



Conflict Sensitivity and Monitoring & Evaluation Toolbox

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Background

The Conflict Sensitivity Guidance Note and Toolbox series is produced under the Lebanon Response Plan's conflict sensitivity mainstreaming work, led by UNDP. To date, six context-specific guidance notes and toolboxes have been developed to support partners working across the humanitarian, development, and peace nexus in Lebanon.

The seventh toolbox, Conflict Sensitivity and Monitoring & Evaluation tackles the topic of Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) from two angles. Firstly, it aims to provide partners with practical tips for conducting conflict-sensitive M&E within the unique context of Lebanon (Part 1: Conflict-sensitive Monitoring & Evaluation). Secondly, it provides tips and guidance for how partners in Lebanon can better monitor and evaluate the application of conflict sensitivity (Part 2: Monitoring & Evaluating Conflict Sensitivity).

The toolbox has been developed through a consultative process with partners and experts working on M&E and social stability across UN agencies, and international, and local organizations. As a result, the toolbox draws on real-life examples from both humanitarian and stabilization interventions in Lebanon which illustrates how conflict sensitivity is as relevant to monitoring and evaluation as it is to any other step in the project cycle.

Who can use the guidance and when?

This toolbox is designed for the benefit of all local and international humanitarian and development partners operating in Lebanon. Whilst the toolbox is specifically developed for Lebanon; many of the elements could be applied in other contexts.

Staff directly involved in M&E activities, proposal writing, conflict sensitivity mainstreaming, reporting and protection mainstreaming will find value in the various sections of the toolbox. Additionally, program and project staff engaged in data collection, enumerators, and volunteers can utilize this toolbox in preparing for their field visits and other M&E activities.

How can the guidance best be used?

This toolbox is a tool of continuous reference, rather than a one-time exercise. It is helpful to treat it as a living document that can be referred to at any stage of the M&E process.



1

Why is Conflict Sensitivity Crucial in Lebanon?

“The concept of “conflict sensitivity” starts from recognizing that humanitarian, development and peacebuilding activities cannot be separated from the peace and conflict context in which they are implemented”^[1].

Therefore, conflict sensitivity is the capacity of any organization supporting or implementing humanitarian or development interventions in crises, conflict-prone or conflict-affected contexts, to:

- 1 Understand the context of their intervention,
- 2 Understand the different aspects of the intervention itself,
- 3 Understand the interaction between the intervention and the context,
- 4 and act upon this new understanding to avoid harm or to contribute to peace when possible.

At the core, conflict sensitivity is about paying attention to the unintended or unanticipated impact that any intervention might have on conflict and peace dynamics, positively or negatively.

This unintentional impact might be driven by a specific activity, a distribution location, selection criteria, an established partnership, a procurement policy, a communication message, etc.

Delivering assistance in a context such as Lebanon can be highly challenging as there is already underlying fragmentation, social tensions, or violent disputes that can potentially worsen conflicts in dangerous ways. Most partners in Lebanon are aware of such risks, but they find it difficult to consistently identify and manage these risks within the demands of their everyday work. With the multiple crises since 2019, such challenges have even deepened further. As monitored through the Tension Monitoring System, developed and implemented by UNDP, conflict drivers have both deepened and expanded, with increasing intra-communal sectarian tensions, lack of trust in institutions, rising community insecurity, aid perception bias, internal displacement, and competition over resources such as jobs, goods and services. These factors must be carefully considered in any response efforts.

Hence, conflict sensitivity should be applied to all programs (i.e., humanitarian, development, peacebuilding), all operational functions (e.g., human resources (HR), finance, procurement, logistics), all types of activities (e.g., registration, distribution, capacity building), and in all contexts (e.g., open and latent conflicts).

[1] [CONFLICT SENSITIVITY, PEACEBUILDING AND SUSTAINING PEACE](#), UN Sustainable Development Group 2022.

2

Interlinking Conflict Sensitivity and Monitoring and Evaluation



Monitoring is “a continuing function that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders of an on-going development – (or aid) – intervention with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds.”



Evaluation is “the systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.”^[2]



Firstly, M&E with all its processes and activities has **the potential to generate unintentional positive or negative impact**, as elaborated in the following section. It’s important to recognize that M&E activities constitute research, and “the interaction of research and conflict context affects **what** is being researched, **how** research is carried out, and the **knowledge** that is thus produced”.^[3]

Therefore, M&E should be carried out in a conflict-sensitive manner. **Conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation enable partners to integrate a nuanced understanding of conflict dynamics, including causes, actors, and profiles, into conventional monitoring and evaluation approaches.** This enhanced

understanding allows for more informed adjustments and adaptations to M&E activities, as well as to the overall implemented program.

While both conflict-sensitive M&E share the overarching goal of enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of interventions in conflict-affected areas, they differ in their focus, scope, and timing within the program cycle. Conflict-sensitive monitoring provides ongoing feedback and adjustments during implementation to mitigate immediate risks, while conflict-sensitive evaluation offers deeper insights into program outcomes and impacts, supporting learning, accountability, and evidence-based decision-making over the long term.

Conflict Sensitive Monitoring focuses on real-time data collection and analysis to track the progress, implementation, and immediate effects of programs in conflict-affected areas.

It helps identify early warning signs of potential conflict triggers or unintended negative consequences of the M&E activities themselves, allowing for timely adjustments to program implementation.

Conflict Sensitive Evaluation involves in-depth analysis and assessment of the impact, effectiveness, and sustainability of programs in conflict-affected contexts.

It helps stakeholders understand the broader implications and outcomes of interventions, including their contributions to conflict mitigation, peacebuilding, and community resilience.

[2] Glossary of key terms, OECD-DAC, 27-28.

[3] Ursina Bentele, swisspeace, Guidelines to Conflict Sensitive Research, Vol. 15, No. 5, 2020

Part One of the toolbox covers how to carry out M&E activities in Lebanon with a conflict-sensitive lens (i.e., conflict-sensitive M&E).

It is challenging to provide specific guidelines for conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation as it is so activity- and context-specific. For example, indicators that work well in one scenario typically do not work well in another. Notwithstanding the difficulties, this part of the toolbox provides an overview of pertinent practices in conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation, along with some fresh perspectives on traditional problems.

Secondly, M&E plays a crucial role in ensuring that conflict sensitivity is applied effectively, and that organizations have proper systems in place to monitor and evaluate any unintentional negative or positive impact, follow up on actions and changes made, and ensure that lessons are learned and shared.

The monitoring system should aim to assess how the intervention affects the evolving context and vice versa. It should also allow programming to be modified as needed to guarantee the highest level of conflict sensitivity. The evaluation system should look for ways to improve future conflict-sensitive planning and execution.

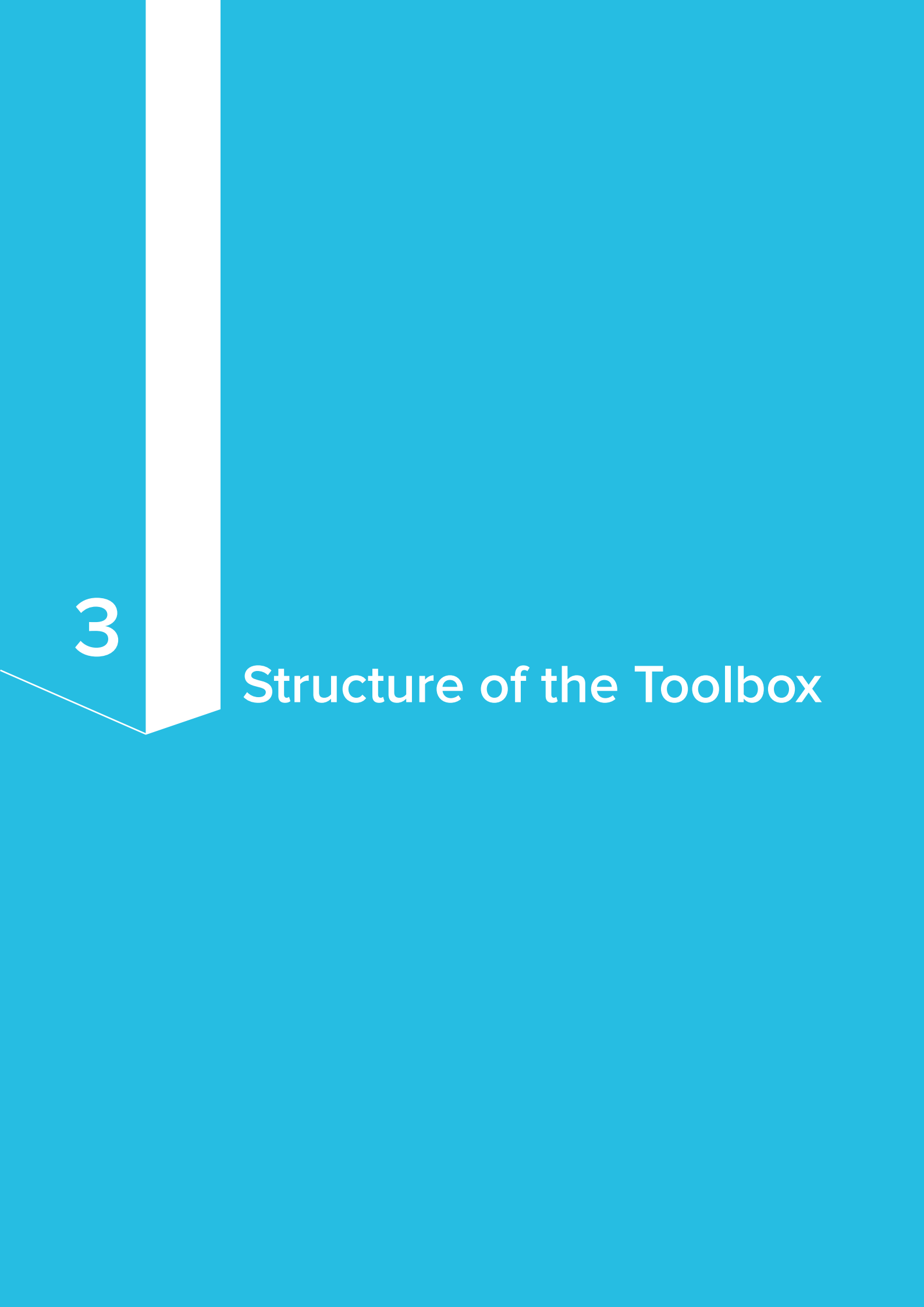
Part Two of the toolbox covers; how to monitor and evaluate conflict sensitivity risks and mitigation measures (i.e., monitoring and evaluating of conflict sensitivity).

Although this part offers the best practice that was prevalent at the time of writing, it should not be interpreted as the final word on the topic. It should be highlighted that conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation is still in its early phases of development. One of the most notable issues is the creation of indicators (see “process monitoring” section below).

The question is how to monitor or evaluate unintentional impact! Usually, organizations rely on a pre-set of indicators related to the outcomes they anticipate from their intervention, and they use those indicators to measure those outcomes. However, conflict sensitivity invites organizations to look beyond the intentional impact and monitor unintentional impact in a systemic way.

Note that

1. Both aspects of the toolbox are interlinked and complementary, as evident in the connection between Parts 1 and 2.
2. Conflict sensitivity complements other protection and safeguarding policies and tools related to the protection of individuals participating in any M&E activity, and hence this toolbox will not cover all protection aspects.



3

Structure of the Toolbox

This toolbox is composed of three different sections:

- **Introductory Section** – here, the rationale and foundational elements of Conflict Sensitivity and Monitoring & Evaluation are explained, giving readers a general understanding of key principles and elements.

In the two following sections, the toolbox proceeds to offer practical guidance across two different workstreams:

- **Part 1: “Conflict-sensitive Monitoring & Evaluation”** where partners are provided with guidance on how to conduct/operationalize M&E activities in a conflict sensitive way (working in a conflict setting in Lebanon).
- **Part 2: “Monitoring & Evaluating Conflict Sensitivity”** where partners are provided with guidance on how to monitor conflict dynamics and evaluate progress against conflict sensitivity aspects as a programmatic topic in Lebanon using adequate tools and methods (working on conflict as a topic in Lebanon).

Section	Sub-section	Main items
Part One: Conflict-sensitive Monitoring & Evaluation	Needs Assessment	► Use of secondary data ► Baseline assessment ► Vulnerability criteria ► Selection criteria inception phase
	Logframe, Indicators and Plan	► Pre-design reflection ► Selecting conflict-sensitive SMART^[4] indicators ► Plan integration and budget
	Surveys, Focus Group Discussions (FGD), Key Informant Interview questions	► Designing Questionnaires ► Focus Group Discussion set-up
	Planning, Preparation, and Capacity Planning	► Allocation of M&E responsibilities ► Capacity building aspects ► Selection of enumerators ► Timing of M&E activities ► M&E security measures
	Coordination and Liaison	► Ensuring adequate and flexible time ► Coordination measures ► Arranging activities with the participants ► Employing phone calls

[4] SMART indicators are **specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound indicators that are used in monitoring and evaluation.**

	Data Collection, Communication and Enumerators Conduct	▶ Enumerators' identities/gender implications ▶ Introducing the team ▶ Introducing the purpose ▶ Clarify the rights of the respondents ▶ Clarify the process ▶ Attention to body language ▶ Psychosocial support to enumerators
	Evaluation Process	▶ Theory of change for casual links
	Analysis and Reporting	▶ Learning session with the team ▶ Validation workshop ▶ Sharing feedback with the team ▶ The limitations of the assessment ▶ Data storage ▶ Sharing findings
Part Two: Monitoring & Evaluating Conflict Sensitivity	Adaptive Management	▶ Management commitment and buy-in ▶ M&E responsibility
	Context and Conflict Update	▶ Multi-level context update ▶ Community group mapping ▶ Identification of conflict variables
	Tools and Indicators Development	▶ Review of theory of change ▶ Context monitoring ▶ Interaction monitoring and evaluation ▶ Process monitoring ▶ Examples of indicators and data collection methods
	Conflict Sensitivity Reporting	▶ Using existing systems ▶ Advocating with donors

4

Conflict Risks Associated with M&E

Conflict-sensitive Monitoring and Evaluation can effectively mitigate significant conflict risks associated with various M&E steps: Design, Planning, Implementation, Reporting, and Learning.

Consider reflecting on the risks most prevalent in Lebanon to harness a collective understanding in your team of conflict-sensitive M&E

Design

When designing the logframe and the indicators, **organizations might miss the opportunity of capturing the unintentional positive, or negative**, impact they might have on communal relations.

When M&E activities lack clear purpose and objectives, **there is a risk of collecting irrelevant and unnecessary data**, which might increase respondents' suspicions and frustration.

When designing questionnaires, **certain questions**, especially those related to inter- and intra-communal relations, or trust in local institutions, **might imply the existence of issues/conflicts that are not genuinely concerning to the respondents**.

Certain local partners who are responsible for the needs assessment outreach **are not inclusive of all communities in their approach and conduct**.

Planning

The timing of M&E activities is important. **Risks could include that M&E activities coincide with sensitive events** (such as elections, or suspicious attempts of malicious actors – local or foreigners – to collect information about the situation in some areas in Lebanon), **which might increase fears and contribute to spreading rumours**.

When various agencies independently plan **numerous assessments or conduct them at a high frequency** without sharing data, or when the indicators of partner organizations or consortium members differ, the **significant risk of survey fatigue emerges**.

Survey fatigue could contribute to a **lack of reporting on complaints and feedback** from beneficiaries, ultimately affecting accountability.

If sampling was not done properly,

perception questionnaires might lead to misleading results that do not reflect the opinions of most communities or different segments of the same community. Additionally, the specific needs of certain groups (e.g., women, people with disabilities, youth, nationalities, and confessional groups) might be overlooked.

Failure to consider power dynamics may lead to expressed perceptions that could exacerbate existing tensions, for example when organizing Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with individuals from diverse backgrounds.

The **selection of data collection methods** is a delicate matter which needs to be carefully considered. For instance, door-to-door visits might expose participants in certain places which might increase tensions.

The process of data collection risks inducing stress among participants, leading to concerns about the intent behind it. Certain participants may be apprehensive about the possibility of losing access to assistance or services based on their responses, thereby influencing the ultimate findings.

In Lebanon, there is a **high risk of retraumatizing participants** due to sensitive questions related to recent and old collective traumas that remain unresolved. This could potentially lead to increased tensions.

Community members could be put at risk by raising suspicion or asking sensitive questions. Questions that are acceptable in one context may endanger interviewers and respondents in another. For instance, asking participants about their perceptions of the role of local authorities or a predominant political party can lead to accusing the agency (or the respondents) of following foreign agendas. Interviewers may inadvertently upset respondents with probing, insensitive questions.

If the enumerator is not adequately prepared to deal with stress, conflict and difficult topics, this could lead to inability to address comments/perceptions that need to be instantly addressed (e.g., calls for violence against another group, blaming “others” for the suffering of a certain group for no valid reasons). As a result, this might reinforce or validate those negative perceptions or dividers.

If local authorities or other entities stipulate the presence of their representative during

data collection, as observed for example recently in South Lebanon, **M&E activities could expose respondents to the risk of potential retaliation,** particularly when questions are raised regarding trust in local authorities or the quality of local services. **Such conditions could also inadvertently influence the answers of respondents and ultimately affect the findings of the assessment** (e.g. participants might not feel comfortable transparently sharing their impressions of the local authority biases or malpractices, which could deny the organization collecting the data, valuable insights regarding a possible partnership with that entity).

Ignoring irrelevant but serious complaints during an M&E activity might give a negative implicit message that the organization is only concerned about extracting information from the participants rather than caring about their wellbeing.

Data collection and M&E activities might be confused with needs assessments which might inflate expectations among respondents which could raise negative sentiments and create trust issues with I/ NGOs and UN agencies alike.

Failure to consider ethical and cultural considerations could provoke anger within the community. For instance, sending male enumerators to female-headed households may be perceived as insensitive and inappropriate, potentially leading to resentment and mistrust.

When reporting timelines are tight, organizations **could miss valuable opportunities for learning and capturing insights** to enhance their programs, mitigate potential harm, and contribute to social stability.

If data security was compromised, and personal information of individuals or households (including locations) fell in the wrong hands, **information could be misused, for example to track people or to cause them direct harm**. For instance, leaking the addresses of people with protection cases might expose them to danger from their relatives or members of their communities.

The unconscious bias of staff involved in data analysis might result in errors in impact attribution, thereby influencing related recommendations (e.g., overlooking opportunities to adjust activities that might be causing harm).

Feedback and complaint mechanisms might be abused to incite inter-group harm by submitting false reports. For instance, some people who were displeased that their neighbours received

assistance while they didn't, may submit false reports accusing their neighbours of falsifying information.

Intentionally misrepresenting selected excerpts of findings from reports to contribute to negative narratives against refugees or particular host communities (e.g., The World Bank Economic and Social Impact Assessment being misquoted to inflate the cost of refugee presence in Lebanon).

Exposing research participants to potential harm, such as through the identification and quoting of representatives of vulnerable groups, can lead to various negative consequences. This includes the risk of targeted harassment, discrimination, or even retaliation from individuals or entities who may disagree with or feel threatened by the views expressed by these representatives. Furthermore, it may compromise the trust and confidentiality that participants expect, hindering their willingness to engage in future research or disclose sensitive information essential for understanding their perspectives and experiences.

5

Challenges and Lessons Learnt Regarding Conflict Sensitive M&E in Lebanon

M&E processes face **several challenges** when conducted with a conflict-sensitive approach:

- ▶ **The steps in the M&E process, from design to reporting, often lack a conflict-informed perspective.** They frequently overlook the significance of contextual factors surrounding the project or intervention being monitored, such as local dynamics.
- ▶ **Integrating local knowledge and perspectives into M&E processes is often seen as a challenge,** leading to gaps in understanding community needs and priorities.
- ▶ **M&E activities tend to be extractive,** with information collected from respondents without offering much direct benefit in return.
- ▶ **Conflict-sensitive M&E is not given dedicated time and resources,** including enhanced staff capacities resulting in limited understanding and implementation of conflict-sensitive approaches.
- ▶ **Assessments are often seen as neither coordinated nor conflict-sensitive** and often raise questions about the accountability of the response.
- ▶ **Many beneficiaries express their frustration about the manner in which data collection is conducted,** referring to them as intrusive but also a waste of time, as they did not seem to inform aid distribution systems. Many people report never hearing back from the organizations that visited them, which has worsened their perceptions of the UN, NGOs and public institutions.
- ▶ **There is a lack of standardized methodologies and tools for conducting conflict-sensitive M&E,** making it challenging to compare and learn from different evaluations and assessments.
- ▶ **Partners experience difficulties in measuring long-term and indirect impacts of interventions on conflict dynamics,** as these effects may take time to manifest and are influenced by various contextual factors.

- ▶ **Assessing the success of conflict sensitivity application can be difficult,** as it requires a redefined understanding of success, prioritizing the project's interaction with the context. This is particularly challenging in a deteriorating context. For example, within the Social Stability sector in Lebanon, impact is measured through a "Percentage decrease in the population living in vulnerable areas reporting tensions in their communities". Despite continued interventions, this indicator is declining due to the overall deteriorating context.

Some key lessons learned in Lebanon related to M&E, as captured in evaluations and strategic reviews, include:

- ▶ Simplifying the collection and reporting of data to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.
- ▶ Further reducing the proliferation of similar assessments and reports to avoid redundancy and survey fatigue.
- ▶ Increasing the utilization of information for planning purposes by conducting demand-led analysis and providing training in data analysis.
- ▶ Measuring social stability at an impact level to assist partners and donors in making critical decisions regarding resource allocation, program adjustments, or the establishment of new activities.

6

Part 1: Conflict-Sensitive M&E

Conflict-sensitive M&E is context-specific and activity-specific, which makes it challenging to offer specific guidance. However, in general, developing a monitoring and evaluation plan in contexts of conflict, instability, and fragility should normally involve:

- A** Clearly defining the purpose: Every M&E activity, irrespective of the context, should initiate with the fundamental question: What is the intended goal of this activity and how will the acquired information be utilized? Clearly defining the purpose and objectives of an activity – be it an assessment, a report, a logframe, or an evaluation stands as the most crucial planning step. Without a clear purpose, the assessment lacks direction and may result in the collection of unnecessary data. As mentioned in the risk section, survey fatigue, suspicion and trust issues can be caused when the purpose is not well defined.
- B** Formulating key questions: Managers overseeing M&E should compile a set of questions (or lines of inquiry) aimed at being addressed by the activity. For instance, for a post-distribution monitoring activity, three lines of inquiry can be specified: 1) the impact of the delivered aid on people's well-being, 2) the perceptions around the selection process, and 3) the impact on the relationships with the larger community. The nature of the intervention, the stage of implementation, and the desired outcomes determine the specific queries.
- C** Conduct a Context and Conflict Analysis: Context and Conflict Analysis is the primary and foundational step for initiating a Conflict Sensitivity process, including M&E. Ensure to conduct your own analysis or leverage existing analyzes available by other organizations or platforms, such as the Tension Monitoring System dashboard.

Conflict Sensitive M&E Checklist

Baseline and Needs Assessment

An updated Context and conflict analysis is needed at three levels:

- ▶ **Country level:** a general understanding of the conflict dynamics. This can be done in collaboration between different agencies, institutions, and NGOs once yearly (or more if major changes take place).
- ▶ **Sector level:** an understanding of how certain key conflict drivers play out in each sector particularly. This should be done for each sector yearly while developing the strategy.
- ▶ **Project level:** a project-level understanding (more at the micro level) of conflict dynamics at the area of intervention. This should be done by each organization, for each area, or possibly in collaboration with other organizations working in the same area upon the design of new programs or projects.

☐

When conducting a needs assessment it is advisable to first **examine existing data and reports** from other actors. The emphasis should be on using your tools to address gaps rather than collecting data from scratch. Data sharing is crucial to prevent redundancy and enhance cost efficiency. Examples of existing data tools in Lebanon are [the Lebanon Assessment, Survey and Evaluation Registry \(LASER\)](#) and the [Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon \(VASyR\)](#).

Exercise caution when incorporating secondary data that may contain sensitive information about the context. It is advisable to triangulate this information before adopting it, ensuring reliability and accuracy.

☐

Initiate a discussion with the relevant Sector Leads to identify existing data and assessments in the implementation area. This can facilitate data sharing across organizations. Please refer to the [Sector Coordination Teams Contact List](#).

☐

In the design of your needs assessment, try to be inclusive and **engage at an early stage with various stakeholders** including representatives of the communities, and officials from local authorities. Check UNDP and House of Peace [toolbox II: Engagement with Local Authorities in Lebanon](#).

☐

Where possible, all collected data should be **disaggregated by age, sex, disability and nationality**.

☐

Utilize the insights gathered from both context analysis and needs assessment to establish your baseline. **Ensure inclusivity by considering not only the target group** but also marginalized or vulnerable populations. Excluding these groups from baseline data could result in an incomplete understanding of their needs, potentially worsening existing tensions or inequalities.

☐

If the project has a predetermined target group based on donor requirements, **it is crucial to include an assessment on whether this risks escalating tensions with other groups**. The findings should be shared transparently with the donor, facilitating informed decision-making regarding potential impacts on inter- and intra-group dynamics.

☐

Review [UNDP and House of Peace Guidance Note II on Project Design Cycle in Lebanon](#) for additional insights regarding needs assessment and selection criteria.

☐

Pre-design reflection: Review the updated context analysis to be aware of sensitive topics, social norms, use of language, and existing tensions in your area of intervention as you develop of your logframe, indicators and M&E plan.



Pre-design reflection: Engage in reflection with the programme or project team^[5]: Is the intervention intended to tackle the root causes of the conflict? Can it address, or potentially address, the critical tensions identified as key factors in past, present, or potential future conflicts?

Let your answers inform the design of your indicators.



Pre-design reflection: Consult with your implementing partners to identify the best parameters (i.e., indicators) to use to measure the level of achievement of activities and outcomes. Design the logframe in a participatory approach with your partners.



When selecting your **SMART project indicators**, ensure that:

- ▶ Indicators encompass a variety of both qualitative and quantitative data.
- ▶ You have at least one indicator to measure potential positive impact on social stability (e.g., inclusion of participants from different backgrounds).
- ▶ Your indicators do not unintentionally reinforce or mainstream existing prejudices (e.g., % of community members express increased safety in their areas regardless of their backgrounds, instead of % of host community members express increased safety around refugees).
- ▶ Avoid high targets that would put pressure on the participants and the team as organizations strive to meet these objectives. In some cases, the pursuit of targets may inadvertently compromise the quality of activities.



Ensure that your M&E activities are adequately budgeted, and the budget remains flexible to adapt to changing contexts or feedback received during the inception phase (e.g., changing data collection methods from phone calls to field visits or vis versa if the essential methods were causing tensions).



Have a conflict sensitivity expert review the logframe and the M&E tools.



Update the M&E plan regularly to see what else you should be monitoring based on changes in the context.



[5] OECD: Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility.

The selection of a M&E method is led by the initial key questions (lines of inquiries) mentioned above, but **it is equally important to consider the sensitivity of the context when choosing the data collection method**. For instance, if assessing how one community's perceptions of another were affected by distributed aid in an area with historical tensions, posing this question via a survey with random sampling could inadvertently reinforce existing negative perceptions. In such scenarios, exploring this issue through interviews or focus group discussions may yield more nuanced insights

When designing your **survey questionnaire** and **guiding questions** consider the following aspects:

- ▶ Start the questionnaire with a clear statement about the purpose of the survey.
- ▶ Inquire about personal information only if it is not prefilled and not available in your database.
- ▶ Maintain a conscious balance between information that is good-to-know and essential need-to-know data.
- ▶ Avoid the use of complicated language and jargon terms that might be intimidating to people or could be misinterpreted (e.g., "Polarisation").
- ▶ Employ culturally appropriate language.

Consider the level of acceptance/non-acceptance of certain terms by the targeted respondents, (e.g., in some communities, the term "displaced" may be more acceptable than "refugees").

When selecting your questions, distinguish between the "factual" and "perceptual" data you aim to collect:

- ▶ Perception questions might include inquiries such as "What do you think about?" or "How do you feel?" or «How has this situation affected you?».
- ▶ Factual questions, on the other hand, pertain to objective information and typically begin with who, what, when, where, why, and how. These questions focus on gathering concrete details and factual accounts rather than subjective opinions or perceptions.

Maintaining a mix and balance of both types of questions ensures a comprehensive understanding of the situation while also capturing the nuanced perspectives and experiences of the respondents.

- ▶ **Avoid posing leading questions** such as: "Has the local authority been fair in providing access to that service to all community members?" Instead, ask open-ended questions like: "What are your thoughts on the access to the service? Do you believe it was fair for all communities? Why or why not?"
- ▶ **Add open ended questions to probe sensitive issues** such as "What do you think about...? How do you feel regarding...?" without implying potential answers.
- ▶ **Use 3 or 5-scale questions** to avoid binary answers.
- ▶ When exploring perceptions, **make sure to incorporate a variety of situational questions** that encompass both personal and general contexts such as "What do you think would be the reaction of a local person if faced with such a situation? What would be your reaction?"
- ▶ **Refrain from including stigmatizing questions** (e.g., asking refugees or internally displaced peoples about lice or scabies), which may imply negative hygiene habits. Alternatively, address these issues indirectly.

- ▶ **Avoid specifying particular nationalities when inquiring about “others”** and keep the question general.
- ▶ **Sequence the questions from less sensitive to more sensitive**, start with inquiries directly related to the program before delving into perceptions about social stability as necessary.
- ▶ **Do not include mandatory questions.** Always allow the option of opting out.
- ▶ **Inquire with participants about their ideas on how specific activities should be conducted differently**, particularly when these activities have led to tensions between them and their neighbours.

Including questions that facilitate data triangulation is essential for enhancing the reliability and validity of the findings. These questions should be designed to cross-reference information obtained through various sources, such as surveys, interviews, and secondary data.

By asking respondents to corroborate or elaborate on previously gathered data points, you can strengthen the overall credibility of your analysis and conclusions. Triangulation helps ensure that the findings are robust and representative of the complex realities on the ground.

If certain conflict sensitivity risks related to Resource Transfers such as “targeting effect” (mentioned below) were conceivable, you might include such questions to **your Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM)**:^[6]

- ▶ Do you have any comments about the recent aid distribution?
- ▶ How has the distribution helped your community?
- ▶ Why do you think the beneficiaries were selected? Who selected them?
- ▶ Did you notice any instances of collaborations or solidarity happening during and/or after the distribution? If yes, what has changed?
- ▶ Did you notice any conflict happening during and/or after the distribution? If yes, between whom? About what? Who helped to resolve the conflicts?
- ▶ Do you have any recommendations on how the community and/or my organization should manage such aid distributions in the future?

When designing focus group discussions (FGDs), **have separate sessions with separate groups especially when tensions are high between them.** Also, consider having separate groups for women led by women staff.

In your design, **prioritize secure data management and storage protocols** to protect the integrity and confidentiality of the collected data, particularly when fieldwork involves movement and visits to various locations. Failing to implement robust data security measures can increase the risk of data loss or unauthorized access, potentially exposing respondents to harm or jeopardizing the credibility of the organization. By ensuring stringent data protection practices, organizations can uphold ethical standards and safeguard the well-being of those involved in the data collection process.

[6] Adapted from the work of World Vision Cambodia in: Garred, M. et al. 2007. ‘[Conflict Sensitivity in Emergencies: Learning from the Asia Tsunami Response](#).’ World Vision International.

Planning, Preparation, and Capacity Planning

M&E activities are typically planned around set timeframes outlined in the project documents (e.g., quarterly and annual reports, end of project, new project phase). **Integrating conflict sensitivity into monitoring and evaluation may require some flexibility in terms of timing** as a project's scheduled timing may inadvertently take place at a time that is not appropriate such as during Ramadan or other religious holidays.

If you are investigating the impact of a winterization project, ensure your assessment takes place during the winter. This timing allows for more accurate responses, facilitating the measurement of both direct and indirect impacts.

Scheduling an evaluation visit to avoid storms or cold winter months may enhance travel logistics and comfort. However, evaluators might miss significant aspects of human interactions and prevailing attitudes during those times, which are crucial to the assessment.

Engage project implementers in sharing M&E responsibilities to promote a collaborative approach.

While designating an M&E specialist is important for oversight, involving those directly involved in daily activities is crucial for effective data collection. This ensures smooth information flow and timely risk detection. Additionally, provide conflict sensitivity training to data collectors to enhance their awareness and effectiveness during fieldwork.

If retaining **external evaluators**, include in the **Terms of Reference** a **clear requirement about adhering to the principles of conflict sensitivity**, and demonstrating conflict analysis skills, good knowledge of the context and its history, and sensitivity to the local context.

Ensure evaluation criteria is not exclusively quantitative, as is predominantly the case with humanitarian and development programmes.

Capacity development of enumerators ought to encompass proficiency in:

Must have	Optional
The concept of conflict sensitivity.	Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis.
Orientation about the area of the activities and the culture of the approached communities.	Skills to collect information from elderly and persons with disabilities.
Active listening skills.	The ability to make sense of information derived from open-ended dialogues and feedback channels.
The ability to sense rising tension during an activity and how to de-escalate.	Technical support to use visual aids to collect information from children.
Ability and authority to adapt methods to the demands of unexpected conversations or situations.	
A comprehensive understanding of this toolbox.	

Considering the vulnerability of the targeted group and the sensitivity of the assessment, **carefully determine who should conduct the data collection**. For instance, if the data activity involves victims of communal violence, Gender-based violence victims, or children, specialized staff should be assigned to conduct the activity. Similarly, for female respondents, deploy female enumerators. In other situations, consider pairing a male and a female in each data collection team.



In the **selection of your enumerators**, consider their backgrounds, their reach and access, and how they will be perceived by the local community. It is advisable to resort to trained staff or volunteers from the same background as the respondents whenever possible.



Review your **security measures for M&E activities** from a conflict-sensitive perspective:

- ▶ If your security measures involve depending on local security escorts for field visits, communicate this in advance with the communities. Clarify that these measures are imposed on your team and not due to a lack of trust in the people. This can help mitigate any negative implicit ethical message about the use of power and arms.
- ▶ Consider the impact of your security measures on the perceptions of non-interviewees who might observe your movement to the community. They might misinterpret your visit to any family as a security activity.



Choose FGD venues or in-person interview locations that are neutral and ensure confidentiality. If possible, provide transportation to avoid excluding people with limited resources.



Be aware **of any biases your activities' partners** might have (e.g., higher empathy with one community). Acknowledge the **diverse interests** that entities and individuals you collaborate with hold regarding research outcomes, such as donor-driven NGOs, state-affiliated universities, and international think tanks. Take proactive measures to prevent and address potential conflicts.^[7]



[7] Ursina Bentele, swisspeace, Guidelines to Conflict Sensitive Research, Vol. 15, No. 5, 2020

Coordination and Liaison

Ensure adequate time is allocated for staff to collect, analyze, discuss, reflect on, and learn from the data. Additionally, **flexible timing** enables responsiveness to change in the dynamics of a conflict.



For all M&E activities, **coordinate with participants in advance**. When **employing phone calls for a survey**, avoid assuming that people are ready and available to respond to your questionnaire instantly, even if they initially agreed, which could be influenced by fear of losing assistance or the element of surprise. Instead, inquire if they prefer to be called later or at a specific time. Be mindful of the potential presence of other individuals in the room, as it may cause stress for the respondent.



When planning field visits for M&E activities, **inform local stakeholders** about the purpose and action plans well in advance, **if necessary**. If local authorities insist on interfering and their involvement poses a risk to the activity, **consider alternative data collection methods** such as phone calls or relocating the venue to a neutral location for FGDs. Provide **transportation allowances** to participants as needed. Always communicate with participants beforehand if any local authority representatives will be present during the activity. When coordinating with local leaders or the Shawish, avoid giving them additional recognition that they could potentially exploit against community members.



Provide the enumerators with a permission paper, especially when visiting sensitive areas. Ensure enumerators are wearing **clearly marked gear** and are visibly recognizable.



Notify participants in advance about the presence of any observers during any activities and explain their role. The introduction of external or unfamiliar individuals might be triggering to the participants.



Data Collection, Communication and Enumerators Conduct

Enumerators should be aware of their **different layers of their identity and values** that can be identified through their names, accent, clothes, and the implication of this identity on people's reactions and answers. Consider the social norms of the community you are approaching.



Limit the number of enumerators, particularly when investigating topics related to social stability. A smaller team size can make people feel more at ease and willing to share sensitive insights or perceptions (or even personal stories/experiences) during data collection activities.



Introduce yourself properly: who you are, which organization you represent, what your role is. Ambiguity about the activity might raise questions and lead to reactions from the people or the local authorities.



During joint field visits, it is crucial to **communicate clearly to community participants the distinct roles of the team** conducting the activity. In situations where roles are unclear, there may be an expectation among people that external guests represent donor agencies or other official entities. Providing clarification helps manage expectations and ensures transparency about the purpose and affiliations of the visiting team.



The purpose of the M&E activity (in-person survey, KII, call, FGD) **should be explained clearly** leaving no space for speculation.



Obtaining participants' consent does not exempt you from the obligation to act responsibly and prudently when collecting and processing data. To emphasize shared responsibility, both the participants and the enumerator should sign the consent form.



Show empathy. Before getting into the questions check with the participants how they are doing and if they are ready to respond to the questions. People might not be mentally ready to participate.



Clarify the rights of the respondents: In the introduction, explicitly state that the responses will be treated confidentially. Inform participants that they have the right to cancel their participation or refrain from answering any question at any time and assure them that their decision will not impact their status with the project.



For sensitive topics, emphasize that the assessment will involve multiple respondents, and other team members will also be examining the same issue. Explain the process and respectfully imply that **all information will be triangulated and fact-checked** to mitigate the risk of false information.



When asking about sensitive issues such as people's perceptions about the propensity of using violence in their community by them or others, make a clear statement that this does not imply that the use of violence is normal in that area.



Pay careful attention to your body language; nodding, often seen as a gesture of listening, might be interpreted as agreement or validation of what is being shared. Ensure to convey neutrality to reassure participants.



Address problematic statements on the spot without necessarily impacting the survey results. This presents an opportunity to clarify misconceptions and contribute to a positive impact indirectly. For instance, if a respondent expresses a clear misconception about another community based on pure rumours, highlight the facts you have without necessarily engaging in a debate with the respondent



When addressing sensitive and weighty issues, allocate both time and budget for providing **psychological support to your enumerators** who may experience secondary trauma. This proactive measure will improve their behaviour, their interactions with communities, and ultimately the quality of the findings.



Evaluation Process

Utilize your **Theory of Change** that outlines how project activities are expected to lead to desired outcomes in different contexts, to inform the design of your evaluation process. This can help in **establishing causal links** between project activities and contextual changes.



Use a **mixed-methods approach**. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to gather data allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities of the context and helps in triangulating findings.



Follow a **participatory approach**. Engage stakeholders from different backgrounds, including beneficiaries, local NGOs, community leaders, and local authorities, in the evaluation process. Their perspectives can provide valuable insights and ensure the evaluation is contextually relevant.



Be mindful of **power dynamics** within the community and between different stakeholders. Ensure that the evaluation **process is inclusive and equitable**, giving voice to marginalized groups and individuals.



Take a **longitudinal perspective** in the evaluation process to track changes over time. This can help in **establishing causality** by identifying trends and patterns that may emerge gradually.

A longitudinal approach involves repeatedly observing and collecting data from the same individuals or groups over a period of time.



Document lessons learned and best practices from the evaluation process. This can contribute to building a knowledge base for future conflict-sensitive evaluations and inform programmatic decision-making.



Maintain **open communication with donors** throughout the evaluation process, highlighting the importance of conflict sensitivity considerations and any challenges encountered. This can help in garnering support for conflict-sensitive approaches and ensuring alignment with donor priorities.



Analysis, Reporting and Learning

Timely share feedback with your team if any adjustments are needed in the approach or tools. Assume that the challenges you face are not exceptional, fostering a proactive and responsive team environment.



Conduct a **learning session** with the programme and project teams to reflect on the gathered data, enabling a deeper interpretation of the findings. Translate these insights into recommendations and mitigation measures as to inform decisions regarding the (re-)design or further adjustment of project activities.

Be mindful of any **biases that the team might possess** when reviewing the data. Ensure to incorporate a diverse range of opinions within the team to promote objectivity and comprehensive analysis.



Take a **participatory approach for the analysis**. Validate the findings with sample groups of your direct beneficiaries. If possible, invite beneficiaries to reflect with staff every six months to help ensure that activities are meeting needs, and at the very least, not exacerbating the conflict.



Clearly **outline the limitations of your assessment**. Refrain from generalizing sensitive findings based on a small sample of people to represent an entire community. For instance, “out of 500 participants, 80% of refugees answered by...”, can be very dangerous if the statement itself is problematic.



Naming specific areas or communities can be problematic so use codes (e.g., Participants from areas A, B...)



M&E are typically extractive processes, as organizations take information from respondents and offer little in direct return. Once the results are available, it is essential to reflect with the team on the most effective way to **share the results**, or a portion thereof, with the communities involved.



Store your data on the cloud for safety to avoid data breaches by any side. Evaluators might utilize the information when conducting mid-term or final evaluations. They may draw different conclusions than you, and having access to the raw data will be essential for their analysis.



Use interim reports to **keep your donors and partners informed of any changes** in the context or programmatic adjustments, particularly those with conflict sensitivity implications. These can describe developments and risks, anticipate their likely impacts on conflict issues and analyze existing peacebuilding efforts.



Integrate findings and recommendations of the analysis of the interaction between the context and the project from a conflict-sensitive lens into regular reporting.



Share your learning with the greater humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding community.



Publish your reports in the local language as well for transparency and accountability measures.



7

Part 2: Monitoring & Evaluation of Conflict Sensitivity

The monitoring and evaluation of the application of conflict sensitivity remains a challenge for many organizations implementing both humanitarian and development projects. This section covers the core requirements of conducting proper M&E for conflict sensitivity application in order to generate findings that eventually inform adaptive management.

Meanwhile, the evaluation of conflict sensitivity focuses on capturing the scale of “adaptive management” in responding to contextual changes in the form of documentation of workplans and log-frames. This is meant to serve as the learning baseline for prospective projects.

The M&E of conflict sensitivity focuses on comprehending the following aspects:^[8]

- Context: How is the context changing (both positively and negatively)?
- Interaction: How is the intervention contributing to those changes?
- Process: How is the intervention responding to those changes?

[8] https://www.swisspeace.ch/assets/publications/downloads/Working-Papers/950ee9877e/Conflict-Sensitivity-Taking-it-to-the-Next-Level-Working-Paper-16-swisspeace-sabina_handschin-eric_abitol-rina_alluri.pdf

Monitoring & Evaluation of Conflict Sensitivity Checklist

Adaptive Management

To ensure the success of the entire process, it is **crucial to secure management commitment and buy-in for the monitoring and evaluation of conflict sensitivity.**

The commitment of an organization to the proper monitoring and evaluation of conflict sensitivity requires an allocation of time and resources for the process. Time allocated for this exercise would ideally be built in the workplan of the project including regular community consultations as well as updated conflict analyses. Resources are divided between building staff capacity and budgetary requirements to conduct qualitative data analysis.

Review the [UNDP and House of Peace Toolbox on Institutionalizing Conflict Sensitivity at the Organizational Level](#). This resource offers a wealth of practical recommendations for integrating conflict sensitivity in your organization and evaluating current systems.

For example:

- ▶ Reviewing strategic plans to ensure the adoption of conflict sensitivity.
- ▶ Creating a Conflict Sensitivity unit or team.
- ▶ Internal mechanisms to collect and discuss conflict sensitivity matters.
- ▶ Formal and informal feedback mechanisms.

If your organization is engaging external evaluators, **include conflict sensitivity as a specific aspect in the Terms of Reference (ToR)** alongside the traditional evaluation criteria for your program. By explicitly outlining the requirements for conflict sensitivity assessment in the ToR, you ensure that evaluators prioritize this aspect and incorporate it into their evaluation methodology and findings. This helps to comprehensively assess the impact of your program within the context of conflict dynamics and ensures that relevant insights are captured for informed decision-making and program improvement.

For example, while developing your ToR, include a section on proposed questions by the evaluator that are specific to the context in which your organization is operating in. Questions would be worded in a culturally and linguistically sensitive manner especially if the evaluator will address them to your organization's external stakeholders.

Upon the onboarding of the evaluator, **provide a security briefing on both national and regional levels** (if field missions to other regions are included in the evaluation plan). If possible, provide the evaluator with support for domestic travel and consider your organization's visibility in the process knowing that you are known but he/she are less known to the targeted stakeholders.

While M&E personnel can provide valuable assistance in conducting specialized data collection activities, it is important to emphasize that the responsibility for **monitoring and evaluating conflict sensitivity efforts is not solely placed on the M&E team.**

Certain aspects, such as capacity building monitoring, fall under the purview of other functions like HR. Additionally, all team members share the responsibility to observe and share feedback within their teams regarding changes in the context or any indirect impact caused by their programs.

As mentioned in Part 1, Context and Conflict Analysis is the primary and foundational step for initiating a Conflict Sensitivity process, including M&E. Ensure to conduct your own analysis or leverage existing analyses available from by other organizations or platforms, such as the Tension Monitoring System dashboard.

An updated Context and conflict analysis is needed at three levels:

- **Country level:** a general understanding of the conflict dynamics. This can be done based on secondary data, or conducted in collaboration between different agencies, institutions, and NGOs once yearly (or more if major changes took place).
- **Sector level:** an understanding of how certain key conflict drivers play out in each sector particularly. This should be done for each sector on yearly basis while developing the strategy.
- **Project (Micro) level:** a micro-level understanding of conflict dynamics at the area of intervention. This should be done by each organization, for each area, or possibly in collaboration with other organizations working in the same area upon the design of new programs or projects.

Create a mechanism for **regular updates to contextual analysis**, ensuring that program managers or relevant personnel incorporate these updates into the renewal, updating, or design of interventions. Additionally, revise existing policies or procedures to **mandate the consideration of contextual changes** during these processes. This proactive approach enables organizations to stay responsive to evolving dynamics, enhancing the effectiveness and relevance of interventions within complex environments.

Community groups mapping: Identify what types of relationships can be affected positively or negatively by your intervention, and what are the factors (conflict flashpoints) that influence those relationships. This exercise can be substituted by [Connectors and Dividers](#), which are better used at the micro level.

Whose relationships can be affected by humanitarian/development interventions in your area? (think of vertical and horizontal relationships)	For each relationship, what specific conflict flashpoints (issues, events, locations) have the potential to trigger or escalate conflicts?
e.g., Actor – political party / Community – community / Community – Authority /	e.g., sectarian division, distributed aid, specific distribution location, access to shelters, political affiliation
Host community – Refugees	
Host communities – IDPs	
Host – host	
Communities – local authorities	

Based on the context update, identify existing **Conflict Variables**.

Conflict variable is “a factor considered to have a determining influence over the direction the future will take; variables are neutral, as they do not indicate a direction”^[9].

Examples:

- ▶ Tensions between the municipalities and citizens in area C.
- ▶ Food and basic commodity prices
- ▶ Internal displacement.
- ▶ Access to a particular service.
- ▶ Evictions outside due process.
- ▶ Media statements with negative sentiments.

[9] https://www.acaps.org/fileadmin/Technical_notes/202202_acaps_technical_brief_scenario_building_methodology.pdf

Development of Tools and Indicators

Among the identified conflict variables, choose the **Key Variables** most relevant to your intervention, those that could potentially impact your intervention, or be directly influenced by it (select a maximum of three or four).



Review your **Theory of Change** and anticipate how your intervention might affect the **Key Variables**. Review your **Assumptions** in light of the updated context analysis and the identified variables.



Context Monitoring: For each key conflict variable, develop an indicator that you can measure to monitor any changes in the context. These will be your **context indicators**. **Identify relevant means of verification.**

Examples:

- ▶ New measures taken by the government to impose restrictive measures on refugees' presence.
- ▶ % increase/decrease in rent prices in area B (sector level).
- ▶ % increase/decrease in the number of evictions outside due process, reported on a monthly basis in the area of the intervention (micro level).



Interaction Monitoring & Evaluation: Assessing unintended and unanticipated impact is not necessarily achieved through indicators, as they primarily assess expected outcomes rather than unforeseen ones^[10].

Here are a few examples of indicators that can be used:

- ▶ % of the public perceiving aid bias towards specific communities, nationalities, or political affiliations, disaggregated by sex, age, geographical area, and nationality. Political affiliation disclosure can be optional based on respondent preference.
- ▶ # of security incidents or communal tensions recorded around a service centre.
- ▶ # of conflict incidents de-escalated by informal conflict management efforts exerted by the team.

To unveil the unintended impact of a program or policy, more suitable and mixed methods involve conducting open-ended inquiries with diverse groups, both targeted and non-targeted. **Let the previous Community Groups Mapping Exercise inform this step.**

Examples of used methods:

- ▶ **Team Observations of Unintentional Impact^[11]:** In your team weekly/monthly meetings, ask the following questions:
 - Have you heard/witnessed any tension that erupted due to an activity we implemented this week? What happened?
 - What do you think about the unintentional impact of our program on people's perceptions of each other/ or their trust in local institutions in our intervention area?
 - How do our relationships with partners reinforce unbalanced access to resources/knowledge or otherwise provide space for new organizations to get involved?
 - Did our organization adequately address the changes in the conflict since previous meeting? Were tensions decreased? Were opportunities to build capacities for peace taken advantage of?

[10] <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7dbdaded915d2ac884d44f/Mon-eval-conflict-sensitivity-challenges-practical-solutions.pdf>

[11] Bamberger, M., Tarsilla, M. and Tortilla & Hesse-Biber, S. 2016. "Why so many 'rigorous' evaluations fail to identify unintended consequences of development programs: How mixed methods can contribute" in Evaluation and Program Planning 55:155-62.

- **Confidential Reporting Mechanism^[12]**: Establish a mechanism external to the project's operational hierarchy, encouraging the reporting of conflict sensitivity concerns within the organization. This ensures that staff can report unintended negative effects without fear of reprisal and with confidence that their concerns will be taken seriously. [Please ensure to link up with existing complaints and feedback mechanisms for Lebanon.](#)
- **Stakeholders Feedback**: Inclusive feedback from a diverse range of stakeholders (local communities, partners, local authorities, other NGOs in the area, private sector), who are not direct beneficiaries, offers valuable insights, potentially unveiling unintended or unanticipated program effects. This can be done quarterly or bi-annually, or at the time of evaluation activities. By considering the perspectives of those outside the program, a more comprehensive understanding of the impact on the broader community and environment can be achieved.
- **Resources Transfers and Implicit Ethical Messages Template^[13]**: use these common conflict sensitivity risk patterns as a template to reflect on during the development and implementation of your project or program. Collaborate with your team to review these risk patterns, evaluate their likelihood in relation to your intervention (low, medium, high), and elaborate on how these risks may be pertinent to your programs in the 'Description' section of the template. You may add any mitigation measures you agree on to address potential risks.

Resources Transfers

Risk Pattern	Likelihood	Description
Diversion/Theft: Aid used to fuel conflict		
Market Effect: Injected aid affecting prices		
Targeting/Distribution: Reinforcing divisions		
Substitution: Undermining local institutions		
Legitimization: Granting status to conflict actors		
Politicization of aid: Manipulation for political gains		

Implicit Ethical Messages

Risk Pattern	Likelihood	Description
Arms and power: security measures reinforce wartime mindsets		
Competition between aid agencies		
Giving different values for different lives		
Impunity of aid workers		
Publicity: Reinforcing stereotypes and labelling		
Suspicion towards served communities		

[12] <https://www.undp.org/lebanon/publications/guidance-note-2-conflict-sensitivity-throughout-project-design-cycle-lebanon>

[13] <https://www.cdacollaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Do-No-Harm-DNH-Trainers-Manual-2016.pdf>

- **Most Significant Change**^[14]: The Most Significant Change (MSC) technique is a participatory approach that involves collecting and analysing stories of significant changes resulting from a project/program or intervention. This method allows for a more nuanced understanding of the impact, involving stakeholders in the identification and interpretation of meaningful outcomes. This tool can be valuable for the evaluation process.

Example: a group of diverse women participated in a social peacebuilding initiative focused on producing and selling reserved food. During a Most Significant Change (MSC) exercise, these women shared that the trust they built among themselves during the initiative led to new connections and support networks. As a result, they were able to address challenges their children faced at the local school with the help of key figures they met through the initiative. This example underscores the unintended positive impact of the initiative on their households and highlights the importance of using participatory methods like MSC to capture such nuanced outcomes in conflict-sensitive evaluations.

- **Surveys** can be instrumental in identifying unintentional impacts, especially when they incorporate specific questions that explore shifts and changes in perceptions or the quality of relationships and trust. The evaluation should include a qualitatively driven component to understand the lived experience of the respondents.

- **Integrate these methods with your regular M&E activities:**

- Exercise caution when evaluating a single project or program, considering the potential impact of other interventions implemented by your organization in the same area or with the same group. Recognize that interventions often interact with each other.
- Ensure that the previously mentioned methods, particularly those involving individuals from affected communities, are applied in a conflict-sensitive manner. Part 1 of this toolbox will provide guidance on this aspect.

[14] <https://gsdrc.org/document-library/the-most-significant-change-msc-technique-a-guide-to-its-use/>

Process Monitoring is designed to assess the compliance of your organization regarding its Conflict Sensitivity policy or planned measures. It highlights the organization preparedness and adaptability in addressing identified risks and unintentional impact^[15].

Identify two to three **indicators** reflecting your conflict sensitivity priorities. For example, if you intend to increase your team capacity on conflict sensitivity, include an indicator about capacity building.

Examples of indicators:

- ▶ % increase in staff attending conflict sensitivity training.
- ▶ # of reports on communal relations and tensions produced.
- ▶ # of programmatic changes and actions taken in response to the context changes.
- ▶ # of community consultations conducted to capture the unintended impact of the assistance.
- ▶ % of community members reporting favorable views of other communities
- ▶ % of increased trust in international assistance activities vs national processes disaggregated by conflict-related group.
- ▶ # (or quality) of incident logs updated weekly by the team, capturing observations or complaints received through the Complaint & Feedback Mechanisms.
- ▶ % of new projects that were supported by a conflict sensitivity analysis.
- ▶ # public authorities (municipalities, vocational training schools) and local community members engaged in project design and implementation.
- ▶ # steps taken to ensure that the conflict analysis results in changes to programming.
- ▶ # of perception surveys produced and disseminated.
- ▶ # of tensions meeting organised with key decision-makers.
- ▶ # of periodic reviews undertaken of how communication messages have been received, including if/how they have been politicized.

Again, it is integral to provide anecdotal evidence of “adaptive management” by **documenting** qualitative examples on the selected indicators.

Ensure that the data collection needed to measure selected indicators and the evaluation activities are conducted consistently throughout the duration of your projects, not solely at the beginning and end. This approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the project’s progress and impact over time.

[15] https://www.swisspeace.ch/assets/publications/downloads/Working-Papers/950ee9877e/Conflict-Sensitivity-Taking-it-to-the-Next-Level-Working-Paper-16-swisspeace-sabina_handschin-eric_abitol-rina_alluri.pdf

Conflict Sensitivity Reporting and Learning

Use existing systems (internal or external) to register and follow up on context and interaction changes. For example, if you have a Risk Register Matrix, integrate the conflict sensitivity risks with it instead of creating a separate system.



In your **M&E plan, include steps to follow up** on the conflict sensitivity measures and actions implemented. Consider this while developing your budget. This entails **assessing the impact of these conflict sensitivity measures**, whether they were intended to mitigate harm or contribute to peace. If the desired impact is not achieved, it is essential to reconsider the effectiveness of the actions taken and explore alternative strategies. This iterative process allows for adaptive management and continuous improvement in conflict-sensitive practices throughout the project lifecycle.



Make information and data about the context updates and accessible for the whole team and possibly for other organizations where applicable. Use concrete maps and info cards with simple colour coding to highlight changes. The Conflict Advisor, M&E Officer, Security Officer or Program Manager can oversee this mechanism.



Incorporate findings and mitigation measures in your reporting. Ensure that donors are informed about changes in the context and emerging conflict sensitivity risks resulting from policies or requirements put in place by them.



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