

A photograph of a man and a woman cooking together. The man, on the left, wears a black Reebok cap and a grey and yellow patterned shirt. He is using a spoon to stir food in a large metal pot. The woman, on the right, is wearing a yellow shirt and has a young child sleeping on her back. The child is wearing a pink shirt. The background is a blurred indoor setting with vertical light sources.

FOOD SECURITY AND PEACEBUILDING:

**DYNAMICS AND
INTERRELATIONSHIPS**

**FOOD SECURITY, CONFLICT
AND PEACE PROGRAMME**



This document of the Food Security, Conflict and Peace Programme of Action Against Hunger was made possible

With the support of:



Funded by
European Union
Humanitarian Aid



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NAZIOARTERKO LANKIDETZA ETA GARAPENARI BURUZKO IKASKETA INSTITUTUA



Pontificia Universidad
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Bogotá

We thank all the individuals and institutions that have participated in the process.

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Bogotá/Madrid
January de 2025

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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 identification of armed conflict as a central factor in generating food insecurity is a well-documented and widely accepted fact. This relationship can be traced through numerous global studies and through data from the Global Report on Food Crises, which consistently shows conflict as the main driver of hunger crises, affecting more than 135 million people worldwide.

A recent milestone in recognizing the link between food security, conflict and peace is UN Security Council Resolution 2417 (2018), which explicitly prohibits the use of hunger as a weapon of war and emphasizes the need to “break the vicious circle between armed conflict and food insecurity,” reiterating the primary responsibility of food security in maintaining international peace and security.

As a result of this growing global attention to the relationship between armed conflict and food insecurity, many actors have recently turned to exploring the potential contribution of food security interventions to peacebuilding. This perspective aligns with the Triple Nexus approach, which seeks greater interlinkage and synergy between humanitarian action, development cooperation, and peacebuilding.

However, there remains a lack of analytical frameworks that deepen the understanding of causal relationships among food security, conflict, and peacebuilding. In addition, multiple dilemmas, nuances, and contextual variables make this relationship difficult to operationalize — further compounded by methodological challenges in data collection and analysis in complex, volatile environments.

To contribute to these debates on the relationship between food security, conflict and peace, this document has been developed methodologically not only from existing literature and research on the subject, but also from the practical experience and lessons learned by Action Against Hunger as a humanitarian organization implementing programs in food-insecure and conflict-affected contexts around the world. Furthermore, this reflection represents an evolution of the “Hunger and Conflict” project, building upon the Monitor and Evaluate Food Insecurity in Conflict (MEFIC) methodology, developed jointly with the Hegoa Institute of the University of the Basque Country and supported by the Basque Agency for Development Cooperation.

The core objective of this document is to explore the different relationships between food security and peacebuilding — one of the least developed areas within the broader reflection on food security, conflict and peace. It examines how the field of food security can serve as a platform for peacebuilding efforts, as well as the bidirectional relationship that can occur before, during, and after conflict.

Through these intersecting perspectives between food security and peace, Action Against Hunger seeks to open new debates, narratives and proposals, broadening global reflection and intervention — not only in conflict-affected areas but also in post-conflict and reconciliation contexts.

Food security thus becomes, without a doubt, a central vehicle for the material and relational transformations necessary to achieve sustainable wellbeing for populations and territories, laying the foundations for lasting and resilient peace across nations, communities, and peoples.



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 livelihoods and 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

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.”*¹ 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 economic diversity and strategies, particularly under crisis conditions (conflict / violence or peacebuilding).

Figure 1. Capitals related to Livelihoods — Source: Frank Ellis, *Rural Livelihoods and Diversity in Developing Countries*, Oxford University Press, 2000

PHYSICAL CAPITAL

All assets related to economic production, including facilities, channels, machinery, roads, among others.

NATURAL CAPITAL

Related to biological and water resources, among others, which constitute a means of subsistence for communities and individuals.

HUMAN CAPITAL

Related to the combination of factors such as education, skills, and health of communities, households, and individuals.

SOCIAL CAPITAL

Broader social and political claims that individuals and households can make by virtue of their membership in social groups with varying degrees of inclusion in society at large.

FINANCIAL CAPITAL

Refers to the monetary or value resources that a household or individual has at their disposal, which they can exchange or store.

Source: Ellis (2000)

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.”*²

It is worth noting that food security is a relative concept—it can exist to greater or lesser degrees—

¹ Frank Ellis, *Rural Livelihoods and Diversity in Developing Countries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)

² 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.

and its dynamics can change over time³. 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 security⁴:

- **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 framework⁵:

- **Agency:** the capacity of individuals or groups to make their own decisions about what food is 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)⁶.

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 actors⁷.

³ Pérez de Armiño, Karlos (2000) "Seguridad Alimentaria" en *Diccionario de Acción Humanitaria y Cooperación al Desarrollo* (Barcelona: Icaria Editorial y Hegoa, 2000)..

⁴ FAO, FIDA, Unicef, WFP y OMS, *El estado de la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición en el mundo 2024*.

⁵ 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>

⁶ 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>.

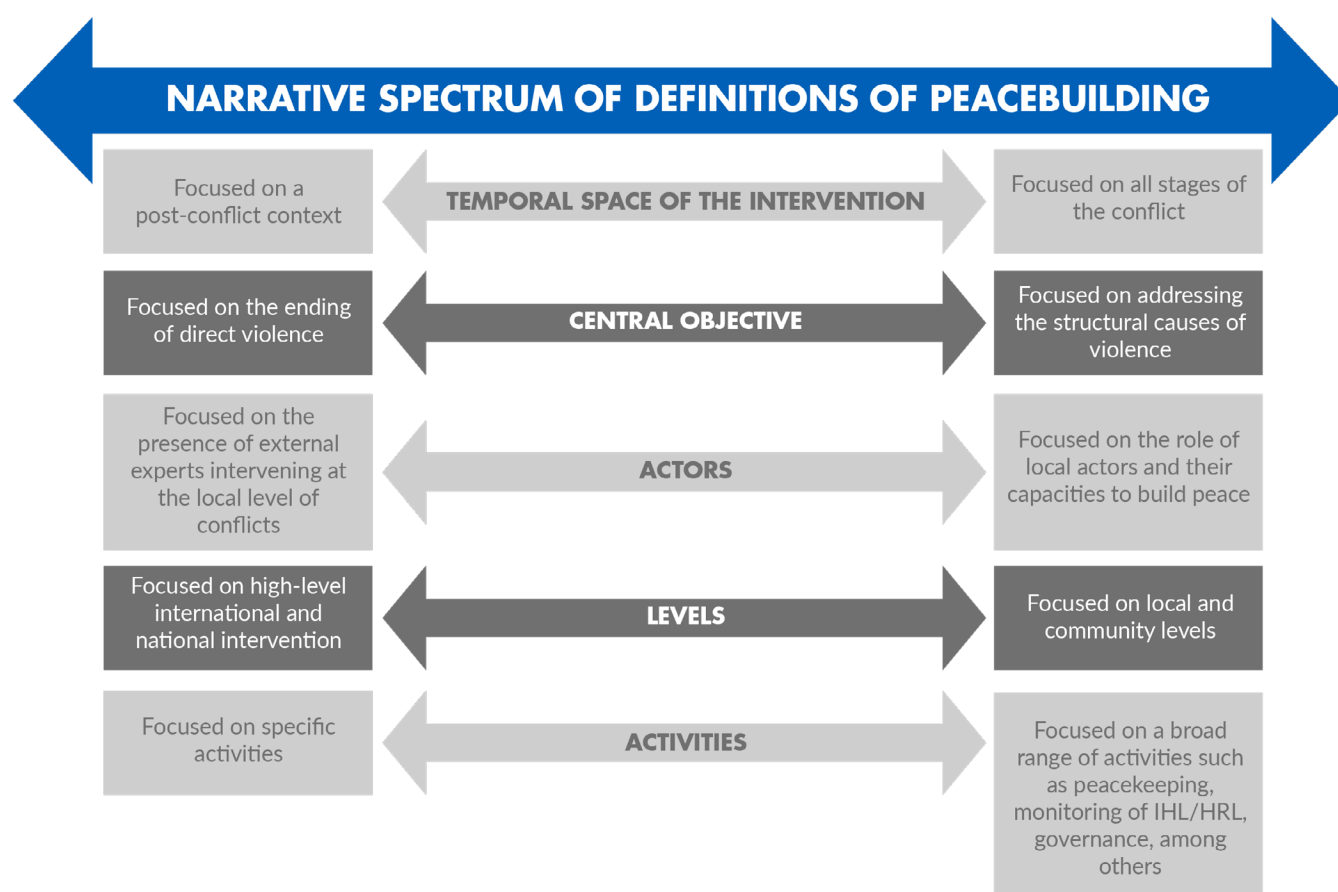
⁷ For more on this topic (anthropology of food) see: Sidney W. Mintz y Christine M. Du Bois, "The Anthropology of Food and Eating", *Annual Review Anthropology* 31 (2022): 99-119.



Peacebuilding refers to the processes aimed at creating peaceful relations in societies affected by conflict or high tension. Although it is widely used by governments, international organizations, academia and communities, it remains difficult to define clearly.

This is because peacebuilding includes a wide range of approaches that vary across contexts and evolve over time, depending on the timing of interventions, their goals, the actors involved, and the security perspectives applied⁸.

Figure 1. Spectrum of peacebuilding definitions



Elaboration: authors; adapted from Shirch, 2008

⁸ Ellis, *Rural livelihoods and diversity in developing countries*

Broadly, there are two main ways of understanding peacebuilding. The first emphasizes efforts led mainly by external actors and focuses on ending violence, strengthening institutions and promoting economic growth, what is often called **negative peace**. The second adopts a more local perspective, prioritizing community initiatives, civil society participation and the transformation of structural causes of conflict—associated with **positive peace**. In practice, organizations and actors usually position themselves somewhere between these two ends of the spectrum, depending on their mandates and the characteristics of each context.

Within this diversity, the idea of **strategic peacebuilding** seeks to bring different approaches together. It recognises that building peace is complex and becomes strategic when actors, resources and methods are coordinated to address several long-term challenges at once. As Lederach notes, strategic peacebuilding requires designing initiatives that maximize constructive change within complex environments. This is crucial given how deeply contextual armed conflicts are, which makes it necessary to adapt frameworks to the specific dynamics, narratives and needs of each territory⁹.

The **Kroc Institute's definition**¹⁰ illustrates this comprehensive vision. It describes peacebuilding as the development of constructive relationships between people and groups across social, political, ethnic or cultural divides. This definition should be understood as practical and adaptable, and it highlights five key elements.

First, peace building is fundamentally about **relationships**; building trust and constructive connections among actors is essential for any peace process. Second, it stresses the need to transform **structural conditions**, recognizing that violence persists when its root causes are not addressed. Third, it sees peacebuilding as a **long-term and continuous process**, taking place before, during and after armed conflict.

Fourth, strategic peacebuilding requires working across **multiple levels**—local, national and

Frame 1. Peacebuilding definition

"Peacebuilding is the development of constructive personal, group and political relationships across ethnic, religious, class, national and racial boundaries. Its objective is to resolve injustice non-violently and to transform the structural conditions that generate deadly conflicts. Peacebuilding may include conflict prevention, conflict management, conflict resolution and transformation, and post-conflict reconciliation."

Peacebuilding becomes strategic when it functions in the long term and at all levels of society to establish and maintain relationships between people at the local and global levels (...) it connects people and groups 'on the ground' (community and religious groups, grassroots organisations, etc.) with policymakers and powerholders (governments, international organisations, companies, banks, etc.).

Its objective is not only to resolve conflicts, but to build societies, institutions, policies and relationships that are better able to sustain peace and justice. Strategic peacebuilders address issues of human rights, economic prosperity and environmental sustainability, in addition to violence."

Kroc Institute

⁹ Lederach, J., y S. Appleby. «Strategic Peace Building: an overview». En *Strategies of Peace. Transforming Conflict in a Violent World*, 2010.

¹⁰ Lederach, J., y Manfield. *Strategic Peacebuilding*. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, 2008.

international—connecting actors who can contribute differently to shared goals. Fifth, establishes the creation of societies that are more resilient to various crises or shocks that may arise. And sixth, it calls for a **systemic approach**, acknowledging that peace is shaped by broader social, cultural, environmental and institutional factors.

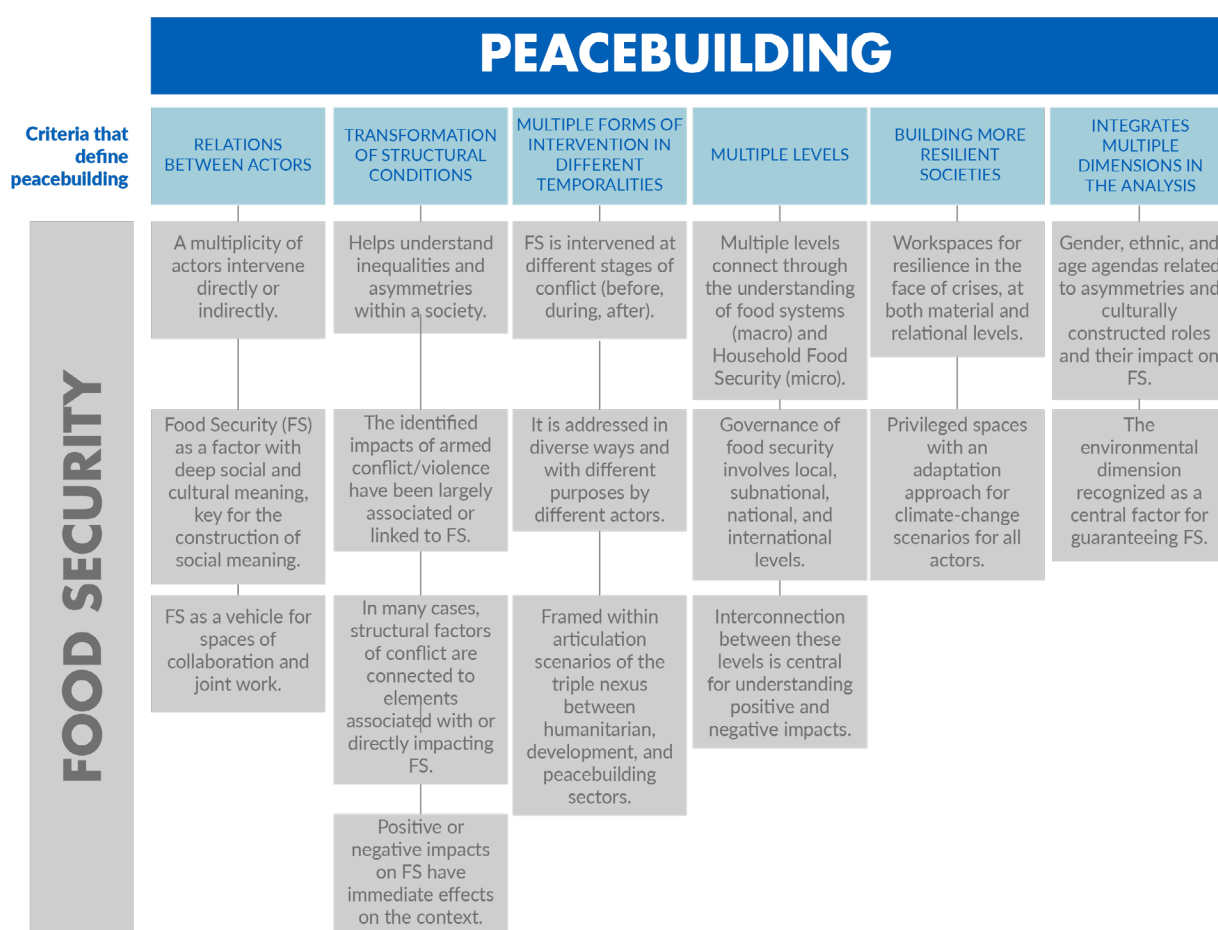
In summary, peacebuilding is a broad and multi-layered concept. It brings together different perspectives, operates across several levels and fields of action, and places strong emphasis on building relationships between groups and individuals as the foundation for sustainable peace.



Why can food security be an attractive space for peacebuilding? A central argument, based on the definition of peacebuilding presented earlier, is that food security is a broad field in which multiple actors, agendas, interventions and temporalities intersect.

Because of this, it becomes a fertile ground for developing relationships and joint action. The six (6) previously described peacebuilding criteria intersect closely with different aspects of food security.

Figure 2. Peacebuilding criteria from a food security perspective



Authors' elaboration

RELATIONSHIPS

Food security, understood beyond its nutritional and material dimensions, encompasses a broad social and cultural sphere. Food is not only a resource but also a vehicle of identity, memory and collective meaning, shaping how individuals and groups relate to each other. Because food systems involve production, access, consumption and exchange, they naturally bring together diverse actors: public institutions, local authorities, private sector actors linked to value chains, communities, producer organizations and civil society. Each of these actors plays a role in food dynamics, making the field of food security a relational arena capable of fostering dialogue and cooperation.

In peace-building contexts, this relational dimension becomes particularly relevant. Food security can offer neutral and practical grounds on which actors with historically opposing positions may engage through shared priorities related to livelihoods, nutrition or access to resources. Initiatives that strengthen production, rehabilitate infrastructure, improve market access or facilitate community-based management of natural resources create opportunities for interaction that can reduce mistrust, rebuild communication channels and generate incremental conditions for coexistence.

STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION

The material dimension of food security also makes it central to peacebuilding. Conflicts often result in the destruction of livelihoods, the abandonment of productive land, disruptions in supply chains and weakened institutional capacities to guarantee availability, access, utilization and stability. These impacts unevenly affect households, often reinforcing pre-existing inequalities that can fuel resentment and hinder long-term peace processes. Interventions in food security—such as supporting agricultural recovery, strengthening value chains, improving income opportunities or rehabilitating critical infrastructure—help address structural issues that often underlie conflict dynamics.

Moreover, food security is closely linked to the structural transformations required for sustainable peace. Unequal access to land, water, markets or state services are common points of tension in many conflict-affected territories. By addressing these

asymmetries through inclusive and context-sensitive interventions, food security initiatives can contribute to reshaping power relations, fostering more equitable resource distribution and strengthening local governance systems.

LONG-TERM AND CONTINUOUS PROCESS

Food security interventions occur across multiple temporal stages. Before conflict escalates, food insecurity may act as an early warning indicator, reflecting deteriorating conditions or rising tensions. During conflict, emergency food assistance helps prevent negative coping strategies, displacement or heightened humanitarian impact. After conflict, restoring food production, rehabilitating supply chains and supporting market reactivation become essential components of recovery, return and reintegration. This continuity across temporalities makes food security a transversal and necessary field throughout the entire conflict–peace cycle.

MULTIPLE LEVELS

In addition, the multi-level nature of food security aligns with the logic of peacebuilding. While food security is experienced at the household level, it is shaped by national and international decisions. Policies, resource allocation, institutional capacities and economic dynamics all influence local realities. Food security thus requires coordination across levels of governance, creating opportunities for dialogue and alignment between local actors, national institutions and international partners.

SYSTEMIC APPROACH

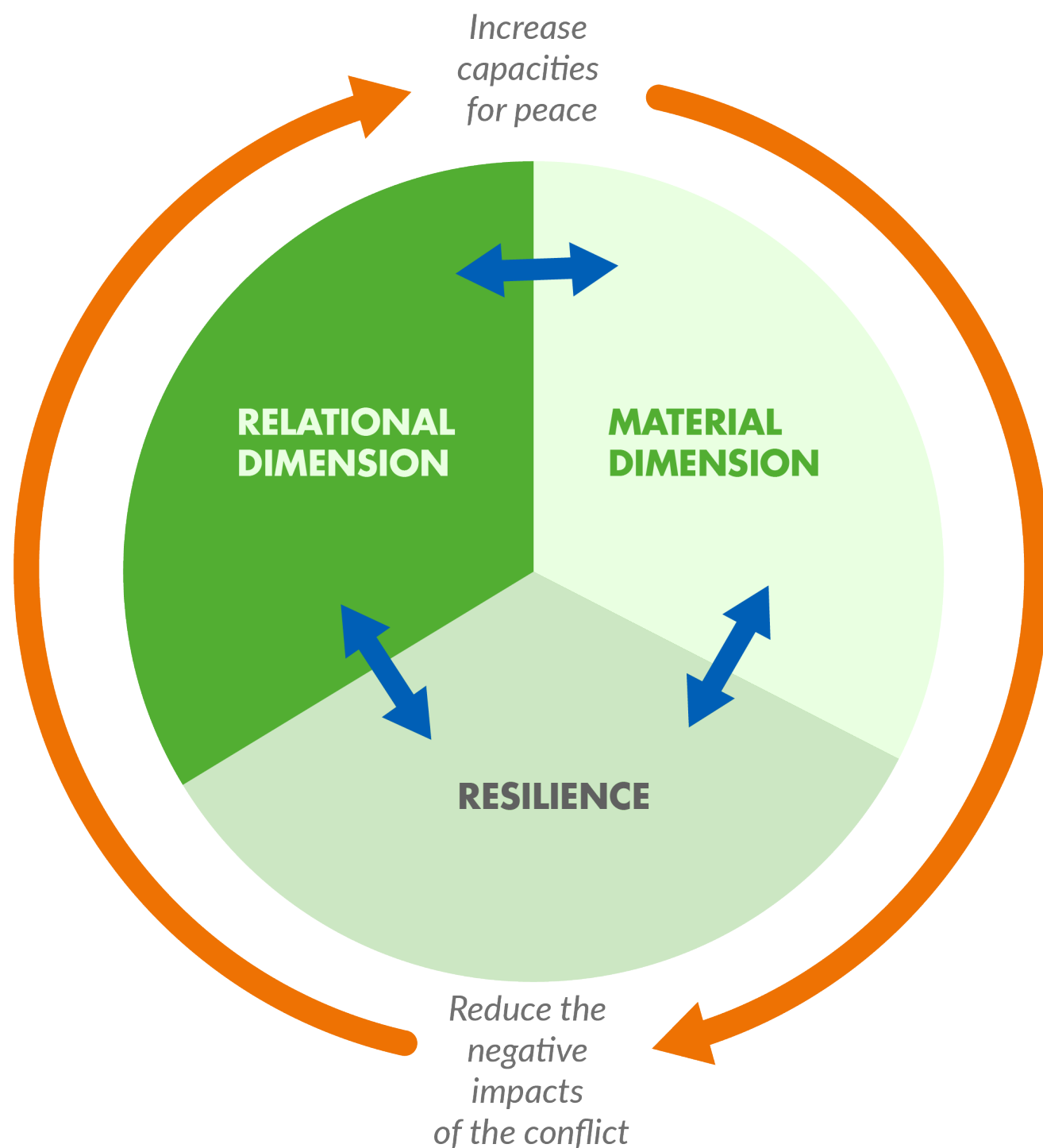
Finally, food security demands a systemic approach, recognizing that it interacts with environmental, cultural, social and institutional dimensions. Armed conflicts alter ecosystems, reduce labor availability, affect market dynamics and transform social relations. Food security interventions must therefore consider climate variability, environmental degradation, cultural food practices, gender roles, social norms and institutional capacities. By engaging in this complexity, food security contributes to strengthening community resilience and building adaptive capacities—elements

necessary for sustainable peace.

Summing up these six criteria, the contribution of food security to peacebuilding can be understood through three interconnected dimensions: **the relational, the**

material, and resilience. Each dimension reflects a different way in which food security interacts with conflict dynamics and with the conditions necessary for peace

Figure 3. Dimensions of food security's contribution to peace



Authors' elaboration

RELATIONAL DIMENSION

The relational dimension highlights how food security creates spaces that enable constructive interaction among actors. Food systems—by their very nature—require coordination, negotiation and communication between producers, consumers, local authorities, traders, community organizations and institutions. In contexts affected by armed conflict, these interactions may have been severely restricted or distorted by mistrust, fear or violence.

Food security interventions can help rebuild these relationships. Community-based agricultural initiatives, joint management of water or productive resources, market revitalization processes, or collaborative food distribution mechanisms create shared spaces where former adversaries or socially fragmented groups can work toward common goals. These initiatives can gradually reduce tensions, rebuild social cohesion and open pathways for dialogue.

Furthermore, food has cultural and symbolic value. Shared practices around food—production, cooking, exchange or consumption—can contribute to rebuilding social ties, recovering community identity and strengthening collective narratives. This dimension is essential because peacebuilding is not only about institutions or policies; it is also about restoring trust, reciprocity and social connection.

MATERIAL DIMENSION

The material dimension centers on the tangible contributions of food security and livelihoods to peacebuilding. Armed conflicts generate profound material impacts: destruction of land, crops and infrastructure; reduced access to markets; loss of income and assets; and disruptions in the availability, access, utilizations and stability of food security.

Food security interventions directly address these impacts by supporting the recovery of livelihoods, rehabilitating productive infrastructure, strengthening value chains, or improving market access. By doing so, they help reduce vulnerabilities and mitigate conditions that may exacerbate conflict. Addressing structural inequities—such as unequal access to land, water or economic opportunities—also contributes to reducing sources of tension that can undermine long-term peace.

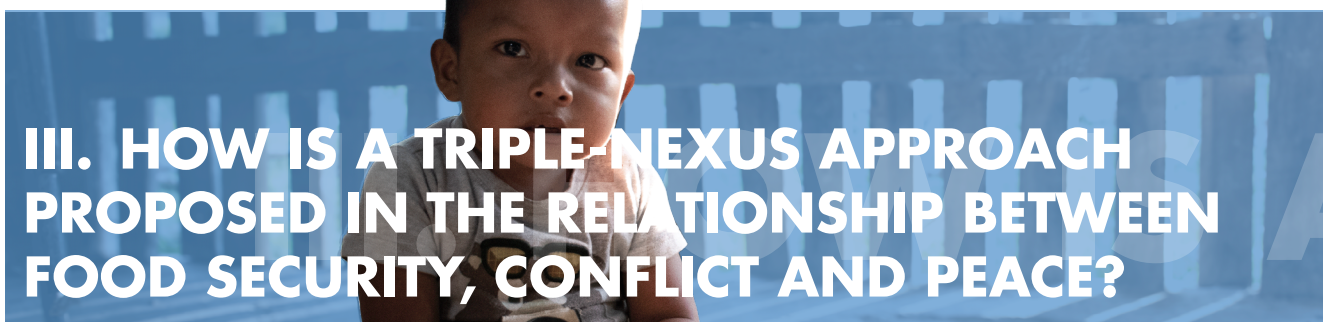
Material improvements are essential not only for household wellbeing but also for rebuilding territorial economies, supporting reintegration processes and facilitating the return of displaced populations. These improvements can lay the foundation for medium- and long-term development processes that contribute to stability.

RESILIENCE DIMENSION

The resilience dimension focuses on strengthening the capacities of households, communities and institutions to withstand shocks and reduce the risks of conflict recurrence. Resilience in food security integrates both material and relational elements: access to diversified livelihoods, improved natural resource management, community organization, strengthened social networks and adaptive strategies to face environmental, economic or security shocks.

By enhancing resilience, food security interventions help communities cope with crisis situations without resorting to harmful coping strategies that may worsen conflict dynamics. Strengthening resilience also supports transitions toward stability by enabling communities to adapt to changing conditions—such as climate impacts, market fluctuations or new governance arrangements—without falling into cycles of renewed violence or extreme vulnerability.

Resilience is therefore not only about surviving shocks but about transforming the underlying conditions that generate vulnerability, allowing societies to sustain peace over time.



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

Understanding peace within the relationship between food security, conflict and peacebuilding requires recognizing that peace itself is a deeply contextual, and sometimes problematic, concept. While analytical frameworks often distinguish between positive and negative peace, the lived meaning of peace in each territory is shaped by local narratives, historical memory, political agendas and community expectations. Peace is not a neutral or universally agreed concept; rather, it is interpreted, contested and sometimes instrumentalized by different actors within the same context.

Because of this, peace introduces tensions and dilemmas that directly affect humanitarian, development and peacebuilding interventions. In many territories, the very idea of peace may be associated with past agreements that failed, promises that were not fulfilled, or processes perceived as benefiting only certain groups. In other cases, peace may be framed by powerful actors—state or non-state—in ways that align with their political interests or territorial control. These dynamics influence how population perceive external interventions, including those related to food security.

This contextual complexity poses a challenge for the humanitarian sector, which is guided by principles such as neutrality, humanity, impartiality and independence. Humanitarian actors must avoid being identified with political agendas or actors claiming to represent “peace.” Any misinterpretation of their intentions can jeopardize their access to communities, affect their operational safety and undermine trust with the population. For this reason, some humanitarian actors may distance themselves from explicit peace-building narratives, even when their actions implicitly contribute to reducing suffering and preventing further deterioration of conflict dynamics.

However, it is also important to recognize that humanitarian interventions inevitably interact with peacebuilding processes, even if not intentionally. Humanitarian assistance can reduce tensions by preventing competition over scarce resources, mitigating the impact of violence on livelihoods and supporting basic conditions for coexistence. Measures that protect food security—such as safeguarding access to markets, ensuring mobility for food production or securing access to clean water—contribute indirectly to preserving social fabric and preventing further escalation of violence. Thus, humanitarian action often becomes a foundation for future peacebuilding efforts, even when it operates at a distance from political processes.

A second key tension arises from the divergence between official peace narratives and the perspectives of communities or other social actors. National governments or international organizations may promote peace frameworks based on political agreements, institutional reforms or macroeconomic strategies. Meanwhile, local populations may interpret peace through their daily experiences: safety on roads, the ability to work on their land without fear, access to markets, or the absence of extortion. From a food security perspective, peace may be understood in terms of stable access to land, water, seeds, income opportunities and mobility—material and relational conditions that have a direct impact on livelihoods.

Recognizing these different interpretations is fundamental. Peacebuilding efforts that do not align with the lived realities and priorities of the communities may fail to generate trust or sustained engagement. Food security, precisely because of its concreteness and centrality to survival, often becomes a more accessible and less politicized entry point to address issues of wellbeing and stability.

It allows organizations to work in ways that are perceived as relevant and legitimate by communities, while still contributing to processes that can support peace outcomes.

Food security itself is also subject to contextual tensions. Debates around food sovereignty, autonomy, access to natural resources or the cultural meaning of food systems often intensify in conflict and post-conflict settings. Food may be used as a bargaining tool, a symbol of resistance or an instrument of domination depending on the actors involved. In armed conflicts, food assistance may risk being manipulated or appropriated by armed groups, creating ethical dilemmas and operational risks. In post-conflict settings, discussions about land restitution, agricultural reform or market regulation may reopen old disputes and generate new tensions.

For these reasons, a deep understanding of the context—its narratives, dynamics, actors and perceptions—is essential for both analysis and intervention. Identifying how peace is interpreted, who defines it, and how food security relates to these interpretations can help organizations better anticipate risks and leverage opportunities. This contextual reading is also crucial for designing conflict-sensitive interventions that strengthen local capacities, reduce vulnerabilities and reinforce positive transformations without exacerbating existing tensions.

Peace, therefore, must be approached as a context-dependent, dynamic and relational construct. It cannot be taken as a static condition or an objective uniformly understood by all actors. Recognizing the inevitability of this contextual dimension allows food security interventions to better align with the needs, expectations and realities of communities, while reducing the risks associated with political perceptions and misinterpretations.



Understanding the relationship between food security and peace requires moving beyond a unidirectional perspective in which food security simply contributes to peace. Instead, it is essential to adopt a bidirectional approach, recognizing that food security and peacebuilding mutually influence one another within broader contextual, institutional and socio-economic dynamics. This bidirectional relationship reflects the interdependence between material conditions, social interactions and political processes that shape both conflict and peace.

The first element in this relationship is the central role of context. What food security represents, how peace is interpreted, and the mechanisms through which communities rebuild their livelihoods all depend on historical trajectories, territorial dynamics and the presence or absence of institutions. Food security and peacebuilding do not operate in isolation; they are embedded within specific environments that condition their interaction. These contextual factors—such as institutional trust, economic inequalities, cultural norms or patterns of territorial control—shape how each dimension influences the other.

Within this relationship, food security can contribute to peacebuilding through multiple ways. On a material level, food security interventions support the reactivation of livelihoods, the rehabilitation of productive capacities and the restoration of essential services that are often necessary to stabilize territories affected by armed conflict. In many contexts, the destruction of productive land, the disruption of supply chains, and the loss of income severely undermine household wellbeing and can perpetuate grievances that hinder peace efforts. By addressing these material deficits, food security interventions help lay the foundation for future political and social stability.

Food security also supports peace in the post-conflict phase, when the urgent needs of populations remain high. Even after the cessation of direct violence, communities often face prolonged food insecurity due to lost assets, reduced coping capacities, abandoned farmland or land contamination by explosive remnants. Food assistance and livelihood recovery initiatives in these contexts serve as critical mechanisms for preventing renewed displacement, enabling safe returns, facilitating reintegration processes and reducing the risk of social fragmentation. These interventions address immediate needs while helping rebuild the economic and social conditions necessary for sustainable peace.

Food security is also relevant before and during conflict. Prior to conflict escalation, deteriorating food security can reflect growing tensions, rising insecurity, economic disruption or climate-related stress. During conflict, attacks against food systems—cropland destruction, market closures, movement restrictions or blockades—may trigger displacement or generate acute humanitarian needs. Violence often manifests directly in the four dimensions of food security: availability, access, utilizations and stability. In these settings, protecting food security helps prevent negative coping strategies, asset depletion and deepening instability.

At the same time, peacebuilding processes generate conditions that can enable improvements in food security. The reduction of violence—or transitional security arrangements—can facilitate mobility, trade, market reactivation, return to productive activities and safe access to natural resources. These improvements enhance availability and access to food, reduce the risks of production, and create opportunities for

communities to invest in their livelihoods. Peace, even if partial or imperfect, may also reduce the costs associated with insecurity, allowing households to diversify their income sources, rebuild productive infrastructure and strengthen social networks.

Peacebuilding is also essential for enabling reforms that have direct effects on food security. Legal measures related to land restitution, resource management, market regulation, participation and access to state services tend to be more politically feasible in post-conflict contexts. These reforms can contribute to reducing structural inequalities that affect food security, especially in rural areas where tensions over land or natural resources have historically fueled conflict. Such transformations can strengthen territorial governance and improve the distribution of opportunities and resources.

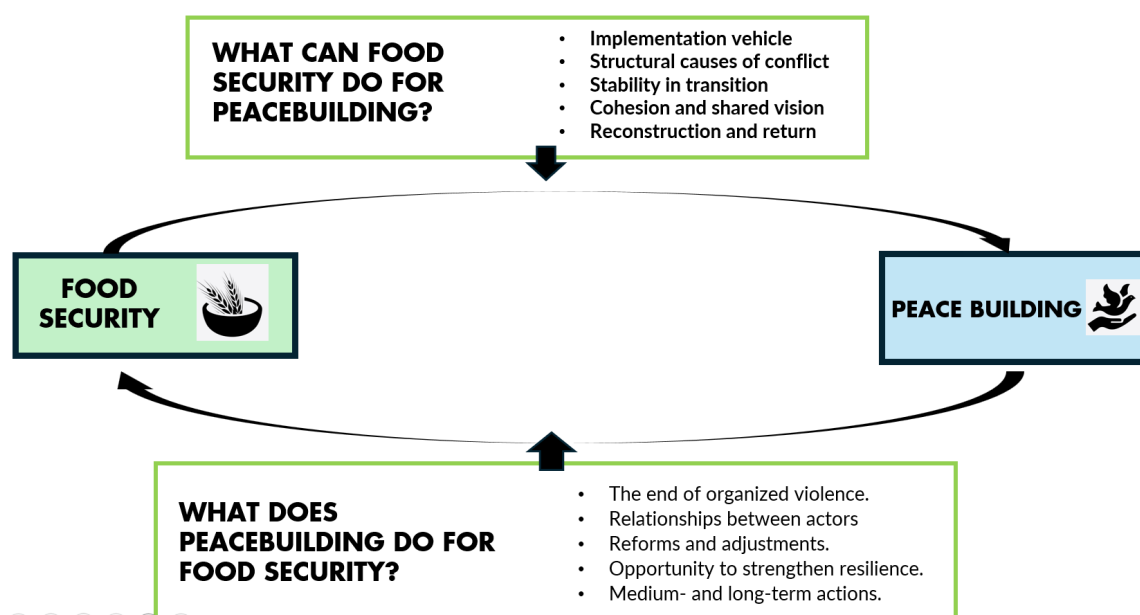
Additionally, peacebuilding and food security interact around the issue of resilience. Peace processes that reduce violence and strengthen institutions create opportunities for communities to adapt to environmental, economic and social changes. This is particularly relevant in the face of climate variability, which disproportionately affects food security in conflict-affected populations. Adaptation strategies—such as climate-smart agriculture, community-based natural resource management and improved risk-mitigation systems—become more viable when

conflict intensity decreases and when institutions begin to regain or strengthen their capacity to operate.

The bidirectional relationship between food security and peacebuilding also reflects the importance of political and social participation. In many territories, accessing food, land or agricultural markets requires negotiation with different actors, including local authorities, community leaders or informal power structures. Peacebuilding processes that strengthen inclusive governance, accountability and participation create more predictable and equitable conditions for food production and distribution. Improved governance, in turn, enhances trust in institutions and reduces the likelihood of disputes escalating into conflict.

In summary, food security and peacebuilding are part of a mutually reinforcing cycle. Food security contributes to stabilization, reduces structural drivers of conflict and supports the recovery of livelihoods, while peacebuilding opens opportunities for sustainable improvements in food systems, social relations and territorial governance. Recognizing this bidirectional relationship allows interventions to be better designed, more contextually relevant and more sensitive to the dynamic nature of conflict and peace processes.

FOOD SECURITY AND PEACE: A TWO-WAY RELATIONSHIP



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSION

The protection and strengthening of food security is a key vehicle for advancing peacebuilding, given its impact on the relational, material and resilience dimensions that shape wellbeing in diverse contexts. Food security interventions influence not only the immediate conditions of survival but also the deeper structural and social dynamics that enable or hinder peace.

The relational dimension of food security constitutes a significant opportunity for peacebuilding. By bringing together actors who interact through food systems—producers, communities, institutions, market food security interventions create spaces that can foster dialogue, rebuild trust and promote coexistence. Recognizing and strengthening this relational potential is essential for designing interventions aligned with contextual dynamics and local narratives.

Working on food security through a peacebuilding lens also represents an investment in strengthening resilience. This contributes both to reducing the escalation of armed conflict and to preventing its re-emergence in transitional settings. By enhancing adaptive capacity and reducing vulnerability to shocks, food security becomes an enabling factor for sustaining peace over time.

From a material perspective, addressing food security in conflict-affected territories helps tackle structural conditions that underpin many armed conflicts. These include inequalities in access to land, natural resources, markets and essential services. Food security interventions can contribute to building more stable socio-economic environments that support territorial recovery and transition processes.

A bidirectional approach is necessary to understand the relationship between food security and peacebuilding. Food security contributes to peace, but peace also enhances the possibilities for achieving food security. Analyzing this relationship from a contextual perspective is fundamental to understanding how both act as enablers of progress in post-conflict settings, where institutional, economic and social dynamics are undergoing transformation.

Finally, **a peacebuilding approach grounded in food security must integrate multiple levels, actors and types of action.** Only through coordinated and context-sensitive efforts can a pathway toward sustainable and long-lasting peace be established—one that connects material improvements with relational transformations and strengthened resilience across individuals, communities and institutions

RECOMENDACIONES

TO HUMANITARIAN, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACEBUILDING ORGANISATIONS

- Create and strengthen spaces for internal and external reflection on the definitions and frameworks guiding their intervention around peacebuilding.
- Identify their scope of action within food security and understand their fundamental role in peacebuilding throughout the different phases of conflict (before, during, after).
- Advance in building alliances based on food security as a vehicle for collaboration and engagement with actors at different levels and of different types.

TO STATES

- Establish a connection among the different frameworks, programs and actions related to food security and peacebuilding.
- Strengthen knowledge management and research to adjust interventions based on territorial and population-based differential factors.

TO DONORS

- Increase resources and interventions that link food security and peacebuilding.
- Establish intervention frameworks that allow humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors to articulate their efforts around food security as an operational entry point to the Triple Nexus.



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