-making effectiveness, the degree of social cohesion, and patterns of state inclusion or marginalisation (Barnett & Dabelko, 2019; Selby et al., 2022; Sändig et al., 2024). Broader structural processes—including power dynamics embedded in institutions and discourse, corruption, trade dependency, economic liberalisation, and historic legacies of colonisation and conflict—further (re)produce insecurities by shaping access to resources and institutional support (Barnett & Dabelko, 2019; Brown, 2010; Neumann, 2009). These structural conditions influence how grievances emerge and whether they escalate into conflict or are channelled through cooperative and institutionalised forms of conflict management (Wallenstein, 2023). Environmental change, therefore, does not undermine human security in isolation; it interacts with multi-scalar processes, such that responses to environmental insecurity must extend beyond local adaptation to include institutional and governance transformations across scales (Barnett & Dabelko, 2019; Brown, 2010).

3.3. Environmental peacebuilding and power dynamics

Where disasters, environmental degradation, fragility, and conflict coincide, they are often driven by shared risks, vulnerabilities, and constrained governance, suggesting that DRR and peacebuilding can act as reinforcing processes (Peters & Peters, 2021; Walch, 2018). Peacebuilding reflects the processes and outcomes through which resilient institutions and societal structures enable communities to address structural drivers of conflict through non-violent mechanisms for managing contested incompatibilities (Brosché & Sundberg, 2023; Swain & Öjendal, 2018; Ward & Ruckstuhl, 2017). Its broader aim is to reduce tensions, prevent the escalation or recurrence of conflict, and strengthen social cohesion to foster positive peace (Wallensteen, 2023).

Natural resources can contribute to tensions across social, political, and spatial dimensions (Jensen & Kron, 2018). At the same time, growing evidence shows that they can also play a key role in peacebuilding (Conca & Beevers, 2018). Environmental and natural resource management offers entry points for conflict prevention and cooperation (Peters et al., 2019b; Rüttinger, 2020), particularly where governance is central to addressing conflict, climate, and disaster risk. In such contexts, environmental initiatives can serve as practical platforms for facilitating dialogue and trust-building between contending groups (Peters et al., 2019b).

Environmental peacebuilding therefore refers to both theory and practice that represents “multiple approaches and pathways by which the management of environmental resources is integrated into and can support conflict prevention, mitigation, resolution and recovery” (Ide et al., 2021, pp. 2-3) and the ecological foundations of socially, economically, and politically resilient peace (Ide et al., 2023; Krampe et al., 2021). More broadly, it encompasses integrating environmental considerations into peacebuilding and conflict prevention efforts before, during, and after conflict, recognising that environmental protection and peacebuilding are mutually reinforcing processes (Zelli & Krause, 2025). Central to this approach is the idea that environmental cooperation and governance can shape actor perceptions, incentives, and relationships, thereby fostering cooperation, reducing conflict risks, and supporting sustainable peace (Conca, 2001; Krampe et al., 2021; Ide et al., 2021).

A political ecology perspective deepens this understanding by examining how power shapes human–environment interactions, thereby enriching environmental peacebuilding theory and practice (Cavanagh, 2025; Ide, 2021; Ide et al., 2023; Le Billon & Duffy, 2018; Robbins, 2020). It highlights how historical, political, economic, and social factors influence, *inter alia*, environmental degradation, governance arrangements, resource demand, use, access, and distribution, and vulnerability, which are rarely neutral in influencing the enabling environment and the distribution of benefits (Cavanagh, 2025; Ide, 2020; Robbins, 2020). Environmental change, and by extension disaster risk, is therefore embedded in asymmetric power relations, welfare disparities, and longstanding social divisions (Ide, 2020; Le Billon & Duffy, 2018), producing inequitable distribution of benefits and disrupting people’s relationship to the environment in ways that can fuel conflict (Davis et al., 2023). Political ecology thus examines

how power relations shape access to and control over natural resources, in which the impacts of environmental change are invariably socially mediated (Le Billon & Duffy, 2018).

Whether initiatives address inequalities and injustices depends on whose knowledge, authority, and priorities inform decision-making (Eriksen et al., 2015). Hearn's (2012) distinction between 'power to' and 'power over' offers insights into why interventions may foster cooperation in some contexts or entrench grievances in others. Davis et al. (2023) argue for a relational understanding of power that goes beyond 'access to and control over' resources to consider how relationships and processes (re)shape and (re)structure power relations central to environmental peacebuilding (Davis et al., 2023). This approach recognises that power dynamics operate at multiple scales—within the broader social and political structures in which interventions are implemented and embedded, and within the interventions themselves, which may ignore, shift, or transform existing power dynamics depending on how they engage with networks of influence (Davis et al., 2023).

3.4. Disaster risk reduction and community-based approaches

Recent research suggests that environmental peacebuilding has largely been driven by external actors, including international organisations, international NGOs (INGOs), and high-level state institutions (Sändig et al., 2024), often resulting in technical or short-term interventions (Ide, 2020) that overlook local priorities and multi-level reconciliation dynamics (Dresse et al., 2019). Yet, local communities frequently manage natural resources and environmental conflicts effectively, and bottom-up approaches can be particularly empowering for marginalised groups (Ide et al., 2021). In addition, slow- and sudden-onset climate- and environment-related disasters are experienced most acutely at the local level (IPCC, 2023), where environmental and security challenges translate into highly contextualised impacts on already-stressed households and communities (Schaar, 2021). As such, local communities, especially those vulnerable and exposed to natural hazards, are increasingly recognised as central to effective DRR and climate adaptation, with local knowledge and participation seen as a core principle of adaptive and context-appropriate risk reduction and conflict prevention (Filho, 2025; Motsumi & Nemaokonde, 2024; Šakić Trogrlić et al., 2022).

Community-based approaches to DRR and climate adaptation have therefore (re)emerged as a key operational framework. CBDRR entails participatory, locally driven processes through which communities identify hazards, assess vulnerabilities, and define strategies for reducing risk (Forsyth, 2013; Mansuri & Rao, 2004; Šakić Trogrlić et al., 2022). Central to these approaches is local agency, ownership, collective action, and the integration of community knowledge—context-specific understandings and skills shaped by lived experience—which shapes everyday practices and longer-term decision-making (IPCC, 2023; Ravazzoli et al., 2025). CBDRR, in principle, seeks to empower communities to shape priorities based on local needs, mobilise local resources, and engage with formal and informal authorities to support locally relevant, resilience-oriented development grounded in social and cultural contexts (Mansuri & Rao, 2004; Ravazzoli et al., 2025; Šakić Trogrlić et al., 2022).

Because climate change, environmental degradation, livelihood insecurity, and resource competition often manifest most acutely at the local level, they are “more likely to influence conflict at the local, rather than national or international levels” (Krampe et al., 2024, p. 1125). Meaning that while peacebuilding requires multi-level institutions that link grassroots efforts to state and global policies (Barnett & Adger, 2007; Schaar, 2021), locally owned, conflict-sensitive, and equitable environmental management mechanisms remain central to effective DRR. In these contexts, existing power asymmetries and governance gaps can shape the effectiveness of DRR and peacebuilding efforts (Krampe et al., 2024). Strengthening locally grounded mechanisms that reflect local capacities and norms can create practical entry points for cooperation and trust-building. Engaging with local actors to identify conflict drivers and establish resource-specific dispute-resolution mechanisms can support the integration of DRR with coordinated resource management (Jensen & Kron, 2018).

Despite the growing emphasis on CBDRR, persistent gaps remain between aspirations and implementation in practice (Filho, 2025; Motsumi & Nemaokonde, 2024; Ravazzoli et al., 2025; Šakić Trogrlić et al., 2022). Empirical studies suggest that CBDRR initiatives frequently reproduce dominant scientific knowledge systems, technocratic risk management models, and asymmetric power structures, thereby marginalising local knowledge and practices and limiting meaningful community influence over decision-making (Filho, 2025; Motsumi & Nemaokonde, 2024; Sakic Trogrlic et al., 2022). Rather than enabling transformative risk reduction, such approaches may exacerbate vulnerabilities and grievances by excluding local perspectives, constraining community agency, and reinforcing external or unequal control over decision-making, resource management, and benefit distribution (Motsumi & Nemaokonde, 2024). Similarly, while grassroots peacebuilding is often associated with more inclusive outcomes compared to top-down approaches (Ide, 2019; Johnson et al., 2021), scholars caution against romanticising or “overstating the potential of the local turn” (Sändig et al., 2024, p. 12). Environmental peacebuilding can produce unintended and adverse consequences (Ide, 2020), and risk reduction and adaptation initiatives can also undermine peacebuilding (Krampe et al., 2024). These limitations reinforce political ecology critiques that local participation does not automatically translate into equitable or transformative power relations.

3.5. Linking the concepts in displacement-affected contexts

Internal displacement resulting from conflict and disasters reached record figures at the end of 2024 (IDMC, 2025). Between UNHCR (2025a) and IDMC (2025) estimates, over 80–120 million people are internally displaced worldwide, the majority residing in non-camp settings (Berke & Larsen, 2025; Easton-Calabria et al., 2025; Saliba et al., 2022). Displacement becomes protracted when forcibly displaced persons remain in host communities for extended periods without realistic prospects for return or other durable solutions (Becker, 2022; Smart et al., 2023). Berke and Larsen (2025) argue that protracted displacement will persist due to rising conflict and disaster-related displacement, as well as limited opportunities for (re)integration. These dynamics position displacement-affected communities as critical sites where disaster risk, environmental degradation, fragile governance, and social relations intersect.

Whether displacement benefits or harms host communities, or generates conflict or cooperation, remains contested. Some scholars argue that the influx of IDPs into already fragile and resource-stressed areas can intensify competition over land, water, employment, infrastructure, and public services (Barnett & Adger, 2007; Eboreime et al., 2025; GIZ, 2024; Munoz & Shanks, 2019). Indeed, evidence suggests that IDPs living outside camps are frequently among the most livelihood- and food-insecure populations (Smart et al., 2023), and, as found in Colombia, are often considerably more economically disadvantaged than host residents (Tellez & Balcells, 2025; World Bank, 2022). Displaced persons may also be blamed for increased crime or associated with insecurity (Munoz & Shanks, 2019). Violent clashes over land, water, and grazing land have been documented in Nigeria, Mali, and Burkina Faso, where non-state armed groups exploit environmental stress and weak state presence (Eboreime et al., 2025).

However, these outcomes are not deterministic. Thalheimer et al. (2023) find no statistically significant evidence that IDPs increase conflict in host communities in Somalia. A meta-analysis by Verme and Schuettler (2021) similarly finds no significant negative effects of IDPs on household well-being. While displacement reshapes the demographic and social landscape, undermining social cohesion (Eboreime et al., 2025; Munoz & Shanks, 2019), some studies from Colombia also show that displaced persons exhibit greater social cohesion and demonstrate higher levels of mobilisation and collective action (Tellez & Balcells, 2025; World Bank, 2022). Myers et al. (2024) likewise report that the increased presence of IDPs does not inherently weaken social cohesion in host communities.

These mixed findings support broader environmental security scholarship in that displacement-related risks are mediated by governance quality, institutional inclusion, and power relations rather than by population movement alone. Eriksen et al. (2015) reinforce this perspective that DRR and displacement governance are inherently political. Measures—such as water allocation rules and land-use restrictions—that are depoliticised and detached from structural drivers of vulnerability can obscure how marginalisation, conflict, displacement, and unequal resource rights shape everyday decision-making and risk governance (Eriksen et al., 2015). CBDRR processes inevitably operate within these existing asymmetrical structures. In some contexts, IDPs face greater disadvantages due to weaker ties to local institutions and social networks; in others, they may benefit from assistance unavailable to host residents (Kamta & Scheffran, 2022; Lopez et al., 2011; Myers et al., 2024). In displacement-affected communities, CBDRR can therefore (re)produce uneven outcomes.

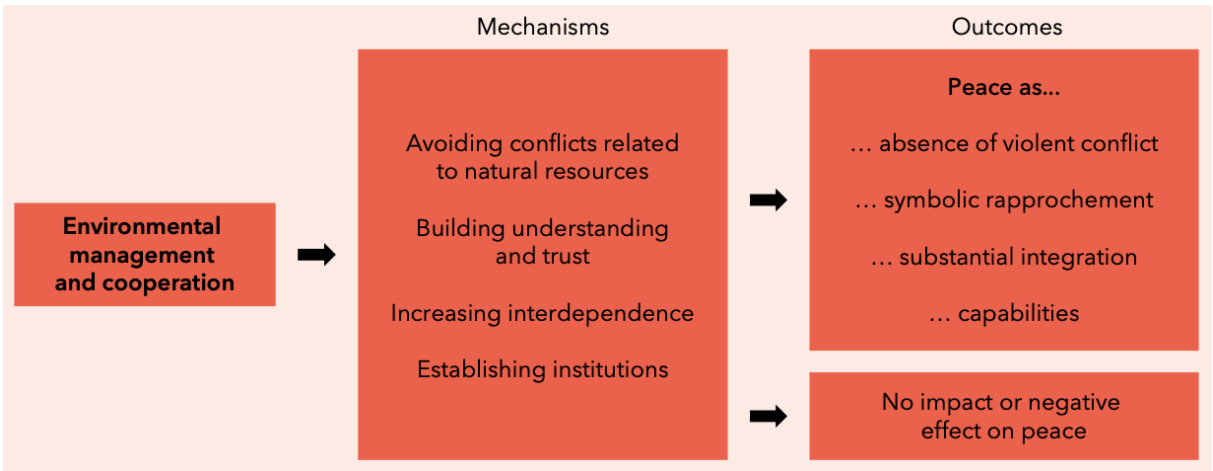
Mainstreaming displacement considerations into CBDRR and climate adaptation frameworks is essential for enabling durable solutions (Scott & Salamanca, 2020) and for linking environmental governance with peacebuilding outcomes. Research increasingly highlights the importance of locally grounded DRR strategies that address vulnerabilities and strengthen community resilience as central to reducing the risks of conflict and displacement in FCAS (Eboreime et al., 2025). In this regard, Saliba et al. (2022) demonstrate the importance of participatory processes that integrate IDPs into planning and governance, explicitly address power imbalances, and link planning outcomes to durable solutions in Ethiopia, Jordan, Afghanistan, and Kenya. Displacement-affected contexts, therefore, provide a critical empirical

lens for examining how community-based approaches to DRR interact with hazards, governance structures, and power relations to shape pathways between environmental stress, conflict risk, and peacebuilding outcomes.

3.6. Analytical framework

The analytical framework for this thesis is deductively derived from existing conceptual frameworks, primarily Ide’s (2021) dimensions of peace and environmental peacebuilding mechanisms, and Davis et al.’s (2023) conceptualisation of power applied as a cross-cutting lens that informs how these components are interpreted. Ide (2021) demonstrates how an environmental peacebuilding lens can capture the mechanisms through which environmental interventions can support different, partially overlapping dimensions of peace along a continuum, as illustrated in Figure 3. These dimensions include the absence of violent conflict, symbolic rapprochement, substantial integration, and capabilities. Environmental interventions may advance these peace dimensions through several interrelated mechanisms, such as avoiding resource-related disputes, building understanding, trust, and cooperation, increasing interdependence, and establishing formal or informal institutions for managing environmental issues. To operationalise the enabling environment, these peace dimensions and mechanisms are complemented by insights from broader scholarship on fragility, governance, political ecology, resource management, and displacement.

Figure 3. Mechanisms and peace dimensions in environmental peacebuilding

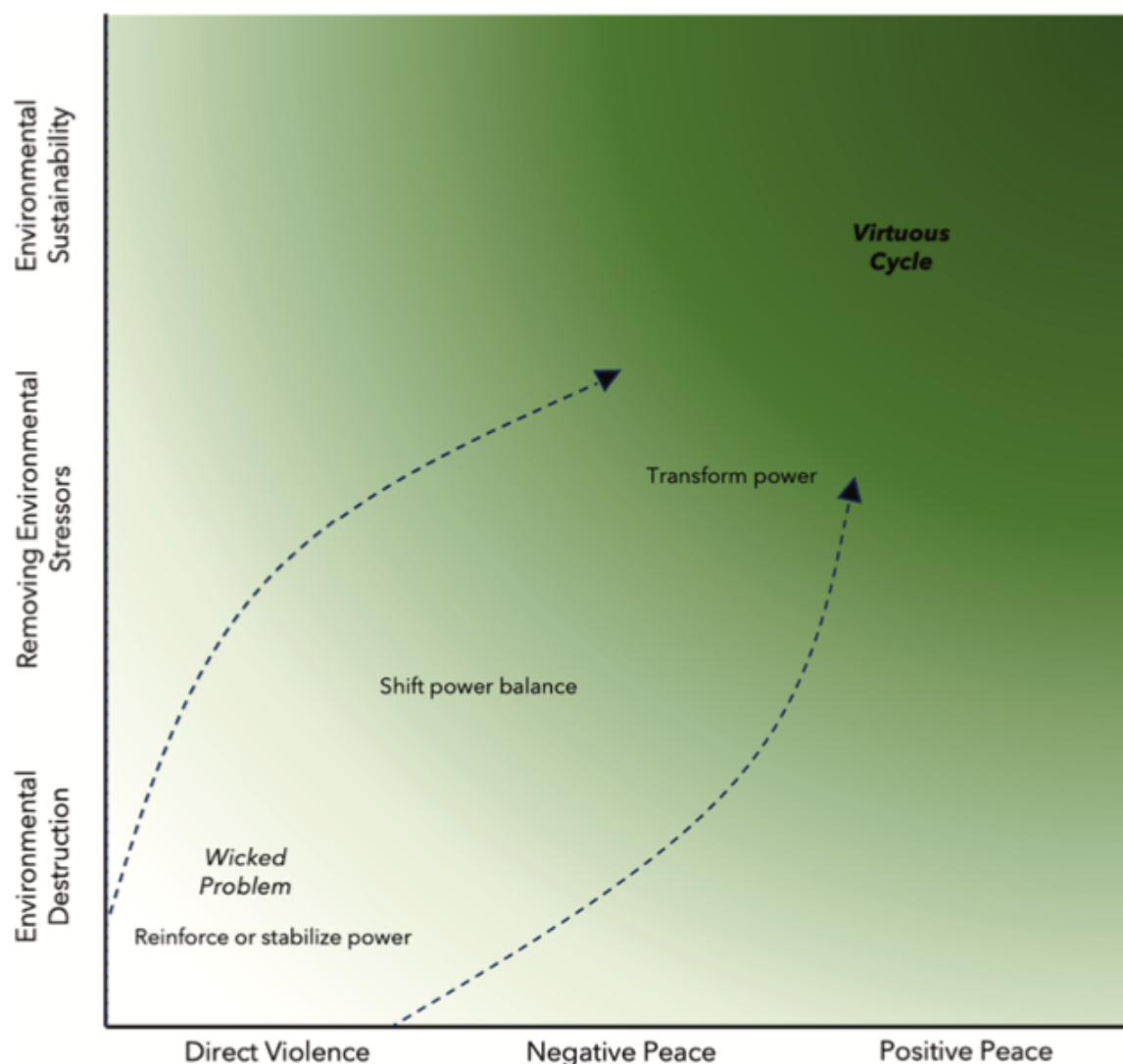


Note. Figure 3 is the conceptual framework from Ide (2021, p. 21).

To extend these peace dimensions and mechanisms, Davis et al. (2023) conceptualise environmental peacebuilding along a spectrum of engagement with power—from reinforcing or stabilising existing power structures to shifting power relations in social institutions and structures to actively transforming inequitable power relations, as illustrated in Figure 4. Initiatives that reinforce or stabilise power risk perpetuating conflict and environmental harm, while those that shift power may support negative peace and reduce environmental stressors. That is, only conditions and processes that explicitly transform inequitable power relations can

generate a ‘virtuous cycle’ of positive peace, environmental sustainability, and resilience. By integrating power-sensitive perspectives with environmental peacebuilding mechanisms and dimensions of peace, this analytical framework examines how power is exercised, reproduced, or transformed through CBDRR processes, and how these dynamics shape peace-positive outcomes. In doing so, this framework operationalises how and why locally driven risk reduction may either entrench existing grievances or contribute to peacebuilding.

Figure 4. Centring power in environmental peacebuilding processes



Note. Figure 4 is from Davis et al. (2023, p. 6).

Table 1 summarises the theory-informed core conceptual components, processes, and peace-positive outcomes that form the analytical framework and guide the initial coding themes and elements used in this study. Power is embedded across all components as a cross-cutting feature of the enabling environment, shaping how CBDRR processes may (re)produce or transform social and institutional relations and, in turn, influence the achievement of peace-positive outcomes.

Table 1. Theory-informed core analytical themes and a priori coding framework

Core themes	Key initial coding elements
<i>Peace-positive outcomes</i>	
Capabilities	- Adaptive capacity to environmental problems - Livelihood security - Capacity for non-violent conflict management
Substantial integration	- Shared interests and/or shared social identity - Joint institutional arrangements or cross-societal structures - Intergroup cooperation
Symbolic rapprochement	- Trust-building - Development of constructive intergroup narratives - Perceptions of fairness in participation and benefit-sharing
Absence of violent conflict	- Reduced resource-related disputes - Reduced incentives for violent mobilisation
<i>Processes or mechanisms</i>	
Establishing institutions for managing environmental issues	- Formal or informal institutions - Channels of communication and conflict resolution - Rules and norms for managing risk and resources - Focus on equity and inclusion - Technical collaboration and knowledge exchange
Increasing interdependence and cooperation pathways	- Shared infrastructure or natural resource management - Sustained (financial and human) resource mobilisation - Symbolic policies
Building understanding, trust, and cooperation	- Participatory planning and collective action - Transparent and inclusive resource governance - Dialogue around shared risks
Avoiding disputes and conflicts related to natural resources	- Well-managed land, water, and forest resources - Inclusive, cooperative, and sustainable management of resources
<i>Enabling environment</i>	
Fragility and conflict context	- Conflict and colonial legacies - Displacement dynamics - Intergroup relations and grievances - Security context
Governance and institutional arrangements	- State presence/absence - Formal and informal institutions - Decision-making structure - External actor influence
Resource access and control	- Distribution of environmental risk and exposure - Livelihood sensitivity to environmental problems (A)symmetric access to resources, decision-making, authority - Inclusion/exclusion of marginalised groups

4. CASE CONTEXTS

This chapter provides a concise overview of the Iraq and South Sudan case studies, outlining the political economy, governance fragilities, displacement dynamics, and natural hazard profiles. It highlights key institutional, social, and environmental conditions necessary to situate the subsequent research findings and discussion.

4.1. Iraq

Iraq represents a case of prolonged displacement shaped by the interaction of governance fragility, conflict legacies, and intensifying environmental stress. Structural vulnerabilities are embedded in a still-fragile conflict landscape. Although the territorial defeat of the Islamic State (ISIS) marked a turning point, its legacy persists through damaged infrastructure, disrupted livelihoods, and weakened institutions (CFR, 2026a; Seyuba et al., 2023). Sectarian conflicts, disputes between federal and Kurdish authorities, and the influence of militias further complicate governance and stability, while armed non-state actors have exploited livelihood insecurities and, in some cases, appropriated resources linked to reconstruction and climate adaptation efforts (CFR, 2026a; Seyuba et al., 2023).

Despite ongoing recovery efforts, more than one million people remain internally displaced (IDMC, 2025; IOM, 2023). Government initiatives such as the Durable Solutions Task Force, the National Plan to End Displacement, and preparations for a National Adaptation Plan signal commitment, yet implementation capacity is uneven across governorates, constrained by political instability, corruption, and entrenched patronage networks (CFR, 2026a; IDMC, 2025; Seyuba et al., 2023; UNEP, 2020). Political competition and the politicisation of state institutions have contributed to unequal resource distribution and persistent gaps in service delivery, reinforcing socio-economic inequalities and fuelling recurrent protests over inadequate services and employment (Seyuba et al., 2023).

Economic structures further compound these pressures. Iraq's heavy reliance on oil—over 90 per cent of government revenue—exposes the country to external price shocks and limits diversification (Seyuba et al., 2023). At the same time, agriculture remains a critical source of livelihood for a quarter of the population, yet environmental degradation and water scarcity undermine productivity, contributing to the decline of rural livelihoods, rural–urban migration, and heightened socio-economic stress (Seyuba et al., 2023). Limited livelihood opportunities in host communities have, in some cases, driven individuals towards informal or illicit coping strategies, including recruitment by non-state armed groups (Seyuba et al., 2023).

Climate and environmental risks act as a threat multiplier. Iraq is highly exposed and vulnerable to droughts, floods, heatwaves, dust storms, pollution, and water scarcity (Seyuba et al., 2023). These pressures are compounded by long-standing patterns of oil extraction, which shape land and water use (Ahram, 2021). Environmental stress increasingly shapes mobility and social tensions, with drought-related displacement and rural–urban migration rising as agricultural viability declines (IDMC, 2025; Seyuba et al., 2023). Displacement stems from the interaction

of these dynamics. Many IDPs are unable or unwilling to return due to unresolved insecurity and limited livelihood opportunities (IDMC, 2025; IOM, 2023).

4.2. South Sudan

South Sudan similarly exemplifies a context in which protracted displacement stems from weak governance, persistent conflict, and acute climate vulnerability. Nearly two million people remain internally displaced, driven by both conflict and recurrent environmental shocks (IDMC, 2025; IOM, 2026; UNHCR, 2025b). Governance and institutional capacity remain limited despite recent policy steps, including the adoption of the Durable Solutions Strategy and Plan of Action, and the country's first National Adaptation Plan (IDMC, 2025; UNDP & UNEP, 2022). Implementation is constrained by political instability, limited financial and technical resources, and weak state institutions (CFR, 2026b).

These structural pressures are embedded within a highly volatile, fragmented conflict landscape. Since independence, unresolved political grievances, tribal and ethnic tensions, and weak state authority have contributed to recurring cycles of violence (CFR, 2026b). Fighting persists between government forces, opposition groups, and affiliated militias (CFR, 2026b; Tarif et al., 2025), while intercommunal conflict—often linked to competition over land, water, and livestock—remains a major driver of subnational violence, characterised by cattle raiding, retaliatory attacks, and mobility restrictions (Tarif et al., 2025). Spillover effects from the conflict in Sudan further compound instability, and efforts to formalise land governance face criticism due to tensions between formal and customary systems (Tarif et al., 2025).

Livelihoods are highly sensitive to economic and environmental shocks. The economy depends on oil, which provides over 90 per cent of government revenue, limiting diversification, while over 80 per cent of the population rely on non-wage subsistence livelihoods—particularly rainfed agriculture and pastoralism, both of which are exposed to climate variability (Tarif et al., 2025). Recurrent flooding damages cropland, reduces livestock holdings, and disrupt mobility patterns, pushing communities towards unsustainable coping strategies, such as increased aid dependency and intensified resource extraction (Tarif et al., 2025). Food insecurity—affecting a large majority of the population—is exacerbated by environmental shocks, rising market prices, and regional instability (CFR, 2026b; Tarif et al., 2025).

Climate and environmental pressures act as amplifiers. South Sudan is highly vulnerable to climate variability, including droughts and flooding (Tarif et al., 2025). Seasonal flooding along the White Nile and its tributaries has become more severe, affecting large portions of the population and disrupting livelihoods, infrastructure, mobility, and settlement patterns (Tarif et al., 2025). Rising temperatures and changing rainfall patterns exacerbate water insecurity and reduce agricultural productivity, contributing to recurrent food crises (CFR, 2026b; Tarif et al., 2025). Environmental stress intensifies competition over resources, particularly between pastoralists and farmers, contributing to localised conflict (Tarif et al., 2025). Displacement emerges as the cumulative outcome of these intersecting dynamics, with the influx of displaced populations intensifying pressure on land, water, and livelihoods in host areas (Tarif et al., 2025).

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the combined results of the document review¹¹ and interviews with key informants (KIs), integrating the findings with an analytical discussion. Given the qualitative and relational nature of the links between disaster risk reduction—and community-based DRR in particular—and peacebuilding, findings are discussed as they are presented, so that mechanisms, outcomes, and context remain visible within the complex realities of displacement-affected communities in Iraq and South Sudan.

This chapter is organised around three thematic domains: peace-positive outcomes; processes and mechanisms through which CBDRR contributes to those outcomes; and enabling and constraining conditions. To address the research questions, the analysis proceeds in four steps. First, it draws on the data to establish what peace-positive outcomes look like in practice. Second, it examines the processes and mechanisms that generate those outcomes. This sequence reflects the analytical logic of this study: outcomes are established to determine what CBDRR contributes to peacebuilding, before examining the mechanisms that explain how those outcomes emerge. Third, it explores the contextual conditions that shape when and how CBDRR supports peacebuilding in displacement-affected settings. Fourth, it contributes to environmental peacebuilding scholarship by highlighting how power relations, governance conditions, and displacement dynamics shape the pathways through which CBDRR can support or constrain peacebuilding.

The findings show that many of the peace-positive outcomes, mechanisms and processes, and enabling or constraining conditions that emerged from the data do not fit neatly within a single theme or subtheme. Several of these are cross-cutting, fluid, and dynamic, shaping and being shaped by one another simultaneously. Treating any one of them as belonging to a single theme or subtheme risks a siloed reading that obscures how they interact and co-produce each other in practice. Instances where an outcome, process or mechanism, or condition is discussed explicitly in more than one subsection are cross-referenced to maintain analytical clarity.

In addition, the data underscored a core conceptual issue: what counts as ‘displacement-affected communities’ and why these matter for analysis and programming. Across cases, the dataset points to a broad, relational understanding that goes beyond a narrow IDP/host binary. The evidence reinforces that displaced populations are rarely a discrete, static category: non-camp IDPs, returnees, long-term environmental herders and pastoralists, and host households are frequently folded into existing social dynamics, producing porous and shifting boundaries that complicate targeting and entitlement (Ali, 2025; ARD, 2026; Bunse et al., 2024; FAO, 2026b; UNAMI, 2024).¹² In Iraq, political sensitivities at the central level mean many displaced persons are effectively depoliticised (ARD 2026; UNAMI 2024).¹³ In South Sudan, pastoral mobility and seasonal migration blur conventional definitions of IDPs and require programming that accommodates both cyclical movement and settlement. Practically,

¹¹ The full list of secondary sources included in the document review can be found in the References.

¹² Supported by KIs 2, 6, 8–11.

¹³ Supported by KIs 1, 11.

displacement-affected communities should be understood as a spectrum of mobility and exposure, and CBDRR must reflect this hybridity through inclusive targeting, flexible delivery modalities, and context- and conflict-sensitive grievance mechanisms (FAO, 2026b).¹⁴

5.1. Peace-relevant outcomes

Across the peace-positive outcome domains outlined in Table 1¹⁵—including capabilities, substantial integration, symbolic rapprochement, and the absence of violent conflict—several themes emerged. These are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Theory-informed, data-driven themes of peace-positive outcomes

Core themes	(Emergent) sub-themes
<i>Peace-positive outcomes</i>	
Capabilities	- Improved food security and reduced aid dependency - Enhanced adaptive capacity and diversified income strategies - Strengthened local governance and dispute-resolution capacity - Collective asset creation and community finance
Substantial integration	- Shared institutions and social pacts - Joint livelihood arrangements and economic interdependence - Inclusive community structures
Symbolic rapprochement	- Narrative shifts through shared climate challenges - Trust-building through joint, concrete projects - Women and youth as key agents of change
Absence of violent conflict	- De-escalation and normalisation of everyday disputes - Conflict prevention through fair resource governance - Conditional and fragile peace

5.1.1. Capabilities

Capabilities underpinning peacebuilding emerged where climate-adaptive interventions strengthened communities' ability to secure livelihoods, generate income, manage resources fairly, and address resource disputes without resorting to violence. Across sources, livelihood support was consistently linked with improved food security, reduced aid dependency, and lower local tensions. Participants described gains in self-reliance, including those who “found a new way to farm in [the] midst of... flooding...” and thus “[do not] have to wait and depend on aid”¹⁶ (DRC, n.d., p. 2). FAO (2026a) similarly reported reduced post-harvest losses and increased fish production, easing pressure on shared resources. In South Sudan, climate-adaptive agriculture promoted “self-sufficiency, food security, and a sense of community and empowerment” (DRC, 2023b, p. 2). Such improvements reduced material

¹⁴ Supported by KIs 8, 10.

¹⁵ Refer to Chapter 3.

¹⁶ As stated by a community member in Rubkona, South Sudan, quoted in DRC (n.d.).

drivers of conflict, particularly where water scarcity, crop failure, and livestock losses heighten tensions.

Strengthening local governance and dispute-resolution capacities was a core peace-positive outcome. In Iraq, informal local structures such as tribal *sulh* councils, mukhtar-led village committees, and elders' assemblies "resolve disputes more quickly—often within days rather than months—while remaining culturally attuned and fostering strong community compliance" (Berghof Foundation, 2026, p. 12). Their processes addressed both "the practical aspects of resource allocation" and "the relationship dynamics that shape long-term cooperation", mediating day-to-day disputes over water turns, grazing, and shared infrastructure. In South Sudan, KI 8 described how community-based committees trained in mediation, dialogue, and land law were able to address land and migration disputes more effectively and with greater perceived legitimacy.

Climate-related projects also built capabilities for collective NRM and conflict prevention. FAO (2026b) reported that NRM committees in South Sudan "played a pivotal role in fostering community cohesion" (p. 21) by developing bylaws with active community input, including penalties for livestock damaging crops. These bylaws "not only mitigated disputes but also encouraged community-wide adherence and cooperation" (FAO, 2026b, p. 21), leaving communities "better equipped to handle challenges independently in the future" (FAO, 2026b, p. 21). In Iraq, water user associations formalised fair distribution rules and rotational irrigation schedules, with communities reporting more "coordinated usage to reduce conflict" around wells and communal pumps (Berghof Foundation, 2026, p. 12; supported by ARD, 2026).

These peace-positive capabilities emerged through three interlinked pathways. First, income diversification and market linkages—such as vocational training, fisheries value chain support, and small enterprise grants—enabled households to pursue alternative livelihoods. Second, community asset creation—such as Farmer Field Schools, floating gardens, drip irrigation, solar pumps, fish preservation training, and village savings and loan associations—strengthened collective resilience. Third, strengthened local governance—such as through community DRM committees, participatory planning, and inclusive training approaches—enhanced communities' ability to manage disputes and plan jointly. These outcomes are reflected across sources¹⁷, which describe how training combined with small grants enabled households to adopt new techniques or initiate microenterprises.

At the same time, the evidence revealed a dual livelihood trajectory: alongside programme-supported resilience-building, households increasingly diversified into informal and short-term income activities as a coping response to deteriorating rural livelihoods. This trend was widely reported across programme documents (Alkhudary, 2025a/b; ARD, 2026; PPO & Berghof, 2023a; UNAMI, 2024; World Bank, 2024; Zullo, 2022) and highlighted by practitioners such as KI 7, who noted that many young people "literally have no education... if their livelihood is

¹⁷ Supported by KIs 2, 6, 10–11.

based on cattle raiding, then what is an alternative to that?” This duality underscores that while capabilities for peace are emerging, they remain uneven and vulnerable to structural pressures.

Structural constraints limit the scale and durability of these capabilities. High installation and maintenance costs for irrigation systems and solar pumps, water scarcity, unreliable electricity, and market distortions reduced the sustainability of gains (Alkhudary, 2025a/b; ARD, 2026; FAO, 2026b). Weak extension services, restrictive seed regimes, tenure insecurity, and fragmented service delivery further constrain production and reinvestment. Several KIs noted that the destruction of agricultural assets, debt accumulation, and service gaps kept many displacement-affected households reliant on assistance, with some preferring to remain in camps rather than return to degraded livelihoods¹⁸. These constraints highlight that while peacebuilding capabilities emerge, they remain fragile without broader structural reforms.

5.1.2. Substantial integration

Substantial integration was most visible where climate-related interventions and governance arrangements created shared institutions, interests, and spaces that brought divided groups into sustained cooperation. In Iraq, multi-stakeholder dialogue and mediation processes in Hawija, Tal Afar, Kalar, Al Zubair and Balad “brought together community and tribal leaders, local authorities, security actors, women, and young people, providing space to express concerns, discuss interests and develop locally driven solutions to conflicts exacerbated by climate change” (Löble et al., 2025, p. 3). These processes produced “three major agreements, an annex to an agreement and a pre-agreed framework linked to a legal platform” (Löble et al., 2025, p. 3). The Al Zubair agreement exemplified integration of IDPs and hosts, establishing “the area’s first-ever social pact... outlining principles for peaceful coexistence, equal access to services and institutionalised conflict management, with local authorities playing a central role in oversight and enforcement” (Löble et al., 2025, p. 4). These arrangements “not only help prevent and manage disputes as they arise but also build trust and cooperation between communities and authorities” (Löble et al., 2025, p. 4)¹⁹. KI 11 confirmed that the pact emerged from a sequenced process of separate listening sessions with IDPs, hosts, and authorities, followed by joint dialogue to identify shared concerns and agree on rules for living together.

Beyond formal agreements, substantial integration also emerged through inclusive community structures and shared livelihood systems. In Iraq, Farmer Market Associations “created a network that transcends individual efforts”, facilitating “collective marketing, bargaining power, and resource sharing among farmers”, thereby “foster[ing] a sense of community resilience” (DRC, 2024, Farmer Market Associations section, para. 3). In Hawija, KI 10 described a project pairing a farmer displaced by climate impacts with another farmer; after training and support they farmed jointly and shared profits, with monitoring showing high levels of cooperation. Subedi et al. (2023) similarly found that nodal seed farmers, embedded in relationships of “trust, reciprocity and kinship” (p. 4), provided network stability and cohesion across tribal divides. In South Sudan, substantial integration was often built through inclusive community structures.

¹⁸ Supported by KIs 2, 7–8.

¹⁹ Supported by KI 11.

KI 7 explained that organisations first identified existing structures and then addressed gaps—such as the exclusion of women and youth—before introducing more inclusive arrangements. KI 8 described community-based committees representing, inter alia, youth, women, local authorities, traditional chiefs, and influential personalities. Supported by training in mediation and land law, these committees became trusted platforms for negotiating access to land and water and managing tensions around migration and resource use.

5.1.3. *Symbolic rapprochement*

Symbolic rapprochement emerged, in which climate-related interventions and joint activities enabled groups to recognise shared vulnerability and see each other differently. In Iraq, KI 11 described how framing climate change as a “shared challenge” helped reduce zero-sum narratives between IDPs and hosts, particularly in areas where IDPs had previously been blamed for insecurity and hosts were accused of discrimination. Several documents (ARD, 2026; Berghof Foundation, 2026; Bunse et al., 2024; DRC, 2024; FAO, 2026b; PPO & Berghof Foundation, 2023a) similarly highlighted that working together on concrete projects generated symbolic shifts in how communities perceived one another. In one Iraqi case, a shared water point serving both Yazidi and Muslim communities became a focal point of cooperation and a symbol of interdependence.²⁰ These examples show how shared infrastructure and services can become symbols of interdependence and mutual recognition.

Women’s roles were particularly significant. Participatory approaches “successfully engaged diverse stakeholders—particularly women—through group formation, specific training, and local innovations” (FAO, 2026a, p. 20). Women-led peace committees in South Sudan were credited with transforming conflict-affected areas within a year.²¹ FAO (2026b) reported that women gained control over agricultural tools and livestock in contexts where “these were not the normal cultural roles” (p. 14), and that men were engaged as male champions to support them. Women were often perceived as less threatening and more empathetic, enabling them to build bridges between host and displaced groups²². KI 6 described a case in which women from two communities in conflict invited one another to learn about vegetable seed production, leading to reconciliation and peaceful coexistence. PPO and Berghof Foundation (2023a) documented similar examples in Iraq “of women actively engaging in finding solutions to promote conflict-sensitive climate resilience and dialogue-based solutions” (p. 15), including leadership in rainwater harvesting and soil conservation initiatives that “contribute to building more peaceful and inclusive communities” (p. 15).

At the same time, symbolic rapprochement had to contend with powerful counter-narratives of stigma, demographic threat, and political mistrust. Ali (2025) highlighted that “perceptions and narratives of demographic change... often pitting communities against each other” (p. 15) undermined social cohesion. UNAMI (2024) noted that IDPs in Iraq experienced “exclusion and harassment... which has increased inter-communal tensions and resentment” (pp. 7–8).

²⁰ KI 12.

²¹ Supported by KI 6.

²² Supported by KI 8.

Practitioners described how families with perceived ISIS affiliation were routinely labelled “ISIS families,” creating friction with host communities and resistance to reintegration.²³ In this context, projects had to adjust targeting—for example, moving to a 50–50 split between IDPs and hosts—to avoid reinforcing perceptions of bias. Despite these tensions, Ali (2025) stressed that there remained “space for cooperative community-driven initiatives to address common concerns” (p. 16) and that “no matter how seemingly small or modest their impact, such local initiatives may help... contribute to building peace and strengthening social cohesion” (p. 16). Symbolic rapprochement thus appeared as a fragile but real outcome, contingent on visible fairness, inclusive participation, and reframing climate stress as a shared rather than competitive predicament.

5.1.4. Absence of violent conflict

In several cases, respondents described how tensions previously linked to climate stress, displacement, or political stigma were transformed into more routine community disputes. KI 10 noted that in one Iraqi project area, initial tensions over resources and the presence of ISIS-affiliated IDPs gradually “started to decrease”, with social cohesion issues shifting towards “normal things that... happen in any communit[y]”, such as conflicts between children and families, rather than environmental- or identity-driven hostility. The importance of underlying cohesion was also evident in South Sudan. The World Bank (2021) reported that in one area of Unity State, attempts to mobilise people to build a dike failed because “a lack of social cohesion and sustained distrust resulting from the civil war prevented them from effectively working together” (p. 44), whereas in another area, strong cohesiveness enabled the community to construct a substantial dike despite severe flooding. KI 6 similarly recounted that women-led reconciliation efforts between two communities resulted in no further conflict reported between them, underscoring the link between relationship repair and the absence of violence. These comparisons illustrate how social cohesion and trust are preconditions for collective action that can prevent both physical harm and the escalation of grievances into violence.

Where mistrust and structural grievances persisted, CBDRR had limited influence on deeper political or identity-based divisions. In South Sudan, Muorwel et al. (2023) documented mutual suspicions between host communities and Dinka Bor herders, where farmers viewed herders as politically backed land grabbers, and herders viewed farmers as rebel sympathisers. In one case, an attempted dialogue between Dinka herders occupying high ground and lowland communities never occurred because the herders were unwilling to engage.²⁴ KI 12 cautioned that while CBDRR could reduce tensions and bring communities together around shared objectives, it would be “a long shot” to claim that such projects alone could “build peace directly” or resolve deeper political and identity-based conflicts.²⁵

Taken together, peace-positive outcomes from CBDRR—in terms of the absence of violent conflict—are best understood as de-escalation and prevention rather than permanent resolution

²³ Supported by KIs 2, 10.

²⁴ Supported by KI 3.

²⁵ KI 12 paraphrased

and a transformative shift in power dynamics. When inclusive structures, fair resource sharing, and trust-building were present, communities were able to manage disputes without violence and normalise everyday disagreements. Where structural grievances, stigma, and mistrust remained unaddressed, the risk of renewed conflict persisted, even when overt violence was temporarily absent. Linking the absence of violent conflict directly to CBDRR initiatives is extremely challenging: in complex, fluid contexts such as Iraq and South Sudan, multiple political, social, and environmental factors interact, and causal pathways are rarely linear.

5.2. Mechanisms or processes

Across the four mechanism domains outlined in Table 1²⁶—establishing institutions for managing environmental issues, increasing interdependence and cooperation pathways, building understanding and trust, and avoiding resource-related disputes—several themes emerged. These are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3. Theory-informed, data-driven themes of mechanisms or processes

Core themes	(Emergent) sub-themes
<i>Mechanisms or processes</i>	
Establishing institutions for managing environmental issues	▪ Hybrid governance: customary bodies complemented by formalised committees and pacts ▪ Locally legitimate leadership and representation as institutional anchors
Increasing interdependence and cooperation pathways	▪ Rule-based resource-sharing agreements and bylaws ▪ Dialogue to negotiate interdependence ▪ Joint implementation and shared monitoring as cooperation incentives
Building understanding, trust, and cooperation	▪ Structured, iterative dialogue that surfaces grievances and shared risks ▪ Continuous engagement and responsiveness to community priorities
Avoiding disputes and conflicts related to natural resources	▪ Early warning and preventive, negotiated arrangements (pre-migration and pre-disaster dialogues) ▪ Linking dialogue to tangible, conflict-sensitive interventions ▪ Genuine participation and ownership to avoid maladaptation

5.2.1. Establishing institutions for managing environmental issues

Institution-building around environmental issues in both Iraq and South Sudan is characterised by layering new mechanisms onto long-standing customary structures rather than replacing them. In Iraq, tribal and community institutions remain central: “tribal mediators, religious authorities and community committees manage water rotation, grazing rights and dispute resolution... canal usage is negotiated weekly among tribal representatives” (Berghof

²⁶ Refer to Chapter 3.

Foundation, 2026, p. 10). Similar structures in Nineveh and Hawija—such as tribal *sulh* councils, *mukhtar*-led committees, and elders’ assemblies—act as first-instance forums for housing, land, and water disputes, resolving cases “within days rather than months” through culturally attuned processes that foster compliance and provide low-cost remedies (Berghof Foundation, 2026). These mechanisms are explicitly framed as managing both practical allocation and “the relationship dynamics that shape long-term cooperation” (Berghof Foundation, 2026, p. 12), underscoring their role in environmental governance rather than ad hoc mediation alone.

Alongside these customary bodies, projects created or reactivated formalised structures to institutionalise climate–conflict management. In Iraq, KI 11 described how dialogue processes in Balad “led to the creation of a water users association”, a legal structure within the government system that effectively reactivated an existing but dormant institution.²⁷ The Al Zubair ‘social pact’²⁸ similarly linked displacement-affected communities with local authorities (Löble et al., 2025). In South Sudan, NGOs and UN agencies similarly supported the formation and strengthening of inclusive community-based committees and NRM/peace committees that “really represent different parts of the society” and are responsible for negotiating land and natural resource issues. These committees were widely described as filling a vacuum where state structures are weak or distrusted; as KI 8 noted, “these committees are very crucial because the institutions that should be there... are not really there right now in South Sudan”. Across sources, these processes show a consistent pattern: environmental management is anchored in locally legitimate bodies, whose mandates are then formalised through bylaws, social pacts, or legal recognition to address increasingly complex climate-related disputes and, where possible, link to formal governance frameworks.

5.2.2. *Increasing interdependence and cooperation pathways*

Mechanisms to increase interdependence and cooperation centred around negotiated rules, shared monitoring, and joint implementation that bound communities and authorities into mutually reliant arrangements. In Iraq, inclusive agreements established fair water distribution systems and community-led monitoring along canals, reinforced by “cooperative dispute-resolution mechanisms involving both community representatives and government officials” (Löble et al., 2025, p. 3). One agreement in Hawija addressed recurring disputes over illegal diversions by setting upstream–downstream sharing rules and integrating oversight into local governance structures (Löble et al., 2025). KI 11 described a dialogue in Kalar that produced an agreement and joint “coordination on small infrastructure improvements” benefiting nearly 100 families—later taken up by development actors and local authorities, demonstrating interest and responsiveness to community concerns. Similarly, in South Sudan, UN-supported community-based NRM committees, peace committees, and associations functioned both as environmental governance bodies and as mechanisms for managing relations between displaced and host communities. These committees develop bylaws to address common sources of conflict and were active in flood-affected areas where IDPs settled among hosts, undertaking

²⁷ Supported by KI 12 and Löble et al. (2025).

²⁸ Previously discussed in section 5.1.2 on substantial integration.

tasks such as opening fire lanes, maintaining fishing practices, demarcating agricultural and livestock routes, and engaging in peacebuilding with neighbouring communities (FAO, 2025; FAO, 2026b).²⁹

Dialogue emerged as a clear, structured mechanism and entry point for negotiating interdependence around resource access, building legitimacy only when linked to tangible outcomes. In Iraq, documents and key informant interviews emphasised that “addressing climate-related security risks provides effective, less politicised entry points for dialogue and mediation”, with “shared challenges such as water scarcity [fostering] constructive engagement and trust more rapidly” (Löble et al., 2025, p. 6).³⁰ In South Sudan, long-standing “cattle migration peace conferences” brought herders and farmers together to agree on routes and grazing areas, now incorporating pre-disaster climate dimensions related to, inter alia, drought awareness, water access, and infrastructure needs.³¹ Before seasonal movements, groups negotiate passage and agree on rules, which one practitioner framed as “co-creation of... communal structure[s] for participation.”³² KI 5 explained that these intercommunal dialogues aim to create “a symmetric power... a system where everyone should abide by it,” even if enforcement is uneven.

However, in both countries, sources underline that dialogue without follow-through can backfire. An Iraq-focused assessment stresses that dialogue forums are most effective when linked to concrete outcomes; purely constructive dialogue processes risk frustration and undermining legitimacy (ARD, 2026). KI 3 in South Sudan similarly warned that identifying needs—such as water points—without implementation support often results in no follow-up, especially when implementing organisations are not part of the dialogue. Across sources (ARD, 2026; DRC, 2024; FAO, 2026b; Löble et al., 2025; UNDP, 2025),³³ the consensus is clear: dialogue is necessary but insufficient. It must be embedded in pathways that deliver visible improvements in water access, land governance, or livelihoods, creating a virtuous cycle that “lay[s] the groundwork for lasting collaboration and resilience” (Löble et al., 2025, p. 6).

5.2.3. *Building understanding, trust, and cooperation*

Processes that build understanding, trust, and cooperation among displacement-affected communities rely on structured, iterative dialogue that is carefully facilitated and attentive to power dynamics. Participatory, community-based processes were most effective when they moved beyond token consultation. In Iraq, KI 11 described how climate-related dialogue processes were designed to shift beyond information sharing to mutual recognition of grievances and shared risks. Climate stress can be framed “as an entry point, as a shared challenge, as a way to bring stakeholders together... to look at the problem or also to look at each other a bit differently”.³⁴ In southern Iraq, hosts blamed IDPs for “bringing in drugs and

²⁹ Supported by KI 8.

³⁰ Supported by KI 11.

³¹ Supported by KIs 3, 5.

³² KI 5.

³³ Supported by KIs 3, 5–6, 8–11.

³⁴ KI 11.

weapons”, while IDPs reported discrimination and unfair treatment by security actors; only once these concerns surfaced were joint sessions convened to build understanding and negotiate agreements sensitive to power imbalances. Project documentation similarly noted that inclusive research, dialogue sessions, and training “increased understanding of how climate change exacerbates existing conflict drivers, including resource competition, social inequalities and governance challenges” (Löble et al., 2025, p. 2). These examples show how facilitated dialogue can shift perceptions and rebuild social relations.

Trust building and cooperation were also sustained through continuous engagement and responsiveness to community priorities. In South Sudan, KI 6 emphasised that trust emerged slowly. Migration conferences held biannually “allow[ed] leaders to engage with each other, to know each other, to build trust... [it is] a very slow process, but...critical, even though you [do not]... see tangible results immediately”.³⁵ At the same time, several KIs stressed that participation in fragile settings is not automatic: KI 5 notes that “[there is] a whole breakdown of trust that makes it not participatory from the get-go... You have to construct that participation” using peacekeeping methodologies to help groups agree to talk and how they will engage with one another. Across sources, these patterns show that trust and cooperation emerge from repeated, iterative, and inclusive engagement that recognises local realities, grievances, and power dynamics, reframes climate risks as shared, and demonstrates responsiveness over time.

5.2.4. Avoiding disputes and conflicts related to natural resources

Mechanisms to avoid resource-related disputes revolve around early, negotiated rule-setting, conflict-sensitive design, and linking dialogue to concrete preventive actions. In South Sudan, cattle migration conferences and pre-disaster dialogues were explicitly designed to prevent violent disputes over grazing, land, and access to high ground. KI 5 described how flood-prone communities and potential hosts were brought together in advance so that “when you have an organised dialogue, you create responsibilities for each and every person... including for the government”. KI 6 further stressed that early warning and preparedness are essential to avoid resource-related conflicts, and that displaced groups must understand and respect host community rules. At the same time, practitioners in South Sudan warned that poorly designed or externally imposed interventions can trigger disputes: “if you bring in an external factor that [does not] address the local conflict, then you create more conflict”, which is why NGOs “[do not] force packages or interventions” but support communities to develop bylaws that “fit the local reality”.³⁶ These examples show that preventing conflict requires early dialogue grounded in local rules and norms, backed by visible, context-appropriate action.

The data also highlighted the limits and fragility of these mechanisms. In Iraq, KI 9 noted that despite numerous community-based initiatives, “there was no real mention of... a noticeably successful conflict resolution,” which is often dealt with at the political or government level. At the same time, KI 9 explained that tribal and government actors are effective at resolving simple disputes but “struggle to address more complex” climate-related disputes. In South

³⁵ KI 3.

³⁶ KI 6.

Sudan, several KIs stressed that platforms “are not effective because people [do not] live on what the platform can do,” particularly where force is still viewed as the primary remedy for dissatisfaction.³⁷ Some dialogues never occurred because “the communities [did not] want to speak with each other,”³⁸ or violence erupted beforehand. Others noted that without systematic follow-up and implementation, even successful dialogue can quickly unravel, and that dissemination and socialisation of agreements can take months.³⁹ KI 8 similarly observed that while risk reduction and resilient livelihoods efforts have “helped stabilise... areas that are most affected by disasters... it is very fragile.” These insights thus temper the more positive findings, showing that institutional and dialogue mechanisms can contain low-level disputes and generate local successes, but remain limited in scale, vulnerable to political shocks, and heavily dependent on sustained resources and follow-through.

Conflict-sensitive and participatory design further reduces the risk of disputes and maladaptive outcomes by ensuring interventions address, rather than exacerbate, local tensions. KI 2 in Iraq stressed that communities must shape intervention design and priorities from the outset, beginning with needs assessments and conflict analyses that identify what communities can do. Women’s economic empowerment initiatives, for example, were built on women developing their own business plans, with implementers supporting their ideas rather than imposing external ones.⁴⁰ Practitioners also cautioned that weak assessment or tokenistic consultation can lead to maladaptation and new grievances—for instance, investing in a water point that dries out within a year, or introducing non-native species that require more water than is available.⁴¹ These findings show that avoiding disputes requires interventions that are technically sound, co-designed, and grounded in local knowledge, ownership, and conflict sensitivity.

5.3. Enabling and constraining conditions

Across the three enabling environment domains outlined in Table 1⁴²—fragility and conflict context, governance and institutional arrangements, and resource access and control—several themes emerged. These are summarised in Table 4.

³⁷ KI 6.

³⁸ KI 3.

³⁹ Supported by KI 3.

⁴⁰ KI 2.

⁴¹ KI 12 paraphrased, supported by UNDP (2025).

⁴² Refer to Chapter 3.

Table 4. Theory-informed, data-driven themes of enabling and constraining conditions

Core themes	(Emergent) sub-themes
<i>Enabling or constraining conditions</i>	
Fragility and conflict context	▪ Structural fragility and “pilotitis” ▪ Conflict and security dynamics ▪ Legacies of violence, intergroup relations, grievances, ideology, and elite capture ▪ Climate and environmental hazards as shared threats ▪ Displacement and (unmanaged) mobility ▪ Politicisation, security risks, criminalisation, enforcement, and crackdowns
Governance and institutional arrangements	▪ Institutionalisation and government engagement ▪ Informal, hybrid, and customary governance ▪ CSOs, NGOs, activists, and networks as strategic partners ▪ External actor influence, funding, and market dynamics ▪ Programme design, operation, and implementation
Resource access and control	▪ Natural resources and environmental conditions ▪ Livelihood sensitivity to environmental issues ▪ Infrastructure and service management ▪ Community engagement, participation, and ownership ▪ Cultural and politicised (a)symmetric access to resources ▪ Inclusion, equity, and targeting, especially women and youth

5.3.1. *Fragility and conflict context*

Fragility, insecurity, and environmental risks interact with longer histories of violence, displacement, and political contestation, creating a structurally fragile baseline for CBDRR. In Iraq, repeated wars, ISIS-related displacement, and damaged infrastructure have weakened critical systems and left climate issues largely unaddressed as governments prioritised security over water and land management (Csordas et al., 2024; UNAMI, 2024). The legacy of ISIS-related displacement and the political salience of affiliation also shape social relations: some IDPs and returnees are viewed with suspicion, and where they are perceived as linked to armed non-state actors, hosts are less willing to share scarce services unless targeting and security concerns are explicitly addressed (Ali, 2025; ARD, 2026; UNAMI, 2024). Under these conditions, actors are pushed towards community-based and CSO-led approaches as pragmatic alternatives. In South Sudan, KI 8 emphasised that fragility and weak institutional functionality make it “very difficult to sustain effort at institutional building in terms of disaster risk reduction.” Farmer–herder dynamics and youth involvement in cattle raiding remain central fault lines, often more salient than IDP/host divisions. Identity-based perceptions between pastoralist and agrarian groups shape access to grazing, water, and markets, influencing whether committees, bylaws, or livelihood inputs are accepted or resisted (Bunse et al., 2024).⁴³

⁴³ Supported by KIs 3, 6.

Despite these constraints, shared exposure to climate and environmental hazards creates pragmatic entry points for CBDRR. Across both countries, communities frame droughts, floods, salinisation, and water scarcity as shared threats that cut across identity lines (Ali, 2025; ARD, 2026; Berghof Foundation, 2026; FAO, 2026b; UNAMI, 2024).⁴⁴ Where CBDRR channelled shared risks into shared livelihoods or collective resource management—such as rehabilitating boreholes serving several localities, agreeing rotational pumping schedules, or demonstrating floating gardens—participants reported reduced competition and increased willingness to cooperate (ARD, 2026; FAO, 2025; FAO, 2026b).⁴⁵ These effects were strongest when interventions converted an abstract threat into tangible, mutually beneficial assets and were mediated by trusted actors (women’s groups, youth networks, local CSOs). However, shared exposure does not automatically guarantee peace-positive outcomes. Perceived partiality—elite capture, unequal distribution of benefits, or unbalanced IDP/host targeting—can turn shared hazards into new sources of contestation (Ali, 2025; ARD, 2026; PPO & Berghof, 2023a).⁴⁶

Displacement and mobility create both risks and openings for peace-positive CBDRR. In Iraq, displacement is often protracted (ARD, 2026; FAO, 2026b; UNAMI, 2024),⁴⁷ with many moving to urban centres that “lack the services and infrastructure to cope with the increased population” (UNAMI, 2024, p. 7). Some returnees only tentatively resume agricultural activities in rural areas despite degraded conditions, signalling willingness to reintegrate if environmental barriers are addressed (ARD, 2026). In South Sudan, community-based integration programmes explicitly grapple with tensions between IDPs, returnees, and hosts. Where projects used feedback mechanisms and dedicated sessions for youth, women, and authorities, practitioners reported reduced tensions and greater acceptance of shared infrastructure (FAO, 2026b).⁴⁸ Conversely, unmanaged movements and overstretched services fuelled negative host perceptions; spontaneous self-relocation to higher ground without pre-negotiated arrangements became “a major conflict trigger,” with hosts imposing conditions such as “[do not] bring your livestock”⁴⁹ to protect scarce pasture.

The dataset reinforces that CBDRR is most effective when anchored in stable institutions or durable local arrangements that survive political turnover. Enabling conditions arise when implementers secure commitments from local authorities or embed projects within recognised local committees, thereby creating continuity beyond individual officeholders and short-term external support (ARD, 2026; FAO, 2026b; Löble et al., 2025).⁵⁰ However, political volatility and institutional fatigue frequently undermine these gains. Damaged infrastructure, contested authority, political turnover, under-resourced administrations, and security risks interrupted service delivery and eroded project credibility and continuity (ARD, 2026; Csordas et al., 2024; FAO, 2026b; UNAMI, 2024).⁵¹ As a result, many activities in Iraq remain small, short-lived,

⁴⁴ Supported by KIs 4, 6–7.

⁴⁵ Supported by KIs 3, 11.

⁴⁶ Supported by KI 9.

⁴⁷ Supported by KIs 5, 8.

⁴⁸ Supported by KI 8.

⁴⁹ KI 5.

⁵⁰ Supported by KIs 2, 11.

⁵¹ Supported by KIs 2, 9.

and non-transformative (ARD, 2026; UNAMI, 2024; Csordas et al., 2024).⁵² Practitioners described a pattern of ‘pilotitis’—low-visibility pilots intended to avoid political exposure that fail to scale because they lack legal protection, predictable financing, or institutional anchoring (FAO, 2026b).⁵³ KI 9 illustrates the consequences of political volatility: “In two years, Dhi Qar changed five governors... because of a lot of corruption [and] political competition, these water projects... suffer”. Where civic actors and researchers in Iraq face security risks for exposing pollution or illegal water use, monitoring and advocacy are discouraged, and implementers are pushed towards smaller, less contentious interventions (UNAMI, 2024).⁵⁴

Perceptions of unequal treatment and elite capture are also decisive for whether CBDRR is viewed as legitimate or exclusionary. Across the dataset, perceived unfairness in aid, compensation, and service distribution consistently heightened community tensions and undermined peace-positive outcomes (Alkhudary, 2025a; Ali, 2025; ARD, 2026; Bunse et al., 2024; PPO & Berghof, 2023a).⁵⁵ In the Nineveh Plains in Iraq, communities recognised that shared environmental pressures required collective solutions, but still identified “perceived inequality in aid and compensation distribution for damages” (Ali, 2025, p. 15) as a major driver of tension. Government resources were widely seen as allocated based on familial, tribal, or political connections (PPO & Berghof, 2023a), disadvantaging groups less connected to power. Similar patterns appeared in South Sudan, where unequal access to land, income, and assets made “needs-based distribution of seeds or trees difficult” (Bunse et al., 2024, p. 21). These findings suggest that pairing technical risk reduction with identity-sensitive safeguards—clear eligibility criteria, participatory allocation, community oversight, and accessible grievance mechanisms—reduces perceptions of favouritism and lowers the incidence of protests or localised disputes (ARD, 2026; FAO, 2026b).⁵⁶

5.3.2. *Governance and institutional arrangements*

Across cases, formal governance constraints create a limited enabling environment for CBDRR. In Iraq, climate change intersects with “institutional fragmentation, uneven decentralization, and underinvestment in public infrastructure” (ARD, 2026, ch. 6.1, para. 1). Water allocation is centralised but implemented locally, producing “inconsistencies and confusion” (UNAMI, 2024, p. 15) and fuelling regional and local disputes. Subsidies, water allocations, and even the legality of wells are widely perceived as tied to political connections, enabling elite capture and deepening grievances (Alkhudary, 2025a; PPO & Berghof, 2023a). KI 9 described crackdowns on illegal water tapping and fish farms that reduced some disputes but were experienced as unjust because “influential people were able to continue” violations while others were punished. Formal adaptation efforts are “largely policy-driven and under-resourced,” with governorates holding “limited discretionary budgets and authority to act” (Berghof Foundation, 2026, p. 10), leaving a vacuum in which informal governance becomes crucial as DRR responsibilities are dispersed across multiple institutional bodies with little coordination (Csordas et al., 2024). In

⁵² Supported by KIs 2, 9.

⁵³ Supported by KIs 2, 9.

⁵⁴ Supported by KI 2.

⁵⁵ Supported by KIs 2, 9.

⁵⁶ Supported by KIs 8, 10–11.

South Sudan, similar fragmentation and weak institutional capacity make sustained DRR institution-building extremely difficult.⁵⁷ These patterns mean that CBDRR often operates in a governance vacuum where formal institutions cannot reliably sustain or scale interventions.

Where CBDRR is rooted in locally recognised and legitimate structures, co-design, ownership, and institutionalisation enhance peacebuilding potential. In Iraq, co-design with local partners and government counterparts—supported by networks of facilitators and mediators—fostered genuine ownership by communities together with authorities (ARD, 2026; FAO, 2026b; Löble et al., 2025).⁵⁸ When paired with clear maintenance arrangements, this ownership increased the likelihood that infrastructure and bylaws would endure beyond project cycles (ARD, 2026; FAO, 2026b; Löble et al., 2025).⁵⁹ As KI 2 noted: “ownership is the main pillar that you can build sustainability on... without ownership, sustainability is... not possible”. Where implementers secured institutional commitments, communities reported greater confidence that, for example, boreholes, irrigation repairs, and agreed pumping schedules would be maintained, reducing the risk that resource projects would become flashpoints for renewed contestation (ARD, 2026; FAO, 2026b). Löble et al. (2025) similarly found that inclusive participation with tailored monitoring and implementation “fostered ownership and accountability” (p. 5), with visible results reinforcing durability, legitimacy, and confidence in collective governance. In South Sudan, alignment with government priorities helped ensure legitimacy.⁶⁰ CBDRR supports peacebuilding when it builds shared ownership and institutional memory; it is constrained when it remains projectised, personality-dependent, or externally driven.

Informal and hybrid arrangements—combining customary authority with formal mandates—are therefore central where formal institutions are weak. In Iraq, informal or semi-formal water sharing mechanisms were repeatedly identified as key to mitigating water scarcity (ARD, 2026; UNAMI, 2024). Such arrangements can “reduce conflict and improve short-term coping capacity,” (ARD, 2026, ch. 7.2.1, para. 2) when grounded in “shared norms, social trust, and the perceived fairness of rules” (ARD, 2026, ch. 7.2.1, para. 2). Natural resource use in both Iraq and South Sudan is governed by a combination of formal legal systems and “informal local systems based on customary rights and traditions,” (UNAMI, 2024, p. 10). In Iraq, multi-level consultations involving communities, community leaders, and local government helped avoid perceptions of bias, such as adjusting project targeting from IDP-only to a 50–50 IDP/host split.⁶¹ Local committees that included chiefs, elders, women, and youth across social groups—representative of IDPs and host communities—were recognised as legitimate platforms for resolving disputes and passing bylaws on livestock and land use (FAO, 2026b). In South Sudan, traditional chiefs and informal leaders were described as “part of the whole fabric of the social fabric,” without whom “you cannot do these kinds of things”.⁶² Dialogue-based mechanisms were an important hybrid governance tool, but their peacebuilding potential depended on design,

⁵⁷ Supported by KI 8.

⁵⁸ Supported by KIs 2, 11.

⁵⁹ Supported by KIs 2, 11.

⁶⁰ Supported by KI 6.

⁶¹ Supported by KI 10, and previously discussed in section 5.1.3 on symbolic rapprochement.

⁶² KI 3.

follow-through, and visible implementation.⁶³ These hybrid structures enabled communities to collectively manage climate-related tensions, though reliance on informal arrangements has limits; while hybrid arrangements are pragmatic, they are not substitutes for institutional capacity and predictable financing.

Shrinking civic space and security risks further limit the transformative potential of CBDRR, but these constraints are uneven. In Iraq, environmental CSOs and academics reported real threats when their work challenged powerful polluters or state-embedded actors; monitoring and advocacy can attract (extra)judicial harassment or reprisals, sharply reducing local accountability and the ability to enforce environmental rules (UNAMI, 2024).⁶⁴ One practitioner described how activists face “a lot of security risks” when exposing pollution or illegal water use, and that these risks discourage sustained civic oversight.⁶⁵ UNAMI (2024) documented that “unregulated dumping of solid and liquid waste, including biohazardous and industrial chemical waste” (p. 16) is a politically sensitive issue difficult to address. By contrast, in South Sudan, community-based organisations, committees, and local leaders are often central to sustaining CBDRR activities, despite their own resource constraints. Weak state functionality and formal DRR institutions therefore shift reliance onto CSOs that also lack stable funding (FAO, 2026b).⁶⁶ Practitioners reported that these bodies were “more sustainable, much more impartial and objective”⁶⁷ in resolving resource disputes than weak formal institutions were, and that programmes that invested in CSO capacity and community feedback mechanisms reduced tensions among IDPs, returnees, and hosts.

Donor short-termism, under-funding, inflation, and logistical delays further undermine CBDRR’s peace-positive potential. Evaluations document how one-off inputs and funding volatility disrupt the sequence from dialogue to tangible action to maintenance, leaving pilots without the multi-year support needed to institutionalise gains, eroding trust when promised follow-up does not materialise (Alkhudary, 2025b; ARD, 2026; FAO, 2026b).⁶⁸ The “short-term nature of international funding” pushes environmental actors towards “shallow and ineffective interventions” (Alkhudary, 2025b, p. 14) that reduce immediate risk but do not remediate slow-onset hazards, embed enforcement mechanisms, or shift political economies. In such an environment, even well-designed CBDRR struggles to institutionalise gains or to scale beyond pilot sites and is therefore unlikely to deliver durable, peace-positive transformation (ARD, 2026; FAO, 2026b; UNAMI, 2024).

5.3.3. *Resource access and control*

The distribution of climate and environmental risk shapes livelihood sensitivity and conflict potential. In Iraq, declining water availability and deteriorating water quality—particularly rising salinity—are described as “major constraint[s] on reintegration” (ARD, 2026, ch. 4.2.2,

⁶³ Previously discussed in section 5.2.2 on increasing interdependence and cooperation pathways.

⁶⁴ Supported by KIs 2, 9.

⁶⁵ KI 2.

⁶⁶ Supported by KI 8.

⁶⁷ KI 8, supported by FAO (2026b).

⁶⁸ Supported by KI 3.

para. 1) and agricultural recovery. Reduced freshwater flows, seawater intrusion, inadequate drainage, and inefficient irrigation are well documented, with salinity affecting both domestic consumption and crop yields (ARD, 2026). Salinity often functions as a “delayed barrier to reintegration” (ARD, 2026, ch. 4.2.2, para. 3), with returnees abandoning agriculture after repeated crop failures.⁶⁹ Several KIs⁷⁰ from Iraq link oil-sector practices—including land grabbing and the use or pollution of drinking water, rivers, and marshlands—to increased salinity and politically complex disputes involving several international state actors and businesses. Under such conditions, CBDRR that does not address structural—and highly politicised—water and soil constraints risks offering only short-term coping. In South Sudan, disaster risk is shaped by, *inter alia*, seasonal variability, droughts, localised flooding, and the spatial overlap of pastoral and agrarian livelihoods, producing distinct hotspots of vulnerability. Where hybrid institutions are perceived as fair, they can redistribute risk and enable joint management; where they are weak or exclusive, shocks quickly translate into livelihood collapse and a heightened risk of local conflict (FAO, 2026b).⁷¹

Infrastructure deficits and mismanagement further intensify environmental risk and constrain CBDRR. In Iraq, infrastructure damaged by conflict—dams, sewage systems, and power plants—reduced adaptive capacity, while unregulated industrial waste dumping exacerbated water shortages (UNAMI, 2024). Underinvestment in maintenance has led to high non-revenue water losses and frequent service interruptions, even during periods of moderate water availability (ARD, 2026). Csordas et al. (2024) describe “dated and insufficient infrastructure” (p. 7), including inadequate wastewater treatment, poorly maintained dams and power plants, and inadequate regulations for buildings and land conversion, compounded by weak planning for DRR and environmental protection. In South Sudan, conflict flare-ups frequently render infrastructure investments unusable (FAO, 2025; FAO, 2026b). These conditions mean that CBDRR, focused solely on behaviour change or local management, is insufficient without parallel efforts to address structural pollution and infrastructure deficits.

Resource access and control are deeply unequal and politicised. Marginalised groups—IDPs and returnees, as well as women and youth—often experience poorer access to services and limited influence over resource decisions. In Iraq, water quotas are frequently set below required levels, leading to violations, over-consumption, and increased tribal conflicts (PPO & Berghof Foundation, 2023a). Farmers suspect that subsidies and services are disproportionately awarded to those with familial, tribal, or political connections⁷², enabling large landholders to benefit at the expense of smaller farmers (Alkhudary, 2025a). Where IDPs and returnees lack political representation, opaque allocation decisions undermine trust and discourage sustainable return (ARD, 2026). In South Sudan, unequal access to income, land, and assets complicates needs-based distribution (Bunse et al., 2024). Government backing for Dinka cattle herders

⁶⁹ Supported by KI 2.

⁷⁰ KIs 1, 2, and 9 discuss the role of the oil extraction industry in Iraq in the context of natural resources and the environment being highly politicised and securitised, limiting transformative CBDRR.

⁷¹ Supported by KIs 3, 8.

⁷² Previously discussed in section 5.3.1 on fragility and conflict context.

reinforces asymmetric access to land and water—especially on fertile high ground⁷³—and strengthens some pastoralists’ de facto control over grazing and watering points, heightening tensions with farmers and returnees (Bunse et al., 2024).⁷⁴ CBDRR that does not expand access for marginalised groups and explicitly address these politicised patterns of access and authority risks reproducing the grievances that fuel conflict.

Land tenure and land-use change also shape whether CBDRR can support peace-positive outcomes. In Iraq, unresolved displacement-related claims, weak documentation, and the role of state and non-state armed groups as landowners and enforcers (UNAMI, 2024) leave IDPs and returnees without predictable access to land for agriculture or risk reduction activities. For instance, practitioners noted that land ownership in northern Iraq remains contested and difficult to resolve.⁷⁵ These constraints reduce incentives for long-term land management and heighten the risk of disputes, even as some farmers adapt through land-use shifts—such as replacing tomatoes with low-cost herbs to buffer against market shocks (Alkhudary, 2025a). In South Sudan, land is formally abundant, but practically inaccessible: customary systems dominate access, formal titles are rare, and 40–50 per cent of land is seasonally flooded.⁷⁶ Customary norms are also deeply gendered. As one practitioner explained, “land belongs to communities,”⁷⁷ meaning displaced households must navigate communal authority structures that often exclude women, widows, and returnees (FAO, 2025). Community-based committees trained in mediation can stabilise relations and negotiate access⁷⁸, but they cannot address structural drivers of vulnerability, such as lack of titles or armed actors blocking grazing routes. CBDRR can foster cooperation where tenure is secure or locally negotiated; where insecurity persists, it risks reproducing exclusion rather than enabling peacebuilding.

Youth functions as both a risk and a resource. High unemployment, school dropout, and involvement in cattle raiding are documented drivers of conflict in South Sudan (Bunse et al., 2024),⁷⁹ yet youth engagement in value chains, environmental campaigns, and livelihood training redirected energy toward constructive, cross-community mobilisation (Alkhudary, 2025b).⁸⁰ KI 6 described youth as capable of driving a “revolution in the food system” when offered viable economic pathways that produced social recognition and reduced incentives for violence. In Iraq, youth-led initiatives mobilise volunteers across multiple governorates and sectarian lines to, inter alia, clean rivers and promote environmental preservation, reflecting “a new generation that is interested in the environment and climate” (Alkhudary, 2025b, p. 13; supported by Khalaf, 2023). Across both contexts, the principal constraint is symbolic inclusion or instrumentalisation: token participation, unpaid volunteer labour, or programmes without

⁷³ KI 3.

⁷⁴ Supported by KIs 3, 8.

⁷⁵ Supported by KIs 1–2.

⁷⁶ Supported by KI 8.

⁷⁷ KI 8.

⁷⁸ Supported by KI 8.

⁷⁹ Supported by KIs 3, 6–8.

⁸⁰ Supported by KI 6.

capacity development reproduce dependency or exploitation, and can ultimately undermine future mobilisation (Khalaf, 2023).⁸¹

Women and youth are not merely vulnerable groups attuned to climate and environmental risks but active mediators and practical risk managers whose meaningful inclusion substantially increases the peace-positive potential of CBDRR. Several KIs in South Sudan highlight that customary community leaders and women often mediate between displaced and host groups, with women described as “very instrumental”⁸² because they are perceived as less threatening and more willing to respond to visible needs. Women consistently framed drought, flooding, seasonal shifts, and water and land access as “the centre of their everyday concerns,” and are “much more open to thinking of joint projects between communities”.⁸³ Programmes that formalised women’s roles—such as women-led committees and seed production groups—aligned livelihood support with women’s priorities (nutrient-dense crops, seed systems) and gave women decision-making authority (FAO, 2026b).⁸⁴ Their economic empowerment can shift norms around land access and ownership.⁸⁵ In Iraq, women’s everyday governance of resources—negotiating tanker deliveries, coordinating access to shared wells, mediating relocation tensions, and organising collective maintenance—was repeatedly highlighted as an under-recognised asset routinely excluded from formal allocation fora (Berghof Foundation, 2026). Overall, when women hold real roles in design, implementation, and monitoring, interventions report faster reconciliation, stronger rule compliance, and more durable maintenance of shared assets (Berghof Foundation, 2026; FAO, 2026b; World Bank, 2026).^{86,87}

5.4. Contribution to environmental peacebuilding debates

The findings from Iraq and South Sudan illustrate that CBDRR’s peace-positive outcomes emerge not from its technical components alone, nor from bypassing structural conditions or delivering rapid aid, but through incremental, relational processes that shape how authority, legitimacy, and cooperation are negotiated within the institutional and social landscapes in which interventions are embedded. Across both contexts, CBDRR supported several of Ide’s (2021) peace dimensions, particularly capabilities, substantive integration, and symbolic rapprochement, yet these gains were consistently modest and contingent. Cooperation around water, land, and seasonal mobility did not arise because CBDRR resolved underlying structural problems, but because it created temporary spaces in which groups could negotiate shared risks, articulate grievances, and establish rules perceived as minimally fair. These processes helped stabilise relations and reduce the likelihood of escalation, but they rarely altered the deeper political and economic structures that shape vulnerability and exclusion.

⁸¹ Supported by KI 8.

⁸² KI 8.

⁸³ KI 4, supported by KIs 6–8, Berghof Foundation (2026), Bunse et al. (2024), and FAO (2026b).

⁸⁴ Supported by KIs 6, 8.

⁸⁵ Supported by KIs 6–7.

⁸⁶ Supported by KIs 6–8, 11.

⁸⁷ Women’s role as key peacebuilding agents is previously discussed in section 5.1.3 on symbolic rapprochement.

Davis et al.'s (2023) relational understanding of power helps explain why these outcomes remained partial and uneven. CBDRR interventions operate within dense networks of authority—tribal, customary, bureaucratic, and political—that determine who can speak, who is heard, and whose claims are recognised as legitimate. In many cases, CBDRR stabilised existing power relations by working through actors already positioned as gatekeepers, particularly where access to land, water, and services is mediated by political or tribal networks. At the same time, the results show that CBDRR can incrementally shift relational power by broadening participation and creating new governance interfaces. Sequenced dialogue, conflict-sensitive targeting, inclusive committees, co-designed bylaws, and hybrid customary–formal arrangements enabled groups with limited institutional standing to influence resource decisions in displacement-affected communities. These shifts did not transform structural inequalities, but they did shift everyday interactions and expectations of fairness—alterations that supported cooperation under conditions of conflict and fragility, and generated meaningful, if limited, peace-positive outcomes.

As such, environmental peacebuilding should treat relational and procedural dimensions as core pathways through which CBDRR become peace-relevant. Technical assets—pumps, dikes, seed systems—only become governed, enforceable, and mutually valued when they are embedded in social relations and routinised procedures that determine who benefits, who enforces rules, and how grievances are resolved. Across cases, modest peace gains emerged where projects created temporary, low-stakes spaces for negotiation and where those spaces were sequenced into visible delivery; where such sequencing and legitimacy were absent, dialogue often produced frustration or reinforced existing grievances or gatekeeping. Framing environmental peacebuilding around relational and procedural infrastructures, therefore, shifts the analytic focus from assets and outputs to the social processes that convert risk reduction into relational resilience—the capacity of communities to negotiate, share, and sustain common goods under conditions of mobility, political and conflict sensitivity, and resource scarcity.

Relational dimensions concern how recognition, legitimacy, trust, interdependence, shared-risk framing, and intergroup visibility are produced or undermined in practice, each dimension mutually reinforcing. Recognition and legitimacy—whose claims are heard and whose authority is accepted—shaped outcomes: agreements and bylaws mattered because they were perceived as fair and inclusive (for example, 50–50 targeting between IDPs and hosts, co-designed bylaws, and water user associations that made upstream–downstream rules visible). Trust-building and interdependence emerged through repeated cooperation and shared maintenance: communities that, for instance, jointly monitored irrigation schedules or co-managed pumps reported more durable compliance and fewer escalatory disputes than those where assets were handed over without shared responsibilities. Shared-risk framing shifted narratives away from blame toward collective problem definition, enabling groups to negotiate passage, grazing routes, or access to high ground in pre-migration and pre-disaster dialogues. Intergroup visibility, particularly the deliberate inclusion and empowerment of women and youth, changed who could speak and be seen as legitimate negotiators. Women-led committees and youth representation repeatedly surfaced as catalysts for mediation and reconciliation.

Taken together, these relational dimensions reinforce that environmental peacebuilding must measure success by changes in everyday authority, reciprocity, and mutual obligation.

Procedural dimensions concern the rules, sequences, safeguards, and institutional interfaces that structure engagement over time. Hybrid governance—layering informal tribal councils, NRM and women-led committees, water user associations, and social pacts onto formal local governance structures—provided enforceable pathways where state presence was weak, anchored agreements in both customary legitimacy and formal oversight, and provided durable sites of negotiation and mutual accountability. Sequenced, structured engagement—separate listening sessions, followed by joint dialogue, co-production of bylaws, and immediate, visible follow-through—strengthened credibility and reduced the risk of dialogue backfiring. Trust and cooperation in FCAS are slow, cumulative, and easily reversible, and so repeated dialogues and continuous, iterative engagement built the social foundations for cooperation. Conversely, one-off or tokenistic consultations, or unimplemented promises eroded trust. Yet, dialogue alone is insufficient; communities trusted processes only when they produced visible improvements. Accountability and follow-through converted dialogue and assets into genuinely common goods. Inclusive governance protocols that explicitly define representation and protect the meaningful participation of IDPs, hosts, women, and youth were necessary to surface and mitigate power asymmetries. Safeguards against elite capture through transparency measures, community oversight, and clear eligibility rules were also essential procedural checks that preserved perceived fairness and prevented gatekeepers from monopolising benefits. Altogether, centring procedural dimensions in environmental peacebuilding reframes success as the durability of CBDRR measures, negotiated rules, and institutions.

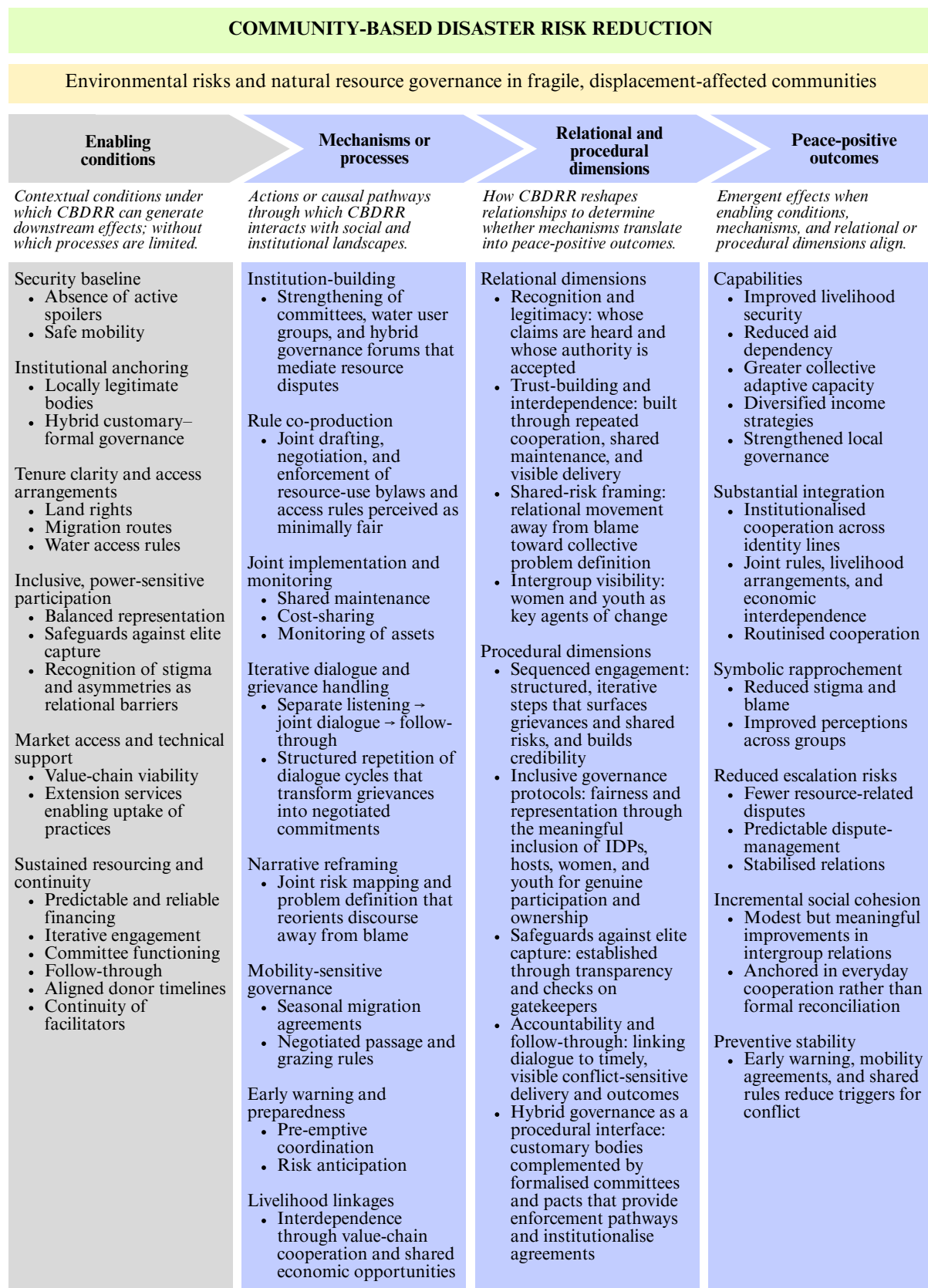
In this sense, CBDRR does not resolve the “wicked problem” of environmental insecurity, displacement, or conflict, but it can, under certain conditions, reshape the relationships through which communities manage that problem together. That is, relational and procedural gains may be contingent on certain conditions. First, a minimal security baseline was necessary. Where active spoilers or severe mobility restrictions persisted, collective action failed, whereas areas with relative safety could sustain joint efforts. Second, institutional anchoring in locally legitimate bodies provided the convening authority and enforcement pathways that made bylaws and social pacts meaningful rather than symbolic. Third, tenure clarity and access arrangements mattered. Explicit rules for land rights, grazing routes, and water access reduced zero-sum competition and made negotiated sharing feasible; where tenure was ambiguous or contested (customary versus formal allocation and recognition), agreements were repeatedly undermined. Fourth, inclusive, power-sensitive participation was a precondition for perceived fairness. Moreover, projects that embedded safeguards against elite capture and empowered women and youth in displacement-affected communities generated faster reconciliation, stronger compliance, and new mediation channels. Fifth, market access and technical support turned adaptive practices into realistic livelihood pathways and sustainable alternatives to risky coping strategies. Without these, income diversification remained fragile and grievance drivers persisted. Finally, sustained resourcing and continuity kept committees functioning and assets maintained; many of the more durable outcomes in the dataset were continuations of prior programmes, rather than one-off projects. In short, CBDRR can create the stepping stones that

make conflict prevention and peacebuilding possible in fragile settings, but these gains remain contingent on the broader enabling environment.

To operationalise these findings, Figure 5 presents a concise visual summary that expands on Ide's (2021) environmental peacebuilding conceptual framework.⁸⁸ It synthesises the core CBDRR mechanisms or processes onto relational and procedural features that make them effective, and the enabling conditions that determine whether pathways succeed in supporting peace-positive outcomes. Figure 5 represents the conceptual logic of how CBDRR operates in practice: conditions shape mechanisms, mechanisms work through relational and procedural pathways, and these together influence peace-positive outcomes. Practitioners and policymakers can use this tool to design CBDRR interventions in displacement-affected communities in FCAS as inputs to relational processes, and to test which processes or mechanisms and enabling conditions must be secured for modest but durable peace-positive outcomes.

⁸⁸ Refer to Figure 3 in Chapter 3.

Figure 5. Relational–procedural pathways linking community-based disaster risk reduction to peace-positive outcomes



6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

This thesis demonstrates that the relationship between climate and environmental risk reduction and peacebuilding in displacement-affected contexts is neither linear nor automatic. Across Iraq and South Sudan, CBDRR interventions generated cooperation not because they resolved structural drivers of vulnerability, but because they created provisional arrangements through which communities could negotiate shared risks, articulate grievances, and establish minimally legitimate rules. These findings support narratives that frame environmental peacebuilding as variably transformative—capable of producing modest to more substantial shifts in social relations depending on context and design. The evidence suggests that the mechanisms and processes through which CBDRR enables or constrains peacebuilding are best understood through a relational lens, whose effects depend on how they engage with existing political economies, institutional landscapes, and displacement dynamics. In this sense, this thesis contributes a more grounded understanding of how environmental interventions operate within fragile settings: not as technical fixes, but as political processes embedded in uneven structures of authority.

This thesis also advances conceptual debates by showing that environmental peacebuilding cannot be understood without a relational analysis of power. While the literature often focuses on access to and control over resources, the findings illustrate that another decisive factor is how CBDRR reshapes the relationships, expectations, and procedural norms through which decisions are made. These relational shifts are modest and contingent, yet they matter: they enable cooperation under conditions where formal institutions are weak, trust is low, and displacement has altered local social contracts. At the same time, the thesis shows that CBDRR can stabilise existing hierarchies, particularly where interventions rely on gatekeepers or where civic space is constrained. This duality underscores the need for environmental peacebuilding frameworks that consider the social, political, and institutional contexts in which interventions unfold, and that recognise the limits of what localised, project-based approaches can achieve in the absence of broader structural change.

Taken together, the findings indicate that CBDRR alone cannot transform structural inequalities or the broader, entrenched challenges of protracted displacement and environmental insecurity. Rather, the findings of this thesis suggest that under certain conditions, CBDRR can create the relational and procedural foundations for more durable forms of cooperation. Recognising both the potential and the limits of these processes, and the conditions under which they operate, is essential for designing interventions that contribute meaningfully to peacebuilding in fragile, displacement-affected settings. CBDRR can function as a form of local peace infrastructure.

This study's limited scope constrains the extent to which the findings can capture the lived experiences of affected communities, and the analysis necessarily reflects the conditions under which CBDRR did foster cooperation in the two cases examined. This raises an important limitation: identifying conditions that enabled peace-positive outcomes does not preclude the possibility that opposite or different conditions can also produce cooperation, or that alternative pathways to peace are unavailable in other contexts. Future research would benefit from in-

depth, locality-specific studies that trace how specific CBDRR processes are experienced by different groups within displacement-affected communities, and how relational shifts observed at the level of programme design translate into everyday practices of cooperation or contestation. Longitudinal research revisiting past CBDRR interventions would also help assess their durability, their effects on inter- and intra-group relations in displacement-affected settings, how they shape perceptions of state and non-state actors over time, and the conditions under which small-scale gains accumulate or dissipate. Such work is essential for understanding what community-based approaches to climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction achieves in fragile settings, and how communities themselves define success and sustainability.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Document review search strings

Table 5 presents the Boolean search strings used for identifying peer-reviewed literature in Scopus and Web of Science. Refer to Appendix B for the document inclusion and exclusion criteria applied to search queries using the search strings within the described search engines.

Table 5. Boolean search strings for identifying peer-reviewed literature for review

Search string	Database and results
(Iraq OR “South Sudan”) AND (“community-based” OR “community-led” OR “community-driven” OR “local level” OR “locally led” OR grassroots) AND (“disaster risk*” OR “risk reduction” OR DRR OR “climate change adaptation” OR “climate adaptation” OR “natural hazard” OR “environmental risk” OR “environmental change” OR “land degradation” OR “resource scarcity” OR “resource stress”) AND (“natural environment*” OR environment OR “natural resource governance” OR “natural resource*”) AND (“internally displaced*” OR “internal displacement” OR IDP OR “displacement-affected”)	Scopus: n = 94
(Iraq OR “South Sudan”) AND (“community-based” OR “community-led” OR “community-driven” OR “local-level” OR “locally led” OR grassroots) AND (“natural environment*” OR environment OR “natural resource governance” OR “natural resource*”)	Web of Science: n = 44
(Iraq OR “South Sudan”) AND (“natural environment*” OR environment OR “natural resource governance” OR “natural resource*”) AND (“internally displaced*” OR “internal displacement” OR IDP OR “displacement-affected”)	Web of Science: n = 9

Note. Attempts to apply the Scopus search string in Web of Science yielded zero results, and applying the Web of Science search strings in Scopus returned an unmanageably large number of results. These cross-database applications were therefore not included in the document review.

Appendix B: Document review inclusion and exclusion criteria

Table 6 presents the inclusion and exclusion criteria employed in the document selection process of both peer-reviewed and grey literature.

Table 6. Document inclusion and exclusion criteria

	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
First screening	▪ The full text is available in English. ▪ Published between 2019–2026. ▪ Focuses on geographic communities within Iraq and/or South Sudan.	▪ Does not meet inclusion criteria (language, publication timeframe, geography)
Second abstract screening	▪ Engages with internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees, and/or host communities in non-camp settings. ▪ Addresses local or general peacebuilding or social cohesion strategies. ▪ Engagement with the natural environment and/or natural resources. ▪ Discusses implementation of disaster risk reduction or climate adaptation strategies addressing slow- or sudden-onset natural hazards.	▪ Non-empirical or purely normative. ▪ Focus outside study scope, including: - Macroeconomic policy - Health systems, psychological or mental health - Domestic or gender-based violence - Schools or education systems - Music or cultural production - Peacekeeping operations (mandates, troop movements, mission reporting) ▪ Does not engage with IDPs, returnees, or host communities in non-camp settings. ▪ Does not address peacebuilding, social cohesion, natural resource governance, or DRR/climate adaptation.
Final screening	▪ Published either by a peer-reviewed scientific journal or by a known international organisation, non-governmental organisation (NGO), research organisation or think-tank, or state institution.	▪ Excluded document types: - Theses, dissertations - Parliamentary debates, legislative transcripts, legal texts - Press releases, published letters - Summary records or minutes of high-level meetings - Government budget performance reports, emergency appeals, ministry commitment documents - Senate or committee reports - National Action Plans ▪ Excluded institutional sources:

-
- Archives
 - Healthcare bodies or agencies
 - Financial institutions or banks
 - Parliaments/senates/congresses
 - Food and drug safety agencies
 - Cultural institutions
 - Citizens' assemblies
 - Armed forces
 - Excluded international/regional policy instruments:
 - EU guidelines, legal frameworks, opinions
 - EU Joint Staff Working Documents (including annual implementation reports on EU external relations)
 - Reports on international humanitarian law or public international law
 - UN General Assembly resolutions and Secretary-General reports
-

Appendix C: Interview protocol

Pre-interview steps:

- Prior to scheduling the Zoom meeting with the participant who has agreed to participate in an interview, send the consent form and an information sheet to each interviewee, which outlines information necessary for informed consent, including what participation entails and data protection procedures, the research focus, and the interview questions that participants will be asked.
- Before the interview, join the meeting 10 minutes before the scheduled start time to test the camera, microphone, and internet connection.

Interview guide:

Introduction and background

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Not part of interview dataset | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Thank participant▪ Introduce researcher background and the research focus▪ Explain interview structure▪ Explain consent procedure; review consent form together▪ Confirm permission to record and transcribe▪ Confirm their preference, as indicated in the consent form, of being anonymous or not, quoted or unquoted |
|-------------------------------|--|

Participant background

- | | |
|--------|--|
| Part 1 | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Could you briefly describe your position working on (and/or your organisation's engagement in) peacebuilding, climate and environmental risk, risk reduction or adaptation, or similar in displacement-affected communities?2. In which geographic areas in Iraq and/or South Sudan have you engaged with community-level approaches to disaster risk reduction, climate adaptation, or similar involving natural resources? |
|--------|--|

Probing: region, city, village; urban/rural setting

Empirical anchoring

- | | |
|--------|---|
| Part 2 | <ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Could you describe one or two community-based initiatives you have worked on (or are familiar with) that address climate or environmental risks in non-camp IDP-host community contexts where interaction between groups was relevant to implementation? |
|--------|---|

Probing:

- Type of slow- or sudden-onset hazard(s) addressed, e.g. droughts, floods, water scarcity, land degradation, etc.

- Natural resources involved, e.g. land or water resources, forests, pastures, seed banks, watersheds, etc.
- Actors involved, e.g. IDPs, hosts, formal/informal authorities, government, (I)NGOs, CSOs, etc.
- Duration and scale of the initiative

Peace-positive, -negative, or neutral outcomes

Part 3

4. Based on your observations or knowledge of the projects, in what ways did the initiative influence relationships, cooperation, or tensions in displacement-affected communities, such as between displaced and host residents?

Reflection prompts:

- Trust
 - Perceptions of fairness
 - Forging positive narratives about other groups
 - Cooperation or collective action
 - Developing shared interests or shared social identity
 - Reduced resource-related disputes
 - Inclusion/exclusion effects
 - Tensions
 - Unintended effects
 - Changes in power dynamics
5. Did the community-based risk reduction/adaptation initiative also influence livelihood security or adaptive capacity to environmental problems for displaced and host residents in ways that affected stability or cooperation at the community-level?

Probing: if yes, for whom?

Processes or mechanisms

Part 4

6. How were decisions made about the design and implementation of the initiative?

Reflection prompts:

- Who designed the initiative
 - Level of IDP/host participation
 - Who had influence over decisions
 - Local ownership
 - Role of the community vs. external actors
 - Role of formal vs. informal institutions
 - A reflection of power dynamics
7. How did the initiative engage with existing or new resource governance arrangements (formal, customary, or hybrid; local, regional, national)?

Reflection prompts:

- New/old committees
- New/old rules and/or norms for managing risk and resources
- Coordination mechanisms or dialogue platforms
- Joint planning or risk mapping
- Changes to access or distribution of resources
- Integration with local authorities

8. Did the initiative create new forms of cooperation or joint action between groups, or influence how resource-related disputes were managed?

Probing: if yes, how?

Reflection prompts:

- Conflict resolution mechanisms
- New dialogue spaces, rules, or committees
- Joint activities
- Knowledge sharing
- Increased interdependence around resources
- Improved ways of coordinating resource use

Conditions in the enabling environment

Part 5

9. What contextual factors, in your opinion, most shaped how these initiatives functioned in practice to produce (previously mentioned) peace-positive outcomes?

Reflection prompts:

- Governance structures (formal, customary, hybrid)
- Governance presence/absence
- Governance quality/capacity
- Conflict history
- Displacement/social dynamics
- Political, institutional, security enablers/constraints
- Funding/programme design
- External actor influence
- Level of local participation

10. What existing power dynamics or social relations shaped how the initiative worked in practice, and did the initiative reinforce, shift, or transform these dynamics?

Reflection prompts:

- Inequalities between groups
- (Who's) resource access/control
- Land tenure or access issues
- Livelihood sensitivity of groups to environmental problems

- Documentation issues
- Gender or social marginalisation
- Other displacement-related asymmetries
- Who benefited most/least.

11. Were there similar initiatives in other locations that produced different outcomes? What might explain the difference?

Interview closing

Part 6

12. Is there anything else that is important for understanding the processes and conditions under which CBDRR initiatives support peace-positive outcomes in IDP-host communities that we have not yet discussed?

13. Can you suggest or provide any relevant documents I could review for this study?

14. Can you suggest additional contacts you recommend I speak with?

- Thank participant
- Turn off recording and transcription

Appendix D: Overview of interview participants

Table 7 presents a summary of the interview participants. To respect participants' anonymity, only broad fields of expertise and organisation category are provided, and no specific positions or affiliations are disclosed. The sequence reflects the order in which interviews were carried out, and corresponds to the key informant (KI) identifiers used in the thesis.

Table 7. Overview of interview participants

KI	Geographic expertise	Organisation type	Field of expertise
1	Iraq	Non-governmental organisation/ civil society organisation	Natural resource governance and legal frameworks for livelihoods and peacebuilding
2	Iraq	Non-governmental organisation/ civil society organisation	Peacebuilding and gender- responsive community engagement
3	South Sudan	Regional intergovernmental organisation	Climate adaptation and conflict-sensitive mobility within climate, peace, and security programming
4	South Sudan	International peacebuilding organisation	Climate, peace and security
5	South Sudan	International peacekeeping organisation	Climate, peace and security
6	South Sudan	National academic institution	Natural resource management with a focus on seed systems and climate adaptation
7	South Sudan	Non-governmental organisation/ civil society organisation	Women, children, and displacement-focused natural resource programming
8	South Sudan	International development organisation	Peacebuilding and conflict- sensitive development programming
9	Iraq	Research and policy institution	Environmental policy and water governance
10	Iraq	Non-governmental organisation/ civil society organisation	Water resource management and peacebuilding
11	Iraq	International peacebuilding organisation	Peacebuilding and natural resource governance programming
12	Iraq	International humanitarian organisation	Disaster risk management in humanitarian and development programming

Appendix E: Codebook

The final codebook is presented in Table 8, showing the hierarchy of nodes and subnodes with their corresponding sources and references as organised in NVivo. The codebook was developed using a framework-driven approach in which major themes were defined deductively. Within this structure, subnodes were generated through a mixed deductive–inductive process. Deductive categories were supplemented by bounded inductive insights that emerged from the data. Inductive codes were incorporated when they strengthened, nuanced, or expanded the predefined themes or directly addressed the research questions. Inductive observations that did not meet these criteria were documented but not included in the final coding structure.

Table 8. Codebook summary of nodes and subnodes informing sub-themes

Nodes and sub-nodes	Sources	References
Absence of violent conflict		
Easing of tensions	7	11
Gender based violence	2	4
Reduce inter-communal conflict	2	3
Reduced resource-based conflict	1	1
Avoiding disputes and conflicts related to natural resources		
Conflict prevention	9	16
Conflict sensitivity	14	27
Dialogue platforms	18	97
Dispute resolution	12	31
Do no harm	1	2
Early warning systems	7	7
Limited in scale	1	1
Participatory approach to prioritise project objectives	8	14
Participatory vulnerability and risk mapping	7	9
Risk assessment	4	10
Risk mapping	4	5
Slow process	1	1
Building understanding, trust, and cooperation		
Communication	2	3
Community leaders and chiefs	15	56
Community-based volunteers	5	15
Coordinated usage	1	2
Coordination	3	9
Data, databases, and knowledge generation	3	3
Erosion of local knowledge	1	1
Indigenous and local knowledge	6	15
Joint action	2	2
Knowledge and skills	17	32
Knowledge exchange	11	17
Legitimacy	6	13
Limited data	4	7
Local champions	3	6

Nodes and sub-nodes	Sources	References
Negotiation	6	14
Transparency	2	4
Willingness	1	3
Capabilities		
Aid dependency	1	1
Avoiding aid dependency	9	14
Community first responders	1	1
Community-based capacity development	23	73
Community-driven development as livelihood opportunity	12	38
Dependency on local ecosystems	7	14
Diversify economy	3	5
Empower communities	5	9
Empowerment	9	15
Entrepreneurial	1	1
Equipment	5	9
Food security	10	17
Illiteracy	1	1
Importing material	1	1
Limited capacities in being self-sufficient	5	7
Literacy skills	1	1
Livelihood	23	111
Low adaptive capacity	3	3
Maladaptation	13	28
Preparedness	2	3
Prestige	1	3
Promoting resilience and livelihood opportunities	4	4
Reinvesting in village savings and loans	7	7
Self-sufficiency	4	4
Socio-economic empowerment	6	8
Spontaneous and unstructured measures	1	1
Undermine resilience by creating dependency	2	2
Economic and funding environment		
Changing market prices	6	6
Concertium and grants	1	1
Financing gap	4	5
Funding	19	57
High cost of doing business	1	1
Market inefficiencies	3	3
Market or inflation	2	2
Establishing institutions for managing environmental issues		
Agreements	13	41
Community committees	17	45
Community rules	1	1
Community-level bylaws	2	3
Documentation	2	3
Heavy resource investment	1	1
Informal leadership	5	6

Nodes and sub-nodes	Sources	References
Layers of institutions	2	4
Peacebuilding engaging wide range of actors	4	11
Shared norms	2	2
Social contract	1	1
Strengthened community institutions	9	10
Vertical integration	1	1
Working within existing structures	2	5
Fragility and conflict context		
Analysis of power structures	2	2
Armed groups	5	8
Cattle raiding	2	2
Colonialism and authoritarianism	1	1
Corruption and neoliberalism	10	27
Criminalisation	7	7
Cultural heritage	1	2
Definition and recognition of IDPs	2	3
Ethnic violence	3	4
Exploitation by armed groups	2	14
Farmers and herders	7	26
Food insecurity	5	8
Framing	1	6
Heighten tension	7	9
Herding practices serve as a symbolic tool of dominance	1	1
Improved security	3	3
Insecurity and political instability	29	121
Inter-communal tensions and conflict	23	77
Land-grabbing	3	5
Monitoring conflict dynamics	4	5
Oil industry	7	15
Political affiliation	10	21
Political buy in	5	7
Political economy	4	5
Political ideology	3	5
Political influence	6	12
Political sensitivity	10	14
Politicisation	6	15
Revenge attacks	3	3
Social tensions	4	4
State narrative	2	2
Tribal dynamics	4	7
Governance and institutional arrangements		
Accountability	6	10
Activist networks	6	13
Advocacy and policymaking	1	4
Alignment with national strategies and policies	11	26
Autonomy	1	2
Bottom-up interventions connect to top-down efforts	5	5
Builds on existing resources from other partners	3	7

Nodes and sub-nodes	Sources	References
Centralisation	3	5
Civil society organisations	16	55
Community policing	2	4
Coordination challenging functionality and project coherence	13	27
Decentralised government	5	5
Diaspora	2	5
Donor priorities	7	22
Embedded within the community	1	1
Engagement with government	13	24
Exploitation by ruling elite	5	7
Fragmented	5	11
Government bureaucracy	2	2
Government imposed rules	8	11
Government involvement	20	56
Grassroots level	5	7
Hybrid governance	4	8
Informal governance	5	14
International organisations and other stakeholders	22	108
Lack of assistance	7	15
Lack of enforcement mechanisms	10	18
Legal environment	13	35
Limited political will	2	2
Local governance and capacity	10	32
Logistical difficulties	5	6
Low government ownership	3	3
Mainstream	1	7
Mercantilist system	1	2
National policies	19	66
Nepotism	3	6
Networking	4	9
NGOs	11	68
Opportunistic politicians	3	4
Organisational capacity	11	36
Outdated methods and frameworks	1	1
Overlapping roles	2	4
Polarisation	1	1
Power vacuum	1	1
Preferential hierarchy	1	2
Private corporations	1	1
Prosecution	2	4
Resistant to national and state level politics	1	1
Rights-based approach	1	3
Ruling elite	2	7
Sanctioned by political elite	8	13
Sectarian competition	3	3
Securitisation	3	5
Short timeframes	10	14
Short-sighted	2	3
Socio-political and governance systems	1	1

Nodes and sub-nodes	Sources	References
State backing	2	3
State managed	2	2
Strategic partner	3	5
Structural dependency	3	3
Structured or institutionalised	5	7
Top-down process	6	6
Turnover	1	2
Weak government capacity	19	62
Weak government institutions	21	103
Increasing interdependence and cooperation pathways		
Cash-for-work	1	1
Cattle migration conference	4	10
Co-management	4	4
Collaboration	14	30
Common interest groups and associations	7	10
Community-based revenue collection	1	1
Environmental alienation	1	1
Information dissemination or socialisation	1	1
Information sharing	2	5
Information systems and coordination	2	2
Interdependent economies	1	1
Mobilising support	4	7
Resource investment	2	3
Stakeholder	3	6
Systems rooted in the community	3	5
Project design and activities		
Awareness campaigns	8	13
Cash and vouchers	2	9
Context specific	5	11
Implementation	7	15
Infrastructure rehabilitation	4	8
Lack of monitoring	2	2
Less politicised entry point	3	7
Monitoring and evaluation	2	2
Poor timeliness	4	8
Poor organisational learning	1	1
Rehabilitation of dikes	5	7
Small initiatives	7	17
Technocratic solutions	10	19
Resource access and control		
Access to limited natural resources	18	48
Accessing land	17	46
Adaptive	2	2
Beneficiaries	6	8
Beneficiary selection and input distribution	1	7
Climate vulnerabilities limit income-generation opportunities	14	40
Climate and disaster vulnerability impede risk mapping	1	1

Nodes and sub-nodes	Sources	References
Climate change and environmental factors	16	39
Co-creation	3	3
Communities consulted	4	4
Communities not consulted on their needs	5	6
Community engagement	16	40
Community engagement to set priorities	9	13
Community interests	4	7
Community needs perceived as being unmet	2	2
Community participation	17	35
Community-led monitoring systems	6	12
Community-level decision-making	1	1
Credibility	1	1
Cultural preference	4	4
Cultural significance	7	10
Customary practices	8	20
Discrimination or favouritism	4	7
Disruption to agricultural and pastoral livelihoods	5	10
Engaging with youth	9	31
Equitable distribution or access	9	12
Exclusion	6	12
Improved access to resources or infrastructure	11	19
Inclusive participation	16	35
Intervention areas	1	1
Land tenure	8	15
Limited capacity of commercial seed suppliers	1	1
Limited depth of community engagement	4	7
Marshland areas	8	14
Mindset	2	5
Overexploitation of resources	4	4
Ownership	13	33
Pollution	4	6
Poor infrastructure	6	14
Project design	11	27
Project sustainability	13	30
Project targets IDPs and returnees	4	5
Reliance on informal practices	4	5
Removal of illegal means of adaptation	4	6
Resource availability	4	9
Risk of increased dependency	1	1
Risk of overexploitation	1	1
Salinity	2	4
Social importance	4	4
Unequal distribution of resources	9	20
Women in community-level decision making	13	33
Youth groups	9	22
Youth unemployment	3	5
Resource–peacebuilding entry point		
Afforestation	1	1

Nodes and sub-nodes	Sources	References
Agriculture	23	75
Aquaculture	7	9
Clean energy	1	1
Community forestry and woodland resource management	1	2
Eco-tourism	1	3
Livestock	12	17
Seed fairs	1	1
Seeds	6	21
Solar photovoltaic systems	2	3
Water point	14	28
Substantial integration		
Co-existence	3	5
Community relations	7	16
Compensation	1	2
Cooperation	14	25
Education	2	4
Increased social cohesion	2	2
Integration	2	2
Sense of community	4	5
Sense of shared responsibility	10	17
Symbolic rapprochement		
Behaviour change	3	6
Challenging cultural norms	6	10
Distrust	7	10
Perceived agents of the government	1	2
Perceived fairness of rules	3	4
Perceived sympathisers of rebel groups	2	2
Perception of fairness	3	5
Perceptions of returnees and IDPs	12	23
Prejudices	1	1
Social acceptance	2	2
Social cohesion	15	25
Trust	16	35