



IMPACTS OF WATER POLICY ON SOCIAL COHESION

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Excerpts from slides prepared for Water, Peace and Security tailor-made capacity development activities in Iraq. Please attribute authors when using materials.

Natural Resource Management as a peacebuilding tool

- International Alert works with businesses, service providers, national and local governments to ensure that effective and context sensitive management of natural resources, such as water, land, forest but also oil and gas, are factored into development, humanitarian and peacebuilding policy and practice.
- We do this through:
 - research and analysis of the interactions between environment, resource management and conflict issues;
 - providing technical support, training and accompaniment to our local partners;
 - building capacity of communities and local actors and linking them to government;

Key Definitions

- **Social Cohesion** – “Social cohesion is the extent of trust in government and within society and the willingness to participate collectively toward a shared vision of sustainable peace and common development goals”. UNDP
- **Resilience** – “The ability of countries, communities and households to anticipate, adapt to and/or recover from the effects of potentially hazardous occurrences (natural disasters, economic instability, and conflict) in a manner that protects livelihoods, accelerates and sustains recovery, and supports economic and social development”. BOND, Interagency Resilience Working Group

Taking into account impacts on social cohesion

- When making a decision, an actor is never completely neutral or indifferent to the context in which it operates.
- Technical decisions linked to water governance have consequences:
 - On livelihood of different categories of users ;
 - On power relations between different communities ;
 - On the relationship between citizens and those governing them ;

Case study – Flower farming investment in East Africa

- A foreign investor established horticulture farm of 125 ha with the support of authorities.
- The land had been expropriated from local farmers, who received compensation.
- Farmers believed that the farm would provide employment opportunities for youth from the community.
- Local authorities promised community services (drinking water, electricity, irrigation water)
- To date the authorities haven't delivered on their promises.
- The Farm is accused of polluting the water due to careless use of fertilizers and unregulated water discharge into the lake.



Group discussion on environmental and social cohesion impact assessments



- What are the key lessons you pull from the previous presentations ?
- What aspects resonates the most with the context in Iraq ?
- How would you prepare yourself to use such an approach ?