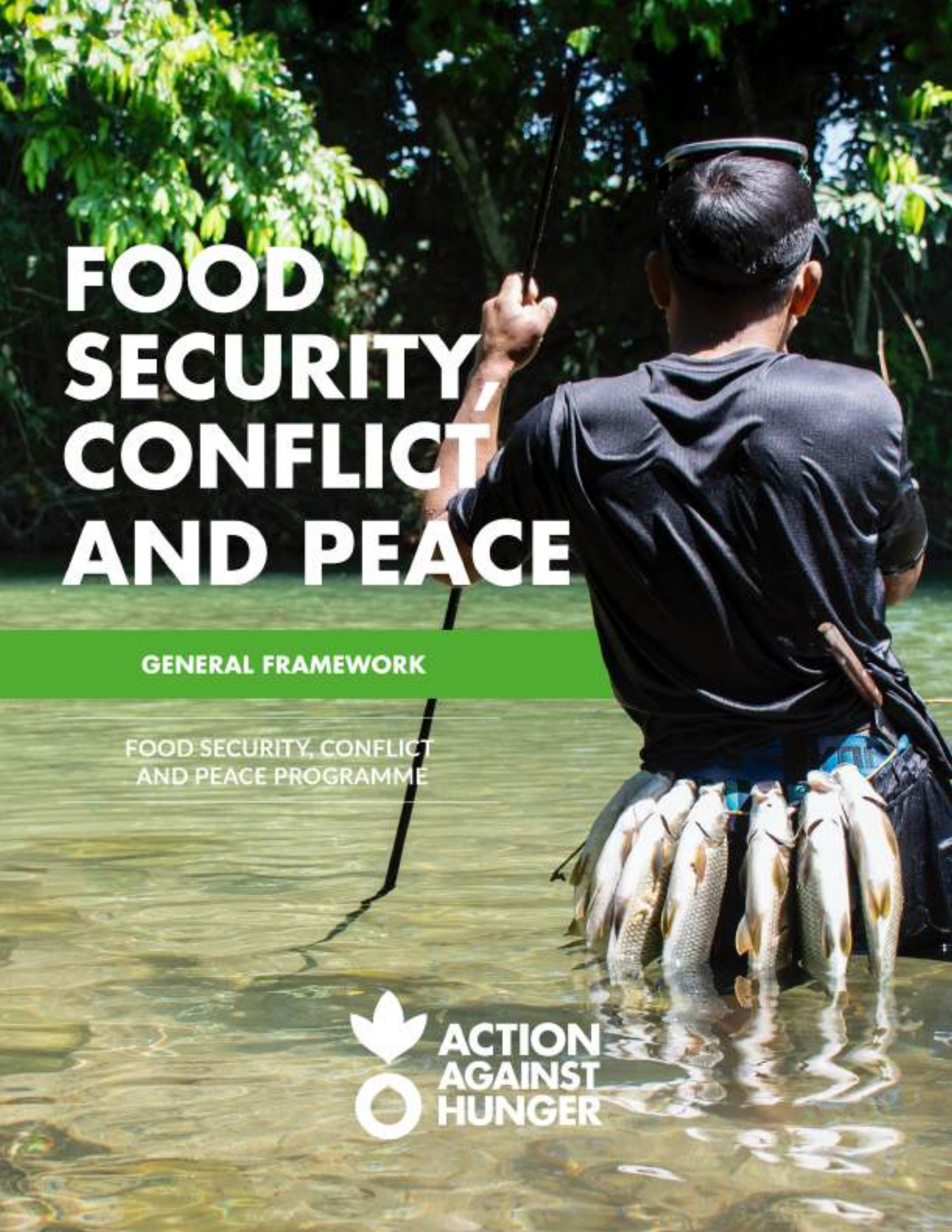


A man is seen from behind, standing in a river. He is wearing a dark t-shirt and has a large catch of fish hanging from his waist. He is holding a fishing rod. The background shows lush green trees and foliage.

FOOD SECURITY, CONFLICT AND PEACE

GENERAL FRAMEWORK

FOOD SECURITY, CONFLICT
AND PEACE PROGRAMME



**ACTION
AGAINST
HUNGER**

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ACRONYMS

Acronym Meaning

AAH	Action Against Hunger
SACP	Food Security, Conflict and Peace
MEFIC	Monitor and Evaluated Food Insecurity in Conflict
NSAG	Grupos Armados No Estatales
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
LSS	Livelihood System Security

FOOD SECURITY, CONFLICT AND PEACE PROGRAMME-ACTIONS AGAINST HUNGER

The *Food Security, Conflict and Peace (SACP) Programme* is an initiative promoted by *Action Against Hunger*, drawing on the accumulated work and knowledge from global projects such as “**Hunger and Conflict**” and “**Hunger, Conflict and Peace**”, with the support of **ECHO**, **AECID**, and the **Basque Agency for Cooperation and Solidarity (eLankidetza)**.

The SACP Programme aims to be a **knowledge management system for action**, functioning as a **working platform** at both global and local levels. It is oriented toward **knowledge building, multi-actor collaboration**, and the **design and implementation of actions** that integrate a **protective approach to food security amid conflict** and highlight it as a **vehicle for peacebuilding**, all within a **triple-nexus framework**.



The document *Food Security, Conflict and Peace: General Framework* aims to map the different elements that shape not only analysis but also action around the relationship between food security, conflict and peace.

The development of this analysis is structured around exploring the impact of armed conflict—as well as the transition to peace—from the perspective of households, focusing on how these impacts materialize in the lives of populations and territories.

Methodologically, this document was constructed not only from the existing literature and current studies on food security, conflict and peacebuilding, but also from the lessons learned by AAH, both through its global implementation in contexts of food insecurity and conflict, and through the “*Hunger and Conflict*” project, based on the *Monitor and Evaluate Food Insecurity in Conflict* (MEFIC) methodology developed in collaboration with the *University of the Basque Country*.

This framework is divided into **three (3) interconnected parts**:

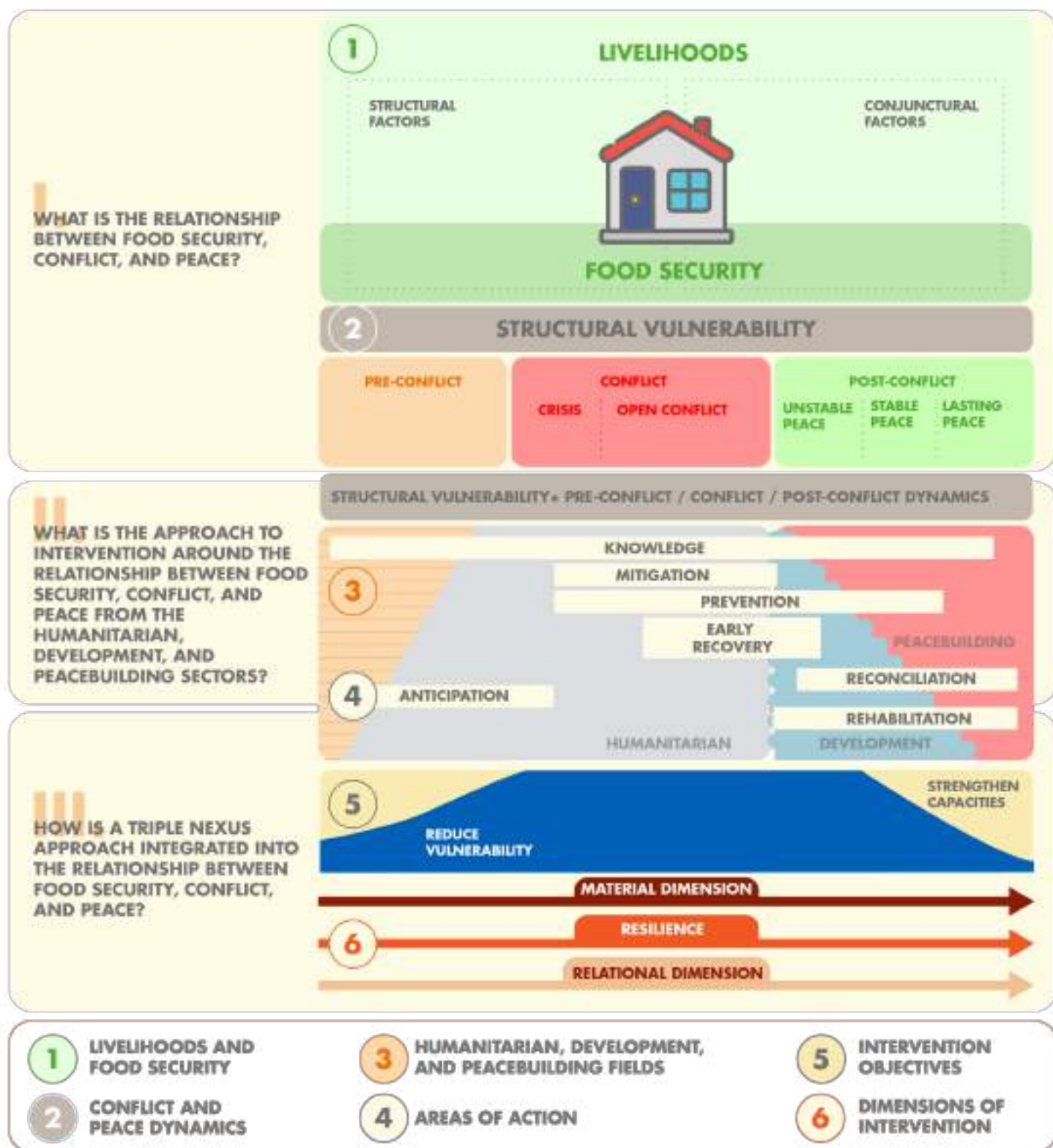
What is the relationship between food security, conflict and peacebuilding? This section presents

the phenomenon of interaction between food security, conflict and peacebuilding. It begins with households as the focal point of intervention, exploring their relationship with livelihoods and food security. It then examines how armed conflict / violence and peacebuilding affect households’ livelihoods and food security, analyzing transitions and challenges within each.

What are the forms of action around the relationship between food security, conflict and peacebuilding from a triple-nexus perspective? This section explores the different fields of action in humanitarian, development, and peace interventions, identifying specific actions that accompany households during transitions before, during, and after conflict / violence. The goal is to highlight the complexity of intervening in this relationship, which is diffuse due to overlapping fields, areas of action, and actors.

How is a triple-nexus approach proposed in the relationship between food security, conflict and peace? This final section proposes key elements for approaching food security as a vehicle for peacebuilding, through its relational, material, and resilience dimensions—within a parallel focus on capacity-building and vulnerability reduction related to food security.

Figure 1. Components of the Operational Guide: *food security, conflict, and peace*



Authors' elaboration



I. "WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FOOD SECURITY, CONFLICT AND PEACE?"

A. WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FOOD SECURITY, CONFLICT AND PEACE?

The global panorama shows how the presence of armed conflicts and their impact on the civilian population have expanded significantly. By 2023, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) reported the presence of 120 armed conflicts worldwide, involving 60 States and 120 Non-State Armed Groups (NSAG), figure that has increased annually since the early 2000s¹.

Between 2022 and 2023, civilian deaths officially reported by the United Nations rose by 72 %. Among every 10 civilian deaths, 4 were women and 3 were children². According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 2023 was the deadliest year for civilians in armed conflict since 1994 (the Rwandan genocide). One in five children worldwide now lives in or is fleeing a conflict zone³.

Within this humanitarian landscape, food security stands out as one of the greatest concerns due to its vital importance for wellbeing and, above all,

for civilian survival. In 2023, armed conflict and violence remained the main cause of global food insecurity, affecting 135 million people in major humanitarian crises⁴. Current conflicts—Ukraine, Yemen, Gaza, and Sudan—show alarming scenarios of violence that affect every dimension of food security: availability, access, utilization, and stability throughout food-supply chains.

All these factors prompted actions such as UN Security Council Resolution 2417 (2018), which condemns the “*use of hunger as a weapon of war*” and calls for breaking the vicious cycle between hunger and conflict⁵. It reinforces provisions of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) that oblige all parties to respect civilian goods and other objects essential for survival.

Identifying armed conflict / violence as a primary driver of food insecurity is now well documented. More recently, growing interest has emerged in the potential contribution of food-security interventions

¹ How Is the Term “Armed Conflict” Defined in International Humanitarian Law? International Committee of the Red Cross. Opinion Paper (Ginebra: International Committee of the Red Cross, 2024), https://www.icrc.org/sites/default/files/document_new/file_list/armed_conflict_defined_in_ihl.pdf

² Consejo de Seguridad de las Naciones Unidas, “Informe del Secretario General, ‘Protección de los civiles en los conflictos armados’ S/2024/385”, Consejo de Seguridad de las Naciones Unidas, 14 de mayo de 2024, <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n24/110/32/pdf/n2411032.pdf>

³ Oficina de Naciones Unidas para la Coordinación de Asuntos Humanitarios (OCHA), Global Humanitarian Overview 2024 (Ginebra: Oficina de Naciones Unidas para la Coordinación de Asuntos Humanitarios (OCHA), 2023), <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/world/global-humanitarian-overview-2024-enarfres>

⁴ Food Security Information Network (FSIN) y Global Network Against Food Crises, Global Report on Food Crises 2024. Joint Analysis for Better Decisions (Roma: Global Network Against Food Crises, 2024), <https://www.fsinplatform.org/grfc2024>

⁵ Consejo de Seguridad de las Naciones Unidas, “Resolución 2417 (2018). Aprobada por el Consejo de Seguridad en su 8267ª sesión, celebrada el 24 de mayo de 2018”, Consejo de Seguridad de las Naciones Unidas, 24 mayo de 2018, <https://www.refworld.org/es/leg/resol/csonu/2018/es/127684>

to peacebuilding, a question closely aligned with the triple-nexus approach, which seeks synergies between humanitarian action, development cooperation, and peacebuilding.

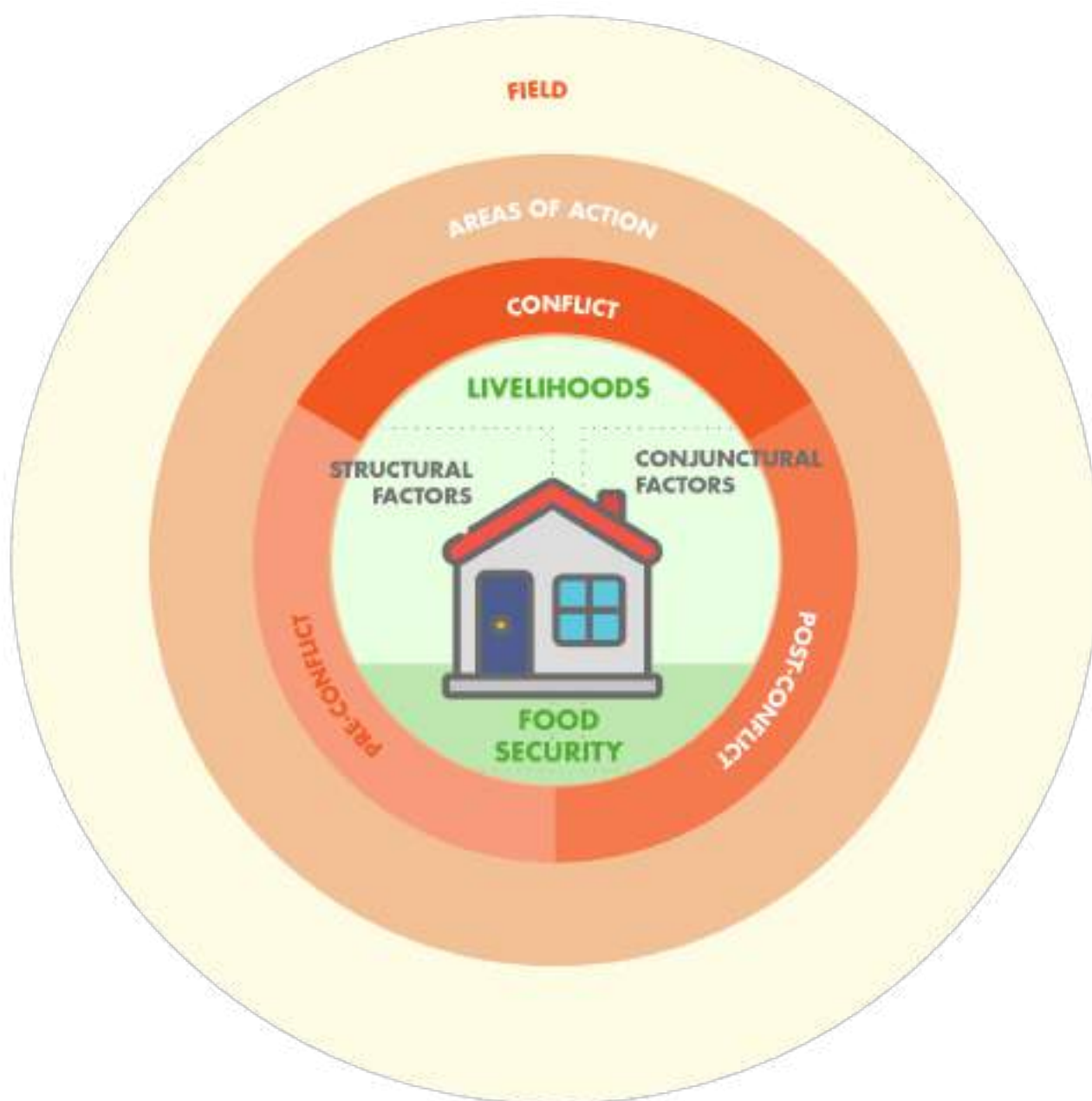
Conflict and peace dynamics must be understood systemically, considering their contextual dimensions and their relationships to environmental, social, institutional, and cultural factors.

The food security, conflict and peace relationship function as a system integrating levels, factors,

contexts, fields, and spheres of action. It is complex and non-linear, with constant overlap between contexts, activities, and actors.

Therefore, interventions addressing the relationship between food security, conflict and peace require frameworks and analyses capable of identifying and categorizing their complex interactions across different contexts.

Figure 2. Food Security, Conflict and Peace from a Systemic Perspective



Authors' elaboration

B. HOUSEHOLDS, FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS

The household is the starting point for understanding the relationship between food security, conflict and peace. It is the fundamental unit of analysis that connects people's and communities' life experiences, allowing us to grasp the environmental, social, and

cultural phenomena that shape daily life and their impact on food security. This micro-level approach reveals and links the concrete effects of armed conflict / violence and peacebuilding through people's activities, perceptions and emotions.

Figure 3. Household, Livelihoods and Food Security



Authors' elaboration

1. HOUSEHOLDS

The definition of *household* is complex, since multiple cultural, social and economic factors shape it in each context. In general, a household may be defined as “a social group that resides in the same place, shares food, and makes joint and coordinated decisions on the allocation of resources and income distribution.”⁶ A household must be understood as a space of cooperation, both economic and in care and well-being dimensions.

However, it is essential to pay attention to the asymmetries, tensions and power relations within households, linked to gender, age groups, disability, etc. These dynamics vary greatly by context and are embedded in social and institutional norms. Such

in-house asymmetries are key to the relationship between food security, conflict and peace, since violence-related shocks may affect members differently, and peace initiatives can also impact them unevenly.

Once the household unit is defined, livelihoods and food security emerge as their well-being axis. Though closely interrelated, there is a hierarchy between them: livelihoods are the means to achieve the end of food security⁷. While sometimes overlapping, each must be studied separately to grasp the diversity of economic activities and strategies households develop — especially in crisis contexts such as armed conflict / violence or during peacebuilding.

⁶ Frank Ellis, *Rural Livelihoods and Diversity in Developing Countries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)

⁷ Maxwell, 1991:22; in Perez Armiño (2000) “Sistemas de Sustento”. *Diccionario de Acción Humanitaria y Cooperación al Desarrollo*. Instituto Hegoa. Icaria & Hegoa. 2000

Household

Household may be defined as “a social group that resides in the same place, shares food, and makes joint and coordinated decisions on the allocation of resources and income distribution.”

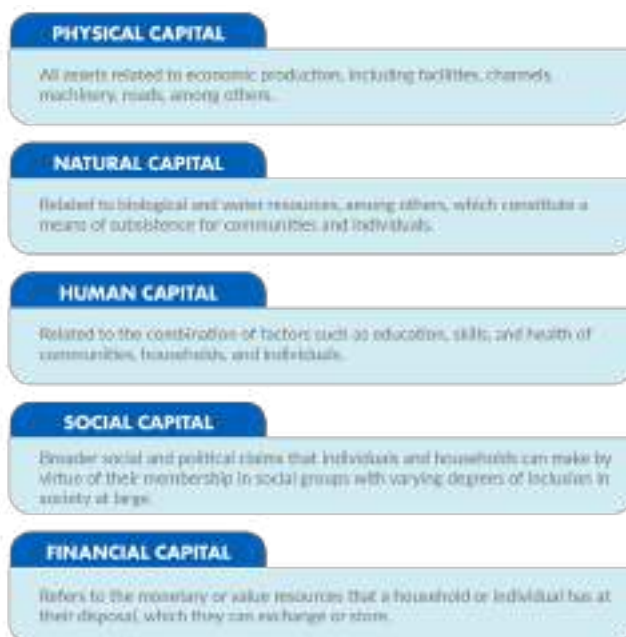
2. LIVELIHOODS

Livelihoods refer to “the mechanisms of control that an individual, family or other social group has over income and/or a set of resources that can be used or exchanged to meet their needs.”⁸ They combine various forms of capital — **physical, natural, human, financial and social**. The specific configuration through which each household accesses these capitals, within socio-cultural processes that mediate such access, shapes productive activities and the degree of diversification available to them.

Livelihoods take many forms depending on urban or rural contexts and on agricultural, commercial or service sectors. The number and type of economic activities, together with household resources, indicate the degree of income diversification. It is important to recognize the multiple income sources that may coexist beyond the so-called main economic activity.

Although livelihoods and household food security often overlap — especially in agricultural households — they should be analyzed individually to understand

Figure 4. Capitals related to Livelihoods — Source: Frank Ellis, *Rural Livelihoods and Diversity in Developing Countries*, Oxford University Press, 2000



Source: Ellis (2000)

⁸ Ellis, *Rural Livelihoods and Diversity in Developing Countries*.

economic diversity and strategies, particularly under crisis conditions (conflict / violence or peacebuilding).

Within these livelihoods and their ability to face crises lies the concept of Livelihood System Security (LSS)⁹, which represents criteria for assessing a system's capacity to cope with crises such as armed conflict or violence. Key factors include:

- **Sensitivity:** capacity for rapid response to change — endogenous or exogenous, positive or negative — enabling quick impact of development interventions but also a greater risk of rapid degradation after small shocks.
- **Resiliencia:** capacity for recovery after crisis; flexible systems allow populations to adapt and regain income sources by using coping strategies and alternative activities.
- **Sustainability:** the result of interacting sensitivity and flexibility — the ability to endure overtime despite adverse trends without undermining natural-resource bases.

High livelihood insecurity, together with poverty, exclusion or disaster exposure, significantly increases household vulnerability, especially in contexts of armed conflict / violence.



LIVELIHOODS

the mechanisms of control that an individual, family or other social group has over income and/or a set of resources that can be used or exchanged to meet their needs."



3. FOOD SECURITY

Food security is, to some extent, a goal achieved through livelihoods. The most widely used definition comes from the 1996 World Food Summit, which states that food security, *"at the individual, household, national and global levels, is achieved when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and preferences for an active and healthy life."*¹⁰

It is worth noting that food security is a relative concept—it can exist to greater or lesser degrees—and its dynamics can change over time¹¹. The specific combination of food security and livelihoods within each household place is somewhere along a spectrum of greater or lesser security. Under the current definition, four main dimensions determine the materialization of food security¹²:

- **Availability:** whether food is effective or potentially present in physical form, including aspects of production, reserves, markets, transport, and even wild foods.
- **Access:** whether people have sufficient physical and economic access to that food.
- **Utilization:** whether households make the best use of adequate nutrient and energy intake. Sufficient calories and nutrients result from good care and feeding practices, food preparation, dietary diversity, equitable intra-household distribution, and access to clean water, sanitation, and healthcare.
- **Stability:** when the other three dimensions—availability, access and utilization—are adequately met, stability ensures that the entire system remains steady, guaranteeing household food security over time.

Recently, two new dimensions have been integrated into the framework¹³:

- **Agency:** the capacity of individuals or groups to make their own decisions about what food is

⁹ From Maxwell y Smith (1992:33-38) in Pérez de Armiño, Karlos (2000) "Sistemas de Sustento" en: Diccionario de Acción Humanitaria y Cooperación al Desarrollo. Icaria y Hegoa. 2000

¹⁰ Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura (FAO), Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional. Conceptos básicos. Programa Especial para Seguridad Alimentaria (PESA) – Centroamérica (Ciudad de Guatemala: PESA, 2001), 4.

¹¹ Pérez de Armiño, Karlos (2000) "Seguridad Alimentaria" en Diccionario de Acción Humanitaria y Cooperación al Desarrollo (Barcelona: Icaria Editorial y Hegoa, 2000).

¹² FAO, FIDA, Unicef, WFP y OMS, El estado de la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición en el mundo 2024.

¹³ High Level Panel Experts (HLPE) y Committee on World Food Security (CFS). Food Security and Nutrition: Building a Global Narrative Towards 2030 (Roma: HLPE y CFS, 2020), <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/8357b6eb-8010-4254-814a-1493faaf4a93/content> Humanitaria y Cooperación al Desarrollo. Icaria y Hegoa. 2000

produced, how it is processed and distributed, and to participate in shaping the policies and governance of food systems.

- **Sustainability:** the long-term capacity of food systems to provide food security and nutrition without compromising the environmental, economic or social foundations for future generations.

Food security differs according to individual, household, national and global levels due to socio-economic, political, environmental and cultural factors. At the individual level, nutritional requirements vary widely by gender (e.g., pregnant or lactating women) or by age group (children, adolescents, older adults)¹⁴.

At the household level, socially constructed gender roles can determine food distribution patterns that favor one member over another. Studies have shown that women are often more vulnerable to food insecurity, as they tend to reduce or skip meals to ensure other family members can eat.

Beyond technical definitions and indicators, food production, access and consumption processes are deeply embedded in and shaped by their contexts. Food, in its social and cultural dimensions, interacts not only with forms of production, access and consumption, but also plays a key role in constructing meaning, social narratives, and relationships among actors¹⁵.

Thus, referring to food security or its opposite -food insecurity- context remains a crucial element for understanding how conflict and peacebuilding interact within a society or community.

FOOD SECURITY

is achieved when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and preferences for an active and healthy life"

C. STRUCTURAL AND CONJUNCTURAL FACTORS

Although analysis begins at the micro-level, structural and conjunctural factors faced by households become highly relevant because they deeply interact with livelihoods and, consequently, with food security. Numerous case studies show how these factors can greatly intensify the negative impacts of armed conflicts and violence on households¹⁶. Among structural factors we find¹⁷:

- **Political:** state fragility, policy implementation, and participation in political processes.
- **Social:** poverty, inequality, and levels of human development.
- **Economic:** inflation, employment, market access, and access to banking services.
- **Cultural:** representations and narratives.
- **Environmental:** natural disasters, environmental degradation, and seasonal food insecurity.

These structural factors mediate, obstruct, or facilitate the link between household needs and the resources they can obtain, thereby shaping livelihoods and food security outcomes.

¹⁴ Nzinga Broussard, "What Explains Gender Differences in Food Insecurity?", *Food Policy* 83 (febrero de 2019): 180-194, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodpol.2019.01.003>.

¹⁵ For more on this topic (anthropology of food) see: Sidney W. Mintz y Christine M. Du Bois, "The Anthropology of Food and Eating", *Annual Review Anthropology* 31 (2022): 99-119.

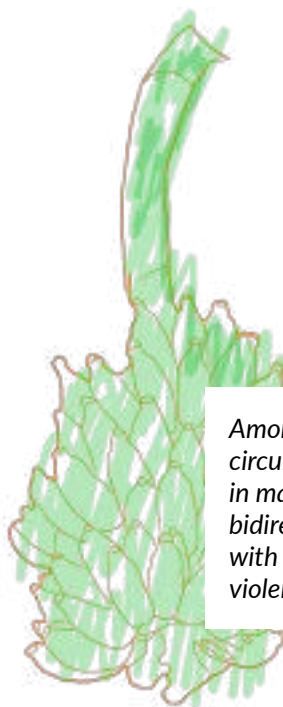
¹⁶ Among these findings, we can cite the various global studies and monitoring carried out by Action Against Hunger within the project of the "Hunger and Conflict" project, see: Action Against Hunger (2024) No Matter Who's Fighting, Hunger Always Wins. Report. How violent actions drive food insecurity. Report. Madrid/London. In the case of Colombia see: Acción contra el Hambre (ACH), Estudio de caso: dinámicas del conflicto armado y su impacto en la seguridad alimentaria en el departamento del Putumayo-Colombia, Serie Hambre y Conflicto, n.º 1 (Bogotá: ACH, 2023); Acción contra el Hambre (ACH), Restricciones a la movilidad en el marco del conflicto armado colombiano y su impacto en la seguridad alimentaria, Serie Hambre y Conflicto, n.º 2 (Bogotá: ACH, 2023); Acción contra el Hambre (ACH), Crisis humanitaria derivada de cultivos ilícitos. Serie Hambre y Conflicto, n.º 3 (Bogotá: ACH, 2023); Acción contra el Hambre (ACH), "Artefactos explosivos y seguridad alimentaria: dinámicas del conflicto armado (2017-2023)", Serie Hambre y Conflicto, n.º 4 (Bogotá: ACH, 2024).

¹⁷ Acción contra el Hambre (ACH). Monitoring and Evaluating Food Insecurity in Conflicts (MEFIC). Indicators.

Conjunctural factors, on the other hand, refer to shocking events that occur unexpectedly and cause massive impacts across territory and its population. In current global food-crisis scenarios, the events with the greatest worldwide impact on food insecurity are armed conflict / violence, followed by economic shocks and extreme climatic phenomena¹⁸.

In many cases, structural and conjunctural factors form bidirectional relationships with armed conflict / violence. Structural or conjunctural conditions can intensify conflict, just as conflict can increase vulnerability. For example, in contexts of armed confrontation, existing problems—such as weak or absent state presence—may worsen due to resource cuts, insecurity, or direct attacks on public infrastructure.

Similarly, extreme climatic events, such as severe droughts, can lead Non-State Armed Groups (NSAG) to strengthen control over territories—by restricting mobility, for instance¹⁹. Yet perhaps the most significant bidirectional link lies in the fact that many structural factors affecting households' food security and livelihoods are themselves at the heart of conflict. When societies are unable to address these root problems, violence often emerges or deepens as a means of attempting to resolve them.

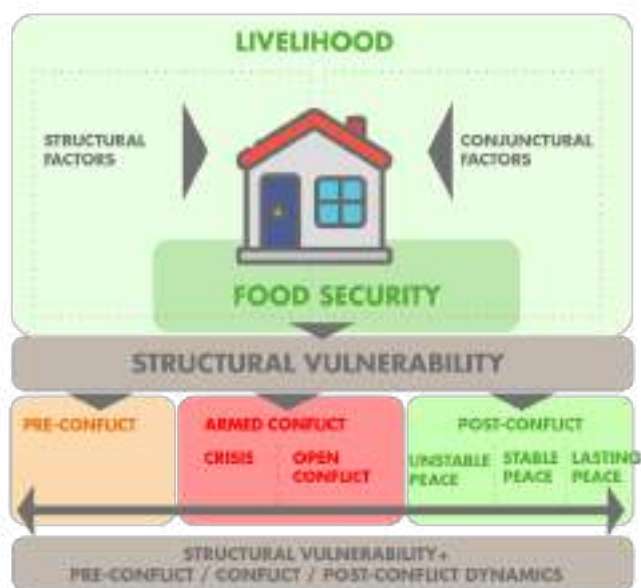


Among the structural and circumstantial factors, in many cases there is a bidirectional relationship with armed conflict/ violence.

D. DYNAMICS OF ARMED CONFLICTS AND PEACE IN FOOD SECURITY

If we take the household as the starting point for analyzing the relationship between food security, conflict, and peace, it is important to understand not only the nature of conflict itself but also, from this micro-level perspective, the impacts that the transition from conflict to peace may have on household food security and livelihood. This transition varies depending on general contextual factors as well as on the structural vulnerability of each household.

Figure 3. Household, Livelihoods and Food Security



Authors' elaboration

If we take the household as the starting point for analyzing the relationship between food security, conflict, and peace, it is important to understand not only the nature of conflict itself but also, from this micro-level perspective, the impacts that the transition from conflict to peace may have on household food security and livelihood. This transition varies depending on general contextual factors as well as on the structural vulnerability of each household.

¹⁸ FSIN (2024) Global Report on Food Crises 2024. Global Network Against Food Crises. 2024.Rome

¹⁹ Acción contra el Hambre (2024) Fenómeno El Niño en Colombia (2023-2024): Percepción de impactos y estrategias de afrontamiento desde las comunidades. Serie monitoreo Fenómeno El Niño. Informe II. Febrero 2024.

1. ARMED CONFLICTS: DEFINITIONS

The term *conflict* is often taken for granted, but it is far more complex and must be precisely defined to understand its relationship with food insecurity.

In broad terms, conflict does not necessarily imply violent or negative manifestations—it can represent natural processes of transformation within societies or human groups. What becomes problematic is the absence of peaceful mechanisms to manage these conflicts, which allows them to escalate into violent or armed conflicts²⁰.

There is no single global definition of armed conflict. Two main approaches exist:

- **Operational definition**, drawn from International Humanitarian Law (IHL), which limits the effects of war and distinguishes between international and non-international armed conflicts—but does not explicitly define the term. This omission is deliberate, allowing flexibility and depoliticization across diverse contexts.
- **Analytical definition**, developed by researchers and monitoring initiatives to classify conflicts by type, intensity, and scope.

According to an **operational definition**, frame by IHL, there are two types of armed conflicts²¹:

- **International Armed Conflict (IAC)**: “An armed conflict exists whenever there is resort to armed force between States, or when there is protracted armed violence between governmental authorities and organized armed groups, or between such groups within a State.”²²
- **Non-International Armed Conflict (NIAC)**:

“Occurs in the territory of a High Contracting Party between its armed forces and dissident armed forces or other organized armed groups which, under responsible command, exercise such control over part of its territory as to enable them to carry out sustained and concerted military operations.”²³

Conflicts have deep contextual dimensions, and their dynamics, armed actors, strategies, and impacts vary widely. A conflict-sensitive approach is therefore essential. While general typologies distinguish between international and internal conflicts, countless variations emerge based on local actors and socio-institutional dynamics.

The absence of a universally accepted operational definition creates additional complexity: there is no central authority to classify conflicts, leaving interpretation largely to the parties themselves.

To navigate this, the ICRC conducts independent analyses to determine conflict classification for operational purposes²⁴. However, disagreement among actors often hinders consensus, affecting how hostilities unfold and their humanitarian impact. Nonetheless, lack of recognition does not exempt parties from legal responsibility for their actions under IHL.

Analytically, several organizations—such as the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) and Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED)—offer typologies based on different criteria²⁵ such as:

- **Type**: identifies the nature of parties involved (inter-state, extra-state, internal, internationalized internal, or one-sided violence).

²⁰ Karlos Pérez de Armiño, Marta Areizaga y Norma Vázquez, “Conflicto”, en *Diccionario de Acción Humanitaria y Cooperación al Desarrollo* (Barcelona: Icaria y Hegoa, 2000).

²¹ ICRC, *How Is the Term “Armed Conflict” Defined in International Humanitarian Law?*. Report.

²² Comité Internacional de la Cruz Roja (CICR), “Protocolo II adicional a los Convenios de Ginebra de 1949 relativo a la protección de las víctimas de los conflictos armados sin carácter internacional, 1977”, Comité Internacional de la Cruz Roja (CICR), s.f., [https://elearning.icrc.org/detention/es/story_content/external_files/Protocolo%20Adicional%20%20CG%20II%20\(1977\).pdf](https://elearning.icrc.org/detention/es/story_content/external_files/Protocolo%20Adicional%20%20CG%20II%20(1977).pdf)

²³ CICR, “Protocolo II adicional a los Convenios de Ginebra de 1949”,

²⁴ ICRC, *How Is the Term “Armed Conflict” Defined in International Humanitarian Law?*

²⁵ For more details see: Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), “Definitions, Sources and Methods for Uppsala Conflict Data Program Battle- Death Estimates”, Department of Peace and Conflict Research. Uppsala University, s.f., <https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/old/brd/ucdp-brd-conf-41-2006.pdf>; Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED), “ACLED Conflict Index Results: July 2024”, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED), s.f., <https://acleddata.com/conflict-index/index-july-2024/#:~:text=The%20ACLED%20Conflict%20Index%20uses,territory%2C%20scaled%2C%20and%20ranked>

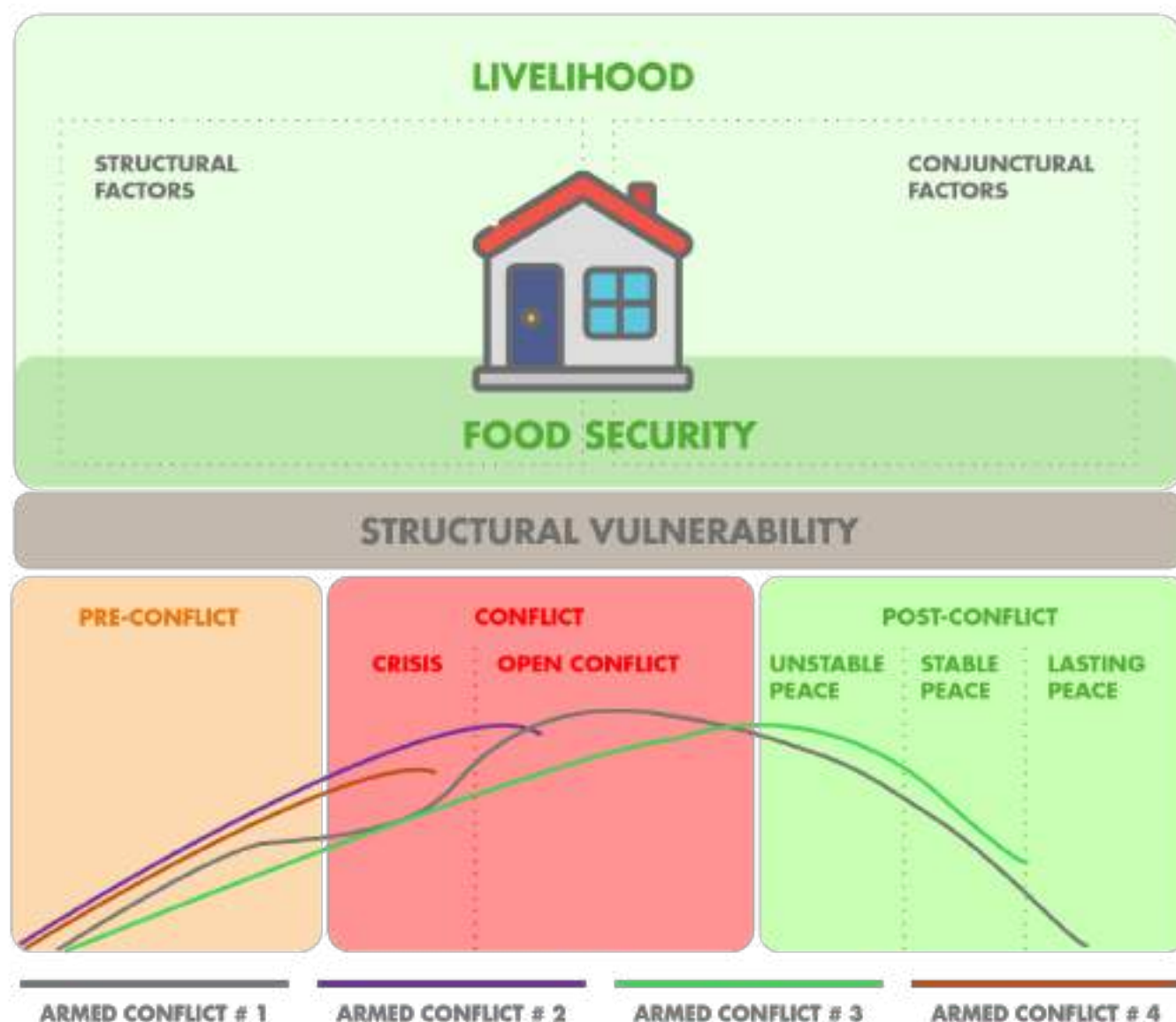
- **Actors:** counts the number of identifiable armed groups; higher fragmentation implies greater complexity for negotiation and protection.
- **Intensity:** measures the scale of violence—commonly “low-intensity” (< 1,000 deaths per year) versus “high-intensity” (> 1,000 deaths per year)—including differentiated civilian versus combatant impacts.
- **Geographic scope:** indicates the territorial spread of violence (e.g., ACLED’s “diffusion” measure).

Conflicts evolve through phases (pre-conflict, conflict, post-conflict), but these are non-linear; many conflicts become protracted crises lasting years

or decades, with alternating periods of escalation and de-escalation. Within a single country, multiple conflicts may coexist, each with distinct agendas, intensity levels, and timelines.

Motivations are equally diverse: ideological, identity-based, or resource-driven. Modern conflicts are often multicausal, mixing identity, economic and geopolitical elements, unlike earlier “traditional” wars. New trends—urban violence, technological innovation in warfare (drones, AI on battlefields, etc.)—are reshaping conflict dynamics and creating new humanitarian impacts.

Figure 6. Overlap of Armed Conflicts Present in Contexts



Authors' elaboration

2. FOOD SECURITY AMID ARMED CONFLICTS AND VIOLENCE

On 24 May 2018, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2417, formally establishing the link between conflict and hunger and recognizing “the need to break the vicious circle between armed conflict and food insecurity, reaffirming its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.”

²⁶ Aligned with this, IHL prohibits and restricts the use of weapons or tactics with widespread, long-term adverse effects on civilians and on food security and nutrition.

It is a primary responsibility of armed actors to ensure that civilians’ basic subsistence needs are met during hostilities. IHL explicitly prohibits the use of hunger as a method of warfare and mandates protection of means necessary for the production, distribution, and consumption of food²⁷. This warning exists because historically, hunger has been weaponized as part of armed conflict strategies.

Most research on the hunger-conflict relationship has focused on the impact of hostilities on civilian food security. However, food is also a strategic asset for all armed actors—from small militias to state armies. Control over food-production and supply systems is vital to maintaining military operations. Depending on context and group structure, supply strategies range from looting and forced labor to local purchasing or self-production²⁸.

Just as armed groups must secure their own supplies, destroying opponents’ access to food is also a military strategy—via sieges, destruction of productive assets and infrastructure, or movement restrictions. Civilians caught between opposing strategies often bear the heaviest consequences as armed groups prioritize their own subsistence²⁹.

Civilian vulnerability to food insecurity has grown alongside the rise of non-international conflicts, which involve non-state actors and fragmented violence. According to UCDP (2023), there were 75 non-states, 59 states, and 42 one-sided conflicts globally. The number of non-state conflicts has increased steadily since 2010, peaking in 2017 with 92 non-state conflicts versus 52 state conflicts³⁰.

Beyond direct hostilities, armed actors (and sometimes non-armed entities) may intentionally use hunger as a weapon. The political economy of conflict often revolves around control of resources that finance warfare. Controlling food systems serves both territorial and population control aims and can forcibly displace communities from strategic or resource-rich zones (e.g., mining, cash crops, trade routes).

Such displacement disrupts livelihoods and undermines food security. According to typologies developed by Conley and de Waal³¹, hunger has been weaponized through:

- **Collective punishment:** inflicting civilian suffering to pressure an opposing armed group.
- **Population control:** weakening communities to subdue them.
- **Territorial control:** restricting movement of goods or people.
- **Labor exploitation:** concentrating and exploiting civilian labor.
- **Extermination tool:** targeting specific population groups for elimination.
- **Recruitment mechanism:** creating food insecurity to drive individuals into joining armed groups.

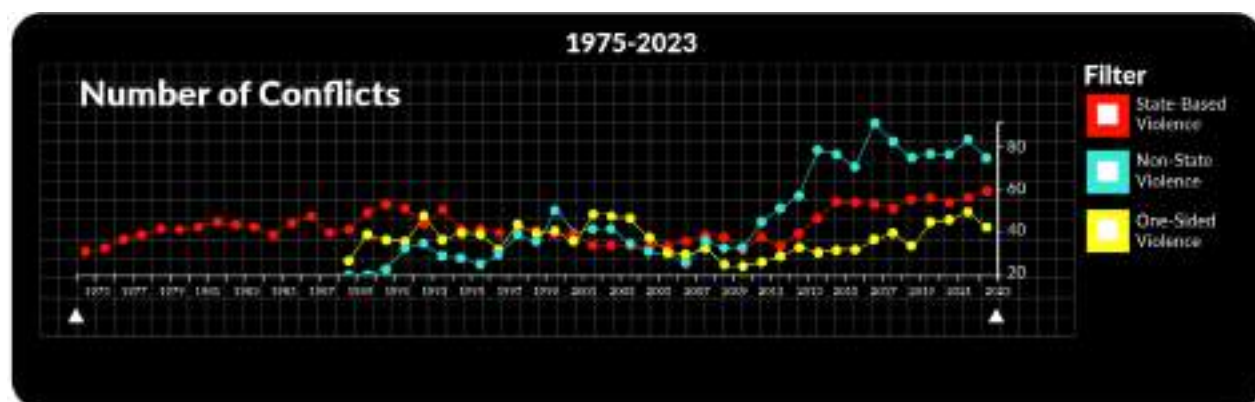
²⁶ Consejo de Seguridad de las Naciones Unidas, “Resolución 2417 (2018). Aprobada por el Consejo de Seguridad en su 8267ª sesión, celebrada el 24 de mayo de 2018

²⁷ International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Food Security and Armed Conflict. Policy Brief (Ginebra: ICRC, 2023), <https://shop.icrc.org/food-security-and-armed-conflict-pdf-en.html>

²⁸ Birgit Kemmerling, Conrad Schetter y Lars Wirkus, “The Logics of War and Food (in)Security”, *Global Food Security* 33 (2022): 100634. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gfs.2022.100634>

²⁹ Action Against Hunger (2024) No Matter Who’s Fighting, Hunger Always Wins. Report. How violent actions drive food insecurity. Report. Madrid/London

³⁰ Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), “Number of Conflicts 1975-2023”, Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, 2024, <https://ucdp.uu.se/exploratory>

Figure 7. Trends in Types of Armed Conflict 1975–2023

Source: UCDP 2024

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1. IMPACT OF ARMED CONFLICTS / VIOLENCE ON FOOD SECURITY

As mentioned above, the impact of armed conflict or

violence on the food security of individuals, families, or communities is a widespread phenomenon across many contexts. Conflict destroys crops and productive assets, obstructs trade and mobility, and shatters people's livelihoods. Yet, the specific dynamics of each conflict—as well as contextual conditions—can generate highly differentiated impacts, not only on overall food security but also across its dimensions: availability, access, utilization, and stability³².

Under the Monitor and Evaluate Food Insecurity in Conflict (MEFIC) methodology³³—developed by Action Against Hunger (ACF) and the University of the Basque Country, the impact of armed actions on food security must be understood as the combination of:

- National-level vulnerabilities
- Local-level vulnerabilities
- Armed actions themselves

Hence, the impact of armed violence is greater in contexts with poor public-service access, weak infrastructure, little or no state presence, and subsistence or undiversified economies, than in those with stronger local capacities and state response.

From MEFIC typologies and findings from the **“Hunger and Conflict”** project implemented by **Action Against Hunger** across different contexts, several transversal patterns emerge linking violent actions to impacts on food-security dimensions.

³¹ Conley y de Waal, “The Purposes of Starvation: Historical and Contemporary Uses”.

³² Cindy Holleman, Julius Jackson, Marco V. Sánchez y Rob Vos, *Sowing the Seeds of Peace for Food Security. Disentangling the Nexus between Conflict, Food Security and Peace* (Roma: FAO, 2017).

³³ Acción contra el Hambre (2021) *Guidelines MEFIC. Monitor and Evaluate Food Insecurity in Conflict*. Madrid. 2021

Table 1. Components of Food Security, Violent Actions, and Their Impacts

Dimension	Sub-dimension	Violent actions	Impacts on food security
Availability	Access to land and crops	Dispossession; destruction of crops; looting; movement restrictions; environmental contamination of soil and crops; anti-personnel mines; extortion	Destruction or deterioration of local productive capacity, causing short-, medium-, and long-term effects through loss of crops, soil damage, and depletion of productive assets essential for livelihoods.
	Access to productive assets	Destruction or looting of productive and non-productive assets	
	Access to water	Destruction of infrastructure; contamination	
	Access to storage / processing	Destruction / looting of assets; extortion	
	Access to distribution networks	Mines; mobility restrictions; extortion	
Access	Prices	Mobility restrictions; extortion	Direct violence against civilians and clashes between armed actors limit or block livelihoods and commercial exchange systems.
	Income	Mobility restrictions; extortion; displacement	
	Coverage of aid / subsidy programs	Access restrictions; extortion	
	Physical access to markets	Mines; movement restrictions; extortion	
Utilization	Access & quality of water	Destruction of infrastructure; contamination	Conflict dynamics and violent acts not only prevent diverse and adequate diets but also hinder access to goods, services, and resources such as health care, housing, and energy.
	Access to energy for cooking	Mines; movement restrictions; extortion	
	Housing conditions	Dispossession; destruction or looting of non-productive assets; displacement	
	Dietary diversity & frequency	Mines; mobility restrictions; infrastructure destruction	
	Care practices Health conditions	Mobility restrictions; extortion	

Source: AAH, 2024

As previously stated, the transition between armed conflict / violence and peace is a contextual, non-linear process in which general phases (before,

during, after) can be identified, though reversals are frequent. Each phase carries its own characteristics, potential impacts, and challenges for food security.

Table 2. Characteristics of Conflict Phases and Potential Food-Security Impacts

Phase	Characteristics of the phase	Potential impacts / challenges for food security
Before (Pre-conflict)	- Contexts preceding violence escalation are marked by political, economic, social, or identity tensions. - Emerging armed-group structures, territorial control, and rising high-impact violence may signal the onset of broader conflict.	The threat of escalation increases perceived risk, reducing investment and disrupting supply chains and markets—negatively affecting livelihoods and food security even before open violence.
During (Conflict)	- In armed-violence contexts, food insecurity is both an indirect and deliberate outcome: direct violence affects food production, access and utilization; hunger and famine can also be used intentionally as weapons of war. "Conflict economies" emerge through local linkages—relations of instrumentalization and dependence between civilians and armed actors.	- Destruction or deterioration of local production capacity with short-, medium- and long-term effects; - Paralysis of economic and commercial activity; loss of dietary diversity; - Blocked access to health, housing, and energy; - Mobility restrictions and clashes causing displacements or closures.
After (Post-conflict)	- Post-conflict refers to processes leading to the end of armed confrontation, followed by broader efforts to establish durable peace. Such contexts are fragile—40% of conflicts relapse into violence within 10 years³⁴. - Residual violence, group fragmentation, and persistent social tensions remain common. The end of direct violence does not end disputes over resources or wartime privileges. - State institutions must rebuild legitimacy and re-establish presence and services.	- Post-conflict settings offer opportunities for food-security and livelihood interventions but also major challenges. - Recovery and reconstruction occur in the medium-to-long term and involve not only infrastructure repair, but population return and clearance of landmines / UXO. - Rural household food security is central to reintegration and return processes. - Economic conversion affects ex-combatants and civilians once tied to war economies (e.g., illicit mining or drug chains). - Short-term food assistance remains crucial amid depleted coping strategies and destroyed physical, human and environmental capital.

Source: AAH, 2024

³⁴ Kristina Tschunkert y Caroline Delgado. *Food Systems in Conflict and Peacebuilding Settings. Ways Forward*. Estocolmo: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), 2022.



II. WHAT ARE THE FORMS OF ACTION AROUND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FOOD SECURITY, CONFLICT AND PEACEBUILDING FROM A TRIPLE-NEXUS PERSPECTIVE?

A. HUMANITARIAN, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE FIELDS: CHARACTERISTICS AND THE TRIPLE NEXUS

One of the historical challenges in linking the humanitarian, development, and peace sectors has been how to connect them meaningfully to overcome crises and to generate real well-being for people and territories. Fragmented, disjointed interventions have reduced the overall impact of aid and raised questions of effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability³⁵.

Within this context, the triple-nexus narrative (humanitarian–development–peace) has emerged as a central paradigm in the agendas of donors, States, and international organizations. Global frameworks such as the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, *New Ways of Working*³⁶, *Peace Promises*³⁷, and especially the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, have promoted integrated approaches to global problems, emphasizing the need to strengthen coordination between humanitarian, development, and peace sectors, with donor and institutional support³⁸.

This triple nexus narrative builds upon decades of experience, especially during the complex humanitarian emergencies (notably in Africa), when structural crises and the massive toll on civilians exposed the need for more integrated and innovative responses³⁹.

The *New Ways of Working* (NWOW) framework exemplifies the triple-nexus approach and has had a strong impact as a UN system-wide guidance. It is built around three key principles:

- **Collective outcomes:** measurable results focused on reducing people's needs, risks, and vulnerabilities while increasing resilience.
- **Comparative advantage:** recognizing the unique capacities and roles that different actors can contribute toward shared goals.
- **Multi-year frameworks:** encouraging analysis, strategic planning, and financing that go beyond

³⁵ Organizations such as the OECD highlight how “despite repeated calls for greater coherence, humanitarian and development actors often operate in parallel, guided by different mandates, principles and financing structures.” OECD (2019) *Towards Better Humanitarian-Development Coherence*. DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus.

³⁶ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), *New Ways of Working*. Policy Paper. (OCHA, 2017), <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/world/new-way-working>

³⁷ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *The Peace Promise*. Commitments to More Effective Synergies Among Peace, Humanitarian and Development Actions in Complex Humanitarian Situations (UNDP, 2016), <https://www.undp.org/publications/peace-promise>.

³⁸ Tschunkert y Delgado, *Food Systems in Conflict and Peacebuilding Settings*. Ways Forward.

³⁹ Karlos Pérez de Armiño e Iker Zirion, *La acción humanitaria como instrumento para la construcción de la paz: herramientas, potencialidades y críticas*. Cuadernos de Trabajo 51 (Bilbao: Hegoa, 2010). old/brd/ucdp-brd-conf-41-2006.pdf

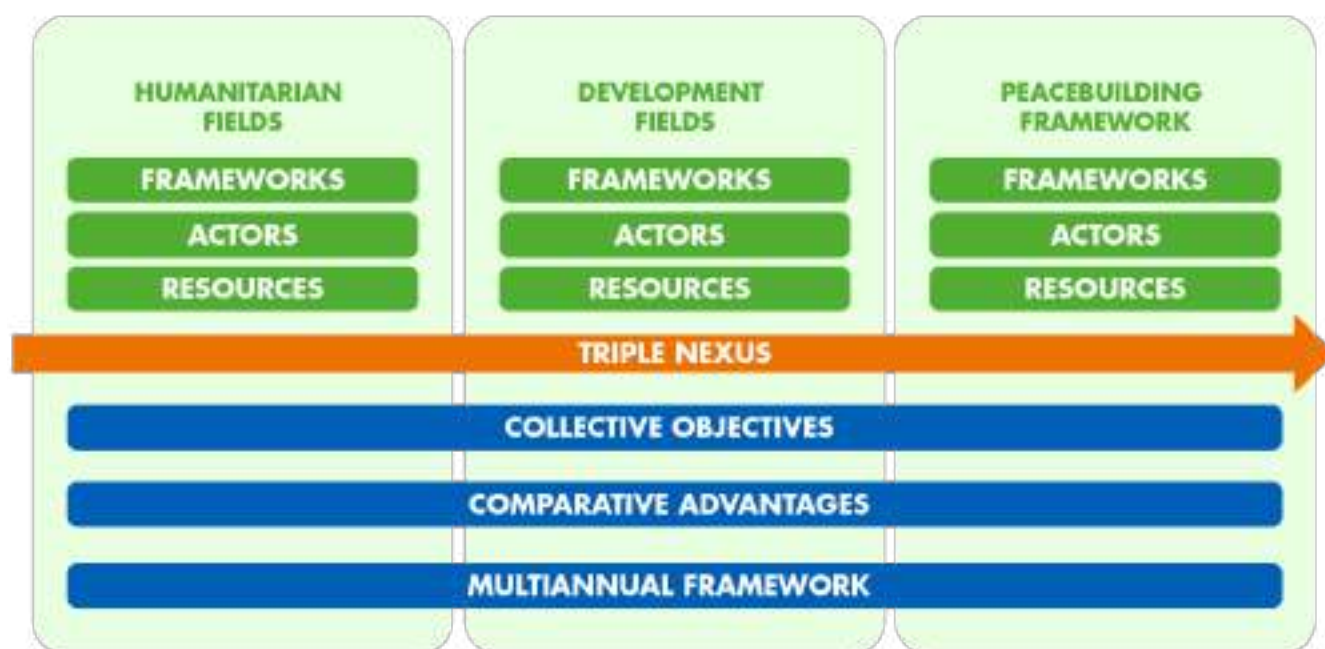
annual cycles, grounded in specific contexts and aimed at multiple objectives.

As noted earlier, one of the greatest operational challenges for the triple nexus lies in the lack of articulation among the humanitarian, development, and peace sectors. This stems from their distinct nature, objectives, and operating modalities. These sectors can be understood as fields, each historically

shaped by its own actors, mandates, and resources.

For instance, they differ in their **time horizons**: the humanitarian field acts in the **short term** (addressing immediate needs), development in the **short-to-medium term** (fostering growth and capacity), and peace building in the **medium-to-long term** (rebuilding relationships and reconciliation).

Figure 8. Fields and triple nexus



Authors' elaboration

Within the triple-nexus approach, food security occupies a privileged position because it naturally bridges humanitarian, development, and peace domains. Food security and livelihoods are vital and transversal elements in households' trajectories before, during, and after conflict.

Each field—humanitarian, development, and peace—engages differently, depending on its own objectives, yet they converge around this common axis.

- In the humanitarian field, food security is central as an immediate survival need for populations affected by natural or human-made crises. Livelihood support serves as both a resilience-building mechanism and a way to prevent negative coping strategies that erode assets or

reduce food consumption.

- In the development field, livelihoods and food security are vehicles for economic and social growth, particularly in communities affected by structural exclusion or chronic vulnerability.
- In the peace-building field, food security and livelihoods become spaces for relationship-building and transformation, offering means to consolidate a sustainable peace.

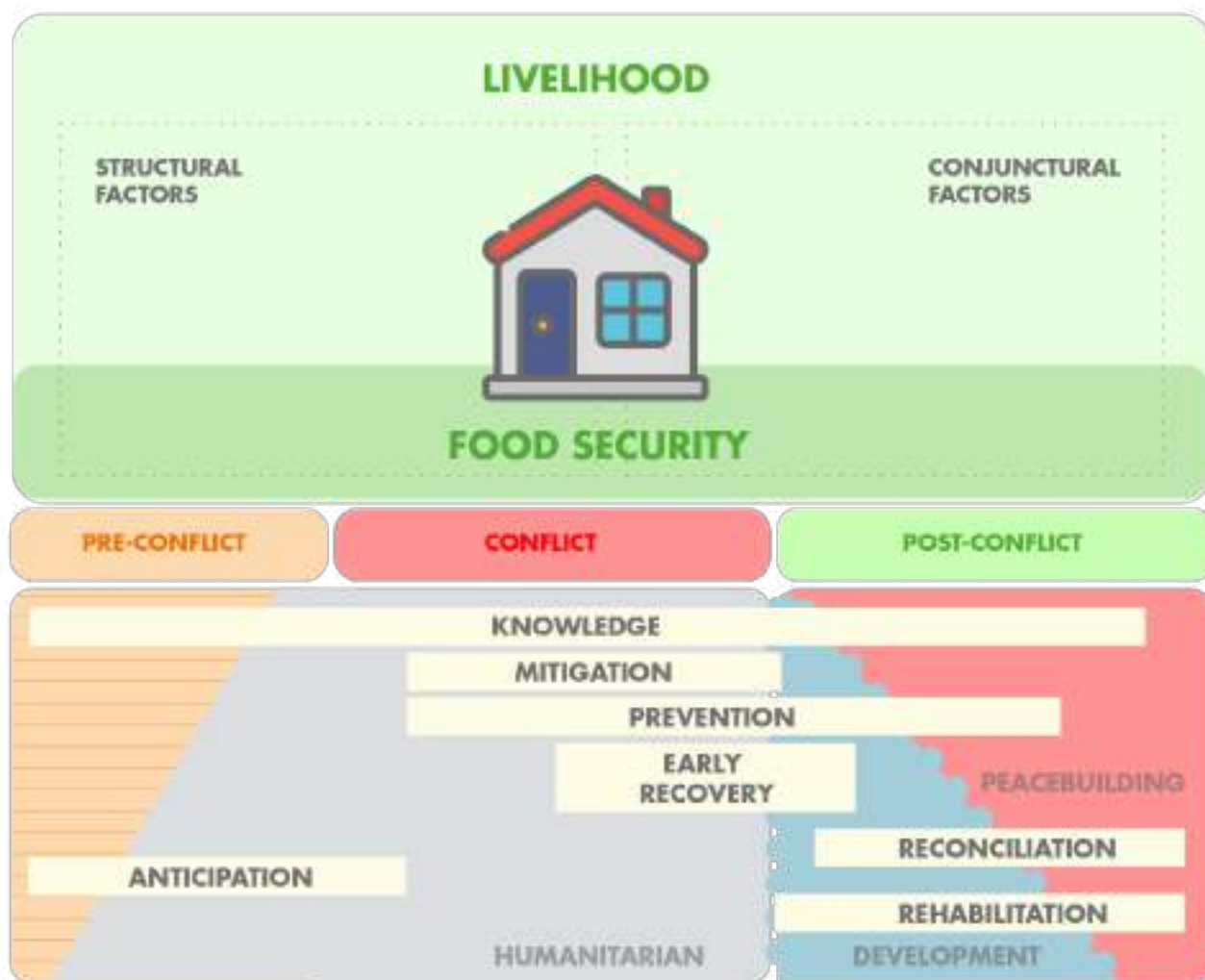
Understanding the triple-nexus in practice requires linking fields, actors, and areas of intervention throughout the household transition from conflict to peace. The ability to articulate across these dimensions constitutes the central challenge of the nexus approach.

B. AREAS OF ACTION REGARDING FOOD SECURITY, CONFLICT AND PEACE

Areas of action refer to the sets of activities developed at different moments or phases in the transition between conflict and peace, in which humanitarian, development, and peace actors all play roles. Seven main areas are identified: knowledge, anticipation, mitigation, prevention, early recovery, rehabilitation, and reconciliation. In practice, these areas and fields

are fluid and overlapping, constantly redefined by context. Some areas may be more closely associated with a specific field, for instance, mitigation with humanitarian action or rehabilitation with development, yet many are cross-cutting and may be implemented by diverse actors.

Figure 9. Areas of Action in Food Security



Authors' elaboration

Although the fields are not sequential—and, as previously noted, conflict phases are non-linear, there is generally a pattern: during periods of high-intensity conflict, the humanitarian field predominates, while development and peacebuilding tend to expand during de-escalation or post-conflict phases. In

complex environments with multiple overlapping conflicts, different territories may simultaneously be in distinct phases (e.g., conflict and post-conflict), requiring combined responses across several areas of action.

1. KNOWLEDGE

This area of action involves an internal dimension within organizations, enabling them to establish structures, capacities, and processes to effectively incorporate and operationalize information related to the food security–conflict–peace relationship. Conflict-sensitive approaches exemplify the need for such contextual understanding by humanitarian and development actors.

The core principle is that every external intervention in a conflict or peace context produces impacts—positive or negative—and the priority must be to minimize negative impacts (do no harm) and maximize positive ones through comprehensive and dynamic analysis.

Knowledge has often been treated as a pre-intervention or end-of-project phase, but due to the complexity and fluidity of the food security–conflict–peace relationship, it must instead be seen as a cross-cutting, continuous process embedded at the organizational level throughout the entire intervention cycle.

What does it have to do with food security and livelihoods?

Interventions in conflict or peacebuilding contexts that involve livelihoods and food security can generate both positive and negative effects—not only at the project level but also by interacting with broader institutional “assets and liabilities” created by other programs or policies.

Likewise, evolving dynamics between armed conflict and peace can lead to unintended impacts on implementation.

What concrete actions make up this area of action?

- SACP-related research
- Monitoring and evaluation of interventions in SACP contexts
- Institutional learning and lessons learned on SACP
- Early-warning systems

2. ANTICIPATION

Anticipatory action consists of acting before a foreseeable threat materializes, thus minimizing or preventing its impacts and, when possible, reducing suffering and human loss. Applying anticipatory approaches in contexts affected by violence and

armed conflict entails challenges, given the multi-causal nature of conflicts and the complexity of contextual variables.

When does it appear in the conflict–peace dynamic?

The incubation phase of an armed conflict or violent episode is a complex stage during which emerging tensions and dynamics can escalate into open violence.

What does it have to do with food security and livelihoods?

Even before violence erupts, the threat of escalation affects food security and livelihoods.

Rising perceptions of risk can lead to reduced mobility, divestment, and price volatility or shortages, all of which deteriorate food access and market functioning.

Hence, anticipation can play a critical role in reducing pre-conflict deterioration of food security among civilians.

What concrete actions make up this area of action?

- Early-warning systems in food security
- Contextual risk-analysis frameworks
- Preparedness and contingency planning in livelihood and food-security programs

3. MITIGATION

Mitigation refers to the set of measures designed to minimize the destructive and disruptive impact of a disaster, including human-made ones such as armed conflict.

When does it appear in the conflict–peace dynamic?

Mitigation occurs during active hostilities, for instance during forced displacements or mobility restrictions imposed by clashes or armed actors.

What does it have to do with food security and livelihoods?

Armed conflict weakens or destroys food security and livelihoods, requiring immediate support for affected civilians. In a stricter sense, mitigation in this domain refers to specific measures to help people survive, preserve livelihood systems, and better withstand future crises. A key element is to prevent households from adopting negative coping strategies that harm their well-being (e.g., malnutrition) or deplete productive resources essential for recovery.

What concrete actions make up this area of action?

- Food assistance
- Protection of livelihood systems
- Vaccination campaigns
- Access to water and sanitation services

4. PREVENTION

Prevention refers to actions aimed at addressing the underlying causes of conflict and at reducing conditions that allow violence to emerge or reappear. These actions can be direct (reducing tensions between parties) or indirect (addressing structural inequalities or vulnerabilities).

When does it appear in the conflict–peace dynamic?

This area may emerge before, during, or after violent conflict. Its intensity and form depend on context, actors, and the degree of escalation or de-escalation of violence.

What does it have to do with food security and livelihoods?

Food insecurity is often both a cause and a consequence of armed conflict. Reducing the factors that produce or intensify food insecurity can therefore contribute to lowering conflict risks. Prevention actions targeting food security and livelihoods can help limit the structural vulnerabilities and inequalities that often serve as conflict drivers.

What concrete actions make up this area of action?

- Food-security and livelihood programs addressing structural vulnerabilities
- Strengthening local institutional capacities
- Governance, participation, and community empowerment processes
- Actions to promote gender equity in food systems
- Territorial and environmental management

5. EARLY RECOVERY

Early Recovery (ER) refers to initiatives that apply development principles at the earliest possible stage of crisis response, identifying and building on recovery potential and local capacities even in contexts of ongoing instability or protracted conflict.

When does it appear in the conflict–peace dynamic?

ER generally appears during or immediately after conflict, but not necessarily once hostilities have ended. It can overlap with humanitarian actions and is intended to bridge emergency response and long-

term recovery.

What does it have to do with food security and livelihoods?

In contexts affected by conflict, restoring and stabilizing food systems is essential.

This includes rehabilitating infrastructure, supporting local markets, and re-establishing productive capacities. Such actions reduce dependence on external assistance and support community resilience.

What concrete actions make up this area of action?

- Restoring livelihood systems
- Cash-for-work programs
- Rehabilitation of infrastructure (roads, irrigation, markets)
- Support for agricultural production and animal health
- Restocking productive assets (tools, seeds, livestock)
- Facilitating access to financial and credit systems

6. REHABILITATION

Rehabilitation encompasses medium-term measures to rebuild livelihoods and restore social and institutional structures after a crisis or conflict. It focuses on the reconstruction of physical infrastructure, the re-establishment of services, and the recovery of productive and social capacities.

When does it appear in the conflict–peace dynamic?

Rehabilitation generally occurs after active conflict and once basic security conditions permit population return and resettlement. It is often the bridge to more structured development interventions.

What does it have to do with food security and livelihoods?

Food-security interventions within rehabilitation focus on restoring the physical, social, and institutional foundations of livelihoods. This includes rebuilding markets and supply chains, recovering agricultural infrastructure, and strengthening local governance mechanisms essential to sustaining food systems.

What concrete actions make up this area of action?

- Rehabilitation of productive infrastructure
- Rebuilding of community facilities (warehouses, irrigation systems, community centers)
- Support for producers' and market associations
- Strengthening local governance and service delivery

- Linking reconstruction efforts with long-term development programs

7. RECONCILIATION

Reconciliation represents the most complex and long-term area of action in contexts of conflict and peacebuilding. It involves healing relationships damaged or broken by violence, as well as the re-establishment of trust among individuals, communities, and institutions.

When does it appear in the conflict–peace dynamic?

Reconciliation usually emerges after the cessation of hostilities, although it may begin even while armed actions persist. It is a progressive and multidimensional process that can take years or decades, depending on the magnitude of the violence and the degree of institutional and social destruction it left behind.

What does it have to do with food security and livelihoods?

Food security and livelihoods can play a symbolic and practical role in reconciliation processes. The reconstruction of productive systems, the recovery of shared spaces, and joint work for livelihood improvement foster cooperation and trust among communities formerly divided by conflict. Furthermore, ensuring equitable access to food and resources helps reduce the grievances that fuel tensions and consolidate positive peace.

What concrete actions make up this area of action?

- Promotion of inter-community dialogue and cooperation around food systems and livelihoods
- Strengthening local capacities for mediation and conflict resolution
- Reintegration of ex-combatants through productive and community projects
- Recovery of collective and ancestral knowledge linked to food systems
- Construction of trust among citizens and institutions
- Symbolic and memorialization actions through food and production

III. HOW IS A TRIPLE-NEXUS APPROACH PROPOSED IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FOOD SECURITY, CONFLICT AND PEACE?

Within the broader dynamics of conflict and peace, and across different fields of intervention, the triple-nexus approach to food security is organized around one cross-cutting objective and three lines of work that can be integrated into various types of actions. Rather than a fixed model, these elements function as guiding principles that must be adapted to each context and the specific dynamics of conflict and violence.

Because the relationship between food security, conflict and peace is complex, any model must go

through a process of contextual adjustment. This approach is based on a key idea: humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors are contextual and interdependent. The triple nexus cannot operate in isolation; it requires coordinated and sequenced actions across different times, places and objectives, all connected by a shared purpose.

Food security is a strong entry point for advancing the triple nexus because it naturally links humanitarian response, development efforts and peacebuilding. Food security and livelihoods are essential for

Figure 10. Objective of the triple-nexus intervention



households before, during and after conflict, and they create spaces where different actors can interact and coordinate.

The central aim of a triple-nexus food-security intervention is to reduce vulnerabilities caused by armed conflict or structural factors, and to strengthen capacities that support recovery and long-term sustainability. Vulnerability refers to the level of risk households face during crises and their ability to recover. Capacities refer to the strengths and resources that help communities respond to shocks and support their development.

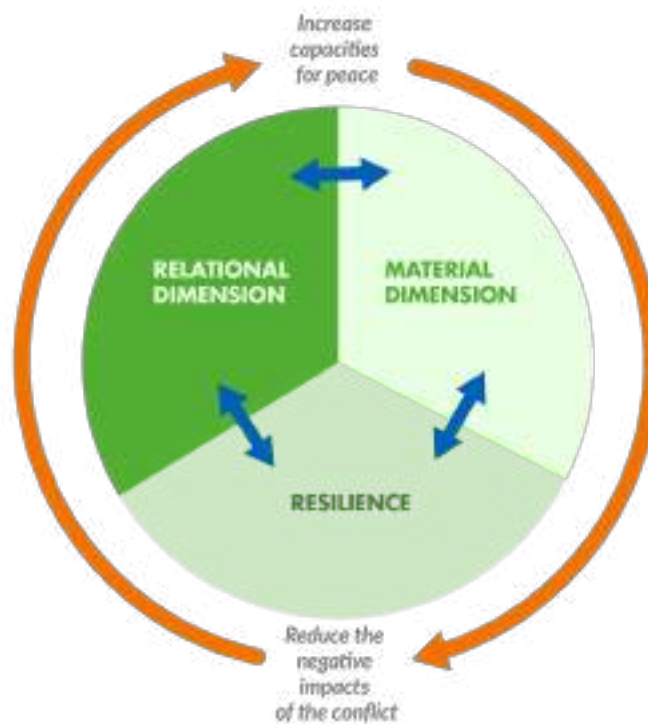
Food security and livelihoods are at the core of this vulnerability–capacity balance. Armed conflict weakens key capital–social, physical, environmental, human and economic—so interventions must focus on protecting and rebuilding these at household and community levels.

While the general objective remains constant, the emphasis of interventions changes across conflict phases. Before violence escalates, actions focus on reducing risks and strengthening capacities. During active conflict, efforts center on protecting food security and livelihoods from direct threats. In post-conflict situations, the focus shifts toward rebuilding

capacities that support stable, long-term recovery. In addition to the overarching objective, the intervention relies on three dimensions that guide food-security work from a peacebuilding perspective: the relational, material and resilience dimensions. Together, they help create a cycle that increases the ability to build peace and reduces the impacts of conflict.

- The relational dimension highlights food security as a space where actors can exchange, collaborate and build constructive relationships, even in contexts where conflict limits such interaction.
- The material dimension focuses on how food security interventions improve structural conditions linked to access to food, assets and livelihoods. These changes address inequalities that may contribute to conflict.
- The resilience dimension aims to strengthen households, communities and institutions to better withstand shocks, including armed conflict, by improving both material conditions and social cohesion. It promotes peaceful ways of coping with crises and reduces the likelihood of future violence.

Figure 11. Food security from a peacebuilding-oriented approach



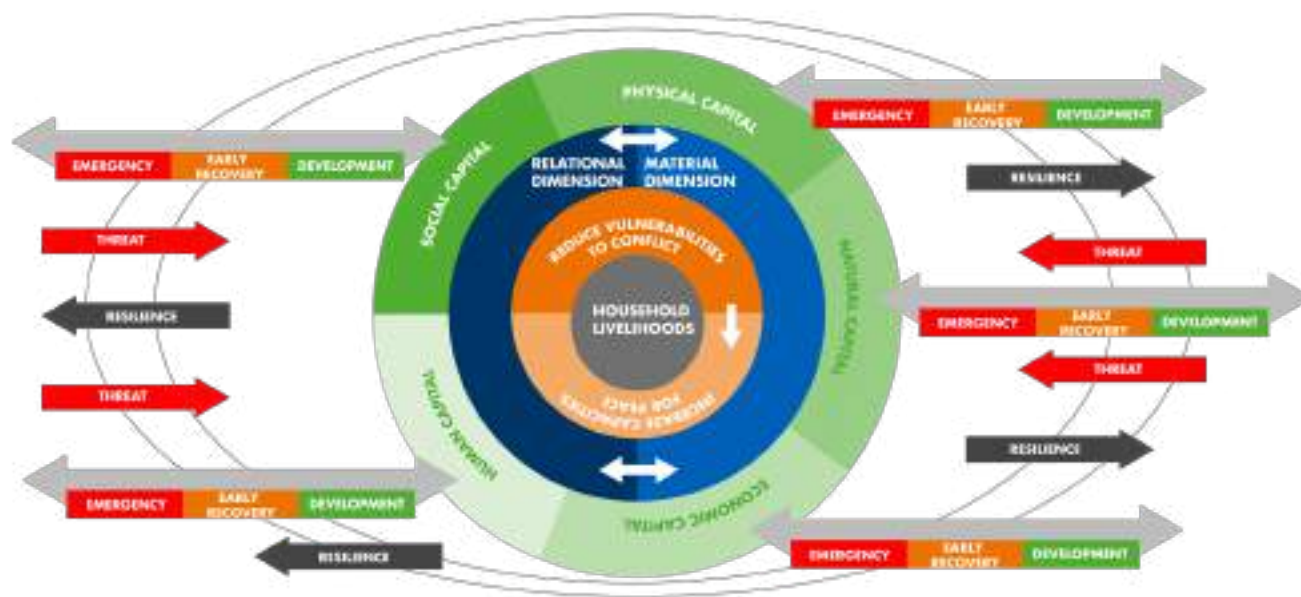
Authors' elaboration

TOWARD A PRACTICAL TRIPLE-NEXUS SACP MODEL

Based on the transformations across these three dimensions, the proposed intervention model must remain adaptable to different social, cultural,

economic and conflict settings. It is designed as a long-term effort involving multiple actors and types of actions.

Figure 12. Food Security, Conflict, and Peace Framework. Action



Source: Action Against Hunger, 2024

Within a triple-nexus perspective, six core elements guide the SACP operational model:

- Household livelihoods:** Livelihoods, built from different types of capital (physical, environmental, social, financial and human), form the foundation of household well-being and food security. They shape the ability of families and communities to remain and thrive in their territories.
- Impact of conflict and violence:** Violence damages the capitals that sustain livelihoods, increasing vulnerabilities and limiting the development of capacities. These impacts vary among conflicts, population groups and territories.
- General objective:** Interventions aim to reduce vulnerabilities and strengthen capacities related to the five capitals, to protect and improve food security and livelihoods.
- Specific objectives by intervention type:** Objectives vary depending on the context and operational domain—emergency, early recovery or development.
- Articulated triple-nexus vision:** Actions must connect past, current and future interventions to build on existing progress. Even in volatile contexts, accumulated capacities and improvements contribute to resilience and peacebuilding.
- Peacebuilding approach:** Interventions should address material and relational changes across capitals and actors, targeting vulnerabilities that drive conflict and enhancing the capacities needed to support sustainable peace.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

Fundamental aspect of a cross-cutting intervention in conflict–peace dynamics

Food security has a cross-cutting dimension that runs through all phases of conflict (before, during and after), across the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding fields, and throughout different areas of action (from anticipation to reconciliation). It is part of the triple nexus because it spans short-, medium- and long-term timelines. Despite contextual specificities and the dynamics of conflict, addressing food security remains essential for actors involved in interventions, as well as for civilian populations transitioning from conflict toward peace.

Everything, at the same time, in the same place: the complex nature of the food security–conflict–peace relationship and its implications for intervention and the triple nexus

Understanding the triple nexus within the SACP relationship requires a complex reading of armed conflicts and peacebuilding phases—recognizing their non-linearity, contextual variability, and differential impacts on actors and territories. A deep understanding of this complexity is what guides operational approaches and enables the construction of a shared narrative for coordination among actors.

It is also important to acknowledge that intervention contexts are highly complex: different types of armed conflict coexist simultaneously, occurring at different stages, and overlapping with multiple interventions where sectors and areas of action intersect.

Articulation around the triple nexus for food security must start with understanding the fields, areas of action and actors involved

The main challenge in operationalizing the triple

nexus—and its articulation around food security—stems from the overlapping nature of the fields, areas of action and actors involved. This is compounded by the blurred continuum of interventions, where operational logic overlaps and generates a complex landscape shaped by armed conflict and violence that does not follow a linear progression.

Without clarity on this mapping, and without understanding the diffuse boundaries among fields and actors, articulating a concrete triple-nexus approach requires a systemic and contextual perspective. Managing this complex, and at times chaotic, reality is an essential part of a triple-nexus SACP approach, which demands new analyses and tools built from practice.

The cumulative effect of interventions is the main contribution to food security within a triple-nexus approach—not isolated actions: no one can do it alone

Although there is no direct or linear link between all actors and interventions, the collective contribution emerges from reducing the impacts of conflict on food security and livelihoods, while progressively strengthening capacities across different interventions. The core value of articulation lies in the cumulative reduction of vulnerability and the gradual increase of capacities over time.

This also means that expecting a single intervention to generate a full impact is unrealistic. In many cases, the contribution of an individual project to peacebuilding will not be immediately visible, making it challenging to measure its direct effect. The impact lies in the accumulation of efforts, not in isolated actions.

I RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Strengthen conflict-sensitive approaches in all programmatic areas.

Every intervention—humanitarian, development, or peacebuilding—must include analytical and operational tools that identify and mitigate the potential negative impacts of actions on conflict dynamics.

2. Integrate food security as a strategic axis of peacebuilding.

Position food security and livelihoods as spaces for cooperation, dialogue, and reconciliation between actors and communities.

3. Promote multi-actor coordination mechanisms.

Encourage collaboration among local governments, civil society, private sector, academia, and international organizations to ensure complementarity and sustainability of interventions.

4. Consolidate information systems and knowledge management on SACP.

Develop methodologies, tools, and indicators that make it possible to measure both material and relational transformations resulting from the food security–conflict–peace relationship.

5. Prioritize differentiated and inclusive approaches.

Ensure that interventions consider gender, age, ethnicity, and other identity factors to address the specific vulnerabilities and capacities of different population groups.

6. Strengthen local institutional capacities and governance.

Support local authorities and community organizations in designing and managing policies and programs that guarantee food security as a public good.

7. Promote territorial approaches and long-term strategies.

Adapt interventions to the territorial realities and the specific dynamics of conflict and peace, ensuring coherence between short-term responses and long-term transformation processes.

8. Encourage innovation and flexibility in funding and programming.

Develop financing models that enable integrated, multi-annual, and adaptive responses across the humanitarian–development–peace continuum.



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