This Guide briefly explores UNICEF's range of partnerships available to support the integration of conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding approaches to WASH, including civil society, donors and the private sector.[1] It provides guidance and resources to support the sector to strengthen partnerships in fragile and conflict-affected contexts (FCCs). Partnerships are the backbone of UNICEF's work on the ground and, as the WASH sector embraces conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding as critically important approaches in FCCs, so new and strengthened partnerships must be developed in the sector to leverage and engage the right capacity and expertise. The 2022 'WASH in the Strategic Plan' report notes that "partnerships with local civil society, youth and faith-based organizations will be expanded to strengthen the linkages between WASH and peacebuilding", and that the inclusion of "children and adolescents into decision-making processes via youth networks for sector policy and strategy development at global and national levels" will be critical. Moreover, partnerships must reflect the role of gender transformation and disability inclusion as key dimensions of UNICEF's contribution to peace through WASH.[2]

The UN Partner Portal is available to UN staff https://www.unpartnerportal.org/login and includes a database of over 23,000 partners across multiple UN agencies. Under cross-sectoral areas, selecting the 'Conflict Sensitivity and Humanitarian Access' category brings up 1,103 partners, including 594 national NGOs that list diverse conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding experiences and expertise.

1. Identifying the 'right' partners – leveraging NGO capacities

UNICEF works in partnership with more than 4,000 civil society organizations (three quarters of which are local or national non-governmental organizations) to deliver over US$1 billion in programming to communities and children around the world annually.[3] UNICEF WASH staff consulted for the development of this Guidance noted that one of the key enablers to the integration of conflict-sensitive and peacebuilding approaches to WASH was the identification and engagement of partners with relevant capacity and expertise.

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1 For more information see https://www.unicef.org/partnerships#
2 UNICEF, 'WASH in the new UNICEF Strategic Plan 2022-2025,' 2021, https://www.unicef.org/media/119056/file/WASH%20in%20the%20new%20UNICEF%20Strategic%20Plan_Summary.pdf; p. 37
3 https://www.unicef.org/partnerships/procedure-programme-implementation-partnerships

The WASH Strategy for Tripoli Frontlines[4]

was piloted by LebRelief in Qobbe's Baqqar and Jabal Mohsein neighbourhoods as part of a partnership with UNICEF Lebanon. The strategy succeeded in transforming neighbourhoods characterized by extreme poverty, radicalized youth, and inter-communal tensions into areas where shared WASH services have galvanized the population and social cohesion has been palpably strengthened. LebRelief brought to the partnership **experience working at grass-roots level** in these communities and a distinct approach that invested heavily in building the credibility of WASH institutions and trust among key stakeholders. One key element of the partnership was the **contextual knowledge** generated by LebRelief through its participatory and community-based mapping methodology to identify the multiple layers of conflict interactions with WASH.

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National partners and community-based organizations are a critical asset to support WASH for Peace interventions as they often have deep and highly relevant knowledge of the history and dynamics of conflict in a given context, and will have developed highly contextual strategies and approaches. This was one of the key lessons learned by the WASH team in Lebanon, where the national NGO LebRelief[5] was instrumental in identifying and leveraging opportunities to build social cohesion around water and sanitation infrastructure in a divided community – the case study in this page illustrates key aspects of their approach and contribution:

Among **UNICEF international NGO WASH partners**, many are found to possess specific capacity and expertise in conflict-sensitive/peacebuilding approaches and to have implemented research and developed tools and resources that can help to strengthen WASH sector capacity to integrate conflict sensitivity/peacebuilding. Below is a selection of examples to give a flavour of the wealth of knowledge and expertise available to WASH teams among WASH sector partners:

- **Tearfund** have done valuable research[6] on the links between WASH, conflict and peace and have developed a step-by-step guide to the project cycle for a conflict-sensitive WASH project that has informed some of the tools developed for this Guidance.[7]
- **Save the Children** have developed a conflict management and peacebuilding resource kit for children and young people to use to analyse conflict, manage conflict and build peace – 'Conflict Management and Peacebuilding in Everyday Life: A resource kit for children and youth'[8] – as well as a 'Conflict sensitivity guider and tools'[9].
- **World Vision** have developed tools to support the integration of conflict sensitivity/peacebuilding, including a Good Enough Context Analysis for Rapid Response[10] and an 'eLearning' course on Do No Harm to support staff capacity development. The NGO have a distinct 'children as agents for peace' approach to build resilience to conflict in communities.[11]
- **Mercy Corps** have developed a peace and conflict programming approach that informs their climate security interventions by supporting integrated climate adaptation and strengthening natural resource governance, as well as strengthening social cohesion and conflict management practices for safer and more secure communities. This is also central to their gender-transformative approach to peacebuilding – elevating the role and responsibilities of girls and women in peacebuilding, as well as challenging and dismantling harmful gender norms that drive violent conflict.[12]
- **CARE International** (The Netherlands) have developed a Peacebuilding Toolbox showcasing peacebuilding strategies implemented by different CARE country offices and local partners as well as practical tools and case studies, including interventions to improve water access in FCCs.[13]
- **OXFAM** have developed resources to identify and mitigate conflict risks as part of the COVID-19 humanitarian response[14], gender and peacebuilding resources[15], as well as a briefing paper exploring opportunities to strengthen triple-nexus programming illustrated by case studies including WASH.[16]

4   Shared by LebRelief in February 2022
5   https://leb-relief.org/
6   https://learn.tearfund.org/-/media/learn/resources/reports/2013-tearfund-double-dividends-en.pdf; https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/8294.pdf; https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/8293.pdf
7   https://learn.tearfund.org/en/resources/research-report/a-wash-tool-for-conflict-sensitive-programming
8   https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/resourcekit-web.pdf/
9   https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/SCI-Conflict-Sensitivity-Guider_Final-2021.pdf/
10 https://www.wvi.org/peacebuilding-and-conflict-sensitivity/publication/good-enough-context-analysis-rapid-response
11 https://www.wvi.org/our-work/peacebuilding
12 https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/Peace-and-Conflict-Overview-Mercy-Corps-May-2021.pdf
13 https://www.carenederland.org/carexpertise/peacebuilding-toolbox#:~:text=The%20Peacebuilding%20Toolbox%20includes%2013,analyze%20and%20define%20Peacebuilding%20interventions
14 https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620992/gd-covid-19-and-conflict-sensitivity-030620-en.pdf?sequence=1
15 https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/gender-conflict-and-peacebuilding-how-conflict-can-catalyse-positive-change-for-305257/
16 OXFAM, 'Transforming the systems that contribute to fragility and humanitarian crises: programming across the triple nexus', 2021, https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/621203/bp-fragility-humanitarian-crises-triple-nexus-150721-en.pdf?sequence=1; p. 5

The organizations listed above are frequent **WASH Cluster partners** in FCCs, and this remains an important entry point to identify and support conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding partnerships using the triple-nexus approach captured in the Global WASH Cluster Strategic Plan 2022-2025.[17] WASH Cluster Coordinators (through their partners' liaison and capacity development roles and responsibilities) can identify and leverage relevant conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding expertise amongst partners. Profiling exercises with partners are a good opportunity to identify relevant capacity – for example in Palestine in 2021, the WCC compiled a Cluster Partners' Profile that outlines the current partners' areas of expertise as well as identifying 'cross-cutting issues' focal points to support the capacity gaps of partners.[18] In Burkina Faso, a comparable exercise in 2020 identified the specific capacities of partners' staff to, for example, do rapid assessments and to use community engagement approaches. This could be expanded to include conflict analysis, conflict sensitivity assessments, and the integration of peacebuilding into WASH programming in FCCs.[19]

UNICEF's 'Water Security for All' brief notes the need to mobilize the **private sector** to support innovation. Technology innovations in FCCs can improve early warning and early action systems to avert water scarcity crises and help find new sources of water to bring more equitable and affordable solutions. Philanthropists, corporations, foundations and other private sector partners can support UNICEF by investing in flexible funds for water and sanitation, or funding specific 'hotspot' country programmes. Private sector actors must
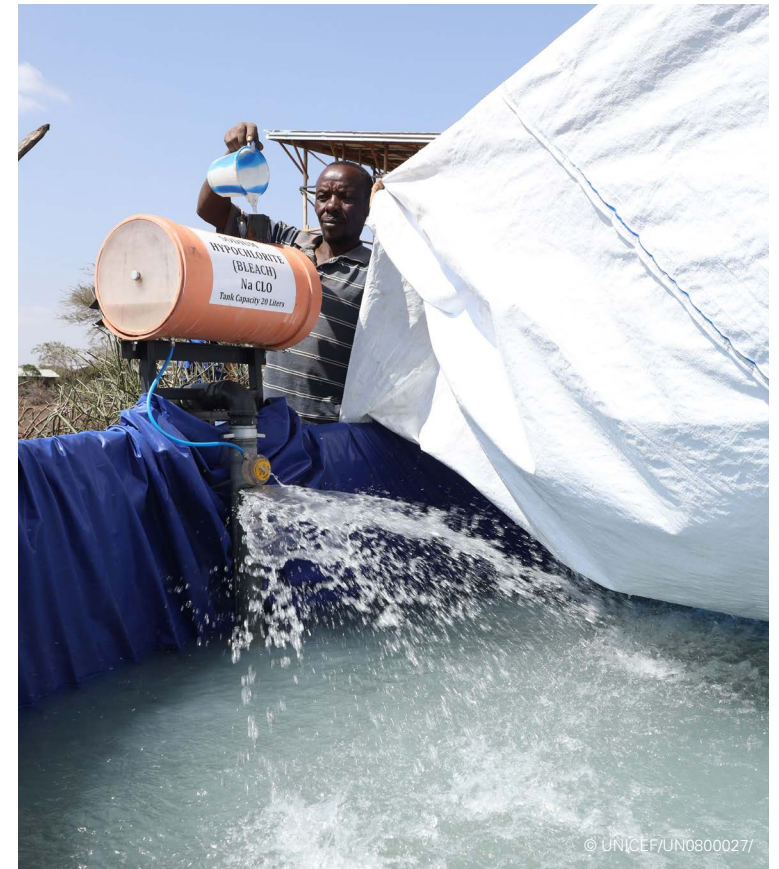
be considered in relevant stakeholder analysis to better understand their distinct role in conflict and peace. It is critical to ensure that they integrate conflict-sensitive approaches and it may be necessary to extend distinct and tailored capacity development efforts to them - *see Capacity Development Tool 2 – 'Conflict sensitivity competencies'* for suggested competencies to be developed.

UNICEF WASH teams may consider **issuing a call for 'Expressions of Interest'** to gauge existing capacity and technical expertise in conflict-sensitive/peacebuilding WASH in the country, and to identify national WASH civil society and private sector partners that can be supported to complement and enhance UNICEF's technical capacity with grounded and highly context relevant knowledge and experience. WASH teams can identify existing and trusted WASH partners implementing UNICEF-supported programmes in FCCs and support the development of their capacity to integrate conflict-sensitive/ peacebuilding approaches to their work. A first step could be for the WASH team and a selection of key WASH partners to take UNICEF's Agora course risk-informed programming (*see the WASH for Peace – Capacity Development Guide for more details on this and other opportunities and resources*). Another source of partnership support includes the **Long-Term Agreement for Services (LTAS)** hosted by UNICEF's Conflict Prevention, Fragility, and Peacebuilding Team. This enables WASH teams to access a number of expert organizations holding significant technical expertise and capacities that can be deployed to support UNICEF WASH programmes in peacebuilding, social cohesion and conflict sensitivity.[20]

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17 https://mcusercontent.com/888e8ad28c65af24339239179/files/8c6009f7-222b-079d-4a95-d90cd2ee6337/Global_WASH_Cluster_Strategic_Plan_2022_2025_FINAL_lowres.pdf
18 https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/wash-cluster-state-palestine-partners-profile-2021
19 https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ydLgSRWg7R-yp2WtuLUKjTRU7EHlamPh/view
20 https://unicef.sharepoint.com/sites/PD-CERP/SitePages/LTAs-for-PB-and-CS.aspx#ltas-full-guidelines?CT=1589555450940&OR=OWA-NT&CID=e06a1508-6264-a60b-9b57-40caadd79e27