**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

**The practical implementation of conflict sensitivity will be anchored on your M&E by monitoring the context and the two-way interaction between the intervention and the context** – impacts of context on the WASH programme/intervention, and impacts of the WASH programme/intervention on the context. For example, an impact of the intervention on the context can be the fuelling of tensions between communities due to the unequal distribution of water or contested allocation among diverse water users; an impact of the context on the intervention could be restricted access due to insecurity in the target area of an intervention - *for details on how to monitor for conflict sensitivity see the WASH for Peace M&E Guide and Toolkit.* An initial CP Scan and Conflict Sensitivity Appraisal will capture the **current and foreseen WASH–conflict interactions, but not all conflict risks can be pre-identified.** Therefore teams should monitor conflict sensitivity continuously. This should be done as a formal or informal and periodic exercise, whenever any major new activities are being initiated, or when a change in the context suggests that peace and conflict dynamics may be evolving. This can be done by asking three core questions, looking at both the immediate area of implementation of a particular action, and also the wider context:

- *What changes have we seen in the peace and conflict dynamics in the past period, and what do we foresee in the next?*
- *What two-way interactions have we seen between our WASH intervention and peace and conflict dynamics; what is the impact of these; and what can we foresee in the next period?*
- *What adaptation or mitigation actions have we taken/should we take?*

A useful way to conduct this regular contextual update is to get diverse stakeholders together for **conflict sensitivity-focused consultations**. Such discussions are useful not only to update the context analysis, but also to maintain stakeholders' awareness of and alertness to conflict-sensitivity concerns. These consultations can be part of an overall Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) feedback mechanism, ensuring we keep a finger on the pulse of our intervention's interaction with the context. UNICEF WASH teams and partners may consider establishing conflict-sensitivity focal points in projects and partnerships at field level that can convene at regular intervals of the programme cycle (even in shorter emergency response cycles) and use the '*Programming Tool 3 – Conflict-Sensitive WASH Programming Tool*' for guidance on how to conduct a conflict-sensitivity appraisal to monitor conflict sensitivity and trigger relevant programme adaptations. During consultations, ensure that adequate attention is paid to:

- **Gender and age dimensions of conflict sensitivity** – for example men, women, and adolescents/youth participation in the design and implementation of programmes to ensure context-relevant services that address specific needs.
- Needs and perspectives of diverse and vulnerable groups, to uphold **equity and inclusion as core elements of your conflict-sensitivity approach.** UNICEF's WASH Guidance Note for Leaving No One Behind[4] notes that ensuring equitable access to WASH for all without discrimination is imperative not only because it is a fundamental human right but because "inequalities between groups can lead to […] conflict".

**CASE STUDY**

## Gender-insensitive WASH driving conflict in the South Punjab region of Pakistan

Due to the prominent and distinct role that women and girls play in water use in rural communities of Pakistan, they are often engaged in the planning and implementation of water supply facilities in rural areas. In rural areas women fulfil traditional but prominent roles in WASH, e.g. water collection and domestic water use, and in some areas women are engaged in farming as well. However, in one case women were excluded from initial assessments for a project to construct a women's latrine, leading to conflict in the location. An international NGO carried out an initial assessment and selected a place for the construction of the latrine in a village of South Punjab region. During assessment there was limited engagement by the women of two households, but once construction started the community were hostile towards the contractors building the latrine. Shortly after the latrine was finalized, conflict broke out in the village as one of the households denied access to the other, requiring police intervention to manage the dispute. The lack of participation by women in the design and implementation of the project and of the community more broadly in its management led to misunderstandings about ownership and access that escalated into conflict.

## Addressing conflict insensitivity through WASH Committees in East Darfur

In Shariah locality of East Darfur, intercommunal tensions rose when one of the WASH sector partners planned to build a new Water Yard (rural water supply scheme in Sudan); initially, the Water Yard was planned to be built in Gaar Hagar community, but after the geophysical survey, the location of the Water Yard was moved to nearby Soraa community as it indicated a better water yield. Unfortunately, when the Water Yard was built, the signpost showed Gaar Hagar community's name. This caused tension between two communities as people from Gaar Hagar felt they were entitled to the new water source. As UNICEF and a local NGO partner were implementing a Peacebuilding Fund project in Gaar Hagar, the WASH committee in Gaar Hagar were trained on the sustainable maintenance of existing water sources and cross-cutting themes including social cohesion. The tension between the two communities came up as an issue, and the WASH committee stepped up its intervention to hold a dialogue between two communities. The WASH committee invited the community leaders of four communities that benefit from the newly constructed Water Yard (Gaar Hagar, Soraa, Hilla Hamid and Dobag communities). After an extensive discussion facilitated by the committee members, it was agreed to establish a joint water management committee to manage and operate the Water Yard jointly, to ensure sustainability of the water source for all.

Conflict-sensitivity capacity can be built into programme implementation, for example by ensuring that implementing partners have knowledge and skills to translate conflict analysis findings into conflict-sensitive programming actions – **partners can undertake UNICEF's [Introduction to risk-informed, conflict-sensitive and peacebuilding programming](#)**. Moreover, supporting and engaging *participating communities* in the monitoring and management of conflict risks is critical and can add highly context-relevant capacities to your conflict-sensitivity approach. Participatory consultations can create opportunities for communities to raise concerns, tensions or fears safely, and if managed effectively can help to address issues before they escalate into violent conflict – for example, WASH committees can be used to support as in the example from East Darfur in Sudan discussed in the case study below.

Conflict sensitivity is also a critical aspect of **WASH systems strengthening work implemented with government counterparts.** Conflict sensitizing WASH sector systems, plans and policies will help to build resilience to conflict throughout the sector. If relevant, conflict analysis and conflict sensitivity can be included in trainings organized for WASH ministry officials, and can also be part of any UNICEF-supported government WASH contingency planning and emergency response strategy or programme. Often UNICEF and its partners work in complex conflict-affected environments where government counterparts are a party to conflict – in these cases balancing system strengthening work with civil society and community engagement can help to mitigate risks of UNICEF support being co-opted or perceived as biased.[5]

### Conflict-sensitive WASH system strengthening entry point

*Adapted from UNICEF, 'Guidance on Risk-Informed Programming', 2018, [https://www.unicef.org/media/57621/file, p. 11](https://www.unicef.org/media/57621/file)*

- Ensure that national WASH ministries or institutions perform conflict risk analysis specific to their sector, to consider how to better target those households or communities most at risk
- Support WASH national/local authorities to adapt policies, plans and budgets to consider measures and resources necessary to ensure that systems can absorb or adapt to conflict shocks and stresses
- Developing protocols, procedures, micro-plans and programmes to enhance shock-responsiveness and adaptation in the WASH sector, so as to ensure the continuity and quality of services for children
- Supporting children, adolescents and youth to engage in these processes and influence the analysis, design and implementation phases as appropriate.

5   UNICEF's Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action are also a good reference to guide the "engagement with all parties to conflict, and other stakeholders as necessary and  feasible, to gain access to the populations in need"; [https://www.corecommitments.unicef.org/ccc-1-3](https://www.corecommitments.unicef.org/ccc-1-3).