Helen Young, Lisa Goldman (Eds.)
Livelihoods, Natural Resources, and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding
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Links between livelihood insecurity, resource scarcity, and warfare have been the subject of academic controversy for several decades. By comparison, little attention has been paid to the role of livelihoods and natural resources in sustaining and strengthening post-conflict peacebuilding efforts. *Livelihoods, Natural Resources, and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding* is a new volume which fills this gap by examining the opportunities and challenges created by post-conflict livelihood and natural resource management worldwide.

The book, edited by Helen Young and Lisa Goldman, is one of a series of six published by Earthscan on issues related to post-conflict peacebuilding and natural resource management. It is an outcome of a joint research programme by the Environmental Law Institute, the UN Environment Programme, the University of Tokyo, and McGill University. The book brings together case studies from an impressive group of contributors in order to explore the opportunities and challenges for peacebuilding that emerge from the use of natural resource-based livelihoods. The case studies, written by over 30 highly diverse practitioners, academics, and experts, cover a geographically wide range of over 20 post-conflict regions worldwide.

In the introductory chapter, the editors argue that a range of factors make it increasingly important for policy debates to focus on the sustainable management of livelihoods. These factors, which are explored in the case studies that follow, include worldwide population growth, the projected consequences of global climate changes, and the growing proportion of rural and even urban populations that are currently dependent on natural resources. The authors argue that livelihoods, which are essential to human needs, can be leveraged to enhance economic recovery and promote peace. The book is divided into four parts with each section contributing to an understanding of the topic's importance from a different perspective.

The chapters in Part One reflect on peacebuilding activities that connect natural resources and livelihoods in conflict-torn regions. Across the case studies in this section, authors argue for the importance of addressing the needs of the most vulnerable populations (often rural) in peacebuilding processes. Post-war situations offer a window of opportunity in which structural inequalities can be addressed as new sustainable livelihoods are created and supported. Different authors show how the neglect of sustainable livelihoods for rural populations has helped to foster contemporary and future conflicts in Afghanistan, Cambodia, and Colombia, as well as in the Karimojong Cluster of Kenya and Uganda.

Innovative approaches to livelihoods are the subject of Part Two which reflects on the opportunities and challenges that emerge from approaches that include the development of transboundary protected areas, ecotourism, youth programmes, and alternative trade chains among other initiatives. Every case study here exemplifies an attempt to recover lost livelihoods after a conflict in order to avoid its endurance or prolongation. The case studies make clear that the re-integration of ex-combatants into society after a conflict represents a key opportunity. War-time skills, such as tracking and remaining self-sufficient in the bush, can be translated into the skills needed for surveying park resources and controlling poaching, for example. When ex-combatants are given work opportunities, they can be incentivised to integrate into a peaceful economy and so contribute to fostering national economic development. The problem of consent-building emerges as the major challenge to the development of innovative livelihood approaches because it is very difficult to persuade stakeholders with different priorities to act jointly on projects. Once a bridge of understanding is built, however, it can prevent a re-occurrence of conflict.

The five chapters in Part Three demonstrate that the development of new governmental structures that focus on natural resources can promote livelihoods, strengthen local economies, and hence contribute to lasting peace. In the aftermath of a conflict, effective institutions and policies are mostly absent. The authors argue that policies and laws on sustainable resource management should be incorporated into governmental structures if a society is to successfully transition from a conflict economy to a peaceful one. Examples of post-conflict reconstruction from Japan, Afghanistan, Cambodia, Mindanao, and Somalia show how effective strategies can encourage economic growth and livelihood creation through institution- and capacity-building, as well as through policy development.

In the book's final chapter, the editors focus on lessons learnt, and their concluding analysis sketches ideas that can be used across the globe in the future. In particular, they address the use of livelihood analyses as a step towards developing a country's specific reconstruction strategy after a conflict is settled. They also consider whether this kind of an assessment can help the wider national economy to profit from livelihood production systems. The editors claim that livelihood approaches should be central to the discourses of development and poverty reduction, which look set to remain prominent in contemporary and future global politics.

The book contributes to the current debate on why and how the natural environment needs to be included in efforts to restore and sustain peace in war-torn areas. The diversity of the case studies in this volume gives readers opportunities to gain a global overview of the topic as well as to focus on one post-conflict region in particular. There is no core argument that connects each chapter. Instead, the book bundles case studies that relate to similar topics, and the remarkably wide range of case studies it offers allow readers to trace similarities between them. For example, it becomes clear that pastoralists in Kenya and Uganda face similar challenges to pastoralists in Afghanistan: all are being forced to move to foreign lands, and this mobility fosters regional conflict that harms local livelihoods substantially. The collection of these diverse case studies gives the reader the opportunity to enhance their understanding of worldwide problems concerning livelihoods, and the book looks set to become a valuable starting point for further research.

Controversy arises in the book's various discussions about both the prominent place that institution-building has in peacebuilding initiatives and the problematic nature of liberal institutionalism itself. Institution-building in post-conflict states is often encouraged or even accomplished by interventions from the countries of the Global North which justify the rationality of their interventions through recourse to their own understanding of state formation. To reproduce this understanding is to emphasise governmental structures and de-emphasise the importance of local actors in the institution-building process. If the critical discussion of institutionalism was embedded in peacebuilding processes, this could help to ward off misunderstandings that generate negative consequences. The book reveals the highly interesting finding that livelihood approaches have been used for decades but have only more recently been adapted to a wide range of humanitarian, conflict, and post-conflict settings thanks to an increasing awareness of the issues surrounding sustainable development and the management of natural resources. Even where livelihood approaches were not an explicit intervention's goal, they have often contributed substantially to peacebuilding efforts.

In the book's final pages, Young and Goldman focus on conflict analysis and assessment technologies. They argue for a comprehensive strategy that will incorporate livelihood approaches from the beginning of the process. The book would have benefitted from more thoughts on how such a strategy could work and how it might best be developed, monitored, and evaluated. Insights on these key issues are necessary if effective policy is to be formulated. Despite the book's many insights, the book does not resolve the problematic

question that dogs this field of research, that is the question as to why certain initiatives or projects work in some regions but fail in others. More research is needed into the transferability of livelihood peacebuilding initiatives so that they can be successfully implemented elsewhere. A clear understanding of the broader nexus of environment and peace would help in the formulation of this kind of work at governmental or policy level. The book's multifaceted case studies, which shape each of the book's chapters, are nevertheless beneficial in that they enable readers to gain a basic understanding of key issues and can serve as key points of departure for future research.

This edited collection can be highly recommended to anyone who is interested in learning about examples of livelihood and environmental approaches to peacebuilding worldwide. *Livelihoods, Natural Resources, and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding* fills a gap in the literature and deserves to be read by academics and practitioners alike.

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