**Pathways to Resilience in the Karamoja Cluster**
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**WORKING PAPER**

**Pathways from Peace to Resilience: examples from Karamoja and the Greater Horn of Africa**

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Abstract:
Chronic violence and instability are pervasive in many of the areas where major investments in resilience are being made, requiring a better understanding of the links between conflict and resilience. To tackle the complex drivers of vulnerability, and work towards resilience in Karamoja region. Mercy Corps has invested heavily in research and learning. In 2015, through the USAID Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation, we conducted our Pathways to Peace Study that examined how conflict management and peacebuilding programs affect resilience to shocks and stresses in pastoral areas in the Horn of Africa.[1] Research found the effects of shocks on household food security could be mitigated by strengthening resilience capacities, such as community and institutional conflict management skills and systems. This research, along with other work, informed the design and implementation of programs such as PEACE III, which works with migratory, pastoral communities in the Karamoja cluster and EKISIL (Securing Peace and Promoting Prosperity in Karamoja), which operates in the nexus between natural resources, climate change, and conflict. This paper and presentation will primarily present learning from the *Pathways from Peace to Resilience* research. We will also discuss some key learnings from the PEACE III and EKISIL programs.

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[1] Kurz, Jon and McMahon, K. (2015). Pathways from Peace to Resilience: Evidence from the Greater Horn of Africa on the Links between Conflict Management and Resilience to Food Security Shocks. Mercy Corps. https://www.mercycorps.org/research/pathways-for-peace (accessed March 2019).

Introduction

Chronic violence and instability are pervasive in many of the areas where major investments in resilience are being made, requiring a better understanding of the links between conflict and resilience. To tackle the complex drivers of vulnerability, and work towards resilience in Karamoja region. Mercy Corps has invested heavily in research and learning. In 2011, we completed a youth, markets and conflict analysis that revealed a complex cross-border war economy of cattle-raiding that was linked with young people's social identity.[2] In 2014, we self-funded a study of the  the Northern Karamoja Growth, Health, and Governance Program (GHG) to better understand how adaptive management functions in the context of large programs and shapes decision-making towards improved systems approaches and greater impact.[3] In 2015, through the USAID Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation, we conducted our Pathways to Peace Study that examined how conflict management and peacebuilding programs affect resilience to shocks and stresses in pastoral areas in the Horn of Africa.[4] Research found the effects of shocks on household food security could be mitigated by strengthening resilience capacities, such as community and institutional conflict management skills and systems. In 2017, we completed a case study on Youth, Peace and Security, to understand programmatic successes in reforming youth warriors. This study found that engaging youth directly in preventing violence and strengthening their participation in meaningful, productive activities helped them better reintegrate into their communities.[5] This research informed the design and implementation of programs such as PEACE III, which works with migratory, pastoral communities in the Karamoja cluster and EKISIL (Securing Peace and Promoting Prosperity in Karamoja), which operates in the nexus between natural resources, climate change, and conflict. This paper and presentation will primarily present learning from the *Pathways  from Peace to Resilience* research. We will also discuss some key learnings from the PEACE III and EKISIL programs.

Research -  design & methods

The *Pathways from Peace to Resilience* research aimed to answer the question: *How do conflict management and peacebuilding programs affect resilience to shocks and stresses in pastoral areas in the greater Horn of Africa?*  This *Pathways* study tested three core hypotheses that are described below and depicted in Figure 1.

**Hypothesis 1: Conflict, climate, and economic shocks adversely affect household food security.**
Before understanding how the effects of shocks can be mitigated, it was necessary to first understand how different shocks impact household food security outcomes, a key resilience well-being outcome.

**Hypothesis 2: Stronger conflict management capacities among communities and local institutions promote peace and security conditions.**
After understanding the relationship between the various shocks and food security, we wanted to understand whether conflict management capacities actually improve security conditions.

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[2] Vaughn, J., Stewart,T. 2011. Cattle Raiding in Karamoja: A Conflict Market Assessment. Mercy Corps. https://www.mercycorps.org/research-resources/cattle-raiding-karamoja (accessed March 2019).
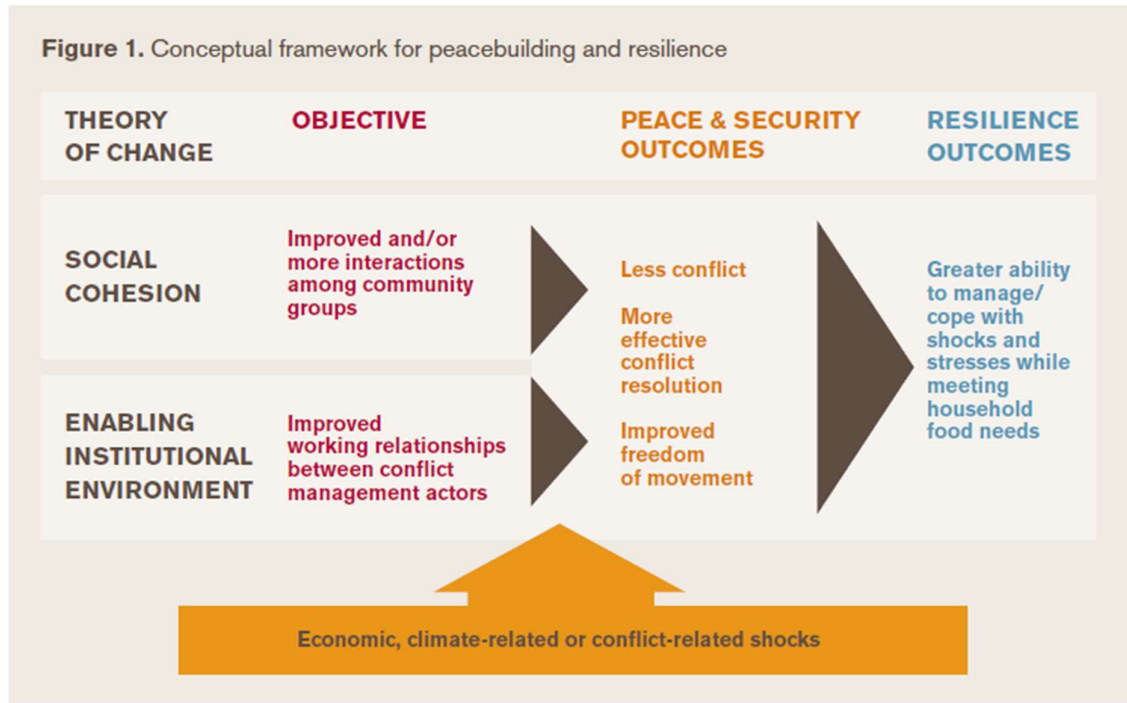
[3] Allana, A. & Engineers without Borders. 2014. Navigating Complexity: Adaptive Management at the Northern Karamoja Growth, Health, and Governance Program. https://www.mercycorps.org/research-resources/navigating-complexity-adaptive-management-northern-karamoja-growth-health (accessed March 2019).

[4] Kurz, Jon and McMahon, K. (2015). Pathways from Peace to Resilience: Evidence from the Greater Horn of Africa on the Links between Conflict Management and Resilience to Food Security Shocks. Mercy Corps. https://www.mercycorps.org/research/pathways-for-peace (accessed March 2019).

[5] Brooks, A., Gatare, D., Wolfe, R. Reformed Warriors: A Case Study from Uganda.2016.. Mercy Corps. https://www.youth4peace.info/ProgressStudy/CaseStudies (accessed March 2019).

**Hypothesis 3: Stronger conflict management capacities among communities and local institutions contribute to greater food security for households' experiencing shocks.**

The study examined if and how conflict management capacities are linked to greater abilities for households to maintain or regain food security in the face of shocks. Two key conflict management capacities were examined: social cohesion and an enabling institutional environment. [6]



Figure 1. Conceptual framework for peacebuilding and resilience

*Pathways from Peace to Resilience: Evidence from the Greater Horn of Africa on the Links between Conflict Management and Resilience to Food Security Shocks.*

This *Pathways* research used a mixed methods approach, which included a household survey and individual and group interviews. Quantitative and qualitative data was collected and analyzed at two points in time during the study in the northern Karamoja region in Uganda and Mandera Triangle region (a geographic area covering pastoral areas in multiple countries in the Horn of Africa). Conclusions were drawn regarding the research questions and hypotheses based on an analysis of trends over time, correlational relationships between variables of interest, and qualitative contribution analysis. The findings are specific to the contexts that they are examining, as both northern Karamoja and the Mandela Triangle are areas that experience low-intensity yet pervasive conflict between ethnic groups. An additional note is that a lack of any major shocks in either location during the timeframe of the study period made it difficult to analyze household resilience – and what contributed to it – based on the research methods and models employed.

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[6] Kurz, J. and McMahon, K. 2015. Pathways from Peace to Resilience: Evidence from the Greater Horn of Africa on the Links between Conflict Management and Resilience to Food Security Shocks. Mercy Corps. https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/pathways_from_peace-full_report.pdf (accessed April 2019).

Results

The *Pathways from Peace to Resilience* research found that household food security is gravely affected by experiencing economic and climate-related shocks. The effects of such shocks, however, can be mitigated by strengthening community and institutional conflict management skills and systems. Building resilience to shocks through peacebuilding efforts, therefore, can support food security goals. The table below highlights the main findings around the research hypotheses.

Table 1.

| HYPOTHESIS | MAIN FINDING |
|---|---|
| 1: Conflict, climate and economic shocks adversely affect household food security. | Greater exposure to climate and economic shocks is linked to greater food insecurity, while conflict shocks have mixed effects on household food security outcomes. |
| 2: Stronger conflict management capacities among communities and local institutions promote peace and security outcomes conditions. | In both study sites, an enabling institutional environment appears to be the most consistent predictor of peace and security. In Karamoja, certain forms of social cohesion were linked to higher levels of dispute resolution and freedom of movement. |
| 3: Stronger conflict management capacities among communities and local institutions contribute to greater food security for households experiencing shocks. | In both study sites, greater institutional-level conflict management capacities are correlated with better food security for households exposed to economic, climate and conflict shocks. The existence of higher bonding social capital had similar results in Karamoja. Neither location showed a link between levels of social cohesion between different ethnic groups and households' food security in the face of shocks. |

This learnings from the *Pathways from Peace to Resilience* research fed into the design and implementation of the PEACE III and EKISIL initiatives. A few promising practices are described in more detail here.

The PEACE III program, a five-year regional conflict transformation program implemented by Pact and Mercy Corps, and supported by USAID, operated from 2014- 2019. The program aimed to expand understanding on the links between climate change and conflict, and what peacebuilding organizations can do to support communities' resilience to climate shocks. Mercy Corps led PEACE III's implementation in the Karamoja cluster, an area of land that straddles the borders between north-western Kenya, north-eastern Uganda, southeastern Sudan, and south-western Ethiopia. PEACE III, which built on PEACE I and PEACE II, had the objectives of strengthening of local cross-border conflict management systems and improving the responsiveness of regional and national institutions. PEACE III worked on issues like social reconciliation, trauma healing, peace dividend projects (PDPs) and the use of culture as a unifier across conflict-affected cross-border communities in the region.

One effective tactic employed in the PEACE III were the peace dividend projects (PDPs) that incentivize continued peace between communities by enabling them to collectively manage and share resources or services across transboundary landscapes. For example, one PDP focused on the Kobebe dam, located 45 km from Moroto town. Kobebe is an important resource for the pastoral Matheniko and Jie communities of Uganda and the Turkana of Kenya, who settled close to the dam to access the water and pasture. Local communities identified protecting the dam and constructing a cattle crush to serve all neighboring communities as important in order to consolidate peaceful sharing of resources and to combat the effects of climate change. This PDP process was led by local communities, in collaboration with the Uganda Wildlife Authority, the Moroto District Local Government, and Mercy Corps.

EKISIL, a two-year USAID funded Conflict Mitigation and Management program started in 2017 and works to build peace in Karamoja region. Mercy Corps, together with Dodoth Agro Pastoralists Development Organization (DADO), and Abim Women Together in Development (AWOTID) implement EKISIL. The approach to peacebuilding and conflict mitigation takes into account the close nexus between natural resources, climate change, and conflict that exists in many areas of the region. EKISIL brings together ethnic groups to address social challenges, such as trauma, and support cooperation on natural resources to overcome ecological causes of conflict, such as degraded pasture. It links groups together though women forums, council of elders, youth groups, as well as to private sector and governance structures to address weak governance of natural resources and economic drivers of conflict, such as a loss of livelihoods from the acquisition of land by government and extractive industries.

In ecologically vulnerable regions such as Karamoja, conflict is inevitable given the disparity between the availability of and demand for natural resources. Increasing populations of cattle and humans lead to more competition for the access to the diminishing resources in these communities. Conflicts often arise due to lack of proper border demarcations and unresolved past grievances between the communities. A recent accomplishment of EKISIL was the signing of two Natural Resource Sharing Agreements (RSAs) between the Rengen, Sidok and Loyoro, and Nakapelimoru sub-counties in early 2019. The RSAs lay out the mechanisms for sharing pasture and water, the preventive measures, as well who will guarantee the agreements, and that the traditional justice system will be used to manage violations to the RSAs. Thus far it appears the communities are moving and living peacefully in the once contested area of conflict.

Key learnings & discussion

The Pathways research results are relevant to implementing partners, policy makers and donor working in conflict-affected contexts in the Horn of Africa. Key learnings for discussion at the conference include the following.

**Greater investments in conflict management interventions are needed to build resilience to food security shocks in fragile and insecure contexts.**
Food security is gravely affected by the compounding effects of conflict, economic and climate-related shocks. The results of this research show that the impact of such shocks on households' welfare can be mitigated by strengthening community and institutional conflict management skills and systems. While additional interventions are required to strengthen resilience in pastoral areas of the greater Horn of Africa, peacebuilding efforts appear to have a strong potential to contribute to food security and resilience goals in areas beset by chronic violence and instability.

**Programs with security goals should work to improve institutional-level conflict management capacities, where such institutions are functioning.**
Peace and security conditions are better where stronger institutional-level conflict management skills and systems are in place. When government representatives and traditional leaders work together, more conflicts are resolved satisfactorily, as seen in the Mandera Triangle. This finding supports Mercy Corps' work to network formal and informal conflict management actors.

**Development and humanitarian actors should support interventions that strengthen the social networks that people rely on during times of stres**s.
Not all forms of social capital appear to be equal when it comes to building resilience. The results indicate that intra-ethnic social cohesion is linked to both increased peace and security as well as improved food security. This intra-ethnic social cohesion can manifest as a community-level social safety net, for example, where community members help each other out during times of stress. Surprisingly, higher levels of inter-ethnic social cohesion were not found to be associated with either more peace or better welfare outcomes.

**Conflict management efforts must go beyond strengthening inter-ethnic social cohesion if they are to contribute to the transformative changes needed to strengthen resilience.**
To achieve these interrelated goals of peace and food security, conflict management efforts need to invest more in translating improvements in individual perceptions and behaviors around conflict into changed group norms and institutional structures that can sustain peace. Strong examples of this are consensus-based natural resource agreements developed in the Mandera Triangle program and the Moruitit Resolution in northern Uganda. [7]

Supported by our research, as well as our on the ground experience, we have found that in order to support resilience outcomes, peacebuilding must be integrated with development programs, such as support to strengthen livelihoods. Peacebuilding, like conflict, works on a continuum. It therefore should be integrated and layered into development work. Other key learnings from PEACE III that we want to highlight in our presentation is the importance of women in making household decisions about migration and use of livestock and other resources, which are often are sources of conflict within communities.

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[7]  Kurz, J. and McMahon, K. 2015. Pathways  from Peace to Resilience: Evidence from the Greater Horn of Africa on the Links between Conflict Management and Resilience to Food Security Shocks. Mercy Corps. https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/pathways_from_peace-full_report.pdf (accessed April 2019).

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