Integrated Conflict Prevention and Resilience Field Guide

Introduction

This is a field guide for staff implementing the guidance laid out in the Integrated Conflict Prevention and Resilience Handbook. It summarises key points from the handbook and lays out a series of top tips and guiding questions for project and programme staff working in conflict-affected contexts. It aims to help staff to integrate a conflict-sensitive approach into key stages of programme design and implementation.

Where is this guide applicable?

This guide is intended to be applicable in contexts in which conflicts between groups have resulted in, or have the potential to result in, significant levels of violence or the fear of violence. However, not all such contexts will be appropriate for the application of resilience-strengthening methodologies.

How to use this guide

This guide should be read in conjunction with the complete guidance laid out in the Integrated Conflict Prevention and Resilience Handbook. It summarises **key issues and best practices** associated with integrating conflict sensitivity into resilience projects. These are elaborated in the full handbook.

A series of **guiding questions** for staff are also included. These are intended to highlight critical issues and considerations; they should not be read as a checklist, and there is not necessarily a right or a wrong answer. They are intended to act as a tool to help staff interrogate their own actions from a conflict-sensitivity perspective, and consider context-specific responses.

Sections 1, 2 and 3 introduce staff to cross-cutting considerations that are critical for promoting resilience in conflict-affected contexts. Sections 4 to 9 are structured around key steps within a typical project cycle. A series of annexes provide further practical tools and guidance on implementing specific sections of this guide.

Contexts in which guide is applicable	Contexts in which guide is not applicable
• Contexts with mid to low levels of persistent insecurity or conflict. • Communities in which the fear or threat of violence (including intrapersonal violence) is a significant barrier to people's well-being.	• In the midst of humanitarian emergency response activities, or immediately following a humanitarian emergency. • In contexts in which access is severely restricted by extreme levels of insecurity.

Chapter 1:
Conflict, violence and resilience

Conflict occurs when two or more parties find their interests incompatible, express hostile attitudes or take actions that damage the other party's ability to pursue their interests.

Almost all contexts are affected by conflict in one way or another: Almost any process of social change is likely to be contested by one or more parties. But when conflicts turn violent, or threaten to do so, then the impacts on local people can be devastating.

Conflict prevention activities seek to reduce tensions and/or prevent the outbreak or reoccurrence of violence.

They seek to contribute to **positive peace** which means the absence of direct physical violence and also of structural and cultural violence that can be the root causes of conflict.

Conflict prevention also requires the strengthening of mechanisms, appropriate for the context, that allow individuals and groups to resolve their conflicts peacefully.

Resilience refers to the capacity of a group of people – usually at the community level – to monitor, anticipate, respond to and manage both known risks and future uncertainties. It is the ability of a community or society to absorb shocks, adapt to stresses, and bounce back better from them.

Violent conflict can be a significant shock and stress factor. It undermines a community's well-being through its impacts on physical and psychological health, basic service provision and livelihood security. It can increase people's exposure to other hazards, for example by displacement, and undermine their capacity to adapt to change. Conflict is also a symptom of a lack of resilience.

In conflict-affected contexts therefore, it is imperative that conflict prevention forms a core component of resilience-strengthening methodologies. Failure to do so not only misses an important opportunity for interventions to reduce vulnerabilities of communities, but risks exacerbating these vulnerabilities and undermining the very resilience that they seek to build.

Different types of violence

Direct violence
Physical attack or harm

Structural violence
Unjust systems and structures that hurt people through human-made causes, such as lack of access to food or medical care
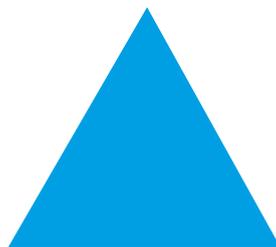
Cultural violence
Unconscious beliefs that cause people to overlook structural violence, such as bias against certain ethnic or social groups

Chapter 2: Conflict-sensitive approaches

Any intervention in a conflict-affected context has an impact on the social, political, environmental or economic factors that influence the conflict in that context.

These impacts may be positive (reducing tensions or improving relationships between key stakeholders) or negative (worsening tensions or maintaining a negative status quo); direct or indirect; intentional or unintentional. 'Conflict sensitivity' is an umbrella term for approaches to managing these impacts.

A conflict-sensitive approach involves gaining a sound understanding of the two-way interaction between activities and the conflict context, and acting to minimise negative impacts and maximise positive impacts of interventions on conflict.

Adopting a conflict-sensitive approach makes resilience-building programmes more effective and efficient as it contributes to improving conditions that can otherwise undermine resilience-building efforts. It makes programme implementation safer and more secure for staff and beneficiaries.

Conflict-sensitive approaches are guided by principles that are relevant in all stages of project planning, implementation or monitoring, evaluation and learning:

- Responsibility
- Participation
- Inclusiveness
- Impartiality
- Transparency
- Accountability
- Respect
- Partnership, coordination and complementarity
- Timeliness.

Resilience strengthening requires an all-of-society engagement and partnership that takes diversity into consideration and seeks to overcome structural inequalities and discrimination. This includes aspects such as gender, age, ethnicity, religion, caste, disability, and level of education or wealth.

Key questions to guide programme design and implementation include:

- Have you conducted a conflict analysis? Does it include an assessment of underlying conflict factors? How has the design of the project been informed by this analysis?
- Does your analysis capture the diversity of local actors and groups? Does it consider how they are affected by, and affect the conflict? What are the implications for your project?
- How can you ensure that your actions do not reinforce inequalities, harmful norms or stereotypes attributed to certain groups?
- How can processes and activities help to reduce inequalities and improve relationships between diverse groups? How can marginalised and vulnerable groups be empowered?
- Are you inclusive in who you engage as beneficiaries, other stakeholders, partners and staff?
- Do you reflect respect for diversity and equality in your attitudes and behaviour?

Chapter 3:
Building relationships

Resilience-strengthening processes rely on trust, coordination and cooperation between beneficiaries, key stakeholders and staff. This can be challenging in conflict-affected contexts and requires good planning. Some key considerations to keep in mind include:

- Relationship building starts at the very beginning of the project. Even during the initial scoping activities, who you talk to, how you approach them and how you behave towards others can have positive or negative implications for relationships.

- Relationship building should be based on a good analysis of the key actor. It should include a diverse range of stakeholders, including marginalised and vulnerable groups, and groups from both sides of the conflict.

- Lead organisations and partners are equally responsible for establishing and maintaining relationships.

- Be mindful of how relationships with certain stakeholders can be seen by others, especially in conflict-affected contexts, where mistrust is often high.

- Being impartial, and being perceived as impartial, is particularly important. This needs to be reflected in the relationships that are built and maintained.

Bringing conflicting groups together to strengthen resilience

Resilience programmes should not be used to mediate between groups in the midst of active and violent conflict. This requires specific skills, knowledge and expertise, and must be approached with great caution.

However, resilience programmes can help to build bridges between groups where tensions are high, and mistrust rife. This can make an important contribution towards conflict prevention, but requires careful planning.

Here are some key questions to help guide you:

- What grievances exist between conflicting groups? What are their common interests?

- How can you build on any common interests between groups to help build trust and reduce conflict?

- Are groups open to interacting? What are the risks of increasing tensions by bringing them together, and how can they be mitigated?

- Is the location perceived as neutral? Is the timing right?

Building relationships with government and security and justice actors

Relationships with government stakeholders or security and justice actors can be especially challenging, especially if they are seen as being a party to the conflict. Yet they are crucial for effective resilience building and conflict prevention. Key questions to consider include:

- What roles do government stakeholders or security and justice actors play in the conflict context? What are their interests?

- Do they have priorities that are in line with your resilience-building and conflict-prevention goals? What capacities do they have, and what challenges are they facing?

- Are there specific legal or bureaucratic requirements to engage with them?

- If you engage with them, might you be perceived as partial? How can you mitigate that risk?

- Are there potential risks for beneficiaries or staff if you engage with them?

Engaging with informal actors

Informal security actors have a lot of influence in many conflict contexts, but engaging with them can be challenging. This is especially the case when they use or encourage violence.

- Do you understand the role of informal actors in the conflict?

- Can they play a constructive role in resilience building and conflict prevention?

- Do you give them legitimacy, resources or other advantages if you engage with them?

- If you engage with them, might you be perceived as partial? How can you mitigate that risk?

- Are there potential risks for beneficiaries or staff if you engage with them?

Chapter 4: Macro-level conflict analysis

Interventions need to be based on a solid understanding of the conflict context at all levels. A macro-level conflict analysis is a tool for identifying conflict drivers, and stakeholders with an influence over them, at the state, national, regional or international levels. It should complement the local-level conflict analysis (see chapter 6) and guide all aspects of the intervention.

Steps to follow, and guiding questions to consider when designing and conducting a macro-level conflict analysis, include:

1) Clearly identify the objective and scope of your analysis

- Does the analysis cover key conflict issues, stakeholders and opportunities for peace at the sub-national, national and international levels that are relevant to the proposed project?

2) Make preparations to conduct the analysis

- How will the analysis be conducted? Will desk and field research be used? Can you access a wide range of information from different sources (including from government agencies, NGOs, academia)? Is sufficient information available to understand how factors such as gender, age, ethnicity, etc, relate to the conflict dynamics?

- Who will lead and be involved in carrying out the assessment? Will partners play a role? Is there sufficient local expertise? How about conflict and gender expertise?

- Who should you talk to? Can you talk to a wide range of actors to get a nuanced view?

- What resources are available? What can you realistically do with the time and funding available?

3) Collect data and conduct analysis

- Are key aspects of the conflict (such as conflict profile, stakeholder analysis, drivers of conflict and conflict dynamics) considered?

- Are you taking into consideration the diversity of conflict experiences: which specific groups (gender, age, ethnicity, caste, religion, wealth, education, etc) are involved? What roles do they play, and why do they play these specific roles (because of traditions, social norms, political pressure, etc)?

4) Analyse findings

- Are your findings translated into practical recommendations for programme design and implementation?

- Is the analysis explicit about how conflict issues may inter-relate with environmental risk factors, as well as other shocks or stresses that may affect communities?

- Are your recommendations specific enough to address the needs and vulnerabilities specific groups are facing?

Annex 1 of this handbook provides guidance on the key components that should be included in a conflict analysis, as well as guiding questions and tools that can help you gather the data and analyse the findings.

Chapter 5: Planning and preparation

Conflict-sensitivity should be integrated into the planning and preparation for your programme work, including into operational considerations, such as recruitment and partnering strategies. Some key considerations include:

Linking findings from conflict analysis to the purpose, objectives and activities of the project

Your planning and preparation should be informed by your conflict analyses, both at the macro and the local levels, as well as by ongoing analysis.

- Do you need to adjust or change key parameters of the project (including its purpose, objectives and activities) based on the conflict analysis findings?

- What are the risks of implementation being affected by conflict or contributing to tensions?

- What opportunities for peace exist, and how can you reinforce them through your intervention (for example, increased dialogue between divided groups, less violence)?

Selection of location(s)

- Are there conflict implications associated with where you choose to work? For example, how will your choice of site be seen by people, institutions and other stakeholders living in neighbouring areas? Will it put other communities at a disadvantage?

- Is the area a government priority? Will working there result in tensions with the government or with communities living in other parts of the country?

- By working in this area, do you risk providing opportunities for certain conflict actors? Is there a danger that your intervention provides resources to one or more conflict actors? Can these risks be avoided or mitigated?

Selection of beneficiaries

- How does the beneficiary selection relate to existing divisions within the community, and what implications might that have? Where do these groups/organisations/individuals stand in the conflict? Are you working only with one conflict group, or all? What message will that send?

- Staffing, organisational capacities and skills:

- Is your team diverse and balanced (for example in terms of gender, age, language skills, ethnicity, etc)? Are they impartial and seen as being impartial by local people? Do all team members, including senior management, understand conflict-sensitive approaches? If not, can this be managed (eg, through capacity building), or does the team composition need to change?

Partnerships

- Are your partner organisations impartial, and perceived as impartial? Do they have a good understanding of the local context? Do they embrace organisational/project-specific values? Are they willing to learn about and apply a conflict-sensitive approach?

- Do Memoranda of Understanding with partners highlight that you expect impartiality and conflict-sensitive practice? Do you have measures in place to ensure that these are put into practice? Do you have internal conflict resolution mechanisms and procedures in place should problems between the lead and partner organisations occur?

Safety and security

- Does the security situation allow you, your partners and beneficiaries to effectively engage with the project, without putting anyone at risk? Are you considering vulnerabilities of specific groups, such as sexual and gender-based violence?

- Are there events or periods that might prevent or make it difficult for beneficiaries, or certain groups within communities, to participate in project design activities? Are there certain times in the year when tensions are heightened or conflict more likely?

Chapter 6: Local-level conflict analysis and Participatory Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment

Strengthening community resilience to hazards requires a good understanding of the specific local context, including local conflict dynamics.

You can gain this understanding through a two-step process:

1) A local-level conflict analysis

2) A local-level Participatory Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (PVCA) that includes questions on conflict and insecurity.

Conducting these two pieces of analysis takes time and effort. However it is advisable not to merge the two, as they are different in both nature and purpose.

Step 1: Conducting a local-level conflict assessment

The local level conflict assessment can follow a similar structure and use similar tools to the macro-level conflict assessment (see chapter 4), adapted to the local context. Annex 1 provides useful guidance on structuring and conducting this analysis.

1) Clearly identify the objective and scope of the analysis: The objective is to identify key conflict issues, stakeholders and opportunities for peace at the level the project is anticipated to be implemented in, for example, in the selected particular village, county or district.

2) Prepare to conduct the analysis:

- **How, where and when will the analysis be conducted?** Can a participatory approach be applied? Will complementary desk research be carried out? Have locations been identified? What is a good time for the data collection?

- **Who should lead the analysis, and who should be involved?** Are trained staff from the lead or partner organisations available who know how to facilitate participatory discussions and conduct interviews? Is the team diverse, including female and male researchers, and reflecting the composition of society in the research location?

- **Who should you talk to, where and when?** Can you talk to a wide range of actors to get a nuanced view? How can you get views of vulnerable or marginalised groups, without putting them at risk? What venues and times are appropriate and safe for respondents? How much time do you need?

- **What resources do you have available?** Are costs included in the budget? Do you need funds for partner/staff capacity building?

3) Data collection and analysis:

- Before you start, make sure you are familiar with the findings of the macro-level context analysis.

- Have the right tools been prepared to collect the data you require? Are they easy to understand, including for illiterate people or those who are visually impaired? Do you have clear guiding questions for interviews? How can you create an atmosphere of trust in which people will share their views? Have you ensured the respondents' safety and security?

4) Analysing findings:

- Are there groups whose views are opposed to each other? Does this suggest a potential for conflict?

Step 2: Conducting a Participatory Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (PVCA)

A PVCA helps communities and implementing organisations to identify and understand existing risks, vulnerabilities and opportunities. It can help to identify existing or potential conflicts that could affect a community's resilience-building efforts.

- Have questions on conflicts and tensions been integrated into PVCA tools? Have staff been trained on those adjusted tools?

- Are diverse experiences of risks and vulnerabilities taken into consideration?

Annex 2[1] provides guiding questions that can be integrated into a wide range of tools to help capture key conflict issues, alongside questions related to disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

Step 3: Analysing findings from both analyses exercises

The two local-level analyses should be analysed separately, and then linked to each other and to the findings of the macro-level conflict assessment.

- Do your findings show how risks and vulnerabilities play out differently for different people/groups?

- How will you translate the findings into practical recommendations for programme design? How can you build on any potential opportunities for peace, and avoid the risk of exacerbating any conflict drivers?

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[1] Adapted from World Vision (2012), Participatory learning approaches for resilience: Bringing conflict sensitivity, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation together. World Vision UK; London.

Chapter 7: Action planning and implementation

If carefully managed, the process of developing your action plan – as well as the resilience activities themselves – can contribute towards conflict prevention.

Key considerations include:

Action planning should be informed by both macro- and local-level conflict analysis: The conflict analysis should identify groups with the potential to engage in conflict, as well as issues, resources or events that are likely to contribute to tension between groups. These findings should inform who you engage with and how, and what issues to prioritise.

• Is your action planning and implementation informed by both macro- and local-level conflict analysis?

The process of developing action plans can empower people and build relationships: Bringing representatives from diverse groups together to discuss key challenges and agree on priorities can be empowering and help to break down barriers between groups.

• Does the action planning and implementation process actively empower marginalised and vulnerable groups? Can these groups take an active role in decision making, alongside with those who are more privileged?

• Does the process provide opportunities to bring conflicting groups together through resilience building? Is trust between the groups high enough to have joint meetings or activities from the start, or should there be separate meetings with each of them first?

• Are there opportunities to involve security and justice providers in resilience-building activities?

Activities should reduce barriers and inequalities and promote greater community cohesion:

• Do your activities contribute to conflict prevention? If not, can they be redesigned to include conflict prevention aspects?

• Are you addressing and seeking to overcome inequalities and discrimination through your work processes and activities?

It's important to help community groups think through how proposed activities could contribute to conflict or tensions:

• Do staff have the capacity to guide community members through this process?

• Could resilience-building activities reinforce inequalities in the community? Could activities lead to tensions with other communities? How can activities bridge divides between conflicting groups or empower marginalised people?

The potential of an activity to contribute to reducing or preventing conflict should be a criteria for activity selection: Consider where and when community meetings will be held. The venue for community meetings should be in a safe and easily reached location. Remember that 'safe' and 'accessible' might mean different things for different people.

• Is the timing appropriate for different groups in the community? Is it too late for some people (such as women or young people) to be out? Does it interfere with other chores and responsibilities (such as work, household chores, school)?

• Is the venue safe and appropriate for everyone? Will women and vulnerable people feel comfortable? Is it accessible for everyone, including the elderly and people with disabilities?

Review progress throughout the implementation stage: It is important that both the conflict context and the impact of the project on this context are continuously monitored, and changes made as necessary (see chapter 8).

• Is there continuous monitoring of the process (ensuring that it is inclusive and conflict sensitive) and progress of the activities (ensuring that they contribute to resilience building and conflict prevention)? Are community members involved in monitoring and reviewing?

• Do plans need to be adjusted because of changes in the conflict, social, environmental etc. context?

Chapter 8: Monitoring and evaluation

Conflict-sensitive monitoring involves three key elements:

- monitoring the conflict context
- monitoring the effects of the conflict context on the resilience intervention
- monitoring the effects of the intervention on the conflict context.

Types of indicators that are frequently used include:

- Intervention indicators, measuring whether the intervention is moving towards achieving its objectives
- Conflict/context indicators, measuring changes in the conflict/context
- Interaction indicators, measuring whether and how the intervention is having an impact on the conflict/context.

Conflict-sensitive evaluation introduces a detailed understanding of actors, profile, causes and dynamics into traditional evaluation activities and processes. Such evaluations are used to understand the overall impact a given intervention has had on its context, and the context on the intervention, and can inform future initiatives.

Key questions to consider when designing and conducting monitoring and evaluation activities include:

- Who is leading the process? How are they perceived by the people being consulted and how could this affect the data? Are responsibilities spread across different members of staff?
- Who is being consulted? How diverse are the groups being consulted (caste or ethnic groups, gender, in positions of power or marginalised)? Are both direct beneficiaries and surrounding communities included?

- When is the monitoring/evaluation being conducted? Does this account for any potentially sensitive times (for example, harvesting season or around elections)?
- Are you capturing unintended impacts?
- Are you measuring change at different levels? And how change differs between diverse groups?
- Are outcomes of the evaluation fed back to the community and all stakeholders, and do they have an opportunity to comment on the findings?
- How will analysis from monitoring and evaluation be used to influence relevant decision-making processes (project design, staff security, planning, etc)?
- How can how learning on conflict sensitivity emerging from the evaluation be shared with others (for example by developing a public summary of key lessons learned) and inform future practice?

Chapter 9:
Advocacy

Conflict-sensitive advocacy is a strategic process of influencing, and seeking to improve, the policies and practices of actor groups, often authorities, in such a way as to minimise negative and maximise positive impacts on peace.

There are many types of advocacy, (for example, go-and-see visits, seminars, street drama, campaigns on the radio, TV, social media). They type that is most appropriate in your context is determined by a range of factors; primarily which approach is likely to have the greatest positive impact, and least likely to put activities, beneficiaries or staff at risk or to create tensions. Advocacy activities may, for example, focus on:

- bringing communities together to articulate their needs and concerns to decision makers

- using the experience of working on the ground to draw evidence-based arguments about the way national and international actors can best prevent conflict and build resilience for local people

- engaging directly with government officials and international institutions to influence policy.

Successful advocacy is a process rather than an event and should be seen as an integral component of programming. A key to conducting successful advocacy is the development of an advocacy strategy:

Step 1: Assess the situation, drawing upon both the macro- and local- level analyses conducted during project design and preparation (chapters 4 and 6).

- Which contextual factors and changes might affect success positively or negatively? Does this require a change of plans?

Step 2: Establish goals, drawing from the local-level PVCA (chapter 6) and the macro-level conflict analysis (chapter 4).

- What changes do you want to see? What are your advocacy objectives?

- Have community members been involved in prioritising advocacy goals and objectives?

Step 3: Develop an influencing strategy, drawing from the stakeholder and conflict mapping conducted during your local level conflict and PVCA analyses (chapter 6) and macro-level conflict analysis (chapter 4).

- Who can make the changes happen? How can they be influenced to do so?

- Who is best placed to convey advocacy messages? What are the implicit messages that your advocacy activities convey? (For example, what does it say if advocacy is conducted only by staff of one gender, or social or ethnic group?)

- What impacts might advocacy activities have on local people and programme staff? Are there dangers that they may be put at risk by such activities? If so, how can these risks be mitigated?

- How is your organisation and its staff viewed by local people/security providers/authorities? How do you ensure that you are perceived as impartial and legitimate actors in this context? How do you ensure that you are not seen to be aligned to any one group engaged in conflict?

Step 4: Plan your activities

- Are there any potentially sensitive events during the advocacy strategy period (such as contested religious holidays, elections or memorials)? What might be the implications for what kind of advocacy takes place, and how it is conducted?

Step 5: Implement the strategy

Step 6: Monitor and evaluate whether activities are having the intended impacts, as well as continuously monitoring the context to ensure that activities remain relevant and are not exacerbating tensions or putting communities or staff at risk.

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