



Environmental Dimensions of Sustainable Recovery:

***Learning from Post-conflict and
Disaster Response Experience***

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Expect the Unexpected



The environmental stakes in recovery



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Disasters & Conflicts



Project origins

- Recognized parallels in work on...
 - ... disaster risk reduction and recovery (*WWF/van Breda*)
 - ... post-conflict environmental peacebuilding (*UNEP/Conca*)
- Perceived value of dialogue across communities:
 - Humanitarian action
 - Conservation and ecosystem protection
 - Conflict transformation and peacebuilding



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Project goals

- Bring together individuals willing to share experiences
- Identify lessons learned that have relevance “across the stovepipes”
- Lay a foundation for improved training
- In the process, create a network for learning and improvement

Project overview: activities and outputs

- “Scoping” workshop, December 2012
- “Stakeholder” workshop, June 2013
- “Tools” workshop, April 2014



- White Paper on project themes
- Chapter-length contributions by lead organizations
- Web-based searchable database of existing tools and trainings
- “conflict-smart” GRRT”
- Groundwork for training program: concept, curriculum, partners
- Network of engaged individuals in lead organizations

Project web site:
<http://edspace.american.edu/greentools/>



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Learning from post-conflict and disaster-response experience

Crises, including complex emergencies, war, and natural disaster, create high-stakes choices for environmental governance and natural resource management. If managed properly, natural resources and environmental protection are key elements for disaster risk reduction and recovery of sustainable livelihoods. But if managed poorly, the result can be greater vulnerability to both conflict and disaster. Prospects for sustainable recovery depend on the choices made by governments, impacted communities, and those seeking to help them—starting in the earliest days of response, and continuing as recovery, reconstruction, and redevelopment proceed.

To better understand these choices and help key actors prepare for them, American University and World Wildlife Fund (WWF)

Some core themes

Barriers to incorporating sustainability considerations:

- *distraction*: The “don’t mess with the mission” problem
- *salience*: The “fuzzy bunnies ” problem
- *empowerment*: The “what can I do” problem
- *accountability*: The “that’s not my job” problem

Some core themes

The importance of evidence—but what evidence matters?

- Lives saved; dollars saved; livelihoods sustained
- Ecosystem benefits, peacebuilding benefits?
- Role of both positive and negative examples
- Beyond examples: systematic, rigorous assessment


Some core themes

Trade-offs to be managed:

- Where expertise and responsibility are located—how far ‘outside the fence’ of core competencies
- Balancing the obvious need for better, earlier, and more integrated assessments with the equally obvious need to act rapidly
- Balancing organizational expertise and local participation
- Learning from experience while recognizing elements of the “new normal” (urbanization, protracted crises, climate change)

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To better understand these choices and help key actors prepare for them, American University and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) have formed a collaborative initiative on Sustainable Recovery. Supported by The United States Institute for Peace and American University's School of International Service, the Sustainable Recovery project brings together organizations and individuals active in the fields of humanitarian response, environmental protection, natural resource management, peacebuilding, and conflict transformation. Actors in each of these sectors have useful, experience-based knowledge about what is needed and what works for sustainable recovery. Yet responses are often fragmented and ineffective, and each sector has much to learn from the others as we seek to move toward approaches that integrate the goals of humanitarian effectiveness, environmental sustainability, and conflict sensitivity. By pooling each group's knowledge and experience, we can identify better practices and barriers to implementing them.

The project is producing several products of use for the community of practitioners active in post-conflict and post-disaster settings:

- A consortium of individuals and organizations willing to share knowledge and learn from each other's experiences, launched by a series of workshops held at [American University](#);
- **COMING SOON** A white paper and policy brief summarizing key lessons learned;
- A [searchable database](#) of relevant toolkits, including training courses, guidance notes, handbooks, and standards used for environmental management, conflict sensitivity, and humanitarian response in post-conflict and post-disaster response;
- **COMING SOON** A series of experimental case studies from lead organizations in the fields of environmental protection, humanitarian action, conflict transformation and peacebuilding, reflecting on lessons learned, existing challenges to better practices, and needed innovations.






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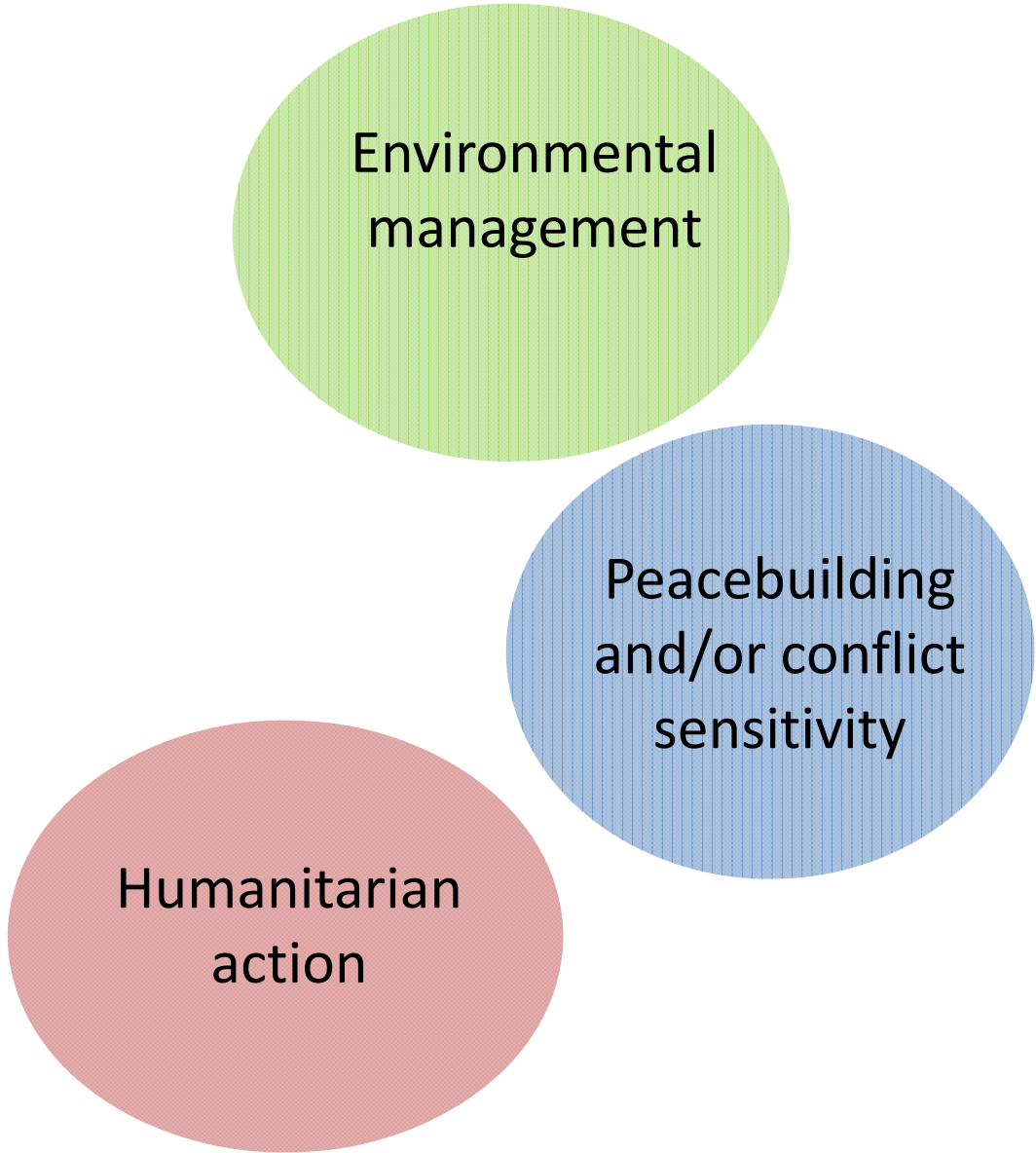
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database:
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- handbooks
- reference guides
- guidance notes
- checklists
- better practices
- self-training courses
- facilitated trainings

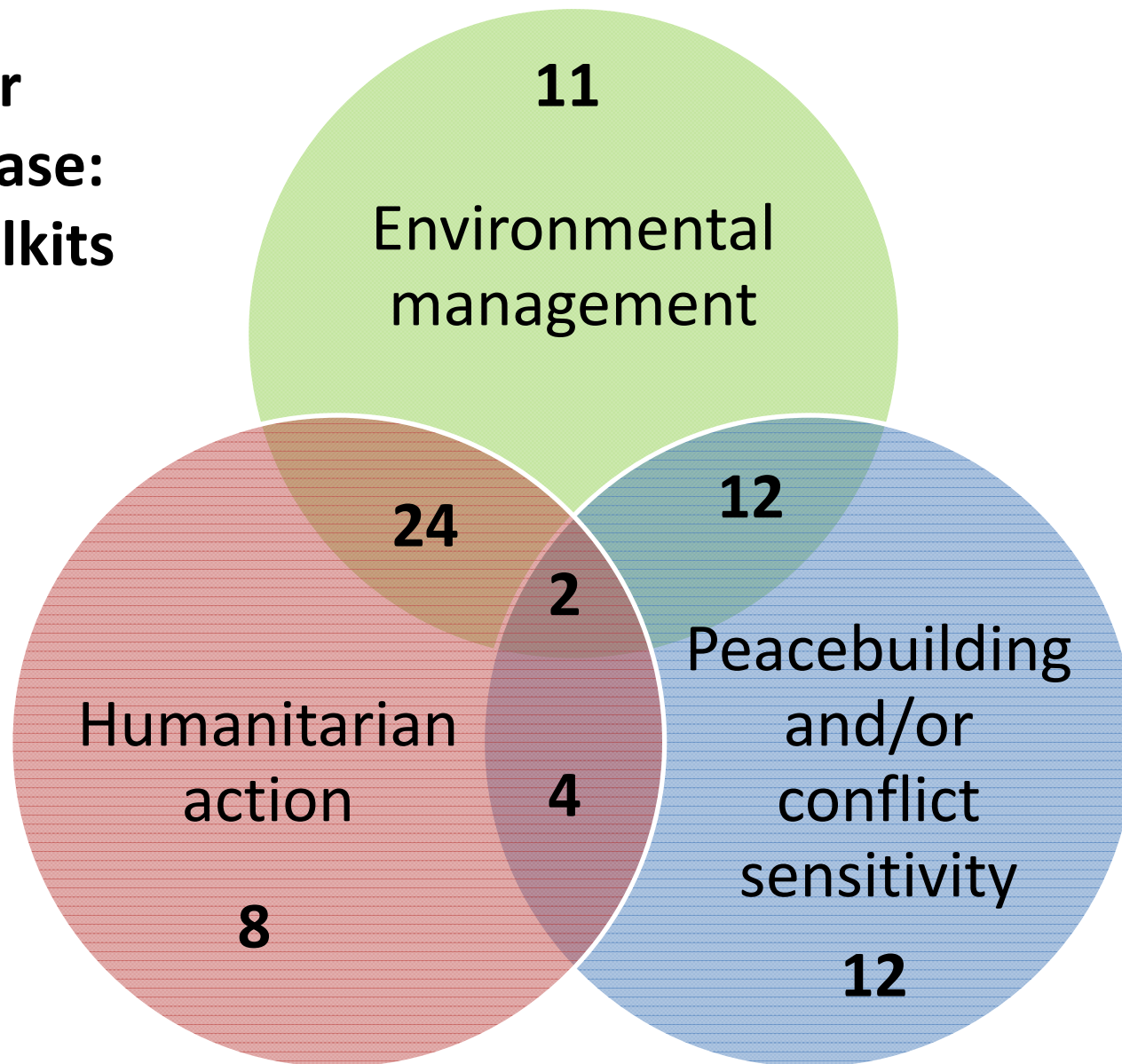


Environmental
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Peacebuilding
and/or conflict
sensitivity

Humanitarian
action

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