Climate Change and Conflict in Ghana
CDA Collaborative Learning Projects with Chemonics International

CASE STUDY

Investigating growing concerns surrounding climate change and conflict in Ghana

climate impacts and specific vulnerabilities

- Rising temperatures and erratic precipitation in northern Ghana - as well as resultant wildfires, rising sea levels, and flooding across the country - negatively impact livelihoods, food security, and poverty reduction strategies.
- Rural-to-urban migration from north to south increases pressures on urban centers while leaving urban communities more vulnerable to climate change. Many of these settlements are built in locations vulnerable to waterborne diseases and climate impacts, including flooding and sea level rise.
- Diminishing agricultural returns in northern Ghana due to intense droughts result in the growth of legal and illegal mining, negatively impacting environmental health.
- Droughts aggravate women’s household labor and impact gender-based violence. The shortage of land and water resources significantly impacts the livelihoods, productivity, learning, and health of women and girls, exacerbating existing gender-based discrimination.

Gbedisaka, 2022
Peterson, 2013
CARE-CCAFS 2014
key driving factors of conflict + relationships to climate impacts

- In the absence of well-established land-use regimes and water rights, long-standing conflicts between farmers and herders over land and water resources have intensified as climate change diminishes the quantity and quality of pasture, farmland, and freshwater resources. Conflicts are also being politicized along ethnic lines.
- Increased land and water scarcity further enhance the chiefs' importance in economic decision-making, increasing competition for these leadership positions.
- Climate change exacerbates conflicts between mining companies and mining communities, and between small-scale and industrial mining companies, over land use, environmental pollution, and compensation.
- The lack of low-skill and agricultural jobs leaves many young people with few income opportunities beyond resorting to criminal activities.
- Infrastructure development, dams in particular, used to mitigate the effects of droughts and boost hydropower has become enmeshed in localized conflicts.

factors for climate resilience

- On a communal level, traditional knowledge is key to mitigating climate impacts on ecosystem services.
- The Akan use a farming and climate mitigation strategy to create a fire line between the farm and surrounding bushes to prevent the spread of fire during the burning stage.
- The Akan also use sustainable farming methods to clear the land without burning, using the decomposed material from bushes as organic fertilizer for crops.

factors for peace and social cohesion

- Ghana has shown its commitment to regional stability by providing refuge to a considerable number of individuals fleeing conflict in neighboring West African countries.
- In the north, state agencies, grassroots organizations, and intergovernmental organizations actively work to address drivers and humanitarian consequences of violent extremism from neighboring countries.
- The government has established national bodies for conflict prevention and resolution and has integrated formal and informal conflict management systems.
- National conflict management mechanisms are complemented by the vibrant role of civil society organizations in promoting sustainable peace by addressing the root causes of conflict.
- Access to justice is prioritized, even for poor and vulnerable communities.