ASSESSING CLIMATE ACTION INTERVENTIONS ALONG THE HUMANITARIAN-DEVELOPMENT-PEACE NEXUS: A METHODOLOGY TAILORED FOR EVALUATING CONTRIBUTIONS TO RESILIENCE IN DESTINATION AREAS

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RESEARCH REPORT

ABSTRACT

Increasing climate and conflict-related displacement in fragile or conflict-affected states threaten human security and sustainable development around the world. As forced displacement increases and becomes more protracted in length, destination areas—where displaced and host communities often have low adaptive capacity and live side by side, sharing resources related to land, food, and water systems—are particularly exposed to human security risks. Here, demographic pressures can put pressure on public services and infrastructure, identity-based and political tensions can lead to violent conflict, and poor access to finance can lower the opportunity costs for individuals to engage in violence or join non-state armed groups. Thus, targeted research is needed to explore how interventions aiming to support climate resilience in destination areas also address risks across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. Solutions intended to urgently meet the basic needs of households facing humanitarian crises must also support long-term sustainable development and be implemented in conflict-sensitive ways. To understand how climate resilience interventions address risk across the HDP nexus, we have developed a mixed-method approach of assessing recently completed or ongoing interventions in destination areas. It involves a medium-scale human security index survey of intervention participants (n=200), supply-side key informant interviews with the intervention design, implementation, and evaluation teams, demand-side key informant interviews that use most significant change and positive deviance approaches to understand the enablers of adversely positive outcomes, and a quantitative assessment of how well the intervention addresses local drivers of conflict and instability (Climate Security Sensitivity Tool).

1.INTRODUCTION

Increasing climate and conflict-related displacement in fragile or conflict-affected states (FCAS) threatens human security and sustainable development around the world. Globally, 490 million chronically food insecure people live in FCAS, where climate's impact further increases the risk of conflict and displacement (Läderach et al. 2021). In 2022, the number of people living in conditions of internal displacement reached the peak of 71.1 million, with year-on-year increases in both conflict (17%) and disaster-related displacement (45%) (IDMC 2023). With global warming expected to reach upward of 1.5°C by 2100, severe impacts on land, water and food systems are likely to have a negative impact on the lives and livelihoods of millions, if not billions of people worldwide (IPCC 2022). Similarly, increasingly frequent and severe rapid-onset (storms, flooding, etc.) and slow-onset (drought, sea level rise, etc.) hazards will contribute to humanitarian crises driven by malnutrition, forced displacement, and conflict around the world, threatening human security, sustainable development, and peaceful stability (Läderach et al. 2021).

While the specific impacts climate, mobility, and conflict are locally contextual, it is broadly recognized that climate, mobility, and conflict are inter-related and able to negatively reinforce one another, leading to a "vicious circle" of climate-related insecurity (Buhaug and von Uexkull 2021). As forced displacement increases and becomes more protracted in length, destination areas—where displaced and host communities often have low adaptive capacity and live side by side, sharing resources related to land, food, and water systems—are particularly exposed to human security risks. Here, demographic pressures can put pressure on public services and infrastructure, identity-based an political tensions can lead to violent conflict, and poor access to finance can lower the opportunity costs for individuals to engage in violence, or join non-state armed groups (Savelli et al. 2023).

Thus, targeted research is needed to explore how interventions aiming to support climate resilience in destination areas also address risks across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. solutions intended to urgently meet the basic needs of households facing humanitarian crises must also support long-term sustainable development and be implemented in conflict-sensitive ways.

The methodology presented below has been formulated as part of the CGIAR Initiative on Fragility, Conflict, and Migration (FCM), which addresses

challenges to livelihoods, food, and climate security in fragile and conflict-affected settings, where mobility-related challenges are prevalent (Kosec, Läderach, and Ruckstuhl 2023). By taking a systems approach and working in partnership with local stakeholders, national partners, and international organizations, FCM seeks to generate evidence to inform effective policies and programs that promote social and gender equity, climate resilience, conflict mitigation, and peacebuilding in fragile settings. Within FCM, the STABILIZE work package focuses on evaluating policies and programs that seek to stabilize livelihoods by promoting food and nutrition security; poverty reduction and resilience; social cohesion and government accountability; and gender equity and inclusion.

To understand how climate resilience interventions address risk across the HDP nexus, we have developed a mixed-method approach of assessing recently completed or ongoing interventions in destination areas. Methods are oriented toward answering the research question:

How well does a specific climate action intervention address the resilience of community members in destination areas, and how can it better mitigate the root causes of instability and conflict by contributing to local resilience?

This will be achieved by employing an inductive approach and participatory research methods that centre the diverse lived experiences, voices, and values of displaced and host community members.

2. KEY CONCEPTS

2.1 Resilience

To explore resilience, the research team has expanded the definition used the in Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (Sendai Framework) (UNDRR 2015) to focus more on agency and transformative adaptation. The Sendai Framework defines resilience as "the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions through risk management" (UNDRR 2015). However, UN and similar operational definitions of resilience can fail to capture the full scope of what the term means to those facing hazards or conceal how the concept is used to legitimize and strengthen the organizations defining it. This often results in technocratic (Quandt 2016), depoliticized interventions (Manyena 2014) that are detached from the social-ecological aspects of resilience (Talubo, Morse, and Saroj 2022) and focus more on humanitarian response than sustainable development or positive peace.

Thus, we define resilience as the agency of individuals and groups to achieve wellbeing by anticipating, withstanding, recovering from, and transformatively adapting to socio-ecological changes. By agency, we mean "the ability to define one's goals and act upon them" in line with "the meaning, motivation and purpose [that] individuals bring to their [activities]" (Kabeer 1999, 438). In this sense, resilience aligns with theories that equate sustainable development with the expansion of human freedom (Sen 1999). By anticipating, we mean the ability of individuals and groups to understand and effectively prepare for socio-ecological changes before their occurrence. Withstanding relates to the adaptive capacity of individuals and groups to mitigate the negative impacts of socio-ecological changes during their occurrence. Recovery is the ability of individuals and groups to return to an initial state of wellbeing after the impact of a socio-ecological change. Finally, transformative adaptation builds on (Few et al. 2017) and (Hellin et al. 2022) to mean actions that address the root causes of vulnerability by catalysing systems transformation. In other words, transformative adaption refers to "a process of societal and environmental change where different actors work in concert to change collectively a system towards greater sustainability" (Hellin et al. 2022, 1). Thus, transformative adaptation is concerned with more than just day-to-day survival; it is oriented toward the

wholesale reconfiguration of social-ecological systems for greater sustainability and revolutionary capacity. Acknowledging that that resilience is a subjective notion that will mean different things to different people (Jones and Tanner 2017), we intend our definition not to serve as an objective benchmark, but as a conceptual mirror against which to compare and contrast local notions of resilience that emerge from intervention participants' values, knowledge, and experiences (Jones and d'Errico 2019).

2.2 The Humanitarian-development-peace nexus

Building on outcomes from the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, in 2018, the United Nations Working Group on Transitions and Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Team on Strengthening the Humanitarian-Development Nexus in Protracted Settings communicated a "New way of working" across the humanitarian-development-peace-nexus (United Nations Working Group on Transitions and Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Team on Strengthening the Humanitarian-Development Nexus in Protracted Settings 2018). Acknowledging the increasingly protracted nature of both crises and displacement, the Working Group and Task Team acknowledged the need for "preventing and resolving conflicts and crises, reducing risk, building resilience … and sustaining peace by addressing the root causes of conflicts" (United Nations Working Group on Transitions and Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Team on Strengthening the Humanitarian-Development Nexus in Protracted Settings 2018, 3). This is meant to be achieved through "greater interoperability among humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding activities, plans, and programmes" (United Nations Working Group on Transitions and Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Team on Strengthening the Humanitarian-Development Nexus in Protracted Settings 2018, 3).

While this has led to a cultural shift among key actors in the sector, many challenges remain in aligning objectives, programming, and finance along the HDP nexus. Firstly, the four core humanitarian principles—humanity, neutrality, impartiality (UN General Assembly 1991), and independence (UN General Assembly 2004)—may, in some cases, exacerbate the root causes of conflict, which "often stem from violations and neglect of human rights, including inequality, persistent discrimination, impunity and violence" (United Nations Working Group on Transitions and Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Team on Strengthening the Humanitarian-Development Nexus in Protracted Settings 2018, 3). In other words, the provision of humanitarian relief may need to be performed in collaboration with the very actors who are driving conflict. This points to the difference between peacebuilding (associated with positive peace and creating the foundations for long-term collaboration between conflicting parties), and peacekeeping

(associated with negative peace, by simply ceasing the occurrence of violence) (ALNAP 2023). Similarly, the aim of humanitarian relief—to provide emergency support that satisfies the basic needs of those affected by natural disasters or complex crises, such as armed conflicts—does not always support the longer-term goals of peacebuilding or sustainable development. A common reaction has been the promotion of "self-reliance" strategies, which largely place the onus of building resilience on individuals themselves (Davoudi 2017). Such responses often ignore the social, ecological, economic, and political systems that marginalize people and work against sustainable development and peacebuilding (Nguya and Siddiqui 2020). This can lead to dissatisfaction among participants, who feel exploited by humanitarian interventions that are designed and implemented without their input (O'Byrne 2022). Finally, funding for HDP initiatives is often short-term and unreliable (ALNAP 2023). Thus, while an emergency funding appeal may generate resources for rapid humanitarian relief, these funds often dry up in the medium-long term, undermining sustainable development and peacebuilding in the wake of a crisis (Mena et al. 2022). Similarly, funds for sustainable development remain siloed from those earmarked for humanitarian relief or peacebuilding, and generally flow toward stable contexts less vulnerable to disasters or conflict (Scartozzi, Savelli, and Caroli 2022).

3. METHODOLOGY

Given the challenges outlined above, targeted research is needed at intervention-level to assess how specific programming modalities can better contribute to resilience building across the HDP nexus. To achieve this goal, our intervention appraisal methodology uses a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods to assess the extent to which ongoing or recently completed climate action interventions (implemented by international, national, or local organizations) 1) support the resilience of participants across the HDP nexus, 2) equitably benefit different social groups within the target community, and 3) can be improved by learning from community members who experienced adversely positive outcomes as a result of the intervention. Four methods are used in tandem, as summarized in Table 1, below.

Research question	Method	Detail
How well does a specific climate action intervention address the resilience of community members in destination areas, and how can it better mitigate the root causes of instability and conflict by contributing to local resilience?	Survey (n=200)	Use Human Security Index approach to understand how a specific intervention has been perceived by different social groups (host/displaced, male/female/, youth/elders) in relation to resilience outcomes
	Supply-side key informant interviews	Semi-structured interviews with intervention implementers and community leaders to understand intervention aims, design, implementation, and MEL results
	Demand-side key informant interviews	Semi-structured interviews with intervention participants using most significant change (MSC) and positive deviance (PD) approaches, to take learnings from individuals experiencing adversely positive outcomes
	Climate Security Sensitivity Tool (CSST)	Quantitatively measure the extent to which climate adaptation projects address local drivers of insecurity

Table 1. Summary of intervention assessment methods

3.1 Human Security Index survey

A mixed-method survey will be deployed to reach a sample size of approximately 200 intervention participants. The survey will use a maximum variation sampling to capture a diverse range of participant experiences and perceptions. The survey will build on Adger et al. (2021) and Le et al. (forthcoming) to construct a Human Security Index for respondents, against which subjective experiences of the intervention and resilience itself will be measured.

Survey Section 1 employs a range of demographic questions to categorize participants according to gender, age, ethnicity, income, and other relevant socio-economic markers. In Survey Section 2, a Human Security Index is constructed to serve as the independent variable. Here, "human security" is defined as a set of environmental, economic, and social variables that affect individual wellbeing. The original dimensions of human security, formulated by Adger et al. (2021) to examine the human security of urban migrant populations, have been modified by Le et al (forthcoming) and the research team to better address the concerns of rural populations. Additional questions are employed to categorize respondents as having a low, medium, or high level of human security based on their answers.

In Survey Section 3, respondents are asked a series of questions about their experience of the intervention, which will function as the dependent variable. Specifically, the questions probe perceptions of how well the intervention has addressed issues of resilience, as defined by the research team (see Section 2.2 Resilience). Here, respondents have an opportunity to express their perceptions regarding the degree to which the intervention has succeeded in helping them to anticipate, withstand, recover from, and transformatively adapt to socio-ecological changes.

Finally, Survey Section 4 provides space for respondents to elaborate on resilience-related issues or areas of importance that the intervention failed to address. An open question asks participants to articulate an individual notion of subjective resilience to be compared against a) the research team's definition of resilience, and b) notions of resilience offered by other respondents.

While Section 2 will illuminate human security levels post-intervention, Sections 3 and 4 will help parse the extent to which these levels can be regarded as outcomes of the intervention. A matrix analysis will assess how the intervention was perceived by and (may have) contributed to the

resilience of participants with varying levels of human security. Additionally, by comparing intervention-related outcomes across various social groups (disaggregated by gender, age, income, location of origin, etc.), we aim to enable an intersectional assessment of which community members benefited most and least from the intervention.

3.2 Supply-side KIIs with project implementers and community leaders

To complement quantitative results from the survey and CSST (see Section 3.4, below), semi-structured key informant interviews (KIIs) are conducted with the intervention team and community leaders. Semi-structured interviews will be employed as they are useful for exploring complex behaviours, opinions, and emotions across a broad spectrum of experiences (McIntosh and Morse 2015). The interview questionnaire will consist of (mandatory) leading questions and (optional) supplementary inquiries. In this way, the questionnaire will ensure flexibility and allow for a conversational style (J.Rubin and S.Rubin 2005).

Where the intervention team is defined as those responsible for designing, implementing, and evaluating the intervention, community leaders often play a pivotal role in facilitating access to communities connecting the implementing organization with participants. The KIIs will elicit information on how the intervention's design, implementation, and evaluation team, and community leaders conceptualize resilience and sought to incorporate it into the intervention. Separate questionnaires are used for the intervention team and community leaders as their perspectives are likely to differ. The qualitative data generated by these KIIs will be compared against quantitative data from the CSST and survey to construct a more comprehensive understanding of how subjective notions of resilience have influenced the intervention's efficacy.

3.3 Demand-side KIIs with intervention participants

A series of semi-structured interviews employing most significant change and positive deviance approaches are then performed with intervention participants to understand how and why certain individuals may have experienced disproportionately positive outcomes because of the intervention, as well as how to scale these outcomes to additional participant groups. Extreme (or deviant) case sampling, a form of purposive sampling, are employed to isolate intervention participants who have experienced significantly better outcomes compared to the mean. These participants will be identified through interactions of the research team

with community participants and in consultation with the research partners.

Most significant change is a narrative evaluation technique that explores how an intervention is experienced by participants (Tonkin et al. 2021). Positive deviance aims to identify individuals who have experienced relatively better outcomes because of a project or intervention, identify the uncommon practices or enabling factors that led to this disproportionately positive outcome, and devise ways of scaling these practices or enablers to a larger group of participants (Marsh et al. 2004). By combining these two approaches, we will employ a dual-pronged strategy to 1) understand participants' experiences of the intervention generally and in relation to various outcomes (positive, negative, no change), and 2) drill deeper into the experiences of those with positive outcomes to identify ways of improving future interventions, or new iterations of the one at hand.

The questionnaire includes two sections, one for each aspect of the dual-pronged approach. The first section employs a most significant change methodology adapted from Davies and Dart (2005) to define "domains of change" through the intervention reporting period, collect significant change stories, and feedback the stories to the respondent for verification. This section is semi-structured, enabling respondents to narrate experiences of the intervention through storytelling. Domains of change are broadly defined categories—change in practice, change in attitude, change in knowledge, and change in interactions with community–that facilitate subjective interpretations of intervention outcomes. However, additional types of dimensions of change—i.e., changes in capacity, risk, etc.—may also be identified and explored.

The second section employs a form of positive deviance inquiry adapted from Shafique et al. (2016). The questionnaire explores a) positive behaviours, b) determinants at an individual, household or community level enabling these positive behaviours, and c) challenges to change and how they are addressed. Positive behaviours are changes in practice, attitudes, and interactions with the community adopted by selected participants that seemingly enabled them to better anticipate, withstand, recover, and transformatively adapt to environmental change, conflict, and climate shocks. Analysis of positive deviance data enables us to identify not only the positive behaviours that enabled individuals to improve their resilience, but also what conditions are necessary, and which challenges must be addressed to scale positive outcomes to new groups or contexts in future interventions.

3.4 Climate Security Sensitivity Tool (CSST)

Finally, the Climate Security Sensitivity Tool (CSST) is used to asses conflict-sensitive and peace-responsive climate action in climate action interventions (Sarzana et al. 2023). The CSST is a means for governmental and non-governmental organization change agents to support rural communities to adapt to climate change while reducing an intervention's potential for conflict and maximizing social cohesion. The CSST is deployed in a participatory manner, during a 90-minute meeting where the research and intervention teams populate the tool together and discuss its outputs. A report is then generated and jointly authored by both teams. A sample output assessing the climate security sensitivity of a climate-smart villages program in Nyando, Kenya, serves as an example (Sarzana et al. 2022).

The CSST assumes that any fragile context is characterized by a unique set of risk factors for crises. These are sourced from the INFORM Risk model, developed by The Joint Research Center of European Commission (Marin-Ferrer, Vernaccini, and Poljansek 2017). The tool also builds on environmental peacebuilding frameworks developed by (Dresse et al. 2019; Johnson, Rodríguez, and Quijano Hoyos 2021)) to express how climate adaptation can contribute to peacebuilding through a Climate-Peace Framework (CPF). The framework introduces six climate-peace mechanisms: economic development, building institutions, building trust and cooperation, resource sustainability, enhancing knowledge and building capacity and resilience. Climate-peace mechanisms translate how different characteristics of climate-action interventions can address conflict drivers, such as by strengthening livelihoods, improving resource governance, or addressing inequality or environmental degradation. They can be conceptualized as the means through which conflict drivers can be addressed to attain climate-resilient peace. These conflict drivers are identified using indicators and assessed at various geographic levels based on a set of pre-defined potential conflict and insecurity drivers. Contextual conflict and insecurity indicators include weak infrastructure (health systems, connectivity, physical infrastructure), weak institutions (governance, disaster risk reduction), socio-economic drivers (development and deprivation, inequality, aid dependency), vulnerable groups (uprooted people, food insecurity, shock sensitivity, health conditions), natural hazards (floods and droughts probability), and human hazards (conflicts probability). Indicators are assessed on a scale from 0 to 10, with risk threshold values differing between drivers, including very low-, low-, medium-, high- and high-risk values (Marin-Ferrer, Vernaccini, and Poljansek 2017).

The CSST is composed of two steps: the context definition and the climate action scoring system. Implementing the first component results in the projection of the ideal set of climate-peace mechanisms for the selected context, while the second component provides the set of mechanisms currently delivered by the program design. Visually aligning these two sets allows practitioners to re-define their intervention to match the ideal mechanisms and prioritize their intervention components.

In context definition, location-specific information (country – region – municipality) is provide and enables risk indicator scores to appear. Indicators are sourced from the Joint Research Centre's INFORM risk, with risk-level thresholds varying between categories (Marin-Ferrer et al., 2017). These risk threshold classes provide a weight of severeness of the drivers of conflict and insecurity. Drivers featuring very high risk are assigned a weight of 5, high risk is assigned a weight of 4, medium risk is assigned a weight of 3, low risk is assigned a weight of 2, and very low risk is assigned a weight of 1. Through the Climate Peace Framework, drivers have been linked with climate-peace mechanisms; a climate-peace mechanism is assumed able to negate one corresponding driver of conflict and insecurity. A list of conflict/insecurity drivers and their counteracting climate-peace mechanisms is outlined in Table 2, below.

DRIVERS OF CONFLICT & INSECURITY	**CLIMATE-PEACE MECHANISMS**					
	Economic Development	Building Institutions	Building trust and cooperation	Resource sustainability	Enhancing knowledge	Building capacity and resilience
Lack of infrastructural coping capacity	✓	✓				
Lack of institutional coping capacity		✓	✓		✓	✓
Human hazards	✓	✓	✓			✓
Natural hazards	✓	✓		✓		✓
Vulnerable groups	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Socioeconomic vulnerabilities	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

Table 2. *Theoretical relationships between climate-peace mechanisms and drivers of conflict and insecurity*

Risk severity coefficients affect the score of the mechanisms they have been linked to: when a driver features high risk, the mechanisms that are linked to it get a higher relevance score, while when the driver features low risk, its related mechanisms become less relevant. Relevance scores for each climate-peace mechanism are projected on a spider chart on a percentage scale informing users of the ideal scores for the selected context. This chart allows practitioners to identify the programmatic areas that require more attention – higher percentage scores – to prevent conflicts and contribute to peacebuilding.

Next, the climate action scoring system defines the extent to which the intervention addresses each climate-peace mechanism. In this step, the user scores the proposed climate-adaptation intervention across the sub-mechanisms within each climate-peace mechanism. Examples are provided for the user to get an understanding of the characteristics a climate-adaptation intervention must have to address each sub-mechanism. A sub-mechanism can be scored with either a 1, a 0.5, or a 0: a score of 1 can be added when a sub-mechanism is completely addressed, a score of 0.5 when the sub-mechanisms is partly or indirectly addressed, and a score of 0 when the sub-mechanism is ignored. These scores are then averaged for each mechanism and visualized on a spider chart with percentage scale. The percentage scores communicate how well an intervention addresses each climate-peace mechanism. Sample spider charts, based on a climate-smart village intervention in Nyando, Kenya, are provided below.

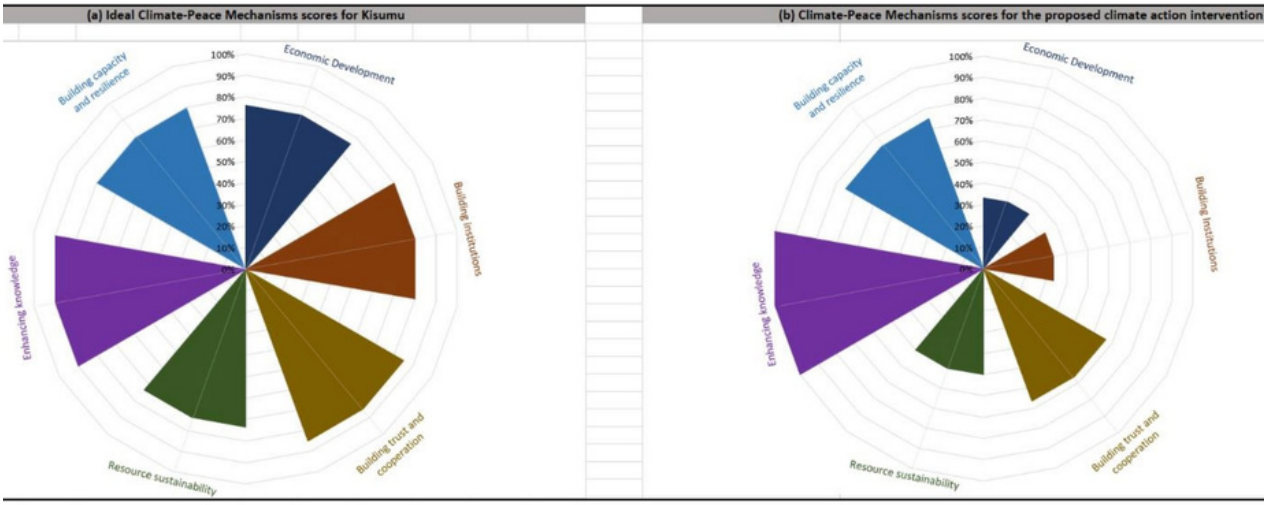

Figure 1. *Spider charts displaying the CSST's ideal climate-peace mechanisms in Kisumu (left), and climate-peace mechanism scores for a local climate-smart villages intervention (right)*

Based on the percentage results of the two spider charts, the extent to which a climate action intervention addresses local climate-peace mechanisms is assessed. If a mechanism scores very high in the ideal conditions chart, it should also score high in the chart illustrating mechanism scores delivered by the program design. When this is not the case, it is inferred that programmatic features must be added to better address this mechanism.

4. OUTPUTS AND IMPACT STRATEGY

The research team views the intervention assessment process as a means of developing close working relationships with implementing organizations on the frontlines of displacement-related crises. As such, results from the above exercises will be synthesized into a single report of approximately 30 pages. Its target audience will be HDP practitioners—specifically intervention designers, implementers, and evaluators—who we hope will integrate its findings into ongoing or future interventions. Though firmly grounded in scientific discourse and the result of rigorous methodological implementation, our findings and recommendations will be presented in easily digestible language. Although we will identify gaps and shortcomings in existing programming modalities, outputs will be presented in a collaborative, constructive manner. We aim for the report to be co-branded and disseminated through at least one (but potentially several) online seminars with relevant stakeholders in the partner organization.

5. CONCLUSION

As greater attention and resources are devoted to interventions supporting the resilience of populations affected by protracted crises and displacement, intervention-level assessments are needed to ensure that programming modalities achieve objectives across the entire humanitarian-development-peace nexus. To accomplish this, a four-step methodology has been developed for assessing ongoing or recently completed climate action interventions in destination areas. It involves a medium-scale human security index survey of intervention participants (n=200), supply-side key informant interviews with the intervention design, implementation, and evaluation teams, demand-side key informant interviews that use most significant change and positive deviance approaches to understand the enablers of adversely positive outcomes, and a quantitative assessment of how well the intervention addresses local drivers of conflict and instability (Climate Security Sensitivity Tool).

Interventions targeting resilience across the HDP nexus face a variety of conceptual, operational, and financial challenges, and, thus, we expect to identify significant gaps within the interventions we assess. While the assessments will be rigorous, our aim is not simply to critique those operating on the frontlines of displacement-related crises, but to clearly identify entry points for strengthening intervention design and implementation. Ultimately, resilience stems from communities rather than external actors. Although governments, UN agencies, and NGOs have a role to play in supporting community-led resilience, programming is no substitute for a well-organized, agentic, empowered populace. Thus, we expect interventions that deeply involve participants in design and implementation to be assessed highly, and those that don't to exhibit the most opportunities for improvement.

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