

2.2. Conflict-sensitive WASH programme planning and design

A critical step in ensuring the CPA or Scan findings inform programming is to integrate a conflict-sensitive approach from the very first stages of programme/intervention planning and design.

Linking conflict analysis to the project design involves:

- Reviewing all key parameters of a project in view of their link to the conflict context
- Assessing the risks that implementation may be affected by conflict issues or may contribute to tensions
- Identifying opportunities for reinforcing peace outcomes (increased dialogue between divided groups, less violence, etc.) through the planned intervention
- Identifying changes to the original project design to avoid unintentionally contributing to tensions.

Reviewing key project parameters against findings from the conflict analysis is what is referred to as a **conflict-sensitivity appraisal** of a programme or intervention and should be an integral part of programme design in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. Integrating conflict sensitivity at the design stage involves using findings from the conflict analysis to review and inform all key parameters of the project: **what** the project will do; **who** will implement it and for whom, and **who** the beneficiaries/participants will be; **where** the project will be implemented; **how** the project will be implemented, and **when** the project activities will take place. It can help foresee risks and obstacles to effective implementation early on; prevent timely and costly ad hoc management of tensions arising from, or exacerbated by, a project; and help identify and leverage new opportunities to build and sustain peace. It is also important to consider if the make-up of the design team is likely to result in any bias in the project design - [see Programming Tool 3 – ‘Conflict-Sensitive WASH Programming Tool’ for guidance on how to conduct a conflict-sensitivity appraisal](#)

Using participatory approaches is particularly important for conflict-sensitive programme design. Including participation, not only by staff and partners, but also community members at the design stage will enrich the conflict-sensitivity analysis of the planned project. Ensuring the distinct needs, perspectives and capacities of women and girls, and of vulnerable groups in target communities will be critical to uphold inclusive and gender-sensitive approaches. Getting different perspectives on the possible risks and opportunities linked to implementation will also help. For example, capturing potential conflict risks related to the allocation of water resources among different users (domestic use, animal rearing, agriculture) is critical to conflict sensitivity in water-scarce environments. The importance of conflict analysis and inclusion of relevant stakeholders in project design is illustrated by the example of tensions around the water services in Gorom-Gorom, Burkina Faso, as explained in the case study below.

A critical next step in designing conflict-sensitive programming is to ensure that your **overall ToC is also conflict sensitive** to underpin all programming in fragile and conflict-affected contexts – this will facilitate the integration of peacebuilding results logic into the ToC - [for details on how to develop a conflict-sensitive ToC see Programming Tool 2 ‘WASH for Peace ToC Tool’ of this Guidance.](#)

Specific activities need to be **included in the workplan** to ensure that conflict sensitivity is upheld throughout the programme cycle, and that it genuinely informs relevant programme adaptation *if and when* needed. Time and space for reflection on conflict-sensitivity issues also need to be embedded in the project workplan, for example by being explicitly included on the agenda of regular project review meetings, etc. Such activities need to be **adequately budgeted for**, as this will embed conflict sensitivity in project implementation.

- If a conflict analysis has not yet taken place to inform programme/intervention design, plan and budget for conducting or updating a conflict analysis at the start-up of the project, and for reviewing it as part of monitoring activities
- Plan and include budget line/s for capacity-building in conflict sensitivity for staff and partners involved in the project (and where relevant community representatives)
- Plan and include budget line/s for participatory monitoring and regular reflection with community members
- Plan and include budget line/s for feedback/ accountability mechanisms



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CASE STUDY

The importance of conflict analysis and inclusion of relevant stakeholders in project design – Challenges addressing tensions in IDP-hosting contexts in Burkina Faso



Gorom-Gorom is a small town in northern Burkina Faso affected by drought and water scarcity, and hosting almost 65,000 internally displaced persons due to conflict and insecurity going back 2.5 years. During this period, various WASH Cluster NGO partners have provided WASH emergency support to both host and internally displaced communities – including the construction of a small water network that took water from a borehole in a nearby village near Gorom-Gorom to the main IDP site inside town. The village was also benefiting from the network, with a dedicated standpipe. However, the network has been sabotaged several times despite repairs by the implementing NGO and the municipality, and meetings with local authorities and communities to ensure its sustainable functioning. After a final act of sabotage, it was decided not to repair it but to rather opt for alternative solutions to bring water to the IDPs site. Local sources indicate that the **exclusion of key community members from project discussions** led to dissatisfaction among host community members, while **long-standing tensions between Gorom-Gorom residents and the villagers hosting the water source** for the network was also cited as the reason for the repeated sabotage. At the time of writing the network was still not working.

2.3. Conflict-sensitive programme implementation – upholding ‘do no harm’

At the core of conflict-sensitive and risk-informed programming is **reflective practice** and **adaptive programme implementation**. They represent key principles, but must also translate into actionable programming approaches and strategies. Reflective practice should include periodic updates of the conflict analysis and the monitoring of conflict sensitivity using the Conflict Sensitivity Appraisal Tool (*see section 2.2 above and Programming Tool 3 ‘Conflict-Sensitive WASH Programming Tool’ for guidance*), and this in turn should inform the adaptation of programmatic activities to ensure that WASH interventions at a minimum ‘do no harm’ and ideally ‘do more good’. **Conflict sensitivity can be integrated at any point of the programme cycle** to respond to changes in the context, as illustrated by the example from Ethiopia in the case study below.

CASE STUDY

Strengthening conflict sensitivity of Itang integrated host-refugee Water Utility in Gambella region of Ethiopia:



The integrated host-refugee water utility scheme in Itang, Gambella, was kick-started in 2014 with support from German Development Bank (KfW) and implemented in partnership with the Regional Water Bureau. A conflict analysis (end of 2020) and sensitivity assessment (early 2021) were implemented to respond to increased tensions and incidents of sabotage disrupting water supply and to inform an ‘optimization phase’ foreseen in programme implementation. Consultations with key stakeholders and community members identified key conflict dynamics, not only between host and refugee communities, but also within local communities about the utility benefiting ‘outsiders’ (Ethiopians not originally from Gambella) brought in to work on the utility as well as business owners connected to the water supply along one of the main trading roads. Efforts were made to strengthen the risk management capacity of the utility, including a ‘contingency plan and risk register’ to address service gaps as well as strengthened grievance management and governance mechanisms. There was a decrease in conflict incidents and an improvement in collaborative engagement of the key stakeholders – the lessons learned from this process were used to inform the development of a Guidance Note to integrate conflict sensitivity, peacebuilding, and social cohesion approaches to WASH programmes:

Source: UNICEF, ‘Conflict Sensitivity, Peace Building and Social Cohesion Guideline for WASH Programming in Ethiopia’, 2022 <https://www.unicef.org/ethiopia/media/5356/file/Conflict%20Sensitivity,%20Peace%20Building%20and%20Social%20Cohesion%20Guideline%20for%20WASH%20Programming%20in%20Ethiopia.pdf>