



Entry-Points for Peace-Positive Investments in Northern Kenya's Frontier Markets

Summary of findings and recommendations

July 2024



Report context and scope

This report has been produced by Interpeace's peacebuilding team in Kenya in partnership with its Finance for Peace initiative. It is a pre-feasibility study aimed at providing the first step analysis required to map a potential pipeline of investment approaches that can positively impact peace and conflict dynamics in the north of Kenya and contribute to sustainable development. The study focuses on the counties of Elgeyo Marakwet, Mandera and Marsabit where there has been a legacy of conflict dynamics that have intersected with development needs. The report has three key objectives:

OBJECTIVE 1

Map conflict dynamics in northern Kenya and their impact on development, with a focus on the moderating effects of peacebuilding activities of Interpeace and other peacebuilding actors.

OBJECTIVE 2

Examine how investments in northern Kenya have been impacted by conflict dynamics.

OBJECTIVE 3

Map an early phase set of options for peace-positive investment opportunities in northern Kenya.

Executive summary



The northern region of Kenya has experienced protracted conflicts, underdevelopment and political marginalisation for decades. Recurrent cycles of ethnic conflicts, natural resource-based disputes, election-related and politically inspired violence, international terrorism, cross-border conflicts, (commercialised) cattle rustling, human rights violations by security actors, proliferation of small-arms and light weapons, and competition for resources have stymied the region's growth potential. How development actors and public and private investors engage with these conflict dynamics is crucial. Conflict-insensitive investments can increase disparities, fuel grievances and lead to more violence, which ultimately reduces the sustainability and bankability of the investment.

Yet, peace-responsive investments can help to address drivers of conflict, reduce underlying causes, and strengthen social cohesion, which ultimately will help to reduce risk, make the investments more sustainable and increase the bankability, even if it slightly increases costs in early stages.

This pre-feasibility study has been developed by Interpeace peacebuilding teams in partnership with its Finance for Peace initiative which seeks to support public and private investors to mainstream peacebuilding in their investment approaches. Through an emergent paradigm of Peace Finance, it is possible to reduce risks for communities and investors in fragile and developing markets, while also helping to crowd in more investment, increase certainty and encourage a more sustainable and virtuous cycle of development and peace. This report seeks to apply the Peace Finance lens to the Elgeyo Marakwet, Mandera and Marsabit counties.

Since independence, Kenya has experienced numerous ethnic tensions and violence. This is particularly true in the northern regions, where the interplay of ethnic tensions, political marginalisation and cross-border issues creates a complex web of conflict dynamics. Historical grievances, land and resource disputes, ethnic politics and the marginalisation of certain groups form the core of these conflicts, which have been exacerbated by socio-economic disparities and competition for resources.

Development finance approaches and wider private investment approaches in northern Kenya must be responsive to these complex dynamics. Investments are more likely to be bankable and sustainable if they address not only the immediate needs of the population but also the underlying causes of conflict. This requires a multi-faceted strategy that incorporates peace and climate-responsive measures. Engaging key conflict actors comprehensively is crucial. This includes key ethnic groups, political leaders, security agencies, marginalised community members, formal and informal community networks and local elites. Embedding a more participatory approach to investment approaches is key to ensuring that all voices are heard and that solutions are tailored to the unique needs and realities of each community. By doing so, it is possible to mitigate risks and increase community buy-in.

The impact of conflict in northern Kenya is deeply intertwined with the region's underdevelopment. Prolonged conflicts have significantly affected livelihoods, wellbeing and economic progress. Population displacement caused by conflicts leads to household vulnerabilities and humanitarian crises, with displaced populations often lacking access to essential services. This exacerbates issues such as malnutrition,

disease and mortality risks, and deepens marginalisation and future conflict dynamics. Furthermore, displaced communities also cause an economic strain on host communities, which often leads to tension.

At the same time, conflicts also disrupt social services, including education and healthcare, leading to long-term adverse effects on human capital development and economic growth. Infrastructure damage and insecurity during conflicts limit market access, lead to road closures, discourage local enterprises and cause economic decline, price inflation and loss of employment opportunities. Social division, mistrust and prejudice between ethnic groups and clans further undermine collective action and solidarity necessary for community development. Reduced pastoralist mobility due to conflicts leads to overgrazing, land degradation and reduced access to essential resources. Without redress of conflict, wider economic and development approaches can be undermined and increase risks facing investors.

Meanwhile, the economic opportunities are significant in the north. These counties are endowed with abundant natural and artificial resource production potential, including agriculture, livestock, fisheries, trade, infrastructure, storage and transport, energy, services, manufacturing, mining and tourism, vast open land optimal for large-scale irrigation and agribusiness opportunities. They are strategically located bordering Somalia and Ethiopia, also providing vast cross-border market opportunities. A huge array of untapped resources can be unlocked by sustainable public-private investment opportunities if they can effectively mitigate social and conflict risks. By doing so they may create a cycle of stability, fostering self-reliance, and building long-term prosperity.

The national government, supported by international development institutions, has initiated several multibillion infrastructure projects, such as the Lamu Port - South Sudan - Ethiopia Transport Corridor and the North Eastern Transport Initiative Project, among others, to open the region to more public and private sector investment. This is a major opportunity to unlock the region's economic potential and narrow the development gap between these historically marginalised counties and other regions of Kenya. The counties themselves have developed their own policies and priorities and allocated resources to sectors that maximise impact on economic development and social cohesion.

The study finds that there are significant opportunities for peace-positive investment across a number of sectors in all three counties. Livestock production and agriculture in Mandera and Marsabit present notable peace-positive investment potential. Modernised farming and meat exports are highly bankable and can be entry points to reduce resource-based conflicts around livestock and cattle while also promoting intercommunal relations. Integrating peacebuilding into agriculture approaches is especially critical, with arable land supporting high-value crops and beekeeping, fostering social cohesion and reducing reliance on conflict-prone livestock trade. Like in many parts of the north, critical water, transportation and renewable-energy infrastructure remain inadequate in all three counties, and investments in these areas are crucial for economic growth and reducing isolation. Peace-responsive approaches must be built into these investments, especially where they are land intensive or where they involve resources that have traditionally fuelled conflict.

In Marsabit County, there is significant opportunity to build large infrastructure in a more peace positive approach as there are existing and planned investments in water management and energy. From a development perspective, limited and erratic rainfall necessitates multipurpose dams to provide irrigation, hydropower, and water



for domestic and industrial use. The fisheries sector, particularly around Lake Turkana, offers significant peace-positive investment potential, with investments needed in cold chain facilities, fish landing sites, and market outlets to reduce post-harvest losses and improve socio-economic conditions. All of these potential investment areas can be highly catalytic, but are also land intensive, concern precious resources that are contested and whereby community perceptions of benefit can be sources of tension. Community engagement and a peace-intentional approach is crucial to ensure benefits are shared and local support is secured.

Elgeyo-Marakwet County presents significant opportunities in agricultural value chains for crops like sorghum, pyrethrum, potatoes, mangoes, green grams, cotton, coffee and tea. Investments in agrifood processing can add value to agricultural products, reduce post-harvest losses, and boost farmers' incomes helping the economy move up the value chain. Existing and planned investments in hydropower, water, and irrigation sectors, such as the Mosongo Water Project and Arror Multipurpose Dam, present opportunities but also risks. Again here, inclusive decision-making processes, especially at the design phase of investment and equitable benefit sharing are essential to prevent exacerbating tensions, ensure peace impacts and mitigate investment risk.

The data of this study is largely based on interviews and focus group discussions with key stakeholders in the three locations. These included private-sector representatives, community leaders, government officials, representatives of non-governmental organisations, senior officials from the Frontier Counties Development Council (FCDC) and the North Rift Economic Bloc, local professionals, political leaders, members of think tanks, and members of professional associations from the three counties.

This report is designed to be a first step in a more systematic approach by Interpeace working with partners to stimulate a more intentional, peace-positive and risk-attuned approach to investment in Kenya. In the future, more in-depth work is needed to generate concrete community engagement and design on the proposed peace-positive investment themes, conduct business diligence, interrogate their risk/return profiles and estimate their contribution to peace impact dimensions in partnership with government, private investors, development finance partners and civil society. This will require new partnerships across different areas of expertise and between different institutions.

Key findings

Section 1 – Summary of key conflict dynamics in northern Kenya which need to be considered by prospective Peace Finance approaches

- > Ethnic diversity and challenges: Kenya, with a population of 53 million, is home to over 50 ethnic groups, enriching its culture but posing challenges to ethnic cohesion and stability, particularly in the north of Kenya.
- > **Historical and recent conflicts**: Since independence, Kenya has experienced ethnic tensions and violence, most notably after the disputed 2007 election. The northern region faces complex conflict dynamics influenced by ethnic tensions, socioeconomic and political inspired violence and cross-border issues.
- > **Devolution and socio-economic disparities**: The 2010 constitution introduced devolution, decentralising resources and decision-making, benefiting marginalised counties. Despite progress, northern Kenya still grapples with socio-economic disparities, resource competition, and insecurity. Also while devolution generally has brought many positive changes, it has contributed to an increase in ethnopolitical tension over resource distribution at the county level.
- > Root causes of conflict that need to be considered by development finance approaches: Conflicts in northern Kenya stem from historical grievances, land and resource disputes, ethnic politics, and marginalisation. It is also critical that climate responsive approaches are considered as well as a legacy of ineffective government responses, e.g. highly securitised approaches to pacify conflict-prone areas. It is possible for development finance investments to be more responsive to these dynamics.



- > Key conflict actors that need to be comprehensively engaged or considered in participatory ways by development finance and private investors seeking peace impact, include and not limited to: Key ethnic groups, key political leaders, law enforcement, marginalised community members, formal and informal community networks and local elites.
- > Key resilience factors in northern Kenya that can be strengthened and built upon through Peace Finance approaches:
 - » Common cultural, social and economic ties: Shared cultural and social connections, linguistic commonalities and economic interdependence foster peaceful relationships, although they can also reinforce gender inequalities.
 - » Community-driven peace approaches: Locally driven peace agreements on relevant issues tend to be more durable and effective in preventing conflict escalation than those imposed by elites.
 - » Local peace and resource management infrastructure: Peace committees play a crucial role in conflict resolution, reconciliation and traditional dispute resolution, promoting community engagement and shared responsibility.
 - » Political efforts to address the challenges of the north: Effective conflict resolution requires political will to encourage cooperation. Through devolution and starting to address decades of development deficits, the Kenyan government has shown commitment by deploying security agencies and supporting local peacebuilding efforts, which helps build trust and confidence.



Section 2 - Impact of conflict and subsequent peacebuilding efforts - key findings

Conflict dynamics are intimately connected to development in northern Kenya. The prolonged conflict in the studied counties has significantly impacted livelihoods, wellbeing and development. Development finance approaches have a role to play in mitigating these dynamics:

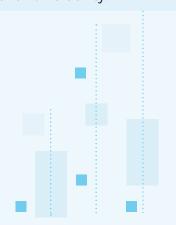
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Population

displacement: Conflicts displace populations, causing household vulnerabilities and humanitarian crises. Displaced populations often lack access to essential services, increasing malnutrition, disease, and mortality risks. Humanitarian assistance, while necessary, does not address the root causes of conflict. Displacement also leads to resource scarcity in areas to which people have been displaced and can create conflicts between displaced and host communities.

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Loss of lives and 2 livelihoods: Conflicts result in deaths, injuries, and trauma, hindering productive activities like agriculture and trade, perpetuating poverty and vulnerability.



Disruption of social 3 services: Conflicts disrupt education and healthcare, leading to longterm adverse effects on human capital and economic growth.

Economic decline:

Infrastructure damage during conflicts and perpetual insecurity limits market access, leads to road closures, discourages local enterprises, and causes economic decline and loss of employment opportunities.

Social division: Conflicts 5 create mistrust and prejudice between clans, undermining social capital, collective action and solidarity.

Reduced pastoralist 6 mobility: Conflicts restrict pastoralist mobility, leading to overgrazing, land degradation and reduced access to essential resources.

Impact on women and vulnerable populations:

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Conflicts can have a disproportionate impact on women, especially young women, e.g. limiting women's mobility, their participation in economic activities, making them more prone to violence and displacement.

Impact on youth:

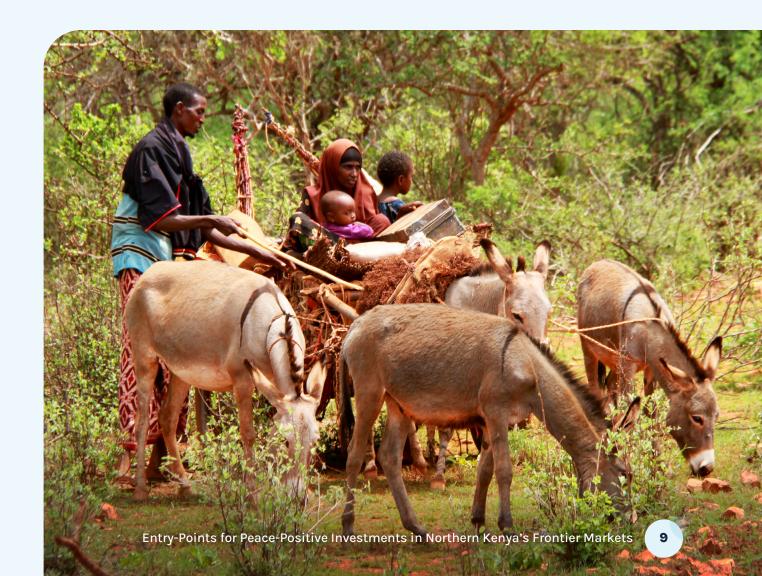
8 Conflicts disrupt education and job opportunities for youth, depriving them of economic prospects and empowerment. Especially young men run a risk of exposure to and involvement in violence.

Gender disparities:

Conflicts can exacerbate gender disparities, leaving women more vulnerable to food insecurity and reducing women's voices in decisionmaking.

Key peacebuilding activities implemented in the northern counties have had a significant impact and are illustrative of the type of joint interventions that Peace Finance approaches could embed in northern Kenya: Interpeace and other actors have implemented peacebuilding interventions to address the root causes of conflict and promote lasting peace. These include:

- > Conflict prevention and early warning systems
- > Fostering reconciliation through community-mediated peace agreements
- > Creating and strengthening community-led peacebuilding structures and capacities
- > Peace education to promote peaceful mindsets and reduce war mongering and hate speech
- > Including youth and women in taking action to promote peace
- > Sensitisation of communities to alternative and peace-positive livelihoods
- > Promoting inclusive governance and addressing political marginalisation
- > Establishing peace and cohesion policies at the county level
- > Supporting socio-economic development, infrastructure development and resource management, e.g. opening of roads and markets, strengthening inclusive rangeland management and advising development actors on peace-responsive practices
- > Facilitating cross-border cooperation and climate resilience programmes
- > Facilitating collaborating across wide range of organisations and stakeholders for collective impact



Section 3 - Mapping potential peace-positive investment opportunities - key findings



Mandera

> There is positive support to the enabling environment and clear county government development priorities. The Mandera county government has implemented policies and programmes that promote peaceful coexistence and incentivise private-sector growth by reducing bureaucratic hurdles, forming co-operatives, and investing in priority sectors. The government is exploring



public-private partnerships, identifying flagship investment opportunities, and leveraging resources from equalisation funds to rapidly improve socio-economic indicators. Additionally, the government has prioritised human-capital development, irrigation agriculture, livestock production and marketing, water resource management, mining, cross-border trade, and co-operative development through various flagship projects and national initiatives.

- > Progress in commerce and trade opportunities and SME development is significant in Mandera but can be more peace intentional: The county's trade and commerce have seen significant growth thanks to devolution funds, development partners and local government efforts. The expansion of businesses has led to a tenfold increase in new business licenses and a rise in active cooperatives. Major banks have established branches, and new minimarkets support numerous households. The revamped national chamber of commerce, supported by Mastercard, boosts local business promotion. However, job creation through small and medium-sized enterprises can be better structured to empower marginalised groups, reducing the likelihood of conflict. Inclusive economic policies and conflict-sensitive business practices can better promote inter-clan cooperation and resilience. Youth entrepreneurship addresses radicalisation, contributing to community stability.
- Peace-positive investment opportunities are notable in livestock production: Mandera boasts one of Kenya's largest livestock markets, with significant potential for modernised farming and meat exports. The major livestock market supports local livelihoods but can also fuel clan conflicts over market control, grazing lands and water resources. Cross-border dynamics add to these tensions, often exacerbated by militant groups. Improved livestock management reduces resourcebased conflicts, promoting better intercommunal relations. Transparent market management, traditional conflict resolution methods and cross-border cooperation can mitigate these issues. A Peace Finance approach to livestock investment is a major peace pathway in Mandera.
- > Integrating peacebuilding into agriculture approaches is critical: Mandera's arable land supports high-value crops and beekeeping, diversifying the economy beyond livestock. These activities provide substantial income and employment, fostering social cohesion and reducing reliance on conflict-prone livestock trade. Agricultural diversification reduces poverty and economic dependency and

- can promote social inclusion and inter-clan cooperation if equitably delivered. Sustainable practices improve resource management, reducing overgrazing and land degradation conflicts.
- > Critical water, transportation and renewable-energy infrastructure remains inadequate in Mandera: Investments in these areas are crucial for economic growth and reducing isolation. Improved infrastructure facilitates economic activities, reduces isolation and enhances community connectivity, contributing to overall stability if provided in a conflict sensitive and peace intentional way. Peace-responsive approaches must be built into water infrastructure and renewable energy investments to reduce resource conflicts and support economic activities.
- Cross-border trade opportunities can be unlocked by key infrastructure: Construction of a bridge over the Dawa River and Somalia's East African Community membership enhance cross-border trade potential. Improved trade facilities can boost economic growth and social cohesion. Enhanced connectivity fosters economic interdependence and cooperation, reducing the likelihood of conflict. However, risks such as smuggling, illicit activity need management to ensure positive contributions to peace. In addition, improvements in border management and addressing border management corruption can yield significant development benefits for all communities.



Marsabit

> Water management and investment are critical for peace and wider development in Marsabit County. Water availability fluctuates significantly in Marsabit because of limited and erratic rainfall. The shift from pastoralism to agropastoralism has increased domestic water demand, particularly in towns like Loiyangalani, Laisamis, Sololo, and Moyale. To address



- these needs, multipurpose dams can provide irrigation, hydropower, and water for domestic and industrial use, supporting industries like fisheries, livestock, tourism, and environmental conservation. These dams can also help grow fodder crops for livestock, thereby reducing competition for resources.
- Scaled energy investment is significantly needed in Marsabit, but peace approaches are key to unlocking those investments. Energy investments in solar, wind and biofuel can create jobs, improve access to services, and reduce unemployment, addressing root causes of conflict and promoting peace. Inclusive energy projects involving diverse groups can foster community cohesion and mitigate resource-based conflicts. Successful solar and wind power projects require participatory land acquisition processes to ensure community support and sustainability. Kenya has the capacity to produce over 800 MW of wind power annually, with significant projects such as the Bubisa Integrated Wind Power Development and the Chalbi Desert Integrated Development proposing substantial wind power generation along with integrated development efforts. However, community engagement is crucial to ensure benefits are shared and local support is secured to minimise risks.

- > Investment is needed to improve rain-fed agriculture in Marsabit. In agriculture, investment is needed to improve rain-fed agriculture by adopting modern cereal varieties, hybrids, soil fertility management, water management, and crop productivity technologies. Small-scale irrigation offers significant potential to boost food production, employ youth and women, and tackle food insecurity. It is cost-effective, decentralised, and involves high levels of farmer participation. Improved agriculture can reduce conflict by enhancing economic opportunities, promoting social cohesion, and improving resource management.
- > Human capital development through education is crucial for Marsabit County's long-term growth. Investing in tertiary and vocational training for youth and women can diversify livelihoods and facilitate low-capital start-up enterprises through savings and credit groups. The county faces significant challenges in education, with a literacy rate of around 54% and notable gaps in secondary education, vocational centres and higher education. High youth unemployment and skills gaps persist. However, government and NGO initiatives aimed at improving education, healthcare, and vocational training present significant opportunities for growth. Education can foster political representation, reduce ethnic tensions, and promote better resource management, contributing to peace and stability.
- > The livestock sector in Marsabit County also presents numerous investment opportunities as well as peace impact. Camel milk processing can improve food security, reduce malnutrition, and increase incomes. Developing the fodder value chain can stabilise supply and market access, especially for women and youth. Investment in commercial beef cattle production through feedlots can enhance productivity and market access. Livestock insurance is badly needed to further mitigate risks like weather, diseases, theft, and rustling, building resilience for pastoralists. Livestock investments can create jobs, reduce poverty, address marginalisation and foster community cohesion. Improved management reduces resource-based conflicts and reliance on negative practices such as raiding.
- > The fisheries sector, particularly around Lake Turkana, offers significant peacepositive investment potential. As Kenya's largest inland freshwater lake, Lake
 Turkana supports about 7,000 fisherfolk and 6,500 fish traders and transporters.
 However, inadequate infrastructure leads to high post-harvest losses. Investment
 is needed in cold chain facilities, fish landing sites, and market outlets. A pilot
 wholesale hub for agricultural and fish products currently being proposed can
 significantly improve market access. Developing fisheries can improve socioeconomic conditions, reduce malnutrition and enhance food security. It can
 also reduce resource-based conflicts, promote collaboration, and contribute to
 environmental conservation.



Elgeyo-Marakwat

> Tourism development and sports
infrastructure are unique investment
themes in Elgeyo that can engage youth
and generate peace impacts, if done
right. There are numerous projects under
discussion by the county government on
forest parks, ecotourism, as well as sports
infrastructure investments that can
leverage the county's natural resources



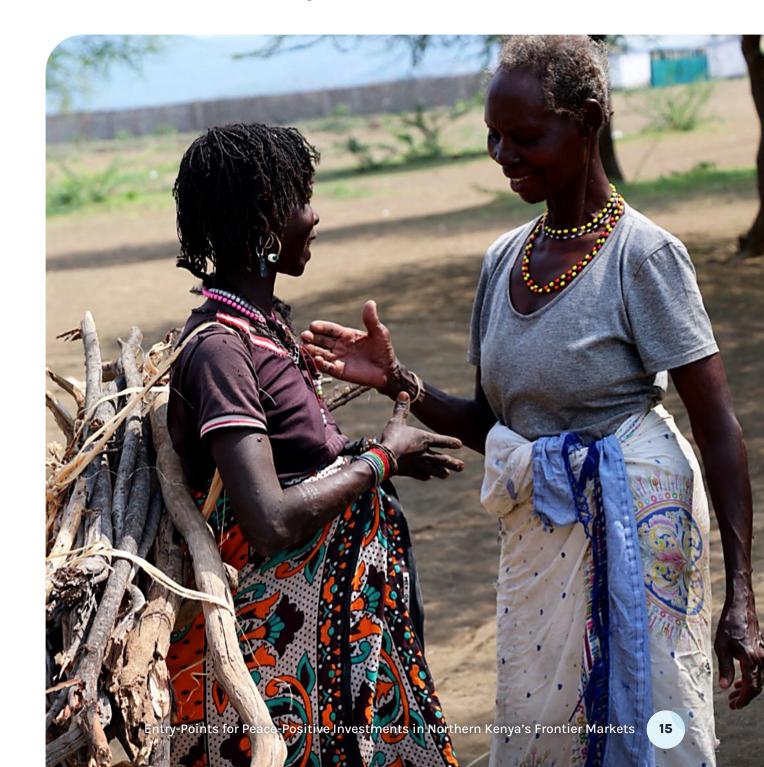
but also reputation for producing world-class athletes. These sectors provide unique opportunities to engage local communities, create alternative livelihoods, promote economic empowerment, enhance social cohesion and provide youth engagement opportunities.

- > There are value chains in agriculture in Elgeyo Marakwet that present significant opportunity. Key value chains for crops include sorghum, pyrethrum, potatoes, mangoes, green grams, cotton, coffee and tea, alongside large-scale production and irrigation. Agrifood processing aims to add value to agricultural products, reduce post-harvest losses, and boost farmers' incomes. These investments can improve food security, create jobs and reduce conflicts by promoting economic stability and community cooperation.
- > Existing and planned investments in the hydropower, water and irrigation sectors present opportunities, but also risks. Projects such as the Mosongo Water Project, Arror Multipurpose Dam and Kimwarer Multipurpose Dam aim to improve water distribution, increase agricultural productivity and generate electricity. However, these projects must be managed inclusively to prevent exacerbating tensions and ensure equitable benefits, promoting regional cooperation and reducing conflicts. A peace-positive approach is key here.
- Like in various parts of Kenya, there are notable opportunities in the mining sector, but a conflict-sensitive approach is vital. Including the Fluorspar processing factory and other resources such as gold, marble and sand, presents significant economic opportunities but also conflict risks. Inclusive decision-making, equitable benefit sharing, and sustainable practices are essential to mitigate these risks and foster peace.
- A Peace Finance approach can help de-risk infrastructure development, particularly road projects which are economically catalytic and can have peace impacts. These projects can enhance connectivity, access to services and economic opportunities, reducing isolation and fostering social cohesion. Transparent and inclusive planning is crucial to ensure community benefits and reduce conflicts.

Summary of key recommendations

- > Forming alliances and taking further steps to design a peace-responsive investment portfolio. This initial mapping in the three counties has indicated the presence of diverse peace-positive investment opportunities. There are clear links between development and peace whereby peacebuilding approaches are a critical tool to de-risk investments through increasing community buy-in and mitigating sovereign risk. However, more participatory engagement with government, local communities and investors is required to take this high-level sectoral analysis to the next step of diligence. Typically, as is the case in conflict-affected regions, there is an underinvestment in the type of multi-sectoral technical assistance required to get such concepts to the first phase of investment readiness.
- > Investors, both public and private, should use Peace Finance guidance that requires engagement of stakeholders in inclusive and participatory ways. A peace-positive investment approach requires more extensive and meaningful engagement with local stakeholders, from the conception stage of the investment. Such approaches can provide a platform for dialogue, incorporating the perspectives of community leaders, government officials, marginalised groups, civil society and other relevant actors. This inclusive approach ensures that the interests and needs of all stakeholders are considered, fostering a collaborative environment for sustainable and impactful investments.
- > International partners and government need to support the integration of peacebuilding into investment so it can help unlock capital markets for greater investment in infrastructure financing. It is clear from the analysis that there are infrastructure deficits, especially in energy, roads, water to support economic growth in northern Kenya. These investments are critical to create a foundation for broader economic development and stability. Through blended and new peace bond approaches using Peace Finance frameworks it is possible to provide investors with lower risk, greater accountability, sustainability, and reputational benefits. Such bonds would embed peacebuilding activities into the use-of-proceeds to ensure peacebuilding support is financed and ensure reporting mechanisms monitor their impact on peace and development.
- > Investors should consider the application of the Peace Finance Impact
 Framework and investment guidance to mainstream peace into investment
 in northern Kenya. The analysis shows how conflict dynamics intersect all
 sectors of investment in northern Kenya, but especially in the three key sectors
 of opportunity identified in northern Kenya agriculture/agri-industry, livestock
 and energy. These sectors are land intensive and affect resources which are highly
 contested peace-responsive approaches are not merely an option for these
 investments but critical for success. Such approaches can help facilitate private
 investment by lowering investment risks, thereby making investments more
 attractive to private investors.
- > All actors, including peacebuilding, civil society, investors and government, need to collect better data for informed decision making. Future peace-positive investment design requires more rigorous data collection, analysis and validation processes. These detailed data will offer investors and stakeholders a solid foundation for making informed decisions. From understanding the local economic

- context to assessing risk factors and potential impacts, future work needs to provide in-depth data with the granularity needed to navigate the complexities of investing in a post-conflict or conflict-affected region.
- > Investors should continue to seek alignment of their investment approaches with county and national-level development priorities. These counties' development priorities are embedded within the broader national development context. Future peace-positive investment design needs to comprehensively align investments with national priorities, ensuring coherence and synergies with overarching development agendas. This alignment enhances the attractiveness of investments to both local and international partners, aligns incentives and further contributes to risk mitigation.





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