



ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSIONS OF SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY: LEARNING FROM POST-CONFLICT AND DISASTER RESPONSE EXPERIENCE

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Crisis, including complex emergencies, war and natural disasters, create high-stakes choices for impacted communities, governments, and NGOs regarding environmental governance and natural resource management. If managed properly, natural resources and environmental protection are critical element of disaster risk reduction and can be important foundations for the recovery of sustainable lives and livelihoods. If resources and environment are managed poorly, however, future vulnerability to both conflict and disaster may be enhanced. Prospects for sustainable recovery depend on choices made in the earliest days of post-conflict or post-disaster initiatives, and change as the stages of recovery, reconstruction, and redevelopment proceed.



*Transmigration settlement in West Papua, Indonesia.
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The environment is often not viewed as an urgent priority in the immediate wake of war or disaster, given the vast human needs and recovery challenges triggered by these events. A growing body of research and case documentation suggests, however, that effective natural-resource and environmental management in the wake of such events may be an important determinant of the long-run prospects for successful recovery and future protection. Moreover, in settings of social tension and mistrust, conflict-sensitive environmental initiatives may serve as a peacebuilding and recovery tool.

American University and World Wildlife Fund are working together to establish a collaborative initiative with three core objectives. First, we seek to pool currently fragmented knowledge and practitioner experience on the links among environment, postconflict/postdisaster response, and peacebuilding. We are building a consortium that brings together key actors from among three types of organizations: first responders, conservations groups, and crisis-management/peacebuilding organizations— each of which has a different foundation of experience with these linkages.



*Girl in Angola refugee camp.
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Second, we will use the consortium and the network it provides to generate and disseminate a series of products and approaches—including documented case studies and a collaborative network with dedicated website—that will make it possible for practitioners to incorporate sustainability considerations more fully and effectively in post-conflict and post-disaster work.

Third, we seek to institutionalize an integrated approach and thus are laying the foundation for a training of trainers (TOT) program on green recovery and reconstruction, with particular emphasis on developing a post-conflict training module to complement the Green Recovery and Reconstruction Toolkit (GRRT) developed by the World Wildlife Fund and the American Red Cross.

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