



ADAPTATION FUND

New Adaptation Fund Study Shows Importance of Addressing Climate Change in Context of Fragile and Conflict-Affected Settings

Washington, D.C. (February 29, 2024) -- As adverse impacts from climate change continue to rise with extreme weather, droughts and floods putting resources and vulnerable populations at risk, they can particularly exacerbate challenges and security issues in fragile and conflict-torn countries.

A new study from the Adaptation Fund (AF), [“Addressing climate change adaptation in fragile settings and conflict-affected countries: Lessons learned from the AF’s portfolio”](#), reveals through several case studies the importance of addressing climate change in the context of fragility.

Key lessons learned from the AF’s portfolio show that investing in capacity building, local ownership, effective partnerships and monitoring and evaluation while allowing projects in fragile or conflict-affected settings to be flexible and adaptable due to changing circumstances on the ground are among critical pathways to success.

“Fragile and conflict-affected countries are among the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and their needs for external assistance are high, yet their circumstances make delivering support challenging,” said **Mikko Ollikainen**, Head of the Adaptation Fund. *“This important study by the Adaptation Fund, as part of its strategic knowledge sharing [pillar](#) aimed at imparting key learnings from the Fund’s [portfolio](#), reinforces the importance of strengthening institutions in fragile settings to deliver climate finance effectively, and building strong partnerships between governments, CSOs and the private sector to ensure proper funding. It also stresses cultivating local ownership to foster sustainability and success, and continuous project monitoring and flexibility to promote adaptability – which is often needed in areas impacted by conflict.”*

The study’s findings illustrated several challenges in implementing climate change adaptation work in conflict areas across AF-funded projects in [Syria](#), [Mali](#) and [Ethiopia](#), as well as a [regional project](#) in the **Volta Basin** of the west African savannah in **Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Mali** and **Togo**.

Syria faces insecurity and shortages of skilled workers, Mali contends with dual challenges of droughts and floods amid threats of violent extremism, and Ethiopia confronts risks of instability and unpredictable weather patterns. Some of the Volta Basin countries suffer from political instability and weak rural infrastructure.

Since AF-funded projects are country-led and tailored to local adaptation needs, continuous government restructuring and turnover can further disrupt and delay Fund projects in some countries. The five **dimensions of fragility**, which can impact vulnerable countries and development in various ways, were also detailed in the study -- covering economic, environmental, political, security and societal factors.



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In the study's case example of the project in **Ethiopia**, when an armed conflict unexpectedly broke out it disrupted AF-funded project activities, increased costs, and endangered the safety of project staff and local communities. However, despite these challenges the project increased ecosystem resilience through measures responding to climate change and rain variability that had impacted water security. *"That water stress was reduced through the project providing a great underground source of potable water and training on the use of new water facilities to the affected communities,"* said **Cristina Dengel**, AF's Knowledge Management Officer who coordinated the study. *"The water facilities also helped to drastically limit the conflict between crop farmers and livestock herders at the local level. Even if anecdotal, it shows the potential of climate adaptation projects to have a positive impact in reducing conflict and fragility."*

About the Adaptation Fund

Since 2010, the Adaptation Fund has committed over US\$ 1.1 billion for climate change adaptation and resilience projects and programs, including 165 concrete, localized projects in the most vulnerable communities of developing countries around the world with over 43 million total beneficiaries. About half of its projects are in Least Developed Countries or Small Island Developing States. It also pioneered Direct Access and Enhanced Direct Access, empowering countries to access funding and develop local projects directly through accredited national implementing entities.

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