



# REGREENING COMMUNITIES SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE NOTE: **FRAGILE CONTEXTS**





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## 1. CONTEXT

As a ‘threat multiplier,’ climate change is deepening fragility and contributing to humanitarian crises in a range of contexts around the world. Shifting weather patterns put livelihoods and food security under stress, which in turn – together with weather extremes and related disasters – are some of the main causes of increased displacement around the world.<sup>1</sup> Displacement and a shrinking resource base also cause an increase in violent conflict. Additionally, weaker governance often leaves communities in fragile contexts less able to adapt, mitigate or respond to climate change’s impact.

Moreover, protracted crises can worsen local environmental degradation. Households that have been buffeted by the shocks and stresses of a protracted crisis for years and have limited options for income are forced into unsustainable resource-use practices like cutting down trees for charcoal production. These unsustainable practices drive landscape degradation and increase the likelihood of future disasters. As the crisis continues, formal and informal governance systems break down and social cohesion weakens, and it becomes harder and harder for communities to negotiate new, fair and sustainable ways of using communal resources. Conflict itself can have a direct environmental impact, as combatants may tactically destroy natural resources to undermine their opponents’ position.

<sup>1</sup>Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2022). IPCC Sixth Assessment Report: Summary for Policymakers. <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/chapter/summary-for-policymakers/>







- more severe and frequent violent conflict
- high exposure to shocks and stresses
- large-scale, protracted humanitarian action
- ultra-poor and insecure household circumstances
- greater likelihood of aid dependency
- different governance landscape
- challenges with access and movement
- frequent displacement, presence of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees
- thin markets (a low number of both buyers and sellers).

Given these challenges, this supplementary guidance draws on World Vision experience and external good practice to propose key adaptations and recommendations to contextualise Regreening Communities for fragile contexts, ensuring activities are relevant and sustainable impact is achieved.

This guidance is tailored for World Vision's fragile contexts and regions of subnational fragility. However, field offices that are not officially recognised or categorised as World Vision fragile contexts or areas of subnational fragility but are experiencing one or more of the above contextual factors (conflict, high exposure to shocks and stresses, very insecure household circumstances, etc.) may find the below guidance useful in adapting Regreening Communities (RGC) for their context.







## 2. ASSESSMENT AND DESIGN

### 2.1 What contexts are 'too fragile' for regreening?

The Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) technical practice – on which Regreening Communities is based – has been successfully implemented in some of the most fragile contexts in the world, including South Sudan, Somalia, Afghanistan, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

- ➔ Note that FMNR/RGC has not yet been extensively trialled in fragile contexts/regions of subnational fragility outside Africa. However, we're keen to try this, learn what may be different, and update this guidance accordingly.

However, not every location within these countries would have been the best fit for FMNR or RGC. Locations with very high humanitarian needs, a highly transient population and very low social cohesion will make successful implementation the hardest.

Projects in such locations may need to focus heavily on systems for communicating and enforcing bylaws, yet even this may be insufficient if there are just too many people unaware of the restoration efforts and/or ignoring the bylaws. Please note that this does not rule out IDP/refugee camp settings. In fact, RGC is currently being implemented in Bidibidi Refugee Settlement in Uganda (see section 5), where camp residents and host communities alike have every expectation that the refugees will remain long term.



## **Conflict sensitivity: An essential requirement**

Conflict sensitivity is a fundamental prerequisite to implementing Regreening Communities – or indeed, any intervention – in fragile and vulnerable settings. Conflict sensitivity acknowledges that our actions are never neutral. Even the best-intentioned development interventions can unintentionally exacerbate conflict, putting at risk the very people we mean to help.

Understanding the conflict through a conflict analysis (see section 2.3.1) is just the first step. Conflict sensitivity also means being aware of the two-way interaction between the context/ conflict and our intervention, and taking steps to avoid any negative impacts that could exacerbate the conflict, instead maximising our contribution towards de-escalation of existing conflicts.

Sometimes, even small actions can have an outsized impact. An interaction between a World Vision staffer and a community member, the location selected for a training, the procurement process for a vendor – any of these could unintentionally run afoul of existing conflict dynamics. Accordingly, it's highly recommended that all project staff are trained in conflict sensitivity. Project management should create space for regular discussions of any interactions between the intervention and the conflict, raising of concerns and sharing of new information. Particularly if there is a significant shift in contextual dynamics, project teams should also consider updating the conflict analysis to ensure that new insights are captured.

For more, see the conflict sensitivity resources at the end of this document.

In successful past projects in fragile contexts, FMNR was often embedded in a broader multisectoral resilience intervention, alongside activity packages addressing food and water security, disaster risk reduction, protection, nutrition, etc., as the context demanded. This holistic approach certainly played a role in the success of the programme in contexts of high vulnerability – treating environmental degradation as one of a number of equally urgent local drivers of fragility. Similarly, these projects were often implemented in districts where humanitarian assistance was also being delivered (although not necessarily in the very same locations – for example, humanitarian assistance was often being delivered in camps around the towns, while FMNR was being implemented in more rural areas.) Anecdotal evidence suggests that this layered approach was important for community acceptance of the FMNR project, as communities could be satisfied that urgent lifesaving needs were first being met.

Starting a new RGC project might not make sense in locations experiencing an acute humanitarian disaster. However, understanding fragile contexts to be protracted crises, it is quite likely that an acute disaster will occur at some point during an RGC project's multiyear implementation cycle. If this happens, there's no need to write off the entire project – in fact, RGC works well with an adaptive, flexible implementation approach (see section 4.1).



## 2.2 Is greening relevant for communities in fragile contexts?

As long as climate change and/or environmental degradation are major drivers of local fragility and conflict, the answer is yes – greening is relevant for communities in fragile contexts. In past experiences implementing FMNR in fragile contexts, community feedback has been very positive, with participants reporting that the intervention was highly relevant. People in fragile contexts are already aware of how the changing climate and landscape degradation contribute to their immediate problems and see the value of restoration work – even though some benefits will not be apparent for years.

Even so, making some tweaks to how RGC is implemented makes it easier for people in fragile contexts to have the 'breathing room' to implement greening interventions while avoiding some likely contextual pitfalls.

### Go-No-Go decision support tool – Key questions for reflection

In deciding whether or not to pursue an RGC intervention in a fragile context, teams should consider the following questions.

- **Relevance:** Is natural resource degradation or resource contestation a significant factor in local fragility or need?
- **Precedence of needs:** Do targeted communities have significant lifesaving needs that are not currently being met by humanitarian programming?
- **Continuity:** Is a majority of the population likely to still be living in the targeted location in five to ten years? Or if not, would locals have some other reason to support the long-term sustainability of the landscape?
- **Insecurity:** Is there an active, high intensity conflict in the targeted locations? Is it unlikely that World Vision staff or partners will be unable to safely access targeted locations on a more-or-less regular basis over the course of implementation? Will project participants have free and safe access to targeted landscapes the majority of the time?
- **Conflict sensitivity:** Based on information available at Go-No-Go stage, will World Vision be able to intervene in local natural resource use and governance without unintentionally escalating local conflict or putting staff or community members in danger? (Conflict sensitivity assessment must be further informed and validated with an analysis in early implementation – see section 2.3.1)

## 2.3 How to understand fragile contexts to inform RGC design

RGC projects in fragile contexts conduct the same set of assessments as in stable contexts (other than the conflict assessment, for which the Integrating Peacebuilding and Conflict Sensitivity (IPACS) tool is required), but will likely need to incorporate additional questions or topics to capture information that is uniquely critical in a fragile context. The results of these assessments may prompt you to adjust the way you implement certain activities, or even to integrate additional activities to improve the project's chances of success.

### 2.3.1 Understand the conflict

RGC projects being implemented in areas experiencing violent conflict must carry out a conflict analysis using World Vision's Integrating Peacebuilding and Conflict Sensitivity (IPACS) tool. IPACS is a highly participatory and inclusive assessment methodology, using focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) tools to build conflict sensitivity into a programme and identify opportunities for peacebuilding.

#### Principles of a good conflict analysis

Conflict analysis is not a one-time activity but a continuous process that is refreshed with new facts, insights, and perspectives as they emerge. To ensure conflict analysis remains relevant and actionable, the following principles should guide the process:

- **Documented:** It is essential for onboarding new staff and for revisiting programme design decisions when the context shifts.
  - **Process-oriented:** Engage partners and staff in discussions to ensure collaborative input.
  - **Living:** It should be updated at least once a year in response to significant changes.
  - **Robust:** The analysis should cover the following key elements:
    - drivers of conflict (including underlying and structural causes, triggers and dividers)
    - key actors, their aims and needs
    - power dynamics and relationships
    - broader social trends, plausible scenarios and opportunities for peace (including local capacities for peace)
    - gender sensitivity, ensuring that the analysis accounts for the different ways the context impacts men, women and other marginalised groups.
  - **Programmatic-relevant and granular:** The analysis should focus on the geographic area of implementation, addressing regional nuances and programme-specific issues.
- ➔ The IPACS assessment may identify contextually relevant activity packages that can help to reduce local conflict and build peace – even activities not directly related to landscape restoration, like support to local peacebuilding committees. Project teams may still consider including these activities in their RGC intervention, with the logic that reduced local conflict will strengthen the enabling environment for restoration activities. See section 3.3.4.



### 2.3.2 Understand local governance

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RGC projects in fragile contexts may face challenges in understanding the legal and institutional environment around natural resources. Formal laws may not be implementable, and government actors may have extra-legal interests in natural resources that they use their official position to exploit. Where formal laws do exist, they may be disconnected from de facto/traditional practices on the ground and community perspectives. Traditional governance practices themselves may vary widely from one local area to the next. They may have weakened significantly in recent years. Project teams should seek to understand all these dynamics with as much nuance as possible.

- Where the governance analysis identifies an important gap in the (formal or informal) legal framework, project teams can consider activities to strengthen governance by filling this gap – for example, translating and communicating formal laws to communities or supporting communities to engage with the government to revise laws. See the case study on the EU FORESITE South Sudan project in the main RGC Handbook (page 48).
- Particular attention should be given to the governance assessment when forming community collaboration structures during the 'Organise' step (page 41 of the RGC Handbook). Committees should reflect the actual dynamics of power and influence in project locations.

### 2.3.3 Understand local markets

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In fragile contexts, markets are very likely to be thin – presenting few opportunities to buy and sell. In this situation, it's important to be thoughtful and realistic about activities under the RGC model's Outcome 3. Outcome 3 is about increasing production of crops, fodder, animal products, marine products and forest products to consume and sell. A core function of Outcome 3's associated activities is to establish a feedback loop – households experience concrete benefits from their increasingly restored environment, and so continue to invest time and effort in restoring and protecting their environment, even beyond the end of the project. In fragile contexts, project teams should think creatively about what concrete benefits can actually be generated for households within a short period of time and will be most relevant for local communities.

- Thin markets will also affect project participants' ability to access key inputs (e.g., agricultural equipment, seeds). Direct provision of these inputs by World Vision is a possibility, but it is preferable to always be working towards sustainability – can alternative approaches be used that only require local materials and inputs? Can working with partners address some gaps? Can steps be taken to improve the community's long-term access to the needed inputs?





## 3. IMPLEMENTATION

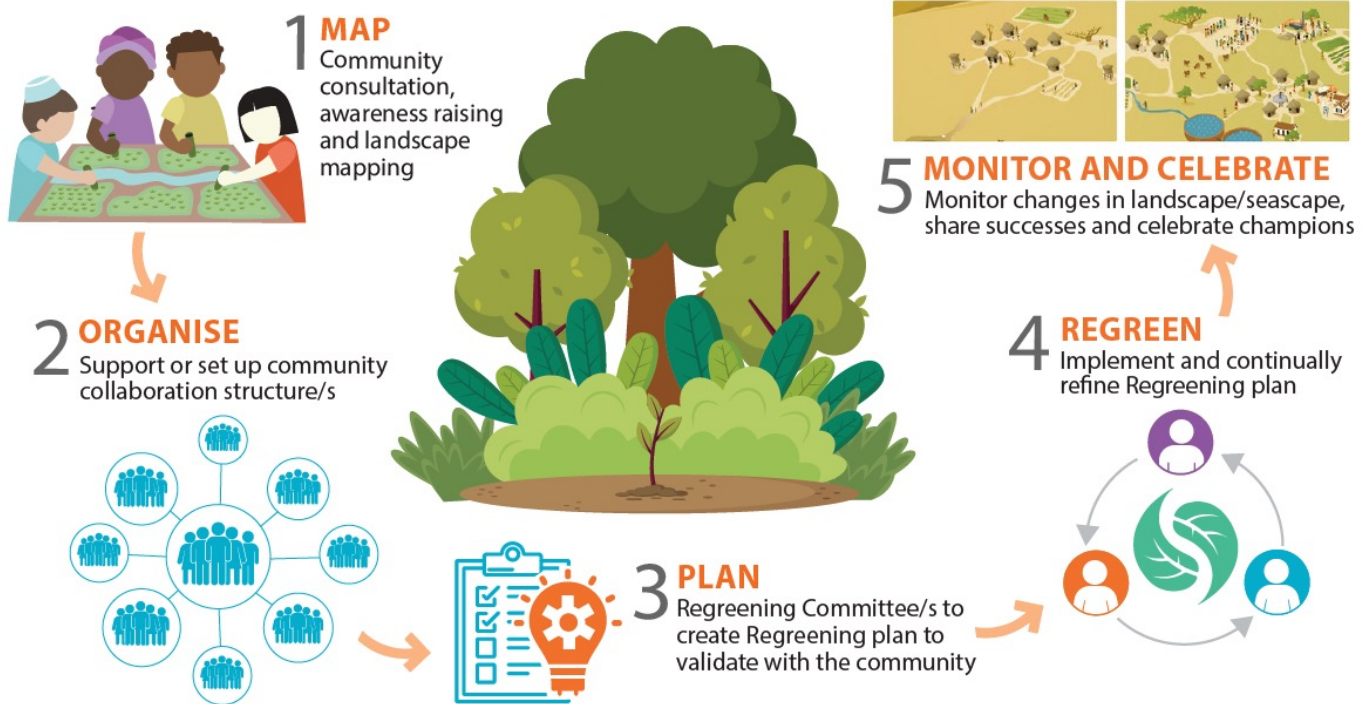


Figure 2. Regreening Communities process



## 3.1 Step 1: Map

### 3.1.1 Identify and consult relevant stakeholders

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During the Map stage, the RGC project model directs project teams to identify and consult with all stakeholder groups that use or have a vested interest in the landscape being restored. It is particularly critical that project teams in fragile contexts look beyond the standard list of stakeholder types, instead thinking critically about their unique context. This can entail reaching out to communities with whom World Vision does not have a longstanding relationship. For example, World Vision often has a more established relationship with stationary farming communities than with pastoralist communities – but the latter must be included if the project will restore water resources that both communities use.

The need to consult and engage broadly can also affect the selection of project locations. If a project elects only to go to stable, non-conflict-affected locations, that can undermine the project's landscape approach. In Kenya, a World Vision project targeting Elgeyo Marakwet county made the decision to focus on the more stable areas on the southern part of the county, instead of the more conflict-affected communities in the north. However, because the project did not deliberately include the groups from the north and address the resource drivers of their conflict, the conflict overflowed and affected even the previously stable southern locations – nullifying some of the progress made. **This sort of inclusion should only be pursued where safety and security of staff and project resources is assured, based on the relevant risk analysis and advice from the field office security department.**

RGC projects in fragile areas have strong reason to engage with a wide range of partners – formal government structures may be absent in the programming areas, may be present but have very low capacity, or may even be present but doing more harm than good. It is important to remember that while Outcome 2 of the RGC project model talks about an 'enabling environment' for regreening, this includes more than just working with government. Project teams can look widely to identify individuals, organisations and structures that have power, influence and responsibility in the project locations – such as traditional/customary leaders or elders, coordination bodies like the humanitarian cluster system, community-based organisations, or faith-based organisations. In multi-faith areas, be sure to engage representative faith-based organisations from all faiths.

#### Engage youth throughout

The RGC Handbook already recommends engagement of children and youth throughout the project, but RGC projects in fragile contexts may have even more reason to establish a strong role for youth. Many fragile contexts have a young population – perhaps with many young people who did not get enough support with schooling and have few opportunities for a livelihood. These young people may have no voice in traditional/customary leadership decision-making or in formal governance systems, and understandably may be less likely to follow the rules that these leaders set. When this is the case, it's essential to give youth a meaningful role and voice in the RGC project.

## Consider refugees, displacement and people movement

In fragile contexts, project teams should be aware that consultation and stakeholder identification are not necessarily a one-off step at the beginning of a project but are instead likely to need updating throughout the project. Context monitoring (see section 4.1.2) is a good way to keep track of significant arrivals of people into project locations. This may be a major influx of IDPs from conflict or disaster in an adjoining district but can also be more subtle – such as an increasing number of new pastoralists passing through project locations as their typical waterholes run dry. If this occurs, project teams should support Regreening Committees and other key stakeholders to connect with representatives of these new groups and bring them into the regreening plan – giving new arrivals a way to contribute to the plan, ensuring that they understand and agree to bylaws, and negotiate fair access for new arrivals to communal resources.

## 3.2 Step 2: Organise

During the Organise stage, a Regreening Committee is supported or established to develop and lead the regreening process. In fragile contexts, it is important that the Regreening Committee is representative and has the capacity to work with the wider range of actors identified in step 1 above to achieve regreening goals. For example, traditional or faith leaders may be best placed to resolve disagreements over resource use. Large humanitarian agencies could be influenced to scale up regreening approaches through their own cash-for-work programming.

In working with partners in fragile contexts, careful adherence to partnering principles (included in the section 6 resource list) is especially critical. It's important to consider how any partnership activity may affect World Vision's security or that of the partner organisation.

Working with the formal government is an important approach in most contexts. Project teams interested in making policy and service delivery a significant part of their intervention should consult the guidance on Citizen Voice and Action in fragile contexts (included in section 6).

Particularly in regions of subnational fragility, there may be distrust between local actors and representatives of the government. In such circumstances, it is all the more important for project teams to (1) ensure they understand the actors and dynamics of the conflict thoroughly through the conflict analysis, and then (2) in a conflict sensitive way, bring the relevant parties together to build their knowledge, identify specific local problems and develop solutions. The right local connectors, who are trusted by the community, will be valuable in supporting dialogue and ensuring community members can voice their needs and concerns.

If navigating tensions between multiple governance actors is anticipated to be a major element in your context, it's particularly important for the RGC senior project staff to be skilled in diplomatically navigating these kinds of situations – and perhaps have support from the broader field office (e.g., advocacy team, security team) in this.



## 3.3 Steps 3 and 4: Plan and Regreen

How should regreening plans and interventions be tailored to fragile contexts? For communities in fragile contexts, the state of the local environment is not an abstract, remote concern. People are well aware of their day-to-day reliance on the environment and troubled by worsening degradation. However, insecurity, hunger and poverty force them to take less-sustainable actions that ultimately damage the environment, trading off long-term resource availability for short-term survival. RGC projects in fragile contexts can disrupt this negative coping strategy by meeting basic consumption needs in the short term and medium term. This gives fragile communities the breathing room to think about and work on long-term restoration goals.

### 3.3.1 Employ cash for green assets

It is recommended to consider incorporating Cash for Work (CfW) in RGC projects in fragile contexts, particularly where households are already under serious food or income stress, and community social cohesion and collective efficacy are low. Specifically, project teams should use CfW to create or restore communal natural resources – i.e., 'Cash for Green Assets'. In past FMNR projects in fragile contexts, integrated cash has been a key enabler of project success. First, it meets immediate consumption needs of the most vulnerable households, giving them the breathing room to participate in RGC activities. Second, it boosts community familiarity with and involvement in landscape restoration from the very beginning of the project – in particular, it enables the project to 'bring in' marginalised groups who might be otherwise hard to involve and give them a stake in the success of restoration work.

It's recommended to use the Conflict Sensitive Market Analysis Tool (CoSMAT) to ensure that cash programming does no harm (see resources in section 6). Ensure that the project adheres to any nationally determined cash programming standards, as well as to World Vision's minimum standards for cash and voucher programming – for example, around beneficiary identification, transfer modality, rates, etc. Contact World Vision Disaster Management Team's cash programming specialists with any questions.

#### → What kind of green assets should be created with CfW?

Assets created through CfW should be selected from the Regreening Committee's list of prioritised solutions in the environmental restoration plan. Regreening Committees and project teams should select assets that (1) can be sensibly created through CfW (e.g., constructing dikes will work, but highly technical repairs to water points will not), and (2) are for communal benefit. Particularly in the first year of the project, CfW should be used to restore assets that will quickly show improvement, enabling 'quick wins' and building momentum. The project team and Regreening Committees may also choose to prioritise assets that will help to strengthen support for regreening among key stakeholder groups such as youth.



## → How can project teams support sustainability and avoid creating dependency?

This is a very important question! A core aim of the RGC project model is for communities to see the benefits of environmental restoration, and to undertake the enabling work with their own time and resources. CfW risks reinforcing the opposite message, encouraging communities to undertake restoration work only when they are being paid to do so. This is a particular concern in fragile contexts, where long-running humanitarian assistance may have already created an environment of dependency. A few strategies can be adopted to avoid this outcome:

**Communicating clearly.** Project teams should be mindful of how they talk about the overall goal of restoration with communities, and the role of cash programming within that restoration. Send a clear message that the cash programming is short-term only with a firm end date, and that communities and landowners are ultimately responsible for maintaining the well-being of their own resources – cash is only being employed to support the most vulnerable households, as identified by communities themselves. Local officials and faith and traditional leaders can be important partners in reinforcing this message. In contexts where ‘aid dependency syndrome’ is a particular concern, project staff could consider incorporating World Vision’s Empowered World View project model into their RGC project.

**Establishing income streams.** For communal assets that require ongoing maintenance, project teams can help negotiate the creation of sustainable income streams for the vulnerable households that restored the asset.

For example, in a hypothetical RGC project, community consultation could identify a degraded forest on communal land in one of the project areas. Using participatory processes, project staff could identify a number of landless female-headed households living in the area, invite them to form a savings group, and begin employing them in CfW to restore the degraded forest with FMNR. Then the CfW participants will be benefitting from the cash, and the broader community is benefitting from the restored forest.

But what happens when the cash programming ends? At the same time that the group is formed and the CfW starts, project staff and the Regreening Committee work with the group of landless women to negotiate with the appropriate local decision maker (which could be a local government representative or a chiefly leader, depending on where we are) to establish that the group members, as long as they continue to restore and protect the forest, have long-term rights to income from certain products from that forest – e.g., honey from beehives, gums and resins from the trees, hay for livestock (through cut and carry system or via rotational grazing). The leader could also stipulate that certain other forest products remain free for communal use, within reasonable quantities. By working in this way, an income stream is created for vulnerable local households, and the long-term restoration and protection of the forest is supported.

**Reviving systems of communal labour.** Cash for green assets should not replace the responsibility of the entire community, including those who have higher incomes, to work on environmental restoration. As the whole community will benefit from a restored environment, so should the whole community devote time and labour to bringing about that restored environment. Community leaders should be encouraged to emphasise that restoration is a collective effort, irrespective of wealth status. Many cultures around the world have longstanding traditions of voluntary communal labour for communal benefit. For example, for one day a month or one week a year, the community may come together to repair or expand communal resources, perhaps marking the occasion with a celebration or a special meal.

However, in many places, these traditions are breaking down as customary governance weakens – or may even have been disrupted by the arrival of international actors and cash programming following a disaster. If this is relevant in the targeted location, the project could work together with local leaders to re-establish the traditional system of community labour – bringing the community together to work on restoration projects and celebrate their progress.

If it's not possible to integrate cash programming into an RGC project, a second-best option could be to target the RGC project to locations already being reached by cash or other humanitarian programming from other sources. At minimum, the provision of cash programming will help to ensure that people living in project locations are having some of their basic needs met; however, the project team may also investigate opportunities for deeper alignment between the RGC and humanitarian projects.

### 3.3.2 Integrate quick-payoff livelihoods activities

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As discussed in section 2.3.3 ('Understand local markets'), the role of livelihoods in RGC is to create positive feedback loops. Households participating in these livelihoods activities experience 'concrete benefits' from the improving environment, and hence are motivated to continue spending time and effort restoring their environment. In a fragile context, this concrete benefit may be more relevant and appealing if it also has benefits for food security even if markets break down – e.g., unlike some cash crops, vegetables can be sold, but also can be eaten at home.

Quick-payoff livelihoods – where households see concrete benefits within just a year or two – are also more likely to be relevant. Accordingly, a project team might choose to focus on quick-payoff value chains like beekeeping as opposed to fruit trees or rare timber value chains which may not create a profit for many years. Although slow-payoff value chains could eventually be quite profitable, in fragile contexts the risk is very high that households could abandon work prematurely on this value chain when circumstances force them to focus on more immediate survival.

### 3.3.3 Consider bylaw development

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When restoring communal assets, bylaws to restrict destructive or unsustainable behaviour are just as important as efforts to encourage restorative behaviour. However, developing and enforcing bylaws is likely to be more challenging in fragile contexts.



### Key steps to develop bylaws:

- Bring influential people together: These should include both local government representatives and traditional leaders, as well as respected representatives from other key stakeholder groups (youth, women, different ethnic or religious groups if relevant, different livelihood groups – e.g., pastoralists).
- Facilitate influential people to agree on the problem: Where are conflict points or degraded resources where bylaws are needed? Give space for everyone to identify problem points, develop potential solutions, review any existing bylaws, and propose new bylaws.
- Support the group to agree to a set of bylaws, as well as to how the bylaws should be monitored and enforced.
- These influential people should then publicly endorse these bylaws (for example, signing an agreement) and are accountable to enforce them.

### Monitoring and enforcing bylaws:

Support Regreening Committees to think through how bylaws will be monitored – in other words, how will it be known when a bylaw has been broken, and by whom. This will probably vary from one asset type to another. For example, if the asset is a central water source where people are always nearby, there will be many witnesses to any breaking of bylaws. However, if the asset is far from inhabited areas, it may be difficult to find out who has broken a bylaw, or even to learn promptly that a bylaw has been broken. In general, the most effective bylaws are monitored and enforced by the community themselves.

If a bylaw forbids common, widespread behaviour – for example, cutting trees for firewood in a common forest – it is important to also publicise the alternative, positive action that community members should now take to meet the same need. If it is no longer allowed to cut trees in these areas, where should community members go instead? These alternatives must be realistic and convenient and should be widely and repeatedly communicated to communities through different formats. Project teams can consult World Vision’s forthcoming guidance on Behaviour Change Communication for more ideas. To deter accidental or casual bylaw-breaking, Regreening Committees can consider options like fences or signage.

In short, for bylaws to be successful, they must:

- **be agreed to be fair by all parties**
- **be enforced**
- **give a clear and convenient alternative to prohibited behaviours.**

### 3.3.4 Consider integrating additional peacebuilding-specific activities

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Regreening Communities’ three outcome areas give emphasis to social, environmental and economic impacts alike. However, it’s important to understand that in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, the project’s social impact (particularly on conflict prevention) is a critical precondition for the success of the other two outcomes. RGC projects must be mindful of these conflict dynamics – lest neglected rival groups destroy restored assets. In a conflict context, it’s also necessary for projects to take a Do No Harm/conflict sensitivity approach, to ensure that project activities do not unintentionally cause or worsen conflict.

**Equally important is the proactive identification of risks that could undermine project outcomes.**

These risks are not limited to natural hazards such as drought or flooding but also include conflict-related risks—such as intercommunal tensions, resource disputes, or political instability. Anticipating such risks allows project teams to design context-appropriate strategies to mitigate or address them. This may include, for example, strengthening local governance mechanisms, integrating conflict resolution approaches into natural resource management, or including flexible implementation plans that allow for rapid adaptation in response to emerging risks. See 4.2.1 for more information on this.

However, RGC projects in conflict contexts can go further. RGC’s community-led approach and focus on local governance of resources present a valuable opportunity to resolve longstanding disputes over shared natural resources, lowering overall levels of violent conflict in project areas. Peacebuilding is highly context-specific, so project teams should be confident in using the results of the IPACS assessment and their own knowledge of the context to identify activities that will have the greatest effect on local conflict and peace. Some ways to integrate peacebuilding are as follows:

- partnering with and supporting local peacebuilding structures and actors through, for instance, core funding and capacity sharing and strengthening
- hosting dialogues between conflicting groups and arbitrating peace agreements
- training local leaders on peacebuilding and conflict resolution strategies (see section 6 for resources)
- partnering with faith leaders to share messages of peace and environmental restoration
- implementing peace education activities with children and youth (see the Empowering Children as Peacebuilders resource in section 6)
- consider integrating mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) activities in contexts where people are hampered by the psychosocial effects of conflict.

Increasing focus on peacebuilding can be a powerful way to increase the relevance of an RGC project for communities experiencing conflict. Project support to arbitrate a natural resource user agreement between local conflicting groups can be a key ‘early win,’ building project momentum while awaiting more slow-arriving environmental benefits.

In World Vision’s DryDev programme in Ethiopia, natural resource management committees experienced such success and community satisfaction with their natural resource rulings, they were used as a platform to resolve conflicts not related to natural resources at all – pointing to the possibility of using natural resource management as an entry point to address intercommunal conflict more broadly.

For more ideas, project teams can find additional guidance and resources on environmental peacebuilding in section 6.

### **3.4 Step 5: Monitor and Celebrate**

In addition to the core RGC monitoring and evaluation, it is highly recommended that RGC projects in fragile or high-conflict contexts add an indicator to measure impact on local natural resource conflict. This helps to capture what may be one of the most significant outcomes of the project and also helps World Vision contribute to a global conversation on climate change, natural resources, and conflict.



- ➔ Specifically, adding the indicator 'Proportion of HH reporting good conflict management in the community' (OIOS L1/C4A.21418) to Outcome 1 is strongly recommended. Work on further support for measuring peacebuilding impact is underway.

Project teams can also consider further options to track incidence of conflict and impact on local peace. For example, as one of its output indicators, World Vision's IMARA project in Kenya tracked the number of incidents of resource-based conflict reported – observing a significant downward trend in conflict over the life of the project. IMARA also tracked the number of peace or conflict resolution agreements brokered with project support, as well as the proportion of community respondents familiar with how and why to resolve conflicts peacefully.

A mixed-methods approach – incorporating qualitative methods alongside quantitative – is a particularly robust way to capture RGC's impact on conflict.

### **What about the celebration stage?**

Step five in the Regreening Communities project model calls for the sharing of successes and celebration of champions – an incredibly important and meaningful event. But is it feasible to celebrate in a fragile context? Yes! Celebrations are both possible and much-needed in fragile contexts. Of course, project teams should use the findings of the conflict sensitivity analysis and the support of the field office security team to determine what kind of celebration will be safe, inclusive and contextually appropriate.







## 4. ADDITIONAL TIPS

### 4.1 Plan for setbacks

Fragile contexts are more likely to be significantly impacted by shocks and disasters because of their underlying vulnerability. As such, it is sensible programme design to think of these likely shocks in advance and make plans for how the project and community can avoid or react to them.

#### 4.1.1 Consider asset destruction as a tactic of war

In many fragile contexts, asset destruction is a tactic used by combatants to weaken the opposing side. For example, an armed group could burn crops and poison wells in villages associated with their rival group, with the aim of cutting off the food supply for their enemy combatants. Of course, this tactic has a disproportionate impact on civilians, especially members of vulnerable groups and children. There is also the risk that assets restored through RGC – particularly if they are high-profile or particularly successful – could be targeted and destroyed by armed groups.

If this is a risk in the project context, Regreening Committees can be encouraged to consider prioritising natural assets and/or value chains that are not easily destroyed (e.g., river dikes or other heavy earthworks), and/or not immediately visible to people passing through (e.g., biochar, tubers and other crops that grow underground). As discussed above, slow-payoff value chains like fruit trees or rare timber may not be the best choice for fragile contexts – they are also more at risk of asset destruction. The greater the number of years required for households to see a profit from a



value chain, the greater the likelihood that in one of these years, combatants could destroy or steal the slow-growing asset.

#### **4.1.2 Context monitoring, adaptive management and Fragile Context Programming Approach (FCPA)**

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As with any long-term programming in an unpredictable setting, a flexible and adaptive approach is highly advised for RGC in fragile contexts. The project management staff must be able to observe key changes in their operating context (context monitoring), and have the flexibility to adjust elements of the project to protect development gains, ensure staff safety, and continue being conflict-sensitive, effective, and relevant to communities (adaptive management). Wherever possible, when allocating funding for the programme, avoid earmarking the entire budget for financial adaptability. Keep a contingency fund to enable flexibility and adjustments as new insights or changes in the context arise. This allows the programme to remain responsive and adaptable to evolving needs.

Context monitoring systems are highly specific to location, and to the particular hazards faced there. Teams should identify indicators reflective of the project and risk environment, thresholds for action, and a collection plan (including designating a focal point responsible for gathering data). Good context monitoring indicators are not monitoring and evaluation indicators (tracking the progress of your own project) but instead track changes in the surrounding context. Ideally, they are secondary sources (e.g., FEWSNET, ICPAC, sub-cluster reports, government reports) – but if appropriate secondary sources do not exist, develop a collection plan together with project stakeholders. Finally, teams should determine in advance how the context monitoring system will be used, including how regularly decision makers will meet, how decisions to alter programming will be made, and how decisions will be recorded.

Recall that project adaptation does not change the goal or outcomes of the project but may change the outputs or activities used to achieve the goal and outcome. Scenario planning is a valuable strategy in adaptive management, enabling project teams to consider in advance how the project will adapt to certain likely near-future shifts in the context.

World Vision's Fragile Context Programming Approach (FCPA) is used to design and implement community-driven projects that span the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus. RGC could integrate very well into an FCPA project, with elements of the model corresponding to all three "dials" or implementation modalities (e.g., survive = cash for green assets, support to local institutions mediating natural resource conflict and protecting assets under restoration; adapt = restoration of assets, building livelihoods, and strengthening peace and social cohesion). Consult the FCPA document (see section 6) for further guidance in incorporating FCPA into a programme design.



## 5. CASE STUDY

### **Regreening Communities in Yumbe District, Uganda**

Yumbe District hosts Bidibidi Refugee Settlement, established in 2016 for the tens of thousands of refugees fleeing civil war in South Sudan. This large and sudden influx of people led to widespread tree-cutting and charcoal-making, as refugees had few alternatives to obtain fuel and provide for their families.

Years later, the Government of Uganda has welcomed the refugees to remain long-term. However, some tension remains between refugee and host communities over access to and use of communal resources like waterpoints and arable farmland.

Funded by the Australian government, World Vision's Regreening Communities project continues to respond to this situation by working with refugee and host community members to restore the local landscape, while creating opportunities to strengthen social cohesion, peace and collaboration. To date, this has involved consultation and joint mapping exercises with refugee and host community.





## 6. FURTHER RESOURCES

### World Vision internal resources

- Fragile Contexts Guidance: Citizen Voice and Action
- Conflict Sensitive Market Analysis Tool (CoSMAT)
- Fragile Context Programme Approach (FCPA) tools and resources
- Guidance: Partnering and localisation in fragile contexts
- Course: Local Capacity for Peace/Do No Harm ([wvecampus.com](http://wvecampus.com))
- Do No Harm for Faith Leaders
- Guidance: Context Monitoring for Adaptive Management
- Programming Guidance: Empowering Children as Peacebuilders (ECaP)

### External resources

- UNEP - [From conflict to peacebuilding: The role of natural resources and the environment](#)
- Sphere – [Nature-based Solutions for Climate Resilience in Humanitarian Action](#)
- World Bank – [Defueling Conflict: Environment and Natural Resource Management as a Pathway to Peace](#)
- UNPBSO – [Thematic Review on Climate Security and Peacebuilding](#)
- [Environmental Peacebuilding Knowledge Platform](#)





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